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**EMINENT PARLIAMENTARIANS
MONOGRAPH SERIES**

**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
1992**

**EMINENT PARLIAMENTARIANS
MONOGRAPH SERIES**

S.M. JOSHI

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Foreword

The Indian Parliamentary Group decided early last year to celebrate the birth anniversaries of distinguished parliamentarians, with a view to recalling and placing on record the contributions made by them to the nation's parliamentary life and polity. In pursuance of this decision, a Monograph Series—known as the “Eminent Parliamentarians Monograph Series” was started in March 1990 with a monograph on Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. This was followed by similar monographs being brought out on Dr. Lanka Sundaram, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Pandit Nilakantha Das, Shri P. Govinda Menon, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Shri C.D. Deshmukh, Shri Jaisukh Lal Hathi, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar and Shri V.K. Krishna Menon, to commemorate their birth anniversaries.

The present Monograph—fourteenth in the series—is our humble attempt to remember the services rendered by a veteran freedom fighter and a leading light of the Indian socialist movement, Shri S.M. Joshi, who made a significant contribution to the nation's social, political and parliamentary life for over six decades.

This volume consists of three parts. Part-I contains a brief profile of Shri Joshi highlighting some glimpses of his eventful life. Part-II consists of nine articles from eminent persons, some of whom had been with him in the vanguard of various struggles and a few others who were his 'comrades-in-arms' since his childhood days. Part-III comprises of nine selected speeches of Shri Joshi in Parliament when he was a member of the Fourth Lok Sabha.

On the occasion of his 87th birth anniversary, we pay our respectful tributes to the memory of this eminent leader and well-known Parliamentarian. We hope that this Monograph would be found useful and interesting.

NEW DELHI;
November, 1991

SHIVRAJ V. PATIL,
*Speaker, Lok Sabha and
President, Indian Parliamen-
tary Group.*

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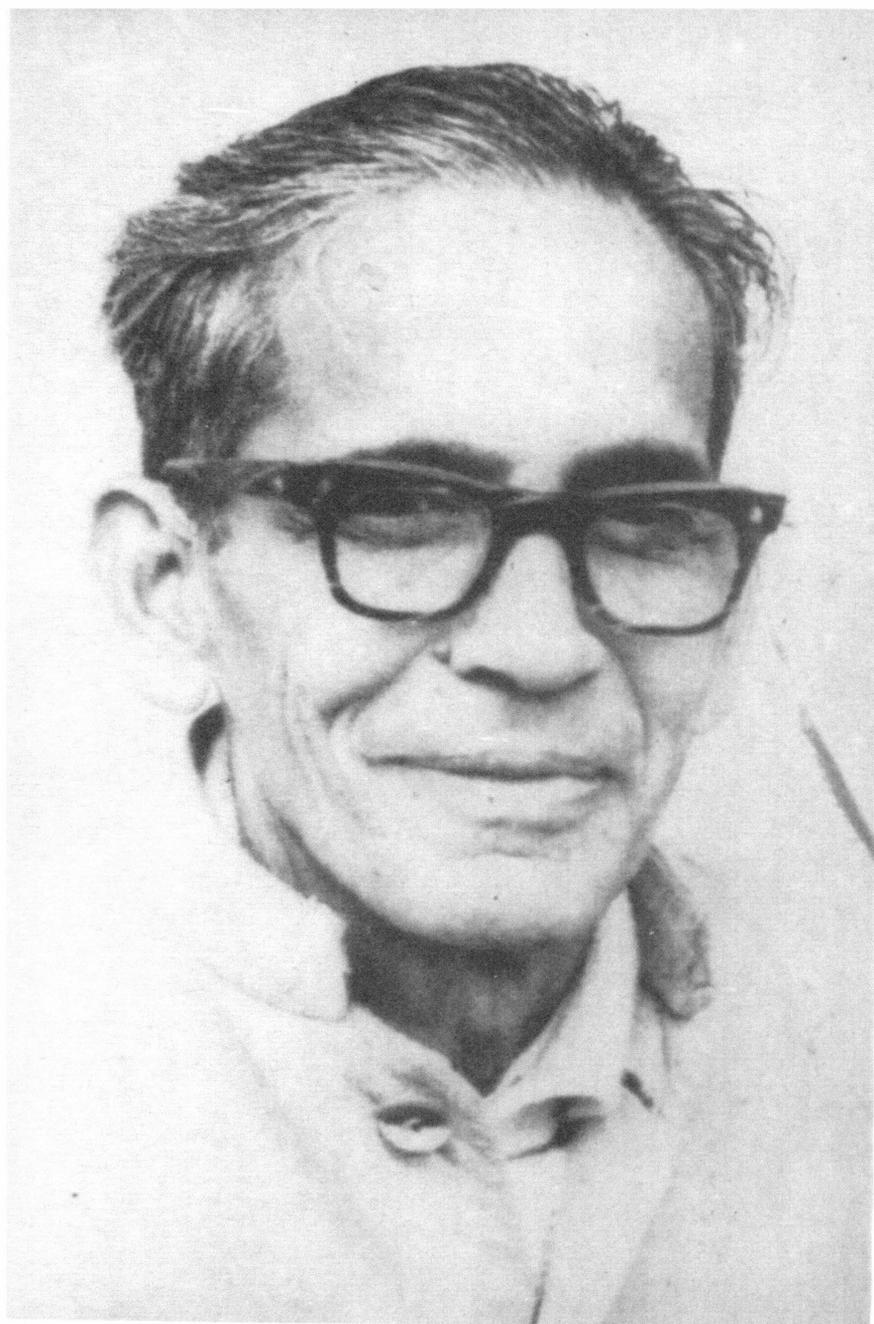
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PART ONE
His Life



S.M. Joshi — A Profile

An endearing personality, with most unassuming simplicity and transparent sincerity, a veteran freedom fighter, a doyen of the Indian socialist movement, a fearless crusader for social justice and a fighter against economic inequality, an eminent trade union leader and a nationalist *par excellence*. Shri Shridhar Mahadev Joshi or S.M., as he was popularly known among his colleagues, friends and admirers, was born in a lower middle class *Brahmin* family at Junnar in Pune District, on 12 November, 1904. His father — Mahadev Janardan Joshi — was a Clerk of the Court at Junnar. Economic status of the family, however, did not embitter the mind of this young boy. Indeed, the deprivations during childhood gave birth in him, a deep urge for identification with the poor and downtrodden and to do something concrete for their upliftment. This spirit always reflected in his outlook and activities and he championed the cause of the poor and deprived till the last breath of his life.

His early life and education

During his childhood, S.M. lived in the ancestral Village — Golap — in Ratnagiri district. Young Joshi pursued his primary education at Junnar itself. However, two years prior to completion of his primary education, his father died, leaving behind the family in distress. Facing both personal tragedy and poverty with great courage and fortitude, S.M. continued his studies with the help of free studentships and scholarships. His mother, who was a devout Hindu lady imbibed in young Shridhar's mind, the fine ideals of life and a sense of self-respect. The self-pride in him obviously led him to think, even while as a student, of the humiliation suffered by the motherland at the hands of colonial rulers. It was during this time that the freedom struggle was reaching its crescendo.

Naturally, S.M. was profoundly influenced by the feeling of patriotism and crave for freedom from foreign yoke engulfing the country. When the Duke of Connought visited India, S.M. threw away the badge given to him in his school and suffered quietly the punishment meted out to him.

After completing his Matriculation, S.M. joined the famous Ferguson College to pursue his studies further. There he won a prize for his essay on political economy. His academic career was exceptionally brilliant and he passed the B.A. Examination with History, Economics and Politics Group in 1929. He also established his reputation as a forceful and effective orator.

While at college, he read the writings of Karl Marx, Mahatma Gandhi's *Young India* and literature by Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad and other revolutionaries. All this had a profound impact on young S.M. who along with his colleagues like N.G. Goray, R.K. Khadilkar and Shirubhau Limaye decided to set up an organisation called *Youth League* and its first conference was organised by these young people in Bombay in 1927. The second Conference was held in Pune under the Presidentship of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru very successfully for which they had to face the wrath of British Government. S.M. and his friends were not allowed to join the M.A. course because of their political activities. In 1930, he, however, joined Law classes in Bombay. But his studies were interrupted owing to his intense political activities, and he could complete his LL.B. only in 1934. Though he joined Law with the intention of taking up legal profession as his career, his patriotic instincts propelled him to plunge headlong into the freedom struggle.

As a Freedom Fighter

The patriotic fervour, love for the motherland and contempt for the foreign rulers were ingrained in S.M. since his student days. He was immensely influenced by the teachings of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and the writings of several other revolutionaries. While in his early twenties, he was attracted to Gandhiji and the Congress, the torch bearer in the struggle for independence. Joshi alongwith his close associates

like N.G. Goray, Achyut Patwardhan and Yusuf Meherally successfully organised a demonstration in Pune against the Simon Commission. The atmosphere was surcharged with enthusiasm and Joshi, like other staunch nationalists, plunged himself into the freedom struggle. He firmly believed that independence would not only end the centuries of colonial domination over India but also usher in a new dawn, ending social and economic inequalities and injustices.

He actively participated in the *Salt Satyagraha* in 1930 on the sea-shore at Alibag in Konkan area. There, he made a speech with such a heroic spirit, profound courage and transparent sincerity that the entire audience gathered over there, went into a thunderous applause. He was imprisoned then for the first time for taking part in the freedom struggle. "I became a full citizen" was the characteristic comment from S.M. in his autobiography, written in *Marathi* while referring to his first imprisonment in the wake of *Salt Satyagraha*.

In 1932 he suffered detention for over two months. Yet on another occasion in 1934 he was imprisoned for two years, for making a speech in Bombay demanding the release of the revolutionary leader late Shri M.N. Roy. In prison, he faced many hardships as he was treated as 'C' class prisoner on account of which his poor health grew worse. However, all this did not deter him in any way in his efforts to seeing the motherland free.

Having accepted the life of a political revolutionary, which he knew was not a bed of roses, Joshi decided not to marry. However, one Kumari Tara Pendse, a young girl from a well-to-do family, who was working as a teacher — influenced by the fire of S.M.'s idealism happily prepared to share the hardships and happiness by becoming his companion. S.M. ultimately married her in 1939 and was blessed with two sons.

When Gandhiji gave the clarion call for the *Quit India Movement* in 1942, which shook the foundations of the British empire, the Government decided to crush the movement with all its might and arrested all Congress leaders including those

at the district level. The people and leaders were, however, equally, if not more, determined to carry on the struggle. In a bid to complete the task in a "Do or Die" spirit, S.M., alongwith his colleagues like Achyut Patwardhan, Shirubhau Limaye and others set up an underground organisation. S.M. who could speak *Urdu* very fluently moved all over India, including Karachi, masquerading as a *Maulvi* by the name of *Imam Ali* and met various leaders who were underground. The organisation became a vital communication link and conduit for leaders from one part of the country to the other. Many of the revolutionaries were killed in this struggle and S.M. himself had a narrow escape a number of times. Immense concern for human suffering in S.M. propelled him to extend support to the families of revolutionary leaders. However, in 1943 police raided a house in Bombay and arrested many underground revolutionaries including S.M. The Government which wanted to conduct a trial of these revolutionaries as 'Maharashtra Conspiracy Case' could not do so for want of evidence. However, they were imprisoned unjustly, as undertrials for a long period of three years.

As a Parliamentarian

S.M. known for his outspoken and forthright criticism and for constructive opposition, was an effective parliamentarian, though his innings was not very long. He remained a legislator for two terms in the Maharashtra Assembly and served as member of the Fourth Lok Sabha. During this period his contribution to parliamentary debates, and indeed to the national life as a whole, was enormous and rich. He was respected and revered by all for his transparent sincerity, honesty of purpose, and utmost simplicity. He made a unique mark of his own and lived the life of a true *Ajat Shatru*

In the first General Elections held to the Lok Sabha in 1952, under the provisions of Constitution, he unsuccessfully contested from the Pune constituency. However, this initial defeat at the hustings did not disappoint him, instead, being a *Karmayogi*, he devoted himself with renewed vigour to the welfare of the working classes.

S.M. began his parliamentary life as a Legislator of the Bombay Assembly to which he was elected from a constituency in Pune in a bye election in 1952. He was elected once again to the Assembly in 1957. As a legislator, S.M. made a mark of his own in the proceedings with his outspoken and forthright views and for his constructive opposition. He was the Leader of the combined Opposition in the Assembly for sometime under the scheme of rotation of leadership agreed to by various opposition groups. Though S.M. remained as Opposition Leader for a fixed term only, he was respected by all and was consulted on every issue by the opposition parties. Thus in his very first innings as a Legislator, S.M. proved to be an effective parliamentarian. It was during this period that he actively worked for the creation of a separate State for the Marathi speaking people of the Bombay State.

When the States Reorganisation Commission did not provide for a unilingual Maharashtra State, there were violent agitations in Bombay in which at least 50 people were killed in police firing. As a mark of protest, Shri Joshi resigned his membership from the Assembly and became the General Secretary of the newly formed *Samyukta Maharashtra Sangharsh Samiti*—an all Party organisation—to press for a separate Maharashtra State and led the struggle till the State was formed in 1960. He provided a mature and able leadership to the *Samiti*. He never allowed the agitation to take the form of linguistic violence. Once he risked his own life to save a police officer from a violent and furious mob. When Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Pratapgarh, S.M. led a unique and dignified demonstration to the appreciation of one and all, including Pandit Nehru himself.

S.M. became a popular leader of the masses with the formation of Maharashtra State. But he did not intend to draw any political mileage or electoral benefit out of such massive response. His *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* itself won a good number of seats in the 1957 General Elections. After the formation of Maharashtra State, owing to differences on certain issues, he pulled out of the *Samiti*. All his actions reflect the fine tradition of *Nishkama Karma*.

When the third General Elections were held in 1962, he contested again but could not win. The same year, he was, however, elected as a Corporator to the Pune Municipal Corporation. In the Fourth General Elections held in 1967, Joshi contested and won from Pune Constituency as a candidate of the *Samyukta Socialist Party*. During this period, he actively participated in 'Land Grab' Movement organised by his party and courted arrest in Bihar.

As a Member of Lok Sabha, S.M. spoke on various issues—concerning national unity and integrity, rights of peasants and workers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, etc. in a simple, lucid language. He was effective and forceful in his arguments and to the point. Shri Joshi was democratic to the core and advocated the need for ethical norms in every walk of life, including politics. He regarded floor crossing as a symptom of degeneration of life in our country and this symptom could not be rectified merely by enacting a legislation. How true Shri Joshi was in his analysis of this evil of political defections is borne out by the fact that after long and strenuous efforts, Parliament passed the Anti-Defection Act in 1985.

S.M. firmly believed in the age-old axiom of unity in diversity that India truly reflects. He laid emphasis on emotional integration. While speaking on the Resolution on status of Jammu and Kashmir in Lok Sabha¹ he said:

.....one of the characteristics of our Constitution is that we find unity in dualism. When we have adopted the democratic system, it means that every person has his separate identity. He has his own soul but the soul of our country is one. He has to integrate his soul into the soul of the country.

¹L.S. Deb., 6 December, 1968, cc. 259-266.

As a Doyen of the Indian Socialist Movement

S.M. was essentially an activist in attitude and an idealist wedded to humanism. Though he was profoundly influenced by Marxist Philosophy, he always thought of solutions to problems in his own way. S.M. practised socialism in his real life too and socialism for him was not a mere intellectual conviction. He gave his heart and soul to it and was convinced that socialism is an effective instrument for improving the lot of the underprivileged. For this he internalised the fine tenets of socialism and imbibed the ethical values of humanism underlying Gandhian Philosophy. It was perhaps because of this judicious blending of these two in S.M. that many came to regard him as a "Gandhian among socialists and, socialist among Gandhians". As mentioned earlier like many others, he was initially attracted to the Indian National Congress. But soon he along with Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, N.G. Goray, Yusuf Meherally, and others, came together and formed the Congress Socialist Party within the Congress fold, in order to give a more positive and militant direction to the freedom struggle.

While S.M. was still undergoing imprisonment, this group of socialists within the Congress, met in Pune and started a volunteer organisation—*Rashtra Seva Dal* in order to galvanize the youth and inculcating in them the spirit of patriotism. Soon after his release in 1940 S.M. was requested to become its President. Under his leadership a new momentum was given to the organisation by infusing in the students and youth a secular and constructive approach. The movement became so powerful that nearly 50,000 volunteers attended a rally held at Satara in Maharashtra in 1947. After independence, the Government banned this organisation; yet owing to Joshi's efforts, the ban was lifted.

With the attainment of independence in 1947, one of the cherished dreams of S.M. was fulfilled. However, the young rebels and socialists had differences with the Government on the socio-economic policy. At their convention in Nasik in April

1948, the socialists decided to break away from the Congress to form the Socialist Party (S.P.). S.M. became Chairman of its Maharashtra unit. As a leader of the Socialist Party he identified himself with the sufferings of the masses. He, alongwith a squad of *Rashtra Seva Dal*, did *shramdan* in villages and when there was a great famine in Maharashtra, he had put his heart and soul in the relief work.

S.M. believed in unity of all like-minded parties. He had favoured the merger of the *Socialist Party* and the *Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party* (KMP Party) which was rechristened as *Praja Socialist Party* (PSP). However, there was a split in the PSP subsequently, as Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, alongwith his followers left the Party due to ideological differences.

After the Chinese aggression in 1962, S.M. as a leader of the PSP, called upon his followers to prepare for high sacrifice. At the same time he emphasised the need for strengthening the socialist movement in the country that would give people a new hope and alternative and to usher in socio-economic transformation, which also would meet foreign aggression and internal disintegration. The PSP at its Bhopal Session in 1963 endorsed this militant line of political action and urged S.M. to be the Chairman of the Party.

As the Chairman of the PSP, S.M. made relentless efforts to consolidate all socialist forces in the country. Some members including Ashok Mehta, who had differences with the leadership, left the party. In June, 1964 after long and hectic deliberations the *Samyukta Socialist Party* (SSP) was formed of which again S.M. became the Chairman and remained in that position till 1969. He toured extensively all over the country.

S.M. was one of the architects, alongwith Jayaprakash Narayan and others, of the Janata Party in 1977 and in the subsequent year he played a vital role in forming the PDF Ministry in Maharashtra. S.M. has rightly been regarded as one of the architects of the Indian Socialist Movement.

As a Crusader Against Social and Economic Inequality

S.M. was deeply impressed by Dr. Ambedkar's mode of agitation for securing for the untouchables the civic rights of drawing water from public tanks and to enter temples, etc. In 1929 S.M., who was the Secretary of the *Youth League*, staged a *Satyagraha* to establish the right of these classes to enter the *Parvati* temple in Pune. More than 3,000 Orthodox Hindus blocked the entry of 25 *satyagrahis* and threw them back. After a few days Shri Joshi was beaten up at a public meeting organised by caste Hindus as he questioned the inhuman practice of untouchability. However, all these impediments did not deter, in any way, the determined S.M. from fighting for the rights of the under-privileged. He used to flare up whenever any incident of injustice came to his knowledge and always came forward to defend the aggrieved. Such was the transparent feeling of compassion and humanism he had for the deprived in the society.

In 1936 S.M. went on a tour in the villages to spread the message of freedom to the people. This campaign gave S.M. further opportunities for knowing the problem of the people in general and peasants and working classes in particular and he dedicated the subsequent years of his life for the amelioration of the lot of these people. Even when the Congress Government was in power in 1937, S.M. led a *morcha* of peasants, and made a demand for a progressive and pro-peasant Tenancy Legislation. Later on he was strongly attracted to the *Bhoodan* Movement. He had firmly believed that it was the *Bhoodan* Movement alone which could change the life of peasants in the villages and usher in socio-economic transformation. It was under his stewardship that the work of *Bhoodan* was organised in Maharashtra.

As a Trade Union Leader

S.M. Joshi has been an ardent fighter and a crusader of the rights of aggrieved and exploited. It was only obvious that industrial workers' problems and their welfare should become a matter of utmost concern to him. He relentlessly championed

their cause, fighting injustices meted out to them in his own way. At the same time he had the nation's interests and wealth uppermost in his mind and heart.

S.M. had always emphasised that workers should have both rights and duties. Only then, he felt, the wheels of industry would move smoothly and the nation would progress. When in 1961 the Central Government employees had made some demands and threatened to go on a strike, S.M. did not support it. But when the Government refused to concede even the minimum demand of the employees, relating to dearness allowance, he himself led the strike.

As a trade union leader of acknowledged sincerity, his advice to the workers of the ordnance factories in the Defence Ministry was that they should put forward their demand to the Government and at the same time work for maximising production.

He was also the leader of various important and large public sector organisations. To name a few, he was General Secretary of the All India Defence Employees Federation, Chairman of the All India State Bank Employees Federation and Chairman of the State Transport Kamgar Sabha.

As a Nationalist

Though some people felt that Shri S.M. Joshi was a regional leader fighting for a narrow cause—probably referring to his role in the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement—this was not a wholly fair comment on him. S.M. was undoubtedly a nationalist *par excellence*.

Being an activist in his attitude right from the day he plunged into the freedom struggle and to the autumn of his life, S.M. led and organised various agitations—be it of the workers, *dalits*, women or peasants—and evinced keen interest in everything having a bearing on the unity and integrity of the country. He was also a staunch exponent of communal harmony.

