100 Best Parliamentary Speeches 1947-1997

Compiled & Edited by Subhash C Kashyap
Amongst the men and women who strode the corridors of India’s Parliament House, have been parliamentarians of outstanding ability, stature and exceptional oratorical skills. This book presents some of the most memorable parliamentary speeches delivered by them during the last fifty years (1947-1997). The book opens, quite appropriately, with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s historic speech on the Objectives of the Constitution and ‘India’s Tryst with Destiny’ delivered on the floor of the Constituent Assembly in 1947. It concludes with some of the most brilliant speeches in the fiftieth year of Indian independence – with former Prime Minister I K Gujral’s assessment of fifty years, former Speaker P A Sangma’s call for a second freedom struggle and Dr Karan Singh’s vision of a resurgent India.

The selection covers diverse issues and themes of continuing national and international interest.
100 Best
Parliamentary Speeches
1947 – 1997
Dedicated to the parliamentarians
who strode the collonades of Parliament House
and with whom I had the pleasure to work.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAWAHARLAL NEHRU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives of the Constitution</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAWAHARLAL NEHRU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Flag</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag of Dharma</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAROJINI NAIDU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rise and Salute the Flag</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAWAHARLAL NEHRU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tryst with Destiny</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn of Freedom</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India of our Dreams</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVIND BALLABH PANT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Electorates</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAWAHARLAL NEHRU</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of the Mahatma</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REV. JEROME D'SOUZA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure of Jesus Christ</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. ANANTHASAYANAM AYYANGAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elimination of Communal Organizations</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salient Features of the Constitution</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H.V. Kamath</td>
<td>Indian Polity</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.G. Ranga</td>
<td>Critique of the Constitution</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.T. Shah</td>
<td>Secular, Federal, Socialist</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanaiyalal M. Munshi</td>
<td>Uniform Civil Code</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. B.R. Ambedkar</td>
<td>Reply to the Debate on Uniform Civil Code</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K.T. Shah</td>
<td>Amending the Rules</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar</td>
<td>In Defence of the Constitution</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. B.R. Ambedkar</td>
<td>Third Reading of the Constitution</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Rajendra Prasad</td>
<td>Adoption of the Constitution</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee</td>
<td>The International Situation</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Hriday Nath Kunzru</td>
<td>Role in World Affairs</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar</td>
<td>Reforming the Hindu Law</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chintaman D. Deshmukh</td>
<td>General Budget 1951-52</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru (I)</td>
<td>The First Amendment</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru (II)</td>
<td>The First Amendment</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jawaharlal Nehru</td>
<td>The Conduct of a Member: The Mudgal Case</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganesha V. Mavalankar</td>
<td>Office of the Speaker</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee</td>
<td>Problems of Migration between Pakistan and India</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contents • ix

DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE
The Five Year Plan

HIRENDRAD NATH MUKERJEE
Motion of Thanks on President’s Address

VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT
On the President’s Address

DR. SHYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE
Motion of Thanks on President’s Address

FRANK ANTHONY
Communists and Democracy

CHINTAMAN D. DESHMUKH
The First Five Year Plan

LANKA SUNDARAM
The Role of the Press

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
Family Planning

M.S. GURUPADASWAMY
The Second Chamber

LANKA SUNDARAM
The Second Chamber

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
The Fourth Amendment

A.K. GOPALAN
International Situation

GOVIND BALLABH PANT
Prevention of Corruption

GOVIND BALLABH PANT
Reorganization of States

RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR
Setting up the Medical Institute

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
The Parliamentary System

S.A. DANGE
Preventive Detention

FEROZE GANDHI
The Life Insurance Scandal

--- LANKA SUNDARAM ---
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOVIND BALLABH PANT</td>
<td>Abolition of Capital Punishment</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE</td>
<td>The Tibet Issue</td>
<td>481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAJKUMARI AMRIT KAUR</td>
<td>The Evil of Dowry</td>
<td>487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOVIND BALLABH PANT</td>
<td>The Official Language</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHARYA J.B. KRIPALANI</td>
<td>India–China Relations</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.K. KRISHNA MENON</td>
<td>The Kashmir Case</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIRENDRA NATH MUKERJEE</td>
<td>University Grants Commission</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RENU CHAKRAVARTTY</td>
<td>Chinese Aggression and Proclamation of Emergency</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAWAHARLAL NEHRU</td>
<td>Motion of No-Confidence</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA</td>
<td>Daily Earnings of an Indian</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA</td>
<td>Combating Corruption</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAHOMED CURRIM CHAGLA</td>
<td>Structure of Education</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACHARYA J.B. KRIPALANI</td>
<td>The Tashkent Declaration</td>
<td>598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHUPESH GUPTA</td>
<td>Use of Money and Government Machinery in Elections</td>
<td>602</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHUPESH GUPTA</td>
<td>Centre-State Relations</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. GOVINDA MENON</td>
<td>A New Constituent Assembly</td>
<td>621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIRA GANDHI</td>
<td>Question of Confidence</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIRA GANDHI</td>
<td>Tragedy in Bangladesh</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V.K. KRISHNA MENON
Pakistani Aggression and State of War

