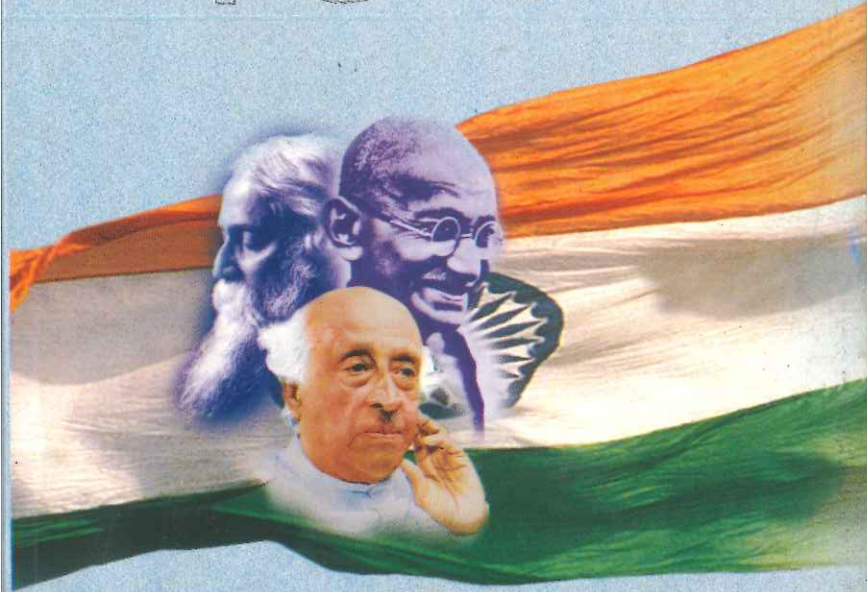


VOLUME II

DESIKOTTAMA
DR G RAMACHANDRAN
1904 - CENTENNIAL - 2004



**EDITORIALS
OF
G. RAMACHANDRAN**

Edited by
**N. RADHAKRISHNAN
&
SISTER MYTHILI**

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MADHAVIMANDIRAMLOKSEVA TRUST
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English
EDITORIALS OF G. RAMACHANDRAN

Edited by
**N. Radhakrishnan &
Sister Mythili**

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CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i> – G. Ramachandran – a Life in Nonviolence	i
<i>Introduction</i> – Editors	viii
1. Fiction and Reality of Generation - Gap	11
2. Communalism and Religion	15
3. Temple and Church	19
4. Nilackal – a Symbol and Segment	22
5. Gandhi Jayanti	25
6. Victory for Nonviolence	29
7. Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati	31
8. India's Place Today in the International World	34
9. The Horrors of 1983	38
10. The Political Mad House in Our Country	42
11. National Disruption	46
12. The Tragedy of Punjab	49
13. Opposition or Vendetta ?	53
14. Tragedy and Grief Beyond Words	57
15. The Great Democratic Victory	61
16. The Shame of it, the Crime of it	65
17. The Vision and Message of Viswabharati	69
18. The Future of Indian Education	73
19. The Congress Centenary	77
20. The First Flicker of Hope	81
21. The Fall of a Dictator	83
22. Whither Sikhism	86
23. India's Point of Agony	89
24. Red, Yellow and Green Segments	91

25. The Infamous Reagan-Thatcher Axis	93
26. A Remarkable New Book on Gandhi	96
27. Long Live Rajiv Gandhi	98
28. The Return of Indiraji	101
29. Unabated Killings on the Roads	103
30. The New Year and the New Dangers	105
31. Kerala Elections and After	107
32. The Heroic Indian Air Lift to Sri Lanka	111
33. The Degradation of Democracy in India	113
34. Dr. Sushila Nayar	115
35. R.R. Diwakar : Our Greatest Gandhian	118
36. Bodheswaran is No More	122
37. Kelappanji: His Place in the History of India	125

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Preface :

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G. RAMACHANDRAN
- a life in nonviolence

How does one describe '*Desikothama*' Dr. G. Ramachandran? A student of Nobel laureate poet Tagore? A close disciple of Gandhi? A freedom fighter for India's independence? An early Harijan Sevak Sangh leader who fiercely fought for social justice? A cabinet minister in the first cabinet in Travancore soon after India became free? It is hard even for a devoted biographer to remember the innumerable posts held by this legendary social reformer in the post-independent India.

His life was a veritable profile in courage, creative leadership and innovation without compromising on the essentials. There was a distinct "G.R stamp" of originality on almost everything associated with him.

All human beings are endowed with the ability to inspire others and initiate activities, which in a sense, lie at the bottom of human survival and progress. The difference is in the measure of what is called being unique. Though we are made to believe that all are born equal, all are not equal biologically, temperamentally, intellectually etc. The Himalayas and the Oceans reflect the human predicament. All forms of life are believed to be the manifestation of the divine. Some are capable of developing the full potentials which make them distinct or great in comparison with the others. It is generally

believed to be a question of motivation. The great ones always motivated and inspired generations of men and women who succeeded them and this in essence explains the secret of human continuity and survival. This awareness leads me to reflect on the inspiring life of 'G.R. Mama', as he was admirably addressed.

The highlights of his amazingly active life would take anyone by surprise.

Young Ramachandran joined the Non-co-operation Movement under Gandhiji in 1921 as a student who left College. He was one of the earliest students who joined the Viswa Bharathi University which was just then started by Poet Rabindranath Tagore. Graduating with honours from the Visva Bharathi in 1925, he went straight to Gandhiji at the Satyagraha Ashram in Sabarmathi and placed his life at the disposal of the Master for the service of India. Gandhiji kept him as a member of his own family for one year and took personal interest in giving him necessary training. From then on till Gandhiji's death in 1948, Shri Ramachandran became a willing instrument in the Mahatma's hands for varying programmes of national service.

For five years he worked under the All India Spinners' Association. Then Shri C. Rajagopalachari took him up as the Manager of the Gandhi Ashram at Tiruchengode where he put in more than three years of service. Then when the Harijan Sevak Sangh was started, Gandhiji sent him as the Provincial Secretary, first to Tamilnad and then to Kerala. It was at this time that he played a conspicuous part in the Travancore Temple Entry Movement which resulted in the Temple Entry Proclamation in the State. Then came the Salt

Satyagraha Movement when he joined Rajaji in the Salt Satyagraha battle in Vedaranyam and was elected the fourth leader of the campaign. Then followed during the next few years two long terms of imprisonment. When Gandhiji started the Hindustani Talimi Sangh for the promotion of Basic Education, he recalled Shri Ramachandran to Sevagram where he became the Assistant Secretary of the Sangh. During the next three years he pioneered with Basic Education in Tamilnad, Andhra and Mysore. It was at this time that the Haripura Session of the Indian National Congress took place and the Session was followed by big movements, for freedom in the Indian States. Gandhiji then commissioned Shri Ramachandran to take up the work in Travancore. The Travancore State Congress which conducted a sustained and hard struggle, had in Shri Ramachandran one of its outstanding leaders who constantly kept the link between Gandhiji and the movement. In this connection he was imprisoned three times. He was a prisoner when the Quit-India Movement burst upon the country and Shri Ramachandran was immediately detained in prison, after the completion of his prior term of imprisonment. Coming out of prison some time later he was drawn once again into constructive work.

Then came Indian Independence and Dr. Ramachandran was elected to the Travancore Legislative Assembly, and became a member of the first Travancore Congress Cabinet headed by Shri Pattom Thanu Pillai. This Cabinet resigned some time later and Shri Ramachandran was called back to Wardha again to become the General Secretary of the All India Village Industries Association in which capacity he served another three years. It was at this period that along

with his gifted and dedicated wife Dr. (Mrs) Soundram Ramachandran, Gandhigram was founded. The growth of Gandhigram was symbolic of the growth of India under the sunshine of national independence. It is today perhaps the biggest Gandhian institution in India. There is hardly any Constructive work in India in which Shri Ramachandran has not participated and which he has not strengthened. Well-known books he has written are (1) *The Man-Gandhi* (2) *A sheaf of Gandhian Anecdotes* (3) *Glimpses of the Indian Renaissance* (4) *Grama Seva -step by step* (5) *Higher values of Life* (6) *Adventuring with Life*.

As a colleague of Ramachandranji for over three decades I am at a loss to mention what precise impact he has left on me. I Joined him as a young lecturer in 1968 in the Gandhigram Rural Institute in whose founding and developing he played a great role. The Gandhigram Rural Institute popularly known as 'GRI' was described in official circles as G. Ramachandran Institute, a great experiment in higher education, was the living symbol of the Gandhian pattern of education in all aspects. As the Honorary Director of this fascinating experiment which provided the students, besides academic inputs, rich insights into the realities of village India outside the campus. In every respect Gurudev Tagore's Shantiniketan and Gandhiji's Sabarmati Ashram found eloquent reflections in the educational, cultural and extension life of the Gandhigram community. The manner in which the programmes were structured and the life regulated in the campus, gave an impression that only a master can conceive and implement such programmes with astounding success.

As days went by, Ramachandranji took me into confidence and I remember with accuracy when one day after the evening prayer he took me in his car to his home and asked me in his characteristic manner if I could take up a challenging job besides my teaching work. When I hesitated in replying, looking at my face he asked, 'Are you thinking that I am taking you to a slaughter house? The question is simple, can you help me in my *Shanti Sena* as Asst. Chief Organiser?'

He put into my hand a copy of the book *Shanti Sena* by Vinoba Bhave and asked me to see him after reading it next week. That day was really a turning point in my life. From matters connected with *Shanti Sena* our association spread to many larger areas and there were occasions when he entrusted to me higher responsibilities and when I looked back it might be difficult to fathom the extent of his influence on me and what I could see about myself, could be as well said about his influence on several colleagues.

Without any doubt I could say that he influenced a generation of Gandhian workers, educators, political leaders, administrators, policy planners and young men and women and the credit of interpreting Gandhi in the post-Gandhian period through education and constructive work goes to him. If Jawaharal Nehru was the political heir of Gandhi, Vinobaji the spiritual heir and Jayaprakash Narayan a bridge between Gandhian and the post-Gandhian era. Ramachandranji was the one, who dynamically interpreted the holistic vision of Gandhi and the role of education in it.

Ramachandranji used to say that besides his mother and wife, *Shanti Sena* was his greatest love. The way he nourished

the Gandhian concept of *Shanti Sena* and gave it a shape and life within the totality of the Gandhian paradigm of development, speaks volumes of his conviction that unless and until the youth are brought into the centre of all our efforts, we would miss the bus as a nation.

The great importance he attached to the activities of the All India Khadi and Village Industries Commission when he was its Chairman, the brave strides that he was able to make as the founder-Vice-Chancellor of the Gandhigram Rural Institute, which had grown into a deemed university under his love and care, the elaborate women's development programmes he launched at the Madhavi Mandiram Lokseva Trust after his retirement from Gandhigram, the pioneering role he had played in organising the activities of the premier Gandhian institutions in this country such as Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Gandhi Peace Foundation, all reflect his undying courage and leadership qualities. It is but natural that such a one would have been one of the chosen instruments of the Almighty.

One of the most gratifying things that some of the colleagues and admirers of Ramachandranji were able to do after his passing away is to constitute a national committee under the Chairmanship of former President of India Dr. K.R. Narayanan to plan and execute appropriate programmes to perpetuate the memory of Ramachandranji. The committee met several times and gave concrete shape to several programmes and some of the programmes were already implemented. One significant step that will go a long way in promoting the youth leadership activities is the establishment of Ramachandran-Ikeda Award to foster youth leadership.

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda, the President of Soka Gakkai International, which has been promoting Gandhian ideals throughout the world through the networking of institutions of education, culture and social work all over the world, has been a great friend and admirer of Ramachandranji. Both Ramachandranji and President Ikeda share similar views about the role of youth in human survival.

Another significant G. Ramachandran-related development is the manner in which the distinguished Prof. Glenn D. Paige, founder Chairman of Centre of Global Nonviolence at Hawaii, carries forward his crusade to usher in a *Nonkilling Society* through the adoption of *Nonkilling Global Political Science*. Professor Paige acknowledges his profound admiration of Ramachandranji and believes his meetings and discussions with 'G.R' as turning points both in his life and in the formulation of his approaches to Gandhi and Nonviolence.

'G.R Mama', as he was affectionately addressed by his colleagues and admirers, continues to be a great source of inspiration. His great life and the innumerable institutions he founded or associated with are eloquent expressions of his total commitment to the welfare of fellow-men and women. He had no regrets. All through he was 'Adventuring with Life'. His was a Great Life and verily it was a spring-board of everlasting inspiration and joy.

Neelakantom

20.09.2004

N. Radhakrishnan

INTRODUCTION

That Desikothama Dr. G. Ramachandran revealed extraordinary skill as a writer even when he was a student in C.M.S High School, Kottayam, is a fact not known to many. One of his teachers with whom both the editors of these Centenary Volumes had the privilege to interact with, fondly remembered the promise displayed by young Ramachandran in analysing situations objectively and critically. Ramachandranji's unpublished 'Jail Diary' is an important document. It reveals both his mind and vision. There is a clear promise of a budding writer in the Jail Diary.

The early fifties of the last Century saw him as an Associate Editor of the *Indian Express* in Madras. Mr. Ramnath Goenka who owned the paper had great respect for Ramachandranji for his contribution. Mr. Goenka always understood G.R's independent mind and they respected each other's divergent views on many matters. 'G.R' also in his later years recollected his association with the Indian Express as an "extremely important period I enjoyed".

The Indian Express period undoubtedly, enhanced the sharpness of the journalist in G.R and this aspect could be discernible clearly in his uncanny ability to start 'house-journals' or newsletters on behalf of the various institutions he worked with later. The most outstanding in this serious was the GANDHIGRAM QUARTERLY which he edited almost for two decades. This journal was ranked along with the VISWABHARATI QUARTERLY started by Gurudev Tagore.

The starting of the GANDHI MARG on behalf of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi saw G.R at his best as an editor. The editorials he wrote were excellent pieces of commentaries. The

Editorials of G. Ramachandran

distinguished American peace-activist Homer Jack once said that the first piece he always read in the 'Gandhi Marg' was the editorial by G.R

The last phase of his life witnessed two major initiatives: starting of the Madhavimandiram Lok Seva Trust and the commencement of the publication, NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION. Both were complementary and he worked over-time in order to establish both and put them on firmer grounds of growth and acceptability. Every month NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION appeared with exciting reading materials. Prof. Paige commented that the 'NVR's regular appearance with refreshing reading materials was something to be appreciated. Here again, many wrote to us and to G.R Mama informing that his editorials were highly inspiring pieces. The 'G.R stamp' of clarity, fearlessness, erudition elevated these brief pieces to a class by itself. There were demands in the past to make these editorials available in a volume.

The Centenary of 'G.R Mama', we thought, would be the ideal occasion for us to work in this direction and the present volume contains a sample of select editorials 'G.R Mama' wrote in the *Nonviolent Revolution*. More volumes will follow.

We are grateful to all those who encouraged us and continue to support us in our efforts to carry forward the flame this great son of modern India handed over to us.

We respectfully place this humble offerings at his feet on the occasion of his 100th birth anniversary with the firm resolve and assurance that we will do everything to spread the brilliance of life under his ever-inspiring command.

We also thank Hari-Krishnan for printing this book in record time.

(Sister Mythili)

(N. Radhakrishnan)

October 8, 2004

THE FICTION AND REALITY OF GENERATION-GAP

There is much loose thinking about what is called the generation gap. This has often affected our judgment in regard to events and conditions of our life. Sometimes when we do not understand some event or idea we are at to refer to it as due to the generation gap. The gap has evidently become a refuge for unclear thinking. It would be good to study both what is real and fictitious about the generation gap.

Let us first understand that this gap is not really a gap at all between the generations. A generation is in terms of time thirty years or so. Within this time one generation has for all practical purposes given place to another. This is natural and inevitable. No one should be alarmed about the consequences. Thirty years is not too short a time in human life. So much can happen in this time. Consider for instance what happens to a boy or girl of five years when they grow up to be 35. They are no longer children; they are young men and women. What extraordinary changes can and will come to them during this interval! We really see no gap but only growth. We accept the changes and consider them natural and proper. We do not argue or quarrel about them. A boy has become a man and a girl has become a woman. This is growth in the natural way. The same is true of Society.

Astonishing changes can come about in Society within thirty years. Changes in Society can be far-reaching like

changes in individual life. Let us all look back for a moment into our own life and note the transformation of our character, talents and aptitudes. Equally if we look into the history of Society, of which we have intimate knowledge, we can see the transformation that has made an old Society into a new Society. Within thirty years, for instance our Society in Kerala has almost changed beyond recognition.

The unmistakable symbol of it is the imposing Statue of the late Sri Ayyankali, the Harijan leader, standing erect at the Vellayambalam Junction in Trivandrum looking towards the Maharaja's palace. Caste has been nearly broken, temples have opened to Harijans and Harijans have been even trained as temple priests-what astonishing changes these are! These are healthy and welcome changes. But there can also be harmful and evil changes; a long list of them can be drawn up in no time. Among the first are the disappearance of Royalty and the coming of Representative Government and Democratic Institutions everywhere. Between the second are the following. The politics of peace and decorum are yielding place to those of violence and intimidation. Students threaten teachers and teachers threaten Government. Mobocracy is lifting its head here and there in our public life.