In 1967, as a Member of Parliament, S.M. visited Nagaland to study and resolve the Naga problem. Again in 1979, at the

behest of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan he visited London to discuss the issue with the Naga leader A.Z. Phizo. Thus he played an important role, in his own way, for the ultimate settlement of the Nagaland problem.

S.M. took a leading part in the organisation of the *Goa Liberation Samiti* while his comrade-in-arms Shri N.G. Gcray took a lead in the Goa Liberation struggle. When the country was undergoing a difficult phase in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression in 1962, S.M. alongwith other leaders of the PSP, though in opposition, extended all support to the Government and gave a call to his followers to prepare themselves for a higher sacrifice in the interest of motherland. His concern for the nation and its poor, aggrieved, deprived and underprivileged sons and daughters mark him out distinctly and vividly as a true and worthy son of India. In recognition of the dedicated services rendered by him to the country, Shri Joshi was publicly honoured on the completion of his 60th year in 1964. Two books in appreciation of his selfless service and a selection of his views on various issues and speeches were published on that occasion.

As a Writer

Besides being an effective and firebrand speaker, S.M. was also a prolific writer. Right from his early life, he had a flair for writing. During his student days, he contributed many articles of high literary excellence to the '*Kirloskar*'

For some time in the early 1930's, he worked as a correspondent with the *Free Press Journal* covering the Legislative Council Proceedings, which were then held at Pune Council Hall. He was also Editor of an English Daily '*Poona Daily News*' for a short while and of the *Lok Mitra* (a Marathi Daily published from Bombay) from 1958 to 1962. He contributed many articles of high standard on socialism to various *Marathi Journals and newspapers*. He was an author of the book titled '*Socialist's Quest for Right Path*' and his autobiography in Marathi '*Mee S.M.*' was published in 1984. Yet another book in Marathi '*Anakhi Vegali Manase*' was released

by his life-long friend Shri N.G. Goray, just a day before S.M. left for his heavenly abode.

Tributes and Homages

A life replete with activities and events for sixty-long years in the service of the downtrodden and under-privileged came to an end at the ripe age of 84 on 1 April, 1989 at Pune, due to bone cancer. S.M. was indeed a symbol of service, renunciation, simplicity and dedication. Though during his six decades of relentless service S.M. did not hold any public office, yet in recognition of his outstanding and selfless service to the nation and to the people, in whose hearts he carved out a unique niche for himself, S.M. was accorded a State Funeral.

The entire nation—the President, the Vice-President, the Prime Minister, the Parliament, the State Legislatures, the press and leaders from all walks of life mourned the sad demise of this great son of India.

The President Shri R. Venkataraman, while eulogising the multifarious personality of Shri S.M. Joshi, said:

Shri Joshi was an embodiment of the principle of simple living and high thinking. He was a Gandhian among Socialists and Socialist among Gandhians. His contribution for the healthy trade union movement will be cherished by the people for long.

In Rajya Sabha, while paying glowing tributes to the departed soul, the Vice-President and Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma said:

An era has ended with the passing away of Shri Shridhar Mahadev Joshi who was a shining link between the Gandhian era before independence and post-freedom politics of Maharashtra in particular and the country in general.

* R.S. Deb., 3 April, 1989, cc. 1—2.

....in the death of Shri Joshi the nation lost a patriot, a Gandhian and a socialist.

The then Prime Minister, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi while expressing deep sorrow at the death of Shri Joshi said:

In Mr. Joshi's death, we have lost a freedom fighter who dedicated his life to the welfare of the poor and the downtrodden....Mr. Joshi was an ardent nationalist whose commitment to the progress and welfare of the country will be long remembered.

In Lok Sabha the then Speaker Dr. Balam Jakhar while paying tributes to Shri Joshi said*:

Shri Joshi was a firm believer in value—based politics. A fearless crusader for social justice, he relentlessly championed the cause of the under-privileged and the downtrodden. He made a very significant contribution to the emergence of a healthy trade union movement in the country.

*L.S. Deb., 3 April, 1989, C.1.

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Debates

Lok Sabha Debates
Rajya Sabha Debates

PART TWO
Articles

S.M. Joshi—A Tribute

—Rabi Ray*

S.M. Joshi's memory will ever remain etched in the minds of the people of India as that of a great political activist and socialist theoretician. He was a lovable person, a composite personality actuated by the higher values of life. His humanism combined with modern and scientific outlook made him a most sought after socialist leader and thinker. Throughout his life, as a political revolutionary, SM as he was popularly known among his friends and admirers, had always championed the cause of the underprivileged. His life was a synthesis of many a movement; in fact he symbolised the socialist movement in India. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan once said:

'S.M.'s greatness lies in his deep humanity, his earnest concern for the values of life, his utter sincerity and simplicity, his spontaneous identification with the lowly and the down-trodden. To have known such a person has been a privilege and a joy'.

S.M. was a founding member of the *Congress Socialist Party* along with Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Dr. Sampurnanand, Yusuf Meherally, Shri Ashok Mehta and Acharya Narendra Dev in 1934. Till his conversion to the political philosophy of Acharya Jawadekar an eminent political thinker of Maharashtra, SM was an ardent believer in Marxist thinking. He realised the limitations of Marxist philosophy and pleaded for the synthesis of militancy of Marx with the purity of means by Gandhi. To quote him, 'It must be remembered that

*Shri Rabi Ray is a Member of Parliament and former Speaker of Lok Sabha.

gradualism is inherent in the Gandhian method. Nevertheless, a radical beginning in the right direction is the need of the hour.'

It would indeed be a privilege to remember the mood, method and message of a multidimensional personality like SM who was not only an ardent socialist but also a political leader of transparent honesty and integrity, a staunch nationalist, a dedicated trade unionist, and above all, an idealist who was wedded to the noble ideals of democracy, secularism, socialism and humanism.

I had the privilege of knowing S M personally as a comrade. Under his inspiring leadership, the *Rashtra Seva Dal* (RSD), a voluntary organisation of youth, made a pioneering contribution to the socialist movement. It was successful in countering the growing influence of cadre-based *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) after 1935. SM became the Chairman of RSD in 1940, and thereafter this organisation became very popular because of its secular outlook and constructive approach. When the socialists decided to part company with the Congress and form the Socialist Party at the Nasik Convention in April 1948, SM became Chairman of the Maharashtra unit of the new party. He was elected Chairman of PSP in 1963-64 and Chairman of SSP in 1964 and a member of the Parliament in 1967.

As a member of Parliament, SM was very popular as people's leader. Whether it was his participation in the debates on the Presidential Address, or deliberations on land reforms movement in Maharashtra, or discussions on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, or discussions on The Unlawful Activities (Preventions) Bill 1967 and an Amendment Bill thereto in 1969 in Lok Sabha, SM said that these granted 'absolute, despotic, dictatorial powers to the Government'. He was never prepared to compromise with democratic rights of the people. He was very critical of the attitude of the Government towards the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

SM wanted parliamentary democracy as a starting point for a more perfect system that would ensure that political power went into the hands of the masses. He firmly believed in what

Gandhi had said, 'Parliament is indeed barren. I do not imagine that its nature would change in India. I live however, in the hope that our Parliament will only remain barren and may not give birth to a wicked son. I am suggesting many ways to ensure that the voice of Parliament is really the voice of the people and not that of hired voters. We are looking for a system that will yield maximum benefit to India'. It will be relevant to note in this context that SM wanted to make democracy more real so that every individual could play an effective role in the running of the country's affairs. He did not want Parliament to become a ritualistic institution. This brings to my mind what Gandhiji wrote to C.F. Andrews in 1918 about his attitude towards democracy. 'I do not believe in any Government', he wrote, 'but Parliamentary Government is perhaps better than capricious rule.' SM was most modest and unassuming. What endeared him to people from all walks of life were his utter simplicity, easy accessibility, lovable manners and ready wit and humour.

SM was very close to leaders like N.G. Goray, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, Yusuf Meherally, Ashok Mehta, and Achyut Patwardhan. Jayaprakash Narayan described him as one of his 'earliest and closest' colleagues in the *Congress Socialist Party*. His outspoken and forthright views during the debates in the Parliament, brought him very close to members belonging to different political parties also.

As a social activist, SM was associated with a number of organisations and worked very hard for building a strong and powerful organisational infrastructure of landless and small peasants that could force the Government to provide employment and other facilities to this most deprived section of society. He was convinced that such a guarantee would go a long way towards strengthening the bargaining capacity of these unfortunate people who have always been treated as second class citizens under the existing socio-economic structure. He led a crusade against the social evils like casteism and communalism.

Communalism, I believe, is like a bleeding cancer of our

socio-political fabric, and political systems that are not based on well-institutionalised organisations are bound to affect the very structural interactions of a political system and, in not too distant future, would limit the equity-oriented growth process. With a view to understanding the problems of minorities and finding solutions to them, I remember how SM pleaded for the establishment of minority cells at various political party levels and implementation of programmes and policies for the amelioration of their plights both in the sphere of social reforms and economic development.

SM was simply an institution by himself. His personality was contagious. The way he took up the causes of the agricultural labourers of Purnea district in Bihar, his commitments to the down-trodden and human values, his respect for Indian traditions, and his sense of dignity and honour for women made him immortal among the men of letters. He had an abiding faith in the common man, and he devoted his whole life to this cause. He once said:

‘The battle lines are being drawn and those who believe in democratic methods and the Gandhian way of life, have to line up with the down-trodden and hungry masses to fulfil the pledges given to them in the historic manifesto of the party on the eve of the Lok Sabha elections. The task is tremendous and the odds heavy. But the very effort is rewarding for all those who believe in Democracy, Secularism and Socialism’.

He made valuable contributions in disseminating socialist ideology in the country. His analytical mind enabled him to explain contemporary issues in their historical and social perspective. He was in fact a great crusader for socialism. I have always been impressed by his actions, his open-minded and non-partisan approach. During his visit to Assam in May 1983 to make an on-the-spot study of the situation there, SM made an appeal to the people of Assam. He said:

‘It was sad to notice that Assam has the feeling of an abandoned child. The Assamese think that no one in the rest of the country really cares for them. This feeling has

created in their minds, apathy, if not hatred towards all political parties in the country'.

He further said:

'Assam for centuries has been a model where different communities and languages have lived in an atmosphere of amity and cultural integration, which has now been rudely shaken. Time is now fast running out. The situation is quite complex and extremely desperate. We believe, however, that the situation could still be saved, if all political parties and concerned organisations decide to come to a pragmatic solution, keeping the best interests of the people of Assam and of the entire country in mind and also set out to mobilise public opinion in Assam and in the whole of country towards that end'.

I am sure that this appeal could now even cover the whole nation in its entirety.

He always sought to spiritualise political and approached all issues of national integration from a non-party point of view. His life was an admirable mixture of both theory and practice. In one of the rallies at Hadapsar, near Pune, he told Prof. G.P. Pradhan, 'Pradhan, you people conduct study circles and preach. You never soil your hands with any work, much less dirty work. Here I would like you and your friends to attend to the task of keeping the trench latrines clean'.

SM was committed to the principle of linguistic states. He had a strong faith in the decentralised democracy. He supported the formation of Maharashtra and Punjab on the basis of linguistic principles, and even went to London to negotiate with Phizo on Nagaland. He always was at the forefront in the fight for justice for the socially backward communities.

SM had tremendous faith in what Dr. Rammanohar Lhia often referred to as a strategy of an integrated ideology and outlook and agreed with him to free socialism and socialists out of the prison house of dogmatic Marxism. Comparing

democratic socialist philosophy with conservatism and communism, Dr. Lohia said:

'Conservatism and communism have a strange identity of interest against socialism. Conservatism holds socialism as its democratic rival and does not fear communism except as a threat of successful insurrection. Communism prefers the continuance of a conservative Government and is mortally afraid of socialist party coming to office, for, its chances of an insurrection are dimmed'.

His decision at the Varanasi Convention in 1965 to part company with his intimate and trusted friends for decades and those in the SSP, was an indication of his principled stand in favour of democratic functioning of a political party that claimed always to be at the forefront in the fight for democratic socialism. He was then confident of Dr. Lohia's leadership of the SSP Party at that critical moment of Post-Nehru phase of India's political history. SM was, of course, vindicated in 1967 when the Congress lost majority in many States and was reduced to a thin majority in the Lok Sabha.

SM actively involved himself in several movements for the benefit of the weaker sections of the society. He never lost his sense of humour. During the days when he was seriously ill, he once remarked 'Oh, it seems that an extremist has entered into my body for permanent protection'.

Beginning from early 1930s when he joined the movement to throw open the Parvati Temple to the so called untouchables, SM involved in a number of other movements. Under his inspiring leadership, trade unions reviewed their ideological roles and became centres for ideological debates.

SM was instrumental in giving a new orientation to the socialist movement in India. Perhaps, no one among the socialists suffered more than SM for the cause of socialism. Transcending the barriers of casteism, communalism and regionalism, he possessed a universal outlook and was truly a

world citizen. The best tribute to the memory of SM could be to commit ourselves to his ideas and philosophy and fulfil the unfinished tasks he had undertaken for the most exploited sections of our society.

SM — A Political *Rishi* — Sharad Pawar*

SM was a vital link between the pre- and post-Independence generations, a constant reminder to us of the ethos and values of service and sacrifice that inspired the freedom struggle in the Gandhian era. He was intensely human, totally fearless and radiated sincerity. There was no place for malice or hatred in his heart. He was committed to creating a society more truly human than the present, and this abiding commitment made him a social activist till the end.

He valued idealism more than ideology and had a human interest in wider socio-economic problems. As these problems demanded political solutions, he was involved in politics.

SM was, no doubt, a socialist, but he was not wedded to dogma. In socialism, he found the expression of the human and ethical values he greatly cherished, as also of his concern and compassion for the down-trodden and the exploited. But this attachment to ethical values equally attracted him towards Gandhiji's teachings and techniques of mass action — more so because of Gandhiji's insistence on the purity of means and emphasis on truth, non-violence and Satyagraha. As a result, SM came to be regarded as "a Gandhian among socialists and a socialist among Gandhians".

SM was elected twice — in 1952 and 1957 — to the Maharashtra State Assembly and in 1967 to the Lok Sabha. Though a firm believer in the values of parliamentary democracy, he was not a parliamentarian in the conventional mould.

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He did not view politics merely in terms of electoral activities and parliamentary debate. He, of course, made informed contribution to Parliamentary and Assembly debates and was always heard with respect and attention. But he found that though Parliament or the Assembly in itself was useful to ventilate the people's views, it was not a really effective instrument to make the Executive responsive to the people's will. He, therefore, made the legislature a forum for voicing the people's demands while, simultaneously, trying to forge the people's power by organising mass movements outside. Only such a two-pronged strategy, he felt, could make the government heed the deeply felt urges and aspirations of the people.

In the Assembly, he was known for his outspoken and forthright criticism. He flayed the government whenever he felt its policies or actions were wrong. But his speeches were devoid of rancour or petty partisan considerations and he zealously guarded the dignity of the House and the rights of its members. He strongly supported the motion of the breach of privilege in 1952 against the *Times of India* for its intemperate attack on the members of the State Assembly and, in 1957, against the Editor of "*Prabhat*" (Pune) even though the latter was his friend and colleague in the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti*.

He, however, believed in constructive opposition. In 1960, the Narsing Girji Mills of Solapur was closed down rendering about five thousand workers unemployed. SM raised the issue in the Assembly and, at his initiative, the Maharashtra Government formulated a scheme for the rehabilitation of the mill appointing a new Board of Management with SM as its member. The mill soon turned the corner and became profitable again. It was this experiment which marked the beginning of the Government-sponsored scheme of rehabilitation of sick textile mills in the subsequent years.

The period of his membership of the State Assembly was dominated by the mass movement for *Samyukta Maharashtra*. SM was a strong supporter of the cause of linguistic States because of his faith in democracy. Apart from advocating the

cause on the floor of the Assembly, he led the *Samyukta Maharashtra* movement and was elected General Secretary of the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti*. He however tried to ensure that the mass upsurge remained peaceful. It was primarily because of his positive lead that the long and sustained struggle did not degenerate into linguistic violence and the harmony between different linguistic groups in Bombay and elsewhere was preserved. During the agitation, SM even risked his life to save a police officer from mob fury.

Though he firmly opposed the Congress Party's stand, he knew that Congressmen in Maharashtra shared his sentiments on the issue of *Samyukta Maharashtra*. After the convincing performance of the *Samiti* in the General Elections of 1957, he did not resort to obstructionist tactics when Shri Y.B. Chavan became Chief Minister of the bilingual Bombay State. When, in November 1958, Pandit Nehru visited Pratapgarh to unveil the Statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji, the *Samiti* staged an unprecedented demonstration to give an unequivocal expression to the urge of the Marathi-speaking people. In spite of the apprehensions expressed by many, SM confidently led the people and the peaceful and dignified character of the demonstrations earned him all praise and also made a deep impression on Panditji.

Though SM was the leader and the General Secretary of the *Samiti*, he was clear in his mind that the *Samiti's* objective was the attainment of *Samyukta Maharashtra* and not the capture of power. He even went to the extent of saying that, if the *Samiti* won the General Elections to the Assembly, it would resign as soon as the goal of the formation of *Samyukta Maharashtra* was realised. As the other constituents of the *Samiti* desired to make it a political alternative to the Congress, he left the *Samiti* soon after the Maharashtra State came into existence though, subsequently, he continued his efforts to resolve the border dispute between Maharashtra and Karnataka on the basis of the people's wishes in the area. He thus never sought power and it was never an end in itself for him.

SM's life was thus a saga of relentless struggle against

injustice and sustained involvement in constructive work. All his life, he suffered imprisonment or detention more than seven times—including thrice after Independence. He was active in the trade union field, led workers' strikes or struggles. But he always held that his trade union activities were part of his pursuit of certain high ideals and national and social goals. He tried to follow the Gandhian path in this field and was not willing to compromise with his principles for narrow gains or expediency.

One of his major contributions was the development of *Rashtra Seva Dal*, which, as its Chief, he nurtured in its formative years. Because of his concern about infusing the values of secular democracy in young minds and training the youth in techniques of Gandhian constructive action—which he regarded as the vital pre-requisites for socio-political progress and harmony—he concentrated his efforts on building up the *Dal* as a constructive volunteer force. Over the years, the *Dal* was able to create bands of talented and dedicated social workers who have enriched Maharashtra's social and cultural life. Many of them are still carrying on the fine tradition of constructive social work and stand out by their dedication to the values imbibed during the training at *Seva Dal*.

Apart from the *Samyukta Maharashtra* movement, SM led the Goa liberation struggle, was involved in the *Bhoodan* movement and the Land *Satyagraha* in Bihar. He also participated in the efforts to resolve the Nagaland problem—visiting Nagaland in 1967, when he was an MP, to study first hand the situation there and impart a healing touch and, again in 1979, visiting London at the instance of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan for discussions with Shri Phizo. These negotiations greatly facilitated the ultimate reconciliation between the Government of India and the Naga rebels.

SM always strove for communal harmony and social equality and even faced dangers to his life in these efforts. But he never flinched. During the riots that erupted in 1978 on the issue of the renaming of the Marathwada University, braving the wrath of the caste Hindus, he extensively toured Marathwada and

was even greeted with a garland of *chappals* at one place. But he persisted in his mission to protect the lives of the *Dalits* and persuade the opponents to accept the decision to rename the University. As a result, the same young man who had garlanded him with *chappals* came to meet him later and, touching his feet, admitted that he was a changed man and had become a supporter of the decision.

In the last Century, Justice M.G. Ranade has described one of his contemporaries as a "Political *Rishi*". I feel, in recent times, SM was one such political *rishi* who was a moral and corrective force in our public life. He never allowed the ethical springs that motivated him to dry up, never got disheartened by defeat and, following the dictates of his conscience, always endeavoured to work for the causes he held dear.

Farewell to 'S.M'

— Professor Madhu Dandavate*

"May be some moments will arrive of lonely leisure in the season of fading flowers and falling leaves, when you will come upon some remnant of my being in the corner of your paling remembrance".

— Rabindranath Tagore

A life of rich experience and deep commitment is a beautiful thing. But when it is eventually overtaken by unbearable pain of incurable ailment and when every moment of survival becomes a renewed agony, death is the final gift to life. A recipient of such a gift, S.M. Joshi bade farewell to the world on 1st April, 1989.

As I watched his body being profusely showered with flowers on his last journey and ultimately consigned to the electric crematorium, a thought came to my mind. Why sprinkle flowers on his body? Throughout his life, he was blossoming like a flower. Why cremate his body? Throughout his life he was burning like a candle.

S.M.'s. was a vibrant life that echoed the urges and spirit of every period in which he lived and worked. His political mind was initially shaped and nurtured by the militant nationalism of Lokmanya Tilak. Later on, S.M. came under the spell of Mahatma Gandhi's programme of mass awakening through nationwide Civil Dis-obedience Movement and institutionalised constructive work. The spirit of compassion of Budha and Gandhi touched him and gradually the humanist ethos enriched

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his socialist convictions. As one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, S.M.'s thinking was influenced in the initial phase of the socialist movement by Karl Marx. But later on, with his sensitivity and appeal of humanism, his heart went all out with Gandhi. Here, he found great kinship with Jayaprakash Narayan who, beginning his political life as an ardent Marxist gravitated towards Gandhi in search of new "incentives for goodness". Like Yusuf Meherally, S.M. abhorred cruelty and ugliness in life and so his socialism like that of Meherally retained its ethical and aesthetic roots. It is here that Sane Guruji's life and message exerted a deep influence on S.M.'s life.

