DISTINGUISHED ACQUAINTANCES

(Volume Two)

Prof: **N. G. RANGA**

DESI BOOK DISTRIBUTORS
VIJAYAWADA-2 HYDERABAD-29

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PREFACE

A nation-wide debate raged between 1885-1945 among Progressive Patriots as to priorities for national services, that is, social justice, social equality and reconstruction versus political freedom and economic nationalism. Those who preferred the first set of priorities fought against untouchability, child marriages, dowries, ghosha and for equality of rights for women and advancement of people of all under-privileged castes. Those who preferred the second set of the priorities fought for achieving political liberation of India.

It was unfortunate that many of the rival protagonists of these highly desirable national objectives of equal urgency which should have been considered as complementary used to accuse each other as counter revolutionaries because of the competitive choices made by them. Political exigencies perhaps made such a rivalry inescapable.

Mahatma Gandhi came to stand on the equi-distant, almost common ground between them. He felt that India's political subjection was so greatly due to her social reaction and economic degradation. But he realised that unless and until political freedom could be wrested from British imperialism, an avalanchic and effective social revolution could not be launched. He knew that genuine efforts should be made to place political revolution upon the rails of social reconstruction. Hence the great stress he laid on Constructive Programmes including campaigns for anti-untouchability, khadi and village economic reconstruction, emancipation of women, peasants and labour and communal equality and harmony. So many like me who hailed from the under privileged peasant and proletarian masses and who could better visualise the comprehensive need of India for all embracing or total revolution have ranged ourselves on the side of Gandhiji and conti-

nued to work whole-heartedly for both social revolution and political freedom. A few like me who were impatient against the economic oppressions perpetrated by feudalism and industrial exploitation tried to broaden our political revolution by developing kisan, mazdoor, Kalakar struggles against their exploiters; so Gandhiji blessed our ideal of democratic kisan mazdoor kalakar Buddhijivi (K.M.P.) Raj.

We know now after nearly 30 years of political freedom that because of our failure to concentrate on social revolution and reconstruction and protection of self-employed economy so passionately desired by Gandhians, self-respectors, and Ambedkarites, Indian masses continue to be "garib" (poor) almost in every sphere of life. Swaraj has come to mean so little to the Harijans, Depressed Classes, the illiterates and ignorant and superstitious masses. At long last, it is being realised by Government also that the poverty of our broad masses and their age-long social degradation can be removed only by waging a relentless war for social and economic liberation.

The emergent youths and ebulliant students of the second half of this Century are witness fortunately to the rapid liberation of all countries from World incubus of imperialism and colonial exploitation. They have however to come now to grips with the national demons of suppression of their broad masses, that is, by the local reactionary elements, social and economic, religious and political and exploitation of rural masses.

In meeting this awe-inspiring challenge our youthful revolutionaries will find much inspiration, and helpful milestones in the heroic sacrifices and daring social experiments made by our myriad revolutionaries of the past half a Century. The study of the lives and travails of social and political workers at all levels, who have been working in these directions would be most useful. It is with this belief I am presenting these tributes of mine to some of our public-spirited good men and women.

I was myself encouraged to embrace public work and service of the people at large by Sri Jampani Anjaneyulu, of my village, Nidubrolu, an educated, patriotic, far-sighted and self-respecting peasant of very small means to emulate the noble examples of Swami Vivekananda, Ramatirtha, Gandhi, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Gokhale, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Veeresalingam. I was inspired by Anjaneyulu's talks about the self-sacrificing services of Saivite and Vaishnavite Bhaktas. So I made my debut into public work in 1917; through our efforts to encourage rural parents to send their children to schools, to organise rural libraries and to collect funds for paying school-fees for rural students from poor families. I began tasting the heady and invigorating political work by demonstrating our protest against the internment of Mrs. Annie Besant by British Government for her demand for Home Rule for India and by collecting signatures of our peasants in support of Congress Manifesto to the then Secretary of State, Edwin Montague.

Ever since many an inspiring opportunity has come to be vouchsafed to me during my public work in this Gandhian era to gain much moral strength from my contacts with the great and good sons and daughters of Mother India who have been struggling and suffering for the liberation of her peoples from social and political bondage.

I have been striving, even as I was imbibing their spirit of self-sacrificing public service, to appeal to ever widening circles of youths to emulate their examples of service — in the way of Buddha and Gandhi — to suffering humanity. To write about their public careers and their inspiring efforts to uplift our masses has been one of my means to canvass the educated youths to embrace public work in a self-less and heroic manner and that has been my part-contribution to adult education. This book continues that adult educational service.

IV

There seems unfortunately to be a post-Independence trend among our students and youths towards giving much less of themselves to self-sacrificing social services than to their self-regarding careerism. They should realise that there is as great a national need for their self-sacrificing services to salvage our masses from economic poverty and social pestilences. The achievement of our national freedom, has brought to the fore, much more insistently the long neglected social and economic needs of the suffering masses. To remove the age-old social disabilities of the toiling masses has become the condition precedent for any worthwhile national development. To salvage the backward and socially depressed masses at the grass roots from the economic and social polio is an inescapable national duty. To help their children to emerge as full-fledged students and youths without any of the painful birth-marks of caste-system and economic exploitation is a primary national dharma. The task of clearing the socio-economic frost and sowing the seeds of economic progress of the toilers in the fields and factories cannot be delayed any longer. To protect and promote the languishing but self-respecting self-employed masses and invite them into full-fledged partnership in the expanding vista of national progress is another sacred function of our resurgent nation. In all such directions, progress can be achieved — ought to be aimed at — through Parliamentary institutions and peaceful means.

Gandhiji, the preceptor of public workers of the past six decades used to consider the services and public life of a village social worker to be as highly valuable and praiseworthy as that of an eminent parliamentarian or powerful Cabinet Minister. It was because he took pains to specially notice and encourage the constructive workers at the grass roots that so many thousands of youths were coming forward to embrace what otherwise used to be not-so-attractive village-level work. It is because post-Swaraj national leaders have been remiss in offering national tribute to the sacrifices involved in the devoted

work of such workers, there is so much aversion, on the part of our youths to agree to work, even on payment of salaries and allowances, as Village Level Workers. No wonder Government has been obliged to accede to their demand to provide for them the so-called dignified title of Village Development Officers, in order to attract our youths to this most essential cadre of social service. I for one have always considered such self-less workers as Achanta Nagaiah, who are content to keep company with the masses at the grass roots and work quietly and persistently for their regeneration and good cheer as my distinkuished friends, in the Gandhian fashion; hence the inclusion of my tributes to some of them in this Volume.

One of my most cherished activities has been to go round to honour such villages and meet their people and leaders and voluntary workers, youths and students as are coming to achieve schools. libraries, roads, culverts, tanks, tree plantation, hospitals, public sanitation and wholesome housing for workers and progress towards Secondary-Grade or High Schools, buildings for Panchayats, schools, libraries, public platforms or open air theatres, electricity connections, Handloom Colonies, House-sites, pucca buildings for Harijans or Girijans, and small holdings for them. It was in this manner, I toured once again to pay tributes to Peraiah of Surepalli, Sreeman Narayana of Govada, Nalla Venkaiah of Swarna, , T. Trivikrama of Angaluru, R. Kotaiah of Chimakurti, V. Bapaih of V. R. Palem, Veeraiah of Chintalapudi, V. V. Subbaiah of Doppalapudi, Panchayatdars of Ipurupalem, Anantavaram, Duggirala, Karumanchi, and Kavur during the weeks around the Sacred Gandhi Birth-Day of 1976. I know this pleases the Soul of Gandhiji. I hope our youths and students will welcome such social service as exemplified by the careers portrayed in these Volumes.

I dedicate this book to G. L. Narayana, M.A. B.L., Freedom Fighter, Kisan Leader and my Colleague in propagating the ideal of democratic Kisan Mazdoor

Praja Raj. We both cherish the co-operation of our brother G. Venkatappaiah during all these decades of our public work.

Sri Kavuri Subbarao of Nidubrolu, Hon. Office-Secretary of Peasants Institute and Federation of Rural Peoples, who had been typist-assistant in the employ of Indian Council of Agricultural Research has typed every word of these volumes of book as well as the equally voluminous and valuable work "Agony and Solace" (Published in 1975) with his sense of self-imposed loyalty to public work. Austere in personel life, unpolitical in village life, he has been voluntarily devoting his time and energy to supplement our work in this manner for the propagation of the cause of democratic kisan mazdoor praja raj.

I am indebted to Acharya P. Rajagopala Naidu, M.L.C. himself a well-known scholar and author in Telugu and C. Amaraiah M.A. (Lecturer, English) who have volunteered to render much editorial assistance. I am grateful to Sarvashree K. Uma Maheswararao, M.Sc.(Physics), Sivarama Krishnaiah, M.A. (English), Principal G. Sreeman Narayana, M.A. (Economics), Ch. Purnachandra Rao, M.A., Census Expert, Social Science Lecturer K. V Pushpa, M.A., K. Gandhirao, B.A. B.L., G. N. Rao, M.B.A. (USA), Editor 'VAHINI' Secretary, Rural Peoples Federation, all associated with the local P.B.N. College and Peasant Institute, who have read through many of these chapters and suggested how they could be so shaped as to serve adult education of our emergent citizen. Sri Amaraiah has prepared the Indices and Errata. I thank the A.I.R., Lok Sabha Secretariat, Bhawan's Journal, Swarajya for their courtesy to let me utilise the texts of a few of these chapters and also the Director of Gandhi Smriti for permitting the reproduction of group photos of Netaji and Jaipur Congress.

INDIAN PEASANTS INSTITUTE, N. G. RANGA
NIDUBROLU. (A.P.) PIN 522 123 D/- 1-1-1977

EDITORIAL NOTES

Rangaji has written in English or Telugu similar sketches and tributes to ever so many other public workers, with whom he came into contact and collaborated in public work. For instance, his memoirs about Lajpatrai, Annie Besant, Shankaran Nambudripad, Mridula Sarabhai, Sapru and Jayakar, B. P. Singh, H. S. Dwivedi, Gayatri Devi, O. P. Ramaswami Reddiar, Pullela Shyambabu, Acharya Narendra Dev, Sreeman Narayan, Poets Jashua, Tummala, Adivi, Mr. and Mrs. Jivaraj Mehta, Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, Jaishuklal Hathi, Nijalingappa, Dr. K. L. Rao, B. V. Sivaiah, Smt. Satpathi, Dr. B. C. Roy, Rajyalaxmi Devi, Srinivasa Ayyangar, Anantasayanam, Y. B. Chavan, C. Subramaniam, Sant Fateh Singh, Srinivasa Sastri, Rukmini Anudale, R. R. Diwakar, D. Barooah, Moturi Satyanarayana, K. Raghuramaiah, B. Gopala Reddi, Dr. Swami Nathan, Master Tara Singh, Conferences and many others could not be fitted into Pattabhi, K. Brahmananda Reddi, World Tamil, Telugu Conferencss and many others could not be fitted into this present series owing to the time-table and other exigencies of the Printing Presses and the straight-jacket of alphabetical order, chosen for presenting these pen-portraits. So the Editors would like to offer them to the public through the third volume.

Since these sketches reveal, besides his thoughts, so many interesting political personal experiences and activities of Rangaji himself, the understanding of their fuller significance can be gained by a study of his books "Fight for Freedom" (Chapters from his autobiography) 1957 and "Bapu Blesses" (talks with Mahatma Gandhi 1925-48; and "Agony and Solace" (his correspondence with Indian and foreign friends between 1935-1972); "Why Ranga Resigned in 1959" and why he "hailed March Revolution" and his dedication to the causes of "Resurgent Masses."

CAUTION

A word about spelling of names, we have not followed any uniform process of spelling names of places, people, as in practice different ways of spelling is in accord with our common usage. For instance, some sign as "Reddi" others as Reddy; Lakshminarayana is also written as Laxminarayana. Postal people write Nidubrole, while local public write "Nidubrolu" for the same place. This variance arises from different ways of spelling names and places in local languages and English.

It would be noted that Rangaji wrote about his friends and colleagues with deep love and intimacy. Hence, he often used affectionate terms such as Bapuji for Gandhi, Netaji for Subash Chandra Bose, Rajanna for Rajagopal, Rajaji for Rajagopalachari, Rafi for Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, and titles such as Desodharaka for Shri K. Nageswara Rao, Desabhakta for Konda Venkatappaiah. Therefore, it is hoped that the reader would find it easy to associate such other terms of affection with the actual personalities concerned. — **(Editors)**

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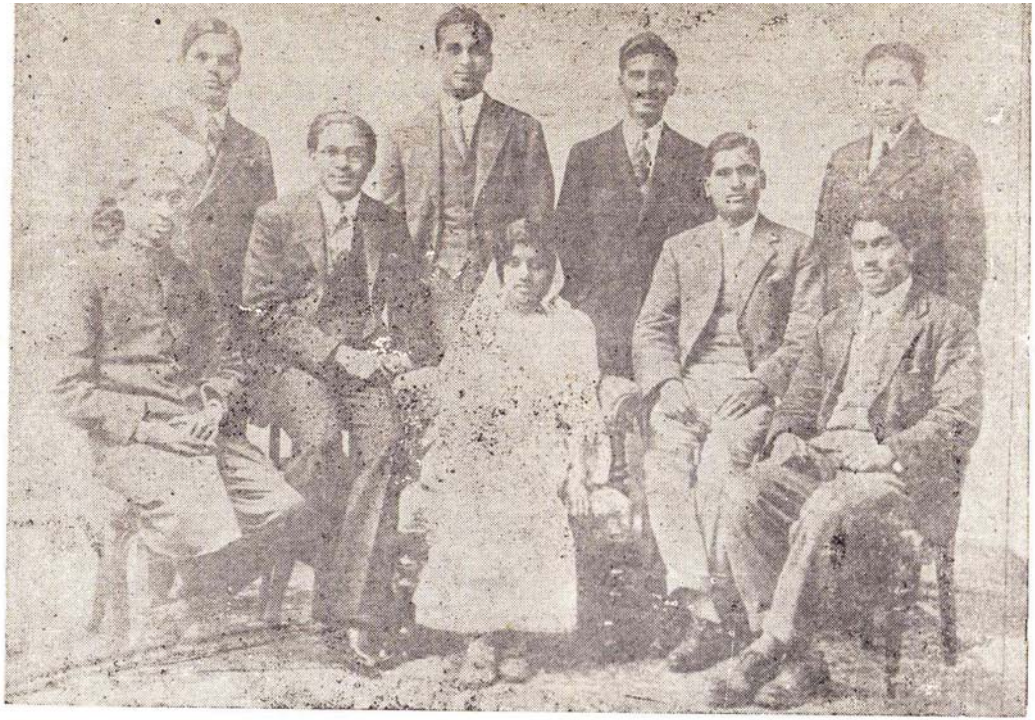
Dedicated to

G. Lakshmi Narayana



with Andhras in Oxford in 1926 Sitting : Sarvasri Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, K. Gopalaswamy (Ex-Registrar, Andhra University) Smt. Bharati Devi Ranga, L.V.B. Chowdary (Income Tax Ex-commissioner) Dr. Murahari (Ex-Animal Husbandry Director)

Standing: Sarvasri O. Pulla Reddy (Ex Defence Secretary, and Vice-Chancellor, A.P. Agricultural University), Late V. S. Krishna (Andhra University Vice-Chancellor) Rangaji and V. V. Chowdary (Barrister)

NETAJI SUBASH CHANDRA BOSE

[Subash Chandra Bose of Cuttack and Calcutta was born on 23-1-1897 in Cuttack, joined Calcutta College in 1913, took his degree in 1919 after moving in Himalayan regions, selected for I C.S., graduated from Cambridge, resigned from I.C.S. and joined Congress through C. R. Das, chosen as Commissioner of Calcutta Corporation with C. R. Das as Mayor, imprisoned as detenu several times in Freedom struggle, Principal of National College, Calcutta, for Congressmen, organised Flood Relief, elected General Secretary of Congress in 1927 with Dr. Ansari as President, pleaded for independence in Calcutta and Karachi Congresses, President of All India Trade Union Congress, elected twice President of National Congress — Haripura 1938, Tripura 1939 —, resigned and founded Forward Bloc, Chairman of left Consolidation Committee of which Ranga was also a member, escaped from internment in 1941 to Afghanistan and Germany and thence to Singapore during war and founded I N.A., himself becoming Netaji, marched I.N.A. upto Manipur, and disappeared in 1945 after taking off by plane from Singapore after the defeat of Axis Powers, gave the slogan "Chalo Delhi" and coined the greeting "Jai Hind".—Ed.]

Netaji is the brightest star among the Constellation of freedom fighters of modern India. He burnt himself, as it were, into ashes so that his hopes for freedom of India could succeed before the embers of these ashes would be gathered by friends. He sprang like a meteor, tore up the clouds of despair, blazened the short cut to Swaraj and hastened to join the myriad martyrs gathered round the feet of Bharat Mata.

Bankim Chandra's inspiring poetic dream of Vande Mataram found its visible culmination in Netaji. Bengal's revolutionaries who made themselves the swords and bombs for her and competed with each other, through their two rival groups found their culmination in Subash Chandra Bose, by the time he emerged as Netaji from the Oceans through the Submarine. The dream of a Poet and impatient love of motherland of Patriots and age-old unap-

peased hunger and thirst of the people for national freedom and the volcanic urge of the Patriots to break out of the chains of Imperialism on one side and self-imposed Gandhian non-violence on the other took the shape of Indian National Army, which hailed Subash as Netaji on foreign soils. They shook themselves free from the British to shatter the last of the imperialist chains and silence the British lions roaring.

Subash Babu was my senior by four years, when we met at the Indian Students' annual Jamboree in Ilfracombo in Devonshire. He was then in Cambridge, as a junior to his brother Sarat Chandra Bose who rose to be a member of the first Indian Cabinet and C. C. Desai, who eventually retired as the senior most Secretary and Ambassador, after Swaraj and I was in Oxford. If K. P. S. Menon was the star speaker, Subash was the handsome, young patriot, both about to cross the portals of the then much prized Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.). He was pleased by my emotional confrontation with Indian Member of Advisory Council of the Secretary of State.

Soon after joining the Civil Service, Subash seriously began to hearken to the enchanting call of Vande Mataram, emanating from the full-threated millions of Patriots all over India, during the non-cooperation era. Just as he had earlier abandoned his studies and rushed to the Himalayas in response to his soul's yearning for spiritual solace, so also now, he decided impetuously to resign from Service and march in step with the patriots in their Gandhian March, with the heart-warming Chittaranjan Das in the lead. The whole of patriotically awakened Bengal gained a special hope through his decision and its leader hastened to invite him to assume the Commissionership of the Premier Calcutta Corporation. Thus by that inspired step, the junior most Civilian was sprung into one of the senior-most Posts of administration, and Subash was placed on the top rung of national leadership by that generous, princely leader, C. R. Das.

From then onwards, there arose in the minds of Patriotic Youths, a sense of rivalry between Subash and the other equally favoured young hero, Jawaharlal Nehru who was the special protige of Mahatma Gandhi. For full twenty years, these two leaders of Patriotic Youths and inspirers of revolutionaries came to play varying roles, sometimes in unison, often, from what threatened to be opposing angles in our struggle for Swaraj. Jawaharlal had to struggle from out of the moorings of moderate Politics of his famous father Motilalji and reconcile his own innate impateient activity, not eschewing violence with the Gandhian urges and all-enveloping coils of non-violent approaches. Subash could never reconcile himself to Gandhian Passion for non-violence as his body and soul were inextricably planted and plumbed into the Bengali cult of violence, as the sacred weapon of Kali Mata, the Mother India. Unfortunately for Subash, C. R. Das passed away too soon. Gandhiji gained supremacy even over the Politicals of Bengal and he placed the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee into the hands of his rival Sen Gupta. British Government, knowing him to be its inveterate enemy externed him for years after the Karachi Congress (1931).

I met Subash again at Karachi Congress. We had prolonged discussions. He was bent upon "No-Compromise" with the Round Table Conference and complete independence here and now and I was supporting the Gandhi-Irwin Pact being implemented. He agreed with my plan that Swaraj India should assure fundamental rights to all toilers and honourable place for Peasants and Workers. We both avowed our faith in Socialism and I stressed Guild Socialist approach for protecting peasants and he promised to examine that. The Patriotic delegates from Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab who witnessed that friendly debate came away with a sense of satisfaction with Subash's stand.

But Subash's proposal for complete independence which found such tremendous support at Calcutta Congress

in 1928-29 despite the last minute defection of Jawaharlal from their Republican Platform, could attain only tiny minority vote in Karachi Congress in 1931, owing to the rise in the stock of Gandhiji and the new sense of confidence of approaching success gained by the millions of Patriots who took part in the soul-uplifting Gandhian Salt Satyagraha Campaign of 1930-31.

That comparative isolation of his group proved to be the signal for the British to again incarcerate and later extern Subash. For years he remained on the European Continent, spending most of his time in Vienna. During that enforced exile, Subash busied himself with building up contacts, with the rising political leaders of European countries. He met the then most powerful anti-British dictators, Mussolini and Hitler and sought their support for India's struggle against British imperialism. Thus he achieved in his own way, a world-significance for India's cause. In the meanwhile, Congress ministries were functioning in majority of the then Provinces demonstrating how they could alleviate the conditions of the masses, if only Swaraj could be achieved. He wrote his book on the Indian Revolution and expressed, once again his faith in the need to utilise both Gandhian and other means to gain freedom.

We were then in touch with each other through our mutual, non-political friend, V. S. Krishna, my Oxford co-student who was then preparing his thesis for doctorate in Vienna University and Subash evinced active interest in the development of the Kisan Movement and obtained my writings on the subject. When later the Kisan Congress staged a demonstration of kisans of Bengal under my Presidentship in support of their demand that the Congress should dissociate itself with the permanent settlement made with Zamindars by Lord Cornwallis more than hundred years ago for their "Rent Collections", Subash was impressed how our kisan front was able to win the mass support, almost independently of the Congress leaders on one side

and Communalists on the other. So he cultivated our comradeship and continued to retain our support for his moves against imperialism — such was his dynamism.

Jawaharlal was completing the second tenure of successive Presidentship of the Congress. Gandhiji's immediate followers among the top leadership were persuaded by Gandhiji who kept his ear close to the feelings and urges of the youths to invite Subash to the Presidentship of the Congress. Jawaharlal who had some talks with Subash during his previous European tour and who did not have too much objection to Subash's indifference to Non-Violence agreed with Gandhiji. Subash was allowed by the British to come back. He presided over the Haripura Congress Session in Gujarat and both Sardar Patel, the Gujarat Chief and he were reconciled to each other. Subash displayed special preference to our Kisan platform, welcomed our Kisan March and embraced me most affectionately, as if the two long separated brothers found themselves again.

During that period of his Presidentship, Subash succeeded in organising the National Planning Committee, conceived after the fashion of Soviet Planning and Tennessey Valley Authority of U.S.A. under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal but he was not himself invited, even as a matter of courtesy, by Jawaharlal to become an ex-officio member of that Committee. Through that far-seeing initiative of his, Subash prepared the people for the eventual need for planned socio-economic development of Swaraj India and laid the foundations for the Planning Commission and its Five Year Plans, however defective and unsatisfactory they have come to be and for whatever they are worth.

The Presidentship of the Congress was at that time the highest place of honour, power and mass leadership and to gain and retain it was the biggest ambition of our national leaders, Jawaharlalji gained it four times by honourable but sedulous efforts. No wonder the supporters of

Subashbabu gloried in his re-election despite Gandhiji's opposition and were most unwilling to let him resign from it even when Gandhiji declined to accept his re-election. But he prized and needed that highest position of power and honour only so long as it would aid him in whatever policies and programmes he considered essential for fighting British Imperialism and in gaining independence of India.

Subash knew that the Second World War was soon coming. So he wanted Congress to keep its powder dry and be ready to take advantage of that inevitable holocaust and funeral of imperialism to forge the freedom of India. The ministry-mad Congress leaders and anti-fascist and pro-Soviet youths, who were brought into close collaboration with Communists, during the World movement against Fascism looked askance at Subash. But the anti-imperialism of the masses impelled both Indian Communists and nationalists to combine with Subash, in defeating Congress Establishment and electing him again as Congress President for Tripura Session. When suddenly and stunningly Gandhiji came out openly against Subash re-election, after he was declared elected, the majority of Congressmen again swerved in favour of Congress Establishment. Communists played the opportunist role of exciting Bose-Partisans into irrevocable revolt and eventually leaving them in the lurch and the Congress Socialists preferred to play the neutral and Kisan Congressites like myself, Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, Indulal Yagnik were alone left to stand by Subash besides his Forward Bloc and other personal followers.

Once he felt convinced that the approach of "Responsive Co-operation" of the Congress 'Old Guards' would come in the way of India's struggle for complete independence, he found no use in the Congress Presidentship. So he resigned from that highest place as easily as he had resigned from the Indian Civil Service, two decades ago. His unique sacrifice of even that great position inspired the youths all over the country. He came to Madras soon after that historic move, and more than a lakh of people gathered

on the sands of the expansive beach to render their homage to him. I had the honour of Presiding over that mammoth gathering. Keeping in mind how the Congress leaders were contemplating even the unprecedented move to expel him and so many of us who were so closely associated with his anti-imperialist moves, the Veteran Congress Ex-President Srinivasa Ayyangar congratulated me for having so boldly come forward to accept their call to preside over that demonstration. In reply I said, the time had come for all to respond to Subash's call to 'Do or Die' as it were and to contribute their mite to buttress the 'Himalayan Courage' displayed by Subash Babu in daring both the British Imperialist Masters and the more powerful Congress leaders and thus save us from the repetition of "Himalayan Blunders".

Subash was a highly sociable political leader. He would go out of his way to cultivate political friends at every level and maintain their friendship. He had a special gift to organise groups, link them together and keep them active by periodical instructions and programmes of activity. He proved to be a highly skilled organiser and Party Chief. He was extremely loyal to his comrades and political friends and used to risk much in order to protect them. Much of his troubles with the Congress Establishment at the Centre and in Calcutta arose out of his blind support of many of his friends.

On two special occasions, he stood by me. When some of the Andhra Congress bosses were trying to press the Working Committee to take action against me for my Kisan Campaign against the violence of Zamindars and Gandhiji was asked to finally decide the issue, it was Subash, the President, who put in a word with Gandhiji on my behalf.

On another occasion when Gandhiji himself mistook my defiance of the internment order of the Government as my lead to workers to start national struggle, before Congress decided upon it, Subash Babu came forward to correct Gandhiji's impression. He said that neither Ranga

nor himself had any idea of starting any campaign at that time, independently of Congress and Ranga was entirely justified to defy Government's provocative and insulting order. "Ranga's defiance of Imperialism ought not to be mistaken for defiance of Congress". Prakasam was the only other leader who sustained my stand.

Subash's sense of comradeship was so lively and ever inspiring. When he was entering the Madras office of our Telugu Weekly "THE VAHINI", he exclaimed "Oh, this is the revolutionary factory of Rangaji". While addressing that great gathering in Madras in 1939 he expressed his satisfaction that "Rangaji has already made his contribution to this struggle by foregoing membership of Congress Working Committee. His brother Comrade Lakshmi Narayana, once General Secretary of All Bengal Students Conference, is now standing trial, as the first fighter to brave the terrible Defence of India Regime." After the meeting was over, he rached me to the Central Station and sent his congratulations to my brother for offering our non-official but non-violent defiance to the British Raj. Such gestures, displayed so spontaneously, on so many occasions all over India have gained for him the hearts of myriad youths and students.

He wished to be loyal to India and its greatest leader Gandhiji. If however he had to follow such means, as were at variance with Gandhiji's, in order to achieve freedom of India, he would abandon Gandhiji's road, even while hailing Gandhi as the supremo. That was not to the liking of Gandhi and Congress Establishment. So he was obliged to resign from Presidentship; and he was ultimately hounded out of the Congress and he was obliged to found the Forward Bloc.

Subash was the most dynamic and resourceful leader of that age. So he overlooked the unsatisfactory roles played by Socialists, Communists at Tripuri and invited them also, together with us, his loyal allies from the Kisan Congress into the Left Consolidation Committee (L.C.C.). When he found that the only aim of Communists was to

exploit that L.C.C. in order to drive all others into jails or underground and get themselves exhausted and then seize power, with the aid of Soviet army which was expected to rush into India at the appropriate juncture, he had no hesitation to dissolve the L.C.C. and abandon the plan to start the struggle, independently of the Congress. It was at that heart-rending stage, imperialists stepped in and clapped me, Swamiji and Subash in jails.

Jawahar preferred not to come to a head-on collision with Gandhiji. So he did not approve Subash's defiance of Congress Establishment or its irreconcilable opposition to Subash. He did not wish to join the new Working Committee constituted by Rajendra Prasad but would continue to co-operate with it. Thus he skated successfullly on thin ice but with his reputation tarnished and with attenuated following among the youths, and managed fortunately to remain in the top rung of progressive national leadership, associated with Gandhiji.

It was at that cruel turn of events that Subash decided upon his last desperately patriotic metamorphosis and proved himself as the most implacable enemy of British imperialism and fight it by any means, from any platform and with whosoever offered to help him.

He managed to be released for home internment, quietly escaped out of the country, under disguise, reached Europe via Afghanistan and then moved to Berlin and met Hitler. Then he metamorphosed himself as Netaji and concluded alliances with both Hitler and Mussolini, just when they were marching from one great military victory to another and British, French and Dutch imperialism was on its last legs and Asia was throbbing with desperate hope of revolt and revolution. All that romantic story of Netaji's emergence after the riskiest journey by submarine from Europe to Singapore, as Netaji of the Indian National Army (INA) and his achievements through the I.N.A. has been related by many authors in several volumes.

Netaji created in miniature, the rival government of India, with its Bank, Mint, Foreign Affairs Service, Defence Forces and thus fired the imagination and ambition of Indian masses, through his own Radio Broadcasts. The British Broadcasts, radioed with the object of fighting the influence of the mere existence of his rival government also awakened Indian masses to the influence and significance of his deadly challenge to imperialism.

Netaji thought of the possibility of his I.N.A. not achieving the ultimate goal of liberating the whole of India and so he took the precaution of appealing to Indian masses to remain loyal to Gandhi and Congress and fight from their end, while he would be doing his best to promote the cause of national liberation from his end.

Netaji put up as good and proud a struggle with the governments of Japan, Germany and Italy for the recognition of his government, the extra-territorial Citizenship rights of Indians and their loyalty to his government, irrespective of their geographical residence as Gen. De Gaulle had done; sometimes more successfully and often with better grace. While most of the European Governments in exile were content to have their habitats in London, Subash made liberated Indian island of Andamans his habitat, though INA had its offices in Singapore — a point of great significance for the freedom of action for his government.

The extraordinary success achieved by him in that diplomatic sphere and the administrative structures he developed in such a short time under these extraordinary circumstances and the deployment of the I.N.A. forces, their provisioning, arming and combat-leadership during those trying times make many a veteran soldier-statesman wonder how much greater would have been the progress of Swaraj India, if only Netaji had lived long enough to provide leadership to our Swaraj Government. But all such wishes are unfruitful.

One cannot but wonder at the twist of the fates of India, if one casts his mind over what happened in 1920 and

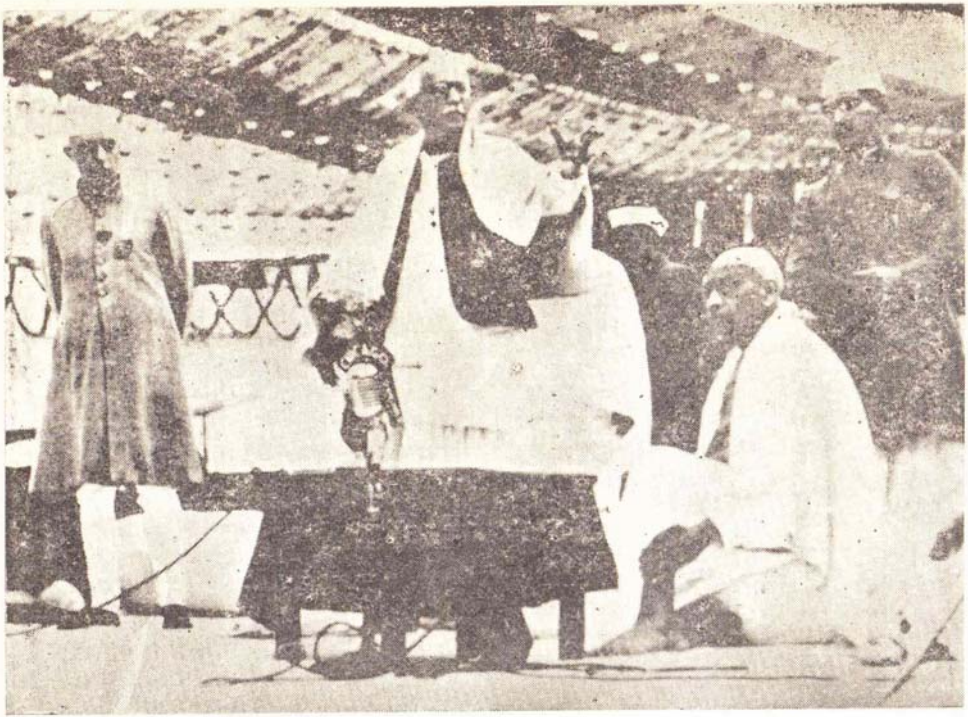
again in 1945. In 1920, Tilak and Gandhi were the two rival giants, whose followers were rivalling with each other for supreme leadership of the national movement. Suddenly Tilak was snatched away by unkind death and Gandhi led the Indian struggle as the unrivalled supremo. Similarly Subash, the Netaji, was consumed by Agni and Jawaharlal came to be the unrivalled Prime Minister for 18 years. Ireland was not so happy and De Valera could become the national leader only after Michael Collins was killed; Soviet Russia had to drive Trotsky into exile to pave the way for Stalin.

Why did Netaji decided upon his final aerial abode ? He knew that such a terrible but celestial end would have to be met by him, when he was leaving his beloved motherland in 1941. It was certainly in keeping with Indian heroic tradition of Johar. He knew that Japan was soon going to surrender; the Axis Powers of Europe were frustrated and the I.N.A. was also doomed. He did his best to reach India mainly with Indian forces. He regained in the name of Free Indian Government, hundreds of square miles of sacred soil of India. He did not allow Japanese forces to bomb or destroy India or Indian people. He could not win, without as spontaneous uprising of Indian masses as had happened in 1942 in the wake of the arrival of Japanese forces in South East Asian Countries and that could not come to pass, owing to the growing downfall of the Axis Powers all over the World. So he had to offer his supreme sacrifice; what he had already decided upon and he was embraced by Agni Deva, as per his own wishes. Did he die, some wonder; certainly he might not have died in his bed. Where is the place of his last seconds, some cry. There is not even an inch of ground that was favoured by him because he joined the elements while in the embraces of Vayu Deva. Could he not come to us, bewail many a sincere devotee. He is a part of our Bhumi, Akash, Vayu, Jal, Agni and thus envelopes us as affectionately as the Bharat Bhumi, that we touch every day.

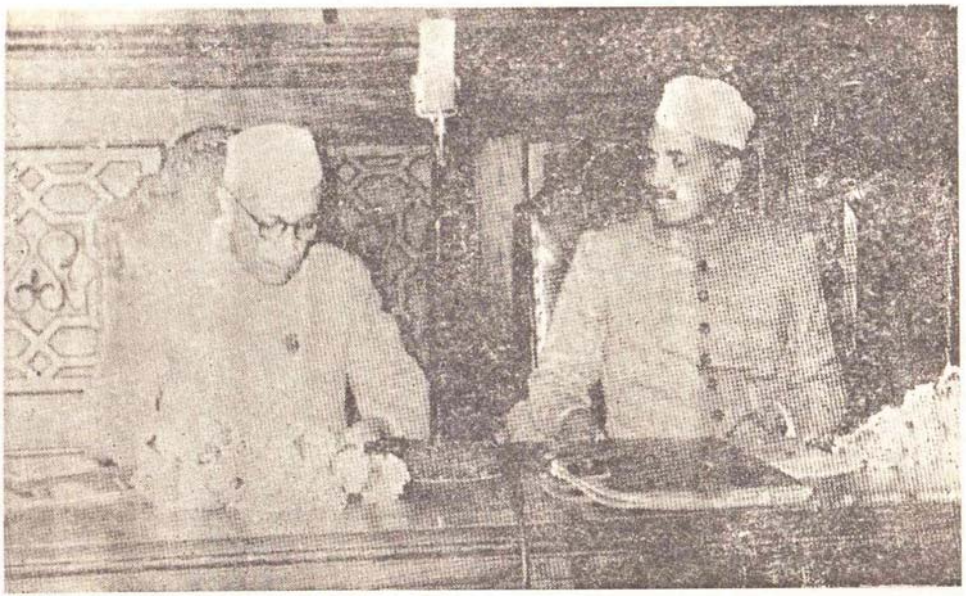
Netaji triumphed in regard to the I.N.A. too. However much Gandhiji was wedded to non-violence and the Congress and Jawaharlal protested their horror of Fascism and Nazism, they could not but respect the overwhelming passionate feeling and fascination which surfaced from our masses in 1945-46 for the patriotic contributions made by Netaji and the I.N.A. So when the British arrogantly staged a trial of the I.N.A. Gandhiji directed the Congress leaders to organise their defence. Jawaharlal felt proud to join the defence advocates and Bhulabhai Desai, the brilliant Congress Lawyer and former leader of Congress Party in Central Assembly led their phalanx and declared in the tones of Netaji, as it were that "to fight for National Freedom against imperialist masters is no treachery but the Supreme duty of every patriot". The acquittal of INA officers, sounded the moral triumph of Netaji and his posthumous political triumph followed, when Jawaharlal was sworn in as the First Prime Minister. And Swaraj India has come to hail though only in 1972-73 the I.N.A. warriors as her Freedom Fighters entitled to pensions and national honours. Some notably, Shah Nawaz Khan, Col. Raju, were offered places in the Central ministry, a few were appointed as Ambassadors.

To those of pitiful politics, who dare to declaim Netaji for his association with the Fascist Powers, our answer is that he coined, breathed life into and consecrated our everlasting national greeting to our motherland "JAI HIND" but did not copy the Nazi salute "HAIL HITLER". Even proud and powerful Jawaharlal found it inspiring for himself and for all of us to hail that salubrious salute and greet our people in the Netaji's fashion "JAI HIND". India is today proud of having had Subash as its leader, Netaji as its camphor of patriotic sacrifice, jasmine of service, champak of beauty and mandara of sweetness and Chrysanthemum of Sarat Chandra. Gandhiji condoled his noble mother and India, the mother of mothers on the Swargarohan of that Patriot of the noblest order.

H. V. Kamath, M. S. Aney, Shankarlal, Subhash, Acharya Ranga, Thevar



At the Jaipur Congress Session :
Pandit Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, Dr. Pattabhi, Lal Bahadur and N. G. Ranga



Rangaji with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru at the All India Kisan Convention in 1950

Swami Sahajananda, Subhash, Acharya Ranga, Bottliwala
(Back Row) H V. Kamath, Shankarlal, M. Annapurnaiah,
Sheelabhadrayajee

ORISSA'S LEADERS

MALATI NABAKRISHNA AND DEOs

I met Smt. Malati Nabakrishna Chowdary for the first time in Karachi at the time of the Congress Session in 1931. Shri Gopala Reddi and myself went to the Orissa delegates camp to see her as she was ailing from fever. Shri Reddi told me how she, himself and her husband Nabakrishna were fellow students in the famous Santiniketan of poet Rabindranath Tagore. Both of them offered Satyagraha a number of times and suffered incarceration for years during our national struggle. She has since risen to be one of the senior leaders of Orissa and her handsome and soft-spoken husband achieved national leadership.

Both husband and wife have been Socialists of the Jayaprakash stamp for the past forty years. They were the chief architects of the Congress Socialist Party of Orissa but when some of their Colleagues tended to depart from Gandhian standards of comradeship and public life, they left it. Temperamentally Malati was inclined to opt for Subhash Bose's tempestuous opposition to the British and Nabakrishna was inclined to move with Gandhians but both of them managed to march with Jayaprakash's mild-moves behind Jawaharlal's centrist Congressism. They co-operated with me in the Kisan movement in its early stages, that is 1936-40 and their then colleague Surendra Dwivedi helped me in developing the Orissa Kisan Congress. They played an active role in the Orissa States Peoples Struggles during 1938-40 and helped Sarangadhar Das (later an M. P.) and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan to develop the Satyagraha of the peoples of Dhenkenal and Rangpur and other States.

Though they departed from Gandhian group of Congressmen of Orissa, they continued to practise Gandhian

standards of public work. Malatiji has organised the famous Social Service Ashram in Angul for the uplift of tribal people after giving up active politics. Nabababu was dragged into the Assembly Politics and his presence in it was found to be highly uplifting, dispite the power-oriented Gandhism of the Chief Minister and ex-Governor Shri Mehtab and amoral politics of his opponents. At one stage the Congress Politicians who got tired of the demoralising competition between different groups of Congress Legislators, persuaded Nabakrishna to accept the leadership of the Congress Assembly Party. When he assumed Chief Ministership and guided the State for a few years, he tried to infuse some degree of Gandhian atmosphere into Orissa's public service. But he got tired of the thankless task of keeping peace between the wavering and rivalling groups and resigned from Chief Ministership. He was the first to have had that distinction of voluntarily surrendering the much prized Chief Ministership; the only other person to achieve the same distinction being the late Kamaraj Nadar.

Nabakrishna decided to join Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan Yatra and Sarvodaya movement and found himself once again besides his good old friend Jayaprakash Narayan in that sphere of service.

Malati, on the other hand got tired of controversial politics, after having warmed up Orissa's public life for decades, as one of the storm petrels. She has always been a more vigorous and dynamic worker, with a greater zest for political struggles than her husband. Their mutual comradeship has been one of the romances of the Gandhian era of politics. She never could tolerate the amoral group-wise politics of so many powerful Congress leaders of Orissa and so, she used to propel her soft-footed and conciliatory husband into leadership of one or the other group. He did not have any stomach for such fights and so, they made peace with each other by himself going into Sarvodaya and herself retiring into the Angul Ashram.

The kisan leaders of Andhra enjoyed very pleasant comradeship with them both. Whenever the kisans of Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts called them to come to their aid, during our numerous Satyagraha struggles, they used to come and campaign for us. Even during our election campaign, whether within or without the Congress-fold, they used to come to our rescue.

Many an Orissa Congressman has reached National Stature after Swaraj but none could achieve the stature of these two good patriots. Another Chief Minister of Orissa could attain the same level of integrity, that was the late R. N. Singh Deo. Yet another Orissa Chief Minister, within the Congress-fold who remained equally honest throughout his period of power was my good old Colleague, on the Kisan and Congress fronts. He was the veteran Biswanath Das. But none could equal Nabakrishna for the degree of self-sacrifice, patriotic services in the national struggles and in gaining and retaining non-controversial State-wide political leadership for more than forty years.

It used to be a pleasant topic of discussion among public workers of the East Coast, as to who is better, bigger or more self-sacrificing, as between this memorable couple, Malati and Naba Babu. Some who loved dynamic and dare-devil ventures opted for Malati. Others who preferred Gandhian softness towards political opponents preferred Nabakrishna. I used to love them both. They were indeed a credit to both Gurudev Tagore and Gandhiji. Their politics was not of Santiniketan's lotus-contemplation. They both love the masses and they are living, even in their old age, as the champions of Gandhian ideals of public service. They are indeed a couple of heroic order.

DEOs AND PABITRA MOHAN

Deos of Orissa were the strong pillars first of the Ganatantra Party, founded by the former Congress leader Godavaris Mishra, ex-Minister and next of the Swatantra

Party of Orissa. R. N. Singh Deo is recognised as the senior of the two and both of them are closely related to each other and powerful associates and competent political leaders. P. K. Deo is more dynamic and has greater flair for organisation while R. N. Singh Deo is politically more stable and considerate towards Colleagues. Both are good parliamentarians with adequate powers of expressing themselves; P. K. Deo being more emotional, Singh Deo more keen on weighing his thoughts as well as words. Both of them proved to be loyal and comradely colleagues of mine in the Swatantra Party. Shri P. K. Deo was good enough to dedicate to me the volume of his speeches, called "TURBULENT FIVE YEARS (1962-66)".

Singh Deo proved to be an efficient and conscientious parliamentary administrator, whether as Minister or Deputy Chief Minister or Chief Minister in different Orissa ministries over a period of 15 years. He earned a good name for high political integrity and fine judgment. He displayed excellent team spirit and capacity to get work done by his ministers as well as Civil Service and kept the whole of his ministers above board. I felt grateful to him that while we worked together, myself as the national president, himself as the Chief Minister within the Swatantra Party, he brought good name to the whole of the party and thus set an example to other Chief Ministers.

Alone among all Chief Ministers during Swaraj India, he was dynamic enough to abolish land revenue and many local imposts and thus fulfilled our pledge to peasantry to relieve them of those vexatious burdensome and ancient taxburdens.

He demonstrated his extraordinary capacity to get the best out of the Civil Service in the extremely efficient and timely relief campaign organised during the disastrous 1968 cyclone. I was struck by the honest and sincere services being rendered by all cadres of the administrative staff, and felt as if they were in the Ramakrishna Mission.

I could see that they desired only the commendation from Singh Deoji for their good services to the distressed.

Singh Deo is a gentleman to his finger-tips and so, he abstained from pursuing his political enemies, even when and where all he needed to do was to leave them to their fate. He believed in tolerance towards political opponents. Unfortunately they did not appreciate his charity and he did not repent for his broad-mindedness. In the end, he succeeded in extorting their admiration and co-operation in bigger crises. When wild allegations were made against him, within the first year of his Chief Ministership he hastened to invite a judge to investigate and was fortunate enough to gain a complete vindication for his actions. How one wishes that other Chief Ministers could be half as scrupulous and honest.

P. K Deo had become the leader of the Bharatiya Lok Dal on the strength not only of his wing of the new party in Lok Sabha but also because of his valuable experience and competent role he played over 15 years of membership, leadership of Swatantra Party in one session and Deputy leadership for years. He is industrious, scholarly and persuasive as a Parliamentary speaker. He knows how to take the fullest advantage of the parliamentary facilities for projecting opposition's challenges. He is able to approach and win the co-operation of other fellow oppositionists. Though he was born and bred as a prince, he has become parliamentary-minded so much so that he put others at their ease by his democratic approaches and thus gained their comradeship. He realises the need to march with the times and play a constructive role in this new era. He is indeed an asset in Parliament. Latterly, he has chosen to become an Independent M. P. in view of his disillusionment with the failure of opposition party politics.

He has travelled extensively all over the world, made many friends among democratic leaders of the world dur-

ing the sessions of Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences and has emancipated himself from his traditional conservative moorings.

PABITRA MOHAN PRADHAN

It speaks volumes for R. N. Singh Deo's integrity and capacity to gain the confidence of like-minded honest public workers in other political parties that no less a freedom-fighter and anti-princely people's champion than the venerable Pabitra Mohan agreed to join him as the Deputy Chief Minister in the Coalition Ministry of 1967-70. Pabitra Mohan broke with the Congress and its post-Swaraj adventurist leaders mostly on the score of their amoral politics. He fought against the princely order, working with me, Nabakrishna Chowdary, Sarangadhar Das and Surendra Dwivedi and his role in Dhenkenal struggle in 1939 was heroic. He was a Minister in many a Congress Ministry and his very name and his public career were by-word for honest service for the masses. Such an arch-democrat and honest Gandhian worked with Singh Deo as his chief for three years, overcoming periodical attempts by his party leaders and several MLAs to break away from Coalition. Both these friends, the one an ex-Prince, the other a man of the masses by origin and life-mission have worked together and proved the feasibility of achieving democratic leadership by consensus.

Both the Deos co-operated with me and the Bharat Kisan Sammelan in our struggle against co-operative farming and the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution which sought to destroy peasant holdings. They mobilised the Oriya Kisans in support of our Postcard Protest Petition against that amendment and rejoiced with me when the holdings of peasants below the ceiling levels came to be exempted from the operations of that anti-peasant amendment. They supported me in the Swatantra Party when I hailed the social control of banks and quietly seconded my

hope that the nationalisation of banks might come to help our peasants. I stood by them, when they refused to allow Orissa's rice from being snatched away by the richer consumers of Bombay and Calcutta by the offer of so-called free-markets' high prices. They protected the local Oriya foodgrain producers by assuring them remunerative prices and adequate supplies to local consumers at reasonable prices.

They and their comrades among the Princes have yet to march a long way in order to gain the confidence and comradeship on equal basis in social and political spheres and merge themselves in the truly mass-wise leadership. Yet they have grown to be good democrats of the liberal approach. They have genuine love for the tribal people, though they have yet to inspire their leaders to gain sufficient self-confidence and assertive capacity to espouse their tribal causes without being propped up by princelings. These two eminent parliamentarians, the Deos, were far-sighted and forward enough to accept Sardar Patel's advice and led the way in 1946-47 for all other princes in merging their States in the Indian Union. Death snatched away Singh Deoji all so suddenly in 1975, just as he was about to make as good a contribution to this new era of Garibi Hatao, and Srimati Satpathi, his successor as Chief Minister, rushed to Bombay to pay homage to his memory, on behalf of Orissa Congress Ministry, a tribute to his popularity.

OXFORD INDIAN ACQUAINTANCES

I had many acquaintances among Indian Students at Oxford between 1920-26, but only a few have come to be associated with me in my public career in India during the past half a century.

K. P. S. Menon, R. K. Nehru, both of the I.C.S., the former very much my senior and the latter my contemporary, rose to be the Secretary-General of the External Affairs Ministry under Jawaharlal Nehru and as member of the Parliamentary Committee for that Ministry or as Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Party, I had occasions to come into contact with their work and felt proud of their achievements as administrators. Both of them became expert advisers on China but their advices could not help us to stave off the 1962 debacle and the collapse of the China-India Bhai-Bhai one-sided offer of friendship. They served also as Senior Ambassadors. K. P. S. has also distinguished himself as one of our famous writers.

A. V. Pai, I.C.S., a good friend of Oxford days served Swaraj India as Secretary and retired as Principal Secretary of Rashtrapati Rajendra Prasad.

D. S. REDDI

D. S. Reddi, who was my senior and President of the Indian Majlis at Oxford, rose to be the Director of Public Instruction, first in the Madras State and later in Andhra Pradesh. He was good enough to promote the establishment of many high schools in my Guntur District. What impressed me most about his career was the bold manner he challenged in the courts the fiat of the Chief Minister to terminate the tenure of his Vice-Chancellorship of the Osmania University. He won in his defiance by the judge-

ment of the Supreme Court which sustained his tenure to which he was elected. That was indeed befitting an Oxford intellectual.

DR. DESHMUKH

Dr. P. R. Deshmukh was at Oxford for his Ph.D. studies in Sanskrit. He was an intimate friend of H. M. Patel. We both co-operated with each other on kisan front. I had the opportunity to send him on behalf of the Rural Peoples Federation to the Food and Agriculture Conference at Washington and that led him on to become Minister of Agriculture. He founded the Bharat Krishi Samaj and organised the World Agriculture Exhibition for the first time in India. He proved to be a great friend of kisans.

H. M. PATEL

H. M. Patel, I.C.S., was my senior, and Mrs. Bharati Devi and myself and V. S. Krishna, L. V. B. Chowdari came to entertain great hopes for him, as he was rising to be one of the ablest senior Secretaries of Free Indian Government. In settling how the officers and equipments, etc., had to be divided between India and Pakistan, he played a highly responsible role and he served India efficiently. He emerged triumphantly out of the unseemly Mundra episode created by T. T. Krishnamachari, the powerful and favourite Cabinet Minister of Jawaharlal, thanks to his scrupulous and courageous exercise of his privilege as Secretary of the Ministry by placing his separate notations whenever he disagreed with or had doubts about the decisions or advices of the Minister. I felt proud of him especially when he refused to rejoin the Government as full-fledged Senior Secretary, after he was exonerated by the Public Service Commission, as a quiet protest against the powerful Prime Minister, who had failed to remain impartial during that unhappy period of enquiry into the doings of the Minister

and his high officials. So I prized his decision to join me and Bhailal Patel of Vallabha University in comradeship in the Swatantra Party. His election as the President of the Gujarat Swatantra Party in succession to the famous Bhaikaka was noteworthy. Eventually he was elected as an M.P. in 1971, when almost the rest of us of the opposition parties were defeated. His name is indeed a by-word for high integrity.

BHASKARARAO

Bhaskararao, I.C.S., was my senior like his contemporaries, V. Ramakrishna, Vellodi, Vijayaraghavan, Shahbuddin, the I.C.S. probationers from South India. They came to Oxford in 1920 along with more than 50 post-war nominated members of the I.C.S. Bhaskararao and Ramakrishna, both I.C.S. probationers from Andhra, were inmates of the Elms Farm, just opposite to my residence in the Elms Lodge, across the high road in Botley, the suburban village. They took intimate interest in me, L. V. B. Chowdari and V. S. Krishna, who had gone to Oxford without having taken our degrees in India, unlike others and who needed sponsors for being permitted to appear for the entrance examination, i.e., Responsions. Bhaskararao introduced me to the Censor (Principal) of the St. Catherines Academy and got me permission to appear for the Responsions. He had a flair for Western ways of life. He welcomed L. V. B. Chowdary as his protege since he too was keen on adapting himself to be a Roman while in Rome. Yet, he was good enough to teach me how to don Western dress in a tolerably fashionable manner.

Later he became an efficient Collector and earned great popularity among all sections of people by his democratic ways and liberal administration. He used to take pride of the fact that throughout all the political crises caused by the Congress through Satyagraha campaigns, he saw to it that the political rebels were treated, strictly

according to both the governmental and Satyagraha codes, and no politician ever had any grievance against him.

Eventually he came to the first Rajya Sabha, as an Independent and was good enough to join the Krishikar Lok Party of which I was the leader and told Chairman Radhakrishna that he was glad to accept Ranga's leadership because he had grown to be the national leader.

L. V. B. CHOWDARY

L. V. B. Chowdary graduated from Oxford in Jurisprudence and was qualified as Barrister. He served as Income Tax Officer and retired as Assistant Commissioner. After retirement, he has been making original contributions on many contemporary social and rural problems and they are hailed as path-breaking contributions to Telugu literature. He has been a discerning patron of fine arts, notably paintings and has been a member of the Andhra Pradesh Lalit Kala Akademi. He was also a member of the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi for 5 years. Bharati Devi and myself have cherished our friendship with him and V. S. Krishna for all these decades.

L. V. B. Chowdary and K. Gopalaswami, another contemporary Oxonian, appreciated the Western culture much more sympathetically than those of us, with nationalistic reservations. So, Chowdary wrote a fine monograph in English entitled "Reflections on the West". about the European outlook on life, their sense of discipline, their practical altruism and social benefactions despite their individualistic philosophical attitudes. It was appreciated when parts of it was published in the Triveni in 1928 and when it was finally published in 1972. Gopalaswami, his kindred spirit, wrote introduction for it as is quite natural. It was dedicated to me, the Gandhian, as if to warn me that despite all our anti-imperialist passions, we should continue to remember how much of Indian renaissance was due to the impact of the West upon Indianism. Bhavan's

Journal of Munshi has published extracts from it, for the benefit of Hindu-minded modernists. Chowdary has broken new ground in autobiographical writing through his book entitled "SWAVISHAYAM" (My Own Affair) in three volumes. Contrary to one's impression that the life of a government officer has nothing or so little to interest society, or literary people or sociologists, Chowdary has demonstrated how culturally fascinating the narration of day-to-day life and thoughts of an officer could be made through such gifted writing. Unlike most of Indians and so much like the Western writers, L. V. B. has painted in words without inhibitions, so appetisingly and excitingly about the practice of art of living, through friendships and culinary excellences and pleasures of dining and entertaining and pains of frets and frowns of gourmets and friends. What K. P. S. Menon, Karaka and Kushwant Singh have done in their English writings, Chowdary contributed to Telugu writing with much more success and with equal grace. The poems and life of SRINATHA, the renowned Telugu-Sanskrit scholar, poet and uninhibited lover of "good life" of the 15th century comes to one's mind, while reading this autobiography of Chowdary.

He has fallen in love with agricultural work and milk production and cattle development. He was responsible for having a veterinary hospital, milk production and collection centre in his village, Pedasanagallu, Krishna District. Thus he exemplified Gandhiji's exhortation to all the educated to "Go Back to Villages".

GOPALASWAMI

Gopalaswami was our junior at Oxford, though he had already taken his degree in Madras. He is the son of Sir K. V. Reddi Naidu, the famous Justice Party leader. Both father and son are good speakers. Reddi Naidu served India as our Representative in South Africa. Gopalaswami inherited his father's flair for public platform

but could not concentrate on public work. He served as the elected Registrar of Andhra University for over a decade and later, as Principal of the First Grade College of Kavali. He has been a leading member of the Andhra Lalit Kala Akademi.

V. S. KRISHNA

V. S. Krishna who took his M.A. in Modern Greats and K. Gopalaswami who took M.A. in History in Oxford have both served the Andhra University, as Vice-Chancellor and Registrar respectively for more than ten years. Krishna was my fellow student in Oxford for five years. We shared common interests in university extra-curricular activities. We both belonged to the Labour Club, I was a frequent speaker in the popular university union and he was my supporter in union activities. L. V. B. Chowdary and Gopalaswami were more intimate friends of each other and used to play notable roles in the Cosmopolitan, Asiatic and Lotus Clubs. I used to entertain great hopes in Krishna as a possible public worker.

But through the influence of Ramakrishna, I.C.S., Krishna tried his hand in Banking and Zamindari Administration before becoming a lecturer in Andhra University. He rose to be the Professor of Economics, after taking Ph.D. in Vienna, the Centre of Continental Economic Research. While he was in Vienna, he helped me to be in touch with Subash Babu, then in exile and he did not mind the risk involved therein. Both the Vice-Chancellors of Andhra University, Radhakrishna and C. R. Reddi, appreciated his quiet, steady and competent management of his faculty and students and therefore reposed their confidence in him by helping him to be elected first as Registrar and eventually as Vice-Chancellor.

Krishna was not eloquent. But he was a wise director of research, clear and sensible exponent of all the vary-

ing approaches to contemporary economic problems and his conclusions seemed to be plausible and his suggestions practicable. So he was popular with the M.A. students and respected by researchers and fellow lecturers.

His real mettle began to surface after he became Vice-Chancellor. He proved to be the most efficient and popular Vice-Chancellor and continued to enjoy the confidence of both the teaching members of the faculties and students in and outside the campus. Those were the times when tempestuous disturbances were the order of the day in most of the North Indian universities. The Education Ministers in Delhi used to admire Krishna with his 13 years of Vice-Chancellorship and Laxmanaswami Mudaliar with as long a tenure for the peaceful and scholastic atmosphere prevailing in Andhra and Madras universities, thanks to their statesmanship. Krishna's work was ably complemented by his more versatile and eloquent colleague and Registrar, our mutual Oxford friend Shri K. Gopalaswami.

The pre-Independence era of Vice-Chancellors, whose convocation addresses used to set the tone for the political tempo of Indian intellectuals gave place to the post-Independence phase of Mudaliar's and Krishna's administrative management and research guidance. In this new phase of rapid increase in the number of universities by tens in every decade and even more speedy increase in students by tens of thousands, universities have come to need Vice-Chancellors who are abler administrators than speakers. Krishna proved to be a great success. He maintained co-operative and mutually harmonious relations with all members of the faculties — a none-too-easy role, whatwith the rising communal and regional forces vitiating the social atmosphere in lecture and science halls and in hostels and on sports fronts. Gopalaswami supplemented his work by engaging the attention, stimulating the interests and humouring the tempers of students who are interested in fine arts, poetry, club life, and such other

extra-curricular but highly useful university environmental interests and activities. Thus these two fellow Oxonians have made their unique contributions and built up an enviable reputation for Andhra University and also for Oxford dons.

Krishna was fortunate in his marriage. His wife proved to be a loyal companion. When he was suffering from a weak heart, she nursed him most affectionately.

When Krishna was pressed by both Dr. Deshmukh, the first most successful Chairman of the powerful University Grants Commission and by Shri Mali, the Central Education Minister to accept the Chairmanship of that Commission, his wife advised him not to undertake that onerous responsibility. But all those concerned in Central Government were very particular that only Krishna had the requisite qualities of impartial attitude towards rival claims of universities and different research activities for priority, for recognition and funds and the much needed imperturbability in the face of powerful pulls. They felt that he was best fitted to maintain high reputation achieved by Dr. Deshmukh. Dr. Krishna agreed with great hesitation. Before assuming Chairmanship of U.G.C., he donated to Andhra University his personal library worth Rs. 50,000. He reached Delhi with his wife and worked for a few weeks as the Chairman of U.G.C, Alas, his heart failed him and he collapsed on to the table of the Minister for Education Shri Mali before whom he was sitting and discussing. Thus passed away full of honours, my very close associate in Oxford for years.

His wife has devoted much of her wealth in the Dharmic manner of an Indian wife, to the development of two colleges, one a Government College in Visakhapatnam and another, a private college in Rajole, her home town, both dedicated to the memory of Dr. Krishna.

O. PULLA REDDI

O. Pulla Reddi was the one Andhra who came to Oxford after being selected for the I.C.S. through competitive examination held in India. He made a good friend for all of us. He used to take much interest in Indian Majlis. Pulla Reddi distinguished himself at first as a highly successful Corporation Commissioner of Madras, when the dynamic Satyamurti was Mayor. He proved to be efficient as Chief Secretary of the State and Secretary of the powerful Defence Ministry in Delhi. After retiring he laid the foundations for the Rajendra Agricultural University, Hyderabad. We have been friends throughout and he was good enough to welcome my repeated returns to Parliament, in opposition to the then all-powerful Jawaharlalji, as I was espousing the cause of kisans, which is dear to him and his self-employed kisan parents.

PALLIWAL, S. K. D.

Shri Krishna Dutt Palliwalji was one of the stormy petrels of U.P. politics for many decades both before and after the achievement of Swaraj. He started his political career as a disciple of the great martyr Vidhyarthi of Kanpur. He was an excellent writer in Hindi and his style was so individualistic and his humour was so caustic and his dynamism in Hindi expression was so effective and infectious that he became a terror to both friends and foes in public life. He used to be one of the principal supporters of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and he was however chosen by Ballabh Pant as one of his principal ministers after Swaraj, so indispensable he grew to be in U.P. Congress power-bloc.

Palliwalji was the President of the U.P. Congress Committee during the stormy years of the last national satyagraha and made great contribution to our national struggle during 1940-45. He went to jail so many times

and was found to be in the vanguard in many a famous struggle. His wife too went to jail. She was a good friend of Smt. Bharati Devi. Palliwalji was as effective a speaker in Hindi as he was a powerful Hindi writer and his speeches in Assembly and more so in public meetings were highly popular and effective.

Many a time he proved to be his own enemy. He was impetuous and passionate in espousing the causes he chose to propagate and he never counted the cost, so much so that some of his friends exploited his loyalty to them, without going to his rescue, whenever he found himself in trouble. He was a tower of strength to Shri Ballabh Pant and served as Finance Minister of U.P. for years.

Palliwalji started life as one of the "have-nots" in politics. By the sheer force of his personality and the great fund of goodwill built up by him by his sacrifices and services, he was able to collect huge funds, start the Daily Sainik and run it for decades against great odds. On many an occasion he had to forfeit securities demanded by Sir Malcolm Haily and other Governors but he never counted such losses in his fervent pursuit of patriotic journalistic services in the cause of the country.

Palliwalji, Mohanlal Saxena and myself shared the unique feat of going up the steps up to the top of Parliament House (then, of the Central Assembly), and bringing down the Union Jack, and then facing the ire of Sir Abdur Rahim, the Speaker. Mahatma Gandhi was pressed by the Viceroy to persuade us to say that our action was non-political. But neither Palliwalji nor Mohanlalji would agree to ask me to yield to the Viceroy's suggestion; such heroic fighters they were. So we came to be known as the irrepressible and unflinching trio of Swaraj fighters in legislature. Our colleague Mohanlal Saxena served Swaraj government as Central Minister for Refugee Rehabilitation and helped Nehru in facing that terrible social challenge, posed by the aftermath of partition.

Palliwalji always had great love for kisans. He espoused their cause against their exploiters, the powerful talukdars, the British authorities and sahukars of U.P. It was the beneficent side of his personality that brought me into close comradeship with him. We both were members of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1935-39 and he used to help me in the peasant group of MLAs. It was then that he invited me to edit the special kisan issue of the famous 'Sainik'.

When I founded the Krishikar Lok Party in 1951, he was one of the first set of eminent leaders to join it. Later he formed the Gram Swaraj Party. When in 1959 Rajaji founded the Swatantra Party and I became its founder President, Palliwalji was good enough to merge the Gram Swaraj Party in the Swatantra Party with the co-operation of the patriotic and famous Congress leader, the late Pratap Singh of Mankapur, who was then its Deputy Leader and thus reinforced our efforts to create a self-reliant, liberal opposition to the all powerful Nehru and his dictatorial leadership. Shri Charan Singh, the U.P. Kisan leader who opposed co-operative farming resolution in the Nagpur A.I.C.C., January, 1959, could not join us in opposition.

One of the greatest events in the political activities of both himself and myself was the unique presidential procession organised by the Reception Committee of the All-India Swatantra Convention held in Agra in 1961 and welcomed by tens of thousands of the people of that ancient city. Palliwalji was hailed as their own hero by the people of that city which witnessed many such great processions, during the many centuries of its glory. It was acclaimed as the greatest procession in the democratic times and in the life of that city. The city honoured itself by naming its biggest public park as "Palliwal Park".

It was during that session that the Swatantrites declared under the inspiration of Rajaji, their determination to abolish land tax, if and when they came into power. Palliwalji hailed that declaration as a part fulfilment of our dream. He lived long enough to learn that the post-1967 Government in Orissa headed by his Swatantra colleague R. N. Singh Deo abolished the Land Tax. His nephew, Prem Dutt Palliwal, has risen to be a valiant leader of youth movement of U.P.

He rejoined the Congress, when its leaders invited him back in 1968. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha, when he died.

PANT, GOVIND BALLABH

[Govind Ballabh Pant of Lucknow was born in 1888, in Nainital; advocate; MLA of Central Assembly in 1934; satyagrahi in all Congress struggles from 1920; Chief Minister in U.P. 1936-39, again in 1947-54; Member, Constituent Assembly; Home Minister in Delhi between 1954 and 1961; Member of Congress Working Committee from 1937-59. He was a trusted colleague of Gandhi, Rajaji, Sardar and Nehru. He died in harness in 1961..—Ed.]

Govind Ballabh Pant, the Deputy Leader of Congress Party in Central Assembly, championed the financial interests of India as a whole and distinguished himself as a powerful critic of the budgetary policies and programmes of the British India Government. Shri Avinashilingam Chettiar defended the interests of Indian industrialists as against their British counterparts and protested against the rising tax burdens on them. I used to inveigh that it was only a Police government which neglected social duties of civilised government, and demanded that it should undertake welfare activities. Pantji supplemented our criticisms and strengthened our constructive suggestions in his able and persuasive speeches.

Pantji was not at all impressive in the beginning, whatwith the unfortunate twitchings of his head (a result of lathi charges the British police gave him during the anti-Simon Commission agitation) and the heavy, drooping beaver-like moustache. His massive stature, his loose coat and his shapeless Oxford trousers made him look more like a mountaineer. But the impact of his telling arguments, persuasive presentation and fearful marshalling of facts against the governmental case used to unnerve the stoutest champions of the government. Many an Executive Councillor admitted, "It is difficult to say who is more fearful than whom, between Bhulabhai, Satyamurti and Pant, each one in his own way is terrible but the elephant-like trumpeting and treading we get from Pant stampedes all our frontage and prestige".

Pantji was supremely wise in his dealings with the senior leaders of Congress, and did not commit the mistake of Bhulabhai of venturing to find a place among them. He looked upon Jawaharlal as his real leader on the national and State levels and never swerved from that supreme allegiance, even when many venturesome and indiscreet co-leaders pressed him to disregard what appeared to be Jawaharlal's imperious commands, and even assured him of majority support in the P.C.C. of his State. He never tempted the fates. At the same time he was fortunate enough to enjoy the confidence of Sardar Patel. He loyally implemented his dictates in organisational matters and was rewarded by the support of equally affectionate and co-operative Sardar whenever local needs for disciplining rebellious comrades surfaced. He very much valued that help from the Sardar, especially as his rival was no less a Congress leader than Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the special friend of Jawaharlal and the idol of most of the young and impetuous Congressmen like Palliwalji, who were chafing under his domination. He alone achieved that envious place of power and favour with two such mutually competitive as well as complementary personalities as Nehru and Sardar. Bhisma of Kurus was one such statesman, as pictured by Veda Vyas through that great epic of the Mahabharata, and it is only with very rare exceptions, like Kautilya of Chandragupta and Timmarasu of Krishnadevaraya, that Indian history has witnessed his likes. Pantji served simultaneously four difficult chiefs — Nehru, Sardar, Gandhi and above all the fickle-minded democratic Congress and the public. His son K. C. Pant seems to be marching in his footprints and gaining the confidence of both Prime Minister and Parliament.

He left the Central Assembly in 1937 to become the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He proved to be the most successful and unanimously accepted Congress chief of the State until he reluctantly left it to become the Home Minister at the Centre on the pressing invitation of his

leader, Jawaharlal. He remained in office until God called him unto Himself. His most distinctive achievements during the time he was in office are peaceful and effective enforcement of law and order, whether it be in U.P. or at the Centre, and freedom from any type of corruption or factious persecution of opponents. He built the Zonal Councils of Chief Ministers into effective means for national integration.

But he could not help his State to keep pace with other States in industrial development or in the expansion of non-agricultural avenues of employment for the masses. He could not make any noticeable contribution to awaken or uplift the non-Brahmin working classes, not to speak of the backward castes. He failed to speed up the development of anti-illiteracy campaign or the universalisation of elementary education. Even his snccessors — there have been several — have failed to make any progress in these key social directions.

Pantji initiated a social revolution by abolishing the hated system of talukdaris and zamindaris. Bengal, U.P., Bihar, M.P. and Rajasthan were the citadels of feudalism of the worst type and U.P. talukdars and Bihar zamindars were specially pampered by the British for over a century. To dispossess them of their estates, and to create an alternate system of land survey, settlement, comprising revenue records of land ownership, and assessment of revenue from each holding — a system which took the British in Madras more than a century to create — within just a decade is a stupendous task. Whereas Bihar Congress regime could not effectively grapple with this for more than two decades and was depending upon many of the erstwhile landlords for managing most of these functions, Pantji laid down the guidelines for its stabilisation, after having laid firm foundations for it. Whereas in other States, landlords were given excuses to go to the Supreme Court and adopt other dilatory tactics and thus prolong their vicious hold over the lives of millions of peasantry, Pantji reached effective

agreement with the landlords, by his tactful and sympathetic settelement of their compensation and other claims so that the Government was able to assume effective and direct relations with peasants in regard to their holdings.

Regarding sugarcane growers' demand for protection by way of minimum and remunerative prices Pantji could not achieve much success, though he initiated governmental moves in that direction. His general middle-of-the-way approach tended to favour sugar factory owners, who were the principal financial props of the Congress — thanks to the political backwardness of U.P. peasants. Even the sugarcane development cess was misappropriated to general revenues. Kidwai always favoured the kisans but could only insist upon reasonable prices for cane even after he became Central Minister for Agriculture. Successive committees and ministries — Congress and non-Congress — declared that socialisation of sugar industry would be advisable but so far, it could not be achieved because of its inescapable political pull.

Pantji's outstanding achievement as the Union Home Minister was the able and statesmanlike manner in which he maintained political peace within the Congress and law and order in the country. He forced the Communist Ministry of Kerala to prefer to quit office rather than face the mass revolt against their oppressive party control of State machinery, or face dismissal by the President.

There were many issues, as for instance, the threat to peasants land holdings through co-operatives on which we both agreed to disagree with Jawaharlal. But he preferred to respect the wishes and supremacy of Jawaharlal, and let me go out of Congress in 1959 to fight for peasants' right over their holdings.

He had the opportunity as well as the privilege to implement the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission. Jawaharlal did not make his task easy by expressing his views freely, unmindful of how much the

interested parties would exploit them, and queer the pitch for Pantji who was engaged in reorganising State borders. Anyhow the new States of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and consolidated Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore took their shapes during his regime.

But he stood in the way, like all leaders of U.P. and Bihar, of the division of U.P. and Bihar. K. M. Panikkar's wise suggestions for their reorganisation were set at naught. Even the Commission's guarded but well-considered recommendations for separate Telangana and Vidarbha were not heeded to, with disastrous consequences, and the problem had to be faced again decades later. He also failed to accede to the persistent demand of the Sikhs and their leader, Master Tara Singh, for a Punjabi State and it was left for Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira to face the music and agree to the creation of Punjab and Haryana States. The partition of Assam into Meghalaya and Assam came to be effected by his successors. He did succeed in paving the way for the formation of separate Nagaland with its mere twenty lakhs population and Himachal Pradesh with its forty lakhs population and developing Andaman-Nicobar Islands into a separate entity.

The wonder of it all was that while he completed the work of consolidating the integration of India — the great heritage of Sardar — and completed major portion of the States' reorganisation, he also managed to prevent the eruption of any major political disturbances in this vast country, except in Punjab. Was that success due to his tact, moral prestige ? By hind sight, I can say that he proved to be one of the greatest Home Ministers after Sardar Patel.

Pantji tried to put life into Zonal Conference of States' Chief Ministers and their colleagues. But he could not succeed much, because of the failure of the Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry to assure him of adequate Central funds needed for their development on a

scale which has become possible in the post-Jawaharlal's times. He was also unable to spare enough time to persuade the States to reach agreements over the distribution and use of river waters, development of inter-State mineral and other resources, or settlement of such border disputes as had been hanging fire between Karnataka and Maharashtra, Assam and Nagaland, Manipur. Till now (1976) the disputes over borders between Karnataka, Maharashtra; Nagaland and Assam and over Chandigarh are still unsettled.

He held fast to his faith in Hinduism and many of its rituals. For instance, he would offer his prayers, consecrating whatever was being offered as meals to gods before tasting it, and sprinkle water, just in about the same manner as Bapuji Aney used to do. He was a strict vegetarian. But he was one with Jawahar in his faith in India's need for observing strict neutrality between all religions and protecting the rights of their masses in relation to each other. He furthered secular approach of government.

Pantji was sensitive to the needs of deserving sections. So when I suggested that some allowance — either in lump-sum or in monthly pensions — should be made to deserving votaries of culture, writers, poets, artists, cultural propagandists, he readily agreed. Both of us appreciated the sense of self-respect and financial scruples displayed by Shri T. S. R. Murty Chowdary, later recipient of National Literary and Cultural Academy award, for his epic Telugu poem about the life of Mahatmaji, by declining this offer of financial assistance, as he was not in need. Quite a number of needy and deserving artists were helped by this initiative, one of them being the famous leader of Peddanandipadu No-Tax Campaign of 1921 and musician late Shri Parvataneni Veeraiah.

He also offered similar assistance to a number of political sufferers. Until the recent (1972 August) offer of political pensions to Freedom Fighters, Pant's grants were the only source of assistance available to a small number of such deserving veteran partiots.

Pantji's greatest distinction was that he was always looked upon as the obvious benevolent elder brother, if not a father, by all who had to deal with him in public life. He looked ten or twenty years older than his actual age, though his beautiful chin — so full, broad and youngish — would belie his general appearance. He never appeared to lose his temper. He smiled but behind his moustaches, his eyes glittered but were shadowed by his bushy eyebrows and people could see only the calm, bright visage of the Nainital elder. He played that role of universal elder so superbly that none took offence by anything he said, and all were content to accept his criticism or advice as from a guardian-angel. Thus his very presence in a debate, his participation in a private discussion and his hammer-blows of repartees and his biting sarcasm cushioned by his silky, shaky head were all accepted as priceless assets behind Nehru's power. He lived and died as our common elder and affectionate colleague.

In conclusion, let me quote the following from my Parliamentary homage paid on the day of his Swargarohan 7-3-1961 :

"We have been together for the last 25 years as colleagues, as comrades, as friends, as almost members of the same family. It was a privilege to be embraced by him. He was a great man, a good man and a wise counsellor. It could be seen from the debates that he did recognise

political differences but he never recognised personal differences. He had a tremendous capacity to love everybody. More than anything else, he set an example as a great follower of our noble leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Bhulabhai Desai. He helped Bhulabhai Desai to keep the British Government at bay in this House, and in the country. On many occasions I received advice from him both when I was with him in the Congress and also outside, and every time he looked at things dispassionately and gave me just the advice that was needed in the situation in which I found myself, and I am sure that that must be the experience of quite a large number of our friends who had been associated with him".

PATEL, SARDAR VALLABHBHAI

[Sardar Patel was born in 1875 in Karamsad of Bardoli taluk; was a Barrister at Ahmedabad; joined Gandhiji in the Bardoli, Kaira Kisan Campaigns; organised non-co-operation movement in Gujarat in 1920, and Bardoli Kisan Satyagraha in 1928; was hailed by Gandhiji as the Sardar; Chairman of Ahmedabad Municipality; his brother Vithalbhai also a Barrister became Mayor of Bombay, and Speaker of Central Legislative Assembly; both went to jail several times; Sardar became Congress President in 1931 at Karachi; Chairman of powerful Congress Parliamentary Board from 1935 to 1948; President, Hindustan Mazdoor Seva Sangh; organised and managed Parliamentary elections of Congress; opposed Subash Chandra Bose and Congress Socialists; right-hand man of Gandhiji in the Congress constructive work; organised State Peoples of Saurashtra; became Deputy Prime Minister; achieved integration of Indian States in Indian Republic; organised Police action in Hyderabad; warned against China's aggressive designs against India; encouraged K. M. Munshi to renovate the famous, historic Somnath temple at Veeravala and helped Bhailalbhai Patel to build new Gujarat University, now known as Vallabh University....Passed away in 1950.—Ed.]

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL had his roots in the self-respecting and enterprising kisans of Gujarat. He and his brother Vithalbhai Patel, distinguished themselves as lawyers and built up prosperous practice in Bombay courts. Vallabhbhai became Chairman of Ahmedabad Municipality and displayed his latent capacity for honest and dynamic administration. On becoming the political follower of Gandhiji, he gave up his legal practice and ably promoted the non-co-operation and triple boycott programme. By sticking loyally, along with Rajaji, to that Gandhian line in opposition to Motilal Nehru-C. R. Das deviation in favour of Council entry, Vallabhbhai established his reputation as the most dependable disciple of Gandhiji in Gujarat. When Gandhiji chose to retire from active politics and left the field free to the Swarajyists, led by Motilal, Das, and Vallabhbhai, Vallabhbhai quietly accepted Gandhiji's line and contented himself with the con-

structive programme and busied himself with the development of Gandhian organisations all over Gujarat and the princely States, and that laid sound foundations for later political hegemony of Congress organisation both in Gujarat and Maharashtra. On that solid constructive work, he raised the peasants' satyagraha campaign of 1928-29 and achieved their resounding success, and established his reputation all over India as the most powerful organiser. While his brother advanced India's cause through Speakership of the Central Assembly, Vallabhbhai became the Sardar of Swaraj movement.

Sardar Patel spent more than thirty years, under the leadership of Gandhiji, in training the nationalist workers of Gujarat in the first instance and those of the whole of the then British India to accept and obey the Congress code of discipline. That unpleasant task of enforcing discipline could be shouldered only by one who had no fear of the electorate and who could be sure of the unquestioned confidence of the supreme leader. Though Rajaji, Rajendra Prasad and Nehru enjoyed equal confidence of Bapuji, the Sardar alone had the steel and strength in him to accept that responsibility. Who can say he made no mistakes or that many colleagues did not suffer at his hands ? But which disciplinarian anywhere in the world in schools and universities or temples and churches or parliaments and ministries, has ever succeeded in not inflicting pains and conferring only favours. I can say as one who did not gain any favours from that steel-fisted Sardar, and one who was made to withdraw by him, all so unfairly, the peasants' pledge that was to be signed by kisan candidates of the Congress in 1936-37 elections — as a subsidiary promise of layalty to kisans' interests, subject to the overall supremacy of the Congress pledge — that Sardar was a noble wielder of the sceptre of Congress.

I derived much inspiration from Gandhiji's leadership of the peasants' struggles in Champaran and Gujarat,

so did the Sardar. It was given to Patel to experiment successfully with that means of struggle — Satyagraha — to secure justice for kisans during the Gujarat kisans' fight in 1928-29 against an unjust and oppressive enhancement of land revenue. He demonstrated in that struggle the kisans' capacity for revolutionary action. He also created a sense of confidence in the nation about its ability to overcome the British oppression. So the whole nation hailed Gandhiji's recognition of him as the Nation's Sardar.

Many people think that he was only a man of steel and not so much a man of sentiments. Those of us who had the good fortune to come into the closest comradeship with him know, as Rajaji so aptly put it, that he had the heart of a Mother. He could love his colleagues with much attachment and yet could prevent them from venturing to take undue advantage of his softness towards them.

There was an occasion in 1939 when Subash Babu wanted to get round his inveterate opposition to his Presidentship, after Tripura debacle by suggesting my name in the last resort, for the one and the only change he wanted to make in the set-up for the Working Committee insisted upon by the Sardar, so that the "faces" of all could be saved. Yet the Sardar would not allow Bapu to agree even to that much of a compromise, though he knew that it would hurt Bapu also to have to drop my name. Of course Subash Babu and so many of us who were working with him were hurt by that demonstration of the Sardar's sceptre.

