TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU (1875-1949)

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru KCSI

Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru was one of the most eminent jurist and constitutional expert of the country. In political sphere, Sapru was acceptable as an important mediating figure between the British Government and the leaders of Indian National Movement. In 1896 Sapru started his legal practice from Moradabad but shifted to Allahabad in 1898. He served as a part-time lecturer at the Muir Central College, affiliated to the Allahabad University. *Indian People,* and *Twentieth Century* (1934), were magazines with which Sapru was involved. He became a member of the Imperial Legislative Council in September 1916. Sapru was closely associated with the Drafting of the Nehru Report. During his tenure as the Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Sapru came forth to rescue the Indian press by getting repealed the Newspapers Act of 1908 and the Press Act of 1910.

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY
CONVOCATION ADDRESS
BY
SIR TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU
ON NOVEMBER 30TH, 1941

MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY,
GRADUATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Let me at once say how deeply grateful I am to you for the honour you have done me by asking me to address you at this Convocation—an honour which I appreciate all the more because my association with this University has been only nominal and my services to it absolutely nil. I know you have been truly generous to me, for a few years ago you spontaneously conferred on me a degree which I feel I had done nothing to deserve. I also realise that in asking me to deliver this address you have shown a spirit of tolerance well worthy of a house of learning for no one is more conscious than I am of an inherent vice in me. 1 have been practically all my life a dissenter —a non-conformist—in the domain of religious and political orthodoxy—in short an intellectual individualist who has been suffered more than he had any right to expect.

After a frank confession like this, let me tell you that my non-conformity has not stood in the way of my appreciation of the noble ideals which have inspired the founders of this great institution and which are so earnestly cherished by them in their daily work—ideals which also actuate its teachers and which, I sincerely, hope, are sedulously striven after by the thousands of young men who have been privileged to imbibe the spirit of their *Alma Mater* in the most formative part of their lives.

Of the founders of this University several have left the scene of their earthly activities. They, however, live in our memory. There are some whom we can never forget and to whom we can never pay our debt of gratitude. The great name of Mrs. Annie Besant, the founder of the Central Hindu College, which was the nucleus of this University, will occur to everyone. Not a Hindu by birth, she became a Hindu by choice and summed up in her life all that is best in Hindu philosophy and Hindu thought, and became too many of us, even to those like me who never accepted her as a religious or spiritual guide, a beacon-light in the still and afterwards stormy waters of politics. Then, there comes back to my mind the

figure of Sir Sunder Lal—a name honoured in law and in many other departments of life besides—but above all for his practical gifts, unbending rectitude, unquestionable personal integrity and unadvertised benevolence. Not many men of this generation know how more than 25 years ago he willingly placed his unrivalled talents at the disposal of this University, how, he prepared the outlines of the legislation which now governs it, how he removed the suspicions which in those far-off days clouded the minds of those in power at Delhi and Simla, how he conquered all opposition, how he piloted the Benares University Bill and thus made it possible for this University to be born. That is a name which I have always held in the highest veneration. I could easily multiply other names—names of generous benefactors from among Princes and commoners—but I refrain. But there is one name, the bearer of which is happily with us and that is a name which will always remain imperishable in the annals of this University. Bent with the weight of 80 years but possessed of a heart, which still beats in unison with every call of duty, and a head, that is constantly thinking of how best to promote the abiding interests of the country and particularly of this University—his fondest child—Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's presence in our midst must be a source of inspiration to everyone of us. A living example of what faith in one's ideals can achieve, in him you can see that most rare of things—a well-proportioned combination of lofty idealism and practical realism so far as this University is concerned. I am sure I am voicing the sentiments of every one in this gathering and of the entire Hindu community when I say that it is our earnest wish and prayer that he may be spared to us and to this University for many years to come.

You will perhaps permit me now to say how difficult I find my task on this occasion to be. During the last several years my services have been requisitioned, by several Universities to deliver convocation addresses. It may be that when a man has reached my years it is perhaps presumed that he must have an inexhaustible fund of platitudes. It is, however, forgotten that there is not much room for platitudes left in the make-up of a case-hardened lawyer who has daily to deal more with the seamy side of life than with the bright. I sometimes think that the time has come when Indian Universities should seriously think as to whether they could not dispense with ceremonial addresses on occasions of this character.

There is, as I have just said, a ceremonial side to our convocations, but as I view the whole matter, it seems to me that their serious side is of far greater consequence, for while on the one hand your alumni come to take leave of you

after their five years' stay under your fostering care and protection and you send them out declaring to the world that they have earned recognition at your hands, they enter the bigger University of the World after leaving your portals without knowing how the world is going to treat them. The bigger University of life, into which they are about to enter, has its own tests. I assume that you have endowed them with certain intellectual and moral gifts, that you have unfolded before them the meandering tale of humanity, its triumphs and failures, its appreciation, howsoever fragmentary, of truth, its failure to avoid error, its conquest of nature, its advancement in knowledge, science and civilisation, and its relapses into savagery and barbarism. The young men, therefore, whom you are sending out today, deserve your best sympathy and support. At the same time you too are entitled to expect that the mental and moral equipment, with which you are launching them into the uncharted seas of life, may be their shield and protection against those perils which are awaiting them.

