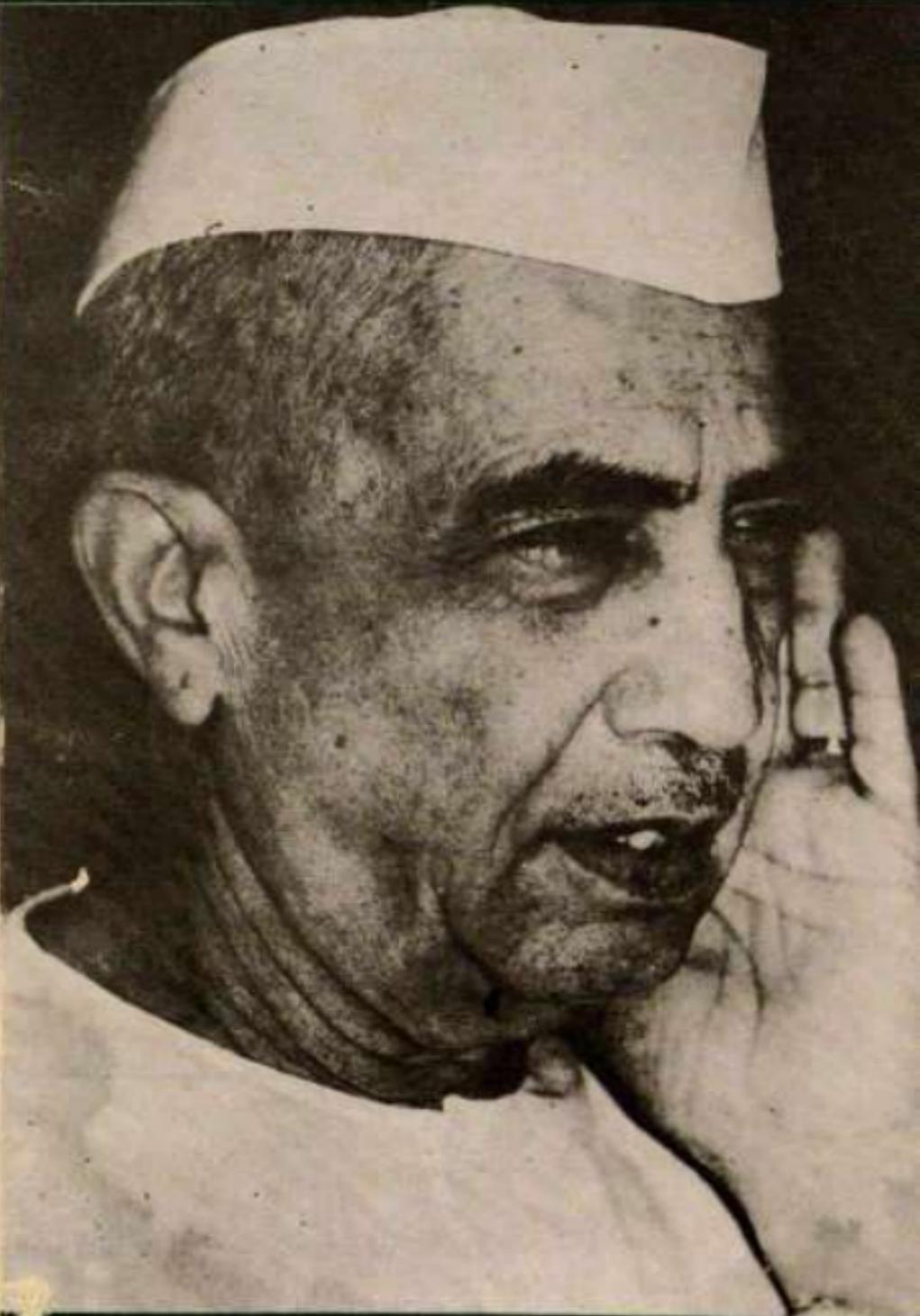


**FIRST KISAN PRIME MINISTER  
CH. CHARAN SINGH**



**FIRST KISAN PRIME MINISTER**

**CH. CHARAN SINGH**

**A BIOGRAPHY**

**BY CAPT. R.S. RANA**

First Edition - November 1993

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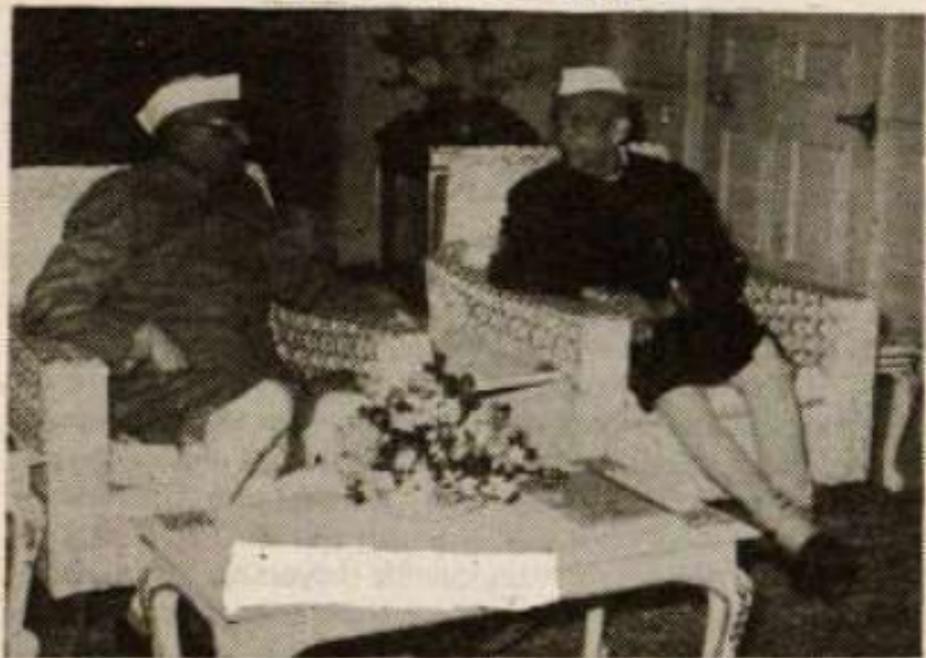
My thanks to Ms Sheela Sardhana Ms S. Verma and Shri S.P. Khanna my advocate colleague who helped me in comparing the proof copies of the book while under print. I also acknowledge with thanks for the promise by my printer Shri K.C. Aggarwal for printing the Book in time.

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**Capt. R.S. Rana**

## Two Kissans



President Reddy & Prime Minister Charan Singh

*Neelam Sanjiva Reddy*

Phone No. 263160  
No. 29, Sankey Road  
BANGALORE  
PIN 560 052

18th December, 1993.

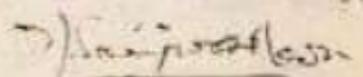
My dear Capt. Rana,

Thank you for your letter. Sri Charan Singh was a close friend of mine. He was a politician with a honest and rightful qualities that is why I was attracted towards him. With his qualitative spirits enabled me to choose him as next Prime Minister after Sri Morarji Bhai resigned.

• I do not see such type of politicians at present. The politicians of the younger generation are very few with these qualities.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

---

Neelam Sanjiva Reddy

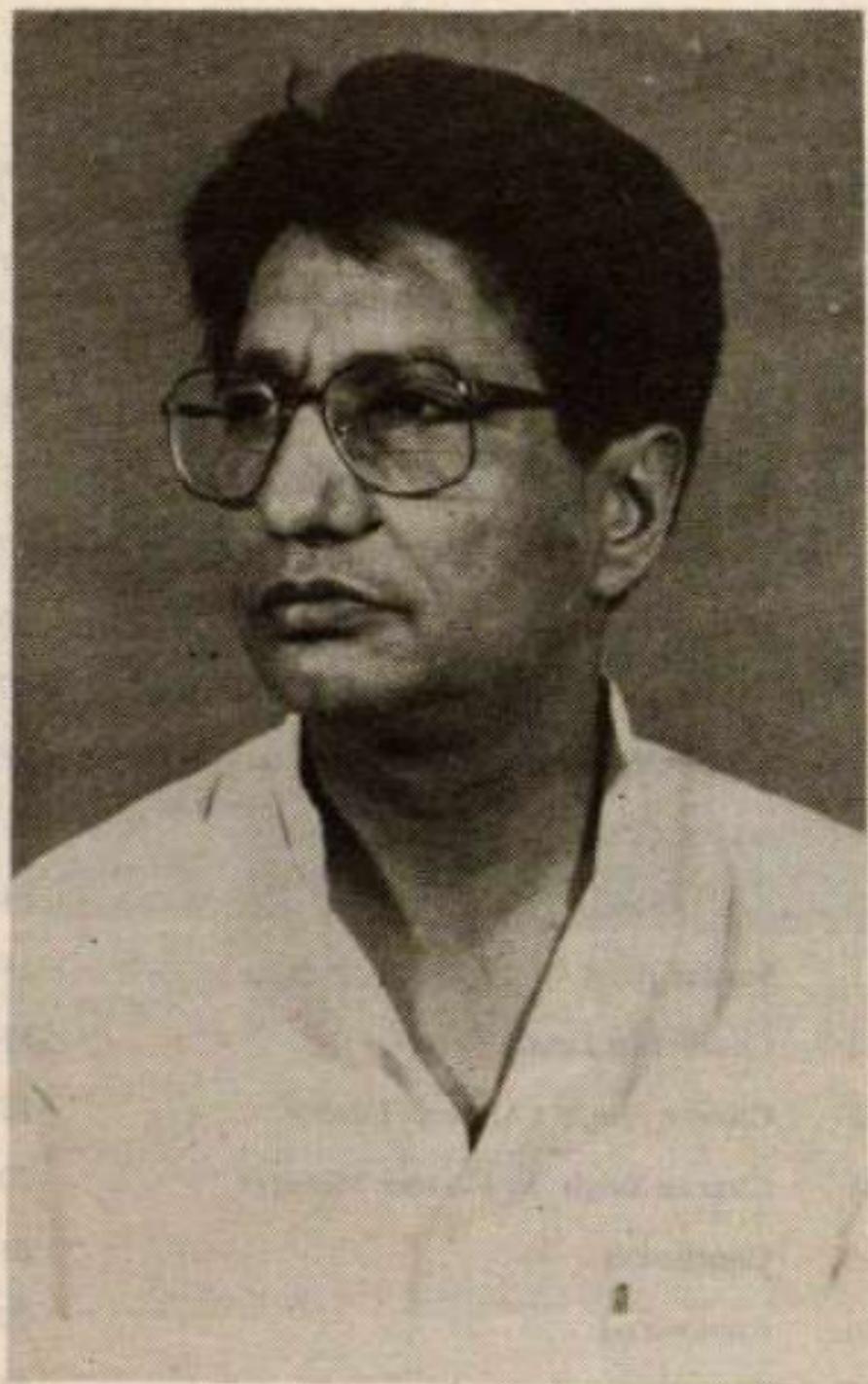
To,  
Capt. R.S. Rana,  
Advocate,  
c/o Graphic World,  
1686, Dakhni Rai Stret,  
Darya Ganj, New Delhi-2.



The book 'First Kissan Prime Minister' in Hindi being released by Smt. Gayatri Devi at Ch. Charan Singh's residence 12 Tuglak Road, New Delhi.

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Ch. Ajit Singh : Great Son of a Great Father.

# I

## CHARAN SINGH :

# HIS BACKGROUND

The forefathers of Chaudhary Charan Singh migrated to a tiny village of Nurpur in Meerut District from village Sihi — coincidentally, also the birth place of the famous Hindu poet Surdas which was a part of Ballabgarh Territory under the famous freedom fighter Maharaja Nahar Singh. Raja Nahar Singh's Ballabgarh Territory produced several freedom fighters of distinction. One of them was Balram Singh, distant cousin of Maharaja Suraj Mal and brother of Rani Kishori who brought up her step son Jawahar Singh who is known to have defeated one of the later Mughal Emperors of Delhi. It is on record that when Jawahar Singh's elephant felt scared of the metal spikes of the Lahori Gate of Delhi Red Fort, Balram Singh, who was nearby in the front row, stood against the gate and asked Jawahar Singh to march his elephant forward. He was horror-struck to see his maternal uncle against the gate. But Balram Singh again said to his nephew Jawahar Singh, "Don't be a coward. Do your duty as a brave soldier. Life and death in the battle field are immaterial". At this Jawahar Singh had to march his elephant ahead. The gate of the Red Fort crashed at the thrust of the elephant's might, and with it fell Balram Singh flat on the ground and died an instantaneous death. This was the end of the heroic Tewatiya General. Balram Singh, the famous Balloo.

Balram Singh is said to have founded Ballabgarh. In the initial stage, Maharaja Suraj Mal gave him the authority to collect land revenue of five villages—Sihi, Bhuj, Lohagarh, Muzbadi and Mirzapur from Mughal Subedar named Murtza Khan but very

soon Balram Singh annexed 210 villages from the neighboring territories of Yadavas and Mughals and declared himself to be the Raja of Ballbgarh.

This is the land of Ballabgarh to which the whole of Northern India is proud for having produced such brave sons as Balram Singh & Nahar Singh whose contribution to the freedom struggle of 1857 is decisively immense. Local bards sing of the great sacrifice and bravery of Balram Singh even today in this part of Haryana, Rajasthan and western U.P.

Charan Singh's forefathers belonged to this clan of freedom fighters who knew only how to sacrifice their all for the honour of the Motherland. After the annexation of Nahar Singh's territory by the British in 1857 and their success in curbing the struggle for independence in this region which was directly under the nose of the British throne. Chaudhary Badam Singh, the grandfather of Chaudhary Charan Singh moved away along with his family of five sons, the youngest being Mir Singh, father of Charan Singh. After the execution of Raja Nahar Singh, the Tewatiya Dynasty was harassed by the Britishers so much that Chaudhary Badam Singh Tewatiya had to take shelter across the Yamuna in a tiny village Nurpur. Here he started tilling the piece of land which people of this own clan donated to him to help him out at the time of distress. such is the usual practice of the village farmers to give shelter to their relatives/clan's people in the time of Natural calamities such as famine/floods etc. With the magnificent labour which the family put in for their rehabilitation, Chaudhary Badam Singh was able in no time to own the land given to him by his brethren. Nay, he purchased more land in the village Bhatona in Bulandshar District. Chaudhary Mir Singh moved to this land when his son Charan Singh was only 14 years old.

When Charan Singh was only five years old, he started going to school which was three miles away from there.

Charan Singh's father Mir Singh had to move out of Nurpur in search of cultivable land which he could get at Bhup-Garhi, a tiny village in the same district. Charan Singh vividly remembered his days of childhood when he used to help the family on the farms which every child of his age does even today in a marginal farmer's family.

Presiding over the annual function of Maharaja Suraj Mal Martyr Day, on 25 December 1977, Charan Singh told the rural elite that, it is the "Sanskar" (Culture) of childhood which leaves permanent impressions on the life of a person and guide his future course. He further said, "I have the 'Sanskar' of a poor farmers' family, living in mud and a thatched house while Indira Gandhi had the 'Sanskar' of Anand Bhawan, and that explains the difference between her and my way of thinking and functioning. I became hardworking and adopted simple living since I had seen life like that in my childhood among scantily clad sweating farmers, whereas she has background of the luxurious life of Anand Bhawan. Therefore when she talked of "Garibi Hatao", it was a pure and simple eye-wash as she had no experience of poverty in her childhood. Only a "Garib" can think and feel like a "Garib" (Poor). Sardar Patel was a Garib in this sense, so he lived and died for the poor. The first five year's plan bore the impression of Sardar's concern for the improvement of the lot of the Poor. Pt. Nehru under the influence of business magnates changed the priorities of the second five year's plan due to the Sanskars of his rich background which unconsciously undermined his romantic concern for the poor. "So if we want to know Indira, we will have to take into account her Anand Bhawan 'Sanskar', and that will help us understand why there is a hiatus

between her preaching and actions”.

Charan Singh was very much keen and intelligent in his studies. When his class-mates used to play and cut their classes, Charan Singh could be seen engaged in his studies in the corner of a class-room. His teachers had high hopes on this budding scholar, and they used to say that he would go very high because of his God-gift intelligence and quick grasp of curricular material. After passing high school examination, he went to Meerut College from where he passed intermediate in 1921 securing very good marks. Charan Singh's father, being a marginal farmer, was not in a position to allow his son to carry on with his further studies, and this is natural with any marginal farmer like Chaudhary Mir Singh. The young and promising student was very sad but his elder uncle Lakhpatt Singh came to know of the problem. His uncle not only encouraged him to go for further studies but also informed him that he had already told Mir Singh that the studies of young Charan would not be stopped, and he would be sent for higher studies he asked his nephew to go ahead with his studies as far as he could. He assured him that the family would work harder to spare money for his studies. Rising equal to the expectations of his family, Charan Singh graduated from Agra University with Science and, later, did M.A. (History) and L.L.B. from Lucknow University in 1925-26. After taking the degree in law, Charan Singh started his legal practice at Ghaziabad in 1926.

These were the days of political upheaval. Charan Singh plunged into the freedom movement, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. His field of operation was western U.P., now Uttar Pradesh. He got imprisonment thrice during the freedom struggle during the British Raj. Interestingly, he was again put behind bars in 1975 during the dark days of Emergency under Indira regime,

and he remained in Tihar Jail for more than a year.

In 1925, he was married to Gaytri Devi, daughter of the great philanthropist, Chaudhary Ganga Ram of Garhi Kundal in Sonapat tehsil which is now a district in Haryana. The two families came close to each other because of the great reputation they enjoyed as staunch Arya Samajists around Delhi, despite a gap of fortunes between the two families. Chaudhary Ganga Ram's family was quite an affluent Arya Samaji Jat family among the peasantry around Delhi. Swami Dayanand used to say that the people around Delhi particularly, the farming communities living in this "Jat belt around Delhi", were crude Arya Samajis. The family of Chaudhary Charan Singh and his father-in-law's, came under the influence of Swami Dayanand in the last quarter of the 19th century.

Their married life was a happy ideal example for any politician of India. The duties were divided into water-tight compartments. There was no interference, whatsoever from the "home minister" of the home in the "home department" of the ex-Home Minister of India though there used to be regular exchange of views on the current political trends and events and Gaytri's advice was always sought before the Iron-man took a decision on the socio-political matter of the country. But files of the Home Ministry or its civilian officers were never discussed at home. There was such a fine understanding between the two that it looked divine. If you go to the house of the ex-Home Minister after 8.00 PM., one was mistaken whether he was seeing the home of a Home Minister- an ideal homely atmosphere of a family of Yudhishtirian era or he has entered a wrong house which one felt that it could not be the Home Minister's residence—simple living combined with straight high thinking go well with his frugal meals of a typical small farmer's family. The difference between

the iron hand with which he deals with his office and political adversaries and the soft one that greets the guests in the evening was a proverbially contrast. His was a sweet home with the beaming faces of his kith and kin moving about or chatting with him.

The house of the ex-Home Minister was an open Darbar. He used to meets the people of different shades of community from the near and far villages who approached, him to seek solutions to their day-to-day problems. He is seen patiently listening to them like a village Mukhia. Sometimes a man from Ghaziabad complained to Chaudhary saheb that he had lost his bullock and wants Charan Singh to trace it out and sometimes a lady — step-wife of a farmer from Bijnore — bothered him about the atrocities of her sister-in-law (Soken) and wanted him to restore her husband to her.

Even a petty official of State administration would snub such persons but Charan Singh listened to them patiently almost everyday, and from his morning Darbar almost all used to be satisfied though sometimes he found it hard to explain to them the delicacy of his position as home minister of India.

He was an angel to the down-trodden and the poor farmers of north-western India who knew him well since the days when he piloted the "Zamindari Abolition Bill" in the U.P. Vidhan Sabha in the early fifties. After this Act, the tenants and even the sub-tenants from the down-trodden communities of U.P., particularly the Harijans and other small farmers/peasants of different castes, become the owners of the land which they had been tilling since generations as tenants. There was no bureaucratic touch in his behaviour. That was the reason why they approached him from far and near, and felt encouraged to put forward their complaints in his morning Darbar. He felt unhappy

if he was not able to find time to meet a farmer or a poor Harijan because of his tight schedule, though he was seldom sorry if a millionaire was unable to meet him even after waiting for days together. Charan Singh did not mince words when he expressed his feelings to people. The doors of his bungalow were always open for the poor, but big business-shots were always hesitant to meet him.

'It is irony of fate that in spite of what he has done for the down-trodden he is branded as "anti-Harijans" and "pro-kulaks" by some people. This hurt him the most, may be the cardiac trouble resulted from such propaganda vigourously renewed in the past. It is but natural that a person who had devoted himself heart and soul to the Gandhian ideals, and who had done his utmost for the down-troddens and small peasants, was misrepresented for political reasons.

When asked, "What is the aim of his life?" Chaudhary Charan Singh said with a farmer-like frankness, "Swami Dayanand is my religious guru, Gandhiji is my political and economic Guru; and Sardar Patel is my ideal. I try to emulate the high ideals of the great Sardar and his firmness of character to provide a clean and efficient administration to the country". What he had achieved in the short period of a little over three years as the first Home Minister of India was enough to guide for years to come.

Chaudhary Charan Singh was an open book, and if we analyse his character keeping in view his family background, his educational interests and his deep respect for the great philosophers and social reformers like Swami Dayanand and Gandhiji, it is not difficult to see him in the right perspective. Being born in a freedom fighter's family of western India, he had inherited the toughness and frankness of a typical jat.

Col. Tod in his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*

described Jats as, "Turbulent and independent, like the sons of Esau, their hand against every man and every man's hand against them, their nominal prince, Surajmal, the Jat chief of Bharatpur, pursued exactly the same plan towards the population of these villages, whom he captured in a night attack, that Janamejaya did to the Takshaks". Tod derives the origin of Jats from the race of Takshaks who came from Central Asia to India in big hordes and he believes that the "Gatae, Gut or Jat is the same race which along with the Takshaks races of the Central Asia occupied place among the 36 Royal races of India and are from the region of Sakatal".

One commentator on Tod's Rajasthan wrote that "the word JAT which comprises of three letters — 'J', 'A' and 'T', depicts the three main characteristics of a typical Jat. 'J' stands for Justice, 'A' stands for Adamancy and 'T' for Truthfulness". He (Tod) further said, "From the mountains of Jude to the shores of Makram, and along the Ganges, the Jat is widely spread; while the Takshak name is now confined to inscriptions or old writing".

Though Chaudhary Charan Singh did not relish to be called a Jat leader, yet there is no denying the fact that he was a true Jat of Colonel Tod's conception. However, he was not ashamed of being born in a Jat family. Once he rebuked a correspondent who asked him why he was branded as Pro-Jat. Chaudhary Charan Singh is said to have remarked, "I had not sent a telegram to God asking Him to give me birth in a Jat family". And why should he feel small for being a Jat? Who does not know that the contribution of Jats to the making of the Indian History is inferior to none of any community. Even the coincidence of his birth in a particular caste was exploited as a weapon to denigrate him. Once Charan Singh wrote to Nehru that his birth in Jat community was a handicap in his political life, and had always



Father and mother of Ch. Charan Singh



Charan Singh and Gayatri Devi



been exploited by his rivals to block his ascent in the national hierarchy.

The Sardar being the true disciple of Gandhiji, besides being a true peasant in his bearing, attracted young Charan Singh the most as a ideal leader. Although it is a matter of chance, but it is fraught with tremendous significance that like the great Sardar, Chaudhary Charan Singh also came to be designated as Home Minister when India saw the second dawn of democracy in March 1977 after 30-years of one party dominance with the thinking and firmness of Sardar Patel. Chaudhary Saheb inspired people with confidence that he would steer the country through the economic and political morass. But alas! the ideals for which he remained preoccupied with the office of Home Minister's proved too idealistic to be true. His resignation under special circumstances in 1978 did not come in his way to wage relentless crusade against corruption, inefficiency and authoritarianism. The emergence of Kisan force in Indian politics is the evidence of Charan Singh's growing influence and strength in restructuring Indian polity based on agro-industrial economy—a Gandhian model of political development.

## II

### CHARAN SINGH:

# A TRUE GANDHIAN

After the death of the Sardar of Bardoli and a gap of three decades, the Home Minister's chair was occupied by another peasant leader, and this time from the North. Charan Singh was the only choice for the Home portfolio. It was offered to him by the grateful Prime Minister Morarji Desai in whose favour he relinquished his claim to the highest office out of respect for Desai's age and reputation for his of being a disciple of Gandhiji and he did not agree to the proposal of his colleagues who went to meet him in the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital (they were the leaders of the five constituents of the Janata Party) to accept Jagjivan Ram as the Prime Minister. Charan Singh categorically refused to accept a person whose public image was tarnished for having piloted the Emergency Bill in the Parliament and allegations of accepting bribe in 'Jaguor Deal'

From the day he resigned the Chief Ministership of U.P., the biggest state of the country which is as good as 50% of India, Charan Singh had seen three Prime Ministers during the Congress regime. He was keen that there should be a viable political alternative to the Congress Party, and it should be a democratic opposition which should be able to provide a foundation for the 'two party system' the key note of a democratic political system. Keeping this view, he formed Bhartiya Karanti dal (BKD) in December 1967. Rajaji the founder of the Swatantra party also wished that there should be one-party opposition. The Samyukt Socialist Party (SSP) also wanted the same. But a section of the

SSP had its reservations about the merger of the Swatantra Party which was by and large a party of Rajas, Maharajas and a few retired ICS. officers. Charan Singh tried to persuade them and said, "We may accept the membership on the individual basis and not decide to merge the party as a whole". The national alternative to Congress Party could not be provided then. The Bhartiya Karanti Dal also did not consider it proper to allow the merger of Swatantra Party as such. The situation remained unaltered upto 1973 when fresh efforts were made towards the formation of a new party at national level. Biju Patnaik of Orissa Congress was eager for a united fronts, so thought Balraj Madhok, a leader of the Jana Sangh party. In the meantime, the U.P. elections become due in 1974. The Bhartiya Kranti Dal alone was able to bag 107 seats in the U.P. elections. But the Congress Party whose image was at its lowest ebb, managed to secure 215 seats though the percentage of votes polled was as low as 32%. This was a pointer to the possibility of the united front polling 68% votes. The leaders of the above referred parties again met in April 1974, and after due deliberations, Bhartiya Lok Dal (BLD) was formed on August 29, 1974. The Jana Sangh, Congress (o) and one faction of the socialist Party led by George Ferrandes and others could not be united with Bhartiya Lok Dal in spite of the request sent to Jayaprakesh Narayan to persuad samyukat Socialist Party (SSP) leaders realise the urgency of the formation of a single party. However, the merger was only possible towards the end of the Emergency in February 1977.

This was blessing in disguise. Leaders of different political parties shed their differences by merging their Separate entity into a single national party which was born in the Prison Cell, as apply remarked by one of its leaders. The major factor of this unity was the uncertainty about lifting of the Emergency

by the then Prime Minister Mrs. Indra Gandhi, and the consequent fear that the leaders of the different political parties under detention would not be able to come out alive from jail. There were different rumours from the 'caucus' that there could be 'concentration cells' in jails and the political enemies could be 'purged' of undesirable elements through physical liquidation. Only Mrs. Indra Gandhi, being daughter of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, thought otherwise that it would be too ghastly a thing to do. The political leaders survived by fluke of history.

There had been an enquiry about the damage of the kidneys off Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan while he was under detention and under treatment in P.G.I. at Chandigarh. Though there was no definite proof that the doctors administered certain inefficacious medicines while treating the Lok Nayak, yet it was difficult for the nation to forgive inadequate treatment, given to the Lok Nayak. It can not be altogether ruled out that there was a plan to dispose of the Lok Nayak by aggravating his old liver and kidney ailments. Since the 'total revolution' call was given by the Lok Nayak, and danger to the ruling party losing power was great, and therefore, it was not unlikely that Jayaprakash Narayan was earmarked for liquidation to perpetuate its regime.

Charan Singh was kept in Tihar jail and all sorts of persuasion and pressure were put on him for 'reconciliation' with the ruling party. He was released after thirteen months of detention to allow him to attend the assembly session of U.P. being leader of the opposition in the Vidhan Sabha. Little did the ruling party knew that it was as difficult to feed a lion on grass by keeping him hungry in a cage as to expect from a leader of Charan Singh's stuff and stature to denounce the high ideals of his life. The speech, he made in the U.P. assembly for about four hours was an eye opener to the ruling party, and it was a

hammer battering by him on the nefarious designs of the ruling party to prolong the Emergency and postpone the Elections which had become due in March 1976. It was too late to rectify the 'blunder' of releasing him from jail and re-arresting him on one pretext or another under MISA. Some of the important extracts of this historical speech of Charan Singh made on the floor of the U.P. Vidhan Sabha on 23rd March, 1976 in reply to the motion of thanks to the Governor's speech delivered at the opening of the Budget Session, are given in an other chapter of the book.

Charan Singh was the prime mover of the idea of a grand alliance which could provide a national political alternative to the Congress and which would put to an end to the one party dominant rule in India. The power had corrupted the congress party upto the extreme. It is worth quoting what Tennyson said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely".

While forming BKD. in 1967, Charan Singh had said that, "Every political system needs revolutionizing and only a revolutionary party like his Bhartiya Kranti Dal can bring about a change in the political system". The BKD fought 1969 mid-term poll in U.P. and captured 99 seats. Though the party failed to get absolute majority, yet it created sensation in the Ruling party which got only 208 seats, and failed to form its government for its failure to get absolute majority in the house of 425. So much was the impact of the newly formed BKD, and the hold of its president Charan Singh on the masses that about half a dozen ministers of the ruling party were defeated at the hands of unknown candidates, who were political non-entities until fighting on the BKD tickets. This was a major change in the electoral behaviors of the people of Uttar Pradesh which is considered to be an advanced State so far as the political awareness is concerned. The congress ministry fell soon after the first

Congress split. In February 1970, Charan Singh was persuaded to become Chief Minister with the help of the Congress party. Although a seasoned politician with a long record of good work done by him as a cabinet minister in U.P., he was outwitted by some unscrupulous political leaders of national standing. Earlier also Charan Singh had a bitter taste of heading SVD (coalition) Ministry in 1967, which could not survive even half of its term. The outcome of his ministry fall came true to the prediction made at the time of its installation. But one could see the design in the activities of the Congress Ministers who showed resentment over the stringent measures of the Chief Minister against the corrupt bureaucrats of his Government. Even his handling of the agrarian problems which was at variance with the policies of the Congress party. To give him jolt the Congress ingredient precipitated the crisis by writing to the Governor that they would withdraw their support to Charan Singh ministry. They went to the extent of submitting their resignation direct to the Governor — an action which was not only undemocratic but against the provisions of the Constitution. Charan Singh who had got the support of the M.L.A.s of the leftist parties, was prepared to face the Assembly, and requested the Governor to convene emergent session for testing his strength on the floor of the house. This was in accordance with constitutional propriety. His stand was found tenable by the legal and constitutional Pandits of the Country. But Charan Singh's ministry was dismissed by the Governor as an unusual precedents under instructions of the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The office of the Governor was alleged to have been misused for getting the desired report against Charan Singh ministry — a pretext to impose President's rule in the State. The most shameless act on the part of the Central Govt. was to send a special plane to Cairo with a senior

bureaucrat carrying the report of the U.P. Governor for the signature of the president. This unseemly haste to dismiss the ministry speaks volumes on the timid role of the Governor, not expected from the class by the founding fathers of the constitution. The indecent haste was intended to humiliate the strong man of UP Ch Charan Singh. It is a pity that most of the state Governors did not behave in a dignified and constitutional manner, rather some of them acted as the subordinate officials of the Home Ministry. More shocking was the misuse of the emergency powers of the President of India by Mrs. Gandhi who always saw to it that person 'elected' to this high office, did act only as a 'rubber stamp' of the Prime Minister to fulfill the evil designs of central leadership and Art.356 of the constitution was fully misused during the reign of Indira Gadhi. The details need not be given which may unnecessarily cast aspersion on some person (s) who occupied the highest office of the Country under the Indian Political System. Though the President is the Head of the state yet the Prime Minister is the Chief Executive of the Government and wields the power sometime reducing the position of the president to that of a rubber stamp only.

As discussed in this chapter earlier, Charan Singh was the main architect in uniting the different opposition parties into a single national party, i.e., the Janata Party. His cherished dream to provide a national alternative to the Congress Party was realized when the new party routed the Congress Party in parliamentary election held in early 1977 and bringing to an end the 30 years Congress rule which also was the beginning of the fall of the Nehru dynasty.

People were so much jubilant over the emergence of the Janata Party that it was felt that JP's cherished dream to bring a total revolution would be fulfilled, and the new government would

ameliorate the conditions of hungry millions.

Alas it was unfortunate that the party was not doing so well, and the infighting which started in the initial stage of the formation of the new Govt. and the alternative to the congress Govt. fell within 30 months. The monopoly press had been vociferously blaming Charan Singh for the disintegration of the Janta Party right from the beginning. Ranjit Roy wrote in the June issue of Sunday in 1977: "There are many within the Janta Party who believe that Charan Singh will even destroy the Janta Party if in turn he can become Prime Minister — the King". This kind of propaganda was intensified after his exit from the Union Ministry by the Janata leaders, who were not reconciled to the emergence of Charan Singh as a national leader. His rivals in the Congress Party, now recaptured by the Congress (Indira) — particularly after her return to parliament from Chikmagalur, were dead set against him. Day in and day out, the Indian press was blaming Charan Singh for the disintegration of the Janata Party and was predicting its capture by him. His postures, they said, are in way no different from those, he had shown at the time of the State Assemblies Elections in June 1977. He had withdrawn his letter from the Election Commission of India in protest for allowing the BLD Symbol to be used as the symbol of Janata Party which by then, had not been recognized as a political party. The Nav Bharat Times quoted Charan Singh as saying, "Janata Party is not the property of anyone's father, and if it is so, then it is that of our father".

Such pernicious propaganda was carried on by the press with the sole aim of teaching Charan Singh a lesson, and force him out of the Janata Party. On the other hand, Charan Singh, who was the main architect of the Janata Party, has reiterated that he would not leave the party. How can he hew the tree whose

sapling he himself had planted with fond hopes not long ago? It was just sheer helplessness that he said, "I will not leave the Janata Party unless I am expelled from it". This propaganda had been blasted by the founding father of the Janata party by his firm determination not to rejoin the Janata Govt. If there was any danger of the party's disintegration, he would work for its unification. It was with this determination that he agreed to become the party president at the suggestion of Chandra Shekhar, who declared his readiness in favour of Charan Singh. Chandra Shekhar thought that only Charan Singh could take the sinking ship of the Janata Party out of the crisis. But the business lobby led by C.B.Gupta, came out openly to settle old score with Charan Singh. Gupta could hardly forget the toppling of his Ministry in 1967 within a month of its assuming office in U.P. Not yet reconciled with Charan Singh, he avenged himself by scuttling the move of unity in the Janata party by installation of Charan Singh as the chief of the Party. It is again an irony of fate that a man, who sacrificed all the genuine claims of the biggest constituent party (BLD) by merging it into the Janata Party, was blamed for its disintegration. The author feels that Janata Party would not have disintegrated though it was probable that it might have to sit in the opposition after the next election of the Parliament. But the Janata Party disintegrated sooner and divided into its earlier fragments than was expected by the Indian people & the ghost of Janata Party still haunts the mind of the Indian electorates whenever such an alliance seeks votes to become the alternative of Congress at the Centre or the states. The experiment failed miserably. Another reason was that the Janata Govt failed to bring social change by not implementing the radical economic measures, suggested by Charan Singh, duly approved as the blueprint of the Janata Government's

economic Policy in 1977.

The people and a Party look forward for the day when a real leader of Charan Singh or sardar patel or subash calibre comes to the helm of affairs in the government by becoming the Prime Minister. He alone can deliver goods by faithfully implementing the Janata Govt. programme like Anantyaodaya, Gram Raj through cottage industries etc. As true champion of the rural poor, he alone was the ray of hope for the neglected millions. In this context, it may be pointed out the Charan Singh had rightly refuted the allegation that he had formed the BKD to meet his personal ambition of becoming the Chief Minister of U.P. as is clear from his letter given below:

From  
Charan Singh

Camp:  
U.P.Niwas,  
New Delhi  
Dated 8-1-1977

*My dear Indira Ji,*

This letter was written on December 30, but is being sent to you as late as on January 8, because I was uncertain whether it would serve any useful purpose.

A Samachar report of the speech, you made on December 23 in a training camp, organised by the National Institute of Social Studies and Research, set up by the AICC, carried the following two paragraphs :

There had been other division in the Congress, some of them due to autocratic methods of 'Congress bosses'. Almost every state had a party boss.

However, in some states, parties were formed for no idealistic reason but because of personal rivalry. She cited the example of Mr.Charan Singh in U.P. who had formed the BKD

on a 'very personal matter' that he should be the Chief Minister.

Now, this is not being exactly correct, and I feel you were less than fair to me. In fact, on an earlier occasion, during the course of an interview to a foreign correspondent (I have not got the exact reference with me just now) you had been pleased to say that I, as also Ajoy Mukherji of West Bengal, otherwise good men and true, had to leave the Congress because we were not allowed to work by those who held the State Congress Leadership in their hands. While one does not know which version of your own statements you consider to be really correct, a bare recital of events will reveal that I did not leave the Congress because I wanted to be the Chief Minister, but because a breach of faith had been committed.

In the general elections to the U.P. Assembly in 1967, Congress had gained only 198 seats as compared to 227 of the Opposition parties put together. Unable to agree amongst themselves on the choice of a leader, the Opposition parties urged upon me more than once to shoulder the responsibility. With my support at the time, the strength of the Opposition would have swollen to 275 or so, but I refused, and said I had no intention of leaving the Congress.

When a few days later, a meeting for election of leader of the Congress Legislature Party was convened, I offered myself as a candidate along with Shri C.B.Gupta.

You sent two prominent confidants of yours, viz., Sarvshri Umashanker Dikshit and Dinesh Singh to Lucknow with a view to persuade me to step down in favour of Shri C.B.Gupta so that the later might be elected unopposed, for reasons which were obvious.

After much persuasion, I agreed not only to retire from the contest, but also proposed Shri Gupta's name, instead. The only

condition I had attached, and which your two emissaries agreed to, in presence of several prominent Congressmen, was that, atleast, two members of the then state Cabinet, out of many who in my opinion, did not enjoy a good reputation, might be dropped and at least, two new persons included. Instead, Shri C.B.Gupta was elected unopposed on March 8. As Chief Minister designate of Uttar Pradesh which contributed the largest contingent of MPs he was able to bring about a compromise between you and Shri Morarji Desai on March 11 or 12, Your cabinet was sworn in, on March-13. Shri Gupta sent up the names of his team to the Governor the next day. The list included my name, but I refused to join, because none had been included or excluded as had been agreed upon between Sarvshri Umashanker Dikshit and Dinesh Singh, on one hand, and me, on the other, only a week earlier. Shri Gupta argued that he was not a party to the agreement.

Shri Dikshit saw me again in Lucknow on March 17, and said, he would talk things over with Shri Gupta and let me know. But he never turned up. Shri Dinesh Singh told me on telephone that he will be reaching Lucknow on March 31 to ensure that their word was honoured. I told him that he should not fall because the Assembly which was in session, was scheduled to disperse on April 1. Like Shri Dikshit, however, Shri Singh also failed to turn up.

When contacted on phone at about 11.30 PM in the night, he said he did not reach Lucknow because the other party did not welcome his inter-cession and that I was free to do as I pleased. It was upon this that I decided to leave the Congress, and so declared it the next day on the floor of the Assembly.

When you or your confidants realized the consequences of my leaving the party, a gentleman on the staff of the National

Herald, Lucknow, which was being managed by Shri Dikshit, and a prominent Congressmen of Pratapgarh which was the home district of Shri Dinesh Singh, saw me, one after the other, at my residence the same evening. They suggested, "I return to Congress as its Chief Minister". I replied that, in view of all that had happened, I could not possibly accept the offer.

If truth has not fled the human habitations completely, Shri Uma Shanker Dikshit and Shri Dinesh Singh will bear testimony to what I have said about their role in the affair.

While the failure to carry out an assurance, so solemnly given, proved the last straw on the camel's back, certain ideological differences between me and congress leadership had already begun developing, particularly, since the Congress session of Nagpur held in January, 1959. I had strongly opposed the official resolution regarding introduction of Cooperative Farming and State Trading in Foodgrains. Pandit Nehru was greatly displeased which led to certain decisions in the politics of Uttar Pradesh that would have, otherwise, not been taken.

To confine myself to ideology: I wrote a book containing my views on the economy Problems of the country which was published in 1960. A revised edition appeared in 1962 under a different title. I had sent a copy to you (the then President of AICC) and to Panditji also. I had pleaded that it was not an economy of huge joint farms but of small independent farms, inter-linked by service cooperatives, that suited our conditions: that, while non-agricultural development was a condition precedent to improvement in our living standard, it could not be brought about without prior or, at least, simultaneous development of agriculture: that as amongst industries, subject to certain exceptions, cottage and small-scale enterprises should get the pride of place; that all our efforts aimed at economic improvement will fail

unless growth of population was checked; that, our country will make no progress unless there is a transformation in our social and economic attitudes, etc.— views, policies or programme inspired by Gandhiji's approach to our economic problems which are all incorporated in BKD's manifestoes of 1969, 1971 and 1974.

I feel flattered by the fact that many an idea contained in our manifestoes, has now been borrowed by other parties and political leaders.

It will not be out of place to mention here that, right since 1947, I had been expressing my concern over the failure of Congress leadership to contain corruption, both political and administrative. There are various notes and letters which will testify to this concern of mine. My efforts met with little success. That is why eradication of corruption and the need of a clean administration, occupied the first place in all our manifestoes and policy statements.

Do not the above mentioned facts reveal that BKD came into existence not 'because of personal rivalry or a very personal matter' of mine, but for idealistic reasons? If I left or was prepared to leave the Congress merely in order to become a Chief Minister, I could have done so a month earlier, far before the Congress could form its own government and when I and my supporters ran little or no risks.

Had my steps not been guided by public interest and/or had BKD not been sustained by an ideology, it would not have survived, resourceless as it was, particularly, in view of the means and methods of fighting elections and securing defections which Congress has been employed in an organised manner since 1970.

The assessment of my conduct as a public man which

you want to convey to the people, would be incomplete unless yet another relevant factor was simultaneously born in mind. You will remember that you were scheduled to preside over the annual session of the Indian Science Congress in Varanasi on January 3, 1968. The local unit of the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) which was a powerful organisation at the time, decided to take you in custody and produce you before a people's court for trial. They announced their intentions through a public meeting as also press statements. Though SSP was a constituent unit of my government and had a strength of 45 members in the Assembly and though I was the head of a non-Congress government I took personal interest in the arrangements made for your visit and accompanied you to Varanasi. Under my orders, Shri Raj Narain M.P and other prominent workers and legislators of SSP were put behind the bars and a massive demonstration against you trying to reach the Pandal where you were addressing the Science Congress, was broken up by the police. Whereas, on the other hand, the President of the UP Pradesh Congress Committee who belonged to Varanasi, and is now a member of your government, had not the moral courage to denounce the SSP whether by way of a press statement or a public meeting.

The SSP was furious. I knew the consequences of my conduct from the start, and resigned on February 17 — a day before the Assembly was scheduled to meet. I did what I thought was right, that is, to uphold the dignity of the institution of the Prime Minister in democratic India.

While I had to resign from the Congress at the time I did, owing to a failure on your part to do the right thing or get right thing done, I had to resign from the office of Chief Minister for doing the right thing for you.

Had I rated the office of Chief Minister so high that it could lure me into resigning from Congress, in whose embrace or service I had spent a life time, I would not have staked it so recklessly as actually I did. On the contrary, I would have clung to it by all possible devices. Nor would I have offered to resign as twice before I did, viz., in August 1967 and December 1967 when I thought the attitude of my colleagues militated against public interest. Those who consider a high political office not as a means but as an end in itself, or rate it above every other consideration, are seen and known to behave differently.

To conclude : the two paragraphs of which I complain, had received wide publicity in the press. This amounts to 'character assassination' of the kind you speak of in your letter to Shri Ashok Mehta, dated December 23 last. People ignorant of facts are likely to run away with opinions which are unwarranted. But I know I have no remedy left, for, the press is not likely to publish anything in refutation of your statements. I write to you only for record.

With regards,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
Charan Singh

*Smt. Indira Gandhi,*  
Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

# III

## CHARAN SINGH

### AND

## HARIJANS

When asked to explain his views on caste system and untouchability, Charan Singh said, "I think the root causes of the social evil are the weak political leadership, and the gradual decline in our love for our own culture. It is the political leadership which decides the policy and unless the political leadership is strong, it is not possible to achieve the desired ends. For example, think of the policy of the Government towards the Christian Missionaries. Arya Samaj wanted to send its own missionaries to counter the impact of the Christian missionaries in Assam and Nagaland in the early thirties but the Congress leadership then was hesitant to take any step in this regard. The number of such missionaries was 2300 in the early thirties and it went upto 4700 in the early fifties. In the last few years, Pakistan, Burma and Sri Lanka have forced these missionaries to stop their work in their respective countries. I then discussed this matter with the Prime Minister as I felt that we should also discourage the expansion of these missionaries but with our best efforts, we have not been able to reduce their number to about less than 3800. Similar is the case in dealing with the other minorities".

He further said, "The party leadership remains very much under the regional, communal and group pressures, which do

not allow any Government to act forcefully. This weakness of the political leadership is the result of our present political system where the Prime Minister or the State Chief Ministers are elected by the majority of the members of the ruling party or the coalition. This can be rectified, to some extent, by changing over to Presidential system of Government".

In France, the administrative machinery came to a standstill with frequent changes in the Governments. Effective Government could not be formed until Gen. De-Gaulle became the Prime Minister who changed the political system of his country and adopted the presidential form of Govt and brought the shaking French democracy on a sound footing by making drastic changes in the constitution. Though Gen. De-Gaulle is no more, yet the French government became stable and the form of government that emerged restored its prestigious place among world powers." Expressing his anguish, Charan Singh said , "I have been alleged as an anti-Harijan. It is mere propaganda being carried over decades by the persons with vested interests, and surprisingly enough it is the elite among the Harijans who are responsible for this campaign and character assassination. You will be further surprised to know that in Western UP it is propagated that it is inhabited by the majority of the Jats, whereas the fact is that their population is at No.5 first four being — the Harijans, Muslims, Brahmins and Rajputs. This can be verified from the census report. But even such a solid fact has been distorted only to keep the anti-Charan Singh bogey alive. Again, you look at the propaganda against the farmers. According to the 1970 census, 56% of the farming community is having less than one hectare of land, and they are not even the marginal farmers but merely small farmers, and their lot is as good or bad as that of their Harijan brethren. But there is always

a talk of the land-ceiling and for the enacting of land ceiling act. I just ask when their own man was the Agriculture minister for about 5-6 years why did he not initiate the land ceiling bill?"

"I ask them to compare UP Zamindari Abolition Act to any of the progressive reforms of the land, including Kerala Land Reform Act, passed by the Communist Government, and you will notice what I have done for these Harijans, who were the tenants and sub-tenants of the land owned by big zamindars. They were able to get the ownership rights because of this legislation passed under my stewardship. Whatever I have done as a Chief Minister for the small farmers, artisans and labourers in the villages, is well-known to leaders of the Harijans but to exploit the illiterate masses in the villages, they always brand me as an anti-Harijan, and do not hesitate to revive the anti-Charan Singh bogey. Even though had I been born in the community of the small and marginal farmers, they would have kept this bogey alive to serve their own ends till the close of my earthly career. It is not that they brand farmers as anti-Harijans but they make it a point to brand me as an anti-Harijan and unfortunately we cannot stop this malicious propaganda, unless there is a complete awakening among the farming community and the Harijans. In fact, the Harijan leadership is doing more harm to their brethren in the villages than anybody else. Earlier, Shri Jagivan Ram incited the Harijans to be prepared for a bloody revolution, and you must have read about it in the press. This is his first open outburst against the farmers. He knew the implications, and the likely repercussions of this slogan. A bloody revolution by the Harijans implies a blood bath for them since the farming communities are equally ignorant and illiterate and as such can easily fall a prey to their social and political exploitations. I had requested the Prime Minister to ask the Harijan leaders to remain

within their limit, and not to raise such slogan as may accentuate bitterness between the farming community and the Harijans." It is like Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Muslim League who fanned the anti-Hindu feelings among the Muslims when they raised the slogan of Pakistan and that slogan had plunged the sub-continent into a blood bath and the Muslims (rather the illiterate and poor Muslims) suffered as much as the Hindus but the leaders of the Muslim League won the ministerial gaddi, when ultimately they got only a 'truncated Pakistan', to fulfil their narrow vested interests.

