

**A STUDY OF CHAKRABORTY RAJAGOPALACHARI AS A  
CONSERVATIVE POLITICAL THINKER OF MODERN INDIA**

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ARTS (PH.D.) OF  
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## P r e f a c e

Chakraborty Rajagopalachari, popularly known as "Rajaji" or "C.R.", played an important role in the saga of India's freedom struggle. During his long and eventful political career, he rendered yeoman service to the country and left an indelible impress on contemporary Indian politics. C.Rajagopalachari always fought for liberty, fundamental rights, rule of law and social justice. He was against any structural social changes and favoured social and moral reforms, albeit within the long-standing and prevailing social structure. But he realised that the neglect of moderate social reforms would only invite more revolutionary change in the future. This belief prompted him, during his Premiership in the Madras Presidency, to undertake some progressive legislation in the field of agrarian reforms, the question of temple-entry and prohibition. His concern for these social problems was genuine. Though a traditionalist, his adherence to social custom and tradition was not uncritical.

C.Rajagopalachari's relations with Gandhiji were marked by mutual respect and dependence. Gandhiji was to find in C.Rajagopalachari one of the best adherents of satyagraha. Also, it was perhaps only C.Rajagopalachari in the right-wing of the Congress leadership who was to take up on a large scale various programmes in Gandhiji's constructive movement. Gandhiji called C.Rajagopalachari his 'conscience keeper'.

C.Rajagopalachari lacked many of the attributes which are considered as requisites for political success. He cannot be said to have possessed the charismatic qualities of Gandhiji. He never succeeded in building up a mass following either at the local or at the national level. He never came to power as a consequence of popular demand. C.Rajagopalachari's contribution lies in his conservative political philosophy and in seeking to fulfil those Gandhian economic and social beliefs. He saw in Indian tradition a set of relevant values to maintain social discipline both as a defence and an alternative to the encroachment of the modern socialist state. During the 1950s and the 1960s, C.Rajagopalachari became a leading ideologue of the Swatantra Party and a critic of the Congress government.

In undertaking and completing this work, I came across and benefited from many persons who helped and encouraged me in many ways. However, I should express my gratitude to those who were directly associated with this study. First and foremost, I must express my gratitude and thanks to Dr.S.N.Ray, the seniormost Professor in the Department of Political Science, North Bengal University, for his scholarly, meticulous and inspiring guidance which was the source of inspiration and encouragement. It was under his supervision that I undertook this study and he provided the perspective and the direction in the completion of this work. I am greatly indebted to him for the completion of this work.

Also, I should express my thanks to other teachers of the Department of Political Science, North Bengal University, I should acknowledge their encouragement while I was a full-time, regular scholar in the Department of Political Science for three years. I am also thankful to Mr. Kajal Ranjan Biswas, Junior Research Fellow, North Bengal University, for giving me friendly help from time to time.

I wish to express my thanks to the Librarians and staff of the following Libraries : Central Library, North Bengal University; National Library, Calcutta; National Archives, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; and Madras University Library. Besides, I am really thankful to the following persons for allowing me to interview them cordially about the career of C.Rajagopalachari : Mrs. Dr.Arunasivakami, Reader; Department of Public Administration, University of Madras; Dr.P.Jagadesan, Reader and Head of the Department of History, University of Madras; Dr.V.Balambal, Reader, Department of History, University of Madras; and Mr.P.Rajendran, Editor of the Kalki.

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*Aziz Ahmed.*  
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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. Statement of the Problem

Chakraborty Rajagopalachari (1878-1972), popularly known as "Rajaji" or "C.R.", was a great patriot, an astute politician, an incisive thinker, and one of the great statesman that modern India produced. As a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, as an ardent freedom fighter, as the Chief Minister of Madras, as the Governor of West Bengal, as the Home Minister of independent India and as the first Indian Governor-General; C.Rajagopalachari's life was quite eventful and he gave yeoman service to the people of India. C. Rajagopalachari was the principal leader in South India for launching Gandhian programmes in social and economic policies. He was also the author of numerous works expounding ancient India's religious scriptures. His political style and career had been controversial. He was often accused of lacking any truly popular support. He defended the rights of princes to their privy purses and his new party was aristocratic. Yet newspaper headlines at his death described him as king among the commoners. His command of English was flawless. Unlike Gandhiji or Nehru, C.Rajagopalachari never studied outside his home state of Tamil Nadu. His wisdom was truly indigenous. He was a well-known national leader without Gandhiji's mass appeal who never emerged as a closely watched personality. He differed with Gandhiji and the Indian National Congress when

both were at the peak of their popular appeal. A compendium of the leader of modern India summarised his leadership saying Rajaji is not a man but a technique.

C.Rajagopalachari wrote no works of sustained theoretical interpretation. His first loyalty was to the practicalities of statecraft. Yet his conservatism was a searching and brilliantly integrated synthesis of ideas from European and Indian culture. Only an insensitive and uncritical reading of his thought would brand him as a mere reactionary. From Edmund Burke in particular, he acquired a belief in the need for gradualist change. As he grew in age, the substance of his thought derived less from European and more from Indian culture. During the later phase of his political career, he did retreat from his earlier perception of socialism, branded as crypto-socialism by some critics, in which he saw socialism as a kind of extension of the principle of Indian joint family to the whole of society and also, from his earlier criticism of the caste system, towards an argument that in the jati, there existed a viable alternative means of social support to that of the state.

## II. Significance of the Study

C.Rajagopalachari, the most astute intellectual among the elite of Indian nationalists,<sup>1</sup> and one who always

disliked communism, was one of the leading figures of the freedom movement of India. The political and social ideas of C.Rajagopalachari provide an example of an intellectual who, in the wake of change generated by colonialism, tried to reformulate the traditional Indian social order and sought a revival of India's classical liberal tradition.

Antonio Gramsci theorised the role of the intellectuals as part and parcel of his reinterpretation of Italian history and cultural tradition. Gramsci posed the problem of the member of the intellectuals in its proper context. He wrote : "Are intellectuals an autonomous and independent social group, or does every social group have its own particular specialised category of intellectuals"?<sup>2</sup> Gramsci's answer to his own question was clear : "intellectuals are not an autonomous group. Gramsci acknowledged that historically, intellectuals largely hail from certain social classes."<sup>3</sup> However, the class of origin of intellectuals is irrelevant. What matters is that they, as a professional category, namely, as a set of persons whose common denominator is their professional role, acquire social and political weight only by acting as theorists, organisers, strategists and spokesmen on behalf of autonomous social groups, that is, social classes, either existing or in the process of formation.

For intellectuals like C.Rajagopalachari, Hinduism was an awe-inspiring arsenal for fighting the Raj, on the

one hand, and for providing for the blueprint for the future of independent India's course of action amidst the comity of nations, on the other. Thus making Hinduism as the pivot, C.Rajagopalachari increasingly took upon himself, during his political career, the task of preserving and propagating ancient India's tradition, directly through translation of scriptures and indirectly through short stories. By defining culture as essentially the prevailing pattern of joyous restraint accepted by the people, C.Rajagopalachari maintained in his book Our Culture that the Indian culture which is organically linked with dharma and spirituality should be the basis of our national life. Modernisation without cultural moorings is fraught with dangers. Similarly, in his Hinduism : Doctrine and Way of Life, C.Rajagopalachari gave a modern interpretation to Karma and Maya.

C.Rajagopalachari made significant contributions to almost all aspects of India's recent past. he was a leading figure in the Congress movement during Gandhiji's leadership, and he seemed to be set to succeed Gandhiji as leader till the younger and more charismatic figure of Jawaharlal Nehru acquired this role. He was to drift apart from the Congress in the early years of the War, anxious for some war-time collaboration with the Raj. He opposed Congress's resumption of civil disobedience in August 1942. Jawaharlal Nehru brought him back into Congress politics after 1945, but whilst C.Rajagopalachari

went on to hold high offices, he was never at ease in the new political dispensation, and in time broke from Congress to help to form, in 1959, a conservative opposition group, the Swatantra Party. Arguably his most significant political achievements lay in those two periods when he was in charge of the administration in the Presidency of Madras. C. Rajagopalachari, himself <sup>a</sup>Tamil and <sup>a</sup>Brahmin, stood out for some form of stern Gandhian programme in social and economic policies. He was a divisive leader, revered by some, while bitterly resented by others. He has been pushed to the margins in almost in all accounts of India's recent history. A.R.H.Copley's work and Rajmohan Gandhi's two-volume biography, was an attempt to do justice to this unfairly neglected career.

However, regarding the study of C.Rajagopalachari's political career, the objective conditions of early twentieth century Tamil Nadu have to be taken into account. The emergence of non-Brahmin movement, unlike other states, in Tamil Nadu, put a strong hurdle to the Congress philosophy and organisation and consequently to the political career of C.Rajagopalachari and other Congress stalwarts. It was only during 1937-47 and 1957-67 the Congress was strong in Tamil Nadu, the former due to the overwhelming national upsurge for independence and also for international factors and the latter due to the leadership of Kamraj Nadar, a non-Brahmin leader. For all these objective

factors, leaders like C.Rajagopalachari with his great intellectual power could not succeed in the long run. Thus completed, the proposed study might claim to be a balanced, objective and total assessment of the largely controversial personality of C.Rajagopalachari, who occupied an important place in the political development and nation-building in modern India.

### III. Objectives of the Proposed Study

The present study will seek to achieve the following objectives :

The primary objective is to highlight the origin and development of the social, economic and political ideas of C.Rajagopalachari in the backdrop of the continuing debate between tradition and modernity in India. To confront colonialism politically, culturally and intellectually, Indian thinkers conjured up a contradictory nationalist discourse; some placing their emphasis on the revival of ancient Indian institutions, structures and ideas, however, not without modifications; others emphasised the emancipatory role of the Western ideas and principles of social organisation. While the former group of thinkers had a strong mobilisational role against imperialism despite their harking back to the past; the latter, despite their progressive image, remained elitist due to their class character.

The proposed study seeks also to show, in this connection, that most of the votaries of the so-called Indian tradition, however, useful their critique of the West, supported the status quo in the name of the tradition. Past and tradition can be reconstructed according to the demand of the particular group or class in society. The revivalistic nationalists, during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, in their eagerness to mitigate the colonial subjugation, provided a wholesale justification of the past.

Another related objective is to analyse the background and substantial content of C.Rajagopalachari's critique of the Congress policies under the banner of the Swatantra Party. From the mid-fifties till his death, C.Rajagopalachari was one of the sharpest and most perceptive critics of the Congress regime in India. It is interesting to note that this 'Rightist' opposition to the Congress rule, despite its intelligent, experienced leadership and potential, failed to make <sup>a</sup> breakthrough in the Indian political arena and petered out rather prematurely.

A third objective is to analyse the long and eventful political career of C.Rajagopalachari, which witnessed so many twists and turns. C.Rajagopalachari, from a critic of state power under the spell of Gandhiji, later became a votary of power and authority during his brief stint of power in Madras and New Delhi.

In this connection, the present study will also seek to examine C.Rajagopalachari's interaction with the political process and with the political leadership both before and after Independence, his role within the rightist faction of the Congress before Independence, his relations with Nehru after Independence, his contribution towards the development of the distinct political and socio-economic ideology of conservatism, and the relevance of his ideas in his own times and afterwards.

#### IV. Sources of Data Collection

The methodology of the present study is primarily historical and analytical. For the purpose of the present study, the original writings of C.Rajagopalachari have been analysed in detail. Unpublished archival materials available at New Delhi relating to C.Rajagopalachari have been duly consulted. Besides, secondary sources like books, newspapers and journals, which were mainly available at the North Bengal University library, the National Library at Calcutta and the library of the NMMB, N.Delhi were consulted. Also, personal interviews were taken of a few persons closely associated with C.Rajagopalachari at Madras. The whole range of literature on conservatism and Indian nationalism have been analysed before the preparation of a meaningful conceptual framework. Extensive references have also been made to secondary sources and wherever

possible, cross references to other related themes have also been made. It may be noted here that unlike Gandhiji or Nehru, books on the political career and ideas of C.Rajagopalachari are scarce, and that is why the present work is an attempt at reconstruction of the era of the movement for freedom and at the life of C.Rajagopalachari in the backdrop of the freedom movement and after.

#### V. Overview of the Existing Literature

The most famous book of Edmund Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790,<sup>4</sup> is treated as a conscious attempt to build conservatism as an anti-ideology against the ideas and impact of the great French revolution. In his book, Burke did not try to place his analysis within the framework of the whole course of western history. Instead, his analysis was confined specifically to the eighteenth century France. In this restricted framework, his key casual factors were nevertheless legitimately conservative, for, aside from a general change in the moral opinion, he saw the primary cause of the French Revolution to be the failure of the nobility to satisfy the upper middle classes by giving it social status. Oppression by the king, Burke said, cannot be considered the cause of the Revolution. Nor it was the faulty economy or deteriorated culture which ushered in the Revolution. The real difficulty was the existence of social and economic conflict between the

nobility and the middle classes. Burke's basic critique of the Revolution was that it was total and social, instead of cautious and political, as he considered the English Revolution. After having dwelt at some length on the problems, he dismissed the Revolution merely as error of opinion which could have been easily corrected. Surely, it was an amazingly superficial analysis.

Morton Averbach, in his book, The Conservative Illusion<sup>5</sup>, was of the opinion that the transcendent value of conservative ideology was the Platonic idea of harmony, and that this conception has assumed a wide variety of historical forms. If consistency was the test of ideology, then conservatism had been consistent only in two limited periods during the past two thousand years ---- the late Middle Ages when something resembling a conservative society actually existed, and the Dark Ages which were the preconditions of the Middle Ages.

Thomas Paine's Rights of Man<sup>6</sup> was a skilful attack on Edmund Burke. Paine argued that Burke knew nothing about the real principles motivating the French Revolution; and he was impassive even before the evils of Bastille. The practical humanitarianism of Paine was outraged at Burke's pompous rhetoric. According to Paine, in the rhapsody of his imagination, Burke had discovered a world of wind mills,

and his sorrows were that there were no Quixotes to attack them.

Progressiveness and Conservatism : The Fundamental Dimensions of Ideological Controversy and Their Relation to Social Class<sup>7</sup> by C.P. Middendorp, was an *empirical* study on the progressive-conservative debate. The major aim of the book was to conceptualise and operationalise the progressive-conservative anti-thesis in the Dutch population. In this study, the definition of progressive-conservative anti-thesis had been attempted through the construction of ideal type conceptual model. And the operationalisation of this model had been made both at the abstract and philosophical levels.

Political Ideologies : An Introduction<sup>8</sup>, by Robert Eccleshall and others dealt firstly with the resurgence of ideological controversy in Britain during the recent years and then examined some of the problems that surround the concept of ideology. In the book there were chapters on liberalism, conservatism, socialism and democracy etc.

Clinton Rossiter, in his Conservatism in America,<sup>9</sup> made an analysis of conservatism in general and then surveyed conservative thought in America periodically. In his analysis of conservatism, Rossiter made a distinction between the temperamental, possessive, practical and philosophical types of conservatism.

H.L.Erdman's book, The Swatantra Party and Indian Conservatism,<sup>10</sup> had made a careful analysis of the genesis of the Swatantra Party and its place in the broader constellation of the right-wing parties and forces in the country. He first considered the concept of conservatism, social bases and political organisation of the right-wing parties prior to 1959. The author made a shrewd appreciation of the strength of the rightist forces within the Congress.

The author commented that the Swatantra Party was an anti-statist organisation but not necessarily liberal. The Swatantra Party was not committed to any programme of change even in a liberal fashion against the traditional social order. The Swatantra was obsessed with anti-communism and was prepared to cooperate with and accommodate most anti-liberal and Hindu communal forces. In this context, Erdman made a perceptive studies of the position of C.Rajagopalachari, Mino Masani and R.G.Ranga. But the author failed to mention anywhere the remarkable affinity between the aims and policies of the Swatantra Party and the American policies towards India.

A.R.H.Copley's book, The Political Career of C.R. 1937-1954 ; A Moralst in Politics,<sup>11</sup> was an analytical study of C.Rajagopalachari's political, administrative and intellectual activities. It contained a brief sketch of C.Rajagopalachari's relationship with eminent contemporaries of the Congress High

Command. The author probed in depth into the manifold aspects of C.Rajagopalachari's Prime Ministership in the Madras Presidency, his contribution during the war-time collaboration with the British, and the consequent decline of his influence with objective detachedness. In the last chapter, the author presented a fascinating comparative study between C.Rajagopalachari and Morarji Desai and the relevance of C.Rajagopalachari's ideas in the present context of India.

A.R.H.Copley's other book, C.Rajagopalachari ; Gandhi's Southern Commander,<sup>12</sup> dealt with the earlier period of C.Rajagopalachari's political career. In this book, Copley analysed C.Rajagopalachari's contact with Gandhiji and his rise in Madras provincial politics through Gandhian constructive work and against the odds of the Swarajist faction within the Congress under the leadership of S.Satyamurthy and also against the Justice Party. Copley amply showed how precarious a standing did C.Rajagopalachari hold in the Madras Congress and also his conservative and rightist leanings.

Rajmohan Gandhi's Rajaji Story I and II<sup>13</sup> was an important study and contribution on the political career of C.Rajagopalachari and his multi-faceted personality. The first volume was the study of the first 59 years of C.Rajagopalachari's life and career which culminated in his acceptance of the Madras Presidency Premiership in 1937. In the second volume, Rajmohan Gandhi probed C.Rajagopalachari's relationship with Gandhiji,

Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose, M.A.Jinnah and Jayaprakash Narayana. It also analysed C.Rajagopalachari's differences with Jawaharlal Nehru, his role in the formation of the Swatantra Party, and his relationship with Indira Gandhi. Despite all these, the book remained a biographical study with valuable source materials.

Eugene F.Irschick's book, Politics and Social Conflict in South India : The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism,<sup>14</sup> was a perceptive account of political evolution in a region that had been long neglected by scholars. His book was of particular interest because it offered not only substantial contribution to regional political history but also provided vital clues to an understanding of Non-Brahmin caste politics in the Madras Presidency. Previously, Non-Brahmins had occupied an unimportant position in the South Indian politics and administration. The inauguration of the Indian Home Rule Movement in 1916 ushered in attempts by Non-Brahmins to secure more influential and assured place in public life. Much of the narrative was concerned with the activities of the Justice Party and its leaders. Irschick described the relation between the Non-Brahmin associations and the Congress Party, and the evolution of a tradition of literary and historical studies of the Tamil and the Dravidian past.

In his book, Our Culture,<sup>15</sup> C.Rajagopalachari made a difference between civilisation and culture. According to him,

the Indian culture which was organically linked with dharma and spirituality should be basis of Indian life. Modernisation without cultural moorings was fraught with dangers.

In his book, Hinduism ; Doctrine and Way of Life,<sup>16</sup> C.Rajagopalachari analysed the Vedantic and philosophical roots of Hinduism. According to him, Vedanta still had immense value and can provide the clue for solving the problems of modern civilisation. He also gave modern interpretation of Karma and Maya.

In the Upanishads,<sup>17</sup> C.Rajagopalachari asserted that the Upanishads was the best modern book on religion. A study of the full texts of the Upanishads would be the means for comprehending the minds of the fathers of Hinduism.

In his Bhagvad Gita,<sup>18</sup> C.Rajagopalachari opined that the purpose of the book was to give nothing new beyond what had previously taught by the Upanishads. C.Rajagopalachari's book did not propose to give any new interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita. The purpose of C.Rajagopalachari's book was a simplified presentation of the Gita content, and at bringing it within the small compass so as to enable the modern students to understand, in the midst of his other studies, the faith, discipline and ideals that lighted the path of life for generations of Indians, and to which was given the name Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism.

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In his Jail Diary,<sup>19</sup> C. Rajagopalachari provided a glimpse of the life of a political prisoner in British India and also his reflections on contemporary political developments afflicting India. He wrote in his Diary : "Non-cooperation is not a means to a political end, but Dharma by itself. By our sacrifices we have made the history of India in this generation an honourable chapter, a relief from the continuous story of surrender, indifference and dishonour."

In their book India's Struggle for Independence, Bipan Chandra et al examined everyone of the varied strands of the Indian freedom struggle individually and collectively and presented it in a new and coherent narrative and analytical framework. Basing themselves on or<sub>g</sub>l and other primary sources and years of research, the authors took the reader through every step of the independence struggle to the final victory in 1947.

Sarvapalli Gopal's three-volume biography of Jawaharlal Nehru<sup>21</sup> was recognised as the standard work on one of the key personalities of the twentieth century. Written from first-hand knowledge of Nehru and with the advantage of unrestricted access to Nehru's papers, the volumes provided more than an account of a personality and branched into a definitive study of both the man and the age.

In his Modern India 1885-1947<sup>22</sup> Sumit Sarkar attempted a synthesis keeping the anti-imperialist struggle as its central

focus while trying also to place it within the totality of economic, socio-cultural and political developments of colonial India. The historiography of modern India and its freedom struggle had often tended to have an elitist bias, concentrating on the activities, ideals or factional manoeuvres of leading groups at various levels. But Sumit Sarkar's work tried to explore, in the light of the author's own research, some of the rich possibilities of a history from below. The shift in focus towards tribals, peasants and workers made a significant shift from conventional history writing.

E.M.S.Namboodiripad's A History of Indian Freedom Struggle,<sup>23</sup> was one of the few comprehensive works on Indian freedom struggle written from a consistently class point of view. The book described in detail the development of capitalism in India as an inevitable consequences of the British rule and the rise of the new class of bourgeoisie which remained throughout at the forefront of the national struggle for freedom. This, in fact, decided the nature of the general tactics of the freedom struggle, the tactics of mass action for negotiations with the British. Particular attention had been paid to bring out the class content of the Gandhian method of struggle and the role played by the working class and other labouring masses at the different stages of the struggle.

In their Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags,<sup>24</sup> Tapan Basu et al made a meticulous and penetrating critique of the forces

of Hindutva. The authors traced the roots of the Hindutva ideology to the politics of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. They discussed the history of the RSS and the Viswa Hindu Parishad, analysed the institutional structures of these organisations, their political language, their attempts at transforming Hinduism and their strategies of communal mobilisation.

In his Why I am not a Hindu : A Sudra Critique of Hindutva Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy,<sup>25</sup>

the author identified himself as a Dalitbahujan, a member of the exploited and suppressed majority of Indians. The author wrote with passionate anger, laced with sarcasm, on the situation in India today. He looked at the socioeconomic and cultural differences between the Dalitbahujans and the other Hindus in the context of childhood, family life, market relations, Gods and Goddesses and death. Collecting many of the ideas of Bahujans, he presented their vision of a more just society.

Partha Chatterjee's book, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World ; A Derivative Discourse,<sup>26</sup> was an ambitious attempt to analyse the nationalist thought of modern India from a critical Marxist perspective. In this book, the author criticised western theories of third world nationalism both Marxist and liberal. He demonstrated how the western

theorists, with their emphasis on the power of reason, the primacy of hard sciences and dominance of empirical method had assumed that their presuppositions were universally valid.

The author took the case of India and examined the political thought of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, M.K.Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Each of these thinkers was taken as the representative of stages of development of the nationalist thought of India. The author concluded that the third world nationalist thought failed, despite Gandhiji, to emerge as an alternative to challenge the legitimacy of capitalism.

Political Thought in Modern India<sup>27</sup> was an edited book by Thomas Pantham and K.L.Deutsch. The essays in the book focussed on the two major streams of modern Indian political thought ---- one which favoured the adoption of western political thought and traditions, and the other which sought to evolve indigenous or alternative formulations. The overall conclusion which emerged from the volume was that in order to formulate an adequate philosophy of modern age, both western and Indian traditions had to be taken into account.

Reba Som, in her book, Differences within Consensus : The Left and Right in the Congress 1929-1939<sup>28</sup> analysed the political career of Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C.Rajagopalachari as the chief articulator of the Congress right. According to her, the trio developed into an independent

coterie as a result of the challenges it faced not only from the British imperialism, but also from the left wing of the Congress. The left wing represented by Nehru, Bose, the Congress Socialists and the Communists, could not, however, put up a united front against the right wing. The book focussed on this left-right encounter within the Congress, identified the composition of these two groups, studied the social background of the chief spokesmen on both sides, distinguished their broad point of view on key issues, and analysed their interactions within the overall consensus framework of the Congress.

In his book, Colonialism, Tradition and Reform : An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse,<sup>29</sup> Bhikhu Parekh made a critical discussion of Gandhiji. He located him in the tradition of political discourse developed by his nineteenth century predecessors and showed how Gandhiji continued and broke it. The author then discussed Gandhiji's various battles against ugly social and moral practices and assessed his successes and failures.

A.R.Desai's Social Background of Indian Nationalism<sup>30</sup> was a pioneering book on Indian nationalism. The book probed Indian nationalism in various forms of social, religious, economic and cultural aspects. It gave a historical account and Marxist analysis of the genesis of Indian nationalism.

In his article, Hindu Conservatism in the Nineteenth Century,<sup>31</sup> the author, Sudhir Chandra, attempted to prove that the western impact produced a whole spectrum of responses in India. Representing a variety of attitudes from abhorrence to fascination, the West co-existed to varying degrees. Reacting to the impossibility of avoiding change, and to the urgency of preserving the religious moorings, the Hindus, endeavoured to evolve rationally defensible and practically effective via media. In the event, the Hindu society changed, yet stuck to its traditions. What made this persistence possible, according to the author, was the instinctive conservatism of the average Hindu. Most of the admirers of the West turned to his traditions. Thus was created, besides a recurring ambivalence, a belief, real or stimulated, in the superiority of Indian culture which provided a defence mechanism against the western cultural onslaught.

In an article, Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Capitalist Class, 1936,<sup>32</sup> Bipan Chandra showed that during 1933-36, Nehru produced consternation among the Indian capitalist, and the Right-wing in the Congress. They took certain steps to counter and contain him ---- thereby revealing a long-term strategy to deal with him and others like him.

S. Bhattacharyya, in his article, Cotton Mills and Spinning Wheels ; Swadeshi and the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920-22,<sup>33</sup> argued that the boycott programme of 1921 did not

mean the same thing to all men ---- to the merchants, petty traders, the cotton mill owners and the Indian consumers. But overriding the short term pros and cons the long term perspective was the balancing of the bourgeois mentality.

The article, Indian Capitalist Class and Congress on National Planning and Public Sector 1930-47<sup>34</sup> by Aditya Mukherjee, examined the ideas put forward by the Indian capitalist class and the Congress on issues such as economic planning and the role of the state. The author concluded that the national leadership before the Independence made two common basic assumptions ; the overthrow of the colonial state structure; and, second, its replacement by an independent indigenous capitalist state structure.

In his article, Mid-term Poll in a Working Class Constituency in Tamil Nadu,<sup>35</sup> the author E.V.Ramaswamy made a revealing comment on the personality of C.Rajagopalachari. The author observed that during the 1967 elections, C.Rajagopalachari was the sworn enemy of the Congress. His son was, however, contesting as a Congress candidate. When asked why he did not oppose his son, C.Rajagopalachari maintained that in Indian culture it is not dharma to work against one's son.

In his article, Ramaswami Naicker and the Dravidian Movement,<sup>36</sup> the author, Mohan Ram, argued that equating poverty with race, and race with caste, E.V.Ramaswami Naicker founded

the Dravidian movement which against the Congress which was to him synonymous with Brahmin domination and Brahminism. His anti-Brahmin movements had the elements of Jyotiba Phule's Satyasadhak movement in Maharashtra and also a secessionist content. Even after Independence, Naicker's movement continued to represent a strong Tamil reaction to Brahminism and also the assertion of Tamil identity vis-a-vis the rest of India.

In his article, Dravidian Movement in its Pre-Independence Phases,<sup>37</sup> the author, N.Ram, observed that the significant feature of the political situation in Tamil Nadu was the existence of two mass-based and politically powerful organisations ---- the D.M.K. and the A.I.A.D.M.K. These two streams defy the logic inherent in the condemnations of regional forces. The article attempted a political explanation of the complex historical forces that were working in the second half of the 19th century and which gave rise to the Dravidian movement.

#### VI. Plan of the Study

The first, and introductory chapters, starts with a statement of the objectives, significance and methodology of the present study, besides the overview of literature connected with this work. While the second chapter makes an analysis of conservatism as a reaction against liberalism in the wake of the French Revolution in Europe, and, conservatism

as an ideology, it also deals with the forces and processes of ideological development of modern India. With the founding of the British rule in India, and under its consequent impact, there emerged a broad stream of nationalist anti-colonial movement. However, attempt will be made to chalk out the distinct conservative stream in the broad nationalist current.

