India and America

An Alliance of Values

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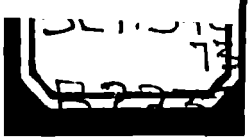
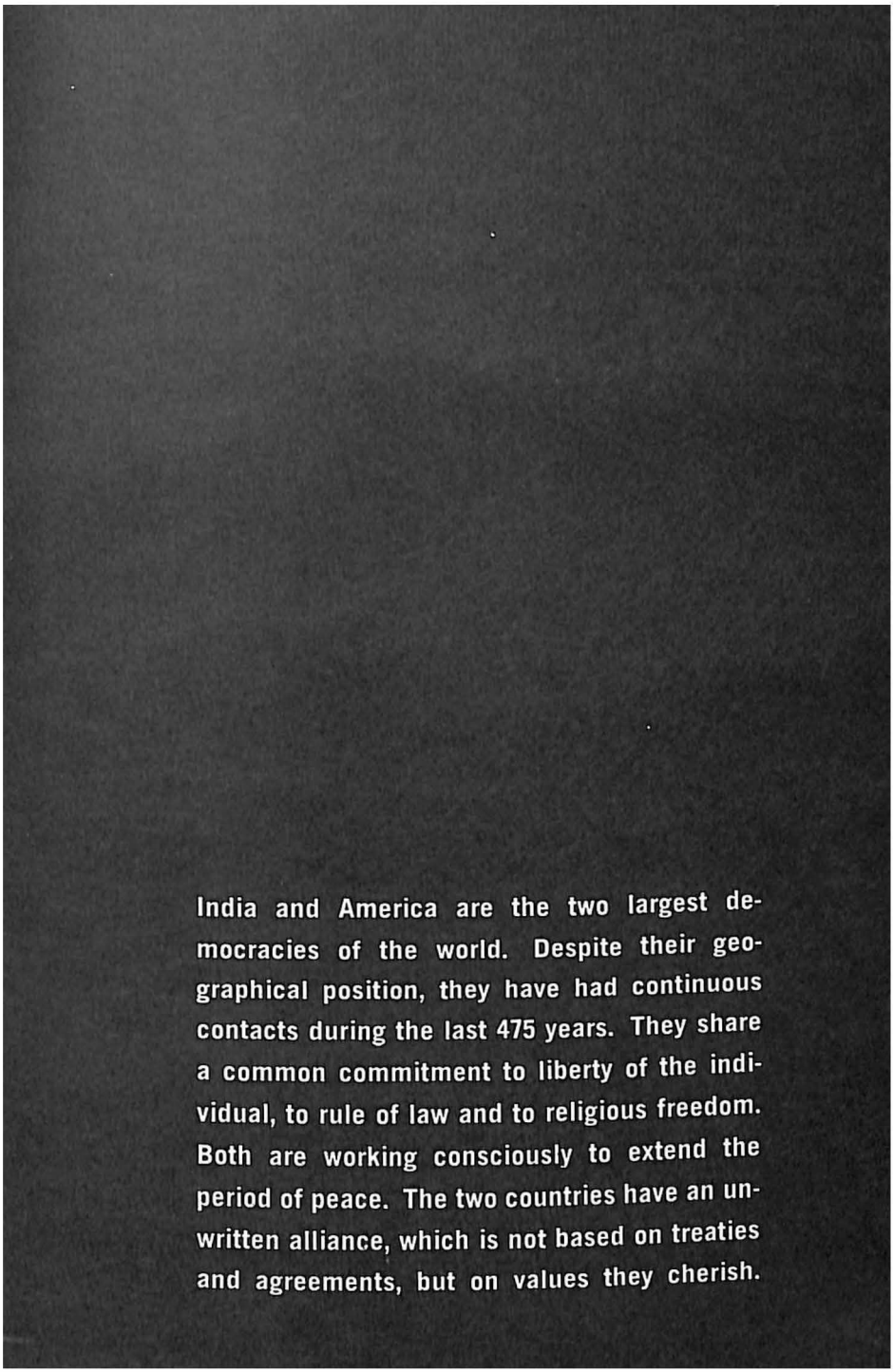



India and America are the two largest democracies of the world. Despite their geographical position, they have had continuous contacts during the last 475 years. They share a common commitment to liberty of the individual, to rule of law and to religious freedom. Both are working consciously to extend the period of peace. The two countries have an unwritten alliance, which is not based on treaties and agreements, but on values they cherish.

An Alliance of Values

HISTORICALLY, no two nations, so wide apart geographically, have been so intimately connected as our two countries. It was the historic error on the part of Columbus, in his search for a new route to India, that led him to the discovery of America. But the hope of discovering a passage to India was not given up even after settlement in the New World. It was turned into a dream of discovering a land route to India. A Missouri Congressman, Thomas Hart Benton, thought that the coming of the railroads would at last accomplish this dream, for his statue at St. Louis bears the inscription: "There is the East; there lies the road to India."

Early Contacts

During the American War of Independence, Britain was also fighting to establish an empire in India. This division of the British forces perhaps delayed the British conquest of India and hastened their defeat in the New World. By a strange irony, the man who lost America to the British Empire, Lord Cornwallis, became Governor-General of India.

Before long, the two countries established a direct relationship. Within four years of the termination of the Revolutionary war, an American ship named *The Grand Turk* called at Calcutta. The Americans struck bargains with both the French and the British who were then quarrelling to establish their hegemony in India. The United States Government assisted trade with India by extending credit and by imposing protective duties to favour imports in American ships.

The trade was so brisk that in 1793 the United States decided to open a Consular office in Calcutta. In 1845, an American consular report claimed that three quarters of the foreign ships that arrived in Calcutta sailed under the American flag. Besides, the trade with India was so profitable that it brought the sailors social prominence and prestige. On Cape Cod it used to be said of a pretty girl that she was good enough to marry Captain of a ship sailing to India. Today the situation has reversed. The "America-returned" Indian has better matrimonial prospects in India!

