

# THE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE INDIAN REPUBLIC



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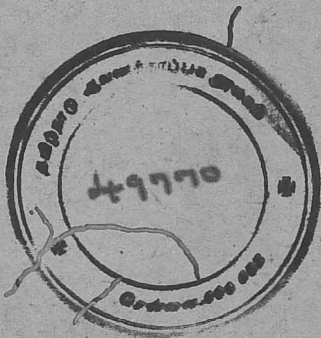
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## PREFACE

The Indian Republic is just one and half-years old. The infancy of political institutions has to be watched and nursed as carefully as human infancy. By enacting the Constitution in the shortest possible time, the great leaders of India who fought and won freedom have discharged their trust. It is now the duty of the citizens of India individually and collectively to guard their Republic in all possible ways.

In order that our Republic may get deep-rooted and spread its beneficent branches over the entire life of the people, it requires free, fearless but scientific and constructive thought and bold, resolute but carefully calculated action. We have to hasten in order to make up the backwardness of a century in relation to other advanced countries. At the same time we have to be prudent, lest the strain on the people should become too great to bear.

This booklet does not pretend to be a full scale discussion of the problems before the Indian Republic. Its substance has been collected from my public speeches during the last three years, mainly to student audience. But they have been revised and re-edited in a readable form. I hope they will introduce the problems to students and politicians interested in national development. Incidentally, I hope it will convince my friends that I have not been altogether lost in the bureaucracy.

In reading through the essays, I would like the readers to remember that the manuscript was ready over a year ago.

New Delhi, }  
10-8-1951 }

K. SANTHANAM.

## ERRATA

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>Instead of</i>	<i>Read</i>
20	15 & 16	confiscated	consolidated
27	9	population of U.S.	population
	30	dictatorship	dictatorship
36	27	willing to suffer greater	more willing to suffer
37	30	short	sort
	32	do not	does not
41	31	the	the
45	13	growing	growling
	28	reaults	results
46	1	10th century	19th century
	26	after all the wars	after the war
47	12	capitalised	capitalist
48	1	wil	will
49	11	economic	economic
	27	may desired	may be desired
53	32	production to the	production and leads to the
64	27	unplacable	implacable
66	19	io	to
	31	off	out
68	8	inequal	unequal
73	4	benifit	benefit



## THE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE INDIAN REPUBLIC

**I**NDIA became a Republic on the 26th of January 1950. We have heard in history that there were small Republics in many parts of India 2,500 years or more ago. But, for the last 2,500 years, India has not been a democracy. For the last 1,000 years, the greater portion of India has been subject to some kind or other of foreign rule. Therefore, the establishment of an Indian Republic is surely a great event in the history of this country.

It is easy in India to get children but very difficult to bring them up. That is the case even with our political baby. Even after the birth of the Indian Republic, our main problem will be political. One may well ask: "The British are out, we have freedom, we have enacted a Constitution and what political problems have we to face?" The maintenance of the new Indian Republic as a democracy is going to be a very difficult problem for some decades to come. Our conception of Republic is that of a secular democracy and this conception has been duly embodied in the Constitution.

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the Christian College, Tambaram, on 6-1-1950.

It is necessary to understand what exactly this 'secular democracy' means. It does not mean that there is any hostility to religion or that the Indian people are expected to give up their religion or even to lose a little of their faith in it. All that the word 'secular' means is that in India, if it is governed by the spirit of the Constitution, all citizens shall be absolutely equal in all political, economic and social matters irrespective of their birth or their faith. That is the meaning of 'secular'.

The other half of the expression 'secular democracy' is even more important. What exactly is the meaning we attach to the word 'democracy'? In terms of the Constitution, the people of India, at least those who are adults over 21 years old, will elect the Parliament and the legislatures. The Parliament and the legislatures will set up the Cabinets at the Centre and in the States and these Cabinet and Parliaments will come before the people at least once in every 5 years so that if the people are dissatisfied with the Parliament or legislatures, they can change the Parliament or legislatures, and if the Parliament or legislatures are dissatisfied with their Cabinets, they can change the Cabinets. All this can be done in peaceful, orderly and constitutional manner without any kind of violence or dislocation. That is the constitutional machinery of democracy that we have established.

But no machine can run without the spirit. Just as the motor-car, however perfect it may be, cannot run without the petrol or some other equivalent fuel, so also no political machine can run unless the human spirit is there. It is only when the spirit of democracy has become prevalent in all sections of the people that we can be sure of its permanent establishment in this country.

What is this spirit of democracy? The first essential of democracy is that those in power, however strong

views they may hold on any issue, should be tolerant of those who differ from them. It does not matter whether those who differ are a few or many. So long as those in power feel that even a single individual is entitled to say that the Government is wrong, that its views and policies are wrong and that it should be changed, that Government satisfies the first essential of democracy, Free expression of views and freedom to express those views publicly are as essential for democracy as any constitutional provision for elections or Cabinet responsibility. If, in any country, it is found that people are not allowed to express their views freely, that people are suppressed for holding views different from those in power, then whatever constitutional form of machinery may exist, one may conclude that that country has something which is not democracy.

From this one should not jump to the conclusion that this freedom of thought can assume forms which will destroy democracy itself. For instance, if it is asked whether a person can preach violence, can ask people to upset the democracy that is established not by changing Cabinets and Parliaments but by sabotaging the railways, by burning government offices, by doing things which are inconsistent with the freedom and security of others, then of course, it is not real freedom of expression. The test of real freedom to any person is that every one else in the country should be able to exercise the same freedom. Therefore, subject to the supreme condition of peacefulness and advocacy of change through peaceful methods, there should be complete freedom of thought and expression in a democracy.

It is not enough that this freedom should accrue to individuals. Those who hold differing views must be able to combine so that they may propagate their views and convert the majority of the people to their view. In

many countries, only one party is allowed to function. While individuals are allowed to express their views, at least to some extent, they are prohibited from combining into a political party, contesting the elections or seeking to change the existing government. In other words, if a single party dictatorship is sought to be passed on as democracy, it cannot be accepted as such.

At a recent conference of political scientists or philosophers, grave apprehensions were expressed about the future of democracy in India under the existing system of more or less single party rule. It is no doubt true that the only effective political party in this country is that of the Indian National Congress; that is so for the simple historical reason that during the struggle for freedom, the country could not possibly tolerate more than one effective political party. If this political party to-day is likely to emerge into a single party dictatorship as in many other countries, those apprehensions have to be taken seriously. But it is not the number of parties that functions at any moment that is of any importance. The real tests are whether every person is free to criticise the party in power and whether all persons who feel dissatisfied have got the right to join as a political party and contest the right of the ruling party to rule. No country can manufacture political parties by any kind of prescription. Parties have to grow organically. In India too, other parties have to grow and will grow. So far as the Congress is concerned, though it may be the only effective political party to-day, it has not placed the slightest obstacle against any other political party from coming into existence. If the Socialist Party is not very effective or strong, it is its own fault. Mr. Jai Prakash Narain has been going about from Himalayas to Cape Comorin trying to induce people to join his party. Similarly, there are many local parties, which are trying to establish themselves in power in

many parts of India. In every election there is no difficulty for any one, for any non-Congressman, from contesting against the Congress candidate. Even within the so-called Congress parties, there are so many rebellious groups and factions that there is not the ghost of a chance of the Congress becoming a dictatorship, unless, of course, its very character and leadership change. There is thus no fear of a single party dictatorship under the present circumstances.

There are, however, two perils which the young Indian Republic will have to face before long. One comes from the right side, *i.e.*, Communalism. All know how much India has suffered from communalism. In 1947, as a price for this communalism, we had to divide this ancient country and hand over a part to the Muslim communalists. That surgical operation has abated one of the deep cankers of Indian life, *viz.*, the Hindu-Muslim conflict, except in so far as it has become a conflict between neighbouring States. So far as India minus Pakistan is concerned, the Hindu-Muslim question is solved for all time. It does not mean that communalism is extinguished. The recent speeches of the leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha are proof to the contrary. They have still hopes of reviving Hindu communalism. They will not succeed. Still it behoves all people who are anxious that true democracy should flourish in this country to be watchful and to see that communalism does not rise again. Communalism may take many forms. It may take the form of asking for special jobs, of special privileges, of creating special grievances and it may also take the form of aggressive religious propaganda offensive to other communities. We shall have to watch for every kind of eruption of communalism and take steps to nip them as and when they arise.

A far graver threat to democracy in India comes from Communism. Communism is the threat from the

left. As it carries with it certain ideas which are bound to appeal to the large masses of poor people in India and as it rules over vast regions, its pull is great and it is likely to grow in the near future. Adding Russia and China, the people who are under Communist regimes probably number more than those who are living under any kind of democratic rule. Therefore, the peril from communism is greater. It may be asked why India should not take her chance with Russia and China and become communist also? Is political democracy worth so much that we should resist it even at the expense of the great economic and social advantages which communism promises? This question will take too long to be answered in detail in this small essay. But whatever advantages communism may give, one thing it cannot. It dare not and it will not give it any kind of liberty to the individual to think and express his thoughts or act according to his lights. The one thing about Russia to-day is that one cannot go to Russia if one wants to do so. Life in Russia is more or less a closed book. If any communist feels that Russia has made tremendous advances and is fit to be copied by other people, one has only to ask him then why it should not open its doors to the whole world. How is it possible that any one can go to the remotest corners of capitalist America or the socialist United Kingdom or Scandinavia or Belgium or Holland and see what he likes in them while one cannot go to Soviet Russia or to the countries dominated by Soviet Russia and learn anything whatsoever? The books on Russia consist only of two categories; those which denounce Russia altogether and those which praise it without qualification. It may be concluded that truth cannot be so one-sided. Until Communist Russia can make up her mind that she has nothing to hide from other nations, we should not easily be willing to lose the little freedom that we have and go in for something of which we do not know and

of which we shall not be able to say anything when once we come under its control. Therefore, we should cherish democracy as the most priceless possession and the students especially must think hard and must see if they are prepared to struggle and fight for democracy if it has to face a crisis. It is the most important problem before the new Indian Republic.

The second set of problems which we have to face immediately is the economic problem. It is needless to say that the vast masses of our population are living almost on the margin of starvation, that our total wealth is not such as to give even a minimum decent standard of life to the generality of our people. The first use we must make of our freedom is to increase the standard of life. But then this is not an easy matter. This is going to be the greatest headache for all those who undertake the responsibility of ruling the country in the present generation. When people talk of the government not having made profound changes in two years, they do not know what they are talking about. Nothing of great consequence can be done in one year or two. But we have to make one choice; whether we want to have a comfortable life in the present or whether we want a better life for the future.

Unfortunately, a large number of the middle class who have political power to-day tend to feel that they should have a soft time to-day and also a good time to-morrow. It is not possible in our country. We are too poor to have enough for capital development which will make the country richer in the future and at the same time to have a soft life in the present. If we really want to build this country so that it will be fit for real human beings to live, if we want to give the people as a whole—not for certain sections—proper food, proper clothing, proper housing, roads, schools, universities, railways and

all the other things, which modern standard requires, it is the duty of this generation to stint itself, to sacrifice itself and save everything to build for the future. This is the thing which Russia also did. But it did it through the severest form of coercion. The whole country was forced to live a life of great scarcity and suffering for more than 15 years in order that their 5 year plans may be carried through. It is not possible to put such a severe strain under any system of democracy. We cannot move as fast as Russia for the simple reason that we want to save our people from too much suffering. We want to get their consent for everything we do. We want to take them along both in mind and body in all the programmes that we may draw. But if we are not able to advance with sufficient speed, it may be that the people will lose all faith. We have to face this dilemma. On the one hand, the possessing classes, the better classes, do not want to put up with much privation. On the other, the masses are getting impatient. Hitherto they were thinking that it was all due to a foreign government. Now that their leaders are in power, they will not wait in patience for a long time.

On the 26th of January, 1950 the masses get the vote and in January 1951 there will be general election all over the country. The one single question which every peasant and worker will ask is, "what am I going to get, am I going to live under the present conditions or are they going to change and how soon and in what manner are they going to change?" Firm clear answers have to be given to these questions. Unless they are given and implemented, the masses will not care much for principles of freedom and this country also may go the way of China.