All these changes and transformations are not explained by the mere term of the generation gap. The Oxford dictionary meaning of gap is break or wide separation. Let us therefore realize that the term generation gap is itself a mistake because there is no break but only continuous change. There is no break between the old and present generation. One leads to the other through natural and inevitable changes. The present generation has literally come out of the old. Both are therefore

bound together inextricably. A quarrel between the two is artificial and harmful for the next generation. The old generation must take the responsibility for the present generation and the present generation must give full credit to the old, for its achievement. In this philosophy of balance and equi-poise lies the creative reconciliation needed for human progress.

How do these thoughts affect our consideration and judgment of existing Society? First of all, the road to reconciliation between the new and the old is to be kept open. This also essentially means tolerance towards the present generation and giving credit to the past generation for all its good work. This should not be too difficult because there are great achievements by the past generation and equally great achievements by the present generation. There are of course many hard and cruel points of dissension between the two. They should not frighten us. We must learn to live with them. All intolerance and violence must be avoided. They will only poison the relations between the two with little or no gain to either.

In Mahatma Gandhi's ideal of the Sarvodaya Society both generations are equal partners. The old generation has a great fund of experience and the strength to conserve what is good and the new has courage and the readiness to adventure with new aims and methods. It is out of the combination of the two that the currents of progress are generated. Experience and adventure are the two forces, which can draw the chariot of progress. Therefore let all of us consciously aim at the reconciliation of the two-generation instead of indulging in the babble about the generation gap. It is good to recall here the immortal words of Winston Churchill "If you create a

quarrel between the present and the past you are in danger of losing the future". Let us make up our minds never to lose the future.

(April 1983, Vol. I, No. 7)

COMMUNALISM AND RELIGION

The word Communalism has acquired strange overtones in our country. Under British rule communalism came to mean the separate ambitions and designs of Hindus and Muslims. One scarcely heard of Christian Communalism. It was the deliberate policy of the British to support and bolster different communal claims as it suited their own political and commercial purposes. All communities involved in Communalism were willing to play into the hands of the Rulers for their own profit and importance. Step by step through a couple of centuries of British rule, Communalism came to mean confrontation and conflicts between various communities. Communities were mostly religious. All the major religions and even the minor ones have larger or smaller adherents. These adherents began to fight for rights and concessions based on religious separatism. The partition of the United India of ages was the climax of Hindu-Muslim Communalism. After centuries of living together Muslim Communalists produced the astonishing theory that Muslims in India constituted a separate nation. Through a sea of blood, Pakistan arose as a separate nation and State. The Hindus also after centuries of common life with the Muslims discovered that India was Hindu India and the Muslims were interlopers or Hindus converted by force.

Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Moulana Azad and Rajagopalachariar among others neutralized the terrible tenets

of Communalism and managed to keep alive the idea of a United India in which Hindus and Muslims and other communities were equal partners. The martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi sealed the unity of India once again and laid the foundation of the Secular Indian Republic. Freedom and Independence thus came to the people. It was widely believed and constantly asserted by high and patriotic voices that Communalism was a dead horse and required only a final kick to destroy it. For a time after the death of Gandhi and during Pandit Nehru's Prime Mastership, it looked as though Communalism would never again raise its cruel and senseless head in this country. But also, we are being disillusioned. We are discovering over again the relentless fact that organized religions competing with each other will never cease to breed the wolves of Communalism in their kennels. Are Communalism and organized Religions inseparable?

Mahatma Gandhi taught and showed the way for organized religions to co-operate with each other in the service of God and man. Pandit Nehru pursued this line in his own way and built it on the love of man more than on the worship of God. Gandhi's spirituality and Nehru's humanism kept India moving forward united and tolerantly. But during recent years every organized religion is raising its own fortress and its army of the faithful for political and economic advantages. In Kerala and in India as a whole there are vast religious organizations, each caring more for its own community even at the cost of the political unity and social integrity of India. This is a tragedy too deep for tears. This is not to ignore the leadership of Indira Gandhi and others to day in keeping India united, democratic and free. But once again as in the past-

organized religions and their separate communities are flexing their muscles to threaten each other. We do not wish to point the finger of scorn at a few recent instances of this phenomenon. What we wish to do however is to raise the finger of warning that we must insist in our Secular State to keep religion and politics apart and to cultivate real reverence for each other's religion and community. Communities may and will remain but they must do so without creating hatred and conflict. If some day it is proved that religions will and must always breed the evils of communalism, it will be a bad day for all religions. Even as it is, the new generations are moving away from religious traditions, practices and aims. The youth of India as of the world want a United Human community giving allegiance to peace and justice equally. They will not hesitate to throw religions into the sea, if religions are not prepared for a process of self-purification though which the evils of communalism will be buried ten fathoms deep. Every step onward towards freedom, democracy and progress is delayed or held up by the evils of religious communalism. Communalism breaks up the Nation into separate compartments of loyalty and service as against the more imperative loyalty to the Nation and the people as a whole. India and the world are on the brink of a peril without parallel in history. Political and economic forces and ideologies and competing for the soul of man. Materialism is rising like a flood around us. The growth of materialism might well destroy all the higher values religions have given man through the ages. While religions are fighting with each other the big Grey Wolf of Materialism is watching for its opportunity to conquer the world. The whole world today is divided into two manor

camps. Communists and materialism hold one camp. Democracy and religion hold the other camp. No one can prophesy which side will win in the years to come. We have however to pin our faith in the moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind as the only way to the establishment of a just and peaceful human society in the world in which we live. Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Sarvodaya as the goal and Satyagraha as the way to it is steadily gaining more and more ground in the conscience of man. This is just the time for the organized Religions to deliver the message of unity and cut out the roots of communalism as it has developed in our country. Religions are on their trial as never before in history. If they will not or cannot rise to the occasion, they would be guilty of having committed suicide. May this never happen.

(May 1983, Vol. I, No. 8)

TEMPLE AND CHURCH

It was Gandhiji who once said that which ever side you looked, there was either a Church or a Temple in the old State of Travancore. He expressed happiness that so many Churches and Temples co-existed in peace and goodwill. This was many years ago. Suddenly but not unexpectedly in recent times Church and Temple have shown a tendency to quarrel and fight with each other. During the first Pattom Thanu Pillai Ministry after the dawn of Indian Independence, there was the attempted desecration of the Ayyappan shrine at Sabarimalai. This was followed by Hindus attacking some Churches. The view was evidently current that Christians were guilty of the Sabarimalai affair. The Pattom Thanu Pillai Ministry ordered an enquiry into the Sabarimalai affair. But under instruction from the Central Government the report was not published. Now we have on our hands the utterly insensate controversy over erecting a Church at a certain place. The Hindus have objected to this as the place is near a Hindu Temple and on the way to Sabarimalai. Leaders of Hindu and Christian Communities have got locked together in a loud controversy over this question. The Kerala Ministry has taken a sober view of the matter and arrived at a decision, which appears to be fair and proper. But neither side has unreservedly accepted the decision. The leaders of the concerned communities are still flinging threats and counter threats against each other. Normally speaking, religious minded people should really welcome more Temples and Churches in which people will worship God peacefully in their own ways. And since

there is only one God, any worship of Him in Truth and in Spirit can only help to bring God and man closer together. How good and glorious that would be! But most astonishingly this is not what is now sought to be attained. What could have been natural and life giving has become distorted into confrontation based on anger and hatred. We have thus a fantastic situation baffling truly religious minds. Supposing there were nothing but deep understanding and unflinching goodwill between the communities concerned, there would undoubtedly be no objection to build more Churches and Temples wherever possible and necessary. Since however there is suspicion and ill-will between the communities, every step taken by one community comes in for attack by the other. It is therefore no longer a question of a Church here or a Temple there. Every Church becomes a menace to every Temple and vice-versa. Therefore whatever decision is taken in the present case of a Church or a Temple, the remedy lies deeper because the disease is deeper. The problem now is how to bring about genuine goodwill between the Christian and the Hindu communities in the Kerala State. First of all, the government might well call together a small, compact but open conference of the highest and best leaders of the Christian Churches and the Hindu Temples. The conference must consist of leaders capable of taking high and gracious decisions and whose voices will count with those concerned. One is reminded of the Unity Conference held long ago in Delhi during Mahatma Gandhi's 21 day-long fast for Hindu-Muslim unity under the Chairmanship of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Kerala is only a small part of India and our problem is commensurately smaller too. But the poison of communal conflict is measured not by its extent but by its intensity. Why do we not realize that what is on trial today is the essential

character and nobility of Hinduism and Christianity? The question is which religion will prove to be more truly religious in the sense that it produces more love and generosity in action than the other. The youth of Kerala are not often caught in the trap of religious communalism fighting with and trying to tear down each other. Marxism and anti-religion have already claimed many youthful minds. Even so, Youth Wings of Communal organizations are in the fray. Here is an example of how religious communalism can corrupt even the progressive youth of Kerala. Religions quarreling with each other furnish a field-day for the opportunists who care nothing for religious values. It is unfortunate that no great religious leader has yet appeared on our horizon to call the human conscience to a realization of what true religion stands for in the life of a people. Hindu Swamis and Christian Priests are ranged against each other, while both Christian and Hindu religious values are being shamelessly lowered and discredited through intolerance and fanaticism. High political leadership, hand in hand with high religious leadership, can certainly solve the problem. Perhaps this is wishful thinking. There is however no way out except the cultivation of genuine mutual understanding between different religions and the readiness to live in accordance with their highest tenets. Irreligion and materialism can never find the proper solution except through dictatorship and violence. This would be a remedy worse than the disease. We have therefore this choice before us of religions competing to prove their high moral worth or materialism creating a more dangerous situation. Let us make the only wise choice.

(June 1983, Vol. I, No. 9)

NILAKKAL - A SYMBOL AND A SIGNAL

Nilakkal is fast becoming a Symbol and a Signal. The Symbol is one of hope in human nature and the Signal is a warning of the danger of religious conflict. Nilakkal is a place where a Temple and a Church have come up in tragic confrontation. A lot of good people, Hindus and Christians, who normally are fair-minded and friendly, are caught in the grip of a fierce controversy. Both sides have held many meetings and conferences. Luckily, there are some good and impartial emissaries of peace and goodwill who have thrown themselves into the task of bringing about a peaceful and just settlement.

The Kerala Government taking a sober view of the situation persuaded the Christians to accept a piece of land given to them in Nilakkal for the erection of the Church. But Hindus have challenged this location for the Church. And so the arguments are still going on endlessly. A few private meetings have been held at which some representative Hindus and Christians sat together for settling the issue without conflict. At these meetings some progress was made in the right direction. The Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi came into the picture with a healing hand. At a gathering of its workers, a small Committee of peace makers was appointed with a view to contact Hindu and Christian leaders and to make them sit together and work for a just and peaceful solution. The Kerala Chapter of "World Religions and World Peace Movement" and the Mahatma Gandhi Vidya Peedom in Neyyattinkara

succeeded in arranging a meeting of Christian and Hindu leaders at the Sri Ramakrishna Mission premises in Trivandrum. The chief Sanyasin of the S.N.D.P. also met Hindu and Christian leaders in this connection. As a result of these efforts a fund of goodwill was created and yet the parties concerned have not been able to arrive at a solution acceptable to both sides. Studying carefully the arguments and counter arguments adduced at these meetings, we are clearly of the view that an appropriate solution is not too difficult to achieve. We have also the impression that the Hindu side is perhaps a little more aggressive in putting up claims which non-Hindus will find difficult to understand or to accept. This is not to throw one party against another. It is just an impression of the slight imbalance of one side against the other. We may be wrong and none will be happier than ourselves if we were wrong. Let us now state some of the basis agreements between the two parties. To begin with, both parties earnestly desire a peaceful solution. Neither party will take the responsibility for creating communal tensions in Kerala. Both parties desire nothing better than that, Hindus and Christians should continue to live together in peace and amity. This basic agreement is a good starting point. Secondly, there is agreement that Nilakkal is sacred ground for both Hindus and Christians alike. The Hindus have a claim and the Christians have a claim in Nilakkal. Curiously, the borders of Nilakkal as one contiguous area are not still very clear. There is no question that the Christians have a very sensitive and cherished claim in Nilakkal for well known reasons. The Hindus consider the part of Nilakkal which is now in the controversy as the flower-garden of Sabarimalai Ayyappan Temple. It is, however, a flower garden without too many flowers. The Christians had originally selected a certain location for their Church. But when the Government gave them a new location they accepted

the change and moved to the new location. The Hindus objected to the first location and are now objecting to the second location. If the Christians are adamant that they will not move to a third location and if the Hindus insist that even the second location is within the area of sanctity of the local Hindu Temple and therefore the Church must be located farther away, then no solution is possible and a communal conflict with far reaching consequences might ensue and yet this is exactly what the better minds on both sides proclaim they wish to avoid at all costs. What then can be the way out? After all what the Christians want is a location within the Nilakkal area. High-level Christian and Hindu leadership may now jointly select a new location with the guarantee from all concerned that there will be no further change. Both the Kerala Government and Christians may have to lose face a little. But this will be worthwhile in terms of long-range good results. Hindus should realize that it is no good to make too tall claims any more. At the meeting in the Gandhi Bhavan, Trivandrum on 23rd June at which representatives of Christians and Hindus met, it appeared to us that this solution might be possible. Hindu and Christian leaders must control the extremists on their sides. And then finally, may we say that what is at stake is whether the Christians or the Hindus in this controversy will rise to noble heights of tolerance and goodwill for the common weal. Whichever side is capable of a more truly religious approach will achieve a moral victory before Kerala and the world. We wish with all our hearts that Hindus might gain this moral trophy. We cannot however, help the feeling that it would be the Christians who would win the trophy in the name of Jesus Christ, the eternal Prince of Love and Peace.

(July 1983, Vol. I, No. 10)

GANDHI JAYANTHI

Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday has come and gone. Never in all these years was this occasion more significant than now. The darker and redder the flames of violence rage across the world, the brighter glows the beacon of Gandhian Non-violence. It is at such a crisis as at present that the distinction between violence and non-violence becomes accentuated in the eyes of mankind. The forces of darkness and the impulses of light are running a close race in the arteries of history. Which will ultimately win, must no longer remain a matter for speculation even at the highest level. Man with Science at his command and his ingrained spirituality must control history and harness it to the greatest creative purpose of all time or allow mankind to perish like ants in a forest fire. But let no one entertain the baneful idea that mankind is already degraded beyond redemption. There is, beyond doubt, so much accumulated evil in the modern world that the stoutest heart might well despair of man's future. Many are the signs that indicate that human civilization and life are drifting to the final disaster. Even so, there are other signs that the unconquerable mind of man will discover new ways of his ultimate redemption. Mahatma Gandhi's life, work and death are the pledges plucked from the heart of history that mankind shall not perish in a volcanic eruption of violence. Let us also not forget how much good there is yet in the world. All this good cannot go in vain in God's great world. That too must count. It will be an

impossible task to draw up the "Balance-Sheet" of good and evil in the world today. It will however be cruel cynicism to forget all the good in the world and to remember only the accumulated evil. Mahatma Gandhi believed that man will ultimately redeem himself. No one knew the tragedies of civilization more than this Prophet of Non-Violence. His heart had bled over and over again at the insensate cruelties, injustices, exploitations, greed for power and wealth which had all but destroyed the very roots of civilized life. He had seen with unerring insight the corruption which had overtaken the Human Soul in the Power Politics of Nations deriving strength from their immense Industrial and Military Complexes. And yet his faith was invincible that man had in him the power of the spirit enabling him to withdraw before he went over the abyss. This faith in him was the supreme mark of his greatness. Even as we witness today the possible annihilation of the race in a nuclear war, we are also at the same time kept aware of the uprising of the human spirit in country after country opposing the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. We must not indulge in any cheap optimism. There is no doubt, the forces of evil have gathered tremendous strength through economic exploitation and political rivalries. But it would be wrong to think that the enlightened people of the U.S.A. or the younger generation of the U.S.S.R. will consent without a mighty struggle to their own self-annihilation. Who will win or lose in the colossal conflict of destruction and death? Those who suffered most in the last wars will be the first to stand up against another world war. We have published in this journal the startling evidence of how Peace Movements in many countries are daily gathering strength. In this issue there is the story how German youth are reacting powerfully against

the prospect of being dragged into another and far more terrible war.

There are two great personalities whose voices have now begun to resound across the world against war and for peace in challenging terms. These are the voices of Pope John Paul and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The first has behind him the vast Catholic Church which is perhaps the most powerful religious organization in the world. Indira Gandhi, as the Chair Person of the Non-Aligned Movement in which there are more than a hundred Governments and peoples, has behind her the majority of mankind. It is now a race between the mighty "Terrorists" who manufacture and stockpile nuclear weapons within the "great Democracies" or within the "Great Dictatorships" on the one hand, and on the other, the Peace loving people in every country. Who will ultimately win must not be left to the decision of the "Terrorists" themselves or to chance or to an accident. For, it has happened more than once that a mad man like Hitler could light a matchstick and throw it into the "Hay-stack" of the world and set it on fire. Mahatma Gandhi's birthday must remind us of this race that is being run by escalating violence and redemptive non-violence right before our eyes. We in India have a duty to perform above all others in the present world. This is to prove how we can solve our hardest problems non-violently. We must unhesitatingly and steadily construct the supporting base for world peace through a society of justice and freedom. India must set the example of how major problems and disputes can be solved without resort to arms. Luckily this is just what India is doing under Indira Gandhi's leadership. Nothing has galvanized the United Nations in recent years more than the presence of Indira

Gandhi in its latest Session as the spokes-woman of the conscience of mankind. Through her voice the world listened once again to the everlasting message of Mahatma Gandhi. In a world recently alerted by the Attenborough's Gandhi Film, Indira Gandhi's call for disarmament and peace found an echo that has astonished even hardened skeptics. Here we have the possibility and the hope of the awakened conscience of mankind without any distinction of the East and the West. Our Mahatma is, now as ever, "*Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai*".