But there was also an occasion in 1949 when the same Sardar was unwilling to go into the Congress Working Committee unless I was also included in it and it was because of his loyalty to me that the formation of the Committee by President Pattabhi came to be delayed by a month. The difference in his attitude did not denote any change in him or me, because on both occasions we were equally devoted to Gandhian way but in the changed cir-

cumstances of the national needs. Did he hate anyone ? It is easy to say, "Yes". He loved many but he was not demonstrative. He was extremely loyal to Gandhi and highly disciplined as a Congressman.

The late Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and the Sardar were frequently at loggerheads. The Sardar trusted the late Ballabh Pantji and wanted him to be left undisturbed in his leadership of the U.P. Ministry. Rafi Saheb did not think it necessary to keep Pantji in the enjoyment of such arbitrary leadership. Once things came to a head; Patelji turned to Rafi Saheb in the Working Committee, before either Jawaharlalji, Rafi's prop, or Pantji came in, and talked to him and asked him to make up his mind either to support or oppose Pantji. Rafi preferred to remain sullen and silent. Many ardent supporters of Rafi, including the powerful and explosive Palliwalji came to be suspended by PCC of U.P. for the mere sin of having appealed to the Central Working Committee and the latter was made powerless to intervene.

On the linguistic redistribution of the country, he and Jawaharlal agreed with Rajaji. They feared that it would sow the seeds of national disruption. Many of us did not agree with them, because we were under the influence of that principle which entered our political matrix long before the advent of Gandhism. The Sardar was much pained by our refusal to accept his advice but strong man though he was, he yielded to our equally sincere demand, although reluctantly, and continued to love us. Have the later events proved him wrong ? He was so much in favour of multi-lingual Bombay and separate Saurashtra. Yet, the Maha Gujarat movement could not have achieved success, and the break up of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat would not have emerged if it had not been for the Sardar's tradition of struggle. In public life there is no unmixed good or evil. It is always an uncertain choice.

This became so glaring over the manner in which we all opposed the communal representation, and the system

of federation propounded on that basis but, finally Congress came to accept Jinnah's demand for Pakistan. What was the Sardar's stand over that unpleasant decision ? Was he right in finally yielding to it ? Did he allow himself to be misled by Jawaharlalji and Mountbatten in accepting the final partition of the country and in making Gandhiji feel helpless for want of his support in that crucial hour ? Did he hope to be freed from Moslem communal obstruction, after partition ? Who could be entirely right or wrong over such historic decisions, which are not really the result of any one group's decisions ? They are the inevitable consummation of historical and social imponderables. It is possible that if our Independence had been delayed for a whle, as has happened in Africa, some other and less painful solution could have been found. We now are able to see, that Nehru and himself gave way to impatience for power and Mountbatten drove a wedge between him and Gandhiji. It proved to be a tragedy for this sub-continent. The fate of this sub-continent would have been far better, if only those national leaders had not grown so indifferent to Gandhiji's advice and warnings against partition, thanks to their bitter experiences of the Coalition Cabinet. Anyhow, it stands to be credit of the Sardar, that he disappointed many an enemy of India and created a much bigger and politically more unified India though it is painfully different from the traditional picture of Mother India, as visualised by our Rishis and as painted in the magic tunes of poets, Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath and Bharati and as dreamt of by Tilak and Gandhiji. India and Indira helped Bangladesh to become free from Pakistan's domination. But has our sub-continent become stronger or its people happier ? The misery of it all is that thirty years after Bapu was thus abandoned by Congress top leaders, Indian sub-continent is being debilitated by the rival burdens of military armaments.

Rajaji, Rajenbabu, Kripalani and Sardar foresaw in 1936 that Jawaharlalji's socialism would queer the pitch for India's social economy, and therefore, they boldly pro-

tested against his campaigning for socialism from the vantage ground of his Presidentship of the Congress. It was because of that historic letter of protest from them and their colleagues, that Jawaharlal had to wait till 1959 before he could inaugurate his offensive against the peasant economy of India and her self-employed people's enterprises.*

Again when so many of us were pressing the Congress Government to develop our economy on a planned basis, the Sardar expressed his doubts as to the turn it would take. He observed to me, when I found myself in a minority in the Agrarian Reforms Committee, that he feared that the so-called planning against self-employment economy would jeopardise the foundations of our democratic peasants' proprietorship and self-employment and people's economy, and so he felt shy about socialist plans. Unfortunately, he was by that time in the grip of heart disorder and he could not exert himself effectively. So, we were left helpless to protect self-employed economy of peasants and artisans against the growing powers of Jawaharlal and the Planning Commission.

Vallabhbhai was not able to please many stalwarts of the Congress; it fell to his lot to displease many freedom fighters like K. F. Nariman, B. Khare, and Subash Babu by his unpleasant decisions. He incurred the wrath of so many great men because he had to weild the axe on behalf of the Congress when they challenged its hegemony. Who could justly say that he had not erred sometimes in giving provocation to those eminent rebels or that he could have avoided using the axe of discipline in many a case ? It is not possible for me to say categorically that personal animus did not enter into any of his actions against the great leaders. I can however say that he did not weild the sceptre out of personal jealousy or out of fear for his own position or merely for wreaking vengeance. I was very much hurt by his attitude towards Subash Babu and

* "Bunch of Letters" of Jawaharlal.

I was enraged when Subash was expelled from the Congress. But the Sardar had the considered approval of Gandhiji in that affair and in many other painful affairs and so, he cannot be accused of having acted on his own. Many of the other leaders enjoyed the luxury of privately deploring Sardar's use of the axe but benefited from the consequent gains to the Congress organisation.

In most cases, the Sardar was guided by one criterion, that is, whether anyone is bent upon defying Gandhiji. Once he became convinced that anyone, may he be Nariman or Khare, Prakasam or Subash Babu, was bent upon defying a clear advice of Gandhiji, he used all the means at his disposal to fight him. I quarrelled with him over the means he adopted because those means were not specially Gandhian, and often smacked of Lord Krishna's politics. In the end, all of us were reconciled to him, though with hurt feelings, because he was about the least vengeful disciplinarian of the Congress.

It is rarely that a country is fortunate enough to find, in times of need and ready at hand, a leader with such an adequate personality, courage and organising capacity. England found such a leader in Winston Churchill during the Second World War and India found him in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel just when it had to forge political and national unity.

The Sardar had already grown grey in experience and national service, when he was called upon to piece together the five hundred odd princely States and fit them into what has since then become our united India. The dream of so many of us who had struggled for decades under Gandhiji's leadership to see a politically unified and free Mother India entering the community of World Nations was falsified by the partition of our country and creation of Pakistan. An attenuated India, lacerated with the infection of divisiveness in all the hundreds of States, was transformed into a New India by the magic wand of Sardar Patel within a short period of 3 years. The consumma-

tion of it was so quick and painless that many are unable to realise its uniqueness.

The British administrators in India and Labour Cabinet in England were then working at Cross purposes; the former were keen on splintering India, leaving only a truncated body politic to the Congress and favouring the Muslim League in every manner, while the Labour Cabinet was keen on keeping India united under a Congress-League leadership. The Princes of States were assured that they would be free to choose their political alignments, that is, to be independent or accede to India or to Pakistan. Some Princes like those of Travancore and Hyderabad toyed with the chance of gaining independence and started negotiating with Mr. Jinnah. Others like Jaisalmer, a few Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan Princes wanted to join Pakistan and were actively intriguing with the Nawab of Bhopal, the favourite of Jinnah and Junagadh Prince actually signed the accession with Pakistan. It was with great difficulty that the States Princes were persuaded by Mountbatten to yield to temporary or standstill agreements of accession, pending their final choice between India and Pakistan or even Independent Status. Sardar Vallabhbhai had to move quickly but sagely, hold his temper under the leash, exercise all the statesmanship he could command and gain control over the quick-silver ambitions and machinations of many avaricious Princes and their wily Dewans. All the assistance he could gain could come only from V. P. Menon, the patriotic and experienced Secretary of the newly formed Ministry and his Indian members of the I.C.S. like C. C. Desai.

He had however his great hold over the States Peoples and their Praja Mandals, most of whose leaders were amenable to his Patriotic leadership. He could threaten the Princes to rouse their people against their autocratic regimes, and he could warn them that the British, as the paramount power, would no longer be available to prop up their power, as had been happening during earlier

Satyagrahic Campaigns of States Peoples. Even then he had to use that contingent power with the utmost sagacity and affectionate cajolery, which could only be felt without being noted either by word or by gesture. Sardar achieved what then appeared to be almost an impossible feat by exhorting the Princes that "none can segregate us into segments. I invite my friends, the Rulers of States and their people to the Councils of Constituent Assembly in this spirit of friendliness and co-operation in a joint endeavour, inspired by common allegiance to our motherland for the common good of us all". He evoked just the needed hearty response from his long-time friend and leader of Princes of Kathiawar, Jam Saheb of Navanagar. The Prince said to his fellow Princes "If India is free, the Princes are free. If India is honoured, every unit is honoured. If India goes under, who survives ?. In this Gandhian manner, this masterful Sardar achieved the integration of States, their Princes and People with India and Indian People. He thus exemplified how Gandhian approach could be masterful and invincible, in the hands of such a Sardar.

We are now better able to realise, by hindsight, how unique was that timely achievement of Sardar Patel, in the light of the plight of the African People by being so hopelessly splitered and the Arabs by being set at each other ears. Sardar robbed the imperialists of the kind of mischievous opportunity with which the African, Asian and South American People are being weakened and exploited, even though they are nominally independent.

A friend who had become a Chief Minister once observed with chagrin, that the "old man is wonderful in the way he keeps abreast of all that happens in the States and at the Centre; especially about the top personalities. How does he get all this information ?" Another leader, who was vying with him for party supremacy, observed, "He is a wizard. He knows the soft and strong points of all of us. He knows which key to press, when and how

far, to get his results". Such was also the experience of our veteran administrator, Sri V. P. Menon in their treatment of the Princes. The genius of the Sardar lay in knowing whom to trust, and how far to trust to get the best results. The wish lingers that if only Bapu and Rajaji could have called upon him to be the first Prime Minister !

How was he able to maintain contacts with public feelings and sufferings ? He was growing old. He was always difficult man to reach. Yet, he was able to talk to about twenty persons or delegations, coming from different walks of life from various States and cities, during his daily morning walk in that Lodi Park and the following rest lasting for an hour or a little more. People would meet him by appointment or by managing to catch his eye. One or the other of his colleagues was always there ready to answer a question or offer information with an affectionate gesture. Every delegation used to move up from behind or to his side and take three or five minutes and withdraw, once he nodded and gave his smiling bow. Each delegation used to offer information, analyse a problem, seek his counsel and if and when he asked about other points or persons or the politics of the concerned area, as he invariably used to do, give the carefully weighed information and judgment of theirs. The fear of his known impatience with fools, meaningless gossip or undignified thoughts made the visitors sift their information and thus offer him only what they considered to be the most relevant and decent, and publicly important or personally interesting. That one hour of intimate contact between that old man and groups of seasoned public men or aggrieved public workers was worth more by way of public contact than five hours spent by any other minister in his office room or public meetings. Pantji tried to develop a similar contact in his lounge but it was not so effective nor was it so spontaneous or homely. Moreover, the Sardar had his own genius not only to listen but also to provoke, not only

to pump out information but also to infuse inspiration for dynamic action, not only to admonish but also to stimulate self-confidence. Jawaharlal could not succeed to inspire that much intimate contact, confidence and comradeship.

Secretaries of the ministries used to go to the Sardar and make him aware of the situation and as sure as anything, he would get the Sardar's definite and precise advice. Once a secretary obtained his directions from the Sardar, he would go ahead with that line of action without any more fear of the Cabinet. I think it was because of this sense of confidence that he infused in the secretaries, that quick decisions became possible during that all too brief tenure of his office at Delhi. There was never any possibility then for such a scandal as that of the V.O.A. which is only an outward culmination of many a blunder.

It has taken fifteen years of disappointing disputations in the United Nations over Kashmir for us to realise the wisdom of the Sardar's advice not to get embroiled in U.N.O. over Kashmir. Why did we go to the United Nations as a petitioner, in spite of the Sardar's advice ?Did we not gain much by being nationally self-reliant over Hyderabad ? No wonder, both Rajaji and Radhakrishnan, exclaimed in 1962, in the face of the threat of Chinese Communist imperialism, "How we wish the Sardar were alive to-day to lead us". Indira reached up to his strategy and statesmanship in marshalling India's self-defence during Bangladesh struggle for freedom in 1972.

In one great affair he felt himself seriously and frequently thwarted by Jawaharlalji's wilful assertion of his Prime Ministership, thanks to the support offered to him by Maulana Azad and Mountbatten. Regarding the problem of Hyderabad, he was all in favour of early integration of Hyderabad. But Jawaharlalji would not agree; Lord Mountbatten's diplomacy further delayed the application of the famous Sardar touch. The army had complete confidence in the Sardar and assured him that if

and when action became necessary all that facade of Razakar's military might could be overcome within a week. But the Prime Minister exercised his genius for delaying such unpleasant decisions, without openly coming into conflict with the Sardar. When he was pressed by so many of us who knew how Razakar's violence was on the increase, the Sardar exclaimed "What can we do but be patient with him ? I was promised that urgent and effective steps would be taken by the Army and was therefore asked to come away from my perch for heart-rest. It is now weeks. Yet he does not make up his mind". With great difficulty, after a good deal of tension, the Sardar had his way and Hyderabad State joined Indian Union after a travail of just two days of Police action. Jawahar's lack of decision took much longer time to let Hyderabad integrate with India than the Sardar's diplomacy took to get more than five hundred States to join the Indian Union. No wonder that doyen among the Secretaries, V. P. Menon, became such an admirer of this Sardar.

The Sardar was unhappy over the impetuous friendship proferred by Jawaharlalji to Communist China, without making sure of her leaders' political attitudes towards India's neighbours, specially Sri Lanka, Sikkim, Nepal, Burma and Tibet. So many of us were anxious to make sure that China—whether of the K.M.T. or the Communist—would not insist upon its imperialist claims over Tibet and that post-war China would continue to honour the Tripartite Simla agreement of 1912, that is, between China, Tibet and India recognising the free independent and autonomous Tibet. But Jawaharlalji would not heed our fears, nor would he realise the geopolitical interests and needs of India and ambitions of China to ensure the autonomy of Tibet, as a buffer Himalayan State to the north of India.

The Sardar being more far-sighted and realistic, agreed with us. So he tried his best to persuade Jawaharlalji to safeguard India's geopolitical interests also, not in opposition to China's genuine national aspirations but in

harmony with the traditional interests of all the three powers, Tibet, China and India. His last letters to Jawaharlalji before his death, containing his eloquent, yet pathetic and paternally reasoned plea for such a sober approach, are the most effective and unanswerable criticism of the wrong policy followed by the Prime Minister. The later Chinese invasion of India, Jawaharlalji's heart-rending disillusionment with China and her cruel response to all the love lavished by him and whole of India on the resurgent China, fully under-score the Sardar's far-sighted warnings. They also justify the confidence so many of us found it possible to repose in his superior statesmanship. My support for the Tibet Liberation and Tibet Day was opposed by Nehru. And we paid bitterly by not following Sardar's advice and policies. After all he was the senior among us all, who were then privileged to shape the policies of our nation.

In another respect, he was not as forward looking as Jawaharlalji; that was in regard to Hindu Law of Property. Ambedkar agreed with Jawaharlal. Yet, thanks to the statesmanship of Pataskar, Sardar's junior minister in the Home Ministry, an honourable compromise was achieved, whereby women's rights for heritable properties came to be established even within the four corners of Mitakshara Laws. This demonstrates how the Gandhian approach could help those who are very much to the left of the Centre, those who are just to the left of the Centre and those around the Centre to work honourably together in furthering the cause of progress and people.

He was unhappy because I would not agree to go into the Cabinet when Jawaharlal was the undisputed chief, and then, continue to wrangle with him, as I was obliged to do in the Congress Working Committee, Parliamentary Party's Executive and many smaller committees. He knew the difference between the two; one of a subordinate though a colleague, and the other of an equal though a junior. But he did not agree with me. He thought that I

was missing a good chance to influence events and help our Kisans.

The latest disclosures made through the publication of the correspondence between the Sardar and Jawaharlal as to how Jawaharlal insisted upon the acceptance of his decisions even by the redoubtable Deputy Prime Minister, and the trend of his replies to my letters (Agony and Solace P.P. 206-203 letters 159, 160) protesting against what seemed to me to be his insistence upon the finality of his decisions even over and during the discussions within the Cabinet and Congress Working Committee, justify my reluctance at that time to join his Cabinet, specially when our views regarding the role to be played by peasantry and artisans as the principal wings of self-employed economy differed so radically. I had great respect for Jawaharlalji. Both of us were wedded to basic approach of socialism and humanism. But he favoured State socialism and I appreciated Guild Socialist approach, which is being experimented with by Yugoslavia and which fascinated even Kruschev. He thought peasants could not help India in becoming, as rapidly as he desired, a Socialist and industrial power, whereas I felt that India's all-round progress and prosperity could and should be achieved with the active co-operation of Self-employed peasantry etc. Since he knew about tempermental differences between us also, the Sardar respected my feelings and became all the fonder of me, for abstaining from such attractive offers and opportunities.

The Sardar's heart was the softest when and where kisans and his trusted colleagues were concerned. I used to worry him about the sufferings of Kisans caused by the Working of Controls. He agreed with me that the compulsory procurement should go and that it was a sin to turn peasants into so called law-breakers just because they stored the foodgrains produced by themselves and needed for the consumption of their families and labour. He also felt that the procurement prices were too low and

it was no sin for kisans to sell their surplus foodgrains at the open market prices. More than once did he direct the leaders of Delhi, Bombay or some other cities who were complaining about the vagaries of rice and wheat rationing and the ration-shop dealers to ask me, how the actual producers were also suffering. "Then who benefitted from all this Control Regime ? He used to observe with a winkle in his eye, "Let Ranga and Jawaharlal agree. The trouble would be ever".

Just as the Charter of Permanent Settlement given by Lord Cornwallis to the Princelings of Zamindars was abolished in the first decade of Swaraj India, the latest but similar Charter of Privy Purses given by the Sardar to the Indian Princes when they agreed to merge their States with Indian Democracy has also come to be abolished by Indira's fiat on the eve of the 'Garibi Hatao' national campaign. Sardar, the national revolutionary could not have hesitated to let that last vestige of functionless feudal privilege to go the way of Cornwallis Settlement though he might have succeeded to obtain the consent of the Princes through less painful but equally effective means.

This reversal of Sardar's settlement with the Post-Independence Princes only 25 years after it was incorporated in the Constitution demonstrates how the march of social revolution could not be arrested even by what would appear, at the time, to be honourable settlement; if it is not based on useful social function.

Sardar's bronze statues have been raised in many a city in the former Princely States. But the statue in the Parliament Street of New Delhi has come to assume special significance, ever since the great Peasants March of 1964 to Parliament to protest against the 17th Constitution Amendment formally offered Indian peasants' homage to this strongest Kisan Sardar of Swaraj India. Every time, any demonstration moves through New Delhi makes it a point

to offer its homage to the Sardar at that Statue and seems to drew inspiration and strength from its contemplation of his indomitable courage. His huge bronze statues in Hyderabad, Junagad, Anand and Karamsad, his birth place are also inspiring.

Sardar's Centenary Celebrations were held in Delhi's Red Fort by rival forces of Patriots. The Prime Minister and President and all governmental forces demonstrated their loyalty and homage to the Sardar and quoted their triumphant leadership of the Country during the 1971-72 Bangladesh Crisis and the defeat of Pakistan's aggression and the emergence of independent Bangladesh, as their fitting tribute to the Sardar. The opposition phalanxes also staged their rival celebrations and avowed their admiration for the successful statesmanship of the Sardar in unifying India and thus ensuring national success in 1971-72 emergency, despite all the machinations of U.S.A. behind Pakistan's aggression.

PATIL, S. K.

S. K. Patil, the freedom-fighter, and first-rate Congress Organiser came to the fore in Bombay, when Congress and Sardar Patel were obliged to face the challenge of Shri K. F. Nariman the favourite son, former mayor and stentorian orator of Bombay. The Sardar had to overcome the resentment felt by majority of active Congressmen in the city and the justifiable disappointment caused to Nariman, the darling of the youths and hero of the 1930-34 Salt and R.T.C. struggles against the British, by Sardar's decision to nominate B. Kher, the comparatively junior leader for leadership of the Assembly Party, overlooking the obviously superior claims of Nariman, Patil stood by the Sardar and worked hard to enable Congress Organisation to withstand the erosion of its forces by that crisis. He succeeded in replenishing the youths' ranks within the organisation. He had to try to keep in good humour the great, patriotic Parsee supporters of the Congress in spite of their unhappiness over what most people then felt to be too harsh a treatment meted out to Nariman, the fond hero of the great Chowpati Beach Forum. Neither Patil nor anyone else available could make up half of the loss sustained by Nariman's opposition but he did succeed over years to repair the breaches in the ranks and gain the confidence of the City. It meant terrific struggle and Patil devoted all his resources to this task though Chowpati's vacuum could not be filled till 1946.

So he organised Citizenship College and invited me to guide it in the summer of 1945. He sought the help of the Youth Congress, then led by Dinkar Sakrekar. We worked together for a week, and helped the patriotic youths, who were so much shocked by the "People's war" co-operators of the British regime as to rush to our College to learn all about the "World Role of National Revolution", the "Outlines of National Revolutionary Path" and

"Kisan Masdoor Praja Raj", the three theses I prepared and which were then popular in the Press.

Patil was the principal organiser of the City's great fight against the British during the war. He found that the Communists were gaining more cadres even among middle classes. The dynamic organisational man that he had always been, he realised more fully and quickly than most others in the other States, the need to challenge the Communists on the ideological plane; hence the organisation of that Citizenship College, under the auspices of the B.P.C.C., Mahatma Gandhi blessed the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj, as was presented to him by me in November 1944-January 1945. I had to explain to our youths the ideological justification for it in the light of the historical evolution of Congress approaches to our masses. Jawaharlal assured the Indian revolutionaries of the Congress how they were in the vanguard of Asian and African people's struggles for national independence and I had to present the ideological justification for the "Colonial and coloured Peoples Freedom Front", the thesis which was also then prominently canvassed in the Press, with the blessings of Gandhiji. Patil was very particular that we should convince the youth how national revolution is as progressive and relevant to contemporary world as socialist revolution and how they both are not exclusive of each other but would have to be embraced by all progressive and democratic socialist revolutionaries. Thus Patil provided the respectable and powerful platform of the premier political city of Bombay for Post-War ideological approach of the Congress for national-cum-social revolution.

Patil is the political architect of both the great Bombay Congress House and its Complex and the Cadres of the City Organisation. His genius to collect and utilise funds to the best advantage made him the indispensable top leader of the City Congress. His technique of discovering and fixing the ambitious, patriotic and energetic youths into the

ever expanding pattern of multi-faceted organisational and propagandist, electioneering units was superb. Sardar Patel recognised these and such other exceptional abilities of Patil and backed all his moves with power, funds and prestige, because he was convinced, as ealy as thirties, that Patil was a sincere, and organisationally competent patriot.

Patil also accepted the Sardar as his load star and remained loyal to him and weathered the storms that were conjured up by sections of the Press, Communists and others against the Sardar. Their combination served well the cause of the Country and strengthened the struggles of the Congress against all the political rivals during the elections.

He was essentially keen on power, being the able organiser of power-politics. But he missed the chance of becoming the Chief Minister of Maharashtra mostly because his concentration on the City's politics prevented him from developing wide and deep enough contacts with the Congress workers and leaders of the districts and his loyalty to the idea of bilingual State of Bombay with Maharashtra and Gujarat as its Constituents, which was being supported wrongly but strongly by both the Sardar and Jawaharlal deprived him of the necessary political support. Yet he was not too much the loser for it, because the City elected him thrice its Mayor for three years—a unique honour and he displayed his constructive abilities in improving its civic environment.

He made his best contribution in Post-Swaraj decades, as the arch-propagandist during elections. He made use of the Press, Radio, Public Platform to thunder at the adversaries of the Congress. He had the most telling answer at any moment to the slogans, or moves of the opposition.

By his supreme confidence in the ultimate triumph of the Congress in any election, against either Communists or Socialists whether or not backed by some one or the other communal elements, he used to succeed in making the people and politicals believe in his propaganda. Thus

he helped the Congress to win in Kerala, Andhra and even in Bombay as against determined and bitter campaigns of Communists and their allies. Even when the local Congress and its allies were powerful enough to win, as was the case in 1955 Andhra elections when the Communists threatened to defeat the United Congress, his dynamic public relations helped them to feel even more confident of their ultimate success.

It was after realising this extremely valuable contribution from him, Jawahralalji became convinced of his need to have him in important positions in his Cabinet. Patil held successively many portfolios. He proved to be so popular with Parliament, that though he was dropped by Jawaharlalji, for a time from Cabinet, on the pretext of freeing him for organisational work—at which he certainly was at his best—he had to be called back into the Cabinet by Lal Bahadur Shastri. Even as Cabinet Minister, Patil was a propagandist and conjured up romantic pictures of the imaginary benefits, expected to be derived from the irrigation projects that he was sponsoring, as a Minister from the generation of power; prosperity accruing from a new Railway Link as in U.P. or Saurashtra. It was a pleasure to see him holding forth for the proposals and work of his ministries of the year during the discussion on the demand for the concerned Ministry but it was more an eloquent reply to the debate than a constructive contribution to the planned developmental aspects of the Ministry. Even at that his was an abler and more democratic role in the Cabinet.

Andhras are attached to him because of his effective aid in their efforts to defeat the Communist challenge in 1955 general elections to the Assembly. So he was invited to preside over the mammoth gathering when the life-size bronze statue of the kisan leader was unvieled. Similarly the lovers of Sardar Patel also felt grateful to him for having arranged the installation of life-size bronze statue

of Sardar Patel in the Centre of the Parliament Street of New Delhi.

But his defeat in the 1967 general election sounded the first warning of his coming mishaps. The indiscreet bravado displayed by him and his group within the Congress Party against Indira's leadership alerted her supporters about his possible offensives. His factious insistence upon the duty of Indira to accept the decision of the Congress Parliamentary Board to set up Sanjiva Reddy as their candidate for Rashtrapati paved the way for later split of the Congress with himself ranged inevitably on the losing side. The 1971 general election in which the under-privileged masses asserted themselves for the first time, jettisoning the middle-class politicians, among whom he was so great a force defeated the democrats in Opposition. The later successive political moves of Jayaprakash Narain and Morarji Desai have kept him outside both power and mainstream of national politics with its dominant accent upon "Garibi Hatao". Nevertheless he continues to be one of the vibrant men, dealing in power politics.

PRAGADA KOTAIAH — HANDLOOM WEAVER

(Champion of the Self-Employed Masses)

Kotaiah was the Second of six brothers among the children his parents have had. His father Sri Pragada Veerabhadraiah was then obliged to maintain his own parents and five or six brothers and sisters. They had then only two handlooms between them to work upon. Kotaiah was then only twelve years old. His father could not find enough work on their looms to maintain the huge family, whatwith the wide-spread distress of peasants and all others during that terrible economic depression of 1929-35. So Veerabhadraiah welcomed the offer so generously made by the Panchayat Board of his village Nidubrolu to work on the low salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. That employment—so poorly paid, so lowly graded though it was proved to be the great blessing for that weaver's family.

Kotaiah was then studying in the local High School and some of us had to contribute towards his school fees, because in those days, neither Backward Classes nor poor people were exempted, as in Swaraj India, from school fees. Being a bright boy, Kotaiah succeeded in passing the public examination, then known as S.S.L.C. along with two other youths of Nidubrolue including Sreemannarayana who later became College Principal from kisan families, which are also poor, though not half as helpless. Kotaiah's father sought my advice about his further studies. I had been convinced of the national need for and technologically modernised and financially organised handloom weaving industry. More than a Crore Weavers were even then dependent, despite all the official discouragement and competition caused by British and Indian textile industries, pampered by both governments of England and India. So I advised Veerabhadraiah to send that promising young man to the Madras Textile Institute, founded in 1910 due to

the influence of Sri P. Tyagaraja Chettiar, himself a scion of a Handloom Weaving family.

I used all my influence, as the former Professor of Pachaiyappa's College and the first Economic Adviser of Government, before becoming a Satyagrahi to get not only admission but also scholarship for Kotaiah, thanks to the generous help of the Principal Mr. Amalsad.

Kotaiah proved to be the ablest graduate of his batch and emerged, after two years of that course, as an imaginative resourceful designer, besides being a highly trained Weaver.

That was the decade in which Mahatma Gandhi was trying to turn the national attention to the plight of all such families which were dependent upon self-employment in Cottage Industries. His special emphasis on Khaddar was a symbolic nationalist move to persuade the public to encourage all Cottage Industries and appreciate the values at once self-reliant and self-respecting of such artisan economy. But the economic depression hit agriculture and peasants so harshly that millions of debt-ridden peasants were losing their sole-means of employment and livelihood, namely, their precious land-holdings to the usurous money-lenders in distress sales. No wonder, weavers and other artisans were reduced to utter helplessness and famine-conditions.

By then I published my theses on "Economics of Khaddar" "Economics of the Handloom Industry" and two Volumes of "Economic Conditions of Indian Villages and Agricultural Industries" and won Gandhiji's appreciation for my efforts to organise Co-operatives for Handloom Weavers and Peasants. I was then pressing the then British Government to increase technical training facilities for Weavers. I had been organising both peasants and handloom weavers ever since 1927. After having served my first term of incarceration in British Jails, I was in search of Youths from among kisans and weavers

and Harijans and Girijans, for students for the Indian Peasant Institute in Nidubrolu, inaugurated by Gandhiji himself in December 1933. Kotaiah was one of my best students in 1934, 1935 and 1936 sessions. He became as enthusiastic as myself about the need for organising weavers for fighting for the recognition of their honourable role in the economy of our country. But he could not become a whole-time public worker because of the poverty of his family, nor did I have the heart to persuade his poor father with his burdensome big family to let his son join the honorary national service, that was taking shape under the wings of the Congress. So we succeeded in getting him employed as one of the Field Organisers of the newly emerging Madras (State-wide) Handloom Co-operative Society. It was a good opportunity for Kotaiah to work in a dynamic manner in organising primary Weavers Co-operative Societies and persuading weavers not only to adopt improved implements and methods of production of handloom goods of better designs but also to strengthen the existing co-operatives and organise new co-operatives. In this direction he gained much encouragement from Shri Ganji Punnaiah, himself from weavers family, functioning as a Co-operative Officer of the Government.

More and more weavers co-operatives began springing up, in all districts from almost all weavers centres in Madras State, thanks to the enterprising and enthusiastic work of Kotaiah, Punnaiah from inside the Textile Department and Pendyam Venkataramulu, a former satyagrahi and a sincere wholetime Gandhian and Machani Somappa, a dynamic, industrial-minded co-operator, hailing from amongst the rich weavers social moorings. University-educated sons of weavers like the late Damarla Ramakantham and Sri Sreekantham from Mangalagiri; Congress workers like P. Venkatramulu and Akkala Kotaiah of Chirala and Basavaraju of Narsipatnam began to join hands with some of us in our efforts to democratise the weavers' co-operative movement. We raised the demand for more and more assistance by way of bigger credits, larger initial

financial subsidies from government, and larger supplies of yarn and dyes for the co-operatives. By 1939, we were able to capture the leadership of the State Weavers Co-operative Society, thanks to the organising work of Punnaiah and Kotaiah and I was elected unanimously the President of that apex society. I was then able to appoint Kotaiah as the State-level Designer and Organiser. I called upon another equally dynamic and imaginative weavers' leader, but older and more experienced, Shri M. Somappa of the famous Yemmiganur Weavers' Co-operative Society, as the acting President of the apex society, when I decided to defy the Government's order seeking to intern me in my village Nidubrolu and marched into jail for the war-time periods of detention lasting for 4-1/2 years.

Kotaiah proved to be an expert inventive adviser in designs and even better organiser of co-operatives. Though he was drawing salary and working in conformity with the usual official discipline, he infused a missionary sense of self-confidence, and spirit of self-reliance among the new leaders who were arising from among the directors of the primary weavers co-operatives.

We knew that weavers and other artisans could not be helped to march with times, so long as they were wedded to old tools and caste organisations. So Pragada Kotaiah got busy to persuade leaders of caste organisations to merge their identity in the bigger industrial community of Handloom Weavers' Congress. With the rise of that Weavers Congress, he began to be better known as Pragada — the dynamic leader who achieved the revolutionary transformation of all weavers of all castes, from Harijans to Girijans, Devangas to Padma Salees, Thogatas to Pattu Salees.

The war-time scarcity of supplies of yarn and dyes and their mounting prices began to worsen the conditions of weavers. Kotaiah began to feel that he could not help his weavers class in any effective manner by merely continuing to be the officer of the society. He found that so

many of us who have been the friends of peasants and weavers, were in jails. So he sought out Smt. Bharati Devi for advice and suggested that she should persuade his parents to let him resign and become a public worker on the rural peoples and handloom weavers fronts within the national movement. She and myself thought about this move, whenever she interviewed me in jails.

Kotaiah's father was becoming old. Four to five looms were then being worked by his sons and daughters and daughters-in-law. Their family was no longer in indigent condition. They could keep away the wolf of starvation. But could they be advised to forego Rs. 400 a month that Kotaiah was able to spare for the family ? How could Kotaiah be maintained, once he became wholetime public worker ? Where were any organisations ? What were their finances ? We did not have the heart to ask good old Veera Bhadraiah to shoulder such a heavy responsibility.

Kotaiah was impatent. He would not bother to think of all such consequential risks. He felt unhappy that he could not become a satyagrahi; more inconsolable at the sufferings of weavers. So he jumped into the couldron of weavers' wholetime public work.

Gandhiji's nation-wide campaign through the growing cadres of Congress in favour of Khadi gave a fillip indirectly to the handloom industry also. But there were trends for weavers to leave weaving in preference to such lowly jobs as peons, attenders, clerks, shop assistants or even agricultural employees were growing unabated, owing to the rising costs of yarn and dyes and ever-shrinking demand for handloom cloth. Almost all the economists were retailing the teaching of Western masters of economics; that in the face of modern mechanisation of textiles on top of modern commercialisation of industrial products through world markets, such remnants of medieval artisan indus-

trialism such as handlooming would inevitably have to go. in the same way as hand spinning had gone. Gandhiji's stress on hand spinning was decried as a political mumbo-jumbo. So, they were shocked when they learnt that my thesis on the scientifically tenable permanent role to be played by the handloom and spinning wheel as a progressive and economically viable companion to the latest mechanised spinning mule and powerloom and dobby was accepted by the Oxford University and its Professors of Economics MacGregor, Dr. Slater, Lipson and others. I maintained that in Asian and Latin American and African countries with their huge unemployed and under-employed masses and unavailability of industrial equipment, capital, technical know-how, such labour-intensive artisan-scale industries are the most timely and attainable ladders towards progress. Moreover I demonstrated how such artisan-based industries based mostly on self-employment and decentralised cottages would save the agricultural countries from such social troubles as labour-capital disputes and strikes, slums and concomitant urban ills and the socio-economic dehumanising of wage-slavery and loss of creative advantages of self-employment, initiative and enterprise of artisan-workers.

Mahatma Gandhi was pleased by the ideological support provided by these theses to his politico-economic Khadi campaign. But he waited till 1945 before according his very valuable blessings to the handloom weavers, working on mill-yarn in the same full-throated manner as he proferred to Khadi workers. So, when Sri Venkataramulu and Pragada Kotaiah agreed to join me in developing the class organisations of weavers, as distinguished from the previous caste-wise organisations, many a Congressmen tried to discourage them and treated them as second-grade nationalists.

Even when Messrs Sreekantham and Ramakantham found themselves being carried into our weavers movement, they entertained some fears, engendered by the So-

cialist propaganda, in their Banaras Hindu University, where they were studying. They were taught that after all, handloom has no future, as per teaching of Karl Marx and at best, it could only be a stop gap and our demands for protection for weavers might be a wrong step. Sri Punnaiah who read my book "Economics of the Handloom" and Sri Kotaiah who imbibed our teaching in the Indian Peasant Institute had to persuade them into our faith in the permanent value and constructive role that such artisan industries could play in the economic and social progress of the heavily populated oriental countries. Kotaiah has been convinced of the correctness of our thesis that labour-intensive industries are as necessary, useful and progressive from the ecological standpoint — I call it Gandhian — for Asia as the capital-intensive, labour-saving, mechanised industries have become the hallmark of European and American economies. Fortunately Jawaharlal came to believe just by that time in the suitability of labour-intensive industries and handicrafts (His "Discovery of India" 1946 edition). So almost all youths of weavers families, who studied in high schools and colleges have come to join us in organising weavers congress and co-operatives.

Surreptitious opposition began to gain ground in a few delta districts of Andhra from the Communist Party. When they found that despite their discouragement, more and more rural youths were rallying to our organisational campaign on the weavers and kisan fronts, the few Communists among weavers began to split the organisation-minded weavers — ever a minority among rank and file. Shri Pragada carried on a relentless struggle to regain most of the weavers to the mother organisation, well-known by then as Weavers' Congress. He persuaded the great majority of weavers that as in the case of peasants, so in that of weavers, Communists could not be the safe and genuine champions, since their Marxism believed in the inevitability of elimination of peasants and artisans, peasantism and artisan-economy and the ultimate triumph of mechanisa-

tion and industrialisation of agriculture and industry and proletarianisation of all types of workers.

Thus on all these four fronts, sometimes simultaneously, we had to defend our faith in artisan and peasant economies, uphold the eternally progressive values of self-employment and assert that to be loyal to the causes of weavers and peasants was as patriotic as to be Congressmen wedded to the orthodox nationalism and Khadi programme; while all the time fighting against British colonial economism and political hegemony. What a struggle it was ? I am glad to bear testimony that Shri Pragada Kotaiah, young and poor as he was, worked hard without respite during those two decades after he resigned from Madras job. We were grateful to the able and enthusiastic assistance given to him by Smt. Bharati Devi, in conducting the weavers' political schools, on the lines of the Peasant Institute, in publishing "Weavers Song Book" and in organising weavers marches in a number of districts. Thus Pragada Kotaiah of Nidubrolu and Akkala Kotaiah of Chirala made the weavers movement, a powerful semi-political mass phenomenon.

I realised as long ago as 1925 that the weavers' cause could be developed only if we would challenge the organised textile industry, both foreign and domestic. I found how the Cotton Excise Duty of 5% which had been imposed by the British Government, as some kind of protection to British textiles as against Indian textile industry was at the same time providing some protection to the handloom industry as against Indian textiles. So I pleaded against its abolition, contrary to the almost universal demand of industrial-minded nationalists for its abolition. Later (1927), when the Indian textile industry demanded protection, I wanted similar (counter-wailing) protection to be accorded to the handloom weavers against Indian textile industrialists also on the plea that while the organised industry employed hardly a million workers, handloom industry maintained ten million artisans and their

dependents. Gandhiji did not raise any objection to this deviation from the usual nationalist stand.

During my first full-term of membership of Central Legislative Assembly (1935-45) — predecessor to our present Parliament — I tried my best on several occasions, to demand protection for our weavers from Indian textile industry. The peasant group of MLAs demanded that yarn supplies should be obtained by Government at lower prices, eliminating mills profiteering, separate shares in the markets for cloth should be allotted to weavers by reserving dhoties, sarees or some other types of cloth production and if necessary, further expansion of looms in the mills should be banned. It took us a long time before we could get the whole of the Congress Party to allow us to sponsor these demands in its name also.

In the meanwhile, we were developing the weavers movement all over India; that is, between 1937-47. The first all India conference was organised by Sreekantham, when the Congress Ministry was headed by Rajaji in Madras. But we had to wait till 1945, that is, after the release from detention of so many of us, before we could contact, with the help of dynamic ex-detenue N. V. Naidu, such weavers' leaders as Messrs Ansari of Bihar, Konda Lakshman (Bapuji) of Hyderabad and R. V. Bet of Sholapur who have all since risen to be Ministers and Poenikar, Deoghar, Kumbhare of Nagpur, K. R. Koshti of Poona, Gopalan of Karur and develop a net-work of State-level weavers congress committees.

By that time, Pragada Kotaiah has succeeded in building up an effective, mass-wise, State-wide weavers congress in Andhra. He was able to start a Telugu weekly called "CHENETA" at Nidubrolu. He collected small donations in all the weavers meetings held by the organisers and used those funds with great care.

Rapidly but carefully the District Weavers Committees were built up and executives were elected in the annual or other periodical meetings held in all centres.

An inspiring faith in progressive aspects of their self-employment, a rising sense of self-confidence in their inventive capacity and artistic abilities and almost a revoluitonary tempo to struggle for social recognition and self-respect were engendered by his infectious zeal and restless organising activity. In the process, he grew to be a powerful exponent of our artisan and peasant ideology of self-employment and economic democracy. So, when we held our second and third full-fledged all India sessions of Weavers Congress in Nagpur and Delhi, Kotaiah came to be recognised as the ablest, boldest and most mature ideologue, organiser and experienced General Secretary.

During the Second World War our weavers came to suffer much because of scarcity of yarn, and dyes at famine prices and their dependence upon the tender mercies of textile magnates emphasised the need for protection from them. So, the Weavers Congress began to emphasise the recommendation made by the "Economics of the Handloom" for starting co-operative spinning mills and dyeing factories with weavers as major partners and also for supplies of yarn and dyes by separate State agencies on no-profit - no-loss basis. Weavers joined hands with peasants in resisting the attempts to foist controls on their production. They also demanded representation upon relevant Government committees, dealing with the textile industry and recognition for their organisations. Eventually Handloom Development Committees came to be established by Government of India with myself as the Chairman and Kotaiah, Somappa and others as members. Both of them gained their experience on that committee as to how to work with Delhi's experts. Somappa built up the powerful Handloom Marketing Board with its popular Handloom Houses in all metropolitan centres and foreign countries. Both of them have been welcomed as unofficial members of the All India Handloom Board.

Politically the handloom weavers have come to be recognised as the most important national element, deserving adequate representation in all governmental consulta-

bodies and political parties. When I was the President of the Andhra Congress Committee, Pragada Kotaiah was invited as one of the honoured ex-officio members of its Working Committee (1946-51). After that , he rose to be one of the organising secretaries of that powerful committee and latterly one of its general secretaries. His loyalty to the National Congress was always unquestioned. Yet his first loyalty has always been, like myself, to his economic class; that is, the self-employed artisans.

Therefore, he organised weavers satyagraha campaigns and braved arrest and imprisonment on several occasions. He is so pragmatic that every time the Government conceded a part of the demands of the weavers, he hastened to withdraw the strike or satyagraha and thus, retained the goodwill of the Government for the weavers cause.

His example was emulated by other weaver leaders in other States, notably Maharashtra. Their constructive use of satyagraha has roused the weavers, raised their self-confidence and steeled their faith in their creative role in our national economy.

Pragada Kotaiah has been taking a leading part in the development of the Backward Class movement also which some of us initiated some decades ago.

Andhra weavers movement has led the way to the weavers all over India in several constructive directions, thanks to the more ready response given by Swaraj Government. As many as six co-operative spinning mills have come to be organised in Andhra alone, the first in Guntakal under the guidance of Shri M. Somappa and the second in Chirala under the leadership of Pragada Kotaiah. Full-fledged dyeing factories have also been organised under the auspices of the State Weavers Co-operative Societies. Separate (co-operative or otherwise) weavers finance commissions are in the offing. State-level co-operative weavers marketing societies have been organised. An ever-growing chain of handloom (marketing) houses are being

organised in all the towns, as harbingers for the sub-markets as it were. Government has been providing all assistance to the growing foreign exports of our handloom goods. Our demand for separate weavers housing-cum-occupational colonies, with adequate space and other storage and shopping facilities has also been implemented and Kotaiah lives in such a colony in Nidubrolu. Handloom Weeks are being organised annually by both Governments and co-operatives. Kotaiah is still hopefully struggling to get minimum wages for weaving employees of master-weavers and living levels of remuneration to weavers working under co-operatives.Indiraji's latest dispensation under the 20 Points Programme may remove the greatest bottlenecks, i.e., scarcity of working capital and provide assured markets for weavers production and housing scarcity and minimising periods of unemployment.

Kotaiah has grown to be an experienced veteran among Andhra legislators, having been in one or the other House of first Madras, next, Andhra Legislature for more than fourteen years. His mastery of facts, and his presentation of the case of the people about any problem have come to be known as Pragada style and ministers and officials have come to pay special attention to whatever problem he chooses to espouse and whatever grievance of people he happens to highlight and demand redress.

He has imbibed the ideology of self-employment as constructive aspect of Gandhian Socialism as enunciated in my books "Self-Employment" and "World Role of National Revolution" and "Why Artisans Hail Gandhian Plan" and submitted in 1972 his own independent thesis to Central Government on the need to rescue and recognise 3 crore weavers as the fulcrum of its self-employed protages. It is my good fortune that I gained so good a student for our Peasant Institute and so powerful a statesman for the cause of the self-employed masses and rural people.

Pragada Kotaiah has gone on working just as sincerely and restlessly as ever not only for the welfare of weavers and other artisans but also peasants and agricul-

ral workers. He has won the needed recognition for weavers cause at the Centre through the formation by Central Government of the All India Handloom Board, for which we had been clamouring since 1940, and having become its most effective member.

Kotaiah began to spare some of his time for the agricultural workers of Guntur district. It was due mainly to his assiduous work that several thousands of landless workers gained their small-holdings in the reclaimed lands under the Romperu Project. He was also largely responsible for extending irrigation facilities for several thousands of acres of sandy lands in Chirala taluk. Similarly Kotaiah has been agitating for protecting peasants, especially of Guntur-Krishna and Nagarjuna Sagar deltas from floods, and inundation by developing adequate drainage facilities. Indeed he has become a front-rank champion of all sections of rural people.

The coping stone for our half a century struggle on behalf of the handloom weavers and other cottage industrial **self-employed peoples** is the inclusion of their problems in the twenty-point programme placed before the Central and State Governments by Indiraji, the Prime Minister. The principles that certain weaves in the textile production should be reserved for handloom and that the protection and promotion of the self-employment of three crores of weavers should be considered as an essential part of our national duty have come to be accepted by the socialist-minded nation. This is a triumph for Gandhian economists and social workers. So Pragada can claim to be the leader of the ever-increasing number of weaver-born campaigns for this Gandhian cult of guild socialism. This is indeed a much greater recognition for his work than any ministership can ever be. It was my privilege to unveil an oil-painting of Pragada in Ipurupalem in the heart of traditionally weavers area of Chirala in Prakasam District during the National Independence Week of 15-21 of August 1976.

T. PRAKASAM

The whole country joyously celebrated in 1971 the Centenary of Andhra Kesari Tanguturi Prakasam. He was born in Guntur which produced Konda Venkatappayya who was hailed as Desabhakta by Mahatma Gandhi.

In terms of patriotic service, Prakasam compares well with the brave champions of the Indian freedom struggle like Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Deshpande, Sardar Patel, Srinivasa Ayyangar, and Rajaji in bravery, he can be compared with Swami Shraddhanand and Lajpat Rai and in reckless squandering of all that he could command for the sake of the national movement with C. R. Das. No wonder he was the idol of Andhras for two generations.

He reached the highest positions of power as Chief Minister that Swaraj could offer both in the Madras and Andhra States. He tasted the bitterness as also the vagaries and fickle fortunes of Indian elections and the problems of the nascent Indian democracy.

Born on August 23, 1872, he passed away on May 20, 1957, after bestriding the Andhra political arena like a colossus for 40 years; but even today Prakasam lives in the hearts and memory of Andhras as their Kesari.

He reached national stature and fame during the non-co-operation movement of 1920-22, like C. R. Das and Motilal Nehru who too like him, gave up their roaring legal practice that fetched them princely incomes. Responding to the challenge that British Imperialism hurled at India through the Rowlatt Act and Jallianwallah Bagh massacre, they unhesitatingly threw away their lucrative practice, dared to embrace poverty and placed their all at the feet of Mother India. Their example inspired thousands of lawyers, doctors, lecturers and men of other professions to take up the cross for the national cause.

Prakasam had a taste of the power that emanates from people when he became the Chairman of Rajahmundry Municipal Council in 1901. It was then that he learnt to cross swords with the British officers and gain ascendancy over them.

He went to England, studied law, became a Barrister by the beginning of this century and joined the Madras High Court. Soon he rose to be one of the leading lawyers and proved to be a veritable bete noire to judges and Government. It was this status he chose to give up to enter the political life which demanded utmost sacrifices and offered no hopes of personal comfort.

He had a splendid galaxy of equally patriotic and seasoned political leaders to co-operate with him. They included Kondajee (Konda Venkatappaiah), a full-time public worker since 1915, Desodharaka K. Nageswara Rao, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Bulusu Sambamurty, Dr. Subramaniam, G. Sitarama Sastri, V. Jogiah and Andhra Ratna D. Gopalakrishnaiah.

In the multi-lingual Madras Province, among the equally patriotic Gandhians, Prakasam befriended Srinivasa Ayyangar who also joined the non-co-operation movement just about the same time after resigning his office as Advocate-General. But he could not offer or gain the same warm comradeship with Rajaji who embraced the Gandhian way of life, in addition to abandoning legal practice. That mischance in the choice of friends was to lead to many a crisis in their mutual relations in the subsequent decades and also in their attitudes and opportunities in the Gandhian era of 30 years.

JOURNALIST

Prakasam recognised the foresight of Desodharaka Nageswara Rao in starting the Telugu daily, Andhra Patrika, to cater to the special needs of Andhra and decided to start an English daily Swarajya, to publicise on all-India

plane Andhra's contribution to the Gandhian movement and the fight for Swaraj. But he was not as business-like as Nageswara Rao, nor was he wise enough to entrust the management to the managerially experienced Nageswara Rao. He sold away not only his palatial bungalows in Coonoor, Madras, and other places, but also lands and all other property to cover the losses of Swarajya. He collected as many lakhs of rupees as possible in Andhra, India and abroad to maintain that ever-thirsty daily. It proved to be a powerful, fearless, ever-vigilant and relentless critic of British Imperialism.

Many a patriotic writer like G. V. Krupanidhi, Punna Rao, Rama Rao, K. Koteswara Rao, Iswar Dutt and Khasa Subbarao, who grew to be the leaders of Indian journalism, served on the staff of Swarajya and made their indelible contribution to India's fight for freedom.

Prakasam was more at home with the politics of Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das and so he plumped for their decision to suspend the "Council Boycott" in 1923 and fight the British in the legislative arena also.

CENTRAL ASSEMBLY

He joined the Swarajya Party, went to the Central Assembly and reinforced the valiant efforts of Motilalji, Malaviyaji and others. His iconoclastic and unorthodox ways and temper pleased Jinnah and so he proved to be a valuable asset for Motilalji in gaining the support of Jinnah for united action and voting on many a crucial occasion in the Assembly work.

He could not agree with the tantrums of Jawaharlalji or with the periodical spasms of boycotts and so he refused to abandon the legislative arena, when the Congress decided upon withdrawing from legislatures in 1929-30 following the failure of negotiations with Viceroy Irwin.

So he resigned like others but got himself re-elected and joined issue once again with the British. The hour-

long passionate speech he made during the Budget discussion on Gandhiji's demand for the abolition of salt tax has come to be counted as one of the memorable speeches ever made in the annals of that Assembly.

He decided to place himself again in the vanguard of the national fight for freedom. So he resigned from the Assembly, joined the people on their 'Salt March', rushed to jail and found solace in the company of equally dedicated patriots.

RARE COURAGE

Because of his unique display of courage when the Simon Commission visited Madras in 1928 he earned that freedom of action by the universal respect shown to him by all the Congressmen and the general public. I remember how on that evening, the huge concourse of tens of thousands of people was being swept from side to side on Madras beach by the mounted lancers of Government. Prakasam, who was on the platform, confronted the police and shouted at them to stop their vandalism.

When they reached the platform and pointed their guns at him and others, Prakasam bared his chest and dared them to shoot him if they were so keen on blood. But he urged them to spare the people. The British officer was so much struck by the display of such courage and the powerful roar of Prakasam that he ordered the mounted police to withdraw.

Many of us who had the privilege of being in that seething mass of demonstrators felt so happy that we had in Prakasam just that leader who could beat them back. I drew special satisfaction that the title of Andhra Kesari that we conferred on Prakasam in 1923-24 at a meeting in Guntur, under the inspiration of Andhra Ratna Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah former Professor in Government Arts College had been vindicated by the lion-like front presented by him six years later.

PRISON LIFE

I had the privilege of sharing prison life with Prakasam and Rajaji in 1931 and 1941-42. They were two great magnets around whom hundreds of us, political prisoners, used to gather. Rajaji used to be the centre of studies of our epics and Gita; Prakasam was the centre of dare-devil patriots who concentrated on mundane plans for ousting the imperialists.

In 1937-39, ministerialism came to hold the field of Congress politics. The redoubtable no-changer Rajaji who defeated in Gaya Congress of 1922 the great champion of pro-changers C. R. Das came round by 1936-37 to accept office as the Chief Minister of Madras. Prakasam, the pro-changer, who could not attain majority support in the Legislative Assembly Party, loyally accepted the second place in that Ministry as Revenue Minister. He prepared the voluminous and unanimous report for the abolition of the Zamindari system. Rajaji loyally accepted Prakasam's report and justified with his unrivalled logic Prakasam's conclusion that the Zamindari system should be abolished.

THE GREAT DEFIANCE

Once again, the Madras Congress Party had to choose its leader in 1946. But Gandhiji was not so keen on Prakasam becoming the leader and he sent word that Prakasam should not stand for leadership. Prakasam refused to heed that injunction and bravely stood and got himself elected as the leader and became the Chief Minister.

But Prakasam committed the grave blunder of choosing his ministers only from amongst those who had displayed no hesitation in choosing him as the leader in spite of Gandhiji's advice. I therefore deemed it my duty to advise him, on my return from Europe and assuming Presidentship of the Andhra Congress, to include the representatives of the dissidents also. But he would not forgive their personal disloyalty because they had all attained their

political stature in the elections through his sponsorship and had broken the almost filial relationship that subsisted till then between them. This proved to be fatal to his ministry.

SIGNIFICANT REFORMS

During his brief tenure of office as Chief Minister of Madras State comprising Andhra, Tamil Nad, Malabar and South Canara, Prakasam was able to lead the way for the rest of India in a few significant directions.

He gave priority to village development and granted Rs. 1 crore per annum to start with, for village development schemes. Equally high priority was given for Harijan uplift for which he granted another Rs. 1 crore. Yet another crore rupees was sanctioned for khadi. Peasants were encouraged to minimise the use of foodgrains on their farms and maximise marketable surpluses by offering them special bonus on their sales. Producers' and consumers' co-operatives were started to minimise the exploitation of peasants by rice-millers. Prakasam was trying to find a constructive alternative to the unpopular controls and compulsory procurement.

At this most crucial and constructive phase of his leadership, a no-confidence motion was raised against him for no ostensible reason. As President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee, I called upon the MLAs not to vote for the motion. I pleaded, but in vain, with both Sardar and Jawaharlalji that it would be setting a bad precedent to allow Congress MLAs to move such a no-confidence motion for no better reason than that they no longer liked Prakasam.

I counselled that such a step would loosen all sense of loyalty and political integrity and open the floodgates for corruption, logrolling and defections. Despite all that Desabhakta Kondaji and I urged before the Congress Working Committee, Congress MLAs were permitted to and

abetted in passing that vote and in displacing Prakasam. That unhappy episode wounded so many of us, and Prakasam was not the same imperturbable statesman thereafter.

FULL STATURE

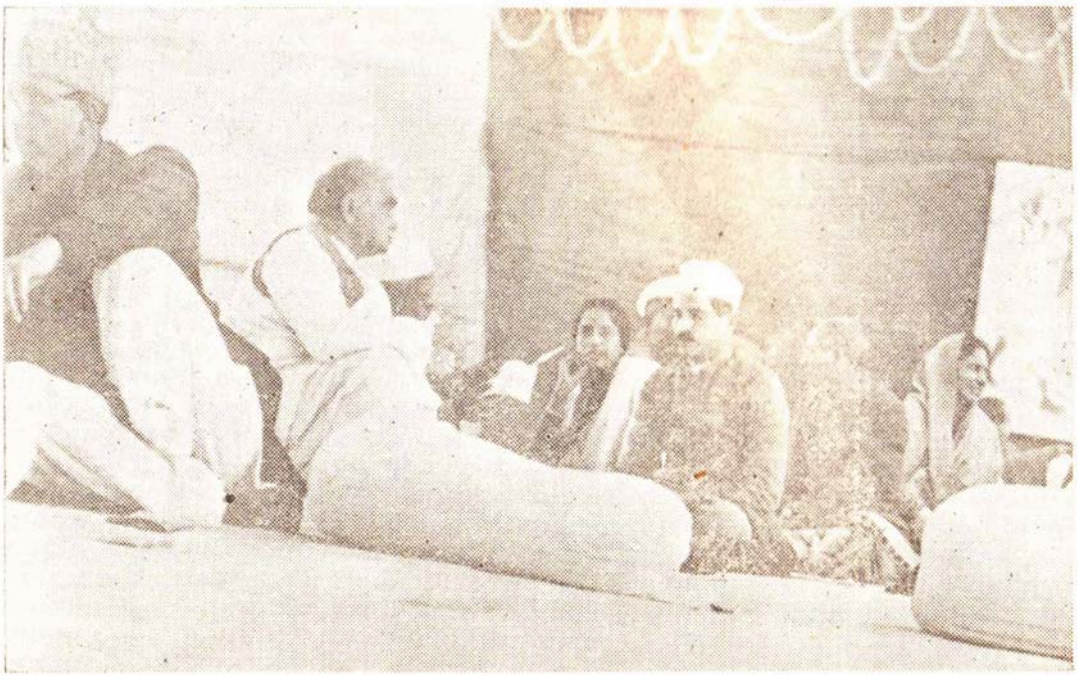
Prakasam rose to his full stature within a year after he lost the Chief Ministership and established a record by raising the charge-sheet of nepotism, corruption and irresponsibility against a number of ministers and demanding an open enquiry. The Andhra Provincial Congress Committee and I myself pleaded with the National Working Committee to order an enquiry.

Jawaharlalji resisted that demand on the spacious ground that it would demoralise the ministers and weaken people's faith in Congress ministries. Prakasam would not accept that apologia. He crossed the floor in the Assembly and moved the vote of no-confidence and spoke for hours over days substantiating his charges. He reminded us of Edmund Burke arraigning Warren Hastings. So I was able to tell the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in New Zealand in 1965 that India's political conscience was alive to ministerial corruption and had raised its warning against it within a couple of years after Swaraj.

Prakasam deserves credit for having been the first to do so. He drew our nation's attention to the indispensability of checking corruption and misuse of power without fear or favour. Thus pre- and post-Indepedence India is deeply indebted to that Romanesque tribune, Prakasam.

TRAGIC NOTE

The morally superior and unassailable stand for integrity and high scruples in public life as expected of ministers and as voiced by Prakasam in his attack on them in the Madras Assembly, inspired me to dare to incur the displeasure of Jawaharlalji, Rajenbabu, Sardar, Azad and Rajaji by making it impossible for them to take the contemplated disciplinary action against that venerable statesman for having so publicly exposed the indisciplined and



Shaik Md. Abdullah, Prakasam, Deviji, Rangaji and Ramanandtirtha at Jaipur Congerss

Smt. Bharati Devi and Rangaji

corrupt ministers. Rajaji was generous enough to congratulate me the next day for my loyalty to my friend Prakasam.

Thanks to the perspicacious initiative of Munshiji, Parliament has at last come to realise the need for some such special parliamentary institution as the Swedish Ombudsman to checkmate corruption at Cabinet levels.

When the Andhra State was formed in 1953 the Communists formed the single largest group. Jawaharlalji was at his wits' end as to how to manoeuvre his party into power. Then I suggested that if Prakasam, the leader of the Praja Party, was invited to become the Chief Minister, I would advice our Peasants Party (Krishikar-Lok) to join the Coalition. Though it went against his grain and proud as he was, Jawaharlalji agreed to let Prakasam become the Chief Minister. But I could not accede to Prakasam's earnest request to join him in the ministy and be next in command, since I was reluctant to abandon Parliamentary arena at Delhi.

He joined us in 1955, though he was past 80 years, in campaigning against the Communist challenge to capture the majority on behalf of the United Congress embracing his Praja Party, Krishikar-Lok and Congress and not the Congress of Jawaharlalji alone. Just after over one year, Telangana came to be added to Andhra to form Andhra Pradesh and Prakasam lived to see that also.

On the issue of formation of Andhra State on linguistic basis, Kondaji, Desodharaka, Pattabhi, Sastri and Prakasam worked for years. Even after political opportunities appeared to make its earlier advent possible, Andhra State could not be formed because of Prakasam's insistence upon the inclusion of Madras or part of it in Andhra and the equally powerful opposition to it by all the leaders of Tamil Nad. The Gordian knot was sundered by the soul-stirring sacrifice of Potti Sreeramulu and the impetuous uprising of Andhras in its wake. All were then agreed on the formation of Andhra State.

PUNJAB KISAN LEADERS

CHOWDARY CHOTU RAM, KABUL SINGH, SARDAR BAHADUR LAL SINGH, UDDHAM SINGH NAGOKI, DARSHAN SINGH PHERUMAN, BASANT SINGH.

In my efforts to raise the Kisan movement and build the All India Kisan Congress, I toured several times through all the States ever since 1935. I found the earliest response, on a broad basis, in Punjab, that is, apart from my own Andhra ! That was mostly due to the work that the famous Jat leader, Chotu Ram had done in awakening kisans, Hindus, Moslems and Sikhs, against the rapacity of merchants and money-lenders.

SIR CHOTU RAM

Sir Chotu Ram of Rohtak, the veteran leader of agriculturists of Punjab and Rajasthan preferred to give a higher priority to kisan's fight for peasant proprietorship and for remunerative prices, etc., than to the national struggle for freedom from the British, because he was convinced that even after the advent of Swaraj, kisans' problems would continue to challenge our statesmanship. On the other hand, I felt that the achievement of Swaraj would facilitate immensely the solution of economic and political problems of kisans.

Chotu Ram and I used to meet in Lahore and Simla, as we shared our love for kisans. But our political choices were wide apart, I being an ardent Congressman and he being associated with the ministry.

In Punjab of the 1880-1940 Lalas were generally money-lenders and merchants whereas Chowdaris or Jats, Guzzars, Yadavs were mostly agriculturists. As is even

w the fate of most of our kisans or agriculturists all over India, the Punjab agriculturists were being exploited, squeezed between the scissors of usurous rates of interest on their debts and too low prices for their agricultural produce. The merchants and money-lenders, that is, the Lalas of Punjab developed the special practice of purchasing kisans' lands, in satisfaction of the non-repayable loans advanced to kisans and then engaged their former debtors our kisans as their tenants-at-will for the cultivation of what had been the latters' ancestral means of self-employment or living. At the same time, the Lalas were deriving their usual profits through the purchase and sale of agricultural produce. For a long time kisans did not realise the inequity of this system of continuous process of their impoverishment. It was the special privilege of Chowdary Chotu Ram to have worked successfully, as his life-mission, for the liberation of kisans from this stranglehold.

When he commenced this work for kisans, most of the politically-minded Lalas were under the influence of the famous patriot and freedom fighter Lala Lajpatrai. So they joined the Congress and bravely faced the repression, unleashed against them. The late Mr. Darling, I.C.S., who studied the economic conditions and needs of Punjab agriculturists and published his authoritative monographs (to whit, Punjab peasant, In Prosperity and Debt) advised the British Government of Punjab to hasten to protect peasants as against the Lalas and their systems of exploitation. So Chotu Ram and his supporters came to be favoured by the British administrators and their efforts to help peasants began to bear fruit. Just like the non-Brahmin politicians of Madras and Bombay, the leaders of agriculturists of Punjab, led by Chotu Ram decided to take advantage of the political patronage extended by the British in order to immediately protect the kisan masses, though they too must have cherished patriotic ambitions for Swaraj. They were all afraid that the Congress leaders who failed to champion their cause either in political or

economic sphere and who drew their principal strength from the politically dominant non-agricultural classes and who were entrenched in the highly profitable and powerful administrative services and industries and commerce might favour only their economic masters. So they preferred to sail with the political masters and wished to gain economic liberation from Lalas or merchants.

Chotu Ram proceeded to persuade the British Government of Punjab to repeal the special Punjab Land Laws and return to peasants lands which were mortgaged indefinitely or alienated to merchants who were also usurious money-lenders. The Congress Party in the then Punjab Legislative Assembly found itself obliged to oppose the amendment bills, as much because they were official bills as also because they affected the interests of their favourite Lalas. Chotu Ram inveighed against that aspect of Congress activity. It was at that stage, he befriended me because he found that I was energetically pleading for reorientation of Congress policy in favour of peasants. We found that our views in regard to economic needs of peasants were the same though our political approaches were diametrically opposed to each other. I pleaded with Gandhiji and Gokulchand Bhargav, the leader of Punjab Congress that we could gain the support and heart of kisan Punjab, not by blindly opposing all the legislation proposed by the British administrators and their allies among agriculturists but by offering discriminative support for such bills as were calculated to benefit the masses and especially kisans. Chotu Ram knew how difficult it was for me to persuade Gandhiji to direct Punjab Congress leaders or to avoid being pulled up by Sadar Patel at the behest of Punjab Congress leaders for what might appear, at first glance, as pro-British moves. When in the end Pandit Gopichand and his pro-peasant colleagues, Mr. Sethi and Mohanlal agreed to let the agrarian bills be passed by the Assembly, Chotu Ram conceded that the National Congress could work for the salvaging of kisans.

He was however not prepared to join the Congress. So he continued his alliance with the Muslims and buttressed Unionist Party. He was recognised to be the most powerful stalwart among its leaders. Though he continued to be its Deputy Leader in name, he actually led it into electoral victory, as against Congress on one side and Muslim League of Jinnah on the other.

Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, the leader of his party and Chief Minister held him in such high veneration that he dared to defy quite successfully Mr. Jinnah, the all-India leader of the Muslim League. They both stood for joint electorates and opposed Jinnah's demand for Pakistan. They demanded Swaraj for United India with effective autonomy for the constituent States. Such was the patriotic role played by Chotu Ram. Alas, he passed away just as India was on the threshold of Swaraj and Punjab's unionist party failed to withstand Mr. Jinnah's triumphant march towards Pakistan and India lost its most powerful champion of United India from that strategic Punjab.

SARDAR KABUL SINGH

Sardar Kabul Singh, M.L.A., was the first big kisan in Punjab to offer me his co-operation in 1935 in developing the Kisan movement, as distinguished from the late Chowdary Chotu Ram's agriculturists' organisation. The distinction between these two organisations lay in their attitude towards the British regime and the order of priority given to the kisan's demands.

Master Kabul Singh believed in my approach and so he joined me in developing Kisan Congress in Punjab. We aided Chotu Ram in his efforts to get many anti-kisan Acts repealed, by persuading Congress Assembly Party to support his bills.

The Master was a great freedom fighter and went to jail many a time to strengthen our national struggle. Yet he was dissatisfied, like me with the political leadership of

the Congress in its attitude towards kisans. For twel years, i.e., from 1935 to 1947 he continued to work with me. He had been to Canada and the U.S.A. and wanted our kisans to achieve similar economic strength and political influence. When he was in the Assembly, he worked for the legislative protection for peasants against money-lenders.

UDDHAM SINGH NAGOKI, DARSHAN SINGH PHERUMAN

Sardar Jathedar Uddham Singh Nagoki and his aged comrade, Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman joined me in 1957-58, after having distinguished themselves in the Congress and Gurudwara and Sikh politics because they realised the inadequacy of national politics of Master Tara Singh and failure of the Congress-led legislatures to protect kisans from the growing collectivist trends within the Congress leadership. They felt unhappy over the failure of Congress ministries to protect kisans from the ravages of controls, and compulsory procurement of foodgrains at unremunerative prices. They were aghast at the urban people's one-sided attack upon the size of peasant holdings despite the terrible sufferings borne by so many Punjabi kisans, caused by the partition. They knew how I had been fighting for kisans since 1935 and used to meet me whenever I was in Punjab. When they found that I was ready to organise public protest against the Nagpur decision of Congress (1959) against peasant proprietorship; they rallied to my side. Both Nagoki and Pheruman, who were then members of the Rajya Sabha, risked their membership of the Parliament by refusing to toe the Nehru line. Sardar Basant Singh their young colleague declined the offer made by Punjab Chief Minister to become the Director of Rural Development. All the three of them decided upon offering vigorous resistance to Congress campaign for co-operative farming. They organised the historic mammoth Kisan Conference at Doraha in February, 1959

which challenged the Congress plan for driving kisans into compulsive co-operative farming. When Swatantra platform was formed by us in June, 1959, they were among the first to join it in Punjab and they have proved to be popular champions of the kisan cause.

SARDAR BASANT SINGH

Sardar Basant Singh lived and died as a martyr to the cause of agriculturists, so much like his leader, Darshan Singh Pheruman. Like all Sikhs, he was devoted to the Akali Dal. He supported and worked for separate Punjab State. But he devoted his major resources to peasants' welfare.

Just as he was getting into public life Chief Minister Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon was fascinated by Basant Singh's genuine concern for agriculturists and his enterprising spirit. So he chose him as one of the farmer youths to be sent abroad, for studying farming methods and farm organisations.

As luck would have it, Shri C. Bali Reddi, MP, who had been closely associated with me and Peasant Institute and Andhra Kisan Congress and its leaders K. Obulu Reddi, P. Timma Reddi, who rose to be ministers, happened to be the leader of that Farm Youths group and he persuaded Basant Singh to take live interest in the political aspects of the peasant movement. He gained much knowledge and self-confidence as a result of that world tour. When Jawaharlalji threatened to inaugurate a national campaign for driving peasants into co-operative farms and I voiced my protest against that disastrous move, Basant Singh quickly got into touch with me. Thus commenced our twelve-year long comradeship on the kisan and political fronts.

Basant Singh was tall, cheerful and business-like. He was disciplined and dynamic like most Sikhs. He had great confidence in his life's mission and displayed rare

sense of loyalty and devotion to me and Rajaji, once he joined the Swatantra cause.

It took him some hard calculation before he could reconcile himself to oppose ceilings. Like all of us, the progressives, he did not have much objection to ceilings, but he insisted, like all of us, that such ceilings should be imposed more or less simultaneously on all propertied classes, rural and urban, agricultural and industrial and professional. He decided to oppose ceilings, as a matter of political tactics, in order to maximise support for peasant's fight against their (a) discriminatory imposition of ceilings upon agriculturists alone, (b) and also at too low a level of holdings, as had then been proposed by Jawaharlalji. He raised the banner of revolt on behalf of Punjab and Haryana peasants and invited me to preside over that mammoth demonstration at Doraha.

Young and ideologically wide-awake as he was, Basant Singh brought into existence, with those noble seniors in the forefront, the Dehati Lok Party to fight on the political plane, the threat of co-operativisation of agriculture and consequent proletarianisation of the self-employed peasantry. He had immense faith in me and used to strengthen my hands in my efforts to give a rural touch and peasant-orientation to the activities of Swatantra Party. He used to tolerate the passion of our urban colleagues for private enterprise only to the extent that it would be non-exploitative. He was conscious of the piquant humour inherent in that uncomfortable coalition.

He was equally proficient in speaking, touring, organising and drafting the challenges of peasants. His world tour had prepared him for this expanding, all-round role of independent leadership.

Basant Singh was far-sighted. He began to canvass for and gain the support of Master Tara Singh, the renowned and uncrowned veteran leader of Sikhs and also the goodwill of Sant Fateh Singh, the next most powerful Akali leader.

So when he, along with Uddham Singh Nagoki, Pheruman and Lal Singh, decided to organise the Punjab wing of Swatantra Party, he saw to it that the blessings and general goodwill of the Akali leadership would be assured for our political activity. He assured them in a statesmanlike manner that the Swatantra aspect of peasant movement would not in any way run counter to their Akali politics. Rajaji and I appreciated those moves and encouraged him to secure all the strength of the great Akali movement for our peasants' struggle for social justice. On his advice, we met Master Tara Singh to gain support for kisans' fight against co-operative farming and later Sant Fateh Singh for support for the campaign against Seventeenth Amendment and thanks to his influence with them, we obtained their wholehearted support. Uddham Singh Nagoki, who had once been the chief of the Siromani Akali Dal, was happy over Basant Singh's efforts to gain the support of the whole of Akali Dal for peasants cause. In 1962 and 1967 general elections Swatantra Party fared badly but the powerful Akali Dal made the cause of peasants its own and so, ultimately the peasant masses triumphed, thanks to Basant's statesmanlike comeraderie with the leaders of the Sikhs as a whole.

Thanks to his winsome and impressive ways, Basant Singh played a much bigger role than what could have been provided by the infant and limping Swatantra. His happy relations with the Master and Sant helped the Swatantra leaders, Nagoki and Pheruman. He was the only M.L.A. officially representing us but successive Chief Ministers and leaders of other parties were glad to co-operate and consult him as if he were the leader of a host of MLAs.

Basant Singh did his best to strengthen the demand for a separate Punjab State, worked in close co-operation with both the Master and the Sant and was extremely happy when the formation of Punjab State was decided upon by Lal Bahadur Shastri.

He was wise, beyond his years. He was almost a statesman by birth as it were. He was shaping himself as a self-reliant, popular leader of the masses. He was learning how to utilise the quasi-religious political atmosphere of all non-Communists to protect and promote the interests of self-employed peasants. Just at that juncture, fate took him away. India has thus lost a brilliant, and self-sacrificing promising peasant leader of all India stature. I have lost one of my right hand kisan comrades.

SARDAR BAHADUR LAL SINGH

The most effective intellectual challenge was mounted, from among non-political ranks, simultaneously with our struggle from within the Congress, by Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh, formerly the Director of Agriculture (Punjab), Agricultural Commissioner of Government of India and at that time an Adviser to the Planning Commission. He was aided in this by equally experienced, eminent colleagues, such as the late retired Chief Justice of India, Mahajan, Shri B. Ramachandra Reddy, ex-M.P., former President of Madras Legislative Council and Shri Jinraj Hegde of Karnatak, former member of Parliament and self-sacrificing and dynamic champion of agriculturists and one of the founders of All India Agriculturists Federation, which founded the Swatantra Party to protect peasants.

Sardar Bahadur made a big name as an able and effective parliamentarian during the five years of his parliamentary career. He was scholarly in his speeches, eloquent and vehement in his exposition and forceful in his presentation of the case of peasants for protection and remunerative prices.

The redoubtable Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the then Food Minister who was also known as a champion of the masses, winced visibly whenever his policies regarding sugar manufacturers and cane growers were criticised and condemned mercilessly by Lal Singh, with all the experience of a renowned agricultural scientist and with the authority of the Chairman of the Statutory Sugar Development Committee. He demonstrated how sugar manufacturers were

profiteering at the cost of cane growers and demanded higher and remunerative prices for cane.

I was struck with the Sardar's genuine fervour and attachment to the cause of our agriculturists. During my previous twenty-five years of parliamentary life, I could not come across among MPs such another first-rate intellectual, devoted so sincerely to the cause of our agriculturists. So I sought him out and gained his valuable comradeship and he was just as keen on joining forces with me. He and Jinraj Hegde published the "Rural Voice" the English fortnightly and carried on a vigorous fight for the peasants' rights for their holdings and self-employment and I supported them.

But he forgot the simple political axiom of keeping himself on the right side of his prop, that is, the Gurudwara Akali leadership and the Congress who were responsible for his election to Parliament and so, he found it impossible to be returned to Parliament in 1957. When he was not in Parliament, he failed to realise the need to continually nurse his constituency and be a whole-time public worker. He could not reconcile himself to the comparatively non-intellectual ways of public workers. So he accepted with alacrity the offer made by the Planning Commission to become one of its advisers. Would he be content with that ? Could he smother his conscience ? Of course not. He raised a veritable crusade against Jawaharlalji's campaign for imposing ceilings on land holdings alone because his sense of fairplay was outraged by that one-sided attack against peasants. He questioned why the future of rural youths alone should be blighted by imposition of ceilings, when other classes were not to be limited by any such ceilings on the quantum, type and degree of non-agricultural properties and earnings.

The credit goes largely to Sardar Bahadur and Hegde for having induced the ailing and aged statesman, Rajaji, to agree first to give his messages, next to address a public protest meeting in Delhi and then consent to bless a special all India meeting of agricultural leaders to be convened

by the All India Agriculturists Federation. That meeting held in Madras on the 4th June, 1959 in which Rajaji announced his decision to come once again into political arena, primarily to protect peasants and generally to champion freedom from the control regime of Nehru was largely the achievement of Lal Singh and Jinraj Hegde. That meeting led the way for the formation of Swatantra Party to protect self-employed masses.

That was a bold venture. I do not know if Lal Singhji had been prepared for such a radical move. On many a previous occasion, when he was asking me to play a prominent role in that agitation, I used to warn him that unless we could have a few such experienced and dynamic leaders like himself who would be willing to offer their whole-time services without being in any way dependent upon Nehru's frowns or favours, it would be futile to make a frontal political attack on the one-sided land policies of Congress. He was not then willing to commit himself. I knew how difficult it would be for him, who was an Adviser to the Planning Commission, drawing more than Rs. 2,000 per mensem and also to so many Members of Parliament from Andhra, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan who used to assure me of their loyalty to our common cause of kisans to run the risk of being victimised politically by the Congress.

Lal Singh remained true to his professions and loyally chose to join our comradeship, and lost his valuable connections with Government. That was indeed a great sacrifice, especially for such a distinguished scientist with life-long tradition of loyalty to Government and attachment to the top-most social and economic conveniences.

In contrast with his sacrifices, there were the cases of so many fellow kisan MPs and Ministers at Delhi and MLAs and ministers at State capitals, who while acknowledging their rise in political life to peasant movement, failed to join me and the Sardars an Kisan Sammelan and Agricultural Federation in our fight against Nehru's challenge to peasant's fundamental right to own and cultivate their holdings and enjoy freedom of self-employment.

RADHAKRISHNAN — PHILOSOPHER - STATESMAN

[Radhakrishnan — born on 5-9-1888 in Tiruttani; Professor of Philosophy in Madras, Mysore, Calcutta, 1921-39; also splading Professor in Oxford, 1936-1952; Vice-Chancellor of Andhra, Banaras Universities; President of UNESCO, 1952; Chairman of its Execu.ive Board, 1948; Ambassador to USSR, 1949-52; Hon. Fellow of British Academy 1962; Vice-President 1952-62; President 1962-67; recipient of British Order of Merit 1963, Bharat Ratna 1954; author of more than score of authoritative books on Indian philosophy; C. E. M. Joad edited a volume on "Philosophy of Radhakrishna" in 1931.— Ed.]

Radhakrishnan's name has become a household name in India because he was the Rashtrapati for five years, Upa-Rashtrapati for previous ten years and was confidently expected by most politically-minded people during his tenure as Vice-President to succeed Rashtrapati Rajendra Prasad. That he was a world-renowned philosopher for decades was known to millions. His tenure as India's second Ambassador in Moscow was distinguished for the first longish interview granted to an Indian Ambassador by Joseph Stalin and also for eliciting the quizzical query from that earthly-minded dictator as to how many men-of-war on the sea and how many mechanised divisions of the army could India marshall in any conflict. That he should have gained that much recognition from Stalin recommended him to Indian Communists, who too supported his election.

That privilege of choosing a non-politician and that too a famous philosopher to such very high elective posts as Vice-President and President of a democratic Republic was shared with India by Czechoslovakia alone. Both Jawaharlal and Sardar made that unique choice and Radhakrishnan brought great credit to them, the elected members of the Indian legislatures and Indian Republic by the dignity and distinction with which he held those positions.

Radhakrishnan like the ancient Rishis of India, has given philosophical interpretations to the political aims and

achievements of the contemporary rulers, through his fascinating and illustrative speeches. His very quiet movements, in that long coat, with that snow-white turban, strengthened by that soft smile lent a glamour to his exalted position and made us feel the presence of a benediction from the Gods.

Radhakrishnan presided over the first Rajya Sabha with dignity and distinction and endowed it with a special status, which does not usually accrue to such a second Chamber. Even the irrepressible Bhupesh Gupta, leader of the Communist group, who was insistent upon following his own rules of the debate was disciplined without loss of face for him and much to the relief of the exasperated members of the Sabha. He knew whom to honour and whom to encourage. Not once were those of us, the senior Parliamentarians made to feel his displeasure nor did any shy junior or rising star lack timely encouragement during his expert professorial chairmanship.

Dr. Kunzru, Dr. Ambedkar, Ramaswamy Mudaliar, Malkani, C. G. K. Reddi, Rukmini Arundale, Narendra Dev and several of us of the Left used to be in that first Rajya Sabha. Radhakrishnan used his great influence with Jawaharlalji and Cabinet Ministers to ensure that debates were held first in Rajya Sabha, whenever possible on almost all important occasions or discussions, through call-attentions, short-notice questions and two-hour talks were arranged to place Rajya Sabha's thoughts and role prominently before the press and public.

As Rashtrapati, he took lively interest in all the vital debates and discussions in both the Houses of the Parliament, thanks to the mike at his bed and desks; his quick and careful reading of the daily press reports and his competent secretaries. In the course of our interviews with him, many of us were tickled by his pertinent quotations from our speeches, and he thus used to encourage and provoke the leaders of parties and prominent Parliamentarians to do their work efficiently, with the feeling that Rashtra-

pati's ears and eyes would be revetted on us. Members of Parliament, even Ministers, had many an occasion to wonder how he managed to be so alert about their speeches in Parliament as to pick out the most piquant or telling expression in their speeches merely by hearing from a mike fixed in his room and switched on to Parliament. Like so many other members I was also confronted by his quotations from some of my speeches. One day he referred to my discovery of, "Cancerous fingers of China seeking to clutch at India," and then bewailed "we seem to be unable to shake them off". Another time, he exclaimed that "we all wish to cling to power unto the last", after admiring my courage in criticising the Prime Minister for clinging to office even after that terrible debacle over Chinese invasion; as if the hunger for power even after seventeen years of it was not appeased. Yet, on another occasion he admired Mahabir Tyagi's cutting intervention, "I have not a hair on my head, does that mean I can lose my head ?" in defence of my criticism over the loss of Aksai Chin to the Chinese and Prime Minister's reply that not a blade of grass grows there. In this way Radhakrishnan used to inspire MPs. No wonder Smt. Indira Gandhi, wrote to him "Delhi would not be the same without your presence" when he threatened to leave after his first term of Vice-Presidentship. This could be echoed with greater resonance by all of us after he left Delhi in 1967.

