

[Shri A. K. Gopalan]

The hon Prime Minister said, "I cannot say that we will never intervene." We did not want a categorical statement from him that as far as the Central Government is concerned, at any time when any occasion arises, it will never do that but we wanted only to know whether direct action and things like this had been permitted, whether it had been persuaded, whether it had been abetted, whether it had been begun at the initiative of the Congress Party and the Central Government, whether it had been inspired

An Hon Member: Conspired

Shri A K Gopalan: I am glad—by Acharya Kripalani, also by Shrimati Sucheta Kripalani and also inspired by the Congress Secretary. This was done. So, not only do I disapprove of this Proclamation but I say that it was as a result of a conspiracy to overthrow the Government by using the words democracy and other things. When the legislature was functioning, when the judiciary was functioning, when the executive was functioning, when everything was there, for the first time in the history of India, after 1947 this article 356 was used. It was very bad and the people of Kerala will certainly oppose it.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr Deputy-Speaker: Sir, I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to avoid the present excitement and distemper that comes from Kerala and to adhere to certain basic considerations which we have to consider. Many things have been said here on both sides of the House which perhaps were not wholly relevant to this debate. It is difficult to draw hard and fast lines in such a debate. Nevertheless a great deal has been said

Shri Dange, who spoke with his usual fluency and ability—and spoke for a fairly considerable time—said many things. But then I wondered

and thought how much can be said with what little content. I tried to catch hold of what he had said. There were long disquisitions about democracy, about various other matters, about conspiracies but not too much about the points in issue. The whole argument is—and to some extent Shri Gopalan's has been—of a deep laid conspiracy to put an end to the Kerala Government.

The word democracy has been used a great deal here on every side of the House, more especially on the opposite side. Shri Dange accused us of being—I forget his words, but he said something to the effect of being—the murderers of democracy. A story comes to my mind of an unfortunate youngman, who went and killed his father and mother. When he was hauled up before the court he asked for clemency on the ground of being an orphan.

Shri Sadhan Gupta: Do you ask for the same clemency after killing democracy?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. Shri Dange was good enough to say some very nice things about me and to condone with me that I had been removed from the pedestal on which our people had put me. I do not personally believe in people being put on pedestals and if any persons had mistakenly put me on a pedestal it is a good thing that they have removed me. It is good for me and good for them.

Shri Dange^{*} referred also to the great deal of disquiet among various people in India including the members of the Congress Party about the step taken in Kerala. He was perfectly right in referring to it or rather in mentioning this fact. He probably knows because the newspapers have recorded it that the Congress Party of Parliament met for three long sessions confidentially to consider this matter and people spoke there

frankly and fully without any inhibitions as they should. Why? And what was the meaning of that? The meaning was because the Congress Party, being wedded to democracy and constitutional procedures, having been conditioned by them, was anxious to understand and know why something has been done which was criticised as being undemocratic. It shows the texture of the Congress Party. Even when its own Government had taken a step of this kind—a big step, an important step—it did not take it for granted. It wanted to argue. It wanted to criticise. It wanted to get out all the facts and then to decide in their individual or in their group minds. We found in those long discussions for three evenings that broadly speaking people who knew about what had happened in Kerala—and many of them had been there—were of one opinion. Immediately they had no doubts. Some people who had not been there perhaps did not know all the facts and were among the original doubters. But as the facts came out before them during these long talks there was no doubter left so far as I know. But what I was laying stress on was that this is the approach of the Congress rank and file as well as the important members of it. This is the critical approach now. If that was the approach of the rank and file of our Party, I would beg of you, Sir, to consider whether those who are honoured by the leadership of this Party could do something which was so radically opposed to that conditioning through which we had gone in the last generation or two specially. It was obvious that any such thing would give us the greatest disquiet and it was only when we were compelled by circumstances that we could take such a step. Now I venture to say that in this matter not only we, but all of us, were compelled by circumstances. How did those circumstances arise is another matter which can be considered.

Shri Gopalan, towards the end of his address, laid some stress on re-

pudiating a remark that has been made that even the leaders of the Communist Party at that juncture wanted intervention. He referred to a visit which he and Shri Ajoy Ghosh paid to me just about three or four days before this Proclamation of the President. I would not normally like to refer to a private meeting, but it is he who referred to it and therefore you would permit me and I hope he will permit me...

Shri Punnoose: The hon. Home Minister referred to it

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not know about the hon. Home Minister. I am talking about a visit by Shri Ajoy Ghosh and Shri Gopalan. There are no secrets involved in it, but I would not have mentioned it if that particular incident had not been mentioned.

Now, I stated in public later, lest there might be any misapprehension, that the Chief Minister of Kerala had not asked us to intervene. Of course not, obviously not. Mr. Ajoy Ghosh and Mr. Gopalan did not in as many words ask us to intervene. But I say definitely that they left the impression upon me that nothing would be more welcome to them than intervention (Interruptions)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Perhaps hon. Members did not follow what the Prime Minister said. He said that is the impression left upon him. It is on him that the impression has been left, not on the hon. Members.

