

New India

— FORTNIGHTLY —

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FOUR ANNAS

A CALL TO ACTION

BY GEORGE S. ARUNDALE

Who is there in India, who is still afire with Dr. Besant's call to India to stir herself to achieve her incomparable dharma, becoming the most brilliant nation of the fifth root race and therefore the great messenger to the world of all that is noblest in Aryan life?

Who is there who still believes, as Dr. Besant herself was assured, that the heart of the world's regeneration abides in India, and that the centre of the world's spiritual gravity is now in this sacred land?

Who is there ready today and to the end of his life to follow the Messenger of the Gods, as she knew herself to be, heeding her voice and actively supporting her actions, her voice still ringing in his physical ears and her actions still calling to a national regeneration as yet unfulfilled?

Who is there who will have the courage to take her words literally because they are spiritual words clothed in the most gossamer of forms, and because they have yet to be redeemed?

Who is there who examines all other teaching in the light of hers, and accepts or rejects accordingly?

Who is there who is unafraid to be laughed at and persecuted for his apparently narrow and unreasoning prejudice, proud to stand unflinchingly under the Banner of the Future which she unfurled at the behest of her Generals?

If there be such, let them come into the open and range themselves under the Oriflamme which goes before the world as it wends its way from the old order into the new. We will strive together in the sacred name and in the sacred cause of India—Queen of the world.

But we must come together, for India is still sought to be humiliated into the background to the end of western pre-eminence and therefore of yet another war, which God forbid!

Is all this fanaticism? Yes, because there are times in the history of the world when fanaticism of the noblest kind alone can save it. This is such a time, for the violent fanaticism of evil has sought to destroy the world, and only the non-violent fanaticism of good can at last save it, after a violence of good which needs must stem the tide of the violence of evil.

Where are there today those who have in them the power and the dedication to be non-violent fanatics in the cause of good under that leadership which was in full glory on the physical plane a quarter of a century ago, and still remains until India has been led into her destiny?

Fanaticism is unswerving dedication to a cause and to a leader who embodies the cause if such there be. It means wholeheartedness and onepointedness, looking neither to the right nor to the left, unswayable, intent on the goal.

The call is for fanatics, as Dr. Besant was and is a fanatic, for non-violent fanatics in the cause of India's freedom and regeneration.

Urgently is needed the Besant Spirit in this Besant Age. Who are ready to embody it? Who are there proudly to call themselves Besant women, Besant men, Besant youths?

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To represent Dr. Besant, in however humble a way, we must try to emulate her powers.

She passionately believed in India, in India's past, and in India's destiny.

She came to India as one who came home. She lived in India as a true daughter of the sacred soil. She worked for India as in fulfilment of her most ardent desires. She died for India—passionate servant of her real Motherland to the very last.

She had but two supreme thoughts uppermost in her consciousness. The first was India. The second was India and Britain together as the heart of a great Commonwealth of the East and of the West.

If she belonged to any organization it was because it subserved her plan.

Political, religious, social, educational, industrial, artistic, ceremonial, duties—all came within the intensity of her probing power.

Above all, she was the perfect soldier, instantly ready to obey the commands of her superior Officers, and faithful to Their slightest wish.

She lived for Their service. She suffered in Their service. Defeat and triumph were alike to her in Their service. She died in Their service.

Fighting Qualities

What must be our fighting qualities? Those that she had in towering power and splendour, and others we must have.

Reverence—for her and her work.

Faithfulness to her—unbesmirched by a single flaw, faithfulness unto death and beyond.

One-pointedness—wholehearted intentness on her mission and on furthering it in its veriest details. Subordinating all other activities to an almost overwhelming absorption and steadfastness in the pursuit of her plan.

Exaltation in the soul of India—a deep and if possible passionate devotion to the Motherland, past, present, future.

A spirit of leadership—at all times calling to others to follow in her footsteps, but content to go

alone even amidst the indifference, the contempt, the persecution, of her enemies.

A recognition of the Rishis as the Guardians of India, and a constant watchfulness for any hint that may, on the rarest of occasions, come from her for our immediate compliance.

A sense of dedication, so that, whatever else may occupy attention, in the background ready instantly to fill the foreground is the supreme and constant response to the highest intimations of her plan.

A great conviction that she is as alive today as ever she was before she passed away from the physical plane—more alive, in truth. Thus she leads and guides and inspires as before, but we must attune ourselves as never before.

Prophet, Interpreter, Builder—all these she was and is.

What can we prophesy? How shall we interpret? How shall we build?

HOW CAN WE CREATE CLASSLESS AND CASTELESS SOCIETY?

By B. R. DESHPANDE, M.A., LL.B.

(Sub-Editor, "National Herald")

Mahatma Gandhi has declared that in Free India people will be casteless and classless. How can we create such a society? There are many today who believe that it is neither possible nor practical to create a casteless and classless society. But it is certain that unless we create such a society, there is no safety for us.