I am rather anxious to speak of those perils and speak of them with absolute candour. I have a very vivid recollection of my college days in the early nineties of the last century. The Calcutta University had been established in 1858, the Allahabad University had followed in 1887, and by the nineties of the last century the process of leavening up had been sufficiently long at work in Northern India. On the intellectual side the creed of many of us in those days was summed up in the famous lines of Tennyson :

> "Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range.
> Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.
> Thro the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day:
> Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

We in these Provinces had cut ourselves adrift from our old moorings. Sanskrit learning, except perhaps in this holy city, was at its nadir and if ever we cared to know what our ancient forefathers thought or said on matters of human interest, we placed our hands on the bookshelves of a library to pick out the ponderous volumes of the orientalists of the West, the most popular among them being Max Muller. Occasionally the earnest among us satisfied our conscience and 'national' pride by acquainting ourselves with the writings of Dr. Bhandarkar and Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitter. We found some of them very pleasing, particularly so when they fed our pride as Hindus, and some of us took Max Muller far too seriously and imagined to ourselves that the last word in human wisdom had been

uttered by our forefathers. If that was the state of education in Sanskrit, Persian and Urdu were taught to us in the traditional style of the middle ages, but the poetry of the 'nightingale' and the 'rose' and the stories of love-lorn Lela and Majnoon, and Yusuf and Zulekha were beginning to be ousted by Shelley, Keats, Byron, Wordsworth and Tennyson. Ghalib had not come into his own and Iqbal's voice had not yet been heard. There were others whose emancipated intellect brushed aside all that black learning with a smile and assumed that our misguided ancestors lived more in a world, which was far too crowded with things of the spirit and too detached from the reality of matter. In short, we had the self-assurance of youth reinforced by a supreme ignorance of our past. The light that came from the West was far too dazzling for us. We knew something of or about the great scientists of the West, particularly those of England, scientists whose inventions or discoveries had led to the growth and development of industrial life of the West and given birth to that capitalism in the defence of which a part of the mad world and for the destruction of which another part of the same mad world are flying at each other's throat today. This science too, we realised, had given it mastery of the seas and established the political domination of the restless West over the stagnant and slumbering continents of Asia and Africa. Apart from the influence of scientists, which unsettled our minds so much in those far-off days, I can recall the all-pervading influence of Edmund Burke, and particularly of John Stuart Mill, John Morley and Herbert Spencer on our minds. John Stuart Mill's essays on Liberty, on the Freedom of Woman and Representative Government were our political Bibles. You could question them only at the risk of being accused by your contemporaries of unforgivable heresy. Describing the state of mind of the 'Eminent Victorians', who lived and moved in those days, of which John Morley was a type, Mr. Churchill says in his 'Great Contemporaries':

> A varied but select society, observing in outward forms a strict, conventional morality, advanced its own culture, and was anxious to spread its amenities ever more widely through the nation. A sense of safety, a pride in the rapidly opening avenues of progress, a confidence that boundless blessings would reward political wisdom and civic virtue, was the accepted basis upon which the eminent Victorians lived and moved. Can we wonder? Every forward step was followed by swiftly reaped advantages: the wider the franchise, the more solid the State; the fewer the taxes, the more abundant the revenue: the freer the entry of goods into the island, the more numerous and richer were the markets gained abroad. To live soberly then, to walk demurely in the sunshine of fortune, to shun external adventures, to avoid entangling commitments, to enforce frugality upon Governments, to liberate the native genius of the country, to let wealth fructify in the pockets of the people, to open a career broadly and freely to the talents of every class, these were the paths so clearly marked, so smooth, so easy of access, and it was wise and pleasant to tread them.

John Morley's serenity of mind and faith in the permanence of the state of society, which has been depicted in the above passage by Mr. Churchill, was rudely shaken by the 'entrance' of Great Britain into the world war though he had already failed to draw the right conclusions from the successful challenge which Japan, an Asiatic country, had for the first time thrown to Russia. Nevertheless it must be admitted that he was true to his convictions. The state of Victorian society and its mental make-up, which Mr. Churchill has painted, is perhaps not wholly true of England today, but the point to note is that although we in India lived 6,000 miles away from England, we accepted the ideals of Victorian society in England as unchangeable postulates. We hankered after them, and wondered at first that they could not be reproduced in India. Of course all this is true only of the intelligentsia of those days, that is to say, that section of the intelligentsia which had come under the spell of the West. The rest of the population knew nothing of these stirrings in the throbbing minds of the young men of those days. It worshipped its gods, as our ancestors had done before, it followed its customs and usages, it hated modernism in thought and conduct, and it reconciled itself to its fate whenever things went wrong with it.