(October 1983, Vol. II, No. 1)

A VICTORY FOR NONVIOLENCE

A peaceful settlement has at last been reached between the Temple and the Church in Nilakkal. This controversy has gone on for many months. At one time it had gathered overtones that appeared dangerous. It was after all a religious conflict. Those who engaged in the controversy were Hindu and Christian religious leaders. Thank God, no politics vitiated the controversy. Even so, there were some attempts at forcing the issue and the Kerala Government had to intervene to maintain law and order. Luckily, however, this was only an under-current. Writing on this very matter previously, we had taken the view that for us the issue appeared to be which of the two religious leaderships would rise to higher levels of non-violence and tolerance. We have watched the controversy all along from this point of view. We had hoped that Hindu leadership would win the laurels and yet thought that Christian leadership might well rise to higher level. Looking back on all the ups-and-downs of the controversy, we are obliged to confess that Christian leadership has perhaps shown more tolerance and clarity of outlook. Either way, we are happy that a peaceful settlement has been reached. Hindus and Christians are within the Indian family of religious communities. Whomsoever wins therefore, it is India that wins. The whole country has been watching this controversy and our happiness will be shared by all the people of India. Kerala has a long record of unbroken communal harmony. Kerala has now lived up to its reputation. The Chief Minister of Kerala is only

waiting for permission from the Central Government to allot the land for the construction of the Church, the location being agreed to by both the parties.

Mahatma Gandhi lived and died for establishing harmony and goodwill between the Hindus and the Muslims and there-through among all the different communities in our country. In Kerala we have a Kelappanji who for years set the Gandhian example in all such matters. Over and above all, we have had the noble reaching of Sri Narayana Guru that it did not matter to what religion a person belonged as long as his character improved and he became a better man. We do not hesitate to pay a tribute of praise to our Sarvodaya leader, Sri M.P. Manmathan, who along with others strove with all his heart to bring about a peaceful and happy solution of the Nilakkal problem. In him we had a Gandhian leader who had the confidence of Hindus and Christians alike. We have set an example which people everywhere in India might well follow when similar controversies arise.

(November 1983, Vol. II, No. 2)

GURU NITYA CHAITANYA YATI

Newspapers and Journals in Kerala are full of the life story of Sri Nitya Chaitanya Yati who has completed sixty years of his illumined life. We can hardly recall in the present time a life so admired, loved and venerated as his. It is well to remember he is not in politics at all. That a Sanyasin, Philosopher, Educator and Liberator of the human mind can attain so much fame and importance proves that spiritual and moral values are still relevant and valid in our society. While so many things are going wrong around us and so much of our life is under the shadow of so many evils his life shines out as a ray of hope for our future. We have tried to study as much as possible the inestimable bio-data of the man. But there is so much to know and understand about him that we were obliged to give up the attempt in despair. Borrowing the light from the great Spiritual Beacon of Sri Narayana Guru, he has in accordance with the Guru's own teachings, developed into a radiant lamp of light on his own for the guidance of mankind. We do not forget that he became the disciple of Sri Nataraja Guru who spread the image and message of Sri Narayana Guru in the entire wide world. We should be forgiven if we say that Nitya Chaitanya Yati has grown into a greater stature than his Guru, which is all to the credit of the Guru himself. Mahatma Gandhi said once that no teacher is worth the name if he does not produce a student greater than himself.

Born with less than wooden spoon in his mouth, Nitya

Chaitanya was for many years in his early youth a wandering mendicant like Sri Narayana Guru himself. We, therefore, see the relevance and challenge of the Padayatra of the great teachers of India of whom Maharshi Vinoba became the greatest exemplar. Like Vinobaji, Nitya Chaitanya mastered many languages and attained very high scholarship in philosophy, religion, literature and science. Steeped in the ancient lore of India, he is a modern among moderns. This is proved by the fact that he founded the East-West University of Brahma Vidya, which has attained International fame. A study of the prospectus of the East-West University will show that Nitya Chaitanya represents the synthesis of ancient wisdom with modern science. In this regard, Nitya Chaitanya stands in line with Rabindranath Tagore who established the first International University of Viswa-Bharati in India with the aim of bringing together the Cultures of the East and West. He was also in line with Maharshi Vinoba who dared to proclaim that the days of religion and politics must now give way to the synthesis of spirituality and science. Did not Pandit Nehru quote this challenge of Mahatma Gandhi's noblest disciple in a speech he delivered in the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow? Nitya Chaitanya also stands in line with Swami Dayananda Saraswathy who established the first Guru Kula University at Kangri near Haridwar. We thus see how in the eternal stream of India's Cultural Renaissance, men of the highest spirituality rose again and again who stood for the synthesis of science and spirituality. Among them all Sri Narayana Guru's place is assured and among those who spread the message of the great Master, the name of Nitya Chaitanya Yati will remain immortal. We feel privileged to pay our humble tribute to him on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. He belongs not only

to India but to the whole world. May God grant him many more years of service in his Spiritual Ministry for mankind.

(November 1983, Vol. II, No. 2)

INDIA'S PLACE TODAY IN THE INTERNATIONAL WORLD

Never has India's place and prestige in the International World stood so high as at the present time. In saying this we do not forget how in early years the brilliant image and noble voice of Pandit Nehru had inspired and captivated the minds of men throughout the world. Between those great years and now there was an interregnum of shadowy and uncertain times. India, our ancient but ever young Motherland, had however come back to its own once again. But the world today is in a terribly troubled state. That perhaps is an understatement. It would be more correct to say that the world is facing the greatest danger ever in all its recorded history. The two Super Powers appear to be reaching a point of no return in their mutual hatred and lust for power and domination. Each of them is trying to destroy the other. The United States evidently wants to force its own brand of peace upon the Soviet Union. It started planting its Missiles in Europe even while sitting at the negotiating table in Geneva. The Soviet Union walked out of the Conference in protest and now has threatened to plant their own Missiles of total destruction on the seas around the United States. This has accentuated the crisis almost to a breaking point. There are many weaker Nations and States ranged behind the two Super Powers and all of them are drawn irresistibly to one side or the other of the impending conflict. This means that the whole world will be involved in the nuclear holocaust when it breaks out any time.

It is against this background of indescribable horror that India from its leading position in the Non-Aligned Movement and in the Common Wealth is fighting with all its strength for World Peace and security. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has become the focal point of the world's hope for peace. As the Chair Person of the Non-Aligned Movement, which includes more than a hundred Nations and States, and as the most prominent member of the Common Wealth, she has given a call to mankind to pull back from the brink of the precipice before it is too late. The situation has become so terribly critical that any unpremeditated incident or even an accident can throw the world into the conflagration after which there will be nothing left to save or cherish on the face of the earth. Besides the fact that Indira Gandhi is the Prime Minister of the World's largest Democracy, she has behind her the glory and continuing influence of her great father, Pandit Nehru. What is even more, the mighty spiritual heritage of the greatest non-violent revolutionary of all time, Mahatma Gandhi, strengthens her hands. As a student of Rabindranath Tagore's Shantiniketan, she had imbibed the Poets' passion for International understanding and concord. She has become the worthy and dynamic successor of her father before the whole world today. But no one can be certain that even the Non-Aligned Movement in combination with the Common Wealth can succeed in preventing the two Super Powers from plunging the world into the total destruction of all that civilization and culture have created and sustained through the centuries.

While the Non-Aligned Movement and the Common Wealth are engaged in the battle for peace, there is also the

phenomenal rising of the common people throughout the world against nuclear armaments. Many millions of the common people are active in this struggle. This struggle is daily growing in intensity and extent and the various Governments concerned are caught in the fearful apprehension as to what might happen in the near future. It is utterly difficult to believe that the leaders of the two Super Powers have so completely lost their moral and intellectual sanity as to push each other over the precipice of world slaughter and destruction. And yet, it is just this dreadful possibility which stares us in the face at the present time. When all the additions and subtractions in the current page of history are completed, we shall perhaps be left with only one hope. That hope rests on the millions of the common people and particularly on the millions of wives and mothers who would not hesitate to make every sacrifice to save their children from being incinerated. The world must concentrate on preventing the very start of a nuclear wars because once started no one would be able to stop it. The time has come for the people everywhere to war against their own Governments to prevent them from warring against each other with nuclear weapons. One attenuating factor is that only a few Nation-States posses destructive nuclear power. All other nations and Governments must get together to muzzle this power.

If Mahatma Gandhi had been alive he would have given a clarion call to people everywhere to rise and revolt against their own Governments preparing to plunge the world into a war of total annihilation. And the world might well have listened to his call as it would be a call from the deepest depth of the human conscience and in tune with the throbbing minds

of the masses. Only a prophet with his moral and spiritual stature could have moved mankind to arise, awake and not rest till world peace had become a reality. It might well be argued that it takes us nowhere to indulge in such a day dream and that the world is too far gone to be saved. We should never agree to such a defeat of the unconquerable human spirit. We must hold on to the faith that life and truth shall prevail and death and falsehood shall be vanquished.

(December 1983, Vol. II, No. 3)

THE HORRORS OF 1983

1983 is no more but the horrors and tragedies of the year are still with us. 1983 has left a world with us replete with armed conflicts and cruel tension. The Middle East has been set ablaze by open confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians. Beautiful, small Lebanon, nestling at the eastern end of the blue Mediterranean was caught between Israel and the Arab world and has almost been destroyed. But behind those in the front line of battles are the two Super-powers that are here, as elsewhere in the world, measuring their strength against each other. The aggressive attitude of Israel stems directly from the massive American support it has received and the Syrian attacks on Israel are backed by the armed support of the Soviet Union. The dingdong waves of the conflict are at bottom of battles between the U.S.A and the Soviet Union. President Reagan's Middle East policy is under heavy fire within his own country. The death of a few hundred American Marines in Lebanon has added fuel to the fire of criticism against the President. Reagan's policy in Lebanon is going to be one of the major issues in the next Presidential election in the United States. The chief Democratic candidate, Mondale, has already announced that he would raise the issue prominently in his election campaign against Reagan. The situation in Central America has also been tragic beyond words. In Nicaragua and elsewhere there are local wars but as everywhere else behind the combatants are the shadows of the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Peace talks between the two

Super Powers at Geneva have ended only in a further explosion of vital differences and distrust. The United States and the Soviet Union have parted company as never before in recent years. The rest of the world is pleading in vain with the Super Powers to get back to the negotiating table. The U.S. had over-played its hand and cannot get back to any negotiation without losing face. The Soviet Union on the other hand is giving the world an exhibition of injured pride. The non-aligned nations under the leadership of India's Prime Minister and Common Wealth nations have already strongly pleaded that the Super Power should resume negotiation to control the nuclear menace. But neither side is yielding to this plea of mankind.

The year 1983 produced two great moral forces standing fearlessly for world peace and disarmament. These were the vast Catholic Church under the inspiring leadership of Pope John Paul and the Nations of the Non-aligned Movement under the heroic leadership of Indira Gandhi. But neither of these leaders has yet been able to change the drift to incalculable disaster. 1983 put up another unpredicted event. This was the coming closer together of China and the Soviet Union. We are today witnessing the astonishing spectacles of the capitalist United States and the Communist Soviet Union competing for the hand of China! China has proved that no ideological political affinity can supersede national self-interest. And even so the drift of China and the Soviet Union towards a closer unity is as apparent as day light. This drift will gather strength in 1984 and, may be, before the end of the year China and the Soviet Union might well stand together facing the challenge of a nuclear war. China's deepest passion is for

industrial and technological development. A nuclear war would wipe out every possibility of such development. Russia has known, more than any other country, except perhaps Japan, the horrors of war and the total degradation and ruination of life arising from wars. We might therefore hope that the coming together of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China may be the greatest event in 1984.

The situation as 1983 passes into history and 1984 enters into the world-picture is not without some sparks of hope for world peace. If the Non-Aligned nations stand together, without any of them taking sides in a future war and if this is made absolutely clear without delay, we can perhaps slow down, if not arrest, the drift to total disaster. In the meantime our own Motherland is facing terrific problems of war and peace. The more we have raised the cry that the Indian Ocean must be allowed to be a zone of peace, the more it has become a zone of war. The United States, in total disregard of the declared policy and wishes of the Republic of India and the littoral countries has poured its armed might into the area, thus inviting inevitably other great powers to do the same. We venture to prophesy that in 1984 the Indian Ocean area might become the zone of the opening skirmishes between the Super Powers. The intense arming of Pakistan thus acquires a new significance in this connection. It is not so much that Pakistan might attack India but much more the necessity of making Pakistan the vital base for attacking the Soviet Union that is behind the frantic efforts of the U.S.A. to crowd the Indian Ocean with warships and war planes. Another factor that must not be forgotten is that whatever may be the major conflict in 1984, the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom will stand

together. This alliance is inevitable. This possibility poses further threats to India and her security. We thus see how 1983 threw up problems which continue to threaten India and the world in 1984. India would need greater unity of purpose as it enters 1984. We shall need all the moral strength which has come to us our heritage from Gandhi and Nehru as we move forward. None of us can afford to be complacent in 1984.

(Jan 1984, Vol. II, No. 4)

THE POLITICAL MAD HOUSE IN OUR COUNTRY

Let us begin by remembering an old and much spreading banyan tree of India like the one in Adyar or in the Park Calcutta. You will see a big stem throwing out many branches. There come down aerial roots that strike the ground and put roots into the soil. After some time these aerial roots become small banyan trees by themselves. Indian politics, ever since Independence, bears a close resemblance to the Indian banyan tree. We had originally the Indian National Congress appearing like the major stem. Then appeared prominent branches like the Congress Socialist party the Swaraj party etc. From these branches there came down innumerable clusters of aerial roots producing another big crop of political parties like the Janatha party, the BJP, the Forward Block, the Revolutionary Socialist party etc. We are unable at the moment to remember the names of all the parties. They are so numerous and baffling. Perhaps no country in the world has so many parties and specially splinter parties as in India. Even now new parties are springing up around us. It happens some time that in a banyan tree the main stem dries up and almost disappears and there are only the branches supported by the aerial roots. This is true of our politics also. Students of politics may work out the details of this picture. The present position is terribly confusing and tantalizing.

In the general elections one of the parties might win and

come to power. They start ruling but within an year or two cracks appear in the ruling party. There are of course always the opposition parties. Very seldom is there one coherent opposition party. As many splits occur among the opposition parties as in the ruling party. The meetings of the Legislatures have come to bear a close resemblance to a fish market. This expression was coined by no less a person than the late Sri V.V. Giri when he was the Vice-President of India and the Chairman of the Raja Sabha. Pandemonium and uproar were bad enough in his time but they are worse now. Not a day passes in our Legislatures without 'fish market' scenes being repeated. In the heat of controversies on the floor of the Legislatures, all decorum, procedure and even common courtesies are thrown over board. The younger generation watching what is happening inside our Parliament and Legislatures gather inspiration for their own rowdyism, violence and misconduct everywhere at every level. If an appeal is made to the youth and students for good conduct, they turn around and sneer, "Physician, heal thyself first". We are thus caught in an ever-widening circle of the failure of all democratic and cultural norms. How long we shall continue to live in this political mad house, it is impossible to foresee. There is not one sign on the horizon to indicate that we shall do better. On the contrary violence and abusive language are daily increasing in the political mad house.

That our country still goes on a steady keel is astonishing, something is still preventing the total derailment of our political and economic structure. We have to look behind and beneath all that is happening above the surfaced. We shall then see the common people standing firm on some foundation or other.

They were welded together by their common poverty and demand. They cry out for a better life and will insist that leaders and those in charge of affairs soon come to their senses. For them, the day of reckoning is that of general elections. Then they come out together to vote in somebody and vote out somebody. After all this is the only remedy available in a peaceful democracy. Only when the breaking point comes and endurance is no longer possible, do we see the eruption of revolution. A revolution can be violent or non-violent. But when it comes it will sweep away all old landscapes, pull down old structures and build a new. Under Mahatma Gandhi's magnificent leadership we pulled down the great British Empire and put in its place the Sovereign Independent Republic of India. Under Pandit Nehru and now under our present Prime Minister we are again pulling down the old and building the new. There are of course many silent and humble programmes of action conducted by innumerable dedicated groups like the Sarva Seva Sangh and the Sarvodaya Mandals. The cumulative effect of all their good work has certainly added strength in cementing our Nationhood. But the biggest problem confronting us is to bring some effective sanity into the political mad house within which we were compelled to function. Something has to be done to abolish the interminable multiplicity of political parties and their licence to function in whatever manner they choose. Political parties are not like Social Work Agencies. Most of them exit people, create corruption, encourage violence and generally play the role of disruption. Is it at all possible that within the next few years we can shut up our political mad house and have only a small number of political parties with adequate following and clear-cut programmes of National Reconstruction? Cannot the

Parliament take up this matter and after the fullest and broadest discussion of all issues present India with the prospect of not more than three or four political parties? Recently regional parties have sprung up appealing to smaller loyalties than to the nation as a whole. This appears to be catching up because local patriotism can come right up to our doors. There are always regional problems which touch the heart of the voter more quickly than national problems. Let us guard against the call to local patriotism in opposition to the national perspective.