INDIRA GANDHI
Reply to Critics

INDIRA GANDHI
The Shimla Agreement

MORARJI DESAI
Motion of Thanks

PILOO MODY
No-Confidence Motion

INTRAJIT GUPTA
Approval of Emergency

LAL KRISHNA ADVANI
Misuse of Mass Media

C. SUBRAMANIAM
No-Confidence Motion

N.G. RANGA
Centre-State Relationship

GEORGE FERNANDES
A Savage Law

MADHU DANDAVATE
Obituary to Indira Gandhi

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO
A New Education Policy

RAJIV GANDHI
Poverty and Plans

BHAJAN LAL
Preserving the Environment, Protecting the Trees

N.G. RANGA
Union-State Relations

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
Defamation Bill

RAJIV GANDHI
Lowering the Voting Age to Eighteen

V.N. GADGIL
Sarkaria Commission Report
RAJIV GANDHI
Panchayati Raj

RAJIV GANDHI
Constructive Cooperation

PR. KUMARAMANGALAM
On the President's Address

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH
Present Economic Situation

INDRAJIT GUPTA
No-Confidence Motion

LAL KRISHNA ADVANI
Electoral Reforms

SOMNATH CHATTERJEE
Criminalization of Politics

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
Motion of Confidence

PURNO A. SANGMA
Call For a Second Freedom Struggle

NAJMA HEPTULLA
Discussing Vital National Issues

DR. KARAN SINGH
Vision of a Resurgent India

G.G. SWELL
Fifty Years of Freedom

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO
State of the Nation

SHIVRAJ V. PATIL
Blueprint of Reforms

H.D. DEVE GOWDA
Fifty Years of Independence

INDER KUMAR GUJRAL
Assessing the Fifty Years

Biographical Notes

List of Abbreviations

Index
Preface

Some of the distinguished parliamentarians who strode the colonnades of India's Parliament house, have been men and women of such outstanding ability and stature that they would have done proud to any Parliament of the world. The effort here is to present some of the most memorable parliamentary speeches delivered by them during the last fifty years (1947-1997). The anthology very appropriately opens with Jawaharlal Nehru's historic speeches on the Objectives of the Constitution and India's Tryst with Destiny delivered on the floor of the Constituent Assembly in 1947. It concludes with some of the brilliant speeches at the special fiftieth Independence anniversary session of Parliament in 1997 — with former prime minister Gujral's assessment of the fifty years, Speaker Sangma's call for a second freedom struggle and Dr. Karan Singh's vision of a resurgent India.

The speeches included in the present volume have been selected with meticulous care and objectivity. The criteria employed have been those of the historical importance, quality and lasting value of the contents, eloquence and excellence of language and oratorical merits of the speeches and the personal eminence of the speakers. The party affiliation of members, their belonging to the ruling party or the Opposition, or their being ministers or private members, have been no consideration in determining the selection of their speeches. The
choice, however, was largely confined to speeches made in the English language even though increasingly over the years, about half of all the speeches in the Houses of Parliament happen to be in Hindi or Hindustani. In a few cases where it was considered absolutely necessary to include speeches originally made in Hindi or Hindustani, for example, in case of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia's oft-cited speeches, care has been taken to use the official translations only.

Ordinarily, the endeavour has been to give the full text of every speech selected. Interruptions and short responses thereto have been excluded. Where minor editing out of some portions appeared unavoidable, it has been indicated by (....). As a rule, the original language of the speeches has been retained although some minor grammatical and the like changes may have been effected.

A brief introductory note has been added at the beginning of the text of each speech. The note seeks to explain the background, the occasion and the importance of the speech. The arrangement of speeches has been strictly in the chronological order. For facility of reference, besides the usual subject index, a biographical sketch about each speaker has been added.

It is widely believed – and not without justification – that there has been a general decline in the standards of parliamentary debate. It was natural, therefore, that the number of speeches selected from the earlier period was much larger.

A speech in Parliament is privileged; members have near-full freedom of speech subject only to the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure. While reproducing a parliamentary speech in any publication outside Parliament, one has to be very careful and assume full responsibility under the law of the land. Some of the controversial speeches containing allegations, accusations etc. have therefore been excluded.

In working on this project, I had a distinct advantage inasmuch as I had been closely associated with Parliament right from the early '50s and had been a witness to the delivery and impact of some of the most outstanding parliamentary speeches. This volume does not, however, claim to cover all the great or all the really memorable parliamentary speeches of the last fifty years. Within a modest volume,
it is hardly possible. This may therefore, be seen as a compilation of some representative samples only.

The credit for conceiving this project goes entirely to HarperCollins who took the initiative, approached me for undertaking this rather difficult and challenging task and persisted in their endeavour.

To scan over two thousand volumes of debates spread over some million pages, select only hundred speeches and edit an anthology of a modest size is not an easy task. It may seem that the present work is merely a duly edited compilation of the texts of the select speeches, but in fact preparation of such an edited work calls for much more painstaking work, rigorous discipline and deft ingenuity than an original work on a theme or problem of one’s own choice.

Thankful acknowledgements are due to all the friends and research associates who have assisted me and enabled me to adhere to the deadline for completion of this work. These thanks extend specially to Shri Vinay Bhatnagar and Smt. Sadhana Gupta whose help proved invaluable. The publishers deserve all the appreciation for the high quality of publication and the promptness with which it has been brought out.

Since the selections herein cover a large variety of themes and diverse issues of continuing national and international concern, it is expected that the volume would attract very wide attention, invite reading and inspire the present and the future generations of men and women of all ages. It is hoped the volume would be welcomed in India and abroad and would be seen also as a respectful tribute to the parliamentarians whose speeches have been reproduced here.