S.M.'s sense of adventure and courage found expression in his dynamic role as the leader of the underground movement of 1942. Every movement, whether it be of the peasants, or workers, or *adivasis* or *dalits* or women found him in its vortex. In the *Samyukta Maharashtra* movement, S.M. had the twin role of giving a sharp edge to the struggle for the creation of the linguistic State of Maharashtra and tempering the movement with the humanistic need to avoid bitterness and hatred among various linguistic groups. If S.M. symbolised *Samyukta Maharashtra*, with his burning commitment to democratic socialism, S.M. also became synonymous with "*Samata*" (equality) and "*Mamata*" (compassion).

If he had responded continuously throughout his life to the humanistic message of lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan and Sane Guruji, he also came to be touched by Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's passion for social equality and preferential opportunity for the backward and oppressed sections of the society like the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes.

Many political leaders received bouquets for their glamorous political achievements but in the midst of his struggle against injustice towards the *dalits*, S.M. became the recipient of a garland of *chappals* from social orthodoxy. He, however, turned these *chappals* into a shining ornament that adorns the social rebels.

The advancing shadows of the Emergency of 1975 got J.P. and S.M. very close again. During the emergency S.M. moved heaven and earth to rekindle the flame of freedom through the 'second battle of freedom' under the leadership of J.P. The emergency was ended in 1977. It was for J.P. and S.M. the "Finest Hour" of their life. However, equally agonising for them was the hour of break of the 'Janata experiment'. "The Garden has been uprooted", said J.P. in great anguish. S.M.'s response was—"A great betrayal". He however, found the glimmer of a new hope in threads of unification being collected afresh. At such a crucial moment when a cementing moral force was very much needed, S.M. has been lost to the country.

But let it not be a loss to the realm of values and principles for which he lived and died. Even after death men like S.M. will live through the values they preached in the society. "S.M. is dead—long live S.M."

S.M. Joshi: A Great Patriot

— Surendranath Dwivedy*

Late S.M. Joshi was known in the country more as a socialist leader than a Parliamentarian. He was our senior eminent personality in the Socialist Movement.

Although he had a long legislative career, he came to Parliament for a brief period, of only for one term (Fourth Lok Sabha). I was the leader of the Socialist Group in the Lok Sabha then. This Group was divided into SSP and RSP. I was the leader of the PSP Group, but we all worked in close collaboration all through this period. S.M. Joshi, being a senior person, played a great role in bringing about understanding between these two Groups.

He was essentially a trade union and political leader. Necessarily, therefore, it will be seen that he had taken interest, spoken or put questions mostly on trade union and political issues. Though he did not participate in the Lok Sabha deliberations much, yet it is a fact that whenever he spoke and whatever he said he was heard in rapt attention and attracted the notice of the Union Ministers—concerned with great respect. His sincerity and putting the matter in a non-partisan and objective manner had a great impact not only on the government but also on the entire House.

Our friend Joshi, who was familiarly called "S.M." was a veteran not only of the Socialist Movement but the national freedom movement as well. During his long political career he

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had come into personal contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru. He had made a place for himself in the political life of the country and at one time almost became the mouthpiece and spokesman of the entire State of Maharashtra. This was because with great boldness and courage he led the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* movement and achieved spectacular success and brought glory to himself. He was being regarded almost as a Messiah of the masses in Maharashtra. In one sense it can be stated that he was one of the makers of the modern Maharashtra State.

Besides the trade union movement, which he joined much earlier, he was one of the founders of the Indian Socialist Movement. We worked together for more than 30 years in this movement. He can be ranked amongst the great Socialist leaders like Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan. Jayaprakash Narayan had great faith in him and till the end of his life he remained a faithful follower of Jayaprakash Narayan. J.P. had entrusted to him all the Trusts and other organisations for public welfare with which he was associated.

S.M. was of a very amiable and sociable nature. His simplicity and sincerity had attracted many people and whichever work he had undertaken he had carried it to success. His cultural activities extended not only to the Socialist party but also to the entire youth of the country. He was one of the founders of the *Rashtra Seva Dal* and I feel, his contribution, in building up public spirited youth who have spread over all spheres of public life in Maharashtra, will ever remain in the sweet memories of the people. He not only imbibed, in him, the noble spirits of Gandhiji but in his life and work too Gandhian ideals were reflected in all respects.

Since all his time and energy were devoted and dedicated for

the cause of the country he made no property of his own and till the end had not even enough money for the treatment of the devastating disease of cancer towards the fag end of his life. He suffered a lot before his death but his friends and admirers all over the country sympathised and supported adequately to make him as comfortable as possible during the treatment. I am told by colleagues who were personally present at his sick bed that even during his subconscious days he was always muttering something about the mother land. In his death we lost a great friend and leader and the country lost a very great, honest and sincere son.

'S. M': As I Understood Him **—Madhu Limaye'**

The year 1937 was an important year in the history of modern India. In the beginning of that year, elections to the Provincial Assembly were held under the Government of India Act of 1935. The Congress Party got absolute majority in Madras, United Provinces (at present day Uttar Pradesh), Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. It could not muster absolute majority in the Bombay Province as it fell short of two or three seats. But it was quite an easy task for the Congress Party to win the support of two or three independent members. In the North-West Frontier Province, the Congress Party won nineteen out of fifty seats. There the Congress Party managed to get the support of other groups. Later, it joined hands with other parties in Assam as well. Thus cabinets were formed in eight provinces under the leadership of the Congress Party. The people began to look at the Congress Party as a new emerging force. A new enthusiasm was instilled among the masses. The farmers and the workers began launching movements after movements. The activities of the Leftists also picked up.

In my life too, the year 1937 proved to be an important one. I had devoted my heart and soul to study in the preceding three to four years. The city Library of Pune used to be my favourite place for study. In the beginning, I used to take special interest in international events. I took abiding interest in events like Italy-Abyssinian war, military occupation of Rheinland by Hitler,

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menacing attack on China by Japan, etc. But the election scene of 1937 aroused my interest in internal politics. There was a tough contest between *Lokshahi Swaraj Paksha* (Hindu Mahasabha and Kesari Group) and the Congress Party for Pune seat of the Assembly. During those days the names of Jéghe, Gadgil and Dev used to appear prominently as Congress leaders in the headlines of newspapers.

I also had the occasion to hear one or two speeches of Jéghe and Gadgil in the election meetings at Pune. At times, the names of young leftist leaders such as S.M. Joshi, N.G. Goray, Raghunath Rao Khadilkar, K.N. Phadke, G.P. Khare were also heard. The defeat of *Lokshahi Swaraj Paksha* and Hindutva loyalists became a matter of great rejoicing for the nationalists. It was aptly described as the victory of Bahujan Samaj over Sadashiva Pethi (Bigoted Brahmin) culture.

I took admission in Ferguson college after passing my matriculation examination in the middle of 1937. Only a few days later the Congress came to power. The hopes and aspirations of the people rose sky high. The young people were very anxious about the release of the political prisoners. The Youth League of 1927 to 1932 was then on its last legs. After his release from the jail in 1936, 'S.M.' had played a leading role in organising a Provincial Youth Council. Nevertheless the Youth League could not be resurrected. The young students formed a new organisation namely 'All India Students Federation' based on the feelings of anti-imperialism and nationalism. Today, many of us will be surprised to know that this organisation was inaugurated by Mohd. Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Till the Congress started the experiment of implementation of Provincial autonomy in mid-1937, Jinnah Sahib had the vision of only a united India and, therefore, he did not have even the slightest hesitation in attending the meeting of the Organisation actively engaged in the propagation of national unity and freedom.

The Students Federation was mostly dominated by the leftists, but all the leftists were not united. There were three groups among them — Royist Group, the Congress Socialist

Group and the Communist Group. There used to be stiff competition among these three groups. But there was total unanimity among them on issues like true nationalism and anti-imperialism. The liberation day of political prisoners of Andaman was celebrated during the rainy season of 1937. I still remember that day. There was strike in our college on that day and a public meeting was held at Shaniwar Bada crossing in the evening. I was present in that meeting along with my friend Arvind Tipnis. A young communist named Bhau Phatak made an excellent speech, but the speech made by 'S.M.' was a memorable one. It was neither a fiery speech, nor copious, nor rhetoric but reflective of his straightforwardness and sincerity to the cause, coming as it was from the core of his heart. It had a deep impact on my adolescent mind. The opinion that I formed about him in the first instance remained unchanged throughout my life. In comparison to other leaders, his sincerity was his forte.

During the first year of my college, I was just a ringside observer and was not directly involved in active politics. It was not that all the students were agitators or were imbued with nationalism. As at present, they also had special attraction for games, cinema, etc. Majority of the students used to remain engrossed in their studies. Only a handful of them used to take part in agitations. Goverdhan Pareekh was my teacher. He was a Royist. One or two students had sympathy for communists. I and two or three of my friends (Arvind Tipnis, Madhu Chapekar) were attracted towards Socialist Party. There was a reason for it. Shri Achyut Patwardhan had delivered an impressive speech in our college. The subject was: "Clouds of war on the horizon". Shri Achyut was a past-master in the art of turning a simple subject into a subtler one and holding the audience spell-bound during his speech. No wonder then that I too was influenced by his speech in English. Another reason was the speech of 'S.M.' that I had heard in the meeting held on the Andaman Political Prisoners Liberation Day. Though I was attracted towards the Socialist Party, yet it never occurred to me that I

should on my own introduce myself to the young leaders. The reason behind this was my reserved and shy nature.

My lecturer in Political Science and History was H.D. Kelawala and it was at his instance that I came in contact with S.M. Joshi. Actually there was a History Association in our college and, as per the practice there, students used to present their essays in its meetings. Kelawalaji was very kind to me. At his instance, I wrote a short essay on "Greek-culture and Modern Western Society". For that purpose I had to read a number of books from the college library. I did not have adequate knowledge of that subject and most of the ideas in my essay were borrowed ones. Even then my essay astounded the lecturers of the Department of History and they praised it a lot. Influenced by it, my lecturer inspired me to write an essay on the *Constitution Act of 1935*. He advised me to meet leaders of different ideologies. In fact, for that purpose only we had met 'S.M.' We informed him through a letter the date and time when we would be going to meet him. All the three of us had signed that letter.

'S.M.' used to live all alone in a separate room on the terrace of a house in Narayanpeth. By that time he had not married Tarabai. His room was like the rooms of the students in college hostels. It looked simple but in perfect order. There was a cot, a table, a chair, and some books and the popular portrait of Jawahar Lal Nehru in a pensive mood on the table. It was for the first time that I saw 'S.M.' so closely. He was tall, lean and thin. His complexion was fair and eyes were brown. He had well set thick hair on his head. I apprised him of the purpose of my visit, but he did not discuss much about the 1935 Act and gave me a note written by him to read on that Act. It appeared that he was in no hurry and had sufficient time as he chatted with us for quite a long time. He talked about freedom struggle and in a lighter vein told us that on the occasion of Roy Day a meeting was held at Chowpati in Bombay where most of the audience consisted of vendors and for that he was sentenced for two years rigorous imprisonment. Like-wise, he spoke at length about his failing health due to his refusing 'B' Class and

accepting 'C' class, hopes and disappointments, sorrows and pleasures of his life, etc.

After that, I met him at least two-three times in connection with my essay, but Constitution Act did not figure much in our discussion. The main subject of our discussion used to be freedom struggle and socialism. I already had a special interest in that subject. Meetings and talks with 'S.M.' and especially his personality helped me mould and develop my basic temperament.

In the earlier months of the new year, I was busy with 'essay-writing' and in preparing for the annual examination. So I could not go to 'S.M.'s house for several days. But as soon as the examination was over, I went to his house to meet him. I wanted to take part in the activities of the Congress Socialist Party and its discussion (study circle) group. 'S.M.' also had the same desire in his heart and naturally when he came to know about my inclination, he became very happy. I could never forget an incident that took place on one night in March, 1938. That incident is quite fresh in my mind as if it happened only yesterday. A study circle of Congress Socialists used to be held in a small bungalow of Narainrao Gore in Pune. Ideological questions and present national and international politics used to be discussed there. Shri P.B. Gadgil, a member of Congress Socialist Party and an employee of the national daily named '*Lokshakti*', used to address the intellectual lecture gathering on various subjects and after his speech the 'students' who gathered there used to discuss and dissect the subject from various angles. One day, 'S.M.' took me to this study circle. We reached a bit late. At that time, P.B. was analytically commenting on the international situation arising out of the occupation of Austria by Hitler and the possibilities of war. His speech was followed by a discussion on the subject and at the end, 'S.M.' introduced me to all present there. Narayan Rao Gore, his wife Sumati Bai, Vinayak Kulkarni, Madhav Limaye, Gangadhar Ogale, Anna Mane and others were among the 'students' there. Bandu, alias Keshav Gore, was the Secretary of this group.

Socialist Party had not done any significant work independently in Maharashtra between 1937 and 1939. Nath Ghanekar of district Satara, Nathubhai Parolekar of West Khandesh, Vasant Bhagwat of East Khandesh, etc. were Congress Socialists only in name. Actually, they had become Communists. The Centres of textile industry at Sholapur, Dhulia, Amalner, etc. and the Railwaysmen's Organisations were dominated by the Communists. In Maharashtra the independent farmers organisations like Kisan Sabha had not taken roots due to non-existence of *Zamindari* system there. The nature of work of the socialists in the Pune city was primarily theoretical and that too was limited to the youth wing only. It will not be an exaggeration to say that all the remaining work used to be done through the Congress.

As the Congress had come to power, the work of Congress Committees had expanded. Persons from different lives were joining the Congress. Power has its own special attraction. It was one of the important factors for expansion of the Congress. During 1937-38, Shankar Rao More was the President and S.M. Joshi was the Secretary of the District Congress Committee. Shri Joshi was also the Secretary of the Provincial Socialist Party. After formation of the Congress Ministry, a rally of the farmers was organised under the leadership of 'S.M.' Their demands included exemption from payment of land revenue in case of the famine-affected people, non- eviction of ryots, lessening the burden of loans on the farmers, granting loans through co-operative societies, etc. The memorandum received in the District Congress Committee Office mostly contained such complaints. After joining the Socialist circle, I also used to go to the Congress office at Shanivarpeth in the evening. Gradually, 'S.M.' started taking my help in his work. He taught me to handle correspondence. The Provincial Office of the Congress was also functioning there. So, I came in contact with the Congress leaders automatically. I got the golden opportunity to observe them at close quarters. My inquisitiveness helped me observe mutual relations of the Congress leaders, their attitude towards the socialists, etc. very minutely. The traditional Congressmen and the Gandhians were very happy with the

simple and pious nature of 'S.M.' The Congress men did not like the outspoken utterances and the satirical tone of Nana Saheb. The leftists too had great regard for 'S.M.' At that time in Pune, the Brahmin controversy was going on. But due to the broad vision of 'S.M.' and his unabated sympathy for the Bahujan Samaj and the down-trodden, these sections had come quite close to him. Right from the very beginning all these qualities of S.M. had a deep impact on me. This aspect of his personality stood him in good stead in the successful discharge of the responsibilities entrusted to him in his later life.

Thus, while working for the Congress, he used to conduct the study circles, etc. of the socialists. I very well remember that he used to take classes on subjects like the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx and Fredric Engels and Economics. Since we young people had joined the party, we used to hold its meetings at time. Different subjects used to be discussed there. In the middle of September, 1938, on behalf of the party, an anti-federation day was observed. On the Government of India Act of 1935 there was the provision for a Federation, but due to break-out of the world war, it could not be constituted and a public meeting was held at Shaniwar Bada Chowk. In that meeting Minoos Masani was invited from Bombay. He also held discussions with the members of the party separately. The party was not having its own separate office. Therefore, such meetings used to be held mostly at the residence of Nana Saheb or in the room of Shiru Bhau. That room was in the building of the provincial office of the Congress. In December, 1938, we celebrated the students week with great enthusiasm. The election of the Pune Branch of the Students Federation was fought with great zeal and fervour. At that time, Vasant Tulpule was in the Socialist Party. On the question of his admission to the party, heated discussion took place in the party. We, young people were strongly opposed to the Communist policy of trying to weaken the Congress Socialist Party from within by getting entry into it. Madhav Limaye (C.S.P. candidate) had to face defeat just by one vote because Vasant

Tulpule had cast his Vote in favour of D.Y. Joshi (Communist candidate). His double loyalty seen in this way pained us very much.

During this period, the student movements were concerned with important issues like communalism versus nationalism, policy of compromise versus militant politics, economic programme versus property oriented thinking, etc. There was rivalry among the leftists, but on the question of communalism, we all were one. When Savarkar came from Andamans, he was punished with confinement within Ratnagiri district. In 1937, he was to visit Mukteshwar, Pune. All were anxious to know about his future plan of action. But, by and by, it was becoming clear that by alienating himself from the national movement and being inspired by Kelkar he would join a fundamentalist, conservative and retrograde forum like the Hindu Mahasabha. Therefore, we, the progressive youth of 'Students Federation' decided to show all respect to his religious deeds but not to extend any support to his political activities as they were then going in a wrong direction. At that time the atmosphere had become very tense in Pune because of aggressive and intolerant attitude of the advocates of Hinduism.

The city of Pune was regarded as a stronghold of the advocates of Hinduism. In that tense atmosphere the followers of Hinduism. Savarkar and R.S.S. on the one side and nationalists, socialists and leftists on the other, used to quarrel among themselves. R.S.S. people used to attack our processions. We had a taste of it for the first time in 1938 on May Day. They attacked our procession and as a result, Tatyra (Senapati) Bapat and S.M. were injured. In the next two-three years, they made a fatal attack on Acharya Atre and disrupted the meeting of Shankar Rao Deo. R.S.S. people never allowed the nationalists to hold a public meeting in Pune. Communalism had spread its tentacles. To counter it, progressive socialists like Bhau Ranade, V.M. Hardikar, Shirubhau Limaye, Nana Saheb Gore and other staunch nationalists revived the *Rashtra Seva Dal*. 'S.M.' was a strong opponent of the proponents of Hinduism. We learnt the lessons of secular nationalism from national leaders and socialist leaders like 'S.M.' When S.M.

was released from Jail in 1941, he was entrusted with the responsibility of *Rashtra Seva Dal*. We organised a public meeting as a challenge and to root out the advocates of Hinduism in Pune. In that meeting the people compelled the leaders to teach the R.S.S. people a good lesson. Thereafter, for some years R.S.S. people did not create any trouble.

In September, 1939, the Second World War broke out. The socialists came forward to lead the anti-war movement. The socialist leaders called upon the Congress leaders not to cooperate in any way in the imperialist war and to launch Civil Disobedience Movement against the British rule. At that time Jayaprakash Narain was in Pune. Yusuf Meherally and Lohiaji were also in Pune. Public meetings were organised for them and they also had a meeting with the workers. In the race of the imminent struggle, college life appeared to me to be dull and boring. We all decided to dedicate our whole life to the cause of the freedom movement and for the work of Sewa Dal. 'S.M.' and Achyutji wanted that I should do my graduation first. But I was not prepared to restrain myself. Keeping in view our will, the leaders sent Gangadhar Ogle to the centre of Sugar Mill in Distt. Ahmednagar (at that time Belapur Road, at present Srirampur). I and Anna Sane chose Khandesh as our field of work. The Socialist Party was on its last legs there. From Trade Union movement to student community, the whole atmosphere there was dominated by the Communists. The Communists of Dhulia belonged to the Ranadive group and the Amalner group was associated with Dange. But the workers and students could never get an inkling of their differences due to strict discipline and control. However, some whispering used to go on all the time among them. Sane Guruji was the most popular leader of Khandesh. He was endowed with a remarkable gift of the gab. His oratory marked by eloquence and fire, had the spell-binding effect on the younger generation of Khandesh. His literature was inspired in ample measure by the national feelings, and it moulded the thinking of youth of Khandesh to a great extent. He spared no efforts for the withdrawal of the wage-cut imposed on the workers. He had organised a strong Morcha of the peasants at Jalgaon. Many of his disciples had turned communists. His relations even with Dange were quite-cordial.

In these adverse circumstances we were to achieve our objective. 'S.M.' himself came with us to Dhulia. In the first instance, congressmen and young people were not believing that we were to stay there permanently. They were thinking that we would leave that place after Diwali holidays, but we continued to be there even after Diwali. Then they changed their attitude. Later on Patwardhan, brother-in-law of 'S.M.', was transferred to Dhulia. He was a bank employee. Thereafter, the younger sister of 'S.M.' who was a nurse, got an appointment in the civil hospital of Dhulia. This made 'S.M.' somewhat assured. He was always worried as to how I, a seventeen-year old boy, would stay and work at such a distant place and in adverse circumstances. I used to take my meals as a paying guest in the house of the brother-in-law of 'S.M.'. With our extremely limited means, we were sustaining ourselves and undertaking tours. After some time we came in contact with Sane Guruji.