The missionaries, also, contributed to understanding between the two nations. The first non-Catholic missionary set out for India in 1813 and took nearly a year to reach Bombay. An understanding woman social reformer, Pandita Ramabai, studied in the United Kingdom and in the United States. Her book, *The High Caste Hindu Woman*, aroused such keen interest in Boston that a 'Ramabai Association' was founded to assist her in her efforts to educate widows in India. At that time, the widows in India suffered from many socio-economic problems.

Influence of Indian Thought

Contact between the two countries was not a one-way traffic. Indians too contributed to American thought. In the early decades of the 19th century Unitarianism, an intellectual interpretation of Christianity, which denied much of the dogma and distilled religion to analytical purity, was popular among the intellectuals of New England. Transcendentalism, which later caught the imagination of the elite, treaded the soft turf laid by Unitarianism.

Both Unitarianism and Transcendentalism were greatly influenced by the Indian social reformer, Ram Mohan Roy. His writings were the thought-pieces for discussion and debate. Roy's interpretations of Christianity covered nearly half the pages of religious publications, including the *Christian Register*, the most influential among them. All major libraries had Roy's works on their shelves.

Reviewing Roy's translation of the Vedanta, William Tudor wrote in the *North American Review:*

> Ram Mohan Roy is not a Christian, it is true, but the doctrine he inculcates differs very little from the Christian doctrine repeating the nature and attributes of the Deity. It is the same in its spirits and objects.

Another student analysing the contributions of Roy wrote:

> With the coming of this great leader, there took place a certain fusion of East and West, a realisation that in spite of distance and difference, the Indian, as personified in Ram Mohan Roy, was close kin to his American brother.

The distinguished American thinker and philosopher, Ralph Waldo Emerson, had come under the spell of

Roy's writings. Emerson's aunt, Mary Moody, had sent him Roy's works while he was a student. Later between 1828 and 1831, Emerson was assistant to a pastor in the Church of Rev. Henry Ware, one of Roy's strongest advocates in America. As early as 1818, Emerson had written a poem "Indian Superstition". He was among the first major *literati* of America to read and appreciate the anonymous authors of Hindu Scriptures. Indian philosophy had obviously made a deep impression on him. He had, it appears, read almost every translation of Hindu works available to him. Some observers feel that the impact of Indian philosophy on Emerson was important, certainly most unusual. Being an eclectic thinker, he had woven these ideas into the fabric of his thinking. His kinship with Indian thought was so deep that it was not easily distinguishable, though it was clearly evident. Mahatma Gandhi, on reading his essays, thought that they contained "teaching of Indian wisdom in a Western *Guru* (teacher)".

GANDHI AND THOREAU

It was Thoreau who brought our two countries politically and ideologically together. As Louis Fischer put it: "Thoreau in Massachusetts borrowed from Gandhi's India, and repaid the debt with words that reached Gandhi in South African cell". "Many years ago," wrote Mahatma Gandhi in his journal *Indian Opinion* in 1907, "there lived in America a great man named Henry David Thoreau. His writings are read and pondered over by millions of people. Some of them put his ideas into practice. Much importance is attached to his writings because Thoreau himself was a man who practised what he preached." This was the preface which Gandhi wrote when he published some extracts from Thoreau's writings. Gandhi later perfected the art of *Satyagraha* which Thoreau had called Civil Disobedience. Gandhi wrought miracles with the creed of non-violence. Thoreau's contributions, derived from his careful study

of Indian scriptures remain immortal and politically influential. Thoreau was greatly influenced by Indian thought. His comments on *Manusmriti*, the Code of the Hindus, were almost panegyric:

> That title (Manu) comes to me with such a volume of sound as if it had swept unobstructed over the plains of Hindustan . . . They are the laws for you and me, a fragrance wafted down from those old times, and not more to be refuted than the wind.

He once even claimed to be a *yogi*. Though he read Hindu works deeply, he was not, according to an observer, in any sense a *yogi*, but he did pay devoted heed to those glimpses of light from the Orient which he saw.

Gandhi and Thoreau had many similarities. Neither of them was a philosopher living in an idealistic cocoon, unrelated to their social milieu. They were both seekers after truth and had an intense and overpowering desire to live according to their own convictions. Both were individualists. But it was left to Gandhi to employ the principle of "conscientious objection" to develop and direct a social and political movement. There seems to be a poetic justice in the fact that the principle of civil disobedience as a finished product gyrated back into the American Civil Rights movement. In this connection, the names of distinguished Americans are Reverend Holmes, Philip Randolph, Stuart Nelson of Howard University and Dr. Martin Luther King.

Walt Whitman, the celebrated poet, also was exposed to and influenced by Hindu Vedantic thought. President Radhakrishnan wrote of him:

> Whitman turns to the East in his anxiety to escape from the complexities of civilisation and the bewilderments of a baffled intellectualism.

Poet Rabindranath Tagore showered his meed of praise and called him the greatest American poet who had

caught the Oriental spirit. Whitman's poem "Passage to India", written on the occasion of the opening of the Suez Canal, describes some of his thoughts on India.

Apart from intellectual contributions, there were also instances of material contributions. In 1717, a college in New Haven, Connecticut, was seeking funds abroad and in desperation appealed to Honorable Elihu Yale, a retired Indian merchant in London and former Governor of Madras. Governor Yale shipped over nine bales of goods, which brought £562 Sh.12 when sold at Boston. The grateful trustees named the institution the Yale College which later became Yale University.

Socio-Political Contacts

There were contacts also at socio-political level. Mr. Dossabhoy Framjee Cama, an Indian Merchant, had reportedly acquired a painting of Lincoln by D. Huntington around 1858. It was probable that he had entered the portals of White House and met President Lincoln around 1860.

Indian religious thought received special prominence during sessions of the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. Swami Vivekananda, who interpreted Hinduism and philosophic heritage of India to the Parliament, enthralled the audience with his eloquence and erudition. His success encouraged him to establish Vendanta Centers in New York and later in California. There are twelve such active centers today in the United States.