"To my mind, the solution of this evil lies in the change of heart of the Harijan leadership, which is doing maximum harm to the cause of Harijan welfare by disturbing communal harmony in the villages to meet their own selfish ends. It is an historical fact that there was no dissension among the Harijans and the farmers in spite of the worst evil of 'untouchability' in the pre-partition days, right upto early sixties. The trouble started when the aspirations of their political leaders crossed all magnitudes, and in releasing them, they even resorted to the nefarious act of inciting the poor, illiterate and down-trodden Harijans of India. There was hardly any necessity of inciting them. There is hardly any necessity of inciting them to achieve their rights through a bloody revolution. The fight of the Harijans should be against their extreme poverty. There is no actual exploitation of their lot by any other community. If it is there, it is their own leaders who are responsible for doing them harm by exploiting them for their selfish ends".

Charan Singh was brought up in an Arya Samajist family, and he himself was a true Arya Samaji not only in theory but in actual practice. Since his childhood, he had been doing 'Sandhya' regularly and he believes in the famous principles of the Arya

Samaj of having a classless and casteless society. Like his religious Guru Swamy Dayanand, he was an ardent fighter against untouchability. To set an example he kept a Harijan as his cook in 1932. Even today it is a Christian girl, who prepares the meal of the much maligned lover of the underdogs, Ch. Charan Singh's family.

He was the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Meerut District Arya Samaj which organised its Half-Century celebrations, on the eve of the 'Nirman' of Maharishi Dayanand throughout India in 1929. In his presidential address on this occasion Charan Singh said that Swami Dayanand said "By acknowledging merit alone as the criterion of superiority or Brahminhood and not birth. He tried to solve the problem of social inequality, which is eating into the very vitals of the Hindu polity. He championed the cause of woman, and granted her equal rights with man and in this respect he went close to Budha. Rishi Dayanand made Herculean efforts in the direction of educational reform also. He proclaimed the principle of compulsory education, and revived the long forgotten ideal of Gurukul, where the children of high and low may prosecute their studies on an equal footing, away from the corrupting influences of town life and blessed by the living personality of the teacher".

Paying tribute to Swami Dayanand, Charan Singh Said, "He was a born fighter and when it was a question of principles, he never knew to yield. He called a spade a spade, come what may. Expediency he did not cultivate, compromise he never made.

In him there was no sycophancy or toadyism. His mighty voice and passionate eloquence raised thousands from lethargic indifference and stupor into active puritanism, ready to face like their Master all kinds of persecution even upto death. His life-

long zeal in the cause of Arya regeneration, his ardent love for the grand philosophy of our forefathers, his relentless enthusiasm in the work of religious and social reforms threw a bombshell in the midst of stagnant masses of degenerated Hinduism, and he filled with love the hearts of all those who were drawn within the influence of his personal magnetism. He lit a fire which has inspired an army of religious, social and political workers throughout the length and breadth of the country and which, let us hope, will continue to inspire untold generations yet to come. We shall not forget him so soon and by collecting in lakhs at Ajmer, we shall conclusively prove that the fire, that Dayanand kindled, is still burning".

Finally he asked his fellow Arya Samajis to follow the path shown by Swamiji:-

"To Ajmer therefore we should have to offer our humble need of praise, honour and 'shraddha' to that redoubtable sanyasi whose clarion call first awakened us from the sleep of ages. Swami Dayanand, mad with wine of Aryan culture, we shall pay our tribute of respect ungrudgingly and in full measure.

"His renunciation was unique in the history of mankind. His passionate search for truth led him to forsake his hearth and home in early youth and to the last he lived a life of unexampled purity. His aditya brahmacharya, his learning, his firm resolution, his fearlessness, his living and unparalleled faith in God and the righteousness of his cause—well these were things that made him an irresistible force. His dynamic personality compelled the admiration of those unbelievers who came to scoff, remained to pray. He lived, worked and died for us; how are we to discharge his indebtedness? Certainly by walking on the path that he trod, by doing the work that was dear to his heart, by propagating the Vedic Dharma for which he gave his life-blood and by becoming

true Aryans that he loved us to see. For all this we require to be inspired by the example of the Rishi himself; we need to get together at Ajmer, that we may, in a body, draw fresh energy from that power-house. At Ajmer we shall take stock of our achievements and resources. Thereafter, God willing, launch an all comprehensive drive against the growing tide of atheism that threatens to engulf the bound generation of Bharatvarsha”.

In may 1954, he wrote to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, about his suggestion for the removal of untouchability and to fight the evil of casteism by encouraging inter caste marriages. Turning it down Nehru said, we should not try to compel people by constitutional provisions and rules to marry outside their castes because this seems to me to offend against basic principle of individual freedom. Marriage is very much a personal affair and this takes it out of the old rut of conventions and customs. What you suggest is definitely a retrograde step from that point of view, although it is meant to encourage a desirable tendency”.

“ We have to create conditions otherwise. The special marriage Bill is one such step. Other steps should also follow. Ultimately people marry those, who more or less fit in with their way of thinking and living. Indeed any other marriage is a misfit and any imposition from above is likely to lead to disaster in so far as the married couple are concerned. I cannot bring myself to think of the choice of marriage being controlled by legislation or by inducements offered”. This is the sharp contrast to Charan Singh's views. This shows the concern of Charan Singh to eradicate the evil of casteism which, according to him, has eaten the very vitals of our nation.

Arya Samaj had a resolution in its Mahasammelan at Rewari, requesting people to adopt inter-caste and inter-religion

marriages. Charan Singh had very rightly written in his letter referred to above as follows:-

"When caste Hindus could not accord equal treatment to their own co-religionists lower down in the social scale, Muslims rightly apprehended that, after the Britishers had left, they would not get a fair deal from the Hindus who formed a vast majority in the country as a whole. All this is now a matter of past history.

I make to offer a bold suggestion, which I have been recommending in a feeble way in my own sphere for the last six years or so. In modern times caste comes in the life of an individual only at the time of marriage. So, if the evil has to be tackled successfully, steps have to be taken which will rob the caste of its relevance or significance in marriage. That is, the evil has to be tackled at the source. While laying down rules for recruitment to Services, we prescribe all sorts of qualifications in order to ensure that a man, fit and suitable for the job alone gets in. These qualifications have only his mind and body in view. But there is no test laid down to measure his heart — to find out how large his sympathies are, whether he will be able to act impartially, whether his heart is big enough to contain all those with whom he will have to deal in the course of his official duties, etc. In my opinion, in the conditions of our country, this test will be fulfilled in a large measure if we require the candidates at least, for gazetted jobs in the first instance, to marry outside the narrow circle of their own caste. By enacting such a provision, we will not be compelling anybody to marry against his wish, just as we do not compel anybody to become a graduate, which is the educational qualification required for many a Government job. It will not at all be difficult to secure such young men in adequate numbers. Today young boys and girls receiving education in our colleges are all prepared for this step. I would lay down the same

qualification of the marriage being an inter-caste will apply only to marriages that take place after a certain date, say, 1st January, 1955".

He has further emphasized his point by quoting Rajaji. He was very hopeful that the evil of casteism would have been set aside within a period of ten years.

"If an article to this intent is inserted in the constitution, India's greatest social evil and, to use Rajaji's aphorism, India's Enemy No. 1, would have been laid to rest within a period of ten years. The country will never become strong unless caste is rooted out. And this consummation will never be accomplished, unless the State intervenes, and strikes at the source. Otherwise, some day the fire of mutual suspicion and hatred, which the caste system has kindled for centuries now, will have consumed the country to ashes as surely and imperceptibly as night follows day".

Charan Singh firmly believed that national integration could best be achieved if the inter-caste and inter-religion marriages are encouraged either by giving incentive by the Government or by making certain provision under Law to give preferential treatment to the young people who would enter into such wedlocks as has been pointed out in the above paras.

Seeing Charan Singh's Arya Samajist background, and the liberal customs among the Jats it can be said that his approach is not unnatural and does not come in the way of his suggestions. Why should these marriages not be successful if there is a change of heart among the youths and their parents? Indian people have now realized the importance of Charan Singh's ideas and it was hoped that with his influence in the Government and the party, he would be able to execute his plan, which was turned down a quarter of century ago by Pt. Nehru.

Lok Nayak J.P. while addressing the people of Delhi on 25th June, 1975 — his last speech in Delhi before arrest on the day the Emergency was clamped — said in a choked voice, full of sentiments, "If Jayaprakash Narayan is a traitor, who is the patriot in this country". Similarly it will be no exaggeration to say, "If Charan Singh is a casteist who in India is a non-casteist?" Below is presented in his own words his view on casteism; the letters exchanged between him and Pt. Nehru are self-explanatory:

### ON CASTEISM AND JATPAN

From

Charan Singh

Lucknow - 2

May 22, 1954

My dear Pandit Ji,

It is after a long time and with great hesitation indeed, that I write this letter to you.

As you have so often emphasized in your speeches, India fell a slave to foreign aggression solely due to our social weaknesses, rather than due to any superiority of the foreigners in numbers, resources, valour or culture. This is admitted even by an English historian in his book, "Expansion of England". This truth may or may not be obvious to the people at large, but is brought home almost daily to those entrusted with public affairs. Of these weaknesses, viz., religious and linguistic differences and the caste system based on birth, I regard the last as the greatest single cause of our political subjugation for centuries. It is also largely responsible for partition of the country. When caste Hindus could not accord equal treatment to their own co-religionists lower down in the social scale, Muslims rightly apprehended that, after the Britishers had left, they will not get

a fair deal from the Hindus, who formed a vast majority in the country as a whole. All this is now a matter of past history.

The regret, however, is that we seem to have learnt no lessons. The caste feeling, instead of being on the decline, is on the increase obviously owing to advent of democracy and the scramble for jobs. Not only has it invaded the highest reaches of our public life, but has affected the services also. It leads to acts of discrimination and injustice, warps and narrows a man's mind and heart and creates a vicious circle of accusation and counter-accusation, distrust and suspicion in society. Lately, it has become a weapon of political vendetta.

The question remains: how to eradicate it. Attempts have been made by Teacher and Reformers since the times of Gautam Buddha, but to no avail. I make bold to offer a suggestion, which I have been recommending in a feeble way in my own sphere for the last six years or so. In modern times, caste comes in the life of an individual only at the time of marriage. So, if the evil has to be tackled successfully, steps have to be taken which will rob the caste of its relevance or significance in marriage. That is, the evil has to be tackled at the source. While laying down rules for recruitment to Services, we prescribe all sorts of qualifications in order to ensure that a man, fit and suitable for the job alone gets it. These qualification have only his mind and body in view. But there is no test laid down to measure his heart — to find out how large his sympathies are, whether he will be able to act impartially, whether his heart is big enough to contain all those with whom he will have to deal in the course of his official duties, etc. In my opinion, in a large measure if we require the candidates at, least, for gazzetted jobs in the first instance, to marry outside the narrow circle of their own caste, by enacting such a provision we will not be compelling anybody to

marry against his wish, just as we do not compel anybody to become a graduate today, which is the education qualification, required for many a Government job. It will not at all be difficult to secure such young men in adequate numbers. Today young boy and girl receiving education in our colleges are all prepared for this step. I would lay down the same qualification of the marriage being an inter-caste will apply only to marriages that take place after a certain date, say, 1st January, 1955. An unmarried man will be free to enter the services under the Union we may say that marriage in a different linguistic groups will entitle a candidate to a preference claim. This will be all the more desirable inasmuch as linguistic States do not offend the feelings even of orthodox people, for 'anulom' marriages have been sanctified by our Shastras also. In effect, we will be converting the present-day castes into so many gotras and discouraging a man's marriage in the gotra of his father.

If an article to this intent is inserted in the constitution, India's greatest social evil and, to use Raja Ji's aphorism, India's Enemy No.1, would have been laid to rest within a period of ten years. The country will never become strong unless caste is rooted out. And this consummation will never be accomplished, unless the State intervenes, and strikes at the source. Otherwise, some day the fire of mutual suspicion and hatred, which the caste system has kindled for centuries now, will have consumed the country to ashes as surely and imperceptibly as night follows day.

I hope my suggestion will not sound fantastic to you. Men like me know from experience what it means to be born in castes other than those which are regarded or regard themselves as privileged. The contemptuous treatment that is meted out, and the social discrimination that attaches by virtue of mere birth, to

members of such castes has often led to mass desertions or conversions to other faiths, not only amongst those occupying the lowest rungs of the ladder but also amongst others. For example, only in the Punjab during a period of forty years, viz., from 1891 to 1931, fifty-six per cent of Hindu Jats, finding, inter alia, that they were looked down by their co religionists, that is, for reasons other than spiritual, left the fold of their ancestors for good.

There will certainly be great opposition to the proposed amendment, but if you are determined to see it through, the opposition will melt away in no time. According to my reading of the situation, the proposal will receive a greater welcome amongst the educated sections than certain provisions of the Hindu Code Bill.

Whatever be the obstacles, if an amendment of the constitution on these lines can be secured, it will, according to my little mind, be a service to the country of equal import with the attainment of Swaraj. Then alone and not till then, will foundations of our stability have been truly laid;

With respects,

I am Your  
Charan Singh

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru,  
Prime Minister, India,  
New Delhi.

From  
Jawaharlal Nehru

Camp: The Retreat,  
Mashobra, Simla.  
May 27, 1954.

My dear Charan Singh,

Thank you for your letter of May 22nd.

You know that I attach the greatest importance to the ending of the caste system. I think, this is certainly the biggest weakening factor in our society. I also agree with you that finally caste will not go till inter-caste marriages are not unusual and are looked upon as something which is quite normal. I would go further and say that there will be no real unity in the country till our prejudice against marriages between people of different religions also does not go.

But to say, as you do, that we should try to compel people by constitutional provisions and rules to marry outside their castes seems to me to offend against basic principle of individual freedom. Marriage is very much a personal affair and this is to take it out of the old ruts of conventions and customs. What you suggest is definitely a retrograde step from that point of view, although it is meant to encourage a desirable tendency.

We have to create conditions otherwise. The Special Marriage Bill is one such step. Other steps should also follow. Ultimately people marry those, who more or less fit in with their way of thinking and living. Indeed any other marriage is a misfit and any imposition from above is likely to lead to disaster in so far as the married couple are concerned. I cannot bring myself to think of the choice of marriage being controlled by legislation or by inducements offered.

Shri Charan Singh,  
Minister, U.P. Government,

Yours sincerely,

Lucknow.

Jawahar Lal Nehru.

From

Charan Singh

Lucknow,

October 6, 1958.

My dear Pandit Ji,

This is with reference to a remark that you were pleased to make when I saw you the other day in New Delhi. You said that you did not like the 'JATPAN' (Jatism) that I had exhibited in my handling of the Congress affairs of Meerut District.

I do not know what you had in mind. The facts, however, are that, owing to consistent propaganda carried on against the caste system in Meerut by me, politically the most prominent Jat of the district, since I entered public life, sometimes against great odds and at great risk. The Jat community votes on non-sectarian lines in far greater proportion than any other in Meerut. As, perhaps, you yourself will testify, Meerut District, is the strongest bastion of Congress in the western parts of Uttar Pradesh and I should be pardoned if I claim some credit for it.

Although the Jats far outnumber any other caste (except, perhaps, the Chamars), they contributed only three members out of 22. And all these legislators were set up as Congress candidates at my suggestion. The Vaishyas, the Tyagis and the Brahmins have all received higher representation than their numerical strength warrants as compared with the Jats. I can say with confidence that there is not a single district in the State in which the most dominant community has got such low representation in the legislature as the Jats of Meerut. And there is not a single act in public life which can be laid at my door for my being a Jat. Yet Panditji, in your eyes and in those of many others, the fact of my having been born in a Jat peasant's home is so

prominent. Why?

The reason is not far to seek. When the charge of inefficiency, want of ability, sloth or lack of will to work hard, want of character in the widest possible term, or unpopularity, cannot be made against me, the best method of beating a dog is to give him a bad name which will stick and stick without enquiry.

In the campaign of vilification, Jats come out badly. For example, the propaganda that certain quarters carried on at the time of re-organisation of States in 1954-55 that the proposed Delhi State will be a 'Jatistan' went on uncontradicted, although it was a lie. They are un-educated, live in villages, have no pull in the public, economic or administrative life of the country, and yet would not reconcile themselves to an inferior position in the society. So they would not put up with the taunt of being a 'Jat' that the term in influential urban circles has come to signify. With the result that 56 per cent of the Hindu Jats in the Punjab within a short period of 40 years (1891-1931) left their old faith to turn Sikhs or Muslims so that nobody could any longer treat them with contempt. This desertion or conversion contributed largely to the demand for the Punjabee Sooba.

Our caste-system based on birth has been singly the most potent cause of our political subjugation for centuries and the partition of the country. But it would seem that we have not yet learnt any lesson from history. For, people holding important positions in public life all over the country, are not able to rise above this weakness even today.

In April 1954, I wrote a longer letter to you suggesting amendment of the Constitution to the effect that no young man in the future will be allowed to enter the ranks of a gazzetted service in the States (or, in the Centre) unless he married or intends to marry outside his caste (or in a linguistic group other

than his own). You did not agree.

I hope you will pardon me for writing in the strain I have done. I was greatly pained and had communicated my feelings to Panditji who, I believe, has already spoken to you in this regard.

With respects,

I am Yours  
Charan Singh

Shri Jawarhar Lal Nehru,  
Prime Minister, India,  
New Delhi.

From  
Jawarhar Lal Nehru  
Prime Minister's House,  
New Delhi.  
October 10, 1958.

Dear Charan Singh,

I have your letter of October 6.

When I used the word 'Japan' in my talk with you, I was not thinking of caste or anything like it. What I had in mind was a certain toughness on group lines. The group need not be Jat or any caste group.

As far Jats, I have always liked them very much and admired many qualities in them. There is no question of a taunt about the word in my mind.

Yours sincerely  
Jawarharlal Nehru.

Shri Charan Singh  
Minister, U.P. Government,  
Lucknow.

# IV

## “A TRUE GANDHIAN”

The political philosophy of Chaudhary Charan Singh to a great extent is moulded in gandhian pattern. His ideas on agriculture, industry, de-centralization, casteism, corruption and uplift of the down-trodden in many ways tally with the Gandhiji's ideas. Swami Dayanand and Mahatma Gandhi have left great impact on his thought and life. Another is believed to be his wife Gaytri Devi to whom he was especially devoted. His steadfastness and fearless approach reminds us to the late Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel.

His simplicity, purity of thought and devotion to work will remain emulable ideals for ever. He spent his youth in the struggle for the independence of the country, and his mature years to safeguard it. He was an uncrowned king of Indian peasantry.

Charan Singh belongs to the sturdy race of jats who smell of earth and sweat. Speaking his language, he looked like a common man. He has headed successively two parties — The Bhartiya Kranti Dal and The Bhartiya Lok Dal. In spite of this he was until recently known merely as the leader of UP. He became twice Chief Minister of UP the largest State of India — first by revolting against the central leadership of the Congress Party in 1967 and again in 1969 when he formed the ministry of BKD with the support of the Congress.

Jailed thrice, he first courted arrest in Salt Satyagraha in

1932. In 1940 he went to prison for his participation in individual Satyagraha, and was arrested in 'Quit India' movement in 1942. Then came the Emergency of 1975, and he was detained under MISA by Mrs. Gandhi's Govt. and was lodged in Tihar jail for about a year. Though for long UP remained the field of his political activity, later the horizon of his field work covered the whole country. He covered the entire way from U.P. to Delhi by his own efforts, and his honesty. He was not merely a preacher of Gandhian thought but its practitioner also.

Like Gandhiji, he preferred solutions to socio-economic problems that are based on indigenous experience, and relate directly to the lives of eighty percent who live in villages. It is this approach that aroused the greatest antagonism among those whose concept of progress and life-style have been borrowed from the West (including the Soviet Union). Even those who find no serious flaw in his reasoning feared that his ideal, if followed would 'set the clock back'.

He believed that the Congress ruined the country by the deliberate neglect of agriculture and by pampering industry. One does not know if he goes as far as Lohiaites — like Raj Narain and George Fernandes — in belittling the work of Pt. Nehru. Ram Manohar Lohia said that Panditji's contribution to the Nation was zero. It is however, clear that he holds Pt. Nehru responsible for the undue importance given to heavy industry.

The Father of the Nation had sought to give first priority to agriculture, accompanied by cottage industry or handicrafts followed by light or small-scale industry and then heavy industry. In the ideal society of Gandhiji, there will be a federation of more or less self-sufficing and self-governing Satyagrahi village communities. As Gandhiji said, "a society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary

cooperation is the condition of dignified peaceful co-existence. The federation like the co-operatives will obviously be organized on a voluntary basis".

"The individual will acquire complete self-control, and will be aware of spiritual reality, will live a life of simplicity and renunciation. In such type of democratic rural communities", he said, "every village will be a republic or Panchayat with full powers". Gandhiji did not believe in utopianism. He did not give a detailed blueprint of the ideal social order. His main concern was the purity of the means in shaping the present in the light of the goal fixed for attainment. He said, "If there is to be a republic of every village in India, then, I claim veracity for my picture in which the last is equal to the first not the last". To Gandhiji "The end is the greatest good of all". He believed that end can be realized only in the classless and stateless democracy of autonomous village communities, based on non-violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisition and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralization. Non-violent nationalism will be cooperative and constructive and will be an integral part of universal humanity instead of being exclusive, competitive and militants; and conflicts will be resolved, not on the physical plane of brute force but on the spiritual plane of love.

In Gandhian Swarajya 'Nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due to the common goal. No one is superior, and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a Govt. for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred."

Gandhiji said that unequal distribution of wealth in society leads to discontent, jealousy and social distinction. In countries like India, the problem of unemployment has become more

serious. Khadi can provide to the unemployed people work in their own homes, which may enable them to earn their living. Thus Gandhiji laid great stress on household or cottage industries; spinning, weaving of Khadi, production of oil in hand mills, manual husking of rice and hand-milling of wheat include some of the industries which have been extensively experimented upon. It puts an end to unemployment and ensures equitable distribution of wealth. The economics of home industries is reverse to capitalism. Cottage industries provides us with a solution, a solution of our poverty, they are an integral part of our culture, which Gandhiji had proclaimed as a means of bringing lasting peace and happiness to the world.

Charan Singh was of the opinion that Independent India inherited four problems — poverty, unemployment, underdevelopment, wide disparities in personal income and attitudes mitigating against hard work — born out of a long tradition of foreign or minority rule. A fifth had been added, viz, corruption of every possible form in both political and administrative areas. India's present plight stems largely from a grievous choice, made after independence to go immediately for 'Industrialisation'.

But Gandhiji's ideas were merely rejected by his heir, who adopted policies of prestige which did not in the least correspond to the internal situation. The Indian National Congress under the leadership of the Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru formally turned socialist overnight at its annual session held at Avadi in January 1955, where big industrial units, the expansion of the public sector, became the craze with public workers, and regarded as a sign of progress in the country.

If Indian economy has not been more successful than it has actually been, it is because they have not kept so close as they should have been to the fundamentals of the teachings of

the 'Father of the Nation'. The entire nation is guilty of making a continuous attempt to bring about a 'mix' of Gandhi and Nehru to hibernate the two, whereas like democracy and socialism, they are un-mixable. They are two opposite poles, we can therefore have only one, not both. If the country has to be saved, it will have to return to Gandhiji to sack clothes and the ideologues made to quit the stage. They have occupied it too long for any good they have done to the country.

Even James Comerab wrote in his book about Pt. Nehru that "he was responsible for the achievement of India's independence and even more responsible at times of its vitiation and decay. He made India and lost it. It will be found that seeds not only of the economic crisis but of almost every other ill from which the country suffers today, were laid by Nehru". His 'distinguished' daughter has only reared these seeds into mighty trees.

Rural India is the backbone of our economy, yet our villages suffered due to misplaced priorities and lacked even the basic amenities. The Janata Government tried in vain on rebuilding and revitalising the agricultural sector, which is the primary source of the country's wealth.

Charan Singh gave the impression that he believed in an 'Arcading Russian's economy, He formulated his views on the national problems in a book he wrote in 1960 inspired by the ideas of Gandhiji. He was totally opposed to joint or co-operative farms, and argued that industrial development cannot be achieved without prior development of agriculture — and among industries also, his emphasis is on small-scale and cottage units. There is no doubt that expansion of Industry during these 30 years, and the state capitalism practised by the Congress Government have not benefited the masses". Charan Singh was on surer grounds when he said that our problem was not merely of

technology or know-how but the inadequacy of the human material. He was one of our few politicians to have recognized that we cannot make progress without changing our social and economic attitude.

His book *India's Economic Policy — The Gandhian Blueprint* is therefore timely. The basic thesis that the interlinked objectives of creating employment and developing agriculture be given priority in policy making, is not new. It was set forth at far greater length in his *India's poverty and its solution*. But the approach has been modified and refined in the attempt to provide a positive philosophy to the Janata Party, and the need to guard himself against the charge of being backward, or even as a spokesman of the kulaks, the big landlords.

Charan Singh made it clear that he did not oppose industrialization he thinks "that industrial development can come about only as a result of agricultural prosperity or at best can accompany the later but can never proceed it, as unfortunately, the leadership of the political party which had ruled the country for thirty years without a break thought and perhaps still thinks it could. Heavy industry is certainly helpful but it is handicrafts and small-scale industries that will form the base of our industrial structure. In our country, where capital is scarce and labour is abundant and growing, unemployed poverty is extreme, and demands for aspirations of the masses have been awakened by the democracy they have come to enjoy, it is low capital intensive enterprises that are advantageous to the country as a whole for they require less capital, provide more employment, yield larger product in the total and bring early returns.

Charan Singh emerge as the champion of the small peasants. He summarised the data contained in his previous book to establish that yields per acre accruing to a farmer decline

as the size of his farm increases. This enabled him to resist mechanisation, his viewpoint was that a system of agriculture, based on small enterprises where the worker himself is the owner of the land under his plough, will foster democracy — the peasant class everywhere is the only class which is really democratic without mental reservations. Towards achieving this, we have to educate and enlighten the farming community of the latest developments in research in agriculture through agricultural fairs and exhibitions, so that the benefit of modern technology could percolate down to the countryside."

He was not a theoretician but a practical man. By Zamindari Abolition Act, he brought an agrarian revolution in U.P. as a prominent member of the UP Cabinet. Zamindari Abolition Act contains no loopholes, which would permit the continued domination of Zamindars in the rural economy of the state and to make certain that landlordism may not raise its ugly head again. The poor peasants were made free from the clutches of zamindars and they were made the masters of land which they had been tilling for years.

He was convinced that it was the peasants who were the backbone of Indian industrial workers. It is the peasants who constitute the main market for the Indian army, so the peasantry is the biggest political force in India, but so far the Indian peasantry has been exploited by a hand-picked shrewd urbanites who has been ruling India since independence. Unless the farmers, who constitute 80% of India's population come at the helm of affairs, India cannot progress. He believed that the relative neglect of the rural sector had created dangerous imbalance in the economy; the farmer had been consistently denied reasonable and fair price for what he produced. Allocations for agriculture had been grossly inadequate and there is

need to remove this disproportion. He spoke their languages, expresses their aspirations and epitomised their hopes. This was his forte, Villagers were his mainstay, and he understood them and their problems.

He had been branded as a reactionary, a kulak and a spokesman of vested interests. He did not fit in any ideological framework. He disliked the Marxist brand of socialism but then he was also opposed to capitalism. As regards the charge that he was a Kulak, it should be remembered that he was chiefly responsible for the land reforms in U.P., and there his gains were more far-reaching than those introduced by the Communist in Kerala. He said that land-lordism would be abolished. He was committed to agrarian reforms covering tenurial relationship, ownerships and consolidation of holdings. Some of the land reforms in U.P. have his stamp. He is the author of all the major measures of land reforms in U.P. beginning with the "Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1951" — a piece of revolutionary legislation when it was put on the statute book. W.A. Ladejinsky in his report to the Planning Commission in 1963 wrote, "Only in U.P. has a well thought out, comprehensive legislation, been enacted and effectively implemented. Three millions of tenants and sub-tenants were made owners and hundreds of thousands who had been evicted, were restored their rights".

Gandhiji believed in a classless and casteless society, and there lies its resemblance with Marxism but the achievement of such a society in Gandhian scheme is through voluntary abdication. Gandhiji said that caste system is the "biggest blot on India". Gandhiji used the word 'Harijan' for the down-trodden and as stated by Gandhiji, a scheduled castes, have been more deprived than any one else of their just right to land and housing,

and it is appropriate that special consideration may be shown in that sphere. Reservation in services, special programmes for their uplift, special facilities for education given are necessary and require to be enlarged in order to enable these exploited classes to catch up with centuries of backlog. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that Scheduled Castes themselves continue their struggle for independence from age old prejudices, operating against them. In fact, if jobs are kept reserved for them no matter what they are, they will never try to develop themselves. So Government's order in respect of reservations is not a progressive measure. Anyway, if there is going to be reservations for the Harijans and the backward classes, then some provision ought to be made for weaker sections among the Muslims and Christians also. Since India is deeply committed to democracy and secularism, no section should be allowed to develop the feeling that it does not count. It is in household that the caste Hindu child learns to make caste discrimination a habit of mind and a way of life. He learns this from the relationship between the scavenger and his own parents particularly the mother. Perhaps, if we could pay greater attention to motivate the women, our success in changing attitudes might be even greater than before\*.

Gandhiji taught us that the gist of all social uplift theories was the actual practice. Charan Singh too was opposed to caste system. He began his life as Social rebel and was gravitated to Arya Samaj — the central theme of all progressive reform who wanted to break the inequities of Brahminical tyranny. Charan Singh in his letter of 1954 had expressed his regret that the people had not learnt any lesson from history and even people holding important position all over the country, were not able to rise above this social evil.

Charan Singh had been accused of casteism, and in particular, Jatism. He was a Jat, and he was not ashamed of it. But he never exploited the Jats or any other caste for political ends. According to his detractors, he believed to sway the Jat vote, though he resented being called a Jat leader. All his life, he fought casteism and whenever he was accused of favouring Jats. "He turns back and says the boot is on the other leg." According to him, his being a Jat had been a disadvantage. In fact, he had strong views against caste system, and had carried on consistent propaganda against it in his home district. In 1932 even his cook was a Harijan boy and his name was Chitu. He was of the opinion that there should not be inter-caste barriers. In 1954 he suggested to Pt. Nehru that any one who got inter caste-marriage should be recruited for gazetted service but if did not click with Nehru. Later on when he became the Chief Minister of UP in 1967, he wanted to pass the same law but his colleagues opposed it. Then he took this step that caste names from educational institutions should be abolished. In 1967, he got appointed a Harijan as a member of UPPSC as per the manifesto of the BKD. He assured both in government and public sectors 20% seats for scheduled caste labourers. So he was one of the leading advocates of a casteless society — A true Gandhian dream.

Charan Singh hoped to remove unemployment all over the country within ten years. To achieve this, he intended to give a great boost to rural, small-scale and cottage industries. As regards the implementation of this policy, he thought that government should not waste any more time with ideological issues but should take over business from all the country's large firms, including multinational corporations. Poor people in India are only interested in earning to meet their basic needs. A poor

man is not concerned with ideology, he looks for a job. Gandhiji was of the opinion that firstly the necessities to the citizens should be fulfilled and then a thing should be exported. A country should be self-sufficient. Even in freedom movement, he boycotted foreign clothes and preached Swadeshi.

Charan Singh saw foreign pressure in the demand for his resignation from Morarji's cabinet. The foreign multinationals knew that with the ideas that he had about small-scale industry, they could not run their factories in this country. A significant struggle was taking place between vested interests — capitalists and multinationals on the one hand, and poor workers in the cities and Kisans in rural areas on the other. Charan Singh was in favour of de-centralization. For him, a high degree of centralization or the concentration of power was inconsistent with democracy. He believed in a polity that would ensure dispersal of economic and political power. This is essential for the maximization of individual initiative and popular participation in development and administration. The fundamentals, freedoms of speech, association and expression, Judicial independence and equality before law, are absolutely essential if people are to retain democratic control over the exercise of power. He blamed Pt. Nehru for reversing Gandhian ideals and composing highly centralised pattern of society. Nehruji wanted to build India from the top downward, with the industrialists, managers and technicians, who were found wielding tremendous power in urban-oriented social structure.

Gandhiji had sought to build India from the bottom upward that is from the poorest and the weakest and hence followed the centrality of the village. Gandhiji said, 'if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things'. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended with-

out adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away, require no policing; the palaces of rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So also most of the huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less equipped with military, naval and air forces. Centralization as a system is inconsistent with non-violent social order.

Charan Singh's view on democracy bears a clear stamp of Gandhiji's ideal. Gandhiji wanted to establish in India a democratic order, free from political, economic and social exploitation. For Gandhiji, human conscience is the highest seat of judgement. The people or any sizable section of people who indulge in violence for themselves, are unfit for democracy. Gandhiji defined democracy as the art and science of mobilising the entire physical economic resources but also spiritual resources of all sections of the people in the service of common good of all. He said that, "Dissent is the oxygen of democracy".

Gandhiji's devotee Charan Singh used to say "that a working democratic government means or ought to mean the government, elected by the people to whom it is answerable". The traumatic experience of the Emergency had been a great eye-opener. We had a taste of what happened when democracy got eclipsed. The time has come to examine whether we have not strayed from the path, we have followed during our struggle for freedom. It is for us to judge whether we have adhered to ends and means that Gandhiji placed before us and the values which led us to the independence and brought the masses into their own. Charan Singh dedicated to the values and ideas of Gandhiji and to the task of building up a democratic and a socialist democracy in India."

To Charan Singh politics without morality has no meaning, and he placed public cause above personal ambition.

Gandhiji also emphasised the need of morality. It won't be an exaggeration if we say that Gandhiji's ideas were a moral code. He even spiritualized the politics that is why he was called a Saint in guise of a politician.

Charan Singh regretted that honesty was the most rare commodity today but without honesty the nation would not progress, youth of this nation should fight against erosion of moral values.

Charan Singh was dead opposed to state coersion for adopting cooperative farms, which would lead the country in the direction of collective farms, treading ruthlessly on democracy and individual freedom. Here, too, we find him very close to Gandhiji, who was in favour of a stateless and casteless society. The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul but the State is a soulless machine. It can never be weaned away from violence to which it owes its very existence. Charan Singh like Gandhiji did not want to minimize the power of the State, since too much control of the State restricts the liberty of individuals. Charan Singh wanted to use state power to implement Gandhiji ideas of rural uplift of down trodens.

Charan Singh followed Gandhian principles of simplicity, honesty, hard-work, selflessness and God-fearing consciousness in his daily life. He had traced the lethargic approach among the Indians to our tradition and culture. He stressed the need for changing our wrong outlook where the dignity of labour and hard work are at a discount. Easy acquisition of wealth and leisure are most cherished but there is little keenness to make investment for that purpose. Most of our educated persons would accept low wages with white collar jobs involving less physical labour. Youth are of the opinion that only low caste are meant for hard labour.

Women with little education when married to rich people stopped cooking. Even in advanced countries, there are hardly any domestic servants.

Lastly, like Gandhiji, Charan Singh was in favour of prohibition. He himself neither had drinks nor smoked. When he was the Chief Minister of U.P., he implemented prohibition in Kashi, Prayag, Ayodhya, and Mathura. Charan Singh was much ahead of then Prime-Minister Desai who wanted to make India dry in next four years somewhat way. Gandhiji, who was totally against it, was of the opinion 'that addiction revives the brute in men which is not the nature of human species.'

From Charan Singh political philosophy, it may be assessed that he was a true Gandhian not only in theory but in actual practice. But his critics say that he was only a Gandhian and not a Gandhi. They say that he was the uncrowned king of jats. Even the members of opposition lobbies accused him of being inflexible, high-headed and power-obsessed. Behind devotee of Gandhian ethics, the dogged champion of his class and the rigid disciplinarian was the man, who was frequently un-forgiving, and egoist who felt betrayed, and whose persistent natural urge arose out of a fear of being ignored right from the start. What makes the talk of his planning priorities all the more suspect was his attempt to use Gandhi as a stick with which he wanted to beat Nehru.

Charan Singh though did outgrow his image as a leader of the Hindi belt yet he failed to be acceptable as a national leader to non farming communities . Of course, he did not possess personal magnetism. Charan Singh made up this lack of charisma by his intense patriotism, his moral fervour and a sense of dedication.

Charan Singh with his clean past and a clear vision was

looking for the day when India comes to be known as a clean society. He frequently used to say "My dream or aim is not Marxist, nor Moist, but Indian and therefore Gandhian".

# V

## THE BASE AND THE APEX

Charan Singh was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation. The Socialists like Madhu Limaya called him "The New Radical Economist". The core of his economic ideas lies in the Gandhian thought. The new Radical Economist resembled his predecessor in many ways and tunes. While Gandhiji started a campaign in ousting an alien regime, Charan Singh spearheaded the movement against authoritarianism, leading to the fall of one party dominant rule. A believer in simple living and high thinking, the founder of the BLD (Bhartia Lok Dal), and a leading archite of grand alliance, culminating into the merger of four parties (BLD, SSP, Jana Sangh, Congress(o)) into the Janata Party continued to remain dissatisfied with the present planning system which was the pale imitation of the Western Model.

Gandhiji believed that a big country like India with vast rural population, need not and must not blindly copy the Western model. Charan Singh too believed that "neither the Western model of economic development through growth of heavy industry nor the soviet model based on autarky, regimentation as also heavy industry is suitable to Indian conditions". The former is ruled out primarily because of its heavy reliance on adequate capital accumulation and its total inability to tackle expeditiously the problem of providing productive employment to India's millions Whereas the Soviet model is diametrically opposed to

the nation's domestic traditions and temperament. India has, therefore, to develop an alternative to these two extremes. Before understanding Charan Singh's economic ideas, it is essential to know Gandhiji's views in this regard.

Though Gandhiji was not an economist, yet he learnt from day-to-day problems of countrymen, and wanted to solve them in a simple manner. His ideas have relevance even today. He himself said that, "He had not left any issue after him". He presented a simple series of solutions, and preferred the development of agriculture first. When asked about Indian culture, Sardar Patel replied that he knew about only one culture and that was agriculture. Like Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi, Charan Singh gave priority to agriculture, and believed that "capital intensive industries should form the Apex, not the base".

Gandhiji's economics has to be studied from the viewpoint of his own moral and spiritual principles and ideals as also from the conditions that existed and still operate in India. One must also try to understand the language that Gandhiji used. It is not the language used by the specialists. It is the pedestrian language, so easily understood by common man. The Marxist idea of human history as a record of conflict and war between economic classes, is a partial view. Man has many urges. The economic urge is only one. Christ truly said, "Man does not live by bread alone". But it is also a fact that he cannot live without it either.

In Gandhiji's philosophy of life, there is no place for economic classes as held by Marx or of an economic man as held by classical economists. The economic activity of man is concerned with the production of material goods, their exchange, distribution and consumption. These activities are necessary not only for the existence of man but also for his

happiness and progress. Man lives in society, and all these activities concern not only the individual in isolation but creates social relations also, as a matter of fact, all wealth is socially produced. That is Gandhiji's view. Gandhiji, therefore, held that socially produced wealth must be equally divided among all those, who are instrumental in producing it. If this is too idealistic a view, socially produced wealth must be equitably divided. The economic constitution of India, and also for the whole world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain under the control of the masses. This should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be. Their monopolisation by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the distribution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but in other parts of the world too.

According to Gandhiji, human wants should be limited. Some amount of material goods is necessary for the good life but possession of material goods beyond that, instead of working for the freedom and happiness of the individual, works for his enslavement and often for his unhappiness. It is, therefore, essential that one limits one's wants, and does not increase them indefinitely.

Apart from opposing the poverty, imposed upon the masses of India by the Imperialist rule, Gandhiji was against the exploitation of the poor by the capitalists, foreign or Indian. The parents act as trustees of their children, the Government acts or should act as a trustee of the people. The representatives of the people in a democracy are the trustees of those who have chosen them as members of a legislature.

Gandhiji wanted rich men to recognize the immanent of God in all creatures, and take initiative in voluntary dispossession with a view to the diffusion of universal contentment. Non acceptance of Competition as a way of life would result in sobriety and reduction in our wants. Gandhi wrote "I do not draw a sharp, or any distinction between economics and ethics. The economics that permit one country to prey upon another is immoral".

Gandhiji was opposed to the selfish utilization of social resources for profit. He wanted the country to ensure the labourer his daily bread, and wanted to attach dignity to work. He also criticised the pervasive economic exploitation. Exploitation thrives on our sins. So remove the sins, and exploitation will come to dead stop. In Gandhian thought, economics is subordinated to moral considerations. He thoroughly believed in the ideal of non-possession. Civilization in the real sense of the term, consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. Gandhiji read Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and formed three basic ideas:

(i) that the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.

(ii) that the lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's in as much as both have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work, and

(iii) that a life of labourer, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicrafts is the life worth living.

According to Gandhiji, "No labour is too mean for one who wants to earn an honest penny. The only thing is the readiness to use the hands and feel that God has given us". India's wealth consists in its unutilizing man-power, and its tremendous labour force is the greatest capital that the country has in its possession.

Gandhiji wanted the rich to become the trustees of their surplus wealth for the good of the society. The society was taken to be only an extension of the family. Gandhiji got this idea of trusteeship from the books of Jurisprudence, and he found a great similarity in the conception of Aparigraha (non - possession) of the Gita. In case, the rich were not willing to act as trustees, satyagraha could be resorted to against the holders of wealth.

In Hind Swaraj, published in 1909, he opposed large scale industrialism because it was based on exploitation. But this does not mean that he wished to neglect machinery totally. On the contrary, he advocated a reconciliation of large-scale and small-scale industries. He pleaded for nationalization of key industries and organization of urban centres not as lop-sided outgrowth but as units, catering to the enhancement of the interests of the villages. He was hostile to machine and considered them "Snake Pits". The machine led to the slavery of the labours both male and female. But it must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour. In Young India, he said, "I am uncompromisingly against all the destructive machinery. But simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of the million villages, I should welcome". The present use of machinery tends more and more to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few in total disregard of millions men and women, whose bread is snatched away by it from their mouths. He is opposed to the technological civilization both on economic and moral grounds. He favoured the item of some factories for producing essential commodities. Gandhiji wanted them to be nationalized and not to be retained under private ownership, because that would result in the exploitation of the labourers.

He was for such machines as do not create or protect underemployment of the wage earners, and which can be driven not by power but by hands and feet. His fundamental idea was limitation of wants, and not the creation of a gigantic machine civilization. His basic theme is not the accentuation of production and the economy of plethoric abundance.

This is the main thing in the agrarian concern of Gandhiji. He had the insight to realize that the emancipation of India could not be brought about by the reform of the towns. Rural rehabilitation was essential if the standard of living of the people was to be raised. Hence he turned his attention to the villages. Gandhiji's heart bled to see the misery of the Indian villagers, and he formulated his famous "Constructive Programme" for them. The basic theme of his philosophy was to safeguard the integrity and foundations of the villages. Free trade apart from destroying India's cottage industry, has ruined the peasantry. Pleading for rural reconstruction, he emphatically declared that the salvation for Indian civilization consisted in India forgetting every thing that she had learnt from the West. He preached the gospel of rural mindeness. Gandhi felt that India lived in villages. Hence his slogan "Back to the village", was not an obscurantist or a reactionary trend. He felt that a strengthened and economically sound village economy, would revitalize Indian democracy. Hence, he championed the cause of Khadi with great urgency.

Mahatma Gandhi pleaded for complete Swadeshi. This demanded the revival of the village industries especially of Khadi. In Charkha, he found not only the symbol of crudeness but a means to help the people in providing them at least their meager food. Khadi was the most potent instrument of mass uplift and mass education. Since resort to Khadi meant enhancement of the economic resources of the Indian villages, Khadi also

demanded decentralization in the system of production and distribution of the essential commodities.

Accepting Ruskin's concept of the equality of wages to all kinds of labour, Gandhiji pleads for equal distribution. According to the Gandhian theory of Sarvodaya, in the ideal society, there should be equality of wages not only of labourers but also for other members of different professions. All persons should be supplied with the necessaries to satisfy their natural needs. There should be no accumulation and no useless possession. Gandhiji in his later years subscribed to the Marxian formula of each according to his needs. The constituent elements of economic equality cover balanced diet, a decent house to live in, medical relief, and facilities for the education of children for every family. For the concrete realization of economic equality, it was essential to take recourse to the Charkha and the allied village industries. This would go a long way in bringing about social and economic equality.

How can equal distribution be brought about through non-violence? Everyone would reduce his wants to the minimum, bearing in mind the poverty of India. By economic equality, he does not mean the doctrine of absolute equalization of the possession of individuals. This form of equalization is neither possible nor desirable. What Gandhiji desired was the elimination of all forms of economic exploitation through non-coercive techniques.

These are the main aspects of Gandhian economic philosophy. After thirty years of Congress rule, Janata Party came to power and it wanted to solve the problems with Gandhian methods. This is because the salvation of India lies in pursuing his ideals. charan Singh, then emerging national leader of India, drew our attention to three main problems, concerning everyday

economic life,

- (1) Lack of goods, i.e., Poverty.,
- (2) Mounting Unemployment.,
- (3) Increasing disparities in incomes

In his opinion "these problems stem from neglect of agriculture and emphasis on industry." By economic development, he meant sufficiency of goods — agricultural and non-agricultural. This is imperative for a civilised life. So the first necessity is food.

We must have non-agricultural goods also. These raw material are necessary for most of the consumer goods. Raw material is also derived from the land. Again we come back to agriculture. It is the sum of agricultural and non-agricultural goods that constitutes the wealth. We have neglected agriculture which is the base of India's economy. Eversince the launching of the first Five year plan in 1951, Indian economy has experienced series of crisis. In the first plan 37% of the financial allocations were devoted to agriculture, and only five per cent to heavy industries. That plan was formulated by the Indian economists in an atmosphere which was full of Gandhian thinking. So, they devoted the largest share to agriculture.

Then came a period conspicuous by the absence of Gandhiji and Sardar Patel and Nehru dominating the Indian same. So in 1955, Congress Party overnight turned into an organisation wedded to the socialist pattern of society. As Socialism tends to place greater emphasis on heavy industry. Nehru's Govt. formulated the Second plan. Foreign experts were invited to formulate the Second plan. In the Second Five Year plan, the allocation of agriculture was reduced from 37% to 17.5% or so but that of industry raised to 23.8%. And that has been the pattern ever since. The second plan commenced from

April 1, 1956, came into operation simultaneously. So April 1, 1956 became "April Fools Day" for India. And only four months later our Government entered into PL-480 Agreement with the U.S.A. In August 1956, Nehru showed his determination to spend every pie which he could have either by way of taxes or loans upon heavy-industry and if necessary to import food from outside. Just to silence the urban critics, he put forward theory that if the food prices rise high, food supply should be supplemented by importing foodgrains. The reversal of priorities was a major set back for the agriculture, from which we have not been able to recover as yet.\*

Although it became obvious that the new policy ran counter to the developmental needs of the country, agriculture continued to be ignored. The pace of industrialisation was not even slowed down since the lure of rapid heavy Industrialization was great. Despite repeated setbacks and huge misuse of scarce resources, the Government persisted in following the new economic strategy. Deficit financing became chronic. The Government tried to offset it by borrowing from Reserve Bank of India and later from the nationalised banks. Nehru admitted this mistake later on. In the Lok Sabha proceedings on December 11, 1963, Nehru said, "I have been a great admirer of modern industry. But it has not been able to solve the unemployment problem. It is due to this major lapse that economic power has gradually come to be concentrated only in a few hands."

The creation of artificial purchasing power without any matching increase in the supply of wage goods or in the gross national product resulted in inflation. Neglect of agriculture had its own impact on the supply side; sharp fluctuations in the availability of agricultural products, including raw materials like cotton, oil-seeds, etc., resulted in a steep rise of their prices.

Hence, the basic assumption underlying the plan, that a stipulated investment would generate planned growth rates, proved illusory.

"There was no planning for three years from 1966 to 1969 because of the drought in country. But political leadership did not learn any lesson from it. Both Fourth and Fifth plans were formulated practically on the old lines with the result was that the country had so far spent over Rs.6,000 crores on imports of good-grains alone. In 1951, 72% of our workers were employed in agriculture, 10% in industry, and 18% in territory sector of economic life. Almost the same proportion continues even today and India's per capita national income continues to be one of the lowest in the world. What is even more tragic, is that about 350 million of our people continue to live on the borderline of starvation. The fundamentally wrong development policy has resulted in the current chaotic economic conditions, pushing the country almost to the brink of disaster.

"Our industrial economy today is a mixed one. The Private Sector calls for tax concessions because the per capita income is abnormally low. The erstwhile Congress government excessively and increasingly began to rely on indirect taxation, thus making the poor poorer. Moreover, a very high proportion of the available national income is also distributed unevenly. Because of these policies, India's economy has become a high cost one. For making its goods more competitive in the world markets, the Government has to subsidies heavily on almost all of our export items. The performance of the public sector has also been dismally disappointing. Barring a few exceptions, these gignatic industrial units have produced no surpluses that could, directly or indirectly, be transferred to the poor and unemployed or might be invested in other new projects, which

would serve their needs.