While this was the state of our society, say 50 or 60 years ago, influences came into being simultaneously, which cannot, and in my opinion should not, be ignored. If the Bramho Samaj— earlier in date—made a limited appeal to the intellectual classes in Bengal, the Arya Samaj under the inspiring personality of Swami Daya Nand made an appeal to a larger section of people in Northern India and certain other parts. I am not called upon to discuss its principles. It is enough for me to point out that being a protestant movement it threw a challenge to immobile orthodoxy and thus came into conflict with the conservative elements. It also came into conflict, as it was bound to, with certain proselytising creeds. Nevertheless its influence on the vast masses of Hindu society was deep and extensive. While on the one hand there were people who looked upon it not merely as a reformist body but as a body aiming at revolutionising certain cherished beliefs and practices, on the other hand there were others who denounced it as a revivalist body. In fairness to it, it must, however, be confessed even by those who were and have been critical of it from one point of view or the other, that its work in the social and educational fields has been of immense value to the country. In any case it was the first organised movement which apart from its religious fervour aimed at social service. Simultaneously, or almost simultaneously with it, came into existence a new school of thought represented

by the Theosophical Society, and I very well remember the time when those amongst us who thought that India was fast moving away from its ancient moorings, sought refuge in occultism and esoteric doctrines and worked as a brotherhood under the leadership of men and women born in the West, who were in revolt against the "materialism" of Europe and found a solace in the spiritualism of the East. It was, and has been, I think, primarily a movement of the intellectual classes. Nevertheless, it must be admitted even by its critics that its work also in social and educational fields has by no means been negligible. Indeed more positive language may be used and it may fairly be said that in a way it led to the establishment of this University and many other educational institutions in the country and to the revival of much of our forgotten culture. Other religious and social reformers sprang up. I shall not refer to them in detail but shall content myself by saying that no true historian of Hindu society can ignore or minimise, the influence which Paramhansa Ram Krishna, Swami Vivekananda or Swami Ram Tirtha produced on subsequent developments.

In short in the spiritual and intellectual spheres of life there were half a century ago or more two influences at work: one obviously western in its origin and the other equally obviously eastern. While this was happening a new movement, professedly political, also came into birth and that was the Indian National Congress, but here again let me point out to you, what is apt to be forgotten by men of this generation, that the real father of this movement was an Englishman—Allan Octavius Hume, a member of the Indian Civil Service—and in this I shall be borne out by one of the few survivors from among his first apostles—I refer to Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. It attracted to itself from the very beginning a large and growing number of the intellectual and professional classes, men who had drunk deep of the political wisdom of Edmund Burke, Thomas Babbington Macaulay, John Bright, John Stuart Mill, John Morley and William Ewart Gladstone. Among the early fathers of the National Congress you will find many English names, now almost forgotton by the present generation but still revered by men of my generation. They were the first pioneers of that love of freedom which is now the common heritage of us all, but in those days the Congress spoke with bated breath. It asked for and it appealed for the gradual introduction and development of representative institutions, the establishment of simultaneous examinations for the Imperial services in India, the larger association of Indians with Government in the actual task of administration, and things of that kind. It was described by Lord Dufferin as a microscopic minority.

It was ignored first, ridiculed next and openly suspected later. It was bound to come into conflict with those in authority. It maintained that it had the right to interpret the minds of the people correctly, it claimed that it knew on what lines people were thinking, what they were aspiring after, what they approved of and what they did not. The claim of the Congress to be representative of the people was absolutely denied in those days. It waited and waited, it sent its deputations to England, it carried on its agitation in India mostly among the educated classes until a time arrived when in this very city of Benares it held a session over which one of the wisest and most far-sighted leaders of that generation presided—I refer to Gopal Krishna Gokhale. It was then that it demanded a constitution similar to those of the self-governing colonies or dominions and from that moment forward a new chapter was opened in our political life. A year later the great Dadabhai Naoroji presided over the Calcutta Congress and for the first time he put forward the demand for 'Swaraj'. What did this word mean? To demand Swaraj was in those days held in official circles to be a crime—the crime of sedition. It is interesting to recall at this distance of time that the matter seriously engaged the attention of two learned Judges of the Calcutta High Court, namely, Mr. Justice Sarada Charan Mitra and Mr. Justice Fletcher. A Conference had met at Khulna. A certain speaker had asked for Swaraj, which expression was translated officially as an 'independent government'. The speaker was then bound down under section 118 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. He then moved the High Court, and I shall give you here just a short extract from the report of this case. In the course of arguments the following observations were exchanged between the Bench and the Bar :—

Mitra J.—What is the exact word used ?

Mr. White (Deputy Legal Remembrancer)— Swaraj.

Mitra J—What does it mean?

Mr. White—Your Lordship can say it better, but I understand it means to remove the Government.

Mitra J—If that be its meaning, then, no editor or writer here is safe. It cannot mean that.

Mr. White—But is it not the hope of a particular political party in India ?

Mitra J—Every Indian likes to have Swaraj, meaning Home Rule.

Mr. White—They may hope so, and there is no harm in that.

Fletcher J—If it means the Colonial form of Government, it is a legitimate aspiration of the people.

Mr. Jackson (Counsel for the accused)—The literal meaning of the word is self-government—'swa' means 'self' and 'raj' means 'government'. Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji initiated the word in his speech as President of the last Calcutta Congress.

Mitra J—Speaking for myself I can say that the word was used by Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji in the sense of 'self-government', and is being translated in the Bengali language in the same sense.

