

DR. SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

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P R E F A C E

Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji passed away on the 23rd of June, last at Srinagar where he had been detained without trial by Kashmir Government since the 11th of May, 1953. He was the brightest luminary on the Indian horizon who was trailing a new light to dispel the darkness that has been engulfing India. This darkness is being felt by every Indian, big and small who has a heart to feel. Moral decay and corruption, cultural stagnation and economic discontent stalk the land. Political freedom which should have helped in dispelling this darkness has become instrument of totalitarian tyranny in the hands of those who rule the country in the name of democracy.

Dr Mookerji was a challenge to these forces of darkness and totalitarianism. As a true Bharatiya rooted in the soil of India, both mentally and physically, he understood the real needs and problems of India as few others have. He was a true nationalist who shed tears of blood when India was vivisected and who was determined not to allow her crown—Kashmir—to be chopped off from her body like her two arms. He was a real democrat who fought all his life for freedom, individual and collective, and who, as the leader of the Opposition in the first elected Parliament of free India, proved to be the greatest bulwork of democracy in the country. He fought for the unity of India, for the improv -

ment in the lot of the common man and protection of his civil rights and for the preservation of democracy and true freedom against powerful forces of disruption, reaction and fascism all his life and died as a martyr in the forefront of the battle for Indian unity.

It was my good fortune to have been closely associated with this great educationist, patriot, statesman and Parliamentarian during the last, which were also the most crowded, years of his life when he was building up Bharatiya Jan Sangh as his instrument for reconstruction of Bharat as a modern, strong and progressive nation on the basis of her age old 'Sanskriti' and 'Maryada.' The following pages, therefore, deal more exhaustively with later years of his life.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge my gratitude to Shri B. R. Verma of the "ORGANISER" who shared with me this labour of love as a humble homage to the great Master, as also to Vaidya Gurudatt, Prof. Mahavir, Shri K. R. Malkani, Shri Dina Nath Malhotra and Shri Vali Sinha of the Mahabodhi Society of India, who gave valuable help in the preparation of this book. I am also thankful to the "Hindustan Standard" and Parliament Library, for extending their cooperation to me for collecting materials.

BAL RAJ MADHOK,

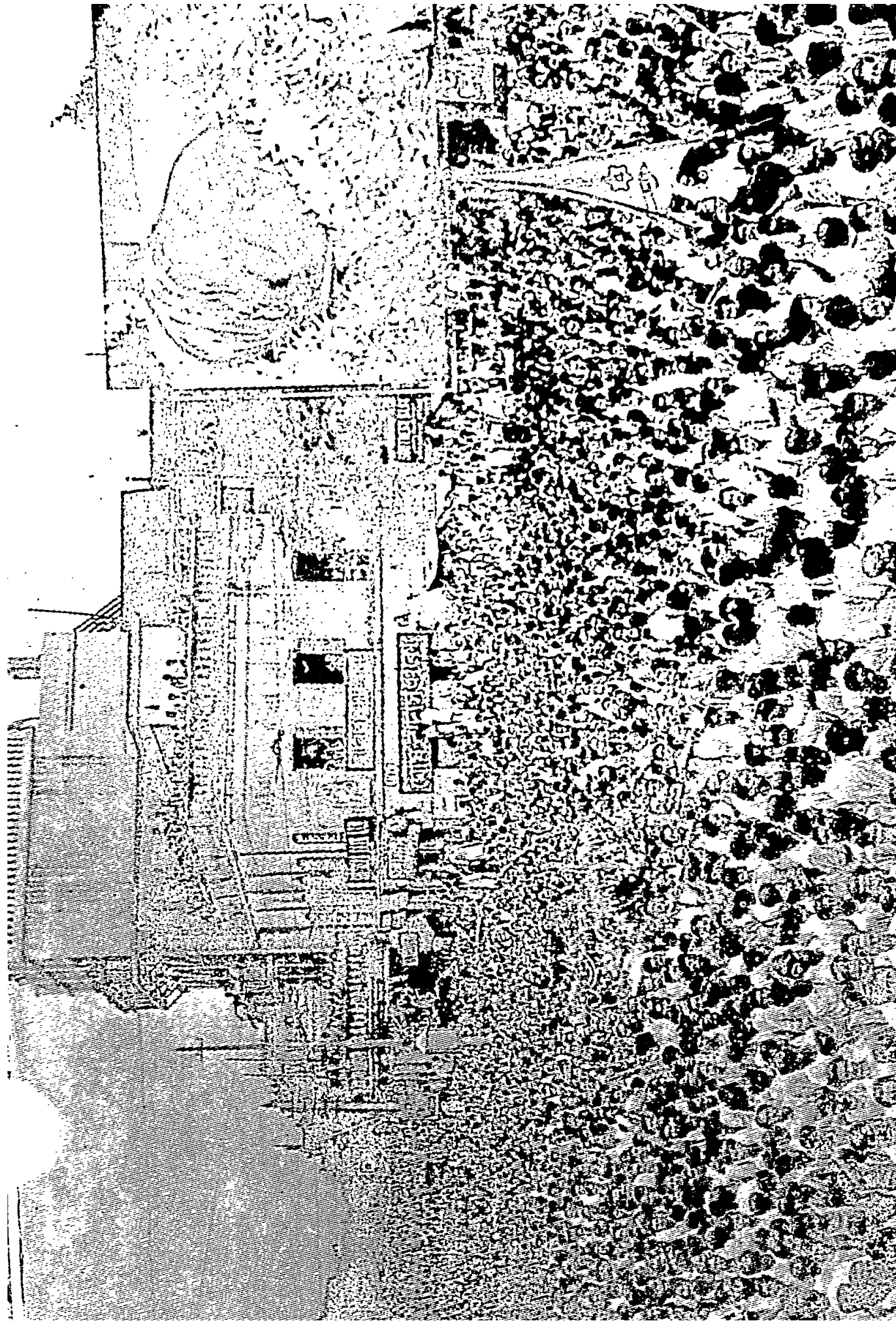
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SYAMA PRASAD

A giant has departed...lo' the sun
Of a colossal intellect has set,
The giants are departing one by one
To whom our mourning nation owes a debt.
Incalculable debt that shall be paid
With understanding in the waging strife—
We dare not rest until our hands have made
A mighty structure of our nation's life.
He gave us the impression of a tree
With thoughts about him like to foliage packed—
How often we agreed to disagree
Yet kept our merry friendship all intact.
We laughed and jested, at each other sent
Ironic repartee like arrows hurled
When we discussed affairs of Parliament
And several sorry problems of the world.
We saw not eye to eye in many things
And yet we were the very best of friends—
Yes—mighty eagle! now fold up your wings
Since suddenly your weary journey ends.
How swiftly you have gone out of our reach,
The sudden cancellation of a peak—
Friend! we shall miss your presence, and your speech

(ii)

Which thundered every time you rose to speak.
How shall our grief in language be expressed
And how shall we forget this mournful day?
“The jail is an ideal place for rest”
Is what you said before you went away...
Now shall you rest for centuries to come,
High Oratory, packed with lightning flashes,
Shall, like a secret statue, cold and dumb,
Sit on the monument which hides your ashes.

—*Harindranath Chattopadhyaya.*

GREAT SON OF A GREAT FATHER.

Sir Ashutosh Mookerji, the maker of modern Bengal, gave much to Bengal and India during his dedicated public life of about half a century. Modern Bengal bears an indelible impress of that towering personality and versatile genius, who had come to be regarded by his contemporaries as an incarnation of Saraswati, the goddess of learning—Eastern and Western—in all spheres of its collective life; particularly the educational and the cultural. His understanding and love of Indian ideals and traditions enabled him to make them a living reality in his own life. He combined in himself all that is best in Eastern Culture and Western thought and he aspired to create in the lives that he was moulding an ideal and natural blending of the Indian spiritual and moral values and idealism and the Western scientific and matter of fact approach to the problems of life, individual and collective, national and international.

He picked up talent from wherever he found, gave it a direction and scope under his protecting and paternal wings so that it may grow after the pattern he had set for himself. Shri Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Shri C. V. Raman and a number of other living Indian savants and scientists are his gifts to the nation. But his greatest gift, the perfect model of natural but intelligent blending of the two strains, the Eastern and the Western, was his own

son, the late Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji who not only carried on the work of his great father in the field of education and culture but also brought his massive intelligence, robust common sense and truly nationalist outlook to bear upon his country's political life as well with decisive results.

Born in Calcutta on July, 6, 1901 Syama Prasad inherited from his devout mother Shrimati Jogmaya Devi and his erudite and fearless father a long tradition of devotion to learning and Dharma in the true sense of the term. Like William Pitt the younger he was trained up from his very childhood by his discerning father with assiduous care to play great role in the affairs of his motherland. He gave him the best education that an Indian in the early years of the present century could aspire to get. Syama Prasad graduated from Presidency College, Calcutta with honours in English in 1921 standing first in first class. In 1923 he passed his M. A. with first class first position in the University and next year passed his B.L., again a first class first, from the same University. Two years later he proceeded to England for higher studies in law and was called to the English bar in 1927. In 1938 the University of Calcutta conferred on him the degree of D. Litt and Banaras University repeated the honour by conferring the degree of L. L. D. (*Honoris Causa*) the same year.

He got himself enrolled as an advocate of Calcutta High Court in 1924. His public life also began the same year with his election to the Senate of the Calcutta

University and later on his elevation to the Syndicate to fill the place rendered vacant by the death of Sir Asutosh in the same year. Very soon he got so much engrossed in public duties that he could find little time for his professional work. He got elected to the Bengal Legislative Council as a Congress candidate representing the Calcutta University in 1929 but had to resign his seat the next year when the Congress decided to boycott the Legislatures. But his sense of duty towards the University that had been literally built up by his father impelled him to seek re-election and get into the legislative Council once again in 1931 as an independent candidate from the same constituency. Thus his life had become quite crowded while he was just thirty years old.

A new chapter in his life opened in ^{age 32 1/2} 1933 when he lost his wife, Shrimati Sudha Devi whom he had married in 1922 and who had bore him four children, two sons and two daughters. Syama Prasad was then in the prime of his life. Had he belonged to the common run he could have re-married and carried on his domestic and professional life side by side with his public duties. But, steeped in Indian ideals, as he was, he took the death of his wife as a signal for renunciation of his personal life and dedication of his time and energies for the good of the society as a whole. He lived like a Sanyasin thereafter till his death. The blessings of his mother were with him in this noble resolve. 'I had long dedicated my son for selfless service to the country and my son

sacrificed his life for the cause of the motherland", she proudly declared after his martyrdom. ✓

The first task he took in hand after his renunciation was that of completing the work of his father in re-constructing the Calcutta University. As the youngest Vice-Chancellor of the biggest Indian University from 1934-38 and as President, Post Graduate Councils in Arts and Science for successive years, he not only completed the work his father had inaugurated for the development of Post Graduate teaching in the University but also made new and bold experiment of introducing Bengali as the medium of instruction for the college studies as well.

His fame as a devoted educationist, intellectual and orator had by this time begun to spread beyond the boundaries of Bengal. He was elected a member of the Court and Council of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, in 1935 and also became a member and then Chairman of the Inter University Board in the creation of which he had played a leading role. He wanted the experiments and developments in the field of education as undertaken by different Universities of the country to be co-related and co-ordinated so that a common pattern could be evolved by them for the educational life of the country as a whole. He was also nominated by the Government of India to the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations as India's representative in 1938. In 1943 he was elected President of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal,

the Premier organisation for Asiatic Studies and research in India. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji was the first Indian to be given that honour.

✓ Dr. Mookerji's entry into politics should be dated from 1937 when he was elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly from the University Constituency in the first elections held under the Government of India Act of 1935, which gave autonomy to the Provinces. Till then he was more or less a Congressman in politics. He had till then, never examined the Congress policies and working from close quarters. He only shared the general adoration that the people had developed for this organisation and its leaders. But his experience in the legislature in which Congress controlled most of the 80 Hindu seats in a house of 250, after 1934 brought him face to face with the realities of Indian political situation and the utopian and un-national approach of Congress towards it. He saw how bankruptcy of statesmanship on the part of Congress was driving all the Muslim members into the fold of the Muslim League and how its continuous pandering to the intransigence of the Muslim League was jeopardising the social, educational and cultural life of Bengal and the very existence of Hindus as equal and self respecting sons of the soil. ✓

The turning point, however, came in 1939 when the Muslim League with the connivance of the British engineered large scale riots attended with terrible outrages on Hindu women in Chittagong, Munshiganj, Kesharganj, Pabna and Dacca. All

sorts of barbarities were committed on Hindus at all these places. The British masters of Bengal rewarded the Muslims for these outrages against Bengal Hindus, whom they wanted to teach a lesson for playing the leading role in nationalist movement for India's freedom, by showing them special favours in appointment to government posts, in allotting seats in local bodies and in educational grants etc.

/ The Congress on the other hand for fear of displeasing the Muslims scrupulously abstained from condemning Muslim law-breakers, rioters, ravishers of women and polluters of Hindu temples. The Congress would not similarly object to curtailment of Hindus' rights to public services etc. or to deprivation of Hindus of their legitimate political dues. Hindus were thus allowed to be persecuted and punished for their patriotism and services to the national cause by the 'nationalist' Congress for fear of displeasing the Muslim Leaguers.

' This experience coupled with what he had been noticing in Bengal Legislative Assembly brought about a revolution in his mind. He did some hard thinking on the political concepts that had been then set in vogue by the Congress and found to his utter disillusionment that they stood neither the test of logic and universally accepted political theories nor that of enlightened national interest. He realised that many of the mistakes of the Congress were directly the result of basically reactionary approach to the problem of Indian nationalism. The main spring of Congress nationalism, he found, was the

negative factors of anti-Britishism. It lacked any positive cultural content. It therefore laid greater store by some kind of pitched up Hindu Muslim unity on the basis of their common opposition to the British rule rather than on creating a truly national outlook, based on loyalty to the motherland and allegiance to the national culture and heritage. His rational mind could not after that be persuaded to toe the line of patently irrational Congress politics on the plea that it was based on the inner voice of Mahatma Gandhi and therefore could not be subject to scrutiny of reason.

But he was not a man to sit quiet and silent in the face of what he had become convinced was positively harmful to the national interests. The hereditary fearlessness and devotion to duty would not allow him to do that. He decided to come out openly in opposition to the Congress and the Muslim League.

Two men influenced him during this decisive phase of his political life and helped him to decide his line of action. They were late Dr. Keshav Bali Ram Hedgewar, the founder of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and Swatantriya Veer V. D. Savarkar who had just then been freed from his internment in his home district of Ratnagiri. Both of them were patriots of very high order who had made extreme sacrifices for the cause of the country. They had shown the rare courage of publicly exposing the hollowness of Congress approach to the national problems and had placed before the country

a programme for creating national solidarity on the basis of the concept of Hindutva or Hindu Rashtra, which laid stress on love of the country and its age old culture as the mainspring of patriotism and national consciousness and not merely on anti-Britishism. It appealed to the reason of Dr. Mookerji. He, therefore, began to take an active interest in Hindu Maha Sabha, which was then being re-organised, and took a prominent part in its annual session which was held at Calcutta in 1939 under the Presidentship of Veer Savarkar. Next year he was nominated to act as Working President of the Maha Sabha owing to continuous ill health of Veer Savarkar.

His entry into active politics was hailed by his admirers and critics alike. His intellectual attainments, dauntless spirit, moral fibre and power of elocution made him look a welcome addition to the political stage of the country. Some, who knew by experience how all absorbing the political field was, felt that the gain to the political life would be a loss to educational and cultural life of the country in which he had already made a mark and reached the top position. The homely remark of a top Congress leader who wrote to him "active politics is like riding a tiger. You can ride it alright but it becomes impossible to climb down from it," was often recalled by Dr. Mookerji in later years when he had come to realise the truth of that friendly advice.

The story of Dr. Mookerji's life from 1940 to 1947, when the mistaken policies of the Congress bore their deadly fruit of partition and the misery and problems that came in the wake of it, is truly the story of the nationalist India. During this period he interpreted the mind and presented the case of nationalist India before the Congress leaders and the British rulers with relentless logic and force. He made himself one with the suffering humanity of Bengal and India and served it with single minded devotion and fearless determination.

✓ Bengal first saw his mettle as a political leader in 1940. Late Subhas Chander Bose had just then been driven out of the Congress. But he had his hold on Calcutta. He wanted to demonstrate his strength and popularity to his opponents in the Congress by capturing the Calcutta Corporation and himself becoming its Mayor. Dr. Mookerji had also planned to put up Hindu Sabha candidates to contest all seats. Subhas Bose realised that in a triangular contest between Hindu Sabha, Muslim League and his men, Muslim League might secure a majority. So he proposed a deal to Dr. Mookerji. Hindu Sabha and his party, he suggested, should contest an agreed number of constituencies to be determined by mutual consultation. Dr. Mookerji agreed. *constituencies were accordingly selected and candidates approved.* But they could not arrive at any agreed decision about the candidates to be set up for two particular constituencies. Dr. Mookerji suggested a way out. A panel was to be

submitted by each party to the other out of which the other party should select a candidate who should thereafter be treated as common candidate of both the parties. The suggestion was accepted. Subhas Bose selected one from the panel submitted by Dr. Mookerji. But the man selected by Dr. Mookerji out of the panel submitted by Subhash Bose was not acceptable to the latter. He wanted a supporter of his, a strong man who was neither a Congressman nor a Hindu Sabhaite, but whose physical support was very much valued by him, to be nominated for the seat and not the one selected by Dr. Mookerji in accordance with the agreement.

Dr. Mookerji argued with him to abide by the pact and not to insist upon the selection of his particular favourite. But Subhas Bose would not agree. He told Dr. Mookerji that force was the ultimate argument in all matters and he would not accept any other candidate even if it meant failure of the pact, and contest for every seat, which was sure to result in victory of third party, viz., the Muslim League. Dr. Mookerji's appeal to avoid placing the Calcutta Corporation in the hands of Leaguers who were already doing havoc with the administration of Bengal had no effect on him. Dr. Mookerji therefore reluctantly decided to accept the challenge. The two great men of Bengal were thus pitted against each other.

Subhas Bose with the help of his favourite decided to intimidate the Mahasabha candidates by the use of force. His men would break up all Maha

Sabha meetings and beat up its candidate. As a result the Maha Sabha candidates got so much terrified and demoralised that they would not hold any meeting at all. Dr. Mookerji could not tolerate it. He got a meeting announced to be addressed by himself. ✓ As soon as he rose to speak a stone hit him in his head which began to bleed profusely. This infuriated the audience that adored him. It fell upon the goondas, including the strong man of Subhas Bose, and gave them a thorough beating. That put an end to their hooliganism. Soon after Subhas Bose met Dr. Mookerji and suggested that there should be no interference or attempt at disturbing the meetings of the rival parties. *what was result*

A new situation developed in Bengal in 1941. Maulvi Fazal ul-Haque fell out with Mr. Mohamed Ali Jinnah whose overbearing manners and dictatorial attitude towards his colleagues repelled those who had any following of their own independent of him. As a result Fazal-ul-Haque parted company with the Muslim League. He then wanted cooperation and support of Hindu groups in the Assembly to retain power. Dr. Mookerji was quick to appreciate the situation. He realised that failure of any response from the nationalist forces will again force him into the camp of Muslim League. This he wanted to avoid. He, therefore, formed the Progressive Coalition with Fazal-ul-Haque and joined his cabinet as Finance Minister. *what was result - the election*

This was hailed as a most politic move by all well wishers of Bengal including his political oppo-

ment like Subhas Chander Bose, as that was the only way to keep Maulvi Fazal-ul-Haque and his party from falling into the lap of Muslim League once again. But the British Governor, Sir John Herbert, did not like this. He wanted the Muslim League to be in power and, therefore, began to put all sorts of obstacles in his way from the day he assumed office. But Dr. Mookerji was not the man to be daunted or deflected from the path of duty by fear or favour. He dominated the cabinet so long as he remained in it and checkmated many of the evil designs of the Anglo-Muslims ; but he quitted it with deep disdain when he found that he could no longer serve his people and country by continuing in it.

While a Minister he set an example of fearlessness and courage of conviction when he dashed to Bhagalpur, where the Hindu Maha Sabha Session had been banned in 1942 and courted arrest. That remains the solitary case in the annals of British rule in India when a Minister of the Crown in one province courted arrest in another province under the same Crown.

When the Congress leaders were clapped in jail after the Quit India Movement of August 1942 and the British Government had started a policy of heartless repression all over the country, Dr. Mookerji took up the cudgels on behalf of the people of India while he was still serving as a minister in the Government of Bengal. The correspondence that he had with Sir John Herbert the then Governor of Bengal particularly his letter of resignation from

the cabinet, ranks among the most forceful political writings of the period

In a thundering language he told the Governor that "Britain's vaunted doctrine of benevolent trusteeship stands exploded and you can no more throw dust into our eyes India cannot be held against her will merely on the point of bayonet". To fling such bitter truth in the face of the foreign Governor when he was still a minister in his Government showed the highest type of moral strength that he possessed. He presented the case of the Congress as no Congressman might have dared and exposed the Government so thoroughly that it had to proscribe that correspondence which was published in a book form, under the title "A phase of Indian Struggle"

During the same year took place his historic meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps. While discussing his proposals with him Sir Stafford found to his surprise that he was pressing the Congress viewpoint with the vehemence of a Congress leader. He, therefore, slyly asked him "But are not your party and the Congress constantly at logger heads?"

"True" replied Syama Prasad, "but that is a quarrel as between brother and brother. Our goal is the same" At least for once the champion of divide and rule policy was put out.

He next addressed a long letter to Lord Linlithgow, the then Governor General of India, outlining some tentative proposals for an Indo-British settlement. He also sought permission for

interviewing Mahatma Gandhi in Jail. But the British Government was so much scared by his trenchant and convincing criticism of their policies and his realistic approach to the problem of Indo-British Settlement that it thought it impolitic to allow the Congress leaders to come in touch with him. He was refused permission to meet Gandhiji.

Soon after his resignation from the Bengal cabinet there began the terrible riots at Dacca which were directly engineered by Muslim League with the connivance of the British Governor and administrators. The Anglo-Muslim conspired not to let the country even hear of this holocaust. Press was forbidden to publish any news about it under the Defence of India Rules. But as soon Syama Prasad came to know of it he decided to visit Dacca. The British Chief Secretary at first would not permit him to do so. But when he insisted he was allowed to go. But there was no conveyance. A chartered plane was going to carry Kh. Nazimuddin and other Muslim ministers there. Dr. Mookerji requested the Governor for a seat in it. But just before he reached the aerodrome the plane took off to avoid him. But he was not the man to be daunted by such tactics. He got into a tiny private monoplane and risked his life in that ricketty thing. When he landed safely at Dacca, the British Deputy Commissioner would not let him enter the city on grounds of safety. He would not give him police escort either. But Dr. Mookerji was determined to be amidst his suffering brethren. He dashed to the

city and directly went to the palace of Nawab of Dacca, the President of Bengal Muslim League from where the whole carnage was being planned and organised. The whole of Dacca was amazed at his boldness and courage. The Hindus came to adore him ; even the Muslims came to respect him.

After his return to Calcutta he wanted the public to know what had happened at Dacca. But the Press was gagged by Defence of India Rules. The only way to get the news published was to first have the matter raised in the Assembly. The Press could then give publicity to the news in the form of proceedings of the Assembly. But he needed some minimum support in the Assembly for moving the Adjournment Motion. He wired to Maulana Azad, the then Congress President, to instruct Congress legislators to support him. But the Muslim in Azad got the better of the nationalist in him. He refused to do anything in the matter just then. Thereupon Dr. Mookerji wrote to Gandhiji who admonished Azad and directed him to wire to Bengal legislators to support Syama Prasad's move. Thus he was able to tell the country what Muslims had done to Dacca Hindus. It was as a result of his exposures in the Assembly that the Government was forced to restore calm and punish the guilty.

^{was} The year 1943 saw Bengal in the terrible grip of a man made famine. Men and women, mostly Muslims, began to die like rats and dogs. But the Muslim League Ministry uttered not a word about the murderous bungle that had created the famine.

The press was forbidden even to publish any news about it which took a toll of 35 lakh lives. It was again Dr. Mookerji who broke the news of it to the startled nation by issuing a statement which was published by a monthly magazine. The Government warned him and the magazine for it. But he refused to keep quiet and dared them to do their worst. He made a national issue of it. The way he organised relief for the famine stricken and the cooperation he secured from all sections of society in all parts of the country revealed his great organising capacity and his deep humanity which was not shackled by any consideration of cast and creed or by provincialism.

After that the whole of nationalist India began to look to him and the organisation he represented for guidance. Hindu Maha Sabha could then have surely filled the political vacuum created by the suicide of the Congress. But Hindu Maha Sabha, with all its ideological strength, was organisationally too weak and ramshackle to take advantage of the situation. It threw away its chance of becoming a force in Indian politics when its top leaders in the Punjab made an abject surrender at Amritsar, where Maha Sabha Session was held in 1943 under the presidency of Dr. Mookerji. The last minute ban on taking out the President elect in procession was a challenge to Maha Sabha. Dr. Mookerji wanted the Reception Committee to take up the challenge and defy the ban. The people also wanted a bold policy and were prepared to suffer. But

the Chairman of the reception Committee and other Mahasabha leaders, who had to take the decision, happened to be arm chair politicians. They failed to rise to the occasion. This weakness not only brought Hindu Mahasabha in disrepute but also enabled the misinformed critics to accuse Dr Mookerji, the most fearless of Indian political leaders of the day, also of weakness and cowardice.

But Dr Mookerji continued to carry Mahasabha on his strong shoulders. His personal achievements continued to bring credit and strength to that organisation.

Release of Congress leaders in 1945 created a new situation in the country. They were thoroughly frustrated and many of them had become impatient for power. The Muslim League ideology in the meanwhile had taken roots among the Muslim masses with the direct help and encouragement of the British. The demand for Pakistan had gained force and momentum and the Muslim League had come to be recognised by the Government as the sole representative organisation of the Indian Muslims.

The Congress leaders got unnerved by this situation.

Shri C Rajgopalachari had in the meanwhile put forth his formula which virtually conceded Pakistan to Muslim League. It was for sometime subjected to bitter criticism by a section of Congressmen. But C R had come to be recognised as the brain trust of the Congress and his pull with

Gandhiji was well known. It therefore created the feeling in Muslim League circles that Congress was giving in. What had been put forth merely as a bargaining counter appeared to be coming within their grasp. They decided to take advantage of the situation and raised the tempo of their agitation.

It did not take Dr. Mookerji long to grasp the new situation. He warned the country about the coming catastrophe and gave all nationalist forces a call to unite and assert themselves against the Congress policy of surrender.

The response to his appeal was tremendous. Congress leadership felt the ground slipping from under its feet. It, therefore, decided to re-assure the country about its bona-fides. Sardar Patel met Dr. Mookerji in Calcutta and assured him that Congress would not accept Pakistan. Mahatma Gandhi also gave him similar assurances and requested him not to organise a separate front. Dr. Mookerji took them on their word. But the Congress Working Committee threw away the case for United India in its Poona resolution which, while making pious professions of faith in the unity of India, declared towards the end that it will not coerce unwilling parts of the country to remain within India. But for winning the election of 1946 it published only the first portion of this resolution which dealt with untenability of partition and expressed Congress desire for keeping the unity of the country unimpaired.

It was the biggest hoax played on the people of India in pre-independence days. The Hindus were taken in. They voted Congress into power wherever they happened to be in majority. Almost all the Muslim seats went to the Muslim League except in the N.W.F.P. A Muslim League ministry was installed in power in Bengal and the Muslim League leaders became more emphatic in their demand for Partition.

In August 1946 they launched the Direct Action and started large scale killing of Hindus in Calcutta and other selected parts of the country to cow down the Congress leaders. Dr Mookerji, who had again been returned to Bengal Legislative Assembly from the Calcutta University constituency stood by the people in that catastrophe and helped them to stand up in self defence. They gave a creditable account of themselves against the organised Muslim League goondas who had the backing of Muslim League ministry as well.

Though Direct Action failed in clearing Calcutta of all the Hindus yet it had the desired effect on the Congress leaders. They got thoroughly demoralised.

The British Cabinet Mission that came to India soon after even though it was convinced of the impracticability of Pakistan was struck by the *imbecility of Congress leaders*. Dr Mookerji pleaded with them to take a firm stand against any scheme of partition. But he was silenced by the Mission by telling him that the Congress which had got all the Hindu votes had already committed

itself to Partition by its resolution about non-coercion of any unwilling part to remain within India.

That convinced Dr. Mookerji that Partition of the country was a settled fact. Thereafter he bent his energies to saving as much as he could from going to Pakistan because he knew that Congress leaders in their impatience for power would not mind giving the whole of Bengal and even Assam in the bargain to Pakistan. It was mainly due to his efforts that half of Bengal was saved for India. He partitioned Pakistan.

When the Constituent Assembly of India was formed by the close of 1946 he was elected to it from Bengal. His qualities of head and heart, his skill as a parliamentarian and above all his deep application and devotion to duty, soon marked him out as the coming man and made him the subject of adoration of all in the Assembly. He began to be recognised as a national figure.

With the partition of India, which deprived the dawn of freedom of much of its charm, the failure of Congress brand of nationalism and the Congress policies towards Muslims became patent. It was then hoped by Dr. Mookerji, as also by the people in general, that the Congress would learn from the bitter experience of partition and reorientate its policies as a pre-requisite to the consolidation and re-construction of that part of the country which had attained its freedom and without which the lives and interests of the Hindus and other non-Muslims of East Bengal, West Punjab,

N. W. F. P., and Sindh, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with the rest of India for liberation of the Motherland and who had been placed at the mercy of the Pakistani bigots against their declared will, could not be safeguarded.

It was this hope and patriotic urge to do his duty towards the people of India in general and those of Bengal, who had begun to look up to him as the guardian of their rights, in particular, that Dr. Mookerji joined the cabinet of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on the 15th of August, 1947.

AS A CABINET MINISTER

Entry of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji as a Minister into the first National Government of free India, his record of service and achievements during the two and a half years he was in office and his exit from the cabinet by resignation in April 1950, in spite of the best efforts of Sardar Patel and Pt. Nehru to retain him, are some of the most momentous events in his crowded public life. They give an insight into the working of his mind, his acumen as a statesman, skill, integrity and ability as an administrator and his deep sense of duty which enabled him to always keep the cause of the country and his people above his personal interests.

It was to meet the desire of Mahatma Gandhi who realised that freedom had been won by the combined efforts of all the nationalist forces in the country and not of Congress alone and who, therefore, wanted the first Government of free India to be a truly national Government, capable of inspiring confidence and creating enthusiasm in the whole nation, that Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru had to form a broad based cabinet to which a number of distinguished non-Congressmen were also invited to join. They included Sir John Mathai, the noted economist and business magnate, Sir Shanmukham Chetty the well known financial expert, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

the celebrated jurist and leader of the Scheduled Castes and Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji.

They were all invited in their individual capacity for their talents and eminence in the different spheres of national life and not as representatives of any particular interests and parties. The idea was to form a National Cabinet of all talents.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji was not prepared for the invitation. As a true nationalist he had been opposing the partition of the motherland at every step. He had developed a distrust and contempt for Congress leaders who had betrayed the faith put in them by the people in the general elections of 1946, and accepted partition. He knew fully well that the most compelling factor in their acceptance of partition was not solicitude for the welfare of the people or conviction that it would solve the communal problem but a pitiable cowardice and abhorrence of bloodshed and a compelling desire to get rid of their Muslim League partners in the Central Government, who had proved to be more than a match for them in Statecraft, so that they might have a peaceful and secure spell of power. At the same time he feared that they might persist in their old game of appeasement of Pakistanis even after getting the licking from them if they were not reinforced from within. Therefore the invitation to join the Cabinet came to him as a pleasant surprise. His Hindu sabha colleagues, particularly Veer Sawarkar who, as a seasoned politician of Tilak School, had always stood for responsive cooperation and who, like all true pat-

riots, wanted to give the Congress leaders a fair chance to show their worth advised him to accept the invitation.

Dr. Mookerji was given the important portfolio of Industry and Supplies though he himself might have preferred Education which had been his special field since his early youth. But it showed the faith that Congress leaders had in his integrity and understanding of the vital industrial needs and problems of the country.

His record of work as Minister for Industry and Supplies for the two and half years he remained in office amply justified that faith and trust. He brought his massive intellectual grasp and realistic understanding of the problems of industrialisation in a predominantly agricultural country, whose industrial growth had been deliberately checked by the unsympathetic foreign Government, to bear upon the task entrusted to him. His experience first as chief executive of Calcutta University, the biggest employer of top intellectuals and scientists of the country and then as Finance Minister of undivided Bengal, stood him in good stead. He suffered from no inhibitions and, therefore, he could handle the tasks entrusted to him with a refreshing realism. His intellectual eminence, mental alertness and rock like integrity evoked spontaneous respect and fullest cooperation from British trained civilians. As a result he was able to make a fine job of his work. Even his political opponents have nothing but praise for the way he handled the indus-

trial problems and formulated the industrial policies in the most formative years of free India.

The Chitranjan Locomotive Factory, the Sindri Fertilizer Factory and the Hindustan Aircraft Factory, Bangalore, the three most successful and gigantic industrial undertakings of free India were conceived and organised by him. The new model third class coaches of the Indian railways manufactured by the Hindustan Aircraft factory are also the result of his deep personal interest in the matter. "I myself sat, slept and moved about in the first coach when it was manufactured to test whether it suited common Indian railway traveller" he told me with a legitimate pride, when I was travelling in such a third class coach from Delhi to Pathankot in his company in August 1952. He also initiated talks with some leading German firms for setting up of new steel plants to improve the quantity and quality of steel production in India.

He had very clear ideas about the role of private capital in the industrial development of the country as also about the capital labour relationship. He was convinced that in an industrially backward country like India which had just achieved freedom, the primary task was to mobilise all resources, private and Governmental, for a cooperative effort to make the country self-sufficient in essential goods, particularly those needed for the defence of the country. He was for giving full scope to private enterprise under suitable government regulation and control to play its part in the industrialisation of

the country. He wanted the State to utilise its meagre resources for developing that sector of industry whose development was essential for the defence of the country but for which private capital was not readily forthcoming. He thus wanted a rational coordination and adjustment, in the light of the actual conditions in the country, between the Private and the State enterprise for speedy but orderly industrialisation of the country.

In formulating this policy he was solely guided by the needs and circumstances of the country and not by any abstract theories or dogmas. He was in fact not wedded to any dogma. He kept his mind open, and tested every scheme and policy on the touch stone of its practicability and usefulness to the people.

He was convinced that India had not the requisite resources, experience and sufficient trained personnel to nationalise all industries and run them efficiently. He was, therefore, opposed to loose talk about nationalisation of all industries which only scared the private capital.

He also knew by experience that the State managed industries had been generally working less efficiently because of the lack of incentive and initiative on the part of Government employees who managed them. He, therefore, initiated the policy of handling the State controlled industries through corporations, organised on the lines of joint stock companies, with Government supplying the major portion or the whole of the share capital and having

some of its own nominees on the board of management together with a number of private industrialists. This has now become the general pattern for running the State undertakings in India.

The same consideration of wider national good which prompted him to advocate a policy of cooperation between the Private and the State Capital guided his approach to the question of Industrial labour. He stood for cooperation between the labour and capital in the interest of increase in production. The theory of class struggle as a means of progress never appealed to his rational mind. But he did not want cooperation of labour on the terms of the employer. He stood for profit sharing between the capital and labour so that labour may develop a genuine interest in the industry. It was this solicitude for the welfare of labour which enabled him to inspire as much confidence in labour as his realistic and practical approach to the problem of capital did in the employers. The workers of the Hindustan Ship-building Yard at Vishakhapatnam demonstrated this confidence of workers in him when they offered to abide by any decision he may give in regard to their dispute with the management just on the eve of his last tragic journey to Kashmir.

He not only laid down correct policies for his own Departments but also proved a tower of strength for the Government as a whole by his able advocacy and defence of its policies and actions. He used to put his heart and soul into the task entrusted to him. His deep application and in-

genuity sometimes saved situations which his colleagues thought were hopeless. For instance, one day in 1949 the government circles were very much perturbed over the information that some important members, who were known to be authorities on matters like cloth control, were going to attack the Control Policy of the Government. The official case appeared to be hopeless. But Dr. Mookerji, who had to speak first, in his three hours oration put the case of the Government in such a forceful and convincing way that those who had come prepared to attack were first to come and offer congratulations to him. It proved to be a case of "those who came to scoff remained to pray."

On another occasion a whispering campaign was started by some interested persons about a shady transaction by some officers of the Stores Section of the Supply Department. They were alleged to have sold huge stocks of tooth brushes and combs for a paltry sum, though they were worth much more. Questions regarding it had been tabled in the Parliament. Files about the whole affair with usual notes were submitted to Dr. Mookerji by the office staff at about 9.30 A.M. It was admitted in the notes that tooth brushes were both good and bad and the price fetched had been really very low. At about 10.30 A.M. he went to the Parliament and at once began to answer questions.

Q: Is it a fact that a very small price had been obtained for a large quantity of these articles.

Ans: Yes.

Q: Is it a fact that the articles were in good condition?

Ans: Some were in good condition others were bad.

Q: Were these articles so bad that they could not fetch a good price?

Ans: Yes.

And immediately Dr. Mookerji produced from his pocket a number of tooth brushes absolutely devoid of bristles. The members looked at these worthless articles and were taken aback being at a loss as to how such rubbish could be offered for sale. The questioners had not the heart to utter a word more. Officers of his own department were puzzled as to how he could equip himself with such effective materials within such a short time.

But the real achievements of Dr. Mookerji as a Minister of the Central Government pertain to the field of policy making in respect of the vital questions of Kashmir, Hyderabad and East Bengal, which began to threaten India's existence, integrity and honour from the very beginning of her life as a free nation. He tried to impart a touch of realism to the policies of the Central Government in regard to all these problems. His touch stone in these matters as in the industrial problems, was the interest, honour and integrity of India and the welfare of all those who looked upon her as their mother. Fortunately for him and India late

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister in the Nehru Government, shared his views in these matters and helped them to prevail. But as soon as he felt that he could no longer prevent the best interests of the country and the people being sacrificed at the altar of appeasement of Pakistan, he walked out of the cabinet.