In the middle of 1940, a Kisan Parishad was organised in Kulaba District. In that connection, 'S.M.' and our young comrades toured from village to village. 'S.M.', Bandhu and Madhav all the three were sentenced to imprisonment for fifteen months (12 months imprisonment and three months in default of payment of fine) due to their anti-war speeches. After some days Anna Sane went to Ahmed Nagar District to help Gangadhar Ogle. I was left alone in Khandesh, but many persons in Congress organisation had become my friends. I had organised some student workers also. I and Murlidhar Bhawsaar (Secretary, District Congress) together toured Saki Taluka. I was soon detained for delivering an anti-war speech and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. I was kept in Dhulia Jail. During this imprisonment (and in later imprisonment also) 'S.M.' and Yusuf Meherally always used to write letters and send books to me. In 1940 I was imprisoned for one year and given class 'C' in Jail and in 1942 I was detained as a political prisoner and kept in IInd Class (there were two classes for detenus, viz. Ist and IInd). That is why 'S.M.' was always worried about my welfare. In Dhulia, his

sister, brother and he himself used to visit me. Taraji also used to write me letters in Jail in the name of 'Tarutal'.

After being released from the Jail in 1941 'S.M.' concentrated upto 9th August, 1942 only on the activities of *Rashtra Sewa Dal*. The youth branches of *Sewa Dal* later on took part in the August revolution. After the arrest of the national leaders, a decision was taken in the meeting of socialist workers held at the house of the brother of Achyutji in Dadar to continue the movement while remaining underground. 'S.M.' was entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating the underground activities in Maharashtra (at that time Nana Saheb was in the jail of the Nizam State). 'S.M.' grew a beard and disguised himself as true '*Imam Saheb*' in such a perfect manner that it was impossible for the police to recognise him. In the underground movement of 1942 two separate schools of thought, namely Gandhian and Socialist, were coming into being everywhere. This rift was proving detrimental to the movement, but since 'S.M.' was having good personal relations with Gandhites and traditional Congressmen, tension in Maharashtra was less. As such, it had become easy to work with constructive workers like Anna Saheb Sahasrabudha. Khadi Bhandars and Khadi producing centres had become sanctuaries for the underground movement. Necessary chemicals and other goods for the arsenals used to be stored in these Centres and distributed from there. 'S.M.' was constantly making efforts to keep the flag of resistance flying in Maharashtra all the time. Many workers got inspiration from him. After thirteen or fourteen months, we were also arrested along with 'S.M.' from 'Chudail House' (a secret place during the movement) in Nal Bazar.

In 1946, all the leaders were released. Socialist Party was reconstituted. The movement of *Rashtra Sewa Dal* spread to the whole of Maharashtra. Work was distributed in such a way that Nana Saheb would look after Socialist Party's work and S.M. would look after the work of the *Rashtra Sewa Dal* Chief. 'S.M.' remained more active in *Rashtra Sewa Dal* and other constructive works than in party politics. He always made efforts to encourage us, the youth in Party politics. He always

stressed to entrust new responsibilities to the young people so as to enable them to show their worth. In 1945-46 the organisations of *Sewa Dal* and Students Congress were gaining in strength as the coercive activities were abating. Mammoth rallies of *Rashtra Sewa Dal* were organised in Western Maharashtra & Bombay. Hundreds of new workers jumped on the bandwagon of the trade union movement. Socialists consolidated their position among the workers in Bombay and Maharashtra. The nationalists in Bombay constituted *Rashtriya Mill Majdoor Sangh* to counteract the effect of the communists over the workers of the textile Mills. At one time this organisation began dominating the workers and most of its candidates won the trade union elections.

Shankar Rao Deo and S.K. Patil were overawed by this youth power and power of the workers. Leaders like Shankar Rao were always worried as to how to bring such a formidable force under control. They were dreaming of transfer of power. They were congress leaders and thinking that they would remain so for ever, that they would control not only the organisation but even the reins of the Government would remain in their hands. For Shankar Rao's pride, sky was the limit. At one time, Acharya Bhagwat and Acharya Jawadekar were Shankar Rao's comrades. They gave him a wise counsel to extend the hand of friendship towards this new emerging power, but he did not agree to it. After the formation of the Interim Government, Kriplaniji was elected Congress President and Shankar Rao was elected General Secretary. This literally turned his head. Gandhites were out to change the very complexion of the Congress and make it narrow-minded, with the intention of restricting the spreading influence of Socialist Party. Shankar Rao was determined to put a spoke in the wheel of *Rashtra Sewa Dal*. In the middle of 1947, this conflict was at its peak. After independence, the Socialists gradually realised that it was impossible for them to work with the Congress. The efforts of Mahatma Gandhi as mediator failed to bear any fruit. At last, *Sewa Dal* broke away from Congress on the question of autonomy versus unrestricted control of Congress. During the

Nasik session in 1948, Socialist Party also broke away from the Congress.

Today, when I think about the role of leaders like Kriplani, Shankar Rao Deo, etc. in 1946-47, I quite realise how complex human nature is, because only within a span of one year Kriplani had differences with Sardar Patel and Nehru which drove him to the point, of tendering his resignation. Kriplani's complaint was that these leaders in power, disregarded Congress President as also the organisation. Shankar Rao Deo was yet to be disillusioned. He was under the delusion that he had special blessings of Pt. Nehru. He was fully confident of getting the support of Pt. Nehru for the election of President in 1950. But Nehruji seconded Kriplani against Tandonji. Tandonji won and Kriplani lost. At last Kriplani left the Congress. Thereafter, he formed *Kisan Majdoor Praja Party* and Shankar Rao Deo joined the "*Sarvodaya*". Later on Shankar Rao used to meet me whenever he came to Delhi. Once he asked me to convene a meeting of some politicians at my house. I did send invitations for the meeting, but nobody was eager to meet and have discussions with him. At last, I compelled some of my socialist friends to come to my house to participate in that meeting. I pitied Shankar Rao very much. He had made great sacrifices; he sacrificed all he had for the sake of the country, he was beaten with whips in jail, yet because of his pride and power consciousness he had to meet this ill-fate. It often came to my mind that if Gandhians like Kriplani and Shankar Rao had worked in co-operation with the Socialists, in difference to the wishes of Gandhiji, during the transition period of 1946-47, the post-Independence history of India would have been different. But *Rashtra Sewa Dal* and the new emerging socialist force had become an eye-sore for Shankar Rao. He did not have the experience of the 'baton' of Vallabh Bhai and Jawahar Lal otherwise, he would not have adopted such a negative approach.

'S.M.' had never been a 'professional' trade unionist. But after the coming out of socialist faction from the Congress Party and the formation of a workers' movement in the form of Hind

Majdoor Sabha as distinct from INTUC and AITUC 'S.M.' too turned his attention to trade union organisation. There are a number of defence production units in Khadki region. 'S.M.' made a great contribution in organising the workers there. He and his colleagues also succeeded in their efforts for setting up the Confederation of All India Defence Workers. For years 'S.M.' was an office bearer of this confederation. He used to participate actively in the talks held with the Defence Department. He participated in many struggles. He also made a great contribution in the struggle of Central Government employees, but it would not be wrong to say that the trade union movement did not suit his temperament. He had participated in this movement just as part of his duty. Making unreasonable demands, encouraging wrong tendencies, delivering inflammatory speeches only to play to the gallery, like Rana Bhimdev, were not the traits of his character. He was of the opinion that trade union movement should be carried on keeping in view the circumstances obtaining in the country at a particular point of time; the condition of unorganised and the down-trodden people should always be kept in mind and the importance of political responsibility for the protection of democracy should be fully comprehended. These views of 'S.M.' were never liked by some professional trade union leaders.

In the first General Election held on the basis of universal adult franchise, an electoral pact was entered into between Dr. Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation and the Socialist Party. Along with Ashok Mehta and Moinuddin Harris, 'S.M.' too had played an important role in it. From the very beginning, 'S.M.' was opposed to social inequality and abhorred it. Even before joining the freedom struggle and *Satyagraha*, 'S.M.' had participated in the *Satyagraha* launched in 1929 against social inequality with a view to helping Harijans gain entry into the *Parvati Mandir*.

The youth movement which started after 1927, had Meharally as its main leader in Western India. He had an attractive

personality and a lovable disposition. On many occasion 'S.M.' and Nana Saheb said: 'It was because of him that we remained immune from the fanatic atmosphere of Hinduism at Pune, otherwise we all would have become Hindu communalists instead of socialists. The leadership of the Youth League had an abiding faith in promoting communal harmony while carrying on their action plans. It left a firm and indelible imprint on 'S.M.'s mind. It was no easy task to try to bring about communal and religious harmony in the atmosphere prevailing in Pune. Yusuf Meherally was a living example and an inspiring force of nationalism. Leaders like 'S.M.' used to acknowledge their debt to him openly.

In rural areas of Maharashtra, particularly in some of its districts, *Shetkari Kamgar Party* was a force to reckon with in 1950. Khandala Pact was entered into with *Shetkari Kamgar Party*. Acharya Atre was the chief mediator in this affair. Negotiations had been held at his bungalow. The merger of Socialist Party and *Shetkari Kamgar Party* would have been desirable from the point of view of Maharashtra, but unfortunately some communist-minded people imposed the 'principle of the Dabhadi' on the *Shetkari Kamgar Paksh*. To an extent, certain prejudice also stood in the way of the merger. There was a triangular contest of Kaka Saheb Gadgil, Keshavrao Jéghe and 'S.M.' in Pune Lok Sabha Constituency. In fact, these three had very cordial relations among themselves, but the political expediency had made them contest against one another. The votes polled were divided between Keshavrao and 'S.M.' In the first general elections, the Socialist Party could not achieve the expected success anywhere. It was hoped that socialists would win at least in Bombay. Even the Congressmen were of the same view but the results were contrary to their expectations. Both Dr. Ambedkar and Ashok Mehta lost in the election. Dange bagged 80-90 thousand votes and the same number of votes were deliberately got spoiled in the reserved constituency. That was the reason of Ambedkar's defeat.

The electoral defeat disheartened many socialist leaders. Only 'S.M.' did not lose patience and stood firm to play the role

of opposition. In the bye-elections held in 1952 for the State Assembly, the people of Pune elected him as their representative for the Assembly. Since then upto 1962 he effectively played the role of opposition in the Assembly. He strove hard to redress the grievances of people. He never indulged in empty rhetoric but showed great composure and confidence in expressing his views and thus left an indelible imprint in the Assembly. Government was also under his moral influence.

After the Nasik session of the Socialist Party, the national executive held its first meeting at Belgaon. In this meeting, a resolution on the question of constitution of linguistic States was adopted. The National Committee accepted the basic principle underlying the reorganisation of States on the basis of language and requested the Constituent Assembly to reorganise the States on that very basis. The case of Bombay was somewhat controversial. Therefore, it was decided that the General Secretary of the Party, Jayaprakash Narayan, would after exchange of views with the parties concerned, take a decision in this connection.

After discussing the matter with all such persons in Bombay, Jayaprakashji gave a clear decision that Bombay should form part of Maharashtra. Some of our colleagues from Bombay were, however, not happy with this decision. But for many years to come, this question was relegated to the background. In 1955, after the publication of the State Reorganisation Commission's report this question again cropped up. There were sharp differences among socialists. Some socialists from Bombay were of the view that 'Bombay should not be included in Maharashtra'. Some people, swayed by their narrow linguistic feeling, were harping on this tune while others were opposing the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement because they did not want to work with the Communist Party. When the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* was set up, all the people naturally made 'S.M.' a central figure. It is a fact that the *Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan* had gained momentum, thanks to the writings and speeches of Acharya Atriji but there are no two opinions on the fact that the success of this *Andolan* is attributable only to the adroit leadership of 'S.M.'

No other leader in Maharashtra except 'S.M.', could do the uphill task of bringing on one platform the parties and persons representing different views and ideologies. All had full faith in his inherent sincerity, impartiality and selfless nature. At times, he had to face bitter criticism from his own partymen while doing the difficult job of uniting all the people. But, till the objective of the Samyukta Maharashtra was achieved, he engaged himself in that task with all patience and sincerity. At that time it was the subject of debate in Maharashtra as to who was to be given credit for the creation of Samyukta Maharashtra. Others may try to claim credit, but some people may like to give credit to Indira Gandhi or Chavan but it is an undisputed historical fact that the credit for the creation of Samyukta Maharashtra undoubtedly goes to 'S.M.'.

During 1957-59, the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* was the ruling party in Bombay Municipal Corporation. Three severe conflicts took place between the Bombay Municipal Corporation and our Union of Municipal and BEST Workers. The role of the Samiti was anti-labour and retrograde during this period. There might have been some political differences between 'S.M.' and me, but our personal relations were quite cordial. Therefore, during these conflicts, he played an important role in reaching an honourable agreement by arranging a secret 'conspiracy' with us. Underlying the agreement was his immense sympathy for the *Dalits* (who were in majority among the workers).

In 1963, Ashok Mehta became the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. He also visited New York as a member of the official delegation appointed for the United Nations Organisation. Since 1952-53 he had been advocating for concluding an agreement with the Government. But in 1948-49 he was eager to leave the Congress. He had not shown any hesitation even in fighting election for the Bombay Corporation against the Congress in Bombay. He had striven relentlessly for four-five years to strengthen the party but he could not digest his astounding defeat in the first general election. His hopes of raising an independent and alternative party were

dashed to the ground. That despondency gave birth to co-operationism. After 10 years, that is defeat in the 1962 general election, he began talking of dissolving the party. With this very feeling of despondency, he had accepted the post of Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. At that time 'S.M.' was the Chairman of the *Praja Socialist Party*. He and others did not like the behaviour of Ashok. Many people joined the Congress along with Ashok. 'S.M.' wholeheartedly helped in the efforts being made at that time for the socialist unity and in 1964 the unity came about. It is a different matter that unity turned out to be short-lived but 'S.M.' was in no way to be blamed for it. At the Banaras Conference, his speech was the voice of his conscience. That speech was very impressive.

After the Chinese attack, Dr. Lohia's slogan that 'the defeat of the Government of national shame is necessary' was appreciated by 'S.M.' from the core of his heart. He played a significant role in organising the anti-congress front on a wider scale in the 1967 elections. In fact, the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* was also such a front. It had one-point programme that Samyukta Maharashtra including Bombay must be formed. Then, its slogan was '*Congress Hatao Desh Bachao* (Remove Congress, save country)'. The distribution of seats was accepted as a means to achieve the end. I had no liking for the policy of non-congressism. My difference in this regard with Dr. Lohia continued for 2-3 years. I could never accept the idea that the Government formed with the help of the princes and rulers of Swatantra Party and Janasangh would be more progressive. From the very beginning of our political life, we had opposed tooth and nail the fanatical and narrow Hinduism of R.S.S. Later, I had accepted this theory due to certain compulsions and mainly at the behest of Dr. Lohia. 'S.M.' was of the view that non-congressism and Janata Party were the repetition of the experiment of the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti*.

In 1971 'S.M.' took a firm decision not to contest election in future. Indiraji was gaining popularity due to certain spectacular measures like nationalisation of Banks, abolition of privy purses,

etc. It was also being heard that Indiraji will leave the Pune seat for 'S.M.' But 'S.M.' did not detract from his earlier decision. In 1967 'S.M.' had been elected to Lok Sabha from Pune Constituency not because of the strength of his party but on the basis of his own popularity. He could easily win the election from any Constituency in Maharashtra in Janata Party wave of 1977 but he was firm on his decision not to contest the election. He had an abiding faith in struggle and constructive work. Efforts made in 1964 might have been fruitless at that time, but his faith in socialist unity remained unshaken. At last in 1971 that unity was achieved. But by then *Praja Socialist Party* had become inactive and *Samyukta Socialist Party* was also on its last legs. The hope of *Samyukta Socialist Party* becoming an alternative was dashed forever due to the co-operationism, Sarvodayism and at last due to the policy of non-congressism.

Due to the youth movements of Gujarat and Bihar, Jayaprakashji once again jumped into the active politics. His disenchantment with Indira Gandhi had started since 1971, as is evident from the correspondence exchanged between Jayaprakashji and Indira Gandhi in the month of March-April that year. 'S.M.' had extended his full support to Jayaprakashji in the people's movement in Bihar. Before and after emergency, he had supported the role of Jayaprakashji in uniting the opposition but it did not mean that his ideas had changed or that he had accepted that the R.S.S. and Jana Sangh had changed. After the formation of Janata Party his personal experience about 'Sangh' was one of total disillusionment.

In the Lok Sabha elections of 1977, Janata Party concluded an agreement with Communist Party (Marxist), *Akali Dal*, *Dravida Munnetra Kazhgam* (Tamil Nadu), Republican Party and *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha* (Maharashtra) etc. The success of Janata Party in West Bengal was attributable to the support of the Marxists. It was only with the co-operation of Karunanidhi that the Janata Party had won three Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu. It was the cooperation of *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha* and the support of other parties that led to the victory of the

opposition parties in Maharashtra in the elections. I had urged that the cooperation should continue to be extended in the coming Assembly elections in states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, etc. and an understanding be reached at with the National Conference of Sheikh Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir. Leaders like Chandra Shekhar and George Fernandes had agreed to my proposal. 'S.M.' was also of the same view. Not only this, in his capacity as the President of Maharashtra Janata Party he had also talked to *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha*. But power seemed to have gone into the head of the leadership of the Janata Party. As a result, the party could not do better in West Bengal; it was defeated in Tamil Nadu and Sheikh Abdullah came out to be victorious with a thumping majority in Kashmir.

As I said earlier, 'S.M.' was trying his best to have some sort of election arrangement with *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha* in Maharashtra. A meeting of the executive committee of the State Branch of the Janata Party was held. In that meeting I and Nanaji Deshmukh were present. 'S.M.' argued that compromise with *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha* was the need of the hour. I, Babu Kaldate and 3-4 other persons supported him. The remaining persons opposed him. Their opinion about the strength of Janata Party was far from reality. Ultimately they could not arrive at any compromise. While the *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha* had to face defeat, Janata Party also could not muster the required number of seats. The result was a foregone conclusion. Vasant Dada Patil and Congress (I) formed a coalition government. 'S.M.' was fed up with the negative attitude in the election adjustment with *Shetkari Kamgar Paksha*, high handedness in the distribution of tickets, constant uneasiness despite having their Chief Ministers in four States, betrayal resorted to ensure that there is no socialist Chief Minister in Maharashtra, actions taken to ensure that a socialist is not made the President of Maharashtra Janata Party, continuous malicious and false propaganda being carried on in '*Sanghi*' Marathi Weekly. He had told me and many other persons that he would not be

able to get along with R.S.S. and rebuilding of the political force was unavoidable.

Since the election of 1952, the *modus operandi* of the ruling Congress Party was to offer allurements to the members of the opposition so that they break away from their parties and defect to the Congress fold. It was only by compromising morality that the Congress had made Rajaji Chief Minister and through him started creating dissensions among small parties. In 1953, the new Andhra State was formed. There was consensus among people that T. Prakasham be made Chief Minister. No party enjoyed majority in the Assembly. In deference to the wishes of the people, *Praja Socialist Party* gave its consent for formation of a coalition Ministry. T. Prakasham was the leader of the *Praja Socialist Party*. But to make him Chief Minister as a *Praja Socialist* man was not acceptable to the Congress. All the leaders, including Nehru, urged him to quit the *Praja Socialist Party*. Prakasham was taken in. He quit the Party. The Congress rewarded him with the Chief Ministership. Dr. Lohia had termed all these developments as 'politics of piracy'. In 1956, Dr. Lohia had given a call for preparing a code of conduct and for putting an end to the practice of defections taken recourse to in quest for power but the Congress did not agree to it.

Then after four-five years, at the inspiration of Shri Dhananjayrao Gadgil, an all party meeting was held near Bhatghar lake but the resolution on defection could not be adopted due to its opposition by Yaswant Rao. He had to bring PWP and PSP legislators, within the fold of his party. In other States too, Congress followed the Yashwant Rao way. The post of the Chief Minister of Kerala that had fallen vacant as a result of appointment of Pattam Thanu Pillay as Governor was also captured by the Congress. Fed up with all these things, Dr. Lohia decided to use the same instrument of defections against the Congress. so as to teach it a lesson. Dr Lohia had a hand in bringing down the Congress Governments in Haryana and U.P. by installing Rao Birendra Singh as Chief Minister of Haryana and Chaudhari Charan Singh as Chief Minister of Uttar

Pradesh. In Madhya Pradesh such a rebellion among Congress legislators was engineered by Vijayaraje Scindia. This issue was debated in the meeting of National Executive of *Samyukt Socialist Party*. It was suggested that the rebel Congress legislators should be welcomed. I remember that during the discussion 'S.M.' had rightly doubted the moral validity of encouraging defections. While admitting that the Congress had committed many misdeeds and had undoubtedly encouraged defections and that it was necessary to oust it from the power, he felt how far was it justified morally to encourage defections? But the opposition preferred pragmatism to morality. The same questions had figured in the meeting of the executive of Janata Party. But Morarjibhai, who was known for his giving sermons on morality and who was against the inclusion of those Congress Parliamentarians in the Janata Party who had opposed emergency only after the 1977 elections, had given his consent for forming Government in Gujarat with the help of legislators who had defected twice or thrice.