In the twentieth century, India's history was mainly a chronicle of her trials and tribulations in the cause of freedom. Many prominent U.S. citizens actively supported India and fulfilled their commitment to anti-colonialism. Among them, I will mention only a few, for the list is long. Among the most prominent were William Jennings Bryan, the Governor of Nebraska and later Secretary of State in President Wilson's cabinet; Dr. John Hayes Holmes, the American evangel of Ma-

hatma Gandhi; Robert N. Baldwin, the Director of the American Civil Liberties Union; and Professor Robert M. Lovett, one of the editors of the *New Republic*. Their espousal of India's cause kept the American tradition of anti-colonialism alive and refurbished the revolutionary zeal of the Indian nationalists.

India had, it appears, drawn inspiration from the American freedom movement. Indian leader Bal Gangadhar Tilak claimed "Swaraj" (independence) as his birthright. Another Indian leader, Mr. C. R. Das, echoed Patrick Henry's immortal words: "Give me death or give me liberty". Asutosh Mookerjee, a great educator and jurist, said: "Freedom first, Freedom second; Freedom always".

Ghadar Party

Some Indians, in the second decade of this century, founded the Ghadar Revolutionary Movement in California under the leadership of eminent scholar and patriot Dr. Har Dayal. Having come into existence before the Gandhian era, they believed in violent methods to overthrow the alien Government. An advertisement in the first issue of their newspaper *Ghadar*, published in San Francisco in November 1913, carried the following:

> Wanted: Brave soldiers to stir up Ghadar in India; Pay—Death; Prize—Martyrdom; Pension —Liberty; Field of battle—India.

During the World War I, the Ghadar Party demanded for India the right of self-determination. It attempted, with the assistance of some Indian revolutionaries in Germany, to smuggle a ship of arms into Indian ports. The cargo was captured by the British, who informed the United States (which had by then joined the War) of the complicity of the Ghadar Party. The leaders of the Party were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. This evoked sympathy for India's cause in

the United States, for many Americans felt that the activities of the Party were no less patriotic than those of George Washington.

American Support for Indian Freedom Fighters

In the twenties, the United States was also the sanctuary for several freedom fighters of India. Among them were eminent scholars, journalists, scientists and thinkers like Tarak Nath Das, G. B. Lal, Silendra Nath Ghosh, Dhanagopal Mookerjee, Syed Hussain, Haridas Majumdar, M. N. Roy, Anup Singh, Basant Kumar Roy, Benoy Kumar Sarkar, R. L. Bajpai, Judge Saund, Krishnalal Shridharani to name a few. An anecdote relating to one of them vividly portrays the sympathy and support American professors extended to Indian freedom fighters. Mr. Silendra Ghosh had with him some secret papers, the existence of which was discovered by the British intelligence. The British Government requested the United States Government to seize these papers. When the police knocked at the door, Mr. Ghosh's professor detained them long enough to allow Mr. Ghosh to burn them. There are myriad instances of such help which Indian freedom fighters received in this country.

India's cause was later strengthened by the visit of Lala Lajpat Rai, a prominent nationalist leader of India. He explained India's struggle for political freedom. Another important Indian to visit America was Poet Rabindranath Tagore. He lectured on the cultural synthesis of India. An ardent internationalist, Tagore articulated against territorial nationalism. He pleaded the cause of Universal Man. Other prominent visitors to America were: Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Rev. C. F. Andrews, Vithalbhai J. Patel, Miss Bhicoo Batlivala, Mrs. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, and Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, whose Haskel Lectures at University of Chicago created a stir in the academic community.

India League

In 1937, India League of America was founded with Mr. Checker as the President and Professor Haridas Majumdar as the Secretary. J. J. Singh later became the President of the League to further activate its programme. Many distinguished Americans like Justice Douglas, then Senator Humphrey, Senator Mundt, Philip Randolph, Henry Luce, Albert Einstein, Congressman Celler of New York and Congressman James Fulton of Pennsylvania, joined the League for creating favourable public opinion for India and for pleading Indian case for independence.

Indo-American relations suddenly received a greater attention during World War II. The rise of Fascism and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour were traumatic experiences for the United States. President Roosevelt could no longer ignore the claim of colonial peoples to freedom. India had geopolitically a special position. Besides, Mahatma Gandhi's creed of non-violence was an eye-opener to colonial peoples. The impact of *Satya-graha* became world-wide. Jawaharlal Nehru, the author of the *Discovery of India,* was resolutely against Fascism and had, during a stop-over in Rome, refused to shake hands with Mussolini. The Indian National Congress had the support of almost the entire nation in its struggle for freedom. To enlist India which held the key to the Pacific theatre of war, to the cause of the United Nations, it was necessary to grant Indian people their basic demand for self-government.

Roosevelt Plan

American anti-colonial tradition, her commitment to freedom, her absence of colonies had built a favourable image in India. Indian nationalist leaders regarded the United States as *primus inter pares* among the Allies. Indian hopes were raised when the United States joined the War. President Roosevelt was immensely popular in

India, which looked up to him for justice. His personal representative in India summed up this feeling when he wrote to the President:

> The magic name all over here is Roosevelt: the land, the people, would follow and love America.

President Roosevelt first raised the Indian question with Churchill during the latter's visit to Washington in December, 1941. According to Churchill, he reacted so strongly that the President did not broach the topic again for some time. As Robert E. Sherwood put it in his book *Roosevelt and Hopkins: An Intimate History,* "the normal broad-minded, good-humored, give and take attitude which prevailed between the two statesmen was slipped cold" on the issue of Indian freedom. President Roosevelt changed his approach to the problem and resorted to diplomatic channels, for he remained convinced of the wisdom of India's demand for self-rule. But he did not postpone the discussion of the Indian problem too long. The President made his historic proposals to Churchill. He wrote:

> I have tried to approach the problem from the point of view of history and with a hope that the injection of a new thought to be used in India might be of assistance to you. That is why I go back to the inception of the Government of the United States. During the revolution, from 1775 to 1783, the British colonies set themselves up as thirteen States, each one under a different form of government, although each one assumed individual sovereignty. While the war lasted, there was great confusion between these separate sovereignties, and the only two connecting links were the Continental Congress (a body of ill-defined powers and large inefficiencies) and second the Continental Army, which was rather badly maintained by the Thirteen States. In 1783, at the end of the war, it was clear that the new responsibilities of the thirteen sov-

ereignties could not be welded into a Federal Union because the experiment was still in the making and any effort to arrive at a final framework would have come to naught.