The third chapter deals with C.Rajagopalachari's political activities and styles before Independence. Unlike other Congress politicians, C.Rajagopalachari's political career was full of twists and turns. He had to create a support base in the shaky terrain of the Indian National Congress in the Madras Presidency and that was also possible, to a great extent, with Gandhiji's blessings. However, it would be wrong to presume that he owed his political standing to Gandhiji's support alone. Acute in intellect, and self-righteous in conviction, hailing from an ordinary family of Brahmin background, he possessed sufficient skills and qualities to enable himself to emerge as a national leader. During the beginning of his political career, C.Rajagopalachari was quite involved in the factional politics of the Madras Congress, in the Gandhian constructive movement, and Right-Left factions within the Indian National Congress. However, he differed with Gandhiji in 1942 on the issue of the Quit India

Movement which brought his political isolation and disrepute.

The fourth chapter deals with the social and religious ideas of C.Rajagopalachari. It seeks to analyse and illustrate his ideas in detail as gathered from his writings and also secondary sources. Also, in this chapter, attention will be paid to bring out the reasons why C.Rajagopalchari is called conservative.

The fifth chapter will make a study of the origin of the Swatantra Party, its growth and decay. Against this backdrop, attempt will be made to make an analysis of C.Rajagopalchari's role in the creation of the Swatantra Party and his role as a Swatantra ideologue and its assessment.

The sixth chapter is the concluding chapter of the work. It will make a summary of findings of the earlier chapters. Besides, it will make concluding observations regarding the political career and ideas of Chakrab orty Rajagopalchari in a nutshell.

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Chapter IITHEORETICAL FRAMEWORKI : Conservatism : Meaning and Nature

For the purpose of analytical clarity, it is necessary to discuss the lineage, tradition and the accepted meaning of conservatism, if only to reveal its conceptual ambiguity. At the attitude level, conservatism, at least semantically, appears to refer to an attitude opposed to change. "Conservatism is a term whose usefulness is matched by only its capacity to confuse, distort and irritate."<sup>1</sup> Generally, conservatism implies a body of thought, either social or political, which emerged in Europe towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth<sup>century</sup>, as a reaction to the eighteenth century rationalism, philosophy of the enlightenment and the French Revolution, and was particularly associated with the writings of Edmund Burke. It was also used to describe "the political activities and ideas of those associated with parties or groups which proclaim themselves to be conservative, even though their ideas and actions may be far removed from the ideas and principles of conservatism."<sup>2</sup> The various uses of the term and the widely accepted and employed meanings of the word "conservatism" gave it a unique flexibility. However, in whatever way it is used, by any person or group, all have a common concern with the preservation of existing institutions and traditions.<sup>3</sup>

A fine summary of Enlightenment thought is given by Zeitlin : "Knowledge of reality, whether natural or social, depends on the unity of reason and observation in the scientific method. The Enlightenment thinkers were as interested in society and history as they were in nature, and these were treated as indivisible unity. By studying nature .... including the nature of man .... one could learn not only about what is, but about what is possible; likewise, by studying society and history, one could learn not only about the working of the existing factual order, but about its inherent possibilities" <sup>4</sup>

The beginnings of Enlightenment are generally linked with the works of Locke. Although Locke laid down the theory of what was later called 'liberal democracy', it has convincingly been shown that his theory can be regarded as the first ideological expression of capitalism. By defining the state in economic terms, the value of freedom could only come to mean freedom from state interference in property rights, whereas the value of equality was formalised as equality before the law, and could never be substantiated in economic and democratic sense.

✓ Edmund Burke was the first exponent of the reaction to these Enlightenment ideas, which quickly grew into a movement which was later called conservatism. His immediate and passionate reaction to the French Revolution already

contains the major arguments of the anti-revolutionary romantic movement. A few citations will set the tone of his reaction.<sup>5</sup>

### I. On the Enlightenment Conception of Natural Rights.

The following quotations are taken from Edmund Burke's book Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790

"Whatever each man can separately do, without tresspassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society, with all its combination of skill and force, can do in his favour. But as to the share of power, authority and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society. It is a thing to be settled by convention." (p.87)

"In this sense, the restraints on men as well as their liberties are to be *reckoned* among their rights. But as liberties and restrictions vary with times and circumstances, and admit of infinite modifications, they can be settled upon any abstract rule and nothing is so foolish as to discuss them upon that principle." (p.89).

"The pretended rights of these theorists are all extremes; in proportion as they are metaphysically true, they are morally and politically false. The rights of man are in a sort of middle, incapable of definition but not impossible to be discerned." (p.92).

II. "The characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of acquisitions and conservation, is to be unequal." (p.75).

"The rich indeed require an additional security from the dangers to which they are exposed, when a popular power is prevalent." (p.260).

"A perfect democracy is the most shameless thing in the world." (p.139).

III. Burke on the value of conventions and traditional ways of life, even the value of prejudice ;

"When men are encouraged to go into a certain mode of life by the existing laws and protected in that mode as in a lawful occupation, when they have accommodated all their ideas, all their habits to it .... I am sure it is unjust in legislature, by an arbitrary act, to offer a sudden violence to their minds and their feelings forcibly to degrade them from their state and their condition and to stigmatize with shame and infamy that character and these customs which

before had been made the measure of their happiness and honour." (p.230).

"You derive benefits from many dispositions and many passions of the human mind, which are of as doubtful a colour in the moral eye as superstition itself .... But is superstition the greatest of all possible vices ? .... Superstition is the religion of feeble minds; and they must be tolerated in an intermixture of it; in trifling or some enthusiastic shape or other, else you will deprive weak minds of a resource found necessary to the strongest." (p.234).

IV. On social change : "By a slow but well-sustained progress, the effect of each step is watched; the good or ill success of the first gives light to us in the second and so, from light to light, we are conducted with safety through the whole series. We see that the parts of the system do not clash."

It was Chateaubriand in 1818 in France who gave the word 'conservatism' its distinctive meaning when he called his periodical, designed to propagate the ideas of clerical and political restoration, Le Conservateur. The word was not adopted in Germany until 1930's, while it did not obtain official recognition in England until 1936.<sup>6</sup>

The best way to minimise the confusion that follows the term conservatism is to distinguish it, in ordinary way

from other isms. This can be most readily accomplished by treating conservatism as an attitude towards social change and political reform.<sup>7</sup>

First, the term radicalism insists that the existing institutions are diseased and oppressive, traditional values are dishonest and exploitative, it is, therefore, prepared to force entry into future by subversion and violence.<sup>8</sup>

Secondly, liberalism is the attitude of those who are reasonably satisfied with their way of life, yet believe that they can improve upon that substantially without betraying its ideals and institutions. The liberals try to adopt a balanced view of social process, in short, he is optimistic rather than pessimistic about the possibilities of reform.

Thirdly, the term reactionary conveys a yearning for the past and a feeling that wants to retreat back. A reactionary should not be confused with the conservative, is a man who refuse to accept the present. More than this, a reactionary is willing to erase some laws, enact others, even amend his nation's constitution to roll back the social process.<sup>10</sup>

Zeitlin<sup>11</sup> summarises the various propositions of the conservative reaction :

1. "Society is an organic unity with internal laws of development and deep roots<sup>in</sup> the past, not simply mechanical

aggregate of individual elements."

2. "Man has no existence outside a social group or context and becomes human only by participating in society."

3. "The individual is an abstract and not the basic element of a society. Society is composed of relationships and institutions. The existence and maintenance of small groups are essential."

4. "Customs, beliefs and institutions are organically intertwined so that changing and re-making one part will undermine the complex relationships maintaining the stability of society as a whole."

5. "Man has constant and unalterable needs, which every society and each of its institutions serve to fulfil. If these agencies are disturbed or disrupted, suffering or disorder will result."

6. "The non-rational aspects of human existence have a positive value and are essential."

7. "Status and hierarchy are essential to society. 'Equality will destroy the natural and time-honoured agencies by which values are passed from one generation to another.'"

Karl Mannheim, in his seminal work on conservatism,<sup>12</sup> made an indepth analysis of conservatism. According to him,

modern conservatism differs from traditionalism in general, it refers to a psychological attitude which manifests in the individual as a clinging to old ways and expresses itself in a fear of innovation.

One of the most essential characteristics of conservative way of experiencing and thinking seems to be its clinging to what is immediate and concrete in a practical way. The result of this is a novel, almost emphatic experience of the concrete, reflected in the consistently anti-revolutionary ~~the~~ connection of the term concrete. To experience and to think concretely now comes to signify a specific mode of conduct, a desire to be effective only within the particular immediate environment in which one is placed, and a total aversion to all things that are merely possible or speculative.

Non-romantic conservatism always starts out from the particular case at hand and never broadens its horizon beyond its particular environment. Its aim is immediate action, change in concrete details, and it is, therefore, not really concerned with the structure of the world in which it lives. All progressive action, in contrast, is increasingly animated by a consciousness of the possible; it transcends the given immediacy by recourse to a systematic possibility, and it fights against the concrete not by seeking to put a different concreteness in its place, but by wanting a different systematic starting-point.

A conservative person only thinks systematically when he is moved to reaction, perhaps because he is forced to set up a system counter to that of the progressive, or because the process has progressed to a point where he has lost touch with the present state of things, so that he is compelled to intervene actively in order to reverse the process of history.

From this contrast between the concrete and abstract, it becomes evident, at a crucial point, how far the two types of experience are functionally related to the social. The conservative concrete experience of things can hardly be shown more plainly than in the conservative experience of property, in contrast to the bourgeois experience of it. The conservative notion of property was bound up with its owner in an entirely different way than is the case of modern ownership. There was a definite, vital, and reciprocal relationship between the owner and his property. Property in its old and genuine sense carried within it certain privileges for its owner; it rendered him eligible, for instance to have a voice in the state, it bestowed hunting rights, and it qualified for membership on the jury. Hence, it was closely bound up with the proprietor's personal honour and in this sense inalienable. Similarly, conservatism also sets up the concept of freedom, in opposition to the revolutionary concept. The conservative contention about freedom is that human beings

are unequal in their nature, in their innermost being, and that freedom consists in the condition in which each and everyone, in accordance with his innermost principle, actualises the laws of development uniquely peculiar to himself.

The ideological nature of conservatism appears to be more complicated. Originally, in the first half of the nineteenth century, it was the expression of the nobility in its defense against those of the bourgeoisie. This is shown, for example, by the fact that conservatism became fully developed in the countries where the nobility held a strong position. However, conservatism was not completely opposed to liberal ideas. Rather, it opposed the ideology of Enlightenment and also the ideas of the French Revolution.

Secondly, conservatism was more than just an attempt at a defense of the interests of a threatened elite ; as conscious traditionalism, it expressed the traditional way of life that many people were still leading in class-divided society. Thirdly, conservative ideas have often been put forward in religious vocabulary, which pretends to be unrelated to the interests of specific groups or social classes. Finally, there is a developmental aspect in conservatism, which made it gradually accept capitalism as a natural development.

Thus conservatism was first developed as a defense of traditional society. It was subsequently developed further as a defense of capitalism. This tendency was finally strengthened that some conservative ideas can be used by almost any elite that wishes to legitimise its particular position.

## II. Types of Conservatism

Clinton Rossiter distinguished four types of conservatism : temperamental, possessive, practical and philosophical.<sup>13</sup>

Temperamental conservatism is simply a man's natural disposition to oppose any substantial change, in his manner of life, work and enjoyment. Psychologists generally agree that all human beings exhibit conservative traits to some degree in their lives and in most men these appear to be dominant. The important traits in conservative temperament, all of them largely non-rational in character, would seem to be habit, inertia, fear and emulation.

Secondly, possessive conservatism is the attitude of the man who has something substantial to defend against the erosion of change, whether it be his status, reputation, power or most commonly, property. Like conservatism of temperament, possessive conservatism is self-centred, non-speculative frame of mind opposed to change of any type and

from any direction. It is only incidentally an attitude towards social and political reform.

The third and most common use of the word is practical conservatism. This is the conservatism of temperament and possession operating in a new dimension, the community, but not on the higher plane of speculative thought. The practical conservative is a man who is prepared to oppose any disruptive change in the legal, political, economic, social, religious and cultural order. The practical conservative has managed to rise some distance above his own interests.

The last and the highest kind is philosophical conservatism. The philosophical conservative subscribes consciously to the principles designed to justify the established order and guard it against the careless tinkering and determined reform. His conservatism is explained in intellectual as well as psychological, social and economic terms. He is conscious of the history, structure, ideals, and traditions of reform and the importance of conservatism in maintaining an established social order.

### III. Theories of Conservatism

Samuel P. Huntington outlined three types of conservative theory : aristocratic, autonomous, and the situational.<sup>14</sup>

The aristocratic theory defines conservatism as an ideology of a single, specific, and unique historical movement ; the reaction of the feudal, aristocratic and agrarian classes to the French Revolution, liberalism and the rise of the bourgeoisie at the end of the eighteenth century and during the first half of the nineteenth century. In Mannheim's words, modern conservatism is the function of one particular historical and sociological situation. Liberalism is the ideology of the bourgeoisie, socialism is the ideology of the proletariat and conservatism is the ideology of the aristocracy. Conservatism thus becomes indissolubly associated with feudalism, status, the ancient regime, and nobility; it becomes irreconcilably opposed to the middle class, labour, commercialism, liberalism and individualism.

Secondly, the autonomous definition holds that conservatism is not necessarily connected with the interest of any particular group, nor indeed, in its appearance dependent upon any specific historical configuration of social classes. Conservatism is an autonomous system of ideas. It is defined in terms of universal values such as justice, order, balance, and moderation. Whether or not these values are held high by particular individuals depends not on his social affiliations but upon his personal capacity to see their inherent truth and desirability.

Thirdly, the situational definition views conservatism as the ideology arising out of a distinct but recurring type of historical situation in which a fundamental challenge is directed at established institutions and in which the supporters of those institutions employ the conservative ideology in their defense. Thus, conservatism is that system of ideas employed to justify any established order, no matter where and when it exists, against any fundamental challenge to its nature or being, no matter from what quarters. The essence of conservatism is the passionate affirmation of the value of existing institutions. No person can espouse the conservative ideology, however, unless he is fundamentally happy with the established order and committed to its defense against any serious challenge.

According to Huntington, both aristocratic and traditional theories of conservatism are inadequate. In short, the aristocratic definition fails because no necessary connection exists between aristocracy and feudalism, on the one hand, and conservatism on the other: non-aristocrats can also expound conservative ideology; aristocrats can also expound non-conservative ideology.<sup>15</sup>

#### IV. Ideological Development of Modern India and the Conservative Strand in Indian Political Thought.

The dominant influence in the shaping of modern India had been its connection with Britain. The British empire in

India began right after 1757 and lasted little less than two hundred years. For two centuries the history of Europe had been built up, to some extent, on the basis of domination of India.

The social and political situation of India was extremely propitious for its conquest by a well-organised, economically united and militarily more advanced foreign power. Karl Marx raised the question thus : "How was the English supremacy established in India ? The paramount power of the great Moghuls was broken by the Moghul viceroys. The power of the viceroys was broken by the Marathas. The power of the Marathas was broken by the Afghans, and while all were struggling against all, the British rushed in and subdued all. A country, according to Marx, which was not only divided between Mohammedan and Hindu, but between tribe and tribe, between caste and caste, a society whose framework was based on a sort of equilibrium, resulting from a general repulsion and constitutional exclusiveness between all its members : such a country and such a society, were they not predestined prey of conquest?"<sup>16</sup>

India had been conquered earlier many times, but those conquests had led to a change in political regimes only. So far as the basic economic and social structure was concerned, these conquests did not affect it. With self-sufficient

village industry and agriculture, the village was the unit of revenue assessment and finally village production almost exclusively for the village use, this economic structure of pre-British India triumphantly survived, in all its outlines, for centuries all foreign invasions, military convulsions, religious upheavals and dynastic wars. All these events, spectacular and cataclysmic, affected only the social, political or religious ideological superstructure of the Indian society. The self-sufficient village in which practically the entire population lived successfully survived the most violent political storms and military holocausts.

Thus, the British conquest of the Indian subcontinent during the eighteenth century was one of the epochal events of modern Indian history. According to Marx, the English interference in India had produced the greatest, so to speak the truth, the only social revolution ever heard of in Asia.<sup>17</sup> Rammohan Roy, hailed as the father of modern India, argued that India had much to learn from the British in the fields of politics, science, literature and religion. Most of the early Indian leaders were convinced that their salvation lay in creating a strong Indian state. Such a state presupposed industrialisation, modern science and technology and a rationalist culture. In other words, India's salvation lay in embracing modernity. Since Britain has successfully modernised itself and was, indeed, a world leader, India had

• good deal to learn from it. And Dadabhai Naoraji could not help but see a divine hand (i.e. British domination of India) at such a ripe moment.

Thus, from the very beginning of the nineteenth century, Indian leaders welcomed the British rule and urged the Indians to take advantage of it. Rammohan Roy contrasted the civilised British with their tyrannical predecessors and saw the new rulers not as a body of conquerors but rather as deliverers. He went on ;

"From personal impression, I am impressed with the conviction that greater our intercourse with the European gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs; a fact which can be easily proved by comparing the condition of those of many countrymen who have enjoyed this advantage with that of those who have not the opportunity."<sup>18</sup>

Rammohan Roy concluded that the British rule spelt a loss of autonomy, but what mattered really was ;

"National independence is not an absolute goal; the goal, so to say, of society to secure the happiness of the greatest possible number; and when left to itself, a nation cannot obtain this object, when it does not contain in itself the principles of future progress, it is better for it that

it should be guided by the example and even the authority of a conquering people who are more civilised."<sup>19</sup>

In the Presidential Address of the Congress, B.K.Dhar spelt out the blessings of the British Raj more clearly :

"Peace, order, and perfect security of life and property have been secured to us and to degree never known to the old Roman Empire and even now not be seen anywhere beyond the limits of the British Empire. A genuine and an active interest in the welfare of the masses, as is shown by its famine, plague, sanitation and agrarian measures, is its abiding and noblest features. Perfect religious and social freedom it has given to us unasked; and Railways, Post Office and thousand other instruments and appliances are the means by which it has added to our comfort and social advancement. The educational system which has immortalised the name of Bentinck and Macaulay is perhaps the greatest gift to the people of India. The spread of English education, as it has instructed our minds and inspired us with new hopes and aspirations, has been accompanied by gradual and cautious concessions of political rights .... the admissions of Indians into public services, the instruction of local self-government and the reform of the Legislative Councils on a partially representative basis. We have a government whose justice is exemplary and a civil service which in ability, integrity, zeal, and genuine regard,

according to its own lights, for those entrusted to its case, had no rival in the world.... I thank God that I am a British subject, and feel no hesitation in saying that the government of India by England .... faulty as it is in many respect and greatly it needs to be reformed and renovated from top to bottom .... is still the greatest gift by the Province to my race . For England is the only country that known how to govern those who cannot govern themselves."<sup>20</sup>

Valentine Chirol was the first person to give a sophisticated version of what may be called the claim that India was a mere geographical expression which could never develop into a nation in the western sense of the term; and whatever political movements, with pseu-national colour existed in India, had their roots in deep traditional, instinctively anti-western sources. The so-called national movement, according to him, was engineered by small elite groups of traditional society, who had in view the particular interests of their own castes and not the general interest of the people. These groups, being of high ritual status in the caste hierarchy of the Hindu society, were deeply committed to one or another form of revivalist Hinduism.

A much more interesting interpretation from an analytical point of view was given by M.N.Roy, who analysed the emergence of Indian nationalism as a historical phenomenon. Here his views coincided on one important point with that of

Chitral, namely, the absence of any political nationhood in India before the British rule. Briefly, his argument ran as follows. The East India Company conquered India with the help of the nascent Indian trading classes of the late Mughal India and later suppressed this class. So there could be no national development until the Indian bourgeoisie rose from its ashes once again in the late nineteenth century, and slowly accumulated capital until the World War I quickened the pace of development of native capitalism and its political ideology .... the national movement. The intellectuals trained in modern political thought laid the theoretical foundation of Indian nationalism. These were the objective conditions in which the Indian National Congress came into being. M.N.Roy in his book, India in Transition posed a challenge to Lenin's thesis that India was under a feudal system. By marshalling a formidable array of facts and figures, Roy argued that, contrary to the general notion, India was not under a feudal system, but was already within the orbit of capitalism and was moving towards a capitalist mode of production.

R.P.Dutta whose India Today still remains the most authoritative Marxist work on modern India, wrote that the growth of modern industry in the second half of the nineteenth century led to the rise of the bourgeoisie, together with a new educated middle class of lawyers, teachers, administrators,

and journalists. But gradually there was a shift of emphasis from R.P.Dutt's bourgeoisie to intermediate groups .... variously designated as the educated middle class, the petty bourgeoisie, and the intelligentsia. A.R.Desai's work on Indian nationalism took up in this respect the earlier threads of M.N.Roy. With the growth of modern industries, wrote Desai, the modern bourgeoisie and working class came into existence, along with professional classes. The intelligentsia drawn from the professional classes developed before the industrial bourgeoisie and led the national movement in each phase.

The construction of Indian nationalism, thus, commenced in the mid-nineteenth century among the urban, anglicised strata to whom the appropriation of a range of western discourses became a vital element in their comprehension and interpretation of social experiences of domination and subordination at the hands of what seemed an invincible western modernity.

European orientalist scholars of Sanskrit and history had since the eighteenth century created a comprehensive body of research on classical Hindu culture. This particular style of imperial scholarship had constructed India as the

symmetrical other of the west. Hinduism was in the main seen as an amorphous religion devoid of central doctrines or organisation. Indian culture was portrayed as essentially spiritual and irrational as spawning hierarchical and barbaric practices such as the rigidities of the caste system, burning of widows, fire-sacrifices etc.<sup>21</sup>

Early Indian nationalists, such as Vivekananda, internalized this construction of India as pure spirituality, holism and cultural depth, and invested them into a positive construction of India as the antithesis to western rationalism and materialism. This discursive inversion opened the entire inventory of civilisational criticisms developed by European romanticism and cultural nationalism to the Indian nationalists. These early discourses emphasised the fundamental ontological difference between India and the West and saw the ancient Indian cultural heritage as a universalist spiritual correction to the excessive materialism of western industrial civilisation.

The other simultaneous strategy strove, while accepting the basic analysis of Hindu culture as weak and incoherent, to reform and organise Hinduism into a more egalitarian, doctrinaire and organised religion. The largest of these reform movements, the Arya Samaj, reacted against the proselytising activities carried out by Christian missionaries. The Arya Samaj emphasised the physical training and organisation of young men. The rationale was to emulate the basic

institutions and practices of semetic and monotheistic civilisations.

Gandhiji's rise to the status of uncontested spiritual figure and political saint in the Congress from 1920 onwards brought about a significant change in the nationalist discourses and strategies. Gandhiji combined the early nationalist's discourses on India as spiritually superior to the West with a range of mass mobilisation technique. His philosophy of non-violence and religious populist syncretism .... the doctrine of equal respect for all religions did not challenge caste or social hierarchies in any radical sense. Along with the emergence mass politics, the dominant liberal leadership of the Congress organised the broad sections of the elite and urban middle classes which remained the primary social basis of the emerging project of a modern nation state.

Thus, the Indian National Congress, during the British rule, combined nearly all ideological strands in expedient manner. There was an implicit faith in the richness and superiority of Indian culture in all kinds of nationalist explanations of colonialism, national emancipation and self-rule. This also produced and sustained an amorphous conservatism in the main currents of nationalism despite conflicting views regarding social and religious reform and political strategy. Reacting to the impossibility of avoiding change and the urgency of preserving the religious and cultural

moorings, the nationalist ideologues endeavoured to evolve a rationally defensible and practically effective discourse. In the event, the Indian society changed, yet stuck to its traditions.

Thus, the question of identifying the conservative forces in Indian politics is quite a difficult one. According to Rudolph and Rudolph, "one of the paradoxes of Indian politics is that ancient India's regime, surely one of the oldest and most deeply rooted in the world, produced no reaction .... only a few minor local parties today stand for full return to the rule of Brahmins and Khatriyas according to the precepts of dharma and traditional duty, and they are ineffectual."<sup>22</sup>

The problem is compounded by the fact that India's landed aristocracy, ever since the Mutiny of 1857,<sup>23</sup> sided with the British for protecting honour and property which could have provided an articulate conservative platform. However, in the absence of stable, indigenous and macro-political institutions and the broad class identifications and cohesion meant that there was no national focal point for aristocratic conservatism. The latter was at best regional and was often formed around antagonistic rulers. Moreover, the national movement attracted the industrial classes and segments of middle class peasantry at a time when the aristocracy came to be aligned increasingly with the British. Also

After Independence, the Congress hegemony and flexibility enables the ruling party to use assorted carrots and sticks to allure and weaken the conservative elements, often making important concessions but paying lip-service to the socialist rhetoric. The Congress willingness to buy off some potent conservative forces and to intimidate others has helped to keep the conservative forces in a state of disarray.<sup>24</sup> In the decades after Independence, the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Nehru established an effective political hegemony bent on the development of a strong, interventionist state apparatus. Through import substitution strategies, economic planning and an effective distributional coalition of dominant economic and political interests within the patronage structures of the party, the Congress party provided the economic development and political stability for decades. This hegemonic Nehruvian state elevated the principles of secularism to the central elements in the official liberal nationalist doctrine of India. Through education and dominant political rhetoric, the slogan 'unity in diversity' became the ideological crossing point of a variety of policies seeking to accommodate diverse linguistic, social and religious demands for official recognition and protection. Nehruvian secular nationalism sought with considerable success to construct Hinduism as a multifarious, integrative and tolerant set of principles. Hence, secularism became in the post-colonial mass democracy a privileged signifier of equal accommodation and competitive patronage of social groups and cultural

communities through state and party.

Another strand of Indian conservatism is much more difficult to analyse, the village-oriented conservatism, which H.L.Erdman called, "disguised" and is available and persuasive to many Indians including C.Rajagopalachari.<sup>25</sup> This doctrine in its core has an image of an idealised village community, sometimes thought to have existed in ancient India. It has its principal roots in the views that the village India, is the real India. The association of Gandhiji's name rightly or wrongly, with this strand of thought, accounts in large measure for its potential emotional appeal. "The fact that this doctrine does defend India against the West," observed Erdman, and that it can be sanctified by the invocation of Gandhiji's name makes it almost uniquely attractive refuge for all manners of knaves, scoundrels, reactionaries etc., as well as genuine conservatives, in addition to those who earnestly desire substantial change along Gandhian lines.<sup>26</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

In the Western countries, along with steady industrialisation and development of capitalism, society became stratified and conservatism became the ideology of the landed aristocrats in different forms in different countries. But in case of India, the new political and economic environment

created by the British conquest and rule of India, posed before the Indians problems which were quite new and could not be solved by the theories and methods which the old Indian culture provided. For example, to solve the national economic tasks arising out of the new economic problems such as greater industrialisation of India, Indian economists turned to the theoretical works on economics of Adam Smith, Ricardo or Marx. Neither Chanakya, the ancient author of Artha Shastra, nor Vyas, the immortal composer of Mahabharata, could arm Indians with theoretical means to solve modern economic problems.<sup>27</sup>

In such an environment conservatism in India took the garb of religious revivalist movements both Hindu and Muslim. These movements appealed to the centuries-old traditional values, were able to build up a powerful following among the less modernised masses where Congress could not. For example, Tilak did not hesitate to appeal to explosive communal religious sentiments. He defended child marriage and organised cow protection society and began to worship elephant-god Ganapati as a means of stimulating mass participation in politics. This type of religious and revivalistic conservative politics is still a powerful force in Indian politics which will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

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Chapter III

THE RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IDEAS OF

C.RAJAGOPALACHARI

I. Introduction

C.Rajagopalachari was a man of sharp intellect, cool reason and logic. It was said that he had the gift for rationalising emotion.<sup>1</sup> His command over English was flawless,<sup>2</sup> yet, unlike Gandhiji or Nehru, he never studied outside India. His intellect was wholly indigenous. If C.Rajagopalachari's family record is authentic, the Brahmins of Thorapalli village secured their agraharam under the last Hindu dynasty before the Mughal conquest.<sup>3</sup> C.Rajagopalachari's father was not educated in western institutions but was well-versed in Sanskrit. The community of Brahmins from which C.Rajagopalachari descended produced, therefore, a very special kind of priest. Patronisation of their special training through land grants could legitimise royal authority. The presence of such Brahmins at the court sanctified local law, and made it known that king's justice is fully acknowledged by orthodox standards. Through the power of their knowledge of the sacred word, they harmonised local events, leaders and customs with universal dharmic order. Legitimation of state power came through formal subservience to the Brahminical order.<sup>4</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's family, therefore, lived in a local world that was rooted in the older brahminical royal authority based upon Sanskrit law and lore. Such knowledge was not a

matter of universal degree or formal schooling in a western sense; instead, it rested in a tradition that was maintained and exemplified within the family through its upbringing.<sup>5</sup> But this type of traditional knowledge was useful during C.Rajagopalachari's period to the local level. The direct lines of power from the agraharam to the royal court were severed by the British legal system. If a young Brahmin wished to rise higher in the central authority, he had to learn a new law and excel within a new system of legal education. C.Rajagopalachari took the latter route.<sup>6</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's political activities and inclinations, before entering the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhiji, have been written in detail in the next chapter. Due to his active involvement in Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements, he was imprisoned in the Vellore Jail by the British Government. In 1921-22, during his prison days, he wrote his "Jail Diary", where he mentioned the habit of praying and attempts at mental concentration. He regretted having no knowledge of Sanskrit without which, according to him, the life of a quiet devotion appears almost impossible to a Hindu. Though he read devotional books such as Kural<sup>7</sup> and the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bible, he considered the intellectual habit of reading as a mere self-indulgence declaring that there is "a time in life when you know for certain that additional learning will make you die more learned, and not enable you to do anything further useful to mankind or to correct your character in any manner."<sup>8</sup>

In fact, the Jail Diary revealed in more than one ways C. Rajagopalachari's course of action and his mental and intellectual make-up. The desire of search for meaning and cause, mentioned above, drove C. Rajagopalachari, at least partly, towards Mahatma Gandhiji by forsaking his thriving legal career and a materially comfortable life. Thus he commented that scores of Indians are busy in carrying out the authority of the Raj, imagining it as God's law and Dharma. But his assessment was that those people mentioned above are not free, rather, those who are in prison in revolt against the Raj, are free, even like the rebel soldier. He is to be held by force, not by shameful, voluntary surrender.<sup>9</sup>

C. Rajagopalachari mentioned all those details of personal sickness and problems of hygiene on which Gandhiji dwelt in detail in his Autobiography. But, for C. Rajagopalachari his physical condition never took an ontological meaning. C. Rajagopalachari after listing his physical troubles added "It is disgusting to record my physical ailments from day to day. How I wish I had healthy body which could give a free play to my spirit."<sup>10</sup> However, for Gandhiji, his physical problems were not just an outside unfortunate force, but bore a direct relation to his spiritual progress. C. Rajagopalachari's Jail Diary did not mention his personal details like Autobiography. His mention of self-control did not apply to emotional and bodily renunciations. He did not see prison in that way. The renunciation

involved in accepting punishment or imprisonment for political action, was a renunciation of social security rather than bodily comfort. C.Rajagopalachari at this stage of life renounced his social status as a means of demonstrating to the society the differences between the acceptance of true law or dharma and false for foreign law.

