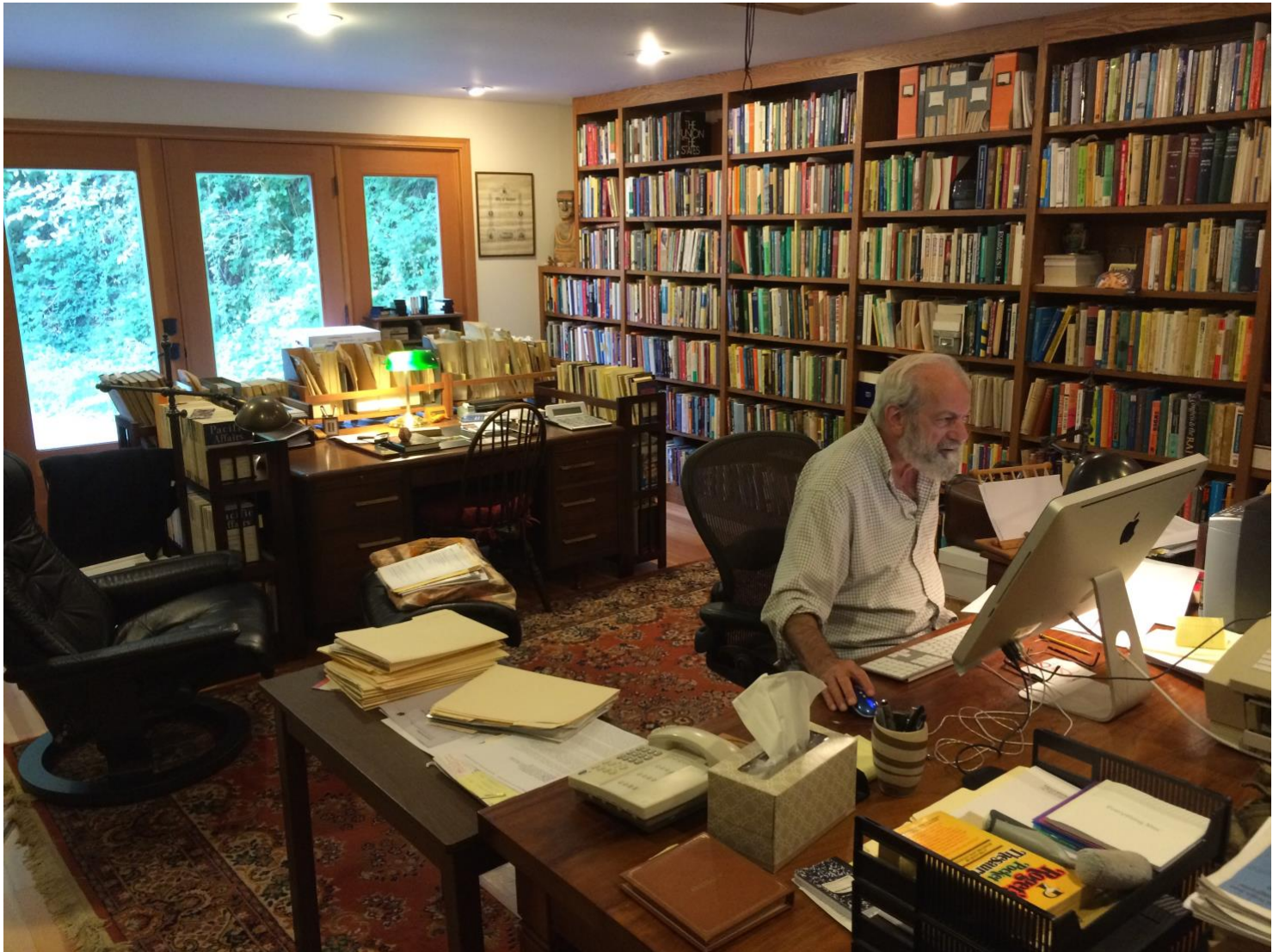


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Paul Brass commenced his long association with India in September 1961, when he first visited and lived in Lucknow as a Doctoral student of Prof. Myron Weiner, reputed political scientist and renowned scholar on Indian politics. This is when Paul first met Charan Singh, then the Cabinet Minister of Home and Agriculture in Uttar Pradesh. Paul's first book (of more than 18 on India), *'Factional Politics in an Indian State'* (1965) was based on his Doctoral thesis. This sophisticated analysis of the complex politics, and politicians, of Uttar Pradesh of the 1960s started him on a life-long relationship with Charan Singh which saw both the men grow close to each other.

Paul is a self-confessed admirer of Charan Singh, though by no means an uncritical one. This article "*An Indian Political Life*" from the *Economic and Political Weekly* of 25 September 1993 is a brilliant, succinct and fluidly written biography, and is reproduced here with Paul's prior permission.



Paul in the study at his home forest in Washington, USA. 6th August 2015

Chaudhuri Charan Singh

An Indian Political Life

Paul R Brass

CHAUDHURI CHARAN SINGH, prime minister of India for a brief period after the fall of the Janata government in 1979, and twice chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) during his long political career in that state, played major roles in transforming the agricultural economy of north India in the post-independence period and the politics of his home state and of the country as a whole during the last two decades of his life. Four aspects of his political career and his influence on contemporary north Indian politics seem to me to be especially important. First is the fact that his political career involved him at all levels of the Indian political system. Second, he became identified as the principal spokesman of the middle peasantry of India. Third, he was identified also with the aspirations of the so-called backward castes of intermediate social status between the elite castes and the lower castes. Fourth, he wrote a number of books, as well as political pamphlets, that presented an extremely sophisticated and coherent alternative development strategy for India entirely different from that of former prime ministers Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

I