Further, in 1978 the same problem arose in Maharashtra. Sharad Pawar was made Chief Minister to oust Congress from power as it was responsible for imposition of emergency. Pragmatic approach and strategy rather than morality prevailed in this move. 'S.M.' and Jayaprakashji did not like these things. It is a fact that Indiraji and Morarji Bhai had introduced an Anti-defection Bill in the Parliament but it was latently motivated. Indiraji and Morarji Bhai wanted to take away the liberty of the Members of Parliament to oppose the laws and decisions contradicting the assurances given in the election manifesto and unjust proposals made by government. In his article entitled '*Ekmev Asha*', Jayaprakashji had strongly condemned this provision. He had said, "this provision is undemocratic and symbolises dictactorship". But why was the Bill eulogizing moral values and democratic traditions needed by Indiraji and Morarji Bhai? They wanted an army of slave Members of Parliament.

There are other aspects also of the questions concerning moral values. Is the morality of public life different from the

moral values of private life? Is public life different from private life? Many people treat public life different from private life but it was not so in the case of 'S.M.'. He did not at times insist on other persons around him to follow those strict norms which he himself used to follow in his own life.

A question that often boggled the mind was whether it was his weakness or tolerant nature. To serve and help others was inherent in his very nature. But to what extent should we go? Should we believe that it is necessary in public interest to work like this? All these questions are very complex and mind baffling. These questions must have agitated the mind of 'S.M.'. Also, it is an undisputed fact that self-interest never guided any action of 'S.M.'. He did everything for public welfare. It will not be unjustified to say that it was his mechanism of bringing the people together.

The values and ideologies for which 'S.M.' fought all his life with all the force at his command are of eternal importance for the people of India. He had an abiding faith in democracy, secular state, social equality, economic justice, etc. 'S.M.' was guided more by his heart than by his head. He did not accept any idea simply for its logic. He recognised only those ideas which his heart accepted. He had no love for power. Material affluence never attracted him. But it was not that he remained unaffected by human feeling like a so-called stoic. It is said about him that he had a touch of moral ego. At times he showed his predilections also. But we will have to remember one thing that he was a dedicated soul. He was neither a perfect man nor a superman. He was neither a God nor a monster. He was out and out human.

At a very tender age, I had the benefit of having an inspiring association and guidance of 'S.M.' Joshi. It was he who initiated me into politics. He guided me at every step in public life with motherly affection. I say this with great pride that 'S.M.' was my first political 'Guru'.

Tarabai also showered motherly affection on me. Right from the very beginning we had great regard for each other. No one

could dare utter even a single word against me in her presence. Taraji propitiated 'S.M.' with her penance the way Sati did. She was an open-minded lady. Her style of writing was attractive, but could she make use of that art?

'S.M.' was successful throughout his life, so he always remained cheerful. Psychologically he was very strong to face any difficulty or disease. In his last days 'S.M.' suffered the agony of cancer, an incurable disease. Meanwhile his life-partner breathed her last. Passing away of Tarabai created a vacuum in his life. He himself expressed this painful feeling a number of times. On the auspicious occasion of the marriage of Aniruddh with Sohela on 12th September, 1987, the ailing 'S.M.' came from hospital by taking special permission from the doctors. As a witness to the marriage he signed first and thereafter the father of Sohela and I signed. The words 'How much happy Tara would have been, had she been alive today' moved him deeply.

Once 'S.M.' went to Tata Hospital for medical treatment. During the night the nurse attending on him woke up suddenly and started shouting in horror: 'Who is there?' Hearing her scream the doctor and other attendants on duty rushed there and enquired 'who was there?' Sensing the situation 'S.M.' said in a joking tone, 'Nothing has happened, Tara came in my dream'. She was saying that she had been waiting for me there: what was I doing here; I should join her soon'.

Death is not only unavoidable but is also inevitable for every human being. But it pains me repeatedly to recall that a man like 'S.M.', who renounced everything and had a spotless character, had to undergo acute suffering during the last years of his life.

I firmly believe that his selfless and sublime life has been and will ever remain a source of inspiration for the youth like a beacon light.

S.M. Anna: More than a Leader

— Dr. Bapu Kaldate

A leader must always have a sense of people's feelings and aspirations. He can hardly have private aims to fulfil. He has to deal with human beings as individuals and not merely as followers. He must know the art of getting into their minds and hearts. S.M. Joshi was a perfect leader in this sense. He was popular among the youth, workers of several industries and people from different corners of Maharashtra and indeed of India.

S.M. Joshi rose from a very humble beginning. He had no rich food to enjoy the Diwali festival when he was child. He learnt hard lessons of life since his childhood experiences. He was known to his followers as S.M.; to him they used to open their hearts, with him they used to be very frank, fearless and free. His manner of dealing with the people was friendly and intimate. This enabled him to understand their problems and difficulties clearly and once he got convinced of the urgency of their cause, and honesty of their purpose he would devote himself to fighting against the injustices.

S.M. grew as a staunch fighter against communalism in the 1930s when he joined *Satyagraha* for entry into the famous "Parvati Temple" in Pune. The Harijans were forbidden from entering into it. He inculcated in him the fighting spirit since then. In his youth he worked under the leadership of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. He was beaten once by the Hindu

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communalists in Pune for championing the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity to fight against the British regime.

I came into contact with him for the first time when he was very actively involved in the underground movement of 1942. Living in the garb of a Muslim worker, with a flowing beard and donning a fur cap, he was then organizing all-India activities of underground workers. Later on he became the leading founder member of *Rashtra Seva Dal*, a youth organisation peaceful, secular and believing in democratic socialism, equality and social justice.

S.M. Joshi was a popular and active trade union leader for decades. He successfully led strikes, went on 'fasts', got imprisoned and stood fearlessly, guiding thousands of trade union workers from all over India. At the same time he was one of those rare trade unionists who told workers "You should work more to raise production. Strikes no doubt are necessary but strikes should not injure the cause of producing national wealth and also the cause of your own welfare, peace and security in life."

After the attainment of Independence, *Rashtra Seva Dal* activities were in full swing socialising children, youth and persons of all ages through various activities like "*Shakhas*" (children's play —club), *Seva Pathaks* (squads going to rural areas for rural reconstruction programmes), *Kala Pathaks* (cultural squads going to entertain and educate masses with new ideologies), *Bhoodan* (distribution of land to the tiller), Study Circles and *Antar — Bharati* (national integration programmes), S.M. was a source of inspiration to hundreds of boys and girls to participate in all these activities. He used to be in the camps, in study circles as well as in other activities of this organisation.

It was during this period, to be precise in 1954, when Jayaprakash Narayan wanted to start *Rashtra Seva Dal* activities in Bihar, that S.M. requested me to go to Bihar to organise this work as a full time worker "Horizon of your life will widen by living with Jayaprakashji as well as in the area outside Maharashtra", he told me. As per his advice, I worked with

Jayaprakashji in Sokhodeora Ashram in Bihar and it was a unique opportunity in my life.

When I was in Bihar, the *Samyukta Maharashtra Movement* took a serious turn in 1955-56, and it became necessary for me to return to Maharashtra. I went to Jail in this Movement and after coming back it was essential to assist S.M. in this campaign. I worked as his Personal Secretary for a long time and I gained considerable organisational experience from him. Sincerity, dedication and humanism of S.M. have always inspired me. He moulded me and gave shape to my personality which enabled me to become a social worker.

While I was his Personal Secretary, an important event took place in my life. A student named Sudha Mydeo was studying in Poona University for her M.A. course. She was also in the *Rashtra Seva Dal*. We decided to marry. There was stiff opposition in the families of both of us due to different castes and socio-economic backgrounds. Inter-caste marriages then were neither prevalent nor popular. *Anna* (as S.M. was fondly called) met my father and also Sudha's and helped smoothen the tensions in the two families before our marriage which took place in 1957. *Anna* not only helped me in this but also convinced my father to enable me to work as full time worker of *Rashtra Seva Dal*. Although I was a Medical Doctor at that time, I decided to give up my medical practice for ever and joined the wider field of social work through *Rashtra Seva Dal*. Both these decisions were crucial in our lives when S.M. stood firmly by us. His helpful hand made us enjoy the happy beginning of our wedding life.

S.M. Joshi was a man of equanimity. He hardly used to get dissatisfied or annoyed with anyone. He believed in discussions than dismissal of issues. He participated actively in *Rashtra Seva Dal* as well as Socialist Party's rallies and several conventions for social reforms, against inequality. He never got tired of convincing audience, may be large, small or even one person, about his views. For him, peace of mind meant understanding and going ahead and never stagnation or fear. Fearlessness was S.M.'s hall-mark. He would fight with his

adversaries on intellectual plane, with open mind and clear views. Though thin in physique and bony in structure, he was made of strong mettle, indomitable courage and firm ideological convictions. Due to his transparent character, honesty of purpose and sincerity of pursuits, S.M. had no enemies. He was indeed an *Ajat Shatru*.

In the last years of his life he developed bone-cancer and fought against this deadly disease for more than three years. He remained cheerful throughout and his enthusiasm never sagged. He faced and fought with the disease in a spirit of *स्थितप्रज्ञ-समदुःख सुखं धीरे*. During his illness also he kept interest in the socio-political events in India and outside. It was very unfortunate that he died of a very painful and incurable disease. In the last few months he had even refused costly medical treatment.

S.M. Joshi had several interests —reading, listening to music, seeing good pictures, discussing about cinema actresses and actors; playing with children and telling stories to his grandsons.

During the Emergency his letters gave many families courage to face the uncertain and grave situations. He was active in collecting funds, helping families, and talking with the leaders inside jails and outside. These efforts rendered very valuable assistance to the families in distress. S.M. also played a very vital and crucial role in the formation of "Janata Party" and shaping its policies and political future. The Party's disintegration pained him very much.

S.M. was a member of the Maharashtra Assembly, Parliament, and several other bodies, trusts, etc., but he was essentially a man of the masses. He was associated with several voluntary organisations. He helped many workers by sacrificing his own honorarium when he was an M.L.A. He was never after any post. His greatness lay in the fact that he neither made capital out of his sacrifices nor he made a show of all those great deeds. He was broad-minded to appreciate anything beautiful. He used to feel happy when the workers and

their children used to progress. The qualities of sharing grief and more so of sharing joy of all of us made him more than a leader to us. His presence amongst us was like that of a Patriarch; in his presence we felt dwarfs but soon he would mingle with us and become a part and parcel of us.

Anna gave us great courage to stand against injustice and withstand suffering and remain loyal to our aims and ideals. Although he is no more with us, his life and his ideals will always serve us as a beacon light. In the complex socio-political situation of today one misses person like *Anna* but the stamp he has left on me and many others like me, will never be erased, we will carry it till we depart from the scene.

Youth today should learn from his life that there is no difficulty in choosing between right and wrong if the issue for which one is fighting is genuine. The urge to fight for whatever one desires to achieve must be strong. Without that urge there will be a gradual oozing out of hope and vitality, a slow merging into non-existence. He used to say "Be mad —full mad; never be half-mad for any cause —may be achieving freedom, removing injustice or even getting bonus". He used to tell us "Be sincere and honest to your values and accept challenges with joy and full enthusiasm." Many like me have basked in the glorious life of S.M. Joshi; many have benefitted from the training they got under him. He was a gold mine from which many have drawn immensely and amply. Today, they are a living testimony to the legacy left by S.M.

S. M. Joshi — A Happy Warrior

— N. G. Goray*

Whenever I lift my pen to write about the late Shri S. M. Joshi or simply SM as he was popularly known, I get the feeling that my writing instead of becoming biographical tends to become autobiographical. But then, I say to myself “it simply cannot be otherwise. After a lifelong sharing of ideas and actions, how can any one expect you to write with total objectivity about him. Some of ‘you’ is bound to trickle in.” So that settles the point.

It is true that since 1922 to the time SM breathed his last we had thought together, joined the freedom struggle together, suffered jail sentences together and had separated from the Indian National Congress together. And that was not all. Even in the trade union movement as well as in various other movements, whether it was for social transformation or for the emancipation of Goa, we were not separated. Naturally, our political and social work got more and more enmeshed. The remarkable thing about this meshing was that neither SM nor I had lost our different identities or our individual aroma. I claim with some pardonable pride that nowhere else in India could one have found such a pair of friends whose close friendship had lasted over sixty years, in spite of occasional differences and divergent personal interests.

SM lived a full and eventful life. He was not born in Pune. He was born in a tiny village on the western coast not far away

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from the still neglected harbour of Ratnagiri. The Joshi family like many other Chitpawan Brahmin families of those days, was blessed with progeny but cursed by poverty. To compound the family's misfortune, SM's father, a government employee in the lower cadre died early, resulting in the dispersal of the family. The boy SM drifted to Pune where he had to fend for himself. His was a hard life and he had to face many breaks in his school career. That is why when I joined his school, the Deccan Education Society's New English School founded by Lokamanya Tilak and the social reformer Agarkar, I found that though both of us were in the same standard, SM was the senior boy in the class. Soon I discovered that he wielded a lot of influence, not only in our class, but also in the school. This was due not to his seniority in age but because of many other qualities of heart and head which he had exhibited even then. SM was never the brightest chap in the class but he was brave and even in the early years of his life he had displayed qualities of leadership.;

Though his pockets were always empty, his parents had bestowed on him some enviable physical assets. He had inherited a fair complexion and smooth skin. He was tall, thin, but wiry. He had a dashing mop of black hair which he tended with great care and I suspect that he probably took pride in displaying it. But above all this, the most memorable asset of his were his eyes, clear and bluish grey. I shall ever remember them, flaring up at the mere hint of injustice or dishonesty; and dancing with joy when a good act was done. He was not an intellectual as the word goes; but he had a fine sense of judgement. Honest to the core, he was ever ready to stake himself for a good cause.

Like many of us in that period, he was greatly attracted by Marx but more than Marx, by Gandhiji. I guess that was so because he was by nature a constructive worker. Like a master

mason he loved to build brick by brick. For some years in the thirties, when he had come under the influence of the late M. N. Roy I had felt a bit puzzled, but I interpreted it as a temporary aberration which would pass in years to come. He loved Urdu and spoke the language fluently. His proficiency in that tongue and perhaps the beard he had grown for some special occasion must have helped him a lot during the *Quit India* underground struggle. He used to move about freely in Bombay and even as far as the northwestern frontier as a Muslim. 'Imam Saheb' as we called him then, could thus freely move about for months without getting arrested.

But to him the hour of highest glory came in 1954-55 when he led the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement. The whole of southern Maharashtra was emotionally aflame and in Bombay in particular, it had reached the point of incandescence. When as a backlash to a police firing on unarmed demonstrators in which a few were killed, a mob 'gheraoed' a young police officer menacingly, SM boldly stood between him and the blood-thirsty mob. He told the attackers in no uncertain words that they would have to kill him before hurting the young officer. Recognizing SM, the mob dispersed and an ugly event was averted. This action of SM's was in the highest tradition of Gandhism. In any country such instances would be hard to find.

S.M. did not consider legislative work as in any way below his dignity. He was twice elected to the State Legislature of Maharashtra from Pune and later to the Lok Sabha from the same city. As a legislator sitting on the opposition benches, he was always watchful but constructive. Committed as he was to the democratic socialist values, he was never cheap in his criticism of the government's policies. Never did he indulge in horse trading nor in rowdy demonstrations that appear to have become at present, the staple of parliamentary work. SM was not an orator and he never aspired to be one, but whatever he said on the floor of the House was out of his deep conviction, transparent sincerity and genuine sympathy for the underdog.

The organization and the development of the *Rashtra Seva Dal* in Maharashtra was SM's most valuable contribution to the

State. It is a thousand pities that efforts on similar lines were not made in other States of India. To understand the value of SM's contribution correctly one has to take note of the fact that India is a land of many outmoded traditions, conflicting religious beliefs, divisive caste systems and enormous differences in incomes and status. India was never a nation in the present day meaning of the term. It had always remained a fertile soil for communal and fundamentalist forces. Fissiparous and centrifugal tendencies that were built-in in India's social build-up have all along stood in the way of secularism and democracy. In order to build a nation out of this welter of contradictory forces, it was incumbent to give the Indian people a new psyche, a fresh and vibrant perspective, a new glow of a mission. This could be possible only if a new cadre of young men and women could be patiently raised by imbibing into them democratic secular values which would prepare them to look beyond caste, creed, religion and community. Had such an effort been made during the post-independence period of half a century, India would not have been caught unprepared by the separatist and communalist forces as it is today. For the proper appreciation of SM's contributions to nation building, one would have to take into consideration one more fact that in India more than sixty percent of her nationals, men and women, are still illiterate and words like democracy, equality, liberty and secularism have yet to find a place in their vocabulary. The only education they had had was what had percolated to them generation after generation by the word of mouth, in the form of legends and myths.

SM's death was that of a happy warrior. In the troubled and turbulent world we are living in today, I find encouragement and solace in invoking SM's memorable message which to my mind was "to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield."

S.M. Joshi—A man of the People

—*Professor Samar Guha*

The history of Indian freedom movement and the struggle for socio-economic changes in the post-independent days will certainly recognise the contributions of the Socialists in them. S.M. Joshi was one of the prominent figures of this socialist fraternity who was also known as one of the founding fathers of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) which was formed in 1934. As a youngman of thirty then, though he was not yet in the front rank of the leadership of the new party like Acharya Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash Narayan, Yusuf Meherally, Minoo Masani, Achyut Patwardhan, Rammanohar Lohia, Ashok Mehta and others, he played a vital role in building this party in Maharashtra, as a whole and in Bombay and other areas. As a very able organiser who was wholly dedicated to his socialist ideals, S.M. Joshi came to be widely known and respected in his socialist circle soon after the formation of the CSP.

S.M. Joshi had no particular charisma of any high-profile, but by his activities he had earned a halo of his own around his leadership. His simple and austere life, his human demeanour, his camaraderie with the rank and file of his party and his ever-fighting drive for the cause of the common people and his transparent faith in socialist ideals endeared him to all. So warm was the general feeling for S.M. Joshi among his socialist friends, that besides Jayaprakash Narayan, who was most

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affectionately called 'J.P.' by all the socialists the elders and the youngsters alike,—S.M. Joshi was the only other socialist leader who was known to be endearingly addressed by every one, among his colleagues and associates, simply as 'SM'.

S.M. believed that political power was an essential instrument for effecting social changes. But he never ran after power for any personal gratification. He was more for struggle against all kinds of social and political injustices, for mass movement and building of mass organisations so that the essential lever of power ultimately remained in the hands of the people and the people could mould it for genuine democratic purposes.

S.M. fought many elections—lost many and won in many. He proved to be an effective corporator in the Municipal Corporation of Pune. He was also the leader of the opposition in Maharashtra Assembly and had been once in Lok Sabha. In Maharashtra Assembly he led the united front of opposition parties like the PSP, CPI, PWD, RPI and others for jointly fighting for establishing Samyukta Maharashtra. By his sincerity, straight forwardness, honesty of purpose and friendly approach to all, he succeeded in making a remarkable contribution in the Maharashtra Assembly. It was decided that the leadership of the opposition would be rotated in favour of all parties of the United Front in the assembly. Though S.M. was its leader for one term only, yet in the rest of the whole term of the Assembly he was looked upon as a moral guide by all,—so was the faith of other parties in his non-partisan capability to lead the United Front.

I had been with S.M. in Lok Sabha in 1967. Notwithstanding his rich experience of functioning in the Maharashtra Assembly, S.M. didn't show any particular zest in Lok Sabha to attain the stature of a veteran Parliamentarian. He was not known to be a noted orator nor had he any keenness to be demagogic in making any articulated speech on the floor of the Parliament.

But still S.M. never missed any important issue in the House to express his views. He always spoke from his heart and whenever he participated in any debate his expressions were sharp, clear, factual and to the point. As he had already built an image for himself as a fighter, and as one who never indulged in any kind of dubiousness in his political behaviour, his views were heard in the House with much respect and appreciation. He was seen to be always treated with a significant regard by the then Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

S.M. it appeared, was a born fighter, coming from a lower middle class family he had to struggle hard for completing his school and college education. In his school days he was inspired by the militant nationalism of Lokmanya Tilak. The Lion of Maharashtra was his idol of patriotism. His newly roused patriotic dignity impelled him to defy an order from his school authority to hold a British badge as a symbol of welcoming Duke of Connaught's visit to India. He could not agree to bow down to such servile mentality. And, in consequence he had to face severe punishment from the school authority. After coming out of the College he, alongwith his closest friend Shri N.G. Goray, started organising Youth League in responding to the call given by the fire-brand youth leader of India of those days, Subhas Chandra Bose. Joshi and Goray invited Bose to preside over a very successful Youth Conference in 1929 at Pune. S.M. Joshi had a special liking for Bose and his message for 'Complete Independence of India'. Although S.M. Joshi had his law degree for legal profession, yet the spirit of militant nationalism that he inherited from Tilak urged him to throw himself totally to the service of his motherland. His young wife Tarabai, a school teacher then, gave him all the support to sustain him in every way. Mrs. Tarabai was an exceptionally patriotic lady but for whom S.M. could not be what he aspired for while dedicating himself to the cause of freedom of his motherland.