Thus he mentioned in Jail Diary, "If hundreds of men and women feel that voluntary cooperation with injustice and national dishonour outside the jails are no longer tolerable, and accept imprisonment as a happier condition of life, because it releases them at once from cooperation with the British, and if they feel that the privation and inconvenience of the prisons are preferable to the sin and immoral cooperation with the wrong in outside, i.e., the Raj, then it becomes true martyrdom, which cannot fail to produce its effects according to the laws of god.... If we believe in the creed of Ahimsa, and if we have faith in the law of love and suffering, this must lead to success."<sup>11</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's writings during the formative period were amazingly varied. He seemed to speak with fluency in two languages and several distinct styles. His pamphlet, The Way Out, made him a trained lawyer and an English essayist. The writings were polished, factual and elegant. Vedanta was written in another style : an interpretation of the Hindu philosophy which was argued in a theological style frequently found in other modern writers on Hinduism. His Bhagavad Gita and Kural were framed in another style : the learned discourse on

traditional religious texts. Thus a variety of styles were displayed by C.Rajagopalachari ; theological, discursive, pedantic and argumentative. For the sake of clarity, we will discuss his socio-religious and economic ideas as follows.

## II

### RELIGIOUS IDEAS

C.Rajagopalachari provided the example of a Hindu intellectual who, in the wake of change in India, under the tutelage of the Raj during the nineteenth and the twentieth century, tried to reformulate India's classical tradition. Obviously, for intellectuals of this sort, Hinduism was the awe-inspiring arsenal for fighting the British master, on the one hand, and to provide a blue-print for the future of independent India's course of action amidst the comity of nations, on the other. Curiously, Hinduism of this sort was more a political entity than a religious one. It resembled Protestantism in Europe which played a role of religion of the then politically powerful and propertied classes. Similarly, Hinduism during the Raj period was always a product of compromise on the part of the influential classes of their political philosophy. That is why, whoever wished to elaborate upon the religion of Hinduism as a coherent, all-embracing system had to speak more or less, willy-nilly, in a political vocabulary rather than a religious one. Thus, before starting to explore C.Rajagopalachari's ideas and explanations of

Hinduism, it is better to quote him which succinctly puts forth his views on Hinduism : "The truth is that", said C.Rajagopalachari, "our religious philosophy is so advanced that it is far beyond the reach of religious ideas prevailing in other theologies."<sup>12</sup>

Placing Hinduism on a high pedestal, thus, C.Rajagopalachari gave an expedient and contemporaneous formulation of Hinduism. Thus, according to him, the requirements of planned and regulated economy can be found in the Vedanta. To him, the old laissez-faire economy and its concomitant social philosophy had become outdated. Instead, there appeared the socialist economy with the passing of the time to meet the needs of the people. But here C.Rajagopalachari's advocacy for socialism was not unqualified; he professed that the inherent danger of planned socialist economy could cause pain and loss of individual freedom. According to him, this pain was due to external control which affects the working efficiency of the people. Thus, instead of laissez-faire, the planned economy should envisage a code of values and culture that could operate as a law from within. And it should also supplement external control or regulation. Such a code of spiritual values and such a culture should help in the preservation of a sense of individual **liberty** and initiative in the midst of complicated state regulation. Thus he opined that a law operating from within was more efficient than one externally imposed, and also less liable to evasion. And to face all kind of social deviations,

a well-accepted ethic and culture can provide the only solution.<sup>13</sup>

From the above discussion, naturally, C.Rajagopalachari's concept of culture followed. To him, culture was neither character nor morality; rather, it was the inside of man; an external rather than internal phenomenon. Culture had more to do with behaviour and way of life than with character. After defining culture, he proceeded to define civilisation and he was of the opinion that mere advance in technology and material aspect of life does not behave with civilisation. Mainly speaking, civilisation intended to connote the curbing of wildness, barbarity and over-indulgence of passion and appetites. Now he argued that civilisation possesses two instruments to achieve its aim. The one is the object of curbing or suppressing the sensual instincts. The other instrument of civilisation, according to C.Rajagopalachari, is culture.... a more pervasive and nebulous social phenomenon, which was functional throughout history through family training, tradition, religious beliefs, literature and education. Culture puts down overindulgence acting as an internal force, as distinguished from penal laws which from the very beginning acted from outside. When culture failed, it acted through social obsequy and, in very bad cases, through social ostracism.<sup>14</sup>

Thus defining culture, C.Rajagopalachari proceeded to dwell on Indian culture .... his forte. According to him, simplicity is the pattern of Indian culture, and was not mere stunted development, rather deliberate maintenance of

simplicity, and conscious rejection of complicated life and multiplication of wants, this being consistent with the philosophy and ethical code of Indian people.<sup>15</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari linked Indian culture with the maintenance of dharma, or moral duty which is "an organic growth, which it is our duty to respect and we should not treat as mere Indian superstition or eccentricity."<sup>16</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's concept of dharma was taken from the Gita, and was two-fold in nature ; the social good for material improvement and the spiritual welfare of the inner growth of man. Dharma in the social context regulated human conduct and also fitted individuals into the right moulds of character by inculcating in them social and moral values and graces. In this sense, dharma in each individual member of society directed him to behave with dignity and propriety in relation to **his** fellow beings. When dharma was preserved and practised, it conferred on man and society, health, wealth and happiness. If dharma were lost sight of, the social cohesive forces became weak and unhinged, and the whole social structure would crumble. Dharma was and is the life force of the society like prana (vitality) in an individual. It was dharma that held the social fabric together. It maintained law and order in society and gave rise to amity, harmony, and understanding in the social relationships of its members.

The ideal of dharma got a wide connotation. There was

no single social dharma for all. As a matter of fact, dharma in the context of Indian society varied from individual to individual. No two individuals may have the same dharma to perform. Each and everyone's dharma was determined by social situation in which he/she found herself/himself. This led to the concept of swadharma (self-religion). Every member of a society, every member of a family had his own swadharma, which he is expected to discharge truthfully and to the best of his ability and understanding.

Dharma, on the social plane, aimed at attaining all-round welfare for the entire community. By means of injunctions and prohibitions, dharma directed human activity, so that each unit in society may fulfil its functions and contribute to the general good of society. In assigning work to everyone, the Gita upholds the principle of guna (quality) and karma (duty).... the inborn abilities and talents. Each one, according to his guna and karma, must do his duty and contribute to the general well-being of the group in which he/she lives and functions.

Thus expounding the concept of dharma of the Gita, C.Rajagopalachari proceeded to analyse its suitability of necessity in the context of the present life. C.Rajagopalachari opined that the present civilisation was fraught with disharmonies. Human energy was wastefully consumed in the disharmonies involved in the prevailing contradictions in

science, religion, national politics and in the conduct of international affairs.<sup>17</sup> Thus he was of the opinion that everything we believe and do should be harmonised with religion. Religion and politics cannot remain in different pigeonholes. What was needed for the present situation was the courage and the need to synthesise. In this respect, he praised the ancient Indian generations in unqualified terms because they displayed, according to C.Rajagopalachari, greater courage and mental acumen towards their mundane problems. But he was quite optimistic that despite the present decline of the mental capabilities of the existing generations, he stated, "We should not, however, despair, but drawing inspirations from our forefathers, summon all the spirit we can command to restore the basic harmony of thought and make all necessary modifications in our fundamental beliefs and axioms for that purpose."<sup>18</sup>

In the opinion of C.Rajagopalachari, Vedanta was the answer to the complex problems, i.e., disharmonies, contradiction between science and religion and politics of the present age. For him, there is no need to create or build a new religion, because India already possessed a religion and philosophy, which were very old in origin, still marvellously suited with the present day science as well as politics.<sup>19</sup> Also, Vedanta enunciated a code of ethics and a system of values evolved out of the Hindu religious philosophy which is admirably consistent

with science, on the one hand, and can provide also a spiritual basis for an egalitarian social order. Not only this, a perusal of the Upanishads, according to C.Rajagopalachari, will show that the Vedanta postulated that the universe is the result of gradual unfolding of the creative powers inherent in primordial substances. In fact, C.Rajagopalachari insisted that the philosophy of Hinduism anticipated the basic theory of biology and physics and also the methods of modern science.<sup>20</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari also highlighted the utility of the Vedantic ethic. According to him, the way of life that was prescribed in the Vedanta is called Yoga in Gita. Yoga precisely consisted in maintaining a detached mind while participating in all affairs that appertains to one's place in society. The great secret is that work should be done in a spirit of duty and performed and dedicated to God. Results should not be permitted to agitate the mind. Duties arise because of the place one occupies in society. There is, in fact, no question of superiority or inferiority in performing the various tasks devolving on individuals or groups in society, all being equally necessary for the maintenance of the welfare and harmony of the society. The work should be performed, i.e., individual duties assigned socially, in a spirit of cooperation and unselfishness. He was of the opinion that, if any religion contradicts with the conclusion of science, that religion must degenerate into formalism and hypocrisy. And in human happiness depends on doing away with indifference, and economic reorganisation

is to base on stable foundation of widespread moral faith and culture and if the state is to be supported by willing cooperation of men and women, Vedanta has contribution, which is quite enduring the nature, to civilisation. Equality entirely based on exploitation or force, even though administered by able and well-intentioned men, it can not last or endure in the long run. Vedanta offers a religious faith that can have no quarrel with the scientist who works in the laboratory or with the geologists who do research in the history of the physical world, and yet it offers a firm foundation for the just polity of a new world.<sup>21</sup>

### III. SOCIAL IDEAS

The early career of C.Rajagopalachari showed his attitude towards social change. In 1917, C.Rajagopalachari was elected as the Chairman of the Salem Municipality. C.Rajagopalachari's stint as Chairman of the Salem Municipality threw some light on the reformist zeal towards Indian social problems and his organisational ability and skill and dedication. During his municipal term, C.Rajagopalachari was able to tackle efficiently civic problems caused by disease like plague, small-pox and cholera. He was able to obtain funds from his influential connections for the public measures like installation of public taps, since municipal funds were severely limited. Without undertaking any sweeping

measures which were socially ameliorative, C.Rajagopalachari was content with his success in a few odd cases involving untouchability or the alcohol problem. Thus, in 1918, when the assignment of an untouchable to the public taps of a Brahmin locality caused considerable Brahmin outcry, C.Rajagopalachari stood his ground and in the Municipal Council debate, he refused to transfer the untouchable worker to another ward. This incident aroused momentary orthodox anger and assumed considerable localised topical significance. On the issue of drinking, C.Rajagopalachari was able to achieve limited success largely due to the cooperation of the British administrative machinery. Complete prohibition was not raised still as a full-fledged demand. But C.Rajagopalachari's concern for these social problems was genuine. Though a traditionalist, his adherence to social custom was not uncritical.

But C.Rajagopalachari always fought shy of structural social changes and was in favour of social and moral reforms within the status quo. Yet he realised that the neglect of moderate social reforms would only invite more revolutionary and violent change in the future. This belief prompted him during his Premiership in the Madras Presidency to undertake some progressive legislation in the field of agrarian reforms, the question of temple-entry and prohibition. He was frank enough to admit his attitude towards the social reform by saying thus :

"I am conservative to admit the proposition at once that unless it is necessary to disturb an existing organisation, you should not disturb it; because the lives of the families, lives of individuals as well as families of all groups, I believe, have been so ordered as to get inextricably mixed up with an existing state of affairs and change involves vital pain, loss, injury, and difficulty, not speak of mere irritation. I admit that. It should not be justified unless it is necessary."<sup>22</sup>

Now let us proceed to analyse C.Rajagopalachari's appraisal of Indian culture. According to him, Indian culture from the hoary beginning was predominantly self-restraint. The main feature of the Indian culture was to share one's substance with the poor, chastity, the rigours of widowhood, austerity, sanyas, and allround religious tolerance. In the opinion of C.Rajagopalachari, the large joint-family is a special type of social institution particularly available in India. This institution is still alive, he asserted, not quite wiped out by the impact of the West and its cult of individuality. The joint family is, according to C.Rajagopalachari, a socialist institution within itself and at the same time, the individuals are potentially free persons. Thus, he opined that perhaps the joint-family is the chief institution in India, which differentiates it from the Western way of living.<sup>23</sup>

In the next step, after the joint-family, C.Rajagopalachari upheld the institution of community ('jati' prevalently known

in India). According to him, jati is a community of larger circle than the joint-family. The obligation of mutual help and respect are real within the circle of the jati, though necessarily thinned out by the wake of industrial and cultural changes. The principle that holds jati together is like this : one's duty does not end with one's wife and children; it does not end with one's son and father, grandchildren and cousins. It also involves the members of the jati, all those who belong to his group of potential relatives. It is not just an artificial extension. It is a circle which includes likely relationships through marriage. It is associated with a very real sense of identity and mutual liability. So much so, that everything seemingly done in public services on account of that connection is in the present looked upon, observed C.Rajagopalachari, as nepotism. This aspect of group behaviour, observed C.Rajagopalachari, was nepotism under the modern notion of administrative equity; but all the same, Indian culture demands that a man should use his influence and share his prosperity with members of his jati (community). In adversity, he is entitled to expect assistance and material help and sympathy from the members of his jati. This element of Indian culture, in the opinion of C.Rajagopalachari, if disentangled from the need of administrative equity and restricted to personal assistance and private sacrifice, this aspect of Indian culture can be looked upon as a loose form of trusteeship, governing the conduct in one's group. Out of this, according

to C.Rajagopalachari, Gandhiji's conception of trusteeship form of socialism was evolved. In Indian culture, according to C.Rajagopalachari, the custom of sharing one's prosperity with his own community may be appropriately called decentralised socialism, without the compulsion of a statist polity.<sup>24</sup> The horizontal family network, according to C.Rajagopalachari, can be treated as a special pattern belonging to India. It is noteworthy of preservation. Unfortunately, it has been considerably weakened as a result of the impact of Western individualism and perverted movements of the so-called social reform.<sup>25</sup>

Thus kinship, unlike caste, was widely regarded as an overriding loyalty which may cut across political affiliations during the election times. It was believed that any voters who were not amenable to any other influence could be presurised through their kin. A close kinsman working against a candidate of his own community is sufficient to damn him. Thus, C.Rajagopalachari, during the 1960's, as the elder statesman of the Swatantra Party, believed in the supremacy of kinship ties. During the 1967 elections, C.Rajagopalachari was the sworn enemy of the Congress. His son, however, was contesting as a Congress candidate. When asked why he did not oppose his son, C.Rajagopalachari is reported to have said, "In Indian culture, it is not dharma to work against one's son. It did only what our culture required of me."<sup>26</sup>

In fact, C. Rajagopalachari recalled that there were many periods in Indian history when there were no effective governments to rule the country. But during all these periods, of what may be called no government condition, the Indian society tided over all these vicissitude by dint of self-restraint inherent in Indian culture, i.e., the joint-family and the jati discipline. Not only was order maintained; trade and art also flourished. The absence of government made no difference. A mere figure-head king was enough to do the duty. Philosophy was not neglected, public health was maintained tolerably well under the caste discipline, contracts were entered into and fulfilled, and property was protected. All this was maintained by culture although there was no law in the Austinian sense of the term. Charities were founded and markets and business went on. People did not move in nomadic confusion although there was no government in the modern sense of the term. The family and caste were the firm anchors which provided the backbone of the Indian society throughout its chequered history. There were at all levels something that held people together in a good behaviour .... the kula dharma and Bharata dharma. Thus culture not only made life fuller but also provided strong political role.<sup>27</sup>

Thus analysing Indian culture from economic and social points of view, C. Rajagopalachari assessed Indian culture by saying thus : "If there is any honesty in India today, any hospitality, any chastity, any philanthropy, any tenderness to

dumb creatures, any aversion to evil, any love to do the good, it is due to whatever remains of the old faith and the old culture. Modern ideas and education and ideas have done their best to caricature and stifle these emotions and substituted materialism and selfishness for them all."<sup>28</sup> Here we find the crux of C.Rajagopalachari's views on modernity. Thus, he praised with unequivocal terms the 'old faith and old culture' and denounced modern ideas and education which is, according to him, associated with materialism and selfishness.

Ultimately, C. Rajagopalachari turned narcissistic towards Indian culture. Thus he said that the doctrine of karma and transmigration that had been propounded in the Gita have tremendously infused and shaped Indian culture, and even today, the influence is still alive and active. The good as well as bad in Indian way of life can almost be traced, C. Rajagopalachari opined, to the doctrine of transmigration. Thus he said that the prevalence of individual charity in India, in spite of the effects of nineteenth century movements (influenced by western ideas) can be traced to the firm belief in the doctrine of karma.<sup>29</sup>

Ultimately, C.Rajagopalachari turned panegyric about which is Indian and whatever it may be. Thus he said that the Indian music is, practically all of it, composed of religion, philosophy and prayer. Even astonishingly, he found a glaring social evil like begging as a typical example of Indian culture.

Thus he observed, "Our beggars go begging, singing religious songs deep in philosophy, telling the people how to live. Nothing illustrates Indian culture so well as the songs of Indian vagrants and beggars."<sup>30</sup>

However, C.Rajagopalachari's concept of culture would remain incomplete with all its broad ramifications without mentioning his views on gender equality. Before analysing and summarising C.Rajagopalachari's views on gender equality and womanhood, let us analyse briefly in what way woman was seen in Hindu religious discourse. Women appeared in Hindu religious discourse as Mother and Nurturer, preserver of tradition and property. Her appearance as Mother Earth, Mother India, the Nation represented a borrowing and an emulation of linguistic usage as developed in European nationalist movements. It is also an amplification and extension of the role of the Indian women as articulated in Indian nationalist discourse.... the role of a provider and nourisher, luxuriant, beautiful and generous by nature, and, of course, capable of enormous sacrifice and suffering.

The woman's place as Mother and Nurturer, begetter of glorious sons of Aryavarta, had been undermined by several scholars in recent times.<sup>31</sup> It had been shown as that which appeared in Hindu nationalist discourse as a container or vehicle, the repository of Indian tradition, the essence, the inner side, the spirituality, and the greatness of the

Hindu civilisation, e.g., Matri Bhumi and Bharat Mata. As a property and sacred symbol, Woman is in an interestingly parallel position to the Cow in Hindu discourse. Yet she possesses a powerful, necessary but dangerous sexuality; and as potentially independent actors, women are threatening in a way that cows are not. As a symbol of the nation and repository of its tradition, Woman is pure .... the spiritual side and the inner strength of the nationalist discourse. But as a sexual entity, which is represented as being primitive, innocent and irrational, women is treated as a lesser thing than men.

This impurity is evident at regular intervals : during the motherly period, pregnancy and childbirth, when the woman, herself polluted, pollutes all those who come in contact with her. But impurity, or its potential, is present in a more continuous sense as well. The sexual desire of women, combined with their innocence and lack of rationality (their primitive instincts), means that they may very easily turn from their quintessential role as mothers, wives and widows and may turn into temptress and loose woman .... threatening order, morality and the appropriate division between men's and women's spheres. Ignorant and weak, women are supposed to be easily misled and often sullied.

The family has been an important system of both community and nation in India and, woman, of course, central to the structure and reproduction of the family. The body of women, however, becomes the site for much of the punishment

that is deemed necessary to expiate the sins of the family, the community and the nation. The point emerges from the Hindu nationalist discourse is that woman is 'pure' and 'impure' at the same time .... is not only to be protected but also to be disciplined and controlled. The emphasis is on modesty, and the place of the women are in the kitchen and inside the home, the promotion of carefully structured, limited and separate education for girls.

Having briefly discussed the position of women in the nationalist discourse in India, let us observe what C.Rajagopalachari said about the gender equality, which is worth quoting : "Equality is a good slogan where we have to encourage and strengthen the forces of reform against cruelty and stupidity, but in the organisation of courses in the Universities and high schools, we should not be moved by passion .... Such discrimination between boys and girls are necessary for the progress of the civilisation on well-ordered lines and has to be made without imagining that the principle of equality is thereby lost."<sup>32</sup> After this, he dwelt upon the question of division of labour between men and women. Thus he said, "On this matter, there is nothing to surpass the general doctrine of the Bhagavad Gita which lays down that all work is equally noble. Whatever task is done as appertaining to one in an organised society is not only noble but tantamount to divine worship. There is no high and low in social work

and performance of duty. To look after home is as noble as politics and engineering. The upbringing of children is at least as sacred and as valuable as the production in heavy industries or service done in army or in any official civil departments. The family is as important as the state."<sup>33</sup>

Thereafter, C.Rajagopalachari made a binary division of all work between men and women and fixed the sphere of activities between the two ; "The upbringing of children, and attention to the requirements of the family in matter of food, clothing, mental and physical health .... all these form the particular attention and activity of the average women, whether educated or uneducated. Society has put the most basic duties upon women who alone can bear those burdens. Man has taken comparatively easier task outside the home. Putting it roughly, but fairly and correctly, the family has to be looked after by the mother, while the community is to be attended by man. Who can say which is more important and which less?"<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, it will raise the eyebrows of all votaries of women's liberty and equality of what C.Rajagopalachari advised in his address at S.N.D.T. Women's University in Mumbai, "My advice, therefore, is that you should all marry rather than try to find independent professions, unless your special gifts urge you from within to serve society without the intermediary channel of family .... Not in any profession

or ambition can the soul of a woman find that sense of fulfilment and that joy which nature has ordained for her in motherhood.... in a child that has to be brought up to serve and attain honour and respect in society."<sup>35</sup>

#### IV. ECONOMIC IDEAS

As mentioned earlier, C.Rajagopalachari always fought shy of structural changes and was in favour of social and moral reforms within the status quo. And his economic and social ideas had been fashioned by his long service in the Constructive Movement, and more especially by his experience in the Gandhian Ashram at Thiruchengode. During his Premiership, he reflected upon the issue of Zamindari which, according to A.R.H.Copley, in no way betrayed his true conservative principles by state interventions into legally binding contracts. He himself raised the problem in the Madras Assembly thus :

"The question to be considered is the sacredness of the contract. For the first time, it is said, we are dealing a fatal blow at that and it will disturb the roots of organised society. Just like religion, the roots of moral obligation, wound up in the sacredness of the contract, are too dangerous to be touched ; do not touch it, do not shake it, society will crumble down."<sup>36</sup>

It would be interesting to note here that regarding the peasant question, C.Rajagopalachari subscribed to the moral economy theory. The moral economy theory, as used by many writers concerned with the changing societies in developing countries, was fathered by E.P.Thompson in his essay : 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18th Century (1971)'. Thompson's view of the moral economy was that the rich and poor were bound in a ring of mutual antagonism and need, and that the poor in the late 18th century Britain re-echoed the patriarchal ideology of subsistence for all to which the rich purportedly held, by making constant demand on the rich to uphold their duty to the poor. Thompson focussed on the contestation over resources and ideology, and his representation of the English peasantry was of a radical group who were active in the making of their own societies.<sup>37</sup>

In India, the moral economy presumes the existence of a pre-modern harmonious social order, rest on the view that the lower castes and classes passively accepted the ideology of the prevailing order. Frankel notes and attacks on .... "the traditional village system under which harmony was preserved by the mutual acceptance of ascriptive inequalities sanctified by the religious myths of caste."<sup>38</sup> In Frankel's work, the poor are variously described as 'resigned', 'deferent' and deeply conservative and inert, strongly committed to the traditional social hierarchy of caste, and largely reconciled to their impoverishment.<sup>39</sup> In the same work, Frankel returns

to a similar refrain :

"Village studies show that .... asymmetrical obligations among unequals were oriented toward ensuring subsistence for all members according to their ceremonial and productive functions. Religious symbolism became attached to the notion of hierarchical collectivity in which the use of concentrated politico-economic power was circumscribed by moral obligation.... As a result, it is arguable that commands by the dominant castes were perceived as legitimate and evoked high level of predictable compliance for the lower castes towards whom they are directed.<sup>40</sup>

Elsewhere, C.Rajagopalachari observed that the need of the hour was the restoration of the old contract to its old and legitimate place and the displacement of the legislation which in recent times has on the plea of public welfare, sought to occupy more and more the place of the contract. He also analysed that civilisation marched from status to contract. According to him, human life depends on mutual cooperation and this cooperation was mostly rendered in old days on the basis of status, birth or rank in society. Later it came to be based on contract. Now the state or the total power of the society seeks to replace the contract basis of the society and directly regulate all mutual services. Thus he opined that the state in India, in the present phase, was eager to regulate the relationship among men involved in industry and food production,

even before fully exploiting the potentialities of the freedom of contract. Hence a premature replacement of the contract by state regulation in agriculture may end in a terrible national calamity and mismanagement, lack of interest in production and shortage extending upto famine.<sup>41</sup> Breaking up the bonds of loyalty had become the sweeping measure of totalitarian reformation; breaking up the ties of loyalty between the landlord and the tenant, between the industrialist and the workmen, between the editor and the working journalist. The result was less production of food, less production of other goods, less work all around.

The fundamental error, according to C.Rajagopalachari, of Nehru's economic policy was the reliance on compulsion, on the coercion of new laws rather than on the people themselves. In support of his (C.Rajagopalachari) views with regard to the socialist policies of Nehru's Government, C.Rajagopalachari quoted five paragraphs from the writings of Gandhiji :

"When reformers lose faith in the method of persuasion, the technique of what is known as scientific socialism is born."

"I do not like the assumptions underlying many of the propositions of the socialist's programme which go to show that there is necessarily antagonism between the classes

and the masses or between the labourers and the capitalists such that they can never work for mutual good."

"If you have only state production, men will become moral and intellectual paupers."

"The socialists and the communists believe in generating and accentuating hatred to bring about economic equality."

"The violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the state. My (Gandhiji's) theory of trusteeship is no make-shift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories."<sup>42</sup>

However, according to A.R.H.Copley, C.Rajagopalachari neatly avoided any betrayal of his personal conservative belief in the contract and the right of private property by restoring to more traditional conservative reliance on the claims of customs. Yet he had, nevertheless, ascribed an interventionist role to the state.<sup>43</sup>

Throughout his political life, C.Rajagopalachari supported the Gandhian doctrine of trusteeship, although with his own refinement. According to C.Rajagopalachari, Gandhiji's 'Ism' can be briefly described as the ism of trusteeship. The social and moral rule of trusteeship should replace state compulsion involved in socialism and communism. The social

doctrine of holding of what you hold as a trustee for others is not a new conception and, according to C.Rajagopalachari, it is as old as the shastras.<sup>44</sup> Thus, C.Rajagopalachari was of the opinion that modern civilisation had greatly increased the number of situations which this sacred relationship of trusteeship must govern. Every human action, no matter how intimate and personal, was affected with a public interest, and attracted the principle of trusteeship. The doctrine of enlightened selfishness of the nineteenth century utilitarianism, according to C.Rajagopalachari, should be refined into the doctrine of immanent trusteeship.