Charan Singh was one of the last important leaders of the country whose active political life spanned the pre-independence Congress political movements and post-independence party politics up through the prime ministership of Rajiv Gandhi. He belongs to a generation of politicians whose political experience encompassed district, state and national politics. During the last two decades of his life, he moved out of the Congress into opposition and provided thereafter the central core of support for the Janata Party, the first political coalition to defeat the Congress and form a government at the centre. His influence persists up to the present as several of the principal contenders for opposition leadership in north Indian politics struggle to gain preponderance over the

political base which he controlled at the end of his life.

Charan Singh was a politician with rural roots in an agricultural district, with a firm base also in his own Jat community, the leading agricultural caste of western UP, Punjab, Haryana and parts of Rajasthan. Between 1952 and 1967, he was also one of the three principal leaders in Congress state politics. He was a central figure in all the major factional conflicts and cabinet crises which occurred in the UP Congress and government in the period from 1948 until 1965. Although he operated in the factional system of the UP Congress like other factional leaders, seeking constantly to undermine his rivals, to reward his supporters, punish his enemies, and attain power for himself and his allies, he stood apart from the others in his ability to articulate as well coherent policies and principles.

For example, a struggle with chief minister C.B. Gupta, the dominant UP factional leader in the 1950s and 1960s, led to an exchange of notes between the two men on the meaning of the collective responsibility of the cabinet. The struggle between them also led to the preparation by Charan Singh of a long memorandum opposing increased taxation on the peasantry of the state, in which he articulated cogently his arguments on behalf of policies which favour the peasantry and his opposition to large-scale capital-intensive investment in industry. C.B. Gupta in reply stood forth as a defender of the development path chosen by the Congress leadership in New Delhi.¹ Throughout all his conflicts during the first two decades after independence, Charan Singh presented himself as the spokesman of the peasantry, of agriculture over industry, and of an agricultural order based on a system of peasant proprietorship in which landlordism was abolished and all the peasants held economically viable landholdings.