Radhakrishnan felt miserable at the rapid fall in the standards of service among public workers, the spread of corruption in the ruling Party and among its satraps at State and Central levels. He used his great influence to press and persuade Jawaharlalji to shed his personal secretary and drop a Cabinet Minister. When he found that the canker was becoming almost universal, he administered the shock to the nation by drawing national attention to the prevalence of a "Crisis of Character". It was after that Dr. Deshmukh's complaint about prevalence of corruption in high circles and Punjabis' protests against Pratap Singh Kairon's arbitrariness attracted the special scru-

tiny at the highest level.

Rashtrapati's role as the effective friend, philosopher and guide of the Prime Minister, Parliament and even of Defence Forces received special emphasis during Chinese invasion of India.

Though he used to talk to us, sitting in his bed, with his shirt on and with his legs covered with rugs against the cold, we felt as if he was the Knight templar, armed with the most powerful weapons, inspiring us to be in the vanguard and lead our national forces against the aggressors; so fiary were his phrases, so stimulating were his looks and so shining was his patriotism. It was with that ennobling devotion to Mother India, he stirred all of us, from Jawaharlal to the newest MP, to stand united by India and shed our mutual ill-feelings however bitterly we had harboured them and strengthen the armed forces and patriotic phalanxes. His presence added special strength to so many of us to press Parliament and its leader, Jawaharlalji, to change the leadership of the armed forces at the front and also in the Cabinet. It was in that atmosphere that I deplored the failure of Parliament and the majority party to dismiss the Prime Minister for his failures to provide effective leadership.

He too observed the corrosion of social standards caused by the operation of quotas, licences, and permits and appreciated the agreement of Home Minister Nanda with our demand for their administration by a quasi-judicial independent commission. He admired Rajaji's campaign against Licence-Permit-Quota Raj. So he hastened to strength the will of Government to implement Home Minister's proposal. He was all in favour of Shri Munshi's suggestion for the adoption of the Swedish precedent of Ombudsman to sift, study and decide upon complaints of corruption and obvious cases of partiality and discrimination indulged in by ministers and high officials. As President he could only advise, warn and influence the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues and secretaries and he exercised those functions to good effect. Fortunately,

Premier Nehru genuinely respected him and sought his advice.

Radhakrishnan paid State visits to many a country all over the world, presented the foreign policy of non-alignment of Indian Government, pleaded for world peace, strengthened the United Nations and world cause of humanism. Even those who were not so friendly towards our Premier and Defence Minister Krishna Menon and who did not appreciate India's role in the U.N.O. Assembly agreed to try to understand sympathetically, the special reasons for our standpoint, because of their respect for him. His supreme position in the world order of high intellectuals and his contributions to the universal cultural development through the UNESCO, as its revered Chairman helped India considerably. Thus, the warmth lacking in our foreign policy of non-alignment and the want of resilience and forwardness in the chiefs of our embassies were made good by the saintly, scholarly dealings and bonhommie that he extended spontaneously to world's statesmen.

Radhakrishnan became famous as an Indian philosopher by 1925. He was then Professor at Calcutta University. He had been Professor of Philosophy successively in the Pachaiappa's College, in which I became Professor in 1927, and in Mysore University, before he was picked up for university professorship by Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, the great Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. In course of time, he became the ablest and most popular interpreter of Hindu philosophy to the West. His treatment of various philosophical approaches of Indian religious leaders from Vedic Rishis; Buddha down to three Acharyas was hailed as the best and most illuminating. He became the Scalding Professor of Comparative Religions at Oxford. I used to meet him in the All-Souls whenever I visited Oxford.

Mrs. Ranga and I met him in Oxford in 1926, when he came there for the first time to deliver six lectures in the Manchester College as Visiting Professor on the invitation of the equaly famous Principal Jacks. My friend V. S. Krishna who was studying philosophy also told me about his writings and I prepared myself by reading his book on the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore before I sought an interview with him. The seven Andhras who were then studying at Oxford met him and felt proud of his academic distinctions and his achievement of the unique honours in the Oxford University.

His first lecture was attended by not more than a hundred people; half of whom were the lecturers and professors. Students at Oxford generally do not attend such special lectures and that was the annual sports week, which had the first attraction for students. But the deep erudition, excellent English diction, silvery flow of oration, which enriched the fascinating exposition that Radhakrishnan began to offer for the "Hindu View of Life" captivated the audience so much that it trebled itself for his second lecture and for the last two lectures, bigger lecture halls had to be arranged. Many exclaimed that this Radhakrishnan became as great an attraction as Regatta of the Boat Races. As I was a keen student of Vivekananda, Ram Tirtha and a devotee of Mahatma Gandhi after the fashion of Telugu poet Potana's Maha Bhagavatam, I found a special fascination and understanding of the trend and core of Radhakrishnan's lectures. So I ventured to write two long articles on his speeches to the Andhra Patrika, then the only Telugu daily catering to the Andhra people. And I was fortunate to be congratulated by him for fully reflecting the general trend of the special presentation he made of the "Hindu View of Life", the title of the book of those lectures. He was good enough to refer to those articles of mine, in 1962, when he accepted my congratulations on his election as our Rashtrapati. He is

a good friend, lively conversationalist and refreshingly worldly and realistic for a philosopher.

Radhakrishna is gifted with the marvellous memory, which is a special gift of Indian Sanskrit scholars. He could memorise, without any special effort, such poems, paragraphs, dialogues and special sayings of Rishis and modern philosophers as attract his attention and quote them most appropriately in his speeches. It is a treat to listen to his speeches — ever so brief and eloquent. However mundane the occasion, howsoever simple the subject, he would raise its level and embellish it with his noble touch.

It is rarely that a philosopher of his eminence attains such political positions in a democratic Republic and Jawaharlal and Rajaji must have wished to rise to his intellectual heights. It is even more unique for a politician like Jawaharlal or Rajaji, who rose to those peaks of political power to appreciate and invite such a philosopher to the unique position as Rashtrapati. It was the good fortune of India.

In conclusion, let me add a personal note about how he did a favour to me.

When a Parliamentary delegation was being sent to Soviet Russia and Yugoslavia in 1955 he succeeded in persuading Jawaharlal to overcome the hesitations of Communist Russia and made me join it. At that time I was looked upon as bete noire by international Communist front, especially for my key role in defeating Communist bid to gain majority in the Andhra Assembly in interim elections of 1955.

To go to Russia and study what had been achieved there by Lenin, Stalin and their followers for peasants and workers by way of social revolution, had been my ambition ever since 1921-22 when I read Betrand Russel's "Roads to Freedom" and also his bitter criticism of the Soviet

dictatorship and the reports of Tagore and Jawaharlal about their visits as published in "Modern Review". My desire to visit USSR was intensified by Webb's great book on "Soviet Communism", Solokhov's monumental novels. Many non-Soviet books later warned me that peasants were persecuted, degraded and given a subordinate place in their social economy. It was to prevent similar degradation of our peasants, through similar Soviet methods, that I joined hands with International Peasants Union and carried on my decades-long campaign against collectivisation of agriculture. So I was naturally keen on going to Russia, once such a possibility appeared on our political horizon, when an Indian Parliamentary delegation was invited by Russia.

Radhakrishnan was very much pleased with my report. He said that Jawaharlal was struck with its objectivity and added "after all Ranga has been a Socialist". He was happy that the Socialists and the Communists were also satisfied with it. When he passed away, full of honours, and rich in age in 1973 the whole world mourned his death.

RAFI AHMED KIDWAI

Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was one of the best patriots and politicians. He was one of the ablest administrators among the Freedom Fighters whom Jawaharlal Nehru was able to gain for close comradeship during his Prime Ministership.

Rafi Saheb was the Akbar-type of a statesman-cum-politician. He gained the friendship of the politicians as well as statesmen of all communities. More Hindus were attached to him and they were equally valued by him. Indeed he was known to be the best friend of the low as well as the high among all castes and they loved him as loyally, whether he was in power or out of favour with those in power. I came into close contact with him during those pre-war days when Sardar Patel was on war path against those of us who were developing class organisations and who were more attached to Subash Babu. He had always been a great friend of Jawaharlal Nehru. Some said they were political twins of U.P., whom Motilal Nehru nurtured with great affection. Motilalji had greater confidence in his worldly wisdom and so hoped that he would keep Jawaharlal tethered to political realism. But Rafi was more impressed with the fearless and clear frontage presented by Subash towards Congress Establishments than with the Hamlet like hesitations of Jawaharlal.

So many of my friends like Palliwalji, Mohanlal Saxena, Mahabir Tyagi, Sucheta, Kripalani, Shibbanlal Saxena, A. P. Jain with whom I used to work on the kisan, youths, students fronts and those among the so-called 'Congress left' were passionately attached to Rafi. They used to narrate how on so many occasions he used to go to the rescue of Congress Leftists whenever they were in trouble with the authorities of the Provincial Congress Committee of U.P. for their many dare-devil activities. On the other hand Jawaharlal would neither restrain them in time from many of their anti-party activities nor protect

them from the wrath of the Congress elders. Yet both Rafi and Jawaharlal used to be on the best of terms and in great good humour with all their friends ever on the brink of indiscipline. Many a time Rafi went to jail defying the British Government, equally frequently he used to defy the Congress High Command's advices. He was the storm petrel who dared to liken Sardar Vallabhbhai's dictats to those of Fascists. When K. F. Nariman of Bombay and N. B. Khare of Nagpur were disciplined, it was Rafi who courageously championed their cause. When Subash Bose ventured to stand in 1939 for re-election to Congress Presidentship despite the advices of Gandhiji and even Jawaharlal, it was Rafi who openly championed Subash's defiance and acclaimed his re-election. When Subash Bose was also disciplined and expelled from Congress, it was he who deplored it and warned the country against the growing fascist leanings of Congress High Command. His was a gourilla-role within the Congress Party and his followers were so much attached to him that they were content to keep faith with him even when they were disciplined by the Congress and were obliged to remain outside the Congress or join opposition parties such as the Socialists of KMPP while he himself was able to be one of the most powerful Cabinet Ministers at the Centre. He encouraged us to go to Patna in 1951 to take part in the conference of oppositionists and found the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (KMPP) under the leadership of Acharya Kripalani and allowed himself to be nominated or to be considered as a member of its organising committee while all the time continuing to remain in the Central Cabinet. When Congress President Tandonji obliged Nehru to ask Rafi to make his choice between Cabinet and rivalry with Congress, he resigned from the Congress in a nonchalant manner. When few months thereafter, he found that the KMPP could not gain much strength and his bosom friend Nehru invited him to return to Congress and Central Cabinet he joined them just as readily as if to go in or out was only a matter of political sport and the Socialists on one side and KMPP

on the other continued to be happy with his political gymnastics. Once Palliwalji and several equally prominent leaders with high reputations as Freedom Fighters were disciplined for the mere sin of protesting to the All India Congress Committee (AICC) against the disciplinary action proposed to be taken by the P.C.C. Rafi Saheb was in great sympathy with them, both when they incurred the displeasure of the PCC and also when they defied it, by appealing against its action against them but both he and Jawaharlal failed to persuade the Congress Parliamentary Board or the Working Committee to save them. Yet, none of them complained against Rafi nor did they ask him also to resign from the Congress as they had done, because of their complete confidence in his leadership. And he reciprocated their affection and loyalty without any fear of disciplinary action from the Congress. He used to find financial support for his friends whenever they thought fit to stand against official Congress candidates and helped them otherwise also so that they could win. Many a time he was accused of such anti-party activities and he used to bravely remark that the official candidates were so undesirable as to deserve defeat. True, he had Jawaharlal at his back to help him out of such scrapes but it needed so much courage, comeraderie and self-confidence to stand so solidly by his erstwhile Congress colleagues. In earlier pre-British times, Rafi would have made as good a leader as Akbar, in the way in which he was loved by his non-Moslem friends and colleagues.

Rafi knew how much I was fond of Jawaharlalji. But he appreciated my fight against the food controls and policy of compulsory procurement of foodgrains at unremunerative prices. He knew that I was a Socialist like himself and Jawaharlal but that I did not want kisans, who were the producers of foodgrains and all other agricultural products to be treated as hoarders or blackmarketeers and turned into law-breakers in marketing their own produce. He used to press me to accept Jawaharlal's invitation to assume Food Ministership and demonstrate how I could

satisfy Jawaharlal's demand to feed the urban people, and under-nourished masses while protecting peasants. I used to challenge him to undertake that responsibility as he enjoyed the fullest confidence of his friend Jawaharlal, whereas every move I might make would be suspect in the eyes of urban-minded Jawaharlal. When eventually I left the Congress in 1951 and worked conjointly with Shri Prakasam and prevented Congress in Madras in 1952 from regaining its majority, Rafi posed the challenge to me, whether I would help the Congress Party to regain majority by letting the Krishikar-Lok Party to support it, if he would undertake Food Portfolio and withdraw the food controls. I gladly agreed to his poseur, offered to support Congress Legislature Party, if it could be led by Rajaji, renowned for his incorruptibility and efficiency and if Rajaji also would offer to help in the abolition of food controls. For some years past Rafi and Rajaji were not on too friendly terms nor was Jawahar too keen on Rajaji reassuming Chief Ministership of Madras. Yet Rafi used all his persuasive comradeship with Jawaharlal to achieve what seemed to be the most impossible developments. That is, Rajaji to assume Chief Ministership, myself to stand by him, himself to become the Central Food Minister. Then he worked quietly through the co-operation of Chief Ministers of major States to assure adequate supplies of foodgrains in all States and thus withdraw food controls without any risk of hunger deaths or too high prices of foodgrains. Such was the statesmanship and administrative capacity of Rafi the most reliable magician behind Jawaharlal.

The manner chosen by Rafi to tackle that highly sensitive question of food controls was so much like his usual gourilla-manoeuvre. Till then every State Government used to underestimate its local production and availability of foodgrains for urban centres and over-estimate its need for imports over the whole year or during the lean months. So the Food Ministry was obliged to fall back upon compulsory procurement on one side and imports on the other,

while States were demanding subsidies from the Centre in a competitive manner. Rafi began to go to each State, negotiate with the local ministers, in consultation with local heads of concerned departments and settle their demands, month by month for Central supplies and subsidies and thus make them agree to give up as much of the controls as possible and liberalise the price and procurement procedures. He found a great ally in the energetic, young kisan minister Dr. Chenna Reddy of Hyderabad. When Communist and other MPs were complaining in Parliament about his moves, he used to say that he was not withdrawing whatever controls would be found essential but that he would relax them only with the agreement of the States. For weeks and months he made himself unavailable at the Centre and steadily went on tackling that ticklish issue to the satisfaction of all concerned. When he turned to me for congratulations, I observed that he was able to achieve that triumph because State Governments did not dare complain to Prime Minister against his moves since he enjoyed the confidence of Jawaharlal. I asked him "would Jawaharlal have given me so much freedom for negotiating with States' Chief Ministers ?" He observed laughingly "Ranga, you live too much on the idealistic plane; I operate by burrowing into the political dens of these power-oriented ministers and officers. Whenever Jawahar used to taunt me that I was following Ranga's policies I used to humour him by observing that it is your Rafi who is keeping Ranga, your bete noire at bay". In that manner Rafi that great strategist used to serve the cause of the people, while making peace between the two rival idealists.

Rafi was supremely self-confident on the communal front. He proved to Jawahar that his 'mass contact' move could win over Moslems to the Congress by achieving majority in the U.P. elections in 1936. But he failed to lead Jawahar the right way, when Jawahar refused so obstinately to invite in 1937 Chowdari Khaliquizzaman the leader of the Muslim League of U.P. to join the State Mi-

nistry along with Rafi. That blunder led to the successive more and more anti-Congress policies and poseurs of the League, which culminated in the Moslem's irrevocable and irresistible demand for partition and Pakistan.

After Jawaharlal became the Prime Minister and Rafi joined the Central Cabinet, he failed to be as comradely and as confiding with Sardar Patel and Rajaji as with Jawaharlal. Somehow he could not be patient while those elders were rivalling with him in the inner-most circles of Jawaharlal; nor were the others wise enough to recognise and respect his affectionate primacy, in the confidence of the Prime Minister. So Sardar began to feel that his counsel was not being as much honoured and later Rajaji felt that his presence and advice were not as much utilised. The country's loss began to grow, as the Centre came to lose one after the other of them but Rafi did not gain so much as to make up that loss. All the time he was conscious of the inescapable truth that Jawaharlal's leadership was not becoming more and more effective to cope with the growing responsibilities, whatwith the rapidly swelling ranks of administrative echelons. So he began to wonder why he should not shoulder more prominent responsibilities, and thus supplement the national leadership. He replied in his characteristically confident manner to the question "who after Nehru" by quipping "why not myself". Jawaharlal took his reply in good humour and the country gloated over his cheerful self-confidence, as another evidence of bumptious genius of Rafi. But alas, he passed away in 1954 at the early age of 66; so suddenly by heart failure only a few days thereafter, as he was speeding by car to Delhi in his usual reckless manner from some underground haunt of his favourite Uttar Pradesh. The whole country mourned his death and Jawaharlal was left alone, so disconsolate. Chenna Reddy constructed the Rafi Cottage in the campus of Rajendra Agricultural University and New Delhi has named a street as Rafi Marg. He lives in the hearts of all freedom fighters as a jolly good fellow and hero of many a struggle in and outside British jails

RAGHUPATI VENKATARATNAM NAIDU, V. C., LLD.

PHILOSOPHER

Raghupati Venkatratnam was the doyen of Andhra Brahmos of the first three decades of this century. He was one of those brave cosmopolitans, like Veeresalingam, who chose Brahmo Samaj for advancing their socio-religious challenge to Hindu orthodoxy, its many puranic absurdities, irrational faiths and inhuman practices.

In those decades, there were so few Indian Professors of English in Indian Universities and their colleges, since Englishmen were alone believed to be competent to teach English literature. Even among those few Indian Professors of English, those who were recognised as good enough to teach Shakespeare were much fewer and Raghupati Venkatratnam had that rare distinction of being recognised — even by 1900-1910 — by English Professors as a brilliant teacher and speaker on English literature, especially on Shakespeare's dramas. I found his voice so carrying, his style of English so rich in similes and his total personality, as he stood and spoke from the platform even in his eighties so fascinating that I envied the good fortune of his students like Mutnuri Krishnarao, the famous philosopher and Telugu editor.

With that unique distinction to his credit, Raghupati Venkatratnam provided a special halo to his propagation of the teachings of Ram Mohan Roy, Keshab Chandra Sen, Debendranath Tagore and others of Brahmo Samaj. He strengthened the relentless campaign against casteism, initiated by Veeresalingam, his companion social revolu-

tionary. They together took by storm Andhra and South Indian Hindu priests and theologians. They hated many of the Hindu attitudes towards child-widows, untouchability and bans on propagation of education as such and in Sanskrit in particular among women, Sudras, other backward classes and untouchables. So they appealed to Indian intellectuals and caste leaders to look at everyone of Hindu beliefs, sayings, taboos and practices from the viewpoint of humanism and either oppose or discard everything that tended to degrade a human being. They preached that every human being, irrespective of his social origin or wealth, must be adored and loved as the beloved son of God.

It was in pursuance of this noble faith, Raghupati, who had no children of his own, adopted a few daughters (orphans) of untouchable parents, long before Mahatma Gandhi reached that level of castelessness and brought them up as his own beloved children. He endowed them as well with whatever property and social status that he had come to possess. He got them married to respectable and highly educated youths, who also embraced Brahmoism, though they were born in high caste families. Raghupati Venkatratnam had broken the rocks of social taboos, levelled down the religious superstitions and constructed roads through the wilds, forests and rocky hills of Hindu and Indian orthodoxy. Gandhians are ever grateful to him for having made their task so much easier.

Venkatratnam was fortunate in his disciples: Very early in his revoluntionary career, he found a good disciple in the rich philanthropic Maharajah of Pithapuram. That Maharajah provided an honourable and influential sanctum for him in the college of their estate in Kakinada. He also provided funds for the foundation of an orphanage,

widows Home and many such other institutions for salvaging the victims of Indian orgies of social malpractices.

Another disciple was Mutnuri Krishnarao, who came to be the famous writer in Telugu, editor of the powerful weekly "Krishna Patrika" and the guru in his own turn of many a Congress revolutionary.

A great storm of protest — greater than what he had to encounter when he became a Brahmo, discarded his caste and adopted untouchable orphan girls as his daughters — burst on Venkatratnam's head in 1919-20. That was when he decided, after prolonged cogitation, to lend his blessings to the demand of Non-Brahmin Movement of South India for social and political leverage, vis-a-vis the then dominent Brahmins, who held sway almost in every social and political arena. Raghupati had to decide to take sides in that semi-political contest between one group of castes and another, he being a casteless Brahmo. Many argued that he ought not to join hands with Non-Brahmin cause, because, its leaders were then pursuing a politically non-progressive role, of delaying political reform lest they should be further degraded in relation to the ascendent and politically developed Brahmins. Venkatratnam, the philosopher and revolutionary chose to side with the weaker section and strengthen their efforts to gain equality, if need be, by demanding temporary weightage, with the then ascendent and politically advanced Brahmins. So many of his erstwhile disciples, who had been born as Brahmins, but discarded caste privileges and embraced untouchables and cosmopolitanism, felt that Raghupati Venkatratnam, their beloved Acharya had suddenly come to a compromise with communalism. But a few realised that he was only extending the umbrella of humanism for the protection of the then under-privileged Non-Brahmins. To that rare cadre belonged Unnava Lakshmi Narayana.

I was present as a young student in that great throng of delegates in Madras Conference in 1918 when this revo-

lutionary rose on the dias with his snowy and flowing tuft of hair and declared that he too desired Swaraj but he would like it to come either simultaneously or in the wake of social reform and justice; that is, he wanted total revolution that would usher in social equality and political freedom. I was again able to co-operate with him, when later he became the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of the century-old Madras University. The British honoured themselves, when they knighted Raghupati Venkatratnam and Rabindranath Tagore. He made Kakinada so famous for social revolution and scholarship married to humanism.

The following quotation from his tribute to his colleague in social revolution, that is Veeresalingam of Rajahmundry, also of his beloved Godavari is a fitting tribute to himself as well, besides being an illustration of his command over English Prose :

"It is true that the word is the "man-incarnate". It is the mirror of the life he has been living.....In him, hand and heart accord so well that worship transmutes work, even as work adds to the riches of worship".

LAXMI RAGHURAM

Andhras congratulate themselves that one of their women, Shrimati Laxmi Raghuram has come to be Vice-President of the International Alliance of Women, during this year of World's Women. Kisan India and their women are happy that this daughter of kisans has attained the Presidentship of all-India Women's Association which was founded by such patriotic and distinguished leaders as Srimatis Sarojini Naidu, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Rajkumar Amritkaur, Mrs. Cousins, Mrs. Ramarao. In 1942 another kisan's daughter Smt. Bharatidevi rose to be the President of All India Kisan Congress and in 1925 Sarojini Naidu became National Congress President.

I used to know, when I was very young Lakshmi's father, the late Venkatesam Choudari. He was then one of the two Tahsildars, the highest attained among all the Kammas of Krishna and Guntur Deltas of four districts. He was encouraging, but quietly, the Self-Respect movement which was trying to find a foothold in these deltas. He agreed with us, his juniors working in the villages that our peasants must be freed from the control of Village Officers. That can be done to some extent by providing training in surveying lands and maintaining land records to some of the educated kisan youths. So he organised special training classes for kisan youths, when he was placed in charge of Land Records. He also agreed with us, and our leader the late Kaviraj Ramaswami Chowdari Barrister practising in Tenali that to free our peasants from the evil influences of Conservative Brahmin Priests, some of our kisans' youths should also be trained as Priests. And he did all he could to help us in organising that training.

He was glad that I was granted what then used to be a rare privilege of a Passport to go to England and presided over the send-off meeting held in our village Nidubrolu

and congratulated me when I initiated the modern kisan and khet Mazdoor movement in India on my return.

Mrs. Margaret Cousins and her husband Dr. Cousins were Irish by birth and Indians by choice and domicile. They were sincere Theosophists and served Indian youths as educationists through the Theosophical College, Madanapalle, a few miles from the equally famous Rishi Valley's Open-air Theatre of the Sree J. Krishnamurti, the protege of Annie Besant. Margaret Cousins served her term as India's Freedom Fighter in Vellore Jail in 1932. She came into intimate contact with so many South Indian Women Satyagrahis, including Bharati Devi Ranga and Kanakamma of Nellore, Kuttiamma of Malabar.

She became fast friend of Smt. Bharati Devi during that jail life. Both of them knew how women in Europe were progressing; with voting power, gaining places in their Parliaments, entering Universities and achieving more and more of economic independence. So they also shared their experiences in awakening women in kisan, rural and urban centres.

Margaret Cousins hailed the opportunity that came in her way a few years after that jail period, i.e., 1932-33 when the "Chowdary Sisters" Lakshmi and Radha springing from rural Indian family, from educated parents, joined Rukmini Vihar, the hostel of the Madanapalle Theosophical College, which she was managing. That College was started by Annie Besant. Her husband, the famous Irish poet Dr. Cousins was its Principal. Margaret took special care of these young girls and did her best, in her sweet manner, to create in them deep interest in the women movement that she was then busy developing as Permanent Secretary. She sowed the seeds of commitment, in their hearts to national movement and women's awakening. Thus, Bharati Devi, the Senior Satyagrahi and Lakshmi the future leader of women were influenced in a creative manner by that sweet old champion of women.

Lakshmi took to her just as affectionately and absorbed her teachings. She was inspired by her high scruples and exemplary personal life, in tune with her love of humanity, inrrespective of castes, creeds and national or racial differences.

It is a romantic fulfilment of the dream of Margaret and her kisan satyagrahi friends in Vellore Women's Jail that today, Lakshmi is working so sincerely and ably as the President of the very same All India Women's Association that Margaret Cousins had started so long ago. Verily Margaret Cousins has come to be re-incarnated through this Lakshmi.

Shrimati Laxmi gained her spurs in social leadership under the able guidance of another dynamic Women's leader Smt. Durgabai Deshmukh, who inspired so many such public spirited young graduate-women to take to social work, in the wake of Swaraj, as their main patriotic effort. Laxmi worked for the Andhra Women's Home and Complex institutions built around it in Madras. Her relatives Mr. and Mrs. V.Hanumantharao of Duggirala donated the whole of their properties to those social welfare institutions and she enriched that excellent and inspiring offering by the offer of her own services.

She had ready to hand, when she began her public work in Andhra itself the heritage of Grameen Mahila Sanghs and Women's Political Organisations, Mahila Seva Sanghs which had been started by such freedom fighting leaders as Unnava Lakshmibayamma of Sarada Niketan, Tayaramma of Tenali. Ponaka Kanakamma of Kasturba School and College of Nellore, Anatha Saranalayam and Stree Seva Sadan of Rajahmundry, and the Women's political platforms of Bharati Devi, P. Kanakamma, M. Chukkamma of Eluru and Annapurna. M. The hundreds of Women Satyagrahis and their thousands of politically awakened Colleagues had already engendered suitable climate of social work and Smt. Lakshmi was therefore able

to obtain rapid and satisfactory response to, as well as appreciation in Andhra for, the offer of her services. The constructive work centres developed through the Andhra Mahila Complex of Smt. Durgabai provided just the needed training centre for Lakshmi's apprentice for her later leadership on the all-India women's platform. It augers well for rural womenfolk that Lakshmi this new leader hails from rural India. She knows how the rural labour and their women are as yet too poor, ignorant and socially and economically depressed. She feels for them so much more readily and soulfully. She has seen from her childhood how pathetic is the condition of even the land-holding peasant women, especially in the absence of medical, hygienic and pre-natal and midwifery facilities and how utterly impossible for majority of their girls to obtain even elementary education. It is natural for her, after Margaret Cousins inspiration and her rural and kisan moorings to evince spontaneous interest in the development of the organisational equipment needed for rural women, that is the Grameena Mahila Sangh.

I am glad to say that as long ago as 1956, the Andhra women espied leadership qualities in her and invited her to inaugurate the Andhra Women's Conference held in Ghantasala organised by Smt. G. Mahalaxmamma, the Sarpanch and presided over by Smt. Bharati Devi. Durgabai and her colleagues who were running the powerful and popular Telugu monthly called "Andhra Mahila" welcomed her as their editor, because she had distinguished herself as an able and imaginative writer of novels with progressive social themes.

From the Andhra Home at Madras, she moved to the Andhra Association at New Delhi, where once again she found guidance from Smt. Durgabai, who had by then risen to be a member of the National Planning Commission with the powerful Doctor C. D. Deshmukh, her husband to back her social work with all his genius for constructive work. She joined the Delhi Andhra Association which some of us founded in 1935 with Desoddharaka Nageswararao as its

first President and became its first Woman President. She had the good fortune to organise and celebrate the Silver Jubilee of that growing Association with the aid of enthusiastic secretary Sri Kodandaramaiah and thus joined the group of distinguished order of women leaders in that Capital City. She was good enough to ask me to preside over that celebration. Sincere and steady social work through that Andhra Association and all-India Women's Association led her to become the President of the All India Women's Association, the first Andhra Woman to its President.

By the time Lakshmi distinguished herself in the arena of all-India Women's movement, Indian statesman have decided to confer voting rights to women in the same way as men; a right for which English Women's movement had to fight for over five decades. Indian national leaders have accepted women's demand for a share in the property of their parents and husbands. Pataskar's Amendment Bill to Hindu Law has ensured that a widow would automatically come into possession of her husband's property. Indian women were accorded such high places of responsibility as Cabinet Ministership, Ambassadorship and even Chief Ministership, for which many Western Women champions like Lady Astor, Mrs. Pethick Lawrence had to struggle for decades. Widow's rights to re-marry and women's right for divorce and Women's needs for honourable and equal places in Universities, and Technological Institutes, including Medicine and Research were all accepted as a part of our national charter for Swaraj.

But in actual practice, much of this area of freedom and equality with man, though conceded in principle and incorporated in the successive Five Year Plans, has yet to be gained and incorporated in every day's social environment of our women. Even the social facilities and progressive economic opportunities which have come to be gained by urban elite were not made available to the masses of urban centres. No wonder, the broad rural masses of women

have been unable to reach even the frinses of such privileges.

Smt. Lakshmi has come to continue and broaden the social bases of the Self-Respect approaches which her father had visualised ,thanks to the energetic Campaigning of Barrister Ramaswamy. She wants equal property right for all women. She pleads for the inviolability of Stree Dhan from the creditors of their parents and husbands and also from Land Ceilings. She demands that women too should be welcomed to study, recite Vedic Texts and Mantrams which the enlightened women of Scandinavia have obtained and the women of Europe are still demanding abolition of discrimination in that sphere. She wants equal rights for women in education-humanities and technological studies and in employment in governmental and industrial and commercial services. She desires that all caste and sex taboos should go and men and women and all human beings of all castes, religions and races should be accorded equal rights, opportunities and honours. All these were claimed by the Self-Respect Movement. These demands of social democracy have come to be hailed and propagated by so many of us, men and women of Gandhian persuasion. Lakshmi has come forward to ennich this progressive and inspiring heritage, thanks to her capacity to absorb the atmosphere of this era of Gandhi and Nehru.

She devoted the special issue of "Andhra Mahila" for publishing the biographies of six well-known All India Women Leaders for emulation by young women who enjoyed happy family life and comradeship of their husbands in Public Work. They were Kasturba, Sarojini Devi, Sucheta, Durgabai, Bharati Devi and Leelavati. Young and educated women who were seeking guidance to enter public work were thus inspired by her to move along their well-trodden paths of self-sacrificing, patriotic and humanitarian endeavours for the uplift of women folk in particular and the down-trodden masses in general.

Western Women are chafing at the social responsibilities arising from family life and teenager-girls are intent upon peaching into adult advantages without being ready to accept the discipline of family atmosphere. In many other ways, as is so well indicated in the well-publicized "Future Shock" approach, the West is making its demands for permissive society. Do we wish to go in that negative direction ? Our people, more especially women have the matrix of Buddhist humanism for their sustenance. We cannot ignore the social indispensability and individually ennobling and mutually disciplining institution of marriage for the progress of our society. The Western thinkers have doubts about their own future. Need we entertain such fears? Is it right for men to persist in hugging their one-sided privileges without welcoming the rights and respecting the innate individual personality of their wives ? Is it not also equally wrong for women to over-emphasise the urgency of their rights and hate the bitters and forget the sweetness of family-life and refuse to avow their obligations to their husbands and children ? Surely the Asian Women have some positive contribution to make the modern society, in its search for a wholesome and progressive relationship, based on quality and mutual respect between men and women in family and society. Smt. Laxmi Raghuram has excellent opportunity to visualise the significance of Constructive Indian Conception of Artha Nareeswara and give a practical and progressive turn to this rather one-sided demand for Permissive Society and Women's rights. We all wish her success in this highly challenging sphere of World's movement of half of humanity.

RAJAGOPAL (RAJANNA)

Rashtrapati Radhakrishna once warned Swaraj India of the creeping crisis of Character; Rajaji feared of the "Crisis of Spirit". Somehow the number of people who are to gain worldly and alluring prospects of getting paid jobs, making easy money by accepting Contracts, obtaining

licenses, permits and Quotas or gaining key positions of vantage and power in the ever increasing channels of contact with the Government legislatures and ministries has been multiplying from year to year. On the other hand, those who turn their backs on such prospects and opportunities are indeed so few as not to be able to make any impact upon our Youths.

Even among those who had staked their all during 1920-45 to win national freedom and who braved both imprisonment and poverty, the post-Swaraj fever for positions, pelf and power has done incalculable mischief. This demoralising epidemic has come to singe and suborne even legislators and ministers. What wonder is there that our demand raised by such of us who had seen the evil effects of it in the working of all the political parties for the institution of Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta (Ombudsman) has not found strong enough national response in its support. Only some ministers and legislators and prominent political leaders have begun to declare their assets and shake themselves free from the odour of corruption.

There are yet a few Gandhians, in all Parties who are above suspicion and who have been living for decades a life of complete dedication to public life, without indulging in the post-Swaraj passion for accumulation of wealth and unseemly hunt after places of power and unworthy misuse of their high privileges. To this rare and almost holy order, belong such public workers and leaders like Rajagopala Naidu better known as Rajanna of Chittoor, Sanyasirao of Visakhapatnam, Kavuri Venkaiah of Palnad. Only Yadlapati MLA and Butchaiah ex-MLA of Guntur district can compete with Rajanna in their complete dedication to attending to the day to day contacts of the public with administration and ministers but they are endowed with hereditary means, to finance their public activities. The Sarvodaya Workers can lay claim to such a plan of honour, in their independence of worldly weaknesses and incorruptibility but they are not under the same painful

political pressures and they are far away from the aweful temptations of Power and pelf.

Rajanna has thus set a high standard of Gandhian integrity and devotion to public service. He has succeeded during these three decades of incessant public service, in being universally respected and loved. He could have become a minister, if only he would jump the queue and he certainly would have proved to be one of the best and ablest ministers. He could have become the first among the K.L.P. or Swatantra MLAs but he would remain loyal to the chosen leader Sardar Latchanna.

Raja is a good public speaker and hails from Rangagram from Chittoor district. He concentrates on kisan and rural problems. He is as experienced and respected a legislator as Pragada Kotaiah. Both of them are equally hard-working, disciplined and constantly mindful of public interest. While Kotaiah concentrates on weavers problems, though not neglecting kisans' needs, Raja's forte is the rural India and the people of the whole village with the problems of its denizens, peasants, weavers, Harijans and Khet Mazdoors and all other artisans. Raja is younger in age and joined the Peasant Institute and public work, a decade later than Kotaiah. Both of them are good friends and great lovers of self-less service. Raja has attained high degree of scholarship in Telugu by self-effort, after he took his degree in 1943. He specialises in Social History. His books in Telugu on "Sage Ramanuja" and the "Times and Civilisation at the time of Krukshetra" have become classics. He has written a number of historial novels, calculated to inspire our youths. He and his boyhood friend, poet, and Bhakta Shri K. Sabha have become guardian-angels of younger poets and writers in Telugu, organising co-operatives, holding periodical conferences and recitals and providing district-level platforms for airing their problems and popularising their writings in prose as well as poetry. He is indeed one of the State-level political leaders of younger generation of Telugu writers, excluding the Naxalite Champions of blood and iron cult.

Raja has taken up, since 1960, the dynamic leadership of our peasant schools, being started for week-ends or for a few weeks at a time at district-levels. He has done as much good work in this direction as Lakshmi Narayana had contributed in the earlier decades. Rightly he is hailed by all of us as Acharya of the Kisan Schools.

Raja is a persuasive speaker on platform, more so in the legislative arena and its mike. His soft sliver-voice fortified by his convictions goes to the hearts of members. He studies every question like a scholar, prepares his case as if he is going to appear before the High Court and marshals his arguments in a persuasive-effective and pleasing manner, so much so, many a Minister finds himself compelled to accept more than half of whatever Raja pleads for.

Raja is most economical of people's money, even more scrupulous with it than with his own. He makes the least collections and less frequently than most public workers. So Bharati Devi used to entrust relief works to Raja at the time of famines and floods. He is second only to Shri Kisan G. V. Subbaiah in such honest and economical use of public funds.

Raja is a convinced democrat, to his finger tips. So he has no truck with totalitarians and he never fears to counteract their adverse propaganda, while being in no hurry to get into conflict with them.

He suported, like Kotaiah, Latchanna, peoples demands for steel plant at Vizag in 1969 and separation of Andhra in 1973. Raja went to jail in 1953 in support of tapper's protest against their arbitrary condemnation to unemployment through the wholesale imposition of prohibition and fought for their right for alternative employment. He offered satyagraha against unjust and arbitrary enhancement of Land Revenue in 1962-63 and joined in Latchanna's challenge against it in peasants' appeal to the Supreme Court.

Raja and N. V. Naidu and Eswara Reddi of Tirupati accepted the challenge of Jawaharlal and Sanjeeva Reddi, the then Chiefs of Central and A.P. Cabinets against my efforts to return to Parliament. He invited me, when I was defeated in Guntur district by their alliance or collusion with Communists to stand for that seat in Chittoor by-election. He worked hard, with the active co-operation of late P. V. Krishnaiah Naidu and their followers. He was so popular and his comrades were so active and powerful among the masses that Sanjeeva Reddi, the Chief Minister and his powerful and passionate ally Timma Reddi could not gain a majority in any of their ministerial strongholds. I came to be elected despite the door to door canvassing made against me by 20 Ministers and two Chief Ministers in Chittoor city and the misuse of Governmental favours and powers all over the constituency. His austere living, Gandhian public work, whole-hearted services for the Harijans and Girijans and eloquent espousal of the philosophy of KMP Raj ideal proved to be of inestimable value — certainly more powerful and persuasive than all the lakhs spent, and score of ministers pressed into the campaign by the governments.

Raja organised two annual sessions of peasant institute in 1947 in Sivagiri and in 1953 in Tiruttani. His wife was one of the key organisers of the Political School run by us in Madras in 1946. Unfortunately his dear wife passed away, leaving only a daughter to survive her. Raja never married again; brought up that daughter and got her married to one of our kisan enthusiasts, an engineer and both the young couple have left for USA for further studies. On their prompting Raja went to the United States in 1974 and made a special study of American farm methods during that 3 months stay. He also examined how American farmers and Government deal with each other and how the four important farmers' organisations, farm co-operatives deal with the Banks and Government. He met the leaders of farmers, 4 H. Clubs and Future Far--

mers' Unions. He took care to write extensively to many Telugu weeklies about his studies and impressions and gave detailed suggestions for improvement of our agriculture and agro-industries.

Raja has thus grown to be one of the best informed legislators, an expert agriculturist on his small farm and a responsible and experienced peasant leader. I am specially happy that Raja has grown in political stature and reputation as one of the best and ablest Gandhians in the middle rung of national leadership, competent to guide the self-employed masses of both Andhra and other South Indian States.

This post-Nehru India needs more urgently many more such public spirited workers as these middle-aged leaders of the stamp of Peasant Institute. It may not be possible for most of them to find their own funds or to develop independent means of living. K. Rosaiah, MLC, the leader of the Small Traders of Andhra and Messrs Y. Venkatrao, MLA and K. Butchaiah, M. Nagaiah, Kondaiah, Iswara Reddi, B. Sivaiah, all ex-MLAs from Nagarjuna Sagar and Krishna deltas, Simma Jagannadham, ex-MLA, V. V. Ramana, ex-MP of Kalinga Seema topped by their senior G. L. Narayana and such others of our Institute, who have inherited some lands have been spending all their annual incomes and a part of their patrimony on public work. Some such organisation as the Bharat Sevak Samaj (BSS) and the earlier Gandhi Seva Sangh is necessary to collect funds and provide bare maintenance and out of pocket expenses, as they rise in the scale of leadership and scope of their activities and responsibilities. But who would organise such workers, collect funds, arrange for their equitable distribution and treat, encourage and inspire them, without any caste, class or regional bias ? The grand old Servants of India Society has been finding it impossible to discharge such functions. These and many other issues have to be faced by the Gandhian Socialist leaders and the Sanchalaks of our non-partisan, non-party socio-political and religious leaders. Recently

the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee is attempting to shoulder this responsibility. We need many public workers like Rajanna to develop such organisations and shoulder such onerous burdens. Can they do it without power? Will they use that power honestly?

B. S. S.

That Mahatma Gandhi thought of the need for recruiting and training a large number of non-party-minded social workers, who believed in his constructive programme and knitting them together, into a Lok Sevak Sangh; was revealed in his talks with me in November, 1944 and later in his writings. It was as an answer to his wish, as it were, that Shri Gulzarilal Nanda, myself and a few others conceived the idea of organising the Bharat Sevak Samaj and Jawaharlalji agreed to be its founder President. We wanted to mobilise all those social workers, who would be constructively oriented and be keen more on non-partisan constructive work. Since the funds of Swaraj governments would not be adequate to finance all the constructive works so badly needed at village level, we hoped to ensure, through the propaganda and influence of such self-sacrificing, Gandhian workers, the co-operation of villages, the advance of local contributions by way of Shramadan, and materials, etc., upto 50% of the cost of such works. Thus we started well and developed a nation-wide network of thousands of workers in all their BSS units. Rajanna, V. L. Sundara Rao, G. Sanyasi Rao, M. Bapi Needu, Hanumantha Rao, Apparao and such other good workers served as district or regional organisers. We organised a number of training camps in every State. The two expert Seva Dal Officers Messrs Gadireddi Hanumantharao of Guntur, Captain Apparao of Srikakulam, freedom fighters and of INA reputation who were trained in our Peasant Institute, worked as whole-time organisers of these camps and provided Nandaji and BSS with efficient cadres. Sardar G. S. Dhillon, till recently Speaker of Lok Sabha served as Punjab State Convenor and the late

L. N. Mishra, who rose to be Central Minister was its convenor in Bihar. We were able to inspire the rural folk to come forward enthusiastically with their contributions. Unfortunately the new ministerial politics and partisan passion for claiming the allegiance and utilising political and social influence of the BSS workers, who seem to be growing powerful because of their BSS social activities came to demoralise these workers. They were being drawn more and more into not only party politics but also into factious fights between different sections of the Congressmen vieing with each other for control of funds, and power. So, the BSS got itself entangled as badly as the RSS in politics. This development has led to the demoralisation of the rank and file of workers. Gradually BSS became an adjunct of the Congress group in power.

Congress bosses at the State levels insisted that their nominees alone should be the convenors at State and district levels. Eventually the Congress ministers at the Centre were obliged to take cognisance of complaints of corruption and appoint a special commission to investigate into the activities of BSS and the manner and methods of its utilisation of public and governmental funds. It is the tragedy of post-Swaraj India that such a great organisation should have become a victim of partisan and factious politics.

RAJAJI

[Rajaji was born in 1878 December in Gobichettipalem of Salem District; had been a leading lawyer in Salem when he joined Mahatmaji in 1920; supported the Non-Co-operation movement and was jailed in 1921; was General Secretary of Congress in 1921-22; edited 'Young India' and 'Navajivan' of Gandhiji during his incarceration in 1922-25; member of Congress Working Committee right upto 1950 with some breaks; Chief Minister, Madras in 1936-39, 1952-54; the Central Minister 1946-47; Bengal Governor 1947-48; Governor-General 1948-50; Central Minister again; founded Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha,; great champion of Prohibition; declared moratorium on Agricultural Debts; passed Tanjore Land Tenancy Act in 1937-38 — all firsts in India; was hailed as one of the most brilliant world intellectuals together with Bertrand Russell; recipient of Bharat Ratna 1955; famous as conscience-keeper of Mahamta Gandhi; founded along with Ranga the Swatantra Party in 1959; guided the Gandhi Peace Foundation's mission to Rome, London, Washington and indicated the outlines of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty; famous as a humanist and champion of the non-nuclear peoples through his book "The Non-Involved"; toured all over India in 1960-62; author of English adaptations of Ramayana, Mahabharata, Kural; presided over 61st Birthday- Celebrations of Ranga; his own 93rd Birthday Celebrations were held in 1972 and he died in 1972 on the Christmas Day.—Ed.]

Pujya Rajaji was the oldest statesman, advising and serving this world and trying to stave off the evils of the Atomic Age. He was one of the two noble champions of humanity, the other being Bartrand Russell, espousing its rights against all those who wish to operate the evil forces of destructive weapons. All those who believe in and espouse the world's greatest and noblest invocations, 'SARVE JANA SUKHINO BHAVANTU AND LOKA SAMASTA SUKHINO BHAVANTU', hail Rajaji as their greatest exponent.

When the whole world was exercised over the threat of the Chinese Bomb, he undertook his mission against the Atom Bomb Tests to London, Rome, Paris and Washington in 1962 at the age of eighty-two. His powerful and per-

suasive plea proved to be catalytic for the emergence of Test Ban Treaty of 1963. President Kennedy exclaimed then that India has the unique capacity to produce, and follow such completely civilised and humanistic savants.

Rajaji joined the national movement at the beginning of this century, when most of us who came to be in the front benches of Indian legislatures, were in our mothers' laps. When we both visited Surat in 1960, he took pleasure in showing to me the street in which he and other followers of Tilak made concerted efforts to promote the cause of Swaraj through that famous Surat Congress session of 1906.

As long as Mahatma Gandhi was alive and he had faith in Jawaharlalji's leadership, Rajaji avoided meeting the masses and cultivating the public platform. So, a legend gained currency that he was a cold intellectual, devoid of any ability to respond to the emotional calls of the masses. His Digvijaya Yatras of 1960-61 all over India demonstrated how he could attract, enthuse and inspire millions of our people in mass campaigns. Any one who had seen him, as I did, with his grandsons (Sons of Devdas Gandhi) or knew his abundant love for the late Ramarao of Mysore, Khasa Subbarao, the renowned columnist and editor of the Swarajya, and his deep affection for the renowned songstress Subbulaxmi of Sadasivam's family of Kalki, would realise how rich and generous were his springs of affection. Indeed, I have enjoyed his love like so many of my elder colleagues and he was so tolerant of differences of opinion and sympathetic towards those who sincerely differed from him.

He felt for long the tyranny of party discipline even with regard to the most devotedly held opinions of members. So, he introduced the innovation in democratic practice of developing and encouraging free, fearless and independent thinking, by providing for the 21st principle in the Swatantra Party; which allows our members to differ from all others on any new issue, without feeling the ri-

gours of the Party Whip. In the exercise of this privilege, he has shown the greatest spirit of affectionate understanding even towards myself, the President of the Party, from whom it is not unnatural for him to expect maximum concord. He has upheld the right of a legislator to change his party on a matter of principle or vital differences.

He had always been a friend of our peasants. When our kisans were suffering from effects of world depression, he declared (as Prime Minister of Madras 1937-39) a moratorium on agricultural debts and passed the Agricultural Debt Relief Act of 1937. He hearkened to the cry of tenants for protection and passed the Ryotwari Tenants Protection Act of 1953. He pleaded for the abolition of land revenue. When I found it impossible to persuade Jawaharlalji to give up controls, Rajaji as the Chief Minister of Madras for the second time, boldly decided in 1952 to abolish controls and demonstrated that free trade when coupled with support prices of foodgrains would benefit everybody.

Rajaji was essentially a man of faith and religion and his observance of the code of public morality is exemplary. This was appreciated by Gandhiji as much as his famous supremacy in the realm of intellect. He was the conscience keeper of the then Gandhian World. It is in the fitness of things that the distinguished Christian family (Jochim Alva) of MPs should have so spontaneously chosen Rajaji's English translation of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata for presenting to Pope John on his historic arrival at Bombay on the 2nd of December, 1964. His latest articles in the Swarajya on "LET US ALL KNOW HINDUISM" help us to understand the message of Indian Vedantism.

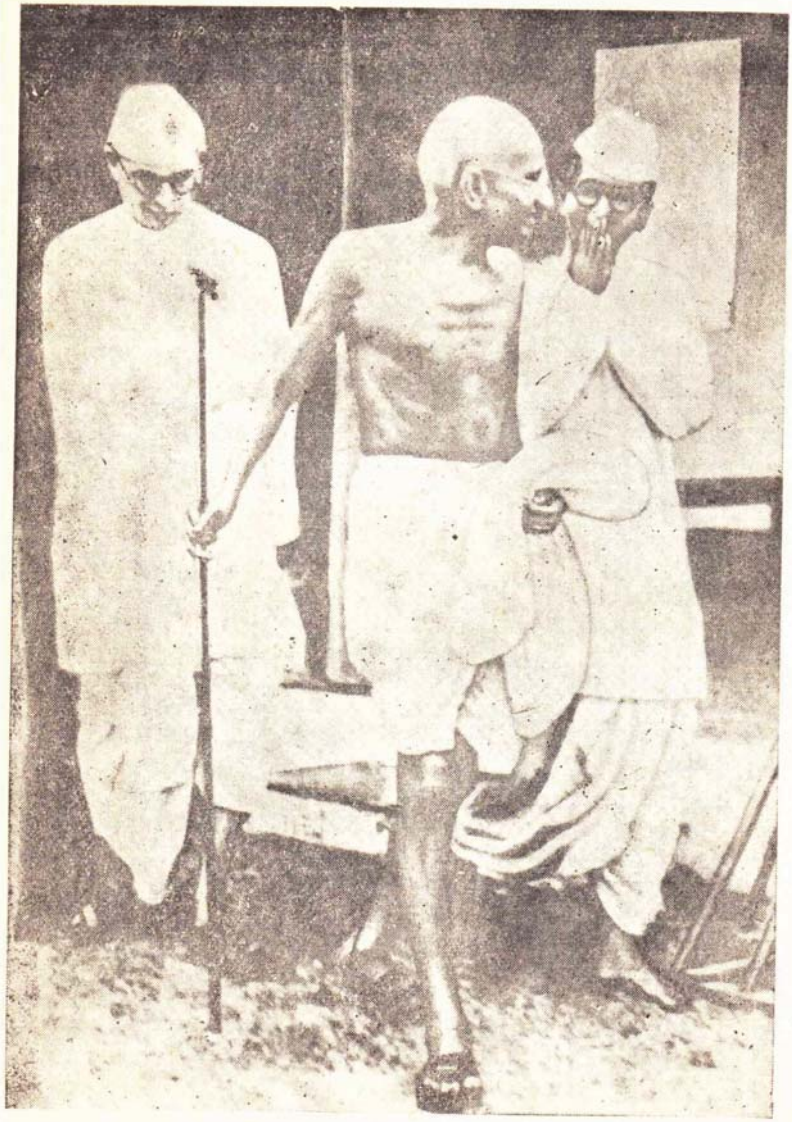
His last testament was entitled "Let Religion be our Politics To-day", after witnessing the failure of parties to place national interest above partisan and sectarian needs and social values before sinful selfish moves. He was an internationalist and humanist. He put in an elo-

quent plea for the world masses against the atom bomb through his epochal book, "The Challenge of the Uninvolved".

His plea for continuing the Non-co-operation movement of 1921-23 was so unanswerable that C.R. Das, the President of Gaya Congress Session (1922), had to resign and form the rival Swarajya Party. His stand in favour of co-operating with the Allied Forces against the Axis Powers but on behalf of national Government, was found to be so exasperating by Mahatma Gandhi and so historically correct by Jawaharlal that Gandhiji had to withdraw temporarily in 1940 from the national leadership and give freedom to Rajaji and Jawaharlal to make their abortive essay into negotiations with the British. The British refused to see the writing on the wall that they would have to agree to liquidate their empire as M. N. Roy had so correctly foreseen, because all empires would find themselves so much exhausted after the war as not to be able to maintain them. So, they persisted with their short-sighted imperial veto on India's demand for national Government. Rajaji exasperated even Gandhiji and his unhappy and restless colleague, Jawaharlal, by refusing to fall in line with their symbolically inspiring but painful "Do or Die" Campaign of three and half years (1942-45). Sharing the irresistible impatience of the nation, as voiced by Jawaharlal, Patel and even Rajendra Prasad and unable to strengthen the unswerving faith of Gandhiji in the capacity of India to gain freedom while remaining united, he expounded with his unique logic, the inevitability of conceding Pakistan and therefore prepared the political leaders for saving for India at least West Bengal and East Punjab from the disastrous Jinnah-inspired separation.

Rajaji had been a tireless and fearless catalyst and Protestant and innovator. When South India was deeply immersed in her love of English, he initiated the Hindi Prachar. When all our economists and industrialists were hungering after industrialisation, he stood by Gandhiji for khaddar and handloom and other village industries. When

Rangaji in Conversation with Rajaji in 1967



Rangaji with Gandhi and Mahadev Desai at Sevagram

all of us were hankering after linguistic States, he stood for multi-lingual States.

Political opponents indulged in the unworthy criticism that he was a traditionalist. But it was Rajaji who staked his all, including what had come to be the Prime Ministership, after the achievement of National Freedom —in giving his consent to his daughter's inter-caste marriage with Gandhi's son, Devadas defying the age-long taboos. It was again he who led the Tamilnad campaign against untouchability and stood by his foremost disciple, the late Vaidyanathan, in taking the Harijans into the revered Meenakshi temple in Madurai.

Such were the prominent contours of Rajaji's baffling stances, taken in the interests of India and appreciated by his equally Socratic colleagues over those four decades of struggle for national independence.

A grateful nation welcomed his rise as the first and last Indian Governor-General and hailed him as its First Bharat Ratna.

In this post-Swaraj period of more than two decades, he found himself invoking ever more frequently the aid of Mahatma Gandhi's soul force and spirit of toleration in his battle against the drift towards totalitarian governance and the growing indifference to moral values and spiritual standards.

He found the tendency to centralise all initiative and political power becoming too strong. So he wrote a series of articles and published them in a volume, pleading for a "States Party" to press for State autonomy. The Planning Commission and National Development Council, which had no constitutional basis but which began to encroach upon States' autonomy, found a powerful critic in Rajaji. But he could not find anyone to shoulder that responsibility and so, that call had a still-birth. Later on,

the D.M.K. Ministry began to ask for a reconsideration of States' rights but he could not offer a powerful backing for their demand. Why? Possibly because he would not trust the D.M.K. Government with greater powers, lest it should return to the earlier demand for autonomous Tamilnad.

He felt that more and more governmental controls over industrial development and agricultural activities have come to inhibit the economic prosperity of the country and deny the masses the fruits of freedom, because the bureaucracy, contractors, permit-holders and licensees succeeded in making this control-oriented regime to serve their own interests. So Rajaji led the opposition to what he so aptly castigated as "Licence, Permit, Quota Raj".

When I and Shri Munshi began to agitate against the Nagpur Congress decision (1959) to start a nation-wide campaign to reinforce Governmental moves to bring about co-operative farming all over India, Rajaji and Munshi were the foremost among the senior-most leaders to realise its evil portents and rush to our rescue and join issue with Jawaharlal on that very vital and sensitive front. The country knows how we have been able to blunt that anti-peasant move of the Planning Commission.

Jawaharlal, the master debator, faced Rajaji's challenge by accusing us of being opposed to planning as such, and tried to twit us in the Parliament and country, because by 1960-61 all the political and scholastic elements, from college forums to youth forums had come to hail Nehru-planning as the only progressive means for development. So I was obliged to declare that we did not oppose planning as such and actually we were in favour of Gandhian Planning. We were only opposed to his statist planning, which did not lay special stress on decentralised industrial development, on cottage-cum-handicrafts-cum-self-employed economy. We were not opposed to all controls, as such. We too stood for prescribing basic and

minimum price levels for peasants produce minimum-wage levels for workers and maximum prices for consumers. But Jawaharlal's unjust taunt did its mischief against us. When I drew Rajaji's attention to this disadvantage caused by his insistence upon logical excellence, in the first instance, he answered that the whole truth which lies in between opposing viewpoints would anyhow prevail. But unfortunately truth which lay between our two opposite positions and whatever ultimately prevails was said to be the monopoly of Government and the press and radio tilted the balance in favour of Jawaharlalji.

Socialism has come to be the dominant approach to the solution of social and economic problems of industrialised society of the century that Rajaji has been trying to enrich. Jawaharlal and Congress socialists came to fancy Fabian School of Socialism which laid special stress on statist approach and Soviet Russia's practice of it has come to emphasise its evils and defects—thanks to its stress on development through violence and bureaucracy. Rajaji guided the majority in the Congress Working Committee of 1936-37 to write their famous letter of resignation to Jawaharlal the then President. Gandhi agreed with Rajaji. He too was convinced that the Soviet-type of socialism, popularised by Congress socialists who were the alter ego of Jawaharlal, would seek to rebuild society on the basis of violence. But the decentralised economy favoured by him and so many of his followers like us would function on non-violent, non-exploitative and self-employment basis. So when we began to develop Swatantra Party, Rajaji was ready to appreciate Masani's allergy to Statism and Jawaharlal's plan-based priorities for State enterprises, in preference to people's enterprises. That landed so many of us of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj persuasion and Guild Socialist approach in quite a quandary. Rajaji assuaged our feelings and quietened our misgivings by saying that after all, Socialism in Nehru's era must be distinguished from Socialism of Self-

Employment, decentralised sector of Gandhian economy* and has to be opposed with all our might, if we wanted to save our people from the evils of Sovietism. I am afraid I did much injury to my own convictions by not insisting upon my Guild Socialist approach. So in the end, I made bold to declare in 1968-69 that I hearken back to my faith in Gandhian Socialism†. Rajaji was realistic enough to appreciate my insistence upon responding to practical demands of the times.

On the score of nationalisation of industries, Rajaji would not at all yield, since he was convinced that the State enterprises, started by free India, have mostly been too costly, too uneconomical, and inefficient in working and too receptive to all the evils of a corrupt, inept and autocratic administration, although some of us would not mind nationalisation or an expansion of State enterprises, hoping that all such evils and defects, as are incidental to such State enterprises, could be and ought to be overcome by better parliamentary and administrative controls.

The Chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Constitution was sacrosanct to him and he demanded that it should not at all be tampered with even for limiting property rights. I was however content with the protection of rights of people with holdings and properties below the all-round ceilings. Nehru has raised the question as early as 1950 as to how free India could promote the progress of the vast sections of our indigent people who are far below property level, if just compensation at market level of prices were to be paid. Rajaji held that the real solution lies in achieving greater and faster production and thus having more and more for distribution to salvage our people from poverty, penury, indigence or sub-standard levels of sibsistence. I could not reconcile myself to his insistence on the repeal of all Amendments to the Consti-

* "Gandhian Plan" by Sreemannarayana and "Four Crore Artisans Hail Gandhian Plan" 1946. † "Bapu Blesses" 1970 by Ranga.

tution to limit the right to property. Some of us who have had to accept ceilings on holdings of crores of Ryotwari Pattadars are prepared to accept this new social measure and allow the principle of ceilings to be extended to all properties and thus give a chance to the new social trends to contribute their share to Garibi Hatao.

Some of us, who had been life-long champions of Peasants and Workers pleaded with him that more and more of State activity has become inevitable because of the demands of the Welfare Society. Peasants have to be protecetd from the rapacity of merchants, industrialists as well as from the ravages of natural calamities, like Cyclones, floods, droughts and pests and pestilences. Similarly Workers need the support and protection of the State. Urban and rural Consumers, including peasants and artisans, need State protection for the regulated supplies of scarce commodities from foodgrains, sugar, kerocene, cement, right upto cloth. So to issue permits, licenses for individuals and institutions and fix quotas for areas and social elements have become almost the elementary functions of the State in modern Society. Though we are also opposed to their misuse, we could not support the demand of our urban allies for maximum freedom from all controls, permits and licenses. We however agreed that there should be some control over the governmental passion for such powers and misuse of this function by the State for the benefit of certain social and political elements.

Rajaji recognised this and agreed to our suggestion that there should be a non-party, quasi-judicial national commission to administer the business of controls, that is, for the allocation or cancellation of licences, permits, and quotas, in co-operation with but independently of the concerned administrative departments. It looked as if the Government was going to devise some such impartial and non-governmental agency, when the then Home Minister Nandaji invited suggestions in that direction. And President Radhakrishnan announced in his Madras Speech,

Government's intention to place this highly strategic and sensitive aspect of our economy on a quasi-judicial basis. Rajaji offered even to liquidate Swatantra Party if this proposal were accepted. But how can the Government which has tasted the fruits of patronage and coercive powers accede to Rajaji's constructive suggestion!

He, who had exemplified how an honest minister should act with utmost integrity and in a non-partisan manner, was pained very much by the growing tendency of ministers to indulge in partial, dishonest and corrupt activities. So he hailed Munshi's suggestion that we should demand the establishment of Swedish type of Ombudsman to control and investigate cases of corruption in the ranks of ministers.

Rajaji continued to be concerned about the fast weakening of national leadership, owing to the loss of moral stamina and political strength of Cabinets. So he began to offer successive solutions to remedy the deteriorating situation. He rose above party considerations, as he alone could do, and suggested that "an all-talents national Cabinet, consisting of ministers of integrity, ability and proven patriotism, should be invited by Indiraji to take the place of her Congress Cabinet". He would not recognise the need for including the representative leaders of the leading national democratic parties. This was possible for him to contemplate, because never had he to seek the sanction of popular electorate in his meritorious career of ministership whether at the State or Central level and he rendered such signal services with the highest integrity. He later gave up that idea, saying that even I, his own colleague, thought it impractical. I had suggested that a more effective preparation for a national government would be to liquidate all splinter parties, including ours, and then work for an all-embracing democratic government functioning through consensus on the most important issues.

We were disappointed by the hesitation shown by the various groups of Congressmen in every State who were

breaking away from the Congress Party, soon after its debacle in the 1967 general elections, at the idea of joining us. The six Chief Ministers of U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh who headed the splinter groups decided to form the new party of Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) in preference to joining either the Swatantra or any other democratic group, because they succumbed to the passion of power for more power and its aversion to any combination which is devoid of power and so, they could think of linking themselves to themselves in partnership of power and thus form a greater combine of power, i.e., the B.K.D. in the hope of vieing with Congress which is the biggest combine of power. Others preferred to form State-bound parties like the Utkal Congress, Kerala Congress, Loktantra Dal of Bihar and the Bangla Congress. Rajaji came to realise the failure of our efforts to grow into the principal secular and democratic opposition force. So, he began to moot the idea of a merger of all the democratic parties into one consolidated democratic opposition. Such was the resilience of his mind and his readiness to sacrifice even his own Party, built up at such great cost and travail, if only he could thereby ensure the safety and progress of our nascent democracy. When however I ventured to suggest the liquidation of Swatantra Party as it had obviously failed to develop itself to be the effective democratic opposition and thus pave the way for broad-basing our democratic national leadership, he could not place so much faith in either of the Congress wings or in any of the other democratic parties to provide the needed National United Democratic Front. Our painful experiences of the so-called Democratic United Front patched up together in haste on the eve of 1971 general elections and the complete debacle suffered by all opposition parties, including the earstwhile Congress bosses and post-election demoralisation of all democratic oppositionists with their bad records of amoral indulgence in defections disillusioned Rajaji so much that he went much

further than the line suggested by me. So, he wrote on 22-1-1972 "we cannot reform politics". "Just as arbitary rule was replaced by democracy, we must substitute Religion for Politics"—Let us realise this—that Religion, the fear of sin and faith in God, is our politics now". Actually six of the Opposition groups, including the Swatantra merged themselves into the Bharatiya Lok Dal (B.L.D.) within eighteen months after his Swargarohan and that B.L.D. has, in its turn offered to join yet another Combination of parties under the hoped-for umberella of Jayaprakash including Communist Marxists at one end and Jan Sangh at another. Even the latest offer of the BLD to so amend its Statement of its objectives as to meet the objections of the so-called leftist groups does not complete the circle because the Cong (O) would not merge into the new combination suggested by Jayaprakash (Aug. 1976).

I realised that the masses would no longer be patient or content with such middle class approaches, as the latest B.L.D. or J.P's combinations. Many people even among lower middle classes felt that the Democratic Front of 1971 was quite inadequate to provide alternate leadership, since it had no common programme or policy to offer and they reacted vigorously against its only patent aim of opposing Indiraji's leadership. So, they preferred to vote for Indira's symbol of cow and calf. I said that the masses have turned their faces against middle-class priorities and programmes based on 'more production first and thereafter equitable distribution'. They have indicated their clear preference for Indiraji's programmes, slogans and hopes held out by her for the removal of their sufferings—if need be-through better sharing of available resources, though small. So I wanted all democrats and their parties to take note of the new high flood marks of people's wishes and yearnings, as indicated by the election results, and to suitably reorient their policies and programmes and readjust their ideological sights. Rajaji continued to hope till 30-10-1971 to make the Swatantra Party bear "the burden

of defending the Constitution of India all alone". But he was obliged to conclude by 22-1-1972 that parties must be abandoned in preference to Religion.

Rajaji continued his educational campaign to help people to understand eternal values and, what he considered as, the immutable laws of social and economic life flowing from human nature and yearnings for incentives to work and save, though he was realist enough to accept the people's verdict. He agreed in October 1971 that the Prime Minister's call for "national solidarity" in the light of 1971 election verdict and Bangla Desh crisis was justifiable and wanted her to form a"national Government of non-party men of talents and experience" and "abandon all plans to amend the Constitution". When my earlier suggestion that all "patriotic and freedom-loving elements among all democratic parties, including even the Indira Gandhi's wing of the Congress" should come together into a democratic front and seek to provide Cabinet regimes based on the rule of consensus and not by majority was completely rejected and what amounted to a national front was forged by the voters in 1971 general elections by raising Indiraji as almost the universally acceptable national leader, I decided to accept in good grace as a genuine democrat the national verdict. Rajaji's final response to my repeated pleas for liberating ourselves from the untenable shackles of party loyalties was his brave exclamation. "Let Religion be our only politics" and we must "vacate politics now and go back to it when it becomes safe". Who can dogmatically say which one of us is alone justified in our reactions to the election results?

The wonder of it all is that while political leaders, who have held some of the highest positions and who are twenty and thirty years younger than him, have chosen to retire into their political cocoons, Rajaji insisted upon remaining in the vanguard of our national political arena and

persisted in offering his suggestions, warnings, criticism and guidance, unmindful of whoever wished to join or oppose him.

He joined all of us in deploring the failure of rest of the world, particularly the United States, to hearken to the sufferings and appeals for help of the millions of East Bengali refugees who fled Yahya Khan's Pakistani persecution of Bangladesh Freedom Fighters in 1972. When the Indo-Soviet treaty was concluded, he was the first to appeal to Soviet Russia to intervene on behalf of suffering and bleeding Bangla people in their unequal struggle against Pakistan for freedom. We both were among the first few who hailed the Indo-Soviet treaty as an effective contribution to this Sub-Continent's march towards peace between India and Pakistan. When so many democrats in Swatantra, Jan Sangh and Socialist Parties began to express their apprehensions, he advised Indiraji not to hesitate, on account of such fears, to continue to strengthen that treaty.

That Pushkaram (12 years) of Swatantra epoch, with Rajaji as its mentor could only lead to his exasperated appeal "Let Religion be our politics for the present" and my decision to join forces with all the political elements and groups who wish to move towards "Garibi Hatao" and others to hail Jayaprakash Narain's call for "Total Revolution". But all of us have had the satisfaction of strengthening the moral forces against corruption, misuse of governments' powers in the realm of Quotas, Licenses, Permits by the ruling parties and creating strong enough atmosphere for the establishment of Lok Pal and Lok Ayukt.

Could anyone be right on all occasions and over all issues ?Many a time I have differed from him. I cannot say I have always been right. More frequently I agreed with him. Can I say that we both have been wiser than others or that the results have justified our views than

those of others or that the results have justified our views or decisions? Indeed, on so many occasions, I silently kept counsel with myself out of my admiration for him. I cannot say I have not regretted my silences or I have not felt happy over some of my submissions. Such is the beauty of coming into enviable contact, over decades, with such a super-intellectual. Shri Munshi used to feel the same exultation in his friendship and platonic dialogue with Rajaji.

I was fortunate enough to gain a few hours respite from the 1972—Andhra agitation and rush to his bed-side in the General Hospital, Madras. His affectionate doctor, our good friend, Dr. C. Satyanarayana, the then Superintendent, whispered in his ear that Ranga came for his darshan. Rajaji slowly opened his eyes, offered me his benign smile, raised himself so as to caress my face and head and blessed me in his usual affectionate manner.

"MAY GOD BLESS YOU, MY RANGA"

I felt that a Century of Vivekananda, Tilak, Gandhi, Rajaji, Nehru, Netaji and their patriotic and social service has given me that Blessing.

RAJENDHRA PRASAD

[Rajendra Prasad was born in 1884; was M.A., B.L.; practised in Calcutta and Patna; joined Mahatma Gandhi in 1917 in the Champaran movement; developed Non-Coperation (1920) Salt Satyagraha movements (1930) in Bihar; founded Sadaquat Ashram in Patna in pursuance of National Education; member, Congress Working Committee since 1920; elected President 1934, 1939 and 1948; President of Constituent Assembly 1947-50; Food Minister in Delhi 1946-48; first Rashtrapati 1952-62; was jailed many times in National Movement; organised Bihar Relief campaigns after the earthquake; toured extensively for Khadi, Harijan uplift; went round the world as Rashtrapati; died in 1962; author of "Divided India" and "Autobiography".—Ed.]

Rajendra Prasad was one of the five most fortunate top leaders of our national revolution, who were associated with Mahatma Gandhi; the others being Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Azad and Rajaji. They all suffered long terms of incarceration. They sacrificed their careers and consecrated their lives for national work. Excepting Rajaji, they headed the Congress organisation as President for one or two terms. They remained in its Working Committee almost continuously and had the rare opportunity of advising and assisting Gandhiji from 1920 till he attained Nirvana in 1948. Rajen Babu enjoyed the complete confidence of Gandhiji—such a unique privilege.

But at the last political pre-Swaraj crisis, all of them thought fit to follow their own collective decision in favour of partition of the country—contrary to the advice and conviction of Mahatma Gandhi against the creation of Pakistan. Just as Garibaldi left the political arena to Cavour and Victor Emmanuel of Italy, Gandhiji abandoned Delhi's symbols of power—Prime Ministership and Constituent Assembly's Presidentship to Jawaharlal and Rajen Babu respectively and preferred to work in Noakhali for communal harmony and peace. Yet the same Mahatma found it possible to bless all the five great leaders in the

enjoyment of their political glory, and commend to the A.I.C.C. their ill-fated formula for separation, as the inevitable price, that his foremost and closest colleagues had found it necessary to pay for the achievement of Swaraj.

Jawaharlal was President of the Congress four times, Rajen Babu thrice. The former abstained from the responsibility of steering the Congress when Subash Babu's resignation of Presidentship slumped its fortunes, while the latter boldly stepped into the breach and shouldered the Presidentship. Once again, when Acharya Kripalani resigned from Presidentship because he could not reconcile himself to the insistence of Jawaharlal for freedom to his Cabinet from party control over policy matters, Rajen Babu was asked to step into that position on that hardly enviable occasion and he loyally resigned from Food Ministership and accepted Congress Presidentship.

Among all the Congress Presidents, Rajen Babu alone could lay claim to as wide, deep and prolonged mass contact as that of Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal, the incoming President, strongly pleaded against acceptance of office at Lucknow Congress session of 1936. But Rajen Babu, the out-going President, was able to assert with equal authority and confidence that it would be the duty of Congress to accept office so as to serve the people with ministerial authority, because he knew from his mass contacts, gained from his prolonged Presidentship how great was the need of the masses for some economic relief, who had suffered so much during the world-wide economic depression.

It was that Rajen Babu with all that seniority and mass contacts who was called upon to step out of the arena of political gaddi into the Presidentship of the Constituent Assembly and then to move as by natural choice, into the Presidentship of the Indian Republic.

Among all the great men who had thus ushered the Swaraj to the broken portions of what had till then been Akhand Bharat and almost sundered the heart of Gan-

dhiji, Rajen Babu was the least guilty and the most unhappy of the followers of the Mahatma.

Out of all those five leaders, Rajen Babu came into my thoughts even earlier, when Gandhiji organised the Champaran peasants and fought for their liberation from the British planters' insistence upon the production of indigo in Champaran and other north Bihar districts on almost slave-labour basis. We learnt how he championed the cause of those peasants, how Gandhiji welcomed him and Kripalani into his intimate circle of colleagues. When later he began to tour the whole country as the President of the Congress, Bharati Devi and I had the honour of meeting him at Vijayawada, Nidubrolu, Vinayashram of Kavuru, Vetapalem and China Ganzam. I opposed the black flag demonstration organised against Rajendra Prasad by Communists at Vijayawada, and warned the public against such unfriendly gestures against such a Buddha-like national leader.

We came into intimate contact with each other, as he and we two, travelled together in the same third class compartment from Wardha to Delhi and also during our meetings in Delhi. Bharati Devi was so much struck with his fortitude in fighting against bouts of asthama. The third class narrow bench had to be broadened by placing some trunks by its side, so that a fairly broad bedding could be arranged for his rest and she was happy to have been able to minister to such simple comforts. We felt contented with our own voluntarily chosen discomforts and comparative poverty when we realised how greatly that senior and saintly national leader was similarly bearing with so many discomforts and poverty, all though he could command the best comforts, by relaxing a few rules of his Gandhian order.

He was good enough to encourage my efforts to develop the all-India platform for peasants and to inaugurate the Conference in Madras of organisers of peasants organisations in November, 1936. He did not mind the un-

friendly attitude of Sardar Patel towards my moves. Gandhiji was willing to bless my efforts as he was assured by Rajen Babu and Sarojini Devi that the peasant movement under my leadership would be a source of strength to the Congress. He used to encourage me in my work in Central Assmbly and through the peasant group of MLAs because he was convinced that peasants interests had to be promoted vis-a-vis those of industrial and urban interests. But when Swami Sahajanand and I began to develop similar peasant group from among MLAs of Bihar Assembly after the formation of Congress ministry, and Swamiji's aggressive campaign for protection of peasants against the depredations of zamindars threatened the political foundations of the Congress ministers of 1936-39, he found it impossible to continue to support us and he swerved more to the side of Sardar. On the whole his sympathies were for the actual peasants who cultivated their own lands.

It was he as Congress President who appointed the Agrarian Reforms Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. J. C. Kumarappa in 1948. He wanted us to suggest how to protect the interests of tenants under the landholders, who came to gain proprietorship of their lands, after the abolition of zamindari system. I was specially asked by him to join it. He accepted my suggestion that Shri T. Raghavalu, MA, LLB (Harijan), be appointed to represent agricultural labour. We recommended various legislative measures to protect tenants, to sustain self-employed peasant-proprietors, to impose ceilings, but on condition that they be imposed more or less simultaneously and in an equal measure both upon land-holdings and urban and professional properties. We also indicated what all have to be done by Governments to help peasants to obtain in-puts and consumers' goods at reasonable and controlled prices, just as their produce might be purchased at remunerative prices. Later on, when Jawaharlal's government failed to deal with the urban classes and peasants in an even-handed manner and refused to impose

ceilings on urban and professional classes while imposing them on land-holdings alone, Rajen Babu appreciated my revolt against that one-sided and anti-peasant approach but he was helpless to prevent Jawaharlal's wrong moves. I had to be content with his understanding sympathy and his quiet suggestions regarding our political moves.

He had great faith in Gandhiji's constructive programme. He did much to strengthen the cottage industries, especially Khadi, and he strained all his resources to protect self-employed masses.

As Minister of Agriculture, he got the opportunity to promote the cattle wealth and he initiated steps, with the co-operation of both myself and our friend, Thakurdas Bhargav, to bring into existence "Gosamvardhan Samiti" to prevent aged, disabled cows from being sent to the slaughter houses and to protect them in some Goshalas. Thus he fulfilled one of Gandhiji's cherished objectives.

He encouraged us to found the All India Agricultural Economists Association, with himself as President, myself as Vice-President and the distinguished economist Shri Natu as Secretary. We initiated enquiries into the costs of cultivation of different crops and also cost of living of both peasants and agricultural workers.

We obtained Rajen Babu's blessings for our efforts to organise the Federation of Rural Peoples Organisations, embracing Kisan Congress, Handloom Weavers Congress, Cottage and Artisans Congress. He was happy to extend government recognition to the Kisan Congress and also to various committees of the producers of rice, wheat, groundnut, cotton, coconut and arecanut.

When Rajen Babu became Minister for Food and Agriculture, the country was faced with a serious food shortage, as a result of British system of controls, rationing, compulsory procurement and corruption. All of us who were engaged in the Kisan movement were dead set against those controls, which were a hang-over of war-

time British controls and clamoured for their abolition. Jawaharlal, who was also opposed to them before assuming power, became a convert to them and urged that if compulsory procurement was given up, and price control abandoned, how could urban rationing and distribution of cheap grain to the vulnerable section be assured. We had some heated arguments between us in the Congress Working Committee and unpleasant debates in the Party's Executive and Rajen Babu, as minister, used to try to make some sense out of our wrangles, with his ever-ready smiles. Soon I succeeded in gaining Gandhiji's prayer talks oriented in favour of peasants who suffered from unwelcome police attentions and Communists gangsterism and urban workers who were obliged to get foodgrains only in black-markets, owing to the corruption in ration shops and at the police check-posts. For months Rajen Babu tried to valiantly implement Jawahar's new pet-scheme, the controls. He suffered agonies as the daily prayer-demands of Gandhiji for their removal had to be ignored, without any effective justification and as I was also pressing in Parliament for reconsideration.

Gandhiji threatened to go on fast if the system of controls in foodgrains was not radically reviewed and peasants were not treated as producers of food rather than as black-marketeers. It was at that delicate juncture that Rajen Babu offered to resign if he were not allowed to drop food controls and Jawaharlal had to reluctantly yield to Rajen Babu's earnest plea to let him drop controls, satisfy Gandhiji and thus free himself from that agonising conflicts of wills between those two seniors in authority.

Rashtrapati Rajendra Prasad and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru were able to establish many precedents and conventions of decent political relationship which have come to be the corner-stone of our parliamentarism. The Prime Minister used to meet the President at regular

and stated intervals and made a dutiful report of the high decisions of the Government and discussed in general outline the political policies — on national and international fronts — which the Government was shaping or pursuing. The Rashtrapati used to offer his advice and remarks in his quiet, pleasant and suggestive manner. They thus engendered the atmosphere that should prevail between the chief of the Government and the Constitutional head of the State, with authority to ask, and know why any decisions are being proposed or taken, to suggest re-thinking or to ask for reconsideration and to affix his assent, after knowing why and what he was approving, though not having the power to refuse to sign.

Rajen Babu began to have doubts as to how far he could make the Cabinet to re-consider, revise or recast any of its decisions. So he tried to test how far he could make the Cabinet to revise its proposals for the amendment of Hindu Succession Law after a particular stage was reached by the Cabinet in finalising its proposals. The Prime Minister would not allow the President to seriously upset or obstruct Cabinet's decisions. To strengthen himself and set at rest all doubts, Jawaharlalji made his unusual statement that the President could not assume any more powers than the English King and the Parliament and its Cabinet could alone decide anything finally.

Many responsible political leaders feel till today that Rajen Babu should have asserted his authority vis-a-vis Jawaharlalji. But Rajendra Prasad preferred to let the Prime Minister and Parliament have their sway, rather than forcing a constitutional crisis. His forbearance and spirit of compromise and Constitutional propriety have helped our Constitution to gain strength and popularity in contrast with what has happened in Pakistan, Indonesia and in most Latin American countries.

Rashtrapati Radhakrishnan had occasions to chafe under the political limitations built up by traditions set

up by Rajen Babu. This was so especially when the whole country and Parliament found it hard to persuade Jawaharlalji to drop some of his colleagues including Krishna Menon during the Chinese aggression and to seek more timely support from democratic nations. What would have happened if Radhakrishnan had chosen to accept the advice of some of our impatient Parliamentary leaders or if Jawaharlalji had continued to hug the unpopular ministers, is anyone's guess. But because there is room for such possibilities to happen, Indiraji and her supporters had taken special care to see that Shri Sanjiva Reddy, who was sponsored by those who wanted the President to play a political role, was not elected and Shri Giri who would follow in the footsteps of Rajen Babu should be elected. It is in the light of this decade's experiences that the noble norms set up and far-sighted Constitutional role played by Rajen Babu shine in all their glory.