Shri Tangamani: How does he know our mind?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: In fact, Mr. Ajoy Ghosh and Mr. Gopalan referred to that threat which had been made by that Samiti, there the Vimochana Samiti, that they would go on the 9th of August to the Secretariat with a large crowd and try to capture it.

Naturally, this was, I thought, a highly improper thing to do. But I

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was asked, in effect: you must stop not only that, but practically this movement, or else, the sooner you act the better. Now, it is quite beyond my capacity—one could express one's feelings and any that it was undesirable and all that—but it was quite beyond my capacity at this stage, or even earlier for the matter of that, to stop this tremendous movement. I could, if I was in charge and if our Government felt so inclined, of course, meet, if I may say so, that type of movement with the coercive apparatus of the Government. That is a different matter. But I knew that no word of mine would suddenly stop this movement where it had gone at that stage. And they knew it too very well.

So the impression left on my mind was that the sooner this is done the better, the sooner this proclamation is issued the better.

Shri Pannoose: The sooner you condemn the better.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: May I also say that when this proclamation came out—naturally I am referring to my own impressions—as I have said, there was a fair amount of disquiet in the minds of many of my colleagues in the Congress Party, but there was great relief in the Communist Party. And this is natural; this is quite natural. I do not mean to say (Interruption)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not mean to say that they wanted Central intervention all along. I do not say that. But I do say that a situation had arisen which it was becoming exceedingly difficult for them to face.

I was told it meant, might have meant, well, very serious consequences, large-scale killing, something. And no government—communist, non-communist—likes doing that. It is obvious. Therefore they were in a

great difficulty. I can quite appreciate that difficulty, because any government would have been in that difficulty if it had arrived at that stage. And there was no way out of it, either this or to face it and those tremendous consequences, apart from the tremendous damage done, I mean to say lives lost, etc., the consequences and the ill-will raised among the people, ill-will that would last a long time, maybe till the elections and after, which obviously as reasonable politicians they did not like. Therefore, what were they to do about it? What could they do? There was no relief for them except by Central Government action.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: So it is being justified?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not justifying it. I am analysing as much as I can.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Analyse it yourself without bringing in others.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. Shri Gopalan is all attention, but the other Members are going on interrupting. I should think that the Deputy Leader should exercise his influence on the others.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: The Deputy Leader is not saying anything because he does not want to do it now. I wanted to repudiate and say it was not correct.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I would like to know his repudiation, so that I may know what it is.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: The repudiation is that even now you are saying that we have said "please intervene to relieve us." That is what you are saying.

Several Hon. Members: No (Interruption)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He has not said that.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: I was present with Mr. Ajoy Ghosh. What he said was not that...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. Perhaps he has not understood the Prime Minister correctly. So far as I could understand, he has not said that.

Shri A. K. Gopalan: I did not talk anything, because the situation was created and I wanted...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The actual words used, to my recollection, were: "If you cannot stop all this, the sooner you act the better" These were the words used the sooner you act the better I am not saying

Shri A. K. Gopalan. The actual words used were "Can you tell us what is the decision you have taken? Are you going to intervene?" That is the actual word that he said, "What is the decision that the Central Government has taken?" We wanted to know the decision taken by the Central Government (Interruption)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order Now I will request hon Members on both sides to have patience Let us listen to the Prime Minister

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: What the hon Member said also were the words used: not exclusively Of course, he used those words too My reply, as he has already stated, was that we have not come to a final decision, but everything is driving us in that direction (Interruptions)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker Order, order

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not wish to enter into verbal exchanges, because the matter is beyond merely verbal cleverness But I do submit that round about the time when this Proclamation was issued, we had arrived at a stage when there was no other way out except disaster on a big scale in Kerala, a holocaust or something like that. I do say—this is my

impression—that this was not only the view of a large number of other people, but by the compulsion of events, many of our Communist friends had arrived at the same conclusion, not willingly, but by the compulsion of events

Coming to the stage when this Proclamation was issued, I may well say, it was issued not only because there was no other way out, but because there was almost unanimity that it should be issued

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: From your side

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am prepared to admit that the argument is, and it should be met, it is all very well to issue it at the stage it was done, what about the preceding stages? (Interruption from Shrimati Renu Chakravarty) I am putting the hon Member's question What about the preceding stages? It was a conspiracy and instead of stopping it, under article 352 or some such thing, you encouraged it in various ways?

Just a little while ago, Shri A. K. Gopalan was good enough to quote from numerous speeches of mine, which I said at Press conferences again and again condemning the direct action that was going on in Kerala, condemning the picketing of schools, condemning the stopping of buses, condemning the so-called direct action in Government offices I said that on three or four separate occasions I may say, of course, this was not enough I should have said so more often and more forcibly (Interruptions)

Shri Asoka Mehta: We are here to hear the Prime Minister, not to hear the communists It is time they stop

Mr. Deputy-Speaker Order, order I will request the hon Members Majority of the House is anxious to hear the Prime Minister They are not interrupting the Prime Minister alone but the whole House They want to listen I will request them now (Interruptions) Order, order

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker]

I should warn hon. Members now that I shall have to take severe action if this is not stopped. I will make an appeal to all others also.