"The economic progress of a country is judged by the census reports. If the percentage of the agriculturists has gone up, then there is a recession. If it has come down and that of non-agriculturist people has gone up, then there is economic progress. So, today we find ourselves in the same situation which the Britishers had left us in 1947. In these circumstances, how we can achieve the objectives of equitable distribution of the nation's wealth and income to provide full employment to our people within the framework of democracy, remains unanswered. The sole answer is not only the adoption of the Gandhian concepts of economy but also their faithful implementation .

"There are three factors, involved in production: (1) Land, (11) Labour, and (111) Capital. There can be no improvement in the living standards of the people unless food and raw materials are available in adequate quantities because the speed, scope or pattern of development of a country, depends on the rate and amount of surpluses generated by the economy. Circumstances of a country like India where the land & man ratio is so low, where labour is abundant and capital scarce, the need is for an economic structure, in which, land operated industries and cottage industries and handicrafts predominate.

When agricultural productivity goes up, resulting in a further increase in farm incomes. It will automatically lead to a higher demand for manufactured goods, setting thereby, a cumulative process in motion. Thanks to the great diversity of wants, various industries, particularly those which are mutually complementary, will automatically begin to support each other. As most industries fall in this category, more and more industrial units will certainly spring up. Gradually , the national economy may reach a point where labour becomes cheaper than ma-

chines. But in India, it will take a long time to arrive at that stage when mechanised industries begin to dominate its economy.

"The progress from labour-intensive techniques to capital intensive techniques, is governed by the quality of farm surpluses- that is, when availability of capital becomes relatively easier than labour for achieving that objective. Therefore, more and more emphasis has to be laid on agricultural development of course with certain exceptions on handicrafts, and on small-scale decentralized industries. In course of time, increase in the income of the people at large, a steep rise in demand for industrial goods will automatically follow.

"Under Gandhian socialism, it is simple labour intensive techniques and small-scale decentralised production that will constitute the main pattern. As the initial distribution of national income under this system favours workers, there would not be any scope for the growth of monopolies. Hence, there will be virtually no need for growth of monopolies. Hence, there will virtually be no need for redistribution of wealth through the agency of the State. In the Indian context of a subsistence agrarian economy, heavy or large-scale industries should become, in course of time the apex of an economic structure with agricultural handicrafts and cottage Industries as its base.

In fact, there are three principles by which India's monstrous poverty can be solved:-

(1) Agriculture including animal husbandry, compost making sanitation, and Gobar Gas.,

(2) Rural works such as Irrigation projects, soil conservation, land reclamation, afforestation etc.,

(3) Rural or Cottage Industries.

No medium or large-scale enterprise shall be allowed to come into existence in future which will produce goods or

services that cottage or small-scale enterprises can produce, and no small-scale industry shall be allowed to be established which will produce goods or services that village enterprises can produce. As a corollary, existing mills or factories that are manufacturing goods, for example, textiles, which can be produced on a small or cottage-scale, will not be allowed to sell their products within the country but will have to export them. This directive may be implemented not all at once but in phases. Government should do all that it can to help such industries compete in foreign markets. In case of failure, they may close down, but the internal market in such goods hence forward shall remain the exclusive preserve of small or cottage industry.

"Not only the mechanisation of agriculture is unnecessary, it is also impracticable in our conditions in being too expensive. It will further increase unemployment. The use of machinery makes it possible for a smaller number of workers to cultivate a large area, a large farm served by tractors, combines with harvesters and threshers, employs less labour than small farms, consisting of the same area, when machinery is employed labour is saved.

"Mechanisation is good when the hands employed are too few for the work, intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the work as is the case in India. Too much leisure demoralises society, and it will be a bad day for India when its peasantry succumbs to temptation of ease and pleasure. In labour intensive enterprises, it is labour that gets the biggest share in contrast to the capital intensive units where the biggest beneficiary is the capitalist himself. A system, in which an overwhelming percentage of the people earn their own living, that is, use their own means of production and are not dependent on anyone else for their

livelihood, is decidedly better than the one under which wealth is first created by and then concentrated in a few hands or in the state. What is more, the economy that Mahatma Gandhi advocated, will create more wealth, provide optimum employment opportunities, ensure equitable distribution of the national product, and help preserve and promote our democratic way of life.

\*Also establishment of an egalitarian society, a society where economic power is not concentrated in a few hands- can be more easily secured by the adoption of labour intensive techniques which not only produce comparatively more but also employ more hands. On the other hand, highly capital intensive undertakings tend to keep a majority of labour idle while inexorably encouraging concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. Thus, if the GNP is produced by many, as under the Gandhian system, then people in general will share the benefits of economic growth.

"In a democracy, the individual forms the basis .It is he who, as a voter, chooses the men who runs the village panchayats, the state and the union governments. But in the present context, where hundreds and thousands of men work under a centralised industrial organisation, the individual has no say in the affairs of its management. As the political and economic freedoms of an individual are interdependent, he cannot enjoy for long the one without the other. It is only in an economy, based on small units that political democracy can prosper because there will be no glaring discrepancies between the status of one man and that of another."

The First Plan had assigned a central place to village and cottage industries. But this plan was never seriously implemented by the Congress Government. The Congress Government due to its wrong priorities was unable to solve the problems

of millions of Indians during its thirty years of tenure in office. With the landslide victory of the Janata Party, a new ray of hope had emerged among the masses. The Janata Party's manifesto aimed at giving primacy to agriculture, and removing rural-urban disparities. Appropriate technology for Swadeshi, end of monopoly, minimum wage and fair price policies, and eradication of corruption, would usher the country into a new society.

The Janata party believed that the dispersal of ownership of property and means of production are the only measures that to ensure that democracy remains safe and thrives. It is, therefore opposed to all concentration of economic power whether it be in the hands of a few capitalists or the state itself. The Janata party had a fifteen year economic planning for which Chaudhary Charan Singh had submitted a draft, entitled "Draft statement of economic policy for the Janata party and its rasou detre". He in his draft gave priority to

- (1) The Primacy of Agriculture;
- (2) Fullest possible use of manpower;

(3) Cottage and small-scale industry shall be the base on which large industry should form the apex

(4) A spirit of Swadeshi should be inculcated among the people., and

(5) There should be greater emphasis on duty and discipline rather than on demands and rights; on hard work rather than easy life.

The inconclusive discussion hovers round three points:-

(1) Whether production of luxury goods should be banned or at least made very costly to reduce their consumption.,

(2) Whether a ceiling should be imposed on personal consumption or expenditure to maximum savings for nation

building activities; and

(3) Suggestions with regard to targets of per capita national growth.

The preamble says- "That the Janata party believes in treading the middle path- in creating a society based mainly on self employment. Knowing that practical ability differs from man to man, so inequality in achievements would continue. However, the egalitarian society will narrow down the income differentials, and foster a system, in which , subject to exceptions, citizens would be free in the choice and operation of their economic life.

Janata Party's opposition to all concentration of economic power, stems from this basic premise. Free market capitalism leads to concentration of economic power in private hands. Ownership of all means of production by the state will lead to concentration of power in its hands which may inhibit freedom in one case, and may give rise to disparities in the levels of living on the other, thereby, generating social and political tensions.

The Janata Party, therefore would put a curb on economic power (i) by imposing physical limits where feasible, (ii) by introducing differential taxation on incomes and wealth and other appropriate measure, so as to reduce these inequalities to the minimum; and (iii) by regulating and demarcating the techniques or the mode and scale of economic operations, particularly in the sphere of industrial production. A Technique of production not only generates certain incomes but also determines the pattern of distribution. The Janata Party, therefore, believes in the decentralisation of the productive process. The aim of our economic policy should be the establishment of a structure which, while serving to increase production, will at the same time, provide employment, and make right to work a reality. The Janata Party would strive for the establishment of an economy

which will

(A) ensure higher production per unit of land in the field of agriculture, because land is the crucial limiting factor in our conditions, and, therefore, valuable; and ensure optimum production per unit of capital investment in the field of Industry because capital is comparatively scarce;

(B) provide maximum employment per unit of land in agriculture and per unit of capital investment in industry, as we have a huge population to support and unemployment is on the increase;

(C) ensure equitable distribution of the national product;

(D) prevent exploitation of other's labour so that opportunity is provided to the largest number of our people for development of their personality and pursuit of their individual aptitudes, and

(E) ensure that even private property is used to serve the common good in accordance with the trusteeship concept, advocated by Gandhiji.

Even Prime Minister Morarji Desai had to believe that agriculture should be given the highest priority in the matter of country's development because agriculture is the foundation of the natural economy with eight of every ten persons, living in the villages and with agriculture contributing nearly fifty percent of the country's national income. It has become necessary to adequately provide for improvement in agriculture and rural economy.

The Janata Government had decided to give top priority to agriculture, industry based on agriculture and cottage industry so that the economy of the country could be developed in consonance with the agriculture produce. But it does not mean neglecting of industry by the government. Since ancient times

Krishi (Agriculture) and Vanijya (Business) have been regarded in the country as the primary sources of well-being. Even today, many requirements of the agriculturists are met by industry, and many industrial products depend on the raw material, supplied by agriculture."

Gandhiji instinctively saw through the situation of economic distress of the peasant, and his first steps taken against the British were for securing justice for the peasantry. It is now part of history that Gandhiji's movement for liberation commenced with his arrest at Champaran where he had gone to ameliorate the lot of Indigo cultivators. India would increase the national income by exporting many of the agricultural items in a processed form, and by taking up an intensive programme for increasing overall production. This would help meet not only the domestic demand but also the growing need for many of these items overseas. The development of agriculture, horticulture, striculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and strengthening of other agro-based industries, and an emphasis on additional production reveal vast potential of generating employment, leading our country towards progress and prosperity.

The leaders of the Congress for a long period neglected Gandhian ideals, and ruined India's economy. The Janata Government had revived his ideas and felt that salvation lied only on the path, showed by Mahatma. This is in itself a greatest tribute to the Father of Nation & Charan Singh was the moving force behind it. It will not be inappropriate to quote Charan Singh himself on this issue:

"Heavy industry is certainly essential, but it is handicrafts and small-scale industries that will form the base of our industrial structure. In our country where capital is scarce, labour is abundant and growing unemployed poverty is extreme, and

demands for aspirations of the masses have been awakened by the democracy they have come to enjoy, it is low capital-intensive enterprises that are advantageous to the country as a whole, for they require less capital, product more employment, yield larger product in the total, and bring early returns". Charan Singh desired the counter-veiling power of the state to ensure the balance growth of natural economy on agro-industrial Gandhian Model.

# VI

## His Economic Policy - A Gandhian Blue Print

During the last thirty years of planning, thousands of crores of rupees have been invested in various sectors of the economy but despite this effort we had been witnessing a deepening economic crisis in the country marked by mounting unemployment and under-employment, rising prices, falling standard of living and ever increasing number of people below the poverty line, and these development have made a mockery of all talk of planning for growth and social justice.

A large number of development economists lured that all this has come to a pass due to the choice of an inappropriate growth strategy which had no link with the resource endowment of our country. Their contention is that in the post-independence period the country's economic plans came to be geared largely to foreign technology. The incongruity between our domestic economic and social conditions and the fruits of such foreign technology did not strike them. Steel, then a scarce commodity, replaced wood and bamboo, cement substituted lime and in the field of transport and power generator petroleum products began to play an expanding role at the cost of coal. Chemical fertilizers replaced organic manure and even in their manufacture Neptha began to be favoured in preference to coal. There was thus a deliberate and steady shift away from the Gandhian prescriptions. The imperatives of self-reliance were totally ignored.

Foreign technology came to be grafted on our economic system in utter disregard of our vast advantage in the availability

of cheap labour. One wonders how this came to pass in a country where Gandhiji had such a magnetic hold on the people and the leadership.

Chaudhary Charan Singh had provided a deep insight into the thinking of the persons at the helm of affairs and the socio-economic forces which led to this state of affairs in his exhaustive and penetrating analysis of economic policy of independent India and had forcefully and convincingly argued for an alternative strategy of economic development based on the Gandhian approach in his publication-India's Economic policy. Writing about this book Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, a distinguished economist though disagreeing with Charan Singh's Thesis said "Though the author is not a professional economist, he has delved deep into economic theory and strengthened his understanding through his own experience of Indian life at the grassroots and the emotional stimuli he obtained from Gandhiji's life and teachings. The result, a lucidly written monograph coherent in its logic and confident in its prescriptions, setting out a simple economic model of development based on the country's unequal factor endowments, its vast rural population and its appalling state of poverty and unemployment. He traces the present economic ills of the economy to the grievous mistake made after independence to go industrial. He, therefore, suggests, that top priority should be given to agriculture accompanied by cottage and small-scale industry, with the heavy industries following later when economic situation requires their establishment. His thesis is that unless the production of food and raw materials in a country is increased and consequently men are released from agriculture for absorption in the non-agricultural sector, there can be no improvement in the living standards of the people. He emphasizes the simple but oft-ignored economic truth that small

farms and small industry which are more labour-intensive are the only means to provide fuller employment in an economy suffering from extreme shortage of capital and surplus manpower. He attributes the recent political crisis in the economy to the persisting economic crises which had been developing in the country for over two decades. To him there is no escape from reversal of the hitherto followed economic policy if we are to come out of this every deepening crisis."

The principal ingredients of the economic policy advocated by Charan Singh may be briefly summarized as follows:

The 'original sin' of the Indian planners according to him, has been the neglect of agriculture by Pt. Nehru who was too much overwhelmed by the Russian strategy of transforming the backward economy through over emphasis on heavy industry. The failure of India's plans is mainly due to the neglect of the primary industry of the country, as a result of which huge quantities of food and raw materials had to be imported although they could be produced in the country. The financial outlays were miscalculated forgetting that the development of domestic resources will have to take place within the frame work of our own factor endowment. In other words, in addition to providing food for the entire population, agriculture, which is another name for utilization or exploitation of land, has to provide continuous and increasing quantity of raw materials for feeding the wheels of consumer industries, e.g., textiles, oil-pressing, rice mills, jute, sugar, vanaspati and tobacco manufacture, etc. Similarly, forests and animals which land nourishes make available various kinds of materials like timber, gum, resin, hides, etc., which form the base of innumerable industries. Further, by way of mines and quarries, land yield like stone, coal, oil, iron, and other metals or minerals that are so essential for the establishment of a capital

goods industry. Charan Singh illustrates extensively from other countries which have achieved high rate of growth by making full use of their agricultural resources.

"A country can go on developing only to the extent the supply of food and raw material available from land allows it. It is a simple fact that unless farm produce is increased, the farmers will have no income to buy the industrial goods. Little wonder that many consumer goods producing industries have been facing severe demand constraints in recent years. Moreover, look at the objective of raising the growth rate of national income. What does it mean in simple terms? Unless 70% of the people get more employment and more income, it is idle to expect the economy to have moved forward. One may not wholly agree with the advocates of balanced growth strategy but it is now widely recognized that continuing imbalance between the agricultural and industrial production can only hamper progress. Besides, the strategy and the pattern of its industrialization depends on the rate and amount of the surpluses a country is able to obtain and her agricultural surpluses are very vital. The lesson taught by the economic development of the advanced countries is that agricultural revolution is a pre-condition of industrial revolution. Coming home, the recent history of comparative growth of Indian states conclusively proves that it is not a few selected industries which can transform the backward economy but the strong agricultural base which alone can bring about the much needed break-through. The recent growth in Punjab and Haryana has been remarkable. The per capita income in these states has reached the highest level in the country not because of large scale industrialization but because of the strong agricultural base- the 'green revolution'. Once the agrarian economy becomes progressive, the growth of industries

automatically follows. On the other hand, a few steel mills here and there, engineering and petro-chemical complexes, oil refineries, etc., have failed to improve the productivity of the general masses of labourers and raise the living standards in the states of Bihar, Orissa, madhaya Pradesh and West Bengal where the basic industry of the economy, i.e., agriculture, has been ignored.

Neglect of agriculture has meant lack of agricultural surplus, that is, lack of food and raw materials. For want of adequate food production we had to spend an amount of Rs. 6,000 crores or more on food imports till 1975 and, for want of both food and raw materials, our industry and other non-agricultural employments have not developed. In 1951, 72 per cent of workers were employed in agriculture; 10 per cent in industry, and 18 per cent in the rest of the economy: exactly the same proportion obtains in 1977. So far as national income per capita is concerned, our country is one of the poorest. What is still more alarming, our rate of economic growth is almost the lowest. In the international sphere we have been going with a begging bowl from country to country.

Charan Singh spoke on the authority of data and empirical evidence to bring home his point regarding the neglect of agriculture and the villages. The emphasis on heavy industry increased the share of investment in industry since the second Plan while the ratio of investment on agriculture almost remained constant. As a result, agriculture was starved of funds. Since the bulk of the agricultural community can hardly make both ends meet the investment in agricultural development has to be provided by the state. The underdeveloped countries are characterized by extreme paucity of funds and higher investment in industry naturally meant less investment in agriculture. The

investment allocation for agriculture in the public sector was reduced from 37% in the first Plan to 17.3% in the second Plan and thereafter never rose beyond 23-24% while those for organized industry and mining were raised from 4.9% in the first plan to 23.8% in the second plan and had been around this figure ever since. As an illustration of the lack of appreciation of the needs of agriculture, it has been pointed out that while almost 1/4 of the country's land suffers from erosion, only a small sum of Rs.47 crores was spent on soil conservation between 1951 and 1973 and soil conservation is as important as soil utilization for raising agricultural crops. Thus the case stands proved that agriculture had been neglected. The economy has had to pay a heavy price for this blunder in terms of the deepening crisis.

Chaudhary Charan Singh used to do a good deal of plain speaking when he came to the explanation for this gross neglect of the main industry. He traced it to the urban origin or urban orientation of our ruling class. 'In fact, the ideology of a man is largely governed by his social origin. The political leadership came from the town and the intelligentsia, and the civil services, who also generally have an urban origin. Obviously, they cannot possibly know how the villagers' mind works and how the village society functions. And so even when they were honestly interested in the development of agriculture and rural society, the leaders and the administration cannot properly appreciate the needs, problems and handicaps of the farming community. He quotes from a number of studies to support his contention. This structure of bureaucracy has been responsible for the preparation of unimgainative schemes aimed at improving the welfare of the rural masses; and even when schemes were realistic they were half heartedly implemented. He did not dispute the ability or sincerity of the political or administrative leadership coming

from the non-agricultural families, but only wants to stress the point that under these conditions, there can be little or no correspondence between the values and interests of political leaders and the administrators on the one hand and those of the masses whose affairs they are called upon to administer. This probably explains why Nehru accepted the industry based model of economic growth recommended by foreign economists whereas Mao tse-tung of China developed an independent agro-development approach to the problems of his country.

"There is another important handicap in the social and institutional structure of the rural India. Even when the opportunities exist for the agriculturists to move to non-agricultural employment, the farmers lack the spirit of enterprise— an urge for material advancement — which can improve their economic lot. Without necessary social and economic attitude there will be no employment of workers from the primary to secondary and tertiary employment even if there is an agricultural surplus. Some communities in India have the requisite spirit of enterprise — Sindhis, Gujratis, Marwaris and Punjabis in the western parts of the country but the agricultural community for example of the Bundelkhand region of UP as a whole lacks this spirit. This fact, however, increase the responsibility of the state."

In highlighting the importance of agriculture in the strategy of economic development, Charan Singh was quite frank in his assessment of the land reforms being introduced and the agrarian structure being planned. He was on a very strong ground when he says " that agricultural production being a biological process there are no economics of time and scale in Agriculture, no scientific technology as such cannot be used on a small scale. The benefits of the neutral -to-scale technology have not been properly appreciated in Indian planning. Our aim

In an agricultural country where there is great paucity of lands, it should be the maximum exploitation of land so as to get the highest possible production per acre and not per man or per agricultural worker. This has an obvious implication for the choice of techniques in agriculture. All mechanization must be avoided and human labour used to the maximum in the agrarian organization in under developed countries suffering from labour surplus and mass unemployment.

We must understand that if the objective of employment is dearest to our heart, no encouragement should be given, administratively or financially, at least, in areas and regions where agricultural labour is plentiful, either by way of subsidies, cheap and easy credit, hire purchase facilities and price control or even through extension services to help extend the use of large machines in agriculture which serve to displace labour. Mechanization helps a farmer in cultivating or controlling a larger area of land, rather than increasing per acre production (which is what has to be aimed at in India). The main policy rule could therefore be to emphasize those elements in modern technology which do not displace labour — seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides — and those forms of capital formation which use a great deal of manpower, such as levelling and clearing of land, extending irrigation and drainage, fencing etc. If agriculture has to be mechanized, it should be mechanized as Gandhiji pointed out, with machines that supplement human effort and ease or lighten its burden rather than supplant it — the Japanese style of farm machinery. The diseconomies of management and difficulties of supervision make it imperative that small scale holdings should continue to be the base of agricultural planning. There is evidence to show that the number of workers employed per hundred acres in regions or countries where small holdings pre-

dominate is greater than that employed in countries where much holdings form a large percentage . Besides a system of agriculture based on small peasant proprietors will foster democracy, in addition to providing more employment and removing inequalities in the distribution of wealth. That production per unit of labour in France , the United Kingdom and United States is several times higher than in Japan is irrelevant . Mechanization of farming operations does improve considerably the yield per unit of labour but it does not increase the yield per unit of land and it is this that matters in India more than anything else". While he favoured strict enforcement of measures the abolition of zamindari, Charan Singh does not see much benefit from land ceilings . The belief that the distribution of surplus land available on the imposition of ceiling can solve the problem of the Harijans , the landless or the marginal farmers and thus remove the poverty of the rural society to any appreciable degree has proved a delusion. One cannot but agree with him that howsoever low the ceiling that might be fixed the surplus land available for distribution will be too little for all those who may need it or even a substantial section of them. The ultimate solution of the economic problem not only of the agricultural labourers but of tens of millions of other poor or unemployed and under-employed persons will depend largely on the development of non-agricultural resources which will in turn depend mainly on increased agricultural production and transformation of the national psychology. The obsession with land redistribution could at best buy some time but it should not be allowed to detract our attention from the real malady affecting the economy and its cure.

Secondly Charan Singh contended that we committed the mistake of setting our aim too high and thus on attainment of political power, immediately fell for heavy industry. Gandhiji

wanted to build the country from the bottom upwards on the strength of its own resources with the village or agriculture and handicrafts as the base and the town or a few large-scale industries, that we must inevitably have, as the apex. We forgot that development of India's economy or a rise in the living standard of its vast millions will have to take place within the framework of its own factor endowment in other words, within the limitations set by its low land or natural resources man ratio and of democratic freedoms which prevent exploitation to its own working force beyond a point.

The present situation can therefore be remedied by a shift of resources from the metropolitan, industrialized, capital-intensive and centralized production based on the purchasing power of the upper-middle classes to agriculture, employment-oriented and decentralized production which, in Gandhiji's telling words, is not only for the masses but also by the masses.'

In the strategy proposed by him, village and cottage industries and small-scale industries have vital role to play. Those who wonder why our attempt at industrializing the country in a big way has not solved the basic problems of the country, will do well to recollect some of the basic characteristics of the Indian economy. When about four million people are added to the labour force annually, it is well nigh impossible to plan such a rate of growth of capital intensive industry which will absorb even 1/10 of this labour force in the manufacturing sector. Not to speak providing the much needed relief to the tens of millions of unemployed and under-employed. Our annual rate of providing jobs in the factory sector comes to about one lakh per annum. With the passage of time more and more sophisticated techniques borrowed from foreign countries are being adopted, while they absorb most of the investable funds their employment

co-efficient is low, Thus , we find the obvious spectacles that while industries grow men decay. The only alternative appears to be to give all encouragement to the cottage and small scale industries which, to start with, will be based on the agricultural surpluses in the different regions and as these industries make a head way and create more demand for machinery , appliances and such consumer and intermediate goods as cannot be produced in the cottage or small scale sector , development of the large scale industries would become desirable as the apex of the economic structures with agriculture and handicrafts or village industries as its base. Gradually , a point is reached where (owing to growth of various kinds of industries and services) labour becomes relatively scarce and capital abundant , that is, when men cease to be cheaper , but become dearer than machines. It is at this stage , a stage which in India will take very long to arrive , that an economy takes on a character or develops into one where machine operated or mechanized industries will predominate. The progression from handicrafts to mechanized industries , from labour-intensive techniques to capital-intensive techniques is governed by the rate at which farm surpluses are available or capital becomes available relatively to labour that is released from, or no longer required in agriculture. As cottage and small-scale industries grow on the basis of agricultural surpluses, mainly in the form of food and raw material , so will grow mechanized industries on the basis of cottage and small-scale industries, responding to their demand and adjusting themselves to their needs. So that, in our circumstances of a dense agrarian economy, heavy or large-scale mechanized industries should come in course of time as the apex of an economic structure with agriculture and handicrafts or village industries as its base. The progress in the economic and the

industrial field should not be measured in terms of the quantity of steel, the number of automobiles and television-sets that we are able to manufacture — as is the yardstick these days - but in the quantity and quality of the basic necessities of life like food, clothing, houses, wealth, and education etc., that becomes available to 'The last man' as Gandhiji used to say. Assigning priority to heavy industry in India and other similar situated countries means retardation of agricultural development, food shortage and dependence on imported food. There are several countries in the developing world where jobs are more plentiful and the poor are creating wealth and at the same time fewer babies are dying and everyone becoming literate. Among these countries are Taiwan, Israel, Puerto Rico and Egypt. The obvious reason for this contrast is that our policies have been faulty and this involves shedding certain fallacies that have been fostered for too long. Charan Singh was very critical of some of these fallacies such as (i) large farms produce and supply more than small farms, (ii) small and cottage industries produce more and supply more per unit of capital investment than big urban factories equipped with modern techniques.

Since land in the field of agriculture and capital in the field of industry are the limiting factors in India, elementary economics should teach us how to utilise them to the maximum? It will be seen that so far as net output (or value added) for worker is concerned, it bears a positive correlation to the size and technique of enterprises, that is, the output per worker is concerned, as the size, capital intensity viz. capital investment per worker, and/or the technology improves. Cottage industry yields less per worker than small-scale industry, and small-scale industry in turn yields less than large scale or capital intensive industry. Whereas, in terms of value and also amount of labour

employed per unit of fixed capital investment, the correlation is negative. That is, less goods are produced and less persons are employed in an enterprise as its capital-intensity, that is, capital investment per head of worker increases and technology improves.

According to a report on the working of the khadi and village industries section of the industries Department, Government of India, released by the government in August 1974, during the fourth Plan period 1969-74, the capital investment for providing employment to a worker in khadi and village industries was very low compared to large-sector industries. The average investment in khadi and village industries was Rs. 530 against Rs. 10,000 in the textile industry and five to ten lakhs in the cement or steel industry. Whereas according to the Annual Survey of industries (ASI), for 1974-75, the amount of investments required for employment of one person in the large-scale sector as a whole was Rs. 29,600.

Added to this is the weighty consideration that there is no other democratic method of ensuring economic growth and social justice. It is clear that there are no "economics of scale" in manufacturing industry as a whole so far as output per unit of capital investment is concerned. In other words, there is no law or rule of thumb operating in actual life which would show that the output-capital ratio grows with concentration of capital in an industrial enterprise. Nor is there any foundation for it in science. Mechanization and automation were introduced to increase the productivity of labour, i.e. the output-worker ratio and their effect on the output capital may be just as well positive as it may be negative. Advances in technology only serve to eliminate labour-intensive enterprises at the cost of an additional input of capital without affecting the volume of output.

The evidence of the economics of scale that we come across in the text books is based on the experience of highly industrialized countries. In India it is mostly in industries producing capital goods like steel that these economies are visible or they are significant . In consumer goods, industries as a whole they are virtually non-existent.

While productivity of human labour improves with the progress of industrial technology , at the same time , it takes a greater amount of capital to employ a worker . In fact, it is because a worker is aided with a great deal of capital that his productivity is increased, Hence, in a capital -short economy, the adoption of an advanced industrial technology would mean employment of a few, though with higher income , at the cost of many with no income at all. Under our circumstances , therefore, where capital is scarce and labour not only abundant but redundant. It will not be in the national interest to use the latest, highly automatic, costly machines which require more capital relative to labour . There is a clear case in our country for adoption of a labour-intensive technology — a technology which would require less capital to employ a worker. Hence , with given capital , would employ a large number of workers, which means saying in other words , capital being the limiting factor in India , our economic organization has necessarily to be such or overwhelmingly such that the ratio of output to capital is higher and that to labour then in economically advanced countries where it is labour that is the scarce resources.

So what Charan Singh pleaded for was a change in our concept of industrialization — a shift away from heavy or large scale industries towards the cottage and small-scale industries which use labour intensive technology and thus provide an effective solution to the twin problems of unemployment and

poverty which are eating into the vitals of the national economy . Seen in this light , growth and distribution, GNP and social justice would not be enemies of each other but would co-exist . Pt. Nehru, the architect of heavy industry oriented strategy too realized this in the later years of his life but it was too late for him then to have provided the sufficient leadership and courage to reverse the trend. Unemployment is India's greatest enemy. Either it should be eliminated or it will eliminate us from the community of civilized nations. Its solution therefore is the key to the solution of poverty and wide income inequalities as well. Once employment of a worker is assured, inasmuch as he will be having some income, poverty will be alleviated and income disparities narrowed down. So the challenge that unemployment poses cannot be balked. In fact, just as the moral of an army depends first and foremost on the care it takes of its wounded, and the risks it runs in order not to abandon them, the quality of an economic policy of political leadership is judged by how it proposes to serve or to uplift the underdog, the weak, the unemployed, the speechless all those who are paid low and are not sure of their next day's bread.

Unfortunately it is not yet realized fully even in political circles that unless the faulty economic policies that are radically changed, there can be no redemption: any number of government jobs or the rival works programme or slum clearance schemes, etc., do not provide a lasting or complete remedy to the cancer of unemployment that is eating into the vitals of the nation. After all, the ultimate objective of policy is not just to provide any kind of programme or jobs, but to provide work that is economically productive and yields enough income for a reasonable standard of living. Jobs should primarily aim at producing more goods and services for the people and not merely provide wages

for unwanted or untrained hands at the tax-payer's expense, which will add to inflation.

"In the circumstances of our present factor endowment, therefore where land and capital are limited and manpower virtually unlimited — where even if investment at the maximum rate possible is achieved, capital will remain scarce relative to labour for a long time to come — the one rule of thumb during this period should be to substitute in the existing set-up, labour for capital, and wherever possible and, virtually in no case to allow a capital intensive project is to come up in future where labour intensive project is to come up in future where labour intensive alternative is available'. This bold assertion springs from intense belief of Chudhary Charan Singh and might appear to the superficial observer to be a doctrinaire approach but a close study of our problems and the solutions attempted so far over a period of over thirty eight years of economic planning leaves us in no doubt that this way alone lies the solution to the problems of the country. He goes on to emphasis that in a free market economy benefits of decentralized less intensive types are insufficient to offset at least financially the superior technology of the modern industry, and therefore labour intensive projects cannot survive or be revived unless they are projected by the State against raids of large scale automatic industries. If we mean business, the strict law demarcating the spheres of various industries will have to be enacted. His proposals were very far reaching in this context — "No medium or large scale enterprise shall be allowed to come into existence in future which will produce goods or services that cottage and small-scale enterprises can produce, and no small-scale industries shall be allowed to be established, which will produce goods or services which cottage enterprises can produce. As a corollary, existing

mills or factories that are manufacturing goods, for example, textiles, which can be produced on a small or cottage scale, will not be allowed to sell their products within the country but will have to export them. This directive may be implemented not at once but in phases. Government should do all that it can to help such industries compete in foreign markets. If they cannot so compete, they may well close down but the internal market shall remain the exclusive preserve of the small and cottage industry." It is interesting to note that about 600 textile mills were closed by their owners by declaring them sick and the present Govt (Rajiv & Narsima Rao) had to take them over for the sake of thousands of Textile workers becoming jobless. These are the measures which call forth much higher order of political 'will' than has been forthcoming in the post-independence period, particularly if we exclude the period of Emergency. The basic question therefore before any political leadership is if they can provide leadership in a democratic framework which can solve the national problem on the lines advocated by Charan Singh. A Communist China or Russia could implement this programme more easily, but a consumer-oriented free society, subject to all sorts of internal and external pressures and high level demonstration effect of the advanced free societies, will find it extremely difficult to accept the programme and implement it in the letter and spirit, and to the extent it fails to implement it, it denies the opportunities of solving the problem.

An implication of the above strategy is that the comparative advantage of the Indian economy in respect of cheap labour should not be allowed to be destroyed by vested interests of organized labour. Trade unions can increase wages of organized labour only, but at the cost of mounting unemployment. Regulations enforcing minimum wages and countering discrep-

ancy in wages in small-scale industry should not be introduced. Cheap labour is our greatest asset and should not in its or national interest be allowed to go waste. Needless to say forbearance in this respect will widen employment opportunities, increase the rate of economic growth, reduce income disparities and promote export trade. Now, it may be possible to follow appropriate policies in the field of credit and foreign exchange and in regard to import of foreign machinery, but political circumstances being what they are, it is not possible to do so in the field of labour legislation. It is not possible to curb the trade unions, in other words, to ask factory workers to curb their appetites or exercise self-restraint. It is possible, however, to so control or regulate the techniques of production that control over the trade unions or the appetite of workers becomes virtually unnecessary. All that the Planning Commission or the Government of India need to do is to listen to the still small voice of the Mahatma & Charan Singh whose memory is being desecrated every day. Gandhiji's prescription is that only those articles shall be manufactured on a large factory scale which cannot be manufactured on a small or cottage scale, will not only bring down the cost of development and, at the same time, increase employment opportunities steeply but will render trade unions irrelevant. For there will be no hired workers in cottage industry and only a few of them in small-scale industry. It is but natural that in the context of current economic situation in India, there will be strong opposition to the proposal on social and political grounds.

Charan Singh used to emphasise, that "Once the techniques are controlled, that is, once we ensure how goods are made and as a consequence, incomes are distributed amongst the largest number of our people, we need not bother what kind of goods, whether goods of class consumption or goods of mass

consumption, are made. Everything else will take care of itself. For, necessarily, that is, because of limitation of technique, these (labour intensive) industries will be producing with rare exceptions, only such goods that the most of the people with low incomes, residing in villages or town in the neighborhood of their locations, will be needing. Further, the government will be saved to attempt at drawing a line between the two kinds of goods (which in any case will be arbitrary), the need to put curbs on consumption in the form of control over price, quality and quantity, etc., and the temptation to introduce institutional reforms which increasingly limit the domain of free economic activity and, to that extent, the domain of democracy."

"Again the real choice in our country is not so much between large and small-scale industry, as between power-driven industry (large or small) on one hand and cottage industry on the other. Only the latter can provide gainful employment to the millions in the villages who are busy during the sowing and harvesting seasons, but are idle for the rest of the year. The colonial relationship which has developed between towns and villages will disappear only when consumer goods, ranging from soap to cloth, are both produced and sold in villages."

"A demarcating line will, therefore, have to be drawn between cottage and small-scale industries, the later being curbed or regulated in the interest of the former. The main consideration in the present context of our economic conditions is to provide employment to people in the villages and, although small-scale industry provides more employment (and, in an overwhelming percentage of cases, also produces more) per unit of investment than medium and large-scale industry, it provides far less employment (and produces less) than cottage industry in every case. While, therefore, in most cases small-

scale industry, cottage industry will have to be protected against both. Then and then alone will we be able to achieve what Mahatma Gandhi had dreamed of half a century ago, viz., 'to return to the villages what has so cruelly and thoughtlessly been snatched away from them by city-dwellers'.

The Gandhian blueprint for the framework of our policy is revolutionary in the sense that it seeks to keep the people and their capacity to lift themselves by their own efforts in a democratic manner as the focal point of every measure, every move. In the ultimate analysis what mattered to Gandhiji was neither money nor machines but men. The primacy given to agriculture, the priority accorded to handicrafts and cottage industries, the emphasis on decentralization and self-reliance, and above all the anxiety to prescribe, as minimal a role as possible under the circumstances to the state agencies in the ordering of the economy have all but one aim, and that is to translate into reality the fundamental maxim of democracy as Lincoln said, "of the people, by the people and for the people".

The powerful impact of Charan Singh's thinking on the Janata economic policy of the Janata Government was too obvious to be emphasised. The Janata Party statement on economic policy issued about six months after it came to power seeks to give a new orientation to the economy on the lines advocated by him in his blueprint referred to earlier — a strategy of economic growth based on going 'back to the villages' in keeping with Mahatma Gandhi's ideas on rural development, encouragement to a decentralized rural industrial sector, adoption of labour-intensive technology and increased investment in agriculture. While there is general agreement on the main pillars supporting this policy, doubts have been raised and difficulties have been experienced at the stage of preparation and imple-

mentation of concrete programmes following from this policy. It is at this stage that the policy is watered down as has happened in the past. What Gandhiji's dream of self sufficient villages, what Lok Nayak Jai Prakash dream of total revolution what Charan Singh dream of making rural India as Real India could not be achieved so far (after about 5 decades of India becoming independent) proves that India has lost the dedicated, patriotic leadership in almost every political party. In the last decade of twentieth Century when India should have entered in the next century as a self sufficient, administered by clean leadership of any political party alas the country is ruled by the leaders alleged by involved in worst sort of economic scams-only hoping to survive on the infighting of the opposition parties. The Indian voters is baffled whom to vote, more so, when the present set of leadership may be replaced by another worst alternative. Therefore, there is a dire need to follow the ideals of Gandhiji & JP & Lohiya to be executed by leaders like Sardar Patel & Ch. Charan Singh.

## VII

# Crusade Against Corruption

Charan Singh lived in Lucknow for four decades yet his life style had not changed a bit. He was a staunch Arya Samajist, and he ran the administration on the principles, envisaged in the scriptures of Arya Samaj. He stood by Arya Samaj not only in conviction but he follows its principles both in his private and public life.

Over the years, Charan Singh had been in political life, he had successfully built up image of "a person who cannot be bought, will not tolerate any corruption". He had consistently improved his image in the politics though his uncharitable critics do not miss any opportunity nickname him as "Chair Singh" but none of them dared to call him "Bribe Singh";

With Charan Singh's taking over the reins of the Home Ministry in 1977, there was virtual terror in the minds of the corrupt bureaucrats. The stories of how he dealt with corrupt officers in the UP administration when he was in the cabinet either as a Minister or as Chief Minister, had reached the corridors of the Central Secretariat before he actually joined the Ministry after his convalescence in the Willingdon Hospital. A sensation was spread when two top officers of the civil service, Vohra and Agarwal were suspended which was a rare action unheard of in the history of British India. Even under the Congress regime official of the rank of Secretary in the Union Government had never been suspended. The revived I.A.S.

Association passed a resolution expressing their resentment against the suspension and many senior secretaries in the Central Government told their ministers that members of the administrative services were demoralised by the action in which the Secretary in the Petroleum Ministry was arrested and suspended.

They pointed out that action had never been taken before against any administrative service officer without first giving him the opportunity to explain his conduct on the charges levelled against him, and that no officer has ever been suspended without going through established procedures which involve ordering of an enquiry and presentation of a charge-sheet etc.

The damage to the morale of the civil servants was brought to the notice of the Prime Minister by many Ministers to whom the Secretaries had expressed their apprehensions and pleaded for safeguards against victimisation of civil servants for political reasons.

But Charan Singh made it quite clear at his first press conference as Home Minister that he had passed orders to the Inspector General of Police, Delhi "that even if I as Home Minister approach you or recommend a case which he thinks is against the rules or in any manner may demoralize a Police Officer to do his duty, the Inspector General of Police should not pay heed to my recommendation". This was necessary since Delhi Police is alleged to be notorious for taking bribe, using third degree methods and expert in framing false cases to extort money. Emergency period was the hey-day for Delhi Police and reports were available with the Home Ministry that one Sub-Inspector of Police took Rs. 20,000 - from a businessman of Chandni Chowk by showing him a warrant of arrest under MISA. The blank warrants of arrest duly signed by the Judicial Magistrate were

supplied to the police in the beginning of the Emergency and there were reports that Delhi Police misused them at will. The corruption had increased many folds during the Emergency period. That the D.D.A. (Delhi Development Authority) and the Delhi Police were openly misusing the MISA like anything, was the talk of the town. One version goes like this that once a Head Constable was removing the unauthorised 'Rehris' and one 'Rehriwala' who was selling vegetable in Sadar Bazar area gave him the usual 'Saptah' (to the Havaldar) and he retorted that Rs.25/- was the 'Pre-Emergency' rate and he would not accept less than Rs.100/- from him. But to the misfortune of the Head Constable, a Judicial Magistrate was purchasing vegetable nearby, who ultimately got him arrested for accepting the hush money of Rs. 100/-. Delhi Police's image had been so much tarnished that it used to be called as 'Daily Police'. The usual 'Saptah' of its petty officials was converted into a 'Daily' recovery from the petty shopkeepers etc. Another notorious weapon which was used by Delhi Police was the threat of the demolition by the D.D.A squads, which played havoc in wiping out colonies one after another in the walled city of Delhi. The police used to extort money from them on the pretext that they had saved their particular locality from demolition. Lacs of rupees were collected by the worker of a particular wing of a political party. The businessmen and the residents of the area used to give 'donation; through contribution, depending upon their respective standings in business, and usually the collection was to be received through the cops of Delhi. Delhi cops shivered in their pants when Charan Singh took over as Home Minister. The first jolt was given when the police officers against whom there were rumours/reports of mass-involvement in the corrupt practices during Emergency, were transferred from the 'prize Police

Station' to 'less important police Station in the Delhi Territory.

I.G. Bhawanimal was sent back to his original cadre allotted state, and Chaturvedi a reputed honest Police Officer was brought as Inspector General, Delhi. The complete set-up was over-hauled by adopting the Bombay police set-up by amending the Delhi Police Act, with the sole aim of removing stigma from the Delhi Police, and to streamline the police administration of the Capital. Charan Singh was firm, and he had hoped that he would be able to remove corruption first from the Police Department. The other defamed corrupt departments like Revenue, P.W.D., Food & Civil Supply were the next in his list from where the corruption was to be weeded out.

The dishonest bureaucrats, according to the Home Minister, were responsible for corrupting the politicians and the businessmen. Charan Singh believed and very rightly "that if the corruption is to be eradicated from the bureaucracy, business and the politics, only then a clean and efficient administration can be provided to the nation. It is this trio of businessmen, politicians and bureaucrats which is responsible for the evil of corruption in the national life of any democratic country, more so in a developing country like India." Expressing his views in the articles, "Politicians Vs. Civil Servants", Charan Singh wrote that "The commitment of both politicians and bureaucrats is to the public service, honesty and integrity". He further added, "I have never been able to understand why a great deal of debate goes on in our country over the relative roles of the political leadership of the Government and the administration of the country. In a working democracy, 'Government' means, or ought to mean, the Government elected by the people and answerable to them.. In our system, based on a clear division of powers, the Cabinet is the executive. It accepts responsibility for all executive decisions.

The responsibility is both to Parliament and to the people."

"The administration, as far as I can understand, is not the executive but the instrument of the executive. In theory, there need be no permanent Secretariat; In some countries, the civil servants, at least at the top levels, come and go with the Prime Minister or the President who has the prerogative in the choice of his advisers /Civil Servants".

"The Indian Constitution does not explicitly preclude the Cabinet's choice of its advisers. However following the British pattern, we have so far adopted the concept of a permanent civil service. There have been instances, however, of the Cabinet Ministers going outside the permanent civil service to choose some of their top policy advisers".

He further adds,

"Terms like sovereign jurisdiction have no meaning in a democracy. Even the people are sovereign only up to a point. For example, the people cannot obviously decide upon the guilt or otherwise of an individual. Parliament and the Cabinet function within the orbit of the Constitution".

"There can be no separate and inviolable sphere of administrative jurisdiction in the sense that the Cabinet or the Minister cannot encroach upon it. The administrator job is to understand the policy of the elected Government, advise it fearlessly and independently and carry out the policy once it is decided by the elected Government".

"Since the entire system is governed by the rule of law and morality, no civil servant can be asked to do what is illegal or unethical. A civil servant cannot take shelter behind a ministerial order, oral or written, to defend an illegal or immoral action. He should have the courage not only to advise fearlessly but to accept the consequences of such an order. Distortions

(like the ones during the Emergency) take place when there is a breakdown of the moral fibre of the politicians and top civil service personnel”.

“Let it be clearly understood that the Minister, as part of the Executive arm of the State, has complete jurisdiction over all matters concerning any appointments. But a good Minister will not exercise these functions, except when it is in the public interest to do so. This self-discipline couldn't be confused with jurisdiction”.

“Ultimately, the success of a system depends on the bonafides of the people running it. The administrator, knowing that a Minister is constructively responsible for what happens in the Ministry, would, in a good system, take care to see that the minister is properly advised and the Minister's orders are honestly carried out. Similarly, the Minister will normally not go beyond policy decisions and supervision. In such a system of bonafides, there is no scope for conflict of jurisdiction”.

#### **AREAS OF LEADERSHIP**

“A word of caution may not be out of place. The concept of constructive responsibility cannot be overstretched. If for every act of omission or commission of the administration, the concerned Minister were to accept the responsibility, no Minister could remain in office even for a day. Policy, vigilance, correction and insistence on codes of conduct are the principal areas where a Minister should show courage, determination and leadership”.

“The difficulty in India has been the nexus between the corrupt politician and the corrupt administrator. The vast increase in Government's powers of control and regulation has only served to produce innumerable opportunities for corruption and favouritism. But, in my opinion, the vast increase in corruption is largely traceable to the failure of political leadership

whose duty it was to set standard and personal examples”.

“Once the administration realises the Minister’s uncompromising adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct, the moral authority of the Minister would be safeguarded against administrative misdemeanours. But this is essentially a task of political leadership”.

#### COMMITTED BUREAUCRATS NOT REQUIRED

“Before I close, I wish to refer to the criticism of the circular, issued by the Cabinet Secretary, asking the civil servants to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Janata Party’s manifesto. The criticism seemed to arise from a misunderstanding. After all, the elected Government is guided to a great extent by the party’s election promises, and the civil servants should at least know what these promises are. No one is asking them to accept the party’s ideology or to be ‘committed bureaucrats’. All that is required is to ensure that the civil servants know the policy of the Government. Such an understanding is essential to smoothen relations and swift transaction of public business”.

“Ultimately, it is to public service, honesty and ethics and every public servant, politician or bureaucrat, should be committed. It is, I say a question of bonafides. If the politician and the bureaucrat understand their roles and perform them honestly and fearlessly, neither of them wanting to stick to office at any price there can be no scope for an conflict of jurisdiction”.

When asked to comment on discipline by a correspondent of Sunday Magazine saying that “Mrs. Indira Gandhi had proclaimed emergency for discipline and progress. Mr. Charan Singh replied, “Discipline can only come through the law. I have a stick too, but it is very different from Mrs. Gandhi’s. Mrs. Gandhi’s stick was for the people, mine is meant for corrupt officers and politicians”.

"Only if you bring the powerful to book only then you can show the people that they cannot get away with corruption", he added. How can we expect the people to be honest if we, sitting on our gaddis, behave selfishly? We will have to present a clean picture before the people. We will have to take action against corrupt officers. Only then the people will be convinced about the integrity of the political system." His firm conviction was "that the crux of a clean administration is the honest politicians, honest bureaucrats, committed to the country and the constitution and full control over the big business through a firm and smooth execution of the national policies, fiscal as well as economic." Only a clear headed statesmen, incorruptible honest administrator like Charan Singh can fulfil this Herculean task of eradicating corruption from Public life and providing a clean and efficient administration at centre and state levels.

Charan Singh first started his crusade against corruption when he was Revenue Minister in U.P. The credit goes to him for piloting and drafting the 'Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforming Bill'. After the passage of this bill, kulak's lobby joined hands together against the most progressive and the pro-small farmers minister who was the main figure to put his ideas of 'Peasant proprietorship' into action through this bill.

The age-old revenue system since the British days, came into motion in favour of the big zamindars whose surplus land was to be acquired and distributed amongst its tenants who were to get the possession of the land in their names. The notorious institution of the Patwari and the functionaries of revenue system whether working in the Revenue Department in the villages or at Tehsil headquarters or the Patwaris in the Irrigation Department, 'Amins' and the Police people at the lower ladder in the Police Department were and are the main source of corruption, and they

fleece the villagers through another corrupts institution of Lambardar, Zaildar who used to be big zamindars. The beneficiary farmers were being harassed by the Patwaris, who were helping the big zamindars under whose patronage the class of Patwaris had flourished, and the Patwaris used to carry on with their nefarious corrupt activities so much so that the poor farmers used to think that the huge money extorted by the Patwaris, was a usual practice going on with the knowledge and with the consent of the Government since British days.

The Patwaris with connivance of the big zamindars started creating havoc with the revenue records favourable to the big landlords by allowing them to retain the possession of their surplus land in one way or the other. The 'Benami' transaction in the name of their pseudo-relatives including their pets and the cattels, was one of the major modus-operandi of these Patwaris. When the land was started being mutated in the names of 'Tota Rams', 'Bhansa Rams' and 'Bela Rams' by the patwaris. The vigilant eyes of the Revenue Minister took no time to detect the designs of the big zamindars and the activities of the 'Patwaris' allowing themselves to be the tools of the loot of zamindars.