Therefore [it is in the very interests of democracy that we must speed fast. We may not speed as fast as



Russia but we must go with sufficient speed to allay popular impatience. If we are to move with any speed, heavy sacrifice has to be imposed on the present generation. If the sacrifice comes voluntarily, well and good, and if it does not come voluntarily, it has to be imposed through legislation and taxation. Take for instance, the development of key industries. Any economist will tell us that without a large scale development of the heavy or key industries, our progress will be dependent on the sweet will or the kindness of other nations and that the cost and service charges for machinery will become unbearable. In order to develop these big industries, we have no capital. The Government of India have had to postpone some of the industries they had in mind. Steel, for instance, is essential for modern development. Great Britain produces something like 14 million tons. United States about 9 or 10 times that amount. Even defeated Germany is to be allowed to produce 10 million tons of steel. Our total production to-day is just under 1 million tons. The Government of India had planned to start two steel factories to produce another million and even that has had to be postponed.

When suggestions are made that capital should be taken from the country by a small saving from the incomes, people naturally protest. They say, "We are already poor, how can you take away the little from what we have?" But then each one must ask the question: "If there are no voluntary savings and if the government cannot take savings compulsorily, how are these things to be built and if we do not build the key industries, how can there be future economic development?" Therefore, the present generation must make the choice. If it wants to have a soft life, it may have a soft life, but it will have to face all kinds of difficulties, violent revolutions and probably a terrible economic breakdown before long.

On the other hand, if we make up our mind that just as we have struggled for a generation to get our freedom, we shall take another generation to consolidate our freedom, it will be possible democratically and peacefully to build up an Indian economy which may not be so glittering as that of capitalist America or Soviet Russia but will be something in which the Indian people can live in decency and comfort.

Of course, the economic problem is a very big problem. There are various difficult issues—how far we should cling to primitive economy in our agriculture or how far we should turn over to more scientific methods using tractors and other modern machinery. If we are to turn over to modern scientific agriculture, how are we going to deal with vast masses of workers who will be unemployed? The President Dr. Rajendra Prasad dealt with some of these things in a recent address to the Economic Conference. All these are very big issue. If we are determined that India should advance and the people's condition has to be changed, then the methods and the means will shape themselves all right. The one thing we should not admit saying is that we cannot change or shall not change. So long as we are determined to change, we shall find out the appropriate method at least by trial and error. It may be a mixture of the most modern and most ancient methods but somehow or other the means will be available if only our will is made up.

The third set of problems which are peculiar to this country is social. India cannot afford to be politically the most advanced democracy, economically striving to become a modernised society and at the same time continue in the medieval stage of social structure. We must get rid of all the distinctions, castes and superstitions, which have divided our peoples in so small communities, coteries and factions and made it impossible to become one

integrated nation. We must, without any hesitation, give up all the reactionary vestiges of the past. We need not condemn them; we need not enter into controversy whether the old system of castes and communities was not good in those days; they may have served in their time but in a democracy based on adult franchise, there is no place whatsoever for any kind of superiority or inferiority and all those aspects of our social system which are based on those notions of superiority and inferiority must go. It is going to be a very difficult problem because these things are not upheld by mere law but by tradition and tradition change very slowly. We do not want to change those traditions by force or even by legal coercion though law may justly be used to abolish legal protection to superiority or inferiority and to customs based on those notions. It must grow voluntarily and our social integration must be brought about largely by the new generation of students, who will be going out to serve the country in the various walks of life.

India's position in the international world is rather curious. India is too weak militarily and economically to be able to bring any kind of pressure on any country. On the other hand, India is too big and too important not to have some full in the international world. Fortunately for us, our leader and Prime Minister has given a very far-sighted lead to this country. He has made our position absolutely clear and he made it clear not only in this country but in the United States where his policy is not the official policy of that government and where that policy was not liked by many leading Americans though they had the goodness and the toleration to appreciate the sincerity of our Prime Minister. That policy is largely as follows: India has only moral force. But whatever it may be worth, that force shall be used without regard to consequences for the cause of freedom and emancipation of subject peoples. Already our policy

has paid rich dividends. In the beginning of 1949, India went out of the way to call an Asian Conference on Indonesia. At that time, few would have said that the freedom of Indonesia was so near but Indonesian independence has become an accomplished fact. Similarly, in spite of our ideological and other differences with Soviet China, India has been the first to recognise Soviet China.

This policy may not be very easy to apply especially when we have to deal with our own nearest neighbours. The problem of Pakistan is still a bad headache to us. It has been the consistent desire of the Government of India, and it has been the persistent policy of the Government of India to make it clear to the people of Pakistan that they have nothing to fear from India. Both the Prime Minister and the late Sardar Patel have categorically repudiated the suggestion of the Hindu Mahasabha that we should strive for union. So far as the present Government of India is concerned, it does not think of any reunion at all in the present. Even in the future, the initiative will have to be taken by Pakistan and not by India. Even after the Partition, India is large enough, her population is big enough for all our dreams and desires. It is foolish to seek a compulsory union with a neighbouring State which we have allowed to be formed by our own free consent. If Pakistan comes into India by force, all our hopes for economic progress will have to be sacrificed to maintain a permanent internecine civil war. Therefore, from every point of view, India wants to be at peace and it is this will for peace on the part of India's Prime Minister that has brought about the recent agreement between the two States when relations had reached the breaking point.

## PATRIOTISM

**I**NDIA is faced with all manner of difficult problems—political, economic, social, cultural and educational. In order to face these problems, we must have, on the one hand, very clear ideas and, on the other, stern determination to face them without fear. But before we can do any of these things, we want deep and burning patriotism. This patriotism must not be the privilege of a few. It should become the common property of all. Now what is patriotism? It may be defined as love of country. We must fully realise what is the country which we must love and what is the manner in which we must love that country. At first sight, one may say the country is India. But introspection will shout that most Indians identify it with his own state or even district. Fortunately through the leadership of our great teacher, Mahatma Gandhi, India has become united and free; but unless this unity and this freedom becomes instinctive, unless in every thought and in every action the citizens of India act upon this unity and freedom, the empty profession that India is our country will not do us any good.

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the Maharana Bhopal College, Udaipur, on 5-11-49.

Real India consists of the people of India and so long as our love does not become love of the people of India, we do not understand the true significance of patriotism. When we begin to analyse our thoughts and actions, we find we love certain sections, certain communities among which we have been brought up, as the people of India. India should really mean the vast masses of peasants, who are living in our villages. Let us look into our minds and hearts whether we really love the people of India, who are living scattered in the remotest villages.

Generally speaking, every one agrees that we should raise the standard of living of the people, but are we prepared to carry the idea of patriotism to the logical limit and agree that the revenues of the States and the Government of India should be mainly devoted to the regeneration of the villages, to build up primary education, to give the masses their rights and all the things that we take for granted for ourselves? We are really in a great dilemma. Our country is like a vast desert in which the majority of the people are living in the most primitive and inhuman conditions. To raise the level of this huge mass is an infinitely difficult task. Therefore, unconsciously, imperceptibly, we drift into growing a little faster here, a little faster there and then console ourselves that we have done our bit. The colleges, schools, Montessori schools for children that have been developed in Pilani are really beautiful things but in the nearest village about two miles from Pilani, Rajputs, Brahmins and Harijans are all living in hovels in which other countries would not like their sheep and goats and pigs to live. That is the condition of many of the villages in the country.

Therefore, the love of the country must mean the love of the people, who are living in this condition. Far

away from the villages, meeting in crowded halls of eager students it is easy to have an abstract love of the people, but when one actually goes to them and sees them in their dirt and squalor, in their superstition, in their suspicion of those who go to serve them, our mind gets revolted and we like to seek consolation in some thing or other away from them. This tendency should be resisted. We must raise the standard of life of our people. True patriotism has got this definite connotation in the present context of things. It is work—work that will give to the vast masses of our people, better food, better clothing, better houses and better education. Any one who tries to serve the people in any one of these aspects is a true patriot. It does not matter whether he is an official or a non-official, whether he is a capitalist or manual worker. Every one should put to himself the question, "Is the work that I am doing in any way calculated to raise the standard of life of the masses of this country especially of the rural masses?" If he is able to answer that question in the affirmative, he is a true patriot. If, on the other hand, he is not able to give an affirmative answer to that question, however lucrative his profession may be, however popular he may be, he is not a patriot at all. Patriotism must, for the fullness of the life of the country, take all manner of shapes. Those who develop music, those who develop art, those who develop literature, all these are no doubt engaged in patriotic activities, but not even the artist, the musician or any other kind of worker can afford to forget the main thing that is needed in this country. He should so devote his own work as to make the life of the masses a little better.

Our most critical problem is that of food. One may will ask what students and middle class workers can do about food. They cannot do much to solve the food problem of this country, but if they begin to think

about it, they find that they are not so helpless after all. Many of them must have their own little bits of land somewhere or other. It is open to them to look into that bit of land whether it is producing as much as it can. Others can read and learn how the agriculture round about them can be improved and in their spare moments, they can go to the farmers and try to teach them. The students may divide themselves into groups and each group may adopt a village in the neighbourhood. It is not suggested they should ignore their studies for anything in the world because unless the students make the best of their studies, they would not be able to serve the country as well as if they are good students. At the same time, it should not be impossible to spare an hour or two every fortnight for a group of ten or twelve students to go to a nearby village, study the conditions there and see what can be done to improve the condition of the villagers. They can do many little things which will have a great cumulative effect.

Our leaders say that we should not depend upon particular types of food. We must have a wider variety and every one of us must eat a little of many things and no one should attach undue importance to a particular cereal article of food. We should readjust our habits, we should improve our cultivation, we should bring more acres under cultivation and we should also eliminate waste. It is by the simultaneous adoption of many policies that we can solve our food problem.

The same is true of village reconstruction. If it is to be done only by the governments either in the provinces or in the Centre, nothing much can be achieved in a short time. It is by the combined effort, by the co-operation of all that we can hope to solve the problem satisfactorily. If a group of students will enquire



and calculate the minimum amount that will be needed for putting each village in some decent standard and multiply it by the number of villages in this country, they will find that probably for another half a century to come, the State Governments and the Central Government will not be able to raise by way of taxation even a fraction of the amounts needed. Are we, therefore, to give up this problem as helpless? We cannot afford to do that and if we do that, the rising tide of revolution will sweep the whole country. We want that our country should become free from economic slavery as peacefully as it has got out of its political slavery. Therefore, the problem of rural reconstruction has to be approached by many agencies from many points of view. The Governments must do their duty but those who are not directly connected with the Government, must also do their duty. For instance, the lack of roads in many parts of the country forms a crucial economic bottleneck. If the villagers want to have roads, and if we can persuade them to give their labour free and ask the Governments to give only technical assistance and such equipment as road-rollers, there is no reason why there should not be a popular wave of road making so that in five to ten years, every village will be connected with the nearest road or railway by a proper road. We have to do things by popular enthusiasm and not merely by routine methods. If we cannot do any work which is directly calculated to raise the level of the masses, then in this new era of freedom, we are not entitled to call ourselves patriots. That is the definition of patriotism which has any significance at present.

## BOTTLENECKS

**W**E cannot have freedom and make use of this freedom effectively unless we put in more work.

It is our duty to overwork and even, if necessary, to overwork to death in order that the future generations may inherit a country which is as prosperous as any other country in the world. There is no escape from it. If we do not work harder than others, we cannot come up to their level. We shall be as much behind them as we are to-day. Our first and foremost bottleneck is therefore time. In the college, in the school, in the workshop, in the office, everywhere, every one must save time and no one should waste it. We cannot afford to waste days, hours or even minutes. Let us economise; money we can find some way or other; other resources we can borrow but if we lose time, it is lost for ever. We must make the most valuable use of our time. It is not enough for a student to say that he has sat for the examination and passed it in the first class. If a B.A. student can say that though he is a B.A., he is equal to an M A., it is possible to agree that he has made valuable use of his time. Every student who comes out of the university must come out as a scholar or an expert.

