

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.¹ His command over English was flawless,² 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.³ 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. Legitimisation of state power came through formal subservience to the Brahminical order.⁴

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.⁵ 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.⁶

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 Kural⁷ 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."⁸

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.⁹

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."¹⁰ 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 the 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."¹¹

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 Bhagvad 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."¹²

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.¹³

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 obloquy and, in very bad cases, through social ostracism.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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."¹⁶ 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 **or** 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.¹⁷ 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."¹⁸

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.¹⁹ 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.²⁰

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.²¹

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."²²

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.²³

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.²⁴ 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 socalled social reform.²⁵

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 pressurised 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."²⁶

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.²⁷

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."²⁸ 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.²⁹

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."³⁰

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.³¹ 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 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."³² 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."³³

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?"³⁴

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."³⁵

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."³⁶

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.³⁷

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."³⁸ 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.³⁹ 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."⁴⁰

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.⁴¹ Breaking up the bonds of loyalty had became 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."⁴²

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.⁴³

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.⁴⁴ 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."⁴⁵ 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 Mongegu-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, (Berkeley, 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, Swarajyaya, 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 Moralist 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 trespassers 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.Appadurai, (OUP, 1976), p.107.
- 45 Said, Edward W., Culture and Imperialism, (Vintage, London, 1994, p.1.

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