The invasion of Kashmir by tribal hordes organised and led by Pakistan's officers on Oct. 22, 1947, brought the Indian Government face to face with a situation which demanded immediate and bold action. Prime Minister Nehru with all his vaunted love for Kashmir lacked will and courage to take the decision that the situation demanded. He feared that direct Military help to Kashmir would lead to war with Pakistan, his own pet creation.

All the powers of persuasion of a high dignitary of Kashmir Government and the pathetic appeal of the Maharaja of Kashmir for immediate help to save his people from the horrible fate of subjugation and utter destruction at the hands of Pakistani invaders seemed to have no effect on him. At last the spokesman of Kashmir Government became desperate. He rose from the Conference table with the intention to rush to Karachi to beg for safety for the defenceless people of Srinagar, including thousands of Kashmiri Pandits, from Mr. Jinnah if Kashmir could not be saved for India.

That proved to be the last straw which provoked late Sardar Patel, who shared the views of Dr. Mookerji that India must rush her troops to save

Kashmir without caring for the consequences because the question involved was not only of safety of lakhs of countrymen in Kashmir but of the integrity and honour of India as a whole, to assert himself Pt Nehru had to submit and air-borne Indian troops reached Srinagar just in time to save that ancient city and with it the whole of Kashmir from falling into the lap of Pakistan

It was a victory for the view point of Dr Mookerji Sardar Patel found in him a brilliant supporter of all right and firm policies, who could smash the arguments of Pt Nehru on the cabinet table and establish the logicity of his stand

But Pt Nehru in his own airy wisdom torpedoed this brilliant decision of sending troops to Kashmir by making the offer of Plebiscite to determine the future of Kashmir after Indian soldier had cleared it of the Pakistani hordes This offer was unsought and uncalled for It was made over the head of his Cabinet This proved to be Pt Nehru's first bungling in Kashmir which has since been followed by many others It was given to Dr Mookerji to raise his voice first in the cabinet and then outside, against Pt Nehru's policy in regard to Kashmir which was leading to the steady withdrawal from India of even that portion of the State which Indian army had been allowed to save and redeem before it was ordered to fall back, without completing its task, by the cease fire order on January 1, 1949 He ultimately laid down his life for it

The Nizam of Hyderabad' and his Razakars presented another major problem immediately after freedom. With the encouragement of Pakistan and British imperialists he thought of making Hyderabad another independent Pakistan with himself as its Sultan. To that end he refused to accede to India and began to collect arms and ammunitions' and strengthen his armed forces. He also entered into negotiations with the Portuguese for the purchase of Goa which would have given him an outlet to the sea. His Razakars began to terrorise the Hindus with a view to convert them to Islam or to drive them out of the Hyderabad State.

This created a situation which called for a firm and quick action from the Government of India because independent and hostile Hyderabad would have become a perpetual threat to the security and integrity of India. It could become the centre of all fifth columnists and anti-national forces. Its geographical position could enable it to cut South India from North India at any time and destroy the unity of the country.

But because Nizam happened to be a Muslim ruler in whose aggrandisement some of the so-called top nationalist Muslims were also interested. the Government of India started protracted negotiations with him. A study of the proposals and counter proposals, draft agreements and treaties which Sir Walter Monkton, the British Constitutional adviser of the Nizam, and his other envoys carried to and from New Delhi makes a sickening reading. It was

then clear to everybody except perhaps Pt. Nehru, that the Nizam was marking time to complete his military preparations. But Pt. Nehru went on yielding to him to the utter chagrin and surprise of not only of his own partymen and colleagues but also of foreign observers like Campbell Johnson, the Public Relations Officer of Lord Mountbatten, who has given a detailed account of these negotiations in his well known contemporary chronicle "Mission with Mountbatten."

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji deeply felt this national humiliation and dangers with which such a policy of appeasement towards the enemy within was fraught. He knew that Pt. Nehru was incapable of firm and resolute policy where Muslims were concerned. Many of his other Cabinet colleagues felt the same way. The only way to change this policy, they felt, was to entrust the handling of Hyderabad question to Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, who should have even otherwise dealt with it as the Minister of States. But it was no easy job to make Pt. Nehru, whose inveterate love of power and dictatorial trends had become manifest by that time, to withdraw from the handling of this vital question. Dr. Mookerji thereupon hit upon a stratagem to achieve this end.

At a meeting of the Cabinet he suggested that because Hyderabad question was getting complicated it needed special attention. The Prime Minister, he added, was already too much over-worked and therefore could not be burdened with any

more work. He therefore suggested that Sardar Patel be requested to handle the problem as his exclusive charge. A number of other ministers supported him. Sardar Patel, who had already been sounded in the matter, expressed his consent to the suggestion before Pt. Nehru could make any comment on it. He could not reject the suggestion after Sardar Patel had expressed his acceptance. The handling of Hyderabad question thus passed into the hands of the right man.

It is a well known fact that Pt. Nehru tried a number of times after that to deflect Sardar Patel from his resolve to end the festering sore of Hyderabad once for all by a bold and timely stroke of Police Action. But secure in the support of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji and a majority of his other Cabinet colleagues and conscious of the popular demand for bold action, Sardar Patel could go ahead with his plans with the well known results. The whole country remembers Sadar Patel with gratitude for his statesmanship and realism in tackling the Hyderabad problem. But few know the part, mentioned above, played by Dr. Mookerji for making it possible for Sardar Patel to handle the problem as he did. How one wishes that handling of Kashmir problem should also have passed into the hands of Sardar Patel through some such strategem.

But the problem which brought him in direct opposition to Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, as the dictator and formulator of Congress policies, was the problem of India's relations and dealings with Pakistan,

particularly in regard to the condition of Hindu minority in East Bengal. The dotting attitude adopted by the Government of India towards Pakistan ever since its inception in face of deliberate and determined acts of hostility on her part never appealed to Dr. Mookerji. The indifference of the Government of India about the fate of millions of Hindus in Sindh, Baluchistan and N. W. F. P., not to speak of those in West Punjab, who had never wanted partition and who were being victimised and squeezed out of their home lands simply because they happened to be Hindus, who adored undivided India as their mother and suffered for its liberation, appeared to him criminal. The failure of the Government of India to name Pakistan as aggressor even after the fact of her aggression in Kashmir had been fully established and the forced payment of Rs. 55 crores to Pakistan under pressure of Gandhiji's fast pained him and convinced him of the imbecility of the Government of which he himself was a member. He instinctively felt that this policy towards Pakistan will only encourage that State, which had been born out of the successful bullying of Congress leaders, by the fanatics of Muslim League, to persist in its bullying tactics towards free India and in the policy of extermination of all *non-Muslims within its own frontiers*. But though no heed was paid to his pleadings and protests from within the Government just then, yet he had the satisfaction to note that opinion was growing within and outside the Government against this weak-kneed

attitude of the Government towards Pakistan and that Gandhiji and Pt. Nehru as the chief advocates of that policy were getting isolated. He felt hopeful about reorientation of the policies of Government of India towards Pakistan and the problems its creation had created. He therefore considered his continuance in the Government useful for the national cause.

But the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on the 30th of January, 1948 changed the whole situation. The clever exploitation of the event by Pt. Nehru and his left wing supporters within and outside the Congress created a strong reaction against the advocate of a bold policy towards Pakistan. Gandhiji, whose popularity and influence on the people had reached the lowest ebb during the days preceding his assassination, became a martyr in the eyes of even his worst critics. It not only rehabilitated him in the hearts of his countrymen but also gave a new lease of life to those who used to shine in his reflected glory. As a result the tables were turned. The idealist Nehru, as the political heir of Gandhiji rose in peoples' estimation and the realist and practical Sardar Patel and Dr. Mookerji got isolated within and outside the Government.

The succeeding months saw the policy of appeasement towards Muslims and Pakistan being pursued with a vengeance. Pakistan was quick to note the change in situation in India. It decided to take advantage of it by starting a fresh offensive in Kashmir as also against the Hindus within Pakistan.

West Pakistan had by that time been well nigh cleared of all the undesirables but more than 13 million Hindus still lived in East Bengal. They formed over thirty percent of the population of East Bengal at the time of Partition and were the life and soul of the educational, cultural as well as economic life of that part of Bengal. They were politically the most conscious section of the community in the whole of Bengal and they had made the greatest sacrifices for the freedom of India right from the birth of national movement in the country. They owned nearly 80% of the national wealth of East Bengal. Majority of buildings and properties in each town of Bengal in some cases more than 85% town holdings, were owned by Hindus. 95% of the 1290 high schools and 47 colleges in East Bengal were privately organised and financed by them and 90% teachers from University to high schools were contributed by Hindu society. There were a number of centres of Sanskrit learning spread all over East Bengal as also a few research institutes for Indian history and culture in Dacca, Comilla, Sylhet and Rajshahi. This population of 13 millions included a very numerous and progressive middle class and a very active and virile rural population of Nam-Sudras who almost monopolised the trades of smithy, carpentry and such other manual professions.

The Hindus as also about half a million Buddhists living in the Chittagong hill tract, were to a man opposed to Partition. They had demonstrated their

love and determination for the unity of Bengal within a united India during the Bengal partition days. It was a son of East Bengal, Late Bankim Chander Chatterji, who gave to the country the inspiring song of Vande Matram. They were equally determined to oppose partition of their motherland in 1947. But their leaders in 1947 did not prove worthy of them. In their eagerness to have power for themselves they decided to sacrifice Bengal and Punjab without caring to ascertain the wishes of their people about this vital decision, which was to affect them directly.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, as said above, after having failed to dissuade the Congress leaders from the suicidal path of matricide bent his energies to save as much as he could. He realised that Congress would give away the whole of Bengal and may be Assam also to Pakistan if a voice was not raised to save at least the predominantly Hindu part of Bengal. This naturally made the Hindus of East Bengal more restive. But they were assured by Dr. Mookerji on behalf of Congress leaders like Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi that their interests will be watched by free India.

Dr. Mookerji summed up the position in regard to Hindus of East Bengal and his attitude towards it in the following convincing passage in the statement he made in Indian Parliament on the 19th of April, 1950, after his resignation from the Cabinet. He said: "When the partition of India became inevitable I played a very large part in creating

public opinion in favour of the partition of Bengal, for I felt that if that was not done, the whole of Bengal and also perhaps Assam would fall in Pakistan. At that time little knowing that I would join the first Central Cabinet, I along with others, gave assurances to the Hindus of East Bengal stating that if they suffered at the hands of the future Pakistan Government, if they were denied elementary rights of citizenship, if their lives and honour were jeopardised or attacked, Free India would not remain an idle spectator and their just cause would be boldly taken up by the Government and people of India "

As the Pakistan Government began to show its dragon's teeth to the Hindus of East Bengal, whose security and protection it had undertaken according to the terms of the partition, Dr Mookerji urged upon Pt Nehru and his other colleagues to remember the pledges they had given to them and do something for their safety. The result was the first Inter-Dominion agreement signed at Calcutta^e in April, 1948, which dealt mainly with the question of minorities in the two Bengals. It was more or less on the same lines as the later Nehru Liaquat Agreement of April, 1950. This agreement, however, did not produce any effective results. India generally observed its terms but the exodus of Hindus from East Bengal continued unabated. It was one way traffic just as Pakistan wished for. There were numerous conferences of officials from both the sides and copious correspondence between

the two Governments. But judged by actual results Pakistan's attitude continued unchanged.

The increasing exodus of Hindus from East Bengal and the news about their sad plight inspite of the April Agreement created a stir in the country once again. Dr. Mookerji again pressed for some determined action. But all that Nehru Government did was to sign another Inter-Dominion agreement at Delhi in December, 1948. It was a virtual repetition of the first agreement. The same platitudes about the Hindu and Muslim minorities in both the dominions were repeated.

Pakistan had no mind to honour this agreement and the tale of woes of East Bengal Hindus continued. In the course of 1949 the situation in East Bengal got further deteriorated and exodus of far larger number of Hindus from that Province continued. Thus inspite of these two Inter-Dominion agreements about 20 lakhs Hindus were forced to leave their hearth and homes in East Bengal during the first two years of Pakistan's existence, besides millions who were uprooted in Punjab and Sindh.

But the worst came early in 1950 when a planned massacre of Hindus on a province wide scale was started. According to Government figures more than fifty thousand Hindus were butchered, thousands of Hindus women were abducted and inhuman and most barbarous crimes were perpetrated against them. All the socially conscious Hindus began to be driven out of East Bengal. It was all

done with the direct connivance and encouragement of Pakistan Government.

As the news of this devilish carnage began to reach India through the uprooted humanity from East Bengal, a stir was created all over the country. It stirred the conscience of many of the men in power as well. They began to realise the futility of paper agreements with Pakistan which were honoured only in their breach. A feeling of urgency about the problem began to grow and some bold and firm action to stop the Pakistani game of exterminating or driving out all the Hindus from East Bengal began to be advocated. It was realised that the problem was not communal but political, not Provincial but national. But the one man who remained impervious to all this was Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. His innate weakness which he has been successfully hiding under high sounding idealism and winsome theatricals at mass meetings would not permit him to take any bold and quick step. He kept fiddling to make up his mind while East Bengal was burning.

Everyone including some ministers of the Central Cabinet felt ashamed at the pusillanimity of the Government.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji naturally felt the tragedy most. He led the opposition to Pt. Nehru's dilatory tactics from within. He had a number of passages at arms with him in the numerous Cabinet meetings held to discuss the situation. All his hopes were finally dashed to the ground when he

learnt of invitation to Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, whose hands were dripping with blood of countless Hindus, for making another agreement and pious declarations about the welfare of the minorities. He protested against this course of action. He reminded the Prime Minister of the fate of previous agreements and warned him not to fall into the trap of Liaqat who wanted to avoid the nemesis which his Satanic policies in Pakistan ought to bring upon him.

But he was over-ruled by the Prime Minister who would lose his temper when he could not meet his arguments. The things came to such a pass that Dr. Mookerji had to rebuke him and tell him at his face that he was flouting all traditions and conventions of joint responsibility and joint deliberations of the cabinet in respect of vital national problems such as one created by the situation in East Bengal.

From that time Dr. Mookerji felt that he could do no good to the country, nor redeem his pledges to the people of East Bengal, by continuing in the Cabinet. Call of duty summoned him out of the exalted position he held in the Government of his country which he had accepted for the service of the motherland two and a half years back. He sent in his resignation on the first of April, and Pt. Nehru readily agreed to relieve him of the burden of office. But other Ministers particularly Sardar Patel did not like Dr. Mookerji's going out of the cabinet at that crucial time. He pressed him hard to withdraw his resignation. Even Pt. Nehru later

requested Dr. Mookerji to reconsider his decision and withdraw the resignation. A lesser man might have yielded to this pressure. But Dr. Mookerji was a man of different stuff. Name, fame and glamour of office had no attraction for him. Like a true Sanyasin he preferred the path of duty to his people and his own conscience to his personal comforts and position and thereby proved that he was a true Karmayogin who had imbibed the spirit of the Lord's Gita.

The Statement Dr. Mookerji gave in Parliament on the 19th of April, 1950, about his resignation from the Cabinet beautifully summed up his views on the problem of Indo-Pakistan relations and gave his main reasons why he could not be a party to Nehru-Liaqat Agreement. The whole statement deserves to be read and re-read for it reveals that clear grasp of the forces motivating the rulers of Pakistan which made his approach to all Indo-Pak problems so refreshingly realistic and practical. Later events and developments have justified his worst fears and today the Hindus still living in Pakistan face the bitter choice between conversion to Islam and exodus to India as refugees. It is now well nigh certain that they cannot live a respectable and secure life in Pakistan as Hindus unless the people and Government of India assert themselves on their behalf.

In doing so India will be only discharging its duty towards her own loyal and patriotic sons whose woeful plight calls for a repetition and re-assertion

of the call Dr. Mookerji gave to the country when he resigned his seat in the Cabinet to mobilise public opinion for doing justice to the Hindus in Pakistan.

"Let us not forget" he said, "that the Hindus of East Bengal are entitled to the protection of India not on humanitarian considerations alone, but by virtue of their sufferings and sacrifices, made cheerfully for generations, not for advancing their own parochial interests, but for laying the foundations of India's political freedom and intellectual progress. It is the united voice of the leaders that are dead and of the youth that smilingly walked up to the gallows for India's cause that calls for justice and fairplay at the hands of free India today."

QUEST FOR A POLITICAL PLATFORM

Exit of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji from the Central Cabinet marked the beginning of a new, and as later events were to prove, the most momentous phase of his crowded life. He had entered the cabinet as a provincial leader of Bengal but he came out as a national leader. All the non-Congress nationalists had begun to look upon him as their tribune and spokesman. The Congress legislators and leaders who had watched his life and work from close quarters had also developed a new respect for him. They had begun to look upon him as the most effective critic and opponent of their policies, particularly those pertaining to relations with Pakistan.

His resignation created a stir in the country. The Congress circles felt uneasy and their controlled press tried to minimise the importance of the event. But the people in general hailed it as a brave and conscientious act. The people of the capital demonstrated their appreciation of the stand taken by Dr. Mookerji by giving him a grand reception which was attended by over a thousand representative citizens drawn from all walks of life, to congratulate him on his bold decision. Some of the independent minded Congress men like Shri H.V. Kamath M.P.,

who had been painfully watching democracy being butchered in the one party Parliament, also hailed his exit from the cabinet as the beginning of a healthy opposition within the Parliament. It was taken for granted by them that he will create and lead the Opposition in the Parliament.

But the tragedy of the situation was that no organised opposition then existed within or outside the Parliament. The Parliament which was also the constituent Assembly was elected indirectly by the Provincial legislatures in 1946, when the main problem before the country was the demand for Partition. Congress then presented itself as champion of Akhand Hindustan and, therefore, all the Hindu seats went to it. The Muslims sent in Muslim League nominees who, for sometime, formed the main opposition. Partition converted the Muslim opposition into sovereign Parliament of Pakistan. The few Muslim members that remained in the Indian Parliament joined the Congress to cover their past sins. So the role of opposition in the debates had to be played by a few outspoken Congressmen and the liberals like Pt. Hirday Nath Kunzru. But for voting purposes they all belonged to the Congress party. This made the debates and deliberation of the Parliament very tame and unreal. Dr. Mookerji after his resignation, therefore, found himself a solitary member in the opposition. After some time his erstwhile colleagues in the cabinet, Shri K. C. Neogy and Shri John Mathhai, also joined him. But they soon withdrew from the active

Parliamentary field altogether leaving Dr. Mookerji to fight the opposition battles against a steam roller majority single handed.

But a greater handicap than the absence of any organised opposition within the Parliament was the absence of any effective and well knit organisation outside that could mobilise and organise the nationalist opinion in the country. The Communist party was no doubt there. But it acted, as elsewhere, as the agent of Communist Russia and, therefore, could not appeal to the nationalist opinion in the country. Its cult of the bomb and the bullet whose worst demonstration it had been giving in Telengana had isolated it from the general Indian public for the time being at least.

The Socialist Party of India under the leadership of Shri J. P. Narain and Acharya Narendra Deva had begun to make some headway. But its basic approach to the problems of the country, political as well as economic and social, was very much the same as that of Pt. Nehru's Congress. It was more or less a wing of the Congress itself.

Ram Rajya Parishad was another organisation that was just then making some headway in erstwhile princely States like Rajasthan and Madhyabharat. It drew its sustenance from feudal elements, and the social and economic policies it advocated were not only very conservative but too out of date to find acceptance with the people in general. A dynamic and progressive mind as that

of Dr. Mookerji could have little sympathy for its approach to national problems.

The Hindu Mahasabha, the organisation whose destinies he had guided for many years as its President, was of course there in the field with the same outlook and pursuing the same policies which it had been doing before independence and partition of the country. But Dr. Mookerji had outgrown it during the three years since independence.

He realised immediately after the dawn of independence that Hindu Mahasabha, if it was to play its rightful role of nationalist opposition to Congress, must re-orientate its policies and outlook. With the abolition of the separate electorates the Hindu Mahasabha, he argued, must broaden its base-admit members of all religious communities into it and play its proper role of the national organisation of all the Hindus, which term is and ought to be accepted as a synonym for Indian, both having been derived from Sindhu, which was pronounced Indus by the Greeks. He wanted Hindu Sabha to make the world realise the true import of the word Hindu and take up the task of Hinduising politically, socially as well as culturally those elements in the country which had been misled by the British propaganda and Congress folly to detest their own national name and ideals and play the role of disruptionists. The Muslim problem, he was convinced, could be solved in free India once for all if their outlook on cultural, social and political-problems of the country was Hinduised or nationalised while leaving

them free, in keeping with the Hindu tradition of absolute tolerance to carry on their religion and way of worship as they pleased. That, he thought, was the only sure way of rooting out the poison of two nation theory and undoing the mischief that the British and the Muslim League had done with the connivance of the Congress leaders, who had walked into their trap. Failing that, he suggested, the Mahasabha should cease to be a political organisation and concentrate on the social and cultural uplift of the Hindu society in the religious sense of the term.

The Mahasabha leaders were at that time very much embittered by the Congress betrayal of the trust put in it by the people and terrible massacres and carnage that had been going on in Pakistan to exterminate or squeeze out all the Hindus. They wanted to capitalise the anti-Congress and anti-Muslim feeling that it had generated in the Hindu masses in general throughout the country to make Mahasabha an effective political force. They, therefore, did not think it worth while to accept the advice of Dr Mookerji to reorientate the policy or change the character of Mahasabha.

But with the assassination of Gandhiji on the 30th of January 1948 the tables were turned on Mahasabha. The party in power exploited the situation to suppress all its real or imaginary actual or potential rivals.

The Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh, the best organised and disciplined non-political national

organisation of the Hindus in the country came in for the heaviest blows. It was put under ban and all its known leaders and workers, running into tens of thousands, were arrested and detained without trial. Some of the Mahasabha leaders were also arrested and the very existence of Mahasabha as a political organisation came to be threatened. This made the Mahasabha leaders nervous and those outside the jail decided on the 15th of February, 1948, to accept the advice given by Dr. Mookerji many months back to re-orientate the policy of Mahasabha. It decided to suspend its political activities and to concentrate only on social and cultural work. This saved it from the wrath of the party in power. It continued to exist.

The situation was changed in 1949 by the determined effort of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh to assert its right to exist. It sent in about a lakh youngmen to fill the prisons of free India to vindicate its right to carry on its perfectly legal nation building activities. The Government had to yield. The ban on the R.S.S. was lifted. The Mahasabha executive, which had taken the earlier decision under stress of circumstance and not out of conviction, thought the time opportune to return to politics. It resolved to rescind its earlier decision and resumed political activities early in August, 1949.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji could not re-concile himself to this decision of Mahasabha executive. He was not opposed to its resuming political activities but in that case he wanted it to open its

doors to all citizens of India, irrespective of caste and creed, who may be willing to subscribe to its creed and policy. He therefore decided to disassociate himself from the policy making of Mahasabha. He resigned from its executive. But as a Hindu he continued to be an ordinary member of Hindu Mahasabha which had been founded primarily for the cultural and social uplift and consolidation of Hindu society.

Dr. Mookerji's attitude towards Mahasabha during this period has been subjected to uncharitable criticism from some quarters. He has been charged with weakness and bad faith towards Mahasabha. But the facts prove the contrary. His critics do not seem to realise the significance of the change that partition and freedom had wrought in the politics of the country after 15th of August, 1947. But a dynamic mind like that of Dr. Mookerji could not fail to grasp it. He wanted Mahasabha to grow with the times. It was only when he found that it had lost the will and strength to grow that he left it. He outgrew it.

The one organisation outside the precincts of Congress and its satellites, which had demonstrated its will and right to exist and keep the torch of true *nationalism, rooted in the age old culture of the country, aflame in face of all odds* was the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. It had come out of the ordeal of ban and the country wide Satyagraha that it launched against it, with flying colours, keeping

its ranks as united and disciplined as ever. Its past record of service coupled with the demonstration of its strength made it look the organisation of the future. It had begun to capture the imagination of the Indian masses. It had its network of branches and a cadre of tried and selfless workers.

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji had come into contact with the great founder and leader of this movement, Dr. Keshav Bali Ram Hedgewar, in the mid-thirties at Calcutta. He had seen the work of this organisation in the pre-partition days. Addressing a rally of R.S.S. at Lahore in 1940 he had described it as the "only silver lining in the cloudy sky of India." The grand work done by its Swayamsevaks in the Punjab, Kashmir, N.W.F.P. and Sindh during 1947, their self immolation for the cause of their country and countrymen and the guts and strength they had shown against brutally violent Pakistanis had won him unqualified praise and respect. The restraint of the strong that this organisation had shown after the murder of Ghandhiji, in face of the most cowardly attacks on its leaders and workers by the members of the party in power with the connivance of the police and custodians of law and order, and the proof of its strength given by it during its Satyagraha in 1948-49 had raised its prestige and credit even with its opponents and critics.

But R. S. S. was and wanted to continue as a non-political organisation, devoted to the work of character building, cultural uplift, social cohesion

and awakening of true national consciousness in the people in general in the hope that change in the outlook of the people coupled with the respect for the national ideals and 'Sanskriti' that it was inculcating in them, will automatically be reflected in the political life of the nation. It, therefore, gave perfect freedom to its members to join any political party they liked

But the developments and happenings during the post-partition years had forced the R S S leaders and workers to do some hard thinking. They had found that the party in power blinded by self interest, had not hesitated to give what it wanted to be a death blow to the organisation which had done the noblest work during the partition days and which was doing the most essential national work of building up character and unity in the country. They had also begun to realise that it was not very easy for ordinary members to influence the policies of well organised and well entrenched parties like the Congress from within, simply because the men who controlled them would not allow fresh blood and fresh ideas to disturb them in their position of power and influence

They had, therefore, begun to feel the need of a political organisation which should reflect the ideas and ideals of the R S S in the political sphere and which should therefore, be able to command the willing allegiance of the R. S S workers and supporters. This need, it was felt would become

more pressing after the introduction of adult franchise. Every adult who has a vote must have some political understanding and affiliation to be able to exercise his right of vote usefully. The growing influence and scope of politics also pointed to the need of shaping it according to the ideals which R.S.S. cherished because the truth of Morley's dictum "what cuts deep in politics cuts deep allround" had begun to face them as a bitter reality.

Dr. Mookerji was aware of this trend of thought in the R. S. S. circles. He knew that the attitude of the R. S. S., which drew its main strength and sustenance from the lower middle and working classes, towards social and economic problems of the country could be anything but reactionary. The R. S. S. approach to the problems of culture, nationalism, and partition had his fullest approval. He, therefore, instinctively felt that any political organisation sponsored by or enjoying the confidence of the R. S. S. could surely and speedily become such a force in the political life of the country as may command his fullest allegiance and succeed in mobilising and consolidating the non-Congress and non-Communist nationalist public opinion into an effective opposition.

But the initiative to create such an organisation lay with the R. S. S. leaders. It was, however, pretty certain that they would not bring R. S. S. as such in the political arena and would concentrate on their nation building activities unshakled by any political inhibitions or prejudices. Moreover the R. S. S. was

at that time concentrating upon the work of rehabilitating itself after the ban and the Satyagraha. It, therefore, did not want to create any diversion for its workers.

A beginning, however, was made on the 16th of January, 1951 when about a dozen prominent citizens of Punjab and Delhi including L. Hansraj Gupta, Shri Dharam Vir, Pt. Mauli Chander Sharma, Bhai Mahavir, Mahashe Krishan, Ch. Siri Chand of Rohtak, L. Balraj Bhalla of Jullundur and the present writer met in New Delhi to draw up tentative plans for starting a new political party for Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, where the need for it was most badly felt because of the utter failure of the party in power to tackle the pressing problems and needs of the people, particularly of the large number of refugees from West Pakistan, and its policy of surrender to the separatist demands of Akalis who held the balance between the warring factions of Congress legislators. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji was specially invited to this meeting to give it the benefit of his counsel and sober guidance.

While appreciating the pressing necessity of doing something immediate for Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, Dr. Mookerji stressed the need of the formation of an all India Party, without which the Provincial parties could not get the proper status and impetus, at an early date. It was therefore decided, on Dr. Mookerji's suggestion, to start the preparation for the formation of

the different sects and creeds of India. It did not denote any particular religion but a common wealth of all the religions and sects of the country because, whatever may be the way of worship of any particular individual, he could not, if he was to be a nationl of India, cut himself asunder from the common cultural and historical traditions of India. As such it is *not and never* was a communal or narrow concept. Those, he argued, who were scared away by the very word Hindu could not be depended upon for safeguarding the cultural and territorial heritage of the country.

But he was opposed to the word being imposed on those who were not, for the time being, prepared to accept it. He, therefore, suggested that the word *Bharatiya* and *Indian*, which are synonyms of the word *Hindu* but are more acceptable to the westernised as also to those who lack the courage of conviction, should also be used along with the word *Hindu* till such people shed their inferiority complex and learn to take pride in their own name and traditions.

Pending the formation of the all India organisation it was decided to go ahead with the formation of *Jan Sangh* for Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. It was also decided to form *Jan Sangh* in as many other states as possible so that the new party should take the shape of growth from below.

Accordingly a convention of some three hundred representative citizens of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi was called at Jullundur on 23rd

of May, 1951 to form Jan Sangh for these four contiguous States which for all practical purposes are one unit. The response was most encouraging. Almost all the invitees responded to the invitation.

The attitude of the party in power towards the new organisation became evident even before it was formally born. The reception committee had made arrangements for the convention in the compound of the Anglo-Sanskrit High School, within the municipal limits of Jullundur. But just on the eve of the convention, literally 24 hours before it was scheduled to meet, the District Magistrate, Presumably under instructions from above, banned all meetings within municipal limits of Jullundur. All efforts to secure permission for the convention which, as was clear from the very nature of the task for which it had been convened, was to be a sort of private deliberative meeting of the invitees alone, proved of no avail. Therefore, the venue of the convention had to be shifted over night to the compound of a cold storage plant just outside the municipal limits.

The convention resolved to form itself into Bharatiya Jan Sangh for Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pardesh and Delhi which were treated as one unit for the purpose of Jan Sangh organisation. L. Balraj Bhalla, an ex-revolutionary (he was sentenced to transportation for life in connection with Hardinge Bomb Case) and a top educationist of Punjab, was elected the first President and the present writer the first General Secretary of the new organisation.

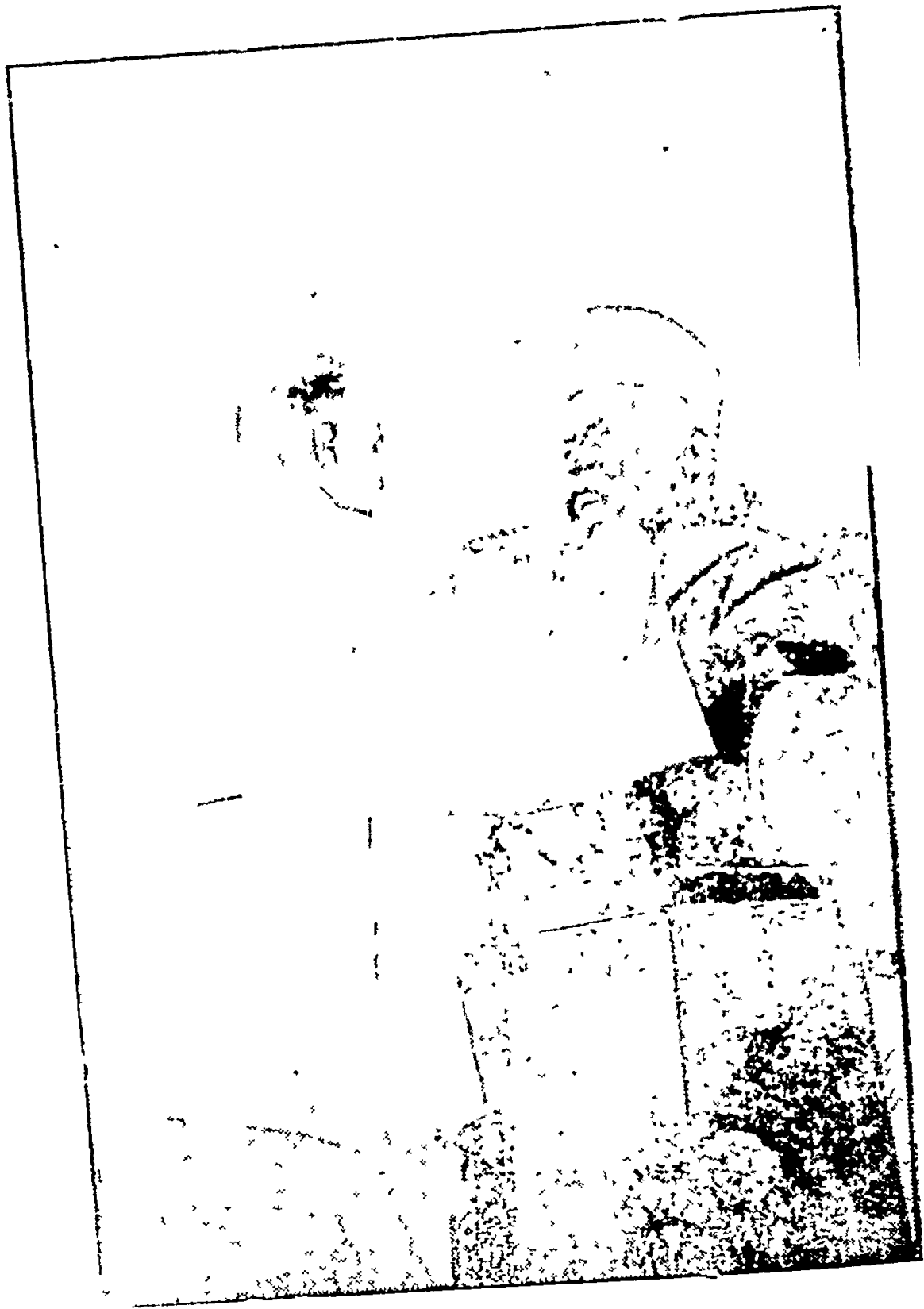
About the same time Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji called a similar convention of representative Bengalis at Calcutta which resolved to form a Jan Sangh, also called Peoples Party, for West Bengal with Dr Mookerji as its first President

Similar conventions were held during the next two months at Lucknow and Indore for forming Jan Sangh in Uttar Pardesh and Madhya Bharat. The Lucknow convention elected Shri Din Dayal Upadhyay, the reputed social worker, writer and orator of that province as the first General Secretary of Uttar Pardesh Jan Sangh with Rao Krishan Pal Singh as President

On the 9th of September, 1951, the Presidents, Secretaries and some other prominent workers of the above mentioned Provincial Jan Sanghs of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pardesh and Delhi, Bengal, Uttar Pardesh and Madhya Bharat met in Delhi and decided that time had come to give an all India form to Jan Sangh to which Provincial Jan Sanghs may get affiliated. The task of convening an all India convention for the purpose was entrusted to the Jan Sangh of Punjab, PEPSU and Delhi. The Jan Sangh of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pardesh and Delhi thereupon decided to call the convention at New Delhi on the 21st of October, 1951, and appointed its General Secretary, the present writer, to be its convener

Before the all India convention met, Provincial conventions were held at Jaipur, Nagpur and Patna to form provincial Jan Singhs for Rajasthan, Madhya

Pradesh and Behar: Thus Jan Sangh had come into existence in all the States of North India except Assam and Vindhya Pradesh before it took an all India form.



“ Two Doctors ”
Dr. Mookerji Garlanding Dr. Hedgewar.

PRESIDENT OF JAN SANGH

The most important decision to be taken before the All India Bharatiya Jan Sangh was formally launched was about the person who was to be elected at the convention as its first President. It did not, however, take long for the sponsors of the new organisation to decide that the honour must go to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji. There was no other person in the country with the stature and strength to carry the burden of an organisation which was destined from its very inception to become a force to reckon with.

It was eleventh of October when at about 8 a.m. Lala Hansraj Gupta, Prof. Mahavir, Pt. Mauli Chander Sharma and the present writer reached 10, Pusa Road New Delhi, where Dr. Mookerji was then staying to request him to give his consent to the proposal. Dr. Mookerji received us with a broad smile in the Verandah of the house and lead us into a small study where he had been working, as was usual with him, since 6.30 a.m. when he returned from his morning walk. He was sparsely dressed. A coarse cotton dhoti, a kurta and a chaddar of coarse silk and country made slippers constituted his whole dress. The room had not enough chairs to seat us all. So Dr. Mookerji himself went to the

drawing room of his host to bring chairs. He took his seat only after all of us had taken ours.

After formal courtesies, L. Hansraj Gupta broached the question in his own inimitable way, half serious, half humorous and enlivened by some homely touches and references. There was a lull after L. Hansraj had finished. Dr. Mookerji's demeanour became serious. He threw his huge body back on his arm chair and got plunged in deep thinking for a few minutes. And then he broke the silence with the following measured words.

"It is a great responsibility that you want me to shoulder. I will try to do it in the spirit of humble duty to my mother land. But before I accept it I want to be clear in my mind about the character and the future working of the organisation you want me to lead."

Again there was a pause for a minute and then he dilated upon, with a question mark on his face, what he thought the character and working of Jan Sangh to be, particularly its relationship with other nationalist forces and organisations in the country both cultural and social as well as political, in some detail.

He visualised Jan Sangh to be the spearhead of the nationalist forces in the country and, therefore, wanted it to be so broad based as to be able to comprehend and consolidate all of them into one effective political organisation. It should be open to all citizens of India who owed unalloyed

allegiance to her and her great culture and heritage which was essentially Hindu

From that day Dr Mookerji put his heart and soul in the making of the new organisation. He sat for long hours day after day with Prof Mahavir Pr. Mauli Chander Sharma and the present writer to give the final touches to the draft manifesto of the Jan Sangh to be placed before the convention. It was in the course of discussions about different items of the economic programme of the new party that he showed his deep insight into the economic ills of the mother land and his realistic and constructive approach towards them. There was an impression in my mind till then that Dr Mookerji leans more on the side of capitalistic economy than on what is popularly known as Socialistic economy. But after discussions with him I realised that I was mistaken. His approach to the economic problems was not coloured by any text book maxims or theories. It was essentially a practical approach which was guided by the stark realities of the Indian situation and governed by the supreme consideration of the speedy economic recovery and welfare of India and her teeming millions. It was why in certain respects his approach appeared to be rather Communistic while in others it could be called capitalistic. In fact it was neither of the two. It was essentially Bhaṭṭiya.