Shri Jadhav (Malegaon): Shri A. K. Gopalan was not interrupted.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I would make an appeal to all.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I started by saying that I hope to avoid bringing in the present Kerala excitement and distemper here. In so far as I am concerned, I shall still endeavour to do so.

The cases may be isolated from the final act which had become inevitable and the preceding six weeks or six months or one year or two years or whatever you like.

We are accused of some kind of deep laid conspiracy to get others to do things which would bring about a situation which would enable us to act in this way. I hope that is a correct representation. The conspiracy goes back according to them to within 48 hours when the Kerala Government into power, when, according to S. A. Dange, Shri Shriman Narayan went there and gave out his opinion that there was insecurity and law and order was in danger. Shri S. A. Dange is not quite correct about that. It is true that Shri Shriman Narayan went there because of a previous engagement to attend a meeting there of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. He did not make these remarks then. He made some such remarks five or six months later.

Some Hon. Members: No, no

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: On the first occasion, what he referred to was—I have enquired from him and on the strength of what he said. I am saying—on the first occasion, just at that time, large-scale releases had taken place of people convicted of murder, etc. About that he said, this is caus-

ing a good deal of apprehension. Five or six months later, he went again and then he said that there was a widespread feeling of insecurity. As a matter of fact, I forget when, about a year ago, last year, some time, I also ventured to say that it had come to my knowledge that among the people in Kerala there was this feeling of insecurity. There was no doubt about that. I am not saying about what the position was; but many people felt that way: that is what I say. I cannot say; I do not know. But, many people felt this way; this was a widespread and growing opinion.

Then, Shri Dhebar is brought into the picture as another villain in the piece who excited. I am sorry the way his name is repeatedly brought out, because I think that Shri Dhebar is a man of the highest integrity for whom I have the greatest honour.

An Hon. Member: Can't help.
(Laughter) (Interruption).

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. Then, I shall have to take some action.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Hon. Members who laugh at this would do themselves no credit by laughing when I refer to an honoured person and a man of integrity. It is not a laughing matter. You may agree or disagree. There are certain conventions to be observed in decent society.

I cannot go into those details, but I will say this. The House knows, last year the matters came up here on the motion of a Member from the opposition and, as has been pointed out, the Government's attitude, my hon. colleague, the Home Minister's attitude was not to encourage that matter here in the House, discussion, etc. Ultimately I do not quite know—it has sort of faded out—what happened to it. Not that we were not getting disquieting reports about various happenings there. The Home Minister's personal file is full of letters from the Governor and of letters to and from, not so

many, but a number—to the Chief Minister he wrote friendly letters—who asked why was not a warning sent under some article of the Constitution before the Proclamation. As a matter of fact, many times friendly letters were sent pointing out something which could be done. Sometimes his suggestions were accepted by the Chief Minister, sometimes not. So things were going on.

So, we were disturbed. But, the idea, the whole conception of intervention never came into our mind. It was quite remote. We had not thought of it. The thing that we did consider when the matter came up here was, when so many charges are brought, would it be desirable or advisable to have an enquiry into this. But, the question of intervention, never came into our mind.

To skip over a lengthy period, I do not wish to go into details, two months or three months ago, I forget, when we were at Ooty, I had been reading in the papers and got some broad reports about friction in Kerala. But I had no real idea of how much the situation had developed. The first intimation I got about this new Kerala situation was from a Minister of the Kerala Government. It was then that I realised from his words how serious it was and how big it was. In fact, I remember some rather odd words he used. He said that 'We have been used, in the past years, to what we call the Nehru crowds, which attracted so many people, but now we see the opposition people bringing these crowds on us'. He said 'This is amazing, this is surprising'. That remark and a lot of other things he told me impressed me that something unusual was happening there and I had not realised it. Later on of course, other facts and impressions came to me from other sources, from Congress people and others.

But the first impression I got was from a Minister of the Kerala Government, first of all, a personal report. I had a vague idea that perhaps by

visiting Kerala, I might be able to do something at that stage.

Then, when the matter came up, the question then was, I think, that this gentleman, Mr. Mannath Padmanabhan had announced or threatened to have picketing of schools or rather to stop the opening of schools by picketing and other ways. This was the sole matter which came up before us; some Congressmen had brought it. We said this was utterly wrong and absolutely wrong, and 'on no account can you participate in it'. That was the advice that we gave. There was no other issue before us.

We began to realise, however, that whatever advice we may or may not give, events that were happening in Kerala were gradually getting beyond any reasonable advice. It was just then that I issued, I believe, a statement, coming down from Ooty or from Coimbatore, in which what I said was—I think Shri A. K. Gopalan has already read out a part of that statement—(and this was the first time that I used that word) that this was a big upsurge. There it was. I came back.