New Delhi
15 August 1998

Subhash C. Kashyap
Advani, Lal Krishna currently president of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was born in Karachi (Sind) now in Pakistan in 1927. A journalist by profession, he was Chairman, Delhi Metropolitan Council. Repeatedly elected to Rajya Sabha or Lok Sabha since 1970, he has held offices of union Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha. Among the most outstanding parliamentarians, he is currently Union Minister of Home.

Ambedkar, B.R. (1891-1956) was an eminent jurist, crusader for the cause of scheduled castes, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee and later the Union Law Minister. Ambedkar was also a prolific writer. The book *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (1940) authored by him is the most comprehensive study of Pakistan.

Anthony, Frank, born at Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh in 1908, was nominated as a member of all Lok Sabhas from the first to the eighth and the tenth to represent the Anglo-Indian community. A barrister by profession and an educationist, Frank Anthony was an accomplished speaker and parliamentarian.

Ayyangar, M. Ananthasayanam (1891-1978) was an advocate by profession and took active part in the freedom struggle but, above all, he is remembered as a parliamentarian. He began as a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1934. He was also Speaker of the Lok Sabha (1956-1962), and occupied several other high offices including that of Governor of Bihar (1962-1967).
Ayyar, Alladi Krishnaswami (1883-1952) was an outstanding jurist and advocate and a prominent member of the Drafting Committee.

Chagla, M.C. born at Bombay in 1900, occupied some of the highest offices in his career — Professor of Constitutional Law, Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Minister of External Affairs and Education, Governor of Bombay and Ambassador to USA amongst several others.

Chakravartty, Renu, born at Calcutta in 1917, was one of the most active women parliamentarians and a powerful speaker.

Chatterjee, Somnath, son of a distinguished parliamentarian, N.C. Chatterjee was born in 1929 in Assam. A barrister by profession and prominent member of the Communist Party (Marxist), he won the Most Outstanding Parliamentarian award. He has been a Member of the Lok Sabha mostly since 1971.

Dandavate, Madhu, was born in 1924 at Ahmednagar (Maharashtra). He was a professor of physics till his election to the Lok Sabha in 1971. A committed socialist, he emerged as one of the most eminent parliamentarians of the country. He has been a senior Union Minister incharge of different portfolios under the Janata governments. He was also Finance Minister and later Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission.

Dange, S.A., born at Bombay in 1899, was among the founders of the communist movement, an outstanding labour leader and freedom fighter.

Desai, Morarji, born in 1896, lived to nearly complete a full century. An old Gandhian, Chief Minister of the old Bombay State, Union Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in Congress governments, he was also elected as the Prime Minister of the Janata Party government in 1977.

Deshmukh, C.D. (1896-1982) was a qualified barrister. He joined the Indian Civil Service in 1919. He became the first Indian Governor of the Reserve Bank. In 1950 at Nehru's instance he became the Union Finance Minister. He resigned from the Cabinet in 1956. For several years (1950-56) Deshmukh was the Chief Planner, economic policy maker and Finance Minister. Thereafter, he emerged as a more distinguished national figure as an educationist, writer, orator and institution builder.

D'Souza, Jerome was principal of the Loyola College, and a member of the Constituent Assembly from Madras.
Fernandes, George, was born in 1930 in Karnataka. He is a prominent socialist, and currently leader of the Samta Party and Union Minister of Defence. A trade unionist, he was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967 and has been Union Minister of Railways, Communications, Industry amongst others. He is known as a forceful and forthright speaker.

Gadgil, V.N., was born at Poona in 1928. Gadgil, an advocate by profession, is an accomplished writer and speaker, senior leader and spokesman of the Congress. He has also been a Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting.

Gandhi, Feroze, son-in-law of late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and husband of late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, was an accomplished parliamentarian in his own right. Single-handedly, he unearthed serious scandals like the Mundhra deal.

Gandhi, Indira, daughter of the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi was born at Allahabad in 1917. After Nehru's death, she became Minister for Information and Broadcasting in Lal Bahadur Shastri's cabinet. After Shastri's death, she was elected as the Prime Minister in 1966. She was assassinated by her own security guards in 1984.

Gandhi, Rajiv, elder son of Indira Gandhi and grandson of Jawaharlal Nehru, was born in Bombay in 1943. A pilot by profession, he was elected to the Lok Sabha four times in 1981, 1984, 1989 and 1990. He succeeded Indira Gandhi as prime minister after her tragic assassination in 1984 and was Leader of the Opposition during 1989-90. Rajiv Gandhi was killed during his election campaign in 1991 in Sriperumbudur.

Gopalan, A.K. was born in 1904. He participated in the national movement, and was an eminent trade unionist and Communist Party leader.

Gowda, H.D. Deve, born in 1933 in Karnataka, became Chief Minister of Karnataka during 1994-1996 and was Prime Minister of India in 1996-1997.

Gujral, I.K., born at Jhelum (now in Pakistan) in 1918, is an eminent writer and commentator, and India's ambassador to USSR. He has held different portfolios as Union Minister. I.K. Gujral was elected as prime minister of the Janata Dal led minority coalition government, and is also a member of the Rajya Sabha.
Gupta, Bhupesh (1914-1981) was a communist by conviction and party affiliation, an accomplished and talented parliamentarian, a great orator and a distinguished member of the Rajya Sabha for nearly three decades (1952-1981). He was first elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1952, and he remained there until his death in 1981 winning all the intervening elections to that House making him the longest serving member of the House.