An interesting incident made this fact very clear to me. A leading economist and industrialist who was lending us his helping hand in the formulation

of the economic programme, on coming across the proposal about profit sharing between capital and labour in the chapter on Industrial relations in the draft prepared by us, felt somewhat shocked. Thinking that it had been put in the draft without the knowledge of Dr. Mookerji by me he remarked humourously, "Our young professor seems to be a Communist." But he was soon disillusioned. Dr. Mookerji defended profit sharing as the only practical way of making the labour interested in increase in production which, he held, was the first essential for solving the economic problems of the country. That perhaps explains why a number of capitalists who joined the Jan Sangh in the beginning thinking it to be an extreme right wing party left it when they found it following an independent national policy, untrammelled by ideological inhibitions of the right or the left, but much more progressive and radical than they could swallow.

Another incident just on the eve of the convention demonstrated the selfless devotion of Dr. Mookerji to the cause he held dear and his disregard for personal name or fame. Shri Dwarka Prasad Mishra, the ex-Home-Minister in the Congress Ministry of Madhya Pradesh, had resigned from the Congress and the cabinet in September and had started a crusade against what he called "communal" and "anti-national" policies of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru. Shortly afterwards he undertook a short tour of North India. Bhartiya Jan Sangh offered him his stage in Delhi and half a lakh people heard his

tirade against his old organisation and its lord in pin drop silence. The Uttar Pradesh Jan Sangh also, out of courtesy, arranged public meetings for him in some of the cities that he visited in that State. It was then openly discussed that he would join Jan Sangh.

But on his return to Madhya Pradesh he floated an organisation of his own under the name of 'Lak Congress'. This came as a surprise to the sponsors of Jan Sangh convention who had invited him to attend it. He came. Dr Mookerji and others had long talks with him. But he was found to be hesitant to join Jan Sangh. Some one suggested that perhaps he would not work under anybody else. Without a moments hesitation Doctor Mookerji said, "But let him become the President. I will work under him". His face glowed with an honest and natural earnestness as he said this. It showed his selflessness, his spirit of keeping the cause he loved and principles he cherished above his person. No wonder he became the idol of all those who came in contact with him. Much against the general belief that distant lends charm, his greatness and charm appeared to grow as one came near him.

The convention was held in the Ragho-Mal Arya Girls Higher Secondary School, New Delhi. A spacious pandal was constructed in it which accommodated about a thousand special invitees from among the citizens of Delhi besides five hundred delegates that had come from all parts of India.

All India Bharatiya Jan Sangh was formally launched by the unanimous vote of the convention which also adopted its draft constitution and manifesto. The most thrilling part of the proceedings, however, was the election of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji to lead the new organisation as its first President. His name was proposed by L. Balraj Bhalla of Punjab and was seconded by a number of prominent delegates from different provinces. All of them paid glowing tributes to Dr. Mookerji for his noble record of selfless service to the mother land and his great qualities of head and heart.

For Dr. Mookerji it marked the beginning of a new, and as later events were to prove, the most momentous phase of his dedicated life. He knew that his task would not be easy. But he had confidence in himself and the teams of young workers that were there to assist him in all the provinces in which Jan Sangh had been formed. For the all India work he selected Pt. Mauli Chander Sharma and Prof. Mahavir, the young and versatile son of late Bhai Parmanand, to assist him as General Secretaries.

His Presidential address to that historic gathering summed up his political philosophy, his approach to the national and international problems and the lines on which the organisation that he was to lead was to be run.

Just as he rose to speak a number of delegates, who were eager to hear him speak in English, requested him to deliver his Presidential address

in English. Dr. Mukerji was not very well up in Hindi till then. But he insisted upon speaking in Hindi, the national language, at that national gathering.

He made it clear at the very outset of his address that Bharatiya Jan Sangh was not coming into existence merely to fight the forthcoming general elections and that whatever the result of the elections, "our party must continue to function thereafter carrying a message of hope and goodwill to all classes of people and trying to draw out from them their best efforts in re-building a happier and more prosperous free India."

Explaining the need for the new party he said: "one of the chief reasons for the manifestation of dictatorship in Congress rule is the absence of well organised opposition parties which alone can act as a healthy check on the majority party and can hold out before the country the prospective of an alternative government".

"Bharatiya Jan Sangh," he declared, "emerges today as an All India Political Party which will function as the principal party in opposition." Opposition, he added, "Does not mean senseless or destructive approach to all problems that confront responsible Government. While, therefore, we may have to attack or criticise official measures or acts, our aim will be to approach all problems in a constructive spirit so that we may keep the public vigilant and make our humble contribution

in developing a real democratic structure for the sound administration of our country".

Dilating upon the composition and character of Bharatiya Jan Sangh he declared "We have thrown our party open to all citizens of India irrespective of caste-creed or community. While we recognise that in matters of customs, habits, religion and language Bharat presents a unique diversity, the people must be united by a bond of fellowship and understanding inspired by deep devotion and loyalty to the spirit of a common motherland.

While it will be dangerous to encourage the growth of political minorities on the basis of caste and religion, it is obviously for the vast majority of Bharat's population to assure all classes of people, who are truly loyal to their motherland, that they will be entitled to full protection under the law and to complete equality of treatment in all matters, social, economic and political. Our party gives this assurance unreservedly".

He laid great stress on the need for adopting proper approach to the age old culture of the country. "Our party", he declared, "believes that future of Bharat lies in the proper appreciation and application of Bharatiya "Sanskriti" and "Maryada". Let all true sons and daughters of India pride themselves in the thought that the heritage that has come to us from ancient days is something noble and enduring, that it must not be allowed to stagnate and degenerate and that free

India's future must be closely linked up with Bharatiya ideals, which must, if necessary, undergo changes from time to time so as to make them respond to the needs of modern and scientific age. This must be suitably reflected in our system of education. While we, therefore, aim at a 'Dharma Rajya' or a Rule of Law, we only abide by the highest traditions of Bharatiya Sanskriti that bind all people together in ties of real amity and fraternity "

Regarding the 'most acute problem of deteriorating economic condition of the people' he explained that his party stood for a "well planned decentralised national economic plan" on the lines of Sarvaodaya scheme. "Our party", he said, "is against concentration of economic power in the hands of small groups and cartels. Sanctity of private property will be observed and private enterprise will be given a fair and adequate play subject to national welfare. State ownership and State control will be exercised when found necessary in public interest. The party will stand for progressive decontrol. Social and economic exploitation must be checked, distribution must be fair and equitable and an atmosphere created so that all may jointly work for increased production "

His view about India's foreign policy was that it should be more realistic, primary consideration being the advancement of the cause of our own country and the maintenance of peace and goodwill in international sphere " "We believe", he declared,

"in democracy and in the maintenance of civil liberties. We are against totalitarianism of any kind what-soever. We recognise that every nation must have the right to shape its national policy and attitude towards life according to the genius and traditions of the people themselves. Bharat's message to the world has been the doctrine of "live and let live". So long as India's right to determine her own pattern is not interfered with, there is no reason why we should not maintain friendly relations with all other countries."

He stood for reconsideration by India of the decision to stay within the Commonwealth because of "strange policy of partiality towards Pakistan observed by Great Britain."

Regarding Pakistan he had very definite views. "We hold the opinion", he declared, "that partition of Bharat was a tragic folly. It has served no purpose and has not helped to solve any problem economic, political or communal. We believe in the goal of reunited Bharat. We will like it to be achieved through peaceful means and through the realisation by the people of both states that such reunion will be of benefit to the masses and will make the country a real bulwork of peace and freedom. So long as Pakistan continues we will urge a policy of strict reciprocity. Our party lays great stress on the need for a satisfactory solution of post-partition problems of minorities in Pakistan and evacuee property which Congress Government systematically try to shirk. Our approach to these

problems is not at all communal. They are mainly political and economic, and they have to be settled between the two states in a fair and straight forward manner."

Referring to Kashmir which had already begun to loom large on the political horizon, he declared

Our party feels that the case should be withdrawn from U N O and there should be no further question of plebiscite. Kashmir is an integral part of India and should be treated as any other state"

Refuting the charge of communalism that had already begun to be levelled against him and the Jan Sangh by Mr Nehru he pointed out that 'having repeatedly sacrificed Indian Nationalism at the altar of Muslim Communalism and even after partition having surrendered to the whims and howls of Pakistan Government it does not lie in the mouth of Mr Nehru to accuse others of communalism. There is no communalism in India today except the new policy of Muslim appeasement which has been started by Mr Nehru and his friends for the purpose of winning their votes at the forthcoming election. We have provincialism and other types of class or caste differences in the country today. Let us jointly try to remove these evils so as to lay the foundation for a truly democratic India. The cry of communalism raised by Mr Nehru is to side-track the real issues now before the country. The problems before the country today are clearly related to hunger, to poverty, to exploitation to mal-administration, to corruption,

to abject surrender to Pakistan, all being evils for which the main responsibility rests on the Congress and the Government under it."

He concluded his remarkable address with a note of confidence in the new organisation to tackle the problems before the country and a fervent prayer for its success. "We enter upon our task", he said, "with full faith, hope and courage. Let our workers constantly remember that only through service and sacrifice will they be able to win the confidence of masses of the people. The great task of revitalising and re-constructing free Bharat awaits us. The mother calls her children irrespective of class, caste or religion to come to her and serve her. However dark the present clouds may be, Bharat has a great destiny to fulfil in the years to come. May our party whose symbol in the forthcoming elections is a humble earthen "Pradip", try to carry this 'light' of hope and unity, faith and courage, to dispel the darkness that surrounds the country. The journey has just begun. May providence endow us with strength and fortitude to remain ever on the right path, not cowed by fears or tempted by favours, and to help to make Bharat great and strong, spiritually and materially, so that she may become a fit and noble instrument in the preservation of world peace and prosperity".

Addressing a huge public meeting in the evening of the same day in the Gandhi Grounds he recalled that Netaji Subhas Bose had launched the Indian

THE GENERAL ELECTIONS AND AFTER.

All India Bharatiya Jan Sangh, as we have seen above, was born just on the eve of the first General Elections on the basis of the new constitution of free India, though the ramblings of its birth had begun to be heard many months earlier. It had not come into existence, as Dr. Mookerji pointed out in his Presidential Address, merely to fight the general elections. It would have rather liked to establish itself well organisationally before entering into the election arena. But it was impossible for it to ignore the imminent general elections on whose results depended the political shape of things to come during the next five years. The importance of elections for carrying the ideology of the new party to the masses also could not be under-rated. It, therefore, decided to contest the elections to the State and Central legislatures wherever circumstances might permit it.

Dr. Mookerji was fully conscious of the strength and resources of the Congress and determination of its leaders to come back to power by fair means or foul. He was also fully aware of the probability of the opposition vote getting divided among different parties to the advantage of the Congress. The elections to Delhi Municipal Committee in October of the same year had painfully demonstrated that fact.

Bharatiya Jan Sangh had a band of trained and zealous workers everywhere. But they lacked political experience and the party as yet had no standing. Its very name was yet unknown to an over-whelming majority of the people. Most of the people were to hear its name during the next two months not from its workers and advocates but from its ruthless critics and opponents like Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru who saw in the new organisation and its redoubtable leader the potentiality to displace Congress. Dr. Mookerji was pained by this campaign of vilification started against the new party by the Prime Minister from its very inception without caring to understand what it was and what it aimed at. But he was also thankful to him for acting as "honorary publicity Secretary" of the new-born organisation which was too poor to arrange for proper and speedy publicity for itself.

But this determined opposition by Pt. Nehru, who made Jan 'Sangh the sole target of his wrath and criticism throughout his electioneering tours, and the campaign of deliberate misrepresentation of the character, aims and objects of the new party started by the Congress, the Socialist party and the Communists party, made it imperative for Dr. Mookerji to undertake a tour of the country to explain the programme and policies of Jan Sangh immediately after the Delhi Convention.

It was not an easy job. Jan Sangh had neither the resources nor as yet the organisation to ensure for him even the minimum comforts and quickest means of transportation. The Press too, particularly

the English Press, which took the cue from the Prime Minister, was generally hostile to the infant organisation

But undaunted by all these handicaps, Dr. Mookerji embarked upon the arduous task of awakening the people to the realities of the situation and making them familiar with Jan Sangh's call for duty to the motherland. He began with the Punjab.

The present writer had the privilege to be with him during some of his tours. It was a pleasure and rare experience to be with him in those hectic days. On some days he had to cover as much as two to three hundred miles by train and motor car and address a dozen meetings. The usual programme was to travel by night, cover two or three important places within easy motorable distance from one another during the day, and catch the night train again for the next centre.

Dr Mookerji was accustomed to sustained hard work from his very childhood. He used to get up whether in train or home at about 5 A M and was ready for work after his morning duties and prayers at about 6 30 A M. He generally worked non-stop from that hour right upto 10 P M.

But the work that he was now called upon to do was of a different nature. It put on him more physical strain than he had ever stood before besides straining his vocal chords too much. He attracted huge audiences wherever he went. Hundreds and thousands waited for him even on the small way

side stations. His fame seemed to have spread fast. He had begun to be looked upon by the intelligent people all over the country as the real leader of the opposition.

The only other man in the country who was subjected to that kind of ordeal in those days was the Congress President-cum Prime Minister, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. But he had all the resources of the Government at his command. He moved in Government planes or military dakotas. He also had the benefit of a fine health and balanced body coupled with unique agility.

But they presented a contrast in their behaviour, both mental and physical, towards the people whom they wanted to serve and lead. Pt. Nehru in his power consciousness indulged in physical theatricals and fits of temper as a matter of right. At Ludhiana, he gave such a wild push to the local Congress President that only luck saved him from falling down from a dozen feet high rostrum. On the mental plane the burden of his speeches which lacked coherence, logic and argument used to be "after me the deluge". A close analytical study of all the election speeches of Pt. Nehru will reveal that he devoted more than half of his total speaking time in denouncing and abusing the opposition parties, particularly the Jan Sangh, and he had little to say about the positive achievements of his party for the four years it had been in power.

Dr. Mookerjee on the other hand never lost his temper. He sweated and perspired, he looked pulled

down and tired, but he never quarrelled with the people for that. He took them to be quite natural and inevitable concomitants of crowded public life in a country like India. At times when the strain appeared unbearable he would turn round and say 'Balraj! You are going to kill me today', and then go on with the scheduled programme without betraying any kind of uneasiness. It was only a strong will and keen sense of duty which enabled him to go on like this for days and weeks together.

His election speeches, which were mainly delivered in Hindi in which he was not very proficient at that time, mirrored his agonised but confident mind, his deep distress over the things as they were moving in the country and his robust confidence in the destiny of Bharat. He touched on all subjects and problems facing the country. He laid special stress on the problem of providing food, clothing and shelter to the common man failure to solve which, he held, "would shake the very foundations of our social and economic structure and bring about a revolution". 'Bhartiya Jan Sangh', he repeatedly declared "was not wedded to any ism but it will not hesitate to take any action, however drastic, to provide for these."

But he cautioned his countrymen at the same time to not to think that economics was the be all and end all of life. He wanted the economic uplift of the people to go side by side with their spiritual and cultural uplift. It is the spiritual and cultural values for which Bharat has stood from the dawn of her history.

which are and will continue to be her distinctive features and bring her the respect of the world. To ignore them in the wild goose chase of mere economic prosperity would not solve the real problem of restoring and revitalising the moral backbone of the people which, he felt, was fast decaying.

Pt. Nehru's foreign and domestic policies, particularly his policy towards Pakistan and Muslims, came in for most eloquent and trenchant criticism from him. He had studied the working of Pt. Nehru's mind from close quarters. He had seen that whatever had been achieved by free India during the first years of her independence had been achieved not because of Pt. Nehru but in spite of him. He would recall with visible anguish how Pt. Nehru had been riding roughshod over the vital interests of India and her millions just to win cheap praise from foreigners. His betrayal of the Hindus in Pakistan, whom he had given solemn pledges on the eve of partition of the country, was considered by him as most unworthy of him and of the great country which had the misfortune to be ruled by him.

Dr. Mookerji was amused when he heard people saying that Pt. Nehru with all his faults and failures had proved a successful foreign minister who had raised India's name in the international field. He held that the sole test for the success or failure of a country's foreign policy was the good it might have done to the country itself. Pt. Nehru's foreign policy, he would argue, had rendered our sixteen

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hundred miles long northern frontier which had been absolutely safe all through the ages, unsafe and vulnerable by allowing Communist China to swallow Tibet, it had isolated India from the democratic world without obtaining any advantage from the Communist world, which would not trust India till she went completely red, it had made the lot of the people of Indian origin wherever they might be outside India miserable, it had failed to liquidate foreign pockets within the country while he always made loud noise against colonialism elsewhere and, above all, it had enabled Pakistan to forcibly grab one third of Jammu and Kashmir State including the strategic region of Gilgit, which she has since been dangling before the eyes of Anglo-Americans as a bargaining counter to secure diplomatic support and military aid from them to be used against India.

Dr. Mookerji knew a lot about Pt. Nehru's pusillanimity and un-Indian cowardice in dealing with India's enemies particularly when they happened to be Muslims. He could not reveal many of the things that transpired in the cabinet when he was in it. But he would often tell his intelligent listeners in the big meetings that he addressed in English: "when I scan the whole course of Indian history, I do not find a single man who has done more harm to this country than Pt. Nehru."

He was not happy to pass this judgement on Pt. Nehru. But he could not help it. The deliberate persistence of Pt. Nehru in wrong, anti-national and

unrealistic policies in spite of repeated appeals and warning from his colleagues and compatriots could lead him to no other conclusion. He held Pt. Nehru to be mainly responsible for the partition of India and terrible carnage and suffering that followed it. The up-rooting of millions of Hindus from the areas where they had stood the onslaught of foreign Muslim invaders and rulers for centuries, was to his mind the greatest blow to India as a nation. He held him responsible for the slow extermination of the Hindus of E. Bengal as well.

Dr. Mookerji also cleared some of the points that were made against him by Pt. Nehru in the course of his election speeches. One such point was that he and Master Tara Singh were also parties to India's partition because they had demanded partition of Bengal and Punjab. Speaking at Jamshedpur in early January, 1952, Dr. Mookerji declared, "It is painful and shameful for a leader like Nehru to indulge in untruths and half truths and say that myself and Master Tara Singh were also parties to partition".

"When it became apparent to me", he explained, "that the Congress, the League and the British had made up their mind to partition the country, and that we were powerless to prevent it, I demanded the partition of Punjab and Bengal. I demanded that at least a part of these provinces be salvaged from the wreck. What I agreed to and worked for was partition of the proposed Pakistan comprising all Bengal and all Punjab and not the partition of

India. That betrayal had been decided betwixt themselves by the two political parties without the consent and against the express wishes of the vast mass of the people "

'If this was a sin', he concluded 'I stand before the bar of opinion of my countrymen for a verdict'.

Another main charge of Pt. Nehru against him and his organisation, which he hurled at them in time and out of time, was that of communalism. He called Dr. Mookerji and Jan Sangh communal

Dr. Mookerji was both amused and pained by this charge which amounted to the kettle calling the pot black. He held that the one organisation which had encouraged and sustained communalism in the country was the Congress itself. "It surrendered itself during the last 35 years at the feet of the communal leaders. "Did you fight," he would ask them, "against the communal award? Who gave the communal percentages for the purpose of having some pact with the Muslim League? Who agreed to partition the country? You might have done it with the best of intentions, because you thought that you could thereby get rid of the British Government, but having sold the country at the altar of communalism to come forward and say that we are communalists is a perversion of truth".

"But if it is to be communalist", he argued, "to love one's country, to love one's community and not think ill of other communities, if we feel with and attempt to unite 30 crores of Hindus living in India that have been liberated after 1000 years. if we try

to recover our lost position in a manner which is 100% consistent with the dynamic principles of Hinduism for which Swami Vivekanand stood, I am proud to be a communalist". Neither Pt. Nehru nor any other congressman has ever tried to reply to this argument and stand of Dr. Mookerji. They have no reply. So they took recourse to abuses and vilification with the help of their kept press, secure in the thought that Dr. Mookerji argumentative replies to their criticism will never reach the electorate whose minds they had been poisoning.

He considered it the greatest misfortune of India that she had fallen in the hands of one who had yet to discover what real India was, in the most formative and crucial stage of her long and chequered history. "Pt. Nehru" he said in a very pathetic tone in a meeting of the elite of the Punjab at Simla, "claims that he has discovered India. But he has yet to discover his own mind which has got a heavy over coating of what is un-Indian and un-Hindu." The course of events in Kashmir during and after his martyrdom has proved the truth in Dr. Mookerji's reading of Pt. Nehru's policy in respect of that state at least.

But Dr. Mookerji was not dismayed by the situation. He had faith in India's destiny and confidence in himself as one of her humble devotees. "I will set this man (Pt. Nehru) right," he said to the present writer while we were returning from Simla, "if I can take even ten members with

me into the Parliament". The occasion for this significant and prophetic remark was provided by his brooding over the prospectus in the election of his new party, for which he was campaigning, in a moment of retrospection when our motor was gliding down the tortuous bends of Simla-Kalka road through delightful mountainous scenery. "Have we done a correct thing in entering the election arena in the name of our new party which is barely two months old" he asked. And after a moment's silence, without waiting for my reply, he added, "But now the die is cast, we are in the game"; and then he made the above mentioned remark about his setting Pt. Nehru right.

And, as is well known, he did set him right to some extent even though he could get only two members besides himself into the Parliament on Jan Sangh ticket; and he would surely have set him right completely if the cruel hand of conspirators had not removed him from the earthly stage so soon.

In the course of his tours up and down the country during these election months, Dr. Mookerji had the opportunity to watch from close quarters the men, young and old, who constituted the Jan Sangh at the town, district and provincial levels. Youngmen mainly belonged to the R. S. S., who had taken to Jan Sangh, while continuing their non-political activities through the R. S. S., for political work. There was no contradiction in their behaviour. As adult individuals having a vote each they sought some political affiliations. The R. S. S.

gave them free hand to join any political party they liked. Most of them found Jan Sangh most after their hearts and joined it. Some had already joined Hindu Mahasabha and they continued to work in it. A number of them were Congressmen too. But un-Indian and anti-Hindu policies of the Congress were driving them out of it. Some of them now joined the Jan Sangh.

Some of the older people also belonged to or were under the influence of the R. S. S., while others came from that fluid section of society which was opposed to the Congress for various reasons and looked upon the R.S.S. trained youth as a fine force of workers in need of leadership which they thought they could supply. They looked upon the R. S. S. trained young folk as mere workers incapable of thinking and laying down the policies of the organisation they were building up. This attitude naturally coloured thier behaviour towards them.

The youth equally naturally resented this. The R.S.S. had created in them a spirit of brotherhood and complete equality in dealings with one another coupled with deep respect for their superiors. They did not like being ordered about as mere subordinates by older persons who, having grown up in different atmosphere, could not comprehend the dignity of the worker and adjust themselves accordingly.

Dr. Mookerji was quick to notice this. The untiring zeal, humility and hard work of the young workers impressed him. He himself was essentially

a worker and loved to be amongst them. As an educationist he had studied the working of young minds. He knew that the youth needed sympathy, encouragement and scope for initiative to develop their latent potentialities and that dictation from those who could not set example of their own life before them repelled them.

He could, as a man of affairs, also realise that it was not easy for old arm chair politicians, who had grown up in different atmosphere, to appreciate and have sympathy for youthful buoyancy of young workers which tended to create in them over confidence, a desire to have a hand in the policy making and a spirit to do things by themselves.

He, therefore, arrived at the conclusion that it was not conducive to the healthy growth of the organisation to have retired people, out of tune with the new generation, to lead the organisation he was building up. "Why have you collected all these old and retired people who have deeprooted prejudices against one another, in the Jan Sangh," he one day told the present writer. "I want young leaders with dash and initiative. Cannot you persuade the R.S.S. leaders to spare a few young workers for Jan Sangh. They will form excellent leaders with some training and guidance in the political thought and methods."

He himself took a hand in training the young leaders. He always attached much weight and importance to the views of young workers and entrusted most responsible jobs to them. He never made any important decision, after becoming the

President of Jan Sangh without first ascertaining the views of young workers. He would encourage them to think and write by entrusting the drafting of most important resolutions at the various meetings of his working committee to its youngest members. He would encourage them to speak by insisting that some young workers should speak before him whenever he was to speak. His personal interest and solicitude for the betterment and development of his young workers served as an incentive to them to come up to his expectations. As a result he could build up a second line of leaders drawn from the comparatively younger workers, though he himself too was quite young as compared to the leaders of the Congress, in Bharatiya Jan Sangh.

Dr. Mookerji himself stood from his home constituency of South Calcutta. It was not an easy constituency. It had about 70 thousand Muslim voters out of a total vote of about 3 lakhs. They had been misguided by the Congress propaganda to look upon the Jan Sangh and Dr. Mookerji as their worst enemies. So they were expected to vote solidly against him. The Congress had put up one of the richest men of Calcutta against him. The Communists also had a strong candidate in the field.

Dr. Mookerji lacked resources. He was not a rich man nor could he ever think of stooping to the methods and means that the Congress and Communists were adopting. But the voters knew him and

his services to Bengal and India. They returned him with a thumping majority even though he could give very little time to his own constituency.

Here again he presented a contrast to Pt Jawahar Lal Nehru. Pt Nehru had declared that he would not visit his home constituency of Allahabad from which he was seeking election. But he had to eat his words and make tremendous efforts to get elected. His friend, Sh. Abdullah, sent Government jeeps and cars and score of workers all the way from Kashmir, a distance of over 1000 miles to help him. All his family members and a number of central ministers spent sleepless nights, canvassing votes for him. All the Muslim votes were in his pocket. Still his pennyless adversary Brahmachari Prabhu Datt, was able to secure about 30% of the polled votes.

But on the whole the election results were none too flattering for Jan Sangh. It was rather a debacle. Only three of its candidates, including Dr Mookerji, out of the 93 who contested on its ticket for the House of the People could get elected. It fared no better in respect of State legislatures. It had put up 742 candidates out of which only 33 could get in. In some provinces like the East Punjab where Jan Sangh appeared to be the strongest, it could not secure a single seat.

Many factors contributed to this failure at the polls. The most important of them was the infancy of the organisation whose name even had not reached the ears of most of the rural electorate in

the country. Much of the publicity it had got by that time had come from its critics who painted it in very lurid colours and created a prejudice in the minds of many people before they had known anything about it. It was thus condemned without a hearing.

Secondly it had not been able to set up its organisational structure in most of the constituencies where its candidates fought elections. It got support from towns and those villages where R. S. S. had some work. But most of the villages had no one to speak for Jan Sangh.

In-experience of the young workers for whom it was a novel experience and lack of resources also accounted to a good extent for this failure. But generally speaking the inexperience of workers was counter balanced by their enthusiasm and hard work. But nothing could counter balance the superiority of Congress and Communists, the two richest parties in the country, in resources.

The undue pressure by the party in power through the official machinery and actual tampering with the ballot boxes was another major factor in the defeat of Jan Sangh. That the ballot boxes were tampered with was admitted by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in the Parliament. He cited an example where the symbol of one party was removed from the ballot box and that of another party was pasted instead. But more glaring were the examples of opening the ballot boxes, which, as was demonstrated by a number of people, could be opened without

damaging the protective seal to take out ballot papers from the ballot boxes. The proof of such happenings came to light at a number of places.

The electoral officers in some States felt themselves helpless in the matter. The present writer, as General Secretary for Jan Sangh of Punjab, PEPSU, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi, approached Shri Vishnu Bhagwan, Chief Electoral Officer of the Punjab, with the request that special care should be taken to guard the ballot boxes as there were rumours that they were being tampered with while in State custody. This suspicion rose from the fact that counting of votes was to take place many weeks after the polling was over. Mr Vishnu Bhagwan formally assured me that he was taking every possible precaution but made the significant remark while I was just leaving his room in the Rest House at Ambala Cantt., 'Human nature as it is, nothing is impossible.' The results revealed the truth of the remark.

In Punjab the Akali question also was an important factor. Their separatist demands had scared the general mass of Hindu voters. They wanted to vote solidly for a party which might be able to take an effective stand against them. Jan Sangh was yet too young to inspire confidence that it would come in majority. On the other hand Pt Nehru made an unequivocal declaration at Patiala that Congress would not concede the separatist demands of Akalis. The electoral arrangement between Jan Sangh and Akalis in the State of Delhi,

where the issues agitating the minds of Punjab Hindu did not exist, was exploited by the Congress, which had itself entered into electoral arrangements with Muslim League in Madras, to blacken Jan Sangh. This confused the voters who for fear of splitting the nationalist vote to the advantage of Akalis voted for Congress.

But it was admitted by all, friends and critics of Jan Sangh alike, that it had given the most determined fight to the Congress wherever it had entered the election ring. It, generally speaking, fought a clean fight, and thus set a new standard of behaviour in elections so necessary for the success of democratic experiment in the country.

Dr. Mookerji was convinced by the evidence that he received about the tempering of ballot boxes and use of other undemocratic and even immoral methods adopted by the men in power to secure victory in the elections. He, in his own inimitable way, smashed the party in power in Parliament when he declared in thunderous voice that "Congress has swept, not the polls but the ballot boxes." But he paid a handsome tribute to the Government servants and the election machinery for efficient organisation of the elections, the most gigantic democratic experiment wherein 170 million voters went to the polls without any kind of clashes or untoward incidents. The responsibility for the mischief, wherever it was done, he declared, lay with the ministers, Central and Provincial, who in

their unholy anxiety to come back to power misused their position, and not on those entrusted with the actual conduct of election who had to carry out their instructions

But to his own workers he would say ' We must admit the failure to be due to our own shortcomings and inexperience and handicaps beyond our control Let us not console ourselves by shifting the whole blame on the party in power That would be suicidal for the growth of our party. We knew that the party in power would do all that lay in its power to defeat us So why complain about that"

As an optimist, that he was, he would emphasise the bright side of the election results ' We began with zero", he would argue 'and we have now got something plus everywhere We have gained something and lost nothing" He counted the gains not strictly in number of the seats won To him the chief gain was that the Jan Sangh had, through the elections, made its existence felt everywhere Its name and ideology had reached the remotest villages in the areas in which it had contested any seat It had secured a foothold in the country and in the hearts of the people

The most significant gain was the recognition of Jan Sangh as one of the four all India Parties by the Election Commission of India on the basis of the number of votes polled by it The elections brought Jan Sangh in the front rank of the political parties contesting for the affection of the people

leaving a number of much older parties behind in the race.

But all those who had entered the Jan Sangh on the eve of elections had not that idealism, faith and optimism. Many of them had come to Jan Sangh to serve their own political ends. Others belonged to that extensive class of people who worship the rising sun. They thought Jan Sangh to be a new luminary on the political firmament of the country and bowed before it. But when they realised that the Congress star was still in the ascendant, they beat the retreat with indecent haste. Even some of the top and trusted leaders of the new party like Pt. Mauli Chander Sharma, got disheartened for some time and began to harbour pessimistic thoughts about the party which they thought might prove a flop.

But Dr. Mookerji on the top and the young rank and file below remained constant. They had entered the field as a matter of duty with the words of the Lord "You have the right to do your duty but not to the reward," on their lips. They honestly felt that they had done their duty. Dr. Mookerji by his robust confidence inspired them to remain constant to build a greater and rosy future for the motherland.

It was thus due to the steadfastness and self-confidence of Dr. Mookerji and enthusiasm and capacity for sustained hard work of the young workers that the infant Jan Sangh could stand the stunning blow of defeat in the general

elections and raise its head again after lying low and inactive for a few months. The achievements of Dr. Mookerji in the Parliament where he came to be recognised as the virtual leader of the Opposition, and the persistence of the young workers in the Provinces in the task of revitalising and strengthening the infant organisation ultimately succeeded in rehabilitating Jan Sangh within a few months of the debacle of general elections.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

The final picture of the party position in the House of the People, the real sovereign Legislature for the whole country, as it emerged out of the general elections was anything but encouraging for the opposition parties separately as also collectively. The opposition had collectively secured more than 55% of the total votes polled as against 44.63% polled by the Congress party. But the Congress had won 364 seats as against 125 won by the entire opposition. The Congress strength was further augmented by the 6 members from Jammu and Kashmir State who were nominated by Abdullah's Government and not elected by the people of the State and the five nominees of the President from among the Anglo-Indians and tribal people of Assam.

To make things worse, the opposition strength of 125 was badly divided. The Communists and their allies who had 26 members in the new Parliament formed the largest organised group in the opposition. But in keeping with the Communist tradition all over the world, they were incapable of making a common front with any other group or party except on their own terms, which invariably amounted to the absorption or extermination of the junior ally. They tried to rope in a few independents. But none liked to walk into their parlour.

The Socialists had 12 members and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party of Acharya Kripalani had 10. Their merger to form the Praja Socialist Party raised their combined strength to 22. The Communists tried to form a combination with them and even offered the leadership of the combined group to a P. S. P. nominee as a bait. But the Socialists who had grown wiser after their experience of alliance with Communists during 1935-40 spurned this offer.

The Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the only other all-India party had only 3 member, Ram Rajya Parishad had three, the Hindu Mahasabha had four and the Provincial or sectional parties like the Gantantar Parishad, the Akali Dal, the Jharkand party of the tribals of Bihar and the Tamilnad Toilers party had five, four, three and four members each respectively. The independents who numbered 36 were, as their very title indicated, incapable of united action. Some of them conscientiously felt that they should remain completely independent. Others wanted to use their independence to good purpose by taking sides at will or at the command of their self-interest.

Another notable feature of this motley opposition was that it lacked talent though not to the same extent as did the party in power. None of the top leaders of the communists and the Socialists and the K.M.P.P. had been able to get in. The one man in the opposition who stood head and shoulder above all others, just as Pt. Nehru stood among

the Congressmen, was Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji. His pre-eminence was recognised by all and it was accepted by his friends and opponents alike that he would be the chief spokesman of the Opposition in the first elected Parliament of free India.

But technically only that party or group could be given recognition as the opposition party and its leader treated as the leader of the Opposition which had a minimum strength of 50 members. It was felt by many prominent members of the Opposition as also by some Congressmen that such a combination could be formed only under the leadership of Dr. Mookerji. So efforts were set on foot by a number of such members from the Opposition soon after the final party position became known to create such a combination with the approval and support of Dr. Mookerji. With this end in view an invitation was issued to most of the non-Communist members in the opposition under the signatures of Dr. Mookerji, Shri N. C. Chatterji, President of Hindu Mahasabha, Shri Rajendra Narain Singh of Patna, leader of the Gantantra Parishad, Sardar Hukam Singh, leader of the Akali Dal, Shri Jaipal Singh, leader of the Jharkhand party and a few independents for an exploratory meeting at New Delhi, before the inauguration of the Parliament.

This meeting was held on the 28th of March, 1952, in the Constitution Club and was attended by about 20 individual members and group leaders who together represented about 45 opposition members.

There it was decided to form a combined opposition Parliamentary party on the basis of a minimum common programme

But some of the members who had originally signified their consent to join the proposed party got nervous about associating with Dr Mookerji for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Prime Minister. They formed an independent group of their own. Dr. Mookerji's proposed opposition party in the Parliament, therefore, when it was actually formed under the name of National Democratic Party could count only 30 members. But it included some of the fine intellects and Parliamentarians like Shri N. C. Chatterji, Sardar Hukam Singh, Shri U. M. Trivedi and Shri B. Ramchander Reddi.

The New Parliament thus opened without any recognised opposition party. The speaker however gave recognition to those parties or combinations in the Opposition which had more than twenty five members as "Parliamentary groups."

But soon after the Praja Socialist Party leaders suggested to Dr Mookerji that the P. S. P. members in the Parliament were prepared to accept him as their leader within the Parliament in combination with his own National Democratic Group so that they may together form the official opposition party in the Parliament, provided he was prepared to drop the Hindu Mahasabha members from the proposed combination.

It was a flattering offer. It had all the advantages and no handicaps. By accepting it Dr. Mooker

ji would have become the official leader of the Opposition in the country with all the privileges and advantages that go with that position. He would have got some striking power to support his relentless logic and elocution which would have enabled him to set the Prime Minister with his steam roller majority right more effectively.

But the democrat in him revolted against the condition about dropping Mahasabha from the combination. He argued with the P. S. P. leaders that this suggestion betrayed a narrow mindedness worse than communalism of which they charged the Mahasabha because it amounted to condemnation of that party outright without a hearing. Communalism, he argued, was no charge. The P. S. P., he reminded them, had been blaggarding him and his Jan Sangh also as Communal and reactionary during the elections. But now they were prepared to treat him and his party as national and progressive. The same, he agreed, could be true of Mahasabha. He suggested that a minimum programme be drawn up. Those who would agree to abide by that programme should be accepted into the combination. Others would automatically be dropped.

But the P.S.P. leaders feared the reaction in their own ranks against their association with Hindu Mahasabha in any shape or form. They, therefore, insisted upon exclusion of Mahasabha. They perhaps had not understood Dr. Mookerji. He preferred principles to personal aggrandisement. The P.S.P. offer was rejected by him.

His decision created genuine regret in the hearts of many people who thought that the Jan Sangh—P S P. combine in the Parliament could have paved the way for the fuller unity of these two parties which, they thought, would have ideally complemented each other. The pure nationalism of the Jan Sangh based on the allegiance to the age old culture of the land, they felt, together with the economic programme of the P S P would have created a truly popular and effective opposition party in the country. But it was not realised by them that the P S P was not a homogeneous party and that its components varied from the extreme leftists of Marxist brand to sober nationalists like Shri J P Narair, who had begun to understand the importance of culture and spiritual values in the life of the nation. Therefore, no lasting combination with this party was possible till it had set its own house in order and developed a clear cut ideology distinct from that of the Congress and the Communists.

It, however, became established in the very first session of the New Parliament, which opened on the 11th of May, 1953, that Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji was the leader of the Opposition whether he had the requisite party strength or not. All the groups in the Opposition, including the Communists, began to look to *him for guidance*. They all considered *him* to be their chief spokesman and conceded to *him*, by implication, the right to reply on behalf of the Opposition on all major questions. Even more than the Opposition, the party in power looked upon *him*

as the unofficial leader of the Opposition. His stature and acumen as a statesman, his Parliamentary skill and elocution, his deep understanding and constructive approach to all the problems facing the country and his following outside the Parliament made him look the real democratic adversary of the Government. Many of the Congress members who in their heart of hearts shared his approach to the problems of the country, had deep admiration for his person and his able advocacy of the policies he considered correct and his fearless and trenchant criticism of what he thought to be wrong and not in the best interests of the country. The Treasury Benches respected him for his deep study and application of the problems before the parliament. They unconsciously treated him as their superior, both as a man and as a statesman. Most of the ministers had known his work and worth as a cabinet minister. His searching and enlightened probe into their policies and affairs made them nervous and the ease and cogency with which he demolished their arguments made them fear him.