S.M. joined the historic Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi in 1930. He toured village after village in Maharashtra spreading the message of Mahatma's

non-violent Civil-Disobedience Movement. In connection with this movement he was twice arrested and jailed. It was during the time of his imprisonment in Nasik Jail of Maharashtra that the idea of formation of Congress Socialist Party was conceptualised along with other like-minded co-prisoners. Many fighting youngmen inside the Congress in the mid-thirties were feeling frustrated because of the failure of Mahatma Gandhi's politics of civil disobedience to secure India's independence. It was in search of an alternative line of mass organisation and mass movement other than the Gandhian programme of constructive works alone, that the Congress Socialist Party was envisaged as an alternative forum for the activities of the radicals inside the Congress. Congress Socialist Party developed rapidly, particularly among the youngmen, after mid-thirties with its widespread ramifications in all the provinces of British India.

The Socialist workers and leaders of this organisation played a glorious role in responding to the 1942—*Quit India* call given by the Mahatma. Indeed, after the sudden arrests of all the leaders of the Congress Working Committee, the underground socialist leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan who escaped from jail, Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali, Rammanohar Lohia, S.M. Joshi and many others played the role of the vanguards of the 'August Rebellion' of 1942. S.M. also went underground to organise the 'do or die' national struggle and as he could speak Urdu well he assumed the name of Imam Ali, shifting his centre of operation from Bombay to Karachi. He was arrested at Bombay in 1943 and kept in detention and released by the middle of 1946.

In his youth S.M. Joshi was profoundly influenced by the philosophy of nationalism of Lokmanya Tilak. While organising youth movement, Subhas Bose's fighting-patriotism also impressed him deeply. But because of his close association with the socialist leaders of the CSP after mid-thirties, S.M. also ideologically affiliated himself with the Marxian thinking of Acharya Narendra Dev and Jayaprakash Narayan. Although these two most prominent socialist leaders were found to talk

and write to interpret their ideas of socialism in terms of Marxian tenets, they were no orthodox Marxists. Their immediate ideological priority was attainment of national freedom of their country. In his ideological identity, S.M. was wholly with the Acharya and J.P. but he never aspired to be an ideologue nor did he ever maintain any rigid ideological stance. After J.P. changed his views radically, since 1948, from Marxism to the concept of a synthesis of socialism of pluralist philosophy and Gandhian ethics. S.M. also gradually changed to accept the new thinking of J.P.

In fact like J.P., S.M. also gradually got more inclined towards Gandhian values of politics and Gandhian way of mass organisation. S.M. always believed that a genuine politician who really aspired to serve the people and become their leader should never follow any kind of duplicity of values,—one in private life and the other in public. It was because of his open and truthful character that S.M. Joshi was universally respected by all politicians and the people of Maharashtra in general.

S.M. participated in many a struggle during the days of British Raj. He was also a leading figure in Goa Liberation Movement. But his role in the Samyukta Maharashtra Movement gave him an abiding recognition as a distinguished Maharashtrian. Because of his major contribution to this movement, he was unanimously chosen as the Secretary of the *Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti* that was jointly formed by the PSP, Workers and Peasant Party, Communist Party, Republican Party and other associates and collaborators of the *Samiti*, as all these parties had implicit faith in his broad-mindedness and non-partisan outlook. S.M. succeeded to transform this united front movement into a genuine people's movement evoking spontaneous response from all sections of the people of Maharashtra. To include Bombay within the contour of the proposed linguistic State of Maharashtra was a very risky task as this city was dominated almost balancingly by the bilingual communities of the Maharashtrians and the Gujaratis. As the agitation picked up momentum, a threatening situation developed which could explode into serious linguistic violence

in Bombay between the Maharashtrian and the Gujarati inhabitants. But it was S.M.'s humanist outlook and his bold and even patriotic gesture to all citizens of Bombay and his special attention to the task of maintaining safety and security for the Gujarati people that ultimately spared Bombay from any big linguistic riot. The present and the future generations of the Maharashtrians will ever remember S.M. as one of the makers of the present state of Samyukta Maharashtra.

S.M. devoted himself more to the activities of struggle, suffering and sacrifice and shined specially while he was in any combative or agitational movement. But he was not just an agitator only. He took keen interest in constructive works as well. S.M. was known as a leading trade unionist who was the President of the Federation of Defence Workers, P&T union and many other trade union organisations, and led a number of successful strikes and agitations in these sensitive Public Sector organisations. S.M. was, however, not a professional trade unionist, he disliked agitative form of trade union activities in hospital services and teaching professions. S.M. had also a special gift of aptitude for constructive works. He was associated with many constructive programmes in Maharashtra and most of the basic organisations of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan. S.M.'s special genius for constructive work excelled in his move to build the social service organisation of *Rastriya Seva Dal* (RSD) in Maharashtra. Though the *Rastriya Sevak Sangh*, which is centrally rooted in the soil of Maharashtra, attracted S.M. in his younger days, particularly its volunteer Wing,—the RSS, however, its refusal to admit non-Hindus into the RSS fold, repelled S.M. from joining it. He decided to form a nationalist volunteer organisation for all communities of Maharashtra and for doing social and cultural works among them,—particularly for removal of the back-lash of conservatism and orthodoxy from the Maharashtrian Hindu community. He succeeded to effectively form his volunteer organisation and give it a lively shape having good response from the Maharashtrian youths. This volunteer organisation, which is known as *Rastriya Seva Dal*, bearing the name of S.M. as its principal architect,—is still active in Maharashtra.

S.M. Joshi was born in a high cast Chitpawan Brahmin family. This conservative community traditionally enjoyed a dominating position in the social life of Maharashtra. But S.M. from his very younger days identified himself more with the cause of social and economic rights of the backwards and lowlys among the Maharashtrian people. In his younger days he launched a vigorous movement for unrestricted entry of the Harijans into the famous *Parvati temple* of Pune. In sixties S.M. wholeheartedly supported Dr. Rammanohar Lohia's socialist thesis of giving preferential opportunities to the backward, scheduled castes, tribals and women for speedy removal of the present socio-economic inequalities prevailing in the Indian society. When a demand was raised for re-naming of Marathwada University as Dr. Ambedkar Marathwada University, disregarding all opposition from the orthodox high caste people of Maharashtra, S.M. threw himself in full support of the movement for changing the name of the University in honour of the great crusader for the cause of the Harijans. Dr. Ambedkar, who symbolized the socio-political aspirations of the lowly in the present Hindu society.

I came to know of S.M. before knowing him personally. When our Subhasist Forward Bloc merged with the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) soon after its formation in early fifties, I had occasions to frequently meet Jayaprakashji who was then the General Secretary of the new party. I was trying to know, as much as was possible, about the personal characteristics of the socialist leaders from J.P., J.P. told me eloquently about S.M. — about his transparent way of life, his integrity and his faith in political values and morality. When I met S.M. and later had the joy of working with him for about three decades, I found how true was J.P. in his estimate about the essential characteristics of the personality of S.M. as one of the closest and very trustful colleague of Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan. True, S.M. Joshi belonged to a political party but in his essential approach to politics he was really a man of the people.

S.M. Joshi—A Fearless Crusader for Social Justice

—Rajinder Singh Sparrow*

Shri Shridhar Mahadev Joshi or 'S.M.', as he was popularly known, was born at Junnar in Pune District, on 12 November 1904. He belonged to a lower middle class Brahmin family. His father was a clerk of the Court at Junnar who died when S.M. was only in his tender age. In fact Shri Joshi drew inspiration from the poor surroundings of his family which made him a very strong man in his later life. A fearless crusader for social justice, he was, from his very childhood, cast in the classic mould of a political revolutionary. At an early age he plunged headlong into the country's struggle for independence and championed the cause of the weakest sections of the society without ever aspiring for power in free India. He was a famous political leader, a great trade unionist and above all an idealist wedded to humanism. The tall and slim figure of S.M. had verily become the symbol of the socialist movement in the country for over five decades.

By the time he graduated from Ferguson College, Pune, Shri Joshi was fired by the patriotic zeal in him and responding to the call of the Father of the Nation, he joined in the country's fight for freedom. Between 1930 and 1939, Shri Joshi was imprisoned several times. He took up the cause of creating a uni-lingual Maratha State and became the Leader of the

* Maj. General Rajinder Singh Sparrow is a former Member of Parliament.

Samayukta Maharashtra Samiti. The group of young socialists including S.M. opposed the acceptance of office by Congress in 1937. S.M. also led a Morcha of peasants demanding progressive Tenancy Legislation. The slogan of leftist unity became popular in 1939. But as a result of United Front Politics, the Congress Socialists suffered heavily.

Though Joshi was reluctant to enter matrimony, Miss Tara Pendse, an educated girl who worked as a teacher in a girls' school and who was associated with Joshi in his socio-political work for years prevailed upon him to marry her and the two were married in 1939. She stood by him in all his political activities. They had two sons.

Shri Joshi actively participated in the *Quit India* movement of 1942. In 1943, while hiding in Bombay, he was again arrested along with his other socialist friends on a charge of conspiracy against the British. However, they were later acquitted for want of evidence.

The socialists in the Congress formed a volunteer organisation and named it as *Rashtra Seva Dal*. S.M. was offered Presidentship of this organisation which he accepted and under his benign leadership, the activities of the organisation got a good deal of momentum. They often did *Shramdan* and when there was a big famine in Maharashtra they did a lot of relief work.

After Independence, S.M. became more and more interested in the trade union movement and remained for quite some time the General-Secretary of the Defence Employees' Federation, Chairman of the State Bank Employees' Organisation and Chairman of the Transport Kamgar Sabha, Maharashtra. He led several workers' strikes, even though he held firmly that production should not suffer because of the strike.

Shri Joshi took a prominent part in the Goa Independence Movement in 1952. He was elected to the erstwhile Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1953. He led the *Samayukta Maharashtra Samiti* and was again elected to the Assembly in 1957. *Samayukta Maharashtra* was formed in 1960, but Joshi

was defeated in the 1962 election to the Maharashtra Assembly. In 1967, he was elected to the Lok Sabha on the ticket of the *Sampurna Maharashtra Samiti* and *Samayukta Socialist Party*. In all these elections, Pune city remained his constituency.

Shri Joshi also made a notable contribution in journalism. He edited the *Poona Daily News* (1953) and the *Lok Mitra Bombay* (1958-62) in 1964. Besides he was also a frequent writer of articles on politics and socialism in Marathi journals. His prominent publications include *Socialists' Quest for Right Path*, and his auto-biography in Marathi "*Mee S.M.*" He was publicly honoured on completion of sixty years of age when two books in appreciation of his services and a selection of his writings and speeches, were published.

Shri Joshi passed away at Pune on 1 April 1989 after a long illness. Thus came the end of this great octogenarian leader who was certainly an inspiring example of talent and patriotism. Making an obituary reference to the passing away of Shri Joshi, the Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma observed in the House*:

...An era has ended with the passing away of Shri Shridhar Mahadeo Joshi who was a shining link between the Gandhian era before independence and post-freedom politics of Maharashtra in particular and the country in general. A staunch believer of value based politics, Shri Joshi....was the founder-member of the Congress Socialist party alongwith Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Dev and other socialist leaders of the day. He advocated socialist ideology till his death and never compromised with social inequalities; rather he just could not bear it. Throughout his life, Shri Joshi championed the cause of the poor, the down-trodden and the Harijans and always spearheaded their struggle for securing to them social justice and a rightful place in the society....

* R.S. Deb., 3.4.1989, cc 1-2.

PART THREE

His Ideas

**(Excerpts from some select speeches of
Shri S.M. Joshi in Parliament)**

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Reports of Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for 1964-65 and 1965-66*

Deputy Speaker, Sir, the debate on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been going on here for the last so many days. From today's debate it appears that we are, sadly enough, not taking this issue with the required seriousness. Whatever has been stated here is based on figures and in my opinion we are indulging in a sort of hairsplitting over the rules and regulations. I think that the time has come when we should stop thinking merely in terms of figures and should bring about qualitative changes. If we do not bring about these changes, we will not be able to prove ourselves equal to the difficult tasks that lie ahead of us.

Fortunately for Maharashtra, a great leader, an outstanding personality and, if we may be permitted to say so, a messiah of Scheduled Castes, was born there. But see what is the plight of the Scheduled Castes people in that State also. I agree that their lot has since improved a great deal. But some years ago they had launched a big movement for land in that State. I had also participated in the freedom movement. I would say that since Independence we never witnessed such massive a movement as the one launched by the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes in that State at that time. But the irony is that not a single leading newspaper of the country carried a news-item about this movement. This shows that due importance was not given to such an issue. The demands raised by these

* L.S. Deb., 7 August, 1967, cc. 17586—17592.

people in that movement were accepted to some extent, but they could not be implemented fully.

In Pune city of Maharashtra, the statue of Dr. Ambedkar was unveiled by the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Even then, holiday was not observed on the birth anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar in one unit of the Ministry of Defence, although it was done so in all other Defence installations. In this connection some people belonging to Scheduled Castes proposed in the Works Committee that they should also be granted holiday on the birth anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar. There was a quarrel over this issue. I wrote to the then Defence Minister, Shri Yashwant Rao Chavan in this regard. As a result, they had to declare holiday in that unit also. But, later on, their leaders were penalised for this. The person who was leading them was transferred to Delhi and among other participants, there was one Shri Rankhambe, about whom I and Dadasaheb Gaikwad also had written to the Defence Minister. An accident took place while he was working on the machine. Although that accident did not cause much loss to the Government, he was charge sheeted and later on dismissed from service. Why does this happen? I would like to know whether such penalties are also imposed on other persons of other castes for such faults. No it is not done. When persons of other castes are not penalised, then why are these persons penalised like this? This is because of the fact that the mentality of officers belonging to upper castes has not yet changed. If such a treatment is meted out to the people of Scheduled Castes and they have to suffer in this way in Maharashtra where a big movement was launched under the leadership of Dr. Baba Saheb, then their fate in other places can better be imagined than described.

You have made reservation for them in jobs. I would like to know whether Harijans and Scheduled Tribe people are also allotted houses constructed by Housing Boards/Commissions in the cities; whether there is any reservation for them also in the matter of allotment of these houses? In cities like Bombay and Pune, I find that these people always have to live and are in fact living in slums. They would not be able to get houses there. No area has been earmarked for construction of houses

for these people. Now-a-days in big cities houses are not available. These can become available only when houses are constructed by the Government housing agencies. I had asked my friend Nana Saheb Kuthe as to whether he had made reservation in houses for these people when he was Chairman of the Housing Board/Commission. He replied that he had not done so because there was no such rule. I feel that we should have such a rule without losing time. These people should be provided houses to live in. But this is not being done....

I would like to say that jobs have been reserved for them not because they had begged for it, but because this would enable them to negate the conspiracy hatched against them by bureaucrats and people of upper castes. This conspiracy against them exists every where. Yesterday, I had the privilege of having a talk with Shri Jaya prakash Narayan and to listen to his speech. He told me that the Congress Government in Bihar had enacted a law, i.e. Homesteads Act, for them. But the same was not implemented by the Government. In Purnea, people are being evicted by the use of muscle power. He also told me that 'Gramdan' is becoming difficult even in villages. Similarly, there is another law for share-croppers. But that has also proved to be of little use. A share-cropper ploughs the land, but his crop is taken away at the time of harvest. His name is not even registered as share-cropper. Mere enacting a legislation is not enough for this purpose. For this, public opinion would have to be mobilised and a people's movement would have to be launched. I would ask my friend, Ashok Bhai, who is in-charge of this Department, as to what he proposes to do to see that a revolutionary change is brought about in the thinking and mentality of the people. At least one representative from among these people should be there in the Public Service Commission to see to their interests. I would like to know whether there is not even a single competent person among them who can be a member of the Public Service Commission. Why has a representative from among them not been appointed in the said Commission so far? It is said that they are considering it. How long will they go on considering it? The

other day I asked my friend Ashok Bhai as to what he proposed to do to clear the backlog. Just now, the Hon. Minister stated that all the reserved vacancies were filled in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965 but we find that their ratio against jobs is only 5% which means that the backlog has not been cleared till now. What is your scheme to clear this backlog? My suggestion is that the quota reserved for them should be doubled and if someone fulfils the minimum qualifications, then he should be selected in order to clear the backlog.

One thing more before I conclude. I would like to draw your attention as well as that of the House towards the speech delivered by our friend Shri Sheo Narain. I tell you that it is not that easy. If you do not read that writing on the wall, its consequences would be disastrous as is happening in America. If the Scheduled Caste people here are treated the way black races, i.e. Negroes in America are being treated, then the people belonging to these Castes would also do the same things as Negroes are doing there. The same situation will develop here also and the Government and we both shall be responsible for that. I do not say that Congress alone has not done much for them. There is non-Congress Government in Bihar. If that Government also fails to do anything good for these people and the law in force at present is not implemented, then the non-Congress Governments will also meet the fate of the Congress Government. If a legal, non-violent and peaceful method is not adopted in this case then the consequences would be disastrous. It is that very question of national integration which Ashok Bhai used to refer to, quite often. So, you should think from that point of view.

Resolution on Wage Freeze Policy

Sir, I congratulate Shri C.K. Chakrapaniji for bringing this resolution before the House because today when this matter regarding dearness allowance has been raised and is being discussed here.

Yes, it is a serious matter and complicated too. Besides, this is a matter which had not been discussed in the House earlier. Now through this resolution we are getting an opportunity to discuss it. First of all, I would like to draw your attention and, through you, Sir, of the Finance Minister, towards one thing. Today it is being talked in the country that wages and prices should be frozen. But this freezing is a misnomer. As a matter of fact we feel that the wages of our workers have already been frozen; any increase in wages is not being allowed. Today our struggle is to ensure that in future workers do not get less real wages than what they are getting today. That is what we are trying to do. Actually we are trying to de-freeze them. We want that the real wages should not go down. This is the situation today. We see that we have to fight for dearness allowance. Our struggle with Shri Morarji Desai is only this much that we should be fully compensated for the increase in prices, which means that our real wages should not be less than what they were earlier. But a misunderstanding is being created here that we are demanding more. It is not correct. Yesterday, when the opposition leaders had a talk with Shri Morarji Bhai, he said that in case they implement the recommendations of the Gajendragadkar Committee regarding dearness allowance, they will

* L.S. Deb., 11 August, 1967, c.c. 19019-19024

have to spend Rs. 175 crore more and he pleaded that if Rs. 175 crore more were given in the hands of workers, it would result in a further increase in the prices.

He was told that it was not like that and the opinion of the Reserve Bank is that it is not the wages that cause increase in prices; the fact otherwise is that a demand for increase in wages is made only when the prices increase. But Shri Morarji would never yield. We should accept this fact that in our country, as also in every country, there is a subjective factor also in regard to prices. Shri Morarji said that if they give Rs. 175 crore more as dearness allowance, it would result in an increase in the prices. Now, if Morarji Bhai himself says like that, the result would be that—while Morarji Bhai will not be able to prevent us from getting what we deserve as a matter of right and he will have to give it—the unscrupulous traders will keep themselves ready for increasing the prices and as soon as dearness allowance is granted, they will effect increase in the prices, as stated by Morarji Bhai. Thus Morarji Bhai himself is encouraging increase in the prices by creating this tangle. Had our demand not been opposed in this manner, it would not have got so much of publicity and nobody would have taken so much notice of it. But since he himself has said, even when the discussion is going on, that the payment of dearness allowance to the workers would result in rise in the prices, even the petty shopkeepers would certainly enhance the prices the day the payment of dearness allowance is made, because such a situation is being created by the Government itself, and we, the workers, are being made the scapegoats.

How the States would be able to contain the price-rise when you are in power at the Centre? With Morarji Bhai sitting in the Centre we have had a deficit financing to the tune of Rs. 4 crore within a period of four months. He himself has stated that the deficit financing has come upto Rs. 80 crore. Have we done it? On the one hand, he indulges in deficit financing which causes increase in the prices, and on the other hand, he creates a notion that if dearness allowance is paid to the

workers, the prices will increase. Thus it is you who are encouraging the price rise. You are encouraging the unscrupulous traders. We strongly protest against this kind of attitude. Morarji Bhai and the Government say that they are going to freeze the prices everywhere. How? In the name of freezing the prices, you have frozen the wages of the workers. Is this the way? The proper method was that first of all you should have reduced the wealth and property of those who have got more than the required limit. The other day when our friend Dr. Lohia had moved a resolution to the effect that nobody should be allowed to spend more than Rs. 1500/-p.m., then Morarji Bhai had made a mockery of that. And, on the contrary he now asks the workers not to increase their expenditure as it would, in his opinion, harm the nation. But why don't you tell those who have enormous wealth, those who are earning more than Rs. 1500/-p.m., that more income tax will be levied upon them and collection would be made from them in other forms also, so that the inflationary pressure does not increase? You will not tell it to them. When it is a question of big persons, of the capitalists, then Morarji Bhai does not act so forcefully, but when the question of workers' interest arises, he opposes it tooth and nail. As my friend has stated, when the workers go on strike, he thinks of trying to crush them. But let me tell him that now it will not do. The INTUC and all other trade unions have decided that they would not let this suppression take place. This matter is not related to any particular party, it is a question of the interest of workers; it is a question of social justice. Wherefrom is the beginning to be made? First of all, those who are having more wealth and more property, should be made to come forward to help when the country is facing a financial crisis. But it does not so happen. So, I would like to suggest to Morarji Bhai that if he wants to check the price rise, the only way out is to ask those who are having a wealth worth more than one lakh rupees to pay a special tax or levy.