Ultimately in their judgment the Court held that it meant Home Rule but that self-government would not necessarily mean the exclusion of the present government or independence. It may mean, as it is well understood, government by the people themselves under the King and under British sovereignty. The word, therefore, stood the challenge that was thrown to it in a court of law. It was not, however, until 1921 that it received the imprimatur of approval from the highest quarter, for in His Royal message to the Indian Legislature through the Duke of Connaught His Majesty observed as follows :—

> For years, it may be for generations, patriotic and loyal Indians have dreamed of Swaraj for their motherland. Today you have beginnings of Swaraj within my Empire; and widest scope and ample opportunity for progress to the liberty which my other Dominions enjoy.

But the year 1921 marked the beginning of a new chapter altogether in our contemporary history. The Congress then adopted a new ideal or objective—different perhaps from that-which Mr. Justice Mitra said the word 'Swaraj' implied. We broke away from the traditional methods of work, new cries came into vogue; a new situation arose under a new leadership. There were defections from its ranks, but the loss was more than made up by the huge accession to its strength. The movement was then sought to be made a mass movement and it did become that to a great extent. The thinking was done by the few, and the enthusiasm was furnished, as always happens in such cases, by the many. We were told that new ethical weapons must be forged for our political battles. Whether the cries or the methods were really new or were a revival of old ones, is a question on which opinion may well differ, but they caught the fancy of the masses. One thing, however, is certain and that is that under the new orientation of nationalism—an assertive and defiant nationalism—suffering or the readiness to

suffer was considered as the most powerful and effective weapon and the acid test of patriotism. Western methods of life, at least Western methods of dress, the use of the English language in our political work came to be decried. For a time, but only for a short time, the Hindus and the Mohamedans seemed to embrace each other. It did not, however, take long before differences grew among us. If even unity of ideals could be claimed at that time, it was plain that there was a great diversity of methods of approach to those ideals. For once an open challenge seemed to have been thrown to the West. I say 'seemed' because it did not take the West long before it regained its ascendancy over our minds. Victorian Liberalism, we were assured, was dead, and something new had to be installed in its place. Again that something new came from the West. We dethroned John Stuart Mill, John Morley and every other god of that pantheon from their high pedestals. We replaced them by Karl Marx and Lenin. London began to lose its hold and Moscow began to cast its spell over us. Man came to be looked upon essentially as an economic being and if the economic basis of our life could be changed in India, we were told the gates of paradise would be within sight. There was, however, nothing peculiar to India in all this. The West itself was during this period pitifully torn by conflicting loyalties to divergent creeds and such is the ascendancy of the West over the Indian mind that the cries and the slogans, which rent the welkin in the West, were re-echoed in India. As Lord Bryce says of the West in his "Modern Democracies":

> "The other new factor (within Europe) is the emergence of a doctrine primarily economic but in its consequences political, and embodying itself in the project of eliminating those sections of the community which either possess wealth or are earning it otherwise than by manual labour, so as to create and thenceforth maintain a uniformity of material conditions, perhaps along with the prohibition of private property."

I myself saw something of this conflict of ideas during my repeated visits to Europe and contacts with different people there during the eight or ten years preceding the war. Shortly before the war I was in France and some other countries of Europe. As a foreigner it would be imprudent, if not audacious, on my part to express any dogmatic opinions, on those countries, but from what I saw in Germany a year or two before the war, I can say that it did not come to me as a surprise that in 1939 war broke out in Europe, involving practically the whole of the world; nor did it come to me as a surprise that France fell after a few weeks' struggle. Those impressions have been further strengthened in my case by some of the books that have recently come out, particularly the book by Andre Maurois, which vividly describes the condition of things in France during the invasion.

The thoughtful among you are bound to ask yourselves some searching questions. What is going to be the future of the civilisation of the West? Is it going to be a perpetual fight between one 'ism' and another 'ism', between one theory and another, between one set of ideas and another? Is humanity going to be bled to death and civilisation going to disappear because the genius of scientists and the untold wealth of Western countries has invented, or is inventing, diabolical machines which can bring us only the peace of the grave? Were our ancestors, at whose ignorance we often marvel, less happy than we are today? If Europe has got to make a choice today between rival theories, must we also necessarily make the same choice? If the independence of the warring countries in the West, which have for centuries, or at any rate for a very long time, enjoyed complete freedom within their borders, can be trampled under feet within a few weeks in the case of some and a few months in the case of others, what is going to happen to that independence which we are aspiring after? Can non-violence be our shield against a ruthless aggressor who believes, or affects to believe that he has a mission from God or from anti-God? Must we copy civilized Europe in organising violence for suppressing the freedom of others who want to think their own thoughts and live their own lives? Must humanity be cast, everywhere in every clime and country into the game mould? Must human thought and conduct be standardised everywhere? There are many more questions which I could suggest for your consideration. It would be presumptuous on my part to answer any one of those questions dogmatically but I do suggest that at a critical juncture like this there must be some men in the country, who should consider it their duty to apply their minds to these questions and to enlighten their less-knowing countrymen. Am I indulging in vain hope when I say that again for these 'some men', we must look to our Universities?