The one man who looked upon him as his equal was the Prime Minister, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. He had seen him and his work in and outside the Cabinet. He had been deeply impressed by his incorruptibility, irrepressible independence, nobility of mind and behaviour and, above all, by his great intellectual attainments and Parliamentary skill. But he had never liked his views and approach to the national problems which was always as refresh-

ingly realistic and practical as his own was devastatingly utopian and unrealistic. He lived in air while Dr. Mookerji walked on earth.

Having been brought up from his early youth in an atmosphere of unquestioning submission to his whims and fancies by the high and low, he had developed fascist tendency of intolerance for all criticism coupled with an exaggerated sense of self-righteousness. This tendency in him had become very marked since the death of Sardar Patel. The consciousness that the Congress success at the polls in the general elections had been mainly due to him had somewhat swollen his head. There was none in his cabinet and his party who could stand up to him or question him. He had literally become the monarch of all that he surveyed.

Dr. Mookerji was the only man in the Parliament who would not only tell him on his face that he was wrong but who would also demolish his arguments and expose the hollowness and un-national character of his internal and external policies with such relentless vigour and adroitness, supported by irrefutable facts and figures, that Pt. Nehru would feel crest fallen before his camp followers. This made him very bitter. Failing to find facts to meet facts and arguments to counter arguments of Dr. Mookerji, he would lose temper which resulted in those flashes of repartee in which Dr. Mookerji used invariably to outshine Pt. Nehru. By his behaviour he tacitly accepted Dr. Mookerji's position as the leader of the Opposition, his chief

adversary in the Parliament and his substitute before the country.

Dr. Mookerji was painfully aware of this temper of Pt. Nehru and his tendency to regard all criticism as malicious. He knew that such an approach towards the Opposition would reduce democracy to a farce and spell disaster for the country. So in his very first speech in the new Parliament on the address of the President on the 21st of May, 1952, he made a sincere and passionate plea for a correct approach towards the Opposition. He said :

“As I was looking to this House for the last two days, I felt, as must have been the feeling of many members of this House, that here we witness the epitome of free India. We here are representative men and women coming from all parts of India elected on adult franchise, representing diverse view points, varied outlook, but I know it, all imbued with one idea and one idea alone : how to make our freedom effective and how to advance the interests of the millions of people of India. It is one of the greatest experiments of history that we are making. Every one of us, no matter to which group or party we may belong, whether we are independents or dependents, must be able to look at the problems from the widest stand point and while appreciating the differences among ourselves we must try to resolve these difficulties and come to conclusions which will be to the good of the country. If we fail to adjust our differences, what is the alternative before the country? If this great

experiment fails, if we go on according to the old fashion with the tyranny of the majority or under a megalomaniac dictatorship, if we do not accept that there are diverse view points honestly expressed and an adjustment of these view points is an essential ingredient of the successful working of democratic government, the alternative will be chaos. The alternative will be a sense of helplessness, frustration in the minds of the people and things will go beyond the control of every one".

Had any heed been paid to this fervent plea for tolerance of the view point of others by the party in power, much of the unfortunate developments that followed could have been avoided and Dr. Mookerji might have been spared to serve the country for many years more.

He also briefly touched, in this first speech, all the big problems and issues that were then, as now, facing the country which, he thought, should be handled not on party lines but as national problems demanding the cooperative effort of all. The first in importance, he held, was the problem of food. He reminded the Parliament that scarcity conditions still prevailed in Rayalseema and parts of West Bengal. He exhorted the Government to give first priority to this question and see that no one died of starvation. He warned that failure to solve this problem would spell disaster because the people, who had become politically conscious, could not be expected to tolerate any government that failed to meet their basic need of food, shelter and clothing.

His sympathy was not merely verbal. He made a practical suggestion, which revealed his truly human heart that would go out for the relief of human suffering wherever he found it and which, if accepted, would have made the five hundred members of the Parliament actual sharers in the hardship of their suffering country-men. "We get now Rs. 40 per day", he said. "I do not know what the allowance of the members of the House of the People will be hereafter. Let us agree to a voluntary cut of Rs. 10 per day and let us set apart this sum for the purpose of opening homes where these women and children (of famine affected areas) may be housed and fed."

He also drew pointed attention to the dangers of growing casteism, provincialism and communalism to the national unity. He pleaded for putting a check on them by eradicating the causes which were giving rise to them. He pointed out "that the very communalism, casteism and provincialism which have been so rightly condemned in the President's address were taken full advantage of in every suitable place by the Congress party for winning elections." This, he declared, was very deplorable. He appealed to the men in power to set an example in this respect by their own behaviour.

He also referred to the problem of Jammu and Kashmir which had begun to threaten the integrity and unity of India and for a just and honourable solution of which he laid down his life a year later.

He appealed to the Prime Minister to consider the forces which were then at work in Kashmir and which had been revealed by Sh Abdullah's declaration that Indian Parliament had no jurisdiction over the Kashmir State.

The interruption that Pt Nehru made while Dr. Mookerji was making this appeal was characteristic of that conceited man "I know more about Kashmir than Dr Mookerji", he interrupted. The reply Dr Mookerji gave to this retort was equally characteristic of the man and revealed his clear understanding of the grave implications of the policies being pursued by Sh Abdullah in Kashmir with the connivance of Pt Nehru, and his determination to not to be brow-beaten where the interests of the country happened to be at stake.

"The whole difficulty", Dr Mookerji said, "is that the Prime Minister knows more about anything throughout the world than anybody else and he will not accept any advice from anybody. Now how can any Parliamentary work be carried on if that is the attitude. If I make any suggestion he says I know more than you do. Undoubtedly he does, but I will give some suggestions, place some point of view before him which he must consider"

"I would like to know", he continued, "are Kashmiris Indian first and Kashmiris next or they are Kashmiris first and Indian next, or they are Kashmiris first, second and third and not Indian at all? That is a very important point which we have

to settle." He thus put the real problem of Kashmir in a nutshell for the Prime Minister and the Parliament to consider.

He also referred to the problem of Hindus of East Bengal which had always been worrying him and which had again been getting serious. According to his information large number of Hindus were being driven out of East Bengal. He, therefore, expressed surprise at the speech of Pt. Nehru of an earlier day in the course of which he had said that though papers had reported that an exodus had started, the figures proved otherwise. Dr. Mookerji pointed out that it was that failure to realise the gravity and urgency of the situation at critical times that had been responsible for the loss of lives, honour and safety of many people in that area. He wanted that that mistake should not be repeated again.

This remark infuriated Pt. Nehru and there followed the following brilliant repartee between the two that continued to be a regular and enlivening feature of the Indian Parliament so long as Dr. Mookerji lived. It gives an insight into the character, nature and approach of the two men as perhaps nothing else does.

Pt. Nehru: "Was my statement wrong."

Dr. Mookerji: "It is wrong. Let the Prime Minister instead of depending on the reports of his....."

Pt. Nehru: "If I place the whole facts and exact figures."

Dr. Mookerji: "The general statement and approach of the Prime Minister were absolutely wrong. It is a matter of verification. I say it is a matter of verification. What I suggest to him is this. He may get some figures from official sources. I cannot blame him for that. But if any Hon'able Member gets up and says that he has information that the exodus has started, it is the duty of a responsible Prime Minister to get up and say: We will take that into consideration and see how to prevent it....."

Pt. Nehru: "The Hon. Member is challenging my statement."

Dr. Mookerji: "I am not."

Pt. Nehru: "I challenge him to prove his and I will prove mine."

Dr. Mookerji: "This challenge and counter challenge will be carried on for the whole of the session".

It literally continued for the whole of the remaining period of the life of Dr. Mookerji.

His speech on the Railway Budget on the 26th of May, 1952 was equally remarkable. He was opposed to the way the re-grouping of the railways had been done, particularly in regard to certain portions of the E. I. Railway and the location of its head quarters, which were to be shifted from Calcutta contrary to the original plan. It was a question about which Bengal was very much agitated. Calcutta had observed complete Hartal for a day

on the call of Dr. Mookerji to register its protest against the decision. In his well reasoned and documented speech he exposed how the pulls and counter pulls on the provincial basis from Congress high-ups had resulted in alteration of the original plan drawn up by experts. His plea to the Government was : "Do have the matter re-examined by an expert Commission". He was actuated not by narrow provincial feeling but by considerations of efficient administration and the necessity to avoid dislocation of low paid staff as far as possible.

He was very unhappy over the sense of self complacency that he found was creeping over the men in power who cared more for the chits and praises of obliging or interested foreign dignitaries than what the people of the country felt about their policies. He was particularly worried about the food situation in the country. He made an impassioned plea for looking to the needs of the common man in the course of his speech on the General Budget on the 4th of June, which was acclaimed to be one of his greatest speeches in the Parliament. He said :

"The Prime Minister said the other day that today foreigners are coming and praising Government a lot for what it has done. Undoubtedly there are some achievements to the credit of the Government. But let us not only think of what Mrs. Roosevelt has said about us, what Bertrand Russel has said about us or some other gracious lady has said about us. Let us find out what our own people are saying

about us. If you are not able to supply food to the people at some reasonable price, if disease and poverty stalk the land, then the foundation for your existence as a Government dis-appears. This is not being said as a measure of threat. This is a matter which must be taken above party politics. Unless we are able to solve the food problem and to give some measure of economic stability to the common man, whatever big scheme we may talk of, all will disappear into the limbo of oblivion. You will not be able to ensure sufficient public support for the purpose of making your planning schemes a success. I, therefore, say that so far as the present budget is concerned, it is a cheerless budget, it is a colourless budget, a budget that might satisfy the capacity and efficiency, which undoubtedly the Finance Minister possess to manipulate dry facts and figures in a manner which he thinks would satisfy the conscience of the Chief Accountant, but if you think of a budget which carries a message of hope and of good cheer, indicating sharing of sacrifices in a common measure with all classes of people, leading to removal of basic wants and privations, then the budget fails and fails miserably."

Dr Mookerji was very much opposed to the policy of drift, of letting things take their own course, where vital interests of the country and the people were concerned. He stood for quick and practical decisions and then standing by them. His approach to the problem of reorganisation of States on linguistic basis is a fine example of this quality

of his mind. While speaking on the resolution on linguistic States in the Parliament on the 7th of July, 1952, he urged the Prime Minister to take initiative in his own hands instead of allowing the things to drift. He said :

"Before things deteriorate, I will beg of this House that this question should be gone into...It is no use adopting an ostrich like policy and thinking that everything is going on all-right. If you say : Let us not redistribute the boundaries of India for any consideration, if that is the policy of the Government, let them announce it and face the consequences. Then the people will know where they stand. If you say there is to be redistribution consistent with the declarations that Congress has made for the last 35 years, then do not leave the matter to be decided by the parties concerned but take the initiative in your own hands. This is my appeal to Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. Let him take the initiative in his own hands, appoint a commission, appoint Advisers or call informal conferences of the leading representatives of the areas concerned and try to adjust matters in such a way that they may come to a decision which will be mutually acceptable to all. It is not a question of making some debating point from the Congress side or the non-Congress side. It is a first class national issue which has got to be settled on a national basis not on party basis."

But his words of practical wisdom fell on deaf ears. The men in power allowed the things to

drift till the martyrdom of Potti Sri Romulu and campaign of lawlessness and destruction that came in its wake, forced their hands. The belated decision of the Government to appoint a high power commission to go into the question of reorganisation of States all over the country is a tribute to the realism and statemanship of Dr Mookerji.

But his greatest speech of the session was the one he made on the Preventive Detention Act on the 2nd of August. It literally brought the whole of Opposition, including the Communists, under his wings and completely floored the Home Minister, Dr. Katju, who was piloting the bill.

Dr Mookerji's opposition to Preventive Detention Bill, the principle of detention without trial, sprang from his inborn love of democracy and freedom. Protection of Civil liberties of the people of his country was one of the three great aims Dr Mukerji aspired to achieve from his early youth, the other two were re-organisation of the post-graduate studies in the Calcutta University, a task left unfinished by Sir Ashutosh, and the writing of the biography of his illustrious parent. The last task he took in hand during his detention in Kashmir. But the cruel hand of death did not allow him to complete it.

What amazed and annoyed the Treasury Benches most was his resourcefulness in collecting apt passages from their own speeches and writings as also from those of their forbears like Pt Moti Lal Nehru to condemn the principle underlying the bill which,

he declared, "is repugnant to any democratic constitution in any part of the civilised world except at a time of emergency or crisis."

But Dr. Katju whose own words—"Detention on mere undisclosed and often on groundless suspicion without charge or trial is opposed to all notions of natural justice and all canons of civilised administration"—he quoted with telling effect would not listen to his voice of reason. Secure in the steam-roller majority of his party he shook his head at all his arguments and pleadings and drew from Dr. Mookerji the famous retort: "He (Dr. Kātju) will never learn anything, forget everything and make a mess of everything."

Five days later he delivered another great speech. It was on Kashmir, a subject on which he had made a great speech on the 26th of June as well, and which shall be dealt in a separate chapter. It was a marvellous speech and was listened to with "rapt attention" by a full House and record number of visitors. One of the visitors of the day, Shri C. L. R. Sastri, later wrote about it in the *Modern Review* (Nov. 1952) as "one of the most brilliant orations that has fallen to my lot to hear whether inside or outside Parliament."

By the time the first session of the first elected Parliament of free India came to a close in August, 1952, Dr. Mookerji's position as unofficial leader of the opposition had been firmly established. The Press, which being mainly controlled by the party in power was by no means friendly to him, admitted

this fact and many of the papers editorially commented on it. The most remarkable tribute came from the "Times of India" which commented that "mantle of Sardar Patel had fallen on Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji" It was a most befitting tribute because Dr Mookerji had been exercising the same sort of sobering and restraining influence on the Nehru government which Sardar Patel had been doing from within so long as he lived. The approach of Dr Mookerji to most of the national problems was essentially the same as that of Sardar Patel whom he paid an eloquent tribute—"he was fearless, realistic, bold whenever a case demanded as to how he should act"—in his speech on Kashmir on the 26th of June. Both were practical men of affairs, deeply rooted in the soil of India, who never allowed the considerations of name and international fame to take the better of the considerations of real interest of the country. Sardar Patel continued to work with Pt Nehru even after Dr Mookerji resigned from the Cabinet because he knew that his withdrawal would mean the end of Congress. Love of the organisation to the making of which he had given his life blood kept him tied to Pt Nehru against his better judgement.

Another remarkable tribute came from the pen of Prof Indar Vidya-Vachaspati MP, who then edited Jan Satta, a Congress Hindi daily of the capital. In a half humorous tone he wrote that the one man whom all restaurant and cafeteria keepers in the Parliament buildings cursed was Dr

Mookerji, because whenever he had to speak no one stayed back to patronise them.

The second session of the Parliament which began in early November, the same year, saw him rise even to greater heights. He made three great speeches in this session on The Estate Duty Bill, the Five Year Plan and the running sore of East Bengal.

He gave his general support to the principle underlying the Estate Duty Bill. But he demanded from the Government to tell the Parliament and the country how they were going to utilise the income from it. "Let us know from the Government," he pleaded, "what their proposals are for tackling the grave and wide spread economic discontent in the country".

His speech on the Five Year Plan on the 16th of December, 1952, was an excellent example of constructive criticism of a thing of vital national importance. He paid handsome tribute to the authors of the Plan. But at the same time he pointed out with the help of facts and figures the lacuna in it—the uncertain and undependable premises in respect of finance on which the Plan had been built and the scant attention paid by it to the basic questions of education, health and industrial self sufficiency.

He drew pointed attention of the Government to the question of popular enthusiasm and cooperation for the Plan without which the Plan, he said, would not be able to achieve its objective. The Public cooperation, he pointed out, would come

only if the party in power would handle the plan on national and not on party lines. "Do not say you want public cooperation and you have got the Bharat Sewak Samaj for that," he thundered, "and at the same time go on developing it as a 'Benami' Congress show. Do not allow that to be built on party lines"

"Public cooperation" he declared "will come provided certain essential conditions are fulfilled. If you come forward with a sincere call that you really want to build up an economy not meant mainly for the privileged or the favoured few but for the millions of down-trodden people, not on paper but in reality, if you take such a message to them there is bound to be public cooperation."

"We are anxious to give you cooperation" he asserted "We are not enemies sitting face to face before each other. You feel for the country, we feel for the country as well. We want that the country should develop. We know that political freedom will be meaningless and fruitless if it is not followed by economic freedom and by social equality. But let us proceed not on party lines. Let there be more tolerance, let there be more appreciation of the other man's point of view. If some of us do not agree with you, do not see eye to eye with you, do not immediately think that we are traitors or enemies of the country. We are here to serve the country and that is the spirit in which I have spoken."

Unfortunately this noble idealism and spirit of surrender for the good of the country was not shared by the idealistic Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru, who thought and acted either as an individual and a partisan or as an internationalist but seldom as a nationalist.

The final act in the Parliamentary life of this great Parliamentarian was enacted during the budget session of the Parliament in 1953. His mind was by that time fully engrossed with the Problem of Jammu and Kashmir. His heart was full and his mind was being agonised by the reports of repression and suffering of the people of Jammu. He was convinced of the justice of the cause of the people of Jammu and its wider implication for the unity of India as a whole. He wanted an honourable and fair settlement of the issue and had been carrying on correspondence with Pt. Nehru with that end in view. He, therefore, took the opportunity to make an eloquent and fervent plea in the course of his speech on the budget on the 14th of February, 1953, to the men in power" to look at the issue dispassionately". "Let us not hurl abuses at each other", he appealed to them. "There may be other occasion when we may do so. But if once we decide to not to cast motives at each other, if once we proceed on the assumption that all sides are proceeding in a bonafide manner and yet not agreeing with each other, it is only then that it will be possible to come to a settlement which will be fair and just".

Referring to the charge of Communalism that was being used to malign him and his organisation as also the Praja Parishad, he asked the Prime Minister to tell him concretely what was communal about him and his party and their stand instead of making vague charges

"I know", he thundered, "the Prime Minister levels the charge of Communalism on all of us Whenever he cannot meet an argument that is the answer that he has to give. I am quite prepared, I am not making a challenging suggestion, because I am getting sick of this charge which is unfounded, if we want to consider whether Communalism exists in the country or whether it is openly advocated as a plank by any political organisation, let us fix a date for a debate and let us discuss the matter Let Government bring forward its charges Let us have a chance of replying We do not want Communalism in this country We do not want that on the basis of religion or on the basis of caste one section of Indians should go on hating other sections We want to see developed a society where people of diverse religions will be able to live as common citizens and enjoy common rights"

"If there is a feeling that something is being done" he continued, "opposite to this policy which we say not—instead of talking in an abstract way, let us meet privately if he so desires, let us all against whom such charges are levelled sit together and discuss We are not enemies of this country. We are not people guilty of treason because we do

not agree with you. It does not matter to which party people may belong. None of us is here for doing harm or deliberate injury to the State. Therefore, if Government comes forward with such a charge-sheet it is only fair and just that it must be a real charge-sheet and we must be able to understand each other's point of view. We may differ. But let us agree to differ in a gentlemanly way and not go on exchanging fireworks and hurling abuses at each other because it does not carry us anywhere."

He also pointed out the futility of repression and vilification to cow down the Dogras.

"You will not be able to destroy the Dogras", he declared. "I have seen some of them, fine elements. It brought tears to my eyes. I saw some men and women, great people, patriotic people, fearless people. They have not been violent uptill now. I advised them that if any movement, any protest is to be carried on, it must be on the basis of non-violence because you cannot fight the organised violence of the State and you will lose the sympathy and cooperation of the people. It is a question of civil right. It is a question of their life and death, of their very existence. Believe them. I have seen Prem Nath Dogra whom I respect with all my heart, I am not ashamed of that. I have met many people in my life. There may be men good or bad or greater than Prem Nath Dogra. He is a loyal citizen and a quiet sufferer. He is a leader who does not lose his head".

Towards the end of this memorable speech he made another plea for a peaceful settlement of the issue. "Even now my appeal to the Prime Minister" he said, "is this. Let us forget the past. Let him take up the matter. He can rise equal to the occasion. He can deliver the goods with Sh. Abdullah. I do not wish for a moment that you should humiliate the Government because, then, whom do I humiliate? Our own Government elected by the people of the country. It is not a question of mutual humiliation or gaining one point here or losing another point there. It is the question of settlement of an issue which is of national importance, which may create serious problems and destroy the peace and happiness of large parts of India and I appeal to the Prime Minister to move before it is too late."

But Pt. Nehru, because of his deep prejudices and lack of touch with the actual realities of the situation in Jammu, had become impervious to all such arguments and pleadings. His inability to meet argument with argument and facts with facts made him sullen and full of anger which was touched off by the casual remarks of Dr. Mookerji about the results of the four recent bye-elections to the Delhi State Assembly, in which Congress had been badly trounced by the Jan Sangh—Hindu Mahasabha combine, towards the close of his speech. This resulted in the last of those great wordy duels between him and Pt. Nehru which had become a feature of the Indian Parliament so long as Dr. Mookerji was alive.

"Let me assure the Prime Minister" Dr. Mookerji said, "that however much he may decry and distrust us, we also have a little hold on this country. The elections were fought a few days ago. So far as these elections are concerned they are important for this reason. I saw with my own eyes how powerfully the resources of the Government can be made to operate for the purpose of winning the election. I can tell the Prime Minister sometime later. He does not know that money and wine played their part in many a sphere. You talk of Gandhsim....."

Pt. Nehru : "It is disgraceful the way this charge is being made."

Dr. Mookerji : "I am glad the Prime Minister said it is disgraceful. It is indeed disgraceful that such things should happen."

Pt. Nehru : "Is it right that in the course of this debate the Hon'ble Member should bring these charges? To make these wild, irresponsible and fantastic charges is perfectly disgraceful for the Hon. Member. This itself shows the nature of his entire speech."

Dr. Mookerji : "Good, very good."

Pt. Nehru : "The mentality behind it, the irresponsibility behind it."

Dr. Mookerji : "His temper shows more than anything else his incapacity to rule over this country. Let us not cloud the issue."

Pt. Nehru : "I ask the Hon. Gentleman. I challenge him to either prove or withdraw his remark about wine and women."

Dr Mookerji : "I said money and wine I do not know whether women were used, but I never used the word 'women'."

Pt Nehru "I challenge the Hon Member to prove his irresponsible statement,"

Dr Mookerji : "There is no use losing any temper "

Pt Nehru "It is only the Hon. Member's right, I suppose, to lose his temper and say these things."

Dr Mookerji "It is the eternal right of Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru always to lose his temper and our eternal duty to submit to it "

It was clear to all those who heard and read this brilliant repartee that Pt Nehru was wrong and that he had been badly worsted

But Dr Mookerji was not happy over it He had been trying to persuade the House and particularly Pt. Nehru to save the daily worsening situation in Jammu Uppermost thought in his mind was good of the country He therefore rounded off this last of his great speeches in the Indian Parliament with an ennobling and patriotic offer of fullest cooperation to the Government in the case of any emergency. "Whatever may be said against us", he declared, "whatever motives may be ascribed to us, I can give this assurance to the Prime Minister that in case an emergency arises in this country, on behalf of the party I represent including the much maligned group, I offer our unconditional allegiance and support to the Government "

A few days after this historic speech Dr. Mookerji was arrested for alleged violation of Section 144 in Delhi, in connection with a procession of the remains of some victims of police repression in Jammu. He got his last opportunity to speak in the Parliament on the 26th of April, 1953, when he once again pleaded for justice to the people of Jammu and a re-orientation of Kashmir policy.

But it all fell on deaf ears. Pt. Nehru seemed to be determined to not to hark to his voice of reason. 'He, it appeared, had made it a question of personal prestige. This lowered him in the eyes of many of his own party men as well who genuinely felt that he was wrong and Dr. Mookerji was right. But no one dared to tell this to him on his face. That revealed the moral degradation and the rot that had set in Congress party and spot-lighted the pressing need for an alternative leadership in the country.

That alternative, now it was universally accepted in and outside the Parliament, could be none else than Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji. He had developed that stature and country wide following which was so essential for a man who might be called upon to lead the vast and varied country like India. He had been leading the Opposition in the best traditions of Parliamentary life, not opposing for the sake of opposition but for the sake of improvement and betterment of the country. He never grudged paying tribute to the Government and offering it his fullest cooperation whenever the

occasion demanded. His touch stone was good of India and her teeming millions and not any particular ideology or its homeland which must be upheld and praised at all times. This distinguished him from the Communists. The contrast between his attitude and that of the Communists was best brought out by the following repartee between him and Mr. H. N. Mookerji, the deputy leader of the Communist group, in the course of his speech on railway budget on Feb. 25, 1953, when he was praising the Chitaranjan Locomotive Factory for its being in a position to manufacture 70% of the component parts of the locomotives

H. N Mookerji: "They are not manufacturing locomotives".

Dr. Mookerji. "Perhaps my Hon. friend does not know that...We have yet to see a country which manufactures all the hundred per cent parts required for locomotives "

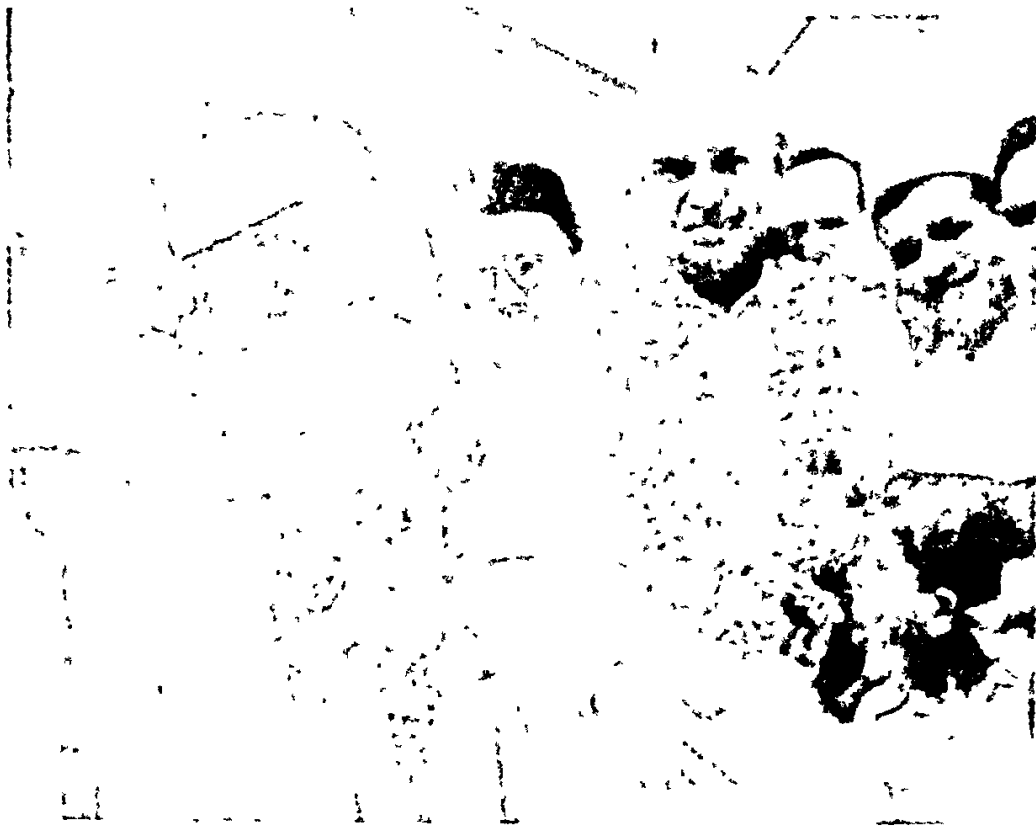
H. N Mookerji: "There are "

Dr Mookerji. "It may be Russia about which my Hon friend knows better than I do. Actually let us look at matters as an Indian and not as a Russian for the time being".

This constructive and nationalistic attitude coupled with his determined but enlightened resistance to all anti-national and totalitarian policies and trends of the men in power made him the one bulwork of freedom and democracy in the country. To the common man he had become the

most redoubtable fighter for his rights who could teach even Pt. Nehru a lesson. The staff of the Parliament and the Secretariat who often found him in action in Parliament had begun to call him "The lion of the Parliament". Dr. Mookerji rules the Parliament though Pt. Nehru may rule the country, they used to say. And to all those interested in the progress of democracy in the country, he appeared to be the coming man, the prospective Prime Minister and hope of the democratic millions of the country.





With Pt. Premnath Dogra
*R. to L.—Dr Mookerji, Shri U. M. Trivedi,
Babu Ram Narain Singh & Pt. Dogra.*



With the Author
L. to R.—Author, Dr. Mookerji, L. Balraj, Mahashe Krishna.

CALL FROM KASHMIR.

Outside the Parliament his main pre-occupations during the year 1952 were the problem presented by the continuously worsening situation in East Bengal and the resultant exodus of Hindus from there, the work in connection with the visit of sacred relics of Sriputta and Mahamoggallana, the two disciples of Mahatma Buddha, to the Buddhist Stupa at Sanchi, which he had to attend as President of Mahabodhi Society of India, and the problem of Jammu and Kashmir State's relationship with the rest of India to which he devoted himself fully during the closing months of his crowded life.

His interest in the problem presented by Jammu and Kashmir State grew casually. As a member of the Central cabinet he had been instrumental in India going to the defence of that State after it had formally acceded to India on the 26th of October, 1947. Since then Pt. Nehru had taken sole charge of Kashmir and others were seldom consulted in regard to the policy about it, particularly that pertaining to its internal developments. Nor did other ministers, including late Sardar Patel, feel like giving their unsolicited advice to the Prime Minister in matters concerning Kashmir

because he was known to consider Kashmir to be the one feather in his cap for which he must have the whole credit alone. Further more many of them did not know much about Kashmir except what came to them from Pt. Nehru and Sh. Abdullah.

But disconcerting reports about the policies that Sh. Abdullah had been pursuing within the State had begun to pour into the Indian capital as early as November and December 1947. Justice Kanwar Dalip Singh who was sent as Agent General of the Government of India to the Jammu and Kashmir State early in November, 1947, soon found to his utter disillusionment that Sh. Abdullah was determined to go his own way unmindful of the plans and policies laid down by the Government of India. He reported the matter to New Delhi. But he was over-ruled and he, therefore, resigned.

Soon after Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, the Prime Minister of the State, whose presence as a check was irksome to Sh. Abdullah, was driven out of the State in a most humiliating way. It was a pointer to the shape of things to come in Kashmir which was taken note of by shrewd men like late Sardar Patel. Then came the arrest and detention without trial and without even any charges being framed, of Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, the undisputed leader of the people of Jammu, along with a number of his co-workers in the Praja Parishad. This sent a wave of indignation throughout Jammu. After

some months of futile efforts to draw the attention of the Government of India to the discriminatory policies of Sh. Abdullah against the people of Jammu in general and Dogras in particular and complete suppression of civil liberties, the Praja Parishad launched a peaceful and non-violent Satyagraha. Its main demands were that the policy of discrimination against Jammu be stopped and Pt. Premnath Dogra be released.

Hundred of men and women from all parts of Jammu, including some Muslim Dogras, courted arrest during this Satyagraha. Sh. Abdullah's government adopted a policy of heartless repression to suppress the movement. Even women were not spared. A number of them were insulted and lathi charged indiscriminately. Thereupon a deputation of some respectable ladies of Jammu city came to Delhi and met a number of members of Parliament and ministers to apprise them of the true facts of the situation in Jammu. They met Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji as well in October, 1948. He was deeply moved by the facts they placed before him. But he expressed his inability to do anything in the matter. He advised them to see the Prime Minister who, he told them, was directly handling the Kashmir issue.

Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was released by Kashmir Government towards the end of 1948, on the intercession of the Government of India and the Praja Parishad was given the assurances that no hindrance

will be put in the way of its normal constitutional activities.

A few months later the decision to have an elected constituent assembly for the State which will "ratify the accession of the State to India" was announced. The Praja Parishad decided to contest the elections to this Assembly and began to make preparation for that.

But the rejection of 42 of the 59 nomination papers of its candidates by the returning officers on most flimsy and even whimsical grounds set the Praja Parishad leaders a thinking. They began to consider whether it would be worth while for them to contest the elections in face of this unabashed partisanship of the Government for the National Conference. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra then visited New Delhi to draw the attention of the Government of India to the new situation and consult the leaders of public opinion in the country about the course of action his organisation should adopt. The attitude of the Government of India appeared to him to be quite discouraging. Many of the leaders outside the Government, including some ex top dignitaries of the Congress, advised him to boycott the elections. He wanted to consult Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, who had by that time come out of the Government, as well. But Dr. Mookerji was not in Delhi. He therefore entrusted the task of consulting Dr. Mookerji to the present writer.

I met Dr. Mookerji in the Western Court where he used to stay after his exit from the cabinet. After I had explained the whole situation to him he opined that elections should be fought inspite of all odds. His view was that legislatures were the only effective forums for giving vent to diverse view points on Governmental policies. Therefore, it would be worth while fighting the elections if thereby the Praja Parishad could send into the Assembly even one single spokesman.

But before this weighty opinion could reach the Praja Parishad leaders they had decided to boycott the elections. As a result Sh. Abdullah could fill the State Constituent Assembly with his hand picked nominees, many of whom happened to be known Communists or Pakistanis, who were all returned unopposed.

This Communist cum communalist dominated one party Constituent Assembly, contrary to all expectations, set about breaking or weakening the ties that already bound Jammu and Kashmir State with the rest of India instead of strengthening them. Under the Communist inspiration Sh. Abdullah began to take a strictly legalistic view of the Article 370, the temporary Provision about the special position of Jammu and Kashmir, which was incorporated in the Indian constitution on the request of Sh. Abdullah and against the definite opinion of Dr. Ambedkar, the chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly, who smelt the motives behind his insistence upon it. When late

Shri Gopala Swamy Aiyangar placed that Article before the Constituent Assembly, many of the members objected to it. Thereupon Shri Gopala Swamy tried to remove their fears and doubts by saying that the discrimination in favour of Kashmir made in the said Article was due to special condition of Kashmir which made that State then unripe for fuller integration. But he added that "it is the hope of everybody here that in due course, even Jammu and Kashmir will become ripe for the same sort of integration as has taken place in the case of other States."

Sh. Abdullah thereafter began to proceed on the basis of Kashmir being an independent State which had acceded to India for limited purpose of defence, foreign affairs and Communications. Even in respect of these three subjects he had mental reservations. Even though defence was a central subject he insisted upon raising a many thousand strong Militia force to be equipped by India but controlled by him. He evaded the transfer of State telegraphs and tele'phone departments as also the strategic high ways within the State, to the central ministry of communications. Even in respect of foreign affairs he dodged the Government of India by using his trade Agents at Delhi and Bombay as his diplomatic missions for developing contacts with foreign missions in India. He could do all this because of the doting support of Pt. Nehru for everything he said or did.

This policy was resented by the people of Jammu who wanted fuller integration of their State with

India like other acceding states They resented the exclusion of the Indian national tricolour flag from all public buildings and functions in the State and the use of National Conference party flag instead They also resented the insulting attitude adopted by Sh Abdullah towards the Dogra Maharaja who had, on the behest of Pt Nehru, invested him with power against his own better judgement The systematic elimination of Hindi from educational curricula as also from offices, the talk of the Kashmiri nation as distinct from the Indian nation, the transfer of all State valuables, rare manuscripts and some of the institutions from Jammu to Srinagar, vivisection of Jammu to carve out its parts adjoining the Kashmir valley into new Muslim majority districts and open propoganda for Pakistan by some high and trusted officers of Sh Abdullah's Government created genuine doubts and fears in the minds of all nationalists in Jammu and Kashmir about the future of the State with which their own future was so intimately connected

The matters were brought to a head early in February, 1952, when students of the Government Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu, protested against the compulsion to salute the National Conference party flag at an official function They were dealt with very harshly As a reaction the students of the college went on strike They also gained the sympathy of the general people who considered their stand to be correct This gave to the students agitation the colour of a mass movement The

Kashmir Government exploited the situation to arrest Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and many of his other workers, all of whom were detained without trial, after clamping an eighty two hours curfew on Jammu city.

These developments drew the attention of the whole country for the first time to the internal situation in the State and it began to be realised that there was something wrong with Abdullah's internal policies. It created the curiosity and desire to know the true facts about the internal situation in the State all over the country.

This was followed by a number of ominous statements by Sh. Abdullah and his lieutenants in and outside the Kashmir Constituent Assembly. On 24th of March, 1952, Mirza Afzal Beg, the revenue minister in Sh. Abdullah's cabinet, declared in the State Constituent Assembly: "The Jammu and Kashmir State will be a republic within the Indian Union....So far as the constitution of the State is concerned we aim at making its frame-work such that the state will be a republic like other republics. According to our plans the State will have its own President, a separate National Assembly and a judicial set up".

This was followed by the pompous declaration on the 29th of March in the State Constituent Assembly by Sh. Abdullah himself, who had returned a few days earlier from Paris where he had been sent by the Government of India as its delegate to the U.N.O., that "we are a hundred percent sovereign

body. No country can put spokes in the wheels of our progress—neither the Indian Parliament nor any other Parliament outside the State has any jurisdiction over us." He followed this up by a more damaging speech at Ranbirsinghpura on the 10th of April, in the course of which he said: "Kashmir's accession to India will have to be of a restricted nature so long as communalism has a foot-hold on the soil of India." He called the arguments in favour of full accession to be "childish, unrealistic and savouring of lunacy." And then he threw a fling on India by saying: "Many Kashmiris fear what will happen to them and their position if, for instance, something happens to Pandit Nehru. We do not know. As realists we Kashmiris have to make provision for all eventualities."

These outburst of Sh. Abdullah coupled with the reports of happenings in Jammu pricked the bubble of complacency about Kashmir in India. The Press and public opinion reacted sharply to this attempt of the Kashmir tiger to bite the hand that had been feeding him. Only Pandit Nehru tried to minimise the gravity of the situation by making the Praja Parishad the scape goat for the indiscretions and ebullitions of his creature.

