

11 Gautam Palli,  
Lucknow.

Dated June 3, 1963

(1024) my dear mesam

I sent you my congratulations on your brilliant success through Shakuntala in Bombay. *I never had a doubt about your success.*  
I have been too much on the move since I was there. I had to inaugurate here a P.S.P. and S.P. unity conference on the 1st of June. In my speech before the conference I have suggested a tentative minimum programme. I am sending you a copy of my speech.

I met your old friend Lohia in Delhi. He was very vague about what was to be done. Even about a meeting of friends he did not commit himself. He has given his reaction to the minimum programme that I have put forth. You must have seen that in the press. Please let me know what is to be done next. People expect too much from me. Everywhere I go I am asked to work for the unity of the democratic opposition parties. I have asked for a public discussion about the tentative minimum programme I have suggested. Will you please give your reaction to that? When I met you in that hurry and bustle at Rajkot I had no idea of the exact position in Amroha. I, therefore, asked Girdhari to see you about it. He must have met you since.

Hope you are resting after your strenuous efforts. What is your programme now? Whether others meet or not, will it be possible for Rajaji J.P., yourself and myself to meet? We can invite Dr. Lohia also and leave it to him to decide whether he would join us or not. This must be done as soon as possible. *With my greetings to both of you*  
Yours sincerely,

J.B. Kishore

# INAUGURAL ADDRESS

UNITY CONFERENCE, LUCKNOW

By J.B. Kripalani

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We have gathered here at a time when the internal and international situation of the country is critical. Internally our five year plans have failed to raise the standard of living of the mass of our people. Recently, the Prime Minister was constrained to say that while the plans had made the rich richer, the condition of the poor had not changed for the better. The authors of the draft of the Third Five Year Plan were constrained to say that landless labourers, whose number is ever on the increase, get today less in real wages and less work than they did before. Our agriculture, after years of effort and large sums of money spent upon it, has become stagnant. We are obliged to import ever increasing quantities of food from abroad. Our industries are not advancing at the rate at which they should, for want of import of necessary raw material and foreign exchange. Our taxes are ever rising. So also are the prices, due to paucity of consumer goods and inflation. The measures that our Government has taken to meet this worsening internal economic situation aggravates it just as the recent gold order and the compulsory saving scheme. Our plans due to their defective conception and more defective execution have failed to yield what was expected of them. Today the failure is sought to be attributed to the emergency created by the latest phase of Chinese aggression.

Our administration, more than ever before, lacks efficiency and integrity. No schemes of reconstruction can be built up upon a deteriorating administration. The internal law and order situation too has worsened in recent years.

If the internal situation looks bleak, the

international situation looks even more bleak. Large chunks of our territory in the Himalayas are occupied by an implacable enemy, Communist China. Even those portions of our borders that have been vacated by the enemy have not been effectively re-occupied. They remain like a no-man's land, wherein the Communist Chinese make frequent incursions without let or hindrances, except the ever-mounting series of protest notes. Our neighbours are alienated from us.

Our democracy is dangerously shaken by the continued possession of power for the last fifteen years by one party, the Congress. The situation becomes worse when that party has abjured its authority in favour of the leaders in the Central and State Govts. This adversely affects not only the Congress organisation but also the political morality of the community. Those in the Government, unless they are kept in check by the organisation, will continue to use their great power to strengthen themselves with a view to retaining office at all costs. This has produced in our country near-dictatorship not of the Congress party but of the Central and State Governments. Under these circumstances democratic elections have ceased to be free. Not only are election funds collected by the ministers, but the entire elections are organised and run by the ministers in the Central and State Governments. They naturally make illegal use of Governmental power and machinery in favour of the Congress candidates, to whom in another capacity they have granted tickets to stand for election to various legislatures. Therefore, it has become well nigh impossible for a non-congress candidate to defeat a Congress candidate at the ~~panx~~ polls, if the authorities are determined to keep him out.

Further no democracy can prosper without a strong

opposition. This has been difficult to create during the last fifteen years. The reasons for this are various. Before independence all politically active people were in the Congress. All democratic parties which have been formed after independence have been largely formed by those who for one reason or the other have left the parent organisation. Even the present leaders of the Communist party were once Congressmen. It is difficult for people to leave an organisation under which they have worked and suffered for years. It is more difficult today, now that the Congress possesses power and patronage and when a politician's ambition is more likely and sooner to be fulfilled by remaining in the Congress than in leaving it and joining an opposition party which has but a distant possibility of coming to power. Therefore, the exodus from the Congress cannot be in such large numbers as to form a strong opposition. Moreover, those who have left *The* Congress are divided in various conflicting groups. Often these groups work against each other. The result is that with a minority of votes the Congress enjoys overwhelming majorities in the Central and State Legislatures. If there is any possibility of forming a strong opposition it can only materialise when the different opposition parties pool their resources and come together. It is, therefore, good that for some time efforts have been made to unite at least the two socialist parties which only a few years back were together. The division in the socialist camp in recent years has, in my opinion, injured democracy and the country more than any other single factor. I ~~wish~~ <sup>wish</sup> that this unity conference was attended by the important leaders of the two parties. But it would appear that the rank and file of the parties realise the danger of disunity more than the leadership. They are, therefore, making repeated efforts towards socialist

unity.

My interest in consenting to inaugurate this conference is that on the unity of various socialist parties may be created a larger unity of all democratic parties in the country. Unless this is done there can be no democratic opposition that can effectively check the vagaries of the Congress Governments, which have brought us to our present sorry state ~~in~~ in internal and external affairs. If this downward trend in the political life of the country is to be checked to any degree, I feel it is necessary to forge a unity of various democratic parties. This can be done by keeping before the country a minimum common programme. The various parties should be free to follow their own inclination in matters that fall outside the scope of the minimum programme. It can succeed only when as a first condition there is an electoral alliance between all the democratic opposition parties. The success against the Congress both at Amroha and Rajkot in the recent by-elections was largely due to a straight fight between the Congress and various democratic parties. Even Dr. Lohia's brilliant success was due to some extent to the combination of different parties as against the Congress.

The first condition, therefore, necessary before a joint minimum programme is drawn up and accepted by the parties, is the forging of unity at election times. The candidate most suitable, taking into consideration all legitimate points of view, from among various democratic opposition parties must be adopted and supported against the Congress or the Communist party candidate or the combination of these two.

The minimum programme for unity of the democratic opposition parties that I would suggest would be:-

(1) A clean and efficient administration. Without this whatever schemes we form for internal advance or external defence are likely to fail.

(2) Resistance to Chinese aggression, till every inch of our sacred soil is vacated by the enemy.

(3) Towards this end and also for the prosperity of the sub-continent efforts should be continued towards bringing about some kind of good understanding between India and Pakistan. This is the more necessary today, because, as military experts have pointed out, the sub-continent can defend itself effectively against foreign attack only if there is at least some scheme of joint defence. This would not be possible before our differences with each other are amicably settled on the basis of give and take.

(4) The establishment in India of social justice. Socialism is a vague term to which all democratic parties may not be able to subscribe. Also because in some of its forms socialism is anti-democratic, aggressive and reactionary.

(5) No further nationalisation of industry and commerce till the schemes already undertaken in the public sector are consolidated and run atleast as efficiently if not as profitably as those in the private sector.

(6) Effective control of enterprise in the private sector.

If necessary, any other item may be added to or subtracted from this programme by common consent. I believe on the basis of such a minimum programme it will be possible to forge the unity of all democratic opposition parties. This will also enable the country to face bravely all the internal and external dangers that confront us today. With these hopes I declare open this unity conference and wish its deliberations all success.