Castes were a creation of the rigid hereditary workings of the principle of *Chaturvarnya*, which system is the feature of Hindu religion. Today the caste system has assumed a perverted form. It has become a class system based on wealth. With the advent of the British rule, Brahmins who were the intelligent caste became virtually a dominant class as Government servants and members of the learned professions. The peasantry was slowly pushed down to the level of beasts, as the victim of the exploitation of upper classes and the ruling power. The economic differences led to two movements within Hinduism: (1) the non-brahmin movement against the brahmin supremacy and (2) the depressed classes movement against caste-Hindus.

The political currents created a third antagonism in the Indian society on a religious basis and that was Pakistan movement or the movement of Muslims against Hindus. Where Muslims were also the victims of poverty, they revolted against the wealthy Hindu classes.

In a casteless and classless society alone can every member be really happy. This does not require intermarriages or inter-class dinners or asking clean Brahmins to go and touch a sweeper every day. A classless society can be created by abolition of the antiquated system of sanitation. The sweepers as a class can be reclaimed if we have flush system everywhere. Similarly we must have public baths for the workers and manual labourers. Their housing must be improved. Thus even a Brahmin must feel pleased to visit the house of a labourer. The degrading professions like Rikshawalla's or a prostitute's must be abolished altogether. These men or women can be absorbed as workers on land. Begging must be made impossible by removing beggars to a poor house where they will have to work for their livelihood and lepers must be isolated in leper hospitals.

Similarly as far as possible no new temples,

mosques or churches should be built. Instead there should be "Humanity houses" where there should be preaching of unity of all religions and Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Sikhs should gather there as brothers and listen to teachers of humanist principles. Everyone who is clean should be allowed to come to the prayer. The founders of all religions should be respected and anyone who has any grievance should relate it to the "humanist priest" who will have to provide for the poor and unemployed. In this way there will be no cause for riots. The hungry should be fed, the houseless should be given shelter in the 'house of humanity'. This is the only way to create a classless society. Social inequality can be removed by providing uniform dwellings for all. Our roads should be dustless, and electricity should be cheap and universal. Slums should be abolished and new ideal localities should be built. In building these projects all idle persons will be employed. Thus, no unemployed or *gunda* will be left to create riots. If we do not start this humanist development programme, people will degenerate into cruel beasts and the cultured classes will also be engulfed into a sea of barbarity.

New India

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The obvious thing today is to try to get rid of the opposition and make the common union shine out, the common demand for India's place among the nations, and not to quarrel over trivialities and refuse to walk together because the path may have here and there a rut. —ANNIE BESANT.

A Great Gesture

Prime Minister Attlee's pronouncement in the House of Commons on February 20 constitutes a momentous event in the history of Indo-British relations. In announcing their intention of handing over power to an Indian government or governments by June 1948, the British Government have ended all doubts in quarters where such doubts have existed so far and have established their *bona fides*. As a gesture of goodwill by one great nation to another, the statement is unparalleled in the history of the world. The new statement of policy covers no fresh scheme or formula, but leaves the settlement of the Indian question in the hands of Indian political leaders as a whole, and rightly appeals to them to "sink their differences in order that they may be ready to shoulder the great responsibilities which will come upon them next year." The full responsibility, therefore, for the solution of the present political tangle in India is laid on the shoulders of the Indian people themselves, and the task of framing the future Constitution is also left to India's chosen leaders.

The striking point in the new policy covered by the statement under review is that irrespective of what the Constituent Assembly might achieve in the course of the next few months, the British Government have fixed a definite date for the withdrawal of their control, which is what several leaders in India have been asking for, so that the *bona fides* of their intentions might be established beyond question. If no Constitution agreeable to all parties concerned is evolved by June next year, the British Labour Government will then consider whether they should hand over power to some form of central government for British India or in some areas with the existing Provincial governments "or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people".

Thus the onus of a realistic approach to the several problems confronting a free India

is placed on the shoulders of the Indian leaders themselves. India's political leaders will now have to solve the problem of the future of the Indian States which are called upon to make their own arrangement with British India because the British Government's powers and obligations under paramountcy are not to be handed over to any future government in this country. By laying down this bold and statesmanlike policy for India, Britain is sure to rise in the estimation of her compeers in the world who expect her to shed her long-cherished imperialist policy.

There is no need, we think, to read between the lines of the statement to impute motives to the Labour Government in Britain with a view to establish some pet theories cherished by a section of Indian politicians that Britain still longs to cling to power in India or that she wants to divide and quit. On the other hand, the statement has been rightly characterized by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as "a wise and courageous one" and is a challenge to all Indian leaders to meet the situation bravely as they should.

While reserving further comment to a future issue of NEW INDIA, we heartily echo Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's renewed appeal to all those who have kept aloof from the Constitution-making body so far to make up their minds and join in the historic undertaking of forging a Constitution for a free and united India "casting aside fear and suspicion which ill become a great people on the eve of freedom."

Thus, all going well in the next 15 months, an old chapter in the history of Indo-British relations, as rulers and the ruled, will end by June next and we hope, as has been so pointedly expressed by Dr. Evatt, Minister for External Affairs of the Australian Government, that "there will not be any severance of association between the British Commonwealth of Nations and India." And furthermore do we heartily endorse Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's sentiments so beautifully expressed by him in his recent appeal: "The British Government on behalf of their people have expressed their goodwill and good wishes to the people of India....We look forward to a peaceful and co-operative transition and to the establishment of close and friendly relations with the British people for the mutual advantage of both countries and for the advancement of the cause of peace and freedom all over the world."