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, on 26-11-49.

The next bottleneck is talent. Unfortunately to-day for any skilled work, there is an absolute dearth of talent. If we want to build a locomotive factory, we have to go to Britain, America and Europe for specialists. Those who were ruling us for many decades were not very particular about developing our talent. Therefore, we are backward because we have no skilled workers. We have got large numbers of workers but all of them are more or less unskilled, in the sense they are not suited to do modern specialised work. We must develop the capacity for specialised work. Of course, it is the business of the Government to develop this talent which is latent all over the country. It will do so, but Government is slow moving. It is essential that every individual and every group of individuals must also independently develop this talent. Every kind of talent which is available must be developed—may be talent in art, in science, in industry or in commerce. There is scope for every kind of talent without any limit or measure. The student must treat his special talent as sacred and consider it as a trust for the country. He must be prepared to suffer and sacrifice for the development of that talent. It is no use saying that one is a genius but that genius will bear fruit only if the Government gives him Rs. 500 per mensem. That is not genius, and such a kind of genius is of very little use to the country. It is only through suffering, effort and sacrifice that a nation can develop and it is this spirit that will save the country from its present state.

The third bottleneck is the lack of team spirit. Individually the Indian is a very competent person. He can do his work well. But if there are 10 people put together, they do not know how to work. No game of sports can be won unless the team implicitly follows the captain. The players may have the power to change the captain before or after the game. Democracy

provides an easy means of doing this with its political captains. It provides periodic elections by which people can change their captains and whenever a captain proves inefficient or incompetent, it is the duty of the people to remove that captain. But so long as we have an able captain and we feel that we have such a captain, it is our duty to follow him. He may commit blunders; even then we should follow him. Has India such a captain? Unfortunately, Gandhiji is dead; assassinated by the hand of one of our people. But fortunately he has left those behind who are great enough to lead this country. Can we hope to get greater captains than Pandit Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel? Let us give them time. Let us reflect as to what they have done in these three years. All the States have been confiscated. India has an established position in the international world. The great achievement of the Indonesian Conference will always stand to our credit. Our national work is obstructed by cantankerous and destructive criticism. After all, we must trust the leaders so long as we keep them as our captains. The new Constitution has provided that every individual in India, who is of 21 years of age, will have the power to vote. They will have the right to choose as to who must be their leaders of the whole of India and of the provinces. Pandit Nehru has always stated that he would be most happy when he could retire and read books he has left unread. Therefore, it is to the national interest that he should be at the helm of affairs so that we can make use of his captaincy. Unless we work as a team, no great result can be achieved.

Now there are disintegrating forces at work in many parts of the country. It is necessary for all patriotic citizens to think about them. They should not allow the country to be disintegrated. Let every one try peacefully to persuade the people of this country

to adopt his views; that is legitimate but let no one imagine that he has got hold of some knowledge which nobody else possesses and that for the sake of that knowledge, he can disintegrate society. All those who seek to disintegrate do infinite harm not only to the present generation but to all the future generations. Our country is so thickly populated that even a slight dislocation in one place will affect thousands, lakhs and even millions of men, women and children. Let us not forget the lesson of the Bengal famine of 1943. Any violent upsetting of our social structure will mean death of millions.

Finally there is another bottleneck. It is the lack of toleration. The terrible things that happened in August-September 1947 were due to this lack of toleration. People were murdered in the streets of Delhi. Young boys were going about killing Muslims. Such things happened in a far greater measure on the other side. More than once during these three years, it appeared as if India and Pakistan were drifting into a suicidal war. Fortunately, owing to the spirit of Gandhiji which happily survives, that calamity has been averted. We want to establish in India a state and a society in which every man will consider every other Indian his brother in spite of differences of religion, language or culture. We have to think of ourselves as members of one indivisible joint family. We have to learn to respect one another. Without it, this country, with its several cultures, with its varied traditions, can never survive as a nation. If she is to be an India of which Mahatma Gandhi would have been proud, these bottlenecks (1) lack of time (2) lack of talent (3) lack of team spirit (4) lack of toleration should be speedily eliminated.

## ECONOMIC DILEMMAS

**I**T is in the field of economics that the Government of India is meeting with the greatest amount of criticism.

In the political field, in the matter of integration of States, with respect to the police action in Hyderabad and in the manner in which we have enacted the Constitution, there is general appreciation of the strength and wisdom with which the Government of India have dealt with all these difficult and delicate problems. In the economic field, however, there is widespread criticism. No one need be surprised at it nor is there any reason to resent such criticism. Though some of the criticism is short-sighted and some of it is obviously interested, yet it should be recognised that much of the criticism is legitimate also.

In the economic reconstruction of India, there are many great difficulties which the Government of India has to face. The Government of India is not merely facing difficult problems but it has to solve difficult dilemmas. Let us consider some of the economic dilemmas which it has to face.

First of all, it is essential to have a very clear objective before our country as without a clear objective it is not possible to pursue coherent and systematic

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\* Substance of this essay was contained in an address to the students of the Loyola College, Madras, on 9-1-50.

policies. What should be the objective of free India? There are two extreme schools. One is that if economic backwardness of this country is to be liquidated, there should be rapid and thoroughgoing application of science and modern technology. Mechanical power should be used in all possible fields as speedily as India's resources and capacity permit. This school derives its authority both from the experience of the U. S. A. and the great experiment which is going on in Soviet Russia. Both these countries have preached from the housetops that without the use of mechanical power to the largest possible extent, no country can have sufficient wealth to build up a modern society.

The argument is very simple. The economic result of mere man-power or mere man-power plus animal power is not sufficient to provide even the elementary necessities in an abundant measure. They do not at all provide the surplus necessary for the building up of social services like education, sanitation, modern roads and transportation services and other amenities like the radio, cinema and other forms of entertainment; nor can a primitive or medieval economy give to the masses sufficient leisure to devote themselves to cultural pursuits like art, music or painting. It may well be asked whether old civilisations dependent upon human labour and animal labour, were not prosperous. If one studies closely the ancient histories, it will be found that in all those civilisations, a small section of people were able to develop a fairly high standard of life by rigorous exploitation of the rest. It may be either slave labour or free wage labour but kept at a very low level. That is what can be seen in this country even now. In big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Delhi, one finds palaces and houses which can rival the best in other countries. But at present most of the wealth of these cities is derived from the laborious efforts of

villagers trying to cultivate their patches of land or produce in their cottage industries articles in the same way as they were doing in ancient times or in the Middle Ages. Therefore, there is a school in this country which clearly says that India must apply modern science and technology as quickly as possible and transform the primitive rural India into a modernised India run mainly by power.

Against this school, there is the opposite school which says that the machine civilisation and the consequent urbanisation involves only an apparent prosperity but the moral and social evils attendant upon such prosperity are so great that India should not pursue that ideal. This school contends that this country may have to use power to some extent for the manufacture of steel or such other materials but on the whole it should prefer to be content with the old system of rural economics. This school derives its authority from the great name of Mahatma Gandhi and it is not unusual to find distinguished Congress leaders speaking on one side or the other and occasionally on both sides at different places or at different times. The one strong argument of this school is that if one takes the vast population of India and tries to imagine its modernisation on the American or Russian model, it will be found to be a practical impossibility. It is not possible, they contend, to build power industries which are likely to employ 50% of the working population of India. There will be no markets at all and in the process of mechanisation large numbers of agriculturists will become unemployed and it will be impossible to utilise them in any manner.

Both these schools, so long as they pursue single-mindedly their argument, appear plausible but when once one gets out of the dogmatism of either side, tries to detach oneself and looks at things in an objective,



scientific manner, difficulties are found in both the lines of thought.

Industrialisation has been going on in India for the past 50 years and the total number of persons in power industries is about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  million. If other people employed in railways and such other modern occupations are included, probably not more than 5 million workers find their occupation in India in these modern industries. Our labour population is of the order of 120 to 130 millions. Can we produce a plan by which within a reasonable time, a substantial portion of these millions can be absorbed in power industries? That is really a difficult question.

On the other hand, can we afford to let one section of India live in the 20th century and large sections of India live in the 10th century A.D. or 1st century B.C.? Will not the village folk demand that the motor cars, the radios and other facilities which the town people enjoy should come to them and will they accept any argument that in the national interests, they should continue in the primitive stage while others are in a different setting? That is bound to be a psychological impossibility.

Therefore, it is evident that for some time to come this country will have to follow a course midway between the two. The reasonable way out of this dilemma is that modernisation and use of power should proceed as much and as fast as possible but efforts should be made to ensure that it does not produce too much unemployment and dislocation, that it does not bring disruption before power industry can give India the surplus to support the rural masses, who may be dislocated from their present occupations. All that can be said with certainty now is that as the change cannot ultimately be avoided, it should be faced in such manner that the transition produces the minimum possible

dislocation and suffering. It will be a very difficult and delicate job for any Government to see how far and in what directions the development of power industry should be directed and how far and in what manner the old type of agriculture and the rural cottage industries should be preserved. There is bound to be a considerable amount of trial and error in this attempt and it is only after many years of experience, the leaders will be able to define the objective clearly. Till then, any one who pursues a very dogmatic line is bound to find himself faced with insuperable problems. This is the first dilemma which the Indian Republic has to face.

The second dilemma is that of the method. Supposing India has to advance in modernisation, how shall she do that? Should she follow the American example of private enterprise or the Russian example of complete nationalisation and elimination of private enterprise? Here again from the point of view of pure theory, if one accepts the assumptions of either side, one is driven to accept its conclusions also. The American assumption is that private enterprise gives the largest possible initiative. Every individual with a brain becomes a centre of initiative for economic activity and whatever conflicts or struggles there may be in the process, the ultimate result is bound to be the most rapid and the most satisfactory advance because this advance is brought about by the initiative of the largest number and by the voluntary approval of the rest. The American economists proudly point out that in a 100 years time private enterprise has increased American wealth many many times and to-day the average American, the ordinary worker, has a standard of life probably higher than that of the middle classes in most countries.

The Marxists contest this claim and say that American prosperity is purely fortuitous. It is due to the coincidence of many accidental circumstances which

is not likely to happen anywhere else. America was a vast continent with unlimited resources starting with a small population and it was founded and developed at a time when the industrial revolution began to take place. Therefore the growth of population and the development of resources went more or less as planned by history, not by man. India has not got a tenth of the resources of the U. S. A. while she has twice the population of U. S. She has not got the time to develop slowly, to build up one industry after another and to absorb superfluous agricultural labour into industry. Therefore the Marxist argues that if India wants to overtake the backwardness of a century, she has to do it by human planning. It is the human brain that must plan. It must put up blue prints to see what industries will be built and where, gather the resources, make the people work and build a modern society in that manner. Russia also claims that in the last 30 years, it has advanced to such an extent as to make all the capitalist world fear. In the field of heavy industries, there is no doubt there has been a remarkable progress in Soviet Russia and given time and peace, it should not be difficult for Soviet Russia to equal U. S. A. in raising the standard of life to the same level.

Theoretically, the Soviet argument is much more appropriate to this country than the American argument but there are great difficulties in applying the Soviet experiment to this country. For one thing, that experiment can be applied only by a ruthless dictatorship. It is only dictatorship that can move vast masses of people from one occupation to another. The world has not had full reports of what has happened in Russia but millions of people have been shifted from one corner to the other, to the remote Siberia and the Urals. Can any one believe that if there were any democratic or free Government in Russia, people would have agreed to be

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moved about like pawns? No. Before India can apply the Soviet experiment, she must also instal a ruthless dictatorship.

Supposing she does it, can she get the same results? No, because Russia started with less than half the population and more than six times the area and probably 20 times the mineral and other resources of India. Even a dictatorship cannot achieve in India such spectacular progress as in Russia. In such circumstances, should this country sacrifice the freedom that has been won in order to achieve a comparatively limited economic expansion in a shorter time?