First of all, an appeal was issued by the District Collectors that any revenue official (s) found helping the zamindars and working against the interest of the small farmers in getting their legal rights/possession over the land, they had been tilling upto then, such official (s) of the revenue department would be dealt with severely. The patwaris' class thought it to be an usual threat from the Government to which they were accustomed for the last many decades when such 'threats' were a yearly routine for them in the form of Govt circulars. But this time, the threat was put into operation and severe disciplinary action was taken against certain Patwaris, who made it a prestige point and a question of

their survival, and went on an indefinite strike. Chief Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant was approached by the kulak's lobby of the 'atrocities' of Charan Singh against the Patwaris, and requested him to intervene and to save the 'bread' of these 'poor' Patwaris. Charan Singh told his leader that "he knows how to deal with this corrupt class of Patwaris and he would be doing a yeoman's service to the poor farmers, if he is able to save the poor farmers from the powerful clutches and corruption in the revenue Department carried out by these patwaris since ages". The whole of the U.P. was stunned when more than 28,000 Patwaris were dismissed from service by a Government order. The hand, which was nursing the cradle of corruption, was broken by the en mass dismissal of the Patwaris, shattering the designs of the kulak's to retain whatever surplus land they could do with the help of those Patwaris.

The corrupt institution was crushed for ever with one stroke of the hammer by the iron-man of UP then. A new institution of 'Lekhpal' replaced the old institution of the 'Patwaris' and these Lekhpals were given a different training and orientation so that they could properly implement the sensitive Clauses of the Zamindari Abolition Act, and watch the interest of this new class of farmers who were only tenants or sub-tenant upto yesterday and in whose names the lands was to be transferred under the new Act. Quite a sizable numbers of these lekhpal were from the down-trodden section of the society who were the main beneficiaries of the new enactment, passed by the U.P. Government.

A similar jolt was given to the Provincial Armed Constabulary, found guilty in interfering with the students politics in the universities, and in becoming instrument of corruption in the public life since British days. This great achievement is credited

to Charan Singh's first tenure of Chief Ministership of UP.

With the success of these two operations against the old-age corruption in these two departments, Charan Singh became a bugbear for the corrupt officials of the State administration of UP. A Law Professor told the author that whenever Charan Singh used to take oath of office as Minister or as Chief Minister, the hearts of the corrupt officials of these Departments would palpitate with their faces growing pale. He also described the common saying in Uttar Pradesh that as soon as Charan Singh becomes the Chief Minister of the State, the receiving hand of the corrupt officialdom goes down the table with the news of his assuming the office at Lucknow. Such was the terror of this incorruptible man in the minds of the corrupt officials. No wonder when he started his crusade against corruption after taking over the reins of the office as Union Home Minister, the fear crept among the officials in the Departments of Revenue, Police and P.W.D., notorious for the breeding ground of corruption. The corrupt officials had the shock of an electric current since they knew the Home Minister's strong dealings against the corrupt officials starting from the lowly paid Patwaris to the highest paid and powerful senior bureaucrats of Govt. Of India.

His famous dictum of eradication of corruption is given in the following para which he often quotes in his speeches to the public and in his addresses to the top civil servants of his ministry/ heads of the police departments of the States' and the Union of India:-

"It is sad to find that corruption, which has been holding our society in an Octopus-like grip, is now sought to be rationalised and belittled as a lesser crime, as something that calls for low-key and neutral action. I think corruption cannot be eradicated from this country unless it is dealt a mortal blow at the top echelons

both of the Government and the bureaucracy”.

Charan Singh's crusade against corruption led to his exit from the union Government, matched by growing public demand for his return to lead the Janta Government as its chief so that the unfinished crusade against corruption could be finished. Crusade against corruption could take the shape of unfinished revolution leading to the emergence of clean public life in Indian polity.

# VIII

## A MOST MISUNDERSTOOD POLITICAL LEADER

'Politics is not the game of Urban elite', said Charan Singh while speaking to The Illustrated Weekly of India, and commenting on the achievements and failures of India under Congress Rule.' True, but at the same time, politics is not a game of plain speaking grass-rooters like Charan Singh either. Charan Singh seemed to be a round peg in the square hole among the present Indian politicians. He had to face the hostile press, controlled by big business magnets who have got deep vested interests. They control the politics of the country by planting their own men in the top echelon of the Government Machinery, particularly among the top politicians of the Ruling party. Once, Charan Singh had point blank said to the journalists at a Press Conference, "How can you eschew the truth that the son of a farmer is running the show from Delhi". Not only that, Charan Singh had started finding it difficult to adjust himself in the surroundings of the top political brass of his newly formed Janata Party. The leaders of different constituents, forming the Janata Party were at daggers drawn right from its formation. This was so as they feared, while in detention, that during operation of internal Emergency would never come to an end and some of them might die in prison as during the dark days of British Raj.

A Conglomeration of such ideological divergent parties

naturally makes a loose form of Union looking more like a Samyukta Vidhyak Dal (SVD) than a single political party.

Charan Singh's first clash with India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru immediate in the wake of independence in 1947, took place over the issue of cooperative farming in early fifties, This came in to open in 1959 at the Congress Session held at Nagpur. Pt.Nehru known for his tolerance & his Westren brought up was known for permitting dissent over ideological matters. But the politicians surrounding the great nationalist socialist, Nehru virtually forced Charan Singh to quit the Congress Ministry in UP headed by Sampuranand. The Chief Minister's reaction to the opposition of Charan Singh's stand, on Congress resolution, based on his firm and clear ideas about the co-operative farming was so strong that the shortsighted Chief Minister of U.P. managed the exit of his colleague from his Ministry. Writing a letter to Prime Minister Nehru, Charan Singh gave an account of circumstances, leading to his decision to resign from the U.P. Ministry as given in the Appendix.

The reply given by the Prime Minister Nehru was that though he was not unhappy over the views on the Co-operative Farming Resolution yet he should not have adopted such a stiff posture which made it difficult and indeed impossible for him to continue in the Ministry, and he ultimately resigned his Ministerial Gaddi for the first time in 1959. It is evident from Nehru's letter that though he did not share Charan Singh's feelings, Prime Minister was unhappy over the later's outburst against the resolution on co-operative farming. There is no denying the fact that Nehru did not like a minister of his party in a state cabinet to criticise the National policy, framed at the central level, even though the minister's views might be found to be correct later on and the national policy seemed to the minister at variance with the basic

national interest. Pt Nehru had realised his mistake a little before his death when he made a statement in the National Development Council on 9th November, 1963. Expressing it again on 11th December, 1963 in the Lok Sabha, Prime Minister said, "I had been a great admirer of the big industries and the modern technology but the problem of unemployment of the country had not been solved, and my mind is again and again haunted by Mahatma Gandhiji's philosophy". He admitted openly that due to this lapse and wrong appraisal by the planning Commission, the economic condition of the country had gone from bad to worse, and a big chunk of the national income had been accumulated in the hands of a few individuals. He, then, assured by stating that I give my word of honour to the Parliament that I would not commit such blunder in future". But it was too late since Nehru died in May 1964.

Charan Singh rightly said after assuming the office of Union Home Minister under Janata regime that the first job of the Janata Government would be to reverse the priorities in formulating the basis of the current five years' plan. Although Charan Singh's views had been accepted as the blueprint of the Janata Government's Economic policy but it seemed to have been scuttled at the execution stage partly by the Planning Commission, and partly by the vested interests particularly the big business houses, which had been mainly instrumental for getting the priorities of the first five year Plan reversed at the time of formulation of the second five year Plan after the death of Sardar patel in 1950, who had succeeded in getting 40 per cent of the allocation of the funds under first five year Plan for the rural and agriculture economy. Thus the big business could not influence the National Policy on economic priorities in the first plan mainly due to the formidable Sardar's hold on national politics. A true

Gandhian, Sardar Patel wanted Gandhian dream of village uplift to come true after laying firm foundations of National Economy. His views were clearly visible when the first plan was adopted. Alas Pt. Nehru could not withstand the pressure of powerful business lobby in reversing the priorities in the second five year Plan.

It is not possible for a single person, what so ever, powerful he may be to put across his point of views viz-a-viz a strong political opposition which is governed by the monopoly business houses. These business houses had been controlling the National Government since Nehru's regime. This had been plainly pointed out by Charan Singh in his assessment of the Congress rule during the last 30 years. It is this vested interest which was one of the major factors in painting the picture of the then Home Minister in an altogether perverted manner and damaging his image. He was a true disciple of Gandhiji and proved to be a strong Home Minister like his illustrious predecessor Sardar Patel. Ever since he became the Home Minister, he had been branded as anti-Harijan and pro-kulaks. Some journalists like Janardan Thakur have not spared him even by branding him a racist and casteist and a patron of the agriculturist classes, Jats, Rajputs, Gujjars, Ahirs, who at one time even propagated the setting up of a separate Jat State carved out of the Western UP, Rajasthan and Punjab. This is evident in reviving an old bogey of 'AJGR' by union of Delhi University with whom Charan Singh had got no connection, the height of character assassination for political and other reasons by vested interest.

The iron man was so much hurt with this type of slanderous propaganda that he confessed openly to the author "this propaganda will cease as soon as Charan Singh dies. Had I not been a Jat, but some other agriculturist like Ahir, Saini, Reddy

etc., the propaganda would have still been launched against me as pro so and so, etc. forgetting the place of my birth. But I am a jat, it is a biological coincidence. The most painful aspect of this propaganda is that I am branded as anti-Harijan. It is an irony of fate that even when I have done more for the uplift of these down-trodden Harijans than anybody else from their own caste has done even than, unfortunately, I am branded as anti-harijan and more shamefully by the Harijan leadership itself to promote its own petty selfish end".

The press was also used against Charan Singh, even the so-called free press under Janata Government was controlled by the big business monopoly houses, and even editors like Verghese had to quit the editorship of The Hindustan Times group of publications; There is no question of the press being free from the clutches of the business magnates who control the most important publicity media, ie the newspapers. Since there was a direct clash of interest between the ideas of Charan Singh and the vested interest of big business houses, which control the press, the focus was on brain washing & derailing the path of right thinking population of a nation particularly its young generation, and it is unfortunate that the press is not yet free and independent in India. It is but natural that under these circumstances, a different picture of Charan Singh used to be painted under the instance of big business, controlling the 4th estate directly or indirectly.

Secondly , the present brand of politicians are the product of the era of hypocrisy which was perpetuated during the Indira regime, more so after the first split of the Congress Party in 1969. The rank opportunists jumped into the Indira band-wagon, changing overnight their loyalties, even their party labels, to get petty benefits from the Ruling congress party, which

was then governed by the notorious 'caucus'. Public memory is proverbially short. It was during the Emergency of 1975-76 that even some RSS its put on Congress tri colour by enrolling themselves as the members of the Youth Congress, headed and controlled by Sanjay Gandhi, though the titular President was Mrs. Ambika Soni, who replaced Priya Ranjan Dass Munshi, the young Congress rebel MP from West Bengal. When the character of the present politicians has undergone so much change under the later half of the Indira regime, it was almost impossible to know who was with whom. Even in the Janata leadership which was a compound of five constituent parties, it was difficult to segregate the original workers of the respective constituents from the turncoats, who managed to enter the folds of the Janata Party enblock. Naturally persons like charan Singh, who were true to their principles, found themselves completely strangers among such turncoat politicians, some of them unfortunately were occupying key posts in the Organizational and Executive Machinery of the Party and the Govt.

At the time of formation of the National Government under Janata Party label, the Prime Minister did not talk of his prerogative to choose his Cabinet colleagues (though he later justified it to justify the exit of Charan Singh and Raj Narain in June 1978). The different constituents of the Janata Party forwarded the names of their representatives for inclusion in the Janata Government, and it was equal distribution of the number of ministers out of Congress (0), BLD Jana Sangh, CFD and the dissident Congressmen, who were expelled or who resigned from then Congress (R) during the tenure of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership. The constituents of Janata Party had grown up in different political climate-RSS and its political wing the Jana Sangh are known for their discipline; the former socialists, the

follower of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia were famous for their fire brand politics. Jan Sangh was a party of Urban Trading Communities while Charan Singh's BKD stood for the protection of the interests of the small peasantry and the downtrodden ruralities. There had been thus a proverbial clash between the interests of the Trading Communities and those of small farmers of the villages; so also between the Urban and Rural people. The political parties having such background representing diverse shades of opinion, interests and behaviour could hardly shed their past. Sometimes, one finds substance in the allegations made by Congress (I) and more particularly by its leader, Mrs. Indira Gandhi that "the Janata Party is dominated by the RSS and Jana Sangh dominated Janta Government was doing more harm to the National integration for which the compass had stood since the Gandhian era". Then there was CFD unit, a party of leaders without followers and merged into Janata Party headed by Jagjivan Ram and his vociferous friend Bahuguna and Ram Dhan. Jagjivan Ram could not have reconciled that he missed the Prime Minister's 'Gaddi' only on account of stiff opposition by Charan Singh. Though Charan Singh's antagonism against Jagjivan Ram was not a secret yet it was the later who was more vocal, and remained busy in villifying campaign against Charan Singh with the sole aim of stopping his re-entry in the Union Cabinet at No.2 position. Jagjivan Ram resisted Charan Singh's re-entry into the cabinet was evident from the press writings of Rajinder Puri and others. According to this journalist, Morarji had reconciled to accept Charan Singh and to restore him his old position with a change of the portfolio and to compensate by elevating him with the designation of Deputy Prime minister continuing, journalist Puri wrote that Jagjivan Ram and C.B. Gupta swung into action. Jagjivan Ram had tasted

the warmth of the Prime minister's chair when he presided over a Cabinet Committee Meeting during the absence of Morarji Desai, who had gone on the tour in the Eastern states. C.B. Gupta was more worried about Charan Singh getting the Finance portfolio. Their joint move had been able to stall the inclusion of Charan Singh in the Cabinet at least for some time, otherwise the stage was set for Charan Singh's inclusion in the ministry, and the ceremony was to be held on 11th of November, 78. The analysis of Rajinder Puri sounds quite convicting.

After 'the lioness's' re-entry into the Indian Parliament from Chikmagalur The Guardian of London wrote that Jagjivan Ram had raised the bogie of a bloody revolution before she entered into the battle fray at Chikmagalur to stop the entry of his ex-boss Mrs. Indira Gandhi for whom, his heart was always itching for a heavenly help in achieving his cherished goal of Prime Minister's 'Gaddi', and by his usual pendulous approach to 'oppose her openly and keep a tract with her secretly'. In this battle of snake and mongoose, he always remained to be in a snakes position who was killed by the more skilful and crazy mongoose Mrs. Indra Gandhi. He called upon his Harijans brethren for stopping the 'atrocities' against them, and incited them to be prepared to resort to any means including bloody revolution. See, how foolish such a call was and that too from a leader of Jagjivan Ram stature. He had not lagged behind Shri Ram Dhan, another aide, who unsuccessfully tried to block the appointment of Ram Naresh Yadav as Chief Minister of U.P. With such a heterogeneous mixture of political constituents in the Janata Party heading the Government by die-hard leadership of Morarji Desai, it was but natural that the opportunists flourished as usual. Quite a few in the top leadership of Janata Party tried to undermine the basic character of the most powerful of the

'Trimurthi', the unbending Charan Singh, by branding him as 'anti-Harijan', 'pro-kulaks' and what not. A person who kept a Harijan cook as far back as 1932 and even upto his last breath kept a Christian girl for preparing his meals and whose family had been cast in the true Arya Samajist mould was branded as anti-Harijan by those who dared not enter the kitchen of their erstwhile colleague in the Indira Government till his death, is really a matter of surprise if not of shame. Even the statue of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviya was got washed by Ganga Jal (water) after it was unveiled by Jagjivan Ram, then a Cabinet Minister at the Centre.

A petty trader in the village, its small farmer and the down-trodden Harijan face the same treatment in a village society. Such is the case with a landless or land-holding Brahmin in the rural society, but it is the political leadership, which always tries to maintain a gulf between the different communities of villages to keep their ministerial chair intact at the State or the Central capital. Charan Singh who had been fighting for the uplift of the villagers and trying to translate the Gandhian dream of 'Purn' Swaraj of Gram Raj reality naturally found it difficult to adjust with such a group of politicians whose main aim remain to keep their 'gaddis' secure by raising different bogies at different times. Charan Singh's concept of 'Aparigrahi' demands sacrifice of his own interests for the interest of the nation. His was a typical farmer's son character, and he was mis-fit in the company of the present day hypocrite leaders.

Whether we accept it or not, it is a hard fact that the spectre of Indira Gandhi's return to power was one of the major factors that had kept the Janata Party intact upto 2-1/4yrs only. The Janata Party constituents were fighting, and were keeping their arms behind the curtain ready to settle, if necessary, their old score. The party's image touched its lowest ebb, and its

leaders were non-performing Ministers, fighting among themselves. The organiser of the Janata campaign, George Fernandes rightly lamented the fact, after the defeat of its candidate at Chikmagalur on 7th November, 1978, "that changing colours like chameleon and turn coatism have become the order of the day for the present day politicians in India".

There is one more important factor that explains why Charan Singh was a misfit in the set-up of the Janta Government ; it was his crusade to eradicate the evil of corruption from the public life. He had been advocating this pious idea that "corruption starts from the top and then seeps down to the base, so, process of eradication should also be started from the top". With this crusade of the ex-Home Minister, the corrupt politicians, bureaucrats and big businessmen became jittery, the day he became the party's most powerful Home Minister with the arsenals of his portfolio to fire them. They joined hands together and before they could be exposed and prosecuted under the law of land, they succeeded in their plan of seeing Charan Singh out from the Home Ministership. It was no wonder that his exit from the Home Ministry was the result of the powerful business lobby, headed by the prodigal Kanti Deasi, son of the then Prime Minister. The father's refusal to appoint a commission of enquiry against his son had almost barred his re-entry into the ministry. Presumably, this was the main hurdle in the former Home Minister's rejoining the Cabinet under Morarji Bhai as the former was not prepared to abandon his crusade against corruption at the 'top' even if a Prime Minister or the Defence Minister's son was allegedly involved. How could an incorruptible honest person like Charan Singh remain happy in a group which was dominated and controlled by leaders whose political record was

not the least unchequered? The yard stick used in India against corrupt politicians is different from the one, used in the Western and the other Socialistic countries of the world. But Charan Singh would not be satisfied unless the Gandhian Concept of corruption was not applied to the political life to the country. It is a tragedy that the political giant like Jawaharlal Nehru also accepted such type of corruption in the public life, which he used to blame as the legacy of the British regime, and Indian society could not be transformed into an altogether clean society overnight. Unfortunately, this indirect acceptance of political corruption has assumed disproportionate dimensions since independence, and the people openly say that the corruption under Congress regime had increased many folds than during the British regime.

Anybody, who raises his voice against corruption is bound to be swept off with the broom of the powerful machinery of the Government. Therefore the exit of Charan Singh as the Home Minister seemed to be a natural outcome of the machinations of the corrupt politicians, big businessmen and corrupt bureaucrats. They carried on their relentless campaign against the iron man through the press media to tarnish his image, until he was forced to resign.

In June 1977, Charan Singh told the correspondent of Sunday, a weekly of the Anand Bazar group of publications, when asked about the validity of the accusation that, though he was among the first people who initiated the move for the formation of a united opposition against the Congress, he would be the first to break the Janata Party for his personal ambition, Chaudhary Charan Singh said, "This kind of talk amounted to a conspiracy against me, a conspiracy in which capitalists, some

politicians and the biased Urban Press lobby are involved". He asserted, "There is nothing I would like more than to see a unified, strong Janata Party. I have done everything I could for the Janata Party. I will not allow it to disintegrate".

Once, Charan Singh said, "Politics cannot be the plaything of elite: nor can it be divorced from the harsh realities of life. The poor in this country and the solution of their most pressing problems have to be the central focus of all political parties and their activities all the time, then, only will they have any meaning for our people". He further said, "There is total erosion of our value systems, and even a large part of our precious heritage. Indeed, I would go to the extent of describing the bulk of our politicians more as wanderers with their past mooring, totally snapped and drifting aimlessly in pursuit of one mirage or another".

To such a class, principles, policies or programmes or even promises do not matter. Indian politics revolves around the sole axis of success. It does not matter how it is achieved. Nor what we forsake or foreswear. All that matters is success by hook or by crook. Ends not the Mean have become the order of the Day for the followers of Gandhiji.

And where this type of Indian politician would land people and the country? It landed the country in 1975-76 in the total eclipse of all freedoms. For two years, the nation and its people were tottering on the brink of an abyss of darkness and dictatorship. 'The Emergency' and all that followed should be viewed as the logical culmination of the type of political activity that had dominated our country all these years".

Now, it is for the readers to judge how Charan Singh could fit in this type of political atmosphere at the top? It would have

been against the spirit of his fibre if he had remained a silent spectator to all the evils of a corrupt system, and that was the reason why as soon as he was asked to resign in June 1978, he submitted his resignation to the Prime Minister. This shows his firm belief in the democratic principles and his respect for the democratic values.

One journal had published an article from the flight of its imagination, depicting a scene of an imaginary drama where Raj Narain was not ready to submit his resignation and having a Dharna in his office of the Health Ministry, Morarji calling for the Police and Charan Singh ordering Inspector General of Delhi not to interfere in the Party affairs. His kite flying took him to the farthest end of his imagination when President Reddy refused to dismiss Raj Narain and Charan Singh on being asked by the Prime Minister to do so, and a political drama was being staged in the streets of Delhi. Though it was a satire and a sad reflection on two ministers' refusal to resign, yet the picture painted in the satirical drama was no less than painting a perverted image of Charan Singh. The writer might have felt sorry when not only Charan Singh submitted his resignation, and persuaded Raj Narain also to do so. Later on the resignation letters were sent to the Prime Minister through a special messenger as Raj Narain was not prepared even to see the Prime Minister's face after his "high handedness", in asking resignation from two of his senior colleagues — one of them was responsible to instal him to the Prime Minister's Gaddi — and the other got it vacated from Mrs. Indira Gandhi through his tireless efforts first, through the legal battle and then in the electoral one. Raj Narain is considered to have set into motion the wheel of revolution and put democracy on its proper railings. All this was possible due to the famous

judgement of Allahabad High Court unseating Mrs. Gandhi as a result of Raj Narain's petition, challenging her election on grounds of the use corrupt practices by her. All this is vividly depicted in Kuldeep Nayar's book 'The Judgement' which deals with "start of the Emergency and ends with the Janata snatching power from Mrs. Indira Gandhi".

# IX

## A GREAT PARLIAMENTARIAN

Charan Singh was a great parliamentarian of his times. Dr. L.M. Singhvi, a great legal luminary of the present century, while assessing the parliamentary talent of Charan Singh, expressed his opinion as under:-

"I reckon Shri Charan Singh's Speech of 23rd March, 1976 in the Legislative Assembly of Uttar Pradesh as one of the truly great landmarks in the annals of our parliamentary history. If there were a contemporary time capsule on our parliamentary institutions, his speech would quality pre-eminently for remembrance by the posterity".

In that historic speech of March 23, 1976, he added, "Shri Charan Singh articulated the agony of a stifled nation and gave forthright expression to the anguish and sorrow of the people of India in a state of siege. He spoke courageously and with wisdom he spoke with righteous indignation, but without rancour or malice. He spoke as a sage and warrior, with a remarkable combination of vision and valour. He spoke not for this or that party or for this or that point of view in a rambling debate. He spoke for the political system and its groundnorms, for the common people and their liberty and for democracy and the rule of law.

To appreciate that heroic speech of Shri Charan Sing, we must recapitulate the perspective of India's modern political and constitutional history and remind ourselves of our national tryst

with democratic destiny.

With the advent of Independence in 1947 and with the proclamation of our republican Constitution in 1950, the concepts of freedom, liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, and the dignity of man were enthroned in our national pantheon. In the long night of India's struggle for Independence and in our dawn of Freedom, we had promised ourselves never to allow the enslavement of the human spirit. Our constitution and the basic values of our struggle for freedom had committed us deeply as a nation against all forms of arbitrary and authoritarian absolutism of power.

In March, 1976, the Emergency had, at least seemingly and for the time being for all practical purposes, succeeded in consolidating itself in legislative and administrative echelons. The skies of the Legislatures and the Courts were overcast with the darkest clouds. Shri Charan Singh's Speech of March 23, 1976 came as a veritable thunder and lightning, piercing and somewhat dispersing those clouds.

The most remarkable thing about that Speech was that in fact it came to be delivered on the floor of the Vidhan Sabha when the encircling and enveloping gloom was overwhelming and impenetrable. The press had been muzzled. Public opinion was voiceless. The ruling as well as the opposition parties were paralysed and atrophied. The Electoral process was put in abeyance. Courtiers abounded and flourished in the corridors of power; critics languished either in jails or in wilderness. Civil servants were without any real options. Many of them had not only surrendered themselves but had enlisted themselves as mercenaries. Industrialists were afraid. Traders were apprehensive. Workers and peasants were baffled. The political leadership itself had lost its moorings. The promise of social justice and

equity, and of discipline, tranquility and order on the one hand, and the climate of fear, apprehension, vengeance and vendetta on the other, brought about acquiescence and even enthusiastic support for authoritarianism. It was in that bleak situation that Shri Charan Singh spoke out firmly, clearly and courageously on March 23, 1976.

Shri Charan Singh started his speech mildly, precisely and courageously. The important extracts of his speech are give below:-

#### INDIRA'S DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY:

Earlier Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi used to term Democracy as Social Democracy, in the Communist jargon, and advocate drastic amendments in the Constitution. But now she terms it simply as Democracy and claims to be functioning democratically and does not feel the need for changes in the Constitution. I cannot say anything as to why there is a change in her statements but there is no doubt she swears so much by democracy now-a-days. On the other side, more than one lac persons are in jails. How have they been imprisoned? For months together. Their families could not know their whereabouts.....

#### THE OPPOSITIONS' CRIME:

Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai and once Raj Narain have been referred to in the Lok Sabha debates for committing particular crimes. I have regularly gone through these debates in the hope that probably my crime will also be mentioned someday. But no, at least I did not read about it. If my friends have read it, I shall be glad to know. This time I had definitely committed a crime in asking for Indira's resignation because she had lost the election petition in the High Court and it behoves such a 'big Prime Minister' to resign thereafter. My

statements made in the month of June were published in some Delhi newspapers. When I try much (to know about the crime etc.) only these statements come before me. Anyhow, this can be my crime but there are hundreds and thousands of such poor people who did not even make a statement and were still put in jail. They were not told of the reasons of arrest and detention. If someone moved the High Court to know the charges against a particular person even the High Court did not inform. Not only this, even the Maintenance of Internal Security Act, known as MISA, was amended. It is just possible that Constitution might have been amended but it is certain that MISA has been so amended that even if the High Court itself wants to know the reasons of someones' arrest by the Govt. it is not entitled to do so. History has no parallel of such dictatorship, autocracy and despotism!

#### JUDICIARY SUBJUGATED:

Magistrates depend upon police. They act according to what police says. They cannot take a decision of their own. Whatever the superintendent (police Superintendent etc.) says, the magistrate does. Of course, there are one or two such magistrates also as do not care for the superintendent. If you give rewards I may name them. But mostly these people (magistrates etc.) act according to police directives. Then, where is the need for Magistrates? The police officials themselves may conduct the cases and do whatever they like. A young Sub-Inspector came to arrest a professor. That young man had been his student. I do not consider it necessary to disclose the identity of the professor but it is difficult to find a like of him in honesty. He was a University professor. The Sub-Inspector touched his feet and told that he had come to arrest him. On being asked for the reason, he told that he was under orders to do so. The professor wanted to know

his fault. The Sub-Inspector replied that he did not know. The professor was sent to Tihar Jail. The case went to Court. Gradually, the Sub-Inspector became conscious and stated in the Court that the charges were concocted ones but even then the professor was not released.

#### FREEDOM FIGHTER AND HIGH DIGNITARIES NOT SPARED:

Kuldip Nayyar, the former editor of *The Statesman*, is a reputed journalist. He has authored many books in which he has written many such things that certainly can't please Indira. Therefore, he was sent to jail. In August, the Govt. allowed meetings with the prisoners. I had gone to the jail gate on such an occasion when I happened to meet him. His only fault was that he is the son-in-law of Shri Bhim Sain Sachhar, who was an old leader of the Congress. Shri Sachhar had the guts to write to Indiraji that 'the way she has proclaimed Emergency and the way the people are being arrested are not proper. She should reconsider it'. Perhaps Shri Sachhar had been a Governor of Orrisa. His letter enraged her. He was sent to jail. Both father-in-law and son-in-law were in jail together. The day I went to the gate, his daughter-in-law had come to see him. It was a good joke. I told her not to worry. Shri Sachhar will have no trouble. She replied that 'she does not worry - and father-in-law / son inlaw are living together. They have come to the in-laws'. Afterwards, Shri Sachhar was released. Kuldip Nayyar filed a writ petition in the High Court that came before a bench. The Govt. Counsel judged the attitude of the bench and before acquittal orders could be issued, fearing defame, the Govt. released him. There were one or two other similar cases.

RN Aggarwal should have been confirmed as a Judge but two of his juniors were promoted. He was superseded and

sent back to District Judgeship. The High Court and Supreme Court Bar Association passed resolutions against it. What for was he punished? A junior person was confirmed and a senior person was superseded. An advocate told me all this. Several other Judges met the same fate.

#### LEGISLATURE'S RIGHTS SUPPRESSED:

Even I wanted to file a writ petition so that those legislators who were in jail could be given full facilities for voting in the upper houses of the states. For this purpose, I had sent for an advocate of Delhi High Court. He told me that a resolution had been passed that day and they were taking a deputation to Indiraji, so that the members of Assemblies/Parliament can take part in voting/proceedings of the house to which they are elected. After that I did not meet him. I don't know what happened. But I have heard nothing came out of it.\*

#### PRESS GAGGED:

Recently Smt. Indira Gandhi was interviewed by a foreign news agency. One of the questions was regarding imposition of censor. Indiraji replied that the newspapers here indulge in unrestrained false propagandize against the Government. These newspapers belong to big business who have big fortunes. They are against us because we are for the poor. The press people are rich, and we are against them. Therefore, they carry on propaganda against us. The first thing \* Mr. Narain Dutt, I want to say is that everybody has a right of propaganda—right or wrong if one wants to do. Is there any provision in the Constitution that there will be no propaganda? Because this propaganda is against her, therefore, she says that it is against democracy.

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\* It is on record that many Legislators/MPs were debarred from exercising their legal rights of voting/discussing as they were not released to attend the sessions to their respective Assemblies/Parliament.

\* N.D. Tewari (Chief Minister of U.P.)

## THE FATE OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY DURING EMERGENCY:

I was telling you that the position today is such that you may imprison anybody; Judiciary had no control, Magistracy had no guts and the Radio is in your hands. News Agency is in your control and we cannot hold public meetings. Whatever I am speaking will not be published in the newspapers--why? Why are you slared? Why don't you allow the news to be published in the newspapers? What is the reason? You won't allow us to hold meetings and our statements published in newspapers. You may arrest anybody. Is this Democracy? Is this the way of Democracy? You are ruling but ruling shamelessly. Is this India of Mahatma Gandhi's dreams? You have suppressed the rights of opposition. You have silenced them. They cannot write. They cannot speak. Breznev came here two years ago. He asked Madhu Limaya, "What is the need of a second party in India". What was Madhu's reply, I don't know. But your contention is that once you have been elected and become Prime Minister, Chief Minister, then there is no need of the opposition. You are looking towards social democracy, i.e., a democracy on the communist model. You continuously say that elections will be held. We have read the statements of your leaders who said that the elections will be held in time. I want to know why elections were not held in time i.e., in February/march 1976?

It was decided at Chandigarh that there will be no elections.

Bahan Rajinder Kumariji, I feel sad. Sidharth Shankar Ray opined about elections that these are minor things. We have to strengthen the country. I want to know how the elections adversely affect the country's strength. His views for not holding the elections are, "Holding of elections is a minor matter, more

important is that we have to lay foundation for the country's progress". If you contend that only Congress can do good to the country and you will win the elections, then what is the hitch in not holding elections?

### ON CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT

Now I want to say something regarding the Constitution. The way it has been amended is a strange example in the world. The Prime Minister loses her petition. She is to make an appeal. She gets the law of the Nation changed in her interest with retrospective effect. The very words of the High Court judgement are incorporated in the Representation of People's Act. The newsmen asked Indiraji on December 19, 1976 about her constituency for contesting election. She named Rae Bareilly. This is called holding out -that is, indicating something before hand. Thereafter, on January 7, a Govt. officer delivers a speech in Indiraji's constituency in her favour which, according to law, is a corrupt practice but the law was amended to consider holding out from the date of nomination. High Court had given its judgement against Indiraji on three accounts and all three were annulled by making amendments. Prime Minister of a country, after losing the petition, gets the law amended in her favour on the basis of majority in the Parliament and wins the petition--there is no meaner example in the world thou this. Now, the Supreme Court could do nothing although there could be two opinions as to how far it accords with the spirit of the Constitution for a Prime Minister to get the Law amended in her favour? But the Supreme Court, keeping in view the law on the day of judgement, accepted Indiraji's appeal on which we and every just person, are unhappy. You may out-wit us in arguments but there are traditions in public life which must be kept and which make and mar Nations. Whatever happened regarding the judgement

of Indiraji's petition is shameful for the country.

### PRIME MINISTER PUT ABOVE LAW—SPEAKER ABOVE THE PARLIAMENT:

I was speaking about the election petition. Mr. Speaker, the law has been amended. The Prime Minister, President, Vice-President and the Speaker are included in that. These people may indulge in any corrupt practices during elections, the rival candidates will not hold the right to move the court. What does this mean? This smacks of the Mughal period when there used to be 'Umraos', 'Raizes'—some 'Tees Hazari', some 'pachas Hazari'. Similarly, Indiraji said these people are Lords—President, Vice-President, Speaker and herself. An election petition against them will not go to a Court of Law. Why not? There will be a separate organization etc..... Why so? Do you call it a democracy? They cannot be sued in a civil court. Prime Minister cannot be used in a criminal court now or in future even when she is not the Prime Minister. I want to know why? I say the Prime Minister does wrong to a person and shoots him in anger. If I go before her, she may kill me. Mr. Speaker, is there any such example in the world where the Prime Minister might have behaved in such a way? Friends, I ask you, it is just not a joke. We have to think with a cool mind about what is happening in the country. This country does not belong to someone's forefathers or family. It belongs to 600 million people. Why to you people not feel bad about what is happening? What will be the end? Where is Kashi Nath Mishra today? He always fights for a good cause. What has happened to his fight? How much has Gandhiji said about individual freedom? But you people cannot raise your voice. What is holding you?

### PRIME MINISTER'S RESPECT FOR LAW:

When the Prime Minister won't abide by the law, why will

a village president or anybody else abide by it? Just see the guts, its bad fate. You people laugh, some of you smile. I want to know when the president of your party says, "Indira is India; India is Indira", you should feel ashamed. Nobody claims so in any other democratic country. Bravo! These are your guts, or this is your weakness. This is your mistake. Have you raised your voice against this? No, but you ought to have. At present you don't have support of more than 25% people but suppose you have 33% or 42% or even cent percent support, even then Indira cannot be superior to the country. You did not feel ashamed in saying so. That man\* calls other 'Thugs' for his own selfishness, chanting "Indira is India; India is Indira". And the entire Congress party supports him. You do not feel how much wrong you are doing to the country. There cannot be anything more sad and shameful for any Indian patriot. Emergency was proclaimed in the country due to this cowardliness of yours. What are the charges against us? We were threatening the integrity of this

Nation, i.e., putting the unity of the country in jeopardy! Emergency has become a joke. None will be allowed to speak or walk.

#### VILIFYING JP

The most serious charge against Shri Jayaprakash Narayan is that he incited the police and Military to refuse to obey the Govt., order even if asked to shoot their own countrymen under orders of the Government. My opinion is that he has the right to say so. We have also the right to say what he says. We can ask the Military and Police that if they are given an order which is against law and against the interest of the country,

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\*Dev Kant Barua, the then Congress President (In Bihar, when he was Governor, he was nicknamed as 'Bharva' since Jayaprakash Narayan once called him Court jester).

against the constitution, then they can refuse to obey that. They are not to act according to such an order. The argument of any soldier or policeman that he was under orders from his officer, will not be accepted. A provision to this effect exists in the Army Act. The Mai Lai episode may be fresh in your memory. Mai Lai is a village in Vietnam. There, some military personnel of the United States of America shot dead some innocent villagers. People were murdered in large numbers. There was a big uproar over this in America and it was felt that it was very bad. The court was moved. The soldiers claimed in their defence that they were under orders of their officers. There the court decreed that no such orders can be just. It is out and out a crime. Such orders from any officer must not be obeyed by you. If you have obeyed, then you suffer the punishment. I want to know whether heavens have fallen if Jayaprakash narayan has said so. There is a similar provision in our Army Act. If any officer issues orders against the law, nobody is under compulsion to obey them and one can refuse to obey them.

#### BRITON'S' REGARD FOR DEMOCRACY V/S DEMOCRACY UNDER INDIRA:

In 1760, the British Parliament received a complaint against ministers. The then Prime Minister of Britain, Earl of Chatham, had said, "If there is any complaint against any minister, whether it is serious or ordinary, it becomes our duty to get it enquired. If the complaint is found baseless and the ministers are found innocent, the prestige of the Government enhances. People will say that false charges were levelled". Some special correspondent asked Indiraji that people level charges of corruption against her colleagues, to which she replied that none of her ministers is corrupt. Can there be a bigger lie in the world than this? The situation is that if for a position there

are two candidates, one is less corrupt than the other, then compared to the honest or the less corrupt one, the more corrupt will be chosen because she knows that he will not rise against her. We say, why you don't hold inquiries. Again, I talk of your guts, you want to make a martyr of LN Mishra, why? Because you want to cover his and your own misdeeds.

#### DEFINITION OF VIOLENCE — GANDHI AND THE GITA:

Shri Ramesh Shrivastava: So you believe in violence.....

Charan Singh: Yes, I do. But as much as Lord Krishna did. He had told Duryodhana that if he did grave injustice to the Pandavas and not give them even five villages then the war would become inevitable. You should kindly try to know the views of Gandhiji. Who religiously believed in non-violence. In this regard Gandhiji had said, that he wanted independence through non-violence, then only India of his dreams would emerge, but if independence could not be achieved through non-violence, he would not hesitate to use violence because he considered violence better than slavery. Slavery is worst than violence (interference)....

What are you saying?

Charan Singh: I am saying the right thing.

" All Congressmen and Pt. Nehru were of this opinion. They never believed in it. They believed in non-violence not as religion (Dharma) but on account of expediency of the situation. Nobody has said that there will be no violence under any circumstances. There can be circumstances, compulsions and necessities when violence can be resorted to. Such was almost everybody's belief. This was said by Lord Krishna, Pt. Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and I also say so. You enslave 600 million people, you do away with their freedom and you want the country goes on tolerating all this I incite people for violence. It is just not

possible even if I want to do so. But do you think the steam goes on accumulating in the boiler and nothing will happen anywhere? Something shall happen, and definitely happen. There will be a blast and the country will be doomed in flames. I am talking in your interest. I am talking in my own interest and interest of the country. You do not provide such a chance to anybody. It is possible that a young man somewhere or some such party will not tolerate the suppression for long when you usurp their freedom for good".

#### STUDENTS' INDISCIPLINE—PROPAGANDA AGAINST OPPOSITION:

"You propagate twenty points in which it has been said that the opposition spreads indiscipline in educational institutions and hostels. May be some people are doing so but the congressmen are no less involved than others. In 1970, we had decided that it was not proper to have compulsory students' unions. Although the congressmen and the opposition incited the students yet it did not lead to any fighting or violence anywhere. It is possible that a few students might have been arrested. It was a very good session from the academic point of view. I received many letters regarding the peace on the campuses and the quantum of education imparted which stated that so much education was never imparted during the last twenty years. Then your leader Shri Tripathi came into power and immediately after taking over, he withdrew that ordinance and again compulsory students' unions were formed. What was the outcome?—the Lucknow University was burnt. Such a big mishap has not happened anywhere till today but still the man responsible for it (Shri Tripathi) was promoted. So, I want to know if there have been quarrells among students here then who is responsible for that? When the Government tried that there

should be no unions you tried for the establishment of unions."

When I was in jail (Tihar Jail) then a police officer (S.H.O.) there told me that whenever students were arrested for burning buses or doing mischief on the campus the congress leaders always pleaded that there should be no prosecution, instead the complaints be registered and the students be let-off after a few days. But the charge of creating indiscipline is levelled against us.

### HER REFUSAL TO HAVE DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION—A DEMOCRATIC TRADITION DESTROYED

In January, some 2-3 days before the session of the Parliament, Indiraji gave a call, before the secretariat, to wipe out the opposition—to finish them. I want to know if in any country of the world a democratic leader has betrayed this attitude or barged that opposition has to be wiped out. You go through the newspaper of January 5, I do not have it with me at this time but I have read it. She said so; not once, but twice. Some independent member asked her why she does not have a dialogue with the opposition. She replied that she will never talk to them (us). This is the attitude of our Prime Minister. Then when next day people told her that it was not proper for her, she said, 'I am prepared to hold a dialogue provided the opposition creates a proper atmosphere for a dialogue and gives an undertaking not to offer any obstruction to Government's working'. On this HM Patel, who is the Chairman of Janata-Front, and Shri Gory (NG) immediately wrote to Indiraji that since she has said that she is prepared to hold a dialogue, they wanted to know how proper atmosphere could be created and as far as your statement regarding our interference in the administration, we want to know any such instance. We only fulfil the obligations of party in

opposition. We criticise those of your policies which are harming the nation and we shall continue doing so. But where have we indulged in violence? What interference have we caused? This letter remains unreplied to-date. Not only this much, Jayaprakashji wrote a letter and on Gorey's insistence he wrote very politely. Had I been there, I would not have let him write that. This letter was not even acknowledged.

#### STUNT OF 20-POINT PROGRAMME:

Now take up Indira's 20-Point programme. This is not a programme of the Congress or the Government, Everywhere one reads; 'Fulfil Indira's test strengthen her hands. If you were to strengthen her hands, you should have written for strengthening hands of the Congress'. You go to some development block where a small road has been constructed or a tube-well has been installed, you will find the inscription constructed under 20-Point programme of Indiraji.

#### PERSONALITY-CULT AND INDIRA'S WORSHIP:

This is not democracy and all this is against the democratic traditions. Anniversaries of kings and queens are celebrated underlining that so-and-so have ruled for ten years. Nowhere in the history of any democratic country have we heard of celebrating such a day. You ask only Shri Naraian Dutt in this regard. There is no harm in it. He has made the State and Pretty one with Indiaraji. Just-think over it. In jail I happened to read a news item 'milk price cut on the occasion of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's birthday.\* This is like having a holiday on the birth of a son to king. I want to know if there is not harm in it, then you argue with me. This is no democracy.

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\* By State Milk Scheme Bangalore. Mysore State is run by her Subedar Devraj Urs.

### MISUSE OF THE ARMY POSITION:

In this regard, I would to read out a letter of Major gen. Habibulla Khan whose wife was also a member of this house. The letter has been written to Major Rajeev Singh of Basti, a member of our party. He gave the original letter to me. I have got it cyclostyled. I have brought two copies of it. The contents of that letter are. "A cell by the name of Es-servicemen U.P. Congress committee cell has been organized. I have been appointed its state convener. I want that you (Major Ranjeet Singh) should become convener of Gorakhpur division and talk to me in this regard". The persons involved in it are G.O.C.-in-C Central Command. A.O.C.-in-C Central Air Command. Who are servicing officers. You are forming an organization of ex-servicemen for the purpose of election-by the name of Ex-servicemen UP Congress committee Cell. By organizing this Cell, You are inviting those senior officers who are in active service. If the Cell had no political connections, there was no harm in it. But no, that Cell is a 'Congress party Cell'. Major Gen. Habibullakhan himself is a congressman. Thus it is possible that you want to make use of army and such administration for achieving political power, which is wrong. You want to merge the state and party into one and impose one party rule in the country Even then we are charged with being against Democracy. You may see for yourself.

### DEGRADATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE:

Now you have not left any honour even for the President. This highest office should be occupied by noncontroversial person against whom nobody can say anything. But no, you would instal such a person that may be in your pocket, may be some commission has reported against him and you would get his signatures on any type of paper. Through no Head of State

in the world could have an Emergency like ours been approved. Earlier, the parliament had rejected an Ordinance on the subject. At the same time another Ordinance was flown to the President, who was out of Delhi, and immediately the presidential signature obtained on it. This will undermine the prestige of the office of the President. When the Constituent Assembly was discussing Section 357 of the Constitution which provides Emergency powers regarding the dissolution of State Legislatures and imposition of Presidents' Rule', Dr. Ambedkar had said:-

"If they are at all brought into practice, I hope the President, who is endowed with these powers, will take proper precautions before actually suspending the administration of the province".

But no such precaution is being taken in practice. The Tamil Nadu Government had offered to conduct the election of the State Legislature alongwith the Parliament. If the election for parliamentary is postponed, the election to Legislature should also have been postponed. But it was not acceptable to Smt. Indira Gandhi and the State Govt. was dissolved and then dismissed in no time."

Indira's mother was prosecuted in 1931. That judgement is now on display in the State Exhibition. The family which has been ruling till today shall rule in future also. Lakhs of people have made sacrifices for the country. In 1931, a large number of people, poor women, poor men and large number of patriots courted arrest but what is being paraded is the court arrest of a single lady since she was the mother of the Prime Minister. I want to know why the name and work of other people were not exhibited in the State Exhibition. There must have been persons who must have sacrificed much more than Kamla Nehru. The 1931 Judgement against Indira's mother is exhibited but quoting

only the last para is important:

"Right below this and bracing Kamla Nehru is another small item conveying Pt. Moti Lal Nehru's concern over the development and the arrangements made by him for looking after his young grand daughter, Indira".

The said poster appeals to the present generation, "The grandfather worried so much and you also ought to worry. How magnanimous is the suffering of our Prime Minister".

#### CHIEF MINISTERS OR SANJAY'S STOOGES:

"If the Chief Minister of UP moves about announcing the arrival of young man who has no constitutional position, how improper it is what does it mean? A young man of 25 or 30 years speaks on budget, such a secret document:—advises all congressman, young and old, to remain together. I have been told that the Prime Minister asks senior congressmen, who go to see her, to talk to Sanjay Gandhi first. Even the Chief Ministers are told like this. This is an insult of all public life. Mr. Tiwari, I want to ask you if there is any comparison between Sanjay and yourself. What is this? Is there any honour left; You should die of shame if you have honour. I have come to know that Ministers shout slogans after slogans for that chap. I have also heard that the slogan, Present leader—Indira Gandhi, Youth leader—Sanjay Gandhi, Future leader —Rahul Gandhi" is frequently raised these days. I have heard this also that Government issued an order that on 27th, the day of Sanjay Gandhi's arrival, the school children and the teachers will be queued up in a 15Km. line from Air port to Government House to welcome him. Why did you issue such orders? And if officers did so, you ask them why they have issued such orders, I do not want to say anything but Tiwariji what would you learn from Sanjay? What the children, queued up for miles, will learn from him? The children, be queued

up to welcome a personality from whom they may learn something. Every Transport Officer has been ordered to bring 5000 persons. RTO's have been ordered to make financial arrangements. Mr. Bahuguna had started this tradition just like that of Emperor Akbar. You also tried today the same on your return from Delhi and now Sanjay's procession is in the offing. RTO's will bring Rs. 5,000/-and 5000 persons each. I want to ask why this all at State expenditure.?

#### FATHER AND DAUGHTER COMPARED:

Pt. Nehru came here in 1936 at the Congress Session which was held here (Lucknow) in 1936. What he said then is very appropriate for this occasion since Pt. Nehru was by chance the father of our prime Minister. Many a time she has said, 'My father was a Saint, I am a politician'. She says that she knows politics and she says this also, "Politics knows no morality". See what Pt. Nehru said in this regard at the all-India Congress Session:—

"Comrades, being interested in psychology, I have watched the process of moral and intellectual decay and realised even more than I did previously, how autocratic power corrupts, degrades and vulgarises".

This was published in newspapers then but her father's administration had not prosecuted any person or newspaper. But does someone have the guts to publish what I say today. In the meantime, I have written a book which I had started writing much earlier. Now I am thinking of getting it published. But I have been informed that there is censor on books also. Panditji said, "that the Government which curbs the press, bans several organizations, as is happening here, detains people without prosecution, and various things of this type, which are now happening in India—things which we all know. Such a Government has no right to stay even for a minute".

Someone remarked later after reading the speech of the leader of opposition, Chaudhary Charan Singh in the assembly, that Nehru would have committed suicide if he had seen the misdeeds of his daughter—and another lawyer remarked—'No she would have put him in jail under MISA before he could have seen her in action during the Emergency and he would have got Shajahan's treatment when Aurangjab imprisoned him at the Red Fort, Agra'.

#### THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE:

What Panditji had said in 1936 is very relevant in the present circumstances.

I will say one thing more to my friends. Let them search their hearts and that too for the sake of the country. I may be wrong and I may have said a wrong word, for that I beg your pardon and request you to forget the strong words used but have an impartial look at the condition of the country. How do we take the country and ourselves out of the wrong path? The wrong might have been done ignorantly or out of lack of political wisdom or otherwise.

#### CLARION CALL TO THE FELLOW LEGISLATORS:

In this regard I am reminded of a very important incident in the Mahabharata. (Laughs from the Treasury Benches) What is there to laugh in it? I am going to tell about Duryodhana, not Lord Krishna. Duryodhan was told that if there was a fierce war due to which the country was ruined, it would be his mistake. Duryodhan had said, "I know what is Adharam but I cannot keep myself away from it, and save myself. I know what is Dharam

But I cannot act accordingly as if some devil had overtaken me". Friends, this is your condition also. This devil is not Indira Gandhi. Not your circumstances, this devil is your selfishness, your own interest, which everybody has. There is no

person in the world who does not have some self-interest, without which worldly courses would have been halted. But if self interest is against the interest of the nation, it endangers the country, then atleast those people who have taken a vow of serving the nation, must forego their self interest and ought to think about the nation. Just think over it. No man is immortal but the country is.\*

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\* The speech of the leader of opposition Chaudhary Charan Singh.

# X

## REVOLUTION IN THE VILLAGES

Gandhiji's dream of village 'Swaraj' finds echo in the ideas of Charan Singh. In the words of Gandhiji, "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 700,000 villages. But we town dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly ever paused to inquire if those poor folks get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain.

"I have found that the town-dweller has generally exploited the villager, in fact, he has lived on the poor villager's subsistence. Many a British official has written about the conditions of the people of India. No one has, to my knowledge, said that the Indian villager has enough to keep body and soul together. On the contrary they have admitted that the bulk of the population lie on the verge of starvation and ten percent are semi-starved, and that millions have to rest content with a pinch of dirty salt and chillies, polished rice or parched grain.

"Over 75 percent of the population are agriculturists. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour.

"We are guilty of a grievous wrong against the villagers, and the only way in which we can expiate is by encouraging them

to revise their lost industries and arts by assuring them of a ready market.

"What they need is not a knowledge of the three R's but a knowledge of their economic life and how they can better it. They are today working as mere automations, without any responsibility whatsoever to their surrounding and without feeling the joy of work.

"We have to teach them how to economise time, health and money. Lionel Curtis described our villages. Our village-folk do not get fresh air though they are surrounded by fresh air; they don't get fresh food though they are surrounded by the freshest foods. I am talking like a missionary in this matter of food, because my mission is to make villages thing of beauty".

"The revival of village industries is but an extension of the Khadi effort. Hand-spun cloth, hand-made paper, hand-pounded rice, home-made bread and jam are not uncommon in the west. Only there they do not have one-hundredth of the importance they have in India. With us their revival means life, their extinction means death to the villagers.

"If we should have electricity in every village home, I should not mind villages plying their implements and tools, with the help of electricity. But, then the village communities or the state would own power-houses just as they have their grazing pastures. But where there is no electricity and no machinery what are idle hands to do?

"Villages have suffered long from neglect by those who have had the benefit of education. They have chosen the city life. The village movement is an attempt to establish healthy contact with the villages by inducing those, who are fired with the spirit of service to settle in them and find self-expression in the service of villagers.

"The villages communities should be revived. Indian villages produced and supplied to the Indian town and cities all their wants. India become impoverished when our cities become foreign markets, and began to drain the villages dry by dumping cheap and shoddy goods from foreign lands.

"It is only when the cities realise the duty of making an adequate return to the villages for the strength and sustenance which they derive from them, instead of selfishly exploiting them, that a health and morel relationship between the two will spring up. And, if the city children are to play their part in this great and noble work of social reconstruction, the vacations through which they are to receive their education ought to be directly related to the requirements of the Villages.

"The villages movement is an much as education of the city people as of the villagers. Workers drawn from cities have to develop village mentality and learn the art of living after the manner of villagers. This does not mean that they have to starve like the villagers. But it does mean that there must be a radical change in the old style of life.

"We have got to be ideal villagers, not the villagers with their queer ideas or absence of ideas about sanitation and giving no thought to how they eat and what they eat. Let us not, like most of them cook anyhow, eat anyhow, live anyhow. Let us show them the ideal diet, Let us not go by mere likes and dislikes, but get at the root of those likes and dislikes.

"We must identify ourselves with the villagers who toil under the hot sun beating on their bent backs and see how we would like to drink water from the pool in which the villagers bathe, wash their clothes and pots in which their cattle drink and roll. Then and not till then shall we truly represent the masses and they will, as surely as I am writing this, respond to every call".

It is well-known that when Gandhiji was invited to Round Table Conference in England in 1931, he went in his usual loin cloth with his coarse Chaddar and it was contemptuously said by Churchill that this half naked Faqir of India has come to meet the king in the same dress in which he met the representative of the Crown, the Viceroy of India, Field Marshal Lord Wavell, at Delhi. Gandhiji unwrapped his Chaddar and said that this is the condition of India in which the British Government have put her, "My dress and my body depicts the true condition of the Indian people of the poor villagers who are half naked and half starved". The British Government was so much indignant that these remarks of the Father of the Nation were taken as the direct insult to the Crown but Gandhiji was a true picture of Indian villages. Charan Singh, being his true disciple, has taken a pledge to convert the Indian villages into the dream of Mahatma Gandhi's Gram Raj.

In this presidential address of an Education Society in Delhi on 25th December, 1977, Charan Singh said, "The condition of the Indian villages has become worse in the Congress Raj than it was under the Britishers, though Britishers were responsible for the miseries of the Indian villages. There was no shortage of the foodgrains in India, rather India was exporting her foodgrains upto the time of the First World War. Even upto the Second World War, India was self-sufficient in foodgrains. In 1946, we started and since then have been importing foodgrains upto 1975. It was pity that we could not produce foodgrains and pulses enough for our requirement in spite of our rich and fertile soil, good climatic conditions and enough water for irrigation. It is a matter of great distress that we have not been able to overcome the twin problems of floods and famines upto now. This was all because of wrong planning, beginning with the

Nehru era and perpetuated under Indira Gandhi. The root cause of the Indian poverty after independence, lies in the Second Five Year Plan, which was approved in 1956: It started the perpetuation of the poverty in India so much so that today there are about 55 per cent people in India, who are below the poverty line and that too from our own standards rather than the Western standard of living. Our luxuries are amenities, their necessities are our amenities."

The Britishers used to say, "India is a rich country, inhabited by the poor, and they followed on the measures of keeping India poor. When the Britishers arrived in India, there were only 45 percent Indians who were employed on agriculture, and the remaining 55 per cent were employed in other non-agricultural professions. When the Britishers left, this figure rose to 72 per cent (on agriculture) while as in England, there is only 3 per cent population which is employed in agriculture, and in the U.S.A., this figure is only 6 per cent. There is direct link between the deployment of the population in agricultural and non-agricultural professions with the prosperity of country. The more the population of country is employed in agriculture, the poorer is the country and vice-versa. The details have been in another chapter of the book.

Charan Singh also denied that he was anti-urban and anti-cities. For him, there is a direct relation between the development of the villages vis-a-vis the development of the towns/cities and these are interdependent for their development, for example, if you notice that a town is flourishing, the construction work is going on, more colonies are coming up, then it is a sure sign that the surrounding rural area is very prosperous, On the other hand, if you see that a town is in a dilapidated state, its houses have become ruins, there is no hustle and bustle in its

bazar(s), the shopkeepers are sitting idle, dozing the their shops which are almost empty, the customers are wanting, then you can gather without hesitation that the conditions of surrounding rural area is quite poor. The development of the small towns depends on the development of the surrounding villages; so also the prosperity of the town depends for their prosperity upon its surrounding villages. Similar is the case with the big cities, even worse than these in the villages. There are heaps of dirt all along, there are no drains, or if there are some, they are Kacha drains, full of the discharge from kitchens: there are heaps lines by human excreta on all sides, and the foul air of the city is further polluted by the smoke-emitting factories, trains, automobiles, etc. Villagers can, at least, have the fresh air when they are out in their fields; but the conditions of the slum dwellers is horrible. These need to be cleaned; but not the way, Sanjay Gandhi wanted with the help of bulldozers.

The slums are the result of the inflow of the villagers, who are usually employed in small traders and business. Since they can't afford to live in the cities, they construct their houses in the unauthorised colonies on the periphery of the cities/towns. The slum dwellers from the old part of the city mix-up with these people to engage themselves in flourishing their illegal trade/business. The slums become virtual hell with heterogeneous population, getting involved in all sorts of social crimes. But ironically enough, these people feel proud in calling themselves urbanised, and therefore better than villagers.

Charan Singh wants village elite to control this tendency of the villagers to rush to the cities, and this can be possible only if the rural elite don't sever their connections with the villages where they are born, brought up and educated. Their false pride of calling themselves urbanites, is the result of their thinking that

the city life is superior.

The Janata leaders took pledge on the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi on 22nd March, 1977 that they would provide a clean and efficient administration, and would do everything to fulfil the dream of Mahatma Gandhi. The pledge was administered by Lok Niyak Jayprakash Narayan in the company of the elder statesmen Acharaya J. B. Kriplani.

But the dream of Gandhiji cannot be fulfilled unless we seek cooperation from the villagers, particularly from rural elite, living in the cities, who can be helpful in bringing about radical changes in villages. This can be done only if they change their false notions about superiority of urban life, and stop following model of modern western living. It is a difficult proposition but they have to change their outlook. They should own their birth place, and try to convert it into a model village on the Gandhian lines. They should no longer look down upon their ancestral home, the village.

Ultimately, it is the village that grows into town, and the town into a city. So, if the villages are provided with modern facilities, and the intellectuals start living in these villages, there won't be pressures on cities. A healthy outlook is needed so that village life is not looked down upon, and villagers are not discriminated against for being ruralities. The primary need, therefore, is to divert the educational and material resources to the villages, and make them so attractive so not to be treated as symbols of backwardness.

#### THE PLEDGE

"We, the elected representative of the people of India, have assembled here at the Samadhi of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi,

Seek inspiration from him and solemnly pledge to endeavour earnestly to fulfil the task that he began ;

Serve our people and give our best to the weakest among them;

Uphold the inalienable rights to life, and Liberty of the citizens of our Republic;

Promote national Unity and harmony by working together in a spirit of dedication, and with a sense of sure direction,

That his life and work impart; practise austerity and honesty in personal and public life.

May Gandhiji's blessing light our path.'

India had been passing through food crises since independence. Preparations from foodgrains figure permanently in the diet of a poor country like India as enough protein, rich food articles like fruits, milk, fish, eggs, fowl and meat are not available in adequate measure. In India, food means bread. The home produced cereals and pulses are the staple diet of India, particularly in the villages. The problem of providing Roti, Kapra and Makan, is the biggest problem, is being faced by the Indian Political leaders. To feed its hungry millions — 50 percent of them are not able to have one square meal a day, to provide coarse cloth to wrap their bodies, and shelter to protect them from the vagaries of nature. Bapu once asked an Oriya women why she was not changing her Dhoti after bath. The reply was that she had got only one Dhoti. On the other hand, a girl student studying in a college of the Capital where the upper urban class lives in luxury, with imported items, had 72 Saries in its half a million villages, as Gandhiji has said, half starved, half naked and majority of the villagers sleeping under the open sky.

It is a pity that the country has not been able to meet the bare requirement of 'Roti' 'Kapra' and 'Makan' for its people, of the people, in majority level below the poverty line, an that too from Indian standard, increasing from 40 per cent at the time of the independent to about 60 per cent after three decades of the Congress Rule under Nehru Dynasty. Charan Singh very painfully repeats this fact in all his speeches, and it is his firm belief that Indian poverty can be removed only by adopting Gandhian principles and disowning Nehru's model, which shifted the priorities from the cottage to heavy industries This according to Charan Singh, was the beginning of an era of perpetual poverty in the villages. Most of the present day leader find truth in Charan Singh's conviction, and appreciate his philosophy, which constitutes a Gandhian blueprint for reconstruction of Indian Polity by the Janata Party.

Our major problem is the problem of food or we may say the shortage of the foodgrains. During the course of his visit of India in 1958, Lord Amery asked his counterpart A.P. Jain how many Food Ministers in India had been changed since independence — (There had been 13 Food Minister in Britain in the last 30 years). A.P. Jain replied:

"Since Independence, eleven years ago, I am the fifth in India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the first: he was followed by Jairamdas Daulatram, K.M.Munshi and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. I succeeded Rafi Ahmed in October 1954. India's Food Minister's span of life is shorter than your Food Minister's —only two-and-a-quarter years. I have already completed four, and now I am ready to drop out".

Out of these five Food Ministers, only Rafi Ahmed Kidwai attained the distinction of being a successful Food Minister. After him, S.K.Patil, C. Subramaniam and others failed like anything'

Kidwai's success may be attributed to his being a man of masses. He was brought up in the Eastern U.P.'s farmers' family which was known for its extreme poverty, and, he, thus, had the necessary know how of the problem from farmer's angle. He discovered that the country suffered from the psychology of scarcity. How was it to be broken? And he did succeed when he asked his Secretary to announce that rice is being despatched from Delhi in thousands of tonnes to West Bengal". His Secretary gazed into the eyes of the Food Minister, and told him the consequences of the announcement when stock of rice with the Centre was not even a thousand tons. Kidwai told him to make the announcement, and see the results after a fortnight. The hoarders and black-marketers took out their stock of their rice and put it in the open market. The artificial scarcity vanished by Kidwai's skill. He earned name for decontrolling the ration system by catching the bull of the food problem by its horns. The Second World War had left behind a legacy of food shortage, procurement, and controls. Black marketing in food was rampant. Grain dealers were minting money. The poor had suffered too long. They had become sick of food controls. "Controls give rise to fraud, suppression of truth, intensifications of the black market and to artificial scarcity. Above all, it demoralises people, and deprives them of initiative. It undermines the principles of self-help, they have been learning for generations. It makes them spoonfed", said Gandhiji at his prayer meeting.

Day after day, Gandhiji advocated decontrol in his prayer meetings. "When this control is removed", said Gandhiji, "the nation will breathe free". But the 'decontrol' before Rafi Ahmed Kidwai took over proved a disaster since it was done without proper planning, and executed by the ministers who were ignorant of the Indian conditions. By their blind pursuit of Western

ideology, they were guided by the Urbanite bureaucrats, who lacked in understanding the actual problem.

This is the difference between tackling the problem from a realistic point of view, and tackling it by imitation. An Executive machinery, wholly ignorant of the issues involved, and of the habits of the consumers, cannot solve national problems less so the food problem.

Charan Singh believed, and he very rightly does so when he stated that, India is capable of doubling its foodgrains by the turn of the current century, and the country is not only capable of feeding its hungry millions, if can also export surplus of its food grain to the gulf countries to neutralise the effect of their 'oil weapon' with our 'grain weapon'. Our agricultural scientists deserve credit for bringing about the Green Revolution in early 1970's. Our present day farmers adopt new techniques and put more labour to perpetuate the fruits of Green Revolution. Now our dairy scientists are busy in bringing about 'White Revolution' in the country, and there is a hope that they would be successful in providing, at least, a quarter of the daily requirement of milk to our poor children, most of them grow without even tasting the milk other than their mother's milk which is insufficient for their proper growth.

Charan Singh's knowledge about the agricultural economy was very vast as it was based on the intensive study of the problem from a farmer's angle. It may be asserted that if his views on Economy Planning and Farmings were properly executed, and not scuttled by the vested interests and the bureaucracy, India may become not only self-sufficient in its foodgrains but it may be able to enrich itself by exporting its surplus to Middle East Countries. Charan Singh once said that had the priorities of the First Plan been not reversed in the Second Plan by the Planning

Commission, India would have become self-sufficient in foodgrains in early 1960's at least a decade earlier and would have saved hundreds of crores of rupees by importing foodgrains under the notorious PL-480 plan which was accepted at the instance of big business in the mid 1950's

Like Gandhiji, Charan Singh also believes that the cloth for the poor should be produced only by the cottage industries set-up in the villages. This has been discussed in details in another Chapter, but it may be noted that whatever Charan Singh said in justification of the village industry is nothing short of a concrete proposal for removing poverty in rural India. It prior to British days. Cent per cent requirement of the cloth used by the villagers was met by the hands-spun and hand-woven cloth, and what Charan Singh discouraged is the hypocrisy of Khaddar (the hand made cloth) which is not a symbol of simplicity. The politicians who use Khaddar, interestingly, buy the costliest imported cloth for other members of their families. Charan Singh's was a rare family which always wears Khaddar as a matter of principle. They have done so since he adopted Gandhian way of life in his teens, as a college student at Meerut.

Unless we follow Gandhism in action and give due importance to Khaddar we can't solve any problem. 'Charkha' was considered to be a wheel of 'Revolution' during days of freedom struggle, so much so that the British Government was worried about the slump in their cloth export, and the textile mills of Manchester and Birmingham were in the danger of being closed since the largest consumer of their goods, the British India, was resorting to the use of Khaddar - product of 'Charkha'. The women folk in the struggle days used to sing:

मेरे चरखे का टूटे ना तार  
चरखा मेरा चलता रहे ।

The thread of my spinning wheel should continue unbroken and my wooden wheel "Spinning thread (to be used to prepare Khadar Cloth to be used by poor ruralities) But this wooden wheel was a danger signal for putting the wheels of Manchester Mills to a halt.

Charan Singh stood for the construction of cheap houses built in the villages by the use of indigenous technology for preparing bricks and mortar. This is the only viable plan for providing roofs to the millions of roofless villagers, who sleep under the blue sky. The only thing to be taught to them, is the importance of hygienes and sanitation. He pleads for houses of simple designs, making provision separately for the cattle shed and the residential accommodation, proper use of the cow/buffallow dung through the cheap devices, like Gobar gas plants to be provided by the Government at subsidised rates. Charan Singh felt that if the Gandhian philosophy of village uplift was to be implemented, we have to resort to the Gandhian methods, so easily understood by villagers. They cannot be forced to accept the much publicised ways of Youth Congress of the model villages of the Congress concept. They can certainly adopt Antyodaya of Janata Party, based on the Gandhian view, but would hesitate to change their life style as Sanjay desired. Sanjay's idea was nothing more than an election stunt. The white washings of the heaps of cow dung to please some Western dignitary, was a common feature of such exercises in futility of this was intended impress upon those Western big shots that India had not been eaten up by congress white ants. The villagers may be ignorant but they are certainly not naive so as not to distinguish between the true intentions of the government and the things done for mere publicity for catching votes after every five years, and for grabbing money from foreign dignitaries,

visiting India on our invitation, then begging for more aid to India.

The present day thinking of the political leaders shows that Gandhiji's ideas have been buried too deep and only a leader of Charan Singh's stature, who was a true Gandhian in action, could have revived the village uplift campaign to realise the dream of Bapu. Only Charan Singh had the necessary capacity of translating Gandhi's dream of bringing about Purna-Swaraj, by turning concept of Gram Raj into reality.

In Charan Singh, we see Bapu in thought, Sardar in action and Swamy Dayanand in his zeal. If he was allowed by destiny to rule for a decade, and spared by his party colleagues (under the influence of big business and vested interest) to work freely in his typical style, then there is no doubt that India's poverty could have been banished from its village within a decade, and Gandhiji's soul would have felt at rest to see India happy. Three decades of the Congress Rule, Gandhi's creation which denounced him in action but exploited his label for its selfish and petty ends — could not do what Charan Singh could have done in a decade. Purposefully we wished that the long cherished dream of Gandhiji be fulfilled by him finding in him a true disciple of Gandhiji, and the people used to feel that the Sardar had been reborn politically. Alas he was not allowed a free hand in moulding the destiny of his countryman and did not get the same cooperation from his colleagues as Sardar Patel got in his short-tenure of office. This disciple of Gandhiji could have converted India into a Real Dream of Gandhian Gram Raj and Purna-Swaraj. Charan Singh had got the capacity and intention to do the needful.

Had he been given the cooperation he needed, Charan Singh could have helped make the country economically self-sufficient, enabling it to enjoy the fruits of 'Purna-Swaraj' — the long-

cherished dream of the Gandhi.

But the Janta Govt. headed by Morarji Desai & Charan Singh crumbled within 30 months of their existence due to infighting & blacksheeps in their party who were hectoring to bring Indira back to power for their self interest. The 2nd era of Indira-rules demolished all the democratic institutions necessary for a successful running of a democracy. The judiciary, bureaucracy & even the legislature were converted into "Commitment-ones"-only committed to Indira Gandhi for perpetuating her dynastic rule-which she succeeded but her innocent son-the heir Prime Minister Rajive Gandhi had to suffer for the axe she wielded to finish the democratic institutions forced them to play at her tunes. The same axe fell on poor Rajiv who met his most tragic untimely death at the hands of L. T. E., trained by the Indian Army (at the instruction of his mother) The only example in the Indian History where the son had to pay the price for the deeds of her mother, otherwise the parents had to suffer for the misdeeds of their children, particularly those who had been in power-autocracy or democracy of any country's polity.

# XI

## SARDAR PATEL - BORN AGAIN

(A strong and Clear Headed Administrator)

Ajit Bhattacharjee of the Indian Express wrote in April 1977:

"The other Minister to make his mark early was Chaudhary Charan Singh. He has held various portfolios in the U P legislature and found no difficulty in facing parliament. The concern he showed for civil liberties and democratic rights in dismantling the remnants of the Emergency came as a surprise to many because of his reputation of being a tough, unyielding administrator. They were even more surprised when far from taking a purely legalistic stand on Naxalism, he dwelt on its socio-economic roots. His ability to impress the C P I (ML) General Secretary, Mr. Satyanarayan Singh, with his sincerity and objectivity throws a new light on his capabilities".

The tough administrator is, in fact, only one aspect of Chaudhary Charan Singh's personality. Those who have read his well-argued and documented, *India's Poverty and its Solution* will realise that he has made a deep study of the country's agrarian problems. He believes that peasant proprietorship is the basis of a sound economy and viable democratic society. But he is not a 'kulak' in the pejorative sense because the farms, he envisaged are small ones. He was one of the first persons to lay stress on employment as a primary concern for India's planners and the inability of large collective farms to increase production or employment. The book was written in the 1950's before the

failure of such attempts in many East European countries became known.

Charan Singh rose on the ladder of prominence through Home Ministry by asking the Chief Ministers of nine North Indian States to dissolve their legislative assemblies, and had fresh elections in April 1977. The dissolution proposal was attacked on the floor of the House by Congress leaders like Y.B.Chavan, who called the step of the Home Minister more dictatorial than even Mrs. Indira Gandhi who had imposed the Emergency on the country. M.Bhaktavatsalam, Congress leader and former Madras Chief Minister, described as 'atrocious' the Union Home Minister's appeal to the Chief Ministers of nine states where the congress suffered a rout in the recent Lok Sabha elections to seek a fresh mandate from the people. He further added, "It was one thing if any Chief Minister felt he should recommend dissolution of the State Assembly. It was indeed 'strange' on the part of the Union Home Minister to imply that those who did not heed his advice would run the risk of some action".

He said propriety required that the Prime Minister should make the announcement and write to the Chief Minister concerned.

Dr.Karan Singh the former Union Minister for Health alleged that the Central Government was trying to topple the State Governments under Congress Rule.

He told reporters that there was no justification for 'removing' the elected governments on the plea that the Congress had been rejected by the people in the Lok Sabha elections.

"Would the Janata Government resign in case its candidate were defeated in the Assembly elections?", he asked. But the unbending, strong, grey eyed tiger politician Charan Singh



Home Minister, 1977



At the 1st National Convention of Legal Forum



whose strength lied in his mettle, said that there was nothing immoral or unconstitutional in his advising the Chief Ministers of nine Northern States to dissolve the State Legislative Assemblies and seek a fresh mandate .

In an interview to the press correspondent the Home Minister defended the Government's decision to ask the States to go in for fresh elections, " The sheer size of the 'total rout' , suffered by the Congress in those states, should have convinced the Chief Minsters that they had lost popular support."

His advice to Chief Ministers seemed extraordinary to some because it had never happened before which by itself was extraordinary. He said, " There were few parallels in the history of parliamentary democracies where a party had been so decisively rejected. To his mind, there was no justification — moral , legal or constitutional — for the Chief Minsters of these States to cling to power . The Congress got hardly a dozen seats out of the total of about 300 seats in parliamentary constituencies in the nine states in March 1977 election.

He pointed out that the Centre had not interfered in the case of Maharashtra where the Congress had been routed but not decisively . It had got 20 out of 48 Lok Sabha seats. He said, " We left Maharashtra alone we have acted only in the case of States where the verdict is at once clear and decisive... take U.P. Congress Zero, Janata and allies 85 .. take Bihar... Congress zero, Janata and Allies 54 and so on. It had to be done in the public interest. A situation had arisen where the public , the bureaucracy and the Government had lost mutual trust".

Charan Singh had met the Chief Minister of almost all states including those from Karnataka, Andhra, Madhya Pradesh and from their talk he felt; to use his own words, " It looked as if they were my own party men... they offered me cooperation—

except the Chief Minister of Rajasthan whom I have not yet met”.

“It would be good thing”, he added, “if the Chief Ministers heeded my advice”. Indeed, he did not see what other option they had. By resigning there was some chance that some of them might continue in a caretaker capacity until the elections were held, he added with a twinkle. There was no way out. Antagonism between the people, the Government and the bureaucracy could not be allowed to linger on it had in it seeds of disintegration and any responsible Government would not allow that to happen”.

He also said that there was not much merit in the question raised by Dr. Karan Singh, the question whether the Union Government would resign if the ruling party at the centre fared badly in the State Assembly elections: “If there is such a rout as the congress suffered, I would say the Government at the centre should and would indeed resign”, he declared.

Charan Singh agreed that in a federal set-up like India's there could be Governments run by different parties in the states and Centre, but the situation facing them just now was unprecedented. The Congress' rout has been total — it cannot say that it represented the people in these States — you have to look back and see what caused the complete Congress debacle ... This was not just a referendum .. this was revolution .. and when as a result of the revolution, you see popular will expressed in such a decisive manner, you cannot but accept its logical consequences....”

The famous journalist Kuldip Nayar while writing about the call of the Home Minister for dissolution of the State Assemblies under the caption MORALLY RIGHT CONSTITUTIONALLY WRONG, tried to defend the Home Minister by justifying his 'call' as morally right. He opined that it would have been better

if the Congress governments in the States had resigned on their own . "They have lost the confidence of the people and the lok Sabha poll has proved it. Morally, they have no reason to continue in office". asserted the journalist , and did so rightly.

Kuldip Nayar further said, "But what is morally right is not necessarily constitutionally right. To quote some outdated British experts , does not buttress the argument , Nor is the example of Britain applicable to India because the former has a unitary type of government.

India's polity has two faces, federal and provincial , The Constitution has delineated subjects for both. The States are autonomous in their field and only when the law and order breaks down does the centre intervene.

Crowding out the States administrations on the basis of parliamentary elections can set bad precedents . It can whittle down provincial autonomy which the southern States may not like at all. Moreover, it will injure the very values which the people have voted in after 20 months of authorisation rule. Ends do not justify the means, and even good results obtained through wrong methods get tainted.

The people elect the State representatives normally on local issues , affecting them directly . But when they vote for parliament , they have a larger persepective in view. It did happen in 1967 elections when the people had voted one party at the Centre and the other in the States. They have often done so even to balance things to ensure that pulls and counterpulls have a free play".

However , Mr. Nayar did not agree to the Home Minister's defence by taking shelter under the opinion of the British Constitution experts. He said that the government had unnecessarily got itself involved in the constitutional niceties by quoting

Dicey and Halsbury , the two British experts . In fact, the Govt. might go deeper into the quagmire of technicalities. He thought ,it did not build up moral pressure against the Congress administrations.

He further raised the question of applying article 174-2B through which the Centre makes use of the Governors in dissolving the State Assemblies if the Chief Ministers do not agree to the call of Home Minister. Some of the Governors were appointed during the Emergency. One of them , the Governor of Bihar was a friend of Bansi Lal , the defeated Defence Minister in Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Cabinet. Nayar for one was not in favour of dismissing the State Government. In fact the centre was in a real fix after the call of the Home Minister to dissolve the assemblies. Most of the Governors still had allegiance to their previous masters , since appointed by the Indira Govt. In the event of the Governors refusing to recommend dismissal of their State ministries , there could have been two possibilities , either the stronger ones might have refused to dissolve the assemblies , or they might have quit their offices and Janta Government to appoint new Governors so that it could be accused of misusing their offices for political ends. This would have meant that the Janata Party leaders were no better than their counterparts in the Congress Party. This would have lowered the credibility of the Janata Party had it happened .

Charan Singh was very clear in his mind and his 'advice' was based on his firm conviction that the 'advice' was not only morally and ethically proper but it was constitutionally correct also. His plea was that the State Assemblies of the Uttar Pradesh and Gujrat had outlived their normal life of five years and were under a fresh lease of life given to them by the outgoing Central Government through unconstitutional means in amending the

constitution to their convenience.

The course of action was well calculated by the seasoned statesman. The affected Chief Ministers rushed to the Supreme Court against the 'high handedness' and the 'illegal action' of the Union Home Minister in writing to them for the dissolution of their respective State Assemblies. Charan Singh waited till the decision of the Supreme Court although he knew very well that it would be against the petitioners themselves. The net laid by the Indira Government to perpetuate her personal rule, proved death trap for Subedars (Chief Minister of these States) who were not the elected leaders of the ruling Party but were picked up individuals to run the show in the State Capitals at the instance of their ring leader in Delhi. The Supreme Court gave unanimous verdict that the dissolution of the State Assembly by the Central Cabinet was perfectly within its legal right under the Constitution as per the provisions of the amended Constitution. The jubilant Home Minister, smiling under his sleeves then passed the orders of the dissolution of the Assemblies by the Union Cabinet after the pronouncement of the Supreme Court's decision. In the Capital, the jubilation found expression in Bhangra dances to celebrate the Supreme Court decision leading to the exit of 'Subedars' of the 'Grand Mughal' in unceremonious manner. Thus ended the era of repression and terror of MISA, initiated by their leader, Mrs. Gandhi and faithfully carried out by them in their own States during Emergency.

Both the great leaders Vallabhभाई Patel and Charan Singh were born in families of small farmers. Sardar Patel was born on 31st October, 1875 in Gujarat in a Patel family. The five Sardar brothers shared ten acres of land with their father. The Sardar had to do a good amount of labour, sharing farm work of his family; as is done by any boy of his age in a small farmers's

family even when he goes to school for his studies. He used to go to school after tilling the land, and passed his Middle Standard examination as late as at the age of 19 years. Charan Singh got more time for studies, and he had to do less farming work while being in school than his elder Sardar used to do in his childhood.

Charan Singh's family uprooted from Ballabgarh State had to take shelter in Meerut District, and his father and four uncles had to depend on a small piece of holdings for their livelihood. Both the leader had seen extreme poverty in a small farmers's family, and they can rightly be called true sons of Mother Earth, the smell and sweat being clearly visible on their faces.

Sardar Patel's claim to the office of the Prime Ministership was superior to that of Jawahar Lal Nehru who was not only 14 years younger but the Sardar has got a complete hold on the Congress Organisation, and by then had earned the reputation of being not only the Sardar of Bardoli but the Sardar of India, a title bestowed on him but the Father of the Nation after his great victory in the struggle of the farmers of Bardoli.

The Sardar had got such an immense hold over the Congressmen of the age of freedom struggle that had the Father of the Nation not intervened personally but showing his preference for Jawahar Lal Nehru, the office of Prime Minister would have gone to the great Sardar as the natural choice of his party. The same thing happened in the case of Charan Singh, who also missed Prime Ministership by agreeing to the nomination of Morarji Desai. Charan Singh gave his concurrence, and did not stake his claim by gladly withdrawing in favour of Morarji thus, he helped Lok Nayak Jayprakash Narayan and Acharya J B Kripalani to announce the 'unanimous election' of Morarji as the Leader of the Janata Party by its MP's. Politically Charan Singh's claim was

stronger than that of Morarji who was hardly able to brave the challenge of P. V. Nellore another candidate to become aspirant for the Prime Ministership. It is important to note that Morarji got the lowest margin of votes than any member of Parliament of northern/western India. He managed to be elected with a margin of about twenty thousands votes when most of the top Janata Leaders won the election under the tidal Janata wave by a margin of at least a lakh of votes. Charan Singh's margin was one of the biggest, more than two lacs, and interestingly, the Prime Minister's margin of votes was the lowest among his cabinet colleagues. Reasons were obvious. Firstly because his B L D constituent of Janata Party had the largest number of members of Parliament, and, secondly, he being the prime mover of forging the opposition parties into one single party (details given in another chapter).

Very few people know that Morarji Desai was the last person to accept the idea of a single opposition party, and he was not prepared to sever his connections with his old political party, the Congress (O). He continued to insist upto the last to retain the word Congress, even if it was called as Janata Congress. Charan Singh was the first person to forego the claim of his most powerful opposition party in order to merge into a new national party by denouncing all sorts of political identities like symbol, name etc., of his erstwhile B L D, which he had formed in 1974 by the merger of three political parties with his own BKD. Moreover, the peasants' class constitute 70 per cent of the total voters of the country, and 80 per cent of them, constitute the voting population of rural India. It is a well-known fact that Charan Singh was worshipped by the farming communities of Northern India and the campaign against him as casteist is shallow as it is motivated by the vested interests, and his fear-struck opponents.

Charan Singh's sacrifice during the freedom struggle was identical to that of the great Sardar with a difference that the latter's sphere of operation was the national stage while the former's field of activities was restricted to the State of U P only. Both suffered imprisonment in the British Jail for more or less of the same duration.

The Sardar was lucky to get the Deputy Prime Ministership with the Home portfolio straightway after the formation of the Interim Cabinet under the Prime Ministership of Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1946, whereas Charan Singh has to wrest his position in the teeth of the strongest possible opposition. He in fact, earned it by climbing the ladder of the Home ministry through consistent and long struggle to attain firstly the Chief Ministership of U P twice and then rising on the National horizon as India's second Home Minister having identical background of a peasant's family of his illustrious predecessor, the Sardar of India. His long struggle for a national alternative to Congress bore fruits, and the Janata Party gave the ruling party a crushing defeat in the elections of March 1977.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was caught on the wrong foot by declaring in January 1977 that general elections would be held, after the minimum constitutional requirement of 40 days, by the middle of March 1977.

Charan Singh had the unique distinction of becoming the first Non congres Chief Minister in U P the biggest State in India, in 1967. The capturing of power by the communists in the tiniest State of Kerala in 1957, was another example, exactly a decade earlier but the Congress leadership ensured the dismissal of Namodripad ministry in Kerala in 1959 that no other party could flourish in India except the Indian National Congress, later on converted as Indira National Congress. Indira Gandhi, who as

Congress President was instrumental in the dismissal of the communist ministry in 1959, later on succeeded to establish almost one party rule' in 1971-72 (after the disintegration of Pakistan), at the centre as well as in the states, though her party had fought election by making CPI as its ally. The Indian people has started believing, and upto some extent correctly that only Congress party led by Nehru family was destined to rule India.

It goes to the credit of Charan Singh that he united the opposition parties before the elections. But having regards for the democratic values, Charan Singh did not agree to become Deputy Prime Minister along with Jagjivan Ram when Morarji Desai offered two posts of Deputy Prime Ministership to accommodate both of them. It would have established unhealthy practice in a democratic set-up. This is why he remained satisfied with his No.2 position in the Cabinet without the designation of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The office of Deputy Prime Ministership was there when the great Sardar occupied it. Later on, Morarji Desai got it created under the Prime Ministership of Mrs. Gandhi, when he lost the battle for prime Ministership against her. It is also interesting to note that Desai did not accept the offer of the ministership under Mrs. Indira Gandhi until the title of Deputy Prime Minister was conferred upon him, while Chaudhary Charan Singh did not insist on this designation. He opposed the creation of the office of Deputy Prime Ministership, an office which was abolished, keeping in view the democratic traditions, laid down by Jawahar Lal Nehru after the death of Sardar Patel. But Morarji's ego got it revived after a gap of two, decades in 1967. Even then, the opponents of Charan Singh do not spare him to call him 'Chair Singh', always manipulating to get a higher chair.

R. Gopal Krishna, the noted journalist of The Times of India Group of publications once said, "But the resemblance to

Patel can be exaggerated. He is close to the Sardar and yet miles behind him. Vallabhbai, when he assumed office, had already become a deity in the nation's political pantheon. Charan Singh has just found his feet, but has to be watchful that the ground on which he stands, does not give way. This is the picture, depicted of the second iron-man of India from a journalistic point of view, and it is a common knowledge that the Indian press being under the control of big business, was always pro-Morarji and anti-Charan Singh. Of course, there were few exceptions of independent papers and free-lancer journalists. In the political perspective, job of the Home Minister immediate after the election in 1977, was much more difficult than that of his illustrious predecessor, Sardar Patel, who had the all-out support of self-effacing leaders of the Congress party who shared the common struggle of participating in freedom movement.

But Charan Singh was surrounded by hypocritic political leaders, most of them the products and mould of the Indira Era. Clinging to the chair by any means was their religion, and 'Kursi' was their Goddess. Charan Singh felt a stranger among them, a round peg in a square hole.

The great Sardar's top administrative capability and his iron will were tested and established when he dealt firmly with the British Indian states numbering 572 under the princely order, and merged them into the main stream of the nation. Those who resented, like the Nizam of Hyderabad and Nawab of Junaagarh, were dealt with sternly. Thus were merged the princely states into the Indian union. It was the will of the people of those states which made the path of Sardar smooth enabling him to crush their resistance to the great Sardar..... So was the attainment of Charan Singh when he announced elections in the nine northern States of India after the total rout of the Congress in March 1977 elections.

# XII

## CONFLICT IN JANATA PARTY

As discussed in an earlier chapter Janata Party had not yet taken the shape of homogenous organisation it continued to be a mixture of the ideology, a sort of conglomeration. In fact some of the constituent units had been at the cross roads right up to the imposition of the Emergency when their top leaders were put behind the bars by Mrs. Indira Gandhi in June 1975. When the Janata Party came into power with a big bang, to the surprise of even its own leaders, the differences of the constituent units of the Janata Party started coming to the surface within a short period of three months at the time of the selection of the candidates, for the elections of the nine states in Northern India which were to go to polls in June 1977.

The maximum gainers in the formation of the government were the Congress (o) and the Jan Sangh. They got important portfolios in the Central Ministry exceeding their numerical strength, constituents of Janata Party, with the four of the state Chief Ministers were from erstwhile Jana Sangh group. The Congress (o) had the lions share in having the president of the Janata Party from its fold and securing the appointments of many state Governors who were earlier members of Congress (o) or old Congressmen.

At one stage, it looked that the Janata Party would tear itself apart with the same speed at which it was constituted when Charan Singh, was sorely disappointed with the list of the U P

candidates for State Assembly poll in June 1977, threatened to withdraw the symbol of B L D which had been allotted as the Election symbol to the Janta Party. This matter was so much exploited by the opponents of Charan Singh was in Janta Party. that the columns of Indian Press bristled with the propaganda that Charan Singh was breaking the Junta Party. Charan Singh not only returned his letter which was earlier withdrawn from the Election Commission but he also agreed to the changes, made by the Janta President in the U P list. The main reason was that he did not want to have the slightest blame on him for breaking the Janta Party which, in fact, was founded by him, and he was on of its founding fathers.

With the achievement of thumping majority of the Janta Party in the state assemblies, the cohesion of the Janta Party continued for some time but the surface-fissures started widening up as result of misunderstanding between the different constituents, which were more power-oriented than ideological in their objectives, The famous words of Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on 1st may 1977 at the time of ratification by the Jana Sangh Executive of the merger of the Jana Sangh with the Janta Party, that Jana Sangh was finally dead and it had been and it had been fully merged with Janta party with effect from that day, did not materialise as the separate tide of Jana Sangh continued flowing in the main stream of Janta Party. Whereas complete merger was a mere wishful thinking of its president, the rank and file of the Jana Sangh continued working at the cross roads with the other constituents of the Janata Party, particularly the B L D the differences did not come to the surface because of the mutual respect and understanding of the erstwhile presidents of Jana Sangh and B L D i.e., Sarvashri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Chaudhary Charan Singh.

Hardly a year had passed when Charan Singh came into clash for his principle with the personality of the Prime Minister when his letter to Morarji Desai on 11th March, 1978, asked for the appointment of an enquiry Commission against Shri Kanti Desai, Morarji's only son. The letter was a part of the statement given by the former home Minister in the Parliament on the eve of the Kisan Rally that was held in the capital the next day. The letter was promptly replied by Morarji Desai on 13th March, 1978, refusing to accept the advice of Charan Singh for the appointment of a Commission of enquiry against his son, Kanti Desai.

Being very sensitive, Charan Singh took exception to the remarks of Shri Morarji Desai: "There were so many persons insinuating about son-in-law and without referring to you I defended him in Parliament because I refused to believe them". He wrote: "I have had number of letters making allegations about you and your sons-in-law and, painful to state, even your wife. There are rumours floating even about some Ministers. If we were to follow the principles you have mentioned in your letter to the logical conclusions we would be appointing a number of commissions of inquiry every day. I am sure you would not like to encourage the prevalence of such an atmosphere in the pursuit of the principles to which you have drawn my attention". Charan Singh wrote back to Morarji Desai on 21st March, 1978 suggesting the appointment of enquiry Commission against his relative, emphasising 'sooner the better'. Morarji shifted from his earlier stand in his reply dated March 23rd, 1978, and refused point blank in appointing a Commission of enquiry against his son. Two more letters were exchanged between the Prime Minister and Charan Singh before the later fell critically ill on April 24, 1978, and had to be admitted in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi on that very day. He had not fully

recovered from his illness and was convalescing at Suraj Kund when the Prime Minister asked for his resignation and that of his trusted lieutenant, the Health Minister, Shri Raj Narain on 29th of June, 1978. This was the beginning towards an end. The resignation letters were sent to the Prime Minister without any loss of time. Four more Union Ministers of States also resigned from the Central Ministry in protest against the action taken by the Prime Minister. Since then a hide-and -seek game continued between the Prime Minister and his supporters on one hand and Charan Singh supporters on the other. Many efforts for patch-up between two leaders were made by the peace makers in the union cabinet but both the old men refused to budge an inch from their respective stands: Charan Singh, not to have any compromise on 'Kanti Issue' and Morarji, not to appoint a Commission of enquiry against his son.

During the last six months much water had flown down the Yamuna and the former Home Minister fired his last bravado in issuing the thrice withheld statement in the parliament on 22nd December, 1978. The Rajya Sabha passed a resolution against the appointment of Commission of Enquiry against Kanti Desai and relatives of the former Home Minister with a clear hint that the insistence for the appointment of commission of enquiry was against Kanti Desai and not exactly so against the relatives of Chaudhary Charan Singh. This was done to stall a likely action to be taken against their leader former Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her son, Sanjay Gandhi. The situation for the Janata Government became worse when the 'Lioness of 1975 Emergency days' entered the Indian Parliament through a by election from Karnataka and 'the Chikmagalur battle' turned out to be a 'Mahabharata battle' between the Congress (I) and Janata Party. Since then Morarji Desai had been fighting a losing battle at two

fronts. The second one when Charan Singh threw the gauntlets by issuing his explosive statement on 22nd December, 1978, comparing his exit from the Government as an expulsion and not a resignation by holding the ever biggest Kisan rally in the capital in which more than two million farmers from different parts of India participated. Charan Singh supporters showed their massive strength to Desai. The first onslaught on the Prime Minister was the attitude of the Congress (I) in the Rajya Sabha which utilised its majority in the upper house by not allowing any business of the house to be conducted after 19th December, 1978.

The Prime Minister, under the influence of hawks in the Janta Party, got expelled Mrs. Indira Gandhi from the Parliament after changing his resolution thrice within 12 days of the debate in the Lok Sabha. Originally starting from a very mild form demanding an apology from the former Prime Minister, which was ultimately changed into the resolution expelling her on the basis of the report of the privilege committee. The Prime Minister's stubborn attitude towards Charan Singh but soft padding toward Mrs. Indira Gandhi had become evident even since he became Prime Minister and even up to the last moment of putting his resolution in the Lok Sabha showing his frame of mind. He said that he was putting up a resolution against the daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru and his erstwhile leader when he was a Deputy Prime Minister under her. The language of this resolution was thrice changed suggesting mild action to the most stiff punishment against the defaulting former Prime Minister of India. The press and the people were watching the behaviour of Morarji Desai, who was behaving most peevishly under the pressure of the hawks in the Janata Party, majority of them belonging to the erstwhile Jana Sangh group. On the heels of the frontal attacks

from the Congress (I) leadership and its followers turning violent at many places after the 'Little Girl' was sent to Tihar Jail. According to her, 'more than 5 lakhs people sent to jail in spite of restraint put by her on her followers. Then came the massive show of strength by Charan Singh's mass following on the occasion of Kisan Rally held on 23rd December, 1979 in the capital, a death signal to Morarji Prime Ministership.

The argument of Prime Minister's prerogative and the collective leadership were at variance if one studies Desai's behaviour in his relation with the erstwhile Jana Sangh group to avoid the real danger to his Govt., he put the 'lioness into cage in Tihar Jail', little knowing the consequences of this unstatesmanly act by the octogenarian statesman of India. The Indian Press gave a varied picture of the events leading to the high drama in the last week of that year. The Rightist press was jubilant that Charan Singh's re-entry to the Cabinet had been forestalled by the active opposition of some of his staunch opponent C.B. Gupta who in the wake of the statement of Charan Singh on 22nd December 1978, started asking for Charan Singh's expulsion from the Janata party for breach of party discipline. The leftist press held RSS solely responsible for Mrs. Gandhi's expulsion and alleged that Jana Sangh had made the Prime Minister its captive .

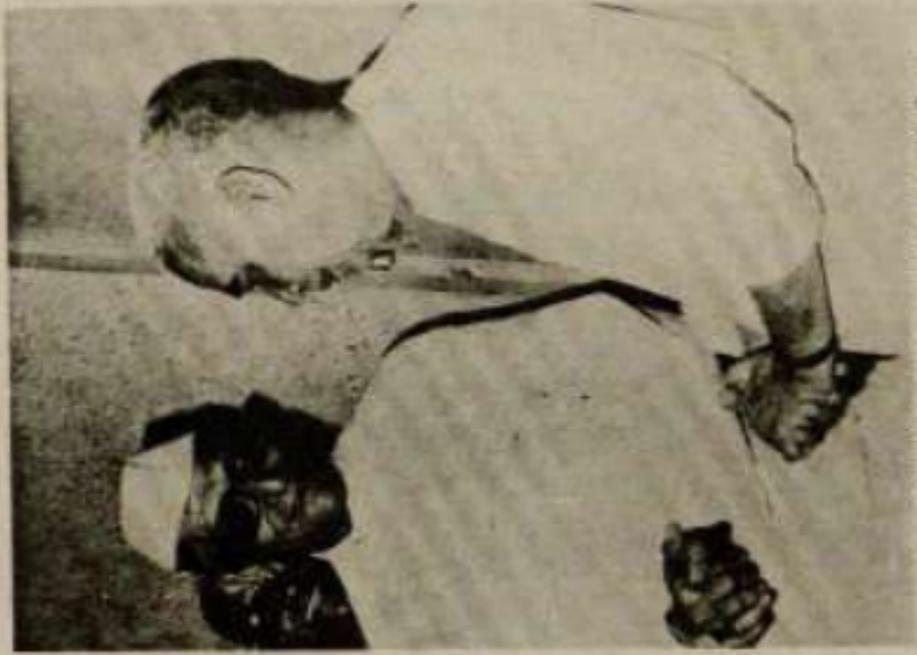
All political Pundits agreed that one thing was certain whether the Janata party might break or not but its Prime Minister would certainly go and one paper had already made a forecast that 'those were the 100 days of Morarji Govt.. Another paper had gone up to the extent of visualising the collapse of the Morarji Govt. before the Republic day of 1979. The leftist press had continued saying that Morarji would prefer son Kanti to his Party. Thus, the clash of personalities had turned out to be a struggle

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कन्द्रीय कार्यालय

सर्वभारतीय किसान कामगार यमन

। किये भरे पूरे भजन श्री मन्ने त्ते टिन्के



The Prime Minister Mr. Shree Jeebhoo on his first State Mission. Mr. Charan Singh on May 28, 1975.



to save the prodigal son at the cost of the Janata Govt. and the Party. The people also heard another rumour that Morarji might prefer to hand over the reign of its Govt. to Mrs. Gandhi from whom he had taken over as a consequence of the stormy success of 'Janata Wave'.

The country was passing through the most critical political crisis and it was very difficult to predict the exact course of events though there were kite flyings in the different columns of the Indian press about the events of 1979.

The author felt that there were four alternatives which could be anticipated in the then political situation.

1. The status quo ante and the Janata Govt. completing its tenure limping in the office as one Journalist had pointed out.