#### V. CONCLUSION

"Appeals to the past", to quote Edward Said, "are among the commonest strategies in interpretation of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past is really past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps."<sup>45</sup> No statement applies more fittingly than the above, in the case of Indian nationalism. Indian nationalists in their eagerness to throw away the imperialist yoke, in their earnestness to bolster Indian tradition and past in the face of the mighty West, painted a pristine Indian past pregnant with most lofty

ideas and knowledge. C.Rajagopalachari was no exception to this. All through the pages of this chapter, we have observed that he painted an Indian past which was full of imagery and smack of cultural revivalism.

Notes and References

- 1 Cf. The Statesman (Calcutta, December 27, 1972), p.12.
- 2 Chitta Ranjan Das (commonly known as C.R.Das) wrote while there was Congress Session in 1919 to consider Mongeeu-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme. There was division within the Congress delegates regarding the scheme but the resolution which was eventually accepted by all, revealed C.Rajagopalachari's skill in draftmanship. C.R.Das said that when a mutually acceptable resolution seemed impossible to all, there came, "this thin Madrassi (C.Rajagopalachari) who put a coma here, a semicolon there, inserted a phrase here, removed one there, and within a few minutes, to the astonishment and joy of everyone, he was able to give us an acceptable resolution.  
  
See Gandhi, Rajmohan, The Rajaji Story, Volume I, (Bharathan, Madras, 1978), p.53.
- 3 Personal interview with Rajmohan Gandhi by J.P.Waghorne. Cited in Religion and Legitimation of Power in South Asia, edited by Bardwell L.Smith (Leiden/E.G.Brill, 1978). The agraharam is not only a cluster of habitations, but also centre of social life for the Brahmins. During marriages, and on occasions of temple festivities arranged by the Brahmins, the customary processions go round the village. To the Brahmin, the agraharam in more than one ways is the village. See A.Beteille, Caste, Class and Power, (Berkely, University of California Press, 1965), p.9.
- 4 Waghorne, J.P., op.cit., p.61.
- 5 Ibid., p.61. See Bimanesh Chatterjee as C.Rajagopalachari said, "I am Acharyya and I should not be emotional" .... Thousand Days with Rajaji, (Orient Paperback), 1975, p.61.
- 6 Ibid., p.61.
- 7 Commonly known as the Tamil book of wisdom, the Kural, was written by Thiruvalluvar around 900 A.D. The book has 133 chapters with 10 couplets in each, that is 1330 couplets in all. It may not be so widely known that when the two of the three books of this work were translated into Latin by Father Joseph Beschi (1680-1747) in 1730 there was no translation of any Indian work, Sanskrit or vernacular, into any languages of Europe, ancient or modern. The manuscript of this precious translation is preserved in the India Office Library, now part of the British Library. The entire Kural was translated into Bengali by Nalinimohan Sanyal.

- 8 Rajagopalachari, C., Jail Diary : A Day to Day Record of C.Rajagopalachari's Life in Vellore Jail, 1920 (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1991), p.85.
- 9 Ibid., p.5.
- 10 Ibid., p.6.
- 11 Ibid., p.7.
- 12 Rajagopalachari, C., in Vedanta Kesari, January 1957.
- 13 Rajagopalachari, C., Hinduism ; Doctrine and Way of Life, (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1989), p.19.
- 14 Rajagopalachari, C., Our Culture, (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 1988), p.5.
- 15 Ibid., p.12.
- 16 Ibid., p.14.
- 17 Rajagopalachari, C., Hinduism ; Doctrine and Way of Life, op.cit., p.23. C.Rajagopalachari further dwelt on the concept of dharma. According to him, dharma should not be confused with fanaticism of some followers of Hinduism. Dharma is the widespread inner call among the people of all classes in India to reduce their wants and give away their possessions for the good of others. That this has been a tradition in our country for ages can still be relied upon. Rajagopalachari, C., Gandhi Talks to Socialists, Swarajyya, 1959.
- 18 Ibid., p.23.
- 19 Ibid., p.29.
- 20 Ibid., p.32.
- 21 Ibid., p.99.
- 22 Cited in Copley, A.R.H., The Political Career of C.Rajagopalachari 1837-1954 ; A Moralism in Politics, (Macmillan, 1978).
- 23 Rajagopalachari, C., Our Culture, op.cit., p.16.
- 24 Ibid., p.17. Thus C.Rajagopalachari expressed concern at the gradual decrease of Indian values : "Helping oneself is selfishness. It generally escapes criticisms.

Helping one's own family is called nepotism by those who do not belong to the family. Helping the community is called communalism by those who fall outside the jati. Helping local community covering everyone in territorial unit irrespective of the jati is given the derogatory name of parochialism and provincialism .... We fail to consider that everyone in prosperity felt the obligation even as limited to his circle, the entire nation could be satisfactorily covered in this way, leaving a minimum to the state to fill any gap left out .... Ibid., p.19.

- 25 Ibid., p.26.
- 26 Ramaswamy, E.V., Mid-term poll in a Working Class Constituency in Tamil Nadu, Economic and Political Weekly, May 20, 1972.
- 27 Our Culture, op.cit., p.26. It is important to quote here Karl Marx, ... "All the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines, strangely complex, rapid and destructive as the successive Hindusthan may appear, did not go deeper than its surface. England has broken down the entire framework of Indian society, without any symptoms of reconstruction yet appearing. This loss of his old world, with no gain of a new one, imparts a particular melancholy to the present misery of the Hindu, and separates Hindusthan, ruled by Britain, from all its ancient traditions, and from the whole of its past and history. Karl Marx and Fedrick Engels, The British Rule in India, Selected Works, Volume I, (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969), p.489.
- 28 Our Culture, op.cit., p.25.
- 29 Ibid., p.26.
- 30 Ibid., p.32. In another place, C.Rajagopalachari offered comments which are highly relevant to cite here, "Madras belongs to the fisherman's families and not to the tresspassers which are all in the city, you can beautify even the fisherman's kupam, but do not destroy them, do not put others where poor folk lived for ages, do not expect to live away from their places of livelihood. Fisherman's Woes, Swarajya, May, 27, 1959.

- 31 Similarly, he justified slums in Madras, "If slum is removed from your sight, it settles itself somewhere else. What are to imagine that what is not seen just been extinguished ! You know we prefer to live on the slope of the dirty drain in Madras because we get work and send some money for the wretched one's whom we have left there .... The slum is not an accident. It is inherent in the progress you have adopted, which requires a coal-driven or electric-powered machine to be the master and a number of living men and women as slaves. The Slum World, Swarajya, June 28, 1958.
- 32 See Uma Chakraborty and Tanika Sarkar.
- 33 Rajagopalachari, C., University Addresses, (Hind Kitab Limited, Mumbai, 1949), p.51.
- 34 Ibid., p.32.
- 35 Ibid., p.54.
- 36 Ibid., p.55.
- 37 Madras Legislative Assembly Debates, Vol.4, December 20, cited in A.R.H.Copley, op.cit., p.123.
- 38 Dispossession, Degradation, and Empowerment of Peasantry and the Poor in Bengali Fiction. By Tony Beck & Tirthankar Bose, in Economic and Political Weekly, March 4, 1995.
- 39 Frankel., F., India's Green Revolution, (Princeton University Press, Princeton) 1971.
- 40 Ibid.
- 41 Swarajya, November 22, 1958.
- 42 Iyer, M.V., Rajaji : A Study of his Personality, Vol.I.
- 43 Copley, A.R.H., op.cit., p.124.
- 44 Rajagopalachari, C., On Trusteeship, in Documents on Indian Political Thought, Vol.II, by A.Appadoral, (OUP, 1976), p.107.
- 45 Said, Edward W., Culture and Imperialism, (Vintage, London, 1994, p.1.

## Chapter IV

CHAKRABORTY RAJAGOPALACHARI AND HIS POSITION IN THE  
IDEOLOGICAL CONTINUUM OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS.I. I N T R O D U C T I O N

Of all the provinces of British India, the Madras Presidency consisted of four linguistic groups (Tamil, Kannada, Telegu and Malayalam). It stretched from the tip of the Indian Peninsula, Kanyakumari, to half-way upto the eastern coast of Bengal, the Ganjam district of the present day Orissa. Most of the North Indian people spoke one of the several Indo-Aryan languages that had many affinities to the classical Indian language, Sanskrit. By contrast, the majority of the inhabitants of the Madras Presidency spoke one of the five Dravidian languages, the most important of which were Tamil and Telegu languages. Aside from its physical and linguistic separateness, the Madras land settlement at the time of its implementation was also unique in British Indian practice. The characteristic system of the Presidency, however, was to settle much of the land directly with the peasants called ryotwari. This system not only differentiated the Madras Presidency from Bengal, but also along with zamindari tenure of other British provinces. All the three elements .... geographical remoteness and the feeling of isolation, the linguistic differences, and the existence of ryotwari settlement .... contributed to the development of what could be called 'the Madras style' of administration. In many ways, the elements that composed this style were subjective, and <sup>had</sup> much to do with the

special way in which the British administrators in Madras envisioned their work.<sup>1</sup>

According to David Washbrook, "the major connection between the British Government and its subjects in the nineteenth century was through formal administration and, particularly, through the process by which revenue was extracted."<sup>2</sup> The British had brought no new service groups with them into Madras and so were unable to adopt the tried and tested tactics of South Indian statecraft. They had to find the material for their administration from within the existing structure of the Madras society. In consequence, they came to anchor their administration to the dominant peasant elites of the South and to support their higher bureaucrats, who were supposed to relate the peasants to the Raj, with very insufficient force. "The dominant peasants elites over most of South India were of local level culture and used the resources derived from local level from within the locality to maintain their power."<sup>3</sup>

Washbrook further analysed that in comparison to the United Province, where widespread religio-cultural homogeneities underlay the boundaries of the province, or Bengal and Bombay, in which economic linkages tied together the various regions, the Madras Presidency was a peculiar collection of autonomous territories. No inhabitant of Madras could speak his language

to half of his fellows; particular institutions of religion and religious revivalism were relevant only to a small fraction of the population; market connection integrated only small, regional groups of producers and consumers. After Independence, the heterogeneity of the province was rationalised by its partition into five separate provinces. But before Independence, the Presidency was an arbitrary conglomerate held together only by the fiat of an imperial power.<sup>4</sup>

## II. The Brahmin Predominance

The great landholding caste group in Madras were the Vellalas in the Tamil areas, the Balija Naidus in both Tamil and Telugu districts, Kammas and Reddis in the Telugu areas. Both Tamil and Telugu Brahmins also had sizeable landholdings, however. The large landholders and the main peasant groups were all non-Brahmin caste Hindus.

From the early period of British contact with South India, the Brahmins were regarded as the repository of religious and social power and literate skill.<sup>5</sup> As priests at the head of the social order, the Brahmins were independent of the British. As a learned caste, they were more and more indispensable in the government bureaucracy. But their very usefulness and skill aroused mistrust, because they were increasingly in command of large areas of British administration and, therefore, in a position to suit their own, rather than British ends. This

factor was not without effect in the formation of a non-Brahmin party in the second decade of the twentieth century.

In the Madras Presidency, after the 1860s, the Telegu and particularly the Tamil Brahmins, who together comprised 3.2 per cent of the total population, enhanced their position in the society by gradually filling the great majority of administrative and educational positions open to the Indians under the Raj. In Tamil Nadu, the Brahmins maintained their high ritual status while increasing their social and economic position. Split into two religious sects, the Smartha and Vaishnavites, Tamil Brahmins were broken into multitude of sub-castes. About half of them lived in the three districts of Tanjore, Trichinopally and Tinnevelly, where they possessed an unquestioned pre-eminence. In Tanjore, the Brahmin district par excellence, hardly a family among them did not possess land and had some valuable estates.

Tamil Brahmins, and the Aiyars especially, were as famous for their ambition and adaptability as the Chitpavans of Maharashtra. An official manual noted, 'there is hardly a pursuit, literary, industrial or professional, to which they do not apply themselves with remarkable success'.<sup>16</sup> In government services, figures compiled by the Madras government in 1912, illustrate the consistently strong domination of the Brahmins in upper level government services. The distributions of appointments among Deputy Collectors, Sub-judges and district Munsifs show that

Brahmins in 1912 held 82.3 and 72.6 per cent of the posts available to Indians. By contrast, the non-Brahmin Hindus (Vellalas, Balija Naidus and Bairs) held only 21.5, 16.7 and 19.5 per cent of the total appointments. The Indian Christians and Muslims were well behind.<sup>7</sup>

An analysis of the caste distribution among those employed in upper levels of the Revenue and Judicial departments of the Madras Government reaffirms these propositions. 70 per cent of all the successful Hindu candidates in the Madras University Examination between 1876 and 1886 were Brahmins. As education circulated, the Directors of Public Instruction were impressed by the 'the energy with which the Brahmins were endeavouring to keep the lead in higher education throughout the country, and their growing enthusiasm for western knowledge.'<sup>8</sup>

It was the Brahmin predominance, not just the tiny number of Britons who ruled the District Collectorates and the Presidency. In many ways, the Raj itself had always been a truly Brahmin Raj. Both the Company's bureaucracy and the earliest public servants consisted so very largely of Brahmins and to a lesser extent, of Brahmanised members of other communities.<sup>9</sup> The Brahmins were helped by two factors in gaining political leadership. There was a carry-over of traditional respect for the ritualist Brahmin to the new professional Brahmin.

With the beginning of the twentieth century, contradictory pressures began to mount. Those who were in the lower categories of the social ranking, those who felt disenfranchised or deprived of full human dignity by the earlier definitions of social reality began to take steps to correct public perceptions of their place in society. But by then, the damage had already been done. By then, public consciousness of these categories and concepts, as employed by predominantly Brahmin and Brahminised bureaucracy, had become so pervasive and so strong that the entire shape of the political process during the twentieth century was to be profoundly influenced thereby. Indeed, no other single factor had more powerful impact upon the shape of politics in South India during C. Rajagopalachari's lifetime than this fact.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, the combination of social advantages was bound to be short-lived and fell to pieces predictably in politics and in civil services. Electoral politics from 1910 onwards came to be based on majority votes and after further extension of the franchise from 1920 onwards, the leading non-Brahmin groups were bound to compete successfully with the Brahmin both at the provincial and district levels. Gandhian politics too depended on organising the masses from 1919 onwards and the Brahmins had no special advantage in this. Similarly, civil service employment with prestige, out of proportion to its monetary worth, could not be the preserve of a minority on the basis of

examinations and the majority groups were bound to demand a larger share of it from 1818 onwards when they became politically effective. This cutting down to size of the Brahmins in politics and in civil service was indeed predictable.

Similarly, the Brahmin eclipse in landownership and general social esteem was equally predictable. For one thing, the average Tamil Brahmin, even at the best of times early in this century, was never a large-scale landowners and indeed very few of them were large-scale landowners in Tanjore or Tirunelveli as they were in Kerala. They were essentially small-scale or medium-scale landowners though almost every Brahmin family owned a little land unlike other high castes which included the landless with the big owners. Brahmin's landownership attained importance for the concurrent reason that he had usually another source of income. Members of almost every landowning Brahmin family were doing some paid work or other, often near their village so that their agricultural savings were ploughed back into savings. This process lasting over a few decades down to the 1920s built up the exaggerated legend of the landed prosperity of the Brahmin. With competition for jobs and with the need to maintain more middle class expensive life standards, the Brahmin landowners were soon coming down the scale. Social esteem began to erode as it was built on the twin foundations of old ritual superiority and the new dominance in the civil services and professions. The

former was challenged by the non-Brahmin social reformers successfully in the new climate of western education, while the latter was challenged by the top non-Brahmin groups as soon as they realised that they had been left behind and they became politically effective enough by 1920 to have their way into the so-called secular and western climate under the Raj.

### III. Justice Party and the Emergence of the Non-Brahmin Politics

Unlike Bengal, Madras was the last province to develop the nationalist political fervour. This is not to say that Madras was immune to the effects of the British rule or missionary educational enterprise. But the cultural renaissance in Madras occurred later and, in many ways, a different quality which occurred in Bengal.<sup>11</sup>

In this most benighted of all provinces, from 1870s onwards, new pressures on the empire and on the southern political economy led to a change in the picture. A new political consciousness came about in the South and modern forms of politics slowly emerged. By 1917, Madras was leading the whole of India in regard to the Home Rule Agitation, communal movements and the demand for regional autonomy. Like many other politicians in India before Gandhiji's rise to power in 1920, Mrs. Besant was faced with the dual problem of expressing her own political feelings and of finding a constituency that

would listen to her. Her most important contribution was that she brought into open the hopes and grievances that were already apparent in the political and social life of the presidency.<sup>12</sup>

The Home Rule agitation and the non-Brahmin movement were the two principal manifestations of this activity, based on new ideas and appearance of new political structures. Madras city, the provincial capital, became the centre of such activity by Western educated Indians and group of men who emerged prominent in business. These men, so it happened, were mostly from the Brahmin community inhabiting certain areas of Madras city, like Mylapore and Egmore. Wealthy and highly educated, they occupied legal and bureaucratic positions. The influence of this small group of men was indeed extra-ordinary. In fact, they came to be referred to as the Mylapore clique.<sup>13</sup>

During the period 1916-1929, the nationalist politicians who belonged to the Brahmin community, the highest caste in the South Indian society, were challenged by a group of non-Brahmins who had then recently began to take an active part in the politics of Madras. The caste conflict between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins in Madras was a projection of the pre-existing social rivalry.<sup>14</sup> There was a belief held by some non-Brahmins that Brahmins were racially different from non-Brahmins, the idea having been posited by some European writers that the non-Brahmins were Dravidians and original civilisers of the

region, while the Brahmins were the Aryan invaders from the North. This led to the view that ...

... the Dravidians had been conquered and culturally suppressed by the Aryans and their institutions supplanted by an imposed Sanskritic Aryan culture and religion and caste system by which non-Brahmins had for centuries been kept in an inferior position.<sup>15</sup>

There were linguistic, cultural and social difference between the two groups, which contributed to the growth of a feeling of separatism.

When the Morley-Minto Reforms made the beginnings of representation, and elections were held under it in the province, it was found that in the quadrilingual province of Madras (Tamil, Telygu, Kannada and Malayalam) that in the small electorate of educated persons one whose caste was more numerous in the electorate had better chance of being elected.<sup>16</sup> The defeat of an otherwise wellequipped candidate in an election where the Brahmins had not supported him is believed to be the immediate occasion for the founding of the great non-Brahmin political party in Madras.<sup>17</sup> In the case of the Justice Party, it was its functions that attracted support, not its attributes.<sup>18</sup>

The formation of the Justice Party was a significant event in Madras. It was an off-shoot of an association called

the South Indian Liberal Federation, formed in 1917 with the declared objective to advance, safeguard and protect the interests of the non-Brahmin community in the Madras province. Newspapers, the Justice in English, and the Dravidian in Tamil were started to propagate the party's ideas.

When the Brahmins came to settle in South India, the ancient kings and chieftains, desiring to secure the benefits of yagnas and other religious ceremonies, accorded to them the supreme position in society by reason of their education and scholarship and simple living and high thinking. The Brahmins naturally tried to introduce their socio-religious organisation into Tamil society, and as religious oligarchy and social democracy could not very well mix, it led to conflict.<sup>19</sup> The people of South India could not be organised in terms of the four Aryan varnas as in North India, and social jealousies began to manifest themselves in the relationship between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmin caste groups in the South. Combining land-ownership and religious exclusiveness, the Brahmins with their earlier English education began to get into office under the Raj in urban areas. They were first to respond to Westernisation, and their literary tradition gave them an initial advantage in this respect. With their command of English, they entered the rank of colonial administration gaining a new criterion of status in addition to their old and new political and economic advantages which further

widened the gap between the elite and the masses.<sup>20</sup>

A counter-elite of these politically articulate and highly educated members of the communities and castes of lesser status and power arose. They felt that the nationalist movement would only strengthen the position of the Brahmin castes, the non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency allied themselves with the colonial regime seeking protection of their position and neutralisation of power differences in the population. The non-Brahmin elite also gradually came to take interests in the education of their communities.

The Justice Party consisted of rich businessmen and seasoned politicians and was led by P.T.Chetti as a powerful group in opposition to the Brahmin stronghold. Since nearly 98 per cent population of the Madras presidency comprised of non-Brahmins, they had a feeling of distress that a very small minority of Brahmins should have become so influential as to hold the most of the public offices in Government. The non-Brahmins realised that the success of the Brahmins was largely due to their ancient literary traditions and consequent skill to pass examinations. The Brahmins accused the non-Brahmins leaders of weakening the cause of the Home Rule by showing their loyalty to the British rulers.<sup>21</sup>

However, without mentioning E.V.Ramswami Naicker and his Self-Respect movement, the description of the non-Brahmin

movement would remain incomplete. E.V.Ramswami Naicker, who was affectionately addressed by his followers as Periyar (revered elder) was a radical social reformer. First of all he was a freedom fighter. His participation in the freedom struggle dates back to 1920s. He campaigned and participated in the Non-cooperation movement and was jailed for picketing in front of toddy shops in Erode. He was elected as the President of the Provincial Congress Committee in 1924. For offering satyagraha and defending khadi, he was jailed many times by the British.

His protest at Vaikom against the ban on the use of roads around the big temple by members of untouchable castes gave confidence to the untouchables to protest and fight for equality. It was followed by the Gurukulam dispute at Madras. The Gurukulam, and orphanage run by a Brahmin Congressman and financially supported by the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, had separate dining facilities for the Brahmin and non-Brahmin inmates. Periyar protested against this practice in the orphanage. When his protests went unheeded, as the provincial Congress President he stopped funds to the Gurukulam. It is well recorded that over both Vaikom protest and the Gurukulam affair, Gandhiji took an opposite stand. He supported the status quo rather than change sought by Periyar. As a result, funds for the Gurukulam were obtained from other source with the support of C.Rajagopalachari. Subsequently, Periyar left the

Congress Party and found his Self-Respect Movement, a social reform group to free Tamilians not only from the British but also from the hegemonic upper castes and Brahmin ideology.

Through his Self-Respect Movement, Periyar continued to oppose caste and gender inequalities, superstitions and various other religious practices which legitimised social oppression. He tried to develop Dravidian cultural alternatives as against hegemonic Brahminical culture.

#### IV.. ... C.Rajagopalachari's Entry into the Indian National Congress ...

Chakraborty Rajagopalachari started his legal career in Salem and became popular. He took interest in social work. However, it was his profession which fully engaged him till 1910. All the time he kept himself abreast with political developments. It was in 1906 that he heard about Gandhiji's work in South Africa. He also kept himself in touch with Tilak and enlisted himself as a member of the Indian National Congress. In taking this decision, he was guided as much by his own patriotism as by the sobering influence of some of his friends who shared his feelings. He was also inspired by the example set by Sir C.Vijayaraghavachari who had been present at Bombay in 1885 and taken an active part in the deliberations of the first session of the Congress.

In December, 1907, C.Rajagopalachari participated in the Surat session of the Congress. It was a historic session. The cleavage between the moderates and the extremists had widened. There was little room for any compromise. C.Rajagopalachari remained true to the tenets set down by Tilak. He got an opportunity to take up the cudgels against the moderates. In the Congress session at Madras in 1908, the organisers instructed that only those Congressmen who agreed to give an undertaking in writing that they fully endorse the policy of the moderates should be allowed to attend the session. It was a dictat which aimed at stifling all dissident views. The situation seemed intolerable to C.Rajagopalachari and his friends. After careful deliberations, C.Rajagopalachari drafted a pamphlet, dealing the inconsistency in the stand of the moderates.

C.Rajagopalachari instinctively felt that the induction of the Justice Party into the body politic complicated the situation in the Madras Province. He agreed that the Brahmins had cornered many of the coveted posts and professions. But this was not due to any determined effort on the part of the Brahmins to keep out other communities. By extending the benefits of education to more and more people, C.Rajagopalachari felt that the imbalance could be removed. What was obnoxious to him was the effort made by the leaders of the Justice Party to identify the Congress as a party of Brahmins.

The Congress, at least in the Madras Province, had to fight on two fronts. The first objective was to contain the British colonial objectives, and second objective was to nail the Justice Party propaganda against the Congress and to educate the people of the role of the Congress as the true national organisation which brought into its fold all religious and castes and linguistic groups.

In 1919, C. Rajagopalachari left Salem presumably intending to enter into the legal profession at Madras. He had just settled temporarily in the house of Kasturi Ranga Iyengar when Gandhiji came to Madras to survey the potential for a new type of political agitation. As fate had it, Gandhiji ended up as C. Rajagopalachari's house guest and it was in this house that Gandhi had the dream which he credited with inspiring the style of his first mass resistance movement.<sup>22</sup> AS for C. Rajagopalachari, this meeting with Gandhiji changed his life. He left his legal career and joined Gandhiji's movement. By 1920, this very promising lawyer was in jail for civil disobedience.

Unlike most of those who became Gandhiji's lieutenants, C. Rajagopalachari neither travelled nor studied in the West; he did not leave India until Independence. His reception of the western ideas and social practices was always restricted by a dogged, but not uncritical, attachment to the religion of his caste. He was a Hindu nationalist as much as an Indian nationalist.

Why, then, did C.Rajagopalachari leave the Extremist School and follow Gandhiji ? According to David Arnold,<sup>23</sup> first, C. Rajagopalachari believed sincerely in the efficacy of satyagraha, which appeared to him a more practical technique for achieving India's nationalist objectives than either constitutionalism or terrorism. Secondly, he was attracted by Gandhiji's spiritual approach to politics. The moral zeal that Gandhiji injected into his campaigns appealed to C.Rajagopalachari, a Brahmin intellectual in search of a worthy cause. There was a strong conservative trait in C.Rajagopalachari's personality. Whereas many other nationalists shuddered at Gandhiji's rejection of Western society and institutions, C.Rajagopalachari's response was sympathetic. C.Rajagopalachari described in a newspaper article in May 1921 that he had seen the moral and political bankruptcy of the West. It was, he said, in India's interests to free itself from this degeneration. Non-cooperation "is not a mere political device to wrest reform but an urgent necessity if we at all desire to live when the West is drifting into social anarchy. To depend for order and government on the West is nothing but death to us."<sup>24</sup>

Ambition as well as intellectual conviction played an important part in C.Rajagopalachari's conversion. In Madras City, he was not to be a junior partner in the nationalist firm, and he chafed at the political caution and preoccupation with legislature of the elder leaders. On the other hand, Gandhiji deserted by the nationalist and moderates, in turn,

desperately needed a loyal lieutenant in Tamil Nadu. By opting for Gandhiji, when all established politicians were against him, C. Rajagopalachari had a unique opportunity to assume a central position in Tamil Nadu. By temperament, C. Rajagopalachari was reserved and Gandhiji noted his innate shyness in their first meeting in Madras in April, 1919.<sup>25</sup> Other writers have commented that he was too much an intellectual to be a popular leader and that he preferred decision-making behind the scenes to public leadership.<sup>26</sup>

V. C. Rajagopalachari : Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements.

Although the Muslims constituted only seven per cent of the Presidency's population and only about half of that per cent in Tamil Nadu, and though they were deeply divided between Urdu and Tamil speakers, a vocal Khilafat movement developed in that region by August 1920. The Muslims were split into three political factions, the origin of which dated back to the beginning of the century, but were intensified by the Khilafat issue. A loyalist group centered around the prince of Arcott, had opposed the Lucknow pact of 1916 between the Congress and the Muslim League and formed a short-lived rival to the Muslim League in Madras in November 1917. A more enduring role was played by M. Usman, a relative of the prince Arcott, who entered the Madras Legislative Council in 1920 and

was the main Muslim spokesman in the Justice Party.<sup>27</sup>

A second group consisted of Urdu and Tamil-speaking merchants and businessmen. Its central figure was Yakub Hasan, who had helped to found a Madras branch of Muslim League in 1908 and had been one of the architects of the Lucknow Pact.<sup>28</sup> A third Muslim faction was the most fanatical. Almost entirely composed of Urdu-speaking Muslims, it was led by Abdul Majid Sharar, a fierce pan-Islamist and editor of an Urdu newspaper, Quami Report. Sharar was bitterly dissatisfied of Hasan's collaboration with the Congress as of the Arcott's loyalty to the Raj. He questioned whether Muslims could rely on Hindu sincerity in the Khilafat issue and urged the Muslims to act assertively.<sup>29</sup>

C. Rajagopalachari assiduously cultivated Muslim cooperation with the Congress over the Khilafat. At the Madras provincial Congress Conference in August 1919, he moved a resolution for the release of Ali Brothers. For the Khilafat Day on 17th October, 1919, C. Rajagopalachari undertook to organise Hindu support in Tamil Nadu. At Khilafat meetings in Tamil Nadu he supported Hasan and the moderate merchants encouraging them to cooperate with the Congress and isolating the Sharar faction. By May 1920, Hasan and his associates, with C. Rajagopalachari behind them, were in control of provincial Khilafat Committee.