(February 1984, Vol. II, No. 5)

NATIONAL DISRUPTION

There are evidences of national disruption clearly visible on the horizon. The horizon itself has become clouded and murky. Assam in the Northeast has witnessed during the last two years many disheartening development. But the gentle, steady but firm handling of the situation by the Prime Minister has brought a large measure of peace and good-will back into Assam. The setting up of democratic Government in the State in spite of innumerable obstacles was nothing less than a stroke of political genius. Nagaland has also shown occasional disruptive tendencies, though on the whole Nagaland today is the picture of peace and prosperity. In the Punjab the Nation is facing a most dangerous situation. The Sikh leader is trying to repeat the old Muslim League role of Mr Jinnah. He does not realize that this is a role which can never be repeated. No one should be surprised if not only President's rule but something more is proclaimed in the Punjab.

No Government worth the name can tolerate the brutal violence, killings, bombings and arson which have been let loose by extremists in the Punjab. Even in some other areas of the country total opposition to the duly constituted Central Government flickers on the horizon. It is one of the most ordinary things in a Democracy that there is the Ruling Party and Opposition Party or Parties. But in mature Democracies Opposition is not all the time destructive. In a mature Democracy as in the United Kingdom or France or the U.S.A. there are large opportunities under which all parties co-operate for the welfare of the Nation. This is specially so when any

external danger threatens a Democratic State.

It is now admitted generally by all concerned that our Nation is facing external danger. Pakistan poses a threat in the North-West. Chinese intentions, particularly in view of our long-standing border dispute, are not yet very clear. Perhaps China is playing a waiting game. But serious trouble over the border dispute can come any time. The Indian Ocean, which we passionately long to keep as an Ocean of peace, is bristling with Warships of hostile States. Pakistan's firm friend appears to be the U.S.A., which will certainly use Pakistan bases in any conflict with the USSR. Our National Government has thus to deal with a very complex and difficult situation within and without our territories. The supreme need of the hour is unity and discipline.

Unity does not mean the denial of freedom to cherish different political ideologies. But all such differences must remain submerged voluntarily before the call of National unity in the face of common dangers. It is at this point that our country is found wanting. Lesser loyalties than to that of the nation as a whole are creating forces of disruption. Communalism, casteism, languageism and regionalism are raising their heads here and there. The voice of the Prime Minister comes ringing to our ears almost every day warning us of the dangers of the situation. Political leaders however appear to be more concerned with the prestige of their parties and of themselves. This is a tragedy beyond words. Perhaps the government cannot do much to rectify the position. Problems of law and order will claim priority in whatever they can do.

Let us take one astonishing instance. The Sikh leaders are tolerating the use of the sacred precincts of the temples for sheltering violent extremists and miscreants and for polling

weapons of strife and death. No one claims responsibility but all are united in their firm view that if the Police enter the precincts of their temples, whatever the provocation, there will be nothing less than civil war. Truly speaking, no religious sentiments are involved but only shameless opportunism and secret support to violence. Opposition parties sometimes attack the Government for being weak and indecisive and at other times they ask the Government not to use any force. The role of the Opposition in this tragedy is thus questionable. Even so the people have a duty from which they cannot turn away. For after all, it is the people who suffer. It is they who are shot and killed for no explainable reason. The Extremists want to demonstrate their power to kill and disrupt and that is just all. How can the people tolerate such a situation? A million unarmed people tolerate such a situation? A million unarmed people should enter all places of worship sheltering criminals and killers and capture them and hand them over to the police.

We have no Mahatma Gandhi who can today prescribe the line of Non-Violence action. We have no Pandit Nehru, who can gather all the political parties together in a determined attempt to find a solution. The whole nation is watching what the present Prime Minister may do to retrieve the situation. This is no easy task. All right-thinking people from one end of the country to the other should strengthen the hands of the Prime Minister. The workers of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, the Sarvodaya Mandals as also all Bhoodan and Gramdan workers should join hands together to prevent the drift to violence in the Punjab. This will give added strength to the Government in whatever they do to arrive at a peaceful solution. Let no Gandhian worker worth the name sit with folded hands in this crisis.

(March 1984, Vol. II, No. 6)

THE TRAGEDY OF PUNJAB

Punjab has always been the pride of India. It is the granary of India today. The place of Punjab in the history of the Freedom Movement is unsurpassed. It was the innocent bloodshed by Punjab in the Jalian Wala Bagh that turned Mahatma Gandhi from a friend of the British Empire to its implacable foe. The people of the Punjab are hard-working and there is literally nothing they do not produce needed by the common people. For many decades Punjab set that example of communal harmony and concord. Hindus and Sikhs lived together as brothers and they mingled with each other in their social life without reservation. The Muslims also lived in peace and goodwill till the Pakistan Movement tore Hindu-Muslim unity to shreds. But, let it be said to the eternal credit of Punjab that it has out-lived the horrors of the Partition.

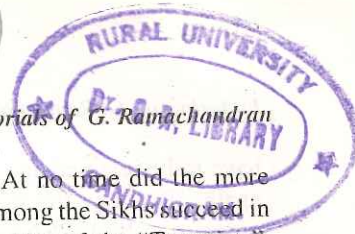
To day again Punjab has been thrown into dark and troubled times. The Khalistan Movement of a section of the Sikhs has created almost insurmountable problems. No one is a greater admirer of the Sikhs and their religion and culture, their bravery and patriotism than the Prime Minister of India. After the establishment of the Punjab-speaking State in response to the demand of Sikh Leaders, it was hoped that peace and goodwill will again reign among the different communities in the State. The one thorny problem was that of the Capital of the Punjab and Haryana. There was interminable wrangling over this question. Punjab wanted Chandigarh to

be its capital. But so did Haryana. A temporary solution was found by allowing both the States to have their Capital in Chandigarh.

This arrangement had worked fairly smoothly till the Khalistan Movement came on the scene. This movement for an independent Sikh State has very questionable background. It does not represent the view of all the Sikhs but only of those who have come to be known as "Extremists". It is now proved almost beyond doubt that the Khalistan Movement originated from outside India under foreign influence and backed by foreign money and immense quantities of foreign arms. What made the situation piquant beyond endurance was that the "Extremists" took their residence in the Golden Temple and made use of the sacred premises for stock-piling every kind of murderous weapons. How these vast quantities of arms were smuggled into the Golden Temple and how they were distributed to the Sikhs throughout Punjab remains an unsolved mystery. The leader of the "Extremists" was a cold-blooded, cunning and relentless person who came to be looked upon as the would-be creator of Khalistan. Under his leadership the Khalistan movement became one of terrorism indulging in murder and crimes of every kind.

The Government of India watched this growing menace with infinite patience. The "Terrorists" were sure that the Government of India would not send the Army into the Golden Temple for they expected such action to create immense sympathy for themselves. But they were reckoning without the host, for no Government could tolerate political murder and crime using the Golden Temple as a façade. The Government of India again and again talked to the Akali leaders

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other than the leading Terrorists. At no time did the more moderate and reasonable element among the Sikhs succeed in controlling the ever-widening activities of the "Terrorists". Every Opposition Party in India criticized the Government of India for its inaction. They pressed for the Army to be sent in to flush out the "Terrorists" and to capture all the weapons hidden in the Golden Temple.

When the time was ripe and nothing else was possible the Government of India ordered the Army into the temple with very strict and elaborate instructions not to defile or to break anything in the Golden Temple. In fact, the soldiers were instructed to be more ready to die than to kill. And yet, when the Army went into action there were inevitable deaths on both sides. Among those who died were the chief Terrorist leader and his close Associates. The Government of India has made it absolutely clear that the Army will not stay inside the Golden Temple for one day more than necessary to clear the holy place of every "Terrorist" and to secure all the arms hidden within the Temple. At the moment there is peace in the Golden Temple, but not yet in the Punjab. For, the Sikhs are distributed widely in the State and they are being misled by the nefarious propaganda that the Golden Temple has been desecrated.

Whatever temporary peace has been achieved has to be preserved with the greatest care and goodwill. The Prime Minister herself visited the Golden temple and offered worship at the Holy Shrines and was satisfied that the Army had acted with the greatest restraint. But the way to settlement is still far away. The moderate leaders who could not control the "Terrorists" are also in prison for the time being. They will

have to be released and peace talks will have to commence again. But now the moderate leaders will be under great pressure from the "Extremists" not to yield an inch in their demands. They might even refuse to negotiate at all. The tragedy of the Punjab, thus, still continues.

(July 1984, Vol. II, No. 10)

OPPOSITION OR VENDETTA?

A ruling Majority party and Opposition Minority party or parties are the essentials of Democracy. If there is only the ruling party with no Opposition, then we are in for a Dictatorship, Fascist, Communist or some other. The Ruling Party and the Opposition together run a Democratic State. Some years ago Earl Atlee, no longer the Prime Minister but the Leader of the opposition in the British Parliament said in Delhi that he had a status equal to that of the Prime Minister and with the same salary. He was paid and kept in place by the British Parliament to oppose the Government every time some thing was done which in the opinion of the Opposition was not good for the country. He said he was hard put to it to oppose the Government day after day. He also explained the meaning and scope of Opposition. He was clear in his mind that Opposition should be on principles and programmes and not on the lines of personal Vendetta against the Prime Minister or the Ministers. Occasionally he said he would even congratulate the Government on some good steps taken.

Looking at the picture in India of the relation between the Union Government and the Opposition parties in our Parliament we see a difference at once. The Opposition is hardly Parliamentary Opposition which is within the constitution. Opposition has become Vendetta against the Prime Minister. Nothing the Prime Minister says or does is good for India but disastrous to the nation. Either through

acts of omission or commission the Prime Minister is treated as enemy No.1. This inevitably leads to politics with only one objective- the overthrow of the Prime Minister. Even when all Opposition parties are united in this programme of political and personal Vendetta, they tear to pieces every constitutional propriety and rule in Parliament. Every day the Opposition will hold up proceedings by every move they can indulge in with the result that the business of the house is suspended almost daily before any work can be transacted after wasteful intervals. Daily walk-outs are the least part of the obstruction. All these may be part of the democratic process if only there was at bottom the slightest intention of carrying on the work before the Parliament. Personal Vendetta lashes against the Prime Minister like whips loaded with lead. Personal and political Vendetta merge into each other without any let or hindrance.

We have recently had the astonishing role of Opposition parties in Parliament in regard to the dangerous political crisis in Punjab. For several weeks and months the Opposition shouted aloud that the Prime Minister was weak and opportunist incapable of any drastic action to prevent Akali violence and open murder and political treachery. When at last after prolonged patience and good-will, the Prime Minister ordered the army to enter the Golden Temple to flush out proven terrorists, the Opposition started shouting for premature recall of the army. The Prime Minister did not send in the army early enough and the Prime Minister was not withdrawing the army early enough! This is the jig-saw puzzle of the politics of Vendetta. In Assam where a Democratic Government is functioning, the Opposition wants its dismissal

at once and the holding of general election once again. It is a tremendous pity that the valiant leaders of the Opposition in Parliament can do nothing better than carry on personal and political Vendetta against the Prime Minister. Even in regard to the daily increasing dangers to National Security and of which the Prime Minister is warning the country in unmistakable terms, the Opposition sprouts the idea that it is simply electioneering tactics.

Evidently the next elections are far more in the minds of the Opposition than of the Government! The Government is in a strong position and it can afford to look forward to the elections with more confidence than the Opposition parties which are unable to unite. The politics of Vendetta are the politics of defeat and despair. We very much wish that the Opposition parties will unite firmly to fight the elections. We wish them to win more seats than they now have in Parliament. We wish the Opposition to be more effective in the future than in the past. Perhaps no one will welcome a more united, clear-minded and effective Opposition than the Prime Minister. Occasionally some one from the Opposition starts the story that the Prime Minister is aiming to introduce Presidential rule. The Prime Minister has denied this unequivocally many times. Every one knows the Prime Minister is wedded to parliamentary democracy and considers Presidential role as unsuited to such a country as India.

Democracy is in the Prime Minister's blood. She grew up under her father who was perhaps the greatest democrat of the 20th century. These present years are full of dangers for our country and people. The Indian Ocean is crowded with warships of the Super Powers. Pakistan and China are slowly

coming closer together against India. The United States is arming Pakistan to the teeth. We have some evidence that Pakistan has encouraged the Akalis. The Akalis have undoubtedly been prodded into rebellion by outside money and influence. We need therefore in our country a Ruling Party and an Opposition Party or Parties functioning together in their own ways to make India strong and united to face real dangers to our fundamental security and integrity. We need to make Indian Democracy, strong, alert and united in the immediate years before us. For this Opposition parties must give up the politics and methods of political and personal Vendetta and adopt those of responsive co-operation.

(August 1984, Vol. II, No. 11)

TRAGEDY AND GRIEF BEYOND WORDS

Oh! Lord God, where were you when this terrible and horrible crime was committed? She was a defenseless woman within the walls of her own residence. The murderers were those in charge of her security. The chief murderer had lived in the house for eight years and more and was a trusted member of it. Instead of protecting the Prime Minister he has murdered her brutally with many bullets shot from a machine gun. There can be no question that it was religious fanaticism that moved the man to this madness. While it is our duty as a people of the land which produced Mahatma Gandhi not even to think of taking revenge on a minority community for the unutterable shame of the deed of a man or two of the community, we cannot turn away from the fact that the same community had created the conditions of hatred and violence furnishing the imperative background for the diabolic crime. It is necessary to keep in mind that there are violent extremists among the Sikhs as also good and sober minded realists who are against violence and terror. But, alas, no judgment, however, just and proper on the part of the people of India of all communities and creeds can bring back to life the most precious life we possessed in this country. Never before has such a storm of agony swept this sub-continent as in the wake of this cruel and savage assassination.

We remember how Mahatma Gandhi died at the hands

of an assassin who was also a religious fanatic. The waves of sorrow that flooded India and the world when Gandhi fell before the bullets of his assassin are still within our living memory. But this time we must recall not only the death itself but the manner in which it came and the time it came which have added new dimensions to the tragedy. How could an armed Security man shoot down the Prime Minister who had done nothing to hurt him personally and whom he was paid to protect? It was also a dastardly betrayal of long family friendship. There is bound to be a searching and high-level enquiry. Many unknown facts might be exposed in the course of such an enquiry. There are enough reasons to point towards some dark influence from behind, which inspired the killing without remorse or pity. India will never remain satisfied unless and until the full story of the crime is searched out. One of those who was involved in the killing has been captured and it might be possible to know from him something of the truth. We shall have to wait to know the truth.

Let us however remember the story and the greatness that was Indiraji. The Nehru family has the most significant record in the whole of India for patriotism, sacrifice and suffering for the cause of our freedom. Motilal Nehru was a right-hand man of Gandhi and even today, many decades after his death, his figure strides like a giant across the pages of our history. Then came his son Pandit Nehru who became a greater leader and statesman than his father. It is in the third generation, we have had Indira Gandhi. She was the only child of Pandit Nehru. There is the interesting story of what her grandfather Motilal Nehru said when he was told that the newborn child was only a daughter. He took the child in his arms and

prophesied that the girl-child will some day be the greatest of the Nehru's. His prophecy has become true. At the time Indiraji fell before the bullets of the assassin, she had undoubtedly become the greatest of the Nehru's. She died at the height of her glorious career. She was not only the Prime minister of India respected throughout the world, for building India, step by step, into a great Modern Democracy but also the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement comprising more than a hundred nations.

She has just returned from a visit to Orissa. This last tour was nothing less than a triumphant procession of events in which her personality stood shining before all India. But she had to die because she stood for the unity and integrity of India against the heaviest odds refusing to make the slightest compromise. In Assam and in Punjab she had acted with the greatest patience and at the same time with equal courage and determination. No leader in any other country would have dealt with the Sikh problem with greater patience. If Gandhi gave his life for Hindu-Muslim unity, Indiraji gave her life for an India that shall never be divided again. India was divided once at the cost of millions of lives, both Hindu and Muslim, Indiraji refused to divide India again at the name fearful cost of human life. She had to pay the price as Gandhi did and the price was her life.

In his great Karma Bhoomi of India, great men and women have achieved results by throwing their lives into the funeral pyre. As we watched on Television her funeral procession and the funeral pyre which consumed her mortal remains, we realized how tremendous are the risks in the making of a great modern Nation in the World today. The world outside India

stood still for a moment and has moved on to face its own problems. The death of Indiraji and its aftermath cannot be by-passed lightly by the modern world in which the freedom and future of man are in daily peril in a hundred areas. But we in India will long remember Indiraji her forceful, gracious, brilliant and beautiful personality which has moved up and down our country like a shaft of light in the present darkness, again and again through coming time she will stand before us in all the glory of her achievements and personality. More than most other leaders of India, she will be a radiant presence with us for centuries to come.

(November 1984, Vol. III, No. 2)

THE GREAT DEMOCRATIC VICTORY

The passage of the Anti-Defection Bill by both Houses of parliament to ban politically immoral defection by Legislators is the first great democratic victory of Rajiv Gandhi's Government. There were doubts thrown out till yesterday that the Anti-Defection Bill may not get through both the Houses of Parliament at their present sessions. The Prime Minister took extraordinary care to ensure that the bill would be passed before both the houses rose this time itself. He had invited leaders of the Opposition and took note of their points of view. Even during the Debates in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, the government took every care to carry the opposition with it. This is the first time in the history of Independent India when a measure of such far reaching consequence was passed by all parties without a single dissentient voice. This was possible not merely because the Bill had become imperatively necessary but also due to the democratic manner in which the Prime Minister used the advocacy of his great majority in Parliament of which he was the Leader. The Prime Minister proved beyond any doubt that he was not simply going to use the pressure of his majority position and that it was his intention to take into his confidence the points of view of the opposition however weak and small in numbers it had been reduced to. Here was a demonstration of the Gandhian way in politics. Who will not remember how Gandhiji himself had set an example more than once in the All

India Congress Committee that he never wanted to push through any programme unless even the minority point of view was fully taken into consideration.