Secondly, I may point it out that you have devalued the rupee, but we demand that you should go for its upward gradation, you should increase its value, you should resort to

demonetisation of the currency, only then the prices could be brought down, otherwise not. It can be done, but Morarji Bhai will not do it. I say that mere increase in dearness allowance of our workers is not the sole cause of price rise. The big capitalists are responsible for it. We launched three Plans, on which more than Rs. 25 thousand crore were spent. Thereby only the rich went still richer, but you did not levy the required percentage of tax on them. Now you look to our Plans. During the First Plan when our investment was less, the rate of production was good enough. But with the increase in our investment, the rate of production has been going down. Everywhere there is bungling. With these words I support this resolution and would also like to tell the Government that if they think that they would suppress the workers in this manner, we would see that it never becomes possible. Now the Minister is openly saying that if we want to serve the nation, if we want to maintain unity in the country, then we should not support the workers' cause, but should support the cause of the Tatas and the Birlas, only then the country could survive, otherwise not. How ridiculous this thought is.

Resolution on crossing of floor by Legislators*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I do not, in principle, oppose the resolution brought before the House by our friends in the Congress party. But to me it appears that we cannot change the existing conditions in the country by moving such resolutions or enacting legislation. Whatever has happened here or has been happening in other Legislative Assemblies is not confined to those Assemblies or this House only. It is only a symptom—a symptom of degeneration of our life in our country and this situation cannot be rectified merely by enacting a legislation. I remember that when the Home Minister was asked whether he wanted to enact such a law, he replied that such a legislation may not help. At that time I had said that he was right. If we establish a convention, that too would not help us achieve our objective. It was the experience of our Home Minister himself. That was why I interrupted him to say that he had made an agreement with us in Maharashtra and what we proposed in that agreement was being repeated here today by our friends in the Congress Party. In 1960, while expressing our views against the practice of floor crossing we proposed to call an all party meetings and to lay down a convention, a small convention to the effect that we shall not admit a defector into our party if we cannot prevent any member from floor-crossing. Why do we allow, one who has crossed the floor, to join our party.

* L.S. Deb., 24 November, 1967, cc. 2816—2822.

many examples. If we collect all of them, they would make as big a volume as Mahabharata.

* * *

(Interruptions)*

If you had the patience to listen to what I was going to say about Shri Asoka Mehta, there would have been no occasion for you to rise to say all this. I wanted to say that the name of Shri Asoka Mehta is often mentioned. But you all forget the fact that when Shri Asoka Mehta left our party, he was not a Member of our party here.

* * *

(Interruptions)**

You did not forget. But these people do not understand what I am saying. The only wrong thing that Asoka Mehta has done is that he has asked other Members to cross the floor. He himself did not cross the floor.

What I was saying was that we did not oppose even floor crossing very much. But why do you accept them in the Congress Party? You asked as to what will be the status of such a defector? We suggested that they should be treated as independents. Many Members raise doubts whether independents have any status. When we say that there is parliamentary democracy in our country we all accept the existence of political parties. If there are only independent Members, how will the Government function? If independent Members claim that they should also have the same rights as enjoyed by other parties, then it will not be possible. Therefore, whenever a Member crosses the floor, he should not be allowed to join any other party and this convention was accepted for being followed in future. But, I remember, at that time when our friend, Shri Madhu Limaye, reminded Chavan Saheb, the Home Minister, of

* Amidst interruptions, one Member Shri Chengalraya Naidu: I am only saying one thing. Yesterday Shri Asoka Mehta read out the letter which Shri Madhu Limaye wrote to him saying that he could also take with him people who think like him.

** Shri P. Venkatasubbaiah: I did not forget.

this convention, he said that Maharashtra was passing through a transitional period, there was turmoil and political loyalties were changing and in such a transitional period people should have the right to defect or cross the floor. This was the opinion of our Home Minister at that time. Our friend Shri Madhu Limaye did not agree with this view but I agreed and a question was asked whether there would be no defections in 1962 because if defections took place in 1960 and you accepted defectors, would the position not stabilise by 1962? If the position stabilises by 1962, do you promise that you will not allow the members elected in 1962 elections to switch over to your party. He accepted this proposal.

(Interruptions)

Home Minister had accepted it. But what happened there? We asked him when he himself had violated the convention that he had made, how can we establish new conventions? We quoted the names of some persons in this regard. If you accept somebody in your party, actuated by greed of power or necessity of forming the Government, it could be understood, but Congress Party enjoys thumping majority. Why do you then allure other persons to join your party? When he was Chief Minister of Maharashtra and I was Leader of Opposition there, he told me that some members of my Party were going to defect to his Party and asked my opinion in this regard. I said that in my opinion if he wanted to accept the defecting members he could do so, because how can we prevent the members from defecting, if they want to defect. But such Members should be quarantined for five years. Then only it would be clear as to how many members from our party want to defect to your party. But he did not do that and on the contrary appointed the defecting Members as Ministers and then the game of defection started.

Now we should devise some method to check defections. If we enact a law to disqualify from membership the defected

* An hon'ble Member: Who had accepted?

Members and if such a person is re-elected, we would be making a laughing stock of ourselves. In Maharashtra Assembly, disciplinary action was taken against a Member and he was disqualified to be a Member of the Assembly. But later on, he again contested and was elected with a thumping majority. We should not subject ourselves to this sort of mockery. At that time I commented: "you turned him out of the House but you did not disqualify him from contesting the election again, so he would again contest the election and win and they would be making a laughing stock of yourselves". Therefore, some convention will have to be laid down as without following a convention and by merely enacting a law, we will not achieve our objective.

When Prakash Vir Shastriji alleged that the Congress was trying to create dissensions in other parties, the Prime Minister sarcastically remarked that they (Congressmen) were not here to form the opposition party. When Shri Pattom Thanu Pillai defected from our party, the members of Congress Party repeatedly asked me, "If your wife did not want to live with you, what can we do?" In reply, I said, "that does not mean that you have got a permit to commit adultery". Why do you accept the defectors? You should not have adopted such an attitude. But you did so and now the poison of defection has affected the entire body-politic and the consequences are before us.

When we came here for the first time after elections, the vitality of democracy was impressed upon in the Presidential Address. If we had appreciated this vitality in the real sense, we could have reached agreement on certain issues, but I see that a spirit of agreement is missing. We could not arrive at a consensus even at the time of election of the Deputy Speaker. Then came the Presidential election. I myself proposed the name of Dr. Zakir Hussain. But Congress never invited us so as to arrive at a consensus on this issue. When opposition parties were invited, they were asked in a challenging tone to propose the name of a consensus candidate. When this was done, efforts were made to arrive at some understanding on the ground the opposition would accept Dr. Zakir Hussain for

Presidentship provided the ruling party accept the candidate nominated by the opposition for the office of Vice-President. That too was not accepted. So this sort of superficiality would lead us nowhere. We will have to consider certain fundamental things in this regard.

I agree that people in our country are also feeling concerned on the issues involved. I know that people do not want violence. But they definitely feel that the Government, even if it is a Government of our Party, is not paying any attention towards the plight of the poor. I would like to draw your attention to the prevailing mentality of the people. There is a maidservant at my home. Her husband went to Nepal and due to floods there his return was delayed by four days. He was a daily-wage worker in C.P.W.D. His services were terminated for being absent for four days. When I wrote a letter to his Executive Engineer stating that he could not attend to his duty due to circumstances beyond his control and therefore his services could not be terminated, the Executive Engineer did not reply. After that I reported the matter to the Minister. He called me and assured me that the person concerned would be reinstated. But when that person goes to any officer, he is asked to go back to the M.P. whom he approached and got a job from him. And our Minister has failed to do anything in the matter so far. This is the lot of the poor in the country. In the circumstances the poor are unable to distinguish between good and bad, violence and non-violence. A poor man does not get even two square meals and does not get employment. Today we should seriously think as to what should be done to improve the lot of the poor. These resolutions, proposals, etc. are superficial things. These are palliatives and not curatives. We should take curative steps to get rid of the ills plaguing our society.

I support your views in principle. However, the Committee proposed to be constituted for this purpose should go into all these facts. Mere enactment of legislation would not help us but would make us an object of public ridicule.

Strike by Newspapers Employees*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I am raising in the House a matter, the importance of which has not yet been understood by many people. The strike by journalists and others in the newspaper industry is creating a special problem for the newspaper readers and the Indian labour movement. Although I have been branded as a protagonist of strikes, I firmly hold the opinion that, as far as possible, we must avoid strikes. We should resort to strikes only when there is no other way out. Industrially, our country has not so far made enough progress; and, as far as possible, there should be no strike in our country; production must go on and industrial peace should be maintained. For that, we have already tried so many methods through the labour movement in our country. As a worker of the labour movement, my opinion is that we should go for collective bargaining which ensures industrial peace and harmony. But our country has not yet progressed so much that all people might follow this path. That is why other methods are used, but these methods take too much time and the example of Wage Board is before us as to how such time consuming it has been. These people agitated for two years, and then only the Wage Board came into being. And after its constitution also, it took two years to finalise its decisions. The present dispute has been going on since November, and it is yet to be resolved. Thus it is clear how much time is wasted in it. Today, the worker is fighting against unequals. In such circumstances we

* *L.S. Deb.*, 30 July, 1968, c.c. 2902—2908.

adopt other methods like adjudication which also takes a lot of time. The big employers go upto Supreme Court and thus the workers do not get any relief. Considering all these things, collective bargaining is the best course to follow. But since that is not possible, the Wage Board is preferable. The Wage Board is comprised of the representatives of the management, workers and the Government; and whatever decisions it takes unanimously are binding on all the parties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you might be knowing about the decision taken by the Wage Board regarding non-journalists. It was a unanimous decision, but the workers had to sacrifice a lot to make it unanimous. Thereafter, the orders issued by the Government have diluted the effect of that unanimous Wage Board decision and even then it has not been implemented. This has created a great danger for the workers' movement. None of the Wage Boards, formed so far, had faced such a situation wherein the verdict of the Board was dishonoured. If we cannot get the award implemented through lawful means, the workers would lose their faith in the Wage Boards.

I agree that the implementation of the decision of the Wage Board for non-journalists in the Newspaper Industry can be difficult to some extent. But we did make an agreement with PTI people. Although we did not get all that the Wage Board had recommended, still we reached an agreement. We reached an agreement with the U.N.I. also. But the big owners tried to grind their own axe through lower ranks and raised much hue and cry. However, our workers acted rightly and they left out the people of grades 4, 5 and 6 and asked the people in grades 1, 2 and 3 to arrive at an agreement. Regarding that agreement, they now say that it is only recommendation and is not binding on a member. Next time also when negotiations started, the management said that the agreement would be recommendatory. What is the use of these things? This is simply a time

wasting tactic, and that is why the newspaper employees went on a strike. This strike has been going on for the last seven days. I want to know as to what our government is doing in this regard.

Hon'ble Deputy Speaker, this is a fight between unequals. We have set up the Wage Board. We also know that big newspaper owners can easily implement the Wage Board decisions. It is not difficult for them to do so because all of them are making huge profits. The Indian Express, The Times of India and all other big newspapers are earning huge profits. Despite that if they do not implement the Board's verdict, what would be the result? I have got the figures showing the profits earned by them in 1963, 1964 and 1965. The Times of India earned Rs. 52 lakh, The Statesman Rs. 30 lakh, The Hindustan Times— Rs. 31 lakh, The Hindu—Rs. 19 lakh, Indian Express— Rs. 29 lakh. How much amount they will have to pay if they implement the Wage Board award? The Times of India will have to spend Rs. 14 lakh out of Rs. 52 lakh, The Statesman will have to spend Rs. 15 lakh out of Rs. 30 lakh, and likewise, The Hindustan Times, The Hindu and Indian Express will have to spend Rs. 9 lakh, Rs. 6 lakh and Rs. 12 lakh out of Rs. 31 lakh, Rs. 19 lakh and Rs. 29 lakh, respectively. If these newspapers owners who are earning this much profit, do not implement the unanimous verdict of the Wage Board, I fail to understand how the Labour Movement will go on?

The workers have been suffering a lot since the day the rift between management and the workers started. Many complications have arisen. If statutory status is awarded to one and denied to the other, they can go even upto the Supreme Court. They have got money and the workers have not. Moreover, it is a time consuming process. That would not help. I want that the Government should make its stand clear in this regard. I would like to tell you that the people are facing a lot of problems. I have received a letter from the workers of the Indian Express. It says:—

“I am glad to see from the teleprinter that you MPs are

taking up the matter of the Wage Board (Journalists and Non-Journalists) very vigorously. In the Indian Express at Sassoon Docks a peculiar and disgraceful thing took place yesterday. The ground floor water supply was cut off. You can imagine the state of the lavatory. Mind you the workers are not allowed to move out of the ground floor. This should be enough to incite the workers but knowing fully the management's plan of a lockout and looking for a chance to level charges against the workers, the press boys were not drawn into the trap. Imagine a worker denied water. But after all the example of Napoleon's army who drank horses' urine is before us."

We are not going to yield, he says.

You can well imagine how much bitterness it would create. That is why I say that the Government should take the initiative in this regard; and we want to know their opinion also. Do the Government think that the employers are right in whatever they are doing; if not, what action the Government have taken till date to fulfil the workers' demand? This is a serious matter which concerns the entire country. The sympathetic strike which was observed yesterday proved successful in the whole country. But the P.T.I. and the Government are propagating that it was a failure. This sort of tactics is not going to fizzle out the strike; it would go on. You should be ready to talk with all the federation of workers if they so wish. But I would like to know the steps Government have initiated regarding the Times of India? Their Board of Management includes two Government representatives — Dr. Hazare and Shri Bhattacharya. The third person, Shri Nana Saheb Kunte, a Judge, has been appointed as Chairman. I want to know the steps taken by you to dispense justice to the workers? Here, we boast of 'Socialism'. But I don't know if this is what is meant by Socialism. I have every respect for the Hon. Minister. He did make some efforts. But I want to know from the big leaders like the Home Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Prime Minister, whether they have asked the newspaper owners to do anything. If not, then what is the way out left for the workers? Will the Government

help them? I do feel that they might have some problems but these could be resolved through some other means also. Firstly, Government should ask the management to implement it cent-percent. If it involves some problems, we are ready for voluntary arbitration. If they do not accept it, then instead of making a propaganda against workers from All India Radio, let the existing law take its course. Through the All India Radio you should rather appeal for industrial peace instead of taking the side of big capitalists.

Secondly, you give them advertisements. Why cannot the Government tell them that it is a policy decision and if they do not implement it, no advertisement would be given to them? But just as we hear about 'tailor-made gentlemen', here also we find "public-made leaders". Why do you fear their resentment? People are with you. You should fight for them. But you would not agree with me on this point.

In the last, I would like to put two or three questions to the Hon. Minister. Kindly clear the Government's stand on these points. Are the demands and struggle of the workers justified or not; if justified, what steps have been initiated from the Government's side? If the employers do not accept what you say, what will be the course of action of the Government? Would you favour the capitalists or the poor workers? We call ourselves socialists, and also have the unanimous decision of the Wage Board and still we are not honouring the same. If the Government do not take any action, the big monopolists will start dictating terms to you. And then we will be left with no other alternative.

Rural Housing Development (Res.)

Mr. Chairman, it gives me immense pleasure to rise to support the resolution before the House. I think this problem has not yet caught the attention of either our Government or that of the people. This is a big problem and when we work on it, many consequential things might arise.

Firstly, though we want to bring about social changes in the country, somehow we lag behind in finding proper means for achieving this end. I have seen in the rural areas that houses and clusters are still being laid out on caste basis. At least in Maharashtra I have seen that the people belonging to the Scheduled Castes live in separate clusters and non-Scheduled Castes live in other areas. It shows that our society is still divided on caste basis. If we undertake this Rural Housing Development Programme without caste considerations, we shall not only accomplish a worthy mission but also usher in a social revolution and thus can reshape the life of our rural folk. When we decide to spend money for construction of houses in a village, we can put a clause to the effect that under this scheme houses will be built only for those people who are willing to live together in the same locality as one community irrespective of their caste. Recently, when the Koyna calamity occurred in Maharashtra, I did raise this very point in the House and said that this was the opportune time when we should not rebuild new villages and new houses on caste basis and rather make it binding on all to live together. If we implement our rural housing

* L.S. Deb., 14th August, 1968, c.c. 2345—47.

programmes in this manner, it would become an instrument of bringing a social change and a social revolution.

Secondly, many educated persons do not like to live in rural areas. While we have tried so hard for spreading the education in whole of our country, we should also try to provide basic amenities in the villages. Since even basic amenities are not available in the rural areas no educated youth wants to live in the rural areas. We should try to develop our villages in such a way that people might like to live there. It is obvious that so long as good houses are not there in villages, no educated person would like to live there.

There is unemployment in urban and rural areas of our country, especially in villages. We should provide employment to the unemployed and utilise their talents in such a way that they prove to be an asset to our country and thus increase our national wealth. It may be argued that the money spent on these programmes may cause inflationary pressure on our economy but in the long run it will prove beneficial. So, it is a very important resolution and Government should accept it. This is a non-controversial issue on which there cannot be any difference of opinion. Would any Congressman say that good houses should not be built in rural areas? I hope the resolution will get massive support from all sides and also hope that the Hon'ble Minister will accept this Resolution without asking the mover of the Resolution to withdraw it on the plea that the matter will be discussed thread-bare later on. The Hon'ble Minister should accept this resolution because, as I said earlier, this is undoubtedly a very good step, and it will bring a social revolution in the country in the real sense. I strongly support this Resolution.

Motion on Demands of Central Government Employees*

Mr. Chairman, Sir, the House has a very serious issue before it. Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha, like, a good lawyer indulged in a sort of hair-splitting, is trying to prove that the workers seeking arbitration have no right to do so.

Sir, if you go deep into the question as to how this JCM, rules of which have just been read out in the House, came into being, you will know that it was set up on the basis of the demand we have been making since long. For the central workers (Central Government employees) strike of 1960 also, I was responsible. It has been alleged that we are interested only in maintaining our leadership and serving our own interests and for this purpose we incite people to go on strike. In fact, I am one of those people who always try to bring about a compromise. But compromise also has a limit, beyond which there can be no compromise except surrender. What was the demand in support of which the strike took place in 1960 and for what reasons was it opposed? The demand was that the workers should get dearness allowance and when their demand was turned down, then they had no option but to go on strike.

Our colleague Mr. Dange has just enquired as to what were the circumstances in which they had to fight and ultimately the J.C.M. was constituted. While explaining the word 'agreement' a little while ago you said that if the issues related to 'a class

* L.S. Deb., August 30, 1968, c.c. 3583-90.

of workers", we would have been entitled to ask for arbitration. We do not want arbitration. But if there is a demand of workers, then we feel that negotiations should take place and if negotiations fail, then we go in for collective bargaining with all the might at our command and thereafter, the last resort is the strike. Now the question arises whether the Government employees should go on strike, because strike brings the whole Government machinery to a standstill, and so it is in the country's interest that we should not resort to strike. But if we avoid going on strike, how will our demands be met? Shri Dange has rightly said that the JCM was formed to find a way out so that the disputes relating to workers may be referred to arbitrator. Both these matters, which are opposed, concern the wages.

As regards the issue of need-based wages, it concerns wageclass employees who are called class IV employees. There was a strike and the machinery which was created to fight it, had a similar issue in the background, that is of dearness allowance. But the question is, what is the Government doing ? On the one hand is the instance of private sector and on the other is the treatment being meted out to these employees. Therefore, it is a very serious matter. If you don't want arbitration, then find some other alternative. How can it be that nothing is done. After all something has got to be done. We are sitting here as representatives of the workers and would like to tell you that it is not a matter which concerns the Secretariat employees only, but it concerns the workers/employees of Railways, Defence, P.W.D., Posts and Telegraphs and certain other revenue yielding establishments engaged in productive activities. Merely because such establishments have been taken over by the Government, it can not be said that persons working there have been divested of their right. If workers of TATA have a right to go on strike, the workers engaged in defence production, ordnance factories etc. should have other remedies available in case they do not have a right to go on strike.

With a view to resolving all such issues, JCM was created.

But today Mr. Chavan is saying that we bring politics into it. I would like to ask Mr. Chavan, as to how politics is involved in it. If there is disagreement in JCM, it cannot be attributed to just one party since INTUC people, our people and others as well are there in the J.C.M. So difference of opinion on any point in it cannot be termed as politics. When we were fighting against Britishers, a small section of people used to say that we were not fighting for independence but merely for seeing our photographs in newspapers. I want to say that for us, politics is not just a profession, but a mission for which we have been working all along.

Now the question is how to find out a way. I would request the Hon. Minister—he is not sitting here, perhaps he has gone to discuss the matter—that if it is possible to find out a way through discussion, he must do so. Mr. Chavan invites us for talks. What for? He wants to discuss whether the matter is arbitrable or not. It is nothing but hair-splitting and we are not prepared for it. If you want to resolve the dispute and discuss the question of need-based wages, we are prepared for such a discussion; but if you want to discuss whether it fits into that machinery or not, we will not take part in such a discussion. The purpose of setting up the arbitration machinery was to ensure that our demands are met without resorting to strikes. But the Government is unwilling to do so.