He was a genuine humanist, in keeping with Buddhist traditions of Bihar. He fought untouchability. He helped the backward classes and tribal people. He presided over a conference, convened by me, of the tribal people in the so-called Excluded Areas and helped us in the Constituent Assembly to provide in the Constitution suitable safeguards for their protection and development.

RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP

[Raja Mahendra Pratap of Brindaban was born in Marsan of Aligarh district of U.P. in 1-12-1886. He is the doyen of Freedom Fighters. He was a notional member of the Congress from 1906 to 1952, though he had to spend more than three decades as an exile in Japan, etc. He was the Founder-Presdient of the First Government of Hind, declared on 1-12-1915 in Kabul. He made representations on behalf of that Government in Afghanistan, Russia, United States, Japan and China and pleaded for support for India's freedom struggles. He founded 'Free India' Society in Japan in 1940. His properties were confiscated by British Government. His "My Life Story" is very inspiring. He believes in World Federation and preaches the need for world peace. Parliament passed a special act, restoring to him, what all was confiscated by the British.—Ed.]

Raja Mahendra Pratap's name shines brightly in the hearts of all freedom lovers who have taken part in India's fight for freedom, whether they be believers in violence or non-violence.

Netaji Subash Chandra Bose is adored by all the Youths of this post-Independence era because he dared to give shape to the dreams and aims of generations for the government of independent India and for her own Azad Hind Fauz and to give a geo-political alignment for our urges by coining the two inspiring slogans of 'Chalo Delhi' of Lal Khilla and 'Jai Hind'. True, we honour Jawahar, Sardar, Rajen Babu, Rajaji and Azad as the Pandavas behind the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi but Netaji stands apart, shines aloft in our hearts.

But thirty years earlier Mahendra Pratap too dreamt and pictured the Dame of Freedom of India through his courageous initiative, poetic in its conception. He thought,

like Netaji's and very much on the lines of Savarkar that Imperialists adversity should be utilised as slave India's opportunity. We raised the notional edifice of Government of Independent India on 1-12-1915, the constructive and inspiring conception, absent in 1856 movement. He moved through Afghanistan, Russia, Germany and crossed both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans as the spiritual representative of that Government in search of friends and political recognition for free India. He succeeded in "encouraging the Gaddar and Har Dayal Groups and Kamagata brotherhood to think of free India as a political possibility. He gained the ear of some of the rulers in different countries. He gave a new dimension to the struggle that a large number of patriots who were scheming and daring to struggle for national independence with Bengali Bombs, Punjab Pens and Pistols and Kanpur Bullets. The British Government realised to its chagrin, that it could not have any peace of mind, by merely consigning Veer Savarkar to Andamans and by mercilessly destroying the Gaddar patriots, so long as Mahendra Pratap was abroad, moving among top leaders, claiming to speak for the indestructible spirit of free India. To frighten others it confiscated his property and inflicted cruel punishment, in a vicarious manner, upon the patriotic U.S. Indian Sikhs who fell into its Coils, because it could not reach Mahendra Pratap.

Ultimately Mahendra Pratap settled down in Japan, lived there for more than a quarter century as an unrepentent rebel and remained steadfast as the unextinguishable incandescent light of aspiration for national freedom of India. All patriotic Indians are grateful to him for thus keeping aloft that Olympic light of free India's soul, with the oil springing from the deep wells of Purushottam, Chandra Guptas, Rajendra Chola, Kakatiya

Nayaks, Rana Pratap, Shivaji, Katta Bomman, Sitaramaraju and Bhagat Singh and their compeers and with the endless wick of his own love of Mother India. He had thus kept faith for 30 years with India in an unflinching manner and India too kept faith with him by winning her freedom. Swaraj India welcomed him back into her bosom; Swaraj Parliament passed a special act to restore his properties, even though it had cancelled the special privileges of Rajahs and Maharajahs, because Mahendra Pratap is no longer an earthly Rajah but the prince among free India's patriotic sons.

It is the good fortune of this generation to have him in our midst, rich in age, growing in rosy dreams of World Peace and World Government and doing tapas for the Kingdom of men of love. It was our good fortune to have had him for five years in our Lok Sabha. It was my privilege to be his colleague as an MP, to be his guest in his Prem Mahavidyalaya in Mathura's Brindaban and to join him on the platform for the protection and honouring of our Freedom Fighters.

NARAYANA RAJU D.

The 1920-22 Non-Co-operation Movement against British Governmental pillars of power, including the newly reconstituted Legislatures with elected majorities and powers over half of the Cabinet was heralded by Mahatma Gandhi with the blessings of Lok Manya Tilak, even as he was on his death-bed. Schools and colleges, courts and Manchester cotton cloth were to be boycotted. That was just the time when the Non-Brahmin Movement, started by Sir P. Thyagaraya Chettiar and Dr. T. M. Nair and heralded in Andhra by K. V. Reddi, Rajah of Panagal, K. G. Krishnaiah to safeguard the political rights of the hitherto submerged majority, that is, the Non-Brahmins was hoping to sponsor the debut of the emerging Non-Brahmin communities into political arena. Every Non-Brahmin whether a lawyer or doctor or educationist who could lay claim upon the awakened support of the then dominant community was hoping to enter into political arena and try his fortunes in the elections to the new Assemblies of Montford Reforms. Indeed most of the well-known Brahmin lawyers and doctors, who then enjoyed great reputation and ever-rising incomes and wealth were also ambitious to gain political power. But since many of their leaders had been clamouring for nothing less than Swaraj itself and at least full responsible governments at the States (then known as Provinces) level, they were disappointed with the partial transfer of power (dyarchy) which was being vouchafed by British reforms.

So Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation Programme was hailed by most of the Brahmin leaders as they were more fully attuned to the nationalist fervour and programme of the National Congress, whereas the top-most and vociferous Non-Brahmin leaders were too keen to jump into

the electioneering fray and seize what appeared to be their golden opportunity to gain admittance into the citadels of power.

At that juncture Desabhakta Konda Venkatappaiah, the wholetime champion of the demand for Andhra State and linguistic redistribution of India, Doctors Pattabhi, C. Subramaniam, lawyers B. Sambamurti, Sitaramasastri, Oruganti Venkata Subbaiah, Barristers T. Prakasam, Unnava Laxminarayana, N. V. L. Narasimha Rao and educationist from Edinburgh D. Gopalakrishnaiah who were then in the top rungs of their respective professions joined G. Harisarvothamararao, M.A., the veteran freedom fighter with 1910-12 jail experiences in forming the first cadre of intellectual leaders for the Gandhian movement in Andhra. The Non-Brahmin intellectuals, few as they were then, seized that opportunity to jump into newly proferred power in the bosom of the British rulers. It was just at that crucial juncture that Congress was hard put to it to find support from among the Non-Brahmin intellectuals and so few of them joined it, not only because of the need to turn their backs upon trappings of power but also run the risk of defying Government and embracing what then appeared to most people, the forbidding example of Harisarvothamarao and Bala Gangadhar Tilak, Lajpat Rai and their jail experiences. Dandu Narayana Raju, the budding lawyer of Eluru, Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu, Chidambaram Pillai from Tamil Nad, Barrister K. V. R. Swami from Rajahmundry bravely stepped out of the ranks of Non-Brahmin intellectuals to join Gandhiji's Non-Co-operation movement, gave up their professions, denied themselves the golden opportunities of standing for Legislatures and ran the guantlet with the British rulers and welcomed the risk of going to jails and losing their all.

Srimati Annapurna, wife of M. Bapi Needu, who was about to sail to USA for advanced studies and joining her husband in California University was the first Andhra

woman who chose to respond to Gandhiji's call to boycott foreign cloth and offered all her clothes prepared for her foreign sojourn for the first bon-fire at Vijayawada and boycott foreign studies. Both Bapi Needu and myself who also accepted Gandhiji's leadership had to wait till 1923 and complete our studies abroad before formally joining the Congress on our return. Thus Dandu Narayana Raju proved to be the sole intelectual from the powerful Telugu Kshatriyas of Andhra and one of the first five Non-Brahmin lawyers to offer their all at the altar of Mother India and prepared themselves to life-long patriotic service.

Raju was a fair-looking, slightly-built and cheerful-looking medium-sized person. He hailed from a middle-class Kshatriya clan of Dandu (the word literally meaning fighting phalanx) of West Godavari district. He was highly studious and meticulous in the presentation of his case in courts or public platforms. His speeches were like those of the famous liberal statesman hailing from the same district Sir M. Ramachandra Rao, scholarly and persuasive. He concentrated on the constructive programme of the Congress. He was extremely popular among the kisans of his district and he specialised on their problems such as the excessive incidence of land revenue, maladministration of local boards and corruption in Revenue, PWD, Registration and Police Departments.

When the Congress decided to give up its boycott programme and allow the Swarajya wing to send Congressmen to legislatures, Raju was elected to Madras Legislative Assembly in 1926. Soon he distinguished himself as an able successor of his hero, Ramachandra Rao, as the champion of peasants. He contested the resettlement proposals made by Holdsworth to enhance the land revenue payable by peasants of East and West Godavaris and Krishna by 18-3/4% and forced the Government to agree to appoint an all-party

Economic Enquiry Committee of MLAs to study Holdsworths report and proposals. That was indeed an achievement, worthy of Gokhale-Ramachandra Rao's tradition. Government wanted the committee to appoint as its secretary one of the senior ICS officers but Raju insisted that only a non-official economist could be chosen and the committee chose me on his recommendation for that vital function. Thus I came into intimate contact with Raju during the two years of my collaboration with that high-powered committee. Raju was scrupulous in all his Congress and legislative work and decent and decorous in his personal relations with fellow workers. Though he was the convenor of that Resettlement Economic Enquiry Committee, he decided so soon as he found my work to be scientific and satisfactory, and sincere to leave all his responsibilities to be discharged by me. He was a good teamworker and used to succeed in winning the confidence of MLAS of other parties also. So his statesmanship had not a little to do with the ultimate acceptance of the recommendations of our committee, unanimously by all members, who belonged to both the Swarajya, Justice Parties which were daggers drawn against each other and also Independents, including the Chairman Arogyaswami Mudaliar who was an Independent and ex-Minister and retired Superintendent Engineer.

Raju distinguished himself equally in developing Khadi production in his district and managing the Gandhi Ashram. By 1940, he came to be the most outstanding veteran Congressman with the highest reputation for integrity, financial scruples and quiet and efficient administration of Congress and Zilla Board affairs. He never appeared to be aggressive but he was aggressively scrupluous and conscious of his efficient managerial capacities.

So when an impatient, intellectually arrogant Congress boss tried to pick up an argument over his decisions about some petty affairs, Raju surprised us all by hurling his resignation of the highly prized presidentship of the

West Godavari District Board and thus humbled the Provincial Congress leaders before all-India Congress leadership.

I was extremely fortunate in my dealings with this sensitive and scrupulous Congress leader. He loved my work for the committee and my championship of its recommendations against the proposed enhancement of land tax by 18-3/4% by organising peasantry for offering satyagraha. He became one of the leaders of that satyagraha and offered to go to jail for the sake of peasants' cause.

He agreed with me in demanding moratorium upon kisans' debts during the disastrous economic depression of 1930-33 and championed peasants' refusal to sell their lands at distress prices only in order to meet the insistent clamour of Sahukars for the repayment of their loans during the period of low prices for foodgrains and lands. He presided over the Andhra Peasants Protection Conference held in Bapatla in 1931 and endorsed the charter of demands of peasants and workers. Afterwards, he used to head the District Peasants Marches, whenever they were organised and his leadership was so much valued by the elders that the great liberal leaders Sir M. Ramachandra Rao and Nyapati Subbarao, the veteran General Secretary of the National Congress agreed to join our Marches and reinforce the peasants cause.

Ever afterwards, he stood by me in all my constructive activities in building up the peasant movement in Andhra and all over India. In particular, he joined us in the 1,000-mile-long Peasant March of 1938 led by K. S. N. Murti to present charter of minimum demands to Rajaji, who was then the Prime Minister of Madras State.

Raju was a happy and comradely jail-mate for all of us. He was not subject to the usual jail-ailment of bad temper and bad stomach. He used to be a good student and also a studious listener in all the study circles orga-

nised by us in jails. He became a sportsman when in college and organised sports among our political prisoners in order to keep up their spirits and make them cheerful. He breathed his last due to heart failure in Tanjore jail. He died a martyr to the cause of India and peasants. If only he had lived for another ten years, he could have become a Minister in Swaraj India and set an example as an honoest, able, scrupulous servant and leader of our people; so good a Gandhian and so sincere a lover of the peasants and workers he was. When later Col. D. S. Raju became a Central Minister, I used to be reminded of my old leader, friend and colleague, Narayana Raju of the same Velanadu Chola heritage of Bhimavaram delta.

All that his devoted and patriotic daughter asked from Indira's Government, at the All Andhra Conference of Freedom Fighters at Palacole in February, 1975 was the Tamra Patra as a token of national recognition of Nárayana Raju as also a Freedom Fighter. So noble is the sense of service he has left behind him as their family possession and tradition.

COL. D. S. RAJU, I. M. S., I. N. A.

A number of us, Freedom Fighters including — Abid Hasan of Telangana, Rajamannar, S. N. Somayajulu, T. Kannan of Tamil Nadu, Sheelabhadra Yaji of Bihar, Dr. Chopra of Delhi, S. N. Gupta of Karnataka, Mathews of Kerala and V. L. Sundararao and myself of Andhra paid our homage to late Col. D. S. Raju, MRCP, LRCP in Poduru, his native village in West Godavari on 7-1-1975. More than ten peasants of that village who were also Freedom Fighters joined us in the public meeting. Sheelabhadra Yaji unveiled the portrait of Raju in the hall called after Netaji Subash Chandra Bose. It was the place of heroes, hallowed by the sacrifices made and the singing songs of Vande Mataram by men and women over 4 decades during our struggle.

Abid Hasan, the confidante of Netaji and one of the earliest officers to join the INA as it was formed in Europe who aided Netaji as Confidential Secretary and who eventually retired as Ambassador to Denmark and Apparao, the Andhra recruit to that force in Europe paid glowing tributes to Netaji and Raju.

Col. Raju was initially not a military man. He was an eminent medical expert. He joined the Medical Corps of Indian Army. He was in Singapore when the British Power collapsed and Japanese took charge of Singapore and Malaysia. He joined the INA and accepted the leadership of Subash Bose, when he became its Neta. Since he was the most eminent medical expert, he soon attracted the attention of Netaji and he won his confidence by his sincere and expert services to the INA personnel and his patriotic leadership. He was welcomed by Netaji as his own trusted personal physician. As Gen. Shah Nawaz Khan said "it was mainly as a result of the excel-

lent medical care that Dr. Raju took of Netaji that the latter kept good health under very strenuous circumstances". When the Azad Hind Government was formed he was included in its Cabinet, headed by Netaji.

Raju was left behind to look after the troops, when Netaji undertook the last journey by plane after Japan's defeat and he was taken prisoner, like the rest of the INA by the Allied Forces and brought to trial by the British in the Red Fort. He faced the trial with the same fortitude and patriotic fervour with which he had joined the INA. It was at that stage I had the privilege of interviewing him for the first time in the War Prisoners' Camp in Delhi. Thanks to the great wave of patriotic protest that arose spontaneously from every side all over India and the changed fortunes of the British Empore and favourable political attitude of the British Socialist Ministry, the INA officers. including Col. Raju and the civilian Sheelabhadra Yaji who were about to be condemned to death were released. And the whole country acclaimed those officers as Freedom Fighters of the first order.

I was then the President of the Andhra Congress Committee and a member of the National Congress Working Committee and I organised on behalf of Andhra Peoples' State-level Reception at Eluru for Raju, and expressed the admiration felt by 3 crore Andhras and accelaimed him as the super-patriot of Netaji stamp.

Raju was not content to rest on those laurels. He started private practice, coupled with a Nursing Home called 'Netaji Healthorium' in Rajahmundry and began to treat thousands of patients as in an Ashram. His services were so good and his expertness as surgeon and general practitioner was so high that he came to have roaring practice and income, though he never stipulated any fees. Soon he became the "Glamour Doctor" of Godavari. And so he was chosen as Congress candidate for Parlia-

ment in 1957 and continued to be in it till 1960 and during one election, he was returned uncontested, indeed a unique tribute.

Both Jawaharlal and Lal Bahadur Shastri, successive Prime Ministers were so much impressed with his transparent sincerity, efficiency and quiet dignity that he was invited to be Deputy Minister, first for Defence, next for Health. Lal Bahadur was once surprised agreeably when Raju sought leave to resign from ministry in order to better look after his beloved nursing home.

As a minister, he maintained best relations with the secretaries and contributed in an unobtrusive manner to the development of ordinance factories and rural health and sanitation.

I had the privilege of supplementing his efforts to get both Andhra and Central ministries to agree to the construction of the road-rail-bridge—the longest in Asia—over Godavari and also to obtain the needed technical sanction and funds for the Rangaraya Medical College of Kakinada. If it had not been for Raju's initiative, and efficient statesmanship and munificent donation of Rangarao of Dommeru, that great college over which several crores have come to be spent by now would not have materialised.

I was specially struck by two special features of Raju's activity when we were fellow MPs. I used to find him so frequently in the Parliament library, pouring over books on history, politics and philosophy, whenever he found free time, even though he was a Minister, a happy and worthy experience, not shared by many other ministers. He also used to take delight in discussing with Sadhus and Swamis about the ultimate verities of life and philosophical approaches of Hinduism. Never did I find him assuming the usual airs of ministerial authority and

sense of omniscience. He was indeed as saintly while a Minister as he was a warrior during war-time. During his last years of earthly existence, he constituted a Public Trust for the ownership and management of his Nursing Home and other related properties; Raju lived thus as a Gandhian and saintly public man, worthy of Netaji and his conception of public service.

Raju was short by Godavari Kshatriya standards of physical stature. He was brown of colour and friendly and kindly by nature. He was born in an upper middle class family. He amassed great wealth by his medical practice but devoted it all for public purposes. He was devoted to his family and so abstained from marrying again after the death of his wife, when he was not yet forty-years-old and proved to be both father and mother to his children. He was unspoiled by ministerial power or personal wealth or medical achievements. He was not a Parliamentary speaker but his sincerety and frankness won for his ministerial statements more approbation of Parliament than what the more prominent leaders were hard put to it to evoke.

India is rightly proud of this good warrior, sweet doctor and saintly public worker.

RAJYA SABHA'S LEADERS

DAHYABHAI PATEL AND M. RUTNASWAMI

Two good friends whose political background upto 1946 had been so far apart as one could possibly imagine were brought into close co-operation in Rajya Sabha as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Swatntra Party; they were Dahyabhai Patel and M. Rutnaswami. In fact the political life I led between 1930 and 1959 was as far apart from that of Rutnaswami and yet we both came to work together as the President and Vice-president of the Swatantra Party from 1959 right upto 1969.

Dahyabhai's home atmosphere was saturated with that of the Congress. He knew no other political approach than that of his great father Sardar Patel, his versatile uncle, the famous first Indian Speaker, Vithalbhai Patel and sister Maniben Patel; that is, the Congress Politics. He was brought up in Bombay and Ahmedabad and became Mayor of Bombay and thus became a City elder.

Rutnaswami made his debut in politics through the Justice Party, which was trying to help the politically unawakened and under-developed Non-Brahmins. He was temperamentally opposed to satyagraha, the main political weapon of the Congress. Dahyabhai could not imagine any Constitutional means of gaining Swaraj, whereas Rutnaswami could not approve any gate-crashing into Swaraj through direct-action by the masses.

When I told Rutnaswami in 1927 that I believed in Congress-Gandhian-methods of fighting for Swaraj, he could not understand why then I was trying to join Pachaiyappa's College and occupy the Professorship of History, Economics and Politics that he was vacating to take up principalship of the Law College; I reminded him that just as he had been a legislator of the Justice Party and

Chairman of the Madras Legislative Council, while being the Pachaiyappa's Professor and Principal, I could also take similar part in legislatures. During the whole of the Quarter Century and more during which Dahyabhai and myself were going in and out of jails, he was carrying on his researches into the Constitutional developments of India under the British and pleading, in his scholastic and persistent manner for successive concessions from Parliament towards evolution of self-government for India.

I have been aware, all the time, of Rutnaswami's whole-hearted concern for the backward classes and politically dormant masses and his fears lest premature advent of political freedom should further strengthen the already powerful social and religious orthodoxy, its priests, monopolists of political pulls and thus prevent or slow-down the almost imperceptible awakening of the masses towards democratic rights not only in politics but also in social and religious spheres. So he did not join me and my colleages from among the under-privileged in our fiery crusade for freedom. He was too much of a Constitutionalist and Liberal to pursue any agitational campaign either for the protection of Non-Brahmins or for resisting vigorously, as Justicites and Besant's followers used to do. He taught and wrote in favour of his ideas and was content to accept whatever scholarly opportunities life vouchsafed him.

When Jawaharlal hailed Socialist approach in 1955, both Dahyabhai and myself were already far in adavance of it in our political work. But when he began to devote all Congress resources to the national campaign to deprive peasants of their self-employment, we saw "red" in his anti-peasantism and having had our roots in the great Indian Peasantry, we decided to oppose that un-socialist and un-Gandhian move. It was at that stage, Rutnaswami found that we all had so much in common, as he also felt that the economic well-being of the hitherto submerged peasant masses was going to be subverted. Thus the three of us, Dahyabhai from Gujarat peasantry and myself from Andhra peasants and Rutnaswami of Tamil-

nad Non-Brahmin politics found it possible to share the same platform with Rajaji, the political altar-ego of India's intellectual elite, in order to protect the self-emploment of our peasantry. When Jawaharlal taunted the convergence of many retired I.C.S. Vice-Chancellors, Governors to Swatanara, he retorted in his quiet but telling manner, "we may be retired men, but we are not tired men" as the Prime Minister confesses himself to be.

Dahyabhai too gained experience in educational management through the Charottar Vidya Mandal of Anand. He had been the Mayor of Bombay and contributed for long for the development of that great city. He was one of the leaders of the Maha Gujarat movement for the separation of Gujarat from Bombay (Maharastra State). He fought the Congress on that issue and got elected to Rajya Sabha and joined the Swatantra Group at the very beginning and became its natural leader, what with his past Congress satyagrahic record, his recognised place in Rajya Sabha and political sacrifices and reputation of his family.

He joined the International Conference held in Taiwan to strengthen democracies. He strengthened Israel's right for honourable place among independent nations. He opposed totalitarianism of every type.

Rutnaswamy was already rich in age and scholarship when he joined us in 1959. He had been a Vice-Chancellor and an eminent political writer. Dayabhai co-operated with Bhailalbhai Patel in the educational field also and evinced much interest in the development of the Vallabh University. Rutnaswami was the founder-President of the Indian Association of Catholics.

During more than a decade, these two experienced leaders made solid contribution to the cause of Indian social democracy through their work in Rajya Sabha. Both of them were good democrats. Dahyabhai was trenchant in his exposition and unyielding in his political approach to the Government. Rutnaswami was constructive in his criticisms, scholarly and statesmanlike in his

warnings. Dahyabhai could be frightful in his rages and pitiless in his exposures. Rutnaswami is great in going to the heart of the Government's weak front and exposing its untenability. Thus they made a goood combination. Both of them condemned the Licence-Permit-Quota Raj and supported our demand for a quasi-judicial independent commission to administer the issue, cancellation and regulation of this regime of permits and controls.

Both of them co-operated with me in the Party's Councils. I deemed it a great privilege to be hailed by them as their leader; Rutnaswami being far too senior to me in age and university experiences and scholarship, Dahyabhai being the son of my beloved senior leader, the great Sardar. I could not be so great a wholehogger for free enterprise and market economy and they were happier with Masani in that direction. But they stood by me on all occasions when I was fighting for rights of peasants.

I loved to do all I could to regenerate the socially suppressed and politically unorganised toiling masses, whose cause was so dear to both of them. Rutnaswami was ever vigilent during our discussions about our attitude towards the masses and was always keen on persuading the top leaders with their intellectual and social affinities with the top rungs of society to give prior thought for the fundamental and primary needs of the masses for more food, clothing, housing, drinking water, sanitation, education and employment.

Both Dahyabhai and Rutnaswami were appreciated by all sections of Rajya Sabha. They were good speakers. They made good leaders of Parliamentary Opposition. They strengthened, like the rest of us in both Houses of Parliament, the three successive Prime Ministers during the aggressions from Pakistan and China in 1962, 1965 and 1971.

Dahyabhai passed away suddenly due to heart failure in 1975.

RAJ, KISAN MAZDOOR PRAJA

N. V. NAIDU AND OBULU REDDI

Among those graduates of the Peasants Institute who have been fully committed to the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj and the cause of Self-Employed masses, some like Shri K. Obulu Reddi, N. V. Naidu, G. Latchanna, P. Timma Reddy have chosen to concentrate on political service. Obulu Reddi rendered valuable services as General Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Congress by developing its mass contacts, inspiring public workers from every section of backward classes and Harijans to gain self-confidence, join the stream of nationalism and social service. Mostly due to his dynamic work, ably aided by Naidu in Rayalaseema and Latchanna from Kalinga region, the P.C.C. became the strongest platform for the Bahujana or the masses and ever larger ranks of public workers were induced to come to the fore, as self-confident Congressmen.

He and N. V. Naidu were too much in a hurry to build the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Cadre of leadership, not so much by patiently training public spirited youths in our Peasant or Handloom or Citizenship schools or B.S.S. or student or youth camps but by inducing politically ambitious youths from socially, and communally rich families. That process appeared to give quick results by way of grand demonstrations and immediately effective political platforms. But they came ultimately to suffer painful disappointments when the same adventurous young politicals were weaned away by the Congress ministers and their power-mongering political agents. So Naidu got disgusted with politics and turned to his second love that is business, though he remained true to K.M.P. Raj ideals. He was so strong in his hatred of practitioners of unscrupulous political power that he would not care to meet or raise political discussions even in Assembly with

the Chief Ministers, during his tenure of seven years as M.L.A.

Timma Reddy, abandoned K.L.P. in 1952 and his success in obtaining important places in Cabinet in successive Andhra ministries, just because he defected from his kisan colleagues of the same democratic socialist faith of K.M.P.Raj ideal might have also given a jolt to Obulu Reddi's faith in spirit and ties of comeraderie.

He worked bravely and in close co-operation with the late Kisan Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah, Kakani Venkataratnam, Congress Sevadal and Dr. Chenna Reddy to protect the peasantry of Andhra and Telangana first from Rajakar Terrorism and next, from Communist violence. The three of them, Reddi, Kakani and Gorrepati defied the letters of threats from "Communist Underground" to their lives and came, therefore, to be hailed as men of Steel.

He stood loyally by Prakasam and myself in our struggle against ministers who misused their power and demanded impartial enquiry. He seconded my proposal to Jawaharlalji that Prakasam, the leader of the Praja Party should be invited to head the Coalition of the Congress, K.L.P. and Praja Party and thus paved the way for Prakasam being called upon to become the Chief Minister for the second time in 1953. If only he and Latchanna had heeded our caution not to take sides between those who were competing for Chief Ministership and let the K.L.P. group remain neutral, the subsequent ministerial history would have been much less burdened with factious misuse of power, to the detriment of the Kisans and Khet Mazdoors, so dear to the K.L.P. MLAs of KMP Raj persuasion.

His love for villagers and his passion for rural reconstruction were so great, that he agreed to work as the

elected Chairman of Panchayat Samiti of his area. He then demonstrated his constructive ability to attend to Panchayat Raj works, like building roads and bridges, schools and rural dispensaries, digging drinking water wells and providing house-sites for poor and homeless folk.

He and myself were involved badly in a car accident in 1934 and though his injuries were more serious, his thoughts were only about my safety.

Obulu Reddi did not like the pressures from Bombay friends upon Swatantra Party and so, rejoined the Congress in 1960. He resisted all pressures from Congress bosses and abstained from campaigning against me in both Chittoor (1962) and Srikakulam (1967) bye-elections, because he believed not only in me but also in the need for the presence of powerful K.M.P. Raj leaders in Parliamentary Opposition.

Obulu Reddi became a Minister for an year. A herculean effort had to be made by Minister Latchanna of Krishikar Lok section of the United Congress (1955-62) to persuade the then Congress bosses to fulfil their pledge of honourable mutual co-operation between all the three partners in forming the United Congress. All that demonstration of bad faith at the highest levels of Congress national leadership must have hurt Obulu Reddi so much that he has not been the same energetic, self-confident missionary of Kisan Movement that he had been since 1934, although he has been an M.L.A. ever since. He did much good work as the Chairman of the University-Executive Board by aiding Shri Pulla Reddi, ex-ICS, Vice-Chancellor of Agricultural University, to broaden the foundations of that University.

TIMMA REDDI

Timma Reddi grew popular in Rayalaseema as the Vice-President of the Andhra PCC, between 1946-51. When he got his chance of being an MLA between 1952-55,

while most other KLP leaders were defeated, he became too impatient to become a minister, on the promptings of the usual Congress power-brokers and so decided to part company with the KLP and join hands with just those Congress bosses, who were responsible for managing by foul means — as judged from Gandhian standards for which Congressmen had hitherto been held in high esteem by the masses. He then attained ministership in 1953 only a month earlier than his KLP leader Sardar Latchanna in the coalition but first ministry of the newly constituted Andhra State. That deviation has taken him farther and farther away from the KMP Raj workers and ever growing clusters of graduates of kisan-citizenship schools.

He functioned as Minister with one or the other portfolio from 1953 till 1970 with two brief breaks, when he could not get into the Assembly. Though he continued to oppose us, in his usual passionate manner unmindful of former loyalties and mutual love while he was toeing the line with Congress power-mongers, he continued to be as passionate as ever about kisan's interests. So whenever Bharati Devi felt that kisan's fundamental interests were being adversely affected by any Governmental move or Bill, she used to appeal in the course of her Council speeches to Minister Timma Reddi, to intervene atleast in some way to mitigate the rigors of those proposals. But poor Reddi found himself incapable of protesting even against the Seventeenth Amendment or Co-operative Farming or Gram Dan proposals. He however successfully opposed imposition of Rs. 2 crores penalty for unauthorised use of irrigation water.

During the last 3 years of his regime as Revenue Minister, he did his best to grant large forest and other uncultivated but cultivable government lands to landless agricultural workers. He heeded the advice of V. L. Sundararao and organised, for the first time in any State, Freedom Fighters Samiti, offered to give anew land grants

to such Freedom Fighters as had not been granted earlier. He also pleaded for monetary pensions to them and free educational and medical facilities and Government of India took up that proposal and announced its Pension Scheme for Freedom Fighters all over India.

Now that he is free from legislative and ministerial responsibilities, he is once again able to fully open his mind and heart to the feelings and grievances of kisans and their cause—his never sleeping passionate love. He joined the Farmers' Federation, founded by Sri Ganapaiah of Mysore in 1972 as its Vice-President. He has also played a leading role in the Indian Agriculture Congress held in Delhi in 1976. He has been protesting against the unjust imposition of Ceilings on Peasants alone, whereas Professionals, service bosses and Commercial and industrial classes are not being touched. So he is once again championing kisans' cause, in his own eloquent and passionate manner, reinforced by his experiences of ministerial power. He complained in the Agriculture Congress in April 1976 in Delhi, that it is meaningless to gloat over the release of a few thousands from "Bond Slavery" in a State as per 20-point Programme, when crores of peasants in all the big States are actually being forced to live like "Bond Slaves" by the key services, Governments, etc. How one wishes that he had been more circumspect, when he was Minister.

JINRAJ HEGDE OF MANGALORE

Jinraj Hegde of Mangalore, Karnataka was my colleague in the Central Legislative Assembly in 1937-39 after Samuel Aaron, a Freedom Fighter resigned. He used to be championing the cause of Kannada peasants and tea and coffee planters. He joined our peasant group of MLAs and used to stand by me, whenever the peasants' cause needed vigorous championship even within the Congress Party.

Jawaharlalji's proposal to impose ceilings on land alone brought him again into political arena. He joined hands with Sardar Lal Singh and Ramachandra Reddy in forming the All India Agriculturists Federation and in starting the English weekly the "Rural Voice". He gained powerful colleagues like Shri Manjunathaiah, General Cariappa, who retired as the first Indian Commander-in-Chief in his whirlwind campaign in defence of farmers. He and the Sardar met Rajaji repeatedly and began to press him to come again to the rescue of farmers.

When I began to protest against Jawaharlalji's moves to pose a challenge to the self-employment status and economic freedom of peasants, he sought me out and pressed me to join hands with them. So persistent and persuasive he was in his sincere espousal of peasants cause that even such hard headed political leaders as Rajaji, K. M Munshi, H. Dasappa, once a Minister were willing to strengthen his moves.

It was on the invitation sent out by Jinraj and sponsored by the Agriculturists Federation, that so many of us met in Madras on 4-6-1959 under the Chairmanship of Rajaji and decided, in the benign presence of Jayaprakash Narayan, to found the Swatantra Party principally for protecting the peasants, weavers and all other self-employed elements. Jinraj was elected as one of the secretaries and I was called upon to lead this new political party.

He toured and lectured in different parts of Karnataka and gained much mass support for both the Agriculturists Federation and Swatantra Party. But so soon as the Karnataka Government decided to exempt the plantations from its ceiling legislation, most of the planters ceased to support us and that disheartened Jinraj Hegde. He bore the consequent additional financial burdens ungrudgingly.

Later when Jawaharlalji introduced the Seventeenth Amendment to the Constitution to place peasants holdings

also, including their homes, farm houses and orchards on the same footing as the estates of zamindars, talukdars, such other feudal interests and empower State Governments to take them over or confiscate them, by paying only nominal compensation I wanted to raise a nation-wide mass agitation and organise a mass protest against that most undemocratic move Jinraj Hegde was quick to understand the seriousness of that challenge to the whole fabric of peasantism and self-employment. So he organised in Bangalore the Peasants Convention of all Southern States. That set the ball rolling for the nation-wide protest. Jinraj gained the signatures of lakhs of peasants for the protest campaign through the Post Card petitions to Parliament. When eventually we triumphed by stalling the campaign of co-operativisation of land holdings and by persuading Parliament to exempt all the land holdings of peasants which are below the ceiling levels, Jinraj felt justified for all the trouble he took to organise the political party and the Agriculturists Federation.

But all that incessant and restless campaigning over five years, in spite of his advancing age and sugar complaint and blood pressure took its toll and so he died soon after savouring that success. Though he was drawn into this movement for the sake of the people who were likely to be affected by the imposition of land ceilings, he was quickly able to appreciate the need to work for the peasant masses as a whole. He had great affection for me. Together with him and Lal Singh, Uddham Singh Nagoki and Basant Singh of Punjab, Bhanu Pratap Singh of U.P., Latchanna, Ramachandra Reddy, Rajagopala Naidu of Andhra and others. We formed the agriculturists and self-employed wing within the political tripod and coalition, known as the Swatantra Party.

Jinraj was dynamic in organisational activity. He was utterly sincere in his professions and affections.

GANAPAIAH OF HASSAN

Sri Ganapaiah of Shaklespur, Hassan district, Karnataka is a progressive farmer. He has been devoted to the cause of agriculturists, as a follower of Jinraj Hegde. He was very much upset by Nehru's proposal to unilaterably impose ceilings on agricultural holdings and so jumped into kisan movement. He stood by us in all our subsequent economic and political moves in order to achieve parity between agricultural and non-agricultural, rural and urban interests. He sacrificed much to help our Swatantra election campaigns of 1962, 1967 and 1971. He organised the Farmers Union of former Mysore right upto 1970. Thereafter he took the initiative in holding the All India Conference of Farmers in 1972. That conference rejuvenated the earlier defunct All India Agriculturists Federation and renamed it as Farmers Federation of India. Ganapaiah has since been its General Secretary, with Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh, MP, formerly Editor of "Gao Pukar" of U.P. as President.

Unlike most of the present day public men he is content to spare major portion of his income from agriculture for public work. He is opposed to compulsive co-operative farming, as adumberated by Nagpur Congress Session, since he is convinced that it would spell disaster to peasants self-employment. He is vigorous in his democratic opposition. Ganapaiah is solidly behind our ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj and wishes for the day when all others would also recognise the national need to sustain and cherish self-employed farmers, peasants and khet mazdoors.

BETAPPA CHETTY OF KUPPAM

Betappa Chetty, now 68 years old, is one of the few veteran freedom fighters from Chittoor district. He is an exemplary kisan, producing lovely and varied flowers in that salubrious climate of Kuppam and Bangalore plateau

for Bangalore and Madras city markets. He was not highly educated kisan, yet, he responded to the call of Gandhiji in 1930 alone and suffered so much as a 'C' class prisoner. Though no high political positions was ever offered to him he kept faith with Gandhian constructive programme and ideals of public service. He resigned from Congress, when I did so and worked for my success in 1962 Parliamentary bye-election and popularised the ideal of KMP Raj in that mountainous corner of Andhra Pradesh. Despite a heart attack, Betappa worked hard to rouse peasants against the anti-peasant moves of Jawaharlal from 1959 onwards. He brought up his son Nagabhushanam, as a self-financing voluntary public worker for the "Garibi Hatao" objective.

T. C. RAJAN

Rajan of Rayalpeta in Chittoor district joined our kisan movement in the forties. He attended the sessions of Peasant Institute in Diguvamagham and Tiruttani. He worked as the secretary and President of the District Kisan Sammelan. He has been an effective colleague of Rajagopala Naidu in all the peoples movements. He suffered imprisonment in 1964, when he organised Satyagraha in Chittoor district against enhancement of land tax. He fought against food controls. He has proved to be an honest, self-reliant public worker. He served as an MLA for a term and developed the campaign against the Seventeenth Amendment as well as co-operative farming.

P. RAMACHANDRA REDDI OF NELLORE

Pellakuri, as he is popularly known is a powerful public worker of Nellore delta. He joined the kisan movement in 1957, when the campaign in favour of the self-employment of kisans was in full swing. He has ever since kept faith with KMP Raj ideal. He has been a legislator since 1967. Ramachandra Reddi is a unique public worker, of the order of Assembly Speaker Sri R. Dasaratharami Reddi.

RANGANAYAKULU, NAGAIAH OF APPIKATLA

Sri A. Ranganayakulu, a Freedom Fighter, is now a leading lawyer in Bapatla. He was in his second year of the highly valued medical course, when he was suddenly detained in Vellore jail in 1941. It was such a pleasant surprise for me to see this favourite nephew of mine being brought into our 'A' class detenu camp. He narrated how he was harbouring some prominent anti-imperialist student leaders and how one of them betrayed their secrets and brought about his detention. He used to keep company with me for months and we used to discuss national problems during our evening walks also. His father Sreeramaiah who used to feel that our family made enough contribution to our national cause by letting me and Bharati Devi and brother Lakshminarayana to go to jails, felt unhappy that Ranganayakulu's training for the profession of medicine was thus upset. He is always cheerful. He co-operated in developing a first grade college in Bapatla and has been its highly popular honorary secretary.

Appikatla, the birth place of Ranganayakulu has a halo of its own for the Indian kisan movement. If the first kisan and khet mazdoor sammelan was born in Nidubrolu, my birth place, the first Kisan Conference was held in Appikatla, all in the same 1923. Ranganayakulu the detenu has come into that heritage of public service and modern kisan movement. His uncle Sri Achanta Nagaiah, my earliest co-student and friend in our high school career was also my co-sponsor of those two historic conferences in those two neighbouring villages — just eight miles apart from each other. He has ever since worked with me in these movements. Peasants of Appikatla were overjoyed when Gandhiji blessed our ideal of kisan mazdoor praja raj. They gloried whenever we triumphed in Parliamentary elections despite the herculean efforts made by Congress bosses to defeat me in bye-elections, after I

had been floored by their forces in the general elections to Parliament in 1952, 1962, 1967. They proudly raised a Stone Pillar with the inscription about their 1923 Conference, which proved to be so catalic for the flowering of all India kisan movement. That pillar was ceremonially installed just at the very site of that first conference by Pujya Rajaji in 1963, forty years after the beginning of the history of modern peasant movement.

THREE KISANS OF ANAKAPALLI

RAMANA, V. V.

Anakapalli of Visakhapatnam district contributed three good comrades for our kisan movement and Adibasi service. The senior-most is Shri V. V. Ramana of kisan family. He took M.A. in Andhra University and joined our ranks as kisan worker. He has been spending a good portion of his agricultural income upon the honorary public service during the past 28 years. He was elected twice to Rajya Sabha and helped me as the Secretary of the Krishikar Lok group in Parliament. He regenerated the local sugar factory, converted it into a co-operative concern, doubled its cane crushing capacity and managed it so successfully that peasants who are its co-operative owners and other cane growers have been benefited so much. He was awarded a prize in the International Conference of Sugar Cane Producers in Manila for his knowledge of the management of cane production and co-operative sugar manufacturing.

RAMU NAIDU

Ramu Naidu, the protege of Ramana and a graduate of Andhra University has combined efficiently the management of both his own family business and agriculturists organisation and thus exemplified how a kisan can serve simultaneously both his family and public causes. He organised and conducted the first kisan tourist train, with

hundreds of kisans and helped them to see both old pilgrim centres and modern manufacturing centres and agricultural research stations which were called modern pilgrim centres by Nehru. He used the savings for the construction of the Kisan Hall in Anakapalli, such is his integrity and business capability. Ramana provided the requisite political guidance for this successful venture.

BEESETTI

Shri Beesetti Apparao, ex-MLA, formerly a worker in Jamshedpur factory complex took up kisan and Girijan work on the invitation of V. V. Ramana and devoted several years for the service of the Girijans of Mahendragiri regions.

MALLIPEDDI

So did Shri Mallipeddi Krishnamurti of Srikakulam. Both of them suffered much from many attacks of malignant fevers, malaria, etc., infesting those areas. They helped Savaras and Marias to gain some protection from merchants and muthadars. They proved to be reliable guides to Sardar Latchanna when he was Minister in initiating many a governmental scheme for the protection of Adibasis. Apparao became a legislator for 7 years and espoused their cause. Mallipeddi is of extremely frugal habits and has therefore been no burden at all to anyone. It is because Government has failed to work on their suggestions and not enough public workers have followed their example, that Naxalites have found a base among the denizens of Mahendra ranges of Srikakulam and Orissa.

VEERACHARI

N. Veerachari has taken cue from this success of Ramu Naidu and Ramana through the special train and developed it into both a commercial and educational ven-

ture for fellow kisan educationists in the country. So a number of such special kisan trains have come to be run every year and thousands of kisans are able to imbibe progressive ideas from what they see of the industrial and agricultural achievements of Swaraj India. Veerachari is one of the dynamic exponents of KMP Raj ideal and an effective aid to Latchanna, Ramana, Kotaiah on the platform for backward classes.

NEW CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC WORKERS

A new trend in peoples needs has gained importance and urgency since 1960 in our rural areas; that is, the need for public workers to intercede between Government officials and the people. Voluntary workers and leaders are needed to guide people in regard to the operations of the Welfare Departments like the Panchayati Raj activities, increasing demand for seats in educational institutions, particularly in engineering, agricultural, medical colleges, polytechnics, the National Extension Schemes, women, Harijan and Girijan welfare scholarships, hostels and loans from co-operative credit societies, and Employment Exchanges, etc. Though Village Development Officers are appointed on fairly satisfactory salaries, our public have come to need guides to approach even these and other Government, co-operative, etc. officers. In United States, the Farm Bureau Federation renders these services and collects regular charges for such services. Unfortunately our kisan organisations have not attained that efficiency. So our public demand all such services from whosoever is bold enough, even in these days of rising costs of living and growing unpopularity of public service at one's own cost to offer, all the services that only lawyers, auditors and such other professionals can be expected to render on suitable payment. And they also expect such services without having either to pay at stipulated fees in addition to covering their touring expenses or to provide minimum where-with-all for their maintenance. No wonder many

public workers have come to brief during the past three decades of this growing environment of welfare State and its politics because of their need to go on eroding their family and personal properties and incomes. One such honest public worker is Shri Nagineni Venkaiah of Ongole district who has grown poor enough to wonder now, after decades of voluntary service, how to find funds to continue to be touring at his own cost on behalf of the people.

It is under these onerous circumstances that so many public spirited social workers have been obliged to slowly lower down their moral standards, become used to demanding so much more than what is absolutely necessary from the needy public and thus cover both the immediate expenses and the maintenance charges of their families. A few are so demoralised as to become no better than touts.

I am glad to be able to pay my tribute to such Gandhian honorary public workers among my friends as Rajanna, MLC, Yadlapati, Venkatrao, MLA, and Kandimalla Butchaiah, T. C. Rajan, ex-MLAs, K. Rosaiah, MLC, Betappa Chetty, Freedom Fighter, C. V. Siddaiah Murty (Harijan worker), Pragada Kotaiah, MLC, K. Obulu Reddy, G. Latchanna, Murti Raju, ex-Ministers, Kommareddi Bapayya Chowdari. These and such other Gandhians have been rendering valuable public services, without charging anything, even for their day-to-day family or personal expenses. The great pity is that their numbers, which used to grow from year to year upto 1955, have been on the down grade.

VENKATRAO AND BUTCHAIAH

Y. Venkatrao and K. Butchaiah are fortunately fairly self-reliant for their maintenance. Venkatrao has been serving the people of all castes of more than two districts for over twelve years almost in a breatheless manner. He has a specially charming way, all his own, with officials and ministers. He succeeds where most other legislators

fail, in persuading those in power to let the affected people gain what is intended for them by the welfare schemes. Many a time I wish other public workers, indeed, legislators take a leaf from his bonhommie methods of extracting welfare even from black granites of officialdom.

Butchaiah too renders similar services, though not on as large a scale. He is catering to the needs of people of more than four Assembly constituencies and thus continuing the tradition of Nagineni. It was said by the District Collector, a Harijan, that there was not one village and a Harijan area in any village in his constituency which has not been benefited by the welfare activities of Butchaiah when he was a legislator 1967-72. Whether the need is for electrification, extension of Nagarjuna Sagar irrigation or a road or road bridge, school or school building, hospital or dispensary, cattle key village or a library or scholarship or stipend or seat for a Harijan student or a bed in an hospital or a job for a Harijan or agricultural worker or marketing facilities for tobacco or cotton or groundnut or credit from co-operative bank or scheduled bank, etc. Butchaiah is ever ready to help the people concerned, at his own expenses.

ROSAIAH

K. Rosaiah, MLC, has come to our Peasant Institute and worked in the Students Congress since 1945. Though he hails from the traditionally business-minded families, he absorbed the teachings and ideal of KMP Raj. He has the businessmen's capacity for organisation and systematic work. He took up the cause of small traders (kirana merchants) and organised them into an effective force. To maintain himself he joined their traditonal rce-mlling industry. He has made as great a success of his business as he served ably the causes of small self-employed people, whether they be kisans or merchants or artisans. So he has been able to co-operate with Sri Pragada Kotaiah in championing the handloom weavers and with Y. Ven-

katrao in protecting peasants and with G. Nageswararao, M.B.A. (USA) in espousing the cause of rural folk. He joined us in all the struggles that we have had to wage for the protection of self-employment of peasants.

SWAMINATHAN, R. V. OF MADURAI

R. V. Swaminathan, an MP for more than ten years is a powerful champion of kisans. We have been working together since 1935. We were fighting Communist propaganda in Tanjore jail. He was associated with me in our successful fight over three decades against zamindari system. He rose to be the President of Tamilnad Congress Committee of Indiraji. In the historic struggle between the Old Congress bosses, known as Syndicate and Indiraji, he sided with Indiraji, fought against Kamaraj Nadar and helped Indira's Congress to defeat Nadar's Congress in Parliamentary elections of 1971.

We sent him as a delegate on behalf of the Federation of Rural People to the Conference of International Federation of Agricultural Producers in 1950. We were fellow delegates to the Commonwealth Parilamentary Conference held in New Zealand in 1965.

Swaminathan has been championing the kisan's cause. He is associated with the Krishak Samaj from its inception. He was largely responsibile for the success of the Indian Agriculture Congress of 1976, organised by Shri K. D. Sharma in Delhi. He is certainly a stout pillar for the KMP Raj ideal.

HANUMANTHARAO, APPARAO

Hanumantharao, formerly a Police Officer Captain Apparao of the I.N.A. have grown to be the best Seva Dal Officers, successively of the Congress, Krishikar Lok Party, Swatantra Party since 1946. They sacrificed their careers in the freedom struggle. They have devoted their energies to train youths in democratic and disciplined ser-

vice. Hanumantarao has the gift of the gab and popularised KMP Raj conception of democracy all over India, during the ten years of honorary work in the Bhrarat Sevak Samaj and Apparao proved to be his loyal and able second-in-command. They have been my bodyguards and counsellors in all my political struggles during the past 30 years.

APPALA NAIDU OF VISAKHAPATNAM

V. Appala Naidu came to our Peasant Institute about 30 years ago, when he was in his teens. He has been serving the kisans' cause ever since. He is a bachelor and lives in as simple and disciplined a manner as Capt. Apparao. He is the allround man for all purposes, provided they subserve the KMP Raj ideal. He is as highly self-respecting and frugal as Capt. Apparao and as loyal a worker too. Some of his nephews have succeeded as prosperous farmers in Fiji islands but he claims that the kisans of Guntur, Ongole, Nellore and Krishna are as precious and good friends for him. He lives like Kavuri Venkaiah as his needs are few. He does not crave for any property.

SIDDAIAH MURTI

Siddaiah Murti of Chittoor is a poor Harijan. His mother used to spare whatever little she could save from her wages gained by agricultural work in Pakala and got him educated upto College studies. He has been in public life from his teens, thanks to the atmosphere of KMP Raj, engendered in his district by N. V. Naidu, Rajagopal, Timma Reddi. He stood thrice for Parlament in 1962, 1967 and 1971 but was defeated by narrow margins. God alone knows how he suffers for want of ready financial resources in his incessant public work. He is highly self-respecting and never stretches his hand for funds in any unseemly manner. He abstained from marrying till he was 35 only because he saw no way of maintaining a wife also.

Siddaiah Murti exemplifies by his sufferings, how extremely difficult, if not impossible for honest, public spirited workers from Adivasis, Harijans and other backward classes to remain in public work, unless there are some such institutions as BSS, Gandhi Seva Sangh, Servants of Peoples' Society or Servants of India to provide bare maintenance and out of pocket expenses for them.

SUNDARARAO, V. L.

V. L. Sundara Rao of Bapatla is now the General Secretary of the All India Freedom Fighters Organisation. He has worked hard for two years to bring about this United Organisation from out of the three or four rival organisations—indeed an achievement.

It was he who initiated the move from the level of the A.P. State Government, when Sri P. Timma Reddi was Minister for Revenue, that cash pensions should be offered to the Freedom Fighters, most of whom have already gone beyond 60 years of age and are in straightened circumstances.

Credit is due to him and Timma Reddy for having brought this demand prominently to the notice of President Giri and Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister. And she has promptly decided to accord this much of national recognition to the Freedom Fighters from 15th August, 1972.

He graduated from the Peasant Institute and imbibed the spirit and ideology of KMP Raj and avowed his faith in it in letters of his blood in Avanigadda. He, it was, who courageously initiated the move of patriotic students to break away from Communist influences and Students Federation which was dominated by Communists when their "Peoples' War" slogan was sought to be foisted on Students movement also. He organised the Students Congress in Andhra, under the guidance of Bharati Devi in 1942 and later, formed the All India Students Congress in Bombay in co-operation with Dinker Sakrekar and

Shri S. K. Patil. It was through that dynamic Students Congress and the Citizenship Colleges organised by it that the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj was popularised, as against the Communist ideal of Proletarian Dictatorship. (See, Rangaji's Fight for Freedom for details. Ed.)

Sundara Rao was a dare-devil among our young political prisoners during the war. In 1940 he escaped from jail and was captured after an year. Second time in 1942 while being taken to Bellary jail, he jumped out of train and tried to escape from the police custody but was soon caught by them.

He and Vijayaraj Kumar were great admirers of Subash Bose and worked in the Forward Bloc. He organised a theatrical group, under the auspices of National Theatre founded by himself at Bapatla with the help of the equally reckless Satyagrahi, the late Sharma. He staged the play dealing with the heroic life of Netaji, in all the important towns and politically prominent rural centres. He was thus able to raise the morale of patriotic students and youths of 1946-52.

He worked for the Bharat Sevak Samaj, on my persuation for about five years and organised its units and training camps, in co-operation with Shri G. Hanumantarao, another patriotic dare-devil who had resigned as a Police Officer and joined the 1942 movement.

The dominant characteristics of Sundara Rao is his genuine faith in Socialism and admiration for everyone who has sacrificed for the sake of the country and masses. His love for such great sufferers as Raja Mahendra Pratap, Sheelabhadra Yaji, Prithvi Singh Azad, M. Annapurnayya, A. Kameswara Rao, Malaya Brahmachari and INA heroes is unbounded. We need many more such sincere patriots, socialists and lovers of the masses.

PASUPULETI

Pasupuleti Koteswararao, M.A.,B.L., popularly known as Pasupuleti is a leading lawyer of Bapatla. He joined

the Students Congress in 1944 hailed KMP Raj ideal and edited its Telugu Weekly. He was one of the prominent youth Congress leaders working with Sundararao, the late Ammayya, N.V. Subbaiah of Nidubrolu. He has shaped himself into a versatile writer, having a few novels to his credit. He has stood by me since 1944 in all our kisan services. He has become a pillar of the Krishikar Lok Party and Swatantra Party. He is able to make ever new telling points, in an impressive and eloquent manner, even after ten or twelve speakers have had their say. During the election campaign, he and Vijayaraj Kumar have been as invaluable speakers with their unique rhetoric as Veerachari is with his torrential eloquence. Though he has not embraced political work as his whole-time public activity like Sundararao, he has made his distinctive contribution, as an outstanding intellectual of Andhra. He reinforced my appeal to all the KMP Raj adherents to welcome and strengthen the unmistakable passion of the resurgent masses, as expressed in 1971 Parliamentary general election for "Garibi Hatao". So he has been pleading for a moratorium on all obstructive opposition—parliamentary and otherwise—to give full opportunity for "Garibi Hatao" campaign to gain firm roots and assured strength and growth.

SANYASIRAO

Shri Gaddam Sanyasi Rao who has celebrated his 61st bIth-day on 15-8-1974 is one of those small number of honest sincere old-time Congressmen who continue to be devoted to Gandhian ideals of social and patriotic service. Like lakhs of others, he went to jails in 'C' class and became a Freedom Fighter, a rare achievement among the rural folk of the thirties in Vizag district. Like hundreds of others, he rose to be an M.L.A. that too from among the ranks of kisans. He stood bravely by the down trodden tenant-farmers, when they were being oppressed by the zamindars and their agents. He was however unique, in having resigned from Legislative Member-

ship, as a protest against the growing indifference of MLAs and Ministers towards Gandhian decencies and Socialist path of Gandhian services and growing corruption among administration and political workers. He marched along Sarvodaya path, long before Vinobha gave shape to that call. He ennobles the historic mission of our peasant-masses to live as self-employed, self-respecting, and self-reliant people. As a peasant, as a Gandhian villager and as a self-employed Sarvodaya Purna Purusha, he lends lustre to our Gandhians. He believes in the ideal of Kisan, Mazdoor, Kalakar, Buddhijeevi Raj. He renders self-less social service of the quality of Ramakrishna Mission, like Avinashilingam of Coimbatore, Kavuri Venkaiah of Palnad, Tummala Basavaiah of Vinayashram. He is a sincere champion of Daridra Narain and so, supports the post-1971 campaign for 'Garibi Hatao'.

KAVURI VENKAIAH

"We must elevate the simple life to the status it had enjoyed in Gandhian and pre-Gandhian days. It is the "standard of life" that has corrupted and is corrupting our souls."

Rajaji, Swarajya, 4-5-1963.

The most unostentatious but most constructive among such public workers of Andhra Pradesh is Kavuri Venkaiah, who has passed away so suddenly on the 1st August, 1976, the date on which Tilak passed away and is therefore sacred to all Freedom Fighters like him. He hailed from Gurazala of Palnad. He joined the Congress when he was in high school. He took part in all the satyagraha campaigns since 1930 and suffered much like all 'C' prisoners. He was a lower-middle class kisan and lived on the meagre income from his poor and rain-fed holding. It is only five years since a portion of his holding has come to be

irrigated by Nagarjuna Sagar waters. He adopted the Gandhian austere way of life and thus made his farm income to cover all his expenses and political demands.

He decided to cut himself free from his family responsibilities as long ago as 1930 and began to live on less than one fourth of whatever income his farm might yield. So he lived independently of his dear wife, and only son and devoted all his time, energies for public work. He did not need a bedding or even a pillow. He used to wash his own Khadi clothes. He was a vegetarian. His hosts used to be surprised at the utter simplicity of his life and his literal independence of money.

Venkaiah took to his heart the exhortation of Gandhiji to all public workers to serve Harijans and Girijans and joined me in my campaign in response to Gandhi's fast in May, 1933 against untouchability. It was an uphill task for him to gather people for our meetings in those socially backward Palnad-Vinukonda highlands. He then resolved to cut himself away from those conservative people and start schools and hostels for Harijans and Girijans and devote most of his time for them. Thence forward he worked vigorously and with constructive passion. He organised more than ten elementary schools and one high school for these long-neglected sections. He provided hostels in all such key centres as Macherla, Gurazala, Piduguralla, Durgi. He made collections in foodgrains — mostly corn from thousands of kisans in scores of villages either directly or through the growing number of his followers, fellow workers and students.

He has thus achieved what millionaires of the Gandhian stamp like Jamanalal Bajaj would have loved to attain and within three decades of that sincere and constructive work, he made education popular among the backward classes. Untouchability could no longer be the social scurge as it had been upto 1930. Tribal people were roused to send their boys and girls even to colleges. Many of the educated hopefuls of Girijans were helped to gain

employment in Services, some as doctors, district munsiffs and judges, some as police and army officers and so many as teachers and lecturers and hundreds as NGOs in different offices. Venkaiah has been their employment exchange, educational advisor and social service guide and benefactor.

His hostels and schools were all handed over to Government long before 1959, when we were resigning from the Congress and began to resist Congress anti-peasant moves in favour of co-operativisation of land holdings. Subsequently for more than 17 years Venkaiah has continued to help these institutions, after all their hostels and schools were handed over to Government management — a unique record of service, even for Gandhians.

Since 1930, he has been among the first cadres to join us, of the kisan movement, in all the satyagraha struggles, agitational campaigns that had had to be conducted in protecting peasants from the challenges of the Congress of the pre-Indira era.

The only worldly responsibilities which were entrusted to him were membership of Zilla Parishad 1949-53, membership of the Executive Committee of the All India Adimjati Seva Samiti with Thakar Baba as chairman and membership of Provincial Congress Working Committee, Nagarjuna Sagar Project Committee and Working Committee of Andhra Kisan Sammelan since 1944.

He used to appreciate the services of Sri Vennelakanti Raghavaiah of Nellore the veteran leader and champion of Adibasis.

RAM, JAGJIVAN

[Jagjivan Ram was born on 5-4-1908 in Chandwa village, Shahbad district of Bihar; Harijan leader; secretary, Bihar Harijan Sevak Sangh, 1933; started Agricultural Labour Unions of Bihar, Khet Mazdoor Sabha, 1937; trade union leader of Bihar; together with Ranga, he was a member of the executive of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, started by Mahatma Gandhi; and also of the Congress Economic Programme Committee, before he was appointed a Cabinet Minister in the Coalition Interim Cabinet headed by Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946; and had been a member of Bihar Legislature since 1936; and served as Parliamentary Secretary 1937-39 in Bihar; was a Freedom Fighter, being jailed in 1940, 1942; president of All India Depressed Classes League 1936-46; cooperated with All India Backward Classes Federation, and helped Dr. Deshmukh and Latchanna; member, Central Parliamentary Board of Congress since 1950; helped the Indian National Trade Union Congress to grow into the single largest representative of Indian labour; pleaded for the nationalisation of sugar industry, remunerative prices for agricultural produce, and parity between agricultural and urban, industrial prices and remuneration and living wages for agricultural workers.—Ed.]

Marx described the industrial worker as the most exploited section of humanity. But in fact, throughout the ages and even today, the most exploited section is the agriculturist, particularly the agricultural worker. The Industrial Revolution and the development of imperialism quickened the pace of exploitation of the rural people by the urban people and the advent of world markets led to the enrichment of non-agricultural classes at the cost of agricultural masses.

India, a predominently agricultural country, is also one of the most backward countries in the world and her agricultural worker is at the very bottom of the economic ladder. India's progress, therefore, can be truly guaged by the degree of economic and social advancement made possible for her agricultural worker.

The main function of the Indian Peasant Movement and the principal mission of so many of us are to stop the exploitation of the agriculturist and the agricultural worker, prevent the drain of rural wealth into towns and achieve an equitable distribution of national and world wealth as between rural and urban, agricultural and non-agricultural, sections of our society. In this sacred and urgent social mission, I am proud to claim Shri Jagjivan Ram the Freedom Fighter and Harijan leader as one of the best and most sagacious comrades.

I have been clamouring for the prescription and enforcement of minimum wages for agricultural labour and extension of as much of protective labour legislation as possible for agricultural labour. I raised my voice in this regard as long ago as 1929. But I could get nothing done in this direction until Shri Jagjivan Ram became the Labour Minister of India. Then came our chance and we seized upon it. Shri Ram sought to extend the Minimum Wages Act as well as the Social Insurance Scheme to agricultural workers also and we were only too glad and proud to co-operate with him. We saw that for the first time agricultural workers were being brought within the purview of Central legislation. It is worthy of our Swaraj that the agricultural worker has come to be a little salvaged, by his confrere. But the position of the agricultural worker can, really improve only in the measure in which the urban exploitation of rural people is reduced and the mutual relations between the agricultural worker and the peasant proprietor are placed on a non-exploiting basis. It is here that we need the quiet and dynamic leadership and comradeship of Shri Jagjivan Ram from Bihar.

Jagjivan Ram has continued to be in the Central Cabinet, ever since 1946 except for the short exit of two years under the Kamaraj Plan, imposed upon a few ministers by Jawaharlalji. Successive Prime Ministers have found him indispensable, so great has been his reputation

as an able administrator, whether it be the Ministry of Labour or Railways or that of Communications or of Food and Agriculture or of Defence. He is rated as one of the competent and successful front rank ministers.

He has proved to be a loyal Party man and colleague at the top levels. He rarely loses his temper and never loses it in the company of the great. He is wise enough to keep his own counsel and never ventures into high level intrigues. Thus he has proved to be an enduring and endearing comrade among the Delhi's gods.

He has kept faith with the backward and Harijan masses. He has ever been keen on promoting their interests in every one of the ministries that came under his charge and has done it boldly, and effectively, without appearing to be over-ruling the conventional norms in an unbearable manner. Thus came into the Railways, Posts and Telegraphs, now the Defence Forces and Food and Agriculture the new rules of appointment and promotion for the employees and officers coming from traditionally under-privileged classes. When anyone had the temerity to question the propriety of the new move, Jagjivan was ready with his sledgehammer and unanswerable challenge, as to how else the backward folk, are to be helped and protected. Indeed he knows how to silence such critics!

Jagjivan Ram has displayed great courage and immense depth of patriotism at every stage of his career, from the remote days of satyagraha to the trying periods of national crisis when China and Pakistan invaded India. During the last two emergencies when Pakistan threatened India's communications with Kashmir and the Bangladesh war of independence was at its height, Jagjivan Ram proved to be a tower of strength behind Prime Ministers Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi. He wanted to be at least Deputy Prime Minister. He rose to be the Deputy Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party.

He stood by Indiraji like a rock during those trying months in 1969-70, when all other senior Congress bosses mounted their offensives against her and threatened to oust her and himself and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed from the Congress itself. After they weathered that political storm, his colleague F. A. Ahmed became Rashtrapati and he began to be hailed as Babuji Jagjivan Ram, the affectionate pedestral, once before held by Rajendra Prasad.

On the whole, he has had a charmed life. Once his plane from Europe was involved in an accident and he was injured badly and had to come into Parliament with special aids; and fortunately he recovered fully after a few months. Every time he became a Food and Agriculture Minister, it synchronised with a series of good monsoon years and India was blessed with bumper harvests and sufficiency. He was proposed by Indiraji for Presidentship and missed it for want of one vote in the Congress Parliamentary Board and that has enabled him to continue to be the Central Minister, though Shri Giri who became Rashtrapati had to retire by 1974. He found himself suddenly accused of not having paid Income-Tax for ten years on some investments but when he frankly confessed to Parliament that it was certainly a serious lapse, on his part and pleaded that it was unintentional, Parliament rose to the occasion and extended its clemency to this senior and favourite minister. One wishes that he would continue to enjoy better health and help the under-privileged peoples to shake themselves free from their disabilities.

I had the opportunity of watching him as a permanent invitee in 1947 and later on as full-fledged member Executive Committee of the Congress Parliamentary Party. During all those years, I never found him in any hurry to offer a criticism or remark nor did I find him out of the Congress Working Committee from 1948 or crossing swords with the mighty and I could not but admire his patient silence, and his unhurried but brief re-

marks, when demanded, without appearing to criticise anyone else. His self-composure and quick reflexes during political battles between the great gods must be largely responsible for Jagjivan Ram's political success. He has indeed become a statesman of a high order. He has proved to be useful and reliable to the Prime Ministers. He has raised the political stature of our under-privileged classes, though he has not succeeded in building up a broad base of leadership for them at the State ministerial levels. Neither he himself nor the late Sanjivaiah, the other fortunate Harijan leader, utilised their political talents and stature to build poliical stepping stones, for the benefit of less-fortunate but competent and sincere political hopefuls among the backward and Harijan classes. Gandhian non-violent means have not been utilised by them as well as was possible, because of their reluctance to risk political wilderness. Perhaps Dr. Ambedkar's failure under the adult franchise might have acted as a damper on Jagjivan Ram. Nevertheless the Harijans, Girijans and all other masses have had the benefit of a very wise, if not fiery, leadership from Jagjivan Ram, I have found in him a sincere social revolutionary and a reliable and pleasant comrade. He has come to be hailed by all classes as Babuji or Babu Jagjivan, as he grew old in age, wisdom and popularity. We wish him greater success for himself and his mission, just as he enters the seventies of his golden career.

RAMABRAHMAM, GUDAVALLI

Peasants Champion among Film Producers

Gudavalli Ramabrahmam of Krishna district distinguished himself as the first Andhra Film Producer to depart from puranic themes for films and to turn the attention of the film actors and cine-p s to social themes of contemporary public interest. I film called "Ryotu Bidda" the son of a kisan highlighted the sufferings of peasants in zamindari areas, caused by the rapacity of absentee landlords who gained their supremacy over rural life, thanks to the permanent settlement concluded with all such erstwhile feudal overlords of the eighteenth century. He was able to depict how the landlords used their influence over the police and revenue authorities to gain more and more power over the everyday life of peasants and agricultural workers. He portrayed the utter poverty of rural folk, their helpless dependence upon the local partisans of zamindari administration. He utilised the songs of Shri N. Venkata Rama Naidu and the themes of contemparaneous peasant movement that we were developing first in Andhra and then in other zamindari States and created his hero from a kisan family to fight the zamindari system.

The film became instantaneous success. It lent much support and justification for our kisan movement against the zamindari system and underlined our demand for its abolition.

Similarly Ramabrahmam broke fresh ground by producing another film called "Malapilla", daughter of a Mala, later called Harijan by Mahatma Gandhi. Through this film Ramabrahmam strengthened the Social Revolutionary movement of Veeresalingam and Kaviraj Ramaswami Chowdari and ridiculed the orthodox priestly

teachings about castes and their rigid gradational snobbery. His heroine a Harijan girl is loved, wooed and married by a Brahmin at the topmost rung in the vicious ladder of castes. They overcame opposition from the elders of their respective castes. They rose above the customary matrix of inferiority complex of the Harijans and superiority complex of the Brahmins.

Through this film, Ramabrahmam was able to lend much strength to the then national campaign of Mahatma Gandhi against untouchability and Ramaswami's movement for rousing Self-Respect of the broad Non-Brahmin masses and awakening Harijans to their rights for equality as humans in every civilised society, laying claim for self-governance in modern world.

Both the films raised the tempo of the revolutionary propaganda, humanitarian social work and social liberation movement of Gandhians and self-respectors and so both we of the kisan and Khet Mazdoor movements and Ramaswami of the Self-Respect movement hailed them, on behalf of social revolution.

But the landlords enjoying the protection and rights of Permanent Settlement took strong objection to the "Ryotu Bidda", whereas orthodox priests objected to the "Malapilla". The former, being politically powerful, as they dominated Madras Ministry, got the "Ryotu Bidda" banned in a number of zamindari centres, notably in Venkatagiri, since our movement took its rise in that place in 1931 in Katikineni Kalyanarao's house.

Since then, many such films with social themes have come to be produced but none of them can claim to have given half as great a fillip to any of our social causes.

Ramabrahmam thought of those themes, favouring social and economic justice and equality because of his faith in Mahatma Gandhi, Ramaswami whom we both acclaimed as our common social philosopher and also in myself and Venkata Rama Naidu of Zamin Ryot. He was a sin-

cere Congressman and played his enthusiastic role as a volunteer in the 1930 earth-shaking Salt Satyagraha.

He imbibed the teachings of Ramaswami Chowdari, famous as the poet and philosopher. Social revolutionary Ramaswami combined within his personality the imagination and feeling heart of poet Shelly and the revolutionary drive and campaigning zeal of his father-in-law Godwin of England. Ramabrahmam used to grow ecstatic whenever the late gifted songstress Hanumayamma, the satyagrahi used to sing the inspiring song of satyagrahic marchers "Who among you are heroes; we have come to annoint them with sacred Sandal Paste". Similarly he was happy over Venkata Rama Naidu's song "We do not want Zamindari System, Down with Zamindars". And Ramabrahmam's mind was creative and his heart poetic and humane. So he seized his oportunity, as a film producer to add drive and mass-wise educative campaigning for the teachings of his noble master, the poetic revolutionary Ramaswami and his senior colleagues in peasant movement, Venkatarama Naidu and myself.

The world economic depression of 1929-33 did more harm to peasants than to other classes. The prices of their lands and agricultural produce tumbled down so precipitously, whereas the burdens of the debts and taxes which they had to pay and which were not lowered by the concerned masters weighed many-fold. The prices of industrial goods and consumers' commodities came down, but nowhere even to half the fall of agricultural produce. So there was a rapid intensification of the traditional drain of the economic resources of peasants and rural folk to the merchants, money-lenders, tax gatherers and others of urban people. Large numbers of peasants were losing their lands to money-lenders and the courts were obliged to strike down sales of peasants' lands at distress bids. We of the kisan movement raised our protest against the callous indifference of Government about the plight of peasant masses.

So I took the initiative to organise Peasants Protection Committees first in Andhra and later in other States and demanded that protective steps should be taken to save peasants in the same way as President Roosevelt had taken in United States to protect farmers, by shielding them from the pressures of banks through declaration of moratorium and by raising agricultural prices by 25% and offering to purchase on government account good portion of agricultural produce for consumption by lakhs of the unemployed workers who were being engaged specially on government works.

Most lawyers, merchants, money-lenders, bankers and even many a Congress leader ridiculed our demands and considered our proposals for peasants' protection as fruitless propaganda stunts. Ramabrahmam was the one bold political-minded self-respector who had the imaginative courage to realise the practical need and political significance of the programme that I chalked out and rushed forward with his offer of whole-hearted co-operation. We were all then engaged in organising boycott of foreign cloth and foreign liquor in Tenali. The late Krishnaiah and Bharati Devi were managing the two congress camps, one of men and another of women respectively and a large number of Congress leaders, who had been released from jails during Salt Satyagraha were co-operating with them. Many of these Congress leaders were afraid that my proposals for developing peasant protection campaign were likely to weaken the concentration of patriotic forces during that Gandhi-Irwin Pacts interregnum upon the preparation of the people either for Gandhiji's success in the Second Round Table Conference (RTC) or for another bout of satyagraha struggle in case the RTC failed to yield the Swaraj demanded by Gandhiji. So they hesitated to reinforce my efforts to forge peasants protection. Ramabrahmam had no such fears. He was convinced that by rescuing peasants at that crucial stage from money-lenders, tax gatherers and by challenging Government to

fulfil its minimum function of protecting peasants from the evil effects of that world economic blizzard we would be winning their hearts for the national cause and entwining them to the Congress. So he agreed to be the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the All Andhra Conference in Tenali for Peasants Protection. His bold and inspired speech, so full of his characteristic, poetic and fiery phrases proved to be both inspiring appeal and poetically uplifting call to action.

We demanded declaration of moratorium upon all agricultural debts and demands of co-operatives. We appealed to courts not to issue decrees and not to enforce decrees issued for repayment of loans. We requested Government to prevent the further fall of agricultural prices either by fixing minimum prices or by banning imports of Siamese rice. We exhorted peasants not to give up their lands in distress sales, either voluntarily or at the bidding of courts. We asked peasants to prefer to go to 'Civil Debtors' jails to giving up their holdings to either sahukars or tax gatherers.

All these and such other demands were considered to be a direct challenge to Government and Congress leaders did not want us to provoke such direct conflict with authorities. We answered that if it was right for Congress to appeal to peasants to go to jails for the sake of political freedom, with the heroic song of Ramaswami on their lips, surely it could be even more justifiable for us to make a similar appeal to peasants to protect themselves, inspired as they must be by that song, created by so noble and poetic a son of a peasant. During the whole of that period of ten years; that is until the first Congress Ministry 1937-39 came Ramabrahmam was solidly behind us of the kisan movement.

Ramabrahmam had the satisfaction of seeing that one after the other, the District Munsiff Courts, followed by the Sessions Courts began to hearken to our call to abstain from issuing decrees or orders for enforcing decrees

and thus they were bringing about virtual moratorium. Soon after, I was able to persuade the Provincial Co-operative Conference presided over by that great co-operator, the late V. Ramadas to echo our demand for moratorium. By successive stages but through prolonged and arduous efforts, we were able to get the All India Congress Committee also to incorporate our demands in its electoral manifesto. Only one State Government, that of the then Central Provinces and only one minister, the late E. Raghavendra Rao rushed to the rescue of peasants, passed Debt Relief Act and took other steps to protect peasants during that crisis on some such lines as had been suggested by our movement.

In the meanwhile Ramabrahmam started the Telugu weekly "Praja Mitra" and began to champion our cause and popularise our demands, with the co-operation of the late G. Laxmi Narasaiah, M.A., my former student in M.A. and S.G. Acharya, both able writers and editors. When at long last Rajaji, the Prime Minister of the Composite Madras State declared moratorium, passed the Debt Relief Act and offered protection, though delated. Ramabrahmam felt so much more happy than when his two films proved so popular and profitable, so great was his love for peasants and rural folk. Later he lived to hear Prakasam and Rajaji repeat what he, Venkata Rama Naidu, Biswanath Das and myself had been saying that the zamindari system, being anti-social and anti-peasant, should be abolished. Ramabrahmam, who provided the Tenali platform for peasants protection and who offered the song and stage of his films "Ryotu Bidda" and "Malapilla" has won for himself a place in the hearts of our peasant masses and rural folk and an honourable place by the side of Ramaswami, Venkata Rama Naidu, Bharati Devi, Mandeswara Sarma, Veera Gunnamma, Shyamsundara Rao, Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah, Settipalli and all other Kisan Mazdoor martyrs, in our pantheon of social revolutionaries of Andhra.

RAMAKRISHNA V.

It augured well for independent India that just as she launched upon planned reconstruction of her social economy, Sri V. Ramakrishna I.C.S. (Retired) came forward to place at her disposal his great resources in mind and money, his immense experience of men and machine of administration and his genius for planning, development and management and his boundless capacity to take the initiatives and risks.

We used to go out every day for evening walks, during 1920 winter, along the village roads around Oxford. During those walks, we used to have Socratic discussions as to how India could become free, how our villages could be regenerated, how the under-employment and unemployment problems of our landowning peasants and agricultural workers could be solved, and how industrial and commercial openings would be necessary for the educated peasant youths to make a living outside agriculture. We shared a common love for our peasants and workers. We planned for industrial development. We longed for India the same degree of economic and technological development that we found in England and Europe. We were impatient to see our people grow, as the French and the British masses were progressing towards a welfare State. I was younger than him in age and much less mature in western thought but within that one year, during those daily discussions and studies, he helped me to grow into a practical-minded socialist.

Very few of our great contemporary industrial builders have had such varied experiences and qualifications. Sri Ramakrishna was a District Collector and learnt to manage offices and officers, to deal with critical situations arising from the impact of our democratic people with the administration and played the role of the top most medium between the representative ministry and our

masses. He was the Dewan, that is, the chief administrator, of the biggest Zamindar of Jeypore, and did so much during that decade to increase the forest and agricultural wealth and to improve the communications in that underdeveloped hilly area.

When he was Dewan of Jeypore, he asked me in 1925-27 to prepare a draft plan for the development of that vast under-developed hinterland. I suggested the exploitation of the hydro-electric potentialities of Machkund, Sileru and Sabari rivers, and he worked on it. From 1926 onwards, he had gone on preparing the ground, getting preliminary engineering studies made, estimates prepared and canvassing support in the Governmental circles of Madras, Orissa and Delhi and succeeded, during the war, in persuading the Governments concerned to approve the proposals for the construction of Machkund Hydel Scheme and the later Upper Sileru Project. Thus he became a planner, Project-initiator and builder long before the Planning Commission was formed.

As the Director of Industries of the Madras State, he broadened the base for the sugar manufacturing industry and helped it to reach a high level of development. It was his foresight and initiative which made the Government to experiment successfully with the coal-gas as the motive power for driving motor-cars and lorries. This stood us in good stead during the war when petrol shortage forced us to depend upon goal-gas. He was chosen by the Government of India as the Chief of the Labour Tribunal and Training Department for South India and he had the unique distinction of laying the foundations of a chain of polytechnics, which are so useful today to our plan-minded State. He gained invaluable experience as Labour Commissioner and also as the head of the Employment Exchanges and of the Department of Relief and Rehabilitation for the discharged soldiers and learnt how to appreciate the labour viewpoint, manage labour and offer them timely and honourable assistance and guidance. He

became the adviser for planning and development to the first Congress Ministry after the advent of Swaraj and was then able to assist it in inaugurating the famous Firka Development Plan of Prakasam which has led the way to the present nation-wide programme of National Extension Scheme. He began to give finishing touches to the State-wide plan for comprehensive economic development, which he had been visualising since he was the Director of Industries and Labour Commissioner. He was indeed the master-mind behind the Madras Government. Through all these functions, Sri Ramakrishna was gaining and sharpening, what has now come to be one of his special merits;—his extraordinary ability to convince in the shortest time the most hardened and highly placed Government officials, business magnates and technicians, about the practicability of what so often seemed to be highly speculative or risky industrial plans and ventures. By having been a member of the Central Assembly, State Upper Council, he has learnt how to view his plans, as legislators are inclined to do.

He gave a good push to various industries and put life into the Aid to Industries Act which has been kept more or less lifeless ever since the late Sir K. V. Reddi Naidu got it passed.

I recall one other instance in which Sri Ramakrishna pressed his constructive planning into the service of the poor peasants of the Jeypore hills. Finding that they were being cheated by merchants in their agricultural deals, he persuaded them to grow on a large scale for their own house-hold consumption, a kind of root-crop like the tapioca, for which there was no market-demand but which would therefore be left with them for their nourishment even by merchants.

As is well-known, Andhra has been singularly unfortunate in the failure of so many of her industrial ventures. The few brilliant Andhras who had the courage

to attempt to build large-scale industrial enterprises were not able to advance beyond their initial ventures. It was given to Sri Ramakrishna to successfully venture upon establishing plants of industrial development of the State. He started with the KCP of Vuyyur, one of the biggest and best managed and equipped Sugar-mills in India.

It is under the auspices of this factory that he built the giant cement factory at Macherla to supply cement to the Nagarjuna Sagar Construction. Under the auspices of the Rayagada industries, he set up a sugar mill at Chagallu. It is under his general leadership that the sugar mills were built up at Tanuku, Ramachandrapuram, Bobbili and also at Challapalli. He had already begun the manufacture of the sugar-mill machinery. He had plans for the construction of two or three small-powered Iron and Steel manufacturing concerns, to utilise the Andhra Iron-Ore and thus demonstrated that through the adaptation of Japanese or Chinese methods to our conditions, we can establish iron manufacturing concerns with much less capital investment. Sri Ramakrishna was thus able to make maximum contribution to South Indian development of basic industries, and added to the total national capacity to multiply national wealth.

Shri M. Harischandra Prasad one of his early proteges and colleagues from Tanuku proved to be the most constructive builder of industries in Andhra. Besides the Andhra Sugars, he developed the auxiliary chemical industries and also the Andhra Foundry etc. He had come to don the mantle of Ramakrishna by becoming the President of Andhra Pradesh Manufacturers Association, a unit of the All India Manufacturers Organisation, founded by Sir M. Visveswaraiah. Messrs Datta, Ramakrishna of Coimbatore and Smt. Rajeswari and the late Ramaseshaiah have made notable contributions to industrial development of Orissa (Rayagad) and Tamilnad and Andhra.

His love for peasants continued to be as strong till the last as it had been when we were at Oxford. That was demonstrated in his treatment of sugarcane growers, when he was the Managing Director of the Vuyyur K.C.P. Sugar Factory. He knew how I was organising cane growers and demanding both floor prices and remunerative prices. He would not allow the interest of cane-growers to be sacrificed and so, he devised a scheme by which cane-growers and his sugar-factories could share equitably in the Prosperity of the Industry. Thus he became the author of the famous SISMA (South Indian Sugar Manufacturers Association) formula, according to which the payment to the peasants would be in proportion to the Sucrose-content of the cane. He had this formula accepted by Minister Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and the Government of India and the Central Sugar Development Council. In this way he has sought successfully to protect peasants.