The Madras Government was no doubt correct in calling the Presidency a backwater of the Khilafat agitation. Except the North Arcott which had a large number of urban population, the Khilafat Committees were as much Hindu enterprise as Muslims. The moderate Khilafat Muslims gave C.Rajagopalachari the numerical and organisational leverage he needed to displace the nationalist leadership.<sup>30</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's involvement with the Khilafat movement begs question as to how sincere or merely opportunist he was in his relationship with the Indian Muslims. His appraisal of Mohammed in his Jain Diary suggests his sincerity. But clearly there was much that was merely tactical. He used Muslim support in his efforts to win control of the Congress party in the Presidency.<sup>31</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's political authority in the South depended very considerably on the success of the Civil Disobedience Movement. Yet, C.Rajagopalachari was seriously disadvantaged. In the first place, civil disobedience went very much against the grain of political feelings of the Presidency. C.Rajagopalachari had to carry the party against its own instinctive preference either for the tactics of the Swarajist Party or for the office acceptance. In his Jail Diary, he wrote : "Non-cooperation is not a means to a political end but a Dharma in itself. To abstain from cooperating with wrong

is an absolute duty. This is not simply because thereby we shall evict the Englishmen. It is an absolute duty for all time to refuse to participate in the degradation of one's own people."<sup>32</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari built up a team of loyal supporters in the Tamil Nadu Congress Working Committee, including Dr. T.Rajan, K.Santahanam and E.V.Ramaswami Naicker. Together with the support of the Muslims through the Khilafat movement, the support of those untouchables mobilised by C.Rajagopalachari's prohibition campaign and his attraction to the students, C.Rajagopalachari had a viable, if heterogenous and ephemeral political base in the Presidency. It would be wrong to think of him as just Gandhiji's lieutenant. His was a position of considerable local prestige.<sup>33</sup>

The Congress Party, between the Bardoli decision of February 1922 and the Lahore Congress of 1929, was in the doldrums. With his own release in February 1922 and Gandhiji's imprisonment in March, C.Rajagopalachari took over the role as defendant of Gandhiji's ideas within the All India Congress bodies. He got ephemeral triumph at the Gaya Congress when his views were carried in the Subjects Committee by 203 to 87 and by a majority in the open session. But C.R.Das, C.Rajagopalachari's chief opponent at Gaya, was far too commanding a figure to accept this verdict. Following his defeat at Gaya, he resigned his Presidentship of the Congress,

and announced the formation of a separate Swaraj Party. At the Allahabad AICC meeting in February 1923, a truce was agreed that both parties should abstain from debating their conflicting views on the Council-Entry. Meanwhile, C.Rajagopalachari, in company with Rajendra Prasad, went on fund-raising tour for the constructive programme. C.Rajagopalachari was well aware of the need for party unity, but his efforts to patch up an agreement with C.R.Das at a meeting in Delhi were unsuccessful. At the AICC meeting in Bombay in May 1923, a compromise was reached to the effect that the Congress should turn a blind eye to the electoral politics of the Swarajists. C.Rajagopalachari resigned. He saw the compromise as a fatal indecisiveness.<sup>34</sup>

On February 1922, a small police party with little ammunition fired at a procession of Non-cooperators in an obscure place known as Chauri Chaura in eastern Uttar Pradesh. When their ammunition were exhausted, the policemen took refuge in their outpost. A violent section of the procession set fire to the outpost and hacked the fleeing constables to pieces. In this gruesome enactments, twenty policemen were killed. Gandhiji read of the incident in the morning newspaper of February 8, the day after his rejoinder to the Viceroy. The facts were immediately confirmed in a report that arrived from his son Devdas, who was in Uttar Pradesh and visited the scene.

Chauri Chaura hit Gandhi with tremendous force. He felt that through Chauri Chaura God had spoken. Though the

number of arrests had gone upto 30,000, the action, he felt, had to be cancelled. When C.Rajagopalachari learnt of the stoppage of the Non-cooperation movement he felt dismayed and hurt. He wrote :

"I fully realise the gravity of the offence of the mob at Gorakhpur. But inspite of my tenderest and most complete attachment to my master and the ideals he stand for, I fail to see why there should a call for stopping our struggle for birthrights because of such events. The Malabar atrocities were a much greater reason, if Gorakhpur be a good reason. No, I fail to see them from here (in seclusion and without materials, it is true) the logicality of the grave steps taken."<sup>35</sup>

VI. C.Rajagopalachari and Civil Disobedience, 1930-34.

In the years from 1927 to 1929, Gandhiji was the person whose voice was decisive in formulating Congress strategies in meeting the emerging left challenge. The left challenge at this time revolved essentially around the question of what to be the Congress goal .... complete independence or dominion status. To Gandhiji and to most of his lieutenants it was a verbal duel whereas to left wingers it was an essential definition of the Congress creed, and important starting point for the struggle against the British. Gandhiji realised the need to placate the aspirations of the emerging left wing and the

Government in turn realised the need to respond to Gandhian overtures to take the wind out of the leftist sail. There was thus a steady progression from the Calcutta Congress declaration of 1928, to Irwin's ambiguous response of October 1929, to Congress reply in the form of Delhi Manifesto of November 1929 and finally, the declaration of Congress creed as complete independence at the Lahore Congress.

Whereas in defining the Congress creed at Lahore, Gandhiji carried the whole Congress with him, in enumerating the programme of civil disobedience the Gandhian line remained distinct. His choice of salt issue, for instance took the left wing and the conservatives within the Congress by surprise. When at the Lahore Congress of 1929, Gandhiji felt compelled to accept the eventuality of a civil disobedience campaign against the British, he was uncertain still about the exact programme he would follow. Worried by the language of militancy voiced by the radical elements within the Congress, Gandhiji even considered it safer to offer the civil disobedience alone.<sup>36</sup> To Gandhiji, civil disobedience was not purely a political movement. The non-violent defiance of law under certain circumstances was a religious duty to him and was intended to gradually bring moral pressure on the British. The philosophical content of his civil disobedience movement was anathema not only to the British authorities, but also to the majority of the Congress who were taken by surprise, for

instance, by his formulation of 11 points before the mass campaign was launched.

Gandhiji's Dandi March (12 March .... 6 April, 1930) inaugurated the civil disobedience movement. The programmes of civil disobedience that Gandhiji suggested, however, remained controlled so that the basic tenet of non-violence would not be compromised. Apart from breaking salt laws, he suggested the picketing of liquor and foreign cloth shops, resignation by lawyers and government officials of their posts, and boycott of courts. So far as the programme of non-payment of taxes were concerned Gandhiji was still wary. Already at Lahore he had cautioned that it could be offered only at the final stage of the national fight. While willing to allow non-payment of specific taxes like chaukidari tax for instance, he was hesitant to talk about an agrarian non-revenue campaign.

The Madras Congress leaders surveyed the prospect of civil disobedience in 1930. C.Rajagopalachari had come out of political retirement. The decision of launching the civil disobedience was a body blow to the Madras Swarajist Party. Srinivasa Iyengar resigned as the President of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee. Gandhiji brought C.Rajagopalachari into line. The Headquarters of civil disobedience in the South India was at Trichinopally and it was from there on April 1930 that C.Rajagopalachari set off with one hundred

volunteers, on his salt march to Vedaranyam .... a point on the Tanjore seaboard. Vedaranyam's assets were convenient salt swamps and Vedaratnam Pillai, a merchant was willing to host a battle.

Ten days before the March, the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee unanimously made C.Rajagopalachari the President. To make the March a success, C.Rajagopalachari's problem lay in turning down the volunteers, not in finding them. He chose with care, enjoining his pledge on each recruit. His ashram supplied the first eight. The eventual regiment .... the hundred gems, as they came to be called .... included a man from each Tamil district, seven youths resigning handsome Bombay jobs, an engineering college lecturer and a railway official, the last two also sacrificing their posts. To the free India of the future the group was to contribute an editor, an ambassador, a union minister and more.<sup>37</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari chose the metaphor of the march to the sea to make illegal salt in order to deliberately violate British laws and to provoke among the Tamil people the idea that their protest was right.<sup>38</sup> This choice was modelled on the Salt March which Gandhi undertook in March, 1930. However, C. Rajagopalachari decided to broaden the meaning of the protest by combining it with that of pilgrimage. It was intended that the members of his group would walk by stages, like pilgrims or soldiers.

Vedaranyam was located on the very edge of Tanjore district which had many sacred spots and was crossed by the most sacred of all rivers in the South India, the Kaveri. C.Rajagopalachari's group of men, almost all of whom were high caste and young, left the inland town of Trichinopally for Vedaranyam on the Tamil New Year's Day. This made the departure doubly auspicious. The Tanjore district had been the centre of Chola kingdom in the eleventh century. The Chola kings were known to have raised great temples and to have made overseas conquest. It is not without some interest that the course of the march to the sea, it was compared to the Digvijaya. Thus the march was an attempt to recreate the Indian political potency.<sup>39</sup>

#### VII      C.Rajagopalachari and Office Acceptance .

During the 1930s, the Congress, while fighting the Raj, faced the great but incomplete transformation of the 1947. This was not just a question of party organisation throttling lower-level spontaneity; what was involved was the gradual establishment of a kind of hegemony of bourgeois and dominant peasant groups over the national movement. The Congress repeatedly aroused expectations and aspirations which it could not satisfy and with the development of leftist challenge through trade unions, kisan sabhas, radical student organisations, Congress Socialists and the Communists, the Right-Left confrontations within the Congress organisation

itself increasingly became an important part of the party's life from the mid-1930s onwards. The disillusionment of the radical middle class youth with Gandhian method of struggle was also contributing significantly to the growth of the Left by the end of the period.<sup>40</sup>

What was now in the mid-1930s was the big increase in their strength through a remarkable shift in their attitudes of men like Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C.Rajagopalachari, the no-changers of the 1920s with considerable stature as rural constructive workers and mass leaders. A partial explanation in some cases might well be the opportunism of middle age replacing youthful ardour. More important was the fact that the twin Gandhian strategies of constructive work and peaceful mass satyagraha seemed to be failing. But relatively few among close Gandhian associates had that amount of patience or idealism, while Gandhiji himself felt acutely threatened by the new Leftist challenge posing for the first time a countrywide alternative mass strategy which was considered unacceptable to the Congress primarily for class reasons.<sup>41</sup>

The months after the Lucknow Congress clearly revealed the foresight of Birla. Jawaharlal Nehru and the three socialists who were Working Committee members (out of 14) became increasingly the prisoners of the Right, without

effective power, yet hindered by their office from frank criticism of the way the Congress was going. Nehru's socialist speeches were made the pretext for a resignation threat on June 1936 by seven Working Committee members headed by Rajendra Prasad, Vallabhbhai Patel, C.Rajagopalachari and Kripalani who had drafted their protest letter from Gandhiji's Headquarters at Wardha. Gandhiji then patched up the quarrel but clearly it was Nehru who as usual made the concessions. On the crucial point of Office Entry the rightists got ultimately its way.<sup>42</sup>

The business community had all along been very apprehensive about Nehru's presidentship, but had felt confident that Gandhiji's restraining influence and good deal of nursing would keep Nehru on the right rails all through. They felt relieved that at the Lucknow Congress, Nehru could not go the whole hog, being restrained by the Gandhiji's Group. Birla gloated with satisfaction at the outcome of the Lucknow Congress : "Mahatmaji kept his promise and without his uttering a word, he saw that no new commitments were made. Jawaharlal's speech in a way was thrown into the waste paper basket."<sup>43</sup> Birla, moreover, correctly predicted that in the forthcoming elections controlled by the "Vallabhbhai Group", there was every likelihood of Congressmen coming into office. He considered C.Rajagopalachari's inclusion in the Working Committee as a very significant thing judged in the context

of C.Rajagopalachari's inclinations for working the constitution.

Disquiet rather than revulsion characterised C.Rajagopalachari's reaction to the spread of socialist ideas (the first All-India Conference of the Congress Socialist Party took place at Patna in 17th May, 1934). But it was another warning signal that C.Rajagopalachari had to change his political tactics. His signature appeared under a resolution of the Working Committee ;

"Whilst the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thoughts, it is necessary in view of loose talks about confiscating private property and necessity of class war to remind Congressmen that the Karachi resolutions as finally settled by the AICC at Bombay in August, 1931, which lays down certain principles neither contemplates confiscation nor advocacy of class war which are contrary to the Congress creed of non-violence."<sup>44</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari further said ; "At the same time, the Working Committee is of the opinion that the Congress does contemplate a wiser and juster use of private property so as to prevent the exploitation of the landless poor and contemplates a healthier relationship between Capital and Labour."<sup>45</sup>

On July 14, 1937, C.Rajagopalachari assumed ~~the~~ office as the Prime Minister of Madras ousting his rival, S. Satyamurthi. During his Premiership, C.Rajagopalachari was notoriously authoritarian and even dictatorial in character.<sup>46</sup> Thus the government run by C.Rajagopalachari came in for the greatest attack. The Andhra Provincial CSP Conference passed a resolution in November 1937 condemning the working of the C.Rajagopalachari ministry which was undermining the prestige of the Congress. Listing the "misdeeds", it pointed out that CID surveillance on the socialists workers were continuing, securities for the newspapers were not being retrieved, and more importantly, the Kottapattam case prisoners were not being released, and the socialist Batlivala being arrested and convicted. Moreover, the repeated emphasis by C.Rajagopalachari on Gandhian philosophy of truth and non-violence and wearing of khadi, to the socialists was "the unnecessary and excessive propaganda of ethical principles unrelated to practical politics."<sup>47</sup> The socialists were piqued at being regarded by the ministers no longer "Comrades in arms but as inconvenient nuisance causes."<sup>48</sup> Stating his own defence, C.Rajagopalachari pointed out that the Congress had accepted office after mature deliberations and after great misgivings. Further, although in the past, Congressmen in their propaganda had often spoken of doing away with the government they could not now indulge in such talk.<sup>49</sup> As Nehru explained to Masani, the two different contexts and meanings of the term government

were causing confusion. Nehru cautioned that treating the Congress government as an alien body would render it powerless and push it in the wrong direction. He counselled "friendly but critical appreciation."<sup>50</sup> In its role as government, C.Rajagopalachari's ministry could not do away with the machinery of surveillance and censure, particularly socialists' and communists' activities who were traditionally critical of his conservative policies. But in this event Gandhiji advised to use restraint. He cautioned C.Rajagopalachari that although there was enough evidence against the communist activities, "they were after all fellow countrymen ... they might be misguided but they were not to be weaned by government aid."<sup>51</sup>

The case for which C.Rajagopalachari came in for maximum attack was that S.S.Batlivala, a socialist leader of Bombay who was arrested at Tellichery on October 2, 1937 for an allegedly seditious speech and sentenced to six months simple imprisonment. The Batlivala case was the first instance of a Congressman arrested under the Congress regime and was thus sensationalised. To Nehru, the Batlivala prosecution by the C.Rajagopalachari ministry had shocked the Congress conscience in an unprecedented manner and represented a negation and a reversal of fundamental Congress principles and policy.<sup>52</sup> At the AICC and Working Committee meetings of the Congress at Calcutta in October 1937, socialist members seriously attacked C.Rajagopalachari's action. To Nehru, the Batlivala case carried serious implications in non-Congress states like Punjab and

Bengal where it had become the by-word and standing justification for every repressive activity of the government prevailing there. His suggestion was that the Congress ministries should secure the Working Committee's prior approval before making arrests or instituting prosecutions was, however, turned down by the strong conservative support that C.Rajagopalachari received at the Working Committee meeting. Referring to the Working Committee proceedings at Calcutta, Governor Erskine reported to the Viceroy how Nehru's free attack upon C.Rajagopalachari for the arrest and trial of Batlivala and kindred matters had been countered by Gandhiji who came really violently in support of the Madras Premier and carried the day.<sup>53</sup> Elaborating the conservative point of view, Patel declared, "Civil liberty must have the full scope in the Congress regime. Please note the adjective 'civil' before liberty. The moment you drop the word 'civil', liberty will then mean licence. No responsible government can allow licence or unlimited liberty to the people."<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, defending his position, C.Rajagopalachari wrote to Vallabhbhai Patel :

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Those who have really administrative experience and who are in the thick of present conditions and also are able to envisage the future will, I think, agree with me that the further separation of the judiciary from the executive than what prevail now will weaken us in controlling the

affairs of the country. Our judgements should be free from and not trammelled by catchwords, I am so convinced of this that I consider it, relatively, as one in which we should have freedom of action in the provinces. It is now police administration that will dominate over the magistracy and will purify and liberalise the police.

As regards Mr. Batlivala case, it is unfortunate that certain groups think that Madras is the proper experimenting ground for activities among the labour unions and the rebellion areas. Because this province is made the target of the left-wingers from outside, I have necessarily to be the first in drawing a line of demarcation between liberty and licence, between freedom of opinion and incitement to violence and disorder. I know we may have a crisis over this and I am prepared for it, though I know, sacrifice means the sacrifice of the province. I cannot gather full power in the field of law and order, such I believe I have done in greater measure than in other provinces unless I am able to draw this line.<sup>55</sup>

Yours sincerely

C. Rajagopalachari

Vallabhbhai, supporting C.Rajagopalachari, wrote to him :

My dear Rajaji,

..... The Communists believe that they have got an opportunity now as the Congressmen as in office to have their own way, and unless we are able to control and isolate them, we can not handle any serious question with any hope of success.<sup>56</sup>

Yours sincerely

Vallabhbhai.

The Kottapattam Summer School of Politics and Economy was started on May 1, 1937, by the Andhra Socialist Party. In May 1937, it was banned by C.Rajagopalachari ministry on the ground that it was fomenting communist and revolutionary ideas and some students were taken prisoners. This action caused considerable opposition from the socialist critics of C.Rajagopalachari's ministry. Expressing shock and indignation, Nehru charged the C.Rajagopalachari ministry of being as much as a police ministry suppressing elementary right of free speech and association as the previous government was. In August, 1937, C.Rajagopalachari issued a communique releasing the Summer School prisoners but condemning their activities. Although Nehru took objection to the communique, Gandhiji justified C.Rajagopalachari's stand declaring, "I think it was necessary to draw attention to the fact that the release did not mean the approval of their breach of the offence." Explaining the predicament the ministries often found themselves in, Gandhiji declared, "I fear that often when the Congress is in power it will use language which its predecessors have used and yet the motive behind will be different."<sup>57</sup>

Besides this, C.Rajagopalachari was strongly attacking a political position that the Congress had always upheld, namely, the separation of the executive from the judiciary. On 12th September, 1937, he wrote to Nehru :

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I do not know if you join in the general objection to my attitude against taking up the question of separation between judicial and executive functions as part of the Congress programme.

(1) Whatever changes we may make now will be in force as long as popular government will be in power whether be it Congress or any other persons. Therefore, the question is other grounds than who is in power.

(2) If the magistracy of the districts, who are now automatically under the ministers, are conceived into an independent guild, controlled in effect by session judges and the Chief Justice, all the power we have secured for democracy in regard to the policy and administration of justice will be lost and we will find that we are powerless to help the people to carry out our programme.

(3) I am firmly convinced that the state is one and indivisible. The old idea that the judiciary is an arbitrator between the state and the people cannot be permitted any longer to shape administrative policy.

(4) My view of the situation is that, henceforth, the police will become more judicial in their investigation. In the old order the magistrates were the executives in their judgements. I expect there will be a reversal now.

(5) In any event, the cost of separation is one which we cannot now undertake. We cannot fail to see that the demand of separation is mostly from those classes which stand to gain by recruitment to new posts.<sup>58</sup>

Yours sincerely

C. Rajagopalachari

Lord Erskine, the Governor of Madras, felt happy with C.Rajagopalachari as a big figure belonging to the inner ring of the Congress. To the British King, Erskine gave the following account :

"As to the Premier himself, I get on quite well with him, but he is an odd mixture. He is a relation of Gandhi, whose son his daughter married, and he dresses in much the same manner. He is an idealist and his object in life seems to be to get India back to what it was in the days of King Ashoka. He runs the whole show and if anything were to happen to him we should be all over the place, as he is the kingpin of the entire ministry."<sup>59</sup>

S.Gopal, in his study of Jawaharlal Nehru, assessed C.Rajagopalachari's office years in the following terms :

C.Rajagopalachari, a self-proclaimed political ascetic who, in the twenties, had led the opposition to C.R.Das, Motilal Nehru, and the Swarajists, had now quietly put himself in line for Chief Ministership in Madras and was determined to take office. Enjoying Gandhi's confidence and ignoring Jawaharlal .... C.Rajagopalachari negotiated with Lord Erskine, the Governor of Madras. While he commended office acceptance to the convention of legislators as a means of wrecking the Act, he assured Erskine that .... "there was a real chance to get rid of the Civil Disobedience mentality for good, and it would be a thousand pities if the chance was missed.... In Madras, however, C.Rajagopalachari was a law unto himself. He was too senior in the Congress hierarchy

and too close to Gandhi to be answerable to anybody. He combined a contempt for his colleague in the ministry and the Working Committee with an undue deference to the British Governor .... a man of very average ability. The result was a negation and reversal of fundamental Congress principles and policy."<sup>60</sup>

#### VIII C.Rajagopalachari and the Quit India Movement

After his resignation from his Premiership in October, 1939, the years upto the Independence revealed another trait of C.Rajagopalachari's personality. Following the failure of the Cripps Mission, C.Rajagopalachari made a total break from the Congress and entered into lugubrious relationships with the liberals in an effort to influence the wartime administration of the Raj. He differed with Gandhiji openly and widely at the national level. C.Rajagopalachari came under fire from V.D.Savakar and Dr. B.R.Ambedkar.

In a Convocation address, C.Rajagopalachari made what Pattabhi Sitaramayya called a weighty pronouncement of a highly controversial and heterodox nature on the burning topic of non-violence.<sup>61</sup> In a private conversation in Lucknow, he was reported to have made a rather detailed exposition of his stand in regard to non-violence as applicable to the then political situation. He seemed to have stressed the limitations

of non-violence in the affairs of men. He also made it clear that there should be a national government at the Centre and popular government at the provinces.<sup>62</sup>

When, on 7 and 8 August, 1942, the All India Congress Committee adopted the well-known "Quit India" resolution, C.Rajagopalachari publicly opposed it. He was opposed not only to the launching of mass direct action but also to the leadership's opposition to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. He broke away from the overriding authority of the principle of non-violence and now began to urge that the Muslim League's demand must be complied with in order to establish an united and common front with the British which they were no longer able to resist.

However, much of C.Rajagopalachari's outlook during this period was conditioned by his being a Southerner. Not only was the South more emotionally caught up in the progress of the War, besides the people of the Madras province represented a majority in Malaya and Burma, but the Japanese threat seemed always more immediate to the Coromondal Coast than elsewhere. Also, a Southerner could adopt a greater detachment towards the predominantly northern predicament of Hindu-Muslim conflice and to the prospect of emergence of Pakistan. However, his political capacity was inadequate for this task.

IX . Gandhiji and C.Rajagopalachari

As analysis of C.Rajagopalachari's political career and social, political and economic ideas would remain incomplete without brief discussion of his relationships with Mahatma Gandhi. Between them existed both personal and ideological relationships. It was under the Gandhian inspiration that C.Rajagopalachari did appear as one of the stalwarts of the Indian National Congress and did engage himself during the 1920s and 1930s in various kinds of constructive activities.

But Gandhiji and C.Rajagopalachari were so different in intellect that they were bound to have disagreements. C.Rajagopalachari was indeed to test Gandhiji's extraordinary talent for reconciliation to the full. Gandhiji reflecting of C.Rajagopalachari after several years of acquaintance, acknowledged the grasp of C.Rajagopalachari's intellect. He wrote :

"C.Rajagopalachari was an acute student of Satyagraha. He began to follow it when it first commenced in South Africa. In my opinion, he knows the science of Satyagraha as no one close perhaps does. And he has tried to live upto it for years. When, therefore, the opportunity for going to jail came to him, he embraced it without a second thought."<sup>63</sup>

During the period of Quit India movement, C.Rajagopalachari had his differences with Gandhiji. He said in a convocation

address at Lucknow University :

"I have worked with Gandhiji these twentytwo years and feel a just pride of having helped him to develop and put into action his principles and methods. Many are the ties that bound me to him. It is pleasure to discover a difference and recognise it as leading to a parting of ways. But prayerfully and in all humility we must *face* a such recognition if it must come...."

We keep our *face* turned steadily in the direction of ahimsa but cannot make the mistake of killing the principle itself by opposing it to commonsense or reality. The defence of India is a case to be treated as an exception.<sup>54</sup> When someone asked Gandhi what was the difference between his attitude and C.Rajagopalachari's, Gandhi replied : "I see the same difference between him and me that there is between chalk and choose."<sup>65</sup>

During this period, Gandhiji said that Jawaharlal Nehru, not Rajaji, would be his successor. In 1927, Gandhiji had spoken of C.Rajagopalachari as his successor. The truth was that, according to Rajmohan Gandhi,<sup>66</sup> Nehru's popularity was wider than that of C.Rajagopalachari. Nehru attracted the youth and the Left in a measure that C.Rajagopalachari could not match. Moreover, having failed to master Hindi despite urgings over the years from Gandhiji, C.Rajagopalachari was not in a position to achieve a rapport with the vast north Indian masses. Gandhiji

realised that the action as a whole was more likely to turn to Nehru than to C.Rajagopalachari. Finally, Gandhiji recognised a philosophical bond, in the broadest sense of the term, between himself and Nehru. Gandhiji said, "He (Nehru) says that ~~he~~ does not understand my language and that he speaks a language foreign to me. This may or may not be true. But language is no bar to a union of hearts. And I know this, that when I am gone, he will speak my language."<sup>67</sup>

Though C.Rajagopalachari attained his greatest height in the years following his discovery of Gandhiji and Gandhiji's discovery of him, during the phase of satyagraha and Non-cooperation struggle, some differences on basic principles of C.Rajagopalachari with Gandhiji were quite obvious : C.Rajagopalachari had unbounded faith in the sovereignty of reason. To C.Rajagopalachari, non-violence was not the law of our being that was with Gandhiji, but an ethic, an instrument of statecraft, one of the arms of the government. C.Rajagopalachari's practice of non-violence had to follow rationalisation and therefore could go only as far as the latter could keep pace with it. If it foundered, his practice of non-violence also must come to a halt.

Once, summing up the point of differences with C.Rajagopalachari, Gandhiji observed : "The difference between you and me is not great, but it is vital, though it seems

small. You want, if you do, power at any price. I have put a limit to the price to be paid, You think if you do that nothing will come if we don't take power. I can say I can afford to wait till it comes at my price, for, I am making progress, however, slight it may be."<sup>69</sup>

#### X. C.Rajagopalachari's Political Ideas

C.Rajagopalachari's political position within the Indian National Congress has already been described. Here, we will touch briefly the main aspects of his political ideas and outlook. Before joining the Indian National Congress, he was a supporter of the terrorist method of agitation against the Raj. After coming in contact with Gandhiji, he converted himself into a Gandhian disciple. The Quit India movement marked a watershed in the political career of C.Rajagopalachari which brought him into conflict with Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in general. Although after Independence, he came to hold several ministerial positions in the Central Ministry and also at the St. Fort George at Madras, ~~but~~ it was <sup>a</sup> short-lived honeymoon with the Congress leaders and the makers of the new India. Nehru's failure to get him elected as the President of India, and subsequently, his souring of relations with the provincial leaders of the Congress at Madras provided him the emotional and personal element of anti-Congress stance, and finally, Nehru's agricultural policies turned him into a bitter critic of the Indian National

Congress which found expression in an elegant manner in the Swarajyya, a weekly journal used to be published from Madras. Though politically it was his swatantratite position which we will deal <sup>with</sup> in another chapter.

Apart from his Swatantra position, C.Rajagopalachari's political ideas and actions could be roughly separated into two broad outlines, viz., Gandhian and conservative. His Gandhian outlook and ideas had been discussed elsewhere, so we will devote here his conservative ideas. Though not opposed to gradual change, C.Rajagopalachari was against the elimination of all traditional restraints and the hierarchy of guidance, and he opined that if the traditional restraints were abolished from society, there will be nothing to keep the humanity together in an orderly cohesion. Without moral restraints, he insisted, there will be no force that will hold the structure of the society together. The notion that secular government and democracy can be a substitute for religion is a moonshine, opined C.Rajagopalachari. According to him, ~~the~~ religion was the basis of civil society and source of all good and comfort. Unless religion and values issuing from it are preserved under the guidance of the elite, there will be no hope for the world, or any part of it, in the dangerous condition that have come into being as a result of technical advance. Thus, C.Rajagopalachari bemoaned that the present situation is going towards a breakdown of authority and

tradition and towards godlessness and proletarianism. Thus he exhorted the present generation to arrest that trend as much as possible, and he opined that evolutionary forces do work irresistibly, but man's place in the evolution is to work intelligently to modify, resist and correct natural trends.