February 24, 1947.

—G. R. V.

OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

By Dr. MULK RAJ ANAND

What is our Cultural Heritage? In this specially written article, Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, the well-known Indian novelist and short-story writer, defines Cultural Heritage and pleads for an intensive study of the various phases of our Cultural History.

There has been much talk in recent years about the cultural heritage of India. It is inevitable, of course, that those of us who love India, but who have been prevented from knowing anything about its past by a vicious system of education, imposed on us by an alien government, should begin even if belatedly to discover our heritage. Naturally, the serious study of India's cultural heritage, as the writing of Indian history, is now mainly the responsibility of our own intellectuals. And the three volumes of *India's Cultural Heritage* issued by the Ramkrishna Centenary, and Jawaharlal Nehru's historical writings, are indicative of the emerging awareness among our compatriots that we alone can bring the sympathy needed for an intimate survey of our past.

We are not chauvinist either and welcome the interest in our culture displayed by outsiders and, as we believe that any future civilisation will be the product of the joint efforts of the best men in the shrunken world of today, we welcome among our midst all those who love us as much for our strengths as for our weaknesses.

As the interpretation of our culture proceeds apace, however, we have to cultivate a certain detachment to temper both the doubting attitude of the foreigners and much of the sentimental affection of our own compatriots for our country, and we have to ask few fundamental questions!

The Meaning of Cultural Heritage

What precisely do we mean by our cultural heritage? Is it worth our while to resurrect from our past the memories of what, at their best, are only certain ideas and realities which are lost in myth and legend? And what value have they for our broken and tormented society of today? And, if it is worth our while to save this heritage, how is it to be saved?

Some years ago, Mr. Paul Valenry, the great French Symbolist-poet, roundly declared that the past of civilization was a dead weight suitably entombed in the sepulchres of academic history and that it was better for the world to throw aside the weight of tradition and embrace the world with a fresh vision. And there is a seeming confirmation of this view in the fact which most English historians of India adduce, without asking the why and how of it, that the Hindus never wrote serious history.

It would seem at first sight that the ancient Hindus stand for a simplification that, by rejecting, the past may yield the leisure to luxuriate in a timeless present. But, I suspect, that the very contrary of it is true, and our definition of our cultural heritage and the writing of history will be the more adequate if we get down to the very root of this matter.

The writing of history presupposes the sense of time. But since time is more susceptible to change than space, it becomes easy for the superficial to think of historical facts in terms of certain fixed ideas or symbols, like Kings and Queens, without going into the ramifications of all those dynamic struggles and movements generated by the people. So that we often tend to regard the inert museum piece as one form of our cultural heritage and the

traditional values and conventions established by polite society as another.

Whereas our cultural heritage, if it means anything at all, can only be looked at socially and biologically in so far as we are heirs to life, in so far as we are the products of a multitude of forces, acting and reacting on each other, through the amalgamation not only of the fundamental economic and political values, but of all the superstructure of belief and reason which are summed up in folk culture, religious and aesthetic values, national and cosmopolitan values, and in the private values of individuals, from sentimental experience to scientific opinion and logical reasoning.

The Beginnings of Culture

The beginnings of culture were in the tilling of the soil, the rearing of silkworms and flowers. Therefore, its sources lie in the life of the peoples, in the feelings and aspirations of the ordinary folk around their work, even though it expresses itself in universal forms through abstract ideas which define ultimate values and excellencies, archetypes of perfection. If we contemplate our past heritage, therefore, we can only look at it, in the words of a savant, 'as if it were a great tree rooted in the soil though it soars to the sky.'

And, even in looking at our cultural heritage thus, we are not merely accepting the yearnings and the struggles of our ancestors, as well as the values, notions and concepts they evolved, but in full view of the needs of the moment we seek to assimilate, to realise, to transform what we accept into the pattern of our own existence.

All these historical beginnings, all these heritages, are not to be viewed as merely so many abstract ideas and theories, which will illumine our present problems and which will help us through the revival of this creed, or that dogma, to live anew, but we have to regard these histories as facts, realities, the achievements of the human species which must be ordered and arranged and submitted to the tests of the living consciousness, of actuality, to see how much and what they have contributed to the making of us. And in the cross-fertilisation of the literature and the art of the past with the life of today we weave a web that embraces our multifarious strivings. Our cultural heritage does not remain, then, merely the decorative array of a number of works of art in our museums which tickle our national pride, but becomes the embodiment of a living tradition.

It is precisely because none of the historians of India have so far attempted to see history as embodied in the myths and legends of our country, in the comic and tragic folk tales of our peasantry as well as in the symbolic designs of our amorphous religions, that most of them think India has no history.

It is because many of them trace the history of our civilisation in terms of generalities, rather than as the story of the groups of little peoples, who inhabited our landscape, with certain manners and customs, performing certain deeds and pronouncing certain words, that we get the hash and rehash of long familiar generalisations passing for appreciation of Indian culture.