There was one historic occasion in a session of the All India Congress Committee held in Ahmedabad when having won a majority vote for an important resolution which he had tabled, he withdrew his motion as he wanted to conciliate a small but important minority section. Pandit Nehru also on several occasions went out of his way to consult and conciliate the opposition. Rajiv Gandhi has lived up to the best of these traditions in which he had grown up in the Nehru family. Even now there is a body of opinion which considers it unfortunate that the Anti-Defection Bill went through the Parliament without any public debate outside the House and that the Bill is loaded against Independent candidates. No one need cavail if other relevant points are raised as the Bill is implemented. It should always be possible to bring up necessary issues before the Parliament from time to time. But the idea that there was no public debate outside the house is not correct at all.

There were several attempts in the past to deal with the disgrace of floor crossing and for many years we have discussed this matter thread bare. The Bill introduced in Parliament in 1973 for the purpose lapsed three years later. The Janatha Government had taken the pledge they would bring legislation to curb defections, but soon gave up the battle for obvious reasons. If the present bill had been sent up for circulation and consequent public debate, the only result would have been further delay and indefinite postponement. Now that we have the Bill it is for all of us to explain to the people everywhere, how a new era has opened in the chequered

history of political parties in India. We are now going to have Assembly elections in several States. There are sensational headings in the papers showing how many hundreds of candidates will be soon in the fray. But, hereafter every candidate will realize that the antidefection bill will put strict limits to all political apostasy. To quote from a leading Daily, "The temptation offered to candidates ranged from outright financial inducement to offices of profit which carried with them status and pecuniary benefit. The magnitude of this malady could be gauged from the fact that between 1967 and 1973 out of 2,700 recorded defections, 212 reached ministerial seats and 15 became Chief Ministers. Little wonder this game of shifting party loyalties went on unfettered. It was not that the major political parties were unaware of the mischievous and dangerous implications of this malady which had struck deep roots but a lack of political will coupled with self interest led to a situation in which they felt that it was much better to leave the matter alone". What the new Government has now done is to cut sharply across all such devious ideas and to give the people of India something clear cut.

The question of corruption is coming up again and the Prime Minister is hell-bent on dealing with this evil at almost every level of our public life. Corruption invariably starts from top levels and seeps down to the middle and lower levels. The Anti Defection Bill is a clear warning to those at the top levels in the nation's affairs that more will follow which will give no quarter to corruption anywhere in the administration and in our public life. After all political defection was the main corruption and in knocking it out, an example has been set, the significance of which no one will fail to understand. We have

today a splendid and careful leader. He is not walking on the beaten track. He has the courage to break new ground. He might well rewrite the philosophy of our new Democracy. Let not the strength behind him be only his majority in Parliament, but the grand will of the people to take India nearer and nearer to the political and social dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru. Corruption in politics is dependent on corruption in society and hence the challenge is to achieve freedom from corruption in both our political and social life.

(February 1985, Vol. III, No. 5)

THE SHAME OF IT THE CRIME OF IT

The arrest and imprisonment of Prof, Manmathan is both a shame and a crime. Manmathan today represents the spirit and soul of Mahatma Gandhi in a crucial area of social conduct more than any one else in Kerala. Fighting for prohibition in general and for the closure of the arrack ship in Koovapadom, Manmathan is standing up with unsurpassed courage and devotion to something that was dearest to Mahatma Gandhi. Every school boy knows what Gandhiji has said and written about prohibition. Who does not know how in his life time Gandhiji fought for prohibition and organized nationwide peaceful picketing of liquor shops into which he brought tens of thousands of women Satyagrahis. The right of peaceful picketing was wrested by Gandhiji from the British Government in the Gandhi-Irvin treaty after the Salt-Satyagraha Revolution. The right of non-violent action against social evils is the birth right of every man and woman in Gandhi's India. No Government or other authority can challenge this right with any sense of moral responsibility.

That the Kerala Government has laid hands on such a high souled person as Sri Manmathan and put him in prison for the peaceful picketing by him and his Satyagrahis at Koovapadom is both a shame and a crime. *It is a shame* because what Sri Manmathan is doing is to uphold a Directive Principle of our Constitution about traffic in liquor by Government or

others. The Kerala Government must have looked upon Sri Manmathan as an *Ally and not as an Enemy* under sine stupid local law. We are clear in our minds that the Kerala Chief Minister is with us in his heart. But he seems to be the helpless victim of circumstances. *It is a crime* because Sri Manmathan represents today the conscience of Kerala and to attack him is nothing less than a moral crime. It is evident that all the members of the Kerala Government are not united in looking upon the drink evil as something, which will ruin the middle and lower classes of our people. We have heard it, argued that moderate drinking does no harm to adults. This is utter nonsense for it is moderate drinking which leads inevitably to drunkenness. The educated and the rich, who can afford excellent and nutritious food, might get away with it for a time from the disastrous consequences of drinking. But the middle and lower classes, who live from hand to mouth and whose food is neither balanced nor nutritious, face ruination of their health and finances through liquor. Even a casual Medical and Scientific survey will show at-once without any reservation, that our middle class and lower class which have taken to drink are going down steadily in life. What is at stake therefore is the moral degradation and financial collapse of millions of people who constitute the majority of the population. Sri Manmathan points to the Directive Principle enjoining on the State to limit consumption of liquor to medical purposes. If the Government is unable to accept Prohibition it should honestly say so and cast aside the Directive Principle. We see in Kerala the sale of liquor through the Civil Supplies Corporation, a Body set up to supply essential household commodities. What a crime it is to include liquor as an essential household commodity!

The Kerala Government must not allow this struggle to continue a day longer. They must do something at-once to prevent liquor becoming a common drink of the people by the insensate policy of profiteering from the moral ruination of the people. Prof. Manmathan is in prison, even if only for a short period. Prof. G Kumara Pillai has now valiantly picked up the gauntlet. Sri Kumara Pillai is an honored leader loved by people all over Kerala. It is tragic that such a good and noble person has started an indefinite fast to mobilize and to assert the power of the common people against liquor traffic. There is much money in the liquor traffic and there are those in the liquor lobby who now wield power in the affairs of the State. What we are facing therefore is not merely people drinking but the organized power behind the liquor trade. We are sure that neither Sri Manmathan nor Sri Kumara Pillai is living in a fools paradise. They know what they are up against. But as Gandhians convinced of the power of non-violent action, they are not turning away from this massive evil in despair. They know that their aim is sacred and their method is morally sound and therefore they must persist in their effort however difficult. The tragedy is that the educated and well to do people have become largely addicted to liquor and they are holding aloof from the struggle in a spirit of indifferent cynicism. But the Satyagraha is bound to create more and more moral support from the common people who are not yet all corrupted by liquor and their number is not at all negligible. Our common people have a lot of common sense and with such leadership as they now have from Sri Manmathan they are sure to rally behind the movement. Much depends on the courage and the determination of our women in this battle. Luckily they are all on our side without a doubt. It is the women of all communities

and classes who are the greatest sufferers in this dreadful business. It is the home which liquor shatters. Let us all stand behind Sri Manmathan.

(March 1985, Vol. III, No. 6)

THE VISION AND MESSAGE OF VISWABHARATI

The Viswabharati University in Shantiniketan came into existence at a time when militant Nationalism was holding the civilized world to ransom. Colonialism had become the hand-made of Nationalism. The forcible imposition of culture by powerful nations on weaker peoples was the order of the day. Poet Rabindranath Tagore was perhaps the earliest leader of India who warned us against such Nationalism. He was thus our first outstanding Internationalist. He wanted India to look beyond the boundaries of Nationalism. His magnificent vision was that of a world federation bound together by inter-cultural bonds, which would go deeper than any politics or economics. He saw the horrors of Nationalism degrading Europe and even Asian countries under the leadership of Japan, in Japan itself he saw how Nationalism inevitably became Militarism. Even in the elementary schools of Japan he saw children taught to parade as little soldiers. He discovered that Nationalism and Militarism had become inseparable. His vision of the beauty of life based on love and tolerance was deeply hurt. But, Rabindranath had also met many noble literary and philosophic minds in Europe and Japan. In profound communion with them he came to the conclusion that the unity of mankind could possibly be built on the foundations of intercultural understanding. It was thus that the Viswabharati was born in his great mind. The Viswabharati should be the place for all

the cultures of the world to come together in deep mutual respect and friendship. Viswabharati itself meant literally world culture.

In India itself at this time, Nationalism was the raging passion of the people. Rabindranath knew more than anybody else the deeper values of Nationalism but these were being over powered by political and economic imperialism. He aimed at saving Nationalism from degradation and wanted Nationalism to grow towards Internationalism. Nationalism was inevitable and even good up to the point that it liberated the people from colonialism and from suppression of the weak by the strong. His vision was neither political nor economic but cultural. If people belonging to different cultural traditions of the world could learn to love and admire each others culture, then there could arise world friendship and world peace. This was a mighty vision at a time when all the forces of history were ranged against it. Rabindranath's moral and spiritual courage was unafraid before the cruel challenge of the situation. And so, he founded the Viswabharati in communion with kindred minds of the world. To begin with, Viswabharati was only a small community of learned teachers and eager students not much more than a hundred or so in number. This small community studied world history, world literature, and world philosophy and world art. There was provision to learn different languages and to understand the life and traditions of different peoples. Students came from some of the countries of Europe and Asia, to live and work together. They all lived without any distinction in the same hostels, ate the same food, joined in common inter-religious prayers and carried on research in various branches of knowledge. This was how the

Viswabharati began under the personal guidance of Poet Rabindranath Tagore. The seed was sown, and some of the soil of the human mind, was ready. The seed sprouted and a great tree has grown up in Shantiniketan with many branches imbibing the sun light of history and the pure air of world culture. It was not easy for the great poet to build the Viswabharati. He proved himself to be a Karmayogin of the highest order even while he wrote his poems and composed his immortal songs. As the years rolled on, great scholars and teachers came to Viswabharati from various countries and also students seeking a new life and new light. This writer had the privilege of being a student in the Viswabharati when it was blossoming out as a great centre of international studies and research. During those years there came to Viswabharati such eminent world scholars like Professor Sylvian Levy, Dr M Winternitz, Dr Tuchi, Prof Formichi and Dr Stenkonov. These scholars and professors came not only to teach but also to learn. The Poet had gathered around him Indian scholars and teachers of such stature that they could not only take but give. Pandit Bidu Sekhra Sastri, Pandit Kshiti Mohan Sen, Probodh Kumar Mukerjee, and C.F. Andrews were among them. Besides, there were great artists like Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Kar, and Asit Kumar Haldar. Viswabharati was thus capable of meeting the world at the same high level.

Let no one run away however, with the idea that the Viswabharati catered only to intellectual and artistic life. Rabindranath established Sriniketan for Rural Reconstruction. He has behind him valuable experience of knowing the common life of villagers in Sealda where he had tried to organize

peasants for a better life. Sriniketan earned a great name as a pioneering institution of Rural Reconstruction. Gour Babu and Kalimohan Ghosh with the help of Dr Elmhirst showed the way for the self-reliance and prosperity of the rural people. Viswabharati with Sriniketan thus embodies the vision and the message of the great Poet for a new India. Tagore anticipated Mahatma Gandhi in several matters. Both had deep roots in the realities of India and her religion and culture and both always looked beyond India to the unity of mankind based on Intercultural understanding and International Peace and Prosperity. Tagore and Gandhi were thus the two prophets of our Nationalism who created the foundation and the structure of true Internationalism. May they continue to guide and shape the Free India of which we are the proud citizens.

(April 1985, Vol. III, No. 7)

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN EDUCATION

There is once more a great deal of talk about educational reconstruction in India. This writer has lived through more than 30 years of what might be called the era of educational reconstruction in independent India. The great poet Rabindranath Tagore was one of the earliest in India to attempt a radical change in Indian Education. He was a towering intellect who without ever entering the portals of a University acquired pre-eminence as a thinker and reformer. Everyone of course knows Rabindranath as a world Poet, but even today there are not many in our country who know what he did to revolutionize education. There were certain fundamentals in all his thoughts and plans on the subject. These came to him out of his own experience from his brief time in traditional schools, where as a student he suffered from deep frustration and the stunting of his mental faculties. The first fundamental though was that all education must be in the mother tongue. He did not want to shut out English or other languages, but no other language except the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction. Let every one learn English or any other language as a second language for inter cultural understanding and scientific knowledge.

The second fundamental was that all education must be closely related to natural environment and also to the social context of the school. This essentially meant that Education

must be in close touch with nature and life. The third fundamental was that education must elevate, inspire and recreate the culture of the people from its ancient roots to the modern branches of science and technology. The widening gap between the cities and villages must be closed as far as possible. Big industries and small industries and handicrafts must be reconciled without trying to destroy each other. Physical punishment and the imposition of fear must be removed from the school, as boys and girls should learn all they did in freedom and joy. All these were revolutionary ideas more than 60 years ago when Rabindranath started Shantiniketan which later developed into the International University of Viswa Bharati. In most of these revolutionary changes which the great poet advocated, he was anticipating Mahatma Gandhi, who in the early nineteen-forties gave India his concept of Nai talim (Basic Education) in developing which he enlisted Dr Zakir Hussain as his right hand man. It is astonishing that people emphasize the differences as they imagine, between Tagore and Gandhi, whereas the fundamental resemblances are so obvious. Mahatma Gandhi also stressed that all education must be through the mother tongue and other languages may and out to be studied as languages and not as the medium of education. He also emphasized that education must be closely related to the natural and social environments of the school. But he went one step further, and wanted the integration of learning in schools with proficiency in one or more socially useful and local handicrafts. The study of the natural environment and social environment would be more real by boys and girls learning one or more local handicrafts. This world being the living touch in the relations between the school and the

environment. Education must aim at developing the character as well as the mind of boys and girls. This meant that children should grow up with discipline. But this discipline must not be imposed from outside but evolved from within the school community by discussion and dialogue among the teachers and the students.

There was one great difference which must not however be forgotten. Gurudev Tagore's experiment was confined to Shantiniketan, whereas Mahatma Gandhi's Basic Education spread throughout India for some years producing excellent results. Tagore's experiment was not reproduced on a large scale and why the large-scale extension of Basic Education did not succeed. This writer had both the joy and the sorrow of closely watching these experiments with their ups and downs. It is no use shedding tears over the past. We have to go into the future remembering our experiences. At this point we wish to stress one point more than any other. It is easy to make plans for changes in education. They may be even the best of plans. But all the troubles will come in implementation. Basic education was carefully planned and detailed under Dr Zakir Hussain's expert advice and there were other leading educationists associated with him in this work. The Congress was in power at the Centre and in the States. The Centre and the States fully supported Basic Education. And yet after a few years of apparent growth and development the scheme began to flop. The officials of the Education Departments of the different States had vested interests in the current system of education in which they were themselves educated. Step by step they modified basic Education and watered down its essentials. While the Education Ministers were proclaiming

loudly their support for Basic Education, the officials were slowly demolishing it, and before we knew where we were, the old system had swept back with merely nominal resemblances to the new system. The hand of warning must now be raised that whatever may be the wonderful changes now being planned to reform our current educational system, the implementation stage will be the most important. Who will stand sentinel over the planned changes? Who will protect the new experiments in reality and not only in name?

(May 1985, Vol. III, No. 8)

THE CONGRESS CENTENARY

Hundred years is like a moment in history. But for a people kept in subjection within a mighty Empire for a little over two centuries and who struggled hard and suffered greatly to find their freedom and their flag, a hundred years etched in their own lives, covering some generations will appear long and arduous. The Indian National Congress was born right inside the womb of the Empire and passed through divergent vicissitudes extending over a hundred years. The Empire stood strong and inviolable when in the earlier years representatives of our educated and upper classes met once a year to formulate and beg for small concessions from the mighty rulers. But fundamentally it was history which was thus stirring. Reactions to imperial rule grew with the seasons and were watered by the monsoons. Subjection meant perpetual inferiority of status, denial of the basic rights of citizenship, political slavery and economical exploitation. Curiously, history itself compelled the autocratic rulers to give the Indian people a measure of freedom and development to facilitate exploitation. Vast quantities of raw materials were taken away to Great Britain to be converted into finished products to be sold back to India on terms all the time favourable to the British people, who thus developed great industries at our cost and impoverishing India's millions in the process. Curiously again, the more the exploitation the greater grew the extent of resentment among the people and the growing determination to liberate themselves and to achieve their own destiny.

Political agitation grew from strength to strength as Indo-British relations changes colour and content from one brief period to another. Indian politics began with petitioning, then demanding and onward to assertion and finally to the backing of assertion with nationwide revolutionary movements. The roll-call of honour in these revolutionary movements covered every party and not only the Congress. This naturally meant a steady and irresistible growth of Indian Nationalism. The Indian National Congress became the organization of the people for fighting for the freedom of India. The people of India poured their courage, strength and determination into this mighty organisation symbolising the will of the people. All other political parties and groups in the country joined hands with the Congress in the revolutionary movements which shook India from end to end. For a long time however, it was an unequal struggle between the organized and armed strength of the Empire on the one hand and on the other, the unarmed but growing will of the people to disobey and non-cooperate with the rulers. One can never forget the fact that the British rulers had not only forcibly disarmed the people but plugged every hole to freedom. The people were thus suffocated and yet there were little groups of desperate young men who shot and killed officials, high and low to produce the impression that nothing could finally over-power the freedom movement. And then, history played one of the greatest acts of the century. History turned away from the idea of violent revolution to the startling new idea of non-violent revolution under a leader the like of whom the world had never known before. Like the prophets and heroes of violent revolutions in other parts of the world who had liberated large sections of mankind from tyranny and exploitation, here came a prophet

of non-violence who proved he could marshal millions of the common people to use collective non-violence to over-throw tyranny and exploitation. Thus the juggernaut of non-violent revolution finally over-threw the Empire and made India into a Sovereign, Independent, and Republic.