Later we found to our surprise that this thing was growing bigger and bigger, and one thing which I had not expected, none of us had expected, was that some of the Congress people there had been prohibited from picketing of schools, they did not do so. I cannot speak about individuals, individual Congressmen might have done so. I cannot say, but officially they did not do so. They did not indulge in this bus business also. They did what they call token picketing, six persons performing some token picketing of Government offices. I did not approve of this at all. None of us did. But I confess to you and it may have been a wrong thing for us to do that we were in difficulty. When the matter came up later here, some days later, we were in a difficulty because people had got entangled in this thing. And here was this thing growing bigger

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and bigger; and what we were anxious about very much was, in so far as it was possible, to check this movement, so far as direct action and all that was concerned, and by progressive limitation or something of that kind, because we realised that just a command 'Don't do it' had no effect in those circumstances.

So, what was said, if you remember, in that resolution of the Congress Parliamentary Board was a fairly strong condemnation of picketing buses etc. etc. and all direct action of any kind, in fact, but there was a proviso—and you may agree or disagree that that proviso ought not to have been made; that is a different matter; but in the circumstances, and considering the situation as it was, there was this entanglement; we said, get out of this entanglement, the most you can do for the present is to gradually withdraw, is to carry on your token thing and then withdraw. That was what we said, because we wanted them to get out of it completely and to influence others also to do so. We said, you can have any other demonstrations if you like, public meetings if you like and such like things, but not this; because, speaking, for myself, as I stated previously, I was against all this direct action. It is a wrong thing.

Acharya Kripalani in the course of his speech two days ago said a number of things in praise of satyagraha and direct action. I am not competent to argue metaphysical and philosophical matters with him. I do not know if I can say honestly that any kind of satyagraha should be prohibited; I am not sure in my mind; there may be occasions when it is justified. But when we use the word 'satyagraha', surely, we should have in mind the basic elements of what is satyagraha. Surely, this House will remember that in the old days, when satyagraha and all these direct action movements were pretty common, how Gandhiji stopped the whole movement, because he thought that it was going wrong; he stopped it. He even said that he was the one and only man in India who

could perform satyagraha, nobody else. That was what he said. Others were not competent; or they could come in individually, one by one. With all deference to everybody concerned, I may say that if what I have said is satyagraha, then there was no satyagraha in Kerala, none at all, because I have seldom seen any place so thick with hatred and incipient violence; it is amazing; it was a case of thick walls of hatred everywhere, group hatred. I say so with all respect, not being, or considering, myself an expert in this; but if there is so much hatred and so much bitterness about it, then it is dangerous to conduct any satyagraha; you may call it by some other name; it is not satyagraha.

Shri A. K. Gopalan referred to my going to Kerala. I might say that I had vaguely thought of going to Kerala earlier. But the Chief Minister said publicly that for the moment he was not anxious that I should go there. So, I did not take up the question of my going there. Shri S. A. Dange is not here at the moment; he asked 'Why did he not go there at the invitation of the Congress or what not?'. Well, as a matter of fact,—except for any very special reason, I do not know, I cannot think of it, I do not visit any State except on the invitation of that State Government, whether it is a Congress Government or a PSP Government or a Communist Government. So, the question of my going there did not arise. Shri Nambudripad said that I need not go. But later in the month he wrote to me that he would like me to go there. So, for three days, I think, for three clear days, I went there. Shri A. K. Gopalan referred to an organised demonstration when I had gone there. Of course, it was an organised demonstration. I know that much of politics and that much of demonstrations as to know that. But organised demonstrations are also of various types, sizes, tempers and all that. And to some extent, I judged by them, but not much of course. I could realise that it was conceivable that a rival demonstration could also be organised,—if not on

that scale,—maybe a little smaller, but big enough, it is quite possible. I spent those three days there, talking to lots of people, hundreds of people, I met them in groups and as individuals almost every person concerned, and I had long talks, of course, with the Ministers of the Kerala Government. But more than these talks, I was trying to sense in some capacity, to sense public feelings, public events, public meetings, crowds and demonstrations, I was trying to sense them, and the impression grew upon me that the situation in Kerala was much worse than what I had thought worse in a particular way, that there was absolutely no meeting-ground left between these rival groups: big or small, and the bitterness and hatred and anger at each other was prodigious, I was amazed, I did not know how I could get a move on with all this, and this movement going on. I criticised direct action etc. whenever I spoke. I spoke to the Congress there and I told them too, but the problem before me was not to give a philosophical opinion but how to deal with a particularly difficult situation. I suggested rather as a side issue, which might do some good, in regard to the Education Act why not talk to the critics of this Act in regard to the controversial clauses? I was glad that they agreed to do so. Thereafter, I met the managers and bishops and various people concerned, the Nair Service Society and others—the Congress had nothing to do with this because the Congress as such was not concerned with the schools at all. Those peoples—I regretted then—were not enthusiastic about this proposal to have talks. The reason they gave was not without force. They said that previously they wanted to have talks, but they did not take place, and now with all this controversy when the atmosphere was so thick with suspicion, how could they have talks, there must be something in it.