He continued:

> It is merely a thought of mine to suggest the setting up of what might be called a temporary Government in India, headed by a small representative group, covering different castes, occupations, religions and geographies—this group to be recognised as a temporary Dominion government. It would of course represent existing governments of British Provinces and would also represent the Council of Princes.
>
> But my principal thought is that it would be charged with setting up a body to consider a more permanent government for the whole country—this consideration to be extended over a period of five or six years or at least until a year after the end of the War.
>
> I suppose that this Central temporary governing group, speaking for the Dominion, would have certain executive and administrative powers over public services, such as finances, railways, telegraphs and other things which we call public service.

Attitude to Cripps Mission

The President commended a programme to solve, not to stall—as Churchill wished—the Indian problem. His proposals, from the Indian point of view, delayed India's independence, but did not deny its legitimacy. It is also significant that Churchill announced the Cripps Mission to India the very next day. There is evidence to suggest that this Mission was sent to India to placate American public opinion. It is evident that Mr. Cripps was sent with a limited and circumscribed mandate. He was

not at liberty to negotiate freely the freedom of India with Indian leaders. Colonel Johnson reported this to President Roosevelt in the following words:

> Cripps is sincere, knows this matter (of Indian freedom) should be solved. He and Nehru could solve it in five minutes if Cripps had any freedom or authority. To my amazement when satisfactory solution seemed certain, with unimportant concession, Cripps with embarrassment told me that he could not change the original draft without Churchill's approval and that Churchill has cabled him that he will give no approval unless Wavell and Viceroy separately send their own coded cables unqualifiedly endorsing any change Cripps wants.

The irate President wrote to Harry Hopkins on the same day, to inform Churchill of the American position on the Indian problem. After suggesting that the Cripps Mission extend its stay in India to make a final effort, he added:

> The feeling is almost universally held that the deadlock has been caused by the unwillingness of the British Government to concede to the Indians the right of self-government, notwithstanding the willingness of the Indians to entrust technical, military and naval defense control to the competent British authorities.

Jawaharlal Nehru was aware of President Roosevelt's disappointment. In his letter of April 12, 1942, Nehru wrote to the President that the failure of the Cripps Mission "must have distressed you, as it has distressed us." Nehru then added:

> I only wish to say how anxious and eager we were, and still are, to do our utmost for the defence of India and to associate ourselves with the larger causes of freedom and democracy. To us it is a tragedy that we cannot do so in the way and in the measure we would like to.

Nehru then went on to stress the war potential of a free India:

> We are a disarmed people. But our war potential is very great, our man power vast and our great spaces, as in China, would have helped us. Our production can be speeded up greatly with the co-operation of capital and labour. But all this war potential can only be utilized fully when the Government of the country is intimately associated with and representative of the people.

Diplomatic Pressure

American bludgeoning was done through diplomatic channels. Secretary of State Cordell Hull later pointed out that the United States was not willing to enter into a public altercation with Britain. He wrote in his Memoirs:

> In publicly stating our conviction that subject peoples should be assisted toward self-government and eventual independence, we kept our statement, without making specific reference to India. But in private conversations, the President talked very bluntly about India with Prime Minister Churchill just as I was talking with British Ambassador Halifax. The President was entirely of the same mind as myself. While for the sake of good relations with Britain, we could not tell the country what we were saying privately, we were saying everything that the most enthusiastic supporter of India's freedom could have expected, and we were convinced that the American people were with us.

Public Support for India

There was clear evidence of this. Pearl Buck and her husband, Richard Walsh, Will Durant, eminent author of *Case for India*, Frederick Schumann, the well-

known political scientist and Dr. Lin Yutang, the Chinese philosopher, Mrs. Claire Booth Luce, Rev. Saunderland, Mrs. John Gunther, Mrs. Dorothy Norman, Roger Baldwin, Norman Thomas, Senator Copeland of New York, Senator Norris of Nebraska, Congressman Mason of Illinois, to name a few, all pleaded the Indian cause through their writings and from public platforms. But it was left to Louis Fischer, the biographer of Mahatma Gandhi, to tell Americans that Britain was trying to drown a fish. Wendell Willkie, in his book *One World*, reiterated the question he was asked from Africa to Alaska during his tour in 1942: "What about India?" He recounted the wisdom of China's wisest man: "When the Indian aspirations were put aside to some future date, it was not Great Britain that suffered in public esteem, it was the United States." He reminded his readers of the American commitment:

> If we believe in the ends we proclaim and want, stirring the forces of the Middle East to work with us towards those ends, we must cease trying to perpetuate control by manipulating native forces by playing off one against the other for our own ends.

The editors of *Life* went further. In an open letter to the people of Britain, they warned:

> We Americans may have some disagreement among ourselves as to what we are fighting for, but one thing we are sure what we are not fighting for is to hold the British Empire together. We don't want you to have any illusions . . . if you cling to the Empire at the expense of a United Nations' victory, you will lose the war. Because you will lose us.

The Annual Convention of the Congress of Industrial Organizations passed a resolution supporting the aspirations of the Indian people. The *Atlantic Magazine* insisted that India should be a part of the general settlement after the war. Professor Ralph Barton Perry of

Harvard University, in a letter to Sumner Welles, the then Assistant Secretary of State, asked the Department of State to express its "real attitude" towards the Indian problem. Mr. Welles in reply said that the U.S. Government was anxious to assist in solving India's complex constitutional problem. India, he added, would be given the freedom to choose her government as soon as the necessities of war permitted.

Churchill continued to defy America as long as she kept her pressure private. He insisted that the Atlantic Charter was not applicable to India. In a radio address on July 23, 1942, Secretary Hull rebutted him, for he spoke with India specifically in mind:

> We have always believed—and we believe today that all peoples, without distinction of race, color or religion, who are prepared and willing to accept the responsibilities of liberty, are entitled to its enjoyment. We have always sought—and we seek today—to encourage and aid all who aspire to freedom to establish their right to it by preparing themselves to assure its obligations.