Similarly, the affection he developed for labour while in England and under the influence of Socialist thought and also while he was the Labour Commissioner, found concrete shape in several ways for the benefit of the workers in the Vuyyur Factory. The new housing colony constructed with the aid of Government when his friend of Dublin-Edinburgh days, Shri Giri was the Central Labour Minister is a model of its kind. He succeeded in winning the goodwill and confidence of thousands of workers engaged in the several plants in different industries and States. The trade unionism of those workers has followed as constructive an approach as his own industrial policy. So there has never been a strike, for more than two decades, in any of his industries. The workers employed in K.C.P. Sugar Factory at Vuyyur installed his bronze statue and those in K.C.P. Heavy Industrial Workshop in Tiruvathiyur near Madras installed another and both were unveiled by Shri V. V. Giri, his distinguished friend.

Ramakrishna has made notable contributions to the development of institutions for higher education. He

gave a munificient donation to the College at Tenali, which came to be named after his father. He offered the complex of buildings worth five lakhs of rupees for another College at Nagaram in Repalle Taluk. He evinced continuing interest in the development of the Andhra University of which our common friend of Oxford-days, the late Dr. V. S. Krishna, was the Vice-Chancellor for over 10 years and persuaded the Jeypore Maharajah to donate more than Rs. 10 lakhs towards its development.

I can think of only one other Indian technician-cum-industrialist who can be said to be of the same calibre. Interestingly enough, he too hailed from South India, he is Sri G. D. Naidu of Coimbatore who has become famous by his discovery of so many gadgets. But he lacked the University training and cultural background of Edinburgh and Oxford, that Sri Ramakrishna was blessed with. He has not been able to develop the same abilities and opportunities of winning the co-operation of his fellow industrialists, administrators and the Ministries. He too developed polytechnics and trained thousands of technicians. Both of them grew to be good friends. The other I.C.S. retired friend, who achieved some such eminence as an industrialist was my colleague, the late C. C. Desai, in Parliament who was once a fellow student in Cambridge of Subash Chandra Bose.

Besides all this, he was able to provide opportunities for thousands of Andhra youths, as they emerged from polytechnics, as trained technicians, to be employed in the many new industrial plants he got started since 1947. He holds the palm of honour, in the whole of India in this unique and progressive achievement. The only other family that can claim to have done nearly as much is the famous P.S.G. Combine of Coimbatore—thanks to their P.S.G. Trust and G. D. Naidu's example.

Ramakrishna came to associate himself with me in my political activities especially against the growing evil of controls over food etc. He too left the Congress, when I and my colleagues abandoned it in 1951. He agreed with my opposition to the move of Shri J. B. Kripalani and Prakasam and others to organise the Praja Party on the model of the Congress with the national executive having all the power, because, we were convinced that under Indian politico-social conditions, such concentration of power can be exploited to bolster up selfish and short-sighted disruptors, so he aided me in my efforts to found the Krishikar Lok Party. During the 1951 general elections, he mobilised some funds from so many of his friends. Even when the electoral results proved to be so disappointing, he did not lose faith either in me or in the KLP. He continued to be associated actively until it decided to merge again into the Congress in 1955. It was then he declared publicly in one of the Madras meetings, "I was Ranga's Guru at Oxford, now he is my political Guru". He was so happy over the KLP's decision to enable the Congress Party to form the Ministry in Madras in 1952, when it had lost its earlier overwhelming majority. From then onwards, he began to differ from me, because I refused to accept the second place in the Congress Ministry; or to allow two of our Party MLAs to become Ministers in that United Congress Ministry headed by Rajaji as I did not wish to be accused of rejuvenating the fallen Congress only for gaining ministerial positions.

Ramakrishna played a leading role in 1955 during the negotiations that took place between the Congress and KLP., after Prakasam's Andhra Ministry was brought down by a no-confidence motion in November, 1954. The late Lal Bahadur Shastri came to have much confidence in him. The KLP and Praja Party on one side and the Congress on the other came to agree to form the United Congress and go to polls with a common but special election manifesto. We achieved signal success at the polls

and routed the Communists. Thereafter he began to concentrate again on his favourite and chosen sphere of excellence—industrial development. When I visited him last in 1963, in his house as he was resting after a heart attack, he was so visibly moved and expressed his happiness that I have been enabled by the voters of Chittoor to remain at my post of national duty in Parliament.

As a person, Ramakrishna was tall, lean, strong, handsome with Romanesque features. He looked so regal, walked with such dignified mien and worked with vigour. He possessed a first class mind, excellent memory, and loved to solve scientific problems. He was one of the ablest intellectuals. He loved to laugh like a boisterous youth when anything pleased him. He had no care for what would please the fancy of most people. He loved his family to the extreme but his passion was to serve the country's economy so much more.

RAMALINGA REDDI, C. - VICE-CHANCELLOR

C. Ramalinga Reddi was as distinguished a Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University as Ashutosh Mukherji had been of the Calcutta University. He was the creator and the first chief of the Andhra University. In those pre-Independence decades when the Convocation addresses delivered at the Universities were the most influential opinion-forming medium among the educated, Reddi's addresses used to be a terror to the British rulers, since he was then the out-spoken and highly respected anti-imperialist intellectual leader. His letter of resignation from the elected post of Vice-Chancellorship, as a protest against the unbridled repression of the Salt Satyagrahis in 1930, proved to be nearly as deadly as Gandhiji's letter of ultimatum to Viceroy Irwin. He was then hailed by all patriots as one of their most brilliant spokesmen.

Reddi was the most eminent intellectual of his generation of south Indians. He graduated from Cambridge in the first decade of this century. He attained the leadership of the Cambridge University Union in those days of white supremacy. He had established his reputation as an eminent scholar, critic and poet in Telugu before he left for England for higher studies. Thus he was hailed as equal of the super Brahmins of the East, as well as of the West, who flaunted their superiority-complex with much ado. No wonder Reddi was expected to become the first Chief Minister of Madras Presidency, once Indians could be called to that coveted status. Most unfortunately Reddi was not invited into that position, nor could he become a minister—positions in which he could have served the people in as brilliant a manner as Asquith in England and Rajaji in the South had done. Why had that tragic failure come the way of democracy in Madras? But varring exceptious as in the case of Balput, Asquith, when did democracy succeed in gaining the services of such exceptionally brilliant scholars?

Ramalinga Reddi could have become the Chief Mi-

nister in 1921, if only he had joined the Justice Party, formed by Dr. T. M. Nair and Sri Pitti Thyagaraya Chetty to achieve social justice for the under-privileged non-Brahmins. But he never felt, in his own academic and official career, the need for a prop such as the non-Brahmin party, to gain a superior status among his contemporary intellectuals, nor did he realise the need for such a political platform to help the non-Brahmins as such. Moreover, Reddi had imbibed a deep faith in all-India nationalism and an urge for freedom during his Cambridge days and could not agree that fight for national freedom, could be postponed until social justice had been achieved for the non-Brahmins. So he disdained the appeals made to him by the leaders of the Justice Party.

Ramalinga Reddy hated the special bans placed by priestly and puranic chiefs of Hindus against women and non-Brahmins but he did not wish to defer the fight for national freedom for the fear that Brahmins might continue their bans even after Swaraj. Non-Brahmins Party chose, instead, Venkata Subba Reddi, the Cuddalore lawyer as the first Chief Minister, when Thyagaraya Chetty declined the offer, on account of his advanced age and poor health. Ramalinga was then the Director of Public Instruction in Mysore State—a supremely eminent position for Indians of that era.

By 1923, the Justice Party lost much of its strength, though retaining a slender majority among the elected members of the Madras Council and Reddi left the Mysore educational service and got elected as a member of the Council. He became the leader of the Opposition, comprising the nationalists, and soon proved to be the ablest critic of the Justice Ministry which was then headed by the sedate, astute Rajah of Panagal. The debates in that Council were distinguished by Reddi's ennobling speeches, so full of scintillating humour, unsurpassed eloquence and scholarly criticism. The educated sections used to be entertained and inspired by Reddi's gibes and sallies against the comparatively debate-shy Justice Ministers and their imperialist power-sodden but tongue-tied white

Executive Councillors. And Congressite Satyamurti proved to be the biggest bug bear to the Treasury Benches during the Question Hour and an able ally of Reddy in debate. So Panagal, who was the most astute statesman of that decade, quietly encouraged Reddi to lead in the debates over the Andhra University, for which the latter had been pleading for a decade and then dexterously offered the coveted post of its Vice-Chancellorship to him and thus freed himself from that unequalled Parliamentary opponent.

Why did Reddi fall for that bait ? Possibly because he could not reconcile himself to remain for a prolonged period without a good office such as ministership or directorship of the education department, after having been in eminent jobs for decades. He might also have felt that even if the Congress was going to dislodge the Justice Party from power in that dyarchical system of government, it might not assume power until full Swaraj had been achieved and that might come only at a distant date. He was ushered into professorship in Baroda soon after his return from England and continued to rise in power in educational administration. So he was not sorry to have left the din and dust of opposition politics.

He was happy over the opportunity fate vouchsafed him to raise the Andhra University from the first book and lecture to its present day eminence among the front rank universities of India. He gathered around himself such eminent intellectuals and educationists as the late Humayun Kabir, V. K. R. V. Rao, and Bhagavantam, and he laid the foundations for the faculties in Nuclear, Oceanic and Psychology sciences. He shared with Ashutosh the gift of discovering and projecting men of promise. He also loved the company of scientists and scholars

He recommended philosopher Radhakrishnan to Sir Ashutosh Mukherji, when he was then professor in remote Mysore. That transfer to professorship at the premier University of Calcutta brought him to the notice of the Western world. Similarly Duvvuri Rami Reddi was re-

commended to Dr. Cousins, the theosophical Irish poet and that helped him to become internationally well-known. My own Oxford friend, Dr. V. S. Krishna, was helped to grow into his successor, as Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from his post of lecturer onwards. Mallampalli S. Sarma, the historian, owed his recognition to him. His discerning introduction to my first English publication in 1926 on "Economic Organisation of Indian Villages" placed me in the Indian academic sphere

It was due to his perspicacity and genius in discovering gems of poetic expression and imaginative and creative poetry that the writings of Pingali Suranna — the great Telugu poet and a contemporary of Shakespeare — have become, once again, favourites with the Andhras of this century. His introduction — so appreciative of Suranna's great semi-epic Prabandham "Kala Purnodayam", has not only established it as the queen among our Telugu Prabandhams and poems but also set the new standard for Telugu poets for original writings. He made writings in poetic prose and prose-like poetry popular and thus led the way for contemporary progressive writing and democratic modes of expressions suited to newly literate masses.

He was the patron-saint of Telugu poets and writers of the past four decades. His classic Telugu book on the principles of poetry, published by 1910, set the norms for new poesy and whoever was able to obtain an introduction or preface or praise from him used to consider himself the most fortunate writer. Reddi was generous in his appreciation of the works of the new generation of Telugu writers, constructive in his criticisms and suggestions and financially helpful to many a needy writer. Thus while Veeresalingam led the way for modern Telugu writers in prose writing and a variety of other subjects and themes, Reddi proved to be the high priest of Andhra literature for almost all the Telugu writers. Such poets as Sitaramamurti, author of Telugu autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi in poetry, Katuri Venkateswara Rao, author of Soundaranandam, Mallampalli, author of Andhra Heroes were helped and encouraged by him. He instituted a doctorate, called

"Kalaprapurna" and invited the famous scholar in Sanskrit and Oriental Studies, Vedam Venkatraya Sastry and Desodharaka Nageswara Rao as the first and second recipients of that academic honour.

In one respect he could not achieve the objectives for which he had pleaded for a separate university for Andhras; that is, to introduce Telugu as the principal medium of instruction. He placed the study of Telugu and its professors on a par with English. But like most other universities, his also is still awaiting further development of literature, libraries, writers and writing in Telugu, before fulfilling Reddi's earlier aims. He was a master of English idiom, lover of English literature and past master in epigrammatic expressions in English. It was possible that because he was loath to allow English to be dethroned from its supremacy as the means of academic studies, he did not use his unrivalled authority in inter-university circles in favour of raising Indan languages to the status of English as media of instruction.

Reddi would have proved a great minister, and an inspiring parliamentarian if only the Congress leaders of Andhra were chivalrous and cosmopolitan enough. In 1936-37, when Congress decided to enter the legislatures and accept ministries, Reddi hoped to be invited in a decorous manner, befitting his universally acknowledged supremacp as a nationally famous patriotic Vice-Chancellor, by the leaders of Congress to be their candidate for the Madras Assembly but the socially-blind and petty-power conscious Congress bosses wanted everyone to apply to them for their 'tickets' and await their decisions for the privilege of standing as Congress candidates.

It was such arrogance of the bosses which led to the revolt of Qualli-Quzzuman of UP and the eventual cry for Pakistan. So Reddi did not go into that 1936-39 Assembly. That could not have been the excuse for the failure of Rajaji, who became the Chief Minister to invite him to join his ministry, since many a minister was chosen, without being first an MLA. At such an obvious failure of theirs to welcome so great a parliamentarian as Rama-

linga Reddi, most politically-minded people felt unhappy. But the Congress bosses in Andhra and Tamil Nad felt relieved by his absence in the Assembly for the fulfilment of their own political ambitions. Congress leaders were then unable at that time to invite not only Ramalinga Reddi but also K. Koti Reddy, who was an Oxford B.C.L. and long-time nationalist parliamentarian, M. Bapineedu, M.Sc., from California University and a jail-returned patriot or any other leader of peasant origin with high academic qualifications or political eminence and patriotic services.

No wonder, the leaders of the Self-Respect Movement of South India seized upon this obvious failure of the Congress to castigate it as highly narrow-minded.

Today American Negroes are realising that black skin has a special beauty and glamour. Thousands of years ago, Indians realised this and so pictured for themselves Shree Rama and Shree Krishna as blessed with the glitter of the heavy, blue clouds. Ramalinga Reddi was blessed with that glamorous hue. He was handsome by any standards. Half his forehead was touched with such divine brush that it lent an exquisite glow to his face. He was of medium height, with fine shoulders. He looked well in suits but more attractive in the dress of Andhras. The upper cloth that he donned used to make him look, every inch, a born vice-chancellor. His smile was very captivating. He was silver-tongued. His style was his own, with flashes of the poesy of Tikkana's Mahabharatam. His social etiquette reminded one of the Vijayanagara Raya's splendour.

He was pleasant company, and it was altogether a stimulating experience to spend a few days with him. He loved gods, but he loved flowers more — Malati being his favourite. Wherever he lived, he became the centre of poets. He was fond of good things of life and was uninhibited in his avowal of his pleasures. He never married, because his first choice was denied to him and wrote a lovely eulogy to the memory of his love for her.

RAMA NAIDU N. V.

(Coiner of "Down with Feudal Lords")

The whole nation is rightly grateful to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and lakhs of organisers of States Peoples for having merged 500 and odd Indian States into India after the achievement of Swarajya. Equally stupendous, meritorious and progressive achievement is the abolition of the much more oppressive exploitative system of zamindaris, taluqdaris, istimardaris, and their rajahs and nawabs.

The possessors of those feudal estates numbered more than a million. They lived close to the people and so, had greater and more cruel hold over the everyday life of the tens of crores of peasants and agricultural workers and other rural masses. They enjoyed semi-royal powers including in many places full or partial authority over local police and judicial authorities. They were looked upon by the rural folk as the veritable rajas, with all the halo of puranic princes and rajahs. Only in a few States, as in Madras their powers were regulated to continually enhance land taxes and impose special cesses whenever a new prince was born or an old rajah died. They were all protected by the Permanent Settlement made by Lord Cornwallis and confirmed by Queen Victoria in 1856, which was respected more spiritedly than the Fundamental Rights of our citizen conferred by our Republic's Constitution.

To oppose that system of zamindars and taluqdars and to question the authority of Permanent Settlement was outside the ken of the National Congress right upto 1931. Most of the powerful leaders of the then Congress were zamindars or scions of zamindari families, especially was it so in Bihar, U.P., Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan.

So when the Ponaka Reddi family and their adviser Nellore Venkatrama Naidu dared to join issue with the Maharajah of Venkatagiri whose sway spread over more than half of Nellore district, not one prominent Congress leader was prepared either to sympathise or to support them. They fought bravely their continuously losing battle and Ponaka family was almost ruined by their litigation against that powerful zamindar. Similarly the Sala family of Bobbili, karnam of Munagala and Kolli Butchaiah of Gampalagudem, Biswanath Das of Khallikot were fighting a losing battle. But they were all treated as local personal struggles; and no notice was taken by nationalists or social reformers.

The credit goes to Nellore Venkatrama Naidu, to have realised the social significance and nationally urgent need for nationalists for fighting the zamindars who were the most important, influential allies of the British authority in India. So he visualised imaginatively, the poet that he was, the need for publicising the sufferings of the kisan masses and started the Telugu weekly "Zamindari Ryot" in 1928-29 with the advocate Ponaka Pitchi Reddi and poet, satirist and journalist M. Kodanda Rami Reddi, both belonging to the long-suffering Ponaka family as the editors, with himself as the chief editor.

It was just about that time I was writing in English journals about the need for fighting against that feudal system of exploitation. I pointed out how Sir Thomas Munro had dismissed all such feudal lords and established Ryotwari System of land-holding in Rayalaseema and thus confirmed the actual peasants who had been cultivating their holdings for generations as the actual owners of their lands and granted them pattas, not dissimilar to the Sanads given to zamindars under Cornwallis dispensation. Naidu was an ardent Congressman. As he felt that he could not get any support from Andhra Congress leaders, he reached me, while I was professor in the Madras Pachaiappa's College and sought my comradeship. I asked him if he would agree with my analysis that the zamindars' rights were

utterly unjust and that unless Permanent Settlement was abolished and their so-called tenants were placed on the same footing as peasants under Ryotwari Settlement, as per Munro's system there could be no rational or just or nationally progressive solution. He agreed with me whole-heartedly. From then onwards, i.e., 1929, we became steadfast comrades and Rama Naidu's career as a social revolutionary on the South Indian political arena and my work on the all-India plane for the regeneration of peasants began.

He had a veritable genius for propaganda. He composed songs — which had catchy metres in their music, whose phrases sprang from out of the sufferings of kisans. His music was attuned on one side to classical metres and on the other to plaintive, heart-melting pathos and pleasant appeals of Radha to Krishna. The Congress nationalists had a song with the title "We do not want Whiteman's Rule" composed by the patriotic poet, Garimella Satyanarayana. Naidu, took his cue from it and composed his song "We do not want Zamindari System". It at once became a very popular hit, indeed, more popular than the nationalist song, because Naidu built it with phrases that sprang as it were from the blood-curdling bitter sufferings of peasants. He then composed two other equally famous and insipring songs ! One was addressed to the flower-loving Tummeda — the black beatle that goes on singing while gathering honey from flowers, and fertilising them. The other was addressed to the parrot of brilliant colours and vibrant chirping with its powerful, lovely feathers. They were meant to awaken peasants who were either slumbering or self-satisfied with their pitiable lot or intoxicated by the pitiful favours sprinkled among them, for which many so-called loyalist opportunists were fighting among themselves in their greedy passion for such small mercies.

Thousands of kisan youths — boys and girls — began to sing those songs setting them to the metres made fa-

mous by Meera of Brindavan or by Bhakta Ramadas of Bhadrachalam. Our weekly "Zamindari Ryot" became so popular because these songs of Naidu were being published in it.

Naidu was not content with composing them. He sang those songs in the hundreds of meetings we organised between 1930-40 in every district. What a strong, musical and emotionally-charged voice he had. How he reached the hearts of people with those lilting phrases and stirring stanzas, added on the inspiration of the moment and local experiences of the suffering masses. He used to stand stolidly, as if he rose out of Mother Earth and took his shape and bewailed the fate of her sons and called them to action in self-defence.

Naidu got the Nellore District Ryots Conference as well as Political Conference of the Congress which were held Alluru in 1931 to appoint a committee to enquire into the conditions of zamindari ryots with myself as President and himself as Secretary. Later he got the Andhra State Peasants Conference to appoint a similar committee with us both as President and Secretary and R. M. Sarma of Kovvur as an important member. When our committees began our enquiries in 1931, and our reports about each of the big zamindaris began to be published in the then powerful nationalist dailies "Andhra Patrika" and "Andhra Prabha" in Telugu and "Swarajya" and "Indian Express" in English, zamindars who were then installed in power in Madras Ministry headed by the Rajah of Bobbili saw the danger to their order and organised their resistance to our tours, enquiries and publication of our reports in the press. They mobilised their local supporters among the leading big land-holdng peasants to boycott our enquiries. They induced them to get up demonstrations against us. They inaugurated their campaigns of vindicative victimisation of those peasants who dared to go to us and submit their statements of sufferings. They appointed a number of lawyers and unofficial journalists and

even official Public Relations Officers to contradict our reports, to vilify the peasants who gave us information and to otherwise white-wash their administrations. They tried their best to withdraw their financial support to some of the dailies, weeklies and thus to draw the curtain upon their atrocities in their domains. Naidu was not the man to be brow-beaten by zamindari zhulum or threats of physical violence. He felt happy to find that I was prepared to face all those trials as determinedly as himself.

Within an year, we were able to rouse the public, not only in South India but also in the North, to the unbearable and pitiable conditions of peasants and the ruthlessness and lawless exploitation perpetrated by zamindars against peasants. I published our report in English under the title "Economic Conditions of Zamindari Peasants" in 1933 and Naidu published his in Telugu through our weekly. All so unexpectedly Naidu felt a dagger being driven into us, as it were, by our fellow Congressmen. When I raised the question of zamindari ryots on the platform of all India Congress Committee during the Bombay debate on charter of Fundamental Rights outlined in Karachi Congress, no less a leader than Jawaharlal Nehru attacked us for complicating the national struggle by raising this subsidiary struggle against zamindars, a large number of whom were then supporting the Congress.

When we organised satyagraha of Venkatagiri peasants against the zhulum of forest administration of the local zamindari forests, hills, rivers and banjar and other unoccupied lands which were then supposed to be private properties of zamindars and I was arrested on the appeals of zamindars, some top-level Congress leaders of his own Nellore district, issued a brochure, dissociating Congress from our kisan struggle. Naidu's stout heart quailed for a second but he returned to the battle with V. Raghavaiah, a Congress advocate and champion of tribal people and

Bharati Devi to reinforce his efforts. They continued to rouse the peasant masses of Venkatagiri and maintained the morale of the satyagrahis over months and forced the zamindar and Government to reach an agreement with peasants accepting some of their important demands for freely grazing their cattle in the forests. It was during that period, while their meetings were being held in the capital of the Maharajah, that Bharati Devi was wounded in the head and Naidu was beaten by the hooligans of the zamindari party.

When Naidu was conducting our enquiry in Munagala zamindari, steps were taken by the zamindar, to prevent peasants from giving hospitality to him, not to speak of deposing evidence. The karnam Rangarao who dared to shelter him for a night was made to leave the village for years. Naidu's life was in danger more than once, while he was touring in Krishna zamindaris. Similarly attempts were made on my life while I was touring in Bobbili zamindari. Because the Rajah felt it to be a blow to his prestige especially as he was then also the Chief Minister, my meetings in Bobbili and its neighbourhood were sought to be disturbed by goondas. Zamindari partisans pursued me but in vain, to reach me and wound and, maime me, if not to throw me into the river, as I was going through the villages, crossing the rivers and reaching the suffering but brave peasants. Naidu wrote his most eloquent poems and songs, in praise of those peasant heroes, particularly of Vavam village of 1920-22 satyagraha fame — who displayed such courage as would beggar the noble achievements of 1920-22 No-Tax Campaign. Whenever Naidu held forth in Congress gatherings and committees about how much more painful and dehumanising were the sufferings inflicted upon zamindari peasants and how, while the people in ryotwari area having direct dealings with the British authorities had to suffer from only one official ter-

rorism, the Zamindari Ryots were groaning under the double terrorism of both the British and zamindars, Andhra Congress leaders began to feel that something must be done to help our zamindari peasants. But their top-most leadership was unrepentent. Then came the Mahatma on his all-India tour of 1933-34. Naidu seized that opportunity to mobilise the victims of zamindari zhulum at Venkatagiri. Bharati Devi proved to be his "Gandivi", i.e., as invincible a weapon as that of Arjuna of Mahabharata fame. He presented the male victims including kisan leader P. Govinda Reddi and she presented the kisan women suffers to Gandhiji. They both prayed that Gandhiji should show them the way of redemption from such zamindari terrorism and oppression. To round off that appeal, Naidu began to hum his song. "What is it", Gandhiji asked turning to me. I replied that it was the bhajan song of peasants, which poured forth their heart's appeal to his own heart, through the inspired poetry and music of Naidu. Then he asked Naidu to sing it aloud. Oh, the Gods themselves must have felt inspired by that soul-stirring, heart-melting singing of Naidu — transformed as he was into a divine bard of peasants. Gandhiji was himself visibly moved. He exclaimed "Ranga, Naidu and Bharati Devi and these satyagrahis have won your battle. Yes, Zamindari System should go". That was the climax of Naidu's triumph.

Then came the 1934 general election to Central Legislative Assembly held as a challenge to Congress, hurled by Lord Wellingdon. I was chosen as the Congress candidate for Nellore and Guntur districts. The Venkatagiri Zamindar and Bobbili Rajah, the Chief Minister, joined to set up their candidate against me. It was during that

election campaign, Naidu's genius as a journalist and propagandist was displayed. Week after week he poured forth his songs, poems, cartoons against the zamindari candidate. My victory in election was so largely due to what he did as a peoples poet and peasants campaigner. In the process, our weekly paper has become the most popular and powerful Telugu weekly. I raised our campaign against zamindar into an all-India issue. I was able to fight the Zamindari System from the Central Assembly platform and AICC. Soon after, emerged the Congress Ministries of 1936-39 and the All India Kisan Congress and with the moral strength of Gandhiji's Venkatagiri exclamation, we were able to get the Congress ministries declare their readiness to fight the Permanent Settlement. The British came to realise, through the defeat of both the zamindars and mercantile interests in the 1934 and 1936 elections, that they should give up their support for Permanent Settlement. Thus the death knell of Zamindari System was sounded and the maximum credit goes for that non-violent social revolution to the bard of Nellore peasants, the poet of Pennar river and the counsellor of Ponaka family of heroic resisters, and devoted colleague of Bharati Devi, and my beloved friend, Rama Naidu.

I felt as if I received the highest honours from our peasant masses, when their inspired bhakta named the office-building of our beloved weekly "Zamin Ryot" as "Ranga Bhavan". Zamindari and all other feudal systems would anyhow have gone into the debris of history, like the princedoms but history has willed it that Naidu, Bharati Devi, Ponaka Kanakamma and myself should be the catalyc forces to move its wheels and bear the fruit of the travail. I am grateful to Naidu for having propelled and steamed me into history's heroic march towards progress.

I feel sure Naidu would have opposed Jawaharlal Nehru's phyrrihic efforts to abolish peasant system of holding land by pattas, and cultivating them as self-em-

ployed masses of Guild Socialist dispensation by the same weapon of Estate Abolition as had been forged by the Fundamental Rights of Articles 30 and 31 of the Constitution. The Seventeenth Amendment sought to bring in all peasant holdings under the definition of "Estate" and deal with them in the same way as the zamindari and talukdari estates were abolished. I felt that Naidu would certainly have seconded and reinforced my struggle against it and congratulated me on our final success in saving all the peasant holdings which are below the ceiling limits from the mischief of that amendment and the consequent Constitutional proviso.. But what a heavy price we had had to pay by invoking the aid of the urban vested interests, in order to gain the modicum of political support to wring that hard-won concession from Jawaharlal's Congress, buttressed as it was by Vinobha's and JP's Sarvodaya Gramdan anti-peasant philosophy. Naidu was the arch-peasant at heart. He loved self-employment. as the ultimate essence of socialist economy. He wanted co-operation to protect it and empower it and never to weaken or replace it.

RAMASWAMI – SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY

[T. Ramaswami Chowdari, was born on 15-1-1887 in Angaluru, Krishna district in a kisan family; educated in Machilipatnam; became a poet, playwright in his teens; educated in Dublin; became Barrister in 1917; practised in Tenali; started the Self-Respect Movement in Andhra in 1918 on return from abroad; wrote many books in Telugu; was honoured by title "Kaviraj"; hailed nationalist movement; famous as social revolutionary leader; died 1943. His eldest son, Gopichand also became a famous Telugu writer.—Ed.]

Barrister T. Ramaswami, once Chairman of Tenali Municipality in Guntur district, was the father of the social self-respect movement of Andhra and led the way for what later came to be known as the Self-Respect movement of South India, under the equally dynamic and uncompromising leadership of K. Veeresalingam, Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker and Annadurai of Tamilnad. K. Veeresalingam inaugurated the renascent movement, roused the Andhra social leaders and galvanised Telugu literary mode of expression to awaken Andhras to the world movements and achievements in social progress and religious rationalism. Ramaswami took Veeresalingam's movement many steps forward and utilised his literary tools to greater effect, in questioning with equal boldness, the rationale for the Hindu orthodox dependence upon priests and their taboos and denial of equality of religious and social rights to women, lower castes, depressed classes and Harijans.

In the pursuit of his social revolution, Ramaswami made bold to question most of the devotional tenets and epic sayings and challenged the pundits and priests to prove, on the anvil of reason, decency and humanism, how they could justify their faith in the absolute righteousness of the doings of their Puranic heroes of Dasavathar legends. He pressed into service his great gifts of poetic expression and eloquent prose in Telugu, like his compeer

Veeresalingam, in battling with the protagonists and interpreters of Hindu Puranas (Epics) and Shastras and in exposing the utter artificiality, crass caste prejudices and amorality of the pantheon of Hinduised Aryan heroes of our ancient history.

Ramaswami studied during his European tour much about the ways and means adopted by the British and French and other European imperialists in cheating the peoples of Mexico, Africa and Asia and gaining sway over their lands and in that process in destroying their cultures and propagating through their literary writings how their European religious cultures and civilisation were far superior to the civilisations and cultures of the conquered peoples. He found to his amazement much similarity between these modern imperialist means and methods and the ancient Aryan onslaught on the indigenous peoples and their civilisations. With that key of rationalist understanding, he proceeded to re-examine the Puranic writings and question most of what had till then been accepted so blindly as unquestionable and established truths by the Hindu general public. He began to prove that Sree Rama was not all that ideal a man as to be accepted as god incarnate, or Ravana, his great opponent, was not so bad a man as to be condemned as demon, and that the cause of Pandavas, the heroes of Mahabharat war, was not so fully justifiable and that of Kauravas, their unsuccessful opponents, was certainly not so untenable. Indeed, he demanded a just re-examination of Hindus' faith in their two principal epics.

I know how much shocked I was, when I first read his books in 1918, so convinced I had been from my earlier readings and absorption of traditional faith in our epic heroes, that Sree Rama and Sree Krishna were God-like heroes, if not Gods, incapable of committing any wrongs. I needed repeated readings of his books, re-reading of the stories of Rama and Krishna and many earnest discussions with my guru Anjaneyulu, the non-Brahmin, and Ven-

kaih, the Brahmin High School teacher, before I could think of the possibility of Sree Rama being in the wrong in punishing the non-Brahmin sage Sambuka for having ventured to do tapas, instead of confining himself to merely serving the priests. Similarly, it took me many heart-searching studies and my European tours to convince me that Ramaswami's interpretations of the Mahabharata and Ramayana demand careful reassessment of our faiths. Therefore one could easily realise how shocked the orthodox pandits, priests and scholastic and whole-time interpreters of our epics must have been during the twenties and thirties by Ramaswami's relentless criticism of their basic faiths and teachings. So, Ramaswami was assailed, almost in one voice, by the whole priestly phalanx, through their powerful writings, abusive pamphlets, massive platforms in every place, as the devil incarnate. Many of them invoked on him the curses of gods and goddesses. Several of them carried on ceremonial incantations of devils to destroy him and his disciples, in the same way as Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and Veeresalingam were sought to be destroyed. But like those earlier revolutionaries, Ramaswami continued his revolutionary writings and campaigns, undaunted by the priestly curses and pandits' condemnations.

By 1917-18 Ramaswami came to be aided by the non-Brahmin movement which sprang up from the ranks of politically-minded leaders who wished to safeguard the legitimate interests of the under-privileged non-Brahmins. But Ramaswami did not wish to go the whole hog with their Justice Party's political platform.

Having breathed and tasted the freedom and national independence prevalent in England and taken part in the Irish freedom movement, along with his student friends, Unnava Laxmi Narayana, V. V. Giri and D. Gopalakrishnaiah, and other Indians who were then in Great Britain, he believed in Swaraj, just like Dr. Ambedkar. He desired both social and political emancipation to be

achieved simultaneously. But he wavered, from time to time, when he had to decide upon priority as between those two aspects of revolution. When the Justice Party gave priority to social revolution, he preferred to walk with Congressmen but when Congressmen and their allies side-stepped social revolution, he parted company with them. So he chose to develop his Self-Respect Movement, independently of both the Justice and Congress Parties. He trained a number of non-Brahmin men and women to recite Puranas and other Hindu scriptures in the new rationalist manner, with their own self-respecting interpretations such as that Hanuman and his comrades were South Indian tribal people and not monkeys.

We invited him to preside over the annual session of our Nidubrolu Library in 1917, soon after his return from England. I admired his speeches, which won much praise from the pandits and priests of our Taluks, who gathered to hear that renowned poet-disciple of the then famous poets Tirupati-Venkateswara. He took much liking for me because the local high school teachers and Anjaneyulu, my rural tutor, told him about my enthusiastic social work in organising rural libraries, anti-illiteracy and anti-untouchability campaigns in pursuance of Veeresalingam's teachings. He gave me the manuscript copies of his plays and books on various aspects of social criticism he was then developing against our Puranic writings and beliefs. Later on, I used to attend the conferences organised in Guntur and Krishna districts over which he presided. He was a powerful speaker in Telugu, a great pandit, with high debating skills. Like most of the awakened youths of that decade, I was very much influenced by his courageous criticism of the hitherto unchallenged Hindu beliefs and priestly preachings which had been current for so long among the rural folk. When I went to Europe and noticed how the peoples of England, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy were so freely embracing national approa-

ches to social and religious problems and were progressing so rapidly because they had no untouchability, illiteracy or subjection of women, my faith in Ramaswami's teachings became stronger.

His play called "KURUKSHETRA" was enacted in our village in 1918, when the State-wide Social Reform Conference was held and I took part in it as one of the minor characters. The main theme of that play was that Lord Sree Krishna sided the Pandavas rather unjustly and Kauravas were in the right in refusing to give a share in the kingdom to the Pandavas, whose father, being the second son, had no right of succession. Ever since, most of the playwrights and poets of Andhra have been following his line and supporting the great hero Karna as against Arjuna, the favourite of Lord Krishna. I liked his scholarly and inspiring introductions to his plays, on the lines of Bernard Shaw and later, he came to be known as Andhra Bernard Shaw.

Thus it was my privilege to have been his follower in 1918-20, his colleague in 1930 and his friend thereafter. He could have gained much, if he had joined the Justicites or Congressites, as a Party man but he preferred to forego political fortunes and devote all his literary gifts, compaigning activities and intellectual leadership to the social upliftment of the masses, intellectual emancipation of women, backward classes and Harijans from the cruel, dwarfing and degrading thraldom of priests, Puranic taboos and intellectual brain-washing imposed by Hindu faiths.

For a time his was the most dynamic mass movement in Guntur, Krishna and Godavari districts, before it was overtaken by the Gandhian mass upsurge during the non-co-operation movement. In Tamilnad a similar self-respect movement was carried on, but almost in rivalry with the National Congress and in alliance with the Justice Party by Periyar E.V.R. He was in touch with that movement and his writings and his disciples fertilised it. But he would not actively join it because of his inability to re-

fuse to give priority to the national cause. He presided over the Nationalist Non-Brahmin Conference of Andhra, held in 1918 at Vijayawada and supported the Congress demand for Swaraj.

He was a man of letters, well-versed in the lyric lore of Telugu poets, Tirupati and Venkateswara Sastri of Machilipatnam and hailed from a peasant family of poets of Anguluru in Krishna district. He was a master of Telugu prose as well as poetry. He achieved great distinction as a playwright, literary critic and developed Telugu poetry of the modern styles.

Ramaswami's influence has grown rapidly among the successive cadres of not only non-Brahmin writers notably, poets Jashua, Venkata Narasaiah, Sitarama Murti, Venkata Kavi, Veerbhadrachari, Pandit Satyanarayana and his own son Gopichand, but also such social revolutionaries among Brahmins as Unnava, and Pingali. Most of the students of these two generations have come under the influence of his rationalist thought and social democratic and self-respect movement.

He was ever vigilent to fight irrational orthodoxy and join issue even with the most popular exponent of Puranic totalitarianism. He was shocked to find a protagonist of orthodoxy the famous poet Shri Viswanatha Satyanarayana justifying the murder of the Puranic Vena Maharaj, through the machinations of priests who resented his lack of faith in caste-gradations and godhood of priestly castes to maintain supremacy of priests etc. So he wrote his epoch-making book "KHUNI" or "MURDER", questioning the Hindu's blind faith in Varna-Ashrama-Dharma, the system with gradations of castes, with the Priests at the top and the untouchables at the lowest social grade. That book is the most effective rationalist challenge to the Hindu's priestly orthodoxy. It is a master-piece in Telugu didactic writing.

Ramaswami admired Buddha for his fight against caste system and the complicated system of Hindu rituals

Centuries before the birth of Christ and Mohammad. He hated the Hindu acceptance of the degradation of huge masses, some as depressed castes and many more as untouchables and degrading successive sections who came to be defeated in wars, social struggles, religious wrangles into lower and lower cadres of society and condemning them hereditarily to lower occupations, social status or non-status with poorer remuneration etc.

Ramaswami deplored the Brahmanical denial of rights to women. He questioned why women should be prohibited from reciting and studying Vedas and other sacred sayings of Hinduism, when the noble and learned Rishi Gargi was acclaimed by the Brahmin Sages as the equal of her husband, the renowned Rishi Yagnavalkya Bharadwaj. He encouraged women and men of all castes to learn Sanskrit and study the Hindu scriptures. He wondered how Hinduism could promote spiritual progress of humanity, while women who form half of the people and Harijans and Sudras remained condemned to ignorance and illiteracy and were denied equality in spiritual communion and in their prayers and worldly activities. So he welcomed my co-operation in persuading many kisan families to send their daughters as resident students to what has since grown so famous as Sarada Niketan of Guntur, started by his Dublin student-friend, Barrister and social revolutionary Unnava Lakshminarayana and his devoted wife, Lakshmibayamma as the nationalist women's school. It was due to his encouragement that a large number of women of his native village Angaluru and other villages like Kuchipudi, Govada have since become women pandits, poets and writers.

In this herioc fight, he received valuable assistance, by way of scriptural arguments, from Swami Saraswati and Duggirala Raghava Chandraiah, a freedom fighter from Angaluru and Unnava Laxminarayana, famous freedom fighter and educationist. He loved Yogi Vemana both as a social revolutionary and poet. He encouraged

the learned Harijan bards and singers of the cults of Basava and Ramanuja, Veerabrahmam like Harijan Ratna Kavi and Veerabhadrachari the poet from Palnad, poet Joseph.

He composed his own songs and poems after the fashion of Vemana to arouse Hindus to rise against all such reactionary and depressing social systems and religious taboos. He made the teachings of Buddha so popular that the "Buddha Purana" of Duggirala Balarama Krishnaiah of Angaluru came to be hailed by Andhras as early as 1926.

To the last, Ramaswami lived as a patriot. His song "Who among you is the Veera, the hero ready to embrace martyrdom if need be, we are ready with our sandal cream to annoint him and worship him" galvanised the Salt Satyagraha marchers of Andhra of 1930 and nationalist fighters for the 1942 "Quit India" demand. Freedom Fighter Smt. Vasireddi Hanumayamma, the inspired singer of that fiery song gained scores of new recruits in every taluk for our national struggle. Such was the magic power of Ramaswami's poesy and patriotic songs.

REDDY, CHENNA M.

Generally speaking, Governors are not supposed to initiate any policies or programmes nor do they get such golden opportunities of convincing their ministers so as to ensure the acceptance and implementation of any major policies or programmes. Even such a strong Governor as Dharma Vira does not claim any such achievement. A number of them have come prominently into public notice for the efficient manner in which they co-operated with the Central Government between 1967-70 in scuttling or hastening the process of self-scuttling of the SVD (Samyukta Vidhayak Dal) ministries, which threatened for a time to command control over majority of the larger States. Even the conferences of Governors have had to disapprove, though by inference, some of the means adopted by some Governors in order to circumvent or reinterpret their functions to get rid of the SVD ministries.

When Chenna Reddy was appointed as Governor of Uttar Pradesh, most of his friends all over India felt disappointed that he was being sent away for five years into an A/C political quietude. But he has begun to display his innate drive for constructive work, so soon as he took the measure of the needs of that State and his opportunities for good works, felt to be needed even by successive ministries but had somehow been neglected.

One of the most outstanding of such a public need, crying for attention, is the reform of the control and management of tens of thousands of Hindu religious Maths, temples and other centres of popular worship. Reddy who has known how the South Indian religious institutions have come to be managed, through Statutory Authorities for forty years, soon visualised his opportunity to make a progressive contribution to the well-being of Hindus and their contributions to religious institutions.

He succeeded in persuading the Cabinet about the urgent need to regulate and control the management, finances and day-to-day working of the U.P. religious endowments and their peethams and maths. On his advice, the U.P. Cabinet arranged for studying the working of the Hindu Religious Endowments Acts of Andhra Pradesh, Madras, and Kerala and Karnataka States. It is possible that he was able to speed up the processing of the reports obtained on such studies; during the few weeks of the President's Rule. The happy result of these initiatives and his success in persuading the Cabinet in this constructive direction is the promulgation of the Ordinance for constituting a statutory body to control, regulate, manage or/and utilise the resources, properties and activities and establishments of the Hindu Religious Endowments of U.P. It is indeed a unique but long-awaited achievement. It is universally welcomed; Reddy has thus demonstrated what a dynamic, democratic and progressive Governor can do even when the institution of Governor is considered to serve as the figure-head.

This success of Reddy makes one wonder what must have been the terrible odds, he had to contend with, when he was a member of successive State Cabinets to prevent him from demonstrating similar initiatives and achieving equal successes.

Reddy had his innings in ministerial power in Central Government also. He is very much like C. Subramaniam in quick grasp and efficient work as minister. Both of them are impatient with unnecessary but conventional impediments of redtape. But they could not overcome the stranglehold of parkinson's laws and so the Steel Ministry and its administration of nationalised steel mills

have been defying the statesmanship of successive ministries; only the Emergency and MISA have been able to come to grips with their management.

Chenna Reddy has had the unique distinction of being sent to jail on account of his leading role in Telangana People's struggle for separation from the combined Andhra Pradesh State, by the very same Chief Minister under whom he had served as a senior Minister a few years earlier.

He was not responsible for the starting of that agitation nor was he its leader during its phase of violence and its rabid attacks upon the Andhra immigrants into different districts of Telangana. It was when its middle-level leadership found itself at a dead end, that he was invited to step into its leadership. Fearing that under his seasoned leadership, that campaign might regain its earlier momentum, even without violent activities, the Government adopted the desperate means of imprisoning him, his colleague Laxman Bapuji and others.

That separatist movement failed in dismembering the Andhra Pradesh. But Chenna Reddy master-minded its election campaign so well in 1971 general elections that a majority of seats in Parliament were captured by its nominees — demonstrating thus how popular and politically effective was its hold upon the electorate of Telangana of 15 million population.

Chenna Reddy is practically the product of the satyagrahic age of 1940-45. It was during that period he was absorbing the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal atmosphere, while in the Medical College. So soon as he qualified himself for medical practice, the call of the people of Telangana to struggle for freedom from Nizam's rule proved to be too strong for him and many youngmen like him who loved country and freedom more than their professions.

I met him and his venerable uncle, the late Ranga Reddi and their young associates at the Telangana Peoples Conference of 1946, on my return from continental tour, in connection with the World Food and Agriculture Conference. They were then functioning for a while as Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj group, trying to find their moorings in their State-level national movement within the ambit of Swami Ramananda Tirtha's overall leadership, surrounded by his top-level leaders from all the four linguistic ranks of that multi-lingual State.

It became my pleasant function to persuade Congress Party's Chief Whip in Provisional Parliament Shri Satyanarayana Sinha to welcome Chenna Reddy as one of the whips on the strength of a good speech delivered by Reddy.

From that initial step-up, Chenna Reddy has gone on gaining political positions, as their State Congress Executive member of the Hyderabad State and of State Cabinet and ultimately a minister in the Andhra Pradesh Government.

In the meanwhile, he was playing a meritorious role during the times of strife caused by Razakars. He, Smt. Laxmibai, Harischandra Heda and many others had to go to jails. They helped thousands of active national workers to escape Razakar terrorism. He and his wife had to emigrate for a while to Vijayawada to be beyond Razakar's violence All of them had to go on agitating for Central intervention. until Police action ended Nizam's evil regime and Hyderabad State was merged with India as a whole.

Chenna Reddy too has had his share of disappointments in public life. Though he did good work as Minister of Food and Agriculture in the Hyderabad State, he

was not invited to join the Cabinet of the new State of Andhra Pradesh, after the dismemberment of the multi-lingual Hyderabad State and merger of Telangana into the other Telugu-speaking Andhra. Many felt that he was being victimised for his prolonged struggle for separate Telangana State — a proposal favoured by the States Reorganisation Commission itself.

He responded to our invitation to join the Swatantra Party to create a viable Parliamentary opposition, in the hope the ruling Congress Party could be prevented from pursuing such vengeful policies. But when the Congress leadership appeared to be repentent and invited him into effective and useful partnership, he rejoined it. Soon after his services were once again utilised first in Hyderabad and next in Delhi as a Cabinet Minister. He has proved to be a strong and efficient minister. However, it is only on ascending what appeared to be much less directly power-loaded gaddi of Governor, that his creative capabilities have come to be demonstrated in such a unique manner.

REDDI, RAMACHANDRA

The cause of agriculturists sustained a great loss by the death of Sri B. Ramachandra Reddi on March 3, 1973. I have known him since 1928 as the champion of agriculturists. We worked together on the Economic Enquiry Committee, appointed by the Composite Madras Legislative Assembly in 1928, which recommended, after a thorough enquiry into the economics of ryotwari cultivation, against the proposed enhancement by 18-3/4 per cent of the land revenue. As irony would have it, the Congress ministries later on raised land revenue by 300 per cent and there are now the new proposals for imposing higher burdens on agriculturists.

Sri Reddi proved to be the distinguished Speaker of Madras Assembly between 1930-36 and demonstrated his love and understanding of democratic debate. It was during the Second World War and its concomitant controls over economic life of our people, Sri Reddi stood by our peasants in their struggle for economic prices, against compulsory procurement of paddy and rice, and co-operated whole-heartedly with Smt. Bharati Devi, then the President of Bharat Kisan Congress, in protecting agriculturists. Sri Reddi championed the cause of rural people when he was the Deputy Leader of the Democratic Party in Lok Sabha between 1952-57 and thereafter, organised, in co-operation with the late Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh, the All India Agriculturists Federation. He then spearheaded the agitation against the unilateral imposition of ceilings on lands as a discriminatory and anti-social measure. When I took up cudgels against Jawaharlal Nehru for his impractical and anti-peasant campaign for co-operative farming Sri Reddi rushed to my rescue and convened in Madras an all-India conference of political leaders, on behalf of the Agriculturists Federation and thus paved the way for the formation of the Swatantra Party — principally for the protection of self-employment economy and peasantry. He served that cause so ably as the Vice-

President of the All India Party for a decade and thus proved to be a bulwark of democracy. He stood by me like a rock, when I was fighting with my back to the wall to get back in a bye-election to Paliament from Chittoor, after having been defeated in 1962 general elections. Caste appeals by Congress propagandists made no sense to him and he helped me to defeat the Reddi candidate, the nominee of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Ramachandra Reddi was called to Madras Bar in 1924 but preferred public work to legal practice. Though he inherited a small zamindari and was befriended by the Zamindar of Venkatagiri and others of the Justice Party, he chose to be a champion of agriculturists.

He did not join us in my campaign against zamindars. He did not share my faith in Gandhian socialism. He did not accept the idea of 'ceilings' at all over any type of property. But I was willing to join hands with him in opposing the imposition of ceilngs on agriculturists alone when no such ceilings on professional, industrial and other urban classes was being proposed. We both worked together for freedom for the self-employed masses. And what a splendid colleague he was.

Sri Reddi was a scholar in Telugu, a good writer and poet, and edited the Telugu weekly "Swatantra" for more than a decade. He encouraged many a Telugu poet and writer. He was an effective debator both in Telugu and English and an able committeeman. Both in the State Assembly and in the Lok Sabha 1952-57 his speeches were known for their erudition, persuasive logic and effective rhetoric. He was a good friend and noble comrade. Both Rajaji and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee delighted to discuss and take counsel with him. He lived a noble life, as a public man, and was well-known for his integrity so much like Dr. Rutnaswami. To me, he proved to be a splendid colleague, and a wise counsellor. On many an occasion, through his cautious approach, sweet reasonableness and quiet humour, he made my initiatives acceptable to the party at all levels.

Dr. SADASIVA RAO

Dr. Sadasivarao, M.B., B.S., M.S,, the fortunate son of a kisan of Takkellapadu in Guntur taluk has become one of the most popular medical practitioners in Guntur city. He has become the favourite of kisans from 1955 as a doctor just as Dr. A. Chalapati Rao, freedom fighter, used to be the beloved doctor of the middle classes of 1930-60. He enjoys the single largest practice. At the same time, he is recognised as a high-class teacher and practitioner and has been welcomed as Hon. Surgeon in the Guntur General Hospital. What pleases me most is that he has gained the reputation of being a peoples doctor like Dr. Pratap Kumar of Chirala, Dr. Vempati Suryanarayana and Dr. Hariprasad of Tenali, Dr. T. Chalapati Rao of Vijayawada.

Sadasivarao has been fortunate in his marriage. His wife, Dr. Jayaprada is the expert in Gynecology and children's diseases. Their mutual co-operation in running their nursing home has proved to be a blessing for thousands of ailing people of Guntur, Krishna and Prakasam districts.

I have been disappointed to find so many doctors who have qualified as M.B., B.S. and even M.S. and M.D. very keen on getting into Government service. Many are going abroad in search of higher earnings. So few of them are ready to face the risks of private practice. It is quite true that it is an ordeal for most of them to have to find Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 20,000 after having undergone such costly training over six years to invest again on the minimum medical equipment, besides maintaining themselves, compounders and midwives, etc. during the initial couple of years. It is even more hazardous and uncomfortable for them to set up practice in rural areas, without roads, sanitary and public health conveniences, medical shops

and telephone, telegraph or postal services. Realising all this, the Raja of Panagal initiated in 1923 the scheme of providing some assistance. But whaever it has grown to be since then through the Panchayat Raj has not been enough. So the growing need of our rural India for such practitioners has not been met by our social order. Moreover there are so few doctors like Sadasivarao and Dr. Jayaprada, who are willing to stand by those few brave medical graduates who are willing to serve the public without seeking Government service. Many groups of five to ten villages are yet without doctors and samiti hospitals or dispensaries or medical shops are too few and lack adequate supplies of even simple medicines or appliances. It is tragic that while there is this crying need for medical facilities and doctors in rural India, there should be such large numbers of unemployed but qualified medicos. Eminent doctors like Sadasivarao have to be consulted by Government to devise a constructive plan for inspiring those un-used, unemployed doctors to serve our people, while providing them with minimum facilities for decent living, pending their full-fledged employment.

Doctors are generally said to be mutually exclusive. There is too much competition especially among general practitioners. But Dr. Sadasivarao has made his name as well as fortune at such an early phase in his career that he has proved to be, the God-Father of so many junior doctors during those two decades all over Guntur district. It has been my pleasant experience to find many a budding general practitioner trying to gain his goodwill and blessings at the inauguration of his practice, as if his presence and blessings on such an occasion would be highly auspicious. To be thus recognised as a beneficient elder in this highly competitive profession is certainly a worthy social achievement. So it was a pleasure for me to preside over the Silver Jubilee of his Nursing Home.

SAHAJANAND SARASWATI

Swami Sahajanand Saraswati of Bihar blazed as an explosive revolutionary force on the Indian national scene between 1936-42 just as Nellore Venkata Rama Naidu arose on the Andhra kisan arena in 1928-48. He was found to be a formidable ally to all leftist elements in Bihar. His tacit approval of the Communist tactics of working up all rebel-forces against the Congress ministry, antagonised even Rajendra Prasad to his movements. So Gandhiji felt it necessary to allow his secretary Mahadev Desai to write a series of articles in the "Harijan" to dissect, deplore and condemn Swamiji's so-called campaign of "kisans with their dandas on their march".

Swamiji, the then President of the All India Kisan Congress (alias Sabha) was not content with my non-committal attitude, though I was its general secretary and past President, towards his reckless head-on collision with Gandhiji's non-violent approach to political and economic issues. Gandhiji was dissatisfied with my refusal to condemn or at least deplore what appeared to be the almost violent drive of Swamiji against Bihar zamindars, which compares with the latter-day Naxalite approach. When in the end, I pleaded for the right of kisans to march with their traditional danda, with which they protect themselves against snakes, wild cattle on the rampage, etc., and that no action should be taken against such kisan marchers armed only with their dandas, until and unless they actually used the dandas in a collective manner against any group of zamindars or their allies, Gandhiji was mollified.

Subash Babu found in him a formidable ally in his fight against Congress, after the founding of the Forward Bloc. Both of us co-operated with Subash on the Left Consolidation Committee. While continued to avow Gandhiji's overall leadership, Swamiji accepted only the LCC and when it collapsed, he was content to be with Subash Babu. After Subash Babu became Netaji and Germany declared war on Russia and Communists swerv-

ed from their anti-imperialist war slogan to peoples war slogan Swamiji and myself parted ways.

Such were the humours of the comradeship we two enjoyed during those hectic six years of our close collaboration on the kisan front and Indulal Yagnik was good enough to help us to continue to appreciate each other, despite differences in our temperamental and cultural approaches.

Swamiji was one of the leaders of the Bhumiars and Yadavs — who are mostly land-holders, under the zamindars in U.P. and Bihar, before he became a Swami.

He was the leader of semi-religious social uplift movement, which upheld the right of Bhumiars and other kisan castes such as Yadavas, Kurmis, to exercise religious practices, like wearing Jandhyams or the sacred thread of religious vows, reciting Sanskrit Mantrams and performing Yajna-homam and he conducted a campaign of consecrating Bhumiars, Yadavs and others also as Brahmins.

While engaged in that highly popular campaign, he used to be conveyed from one remote village to another in palanquin followed by large crowds. He came to realise then the need to work for the liberation of kisans from the oppression of zamindars. He could not bear with the sufferings of kisans, who were being treated as tenants-at-will over their ancestral holdings and whose rent burdens were being enhanced arbitrarily. So it was natural for him, with his irrepressible spirit of revolt to move from his fight against religious suppression to the struggle against economic oppression. Thus emerged the Swami of Bihar Kisan Movement.

I met him and Indulal Yagnik for the first time on the platform of All India Kisan Conference at Lucknow convened by me and Mohanlal Gautam with the support of the Congress Socialist Party. We invited Swamiji to be the Chairman on the advice of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. That conference decided upon the formation of All India Kisan Congress. It also chose him, myself and

Mohanlal Gautam as the joint convenors, to hold the All India Kisan Congress at Faizpur, at the same time as the session of the National Congress. The Faizpur session of the Kisan Congress elected me as the full-fledged President and Swamiji as General Secretaary. He was thus ushered on to the all India national platform as a kisan leader.

Swamiji was by nature a dynamic person. Through his leadership of the successful socio-religious self-respect movement, he established himself as the most powerful populist. He was learned in Hindu scriptures but largely un-initiated into the Marxist ideology and intricacies of the ideological disputations between different groups of socialists. He had a working knowledge of English. His Hindi idiom was said to be homely, rural-based and graphic. His speeches in Hindi — he could not speak in English on platforms — were found to be highly popular and his vitroilic phrases backed by his vibrating and volcanic gestures incited multitudes into reckless explosions. His saffron garb and sanyasin's authority lent special fervour and drive to his exhortations. No wonder the Communists found in him excellent vehicle for their drive against Congress as well as landlordism. Jayaprakash, Indulalji and myself who were impressed with the new force and energy that Swamiji introduced into our Leftism, realised not long after the 1936-37 general elections how easily and successfully Communists were able to gain him to their side, by their quick-witted publicity given to him in their English and Hindi press. There was a mush room growth of their name-sake kisan committees by 1938 in Bengal, Gujarat, U.P., Maharashtra, Assam, Rajasthan, where there had been no worthwhile kisan movements even an year before Faizpur session. So, by the time Swamiji came te preside over the Comilla session, both the CSP leaders and myself found it a herculean task to persuade Swamiji to be a centralist and allow the kisan platform to remain 100% kisan-minded and, kisan con-

trolled and not to become another extension of the Communists. It was because of that cyclonic drift of the Swamiji, I chose to agree to serve the organisation, after having vacated the Presidentship, as the General Secretary and thus induce Swamiji to remain strongly uncommitted to any political leadership, apart from that of the Congress.

Swamiji was made of the stuff which yielded in history many an irresistible and explosive leader who upset the existing economic systems or social orders, whether the direction of that revolt be to the right or to the left. He was cataclysmic in his explosions. He was all consuming in his furies. His dare-devilry did not wince even before Gandhiji's censures. He was indeed a live volcano, emitting terrific lava of revolt and resentment. Is there any wonder, if both the British Government and its zamindari allies, as well as Congress bosses shivered in their shoes at the sound of Swamiji's marchers and the sight of their dandas — consecrated by Swamiji's religious blessings.

Swamiji led a kisan march, one lakh strong to Patna to demand legislation for protecting peasants. The Congress Cabinet hastened to pass the needed legislation. He exhorted kisans either to stick to their batai lands or occupy them despite the zamindari records of rights and tens of thousands responded to his call, despite Governmental warnings and the Congress Cabinet was forced to withdraw its coercive activities to dislodge kisans. He incited kisans to retaliate zamindars' violence by exhibiting their united massive strength backed by kisans' dandas during their earth-shaking marches. Thus Swamiji became a terror to Congress ministers, most of whom were the scions of the order of zamindars and were all caught up by his avalanche drive against the vested interests, who were then the electoral back-bone of the Congress.

When thus Swamiji was at the height of his popularity and swinging into undreamt of heights of national

anti-imperialist-cum-kisan leadership that the Communists succeeded in catching him in their political coils and gaining a firm hold on his emotions and seep into the innermost cells of his following. The Left Consolidation Committee collapsed, when Subash Chandra Bose, myself and others refused to accept partnership on it with Communists since they were found to be scheming through their "proletarian path" for capture of power in the wake of advent of Swaraj, Swamiji found it not possible to sever his partnership with Communists; so entwined they had grown around him and many of his followers and their political consciousness.

The decision of the Congress to withdraw from ministries and to wage non-violent struggle against British imperialism robbed us of our willing and soft Congress opponent, against whom we could press kisan claims. Gandhiji's individual satyagraha diverted many a colleague of ours into jails. The people's war slogan of Communists which enveloped valiant Swamiji also placed him all so suddenly and irrevocably on the wrong side of peoples' emotions. The Bihar Congressmen found it easy to take the offensive against him, taking advantage of that unpopular turn in his politics. The people felt unhappy at that inexplicable turn in Swamiji's politics, while they were all responding to "Quit India" call of Gandhiji.

While I was in jails, I entertained many a vain wish about that dear and daring colleague if only he had heeded the advice of seasoned kisan Congressites: If only he had overcome his contempt for the ministry-minded Congressmen and remained loyal to Congress mission for the achievement of Swaraj: If he could have realised how through decades, in country after country, Communists had captured the hearts of leaders who were not equal to Communist ideologists and political tacticians and technicians; Swamiji could have lived long enough to make much greater constructive and dynamic contribution to the social revolution of Indian masses.

Fates have favoured Communists. So he lost control over the main and live springs of inspiration. By 1945 Communists robbed him of many of his followers.

Swamiji realised that his partnership with Communists led him into a blind alley and found that Indulalji also came to similar conclusion. By the time he decided to shake himself free from Communist control and rejoin the Congress comrades, the local Congress leaders indulged in their vengeful and petulent attitude and so, I could not persuade either Gandhiji or Rajendra Prasad to invite either Swamiji or Indulalji into the high-level collaboration that they deserved. Communists, in their turn dared to deny or defy Swamiji's Presidentship of the All India Kisan Sabha. Thus he found himself isolated by 1946, and that might have pleased Communists and a number of Congressmen but not the kisan masses of Bihar and U.P. for whom he laboured so sincerely and successfully. The abolition of zamindaris, which was achieved within five years after his Swargarohan, resulting in the attainment of proprietorship of their holdings by more than 10 millions of Bihar kisans, and twenty millions of U.P. kisans is so largely due to Swamiji's great work. They must be wishing for his presence, in these decades of disillusionment with Congress regime, and longing for his resounding voice and electrifying personal atmosphere.

Swamiji was a good friend. He was great in his passion for service. He loved to work for the salvation of Daridra Narayan. He was good at heart. He was essentially a man of the masses. He was indeed a rare and noble Swamiji.

Justifiably Bihar kisans felt grateful to that valiant fighter and so installed a fine marble statue in Bihta Ashram. The Congress Chief Minister Shri Krishna Sinha unvieled it. I deemed it a privilege to offer my homage to that indomitable and inspiring comrade by placing a floral garland on that statue in 1967 and by presiding over the 81st birthday celebration held in Patna in March, 1975.

SANJIVAIAH D.

[D. Sanjivaiah was born on 14-2-1921 of Harijan parents of Peddapadu in Kurnool district. He was an M.A. and LL.B. Ranga who was then President of Andhra PCC proposed him as Congress nominee for Parliament (Provisional) in 1950, was later elected as Andhra MLA 1952-64. He was Minister in Rajaji's Madras Ministry 1953-54, and in other ministries till 1960. He became Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 1960-62; President of National Congress 1962-64; Central Minister in 1964-66. He was Congress President when he died in 1971. He was a good scholar in Telugu. His wife Smt. Krishnaveni and his nephew Shri D. Muniswami, B.A., B.L., are now Ministers in Andhra Pradesh.—Ed.]

Shri Sanjivaiah was one of the three most important Harijan leaders, who was vouchsafed national stature and all-India acclamation. He was so unlike Dr. Ambedkar and so much like the other Harijan leader, Jagjivan Ram, Dr. Ambedkar achieved his all-India position, and power in Central Government through his dogged fight for such recognition both for himself and for the Scheduled Classes as a whole, whereas both Jagjivan Babu and Sanjivaiah rose to their positions by virtue of the Congress coming into power. Ambedkar's heart was set on higher national ideas and grander ambitions for his classes, and so turned away from the position of power offered by Congress whereas these two eminent Harijan leaders were content to be good, efficient party leaders and ministers and promote the interest of their section of the masses through the medium of Governments. All the three of them have reached high enough water-marks of statesmanship and social service, which will inspire and uplift the public spirited and ambitious youths of our Scheduled Castes, Depressed Classes and Scheduled Tribes. To have been a minister in Madras and Andhra State Cabinets a Cabinet Minister in two Central ministries of Jawaharlal and Indira, and the President of the Andhra Provincial Congress as well as the All India Congress is the unique privilege enjoyed by Sanjivaiah. Like Jagjivan Babu he continued

to the very end to be the most loyal colleague, of both Jawaharlal and Indira as Congress Presidents, ministers.

Exceptional opportunities offered themselves to him in the same way as princes find for themselves. Fortunately Sanjivaiah did not lose his head because of his extraordinary good fortune. He was content to try his best to meet their challenge and discharge his functions. One cannot but feel that he could have used his powers and privileges to rouse and raise the sense of self-respect of the vast masses of depressed humanity from among whom he had arisen, and help them to shake themselves free from the shackles of socio-religious beliefs and the debilitating sense of submission. He was not the kind of revolutionary that Ambedkar, Annadurai or Barrister Ramaswami were.

Sanjivaiah is one of the most fortunate political products of free India. He embellished every opportunity by his discreet and Lal Bahadur-type smiling simplicity. Opportunities sought him out just because he was sensible enough to enrich the core of such opportunities and paved the way for further progress. Soon after his graduation I had the privilege of enticing him away from the Employment Exchange in search of a humble job in Madras Civil Supplies and getting him chosen, on behalf of the Congress, as a member of Interim Parliament. That brought him into intimate contact with Shri Sanjiva Reddi who became the favourite of Jawaharlalji who took him up as one of his proteges. When Rajaji had to make his choice of a minister, from among Harijans in 1952, I was able to advise him to invite Sanjivaiah to join his ministry and Sanjiva Reddi also welcomed that idea and thus, he came to gain excellent training as a minister under Rajaji, the supremo among Chief Ministers. In 1955, he was invited into the Andhra Cabinet, as a follower of Sanjiva Reddi. In 1959, Sanjiva Reddi was chosen as the Congress President, a few months after we inaugurated the Swatantra Party which threatened to become the most fomidable de-

mocratic Liberal opposition party with myself as President, under Rajaji's leadership. The Chief Ministership of Andhra, when it was vacated by Sanjiva Reddi fell to Sanjivaiah, as a compromise choice. When, however, Sanjiva Reddi vacated Congress Presidentship to become Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and Jawaharlal wanted Sanjivaiah to vacate that much prized post, though he had got elected as MLAs quite a number of his personal followers, he bowed out gracefully and in a disciplined manner. That must have pleased Jawaharlalji immensely. So he chose Sanjivaiah with complete confidence, for the Congress Presidentship in 1962. Not long afterwards, he invited him into the Central Cabinet as Labour Minister. It was only for a short while, after his first and last disappointing defeat in Parliamentary election of 1967, that he was allowed to remain without any high-level office. No sooner was he chosen as a Rajya Sabha member than he was again invited into the Central Cabinet. During the political crisis that overtook Congress in 1969-70, he remained unswervingly loyal to Indiraji and strengthened all her moves without any compunction. He was again called upon to be the President of the Congress, when Jagjivan Ram was vacating it and he loyally resigned from the Central Cabinet and moved into the Congress gaddi. Both Jawaharlal and Indira were happy with him, throughout that decade of their close association with him — a unique experience at that giddy plane of power. Sanjivaiah might have preferred, if he had the free choice, to be in the Cabinet, as Jagjivan Babu, Sanjiva Reddi had done before him but like Lal Bahadur he proved that loyalty to his national leaders would be more beneficial to all concerned than mere personal choice of power and pelf.

Sanjivaiah displayed grit and high sense of responsibility. When an upper caste minister defied him, though he was the Chief Minister he had the guts to withdraw his portfolios, and forced him to resign, despite all his efforts to obtain umbrage from Central leaders. When he was asked later to join Sanjiva Reddi's ministry, he refused to join it, because his loyal colleague, Shri Satyanarayana Raju, was not also invited and thus preferred to remain for about an year without power. As President of the powerful National Congress, he boldly declared at Indore that many partymen were exploiting their positions within the ruling party, in and outside ministries, for enriching themselves by unseemly and even openly dishonest means and thus held them up for public censure — reminding one of Jawaharlal's tempestuous tirades before assuming Prime Ministership. If only he could have served apprenticeship for at least a brief period under Gandhiji — whom he had not met as he was then too young or if he could have imbibed the revolutionary fervour of Ambedkar, he could have made much greater use of his exceptional opportunities to help Jawaharlalji or Indiraji to cleanse the Congress or uplift the Harijans or accelerate the social revolution that his two great leaders and all of us, who wished him well, had been so keen about. Sanjivaiah was content to live an unblemished political life, in his sweet, similing and successful Lal Bahadur-like manner and that is saying a lot for any national leader in this post-Gandhian era.

Sanjivaiah was born in Kurnool district in the priestly Vaishnavite family of Harijans. His father was literate, well-versed in the Hindu Bhakti cult. His family lived by agricultural work, as owners of a small holding, liable to drought for two years in every five years and also as wage-earners. The Gandhian atmosphere of philanthrophy towards Harijans helped him in his studies through high-school and college stages and he became a graduate. He was able to march

from one specially rare position to another of fame and power, all the while smiling, singing and musing with his lyrical heart, through the rich fund of his favourite Telugu poetry. He served as Labour Minister under Nehru and Industries Minister under Indira. During his tenures, there were not the special powers and facilities that have emerged during the later period of Emergency and Garibi Hatao. If only he could have been the Minister during this more auspicious period, he would have propelled the State Governments, with his winsome powers of persuasion, to implement more fully and sincerely the Minimum Wages Act to assure agricultural workers, from whose ranks his parents have sprung, decent and living levels of minimum wages and to organise even on a larger scale and in a more dynamic manner, as many industrial co-operatives for the self-employed youths of the backward and scheduled classes.

His phenomenal rise in political arena gave a sense of confidence and hope to the Harijan youths. By welcoming poets, singers and other artists, he inculcated among all Andhra youths a new passion for fine arts. By maintaining friendly and co-operative relations with people and leaders of all castes, he encouraged the youths of Harijans and backward classes to try to shed their inferiority complex. By remaining loyal to the Congress and functioning twice as its national President, he inspired working people to have confidence in that party, in themselves and in the possibility of an honourable partnership for rural labour and socially depressed peoples in national politics. By refusing to heed the Naxalite-type of shouts and slogans, he strengthened Gandhian approach towards social challenges. By declining to join the State Cabinet when his erstwhile colleague was being dropped, he de-

monstrated how ministership was not everything even for the scion of the traditionally underprivileged.

Sanjivaiah died in harness, as President of the Congress. He became an effective instrument of 1971 March social revolution, and contributed much to the national acceptance of Indiraji's slogan of "Garibi Hatao". In all this he was so much like Jagjivan Ramji. In his death, he gained a hero's homage from the nation, Congress and especially Harijans and backward classes, thanks to the timely awakening of the masses. It was the misfortune of this country that such a good, and experienced Harijan statesman should have been snatched away by cruel death, in the prime of his life, just when his mature statesmanship and valuable services are needed to strengthen this phase of social revolution set afoot by its 1971-72 electoral mandates. The Andhra Pradesh Government has consecrated a great park in its metropolitan city to his memory.

SAROJINI NAIDU

[Smt. Sarojini Naidu of Andhra and Bengal was born on 13-2-1871 in Hyderabad; educated in England and hailed as a poetess in English, Joined freedom movement in 1915, Worked for Home Rule Movement, became adherent of Congress and Gandhi-ji's Non-Co-Operation movement in 1920-21, became Congress President in 1925 after touring triumphantly in Sou.h Africa in 1924, Toured all over the World, Member Congress Working Committee till 1946, Founder of All India Women's Association and Movement, Governor of U.P., Chairman of the First Asian Conference, New Delhi in 1947, died on 2-3-1949. Ed]

I had my first experience of policemen coming to our house in 1917 because I took part in the National Day of Fasting and Marching in our village as a protest against the arrest of Dr. Annie Besant. She was indeed the first grandmother of the Indian National Congress and India's cause of freedom in the twentieth century. She led the way, through her fearless writings in favour of Home Rule in her daily NEW INDIA for the purely anti-imperialist style of press and editorials. I had also the distinction of marching side by side with Smt. Sarojini Naidu, the famed poetess in English to the A.I.C.C. platform in 1942 August, where and when the Quit India decision was taken. She was certainly the most distinguished Indian woman President of the National Congress and the photo-album of that session is one of my most cherished worldly possessions.

It was while I was an undergraduate at Oxford that I first heard Annie Besant speak and that was her most unpopular phase in life, because she was speaking against Mahatma Gandhi and his Non-Co-Operation and Triple Boycott Campaigns. We gave her a sullen hearing as we truly believed that she was obstructing India's heroic efforts to gain Swaraj within that year. But I admired her silver voice, loved her oratory and gloated over the beauty of her whole bearing symbolising Mother India. It

was fortunate for me that I heard her again in later years in Adyar when all of us cooled down to seriously consider how best to strengthen our national freedom forces to wrest freedom from the British also through Constitutional channels and learnt to admire not only her peerless eloquence enriched by silver voice but also her abiding love for Indians and India's yogic contributions.

Sarojini thrilled, shocked and shamed South African Whites by her condemnation of racial discrimination prevailing in that self-governing British Colony through her rare orations, as she was possessed by the oracle of freedom. Both the English and Dutch of South Africa felt themselves humbled by this lady of poetic eloquence, pleading for racial justice.

She adorned the Congress Working Committee ever afterwards until she chose to go as Governor, on the advent of Swaraj i.e. 1947-49 with a few breaks, when her absence was sorely missed both by the Committee as such and Congressmen as a whole. Her irrepressible humour and womanly patience helped the other leaders to bear what must have seemed to be too painful a prolongation of their hopeless debates over the relevance or otherwise of membership qualifications for Congress mmembership or of stepping in or walking out of legislatures etc. The pity it was by the time I reached that pinnacle of leadership, she exchanged it for Governorship.

When Mahatma Gandhi called the women of India to breakout of their traditional confines of family and males primacy in warfare and rush to the vanguard of Satyagraha, Sarojini was the noble example he held aloft. She became the favourite of foreign correspondents through her sense of humour, poetic expressions and light conversation lit with mysticism of the east and pathos of Satyagrahi's Christican suffering. So her interpretation of Gandhi's moves inspired them. When the British forces were trying to ignore the presence of women in the ranks of our Satyagrahis and to blindfold the world to the truth

of India's women being on the march against imperialism, it was Sarojini with all her international fame and her abiding place in the hearts of English knowing people with their ears ringing with her lilting songs and sonnets who forced them to arrest her and thus acknowledge the emergence of reincarnated Laxmibhai of Jhansi of 1857 war of independence.

I enjoyed the pleasure of her comradeship in baiting the indomitable Sardar over Kisan issues, when she graced the Madras session of All India Kisan's Organisers Conference and seconded my plea that Congress should support kisan's demand for the abolition of feudalism. She encouraged us when we voted for Subash Chandra Bose at Tripuri and shed secret tears at the sight of that battered President, struggling against last minute betrayal by Congress Socialists and Pant-cum-Rajaji's resolution. She gloated over Bapu's Bombay speech, with all its reckless trumpeting as from Bhishma on the battlefield of Kurukshetra with his bugle call for "Do or Die" for the sake of India's freedom and against the vengeful British imperialists She loved Bharati Devi, admired her poise, and quiet but firm leadership of women. She congratulated her on the success of her picketing campaign. She used to call her to her sides whenever she attended A.I.C.C. Once she turned to me and said "How fortunate you are ! She is so charming and capable."

Sarojini Devi's second daughter Leela also studied at Oxford when Bharati Devi was there but they could not become fast friends because Leela was a great believer in Women's Lib and careerism, far too early for those fads and Bharati Devi was devoted to a family dharma. Her sister-in-law, Kamaladevi was admired by Bharati Devi from 1927 onwards and Kamaladevi was affectionate and allied to me on the Congress and Kisan platforms. I am not quite sure if Sarojini and Kamala loved each other as much as they were attached to Bharati Devi. Sarojini's elder daughter Padmaja's heart loved all that her mother

loved but her heart and mind were devoted to Jawaharlal, while I liked to hear her voice, with my eyes closed as it reminded me so much of her great mother's voice and its sweet cadences, I could not appreciate her Hyderabad politics. Sarojini married Dr. Naidu of Kakatiyas from whom we claim our heritage. With these and many other intimate social points and counter-points, our two families were in close touch with each other over decades. And as luck would have it, her biographer in Telugu was no other than Pandit Gorrepati who had made his debut as a scholarly and inspired author by writing my biography in 1946. What more inspiring communion can we ask for with such a good, great heroic national leader, the Sarojini of India's war of Independence !

She was a terrific personality by the combination of what appeared to be incongruous features — in private, such an unbeliever in heavy Gandhian social approaches, such a satirist of Indian inhibitions, yet so great a exponent of what is best in India's cultural message and so noble an exampler of India's cosmopolitan social outlook. One moment, she used to be as vivacious as Satyabhama of Lord Krishna and in another, she was like the wise queen of Pandavas.

She represented Indian Women at the Second Round Table Conference and seconded Gandhiji's claim that both men and women were behind the national demand for independence. She nursed him as beloved sister in England and in Ahmednagar Jail. She comforted Jawaharlal when he was too much worried over the fates of India, while he could not break away from the Mahatma's Satyagrahic logic to follow his own line of thinking. Many a time she felt annoyed by Sardar's tight hold over Congress machine and his harsh treatment meted out to such of us as were inclined to break away from the elders' restraints and used to shower her motherly love upon us, lighten our hearts just by a knowing smile, charged with her sympathy or pat on the shoulder or an invitation to share tea or coffee or atleast a minut's walk by her side, accord-

ing to the humour of the chance. Once she waited for minutes on the Bombay Railway platform until I got down from my third class carriage and reached her, and asked me to accompany her to her camp in the City. The Reception Committee people, who were under the tight control of Shri S. K. Patil, the trusted man of Sardar Patel were aghast, for fear that she might be joining forces with me and my colleagues against the Sardar. She looked askance at them and observed not in a whispering manner, "Let them wonder, what we can do this time". She was youthful storm-petrel to the end.

Her greatest triumph was her marvellous role, as the Mother of Asia—resurgent and renascent—presiding over the first great Pan-Asian Conference, convened by the Indian Council of World Affairs on the inspiration of Jawaharlal, the head of the Provisional Cabinet of India, on the eve of Swaraj. It was a sight for the Gods to see her standing, with her broad shoulders, pouring out her invocations and exhortations with all her peerless eloquence in her unique and exalting and conch tones of confidence. She appeared like the incarnation of the eternal Mother of Asia awakening her slumbering sons and daughters to strengthen the declaration of Jawaharlalji that "the door is open and destiny beckons to all and Asia stretches her hand out in friendship to Europe and America as well as to our suffering bretheren in Africa. The universal human freedom cannot be based on the supremacy of any particular class. It must be the freedom of the common man everywhere and full opportunities for him to develop".

I saw her in the Teen Murti House, when I went to greet Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on his birth-day, the fourteenth November. She was lounging in an easy chair, with her feet on a stool and hailed me with great gusto and wished me "Satayush". She asked me if I received her message of greetings on my birth-day the 7th, i.e. a week earlier and said she was glad I came there, so

soon after. She observed that I should whole-heartedly co-operate with Jawaharlal and asked me why I was refusing to join his Cabinet. She warned me "Ranga, I cannot live much longer. Look at my swollen legs. I am so unwell. I will not be available to smooth relations between you and him. After all, he wants controls not for their own sake but only to ensure some food at reasonable prices for all the people". Then, seeing Jawahar coming to us, she said aloud, with all her charming smiles "Look Jawahar, Ranga has come all the way from Andhra, soon after the festivities of his own birth-day to greet you. And you think he is opposing you. I am sure he must love you so much". I took out the Khadi garland and placed it on Jawaharlal. Laughingly she exclaimed "See, Ranga is so loyal to kisans, and khaddar. So do not annoy him with your controls". Only four months thereafter she passed away in March full of glory but leaving the whole nation in mourning for her.

PADMAJA

Her charming daughter, Padmaja Naidu distinguished herself as the popular Governor of West Bengal. Padmaja was an eloquent speaker in Parliament. She ably played the hostess in Jawaharlal's house, whenever Indira sought her assistance. She was loved equally by Jawaharlal, Indira and a large section of their friends as an affectionate comrade. She dedicated the whole of their ancestral property, including their beautiful home in the Centre of Hyderabad to the Central University, started in 1975 by Government of India. Thus both the mother and daughter gave all that is best in them to the nation.

SATYA SAI BABA OF PUTTAPARTI

What a fine and heart-warming view one gets of that half moon-like swing of the baby rivulet called Chitravati, buttressed as she is by three-layered bluish hills of the Eastern Ghats, as one looks at the landscape from the circular library building on top of the small mound of a hillock behind the Prasanta Nilayam, the abode of Swami Sri Satya Sai Baba in Puttaparti. The Chitravati is indeed a picturesque silver stream, with its waters sprawling leisurely in late December.

Below the library's mound, we find the Prasanti Nilayam in the centre of a quadrangle of three-storied, long-armed buildings for the disciples. At first sight, it all looks like a university campus. It also resembles a European Catholic college for its priests; so quiet in its atmosphere with people in it and so contemplative and the birds flitting about or humming on the growing trees.

As I went into it, I found people in the quadrangle —thousands—concentrating only in one direction—towards the Central Building. They were either seated on earth in rows, one behind the other or standing on the fringes behind the seated folk. I saw them swerving all noiselessly and almost effortlessly, however with great alacrity, in this or that direction, to catch the view, to gain the warmth and to treasure the memory of a glimpse of the Swami, red-robed from shoulders to the ground, moving or flitting in and out of his room or the verandah or the foreground of his abode.

On another evening, I found him moving one to another of the people who squatted in successive rows, seeking his blessings. With a basket in his left hand, he was distributing to them the small, thin packets of Vibhuthi called Mahaprasadam. Not one would move out of

the row, nor would anyone try to snatch away what was being intended for his neighbours. Sometimes, more than one packet falls from the Swami's fiingers to a fortunate person. When no packet is clutched by his fingers, as he moves to another person, Swami swirls his palm, materialises the Vibhuti and offers it to the fortunate men. He spent an hour in that manner, blessing each and everyone who was awaiting it. Thus he favours his devotees both mornings and evenings, wherever he happens to be.

His is not the habit of receiving any money from any one. Indeed he answered in a pleasant manner, so I was told by the daughter of our family Smt. K. Atchamamba Kamalamma, who is his disciple, that he was sure that there could be none in that huge concourse of one hundred thousand people who could claim to have been approached by him for donations.