Gupta, Indrajit, was born at Calcutta in 1919. He has been member of the Lok Sabha ever since 1956, with only one break. Indrajit Gupta won the Most Outstanding Parliamentarian award. A prominent member of the Communist Party of India, he was Union Home Minister in the Janata Dal led coalition ministry.

Gurupadswamy, M.S., born at Malangi (Karnataka) in 1922, was a committed socialist member of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha for many years. He was leader of the Janata Party in the Rajya Sabha and a minister in the Janata Party government.

Heptullah, Najma, was born in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh in 1940. She took her Ph.D. in Zoology, and has been Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha for the longest period having been elected to the office thrice.

Kamath, H.V., born at Mangalore (Karnataka) in 1907, became a member of the Indian Civil Service, but resigned to join the freedom struggle. He was an active member of the Constituent Assembly, Provisional Parliament and several Lok Sabhas (first, third and sixth). Kamath was a master of the parliamentary procedure and an effective parliamentarian.

Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit (1889-1964) coming from a princely family became a devout disciple of Mahatma Gandhi and a freedom fighter. She dedicated her life to social service and was a crusader for the emancipation of women and weaker sections of society. Right from the days of the Constituent Assembly and later as the first woman minister of the Union Cabinet after Independence she emerged as a distinguished parliamentarian. It was as a result of her dedicated efforts that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) — one of the best in Asia — was set up in New Delhi. Speaking in the Lok Sabha, she had called it as one of her ‘cherished dreams’.

Kripalani, J.B., born in Hyderabad (Sind) now in Pakistan in 1888, was a senior Gandhian, freedom fighter and parliamentarian. He was an active member of the Constituent Assembly and later of Parliament.
Kumaramangalam, P.R., born in Tamil Nadu in 1952, in a family of eminent public men (his father and grandfather also had been Union Ministers), is a lawyer by profession. Elected to the eighth, ninth, tenth and twelfth Lok Sabha, he is currently Union Minister for Power.

Kunzru, H.N., was one of the most accomplished Indian parliamentarians who was listened to with rapt attention when he spoke on defence matters and foreign policy issues — the two areas in which he specialised.

Lal, Bhajan, born in a village in Bahawal (now in Pakistan) in 1930, was Chief Minister of Haryana (1989-1986) and later Union Minister for Environment and Forests, Agriculture.

Lohia, Ram Manohar (1910-1967) was a fiery socialist leader, an eminent freedom fighter, outstanding Opposition leader and a great parliamentarian. He was an original political thinker, a man of the masses and a prolific writer. When he entered the Lok Sabha as a member in 1963 and took oath, he was given an unprecedented standing ovation. A new life and a new light seemed to have entered the House.

Mavalankar, G.V. was born on 15 May 1952. He was elected Speaker of the Lok Sabha constituted after the first general election under the Constitution. Earlier Mavalankar had been President of the Central Legislative Assembly (1946-47), Speaker of the Constituent Assembly Legislative (1947-50) and of the Provisional Parliament (1960-52).

Menon, P. Govinda (1908-1970) was a successful lawyer, constitutionalist and parliamentarian. He served in the Constituent Assembly, the Provisional Parliament and the third and fourth Lok Sabhas. One of the most notable legislations piloted by him as the Union Law Minister was on nationalisation of banks which was followed with acrimonious debates in Parliament.

Menon, V.K. Krishna (1896-1974) played an important role in India’s freedom movement through the India League and the Labour Party in Britain. After independence, he was India’s High Commissioner to the United Kingdom during 1947-1951. As leader of the Indian delegation to the UN, he delivered the famous seven and a half hour long speech on India’s case on Kashmir. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1956 and he was India’s Defence Minister during 1957-1965. In 1972 and 1977 he was elected to Parliament as an independent from West Bengal and Kerala respectively. An
internationally and nationally controversial figure, Krishna Menon distinguished himself as an outstanding orator.

Mody, Piloo, born at Bombay in 1926, was known as a parliamentarian and for his sharp wit and humour. By profession he had been an architect but became one of the founders of the Swatantra Party. He was elected to the Lok Sabha twice and once to the Rajya Sabha.

Mookerjee, Shyama Prasad (1901-1953) was a barrister by qualification, and the youngest ever Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calcutta (1934). He was inducted by Jawaharlal Nehru in his Cabinet in 1947 but resigned as a protest to Nehru's Pakistan policy and the Nehru-Liaquat pact in April 1950. Mookerjee founded the Jan Sangh and is remembered as a great orator of extraordinary merit.

Mukherjee, H.N., born at Calcutta in 1907, was lawyer, educationist and is one of the most distinguished parliamentarians alive. A prominent communist party leader, he was also a candidate for the office of the president.

Munshi, K.M., born in 1977, was an advocate, writer, member of the Constituent Assembly and of the Drafting Committee. He was later Union Minister incharge of Food and Agriculture and Governor of Uttar Pradesh. He was known as a distinguished scholar and jurist.

Naidu, Sarojini (1879-1949) was an eminent poetess, and known as the nightingale of India. Sarojini Naidu was a prominent leader of the freedom struggle and a powerful and charming orator. She adorned the office of the governor of the most populous state of India — Uttar Pradesh.

Nehru, Jawaharlal (1889-1964) was among the most prominent freedom fighters and one of the founding fathers of the Constitution and the republic. Jawaharlal Nehru was an accomplished writer in English and India's first prime minister (1947-1964).

Pant, G.B. (1887-1961) was one of the foremost leaders of the nationalist movement for freedom and among the distinguished builders of modern India. A great parliamentarian, he was Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1947-39 and 1947-1954) and later the Home Minister of India (1945-1961).