Any survey of our past heritage which does not study it in relation to our own time, but aims to

borrow a theory or a way of life from history is doomed to failure. Especially as, in the case of India, our old way of life and our ancient ideals are wrapped up in religious philosophy of Hinduism which, the Yogis of Bloomsbury and California apart, the vast majority of our peoples neither accept nor reject, but believe as a heterogeneous sum of formulæ, which in practice they seek most of the time to respect as puja path, even as they allow constant encroachments on its taboos by the forms of the new modern industrial civilisation.

It is All in Vain

The analysis of most of the historians of our culture is the usual one, familiar by now even to the proverbial intelligent man for whom guide books are written: There were the Aryan conquerers of India, who wrote the Vedas, and their successors, who composed the epics, Ramayana and the Mahabharata and evolved the caste system. Then there were other conquerers, the Scythians, the Huns, the Mughals, who all did their bit—especially the Mughals. Nowadays, of course, the historians begin their books earlier than their predecessors, for, as a result of the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro and Harrappa, some evidence of a unique layer of Indian civilization of an earlier date has become available. The general idealism of the Vedanta looms large in all these surveys. A brief reference to the dramatists of the Classical age, and to the grammarians of the Mediaeval period and the whole business is rounded off by an exposition of Vaishnavism, Saivism and Saktism.

One looks in vain in such surveys for any knowledge about the original neolithic inhabitants of India, for a description of the flights of fancy evidenced in their lovely stone-carvings of tree spirits, or for the myths embodied in the heavy monoliths of Mother Earth itself. Have these historians, one asks, ever read the more human stories included in the Mahabharata, or seen the significance of some of the moral ideas enshrined in the myths and the legends that became current in the various periods?

It is likely that the peasant, the potter, the maker of toys and the handicrafts of any time may give a far truer picture of developments than the currents which are supposed to run through the various periods. In fact, it may be that the series of poems and pictures around the Krishna cult are more useful to the cultured person of today than the allegorical generalisations which interpret them, important as these latter are. For, it is in a synthesis of the beauty, the subtlety and the human qualities of past culture with that of our own day, that lies our hope of using our heritage effectively.

The jibe that the Hindus never wrote any history cannot be sustained in the face of the imaginative work of a whole succession of poets, saints, artists, priests & story tellers, who, though they may not yield such respectable evidence as our scientific historians desire, certainly continued to develop new folk forms almost century by century. And, however, indeterminate these early periods may be, there is enough in the vast mass of stories and ballads, lyrics and epics to make the basis of a comprehensive survey of the

societies from which these documents of human culture sprang up.

The two Points of Views

If, indeed, the choice is to be made between the bird's-eye point of view of studying Indian history and the world's-eye point of view, I for one would plump for the latter. For, the bird's-eye point of view involves an emphasis on the Vedantic truth, as it has been interpreted by Shankara, for instance: "The oversoul is the one eternal verity." "The rest is illusion."

The world's-eye point of view shows that our past is not one thing or the other, but enshrined in our various energies, in our various strengths and weaknesses, in our many achievements and many failures, and that it is essentially human. One God, one book, one leader, one country, was never the slogan of our peoples, and dogmatism and fanaticism were discouraged. And in the vast majority of the saints of India, especially in the Mediaeval poets, Kabir, Chaitanya, Nanak, Nam Dev and Tuka Ram, the concern for a human truth, a human philosophy and a human religion is most pronounced, probably because sprung from the soil, they conceded a great deal to the little people, whose only virtue is always the heart.

It is often asserted that the character of the early societies of India was static over long periods and that the later feudalism showed a continuity and sameness which makes a study of its various phases superfluous. But how then are the variations in art forms to be explained? Did not even the caste system take a long time to develop? And was not the revolt of the Buddha against the metaphysical idealism of the Brahmins symptomatic of a great ferment whose cultural impulses resulted from the people's urge for a more humanised religion? And how did the Indian sensibility flow out again, after the development of a great many different schools of philosophical thought in the drama of the golden age, the paintings of Ajanta and in the tender lyricism of those intricate carvings of Sanchi and Amravati, with all the warmth of a passionate life bursting through the moon-breasts and wine-jar hips of lovely women involved in festivals of dance and song? And why the exuberant vitality of mediaeval Indian sculpture, so different from the Classical restraint of the Gupta period? How came it to be that the tradition of fresco-painting lapsed for so many centuries only to re-emerge through certain survivals in the folk art of Gujarat of the 15th century and the Rajput paintings of the 18th and the 19th centuries? Why the rich sensuous, lyrical, as well as epic love of poetry of the mediaeval singers? And how the contemporary decadence?

All these changes hark back to slow changes in the social life of India, which will have to be studied in all its ramifications, in terms of the creative impulses of our ancestors and in terms of the forces that they generated, if it is to be rescued from the fossilised generalising mind, and if the past of India is to become ours. Meanwhile, it is obvious that the real history of India has not yet begun to be written, and the whole of Indian culture is waiting to be claimed by its true inheritors.