It is true that there were other political parties which contributed to the making of our freedom and independence. But no one except those who pervert history will or can deny that the Indian National Congress spearheaded the liberation movement in our country. The Centenary of the Congress therefore is something which can send a thrill through millions of minds. Let us look back into the history of the Congress replete with the heroism and sacrifices of a great people. Let us remember our great leaders and even more the common people who constituted the back-bone of the long and protracted struggle for freedom and independence. Let every man and woman in India feel the pulse of gratitude and inspiration from such remembrance. In a vast country like ours with many different and even conflicting political organizations there is bound to be differences of opinion in regard to even the facts of history. The question will be raised where is the Indian National Congress today and which of the existing parties can claim to be its lenial descendant. Can there be any doubt that the Congress of which Rajiv Gandhi is the President is that Congress? If a referendum could be taken, there will be an overwhelming vote for it. Who can put aside the fact and the truth that it was this Congress which swept the polls in the last General Election and came into the Parliament of India with an unsurpassed majority? Rajiv Gandhi is both the President of the Congress and the Prime Minister

of India. Luckily he has proved himself to be a Statesman of high stature even if he is young. Youth and wisdom have combined in him. He has already established a firm claim to be a true Democrat. He has also established an equal claim as a political peace maker and reconciler. May be, within the next year or two the splinter groups which carry the name of the Congress will merge with the Congress of which the Prime Minister is the President. There are too many political parties in our country. If the Communist parties come together and there be only one Janatha party and one congress, India can become one of the world's great, progressive and peace-guarding Democracies. May the Centenary point the way onward.

(June-July 1985, Vol. III, No. 9 & 10)

THE FIRST FLICKER OF HOPE

From Geneva has come the first flicker of hope that there may be a turn of the tide in the fate of mankind. For six frosty years the U.S.A. and the USSR had drifted away from each other filling the world with the foul fumes of their mutual suspicions and hatreds. Their top leaders had refused even to meet. This mattered tremendously to the world in which we live, because both these Super States were armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons. The entire world had waited and watched for the result of the meeting between the Russian Leader Gorbachev and the American President Reagan. The world knew both had accumulated such a load of bad Karma that, with the best of intentions, they would find it extremely difficult to come to honorable terms. And yet the hand of God or History has compelled them to face the long and dreadful path of their own destiny at the end of which was the possibility of the total destruction of man's life on earth with all its vaunted civilization and culture of uncounted centuries. It is now clear that there has been a breakthrough in the iron wall of suspicion and hatred. Two things stand out in the joint communiqué which has been published at the end of the three days talks between the two leaders. The first is, they do not want a nuclear war between them in which they recognize there can be no victory for either side. Secondly, they do not wish that there should be any war at all between the U.S.A. and the USSR. Before the relevance of these resolves everything else falls into insignificance. There has also been some agreement

on the follow-up programme. Mr Reagan has invited Mr Gorbachev to visit the U.S.A. and Mr Gorbachev has invited Mr Reagan to visit the USSR and both the invitations have been accepted. Every one however realizes that there is a long and hard journey before the two Leaders before the "Destination of Peace" in the world can be reached. But given the will and the honesty on the part of both the leaders, it must not be impossible to move steadily towards the goal of World Peace. It will be foolish to expect everything will come alright and cynical to expect that nothing can come alright. We have to wait and watch and pray. Let no one go to sleep. Let as keep awake through the dark night let us in the mean time strengthen peace movements in every country including ours to compel our governments to move towards disarmament.

(December 1985, Vol. IV, No. 3)

THE FALL OF A DICTATOR

There are inspiring, even if grim, lessons to be learnt, from the flight of President Marcos from Manila and the installation of Mrs Aquino as the new President. The world had watched for many weeks the grim struggle between a people and a tyrant. Papers and journals had carried details of all happenings in Manila from day to day. Marcos was undoubtedly a man with guts. Almost up to the point that he took flight, he was indulging in bravado and bluster. He was incapable of realizing that the law of Karma was operating irresistibly against him. The world had all along fully believed that Marcos was the deadly hand behind the murder of Mrs Aquino's husband. Marcos had however tried every subterfuge to prove the contrary. He had brought wrong people to a trial and kept the real culprits under his protection. His own people never doubted his complicity in the murder. They valiantly put up Mrs Aquino as their leader to oppose Marcos in the Presidential election. Marcos of course manipulated the elections to his heart's content and produced figures of heavy precedence over the votes in favor of Mrs Aquino. The world inside and outside Manila disbelieved him but was helpless to set the balance right. Then it was that President Reagan played a Roman hand in this unholy game. He asked Marcos so step down and leave Manila. And if he did so he would get protection and asylum in the U.S.A. Marcos's first open reaction was to say that he would rather

die in his Presidential palace than run away from his country. But even as he uttered these brave words he was getting ready to escape under American protection. This was exactly what he did within a day or two. He is no longer in his country but has taken refuge with his family in his own palace in Honolulu. It is of no consequence hereafter where he lives. History has wiped him off from his country. Mrs Aquino is a young woman already proving her worth. She has not indulged in any vituperative language of victory. She has already promised she would favorably consider permission for the Americans to retain their two important military bases for the full term agreed to by the previous Government. She has opened the prison gates and allowed Marcos's innumerable prisoners to regain their freedom. She has proved herself to be conciliatory and fair to all concerned. She has of-course inherited a hornet's nest in Manila and it will take a pretty long time before she is able to repair the shattered economy of her country and establish political stability.

There are some vital lessons to be learnt from this Manila story. It has now been proved that in an Asian country the will of the people is more sovereign than any other power. Again it has been proved in an Asian country that a woman leader can lead a people's movement to remove dictatorship and tyranny. Thirdly we have now the demonstration of non-violent power generated by the people in a vast civil disobedience movement. Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence has achieved another great victory on Asian soil. Of course, as in India, there were acts of violence on the fringes of the movement but the main stream remained obviously non-violent. Dictators and tyrants everywhere might well tremble

in their shoes in the face of the revolution in Manila. Neither Golda Meyer in Israel or Bhandara Naike in Sri Lanka and not even Indira Gandhi in India had to fight against such heavy odds in the very beginning as Mrs Aquino in Manila. The Manila revolution might have taken other turns and become prolonged but for the firm intervention of the President of the U.S.A. An Asian people has proved that they can defend democracy and banish tyranny like any other people in Europe or America. India will undoubtedly rejoice in the success of the Manila revolution which is the record of a people's revolution with little or no bloodshed from their side. The President and Prime Minister of India have already sent their congratulation and good wishes to Mrs Aquino. The leaders of many other countries have also done the same. Mrs Aquino is thus already a historic figure in an astonishing setting.

(March 1986, Vol. IV, No. 6)

WHITHER SIKHISM?

Through the centuries Sikhism has stood before the world as the religion of a heroic but small minority in India. The smallness of numbers was always more than made up by the high character or courage, devotion to one God, universal love for all people irrespective of their religion and a readiness to suffer unto death to uphold their noble convictions on the part of the Sikhs. Sikhism taught that their path did not need to renounce the world or to adopt the robes or the way of life of the ascetic. God pervades the whole world including the homes of man and He is in the heart of every human being and was also embedded in nature. As God was equally in all his creatures, none should be despised, injured or brutally treated. To protect the then young community of Sikhs already subject to persecution under the Moghul empire, the sixth Guru converted it into a semi military Brotherhood furnishing it with the outward insignia and sacrament and preparing it for the purifying fires of martyrdom. The Sikhs have thus held a special place in the history of India as a courageous and heroic spiritual force. In spite of its small size Sikhism had already become one of the great religions of the world. Since the Sikhs occupy a very crucial border area of India they have long been the sentinels of our international boundary. It has been recognized that no enemy can enter India from the north-west except over the dead bodies of the Sikhs. We have thus loved and respected the Sikhs through the years. They have now however become the victims of a diabolic international

conspiracy aiming to destabilize the Nation and create a new and Independent State torn out from the very heart of India. The background and even the foreground of this terrible situation is now well known throughout the world. The first great victim of this conspiracy was India's late beloved Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who was sprayed with fatal bullets by her own Sikh sentries. With foreign money and arms a sizable part of the Sikhs have become at present the worst enemies of the nations integrity. The Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal agreement came like a lamp in the darkness and the victory of the Longowal adherents in the elections gave us all the hope that Punjab had turned the corner. This hope has now been nullified by subsequent events Sikhism has suddenly become a tool in the hands of terrorists and extremists who hold undoubted sway over a considerable section of the Sikh Community. It has become increasingly clear that the international conspiracy aims at nothing less than creating political chaos and the breaking up of united India. Luckily the leadership of Sri Rajiv Gandhi as the Prime Minister of India and the united determination of every party in India to oppose the conspiracy have eased the critical situation up to a point. What we are concerned herewith is more than a political issue. It is the question of the future of Sikhism in the present world context. Sikh terrorism indulging in brutal violence and killings are no longer respected or welcomed in the outside world. Even countries which has earlier abetted in Sikh terrorism have come to wash their hands off and reject it. Sikhism is thus on trail before the world. A great and noble religion is being degraded by a large section of its followers. Luckily again and slowly but surely the Sikh community is reasserting its spiritual and cultural values which have made a contribution to the

advancement of human vulture. We are certainly not out of the woods yet. Neither the armed police nor the army can solve this problem. We need a change of mind among the Sikh terrorists. This undoubtedly is at present a most difficult job. We have on the one hand to counter terrorism with all the power of the State and the society and on the other to create a new climate of confidence in the Punjab. The Barnala Government is now fully up against this problem. The Union Government is acting with circumspection and firmness. We have no cause to despair because Sikhism will never surrender its soul to terrorism. The whole nation nevertheless has to be extremely vigilant to defeat the worst international conspiracy of our time to weaken and discredit India. We pray that none should tarnish the image of the great religion of the Sikhs.

(April 1986, Vol. IV, No. 7)

INDIA'S POINTS OF AGONY

There is no question that the world now knows that India has a place to be reckoned with in International politics. For a long time every body called India the largest Democracy in the world. This was half in praise of the great democratic traditions which Pundit Nehru established in the Parliamentary Government of India and partly some sly contempt of the vast and growing population of the country. But, with the passing of pundit Nehru and Smt Indira Gandhi and the coming of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, India is not only the largest but perhaps the greatest Democracy in the world. This is not written in any mood of bluff or bluster. If a small body of Political intellectuals and Statesmen would study the record of democratic countries in the world, we think it can be shown that we are the world's best Democracy. The greatness of Democracy is not measured by its armed strength but by the leadership it gives for the freedom and dignity of mankind throughout the world. Within India itself we have fought human degradation like caste and untouchability more than Abraham Lincoln fought for the emancipation of slaves in his country. We have given women every right equal to that of men. We have gone out to educate and uplift our vast tribal population. We have not tried to exterminate them as the American Government sought to destroy the Red Indians. We have stretched our hands to help African Nations more than any other country in the word. Our Labour Laws have hardly any equal among the nations. Above all, India achieved its freedom from the British Empire not through wars and hatred but through Non-violent Non-

co-operation. Even so, we have our own points of agony today. In the Punjab we are up against an International conspiracy to destabilize the nation, the depth and width of which conspiracy we have not yet fully grasped. No one could have handled the Punjab crisis more wisely than Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. This does not mean that he has either been weak or hesitant in dealing with the problem. Equally in relation to the Tamil ethnic problem in Sri Lanka, India has acted at the highest level without securing reciprocity from President Jayavardana and his Government. The Sri Lanka Government is playing a double game, of hypocrisy and outward reasonableness at the same time. Within Sri Lanka which claims to be a Democratic Nation, however small, the Government has let loose a reign of terror with the military invading civilian areas and what is more, bombing the civilian population from the air. This reminds us of British bombing of considerable areas in the North West Frontier in their attempts to crush the Pathans who were fighting for the freedom of India under the historic leadership of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, called the Frontier Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi's government has ably contained every other difficult situation in the country. But the Punjab and Sri Lanka are points of agony for India. In the Punjab we see the hand of Pakistan. The Pakistan President like Sri Jayavardane has also been playing a double game. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has more than once hinted at his double-faced diplomacy. We have also some evidence now of the link between Sri Lanka and Pakistan. They are helping each other to attack and discredit India. We are however sure that India will face these two problems with the same peaceful approach as ever. Our peaceful approach can never mean inaction or acceptance of defeat.

(June 1986, Vol. IV, No. 9)

RED, YELLOW AND GREEN SIGNALS

The Punjab signal continues to be red. The signal from Sri Lanka shows Yellow, meaning that a green signal is likely to be shown. The Mizoram signal is distinctly green. The undeclared civil strife in the Punjab goes on unabated. Chief Minister Barnala has won high praise from the Prime Minister for his courage and determination in dealing with civil strife and in pursuing his policy of undiluted support for the Punjab Accord. He has fought not only the extremists who were specializing in the murder of innocent people but also the last minute dissidents from his own Akali group. Even so, Punjab is in disarray and specially with the migration of the minority community to Delhi and elsewhere. The Union Government is giving every support to the Barnala regime. Nevertheless Civil disorder bursts out almost every day. Some parties are clamoring that the Indian army must be sent to quell the civil strife. We wonder if civil strife has not already become violent rebellion by the Sikh extremists. How long can this situation be tolerated is a matter for the patient but firm Government of Shri Rajiv Gandhi to decide. We shall not be surprised if the Chief Minister himself asks for the intervention of the Indian army. But it is not wise to force this issue.

The Yellow signal from Sri Lanka is welcome. It will be folly for the Tamils in Sri Lanka to reject out right the latest proposals. The Tamil fighters must now produce pragmatic statesmanship. Take what is now offered with such

modifications as they can get and settle down to stable Tamil administration of Tamil areas. At no time should they raise the flag of independence and throw back the whole agreement into the gutter flowing with blood. Shri Thondaiman perhaps holds the key now to the situation. The whole of Indian estate labour in Sri Lanka is in his hands. At a word from him, the estates can be paralyzed. We earnestly trust such a drastic step will not be necessary and political wisdom will lead to an acceptable political settlement. India is not a direct party in the Sri Lankan ethnic strife. But as the president of Sri Lanka has now formally and openly admitted, India has to play a very prominent role in any settlement. Sri Rajiv Gandhi is no enemy of Sri Lanka but a firm and understanding friend. Sometimes such a friendship can be more effective than any active hostility.

The green signal is from Mizoram. A 20 year old struggle has come to a happy end. In the words of Sri Laldenga himself, it is the political genius of Sri Rajiv Gandhi which has brought about the settlement. No one can forget that the inspiration came originally from Indira Gandhi. And so, India moves on through the dark and the bright ways steadily and irresistibly to her great destiny.

(July 1986, Vol. IV, No. 10)

THE INFAMOUS REAGAN-THATCHER AXIS

The world is boiling over South African apartheid. The Non-Aligned countries, more than a hundred in number and forming the majority in the United Nations have made it the issue of issues. Several other Democratic Countries have also joined in denouncing South Africa and calling for adequate sanctions against the apartheid regime. But the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States have opposed effective sanctions. Prime Minister Thatcher's attitude is understandable. She is a blue-blooded Conservative who hangs on to the coat tails of President Reagan. Both are at heart "Whites" for whom the white colour is superior to the black. It is not merely a question of blood being thicker than water but of the white skin being superior to the black skin. What we have in South Africa is double-distilled slavery. Both the United Kingdom and the United States had given up slavery under the terrific pressure of public opinion. Conscience had triumphed over colour. But this was long ago. The colour bar however is still hidden in the souls of the white Conservatives, who dare not come out with it. There are discoverable traces of the colour bar both in England and in the U.S.A. even today. In their secret hearts they have sympathy for South African Whites, who are in a small minority under the vast shadow of rising Black Power. The international character of the Olympic Games in the U.K. has already been shattered by the non-co-

operation of more than half the usual participating countries. Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister of India and the Chairman of the Non-Aligned movement has gathered powerful world support against South Africa. It is however to the credit of the British people and American people that they have also joined in the cry for adequate sanctions against South Africa. Only the other day President Reagan used provocative language against the rising tide of public opinion, calling the demand for strong economic sanctions as "A historic act at folly." He had the temerity even to ask West European Countries to "Resist this emotional clamor for punitive sanctions". Prime Minister Thatcher has adumbrated the fantastic theory that sanctions against South Africa will only do more harm to the Black majority. Evidently, she is living in the 18th Century. Her Foreign Minister has met with insult and contempt when he visited some of the Black counties in Africa very recently. President Kenneth Kaunda told him to his face, that "He was kissing apartheid and conspiring to give aid and comfort to South Africa." Dr Kaunda added that the British Foreign Secretary was not welcome at all and that he had agreed to receive him only out of love and respect for Queen Elizabeth. The whole matter of South Africa has now reached the point of no return. Within the next few years the Whites will have to live with the Blacks under a Democratic government or they will have to flee South Africa. There are only two ways of destroying the poison of apartheid. One is to impose such economic sanctions which will compel the abandonment of apartheid. The second is a terrible and bloody struggle in which no quarter will be given to the White minority. But if there is some sanity still left in South Africa, it might enable that country to establish a multi-racial Society under a just

Government. The first is the only peaceful way. The second will be the way of violence and of rivers of blood. This is the one major reason why India is pressing for sanctions.