Pandit, Vijaya Lakshmi (1900-1990) sister of Jawaharlal Nehru, herself a prominent freedom fighter, occupied some of the highest positions in public
Biographical Notes • 1011

life both nationally and internationally. She was the first woman minister in Uttar Pradesh (1937-39), ambassador to USSR (1947-49) and USA (1849-53), High Commissioner to UK (1954-61), Governor of Maharashtra (1862-54) and Member of Lok Sabha (1866-68). She was leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations and became the first woman President of the UN General Assembly.

Patil, Shivraj, born in 1935 at Latur (Maharashtra), is an advocate by profession. Patil was Speaker, Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, Union Minister of State for Science and Technology, Civil Aviation and Defence before being elected as the Speaker of the tenth Lok Sabha. He is an active parliamentarian.

Prasad, Rajendra (1884-1963) was one of the most distinguished leaders of the freedom struggle, a committed non-violent satyagrahi and a Gandhian. He was the President of the Constituent Assembly and was elected the first President of the Republic (1950-62).

Radhakrishnan, S. (1888-1975) was a distinguished philosopher, scholar, author and statesman. Dr. Radhakrishnan occupied high positions as Professor at Oxford, Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University, Ambassador to the then Soviet Union, Vice President (1942-62) and finally President of India (1962-67).

Ranga, N.G., born in 1900, was an agriculturist and freedom fighter and Professor of Economics. He was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly, Constituent Assembly Provisional Parliament, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha for over half a century making him the senior most sitting Parliamentarian of the world before his demise.

Rao, P.V. Narasimha, born in 1921 in Andhra, was Prime Minister of India during 1991-96. Narasimha Rao had been earlier Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and Union Minister incharge of various portfolios like HRD, Defence, Home, External Affairs. He is known as a linguist and an erudite scholar.

Sangma, P.A., born in 1947 in Meghalaya, had been Chief Minister of Meghalaya and Union Minister of State for Labour, Coal, Information and Broadcasting before he was elected Speaker of the eleventh Lok Sabha. Known for his competence and friendliness, Sangma is an outstanding parliamentarian.
Shah, K.T., was born at Cutch Mandir in 1888. He was known as an eminent economist, author and active parliamentarian.

Singh, Karan, was born at Cannes (France), in 1931. He became maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and Sadr-i-Riyasat at the age of twenty-one. He was governor, union minister, is world famous scholar, thinker, author, poet and statesman. He was also India’s ambassador to the United States and is currently member of the Rajya Sabha.

Singh, Manmohan, born in West Punjab in 1932, is a well-known economist, professor and civil servant. He became the Finance Minister of India in the Narasimha Rao Cabinet and is known for the new economic policy of liberalisation.

Subramaniam, C. was born in Coimbatore in 1910. He was one of the most outstanding senior statesman around. He occupied some of the highest offices as Governor and in the Union Cabinet.

Sundaram, Lanka (1905-1967) was an eminent parliamentarian, economist, trade unionist and writer. Lanka Sundaram spoke in Parliament more as an experienced journalist than anything else.

Swell, G.G. was born in Meghalaya in 1924. He was educationist and Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha during 1977-71. He has also been a Member of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha for nearly three decades and India’s ambassador to Norway and Burma.

Vajpayee, Atal Bihari is currently the Prime Minister of India. Vajpayee was born at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh in 1926. He is an eminent writer, poet and journalist, and has been adjudged as the most outstanding parliamentarian. He is known as a very powerful speaker and is widely respected, transcending all party labels and ideologies.
List of Abbreviations

AICC – All India Congress Committee
ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party
CAG – Comptroller and Auditor General
CARE – Co-op. American Relief Everywhere
CPM – Communist Party Marxist
CRP – Central Reserve Police
CSIR – Council of Scientific & Industrial Research
CVC – Central Vigilance Commission
DIB – Director Intelligence Bureau
DIG – Deputy Inspector General
DMK – Dravida Munnetra Kazagham
EAC – Economic Advisory Council
EPT – Excess Profit Tax
FAO – Food and Agricultural Organisation
GATT – General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP – Gross Domestic Product
HRD – Human Resource Development
IAF – Indian Air Force
1014 • Abbreviations

IB – Intelligence Bureau
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IPKF – Indian Peace Keeping Force
ISI – Inter Services Intelligence
JKLF – Jammu Kashmir Liberation Force
LTTE – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MISA – Maintenance of Internal Security Act
MLA – Member of Legislative Assembly
MOSIS – Minister of State for Internal Security
MP – Member of Parliament
MRTP – Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices
NAM – Non-Aligned Movement
NEFA – North East Frontier Area
NIDC – National Industrial Development Corporation
ONGC – Oil and Natural Gas Commission
POK – Pakistan Occupied Territory
PSP – Praja Socialist Party
PTI – Press Trust of India
RSS – Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
SEADO – South East Asia Defence Organisation
TISCO – Tata Iron and Steel Company
UNO – United Nations Organisation
UGC – University Grants Commission
UNESCO – United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UT – Union Territory
VHP – Vishwa Hindu Parishad
Index