Charan Singh also held clear and strong views on most aspects of state policy and administration during these years. As economic development expenditures became increasingly wasteful, as corruption became increasingly pervasive, especially in some of the most development-oriented departments of government, and as the vastly increased numbers of government employees at up even more of the available funds for development, Charan Singh stood forth for close control of government expenditure, for stern measures to deal with corrupt officers and for a firm hand in dealing with the demands of government employees for increased wages and dearness allowances.

In fact, Charan Singh was a strong advocate of firmness in maintaining law and order in general, including curbing the activities of political opposition and trade union movements and strikes. In 1957-58 when Charan Singh was revenue minister, he responded to opposition political leaders who sought to use scarcity conditions in the eastern districts of the state to mobilise public opinion against the state government. In this crisis, Charan Singh analysed clearly the causes of scarcity, its actual extent, and appropriate measures to deal with it, insisting against all opposition claims to the contrary that revenue had still to be collected in the drought-stricken areas and deploring opposition efforts to arouse unreasonable expectations among the people.² He was also concerned during these years with the condition of police administration. His papers reflect Charan Singh's concerns about and arguments with his rivals over their interference in police administration, which he saw corroding its integrity.

On April 1, 1967, Charan Singh defected from the Congress to join the opposition and then became the first non-Congress chief minister of the critical state of UP. He was one of the principal leaders in the politics of the

period from 1967 to 1971, when non-Congress governments were in power, having himself inaugurated his period by his defection. During this period, he created a political movement and a new agrarian party, the BKD, whose core consisted of the middle status, middle size cultivating castes. The goals of this movement were to reorient the economic development policies of the state and the country as a whole away from large-scale industrialization, big dams, and consumer industries for the urban middle classes towards policies emphasizing investment in agriculture for the benefit of the rural cultivating groups and to provide employment in the countryside in small scale industry for those without land of their own.

Charan Singh's penchant for dealing firmly with threats to public order was apparent during his two periods of tenure as chief minister of UP. After his second term, which lasted only seven months, I asked him what he considered to be the main achievements of his brief ministry. His response focused upon measures he look to prevent disruption of public order and the political activities of opposition forces; his firm handling of a Communist party-led land grab movement, the banning of compulsory membership in University student unions, the relative absence of strikes during his tenure, and his breaking of the one major strike which did occur.³ Such measures party reflected Charan Singh's concerns to avoid the loss of government financial integrity through drains upon its resources as well as antagonism to the demands of urban workers whom he considered privileged in comparison with most rural folk. At the same time, there is no doubt that Chaudhuri Sahib, like his political mentor, Sardar Patel, believed strongly in the utmost importance of maintaining the public peace.

Charan Singh's capturing of power in UP, however, tenuous it was during this first period of non-Congress government,⁴ and his formation of the BKD brought him into direct conflict with Mrs. Gandhi and her efforts to consolidate her leadership of the Congress and rebuild the power of the ruling party in the country. He resisted repeated efforts on the part of Mrs. Gandhi to get him to agree to a merger

of the BKD and the Congress.⁵ He also denied Mrs. Gandhi three votes which he controlled in the Rajya Sabha, which she needed to pass a constitutional amendment abolishing the privy purses of the princes. Mrs. Gandhi responded to this blow to her policy goals and the associated threat to her political leadership of the country by withdrawing Congress support to the existing Congress-BKD coalition government in UP and subsequently by calling the 1971 parliamentary elections in which the Congress achieved its desired two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament.

From the mid-1970s until his death in 1987, the focus of Charan Singh's political activities shifted to the centre. This period includes the emergency, the formation of the Janata Party, the formation of the Janata government, and the dissolution of the latter in July 1979. In all these events, Charan Singh played a central role. His political organisation and support base in north Indian constituted the core of the successful Janata party which defeated Mrs. Gandhi in the post-emergency election of 1977. Frustrated as his failure to be selected prime minister of the country, he and his supporters formed a group in and outside the government of Morarji Desai and ultimately brought it down in 1979. In doing so, Charan Singh was accused of rank opportunism and just for power with no regard for the interests of the country.