2. Jana Sangh joining hands with Charan Singh and oust Morarji—before or after the budget session.

3. Indira joining hands with Charan Singh and giving him the necessary support in the parliament to become Prime Minister as Janata did to Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra .

4. Mid term poll and capture of power by Congress (I) and Indira's comingback to the throne of Delhi.

At the time of the formation of the Central Ministry it was evident that Shri Morarji who was a staunch Gandhite would be Janta party able to fulfil the promises made by Janata Party at the time of election by following Gandhian methods. The leftist press was alleging which was upto some extent correct that Morarji was more keen to save his son than the Janata Party, throwing all election promises to wind. The first alternative, that the Janata Govt. at the Centre would complete its tenure of 5years limping in the office; Janata Govt.'s was in sight. The chances of its complete term became dim with rapid movement of the events during the last week of the year only one thing became certain

that the change of leadership was to take place if the Janata wanted to complete even its present tenure in the office, not to talk of a fresh lease of life after the General election otherwise due in early eighty two.

In the light of above, the different political personalities and the parties manoeuvred their respective strategies to cast the shadows of the coming events on the political horizon with the beginning of the new year of 1979. Swaran Singh rushed to Indira Gandhi to finalise the process of unification of the two Congress parties and both the leaders were happy after their talk though Mrs. Gandhi's smile was the indication of her personal victory. Her brief to the press that the Indian National Congress would be revived and the congress (I-Indira) and Congress (S-Swaran Singh) were to unite. The names of the factions were coined by the press as it had coined Congress (N-Nijalingappa) and Congress (J-Jagjivan Ram) at the time of the split of the party a decade earlier. Close on the heels of the unity talk, the convention of the Congressmen headed by Dr. Karan Singh and Charanji it Yadav sacked Mr. Tidke, the president of M P C C. for his pro-unity move and appointed a staunch anti mover one Rupawate as the new president of the M P C C. To put more explosives in the arsenal of this group, the convention revoked the expulsion of Sharad Pawar and his forty M.L.A.s and allowed them to come back to the old fold. Pawar and his supporters made a direct entry amidst thunderous applause after the conference had unanimously adopted a motion to appeal to them to rejoin the Congress. Tidke ridiculed the move to revive the old congress. "At the most a regional party which the convention was trying to show as the National Congress can be revived", he said. Whatever by the nature of these political juggleries performed by the Congress (I) ie., Congress (s) and

the 'Real Congress', the fact remained that sooner than not the Indira Congress would become the Indian National Congress with Indira as its undisputed leader, and some dummy as its president.

The speculation that there would be a combination of Charan Singh and Indira were belied for the moment. It is on record although it is sad, that whether it was D M K. or Akalis or the Urs-led Congress Party in Karnataka or Chavan-led faction of Congress in Maharashtra, these groups were successful in obtaining political power on caste/regional basis. There had not been a planned effort to unite and lead the backward castes in Northern India until Charan Singh found a way out through the mobilization of Kisans as a new political force. So it is but obvious that Charan Singh group, riding on the high horse of Kisan Sammelan, initially did not like to join hands with Indira since its leader had poor opinion about her personality and his bitter experience of a political ally when she had dismissed his ministry by manipulation through the Governor of the U P and her nominee the President of India, signing the decree in a foreign land. Not only Charan Singh even Jagjivan Ram was so hesitant rather scared to have any truce with Indira Gandhi, apprehending her come back having chrismatic personality and her powerful hold on the minority votes, including those of Harijans his own clans.

There is another side of the picture which indicated clearly that Charan Singh had emerged as the undisputed leader of a third force, the rural or Kisan power, with the massive show of strength of the sturdy peasantry in the capital at his back, he was able to combine the like-minded groups in and outside the Janata Party, and that would be a political force to be reckoned with and capture power after Morarji exist from the seat of power.

Contrary to the expectation Chauhan, group joined hands with the conventionalists. Dr. Karan Singh and Chandrajit Yadav combined with Charan Singh and Morarji Desai was left behind gasping in the political wilderness. The hint was thrown by Chauhan who along with Brahmanand Reddi and Mrs. Indira Gandhi attended a birthday party of the grandson of Charan Singh at his residence. Morarji Desai who used to criticise the celebration of birthday of the grandfather and was thundering to impose the ban on the use of the trucks and tractors on the occasion of the Kisan rally on Charan Singh, birthday on 23rd December 1979. 'Graced' the occasion along with his senior colleagues. Jagjivan Ram and erstwhile Jana Sangh stalwarts, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Advani. Charan Singh had thus become the focal point of the new political power and the different political groups started orbiting around the new satellite. With these events which were fast casting their shadows on the political scene, the ever opportunistic erstwhile Jana Sangh leadership threw away their loyalty to the octogenarian Prime Minister of the Janata Party in order to gain more loaves and fishes and to out-manoeuvre the strategy of the 'lioness of Chikmagalur' to snatch Chaudhary from their fold and the Jana sangh faction of Janata party came out openly to put their weight in favour of Charan Singh by accepting him as the party leader, replacing Desai before or after the Budget session. This may be called compulsion or the political expediency. The political pundits and the intelligentsia gave more credence to the second alternative and they ruled out the first alternative altogether though some of them firmly believed in the second alternative i.e. Indira and Charan Singh coming together and Indira offering Charan Singh the office of the Prime Minister. She and her party would be his allies on the 1969 pattern in U.P. she was behaving

in a more statesmanly but cleverly manner than Indira of 1969 to the Indira of 1979.

At the birthday party of Charan Singh grand son Indira and Charan Singh were sitting on one sofa, to the greatest shock and surprise of his party colleagues. After 2-3 days the Congress party General Secretary Kalpanath Rai disclosed his party's intention to make Charan Singh as the Prime Minister. His statement in the press was as under:-

"The Congress-I would support Mr. Charan Singh if he becomes Prime Minister after reviving his Bharatiya Lok Dal", Congress-I Parliamentary Party General Secretary Kalpanath Rai said so and explaining his party's stand to the newsmen. He said that Mrs. Indira Gandhi had no plan to become the Prime Minister even if she gained strength after the merger of the two Congress parties in the near future. After the disintegration of the Janata Party which according to him, was in the offing, there was every likelihood that Mr. Charan Singh will be the next Prime Minister with the support of many including the Congress -I. Meanwhile Rai also forewarned Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan that his party would be compelled to launch a country-wide agitation for the dissolution of the Lok Sabha in case he (Mr. Narayan) was unable to bring round Janata leaders to mend their ways.

In a letter dated January 12 the copy of which was released to the press Rai drew J.P's attention to the deteriorating law and order situation in the country, and said, "murder, loot, arson, rape were being reported from all over the country".

The political pendulum moved so fast that Charan Singh was offered the Deputy Prime Ministership again to have the compromise formula with the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai..

Kuldeep Nayar wrote in the Indian Express, under the caption:

Desai heeds J P's appeal; Charan offered post of Deputy Prime Minister

Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan's plea to the Prime Minister to accommodate Mr. Charan Singh appears to have gone home and he has been offered Deputy Prime Ministership.

The portfolio suggested was either Finance or Food and Agriculture.

Mr. Charan Singh's associates, who confirmed this offer said that he alone would be the Deputy Prime Minister.

One way to resolve this impasse was said to be that J P should appeal to Mr. Raj Narain not to join the Government for the time being.

It is apparent that once Mr. Raj Narain was pacified Mr. Charan Singh would join the Government. And so the other four Ministers of State, who had resigned in protest against the exit of Mr. Charan Singh from the Cabinet.

The offer to Mr. Charan Singh was with the condition that Mr. Raj Narain, Mr. Charan Singh's 'Man Friday' would not return to the Government.

Upto the last, Charan Singh was not agreeable to join the Cabinet without Mr. Raj Narain. Many B L D leaders tried to persuade Charan Singh but in vain. He has reportedly argued that he cannot 'leave' the person who has stood by him so faithfully. How could he be a faithless friend to Raj Narain? S.M. Joshi, Maharashtra Janata Leader, who returned from Patna after meeting J P had played an important role in persuading Desai to make the offer of Deputy Prime Ministership to Charan Singh. Biju Patnaik was said to have broached the offer to Charan Singh.

If Mr. Charan Singh returned to the Government, the current crisis in the party would come to an end. Even otherwise

the crisis could not have prolonged beyond a month. The initiative by J P through his letter to the Prime Minister, was the last card played for reconciliation and saving the party.

Some who have a penchant for something said that J P's move did not amount to mediation. But when a person like him wrote to the Prime Minister and requested him to settle difference with Charan Singh, it was not a routine letter as the Prime Minister's secretariat tried to make out. J P's stature in the Janata Party was that was Mahatma Gandhi's in the Congress Party. It is for the first time that J P's letter mentioned Charan Singh by name in connection with the restoration of unity in the party.

Though there was a rebuttal from the former Home Minister but it looked possible that he would accept the offer when it would be made to him by the Prime Minister at the instance of the Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan who could be the last hope to be the saviour of the Janata Party. Thus the political crisis in the ruling party was solved with the statesmanship of Charan Singh, and intervention of Jai Prakash as indicated by different sections of the Indian Press.

In respect of the efforts made by the peacemakers and the appeals of Lok Nayak to save the Janata Party, a powerful group in the Janata Party, controlled by big business was all out to scuttle the unity move in the Janata leadership, since that did not suit their interests. It was reliably learnt that to achieve their end, they wanted to force Charan Singh out of Janata Party and for this purpose they had planted their own men in the camps of Charan Singh and Morarji, and whenever the rapprochement bids seemed to succeed they succeeded to scuttle it down. This hide and seek game had been going on for the last 6 to 8 months, since June 1978.

Thanks to the statesmanship of Charan Singh and with

his mass base in the rural area, particularly in the north, and his extreme attachment to the party in whose formation he had the major contribution (though the Indian press sometimes gave this credit to some regional and sectional leaders/party like Akali Dal, Pilloo Modi and some other up-starts in the then Janata leadership) that he was finding it too difficult to snap ties from the party of his own formation. He was postponing the dates of the meeting to decide the future course of either reviving his old B L D or to break away from Janata Party, dominated as it was by the BJP under dominance of the R S S. and the business lobby. Under compulsion good sense prevailed and in the statement of Morarji to the Press conference hoped for early return of Charan Singh to the Central Government ultimately came true and he invited his ex-senior colleague to rejoin the Government on honourable terms. If this opportunity was lost, and the Prime Minister was unable to climb down from his false prestige and failed to come out of the clutches of the big business, then it would not only be a disaster for the party but to the Janata Government itself, which would have been pulled down at the centre sooner than expected by its Congress- I adversaries. Luckily the blame was not put on Charan Singh and ultimately he showed the strength of character and his statesmanship. Had he not have taken an independent decision, he would not have saved the Janata party nor his own Government. But much damage was done by the (thrice withheld) statement of Charan Singh in the Parliament on 22nd December, 1978 which had been fully exploited by the press to the entire satisfaction of the Business lobby that the re-rapprochement between Morarji and Charan Singh had ended into a permanent stalemate. This perversity found expression in the press that Indira's regime was better than that of the Janata, and this shows the preference of

the big business for the Indira's Government which was fully under their control though they equally controlled the Janta Government through their own lobby. Their interest remained the main causes of the rift in the Janata Party, which infact was not a clash of ideology but the clash of personalities, as had been depicted by the Indian Press during the whole period of the crisis in the Party.

The Congress-rule since the days of Nehru was the creation of the capitalistic under world, and the big business was in full control of the Congress policies, which used to be socialistic in theory but 100 percent capitalist in practice. This fact has been attested by the statement of the present finance minister Man Mohan Singh that capitalism grew at its optimum Level during Nehru Era - 1952-1964. How the power of the big business in proxy which had tasted blood for the last three decades would easily loose its grip in the political set-up, had yet to be seen. It is an Herculean task as for any party to free itself from the yoke of big business, less so when the political leadership is so weak as it was then & today in 1993. Only a Sardar or a Gandhi of India is needed to provide a true socialistic society to India, and Charan Singh was the only ray of hope. Being the true disciple of the Gandhiji and a true replica of the Great Sardar, he could have deliver the goods. But ultimately he was eased out by the machlivan Indira Gandhi and treachery of his own partymen. The last alternative of a mid-term poll, and the frail lady capturing power. The scinerio was emerging again that democracy-eating tigeress seemed to be ruled out for the moment. But the political fore-cast is a difficult calculation for Indian Polity particularly with the political leadership available to the country. The elder leadership, being too stiff necked and stubborn, and the second liners being too much aspirants, the

alignment and re-alignment of the political factions to secure ministerial berths was the order of the day in India. More so when the comeback of Indira in 1980 become a certainty, which is the characteristic feature of Indian politicians.

However, the immediate danger to the Janta Government was averted by the return of Charan Singh to the Union Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister on January 24th 1979. But the future course of events indicated that Charan Singh's crusade against Corruption was not palatable to Morarji Desai and inherent clash of personalities continued. Charan Singh tried his level best to keep the party united and fulfill the promises made to the electorates. But alas!, his efforts could not bear fruits, The responsibility of which solely rest on the Prime Minister Morarji & the Capitalist lobby around him. The role of the major constituents of the party i.e. Bhartiya Jan Sangh was also dubious for its business connections.

# XIII

## CHARAN SINGH : A KISAN LEADER

Charan Singh had emerged as a Kisan Leader though most of the time he was dubbed as a spokesman of the 'kulaks'. Charan Singh was born in an extremely poor farmer's family, having very small holdings of land on which his family was dependent. Speaking on the occasion of Kisan rally in December 1977, AB Vajpayee had rightly said that "Charan Singh is a true son of the mother earth, and he had got all the virtues of the farmer's son. Even his demeanour betrays him. He gives the look of a typical Western U.P. farmer even after decades of living in the sophisticated atmosphere of city bred people".

Charan Singh possessed the in depth knowledge of the farmer's problem, and he also knew how to eradicate farmers poverty, for which, he offers several proposals given belows:-

- (i) Peasants proprietorship;
- (ii) Proper use of the modern implements of agriculture, which are necessary for a small farmer; and
- (iii) Making available to the farmers, basic facilities like better seeds, full water for irrigation, and scientific knowledge to protect and augment their produce.

In order to meet the first factor, he successfully piloted the 'Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Bill' in 1951, which ensured proprietary rights for the tenants, and provided safeguards against their ejection from the land by the Zamindars. The preamble of the bill reads under:-

"The Bill provides for the acquisition of intermediaries' rights on payment of compensation at eight times of their net assets. It will yield an income to the bigger zamindars, sufficient for a reasonable standard of living. For rehabilitation of the smaller zamindars, who constitute the overwhelming majority, it further provides for the payment of a graded rehabilitation grant ranging from two to twenty times of the net assets, being the largest for low incomes and smallest for those with comparatively large incomes. To overcome financial and legal difficulties, the tenants are being asked to make voluntary contributions of ten times their rent. This will provide finance for the speedy evolution of Zamindars to check inflation, and utilise the peasant's saving for productive purposes. The tenants, who make this contribution, will be entitled to transferable rights in their holdings, and will be called Bhoomidhars, who will pay land revenue at fifty percent of their existing rent.

"It is considered necessary to substitute the bewildering variety of the existing land tenures by a simple and uniform scheme. Accordingly, it has been provided that there will be, in future, only two main forms of land tenure. It is expected that the vast majority of cultivators will become Bhoomidhars. The present intermediaries in respect of their 'khudkast' (self cultivation) and grower, will be classed as Bhoomidhars. So will also the tenants, who pay an amount equal to ten times of their rent. The rest of tenants will be called siridars with permanent and heritable rights in land, the right to use their land for any purpose connected with agriculture, horticulture or animal husbandary, and to make any improvement in this regard".

"It is also desirable to protect the interests of the considerable body of cultivators, who do not at present, enjoy any permanent rights in land, but whose displacement would lead to

social injustice and grave economic hardships. The general body of tenants, sir, to whom hereditary rights do not accrue, and of the existing sub-tenants, will be given security of tenure for a period of five years after which they can, on payment of 15 times the hereditary rate or the rent of their tenant-in-chief, acquire Bhumidhari rights".

To avoid multiplication of uneconomic holdings, the restricted table of devolution laid down in the United Provinces Tenancy Act, 1939, has been maintained with minor variations, and future fragmentation of holdings which would result in the creation of an uneconomic holding, has been prohibited. To prevent accumulation of large holdings, and the consequent exploitation of labour, no person will in future be permitted to acquire by sale or gift, a holding of more than 30 acres".

The Act had been hailed as the most progressive, even more radical a measure than the one, adopted by the Communist Govt. in Kerala after about a decade of the U.P. Act.

The Bill was a real horror to the 'kulaks,' who joined hands against the most progressive measures, taken by the Revenue Minister. But before they could be successful in frustrating the Bill, the vigilant Revenue Minister plugged the loopholes. The execution of certain provisions of the Act, were being flouted by the Patwaris with the tacit connivance of the ex-Zamindars. (The details have been discussed in the chapter under the heading "Crusade against Corruption"). Charan Singh set the pace of agrarian revolution by abolishing the Zamindari system in the biggest state of India, paving the way for Bihar, Orissa, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal to move in the direction Hence, the U.P. Zamindari Act was a landmark in ameliorating the lots of the poor and marginal farmers, who had become the owners of the land in 1952, which they had been

tiling since ages. Truly speaking, it was a revolutionary step in the history of the land reforms in India as the Zamindari system, which was the creation of the British Govt., was demolished root and branch once for all.

It is important to note that Charan Singh adopted Gandhian approach while enacting this measure. The surplus land of the Zamindars was not confiscated as it was done in Communist countries. Due compensation was paid to the Zamindars. (Although its quantum was challenged in the court of law, which led the Parliament to enact measures over the rate of Compensation by making article 14, 19 and 31 of the Constitution not negotiable).

Charan Singh's second clash with the Congress leadership took place in 1959, and again it was for the welfare of the small farmers on whom he had bestowed the proprietary rights only seven years ago. He had opposed the official resolution on the cooperative farming, tabled at the Congress Session held in 1959 at Nagpur. Charan Singh's main opposition to this resolution, was ideological. With his down-to-earth knowledge of the farmers' problem, he thought it proper to put forward his ideas which were contrary to the 'Resolution on Cooperative Farming', and were to be executed by the Congress Govts. in various States. Pt. Nehru was said to be the prime mover of the idea of cooperative farming which fascinated him by its operation in the Communist countries. He therefore thought that he could introduce that in India with equal success.

The main arguments, advanced by Charan Singh against the resolution deserve consideration and thorough discussion.

#### A KISAN LEADER AND ANTI-KULAKS

"The basic necessities of life are food, clothing, and shelter. Are Indians getting these today after 30 years of political

independence? The answer is surely in the negative. Then, who is responsible for this adversity? Naturally the policies of our national Government. After independence Sardar Patel became the Home Minister. He followed Gandhian principles, and gave priority to agriculture. After Patel's death Nehru deviated from this path and he inadvertently played into the hands of vested interests. He sacrificed the interest of 80 per cent peasantry for the sake of 20 per cent tradesmen. Hence the ruin of India started. Overnight the rich became richer under the garb of socialism. Priority was given to the industry, & not to the agriculture. In 1959 they were going to launch a new experiment of cooperative farming based on Russian models which were diametrically opposite to the Indian democratic traditions and the temperament. Indian some how, in the heartland of India, i.e. the state of U.P., the spirit of Sardar Patel was alive that was in Chaudhary Charan Singh. He totally opposed the idea of cooperative farming, and this way saved India from the ruination. Achievement of political freedom appears in retrospect to have been an easier task than economic emancipation such as — freedom from want, hunger, ignorance and disease. There was frantic search for the formulae that would ensure rapid economic development.

Some of the leaders of the country emphasised the advantages of the pooling of individual fields and labour as a sure step for creating farm surpluses which are an essential precursor of economic development. It was claimed that co-operative farming would accelerate capital formation by increasing the rate of internal savings and thus paved the way for industrialization of India.

The experiment of cooperative farming was an innovation in the field of agriculture. U S S R was the model which

influenced our leaders, particularly Nehru PM In Soviet Russia , as a consequence of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, carried out with the slogan of 'Peace and Bread' all land was distributed among the peasants . The results was division of all the land into some 25,000,000 small farms, each of them big enough to produce as much as was needed by the peasants depending on them. Little was left for the cities to supply to run the farms. If the small peasants needed credits, they obtained them from the wealthier farmers, the Kulaks. Both the deficiency of marketable output and the dominance of the middle class kulks, presented to the new Soviet State grave problems which had to be solved in terms of Marxist ideology.

Following the industrial pattern, the communist argued that farming had to be mechanised. If the peasants could be induced to pool their land and use agricultural machinery in common not only would the dominance of the kulaks be broken but marketable surplus would also be better mobilised. In addition, large scale joint farming by mechanical means would reduce the number of hands needed in agriculture, and thus free them for use in industry , the expansion of which would , in turn, help in the mechanisation of agriculture. Hence , there were two alternatives by which one could join such a settlement, or a group which was prepared for the settlement. To be eligible in both cases one must be Zionistic over eighteen years ago, in good health and of good character . In Russia Kalkhoz and the Ejido owe their establishment to administrative measures, the Kalkhoy grew out of spontaneous decisions of those who first shaped its essential socio-economic structure. In Russia cooperative organisation was infact comprehensive and compulsory.

The Chinese agrarian policy was set towards an ultimate collectivisation of agriculture on the Russian model. Their



Addressing the public meeting.



Addressing Kisans.



ultimate objective was first to change from peasant proprietorship, to cooperative farming then to collective farming at the earliest opportune moment. The establishment of the communes was the latest in a series of tremendous, frenzied attempts to transform the whole of Chinese society. A commune was formed by the merger of a number of collective farms or the advanced agricultural producers cooperatives as the Chinese loved to call them. Communes were so designed and operated as to wipe out the last vestiges of individualism and of traditional family bonds as understood all over the world.

When Pt. Nehru visited China he was very much impressed by this system and he wanted to introduce it in India. Cooperative principle was undoubtedly a very fruitful mission in the field of agriculture, but when stretched to the point of merger of holdings, it violated the essence of true cooperation. Independent businessmen cooperated to remove individual disabilities, Charan Singh reminded that "when independence itself is compromised and the farmers reduced to a farm hand, it is not a case of true cooperation. It is preparing the ground for authorization control. A self-elected few will exploit the simplicity, ignorance, credulity and lethargy of the overwhelming majority and dominate the cooperative farms. They will lean on officialdom for support and support it in return. In place of the intermediaries who have been liquidated, a new class of intermediaries will emerge with more powers masquerading as the spearhead of a new cooperative movement. Local bosses, into which the officials of the cooperative will degenerate into, will slowly but surely undermine the very foundation of our nascent democracy and reduce the peasantry, their country's pride to the status of mere labourers". He further argued that sovereignty resides in the people and for that reason the constitution

guarantees fundamental rights to the individual. To the extent that the individual is hampered in the proper appreciation and free exercise of the fundamental rights, to the extent that his personality is cramped. To the extent his independence of thought and action is subjected to extraneous centers, to that extent his destiny ceases to be his sole concern, the seat of sovereignty will tend to shift from all to the few and the country will have taken the road to regimentation and totalitarianism".

Large scale farming, whether cooperative, collective or of any pattern, inevitably attracts mechanisation. In fact, the popular but erroneous belief that mechanisation increases production is used as an argument for the introduction of cooperative farming. Whatever may be true of countries with different soils different climate and rainfall conditions, and differently placed in the map of the world, in this country with a tropical climate and a thin layer of fertility, mechanised cultivation on large farms may pay their few owners in terms of money but it cannot pay the nation in greater tonnage, while in the present circumstances of India every ounce matters.

Our economists and planners perhaps do not take into account Indian conditions but are influenced by the theories of Karl Marx who concluded without due examination of facts that the laws regarding industrial development at which he had arrived, applied to agriculture also. In India the amount of arable land is limited and the population is divided. The production per acre has therefore to be increased. In the U.S.A. Canada, Australia and other such countries the best results are obtained by large scale mechanised farming, which increases the production per man because plenty of land is available and labour is scarce.

Prime Minister Nehru restated his approach in his ad-

dress to the U.P. political Conference in Jaunpur on 29th October 1956. He said, "the Govt. did not intent to proceed in the matter arbitrarily. It was for the Kisans themselves to take into account the pros and cons of cooperation and if they considered it to be useful for them and the country, they should adopt it". But to him there appeared to be no alternative. At this stage all that he wanted was that they should discuss the matter among themselves thoroughly and try cooperative as an experimental measure.

The Indian national Congress has also at its plenary session held at Nagpur in January 1959 agreed with the planning commission and accepted joint farming as the ultimate pattern for India. The Resolution Says:-

"The future agrarian pattern should be that of cooperative joint farming in which the land will be pooled for joint cultivation, the farmers continuing to retain their property rights and getting a share from the net produce in proportion of their land. Further, those who actually work on the land, whether they owe the land or not will get a share in proportion to the work put in by them on the joint farms.

As a first step, prior to the joint farming, service cooperatives should be organized throughout the country. This stage should be completed within a period of three years. Even within this period wherever possible and generally agreed to by the farmers, joint cultivation may be started. Surplus land (obtained by imposition of a ceiling and large farms) should vest in the panchayats and should be managed through the cooperatives". Even Pandit Nehru said in a press conference in Delhi on February 7, 1959—"I want to do something in India, to change India within few years left to me, to change the peasant in India to change agriculture, economy and the rest. I may go wrong—

as I do often — but it is my intense desire to reach a certain goal”.

Chaudhary Charan Singh sent a letter on cooperative farms to Nehruji in which he explained all the demerits. He said that large scale farming will reduce production, injure the democratic principles which the country cherishes, invite bureaucratic control, and lead to rapid mechanisation with all its consequences. Peasant farming on the other hand will enable the country to steer a path which may not be spectacular but which will ensure that it does not abruptly go off the rails. Pandit Nehru replied: “Your work in administration is efficient and more particularly that you have studied and paid a great deal of attention to agricultural classes”.

Had Pt. Nehru not been in such a hurry and had he the patience to listen to the voice of reason, agricultural reforms in India would not have run into the problems they faced later on and the country would have been saved from much unnecessary suffering.

Those who live in city glass houses can never be aware of the problems of tillers. Only a Kisan can understand their problems and their aspirations. Charan Singh represents the Kisan community that is why he succeeded in making it clear that the interests of 80 per cent was bound to clash with those of 20 per cent vested interests.

The text of resolution sent by Charan Singh for the Congress Session at Bangalore, reproduced in the following pages, shows the intensive study of the problem from a farmer's point of view. But it is no wonder that the resolution sent by Charan Singh did not find place on the Congress agenda as it was against the interest of the vested interests the big business houses which had grabbed the political power by then through its well planned strategy and even Pt. Nehru was then under the

total influence of the business lobby in the parliament. the national economic policy was framed according to their wishes direct under his nose and he scummed to their pressure his good intentions for the uplift of the farmers apart.

#### RESOLUTION

The following is the text of resolution for which notice was given by Chaudhary Charan Singh formally at the Congress Session at Bangalore on January, 1960 but it did not secure a place in the agenda.

From  
Charan Singh

Bangalore,  
December 28, 1959.

Agricultural production being a biological process, enlargement of the size of an undertaking does not lead to increased production in agriculture as it does or may in industry. There are no scientific methods or modern technologies which cannot be used on small farms, except tractors and other large machinery which, admittedly, we do not propose to use, at least, today. Nor can there be any economy of time and space in plant growth even if we use large machinery for it, instead of being operated by hand or animal, an agricultural implement is powered by oil or electric energy. On the contrary, inasmuch as incentives in a joint undertaking are weakened, a joint farm will lead to decrease in production. Also, increase in the size of farms does not increase employment opportunities. Rather, because of rationalization of labour and all the pressures in a large undertaking being on the side of mechanisation, a joint farm will aggravate the unemployment problem. Nor will it inculcate or enhance a sense of responsibility in the members. Larger the

size of an economic undertaking, greater the risk of a member or worker losing his responsibility in the multitude. Instead of relying on his own judgment, as a peasant farmer does, a member of a joint farm will lean upon the management. The few who are ambitious and unscrupulous, or hold office and authority over the farm will exploit the credulity, the simplicity and the ignorance of the many. This will result in emergence of authoritarian trends in the economic life of our people, which will ultimately infect politics.

Further, granting that these arguments are not valid and joint cooperative farm is a very desirable development—a grand, attractive ideal—worth working for, but it is impracticable. And governments work for what is practicable today or in the near future, not for a Kingdom of God on earth in the distant future. Besides being a science and business,

agriculture is a way of life which cannot, rather should not, be rushed. A joint cooperative farm seeks to effect a complete change in the farmer's way of life. Understandably enough, he sees in it a loss both of his identity and that of his farm. Hardly any farmer, therefore, is a candidate for its membership. A great deal of one's individual authority in favour of a group with which one's ties are incomparably more tenuous than in family. There must be an over-powering reason—a reason which he can make personal, that will make a person subordinate his economic interest to group interest. Such a reason once operated in Israel where alone in the wide world two hundred and odd farms on a perfectly voluntary basis have been working successfully for sometime. No such reason operates in India today. Even if, owing to fortuitous circumstances, a cooperative farm comes into existence, the centrifugal forces in a joint venture embracing the entire economic life of the members are so powerful that it will

soon disintegrate.

Second:- The Nagpur Resolution as worded, would make it appear that service cooperatives are only a preliminary step to joint cooperative farms which are the ultimate consummation. This has created psychological barrier even to the establishment and success of service cooperatives about whose role and utility there was absolutely no controversy. No farmer will ever set out on a course which, though otherwise welcome to him, is regarded by its sponsors themselves as half-way house to a destination where he does not want to arrive at all.

Third:- Advocacy of the joint cooperative farm as our ideal of a social and economic organisation for the countryside, is doing immense harm to Congress. It creates an apprehension among the farmers, which is being exploited by our political opponents to their great advantage. Being a democratic party, we can fail to take notice of people's reactions only at our peril.

Therefore, instead of campaigning for universal acceptance of the joint cooperative farm as the only solution of our problems in the rural sector, we would do better, as the Prime Minister himself has said, on more than one occasion, to promote and assist voluntary experiments wherever they are possible and truly understood by those engaged in them. If successful, they will inevitably find imitators, and will multiply. Farms which came into existence as a result of official cajolery and persuasion, and are nurtured by loans and subsidies, will remain a hot-house growth and soon wither away, leading to great economic wastage, frustration and loss of valuable time.

As a national policy we have to confine ourselves to explaining to the farmers the advantages that service cooperatives or pooling of financial resources and cooperation in all non-farm activities, will bring. Our aim must be the creation or

maintenance of independent existences bound together with the principle of co-operation rejecting both economic anarchy and collectivism. It is such a system in Japan and Europe that has resulted in greater production per acre than where land and, therefore labour also have been pooled. Indeed, looking to the deficiency of our human factor and other social and economic conditions, even the service cooperatives will take decades or more to establish or spring up as an organic growth. A high percentage of the present-day societies are not genuine or truly cooperative. They are borrowers' societies disbursing government credit or controlled by government servants. We need to hasten slowly, therefore, whether cooperative farms will not follow upon the success of service cooperative, is not our concern at all, but that of the farmers alone.

Your sincerely,  
Charan Singh

So severe was Charan Singh's reaction to this resolution that he staked his berth in the ministry when he was asked by Congress President Dhebar Bhai through his Chief Minister Sampurnanand to publically accept and propagate for the Congress resolution, on co-operative farming. Charan Singh wrote back to Chief Minister Sampurnanand, sticking to his own ideology and refused to accept the 'advice' of his Chief Minister and the Congress President whom he thought, were wholly ignorant of the farmers' problems. He gave his argument as under:-

"It is only two parts of the Nagpur Resolution that are relevant in the context of an assurance, demanded by the Working Committee from me, viz fixation of ceilings of land but co-operative farming is not my responsibility. A Minister need not

agree positively with all the decisions that are taken by a Government. If a Minister does not agree with a certain policy, followed in another department, he simply keeps silent, and does not and cannot criticize it in the public. That is what I propose to do in the matter of co-operative farming. As you yourself have hinted, I cannot possibly forswear my views in this regard". He further said, "The ideology behind the consolidation of holdings scheme is individual farming. Obviously, it is not consistent with the aim of joint farming, wherein, instead of the land of the individuals, land of the entire village, or a good part of the village, will be pooled. I find myself in a fix. On one hand, inasmuch as the ideological base of the scheme has disappeared, I no longer feel any enthusiasm about pushing it through. On the other, if we declare that the operations are closed, I am sure, it will do irretrievable damage to the Congress. What is true of the advisability or otherwise of continuing the consolidation of holdings scheme any further, is also true of our policy regarding encouragement of small irrigation schemes, which mostly are synonymous with masonry wells. Why should a farmer sink his own well, or how can we ask him to take advantage of the facilities that we are providing in this regard? The argument that the co-operative farm is still three years away, will not convince anybody.

Since May 1952, I have been holding charge of the Revenue Department formally. Now, this period for a Minister in a particular department, is long enough. If, therefore, either you or the Congress President feels that co-operative farming is a matter, which is the direct concern of a Revenue Minister and or the consolidation scheme has to be scrapped, then, perhaps it will ease matters for all concerned if the Revenue Department is entrusted to the charge of some other colleague.

Since 1949, I have been conducting one campaign or another throughout the countryside of our Pradesh. This was possible, because our land reform measures, which tended to restore self-respect and initiative to the toiling rural masses, and put heart into them for greater and greater efforts both of body and mind, if had their broad approval and appreciation. In the meetings that I have addressed during the last one year, it is on the need of increased agricultural production that I have been laying almost entire stress, and pointing out to consolidation of scattered fields as a major means of increasing the production. I will now cease going out among the masses. This is the price, I am prepared to pay for my views.

"If a decision is taken from which a member charged with the responsibility of carrying it out differs, whether radically or otherwise, he will himself like to be relieved of the responsibility as I am offering to give up the Revenue Department, because I feel that consolidation of holdings, though not in so many words, yet as a corollary of the Nagpur Resolution, is out of place. Had I held the portfolios of Agriculture and Co-operation, the first thing I should and would have done on return to Lucknow, was to request you to allow me to resign. But if people who happen to hold views different to those contained in official resolutions, are asked to give assurances of good conduct, persons holding important positions like me in the Organisation or in Government, will think twice before participating in any discussion except to say 'yes' to whatever the Working Committee chooses to put forward. Such a state of affairs will not be, in my humble opinion, conducive to the interest of the Congress it self or the country. Already, not many people think it expedient to speak out their minds freely in the AICC or the Plenary Session, I know it as a matter of fact that there are many responsible members of

the AICC who do not agree that co-operative farming is a practicable proposition, or will serve the national interest, and yet either voted for it or kept neutral".

Though he had to resign from the ministry, yet whatever Charan Singh had said in 1959 was found to be 100% correct and the resolution on the co-operative farming which was the brain work of bureaucrats and the economist theoreticians, was belied by no other person than the Prime Minister Nehru himself who admitted in the Parliament in 1964 a few months before his death that his approach on the farming economy was a mistake.

In the long run, Charan Singh's dream had been fulfilled. His knowledge and ideology about the farming economy, had been accepted by the Janata Party as the blueprint of its National Economic Policy.

Charan Singh's policies had awakened the poor farmers, who have jointed hands to celebrate his birth day as Kisan Day, and held Kisan Rallies in 1977 and 1978. So severe was the criticism, of these rallies by the political opponents of Charan Singh that even Morarji Desai condemned the idea of holding rally in the capita. As usual, the Indian Press controlled by the big business, tried to denigrate charan Singh, and used it as a weapon to brand him pro-kulaks. The press wrote that there was already a very strong farmers lobby in the national Parliament and most of the state Chief Ministers came from the families of the farmers, so, what was the necessity of holding a Kisan Rally on the occasion of the birth day of Charan Singh? In their opinion, the rally was the usual tactics of Charan Singh's followers to consolidate his position in the party as well as in the government and consequently to fulfil his cherished dream of becoming India's Prime Minister. The political rivals of Charan Singh in the Janata Party, who called the rally as 'anti-Harijan', got their

leaders birth day celebrated by his own fellow men, and it was celebrated as "Dalit day" or "Harijan Day", and strangely enough there was no criticism of his birth day in any quarter of the press.

The organiser of the Kisan rallies, i.e., Kisan Sammelan had emphatically declared again & again that kisan sammelan was a non-political body. Charan Singh had also made it clear that no political issues would be raised in the rally to held on 23rd December 1978. The criticism of Charan Singh after his exit from the Government, reached the highest peak when the vociferous, mercurial Raj Narain, the Chairman of Kisan Sammelan, declared to present a purse of rupees one crore to Charan Singh on his birthday. He declared further that the money would be invested in publishing a daily newspaper in English and Hindi, and a monthly journal in Hindi, which would be the true spokesman and mouth piece of the poor farmers. He also said while addressing public meeting to win support for the rally in different states of India. It was made clear that the rally was not intended to be anti-Harijan, since Poor labourers of villages were part and parcel of the poor Kisan population, and it was not understood why 80 percent population of the villages (which comprises poor farmers and the farming labourers) should not organize themselves into a forum when the constitution provides for the formation of unions by workers/employees of different shades and interest. Charan Singh fully agreed with the idea that the farmers must have some sort of forum to get their grievances redressed, and nothing else could better serve the interest than the Kisan Sammelan. 1978 Kisan rally symbolised the exemplary public behaviour of Charan Singh, who as true Gandhian he followed in his private and public life as well.

Even in early fifties the then Food Minister of India Ajit Prasad Jain wrote:-

"In India, the farmers are a disorganized lot. Their lobby is almost non-existent. Hardly a paper worth the name is owned by farmers to further their interests. India's press is a monopoly of big business. The Hindustan Times, The Statesman and The Indian Express are all owned by moneyed men. Their editors are city-bred and university educated, ignorant of the farming problems. They know and only understand industry. For them, low prices of cotton, jute and sugarcane are matters of little significance, and the farmer's family budget has no meaning. Any small rise in food prices tilts their equilibrium lest industrial labour demand higher wages. Industry has its lobby in the Indian Parliament. Members, speaking for industry, are vocal and effective. One Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission argued that wheat should be stabilized at the rate of Rs. 10/- per pound. When asked how the farmer would balance his family budget, he replied that the farmer should increase the farm output and earn more". Such had been the fate of the poor farmers since the days the British created Zamindari System and persisted even during the three decades of the Congress rule under Nehru's dynasty.

The economic condition of the small farmers was even worse than that of a landless worker. Since the traditional profession of his forefathers cannot be left out by him still worse, since the profession has become highly uneconomical. In consequence, the kisan is not able to get even the supporting price, not to speak of the remunerative price of his commodities. To add insult to injury, the monopoly press blamed Charan Singh for being a pro-kulak when the Kisans were having a very strong lobby in the National parliament and assemblies. Unfortunately, the presence of this "strong lobby" had borne no fruit till to day. It is this farmers class, along with its down-trodden brethren in the

villages, who are a living the life much 'below the poverty line' of the Indian population and, that too, from Indian standards. Charan Singh would have done a real service if he could have improved the condition of this ill-fed, ill-clad farmers of India. It is no exaggeration to say that these very people of villages, kisans & landless labourers who provide luxurious life to the elite and the upper class of the society with the sweat of their brow. But ironically enough, in turn, it is the upper class who is responsible for making the poor farmers poorer than what the Britishers left them at the time of India's independence in 1947.

Morarji Desai branded the rally as antiparty, and he directed the Gujarat Unit of the Janata Party that anybody flouting its directive of attending the Kisan Rally, would be considered guilty of indiscipline. At the same time, he seemed to be, perturbed by holding this rally in the Capital particularly after the shadow of Mrs. Gandhi had started lurking on the Prime Minister's Chair in the Parliament. It was hoped that the Prime Minister would see the reality, and stop criticising a genuine forum of the Kisan, who had been the most neglected, exploited and remained the poorest of the poor people in the country.

### Emergence as Deputy Prime Minister

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The resurgence of Kisan rally found wide-spread support from the south also. A section of the Janata Party in the Southern States sent a big contingent to the Kisan Sammelan, held in Delhi on December 23, 1978. Dr. Santosham, Vice-President of the Tamil Nadu Janata Party succeeded in recruiting volunteers for the rally. The party leadership had earlier sent a circular that it had nothing to do with the rally but several members of the State executive stood by Dr. Santosham in mobilising support for it.

This was in response to the appeal, made by Charan Singh and Raj Narain to make it a national forum for kisan from all parts of the country. And this support from the south enhanced Charan Singh's image as the national leader of the Kisans. The purse of Rs. 77 Lacs, presented to Charan Singh on this occasion was token of people's affection and esteem for the man, who did so much for the poor peasants and landless workers in the villages.

The success of Kisan rally sent shivers to the Prime Minister and the party leadership and they then realized that the real strength of the Janata Party lied with the farmers. Much as he feared, Prime Minister Desai failed to expel Charan Singh from the Party & invited him to rejoin the Union Cabinet on 24-1-79 as Deputy Prime Minister the post, once held by his illustrious predecessor, Sardar Patel. This is not the fluke of history but a distinction, conferred upon Charan Singh for his spirit of service and sacrifice in the cause of nation that had given him another opportunity to re-construct Indian Polity in the Gandhian framework.

## XIV

# CHARAN SINGH AS FINANCE MINISTER

Chaudhary Charan Singh's economical policy, was based on his Gandhian philosophy, that is, the major industries should be in the public sector and the small-scale industries should be in the rural areas on co-operative basis. He was strongly opposed to Nehru's economical policies, particularly big cooperative farms. Charan Singh created a flutter in the Nagpur Session of congress 1959 when he opposed the co-operative farm's resolution put up by Jawahar Lal Nehru himself. For that Charan Singh was criticised by the congress high ups up to late sixties when Nehru himself denounced the idea of co-operative farming. Charan Singh was keen for the welfare of peasants, whose interests he protected from inside and outside the Government.

The budget which he put before the Parliament in 1979 was an attempt to protect the interests of agriculturists. The attempt failed because of the strong opposition of capitalist lobby in and outside the parliament. But the budget was widely acclaimed as the first major attempt since independence to prove the intentions of the Finance Minister to uplift the lot of poor peasants and landless labour.

The 'Food For Work Programme' could itself make an important contribution in helping the rural poor, as he stated in his budget speech. He promised to provide whatever amount was necessary and could be profitably used in the execution of the Food for work programme. He rightly argued that India could



Kissan Rally (Boat Club, 23 Dec. 1979)



A view of Mammoth Kissan Rally.



think in terms of a larger 'Food for work programme', due to the rapid increase in food production in these years, thus making imports necessary. Food imports in the three calendar years of the Congress regime (1974, 1975, and 1977) amounted to a quantity of 18.7 million tones worth an enormous figure of Rs. 2503 crores.

He reminded his critics for levying additional taxes on urban people that if there were rich peasants or kulaks, who used cars, refrigerators and other luxury goods he had taxed them also, they would be as much affected by his proposals as the urban rich, probably more, in as much as their transportation costs would be higher. After all, taxes on luxuries were not levied depending on the location of industries. In choosing various commodities for taxation, he had either taxed luxury items or, as a measure of protection, and employment creation, taxed machine-made goods which could be produced in the labour-intensive decentralized sector. It was grossly unfair to see in the budget any prejudice against the urban sector. All that he was seeking was to tax those who had the capacity to pay. If more of such people happened to be in urban areas rather than in rural areas, it was a reflection of past neglect of rural areas. He was merely trying to rectify some of the past mistakes in an effort not to set one class against the other in the true Gandhian spirit but to help usher a more integrated and less unequal society. He was set against the emerging 5-star culture and consumerism.

The increase in the price of bidis due to a rise in the excise duty, was going to be less than 1 paise for 10 'bidis'. However, this measure led to two important gains. The exemption of excise duty on unbranded bidis led to a number of manufacturers of branded bidis manipulating their production by encouraging the manufacture of unbranded bidis. That loss of revenue would be

plugged by the new duty levied. Also, since unbranded bidis were got made through contractors, the manufacturers were able to shirk all responsibility for the welfare of the bidis workers. The levy a tax on unbranded bidis will make such exploitation more difficult by establishing a clear employer-employee link. He assured the house that the step which had negligible price consequences but which led to increase the welfare of a large number of poor people in both urban and rural areas would be welcomed by people since the production of unbranded bidis was 217 million as compared to 320 million of branded bidis.

Many hon'ble members had expressed the fear that the excise duty on petrol and HSD oil would lead to a general increase in the price level, because transport was basic requirement to the economy. While he appreciated the concern of some members and he pointed out that in this case we were facing somewhat a Hobson's choice. India then imported 16 1/2 million tones of crude oil and a sizeable quantity of products like kerosene oil. The various developments in oil producing countries had led to a general increase in the price of crude oil and oil exporters had already advised the Indian Government that the price of Arabian crude oil which was £12.70 per barrel prior to 1.1.1979 would go up to £14.5 per barrel by the end of the year. At the same time sport price transactions had been taking place at much higher prices.

"I venture to think that the budgetary strategy that has been outlined in the budget for 1979-80 points to a new and more hopeful direction. Capital-intensive and elitist oriented production has been taxed while giving relief to labour-intensive production in the decentralised sector. The objective is both to curb ostentatious consumption as well as to generate more employment per unit of capital. In addition some reliefs have been given

for agricultural inputs in the hope that their use may become more widespread particularly among small and marginal farmers. Sizeable provisions which have been made for dairy development, village and cottage industries and the 'Food for Work' Programme, reflect Government's concern for increasing employment opportunities for the rural poor particularly those who are landless. The budget does focus greater attention on the problems of rural India.

"But for this I need make no apology. By now, there is almost a universal agreement that past neglect of agriculture and rural development not only accentuated unemployment and inequalities in income and wealth but has also limited the future scope for industrial growth. In a country in which nearly 80 per cent of the people live in rural areas, increased incomes and productivity in rural activities alone can enlarge progressively the market for industrial goods. The emphasis on rural development should therefore not be misunderstood as an anti-urban bias but should be seen as the pursuit of a genuine Gandhian path of working towards a more integrated and less unequal society

"This is bound to hurt some vested interests who are better organised, vocal and also have the means of mass communication at their disposal. But the fact that these interests are so vocal and organised does not mean that they have a correct appreciation of the objective needs of the great mass of our people". As a believer in Gandhian economics, he was opposed to perpetuation of class conflict. It was his hope that after an objective analysis of the budget even his cities would recognise the basic soundness of the path the Government had adopted.

The author hopes that Shri Sathe who was holding the Ministerial office in Indira and Rajiv Government should have a

heart searching and should now be feeling sorry that he had criticised a budget prepared on the Gandhian lines and whose main aim was the uplift of the rural poor living in the rural India. If the Rajiv Budget of 1986 be compared with the 1979 budget of Charan Singh, it would reveal that the pressure of the multinationals and the imperialistic lobby has put the country to ransom. One thing of was very clear while Charan Singh with stood the pressure to accept any outside pressure the Rajiv's budget of 1986 aimed at making the rich richer, and the poor poorer.

The Congress Party had been shouting at the top of its voice that the economy of India was derailed during the two and half years of the Janata Regime and whatever Congress did to stabilize the economy in 30 years was destabilized in 30 months by them. But the people know that the prices during the Janata regime of 30 months were never allowed to rise more than 20 per cent in the case of any consumer good item but in the Indira Regime in the post-eighties and five years regime of Rajiv, the prices of the items such as textile and farm implements such as tractors, thrashers, harvest combine, etc., had gone upto 500 per cent and even more. While the prices of food grains and the other agricultural products were not allowed to increase by even 10 per cent by the Govt. thereby making the poor farmers poorer and big business sharks adding a few billions to their coffers.

During 30 month's regime of Janata Government the prices were kept under control even at the cost of farmer's interests and Charan Singh was blamed like anything for presenting a pro-farmer budget which in fact was only anti-capitalist, but every good work done by Charan Singh whether in the capacity of Union Home Minister, Finance Minister, Chief minister of U.P. or during the short tenure of Prime Minister, he was

branded of as having flouted the democratic principles and ushering an era of chaos, ruining the 'national economy' by his fiscal pro-farmers and pro-down trodden budget. The congress M Ps and the press had a role in criticizing the budget in a most unscrupulous manner, throwing all press norms to wind.

# CONCLUSION

When Chaudhary Charan Singh's popularity was at the peak during his tenure as Home Minister in the Janata Regime, the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai did not relish the ever rising popularity of the Chaudhary and sensing it a threat to his position. The capitalist lobby of the Press barrens manipulated the ouster of the Home Minister for Chaudhary Charan Singh's insistence to appoint a Commission of Enquiry against Shri Kanti Bhai Desai, son of the Prime Minister, for his alleged involvement in the Gold scale scandal after the Gold Control Order was passed by the Janata Government. Prof. Madhu Dandvate had stated in his article published in a issue of 'The Current, magazine that Morarji Desai had assured the S S P Members that he would not drop Charan Singh from the Cabinet. The choice before Morarji Desai was either to save Kanti Bhai Desai or to drop Charan Singh from the Cabinet and, he obviously chose the later, inspite of the assurance given to the S S P leaders, (a constituent of Janata Party after their merger), namely S/Shri Mádhu Dandavate and Raj Narain etc. that he would not drop Charan Singh from the Cabinet.