Dr. Mookerji was deeply perturbed over these developments. He was not happy with the turn things had been taking at the U.N.O. in regard to Kashmir. He was pained by the continued occupation of 1/3 part of the Jammu and Kashmir State by Pakistan and he considered it to be a dangerous

blow at the integrity of truncated India. These new developments indicated that the part of the State that was, technically at least, still part of India was also slipping away. He strongly condemned in a public statement this volte face of Sh. Abdullah, whom he compared with late Mr. Jinnah, and described his speech to be an "offer of accession with his left hand with secession up his sleeves."

But he was not the man to sit content merely with issuing a statement where the integrity and honour of India as a whole was at stake. He became keen to know full facts of the situation so that he might educate and guide the public and Parliament in time about the real situation about which they had been so far kept in dark by the Government and the press of the country. This created in him a desire to meet Pt. Prem Nath Dogra who had just then been released from jail under the Pressure of the Government of India.

He had not to wait long for that. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra visited New Delhi by the end of April, 1952, to place his case before the leaders of public opinion in India. He met Dr. Mookerji in his suite in the Western Court early in May.

The meeting, judged by the later results, was a momentous event in the life of both of these great men. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra, who was then in the 70th year of his dedicated life, was a picture of humility and self surrender. But his spirits were high. He narrated to Dr. Mookerji the ventse that had preceded and succeeded Sh.

Abdullah's elevation to power, how he would not enter Jammu without getting an assurance of support from him, how he had publicly accepted that the responsibility of what happened in Jammu in October, 1947, lay mainly on the shoulders of Pakistan and her agents who forced the people of Jammu to fight in self defence, how he pressed him to join National Conference as a pre-requisite to his being taken into his cabinet and how his refusal to sell his conscience for loaves and fishes of office made him his enemy. He also explained how the hand of cooperation offered by the Praja Parishad for the defence and betterment of the State and her people was spurned by Sh. Abdullah and how he had started the process of Muslimisation of the State in the name of secularism, and of establishing a totalitarian one party regime in the name of democracy. The Praja Parishad, he explained, had been putting up with all this under the impression that Government of India was giving a long rope to him for securing his support towards the final settlement of the Kashmir Problem. They had hoped that all this would end after the integration of the State with the rest of India like other acceding States and consequent application of the constitution of India to the State of Jammu and Kashmir as well.

"But this hope", he said in a voice choked with emotion, "has been dashed to the ground by the recent developments in the State. Sh. Abdullah and his Communist and Communalist supporters

are now bent upon cutting Jammu and Kashmir State from India for different reasons. The Communists want to make Kashmir their stronghold which they might be able to use as a jumping ground for a red revolution in the rest of India at the opportune moment. They, therefore, want the Indian control over its affairs to be reduced to the minimum. With this idea they are trying to equip the State with full paraphernalia of an independent State. Communalist and Pro-Pakistan supporters of Sh. Abdullahist are also encouraging him in this policy because they feel that it would be easy for Pakistan to grab Kashmir once its ties with India have been loosened.

All the nationalist elements in the population of the State including the Buddhist of Laddakh, the Dogras of Jammu and a good section of the Kashmiris as well," he added, "are opposed to this policy. They feel that Sh. Abdullah is making Jammu and Kashmir into another Pakistan. The people of Jammu are particularly scared by it. For them it is a question of life and death. They are determined to resist this policy of cutting Jammu and Kashmir asunder from the rest of India. Their one aspiration is to be governed according to the constitution of India under the Indian tri-colour and they want to owe allegiance to none but the President of India". The people of Jammu, he emphatically told Doctor Mookerji, were united to a man in this matter and they were prepared to

make any sacrifice for asserting their right to be one with India, their common motherland.

The whole thing came as a revelation to Dr. Mookerji who listened to him with rapt attention. He began to see the real purpose and motive behind Sh. Abdullah's utterances referred to above. He saw the justice of the stand of the Praja Parishad and its wider implications for the unity and integrity of India as a whole. He was impressed by the transparent sincerity of the aged man who had the spirit of the youth in him, and he was visibly moved by his appeal for his support to the cause for which Praja Parishad was struggling.

But Dr. Mookerji was not the man to rush to conclusions without mature thought. He wanted facts to substantiate what Pt. Dogra had narrated to him and also wanted to be sure of the popular support to the Parishad because, as a democrat, he was the last man to go against the wishes of the people.

Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was ready for it. He placed before him facts and figures, supported by documents and official records and publications, in support of his contentions. As regards the popular support for the stand of the Parishad, he invited him to visit Jammu to see things for himself.

Dr. Mookerji was convinced by the facts and evidence placed before him about the righteousness and genuineness of the cause of the Praja Parishad. It did not, therefore, take him long after that to deter-

mine his course of action. He told Pt. Prem Nath Dogra that he would do whatever lay in his hand to persuade the Government of India to change their policy and stop Kashmir from becoming a sovereign republic within the Indian republic with a separate flag, president and constitution. He suggested to Pt. Dogra to place all the facts and figures he had got before the Prime Minister also.

Pt. Dogra tried to meet the Prime Minister. But Pt. Nehru refused to see him inspite of his repeated requests because he seemed to have developed some deep prejudice against him on the basis of false and misleading report from Sh. Abdullah.

Dr. Mookerji was pained when he came to know about the democratic Prime Minister's refusal even to see a recognised leader of public opinion in a very important part of the country in which the whole country was deeply interested. It became clear to him that Pt. Nehru was not prepared to listen to the pleas and requests of the people of the State to reconsider his policy about Kashmir unless popular pressure was put on him by the rest of India as well.

He gave the lead to the country in the matter by getting a resolution passed by the Working Committee of Bharatiya Jan Sangh on the 14th of June, 1953, which emphasised that Jammu and Kashmir State was an integral part of India and declared that "the decision of the State Constituent Assembly concerning an elected President and a separate flag coupled with the recommendations of

its Basic Principles Committee that Kashmir will be an autonomous republic are in clear violation of India's sovereignty and the spirit of India's constitution' It further added that .

"The committee takes a serious view of this development and wants to remind the people and the Government of India that the Cabinet Mission Scheme of 1945 envisaging a weak centre with only three subjects was opposed by the Congress and a large section of Indian opinion as being inimical to India's unity and interests The fissiparous tendencies of the Muslim League, however, succeeded in dividing India leading to disastrous consequences To allow the Jammu and Kashmir State to proceed along the same path now looks like permitting history to repeat itself It might mean a fresh call to disruptive elements in India to break its unity and integrity which has been achieved at such tremendous cost "

The resolution also called upon the people of India to observe June 29th as Kashmir Day and hold public meetings and demonstrations in support of the stand taken by Bharatiya Jan Sangh

On the 26th of June, three days before the appointed all India Kashmir Day, Dr Mookerji made first of his great speeches on Kashmir in the Parliament Earlier on the same day the people of Delhi staged a huge demonstration before the Parliament to condemn Sh Abdullah's policy of separatism

In the course of this speech Dr. Mookerji dealt with the question of separate flag, elected head in the place of hereditary Maharaja as the constitutional head of the State, and the Article 370, on the basis of which Sh. Abdullah wanted a separate constitution for the State, point by point and demolished completely the case of Sh. Abdullah and his Indian supporters.

Referring to the question of flag he pointed out: "You cannot have divided loyalty. Sh. Abdullah has said: We will treat both flags equally, you cannot do it. It is not a question of fifty, fifty. It is not a question of parity. It is a question of using one flag for the whole of India, India that includes Kashmir. There is no question of having a separate Republic of Kashmir having a separate flag."

Regarding the move to replace the Maharaja by an elected head of the State he declared: "The Maharaja is gone. There is no question of the continuance of his autocratic administration. He functions as the constitutional head of Kashmir with his hands completely bound, a dignified rubber stamp. But if you want that no Maharaja should remain in any part of India even as a constitutional head over a particular unit let it be done soberly, properly and constitutionally. If the Parliament of India considers that the constitution of India should be amended and there should be no Maharaja's rule, no Rajpramukh in any part of India, let us discuss it."

He also pointed out the inconsistency between the attitude of the Congress party towards Article 370 when it was placed in the constitution by late Gopala Swamy Aiyanger and its present attitude of defending Sh. Abdullah on the basis of the same Article. He also referred in detail, with facts, figures and documents, to the suppression of civil rights, elimination of Hindi, vivisection of Jammu on communal lines, expropriation of Dharamarth property and funds, communalism in services, discrimination against Jammu, the double game of Sh. Abdullah in giving different version of his speeches to the press and people of India from the one meant for the home consumption in the State and the iron curtain he had drawn around the State to prevent true facts from being known outside. He made a passionate plea "for being clear in our own minds as to what we want and," he added prophetically, "if you just want to play with the winds and say "We are helpless and let Sh. Abdullah do what he likes" then Kashmir will be lost. I say this with great deliberation that Kashmir will be lost."

On 29th of June, Kashmir Day was observed all over the country with great enthusiasm. Dr. Mookerji himself addressed a mammoth public meeting in Delhi.

The sharp reactions of the Press and the people of all shades of opinion to Sh. Abdullah's utterances and the tremendous popular response to the Jan Sangh's call for observance of Kashmir Day made even Pandit Nehru a bit restive. He summoned

Sh. Abdullah to New Delhi to be able to persuade him to stop his fire eating. But Sh. Abdullah evaded compliance with his request on one pretext or the other. On the other hand he sent a team of his constitutional advisers to negotiate with the Government of India an agreement which may give recognition to his decisions about separate flag and constitution for the State. He himself came down on the 16th of July, to extract more concessions and give final touches to the deal that his agents had negotiated. It was placed before the Indian Parliament by Pt. Nehru on the 24th of July, and has since come to be known as July Agreement.

This Agreement was a victory for Sh. Abdullah's separatism. It conceded to him the right to have separate citizenship, separate flag, elected head of the State in the place of hereditary Maharaja and separate constitution. The concessions he made to the Indian view point were all hedged in by so many 'ifs' and 'buts' that they could be nullified without much ingenuity by any dishonest man.

Dr. Mookerji disapproved of this Agreement. The very idea of an agreement which aimed at abridging the constitution and over riding the sovereignty of India in respect of one of its constituent parts, was repelling to him because he felt that it would be the first step towards constitutional disintegration of India, which would be exploited by the disruptive forces elsewhere as well.

He got the opportunity to give vent to his feelings and ideas on this agreement in the Parliament

on the 7th of August, 1952. He put two straight questions to Pt. Nehru—one about the areas of the State occupied by Pakistan and the other about the areas ruled by Sh. Abdullah. Regarding the first he asked: "Is there any possibility of our getting back this territory?" "We shall not get it," he added, "through the efforts of U.N.O.; we shall not get it through peaceful methods, by negotiations with Pakistan. That means we lose it unless we use force and the Prime Minister is unwilling to do it. Let us face facts—are we prepared to lose it?"

Regarding the second his question was: "May I ask—was not Sh. Abdullah a party to this constitution of India. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly; but today he is asking for special treatment. Did he not agree to accept this Constitution in relation to the rest of India including 497 States. If it is good enough for all of them, why should it not be good enough for him in Kashmir?"

Pt. Nehru had no reply to these questions. He evaded them and talked about the special position of Jammu and Kashmir State. It convinced none—not even his party men. But his condemnation of the Praja Parishad as an organisation which had no following among the people seemed to carry conviction with many who knew little or nothing about Jammu and Kashmir except what was doled out to the Indian Press by Kashmir Government or by Pt. Nehru.

The Praja Parishad had by this time announced its decision to hold a convention of its workers at

Jammu on the 9th and 10th of August, to give its authoritative views on July Agreement and decide upon its future course of action. It had invited a number of members of Parliaments and leaders of Public opinion in India to attend that convention and judge for themselves the following of the Praja Parishad and the feelings of the people. Dr. Mookerji had accepted the invitation. He announced his decision to go to Jammu to see things for himself in the Parliament on the same day.

This made some of the Congress leaders and M. Ps, who knew the real situation, nervous. They tried to persuade him to drop the idea of going to Jammu. Some of them told him: "Why are you lowering your position Doctor Sahib? You will not find even five hundred people to receive you. Praja Parishad has no following at all."

An unknown astrologer also visited his house and pressed him to not to go to Jammu. He warned him that there was danger of his losing his life as a result of an accident. But Dr. Mookerji was not to be dissuaded. He had planned to leave on the eighth night by Kashmir Mail. Shri U. M. Trivedi and Babu Ram Narain Singh—both members of the Parliament, a good number of Press representatives, and the present writer were to accompany him. But to his utter disappointment he learnt at about 6 P.M. that the Defence Ministry had not issued the permits for entry into the State to him and his party till then. He immediately telephoned to the Home Minister and the Defence Minister and was able to

get the permits just before he was to leave for the railway Station.

On reaching the Railway Station the Pressmen who had to accompany Dr. Mookerji were greatly surprised to find that he was to travel in the third class along with the rest of them. One of them could not hide his amazement and asked: "You must be travelling in the third class for the first time in your life?" "No, I travel third quite often" was the prompt reply. "You know ours is a poor organisation", he added, "the saving made in this way helps us to meet other necessary charges."

Dr. Mookerji's travelling kit consisted of only one suite case which contained one small pillow, two sheets and a few clothes. He spread one sheet on the wooden seat of the third class coach and used the other for covering his body. That was the kit that he usually had with him except that in winter one cotton sheet was replaced by a blanket. When asked why he had not brought his bedding he smiled and said, "I believe in travelling light." The Indian ideal of simple living and high thinking had become a living reality in his life.

The journey from Delhi to Jammu was a memorable event in his life. Upto Dasuya on the Jullundur—Pathankot line, where the train reached at about 6 A. M., he was not disturbed at any wayside stations because instructions to that effect had been sent by the Jan Sangh head quarters. But from Dasuya onwards every station saw thousands of people waiting to greet their hero. They invariably

insisted upon his speaking a few words to them. Dr. Mookerji was not the man to disappoint them. So the first speech of the day was delivered by him at 6 A. M. At Pathankot where the train reached at about 9 A. M., a huge crowd had assembled on the platform to welcome him. It included Pt. Prem Nath Dogra who had come all the way from Jammu to receive him and welcome him into the State. Dr. Mookerji was deeply impressed by the devotion and earnestness of Pt. Dogra who at the ripe age of 70 appeared as active as a youngman.

Dr. Mookerji had to address a huge public meeting just outside the Pathankot railway station before he could proceed to the house of his host Mr. Gopal Krishan Mahajan, the son of Justice Mehar Chand Mahajan, whose interest in the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir and its people has continued unabated. He had to go through a crowded programme which included a talk to pressmen and meeting a deputation besides taking his lunch during the three hours he stayed at Pathankot. At about 1 P.M. he and his party left for Jammu on a jeep. The press reporters followed him in wagon.

He crossed Madhopur bridge on the Ravi at about 3 P. M. As soon as he set his foot on the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State he was greeted by the resounding slogans :—

Bharat Mata Ki Jai ;

Kashmir Bharat Ka Ang Hai ;

Ek Desh Men Do Vidhan,

Ek Desh Men Do Nishan,
 Ek Desh Men Do Pradhan,
 Nahin Chalenge Nahin Chalenge ;—

which kept ringing in his ears till the last days of his life.

The first town of the State, its gateway, to which he was first taken was Kathua, the head quarter of the district of the same name. It is just about four miles from the Ravi Bridge and has a population of about 3 thousands. But more than ten thousand people, men and women, had assembled there on that historic day to receive Dr. Mookerji who was taken through the tastefully decorated streets of the town to the meeting place.

The enthusiasm, the earnestness and the grim determination that Dr. Mookerji saw on the faces of the hardy Dogras there removed the doubts that had been assailing him till then in view of what he had been told by his Congress friends, who claimed to know Jammu and Kashmir better than him. What impressed him most was the universal respect for Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and the hold of Praja Parishad over the masses. He gave vent to his feelings in the short speech he delivered there. He said:

"Before I left Delhi many Congress friends had told me that I should not visit Jammu because Praja Parishad has no following among the people. I would ask them to come here and see whether Praja Parishad has any following or not". Refer-

ring to the slogans that he had been hearing and which were prominently displayed at the meeting place he declared :

“You want Indian constitution, you want Indian flag, you want Indian President to be your president. These are just and patriotic demands. They will have to be met. So far as I am concerned I can only assure you that I will do all I can”. And then he uttered the propetic words :

“Ham Vidhan Lenge Ya Balidan Denge.—I will secure for you the constitution of India or lay down my life for it”.

Seventy miles journey from Kathua to Jammu was a continuous procession. All along the route people, sturdy men and women from remote villages, were standing to greet the one Indian leader who had responded to their appeal and had come to understand their feelings and sentiments, their woes and problems. They had put up gates on the road here and there with photos of Pt. Premnath Dogra, the “State Kesri” prominently displayed on them. After every mile or two Dr. Mookerji had to stop and say them a few words. At Hiranagar and Samba, two tehsil places on the way side, he had to address mammoth meetings.

He was scheduled to reach Jammu by 6 P. M. But he could not leave Samba, a distance of 25 miles from Jammu, before 7-15 P. M. The unexpected enthusiasm of the people who had travelled long distances to have a glimpse of Dr. Mookerji had caused the delay.

The people of the villages lying between Samba and Jammu had been waiting for him for long hours. As night fell many of them returned to their homes disappointed but many others continued to wait for him with torches and 'Mashals' in their hands. It was a sight to be seen. Beautiful arches and gates surrounded by young and old people with flower garlands in their hand waiting for their hero for hours together in pitch dark. Shri Jagdish Abrol, a co-worker who had been driving the jeep tried to race against time to reach Jammu early and in the attempt just missed a serious accident. The jeep was about to fall in a depression at one sharp bend when he, with great presence of mind, pulled it up with a sharp jerk at the steering.

As the flower bedecked jeep carrying Dr Mookerji reached Tawi Bridge, the outpost of the city of Jammu a surging sea of humanity greeted him with full throated Jais. They had been waiting for him since 5 P M. The two and a half miles route from the Tawi bridge to Pt Prem Nath Dogra's house was tastefully decorated and the whole city had turned out to have a glimpse of their saviour.

As he reached his destination at about 11 P M, broken and tired after a long days strenuous journey in the course of which he had delivered no less than twenty speeches, he had become fully convinced of the popularity and strength of Pt Prem Nath Dogra and the organisation he headed. He had also become fully aware of the strong feelings and sentiments of the people about Sh

Abdullah's move to have a separate flag and constitution for the State.

Within a few minutes of his arrival, the deputy Commissioner of Jammu came to him to invite him on behalf of Sh. Abdullah to visit Srinagar the next day and have talks with him. Sh. Abdullah, it appeared, had been informed by his officers about the charged atmosphere in Jammu and he wanted to place his point of view before Dr. Mookerji before he gave his advice and guidance to the Praja Parishad convention.

Dr. Mookerji was not prepared for this invitation. The people of Jammu including his hosts did not want to be deprived of his presence amidst them even for an hour. But Dr. Mookerji, the democrat as he was, thought it his duty to hear the other side before he arrived at any conclusion. He accepted the invitation on the condition that he would be sent back to Jammu the same day to be able to keep his engagements there.

He left by plane for Srinagar at 11 A.M. on the 10th of August, and reached there by noon. He was directly taken from the aerodrome to Sh. Abdullah's residence where he had talks for about 6 hours with him and his deputy, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. The plane had to return to Delhi in the evening. It waited for him for some time. But the talks continued longer than expected and Sh. Abdullah decided to send him back by car at night. Before he left Srinagar he had a long talk

with Yuvraj Karan Singh, who was then being pressed to become the Sadr-i-Riyast much against his will, as well.

What exactly transpired in the talks between him and Sh. Abdullah, none can say. But this much is known that at one stage Sh. Abdullah began to talk loudly and imperiously about his right and powers as was his wont, but Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammed interrupted him by saying that that was not the way of making one's standpoint understood to the other. Dr. Mookerji, as was clear from the speech he delivered at Jammu after his return from Srinagar, appreciated the difficulties of Sh. Abdullah in carrying the Muslims of Kashmir with him. But he was not convinced of the advisability of the ways and methods he had adopted to placate the communalist Muslims. He told him on his face that his policies and utterances made him look more like Mr Jinnah, who would not accept a strong or even a weak centre on the plea that it would be controlled by Hindus, who happened to be in majority in the country taken as a whole, than like Mahatma Gandhi whose path he claimed to have been following in Kashmir. He particularly advised him to not to take any hasty step about the flag about which the people of Jammu had very strong sentiments.

Dr. Mookerji left Srinagar at about 8 P M by car, slept for a few hours at Batote where he reached about 2 P M and again continued his journey in

the morning so as to reach Jammu by 9 A. M. He was scheduled to leave Jammu the same afternoon.

Immediately after his arrival he was closeted with Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and some other top leaders of the Parishad whom he gave a gist of his talks with Sh. Abdullah. He advised them patience for some time more. Pt. Dogra asked him to remember the temper of the people he had seen and told him how all the delegates at the convention had been demanding some sort of direct-action. Dr. Mookerji's reply was characteristic of that man of peace. Satyagraha, he said, was an extreme step and it must be resorted to only after all other means have been exhausted. He was, he added, going to meet Prime Minister Nehru, and place the real situation before him. Within the State, he advised them, they should continue to organise and educate the people. He hoped that better counsels might prevail upon Sh. Abdullah. But if he remained adamant, he assured them, then he would support any action they might take.

He spoke in the same strain to the half a lac people who had assembled in the scorching sun in the Parade ground to listen to him. Some of them were disappointed at his pacifism while the sober section appreciated his tone.

The Special Correspondents of the "Statesman" and the "Hindustan Standard" who had gone there to study the situation wrote about his visit that he had pacified the people whose patience had reached

the point of exhaustion, and had thereby done great service to the cause of mutual understanding and peaceful settlement of the vexed question

Dr Mookerji had a long interview with Pt Nehru immediately after his return to Delhi. He told him that it was no use minimising the gravity of the situation. Praja Parishad, he informed him, was not the organisation of a few disgruntled and expropriated land lords as he would like him to believe. It was a democratic political organisation with capable leadership and mass following. It was a force, he told him, to reckon with in Jammu and Kashmir and it would be impolitic and dangerous to force decisions, which, besides going against the unity and integrity of the country, were totally unacceptable to it. He advised him to take Pt Premnath Dogra whose integrity and patriotism was beyond doubt, in his confidence so that the Dogras, who happened to be one dependable factor in the Kashmir situation be harnessed for fortifying the unity of that State with the rest of India.

His advice went unheeded both by Sh Abdullah and Pt Nehru. Secure in their respective seats of power they failed to understand the strength of feeling in Jammu against their policies and the growing awakening of the Indian public opinion about it.

Sh Abdullah got the concessions made to him by the July Agreement about elected head in the place of the Maharaja and the flag implemented by his Packed Constituent Assembly with indecent

haste and postponed any decision about extension of citizenship, fundamental rights and the jurisdiction of the Indian Supreme Court to the State. On the other hand the Constitution Drafting Committee appointed by him prepared a draft constitution which virtually made Jammu and Kashmir an independent State with its own National Assembly, Supreme Court and flag. The Praja Parishad leaders were able to secure a copy of this draft constitution which made them all the more restive about the future of the State. The efforts made by Pt. Dogra to draw the attention of the Indian authorities through a memorandum to the President, deputation to the minister of States and through other means open to him had failed miserably. So the feeling in Jammu began to grow that they will have to go through the sacrament of sacrifice to awaken the conscience of the leaders and people of India to their pitiable condition and the patriotic nature of their stand which had its importance for India as a whole. They decided to consult Dr. Mookerji once again before they took any final decision.

Accordingly Pt. Premnath Dogra met Dr. Mookerji at Jullundur on the 8th of November, where the latter had gone in connection with the Punjab Provincial Jan Sangh conference. Pt. Dogra placed before him the full picture of the deteriorating situation and the growing feeling in the people that things could not be set right without a struggle.

Dr Mookerji had seen how all his own efforts to make the authorities in Delhi see light of reason had failed. Conviction had begun to grow in him that Pt Nehru was not susceptible to democratic pressure, that arguments, logic and public opinion had no meaning for him. As a man who had been agitator all his life Pt Nehru, he felt, had developed a complex for agitational methods. He would bow before force and agitation but not before right or reason if it was not backed by might. He thought it to be a most unfortunate thing as it undermined the people's faith in democratic methods. But he had to see things as they were. He, therefore, told Pt Dogra that he had tried to secure justice for them and had failed. So he had no right to bind their hands any longer. But the decision, he said, must be taken by Praja Parishad after full consideration of its own resources and strength. Jan Sangh, he assured him, will stand by them and do everything possible to mobilise public opinion in India, because it was convinced that the cause of the Praja Parishad was the cause of the whole of India.

Pt Prem Nath Dogra took leave from Dr Mookerji at Jullundur with a heavy heart. He knew that he would have to lead the people of Jammu in the struggle and he was prepared for the worst. Dr Mookerji was deeply impressed by the nobility of character, courage of conviction and winning manners and behaviour of that old man. He had developed sincere respect for him.

Soon after Pt. Dogra's return to Jammu, Kashmir Government announced its decision to hoist the National Conference Party flag, which had since been adopted with a minor change as state flag, on the State Secretariat at Jammu with full ceremonial on the 17th of November. It was a direct challenge to the people of Jammu. They took up the challenge. Pt. Premnath Dogra declared that none but the Indian National Flag shall fly over Jammu and gave a call to the people to get prepared for making sacrifices for the vindication of their right to be one with their mother—India.

The National Conference flag was not hoisted on the State Secretariat on the appointed day. The Government had realised the weakness of their position. They decided to strengthen it by the use of force. The obliging Pt. Nehru lent them battalions of Central Armed Reserve Police and his nominee in the Punjab followed suit with the supply of tear gas squads. Having thus equipped themselves, Sh. Abdullah's government started the policy of repression for which the people of Jammu were well prepared. Pt. Prem Nath Dogra and Shri Shyam Lal Sharma, the organising Secretary of the Praja Parishad, were arrested on the 26th of November when they addressed a public meeting and hoisted the Indian tri-colour in the main square of Jammu city. That became signal for the start of the Praja Parishad Satyagraha.

Dr. Mookerji took it to be a signal for him also to do whatever he could to secure justice to the people of Jammu and save India from another partition.

JOINT FRONT ON EAST BENGAL

The plight of the Hindu minority in East Pakistan and the indifferent attitude of the Government of India towards it, which had impelled him to kick at his cabinet post in 1950, continued to be a matter of deep concern for Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji so long as he lived. His interest in the welfare and security of the Hindu compatriots of East Bengal, who had been thrown at the mercy of Pakistan much against their will, grew out of the highest patriotic and humanitarian considerations and not out of any narrow, parochial or communal considerations. The condition of Hindus in Pakistan was, he held, the acid test of that State's right to exist. Partition of the country had been accepted on clear understanding that the minority communities in both the new dominions will be guaranteed security of life and property and equal rights and treatment before law. This was the argument given by the Congress leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel against the case for exchange of population made by representative Hindus of East Bengal as also by Dr. Ambedkar, who had worked out a detailed scheme for the purpose, in his "Thoughts on Pakistan". Dr. Mookerji had also his doubts about the fate of Hindus in Pakistan and he supported the idea of planned exchange of popu-

lation. But he changed his views after the assurances given by Congress leaders and he had himself conveyed these assurance to the Hindus of East Bengal, which region he toured extensively on the eve of Partition.

The subsequent developments had shown that Pakistan was not at all sincere about her professions regarding the treatment of minorities in Pakistan. The Government of India had tried to remind her of the obligations that Partition Agreement had put on her about minorities and had entered into a number of pacts for the purpose. The Delhi Pact between Pt. Nehru and Mr. Liaqat Ali of April, 1950, was the third of such agreements about the treatment of minorities in the two Dominions.

Dr. Mookerji had lost all faith in the pious agreements with Pakistan which were honoured by her only in their breach. He had opposed Nehru-Liaqat Pact because he was convinced that its fate would be no better than those of the earlier agreements. In his statement on his resignation he had enumerated seven convincing reasons, based on irrefutable facts, why he thought that Pakistan would not honour the Agreement and that the process of exterminating or squeezing out the Hindus will continue unabated.

The actual happenings in Pakistan after the Delhi Pact proved his fears to be too true. Liaqat Aji had come down to Delhi in April, 1950, only to save Pakistan from the nemesis that his policy

of extermination of Hindus was drawing upon her. Pt. Nehru then played his game and the only realistic way of settling the question once for all, for which Sardar Patel had prepared the country, was abandoned. Having thus outwitted Pt. Nehru, Liaquat returned to Karachi only to carry on his settled policy of squeezing out all Hindus from Pakistan by new and more subtle ways.

They included a secret circular to all the thana officers to report on the "extent, nature and source of influence wielded by particular individuals of the minority (Hindu) community and the forces and parties that might work against them".

It was followed sometime later by another circular to all heads of commercial firms in East Pakistan to obtain the previous approval of the District Magistrate before giving employment to any non-Muslim. It was clear that no commercial firm would like to incur the displeasure of the government and undergo the botheration of securing permission from District Magistrate for giving employment to any Hindu.

Sometime later another fourteen page long secret circular to all the district magistrates, which was later produced before the Pakistan Constituent Assembly by Shri Bhupendra Kumar Datt, a member of that Assembly from East Bengal, instructed them to not to return the lands and properties of the returning Hindu migrants but to distribute them among the Muslim refugees. A long list of Statutes and orders and the relevant legal bars

were to be put forward in each case one after the other. In all other matters the district magistrates were instructed to "talk sweetly to minorities and their representatives, even with a smile on your lips". "You have", it significantly added, "earned the compliments of persons like the honourable Mr. C. C. Biswas who have stated that it was only some subordinate officials who were responsible for the troubles; try by all means to maintain your reputation." It concluded with the advice, "Keep this instruction secret. Do not trust other officers. They sometimes mismanage and mishandle things."

No wonder, therefore, that Nehru Liaquat Pact became a dead letter within a few weeks after it was signed so ceremoniously at Delhi. Pakistan continued its policy of squeezing out the Hindus. But it now saw to it that they were not driven out in very large numbers at one time because she had seen by experience that, besides creating sharp reaction in India which disturbed the equanimity of the mind of their friend Pt Nehru, that could also lead to counter-action by the people of India even against the wishes of their Government.

Consequently the steady influx of refugees from East Bengal continued unabated throughout 1950 and 51. But after the assassination of Liaquat Ali Khan at Rawalpindi by the end of 1951, which was exploited by Pakistani Press to malign the enemies of Pakistan by which they meant India and Hindus, attempts began to be made to repeat the perfor-

mance of Feb-March, 1950. Killing and looting of Hindus and dishonouring of their womenfolk again began on a fairly large scale in different parts of East Bengal. As a result the sense of insecurity in the minds of East Bengal Hindus, which Delhi Pact had failed to remove, became intense once again and they began to leave their hearths and homes in large numbers to save their life and honour.

Dr. Mookerji drew pointed attention of the Prime Minister to this increasing exodus from East Bengal in the course of his speech on the President's address in the opening session of the newly elected Parliament in May, 1952. But, as we have seen above, it not only failed to evoke any response from Pt. Nehru but, what was worse, led to some angry exchanges between the two. Pt. Nehru in his reply to the debate not only minimised the gravity of the situation but also gave a handle to Pankistan for counter propaganda against India by making the absolutely baseless statement that minorities were being ill-treated in India as well.

Pakistan was quick to exploit this attitude of India's Prime Minister towards the critics of their policy in India. The campaign of intimidation and humiliation of Hindus with a view to convert them to Islam or to squeeze them out of Pakistan was, therefore, intensified. It also helped the rulers of Pakistan to divert the attention of Bengali Muslims from the growing demand for autonomy for East

Bengal. To make the humiliation of the Hindus complete and to prevent young Hindu girls from being sent away to West Bengal for the safety of their honour a "Girls Release Duty" was imposed on all Hindu girls leaving Pakistan. Their hopeless guardians had either to pay that tax or leave their sisters and daughters to the mercy of Pakistani goondas.

To make things worse preparations were started for the introduction of passport and visa system for movements between East Pakistan and India. The idea of Pakistan in doing so was to avoid large scale exodus all at once, which they feared would create sharp reaction in India. Its settled policy now was to squeeze and not to flood Hindus out of Pakistan. It also wanted to create a sense of helplessness among the lower classes of Hindus, mostly artisans, whose stay in Pakistan was considered necessary for the maintenance of already shattered economy of East Bengal, as a pre-requisite to their conversion to Islam.

But to begin with it had the opposite effect. The Hindus in East Bengal felt that the passport system was being devised to seal them off and prevent their escape to India to save their life and honour. So many of them decided to escape to India before the passport system came into operation. Increased harassment by Ansars and other Pakistanis, with the active connivance of Pakistan Government, further aggravated the situation. As a result lakhs of Hindus left their hearths and homes and began to move

towards the Indo-Pak border. The situation became similar to that created by the planned killings prior to Nehru-Liaqat Pact.

As these refugees began to arrive in Calcutta in large numbers and tell their tales of woe, a stir was created in West Bengal as also in the rest of India. Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji was naturally very much perturbed over the situation. He immediately took up the matter with the Government of India. He urged upon the Government to oppose the introduction of passport system and to adopt a definite and firm policy towards Pakistan to put effective pressure on her to behave as a civilised government towards the Hindu minority. He also appealed to Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru to visit West Bengal and see the situation created by the exodus from East Pakistan for himself.

To begin with no heed was paid to his appeals and the Passport system came into operation on the 15th of October, 1952. This created a new problem. Lakhs of Hindus who had left their homes in distant parts of East Bengal and were on the move towards the border were completely stranded. Thousands of them lay helpless on rail and ferry heads on the Pakistan border not knowing what to do. They lay there not only exposed to rain and sun but also to the depredations of Pakistani goondas who preyed on their meagre possessions and their women-folk. The rules for the issue of passports were made so difficult and complicated that for the common man it became a problem to

secure one. The Price of Post card size photographs, needed to be appended to the application for Pass port, shot up to Rs. 40 a piece.

This situation forced the government of West Bengal also to reinforce the appeals of public leaders like Dr. Mookerji to Pt. Nehru for paying a visit to West Bengal and taking some effective step against Pakistan.

As a result Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru paid a hurried visit to Calcutta on his way to Assam on the 18th and 19th of October, 1952. Dr. Mookerji submitted to him a memorandum detailing his analysis of the problem and suggesting that some effective pressure must be put on Pakistan if this problem of the Hindus of East Bengal was to be settled. The gravity of the problem, he held, should be judged not from the number of refugees, though that in itself was a big and grave problem, but from the conditions in East Bengal which forced them to become refugees. He suggested that as a first step economic sanctions should be imposed against Pakistan and if that did not bear the desired result other plans and methods, earlier contemplated by Sardar Patel and Pt. Nehru himself, should be adopted. But all his reasoning and appeals went unheeded by Pt. Nehru,

But he was not the man to lose heart. He immediately set himself to the task of awakening the country to the gravity of the situation and to mobilise public opinion in support of his stand. He had always looked upon this problem not as a provincial or communal problem but as a political

problem of the nationwide importance. It was, therefore, his endeavour that it should be treated as a national problem towards the solution of which all parties should cooperate. It was why he had been appealing to Pt. Nehru as Prime Minister and president of the biggest political party in the country to take initiative in the matter.

But the attitude adopted by Pt. Nehru towards his appeals convinced him that he was either not amenable to appeals and reason or was incapable of taking such initiative. So he decided to take the initiative himself.

He approached the leaders of all the non-Congress and non-Communist parties working in West Bengal and held an all parties conference for evolving a joint front and a common policy about East Bengal Hindus. Congress as a party would not come into his joint front on the issue for obvious reasons. The Communists, true to their anti-national role in the past, adopted the opposite policy of defending Pakistan in the creation of which they also had a big hand. They suggested that a good will mission should be sent to Pakistan and started a campaign of vilification against Dr. Mookerji and those who cooperated with him.

But inspite of this opposition he was able to bring all the other Opposition parties on a common platform on this issue. Huge joint public meetings of the non-Communist and non-Congress parties were held at Calcutta Maidan on the 16th of October, and at Gandhi Grounds, Delhi, on the 26th of

October, in which Government of India's policy towards Pakistan and its indifference towards the lot of Hindu minority there was severely criticised by leaders like Acharya J. B. Kripalani, Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party, and Shri N. C. Chatterji besides Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji.

In the course of his speech at Calcutta Meeting, which he presided, Dr. Mookerji referred to the fundamental issues involved in the treatment of minorities in Pakistan. India, he said, was not partitioned as a result of a war. It was an agreed act, intended for solving communal bitterness; but the basic condition was that people belonging to all communities would continue to live in both countries and would receive the protection of their respective governments as indeed any civilised government would be willing to do.

He declared that Pakistan Government's persistent and deliberate failure in undertaking the responsibility for the safety and protection of the minority people entitled India to examine the whole problem of Partition *'de-novo'* and proceed to act as any self respecting nation would do. It was not the misery of the suffering migrants alone that called for redress; if this exodus was unchecked it would give a blow to the safety and security not *only of North Eastern India but of the entire country.*

Pakistan, he declared, had been emboldened to behave in this scandalous manner because of the weakness and vacillation of our own government.

If only the government of India took up a firm attitude and if Pakistan Government knew that its acts of omission and commission would lead to consequences which would hit the vital interests of that country economically and politically, the Pakistan Government would never act as at present.

Delhi Pact, he declared, was dead and gone. Pact after pact had been made between India and Pakistan only to be repudiated by the latter country in practice. He demanded that this policy of appeasement, of Pacts, of wait and see, must be reversed.

He followed it up by organising an East Bengal Minorities convention on an all India level at Calcutta on the 1st and 2nd of November, 1952. The convention which was held at the University Institute Hall under the Presidentship of Smt. Sucheta Kripalani was an eloquent testimony to the statesmanship, constructive mind and organising ability of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji. He was the moving spirit behind the whole thing. It was his stature as a national leader, the faith in his integrity and his constructive and realistic approach to the Problem which had brought such different, and even mutually hostile, elements as the Praja Socialists, the revolutionary Socialists and the Hindu Sabhites on one common platform for a national purpose. It also demonstrated the growing strength and influence of his own party, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, whose nationalistic and progressive approach to the problems of the country and capa-

city to act was slowly being recognised even by its erstwhile critics.

The all parties convention unanimously demanded that economic sanctions be imposed against Pakistan and supply of essential goods to her be stopped as a first step to put effective pressure on her to behave as a civilised government. It also demanded withdrawal of passport and visa system between the two Bengals which, it declared, had been causing incalculable hardship to the people on both sides of the border.