Between these two horns of the dilemma, some middle path has to be found and tentatively for the immediate future the Government of India has set before itself the goal of what is called a mixed economy. The meaning of this expression is that the Central and Provincial Governments will be free to develop industries as much as they can. But for the present they will allow private enterprise also to build up industries in those fields which are not considered to be key enterprises. For instance, all railways are nationalised, all motor transport is being nationalised. The Central Government is building its fertiliser factory, it is building its locomotive factory, it is going to build its machine tool factory and the steel and synthetic oil factories and so on. The Government of India has not enough resources to push on with its own plans of national industries. It, therefore, rightly feels that it is a waste of effort to collect the peoples' savings and then hand it over to those who are running the textile or sugar or other industries.

Therefore, the present plan is to let private enterprise run such industries as textiles, sugar or cement and the Governments produce electric power, build up transport and other industries which are essential public amenities. It can be decided later whether even the existing

industries should be taken over. On the whole this is a wise policy though like any compromise, it is bound to lead to many marginal and difficult problems. Even in the case of private enterprise, the conditions in India are not such as to facilitate its easy progress because in other countries, private enterprise was well established before labour became acutely conscious of its rights. To-day India has to start in an infant stage with her workers acutely conscious of their rights. Though the efficiency of labour is very low, the hours of work and other conditions have to be regulated according to modern standards. Let us take for instance the Sholapur textiles. The factory has been closed for many months. In such cases, private enterprise has to call upon the Government to support it when it is in trouble. At times when private enterprise tries to make too much profit, the people call upon Government to regulate it. Thus even in the field of private enterprise the Government has to enforce control in many directions. A careful analysis of the present situation shows that those who want the whole sector of Indian economy to be nationalised and abuse the Government of India for letting private enterprise exist in a limited field and those who are opposed to any kind of Government control and abuse the Government of India for taking over some industries and instituting controls are often the same persons. If one watches the newspapers day by day, one is amused to read that one day the same paper calls for decontrol and after a few days, it criticises the Government of India for the consequences of decontrol. What can the poor Government of India do?

Let us take for instance the sugar problem. The Government of India in response to these critics had decontrolled sugar. It had disbanded all the machinery of control. It had yielded to the popular clamour of decontrol and the people who blame the Government

of India for sugar scarcity and prices must really blame themselves for calling upon the Government of India to decontrol sugar. Especially when a Government which was designed to be a police state, which had no experience except of enforcing laws through the bayonet and the prison is called upon to run commercial enterprises, it is not able to do so very efficiently. There is a cry that all controls are full of corruption and inefficiency. How can one learn to swim unless one gets into the water? How can the Government of India within two years produce a body of Government servants who will manage business enterprise very efficiently, honestly? All this must take time. This is the second dilemma. People are not prepared to take the consequences of the policy they themselves advocate. They want to have the cake and eat it too.

There is a third dilemma. It is regarding the rate of change. Every community produces a certain amount of wealth at a particular time. This wealth is partly consumed and partly saved. All new reconstruction depends upon the amount which is saved. In India, the total wealth which is produced is not sufficient even for ordinary consumption. But unless people save there can be no expansion. The rate of expansion depends upon the amount which is taken away from consumption. India can move faster if her people are willing to suffer greater. She has to choose between present comfort and slow or no expansion or fast transformation with present sacrifice and suffering. If to-day Russia has built up her economy to some extent in some fields, it is the result of terrible suffering imposed on her people during the first two decades of the Soviet revolution. People's grain was taken away from them at nominal prices, afterwards their land. Finally they were compelled to mechanise their agriculture and the surplus labour was drained

away to Siberia and other places. Here one hears of the right of labour to strike but it is a crime to speak of strike in Russia. India is in a much worse position than U. S. S. R. so far as population and resources are concerned. If she wants quick economic expansion, her people must be prepared to suffer. They must say to the Government of India and Provincial Governments: "Take as much as you want for the building up of the future and we of the present generation are prepared to suffer." But that is not the cry here. They do not want to suffer at all but demand that India must advance quickly. It is an impossible prescription. It is a very difficult job to arrive at a satisfactory rate of economic transformation and get the people to suffer and sacrifice for implementing that rate.

There is one other dilemma which the people of India have to face. It is the choice between growing population and prosperity. One wishes it were possible to have together growth of population and prosperity. Given certain conditions every human being can be converted into a great economic asset. India's 300 millions need not be an economic burden but unfortunately in the present circumstances unless she can cry a halt to her population the little advance she can make in the economic sphere will be soon swallowed up by the flood of population. Annually India's population increases at about 3 millions and assuming that  $\frac{1}{3}$  is working population, her labour force is increased by 1 million. Unless at least this million is absorbed in new enterprises, it will add to the pressure on the soil which is already suffering under extreme burden. The cultivated area is less than one acre per head and it is estimated that at least 2 acres per head is necessary for a minimum decent standard of life. Even if through careful planning, it is possible to make the one acre increase the yield as much as is necessary, if

population increases, the acreage available per head will go on decreasing. It becomes a matter of the greatest importance for one century at least to control the Indian population. Unless ways and means of doing this are found, India's population is bound to be a big economic burden and her struggle to increase the standard of life may succeed with small sections but cannot succeed for the people as a whole. Though it is not practicable to put it forward as a serious proposition under the present political conditions, the rationing India wants above all others is the rationing of children. Of course, the idea will not appeal to any one but there should be no surprise if, within ten years, after experimenting in all possible ways to liquidate her economic backwardness, Indian thinkers and workers come to the conclusion that this is the crux of the problem and without some solution to it, all other steps will not yield much result.



## THE STRUGGLE OF IDEAS

**I**ndia has achieved political independence and luckily it has achieved it in a peaceful manner. Unfortunately owing to this very lucky fact, we do not yet realise the full import of what we have achieved. We do not think that something great, something new has happened and that it is our duty to rise to the occasion and be able to do great things which we have not imagined before. For the past many years, history has been in the march. There have been similar periods in the past when history was in the making and there have been many long periods when history appeared to be sleeping. To-day history is almost in a gallop. Reflecting on the events of the past few years, we can see two distinct lines of development. One is the struggle of Continents. Europe has been in the front page of history for the last three centuries. Her contribution to human progress has been enormous. Modern science and invention are largely due to the creative genius of Europe but the energies seem to have been exhausted and through two world wars the vitality of the whole continent has almost come to an end. The star of Europe is setting but at the same time other stars have arisen in

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the National College, Trichinopoly, on 26-1-49.

the firmament. The star of America is in the ascendant and according to reasonable expectations, it is bound to be in the ascendant for another century or two. Far in the East, the star of Russia has arisen. It has emerged in a most dramatic manner and we are inclined to exaggerate its importance. But in spite of the heroic achievements of the last thirty years, Soviet Russia is still in the beginning of her development. To take simply the production of steel, production of motor cars and the production of electricity, Soviet Russia has to fulfil many more five-year programmes and to develop a great deal further before it can arrive at the point at which United States stands today.

Again, going still further East, Asia is rising and in the continent of Asia, India is slowly but surely taking her place. When the Asian Conference met in March-April, 1947, there was an inclination in Europe and America to ridicule it. They thought it was a childish attempt to earn cheap notoriety on the stage of the world as if India were a powerful country. India was then not a powerful country. Even to-day she is not a powerful country but she is throbbing with vitality, with energy and above all with idealism and she and her progress have attracted world attention irresistibly. We have only to reflect on the significance of the Indonesian Conference and compare it with the tortuous proceedings of the Security Council and the general body of the United Nations to see that something new is taking place in Asia and particularly in our own country.

Therefore, we see before us the struggle of Continents. But behind this struggle of continents, there is a far greater and a more fundamental struggle of ideas. The ideas that are struggling before the world may be summed up in the words "Capitalism, Democracy, Socialism and Communism." They are all struggling

among themselves, sometimes in alliance and sometimes in opposition.

Take for instance Capitalism. To-day it has become a word of opprobrium. There is no doubt that it has got many ugly aspects. But then let us just reflect on its achievements. All the material progress which has occurred, all the social progress that has occurred during the last two centuries is due to Capitalism. Can anything achieve so much without some vitality in it, without some profound meaning in it? It is its basis of individual initiative. According to capitalism, the individual is the centre of all social development. Only give the individual free opportunity, give him the facilities, he will create a new paradise on earth. In many ways, in many places, this individual initiative, this private enterprise has created a paradise on earth. Let us not forget that. Go to the city of Bombay or Calcutta. There are many slums, there are many ugly corners in these big cities, but see the wonderful work that has been done. Private enterprise has created both the slums and the palaces. All the big shops, all the big factories as well as the slums and the ugliness are the fruits of capitalism. So, while condemning capitalism and seeking to avoid all the evils it has produced in this world, let us not forget that it has produced great results and we have to make it certain that any other thing which is put in its place will not only avoid the evils but will also produce the results.

Take Democracy. In spiritual significance, it is far greater than all the rest. There is no doubt that if only people stick to democracy, they will gain all their other ends while if they get all other ends and lose democracy, they lose everything. After all what is democracy? Is it not that every time the people will decide as to what they want and how they will achieve what they want? People may not know what they want; they may not be

able to achieve what they want. In the short run, they may be very foolish indeed, they may do things which hurt themselves but in the long run, it is the only principle which will give life to any community, to any country. In the long run every system based on dictatorship, on absolute power, will bring only disaster and disgrace. It is only democracy that will save the people and keep them alive continuously for centuries. Capitalism and democracy have grown together but capitalism has found that democracy is slowly but surely restricting the scope of private enterprise. On the other hand, capitalism has been trying to pervert democracy. In England, the struggle has occurred between capitalism and democracy and finally democracy has won and has put capitalism in strict fetters. The same struggle is proceeding in America. If we reflect on the victory of President Truman at the last election, it will be realised that even in that land of almighty dollar, democracy is slowly but surely conquering capitalism. President Roosevelt's New Deal which has been resuscitated by President Truman got a majority vote, while every newspaper—all the dailies and weeklies—of United States safely predicted the defeat of Truman. It is not Truman that has won but capitalism that has lost. On the other side was the inveterate champion of full-blooded capitalism and it is this capitalism the American people have rejected. There should be no surprise if within the next two or three decades, the United States of America, travels the same road as Britain and comes to the same conclusion.

Let us take the third idea which is engaged in the struggle, *viz.*, Socialism. The idea is simple. All wealth, especially wealth which is being created by harnessing the powers of nature, is essentially social in its nature. It is foolish for any individual or any group of individuals to claim ownership of it and seek to use that ownership to enslave the vast masses of the people

of any country. So far as the idea goes, no rational person can question the soundness of the principle of socialism. But then the difficulties of socialism are no less great. On the one hand socialism has to achieve its ends through the building up of a vast bureaucracy. To-day people speak harshly of bureaucracy. No one can tell what they will say when India has become more socialist than it is when all our industries, all our agriculture are owned by the State and run by the officials; when practically every citizen—man and woman—will consider himself a Government official and act more or less in the manner in which a Government official acts to day. It is going to be a very difficult time. Therefore it is but prudent for even an ardent believer in socialism for India to be thinking as to how socialism can escape the evils of bureaucracy, how socialism can be decentralised, how the initiative of individuals and groups of individuals could be preserved so as to promote the freedom and the growth of the people.

Finally, let us reflect on Communism. In the abstract, it seeks to go one step further than socialism. In fact there is no difference in theory between socialism and communism. Communism says that every one should be given whatever he needs and from every one should be taken whatever he can freely give. This, of course is certainly the ideal state of affairs. But then it goes further and says that no one has a right to think in a different manner and if any one thinks that communism is difficult or impracticable to establish at least in a short time, he is a sort of criminal, that it is legitimate for any one to try to destroy all such people, to uproot all such society which do not believe in communism and that every kind of anarchy, injustice and destruction is legitimate if only it furthers the cause of communism. It is not easy to concede that this is a doctrine which India should adopt. The activities of our

own Communists are based on this doctrine. They go everywhere, they go into the schools, they go into the factories; they do not teach people the science of socialism, the truths about communism. They do not seek to persuade them to accept their doctrine but they want to disintegrate every institution. They want to poison the minds of ignorant people. They carry their propaganda in an insidious manner. They say: "We stand by liberty" and cry out when some one is arrested but they will have no pity in arresting and killing thousands of people in order to establish their own ascendancy. They do not mind sabotage. This is not a doctrine worthy of civilised human beings and this country should reject it.