Charan Singh was asked to resign from the cabinet and he instantaneously submitted his resignation, holding the highest traditions of the democracy. However it was a direct insult to the leader who had the rightful claim to become the Prime Minister since the Bhartiya Lok Dal constituent of Janta Party was having the maximum number of MPs in the Parliament, even then, Charan Singh sacrificed his claim giving reverence to Morarji Desai because of later's age and experience in the Central Government though he had made no sacrifice for the change of the government except that he was thrown out of

government by Indira Gandhi when he contested the unsuccessful election of the leader of the House in 1967 he was imprisoned by Indira Gandhi during Emergency.

The ouster of Charan Singh was resented more by the Chief Ministers who were basically kisans and their interest was supreme in their minds whether it was Ch. Devi Lal of Haryana, Parkash Singh Badal of Punjab or Ram Naresh Yadav of U P. There was an unprecedented rally on the birth day of Charan Singh on 23rd December, 1978. This was the biggest rally ever held in the Capital and these leaders through that rally showed their wrath for the injustice shown to their leader who was a Massiha for the kisan community.

Morarji Desai smelling the danger sought truce with Charan Singh and offered him again the Home Ministership. But Charan Singh declined and put the condition that he would only accept the office with the designation of Deputy Prime Ministership alongwith the Finance Portfolio. The condition was accepted by Morarji Desai. Charan Singh got hardly a month to place his budget before the Parliament. Thus unbendable Morarji bent to keep Charan Singh under control fearing his own ouster at the hands of pro-Charan Singh group in the Parliament.

The Janta Party was at the brink of breaking and its two senior members of the Party i.e. Shri Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram contested the office of the Prime Ministership. Jagjivan Ram on the strength of Janta M Ps. But unfortunately Charan Singh was cleverly befooled by Sanjay Gandhi through Raj Narain staked his claim for the highest office with the help of Congress (I) and his own BLD M Ps in the Janta Party.

The innocent kisan leader was trapped in the net laid down by Mrs. Indira Gandhi through her most ambitious but lumpen politician Sanjay Gandhi, who gauging the aspiration of

Chaudhary to become the Prime Minister of India, hobnobbed with Raj Narain the mercurial politician- nicknamed as 'Monkey' of the Janata party and Hanuman of the Chaudhary as he himself used to say. Raj Narain succeeded in persuading Charan Singh to become Prime Minister with the help of Congress (I) M Ps The Blunder of his political career.

The author had warned Chaudhary to desist from this type of unholy alliance- and more so when the lady having been the Prime Minister for 11 years had tasted the blood and was an expert in the power game, would ditch him at the eleventh hour as he was dethroned by the Congress M L As in U P when he had to resign his Chief Ministership which he had accepted with the help of Congress Party. But the plea of the author and some other close knowledgeable persons had no effect on the adamant Chaudhary, and he trod in the net laid down by Indira like prince Dara Shikoh who had not allowed his ailing father Shahah Jahan to go to the battle field and proved that shaha Jahan was alive and to put an end to the rumour spread by Aurangzeb that the king had died.

Sadly the game of politics is the most dirty and slippery one for the simple minded politician like Charan Singh who inspite of his ardent desire for the uplift of the poorest of the poor, became a scape goat at the altar of political chess board laid down by the most unscrupulous but power hungry Indira Gandhi and was crucified.

When Morarji resigned the situation faced by the president Sanjeeva Reddy was that Mr. Jagjivan Ram was another contender for the office of the Prime ministership claiming majority among the Janata Party MPs. and Charan Singh staking his claim with the help of Congress (I) M Ps The lists of their respective supporting M Ps submitted by the two contenders

were got duly scrutinized by the president Reddy who took about a fortnight to decide. After ascertaining the majority in favour of Charan Singh, he invited him to form the Government on 24 July 1979, keeping in view the constitutional obligation. He asked Prime Minister Designate Charan Singh to prove his majority in the parliament within three weeks after his taking over as Prime Minister (which the press even today writes him as acting Prime Minister).

The crucifixion stage was set by Indira through Sanjay to put Chaudhary at the cross of Indira's conspiracy who was to crucify Chaudhary at the time of voting after three weeks. By then Chaudhary was quite aware of the likely voting result and he had realised, the blunder for which the author had warned him not to form the Government with the help of Indira Congress (I) MPs. the author had suggested to Charan Singh to step down from the office of the Prime Ministership by giving the reign of power to his arch rival Sh. Jagjivan Ram. The advice fell flat on the ears of adamant Chaudhary who said, "Should I accept that most corrupt politician who 'siphoned' Rs. 200/- crores in Jaguar Deal. I would prefer to become Prime Minister with the help of Indira whose family had sacrificed their all to get freedom, then to have any track with most corrupt politician like Jagjivan Ram ." The political inhabitation of Chaudhary was exploited by the power hungry Indira who had maneouvered to put her mantle on the throne of Delhi through her son in a shrewd game of political chess.

It was too late and there was no option for the Prime Minister Charan Singh but to recommend the dissolution of the Parliament and to hold fresh elections. The advice was accepted by the president as provided in the Constitution and the elections took place in January, 1980. The results was obvious as was

foreseen and calculated by Indira Gandhi. She won election with 2/3 majority.

By now, the roots of our democracy had not gone deep into Indian soil and the characteristic manouvaring of capitalist and foreign lobby also. These forces capturing political power by using the opportunistic political leaders in manoeuvring to topple the Governments in the developing and under developing countries. In the same fashion the Janata Government was thrown out of power and the blame was put on Charan Singh for the disintegration of Janata Government and the Party, though in fact it was the capitalist lobby in India, which played their shrewed but secret game of toppling the Government through the leader of the party and the Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai their own man. In preference to Charan Singh, Morarji Desai was acceptable to the capitalist lobby and the Indian politicians and press who used to project the later as an upright and moralistic leader. Also thanks to Brahmanical political lobby in the Indian politics, created unconsciously since the freedom of the country, and it is always persons like Morarji Desai or Indira, who would always be acceptable to these forces.

The Congress again came to power in January 1980. The mid term poll were held in Janata ruled states also and the story of Congress rout in these states in mid term poll of June, 1977 was repeated. What happened during the Indira's second tenure as Prime Minister in the post 1980 era is well known to the nation and whatever she did in killing the democracy finishing the such as subverting the democracy, subduing judiciary, appointing Subedar from Delhi as Chief Minister of important States along with other acts of high level political and religious maneouvaring which eventually led to her assassination on 31st October 1984, mainly due to her folly of sending troops in the Golden Temple

in June, 1984. But her 'martyrdom' brought Rajiv to power on the 'Sympathy Wave' and the dynasty rule was restored in India. The poor Rajiv the new heir was in hot water with all sorts of scandals such as fair-fax, Bofor Gun deals, Westland Helicopter deal etc. The government of Rajiv with 4/5th majority in the Lok Sabha and 2/3rd majority in Rajya Sabha, was virtually behaving like a lamb before the roaring lion V.P. Singh who emerged as an alternative to Rajiv in the days to come, after Janata Dal came to power with coliation of BJP in 1989.

Sometimes the author feels that for the wrongs done by the sons/daughters the parents have to suffer, but in his case it is in reverse gear in the political history of India rather in the world history where the son had to suffer for political misdeeds of his mother Indra Gandhi the Prime Minister of Indian for 16 year.

## **ANNEXURE-I**

### **JANATA PARTY'S ECONOMIC POLICY STATEMENT**

Freedom and equality are as indispensable to man as the satisfaction of his material wants. The Janata Party, therefore, is pledged to the building up an economic system which will ensure the basic requirements of bread, freedom and equality. The record of human history shows that freedom and equality in absolute terms are in conflict; where one prevails the other shrinks.

The Janata Party is of the view that there is a need to develop an alternative, both to capitalism and communism. The Party believes in treading the path of Gandhian socialism based on political and economic decentralization. It believes in creating a society largely based on self-employment. While aware that men differ in their practical ability and inequality in achievements cannot be eliminated, it holds that an egalitarian society can be built up with narrow income differentials and in which citizens will have the freedom and initiatives to shape their economic life within the framework of social regulations.

The Janata Party is opposed to any economic system which allows individuals or groups freedom to exploit other; at the same time it is not in favour of the State possession unlimited power which will destroy all initiatives and freedom and result in the establishment of a totalitarian society. In other words, the Janata Party as a servant of the under-privileged the exploited and the weak, will strive for their uplift.

While the Party believes in the need to release people's enterprise and initiative it is opposed to any system which is based on exploitation. The Janata Party desires the widest possible dispersal of ownership of property and means of production. This is the sole guarantee of social justice and

democracy. Its opposition to all concentration of economic power stems from this basic premise. Free market capitalism leads to concentration of economic power in private hands. Ownership of all means of production by the State would lead to concentration of power in the State. Such concentration inhibits freedom, in one case, and gives rise to disparities in the levels of living in the other case, thereby engendering social and political tensions.

The Janata Party, therefore, will put a curb on economic power, (i) by imposition of physical limits where feasible, both on existing possessions and future acquisitions, (ii) through differential taxation on incomes and wealth and other appropriate measures so as to reduce these inequalities to the minimum and (iii) to regulate or demarcate the techniques or the mode and scale of economic operations, particularly in the sphere of industrial production.

A technique of production not only generates certain incomes but also determines the pattern of distribution. The Janata Party, therefore, believes in the decentralization of the productive process.

The three ills which afflict our economy are poverty, mounting unemployment and widening disparities in wealth and incomes. Logically, the aim of our economic policy should be the establishment of a structure which, while serving to increase production, will at the same time provide employment and make right to work a reality.

Concretely the Janata Party will strive for the establishment of an economy which will:

(a) (i) ensure higher production per unit of land in the field of agriculture, because land is the crucial limiting factor in our conditions and therefore valuable;

(ii) ensure optimum production per unit of capital investment in the field of industry because capital is comparatively scarce;

(b) Provide maximum employment per unit of land in agriculture and per unit of capital investment in industry, as we have a huge population to support and unemployment is on the increase,

(c) ensure equitable distribution of the national product;

(d) Prevent exploitation of others' labour so that opportunity is provided to the largest number of our people for development of their personality and pursuit of their individual aptitudes and,

(e) ensure that even private property is used to subserve the common good in accordance with the trusteeship concept advocated by Gandhiji.

## 2. THE NEW STRATEGY AND THRUST.

In this view, a strategy of development would become really a strategy of socio-economic change, a strategy where growth is an integral part of the basic objective of eliminating poverty and inequality and improving the living standards, in sum to build a new social order.

The new thrust of the Janata economic policy would therefor be growth for social justice rather than growth with social justice. This would mean that radical social and economic reforms would be necessary for sustained growth, greater well-being of the community and consolidation of the nation. This alone would do away with the dual society as development would be oriented to the jobless and the homeless, the small and marginal farmers and labourers.

## 3. DYNAMICS OF CHANGE.

The dynamics for the change-over to such a society and economy would be provided, in the first instance, by the utmost decentralization of planning, and in the second, by the elevation of agriculture to the predominant position and finally by a mass-oriented industrialization.

#### 4. COMMITMENT TO AN EXPANDING ECONOMY.

The Janata Government has inherited an economy characterized by a slow growth rate, growing unemployment, rising number of people living below the poverty line and increasing inequalities in income and wealth in the 15-year period between 1960-61 and 1975-76. The per capita availability and consumption of all essential articles of consumption like cereals, pulses, edible oil, vanaspati, sugar and cloth, etc. has declined. The consumption of the bottom 60% of the population has fallen even more sharply. As for the poorest 30% they had to face stark destitution and ruin. Restoration and further improvement of the consumption levels and, especially, the satisfaction of the minimal needs of the poorest section of our people and rapid expansion of employment opportunities are the pressing problems confronting the country. The Janata Party is committed to finding effective solutions for these problems in the framework of a time-bound economic programme. The Janata Party recognizes that meaningful solutions for these basic problems can best be found in the stimulation of a rapidly expanding economy. The average annual growth rate of 3.5 per cent (and only 1 per cent per capital) realized during the last twenty years is clearly far short of both the aspirations and capabilities of the Indian people. With a view to realizing these capabilities and aspirations the party calls upon the Government to so re-shape the economic policies that the annual average rate of growth of the economy can be raised to 7% per annum during the next five years. This

would require a substantial increase in investment backed up by increased efforts at mobilization of domestic savings. Our economic policies, including fiscal and monetary policies, would have to discourage ostentatious consumption and promote the habit of saving, austerity and swadeshi.

#### STRESS ON PLANNED DEVELOPMENT

5. The Janata Party regards planning as a vital instrument for achieving the country's social and economic objectives. It is its firm belief that our planning processes should be so re-shaped as to reduce the hitherto yawning gap between promise and performance and also ensure that the benefits of planning truly accrue to the broad masses rather than being monopolized by a small privileged class. The party attaches great importance to strengthening the planning process at the grass roots without which there cannot be an effective attack on poverty. Planning must seek to remove regional disparities and regional imbalances. Consistent with its emphasis on maximum possible decentralization of decision-making processes, the Janata Party holds that effective association of gram Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and district Panchayats ought to be the key elements of a reformed planning process. For this purpose it is necessary to give these authorities additional statutory powers. We, therefore, recommend that a Committee be set up by the Government to consider fully the question of political decentralization, including review of the working of the Panchayat system with a view to revitalizing and strengthening and enabling them to perform their role adequately. The Committee should submit its report within six months at the most.

We would also commend that the administrative machinery in States, including State Planning Boards, has to be fully geared to meeting the requirements of the new planning strategy



Indira Gandhi on his grand son's birthday 1978



With Jagjivan Ram - Defence Minister, Janta Govt



with its emphasis on rural development.

#### PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE:

6. In the field of planning the Government has adopted a new system for which the data collection mechanism has to be streamlined to improve and sharpen the quality of planning. An important attributes of planning is to match performance to targets and not adjust the targets to suit the performance. There has to be a closer correlation between plan targets and plan performance and critical changes which occur from year to year in internal and international situation, such as failure of crops or sudden spurt in oil prices have to be taken into consideration. There should be effective monitoring of the progress of the land and implementation of various schemes. All this should be done within the framework of the Five Year Plans.

#### PRIMACY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

7. It is the firm conviction of the Janata Party that in a predominantly agrarian economy like India, the massive problems of poverty, under-employment and unemployment can be solved only if the development of agriculture and rural areas truly receives the top-most priority in our planning processes. The party is greatly concerned at the sluggish rate of increase of agricultural production in the last twenty years averaging no more than the rate of population increase. Without a rapid increase in agricultural production, there cannot be a sustained increase in the standard of living of the ordinary people. Since 80 per cent of our people live in rural areas, without a rapid increase in their purchasing power, even the market for industrial goods and hence the scope for industrial development must remain restricted. The Party is greatly concerned at the growing incidence of poverty in rural areas and acute hardships, suffered

by millions of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. These distortions in the pattern of development can be corrected only in the framework of a truly integrated approach to rural development. The basic emphasis must be on the establishment of a structure which, while serving to increase production, will at the same time, provide employments and also reduce income disparities.

#### 40 PER CENT RESOURCES FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

8. The Janata Party is of the view that in the past the full potential of agricultural development has not been realized because of inadequate provision of investable resources for rural development. The Party is determined to rectify this distortion. As an immediate objective, the Government should aim to raise the share of agriculture and rural development to at least 40 per cent of public sector investable resources exclusive of metalled and asphaltic roads, transport and education but including electricity used for agriculture and village roads. The primacy of agriculture to which the Janata Party is firmly committed implies that hereafter the needs of rural areas for public investment will be met to the limit of productive absorptive capacity of rural areas. We have viewed with considerable concern the imbalance in the allocation of credit for working capital needs in the urban as against the rural sectors of the economy. The major portion of finance and credit is today going to the urban and industrialized areas and inadequate funds are being pumped into the rural economy. We would strongly recommend a much larger share of credit to the rural areas in particular to meet the needs of small and marginal farmers. Farmers' credit requirements are today met only to the extent of 35 percent through institutional credit, for the rest, they have to

really on private money lenders who charge very high rate of interest. Every effort must be made to reduce dependence of agriculture on private money lenders through development of institutional network. We also recommend that the deposits mobilized by the commercial banks in the rural areas should be earmarked for rural development.

#### STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT:

9. The Janata Party recognizes the crucial role of irrigation in stepping up the rate of growth of agricultural production as well as in reducing the fluctuations in output from year to year. Our objective should be to fully utilize the country's latent irrigation potential within a maximum period of 15 years. A fifteen years national plan for the development of irrigation should accordingly be evolved without any further delay. Emphasis should be laid on fully utilizing the potential of quick maturing small scale and minor irrigation. Local labour, local resources, gram panchayats, co-operatives and, above all, voluntary agencies should be effectively harnessed for extending such irrigation. Irrigation capacity has not been fully utilized. There is need to educate farmers in the proper utilization of irrigation water. Authorities must also pay greater attention to efficient water management.

#### SOIL CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH:

10. To maintain fertility of the soil is an important objective of agricultural policy. The nation's soil resources constitute its greatest wealth. All life on the land — vegetation, trees, insects, animals and human beings — depends on the existence and healthy conditions of barely eight inches of the top soil, the part that contains the soil bacteria, fungi and other microscopic forms of life, and earth worms. In the past, little or no attention has been paid to prevention of soil erosion in our

country which, if it continues at the present rate, will exhaust our soil completely and render it incapable of growing any crops. In the long run therefore, soil conservation is even more important than soil utilization. Government must, therefore, take all measures for maintenance of the country's soil. Government should, therefore, increase the allocation of resources for soil conservation, land reclamation, afforestation, flood control and agricultural research and extension work.

There is an urgent need to step up research work for the development of new high yielding varieties of seeds for pulses, coarse grains like bajra and jawar, sugar raw cotton and oil seeds. Special attention must be paid to evolving an effective technology for dry areas. The Janata Party believe that an economy of small peasant proprietors can be both efficient as well as healthy provided that there is a link of service cooperatives to enhance their productive potential. To that end, the party is committed to strengthening the role cooperatives in the transformation of India's rural economy. Consolidation of holdings also greatly enhance the viability of small farms and therefore deserves national priority.

#### **ORGANIC MANURE AND FUEL ECONOMY:**

11. Government should take steps to see that all available organic manure is conserved and utilized for increasing agricultural production. Sole dependence on artificial and chemical use of fertilizer is destructive to the fertility of soil. So the use of manure should be maximized in order to bring about a balance between organic manure and chemical fertilizers. Alternative fuel will have to be provided for the rural areas in order to conserve cowdung and prevent destruction of trees. Further, existing Choolhas should be improved to achieve fuel economy.

#### **EXTENSION WORK AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

## CENTRES:

12. Extension work will receive an impetus if farmers' organizations, co-operatives and the panchayats are associated with the official extension agencies. It is also necessary to revitalize the governmental machinery at the block level for this purpose. Development blocks can perform genuine service to the farmers if they can organize farming families around rural development centres. These centres provide at one place a market for agricultural inputs and service for repairing pumpsets, and agricultural implements, spraying and supply of raw material for cottage and small industries in a area these cluntres should have market outlets with in the urban areas. Farmers should be supplied with passbooks up-date entires in respect if credit limits etc. This idea with should be examined by the Decentralization Committee to be set up the Government]

## POWER FOR AGRICULTURE:

13 Agriculture has been starved of Power in most areas, it has to bear the main brunt of power cuts. We therefor recommend that the power cuts should be equitable born by all sectors, further we recommend that in the allocation of additional generated power agriculture should be given priority. The system of levying fixed service charge by the irrigation and electricity authority should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that the burden is not unfair and unjust:

## EXCISE DUTY ON AGRICULTURAL INPUTS:

14. As the prices of agricultural produce will depend to a great extent on prices of agricultural inputs, reduction of the input prices is important. This can be achieved in the immediate future through abolition or reduction of excise duty. The party thereafter recommends that the Government take steps progressively to reduce excise duty so that the duties on fertilizers,

pesticides and weedicides are completely abolished in the next three years.

#### PARITY PRICE:

15. The price to be paid to the farmers for his produce should be fixed according to the principle of parity i.e. maintenance of balance between prices received and prices paid by the farmers. A support price, which should be lower than the parity price should also be fixed at an appropriate level below which it should be government's endeavor through efficient purchase arrangements to see that they do not fall.

#### AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND LAND REFORM:

16. Agriculture productivity depends greatly on the manner land is held and operated or the kind of agrarian structure a country may have. The Janata party believes that a system of small independent peasant farms assisted together by service cooperatives, will meet our needs or fulfil the aims of our economic policy best. It will produce more crops, provide employment for more workers lead to more equitable distribution of wealth or avoidance of undue disparities in incomes and help strengthen democratic trends more than any other system of farming.

This system demands that every cultivator is given a stake in the land he holds, which means that he will be made its proprietor and no threat of ejection will keep hanging over his head any longer. Unless those who works the land owns it the rest is likely to be dirt in water. Despite so much propaganda by the Congress Party, fental, landlordism still lingers in most parts of the country in some form or other. Legislation has yet to be enacted for the abolition of some of the intermediary tenures and interests in Assam, some parts of Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Tamil Nadu. Ten-

ants and sharecroppers in some other States continue to be insecure. In Haryana, Punjab, security of tenants is subject to a continuing right of resumption by the landlord. In certain States there is widespread circumvention of laws meant to prevent eviction; and the statutory rent of share of the crop payable to the landlord is on the high side in some other States. In some States the ceiling legislation is virtually a dead letter. The Janata Party recommends strongly that all these shortcomings are removed and the various items of land reforms legislation fully implemented within three years. Major portions of the surplus land and uncultivated government lands available for distribution will be given to landless Scheduled casts and Scheduled Tribes people.

National interest demands that a floor on land holdings is also laid and that the law relating to inheritance transfer and partition of land is so amended that it is not reduced below 2.5 acres. This will be possible however only if diversification of the economy and industrialization proceeds at a pace faster than the pace of population growth.

Consolidation of holdings is the first step towards modernisation of agriculture. Therefore, the Government should see to it that the consolidation holdings operations are completed in all States as early as possible. For implementation of land reform measures proper maintenance of land records is absolutely necessary. Therefore in those States, in which the record of possession is not available or is not up-to-date, this should be prepared after on the-spot verification by Revenue staff and the whole work completed within a period of two years.

#### **AGRICULTURAL POLICY STATEMENT:**

17. We recommend that Government should consider formulation of an Agricultural Policy Statement analogous to the Statement on Industrial Policy.

## CREATING MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS:

18. The Janata Party is conscious of the fact that redistribution of land alone cannot solve the problem of acute unemployment and under-employment faced by small farmers and agricultural labourers. The long-term solution to this problem lies in the creation of enough non-agricultural jobs. In the near future, however, we must find ways and means of utilizing this surplus manpower in the rural areas themselves. In this context, the programme for speedy development of rural infrastructure involving provision of pure drinking water, adequate number of rural roads, rural electrification, dispensaries and schools assumes great importance. The Janata Party is greatly concerned at the gross neglect of rural areas in the provision of such essential services as pure drinking water and health care facilities. The Janata Party calls upon the Government to allocate adequate funds for the development of rural infrastructure in the next five years. A successful programme of this type will make a major contribution in improving the quality of rural life and prevent premature excessive migration to the urban areas. In order that these ideas should take concrete shape each State should, to begin with, select at least two districts for intensive development. 'Food for work programmes' and employment guarantee schemes should first be implemented in these districts.

The productive activities on which we should concentrate in the rural areas must include construction of roads, planting of trees, tanks, wells, lift irrigation and other water conservation schemes, levelling of soil, bunding, bringing new land under cultivation, construction of gobar gas plants and so on. Animal husbandry has great possibility and this occupation can be fully

decentralized. It will not only increase the number of self-employed people in the countryside but it will also increase incomes and supply of a key food item and sources of protein.

#### THE NEED FOR PEOPLE'S INVOLVEMENT;

19. In evolving and implementing a national strategy of agricultural and rural development we believe that there must be close association of the people at all levels both in planning process and in the more important task of implementation. We recognize that an effective programme of implementation must necessarily have the support and assistance of State Governments and the State Administrations. In turn, it is our hope that the State Administrations will associate institutions at the district add tehsil and village levels as well as voluntary organizations which are willing to extend a helping hand. It is our firm conviction that planning and national development must go hand in hand with a participative style of democracy.

#### INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:

20. The Janata Party fully recognizes that the long-term solution to India's poverty must involve diversion of a sizable proportion of the rural population to non-agricultural occupations. Thus in any long-term strategy of development we cannot overlook the imperative need for industrialization. The primacy of agriculture to which the Janata Party is firmly committed must not be seen as a bias against industry or neglect of the longer term perspective of development. It simply reflects an awareness that in the present stage of India's development a sustained increase in agricultural productivity is almost a precondition for further advance in industry. So long as poor as these are today, the market for industrial goods in the country must remain severely restricted. Thus providing additional resources for agricultural development will in the long run impart a powerful stimulus to

industrial growth.

21. The Janata Party believes that even after meeting the capital requirements of rural areas it will be possible as well as desirable to provide substantial resources for development of vital industries needed for expansion of agriculture like fertilizers, pesticides, cement and agricultural implements. It will also be necessary to devote substantial resources for development of transport and, especially, power in the next five years. With this end in view the national resources of energy such as water, coal, oil, solar energy and nuclear fuel will have to be speedily developed. In addition, it will be desirable to push ahead with the development of such resources-based industries as steel and aluminium. This calls for a massive developmental effort. It will have to be based mainly on the mobilization of internal resources, including our human potential. External credits or assistance can only play a marginal role. In short, the Janata Party would work for the integrated and planned development of the national economy and would seek to generate enthusiasm among the people by giving a new direction and focus to the economy.

22. In such an integrated economy public sector, private corporate sector, small-scale sector, cooperative industries, cottage industries and self-employed people will all have a meaningful place. The public sector has to use its dominate position to serve the people, promote agriculture, cottage industries and small-scale industries, accelerate development and set the tone to the national economy. In order to do this, the public sector will have to improve greatly the efficiency of public enterprises and their managerial capabilities. The Janata Party's concept of a socialist economy would require the various sectors to work within the framework of national priorities. In view of the

present needs of investible resources for agricultural and rural development, both the public sector and the organized private sector must generate surpluses and use their own internal resources for growth and expansion. This would imply that their productive efficiencies must improve and their pricing and output policies must be so adjusted as to generate surpluses. These surpluses should not be thrown away by way of indiscriminate distribution of dividends and bonus and increasing the perks and amenities of the top people. These surpluses must be saved and invested for growth and expansion thus relieving the public exchequer and the banking system of the need for continuously canalizing further investible funds, which can then be diverted towards agricultural development and building up of cottage and decentralized industries.

23. The Janata Party believes that the development of small scale industries and optimum utilization of labour intensive techniques of production should be given all possible encouragement. In areas reserved for small-scale industry future capacity should not be permitted in the large-scale sector. In order to encourage small entrepreneurs and self-employed people administrative procedures will have to be simplified. These people today have departments before they can start their businesses. All this will have to be changed. A centralized agency has to be created from which these small businesses can receive guidance and help.

While considering the question of reservations of areas of production for the small sector, we would like to emphasize the need for ensuring economic production of high quality at reasonable price in such sector. In deciding the question of reservation, therefore, Government will have to keep in mind considerations of employment generation and broad-basing on the pattern of

entrepreneurship as well as economy in the scale of operations.

#### SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF VILLAGE & COTTAGE INDUSTRIES:

24. The Janata Party calls upon the Government to evolve national plan for the development of village and cottage industries taking into account the evolving pattern of demand. We must continue to encourage khadi which was associated with the struggle for national independence and which provides employment for considerable number of people. Credit and technical assistance should be provided to small-scale and cottage industries on a liberal scale so as to enable them to improve both their technique of production as well as marketing of their products.

While recommending the planned development of khadi, village and cottage industries, we would suggest to the Government that these industries must have a sound economic basis. They must result in the production of goods which are high in quality and widely acceptable in the markets. They must also aim at economy in costs of production so as to be consistent with our general objective of bringing down the price line. Modern management techniques must therefore be introduced in order to achieve these ends. In terms of the policy commitment made in the Janata manifesto the party would like the Government to clearly demarcate the areas of reservation for the small-scale and cottage industries which use power and cottage industries which use no power.

The party's policy will be that what can be produced by cottage industries shall not be produced by the small-scale and large-scale sectors and what can be produced by the small-scale sector shall not be open for large-scale industry. The reservation of fields must be clear and where necessary statutorily defined.

The only exception that may be considered will be for production that is entirely for export.

The Janata Party, therefore, proposes that till the time full employment has been achieved, no new capital intensive enterprises shall be allowed to be established for manufacturing any consumer and other goods which can be produced by and which be statutorily reserved for production by cottage or village or small sector. All this will have to be worked out in great detail. Thus the Government should not permit any expansion in the weaving capacity in the organized mills sector. New weaving capacity should be created only in the decentralized sector consisting of first handlooms and, second powerlooms whose ownership should be widely diffused. Weaving and production of footwear and soaps and if possible other articles in the organized sector should be progressively reduced so that the entire weaving and production of footwear and soap is allocated to decentralized sector within the framework of a 10 year phased programme.

To sum up, the expansion of cottage industries and small-scale industries would necessitate.

(a) Clear statutory demarcation, reservation of specific lines of industrial production and statutory protection for these sectors;

(b) credit facilities;

(c) machinery for enforcing quality control;

(d) improvement and innovation in the techniques used in cottage and small-scale industries;

(e) adequate supplies of raw materials at reasonable prices;

and

(f) a vast marketing network.

## URBAN ENVIRONMENT:

25. For thirty years we have neglected the urban environment allowing a haphazard growth of our cities and towns. It is, therefore, essential that all metropolitan areas produce a regional plan which will scientifically disperse congestion of industry and people without destroying the natural aesthetic. Similarly, every city having a population of five lakhs or more must statutorily have a master plan and made provision for a green belt area around the city to prevent haphazard growth on its periphery. Likewise cities of one lakh and over must produce master plans which make adequate provision of open spaces and orderly development. In all these plans, provision should be made for slum improvement housing for the poor and the displaced slum-dwellers, and where possible allotment of house sites for them. In doing so care should be taken to ensure that they do not have to travel long distances to their places of employment.

## LOCATION OF INDUSTRIES:

26. To prevent concentration of industries in a few large urban centres, the Government should prohibit starting of new industries in urban centres with a population of 10 lakhs or more or in the environs of these centres within a radius of 15 to 20 kms.

The Government should provide infrastructure facilities including power, in selected places so that industries can be diverted to these areas. A system of standardized components, parts and ancillaries should be increasingly adopted so that quite a substantial portion of the production process can be decentralized.

## HOUSING

27. Constructional activity like laying of new railway lines irrigation, road building and housing has a very large employ-

ment potential. This activity is also important from the point of view of social needs. It will incidentally stimulate demand of steel and other materials for which the demand is at present very slack. All restrictions on house building must therefore be removed and individual initiative and cooperative endeavors must be given full play to meet this pressing social need. People induced to save and invest in housing construction. Encouragement must be given to house building activities of the common people. However, construction of lavish and luxury flats should not be allowed. At the same time, production of cement and other building material like bricks, mortar etc. should be rapidly increased so that shortages and black markets do not reappear. Public authorities should give special priority to construction of house for economically and socially backward, including Harijans and Adivasis.

#### SELF-RELIANCE

28. The Janata Party is firmly committed to the goal of national self-reliance. India has a huge internal market of over 600 million people. The potentialities of this market are vast. Besides, India is well endowed with basic natural resources like iron ore, coal (though not high grade) bauxite and so on. The policy of national self-reliance however does not mean that our country should cut itself away from the world and live in total isolation. There will be need for us to encourage international trade both in the form of exports and imports. In planning for self-reliance, we should concentrate in those areas where we have comparative advantage and where we can produce goods economically and profitably at low cost both for the domestic and external markets. Without expanding the internal market and increasing the volume of production for domestic consumption, neither can costs be brought down nor our goods made competi-

tive in external markets. The question of self-reliance has also to be approached from the point of view of generating employment. Thirdly, considerations of national strategy would also necessitate self-reliance in certain critical and strategic areas. However, in non-critical and non-strategic areas where production in the country would be uneconomical, producers and mass consumption goods which are in short supply may be imported from the cheapest sources as part of overall strategy of containing inflation and bringing down price levels. But the imports of goods which cannot be economically produced in India should be counter balanced by strong export efforts. The Janata Party would like to caution that due care must be taken to ensure that the export drive does not cause scarcities of critical commodities and essential articles of consumption for the domestic market. The export-import policy must fit in with the development strategy based on agriculture and labour intensive industrialization. The national production plan must cater both for the domestic market as well as external markets.

#### FOREIGN COLLABORATION

29. In consonance with its emphasis on self-reliance, the Janata Party is of the view that our approach to foreign technical and financial collaboration must be selective and flexible.

The Janata Party will not go in for foreign collaboration in areas where adequate Indian skills and capital are available.

In order to promote technological self-reliance and obviate the need for foreign collaboration, large Indian firms should be encouraged to spend adequate amounts on research and development. Wherever the need for foreign collaboration is felt in areas of high priority emphasis should be on purchasing outright technical know-how, technological skills, and machinery



Oath of Prime Minister, July 1979



At Desk - Prime Minister's office, South Block



The provisions of FERA must be rigorously enforced in the sector of consumer goods industries. The foreign firms should be asked to carry forward the process of Indianization. Their production capacities also should be frozen at the existing levels. Only then will the indigenous firms be able to make headway in the areas of consumer goods industries.

In this connection, the Janata Party would commend the example of Japanese industries which brought about astonishing expansion without providing any significant role for foreign equity capital. The Japanese imported the best available technology and then adapted it to their own needs. The Janata Government should follow this example. We also call upon our scientists and technologists to evolve a forward-looking, small unit technology suited to our condition and needs.

The Janata Party would like to emphasize that foreign companies which are operating in the country must conform to national objectives and priorities and that foreign equity must operate within the parameters of national policy.

#### DISPERSION OF PROPERTY AND CURBING OF CONCENTRATION OF ECONOMIC POWER:

30. The Janata Party notes with concern the concentration of economic and productive power in a few hands. The entire strategy of development must, therefore, seek to achieve the widest possible dispersion in the ownership of property and the means of production. The policy of enforcing agricultural ceilings and promoting small-scale and cottage industries will help dispersion of property. There is an urgent need to develop entrepreneurial skill and initiative in small and the medium sector and to prevent continuance or emergence of monopolies.

A peculiar feature of the post-independence industrial development has been the dominance of about twenty industrial

houses. These industrial groups have used their entrepreneurial resources, their connections with the administration and their capacity to manipulate to frustrate measures designed to curb concentration of wealth.

The Janata Party is of the view that the Government may allow these industrial groups to expand only in those areas where such expansion is clearly in national interest and in accord with national priorities.

The Government should not, however, permit any company or group of companies to have a dominant share of the market in what they produce nor should it allow these companies to be in a position to dictate terms to producers, raw material suppliers and consumers. In order to break the monopolist stranglehold of a group of companies or inter-connected companies over the market in the goods they produce, these inter-connections or groups will have to be broken, and the law must unambiguously empower the authorities to do this so that unnecessary litigation on this subject is avoided. In this view, the committee is glad to note that the Government has already under examination the strengthening of Monopolies Commission.

The tendency towards concentration of economic power arises from indiscriminate diversification and pre-emption of new fields by leading business groups. It should be the policy of the Janata Government to encourage new entrepreneurs in new lines of industrial activity.

While every possible assistance must be given to the small sector to realize its growth potential Government must back this up by systems of progressive taxation on income and wealth as well as direct measures to curb the concentration of economic power.

## PRICE POLICY

31. The Janata Party firmly believes that reasonable price stability is a pre-requisite of sound development. The Janata Government inherited an explosive inflationary situation. However, due to firm control over money supply and other corrective measures adopted by the Janata Government in recent months, the price out-look now appears to be more encouraging. Prices of a number of essential commodities have started declining in recent weeks. However, there is no scope for complacency. The Janata Party commends to Government a price policy with following essential ingredients:

(a) a firm control over money supply;

(b) incentive prices designed to secure an adequate increase in the production of basic consumption goods;

(c) timely arrangements for import of commodities in short supply;

(d) a well functioning public distribution system; and

(e) stringent action against unscrupulous traders and hoarders.

Remunerative procurement prices must be seen as an essential element of increasing agricultural production and of stabilizing prices. In this context particular attention needs to be paid to increasing the production of pulses, raw cotton and oilseeds which have contributed significantly to price inflation in the recent past.

### MARKETING AND DISTRIBUTION :

32. The production in abundance of consumer goods is by itself not adequate. Government must ensure that these consumption goods reach the masses and the people and are available throughout the country and to all sections of the people at fair and reasonable prices. We would strongly urge the

establishment of a marketing network which will ensure the availability of goods to the common man. The public distribution system would have to be extended to all areas of the country. It must distribute through its network cereals, pulses, edible oils, sugar, textiles and kerosene. The public distribution system in the rural areas should be based on panchayats-cum-cooperatives. In the urban areas it should increasingly use consumer cooperatives. A functioning public distribution system presupposes procurement by the State of large supplies of the essential articles of consumption mentioned earlier. The Janata Government should ensure this through creation of warehousing facilities, storage and maintenance of buffer stocks.

In this connection, we would also like to emphasize the need for the improvement in quality for products and towards this end we suggest standardization of production of goods. Abundant production backed by a proper marketing and distribution system, we hope will stimulate per capita consumption.

#### MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT

33. The Government machinery must be fully geared to developmental activity if programmes necessary to achieve the objectives of the Party are to be implemented with speed and efficiency. The hurdles in the path of socially beneficial projects have to be removed and inter-State disputes which prevent rapid realization of our irrigation and hydro-power potentials should be expeditiously settled. Economy must be the watchword of Government organizations. Drastic cut in non-development expenditure is necessary to divert resources for development. There should be a clear realization that costs of delay are incredibly heavy and a poor country, seeking to pull itself up by its shoe-strings can ill-afford them. Finally, if progress is to be as swift as is necessary, every effort must be made to root out corruption.

## EDUCATION, EDUCATED UNEMPLOYED AND SOCIAL SERVICES

34. Educated unemployed are today in the grip of blank despair. Their number on the employment exchange is rapidly increasing and the vast human capital built in them is going waste. Their problem will receive special attention of the Janata Government. It will see to it that its development strategy is oriented to expansion of employment opportunities designed to make use of their capability and skills. The Janata Government will also take steps to refashion the educational system so as to bring about a radical change in the attitude to work as also to increase employability. The Party emphasizes the need for building up a strong, healthy and educated generation of Indians. The State must accept much greater responsibility toward the provision of social services to the citizens of India. The facilities in respect of education, health, services and public sanitation are totally inadequate. The Directive Principle of State policy about compulsory and universal primary education must be speedily implemented and adult literacy should be vigorously promoted. Education specifically directed towards the needs of the nation and towards the optimum employment must be provided. Public health standards must go up and medical facilities extended to all the people. It is our belief that a literary army will help us in tackling the problem of unemployment among the educated youth and a land army will help us in solving the problem of rural unemployment.

### ERADICATION OF MALNUTRITION

35. War against malnutrition has to begin in right earnest. It is necessary not only for the development of man as an end in itself but also for the efficiency of economic performance. Efforts in this direction have to begin with the care and nourishment of

children in mother's wombs, and later in their school. The former will bring about greater equality at birth and the latter in the crucial and formative years of their life. It should be possible to provide high protein food to an increasingly larger number of children through the use of pro-flour prepared from ground-nut cakes after extraction of oil and from soybeans. In particular, the mid-day meals which are at present available to only a small section of school be progressively supplied to all school going children.

#### POPULATION POLICY

36. The Janata Party affirms its firm belief in the vital necessity of a successful programme of family planning, as an ingredient of development policy. Every possible effort has to be made to bring down the birth rate in the country to a more manageable level. However, the Party wishes to emphasize that there should be no coercion whatsoever in the implementation of family planning programmes. These programmes must be integrated into a well thought out programme for health care. Success of family planning is vitally linked with the spread of education among women and a rise in their status in our society. Incentives must be provided to make the programme a success. However coercion of any kind should not be resorted to. The party is also in favour of legislation designed to raise the minimum age of marriage. This is a need for a sustained nationwide campaign to create a proper awareness of the need for smaller families.

#### FISCAL POLICY

37. Fiscal concessions such as development rebates and investment allowances, etc., which are in operation today must be reviewed and revised by the Government with a view to promoting labour intensive industries and discouraging wasteful use of capital. We have recommended a positive, and aggres-

sive investment policy in agriculture, industry, social services and human welfare which is imperative to stimulate national growth. For this purpose Government would require adequate funds. An appropriate fiscal policy would have, therefore, to be evolved for the purpose. We believe that the taxation policy of the Government must keep in mind five considerations :

(1) Increased public investment expenditure must necessitate increased public income. The people of the country, therefore, have to accept the burden of higher taxation needed for investment in the future.

(2) Taxation policy must simultaneously aim at redistributive justice and must take into consideration the capacity to pay.

(3) Taxes should be easy to collect and it should be easy for the tax payer to know what he has to pay. There is urgent need for the simplification and rationalization of the tax administration.

(4) Taxes must have an in-built growth potential and inherent buoyancy.

(5) Taxation policy must aim at stimulating national growth and must encourage production and savings.

#### INCOMES, WAGES AND PRICE POLICY

38. The Janata Party is concerned about the growing disparities in incomes, wages and emoluments of different sections of our society. These disparities exist not only between the rich and the poor, there also exist regional income disparities, disparities between the rural and urban populations, and disparities between the organized and unorganized sectors.

The Party reiterates its commitment to an equitable national wage and price policy. The Party wants the minimum incomes to rise steadily so that the difference between the minima and the maxima, after tax, is reduced to 1:20, its ultimate objective being to reduce this differential to 1:10. It holds that an

integrated incomes and price policy is an important instrument in removing the disparities and correcting the distortions that have entered the structure of wages and prices. The Party notes that the Government have set up a Study Group to make a study of the problem. Among the terms of reference of the Group are questions relating to the fixation of minimum wage, maximum wage for different categories of workers, wage differentials and criteria for determining them, linkage between wages, incomes and prices and review of arrangements with regard to dearness allowance, etc., and appropriate fiscal, economic and other measures for achieving the objectives of this policy as also the necessity or otherwise of legislative changes. We note that the terms of reference do not expressly cover the question of minimum wage for agricultural labourers and incomes disparities and limitation of personal consumption.

The Party hopes that the report of the Group will become available in six months and that the Group will take into account the claims of social justice in formulating its proposals. Thereafter the Government should take swift and effective steps to bring about rationalization in wages, income and prices to achieve the twin objectives of increased production and equity and social justice.

### QUALITY OF HUMAN FACTOR

39. The total real income of a country is roughly a function of the size and efficiency of its labour or working force relative to the size and quality of its natural resources. Which the quantity and quality of natural resources are almost beyond human control, the quality or degree of excellence of a people is very much of its own making. Deficiency in quality and quantity of natural resources can, to a great degree, be made good or compensated by the quality of the working population. This

quality depends upon historical and cultural factors, social environment, quality of health and education as also the kind of leadership provided by the Government.

The Janata Party, therefore, will do all that lies in its power to create conditions which will improve the quality of our people.

#### NEEDS OF CHANGE IN MENTAL ATTITUDE

40. The Janata party will work for a change in such of the values, attitudes and motivations of our people as stand in the way of economic development. Large sections of our society lack the urge to improve their economic condition by their own efforts. The Janata Party will impress upon the people that man can very largely be the captain of his own fate.

The people have also to be made to realize, as Mahatma Gandhi taught us, that rights flow only out of duties well performed. No individual or nation on earth can possibly have something for nothing. We will have to pay the costs for economic development whether we live in a democratic society or are governed by a dictatorship. The only difference is that in a democracy the costs are willingly borne, in a dictatorship, they are extracted. These costs will have to be paid in the form of hard work, discipline and integrity in the widest sense of the term.

#### SUMMING UP

This then is the main direction in which the Janata party would like to move. The party feels that the time has come to end all uncertainty about economic policy and to take determined steps for a rapid economic advance. All pre-conditions for such an advance like a satisfactory kharif harvest and equally good prospects for Rabi and fall in wholesale price index already exist. What is required is the will to forge ahead. This the Government must now provide. Unless the nation agrees to defer present consumption and undertake large savings and investment effort

life existing opportunities for expansion cannot be fully exploited. The upper classes and elite will have to set an example in this regard. Unless these classes give up ostentation and display of wealth, unless they agree to make sacrifices proportionate to their wealth and responsibility the common people cannot be asked to exercise self-restraint or moderate their sectional demands.

In order to enthuse the people the national economy must promise to provide goods and services needed by the crores of our people and not only satisfy the demands of the rich. Our economy must not only produce adequate quantities of food and clothing but also ensure that every village home has an assured supply of pure drinking water, That every Indian has a pair of footwear, that every family has a bicycle, a radio and sewing machine, and that every Indian has adequate supplies of soap and minimal health housing and educational facilities. In order to achieve these goals within the next ten years, the Janata Party invite the people to join in a common national endeavour. Let increased production and hard labour now become the national motto and let the burning desire to achieve social justice pervade all our public activities. To this end the Janata Party rededicates itself.

## ANNEXURE-II

I may state, at the outset, that my exit from the Government was not a resignation in the usual sense, but an expulsion.

I fell critically ill on April 24, 1978 and had to be admitted in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi on that very day. I came out of the Institute on June 9 and was convalescing at Suraj Kund, but under the care of a doctor of the Institute, all the 24 hours of the day. On the 29th June, I received a letter from the Prime Minister at about 10.00 PM, demanding my resignation and clothed in strident language— language of a master to a servant. I wrote back the next day that I was resigning forthwith as desired by him, but would give my assessment of the real reasons behind this action of his, on the floor of Parliament. I would have come earlier to the House but for my ill health and persuasion of my friends to delay the statement. Inter alia, the letter said:

"I am quite sure that you are fully aware of the concept of collective responsibility that prevails in a Cabinet system of Government. I do not know what prompted you to decide to depart from time-honoured procedure that are characteristic of the Cabinet system, and choose to use the Press as the medium of communication with your Cabinet colleagues. Instead of submitting your proposals to the Cabinet you chose to bypass the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and make statements which amount to a condemnation of the Cabinet through the medium of the Press....

"The step that you have taken is all the more understandable, because the matters that you have raised are all matters which fall entirely within the competence of the Home Ministry, of which I am In-charge. The responsibility for processing legal action against Mrs. Gandhi and others responsible for

the excesses of the Emergency falls within the area of responsibility of the Home Ministry. As Home Minister, I am, and has continued to be my responsibility to give thought to this question and put before the Cabinet proposals for the best course of action in this field, and also to see that the administrative action necessary for the implementation of these proposals are carried out expeditiously and effectively."

"Your statement gives the impression that you wanted that Mrs. Gandhi should be immediately arrested and detained but 'those who differed from you' obviously in the Cabinet, stood in your way'. There can be no greater travesty of truth than to suggest that you put forward any proposals in this regard which were turned down by the Cabinet. The fact of the matter is, that you made no proposals of this kind to the Cabinet and, therefore, the question of turning them down did not arise".

Mr. Speaker, I would now like, with your permission, to state the facts leading to the situation, in a chronological order.

While I was staying at Suraj Kund, Shri Ram Jethmalani, a legal luminary and a respected member of this house, saw me thrice at my request in order to discuss the question of establishment of special courts or some other special procedure for the former Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi's trial. He told me that a distinguished jurist, Shri Seerval, was also of the same opinion as he himself and I were. He also referred to the opinion of Shri Tarkunde in this connection. Shri Ram Jethmalani's interest in the matter as also my view of it will be clear from the letter which he wrote to the law Minister on June 12, 1978:

Ram Jethmalani, MP  
7B Janpath  
New Delhi

12th June, 1978

My dear Shanti Bhushan,

After our last meeting, I prepared a draft Ordinance and showed it to Charan singhji. He was keen that I should obtain Mr. Seervai's opinion on its Constitutional validity. I sent a copy of the draft ordinance to Mr. Seervai and requested him to make such changes as he liked, but the ordinance should be foolproof and immune to all possible attacks. Mr. Seervai has made a few changes and the revised version is according to him above all Constitutional reproach. I am sending herewith the revised ordinance as well Mr. Seervai's opinion. I have once again to reiterate that on the return of the Prime Minister this Ordinance should be forthwith promulgated and some thing done to bolster our lost diminishing credibility.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/

(Ram Jethmalani)

Mr. Shanti Bhushan,  
Union Law Minister,  
New Delhi.

On June 15, the Cabinet Secretary, the Home Secretary and the Personnel Secretary (who is in charge of the central Bureau of Investigation) held a meeting with me at Suraj Kund to discuss the question of trial and prosecution of Mrs. Gandhi. During the course of the discussion, I made it clear to them several times-clear beyond any doubt-that I wanted Special Courts to be set up for the purpose otherwise, the trial would take years and years, create disaffection in the public mind and bring bad name to the Government. And that the people were unable to appreciate how Mrs. Gandhi came to be released unconditionally in the preceding October perhaps, the first instance of its kind in the history of Criminal law in India. I also referred to the opinion of the distinguished jurist, Mr. Seervai and the draft of an Ordinance prepared by him which had been given to me by Shri Ram Jethmalani. While such was my view, the thoughts that swayed the Prime Minister and the law Minister were different.