(August 1986, Vol. IV, No. 11)

A REMARKABLE NEW BOOK ON GANDHIJI

The Book is entitled "Foundations of Gandhian Thought". The author is Dr. P.K. Jose, M.A. Ph.D., Professor of History, St. Joseph's College, Calicut. The publishers are Gandhi Peace Foundation Trust Calicut. The Book is priced at Rs.60/- and contains two hundred and thirty pages. Normally, we do not include the review of a book in our Editorial column. But this is a very special case. And this book deserves such notice.

Every year new books are added to the growing library of Gandhi literature. This book is perhaps the latest addition. It is not simply a biographical thesis. It is a careful study of what has moulded the great Gandhian ideas with which the world is now familiar. It is thus a piece of formative literature interwoven with very accurate biographical data. Many of the big volumes on Gandhiji are difficult for the young to digest. But here is a book, so well arranged that the reader can easily obtain what he really needs. Chapter I gives valuable data about Gandhiji's birth and family influences. In the second chapter we have the early impacts which slowly built up the character and personality of Gandhiji. The third chapter indicating the period of transition from a Lawyer of the poor and enslaved Indian Laborers in South Africa into a thoughtful and high-minded Social Reformer is a fascinating study by itself. And so the chapters move on smoothly and creatively

to the ninth entitled 'Soul Force against Brute Force'. And then, comes the tenth chapter on the birth of the Non-Violent Revolutionary. In the eleventh chapter "The Gandhian Manifesto" we have an acute analysis of Gandhiji's revolutionary thesis entitled "Hind Swaraj". The final and long chapter on the Foundations of Gandhian Thought is a brilliant sum up of all the previous chapters. The book ends with Gandhiji's return to India in 1914. The concluding words are from Gandhiji himself.

"I have been so often prevented from reaching India that it seems hardly real that now I am sitting in a ship bound for India. And having reached that what shall I do with myself? However "Lead Kindly Light amidst the encircling gloom, lead Thou me on". The book ends thus with Gandhiji's return to India in 1914. This means the whole of Gandhiji's life and work in India is in front of him. But what that life will be is seen in the germ already. We all close this brief review of this book with a paragraph from the author: -

"I have resorted to the use of lengthy extracts from the contemporary writings and speeches in order to make the reader well acquainted with the thought processes of Gandhi. And his responses to the events and ideas that influenced him". The author did well to bring out the lengthy extracts. The reader can only be grateful to the author for doing so. This is a small book which should be in the hands of every college student in India. We offer our congratulations to the author Dr Jose and to the Publishers, the Gandhi peace Foundation Trust, Calicut.

(September 1986, Vol. IV, No. 12)

LONG LIVE RAJIV GANDHI

For once the grace of Almighty God did not fail India. This is no mere heresy or cynicism. This is written against the background of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. God did not intercede when brutal bullets snatched them away from the people of India and people of the world who sorely needed them yet. Our quarrel with God on this account is long standing. But this time the grace of God intervened to protect Rajiv Gandhi. But who are we, insignificant mortals, to sit in judgment over the Eternal Lord of Judgment. From the depth of our sorrows or the depth of our joys we cry out in our agony or in our ecstasy to God Almighty.

India and the world are today facing a crisis far more terrible than when Gandhiji and Indiraji were leading India forward and onward. The dreadful weight of the problems confronting our great Prime Minister who is also the beloved leader of the people are such as can crush any leader in any country, Luckily our Prime Minister is young and fearless and as an Ex air-pilot accustomed to fair and foul weather in high and unprotected altitudes with God only for company. He was catapulted into Prime Minister-ship by a cruel accident of history and against his own will. He did not however falter or hesitate to handle responsibility once it was thrust upon him. He was plunged into the heart of immense problems but he wrestled with them with the never failing courage of the

Nehru's. He has already touched the life of India almost on every side and he has succeeded in enriching and strengthening the fibre of the people at every point. His smiling face has appeared in every part of India and specially where the Harijans and the tribal people live in remote places. He has already established a record of heroic travels and meeting the poorest of the poor face to face.

Within India he has furnished stabilising and progressive leadership and thus strengthened our nationhood. As the leader of the Non Aligned Movement he has attained the status of World Statesman. It was such a man that the assassin wanted to destroy with his bullets. That this diabolic crime was attempted at the Gandhi Samadhi and during the inter-religious prayers in memory of the greatest leader of non-violence and freedom shows the nefarious heights to which violence and terrorism has climbed in our country. A noble religion is being daily degraded by the brutal violence of political extremists to achieve ill-fated glory. More than ever before India and the world needs the leadership of a man who has in his blood and bone the heritage from Gandhi and Nehru alike. His loss at this time would have created chaos in India and the world. Thank God we have not lost him and he is going about his business unruffled and absolutely undeterred. We in India and the people all over the world heaved a sigh of relief that the assassin failed to kill him. Since the passing of Mahatma Gandhi violence in India has come up in wave after wave to destabilize the country. Taken singly Rajiv Gandhi has been the most powerful force for maintaining the stability and integrity of our nation. It is not that our young Prime Minister is always in the right. He can make mistakes and has

made some mistakes. No one however has been more ready than he to admit mistakes and correct them. In politics no people have the good luck always to get the best of everything including leadership. We can only get hold of the better and not the best. We have in India today no better man to lead the country forward and onward than Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

May he live long with strength of mind and body to achieve most of what he dreams for the India which he loves and serves with profound devotion. Let all men and women who love India add strength to his elbow. We close by uttering the prayer and not the mere political slogan, "Rajiv Gandhi ki-jai".

(October 1986, Vol. V, No. 1)

THE RETURN OF INDIRAJI

For a moment our mind went to Thomas Hardy and his great novel "Return of the Native". But our theme is very much greater. It is the return of Indiraji to the mind and heart of India and the world. The occasion was the second Anniversary of her death on 31st of October this year. The world has hardly known a greater political resurrection. In countless places in India and outside, the day was celebrated with deep and sincere fervor. Suddenly Indiraji's smiling face looked at all of us from the gateway of eternity. She stood before mankind undefeated, courageous as ever and with a mind going down to serve the poorest, the lowliest and the lost. We heard once again her voice ringing out challenging every tyranny and oppression anywhere in the world. Her voice again warned us against the dreadful possibility of a nuclear war by Super Powers seeking to dominate the world. She asked her own people in every part of India to stand united and firm against any international conspiracy to destabilize our nation. Her voice was as clear as crystal when she challenged her would-be killers that every drop of her blood will only strengthen and invigorate India. We saw and wondered; we heard and wondered more. How true were her words! Every drop of her blood has added strength and courage to every man and woman in our country. Her enemies found that in her death she inflicted the greatest defeat on them. They were staggered and did not know what to do.

They would have very much wished that she had lived and not died, so that they could attack her and break her to pieces. But with one superb gesture of martyrdom she swept them into defeat. From her ashes there arose a unity of all those who valued her life and work for India. She incarnated herself in the person of Rajiv Gandhi who came to power with the overwhelming support of the people. It is not without significance that the place where her physical body was cremated has been called "Shakthi Sthal". That means the place of invincible strength. Mahatma Gandhi's Samadhi is Rajghat. Pandit Nehru's Samadhi is Shantivan. Lal Bahadur Sastri's Samadhi is Vijaya Chowk. In many countries outside India the second anniversary of her death was celebrated to present to people everywhere Indiraji's political, economic and social ideas, hopes and vision. She has now become a vital part of human history and as the years roll on, she will grow in moral and spiritual stature. Her enemies think they have killed her. They have only made her immortal. Gratitude to Friends.

Several friends from all over India have written to me to congratulate me on receiving the Award of Soka Gakkai International, Tokyo. Instead of writing to them separately to express my gratitude, may I do so through this brief note in my little Journal. It warms my heart to know that so many friends remembered me and took care to write to me. May I deserve their affection and consideration more and more in the few years still left to me.

(November 1986, Vol. V, No. 2)

UNABATED KILLINGS ON THE ROADS

We have written more than once on the many killings taking place on the roads of our country. We had always in mind how motor vehicles smash up pedestrians and those riding on scooters etc. Day after day this menace of death on the roads has gone on increasing. We have pointed out that there are no traffic rules outside the big towns. Outside the Municipal limits buses, lorries, motorcars and the trekker etc, observe no traffic rules whatsoever. Intolerable over-crowding in the buses and other motor vehicles can stagger any observer. The trekkers are on the increase on our roads. Normally a trekker is for 10 passengers but actually they carry 20 to 25 passengers. The drivers put on speed and over-take other vehicles. We do not however wish to pin-point only the trekkers. Most motor vehicles appear to have gone mad on our roads. The Ministers and their escort vehicles cover distances at high speed and more than once they have knocked down scooters and pedestrians. The whole picture is one of traffic chaos. Relations of passengers wait with anxiety for the arrival of their people and when there is some delay they get into a panic. This editor is often on the roads in his motor car and he has witnessed some of the cruel tragedies on the roads. Between any two towns, the accidents are all the time increasing. It is impossible to make the long list of death accidents on our roads. But every day the newspapers will

have one story or other of such accidents. Among the amenities on which the common citizen lays much stress is safe and convenient travel on the roads and specially in nationalized transport. Private motor vehicles naturally take more care on the roads but it takes two parties to make a death accident. Drunken drivers, specially of the big vehicles add to the tragic situation. Our roads are narrow and the traffic on them has increased many fold. There is no way of widening the roads except marginally. We can only make more stringent traffic rules and enforce them. Look at the question of the immense number of children coming out of our schools in the afternoons. Can we make rules that the movement of buses and lorries is more strictly controlled during this time? Can motor vehicles other than those which carry children be stopped for an hour or so during the post-school time table? We recently heard a story from an eyewitness which raises another crucial problem. It appears that the driver of a crowded passenger bus found suddenly that the break would not function. He naturally got terror stricken and lost his nerves and the bus ran into a ditch. Many passengers who tried to jump out sustained injuries. This was clearly a case of not properly checking the breaks before the journey. Many accidents occur because of the failure of proper checking of the engines, breaks etc. This is a mistake for which there should be severe punishment. We close this note with the fervent hope that an appropriate and separate Traffic Department with adequate functions and powers would be set up under a Traffic Inspector General to cover the whole State, so that within the next one year at the most, traffic accidents are reduced to the minimum.

(December 1986, Vol. V, No. 3)

THE NEW YEAR AND THE NEW DANGERS

We have more than once in these pages quoted Bertrand Russell's prophetic words about China. Thank God he said the giant is asleep. When the giant awakens the world will have to reckon with it. This was written long before the birth of the People's Republic of China. The giant is now awake and the world must reckon with it and specially India. India has many friends in the world and some enemies. These enemies are powerful and geographically so located that they can at any time hurt India. There is Pakistan constantly indulging in double-dealing. There is Sri Lanka guilty of genocide against the Tamils within its own borders. Israel is clubbing with them. And now, there are serious threats from China. China is one of the world's Super Powers. There are a thousand million people inside China. China possesses the biggest army in the world. They have now also nuclear weapons. Far away in distance is the USA, which is bound to Pakistan irrevocably as the great bastion against the USSR. Luckily, the USSR is in close alliance with India and stands sentinel over any future developments in regard to India. India cannot and must not trust China. China once attacked India without any reason or rhyme. India was then in great peril. Strangely, at that time the USA came to India's aid because it was then hostile to China. In 1987, China might create trouble for India over the boundary question. They are past masters

in the language of diplomacy and knows how to speak softly. But, their actions revealed their intentions. They have not agreed to return to India one inch of great tracts of land they have illegally annexed. What is much worse they are putting up subtle claims to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh etc. Recently, they have put forward their feet into Indian territory in more than once place. When the Prime Minister of India was asked at the Calcutta Airport what he is doing about it he could only reply, "Wait and see". Once bitten twice shy, is an old adage which is full of significance. India will have to do her utmost to strengthen our north eastern borders and at the same time avoid, as far as possible, any armed conflict with China. India will have to strive in every world Forum to bring China to a political settlement. Will this be possible is the biggest question mark in 1987? India has no fear of Pakistan. If Pakistan attacks India it would be the end of Pakistan. Even so, we must pursue all our present efforts to establish friendly relations with Pakistan. There is nothing we can do in regard to Israel playing its underground games in International politics. In regard to Sri Lanka there is an unholy attempt to involve our country directly in the ethnic crisis in the Island. We must resist this attempt and make it absolutely clear that our role is simply that of a mediator for a peaceful political settlement. Our Prime Minister has matured greatly during the last two years and we can trust him to lead India warily through the labyrinth of the dangers of 1987. The whole of India must stand behind him like one man in the face of the dangers facing our country. We must cling to the ways of peace while keeping our borders fully protected.

(January 1987, Vol. V, No. 4)

KERALA ELECTIONS AND AFTER

Never before in our memory were general elections fought all over Kerala with so much unbridled passions and even ferocity as the recent Kerala elections. The battle was fundamentally between Marxist-led Leftists and the Congress-led Democrats so called. The latter was the ruling party and therefore had all the usual advantages in fighting the elections. These advantages are well known and need no mention. That even so, the Ruling Combination of Parties was fairly heavily defeated is an astonishing fact. Pundits are propounding innumerable causes to explain the defeat. This exercise is a sheer waste of time after the event. A defeat is a defeat and must be faced and accepted as such. Evidently the Marxist-led combination of parties proved itself capable of more systematic and sustained efforts. They took unerring advantage of the pitiable exhibition of internal quarrels and differences within the Ruling Parties. The people of Kerala watched with dismay these internal rivalries lasting almost right up to the Election Day. All the consummate ability of the Chief Minister Sri Karunakaran to put up with compromises and every possible kind of adjustment proved futile in making genuine peace between the parties concerned. No one could have done more to keep the party together and really united. Some of the political leaders within the ruling party made fools of themselves before the people of Kerala who very well understood the game that was being played. It would not be

too much to say that the people were disgusted with what they saw happening. The Leftist Parties brought big guns from outside to boom on their behalf. The Ruling Party of course had the magnificent and untiring support of the Congress President, Sri Rajiv Gandhi, whose prestige is the only thing remaining untouched even after the defeat of the ruling Party. But for him the defeat of the Ruling Party would easily have been heavier. Now, the long battle of the ballot box is over and the Marxist-led Leftist parties have already set up their new Ministry under the capable leadership of Sri Nayanar. The new Chief Minister is an old war-horse and knows only too well the intricacies of controversial politics. He is a clever judge of events and persons, and can certainly be trusted to run an efficient Government. It is too early for the defeated leaders to fling curses at the new Government which has only just now settled on the saddle. Mr Nayanar and the parties working with him had given Sri Karunakaran and his supporters almost five years before they faced the electorate for a fresh mandate. Common political decency demands better conduct from the defeated leaders. The people of Kerala have given their vote to Sri Nayanar to form a new government and to run it for the next five years. Democratic tradition demands that the people of Kerala should now give a sporting chance to the new Rulers. One or two statements earlier did hold out the possibility of the defeated Parties giving constructive and responsive co-operation to Mr Nayanar and his Government. But now we have the impression that some of the defeated leaders might well try to play the game of breaking the new Government at the earliest. This is unfair and unfortunate. We certainly need political opposition but we want such opposition to be constructive and not wholly

destructive. We have now the news that the leadership of the Congress in Kerala might be recast to enable it to play a suitable part under the changed conditions. This does not certainly affect Sri Karunakaran as the leader of the Opposition in the Legislature. In the coming period the composition of the Congress outside the Legislature will be as important as that inside it. We want a new leader with an all India vision and standing. It would be for him to see that the present Opposition Parties live up to Democratic norms. This essentially means that political revenge must be given up altogether. The Opposition Parties must not indulge in the dream of shattering the government. This would be also in the best Gandhian tradition. Sri Nayanar as the Chief Minister and Sri Karunakaran as the leader of the Opposition will make a rare non-combination. Together they should abolish poverty, illiteracy, disease and violence among the people. They might fight hard on issues on which they differ but let the fight be above board. We earnestly wish to look forward to an era of peace and development in Kerala. It is certainly a far cry from Kerala in the extreme south to West Bengal in the north-east. There too the Marxists have won a resounding victory. Sri Jyothi Basu is undoubtedly the acknowledged leader of West Bengal. He is a person of high integrity and ability. Like Sri Nayanar he has also long experience of politics and administration. It is quite likely that in the period ahead Sri. Nayanar and Sri. Jyothi Basu will join hands to promote political and economic causes. This should not surprise anybody nor frighten anybody. The Congress in combination with the National Conference has won a resounding victory in the Jammu and Kashmir area. This is one step upward for the Congress. But some one has raised the slogan that now is the

time to over-throw the Congress Government at the Centre. This is easily said than done. Rajiv Gandhi's Government at the Centre with its overwhelming majority in the Parliament is unshakable at present. We may now count the losses and gains of the Congress in the recent general elections to make the best use of the opportunities it still has to rebuild India on firm and prosperous foundations.