To-day all these four ideas are struggling. We should boldly and decisively choose democracy and socialism and evolve ways and means of reconciling the various features. It is only through a combination of democracy and socialism achieved through the ways of democracy that India can attain her true place and it will be an India which Gandhiji will bless from heaven.

# DEMOCRACY OR DICTATORSHIP

WITH the departure of the British and the advent of political freedom, the people of India naturally think that their work is over and that the future of the country must be left to the Central, Provincial, or State Governments. It is natural for the ordinary people whom we and our previous rulers did not educate to think in that manner. In fact, the end of foreign rule has merely cleared the ground for the building of the future of this country. It is almost as if we have merely regained the uneven site on which we want to build a house which will give comfort and protection to 300 millions of people. Everyone knows the difficulties if one wants to build an ordinary house and it should be easy to imagine the difficulties of building a house which will feed, shelter and clothe the vast population of India. In many matters, we have almost to begin from the scratch. In terms of things that count in the modern world, the Indian people are still where they were probably 2,000 or 2,500 years ago. Of course when we look at the big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras or even second rank towns like Indore, we see many signs of modern civilisation, but if one merely steps out 10 or 15 miles away into the village and observes the economic and

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the Indore College on 8-11-49.

social conditions of the people, he will find that the whole country is still where it was many thousands of years ago. If it is our desire to keep them in that condition and if it is possible to keep them in that condition, then our problems will be comparatively small, but it cannot be our desire and is it possible to keep the Indian masses in their present condition? If anyone or any Government makes that attempt, it will be broken to pieces. The masses will revolt, and they will be entitled to do so against any attempt to confine the benefits of modern civilisation to a small fraction living in the towns and deny them to the millions living in our villages.

Unless India can make such quick progress that the masses feel that the leaders are fulfilling their pledges, are taking the whole country to a state where human beings can live in decency and comfort, then the title of those who rule will lapse, and the masses will certainly be entitled to look to others who will deliver the goods.

Unfortunately, however, it is not a single problem that is facing the country. The whole world is torn by many conflicts which we cannot avoid. If we can only make up our minds as to the directions in which we move in our attempt to modernise and bring up to date this ancient country, then our progress will be much quicker. On the other hand, if on the threshold of freedom even with our tremendous problems facing us, our country is going to be torn by ideological conflicts, our progress is bound to be slow and probably we may advance a step here and recede a step there so that the net result may become nil.

Let us reflect on some of the conflicts we have to face and the possible solutions of those conflicts. No one should think that these solutions are the only solutions or even the best solutions. It is the duty of every intelligent citizen of India to ponder over them and dis-



cover some other solution if they reject those indicated here. In particular, it is of the utmost importance that the students should be able to think out all the big problems for themselves and come to independent judgments with an open mind. It is only then we can expect them to be strong in their convictions. Otherwise, if they get into the habit of simply adopting the views which may be current, they are likely to be fickle and change with every passing wind.

The first great conflict we have to face is that between democracy and dictatorship. Outwardly, the whole of India is for democracy. If a vote is taken, democracy may secure 100%, at least it will get 99% votes. But this apparent unanimity is rather deceptive. Our people, even our educated people, do not fully realise the implications of democracy. They want democracy, but they want it to function in the manner of a dictatorship. While it is obvious that democracy is the only rational system of Government, that it is the only system which is fit for a civilised people, it is not a natural system. Everything rational has to be acquired by laborious thinking and effort. It is easy for a people to obey dictatorship, it is easy for dictatorship to come to quick decisions on mighty issues, erect big buildings and start big industries without any loss of time, but democracy cannot function in that manner. It has to consult public opinion at every stage, it has to observe many checks before it can sanction any project. It has to undergo the scrutiny of experts and it has to go before the legislature. In any democratic legislature, there will always be opponents even against the most beneficent projects.

Therefore, democracy has to function in a slow, methodical fashion. Of course, in the long run, democracy does things better than any dictatorship, because under dictatorship there will not be continuous progress.

It is more than likely that the wise and benevolent dictator will be succeeded by an idiot who will upset all things and the whole country will go back with perhaps greater speed than that with which it went forward. But democracy does not go back. It goes on plodding and plodding till the results become obvious. The only difference between the United States of America and Western Europe was that the U. S. A. formed one continuing democracy while Western Europe was split up into small States with varying allegiance towards democracy. The result is obvious. Though most of the great scientists and the great inventors were born in Western Europe in the recent centuries, U. S. A. has gone ahead of them all and today it stands forth as the patron and protector of Western Europe. That is the long term result of democracy.

It requires a great deal of patience for a people to put up with democracy. The danger in India is that people are becoming impatient of the country's progress. They cannot be blamed for such impatience, but in their impatience, people forget that the means matter much more than the end and try to jump towards the end in some way or other. All students should study this question of conflict between democracy and dictatorship and then come to a balanced judgment as to which they prefer. If they prefer democracy, as they should, then they should take democracy with all its implications and not expect the impossible out of democracy. In the world today, the word "democracy" has become popular, and everyone calls himself a democrat even when he is actually preaching and practising dictatorship. Hitler and Mussolini proclaimed that they were the greatest democrats. There are also other systems which call themselves democracies but would not allow democracy to function.

Now what are the tests by which one can tell a democracy from a dictatorship? It is a big subject and it is possible in a short essay only to indicate the main tests which any intelligent person can apply by himself. The first test of a democracy is that there should be a regular, constitutional method of changing the Government in power. In the case of a dictatorship, the only method of changing is by some kind of revolution, by a violent upsetting of the existing Government. But in a democracy, the existing Government can be changed by some form of election and voting. The second test is that people should have the right to form political parties based on their own principles or on their own ideals. It is no use giving vote to everybody in the country and say 'you may have the vote but you can join only one political party and give vote only for members of that party.' That vote is a fraud and is of no good. No one can say how many or what political parties can be in a democratic country. Experience has shown that democracy functions best where there are two big organised political parties. But that is a thing which must develop naturally. It is not possible by legislation or other means to say that there should be one political party or two or three. In that case, the right to form a political party would be denied. Therefore, if one finds that in any country there is adult franchise, but people have no right to differ from the existing Government and have no right to form political parties, that is not democracy. It is only a concealed dictatorship. The third test is that there should be freedom to hold meetings and criticise the Government in power. These are not alternative but cumulative tests, and where they are satisfied, one may conclude that that country is living under a democratic system. If any one of these tests does not hold good, that country is not living under a democratic system.

These are the objective tests, but no democracy can function unless there is the psychological background in which it can flourish. The psychological background of a democracy must be the love of individual liberty.

Another and even more important requisite is that people must be ready for voluntary co-operation with the Government. If people think that everything should be done through the Government, through its officials and the police and army as in dictatorship, that will not be real democracy at all. For instance, everywhere people complain that there is blackmarketing, that there is corruption. The Government may pass any laws, it may put any number of policemen, but unless people co-operate, blackmarketing and corruption cannot be eliminated. Every citizen must consider it his duty to fight these things, to co-operate with the Government, and when the Government does not do things, he is entitled to criticise and change the Government. Voluntary co operation in all matters affecting public interest should be available in an abundant measure.

Again, there should be a general love of peace and democracy can function only when there is general peace and order.

When there is external war or serious internal disturbance, it cannot possibly function. If there is any political party or group which seeks to achieve its ends through violence or through creation of disorder or other trouble, there should be no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that that group is against democracy.

The tests and the psychological background described above enable us to discover the immediate enemies of the progress of democracy in this country. They are poverty, Communism and communalism. How Communism and communalism are antagonistic to democracy, it is not necessary to elaborate but it should be emphasised that poverty is the greatest of all

these enemies of democracy. It does not matter whether the Indian people get all kinds of luxuries or not. There should be no difficulty in living a comparatively simple life provided the means of living that life in decency and comfort are available, but if the Indian people continue to be in their present state of poverty for a long time, they may become desperate, conclude that democracy is no good and hand over the Government to those who promise quick relief from poverty by any means.

That is the first conflict we have to face. The second great conflict we have to face is as regards the economic system. Capitalism on the one extreme and Communism on the other are growing face to face and no one knows when they may be engaged in a struggle which may end in the destruction of the major part of the civilised world. Any arguments based on the analogy of the U. S. A. or of Soviet Russia are likely to be wholly mistaken in their application to India. U. S. A. has achieved a degree of material prosperity which is hardly imaginable. The income of the transport industry alone in the U. S. A. today is of the order of 10,000 crores, while that of all our railways, airways and other means of communication is of the order of only 300 crores a year. The same proportion holds good in other fields also. In matters like production of steel and petroleum, the proportion is even greater. Naturally the Americans contend that if private enterprise can produce such results then all must accept it. This is the view not only of American capitalists but also of American workers and officials. If there is a proposal to nationalise the American railway, the workers will be the strongest opponents. But the phenomenon of prosperity of the U. S. A. is not due to the inherent virtues of capitalism but to certain historic factors which are not likely to be reproduced in other countries. In the dawn of the industrial era the U. S. A. was a vast continent with a

small population—in the beginning of the 10th century it was perhaps of the order of 20 or 30 millions—and vast resources. The population grew with the growth of modern industrial technique and technology.

The Soviet Union, no doubt presents some analogies which are nearer to India. It started at a late stage. It started as a rural country and through Communist system of Government it has been able within the last 32 years to become a serious rival to many of the industrialised countries and even to the U. S. A. itself. But no one should think that the wealth of the Soviet Union is anywhere near that of the U. S. A. The Soviet Union may have as many aeroplanes, as many atom bombs, even as many guns and as many soldiers as the U. S. A., but if one looks at the houses and their quality, the food and its quality, the clothing and its quality, and other factors like manufacture of motor vehicles, petrol consumption, production of steel, etc., there is no doubt that the Soviet Union is today very very much behind the U. S. A. Many of the European nations like Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland and Norway are in a much better position so far as the things that affects normal well-being are concerned. Also, the Soviet Union started with advantages which India does not possess and is not likely to possess. Its population in 1917 after all the wars was only about 100 millions, it has six times the area of India, and its resources are probably 20 or 30 times that of India. India has 300 millions with an average of one acre cultivable area per head. Even if all the available waste land is brought into cultivation, we may be able to take this acreage to  $1\frac{1}{4}$ , but we shall not be able to reach the average of even  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres per head. Again we are considered to be one of the industrial nations, but the number of industrial workers is only of the order of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  millions. If we put the total number of adult workers

in this country at about 100 millions, the proportion of industrial workers at present is only  $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ . Therefore, even industrialisation will not be able to diminish quickly the pressure on land. Russia could shift millions of her population into Siberia. Can anyone imagine that India will be able to shift any section of her population anywhere else?

Therefore, India has to calculate her resources and the only way open to India is to pool all the resources of Government and of individuals to develop the Indian economy. It is not possible for her to go for a wholly capitalised economy, and it will be disastrous if she does so. It will also end in the death of millions of our people if she tries hastily to upset the existing economy in the hope of substituting a totally new one. It should be the business of the Central and Provincial Governments to develop industries and agriculture by State enterprise wherever they can do so and wherever they cannot do so they should let private enterprise, individual farmers and small peasants, to develop industry and agriculture. For many decades there is so much scope for every kind of agency in this country that to suppress any agency will be a national waste.

The third great problem we have to face is whether we should centralise our activities or decentralise all activities. There are many persons who plead that in the light of Indian history, with all the disintegrating and fissiparous tendencies we want a completely centralised Government, centralised economy and centralised society. On the other hand, there are those who think that centralisation will mean more bureaucracy, more waste and more expenditure. Here again, the advantages of a balanced middle course seem to be beyond all doubt.

# ECONOMIC DEMOCRACY

IT is frequently stated that political democracy will be a dead sea fruit unless it transforms itself rapidly into economic democracy also. At first sight, the demand appears to be irresistible and it expresses general popular sentiment.