Gandhi's Letter to Roosevelt

The letter dated 1st July 1942 which was written by Gandhi to Roosevelt and was brought by Louis Fischer to America indicates as to how much India was looking forward to Roosevelt's assistance and help to Indian cause. The letter reads:

> I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau and Emerson. I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing be-

yond mentioning that in spite of my intense dislike of British Rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people. I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into good-will the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present war.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in non-violence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this war, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organisation, of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complica-

tions, in my proposal I have confined myself only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal foolproof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense, in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, she must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the Free India Government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

I hope that it would commend itself to you.

Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it.

I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and well wisher of the Allies.

During Mahatma Gandhi's fast in 1943, President Roosevelt made it clear that Gandhi must not be allowed to die in prison. The expression of deep and great public concern in America was a further evidence of America's increasing interest in India and love and respect for Gandhi. Ambassador Philips sent telegrams to the State Department almost everyday, imploring that he be given permission to state publicly the views of his government. This he was denied, for fear of offending Britain. Later he was authorised to say that "the phases of the situation in India requiring discussion are being handled by high Government officials of the United States and Great Britain". Secretary Hull by publicly failing to endorse this annulled its effect. Later Secretary Hull privately told Anthony Eden that the

U.S. Government had made a "real effort to keep down the anti-British sentiment".

The Philips Report

Ironically, it was a column in the *Washington Post* of July 25, 1944, that rocked the public harmony in U.S.-British relations. For the first time, the United States was not able to dissociate publicly with the contents of the column as desired by the British Government. The column published a letter which Ambassador Philips had written to President Roosevelt detailing the plan for India's emancipation. The Philips plan, the author admitted, was possibly a way out of the impasse which, if allowed to continue, might affect America's conduct of the war in that part of the world and her future relations with the coloured races. It was presented as a step in furthering the ideals of the Atlantic Charter. Its publication raised a furore. The British Government demanded of the State Department to dissociate itself publicly from the letter. The Department advised the President that, inasmuch as it was the view of the Department, no public statement should be issued on the matter. Ambassador Philips was declared *persona non grata* in London and in New Delhi.

Congress also reacted strongly. Congressman Colvin D. Johnson moved a resolution stating that India was important to the U.S.A. in war and in peace. In the Senate, Senator Chandler of Kentucky proposed a resolution demanding that the President publish Mr. Philips' second report. Thus the Philips episode hurt the British badly, proving the ancient maxim that truth cannot live in seclusion.

Here notable mention should be made of the great contribution made by the American Friends Society—the group of dedicated Quakers who helped India's claim for independence. The freedom struggle in India took a different turn. The country was partitioned, which never would have occurred, as Sumner Welles wrote in

his book, *Where Are We Heading?*, if Churchill had not angrily rejected President Roosevelt's proposal. The actions of the United States in their totality hastened the dawn of freedom in India. No wonder India and America exchanged Ambassadors in October 1946 even before India became free. Significantly, Jawaharlal Nehru, in his broadcast to the nation on September 7, 1946, said:

> We send our greetings to the people of the United States of America to whom destiny has given a major role in international affairs. We trust that this tremendous responsibility will be utilized for the furtherance of peace and human freedom everywhere.

In a reflective mood, emanating from the consciousness of a glorious past and the dedication of the silent masses, Nehru looked to a future full of hope and expectation. He concluded the broadcast by telling his people:

> India is on the move and the old order passes. Too long we have been the passive spectator of events, the plaything of others. The initiative comes to our people now and we shall make the history of our choice. Let us join in this mighty task and make India, the pride of our heart, great among nations, foremost in the arts of peace and progress —the door is open and destiny beckons to all.

A few months later, the Indian ship was sailing in the international waters with, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, "hope in the prow and fear in the stern". India's non-violent principle had become the cutting edge of anti-colonialism. This added to the importance of the birth of free India, an historic event in itself. But anti-colonialism, India repeatedly stressed, was accompanied by her commitment to the freedom of the individual enshrined in democracy. Our two countries have naturally developed a comradeship, which was not based on treaties and alliances, but on mutual respect and, even mutual admiration.

Free India

Thus with independent India, a new era dawned in our relationship. We arrived on the international scene, in a sense, together. The war-devastated and impoverished Europe no longer evoked the respect and the leadership it once commanded as a matter of right. The United States found herself the leader of the world. Because of her isolationist policy in the earlier era, America had very few commitments outside the New World. India too, being a newly independent State, had a clean slate to write on. We both, therefore, ushered in a new phase in international relations. We sought peace, and its attainment became our main objective. Sometimes we employed different methods to achieve the same goal. Nonetheless, there was, in my judgement, a fundamental unity of purpose. One might say we worshipped in the same church though we occupied different pews. The internal and international aims of our two countries clearly confirmed a partnership in values.

India, like America, is wedded to democracy and individual freedom. In our Indian society, we realize we must remove oppressive restrictions, dispel the ignorance of the masses, increase their self-respect, and open to them opportunities of higher life. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that it is impossible to abolish the distinctions between the genius and the fool, the able organizer and the lazy worker. We assure our people equal opportunity to develop their individual personality. This concept of equality is more than a declaration of intent; it is a creed.

The main impediment to the realization of equal opportunity is the concentration of power. Power is a heady, immature wine and a self-perpetuating phenomenon. Without control, without supervision, it is, with

history as our witness, likely to be an instrument of oppression, not order. In India and in America, political institutions are geared to prevent the concentration of power. We both stand for decentralization of power that would bring order and harmony in the complexities of our lives. Democracy is not the standardization of everything so as to obliterate all particularisms. As Dr. Radhakrishnan put it, "We cannot put our souls in uniform—a just organization of society will be based on spiritual liberty, political equality and economic freedom."