Nevertheless, even at this time, Charan Singh behaved as something more than an opportunist politician. For, throughout this period, he continued to articulate an alternative economic programme for the country and to support policies favouring agriculture and the peasantry. In the midst of the crises, which marked his conflicts with Morarji Desai, on December 23, 1978, hundreds of thousands of the peasantry of north India, particularly from western UP and Haryana, where mobilised in his support in the capital itself. This intrusion of countless 'dhoti'-clad peasants in the nation's capital confronted its bureaucratic and intellectual classes, many of whom have never visited a village in their lives, with a spectacle which they resented deeply

and mocked. For many planners and intellectuals in Delhi, these people are an abstraction not a reality. They represent backwardness, encrusted tradition and uncouthness, people best kept out of sight while the country 'modernises'. Thus, however, opportunistically he behaved, Charan Singh confronted his opponents and the country with alternative policies and forced them to face the reality of the presence in the capital of the people in whose name they all claimed to speak.

In the 1980 elections, Charan Singh's Lok Dal emerged as the largest non-Congress party and he became leader of the opposition in parliament. He felt personally demoralised after the landslide election victory of Rajiv Gandhi in the 1984 elections, which reduced the representation of the Lok Dal to only two seats in parliament. However, his party remained the second largest in UP and the most important non-Congress party in the north Indian plain until his death.

Moreover, Charan Singh's influence has persisted beyond his death in 1987 as his political successors have struggled to gain control over his former political base. They include his son, Ajit Singh; the former chief minister of UP, Mulayam Singh Yadav; and the former prime minister, V.P. Singh. Ajit Singh's claim is based on the right of natural succession, but Mulayam Singh Yadav, Ajit's rival in UP politics, claims to be Charan Singh's true political heir, which he reinforces by saying that the latter had referred to him as 'my son'.⁶ V.P. Singh made the boldest claim of all in August 1990 with his decision to implement the Mandal Commission recommendation on reservation of places of backward castes in public sector services under the central government, thereby seeking to consolidate the hold on the backward castes of the Janata party under his leadership. At the local level also, particularly in the western districts of UP, candidates for office make use of a past connection with Chaudhary Charan Singh in their election campaigns.⁷ Tikait, the famous Jat peasant leader of western UP, also claims the mantle of Charan Singh,⁸ though he has avoided any political party affiliations.

Clearly, therefore, in the course of his political career, Charan Singh has

played a central role in several of the most crucial turning points in the history of the politics of India's largest state and that of the country as a whole. In addition to his role as a precipitator of crises or a central force in crisis periods in Indian politics, Charan Singh's participation in politics and his roles in these crises are of particular interest also for other reasons. During his long political career, he demonstrated mastery of the multiple 'idioms' of Indian politics,⁹ the 'modern' idiom of party, parliamentary behavior, and economic development planning; and the 'saintly' idiom of the crusader against corruption in Indian public life. Charan Singh was both a politically ambitious man and a man with clear policy proposals. His political life therefore, raises the issue of how one successfully pursues both power and policy in a rough-and-tumble representative political system.

II

The second noteworthy aspect of Charan Singh's political career- in addition to his involvement at all levels of the Indian political system- was his role as spokesmen for the middle peasantry.¹⁰ Throughout his active political life, he was identified with rural, peasant interests and values in a political tradition in India that draws its inspiration from Gandhi and from Sardar Patel, Nehru's principal rival for political power in the country in the early years after independence. He was the principal architect of the UP Zamindari Abolition Act, the most important piece of land reform enacted in the Indian state after independence and the most carefully conceived of the acts of that type enacted by various state governments in India. Until the end of his life, Charan Singh considered zamindari abolition his principal achievement. Several of his books also deal with zamindari abolition, land reforms, and the establishment of an economically self-sufficient peasantry in UP.