Speaking of the Universities of the West in the early part of the nineteenth century a learned American writer says:—

"The Universities of the period were not only scientific but also political centre. By fostering national sentiments they played a significant role in the political evolution of the various countries. German universities, such as Berlin and Breslau, led the nationalistic movement during the War of Liberation (1813-14); their professors and students through organisations such as the *Burschenschaft* educated the general public politically and spread the idea of national unity..... Guizot, Cousin and Villemain in Paris aided in the liberalisation of French politics... Spanish universities were instrumental for the downfall of Napoleon and in the spreading of liberal doctrines. Copenhagen and Christiania (now Oslo) universities were centres of Danish and Norwegian nationalism, Warsaw and Vilna of Polish and Pest of Hungarian. Moscow, Kazan,

Kharkov, St. Petersburg and Kiev promoted Slavic studies and were the nuclei of intellectual as well as political pan-Slavism."

I have often wondered whether our Universities are discharging this function in the manner in which they should. There is a cultural and an intellectual side to our national movement in the development and guidance of which the Universities can play a great, honourable, and enduring part. To be absolutely frank with you I do not look upon it as a contribution to the clearing and development of political ideas or the strengthening of the national movement that we should hear so much of strikes in our Universities and Colleges, or that the generous sentiments and the unbounded energy of our youth—the future workers and leaders — should be dissipated in the repetition of party slogans or the performance of peripatetic exercises necessarily involved in processions of protest. I might have been more discreet and kept silent, but I know that my fate for uttering these words cannot be worse than that of stout-hearted, leaders like Mr. Rajagopalachari and Mr. Satya Murti.

Speaking for myself I have no hesitation in saying that I should expect our Universities to become the emporiums or clearing houses of our political ideas. I can fairly say that I have kept in touch with the output of our Universities, but if I may speak with absolute candour, I think that excepting in very rare instances I have not seen much evidence of any effort to approach the problems that are awaiting solution in a dispassionate spirit. It is unfortunate that this should be so, for while party has its use in practical politics, subservience to it on the part of those who profess to guide us has a blighting influence on their minds and the minds of those whom they wish to enlighten. It has often seemed to me that we pay a lip homage to the idea of nationalism and democracy, and wittingly or unwittingly we have been submitting to the autocracy of certain ideas and certain slogans. Nationalism in Europe was said to have sprung from the loins of the French Revolution. Essentially it was geographical, it then became an ethnic phenomenon until it became clear that "the natural goal of every national movement is the creation, maintenance and increase in power of a national state". From the evils of nationalism in Europe— and they are and have been freely emphasised by its critics—people have sought refuge in internationalism and today in Europe you have all these ideas in the melting pot with the result that you hear more of the New Order than of "nationalism" or "inter-nationalism". So devious is human history that Democracy, nationalism and internationalism having for the moment received the sentence of death, the will of a single man or

of the chosen few among his followers must be imposed upon all men and all countries. Whatever be the evils of "Nationalism" in Europe I think nationalism is a necessity with us and before we think of inter-nationalism or the New Order or the Federation of the world, I think we must allow nationalism a fair chance in our own country. Its task may be less ambitions than it was in Europe; nevertheless it is more important in so far as it has got to surmount difficulties and barriers which are peculiar to us. The peculiar mission of nationalism in India, with its different religious creeds and different languages, should be to federate different sections of the community giving them full freedom in matters that affect them peculiarly but harnessing them all to the service of the common land. Nationalism in India must seek not to supersede old cultures but to supplement them by a common culture and a system of life to germinate and foster those ideas which alone can secure the integrity of the country and its unimpeded progress.

What then is the part which we are entitled to expect the Universities to play in the development of our national life? First and foremost, I submit, we should, expect our Universities not merely to impart education in modern sciences and different branches of knowledge, but to bring about a synthesis of Indian culture. I use the word 'culture' in its largest sense. I should like our young men to remember that Indian culture is a variegated mosaic and indeed it would be difficult to claim for any culture in the world that in the course of its development it had not been influenced by other cultures. I have always maintained that while it is correct to say that there is such a thing as Hindu philosophy and such a thing as Muslim philosophy, it is absurd to maintain in the year 1941 that there is such a thing as a purely Hindu culture, and such a thing as a purely Muslim culture. As time has gone on in our history there has been a remarkable blending and fusion of the original Hindu culture with that culture, which is popularly called the Muslim culture but which is clearly traceable to countries, like Persia and to a certain extent Arabia, with the result that at least in Northern India during the last three hundred years or more a mixed common culture has grown up which may truly be said to be 'Indian culture'. It may be that among the Hindus, elements of Hindu thought and Hindu philosophy and Hindu mode of life may predominate; it may equally be that among the Muslims, the elements of Muslim thought and Muslim philosophy and Muslim mode of life may predominate; nevertheless the mixture of the two and its existence as a single entity cannot be denied and in my opinion it would neither be wise nor patriotic to do anything to destroy this common culture and for the Hindus to substitute for it an unadulterated Hindu

culture and for the Muslims to substitute for it an unadulterated Muslim culture. Remember also that the last two hundred years of association with the West have also profoundly affected our mode of thinking and even our mode of life. As your distinguished Vice-Chancellor has said in a recent book of his with that detachment, which is characteristic of a philosopher,

"Today the whole world is in fusion and all is in motion. East and West are fertilising each other, not for the first time. May we not strive for a philosophy which will combine the best of European humanism and Asiatic religion, a philosophy profounder and more living than either, endowed with greater spiritual and ethical force, which will conquer the hearts of men and compel peoples to acknowledge its sway?"