Freedom of Worship

"The realm of conscience", as Justice William O. Douglas declared in his Tagore Lectures, "should be placed beyond the reach of government. Political beliefs, like religious convictions, are one's own business. One should not be subject to an accounting for anything but his conduct." The Indian Constitution assures this to the Indians. It has guaranteed Fundamental Rights, which include, among other rights, the freedom of worship. Spiritual liberty demands toleration of different religious viewpoints. India is secular but Indians are not. They are a 'god-intoxicated' people as you are a 'god-fearing' people. Truth, Mahatma Gandhi asserted, is God. Truth to Indians is on the top of a hill and different religions provide different routes to the peak. The differences we notice on the ascent vanish on the summit. Organised religions are many, but religion is one. Each of our countries has, within its territorial limits, almost every religious sect known to man. We realize that there is too much diversity in life to confine people to a single religion or a single philosophy. We seek unity, not unanimity.

Economic freedom is the third component of our democratic society. The goal of all governments, we

realize, is to give a status of social equality and provide economic opportunity for the common people. We are in a social and economic revolution. The word "revolution" need not scare us. It does not mean barricades and bloodshed. The elections held in India last month attest to this. Revolution means to us only speedy and drastic changes. We are interested not only in our objectives, but also in our modalities; not only what we achieve, but in how we achieve it. Gandhi drummed into our ears that means are more important than ends. President Johnson, in describing his dream of the Great Society, also emphasized means. He proposed the quality of its people to be the test of a nation. One of the reasons that impelled President Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis, it was reported, to avoid a Pearl Harbour was that it was un-Christian. The bed-rock of democracy —the rule of law—basically lays emphasis on means. For example, legitimacy and recognition of the President in a democracy depends not in the fact that he is a President, but *how* he became President.

Democracy at Work

In February, this year, the largest electorate in the history participated in a mammoth election when India held her fourth general election. The electorate was of about 250 million, larger than the total population of the United States and nearly 150 million cast their votes. The voting was by secret ballot in an estimated 250,000 polling booths manned by nearly a million electoral officers. There were about ten major political parties, each with a different symbol, battling for the ballots. The elections were direct, through territorial constituencies for the Lower House of the Parliament with 521 seats and for all legislative assemblies of the States and the Union Territories with some 3,488 seats in the aggregate. With this election another chapter in the constitutional development in India has opened. It is true that the strength of the ruling party has been

cut down by the gains of the various opposition parties, yet the ruling Congress Party has formed the Central Government in Delhi. They have a clear majority, but not the type of comfortable majority they had in the last three elections. Therefore, the policy that India followed, both at home and abroad, will have continuity in the coming years though the emphasis may shift from place to place.

Furthermore, this election has given other political parties a chance to form State Governments. Hithertofore India had no experience in this area. For coming years, the Centre and the States will negotiate and bargain, keeping in view their respective objectives. The United States already has such constitutional experience and India will be able to learn a few things from her in this sphere.

As in the past, these elections were also, despite the magnitude, conspicuous for their orderly conduct. India, despite her size and diversities, likes to prove that democracy can successfully meet the challenges of a revolution of rising expectations. India is, undoubtedly, the most stable and "active democracy" in the underdeveloped world.

We in India are insistent on industrializing our nation, but within the framework of our democratic setup. We seek to assure our people the basic necessities of life and social security. We therefore plan our limited resources and supplement them by external assistance. The bulk of our foreign aid has come from the United States. In absolute terms, we received a substantial amount, yet in per capita terms, it is about the lowest on the international scale. But generous assistance of the U.S. in our effort to fight poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease, has brought the two nations into an enduring partnership.

Spirit of Tolerance

Apart from institutional similarity, and even identity, India and America are founded on the idea of tolerance.

The United States, in the words of President Kennedy, is a nation of immigrants. She has in her midst almost every nationality, every race and every language. The process of assimilation has tangibly affected American community. The languages, songs and folkways of the newcomers often added a new flavour; their culture introduced a fascinating diversity; their attitudes generally mellowed people's point of view; their humour brightened the platform and the stage; and their religious beliefs necessitated the tolerance of every group in the nation. The contribution of these immigrants is immeasurable.

India is also a land of wide variety. We too have had our immigrants, who entered our country over the ages by land and by sea, some to trade, some to conquer, others for a better life. India was not always poor and hungry. We too have a multi-religious society. We have about 15 million Christians, 60 million Muslims, 350 million Hindus and there are Sikhs, Jews, Nestorians, Zoroastrians and others. India absorbed all of them and produced a composite culture. We have also built communities in which all races could blend and mingle, each retaining its special characteristic and developing whatever is best in it. This was achieved by choice, not by compulsion. From Buddha to Gandhi, the idea of tolerance has permeated the Indian milieu and has formed a powerful link in forging the unity of India. It is not surprising, as Arnold Toynbee described, that "the Indian missionaries of an Indian philosophy, Buddhism, were the first people to think and feel in terms of the human race as a whole. They felt a concern for all their fellow human beings; they had a vision of mankind as being potentially a single family and they set themselves to turn this potential unity into an accomplished fact by peaceful persuasion."

Naturally, both India and America consider the praxis of tolerance as the livery of freedom. But in our social mores and philosophical undergirding, we differ. Indian ethos recognizes sacrifice, unlike the American which

rewards success. In America, a "have-not" should become a "have" to prove his mettle. From "log-cabin" to the White House is American tradition. In India, on the other hand, a "have" should become a "have-not" to prove his spirit of sacrifice and selfless service. Lincoln is your hero; Buddha and Gandhi are Indian heroes.

Philosophical Outlook

On the philosophical level, there exists a fission-fusion relationship between India and the West. In the West, moral consciousness is characterized by the persistent rational concern with social justice and progress. Her attitude is moulded by Greek philosophy, Judeau-Christian principles and scientific revolution. Rationalism, religious faith, humanism and collectivism all mingle and jostle in Western mind and create an intricate multi-coloured fabric of moral consciousness. There is an impact of the West on the Indian mind. Her amazing dynamism, preparedness and eagerness for change; and her ideas of social progress have effected us. Indians were mainly concerned with personal purification and self-transcendence. The need for social progress touched the Indian mind only pietistically or ritualistically, and almost amorally. Our outlook thus appears to be complementary, not competitive. There is, one feels, a need for coalition of Eastern and Western mind to fuse the quest for external progress with the search for inner peace.