Adimjatis, facilities for, 39
Adult Suffrage, 121, 156
Advani, L.K. (Janata government),
White Paper on misuse of mass media moved, 702-707, for electoral reforms, 867-870
Afghanistan, 180
Agrarian Reforms (1st Constitutional amendment), 232, 4th amendment 387-407
AIIMS, Bill for setting up of, 436-443
Akali Dal, 62
Aliyasanthana law, 194
All India Institute of Medical Sciences setting up of, 436-443
Allauddin Khilji, 108-9
Ambedkar, Dr. B.R, constitution salient features of, 64-87
constitution, final reading of, 132-147
Uniform Civil Code, 110-113
American Constitution Convention, 133, military landings in India, 323
American Protestant Church, 145
Anglo-Americans, 358
Anthony, Frank-communism and democracy, 354-360
Arya Samaj, 193
Ashoka Chakra, 21
Ashokan period, 18
Asia, comment on, 8-9
ASEAN, 1002
Assam, 170
Atom bomb — human spirit, 10
Attlee, Clement, 31
Australian Constitution, 71-72, 133
Ayyangar, M. Ananthasayanam, for ban on Communal organisations, 55-63, reforming Hindu law, 181-96
Ayyar, Alladi Krishnaswami, 111, 137 in defence of constitution 120-31,
Backward classes, education, 220, opportunities, 236
Bangladesh, refugees migration from, 642-646, war against Pakistan, 647-650, unconditional surrender of Pakistan forces, 661-669
Bearer bonds, 202
Bengal famine, 302
Bhajan Lal, speaks for protection of environment and trees, 758-768
Bharat Sevak Samaj, 311
Bhargava, Thakur Das, 136, 186
Bhartiya Janata Party, 857-866
Bhore Committee, health services report, 436
Bhutan, 179
Bhutto, Z.A. (see Shimla Agreement)
Bicameralism, 386-396
Birla, L.N., 258
Birth control see family planning
Bismarck (Germany), 84
Bombay, agitation for retention with Maharashtra, 454-460
Bombay Bullion Association, Mudgal case, 255-264
Brahmo Samaj, 193
British India Corporation, 471
British warship, visit of, 323
Buddhism in China, Indonesia, 193
Buddhist bhikshu sanghas, 142-143
Budget debate (1951-52), 197-211
Burman (collector), harassment of, 287
Canadian Constitution, 128, 133
Capital punishment abolition, debate on, 475-480
Casteism, 146
CBI, 1003
CIA, role in elections, 605-613, 692
Central Vigilance Commission, limits to curb corruption 581-591
Centralism, 140
Centre-State relations, 83
Gupta (Blupesh) for more powers to states, 614-620, strong centre pleaded, 716-723
Ranga (N.G.) against regional and local demands, 769-78
Sarkaria Commission report placed in Lok Sabha, 789-797
Chagla, Mahomed Currim, education, structure of, 592-597
Chakravarty, Renu, Chinese aggression of India condemned, 541-549
Chambal Project, 371
Charkha, national flag, 16-17
Chatterjee, 375
Chatterjee, Somnath, on criminalization of politics, 871-884
Chidambaram, P., defamation bill, motion on, 779-782
Child Marriage Restraint Act, 185
Child Welfare, New Education Policy, status paper on, 741-746
China, 167, 168, 170
Chinese polity, 358
Chittagong hill tribes, atrocities on, 286-287
Chittaranjan factory, 309
Christians Personal law, 183
Civil Code, debate on, 106-113
Citizenship, concept of, 124
Civil Disobedience Movement, 143
Civil Marriage Act, 183
Cold War, Korean crisis, 317
Commonwealth, membership of, 130
Commonwealth, relations with, 6
Communal electorate, 121-22
Communal Organisations, resolution for ban on, 53-63
Communal Problems, 149
Communism and democracy (Anthony, F.), 354-360
Communist Party, 137, act used against, 450-465
Communist Party (Marxist), 652
Comptroller and Auditor-General, 159
Concurrent List, 127
Congress for unity and liberty, 20
Congress Party founded, 57, Faridabad Session, 615
Congress, August '42 Resolution, 98
Constituent Assembly, Menon (P.G.) against convening new Assembly, 621-629
Constitution, amending provisions, 85-87, 114-19
Constitution Amendment, socialist, secular inserted, 100-4
Assembly, resolution before, 1-10
critique of, by Ranga, N.G., 95-99
Drafting Committee, appointment of, 64
final reading of (November '49), 1332-147
First Amendment (Article 15(2) 19, 29(2), 31, 212-254
First Amendment, Select Committee members, 212, report, 232-234, zamindari abolition, 232-254,
4th Amendment (Article 31, 31A), 387-407, Sixty-Second Amendment voting age lowered, 783-788
Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth Amendment on Panchayati raj, 798-812
framing of, 1-10
Irish pattern, 5
objectives of, 1-10
parliamentary system, reasons for, 444-449
Prasad, Rajendra on adoption of, 148-166
salient features by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 64-87, 153
Constitutional reforms, 950-971
Converts, law for, 184
Corruption prevention, debate on, 422-427, eradication of,
(Lohia in Lok Sabha), 581-591
Cow slaughter, demand for ban, 311
Craik, 373
Criminal Procedure Code, capital punishment abolition debate, 475-80
Criminalization of politics, Vohra Committee report, 871-884
Cutchi Memons, 106, 182
D' Souza, Rev. Jerome, tribute to Gandhi, M.K., 52-54
Dahar (king), 142
Damodar Valley Project, 309
Dandavate, Madhu, obituary to Indira Gandhi, 737-740
Dange, S.A. in Dhana Jain, 458, opposition against F.D. Act, 450-465
Dar Commission, 432
Das Commission Report see under Mass media
Death of Gandhi, 48, 47-54
Decentralisation, plea for, 96
Defamation law, criticism by Somnath Chatterjee, 779-782
Defence forces, move against reduction of, 179
Delhi Pact (1950), violation by Pakistan, 284-286
Democracy, preservation of, 143
Desai, Bapurao, 373
Desai, Morarji, on government apathy towards abject poverty, 670-679
No-confidence Motion debate, 708-715
Deshmukh, C.D., budget debate, 197-211, First Five Year Plan, debate, 361-372,
Deshmukh, P.S., 136
Deshmukh, Dr. Punjabrao, 306
Detention without trial, Act for, 450-465
Dhana Jain, 458
Dikshit (Dr.) see AIIMS
Dinesh Goswami Committee see electoral reforms
Disarmament, 934 (see also Non-proliferation Treaty)
Dogra, Prem Nath, 350
Dogras, agitation in Jammu and Kashmir, 341-353
Dowry Prohibition Bill, debate on, 487-490
Dual Polity, 68-69
Durgabai (Mrs.), 114
Dulles, John Foster, 317
Dutt, Bhupendra Kumar, 284
Ecology see Environment
Economic conditions, Lohia on three anna daily earnings of an Indian, 573-579, poverty (abject), 670-679, Manmohan Singh for liberalisation, 851-856
Education-Radhakrishnan Commission, 305-6, U.G.C. Report on higher education, 532-540, All India Education Service move, 595, Resolution on structure of, 592-597, policy on child development 741-746
Egalitarian society, concept of, 237
Electoral Reforms, resolution to check intrusion of big money, 602-13 voting age lowered, 783-788,
Advani, L.K. for, 867-870
Emblem, national flag, 17-18
Emergency Proclamation, Gupta, Indrajit, defends it, 687-701
Environment, protection of, 758-768, 944
Equality, concept of, 140, 144
Eisenhower, 322