Repeatedly, on issues of land consolidation, taxation and resource allocation, and price policy for agricultural produce, Charan Singh stood forth as a spokesman for rural over urban interests and for agricultural

development as opposed to large-scale industrial development. He also opposed consistently the expansion of the state bureaucracy and the corruption associated with it, which he saw as an unnecessary drain on rural resources and of little benefit to rural interests.

In 1959, when the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution in favour of the introduction of joint, co-operative farming, Charan Singh opposed the policy. He proposed instead policies that would strengthen the existing system of peasant proprietorship and would sustain 'rural democracy rather than co-operative farming, which he thought could be maintained only by undemocratic means. Finally, as noted above, after his earlier defection from the Congress, Charan Singh founded in 1969 the most successful agrarian party in modern Indian politics, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD), which later, under different names, also became the core of the opposition to Mrs. Gandhi and her emergency rule and of the Janata Party that replaced the Congress in power in the centre from 1977 to 1980. Although Charan Singh and his political following were often accused of promoting the interests of a kulak class, his electoral support actually came from a broad range of land owning castes, including many small peasants.

III

The third central aspect of Charan Singh's political career was his identification with the interests of the so-called 'backward castes' Charan Singh always saw himself as a Jat which meant for him, among other things, that he was not from an elite caste. Although he never himself adopted a militant public position on the matter of backward caste representation, he sometimes referred in private, with some resentment, to the position of Brahmins and Thakurs in society and in public life. Moreover, he felt that the position of the backward classes in contrast, especially in the services and especially also in his state of UP, was deplorable. He kept in his head and would now and then recite figures showing that 45 to 50 per cent of particular government services were

dominated by Brahmins, Banias, Khatri, and elite castes generally whereas the backward castes had negligible representation, amounting to less than one per cent in some departments. He would point out that Harijans, because of the reservations accorded to them in government services since independence, were far better represented than the backward classes. During the period of Janata rule between 1977 and 1979 at the centre and in north India, Charan Singh supported the reservation policies for backward castes adopted by the Janata governments of UP and Bihar. However, he did not argue for proportionate representation of positions for backward castes, but thought that the reservation policy of 15 per cent for recruitment of backward castes adopted by the UP government was reasonable¹¹.

The Mandal Commission report was in preparation during the time the Janata government was in office. In the last days of his own term as caretaker prime minister, in the midst of the election campaign in December 1979, and before the completion of the Mandal Commission report, Charan Singh brought before the other members of his government, particularly deputy prime minister Y.B. Chavan, a proposal to reserve 25 per cent of central sector positions for backward castes. However, nothing came of this move.¹²

The rise of backward caste movements in opposition to the political and economic dominance of elite castes in Indian politics has been a recurring political phenomenon in several Indian states. However, the social configuration of elite, backward, and low caste groups is more complicated and potentially more conflictual in north Indian than in Tamil Nadu and the Deccan for, in north India, the elite castes continue to be the dominant political and economic forces in the countryside and are also numerically larger than most backward castes. Moreover, since many of the backward castes are rural peasants with holdings large enough to employ low caste labourers and since their political demands for increased representation in public services and in educational institutions are similar to the demands made on behalf of low caste groups,

backward castes and low caste groups are often in conflict with each other.

In his political life, Charan Singh faced a political dilemma in relation to his identification with the backward castes, which was that his support for their aspirations was critical in his own advancement, but that it also sometimes stood in the way of his formation of viable coalitions with elite and low caste groups. Charan Singh worked skillfully at the local, electoral level and in state and national politics to form alliances with other castes and community groups. Although he was sometimes successful in forming such alliances, his solid and persistent political support always came predominantly from the backward castes.