Many factors are assisting the parturition of a new society where this assimilation would be possible. Merely on a people-to-people basis our contacts have increased. In the colonial era, for example, there was a wall of censorship between the two countries. This was graphically described by Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce in her letter of August 25, 1942 addressed to Jawaharlal Nehru. The letter was sent through Mr. Wendell Willkie, who was to deliver it to Mr. Nehru.

> I have heard from many sources how little of the truth about America and America's true aims manages to find its way into India today. By the same token, we don't get the truth about the Indian question here. With the Wall of Censorship that has been inexorably and tragically erected between us and one fifth of the world's people, it is natural that ignorance, antipathy, misunderstandings on both sides should grow. Mr. Willkie's appearance will be the first great breach in that wall. Through it the tides of truth may at last flow. But his appearance there will only be another illusion, unless he talks face to face alone with you. Many of us know that you are the greatest and truest friend that the cause of Democracy and the cause of the United Nations has in all of Asia.

Today the White House no longer looks to Whitehall for expertise on India. Some of the emotional hangover of the past is still reflected especially in the press. Many journals still employ that pejorative rubric "Hindu India", which is full of Maharajas and snake-charmers. But our increased contacts have brought greater awareness of each other's social background. Today there are about 9,000 Indian students and teachers on the campuses of this country. There were only about 100 in 1945. There are hundreds of Peace Corps volunteers in India who share their knowledge with Indians and assist them in various fields.

Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy was again surprisingly modelled on American external policy in the early years of her freedom and economic development. George Washington was perhaps the first statesman to conceive the policy of non-alignment. As Gandhi perfected Thoreau's concept of civil disobedience, Nehru adopted and improvised Washington's ideas on non-entanglement to modern

conditions. India's non-alignment policy was no different than what was enunciated by George Washington in his farewell address when he exhorted the American people to "observe peace and harmony with all"; and beware of "permanent inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachment for others . . . A passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. It is our policy to stay clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the world."

Thomas Jefferson, whom Nehru resembled in many respects, also advocated "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations—entangling alliances with none." This policy later became isolationist policy, but India, maybe because of increased international communication, made a positive policy out of it.

In international relations, India and America have disagreed on the means, but not on the necessity to attain a peaceful world order which facilitates non-violent change. Military alignment, India feared, with the experience of World Wars, would tend to promote, not resolve, conflict. Non-alignment, being essentially a non-military pose, formed the guidepost to the formulation of policy. It was a method for arriving at a decision and was relevant to the conditions of peace. Actually non-alignment functions only in a situation short of war. For during a war there may be neutrals, but no non-aligned nations.

Non-alignment is a participationist, not an isolationist, policy. A non-aligned country takes a position on every major issue affecting the international community and is not indifferent to any problem. India was never, and never will be, ideologically unaligned. We are for democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. But we are not crusaders. Crusading is in a sense alien to our thought. We seek to persuade others, if possible, by example, to the merit of our system and thoughts. Non-alignment, therefore, relies on democratic ideology, consent, not command, in international relations. We believe, as in a state, so in the world, persuasion, not

force, should be the basis of inter-state relationship. We seek to convince those who disagree with us, not to destroy them. That is the basis of our policy of co-existence. But we are conscious that this cannot be established in the absence of peace and justice. Jawaharlal Nehru made this clear when he said: "When peace is threatened or justice is menaced, India will not and shall not remain neutral."

Commitment to Peace

Peace, in the nuclear age, we feel, cannot be achieved by alliances based on force as an instrument of policy. Because when two ride the same horse, as Hobbes put it, one has to sit in the back. Obviously, we do not like the idea of sitting behind. We prefer to ride our own horse and, if possible, in step with other horses. We neither aspire to lead them nor to follow any of them. We have, I believe, often supplemented rather than supplanted your policy objectives as some of your allies have done. India's role in Korea, Indo-China, Suez and in the Congo provides obvious examples. "A strong, independent, non-aligned India," Senator Tydings stated recently, "serves as a conduit and affords an opportunity for liaison between the Communists and the West. This opportunity would be tremendously valuable in our efforts to maintain world peace."

There are many areas in which we concur with you. We are opposed to aggression, whether it is in Korea or Kashmir. In Suez and in the Congo and in Indo-China, we sent our soldiers in the cause of peace. In Cyprus we have upheld the banner of order; in U.N. discussion for disarmament we have made several proposals. We have even denied ourselves, of our own volition, nuclear weapons in order to serve the cause of international peace and stability.

We realise that India and America, as the two largest democracies, have a larger share in achieving peace. Together we can, with patience and perseverence, work

to prolong "the period of peace". To achieve a world without war, we need a world based on understanding, tolerance and sympathy; and not a world where war is just kept in check by the balance of armed strength. Peace can dawn only when we succeed in extending the scope of the nuclear arms ban treaty, both in regard to destruction of the stockpiles as well as further production. We believe non-dissemination and non-proliferation are the essentials of nuclear disarmament. We recognise the problems of nuclear powers and non-nuclear powers. But we feel that mutual respect and mutual obligations are the basis for a rapport between them. A spirit of participation should pervade all negotiations, more so in the case of disarmament.

We, the poorer nations, have a stake in disarmament. We want to harness the nuclear energy, not for destruction, not for building nuclear weapons for parade, but employing it to fight poverty and hunger. We want to use nuclear energy for economic advancement.

We consider nuclear energy as the hope of India's technological revolution. Opening the first atomic reactor on January 20, 1957, Prime Minister Nehru said:

> We have built these atomic energy establishments here not only to help ourselves, but as a centre where we can share such knowledge and experience as we possess and as these establishments might offer, with people of other countries of Asia and Africa. I believe some of them have expressed their willingness to take advantage of them. I should like to repeat that we shall gladly welcome the association in these training facilities, of people from countries which do not possess them, more especially in Asia and parts of Africa.
>
> I am happy today, but with that happiness it is impossible not to think of the likelihood of this development taking a malevolent turn. No man can prophesy the future. But I should like to say on behalf of my Government—and I think I can say

> with some assurance, on behalf of any future Government of India—that whatever might happen, whatever the circumstances, we shall never use this atomic energy for evil purposes. There is no condition attached to this assurance, because once a condition is attached, the value of such an assurance does not go very far.