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Religion and Art have ever been twin-angels. Let us follow them as they point to the East, where the fair Dawn-Maidens are tinting our earth-born clouds with their rose-tipped fingers, to welcome the Rising Sun of India, as He leaps across the horizon, and floods our world with the glory of His unveiled face.—ANNIE BESANT.

JAI PRAKASH NARAIN

BY KANJI DWARKADAS

India today is on the threshold of her political freedom. Already an Interim all-Indian Government of India has been set up, headed by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who has spent the fifteen best years of his life in British jails. India at last has been given the opportunity to make progress on all fronts for the happiness and prosperity of her people.

The progress that India makes in the crucial years just ahead will depend upon her present leaders. Except for Pandit Nehru, who is fifty-seven, most of these are already over sixty-five. But India has one prominent political leader who is only forty-three. This is Jai Prakash Narain, the tall, well-built dynamic leader of the Congress Socialist Party. Narain is not so well known yet outside India, but in India he has secured an outstanding place for himself. Though he differs radically from both Gandhi and Nehru in his point of view, he has been able to win their respect, not only for his sincerity of purpose, but also for his strong and determined leadership. What kind of man is this Narain and what has he done, what is his background and what can we expect of him in view of his past activities?

Jai Prakash has had an interesting career. He received his higher education at the University of Chicago, in the United States, where he spent seven years in the nineteen twenties. After leaving the University, he worked in an American plant, to gain practical experience. Here he read Marx and was influenced by Marx's philosophy; and, I am told, he was for some time a Communist. Narain belongs to a middle class family, and his father was an official in a British Indian Court. In view of his political activities of the past fifteen years, it is interesting to note that he began his career as secretary to Mr. G.D. Birla, one of the most prominent nationalist industrialists of India. But this job he kept for less than a year. His mind was on politics, and he had a little trouble with the police over his getting into India some books which the government considered objectionable.

Narain was taken over by the Secretariat of the All-India Congress, working under Pandit Nehru in Allahabad. From there he went to Bombay and worked with the late Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, leader of the opposition in the Indian Legislative Assembly. He came to know Mahatma Gandhi through his young wife, who was and still is a close disciple of Gandhi, accepting both his religious beliefs and his spinning-wheel economy. But to Narain, Gandhi's ideas seemed medieval. He himself is in no strict sense religious, his only "religion" being service of mankind in general, and of India and of the underdog in India in particular.

All this time Narain was growing more leftist, and he and his friends finally formed the Congress Socialist Party of India. This is the extreme left wing of the Congress and is not so much a party as a powerful group of highly educated intellectuals, believing in mass-movements. It has no close affiliation with Socialist parties abroad. Its strongest assets are the strong will and determination of its leaders and their power in rousing the emotions of the masses, and its biggest following is among the student world of India. It has not accepted in principle or in practice Mahatma Gandhi's policy of non-violence. For many years, however, Narain and his friends concurred in the Mahatma's political philosophy and did not take steps leading to violence, although they brought continuous pressure to bear

privately on Gandhi and his right-wing friends. The fact that there were Congress governments for the two and a half years from 1937 to 1939 also kept the Congress Socialist Party from working against the existing constituted authorities in the Provinces.

But Prakash Narain and his colleagues of the Congress Socialist Party were not happy with this situation. He was one hundred per cent anti-British, and so far as he was concerned "Quit India" was no mere political slogan—he was willing to use force to back it. Finally, after the outbreak of war, the British government's failure to deal honorably and fairly with the Indian problem gave Narain an opportunity to plunge into anti-British government activities. He and his party organized the sabotage movement which began on the ninth of August, 1942, when most of the Congress leaders were suddenly taken to jail, and which lasted well into 1945. At one time, for a period of four to five months, they made things very uncomfortable indeed for the British Government.

The story of this movement has yet to be written, and the one who can write it best is Prakash Narain himself. I hope some day he will. He has had several convictions and has spent many years in jail. He holds the record as a political prisoner for having escaped from jail and also for smuggling out to the world letters advising further activities. How badly he was treated by the British authorities while in jail is not known and he is not anxious to talk about it. He has also been reluctant to take the world into his confidence as to the kind of life he was leading while working underground. The few details which have come out indicate that he was travelling all over the country, by train, by bus, on foot, was welcomed and given hospitality by the people, and that he suffered terrible privations, went through periods of intense hardship and discomfort. He braved many dangers, on the lines of the French Maquis during 1941-1944.

Narain is a steady, silent organizer and most of his work has been accomplished through well-organized effort, but he is also an extremely popular speaker.

An Interview with Narain

He openly and honestly declares that he does not accept the Mahatma's non-violence theory, and his fiery political speeches and other activities would lead one to expect him to be a very rough and unpleasant fellow. I do not think I do him any injustice if I say that he and his friends were responsible for the sabotage of trains in many different parts of the country between 1942 and 1944.

I frankly disagree with this type of activity, which means to me a senseless loss of human lives, and I felt extremely unhappy that so capable a man as he should concentrate his effort on destructive work. Since I felt so prejudiced against him, I thought I would do well to meet him and talk things over. He readily agreed to see me in Bombay just a week before I left for America. This was at a time when very delicate negotiations were taking place with the British mission sent by Prime Minister Attlee to bring about a political settlement in India.