Again at another place in the same book, 'Eastern Religions and Western Thought' which due to his kindness I have lately been reading, our philosopher Vice-Chancellor observes as follows :—

"Science cannot minister to the needs of the soul; dogmatism cannot meet the needs of the intellect. Atheism and dogmatism, scepticism and blind faith, are not the only alternatives. They are the twin fruits on the same branch, the positive and negative poles of the same tendency. We cannot combat the one without combating the other. In the battlefields of Spain we find massacre, arson, despotic control. Both sides are as ruthless in their action, in their war of creeds, in their determination to stamp out the bestial thing—Marxist atheism or dogmatic Christianity. Is it a matter for surprise that some people believe that a malignant demon sat by the cradle of the unfortunate human race?

We require a religion which is both scientific and, humanistic. Religion, science, and humanism were sisters in ancient India; they were allies in Greece. They must combine today if we are to attract all those who are equally indifferent to organised religion and atheism, to supernaturalism and nihilism. We need a spiritual home, where we can live without surrendering the rights of reason or the needs of humanity. Reverence for truth is a moral value. It is dearer than Buddha or Jesus. Truth is opposed, not to reason or the Greek spirit, but to dogma and fossilized tradition. We cannot rest the case of religion any more on dogmatic super- naturalism."

Next I suggest that the one great service, which our Universities can render to the country, is that they may encourage and foster among those who are

committed to their charge, those habits of thought and conduct which alone can be the true foundation of a true democracy. Again as Lord Bryce says:

"Democracy assumes not merely intelligence, but an intelligence elevated by honour, purified by sympathy, stimulated by a sense of duty to the community. It relies on the people to discern these qualities and choose its leaders by them."

It is remarkable that in this matter the views of this philosopher-statesman of England should coincide with those of Sir Radhakrishnan. "The future of democracy", says Lord Bryce, "is a part of two larger branches of enquiry, the future of religion and the prospects of human progress." I shall beg you to compare this wise observation of Lord Bryce with that of Sir Radhakrishnan, which I have quoted above. Perhaps you will excuse a man of my way of thinking if he may venture most heartily to emphasise what Sir Radhakrishnan has, in his inimitable language, spoken of as the "opposition of truth to dogma and fossilized tradition".

The greatest need perhaps of Indian democracy, that is yet to be, is leadership. It is inevitable in conditions, such as we are witnessing today in our country, that our thoughts should often be running on sectional or party lines and in the clash of ideas that we notice in the country, there should be not only conflict between one community and another but between one party and another. In the midst of this clash there is nothing more easy for each party and each community than to assume that it is or at least it represents the entire nation, or that it constitutes a separate nation. We sometimes delude ourselves with superficial historical analogies. When we are quarrelling on the question of Indian languages, we refer to the multiplicity of languages in Switzerland and South Africa, if we do not do worse. We justify outbursts of religious intolerance by pointing to certain chapters in the history of other countries and we always take care to point out that it is the presence of the 'third party' and its Machiavellian machinations, which are far more responsible than our own conduct, our own omissions, our own failings, for that spirit of disunity, which is at the present moment disfiguring our public life. I do not propose to examine the truth of any one of these justifying pleas. Let it be granted that each one of them is true and valid, but I cannot help thinking that we have allowed our pride and our prejudices to stand in our way. If we know that there are some scheming people about, who think that their chance lies in our continued disunity, why do we play their game? Why can we not rise superior to these conditions? It seems to me that

if we want to establish a really democratic state of society and government, we need not paralyse our whole activity merely because we cannot attain perfection immediately, or adopt a system which would stand the test of the most fastidious conformist to the fundamentals of western democracy. We must, therefore, look to a new kind of leadership in place of that which begins and ends with party supremacy. Again, if I may be permitted to quote Lord Bryce:

"The predominance of Party in democracies has made us, when we talk of leadership, think primarily of the militant function of the general who directs a political campaign and bears, like the champions in ancient warfare, the brunt, of battle in his own person. But the best kind of leader has a duty to the whole people as well as to his party. If he is in power, he must think first of the national welfare; if he is in opposition he has nevertheless the responsibility of directing the minds and the wills of a large section of the people, and of aiding or resisting the policy of the Administration. In both cases his actions as well as his views and arguments and exhortations, have weight with the whole nation for good or for evil."