Unfortunately, however, the expression "economic democracy" is used in a vague fashion. It is useful to inquire into the main ideas and feelings associated with this expression and determine as precisely as possible the social conditions which may entitle a community to claim that it has secured economic democracy.

The phrase "economic democracy" has been obviously coined on the analogy of "political democracy". It is true that the latter expression also is used loosely whenever any person is discontented with a government he does not hesitate to call it undemocratic, but fortunately, political democracy has three definite criteria.

First, its ultimate authorities who exercise political power should be periodically elected by the people who will thereby have the power to pass judgment on the work of the legislatures and executives and ensure the support of the majority to and limit the period of general unpopularity of such authorities.

Secondly, this election should be free, *i.e.*, there should be no special limitation or compulsion on the



candidates and voters who may be opposed to the existing government.

Thirdly, there should be freedom of propaganda against the existing government and the right to organize political parties with the avowed object of wresting power through constitutional means. If any system fulfils the above criteria, it is a democracy whatever the peculiarities of its constitution may be. If a system fails to fulfil any of the criteria, it ceases to be a democracy.

Is it possible to evolve some criteria for the concept "economic democracy"? The first criterion may then be formulated as follows: The ultimate authorities controlling the production and distribution of wealth should be elected by the people who are the producers and consumers of wealth. It happens that this criterion is fulfilled by the ultimate authorities in a political democracy. The parliaments and executives of every democracy have got the power to control and regulate the production and distribution of wealth except in so far as they may be limited by the constitution. Even constitutional limitations can be removed by amending the constitution.

It follows, therefore, that in the ultimate analysis, political democracy and economic democracy are convertible terms. In any real political democracy the economic system can be changed peacefully to any pattern which may be desired by the people.

It is thus not possible to give a positive content to the concept of economic democracy as distinct from political democracy. If we do not want to abandon the use of this rather attractive phrase and yet invest it with some real significance, we should try to relate it to those economic features of society which obstruct the free and rational functioning of political democracy.

The most obvious economic aspect of societies governed by a political democratic system which induces

the people to protest against the mere futility of political democracy is the prevalence of great inequalities of wealth and income. Wealth and income not only give to their owners greater material comforts and greater securities against the vicissitudes of fortune, but they also give them more political and economic power. The vote of a man earning one rupee a day may be equal to the vote of another having an income of one thousand rupees a day, but the latter ordinarily has more power to influence other voters and pull the strings from behind parties and groups who have influence over the voters.

It is true that in modern times organizations of workers and the spread of Socialist ideologies have to a large extent nullified the influence of very rich individuals, but the diverse social, economic and political effects of extreme wealth and extreme poverty are so obvious that a progressive reduction of inequality is undoubtedly desirable.

It is not possible to lay down any rigid rule regarding the permissible range of inequality. On the other hand, it is not possible to establish any society based on arithmetical equality of wealth or income. So long as the economic organization of a society is such that there is a progressive movement from both sides towards the reduction of inequality, it may be legitimately contended that that society is moving towards economic democracy.

Those familiar with the Marxian doctrine of scientific materialism may argue that the test of economic democracy or its absence is the absence or existence of private ownership of the means of production. This ownership, they will say, gives power to a small set of people to exploit the rest of the community and appropriate for themselves a disproportionate portion of the wealth produced by the community as a whole. If private ownership of means of production is completely

uncontrolled and if it is free to reap all the fruits of its exploitation, there is no escape from this argument. But even American capitalism is controlled and taxed. If it is not yet regulated to the same extent as European capitalism, it is due to the extraordinarily favourable circumstances under which American capitalism grew up during the last two centuries. In Europe, which was the birthplace of modern capitalism, the so-called private enterprise is almost as controlled as nationalized industries.

Now the gap between ownership and management by private individuals and corporations and nationalization and other public forms of ownership and management can vary widely. As in the case of inequality of wealth and income, the test of a progressive society is not the actual gap but the tendency towards its progressive reduction. So long as private enterprise has to function increasingly like public enterprise, it can be legitimately contended that the community is moving towards economic democracy.

It is sometimes claimed that the essence of economic democracy is the participation of workers in management. When it is pointed out that the persons who are actually managing any kind of industry or business in its various stages are workers of some kind, it is said that superior officers and supervisors are not included in the category of workers and the advocates of such participation are reduced to the absurdity that industries should be managed by those who are least fit to do so.

Now and then the idea is put forward that there should be an elected committee to supervise and regulate the management of industry. Wherever it has been tried it has broken down. In most modern industries an elaborate division of labour based on training, experience and skill is indispensable and any plan by which the

unskilled worker becomes the dominating element in control or management cannot work.

It may be argued that the workers may be represented in boards of directors or public corporations which have the ultimate control of industries and usually contain a large proportion of non-technical membership. This is worth consideration as also proposals to associate representatives of workers in certain non-technical aspects of management. Participation in profits is another idea which is quite legitimate; but whether labour chooses to get its remuneration through proper adjustment of wages or through wages-cum-share of profits is merely a question of procedure which is not vitally connected with the question under discussion.

The demand for economic democracy derives its basic force from the desire for economic security. So long as the majority of the population have no security against unemployment, sickness and old age, the benefits of political democracy will appear illusory and political power will become a monopoly of the more fortunate economic classes. By evolving and enforcing a comprehensive system of social security Britain has attained a state of affairs in which political democracy can function freely without the perversions produced by economic insecurity.

It is argued that in her present state of poverty India cannot afford to have any such system. I do not agree with this view. It is certainly not possible for India to provide pensions or sickness or unemployment benefit on a scale comparable to that of Britain, but there is no insuperable theoretical or practical difficulty in the way of building up a system of security suitable to her economic condition. In any event, public opinion is bound to force the Central and Provincial Governments in this country to evolve a system of social security before long.

There are many thinkers who consider that the tendency for increasing centralization in the political and economic fields is contrary to the true spirit of democracy. Mere adult franchise becomes nominal and even fictitious when the result of the exercise of that franchise is remote and incomprehensible to the voter. Therefore it is urged that democracy will be real only to the extent that political power is decentralized at various levels so that all sections of the people can gain some direct experience of self-government.

In the same manner it is contended that industry and agriculture should also be decentralized as much as possible and wherever joint action by many individuals or groups is necessary it should be secured through co-operative organizations. I feel that there is a great deal of force in this line of thought, but it has got severe limitations. Even the co-operative movement tends to become centralized and when it seeks to undertake large-scale industry or business it comes to be managed by permanent officials like private or State industry and the ordinary member ceases to have any vital connection with it.

By incorporating all the suggestions indicated above it is possible to arrive at a conception of economic democracy which may suffice for practical purposes. It may be defined as political democracy moving towards a progressive reduction of inequalities of wealth and income and increasing public control over production and distribution of wealth, which is fortified by social security and which holds the balance between centralization and decentralization of production to the encouragement of all forms of co-operation in the economic field.

It may be observed that I have rejected as altogether inadmissible any conception of economic democracy

which is inconsistent with political democracy. It must, however, be admitted that even the developments I have indicated will involve a progressive bureaucratization in the economic field and to that extent undermine political democracy. So long as Government participation in and control of production and distribution of wealth is limited, the opinion of persons not under the employment of Government is the determining factor in political democracy. In fact, employees of Government have been prohibited from becoming members of political parties or engaging in political movements.

But when a substantial percentage of the population has to earn its livelihood by Government or semi-Government employment, society will be faced with the dilemma of maintaining discipline within its bureaucracy on the one hand and ensuring political freedom to all the citizens on the other. It is possible that just as intolerant religion became the enemy of democracy in ancient and medieval times, ruthless scientific materialism may well become the enemy of modern democracy.

If we want to escape political dictatorship as well as uncontrolled capitalist exploitation, or, in other words, if we wish to maintain political democracy and evolve a system of economy controlled and regulated or managed in public interest, we should find ways and means of achieving a balance between the conditions necessary for the preservation of individual freedom and those which are indispensable for eliminating poverty and assuring a decent standard of life for all the people. With her immense population and comparatively scanty resources, India cannot flirt with the idea of plenty for all out of minimum work. It is only through hard work of the entire population that a moderate standard of life can be assured. Progressive reduction of inequality of

income will not be possible unless the richer and the middle class reshape their lives through a voluntary preference for simplicity and avoidance of unnecessary luxuries.

Above all, any large-scale outbreak of violence will kill Indian democracy and at the same time make any economic progress impossible. Hard work, simplicity and non-violence constitute the only sure foundations for Indian democracy—political and economic.

## UNITY IN DIVERSITY

**W**HETHER we consider the future of India, of Asia, of Europe or of the world as a whole, the central problem is the evolution of a practicable system which reconciles the conflicting but urgent needs of enforcing minimum political and economic unity on the one hand while allowing freeplay for social and cultural diversity due to climate, soil, race, religion, tradition and history. Unity in diversity is a formula instinctively accepted by every Indian as an obvious and inescapable objective. It is in tune with Indian historical tradition. The Indian religions, the caste system and the joint family are all experiments towards the realisation of this objective. But they have not been adequate owing to their lack of political sanction.

There have been notable attempts in history to simplify the problem by eliminating one of the two conflicting ideals. Catholic Christianity and Islam in the past and Communism in the present may be described as large-scale attempts to eliminate diversity by the enforcement of unity in the spiritual and material planes. It is largely due to Roman Catholicism that Europe and White America possess such a large measure of unity in



social habits and mental outlook. But the free and liberal thought of ancient Greece and the political virility of the then young nations of Europe resisted this attempt to enforce unity and in the end proved victorious over Catholicism.

Islam was far more successful in establishing unity among its followers. As it spread over a large area, it had no doubt to compromise with local customs and institutions, but it never did so willingly. Its very success made it less progressive than Catholicism and the Islamic world is among the most stagnant portions of humanity today.

Communism began with great professions regarding the preservation of the cultural traditions and freedoms of its communities. But even within the short period of 30 years during which it has exercised political power, it has amply demonstrated that in its inflexible pursuit of a rigid economic system, it has to impose an equally rigid political dictatorship which in turn has necessitated the enforcement of rigid conformity in other matters too to the Communist leadership centred in Moscow.

Attempts to repudiate the ideal of unity and propagate the virtue of unlimited diversity have not been so significant but they have not been wanting. The extreme nationalism of the past two centuries which culminated in the Hitlerian doctrine of the supremacy of the German nation and the analogous doctrine of Japanese superiority may be cited as the most outstanding illustrations of the conscious application of the principle of the survival of the fittest to human affairs. The anarchist doctrine is, in effect, a repudiation of the ideal of unity and it has influenced and still influences many Socialists all over the world.

The most far-reaching experiments in the application of the principle of unity in diversity in the political plane have been Imperialism and Federalism. The Roman

Empire in ancient times and the British Empire in modern times have attempted with a considerable measure of success to establish systems of security and individual liberty over large areas. Rome, starting as a Republic, had to lose its democracy in pursuit of imperialism. On the other hand, Britain began her pursuit of democracy and imperialism almost at the same time and had finally to renounce the major part of her empire in order to safeguard her democracy. The principle of exploitation and racial superiority and compulsory allegiance to a remote centre were fatal to the establishment of a permanent system of unity in diversity by British imperialism.

Federalism is theoretically the only logical method, consistent with the principles of democracy and equality, of achieving unity amongst a large number of communities and groups spread over a large area. Even where the area is small as in Switzerland, it has been applied successfully to keep racial and cultural units together voluntarily. In the U. S. A., it has enabled a vast country to develop its material resources in a most amazing fashion, while fusing widely diverse racial and cultural elements into one organic nation.

It is not surprising, therefore, that India with her vast population, varied soil and climate and wide divergences of language, religion and habits should seek to establish a new freedom through Federalism. But it will not be easy for her to reconcile the dominating need for unity indispensable for her security and economic progress with a no less indispensable need for tolerating and even encouraging the diversities which have come down through the long centuries.

The problem of language is one, for instance, which is going to give considerable trouble for at least a generation to come. In this matter the task of imperialism was much easier than that of federalism. It

is easy for imperialism to impose the imperial language. From the very nature of imperialism, the imperial language is usually better developed in many respects than the languages over which it dominates and is more easily accepted by the subject peoples.

