

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

Positive Co-existence

We invited Mr. Rajagopalachari, the distinguished Congress leader who was Governor-General of India between 1948 and 1950, and who is now President of the All-India Peace Council, to comment upon the possibility of Britain following the example of India and the 'Bandung' powers by taking up a neutral, mediating role in Europe. He replies that he is reluctant to "butt too often into the affairs of Britain" but he sends us these reflections upon the attitudes which must be fostered if co-existence is to be possible.

There can be nothing so silly as a serious physical battle based on anger and hatred and planned with instruments of destruction, over any two "isms."

Two "isms" working side by side would be most desirable laboratories wherefrom truth might from time to time be culled for the benefit of both managements. This is what is called co-existence, which has become the formula for lovers of peace. Those who swear by one way of life ought to look at other peoples' as experiments conducted for their benefit, and which therefore must be welcomed rather than disliked or feared.

Foreign affairs should not be a battle of "isms." What is needed is tolerance of all "isms," with an assurance of peace and non-aggression. Instead of assurance being accepted at face-value, international politics has launched a scheme of so-called deterrence which costs far too much ever to be deemed wise or permissible.

What applied to international affairs applies also to contending policies aiming at social welfare through internal administration. Go-existence between Left and Right is essential to orderly progress. Changes demanded by the Left in order to bring about a speedy advance in the welfare of the people and a more even distribution of it among all sections must necessarily produce dislocation, disturbances and distress, corresponding to the friction and jolts and creaks in a machine. But life, individual and collective, is different from a machine. The pain involved falls on living human beings, and must be taken into account. A party on the Right, as it is called, gives expression to these distresses and disturbances, which are not less real or important than the need for change and progress.

We in India have been making efforts to remove social injustice and raise the level of general happiness. It is a regrettable fact that after the change-over from British rule to self-government, good

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government is still a desideratum. It was right to maintain that the good government claimed on behalf of the foreign regime was no substitute for the self-government which India demanded. But that truth does not lead to the proposition that the people of a country can rest content for all time with the fact of self-government, even when it does not yield good government as a result. Ten years have passed since the transfer of power, but the experience of people in the matter of daily administration has not by any means been relatively happy. Officials who ought to have inherited the traditions of vigilant and impartial administration from the Indian Civil Service of the British days have not found it easy to do so, and have instead concentrated on the less difficult part of the legacy, holding on to the self-importance and exclusiveness that characterised the Service, considering it to be the distinguishing caste-mark of authority.

The experiments in socialism in countries like Britain and Scandinavia depend on a degree of administrative efficiency and a pervading sense of honesty and responsibility among all people engaged in public duties. It is unfortunate to have to admit that this condition does not exist in this country. After nationalisation of any workshop or factory, economics are not thought of and the buying of raw materials and other forms of expenditure are done with far from strict frugality. Co-operatives have thrown up a new class of managerial magnates not less oppressive than the old private proprietors and money-lenders. After nationalisation of Life Insurance we have reason to think that the medical examination and reporting of insured persons has been lax.

Wishful thinking cannot be a substitute for the sense of responsibility, integrity and national efficiency on which socialism must rest. Socialism can rest only on character, not on force, and it would be chaos if we depended on socialism itself to produce the character on which it should rest. What is true of socialism in general is true of every broken part of it that we try to put into operation. Wherever we attempt to substitute personal interest by public ownership and management, success depends on the measure of the sense of civic responsibility, integrity and energy that prevail among those who work and those who receive the services rendered. If these are lacking the change will lead to grievous loss and not to better social welfare.

Everyone may admit the importance and desirability of certain qualities, but there is a difference between intellectual acceptance of such a proposition and the actual possession of the qualities which alone can support the extinction of the property interest on which the old political economists so firmly depended. Any "ism" tends to replace the old tyrants by new ones wherever the essential condition

of a high level of civic responsibility and integrity and efficiency in administration is wanting.

Yet to feel frustrated and get lost in a state of misanthropy when we find our efforts at removing injustice or relieving pain and distress have been circumvented or obstructed or have otherwise met with failure is to refuse to grasp the fundamental of life.

Without pain and want there can be no growth and no life. Pain is in the permanent structure of nature, and it is an essential condition for life activity. We must accept grief and suffering as inevitable, even as we recognise compassion, brotherliness and love, that follow in the wake of pain and privation, to be the highest and most desirable elements of human happiness. In fact, it is grief and suffering and the continuous effort to remove them that give life a meaning and purpose. The river, living and beautiful as it is, cannot flow unless there is a difference in levels that drives the water down. So does the river of life flow from pain and privation to joy and fulfilment. It is the fundamental mystery of life that joy is tied up thus with grief. There is nothing more beautiful and more enlightened than compassion and love, and these cannot stand by themselves but are founded on pain and privation. So when men meet with sorrows and disappointments they should not feel frustrated. It is the inescapable character of life to be ever engaged in relieving pain, and the good life consists in feeling others' pain as one's own. Every scripture has taught this. Every nation's proverbs have included this. Yet as long as this truth does not permeate into one's way of life it sounds empty and flat.

Life is a continuous stream of feeling, not a static and fulfilled condition. Fulfilment without flaw would mean the ceasing of life. It is in this light that we must approach problems of human misery and social reform. To hope that any way of life which we may voluntarily adopt or accept under compulsion will solve all unhappiness and all injustice and to feel frustrated and to blame people or laugh at them when this is not achieved is sheer ignorance. To attempt is life's purpose. Failure is a call for further effort to keep the stream of human life going. Not to attempt is sin.