The convention also appointed a small sub-committee consisting among others of Dr. Mookerji and Smt. Sucheta Kripalani to draw plans and take action about the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the convention.

The convention concluded its deliberations with a huge public meeting at Wellington Square, on the 2nd of November, where Dr. Mookerji as also the spokesmen of other parties laid stress on the urgency of the problem and called upon the people to be prepared even for making sacrifice to secure justice to their compatriots of Pakistan.

Addressing another huge meeting a few days later at Park Circus Maidan, which was attended by a large number of Muslims, he appealed to the Muslims to support the stand taken by all parties convention. Pakistan government, he told them, had turned out to be an enemy of humanity and it was the duty of every man, be he a Hindu or a

Muslim, to raise his voice of protest wherever humanity was oppressed.

To educate and mobilise public opinion all over the country about the problem the Sub-Committee issued an appeal under the signatures of leaders of all the non-Congress and non-Communist Parties of the country including Dr. Mookerji, Acharya and Mrs. Kirpalani, Shri N. C. Chatterji, Master Tara Singh, General Mohan Singh, Shri R. S. Ruiker of the Forward Bloc, Shri S. S. More of the Peasants and Workers Party and Shri Rajbhoj of the Scheduled Castes Federation to observe November 23 as the All India East Bengal Minority Rights Day all over the country under the combined auspices of all the parties.

Before that Dr. S. P. Mookerji once again presented the case of East Bengal Hindus before the Parliament on the 15th of November, in one of his most forceful speeches which was listened to with rapt attention by the Chief Justice, Mr. Patanjali Sastri and other judges of Supreme Court, Secretaries of the various departments of the central government and a number of foreign diplomats including Shri Shuaib Qureshi, the High Commissioner of Pakistan in India, besides a full house and crowded visitors galleries.

In the course of that speech, which proved to be his last speech in the Parliament on the question of East Bengal which had been uppermost in his mind.

since the partition of India, he appealed to the Parliament, to the representatives of 360 millions of free Indians, "to make up their mind once for all whether under the existing circumstances it is possible for the minority to live in East Pakistan. That is the fundamental issue. And if they say that it is not, then to make up their minds whether it is possible for the free government of India to take any effective steps for their protection".

He reminded Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru of the pledges and assurances that he along with other Congress leaders had given to Hindus of East Bengal on the eve of partition and he also recalled his speech on the 15th of August, 1947, in the course of which he had said :

"We think also of our brothers and sisters who have been cut off from us by the political boundaries and who, unhappily, cannot share at present in the freedom that has come. They are of us and will remain of us, whatever may happen in future, and we shall be sharers in good and ill fortune alike."

And then he called upon Pt. Nehru, "who is now Prime Minister of India, to fulfill this pledge which he had given in such noble words to those who had suffered with him and others like him for the liberation of their motherland".

He recalled his own experiences of conferences with Mr. Ghulam Mohammed and Khwaja Nazimuddin when he was a minister in the central cabinet. He described them as bitter and tragic

experiences of failure which have continued all these five years and reminded Pt. Nehru of his own statement in Feb., 1950: "When peaceful methods fail other methods will be adopted by the Government", and asked him to "tell us whether time has not come to adopt other methods".

He put to the government the fundamental question: "Do you believe that you have any responsibility for the protection of the minorities"? "Pandit ji" he went on, "had said on that occasion (Feb. 1950) that they are our concern: the protection of minorities is a matter which we will have to take in hand. They will be rehabilitate in their homes, if possible, or elsewhere if necessary".

Referring to the question of rehabilitation of those who had come out of Pakistan he quoted some representative Harijans of East Bengal who had come over to India to save their honour and religion but had again gone back to Pakistan. They had told him, "We came to India for rehabilitation; we have not got it. Our children have died. We are going back. What is the crime we have committed? We did not want Pakistan. You asked us to live there and it is only because we are Hindu we are facing this crisis. We will embrace Islam, we will surrender ourselves". And he asked:

"Will it bring credit to India? Will it be something of which India can be proud"?

Explianing his own approach to the problem he said: "I look at this problem from two points of

view. One rehabilitation and the other the future of people who are still in Pakistan. Rehabilitation", he added, "must naturally be continued". But it is not an easy task. And if more continue to come, your rehabilitation plans will never be successful. Where will be your planning schemes. What are you going to do if another fifty or sixty lakhs of people are pushed out of Pakistan and they come over here."

This, he declared, went against the very basis of partition: "We accepted Pakistan under certain basic conditions. When that basic condition is not observed by Pakistan, then the very basis of partition disappears. From that point of view the Partition stands annulled and India is not bound by her commitments. It is not my wording alone. The Prime Minister himself has declared from that very place that the basic condition is that minorities must be protected by Pakistan".

"We" he continued, "have done our duty. India has protected its minorities".

He was opposed to any communal or parochial approach to the problem. "It is a national problem", he declared, "we must find a national solution for it." The killing of some innocent Muslims because Hindus are butchered in Pakistan will be a vicious circle and is most inhuman. The true interpretation of Hinduism is that if a man goes wrong you should punish him, but if a man is innocent and you go and cut his throat that simply poisons the atmosphere. It does not save people".

He placed before the Parliament a few of the hundreds of cases of cold hooded butchery of Hindus and barbarous crimes against their women folk that had been reported to him, which brought tears in the eyes of Congress members even, and he made a pathetic appeal to Pt. Nehru not to underestimate the woes of Hindus by making such statements as "everything is all right except some insecurity. "He may declare his helplessness", he added, "but for heavens sake do not say things which are not true. That would be like throwing salt into the gaping wound. You may not be able to protect them, you may not be able to help them but do not minimise the gravity of the situation".

"Unfortunately", he continued, "the statements which the Prime Minister made during the last few days will form part of Pakistan propaganda" against India.

Coming to the remedies he made it clear that he wanted a solution of the problem and was prepared to give his fullest cooperation to the government for the purpose. "We do not want that people should be killed by inches. If they have to die let them die all at once" he declared. "This is a chain of terrible humiliation and misery which affects not individuals alone but which humiliates the status and stature of the nation".

"We have given some remedies," he added "other remedies may be suggested. Economic sanctions is one. Naturally demand for land is one. It was Sardar Patel's remedy. If one third of the popula-

tion who happen to be Hindus are pushed out, Pakistan must give one third of the land. We cannot ruin the whole country of India for misdeeds of Pakistan. There must be a re-partition of the territory of Pakistan and these people must be settled there".

Then he referred to a remedy suggested by no less a man than Gandhiji with whom he had once discussed the problem along with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Gandhiji, he revealed, had told them, "Let India play her part; you protect the minorities, let not one man be turned out of here; then turn towards Pakistan and say: we have fulfilled our part, but you have not; it becomes a world problem, it becomes a moral problem. And if Pakistan fails to do so, if there is no other remedy, you must take charge of East Bengal, let the Government take charge and protect the people."

"I am not advocating war" he explained "but if there is no other way of protecting the minorities of East Pakistan except to take charge of that territory, Government of India someday will have to consider it". He thought that such an eventuality could even be completely avoided if the Prime Minister were to declare that his Government would act firmly and not adopt a policy of weakness and appeasement" because, "goondaism does not wish to face war. They want to gain something without sacrifice.

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"I am not advocating war" he explained "but if there is no other way of protecting the minorities of East Pakistan except to take charge of that territory, Government of India someday will have to consider it". He thought that such an eventuality could even be completely avoided if the Prime Minister were to declare that his Government would act firmly and not adopt a policy of weakness and appeasement" because, "goondaism does not wish to face war. They want to gain something without sacrifice.

He denounced the policy of appeasement adopted by Pt. Nehru towards Pakistan and ridiculed his

defence for it. "I am amazed at it" he declared. "He (Pt. Nehru) may say, I cannot find a solution ; I can sympathise with that. But he glorifies the appeasement and goes on appeasing. At whose cost ? If he does it at his own cost, I do not mind, though I shall be sorry. But what right has he to appease at the cost of the nation ? It is a question of the honour and self respect of India. Something has to be done to prevent a major catastrophe."

It was, he held, primarily the task of the Government to find a remedy. Opposition could only suggest something and offer its cooperation. "Find out an effective solution," he therefore asked the government, "by which these people can be enabled to live exercising their elementary rights without being ruined as refugees or beggars or slaves."

Referring to the healing touch theory of Pt. Nehru he said : "The Prime Minister very often says he believes in a healing process. Undoubtedly. Healing by what means ? Healing by curing the diseases ? If there is a cancerous growth, will you put sandal oil on the cancer and heal it ? You will have to go to the root of it. You will have to appreciate what the disease is."

What pained him most, he declared, was that "Government are running away from the real problem. They just say there is no problem, people are not coming. But coming or not coming the disease is there." And then he repeated the suggestion that he had made in, 1950. "Until you can go

and settle there with your wives and daughters, you cannot realise the agony of millions."

Finally he appealed to the Government to not to talk of Gandhian ideology because "whatever Gandhiji was, cowardice was not within his ideology. Inaction was not within his ideology. He would have never sat quiet and helpless. Resist non violently if possible, violently if necessary, but never submit to a wrong", was his philosophy. "I ask the Government," he pleaded, "to accept that as policy. Resist this national wrong."

He wound up this great oration, the most pathetic but eloquent and convincing advocacy of the cause of Millions of Hindus of East Bengal, by an exhortation which needs to be barked today as never before :

"Peace undoubtedly is wanted, but peace with honour. Let us follow the path of peace. If we can lay out the scheme whereby we can finally solve this problem peacefully, then let us do it. But if not, do not submit to wrong things."

Twenty third of November was observed as East Bengal Day throughout India. As was expected Bharatiya Jan Sangh played the leading part in it. All other parties cooperated. Dr. Mookerji himself addressed a mammoth meeting in Ramlila ground in New Delhi, which was presided over by General Mohan Singh and was addressed by all the leaders of the Opposition parties and groups in the Parliament except the Communist Party.

The mass enthusiasm for the cause of East Bengal Hindus created by the observance of this day had some effect on the minds of the rulers both at New Delhi and Karachi. Gods of Karachi realised that they had over-done themselves. So steps began to be taken by them to repeat the old tactics. Some reassuring speeches were made by Khwaja Nazimuddin, who also started correspondence with Pt. Nehru for another meeting, presumably to be followed by a Pact on the lines of Nehru-Liaquat Pact. But he was thrown over-board before he could come to Delhi and the drama of "friendly" talks with Nehru was performed by his successor, Mr. Mohammed Ali.

In New Delhi, Pt. Nehru got restive over this unholy combination of nationalist parties like the P.S.P. the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Forward block with the "Communal" Parties like Jan Sangh under the leadership of communalist Mookerji. This started the correspondence between Pt. Nehru and Shri J. P. Narain, the P.S.P. leader, for a Congress-P.S.P. coalition so that the latter could be weaned from the growing influence of Mookerji.

But so far as the condition of Hindus in East Bengal was concerned it remained what it was. Pakistan continued to be as insincere as ever and Pt. Nehru's heart remained too full with the miseries of the people of Tunisia, Morocco and Korea to have any tears for his own compatriots of East Pakistan.

As a result the conviction began to grow in the mind of Dr. Mookerji, a conviction that was to

be confirmed by the failure of his efforts to persuade Pt Nehru to, at least, meet Pt Premnath Dogra to settle the Jammu issue, that the Prime Minister was not amenable to reason and that he had become too much puffed up by his unlimited power to take into consideration any view point which was not backed by such power as he could feel. He was thus being driven to the path of Satyagraha much against his wishes as the only means of making the "democratic" Government to do anything in the matter.

But before he could do anything for East Bengal, Kashmir issue came to a head and it assumed such urgency that he had to throw himself completely in it. But he never for a moment became oblivious of East Bengal. In his Presidential address at the Kanpur Session of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, he drew pointed attention to the Problem of East Bengal, along with that of Kashmir. It was his plan to take up the issue of East Bengal and do everything possible for forcing the hands of Government of India to settle it in a satisfactory manner as soon as his hands were free from Kashmir. But Kashmir freed him from his mortal bounds, bequeathing the great burden on his heart about East Bengal to his followers.

It is painful to think what he would have thought and done about the latest developments in Pakistan, particularly the Provisions in its constitution which have finally declared that state to be an Islamic State, whose laws are to be in conformity with the

Quran and the 'Sunnah'. The Provision about a State sponsored missionary organisation for the propagation of Islam is obviously meant to convert those Hindus in East Bengal who have not been squeezed out or whose continuance in Pakistan is considered essential for her economy.

INDIA'S CULTURAL AMBASSADOR

With all his preoccupation with politics, which began to absorb most of his time and energy during the later years of his life, Dr. Mookerji was never completely lost to education, literature and Indian culture—the Bharatiya Sanskriti—for which he had developed keen interest and devotion from his early youth. The great culture and ideals of India, the moral and spiritual values for which they stood, had always had a special appeal and fascination for him. He imbibed them in his own life and tried to live up to them.

He took a very comprehensive view of the term culture or 'Sanskriti'. He considered it to be the sum total of the highest achievements of a people in the realm of thought and action which imperceptibly moulds the mind and influences the conduct of that people, individually as well as collectively.

History, literature, lives of great men and social and religious festivals, he held, play a great part in this process of influencing the race conduct. In India all these are essentially Hindu. Therefore, he considered Indian culture to be in essence Hindu culture which has come down in continuous flow right from the Vedic times, absorbing and assimilating the contributions of a number of new elements

which, in the course of History, got absorbed into the Hindu or Bharatiya society. Some basic features of this Bharatiya culture according to him, are :

1. Philosophy of rebirth.
2. Philosophy of 'Karma'.
3. Equal rights to all.
4. Equal opportunities to all.
5. Respect and reverence for the learned and the pious as distinct from the rich.
6. Balance between the rights of individual and society.
7. Right to live for all.
8. Freedom of thought—Tolerance.
9. Emphasis on character.

It is the historic mission of Bharat, he held, to give her cultural message to the world to restore balance between the moral and material aspects of man's life.

He, therefore, held that Indian missions abroad instead of trying to emulate their western counterparts in pomp and show and external luxury, should try to interpret India's culture and ideals through their own lives and conduct.

He believed that men like Swami Vivekanand and L. Hardayal had done more to raise India in the eyes of the West than all the political missions that India has sent out since her freedom because, they lack that faith in the destiny and understanding of the ideals and culture of India which distinguished those unofficial cultural ambassadors of India in bondage.

It was his keen desire that their work of interpreting real India and her thought and culture to the people of the West as also of the East should be continued and he himself had a strong urge from within to go on a lecturing tour of U S A and Britain for the purpose. He had actually got an invitation from the U S A for such a tour and it was his plan to fulfil this mission after settling the Kashmir issue.

But though the cruel hand of death did not permit him to play the role of India's cultural ambassador to the West—a role for which he was eminently fitted—he did play that role in the countries of South East Asia which he visited in 1952, as President of the Mahabodhi Society of India.

Dr Mookerji's interest in this society and Buddhism was born out of his conviction that Buddhist thought and culture, which is essentially Indian or Hindu in its inspiration and essence, could act as a great unifying force to bind the Buddhist world, particularly the South Asian countries, with India. Consciousness of such a community of thought and culture, he felt could create an abiding unity between these countries and India transcending any differences in the economic or political sphere and enable Bharat to play her ancient role of a world teacher—"Jagat Guru".

He looked upon Mahatma Buddha as a world teacher who gave the best in Indian thought and culture to the world through his life and teachings.

It was wrong, according to him, to say that Buddhism had disappeared from India. Buddhism as taught by Mahatma Buddha, he would say, has been assimilated by the age old current of Hindu culture of which it was an aspect. The fact that Mahatma Buddha has been accepted as one of the ten 'Avtars' or incarnations of God by the Indian people, he believed, was the most convincing refutation of the belief that India had rejected Buddhism. What she rejected was not the essence of Buddhism which Mahatma Buddha gave, but the over-coating given to it many centuries later which transformed it from a reform movement, that it essentially was, into a religion with separate rituals and dogmas. India rejected that over coating and assimilated the spirit within it.

Dr. Mookerji was attracted by that spirit. He did not mind what rituals and dogmas were adopted or developed by different sects of Buddhism so long as they did not lose sight of the spirit which was common between them and all the sects constituting the common wealth of Hindu Dharma. He tried to emphasise and popularise that common spirit among the Buddhists and thereby rendered a very great service to the cause of cultural unity of India and the countries of South East Asia whose geographical position, economic interests and needs of security also point to a closer unity between them all in the political sphere as well.

The occasion to demonstrate this unity of thought and culture between India and the Buddhist

countries of South Asia was provided by his visits to Burma and Indo China along with the sacred relics of Sari-Putta and Maha-Mogallana, the two chief disciples of Mahatma Buddha, prior to their re-enshrinement in the new Vihara at Sanchi on November 30, 1952.

These relics had been taken out of the ancient Stupa of Sanchi by General Cunningham in 1851. They were then sent to England and were kept in the British museum. They were returned to India after the attainment of freedom and were handed over to Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji, as President of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, by the Prime Minister, Pt. Nehru, on the 14th of January 1949, at Calcutta with great ceremonial.

It was followed by requests from different Buddhist countries like Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia and Tibet for an opportunity to worship the relics in their own lands before they were re-enshrined. On their invitation Dr. Mookerji visited Burma in March and Cambodia and Indo-China in October 1952, along with the sacred relics.

He visited Burma at a time when Communist rebels were making the life there miserable both for the Government as also for the common people. Even Rangoon, the capital city, was not safe from their depredations. The whole of Burma was in turmoil.

The visit of Dr. Mookerji with the relics and the mass enthusiasm and devotion they created in the

people's minds changed that situation. The people of Burma who had been torn between different political factions and loyalties re-discovered their unity in the common reverence for the gospel of the Buddha. It created a reaction in their minds against Communist irreligiosity and cult of violence. Since that day the situation in Burma has been improving and the Communists have been put on the run.

"You do not know how great a service you have rendered to any country", said Thakin Nu, the Premier of Burma, to Dr. Mookerji at Sanchi in November, 1952 when he visited that place to take part in the ceremonies connected with the re-enshrinement of the relics. "Your visit with the relics brought about a wonderful change in my people. They have found their soul."

The Indian community in Burma also gave him a royal reception. The volunteers of Bharatiya Swayam Sewak Sangh, a cultural and social organisation working among Indians oversea, gave him a guard of honour at the airport, the Burmese Indian Congress gave him a reception in the Congress hall and he addressed a mass meeting of the Burmans and Indians in Bandula Square.

He created a tremendous effect on the minds of the Burmans who heard from his mouth the message of the Buddha, whose memory binds them to India as no economic and political pacts can. They began to think of him as one of them, a sage who had come to re-awaken in them the faith that had been

shaken by the stress and strain, the confusion and turmoil, that came in the wake of the violent end of British rule in Burma at the hands of the Japanese. As he was talking to the premier of Burma just before emplaning for Calcutta, a Burman lady standing near-by remarked in her own tongue "He looks to be a Burman". It drew loud laughter from everyone standing there. On being told the reason for it, he felt elated because he could appreciate the deep feeling of oneness which must have drawn that remark from her.

On the 6th of October, of the same year he visited Phnon Penh, the capital of Cambodia, with the sacred relics on the invitation of the Cambodian Government. The scenes of pious devotion that he saw there had a very deep effect on his mind. Over a million monks and laymen lined the route from the aerodrome to the Silver Pagoda where the relics were to be kept for worship. He addressed half a million of them in the main square of the city about the message of Mahatma Buddha and the cultural ties between India and the Buddhist countries. As his speech was translated into the language of Cambodia by an interpreter, thousands actually shed tears of joy and devotion. They prostrated before him as if he was a Messiah who had come to re-awaken them on behalf of their spiritual mother-India.

He also visited the ruins of the world famous Hindu Temples at Angkor Vat which still contain 1737 images and on the walls of which the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata are presented in

exquisite carvings in stone that remind the visitor of the glory that was India in the past.

From Phnon Penh he visited Saigon, the capital of Indo-China. There too he saw similar scenes of devotion and respect for India.

On his way back his plane stopped at Bangkok for a few hours to enable thousands of Siamese who had collected there to worship the relics. Indian diplomats at the Thai capital also met him there. He also came to know there to his great disappointment that the reports of such pro India feelings of those people, which pointed to the advisability of developing closer cultural relations with them, were usually not sent to Indian foreign office at New Delhi as they were not liked there.

He had been invited by the Government of Ceylon as well. He wanted to visit that country where economic and political causes have given rise to an unfortunate antipathy between the Indian settlers and the Ceylonese. Had he visited Ceylon, he might have brought about a transformation in the hearts of the people there, which no political pacts can, and without which the problem of status of Indians in that country cannot be satisfactorily solved.

The last great performance of Dr. Mookerji as the cultural leader of South East Asia came towards the end of November, 1952, when the New Vihara at Sanchi was opened and the sacred relics were re-enshrined in it. An international cultural

conference was also held on the occasion which was attended by statesmen, ministers and religious leaders from all Buddhist countries of the world except Communist China.

In his welcome address to the cultural conference, which was presided over by India's Vice-President Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Mookerji pointed out the great utility of the genuine cultural contacts such as that conference had produced.

"Many of these countries in S. E. Asia" Dr. Mookerji said, "after attaining independence are striving hard to receive the highest elements of Buddhist cultural and religious thought. In this respect India occupies the role of their spiritual mother".

"With a true sense of humility and responsibility," he added, "India can re-establish bonds of friendship and understanding with them so that this fraternity will not only be welcomed by the peoples of the countries concerned but will also create mighty source of strength and solidarity which can worthily contribute to the maintenance of world peace and freedom."

The following day the new 'Vihar' was opened with full religious rights. Speaking on that occasion Dr. Mookerji dilated upon his idea about the role of cultural centres like Sanchi. "Such centres," he said, "must not remain confined to the educated few; but from them must flow currents of thought and service so that the poorer people suffering from

ignorance, disease, poverty and superstition might receive their due inspiration and be helped to raise themselves socially and economically so as to become worthy citizens of free India”.

It was his plan to open schools and dispensaries in the villages surrounding Sanchi to be maintained and manned by the monks of the Sanchi Vihar so that the common people of the region could feel the presence of the great men whose memory was preserved by the stupas of Sanchi.

Paying his tribute to the memory of Mahatma Buddha he said, “Gautam Buddha was not born on the soil of India by accident. The genius of India from time immemorial has been reflected through the words and deeds of mighty men, sages and savants, who gave to their country and to the world the benefits of their wisdom and guidance consistent with the changing needs and aspirations of society. When stagnation came, when the external manifestations of religious rites destroyed the life blood of true religion, these savants appeared on the scene and served to maintain her soul from destruction. Gautam Buddha represented, 2500 years ago, a unique challenge of the scientific spirit of man when he declared his unwillingness to accept anything as true without full and searching analysis and self-satisfaction.”

Referring to the need of peace in the world and the path shown by Mahatma Buddha to achieve it, he said: “Buddha showed the path of peace, peace not of the grave but of the living, peace born out

of deep understanding and proper appreciation of the realities of life. Peace can only be permanent if it conquers evil and brings about a true harmony between spiritual and material impulses of man so that both by his preaching and practice he may prove himself the image of his Maker."

Celebrations at Sanchi, incidently, provided the last occasion when Dr. Mookerji and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru met face to face outside the Parliament and talked about culture and peace in the whole world. But Dr. Mookerji felt in his heart that there was no peace in India itself where people were being shot down for callings themselves Indians first and last, and for demanding to be governed by the Indian constitution. All efforts of Dr. Mookerji during the next three months to persuade Pt. Nehru to apply the healing touch and the Gandhian principles of Peace and tolerance, about which he talked so much, to the distressed people of Jammu proved futile and he ultimately laid down his own life for them.

A MOMENTOUS DECISION

On his return from Sanchi to New Delhi, Dr. Mookerji received fresh reports of repression in Jammu where Praja Parishad Satyagraha had been going on in full swing since the arrest of Pt. Prem Nath Dogra. He remembered the assurances he had given to the people of Jammu as he remembered his pledges to the people of East Bengal. His humane heart went out to the suffering people of Jammu. He gave a call for an all India Jammu day to be observed on 14th of December, all over the country to educate and mobilise public opinion in support of the Praja Parishad Satyagraha. The day was observed with great enthusiasm everywhere. Dr. Mookerji himself addressed a mammoth meeting at Ram Lila grounds in Delhi where he made a touching reference to Pt. Dogra. But all such demonstrations of public sympathy went unheeded by the Government. Therefore, demand for doing something more effective began to grow. The momentous decision to give active support to the Praja Parishad was taken at Kanpur, where the first annual session of Jan Sangh was held under his Presidentship towards the end of December.

Before that decision was taken at Kanpur Dr. Mookerji was called upon in the same month to give his mature views on the problems of education and

literature, two of his life long interests, besides politics

Education was his first love and it continued to command his devotion and attention till the end of his life His interest in and attachment with Calcutta University, which began when he was just a student of that University, was life long He can well be called the joint maker, other being his father, of that Premier University of the country. Organisation of the Teachers Training Department, establishment of Fine Arts Gallery and Museum, known as the Ashutosh Museum, as a wing of the Post Graduate studies in Ancient Indian History and Culture, the introduction of Science teaching as a part of the Matriculation course and introduction of Vernacular as the medium of instruction and examination, the introduction of Military Studies as a subject for examination and the introduction of the system of examination by compartment were some of his contributions to the Calcutta University during his two terms as its Vice-Chancellor. He continued to be associated with that University in various capacities even after politics began to absorb most of his time and energies

He was also the moving spirit behind the Aurobindo University at Pondicherry in the creation of which he had a big hand He wanted it to grow as an international centre of the spiritual culture of India

Because of this long association with the educational life of the country and his deep understanding

of the educational problems, he had begun to be looked upon as one of the top most educationists and an expert in matters relating to University education.

The last public recognition of his status and stature as an educationist came in December, 1952, when he was invited to address the thirtieth annual convocation of the University of Delhi. The address he delivered on the occasion proved to be the last public expression of his views on education and, therefore, has a special importance for the understanding of his approach to the problems of education.

Like his father who jealously and successfully guarded the academic freedom and autonomy of Calcutta university against official encroachment, even when it came from such stalwarts of Pax Britannica as Lord Lytton, Dr. Mookerji was very anxious to preserve the autonomy of the Indian Universities. He was particularly disturbed by the growing interference of the Education Ministry of the Government of India, presided over as it was by a man utterly ignorant of the problems and ideals of university education, in the universities directly under its control. He, therefore, warned the Delhi University that "Proximity of a University to the seat of Central Government is sometimes fraught with the danger of unnecessary and irritating state interference which it is to be earnestly hoped will be avoided."

All necessary reforms in the Universities, he held, should be primarily carried out by the respective universities themselves who should balance regional requirements with national progress. The inter-university Board and the Universities Grant Committee could also guide the universities by developing healthy conventions under which their considered opinions could not be easily flouted by the University concerned. Well informed deliberations in the State legislatures and Parliament at the time of voting for grants could also, he held, help the universities in the matter.

He stressed the need for developing a comprehensive national system to cater to the needs of all stages of education. "There need not be", he said "any conflict amongst primary, secondary and university stages nor amongst literary, scientific, technical, vocational and agricultural courses of study. A national system of education", he pleaded, "must conceive of a balanced structure where due and proper emphasis will be laid on every section so as to maintain its harmony, its strength and solidarity."

Regarding the medium of instruction he advocated the use of mother tongue, and where it was not developed enough, of the regional language upto higher secondary stage. "But while Indian languages", he said, "must be fostered and developed in the widest possible manner, they must not take a hostile attitude towards English."

He also advocated publication under State patronage of selected works from different Indian languages in the Nagri script to facilitate comparative study of the different regional languages and to enable the people to comprehend the essential unity between the different languages of India.

Planned exchange of visits of University teachers and teams of students between different universities, he held, could go a long way towards developing unity of outlook and proper understanding of problem and peculiarities of different regions.

He suggested re-orientation of the policy of awarding scholarships for studies abroad. Such scholarships, he held, should be given for those subjects only in which specialised study was not possible in India.

To provide facilities for higher training in science and technology within the country speedily, he suggested, that different universities should specialise in particular branches of science and they must be open to advanced students in those sciences from all over the country.

He laid special emphasis on the education given to the youth of the country being purpose full. "It is a supreme task for university administrators and teachers," he said, "to read into the minds of the youth of re-awakened India and to place before them not only well regulated courses of study and well thought out programmes for extra curricular activities but also rousing in them a true

scientific spirit and a deep impulse for devoted service to the cause of national well being. A compulsory provision for three months of intensive social work for at least every intending graduate may narrow the gulf that divides the so called educated class from the illiterate masses."

It was his considered opinion that the ideal to be achieved in the educational sphere should be free elementary education for all and higher education for those who deserved it, and not for those who can afford but do not deserve to have it. It was, he held, the duty of the State to arrange for the higher education of brilliant but poor students. For the ordinary students, avenues of technical education and training must be provided after a minimum basic education. The number of students for different trades and profession should be related to the need of hands in the respective trades to avoid glut and unemployment.

A week later he was called upon to give his views on the important question of language and literature as President of All India Bengali literary conference—Nikhil Bharat Banga Sahitya Sammelan—which was held at Cuttack on the 24th and 25th of December.

Vernacular languages of India, particularly Bengali language and its literature had always had special fascination for him. It was to demonstrate the importance he attached to these languages of the country that he had taken up Indian vernacular for his M A. His interest in Bengali literature

continued all his life. It was in recognition of his deep understanding of the literary trends in the Indian languages and the services he had rendered to Bengali language that he was elected to preside over the Twenty Eighth annual session of the Sammelan.

In the course of his Presidential address to the Sammelan he dealt upon the role and position of regional languages of India vis a vis Hindi, the national language of the country. He stood for paying full attention to the development of all the regional languages. He was opposed to any kind of imposed uniformity and considered it contrary to the Indian tradition, "Achievement of unity amidst adversity", he said, "has always been India's aim. Bearing this cardinal fact in mind, we should give full scope to the different regional languages to further enrich themselves and discountenance any move to further the cause of one language at the cost of the other".

Dev-Nagri being the script of Sanskrit, he held, should be adopted as the script for all Indian languages. He attached greater importance to unity of script as a factor for national unity than the unity of language itself.

He regarded Hindi as the natural lingua franca of the country and he wanted it to be developed and encouraged to such an extent that it could become an effective medium of expression in all provinces of the country. But to give Hindi a really Indian character and make it easily understandable by all, he thought it desirable that

appropriate words and expressions used in different languages should be incorporated in it. He thought that an authoritative Hindi dictionary which should contain special words and phrases of all regional languages could go a long way in developing a common vocabulary and bringing all the regional languages nearer to one another and to Hindi.

His own experience of speaking in Hindi proved the practicability of the above suggestion. His Hindi was none too good when he became President of Bharatiya Jan Sangh. But realising that he will have to address common people in Hindi, he thought of learning Hindi with the help of an English-Hindi dictionary. But he had not the leisure for it. Pt. Mauli Chandra Sharma, thereupon, advised him to not to bother about learning Hindi words and expressions. "Use your Bengali words and expressions whenever you cannot remember an appropriate Hindi word or expression", he told him, "and you will be perfectly understood by Hindi speaking audiences". He tried it and found it a marvellous success. Within an year he became as effective a speaker in Hindi as he was in English and Bengali.

From Cuttack he directly came to Kanpur to preside over the first Annual Session of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh of which he had been again elected President for the ensuing year. It was the pinnacle of his political career. His utterances and conduct at Kanpur and the momentous decision that Jan Sangh took there under his leadership, revealed his real self to the thousand delegates that had assem-

bled there. The pronouncement of policy he made regarding many of the national and international problems in the course of his Presidential address and subsequent deliberations proved to be his last public statements on such problems.

In his Presidential address which he delivered in very forceful and chaste Hindi—a fact which surprised and gratified the people of Kanpur—he re-emphasied the national outlook and character of Jan Sangh and declared that “it will be fatal mistake to confine the membership of any political party in free India to sections of the people based on caste, community or religion. But while extending its hand of equality to all citizens, Jan Sangh,” he declared, “does not feel ashamed to urge for the consolidation of Hindu society nor does it suffer from an inferiority complex to acknowledge proudly that the great edifice of Indian culture and civilisation which has stood the test of thousands of years has been built most of all by the labour, wisdom and sacrifice of Hindu sages, savants and patriots throughout the chequered history of our motherland.”

“If India’s freedom is to be purposeful,” he continued, “a correct appreciation of the fundamental features of Indian culture is highly essential. A nation that fails to take pride in its past achievements or take inspiration therefrom can never build up the present or plan for the future. A weak nation can never attain greatness.”

Referring to the five year plan he pointed out : “India today needs a big psychological shake-up and

'the plan unfortunately does not fulfill this essential requirement" But he recognised the 'laborious and intelligent" activity that had gone to the making of the plan and declared, "there is no question of opposing the plan even if it does not fulfil our expectations" He stressed the need for narrowing down the disparity between the upper and lower level of the economic structure of the society He held that maximum difference between the highest and the lowest incomes in the country should be in the ratio of 1 : 20 and that minimum should not be less than Rs one hundred

He dealt at length the problems of Kashmir, East Bengal and Rehabilitation Regarding Kashmir, where Paraja Parishad satyagraha was daily gaining momentum, he pleaded for sympathetic understanding of the fears and doubts of the people of Jammu "Even at this late stage", he said "I would appeal to Mr. Nehru and Sh. Abdullah to cry a halt and not to stand on false prestige They must open negotiations with the Parishad leaders and arrive at a settlement which will be fair and just to all Meanwhile," he declared, 'our active sympathy must be extended to all those in Jammu who, are facing bravely the wrath of the authorities and silently suffering for a noble cause "

Referring to the plight of Hindus in East Pakistan who 'if they live there as at present will live as serfs or converts", he deplored the helplessness of India "It is tragic," he said, "that our stock should be so low in the eyes of Pakistan that it dares

humiliate us in season and out of season and our Government should stand by as helpless spectator incapable of taking any effective action." He also warned that activities of fifth columnists within India were steadily on the increase. "If this state of affairs," he declared, "continued, our freedom may become short lived and we will be heading towards a grave catastrophe." Regarding rehabilitation he demanded that an independent commission be appointed to consider the nature and extent of rehabilitation already effected and to suggest lines of action for the future.

Deprecating the tendency to over-emphasise internationalism and neglect the basic problem of national solidarity he said, "Internationalism can thrive only if there is a sound base of national solidarity. We should, therefore, strive hard to keep our home front safe and sound. It is not armies or navies or air forces or arms or ammunitions that ultimately constitute the strength of a nation. Real strength of a nation emanates from the people themselves. If they are contented, if they are united, if they are determined to retain their freedom at any cost or to face any sacrifice or suffering for building up their national life, there is no power on earth that can destroy such a nation. We have attained our freedom after nearly a thousand years. Whatever differences there may be among political parties, whatever may be the hopes and fears of sections of our people, we must learn the lesson of history and not allow

disunity in our ranks to be a cause of our ruination in future "

"India with her past traditions and with immense possibilities of her future development," he declared "could play a very large part in creating an atmosphere for peace. But a distorted conception of secularism along with grave economic disabilities is arresting the natural growth of country's man power and material resources" He concluded this historic speech with the prayer that organisation he was leading may succeed in fulfilling the mission of rebuilding India on right and progressive lines "There is no hope for India," he said, "unless she worthily develops herself taking firm root in her culture and civilisation, advancing with the changing needs of the times and marching ahead with the torch of equality, progress and righteousness in hand. In this mighty task of national reconstruction may Jan Sangh play its part with the good will and support of the people throughout the country "

But much more important than his able enunciation and presentation of the policies to be pursued by Jan Sangh, was the contribution he made towards re-vitalising Jan Sangh through his personal contact with the workers, proper and correct appraisal of men and situations, and the momentous decisions it took under his guidance

The Pandal for the Session as also "Dip Nagar", the village of tents for the delegates, was constructed in the spacious grounds of Phool Bagh. But the Reception Committee had arranged to lodge him at

the house of Barrister Narendrajit Singh where he could have all the comforts of home. But Dr. Mookerji insisted that he must stay with the delegates in a tent and share the life of ordinary delegates. This showed the great quality of leadership that he possessed. He never liked "leaders" and "workers" to be treated as two separate classes. All leaders, he held, must be workers first. He who cannot be a worker cannot be a leader.

He also preferred to take his meals together with the delegates from the common mess. One day a Harijan worker found himself seated next to him. He was deeply impressed and said in an apologetic tone, "I am an untouchable".

"We are all untouchables here," replied Dr. Mookerji, "I am political untouchable number one in this country". This sent all present into peels of laughter.

He was to address a rally of the R.S.S. volunteers—he made it a point to attend R.S.S. branches whenever he could get time—early in the morning on the 31st of December. He had to keep very late hours the previous night and his sleep had been disturbed by heavy rain that continued the whole night. But still he was ready for going to the rally at 6 a.m. As he was speaking to Swayamsewaks, rain started once again. A worker rushed to him with an umbrella. But he would have none of it. "Why cannot I stand this rain when so many hundreds of Swayamsevaks are sitting in rain. Do you not consider me a Swayamsevak?"

Naturally the Swayamsewaks of the R S S had begun to look upon him as one of them and he could get the best out of them

On another occasion some unscrupulous persons taking advantage of their personal relations with him and his simplicity of heart, tried to hustle him into taking a decision that might have proved very harmful to the growth of the young organisation. But they had not understood Doctor Mookerji who always kept duty and interest of the cause for which he stood above all personal considerations. He gave them a rebuff and took the correct decision and thus saved an awkward situation.

The two persons who had made Kanpur Session of the Jan Sangh the success it was were shri Din Dayal Upadhyay and Nana Sahib Deshmukh, the energetic and unassuming General Secretary and Organising Secretary respectively, of the Uttar Pradesh Jan Sangh. Dr Mookerji who had a knack of distinguishing the real worker from those who posed as such and who believed in pushing up the young workers was quick to appreciate their work and worth. He nominated Din Dayal Upadhyay to be the General Secretary for the all India Jan Sangh so that the Jan Sangh Organisation all over the country should benefit by his selfless devotion to duty, experience and organising skill. I wish I had some more Din Dayals. He told some workers and members of his working committee 'Then I would have covered the whole country in no time. Din Dayal Upadhyay is carrying on his unfulfilled

mission in a manner befitting to the memory of that great Master.