In its issue, dated June 18, 1978, the 'Times of India', New Delhi, carried the following report of a press conference held by the Prime Minister immediately on his return from a ten-days tour of the U.S.A.:

"The Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, said here today that the government would decide within two months the question of prosecution of Mrs. Gandhi in the light of the findings of the Shah Commission.

Replying to a spate of questions on the subject at his press conference here this evening, Mr. Desai was emphatic in ruling out any retrospective penal action.

The question of prosecution was being examined by the government. "Any action taken will be under the existing law and for specific offences. I do not believe in any high-handed action. Crimes committed will be dealt with in accordance with law. I

cannot make new crimes. I cannot make laws with retrospective effect. That will be wrong".

He told a questioner that Mrs. Gandhi had been punished by the people. ' She will be punished in future also. People are not going to forget what she did". Emergency must be forgotten as a bad dream, he said.

A week later, that is, on June 25, the "Indian express", New Delhi, reported thus:

Mrs. Gandhi to be tried by Ordinary Court.

New Delhi: June 24: The Government has decided to try Mrs. Gandhi in an ordinary way, instituting cases against her in a magisterial court in the capital.

There will be no special court, nor a special judge, even though it realised that the cases may take a long time to conclude.

It is not known whether, to expedite the proceedings, the government will approach the Delhi High Court to transfer the cases to itself— a procedure adopted earlier by the government in several cases. This can help skip two stages. From the High Court the appeal is only to the Supreme Court, while from the magisterial court the cases will go to the sessions judge, then to the High Court and ultimately to the Supreme Court.

The cases which are being instituted are under Sections 343 and 344 of the IPC and they relate to wrongful confinement. One is under Section 211 for giving false information to the State this is about the wrongful detention of textile inspectors. The Government could have preferred this case under the prevention of Corruption Act and that would have automatically meant a trial by the Sessions Judge. (The Supreme Court has held that misuse of authority to cause wrong to the State can be a case for a special magistrate). But the government has not done that.

It looks as if the government was bending back-wards to see that nobody criticised it for having cut short any procedure or for having shown unnecessary haste in trying Mrs. Gandhi.

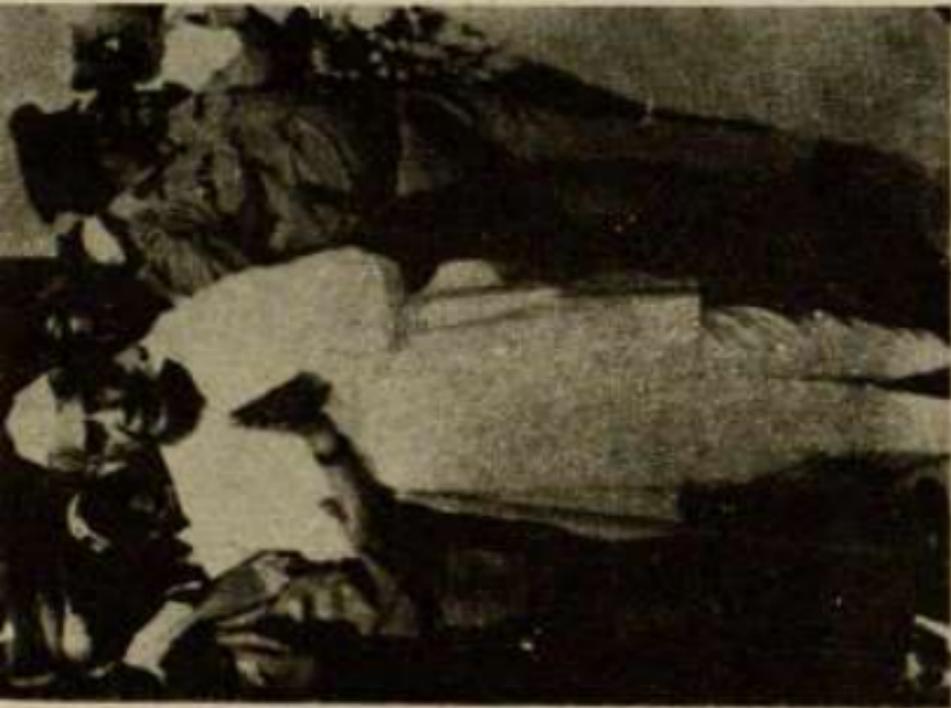
It is an open secret that a few Ministers in the Central Cabinet, particularly Mr. Shanti Bhushan, law Minister, have opted for a soft line towards Mrs. Gandhi. They think that she was 'punished' by the people when they threw her out in the lok Sabha poll. At a news conference after his visit to the U.K. and the U.S.A. Mr. Morarji Desai had also observed 'Has not she been punished for playing with the Constitution?'

On 27th June, the UNI sent out a despatch from New Delhi, a part whereof runs as follows:

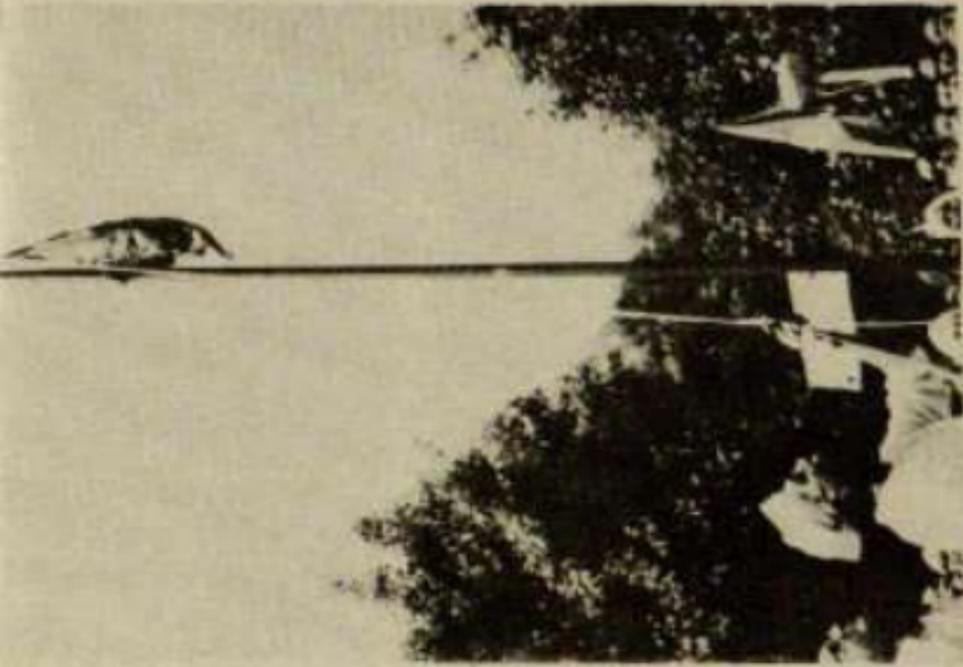
"According to the current thinking of the Prime Minister, he does not favour action except under the existing law. Even under the present law, it will be open for the Government to approach the High Court to specify a magistrate's Court to deal exclusively with cases relating to Mrs. Gandhi and others. The Court would commit the proceedings to the Sessions Court. The Prime Minister also does not favour any new legislation depriving Mrs. Gandhi of the due process of law now accessible to other citizens. The suggestion that she should have only one course of appeal instead of two or three available to others is also not acceptable to Mr. Desai. This legislation would create an impression that the Government was out to persecute some one and could be challenged in a Court of Law".

It was in the contest of the above three reports that I thought it necessary, on June 28, to explain by point of view by way of an interview to the Press — a view which dictated strong and swift action against the former Prime Minister. I said as follows:

"Perhaps, those who differ from me do not realise suffi-



Prime Minister Charan Singh 1979



Hoisting National Flag 15 Aug 1979



ciently the intensity of the feelings among the people of our country on the Government's failure to put the former Prime Minister behind the bars by now. They draw all sorts of conclusions and are inclined to give credence to all kinds of stories. They think that we in the Government are a pack of impotent people who cannot govern the country. Indeed, there is even a section of our people, especially among those who had suffered grievously under her regime during the Emergency, who want that Mrs. Gandhi should be detained under MISA, which is still on the statute book and despite the Janata Government's irrevocable commitment to scrap this lawless law. Although I might not go along with this extreme view, I can still understand and appreciate their feelings. It only represents their patriotic reaction to the manner in which Mrs. Gandhi and her caucus have tried to denigrate the law courts, create uproars in law court compounds, impute motives to the Shah Commission, subvert the prosecution evidence and generally create an atmosphere of violence and terror in the county against those who differed from her and her Congress."

As it happens, the Grand Old Man of Indian politics, Acharya J.B. Kripalani, was also thinking on the some lines as I was. On the 27th June, he wrote the following letter to me:

Madras

27th June, 1978

My dear Charan Singh,

When I wrote to you last, I thought you are quite restored to your health, but I find that this is not so. I hope, inspite of the present difficulties, you will soon be restored to your normal health.

I am sending you herewith a letter I have addressed today to the Members of Parliament about the trial of Mrs. Gandhi. I am

sure you will agree with me that the way that has been proposed for a trial is as good as dropping it altogether. In this connection, I am also sending you herewith a cutting of an article that I wrote a few days back in the 'The Hindu' of Madras.

I hope the political troubles there will end soon and you will begin again the service of the nation as a united party.

With greetings and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
sd/- (J.B.Kripalani)

I may tell the House, however, that I received Acharya's letter (along with its enclosure) more than a week after I had resigned.

Now, to the arguments advanced by the Prime Minister in his letter to me, dated June 29: the first is based on the principle of collective responsibility. This principle has been taken from the Conventions of the British parliamentary practice. It has been incorporated in Clause 3 of Article 75 of our Constitution and provides that the Council of Minister shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People. I must submit, however, that this principle is not absolute. In other words, it does not rule out public expression of dissent on the part of a Minister in all cases. And I think, in view of the history of the question of Mrs. Gandhi's trial and its public importance, I committed no wrong if I conveyed my views thereon to the people directly.

Mr. John P. Mackintosh writes in his book, "The British Cabinet", Third edition (1977) page 33, as under:

"Collective responsibility used to be enforced from the days of the Younger Pitt, because Prime Ministers and Cabinets felt too exposed to criticism if members publicly disagreed with each other. But in the modern conditions of politics, a government can keep going in the House of Commons provided it

retains its majority. What is more important, is to avoid electorally damaging resignations or 'splits' as the newspapers would describe the situation. If it is easier to prevent such damage by allowing an element of public disagreement, then this can be done and has been done".

He goes on to point out on page 535 that "by 1975, as has been said, occasions arose when ministers were allowed not merely to record their dissent in public but to campaign against each other (over the BBC particular bills or the leadership of their party) before relapsing once again into a form of collective responsibility".

Another writer, Mr. Gordon Walker, in his book "The Cabinet", has also pointed out that "dissent is also permitted if, on balance, this does the governing party less harm than playing the card of collective responsibility and facing resignations, recriminations and talk of splits".

The above facts of British parliamentary life are particularly true of/or applicable to the circumstances in which the Janata Party was born. It is not a fully integrated party with an organic growth from the roots, but more a combination of parties or groups which could act only on the basis of a broad consensus, at least, on important issues

What is more relevant than what 'collective' responsibility' means or does not mean, is the question whether it applies to Minister only or to the Prime Minister also. The Prime Minister thinks that he is above all rules and conventions, that it is the Ministers alone who are subject to discipline or answerable to him on all conceivable occasions. But, in my humble opinion, he is wrong in thinking or acting as he has been doing. Article 74 provides that there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head. Although he is the head of the Council, the

Prime Minister is only the first among equals (*primus inter pares*). Thus the principle of collective responsibility embraces in its fold the Prime Minister along with the Ministers. This is clear from the observations of the Chief Justice Beg and Justice Chandra chud also made in a judgement delivered in the case of Karnataka State V/S Union of India this very year.

Last year, in 1977, the Prime Minister had declared that India would not produce or use nuclear energy even for peaceful purposes though this might be detrimental to the interests of the country. Now, this goes contrary to a clear Government decision taken during the days of the previous regime, not with standing the objections of about half a dozen countries which today hold the monopoly of production of nuclear energy and stockpiling of the destructive arms. It was a sensible decision and consistent with our national self-respect. The question arises : why did Shri Desai make such a statement without putting it before the Cabinet?

Then there is the unfortunate statement of the Prime Minister on Sikkim's merger with India. Now, this statement was not only factually wrong, but it was never put to the Cabinet or discussed by it. The statement has made our country an object of ridicule throughout the world. Shri Desai expressed the same view about the liberation of Goa, again, without consultation with his colleagues.

The Prime Minister explained that it was his own personal opinion. But a Prime Minister's opinion in regard to a public question can never be regarded as a private or personal opinion. It was an outright official declaration and, in any other country, the Prime Minister would have been forced by Parliament to resign. But, then, India is different.

Centre-State relations is a subject falling within the ambit

of the Department of Home Affairs. When certain Chief Ministers wanted that a Conference of Chief Minister be called to discuss certain issues, the Prime Minister made a declaration that no such conference would be held nor was it necessary to do so. He never consulted me as to what I thought about the matter.

Law and Order is strictly a State subject, but there are certain questions relating thereto, which Government of India might consider relevant to its own duties and functions. For example, there were serious disturbances in Maharashtra in October last year. The Prime Minister wrote a letter to the State Chief Minister without even insulting as much as bringing it to my notice even after it had been sent out.

There are several such other instances, over the narration whereof, I need not waste the time of this House any further. A valid question will, therefore, be whether in the face of his own personal record of willfully bypassing the Cabinet and the concerned colleagues, it lies in Shri Desai's mouth to accuse me of transgressing the principle of collective responsibility.

As for the second point, raised by the Prime Minister in his letter, it is true that legal action against Mrs. Gandhi and others responsible for the excesses of emergency, as held prima facie by the Shah Commission, falls within the area of responsibility of the Home Ministry. Now, the first part of the Commission's report was received in the Home Ministry on March 12, 1978 and placed before the Cabinet on March 23. As the House already knows, an intimation that an Empowered Committee was appointed to process the recommendations of the Commissions, to submit its recommendations and to suggest the action that was to be taken thereon, within a month or so. The second part of the Commission's Report was received, and the recommendations of the Empowered Committee on the first part submitted during my illness, viz.,

on April 27 and May 1, respectively. The Committee's recommendations on the second part of the Commission's report are said to have been received still later, viz., on May 11. During this period, it was the Prime Minister himself or the two Ministers of State who held charge of the Home portfolio. I do not, however, exactly know what the arrangement was made; atleast, I was never informed of the arrangement.

As regards the Prime Minister's third argument, viz., about my responsibility to give thought to the question of Mrs. Gandhi's trial and put proposals before the Cabinet on the subject, I have already told the House that I did hold a discussion with the Secretaries concerned immediately my health permitted me to do so. I understand, however, that the Ministry of Home Affairs, rather its Secretary did not submit any note on the trial of Mrs. Gandhi either to the Prime Minister or directly to the Cabinet. Why no action was taken in pursuance of the discussion or my view so clearly expressed, passes my comprehension. But I could not ask any questions or take any actions on this failure as it came to my notice only after I had resigned.

The question that calls for consideration in this connection, is very simple, indeed. Admitting I tried or failed in my duty of sending up proposals in regard to Mrs. Gandhi's trial promptly to the Cabinet, could not the Prime Minister motor down to the Suraj Kund for a discussion with me, or, if he considered this course to be below his dignity, could he not ring me up for a telephonic talk? But it was certainly not open to the Prime Minister, without consulting me, to let it be known to the press and, through it, to the people that he did not favour any course for trial of Mrs. Gandhi other than what was available to other citizens; that she was to be tried in the ordinary way, starting with institution of complaints in a magistrate's court and an appeal to

the Sessions Judge, then to the High Court and finally to the Supreme Court; that government would appoint no special court or special judge to try Mrs. Gandhi even though the cases took a long time to conclude; that any such action on the part of the Government or a new legislation in this regard was likely to create an impression that Government was out to persecute some one; and also that such a legislation could be challenged in a court of law, etc., etc.

It is clear that the Prime Minister thinks he was free to do what he liked, without consulting the Minister concerned. I do not think he was so entitled. At best, he could take the matter to the Cabinet. But, then, the House must have noted that our Prime Minister usually speaks in terms of 'I', not 'we', 'Cabinet' or 'Government!.

To conclude the argument about collective responsibility, the House must have noticed that, in seeking the Supreme Court's orders about establishment of special courts for trial of Mrs. Gandhi, he has contradicted all that he told or conveyed to the press in June last and the Supreme Court's opinion vindicated my stand in the matter. What history will say of such a Prime Minister, can easily be guessed. If I had not issued my public statement, the Prime Minister might not have given up his opposition to Special Courts.

The hollowness of Shri Desai's plea of collective responsibility is established by the fact that, when another Minister accused the Government of softness in the matter of action against Mrs. Gandhi, the Prime Minister not only did not demand his resignation but reportedly persuaded him to withdraw the resignation, which he had submitted on his own. Therefore, the argument about transgression on the principle of Collective Responsibility was a feint: the real reason lay elsewhere.

The first reason consisted in the Kisan rally, I had advised my co-workers not to convene any such rally, for, it was likely to create a misunderstanding about me in the minds of the residents of the city of Delhi. They would not agree, a rally was held and more than 15 lakh people gathered. The size of the rally sent a chilling wave through the heart of some who mattered. They looked small in their own eyes. Even some of those who attended and addressed the rally, had second thought. A rally in honour of a colleague had been held in the Capital eight months earlier, but it was comparatively a small affair and, therefore, not out of the ordinary .

The Prime Minister, in particular, saw in the rally a threat to his position. I know a Minister of State whom he asked not to attend the rally. Not only that, he went to the extent of taunting a Member of the Cabinet saying that he attended the rally because Charan Singh had promised to allot the Ministry of Home Affairs to him when he became the Prime Minister.

He went out of his way to make a statement on the floor of the Rajya Sabha on the day preceding the rally, viz. on December 22, 1977 that he did not approve of any birth-day celebrations for himself and that 'he would not join such things!. He did not care to consider that such an unsolicited statement would wound the feelings of his senior-most colleague. But, then, he was the Prime Minister, and I, an humble individual whom he could make or unmake. Few people would believe when I tell them that Shri Desai had not even the courtesy to felicitate me, perhaps, because my birth-day had been tainted by the rally.

It would seem that the prime Minister's attitude towards the Kisan rally is also rooted in a reason other than what its association with my birth-day dictated. He does not think India's economic development is, in any way, linked with rural uplift,

increased agricultural production or purchasing power of the agriculturists. To give only three or four examples: in his opinion supply of power to Birla's Hindalco is more essential than to tube-wells. This would be clear from a letter which he wrote to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh last year.

Second, the Prime Minister wrote a D.O. letter to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on January 23 last virtually pleading for exemption of Raja Challapalli's sugar farm from the provisions of the land ceilings of the State in the name of equity and justice. He sought to show 'patent' discrimination against this particular farm inasmuch as the State Government's Nizam Sugar Factory had already been exempted from the Ceilings Act. The then Chief Minister, Shri Vengal Rao, turned the tables on Shri Desai with a prompt reply on February 12. He questioned Shri Desai's wisdom in intervening in an unmerited case in favour of a party with a notorious background.

Third, the Prime Minister would not allow more than 5,000 tonnes of Gur to be exported the suggestion was made in order to boost its price that had gone down very low. Inasmuch as the production of Gur in the country was estimated at 86 lakh tonnes, export of such a small amount could not make any dent on the producers' price. As for the cost or interest of the consumer, inasmuch as consumption of Gur constituted only 0.7% of its total consumption, export even of 1/3 of the total production would not irk him.

Fourth, in August last, with a view to host a meeting of the UNCTAD in January or February, 1980, the Government decided to spend an amount of Rs. 15.66 crores on the construction of one hotel and one hostel as also on expansion and renovation of the Vigyan Bhawan. This expenditure could very well be avoided, and this huge sum spent upon sinking of tube-wells,

construction or expansion of a fertilizer factory and providing clean water to thousands of villages which are going without it.

But, then the wretches, living remote from the Capital, are not within our ken. Nor do they seem to belong to us. They are citizens of a different world—uncouth and unlettered. What are the poverty-stricken people in the villages or even the towns to us, and we to them, that we should weep for them!

Here the incompatibility between the Prime Minister's and my attitude—his inclination towards the rural and urban rich and my insistence on policies and programmes for the uplift of the rural and urban poor—becomes relevant.

As a communication to me in January last said apprehending opposition from me to certain deals, 'silent wheels had begun to move to get me out of the way', that is, to shift me from the Home Ministry. The first two paragraphs of another communication which I received in the last week of February, read as follows:

"The conspiracy of the new Caucus against Mr. Charan Singh has reached the flashpoint with a decision to ease him out of the Home Ministry if not the Morarji Cabinet itself with the offer of an extended portfolio of Agriculture to him. Anticipating a revolt from the BLD-Jan Sangh side, attempts are being made to seduce them into the official camp. Ramnath Goenka of the Express Group is playing the leading role in this operation. First of all, he is trying to get the Socialists to make up with the Jan Sangh. It is understood that A and B are willing but C is being difficult on the RSS issue. They hope to overcome his reservations. Their assessment is that the Jan Sangh is supporting Chowdhary Sahib only to protect themselves against C's campaign backed by the official group. Once this is removed, they claim, the Jan Sangh would be willing to ditch the Home Minister.

Simultaneously the dialogue with the Chavan-Reddy Congress continues with the object of a reconciliation which would bring old Congressmen together within the Janata Party. A has been openly pleading this brief and high level discussions have taken place in pursuit of this common project. Everything depends on how the Congress and Janata fare in the coming States poll.

Meanwhile the press is being mobilised to support the official campaign against Chaudhary Sahib.

True, no responsible public man can derive any valid conclusions from such letters or communications but, as it happens, in this case their contents stood confirmed by what happened shortly after.

The immediate and, perhaps, the most important reason lies in my suggestion to the Prime Minister to institute an inquiry into the conduct of his son, particularly in view of what he himself had said in Bhavnagar in a public meeting on January 15, 1978. After waiting for about two months for the prime Minister to initiate action in this regard, I wrote to him thus, on March 11:

New Delhi

11 March 1978.

My dear Morarji Bhai

I am writing this letter after a great deal of reluctance. In the given circumstances, not certainly of my making, it is likely to be misunderstood. But I have carefully weighed it in my mind and think that I would be failing in my duty if I did not do so.

On January 16 last, it was reported in the press that you had been pleased to make the following statement while addressing a public meeting in Bhavnagar (Gujarat):

"Bhavnagar, January 15 last: The Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai, to day offered to resign if allegations of corruption

levelled against his son, Mr.Kanti Desai, were proved.

"Addressing a mammoth public meeting here, Mr. Desai described the charges as "unfounded and mischievous" and said: "Let these allegations be inquired into by a three-member impartial committee".

"Referring to the allegations for the first time in public, he said he was doing it intentionally so that whenever had any proof against his son, could produce it.

"Mr. Desai was provoked to come out openly as the latest issue of "Samarthan" , a Weekly published by Mr. Pranubhai Bhatt, President of the Bhavnagar district Janata Party unit had carried these allegations-.....

"The Prime Minister pointed out to Mr. Pranubhai Bhatt who was sitting beside him on the dais and hoped he would apologise in public if he was convinced that his allegations were baseless. Mr. Bhatt, however avoided referring to the issue while thanking Mr. Desai for his address", Times of India, January 16, 1978.

Now, if I may say so, this stand of yours in the matter of allegations against your son could not be improved upon. Shri Kantibhai Desai is your only son and lives with you. Perhaps, as stated by you on the floor of the Parliament, you have appointed him as your Private Secretary also.

Below are given extracts from an interview which a correspondent of the weekly 'India Today' had with Shri Kanti Desai, as published in its issue dated 16-31 December, 1977:

Q: What exactly do you look after as the Prime Minister's private Secretary ?

A: I mainly look after the political affairs. The administrative details I leave to others. I meet and discuss things with political leaders and others ....

Q: You said you wanted to start public life by working as your father's Private Secretary 14 years ago. How would you like to think of your own political future?

A: I do not think the work I am doing at present is any less important. But when the time comes, I will be there. Until then I am gaining experience.

People in general and publicmen in particular have, however, been disturbed to know that you do not propose to hold any enquiry at all. This is apparent from the following news items which appeared in the 'Statesman', dated 19 January 1978 which remains uncontradicted till date:

"Mr. Desai has no intention of setting up a committee of three independent persons to find the truth about the allegations being made against his son, Mr. Kantibhai Desai, reports Samachar.

"Sources close to the Prime Minister said on Wednesday that any such interpretation of his speech at a public meeting at Bhavnagar on January 15 would be erroneous and unwarranted.

"What the Prime Minister had said was that the same allegations which had been made against Mr. Kantibhai Desai and on which he made a detailed statement in 1968 were now being revived to malign him and his son".

It is difficult for me to believe that this news-item had your approval, but if it had, I will submit that your earlier reaction was the right one and you should stick to it. Further, that most of the allegations against Shri Kantibhai Desai which are now reverberating throughout the country, are new, and not old.

May be, these allegations, too, are all wrong and the press misquoted your Bhavnagar speech. Nevertheless, an enquiry would be appropriated. The reason is simple: every minister, much more so the Prime Minister along with such

members of his family as are living jointly with him, should not only be incorruptible but should appear to be so.

As a distinguished Prime Minister of England, the Earl of Chatham said long ago, if allegations are made against a minister, they should invariably be enquired into. If the allegations are found wrong, the finding will raise the prestige of the Government; if they are found correct, the minister concerned will have to leave the Cabinet, in which case also the prestige of the Government will go up.

I would urge, therefore, that whatever be your compulsions to the contrary, it would be best to abide by the sage advice of Lord Chatham. Such a step alone will help maintain the moral of the Party and the good name of the Government which are going down steeply with every day that passes.

I conclude in the hope that you will not misunderstand me.

With regards,

I am,

Yours sincerely

Sd/

(Charan Singh)

Shri Morarji Desai,  
Prime Minister of India  
New Delhi.

PRIME MINISTER  
NEW DELHI  
March 13, 1978.

My dear Charan Singhji,

I have received your letter of the 11th March regarding Kanti. It has caused me no surprise; some persons had been telling me that you were intending to write such a letter and I had earlier told Raj Narain about it. He told me that there was no truth in it. Your letter shows that Raj Narain was wrong.

Your letter appears to have been prompted by what I am purported to have said in Bhavnagar on 15th of January according to the Samachar report as was published in the newspapers of the 16th. As soon as this incorrect report was brought to my notice I had it corrected and the corrected version is the one that appeared, along with other papers, in the Statesman of the 19th January which you have quoted in your letter. I do not know why you should prefer the former to the latter. What is material is the version of the speech which I gave and not as it was construed by the reporter of a news Agency.

Such wrong versions by a news agency are not so uncommon as to carry with them irrefutable authenticity.

You seem to think that whatever the correct version may be, the allegations against Kanti should be inquired into and in support of it you have cited the time worn but seldom-followed principle that persons holding high office and members of their family should not only be incorruptible but should appear to be so. I have always followed this principle. The question arises, however, as to whether every time an allegation is made against such persons or their families it should be inquired into or whether allegations should in the first instance be supported by prime facie evidence so as to be deserving of notice.

When I referred to the precedent of 1968 it is only because the situation and environment were more or less what they are today both within the party and outside. Interested persons were making propaganda against my son not so much to involve him but to ensure that I get out. As a result of statements made in parliament, the matter was clear and Mrs. Gandhi who had earlier clandestinely encouraged it had to make a speech. The ghost of those matters is sought to be resurrected for their own purpose by some designing persons.

May I ask if it is your view that we should submit to the machaevaluation of such ill-disposed persons? Our country has somehow become a vast whispering gallery in which character assassination seems to be a pastime or a child's play and rumours seem to float as if they are facts. False news is served to credulous readers as if they are authentic and Gobbeled Version that there cannot be inquiries into such scandal mongering without regard for the need of curbing this evil tendency in our body politic or without verifying the truth of the allegations or bonafides of those from whom such things emanate.

You have quoted the Earl of Chattam. The matter is not one in which I need be given any authority from outside or from the days of George III. I have myself followed the principle you have quoted more than any one else. Nevertheless, we must take cognizance of the situations and conditions prevailing today in our country and in our public life which I have referred to above. It has become a fashion here to try to portray as if no one in this country is safe from corruption. It has also become a fashion not only to involve Ministers but also their families in vague insinuations unworthy of any credence.

You will recall that there were so many persons insinuating about your son-in-law and without referring to you. I

defended him in parliament because I refused to believe them. I have had a number of letters making allegations about you and your sons-in-law and, painful to state, even your wife. There are rumours floating even about some Ministers. If we were to follow the principles you have mentioned in your letter to the logical conclusions we would be appointing a number of Commissions of Inquiry every day. I am sure you would not like to encourage the prevalence of such an atmosphere in the pursuit of the principles to which you have drawn my attention.

I do not know what you mean by compulsions to the contrary. I have no compulsions to the contrary about my son. I have never allowed personal feelings or affections to stand in the way of public duty.

I know that Kanti would not be even the last person to put me in an embarrassing position on this account. I also feel certain that if he is at fault he would not hesitate to admit it and make amends and accept whatever punishment I may impose on him.

So far as I am concerned I have made my position clear not only in Bhavnagar but every time that this question has been raised and it is that if any allegations against my son are proved I shall not hesitate not only to resign from office but even to retire from public life. It was in this context that I said in Bhavnagar that in any three independent and impartial men having standing in public life come to the conclusion that my son was guilty of misdemeanour, I would not remain in office. This does not mean that I or government were going to appoint a Commission of Inquiry. It is for those who, indulge in such insinuations to refer them to such men and have them proved to their satisfaction that the allegations against my son have substance.

After all my son is a private citizen and holds no position in Government. You have referred to the statement which has

appeared in 'India today' in its issue dated 16-31 October 1977. It has been utilized by others also for their own purpose but the main point is that he has made it clear that as private Secretary he does not deal with any official matters. He works virtually as Private Secretary to me in my personal, political (non-official) or domestic matters.

There is not a scrap of official paper which he sees or which goes to him. Nor does he make any recommendation or suggestion in any official matters. In the circumstances any allegations and insinuations that he dabbles with official matters or there is a 'Kanti Caucus' or 'Kanti Janata' are mere figments of a wild imagination beneath notice and in the words of Acharya Kripalani in 1968 when the discussion took place in the Lok Sabha beneath contempt".

There can, therefore, be no official inquiry in such matters of private nature. Even a suggestion of this kind coming from you surprised me. If, however, any person has any allegation to make with which Kanti is connected as a private citizen, it is open to him to avail himself of the offer that I have made.

You have repeated your plea that you should not be misunderstood. I do not think the question of mis-understanding arises. You have expressed yourself clearly and I understand it fully but what is significant is that you have not chosen to discuss it with me but have preferred to write to me about it.

Finally, let me say that I hold strong views, as the Janata Party does, about the need to root out corruption in the affairs of Government and public life. But I do not see how your suggestion can be considered as a right step in this direction when there is no basis of facts supporting it. The commissions that have already been appointed to look into the misdeeds of the previous regime and important functionaries in that regime is ample

evidence of our keenness to curb this malady. But weakness shown in submitting to mischief mongers or encouragement given to 'news-fliers' will introduce more corruption than lessen it. It has been my experience that most of people who indulge in such activities are themselves corrupt and through these attacks seek to shield themselves or get their objectives served. Evidently it would only be tantamount to giving support to corruption if we entertain vexations and frivolous allegations,

With kind regards,

Your sincerely,

Sd/

(Morarji Desai)

Chaudhary Charan Singh,  
Home Minister  
New Delhi

21 March, 1978,

My dear Desai

Thanks for your reply dated March 13, 1978.

I have thought a great deal over it since, and felt considerable hesitation in writing to you again on this subject.

It is obvious that my letter has caused you some irritation even anger. For, if it is not anger how else one is expected to understand your reaction which in essence, amounts to this: "If there are charges against my sons-in-law and wife too." You, no doubt, refer to rumours regarding other Ministers too. But the main thrust is unmistakably directed towards me and my family.

Well, if there are charges against my relations and they reflect adversely on my integrity, they must be enquired into the sooner the better. I would like you to kindly appoint a Commission at the earliest. It is precisely my point that any cover-up of such matters leads to contrary results.

It is, indeed, possible that, as you say, some people are playing by old scripts and are trying to settle their old scores with you. But their game has to be exposed, and to me it seemed that the best way of doing it was the appointment of an impartial and independent Commission to hold an enquiry.

Now, as regards the authority which should appoint the Commission, you have advanced a strange proposition. According to you what you had said in Bhavnagar about the commission "does not mean that I or Government were to appoint a Commission of inquiry . It is for them who indulge in such insinuations to refer them to such men and have them proved to their satisfaction that the allegations against my son have substance".

I am constrained to say that you have not carefully considered the implications of this stand. Inquiries into the conduct of important persons have been held in our country and in others in the past also, but accusers themselves are not known to have named or appointed those who will hold an enquiry into their accusations. For once, an accused may be allowed to make a choice from a panel, but, in no case, an accuser. Nor will such judges or members of the commission of Enquiry enjoy any legal competence to make the enquiry, summon witnesses, ask for production of documents, inspect relevant file, etc. Further, however, impartial and objective the verdict of such persons, it would hardly carry any conviction or credibility. And, if there are number of accusers, then according to this scheme, they will have to meet and select three persons or, in the alternative, appoint separately as many sets of such persons. This attitude of your amounts to a refusal to hold an enquiry at least, that is the conclusion which people will draw

You have gone to point out that the Commission that have already been appointed to look into the misdeeds of the

previous regime is ample evidence of our keenness to curb this malady". Inasmuch, however, as we are not willing to apply the same standards to ourselves, the appointment of Commission "to look into the misdeeds of the previous regime" is no evidence that we are really keen to root out corruption.

I also think that the formulation regarding your son's status requires another look if it is to effectively silence his critics.

According to you, your son is a private citizen and holds no position in the Government and, therefore there can be no official inquiry in such matters. You say that he works virtually as private Secretary to me in my personal, political (non-official) or domestic matters".

Now, political affairs of a Prime Minister in connection with Shri Kanti Desai, as he himself has put it, 'meets and discusses things with political leaders and others' cannot be characterized as a purely private or personal, non-official or domestic matter. My contention is borne out, again, by Shri Kanti Desai himself when, on being asked how he would like to think of his own future, he vouchsafed that 'the work I was doing at present was no less important and when the time comes, I will be there. Until then I was gaining experience. 'Experience of what? obviously, not of a private citizen.

Next, under the law as it stands, a charge of corruption can be validly laid even against a strictly private citizen placed in the circumstances, and entrusted with the duties of Shri Kanti Desai.

Further, Shri Kanti Desai is a member of a joint Hindu family with you as its head. Which means the financial interests of you both are the same. Legally this position leads to conclusions which are obvious.

Therefore, my view and advice whatever they are worth,

remain unchanged. Your own good name and that of the country demand that a Commission is appointed.

With regards,

Yours sincerely  
Sd. Charan Singh

Shri Morarji Desai,  
Prime Minister of India.  
Personal/Secret  
PRIME MINISTER  
New Delhi

## PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi

March 23, 1978

My dear Charan Singhji,

I have received your letter of the 21st March, this time with some surprise because I did not expect that you would misconstrue my letter to the extent that you have done.

In the first place there was nothing in the letter to show that I was irritated or angry. In fact, I dispassionately explained my approach to the question.

Secondly you have also misunderstood my reference to your son-in-law and your wife having been the subject of rumour. I mentioned it only to indicate how baseless such rumours could be and how it would be wrong to take them at their face value. There was no equation in my mind between Kanti's case and the case of your son-in-law and your wife.

I am not the one to look for alibis of this nature.

You still seem to hold the view that because there are allegations a Commission of Inquiry should be appointed. I am sorry I cannot subscribe to this view. You have referred to the earlier inquiry into the conduct of important persons. If you look up the records, you will find that no enquiry was ordered unless there was prima facie evidence to sustain specific allegations and not, as in a case like this, in which there are only vague allegations many of which were demonstrably unjustifiable and vexatious. So far as I am concerned there is no question of refusal to hold an inquiry. In fact no grounds for an inquiry exist. After all, who ever makes allegations is in the position of a complainant and it is quite fair on my part to ask them to substantiate their allegations with concrete evidence.

I do not appreciate what you mean by not applying the

same standards to ourselves as we apply to the others. I hope you will not mind my asking you whether it is your case that an inquiry should be ordered, even without being convinced that an inquiry is necessary or would be worthwhile, on merely vague allegations in an atmosphere in which, as I mentioned earlier, character assassination is the rule and truth a ready casualty. If so, I am sorry that I have to differ.

Regarding Kanti's status, I think you are quite wrong in your analysis. There is no question of joint family being involved. He and I have separate identities; we are separately assessed; we may live under the same roof but have separate life of our own. He has his own affairs to look after and I have mine. If he meets and discusses things with political leaders and others it is mostly on their approach. They see him on organisational and such other non-official matters and mostly unasked. Should he say 'No' when they do so? I myself have tried to dissuade them from seeing him but they persist. In any case, if he deals with political matters, it is not possible for him to be restricted from seeing those who wish to see him or whom he has to see for non-official or personal matters.

I thank you for being so solicitous about my good name and that of the country. I can assure you that both are and will be safe in my own keeping and the day I am convinced that I cannot look after both, I have already told you what would be my line of action.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd/

(Morarji Desai)

Shri Charan Singh  
Minister of Home Affairs,  
New Delhi

Sir, one other letter each passed between me and the Prime Minister, but there was no new ground that was covered. So, I do not think it necessary to read them out:

The main argument of Shri Desai is:

"allegations against persons holding high office or their families should, in the first instance, be supported by prime facie evidence so as to be deserving of notice... No enquiries into such scandal-mongering can be held without verifying the truth of the allegation or bonafides of those from whom such things emanate.. If the principles mentioned by me are followed to the logical conclusion, then we would be appointing a number of Commission of Inquiry every day. An enquiry can be made only when there is prima facie evidence to sustain specific allegations and not, as in a case like this, in which there are only vague allegations many of which were demonstrably unjustifiable and vexatious.

At the outset, one would like to know if the truth of an allegation is first ascertained, then what else remains for a Commission of enquiry? A Commission can be appointed under the existing law, the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, for the purpose of making an inquiry into any definite matter of public importance. And, in order to be definite, all that is necessary, is that the matter must not be vague. If general allegations are not vague. They are definite matters. Doubtless where a particular instance is given, the matter becomes definite.

The Reports or Findings submitted by Commissions appointed under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952, are in the nature of a mere advice or information for the government and have no force *proprio vigore*. The Commissions do not adjudicate any disputes or determine any rights or liabilities or decide any questions of guilt or innocence. Such inquiries do not even

initiate any proceedings which have to be left to the ordinary criminal procedure. As the Supreme Court has observed in Braj Nandan Sinha's case, the Commissions are merely fact-finding bodies.

One really fails to understand what objection the prime Minister or anybody placed in a responsible position in the public life of the country could possibly have to the appointment of a Commission so that confidence in the public life of the country was restored.

In the most recent case under the 1952 Act, Karnataka State V/S Union of India, the Supreme Court made it clear that the purpose of the Act was not just to prove the guilt of the person concerned. Several of their Lordships endorsed the following paragraph from the lecture of Sir Cyril Salmon:

"In all countries, certainly in those that enjoy freedom of speech and a free press, moments occur when allegations and rumours circulate causing a nation-wide crisis of confidence in the integrity of public life or about other matters of vital public importance. No doubt this rarely happens, but when it does, it is essential that public confidence is restored for, without it, no democracy can long survive. The confidence can be effectively restored only by thoroughly investigating and probing the rumours and allegations so as to search out and establish the truth. The truth may show that the evil exists, thus enabling it to be rooted out, or that there is no foundation in the rumours and allegations by which the public has been disturbed. In either case, confidence is restored."

If we accept the Prime Minister's stand, we will have to bid good-bye to all hopes of establishing a clean public life or giving an efficient administration to the country and cease entertaining dreams of greatness economic progress of our Motherland.

Anyway, as I have already said, it is my attitude in regard to allegations against Shri Kanti Desai that actuated the Prime Minister's letter to me on June 29. Since March 11 when I wrote the first letter to him, in this connection, the Prime Minister was on the look-out for a pretext. That my conclusion is correct will be borne out by the fact that, on the first two occasions when I saw the Prime Minister at the instance of erstwhile colleagues of the Cabinet, he required of me to withdraw my demand for an inquiry into the conduct of his son which I refused to do: on the third occasion, viz., on August 17, he said that inasmuch as the Rajya Sabha was already seized of the matter, no question of withdrawal of my demand was any longer germane, but I should issue a statement that I did not want any inquiry to be made which also I categorically refused to do.

(On none of the three occasions did the Prime Minister speak to me a single word about my alleged transgression of the principle of collective responsibility).

The opposition in the Rajya Sabha brought a Motion in the House asking its Chairman to nominate a 15-member Committee to go into the corruption charges against the family members of Shri Morarji Desai (and myself) which was passed by a majority of 154 to 78 votes, on August 10, 1978. While regretting the government's inability to accept the recommendations contained in the Rajya Sabha's above resolution, the Prime Minister said on August 24 that in the event of any specific charges of corruption in the context of the resolution, being made to it in writing by any honourable Members since my government took office, government proposes to refer the same to the Chief Justice for being examined by him."

Now, this was a course open to fundamental objections and fraught with grave consequences. For, the legal position is

that the Chief justice will have no authority to compel the attendance of any person for being examined as witness or for the production of any documents. So that enquiry will be an informal one —not one conducted with the sanction of law.

In a similar case that arose in Britain, the then leader of the Opposition, Mr. Wilson, had attacked Prime Minister Macmillan for blurring the edge which marks the sharp definition of the function of the judiciary, on the one hand, and the executive and the legislature on the other."

No sitting Judge should, therefore, ever be asked to tender advice or conduct an examination or inquiry, whether final or preliminary without the authority and sanction of the law. However, if the Prime Minister would still like to be guided by the opinion of the Chief justice Chandrachud, he has only to open the law reports and read his Lordship's judgment in the Karnataka case wherein he went on to say:

"These are sensitive matters of public importance which if left to the normal investigation agencies, can create needless controversies and generate an atmosphere of suspicion. The larger interests of the community require that such matters should be inquired into by high-power commissions consisting of persons whose findings can command the confidence of the people. It is only by establishing the truth that the purity and integrity of public life can be preserved.

In his abounding affection for his son, Shri Desai does not realise that he has done great harm to the Janata Party, the public life of the country and to democracy. He is so much obsessed with personal reasons as to endanger the public will. I have already referred to the matters of the Birlas' Hindalco and the Raja Challapalli's 3000-acre farm. It will not be out of place to state here that, in actual truth, Shri Raj Narain was asked to

resign not for addressing a public meeting against law or for abusing the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh during the course of his speech, as in my case, it was a feint. The real reason consisted in the fact that, inspite of the Prime Minister asking him several times to appoint two persons of his choice as presidents of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi and post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Chandigarh, Shri Raj Narain refused to do so because he thought his insistence was detrimental to public interest and went against established practice. Shri Raj Narain wanted to include this fact in his statement which he made on the floor of the House in July last, but I persuaded him not to do so.

In conclusion, however, I must thank the Prime Minister for this kindness in including me in his Cabinet at all and, at the same time, I must congratulate him for bringing, in such a short time, an unprecedented awakening amongst the peasantry all over the country by dismissing me from the Cabinet so summarily as he did.

(Charan Singh)

Member of Parliament

New Delhi

December 19, 1978.

## ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION

From  
Jawaharlal Nehru  
Prime Minister's House,  
New Delhi.  
October 22, 1961.

My dear Charan Singh,

Hifzur Rahman came to see me today. He complained of the charges you had brought against the Jamiat Ulema. I had not seen Hindustan Times and the Times of India. In these reports you had practically put the Jamiat on the same level as the Jamaat Islami and charged them with promoting exclusiveness among the Muslims and thereby damaging the cause of national integration.

There is no doubt that Jamiat is necessarily a purely Muslim organisation. It is also true that they have stood up often for Muslim claims. While all this is true, I think there is a great difference between the Jamiat and the Jamaat Islami. ON the political plane, however, they have been always with the Congress and have been held high offices in the Congress. Maulana Azad himself was associated with the Jamiat. Inevitably the Moulvi type of mind comes out from time to time. But these people have not only been associated with us on the political platform and have been our candidates for parliament and Assemblies, but also have done often good work among Muslims even for the cause of integration.

It would be a good thing if we had no organisation of this kind among the Muslims, Hindus or others, But the situation being what is it, it is difficult to prevent them from functioning or

even to condemn them. On the whole, they have done good work though occasionally they have erred. They are strong opponents of the Jamaat Islami which is definitely a bigoted, narrow-minded organisation with ideals which are entirely opposed to any kind of common living or integration in India. I do not think it is right to put the Jamiat and the Jamaat on the same level.

Hifzur Rahman also drew my attention to some correspondence received from the U.P. Government about the Deobund Academy. Apparently this was in regard to some Pakistani students who had been admitted there without proper papers. It was also alleged that some students who had complained or given evidence to the Police were subsequently expelled from the Academy.

The Deobund Academy has about 1,500 or more students from a number of countries. There are a number of Pakistanis too and it is quite possible that a few of them crept in under false pretences. I do not know all the facts, but it appeared to me from what Hifzur Rahman said to me that he had fairly adequate explanation about these few persons, numbering perhaps a dozen or less. There are at present probably thousands of Pakistanis without papers in India and especially in the U.P. It may not be easy for them to be distinguished or found out. We can evolve some proper method for that. I understand that some of these persons were charged in the court and acquitted.

Then there was the case of some students who were expelled for giving evidence before the Police. They may be guilty of this to some extent. At the same time, I would not accept wholesale the account of the Police. The story that Hifzur Rahman gave me was rather different. In fact he said that two or three of these persons who had been expelled were Pakistani students who had been misbehaving. There had been a general outcry among the Muslim students against the activities of these

two as well as the interference of the Police in their internal activities.

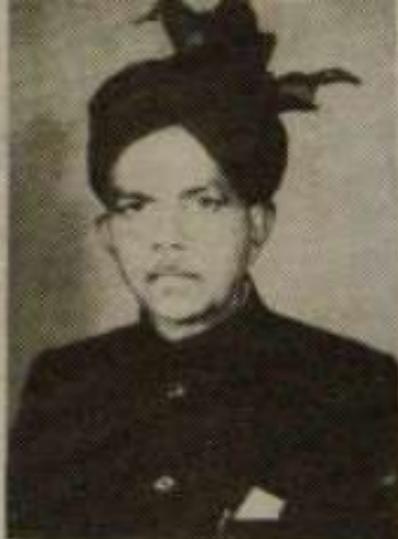
Whatever the facts may be, it would be better to see them in proper perspective. Here is an Academy with a large number of students from a number of countries. It has an international reputation and draws students from many countries in West Asia and East Asia. It is would hardly be fair to run down a big institution because of some mistakes or even deliberate errors. Exaggerated accounts of these go to foreign countries and even in India they create a certain atmosphere of harassing Muslims even in educational institutions.

We know that in many of our old colleges there are Hindu communal groups who function in an aggressive, communal and even violent way from time to time. We do not run down the whole institution because of this, although sometimes it might well deserve this. Much of the trouble caused recently in Meerut, Chandausi, Aligarh, etc., was largely due to Hindu students, apart from the Muslim students who misbehaved round about the University.

We have to deal with a vital and difficult problem which is essentially one of changing psychologies and creating a proper atmosphere both for the Muslims and the Hindus. We should particularly avoid doing anything which worsen this atmosphere.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. RAN SINGH RANA, M.A. LL.B, Advocate, Delhi High Court was born in a middle class, farmer's family of Village Kundal of Rohtak Distt. in 1932. He had his Education in Hindu College, Delhi and graduated from Dyal Singh College. He got his LL.B degree from Delhi University in 1962 and started his legal practice at Delhi in January 1963. He joined the Indian Army in the commissioned Rank during the National Emergency at the call of the Nation, and at the insistence of his father Late Ch. Hari Ram. He took part in battle operation in Sial Kot Sector in 1965 during Indo-Pakistan war. After his release from the Army, he joined Kurushetra University as Asstt. Registrar in 1968 and retired as Controller of Examination and Director I.A.S. Pre-Trg. Centre, on Haryana day, 1st November 1992. He is a political scientist holding a master degree in Political Science. He has been contributing on important National & Inter-national matters in English Dailies from Chandigarh. He had keen interest in politics since his college days and joined Janta Party in 1977. He remained with Janta Dal Since then.

He is an extempore speaker since his college days. He has been a staunch follower of Ch. Charan Singh. He had remained incorruptible honest in his service career. He is a fearless fighter against injustice for which he has to suffer a lot in his service career like any honest officer.