Yet, the Colleges, Ashrams, the Prasanti Nilayam and its quadrangle of three-storied biuldings, with their 400 self-contained flats with all modern conveniences of kitchen, and store and sanitary fittings could have come to be constructed at a cost of at least half a crore rupees. Many more such structures are coming up in Bombay, Madras, Vijayawada and Hyderabad. Who finances their construction ? It is his disciples and their local committees. The Swami advises in regard to their planning and utilisation and the purposes for which they are to be reserved. Just as there is perfect discipline and order among the thousands who seek the Prasadam, so also there is quiet, effective, business-like performance of all the necessary work needed to raise these many Ashrams and offices.

When I reached Puttaparti by 29th November, I learnt that celebration of his Fifty First Birth-day on 23rd November 1975 was a marvellously self-disciplined gathering. Not one had to complain about another's im-

patient or thoughless pressure or intemperate gesture or unhappy exclamation.

So many who had participated in that gathering told me that they were struck with wonder at that extraordinarily peaceful- self-regulated atmosphere of discipline, devotion and co-operation, cumulative bhajan atmosphere. Indians are generally not accustomed to offering such disciplined presence, whenever they get together, even when they go to temples. Indeed the trustees of the celebrated Venkateswara temple have had to take special steps to regulate the queue of the thousands of worshippers every morning and evening to prevent the recurrence of the unhappy stampede of devotees a decade back in which more than fifteen persons were crushed to death. At Kumbh Mela during the Pushkar at Prayag in Allahabad, scores of bathers in the sacred waters of Triveni of Ganga-Jamuna-Saraswati, died similarly because the police could not control the god-mad impatience of the huge crowds, seeking a dip in the Sacred Triveni. At Puttaparti, that unprecedented concourse of people fell into spontaneous self-discipline. They were a self-disciplined assemblage, without any need for a speaker with any gavel to call them to order. Because each one of them was convinced that the Swami, whose darshan was so much sought after, would know the workings of their minds and would quietly chasten them in his saintly manner for any inclination or thought or effort to over-reach any neighbour. True, many cherished hopes of obtaining his succour in their efforts to gain wordly advancement or solace or inspiration. They were determined to try to deserve his favours.

I met Swamiji in Delhi for the first time in 1956 on the suggestion of a member of Andhra Legislative Assembly. I found him very affectionate and wordly-wise. He gave me the famous 'Vibhuti' from a shake of his palm, in the same way as some of the other Swamis do. Again

I was in his presence, along with my wife Brarati Devi, Nagesh, his wife of our family in Hyderabad, after we had all participated in the highly inspiring Bhajan; we admired his sweet musical participation. He talked to us about publc affairs and expressed his appreciation of the patriotic and social work we were carrying on. Again he offered the Maha Prasadam. During another visit, he talked at length about the social, filial and fraternal relations that people have to develop and practise in order to enjoy good citizenship and maintain family's mututal affection, service and godly atmosphere. His words flowed in sweet musical cadences.

An Australian author has written a book about Swami Satya Sai Baba entitled "Man of Miracles". Mr. Kasturi wrote another book. Prof. Gokak got another in English. The latest is by an American psychialrist, Dr. Samuel H. Saridweiss, M.D. (1975). Many Scientists have also testified to his miracles. But there are some doctors and professors who deny any such super-powers, by themselves producing "Vibhuti" and materialising from nowhere some material luxuries. The relevant consideration is that granting the possibility of a "Giles Effects" (as per Readers Digest, November, 1975), to what use are such powers put? Is it for producing many worldly goods such as rings, watches, lockets, poseurs as in the case of Uri Giles or many magicians, mediums or astrologers or is it for the benefit of society, salvaging of individuals or smoothening relations between people or groups in any society? Puttaparti Swami has been in voking his undoubted, demonstrative, inexplicable powers in the words of scientist Bhagavantam to invoke many precious things with their coping stone of Vibhuti in order only to reinforce the vedantic teaching that every person has in him the godly powers and that everyone can find in himself the ultimate, as well as basic power and source of life, if only he would try to gain conscious contact with his innate being. He reinforces the teaching of Ramana Maharshi and that of Vedas, that is "know thyself". Sai

Baba's total effect is all for the good. He is a positive, and beneficent elemental force as affectionate and merciful as a mother is to its child and as a Sage is to any society.

II

Mysterious and miraculous things have fascinated and tantalised people of all ages. From trains, aeroplanes, submarines to computers of this era of automation, radios and televisions have been hailed as mysterious emergences at successive stages of human awareness of this world's potentiality. Writing poetry, composing music, playing chess, assessing economic problems are admitted to be as yet beyond the capacity of computors to "stimulate intelligence", and so Dr. Jagjit Singh, the eminent Science writer said "the quest for synthetic intelligence will therefore be long and arduous". Why ? Because he admits "the secrets of human wisdom is a primeval mystery", which our philosophers and yogis consider it to be an attribute of God. Those who conceived the possibility of the Atom Bomb and Hydrogen Bomb and Inter-cotinental Ballistic Weapons, like Einstein, are like their ancient forbears who visualised the practical possibilities for the production and use of the gun and gun-powder, the horse and the tank for infantry's mobility, the blitz-Krieg and helicopters such other sudden presences and effulgences of death only tried to capitalise whatever they could and draw from the warehouses of brain's power. And what is brain ? It is just matter. It is but an instrument of mind, which is repository of human wisdom —primeval mystery.

Is mind also matter ? We learn from Einstein that matter is also energy, in its unmanifested condition. It reflects, something which is so much more mysterious. which Yogis espy as God, just as water reflects, warms up under Sun. What is mind ? Satya Sai Baba repeats what all our Yogis have also realised and expressed to be

consciousness. What is Consciousness ? That by which animal world has led to emergence of human being and who in his turn has reached the present stage of demonstrating "chit" from out of 'Sat', that is, through the utilisation of the Einstein's discovery of the formula, that Energy—is equal to MC^2. Can the human world be said to have reached the ultimate goal of its search after the "primeval mystery", which is considered to be the secret of human wisdom, as per Dr. Jagjit Singh ?. Jawaharlal observed in 1958 when speaking in Delhi Convocation that "solid world dissolves into some mathematical concept or illusion, perhaps approaching the concept of Maya" J. N. Speeches Vol. IV P. 168. Pujya Aurabindo discovered "Supra Mind" and thus gained one step beyond "mind" in delving into the mystery of Consciousness. What is that ultimate Consciousness ? Consciousness of what ? what can possibly emanate from that Consciousness ? One and all of our yogis have said that it is "Anand". Like all Saints, Satya Sai Baba says that "this Anand is permanently there in the heart of everyone who is perfectly free to seek it" and gain it and give it to others and broadcast it to everyone, just as Ramanujacharya broadcast the Tirumantram from temple tower.

Speaking in terms of our present day World of Class Conflicts, national and Super-power rivalries and racial misunderstandings, Satya Sai Baba once again emphasised, what the myriad Swamis of Indian World of all ages have preached; the inestimable and indestructible and preciously sweet unity of all mankind. He does not associate spirituality and culture with "privilege on the one hand and poverty on the other". He stresses the need for displaying 'Daya' or mercy and 'Dakshinya' or compassion, 'Prema' or love and affection towards all fellow-beings.

He is not alone in this intense awareness of the need for humanism. From Ramakrishna to Vivekananda, from Aurabindo and Ramana Maharshi to Shivananda, Muktyananda, Mahesh Yogi and Chinmayananda of this century to

mention only the most manifest among our Yogis, all the seekers and savants in the sphere of "Ananda" have been trying to reach the people at the grass roots with their message of Mercy and mutual ministration.

But the great majority of even the middle clases have not been able to comprehend and absorb the humaneness of their teachings and enlightenment of their Sadhana. They too need, like the Scientists, 'Nidarshan' (demonstration by example) to be convinced of the inescapable need for eschewing hate, envy, passion of vengeance and indulgence in cruelty and bloodshed. They have to be helped to realise the oneness of not only of all humanity but also of all beings, chit and Sat and it can be better done, more quickly and on a larger-scale, when the real Yogis like Satya Sai Baba deign to come into the midst of the populace. They have to demonstrate through their active participation in mass-wise Bhajans, display of 'Nidarshan' and spreading the eflulgence of the light, warmth and ennobling bliss of their Comradeship; exhausting, though it be, so much of their Yogic or spiritual wealth of the day. Fortunately such noble souls have inexhaustible capacity to draw from the ever-replenishing universe of spiritual energy, creative and constructive elan. Not every such saint is available to come into the midst of the masses to serve as an attainable medium for spreading just that 'Anand' which he has espied or attained. From time to time, some of them make themselves available to the people, by throwing open their spiritual laboratories, such as Ashrams or Darshans and give a glimpse of their spiritual powers. This post-war world of ICBM threats is sick at heart because of its fears of evil possibilities of the misuse of Post-Einstein scientific powers. So its need for constructive and humane use of power has become extremely urgent. This need can find an adequate answer in the development of spiritual power harnessed to the cause of universal brotherhood. For every Nuclear-power Research Station we need counter-wailing Spiritual laboratories with its Swamis. While the Super-Powers

of this so-called Scientific World boast of their destructive and bestial Nuclear Weapons, it is the good fortune of the Indian World to continue to possess so many yogis who do their continuous tapas for the progressive and humane reconstruction of our social institutions and rapid and all-round uplift of the masses and their liberation from ignorance, prejudices, superstitions and poverty, both material and spiritual. Satya Sai Baba is specially busy with the co-operation of his ever-expanding circles of spiritual researchers and social workers and philanthropists in India and abroad, to broacast the lessons of Vedanta from seen and unseen stations of Prardhan, Bhakti, Bhajan and Yogic researchers.

Who is this Satya Sai Baba ? He is no mysterious person. He is the son of a traditional Bard of Kisans, that is, a Bhatraju, born in a humble village called Puttaparti, traditionally famine-stricken part of Anantapur of Rayalaseema, Andhra Pradesh. His two brothers were teachers in elementary schools. He studied in local schools both elementary and upper-elementary. He learnt to read and write in both Telugu and English, while he was in the traditional schools of that backward area. While in that elementary educational stage, somehow and suddenly he became capable of demonstrating, the type of extra-super human powers like those which are being displayed by Uri Giles during this decade, which is being styled by the scientists of England and U.S.A. as "Giles Effect" His fellow students and youths who were keeping company with him, while looking after the local cattle, on and around the small hillook, so close to his village were astounded by his "producing" f'rom nowhere some sweets and play things and offering them freely for their enjoyment. His parents and other local people feared that he might have come to be possessed by evil spirits and so subjected him to many bodily tortures and tried other psychological therapies, known in Anantapur towns, to bring him back to the so-called normalcy of children. Repeatedly this youth began to assert that he was the re-

incarnation of Sai Baba of SIRDI, who died seven years before he took his birth in Puttaparti in 1926 (23rd November) as that Sai Baba had himself declared to his disciples before his Swargarohan that he would be re-born seven years after he entered Samadhi. None would believe him and considered his talks as ravings of a hypersensive demented Bhatraju.

For years thereafter, Satyanarayana Raju, as he was then known, left the village and found himself in the company of many a Sanyasi, Sadhu, Swami, and Saint. Being the scion of the traditional Bards who are by their profession highly imaginative, eloquent, poetic and superintellectual, he must have absorbed the teachings-essence and texts of Indian Vedanthis through his special capacity for Ek-Santagrahi, Dwi-Santagrahi or Tri-Santagrahi, that is, the capacity to memorise any poem or sloka or invocation or saying by hearing once, twice or thrice. By the time he reached beyond adolescence, Raju, the young man emerged as the Sadhu, Satya Sai Baba and began to preach in eloquent Telugu with the stamp of spiritual erudition and enlightenment and sprightliness and genuineness of peasant idioms. He began to wonder, in the words of Sri R. R. Diwakar "Man is born for joy but everywhere he is in misery, can that be God's intention ? Is God so cruel as to impose suffering on the innocent ?

Most Swamis are particularly to erase all traces of what they were before they assumed the vows of Sanyasism. Not so Satya Sai Baba. Most Yogis do not bother to go back to their native places. Not so Satya Sai Baba. Just as it happens with almost all great men, not to speak of Swamis, so also, in his case the local people took more than two decades to recognise the special spiritual significance of his message and work of Satya Sai Baba. He never tarried in his work to win the local approbation. He proceeded to preach in his own village and its neighbourhood. Then he moved from district to district; from

State to State. Later he welcomed colleagues and allies, and disciples by simply spreading his umbrella of prayers and Bhajans. He engendered the atmosphere of spiritual healing and succour to the suffering people. He did not withdraw into the hallowed but distant Himalayas or other hilly "Guhas" like most other Sanyasis. He made his own village his centre of preaching and braved the disbelief, and indifference of local people who knew his poor parents, his want of any hereditary property or aristocracy of caste and continued to live the life of Sanyasi. Yet his fame spread and disciples sought him out and crowds of unhappy people, sick of mind and body swarmed round Puttaparti. Gradually he reached the cities of Bangalore, Madras, Hyderabad, Bombay, Delhi, Vijayawada etc. and more and more rich and educated people sought his healing touch for the ailing members of their families. Soon the politicians, educationists and professionals, whose ambitions were either thwarted or whose progress was to be insured sought his blessings. It became known how liberal, all embracing and effectively gracious Satya Sai Baba's presence, benign smile, soft touch of hand, sweet word of blessing, rythm of music, or/and inspiring other-worldly look at Prayers has been yielding so much of solace to so many suffering from any kind of mental or physical ailment.

His Bhajans drew ever larger groups, from hundreds into thousands and they were highly devoted and disciplined and they inspired each other by their mutual faith and collective atmosphere of prayerful concentration on the preachings of all Swamis, repeated by this Swami that "man can be divine by rising above his animality and selfish ego". He has been scrupulously exhorting his disciples to aim at the eternal, spiritual exalting "Vibhuti" or divine grace by themselves offering service to fellow beings.

Like other great Swamis he did not try to speak either in the professional or Pandit jargon. He spoke not

either in English or in Sanskrit, which he understands so well. He had not to demonstrate his scholarship with the rolls of ancient scriptures or slokas. He does not offer, as his daily work, spiritual healing, yet he does not hesitate to help through spiritual healing such of his Bhaktas for whom he feels spontaneous compassion. Thus the wife of a Communist friend of mine who is an Independent Member of Parliament went to Puttaparti in the hope of finding relief from what was declared by many eminent medical experts of Europe to be incurable cancer and sought his blessings. After months of concentration, with her faith in his compassion and her prayers, she got cured and there was no longer any need for operations etc. Is there any wonder her Communist husband had to admit his failure before the faith of his highly educated wife in God. He is now a firm believer in spiritual powers and their active presence in the Bhajan Samaj around the Swami.

By such and similar demonstrations of his compassion for many a deserving Yogic Patient, who are destined to live, Satya Sai Baba has helped lakhs of men and women all over India to fortify their faith in Hindu view of life and Yogic approach to spiritual values and godly way of living.

The multi-linguist scholar, poet and elder statesman and Satyagrahi, the late B. Ramakrishna Rao, the well-known Physicist and Government Advisor on Military Science, Prof. Bhagavantham, the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Gokak, the topmost Jurist Palkhiwalah and many such other distinguished scholars and scientists have found Satya Sai Baba's practice and preaching of Yoga to be of incalculable social benefit. K. M. Munshi, the Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, eminent statesman and historian prized his blessings and experienced his "healing touch".

SRI R. R. Diwakar, formerly Governor, Central Minister and presently President of Gandhi Peace Foundation wonders in the Bhavan's Journal of 4, January 1976:

> how "by his sheer inner genius, unaided by lineage, learning, temporal power or authority attracts and enraptures the hearts of men and women and children by his simple love and divinity enshrined and manifest in him ?"

Dr. Samuel. H. Sandweiss, M.D., an experienced Psychiatrist from California, U.S.A., who said about himself as "trained in the most advanced country, in the best schools, exposed to the leading theories, the latest practices and techniques of psychiatry" quotes in his book "Sai Baba, the Holy Man and the Psychiatrist" 1975 the following poetic expression of Swamiji about our much prized Being.

> "It is like the flower of one individuality growing into a fruit and filling itself with sweet juice out of its inner essence and then the final release from the tree".

It stands to the credit of this peasant-prophet, the Sai Baba of Puttaparti that Christians, Parsees, Moslems, Buddhists and Hindus find their prophets and religious symbols equally respected and hailed as spiritual paths towards the universal aims of humanism, peace, mutual love, and truth, representing God in human life. Swami Sitaram of Vinayashram also tried to build a temple with the sky as its roof for these universal aims of all religions on the sands of East Coast.

Mahesh Yogi has been popularising "Trascendental Meditation or tapas" in India and abroad. So many highly sophisticated psychologists, para-psychologists, scientists and scholars agree how great and good have been the healing powers of that aspect of India's Vedantic Yoga. Simple Bhajan atmosphere of India is generally conducive to social hegemony and harmony as has been demonstrat-

ed by Bhaktas Mira, Chaitanya. It is also conducive to purifying individual's approach to life. The atmosphere of Sai Baba's when harnessed to the Bhajan is indeed highly inspiring and evocative of our latent powers and feelings for doing good deeds and displaying the best of whatever one is capable of. Swami Chinmayananda's interpretations and readings of Bhagavad Gita are the most eloquent and inspiring to the English educated. Sai Baba's bodha or preachings convey to the less sophisticated but spiritually-oriented populace, the essence of Bhagavad Gita and its ancestral lore, coming from the earlier Rishis' visions of 'Anand' and the Be All and End All and the ultimate oneness of everything in Viswa (Satchidanand).

Dr. Bhagavantam observed that "the tangible results that flow from faith in God are as real to the incumbent as are the facts of science to a Scientist who understands them" (Quote from the Blitz 4-9-1976).

Is not Baba's saying that "Work is highest form of worship" so much like what Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji said and what the present day advocates of our national objective of Garibi Hatao and Twenty Five Points Programme declare? He said so long ago as 25-5-1947 that he was attached to the work of removing "the sufferings of the poor and grant them what they lack".

SATYAMURTI

If we keep in mind the stylish and scholarly English exuberance of Hiren Mukherjee, case-oriented, legal slant of Madhu Limaye, carping and conscience-smiting thrusts of Lohia, machine-gunning of Bhupesh Gupta and querulous attachment to Rules of the House of Kamath and add something more by way of indefinable personality, extremely impatient and highly anti-British; we can have some idea of what Satyamurti used to be in Madras Council upto 1930 and in Central Legislative Assembly between 1935-39.

The Executive Council of the Viceroy hoped against hope that their favourite Ramaswamy Mudaliar, the silver-togued and eloquent Justice Party Leader who had been successfully stalling Satyamurti in Madras Legislative Council and City Corporation, would be able to defeat him. But Satyamurti was elected triumphantly to Central Assembly just as Sami Venkatachalam Chetty was elected, defeating Shanmugham Chetty, the Speaker of the Central Assembly and the darling of the friendly British Press. So they entertained lively fears of that champion Congress debator from Madras.

Satyamurti more than justified their fears. He turned the question hour into a storm period. He set the pace and blazed his questions into the hitherto complacent chambers of the Executive Council. Several of us, the youthful members, enthusiastically followed his example and broadened the successful openings made by him in the enemies' carefully built defences. The present day 'Zero Hour" is not half as terrible though it is too unruly, confusing and damaging for all concerned, as that question hour charged with Satyamurti-Effect; the supplementaries were fussilades of sharp razors, and the battle of wits, arguments and thrusts and counter-thrusts raged on until blood was drawn. Most of the British Executive

Members were exasperated by that Satyamurti Effect. So the British found it necessary to depend more and more on the forensic gifts and rhetorical skills of N. R. Sircar, the Law Minister, Girija Shankar Bajpai and P. R. Rao.

The British hastened to rush Sir James Grigg, once the confidant of Winston Churchill, to their rescue and entrusted him with the then most powerful Finance portfolio. He did his best by his free use of billingstate abusive phrases to counter our Congress thrusts. But Satyamurti's phalanxes retained the upper hand throughout that period of incessant parliamentary warfare, right up to the Congress boycott of the Assembly on the declaration of Second World War.

We turned "Adjournment Motion" into another smarting and powerful parliamentary weapon. To get any such motion admitte'd used to be the test of the legal acumen on the opposition benches. As Sir Abdur Rahim, the Speaker had been a renowned High Court Judge, it can be imagined how extremely difficult it was for the opposition to overcome his none-too-scrupulous obstruction. Yet, with Satyamurti's unflagging and extremely dexterous interpretations, we used to succeed in getting at least one adjournment motion admitted for every ten parliamentary days. Once it was admitted, the two-hour debate it opened was turned into a first-rate war of wits and arguments. Almost always, the Government came out badly battered, with its morale almost shattered, and the House resounding with our shouts, "Resign, Resign, Shame, Shame". True, the Government had its majority and only rarely could the adjournment motion muster a majority whenever Jinnah's group and a few so-called Independents chose to join hands with us. But even when the numbers went against us, we had the satisfaction of offering the most heroic fight, thanks to Satyamurti's presence among us. If the motion dealt with some vital national issue, Bhulabhai used to intervene; if issues of high finances were raised, Pantji or Manu Subedar or Avinashilingam Chetty used to take part; If N.W. Frontier

bombings were under challenge, Dr. Khan Saheb and Asaf Ali would join the debate. Generally, we used to look to Satyamurti to lead our case against the government. And what a treat it was to hear him expose the government's misdemeanours and failures; During the fif'teen minutes allowed to a member during such discussions Satyamurti used to pack in his speech, by his machine-gun speed and mastery of expression, as much as others would take half an hour. By the time he concluded his tirade, the treasury benches including its stoutest champions used to feel themselves thoroughly beaten up, with little spirit left for fight.

Satyamurti was equally effective in committees. I worked with him on the Public Accounts Committee. Sir James Grigg, its Chairman, found in me a formidable taskmaster. But Satyamurti was the master-citic of the Departments and an expert standard-setter for the Finance Ministry. In those days, we could not succeed—as has become possible since Swaraj—in having a non-official chairman and the Finance Member, being the Ex-Officio Chairman, used to go to the rescue of the Department under fire, instead of being an ally of the Auditor-General and the Committee. Inspite of that, B. Das, the veteran, P.A.C. member, Satyamurti and I succeeded in neutralising Sir James Grigg, thanks to Satyamurti's mastery over administrative techniques and his great personality. I learnt so much from his Committee expertise.

He was an equally effective member of Select Committees over bills. His contributions to the Company Law Amendment Bills, Insurance Law Amendment Bill, etc. were acclaimed as highly constructive. He was always clear headed and knew what support Indian interests needed and deserved against competing British intrests. He fought for their protection with all his parliamentary skills. It was said that, though a lawyer, he had never practised. But the way he used his legal acumen to make and unmake or amend laws in the House and Select Com-

mittees proved that he was by far the ablest architect as well as demolisher of Acts of law.

Satyamurti had to incur much unmerited contempt of many sanctimonious believers in Gandhian programme of boycott of legislatures, because of his undisguised passion to fight the British imperialist masters through legislatures. He braved much opposition over decades and repeatedly triumphed. After long painful intervals of Congress boycott of legislatures, he helped Congress to enter legislative chambers and resume the battle against imperialism. In that arena, he certainly outshone every one else.

He was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He however, loved, the good things of life. As the head of the Tamilnad Provincial Congress, his organisational activities were financed by the Congress. Srinivasa Aiyangar, his good friend and president of All India Congress Committee used to stand by him when electioneering demanded funds. But over-orthodox Gandhians, who themselves practised extreme austerity, used to wonder if Satyamurti could observe if he became a minister the high standards of Gandhian austerity. Actually Satyamurti too insisted upon political integrity and financial honesty. When the opportunity came for the Congress to form the ministry in Madras, Satyamurti was not invited to join it. That was indeed a great tragedy, not only for him but also for the nation.

Satyamurti got his chance to display his genius for constructive work and flair for dynamic achievements, when he was elected as the mayor of Madras Corporation even after Congress ministries resigned on the outbreak of war and the British were once again ranged bitterly against Congress. Ordinarily a mayor is only the symbolic chief of Corporation, presiding over its Council. Satyamurti turned it into an all powerful Supremo of the Corporation.

He took the Commissioner, powerful Pulla Reddi, in his stride, mobilised popular support for his constructive and dynamic programmes for "CITY BEAUTIFUL' and transformed the city's civic atmosphere within weeks. He blamed the Government for long neglecting people's demand for another reservoir for drinking water and persuaded it to sanction the Poondi Reservoir, all within a few months. He showed how much of genuine improvement could be made in civic amenities especially in clearing slums, in providing houses and shelters for the under-privileged and the homeless if only Citizen's active participation and administration's public spirit could be mobilised behind popular schemes. All of us, who were then in jails, began to wonder how much more could have been achieved by him, if only he had been chosen by Rajaji as a member of his Cabinet. Indeed, the present-day Cabinet ministers at the Centre and in the States have much to learn from those achievements of Satyamurti.

Satyamurti was fond of fine arts. He was a great lover of music. He did much to encourage votaries of Karnatak music. He was also religious minded but too orthodox. It might have been due to his misplaced faith in Sanatanism and his unwise passion for Mandarins and also his reaction to anti-Congress politics of Justice Party and its non-Brahmin movements, that he could not rise above south Indian Brahmin's allergy to democratisation of Hinduism and self-respect movement of non-Brahmins.

He was the favourite of almost all the highly educated mandarin-type intellectuals thanks to his incomparable mastery of Parliamentarianism and ceaseless struggle for national freedom. So, he was always being elected to legislatures by heavy majorities from the graduates constituency. As irony of fates would have it, just when he was expecting to be nominated by Congress as its candidate for Madras Assembly from the graduates constituency, it was offered at the last moment to his senior in Congress heirarchy, Rajaji, who had been boycot-

ting legislatures. Thus Satyamurti lost his chance of joining the first Congress Madras Cabinet.

He was a handsome man of medium height, fair in colour, and cheerful and smiling, when not debating. Once on his feet in the Assembly, he stood erect, hurled his challenges in a manner befitting a warrior, gave no quarter to the enemy and spoke, as if he feared no answering report. His voice was strong and his whole bearing was evocative of admiration. With his pan-coloured lips, his noticeable sandal-tilak and his upper cloth decorating his chest, he made a fine picture, pleasantly solid on his feet. Satyamurti was bold and unsparing in his fights within Congress against its supreme gods. Many a time he joined issues with Rajaji, Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel. He could be uncharitable too, as when he asked Gandhiji to retire to the Himalayas if he could not reconcile himself to the legislative arena and would like the country to confine itself for so long to khaddar and other constructive work alone. So when the time came for ministry-making, not one of the Congress gods championed the national need for his services as a minister.

He was ailing when the British again took him into detention in 1942 during the Quit India movement. By the time he was taken to Nagpur, paralytic stroke began to disable him. He was rushed by car over the whole distance to Amraoti and confined in that jail. He was subjected to cruel negligence regarding medical care. So his condition grew worse over the months. When at long last he was transferred to Madras and rushed to General Hospital, he was sinking. Soon after, he breathed his last, long before he reached Shasti-Abdi-Purti (60 years of age). Thus passed away the greatest parliamentarian of India, the indomitable tribune of freedom loving people.

DOCTOR SATYANARAYANA, C.

To be a Poet, a Painter, a Sculptor, a Dancer and a Doctor is a formidable combination of talents in these days of specialisation. To be also a lover of poetry, music, books and beauty is a rare gift, possessed by few. To grow into a good family man and to gain and give friendship to as many good men excelling in each of these directions is an extraordinary good fortune. All this and much more is possessed by good fortune and self-effort by Doctor Chitturi Satyanarayana, an Internationally known Ear, Nose and Throat Surgeon.

Dr. Satyanarayana has made great name in the world of medicine, especially in practising and expounding newer techniques in surgery. He was honoured by more than a dozen International Medical Societies throughout the world — particularly USA, UK, France and Netherlands, by conferring fellowships upon him, where he demonstrated his special work. A merit certificate was awarded to him at the 8th International E.N.T. Congress in Japan.

Dr. Satyanarayana was the founder editor of the only Indian E.N.T. Journal for over a decade.

Satyanarayana's services on the designing and manufacture of medical instruments were appreciated by the Central Governments' Committee, managing the Public Enterprise, specialising in their production, because he is as good in that "Mother Industrial Instrumental side" also. It was my privilege to have been instrumental in enabling Government to draw upon his services in this direction.

He has contributed learned chapters to the British Clinical Surgery and other well known Medical Journals both abroad and India. He was invited and honoured by many International Conferences specialising in his special branches of medical studies.

When he exponded the code of ethics that medical men should observe, in the light of the teachings of Charaka and Susruta the ancient Indian Medical Scientists, the Tokyo Conference expressed its great appreciation of Indian cultural heritage. Although he was the Director of E.N.T. Institute in Madras General Hospital, the governmental Institution in India he was requested to be its Superintendent simultaneously.

Expert as he is in the E.N.T. section, his knowledge of general medicine is so upto-date and reliable that a select few friends of his depend upon him for guidance and personal service. It is well-known how Rajaji, who was a host in himself even on such scientific matters used to revel in discussing with Satyanarayana on questions of general medicine and depended so much on his advice and service for himself. When he ventured upon his world tour in 1962, he requested Dr. Satyanarayana to be his general physician and sole care-taker of his precious health. Those few of us, of whom he is so fond, depend upon his know-how and good knowledge and he is reliable as the doctor of the Dhanwantari style.

Satyanarayana the poet, has written a few deservedly famous Prose-Poetic songs in Telugu. The best of them was produced, as one act play, on the Radio and published in Telugu and Tamil, called Jeevita Madhurima or the beauty of life and love. In it, as a youthful poet that he was at the time of composing it, he expounded the paths of people's sufferings, the depth of feeling of two lovers, who though they were immersed in their mutual love, could not find satisfaction in just their passion-filled love and so began to search the answers for their devine discontent. In the end, the lover gave the answer to the query of his beloved, that perfect satisfaction and heavenly consummation for their love could be found only in serving humanity. To that, the love-lorn girl puts the silver-lining of Buddha's non-violent transformation of society along Gandhi's Satyagrahic erosion of inequalities

and injustices. It was my privilege to write an introduction to this poem of beauty and humanism.

Satyanarayana has a natural gift for making and keeping friends. By his enchanted association with the elder Andhra Statesman Unnava Lakshminarayana, Barrister and satyagrahi hailing from Guntur and well-known Congress leader, Satyanarayana at an young age enriched himself of the Indian tradition. He admired him as a good and great friend, poet and philosopher and scholar and sage, in the best trad itions of India's saints. Lakshminarayana was more than thrice as old as Satyanarayana when he first met him. Yet he was able to treat Satyanarayana both as a friend and chela. He was already a Yogic Sadhak and an inspired poet in the philosophic love and practices of Vaishnavite Bhaktas and Saivite sanyasins. He guided Satyanarayana through the intricate intellectual ways of gaining the inner meanings of India's scriptural sayings. Thus Lakshminaryana paved the way for his Chela's inspiration for his spiritual aspiration. Satyanarayana has ever since been so grateful, with all his filial affection, to his elder brother-cum-philosopher, Lakshminarayana.

In his search for philosophical enlightenment, his wife Smt. Lakshmideyi has been helping him with her intuitive understanding. They both have thus become competent to comprehend Aurabindo's teachings and the philosophic insights of Poet Dhurjati as embodied in his poesy in praise of Kalahasti's Shivjee.

They are fond of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. He obtained the blessings of Swami Sivananda as well as Mahesh Yogi and obtained insight into the former's Bhajan and the latter's transcendental meditation, as excellent therapy for present day psychic needs of people. The late Dr. Amaseur of Bombay, as an E.N.T. expert became a Sadhu and left his precious records with Satyanarayana because of his admiration for him.

Just as Satyanarayana attained his opportunity to serve our country and people, by offering satyagraha and risking every thing during terrorist phase of our revolution in the thirties, so also did destiny favour him with the equally great opportunity of serving Rajaji, one of the greatest statesmen of this age, when he went to Rome, Paris, London, Washington.

Pujya Rajaji, the former Head of the State of Indian Republic, when he was over 85 years of age had to undertake a Gandhian peace mission to President Kennedy with the support of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Rajaji requested the Doctor to accompany him. Satyanarayana undertook that onerous though important and patriotic mission.

It was as harsh and hard a job as it could be a highly honourable opportunity. How risky it could be to look after that frail, folding, golden statesman was indicated by President Kennedy's quiet exhortation to the doctor. "You have a highly valuable statesman in your charge. Look after him well. I wish you success".

Satyanarayana had to be on the alert day and night while Rajaji slept in planes or in rooms and during prolonged discussions with the much younger and more vigorous statesmen from Pope John to Premier MacMillan, President Kennedy, the Russian Ambassador Gromyco and the French Foreign Minister. He had to watch the food given and used by Rajaji and ensure that his energy was maintained; time for rest and sleep were provided and strength for other activities ensured.

He did all that a mother had to do and more. No wonder he could have so little time for his own minimum creature comforts and bear all the inconveniences that inevitably fall to the lot of the youngest member of such high-powered mission. It was indeed a Yogic burden.

When atlast Rajaji returned to India in full health and good cheer, those of us among Satyanarayana's friends

who cared for both of them felt extremely happy that the saintly statesman and his doctor have both triumphed over their challenges to their respective personalities and missions.

And what an angelic reward was conferred by kind fates to our friend, Dr. Satyanarayana. To have been present during the conference between Rajaji and the Pope in Rome, with French statesmen, with Gromyco the Russian diplomat, with British Premier MacMillian and Labour statesmen in London, U.S. President Kennedy was itself a valuable experience. To have followed with his high sense of appreciation of the mission on behalf of all the un-involved humanity of non-Nuclear Powers was an opportunity which is rare for any statesman and rarer for a doctor. He was privileged to hear Rajaji expounding the case of the un-involved nations to be allowed to live peaceful life. He heard Rajaji's warning that the power to hurl death with the Nuclear Powers' unquenchable fire and capacity for self-multiplication was an immensely more cruel and unprovoked and un-merited butchery than what had been experienced by the world at the hands of Genghis Khan, Timur, Cortez, or the British, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Japanese imperialists.

How he must have been excited when Rajaji pleaded, in the name of humanity and progressive civilisations of all climes and ages, that the generations to come, that is, the embryo of unborn humanity ought not be cursed and infected by the fall-outs of the atomic and nuclear explosions. What must have been his exhilaration to witness the humane reactions of those Western statesmen, with all their excruciating personal and national experiences of the Second World War's horrors. All that and much more was the priceless treasure of emotional involvement and education gained by Satyanarayana during those prolonged weeks of intense intellectual defensive war of humanity as personified in Rajaji and other statesmen R. R. Diwakar, B. Shivarao of the Gandhi Peace Mis-

sion against the contingent risk of nuclear explosions and thunderous evil weapons of death.

He came into our family circle in 1931, when he was a handsome and spirited young student, with participation in satyagraha as his certificate and his songs and poems, as his rare qualifications for higher patriotic services. He used to visit our home in Nidubrolu with his translations of nationalist poems and plays of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and some of his own writings. He was already a full-blown patriot, with dynamic qualities of leadership. Ever since he and his devoted wife have been our family friends and kept faith with us, despite our various painful political fortunes and travails.

His home and its table in Madras have been placed at our disposal with so much love. We are always welcomed as affectionately as Unnava Lakshminarayana was honoured in their Madras home. We both enjoyed the love of Rajaji. He treated Rajaji as his personal Daivam and served him as if he were his eldest son. And Rajaji hailed him, with a sense of satisfaction and gratitude as "my god on earth" because he felt as if he was able to live in good cheer without pains with Satyanarayana's services and love.

He is a connoiseur of both painting and sculpture as well as books. I find his library full of the latest books on history, philosophy, politics and Telugu and English literature. He is good at editing and managing the printing of books. So he made an entirely new presentable book out of MSS of my Memoirs of Talks with Mahatma Gandhi between 1925-48 and saw it through the press, and christened it 'Bapu Blesses'. His work on it was so skilled that it turned out to be the best edited and printed out of all my books and Bharati Devi derived immense satisfaction from the dedication to her of such a fine work of art, as it were.

SHAIK MD. ABDULLAH

[Shaikh Abdullah of Kashmir was born on 5-12-1905. He was the Prime Minister of Kashmir from 1947 to 1953. He was also the President of the All India States Peoples Congress, in succession to Jawaharlal Nehru. He and the volunteers of the National Conference founded by himself, aided Indian defence forces in driving away the tribal forces, sent to invade Kashmir by Pakistan; was incarcerated several times by the State Government. After being dismissed from power, he was detained repeatedly by Government, on account of differences over the status of Kashmir within India; Ranga pleaded for his release, in co-operation with Mridula Sarabhai, both welcomed Abdul Ghaffar Khan, in 1970 in the Delhi reception. Shaik was a friend of Nehru's family and freedom fighter; he could not shake himself free from political confusion arising out of communalism-cum-nationalism. Shaikh Abdullah has assumed, once again, Chief Ministership of Kashmir in February, 1975 and thus Indiraji has helped to usher in a happier period of better understanding.—Ed.]

Kashmir on the North-West and Nagaland on the North-East have come to assume an importance in Swaraj India out of all proportion to their size or their population. Their peoples, forty to fifty lakhs in Kashmir and four to five lakhs in Nagaland are unique in their tribal pride and ferocious spirit. I doubt if any of us in the then Congress Working Committee, which was advising and co-operating with Jawaharlalji, was fully aware of the possibility of terrible international complications that might arise as a result of our decisions to undertake the political responsibilities of accepting these regions as parts of our country.

Sir Francis Young Husband warned the world that the frontiers of three great powers, Russia, China and India were converging in and around Giljit, a trading centre in Ladakh. But neither Jawaharlal nor Shaik Abdullah, who was then the topmost leader of Kashmir peoples struggle for self-government and freedom nor the Congress Working Committee nor the then Maharajah of

Kashmir took cognisance of the responsibilities that were devolving on India, when we decided to accept the accession of Kashmir. Even after we repelled the raids of North-Western Frontiers tribes, propelled by Pakistan and Shaik Abdullah was firmly installed as the Prime Minister we did not properly assess the Internationally crucial and strategic role that Kashmir might come to assume, thanks to the new ambitions of Pakistan, China and Russia. Jawaharlalji rushed to the United Nations to seek its intervention to prevent Pakistan from abetting the tribal raiders, because of his faith in its willingness and capacity to work for world peace without any regard to power politics in the world. Only then did we realise how much the Anglo-American powers on one side and Russia and her allies on the other were interested in staking their political and strategic claims on the land of the peaceful people among the frontier folk. Soon after, China regained her suzereignty over her long- neglected Sinkiang and asserted her sovereignty over Tibet, thanks to India's ignorance of their logistic and strategic importance for herself.

America began to moot her rival moves to improve her foothold in Pakistan's frontiers Pakhtoonistan, under the belly of Soviet Russia's South-Asian Tazikistan. So Shaik Abdullah was approached through Stevenson with the proposal of making Kashmir, almost independent of both India and Pakistan, with the guarantee of United Nations.

Shaik Abdullah is one of the most prominent among the post-Independence cadre of national leaders. He is in the first list of national workers who suffered most for what they believe to be the national interests. He was one of those few leaders whom Jawaharlal favoured most but who came to suffer most disappointments, because their politics ran contrary to those of Jawaharlalji. It is romantically tragic how Shaik and Mridula Sarabhai, who started their political careers as the favourites of Jawahar, came together into the most devoted comradeship between

themselves and found themselves in painful opposition to Jawaharlal in pursuing their common policy towards Kashmir, which was contrary to the national policy, as implemented by Jawaharlal. Both suffered detention, at the hands of (from) Jawahar's governance because their Kashmir policies came into conflict with the all-India's policy of Jawaharlal and Indian Parliament.

I came into touch with Shaikh Saheb at Udaipur in 1945 where he was called upon by Jawaharlalji to be the President of States Peoples Conference. I was one of those who were then spearheading the States Kisans struggles in Orissa, Hyderabad. Abdullah was then hailed as the most revoluntionary and powerful leader of national stature among the States Peoples. Those of us who were Gandian Socialists were being warned that he had his roots in the communal politics of Kashmir Muslim Conference but we only cared for his dynamism and unrelenting opposition to the Maharajah Pratha in Kashmir and everywhere else and we felt convinced despite recurring complaints about India's tenuous control over Kashmir, as a Constituent State. If it had not been for Shaik Saheb's removal from Prime Ministership through an injudicious procedure and his unfortunate detention for years and subsequent unfortunate turn in Kashmir politics. Abdullah would certain have been invited either into the national Cabinet or into the Rashtrapati Bhavan itself; Fates have willed it that Jawaharlal, Shaik, Mridula and others should suffer terrible anguish by finding themselves in opposite camps, despite their personal attachments. It is good that at long last efforts are being made by the Indian Prime Minister Indiraji and Shaik Saheb and the Plebiscite Front to achieve a rapproachment — long delayed and much needed as it is — and the return of Abdullah as the Chief of the Kashmir State Ministry.

Kashmir was placed in a special category in the Constitution. Panditji's spontaneous and unilateral offer of letting the people of Kashmir to decide their ultimate poli-

tical status, through a plebiscite, after peaceful conditions would come to prevail was taken advantage of by Pakistan, the great power-blocs and United Nations to treat Kashmir as a semi-autonomous State. It was in that background that our Constituent Assembly as well as Parliament continued to yield to the demands made by Abdullah for special reservations for Kashmir. While the people and erstwhile rulers of all other States were hastening to abandon their plans for formulating their separate constitutions, merge their unions into Indian policy. Abdullah's insistence upon the earlier offer of India to reserve for Indian Union only the limited sphere of defence, communications, commerce, etc., on jarred the nerves of Indian people and continued to upset the Constituent Assembly's work in formulating and finalising the Constitution. When he displayed his patriotic secularism by the courageous national turn he gave by guiding the revolutionary forces of Kashmiris into the National Conference and when Jawaharlalji rushed to Kashmir, in order to demonstrate India's comradeship with the Shaik and defied the ban on his entry and was arrested, all-India hailed Abdullah as one of its new national leaders. When subsequently the Maharajah was obliged to call him to proceed from jail to become the Chief Minister, we in the Constituent Assembly felt highly gratified over the new progressive rush that development gave to States peoples' role in India's Swaraj movement.

We were therefore shocked when Shaik Saheb began to harp upon the special rights and demands of Kashmir people and their communally oriented interest in the politics of the Moslem minority in the rest of India. Shaik's repeated warnings to the Indian people as a whole against forgetting the special needs of Moslems; and to be mindful of their need to retain the loyalty of Moslem majority in Kashmir weakened the hands of all of us who have been consistently devoted to secularism and strengthened the communally-oriented patriots. It was because of these and many such ill-considered and ill-timed political

outbursts and deviations of Shaik, that Indian patriots as well as political workers reconciled themselves, without as much as a nation-wide protest, to his repeated and prolonged periods of cruel detention.

I for one pleaded both privately and publicly when I was within the Congress Party and also when I was one of the leaders of Parliamentary Opposition for his release and a fresh friendly approach to be made to Shaik's politics. Unfortunately he did not think of removing the fears of genuine patriots in and outside Kashmir nor could he recapture his earlier, nobler and more statesmanlike posture of the Indian patriot or the oft-stated loyalty to secularism and Indian citizenship. That weakened us so disappointingly.

All the genuine efforts made by Jawaharlalji, a fortnight before his Swargarohan and the wise advice proferred by Rajaji soon after his release in 1965 from the first of detention only encouraged him to assume the international leadership to play the role of Big Brother-cum-international peace-maker between India and Pakistan. Mistaking Lal Bahadur Shastri's soft-spoken advice for either imbecilic weakness or younger brother's obedient docility, he ventured upon mobilising international opinion in England and West Asia in favour of whatever international status he dreamt of for Kashmir and his political forces. That again led to his second detention and further weakened the well-wishers of Kashmir, like so many of us and the patriotic and devoted publicity that Mridula Sarabhai had been maintaining on his behalf.

We all heaved a sigh of relief when the Shaik was at long last released, we know that he was treated in a generous manner, when in detention and accorded so many more privileges than we had ever been offered during our periods of detention. Certainly meticulous care was taken to ensure his health, contacts with his family and even political friends. Indian Government was more friendly and considerate than he had been towards the late Shyama Prasad Mukherji. Yet, such detention and the later

concession of freedom of movement all over India, except Kashmir, cushioned as it was by princely privileges is horribly cruel and when a great leader was such a detenue, it becomes an aweful punishment to the masses who are devoted to him. So all-India hailed the freedom accorded to him to reach Kashmir and get into free and unfettered contact with his people. Naturally it has taken years for him to rise above the corrosive influence of that bitterness. Slowly but in almost saintly manner, he has made a violent effort to hearken back to his earlier all-India-wide sense of citizenship. It has not been easy for him and his loyal colleagues to get out of their two decades long insistent demand for plebiscite. They deserve the gratitude of all patriots for their success in realising, the painful necessity for recognising the progressive improvements made in Kashmir, as a constituent part of India and the inextricable bonds of friendship and patriotic and full-blooded national integration as our common progressive achievements, as sacred as other heritages of our national history. Thus Shaik Abdullah has succeeded to come home, after two decades of struggle, suffering for himself, sacrifices on the part of his followers. The unmistakable progress achieved by the people of Kashmir during this prolonged period, despite the dreadful and repeated aggressions made by Pakistan and the lessons drawn by the Kashmiri masses from the loss of civic freedoms, growing economic misery and the unrealised hopes of the people of Pakistani-occupied Kashmir must have persuaded the people of Kashmir to accept the latest phase of reconciliation that Abdullah and Indira have so wisely develped, in the interests of the masses of Kashmir as well as the rest of India. Both the Shaik and Kashmir have grown in their age, achieved maturity and statesmanship.

All have suffered from the two decades' long painful debate between Indian Government and this astoundingly popular leader. Twice I have had to argue in private and in public for the release of Abdullah from detention and every time he was released, he had gone on harping upon the need for an unhistorical return of the State to where it had stood in 1953. It has taken him so many years to accept the irreversible achievements and records of two decades of history. If the Kashmir people are still faced with problems, so are the people of the rest of India. All are trying to get out of their common blight of poverty, under the leadership of the same Congress, the daughter of his own beloved comrade, Jawaharlal and with the statesmanship of Indian democracy and its Constitution. So let us hope that Abdullah would now put his shoulder during this second tenure as Chief Minister to the onerous and inspiring task of streamlining the administration, economical and efficient use of public funds and raising the standard of living of the Kashmiri masses. It is also the fond hope of so many of us who have done what all we could to help him to come into his own, that he would be content to leave the settlement of relations between India and Pakistan to the all-India leadership, as a whole, in which he and his colleagues would be having their due and honourable place and role to play.

It augurs well for smoothening relations between the three countries, in this sub-continent that Shaik Abdullah has repeatedly assured the world that Kashmir is an integral part of India and Kashmiris do not welcome any interference from United Nations. Let us hope that the people of Pakistan would heed the appeal of this experienced veteran not to allow their governments to meddle in the affairs of Kashmir but allow Kashmiris to prosper

as patriotic Indians. Both the all-Indian leadership and States leadership all over India should become the wiser after this painfully lacerating experience of Kashmir. The leaders of Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya, etc., in the East and Kashmir, Ladakh and Jammu in the West and the many States all over India would do well to learn from the bitter experience of patriot Shaik Abdullah. And if the leaders of Indian peoples as a whole and Parliament would learn to treat the peoples and the leaders of States and their aspirations for autonomy within the over-all national unity with more than comradeship and inspire genuine sense of filial attachments, then the painful sufferings and heart-rending experiences of our people on the Kashmir front would not have been in vain. The statesmanlike and successful efforts made so patiently by both Indiraji and Shaik Saheb in 1974-75 in overcoming as they had done so many cobwebs of historical misunderstandings would be a happy precedent and object lesson to future leaders of people in achieving harmonious relations between the Centre and States and their peoples.

LAL BAHADUR SASTRI

What did not appear to be likely to most foreign observers was found to be natural and in conformity with our national tradition, when that physically small and parliamentarily non-formidable Lal Bahadur was proposed and elected the successor of Jawaharlal, that "Colossus" among world's statesmen and Indian Pericles among India's leaders. Why ? Because Indians have been nurtured with the Ramayana ideals and practices. Even today we glory in the enthronement of Shri Rama's sandals by his loyal brother Bharata; so unlike the tradition of Ayub Khan and Bhutto: And after all, Lal Bahadur was known to be the trusted colleague and beloved counsellor of Nehru and most Indian politicians and parliamentarians felt reconciled to the loss of their unique leader by choosing this humble but good Gandhian, in his place.

And what were his origins. He hailed from a poor middle class family. He had an unimposing education. He did not lay claim to any outstanding political abilities or ambitions. He was content to remain in the second line of leadership. He rose to be a front rank politician and parliamentarian by his own intrinsic qualities of loyalty, genuine simplicity and devoted service among the ranks, and thus achieved the general approval of all the top level leaders, as a good man and loyal colleague. Once Jawaharlal brought him to Delhi and made it clear how much he trusted him in most matters, especially in the choice of his Cabinet Ministers, etc., Lal Bahadur rose high in the esteem of almost all those who were ambitious and powerful.

So when Jawahar's daughter could not yet be primed up for succession and when the obviously next most powerful claimant, Morarji Desai, was not acceptable to other aggressively ambitious leaders, Lal Bahadur was acclaimed as the natural successor to Nehru. Indians with their

Bharata temper accepted him joyously, small in size and poor though he was.

Political leaders of all parties hailed the election of Lal Bahadur Shastri as the leader of the Ruling Congress Party in Parliament. There were many who would have preferred Morarji Desai, but once the decision was made, they too were reconciled to Lal Bahadurji.

Lal Bahadur grew gradually in political stature. He rose by natural promotions, obtained in the ministerial realm first from Govind Vallabh Pant, the outstanding Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and later from Jawaharlalji himself. His national stature rose phenomenally when he resigned soon after terrible Railway tragedy, thus demonstrating his devotion to public welfare and high-lighting the principle of ministerial responsibility for the general conduct of the employees in his charge. He was thus ever-ready to quit office and discharge party responsibilities with equal earnestness. By being willing to join the Cabinet, without portfolio, at the bidding of the national leader, Lal Bahadur demonstrated his complete devotion to national duties. So, the Parliament learnt to look upon him as not only the most devoted follower of Nehru among Cabinet ministers but also as one who enjoyed complete confidence of Nehru.

He demonstrated his diplomatic skill by quietly softening the feelings of the King of Nepal, and the Prime Minister of Ceylone and thus improving the relations between India and her neighbours—which had remained strangely upset for over a decade.

During those painful five years after attainment of Swaraj, when the political relations between Jawahar, Sardar Patel, Congress President (Kripalani, Tandonji), Govind Vallabh Pant and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai were rather strained, Lal Bahadur proved to be the common friend and confidant and thus became an indispensable counsellor and ever smiling diplomat to keep the politics of the Congress leaders on an even keel.

So when he became the Prime Minister, most political leaders of the Congress found his elevation a logical development and felt that it would be conducive to their party's stability. Once he became the Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur began to rise to the challenges of the times.

When it was discovered how Pakistan was encroaching upon the Rann of Cutch, he did not hesitate to authorise the army to take emergent measures to resist aggression. When it was sensed how Pakistan was ready to violate the International border in the Chumb Valley, with the aim of severing our communications with Kashmir, he allowed Defence Minister, Chavan to take the offensive, and thus pay Pakistan in its own coin. When he thought that Pakistan's move to nestle herself into the bosom of nuclear-powered America should be countered, he did not hesitate to exclaim that India too might not object to claim the protection of Nuclear Umbrella, stretched out by President Lyndon Johnson. Once that psychological phase was over, he hastened to declare that India would protect herself, like all other uncommitted nations, by opposing the spread of nuclear warfare.

True, he was found to be a disappointing figure in the Commonwealth and other spheres of world politics. The leaders of other great countries of the world were short-sighted in their conception of him as that "Little Man". But when once they realised how manfully he rose to the occasion in resisting Pakistan's aggression, mobilised the people by his inspiring and timely call of "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" and won the co-operation of all parties in the Parliament and country through his bon-hommie and comradely consultations, they saw in him a truly great leader.

In parliamentary debates, he was first a friendly speaker expounding the policies of Government, explaining activities of the ministries in his unassuming manner, in simple English words and never attempted to create oratorical or rhetoric effects, as used to be the case with

Jawaharlal. When he was taunted by Lohia and others who had known him for decades as an unsophisticated and non-scholarly political worker, he used to freely admit, disarming all opposition, that he was not a great scholar or a parliamentarian. But whenever it was hinted by Opposition that he was too simple in his dealings with the leaders of other countries, he retorted with some heat, that though he might look simple, he could not be overcome in argument or tactics or in matters of principle.

It was my good fortune to have known him since 1936, when I went to Allahabad to canvass support for my plan for estblishing All India Kisan Congress. He aided my efforts. Later when I had to battle with Dr. Pattabhi's forces in the Andhra Congress, he put in his good word for me. At the crucial time when the question was how to overcome the Communist challenge to capture the Andhra Government, during the 1955 interim-elections, it was Lal Bahadur's conciliatory negotiations which helped Jawaharlal and us to forge the United Congress from out of the Andhra Congress and Krishikar Lok and Praja Party and defeat the Communists. My faith in him largely weighed with me in deciding to rejoin the Congress. I know how much he and Pantji were grieved over Jawaharalal's quarrel with me over the issue of co-operative farming and tried their best to dissuade him not to force the issue. We used to meet frequently in his room in the P.M.'s Conferences with the Leaders of Parties, and also in the lobbies and were in the habit of discussing the points of highest state policies. Never did he make me feel that he was the Prime Minister and I was the Leader of the Opposition and always succeeded in a spontaneous manner to make me feel that I was his most intimate and trusted senior and he was glad to freely share his thoughts with me. Such must have been his treatment of many others in and outside his party; hence his popularity with all parties and elements in the Parliament.

There were many occasions when Lal Bahadur disagreed rather strongly with Jawaharlal over organisatio-

nal matters and choice of colleagues in the Cabinet, Working Committee etc. But he would never press any point once Jawaharlal persisted in his posture or choice. On so many issues he would agree with us but would only offer to plead our views with the leader; and if he did not succeed, he would as sincerely plead with us to be content with Jawahar's decision. Lal Bahadur was indeed a 'Mantri' of the classical-type depicted in the Mahabharat, by Dharmaja and Bhishma. He was supremely loyal to Nehru. He was generally equally loyal to all of us. He believed that national interests would be best served by accepting the decision of the supreme leader and his political career found its culmination by sticking to that guiding principle and practice.

To many of us who have made national reputations as stentorian and dialectical parliamentary champions and who have enjoyed the parliamentary exploits and soul-lifting eloquence of Jawaharlal, Lal Bahadur's parliamentary performances were certainly not attractive. But his transparent sincerety, his alluring simplicity of bearing and his disarming candour reconciled us to him and his capacity to manfully come to grips with economic situation.

It was that Lal Bahadur who went to Tashkent with the good wishes of the whole of India. I for one warned him against that mission, in view of his weak heart and also because of my fear of Pakistan leaders' unscrupulous diplomatic moves. He believed in the righteousness of our cause and in the power of our defence forces. Somehow, the leader, known for his extraordinary humility, suddenly developed over-confidence, possibly because of his faith that God was with him and India.

He asked us to pray for his success and India's cause. We all echoed his prayers. Alas, our prayers did not succeed.

The intransigence of Ayub Khan, diplomatic pressure of the Soviet leaders for an agreement at any cost, and his anxiety to keep the promise to his countrymen not to give up the strategically indispensable positions, regained by our Jawans at a terific cost in lives, all conspired to claim his heart and life. Lal Bahadur lost at the conference table what we had won in war but gained the love and veneration of this country and of the world, through his martyrdom on the altar of peace.

Even today some wonder if he could not have been saved from that heart attack if proper precautionary medical arrangements had been made, befitting his status and his delicate heart-condition. Some other doubts had been raised repeatedly in the Parliament. By hind sight, we now find that the Tashkent Agreement settled nothing, and only encouraged Pakistan to become even more aggressive and found its burial in the holocaust of Bengal engineered by Yahya Khan and Bhutto.

SHIVA RAO B.

[Shiva Rao of Karnataka was born on 26-2-1891 in Mangalore. He graduated from Allahabad; worked for Madras Labour and helped the Whitley Commission on Labour; Special Correspondent of Manchester Guardian and Hindu; represented India at the ILO, UNO; played leading role in Trusteeship Council; helped his brother B. N. Rao in his work for the Constituent Assembly and edited his papers thereon; M.P. (Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha) from 1946 to 1957; his other brother Ramarao was Governor of Reserve Bank; promoted Tourism for India. He died in 1975.—Ed.]

B. Shivarao is one of our patriotic and constructive-minded journalists. He retired as the Special Correspondent of the distinguished daily of Madras with national stature, the Hindu and also the Manchester Guardian which plays the same role in English journalism.

He started his public career as a Congressman, wedded to the national demand for Swaraj. His first leader was Dr. Annie Besant and his first organisational platform was the Home Rule League. He felt drawn into Labour politics through the leadership of Wadia of the Buckingham Labour Union.

He could not join the Non-Co-operation or Satyagraha campaigns because of his temperamental attachments to Srinivasa Sastri, Sapru, Besant cult of politics. He was however keen on constructive aspects of Gandhian politics and so, he busied himself with Swadeshi productions and development of "Buy Indian Goods" centres. He was however convinced of Gandhian demands for complete national freedom. He would have liked the British to agree to our national demand for independence, even if it might take longer than what Congressmen contemplated, to actually implement the demand. Such was the political approach of the Hindu in the thirties and also of the Manchester Guardian and so, they all agreed to co-operate with each

other and thus he came to be deputed by those great dailies to be their politically oriented representative in New Delhi by 1934-35.

I first came across some good friends among the textile workers of Madras, when I was studying labour conditions of that city in 1927-30 and they told me how he served the local textile labour. He gained much knowledge from and contributed his experience to the Whitley Labour Commission by his association with its studies of the conditions, needs, and aspirations of Indian labour of the thirties. He has remained a steady champion of the constructive recommendations made by that Commission especially the need for establishing Tripartite Commissions and Tribunals, Whitley Councils from Work-shop-level on wards, abolition of forced labour and contract labour housing employees participation or control and settlement of labour disputes through conciliation.

When I went to Delhi as Congress MLA in 1935, I was taking active interest in labour and peasant questions and co-operating actively with N.M. Joshi and V.V. Giri, the labour champions and I came into personal contact with shivarao at our meetings with Dr. P. P. Pillai in the Indian branch of the I.L.O. I was struck with the non-sensational non-gossiping but highly patriotic and quietly socialistic approach of Shivarao. So I was drawn to him. There were many occasions when I used to come into conflict with my leader Bhulabhai Desai and I could not just be dittoing the softer co-operative attitudes of Joshi towards government and I used to confide only in Giri and Shivarao for clearing my own doubts and settling the line of attack I had to pursue in Parliament against employers on one side and the Government, their ally on the other.

In course of time, Shivarao came to be so much impressed with my sincere, strong and fearless championship of labour that he likened me to James Maxton, the British Labour Leader of Independent Labour Party. And that proved to be a great encounragement to me and good recommendation with both Bhulabhai and Jawaharlal.

Later Shivarao gained the confidence of British Viceroys, thanks to his staid and statesman-like approaches and of Gandhiji and Jawaharlal, because of his liason with the powerful "Guardian". His close friendship with Sapru and Sastri also added weight to his studies and suggestions. He grew thus to be one of the few powerful journalists who could play the role of honourable 'brokers' without any personal axe to grind. The presence of his great brother Sir B. N. Rao in the highest consultative posts, on the side of the Government also proved a great asset. Shivarao was known to be playing a constructive role on the side of Swaraj. He enjoyed the confidence of both Gandhiji and Jawaharlal.

After Swaraj, he gave up journalism and came into Parliament. He was a fearless, but helpful critic. He concentrated on international issues. He gave sound advice. He was chosen as a delegate to the United Nations. He played a very useful role in the Trusteeship and Non-Self Governing Territorial Councils and strengthened the cause of freedom and self-governance for colonial people. He added India's weight to the world-wide Leninist-Gandhian fight against imperialist regimes and recognising the right of all people for national independence. This new role of his brought much satisfaction to me and my friends of the Pan-African Congress and Fenner Brockway and our various international organisations in London and Paris and made India so popular in all African and Asian countries as the champion of their anti-imperialist struggle.

Shivarao is temperamentally a diplomat, with the capacity for sincere friendship and an understanding heart —so typical of the best men of Karnataka. So he won the confidence of Jawaharlal as well as Sardar, even while retaining love of younger men like me in the Congress Working Committee. Once he quietly observed, after we spent a couple of hours with Jawaharlal at dinner and discussed the strong and weak aspects of the work of so many Congress politicians and Secretaries of Government, "Ranga, you should not forget how strong are the family affiliations and affections of the Nehrus, when you proceed to make such fearless and merciless comments". Shivarao appreciated the risky decision made by Rajaji and myself to leave the Congress, oppose co-operative farming etc. and build up an alternative political leadership. He continued to contribute thoughtful articles to "Swarajya" in support of many of our approaches. But he preferred to maintain his co-operative links with Jawaharlal.

Unfortunately ill-health disabled him to play his active role in public life. His Austrian wife, Kitty looked after him. He has however edited the Constitutional papers of his brother B.N. Rao, one of the great architects, behind the purdah, of our Constitution and has rendered a great service to India's lore on Constitutional issues. He is indeed an ideal jounrnalist-cum-statesman. He remained loyal to these two vehicles of public service, trade unionism and patriotic writing. In neither direction did he plan to make a living. He took to them as effective means, appealing to his heart, to render public service. It is such purposeful public-spirited journalists that Swaraj India needs for atleast two more generations. Ramanand Chatterjee, Khasa Subbarao, G.V. Krupanidhi, K. Punniah, Harniman, Spratts and such others have been his elder compeers and M. Chalapatirao is his junior colleague in this honourable order of journalists with a

mission in life and an inspired pen and scholarly equipment putting their hearts into their thoughts. If only the present-day editors would take a leaf from his rich experience and statesmanlike penmanship, there would be no need for Press Laws.

B. N. Rao, Shivarao's brother had been a High Court Judge. After the Constitution was adopted, he served as the permanent head of Indian delegation to the United Nations. Mrs. Roosevelt said that he came to be depended upon by the UN Assembly for final drafting of many of its resolutions. He was also elected as a Judge of the World Court at The Hague.

Shri Shivarao passed away in 1975 after prolonged illness.

SINGH, CHOWDARY CHARAN

Charan Singh has now (1976) emerged on the national platform as the leader of Bharatiya Lok Dal, after the merger of six or seven big or small parties. For about seven years, he tried, in vain, to achieve this stature through the Bharatiya Kranti Dal. Even the combination of six or seven Chief Ministers of the SVD's abortive anti-Congress period of 1967-70, within the BKD did not help him to reach this stature.

Chowdary Charan Singh was a Congress Minister in U.P. for twelve years during the regime of Pant and Gupta and he made a great name for honesty, efficiency and forthrightness and avoided the pitfalls of faction-wise, caste-wise misuse of power. He proved to be a powerful and impartial administrator; a rare achievent for U.P. Minister.

Peasant India began to cherish high hopes and nurse confidence in him when he made bold to oppose Jawaharlalji's move at the Hyderabad and Nagpur sessions of the AICC to introduce compulsive co-operative farming, through a nation-wide Congress campaign in support of the Governmental programes. Sri C. Subramaniam, even now a Cabinet Minister at the Centre, also opposed it at Hyderabad but resiled from that opposition at Nagpur; not so Charan Singh. He marshalled his opposition in a highly courageous and persuasive manner. But when Jawaharlalji triumphed and to develop co-operative farming became the official policy of the Congress, he chose not to join me, in resigning from the Congress in protest against that anti-peasant policy. He, however, was powerful enough to publish his thesis on "Co-operative Farming X-Rayed" and continue to remain in the U.P. Cabinet and Nehru did not wish to provoke a crisis by asking him to resign. Thus he earned the respect of all of us, who were championing peasants' freedom to hold

on to their self-employment and small holdings and retain his key position in Congress Establishment even while keeping peace with his ministerial conscience. This multi-faceted vivacious political frontage has characterised his later political activities, during the 1967-70 confusing political interlude in Indian democracy.

Charan Singh is a born peasant of the traditionally land-loving Jats who are at once kisans and soldiers for ages. He achieved a powerful alliance with the other equally brave and numerous kisan tribe of Yadavs through inter-caste marriage. This kisan base has helped him to remain 100% kisan minded and class conscious, which distinguishes him from the scores of ministers who, though, hailing from kisan roots, have found it possible to make their peace with anti-kisan, pro-urban and name-sake cosmopolitan attitude and policies of their Cabinets. It stands to the credit of Charan Singh that he has viewed political issues that faced the State Governments mostly from the peasants point of view and generally from the rural angle, because he is convinced Indian economy is predominantly agricultural and India's employment is geared to self-employment, whether in agriculture or arts and crafts or industrial infrastructure.

When I began to defy the Nagpur Congress decision in favour of co-operative farming Charan Singh appreciated my moves. But when I proposed that we should leave the Congress, in a concerted manner, he would not agree and so he could not help me in making the Swatantra Party less dependent upon the free-enterprise posteurs. When I suggested to him, a decade later, that he should merge the BKD into the Swatantra Party and agree to be its President in my place and thus ensure the continuation of its kisan moorings he feared that the free-enterprise a facet of the party might weaken us all. But when he realised by 1972 the failure of his B.K.D. to grow into a national platform and found it necessary to combine with Swatantra and other

groups, he made his peace with much of the thesis of free-enterprise of Swatantra friends of the cities. His latest offer to Marxist Communists and others to drop such aspects of the BLD visage as is oriental to free-enterprise section in order to make it possible for them also to co-operate with BLD and thus develop a united front behind Jayaprakash Narayan is indicative of his political resilience. But how one wishes that he could have helped me a decade earlier to persuade the Bombay friends of the Swatantra to reconcile themselves to what they are now able to accept, by joining forces with me in 1968-69 when Rajaji and myself were pleading for his comradeship on the same platform.

Charan Singh is also keen on a non-exploitative, socialist society based on peasant and artisan economy and self-employment, buttressed by service co-operatives and co-operative agro-industrial environment. It is wrong to say that he is for only the rich peasants. Since he has accepted the principle of ceilings on both agricultural holdings and non-agricultural properties as he is not at all in favour of monopolists in any sphere or of exploitative economy, he is as good a Socialist, with a high accent on agriculture as any genuine, left or centre Congressman. If he succeeds in orienting the BLD towards agrarian socialism, thanks to the pressures from JP's movement, he can play a progressive role in Indian politics, provided he grows to be a consensus minded political leader.

Charan Singh is not a leader of the masses. He has not led any mass-wise marches, satyagraha campaigns. Yet he has gained wide popularity and solid following among the U.P. kisans, especially of the western districts. So, he has succeeded, in gaining electoral triumphs in a uniform manner during these post-Swaraj years. Though Delhi satraps have tried their best, with the use of money, press and official propaganda and power, they have failed to defeat him in any of the electoral contests as they had failed to contain him.

Charan Singh is indeed a patriot and freedom fighter, worthy of Jats, Ahirs and Gurzhars who so enthusiastically support him. He has his firm bases of mass support in Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan also. He is keen on strong defence forces for India and giving priority for the protection of Indian borders on Pakistan and China. He is opposed to any move which is calculated to make India a pawn in the politics of either USSR or China or USA. This aspect of his defence and foreign policies pleases the martial-minded North-West States of India.

Charan Singh is not an inveterate enemy of either Congress or Indira, as is evidenced by his negotiations with Congress as well as Indira in 1969 and 1970. He is capable of adjusting his politics to the convenience of necessity of political developments, as obvious when he supported Shri Giri in 1969 election. He is moving towards Jayaprakash Narayan to dislodge Congress and Indira from what they term to be totalitarian and amoral political power. Whatever might be the future developments in his politics, it can be said definitely that he would alaways keep national interests and peasants — small as well as middling—uppermost in his mind and heart.

Charan Singh proved as Chief Minister to be too independent a politician, without the ability to work in harmony and in a spirit of compromise with his colleagues. Twice he failed to keep peace among his coalitionists during the SVD phase of U.P. ministerialism. He is not a Communist but he allowed their partnership in his Coalition Ministry. He is allergic to Jan Sangh's social policies and religious approach but he welcomed their cooperation with his SVD Ministry. He could not help his coalitionist partners to toe the line with his leadership nor could he remain patient with the partisan excesses of his partners. His faith in his ability to lead is so great and his passion for power to protect and promote the interests of peasants is so strong that he did not mind making one too many experiments with his Chief Ministership. All

these permutations have only weakened the solid reputation he achieved as the incorruptible, honest and competent minister during Congress regimes. Charan Singh has yet to master the arts of leadership over social and political elements that are a cross-section of the nation. He drove a hard bargain with Swatantra and other parties in forging the Bharatiya Lok Dal, that is, BLD before he agreed to give up the BKD. He failed to persuade the Jan Sangh to join the BLD, because of his previous unhappy dealings with them as the Chief Minister of the SVD Cabinet. In the end, he joined hands with the equally uncompromising and self-righteous Morarji Desai in calling upon the people, all over India, to rise in revolt against Indira's leadership and upset her ship of state. Thus he has found a finale for this side of Parliamentary career by provoking Government of India and Parliament to declare, a "state of Emergency". Would his bitter and varied experiences help him to concentrate more on his genuine and life-long love of peasants and their self-employment and agree to consolidate all the truly democratic elements and achieve a united democratic platform ? It would be good if he would win the support of all democratic elements for peasants, below the ceiling levels and their self-employment.

SINGH, JAIPAL

Jaipal Singh came to a conference held in my residence in New Delhi in 1947 of such of the Members of the Constituent Assembly — as were interested in the welfare of what were then known as the Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas of our country. Babu Rajendra Prasad presided over it. It was a pleasant surprise for me to meet him, after an interval of more than two decades since we left Oxford University. During that long interval, he had such varied experiences; as a Professor in an African college, an MLC in Bihar, a minister in Bikaner, a member of the Round Table Conference and a prominent anti-Congress leader in Bihar and a powerful leader of the tribal peoples of Bihar (Chota-Nagpur) — Orissa. He said that he chose to attend that conference, because I was one of the convenors and he had known about the work I was doing since 1936 for the tribal people, though he was suspicious of the motives of his fellow Bihari members regarding their participation. My fellow convenor, Ramanarayan Singh, and he hailed from Ramgarh, he an Adivasi, and the other a non-adivasi settler.

Jaipal Singh was a full-fledged Oxonion, glorying in hockey, aristocratic English accent, and the Indian glow of the White Nabob. He was brought up by Missionary well-wishers of tribal people. When he took to politics he did not turn against British rulers as his ancestors had done so repeatedly in the nineteenth century nor did he favour them. But like his ancestors he hated the non-tribal settlers who lent money at usurous rates of interest and deprived tribal people of their land. With his Oxford veneer it was natural for him to cherish high ambitions but soon found in non-tribal politicians the main hurdle in the progress of tribals. So he played the role of a social revoluntionary, striving for social upliftment and for freedom from the domination of Hindu priestly

classes. He had one more special love; that is, his resolve to free the tribal people from the exploitation of money-lending, land-grabbing Hindu settlers in the Adivasi lands who also dominated social economy and government services.

That conference proved to be an eye-opener to Jaipal, because, contrary to his fears, it resolved to recommend to the Constituent Assembly and the new National Government the need for suitable provisions in the Constitution, which was then on the anvil, for adequate protection for economic rights as well as social heritage of the tribal people, even while releasing their areas from out of their cocoons of exclusion from political rights and status of the surrounding developed areas. He was happy that Rajendra Prasad, the chief of Bihar Congressmen who led the settlers, was liberal enough to agree with the thesis of the conference that tribal people have to be afforded special protection from the domination of the settlers.

He joined my other colleague in the movement for the regeneration of tribal people. P. Kodanda Ramaiah, in the Special Sub-Committee constituted by the Constituent Assembly to ascertain the wishes and needs of the peoples of the tribal areas all over India and that Committee's report was largely depended upon by the Assembly in drafting the special chapter of the Constitution, dealing with tribal areas and peoples. Jaipal's contribution to that constructive aspect of the Constitution was indeed quite significant. Fortunately for us, both Jawaharlal and Rajendra Prasad evinced as much interest in the political aspects of their needs as Thakkar Bapa in their social needs for the next two decades and Jaipal was able to shed his fears of Congressmen.

For years, he was the most prominent Parliamentary representative of the tribal people of north India. He played an important role in the making or breaking of post-Swaraj ministries in Bihar and Orissa. Unfortunately his followers and he did not succeed in concentrating on the social and economic development of the tribal

masses, to the exclusion of party politics and so, their achievements fell short of the demands of the poor among tribals. Nevertheless, tribal MLAs became vital groups in Bihar and Orissa, and their ministers gained political prominence in those States. And if today the tribal people of these States are emancipating themselves from the age-long social depression and economic slavery, Jaipal's contribution to it is not insignificant.

The Oxford-trained and sensitively aggressive Jaipal Singh used to nurse strong feelings for freedom. So he used to react as intolerantly as Nagas to any show of pomposity, and superiority complex emanating from among the settlers and non-tribal people. His heart went out for all tribal people, wherever they might be. So he used to offer his comradeship to the fighters for freedom in African tribal reserves, Indian hills and dales.

Jaipal Singh felt, quite rightly, that only through their separate administrations could tribal areas be better developed in schools, roads, bridges, hospitals, regulated markets, co-operatives, cottage and medium-scale industries and Adibasis could be protected from exploitation of merchants, money-lenders, industrialists, and non-tribal servicemen. As the proud inheritor of the tribal traditions, he favoured separate political identity for his Adibasis. He organised the Jharkhand Party and All India Adibasi Mahasabha. He worked for decades for separate states for the tribal peoples. He demanded that Chota Nagpur, Jeypore, Koraput in Orissa and tribal hill areas in Assam should be formed into separate states.

The tribal people of Assam were more fortunate in gaining a broad-based leadership from amongst the educated Christian tribals. They pursued the Gandhian technique of alternately co-operating and non-co-operating with the local Congress leaders. They struggled wisely for two decades till the emergence of Meghalaya, Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal States became possible.

The leaders of Nagaland found in him, a special champion of their fight for freedom. Yet when practical

political realities made it incumbent for Naga people to be content with a separate State of Nagaland with a relatively high quantum of financial and other Central assistance, Jaipal joined the rest of us, friends of tribal people, in advising the Naga people to embrace Indian citizenship and agree to treat India as also their national home.

When eventually Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal and Nagaland in Assam emerged as separate State entities, he was happy that a part of his dream had become a reality. But he died a disappointed man when his own homeland of Chota Nagpur could not achieve a separate statehood.

He took pleasure in sports and played for India, as the captain of her national hockey team in international tests. He looked every inch a tribal chief, with all the polish and stature of both occidental and oriental nobles. I used to wonder what a front rank leader he would have made in Post-Swaraj decades if only he had given up his costly habits and learnt to live in Gandhian austerity. On the contrary, he used to be unhappy over my fancy for the Gandhian way of life. Yet, we continued to enjoy close comradeship in our common fight for protection from Sahukars and steel magnates and for political and social advancement of tribal people.

He grew to be the doyen of the Lok Sabha (1952-67). All parties appreciated his high sense of humour and his eloquent espousal of the cause of the poor people. His tirades against proud and powerful ministers and his furies over the failure of Government, used to be so stimulating that even his victims on the Treasury Benches used to enjoy his cultivated accents of rhetoric. He was the favourite of all lovers of good jokes and high humour and his presence enlivened the Parliamentary lobbies.

Jaipal Singh was indeed a unique specimen of independent-minded, cultured and noble tribal leaders.

SRI PRAKASA

The whole of India is the loser by the death of Sri Prakasaji in 1971. His family, like that of Nehrus, Malaviyas, Saprus has served our freedom's cause since the beginning of this century. Both Bhagwan Das, his father and Sri Prakasa have enriched Indian culture by their exemplary family life, and inspiring writings in Hindi and English. It was my privilege to be the colleague of both father and son in the Central Assembly when Bhagwan Das used to exhort us to live upto Indian Dharma, and Sri Prakasa reminded us of our political duties in our struggle for freedom. He enjoyed the friendship of so many of our elders, including Bapu, Annie Besant, Malaviya, Tandonji, Motilalji, Rajenbabu, Jawaharlalji, Sardarji, Rajaji and Munshiji.

Sri Prakasa made a constructive contribution to democracy in the South when he boldly called upon Rajaji to become the Chief Minister of Madras and thus he helped the Congress to win the support of our Peasants' Party and achieve majority, preventing thereby the advent of Communist dominated SVD Ministry.

He believed in Fundamental Rights of people and guided, as the General Secretary of the Congress in 1931 in formulating the Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Sri Prakasa was unique among our Congressmen for his high sense of humour and freedom from partisan rancour. Whenever the U.P. Congressmen were unable to reach any agreement among themselves they used to turn to him to be their common friend, and that is how, he came to be chosen as the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Lucknow session of the Congress in 1936.

He was one of the founders of "Kashi Vidyapith" and co-operated with Shiva Prasad Gupta and Acharya Narendra Deva in its development.

Being a good friend of Jawaharlal from their Cambridge days, he was inclined to favour Jawaharlalji's political attachments. So he joined the Congress Socialists, along with Kasi Vidyapith friend Sampurnanand. But so soon as they found it politically advisable in their State, they hastened to stand as candidates on behalf of the Congress for Central Assembly. Thus Sri Prakasa became an MLA of the Central Legislative Assembly at the same time as myself. He did not incur the displeasure of Jawaharlal for thus going into the Assembly despite his opposition to such policy of Council entry.

Ministerial, gubernatorial positions sought after him and like the good samaritan he found it easy to serve as a Central Cabinet Minister and Governor of Madras, Assam and Bombay and served the Nehru regime with integrity and ability. He never lost his love and admiration for public workers like me who chose not to join such positions or to rush into the ministerial brigade. He pressed me hard to agree to succeed him as the High Commissioner for Pakistan. He assured me that both Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan who had been by colleagues in Central Assembly were also keen about me. So both Jawaharlal and himself desired me to go to Karachi. But when I declined to leave Parliament and national politics, he was not too much displeased with me and observed to Jawaharlal "So, you see Jawahar he is afraid you may neglect his peasants in his absence".

He had a great gift for making and keeping friends. He could be very proud of his friends and considered whatever honours came their way as his own. I was pleasantly surprised when he showed me one day his pad of intimate papers and showed me the press cutting from Anand Bazaar Patrika of Calcutta which published a large photo of peasants gathering in Shraddhanand Park with myself as Chairman and Subash Babu as the special speaker with some such caption as "Bengal Peasants welcome Ranga and Subash".

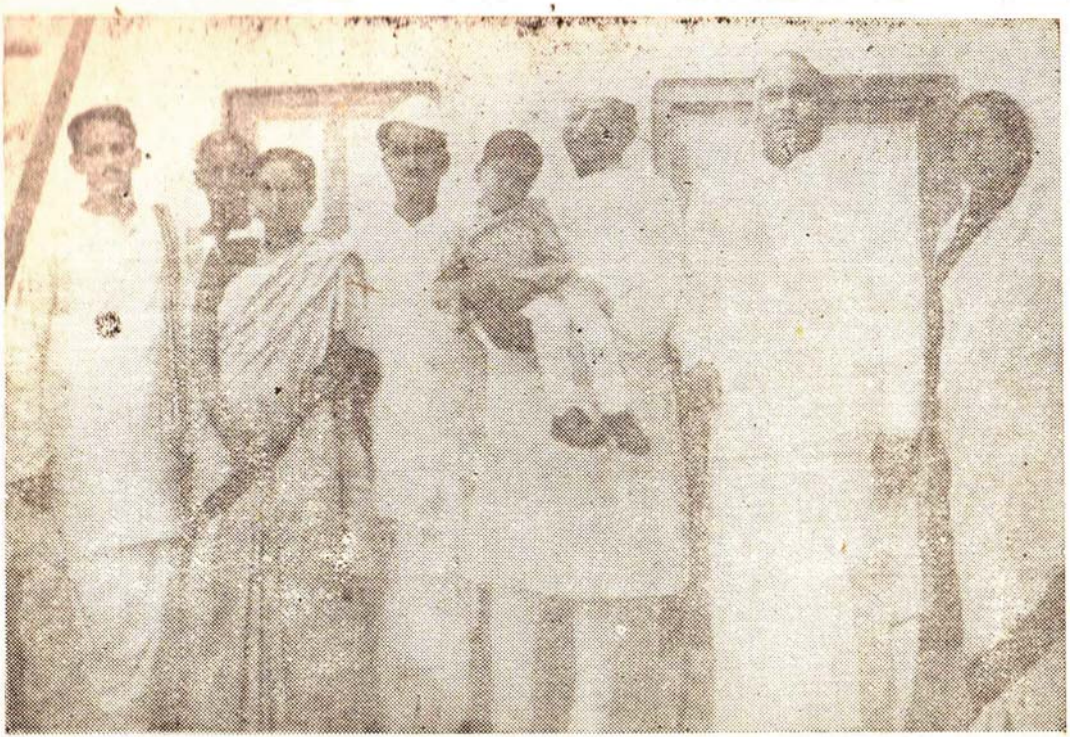
When he was the Governor of Madras, he liked my decision to support Rajaji in Madras in 1952 and Prakasam for Chief Ministership in 1953 but felt deeply hurt because I would not accept his advice to leave Parliament and come as Deputy Chief Minister in State politics. Nevertheless we continued to be great friends.

When he was a Cabinet Minister for Irrigation in the Central Cabinet, he was asked for his qualifications for his portfolio. By way of educating the questioner that Cabinet posts are not to be necessarily given appropriately to the most technically qualified persons, he quoted the British experience that Goschen of England had no notion of the oceans, when he was appointed the First Lord of Admirality. Such was his sense of humour.

He would never allow knowingly any injustice done to anyone. I had once warned him against the Machinations of Tamil political-cum-engineering experts to prevent the development of the Nandikonda-Nagarjuna irrigation project on the Krishna river, in order to diverting Krishna waters to Madras city by appointing a tribunal with Tamil engineer and without any Andhra engineer and so he appointed Khosla Commission without any South Indian engineer and it recommended in favour of only the development of the great multi-purpose project, which has come to be known as Nagarjuna Sagar Project.

