



MAHATMA GANDHI

Man of the Millennium

THE TEACHING OF MUSIC

Music exercises great influence on us. We have not given sufficient consideration to this important fact or else we should have provided for the teaching of music to our boys and girls. The *Vedic* hymns are found to have been composed on the basis of music. Harmonious music has the power to soothe the anguish of the soul. At times, we find that there is too much restlessness prevailing in large gatherings. This can be arrested and calmed if a national song is sung by all. When a large number of people sing in harmony, it is very inspiring and uplifting. Hundreds of boys singing a poem full of the spirit of adventure and bravery will be an impressive spectacle. While carrying on their work, it is quite common to the boat-men and other labourers raise

the cry of *Harihar* and *Alla-beli*. This is to enable them to do their work more easily. It is an example of the power of music. I have seen my English friends trying to ignore the cold weather by singing. Our boys easily pick up songs from popular plays and learn to play upon such a crude musical instrument as the harmonium. This prevents cultivating a taste for good music. Instead, if they were trained in classical music, their time which is now wasted in singing popular and often silly songs, would be put to good use. Just as a trained singer does not sing out of tune or out of time, even so a learner of the right kind of music would not sing dirty songs. Music must be given a place in our scheme of education, and its value in the cultural awakening of the people accepted.

M.K. Gandhi

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A Letter from the President

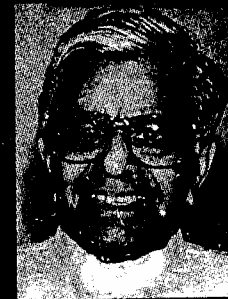


C. S. AND I: POLITICAL TWINNS

III

□ R. VENKATARAMAN

Smt. Indira Gandhi had a high regard for the efficiency and competence of C.S. She proposed in 1967 that C.S. may be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission which has the same rank as a Cabinet Minister.



The defeat in the General Elections in 1967 did not bother me. I had started the *Labour Law Journal* in 1949 which, after initial losses, had picked up very well. My friends in the Bar had taken good care of the journal during my absence and built up a respectable standard in legal journalism. The next day, after the new ministry under C.N. Annadurai was sworn in, I resumed the job of editor of the *Labour Law Journal* in the rickety office in Deivasikamani Road, Chennai.

C.S., the Finance Minister of Madras for 10 years, was at a loss. Smt. Indira Gandhi had a high regard for the efficiency and competence of C.S. She proposed in 1967 that C.S. may be appointed as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission which has the same rank as a Cabinet Minister. I heard from reliable sources that a senior colleague in Indira's Cabinet raised an objection to a defeated minister being appointed to a post with Cabinet rank. Then Indira Gandhi appointed one of the foremost

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economists of our time, Dr. D.R. Gadgil, as Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Within a few months, i.e. August, 1967 a Cabinet member of Indira's government telephoned to me from Delhi that Smt. Indira Gandhi wanted me to be a Member of the Planning Commission and asked for my assent. This was a bolt from the blue as I had not dreamt of seeking any office. Besides, only a year earlier, I had opposed the devaluation of the Indian Rupee by Smt. Indira Gandhi. Shri Kamaraj was away on tour of remote villages. As chance would have it, C.S. and I were returning in a car that evening from a public function. I discreetly asked him if his appointment as Dy. Chairman was stalled by X. C.S. confirmed it. Then I told him of the offer made to me and wondered how it could have come. C.S. said that since he himself could not be appointed "the choice naturally fell on you".

From 1967 to 71 C.S. was out of ministerial office. But Smt. Indira Gandhi utilised his services in a number of ways. He was appointed Chairman of the Committee on the Development of the Aeronautic Industry and again as Chairman of the National Commission on Agriculture. On both these assignments C.S. brought to bear his innovative ideas and earned the appreciation of the nation.



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Though the life of the fourth parliament extended upto 1972, Smt. Indira Gandhi after the success of her candidate, Shri V.V. Giri, in the election to the office of President of India, called a general election one year ahead of the expiry of the term of the Lok Sabha. In the general election in 1971 C.S. was elected to parliament and became the Minister for Planning and Science and Technology.

In 1971 my term as Member of the Planning Commission ended and C.S.'s term as a Cabinet Minister commenced. C.S. had a penchant for Science and Technology and was keen on its application to all aspects of life. He had the crusader's zeal in widening its application. However, in 1974 Smt. Indira Gandhi asked C.S. to take over Finance. It also synchronised with the promulgation of Emergency from 1975. C.S. was able to harness the ever-turbulent and prancing horse of inflation. Maybe the rigors of emergency helped him but the fact remains that the rate of inflation was negative in one year.

On retiring from the Planning Commission I did not rejoin the Congress Party nor participate in any political activity. However, when Emergency was declared, I took up the Editorship of 'Swarajya', the organ of the Swatantra Party and Rajaji's mouthpiece. I did not join the Swatantra or the Congress (O). I wrote editorials

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criticising the Emergency and explaining its implications for the sacred rights of the citizen. When the Government enforced censorship, 'Swarajya' took the matter to the High Court.