(April 1987, Vol. V, No. 7)

THE HEROIC INDIAN AIR LIFT TO SRI LANKA

The diabolic mood of the Sri Lankan Government continues unabated. The long queue of peace-boats loaded with food and medicines for the beleaguered people of Jaffna was threatened to be blown to bits by the Sri Lankan Navy. International Red-Cross representatives were in the peace-boats which were wholly unarmed. It did not suit the Sri Lankan Government that India should vie food and medicine to their own Tamil citizens who were being slaughtered like dogs in the ethnic struggle on the island. The peace-boats returned quietly to the Indian shore. The world looked on with amazement at this diabolic cruelty. Every one wondered what the Government of India would next do or could do. Then suddenly came the heroic airlift to Jaffna by Indian planes accompanied by two protective fighter planes. The airlift began from Bangalore and in one swift flight reached Jaffna. The Sri Lankan Government was duly given warning of the airlift. Many tonnes of food and many bundles of medicines were dropped in different places in Jaffna and the Mercy Mission returned to India within less than 2 hours. There was no resistance at all by the tiny Sri Lankan Air Force which earlier was bombing and killing unarmed Tamil civilizations in Jaffna. The Government of India has taken care to explain to the world that their mission was one entirely of mercy and in no sense a mission of aggression. World leaders have neither condemned

nor condoned the Indian airlift. There is however great rejoicing among the Tamils of India, and the people of India in general. The Indian Prime Minister did take a grave risk but there was nothing else he could do. There are bound to be further political repercussions. The Sri Lankan Government has already taken the matter before the Security Council of the United Nations. India will have to defend the airlift in the World Forum. We can do so with a clean conscience. India has nothing but goodwill and friendship for Sri Lanka. India cannot however look on helplessly at the genocide in Jaffna in which the victims are Tamilians and when nearly a hundred thousand of them have already taken refuge on Indian soil. Sri Lanka can get all the trouble it wants or all the good will of India in the next few weeks. The choice is in their hands. We can only hope that there is still a modicum of sanity left in the mind of the Sri Lankan Government.

(June 1987, Vol. V, No. 8)

THE DEGRADATION OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIA

Few people realize how costly is Democracy. Every step in creating a Democracy is costly. The preparation of electoral rolls is costly. Candidates standing for election spend money like water. After election thousands of members throughout India are paid salaries, sitting allowances, free accommodation traveling and dearness allowances, and many highly paid offices come into existence. Elected Representatives set up Ministries and Ministers are paid high salaries and many other pre-requisites. We have not enumerated all the expenses incurred for Democracy. But they all add up to many millions of rupees. All this is paid for by the tax-payers. It may be pointed out that all this expenditure is unavoidable but that does not detract a rupee from the expenditure. What do the people expect from the Legislatures over and above making laws, imposing taxes, offering security to person and property and doing all the other things to which we are accustomed? People expect the Legislatures to function with propriety and dignity setting the example for all other public activity. But what is happening is something utterly to the contrary. Almost every Legislature in our country has become the scene of rowdism and violence. A great deal of time is wasted by parties tearing all the rules to piece. Recently, in one of the States' Legislatures a Member attacked a Minister shaking him by the scruff of his neck and even pummeling him. This was followed

by a heavy attack on the offender by the other party and he had to be hospitalised. There is violence almost every where in the country outside and the Legislature are often playing the same foul game. Someone has pointed out that such scenes of rowdism and violence are not uncommon in other countries including the country where we have the Mother of Parliaments. If a leader like Sardar Patel or Pandit Nehru were with us today such things would be almost impossible. Mahatma Gandhi might well have undertaken a fast to prevent this kind of degradation of our Legislatures. Are we proving that we are unfit for Democracy in India? All thinking men and women who care for the common decencies of political life must come forward to resist this process. Otherwise we shall soon reach a time when the people would have lost completely their faith in the Democratic tradition. That can only pave the way for fascist Dictatorship which will not hesitate to use the mailed fist to crush all such conduct.

(July 1987, Vol. V, No. 9)

DR. SUSHILA NAYAR

Sister Mythili still sticks to her first impression which she gathered in Sevagram more than an year ago, where she met Dr Sushila Nayar for the first time in the setting of her own Medical College. She said at the time that Dr Sushila looked like Queen Victoria as she remembered from photographs. Short and rubicund with firm steps and dignity and poise she went up and down in the Medical College. She was one of the adopted daughters of Mahatma Gandhi and for many years his Medical Assistant. Her brother the late Sri Pyarelal was the immortal biographer of the immortal Mahatma. Dr Sushila looked upon her brother as her guide and mentor. Dr Mrs. Soundram Ramachandran and she studied together in the Delhi Medical College. She was then a very young, shy, and timid person. It was then that Dr Soundram befriended her and helped her to become more and more self reliant and mature. This was a life long friendship which is still in her heart. She stayed with us in Madhavi Mandiram for two days. She was gentle, understanding and lovable throughout her stay with us. She gave us all a moving demonstration of her love and admiration for Dr. Mrs. Soundram. She saw on the wall of my veranda a portrait of Dr Soundram, taken at the time she was Deputy Minister of Education in the Nehru Cabinet. Dr. Sushila fetched the beautiful big garland which had been given to her earlier and climbing on a chair put the garland on Dr Soundram's portrait. Her eyes were wet when she did this. Here was an expression of her profound humanism.

In Madhavi Mandiram she studied with personal interest all the different items of work. She was very pleased with the Khadi Sarees woven in our Khadi Institute. She was equally pleased with the articles we make from banana fibre. She spoke kindly to girls at their work and enquired from them how they liked their work. It was her view that there is a peculiar pleasure which workers derive from their handicrafts. All our workers were filled with joy that she took a personal interest in their life and work. At the Anniversary Function in the majestic pandal where she was the Chief Guest she appeared happy and proud. When she spoke her voice was clear and often challenging. It was a crowded meeting filled with more women than men. The women had gathered from far and wide to listen to Gandhiji's noble disciple. There was pin drop silence as she spoke on a variety of subjects facing the country today.

In a quiet voice she raised big issues. She spoke about Khadi and Village Industries, of Harijan service, of the condition of our women, and Basic Education. She had studied all these subjects at close quarters in Wardha where she had lived with Gandhiji. No item of the Constructive Programme was unfamiliar to her. But when she spoke about Prohibition and the poverty of the millions in the rural areas her voice and words were challenging. Our readers will find in her mind the extracts of her speech printed elsewhere in this issue of our magazine. The friendly and admiring audience cheered her when she said that she felt absolutely at home in Kerala. Prohibition was of course in her deep heart when she asked Sri Karunakaran and Minister Thankappan to take up this cause which was so dear to the heart of Gandhiji. She pleaded that no present obstacles in the way should deter us even for a

moment from fighting for total prohibition. She pleaded for special care of the education of women. An educated woman would become an educated family. Families ruined by drink and continuing poverty were like the two sides of a coin, the coin of the tragic life of the people. She confessed she had made some new discoveries in Madhavi Mandiram. For the first time she had seen how the pineapple grew. She had also for the first time seen pepper vine. She had tasted for the first time ripe and sweet jackfruit. She enjoyed appams with sweetened coconut juice. These were all new experiences and she enjoyed them like a child. Before she left on the morning of 15th March all our women workers gathered to receive her final blessings. "God bless you all" were her parting words. All of us together said to her "God bless you too". The parting was sad but unavoidable. The memory left in all our minds is that of a gracious and noble lady, devotee of Gandhiji and devotee of our Mother land. This memory will live long with us and in spite of us to do our work better and better in the years to come.

(March 1939, Vol. VII, No. 6)

R.R. DIWAKAR **- OUR GREATEST GANDHIAN**

We write about the late Sri R. R. Diwakar. Our readers are entitled to ask whether Acharya Vinoba or Pandit Nehru or Rajagopalachariar were not greater Gandhians. We wish to explain our choice of the name of Diwakarji. The other great names are certainly those of very eminent Gandhians in some way or other. That Diwakarji was once a Central Minister and also a Governor has tended to obscure his greatness as a Gandhian. The high places which he for a time occupied were not the major events of his life. The major events are covered by over 70 years of his unalloyed devotion to the cause of taking Gandhiji and his ideals and programmes to the people of India and to the people in many different countries of the world. Acharya Vinoba was perhaps not a Gandhian in the same sense. He was first and last himself on his own. He had of course taken much from Gandhiji but he had added his own dimensions to it. This was true of Pandit Nehru also. Diwakarji took Gandhiji as he was, personal and impersonal and spent his whole life time in taking Gandhi to millions of people inside and outside India. Our first meeting was very romantic. Gandhi's "Quit India Revolutions" was in full swing. This revolution was throbbing in every nook and corner of our country. I had come out of prison unexpectedly in Trivandrum and received a telegram from Diwakarji that I should meet him at a certain address in Madras. I went to Madras at once and

to the address mentioned in the telegram. The man who met me looked like an Anglo Indian with a solo hat and in European dress. He was really Sri Diwakarji. He was evidently "Underground". He gave me a message from Acharya Kripalani the then acting president of the Indian National Congress. I was to undertake the task of organizing the Congress Underground Postage system in South India. This meant arranging relays of people carrying messages from the Congress High Command to different centers of political activity. Since then Diwakarji and I were in the Underground Movement till Gandhiji was released before the Round Table Conference in London. Gandhiji insisted that all Congress workers should give up their Underground activity and come into the open.

Diwakarji was a great freedom fighter and one of the recognized Congress leaders in Karnataka. He organized and lead a formidable peasants resistance movement in Karnataka. Gandhiji loved and trusted him implicitly as one who understood the philosophy and practice of non-violence. Diwakarji's famous volume on Satyagraha as a method of revolution caught the imagination of the youth of India. Sardar Patel had also great affection and faith in Diwakarji's leadership in Karnataka. It was but natural that when India became independent he was given a place in the Central Government as Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Sometime later he was appointed Governor of Bihar. Pandit Nehru as the Prime Minister of India at the time is reported to have remarked humorously that Diwakarji has converted the Government House in Patna into a Gandhi Ashram! As Governor of Bihar he found ample scope to become a renowned author of several

books one of which was "Bihar through the Ages". This was a monumental work. Let it not be forgotten that Diwakarji was a very eminent journalist. He edited "Samyukta Karnataka" a daily paper in Kannada with a very wide circulation. If today we have a Karnataka State and not the old Mysore state and the Kannada parts of the Bombay state but a united Kannada state it is largely due to the effective propaganda which Samyukta Karnataka carried on vigorously for many years. Diwakarji was thus in a measure the Father of the Karnataka State. Due to some internal troubles the paper had to be closed down for an year or so. But it has resumed publication with greater prestige than before. It has become the leading Kannada paper the political and economic view of which are highly respected by the people. After the brief interlude of occupying high places Diwakarji became the Chairman of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and the Gandhi Peace Foundation while I had the honour and pleasure of being the General Secretary of both these organizations. Then for an unbroken period of ten years Diwakarji and I worked together establishing more than a hundred centres of Gandhian work and spreading Gandhiji's message of Constructive work in rural India. No one in our country deliberately chose to be a Gandhian worker as did Diwakarji. Even in his old age and with one of his legs broken in an accident he traveled up and down in India and in several countries outside India on crutches with nothing but Gandhi in his heart and mind. He was 96 years of age when he died. He had become very weak physically and went for nature cure to a famous Nature Cure centre in Belgaum. There is a story that before he left his home in Bangalore he told a friend that he would not return alive. He had perhaps a secret foreboding that his end was near. I was lucky to be present in

Bangalore when the body of my beloved comrade and leader was brought to his home town from Hubli. I placed a wreath of white roses on his body and took my final leave of him. He was given a state funeral by the Karnataka Government. It is not enough to say now "May his soul rest in peace" even in heaven he must be busy inducing the angels to emulate Gandhiji! We must follow his glorious example and dedicate ourselves to carry on the work of keeping alive the message of Gandhi in millions of human hearts.

(February 1990, Vol. VIII, No. 5)

BODHESWARAN IS NO MORE

We write about Bodheswaran with our minds steeped in sorrow. We find it difficult to imagine he has left us for ever. The personality and character of the man stand out vividly in the minds of Keralites. Those to whom Malayalam is their mother tongue can never forget him, and they are spread all over India and even in countries outside. We are all therefore in mourning. Our eyes are still wet and our sighs have not ceased. He was a man among men. He always stood erect like a warrior. He looked the world in the face without fear or favor. None of us can remember his piercing eyes looking down. His voice was like the roar of a lion when he attacked injustice and yet the voice could be tender like the voice of a lover when he spoke to those in suffering. Poetry was the tool of his mind. It reflected both his fierce indignation and his human and humane devotion. He once took to Sanyas and for a time became a Swami and with a sturdy staff in and he wandered all over India seeking atma-vidya and the science of moksha. He met many learned and holy men but never gave up his own critical mind. For a time he had some leaning towards the Arya Samaj and its heroic founder Maharshi Dayananda Saraswathi. But even here he refused to be bound. He was seeking liberation and not bondage however exalted. His original name was Kesava Pillai. The transformation of Kesava Pillai to Bodheswaran is an episode which can inspire out general. It was courage and selflessness which produced this transformation. He had the heroism to declare "I am not a

Hindu. I am not a Muslim. I am not a Christian. I am just a man". His religion may thus be described as "Neethi Dharma". Mahatma Gandhi drew his mind but he would not first accept ahimsa as the only law of life. He believed that himsa could not be wholly discarded and yet in actual practice he valued the ahimsa of the brave and selfless. A significant change came over him when he married Karthiyayini Amma of revered memory. She was a gentle, soft spoken and noble woman who valued the sanctity of silence as much as right thought and right speech. She had a profound influence on Bodheswaran who in turn became gentler and more tolerant. Their family life was exalted, cultured and devoted to the service of fellow men.

Bodheswaran opened a revolutionary chapter in Malayalam literature with publication of his book of poems entitled "Hrida-Yankuram". Young poets imitated him and produced a mass of poetry which enriched the Malayalam language. I am ready to confess that 'Hridayankuram' is the only book of Malayalam poetry which I always keep on my little table near my bed to read and enjoy over and over again. Bodheswaran of course wrote other poems. Apart from this golden treasury of poems Bodheswaran was a great freedom fighter. The battle for the freedom of India was his life-breath. He once told me that the greatest good fortune of his life was that he lived to see India become an Independent Sovereign Republic. "I can now die in peace" were his words.

Newspapers in Kerala have paid the highest tributes to his memory. They have written leading articles portraying his personality and character. Friends who met him during the days of his last illness testify that though the body had become

weak the mind was alert, courageous and revolutionary as ever. For many long years to come the image of this poet and warrior will stand vividly before the people of Kerala inspiring them to lofty thoughts and fearless and selfless action. Even in death Bodheswaran has left behind two priceless treasures in his daughters Hridaya Kumari, and Sugatha Kumari who are loved and respected for their high literary attainments and fearless and selfless character. Bodheswaran thus lives on in and through them. Bodheswaran is no more and yet is thus alive with us.

(July 1990, Vol. VIII, No. 10)

KELAPPANJI: HIS PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF INDIA

Kerala is ringing with Kelappanji's name from one end to the other. Seminars, Symposia, Study-circles and public meetings on Kelappanji's personality, life and work are being held literally in scores of places in Kerala. The same is happening wherever large numbers of Malayalis live in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Madras and in other cities. Kerala is not an easy place for any leader to receive public acclamation. Communal and political rivalries are rampant and the public mood is often volatile. It is therefore very significant that deep appreciation of Kelappanji's life and work has cut across these differences. Political parties like the Congress, the Communist, the Marxist, the Janatha, the BJP etc. have all participated in paying high tributes to the memory of Kelappanji. Kelappanji himself while remaining a devoted Congress man never hesitated to extend his hand of co-operation to other parties to achieve political freedom and social justice. He was undoubtedly an Ambassador of communal unity who stood for complete justice to the downtrodden and oppressed sections of the people. He was a strong man who never yielded to threats and he ever bet his knee before insolent might. Being utterly selfless in his public career, he was fearless to a degree and never hesitated to call a spade a spade.

There were three outstanding Social Revolutionaries in

the Kerala of our time. They were T. K Madhavan, Mannathu Padmanabhan and Kelappan. This Trinity was largely responsible for bringing Mahatma Gandhi into the life of Kerala. Each one of them can well be the subject matter of a heroic biography. It has now become current to characterize Kelappanji amok as a Kerala Gandhi. This simply indicate the profound love and admiration of the people for Kelappanji. It would however be more apt to call him the Sardar Patel of Kerala. While Kelappanji lived up to Gandhiji's teachings he was not cast in a Gandhian mould. His face like the Sardar's was like an iron mask and whenever he was challenged in politics or social transformation, he reacted relentlessly like the Sardar. Gandhiji was not only a Political and Social Revolutionary but a Moral and spiritual Prophet at the highest level. And that was why the Sardar and Kelappanji were devotees of Gandhiji. Kelappanji achieved his greatest moral victory in the Guruvayur Temple-entry Satyagraha. He fasted unto death for getting the Harijans the right to enter and worship in the Guruvayur temple. But suddenly Mahatma Gandhi intervened and bade him to give up the fast promising that he would himself take on the responsibility for achieving Harijan temple entry in the Guruvayur temple. Here we see the master's deep love for the disciple. Temple entry for Harijans did come afterwards. But the Guruvayur Satyagraha of Kelappanji did play an unmistakable part in the final result. Kelappanji's achievements are manifold. Whichever way you look in Kerala seeking to find how several radical changes in politics, religion and society took place, it will be found without a doubt that Kelappanji had showed the way. His footsteps preceded those of most other political and social revolutionaries in Kerala. It is therefore only proper that

Kelappanji's Centenary is being celebrated in Kerala and outside for a whole year. He was a man of deep compassion for the downtrodden and oppressed and he battled for their rights with all his moral and spiritual fervor. He is no longer with us in the body but his spirit enriches all our character and culture forever.

(November 1988, Vol. VII, No. 2)

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G. Ramachandran made his mark on India and the world. He has interpreted the word and philosophy of Gandhiji for our times and for the modern generation. He has dedicated his entire life to interpret Gandhi's message in the context of the emerging realities without compromising on the core values of Gandhi.

DR. HOMER A. JACK

(Former Minister, Unitarian Universalistic Society, Illinois)