Charan Singh's political dilemma reappeared very starkly in 1990 as his political successors sought to maintain control over his backward caste support base by implementing the Mandal Commission recommendations made nearly 10 years earlier for reservations of opportunities for backward castes in central government services and public sector enterprises, a move which antagonised and caused an electoral backlash in the 1991 elections among upper castes in north India and divided the backward castes as well between those, including the Jats, who were not included in the Mandal decision on reservations and those who were. In contrast, Charan Singh's public approach to the issue of backward caste representation combined a low keyed, implicit appeal to their resentment over backward caste dominance in the services and other aspects of public and political life, based on a moderate backward castes reservations policy, with an explicit appeal to their economic interests as peasant farmers.¹³ Although many upper caste politicians and big farmers in UP politics did not like Charan Singh's identification with the backward and middle peasant castes, his public moderation on the caste issues and his emphasis on the common economic interests of all peasants irrespective of caste made it possible for him and his party to form electoral alliances at the local level with upper caste politicians.

IV

The final aspect of Charan Singh's life that deserves emphasis is his role as an author of several highly original books on land reform, agriculture and economic development in India that take a broad comparative perspective and are of theoretical interests as well to scholars of economic development. Charan Singh's most important book, *India's Poverty and Its Solution*,¹⁴ was originally published in 1959 under the title, *Joint Farming X-Rayed : The Problem and Its Solution*, in response to the Nagpur resolution of the Indian National Congress, which proclaimed as one of the principal goals of the Congress the establishment of large-scale co-operative farms in India as a means of solving India's agricultural problems¹⁵. Although the book takes off from the issue of co-operative farming and is an attack upon it, it is far more interesting as a positive statement of and proposal for an economic development strategy for India based upon agricultural rather than industrial growth and as a defence of the system of peasant proprietorship as the most suitable form of social organisation to achieve both the economic goals of development and the political goals of democracy.

The book was published at the height of the Nehru-era emphasis on an economic development model based upon rapid industrialisation, with agriculture seen primarily as a resource base for industrialisation, providing food for the cities and revenue for plan projects. In this atmosphere, Charan Singh was seen as an obscurantist opponent of the modernisation of India. Yet, the arguments Charan Singh presented then anticipated later economic critiques of the rapid industrialisation strategy and calls for greater priority to agricultural development, as well as the world-wide concern with ecology and the avoidance of further destruction of man's environment.

Charan Singh's defence of peasant agriculture in India was based not only on economic and ecological, but also on ideological and political grounds. In an agricultural society, he insisted, democracy was dependent upon the existence of small farms. Large farms, whether capitalist or collectivist, were inimical to democracy. Both types

of big farms inevitably involve concentration of power and the direction of farm operations by a few, offering to the peasantry the prospect of a countryside "tuned into huge barracks or gigantic agricultural factories".¹⁶

Charan Singh's book *Joint Farming* was also a plea for the necessary priority to and capital investment in agriculture to bring about what 10 years later would be called a 'green revolution'. Even before the development of the new wheat and rice varieties, he thought that it was realistic to envision a doubling or tripling of India's food production by applying appropriate capital inputs. However, what distinguishes Charan Singh's proposal from those advanced through the international research institutes, the aid giving agencies, and the government of India are their orientation toward the interests of the self-sufficient or potentially self-sufficient peasantry and their explicit emphasis on the economic, political, and even the moral values of a system of peasant agriculture. In a word, Charan Singh was insisting that technology and capital inputs must be applied to Indian agriculture not willy-nilly, but in a carefully controlled manner designed to sustain a particular socioeconomic order, political system, and way of life.

Although Charan Singh's economic ideas are complex and scholarly, he did not present them for the edification of economists. In fact, he several times condensed them and presented them as the central sections of the manifestoes of the political parties he led. As such, these manifestoes are by far the most sophisticated ever issued in India.