C.Rajagopalachari's political outlook was greatly influenced by his Brahmin background and upbringing. Thus, while taking the oath as the Governor General of India he told, "I am an Acharyya and I should not be emotional, but in the lives of the Acharyyas also there may be occasions when free escape of emotions is like a purifying bath. And this is one such occasion."<sup>71</sup>

While, as the Governor-General of India, the Governor of West Bengal, and as a Swatantra leader, he took the role as a teacher and preacher, Unlike Gandhiji or Jayaprakash Narayan, who even after Independence continued their critical outlook about political authority, in the case of C.Rajagopalachari, we find a complete change of his earlier attitude towards political authority. Thus, before Independence, C.Rajagopalachari as a non-violent Gandhian follower sought to justify disobedience, defiance and imprisonment against the Raj was 'Dharma'; while to placate, to obey and to maintain the bureaucratic structure of the Raj was itself the greatest a-Dharma. He completely

changed this stance after Independence. Thus, he explained before the audience of the Benaras Hindu University Convocation, that the process involved in the attainment of the freedom through the methods of disobedience have left behind certain less desirable results, along with the attainment of the object. These results, according to him, like the incidental harm done to the body when anyone take drugs for the cure of a serious disease, have to be corrected by convalescent discipline, by an effort and determination amounting to religious fervour and faith. After employing this simile, he advised the audience to throw away the habit of disregarding law and authority that had been a legacy of the Raj period. Instead, he exhorted that, "We must restore the unqualified reverence for the state that was cultivated by our ancients, the reverence for law and discipline is equivalent to the reverence for Dharma and that was insisted upon in the old days. In fact, we want a revival of feudal manners and chivalry, but in terms of modern democracy."<sup>72</sup>

Similarly, C.Rajagopalachari supported modern democracy that had been adopted in Independent India, but not for its intrinsic values and revolutionary ideals, rather, he supported it on a quite conservative standpoint. He supported the Western democracy in India against socialism. Thus, he said, that Indian should trust democracy to ensure just distribution and not to look to the class struggle for salvation. Class struggle,

according to him, means hatred, fouling of atmosphere, unhappiness for all and submission to the crudest type of tyranny and the end of it. The delays of democracy are very much better than the violence and hatred of class struggle.<sup>73</sup>

Now let us analyse C.Rajagopalachari's political outlook from <sup>a</sup> theoretical standpoint. By and large, C.Rajagopalachari endorsed the Gandhian belief that civilisation consists not in multiplying of wants but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants. Similarly, he also said that "high thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life, based on speed imposed upon us by mammon worship."<sup>74</sup> However, to understand the full range of C.Rajagopalachari's conservatism, it is necessary to go beyond this posture. A second point of view which is reflected in C.Rajagopalachari's assertion <sup>is</sup> that he, like Gandhiji, believes that machinery has its place. And he, like Gandhiji, is an enemy of the machine when it becomes the master and man becomes its slave.

Planned economy and cooperative life cannot be effectively achieved, asserted C.Rajagopalachari, if it depends on more authority, however, powerful. For achieving it, there must be a generally accepted culture which will act as a law from within, to assist the law imposed from outside. Unless there is the help of culture, more material planning culminates in fraud and corruption.<sup>75</sup>

Interpreting the same theme, C.Rajagopalachari asserted that : " Properly designed and placed on a spiritual basis, a regulated economy need not to be inconsistent with individual satisfaction and individual seal. The restraints and habits of mind are required to be developed for altruistic action which must flow from faith and inner conviction."<sup>76</sup>

If the question is put : how the 'culture' and 'spirituality' can be secured, C.Rajagopalachari ~~was~~ not free from apparent contradictions on this point. He defined 'culture', as 'essentially the prevailing pattern of joyous restraint accepted by the people.'<sup>77</sup> He linked it to the maintenance of dharma, or moral duty, which is an organic growth and should not be treated as mere Indian superstition or eccentricity.

## XI Conclusion

Thus, finally, taken together, according to H.L.Erdman,<sup>78</sup> C.Rajagopalachari's emphasis on restriction of wants, on minimising dislocations, and the need to sustain culture through the family and the jaati, and the like, he would go far toward maintaining the status quo in India. In this sense, Erdman opined that C.Rajagopalachari was fundamentally conservative, which he freely admitted, without invoking dogmas. And C.Rajagopalachari drew himself close to the messiahs of backwardness. It may be a consolation, opined Erdman, that C.Rajagopalachari eschewed traditional justifications for supporting traditional institutions, practices and values.<sup>79</sup>

Notes and References

- 1 Irschick, Eugene F. ; Politics and Social Conflict in South India ; The Non-Brahmin Movement and Tamil Separatism, 1916-1929, OUP, 1969, p.4.

Irschick further explained, "From the early period of the connection with southernmost part of India, Madras was considered to be an administrative and cultural backwater, far removed from the headquarters of the East India Company of Bengal and later from the Government of India at Calcutta and afterwards Delhi. Almost from the beginning, therefore, the Madras politicians and civil servants learned to depend on their own resources and this implied a certain limitation of their political and administrative horizons. At the same time, there arose in the Madras Presidency, and particularly in the city of Madras, a small but influential group of men who maintained a pan-Indian perspective and tried to connect Madras public life with that of Bengal, Bombay and the rest of India. It was from this group that the founders of the Indian National Congress came, and it was they who sought to counteract the feeling that Madras was gravely imposed upon the rest of India."

- 2 Cf. Karl Marx ; "The essential difference between the various economic forms of society, between, for instance, a society based on slave-labour, and one based on wage-labour, lies only in the mode in which surplus labour in each case is extracted from the actual producer, the labourer." Marx, Karl, Capital : A Critique of Political Economy, Volume I, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Reprint, 1984, p.209.
- 3 Washbrook, D.A. ; The Emergence of Provincial Politics ; The Madras Presidency, 1870-1920, Vikas Publishing House, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1977, p.330.
- 4 Ibid., p.14.
- 5 Irschick, E.F. op.cit., p.19.
- 6 Seal, Anil. The Emergence of Indian Nationalism ; Competition and Collaboration in later Nineteenth Century, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1968, p.97.

- 7 Irschick, E.F., op.cit., p.13. Cf. .... The Brahmin Intellect, like that of all orientals is acute, but I do not see any reason .... in the past or present .... to believe it is of a high order. They are quibblers with words, not scientific men; their powers of observation are very small, they have hardly any originality, and can see nothing that what immediately concerns them .... Their acuteness, in appropriating European shibboleths had raised them into a position like what Mrs. Mill occupied in J.S.Mills thoughts .... There is no class that is so hostile to the English .... It is one of the great misfortunes of our administration that we should have already made such men our masters to a great extent, and that we are going to a still further extent in the same course.
- Letter from A.Duverre, Collector of Tanjore, to Sir James Caird, dated July 8, 1879, cited in E.F. Irschick, op.cit., p.20.
- 8 Seal, Anil, op.cit., p.103.
- 9 Frykenberg, Robert, An Introductory Essay on the Political Career of C.Rajagopalachari, included in C.Rajagopalachari: Gandhi's Southern Commander by A.R.H.Copley, Indo-British Historical Society, Madras, 1986, p.6.
- 10 Frykenberg, Robert, op.cit., p.7.
- 11 Irschick, E.F., op.cit., See Introduction.
- 12 Ibid., p.27.
- 13 Muthuswamy, M.S., K.Kamraj : A Socio-political Study, Tamil Nadu Academy of Political Science (Madras, 1988) p.23. The Mylapore and Egmore Cliques ; Between the 1890s and the 1916 the struggle for the control of the modes of patronage system was central to the development of provincial politics. The almost conspiratorial nature of political life to Madras city led to the formation of specialised political groupings designed to extract and distribute patronage. One of the most celebrated of the groupings was popularly known as the "the Mylapore clique" after the suburb in which most of its prominent members lived. It was composed of a succession of lawyers and administrators who were on close personal terms, who met regularly in each other's houses, put forward some demand in the Congress, the Press and on the

streets and aided each other in seeking office. Each generation in Mylapore picked its successors and brought it up through its favour. Permanently in opposition to the Mylapore clique were a group known as to the contemporaries as the "Egmore Clique". They were even less homogenous and existed only as counterweight to Mylapore. At the centre of the clique sat C.Sankaran Nair.

- 14 Irschick, E.F., op.cit., See Introduction.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Bhaskaran, R., Sociology of Politics .... Tradition and Politics in India, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay) 1967, p.43.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Baker, C.J., Politics of South India, 1920-1937, (South Asian Studies, Cambridge University Press) 1976, p.323.
- 19 Hardgrave, H.L., The Dravidian Movement (Popular Prakashan) Bombay, 1965, p.11.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 The Hindu, December 20, 1916.
- 22 Gandhi, M.K., An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, (Penguin Books) 1982, p.413. Thus Gandhi wrote ; "The idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call upon the country to observe a general hartal. Satyagraha is a process of self-purification, and ours is a sacred fight, and it seems to me to be in the fitness of things that it should be commenced with an act of self-purification. Let the people of India, therefore, suspend their business and on that day and observe the day as one fasting and prayer .... C.Rajagopalachari was at once taken up with my suggestion. Other friends too welcomes it when it was communicated to them later. I drafted a brief appeal. The date of the hartal was first fixed on 30 March, 1919, but was subsequently changed to 6 April ....
- 23 Arnold, David, The Congress in Tamil Nadu ; Nationalist Politics in South India 1919-1937 (Manohar) 1977, p.38.

- 24 Ibid., p. 50.
- 25 Ibid., p. 53.
- 26 Ibid., p. 56.
- 27 Arnold, David, op.cit., p. 68.
- 28 Ibid., p. 70.
- 29 Ibid., p. 78.
- 30 Copley, A.R.H., op.cit., p. 108.
- 31 Ibid., p. 124.
- 32 Ibid., p. 160.
- 33 Ibid., p. 178.
- 34 Ibid., p. 209.
- 35 Rajagopalachari, C., Jail Diary, A Day to Day Record of Life in Vellore Jail in 1920, (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan), Bombay, 1891, p. 69.
- 36 Som, Reba, Differences within Consensus : The Left and Right in the Congress 1929-1939, (Orient Longman) Hyderabad, 1995, p. 112.
- 37 Gandhi, Rajmohan, The Rajaji Story I, (Bharathan) 1978, p. 202.
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- 39 Ibid.
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- 50 Jawaharlal Nehru to Masani, July 24, File PL3/37, AICC, NMML, cited in Reba Som, op.cit., p.207.
- 51 Gandhi to M.Desai, March 24, Patel Mirofilms, Reel 21, NAI.
- 52 Som, Reba, op.cit., p.207.
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- 54 Bombay Chronicle, December 31, 1937.
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- 56 Gandhi to Nehru, August 8, 1937, Vol.25, NMML.
- 57 Rajaji Papers, NAI .... Ironically, during the 1950s, C.Rajagopalachari wrote reversing his earlier stand ; Minimum government and maximum freedom for the individual decentralised responsibility instead of centralised planning and concentration of authority, and a moral revolution in stead of legislative compulsion, the inner law taking place the external policemen, leading to a gradual transformation of personal ownership into trusteeship for the community .... Congress Statism or Gandhian Way ? Swarajyya, Marchil, 1961.
- 58 Gandhi, Rajmohan, The Rajaji Story, 1937-1972 (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) Bombay, 1984, p.8.
- 59 Gopal, S., Jawaharlal Nehru ; A Biography, Vol.I, 1889-1947, OUP, p.230. During Rajagopalachari's Premiership E.M.S. Namboodiripad was the Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee and he wrote to the President of the Indian National Congress ;

Sir, this is to draw your attention to a very serious state of affairs obtaining in our districts in the matters of policemen's behaviour towards Congress Committees and to the Ministry itself. Rajaji said several times that if there are grievances, Congress workers should go to him, not agitate outside. But we find that there are no relief when we approached him. I feel if this sorry state of affairs is not immediately put to an end, Congressmen will be put in a dilemma." Rajaji Papers, NAI, New Delhi.

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- 61 Ibid., p.123. During this time, C.Rajagopalachari commented : As everyone knows, greater attention was directed to the propaganda that was to follow in determining who was to blame, than to a settlement of the issue itself. Great use was made in this connection of the irrelevant fact that Gandhi's pacifism would not permit him to take part in any war. This had nothing to do with the policy of the Indian National Congress for immediate intentions. Vide C.Rajagopalachari, Reconciliation : Why and How .... A Plea for Immediate Action. (Hind Kitabs) Bombay, 1945, p.13.
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## Chapter V

### C. RAJAGOPALACHARI AND THE SWATANTRA PARTY

#### I. Introduction

The formal decision to establish the Swatantra Party was made public in Madras on June 4, 1959. Only in the narrowest sense, however, does this tell anything about its birth. The date of conception was uncertain, although the period of gestation is known to have been long.<sup>1</sup> However, before starting to trace its birth and growth and the ideological position of C.Rajagopalachari within the Swatantra Party, let us describe how C.Rajagopalachari, a Congress stalwart over the decades, was drawn to the new party and became its father figure.

After Independence, C.Rajagopalachari held several portfolios in the Interim Government. He became the Governor of West Bengal in 1947-48, the Governor-General of India in 1948-50, a Minister without Portfolio and the Home Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet and the Chief Minister of the Madras Presidency in 1952-54. But most of these official positions of C.Rajagopalachari were of little official power. C.Rajagopalachari's self-righteousness, his opposition to the 1942, Quit India Movement, his lenient attitude towards the Communists and the Muslim League during the World War II had antagonized a large section of the Congress rank and file towards him. In fact, his post-war and post-Independent

official positions were mostly dependent on Jawaharlal Nehru's sympathetic attitude towards him. But let us analyse why Jawaharlal Nehru leaned towards C.Rajagopalachari during this period, since he (C.Rajagopalachari) was a rabid Congress rightist during the 1930's, and about whom, Jawaharlal Nehru once exclaimed.... 'As for C.Rajagopalachari .... is there a more dangerous person in all India?'<sup>2</sup>

During this period, there was both an increasing alienation and weakening of the left-wing elements outside the Congress and radical forces within the Congress itself. The decision of the members of the Congress Socialist Party in 1948 to leave the Congress had been a blow for Jawaharlal Nehru. Jawaharlal Nehru, sympathized with the general viewpoint of the Congress Socialist Party and liked many of their leaders. Jawaharlal Nehru was particularly sorry that Jayaprakash Narayan should have been lost to the Congress. In an effort to win back the socialists, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to Jayaprakash Narayan : "I am greatly distressed at many things in India. But perhaps what distresses me most is the wide gap which is ever growing between many of us and the socialists."<sup>3</sup> But these efforts and approaches of Jawaharlal Nehru towards the socialists proved fruitless. Jayaprakash Narayan was critical of Jawaharlal Nehru's general outlook. He commented, "you want to go towards socialism, but you want to help the capitalists

in that you want to build socialism with the help of capitalism. You are bound to fail in that."<sup>4</sup>

It was in this context that Jawaharlal Nehru relied heavily on C.Rajagopalachari. Moreover, C.Rajagopalachari's turning towards the Congress was encouraging to Jawaharlal Nehru. So, Jawaharlal Nehru favoured C.Rajagopalachari's continuance as the President of India after the promulgation of the Republic. But C.Rajagopalachari's past vacillations had not been forgiven by the rank and file of the Congress Party. They preferred Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Constituent Assembly. When this feeling in favour of Rajendra Prasad in the Parliamentary Party surfaced, Jawaharlal Nehru felt surprised and wrote to Rajendra Prasad hinting that he should announce his lack of interest in the office and propose C.Rajagopalachari's name. Rajendra Prasad declined to oblige and said he left it to Nehru and Patel to edge him out. What Nehru did not know was that Patel favoured Prasad and had arranged for widespread expression of opinion in Prasad's favour in an informal meeting of the party. So Nehru had to accept his defeat and let C.Rajagopalachari retire.

## II. The Formation of the Swatantra Party

It has been part of the conventional wisdom about Indian politics that the right-wing political activity has been extremely ineffectual. Thus, two leading students of Indian affairs

have commented on the reactionary activity in the following fashion : "It is one of the paradoxes of the Indian politics that India's ancient regime, surely one of the oldest and most deeply rooted in the world produced no reaction .... Only a few minor local parties today stand for a full return to the rule of Brahmins and Khatriyas according to the precepts of dharma or traditional duty, and they are ineffectual."<sup>5</sup> In a more general vein, another scholar has argued that Jawaharlal Nehru once observed that the opposition forces were not weak in India, ~~the~~ but obscurantism and inertia of the people were.

The weakness of conservatism more specifically was noted before independence by a Maharaja who commented that "it must seem strange in a country whose ways of life are so dominated by custom and tradition as India, there should be no political party which called itself conservative."<sup>6</sup>

On August 15, 1947, India gained independence from British rule. There was no doubt that the mantle of power would fall on the Indian National Congress. From the standpoint of India's conservative elements, as for all others, the future was clouded. Over the years of the British rule, traditional India had confronted numerous challenges. Many princely polities had been annexed, and those remaining had atrophied considerably. Conscious efforts at social, legal, educational, and other reforms, as well as changes flowing from the advent of rail-roads, modern communication, new

forms of industry and the like, seemed to strike at the roots of the Indian society. Over wide areas, erosion, if not sudden destruction, seemed to threaten indigenous institutions and values, and at least from the time of Rammohan Roy in the early nineteenth century, there were always articulate Indians who advocated changes, some modest, some to drastic, in traditional India.

Uppermost in the minds of conservative Indians in 1947 was the knowledge that Jawaharlal Nehru would probably dominate the scene, and this generated considerable anxiety. From the late 1920s onwards, Jawaharlal Nehru had explicitly identified himself with more radical elements in the country and had inveighed against the princely order, the landed aristocracy, the capitalist class, the defenders of socio-religious orthodoxy, the general stagnation of rural India and the like.

Jawaharlal Nehru did, of course, tower over the Indian political scene after independence, until his death in 1964, and in varying degrees, each of the groups against whom he had inveighed did face challenges during his tenure as Prime Minister. The princes had their states integrated into the Indian Union, and thus they lost their residual power, their status suffered and their economic position deteriorated badly. The same was true of the great landed aristocrats, both in the former princely states and in former British India. The

middle peasantry came ultimately to confront pressure for heavier taxation, ceilings on land holdings, a vague threat of collectivized agriculture and a variety of efforts designed to improve the general position of the lowest strata of the rural population. The business communities were confronted by a wide range of respective legislation, including prohibitions on entry into certain fields which were reserved for state-sponsored enterprises; limitations on expansion in other areas; quotas and excises, particularly in the textile field, intended to make hand-woven cloth more competitive; attacks on the managing agency system which had structured Indian enterprise since the nineteenth century; heavy corporate and personal taxation; and occasional intimations of nationalisation of the private sector. Legislation intended to reform Hindu family relations, inheritance, and other aspects of the traditional private law challenged the orthodox of whatever status or occupation.

Each of these moves produced adverse responses, but for the most part these responses were isolated efforts which did not develop into a cohesive force. Some princes refused, at the outset, to accede to the Government of India; one or two resorted to military resistance; and in 1951, some former rulers and landed aristocrats attempted to form Rulers' Union, to agitate against the integration of the native states and the decline of the aristocracy more generally. The landed

aristocracy, often in consort with former princes ~~and~~ former took their fight against land reforms to the courts. Non-aristocratic landed groups worked through many channels, including caste associations and such groups as All-India Agriculturalists' Federation (1958); while at the village level, the attempted rise of the depressed groups was countered in a variety of ways, including attrition in prolonged court battles, boycott of village councils on which they sat, refusal to respect elections, and a whole spectrum of more or less coercive measures, including the burning of homes and crops the destruction of cattle, physical assault, and so on. At the national level, the late President of the Republic, Rajendra Prasad, steadfastly opposed certain provisions of the social reform legislation and threatened to withhold his assent, or to resign from his office, unless modifications were forthcoming. The business communities, having tried to anticipate and to undercut Congress Planning efforts by advancing a development plan of their own in 1944, betrayed a crisis of confidence in the regime immediately after independence, and periodically thereafter they displayed anxiety over Congress policies, especially whenever there seemed to be a move toward Soviet style planning.

Many of these challenges were, thus, acutely felt and many of the responses were certainly conservative; yet there was no coherent, explicitly conservative response at the party level during the first decade after Independence. There were

many reasons for this, but the brief catalogue of challenge and response during the Nehru era suggests one important factor : the diversity of the social forces involved. In addition to major inter-group cleavages, however, there were also intra-group cleavages, based in large part on the historic social fragmentation of the Hindu society; and these also worked against the formation of a cohesive opposition force.

A brief glance at the historical record will show that even within a given group, viz. the aristocracy, the landed peasantry, the business communities, etc., unity was at best a remote possibility. With respect to the princely order, for example, it is clear that at almost every critical juncture in its history, it was beset by internal cleavages which seriously impaired its collective position. The story is told that sometime before the rebellion of 1857, a leading Indian ruler looked at a standard British map of the sub-continent, with British India coloured red, princely India yellow and commented that one day the princely India will also be red. Yet this sentiment was either not widely shared, or else, it did not matter, because at no time did the native rulers act on the maxim that it would be better to hang together than to hang separately.

Prior to independence, the great landed nobles of British India were virtually compelled to be better united, because they had to function within a somewhat more open and more reformist

environment. Over the years, the zamindars had organised themselves, at least locally, to petition the raj and eventually to elect representatives to the legislative councils, in which they had reserved seats. They amply demonstrated their conservatism by proclaiming and defending their elite status and by steadfastly opposing almost every significant piece of land reform legislation introduced by the British to ameliorate the conditions of the actual tillers of the soil. Throughout the years of the British Raj, however, differences between big and small zamindars were evident; each group, as in the case of the princes, was beset by religious and caste animosities. Furthermore, the political division of India into British and princely areas inhibited the development of associations which would bring together the zamindars and their closest counterparts in the princely states, the jagirdars.

Thus, while sharing many interests and aspirations vis-a-vis more democratic tendencies, the aristocratic classes never formed a cohesive opposition force, either at the national or state level, either under the British or after 1947. Both the aristocrats and the defenders of religious orthodoxy might be eminently conservative but their activities were inevitably fragmented.

However, it was the formation of the Forum of Free Enterprise in 1956 which was later responsible for the formation of the Swatantra Party. The Forum of Free Enterprise was a non-political organisation, formed with the avowed purpose of

educating the public opinion about the merits of free enterprise and the danger of excessive state domination and state control over citizens' activities. However, the Forum of Free Enterprise declared itself against the complete laissez-faire, because, according to its spokesmen, nineteenth century capitalism had no place in the contemporary world, and this was not due to the feeling of sheer expediency, but buttressed by considerations of rapid economic growth and for the maintenance of political democracy. In its decided view, nineteenth century capitalism is "as dead as dodo and can make no contribution to the industrial, social and economic development we seek."<sup>7</sup>

In an advertisement under the title, "what forum stands for?" it said :

"The Forum unreservedly accept the concept of a fuller and better life for all, equality of opportunity, eradication of unjust privileges; in fine, the establishment of a welfare state. Indeed, we hold that these objectives will be attained more rapidly, more effectively and with a greater degree of enthusiastic cooperation through free enterprise, than through any other system. Inherent in our acceptance of these social aims is also that of planned economy, and common existence of mutual interdependence of a state-controlled and a free enterprise sector. What we do not accept is the theory that state-owned sector should continuously expand until it dominates the national life.... will there be a regimentation of life, totally at variance with India's outlook and traditions, which have always

recognised the place and worth of individual in society."<sup>8</sup>

Apart from C.Rajagopalachari, Minoo Masani (a former founder of the Congress Socialist Party) had been criticising the Congress long before the Nagpur Resolution of 1959. In fact, in his book published in 1954, he drew attention to the dangerous polarisation<sup>9</sup> of Indian political forces between the Congress and the Communist Party since consistent ideological opposition to communism had hitherto been negligible. He emphasized the importance of religion to keep India free from the threat of communism.

As an independent member of the Parliament, Masani made a pointed reference to the lop-sided ideological balance in the Indian Parliament. Three major parties, the Congress, the Praja Socialist Party and the Communist Party, all claimed to be, according to Masani, socialists. Thus, Masani asserted that no liberal or conservative or centre-party exists which is non-socialist. Masani and Jaipal Singh, member of the Independent group of the Parliament, on March 17, 1959, proposed the intention of the group of becoming the precursor of a new middle-of-the road political party which would stand for mixed economy and oppose cooperative farming and ceilings on income.

However, the immediate provocation for the formation of the Swatantra Party was the adoption of the Nagpur Resolution on co-operative farming by the Congress Party in January, 1959. Following are the extracts of the Nagpur Resolution :

(i) "The organisation of the village should be based on village panchayats and village cooperatives, both of which should have adequate powers and resources to discharge the functions allotted to them. A number of village cooperatives may form themselves into a union. All permanent residents of the village, whether owning land or not, should be eligible for membership of the village cooperative which should promote the welfare of its members by introducing progressive farming methods and improved techniques of cultivation, developing animal husbandry and fishery and encouraging cottage industries. In addition to providing credit and discharging other servicing functions, it will arrange for pooling and marketing the agricultural produce of the farmers and for storage and godown facilities for them. Both the panchayat and cooperative should be the spearheads of all developmental activities in the village and, more especially, should encourage intensive farming with a view to raising the per acre yield of the agricultural produce."

(ii) "The future agrarian pattern should be that of cooperative joint farming, in which the land will be pooled for joint cultivation, the farmers continuing to retain their property rights, and getting a share from the net produce in proportion to their land. Further, those who actually work on the land, whether they own the land or not, will get a share in proportion to the work put in by them on the joint farm."

"As a first step, prior to the institution of joint farming, service cooperatives should be organised throughout the

country. This stage should be completed within a period of three years. Even within this period, however, wherever possible and when generally agreed to by the farmers, joint cultivation may be started."<sup>11</sup>

(iii) "In order to remove uncertainty regarding land reforms and to give stability to the farmer, ceilings should be fixed on existing and future holdings and legislation to this effect, as well as for the abolition of the intermediaries, should be completed in all states by the end of 1959. This does not mean any ceiling on income, as it is expected that, by intensive cultivation as well as by additional occupations, rural incomes will rise. Such surplus land should vest in the panchayats and should be managed through cooperatives consisting of landless labourers."<sup>12</sup>

(iv) "with a view to assuring a fair return to the tiller, a minimum or a floor price should be fixed reasonably in advance of the sowing season with respect to each crop, and arrangements should be made to purchase directly, whenever necessary, the crops produced."<sup>13</sup>

(v) "The introduction of the State trading in wholesale trade in foodgrains is welcomed and should be fully given effect to."<sup>14</sup>

(vi) "Every effort should be made to bring the uncultivated and waste land into cultivation. The Central Government should appoint a Committee to devise suitable measures for the utilisation of this land."<sup>15</sup>

The decision to form the Swatantra Party was taken at an informal meeting of the All India Agriculturists' Federation, an organisation mainly of landowners and rich peasants, in Madras on June 4, 1959. This meeting drew up a statement of the principles which was to form the basis of the Swatantra Party. To inaugurate the Party and to adopt its statement of principles, a preparatory convention was held in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959.

Masani, in his opening remarks, claimed that the Swatantra Party provided a clear alternative to the principles of the ruling party, "by putting the individual right in the Centre of the pictures and rejecting lock, stock and barrel the methodology, as opposed to the ideas of socialism, which is more accurately described as state capitalism."<sup>16</sup> In his inaugural address, C.Rajagopalachari said, .... "we stand for the great principles enunciated by Gandhiji and constantly emphasized by him of maximum freedom for the individual and minimum interference by the state."<sup>17</sup>

The convention adopted the statement of principles of the party. It may be noted that soon after the formation of the party, it absorbed the Janata Party of Bihar, the Krishak Lok Party of Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan, the Indian National Democratic Congress in Madras. Later the Gram Raj Party of Uttar Pradesh, and the United Independent Front of Uttar Pradesh joined it. The emergence of the Party, therefore, may be considered a regrouping of the conservative forces in Indian society.