Nevertheless, I reminded them that the lesson I had learnt from Gandhiji was always to be prepared to talk even with the enemy. Do not give up. You need not give up what you consider your principles, but talk. How-

ever, I could not convince them. I am sorry. But I realised that that was not the major issue. The Education Act had long ceased to be the major issue. Therefore,—I saw no way out—I suggested to the Chief Minister and the other Ministers of the Kerala Government that their only way was an election. Mind you, not Central intervention. There was no question of Central intervention, but an election asked for by them. That was a proposal. I said that I thought that this position could not be dealt with merely by admonition or by strong language because—I use the word for both sides—it was a hysterical position. Everybody was in a state of hysteria. I am leaving out the question of justification or otherwise. There was this hysteria, anger and hatred and incipient violence, breaking out of violence. May I say—a fact which I did not quite know—that people in some parts of Kerala are in the habit of carrying about long knives with them and they are not averse to using them if their tempers rose? This kind of thing was happening from day to day, we heard of stabbing.

So I suggested elections. I did not expect elections—of course, I am not so simple-minded as to expect it—to solve this problem. But what I was aiming at was—to use a word which has been used in connection with European and world problems—some disengagement. This word, as you know, has been used in Europe about Germany and other problems. I said I wanted some disengagement and if they decided to have elections, then the situation would change. They would not set about to embrace each other, but this bitterness would change, people would, in a month or two, begin to think of the elections and start preparing for them. No doubt, they would use strong language, but it would be a different thing. This movement etc. would also be over and then it would be time to talk about the Education Act and other matters. This was the suggestion I made before I came away.

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After I came back, here on two or three occasions I repeated this either in Press conference or, I think, in a letter to the Chief Minister and in various ways, because I felt that was the only thing one could do. After all, what else could one do? There were two courses open. One was to try to crush this agitation by coercive methods. I did not think it was feasible; it was possible with the help of the police and the army to crush any agitation, however big, but the cost would have been frightful and the consequences would have been even more frightful. Maybe, I am wrong in this. The Kerala Ministers said that if this happened, the whole thing would fade away. But I think they were quite wrong, at that stage any way; I do not know about some early stage

The other alternative was for the agitation etc., to continue and continue; which also was terrible, because government, as it was, became impossible. The House can well imagine that there was not much of a normal government functioning. It was functioning in the sense of the officers and other people being there, but the normal work of Government could not go on when every Minister had to deal with the situation and did not know what might happen—with stabbings going on, firings going on somewhere, demonstrations, arrests, jails full, etc. It could hardly go on in a small State like that with the percentage of people arrested being tremendous.

So that I would see no outlet except some disengagement. And I thought that the only way of disengagement was elections. I would again beg to point out that elections did not mean Presidential Proclamation at all. In fact, it would have been, more or less, on their initiative, an advantage to them in many ways. I put it to them in this way. No doubt, they must have considered it among themselves, but ultimately they were not agreeable to that. I stuck to this advice even to the last. Once or twice I thought that was a possibility of their accept-

ing this advice. But ultimately they did not. When they knew that the alternative was Presidential Proclamation and elections—the first was only elections—they realised that completely, because in spite of sometimes wrong notions, we can think intelligently about these consequences. They knew that

Now, the clear choice before them was to ask for elections or to permit the President to take action and then have elections. I have no doubt that they must have considered this choice carefully and long. And they came to the conclusion, I imagine—this is guesswork—that asking for elections would be some kind of a confession of failure

Shri C. D. Pande (Naini Tal): Danger of losing

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: and they would not be able to blame the Central Government so much. 'We will stick to the end. The think will come. But then we can hold the banner of democracy against the Central Government.' That is a clear and unvarnished account of things that happened. Here we were struggling for preventing this thing happening, trying to find some way out, because, naturally, not merely because of our love for theoretical democracy but because of the practical aspects of this and the possible consequences of it, we did not want that

Now, think of another little thing. But it is important. It would have been greatly to the advantage of the Central Government if it wanted to put the Kerala Government and the Communist Party more and more in the wrong. It would have been greatly to its advantage to have stayed this action a few days, because by so doing the situation in Kerala—I have no doubt—would have become much worse. It was going forward towards disaster. That would have forced the Government there to take more and more action, suppressive, coercive action.

Shrimati Bhanu Chakravartty: You talk of saving the Communist Party at every stage!

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That was realised by Shri Ajoy Ghosh. When he came to me, he said: 'If you want to act, act quickly; don't delay'. Because it was obvious that the situation had become such that there was not a shadow of a doubt that—President's Proclamation or not—we would have to come in whether with the police or whether with the Army, call it what you like.

It has been repeatedly said—and I hope I am not referring to wrong articles—that under article 352 of the Constitution

16 hrs.

Shri C. D. Pande: 355

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: 352, 353 or 355, that we should have helped. It is not quite clear to me what is meant by that. Even before the President's Proclamation I put it straight to the Chief Minister, 'What kind of help do you expect from us?' They never asked for any kind of help which we did not give. He said: 'We are thinking in terms of moral help and not physical help', moral help meaning thereby that we should have condemned this movement much more strongly than we did. I did condemn it. But I was quite clear about it. I condemned the form of the movement because I objected to this picketing business. But I did not condemn the expression of the people's will. I think they were justified. I said, you can do it any way you like; but these forms at least are not right. I used these very words. Do not for Heaven's sake call it satyagraha or anything because in my opinion a movement which was full of anger and hate cannot be called satyagraha. I said, have your movement. How can I condemn a movement which is people's expression? But let it be apart from this kind of

direct action. Nobody listened to me; and, probably, nobody would listen to me in those circumstances. It has been repeatedly said that under some article or otherwise we should have come to their rescue.