Family Planning, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur on, 380-385, 972-985
Federalism, 66-71, 100-4, 128, 140, 614-620
Fernandes, George, criticises National Security Act Ordinance, 724-736
Five Year Plan, Debate on, 361-372, Mookerjee (S.P.) comments on, 297-314, poverty alleviation, 747-757
Foodgrains target in Five Year Plan, 302, import, 316
Foreign aid, U.S. conditions for, 318
Foreign Military aid, Kripalani (Archarya, J.B.) for, 506-521
Foreign Policy (Mookherjee seeks clarifications) on China, friendship policy, 659
Nepal, Pakistan, Tibet, 167-174, 334-353, Mukerjee, H.N., 315-325
Foreign Policy, outlines, 6-7
Foreign Policy, Non-alignment, 19, role in U.N., 327-331, Pandit (Mrs.) in defence of, 326-333
Foreign Policy, poor publicity abroad criticised, 506-521
Forestry Protection see under Environment
Formosa, 335
Fraternity, concept of, 144
Fundamental Rights, 79-81, 125-6, 130, 138, 219-221 (static), 244 suspension of, 92

Gadgil Formula, 796
Gadgil, V.N., speech on Sarkaria Commission report, 789-797
Gana agreement, 194

Gandhi, Feroze, Mundhra scandal unearthing of, 466-474
Gandhi, Indira, speaks for confidence in her government, 630-641, status on refugees migration from Bangladesh, 642-646, defends President Address on her government performance, 651-660, Shimla Agreement a 'good agreement', 661-669 assassination of, 737-740
Gandhi, Mahatma, on cow slaughter, 311, Noakhali happenings, 292 purity of methods, 164 tribute by Nehru, J.L., 47-51 tribute by D' Souza, Rev. J, 52-54
Gandhi, Rajiv (P.M.), Five Year Plan for poverty alleviation 747-757 voting age lowered, 783-788, Panchayati raj and Nagarpalika bills introduced, 798-812, Leader opposition speech on constructive cooperation to V.P. Singh government, 813-841
Gandhian tradition, 357
Gandhism, 349-352
Ganga Barrage, 309
Goa, liberation movement of, 408-421
Goa Vimochan Samithi, 413
Golden Jubilee of Independence celebrations, 899-912, assessing the fifty years, 986-1004 blue print of reforms, 950-971, fifty years of Independence, 972-985, national issues, 913-921, vision of a resurgent India, 922-926, problems of population, education and relations with neighbouring countries, 927-932, state of nation, 933-949, Gopalan, A.K, debate on Goa movement 408-421
Gowda, H.D. Deva, fifty years of Independence, 972-985
Great Britain, relations with, 6
Gujral, I.K., Assessing the fifty years on golden jubilee celebrations of Independence, 986-1004
Gulam Mohammed, 275-6
Gupta, Bhupesh, Electoral reforms to check intrusion of big money 602-613, for more powers to states, 614-620
Gupta, G.S., 166
Gupta, Indrajit, emergency proclamation defended, 687-701 criticism of fundamentalists, 837-866
Gurupadaswamy, abolition of 2nd Chamber, 386-391
H.G. Mudgal Publications, 257
Haldane (Lord), 128
Haldia-Barauni Oil pipeline, 698
High Courts, 125, Madras (235-236)
Hindu Code Bill, 181
Hindu Law Committee, 187
Hindu Law, move against interference in, 181-196
Hindu Mahasabha, 62
Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 185
Hindus' condition in East Pakistan, 273
Hindus migration from Pakistan, 270
Hirakud Project, 372
Hiranya Patra (golden pot), 589
Housing-Five Year Plan, 304
Humanity, spirit of, 10
Hyderabad, accession of, 150
Independence, Golden Jubilee Celebrations, 899-912, national issues, 913-921, problems of population, education and relations with neighbouring countries, 927-932, vision of a resurgent India, 922-926, see also Golden Jubilee Celebrations
Indian and Newspapers Society, 377
India-China relations, aggression of India condemned, 541-549, demand for Tibet issue reference to UN, 481-86
India-China relations, Kripalani for Chinese expulsion from occupied territory with foreign military aid, 506-521
India-Pakistan relations, 336-337, Bangladesh (Indira Gandhi warns), 642-646, massive migration from Shimla Agreement (1972), 661-669 war on Bangladesh, 647-650, War-Tashkent Declaration under Soviet good offices, 598-601, India-US relations, 1002