In the case of a voluntary association of free peoples, no such domination is possible. It is also likely that all the languages of the communities which form the population will be more or less in the same state of development. It was fortunate for U. S. A. that the English language should have emerged naturally as the common language. The older federal Republic of Switzerland has had to maintain the equality of its three principal languages, German, French and Italian. Owing to the large number of important languages in India, this solution is not possible while the conditions in which English became the language of U. S. A. do not obtain in this country.

That Hindi is going to be the national language and will in due course replace English for national purposes is universally accepted. But how this is to be done, where and when the process is to begin and during what period the transition should be completed are all matters which require careful consideration. In this respect I would like all those whose mother tongue is Hindi to act with exemplary patience and toleration. Any attempt at coercion or forcing the pace will provoke reactions which will in effect prolong the transition. The only claim for Hindi to be the national language is that it is the mother tongue of a larger section of the Indian population than any other Indian language.

As regards maturity of development and its capacity to serve for modern purposes of higher and technical education, science, industry, law and administration, it is no better than any other Indian language, while from the artistic and cultural point of view, some of the other

Indian languages can claim superiority over Hindi. It is worthy of note that in spite of its being the mother-tongue of nearly half the population of India, Hindi has not produced in recent decades any literary genius like Tagore or Subramania Bharati.

The substitution of Hindi for English as medium of instruction in the Indian universities is not likely to be easy. There are already proposals in various linguistic areas to make the local languages such media. I wonder if the consequences of such a proceeding are fully realised. It would cut away the indispensable basis for recruitment to central services, for co-ordinated scientific development, for all-India standards of legal and scientific precision and terminology and generally for the existence of a large body of intelligentsia, distributed in approximately equal numbers all over the country, who think and write with the same facility in the common national language.

If national disruption is to be avoided and a common plan is to be evolved, by which English can be substituted by the national language without any wound to the self-respect of non-Hindi speaking communities, I think, it is essential that for some time to come, say 10 to 15 years, English should be continued as the medium of instruction in universities and the common medium for legal, administrative and scientific purposes. During this period, an intensive effort will have to be made throughout the country to strengthen and develop the local languages as the principal medium of instruction in the high schools and also to teach Hindi as a compulsory second language. It will be desirable to increase the duration of high schools and lessen that of the university courses. This will enable students whose mother-tongue is not Hindi to attain full development in their own mother-tongues and at the same time give them a sufficient knowledge of Hindi to enable

them to change over to it as medium of instruction in the universities. If, however, linguistic attachments prove too strong to enable Hindi to replace English as the medium of instruction in the universities, I do not see any escape from the establishment of national universities financed by the Centre, which will be the training centres for recruitment to Central Services and for other general national purposes, leaving provincial universities to be conducted through the media of regional languages.

In any case, it is better to proceed slowly and build a proper foundation than to take hasty steps which may cause confusion and conflict. I would also emphasise the supreme need for the Centre to finance the teaching of Hindi in all parts of the country where Hindi is not the mother tongue. If the latter have not only to learn a different language from the mother tongue but also to finance its teaching, the burden will appear doubly hard.

Next to language, the problem of establishing a minimum standard of life for the peasants and workers throughout the country is the formidable task of Indian statesmen, who wish to consolidate Indian unity amidst diversities of climate, soil fertility, rainfall, the existence of rivers, availability of sub-soil water and mineral resources. Here too the only way seems to me to be for the Centre to assume responsibility for evolving measures of social security, including sickness and unemployment relief, old age pensions, etc. Even the U. S. A. has found it necessary to do this and in India, it will be dangerous to leave the poor parts of India to their fate in this matter.

In food, dress, art and other matters, a far greater range of diversity can be permitted without any evil effects but even there, a persistent attempt has to be made to evolve a common background of unity. A common national dress at least for official, ceremonial

and educational purposes appears to me indispensable for fostering and consolidating the feeling of national unity.

It is not possible in the course of a single article to deal with all the problems which free India will have to tackle in her pursuit of evolving a political and economic system based on the principle of unity in diversity. Indian federalism will have to be at the same time more strong and more elastic than American federalism. I hope that our statesmen and our thinkers will be found equal to this task.

# THE ROLE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

THE role of the middle classes is vital in the functioning of the Indian Republic in the immediate future.

Let us start with some kind of rough definition. All groups who have not to earn their living by manual labour but who have to earn their living by some occupation or other may be said to constitute the middle classes. It is only the richer classes that can afford to maintain whole families indefinitely without any earning member. When a middle class family either chooses voluntarily or is forced by necessity to take to manual labour, it becomes one with the masses. It is true that under the great inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi, there has been a notable attempt to bring the middle classes and the masses together. The middle classes have been taught to think in terms of the welfare of the masses. To some extent the peasants in the villages and the workers in the towns have been induced to side with the middle classes. But speaking broadly, it is correct to say that the national struggle was conducted in the main by the middle classes and the Congress today consists of and is led by the middle classes mainly. Not only this, for some time to come, the middle classes are bound to be the principal rulers even under a constitution based

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the Vivekananda College, Madras, on 7-1-50.

on adult franchise. Our masses are still so uneducated as to be incompetent to deal with large problems. It is not only the Congress but also every other political party that consists largely of the middle classes. Therefore, for some time to come, for good or evil, the middle classes are bound to be the rulers of India under the new democratic constitution. There is no doubt that if middle class leadership fails, India will take the fatal road either towards Fascism or towards Communism. We have seen the results of the failure of the middle classes in recent times in Italy, in Germany and in China. In Italy and Germany, the middle classes were afraid of the masses and handed themselves over to dictators. In China, on the other hand, the middle classes became corrupt and selfish; they would not make a constitution with sufficient speed, they would not transfer power to the masses. We know the result. In spite of the great victory it had over Japan, the Kuomintang has disappeared and the Communist leaders have taken charge.

If we are today ready and willing to learn the lessons of history, we should beware. Unless the middle classes of India are wise and foresighted, they may lose the freedom they have now got. Unfortunately, it was not the policy of our foreign masters to educate the masses. They created the middle classes for their own purpose though they found in the later stages of their rule that they had created their un placable enemies. Therefore, there is no alternative to middle class leadership for the present. The history of the last 30 years gives the hope that if only we can nurse and continue the spirit inculcated by Mahatma Gandhi, we may reasonably expect to succeed. The condition, however, of such success is that we should be clearly aware of the limitations of middle class leadership.

Generally, the middle classes are intellectually enthusiastic about change but when any practical



proposal for change comes, they tend instinctively to resist it. It is not because there is something radically wrong with them but the simple fact is that any change in the existing structure of society whether it be economic, social, educational or cultural, affects one or other section of the middle classes adversely. The masses are generally affected only to a little extent and often for the better and the richer classes can stand these changes. If one has followed the proceedings of Parliament of India, one will have noticed that there was hardly any proposal which did not meet with bitter opposition from some members. For 30 years, we had preached from every platform, pledging to the people that the first act of a free Government would be to introduce prohibition. It is fortunate that the Madras Government and some other State Governments have been able to redeem this pledge. At the same time, this reform has been brought about in Madras and elsewhere not with the co-operation of the entire middle classes but in spite of the opposition of powerful groups among them. Take another instance. For the past 30 years, we have given the pledge to the peasant masses that we shall abolish the zamindaris. Even here, owing to the momentum of our national struggle many of the State Governments have been able to redeem the pledge to some extent but it has been in the teeth of opposition from many sections of the middle classes.

The Hindu Code Bill is another instance. It is difficult to see how the Hindu community which is the main community in this country after partition and through whose strength India has to uphold her freedom before an armed world can afford to be disintegrated into castes and sections each of which is regulated by custom and law in its own way. We want to make this country one solid integral nation in which any citizen can go from one part to the other without any

feeling of strangeness. There is no need to question the wisdom of our ancient law-givers. They had to deal with a situation in which no man would ordinarily be expected to go more than 20 miles from his place of residence. They were quite content that within their own little region, people should live honestly. But at present, when one is at Madras in the morning and at Delhi in the evening, can we afford to allow the majority community to be subject to half a dozen different laws according to the place of birth of a person?

This legal disintegration produces a mentality of disintegration in other fields and we cannot escape the consequences. We cannot have a cause without its effect or vice versa. Whether a particular clause in the Hindu Code Bill or a particular chapter is necessary or useful is a matter for special consideration. But how is it possible for really intelligent and even very able and disinterested representatives of the Hindu community to resist the idea of unification, of consolidation, of integration of the community as a whole? But that is what is happening.

Similarly, let us take the controls. We find the middle classes crying for decontrol but they are not prepared for the consequences. That is what happened with regard to sugar. We have got into the habit of saying that the blackmarketeers and the capitalists who sell at high prices should be hanged. This is unreasonable. Each trader acts as a person in a city when the enemy is throwing a bomb. If there is a profit, there is a scramble. If there is going to be a loss, there is a scramble to cut off the loss as much as possible. A single merchant with a ton of sugar thinks that there is scarcity of sugar and the price is going to rise. He naturally hoards hoping that he can make a little more money. After all, what is profit but an attempt to make some more money than one has invested? It is easy to

say that the merchants should consider national interests first but how can a poor merchant, who probably has to pay three times the usual rent for his shop, salaries of staff and other items of expenditure, be expected to put national interests first? If we want decontrol, we must be prepared to face all the consequences. That is to say we must be content that in the long-run competition will see that the prices come down to the economic level.

In this country, the bureaucracy has been developed as a Police State. It knows only to punish people. It has not much experience of constructive work. If we want the bureaucracy immediately to take the question of production, distribution and regulation of prices, it is inevitable that every official should want to send it over to the higher official—Provincial Secretariat, Central Secretariat and so on. Government is not an art which comes to one by birth. We have to learn it. We have had only two years and one should not expect the impossible from the Central or Provincial Governments. Whatever course we take, there will always be some difficulties, and unless we are willing to face difficulties and learn by trial and error, we shall be nowhere.

The present difficulties of the middle classes are so great that they are likely to be overwhelmed by them. If they can only detach themselves from the present difficulties and look at the needs of the nation as a whole, it will not need much argument to come to the conclusion that the present generation must sacrifice itself for the future. Just as we fought for a whole generation to wrest independence from the British Government, we must work, suffer and sacrifice for another generation if we want to create the new India of our dreams. If they are willing to let the present economic, social and other backwardness to continue, the middle classes may think they will have an easy time. Devoted men have to spend days, months and years to build up even small

institutions like a school or college. How difficult, what a great task, it is to raise 350 millions of people existing on the margin of starvation to a level comparable with other modern nations of the world? After all, our resources are limited. Our production is not sufficient even for present consumption. If everybody will have a full meal, there will be nothing left for even clothing or for housing, but because of unequal distribution today it is possible that a section can have houses and clothing while the majority go without their due share of food or clothing.

How can Government build new industries, big dams, electric power-houses, steel mills, machine tools without capital? What is capital? It is only a share of the current wealth of the nation which is taken away from current consumption and conserved for productive purposes which may yield fruit in the future. Therefore, if 25% of everybody's income is to be taken away for future needs, to that extent our present standard of life will be reduced. Is it not strange and inconsistent that people should on the one hand object to increase of taxes, and resist compulsory saving and at the same time complain about the slow pace of economic development? This generation chooses to have soft time. It must be prepared to have a terrible time in the future, perhaps in the very near future.

Another bane of the middle classes is destructive criticism. We do want criticism. By all means, let us expose mistakes. But it is no use carrying criticism to the point of preventing anything being done. This is always the characteristic of the middle class throughout history.

If the middle classes have to succeed in their leadership, they have to overcome these limitations and deliberately go in for things which will, in spite of their own present difficulties, help the country in the future.