About a year or more than a year ago, that is just after a year of the coming into power of the Government in Kerala, the Chief Minister delivered a speech which attracted a good deal of attention at the time simply because in his speech the words 'civil war' came in. It was not really important. But, nevertheless, it was an interesting speech, interesting in the sense of the working of the mind behind it. I have got a note about it.

'The Chief Minister of Kerala warned the opposition parties that if they jointly tried to oust the communist Kerala Government, it would divide the people into two camps and create disruption in the country. This, Mr. Nambudripad felt will inevitably lead to a situation in which the two contending groups will be forced to embark on a policy of mutual annihilation leading to a national tragedy. It was a similar situation, he added, that led to the protracted civil war in China.' (Interruption)

This speech was delivered on the 31st May, 1958, more than a year ago. But now forgetting as to whose fault it was, the fact is that in Kerala a situation arose when not only all the Opposition groups but, if I may say so, all the people, the people who belong to no groups, the neutral people—they are non-political people—all of them joined together against the Government and its supporters. And this very thing, in a sense, the then Chief Minister referred to, that there will be two contending groups facing each other. This situation was, in fact, created. Sometimes, even leading members of these groups talked in amazing terms of annihilating the other group as if it was conceived at all possible, as if the communist party or Government could annihilate the rest of Kerala or as if the opposi-

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tion groups put together could annihilate all the communists and their sympathisers. They are both ridiculous propositions. But it shows to what extent the feelings had gone when people talked in this way.

Now, I read this little speech of Shri Namboodripad, which, in the context of civil war, he subsequently explained somewhat. But I attached really no importance to it, the civil war part of it, at that time, that is 15 months ago in May—to his thinking of everybody else combining against his Government. This way of thinking of the communist party and its supporters being one group against the world, against everybody else, one the selected and the elect and the other having the presumption to come together to oppose it, is a line of thinking which seems to be slightly odd.

When I met some of the members of the Kerala Government I put it to them. How is it that you have managed to make everybody against you—everybody meaning apart from their own party and supporters—all parties outside your group and your supporters, even some people—I do not know who they are—who call themselves Marxists or Revolutionary Marxists or Socialists, the RSP? I asked. By what alchemy have you made all these people your opponents? I used this word in this context. They were, as usual, taking it out of the context and putting it in the papers in their own context. I said, this is an astonishing failure on your part—I was not referring to the governmental measures or others. I said, you are losing support of all these people who are not intimately attached to you. I said, I was astonished. I do not think they gave me an adequate answer. I do not think it is an adequate answer to say that the communal institutions, the capitalists and the Nairs and the other people have abused and misused the people and incited them to do this. That is not the answer.

Of course, people who were opposing the communist party and the communist Government were all sorts of people. There are plenty of reactionaries in them. Who denies that? There are plenty of communalists in them not functioning communally, but those at other times functioned communally. You may say today they are functioning communally. It is immaterial. The point here is, all these people—remember however, though you divide all people into organised parties, but most of the humanity remains outside organised groups, whether it is in election or whether it is a movement—were opposed. Much depends upon on which side the sympathy of that unorganised, non-political mass, goes.

I have no doubt that in the present instance, these non-political lot, such as they are in Kerala, had all shifted over to the opposition groups. (Interruption)

An Hon. Member: Wrong.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I may be wrong. I am only giving my impression.

Shri Tyagi: Not the toddy tappers.

An Hon. Member: Except the toddy tappers.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Shri Gopalan read out in the course of his speech an old lady's pathetic letter. I do not know what his purpose was in reading it. If he likes, I can send him many letters from old ladies and old men which I get from day to day from various places, including Kerala. Unfortunately, many of these communications from Kerala are disturbing. The other day in this House, Shri Gopalan and his colleagues rather warmed up on one occasion on a question of an adjournment motion because he wanted to put in an adjournment motion about something which, according to him, was happening: some attacks were being made on communists in Kerala. I think that some of the

statements have probably some truth in them. I tried to enquire into every-one of them. Some—I found—had no basis; some had some truth. But the other aspect was this; a number of messages, telegrams and letters have been coming in about attacks of communists on the others—stabbing, this and that. In fact only two or three days ago, one of the oldest persons I know in Kerala, a friend and colleague with whom I stayed 29 years ago at Trichur, Kuroor Namboodiripad

Shri V P Nayar: He is also called Kambi—kambi means telegram—Namboodiripad, which means that he is capable of sending any number of telegrams