Narain had made statements opposing any compromise settlements, and when I saw him I told him it was not helpful to recreate the August 1942 mentality and launch another movement of violence. I reminded him how, every time there was a stoppage-

of work or hartals for political reasons, workers were always the losers. He did not deny that the working-classes would have to suffer if such a movement was launched, but added that suffering was bound to come in the struggle for freedom, and that it would be only temporary. Narain was fully conscious of the low standard of living of the working-classes, their sub-standard earnings, the overcrowded and insanitary housing conditions, and I could see that he realized what all this meant in terms of human misery, unhappiness, degradation and demoralization. He spoke with genuine emotion, and his words—slowly and deliberately uttered—obviously came from deep conviction. He felt it was essential to rouse public opinion, which could, he added, be brought about through proper study and exposure of the existing conditions. With that end in view, he meant to organize study classes of students, whose youth and enthusiasm and patriotism were great assets in the fight for freedom, but could be channeled into a more useful direction through study and definite, constructive plans.

Even at that time Narain was of the opinion that unless the British proposals were really meant to give full freedom to India, he would not support them. Later, in June, he took a definite stand in opposition to the British proposals, and when the compromise settlement was also rejected by the Congress—unfortunately, to my way of thinking—it gave him an opportunity to launch a new attempt to obstruct and paralyze the British government. In the month of July, strikes broke out all over the country. The postal and telegraph strikes, paralyzing the trade and commerce of Bombay, were followed by sympathetic strikes of students, clerks, industrial workers and what not. Fortunately, Lord Wavell and the British government asked Nehru to form a new Interim Government of India. In the meantime Nehru had become President of the Indian National Congress and he invited Narain to join his Working Committee. Narain refused on the ground that his policies differed from those of Gandhi and Nehru. As if to confirm this, Nehru made a statement advising the people of India against work stoppages on the ninth of August, the anniversary of the 1942 movement; Prakash Narain made a contrary statement, advising people to observe work stoppage on that date.

And yet, when Nehru formed his all-Indian government on September 2, he gained his first victory with Narain's decision to join the Congress Working Committee. This clearly indicated that Narain was not going to obstruct Nehru's government. In spite of all his desperate activities Narain is very gentle and winning, both in appearance and behaviour. By joining the Working Committee he has proved that he is also not devoid of statesmanship. He has made a grand gesture. I admit that I was prejudiced against this man, but when I met him on May 11, I realized what a great asset a man of his capacity and dynamic energy will be to the country, if he can divert his activities into constructive channels. The welfare of the peasants and workers is dear to his heart, and, with the government of Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and their able colleagues in office, he has excellent opportunities of achieving his life's goal. The British have as good as "quitted" India. It is all a question of a few months, and the "quitting" will be done in a friendly and honorable way, resulting, I hope, in a real friendship between the two peoples, whether India becomes a Dominion or not. In a recent statement Jai Prakash Narain has definitely given it as his opinion that India will

not remain a part of the British commonwealth, but will insist upon complete independence.

Narain's Beliefs

In regard to his joining the Working Committee, Jai Prakash Narain said: "My joining the Working Committee was a token of Congress solidarity. Furthermore, all the prominent members of the Working Committee having joined the Central Government, I felt there was a need, in some manner, to emphasize the popular, non-governmental, revolutionary character of the Congress."

Narain's attitude toward the Communists and the Communist Party is worthy of note. In his articles and speeches, which have recently been published in India under the title *Toward Struggle*, he emphasizes the fact that he is prepared to cooperate with anybody and everybody in India except with the Communist Party and the Communists. His reasons for this definitely hostile attitude toward the Communists were clearly expressed in his talk with me. He said, "I consider the Communists Quislings. They take their orders from a foreign government, and they would obey such orders even if opposed to the country's interest in a time of real crisis. They are therefore no friends of India."

The Indian National Congress, like the British Labour Party, has now ousted the Communists from its fold. As a result of this opposition from the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party, India's Communist Party is today numerically and otherwise much weaker than at any time in the past twenty years. And, if all goes well, as the new government starts functioning and gains friends, the Communist Party will grow weaker and weaker. On this question, I believe, Jai Prakash will make no compromise. He will fight Indian and foreign Communists to a finish and will not let them interfere with the internal affairs of the country.

On another important question, Jai Prakash is equally firm. He will never agree to the division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan. He has always felt that such unholy compromises for apparently temporary gains lead to nothing but trouble. And, therefore, he will not stand any dictation from the Muslim League.

For Mahatma Gandhi, Jai Prakash has great respect and affection, but he feels that the Mahatma belongs to the 1921 age, and what is wanted in India is the 1942 age—a spirit of daredevil defiance regardless of its cost.