During the Emergency Shri Kamaraj was a heartbroken man. Many persons told him that it was because senior leaders like Nijalingappa and himself were not in the organisation that drastic measures like the Emergency had been resorted to by Smt. Indira Gandhi. Nature took pity on Shri Kamaraj and stopped his heart. Smt. Indira Gandhi seized the opportunity to fly to Shri Kamaraj's funeral creating a tremendous impact on the Congressmen. She sought out people who could organise the return of the Kamaraj Congress to her fold. I was persuaded. Finally she lifted emergency and called for general elections. CS and I contested the elections to Lok Sabha and were both elected. But the Janata Party secured a majority in the House and Morarji Desai was chosen Prime Minister.

Shri Y.B. Chavan was chosen Leader of the Opposition and C.S. was the spokesman on Finance. He opened the debate on the Budget for 1977-78 presented by H.M. Patel and made a devastating attack. Having handled the subject till 1977 C.S. had more figures in his fingertips than H.M. Patel the former Finance Secretary. But soon the Congress Party split again into Y.B. Chavan



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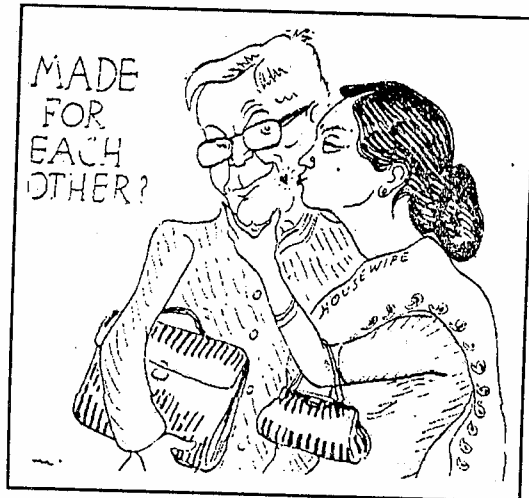
group and Indira group. C.S. was in the Chavan group. I was in a dilemma. I had always felt that the person elected on a manifesto must stand by it and that whether one member or one-third of the members of the party leave the party, it is defection. I consulted some organisations, which had worked for me during my election. They shared my view. Soon the Indira group became larger in number and displaced Y.B. Chavan from the post of Leader of Opposition. C.M. Stephen became the Leader of Opposition and I became the spokesman of this group on Finance. I opened the debate on Budget for 78-79 and 79-80. The Janata Government fell and there was a brief caretaker ministry under Charan Singh for five months. C.S. joined that ministry as minister for Defence. Since Charan Singh did not have a mandate from the people now it was dissolved and general election was held in 1980. C.S. chose to retire and did not contest the election.

Though I too felt that enough was enough and thought of retiring, I was prevailed upon to contest the election. The Janata Government mounted such a severe reprisal of Indira Gandhi during the period 1977-79 that public sympathy visibly changed in her favour. Not a day passed in Parliament without some attack or other in the Lok Sabha including her expulsion from the Lok Sabha. In 1980 elections. Smt. Indira Gandhi

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and her party secured a comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha and formed the Government.

When I followed C.S. as Finance Minister the rate of inflation was 21.4% and when I left two years later the rate of inflation had fallen to less than 2.5%. I borrowed from the IMF, the then largest loan of 5 Billion Dollars without the usual conditionality such as devaluation. When I presented Budget for the year 81-82 it was so popular that a cartoon conveying the Housewife's appreciation of the Finance Minister under the caption "Made for each other" came out in the press. I was thrilled when C.S. rang me up that night and said "I am proud of you". Like C.S. I also became Defence Minister during 82-84.



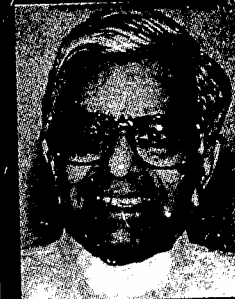
After my term as President, again, we came together in the work connected with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan such as Sadachar Bharati and the Rastriya Chintan Samithi. No wonder that the mantle of Presidentship of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan fell on me even as I succeeded him in many public offices earlier.



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C.S. was a patriot who worked selflessly for national development and advancement. He was a role model for the younger generations to emulate. He was in every sense a Bharat Ratna, a jewel of India.



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Public memory is short and politicians' memory shorter still. Not only that, everything good is no news and anything bad about the nation and the people is not news deserving streamer headlines! How can we make the younger generation to follow ideals, like integrity, efficiency, selflessness, discipline and sense of duty towards the nation and the society? C.S. was an able administrator, a model legislator, an example of probity and integrity in public and personal life.

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R. Venkataraman
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New Delhi,
February 15, 2001