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Anyhow, on Independence Day, he was going to attend the celebration of Independence Day or coming back—I forget. The poor man was pulled out of his car by people who are described as communists. He was given a thrashing. He was rescued and taken to a hospital and he is still in a hospital. That is the kind of thing. (Inter-
ruptions) I want you to visualise this picture in Kerala, with this tremendous anger, hatred, discontent, anger with each other, polarisation of two groups and so on. Leave out for the sake of argument which is the bigger and which is the smaller. I have no doubt that in the circumstances one was much bigger than the other but leave that out. Here was a situation and a tendency to use knives—not only a tendency, but the actual use of knives. Now it is a grave danger. One could see it happening. This would go worse and worse and in fact stabbing all over the place, this man stabbing that man and thus a situation arises which it is not easy for even the best of police to deal with. You cannot deal with this, if all individuals have to stab somebody else. It is not a question of a crowd. Because of this we felt that something had to be done to stop this and we took this action. We advised the President rather to take

this action. We might as well, as I said before, waited because every day that we waited would have made the justification of that action more. But that would not be proper because that would have been at the cost of the people of Kerala and at the cost of greater bitterness and conflict. As a matter of fact, ever since this action has been taken—I do not say that there is complete peace all over Kerala, but—the situation is infinitely better. Occasionally, something happens in two or three districts. But broadly speaking, people have quieted down and they are getting out of the terrific condition in which they were in. As I said, I cannot expect them suddenly to develop an exceeding love for each other quickly.

Now, in the course of the debate, reference has sometimes been made to communism and communist party and all that. In connection with the Communist Party in Kerala or the Government in Kerala, naturally that subject has to be considered. But I do not think that this is the time or occasion for us to discuss communism or Marxism or even the wider implications of the communist parties in the world or even here. Not that I am averse to any talk on the subject but it must take place in the proper context, but not tied up to an important local issue like Kerala which arouses so much passion. I do not agree with much that has been said on this side or on that side. I am no communist. I do think, if I may say so with all respects, that what may be called communist theory is rather out of date. I do feel so. One big virtue in it—not so much the communist theory—is the normal socialist approach, being for the under-dog. That is, the normal socialist approach. Whether you come up to it or not, that is a big thing. There is much good thing in communism that people should learn and certainly in the advanced communist countries. Nevertheless, I think that the communist theory is out of date and more especially, the application of it in various odd countries, the application

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based on some other application, is utterly wrong.

Shri Dange accused or rather said that he objected to being told that he had no roots, in this country—he, meaning, a communist. Now that charge, not referring to Mr Dange or to any particular individual, has a very great deal of relevance to the group. I am not for a moment criticising anybody. But I say it almost inevitably follows—this kind of thing and that is the basic difficulty. It is not the communist theory, the economic theory. We may agree with it; we may not agree with it. It does not matter. We may vary it as even communist countries are varying it—but not the communist outside the communist countries! This business of not having roots—I think—is a dangerous thing. I do not say that because you have no roots, you are powerless. You may gain all kinds of authority and power but the result is this. Not having roots, your power is not easily used for the basic construction. It is power for destruction, rather than for building up from the roots. That is a long argument and I am not going into it. Whatever it is, it is. I do believe this applies not to India only but to other countries. It is only on the roots—you may call them what you like, cultural roots, national roots, basic roots—you may add anything from outside. Otherwise, you may remain static, so you must add. Add anything you like to it but build on these roots. If you are uprooted in mind or body, then anything you have is like a pot unconnected with earth—separate pots. That is the difficulty. And the real difficulty is all these suspicions in these which had come here; they have little to do with the basic economic approach. You may agree or not. But this difficulty of rootlessness and looking elsewhere—it is that which creates those difficulties and suspicions in those minds.

Shri Punneose: Is it our fault that we look to Delhi from Trivandrum? .. (Interruptions).

An Hon. Member: Not to Moscow? They look more to Moscow than to Delhi.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I did not quite follow, Sir.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is it our fault that we look to Delhi from Trivandrum?—that is what he is saying.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: You do not look to Delhi; you sit in Delhi. But apart from this, let us look at it from another point of view.

I am no communist, but I am certainly not an anti-communist either and I want to declare it. I do not believe in this anti-ism, people get frightened of these things. I am a positive individual, not a negative individual. I hold a certain faith.

Acharya Kripalani: They do not accept you are not an anti-Communist.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: We have arrived at a stage in the world, trying to shift ourselves for a minute or two to a larger stage, when every attempt is being made for this kind of disengagement, disentanglement, to get out of the cold-war in order to avoid the hot-war. Well, so far as we have been concerned, in this country, we have endeavoured in our own small way to help in that process, because it is patent to any thinking person that the idea of these mighty groups in the world, one of them trying to crush out of existence the other, is no longer feasible, if it ever was. It means total destruction. Therefore, whether you like it or not you have to think in terms of, call it peaceful co-existence, call it what you like. There is no other way. The other way is common disaster.

16.21 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

I am very glad that recently some things have happened, or are going to happen, which bring out that this idea is more and more widely accepted in the great countries of the world; the idea that Mr. Khrushchev is going to visit President Eisenhower and President Eisenhower is going to pay a return visit to Mr. Khrushchev, which was difficult enough to envisage a year or two ago. More or less it shows not a conversion of one to another but a conversion to the idea that problems cannot be solved by fighting and trying to kill but by more or less friendly approaches.