Again, the spirit of factionalism and communalism are almost incurable diseases of the middle classes. It is almost a wonder that they could all be united to the extent they were in the struggle against the British Government. We should try to get rid of these features of middle class mentality. It is a very difficult prescription, but there is no other. The middle classes must consider themselves as trustees of the poor illiterate masses and act in that spirit. If they do that all will, be well. India has not got the resources or the time or the historical circumstances which have enabled the United States or Great Britain or Scandinavia or Belgium or Holland to become more or less entirely middle class nations without special efforts. If we want to bridge the gulf between the masses and the middle classes, the middle classes will have to do it deliberately, voluntarily and through a system of planned development comprising not only one field but every field of corporate life—political, economic, social and cultural. In the political field, we have to educate the masses to use their franchise, to tell them that they have got the right to elect whomsoever they like and also tell them how to enforce responsibility upon their representatives. In the economic field, we have to raise their standard of life, if necessary by compulsorily lowering the middle class standard of life. When once we have raised the national standard of life to a reasonable level, the progress of the country will be in a geometric progression and the middle classes will prosper without any difficulty. Today the position is that the middle classes have to prosper at the expense of the masses and we must bring about a change so that all of us may become indistinguishable and may prosper together. That means that we should work in a peaceful, democratic, orderly way towards a classless society. If we do not do that, the classless society will be imposed

upon us by force, by destruction, by large scale massacres. That is what is happening in other countries and we should learn by their experience.

Nor can we think that with political equality and economic equality, social inequality can be maintained. Whatever function the caste system might have performed in the past, it has outlived its time and it cannot continue in the future. Indian society must soon become a casteless and classless society. The only choice before us is whether this consummation is to be achieved by an orderly democratic way or by convulsions and revolutions. If we are wise we shall strive to bring it about in an orderly peaceful way. Violence and revolution will have far more disastrous consequences in this country than in Russia. If there is the slightest dislocation in the social fabric, people will die in millions. We should reflect on what happened in 1943 in Bengal when there was a mere shortage of a few lakhs of tons of rice. Nearly fifteen lakhs perished. If there is economic or social dislocation in this country, the same thing will happen in a greater scale and in a wider area. It is to be hoped the middle classes of India will rise to the occasion, will subordinate their interests, will try to view problems through the eyes of the masses and so act that the masses recognise that the middle-class leadership after independence is as disinterested and as patriotic as it was during national struggle.

## THE ROLE OF STUDENTS

**T**HERE is a threefold tendency among the students.

One section of the students have come to be obsessed about their future careers. It is not strange especially in a country where opportunities for educated people are rather scanty. No student can be blamed who is anxious about his future career, but he should remember that in the long run, individual careers have to depend upon the career of the nation as a whole and, therefore, it is not wise from the point of view of enlightened self-interest to be too much interested merely in one's own career. .

There is another section of students who are eager to play their part in public life of the country. It is a worthy feeling but a fruit which falls from a tree prematurely is likely to be rather sour. So also a student who wants to play a prominent part in public life may find that he is not able to play as much part as he could if he waited and perfected himself.

There is a third section of students who are eager to catch at dogmatic ideas, become obsessed, with fanatical feelings and feel that unless they can transform the whole world into the pattern to which their minds have come too hastily, it is worthwhile to destroy and

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\* This essay is based on an address to the students of the Baring Union Christian College, Batala, on 20-5-1940.

to hate. The students of India should fight all these three extremes and learn to see things in their proper perspective. The main work of a student, especially in his college days, is to learn to think freely, boldly and accurately. The art of thinking is a very difficult one. In fact, thought is the latest achievement in the evolution of the human species and people get very tired when they have to think. It is the business of the university to enable students to think, to think not as other people think but to think freely on their own account, to think not only the thoughts which have been thought in the past or even in the present but to think boldly, to think new ideas, to look into the future and fashion their minds according to the conception of the future and, above all, to think accurately. To think vaguely is easy but to think accurately is very difficult and before the students get out of the college, they should have to learn to prize the value of accuracy in thinking.

Before one can think at all, one must have a background. There are two kinds of thinking which the students will find necessary in their future life. One is general thinking. All kinds of general problems will arise before them: political, social, economic, cultural, spiritual. They may not be specialists in thinking yet they will have to judge for themselves on many problems. For this purpose, it is necessary to have a background of basic general ideas. They will also have to think more carefully and precisely in their particular lines of work and for that, to some extent, though it can be only to a small extent, they will have to familiarise their minds with the methods and data of specialised thinking in those particular fields. The normal work of a student is thus really a difficult one if he takes his career seriously. Once his student days are over, he will never get the opportunity to learn these things. When he gets out into public life, he will always be



carried from post to pillar in a hurry and he will have to manage with hasty thinking and improvised methods of work. Therefore, every student should get the maximum benefit out of his college days. This is particularly essential in the times we are living in.

This is an age when history is moving fast. It is true that history never stands still but there have been periods when it moved slowly. There have been periods when certain sections of humanity were moving fast while others were stagnant or standing still. But to-day the history of the world is moving very fast indeed.

What have been the greatest events of history during the present century? One may be inclined to answer, "the two great world wars and the rise and fall of Germany and Japan." But if we look back calmly and reflect more deeply, we shall find that these were mere whirlpools of the fast moving currents of history and the real events were different. The great events of the present century have been the revolution in China, the revolution in Russia and the revolution in India. The fundamental problems of China, Russia and India have been the same. All the three countries were thickly populated and big countries whose people had to get rid of a hated political regime, had to find ways and means of eliminating poverty, squalor and disease and the uncertainty of life which arises out of them. They had to find ways and means of doing this through applying modern ideas and science to agriculture and industry. All these three countries had also to bring about a social revolution and convert a stagnant, superstitious and hierarchical society into an intelligent, dynamic and equalitarian society. These were the common problems of the three countries and it is worth while to reflect how each of the three countries has tried to deal with these fundamental problems.

In China, the political revolution inaugurated by Dr. Sun Yat Sen was a great and glorious event which was practically peaceful and the ancient regime which had a greater continuity of history than in any other country or in any other age, came to an end almost overnight. It was firmly believed that the progress of China thereafter would be smooth and quick but unfortunately events proved otherwise. Poor China could not benefit much from the great political revolution brought about by Dr. Sun Yat Sen. There have been external causes which have contributed to this disaster. The First World War arrested the flow of economic assistance from the outside world and Japanese imperialism and the assistance which it obtained from the British and other imperialisms also prevented the development of Chinese democracy. The major cause of the failure of the Chinese political revolution was that the political revolution did not develop itself into economic and social revolution. It became arrested and naturally in order to prevent further progress of that revolution a reactionary party sought to find outlets in military adventures.

The Russian revolution was far more momentous. It was perhaps the first revolution in history in which a theory obtained almost complete power to enforce its doctrines. It is rather difficult for any one to speak confidently about the Russian revolution. The material is very scanty for the simple reason that those who have brought about the revolution and have maintained it have managed to keep Russia to a large extent a closed book. One would have thought that after nearly 30 years of revolution, after she has emerged victorious from the greatest war fought in history, Russia would be anxious to throw open her doors, her farms and her factories to all enquirers from outside so that people might come in their thousands and take back the message of the

Soviet revolution to their lands. It is, therefore, a matter of deep disappointment that even foreign Ambassadors in U. S. S. R. could not get free opportunities to visit factories and farms or to go about and speak to the Russian people.

From all reports, Russia has made tremendous advance in her economic revolution. She has transformed her agriculture and built up successful co-operative and large scale farms. She has no doubt built up big industries which are capable of giving her a mighty military machine comparable to other industrial nations of the world; but it appears that Russian revolution has become arrested at the economic level; it has not passed over to the political revolution. To-day democracy seems to have no chance in Russia. According to the Marxian theory, first the Proletariat gets into power through dictatorship and as soon as the economic revolution is complete, the State will wither and all the people will be free. What has happened is that as a result of the economic revolution, the political evils of the old regime have been re-established in a different form that to-day the dictatorship which had all Russia in its grasp in the past has been re-established with even greater severity. During the Czarist days others could go in and Russians could escape to the outside world but to-day no Russian can come out of Russia without the permission of the existing regime nor can any outsider go into Russia without similar permission and no one can report freely. Therefore, all the books that are written about Russia are either propagandist for the Russian claim or almost a blind opposition based on so-called facts which no one had been able to verify and examine for himself but had to gather from all kinds of rumours and prejudiced reports. No one can guess what will happen in Russia in the future but one thing is certain. Unless Russia can shake herself of the present

dictatorship and enable the economic revolution, which has undoubtedly taken place, to pass over into a real political revolution based on freedom and democratic government, her revolution will also become a dead sea fruit. The Russians will again have to go through another political revolution just as the Chinese had to go through a second revolution because their economic revolution is arrested by a mere political revolution.

Now let us reflect on the Indian revolution. It may be said that it is rather a misuse of words to speak of the Indian revolution. Things have happened in India in such a quiet and unobtrusive manner that one may be inclined to say that there was no revolution, that there has been very little progress. But when one looks back at the state of India thirty years ago, one is hardly able to recognise the features of those days; conditions in India have changed so utterly. When we started our political career in 1920, it was the British who dominated the scene and no one expected that our struggle was going to be successful in so short a time. Of course, it took nearly 27 years for that struggle to end with the departure of the British. It may also be true that the departure of the British was due not only to our struggle but also to world events. This is undoubtedly true, but fortunately the thing has happened and the Indian political revolution is complete and it has been embodied in the Constitution of the Indian Republic which came into force on 26th January 1950. A mere political revolution is not enough. Unless the Indian political revolution passes quickly and smoothly into an economic revolution, our political revolution will have the same fate as similar revolution in China and the same forces will arise here also. It is of supreme importance that we should all be thinking of the economic revolution and work actively for it. But

we may not forget the distinguishing feature which characterised the Indian political revolution.

Each of these revolutions has had the impress of its leaders—of Dr. Sun Yat Sen in China, of Lenin in Russia and of Mahatma Gandhi in India. What has been the distinguishing characteristic which Mahatma Gandhi gave to Indian struggle? He gave us many ideas and many methods but the keynote of all is that in life means are more important than ends. It is no doubt necessary to define our ends clearly and to see that our methods are such as to enable us to reach those ends, but once the ends have been determined it is the duty of wise people to concentrate on the means. So long as we keep the means pure and unsullied the ends will come of themselves. To-day after having fought bitterly for the last 30 years India and England stand together as friends. Is it not a most remarkable fact to ponder over?

It may be asked whether it was wise for India even as a Republic to become a member of the British Commonwealth. It is true this Commonwealth includes the rabid racialists of South Africa and the people who believe in White Australia and White Canada. Was it worthwhile to compromise our independence—if it is any compromise at all—and become a member of this Commonwealth? The position was explained in the long statements of the Prime Minister in the Constituent Assembly. There is one aspect on which it is useful to reflect. When nations have had such close association as India and Britain there could be only two developments when they part—they would either come closer on a higher level or drift away from one another. Between alienation and all its disastrous consequences and friendship and all its beneficial consequences there is hardly any middle course. Because her mind had been

obsessed by the British for two centuries India can never become indifferent to Britain and Britain with her long memories of domination over India and of profit derived from India can never forget this country. Therefore the two have to love or to hate and if we are true to our leader's gospel we had no other alternative. So our statesmen who represent the true spirit of Mahatma Gandhi have decided that the only course open to us is to make a serious endeavour to forget all the old bitterness and hatred and substitute love and friendship for them.

We must have the threefold revolution in quick succession—political, economic and social. It is necessary for Indian students to have clear ideas of their priority, as to which is the most important. The economic revolution is urgent and cannot be escaped without failure of the political revolution, but in the long run democracy is more important than economic justice or even social equality though all of them are highly important. Let us contemplate on what has happened in Britain. It was considered to be the citadel of imperialism but owing to the inevitable operation of democracy, it has gone over to socialism quietly and peacefully.

One may think that U. S. A. is an exception. It is not so. There capitalism has developed under such favourable circumstances that for the moment an American worker is better off than in any country in any part of the world. He too does not want any change. But in a few decades, things will change and U. S. A. will have to follow the British lead. It is thus true to say that democracy is the first essential but it must be used for economic justice and social equality. Unless we can do so, our revolution will also be still-born and will not give us the fruits we want.

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