In summary, Charan Singh's political life and economic ideas provide an entry-point into a much broader set of issues both for India and for the political and economic development of the remaining agrarian societies of the world. His political career raises the issue of whether or not a genuine agrarian movement can be built into a viable and persistent political force in the 20th century in a developing country. His economic ideas and his political programme raise the question of whether or not it is conceivable that a viable alternative strategy for the economic development of contemporary

agrarian societies can be pursued in the face of the enormous pressures for industrialisation. Finally, his specific proposals for the preservation and stabilisation of a system of peasant proprietorship raise once again one of the major social issues of modern times, namely, whether an agrarian economic order based upon small farms can be sustained against the competing pressures either for large-scale commercialisation of agriculture or for some form of collectivisation.

V

Since his death in 1987, a kind of 'deification' of Charan Singh's life has been taking place among those who knew him. It is being said that Charan Singh belonged to another and higher category of leaders from those who walk the Indian earth today and that the times as well have changed for the worse. My own perception of Charan Singh is of a flawed political leader, who achieved much, but also much less than he hoped partly because of his relentless drive to exercise power and his contempt for most of his political associates and rivals. Flawed though he was, he stood apart from most of his political opponents - and the urban intellectuals who hated him - in intellect, personal integrity, and in the coherence of his economic and social thought. Flawed though the political

times were during most of Charan Singh's political career, they appear in the light of the political transformation in Indian politics since the mid-1970s as - if not a 'golden age'- at least an age when there was a dialogue on the meanings of virtue and corruption, on the boundaries of permissible political methods of attacking one's rivals, mobilising public opinion, exploiting religious passions, and the like.

The dialogue of virtue and corruption which existed in the first two decades of independence permeates Charan Singh's papers on district politics in UP. They are filled with charges, counter-charges, and defences made against Charan Singh by local politicians and by Charan Singh against his rivals and the rivals of his district supporters. They include complaints about bribery, casteism, favouritism in appointments, misuse of election machinery, and connections between politicians and criminals.

These papers also provide further insights into the dynamics of political mobilisation and competition at the local level, previously examined in my own work in the 1960s and in the works of several other political scientists and anthropologists.¹⁸ Equally important to the insights these papers provide on political behaviour are the way the charges and accusations are received and answered, what they reveal about the values and moral

standards of the participants at the time, especially, of course, Charan Singh, who valued his personal honesty and integrity and devalued all others who departed from his own rigorous standards. However, serious the accusations and charges appeared at the time, they are qualitatively different from those that are made now, as are the facts. Bribery, casteism, favouritism, misuse of election machinery, and the criminal connections of a few politicians have been replaced by large-scale institutionalised political and bureaucratic corruption, charges and actual cases of considerable local violence before and during elections, and the interlinking of police, politicians and criminals in networks of illegal activity, including murder and the deliberate instigation of so-called communal riots for political purposes.

There was a political dialogue in those days also on the proper goals of the Indian state and economy, on how it might be possible for India to achieve economic growth and satisfy the minimum needs of its poor. Charan Singh himself often forced such dialogues upon his rivals in correspondence, notes, and memoranda in the midst of factional and policy debates. His position was not always the obviously correct one, but the dialogues he initiated provide a commentary on both his times and the times thereafter.

Notes

[In 1983, I expressed to Charan Singh my wish to write his biography, in connection with which I was allowed to go through all his papers and files and to make copies of materials which were of particular interest. A few references to material in Charan Singh's papers are made in the notes to this paper.]