I am at a loss to decide as to what should be done. I am the Chairman of the Action Committee constituted for the purpose and say this with full responsibility—even if they want to shoot us down, we are prepared for it. Bread is not available, so we are ready to take bullets. Whatever you may say, the fact is that no other option is left for the workers now, but to protest against injustice. We are followers of Gandhiji and we have learnt a few of his teachings. I want to make it clear that if the workers of our country do not get justice they cannot serve the country well, they cannot work with dedication, cannot increase their efficiency and the Government will have to own the moral responsibility for all this.

I would like to tell the Government that it is not the question

of money only but it is more than that. You talk of the agreement. We accepted that agreement and did abide by it for quite some time. But when the question of its implementation comes, then you ask us to consider whether it is against the agreement or not. This will not do. Some time ago, an agreement was reached in respect of Roadways in Punjab; it was violated by the Government and the workers went on strike in protest. They were removed from service. We know that we too will be victimised in the same manner. We know this also that when we go on strike, they will use the entire machinery at their command to suppress it, and this is the same machinery which the British rulers had. So, we don't want to put our workers to risk. But when we decide to go on strike, we do so after a lot of consideration and take full responsibility for it.

It is in fact a question of morality for all of us. If we make an agreement and do not honour it, then there is no morality in it. It is rather strange that we honour our agreement made with foreign countries but violate the ones reached among ourselves. For example, Government honoured the Kutch Award, as both parties accepted the same. But the agreement reached with the workers is being violated by this very Government. In this case also the Government should have honoured its agreement.

I cannot even imagine the difficulties and the misfortunes the workers, who will go on strike under my leadership, will have to face. But at the same time we also have to see whether, like cowards, we should completely surrender to atrocities and injustice. We cannot do so. To get our just demands accepted and to seek justice, if we have to take a risk, we must do so. It is our duty and we must fulfil it. When I fight for the workers' rights and exhort them to fight for their rights, I also ask them to work hard and to discharge their duties with devotion keeping in mind that the money they get as wages from the taxpayers should be compensated fully by putting in hard labour. Whenever they are compelled to go on strike, they serve the national cause. If workers go on one day strike on 19th September they will do so because they have been compelled

to do so and have no other option. The responsibility for it will not rest with the workers but with the Government as it has violated the agreement. The Government will be responsible for it.

Resolution on Status of Jammu and Kashmir

Mr. Chairman, the resolution moved in the House by our friend, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is very important. It seeks to remove Article 370 from our Constitution. In view of the prevailing circumstances in the country it has become all the more important. The intention of Shri Vajpayee is to secure integration of the country. But this integration will not come about by taking piece-meal measures; we will have to think in terms of creating an atmosphere in the entire country which is congenial to integration. I remember Vajpayeeji having said in his speech that there is dualism and how we can allow this dualism to continue here when we are one country. One of the characteristics of our Constitution is that we find unity in dualism. When we have adopted the democratic system, it means that identity of every individual is to be preserved, and every individual has to identify himself with the soul of the country.

Today the question of national integration has become so vital that we will have to consider it in the larger interest of the country. Vajpayeeji will agree with me that if we want to preserve the unity of our country, we can do so only by strengthening the democratic base. While making the Constitution, Babasaheb Ambedkar had drawn our attention towards certain peculiarities of our country, viz., the lopsided development, the multiplicity of languages spoken and the different

* L.S. Deb., 6 December 1968, cc 259-266

faiths pursued by the people. We have to move ahead alongwith all these things. Hence, integration cannot be achieved overnight through any law, it is a thing to be assimilated in our day-to-day life.

The other day, Centre-State relations were being discussed in the House. At that time I could not get an opportunity to speak. I hope I will get such an opportunity next time, but I want to say that this is not a matter which concerns a particular party. We all have to sit together and think over it. We should not forget that during our freedom struggle, there was a section of Muslims who extended to us their full support and there was another section who rather opposed us than helping. I think that the Muslims of Kashmir belong to that class which supported the one-nation theory. Badshah Khan was our leader at that time, and he continues to be our leader even today. He was our leader during the freedom struggle, and today also we have sympathy for the cause he is fighting and we feel that the Pakhtoons should get autonomy in Pakistan, and it is the opinion of my party. Certain issues of Pakhtoons will have to be dealt with at a different footing. We have to deal with our colleagues from D.M.K. with patience and not with petulance. we would have to go deep into the matter to find out as to what gives rise to such demands. These demands arise because we have different regions and classes of people in our country and their problems are also different. Unless we solve them, we cannot achieve anything by the force of law. The baton of law cannot unite us and if we try to do that, the country will disintegrate. I believe that we cannot bring about intergation by force.

I am in agreement with the intention of Vajpayee Saheb. His intention is good, but integration cannot be brought about merely by enacting a law. For what purpose is the Constitution framed? It is not framed by imagination alone. Perception may

be very good, but a balance has to be struck among the social forces in the country and we find that balance in the Constitution. Whenever that balance is disturbed, the need arises to realign the balance in the Constitution. This is the peculiarity of our Constitution that we can bring harmony again through the democratic way if the balance among the social forces is disturbed. Directive Principles provide certain guidelines for that.

I am not happy with the situation obtaining in Kashmir. But we should not forget that the Muslims of Kashmir had extended their support to us in the freedom struggle. So, we will have to find out as to why they are angry with us now? Similarly, we will have to think as to why have the people of Kerala elected the Communist Party. The people of that State have not come from China. Then why have they turned Communists? We should try to find out the reasons therefor, otherwise we cannot arrive at any solution. The reasons are both political and economic. You cannot bring about unity of hearts by force. It has been repeatedly said that the communist party should be declared illegal. But what will be its result? Similarly, we will have to think again about the present situation in Kashmir and the turmoil in the country. We shall have to think afresh about the entire Constitution. We have to take all classes of such people with us. When the Kashmiris say that they are an integral part of India, we should not take any hasty step. The same thing applies to Nagaland also. If we had made efforts in right earnest earlier, things would not have come to such a pass. The policy that we have adopted towards border States has not helped us win the hearts of the people there. We did spend money in Kashmir and Nagaland but it was not backed by serious efforts to integrate them fully with us. That is why people there are feeling estranged and are talking of a separate State. The same thing is happening in Nagaland and Mizoram. Today there are disturbances in Manipur also and a *Satyagraha* is going on there. People of Manipur question us as to why they are being discriminated against. Government has accorded statehood to Nagaland which has a population of five lakhs only

but why has Manipur with a population of ten lakhs been deprived of statehood and autonomy? If we want to maintain unity in our country, we will have to adopt a distinct uniform policy for all the border States. Today, what you do in Maharashtra, you cannot do the same thing easily in Kashmir. It may, perhaps, be possible in future, if we succeed in bringing about complete integration. But today when the situation is different we should accept the facts and not run away from realities.

I do not say that the present situation in Kashmir is good. There is a problem of Government employees in Kashmir. Sadiq Saheb is known for being very progressive but here it is said that there is a capitalist rule in Kashmir. If Sadiq Saheb is progressive, then why was Shri Shishupal, the General Secretary, arrested when he came to meet our friends? 50 persons were arrested and 12 of them were detained under the Preventive Detention Act. Their preventive detention is of a different nature. So, we are not happy with this situation and we feel that excesses are being committed on the people there. We should take stock of the situation prevailing there at present. A reference was made here to land laws. I have received a complaint to which I would like to draw the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs; I have come to know that there are two aerodromes—one is a civilian airport and the other is a military one. Military aerodrome may be separate but the civilians also do not get land. They would have to be provided land. The land laws differ from place to place. For example, there is a law in Chhotanagpur under which the tribals are not allowed to transfer their land without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner. That law is still in force there. Same may be the case in Kashmir also. So the old system would have to be done away with gradually.

Ours is a vast country in which people have different religions, different languages and we have to move ahead with the development keeping all these things in view. Today, we find that the cases of the Central Government employees arrested in Kerala are to be withdrawn, the cases in Punjab will

also be withdrawn but our cases and the cases in Maharashtra are not going to be withdrawn. If it is not discrimination, what else is it? We have to remove this discrimination also. What has led to this discrimination? It is because of the fact that we are following contradictory policies. We have to bring an end to such a contradiction. As I said earlier, we should first improve the situation there and win the hearts of the people. I am one of those, who sympathise with Muslims, but to them also I would say, whether they agree or not, that majority section of the minorities in the country had demanded a separate Pakistan which resulted in the partition of the country and thus they had annoyed the people here. It is not a thing to be forgotten. Loyalty can not be divided. That is the weakness. We will have to inculcate patriotic feelings in their children. Once I said here that a little boy asked me in Poona – when violence broke out there – “Joshi uncle, tell me that a Hindu boy who sits next to me often says that your Ayub did that: how has Ayub become ours?” When he asked this question, I kept mum for a while and after some time I told him that he is too young to understand it. It is the fallout of the injustice committed by you as well as our ancestors. There are five crore Muslims in our country and they in no way are different from us as human beings. But today, it cannot be denied that there are some people who are indifferent to the country. Even then, we should not run away from the realities and it is our duty to instil feelings of love in them. We want to do all this through democratic ways. If we abandon the path of mutual discussion, then democracy cannot survive. Today, if Indiraji does not meet Sheikh Abdullah— should we also refuse to consider the views expressed and the resolutions passed in the conference organised by him? Prime Minister may not like to meet him because the policy of her Government is at variance with him. But why should we people refuse to have talks with them? If we can find some way that satisfies these people, we should try to find it out.

I request Vajpayeeji to realise that nothing should be done in haste, especially in the prevailing circumstances, when there is

turmoil and ferment. If we do anything in haste, it can prove dangerous for democracy. As our Late leader Dr. Lohia used to say — we also subscribe to that view— that a confederation will have to be formed in order to protect democracy and to keep the country united. Without that we would not be able to achieve anything. We have to move ahead with that point of view.

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(Interruptions)*

I would again request you not to do anything in haste. I know that I belong to the old generation and people may not like to listen to me but I still consider it my duty to put forward my point of view. I would once again urge upon you not to act in haste in the matter and not to press for voting.

* *An Hon. Member.* Dr. Lohia had opposed the Status granted to Kashmir, in the very beginning.

Consideration of Public Employment (Requirement as to Residence) Amendment Bill

Mr. Chairman, I support the Bill which is before the House. I would, however, have liked the Bill to be more comprehensive so as to provide more rights to the backward people. Two days ago I had an opportunity to go there (Telangana) and study the situation on the spot. The agitation going on there has no backing of any political party. Time and again it is alleged that we, the Opposition Parties, organise such type of agitations. But I was surprised to see that none of the Opposition Parties was extending its support to that agitation, yet the students were carrying on a big agitation. I tried to convince my partymen for nearly four hours. I told them that their problem of unemployment could not be solved even by creating a separate Telengana State. It was a very difficult task yet I tried to appeal to their wisdom. I was amazed to hear them. They told me that the States Reorganisation Commission had recommended the creation of a separate Telengana State but that recommendation was not implemented. The reason was that many of the then leaders of Telengana and Andhra Pradesh thought that if the Telugu speaking people remained united, they would make progress rapidly. The Telengana people accepted this view with the condition that they would get special protection. An agreement was signed but it was not honoured. I will not repeat all that has already been said. In fact, the revenue surplus

* *L.S. Deb.*, 17 March, 1969 c.c. 242—247

collected from Telengana area should have been invested in Telengana itself. This surplus amount can be divided into two parts. One as revenue surplus and the other as capital expenditure surplus. According to them the revenue surplus comes to about Rs. 40 crore and that was not spent there and the people got annoyed. Besides, I am told that the basis on which Legislation was enacted and is being extended is a part of the agreement. Andhra got two seats, out of which one should go to the people of Telengana. It was not done. As Ranga Saheb has said there has been a gross violation of the agreement. A Regional Committee was constituted there but as per one agreement, there is a Regional Committee of the representatives of Telengana sitting in Vidhan Sabha, which sees whether all is going on well or not. The Regional Committee had recently completed the investigations. A special Committee was constituted to go into the question of surplus and employment. I happened to see the Report of this Committee and was surprised to see it. A gentleman's agreement was signed which was never implemented. Not only this but things were also done contrary to the agreement. The number of people from other areas given employment in Telengana was stated to be 4000, but some people told me that this was a wrong statement and that the people, in fact, had submitted false certificates and their actual number was nearly 40,000. It may not be true but such a mentality is dangerous. We want national integration in the country. For this, we have formed a National Integration Council and keep organising conferences also. But until we go to the grassroot level and unite the hearts of the people, nothing concrete will be achieved.

When the Nizam Railway was integrated with our railway system, the Nizam State got some compensation. This compensation amounting to Rs. 30 crore was kept by the Railway

Department with themselves. It is just today that I have asked the Railway Minister to supply information in this regard. In my opinion, if justice is to be done to the Telengana people, this amount should be spent on the development of railways in that area. When you have received the amount from a backward area, it should be utilized for the development of railways there. You have not asked Telengana people or their Government about it and the amount which was meant for utilization on the development of railways there, was not utilized for that purpose. Until the people living in backward areas launch an agitation and do something which opens our eyes, we do not pay attention to their problems.

As our hon. lady colleague has just said, I also feel that it is not a question of five years. Till these people remain backward, we will have to look after them and they must get these special opportunities and facilities. So, I would like to say that the Bill which has been brought here is not enough. The Regional Committee, which has been formed should be vested with statutory powers so that if anything goes wrong, the people may have the right to move the court. Today we see that the people are arraigned against one other. I feel sorry to hear the abuses being hurled at each other. The people of Telengana say that the people in power behave with them in a fashion as if they have been vanquished in a war. Such abuses are exchanged as cannot be described in words. I asked one of my friends as to what the word "Gardikod" means. He told me that it means donkey's son. If such words are not being used and my information is also wrong, I will be very happy. But if such words are used, it is very disgusting. The people there say that nobody bothers if they do not make progress. They say that since the people in power have gone back on their promises and have grossly violated a gentleman's agreement, they want to separate from them.

I want to say that all parties should understand that if Telengana people wanted a separate State, then Telengana would have been a separate State and there was no need to fight for it because the States Reorganisation Commission had

taken such a decision. But the great leaders at that time convinced the Telengana people that it was in the interest of the country to have one State of all Telugu speaking areas. So they agreed on this point with the result that they have remained backward till today. If this is the result of agreeing to the views of great leaders, then the leaders will lose confidence of the people. If we want that our country should make progress, then such things should not be allowed to happen. One day I received a telephone call from the Chairman of our party and I had to go there. Our party workers from all parts of the State had gathered there. There were people from Telengana, Rayalaseema and Tonda regions in Andhra. The situation in Rayalaseema is the same as exists in Telengana. These areas should also be developed. Our party workers wanted to participate in the agitation for a separate Telengana but on my persuasion, they agreed to postpone it till May 31. Some people were in favour of launching a movement immediately. One of our best workers from Karim Nagar resigned from the party on this issue and we argued with him for two days to make him withdraw his resignation. After a lot of persuasion, the workers told us that if their legitimate interests and rights — whether it was Pochampad project or the share of the railway money — were not protected and decisions in respect of development were not implemented till May 31, they would reconsider the issue. What is the meaning of reconsideration? It simply means that they will launch a movement. This is why we tried to make them understand the point.

I want to tell the House that it is not a petty issue but one of great importance. What is happening in Telengana may happen at other places also. The creation of linguistic States started from Andhra itself. When Andhra Pradesh became such a State, Karnataka and Maharashtra made a demand for the same and thus a chain reaction started. We will have to adopt a liberal attitude in the matter and persuade both Andhra as well as Telengana to agree for one State. If they do not agree, the demands for separate States will continue to pour in. There will be a demand for Greater Vidarbha because the States Reor-

ganisation Commission had accepted the demand for Greater Vidarbha, but a bigger bilingual State was created afterwards. Earlier, a promise was made to the people of Greater Vidarbha through the Akola Pact. Later on Nagpur Pact was signed. Though these Pacts were fully implemented, yet there was resentment among the people. One could not have even imagined the extent of resentment if the Pacts were not implemented. I would also like to tell the people of Greater Vidarbha that if they remained with us, it would be in their interest. But if they do not want to remain with us, we cannot force them to do so and it will be beneficial to none even if they are forced to remain with us. Thus an endless chain reaction will start. Today there is the demand for separate Telengana, tomorrow there will be a demand for the Greater Haryana and then there will be demand for Chhattisgarh.

In the end, I want to say that this Bill must be passed. But mere passage of the Bill is not enough and something more would have to be done for the welfare and prosperity of the people of Telengana. As the hon. lady colleague of ours has rightly said we should ponder over the issue seriously and should give all possible help to the backward people.

With these words, I support the Bill.

Cossipore Firing and West Bengal Strike*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the time at my disposal is very little but since the matter under discussion needs serious thinking, we should go deep into it before expressing our opinion.

Before coming to the subject, I would like to say that my sister Smt. Sharda Mukherjee seems to have some misunderstanding. She said that the civilian defence personnel work side by side with the military personnel. Probably Smt. Mukherjee is not aware that in factories, which were earlier functioning under the Director General, Ordnance Factories and now are under the General Manager, only civilians and not military personnel work.

I have also been associated with the Civilian Defence Personnel. Smt. Sharda Mukherjee advised us to keep in mind that we were working in such places where we should not think in comparative terms with other workers. All right, we are prepared to do so but at the same time we want that if our responsibilities are higher (special), we should not be treated like other workers. Hon. Minister had assured in this very House that the temporary personnel who had been discharged, if covered under section four, would be reinstated. But it has not been done so far. I would like to tell the House that in the Cossipore factory, the workers held several meetings in three or four days in support of their demand. I do not know how for it is correct but I have been informed that in the school situated inside the factory it was announced on the preceding day that

* L. S. Deb., 14 April, 1969 c.c. 330-336

the next day would be a holiday. But the meeting continued till half past seven and then they came. Many officers advised that the door be kept open. But there is a section of the people who want to beat the workers on one pretext or the other and they wanted that the door should be closed. All came there and there was pandemonium. Firing was resorted to and that resulted in all this. I want to say that if Government had given an assurance, which was not fulfilled and workers held meetings in protest, then it is not good to treat the workers in this manner. If the time is up by a minute or so, it does not mean that the gate should be fully closed. Besides, there is another point where people can be stopped. After that point this gate is located. But on that day all barriers were removed and this incident took place. On that very day our Minister of Defence said that an enquiry would be conducted. All right, but I think undue haste was shown in announcing the appointment of a Judge to hold an enquiry. The good point in it is that an enquiry has been announced because Hon. Minister rarely accepts such a demand.

I was not present here on that day. Many persons asked whether you would institute an inquiry into it. You replied in the affirmative. It was good. Subsequently the West Bengal Government asked whether it was not desirable to consult them while taking a decision in this regard? If they should have been consulted why was it not done? I would like to say that all State Governments should be treated alike. You have one criterion to deal with West Bengal Government where it is a Communist Government, another one to deal with the Andhra Government, a third one to deal with the DMK Government in Tamil Nadu and a fourth one to deal with the Maharashtra Government., But it is not proper. Instead of dual policy, uniform policy should be adopted.

We all want that the freedom of the country should be protected and the nation should make progress. We want democracy to function in our country. But in which manner should democracy function. We have a Constitution, which has been amended a number of times. Now circumstances have

definitely changed. We should adapt ourselves according to the changed circumstances. Nobody should have any objection to such an adaptation. Prof. N.G. Ranga asked for the dismissal of that Government immediately. It is the only remedy in his opinion. I have been hearing since long about such a remedy which is very often suggested, as if we have been left with no other alternative. When events were taking place in Nagaland, it was suggested that army should be sent there. When riots were taking place in Assam, then in the name of integration it was suggested that stern steps should be taken. It is easy to talk about such stern action. But you will have to think whether such steps do not go against the principles of democracy.

All people have the right to form their own party, whether they are Communists, Socialists, Praja Socialists, Left Communists or Right Communists or wrong Communists. It is also demanded that the party should be declared illegal. Do whatever you like. But so far as we are concerned, we want that Government of this country should honour public opinion. Those dismissed by you in Bengal have returned to power, people have elected them. What conclusion should one derive from it? It is mandatory that government which has been formed there should function in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. But it is wrong to expect only one to follow the Constitution whereas the other is violating the same. In fact, we should act without any prejudice. We need not go into the question whether Communists believe in democracy or not. We should ask ourselves whether we want democracy or not; and whether we would be upholding democracy by dismissing them and sending the army there. Each of our actions should be aimed at preserving democracy and maintaining unity.

In West Bengal my party is a small one. We are a part of the United Front there. So far we are not in Government. But time and again we have reminded our United Front partners that we have gone to the Assembly to help the people to get relief and also to do something for the poor and the oppressed. We have some complaints against the United Front. We want that they should fix a time-limit for implementation of programmes and

have to keep in mind that the people have voted them to power and we should honour the people's mandate. To protect democracy we should think on these lines. We will have to see whether the steps taken by us may not add to the tension. If we find that any of our steps would further increase the tension, then it is necessary that we should devise means to lessen it. If the steps, as apprehended are taken, they would definitely increase the tension. Communists might be interested in getting the tension increased. But the question is whether we want to increase it. If not, I would like to make a request that we should sit together to take some decision in this regard.

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