The most momentous decision taken by Jan Sangh at Kanpur was to actively support the Satyagraha movement of the Praja Parishad in Jammu for the integration of Jammu and Kashmir State with the rest of India. The younger delegates in their enthusiasm wanted that Jan Sangh must give an ultimatum to the Government of India to take concrete steps to meet the patriotic demands of the Parishad within a fixed period after which the Jan Sangh should launch Satyagrah in its support in India as well. But Dr. Mookerji counselled them patience. He was not the man to take a hasty decision in a fit of emotion. He wanted to explore all means of a peaceful settlement, of an honourable compromise, before taking the extreme step of Satyagrah. It was, therefore, resolved that he should write to Pt. Nehru and Sh. Abdullah in a final bid for finding a solution.

It was in pursuance of this resolution of his Working Committee that Dr. Mookerji started correspondence with Pt. Nehru and Sh. Abdullah which, like his correspondence with Sir John Herbert before his resignation from Bengal Cabinet, has become a historic record of his fearless and well reasoned advocacy of what he was convinced was a righteous cause.

THE MAN OF REASON

The protracted correspondence between Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji and Pt. Nehru on the one hand and between Dr. Mookerji and Sh. Abdullah on the other, which began with Dr. Mookerji letter to Pt Nehru on the 9th of January and concluded with his letter to Sh Abdullah on the 23rd of February, throws a flood of light on the Kashmir Problem since its inception, the circumstances which forced the Praja Parishad to take resort to Satyagraha, the patience and persistence of Dr. Mookerji in his efforts to find a peaceful solution of the impasse and equally persistent refusal of Pt Nehru and Sh Abdullah to review the authoritarian stand they had taken, and even to discuss the matter in person with Dr. Mookerji and the leaders of the Praja Parishad. In all 11 letters were exchanged between Dr Mookerji and Pt. Nehru and 6 between him and Sh Ahdullah. The whole correspondence reveals Dr. Mookerji as a man of reason

I

"May I take the liberty of addressing you on the situation in Jammu" wrote Dr. Mookerji to Pt. Nehru in his first letter from Calcutta dated 9th January, 1953. "We discussed this matter at Kanpur session of Jan Sangh and it was the unanimous wish of

every one that I should directly approach you and Sh. Abdullah on the subject. I know you do not see eye to eye with many of us on this issue. Yet I am writing to you in the hope that you will keep an open mind and try to appreciate the view point of those who may differ from you on this matter. It is vitally important that the circumstances that have led to the present movement should be impartially reviewed and effort made to arrive at a speedy and peaceful settlement which will be fair and just to all concerned."

Pointing out that the movement was not on the wane but was rather spreading and refuting the allegation that it had been instigated from outside, he recounted the circumstances leading to the movement. "Repeated efforts were made by Praja Parishad leaders and others," he wrote, "to have an amicable settlement by constitutional means. Representations were sent to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, to yourself, to the minister of States and to Sh. Abdullah. Interviews were sought for with some of them, but such requests on most occasions were not granted. Conferences were held from time to time and after mature deliberations the view points of the Praja Parishad and others supporting it were publicly expressed. Apparently the authorities concerned paid no heed to such manifestations of public opinion and even treated them with contempt. On the other hand some of the matters regarding which acute controversy had been raised were proceeded with by the authorities themselves with undue haste, thus precipitating a crisis."

After referring to the extent of repression that was going on in Jammu he pleaded "It is high time that both you and Sh Abdullah should realise that this movement will not be suppressed by force or re-pression. In some of your recent utterances you have laid great stress on the need for appreciating each other's point of view, on tolerance, on carrying people with Government not by force but by goodwill and understanding. Yet when it comes to actual administration, it appears that the same old methods which used to disfigure British administration are still in operation, some time with even greater vehemence than before. The problem of Jammu and Kashmir should not be treated as a party issue. It is a national problem and every effort should be made to present a united front."

"Very often," he continued, "the issues are sought to be clouded by referring to the alleged past activities of Praja Parishad. For obvious reasons it will be better to deal with the actual issues on their merits. I would earnestly urge upon you to consider the effect of the movement on the rest of India. The State of Jammu and Kashmir is a part of the Indian Union and as such it is perfectly open to the people of the rest of India to interest themselves in the affairs of the State."

Analysing the causes underlying unrest in the minds of the people of Jammu he wrote that people of Jammu "are not prepared to sever their connection with India under any circumstances, plebiscite or no plebiscite. The greater the delay in having this

moot question (of accession) decided once for all the greater will be complications and possibilities of unrest.

Once it is settled that a final decision has been taken on the question of accession, two matters will have to be taken up. One relates to recovery of one third territory of Jammu and Kashmir which is now in occupation of Pakistan. How are we going to get this back. You have always evaded this question. The time has come when we should know what exactly you propose to do about this matter. It will be a sort of national disgrace and humiliation if we fail to regain this lost portion of our territory.

The other question relates to the extent of accession of Jammu and Kashmir State with India. If the people of Jammu demand that the accession should be on the same lines as in the case of other States, they do not say anything that is arbitrary or extra-ordinary. This is their natural wish and they are guided by patriotic and national motives."

"Repression", he added, "will be no answer to the fundamental question that the people of Jammu are asking, namely, have they not the inherent right to demand that they should be governed by the same constitution as has been made applicable to the rest of India? Ek Nishan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan—one flag, one constitution, one president—represents a highly patriotic and emotional slogan with which people are carrying on their struggle".

"People who are facing sacrifices and suffering cheerfully", he further wrote, "are not enemies of India or of Jammu and Kashmir. It is absurd to dub them as friends of Pakistan."

He concluded his letter with an appeal: "Pray do not stand on false prestige or imitate methods followed by British administrators who thought that by ruthless suppression they could solve any matter affecting the rights and liberties of the people". He wound up the letter with a request: "If you want me to discuss the matter personally with you and Sh. Abdullah, you may let me know and I shall gladly abide by your wish."

II

He sent a copy of this letter to Sh. Abdullah also with a covering letter which said: "The issues at stake affect not only your state but the whole of India and I hope you will move before the situation further deteriorates".

III

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in his reply dated New Delhi, January 10, 1953, wrote, "I am quite prepared and I am sure that Sh. Abdullah is prepared, to consider any grievances of the Jammu people and try to rectify them where this is possible. But the demands of the Praja Parishad are basic constitutional issues which cannot be given effect to for obvious reasons. They are trying to decide a very difficult and complicated constitutional question by methods of war. It does not require much thought to

demonstrate that this method cannot yield those results, whatever the merits may be."

"You should know" he continued, "how anxious I am to settle finally the whole of J and K state issue. That is not only because of the State itself but also because of its larger repercussions in India. But this issue has got tremendously complicated and there is no magic way of solving it by decree or Act of Parliament as some people seem to imagine."

"The right way to approach Jammu question", he concluded, "is to stop the agitation completely and then deal with any grievances that may exist. I hope you will exercise your influence with the Praja Parishad in this direction."

Regarding Dr. Mookerji's request for personal discussion he did not show any enthusiasm. "I shall gladly meet you if you wish" he wrote. "But I am going away to Bombay and Hyderabad and shall be away for about ten days or so".

IV

Dr. Mookerji again wrote to Pt. Nehru from Calcutta on the 3rd of February. It began with a reference to Pt. Nehru's reply to his first letter and the speeches he and Sh. Abdullah had been delivering since then and said, "I have no desire to carry on a protracted correspondence with you in this matter. But the issues involved are so serious that I am taking the liberty of writing to you again. One common feature of (Your) Speeches", he wrote, "has been an abundance of abuses and vituperation which you

have poured forth on those who differ from you. You have ascribed to us all sorts of base motives and have even dubbed us as betrayers of the country's interests. I have no desire to emulate you in this respect. Outbursts of anger and passion will not help us in solving any big problem. It is obvious that we do not see eye to eye on this momentous issue. Let us, however, try to argue with each other and proceed logically and see whether any solution can be reached "

"I have read your speeches and those of Sh. Abdullah with considerable care, but unfortunately they evade the real issues "

Referring to his oft-repeated charge of communalism he wrote : "This is a most unfair charge and unconsciously you have been recently indulging in such attacks only to hide the weakness of your case. Our approach to the problem is actuated by the highest national and patriotic considerations. The solution that we are asking for is far from communal, nor does it seek to disunite or disintegrate India. I would beg of you," he appealed to him, "to think in your cool moments how in your life's history your failure to stand against Muslim communalism in India has resulted in disastrous consequences."

Presenting his views regarding Kashmir, point by point, he wrote to him that he had got to keep in mind and settle following points :

1 'That Parishad has considerable popular backing. As one who knows mass mind, you will

realise that no popular movement can be crushed by force.

2. "The first question raised is when and how will the accession of the State of J & K to India be finally settled? My own suggestion has been that the Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir, which has been elected on adult franchise, may accept a resolution accepting final accession and the matter may be considered as irrevocably decided so far as India is concerned. Please, he asked, be specific on this issue and let us know that if this suggestion is not acceptable what is your alternative proposal for finalising occasion."

3. "We do not want Partition of the State. But you seem to forget that J & K State has already been partitioned by Pakistan and the real question is whether you and Sh. Abdullah propose to acquiesce in this partition. You have always evaded this question. Please do not side-track the issue and let the public of India know when, if at all, we are going to get back this part of our cherished territory.

4. The third point relates to the subject in respect of which accession will take place. The Praja Parishad wants, and we whole heartedly agree, that the entire State of J & K should be governed in accordance with the same constitution that applies to the rest of India. Is there anything communal or reactionary or anti-national about it? It is amazing, he added, "how the move of separatism pursued by Sh. Abdullah and his colleagues is

being applauded by you as national and patriotic and the genuine desire on the part of Praja Parishad to secure the fundamental unity and integrity of India and to be governed as common Indian citizens is being dubbed as treacherous conduct. Your letter and your speeches give no satisfactory answer to these basic points raised by the Praja Parishad.

5. There are many grievances of the people of Jammu regarding internal administration. Delay in dealing with them is intensifying the agitation.

6. It is undoubtedly true that we should do nothing which may weaken India's position or strengthen the hand of our enemy. This aspect you, of all persons, must bear in mind as Prime Minister of India."

He concluded this well reasoned letter with the suggestion that the only way to bring Jammu movement to an end is "to release all those who have been arrested and to call a conference where all the problems can be discussed in an atmosphere of calmness and with the sole desire to arrive at decisions which will be fair and just to all concerned. Repression, imprisonment, lathi-charge and bullets", he added, "will never crush this movement. In fact it will spread, go deeper and affect India as well."

In the end he informed Pt. Nehru that his Working Committee was meeting in Delhi on the 6th, of February to discuss the Kashmir situation and he asked him, "If you feel that it will be better

for me to come and have a talk with you on the morning of 6th, you may kindly send me a message at my Delhi address”.

V

Like his previous letter to Pt. Nehru he forwarded a copy of this letter also to Sh. Abdullah with a covering letter in which he wrote : “It is tragic you shall completely misunderstand those who are differing from you and are proceeding in a manner which may be disastrous to India including the State of Jammu and Kashmir. I still hope you will be able to rise equal to the occasion and find a way for peaceful settlement.”

VI

Sh. Abdullah sent Dr. Mookerji a reply on the 4th of February, from Jammu Tawi. He also sent a number of pamphlets issued by his government to justify his policies and his stand regarding full accession of the State to India. He laid special emphasis on Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which, he held, gave special position to the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

VII

Pt. Nehru replied to Dr. Mookerji's letter of 3rd February on the fifth of February. He wrote :

“According to my thinking the agitation of the Praja Parishad is not only communal but is supported by communal and narrow minded elements in India. Believing this as I do, the only course that I can

follow is to resist this utterly misconceived agitation That is our Government's opinion and they propose to adhere to it and pursue that policy "

'You suggest", he further wrote, "the release of those who have been arrested and a conference, presumably with them What you suggest means, at the present juncture, the Government of India as also of the State ceasing to function and handing over authority to those who have challenged them on these basic constitutional issues by an agitation which has become increasingly violent and subversiveIf indeed the agitation continues it will be for us to consider what other and further steps Government take in the matter "

Referring to Dr Mookerji request for a personal meeting he wrote, "I regret that tomorrow and for the next day or two I am completely occupied I confess also that, reading your letter, I find it a little difficult to discover any common ground for a talk "

VIII

Pt Nehru's letter referred to above left little scope for further correspondence The arrest under Public Safety Act of a number of the members of the Jan Sangh Working Committee on the eve of its meeting at Delhi also showed that government had banged the door on a negotiated settlement of the issue But Dr Mookerji had unlimited patience He was also sware that some distinguished people had been using their good offices with Pt Nehru to prevail upon him to rise above his

prejudices and help in finding a way out of the impasse. So he wrote to him another letter on the 8th of February. Referring to his reply to his earlier letter he wrote: "Apparently you are not in a mood even to understand the views of those who differ from you, for less to talk to them. I am sure in your cooler moments you yourself will regret that you could not reply to arguments with arguments but had only to cast motives and aspersions against those who differed from your official policy".

"I and many others," he continued, "honestly feel that demand on the part of a section of our countrymen living in the State of Jammu and Kashmir to see that their State is finally integrated with India and is governed according to the constitution of Free India is not an unpatriotic or disintegrating or communal move."

Referring to Pt. Nehru's warning about his government taking "other and further steps", which apparently meant more repression, Dr. Mookerji wrote: "Let me assure you we are ready to face the consequences of your wrath and fury. The arrest of a number of our workers in the Punjab yesterday under the Preventive Detention Act is an indication of the things that are to come. It reflects a strange functioning of democracy in our country where Preventive Detention Act has to be made use of for curbing legitimate political opposition."

Referring to Pt. Nehru's fears about international complications, he wrote: "You will forgive me if I fail to appreciate your repeated reference to possible

international complications as a result of Jammu movement. No one today will claim that your handling of the Kashmir Problem has enhanced our international prestige or has won for us wide international support and sympathy. On the other hand your policy in this behalf has added to complications both at home and abroad. Statesmanship required that you should examine the whole matter dispassionately and instead of being haunted by false internationalism firmly create conditions for national solidarity based on a fair adjustment of different view points and interests. If you succeed in this it will give you greater strength and prestige even in international dealings."

He concluded this letter with another fervent appeal to Pt. Nehru to rise above partisan spirit and take the initiative for settling the issue. "I only wish," Dr. Mookerji, wrote, "to close this correspondence with my deep regret that your replies have a painful resemblance with similar communications which Heads of British Government in India, carried away by a sense of power and prestige, used to address while refusing to take note of the manifestations of the will of the people. The only difference is that while we disagree on some vital matters, we are children of the same Mother, and with a little good will and tolerance on both sides we should have been able to avoid a serious cleavage. If you feel in the country's paramount interest that you should set aside questions of prestige and partisanship and explore the possibilities of a

peaceful settlement, our whole hearted cooperation will be always at your disposal. Even at this late hour I firmly believe this is possible and it is you who can take the initiative."

IX

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru's reply to the above letter, which he sent on the 10th of February, was couched in some what restrained language and showed a little desire to find a way out of the impasse. "I have no doubt" he wrote, "that you wish well to India, but the fact remains that our conceptions of what is well for India appear to differ. Because of this our past lives have moved largely in different spheres. Neither of us can wipe-out or ignore that past which has produced the present. I consider the communal approach as inherently bad, narrow and injurious to the individual, the group and the nation. You object to my using the word communal and deny my charge. Obviously we think differently and our actions are presumably the result of our thinking."

"However", he continued, "all this does not help much in the present situation. I can assure you that I want peace in India with all my heart. That is prerequisite for any work to be done. If I could venture to advise you, I would suggest that you exercise your influence to put an end to this agitation in Jammu."

X

Dr. Mookerji welcomed this change of tone and in his letter of the 12th of February, he suggested to

Pt. Nehru a concrete procedure for settling the issue.

"It is my belief", he wrote "that there is and there should be much in common between you and me regarding the real needs of the country. We may, however, honestly agree to differ in respect of some vital matters. But even in this sphere, there is no reason why we should not try to understand each other's view point without taking recourse to mutual recrimination or imputing base motives to each other "

"You have been good enough" he further wrote, "to ask me to exercise my influence to put an end to this agitation I am prepared to do so provided you and Sh Abdullah create suitable conditions for giving effect to it.

The only way this can be done is to make the sponsors of the movement appreciate that you and Sh Abdullah are prepared to discuss all matters with them with an open mind and arrive at decisions which would meet their legitimate demands I would suggest that you and Sh Abdullah should meet some of the leaders preferably in Delhi If this offer is communicated to them they will, I hope, agree to suspend the movement. If on the other hand you feel that this procedure may create some complications unless some understanding is previously reached regarding the possibilities of ultimate agreement on the main issues and withdrawal of the movement, we may have a discussion on the several points raised and see what should be

a fair approach to their solution. Naturally I cannot commit the Praja Parishad, but knowing as I do their minds to some extent, I can make some suggestions for your consideration. If there is a general agreement, I may send a communication to Pt. Prem Nath Dogra giving him my advice.

The points for consideration are as follows :

1. Finality of accession to India through a resolution to be adopted by the Constituent Assembly of the State.

2. Adoption by the State of the provisions of Indian Constitution regarding such matters as Fundamental Rights, Citizenship, Financial integration, Abolition of Customs duty, Supreme Court, Emergency Powers of President and conduct of elections. These are to be implemented within a stated time.

3. In respect of the rest of the Indian Constitution, Sh. Abdullah should indicate what deviations, if any, he desires to be made. These are to be considered on their merits,

4. Jammu and Kashmir Constitution as finally agreed will be a part of the Indian Constitution.

5. Provincial autonomy to Jammu and Ladakh without changes of boundaries.

6. Acceptance of supremacy of the Indian flag.

7. Policy regarding liberation and occupation of the Pakistan held territory.

8. Commission of Enquiry with a majority of judges from outside the State to go into all grievances including Dharmartha Trust, excesses committed by police and compensation to the families of sufferers, especially who have been shot dead.

9. Restoration of pensions, properties etc. to people against whom confiscation orders might have been passed.

None of the matters mentioned above is incapable of reasonable solution if both sides proceed with an open mind. If you feel that my approach is correct we can have a detailed discussions and decide what course should be taken in the best interests of Kashmir and the country as a whole."

"You and Sh. Abdullah", he concluded, "can well rise equal to the occasion without standing on false prestige and create an atmosphere which will make it possible for all parties irrespective of other differences to put forward our national demand on Kashmir issue. I hope you will appreciate the spirit in which the letter is written and take action to bring the impasse to an end".

XI

Pt. Nehru sent a non committal reply on the 12th of February, to Dr. Mookerji's above letter. He took shelter under the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir State which alone, he said, could settle the problem.

"Even in States other than Jammu and Kashmir", he wrote, "we have to respect Provincial autonomy and though "we give advice to our colleagues there, we do not interfere. No State Government can carry on if it is over-ridden by the Central authority".

But he did not slam the door. "I am sure" he wrote, "that the right course is for this agitation to be withdrawn and an attempt made on all sides to bring about normality and goodwill. That is the basis of any progress and removal of grievances or disabilities."

XII

Realising that Pt. Nehru would not move in the matter without the approval of Sh. Abdullah, Dr. Mookerji addressed another letter to Sh. Abdullah on the 13th of February. He appealed to him to not to drag in what Praja Parishad and its leaders might have done in the past in the present discussion because "it is not safe to base one's present attitude towards grave political issues solely on past relationship with one's opponent's", and added, "I do not know intimately about your past but, I have seen some papers and documents. You yourself started as a leader of a communal party." (Dr. Mookerji was referring to secret correspondence between Sh. Abdullah on the one side and the Khalifa of Ahmedi Sect and some officers of the Political Department on the other during 1930-35 which throws lurid light on Sh. Abdullah's role as a

stooge of the British in early years of his political career) 'And yet', he added, "it would be highly improper to judge your present aims by making elaborate researches into your past history starting from Aligarh "

He pointed out to him that India had been torn into two by the two nation theory "You are now developing a three nation theory, the third being the Kashmiri nation These are dangerous symptoms and are not good for your state or for the whole of India "

He appealed to him once again to rise equal to the occasion and take initiative to settle the issue "I would beg of you" he wrote, "to not to stand on false prestige but to agree to discuss all disputes with the leaders of the Praja Parishad even at this late stage "

XIII

At the same time he addressed another letter to Pt Nehru in reply to his letter of the 12th of February, in which he specifically told him, "What you and Sh Abdullah have to decide first is whether you are willing to talk to the Praja Parishad leaders I would implore you to do so "

He suggested, 'Both of you should agree to meet some selected representatives of Praja Parishad and this should be followed by an immediate suspension of the movement The process of bringing about normality and goodwill, I trust, will then automatically follow If their view points are met in a fair,

and just manner, there is no reason why they should not reciprocate."

Regarding points about finality of accession about which Pt. Nehru had written that no public declaration could be made in view of the talks then going on in Geneva, he suggested that if assurance was given to them about it he would himself ask them "not to press for any open declaration at this stage". But at the same time he pointed out to him that "really speaking accession was not the issue on which we went to the U. N. O."

Regarding liberation and reoccupation of Pakistan held territory also, he wrote, "no public declaration need be made, but a fuller appreciation of the situation can be made as a result of your discussion with the people concerned."

Regarding the applicability of the Provisions of the constitution he suggested that they should set aside all technicalities and agree to proceed in a practical manner. "I do not think", he wrote, "we will have any difficulty in agreeing to the minimum number of subjects which will be immediately applied to J & K. As regards the rest we may postpone consideration till we know what specific proposals the State authorities have to make for the purpose".

He concluded his letter by repeating the suggestion for a personal discussion. "I am leaving for Calcutta early tomorrow morning and shall be back here on Monday afternoon. I am willing to come

and see you sometime today, if you feel that at this stage a personal discussion may be helpful. I shall be glad to come and see you any time today that suits your convenience except between 6 and 7.30 P. M."

XIV

The hopeful turn that the correspondence was taking was not to continue. Pt. Nehru in his reply of the 15th February informed Doctor Mookerji that he did not read his letter till late at night and so could not make use of his suggestion about a personal meeting. They could have met on Dr. Mookerji's return from Calcutta. But it appeared that in the meanwhile Sh. Abdullah had torpedoed the entire basis of talks. He was not prepared to meet Praja Parishad leaders across a table and Pt. Nehru had not the courage to go against his wishes. He again emphasised the basic difference in his approach and that of Dr. Mookerji. "Between these two basic approaches" he wrote, "there is no common ground. Subject to our holding fast to the principles which have guided us, and to the policies which we have pursued, the Government will gladly do all in its power to bring about normality and peaceful cooperation in the Jammu and Kashmir State. But this agitation was not of our seeking and the first step should be to withdraw the agitation completely."

XV

This letter of Pt. Nehru showed that he was again reverting to the realm of recrimination and

abstract theories from which Dr. Mookerji had been trying to draw him out. But Dr. Mookerji was not the man to lose heart so long as there was some possibility of success. He addressed to him another, his last, letter on the 17th of February, in a final bid to pin him down to something concrete towards the settlement of the issue.

“When we start talking about mental approach”, he wrote, “unrelated to specific matters, discussion takes an abstract turn and imaginary charges are hurled. When a movement continues for several weeks,” he added, “resulting in loss of lives and various kinds of alleged oppression and excesses, it cannot be withdrawn unless there is some basis for appreciating that the objectives for which the struggle had been launched would be properly considered by the authorities. You will also realise that it is not for me, or for anybody else in India, to withdraw the movement. This must be done by the persons who have started it and many of them are now behind the prison bars. They have to be approached on the subject and some idea has to be communicated to them of what is to happen in future.

After considering the matter fully and also your determination that the movement must be withdrawn completely as a first step, may I suggest the following procedure for your consideration :

1. The movement is withdrawn.
2. Order for release of prisoners is given and there will be no victimisation.

3 You and Sh Abdullah call a conference say, after a fortnight, where all political and constitutional matters are discussed with an open mind

4 Both parties reiterate that the unity of the State of J and K will be maintained and that the Principle of autonomy will apply to the province of Jammu as a whole and of course also to Ladakh and Kashmir Valley

5 The new constitution to come into force as soon as possible and elections to take place within, say, six months

6 The question of flag is to be clarified and the Indian flag should be in use every day just as is done in all other parts of India

7 Implementation of the July agreement will be made at the next session of J & K Constituent Assembly after the issues left vague have been properly clarified In respect of fundamental rights, citizenship, Supreme Court, President's powers, financial integration and conduct of elections provisions of the Indian constitution will apply Exception however may be made with regard to conditions for acquisition of land

8 The terms of reference of the commission of enquiry will be widened and all grievances will be examined by it

9 The commission now includes 4 person, Chief Justice, Accountant General, Chief Conservator of Forests and the Revenue Commissioner The last three gentlemen are administrative officers under

J and K State and they can hardly inspire confidence. The commission should be reconstituted with 2 Judges from India and Chief Justice of J and K, so that its impartiality and representative character may not be questioned.

10. Regarding finality of accession and other political matters, the conference will consider these points from every aspect and agreement ought to be reached which will be to the best interest of India including J and K.

If there is some agreement as regards the general approach to the problem, contact will have to be made with Pt. Prem Nath Dogra. It will be for him to take the ultimate decision. Of course we will advise him what in our opinion should be done for a peaceful and speedy solution. I am sure he and others will not take up an obstructive attitude and will be ready to cooperate in every possible way."

He concluded his letter with the appeal, "If you feel that the above suggestions are worthy of your serious consideration and they should be discussed personally, I shall be glad to come to see you at any time convenient to you. If, however", he added, "you have finally decided that the movement is to be withdrawn unconditionally and there can be no understanding regarding any other point then I shall have to conclude with deep regret that I have failed in my efforts".

XVI

He received no reply to this letter nor there was any response to his appeal for a personal meeting.

This change of attitude became clear to him when he received the letter of Sh. Abdullah dated February 18.

Sh. Abdullah explicitly wrote: "I will frankly state that the present leadership of the Praja Parishad is avowedly disruptive and communal in its aim and purpose. Consequently, it will not be possible for us to have any common meeting ground with them."

XVII

Dr. Mookerji wrote to Sh. Abdullah his last letter on the 23rd of February in which he explained to him the whole constitutional position of the State, vis a vis India, as also of Sh. Abdullah himself, vis a vis the Maharaja, as it had developed since the accession of the State of India, and warned him of the dangers of the path he was following: "I have been unable to understand", he wrote "your refusal even to talk to the representatives of the Praja Parishad. If you, who represent the dominant political party in the State and in whose hands the powers of Government rest today, feel determined to crush a particular political party that may be opposing you, and to adopt force and other methods for the purpose, then you cease to be a democratic leader. You then become a fascist. But even then your success is doubtful, for in all such cases history has proved that the movement goes underground and ultimately the mighty dictator loses the battle of true freedom".

The correspondence clearly showed that sweet reasonableness of Dr. Mookerji had failed to have

any effect on Pt. Nehru and particularly on his conscience keepers in New Delhi and Srinagar. Pt. Nehru was perhaps not well informed about the popular character of the Praja Parishad movement and the wide spread sympathy it had evoked in India. Moreover he and his advisers perhaps erroneously thought that Dr. Mookerji was a man of words but not of action. Conscious of their steam-roller majority, they thought they could safely turn a deaf ear to his words of reason. But they were soon to realise that he was equally good at action for the causes he held dear.

THE MAN OF ACTION

The failure of the protracted correspondence to bring about a change of heart in Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru and Sh. Abdullah without which no fair and just settlement of the Jammu impasse was possible, created genuine regret in all patriotic hearts. Some distinguished people like Sir S. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of India, who had high regard for Dr. Mookerji, his burning patriotism and leonine heart which could go to any length to effect a compromise with his own people, as he thought Pt. Nehru to be, for the national good, tried to act as mediaries. But unlike the British Viceroys who, with all their authoritarian and bureaucratic outlook, had had training in democracy in their own homeland and therefore could be amenable to reason and sober counsels if they came from people for whom they had respect, Pt. Nehru was living in the atmosphere of the Mughal Court and only psychopants could catch his ears. Moreover, there was no escape from the veto power that he had given to Sh. Abdullah. So his efforts failed. And where Radha Krishnan failed no one else could hope to succeed.

But Dr. Mookerji was not the man to sit on his oars because he had failed to persuade Pt. Nehru to see reason. The reports of the reign of terror

that had been let loose in Jammu were daily reaching him. He sincerely believed the cause of the Praja Parishad to be the cause of Indian unity. It was his own cause and the cause of every patriotic Indian. Right was on the side of the Parishad, might on the side of the Government. The path of duty was clear before him. As a Karam-Yogi he had tried what Samarth Ram Das called "Dharm Shakti" and "Niti Shakti", but in vain.

The "Rajya Shakti", the argument of power, which Samarth Ram Das advocated as the last measure to achieve a noble end, he did not possess. But he was a democrat. He knew that the power which had intoxicated the Congress rulers of the country and the monster they had raised in Kashmir, came from the common people who were the ultimate masters of the country. So he decided to make a direct appeal to them so that such a strong public opinion in the country might be created as it would be impossible for the Government to ignore with impunity.

But the Government would not allow him to do even that. They had already taken steps to deprive Bharatiya Jan Sangh and its allied parties of their democratic right to educate and organise public opinion about an admittedly vital national problem. The Punjab government in its over anxiety to prove its loyalty to Pt. Nehru, had already struck at the Jan Sangh and detained most of its top leaders under Preventive Detention Act. It had promulgated Section 144 in almost all districts which, in Practice,

was meant for Jan Sangh only. The spokesmen of the Congress and the hired agents of Sh. Abdullah were allowed to carry on their propaganda against the Praja Parishad and Jan Sangh without let or hinderance. The metropolis was not to lag behind. Soon after meetings and processions were banned in Delhi as well and there too the ban was meant mainly for Jan Sangh and its supporter.

This created a new situation. Preservation and protection of civil liberties had been one of the main tasks set before himself by Dr. Mookerji from the day of his entry into public life. He had fought for civil liberties of his people in Bengal even when he himself was a member of Bengal government. It was his firm conviction that democracy could not function without civil liberties. He, therefore, looked upon ban on peaceful public meetings and processions in Delhi and elsewhere as a challenge to democracy. It amounted to adding insult to the injury being caused by the government's un-national and repressive policy towards the Praja Parishad.

To protest against the growing repression in Jammu and to demonstrate people's will to protect their democratic right of free association and free expression of their views on national problems, he gave a call to observe March 5, 1953 as Jammu and Kashmir day all over the country. The Programme of the day was to include public meetings and peaceful processions for explaining to the people the stand of Jan Sangh and allied parties on Kashmir.

That the public opinion was appreciating the view point represented by Dr. Mookerji was proved by the results of four bye-elections to Delhi State Assembly which were held just when Pt. Nehru was spurning the appeals of Dr. Mookerji and saying: "We have no intention of abdicating and running away from the duty that has been entrusted to us by the people and the Parliament."

Jan Sangh-Mahasabha combine captured three seats while it lost the fourth by only a few votes to a millionaire sitting Congress member. Kashmir policy had been made the main issue of the election by both the parties and the Congress had, besides making full use of official machinery and patronage, brought a number of Kashmir ministers and M. Ps to help it.

Had the Congress rulers been responsive to public opinion they should have realised that the people had begun to disapprove the policy they had been following in regard to Jammu and Kashmir and they should have adopted a more realistic attitude towards the Parishad and its supporters in India. But that was not to be.

In the mean time Dr. Mookerji undertook a tour of western districts of U. P. to explain Jan Sangh stand on Kashmir. He visited Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur, Hardwar and Dehra Dun. At Dehra Dun he performed the opening ceremony of a four mile long irrigation canal built by Jan Sangh workers with the help of the local people. Every where

lakhs of people heard him and assured him of their support

As fifth of March approached, the authorities in Delhi became nervous. They had been watching the rising tempo of public opinion in favour of Jan Sangh and they realised that the meeting announced for the day was going to be held inspite of the ban. So they thought discretion to be the better part of valour and lifted the ban just before the meeting was scheduled to begin.

The meeting was held in the Queens Garden. It was presided over by Swami Karpatri ji and was addressed by Shri N C Chatterji and Pt Mauli Chandra Sharma besides Dr Mookerji. The atmosphere was tense. Few among the half a lakh people who had assembled there knew that the ban on the meetings had been lifted and that the meeting they were attending was a lawful one. They had come with the determination to suffer for their convictions. Many had brought wet pieces of cloth with them to protect themselves against the effect of tear gas.

Dr Mookerji made one of the most powerful speeches of his life that evening. Every word seemed to come from the depth of his heart. He explained his efforts to place the cause of the Praja Parishad which, in its ultimate analysis was the cause of the whole of India before the powers that be. He wanted them to call the leaders of Parishad and explain to them their point of view if they could not do anything else just then. He had implored them to not to treat the patriots

of Jammu as untouchables. But all his efforts had failed. It was now for the democratic people of India, he told his audience, to assert their right to be heard in the interest of the nation as a whole.

Other speakers compared the role played by Dr. Mookerji to that of Lord Krishna who had gone to the extreme length to persuade the ruling "Kurus" to do justice to the 'Pandvas'. That was a correct appraisal of the situation, Dr. Mookerji's advocacy of the cause of the Praja Parishad had been no less sincere than that of the Pandavas by Lord Krishna, and the prtience and tact he had shown could not be surpassed.

The only path open to him then was to give to the people, who looked to him for lead and guidance, a call to share the suffering of the people of Jammu by starting a peaceful and non-violent struggle in the rest of India also in the hope that that might change the heart of Pt. Nehru some day or, failing that, awaken the conscience of the nation to the wrong his mistaken policies were doing to the country as a whole. The fighter in him urged him to give this call. But the democrat in him wanted to avoid it, as far as possible, because he thought that it would be an abnormal thing in a democratic set up where normally the authorities should be amenable to the pressure of the public opinion.

But a pre-requisite for that was that the democratic government should allow the public opinion to be expressed and mobilised. Dr. Mookerji still

had some hope that the democrat in Nehru may assert itself against the Fascist that, he thought, he was fast becoming. So he decided to test him once again much against the wishes of the people who were looking for a call of action. It was announced that the ashes of some of the victims of the Police firing in Jammu shall be taken out in procession on the next day, the 6th of March, from the Railway Station and that the procession would be led by Dr. Mookerji, Shri N. C. Chatterji and Shri Nand Lal Sastri M. P. The idea was to inform the people of the extent and nature of repression that was going on in Jammu.

But just before the procession was going to be taken out the next day, ban was re-imposed. Dr. Mookerji and his companions, however, reached Chandni Chowk from where they were to lead the procession at 4 P. M., the appointed time. But as soon as they reached there they were taken into custody under section 188 of the I. P. C., on the charge of contravening the order against public meetings and processions.

The news of his arrest created a stir in the country. Crowded protest meetings and Hartals were observed all over India. In Delhi large crowds paraded the streets. They were lathi charged and tear gassed a number of times.

His arrest became a signal for the start of a peaceful and non-violent struggle which was as much in sympathy with the struggle of the Praja

Parishad in Jammu as in protest against the suppression of civil liberties in India.

Unfortunately for the Government, the magistrate who arrested Dr. Mookerji in his over-zeal failed to fulfil the elementary demands of law regarding the presentation of his august prisoners before the court of law within the fixed time. Babu Ram Narain Singh M.P., therefore, filed a habeas corpus petition before the Supreme Court which ordered Dr. Mookerji and his companions to be set at liberty on the 11th of March.

But a charge under section 188 was framed against them and a regular case was instituted. Dr. Mookerji did not like to defend himself because he asserted that freedom of association and expression was his fundamental democratic right and that he had committed no offence by attempting to join the Procession. But Shri N. C. Chatterji wanted the defence to be put up. His counsel also raised some technical law points which had to be referred to the High Court and which unnecessarily prolonged the trial.

At the time of his release by the Supreme Court Dr. Mookerji agreed to execute a personal bond for Rs. 100 in respect of the case under section 188. He had thought that the trial would be soon completed and he would get the usual sentence for which he was prepared. But the prolongation of trial made him uneasy. He wanted to be with his younger companions who had been taken into custody along with him and who were living in jail as

under—trials. The reports of repression from Jammu as also from different parts of India pained him. He wanted to share the suffering of the Satyagrahis by being with them in jail. He, therefore, tried a number of times to surrender his bail and go back to jail. But the government wanted to avoid his return to jail because that would have created a stir in and outside the parliament. So Doctor Mookerji had to remain out much against his will.

But he made the best use of this enforced liberty to educate his countrymen about his stand about Kashmir and the circumstances which had forced first the Praja Parishad and then the Jan Sangh and its allied parties to take resort to the path of suffering and self sacrifice. He visited Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur, Calcutta, Bombay, Bangalore, Patiala and Patna during the months of March and April. Everywhere literally lacs of people turned out to listen to his voice of reason and call for action. The people had begun to appreciate the stand he had taken on Kashmir and had begun to see in him the alternative leadership that the country so badly needed to save it from megalomaniac dictatorship of one man.

Every where he received assurances of cooperation from the big and small, the rich and the poor.

A popular slogan of those days was :

नहरू ष्यो-ष्यो गरजेगा ।

जनसंघ त्यो-त्यो बरसेगा ॥

(The more Nehru will shout at us, the stronger Jan Sangh will grow). At Bombay more than a lac of people assembled at Chaupaty sands to listen to him within a few hours of his unexpected arrival there. At Patiala he thrilled the people by his unequivocal declaration that he looked upon Sikhs as a part and parcel of Hindu Society. Therefore, their unity with other Hindus could not be made a matter for bargaining. He asked them to talk as Hindus and have all they wanted,

The demand for him from different parts of the country was so pressing and persistent that it was not physically possible for him to meet it. So his message was taken to those provinces which he could not visit by Shri Atal Behari Bajpai, who played the role of his personal representative with distinction.

The Satyagraha also showed in action his great qualities of leadership, the capacity to inspire love and confidence in the common workers, to judge people and to distinguish the genuine from the spurious. He had the knack of winning the hearts of all those who came in contact with him, particularly the common worker, by a winning smile, a word of cheer and wit and his own earnestness which was contagious.

He was very particular about the work in Delhi, the capital of the country and hub of all political activity. It is why he had selected it to be the main centre of Satyagraha. He was confident that Delhi would give a befitting response to his call. He,

therefore, felt shocked when a person holding a responsible position in Delhi State Jan Sangh told him "in private" one fine morning that Delhi was exhausted and that he should withdraw the movement. He listened to him calmly and as soon as he left, summoned Shri Din Dayal-Upadhyaya, his energetic General Secretary, who had been conducting and controlling the whole movement and told him the report he had received.