He understood how strongly Andhras were feeling for separation. He felt so unhappy over Sri Potti Sreeramulu's fast for separation of Andhra and was chagrined because his good friend Rajaji could not agree to the division of Madras city also. When the Andhra State materialised, he was quite happy that grand old Andhra our mutual friend Sri Prakasam was being installed again as Chief Minister.

He was good enough to lay the foundation stones, when he was Governor, for the buildings of P.B. Naidu College, Nidubrolu and P. Venkaiah High School, Govada, in



Rangaji with Sri Prakasa, V.S. Krishna, Bharati Devi, G.L Narayana, G.V.Rao and Susila Devi

Rangaji beeing honoured at the world Telugu Conference in Hyderabad 12-4-1975 by Sri B. D. Jatti, Vice-President, while Chief Minister J. Vengal Rao and Education Minister M. V. Krishna Rao look on

which I was specially interested because the former was founded by a nephew and the latter by an uncle. He performed Aksharabhyas of one of our grandsons, Chy. Kamalendra Kumar. In this way, he wove a thick network of sweet and unforgettable personal relations with many public workers all over India.

He studied as Governor of Assam the geo-political set-up of Assam. He farsightedly suggested rapid development of communications, roads, bridges in the tribal areas. He was afraid that unless Assamese were liberal enough to appreciate the sentimental and semi-nationalistic demands of the tribal peoples, there might be great trouble in store. Later events have more than justified his readings and warnings.

He believed in the Asian cult of Pitru Devo Bhava. How his devotion to the venerable parents and his admiration for his noble father Dr. Bhagwan Das are exemplary can be understood by reading his biography of his father. He was an affectionate family man but unlike his father he did not enjoy much happiness from his own family.

Sri Prakasa has contributed, during his six years of life after retirement, many constructive suggestions for the improvement of our democracy and planning for social welfare. He made no secret of his unhappiness over Congressmen's obsession with power and pelf.

Sri Prakasa has endeared himself to political and social workers of the past 50 years by his rare gifts of humour and faith in India's capacity to live up to the ideals of Dharma.

VENKATA SUBBAIAH, GORREPATI

(KISAN LEADER)

Bharati Devi woke me up, one night in our Nidubrolu home, as I was speaking in my sleep. She said, "How could you have any peace of mind if you go on talking to yourself even in sleep about kisan conferences ? When did you meet last Gorrepati Venkata Subbaiah that you should be talking about him and kisan conference in Divi Seema". As I woke up fully and began to laugh, there were knocks on our door. She went through that big hall and opened the door, held up the Dietz kerosene lamp to see who was there. To her utter amazement, there was the very same Gorrepati, smiling and offering salutations. We spent the next five minutes in wondering over that extraordinary coincidence. That was the third meeting we had with him. With that happy meeting our comradeship commenced and continued upto the day of his Swargarohan in 1970 for full forty years, comradeship in the service of our nation and kisan, mazdoor masses.

He rose to be the President of the Andhra Kisan Sammelan in 1943 and came to be popularly known as Kisan Gorrepati, and was beloved of peasants all over Andhra. He led their campaigns against the war-time controls, post-Swaraj quota permit licence raj and also against the periodical enhancements of land revenue. He was the hero of many a kisan satyagraha campaign with the support of Sardar Latchanna. He aided me during my prolonged talks with Mahatma Gandhi in 1944-45 and he conveyed to kisans of India Gandhiji's message in favour of the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj. He helped us in propagating that ideal during the 1952, 1953 and 1957 general elections in the name of the Krishikar Lok Party. He was in the forefront in our fights for protecting the delta ryots from floods and inundation caused by Kolleru,

Budameru lakes. He worked for long, in co-operation with other kisan leaders, Nagineni Venkaiah, V. S. R. K. Prasad, MLA and succeeded in getting Government to undertake the development of the Tungabhadra and Nagarjuna Sagar projects. He fought for the extension of irrigation belts and also for the development of Krishna and Godavari barrages. He worked hard for ensuring Government's protective action to rebuild the barrages on Krishna and Godavari rivers. He achieved land revenue remissions whenever crops failed. He co-operated with me and Smt. Brarati Devi in organising famine and cyclone relief when those calamities overtook our rural folk during the past twenty years.

He developed the Andhra Unit of the Rural Peoples Federation which stood for parity between rural and urban people in regard to civic amenities and economic opportunities and also for parity in prices of agricultural and consumers' goods. He wanted minimum prices based on minimum wages. He was shocked at the sufferings of rural labour caused by the inexplicably high prices charged by the Food Corporation for the rice supplied through so-called Fair Price Shops, whereas uneconomically low prices are paid to peasants for the paddy procured through compulsion from the villages. He insisted that adequate stocks of such procured paddy and rice should be kept in the villages and supplied to local workers on at least no-profit-no-loss basis, if not at lower prices. He organised in many a village such voluntary distribution of foodgrains by peasants to agricultural workers, with the co-operation of such peasant leaders as Messrs. Y. Venkatrao, MLA, Nagineni Venkaiah, MLA, G. L. Narayana, G. V. Appaiah and Ch. Nagabhushanam.

He was active in the Fundamental Rights Front to protect peasant proprietorship. He led the Andhra peasants in their fight against the 17th Amendment to the Constitution. Every public movement started during the past 35 years in Andhra calculated to promote the inte-

rests of Harijans, Backward Classes and rural people found a powerful champion in him.

He organised the mammoth Kisan Conferences of Machilipatnam, Gudivada in 1957 to awaken peasants and help them to stage their organised opposition to Nagpur Congress decision to force co-operative farming on Peasants. Both of us left the Congress as a protest against Nehruji's campaign for co-operative farming, which threatened to deprive peasants of their self-employment on their own holdings.

We realised that peasants and their class organisations were alone not effective enough to arrest Congress drive towards the liquidation of self-employed peasantry, especially as orthodox Communists, Socialist and Vinobha's ranks had joined hands at Yelwal with the Congress against Peasants and their proprietorship of land holdings. We needed the support of political platform. We were opposed to communal politics. We were also not ready to walk into the parlour of monopolists and the avowed champions of Capitalist-cum industrial interests of the great cities. So we approached Rajaji, who had kept himself free from monopolists and profiteers of the plan regime of the Congress, for help and guidance. Rajaji was already mooting the possibility of organising political opposition to Nehru's drift towards the regime of Licenses, Permits and Quotas, which would lead only to Statism. We felt that with his support and under his guidance, we would be able to develop a strong enough political platform, with the backing of a powerful cross-section of all non-exploitative classes. Rajaji was also sounding such other leaders of national standing as Jayaprakash, Kripalani, the late Munshi, Sardar Bahadur Lal Singh, General Cariappa whether they would second his move. All these moves synchronised in the founding of the Swatantra Party on 4-6-1959 at Madras, at the Conference, convened by the All India Federation of Agriculturists and its leaders, Lal Singh, Ramachandra Reddi and

Jinraj Hegde. Jayaprakash was also present, when Rajaji suggested that I should accept the leadership of the new movement. Though J.P. was unwilling to give up his partyless stance, and therefore would not agree to lead us, he was willing to welcome our movement to provide a secular, democratic Liberal opposition to the ruling Congress regime. The three colleagues of mine whom I could contact, namely G. V. Subbaiah, N. V. Naidu, M.L.A., P. Rajagopala Naidu. M. L. A., felt that we could not get better auspices to protect hte self-employed peasants and other masses. We however wanted a few days to consult with other colleagues. We met them at Medarametla, Ongole district in the Peasants' Political School, organised by N. Venkaiah, MLA, Gujarat leaders, Dadubhai and Bhailal Patel also joined us in our discussions. We reviewed our earlier experiences in developing the Krishikar Lok Party in 1952-55, how it failed for want of Finances on one side and for our failure to gain the support of non-peasant ranks in villages and towns. We felt confident that with the backing of Rajaji, the acknowledged leader of intellectuals and urban middle classes, we might be able to develop a broad-based political platform, though depending largely upon peasants and rural masses. Kisan Gorrepati was convinced that we could not get better political auspices for mounting our campaign for the protection and promotion of the cause of our peasant masses. We therefore decided to join Rajaji in founding and developing the Swatantra Party, as the best champion of peasants and workers. I was chosen by the party and Rajaji to be its first national President. I invited G. Venkata Subbaiah, the senior-most kisan champion among my colleagues to undertake similar responsibility in Andhra. Thus he became the first President of the party. But within the first week of its foundation, Jawaharlal Nehru castigated our party so unjustly as the Conservative Party and however much we protested against that unfair appellation, the Press urban oriented as it is, chose to accept his charge and all our

protests that ours was a progressive platform of Gandhian Socialists, Liberals and Democrats, Protogonists of Dharma, as per Gandhian conception of trusteeship proved to be in vain. Venkata Subbaiah raged against this unjust propaganda of Jawaharlalji and became even more passionate in working for the protection of peasants.

Many a time, he protested that we are not opposed to State interference for constructive purposes. On the other hand, he used to say that peasants movement has complained about failure of Government to interfere on behalf of peasants to assure both minimum (support) prices and remunerative prices, to organise national insurance against floods, cyclones, draught, cattle-epidemics, out-breaks of fires in villages. He used to challenge "Have we not been asking but in vain for enforcement of minimum wages for agricultural labour, health insurance for all rural people? Have we not been crying hoarse for moratorium against maximum rates of interest, penalising collection of usurous loans, protection of tenants and limitation of rents? Did we not demand State distribution system for supply of oils, manures, seeds, insecticides and even tractor services?

When and where did any State Government ever propose to provide any of the many protective, promotional or progressive activity in the interests of peasants and workers, which has not been demanded for long and supported, when proposed by our peasants movement and by the Swatantra Party? Gorrepati challenged Congress and its allies to prove how and in what direction the welfare society that peasants like him and his leaders have stood for is not Socialistic? The Krishikar Lok Section of the Swatantra Party continued to voice the demand, that they had raised, when in the Congress, for a national rural housing plan and programme for all such agricultural workers and artisans who had no house-sites or houses of their own. They went to the extent of exhorting landed peasants to donate house-sites and all able-bodied villa-

gers to contribute labour for twelve to 18 days in the year for helping in the production of bricks, constructing walls with burnt or unburnt bricks etc. and thus raising small houses in a period of 5 or 10 years for all the homeless rural workers. They only demanded 50% of grant by way of sites, housebuilding materials or money from Government. In fact it was their leaders who took the initiative along with Shri Nanda to make the constructive suggestion, through the Bharat Sevak Samaj that villagers and their Panchayats on one side and Government on the other should share equally the responsibility for developing social development of landless masses of rural India through the financial device of matching grants. The Krishikar Lok Swatantraites did not oppose the principle of imposing ceilings on land-holdings but only insisted that such ceiling should be imposed on all properties and professional incomes, so that there would be social justice between all classes. Gorrepati added that whenever there is need to protect the weaker sections like the handloom weavers from the unequal competition of the better organised sections like textile mills, both Rajaji and Rangaji demanded adequate protective State action. The peasant-wise Swatantraites did not oppose controls and licences as such but only their misuse and so, they demanded that the issue and operation of whatever controls by way of licenses, permits and quotas found to be necessary should be regulated and administered by an impartial, non-partisan quasi-judicial commission with adequate staff and proper co-operation from Government. Indeed, Shri Nanda, the then Home Minister was inclined to experiment with that suggestion but Congress Government found it more profitable to exploit the Licence-permit Quota Raj for political raj and give the go-bye for social welfare. Gorrepati instanced how the Krishikar-Lok champions of Swatantra have all along been demanding such independent commissions for the regulation, and supervision of all such social institutions as Panchayats Religious Endowments and free them from party political

interests of the Cabinets of the day. It was because of such convictions, Gorrepati continued to work with such zeal on the kisan and Swatantra platforms. If it was right for Congress and Nehru to work for their plans in alliance with industrialists, capitalists and even profiteers and monopolists, how could it be wrong for him and us to seek the political partnership of small enterpreneurs and other urban lower middle classes and thus develop a national democratic front, as representing progressive cross-section of all national elements which are far less exploitative and thus ensure the protection of the most exploited peasants and workers who happen to be the most vulnerable and neglected cadres in modern society.

It hurt him very much to see that while profiteers, black-marketers and holders of licences, permits and quotas were prospering under Congress regime, and Maharajahs and millionaires were financing the Congress the gullible voters were supporting repeatedly Congress candidates, most of whom had nothing better to recommend them than their money, caste, political chicanery and governmental powers and prestige. Most of the kisans were more caste-minded than class-conscious and so they favoured caste-cum-power oriented candidates and caused the defeat of their avowed champions.

He was shocked when most of us, who were the leading champions of kisans, artisans for decades and who were hailed as sincere followers of Gandhiji were being defeated repeatedly at the polls. Yet, he did not lose heart because he had immense faith in justness of our peasants' cause. So he mobilised our kisan champions, and organised my election campaigns, with the active support of Sardar Latchanna, Rajagopala Naidu and others in 1962 and 1967 and ensured my success in the bye-elections. Such was his heroism. Such indeed was his revolutionary fervour for the cause of the self-employed masses. He was truly a Gandhian Socialist.

In the course of one of his speeches, he passionately held forth "we have always demanded Government to exercise social control over banks and make them advance credit on easy terms to peasants and workers and it was our leader who demanded their nationalisation. We wanted sugar and rice mills, cotton and oil processing industries to be brought under social or co-operative control and it is the Congress ministries which pampered them, the better to get funds for their electioneering. Therefore, Gorrepati had a clear conscience about our party continuing to be the champion of Peasants Par Excellence, just as Rajaji characterised its principal mission."

Kisan Gorrepati used to deplore the failure of the Press to champion the cause of kisans and also the absence of even a single Telugu daily to offer sincere, stiff and persistent opposition to Governmental moves to rob peasants of their hard-earned proprietorship of holdings. He was pained by their support for compulsory procurement of their foodgrains, produced at great cost, under painful conditions without even minimum help from Government in regard to the supply of essential in-puts. Our only kisans weekly "The Vahini" started by Smt. Bharati Devi in 1936-37 could not reach high enough circulation or maintain itself. So, with a view to relieve her of that financial burden and to ensure its wider circulation, Gorrepati shouldered its management for about ten years. But he too could not make it a self-paying business proposition and had to devote for it a good portion of his personal income from his holding. Venkata Subbaiah was happy to learn from me that in contrast with this failure of Indian kisans to develop their own independent, financially sound press, the Japanese farmers have developed their I-no-Hikari weekly journal with its 3 million circulation. He exclaimed that there is the reason for India's failure to make a success of four Five-Year Plans and Japan's rapid rise from the ashes of war and Hiroshima, into one of the five richest nations because of its enlightened peasantry.

The need for finding funds for our kisan weekly was a greater worry on his mind than his own health, during the last weeks of his earthly existence. It is to fulfil his last wish and that of Bharati Devi, who also achieved her Swargarohan 1-1/2 years later, that Shri G. N. Rao, MBA (USA), son of my brother G. Venkatappaiah has come to shoulder this onerous responsibility.

He was a boyhood friend and colleague in satyagraha campaigns of G. Brahmayya, former President of Andhra Congress, Chairman of Upper Council and Pandit Gorrepati, the famous author of a number of biographies in Telugu of national leaders. He fought for national freedom. He and his wife were Freedom Fighters and went to jail in Swaraj struggle. He worked for decades in the Khadi, cottage industries and Harijan movements of Gandhiji. He believed in the high-employment potential of such decentralised industries and so he helped weavers, potters, carpenters to organise themselves. He aided Shri P. Kotaiah, MLA, in developing Handloom Weavers Congress. He joined forces with me in 1931, in our fight against zamindari system and stood solidly by my side until we achieved the abolition of zamindaris. He grew to be a passionate champion of kisans fight for freedom from exploitation by Government as well as merchants. He was as passionately opposed to Communist anti-peasant totalitarianism as to capitalist exploitation.

As Vice-President of the Krishna Zilla Parishad he succeeded in improving the rural health and educational facilities and set an example, through his conscientious work, for integrity and efficiency. He organised a number of rural dispensaries, veterinary hospitals and maternity centres by inspiring local kisans to make donations. He encouraged local kisans to establish a number of high schools in his Divi taluk. It was because of their kisan work, that the village common of Ghantasala was gained from the clutches of local zamindar and the splendid social complex of high school, hospital, etc., was developed on

it. He aided me in organising and running a number of kisan and political schools in Andhra to educate kisan public workers. He was responsible for the success of the 6 weeks' long Kisan School at Challapalle in 1953, in which we trained two hundred kisan and mazdoor, Harijan youths for public work.

Kisan Venkata Subbaiah and Pandit Venkata Subbaiah were both strongly in favour of advancement of rural women. They helped Bharati Devi in her efforts to develop the organisation of rural women. Kisan Venkata Subbaiah encouraged his wife, Smt. Saraswatamma to become a satyagrahi as early as 1930 and go to jail in Swaraj movement. When he had the opportunity to gain majority in the Panchayat Board, he helped Smt. G. Mahalakshmamma to be elected as the Sarpanch — a rare honour for women in the generally conservative rural India. He rendered all help to Smt. Mahalakshmamma and Saraswathamma to hold the State-level Women's Conference in Ghantasala and it was presided over by Smt. Bharati Devi and inaugurated by Smt. Lakshmi Raghuram, who has since become the President of All India Women's Conference. Thus he demonstrated how kisan movement is so keen on the all-round advancement of rural women.

He was born on 15-6-1903 in peasant family in Ghantasala, famous for its Buddhist and Roman antiquities. He loved to work on land and right upto his thirties, he was as much engaged in actual labour on land as he was interested in national and peasant movements. He knew what freedom and independence, that the self-employment of peasantry vouchsafed to himself and peasants like himself; hence his passionate devotion to our kisan movement. He was convinced that if it had not been for their economic independence flowing from their self-employment on their own holdings, peasants would have been as helpless as industrial workers in the face of imperialist repression. It is because of their self-employment, he used to say, that Bardoli and Andhra peasants were able to offer such sustained opposition to British Government

and achieve success in their No-Tax Satyagraha campaigns.

He was well-built, strong in body and in will-power. He was a thick-set man, dark-brown in colour and dignified in bearing and noble in character. He was serious-minded, though he could laugh boisterously when anything pleased him. He looked like a tribal leader, walked like a warrior and acted like an elder.

He studied upto Matriculation in Machilipatnam and came under the influence of the leaders of national movement, who were then conducting the National College, established in the wake of 1908 National Movement against Bengal partition. Many a highly educated pandit used to wonder decades later, how well Venkata Subbaiah developed his knowledge of books and public affairs by his assiduous efforts at self-education.

He believed in Gandhian ways of public work. So he spent almost the whole of his agricultural income on his public work, and his devoted wife and son placed all their remuneration at his disposal. He dressed in simple, clean, white khadi and looked so well in that austere dress. While staying in Vijayawada he used to cook his own food and feed one or two more guests everyday and thus set an example in austerity and self-reliance for fellow public workers. It is tragic how most of our public workers of the seventies have turned their backs upon such austerity and habits of simplicity, self-service and have become a burden on public institutions.

The peasants of his Krishna district have raised his statue in Ghantasala, his village, as their grateful tribute to his life-long services for kisans and the country. (That statue is fittingly installed by the side of the statues of Gandhiji, Kasturba and other national leaders in the square of that centre of Buddhist stupa. Pandit Gorrepati and myself have written and published his Telugu biography during the celebration of the first anniversary of his Swargarohan.

SUCHETA KRIPALANI

[Sucheta (born in 1908) was a membtr Congress Working Committee along with Ranga. She functioned as its General Secretary; Chief Minister of U.P She died in 1974 December.—Ed.]

Sucheta Kripalani is a good woman, good wife and good leader. She made a name as Professor in Banaras Hindu University. She helped Acharya Kripalani as an able ally and secretary, when he was President of the Congress. She became a self-confident member of the Congress Working Committee, when she was invited to partly fill-up the wide gap created by Kripalani's sudden resignation from Presidentship, due to differences with Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel. She withstood the shocks caused by her husband's defeat through a trick at the time of counting, in the Presidential election against Purushottam Das Tandonji. She left the Congress along with so many of us in 1951 as a protest against Jawaharlal's failure to control corruption and arrest the growing political demoralisation within the Congress. She worked loyally by the side of Kripalani in the KMP Party and later in the PSP and bore with the disappointments suffered in the 1952 and 1957 elections. When they found that the Socialists became too querrulous not over principles but over personalities, both husband and wife resigned from it. But while Kripalani chose to remain in politics without any party attachments, she decided to rejoin the Congress, a little later than some of us. By then she became an M.P. like her husband and they managed to live harmoniously at home, while sitting on different party enclaves in Parliament.

Though she started her political career as the wife of the renowned General Secretary of the Congress, she chose the hardest aspects of Gandhiji's constructive work and suffered as much as many an ordinary volunteer. She accompanied Gandhiji, like Dr. Suseela Nayar, Mridula Sarabhai during his historic Naokahali march and braved

the hardships as well as the risks involved in that hate-filled area and atmosphere. She worked for months for rehabilitation of the refugees from Pakistan, bore the terrible worries and pains of ministering to the thousands of sufferers with physical, psychic and moral wounds. Suseela and Mridula and she became angels of mercy.

She went to jail many a time like Kamaladevi, Mridula, Suseela, Bharati Devi in our freedom struggle. She did much work in the underground like Aruna. She displayed much fortitude in all those trials.

Many a time Kripalani would say, with some suspicion of glee, to the merriment of Lok Sabha, that he believed in 100% freedom for women in politics from the political attachments of their husbands. It was often a sight for the gods to find Sucheta sitting by his side prompting him from his notes as he was speaking, and helping him to twit, tear and twist the political facade of the Congress Government, which she was bound to support. Both were sincere, in their approaches and both remained loyal to their common patriotic duties and genuine faith in Gandhian approach to political life.

She is a good speaker, in her rapid, lisping manner. She makes her points quite clearly. She is a good enough debator. She is keen on offering constructive suggestion and when she is roused, she displays moral indignation. She is listened to with respect from all sides of Parliament. On her rejoining the Congress, Jawaharlal gave her the opportunity in 1958-60 to serve as General Secretary of the AICC just as he had given the same opportunity in 1946-47 to Mridula and both of them acquitted themselves well. Again another opportunity was vouchsafed to her by Shri C. B. Gupta on his withdrawal from Chief Ministership, due to his acceptance of the so-called Kamaraj plan of some senior ministers opting for organisational work, to lead the Congress Assembly Party of U.P. and becoming Chief Minister (1963-67). She rose to the occasion, guided that ministry and kept together that huge Congress Party of more than three hundred MLAs,

no doubt with the political assistance of C. B. Gupta and moral support of her great husband. It was a unique experience of Indian democracy that Kripalani, the opponent of Jawaharlal's politics at the Centre, found it possible to guide his able wife as Congress Chief Minister and retain the respect of Congress MLAs, while she proved to be a loyal Chief Minister, by the side of the Congress Prime Minister who was at the same time, the Chief of the National Development Council, including mainly Chief Ministers. Her most outstanding achievement was that while there were so many charges of corruption, political and otherwise against many a Chief Minister in most of the States, her own predecessors in U.P. included, her regime and herself were free from such taints. She was quick to respond to the call of kisans, rural folk and industrial workers for succour and never did she allow either sugar manufacturers or factory owners to oppress farmers or workers.

She came back again to Parliament, after 1967 general elections and found herself at logger-heads with Indira's ministry and Indiraji herself over the election of the Republic's President and so continued to work from 1969 with the old group and separating herself from Indira's New Congress. During that unhappy period of two years of heart-searching controversy, she maintained a dignified posture, without indulging in any personal vendetta.

As national misfortune would have it, she had a heart attack while on propaganda tour of Guzerat in 1972 and succumbed to another attack on 1-12-1974. Acharya Kripalani is still keen on playing his usual active role in Opposition and she seconded his efforts right upto the last day before her death without the dividing curtains of different political allegiances. Sucheta has indeed set up a noble standard for good, able and sincere social work, constructive and morally eminent standard for political partnership and a wholesome and progressive example of a loyal, self-respecting and dharmic wife.

SUNDARAM, G. K.

Shri G. K. Sunraram is one of our best people in public life. He was born in 1914 in Peelamedu of Coimbatore. He is an exampler of Gandhian conception of a rich man, holding his surplus wealth as public trust and utilising most of it with a sense of service. I found in his library Birla's "In the Shadow of the Mahatma, my own book "Bapu Blesses" and Rajaji's books, notably 3 volumes of Satya-Meva-Jayate, Ramayana and Mahabharatam and Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru. He is an industrialist who has been striving to serve the nation, not so much with an eye for maximisation of profits for copitalists but as a matter of public service. He is an employer-manager and expert, all rolled into one, working hard and efficiently with a view to maximise production, achieving workers' welfare and increase national wealth. The Laxmi Mills and associated concerns have thus earned an enviable reputation as real national institutions, serving ably and fully all the three social elements engaged and interested therein, namely the State, workers and employers.

Sundaram comes from an agriculturist family with cotton-growing, textile milling and public-trusts and their traditions of managing them. He obtained both technical and general education in England and United States. He drew many a lesson in the ways of efficient and scientific management by his careful studies of the Post-war industrial technocratic and managerial methods of the West and Japan. Having realised India's need to be self-reliant in mother-industries, he managed to establish a fine textile-machine manufacturing in Coimbatore environs. He works in close co-operation with the neighbouring PSG Charities Industrial Training Centre and the two Engineering Colleges, which are being run by his equally distinguished cousins Messrs. Damodaran and Ramakrishnan

and G. D. Naidu's Polytechnics and provides employment to their highly trained engineering graduates. In short, Sundaram is just the kind of public spirited and go-ahead agriculturist entrepreneur and managerial expert that Socialist India wants so badly.

I have come to know him through his interst in the principles of self-employment and public service. He was one of the few industrialists who joined the Swatantra Party because of his admiration of Rajaji and his faith in the Dharma of Trusteeship and his affection for me. I enjoyed his comradeship for ten years and his management of the Tamilnad Swatantra Party was on a par with his industrial management; that is, without friction, faction, with no strikes and with everyone being encouraged to do his best.

He rendered timely and comradely assistance to my election campaigns in Chittoor in 1962 and 1967 when I was obliged to fight with my back to the wall, against the mighty phalanxes of Central and State Governmental Congress bosses.

As an M.P. he was a great help to the late Dahyabhai Patel, his leader in Rajya Sabha. He used to take part in debates dealing with industrial and other economic questions and whatever he had to say, he used to command the attention of government because, the ministers realised that he spoke with the fullest knowledge and from sincere desire to promote national interests. He would not take pleasure in political controversies in Parliament but he never hesitated from warning government against what he considered to be wrong policies.

In politics, he was not pugilist and in public life, he was a perfect gentleman. So the leaders and the local organisers of rival political parties were never provoked or inclined to attack him; even in these times of extreme political factionism.

Sundaram rendered great service to the Textile Industry of South India during that decade of its depression, by persuading the leaders of industry to realise the need to rehabilitate their mechines and to plough into it whatever finances could be mobilised and next by influencing the State and Central Governments to prop up the tottering mills by suitable means. Ne wonder, textile labour are also grateful to him for thus saving this great employment yielding industry.

His Laxmi Mills Complex was mentioned as one of the six such industrial complexes, well-known in the country for their efficiency, good labour relations, freedom from under-hand and extra-legal dealings and high and honest dealings with Government, People and Proletariat. In these decades of subsidance of public morals and political-cum-financial deals between industry and administration, Laxmi's standard and Sundaram's character are nationally invaluable.

He has been evincing great interest in the welfare of Cotton-Growers also. He is convinced that the workers, management etc. of Textile industry can justify their prosperity only when remunerative prices of cotton are afforded to agriculturists. So, he has been supporting me, as my colleague on the Board of the Cotton Corporation and its Chairman Shri Ramanujam, the champion of Patriotic Labour of I.N.T.U.C. in pleading for both support and remunerative prices for cotton, development, organised markets and co-operative marketing.

It was a pleasure for me to have participated in the cultural and religious functions organised in connections with the celebration of his Shasti-Abdhi-Purti functions in Coimbatore on 14-9-1974.

TANDONJI, PURUSHOTTAMDAS

Purushottam Das Tandonji born in 1882 was one of the few who were recognised as Bharat Ratna by the Rashtrapati. He was acclaimed by the patriots of the Ganga Valley as Rajrishi. He was the President of the Servants of Peoples Sociey, founded by the eminent patriot, Lala Lajpatrai, his predecessor in its Presidentship.

The Tandons, Saprus, Kunzrus, Katjus, and Nehrus hailed from Allahbad and there used to be competition between their families in serving the country. Nehrus, the father and the son, far outspaced all others in Congress politics but Tandonji ran a close race with them He stood twice for Presidentship of the Congress. He was defeated on the first occasion by Dr. Pattabhi, who was quietly favoured by Jawaharlal. The second time he won over Kripalani who was supported by Jawaharlal. Thus Tandonji, as Congress President, came very close to Jawaharlalji's level in national politics. But eventually, Jawaharlalji had his way when he resigned from the Congress Working Committee, and refused to co-operate unless Tandonji agreed to drop his Secretaries whose organisational impartiality he questioned and Tandonji, who declined to oblige was obliged to resign from Presidentship itself and thus paved the way for the Congress to accept the supremacy of Jawaharlalji, the Prime Minister, over the President of the Congress. From then onwards Congress Presidentship had to take a place second to Premiership. If any doubts lingered about this, those were set at rest by Indiraji's 1970 triumph over Congress heirarchy.

On the personal level, in the national arena, Jawaharlalji bestowed the fullest honours to Tandonji. in the meeting of Members of Parliament held in the Central Hall when the latter was invited by Rashtrapati to assume the insignia of Bharat Ratna.

Tandonji was a great lover of Hindi and took upon himself the mission of developing it into a national lan-

guage. He did not agree with Gandhiji that Hindustani, which is cross between Hindi and Urdu, should be made the national language and so he led the movement to make Hindi, which is nearer to sanskrit and Sanskrit-based languages, the principal national language. This brought him prominently into the national level of politics. By the time Congress decided to accept office in the U.P. in 1936, Tandonji came to be the most prominent candidate for chief ministership, whatwith his experience of administration in an Indian State, his Presidentship of the important Servants of Peoples Society, with so many of its members holding important political positions in Punjab, U.P., Bihar and M.P., and his pre-eminence in his own State politics. But Gandhi and Nehru favoured Govind Ballabha Pant, and as he could not be asked to take a second place in the ministry, he was invited to be the Speaker of the Assembly. Tandonji agreed to become the Speaker, only on the condition that he should be free to play his important role in the Congress politics. The A.I.C.C. accepted Tandonji's conditions and he became the one and the only Speaker in India who was allowed to be in politics, a unique recognition of his national stature. It took him 14 years thereafter to achieve the gaddi of the National Congress itself.

He used to look so attractive in 1934 in his simple khadi, with that beard on his pointed chin. His thin straight nose lent strength to his shapely thin cheeks. He spoke with conviction and used to be impressive on the platform, with his vibrant torso. As he grew older, he became less eloquent but his smile and looks gained a special attraction. He looked every inch like a political saint. Indeed he behaved scrupulously towards friend and foe and I felt that he had lent a special dignity to the presidentship of the Congress.

Tandonji was the President of the powerful Hindi Sahitya Parishad. He was largely responsible for getting Hindi accepted by the Constituent Assembly, after a prolonged struggle, as the national language. He was ably

aided by Sath Govind Das, famous Hindi playwright and Freedom Fighter. But I am not sure that this success has yielded unqualified good results, as it led to the revolt of the people in south India and West Bengal against this imposition of Hindi, over and above their languages, as the principal national language. Tandonji realised when it was too late that his triumph did not promote the popularisation of Hindi

He had great love for kisans. He founded the Karshak Sangh of U.P. in 1923 to spread Congress message in rural areas and also to strengthen the kisan demands for rent relief and parmanency of tenture in that State. He used to appreciate my efforts to develop the All India Kisan Congress and gave his moral blessings to the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj.

He was aghast at corruption infecting even the ranks of Cabinet ministers. He appreciated the demands that some of us were voicing in the Working Committee and in Parliament for impartial enquiries into the charges of partiality, misuse of powers and corruption being aired in the Press and the Parliament. As President, he succeeded in persuading Jawaharlal to overcome his fears of the effects of such enquiries on ministers' status and creditility and accept the need for such investigations. But the country had to wait for another decade before Jawaharlal agreed to go beyond Prime Minister's right to study and decide upon such allegations and appoint independent quasi-judicial commissions, such as the Das Commission which investigated Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon's affairs.

It is because of my close association with him over the questions of kisans, refugees, campaign against corruption and of accountability of Cabinets to Congress organisation also, that Tandonji came to be so much attached to me.

His heart bled over the sufferings of the millions of refugees from West Pakistan, when Government of India declined to offer any compensation for their properties left behind, beyond proferring monthly allowances and some small grant for resettlement. He reinforced our pleas

for offering substantial compensation and as President of the Congress, he was able to persuade Jawaharlalji to let the country shoulder that burden also, irrespective of Pakistan's attitude towards our demand for compensation and India's parlous financial plight. Today's comparative prosperity of our Punjab refugees owes much to that early fight put up by Tandonji.

It was during his Presidentship, that I and Prakasam had to resign from the Congress, as a protest against the unholy and un-Gandhian tactics pursued by Shri Kala Venkatrao, A.I.C.C. Secretary, and Andhra ministers in turning our actual majority into a national or false 'minority'. Though he appreciated my position and sympathised with my protests, he felt himself helpless against the Congress machine's workings. So he declined to accept my resignation and kept alive my membership of his Working Committee, i.e., from April till October, until he himself came to resign from Congress Presidentship —so great was his love for his comrades.

He was fortunate in his colleagues, Mohanlal Gautam and the late Lal Bahadur Shastri. He was happy to get Shastri appointed as the Home Minister in Pant's ministry of U.P. and to see him become later a successful minister in Jawaharlal's Cabinet, and the General Secretary of the Congress, under Jawaharlal's Presidentship. He was simple in his habits and Gandhian in his austerity and financial scruples. He set a high standard of political morals. He brought an infectious Gandhian atmosphere into the Congress Citadels.

Both Rajaji and myself visited him in Allahabad in 1960 and found him in sickbed. He felt that he might not recover, yet he was so cheerful and smiling and joined Rajaji in recollecting so many happy exchanges of thoughts and political sallies with Jawaharlal. He expressed his happiness over the spirited fight we were offering in support of peasant economy and self-employment sector. To the end he remained a true Gandhian socialist.

PROPHETS FOR SWARAJ

HOMAGE TO JALLIANWALLAH BAGH MARTYRS

Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer only thought in their short-sighted manner, typical of all power-drunks, of striking terror into the hearts of Indian patriots and weakening, if not stamping out India's anti-imperialists struggle, by the horrible and cold-blooded massacre they perpetrated in Jallianwallah Bagh on the 13th April, 1919.

History has proved that by that arrogant and inhuman deed of theirs, the first blow was struck by them to unhinge what till then appeared to be the invulnerable and modern White Man's sway of the imperialist West over Asia, Africa and even Latin America.

On the 13th April, 1919, the British forces were ordered by General Dyer to shoot at the peaceful meeting held in Jallianwallah Bagh — an open space, surrounded by walls of houses all around with only one entrance, on the only pretext that on the 12th, a proclamation banning all meetings was made in Amritsar. The General said before the Hunter Commission "I fired and continued to fire until the crowd dispersed. It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect from a military point of view not only on those who were present but more especially throughout the Punjab". Several thousands were killed and many more were maimed. That butchery turned out to be the precursor of later Nazi atrocities. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer and Viceroy Chelmsford must have thought that they could stamp out India's struggle for freedom by that horrible and cold-blooded massacre.

They had not to wait for history to prove that theirs could only be a short-lived imperialist wish. For, the horrified conscience of India, was so much stung to the quick that poet Tagore, so internationally famous, as the

recipient of Nobel Prize, hurled back the British knighthood at the British King, in protest against that despotic and contemptuous misuse of power against Mother India. Gandhiji was also quick in discarding the much valued Kaiser-i-Hind Medal, granted to him by British Crown. Swami Shraddanand hastened to organise relief fund for the surviving victims and Gandhiji founded the Jallianwallah Bagh Memorial Fund, thus demonstrating that India's nationalism was earthquaking with live fires.

Instead of joining the British in celebrating the victory of the Allies in that first World War, Indians and their patriotic publicmen were exhorted by Gandhiji to observe a fast in protest against that massacre and mourn the British victory in war. History has proved that Lajpat Rai, the lion of Punjab read correctly India's spirit, when he wrote only three years earlier, that Indian nationalism was in that condition "when repression, death sentences and imprisonments are more beneficial to it than otherwise" (Young India, page 192). Gandhiji, Lokamanya Tilak, C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru who had been almost ready to let the country enter the new legislatures, in the wake of Montford Reforms, were so much shocked by that massacre, preceded by the monstrous Rowlatt Act that they recommended non-co-operation with not only the new legislatures but with the whole machinery of Government, which was stigmatised as "Satanic".

The spirit of Indian youths has not been content with these politically vigorous responses of the Congress to humble imperialism. So many must have tried to wreak more personally satisfying vengeance against those principal perpetrators of that tragedy. One Indian hero alone, by name Sardar Uddam Singh, from Punjab itself succeeded, after years of waiting to shoot to kill Sir Michael O'Dwyer as he was emerging from a meeting in Caxton Hall in London and thus vindicate the prowess of India's young manhood. Free India responded equally honourably by negotiating for the return of his ashes and conse-

crating them on the soil of Mother India. We hail both the martyrs of the Jallianwallah Bagh and Uddam Singh, their direct heir in patriotism and heroism.

The Indian National Congress drew tremendous strength and renewed revolutionary fervour from the decision of Indian patriots to look upon those imperialistic forces of repression and their machine-guns as Satanic. Mahatma Gandhi created out of that rejuvenated Congress, through his Non-Co-operation and constructive programmes and nation-wide satyagrahic struggles, such irresistible national and anti-imperialist forces, as have enabled India to march towards complete Independence. The Second World War led to our "Quit India" struggle and "Quit Asia and Africa" slogans and struggles and thus, what had been an imperialist show of strength at Jallianwallah Bagh has led to the world-wide movement for the liquidation of world's disease and incubus of imperialism itself, thanks also to the new freedom forces created by that World War.

So greatly were the Europeans inured into their imperialist miasma, that even when my book "Colonial and Coloured People Freedom Front" was being reviewed in 1946 and its chapters were being reproduced in the "Pan Africa" in 1946-47 when the first Asian conference was being held in Delhi by free-India's leaders there were even some Socialists who wondered whether African and Asian colonies would be ready for freedom for several generations to come.

Whenever I visit Amritsar, I offer my homage to the myriad martyrs who fell on that 13th April in that Jallianwallah Bagh. The momentum of Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy has led ultimately to the liquidation of Imperialism not only in India and Asia but also in Africa and Latin America by 1960. The result is that the nations of the newly liberated peoples have come to form the majority in the United Nations.

ANDAMAN'S CELLULAR JAIL

I saw the exhibition at the Cellular Jail in Andamans, when I visited the island in 1970, along with other members of the Parliamentary Committee. We were shown the plaques, bearing the names of the patriots who had been kept in that jail during our struggle for Swaraj.

The British rulers confined hundreds of our patriots in that dreadful jail in the then god-forsaken island of Andamans, studded in the bosom of Bay of Bengal, farther away from India than from Indonesia or Malaysia, in the vain hope of striking terror into the hearts of Indian revolutionaries. On the other hand, the very hopelessness of incarceration in that Cellular Jail used to instigate and inspire the red-hot revolutionaries to embrace terrorism, in preference to Gandhian satyagraha, in their passionate pursuit of Swarajya.

In those first four decades of this century, there used to be hot and anxious exchanges between all of us who were devoted to the cause of Indian freedom, as to which of the two approaches, that is, satyagraha or violence, would more surely and quickly help us to become independent, just as a similar dialogue is afoot during the sixties and seventies between Gandhian socialists on one side and Mao-oriented and Soviet-minded Communists on the other as to whether socialism could be achieved through democratic and non-violent means or only through violence.

We devoted a whole day for this discussion in Karachi in 1931 where we met to offer homage to the memory of Bhagat Singh who had been hanged by the British, despite nation-wide prayers to save him. I stood up for Gandhian means and found myself opposed by most of the youths assembled in that emotionally explosive meeting. I quoted the earth-shaking Dandi Satyagraha, which awakened crores of our masses and inspired lakhs to actually participate in the struggle and defy the government and

jails. I also pointed out how the Round Table Conference had to postpone its deliberations, as without Gandhi, the British admitted they could not resolve the Indian crisis. The Gandhi-Irwin pact had itself put the stamp of equality between India and Britain. But they replied with equal vehemence that the British had slapped Gandhi and the whole Congress in their face by vindictively hanging the arch-revolutionary youth Bhagat Singh. Subash Bose was emotionally attuned to them, although he was prepared to work with Gandhi. That dichotomy influenced our views as how to achieve the emancipation of our masses from the feudal and capitalist exploitation I took my stand on Gandhian socialism, as indicated by Karachi Charter of Fundamental Rights, which we were then endorsing and they were quoting Soviet achievements made through violence.

THEIR FAITH

Later when I came across the well-known Bengali terrorists, Pratul Gangulee and Chakravarti in Vellore Jail — they were detenues and I was a political prisoner —, they admitted that Gandhiji's non-violent struggle had brought about mass awakening, which could not be achieved by terrorism. But they insisted that the ultimate success of India's struggle could only be achieved by such revolutionary bodies as the Anusheelans and Jugan-thars of Bengal, and individuals like Bhagat Singh, Jatin Das, Savarkar and Bhai Parmanand who would stake their all and not symbolically only once in a while either in an election or in a mass march. Of course there could be no agreement between us. But I was struck with their passionate convictions. I admired their ceaseless struggle over decades, risking their precious lives almost every year, if not every moment, treating that jail or underground life as the least bit of their offerings at the feet of Bharat Mata. They and others of their school of revolutionary thought and service knew that what could not be gained by them by way of mass following was being

achieved by Gandhi and his followers, yet, they did not feel either unhappy or envious of us. They however continued to cherish their conviction that their services and offerings — man to man the most priceless and incomparable as they were — would be needed by Bharat Mata. Such was their faith and it became almost a cult, and Andaman, with its Veer Savarkar and others, Mandalay with its Lajpat Rai, Tilak, Subash Chandra Bose became places of pilgrimage for all our patriots including so many Koya tribal leaders, like Mallu Dora of the famous Sitaramaraju rebellion and hundreds of Mopilal prisoners. These memorial plaques were placed by grateful India, after Swaraj was won.

Lajpat Rai said in his "Young India" published in 1916 in USA, that the great bulk of Bengal nationalists "were patriots who had raised their patriotism to the pitch of a religion. They realised their 'duty' every moment of their life and they were prepared to do anything and take any and every risk in the performance of that duty".

They maintain "that the first condition of life — life with respect and honour, life for profit and advantage, life for progress and advancement — is political freedom. "All schemes for social reform, for sectarian advancement, for commercial interests are nothing more than so many devices for dividing the nation and keeping them engaged in never-ending internecine quarrels . . . . So the first thing is to get rid of the foreigner".

Even during the First World War, Lajpat Rai was able to boldly and patriotically assert that he "has not so far met any Indian of all classes and all shades of opinions, educated, uneducated, prince and peasant, moderate and extremist, loyaltlist and seditionist — who was genuinely sorry at the outbreak of this war". Is there any wonder that Netaji did not scruple about seeking the assistance of both Nazis and Russians in his fight against British imperialism ?

Need anyone wonder at my contacts, admiration and affection for such Indian terrorists with whom I had the good fortune to come into contact, though I have been working as a Gandhian! Let us hearken to what Lajpat Rai who inspired us all in the twenties and thirties and whose martyrdom continues to inspire successive generations said in 1916 in his memorable book "Young India". He observed, "Nationalism is a seed that is richly fertilised by the blood of martyrs . . . . The moralist and the legalist, the loyalist and the Constitutionalist, all condemn their deeds but the doers themselves they adore and their names they enshrine in their hearts".

KAPUR AND BHAYANKARACHARI

Besides those eminent Bengali terrorists, I met Kapur of Punjab of Lahore Conspiracy Case, also in Vellore in 1933. We became good friends. We had many discussions about how and what type of socialism could be developed in India. He was a fine young scholar, tall and strong in mind and body. He told me how Jatin Das died just to help politicals to survive jails life and thus promote the cause of our freedom. I saw also the name of Andhra patriot, P. Bhayankarachari. He too was my fellow prisoner in Vellore in 1941-42. He was well-versed in Sanskrit and Telugu devotional literature. He had become, by 1941, a convert to Gandhian non-violent means. I felt happy when I found him among those few freedom fighters who were offered Tamra Patra in the Red Fort by President Giri on 15th August, 1972.

VEER SAVARKAR

We were taken to the Corner Cell, in which that lion among our freedom fighters and also even among the terrorists, namely Veer Savarkar, was kept for more than 10 years as a life-prisoner. It is provided with a small rectangular ventilator, so high in the wall, fully barred by iron-rods. He was allowed to come out of the cell

twice or thrice a day generally at meals times but was not allowed to move beyond the twenty to twenty-four square yard space in the veranda, which was also cordoned off from the rest of the veranda. As I looked at those plaques, with reverential heart, I thought I found the names of my friends, Tiwari, Sinha, Kapur, Chatterji, Bhayankarachari of Andhra topped by those of Veer Savarkar and Bhai Parmanand. I thought also of Alluri Sitaramaraju's Adi-basi followers from Vizag and Srikakulam areas especially Mallu Dora, who later became M.P. Did I actually find each one of these household names or did I only imagine I saw them, so full was my mind with their names and tales of their deeds. It was indeed a great experience for me.

I was also kept in such a small cell in Madras for six months. But I was free to move over to the veranda of 50 square yards and also to go downstairs and move there too over another 50 square yards. I was also the lone prisoner in that compound for a few months. So I know how painfully lonely my life in it was.

But it was a heaven when compared to the inhuman confinement imposed upon Savarkar, and that too, for more than a decade. I wondered how did he survive! Then I remembered that he was a lion not only among Satyagrahis but also among terrorists.

Lajpat Rai, the Lion of Punjab has told us that Savarkar had extremely "fine qualities of a leader. He never cared about his personal safety; he had the dash of the old warrior who always put himself in the post of danger".

"In the simplicity of his life, he was of the same class as Aurobindo Ghosh and Hardayal. In the purity of his life, he was as high as either."

All of us read so much about the extraordinarily daring and determined efforts made by Savarkar to organise bands of terrorists, even while he was in England, to

launch once again Indian struggle for freedom. Bharati Devi and I read his biography in 1930, written in Telugu by a freedom fighter and Gandhian, Shri M. Jagganna Shastri, who wrote similar biographies of other patriots also. I later read his inspiring book on "INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE", depicting so graphically and emotionally the aims, ideas, sufferings and sacrifices of Indian heroes of the 1857 armed rebellion against British Imperialism.

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar of Maharashtra and Andamans was born on 28-3-1883. He was the author of the famous book "War of Indian Independence" which was banned for decades by British but circulated in many languages through under-ground. He worked with the famous Punjabi revolutionary Hardayal. He was arrested in London in 1910, and then escaped from the steamer into French territory at Marsailles but was handed over by the French to the British authorities. He was then sentenced for life-imprisonment and confined in Cellular-Jail of Andamans. He believed in Hindu nationalism and in violent over-throw of British rule. Unfortunately for him events of Gandhian era overtook him and India achieved freedom through Gandhian means. He was most unhappy over the partition of the country and could not excuse the Congress for having yielded to Jinnah. He died in 1953.

It is a wonder how these patriots survived that confinement in the Andamans. True, the Island is beautiful. It enjoys much rain and sunshine. Its forests are lovely. But there was so much of disease induced by climate and mosquito and sea-breezes. They were sent there for years. In fact very few survived that climate and Cellular Jail. It must have been their burning patriotism, steely determination to live to fight for Swaraj and their unquenchable thirst for national liberation which helped them.

BHAI PARMANAND

There was also the venerable revolutionary, Bhai Parmanand, who was condemned to life imprisonment. I was more fortunate in regard to him. While I had no opportunity to work with Savarkar after his release, I became Parmanand's colleague in the Central Assembly when he was elected to it, on his fortunate release after serving his long sentence. I was also privileged to offer homage to his memory and a tribute to his valiant services at the Centenary Celebrations held in Delhi. I was especially struck by one statement made by his devoted son, who was also my colleague in Parliament. It seems Parmanand did not like any one to appeal against the death sentence passed against him.

But his devoted wife signed a petition for its commutation into life sentence. Bhaiji asked why should he be condemned to such prolonged suffering, instead of being privileged to offer his neck at the gallows and thus gain release in a moment from British-imposed slavery. His wife answered in the typical Hindu manner, "Why should I be deprived of the chance of my husband coming back to me some day and also of my right to live as a wedded woman and wear the sacred kum kum (tilak) on my forehead ? Why should I not fight against widowhood ?" Arya Samajist Hindu, as he was, Bhaiji allowed her to appeal and thus, he was able to survive that life sentence, reach the Central Assembly and join the rest of us nationalists in fighting British imperialism in that arena also. Similarly Mallu Dora survived 13 ½ years imprisonment in Andamans, got elected to Swaraj Parliament and thus demonstrated the invincibility of revolutionary patriotic fervour.

CHATTERJEE, J. C.

There was a younger revolutionary, Jagat Chandra Chatterjee, from Uttar Pradesh who too survived the cruel life sentence, after having been saved from British gal-

lows. He was convicted in the Kakori conspiracy case in 1927. He too came to Parliament. He continued his struggle for freedom, even after Swaraj, by joining parliamentary opposition. He championed the cause of workers and used his pen to uphold the socialist cause.

BIJOY KUMAR SINHA

A young poetic Bihari writer, Bijoy Kumar Sinha, who was also embraced by the terrorists came to marry after his release an Andhra peasant girl Rajyam, a graduate of the Santi Niketan and Peasant Institute, and the daughter of a freedom fighter. Sinha was the beloved comrade of Kapur, Tiwari and others. He has become an ardent socialist after Swaraj and his travelogue about his impressions of Soviet Russia was acclaimed as worthy of Nehru Award offered by the "Soviet Land".

PRITHVI SINGH AZAD

Prithvi Singh Azad is now the President of the All India Freedom Fighters Organisation, of which Indira Gandhi is the Patron. Thus he has been acclaimed as the first among our Freedom Fighters at the Bangalore Session in February 1976 because of his successful evasion of arrest for more than 16 years during the highly repressive periods of mighty British regime. He was arrested and condemned for terrorist activities. He suffered innumerable tortures, was put in tortute cells in Andamans, fasted in all for 155 days and ran the risk of death many a time. But he boldly escaped while being hand-cuffed by jumping from a runnig train in an Andhra district. Then he evaded the British Police Forces, toured in many States. During his period of voluntary exile he travelled in the far East, was one of the pioneers of the Gaddar Movement in America and was a student of Moscow University making intensive study of Marxist and Leninist thought. He also came in intimate contact with many

national leaders and patriots of all idealogies and also with Chandrasekhar Azad and S. Bhagat Singh. He spent years in some States under many alias and organised volunteer corps and trained thousands of Patriotic Youths in Akhadas and Sports Atheneums. He operated in underground for sixteen long years while a heavy price lay on his head, for his capture, dead or alive. He set up an institute of Physical Culture in Sourashtra and specialised in youth welfare, physical education, sports and games.

He voluntarily surrendered himself eventually to Mahatma Gandhi and not to British forces, because he became convinced of the comparative futility of terrorism and the growing effectiveness of Gandhian Satyagraha in bringing into the vortex of national revolution more and more of the masses. When however Gandhiji advised him to surrender himself to the British Law in India and brave the rigorous of British vengeance, he obeyed him just as dutifully as Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan had done and accepted the term of imprisonment meted out to him by British Indian Government. He was released after a prolonged period, in response to repeated pleas of Gandhiji as a tribute to both his courage, sense of discipline and patriotic faith in non-violence.

Prithvi Singh developed great passion for the liberation of India's masses from their age-long poverty and social degradation, while he was moving among the common people in different parts of India. He was attracted to Communism as well as Gandhism as means for liberating them from their disabilities. He managed to go to USA and USSR and observed the methods adopted by Soviet Union to emancipate the masses, that is, during his underground period. Today he is happy to put his heart and soul in Indira's moves to achieve "Garibi Hatao".

He is 85 years old, he is so healthy and energetic, besides being quite handsome, thanks to his disciplined, abstemious habits. A national celebration is being made on 15th Sept. 1976 in Delhi on his 85th Birth Day.

SHEELABHADRA YAJEE

Sheelabhadra Yajee of Bihar was born on 2-3-1916 in Bakhtiyarpur of Patna district, studied in Patna College, was a Secretary of Forward Bloc, also of All India Kisan Sabha, Ex-Member of Rajya Sabha Vice-President of All India Freedom Fighters' Association, Confidante of Netaji, Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, Bharati Devi during the war-time under-ground work, was imprisoned ten times. (Ed).

Sheelabhadra Yajee is an unassuming, but dare-devil freedom fighter from Bihar. He is the symbol of reckless opposition to imperialism. He came to us through Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, the great kisan leader of Bihar and worked so loyally with all of us on the platform of the All India Kisan Congress.

We were all working in close co-operation with Subash Babu ever since Tripura and Ramgarh Congress sessions. When Congress took disciplinary action against Subash Babu, Sheelabhadra Yajee and so many of us stood by him and protested against Congress. When he formed the Forward Bloc to organise resistance to the British War efforts in India he not only welcomed the move, but also joined him and defied Congress and went out with Subash Babu to run the Bloc as independent political force.

He was one of those few brave patriots who helped Subash Babu in disguise on his way to Afghanistan and thence to Europe. From then on wards, he was wanted by the vengeful imperial government. A heavy price was put on his head. There were orders to shoot him at sight. Yet he managed to work shoulder to shoulder as Secretary of All India Kisan Congress with Smt. Bharati Devi Ranga, the President. He co-operated with her and my brother G. L. Narayana his Co-Secretary to resist the Communists' moves to carry on their "Peoples War" propaganda even from kisan platform.

He rallied his comrades from Bihar and U.P. behind Bharati Devi in maintaining that so long as British Government would not concede Indian national demand for Swaraj and formation of national government, its war with Hitler could not be treated as India's peoples war. Thus right upto Bihta Session in 1942, Sheelabhadra Yajee helped her to succeed against the Communists move. It was only after 1942 August-October that Communists managed to steal the Kisan Sabha Platform for their anti-Indian propaganda. Then he joined us all in reorganising the ranks of patriotic kisan leaders into the All India Kisan Congress and Sammelan just before I was taken in as detenue. Since then, he had those two burdens to shoulder to protect the kisan platform from Communists and to maintain contacts with Subash Babu, in Europe and later in Singapore, Kaulalampur, Andamans etc. It was frightful enough for the stoutest hearts but Yaji's heart was consecrated to the cause so completely that worldly threats and British Powers could not make any impact on his yogic heart. He came to Andhra as he toured other areas and stayed in our home and appreciated the shelter and resources offered by Bharati Devi. For his success in developing and maintaining underground contacts for Netaji through the Forward Bloc, he was clubbed with I.N.A. Prisoners and placed on trial, as the only civilian for that honour, along with INA warriors in the famous Red Fort Trial.

He was released only at 9 p.m. on 15th August 1947 from Bombay prison i.e. simultaneously with the advent of national freedom—a rare honour for this worthy warrior. After the advent of Swaraj, he maintained the Forward Bloc for a decade and then accepted Jawaharlal's leadership after Avadi Congress decided in favour of democratic socialism. He has since been working as one of the dynamic and sincere Congress leaders.

He took upon himself the mission of developing a National Memorial at Imphal in Manipur for the I.N.A. and

Netaji. He collected funds from the State Governments and the Centre and built a Memorial Hall, Public Library, Exhibition and Stupa and also Bronze Statue of Netaji. He has demonstrated what could be done by a honest and devoted patriotic leader by the scrupulous, economical and constructive use of public funds. I had the honour of visiting that great Memorial when it was nearing completion and admired the constructive genius of Sheelabhadra, my comrade.

He conceived the idea, possibly in 1970 of forming the All India Association to provide some tangible protection and recognition for the lakhs of Freedom Fighters, in the same way as he had been helping the I.N.A. Personnel ever since 1946. He gained the support of the Prime Minister Indira and has succeeded in getting the Governments to sanction the scheme of providing life pension, upto Rs. 200 per mensem. True, this sum is not enough in these days of inflation to maintain even one adult. So Sheelabhadraji is working in co-operation with Prithvising Azad, myself and Sundararao and others to ensure the grants of bigger pensions and better facilities for education of the dependents of Freedom Fighters. He is restless and ever active, in all such causes.

It is the good fortune of Swaraj India that there are still among our Freedom Fighters such sincere patriots, endowed with such stout hearts and unquenchable passion for service.

He is not fond of power, yet he wields so much power all so quietly over the Governments in all the Tribal States, whose champion he has been for decades. He came all the way from Delhi specially to greet me, at Bharati Kuteer, a memorial to Bharati Devi and at Chilakalurpeta during the Celebrations held on my 75th Birth Day i.e. 7-11-1974.

KAMAL NATH TIWARI

Both Sinha and K.N. Tiwari have become my personal friends, long after their release, while I met their comrade Kapur in jail. They joined the terrorists when they were very young. Tiwari was also kept in Vellore jail but during the earlier phase of the Satyagraha. Shri Unnava Laxminarayana, a Barrister and a Telugu writer, who was one of my best friends, was his jail-mate and shared his thoughts and experiences. So when Tiwari was elected to the Parliament and we met each other, we felt as if we had been comrades from the days of Unnava the poet, I felt on reading Unnava's famous novel "MALAPALLI", that he pictured his two main characters, Ramadas, the Harijan Satyagrahi, Philosopher, and Venkata, his son the terrorist, after Gandhiji and Tiwari. By the time he became an M.P., Tiwari had a paralytic stroke, and so, he used to drag his left leg. a little. That physical impediment was the direct result of prolonged jail life and all the physical and mental stress caused by it. I felt so unhappy as I saw him moving about so slowly but he was ever so cheerful, and his bright visage, as he hailed us and talked to us, set our minds at rest.

Tiwari, the M.P., sided with kisans during his whole Parliamentary career of more than a decade. We were always on the same side whenever kisans' interests were threatened. We pleaded for remunerative prices for sugarcane growers. Tiwari hailed from cane-growing areas of Bihar. He was at my side whenever I pleaded for self-employed peasants. When Jawaharlal and I came to head on collision over Nagpur session's resolution in favour of co-operative farming, he stood by me and pleaded with Jawaharlal not to lose me. When I finally decided to leave the Congress on that issue, he felt very unhappy, and assured me that he would try to protect peasants' interests by remaining within the Congress. I appreciated his sincere love for peasants and for Congress and also Jawahar, the revolutionary hero of our youthful era.

Later on Bibhuti Mishra came to join hands with him in championing peasants' cause even more vociferously.

Tiwari deplored the rising tempo of corruption in politics as well as administration and often took the government to task for its failure to shed some of the incompetent or politically dishonest ministers. His criticisms, couched in his inimitable vigorous Hindi or English language used to make a noticeable impression on Nehru, Shastri and Indira.

Tiwari, who had no doubts when he chose to fight the British about risking his neck at the gallows, came to be deeply troubled as to which side to choose, when the great "Divide" was forced by historic developments upon Congress leaders. He did not like the growing negation of Gandhian standards displayed so brazenly by the protagonists on both sides of that struggle. Ultimately, he decided to stand by Indira and helped her to win. He was convinced that she stood for the right ends.

He and Bibhuti Mishra were among those friends of kisans and Khet Mazdoors on the side of Indira who were the happiest, when they learnt that by July 1971, Bharati Devi and I were arguing with Rajaji in favour of reinforcing the efforts of Indira to move towards "Garibi Hatao". Both of them pressed the point that the cause of agriculturists could be effectively protected and strengthened only by accepting the choice made by more than two-thirds of our M.Ps. So when we decided to join them in the Congress, they were overjoyed. I last met Tiwari in January 1974, and a fortnight later the Radio announced his Swargarohan. The country has lost a noble patriot, the peasants their great champion and I have lost a sweet colleague in his death.

ARUN CHANDRA GUHA

Arun Chandra Guha of Bengal is another terrorist who spent more than 20 years in jail during four periods of detention. He was statesman enough to realise the

limitations of the terrorist approach and embraced Gandhian leadership and means to work for Swaraj. He became an ardent follower of Desabandhu C.R. Das, Sen Gupta and Subash Bose. When Swaraj came, he was called upon by Nehru to serve as a Deputy Minister for Finance. He was good enough to accept my resolution in Parliament pleading for the establishment of Agricultural Finance Corporation. After his retirement from Parliament, he had been editing the powerful English Weekly 'Forward' and 'Liberty' and writing the history of revolutionaries of Bengal. That book has become a classic, about Bengal Terrorists. We have worked together for 15 years in Parliament and he was a good and honourable comrade. He has organised a number of educational institutions after retiring from the ministry.

CHAKRAVARTI

I had an equally dear but older comrade in Chakravarti. He too was a terrorist, but of the 1905-07 Bengali school. He spent a life-sentence in jails. He and Pratul Gangulee were vocal exponents of terrorism and were my jail-mates in Vellore in 1932. We had many talks on ways and means best suited to win Swaraj. Both were then detenues.

When Swaraj came, he had to go to East Pakistan and fight again against Pakistani dictatorship. Again he was sent to jail and suffered more in Pakistani regime. He stood solidly and boldly for the rights of Hindu minority; and for fundamental rights. He was ever a revolutionary nationalist. He worked quietly but determinedly for revolution in East Bengal, earned the love and confidence of Muslim revolutionaries and helped them to prepare a nation-wide net-work for terrorist-revolt. When he made his last visit to Delhi after two decades, he met us and the Prime Minister and some of her Cabinet colleagues. He was able to assure us that very soon, possibly soon after their general elections the masses of Bengal would opt for

freedom from Pakistan's dictatorship, if possible, through outvoting West Pakistan and if not, through armed revolt. He died in Delhi within that month, in the lap of Surendra Mohan, as it were, after bequeathing his mission to us all.

SURENDRA MOHAN GHOSH

Surendra Mohan Ghosh of Bengal was born on 22-4-1893. He was a veteran revolutionary of Juganthar group. He was jailed many times for more than 20 years. He served the national cause through the Congress since 1930. He rose to be the President of B.P.C.C. and also as A.I.C.C. for decades. He was in Constituent Assembly and Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha from 1946. He was a delegate to Commonwealth Parliamentary Conferences. He worked with Subash Chandra Bose at Ramgarh in the anti-compromise conferences. He rendered his biggest service to India and Bangladesh by inviting to Delhi the veteran revolutionary Shri Chakravarti from the then East Pakistan and making it possible for him to meet Indian leaders in Parliament and Central Cabinet and prepare us to respond to the call of the masses of Bangladesh, which he felt convinced, was soon to emerge in the wake of the impending elections in Pakistan. When actually the masses of Bangladesh, fulfilled his hopes by giving overwhelming and massive majority to Muzibur Rahman's Awami Party, demanding almost complete autonomy for Sonar Bangla, Parliamentarians of all parties in and outside Parliament felt that they were in honour bound to respond to soul-ful call and life-long mission of Chakravarti, martyr among noble revolutionaries of Bengal. Is there then any wonder that the new Parliament which assembled in the wake of India's 1971 general elections responded so wholeheartedly and with such anti-imperialist missionary zeal to the appeal of the masses of Sonar Bangla for support in their heroic resistance to the malicious and treacherous campaign of genocide hurld on them

without any notice and with all the strength of armed forces of Pakistan.

Successive phases of that revolution, from the formation of Bangladesh Government to that of their vimukti Sena, from the declaration of Bangla People's freedom to their brave resistance to West Pakistan's imperialist hordes brought India into the vortex of Bangladesh revolutionary soul and spirit. The International Conference organised by so many of us in Delhi and presided over by Jayaprakash Narayan reinforced the appeal of Bangladesh Patriots for world sympathy. Government of India did its best to mobilise world public opinion in support of the Bangladesh revolutionaries. Soviet Russia stood by India and Bangladesh and the Defence forces of both India and Bangladesh worked in concert and achieved the freedom of Bangla people. The souls of Chakravarti, Pratul Babu, Netaji and the tens of thousands of their Bengali comrades in both wings of Bengal revolutionaries who risked their all since 1900-06 and our friends Surendra Mohan, Arun Chandra Guha who are fortunately with us must have derived immense satisfaction with the Parliament and Government of Swaraj India for their ready response, almost with revolutionary fervour and speed, to their clarion call for moral support and material sympathy for Sonar Bangla. It was indeed the triumphant culmination of abruptly suspended anti-imperialist war declared by the I.N.A. It is tragic for Asia that the foremost leaders of that struggle came to be tracherously assassinated and long dark night has descended on Sonar Bangla.

NAXALITE TERRORISM DISRUPTS DEMOCRACY

Naxalite — the latest edition of terrorism — is not aimed at any imperialism. It is intended to speed up the social revolution which has already been set in motion by 1971 March Peaceful Revolution, by Ballot Box. Indira is trying to help India to achieve social revolution by rapid strides but in a non-violent manner through and wi-

thin the ambit of democracy. Therefore Naxalite terrorism does not and cannot serve any progressive purpose. It can disrupt our democracy. It can delay the process of peaceful transformation of our social institutions with the co-operation of all types of vested interests. The greatest social evil that may arise from this Naxalite terrorism is the undermining of non-exploitive self-employed economy through the confused efforts of its protagonists to fight exploitative institutions. Indira's efforts are directed towards the achievement of our revolution in a democratic and non-violent manner with the aid of and within the ambit of our constitution.

THEVAR, MUTHURAMALINGA

Thiru Muthuramalinga Thevar was one of the boldest freedom fighters of our country reminding us of the other great revolutionary, Katta Bomman of 19th century. He joined the freedom movement when he was a student. Though he accepted the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, he became impatient with the non-violent methods and means adopted by Congress and was dissatisfied with the predominently parliamentarian tactics of the then Tamil Nad leaders, Rajaji and Satyamurti. He was not attracted by Jawaharlal because of his political hesitations. He was fascinated by the relentless spirit of fighting the British in all spheres and with all means displayed by Subhash Chandra Bose. So he hailed the dynamic leadership of Subash and grew to be the most powerful exponent, in word and deed, of the war-like methods of resisting British imperialism. He was obliged to fight even the first Congress ministry, although he was an admirer of Rajaji, since that ministry was working under the aegis of the British Parliament Act.

Thevar and myself joined the Anti-Compromise Conference held at Ramgarh and Anti-Imperialist Conference held at Nagpur, 1939-40; which were both presided over by Subhash Bose. While I could not join Subhash

Babu's Committee of action as he was not yet ready to hail the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Raj, Thevar was impatient with ideological disputes and was only too keen on going ahead with anti-imperialist struggle, come what may after Swaraj.

Thevar joined the Forward Bloc when it was formed in Calcutta in 1939 and became a member of its national working committee after it was formally inaugurated in the Bombay Convention. Both Subhash Babu and Thevar were happy with my co-operation with them, though I preferred to function as a Kisan Congressite, while offering to them my fraternal comradeship.

When Subhash left India and formed the I.N.A. and came to be hailed as Netaji, Thevar was one of the few courageous leaders of national stature to hail Netaji as his leader and braved consequent special repression of war-time British Government.

He was taken as a detenue and was confined along with me first in Vellore Jail and later in Damoh Jail in Madhya Pradesh. Thus we were able to be in the same compound and in the same cell for about an year.

It was indeed a treat to be thus lodged together with him. He was always smiling and cheerful. Even in that Central-Indian cold weather, he used to wear only a shirt and practice Yoga without it, so inured he was to such cold or heat of changing weather. He was highly religious and it was a pleasant sight when he was in his Padmasan, while offering prayers. His smile was attractive and his laughter captivating and whenever he chose to talk to us about Netaji, it was a sight for gods, with his Saivite Vibhuti on his forehead and on his broad strong chest.

Thevar was reputed to be a highly eloquent speaker in Tamil and I heard many a good speaker say that only Rajaji and Periyar E.V.R. Naicker could excel him in the similies, and humorous sallies and happy quotations from

traditional Tamil epics and felicity of the musical cadences of his Tamil Expressions. He certainly became an outstanding member of the Assembly and proved to be a formidable critic of the Congress ministry of 1937-39. He came to Parliament also, as he was allowed to choose into which Legislature he wanted to go, by the masses of Ramnad district who virtually worshipped him as long as he lived. We both stayed then in North Avenue, and used to meet frequently. So many North Indian Parliamentarians used to admire him, seated as he would be without any shirt, in the green lawn and absorbed in Yoga.

As a member of Parliament, he could not be so eloquent or effective in debates but whenever he chose to speak in the general discussions on President's speeches or Budgets, he used to voice people's disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the national leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

He continued to believe that Netaji was alive. He truly thought that he was able to commune with Netaji while he was in Yoga-Dhyan. He used to condemn Nehru and his administration for their failure to search, find and duly honour Netaji. He continued to be the outstanding pillar of Forward Bloc as long as he lived. His disciples, Sashivana Thevar and Mooku Thevar are trying to keep alive his tradition of opposition to whoever may be in Power.

It was irony of fate that he and Kamaraj Nadar could not work together in Tamilnadu Politics. Their Communities, Maravas and Kallars are like the two sides of the same coin, both having had heroic traditions of once ruling in Pandya Nadu and both having been condemned by the British as Criminal Tribes and by the orthodox Priests as unworthy of temple-entry, thanks to their incessant rebellions against the authority of the British and the power of money of the Chettiars, the allies of the alien rulers. Thevar roused his Marava fellow-men to fight the British Power with the Congress, as their shield, while Nadar in-

spired the Kallars to make the Congress their stepping stone into respectable revolt against imperialism. Thevar failed to win the support of Rajaji because of their incompatibility of tempers and approaches, whereas Nadar got the whole-hearted support of the powerful parliamentary leader, Satyamurti. So they pursued two parallel and rival political activities both before and after attainment of Swaraj. Both their Communities have however risen high in social scales and political stature because of the achievements and services of these two great leaders. But they would have gained much more and contributed so much more to the general social uplift of all such suppressed classes and depressed communities, if only they could have hit together when they both were in the same Congress Party. Unfortunately Nadar's down-to-earth politicking repelled Thevar and the latters other worldly intolerance of compromises obliged Chief Minister Nadar to send Thevar to prison and thus incur the terrible antagonism of the great Maravas. However, Maravas developed their self-confidence in politics through the heroic activities and saintliness of Thevar just as Kallars flowered into political and economic prominence because of the inspiring rise of Nadar as the Chief Minister of Madras and as the President of the Congress.

Throughout the decades of our anti-imperialist struggle, he was unable to support the D.K. and D.M.K., though he agreed with their social philosophy. But after the attainment of Swaraj, he began to offer his moral support to their local and State-level leaders. How one wishes that those parties had maintained as high moral levels and remained financially as scrupulous as Thevar and thus gained his whole-hearted and active-support.

It became my privilege to befriend him again during my Tamilnad tours in connection with Swatantra cause. He became by 1959 an admirer of Rajaji because of his readiness to criticise Nehru regime. When Rajaji and myself began to try to develop Parliamentary Opposition, he ap-

preciated our move and offered his moral support to us. He even advised his followers in the year before his death to become associate member of our party.

When Thevar went into jail, under the dispensation of his political opponent, Shri Kamaraj Nadar he was in good health and his steel-like body was so strong but when he came to be released, he was a physical wreck and doctors were shocked by the change. He met the end of this earthly existence in his usual Yogic and stoical mental preparedness and died a martyr for India's freedom and people's freedoms. He would have been glad, if only he had lived until Anna achieved overwhelming majority in Madras Assembly, by routing the leadership of upper classes. But he certainly would have deplored when Anna"s successors in the ministry had fallen as low, if not lower than Congress ministers by their short-sighted and unscrupulous indulgence in political corruption, nepotism. India as a whole and freedom fighters have lost one of their bright jewels, when Thevar died.

TYAGI MAHABIR

[Mahabir Tyagi hails from Dehra Dun, born on 31-12-1899, jailed for 7 years during nine periods of incarceration; first joined the British army and was dismissed for political protest against Jllaianwallah Bagh atrocity, elected to U.P. Assembly, Constituent Assembly and Parliament, Member, A.I.C.C. for decades, Minister several times.—Ed.]

Tyagi has been a terror to both the British and Swarajya Governments without being a terrorist. He had his first experience of the Military Service during the First World War. He fought almost in a military manner with the British during and soon after the Second World War, this time on behalf of Congress. He used his earlier experiences of the military training in raising the Tyagi Seva Dal (Sena) of U.P. and thus built up disciplined cadres in the first years of Swaraj Government, very much in the same way and for the same social purposes as we did in Andhra through the Congress Seva Dal.

Tyagi did not like the hydra-headed factionalism within the U.P. Congress, which was being pampered by Shri C. B. Gupta under the umbrella of Govind Ballabh Pant's leadership. So he fought against it with the aid of his Seva Dal. He was eventually forced to disband his Seva Dal; and C.B. Gupta triumphed. Tyagi resigned from the Congress, in protest but was saved in time by his group leader and intimate friend and protige of Jawaharlal, namely Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. Thus he was one of the very few who survived from U.P's suffocating groups terror of Congress.

In some respects, he is like A.K. Gopalan of the Communists. Both are weak in English expressions but eloquent in expounding their points of view. Both are genuine revolutionaries, equally patriotic during the Freedom's struggle and passionately devoted to their respective

causes. Both were self-educated and fine off-springs of the revolutionary struggles.

Tyagi is extremely humourous and explosive. Sometimes his humour borders on cruelty, as it did when he charged the Central Secretariat with malignant meningitis-hinting that it was dominated by Menons. It hurt though unintentionally, the Kerala Putras.

He can also be extremely telling and highly expressive, as for instance, when he touched his all but clean, bald head and exclaimed vigorously "There is not a hair on my head, does it mean, it is not valuable", in answer to Jawaharlal's helpless reply to my attack on his wrong policy regarding Aksai Chin etc. which were allowed to be occupied by the Chinese that "not a blade of grass grows there".

During the Chinese aggression in 1962, Jawaharlal was unwilling to drop Krishna Menon from Defence Ministry though the country and Parliament were clamouring for his resignation. He said that since he was responsible for government's policies, he might as well be asked to go up arose Tyagi, saying "then either you go out or he goes out". That settled the issue and Jawahar quickly sensed the real temper of the party and dropped Menon and saved the situation.

Tyagi introduced Hindi-oriented, Indianesque English in public speaking in and outside Parliament and made it almost fashionable. As Minister-in-charge of the orthodox Finance Ministry, Inland Revenues, even more straight-laced Defence Ministry, he was also able to make his points effectively. He could infuse life and beauty into his method of speech and mode of Engilsh; although the veterans of Gokhale-Srinivasa Sastri school of parliamentarianism used to ask me, some times whether what Tyagi and adherents of his method of speech, were saying was in English or some other language. After all the rank and file of M.Ps, and they are 750 in both Houses,

cannot manage to learn and speak King's English and Cosmopolitan Parliamentarians from non-Hindi areas ought to be thankful for Tyagi and his friends for caring to utilise their Hindi oriented English, instead of dogmatically sticking to Hindi alone, as Lohia, Madhu Limaye Vajpai and others have done with egoistic Hindi approach.

As a minister, Tyagi has set an excellent example by eschewing pomp and pedantry, and by remaining truly a people's minister. For many months, he used only the jeep for conveyance. Neither corruption nor castism could taint his record. He remained unaffected by the usual influences of sychophants, without losing his habitual broad smiles and affectionate address to all and sundry. It is well-known how he begged Jawaharlal to shift him from a ministry because he feared that one of his close relatives was trying to exploit his place among the fellow officers and his family suffered terrible losses as a consequence. Though not so highly educated in colleges, he was able to rise to the challenge of life as his successful work as Chairman of the Finance Commission has demonstrated.

He could be firm about his status, while appearing to be careless about it. When Jawaharlal listed him as only one of the Deputy Ministers, he went to him quickly and almost chided him, without appearing to be doing so, how he could insult himself by downgrading one of his most intimate and equal comrades-in-arms over decades and as a result he was appointed as State Minister just in the right nick of time. Tyagi has shown himself so unlike most of the ministers who gained their places in Delhi; by resigning from the Central Cabinet within hours after the signing of the Tashkent Pact between India and Pakistan, because, Lal Bahadur Shastri, his close personal friend gave away the hard-earned places of great military significance. John Mathai, Dr. Ambedkar, Asoka Mehta were only the others to withdraw from such a high position. It was only after a national crisis arose over Bangalore Con-

gress decisions that Morarji and his comrades decided to resign but their decision was not of such a high order of courage as that of Tyagi's.

Tyagi is an ideal colleague, and friend. He was loyal to Jawahar. He could dare make him look ridiculous, without being misunderstood. He was extremely kind to me and my friend S.K.D. Palliwal of Agra. We have worked together as comrades for over two decades. He is a good friend of Moslems and he had once been a champion of the Khilafat Movement. But he is firm in his attitude towards Pakistan's aggressive postures. His love of the common man is all-absorbing. He is every inch a Socialist. He lives as a passionate Gandhian, austere and principled. The Great-Divide of 1969-70 has found him in the Opposition in Parliament and the 1970 election, which proved to be such a debacle to opposition spared his seat and he is to-day an asset to Parliamentary Opposition.

UNNAVA LAKSHMINARAYANA

Barrister Unnava Lakshmi Narayana, popularly known as Unnava of Sattenapalli and Guntur was one of the noblest Andhras who played a prominent role in the social and political life of South India between 1916-46. He was never an M.L.A. or M.P. but many a legislator gained inspiration for public work from him. He was not a leader of the masses but many a mass-leader was encouraged by him. He was not rich in worldly goods but he sacrificed all his ancestral lands in public service. He was a poet and playwright and novelist but he never tried to live by trading them nor did he seek patronage from any patrons.

He started his public career by implementing the social revolutionary programme of Veeresalingam, who led the way for South India in espousing the cause of womenfolk, and pleaded for the right of child-widows for remarriage and of all women for equal educational and cultural rights, along with men and who made the boldest attack on religious bigotry, untouchability, caste taboos and who attacked castism. As such Unnava accepted Veeresalingam's teachings against castism and priestly teachings in favour of so many Hindu taboos and bans against non-priestly people and their castes. He displayed, as long ago as 1905-1910, his special characteristic of acting according to his convictions, unmindful of social or religious or even political consequences and painful penalties that resulted therefrom by aiding Veeresalingam in organising the marriages of Hindu widows, whenever the concerned parties wished to get married, despite the opposition of their respective families, leaders of their castes. Smt. Laxmibayamma, his devoted wife co-operated with him boldly. They faced the bans issued against them by local Brahmins and their high priests. They provided shelter to the Brahmin widows who wished to re-marry and

they braved the legal actions instituted by the parents of the concerned widows and thus strengthened the social revolution initiated by their leader Veeresalingam. To have to face such social persecution and painful rigors of Brahminical bans, even during Gandhiji's national campaign against social orthodoxy, for the sake of Swaraj was dreadful enough and Bharati Devi and myself knew how painful and dwarfing it was in our own personal life. But to have openly invited that persecution from the then almost all powerful orthodoxy and challenged it to do its worst, two decades before Gandhian era was indeed a terrific task and Lakshmi Narayana and his wife proved their mettle by shouldering that extremely dangerous mission on the inspiration of their great leader, Veeresalingam. Thanks to their saintly faith in their cause of humanism, Veeresalingam and Lakshmi Narayana faced social ostracism in their heroic manner and emerged as triumphant templars of social revolution, and thus paved the way for the later Gandhian age.

Unnava and Tripuraneni Ramaswamy of Angalur went to England and studied law in Dublin and London and returned to India about the same time, qualified as Barristers. Both of them were good writers in Telugu prose and also poetry. One was a Brahmin and the other was a non-Brahmin of self-employed kisans. Both were Hindus of Vedantic order. They lived in Europe as strict vegetarians and donned Indian turbans as befitting their aggressive faith in Vedantism and Indian nationalism. They hailed the cult of Savarkar, Tilak and Hardayal for their nationalism of Vandemataram. They were great friends with Duggirala Gopalakrishnaiah known for his peerless eloquence in English and Telugu who was later to prove to be the dynamic General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee. They also came into touch with Darsi Chenchaiah, who was associated with the Gaddar Party and who was kept as a war-time detenue in Singapore, Madras and Lahore. They met Gandhi in England before he came to be hailed as the Mahatma. They imbibed the

spirit of Sinn Feinism of Ireland. Their approach to public life of India was more comprehensive and their mission extended far beyond the ken of mere nationalist revolution and envisioned a wider and more progressive revolution, a total transformation of Indian society.

On their return to India, they continued to be ardent patriots. But whereas Ramaswami devoted most of his time to social revolutionary work. Lakshminarayana immersed himself in the national stream of political revolution. Yet as a poet and writer, he worked for social revolution. Theirs was a historic and exemplary friendship on the lines of tribal institution of "Sangathan", united in thoughts and life-long attachments.

Unnava joined non-co-operation movement and abandoned legal practice, closed his office in Madras, and began working among upland peasants of Palnad and Sattenapalli. He organised the Forest Satyagraha in Palnad and he was imprisoned, while peasant Hanumantu was shot dead, in that struggle. He realised how urgent was the need to organise peasants and how difficult to keep them united despite disruptive forces of Castism and inter-village rivalry. It must have been due to that experience, he continued to appreciate my work in peasant movement, even in those decades when most of the Congress leaders were cold-shouldering it.