I see great future for Jai Prakash Narain, with his dynamic energy, his great capacities, his gentle spirit and unselfish devotion to the motherland. It is fruitless to ask in India today who belongs to the right wing and who to the left wing, and how one side will get the better of the other. There should be no question of the right and left wing in India today. There should be no question of any political party working merely for the good of the party, on partisan lines. There can be only one party—the Party for India, functioning as one solid group. The country must be industrialized, agriculture must be improved, earnings must go up, and the standard of living must be improved, the peasant and farmer and industrial worker must be provided with happy working and living conditions. The education and health of the whole country must be taken in hand, social security legislation must be passed, sickness, unemployment and old age must be provided for, more food must be grown to feed India's starving millions. The children of the masses must be brought up under conditions that will insure good health, happiness and the dignity of human life, and this means the liquidation



of the caste system and the removal of all difficulties in the way of the untouchable.

This is the big programme for India. Where, in this programme, can there be any quarrel between the right and the left? It is a common programme for all parties in India. I am sure that Jai Prakash realizes India's fundamental problems as clearly as does any

other political leader and will contribute his share to their solution. If he takes this constructive course, a great future is in store for him. Jai Prakash Narain may well be one of the leading lights in the future government of India.

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FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

BY ROHIT MEHTA

In all Constitutions, the Fundamental Rights of Citizenship naturally form a very important section, in as much as they define the freedom of the individual in relation to the state to which he or she belongs. It is true that a mere enunciation of these Rights does not grant freedom to the individual, as everything will depend upon the manner in which the provisions of the constitution are put into operation by the Executive of the State. The Section under Fundamental Rights may remain a dead-letter as it has remained where totalitarian power has crushed all individual liberties. But still a definite statement about Fundamental Rights does give to the individual a security under law, and if the Executive of a country defies the very law under which it is supposed to work, it is left to the individual to uphold the law and in so doing to agitate for a change of the government. In the absence of a clear enunciation of the Fundamental Rights, the individual has no constitutional footing on which to stand and agitate for the maintenance of his political and constitutional rights. In such circumstances the individual must resort to extra-constitutional measures, and in so doing bear all the consequences to his life and property, as have been borne by those who have fought for human rights in all ages. Behind the Bill of Rights in the constitutions of modern states lies a record of heroic and selfless struggles of those who have stood for individual freedom against the tyrannies of dictatorial and irresponsible executives in all countries and in all ages. The Bill of Human Rights has become an integral part of all democratic constitutions because of the sacrifices of life and property made at the altar of Liberty by those who regarded the Freedom of the individual as of greater importance than all the wealth and riches of the world. The constitution of Free India, now being framed by the Constituent Assembly, will assuredly be of a democratic nature in which the state shall derive all its power from the people of this land. The people who invest the state with this power must naturally demand a statutory assurance with regard to the protection and the preservation of their rights. What are these Fundamental Rights which all citizens of India must enjoy and which must be incorporated in the constitution of this country?

1. *The Right to Maintenance*: All citizens of this land by virtue of their birth and residence in this country must be assured of economic security. It means the state must provide suitable work for all, which includes the payment of living wage, or if work cannot be provided for, it must look after their maintenance. A political franchise without economic security is meaningless.

2. *Right to adequate Leisure*: Every citizen in India must have sufficient leisure which he or she must be free to organise. With advancement of science people will be required to spend less and less time in activities for economic wealth and will therefore be more and more free to spend their time in non-material pursuits. But this can happen only where eco-

nomic activity is under social control. Provision of leisure will therefore mean socialization of some of the key economic activities.

3. *Right to Religious Freedom*: The world is moving away from institutional to individual religion. This process, however, will take a long time for its completion. In the meanwhile, the vested interests of organised religion will try their best through the help of political or military power to establish its control over men's lives. Hence it is necessary to provide in the constitution that every man and woman in India shall be free to follow any religion or none. It means that the state will not persecute any individual for the religion he follows, provided, of course, such practice of religion does not violate the principles of public morality.

4. *Right of Equality before Law*: This means there shall be no distinction of caste, creed or sex in the administration of justice. It also means that there shall be no legal barrier with regard to the use of public places on grounds of caste, creed or sex distinctions.

5. *Right of Free Speech and Association*: This is one of the Fundamental Rights which has found general acceptance in all democratic countries. The right of association no doubt will mean the right of peaceful assembly, as no organization which stands for the violent overthrow of the existing order of society can be given a legal recognition by any state. Enlightened public opinion is the very soul of democracy, and hence where free speech or expression of opinion is stifled there democracy cannot exist. Without the right of free speech and association, minorities in any state will be in a condition of perpetual persecution.

6. *Right of proper Education*: Every citizen, by virtue of his birth and residence in India, must have a right to receive education appropriate to his or her temperamental or vocational inclination. It is not enough that a state wipes out illiteracy; it is essential that each citizen should have the required educational facility to draw out that which is best in him. "From each according to his capacity" can become a practical ideal only where education according to the need of the individual is provided for.

7. *Right of Political Self-determination*: In a democracy, every citizen must possess the right of self-determination, as otherwise citizenship becomes passive. There is no doubt that this right of self-determination must be given in accordance with the individual's understanding and experience. This means that each individual citizen must have a right to have his voice heard in matters of government either directly or through his elected representative.