Mr. Nehru's commitment still stands. Prime Minister Shastri had declared that the land of Gandhi and Nehru would not manufacture death-dealing weapons. Only last month, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi reiterated India's basic policy not to gain admittance into the nuclear club by exploding a device. We have, technologically speaking a fairly sophisticated atomic energy establishment. But our scientists are working towards a different goal. They are analysing the application of nuclear energy to medicine, agriculture and industry. Apart from supplying cheap nuclear power for our industrial establishments, nuclear energy is being applied to agriculture. We have discovered that irradiation of seeds yields better crops. We have found that putrefication of fruits and fish is almost negligible if they are exposed to radiation. This will be a great boon to a tropical country like India, where refrigeration facilities are rudimentary. Nuclear development can be the hope of tomorrow rather than a curse.

Differences in Modalities

India and the U.S.A., in the past, have perhaps erred grievously in their political assessments. You did not accept our judgment about Pakistani motives. We were not convinced of the cogency of your arguments about China. We have, for our part, realised that non-alignment need not be equated with military weakness. We are, therefore, today prepared to fight any aggressor and even to punish him. On the other hand, our analysis of Pakistani motives has been undeniably proven.

There is another area where America and India have disagreed, not in their objectives, but in their methods of how to achieve those objectives. The Vietnam situation illustrates this. Both India and America would like to have cessation of all hostilities and a negotiated settlement broadly in terms of 1954 Geneva Agreement. We feel in India that North Vietnam today is more realistic and concerned for a political settlement, because of (a) increasing and enlarged rift between China and the Soviet Union, (b) the setback of the Chinese foreign policy in Asia and Africa and (c) internal political convulsions in China.

India and America both share the common concern about the present Chinese leaders and their policy of militant expansionism. We feel all the more in view of this, that today if it is possible to stop all hostilities, from both sides, including bombing and shelling and to start negotiations in Vietnam, that would be the biggest blow to the Chinese foreign policy and the Chinese militant influence in general.

An Unwritten Alliance

India and the United States are today at the cross-roads. Any immature step may ruin both nations' hopes and aspirations. As President Eisenhower eloquently put it: "We who are free and who prize our freedom above all other gifts of God and Nature, must know each other better, trust each other more, support each other".

India and America, Vice President Humphrey once declared, have an unwritten alliance. There are many instances that confirm this fact. I may point out that it has been America that readily came to the aid of India in times of danger or distress, whether it be on account of famine, foreign exchange or invasion from China. Similarly, we are one of the few countries that has not resorted to stone-throwing or mass demonstrations against American Embassy or its allied offices. General Eisenhower had a tete-a-tete with Prime Minister Nehru

at Camp David after the Suez crisis. Later, during his visit to New Delhi in 1959, President Eisenhower drew huge, unprecedented and enthusiastic crowds. Every hamlet in India grieved at the death of President Kennedy. One of the Indian calendars carried a triptych of Gandhi, Nehru and Kennedy. I am emboldened to say of our partnership, our common quest for peace, *Solvitur ambulando,* it was answered by facts.

In 1954, when the Vice President of India presented on behalf of the people of India, a gavel to the United States Senate, the then Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson said:

> As we go down the road in this critical hour, searching for peace and prosperity so necessary to free civilization, we trust we can march together in a spirit of friendship and mutual trust and confidence.

It was more than a hope; it was a wish. As the President of the United States and as a practising statesman, he is doing his very best to translate this wish into reality. For our part, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has said: "India is as important to the United States as the United States is to India. Let us both recognise this cardinal truth."

Based on a keynote address delivered at the Conference on India, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, Pa., on March 9, 1967.

Dr. Purnendu Kumar Banerjee

Dr. Purnendu Kumar BANERJEE Minister, Embassy of India in the United States, Washington, D. C., born December 1917, was educated at his home University in Calcutta and then at New York and Harvard. Professor of Law for a number of years, Dr. Banerjee served on the Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Law and on the Senate of the University of Calcutta as an elected member.

Dr. Banerjee was connected with labour movement and was the Vice-President of Bengal Railway Employees' Union, Chief Editor of the Railway Union Journal and Vice-President of the Press Workers' Union. He was also Member of the Board of Editors of Calcutta Review.

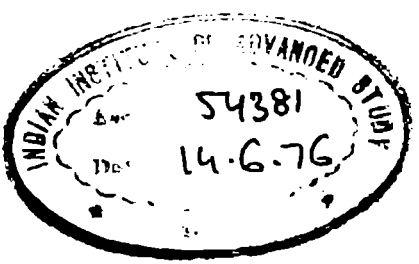
Dr. Banerjee joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1948 and was successively acting High Commissioner for India in Canada, member of the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in New York, Deputy High Commissioner for India in East Pakistan, Counsellor and Charge d'Affaires for India in Japan. Prior to his present posting. Dr. Banerjee was India's Minister and Charge d'Affaires in Peking. He was concurrently accredited to Mongolia.

Dr. Banerjee is the recipient of national decoration "Padma Shri" awarded to him by the President of India in 1963 for meritorious work done by him, for India, in China. He has received honorary degrees of L.L.D. from the West Virginia State College in 1965 and D.C.L. from Luther College, Iowa, in 1966. He was made honorary citizen of the State of Delaware in 1965.

Dr. Banerjee has represented India at a number of international conferences including the U.N. General Assembly Sessions (1951, 1952, 1953, 1954); Peace Observation Commission (1951, 1952); Security Council (1951, 1952); UNICEF (1953, 1954); Social Commission (1953); Commission on the Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (1953); Economic and Social Council (1952, 1953); Human Rights Commission (1954);

Trusteeship Council (1954); International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos (1954, 1955); UNESCO (1956); ECAFE (1957); Asian-African Legal Consultative Conferences (1957, 1961); GATT Conference (1959); the Colombo Plan Conference (1961); the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund Conference (1965). International Conference on Social Work (1966).

Dr. Banerjee's publications include "Pages from History", "Disarmament—A Review", "Certain Aspects of United Nations", "Trust and Non-Self-Governing Territories", "Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes".



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