On his release from jail, he was elected President of the Andhra Political Conference at Cuddapah. He was brave enough to advise Congress to suspend the Non-Co-operation movement, since it failed and Gandhiji abandoned the direct-struggle, and he favoured Council entry. His courageous lead was developed later by Motilal Nehru and C R Das and Swaraj Party took shape out of their efforts. Unfortunately Andhra Congressmen were by and large too orthodox in politics also and so would not countenance any such departure from Gandhian policy. By the time Shri T Prakasam the dominant leader came round to his point of view and joined the Swarajya Party, Lakshmi Narayana

found himself without funds to think of standing for any legislature. When I asked him why he sent V. Ramadas who was not a freedom fighter to Council of States instead of himself who had been a prominent freedom fighter and famous Satyagrahi, he said he had no funds to finance an election campaign. He realised the extreme need for money in such political election campaigning and the realist and genuine patriot that he was, he decided not to venture into election-politics by himself and to be content to help others, better equipped for that costly field of service; to serve the common cause. He disliked the caste-orientation of electioneering. He was too independent-minded to gain the support of Congress bosses. He hated bossism and so, did not try to become a partner in the political combinations. So he abstained from election politics without any regrets. Such was his noble conception of politics, so dutiful and altruistic. In 1923 elections to Assembly he actively campaigned for his comrade, Ramaswami.

He came into contact in Vellore Jail, with the terrorist Shri L. Tiwari, M.P., and loved and admired him for his burning patriotism, and his total devotion to Swaraj struggle. He knew about the efforts of Alluri Sitaramaraju to organise gourilla-warfare from among the Koya tribal people of Vizag and Srikakulam.

He had already adopted Gandhiji as his political guru and accepted his cult of non-violence as the most effective weapon to achieve political and social revolution, and believed that it would ennoble the revolutionary and enrich the society. At the same time, he learnt to admire such revolutionaries as Tiwari and Sitaramaraju and appreciated the inestimable strength and spirit of their sacrifices. He admired the terrific struggle organised by Raju and wondered at the terror it caused to the mighty British empire.

Unnava was a good scholar in Telugu He believed like Veeresalingam in the need for de-

mocratising Telugu prose and poetry so as to make it the vehicle of revolutionary thoughts and the energing and educative medium of expression for the feelings and thoughts of the suffering and struggling masses. So he wanted to write a novel in the language of the masses. He had two types of personalities to exemplify the two contending forces and means for achieving the revolution; the non-violent Gandhiji and violent Tiwari and Raju.

He chose rural India as the Panorama for his story, village life as its cancass and the class as well as caste struggles between the land holding village bosses on one side and the landless workers on the other. He found the class struggle inextricably inter-twined with the inter-caste antagonisms and rivalries. He found village-life so full of social disparities, caste rivalries, spirit of vengeance poisoning social relations and untouchablity buttressing economic exploitation.

He was aware of the cataclysmic social challenge that Lenin's Russia posed to the whole of the world. Unlike most other nationalists and even poets and thinkers of the Congress, he realised that sooner or later, India too would have to face up to the socio-economic conflicts that were latent in Indian economic life and find a solution to the age-old disease of exploitation that was eating into her vitals. He read Tolstoy's novels Resurrection and Anna Karenina and the English novel "Silas the Mariner" and H.G. Wells novel, "New World for the Old". He knew also about the British Socialist approach. He wanted to prepare the Andhra Congressmen and other nationalists as well as the youths to face upto not only world's struggle against imperialism and to India's immediate need for Swaraj but also inescapable problem of Indian masses to liquidate social and economic exploitation and achieving humane relations between all classes and castes. Around this principal ideological approach, Lakshmi Narayana wove the plan for his novel.

He displayed his uncompromising passion for social revolution in the title 'Malapalle', he chose for his novel; that is, the ghetto of the untouchable tribe, called Malas. He hated the segregation of Harijans from the rest of the village folk, a segregation that the defeated and submerged Harijans must have bargained for at the time of their political fall so as to be free from daily and intimate interference of the aggressive victors in their social relations or the victors had forced on the vanquished as a token of their subordination. He wanted to highlight the utterly unconscionable and socially degrading nature of such isolation and thus shamed society for its callous apartheid policy and practice.

The father of his hero, Rama Das was fashioned after Gandhi and the character of Sanga Das probably took shape after himself. The other principal character is the brother of Sanga Das, Shri Venkata Das. He made both of them, Sanga and Venkata to typify a Gandhian and a Leninist, one practising non-violence, the other choosing violence as their means for achieving the desired social revolution. He developed the dialectical themes, conversations and disputations between these protagonists with great skill, and literary excellance. Unnava's heart was consecrated to Gandhian means.

Around these social approaches, along these themes, Unnava developed his great novel of about 1000 pages, so rich in its discussions about the nature and place of religion, literature, songs, family loyalties etc., all woven into a beautiful multi-faceted Kalankari of literature. It has come to be one of the noblest literary achievements of contemporary India. Its translations have appeared in Hindi, English, Russian and Kannada.

It was but natural for him to deal with the role of God in discussing such vital social questions of poverty, exploitation of man by man and age-long social injustices.

Unnava believed in God and thought that he realised communion with God and hailed his Guru of Ongole as the true Sadhak. In fact many of his disciples believed that Unnava was himself a Siddhi Purusha and he, in his turn, looked upon Gandhiji as an Avatar. I, myself, likened Unnava to Rishis of our ancient cultural past.

Unnava continued to be true to his revolutionary role that he wished to assume. So when Ramaswami, his friend stood against the Swarajya candidates in Assembly elections, he supported him. When I stood as a Congress candidate against the candidate of Land Lords and other Justicites, he supported me. When Mahatma Gandhi carried on the anti-untouchability campaigns he joined them. When some social revolutionaries posed the challenge of admitting Harijan girls not only into his beloved institution, Sarada Niketan, but also inter-dining, which threatened to disrupt that rare and hard-built Residential Social Reform Girls High School, he accepted it and ran the high-risks involved in that daring move. When most of the Congress Brahmins were not yet ready to join us in organising inter-dining with Harijans in large-scale public dinners in rural areas and especially in Harijan areas Malapallis he gladly joined me, Bharati Devi and Desodharaka.

Soon after my return from Oxford in 1923, I met most of the Andhra Congress leaders and found that Unnava, with his burning passion for social justice and tested leadership in Social revolution and fully developed socio-economic philosophic outlook was after my own heart. We had many a discussion in our home in Nidubrolu, while he was canvassing rural families to send their grown-up girls to study in his residential college of Sarada Niketan in Guntur. We found ourselves so much in agreement with each other as to how to wring Socialistic messages from out of the daily expanding panorama of Gandhiji's teachings. We were convinced that the fight for Swarajya would be meanigful only if it would lead to Social

revolution. He agreed with my plans for organising agricultural workers and peasants. He told me all about his novel and warned me that my path would be strewn with thorns, cwiss crossed with caste-minded social snakes. His novel is hailed by the Sahitya Academies of both All India and Andhra. It ranks among the best world classics of this century. I learn that several ultra-leftist progressive writers of the Avant Guard are producing plays over certain of its themes and enacting them on the Andhra stage. Thus Unnava, the social-revolutionary of 1916-1940 is proving to be the literary god-father to the revolutionary writers of this 1960-80 generation; a high distinction indeed.

It was that wholly humanised revolutionary who was good enough to be our guest in our village homes in Nidubrolu and the guest, friend and guide of Dr. C. Satyanarayana in his splendid home in Madras. He used to be at home with equal facility and happy comradeship in our rural austerity and in their city comforts. He enjoyed frugal meals as happily as he appreciated the excellence of urban cuisine. He was an affectionate friend, ever smiling and ready to be happy at the slightest whisper of good humour and willing to help to the best of his capacity. His heart used to melt at the sight or thought of unhappiness of others, though he would be as ready to shout at anyone, found callous or cruel to others.

SARADA NIKETAN

Unnava and Laxmibayamma founded the Residential College of Sarada Niketan in Guntur, in 1922-23 soon after their return from jail, because they realised the importance of recruiting, training and sponsoring young leaders among our women folk, especially of rural areas. It was not easy to persuade peasant families to send their grown-up girls to such institutions in distant towns. So they sought my co-operation. I was only too glad to join hands with them. To make it easier for peasants to send

their grown-up daughters to Sarada Niketan, I persuaded my own families to send six of our girls, including Bharati Devi, two sisters, three nieces. Unnava made that great institution, the training ground for many a spirited, competent woman leader for the later decades of Kisan, Congress and women movements of South India. Thus, he carried on Veeresalingam's tradition and broadened his revolution's ambit through this constructive work for our women folk.

Many a full-fledged public worker, among our leaders of women who have become Freedom Fighters, like Smt. Annapurnamma M.P. from Karnataka, Laxmibai M.P. and Deputy Minister from Telangana, Pushkaramba, artist from Andhra have gained their spiritual back-ground and cultural attainments and self-confidence from these twin Lakshmis — Unnava and Laxmibayamma. Sangam Laxmibai, one of his trainees, has been running a high school, hostel and other institutions for girls and also for orphan children from backward classes. She has devoted the whole of her life and financial resources to the service of the long depressed working class sections of Telangana women, in the Unnava tradition.

VAHINI

Telugu Messenger of K.M.P. Raj Ideal

I have developed so much affection and attachment to the 'Vahini' our Telugu Weekly because of its unswerving loyalty and efficient public relations on behalf of the ideal of K.M.P. Raj and the Gandhian Constructive Programme. Strange though it may seem to be, in mundane terms of life, Bharati Devi and myself came to depend upon the Vahini as much as on Kisan Gorrepati for loyal and constructive comradeship in all the political crises that confronted us since 1936. Vahini espied, so soon as the masses declared their choices in 1971-72 elections, that a new constructive and progressive phase has dawned on Indian democratic horizon and therefore threw open its columns, with great glee to hail and herald "Garibi Hatao" and embrace the constructive programme, including the 20 + 4 points and the chapter on Citizen Duties as the metamorphosed Gandhian and K.M.P. Raj approach.

It was through this Telugu Weekly 'VAHINI' that we first declared our faith in full-fledged democracy of Kisan, Mazdoor, Kalakar, Buddhijeevi Raj, as contrasted with the Communists faith in Proletarian dictatorship. Vahini, it was, which warned intellectually-oriented Congress leadership that Indians in Swaraj India would not allow the growth of American-type of bourgeois democracy. The Vahini boldly broadcast the resounding bugle-call "Peasants of the World, Unite" in unison with when welcomed or in spite of, when opposed, to the Communists Cry of "Workers of the World, Unite". The Gandhian plan for awakened and restructured and resurgent Village Economy, embracing the Self-Employment of peasants and artisans" was heralded by the Vahini as against the Bombay (capitalists) plan and the industrial and urban-oriented Four Plans of Swaraj Government. The Vahini

pleaded for the rejuvenation of backward classes, Harijans and Girijans and release all religionists from the stranglehold of reactionary priests, and outmoded taboos and shackles of psychologically dwarfing superstitions.

The Vahini proclaimed so courageously that peasants, artisans as self-employed toilers have a historic role to play, that nationalism has a revolutionary role to fulfil and that Communism or Socialism, if and when it comes to be adopted by any people has to reconcile or adjust or acclimatise itself to their national history, characteristics, and needs.

The Vahini has witnessed with great satisfaction how the Communists from all over the world met in Berlin in 1976 and agreed that Communism has to don the garb of each nation. They also declared that Socialism could be achieved through Parliamentary democracy, and not necessarily through Proletarian dictatorship — a vindication of our stand for K.M.P. Raj.

The powerful Colombo Conference of Non-Aligned Countries (1976) and the UNCTAD and Third World Group in United Nations have now provided a world-level platform for our demand on behalf of all rural peoples and agricultural masses for parity with industrial and commercial nations and classes and also for less unequal terms of trade. They also recognise the need for distribution of wealth between the privileged and under-privileged peoples within every nation and as between nations. Vahini has stood for these demands on behalf of suffering humanity.

The Vahini was also happy to record that the Communist-oriented peasant groups and parties in more than 40 countries met in Moscow at the time of the Golden Jubilee of Soviet Union and decided to form themselves into a World Union; which is happily not so far from our declaration that peasants too have a world role to play and the proletariat have to reconcile themselves to the existence of Peasants Organisation as also a world force. The Vahini

pleaded with the Self-Respectors that it would be unwise to turn their face against Congressmen for fear that under Congress dispensation, only the traditional intellectuals, reinforced by intellectuals drawn from other sectors would monopolise political power and pleaded for united front of all under-privileged people in social and political spheres. It also repeated Gandhiji's warnings to the privileged classes that unless and until the depressed people and under-privileged Bahujana are actively helped to regain their just shares in National well-being, the Daridra Narayan might resort to violent means and cause such upheavels as to destroy our national cultural moorings. Vahini has now the satisfaction of having contributed its own honourable share to the advent of the present-day national decision and devotion in favour of giving first priority to Garibi Hatao, consistently with the renovation of self-employed economy and enthronement of the small man, with his land holding or loom or workshop and enterprise however tiny, backed by all the contrivances that are switched to electric power and service co-operatives.

Both Bharati Devi and G.L. Narayana had to strain all their resources during the war, to keep it afloat. And what a struggle it was to let it take up the new names, successively of Kranti, Gobhumi, as penal securities were being demanded or forfieted. Its presses had to be given up twice. Later even a Joint Stock Company could not keep it afloat. It speaks volumes for the generosity of so many kisan workers and their leaders also of the Star Group and loyalty of so many part-time and whole-time editors and guest-writers, like P. Shyama Sunder Rao, immortal poet Settipalli, Raghavadas, N. V. Subbaiah, Pasupuleti, B. V. Sivaiah, ex-MLA, Timma Reddi, ex-Minister, A. G. K. Murti, M.A. B.L., Y. Ranganayakulu, educationist, Poet Bapayya, Ch. Nagabhushanam B.A., Korla Harikrishna Bharadwaja Chandra Pal that Vahini has been enabled to espouse the philosophy of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj and keep up the morale of different and successive cadres of voluntary public spirited workers in their self-less

services and organisations of kisans, khet mazdoors, weavers, artisans, and rural people and Girijans.

Vahini was served during these 4 decades by many patriotic and progressive editors under the overall guidance of Bharati Devi, Kisan Gorrepati, G. Latchanna, G. U. Rao, Rajanna and now G. Nageswara Rao.

PANDITARADHYULA AND NYAYAPATI

Panditaradhyula Nageswara Rao was the first editor who persuaded Bharati Devi, Lakshminarayana and P. Butchi Naidu to start the Vahini, under the Chief Editorship of the well-known Freedom Fighter, Telugu Writer Nyayapati Narayana Murty. He worked loyally on mere maintenance allowance for a decade. Later he accepted the Editorship of the Telugu dailies; pristigious Andhra Patrika and Andhra Prabha and retired recently on a pension which is ten times the allowance given by the Vahini. Nyayapati served the Vahini for five years and then accepted the Editorship of the Andhra Prabha daily and distinguished himself, in both the papers and also as an M.L.A. (Central) as the valiant champion of national and peasant causes. Nageswara Rao's poem "Gobhumi" about K.M.P. Raj has become famous.

G. Umamaheswararao (G.U. Rao) B. Sc., who had made a name as a prominent contributor to Telugu Swatantra volunteered to be both the manager and editor, without even an honororium or allowance, after our electoral debacle in 1952. He used to write some poetry too. The fortune of the Vahini took a good turn under his efficient management for over a decade and we had not to bear any losses. He was good enough to edit and publish my books "Towards World Peace", "Credo of World Peasantry", "World Role of National Revolution", "Photo Album" and ensured their sales. He conducted Seminars for Rural Journalists under Vahini's auspices.

K. Sabha the famous poet of Chittoor who has distinguished himself by his plays and songs worked for the

Vahini for a few years. Later he served on the editorial staff of the daily Andhra Prabha and started his own weekly "Devadattam" from Chittoor. He has been popularising the cause of the Bahujana.

K.V. Subbaiah, B. A., of Ongole also served the Vahini. He is a racy pen-man. His Telugu book of travelogue "Bharat Darshan" written after having toured all over India in the Kisan Special, has enriched Telugu literature.

B.S.R. Krishna who had been the editor of Weekly "KARSHKA" also served the Vahini. He wrote the poem about KMP Raj versus Proletarian Dictatorship. He has been a leader of Telugu Sahitya Goshti of Madras.

G. Viswanatham of Tiruvur came to Vahini as a volunteer-writer, rose to be the editor. Subsequently he has turned to business and has become the part-owner of a printing press. His book "Naalo Nenu" serialised in Vahini is considered to be thought-provoking.

Whoever came to work for the Vahini sacrificed much and worked only for the love of promoting the ideals for which the paper has stood. When the time came for them to leave it, it was only because they could no longer continue to sacrifice and suffer and not because they have grown any the less enthusiastic about its aims and objectives. In truth, whoever had thus left it have been promoting its ideals* in whatever place or capacity they have engaged themselves. That is indeed highly creditable for both the Vahini and themselves.

* as indicated in the credo of World Peasantry, World Role of National Revolution, by Fight for Freedom by Rangaji (Ed.).

VELUGU – VELAGA SUBBAIAH

Kisans' heirloom

"GOBHUMI", our home, cherishes a precious heirloom. It is a soldier's haversack. The soldier was not in the employ of any government. The haversack was not intended to contain any weapons or bullets. It was made of khaddar. Khaki in colour, it was worn by a patriot; it was given to a peasant of patriotism of Kakatiya-Vijayanagar vintage. It was consecrated in the Ponnuru Conference of Satyagrahic peasants led by Sitarama Sastri (Swami Sitaram), the seasoned leader of Andhra Congress Committee. The Conference decided upon the No-Tax Campaign by peasants, as advised by Mahatma Gandhi in the Congress Working Committee in 1921. That campaign came to be known as the famous Peddanandipadu No-Tax satyagraha. The consecrated haversacks were presented by Sastri to some peasants of Machavaram, the birth-place of Shrimati Bharati Devi.

To take an oath not to pay the land tax, to swear by the Congress and to wear the haversack across the chest, were then treated as disloyal acts, liable to be punished by Government. Only a few in every thousand who enthusiastically came forward to pledge their support for the campaign were honoured by that noble badge of revolt against the mighty government. Nidubrolu was then being led by a youthful Choudary, burning with political ambitions, and he felt sure he could advance his fortunes by supporting the Justice Party and standing firmly by his traditional family responsibility of Village Munsiff. So only a minority of peasants could dare stand by Congress and among them too, only a few were trusted with that badge of rebellion.

The Khadi and Congress haversacks were given to two brothers, Velugu Subbaiah and Narendra of Macha-

varam. They were not highly educated in the modern terms. Subbaiah was a public spirited peasant. He held a fairly good landholding, most of it self-acquired. For more than ten years he had been leading the peasants of the neighbourhood in their efforts to improve the irrigation and drainage facilities by gaining government's permission to utilise the surplus waters of the local drain and thus ensure timely and adequate water supply to their lands in the Krishna Western Delta. He became disillusioned with the Government. He learnt with disgust how the Public Works Department was riddled with corruption (Rajaji, the Chief Minister came to declare it in 1953 as Public Enemy—Ed). He was then convinced that only organised efforts on the part of peasants could make the officers of Public Works and Revenue render at least elementary service to peasants. I was able to persuade him and his comrades to function through their Ryots Sangham. So by the time the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi came to castigate the Government as Satanic or Rakshas he was more than convinced, through his own decade-long bitter experiences, that Gandhi was the God's own man to echo his own bitterness. So he joined the Non-Co-operation Campaign and offered to mobilise all his friends in support of the No-Tax Campaign. Thus he came to be hailed by Sastri, the District Congress Chief and Veeraiah Choudary, the Campaign Captain, as one deserving that badge of Khadi haversack, which was at once an invitation for governmental repression and an assurance of loyalty to the national cause.

For full three months, the peasants of Machavaram area abstained from paying taxes, offering any assistance or displaying any signs of allegiance to Government, despite all the blandishments and threats from the Village Munsiffs or Karanams, their hereditary local officers commanding much influence, and the campaign and marching of British troops through their villages. Peddanandipadu area became out of bounds for the Emperor's forces. Shri M. Ramamurti, a friend of my father and

the Karanam of Chandole (once the Capital of Velamati Cholas 10-12th Centuries) came forward to lead the peasants of this eastern wing of Peddanandipadu. When most of the Karanams, and Munsiffs and influential peasants offered combined opposition, the British and their Justice Party allies found it impossible to know who held what lands and how much land revenue was to be paid by whom and who were all the partners, to what extent in a Joint-Patta held for a joint holding. In fact on several occasions, the soldiers found it difficult to know by what routes they could move from one village to another. In some cases on certain days, they could not be sure of the purity or safety of the drinking water-sources; nor could they get provisions locally for their daily rations. Such was the control gained for Congress, thanks to patriotic heroism displayed by peasants like Subbaiah and Karanams like Ramamurty.

Subbaiah was dark, strong and brave, with broad shoulders. He had shapely face, curly flowing hair and a highly attractive smile. He was over fifty years of age when he became a Satyagrahi. His hands were hardened by constant physical work in the fields. He loved agriculture and cattle-breeding. He was adept in veterinary medicine. He was cheerful in the midst of his big family and large circle of friends. An ideal kisan, he was highly public spirited and altruistic and was generous and affectionate to his workers. He was proud of his self-employed status as a cultivating peasant.

That Subbaiah, whose Khadi-haversack and whose bold and enthusiastic participation in that famous No-Tax Campaign of Peddanandipadu, qualified him for being condemned to pay a punitive tax, imposed by the British after the campaign was withdrawn on the orders of Congress and Gandhiji, was no other than the father of Srimati Bharati Devi. I was studying at that time in Oxford. I felt proud to declare in one of the debates of the Indian Majlis 1921-22, that I hailed from the area of that peasant

leader Velugu Subbaiah. I came to be married to Srimati Bharati Devi in 1924. We both jointed the Congress struggle and were incarcerated at first in 1931-33. When Bharati Devi was about to undertake her under-ground work to mobilise women for the Satyagraha and again when she was developing the Congress campaign of picketing shops selling foreign cloths in Tenali town in 1931, her father presented her in their family function with his much-prized haversack taken out from a treasure-trove. As he adjusted that haversack on her shoulders, broad and high as his own, he told us how proud he was to pass on his insignia of heroism and patriotism to his beloved daughter, who was consecrating herself for national service and thus upholding their family tradition.

He passed away in 1941, while I was in jail, after having devoted his last seven years in assisting Bharati Devi in cultivating our small farm. Bharati Devi paid the fine imposed on me, so soon as I completed my first period of war-time incarceration in the hope of my going home to condole with their family but alas, Government re-arrested me by a fresh detention order just as I was boarding the train for my place and detained me in Vellore. She used to display that haversack so proudly on important occasions of our national and kisan struggles. She offered it to me in 1958 when I was bracing myself for a fight against the Congress campaign for compelling peasants like her father to pool their holdings into co-operative farms, and thus deprive them of their self-employment and economic independence, like that of her father.

VENKATAPPAIAH, KONDA – DESABHAKTA

The first time I heard about Desabhakta Venkatappaiah was when my uncle Ramaswami and my cultural mentor, Anjaneyulu, attended the first Andhra conference held in Bapatla, 14 miles from my village Nidubrolu. They were full of praise for him. Being a leading lawyer of Guntur, he offered to give up his lucrative law practice if that was found necessary to promote the cause of Andhra movement. It was only long after—seven or ten years—that Mahatma Gandhi urged upon public workers to make sacrifices of that order, and embrace public work as unpaid but wholetime activity. I cannot say that I understood then the full significance of that offer of self-sacrifice. In the light of my own personal experience of the rigours of honorary public service as wholetime activity since 1930, I am marvelling at the courage, passion and faith of Desabhakta in choosing such a thankless, costly, self-sacrificing career more than half a century ago.

He displayed similar courage and decision when in 1921, he agreed to throw in his lot with Mahatma Gandhi and merge the Andhra movement in the broader movement for national freedom and trusted that the National Congress would usher in the Andhra State, once national independence came to be achieved. Several leaders who were also working for linguistic redistribution of States and who wished for the Maharashtra, Vidarbha, Orissa, Sind States did not like to join Gandhiji because they were not as broadminded or far-sighted. By the irony of history, they achieved separate statehood for Sind, Orissa, Assam and N.W. Frontier by co-operating with the British, whereas Andhras had to wait till 1953 for their Andhra State.

By the time I attended the Nellore Andhra Conference in 1917, Andhras had come to hail him as the Desa-

bhakta. He presided over that Conference and welcomed Andhra Ratna Gopala Krishnayya as the meteour of our national upsurge. Several of his colleagues, like Sir B. N. Sarma, Sir M. RamachandraRao, and Sir K. V. Reddi Naidu later went over to the administration but he moved from one revolutionary movement to another until he rose to be one of our national leaders.

When the Andhra Association metamorphosed itself into the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee he was natuarlly elected as its President. Such stalwarts as T. Prakasam, Sambamurti, Sitarama Sastri, Andhra Ratna, Dr. Pattabhi, M. Krishna Rao, Desoddharaka Nageswara Rao, Kaleswara Rao, Unnava, Rangayya Naidu, Cherukuvada, Narayana Raju, Nyayapati — gathered round him as his able coleagues and all of them together provided a powerful and inspiring leadership to the Andhras during those hectic months of Non-Co-operation, No-Tax and other satyagraha movements of 1921-22. Mahatma Gandhi was happy over the loyal and powerful support offered to him by Desabhakta and felt happy over the initial success of the Peddanandipadu No-Tax campaign of Veeraiah, and Chirala Anti-Municipality struggle of Andhra Ratna Gopalakrishnaiah.

As a member of the pre-1920 Madras Legislative Council, the Desabhakta succeeded in getting the first grant made to the nascent public library movement. He had to wait till 1936 to become once again a legislator and in that role, he espoused the cause of the poor and peasants and fought for the maintenance of high standards of public life.

He was one of the first to recognise the revolutionary significance of the peasant movement that we have initiated and so, he presided over the inaugural function of the Peasant Institute, started in 1934, in Nidubrolue. He continued to watch with great sympathy, the strides that the peasant movement and the Institute had gone on making since then.

He wanted the Andhra mases to be educated about political issues and desired to help in having the best books published in Telugu. So he co-operated with Dr. Pattabhi and Mutnuri Krishna Rao in founding the Krishna Patrika of Machilipatnam and became its first editor. He wrote a short brochure on the Andhra Movement and explained how the national development of South East European People (then known as Balkans) was being furthered by the development of their local languages, and literatures. I had the honour of dedicating my two volumes in Telugu on "Modern Political Institutions" to him in 1934.

I was fortunate to go to him as the President of the Andhra P.C.C. soon after national freedom was won and felicitate him. How his old eyes gleamed; his small frame moved with emotion and his bass voice gained the precious glints of old, when I announced to him formally on behalf of the P.C.C. that Swaraj had come. He deserved that homage from us, his followers and colleagues for decades, because he held aloft the banner of national freedom during every one of the national struggles and was always in the vanguard.

Desabhakta was a typical Andhra in his emotional outbursts. When so many Andhra Congress legislators were intriguing against the then Chief Minister of Madras, Shri Prakasam, he went all the way to Delhi, though he was past 80 years of age, and almost an invalid, to lead us in our efforts to persuade the Congress leaders, Nehru and Sardar, not to allow the prejudices against Prakasam to undermine democratic decencies and not to allow the MLAs to pursue their undemocratic intrigues to move the proposed no-confidence motion against him for no other reason than that they did not want him.

It was my privilege to have him as co-prisoner in Vellore Jail. I used to admire the simple, austere and exemplary life that both Desabhakta and Desoddharaka used to lead in jails. They never used to grumble over anything said

or done by any of their less patient —more worldly colleagues, nor did they ever falter in their faith in the innate goodness of everyone of us, their followers and juniors.

Desabhakta was so much disappointed at the failure of our national leadership to take early enough steps to form the Andhra State. He pressed for its formation even during 1936-39, when the First Congress Ministry functioned in Madras and was unhappy over the indifference of the leadrs of that Ministry. When later the Jawahar-Vallabhbhai-Pattabhi report also did not envisage the formation of Andhra State, with the whole or part of Madras as the headquarters, he rose from his sick-bed, in all his former fury, and came to Vijayawada to preside over the protest meeting I had convened as the President of the Andhra Congress. He would have rejoiced so much, if only the Andhra State had come to be formed before he breathed his last, in his great age of 84. We glory in him as being the father of the all-India movement for linguistic States, just as we hail Potti Sreeramulu as the creator of the Andhra State.

Desabhakta was a generous and far-sighted elder, who could appreciate and sustain his colleagues who were attaining special heights of national leadership. When Desoddharaka and myself were chosen as Congress candidates to the Central Assembly in 1934, an exceptional distinction for that decade, he campaigned for us enthusiastically. When I was invited by Bapu to the then Congress Working Committee of 1946-47, the universally accepted High Command of the nation in those days he felicitated me on having risen to the place which he had held in the thirties. When Sitaram Sastri was hailed by Bapu as his Andhra representative for constructive work, he offered his whole-hearted support to the Vinayashram.

He was keen on our political life being inspired by high morals and ministers and other political leaders being

exemplary practitioners of Dharmic comradeship towards each other and the public. Such were the Gandhian standards which Desabhakta cherished.

Desabhakta's sensitive heart was shocked to find hardly two years after power was achieved by the Congress that many a minister had begun to fall for the temptations of power and most ministers misused their powers. He saw the justification of my campaign against the controls over foodgrains and other commodities initiated by the British and hugged by Jawaharlalji. So he wrote that memorable letter to Bapuji which expressed his moral protest against that regime of controls and their attendant evils of corruption and conveyed his anguish at the rapid fall in standards of character and responsibility to the public. The Mahatma read out that Desabhakta's warning with his approval at his evening prayers. What all has happened since that January 1948 — 26 years — in the realm of this control-licence-permit raj has demonstrated how low our public life has sunk compared to Mahatma-Desabhakta's standard.

Desabhakta's daughter Smt. Parvati has been working for over a decade for the development of Mahila Sanghs, orphanages and women welfare centres in many places. Her honest, scrupulous and devoted work is very much appreciated by the All India Women's Association and Central Women's Welfare Board. She is now an M.L.C. in Andhra Pradesh.

VEERESALINGAM – A SOCIAL REVOLUTIONARY

[K. Veeresalingam of Rajahmundry was born on 16-4-1848. His Centenary was celebrated by all Andhras in 1948 and a postal commemoration stamp was also issued. He became a scholar in English, Sanskrit and Telugu, though he stopped formal education as an under-graduate, he retired as the Chief Telugu Pandit of the prestigious Presidency College, Madras. He wrote more than 100 books in Telugu in peoples' spoken style and idioms. He was the leader of Social Revolutionary Movement of South India in 19th century, a prominent Brahmo. Champion of Women's freedom, including widow remarriage, higher education, property rights. He initiated renascent movements in South India, in Andhra literary circles and social life.—Ed.]

The most important all India leader who made the biggest impact on my mind and activity before I left for studies at Oxford in 1920 was Veeresalingam. His books lifted me out of my rural moorings and placed me in the ever expanding stream of national feelings, thoughts and movements. Indeed, that period of five years 1915-20 in my life could be considered as Veeresalingam's era. Ever since, I have held him as my exemplar, just as the fabled Yekalavya of Mahabharat times made a statue of Drona, the legendary teacher of Pandavas and Kauravas, and tried to become an expert archer, after Drona's example.

I am happy to acknowledge my debt to Veeresalingam's many faceted and path-making contributions to our national regeneration. He was as great an inspiration to the political and social leaders of this generation as Mahatma Gandhi.

The advent of British Raj over India and the introduction of English literature into Indian cultural circles made a deep impact upon Indian intellectuals of the nineteenth century. Veeresalingam and Gurazada Apparao, scions of India's traditional mandarins, responded to the call of this new influence. Being poets, writers and liberal minded, they rose to the new challenge and inau-

gurated a new era for Telugu-speaking people. Both became the enemies of orthodoxy-religious and social. Both broke away from the confines of mandarin linguistic styles and norms, and rejected the social and literary taboos.

He was grateful t othe liberalising political influence and democratic spirit of English literature and history which awakened our thinkers and leaders to the world currents of social and political progress. He responded, like similar revolutionary and social thinkers in other parts of India such as Ram Mohan Roy, Iswarachandra Vidyasagar, savants of the Tagore family, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Ranade, and Gokhale, Karve, to the messages and achievements of leaders of European renascence. He was essentially a revolutionary, dynamic, aggressively constructive; so, he devoted most of his extraordinary creative energy to speeding social revolution, long before Gandhian revolutionary era could dawn on Indian public life. He was one of the leaders of the All India Social Reform Conference, which was then being held as a companion of the National Congress.

He was the first fearless and merciless critic of corrupt officials. He never spared even the judiciary, whenever he found any magistrate or judge indulging in corruption or unsocial activities. He had to face several times the wrath of officials, but he emerged unscathed from all such ordeals. It is surprising how so long ago —seventy years ago—that he was waging a campaign against all types of anti-social forces. What a contrast he presented to so many of our present-day meek legislators and amoral political workers who witness helplessly the prevalent corruption in all spheres of governmental activity.

Veeresalingam belonged to the Saivite section among Brahminical order and hearkened back to the revolutionary teachings and activities of their Saint-statesman, Veera Basava, of the middle ages. Basava defied castism, priestly superiority and favoured religious and social

equality for women and lower social classes and popularised writings in the styles and words and idioms of Telugu, Kannada masses. Veeresalingam found that English writers were also pursuing the same democratic and humane principles with such good results, and so decided to abandon traditional social faiths and paths and recapture the spirit of the earlier social revolution and thus liberate the people from their suffocating confines of blind orthodoxy and dehumanising social customs.

Those were the days of caste-conferences. But Veeresalingam persuaded us to abandon our dependence upon castism. So even those caste conferences were popularising Veeresalingam's ideas and were campaigning against life-long widowhood even for children, dowry system, child marriages untouchability, animal-sacrifices and in favour of women's education, widow re-marriage and adult education. The Gandhian movement had come later to support all these ideals. But the Congress Party had failed to continue that campaign and in its obsession with the political campaigns, it neglected these social reform movements. Electioneering necessities have obliged it to come to terms with castism. The result has been most unfortunate; the evils of dowry systems, nautch parties, have become so glaring.

Veeresalingam opposed 'idol' worship and so many of our social and religious ceremonies, and sacrifices. He popularised the cult of one and only one God, without any physical form or feature.

His passionate espousal of the cause of the depressed and suppressed sections of our people has awakened many of us to the need for the removal of social evils prevalent in our society. I was so much inspired by his writings that even as a student I began to revolt against prejudices against untouchables and inter-caste dining and educating women. My novel, "Harijan Nayak" in Telugu continued his work. I felt myself attuned to Veeresalingam's trust in women. My championship of the women's uplift

movement was as much due to the influence of his writings and his exemplary respect for his good wife Rajyalaxmi, as to what I learnt during my world tours of the achievements of Western women. Bharati Devi derived much inspiration and moral courage, like so many other Andhra women leaders, from his work, writings and exhortations. I certainly felt proud of Veeresalingam when later on I discovered that the liberal thinker John Stuart Mill had displayed the same respect and delicate affection for his wife.

He was not at all a Hindu-oriented nationalist like Madan Mohan Malaviya. He did not support the political moves of Justice Party which made achievement of our independence conditional upon safeguards for social and political advancement of under-developed non-Brahmin masses and emancipation of women and untouchables, though he was the greatest champion of such under-privileged masses. He desired and worked for simultaneous advancement of our people in social and political spheres. So he was piqued by some of the youths who were inclined to be impatient with his too much stress on social reforms because of their obsession with merely political campaigning platforms. He observed so wisely on 1-5-1918 "we cannot enjoy the fruits of political independence unless and until we reform our religious and social conditions". In fact, he paved the way, for South Indians through his constructive social reforms and political writings in favour of Congress demands including both wholly politically-minded budding Congressmen and self-respectors to welcome Gandhiji's constructive leadership as against British leadership and social reaction. He was indeed the harbinger for the Gandhian programme for removal of untouchability, women's emancipation, national education and provision of employment for the poor and famished masses and the present-day Youth Congress's Five Points seek only to complete his programme and work.

He was the first to write in Telugu biographies of famous scientists, social reformers and progressive rulers

and democratic leaders among men and women of the world outside India and asked our people to think boldly as to why Indians were lagging behind, while the Britishers of the tiny islands could become the masters of vast masses of our great country. He wrote an appreciative biography of Florence Nightingale.

His history of Andhra poetry and poets led the way for the later researches and writings from so many Andhras, starting from the History of Andhras by the famous Chilukuri Veerabhadra Rao upto Arudra's History of Telugu Literature. He whole-heartedly worked for enlarging the intellectual horizon of Andhra people and wrote many books on all aspects of modern sciences and knowledge.

He was the creator of modern Telugu prose, in its eloquence, easy flow and expressive idioms of the masses. His style is so felicitous, easy and persuasive that I have found it within my power to emulate. I did hold his writings as my model. I wrote my "Modern Political Institutions", "Harijana Nayakudu" and other books. Mudiganti Jagganna Sastri of Palleturi Grandhamala wrote a dozen books on political issues and Pandit Gorrepati wrote a number of biographies of national leaders, after his example.

Veeresalingam made special efforts to reach the people with his ideas and appeals for improvement in their social and economic conditions and wrote so frequently and so much in Telugu to educate the people.

Veeresalingam was not afraid of joining issue with the great and powerful leaders of society, if he thought that their ideas on Telugu poetry and prose, about social institutions and habits were not progressive or useful to the people. He suffered much from their intemperate criticism. His was an extraordinary career of incessant service to every group of sufferers from social taboos, bad customs and superstitions. So many of us have had before us the inspiring example of Veeresalingam's work in Andhra Public Life, to inspire, strengthen and speed us

in our march along the path of Dharma, as indicated and enlivened by Mahatma Gandhi.

I wrote in 1917 an essay of 25 pages upon the life, thoughts and achievements of Veeresalingam and read it in the Cultural Society of Nidubrolu High School. It was so much appreciated by my teacher Venkayya from Nellore that he took me under his special care and began to train me for public life, as he thought that I was marked out for it.

When the Self-Respect Movement began to be led by the late poet social revolutionary Ramaswami, I found so much in common between it and Veeresalingam's teachings and work.

Whenever I pass through Rajahmundry, I think of him, seated in his chair as I found him, when I went to him in 1917 to ask for his books. He was so affectionate and inspiring. He was pleased that we wanted his books for our village library. The silvery, smiling canals, coursing through the lovely Godavari delta, with those boats and the twang of the talk of their boatmen of his "Prahasanas", have become as dear as the places and persons of my own childhood environment. I have derived as much emotional nourishment from my contacts with Veeresalingam's places as I did from my visits to the places of Dickens, Wordsworth, Viswabharati of Tagore and Adyar of Besant.

I feel as if Veeresalingam is alive to-day. His influence can be seen in the good work that so many of us are able to do. The present day Indian Women's Movement owes so much to him and it is catching up to the guidelines delineated by him. The National Book Trust published an excellent biography of Veeresalingam in English by V. R. Narla. Even Communists hailed him in their centenary volume as "Comrade Veeresalingam". The self-respectors of Tamilnadu also avow their debt to his teachings.

VIJAYALAKSHMI PANDIT

[Vijayalaxmi Pandit of the Nehru family was born on 18-8-1900 in Allahabad. She was the first Woman Minister in 1936-39, also first Woman Ambassador to U.S.S.R., U.S.A., and U.K., 1947-61, Governor of Bombay 1962-64, M.P. 1964-65....She represented India at the World Meet at Sanfrancisco, which formulated the Charter of U.N.O. She was India's Chief Delegate to U.N. Assembly from 1947 and became its first Woman President in 1953-54. She was also a freedom fighter and was imprisoned by the British.—Ed.]

In the sphere of womenfolk, more than in any other, India is a land of inexplicable and painful contrasts. One comes across within everyone of its States, families with their women being content with illiteracy, indifference to what happens within the social life of the associated caste-groups, not to speak of the other castes at higher or lower gradation and also those which sacrifice so much to get their daughters educated in colleges, married into families which move from one State to another, even venture into other countries with the greatest ease and sense of cosmopolitanism. Yet they are not in any haste to change their social milieu.

Today there are women in Cabinets at the State-levels and in the Centre. There are also women governors. Some have even risen to be the Chief Ministers. And Indira has been the Prime Minister for ten years and been elected thrice into the leadership of the most powerful Congress Party. Yet there are millions of Moslems and Hindus whose women take pride in their social status of moving only in Purdah and remaining in ghosha and they go to vote with their cherished atmosphere of keeping off prying eyes of males. If many hug jewels, in weight, variety and numbers, and most cherish their all-embracing but artistic sarees and love-enveloping blouses, there are also an increasing number of young women aping

with relish the declothesque exhibitionism and expose of Swedish-Italian-cum-American sex-mindedness.

Some contrast could be seen even among wide-awake sections and among middle-classes of rural and urban societies. In 1923 Shri Unnava Lakshminarayana, who had by then become a famous Freedom Fighter and popular author and social reformer and myself who had returned from England, becoming popular among peasants found it so difficult to persuade peasant-parents to send their grown-up daughters to the Sarada Niketan, residential College for girls started by the Unnava family in Guntur. The few parents who sent their girls to that national institution were hailed as progressive and courageous champions of social reform. On the other hand, the daughters from such traditionally educated and socially advanced families of towns had already been graduating from public or private educational institutions and beginning to play their roles in a confident and capable manner. When girls from rural India like Bharati Devi were shyly sent to high schools in towns, as if they were on a high adventure, grown-up women like Vijayalaxmi, Kamaladevi, Sucheta, Leelavati, Aruna, Radhabhai had already achieved their debut into their respective public careers, willing and capable of shouldering responsible positions of influence, power and social service. Swaraj India has provided wide opportunities for all such forward-looking educated women. Indian electors have come forward to accept Indira as their Prime Minister of what has been hailed as the biggest democracy of the contemporary world. These tall poppies are rising to inspire the rank and file of our womenfolk to rise to the occasion and take the fullest advantage of all the exceptional opportunities which are being made available.

Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Kamaladevi, Radhabhai like their seniors Sarojini Devi, Rukmini Devi achieved the same level of competence to shoulder high level political responsibilities as the politically well-known and educa-

tionally eminent males among our public workers by the time India was witnessing the formation of Congress ministries in the States in 1936-39. It was in such an atmosphere that Vijayalaxmi Pandit became the first woman minister in India in 1936-39 and also in 1946 the first Indian delegate to the foundation conference for the formation of the United Nations.

If she could not make much impact as our Ambassador upon the leadership of U.S.S.R. during her period, it was mostly due to the then anti-Indian attitude of Stalin and his government. If we keep in mind how the Western as well as Russian political leaders and their chancelleries and Foreign Ministries were so unused to and unready to welcome woman Ambassadors, we can appreciate how exceptionally successful was the contribution made by Vijayalaxmi not only to the tradition of our chancelleries in these three great countries but also to world's role of women in foreign, diplomatic service. She made a greater success than others either before or after her tenure, by her charm and quiet dignity. Indeed, she made many more friends for India and smoothened feelings of people in the highest circles, despite the ill-humoured and un-Indian tempermental annoyances being caused by others who happened to exploit their closer political relations with her brother, Prime Minister Nehru. India's relations with U.K. and U.S.A. would have been far more unhappy and unhelpful, if it had not been for the noble and patiently patriotic role played by her with her innate diplomatic charm and frank friendliness.

Vijayalaxmi has absorbed the Nehru family's self-confident bearing and style and smile for public reception and flair for public speaking. She speaks well, persuasively and often eloquently. She has used her place in the great Nehru family to project and embellish India's role and India's case in World's Councils. I have seen her at the UN, taken part in the receptions given in her honour in Tokyo, and by our Foreign Affairs Association, of which I was then its President, when she was the President of

the U.N. Assembly. I have heard her speak in Lok Sabha also. She enriches the atmosphere and also delights the audience by her short and broad-visioned speeches.

She is a good Committee-Woman. She listens to others patiently. She is in no hurry to project her own point and when her turn comes, she makes good contribution towards the attainment of a consensus. This did not please others who were too impatient to assert their monopolist understanding of Nehru's mind. Where and when she was quietly paving the way for the acceptance of the pith of Jawaharlal's viewpoint, her intemperate colleagues were showing up resistance to India's approaches or proposals. They have however contributed by contrast to the better appreciation of Vijayalaxmi by those whom they were annoying, if not insulting.

We are all however very glad that thanks to the far-sighted opportunities provided by her father, our great national leader, Pandit Motilal Nehru and her own great intellectual abilities and cultural attainment Smt. Vijayalaxmi has acquitted herself well in all the high positions she was offered and the heavy responsibilities which were placed on her shoulders. She brought distinction to India by the competent manner she chaired the U.N. Assembly sessions.

Unfortunately she gave way to her long-felt and long-baulked fervour for the aroma of parliamentary politics. So she heeded the advice of short-sighted friends to go to Parliament and try to play equally eminent role in Cabinets. And when she joined the Lok Sabha, she found that successive Prime Ministers were not as powerful as her brother Jawaharlal to jettison others, less eminent in their stature on world's platform but with more insistent claims for earlier and greater consideration for their places in national Cabinets and Committees.

So this world-famous statesman could not be invited to be the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party, even when

she offered herself as a candidate, nor was she invited to join the Cabinet. When she openly charged the Shastri Government in the Lok Sabha with the "crisis of inaction", she was very much criticised in the party meetings. When she warned against our foreign policy being tilted too much against democratic powers, she was accused of being partial and weakening the traditional Non-Alignment policy. She decided, out of exasperation, to resign from Parliament and retire into her homes in Bombay and Missouri, rich with their atmosphere of the world.

Certainly India's young women of two generations who have been fortunate enough to enter the portals of high schools and colleges have been gaining much inspiration and confidence from the great roles that Sarojini, Vijayalaxmi, Kamala Devi, Mridula, Aruna, Bharati Devi and Durgabai have played in our national struggle for freedom, social reform movements and the uplifting records of their achievements and services. Vijayalaxmi also has made immense contributions to the awakening and organisation of the great mass of "Indian women", thanks to her varied experiences of the working of national and international councils and the famous actors and her own considerable and eminent roles therein, by utilising atleast a part of her time, since retirement from the world platform. She has patiently continued Sarojini Devi's work in creating receptive atmosphere for other women leader's at national level to inspire our Women and their leaders at States' level and also at the grass roots.

VINAYASHRAM

SEETARAM, BASAVAIAH

Gandhiji's disciples started a number of National Schools and Ashrams in the wake of the 1920-22 Non-Co-operation movement to provide positive alternative to their national call for the boycott of British Schools and Colleges. They were modelled on Sabarmati Ashram. Ashrams were organised in Pallepadu by Smt. Ponaka Kanakamma of Nellore, in Sitanagaram by Dr. Subramaniam of East Godavari, in Chagallu by Prakasarao and in Eluru by Dr. Narayana Raju, in Pedapalem by Hanumantarao, in Gudivada by Ramachandrudu and many such but smaller institutions in other districts of Andhra between 1921-31. Every Ashram had as its very first associate, a school providing teaching from elementary education upwards. Most of the Ashrams tried to provide board and lodging to workers in national work. They also organised production of Khadi and other cottage industries. They inculcated the Gandhian principles, service and practices of austerity. They spread the cult of social service through Harijan, Girijan uplift and Daridranarayana Seva. They tried to fashion themselves as far as possible on the Sabarmati Ashram. I joined the Andhra Committee of Gandhian Educationists in 1925 in preparing the syllabus for their elementary and high schools. Between 1930-33, the British Government practised vandalism in banning these institutions, sequestering their educational activities and destroying most of their libraries, records and furniture.

So when we were all released in 1933, Sri Sitarama Sastri, who later became Swami Sitaram and Tummala Basavaiah started Vinayashram at Kavuru, in Guntur district, with all their properties including the whole of land-holding of Basavaiah as its first assets. They took nearly

fifty acres of sandy land on 99 years lease, for agricultural operations on progressive lines but without mechanised equipment. They started cottage industries and production of Ayurvedic medicines, besides adult education work through day and night schools. Sitaram was keen on reaching the standards of work of Comilla Ashram of Satischandra Das Gupta, if not that of the Sabarmati.

Swami Sitaram joined the national movement as long ago as 1914, as a follower of Konda Venkatappaiah and developed the movement for separate Andhra province, in pursuance of the principle of linguistic division of India. Sitaram used to be the leader of the Bar in Repalle and a leading lawyer in Guntur also, when he heeded Gandhiji's call to boycott courts and gave up his lucrative practice of Rs. 1,000 per mensem in 1921. I saw him in 1918 for the first time in Vijayawada at the time of the National Conference which was held to endorse the United National Manifesto, signed at Lucknow by all parties including the Muslim League. I was told how brilliant a speaker he was. I was not impressed as he was so short a man, scarcely 5 feet three inches, with pock marks all over the face. But once he began to speak, all of us were highly impressed with his carrying voice, and powerful advocacy.

He played a leading role in the Peddanadipadu No-Tax Campaign of 1920-21 and so he was soon imprisoned. Since he had already begun to live according to Gandhian austerity, he did not find 'C' Class wormy gruel and otherwise harsh jail life as great a punishment as the other non-Ashramite politicals found. On his release from jail, he became one of the staunchest champions of the Constructive Programme of Gandhiji and he continued till his Swargarohan in 1965 to be the principal adherent of non-Parliamentary Gandhian Programme of Sarvodaya.

He found wholehearted disciples in Basavaiah and M. Rangaiah. Basavaiah alone accepted the Sabarmati Ashram's precept of placing all one's possessions at the

disposal of the Ashram for social work, whereas Rangaiah spared only a part of his savings from business.

For many years, Sitaram was in charge of the Khadi production in the whole of Andhra, under the guidance of Konda Venkatappaiah and all the khadi workers, who formed the majority of the then active Congressmen used to work under his leadership. But when Dr. Pattabhi and his few followers succeeded in persuading Gandhiji to remove them from the leadership of that major programme. Sitaram and Venkatappaiah demonstrated their spiritual protest by starting the independent Guntur District Khadi Pratistan with powers to have its branches for production and sale, in other districts also, in rivalry with the main khadi organisation, which came to be handed over to the worldly-wise but equally patriotic Pattabhi and his adherents.

Sitaram has continued to be the most sincere wholehogger for all Gandhian constructive activities. No sooner Gandhiji started the All India Village Industries Association in 1935 than he organised production units for many house-hold utensils, soaps, paper, using only whatever raw materials are available in rural areas. He made Shri Saranu Ramaswami Chowdari to survey and write a report about the cottage industries in Guntur district. He persuaded Shri Neti Chalapati Rao to hawk the products of Vinayashram industries by going on bullock carts and displaying them in villages around the Ashram.

So great was the enthusiastic and infectious atmosphere generated by Sitaram's sincere espousal and practice of Gandhian constructive programme, that villagers in several taluks used to visit the Ashram just to see these new activities in favour of all those rural industries with which they had been familiar in their own villages as being the languishing equipment of the down-trodden and socially depressed artisans. Bharati Devi and myself used to join Sitaram, Basavaiah and Chalapti Rao in going round villages and selling khadi, vegetable oils handmade

cloth and thus took pride in demonstrating to villagers our faith in the work and message of Swami Sitaram. Mahatma Gandhi came to look upon the Vinayashram, as one of the best centres of demonstration of his National Constructive Programme. He visited it several times. He was most fascinated by the achievements and activities of Swami Sitaram, Basavaiah and his devoted wife, Smt. Durgamba, Vinoba Bhave, Rajen Babu visited it.

Gandhiji stood for Total Revolution. So he worked almost simultaneously, though not always directly, on political, as well as socio-economic fronts. He used to allow Andhra political fronts to be dominated or managed by Dr. Pattabhi, Prakasam, while he patronised Swami Sitaram and Venkatappaiah and the leaders of the Ashrams to develop certain aspects and activities of social revolution such as anti-untouchability, Harijan schools and hostels, Girijan and Harijan uplift, development of khadi and other village industries and encouraging and rehabilitating artisans, educating rural women.

They courted imprisonment in every struggle and even while they were in jails, their rooms were turned into Styagraha Sibirams and they lived like Chota Gandhis. During their last years on earth, Sitaram and Basavaiah damaged their health by undertaking 'Fast unto Death' for achievement of separate Andhra State. During their 30 days fast, they created so powerful a public atmosphere that Jawaharlalji approached Vinobhaji to intervene and Vinobha persuaded Swami Sitaram to break the fast, on the assurance of his support when conditions would be more propitious for the creation of the Andhra State. An year after that strenuous struggle, Sri Potti Sreeramulu, a heroic follower of the Swami and champion of Harijans fasted upto death, out of exasperation over procrastination of Delhi leader to fulfil their pledge and paved the way for the achievement of not only Andhra State but also reorganisation of States all over the country on linguistic

basis. For Swami Sitaram it was a fulfilment of his life-long demand and also a disapppointment since it came long after his herculean health-breaking, abortive fast.

These noble martyrs, Sitaram, Basavaiah and Sreeramulu to the Gandhian total revolution, lived so fully and in such utter dedication to Gandhiji practice of service to the nation and humanity. They have lived like the ancient Rishis. So Bharati Devi and myself offered our special homage to Sitaram and Basavaiah on the 21st September 1972. She made then her very last speech, fittingly enough in Vinayashram, about her golden experiences of 1931 struggle in co-operation with Durgamba and Basavaiah. It was my high opportunity to garland their statues again on 3-9-1976 at Vinayashram; I then reminesced how Bharati Devi, myself and Desabhakta Venkatappaiah, accompanied by hundreds of national workers came to that sacred spot and witnessed Gandhiji laying the foundation-stone for the Vinayashram. Bharati Devi presented there hundreds of kisan and khet mazdoor women to Gandhiji. In the course of his message, he asked Indian women to follow the example of Durgamba who inspired her husband to give up whole of their property for national and social work. Contrary to the usual impression that women are much more attached to property Durgamba behaved like the wives of ancient Rishis. That was indeed a great day for us of Guntur district. Gandhiji addressed mammoth public meetings in Guntur, Nidubrolu, Tallapalem, Repalle, Tenali, inaugurated our Peasant Institute, Kisan Publications at Nidubrolu and Vinayashram and its universal place of worship. Since then (23-12-1933) Vinayashram has become a cherished place of pilgrimage for all Satyagrahis and adhrents of Total Revolution.

VISWANATHAM, TENNETI

Sri Tenneti Viswanatham is one of the few elder statesmen of Andhra, well-known for his steadfast political loyalties, high standrds of public life and rare capacity for patient and cheerful comradeship in his relations with fellow public workers of all parties and predilections.

I have known him for the past fifty years, as one of the front rank men in Andhra and all India. He used to be a pleasant and powerful debater on the platform of the All India Congress and Madras and Andhra Assemblies. His eloquence, sense of humour and bon hommie Parliamentary role made him a worthy politician among the legislators of Swaraj India.

He was beloved of the gods of the All India Congress and also of the Andhra Congress and Sri Prakasam prized his services so much that he hailed him as his right-hand man. By the same token, Viswanatham offered unstinted and steadfast loyalty to that hard-task master. He exemplified by his integrity, loyalty and indifference to and independence of political profits, how those blessed to be so close to the Chief Minister and Prime Ministers should abstain from exploiting their obviously tempting dame of power for personal or sectional advantages. If only Rajaji, Nehru, Shastri or Indira could have won his services in the same way as Prakasam was fortunate enough to gain, they could have saved themselves from the kind of embarrassments that came to be caused to them by their most intimate Cabinet colleagues.

He was Parliamentary Secretary (Corresponding to the present-day Deputy Minister) to Shri Prakasam in the Pre-War Congress Ministry (1936-39) and also in the first-ever Swaraj Ministry of Prakasam in 1946-47. He distinguished himself as an able, trustworthy and resourceful minister and earned the approbation of the then Chief

Ministers. The powerful ICS Secretaries of the most prestigious Revenue Ministries learnt to respect not only his political integrity and parliamentary skill but also his administrative capacities.

Only once, that too for an year only, Viswanatham became a Cabinet Minister and even during that tenure as Finance Minister of the infant Andhra State, he did more to augment Andhra's financial share of the Central resources than any of his successors during the past 20 years.

He helped the Central Government, by managing for two or three years, the Company Law Administration. In that capacity he had opportunities to deal with the industrial magnates. He earned an enviable reputation for honesty, sympathetic yet scrupulous enforcement of that Law and he abstained from the usual habit of gaining any political vested interest with many of these far from scrupulous company managements.

He could remain loyal only to Prakasam, though he joined Prakasam and myself in leaving the Congress. So when Prakasam chose to be friendly, for a time with Communists, he marched with them into the United Opposition in Madras Assembly of 1952 and so Rajaji lost the opportunity of inviting him into his Cabinet. When Prakasam chose to resign from the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party in order to become the Chief Minister, Viswanatham wisely decided to join his Cabinet and Prakasam allowed this most loyal colleague to continue to function as the Leader of the Praja Party.

I had the good fortune to be in Lok Sabha when he chose to come into it. For those four years I enjoyed his significant role as an Independent in that House. True he could not gain in that House the pre-eminent place which he had enjoyed in the State Assemblies, because he was too old to get used to the newly exacerbating boisterous tempo of Post-Nehru Opposition. But Government

heeded his wise and constructive contributions. He was respected by all sections of the House and as leader of the Opposition for most of that period, I used to derive much spiritual strength from his presence.

His role in the progress made by the Andhra University and by the city of Visakhapatnam through the Ship-building, Dry-Docks, Caltex, Fertiliser and other industrial units is significant for its unobtrusive effectiveness and also by his abstinence from any effort to derive personal advantages. Though he would not agree to join our party, he was always so charming in declining any such suggestions and he continued to offer homely co-operation in every move we were making to fight corruption, irresponsible administration and undemocratic activities of the Cabinet. Standing as an Independent he was unfortunately defeated in 1971 elections in spite of Indira's support.

Viswanatham's contributions to the Andhra movement are well-known and he proved to be one of the ablest champions of Andhra rights vis-a-vis the Centre and Telangana. He used all his political strength and parliamentary skills to persuade Governments at the Centre and Hyderabad to commit themselves to the proposal of Steel Factory in Visakhapatnam. He joined the Opposition, after the refusal of Indira's Government to separate Andhra from Telangana and formed the Andhra Front. When the emergency was declared he was also detained for about an year.

Shri Giri and myself used to share the table with him in the Amraoti Jail. He made such a pleasant companion, with his high sense of humour and charming presence. He never took part in the usual jail squabbles, just as he abstained scrupulously from group politics of Andhra Congress. He has continued to be gentleman to his finger tips and moved among Post-Swaraj politicians with that sweet poise and gentleness, all his own-qualities which

have become so rare in our parliamentary and political arena.

Viswanatham has made great sacrifices in the freedom movement and greater sacrifices for the Post-Swaraj India by exemplifying how a Gandhian Public Worker could remain honest, and faithful to the people even while exercising power. He has also strengthened the morale of public workers by playing his role as a leader of Opposition without any feeling of frustration. He is indeed one of the few ideal Gandhian political leaders of our country and continues to be active in politics even after his 82nd Birth-Day (1976 September). We both have been accorded in 1972, political pension for having been veteran Freedom Fighters and we both have managed to get on without it. He was good enought to preside over my Birth-Day Celebrations in Chilakaluripeta, organised by Sri K. Butchaiah, ex-M.L.A. in 1975. He sent the heartening message of his support, on the eve of his return to jail in 1976 after parole, for my opposition to the latest proposal of experts of the Planning Commission in favour of issuing "Show Cause Notices" to Peasants for failure to produce prescribed minimum crop targets; so alive he is to the interests of poor self-employed peasants. I feel indeed privileged to have been his contemporary and colleague in public work for all these decades.

VISVESWARAIAH, M.

Visveswaraiah and Karve are the two great national leaders who lived beyond 100 years and continued to be in the front line of useful activity in their chosen fields of national service. The whole country gloried in their Centenary Celebrations and Jawaharlal Nehru offered the national homage to them and their great contributions to the enrichment of our national heritage. Most of us of our generation were inspired by their lives and achievements. Bharati Devi and her seniors, like Laxmibayamma of Sarada Niketan, Durgabayamma of National Social Welfare Board and so many other leaders of Andhra Women learnt to look upon Karve as the father of women's education and as the honourable colleague of the great Andhra social reformer K. Veeresalingam.

To so many of us who joined the ranks of national workers in the twenties, Visweswaraiah was as great a legendary figure as Gandhi, Tilak, Lajpatrai. He had already become famous as the unique Indian Engineer-statesman, who had to his credit, the construction of Krishnaraj Sagar Dam, Hydro-Electricity Works, Bhadravati Iron Works, Industries Exhibition of Mysore, all unique achievements by Indian engineers of that era. Right upto that time no Indian engineer was given an opportunity by the British Government and British engineers to undertake on their own the construction of any such great engineering works. Visveswaraiah was fortunate enough to work under the Maharajah of Mysore and got his chance of trying his hand at such great construction works and he was expert enough to achieve signal success in those enterprises.

When he rose to be the chief administrator, as Dewan of that State, he proved to be as competent a Chief Minister as he was a far-seeing and constructive engineer. But he was obliged to resign from Dewanship by both the

impatient Non-Brahmin leaders and the jealous Europeans in the then powerful Residency of the paramount Power. Nationalists all over India regretted that development. We, young people felt proud of his declaration that he would continue to prove by working incessantly for national development and that neither British favours nor Dewanship were indispensable for a Patriot to serve the national cause.

Many great men, even good men somehow fail to maintain their elan for original or constructive or dynamic work, soon after they are retired either compulsorily or voluntarily. We have seen it happening in the case of some of our own eminent public men who had been Central Cabinet Ministers. But Visveswaraiah has proved to be an honourable exception. Some of his most outstanding achievements have come to us long after his retirement from office in Mysore in 1917-18.

As an eminent engineer, he continued to hold to the very last the palm of honour among the swelling ranks of fellow engineers. He demonstrated that South India could produce power through Hydel Works and thus make up for her lack of coal mines and speed her industrial growth. He proved the efficacy of small iron-works, and showed the way for India to make full use of her abundant iron ore deposits. Nagpur had drainage problem, whatwith its pestering mosquito and malarial environment. His report has proved to be the basis for tackling that problem. Visakhapatnam harbour was in danger of being filled with sand. The implementation of his report and the solution suggested by him solved that problem. In that manner, he had always been called upon to tackle the most ticklish technical problems, which had till then defied solution and Visveswaraiah's touch proved to find the solution.

Visveswaraiah has become famous as the father of India's planning for industrial development. For the previous forty years, Indian statesmen from Pherozshah

Mehta, Ranade to Gokhale, Lajpatrai have been insistent upon developing industries, as the principal instrument for India's economic reconstruction and solution of the growing problem of poverty. But Gandhiji's special emphasis upon Khaddar, cottage industries and rural reconstruction seemed to put a damper upon the earlier all-out support from Congressmen for industrialisation and industrialists. Consequently there was much criticism of Motilal Nehru's guidance to the Swarajya Party in the Central Legislative Assembly to support the Tata Iron Works and fight for protection for that nascent Indian Heavy Industrial Plant and its production of iron and steel. Visveswaraiah drew the attention of India to the phenomenal progress that Soviet Union was making by having a nation-wide plan and developing her industries by according due priorities to basic industries. He was bold enough to ask Congress, which by that time (1933) had grown to assume the all-embracing national leadership to switch its attention to the importance of heavy and large industries also. He proceeded to prepare his thesis on the need for national planning. When his book gained national attention, the success of the Russian Plan on one side and the equal success of the Tennessey Valley Authority established by U.S.A. for the multi-pronged reconstruction of the depressed Tennessey Valley made their great impact upon Congress Legislators in Assemblies. So, the Congress Party in Delhi tabled a resolution in Central Assembly and debated on the utility and urgency for developing a National Plan for the all-round economic reconstruction of India. Messrs. Giri, who moved it, Avinashilingam Chettiar who strengthened it myself and other speakers relied upon Visveswaraiah's thesis to support our demand for planned economy.

Most of the Congress people debated among themselves, once again, whether such a national planning was to concentrate on mere industrialisation on the Western and Soviet lines of heavy and medium scale industries or

whether we should aim at a harmonious, comprehensive planning for the complementary development of both mechanised industries and cottage and artisan-cum-small-scale decentralised industries.

The Congress developed a split-approach over this debate. The Gandhian Workers like myself, Kumarappa, Satishbabu ranged ourselves behind the All India Village Industries Association (AIVIA) founded in 1934 and enjoying all the halo of Gandhian campaigns of 1920-34 national struggle on one side and the urban-minded and industrially-based Congressmen who were elected to the post-1935 legislatures and Socialists of Nehru's "Whither India" thesis on the other have had to reach some understanding among themselves regarding priorities in planning. The former quoted Gandhiji and the latter quoted Visveswaraiah. Both agreed upon Visveswaraiah's main theme, that there should be a National Plan for economic development.

Thus, Visveswaraiah became once again a national figure. When the Congress ministries came to be formed in majority of States (1937-39), Subash Bose, the Congress President decided upon forming the National Planning Committee and nominated as its Chairman Jawaharlal Nehru, the author of "Whither India" with its complementary thesis, called "Why Socialism" by his alter-ego, Jayaprakash Narayan. To appease the A.I.V.I.A. Gandhians, Dr. J.C. Kumarappa and those of us who are protagonists of cottage and small-scale industries were also appointed as members. Many of us abstained from joining it, as we felt that it might prove to be a trap or an infructious essay in the absence of Swaraj.

Visveswaraiah was the fulcrum for that committee and Jawaharlal Nehru provided the political stature and K. T. Shah as Secretary developed the work of various committees on different industries and aspects of planning.

He was not satisfied with the work of the various organisations, of Indian businessmen such as the Chamber of

Commerce, Indian Merchants Federation, because their protagonists were more keen on making a success of their businesses and minting wealth without any code of business morals whereas he was bent upon developing industries more to enrich Indian economy than to benefit industrialists alone. So he founded the All India Manufacturers Association in 1941. Fortunately he was able to inspire Shri Morarji Vaidya, an enterprising and farsighted patriotic industrialist to become first its Secretary and later, its Chairman. Both of them together succeeded in giving a patriotic orientation to the ideological approach of Indian builders of manufacturers. They convinced young industrialists that they have a progressive and patriotic mission to fulfil in promoting India's industries.

It was at this phase of planning that I came to work with him and was able to persuade him as to how and to what extent, cottage industries have a constructive role to play, in supplementing the work of major manufacturing industries. He helped me in my attempts to get priority for minor irrigation works and simultaneous development of drainage works, along with the construction of irrigation works.

He was a good chief. He was extremely friendly and co-operative. He had a genius to evoke the best talents from his colleagues. Thus he had the satisfaction to see his erstwhile honorary secretary Shri Morarji Vaidya rise to be his successor as the President and idealogue of his beloved AIMO, the really creative institution of manufacturers.

He stipulated high moral standards of manufacturing and business management, believing so strongly that corruption, sub-standards and adulteration would destroy not only the manufacturers but also demoralise the people of the country as a whole. His disciple cum successor Shri Morarji Vaidya imbibed his "philosophy of rapid industrialisation under a planned programme

for the Country to emerge economically free from domination by outside powers" Vaidya was as unconventionally enterprising as Visveswaraiah and therefore proposed to establish under the auspices of the A.I.M.O., Indo-USSR Chamber of Commerce on the lines of Anglo-Soviet Chamber. Visveswaraiah and his disciples were willing to learn from everywhere in order to enrich India and help her to become economically self-reliant. This is exactly the aim of National Self-Reliance that Indiraji is placing before the country since 1971.

Visveswaraiah's bronze, life-size statues have come to be raised not only in his beloved Bangalore but also in Hyderabad, the metropolitan city of the Telugu peoples who are proud that his Telugu ancestors used to live in Mokshagundam in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh.

Both Bharathi Devi and myself had his darshan in Bangalore as he attained 100 years of age almost as a fulfilment of a sacred function. He was so punctilious about his life-long practice of social conventions, that he kept us waiting outside until he could get up from his bed and donned his dressing gown and then alone, he called us in. When Bharathi Devi offered her pranaam, he prevented her from bowing in the Hindu manner and blessed her so cheerfully. Even at that age, he kept himself abreast of contemporary events; and congratulated me for taking cudgels with the mighty Jawaharlal over co-operative farming. He felicitated Bharati Devi for standing by me. When we were taking leave of him, he insisted upon walking up to the door and blessing us again. Such was that grand old man of Sacred Cauvery river, so tall, so lean, so bronze-bright, with that acquiline nose, firm mouth, delicate smiles and clean, high forehead.

YAGNIK INDULAL

Indulal Yagnik of Maha Guzerat fame died in 1972 with full honours from the leaders of State and Central ministries. Ahmedabad City offered its homage, befitting only giants in public life.

He was the contemporary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in the Sabarmati Ashram. But they could not get on with each other and Indulal felt so much aggrieved when he was obliged to leave the Ashramites that he wrote his book "GANDHI AS I KNOW HIM". It did much harm to him while it could not shake people's faith in Gandhi and Vallabhbai.

He went into political eclipse for over 20 years, busying himself with film-making, odd businesses, journalism.

Suddenly he came into my political sphere in 1936 by beginning to publish from his Bombay office in a Gujarati daily, the "KISAN BULLETIN". I was then struggling to develop an all-India platform for kisan movement and give shape to the All India Kisan Congress, despite the indifference of Congress Socialist leadership and opposition of Communist Party. I hailed that offer of support from Bombay. Thus we came together at Lucknow on the Kisan Congress platform and my proposal to accept his Bulletin as ours and him as its Editor was accepted. Swami Sahajananda Saraswati, the dynamic kisan leader from Bihar, also hailed his comradeship. We only knew that he was an experienced journalist, enthusiastic about serving the masses and full of faith in the revolutionary role that peasants could play in Indian social revolution. I had no knowledge of his previous political experiences nor did I bother to enquire about them; so badly did I need friends like him.

Indulal's dynamic capacity for organisation, his infectious enthusiasm for mass campaigns that Swami and I were then developing and his experience in public relations with the powerful Bombay press made us to rely more and more on him. Our relations rapidly developed into comradeship and we welcomed him into intimate partnership in the fast growing Kisan Congress as Joint Secretary. He came to Andhra Villages, befriended our workers and joined us in our Kisan Schools. He stayed in our home "GOBHUMI" and admired Bharati Devi's contribution to our constructive programme. Similarly, he toured in Bihar and strengthened Swamiji. By the time I passed on the Presidentship to Swamiji and he and I were ready to pass on the Presidentship and General Secretaryship respectively to our successors, the war-time political crisis overtook us and we were all put into jails. Then Bharati Devi became President of All India Kisan Congress and G. L. Narayana one of the Secretaries, during the critical phase, when Communists tried to impose their "PEOPLES WAR" thesis on the kisans. Bharati Devi successfully resisted their moves with all her statesmanship and patience. During Cripps first mission in 1942 we were all released.

By that time, Communists succeeded in winning over both Swamiji and Indulalji to their side and proposed Indulalji for Presidentship, because we were opposed to their people's war slogan. We accepted Indulalji because he had not become a ful-fledged Communist. And he took a centralist stand at the Bihta session, and the kisan platform was not allowed to merely echo the Communist slogan of "People's War", although, he tilted the balance dangerously towards Communists. Soon afterwards, the Congress gave the "Do or Die" call and Gandhiji his challenge to the British to "Quit India" in August 1942. We were the traditional nationalist revolutionary kisans, and we hailed Gandhiji's call. But the All India Kisan Congress and Indulalji, its President, chose to keep company with Communists. It was at that stage that I parted

company with Indulalji and Swamiji, and severed our six-year long intimate comradeship. My friendship with them remained as green as ever but when fundamental differences on principles arose, I chose to remain loyal to nationalist moorings and their agency, the National Congress, while they preferred, so I felt, to toe the line with pro-Russian Communists. That comradeship with them invited for me adventitious enmity of Sardar Patel, because he disliked Indulal for happenings beyond my ken. Mahadev Desai and Rajendra Prasad were annoyed because of their unhappiness over Swami's cult of Danda, which is not unlike the later Naxalite approach. I had to bear that cross only to lose their partnership in the end.

Their honeymoon with Communists was shortlived. Swamiji soon discovered how Communists were undermining his position in Bihar, by projecting Karyananda Sharma and Jadunandan Sharma as the effective leaders. Indulalji could not tear away from the nationalist chords, which he imbibed deeply during the good old days of Sabarmati. So first Swami and then Indulal tried to regain their independence from Communists. They met me in Bombay in 1945, on the advice of Gandhiji with the proposal for our reunion. Indulal used to call me their shield, in their controversies with Gandhian leaders. But they found how far they had weakened their shield when they realised that the local Congress leaders would not show any confidence in their partnership. Thus that last opportunity for our reunion on the kisan platform, independently of Communists was denied to us by local Congressmen.

Thereafter, for well over fifteen years, Indulalji retired into a political ashram in Nadiad, his home town, trained a number of workers, built up his contacts in Ahmedabad city, gained some hold over labour, and kisans, by pursuing Gandhian methods of propaganda, fasting, and organisation.

In the meanwhile Congress Government was becoming unpopular and Congress organisation was drifting away from the new generation owing to the iron-laws of Morarji Desai, Peasants too were discontented with Government and its anti-Peasant legislation. People began to think of separation from the bi-lingual State of Bombay as a solution for their problems. Indulalji, with his keen eye for such a political opening seized his opportunity and gave it the much needed dynamic direction to the Maha Gujarat Movement.

The leaders of that movement met in the house of the Khedut leader, and my colleague the late Dadubhai Amin, and chose as their leader this veteran of many a fight and inveterate opponent of the bilinguilist Congress men. Indulalji rose to the occasion, and manfully led the people of Maha Gujarat, especially the masses of the powerful City of Ahmedabad, through their prolonged struggles for separation from Bambay State.

It was on the crest of that irresistible movement, that Indulalji sailed heroically and entered into Parliament with a number of supporters, most of whom had been erstwhile Congressmen and Kisan and Mazdoor leaders within the orbit of Congress itself. Thus once again we came together in 1957 on the floor of Parliament. My kisan colleagues, Parsurambhai Patel of Mehsana and the late Dadubhai Amin of Ahmedabad and Sabarkand were also in the legislatures on behalf of the Maha Gujarat Movement. Thanks to that almost fatal onslaught made by that movement and Indulalji's, statesmanlike alliance with the champions of Brihan Maharashtra, Jawaharlal Nehru, Chief Minister Chavan and Union Home Minister Morarji Desai were obliged to agree to the creation of separate Gujarat and Maharashtra States. Thus Indulalji came to be hailed as the principal architect of Gujarat State.

Once their special need for separate State was satisfied the erstwhile Congressmen began to abandon Indu-

lalji and drift back to their more profitable political moorings, the Congress. Yet, Indulal did not lose heart and in his characteristic manner, busied himself with the day to day needs and problems of industrial labour of Ahmedabad and succeeded in broadening his contacts with the working classes. In this effort, Communists came to his aid and both together loosened the generation-long hold of Congress on the growing labour ranks of that key city. But Indulalji, having been once bitten in 1942-45 by the Communists, abstained from accepting their whole thesis and contented himself with partnering with them in civic politics. When Indiraji challenged Morarji Desai, Indulal once again jumped at the long sought after opportunity to destroy Morarji's hegemony over Congress, reinforced Indiraji's moves and helped the new Congress to oust the Old Congress from power in Gujarat. He then triumphantly joined the rejuvenated Congress and came to be hailed as a leader of the new democratic social revolution, about which he had been dreaming and for which he had been facing so many political crises. Just as he was savouring that truimph, he passed away rich in age and laurels.

It was our good fortune that we were reunited during his last year, as comrades in the current social revolution, in which we have avowed our faith and to whose political party we have come to belong after all our painful march through many a blind alley and steep and slippery path.

Indulal was a tall, well-built, Aryan-type of a man, fair in colour and big in jaws and mouth and with swinging hands and a fast gait. He must have been a very handsome man, when he got into trouble with the joykills of Ashramites. Even when he came into our company, fifty year's old, he was formidable in size and smile, He was good at the dining table and jolly and happy in company. He admired me and my wife as hosts. He enjoyed our vegetarian repast. He used to stay with me

in my rooms in Delhi. Indulal must have turned a new leaf after his retirement into Nadiad, to have borne the rigorous of his repeated and prolonged fasts. With his Khadi sack, held by a belt on one shoulder, his loose, long Khadi trousers and wind-blown shirt and his gaunt, thin cheeks and broad-forehead he was a golden giant in grey colour. Indulal used to remind us of the traditional Sanyasins of rural India.

As Parliamentarian, Indulal could not rise up to the level of his reputation as the dynamic mass leader of Gujarat; possibly so because he was already old, his voice grew weak and his Hindi was not so effective. He lost interest in lobbying and he carried an air of disappointment with society and some internal bodily ailment. I am glad, however, that he was able to be in the Parliament during his last 12 years and enjoy the Parliamentary atmosphere of live-thoughts and active collaboration with the leaders at that level.

YELAVARTI LAKSHMAIAH - THE ARTIST

Bhatrati Devi of Gobhumi used to be happy to meet, among the artists who befriended us, Shree Gurram Mallayya of Palnad, Adivi Bapiraju of National College of Machilipatnam, both Freedom Fighters and Y. Lakshmaiah of Patsala Tadiparru, Gandhian by his rural environment and personal austerity, "talented and benevolent" in the words of Shri Sanjeev Dev, the famous artist and philosopher.

Shri Yelavarti Lakshmaiah graduated from the Madras School of Arts. His attainments were so high, as a painter, and Sculptor that he was chosen to go to Rome, famous for its contributions to European arts. He must have drunk deep from the springs of inspired achievements of Michael Angelo, the master Painter and Sculptor of the famous St. Peters Church. He gained special training during his European sojourn in Fine Arts in both classical and modern arts. Yelavarti Lakshmaiah achieved high laurels in Rome. He was welcomed to hold One Man Exhibitions in Rome and in other art centres and his paintings were praised by the Press and Italian artists who were competent to judge such achievements.

Since returning to India, Yelavarti Lakshmaiah found patronage from the late P. Butchi Naidu of the famous P.B.N. College, and a number of Americans, associated with the Andhra Christian Colleges, Guntur and Vice-Chancellors of Andhra University.

Lakshmaiah depicted with great feeling on the bronze bust of Srimati Mangamma, a benefactor of P.B.N. College the patience and dharmic attitude of Hindu women. Yelavarti's paintings have also come to be appreciated for their Character-delineation.

Bharati Devi and myself are very happy to have in the Central Hall of our Gobhumi, his special paint-

ing of Mahatma Gandhi with myself at Sevagram. In it Lakshmaiah has delineated Gandhiji as he was sallying forth for his evening walk in 1939-40 accepting my pranam. On that sun-dried brown ground, Bapu planted his feet firmly and his stick even more determinedly. Bapu, as Lakshmaiah pictured, seems to typify what Swami Vivekananda wanted his hero to be like "vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles". I am shown with all my sense of satisfaction of my intimacy with him and adoration for him. We were backed by the vast, blue horizon lit by the delicate Sandhya. The whole effect of the Painting is celestial, in its setting, and the absorption of both of us in the satisfaction gained by our talks. There is somehow an air of high promise of great deeds contemplated by both of us. All this has been infused by this imaginative artist into a mandane hazy snap taken by a Press Photographer, printed in the Daily Andhra Patrika and reprinted for the purpose of our Telugu Weekly the 'Vahini' and G. U. Rao's 'Photo Album'. Only a great artist could have achieved such a master-piece, said Smt. Bharati Devi and she was glad to accept it as a treasured gift and accord it the best frontal place in our hall, by the side of the memorable Painting, presented to us by Rene Cera, French-born Canadian Painter, settled in Massachsetts, U.S.A.

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Rangaji is one of our most eminent seniors among National leaders who are distinguished scholars and authors besides being active Parliamentary and constructive front rankers. He collaborated at the highest national level with our leaders from Gandhiji, Rajaji, Nehru, Sardar, Rajendra Prasad, Radhakrishna, Netaji, Prakasam, Sastri, Giri and N. H. Joshi, Satyanand, Yagnik in Kisan, Labour and has also worked with leaders of leftist, Socialist and constructive movements and he is now supporting Indira in the Garibi Hatao Campaign. He has also worked with Jayaprakash Narayan, Ashok Mehta, Kamaladevi, Aruna, Lohia, Nathpai and several other leftist leaders. Unlike most other national leaders, he has maintained close contacts with the genuine workers at grass roots. His impressions and evaluations of the permanent and constructive aspects of the ideas, works and achievements of so many leaders and workers in National Freedom, Social Revolutionary, Kisan, Labour movements during more than fifty years have a special value to all who have engaged in this second half of the Century in constructive as well as revolutionary work within the total revolution through Garibi Hatao of this post Gandhi Cum Nehru Era. These two volumes will prove to be inspiring to our youths and students.

Rangaji was an Oxford Researcher in Economics and History. He believed in Gandhian and guild Socialist approach; He is the Senior Parliamentarian, having been a Front Bench leader between 1946–1970, when in the Congress and also when in opposition. He played notable role in World Parliamentary forums like Inter-Parliamentary Union and Commonwealth Parliamentary Union; He was associated with Congress Planning and Economic Programme; Public Enterprises Committees and also Chairman of Public Accounts Committee.

He was one of the founders of International Agricultural Producers Federation: He was the Founder - President of the All India Kisan Congress, Peasant Institute Nidubrolu and Foreign Affairs Association of India (New Delhi) and Federation of Rural Peoples, Handloom Weavers and Self - Employed Artisans Congress. He propounded the ideal of Kisan Mazdoor Praja Raj, which was blessed by Gandhiji.

He was India's delegate to International Labour Conference (San Francisco), World Food and Agriculture Conference (Copenhagen), World Peace Conference (Tokyo) and UNESCO'S Gandhi Centenary Seminar, Paris in 1969 etc.

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