Anarchist Manifesto

M.P.T. Acharya

September 1st, 1926

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M. Acharya

OUR COMRADE M. ACHARYA (deported from the United States during the era of Mitchell Palmer), publishes in *The People*, Lahore, India, an anarchist manifesto as follows:[1]

I have been following your paper and other Indian papers' suggestion for eradicating communal and other quarrels. Most of these are serious and of a constitutional nature. But how any constitution will solve the problem of unity, I do not understand. The very persons drawing up the constitution as national (although the nation has no voice in it except to vote if wanted), even if they continue to agree till it is drawn up on paper, are sure to quarrel about the interpretation and application of the constitution.

Secondly, all constitutions say: "Thus far and no further"—as such they are the beginning of conservatism. A change is impossible within the constitutional limits and every fraud practiced to change in spite of it leads only to further corruption.

Thirdly, constitutions allow decisions only by the *wish* of the majority against minorities, whether such decision is good or bad, just or unjust, or expedient or not. A majority is not always right, just and all that—nor a minority always the opposite. As a matter of fact, a minority is often more revolutionary than the majority. A minority has a clear solution, but a majority makes a muddle of all ideas, solutions, and applications.

I object to dividing a whole into any categories—even majorities and minorities are divisions. Where such divisions are created, there can be no unity at all.

People now object to communal franchise and still want a franchise. What does it matter whether the cleavage takes place on religious, property, or political lines? It will continue to exist, and its existence in any form is not unity.

The parties carry on their divisions through the whole mass of people under a national universal electoral system, instead of localizing or abolishing divisions in any region or small hamlet. Why should any division at any point create divisions throughout every village and hamlet?

All quarrels and squabbles are political, i.e., made in the interests of a few who can afford to see people quarreling. How?

Let us take communal representation. Who wants it? A few religious fanatics on all *sides*, and a few "Zemindars" and "Jagirdars" in every community, who can gain the reputation of being communal and religious, and a few office hunters, present or would-be, who pretend to serve the interests of all these.[2] The mass of the people has nothing to gain under the present quarrels or by their future agreements, but have only to lose more.

I am convinced that no unity can come out of constitution mongering either for the present government or for any future government. Constitutional schemes can only regroup the quarrels, but not avoid them.

Do you want real unity? Or do you want only this political "ideal" or illusion called by that name? Politics is neither ideal nor practical in the sense of being good for the vast majority—who do not constitute the small minority of egoists and parasites called politicians.

If you want unity, peace, and harmony:

[1] Acharya was not deported from the United States in the so-called Palmer Raids (1919–1920), but sentenced in absentia in the Ghadar trial (1917–1918).

[2] "Zemindar": official or landowner and tax collector during British colonialism in India; "Jagirdar": official or landowner and tax collector, particularly in South India.

1. Give up looking for political or economic central government, of any kind whatever.

2. Give up looking for any kind of constitution, legislature, even village legislature.

3. Give up *all* religious, political, party groupings.

4. Mind your immediate living affairs from birth to death—such as food, clothing, housing, work, instruction, recreation. Assure these for yourself in common with others.

In order to assure all your necessities and comforts—and of others:

1. Don't look for superior or inferior positions as of right or of charity; don't look for salaries and representation, don't take them.

2. Give up ownership rights and join together—to make others give up theirs.

3. Don't look to arranging the whole country's affairs nor begin with the country *first* in anything-work in your local surroundings wherever you are. Try to bring out economic contentment there by bringing out order in production and supply for all. That is the beginning to reach the country.

4. Abolish money and wage and salary and profit system and introduce common ownership and common production for the use not only of your immediate neighbors, but for the whole country later on. There should be no question of not only buying and selling and profiteering for anybody, but also no question of bartering and exchange even in kind. We produce as much as we can of what is necessary for all in the village, town, or quarter. Let there be no employers and owners, no salaries and wages, *differential or equal*. Let all the bodies of persons be treated as *one and indivisible*. Let everyone go to work voluntarily wherever he wants and is accepted—making work easy and pleasant for all, like play, and making it short. Money produces nothing—nay, *production is kept down by money and by private ownership, profit, and the supply and demand of buying and selling.*

5. Provide equally for the necessities and comforts of every individual—working, as necessary, for any incapable member of your village, town, hamlet, or quarter. You are nobody's servant but *your own employer in society, not even society's servant*. Do not keep people doing unnecessary work, for that is encouraging parasitism.

6. Let there not be twenty newspapers telling all confusing things in every spot. One is enough *for all* and may be had as an organ for all who wish to write. Let no editor act as bureaucrat censoring other people's views. That is government and tyranny by individuals.

If all these are done at every place in the country, then a uniform flow of wealth can be arranged for all regions simply by occasional conferences of different regions, simply *consulting* with each other. No government of fatly paid, idle, parasitic "specialists" is needed to improve society, which they never do.

It is no doubt difficult to make vested interests to give up their privileges. But to make them give up, to fight them down to join all, is the first condition not only for this scheme but also for any unity in the country. It is not practicality to give up first fighting for it, in the name of being practical.

Not only vested interests but the vast majority in every community will probably be against such an abolition of privilege, helped by the corruption all around. But if people think they can abolish privileges which create divisions by not fighting first to abolish them, if they think that is "*being practical*" not to fight privileges—well, they can go on with their unity-creating game forever without profit to some individuals, till disunion becomes intolerable and impossible.

What is noted above is the only practical thing to do, everything else is postponing *practicality and work* for trying to prove a theory of "practicality."

We have no international matters to care for till we come by our own in this way. Make yourselves an example for the world and that is the best internationalism. Otherwise, the world will not come by to help you nor can you help it.

The Road to Freedom, 3.1 (September 1, 1926), 5–6.

South Asian Anarchist Library

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We Are Anarchists: Essays on Anarchism, Pacifism, and the Indian Independence Movement, 1923-1953 - Ole Birk Laursen

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