I do not expect general agreement with these views. Some of these, I fear, may be described as mere platitudes, they may even be condemned as intolerable heresies, but I hold very strongly that the Universities must recognise their responsibility in providing the type of leaders, who feel that they owe duty to the whole people and not merely to their party, for I fear at the present moment the nation, has receded in the background and party is occupying the forefront. Even if I am told by some that my whole argument rests on the false assumption that there is already a nation in esse, I shall not demur to that criticism, but I shall venture to say that if the nation is not an accepted fact, yet the necessity of its creation in the future must be recognised by all unless, of course, we have made up our minds that India must in future consist of a loosely united congeries of different communities, actuated by different ideals and impelled by different urges. To achieve this object we shall have to learn the supreme lesson of compromise in politics—a lesson to which all human history bears witness, a lesson which, when forgotten, has led to disastrous results in the history of humanity. Summing up the career of Julius Caesar, Mommsen says in a remarkable passage in his "History of Rome":

"Caesar is, in fine, perhaps the only one of those mighty men, who has preserved to the end of his career the statesman's tact of discriminating between the possible and the impossible, and has not broken down in the task which for nobly gifted natures is the most difficult of all—the task of recognising when on the pinnacle of success, its natural limits. What was possible he performed and

left the possible good undone for the sake of the impossible better, never disdained at least to mitigate by palliatives evils that were incurable."

If you want to be convinced of the soundness of the principles which guided Julius Caesar, compare the Rome of his time with the Rome of the time of Mussolini. It is for the cultivation of some such spirit among your alumni that I earnestly plead.

"A political institution" so said a great English statesman once, "is a machine; the motive power is the national character. With that it rests, whether the machine will benefit society, or destroy it. Society in this country (by which he meant England) is perplexed, almost paralysed; in time it will move, and it will devise. How are the elements of the nation to be blended again together? In what spirit is that reorganisation to take place?" How this description of the England of three generations back is true of India today is a matter for you to consider. The main questions, therefore, which must engage the attention of all thoughtful men are those formulated by Disraeli. How are the elements of the 'nation' to be blended together in India? In what spirit is that reorganisation to take place? These are questions which can easily be answered by enthusiastic party politicians according to their lights, but their answers will not, I fear, lead to a solution which may plant our feet on the road to uninterrupted progress. They have, I fear, failed to do so until the present moment. Each one of the parties can justify itself in the light of the axioms which it has adopted or prescribed for itself, but from a national point of view, I fear, each one of those parties is as far-off today from the solution of our problems as it was 10 years ago or more. Perhaps we are farther away. We want, we say, an absolutely free Constitution. I agree that that constitution should be the constitution of a fully free and self-governing country, but the real problem is not about the ideal but as to the method of attaining that ideal, or at least making the nearest possible approach to it. It is again a tribute to the supremacy of the hold of the West on our minds that some of us will not be happy unless all the features of the constitution of England are reproduced in our future constitution. It is also a tribute to the supremacy of the hold of another part of the West that others will not be happy with the British model. The constitution which will make them happy must bear more or less the impress of Russia or something like it. Time is fleeting and no one can feel sure what the future has in store for Russia or for us, and yet I feel that at this juncture our learned professors may do worse than rescue themselves from party slogans and shibboleths, study the realities of the situation,

the possibilities and the impossibilities of a particular line of advance, which we cannot ignore excepting at our own peril, and enable us by their wisdom and dispassionate judgment, by the results of their study, to see the light. Perhaps they alone can furnish the material for the practical statesman—the statesman of whom Napoleon once said that "his heart should be in his head". I am deliberately refraining from going into the intricacies of the various problems which confront you, but I am only begging that the learned among you may justify their existence, as Universities in the West have done in epochs of national ferment by battling against the forces of darkness, prejudice and passion.

Today you have certain practical issues waiting for solution and I venture to make a few suggestions for your Department of Politics. We have been told authoritatively that it is for Indians to frame a Constitution. If we have to frame such a Constitution, let us be serious about it. The spade work must be done by men who have the time and leisure and above all a thorough knowledge of our country and also of the constitutions of other countries. In our case if political power is to drift into Indian hands, it is clear to my mind that it cannot be reposed into the hands of the few. The ultimate responsibility must be owed to the country at large. This being so, I assume that democracy, i.e., a form of government in which those who will actually administer our affairs shall in the last resort hold themselves responsible to the will of the many, is the only alternative before us. The basis, however, of such a government must be popular franchise. There are some among us who think that the franchise should be widened—widened to the extent of its becoming 'adult franchise'. There are others who look upon the existing franchise as solely or mainly responsible for those evils, real or fancied, which, they say, have followed in the train of the Constitution of 1935. It has been suggested in some quarters that we must turn from the existing system to the system of 'functional representation'. The subject of functional representation, examined in its historical aspect in countries of the West from the time of the Middle Ages, as interpreted and emphasised under Guild Socialism in France, Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany and Socialism or Communism in Russia, is one of fascinating interest—not without its lessens and warnings, to us all. It is for you to come to your own independent conclusion though I confess that such study as I have been able to make of it, has convinced me that nothing can be more disastrous to the growth of democratic ideas in India than the adoption of this system. Similarly broad hints have been given in high quarters that