1. For a more detailed discussion of this issue, its relationship to factional conflicts in the Congress and the role of opposition parties at the time, see Paul R. Brass. Uttar Pradesh in Myron Weiner (ed.), *State Politics in India* NJ: Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1968, PP 100-109 and Paul R. Brass, 'Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952-1977' in Paul R. Brass, *Caste, Faction and Party in Indian Politics, Vol. I : Faction and Party*, Chanakya, Delhi, 1983, pp. 309-312.
2. Letter of Charan Singh to Shibban Lal Saxena, MP, dated March 26, 1958.
3. Interview with Charan Singh at his residence, 34 Mall Avenue, Lucknow on July 25, 1973.
4. Non-Congress-led coalition and Congress governments alternated in power in UP in the years between 1967 and 1971. The first non-Congress coalition government under Charan Singh lasted from April 3, 1967 until February 17, 1968. It was followed by a Congress government under C.B. Gupta, which lasted from February 26, 1969 to February 10, 1970. Charan Singh again led a coalition, this time with the Congress, from February 17, 1970 until October 2, 1970. T.N. Singh, whose government lasted from October 18, 1970 to March 30, 1971, led the last non-Congress coalition in this period. Congress single party rule returned under the chief ministership of Kamalapati Tripathi on April 4, 1971. For further details, see brass, *Division in the Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952-1977* op cit., pp. 318 ff.
5. Interview with Charan Singh at his residence (34 Mall Avenue Lucknow) on July 25] 1973. See also Chaudhary Charan Singh, *The Story of New Congress-BKD Relations: How New Congress Broke the UP Coalition*, Lucknow, BKD, 1970
6. Interview in Lucknow on Jun 24, 1991.
7. E.g., see reports on the 1991 election in Bulandshahr Lok Sabha constituency in *The Times of India* May 17 and 18, 1991.
8. *India Today*, March 15, 1988.
9. W.H. Morris-Jones, *Government and Politics of India*. Hutchinson, London 1971.

10. On this matter, see also Terence J. Byres, 'Charan Singh, 1902-87: An Assessment', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. XV, No. 2 (January 1988), pp. 139-89. Byres acknowledges Charan Singh's deviation to the middle peasantry and the support he received from them, but argues at p 147 that "the rich peasantry have been the major gainers from his policies".
11. Interview with Charan Singh at the Suraj Kund Inspection House, outside Delhi, on March 24, 1978.
12. Letter from Prime Minister Charan Singh to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Y.B. Chavan dated December 3, 1979. This episode deserves more attention, but the papers do not indicate the results of the cabinet meeting held to discuss the proposal. A previous decision had been made to defer the introduction of such a reservation scheme, but the pressures of the election campaign may well have impelled Charan Singh to look for a dramatic measure to give it a boost. However, the adoption of such dramatic actions with uncertain political consequences was not a characteristic feature in Charan Singh's political life, in which he usually displayed considerable caution.
13. A former associate of both Charan Singh and V.P. Singh compared the latter's policy unfavourably with that of the former by remarking that V.P. Singh had "divided peasants into.... Mandal peasants and non-Mandal peasants", thereby making a "mess of everything [although], on the surface of it, it looks very good that he has made a formidable combination". In contrast, he said, "Charan Singh never talked of Mandal And he got everybody. ...When he talked of....exploitation of rural people and village as centre of development,that was more Gandhian.... And in the meantime, due to that, not only Jats but even Brahmin [though] maybe in less[er] numbers. But, he [Charan Singh] made a peasant base. V.P. Singh destroyed that". Interview in New Delhi on June 11, 1991.
14. Charan Singh, *India's Poverty and Its Solution*, Asia Publishing House, London 1964.
15. Some of the material in this and the following three paragraphs is derived from Brass 'Division in Congress and the Rise of Agrarian Interests and Issues in Uttar Pradesh Politics, 1952 to 1977, op cit., pp. 30-34
16. Charan Singh, *India's Poverty*, op cit., p 103.
17. See, Bharatiya Kranti Dal, *Aims and Principles*, signed by Charan Singh, Lucknow, 1971, and Lok Dal, *Election Manifesto*, 1979.
18. *Vide esp.* Paul R. Brass, *Factional Politics in the Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1965; Myron Weiner, *Party Building in a New Nation : The Indian National Congress*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1967; Richard Sisson, *The Congress Party in Rajasthan : Political Integration and Institution-Building in an Indian State*, University of California Press Berkeley, 1972; Donald B. Rosenthal, *The Expansive Elite : District Politics and State Policy-Making in India*, University of California Press Berkeley.