### III. The Ideology of the Swatantra Party

There can be little doubt that India's native aristocracy was in large measure a self-consciously proud group which explicitly referred to and defended its extraordinarily privileged position in Indian society. Throughout the constitutional deliberations of the 1920's and 1930's, they insisted that their rights and privileges should not be ignored or encroached upon. In confronting the British, the aristocrats quite understandably emphasized their ungrudging support and sincere assistance to the crown. Many a British official frankly admitted the crown's debt to the aristocracy and regarded the final deposition of the native states in particular as illegal, immoral and a despicable sell-out.

While this style of argument commended itself widely to the British, it was not designed to appeal to the articulate, non-aristocratic elements in Indian public life, notably those who comprised the Congress, one defender of the native rulers thus insisted that the natural instinct of mankind is self-preservation and another insisted that we wish to preserve the individual and historical identity of our states which our forefathers carved out for themselves and handed down to us.

Such self-interested and fully conservative arguments could hardly suffice by themselves and the rulers were by no means oblivious of this fact. While admitting that they were conservative to a certain extent by tradition and instinct, the

aristocrats were insistent that they were the conservators of a great tradition, of an ancient civilisation and of a proud culture, which was superior to the dynamic, machine-made civilisation of the West which was to some extent being imported to India by the British and westernised Indians. The emphasis on the role of the princely states in the indigenous tradition and on Indian culture as superior to that of the west held out some hope for a more favourable response from the more conservative, non-aristocratic Congressmen.

Also indicative of their determination to exploit prevailing problems and sentiments, the aristocrats claimed that they were above communalism of the newer class of politicians, that they treated the people in their states as children rather than as subjects, instead of the complex, bureaucratic <sup>coldness</sup> of the British India.

Given such feelings, it is little wonder that most articulate aristocrats balked at any strong suggestion of the advent of parliamentary, democratic government on all India basis, especially under the auspices of the Congress. As one British supporter of the princes put it that democracy, as known in British India, they do not find alluring in part because it represented rule by the lower classes, an inversion of the traditions of three thousand years. Another referred to the Congress as subversive elements and bile producers which justified the conclusion that in such conditions, one can

hardly expect the Indian princes to sit in their Durbars with folded hands, while the lawyers, school-masters, money-lenders and industrialists decide the fate of India.

The aristocrats themselves, were no less critical of the Congress Party than the British who stood by them. One of the leading zamindars referred to the Congress as a new class of demi-gods and career politicians who exploit the ignorant masses for strengthening their own class rule; and he insisted that the Congress was an upstart body and had not built up the traditions of authority and command through time with a corresponding attitude of obedience among the masses. Many reiterated their prolonged hostility to the Congress ideas and scorned the talk of democracies and all such things, rejected the prospects of a Congress regime as one run by tradesmen who were not born to rule.

In the light of such sentiments, it is not surprising that many rulers, before the integration of the states, were quite outspoken in their insistence that they will never submit to being governed by British India, over many parts which princely states in former times held sway, and most emphatic was the statement that the princes fought and sacrificed their blood to win power and they mean to hold it. If the Congress wants to rob them, if the British should let them down, they will fight. In the event, these brave words were not matched by brave deeds, but two points remain clear. First, these words represent

the authentic voice of aristocratic conservatism, defending the rule of Khatriyas according to the tradition and precepts of dharma, although efforts were made to go beyond such defences, in order to appeal to non-aristocratic conservatives. It is abundantly clear, however, that the aristocracy did not look with favour upon the middle classes, let alone the masses. Secondly, related to this, was the fact that there was much smouldering resentment against the Congress regime which the ruling party had by no means able to obliterate.

Not all of the aristocrats were vehement about the Congress, at least in public. Before independence, many were disposed to assure the nationalist leadership that they were not reactionaries who wanted to effect a total princely restoration or steadfast conservatives who acknowledged the need for change but felt it must be gradual.

In some ways, the upper castes at the village level advanced positions comparable to those of the aristocrats. As one scholar has observed, the decline of the Brahmins and Khatriyas was not a happy thought for these classes, and the prospect of degeneration which would bring the Shudras and untouchables into greater prominence was an appalling prospect. Numerous village studies fully document this point. Upper castes complained that the lower caste, were now swollen-headed. They do not want to serve the upper castes and they cannot depend on them. Efforts by some government servants to work directly with

the lower castes at the village level, had generated coldness and even hostility from groups on the higher levels of the social hierarchy, who asked themselves whether the government was out to destroy the social system of the Hindus. One effort by prominent private citizens and government officials to gain temple entry for untouchables elicited the response that the government is mixing the maize with the millet. A wide range of coercive techniques had been employed by the higher castes to keep the lower castes in their place, and this in its own way is an important manifestation of conservatism, albeit of a less politically organised and sort.

Many middle peasants and substantial tenants have been quite willing to see the end of large-scale landlordism, without being any way solicitous to those who are subordinated to them; and they frequently condemn efforts to give land to the landless as contrary to dharma or else as unproductive. In these and other ways, caste Hindus demonstrate their sense of superiority either explicitly or implicitly to the depressed castes; and they demonstrate as well their refusal to confront the fundamental problems of rural India. Still, it is important to note that non-conservative vocabulary is often used to deny the claims of the depressed groups. Furthermore, it is also important to note that the exponents of these views are not necessarily sympathetic to aristocratic or Brahminical world-views ; many anti-khatriya and anti-Brahmin groups have challenged the

position of these superior classes, while steadfastly denying the claims of those who remain below them.

More difficult to come to grips with such straightforward manifestations of conservatism is a doctrine whose practical consequences are profoundly conservative, even though its exponents profess to want certain major changes in Indian life. This doctrine has as its core an image of an idealized village community, sometimes envisaged as having existed in ancient India. It has as its principal roots (i) the view that village India is real India; (ii) the reaction against imperialist arrogance and against the corrosive effects of British rule on traditional, village India, pitting the real India against the west; and (iii) linked to this, the virtually universal reaction to the dislocations of early stages of industrialisation, including the Indian variants of Luddite and utopian socialist themes. The association of Gandhiji's name, rightly or wrongly, with this strand of thought accounts in large measure for its potential emotional appeal.

Different exponents of this doctrine give it different twists and embellishments, but some major perspectives are almost universally shared. Of central importance is the view that the Indian village is, or was at one time, almost an idyllic, self-reliant, harmonious and spiritual little republic. The caste system, one of the most uniformly condemned aspects of

Indian life, was, according to this view, originally a plausible approach to the requirements of a division of social function and did not contain the rigidities commonly associated with it in recent times. Nor did it relegate a significant segment of the population to the position of untouchables.

The anti-western and anti-industrial themes are related to this one and are almost uniformly articulated. The introduction of machine-made goods, both foreign and domestic; the introduction of western legal procedures, western education, western political processes, and the like, is widely portrayed as a cause to the present distress. There is a general rejection of individualism, in favour of social cooperation and concern for larger social groupings. Specifically, there is a rejection of competition associated with laissez-faire economies, of the win-or-lose struggle associated with western legal procedures. The individual is to subordinate his passions and needs to those of the extended family, the caste and the village as a whole; and an important corollary of this basic view is the requirement that the rich, the wise and the well-born must use their advantages for the common good - the so-called doctrine of trusteeship. Because cooperation and harmony are major desiderata, conflict and coercion in any form are not permissible; and hence the notion of class war and even of legislation through majority rule are to be rejected. In so far as privileged classes use coercive techniques which are to be eliminated, education in

doctrine of trusteeship must provide the corrective. It is generally argued that the ideal can be approximated only in smaller communities unsullied by significant concern for material things; hence urbanisation and industrialisation along western lines must be resisted. Indian spirituality must be maintained in the face of western materialism.

The contention that such perspectives have conservative implications is based on the following considerations. First of all, for many exponents of these ideas, the principal dangers to the idealised village system lie not in the village itself, but in the forces outside the village which are undermining it. Hence, in many cases, there is relatively little attention devoted to the actual distribution of power in the Indian village. Secondly, when the rural power pattern is realistically examined and changes are deemed necessary, the latter are to be achieved through education in trusteeship. Thirdly, the pattern of constraints within the joint family and caste are often totally neglected, and these social groupings are looked upon as instruments of social welfare. Fourthly, while there is some attention given to the desperate plight of the lowest classes, there is less than passionate concern for their unhappy material condition because a concern for material affairs tends to erode concern for spiritual matters. Thus, C.Rajagopalachari supported Gandhiji's views that civilisation consists not in the multiplication of wants but in the deliberate and voluntary restriction of wants,

and he also supported the view that high thinking is inconsistent with a complicated material life, based on high speed.

From some vantage points, it is really immaterial whether one calls the exponents of such views conservatives, reactionaries, utopian socialists, or something else more or less flattering. In some respects, it also matters little whether one assumes that they genuinely desire the changes which they profess to want or whether one insists that they are frauds. The important point is that policies consistent with the model of idealised village would serve as almost a total bar to any major transformation of the Indian village. In other words, the doctrine supports the status quo in fact, if not in theory. Particularly for the lowest strata of the population, there is little hope for improvement, materially or otherwise. It is abundantly clear from the historical and current state of Indian village that there is no salvation for the lowest strata within that framework. And the entire history of mankind should be proof that privileged classes do not become trustees to any significant degree without substantial pressure from below or from competing elites who speak for the lower classes. Under existing and foreseeable Indian conditions, the village itself simply cannot provide the economic underpinnings needed to sustain a movement for the betterment of the lower classes.

If the commitment to cooperation, trusteeship, and the like precludes any major changes in the village in the interests

of the lower class advance the anti-urban, anti-industrial commitments clearly run counter to the interests of the urban industrial class. It is easy to see why the exponents of the idealised village did not endear themselves to untouchable leaders, or to India's captains of industry. To the untouchable, a defence of the village was a defence of his prison. To the industrialist, a defence of the village was more a nuisance than a threat.

Having discussed the ideological background of the Swatantra Party, let us look at the core ideology of the party. The anatomy of the Swatantra Party has been discussed in some detail by H.L. Erdman<sup>18</sup>, according to whom the leading figures of the Swatantra Party were all comparatively old men who were united in their opposition to communism, and what they regarded as the increasingly statist policies of the Congress, especially under Jawaharlal Nehru. Certain differences among the leading figures were obvious. Among the leading figures, Masani and Mody were Parsees, and others were Hindus. Of them, C. Rajagopalachari and K.M. Munshi were Brahmins, while Ranga was a clean shudra. Masani and Mody were highly westernised, and very clearly oriented towards modern business and industrial world, while the others in varying ways, were more in tune with the non-industrial world. To complicate the matters even further, Ranga and Masani were radical, relative to the main thrust of the Congress in the 1930s; while others were, in different ways, relatively

conservative. The diversity was apparent, so that it elicited the oft-heard, derisive comment that the Party was a melange or medley of fundamentally uncongenial bed-fellows.<sup>19</sup> Thus, Erdman observed that Swatantra Party leadership was united in its opposition to communism. And the inner circle represented at least three major strands of thought - the idealised village, militant Hinduism, and modern industrial capitalism.<sup>20</sup>

C. Rajagopalachari, in responding to Jawaharlal Nehru's charge that it was impossible to know what Swatantra stood for because it contained diverse elements, observed that "the straight and easy path to understand the Swatantra Party is to read what has been said in twenty-one short articles of the Party's foundation document. There is no ambiguity or prolixity in it".<sup>21</sup> The heart of the Party's doctrine is, to be sure, embodied in these fundamental principles, in elaboration of and addition to these. Unhappily, these would not suffice to define the nature and role of the Swatantra, even if they were crystal-clear. Many of the conflicts and tensions revealed by a study of the social bases of the Party that emerged in the realm of the doctrine as well. None the less, attention must be paid to the official pronouncement of the Party, and the twenty-one point programme serves as the appropriate starting point.

If one had to categorise them en bloc and briefly, the twenty-one points programme could be called predominantly classical liberal in tone, suggesting a moderate, non-traditional outlook.

They reflect the general aversion of the national leaders to reactionary and to authoritarian national views; and they reflect, as well, the influence of the modernists in the realm of doctrine. The Indian heritage, especially via Gandhiji, is also present, but in an understated way, socialist rhetoric also intrudes in it.<sup>22</sup>

The fundamental principles are important, moreover, not only for what they say, but also for what they do not say. Much is excluded from their purview, and on all such issues, the Party members are allowed to advance any position not inconsistent with a fairly narrow-reading of the twenty-one programme. Significantly, foreign policy, linguistic policy and religious and cultural issues in detail, receive little or no explicit attention within the framework of the fundamental principles. This reflects the conviction that the principal task of the Swatantra Party was that of opposing the Congress 'Statism', and those who can agree on this should not be divided by other issues deemed to be less significant.

The liberal aspects of the twenty-one points are abundantly evident. The first, for example, calls for equality for all, without distinction of religion, caste, occupation or political affiliation. This is followed by a defence of individual initiative, enterprise and energy in all areas, with emphasis on economic sphere. The subsequent points are best described as rigorously antistatist, with attacks on the

policy of statism, expropriation, the conferment of more and more powers on officials of the government, collectivisation and bureaucratic management of the rural economy, crippling taxation, abnormal deficit financing, and foreign loans, and so forth. In calling for minimum interference by the state in all spheres, with emphasis on economic spheres, the Swatantra leaders urged the restoration of private initiative in land, ship and factory alike, and emphasized freedom of property.

#### IV. Electoral Strategy and Performance of the Swatantra Party

Soon after its formation, the Swatantra Party projected the philosophy of economic liberalism, opposition to statism and state capitalism called socialism, and openly advocated competitive market economy.

Explaining the electoral strategy of the 1962 elections, C.Rajagopalachari stated that he would "ally with the devil himself" to defeat the Congress. The twin objectives of the Party for the 1962 elections were :

"I.... the achievement by the Swatantra Party of the position of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, thus providing an alternative government to the country."

"II.... the best possible representation of the Party in various State Assemblies, consistent with the first objective."<sup>23</sup>

Keeping these objectives in view, the Party fielded 1038 candidates for the State Assemblies and around 170 candidates for election to the Lok Sabha. The performance of the Swatantra Party in 1962 elections was hailed by most sections of the Press in India and abroad and by people generally as satisfactory and as laudable achievement for a Party then barely two-and-a-half years old. The Party emerged as the second biggest Party in the country by capturing 207 seats in the State Assemblies as against 153 won by the Communist Party, 149 by the Praja Socialist Party and 115 by the Jan Sangh. The Party became the official opposition in four states — Bihar, Rajasthan, Orissa and Gujarat.

In so far as the elections to the Lok Sabha were concerned, the Party polled around 9 per cent of the total votes. Its share in the proportion of the votes secured in several states was significant. The Party obtained 25 per cent of the votes polled in Gujrat, 18.57 per cent in Orissa and 18.10 per cent in Rajasthan. In these states, the number of votes polled by the Swatantra Party was around half of that polled by the Congress Party. The Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha had 25 members as compared with the Communist Party which had a strength of 29. In the Rajya Sabha, the Party's strength went up from seven to eleven.

The Party leaders utilised the period intervening between the third and the fourth general elections, i.e. from 1962 to 1967, for the growth of the Party in the country.

Various political and economic events like China's attack on India in 1962, death of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, Indo-Pak War in 1965, death of Lal Bahadur Shastri in 1966, etc., generated anti-Congress wave in the country, and the Swatantra leaders wisely utilised this changing mood of the Indian people in favour of the Swatantra Party. Thus, the political climate in the country at the time of the fourth general elections was anti-Congress and Pro-rightist. Long before the 1967 elections, it was evident that the Congress system was on trial in the country, and that the pattern of one-party dominance was breaking down. Till 1967, Indian politics was truly one party oriented, comprising the massive Indian National Congress and a number of small opposition groups in the wilderness. All this changed with the election of 1967. In short, the 1967 elections constituted a watershed in the politics of independent India.

For the 1967 elections, the Party requested the people to send at least 100 M.P.s and MLAs in the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha respectively. The Party's high command was always eager to join hand with the opposition parties except the Communist Parties. During the 1967 elections, the Party developed electoral understanding in the states of Rajasthan, Gujrat and Orissa, viz., with the Jan Sangh in Rajasthan and Gujrat and Jana Congress in Orissa. In Orissa, the understanding between the Swatantra and the Jana Congress was based on a strong footing, and both agreed for a common twentyone point programme to lead Swatantra-led government. In Gujrat, the Party had understanding only for 15 Vidhan Sabha seats.

In all, the Party fielded 978 candidates for the state legislatures. The Party in all secured 259 seats from 12 states, as against 207 seats from nine states in 1962. The Party's areas of influence in both the elections of 1962 and 1967 remained almost the same. The Party came to power in Orissa with the help of the Jana Congress. In the states of Gujrat and Rajasthan, it emerged as an official opposition.

But the sudden rise of the Party was without any grass-root organisational background. The Party grew from the top and very little work was done at the grass-roots level. David Hume<sup>24</sup> has observed that generally, during the founding period of a Party, the programme has considerable importance, because it serves as the rallying point of dispersed elements, but later, the organisation takes the foremost place. This reference also applies to the Swatantra Party, as in later years, the Party leadership was faced with problems on building a viable organisation. The Swatantra leaders never cared for sound organisation from the very beginning and aimed at 'Congress Hatao' (removal of Congress) Programme only, by all means. So the sudden rise of the Party, with the help of existing support of caste groups, Princes, industrialists, aristocrats, etc. was based on weak foundations. The Party failed to develop its organisation in a sound and methodical manner. The Party failed to inculcate ideological articulation among its hastily assembled, opportunistic, and ambitious but influential elements. Only an ideology or

commitment to the Party.<sup>32</sup> Programme could have kept these various elements of the Party together. After playing a decisive role between 1962 and 1967 in the national politics, the Party gradually ceased to count. And this was because the Party had not satisfactorily proceeded towards the task of Party-building. The Party's approach of accommodating and co-opting the ready-made leadership and group of power-structures in it, without baptising them ideologically, made it faction-ridden. The persons who joined the Party never became Swatantratites in the true sense of the term. Hence, soon after 1967 elections, cracks started to appear in the Party. Thus, besides, poor party-building and indiscipline among party workers, the other important reasons for the sudden disappearance of the Party from political scene of the country were :

- (a) Overdependence on caste groups;
- (b) Almost total dependence upon the former princes;
- (c) Inclination to preserve and conserve than to advance;
- (d) Failure to study the dynamics of politics;
- (e) Negative attitude of Congress Hatao (removal);
- (f) Lack of commitment among the Party workers and leaders;
- (g) failure to check the process of change initiated by the Congress, especially after its split in 1969; and
- (h) limited sphere of activities.

All the above-listed factors increasingly isolated the Party from the political scene of the country. The Party's more negative and less positive approach to the policies of the Congress, like cooperative farming, establishment of public sector, planning commission, nationalisation of banks, abolition of privy purses, etc., was contrary to the trends of the day and this diminished the image of the Party in the eyes of the public. The public image of the Swatantra Party had always remained that of a Party which in domestic affairs planned for unrestricted free enterprise and complete abolition of public sector, and in the field of foreign policy, for a close alliance with the West. Ultimately, the Party disappeared from the political scene of the country. And, in the end, the Party lost its original name when it merged with the six opposition parties into a new nation-wide opposition party, namely, 'Bharatiya Lok Dal' (BLD) on August 29, 1974.

#### V. Policies of the Swatantra Party

Following are the principles of the Swatantra Party as adopted by the All India Convention held in Bombay on August 1 and 2, 1959.<sup>25</sup>

"The Swatantra Party is pledged to social justice and equality of opportunity for all people without distinction of religion, caste, occupation or political affiliation."<sup>26</sup>

"The Party holds that the progress, welfare and happiness of the people depend on individual initiative, enterprise and energy. The Party stands for the principles of maximum freedom for individual and minimum interference by the state, consistent with the obligation to prevent and punish anti-social activities, to protect the weaker elements of society and to create the conditions in which individual initiative shall thrive and be fruitful. The Party is, therefore, opposed to the increasing state interference of the kind now being pursued."<sup>27</sup>

"The Party holds that state should foster and utilise the sense of moral obligation, the pride, the satisfaction and fulfilment felt by individuals in serving others, which are inherent in Indian tradition, instead of adopting legislative or other forms of compulsion. The Party, therefore, adheres to the principles of trusteeship adumbrated by Gandhiji."<sup>28</sup>

"The Party holds that the policies of the Government should be founded on faith in the people and not on state compulsion and the encouragement of hatred and conflict."<sup>29</sup>

"The Party stands for every effort being made to foster and maintain spiritual values and preserve what is good in Indian culture and tradition and avoid the dominance of a materialist philosophy of life without any reference to its content and quality."<sup>30</sup>

"The Party holds that steps should be taken to remove the pervading sense of uncertainty that has been created by the present policies of the government. The Party holds that a sense of stability and incentive for individual effort can be restored only by strict adherence to the Fundamental Rights."<sup>31</sup>

"The Party holds that in the policies adopted for national development, priority must be assigned to the basic needs of the people, namely, food, water, housing and clothing."<sup>32</sup>

"The Party believes that every citizen has a fundamental right to educate his children according to his choice and in a free atmosphere."<sup>33</sup>

"The Party holds that the paramount need for increasing production and that this is best attained through self-employed peasant proprietor."<sup>34</sup>

"The party believes in an intensive programme of agricultural improvement by promoting the material and psychological inducement for greater production without disturbing the harmony of rural life. The Party holds that there should be no disturbance of ownership, management and cultivation of land."<sup>35</sup>

"In industry, the Party believes in the incentives for higher production and expansion of inherent competitive enterprise with adequate safeguards for the protection of labour."<sup>36</sup>

"The party stands for restriction of state enterprise to heavy industries such as necessary to supplement private enterprise in that field."<sup>37</sup>

"The Party is opposed to the state entering the field of trade and disturbing free distribution."<sup>38</sup>

The Party stands for the preservation of the freedom of the small and self-employed artisans, craftsmen, who are

in danger of losing their occupational opportunities by reason of the policy of statism."<sup>39</sup>

"The Party stands for great thrift in public expenditure."<sup>40</sup>

"The Party is opposed to a programme of development based on crippling taxation, abnormal deficit financing and foreign loans."<sup>41</sup>

"The Party shall, in all matters, keep before itself the cardinal teachings of Gandhiji, maintaining faith in the people and in the efficiency of truth and non-violence."<sup>42</sup>

"The Swatantra Party holds that democracy is best served if every political Party allows freedom of opinion to its members on all matters outside the Fundamental Principles of the Party. It, therefore, gives its members, full liberty on all questions."<sup>43</sup>

Besides, Swatantra Party's outlook on the following issues are discussed severally :

(i) Economic Policy

The most controversial issue about the Swatantra Party was its economic policy. Restriction of state enterprise to heavy industries was necessary to supplement private enterprise in that field, opposition of State entering the field of trade and disturbing the free distribution and introducing controls

and official management, greater thrift in public expenditures, opposition to a programme of development based on crippling taxation, abnormal deficit financing and foreign loans beyond capacity and full and lasting employment in all sectors of life .... these policies formed the core of the economic policies of the Swatantra Party.

(ii) Cooperative Farming

The Swatantra Party considered the 'Joint Cooperative Farming' in the Nagpur Resolution to be calculated to mislead people. According to the Party Resolution, once the peasants lost their individual ownership, possession and utilisation of his farm, the free and self-respecting peasantry which was the bulwork of democracy would disappear and the bureaucrats would acquire a stranglehold on the economic, social and political life of the rural areas. In point of fact, the Nagpur Resolution would replace the old Zamindar with one big super-Zamindar, viz., the Government. The Swatantra Party stated that it stood by the peasants of India in this matter and would protect the peasantry against any attempt to filch the land away from them under the beguiling slogan of joint cooperative farming. The Swatantra Party rejected the scheme of ceilings on landholdings as likely and further to injure the efficient farming and maximisation of movements of food-grains to industrial and urban areas. This seemed to be an open plea for the protection of

the interests of the land-owners, ignoring the interests of the community ! That is why Jawaharlal Nehru had said that the Swatantra Party wanted to take back India to the "middle ages of Lords, castles, and Zamindars."<sup>44</sup> However, the Swatantra Party's stand on cooperative farming vindicates its position, viz. it stands for private property and initiative of private individuals.

(iii) Private vs. State Enterprise

According to the Swatantra Party, state enterprises should be reduced to the barest minimum. The Party did not deny that the state had no part to play in industry. In certain recognised fields such as communications and defence industries, the state had its legitimate field. The state might in the interest of national welfare, if found necessary, enter into industries such as are of the nature of pioneering enterprises, or where the needed capital could not be obtained otherwise. In such cases, the state should withdraw the moment when private competitive enterprise can be drawn into them.

Later C.Rajagopalachari suggested that state ownership and control must be resorted to in those cases where it was established after impartial enquiry that it was necessary in the interests of the community as a whole and also that it would increase efficiency and production in such a degree as to

outweigh the inherent disadvantages.<sup>45</sup> This does appear to be a feasible proposition. It only implies that the Party wanted full freedom for private entrepreneurs.

The Party's Election Manifesto stated that the role of the state was that of facilitator and regulator but not a participant. There was a great deal that government could do in a developing country, through the development of roads and other forms of communications, transport and cheap electric power. Mino Masani clarified this position further while speaking in the Lok Sabha on December 5, 1963 .... "The appropriate sphere of state is to build the infrastructures, the foundation for economic development. It means irrigation and water supply, it means roads transport and communication of every form, it also means education. And finally, there should be an essential minimum regulation to stop anti-social practices. All this is the legitimate role of the state as understood to be in a civilised society. But it is where the role of the state stops."<sup>46</sup>

In fact, the Swatantra Party's argument counter to the prevailing ideas about the role of the state in modern society. The Party was very eager to draw the line which the state should not cross. It wanted the state to play the role of a 'night-watchman' and not that of a 'welfare state'.

(iv) P l a n n i n g

The Swatantra Party was disillusioned with planning in India which according to it, was 'totalitarian' and 'incompatible with democratic ways'. A collectivised economy could not co-exist for long with political democracy. While the Swatantra Party rejected outright the current pattern of centralised and top-heavy planning based on totalitarian programmes, it was not opposed to planning as such. Planning must, however, be carried on within the limits of the Constitution without relaxing the care for freedom guaranteed in it. Above all, it must know where to stop.<sup>47</sup>

The appropriate organization, the Swatantra Party believed, for such planning of the affairs of the nation, was the cabinet responsible to the Parliament and through it to the people, and that while the government might resort to such expert assistance as it desired, there should be no other body, which in effect usurped the power of making policy affecting the life of the nation.<sup>48</sup>

Though the Party opposed India's Five Year Plans, it was strange to note that the Party leaders held their own views about plans. Professor Ranga, the Party's spokesman, believed in planning and said, "our Plan is a Gandhian Plan, a plan that has for its foundation Dharma, a plan that is based on the initiative of the people, a plan that stands for self-employment and security of our people."<sup>49</sup>

What was the Swatantra's alternative to the Plan ?

Mino Masani said, "We have an alternative by which we believe that plan would prove to the pedestrian. We believe if you try not to drag the savings of the people into the public sector, if you try not to divert them from the pursuit of agriculture and allied industries, where you get higher returns on your investments, our national income will go up much faster than what the (Third) plan contemplates."<sup>50</sup>

#### V. The Swatantra Party's Concept of Socialism

The Swatantra Party was opposed to state ownership of all the means of production and distribution which was the creed of socialism. It opposed the socialism of the Congress Party on the plea that it would kill enterprise and initiative in the agricultural field and frighten foreign capital in the industrial and private sector. The Party stood for 'decentralisation of state power' and a policy of creating opportunities and facilities for small-scale private industries widely distributed over the country.<sup>51</sup>

The Swatantra concept of socialism was defined by Lobo Prabhu. The Party understood by socialism, "the advancement of the interests of the common man by taking from the rich and poor what they can give without the state competing with them in respect of what is within their capacities. It is this form of socialism that has enabled the free countries to establish

standards for their population which can never be reached by the brutality and godlessness of communism." <sup>52</sup>

The Swatantrites wanted the economic development of India to be left mainly to the private firms and also to foreign firms with whom the private industrialists of India had a close connections and affiliations. They believed that when money and power concentrated in the same hands, it would lead to totalitarianism and centralisation. At the same time, since the political atmosphere was saturated with socialist rhetoric, the Party could not escape being affected by it, at least for tactical purposes. Hence, it claimed that it was a better socialist party than all others. <sup>53</sup>

#### VI. Foreign Policy

The Swatantra Party's views on foreign affairs are striking in many ways. The Party was highly critical of the Congress government's foreign policy of Non-Alignment (Rajagopala-chari said, 'If non-Alignment is a sacred word and can not be given up, our policy should be 'Non-Aligned alliance with the West.' <sup>54</sup>

On Indo-Pak relations, the Party stood for settlement of outstanding disputes with Pakistan so as to enable the defence of the sub-continent to be secure against communist aggression. The solution of the Kashmir problem, the Party advocated, should

be such as to reduce, if not end Indo-Pakistan ill-feeling and such as to promote good understanding and amity between the two countries . For adequate defence against China, the Swatantra Party welcomed joint defence agreements with other Asian countries.