perhaps a system of irremovable executive will suit us better than the system under which Ministers have got to depend upon popular vote and party strength. Again I say the question requires careful study and it will be for your professor to tell us whether it is possible for us to adopt the American Presidential System, or the Swiss System, or any other similar system, or whether none of these systems will suit the conditions of India. Similarly in any serious attempt to study the problems of constitution you will be called upon to do more deep thinking about the problems of defence of India. The present war has already shown that the methods of defence adopted hitherto are out-of-date and that instead of India being exposed to danger only at its North- West frontier, it is exposed to dangers of a serious character practically on all sides. We cannot assume that because we do not mean to pick up a quarrel with any other nation in the world, we need have no fear now or in future of any danger from outside. The world does not consist of, and has never consisted of 'angels', though I believe angels too were in the habit of quarrelling among themselves, and there are plenty of such angels today in human form almost everywhere in the world, with more than one ambitious arch-angel, anxious to establish his own new order. In studying problems of defence you are bound to come up against problems of industries, and if the present situation is borne in mind, we can only come to one conclusion and that is that the dissociation of industrial development in our country from the problems of defence by those who were in power has brought them and us to the very brink of danger. I do not know what is really at the back of the minds of those who often talk to us from across the seas with pontifical authority about our future. I cannot say whether they want really that India should stand on her legs in future in every department of life, including defence, or whether the freedom of India shall be more or less a replica of the freedom of Egypt with all the weakness of its position, as it has been demonstrated in our own times. I do not deny that Lord Milner was a great statesman, but I maintain that history has proved that Lord Durham and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman were greater ones, and speaking for myself I should like something of their spirit to be introduced in place of the Milner spirit. Lastly, and this perhaps will be the most important subject for your study, will be the question of the Minorities. There is perhaps no one more anxious than I am for a genuine, honest and honourable settlement with the Minorities but it may be for those among you who may apply their minds to this subject, to tell us how best we can proceed to achieve that end. You will have to disentangle this problem from those knots which have been tied up in

recent years by false assumptions, false reading of history and prejudices and passions. The problem is one of infinite difficulty, but I maintain that in the handling of no other problem is there greater necessity for a spirit of genuine compromise. Again do not forget that the integrity of India can never be secured and you can never have a truly national government unless and until you have found a place in your system for that one-third part of it which is represented by the Indian States. Not many years ago I was hoping that we were within sight of a solution even though that solution had its imperfections. I am still not without hope that some solution may be found, but I warn you that the problem is one of great complexity and will make the largest demand on your patience, on your judgment and on your statesmanship. Mere theoretical discussions about 'sovereignty' or 'equality of conditions and rights' will, I fear, not help you. The problem should, in my opinion, be approached from a strictly practical and realistic point of view. In short, I suggest that our present task should, be to prepare the framework of the Constitution, leaving it to experience and the varying necessities of the future to strengthen and improve the superstructure that we may raise now. In all this task the learned and the thoughtful among our University men can render inestimable service and I do, therefore, suggest that under the wise guidance of your Vice-Chancellor your Department of Politics may at once begin to study all these problems in the spirit in which they should be in the calm and serene atmosphere of a University.

I am afraid I have already exceeded the limits which I had prescribed for myself when I commenced this address. If instead of venturing to discuss educational problems, which I know can be far better discussed by educationists of repute and experience among you, or referring to the question of unemployment among the educated classes—a subject in which I have been much interested and on which I have written or spoken on other platforms—I have ventured to draw your attention to some of the current problems of the country and to the dangers looming ahead, it is only because I feel that you are keenly interested in them, as indeed you should be, and because I am anxious that some departments of your great University may make a valuable contribution to the elucidation of some political and constitutional ideas, not in the spirit of wrangling politicians eager to score dialectical victories, but in that of earnest investigators of fact. The students themselves, to whom I am now going to address a few words, can take their proper part in this process of investigation. I

have already said that it is the function of the University—and it is an obvious fact—to impart education to our young men and stimulate their latent intellectual faculties and tastes. There is, however, one appeal that I shall make to the students and that is that they should realise that their educational process does not end with the taking of their degrees at the University. It is only the beginning of a new chapter in their life. They must keep up their habits of study and must, on no account, allow their minds to rust. Unfortunately it is only too true that the habit of self-education and self-culture, which must mark every true man of culture throughout his life, is not sedulously cultivated by a large number of our graduates. I should like every young man and young woman present here to ask himself or herself one question at the end of each day in his or her life. How much have I learnt today? What addition to my store of knowledge have I made today? But more than that what is necessary is that you should cultivate the habit of balanced judgment in the practical affairs of life, learn to weigh the conflicting opinions that are placed before you, to correlate the theories of life, howsoever attractive they may appear in cold print, to the facts of life, and above all to cultivate a spirit of humility and avoid that snobbery, which is very often the mark of a person of little learning. If this is the advice that I am going to give you for your intellectual life, I shall only venture to suggest to you that there is a deeper life than mere intellectual life, and that is the spiritual and moral life in the truest sense of the word. In the actual affairs of life there will be many occasions on which you will be called upon to prove your fidelity to those principles which you have been taught here or which you will gather from books. Such occasions are the supreme tests of a man's moral vitality and I sincerely hope and trust that you may fully stand those tests. It is in the ordinary affairs of life, in your dealings with your friends and with your enemies, with your neighbours and strangers, and with others less happily circumstanced than you are, that you can show whether the principles which you have imbibed here have become a part and parcel of your life, and thus alone can you justify the reputation of this great University. There is great wisdom in the old adage "Every tree is known by the fruit it bears." Let the fruits of this University be such as will be its best title to glory.

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