It puzzled Din Dayal also. He knew his strength too well to believe it. But before he could utter a word Dr. Mookerji spoke out : "I feel he has given me this report to cover his own cowardice and inactivity. Why have you put such a weak and selfish person on a responsible position." After that day he never took that person in confidence.

But this case was an exception to prove the rule. The movement revealed to him the fine stuff that the R. S. S. trained workers were. He had so far heard about their devotion to duty and spirit of self-sacrifice. Now he saw these qualities in action. Young men like Durga Das Varma, the underground General Secretary of the Praja Parishad, who visited Delhi thrice in the course of the movement to meet him, Shri Rameshwar Das who risked his everything to do his duty, Shri V. P. Joshi who came up to his expectations in every way after he had left on his last and tragic journey to Jammu, Shri Vijay Kumar, the Joint Secretary of Delhi State Jan Sangh and Shri Jagdish Abrol who between themselves organised the whole movement in Delhi, appeared to

him the type of men that can make a fine job of anything entrusted to them. The response from U. P., which alone sent about 2000 Satyagrahis, confirmed the faith he had developed in the leaders and workers of Jan Sangh in U. P. He would often tell Nana Deshmukh humorously, "Half of the central cabinet comes from U. P. because they say, U. P. is equal to Bharat. So your contributions to the Satyagraha must be equal to that of the rest of Bharat." U. P. did fulfil his expectations.

A distinctive feature of this movement was that the rank and file that joined it came from educated and politically conscious section of the society. It was estimated that out of about 10000 Satyagrahis who courted arrest all over the country about a thousand were professional men, graduates, doctors, lawyers teachers and professors and about three hundred paid income tax. Quite a large number of Satyagrahis came from villages. A number of other distant places. Batches of Satyagrahis came from Maharashtra, Bombay, Andhra and Karnatak as well. This fact gave a lie direct to the Congress propaganda that it was a localised affair in which the people of the country in general were not interested.

As the movement gained momentum in Punjab, Delhi, U. P. and other parts of India, Sh. Abdullah's Government intensified the repression in Jammu where a no tax campaign had also begun. The Dogra police was replaced by Kashmiri Police and

Militia, which was predominantly Muslim. They let loose a reign of terror in the countryside of Jammu. The villagers were hounded out of their homes, their properties were looted and their women insulted. This sent a wave of indignation throughout Jammu. The patience of the warlike people, many of whom were ex-servicemen, came to a breaking point. They began to press the Parishad dictator, Durgas Das Verma, to allow them to meet violence by violence. "We are soldiers", a number of them wrote to him, "and have seen fighting in different parts of the world. We have been so far obeying your instruction to remain non-violent in face of all provocations. But we cannot remain non-violent spectators when our women are insulted before our very eyes."

The statement issued by a number of retired civilians including an ex-Inspector General of Police, who visited the scenes of such occurrences of their own, confirmed these reports.

This made Dr. Mookerji very uneasy. He did not want violence to break out in any case. He, therefore, decided to send two of his colleagues, Shri U. M. Trivedi Bar-at-Law, M. P. and Shri V. G. Deshpande M. P., to Jammu to see things for themselves and console the people. But the Defence Ministry refused to issue permits to them for entry into the State and when they expressed their intention to proceed even without permit, they were arrested under Preventive Detention Act at Jullundur in mid April.

Soon after a delegation of some retired ministers and high dignatories of the State visited Delhi. They again drew the attention of the people and Government of India to the fast deteriorating situation in Jammu. The situation there demanded immediate attention. The Government seemed to be utterly impervious to the appeals of even their friends and its false sense of prestige prevented it from taking any initiative in the matter. In view of this situation Dr. Mookerji began to think of his own going to Jammu to see things for himself and to meet people there including Sh. Abdullah, if possible, in an attempt to find a solution of the impasse.

But the continuous hearing of the case under section 188 in the court of the A. D. M., Delhi, stood in his way. He needed recess of at least a week to be able to visit Jammu. Before that he wanted to tour the Punjab for a couple of days because of the pressing and persistent requests from the workers of that State.

In the meanwhile he made his last appeal to Pt. Nehru in the course of his speech in the Parliament on the 26th of April, to rise to the occasion and take the initiative to settle the question. He told him that he would be satisfied if Pt. Nehru invited Pt. Premnath Dogra and explained to him his view point and difficulties instead of talking about them to him. But it had no effect on him. He appeared to be determined to crush Praja Parishad and the Jan Sangh as they had dared to chal-

lunge his might Just about that time I brought to his notice a prophecy published in "Filmindia" which said that he would replace Pt Nehru towards the end of 1953 Dr. Mookerji felt perturbed over it. ' It will further harden him (Pt. Nehru)" he remarked, " and make a solution more difficult "

Dr. Mookerji had seen how permit to visit Jammu had been refused to Shri Trivedi and Deshpande and prior to them to the fact finding mission consisting of a number of legislators, including the Deputy Speaker of Rajasthan, which he wanted to send to Jammu in January He was also aware of the fact that permit system had been introduced to prevent Pakistani agents and spies from entering Kashmir and that it could not be lawfully used to stop responsible men, like members of Parliament, to visit that State. He, therefore, wrote a letter to the Defence Minister asking him the legal position about the Permit System The Minister gave him no reply.

Before starting on what was to prove his last journey, he paid a hurried visit to Calcutta to pay his respects to his aged mother. On his way back he stopped for a day at Patna. There he expressed his intention of going to Jammu to his host, Shri Thakur Prasad Advocate. This came as a surprise to him His aged father who had served as Dewan in a number of Muslim States tried to dissuade Dr. Mookerji from going to Jammu. " I will never advise you", he pleaded, " to put yourself on the

mercy of Sh. Abdullah. My experience has taught me never to trust men of his tribe."

But Dr. Mookerji took his suggestion quite lightly. He was not the man to change his plan for fear. Thereupon the old man entreated: "Go, if you must. But please see that you do not take anything there unless it is first tasted by one whom you trust. One does not know the ways of Muslim rulers. They are capable of anything." Dr. Mookerji agreed to abide by his advice as far as possible.

Just a day before he left Prof. Johnson, Personal Secretary of Mr. Adlai Stevenson, the defeated Democrat candidate for American Presidency, who was then on a short visit to India, met him at his residence to fix an engagement for his chief. Engagement was fixed for 13th of May, by which time Dr. Mookerji was expected to be back in Delhi after spending two days in Jammu. But he had a premonition that he may not be able to keep the engagement. So he told Prof. Johnson while he was leaving him, "It is possible that I may not be able to keep the engagement. Anything may happen."

ON A MISSION OF PEACE

Thousands of full throated Jais to Bharat Mata and Bharat Kesri Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji rent the air as the passenger train carrying Dr. Mookerji to Punjab enroute to Jammu steamed out of the Delhi Railway Station at 6.30 A. M., on the 8th of May, 1953. The compartment in which he sat had been decorated with flowers and Jan Sangh flags. Vaidya Guru Datt, Shri Atal Behari Bajpai, Dr. Varman, Shri Tek Chand and the Present writer accompanied him in the same compartment. A few pressmen also joined us.

Just before his departure, he issued a statement explaining his purpose in going to Jammu. "The Satyagraha movement has been continuing in Jammu," he stated, "for nearly six months leading to the arrest of about 2500 persons and to the killing of more than 30 Satyagrahis by police firing. In Delhi and Punjab the movement has been going on for more than two months and has led to the arrest of more than 1700 Satyagrahis in these two and other adjoining States. In spite of all provocations and various types of repression and terrorisation, reminiscent of the British regime, the movement has remained non violent and free from any communal bias.

"Although the movement has remained confined to Delhi and some parts of the Punjab," the statement continued, "yet a large number of Satyagrahis are pouring into the capital of India from various parts of the country giving the movement an all India character. They are bringing with them the support and blessings of large sections of people living in the area's concerned, In Jammu, inspite of the iron curtain, people have not succumbed to fear and are ready to face the wrath and fury of the authorities whose repressive measures continue unabated."

Referring to the success that the movement had achieved it said: "During the last few weeks I have visited many parts of India and I have tried to place our view point before our country. I have found that slowly and steadily even those who did not fully support our movement are realising the grave implications of the mistaken policy of Mr. Nehru towards Jammu and Kashmir. From that point of view our movement has been successful. It has aroused wide spread public support in favour of the basic objective of the movement.

Explaining why he had not applied for permit the statement said: "Mr. Nehru has repeatedly declared that the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India has been hundred per cent complete. Yet it is strange to find that one cannot enter the State without a previous permit from the Government of India. This permit is even granted to Communists who are playing their usual role in

Jammu and Kashmir, but entry is barred to those who think or act in terms of Indian unity and nationhood. I do not think Government of India is entitled to prevent entry into any part of the Indian Union which according to Mr. Nehru himself includes Jammu and Kashmir. Of course if any one violates the law, he will have to face the consequences."

Regarding his object in going to Jammu the statement said: "My object in going to Jammu is solely to acquaint myself with what exactly had happened there and the present State of affairs. I would also come into contact with available local leaders representing various interests, outside the Praja Parishad. It will be my endeavour to ascertain what the intention of the people of Jammu is and to find out if at all there is any possibility of the movement being brought to a peaceful and honourable end, which will be fair and just not only to the people of the State but also to the whole of India. I confidently hope I shall receive the full cooperation and sympathy of all concerned when I proceed to discharge this difficult responsibility. If I am allowed to enter the State, I for my sake do not rule out the possibility of even meeting Sh. Abdullah and have a personal discussion with him."

It was thus clear that he was proceeding to Jammu on a mission of peace,

The Journey from Delhi to Ambala Cantt, his first halt in the Punjab, was a continuous ovation

from literally thousands of people, rich and poor, townsmen and villagers, who assembled even on small wayside stations in hundreds to express their solidarity with and support to his mission. At bigger stations like Ghaziabad, Modinagar, Meerut Muzaffarnagar, Saharanpur and Jagadhri gatherings ran to four and even to five figures.

During the intervals between the Stations in this journey of about 8 hours, Dr. Mookerji revealed himself and the thoughts uppermost in his mind in the form of casual reflections and remarks.

"Did you read my statement, I was waiting for your suggestions till evening", he asked when I gave a copy of it to an accompanying pressman.

"I did read it but there was no time to discuss it as it had to be scyclostyled immediately to enable you to release it this morning", I replied.

"Why did you get it so late", he said in surprise. "I sent it to you at 10 A. M. I wanted you to sit down with Gurudatt Ji and Madho Rao Ji and suggest any changes in it if necessary".

The statement was so well worded that even if it and his message had been delivered in time, no improvement could have been suggested. But it revealed his democratic mind, his humility and his keen sense of responsibility as President of a democratic organisation.

After some time he remembered that he had promised to send some literature about Jan Sangh, particularly about its stand on Kashmir, to Prof.

Johnson. While reminding me about it he began to comment on what he called 'different standards' by which Americans want to judge Indians. "I asked Johnson", he told us, "just to think what U. S. A. would have been today if Abraham Lincoln had surrendered to the demand of Southern State to secede. Lincoln waged war to preserve the artificial unity of U. S. A. and you hail him as your greatest statesman and hero. But when we talk of re-uniting India, which has been one geographically, culturally and historically all through the ages, you dub us as mongers. I told him", he added, "that U. S. A. had weakened the democratic forces by partitioning India and her policy of bolstening up Pakistan will defeat the very object she has in view".

This turned his thoughts to the circumstances leading to the Partition of India. He recounted his discussions with Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942, and with Gandhiji and Sardar Patel on the eve of the A.I.C.C. meeting at Poona where the congress implicitly accepted the principle of partition of the motherland.

"Why do you not write a book on this topic to explain your stand about Akhand Bharat", I asked him after hearing his revealing talk. "You can remove many of the misconception about the causes leading to the partition of the country".

"I do want to write one. But how to get time for it. Why don't you collect material and do some preliminary work. We can sit down after

my return for some days and complete it", was his suggestive reply. The true story of that betrayal of the motherland will perhaps never be revealed now that he is no more.

Just on the eve of his departure some Indian merchants from West Indies had met him. They had requested him to keep an eye on the lot of Indians who had gone overseas. He himself had developed interest in them after his visit to Burma, Cambodia and Indo-China where a large number of them had met him. He thought that an organisation like the British Overseas League should be set up in Delhi to collect and disseminate information about the overseas Indians and watch their interests generally. He wanted that a beginning should be made in that direction. That wish of his still remains to be fulfilled.

As we were approaching Ambala Cantt, it struck him that he should inform Sh. Abdullah of his projected visit to his State. So as soon as he reached there he sent the following telegram to Sh. Abdullah :

"I am proceeding to Jammu. My object in going there is to study situation myself and to explore the possibilities of creating conditions leading to peaceful settlement. I will like to see you also if possible".

A copy of this telegram was sent to Pt. Nehru in New Delhi.

Because of section 144 Dr. Mookerji could only address a private meeting of workers in Ambala Cantt. Later while talking to some pressmen, he stated 'Permit System is meant to prevent foreigners and particularly Pakistani agents from entering Kashmir and obtaining military secrets and not to prevent respectable citizens from moving in the country. As a member of the Indian Parliament I have a right to go to every place within India to study the situation there. It is why I did not apply for a permit.'

'Do you think Sh Abdullah will meet you?' A Press-man asked.

'Why not', replied Dr Mookerji, 'It is my wish that I should meet him. I see no reason why he should refuse.'

From Ambala Cantt. Dr Mookerji motored to Karnal where he had to address a public meeting and stay for the night. He was stopped in the way by enthusiastic crowds of thousands at Shahabad and Nilokheri. He made brief speeches at both the places.

He reached Karnal at about 8 P M and went straight to the place of meeting where over 10 thousands people were awaiting him. As he returned to the house of his popular host, L. Sita Ram, he was dead tired. He wanted to go to sleep immediately after taking his dinner. But workers of the district had assembled there to meet him. They wanted him to speak to them for some time. He turned

round to me and said in an appealing voice, "Why don't you help me. You talk to them and let me sleep. I am tired". .

I knew his condition and had no mind to be cruel to him. But the workers wanted him to say something. I had to submit. "They have come to talk to you Doctor Sahib and not to me", I told him apologetically.

Without a second word he sat up in the chair and talked to the workers and answered their queries for more than half an hour. He could not disappoint them.

From Karnal he went to the historic city of Panipat early next morning and addressed another huge meeting there. From there he entrained Bombay Express and arrived at Phagwara, his next halt, at about 4 P.M. In the way thousands greeted him on all stations as on the previous day,

Dr. Mookerji received Sh. Abdullah's reply to his telegram of the previous day at Phagwara. The telegram read, "Thanks your telegram. I am afraid your proposed visit to the State at the present juncture inopportune and will not serve any useful purpose."

On being asked what he proposed to do in view of Abdullah's reply, he said : "I want to visit Jammu to study the situation there. Therefore, I know its usefulness. If Shaikh Abdullah does not think that it will serve any useful purpose, he may not meet me and may utilise his time for any other useful work".

Pt Nehru did not care to reply

From Phagwara he motored to Jullundur where he addressed a Press Conference. Replying to a question regarding the position of U N O vis a vis Kashmir he said 'India had taken the issue of Jammu and Kashmir to U N O for stopping Pakistani aggression and for getting her armies out of the State and not to settle how and when plebiscite was to be held there. Pt Nehru should have protested against this deflection from the main issue and should have withdrawn from U N O if it had failed to accept this "

Replying to another question he explained his stand about the vexed question of Punjabi Speaking State

"It is difficult to say anything about it", he said, "so long as one does not know about the geographical limits of such a State. Large number of people from West Punjab have now settled in Ambala division. Therefore, Punjabi speaking areas today are not the same as they were in 1947. The whole matter should be left to the Commission for reorganisation of States which the Government of India must appoint without delay."

As he entrained at Jullundur for Amritsar an elderly person who was sitting in the same compartment introduced himself to him as Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur. He disclosed to him that the Punjab Government had decided to not to allow him to reach Pathankot. "I am expecting instructions from my Government as to where you should be put under arrest," he added

It now became clear that he would be arrested. Vaidya Gurudatta had been sent to keep company with him if he was arrested. He wanted a younger companion also who besides looking to his personal comforts should "be available for consultations also." He wanted Shri Atal Behari Bajpai for the purpose.

A huge crowd of over twenty thousands received him at the Amritsar railway station where he stayed for the night. He met the workers and told them about his plan. He declared that Sh. Abdullah's reply to him was analogous to the reply sent by Maharaja's Government to Pt. Nehru in 1946, when he wanted to visit Srinagar to study the situation created by the arrest of Sh. Abdullah and that he had decided to go to Jammu whether Sh. Abdullah liked it or not.

Journey from Amritsar to Pathankot on the 11th of May was again a triumphant march. Thousands greeted him at every station. But to his surprise he was not arrested.

Soon after he arrived at Pathankot, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur, who seemed to have preceded him there, sought an interview with him. He informed Dr. Mookerji that he had been instructed by his Government to allow him and his companions to proceed without Permit and added, "Though no limit has been put on the number of companions you can take with you, I will advise you to take only a few".

This information intrigued Dr Mookerji because it contradicted the information that had been given to him by the same officer at Jullundur. He could not understand why the Government had changed their plan. He did not then know that a conspiracy had been hatched to push him into the State where he would be out of reach of the protecting hand of the Supreme Court.

Pathankot gave him a right royal send off. Thousands of people with folded hands stood on both sides of the bazar through which his jeep passed. Just before his departure a ninety year old lady blessed him with the following touching words: "We Putta! Jit ke avin, aiwan na avin"—My son! return victorious, not otherwise.

Dr Mookerji and his companions reached the Madhopur Check Post on the Ravi bridge at 4 P M. The Deputy Commissioner and other officers present there saw him off and wished him good journey. But as soon as his jeep reached the centre of the bridge, he found the road blocked by a posse of Kashmir police. The jeep stopped and a police officer handed him over an order of the Chief Secretary of the State dated 10-5-53 banning his entry into the State.

Dr Mookerji read the order and said "I have been permitted by the Government of India to proceed. What is it now?" "I am Superintendent of Police, Kathua", the police officer replied "I have been instructed to hand over this order to you."

"But I intend to go to Jammu," Dr. Mookerji declared.

Thereupon the police officer took out an order of arrest under Public Security Act of the State issued by the Inspector General of Police, Jammu and Kashmir State on 11-5-53. It stated that Dr. Mookerji "has acted, is acting and is about to act in a manner prejudicial to public safety and peace."

"All Right", Dr. Mookerji said after reading the order and got down from the jeep. Vaid Gurudatt and Shri Tek Chand, who insisted that he would accompany him also got down and were put under arrest. The rest of the company were sent back. Dr. Mookerji then told his returning companions that he felt that it was a conspiracy between the Government of India and Jammu and Kashmir. He also sent the following last message for his countrymen through them: "I have entered Jammu and Kashmir State, though as a prisoner".

After a halt of about an hour at Lakhampur, Dr. Mookerji and his companions were put in a jeep which dashed towards Srinagar. The people of Jammu who had not got the news of his arrest had assembled in their thousands at Tawi bridge to receive their hero. They waited for him till night. But they could not notice him as the closed jeep carrying him passed the bridge at dusk.

He reached Udhampur at about 10 P. M. He was dead tired by the strenuous and uncomfortable journey in the jeep and wanted to spend the night

there. But the officer escorting him told him that night was to be passed at Batot. He reached there at about 2 A M, slept for the remaining hours of the night there, and was again rushed next morning towards Srinagar Central Jail where he reached at about 3 P. M. From there he and his two companions were escorted by the Superintendent of the jail, Pt. Siri Kanth Sapru, to a small cottage near Nishat garden where he was to spend the last forty days of his life as a prisoner.

The news of his arrest created a stir all over the country. Protest demonstrations and hartals took place at Delhi and other places. It gave a new direction to the Satyagraha. Satyagrahis began to proceed to Jammu without permit instead of courting arrest at Delhi or Pathankot. "Jammu Chalo" became their new slogan.

On the 13th of May, Shri N C Chatterji raised the question of Dr Mookerji's arrest by Kashmir Government after he had been allowed to proceed to Jammu without permit by the Government of India as per information given by the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur to him. But to the amazement of all Pt Nehru flatly denied the fact of the Deputy Commissioner having met Dr. Mookerji at all. "Does Pt. Nehru think," commented a Hindi daily of the capital on this denial, "that Dr Mookerji is not to return to take him to task for this flagrant lie"

THE MARTYRDOM

The story of the last forty days of Dr. Mookerji's life in detention at Sirinagar culminating in his martyrdom on the 23rd of June, 1953, will go down in history as one of the most tragic and poignant episodes in the political life of free India. It is a sad commentary on democracy as it has been working in India and on the character and behaviour of men who masquerade as democratic rulers of the country.

The cottage which was converted into a sub jail for him was a small cottage on the slope of the mountain range which flanks the Dal Lake. It had one main room about 10' by 12', in which Dr. Mookerji was lodged and two small side rooms which accommodated his co-detenus. There was no room in this "bungalow" for a fourth cot. When Pt. Prem Nath Dogra was brought there on the 19th of June, a tent had to be pitched outside for him.

The whole compound was covered with fruit trees and vegetable beds leaving only a small lawn, smaller than a tennis court, for the detenus to move about. It was at a distance of about eight miles from the city. There was no arrangement for medical aid there. Doctor had to come to from the city on being requisitioned. About hundred yards

away from the hut there was a canal and a sub station of the water-works department, which had a telephone. That telephone served this improvised jail in the wilderness as well.

Only one news paper—Hindustan Times—was supplied to him though later he was permitted to receive "Hindustan Standard" also. But they seldom reached him in time. Usually two or three days elapsed before he got the next consignment of newspapers which, along with his dak, were brought to him by the Superintendent of the jail personally. The authorities were most callous in respect of his dak. Generally it took about a week for a letter, particularly one written in Bengali, after it had reached Sirinagar, to be delivered to him. Some letters that were sent from Calcutta on the 10th of June and which bore Sirinagar Post mark of the 12th and 13th of June were returned undelivered to his family after his death. On his protest at this inordinate delay in delivering his dak to him, he was told that the person who censored his dak written in Bengali was not readily available. Thereupon Dr. Mookerji suggested that he could supply them English rendering of the letters written in Bengali which came only from his family members and contained no politics, for the purpose of censor to avoid delay. But no heed was paid to this suggestion. What was worst many letters to and from him were completely suppressed. It presumably included one written by the present writer, because it was not mentioned in the catalogue of letters.

received and sent by Dr. Mookerji, given in the statement issued by the Kashmir Minister for prisons after his death.

He was not even supplied with the books and other necessities of life that he required as is clear from his various letter to his friends like 'Homa' of 'Hindustan Standard' and to his daughter in Delhi, for sending him books and articles like a tin of biscuits, Nescaffe, a muffler, merocalized wax, a tin of ovaltine, a bottle of hair oil, lemon drop lonzenges, a khatta and a writing pad.

Dr. Mookerji was in the habit of taking long walk in the morning and evening. That was, in fact, the only exercise he took to keep his body fit and going. He needed it all the more in jail where there was no other activity that could give any exercise to his limbs. But the narrow and short garden path could not serve his need. So he began to loose appetite soon after he reached there. The bracing climate of the valley had no use for him because he suffered from high blood pressure and high altitude was harmful for him. It was medically wrong to keep him in Kashmir. He should have been kept in some jail in Jammu province.

The natural scenery that the cottage commanded was of course good. But it could not give his limbs the exercise they needed or his soul the buoyancy which natural beauty can give to a free man alone. The feelings of Dr. Mookerji about the place of his

confinement are best expressed by him in the following letters to his family members

"I am staying in a small bungalow The bungalow is situated in a small but lovely garden I walk on the narrow garden path When you read this, you will feel how happy I must be Alas, that is not possible What physical comforts what charms of nature, can bring you joy if your freedom is not yours .Send me a long reply full of news and stories—but not politics of course! For, I am a prisoner here'

Letter dated 18-5 53

"Permission is limited only to a walk along the garden path—It takes 2 or 3 minutes to cover the distance It is there only and in the open space that lies ahead of it that I take my stroll This house is very small "

Letter in Bengali dated 25-5 53

'Permission could not be had for stroll outside the garden in the morning and in the afternoon I take a walk in the narrow path inside the garden The garden is not large There are ten or twelve police men who keep guard—lest there be loss of prestige'

Letter in Bengali dated 25-5-53

That he was refused permission to take a stroll, under guard of course, outside the compound throws a lurid light on the working of the mind of Sh Abdullah Colonel R N Chopra, the Inspector General of Prisons, visited Dr Mookerji in jail a

few days after his arrival at Srinagar. On being asked if he could do anything for him, Dr. Mookerji told him that he was missing his morning walk very much.

"That is a small thing", replied colonel Chopra, "You can take stroll on the canal bank. Police guard will accompany you".

Colonel Chopra instructed the Superintendent accordingly and he instructed the inspector of Police on duty. But when Dr. Mookerji got ready for walk the next morning, the inspector of police informed him :

"I have not received written order so far. I am waiting for it". He did not get written permission till 20th of June, when Dr. Mookerji had become physically unfit to move even.

It was later discovered that Sh. Abdullah had ordered that Dr. Mookerji not be given any facilities without his express orders.

None of his friends or relatives were allowed to interview him while he was in jail. His eldest son applied for permit to visit Sirinagar to see him. But he was informed by the permit issuing authority in New Delhi that he could not be allowed to visit Kashmir to see his father. Some of his relatives were in Srinagar at that time. They too sought an interview with him but were refused. The only person from outside who was taken to him for the purpose of interview, except S. Hukam Singh M. P. whose visit was purely political and Barrister U. M.

Trivedi M. P., who met him as his counsel, was a half mad sadhu who was inflicted upon him to hear his non-sense. It was probably done to tell the world after his death that interviews were allowed to him.

Dr Mookerji spent his time in jail in reading, writing, meditation and occasional chats with his co-detenus over the cup of afternoon tea which covered a wide range of subjects, from culture and spiritualism to politics and his assessment of men and events. It was his long cherished desire to write a biography of his father. He began writing it there. He also used to write his diary regularly. He took it with him to the hospital as well when he was removed there on the 22nd of June. It would have been the most authentic source of information about his life and work, thoughts and ideals and above all his own feelings and reading about the events that culminated in his tragic death. But it was kept back by Sh Abdullah's Government after his death and has still not been returned, inspite of repeated requests. This betrays a guilty conscience.

One of the books that he read there was Raj Trangani, Kelhan's Chronicle of Kings of Kashmir. This great book gives a pathetic account of the intrigues and treachery that have characterised the rulers of Kashmir, with a few honourable exceptions, all through the history. It is difficult to say for a contemporary whether the present day rulers of and from Kashmir come within the exceptions or not.

Sh. Abdullah, in any case, has left no doubt in any body's mind about himself.

Some idea of the sublimity of his thoughts and ideas about himself and the world around can be formed from the following last portion of the letter that he wrote on June 6th, to his sister in law, wife of his elder brother, justice Rama Prasad Mookerji.

"I do meditate, not simply over the days and years that are past, but also the events which happened then. And when they are mingled with sorrow and happiness, how could I afford to forget them. With them I brood over the present men and events. They flash in my mind like pictures—the place one is staying at, the work one is busy with or the how and why of events which are taking place—they crowd into my mind in different ways. Then again, when I ponder over the uncertain and distant future, a different set of ideas prop up in a different fashion. Then, I have a vision of light in the midst of darkness—victory in the midst of defeat. I experience what is good in every body. I have felt very much during these few days, how small and trifling, yet how proud and power drunk we are, and yet how little conscious we are about it. We do not realise that this universe is moving like a machine, nor do we think of Him whose kindness has caused the birth of this creation, and is even causing its growth and destruction. I am at the 'fag end' of my life. yet am not sure what I have done in my life. I just think how I have spent my

time in trifling and absurd words and deeds, how many errors and wrongs I have committed

You know I like books At present I am going through works on various subjects—new and old—but learning things a new all the same There is the ardent desire to write but somehow that does not seem to be possible Even in the past thirty years, a biography of father could not be written This is a thing which I sorely regret Even if an endeavour was now made many stories and writings of his time could be discovered,

For the past few days I feel moved with a desire to wield the pen for it My mind also intends to write down the none to small experience that I have gathered during my life time I do bother myself about you, the children, the grand children and the thousands of boys who have been kept confined behind the prison bars. I am not sure how long will I remain in this State Nor am I sure about my future programme. But I know it for certain that there is neither sorrow nor worry in my mind Rather, I have been able to keep up, during these few days, that unceasing confidence which I used to place in myself and I could maintain my faith in that Unknown Supreme power without whose guidance we cannot move or survive This really cheers up and gives strength to the mind This much for the day Please reply "

Your Mejothakurpo

His lively and elegant humour continued to enliven the drab atmosphere of the jail till the end. He was in the habit of seeing the bright side of everything, animate and inanimate. His self confidence was superb and his optimism was catching. But he never failed to note the inconsistencies and hypocrisies that often go with life and he used both his humour and satire to expose them. The letter written by him on the 7th of June to the columnist "Homa", paying his tribute to Norkay Tensing, is a brilliant example of his humour and satire :

"We are having mixed weather here", he wrote, "like our mixed economy, or if you like, my mixed health or my mixed feelings in detention. The conquest of Everest gave us unmixed pleasure—but Tensing although he reached first and was the real guide, got a mixed world reception. The Calcutta reception will of course be one of unmixed pride and admiration. The real discoverer of this proud and lofty mountain was a Bengali surveyor. Sikdar, I believe, was his name. But the Burra Sahib Everest, got an unmixed dedication. Such is life".

Dr. Mookerji as said above, began to lose appetite soon after his detention at Sirinagar. He also developed acute pain in his right leg accompanied by temperature on the 18th of May. He never regained his full health after that.

On the 24th of May Pt. Nehru and Dr. Katju visited Sirinagar for "rest". They had not the courtesy and decency to visit their august prisoner and see how he was being treated there.

The pain in his leg reappeared on the 3rd of June, with greater intensity. In a letter dated 6 6 53 he wrote - "I was on the whole keeping well, but the pain in the right leg has again increased during the last two days. Moreover for some days I have been running temperature in the evening. There is burning sensation in the eyes and face. I am taking medicine"

On the receipt of this letter at Calcutta on or about 12 6 53, Dr Mookerji's brother saw Dr B C. Roy, apprised him of his health and requested him to contact Kashmir.

This pain in the leg with fever was a new malady which Dr Mookerji had never had before. Because of loss of appetite he was getting weak everyday. Barrister U M Trivedi, who had gone to Srinagar to argue his Habeas Corpus before Kashmir High Court and who had refused to take instructions from him on the 12th of June in the presence of the District Magistrate, interviewed him for 3 hours on the 18th of June after the Kashmir High Court had directed the Kashmir Government to allow him to take instructions in private. He found Doctor Mookerji weak and cheerless.

Pt Prem Nath Dogra who was taken from Jammu to Srinagar on the 19th of June, to meet him was also struck by his poor state of health and low appetite. He asked him the reason and was informed that it might be due to lack of exercise.

The same night he developed pain in chest and high temperature. On the 20th morning the autho-

rities were informed about it. Thereupon Doctors Ali Mohammed and Amar Nath Raina reached the sub jail at 11.30 A. M. Dr. Ali Mohammed diagnosed the trouble as Dry Pleursy and prescribed Streptomycin injections. Dr. Mookerji protested that his family physician had advised him to not to take Streptomycin as that did not suit his system. But no heed was paid to it. Dr. Mookerji, according to Vaidya Gurudatt, requested the Superintendent on that day that news of his illness should be sent to his relatives. But no such intimation was sent nor any bulletin issued by the Government till after his death.

Next day, the 21st of June, except the Jail doctor, a sub-assistant surgeon, no other doctor, not even Dr. Ali Mohammed, visited him. His temperature rose and pain increased during the day.

Because of this sudden collapse he could not have much talk with Pt. Dogra who had been brought to Sirinagar for consultations with him regarding withdrawal of the movement in view of the internal developments in the State, which had divided the State cabinet into two camps—Sh. Abdullah and Miṛza Afzal Beg on one side and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, Pt. Shyam Lal Sarraf and Mr. Girdhari Lal Dogra on the other. The latter wanted an understanding with the Praja Parishad to checkmate the designs of the former. Pt. Dogra had been brought to Sirinagar to meet Dr. Mookerji inspite of the opposition of Sh. Abdullah. Dr. Mookerji, a democrat as he was, was

then thinking of drawing up proposals in consultation with Pt Dogra for the consideration of Jan Sangh and Praja Parishad colleagues outside who, he held, must be consulted before any decision was taken

At about 4 A M on the 22nd of June, he had a severe heart attack His temperature went down to 97° and he began to perspire profusely Vaidya Guru Datt administered him some hot cardamom and clove water which gave him some relief

At 5 15 A M the Superintendent was informed about Dr Mookerji's health and was requested to come with the doctor immediately Dr. Ali Mohammed reached there at 7 30 A M He suggested to the Superintendent that Dr Mookerji should be immediately removed to the State Nursing Home The Superintendent asked him to get orders from the District Magistrate Thereupon both the Co detenus requested him to get permission for them also to move with him to the nursing home But Dr Ali Mohammed refused to do so and remarked "I understand your anxiety, but you don't worry He will be in better hands there"

How one wishes that they, particularly Shri Tek Chand who had insisted to go with him much against his wishes, had then insisted to be with him in the nursing home

At about 11 30 A M, the Jail superintendent reached there with a Taxi car in which Dr Mookerji was removed to the nursing home in the State

hospital at a distance of about 10 miles from there. He was kept in a room in the first floor.

This removal to the distant hospital, and the exertion it involved, of a patient suffering from acute heart attack was itself wrong from the medical point of view.

What happened in the nursing home is till shrouded in mystery. Barrister Trivedi met him at about 5.30 A.M. after completing his arguments in the court. He was confident that he would be set at liberty the next day when the judgment was to be delivered.

He left Dr. Mookerji at about 7.30 P.M., weak but cheerful. Dr. Mookerji himself felt better. Doctors on attendance told Shri Trivedi that the worst had passed and that he would be X-rayed next morning and would be all right in two or three days.

But on the 23rd of June at about 3.45 A.M. Shri Trivedi was picked up from his hotel to go to the hospital Pt. Premnath Dogra and the two co-detenus of Dr. Mookerji in the sub-jail were also asked about the same time to get ready to go to the hospital. They reached there at about 4.30 A.M. and were informed that Dr. Mookerji had breathed his last at 3.40. A.M.

The communique issued by the Kashmir Government after his passing away on 23.6.53. gave the report of Drs. Ali Mohammed and Ram Nath Parihar M. D., who were declared as having been attending

upon him, about his illness and death said that his general condition was fairly good at 4 P.M. Oxygen was given to him at 11 P.M. to allay restlessness which started at that time, that he got pain in the heart area at 1 A.M. and became restless, and that his pulse stopped at 3. 40 A.M.

Apart from the criminal negligence in general treatment meted out to Dr. Mookerji, who had been detained without trial and was, therefore, a national trust in the hands of the Governments of Kashmir and India, there is much circumstantial evidence which goes to suggest something worse.

In the first place the time of his death as given in the official communique is not correct. According to all accounts coming from other patients in the nursing home at that time as also from a hospital official, he died at about 2. 30 A.M. and not at 3, 40 A.M. as given out by the Government.

Secondly according to a very reliable information, oxygen was not given to him at all. In fact only vain effort was made to get it from the military hospital at the spur of the moment.

The name of Dr. Parihar was probably associated with Dr. Ali Mohammed as the physician attending upon him only to lend weight to the official version. He had never examined him since he reached Srinagar.

These discrepancies in the official version and the known and uncontradicted facts go to prove that there was something to hide.

Enquiries made on the spot by some very responsible persons later revealed even more damaging facts which demand further investigation. It has been, for example, found that it was wrong that Dr. Mookerji's condition took a turn for the worse at 11 P.M, as given out in the official communique. He was rather feeling better at that time. His condition suddenly worsened only after a particular doctor gave him an injunction at 1 A. M. "as a precautionary measure." The same doctor refused to come and attend upon him after that, even though he was repeatedly requested on the telephone by nurses to do so in view of the fast deteriorating condition of Dr. Mookerji, who died at about 2.30 A. M.

The suspicions roused by these stray pieces of information are further strengthened by the popular belief in Sirinagar, and the ominous warnings that some respectable men gave to Shri Trivedi when he went there. When, on being refused permission to take instructions from Dr. Mookerji in private, Shri Trivedi was planning to return to New Delhi an important citizen of Sirinagar dropped into his hotel room and pleaded with him not to go till he had got Dr. Mookerji released. He warned him that "Dr. Mookerji will be killed," if he was not got released early. The same man met him on the 24th morning outside the hospital and reminded him of his earlier warning.

A police superintendent who came to Shri Trivedi before he left his hotel for Delhi was so

"In Dr. Mookerji Bharat has lost one of the foremost patriots and a born Parliamentarian", said Shri V. D. Sawarkar.

To his colleagues and co-workers of the National Democratic party in the Parliament, Hindu Maha Sabha, Ram Rajya Parishad and Praja Parishad, and above all, to the Bhartiya Jan Sangh which he led so boldly and successfully that it became the most formidable challenge to Congress mis-rule within two years of its inception, his death come as a cruel blow and an irreparable loss.

The only tribute that the Jan Sangh could pay to his memory was to re-dedicate itself to complete his unfinished work. That it did.

The most touching and telling tribute came from Dr. M. R. Jaykar the famous Jurist and Priy Councillor who said: "To die in a prison house, locked there by his country's Swadeshi Government by persons with whom he shared power is a colleague, is a fitting termination of a warring life. Let us hope that this incident will make the Government of India realise, in their self complacent enjoyment of the chits of American Visitors, the enormity of their behaviour, which ignored all the canons of fairness and justice accepted by civilised Governments".

His was a warring life no doubt. All his life he fought valiantly for his country's freedom both social as well as political, for civil liberties of the people, for the unity of the motherland and, after

the dawn of independence, for upholding democracy against growing fascism of the men in power. He ultimately laid down his life for these. He truly became a martyr to civil liberties, to democracy and to the unity of India. Like a true a *Karma Yōgin*, he lived as a soldier, and died a martyr. He was great in life, greater in death.