Well, if that is so to the world, surely it is even more important that that should apply in the narrowest sphere, in the national sphere. It is obvious. It is not a question of giving in. But this approach that some people have of trying to annihilate and crush the other, this approach to which reference was made in Mr. Namboodiripad's speech which I read out to you—this is the phrase used, that each party try to annihilate each other—that is not an intelligent approach in modern life. You may like or dislike it, but you have to accept some ways of dealing with them apart from the normal jungle way of breaking each other's head or shooting each other down. It is from that point of view that I would like you to consider this.

I can also give you another, in Communism or Marxism. Those of us who are interested in history read about crusading religions often full of vitality, full of the desire to conquer and convert the whole world. Well, they show considerable results. But they gradually tone down. The world still remains multi-religious; no single religion has conquered the world in spite of the army, the faith, the energy and the crusading spirit. They tone down. If you go to the letter of the religion, it is: "Go; convert everybody with the sword if neces-

sary". But you see in practice they are quite individuals professing that religion, may be liking others to be converted but not at the point of the sword or lathi or conflict.

So these great impulses that come to the world from time to time for doing good, sometimes they upset things, sometimes they may bring in a bit of evil, but gradually they adapt themselves, they become less and less fierce, if I may say so with all respect, less crusading, less upsetting. They adapt themselves wherever they are, in their own countries or elsewhere. This process always goes on and they are going on now, whether it is communism or anything else; and it is only people who take to narrower view of this, whether they are Communists or anti-Communists, who prevent the growth of these normal and natural forces.

So far as we are concerned, we have tried to follow our own policy, international, national or domestical. We approach such things as we consider wrong, national or inter-national. But we do not make our policy one of fighting an opposition to everybody who does not fall in line with us. That certainly has not been the genius of the Indian people. The genius of the Indian people has been "live and let live" and not give in wrongly. But I do think that nowadays, not when political and economic matters arouse passions to a high level, we should stick to what we believe right, we should discuss and come to terms, but finally we should "live and let live" and not try to solve them by annihilating each other.

We live in the present. But, obviously, we live in the present thinking of the future. We want to have a stake in that future. We won't have that future at all if we, more or less, in the present put an end to ourselves, if not to ourselves to much that we stand for.

Sir, before I finish, may I say a word about something quite irrelevant that was brought into the pic-

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ture? I think Shri Khadilkar brought in my colleague, the Finance Minister, Shri Morarji Desai, what happened in Bombay and so on. Now, much can be said on that subject, but, surely I would say there is no time for it, and I do not think it is quite fair of Shri Khadilkar to bring that in and in the way that he did it

Shri Siva Raj (Chingleput—Reserv-ed-Sch. Castes). Mr Speaker, Sir, after the speeches made from every side of this House on this question, my few remarks will be like a torrent-dwindling into a trickle.

Some Hon Members: Come to the front We can't hear you

Shri Siva Raj: Sir, in the face and in the spate of the literature that was supplied to us both on the side of the Communists and, what were called, the non-Communists, it is, indeed, very difficult for anyone of us to arrive at, a correct conclusion. It is very difficult for us to arrive at the truth from what we consider to be an over-statement of facts. In fact, it is very difficult for us to come to any precision between two sets of lies. That is the way everyone, from what ever side he may be, spoke. I now feel, Sir, representing as I do the Republican Party of India, I must make mention in this House that our first article of faith is a parliamentary system of Government particularly on a two-party basis. We are averse to any act or conduct on the part either of an individual or an institution or a party which aims in the slightest manner to cut at the root of the system because we sincerely believe that placed as we are in the present conditions of Indian society, of all the systems that will help us to develop, more particularly our mind, the parliamentary system of Government will be the best system. We do not in our developing stage want to surrender our minds to any kind of ideology. I

think the hope for the masses in this country and for their development lies in the fact that they must have freedom to develop their minds in a free way and not be subject to domination of either one ideology or the other.

But in this respect it is our experience that the Congress party, in spite of its professions of democracy and democratic practice, in actual administration, allowed these principles to go by the board and acted in such a manner that it created an impression on us that they are no less dictatorial than our friends, the communists. So, as far as we are concerned, we can only say that this long-drawn dispute, between the parties in Kerala and also these expressions of charges, each against the other, has left us with this question, namely, a question of choice between two evils. Quite naturally we will choose the lesser evil. At the present moment, having heard the many statements made by the different Members from different sides, we welcome the decision taken by the President to impose the President's rule in Kerala, if for no other reason than that at least temporarily this tempo of agitation in Kerala may be stopped.

We believe that a Government, whether of the State or the Union, if it is to be called a Government, must govern, and if it is not to govern, it must yield place to some other Government. In the case of Kerala—it does not matter who created the agitation and it does not matter who created the chaos—it looks as if it was not possible for the Kerala Government to control the situation. I do not know how far the Kerala Chief Minister or the Kerala Government confessed to the Central Government their inability to control the situation. Nevertheless, it looked as if that at least for quite a period of time, about one and a half months, the Kerala Government did not know what exactly to do with the situation that was developing very fast there from