These are some of the Fundamental Rights of citizenship which should find a place in the future constitution of India. They cover practically all the aspects of the composite human personality. To create happy individuals and useful citizens should be the aim of all democracies. This aim to a large extent can be fulfilled by the Recognition of Fundamental Rights.

A FORETASTE OF PAKISTAN

By ROHIT MEHTA

It was at the Lahore session of the Muslim League, held in 1940, that the now famous Pakistan resolution, which has caused much bloodshed and bitterness in this land, was passed. Ever since then the Muslim League leaders, under the guidance of Mr. Jinnah, have been preaching the two-nations theory with increasing vehemence. From separate electorates to 33% seats in the Central Legislature, thence to parity with Hindus in the all-India Cabinet, and lastly to the complete division between Hindustan and Pakistan—such have been the march of events in the political-cum-communal history of India during the last quarter of a century. Mr. Jinnah believes that there is nothing in common between the Hindus and the Muslims and that the only solution of the communal problem lies in Hindus and Muslims establishing their separate independent states. For the last six years politicians in India have been discussing the advantages and disadvantages that would result if this policy of Mr. Jinnah were to be put into practice. Scores of books have been written during the last few years on the subject of Pakistan. In short, Pakistan has raised considerable amount of political dust in this country so as to cloud the main issue of political and economic freedom for the large masses of the Indian people.

Unfortunately for this country during the last three or four months, Pakistan has travelled from theory into the region of practice. Under the present Government of India Act, Provinces enjoy a large extent of autonomy in their administrations. Most of the nation-building activities are under the control of Provincial Governments. But apart from this, Law and Order, the chief weapon in the armoury of all Governments, is also a Provincial subject. Recently, when the Congress decided to enter the Interim Government at the Centre, His Excellency Lord Wavell stated in his broadcast speech that the Interim Government would not interfere in Provincial administrations and that

the Provincial Governments would enjoy utmost freedom in their activities. At this statement of the Viceroy, most of the Muslim League leaders were overjoyed. And so, both under the provisions of the Government of India Act and by the policy enunciated by the Viceroy, Provinces in India are free to order their affairs without any interference from the Centre. It is this freedom enjoyed by the Provinces that has given us a foretaste of Pakistan. What has happened during the last three months in Calcutta, Noakhali and other parts of East Bengal is more than sufficient to prove to what state minorities would be reduced in Muslim majority Provinces. The first duty of every civilized government is to protect the life and property of its citizens. A government which fails to discharge this primary duty is hardly worth being called a government. For three months, a reign of communal terror has raged in Bengal. Lives and properties of the people have been treated as if they had no value. The Hindu minority in Bengal has been subjected to gross indignities and most brutal inhumanities. In the midst of all these atrocities the Bengal Government has done precious little to give protection and security to the persecuted minority. It was only the public opinion outside Bengal—the press has been gagged in Bengal, so that there was no question of public opinion in that Province challenging the actions or lack of activity on the part of the Government—and the visits of Gandhiji and the Members of the Interim Government that ultimately could move the immovable Bengal Ministry. In other words Bengal, under its present Ministry, has behaved as if it were completely separate from other parts of India. For three months, India and the world have seen Pakistan in practice in the Province of Bengal. Thank heavens that Bengal is still a part of India so that Gandhiji and the popular Ministers at the Centre could go there in order to shake the Bengal Govern-

ment from its supineness. If Bengal had been an independent Pakistan State, perhaps these "foreigners" would have even been refused entry into the State, and the world outside Bengal would have been kept in utter darkness as to the happenings within its territory. We have seen the shadow of Pakistan in Bengal; we shudder to think of the substance it would become under the application of the two-nations theory of Mr. Jinnah and his colleagues.

After Bengal has come Bihar for the display of communal frenzy. It is said that Bihar has indulged in this madness by way of retaliation for the happenings in Calcutta and Noakhali. The method of retaliation will take us only to more slaughter and greater bitterness, for we cannot exterminate Hindus in the Muslim majority Provinces nor Muslims in Hindu majority Provinces. Hindus and Muslims have to live together as they have lived for centuries. The letter which Gandhiji has addressed to the people of Bihar is indeed a pointer to the majority communities in different Provinces as to how they should behave towards the minorities. Gandhiji's suggestion that the Hindus in Bihar should reinstate Muslim refugees and

should make good the loss of property they may have sustained, is certainly the just line of action that must be followed by majority communities, for it is the duty of majority communities to afford all protection and security to minorities. Pandit Jawaharlal has truly earned the gratitude of patriotic Indians for the strenuous efforts he made in Bihar to persuade the Hindus to stop all carnage. In spite of his many pressing preoccupations of national and international importance, he stayed on in Bihar in order that the Muslims of that Province may get the necessary protection. This action of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ought to be an eye-opener to such of those Muslims who swear by Pakistan, that the Muslim minorities in the several Provinces are carefully protected and assured of security of life and property. We wish that the Muslim leaders of Bengal would follow the example set by Pandit Nehru and stand by the persecuted Hindus of that Province.

The recent atrocities in Bengal should convince everyone that Pakistan should be buried in the ground and that the deeper it is buried the better for all-Hindus as well as for Muslims.

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