#### VI. C.Rajagopalachari and his role as a founder of the Swatantra Party

C.Rajagopalachari, "the most astute intellectual among the elite of Indian nationalists",<sup>55</sup> and who always disliked communism, had advocated earlier for our body politic and to save Parliamentary democracy, "not an ultra or outer Left but a strong and articulated Right."<sup>56</sup> For, he continued, a party of the Right gives expression to the distresses and disturbances, which are not less real and important than the need for change and progress. He emphasised that a rightist party in a Parliamentary democracy by testing and measuring both proposed legislation and the day to day administration, would challenge the wisdom of the governing party and compel modification when those in power act in a way which would produce more pain than profit to the community. He exhorted that those who were interested in the conservative aspect of the progress should, therefore, exert themselves to build up such an opposition. He was to repeat this appeal a few years later, this time for founding a conservative party, "a party that openly and boldly stands for and guided by the principles of conserving what

we have and what is good, before proceeding to change or disturb the status quo. Change should not come from mere compliance with untested and unrealistic slogans of revolution. The Congress has thrown to the winds the principles of conservation of what is good and what is rooted in the soil and has been acting more or less as a prisoner of its own slogans."<sup>57</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari's criticism of the Nehru Government as a Swatantra leader and his pointing out of the loopholes of Indian democracy are elaborately discussed as follows :

(a) Democracy and Money Power

C.Rajagopalachari pointed out, like a seer, the sole that money power played in elections .... collection of crores from the corporations against the laws of the land, to be used for indulging in wholesale bribery and making it impossible for the honest but poor man to win the suffrage of his people.

C.Rajagopalachari made a revolutionary suggestion that the elections should be nationalised as is done in case of national census.<sup>40</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari had strongly pleaded for a ban on elections donations by companies. If companies cannot pay, individual directors made large donations out of black money or by so manipulating the accounts of the company that it does not appear that the money had been paid by the company. Further, the companies had resorted to the device of paying large sums for

the advertisements to the souvenirs which had never seen the light of the day. Therefore, open and honest donations by a company or an individual were much better, provided any breach of it was severely dealt with.<sup>41</sup> How practical was C.Rajagopalachari's foresight is proved by recent political developments in our country in connection with company donations to the political parties both in times of election and outside the election period. Thus, the present Chief Election Commissioner, Mr. T.N.Seshan called the present limits on election expenditure as the "biggest joke". Ridiculing the dishonesty involved in the electoral process, Mr. T.N.Seshan said that candidates spent several times more than the present limits. Yet, the first thing the candidates did after catering the House was to pledge honesty and truth. They could always claim that the posters, vehicles and the likes were sponsored by a friend or the party.<sup>42</sup>

C.Rajagopalachari had also suggested that when a general election was declared, the government in office should resign and a caretaker government should be installed. This may be possible in states where President's rule can be imposed. But there is no provision in the Constitution for such action as far as the election to the Lok Sabha is concerned.<sup>43</sup>

How true were C.Rajagopalachari's apprehensions had been borne out by happenings in the subsequent elections in

India's parliamentary democracy. The 1989 General Elections were estimated to have cost anything in the region of Rs.7000-8000 crores, and some economists felt that even this figure was very conservative. The Election Commission admitted to having spent Rs.110.14 crores in direct administrative expenses. According to the candidates statement of the expenditure submitted thereafter, another Rs.300 crores were spent during the campaign.<sup>44</sup>

However, government expenses are really incidental in an election. The real expenditure is the money squandered by political parties and the individual candidates in campaign or buying votes. According to Election Commission rules, a candidate is permitted to spend upto Rs.1.5 lakhs, but this figure is simply fictitious. Everyone knows that it is much higher. In 1989 elections, figures see-sawed between Rs.10-20 lakhs per candidate. Even if one takes the lower estimate it would still amount to Rs.600 crores.<sup>45</sup>

Where does all this money come from? It is said that Indian black money economy is in the region of 900000 crores. It is from where the money comes from. Be it Kulak or the erore-pati from the corporate world, the money-bags pave the way to electoral booth.<sup>46</sup>

The prophetic mind of C.Rajagopalachari dwelt on the future of Indian democracy after Independence as a founder of the Swatantra Party, and even before Independence, as far back

as 1922, while he was in Vellore jail. Thus, he wrote in Jail Diary, "we all ought to know that Swaraj will not at once or, I think, even for a long time to come, be better government or greater happiness for all the people. Election and their corruption, injustice and the power and tyranny of wealth, and inefficiency in administration, will make a hell of life as soon as freedom is given to us. Men will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparative justice, and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration. The only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination. Hope lies only in universal education by which right conduct, fear of god, and love will be developed among the citizens from childhood."<sup>47</sup>

(b) Elucidation of the Swatantra Philosophy

C.Rajagopalachari tried to remove the general notion that the Swatantra Party and the Swatantra movement were conservative. To do that he tried to modernise the term conservative. Thus, he opined that, "Swatantra does want the state to conserve what is good in anything before proceeding to reform it. It can be called conservative for that reason."<sup>48</sup> The Swatantra Party, according to C.Rajagopalachari, wants the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution of 1950 restored and preserved in fact. The Swatantra stands for, as its name implied, is the restoration of citizen's freedom of action, not inconsistent with general welfare, and therefore, it wants the removal of barbed-wire entanglements known as

permit licence quota raj, which sits heavily over all national production and trade."<sup>67</sup>

According to C.Rajagopalachari, Swatantra party wants less government and more freedom. At no time in the history of India, according to the members of the Swatantra Party, did government press so heavily on the minds of the people at all levels as during the time of the Nehru government. And this pressure is an incubus, not a contributor to the health or strength of the people who after all compose the nation.<sup>68</sup>

Regarding land reforms, C.Rajagopalachari said, Swatantra wanted everything to be done to give full security to the tenants and every opportunity for the welfare of the workers, rural and industrial. The Swatantra Party was opposed to interventionism to prevent free competition, and was opposed to every policy that tends to frighten capital out of its function. We cannot produce, said C.Rajagopalachari, without capital and should not levy taxes to obtain capital but furnish incentives to national savings. It is only this that distinguishes progress and prosperity under freedom more mere appearance of prosperity.<sup>69</sup> According to him, the Swatantra Party wanted land reforms to be based on informed leadership, to be executed without attempting to extinguish the fundamental freedoms guaranteed in the constitution. The Swatantra opposed to statism dressed up in attractive garments.<sup>70</sup>

According to C.Rajagopalachari, the Swatantra Party and the Swatantra movement could not be equated with the conservatives or liberals or any other party in the United Kingdom or the United States of America. It would be best to call it a 'constitutionalist party'. According to him, the ruling party's (i.e. the Congress) conceptions were bodily lifted from the communist conceptions of short and coercive way to progress and prosperity. The original of this copy, according to him, had been a failure. And any **system** working against human nature was bound to fail, even if it began with the deceptive promise at the outset. The desire to have prosperity is rooted in human nature and civilisation is rooted in it. In a free economy zeal and enthusiasm are automatically guaranteed. In the socialist world, the only proprietor is the state, neglect and apathy become the national climate. This cannot be counteracted by wasteful proliferation and entanglements of bureaucracy.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, C.Rajagopalachari opined that the Swatantra party opposed the Congress Party's statist policies based on a repudiation of the fundamental principles of the Constitution and freedom guaranteed therein. To those who are in the Swatantra movement and who feel abashed at the power which the ruling party has secured by being in office and **acquiring** control over the economy, exhorted C.Rajagopalachari, in a provocative language, "let us do what we should do and not be concerned about the results, let us not yield to the temptation of non-doing and become apathetic."<sup>72</sup>

## VII CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be assessed that both in its ideological appeal and its support base, the Swatantra Party was rightist. Ideologically, it was wedded to a free enterprise economy, closer understanding with western democracies, and a liberal political platform. Its support base was extremely narrow, limited to the landed classes and private industry. In terms of its Hindu communal background and its traditional base among petty traders in small towns, the Jana Sangh appeared to be more rightist.<sup>73</sup> Also, regarding the political strategy of the Swatantra Party, what S.Gopal<sup>74</sup> observed is highly remarkable. According to him, the Swatantra Party did not seem to have realised that it was not in the directions of economic and foreign policy but in the weakness of administration that the telling criticisms of the Nehru Government could be made. An underground economy was growing and the integrity of the bureaucracy had become very ragged at the edges. Thus the Swatantra Party instead of fighting the Congress on real grounds, directed its policies and strength against an imaginary enemy, i.e. the Congress socialism. In fact, the Indian National Congress was never socialist, not even during the time of the Nehru Government.

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Chapter VICONCLUDING OBSERVATIONI. Summary of Findings

Conservatism as a movement generally started with the publication of the famous book by Edmund Burke, namely, Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1790. In fact, Burke's book was a critique of the French Revolution. Some considered the book as the starting point of modern conservatism. Actually, modern conservatism started after the French Revolution. Burke himself did not use the term 'conservatism', although he did use the word to 'conserve'. Wide usage of the term first began among the European traditionalists of the early nineteenth century, groping for a new philosophical terminology against the French Revolutionary era of 1789-1815, especially against the most radical and terrorist party, the Jacobins. It would not be correct to present conservatism only in its moderate form espoused by Edmund Burke (1729-1790) and to omit the more radical form preached by Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821). The former was evolutionary; the latter, counter-revolutionary. Both favoured tradition against the innovations of the French Revolution. The former was constitutional; the latter was partly authoritarian in its stress on authority of some traditional elite and often was called not conservative but reactionary.

Properly speaking, those who wish to conserve what exists, to perpetuate the status quo, are conservatives. Thus

conservatism is less a body of belief than it is a point of view or a state of mind. It cannot be identified with a particular place and time or with a specific school of thought. The generic opposite of conservatism is radicalism, but what is radical in one context may be conservative in another. It is also true that one can find some common ground underlying the arguments and actions of the most self-conscious conservatives of more recent history. Anarchists, communists, socialists, and liberals, all assume that human reason is capable of understanding the nature of man and nature of society. By pointing to an inconsistency between man's nature and his social condition, they at least imply that reason is largely an infallible guide in helping us to set things right. For the conservative, reason is an aid but not the infallible guide to understand the nature of man and society. There are too many imponderables, and there is too much complexity in the fabric of any given society for reason to be capable of comprehending what motivates men or how society works.

Indian conservatism presents some important and distinctive features. There is no difficulty in locating an indigenous aristocracy and landed nobility, whose response to challenges drove them towards the search for aristocratic conservatism. However, the absence of stable, indigenous, macro-political institutions and the absence of broad class identifications and cohesion meant that there was no national

focal point for aristocratic conservatism. The latter was at best regional; and often it was formed around antagonistic individual rulers. The fact is that Hinduism had no organised church to serve as a focal point for religious conservatism.

Moreover, in about half of India, princely politics were swept aside by the British, different institutions, values and new social classes came to the fore, which ultimately led to parliamentarism. There is yet another complication. The historic weakness of India's macro-political institutions, the instability of the princely politics and the pro-British stand ultimately taken by most leading aristocrats, combined to lead many Indians to hold that the real India had nothing whatever to do with princely states. For them, the real India was to be found in the three pillars of the self-regulating Indian society — joint-family, caste and village — which enabled India to withstand instability in the broader polity. This type of conservatism existed with monarchs and landed nobles. Furthermore, the caste system, often portrayed as totally inflexible, contained within itself a profoundly conservative mechanism of change, which helped to avoid frontal attacks on the system.

In India, then, one will find aristocratic conservatives; village-oriented groups which rejected both aristocratic order and British institutions and values; village-oriented groups which accepted parliamentarism but which wanted the new political institutions to be used in defence of village India; and others

who, in varying ways and degrees, were more fully committed to transform India along western lines. For a long time, these groups functioned in a colonial setting which further complicated the complex relationships.

The primary objective in this work has been to highlight the origin and development of the social, economic and political ideas of C.Rajagopalachari in the backdrop of the continuing debate between tradition and modernity in India. To confront colonialism politically, culturally and intellectually, Indian thinkers conjured up a nationalist discourse; some placing their emphasis on the revival of ancient Indian institutions, structures and ideas, however, not without modifications; others emphasised the emancipatory role of the western ideas and principles of social organisation. While the former group of thinkers had a strong mobilisational role against imperialism despite their harking back to the past; the latter, despite their progressive image, remained elitist due to their class character.

Another purpose of the proposed study was to show, in this connection, that most of the votaries of the so-called Indian tradition, however useful of their critique of the west, supported the status quo in the name of the tradition. Past and tradition can be reconstructed according to the demand of the

particular group or class in society. The revivalistic nationalists, during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, in their eagerness to mitigate the colonial subjugation, provided a wholesale justification of the past.

Another related objective in this work was to analyse the background and substantial content of C.Rajagopalachari's critique of the Congress policies under the banner of the Swatantra Party. From the mid-fifties till his death, C. Rajagopalachari was one of the sharpest and most perceptive critics of the Congress regime in India. It is interesting to note that this 'Rightist' opposition to the Congress rule, despite its intelligent experienced leadership and potential, failed to make a breakthrough in the Indian political arena and petered out rather prematurely.

The introductory chapter started with a statement of the objectives, significance and methodology of the present study, followed by an overview of the literature connected with this work. In the first chapter, it was stated that C.Rajagopalachari wrote no works of sustained theoretical interpretation. His first loyalty was to the practicalities of statecraft. Yet, his conservatism was a searching and brilliantly integrated synthesis of ideas from European and Indian culture. As he grew in age, the substance of his thought derived less from European and more from Indian culture.

In the second Chapter, it has been shown that in the Western countries, along with steady industrialization and development of capitalism, society became stratified and conservatism because the ideology of the landed aristocrats in different forms in different countries. But in the case of India, the new political and economic environment created by the British conquest and rule of India, posed before the Indian problems which were quite new and could not be solved by the theories and methods which the old Indian culture provided. In such an environment, conservatism in India assumed the garb of religious revivalist movements, both Hindu and Muslim. These movements appealed to the centuries-old traditional values, and were able to build up a power following among the less modernised masses where the Indian National Congress could not penetrate. For example, Tilak did not hesitate to appeal to explosive communal religious sentiments. he defended child marriages and organised cow-protection society and began to worship elephant-god, Ganapati, as a means of stimulating mass participation in politics.

In the third Chapter, it has been demonstrated that C.Rajagopalachari provided the example of a Hindu intellectual who, in the wake of change in India, under the tutelage of the Raj during the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, tried to reformulate India's classical tradition. Obviously, for intellectuals of this sort, Hinduism was the awe-inspiring arsenal for fighting the British master, on the one hand, and to provide

a blue-print for the future of independent India's course of action amidst the comity of nations, on the other. Curiously Hinduism of this sort was more a political entity than a religious one. It resembled protestantism in Europe which played a role of religion of the then powerful and propertied classes. In fact, C.Rajagopalachari, through numerous works, gave an expedient and contemporaneous formulation of Hinduism. Thus, according to him, the requirements of planned and regulated economy could be found in the Vedanta. To him, the old laissez-faire economy and concomitant social philosophy had become outdated. Instead, there appeared socialist economy with the passing of the time to meet the needs of the people and which can be traced in the Vedanta.

In the fourth chapter of this work, an attempt has been made to show that C.Rajagopalachari belonged to the old guard of the Indian National Congress which dominated the Congress leadership during the 1930's. The varied experiences of the 1930's, ranging from the socialist challenge, agrarian crises, civil disobedience movements and ministry-making, and British moves in reaction to the above, enabled the Congress leadership to mature and crystallise into a composite group. This group which characteristically also came to be labelled as the High Command, came to make decisions and to control the broad developments of this period. For all practical purposes, this group remained under Gandhiji's overall guidance

and influence and was generally described as the Gandhian leadership.

A study of the composition of the Congress working Committee in the years between 1929-39 shows a recurrence in it of a few names like Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C.Rajagopalachari. These men were the lieutenants of Gandhiji who could be trusted to carry forward the Gandhian point of view in any major issue of the decade. They were men wielding considerable authority in their respective provinces and were, therefore, able to combine strength of their local bases with their all India positions. Their support was invaluable to Gandhiji who himself was a continental leader with no strong provincial base, as they provided the vital link in the locality-province-nation chain during any movement occurring on an all India scale.

Broad parallels in the family backgrounds of the three leaders, common values they cherished and interests they represented, led them to formulate a similar, if not unanimous, point of view on most major issues of the day. Born into essentially conservative rural backgrounds, all the three leaders had their essential moorings in the traditional culture and values. Early village education, childhood association with tales from epics, proximity to rural environments in the initial years, and early marriages in accordance with conservative customs, were experiences shared by the three leaders. Subsequently, all three of them made a considerable effort to

educate themselves and establish their careers. They were all essentially self-made men. Exposure to western education did not disturb their essentially traditional core, but they were not to be unquestioning believers in traditions and customs. The attempt to strike a balance between the traditional and the modern was a characteristic that sprang from their essential conservatism. They were instinctive supporters of both hierarchy and authority, and yet their moral and political beliefs led them to rebel against religious orthodoxy and irrational social customs. While dealing with social abuses, however, they would rather reform the symptoms than uproot the cause. As Prime Minister of the Madras Province, C.Rajagopalachari, for example, was alive to the necessity of taking up agrarian and tenancy issues, but would not countenance doing away with the **Zamindari** system itself.

However, during 1937-39, when C.Rajagopalachari was the Prime Minister of the Madras Presidency, his political outlook and style became clear. The government of C.Rajagopalachari came in for the severest attack. The Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party Conference passed resolution in November, 1937, condemning the working of the C.Rajagopalachari ministry which was undermining the prestige of the Congress. Listing the misdeeds, it pointed out that CID surveillance on the socialists was continuing, securities for the newspapers were not being retrieved, a deferential attitude to British officers was being maintained, and more importantly, the

Kottapattam case prisoners were not yet being released, and the socialist Batlivala was arrested and convicted. The socialists were piqued at being regarded by the ministries no longer as comrade-in-arms, but as inconvenient nuisance elements. Stating his own defence, C.Rajagopalachari pointed out that the Congress had accepted the office after mature deliberations and after great misgivings and it would not be advisable for the people to agitate for all these things and demand that the Congress ministry would do everything. Further, although in the past, Congressmen in their propaganda had often spoken of doing with the government, they could not indulge in such talk now. As Nehru explained to Masani, the two different contexts and meanings of the word were causing confusion.

The case for which C.Rajagopalachari came in for maximum attack was that of S.S.Batlivala, a socialist leader of Bombay, who was arrested at Tellichery on October, 1939, for an allegedly seditious speech and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. The Batlivala case was the first instance of a Congressman arrested under the Congress regime and was thus sensationalised. To Nehru, the Batlivala prosecution by C.Rajagopalachari ministry had "shocked the Congress conscience and it represented a negation and a reversal of fundamental Congress principles and policy."<sup>1</sup> At the AICC and Working Committee meetings of the Congress at Calcutta in October, 1937, socialist members seriously attacked C.Rajagopalachari's action.

To Nehru, the Batlivāla case carried serious implications in the non-Congress states. His suggestion was that Congress ministries should secure the Working Committee's prior approval before making arrests or instituting prosecutions; this was, however, turned down by the strong conservative support that C.RajaGopalachari received at the Working Committee meetings.

The Kottapattam Summer School of Politics and Economy was started on May 1, 1937 by the Andhra Congress Socialist Party. In May, 1937, it was banned by the C.Rajagopalachari ministry on the ground that it was fomenting communist and revolutionary ideas and some students were taken prisoners. This action caused considerable opposition from the socialist critics of C.Rajagopalachari ministry. Expressing shock and indignation, Nehru charged the C.Rajagopalachari ministry of being "as much a police ministry suppressing the elementary rights of free speech and association as the previous government was."<sup>2</sup>

In the fifth Chapter, it has been shown that during the last phase of his political career, to mitigate his political wilderness, C.Rajagopalachari emphasised the need for a rightist party against the license-permit-quota raj of Nehru. He exhorted that those who were interested in the conservative aspect of progress should therefore exert themselves to build up a rightist opposition to the Congress. According to him, the Congress government had thrown to the winds the principle

of conservation of what was good and rooted in the soil, and had been acting more or less as a prisoner of its own slogan. But C.Rajagopalachari, at this stage, was quite conscious of his old age, and also his long record of service in the Congress Party and his personal attachment to Nehru prevented him from assuming the leadership of the Swatantra Party, and he suggested the name of Prof.N.G.Ranga to take up the Presidentship of the Party.

## II. Concluding Observations

C.Rajagopalachari, throughout his political career, broadly subscribed to Burkean conservatism. Thus, according to him, evolutionary forces do work irresistibly, but man's place in evolution is to work out intelligently to modify, to resist and to correct the natural trends. If the traditional restraints and hierarchy of guidance are eliminated, there will be nothing to keep the humanity together in orderly cohesion. Without moral restraints, there will be no force to keep the structure of the society together. According to him, religion is the basis of civil society. Unless religion and values issuing from it are not preserved under the guidance of the elite, there will be no hope for the world or any part of it in the dangerous condition that have come into being as a result of technical advance.<sup>3</sup>

Thus C.Rajagopalachari opined that conservation is the first law of progress. If mere change is to be condemned, people

should not hesitate to call themselves conservatives. To conserve, according to him, is to look after what is good and not to let thoughtless ruin overtake what is essential and good. He even argued that it is better to remain poor and happy than to be favoured with facilities to grow richer. The craze for higher and higher standards of living should be substituted by a craze for spiritual freedom.

C.Rajagopalachari was attracted by Gandhiji's spiritual approach to politics. The moral zeal that Gandhiji injected into his campaigns appealed to C.Rajagopalachari, a Brahmin intellectual in search of a worthy cause. There was a strong conservative trait in C.Rajagopalachari's personality. His reception of the western ideas and social practices was always restricted by a dogged, but not uncritical attachment to the religion of his caste. Some writers have commented that C.Rajagopalachari was too much of an intellectual to be a popular leader and that he preferred decision-making from behind the scenes to public leadership. And for such a man, power would not come from popular acclaim, but from association with a cause or personality. Thus, Michael Brecher<sup>4</sup> was of the opinion that C.Rajagopalachari was probably the most astute intellectual among the elite of the Indian nationalists. He was also the only South-Indian to achieve a nation-wide prominence as a Congress leader. A Madrassi Brahmin of fair complexion, C.Rajagopalachari's delicate appearance belied his

intellectual vigour. There was a cold, almost icy reserve about him, a pronounced aloofness and stern composure. Precise in thought and speech, he was also capable of biting satire. He had a quick, razor-sharp mind and was less given to emotion than any of his colleagues in the nationalist movement.

Apart from his conservative leanings, C. Rajagopalachari throughout his life upheld the Gandhian notion of trusteeship. According to him, modern civilisation has greatly increased the number of situations which the sacred relationship of trusteeship must govern. Every human action, no matter how intimate and personal, is affected by a public interest and attracts the principle of trusteeship. To explain the doctrine of trusteeship in simple words, whatever any person holds as his own, he should look upon it as given by god and should be used only for good purposes. This is the reconciliation between the charter of individual property and the claim of society. Like a lake which overflows when it cannot contain any more water, men who have amassed wealth should give it freely for the benefit of others. So, it is that Gandhiji pointed out what he called the doctrine of trusteeship as the answer to, not a justification for, modern socialism.<sup>5</sup> The doctrine of enlightened selfishness of the nineteenth century utilitarians should be refined into a doctrine of immanent trusteeship. The means to reach this end should not be compulsion, but a refinement of the moral sense by education and religion,<sup>6</sup> Dharma is the single word that can fulfil this task.<sup>7</sup> Religion cannot be piegon-holed, but

should be woven into every activity of life including social and political activities. Thus, C.Rajagopalachari envisioned a society where there will be minimum government and maximum freedom for the individual, decentralised responsibility instead of centralised planning, and concentration of authority and a moral revolution instead of legislative compulsion, the inner law taking place of the external policemen, leading to the gradual transformation of the personal ownership into trusteeship for the community, without detriment to the fundamental principle, namely, the personal interest of man.

Besides his conservative and Gandhian leanings, anti-communism was the governing passion of C.Rajagopalachari throughout his life. It underlay all his policies. It was the central concern of his politics. Thus, during the premiership, he described the Communist Party as his enemy number one and considered the Communist Party as a great and dangerous trap for the country. He even commented that he did not understand dialectical materialism and had too much prejudice against it.<sup>3</sup>

It would be highly relevant here to dwell on C.Rajagopalachari's role as a preacher and interpreter of Hinduism through numerous books. It may be noted that the themes of his religious books were brahminic Hinduism, the identification of orthodoxy with the acceptance of the authority

of the Vedas and brahmans, along with the tremendous absorptive and cooptive power as long as the dissident elements accepted their place within a caste hierarchy. The material base of this social order lay in the village productive system of caste, jajmani and untouchability. There were numerous local gods and goddesses who remain at the centre of popular religious life even today.

Conflicting opinions exist regarding C.Rajagopalachari's political career and ideology. Thus, someone said<sup>9</sup> that C.Rajagopalachari was a self-righteous Gandhian and also was autocratic to some extent. Unlike other Gandhians, C.Rajagopalachari had the courage to criticise Gandhiji.

But his critics<sup>10</sup> argue that C.Rajagopalachari had no political philosophy at all. He was above all an intellectual and never bothered about the masses. He was not even a true Congressman unlike other Congress leaders. Ultimately, during the 1960's, he became a Brahmin leader in Tamil Nadu through the Swatantra Party Platform. The greatest obstacle in bringing out any political ideology from C.Rajagopalachari's political career, speeches and writings was his inconsistency. He just expressed his opinions from time to time and never bothered about their logical consistency.<sup>11</sup>

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- 1 Nehru to P.Subbarayan, November 21, 1937, SWJN, 8, pp.359-60.
- 2 Ibid., 8, p.249.
- 3 Rajagopalachari, C., Swarajya, May 27, 1961. "When I read your book on Hinduism, it seemed to me that you really have a utilitarian approach to religion. You preach Hinduism not as if you believe in its doctrines, but because you think they will make for morality in politics." Minica Felton, I Meet Rajaji, (Macmillan, London, 1962), p.7.
- 4 Brecher, Michael, Nehru : A Political Biography, (OUP, 1959), p.86.
- 5 According to C.Rajagopalachari, "the whole plan of socialism is based on this axiom, namely that the world is sufficient in itself and it is only inequality in distribution which makes us miserable. If the world is sufficient for all its inhabitants then divide it equally amongst us. Socialism is the extension of a Hindu joint family system to the whole world." Rajagopalachari, C. Chats Behind Bars, Madras, 1932, p.30.
- 6 According to C.Rajagopalachari, "what socialism really demands is a change of heart, not an unwilling people yoked to the law. A new way of life, a new culture what is aimed at. This cannot be achieved by coercion but only by a change of heart." Rajagopalachari, C., Satyam Eva Jayate, Madras, Volume I, p.283.
- 7 According to C.Rajagopalachari, "Dharma is not to be confused with the fanaticism of some followers of Hinduism. Dharma is the widespread inner call among people of all classes in India to reduce their wants and to give their possessions for the good of others." Rajagopalachari, C., Satyam Eva Jayate, Volume I, p.434, October, 1959.
- 8 C.Rajagopalachari commented that "I cannot understand all this stuff about dialectical materialism. I never could. I suppose I have too much prejudice against it. These young men (Marxists) who have lost their faith are looking for something fresh to hook themselves on to. Their god has fallen down and now they need another one. They are honest, but they are not ready to acknowledge that there is no final answer. They are looking for panacea, for a solution which will solve everything." Minica Felton, I Meet Rajaji, (Macmillan, London, 1962), p.84.

- 9 Mrs.Dr.Arunasivakamini, Reader, Department of Public Administration, University of Madras, Interview was taken on 8.4.91.
- 10 Dr.P.Jagadesan, Reader and Head, Department of History, University of Madras whom I interviewed on 18.4.91. Also to be noted is the comment of Jay Dubashi, "Copley is wide of the mark in describing C.Rajagopalachari as a moralist in politics. Actually, C.Rajagopala-chari had the temperament of a priest, only he changed his gods from time to time. It was once Gandhiji, then Jinnah; later still, when all gods are in proper heavenly niches, it was private enterprise garbed in the mantle of liberty. Like Bernard Shaw, C.Rajagopala-chari never really believed in anything. But like most lawyers, he was clever at rationalising anything he happened to believe at any time." India Today, December 16-31, 1978.
- 11 Regarding inconsistency, C.Rajagopalachari said, "It should be foolish for anyone to claim that his views on every subject had been unchanged for fifty years. If there was a change of opinion the later opinion should be held as more correct as based on more experience and more thought." Iyer, M.V., Rajaji : A Study of his Personality, Volume I.

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