Indian Contract Act, 185
Indian Independence, First battle of '57
Indian Independence Bill, 11
Indian Penal Code, 240
Indian Polity, 88-94
Indian States, 150
Indian Union, concept of, 100-4
Indo-Pakistan conference on East Bengal situation 275
Indonesia, 178
Industrial Workers, Congress 1942 resolution, 98
Industrialisation-Five Year Plan, 306
Industry, control of, 199
International situation regarding Goa liberation movement, 408-421
Iyengar, H.V.R., 165
Jamait-ul-Ulema, 62
Janapadas, 90
Janata Party Government, 708-715
Japan, 178, remilitarization of, 317
Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, 822
Jayakar, Dr., 3, 4
Jayaswal, Dr., 90, 192
Jefferson, 138, 139
Jinnah on minorities, 44, press, 373
Joint Electorates, Pant, G.B. on, 42-46
Joint Family system, 189-190
Judiciary, 124-5, independence, 158
Kabir, Saint, 61
Kalai-Nasan (journal), 374
Kamath, H.V. on Indian Polity, 88-94, 136
Kamesam (Dr.) theory on use of timber, 308
Karan Singh (Dr.), speaks on Vision of a Resurgent India, 922-926
Kashmir, accession of, 150 (see also Jammu and Kashmir)
Kaur, Rajkumari Amrit, AIIMS, 436-443, family planning, 380-385
for withdrawal of Dowry Prohibition Bill, 487-490
Khaliquzzaman, 30
Khan, Abdul Ghaffar, 273
Khanna, Jugal Kishore, 166
Khojas, 106
Khwaja Nazimuddin, 275
Korean Conflict, 167-169, 175-6, 317-319, 327-331
Kripalani, Archarya J.B. for expulsion of Chinese with foreign military aid from Indian occupied territory, 506-521
participation in no-confidence motion debate, 550,
Tashkent Declaration dubbed as vague, 598-601
Krishna Valley Project, 309
Krishnamachari, T.T., 131, 137
Kumarmangalam, P.R. opposes motion of thanks, 842-850
Kunzru, Pandit H.N., 136,
international situation, 175-180
Labour Commission, National, 911
Ladakh, 170
Lalwaney-Mudgal case, 259-260
Language (Official), 491-505
Lawyers, comment on, 116, 230
Leh, 170
Liberty, concept of, 144
Life Insurance Corporation, Mundra scandal, unearthing of, 466-474
Linguistic provinces, basis for, 97, 340
Linguistic Scheme (Constitution Article 343-348)
Liquat Ali Khan, 276
Local self government see Panchayati Raj
Lohia, Dr. Ram Manohar, for curbing corruption, 581-591, participation in no-confidence motion debate, 550, speech on three anna daily earnings of an Indian, 573-579
Lok Sabha, valedictory remarks by speaker, 444-449
Lucknow Pact, 19, 16, 57
Macarthorism, 356
MacMahon Line, 170
Maharashtra, agitation for Bombay's retention, 454-460
Malabar, 112, 184
Malaviya, Pandit, 92
Manchester Guardian, 493
Manmohan Singh, pleads for economic liberalisation, 851-856
Manu, 107
Marriage Laws, Dowry Prohibition Bill, 487-490
Marumakkathayam law, 112, 194
Masani, M.R., speech on No-confidence motion debate, 550
Mass Media misuse, White Paper on, 702-707
Maulana Mohamed Ali, 92
Maulana Masudi, 295
Mavalankar, Ganesh Vasudeo elected as Speaker, 265-268
Max Mueller, 187
Maxwell, 373
Mayukha law, 107
Medical Research, AIIMS set up, 436-443
Members of Parliament, Mudgal, expulsion of, 255-264
Menon, Karunakara, 112
Menon, P. Govinda, speaks against convening of New Constituent Assembly, 621-629
Menon, V.K. Krishna, explains difficulties in withdrawing Kashmir Case from U.N., 522-531, Pakistan aggression, 647-650
Metcalfe, 90
Middle East Defence Organisation 319, 336
Migration of people from India, Pakistan, 269-295
Military aid, Kripalani pleads for, 506-521
Mill, John Stuart, 143
Minorities in Pakistan, 275
rights of, 42-46, plea against reservations, 99
safeguards for, 78, 92
Mithakshra, 107
Modi, Piloo, no-confidence motion speech (railway strike), 680-686
Mohammed-bin-Kasim, 142
Mohammed Ghauri, 142
Mookerjee, Dr. Shyama Prasad-, foreign policy, attack on, 334-353, international situation, 167-174, Five Year Plan (comments), 297-314
migration of people (India, Pakistan), 269-295, repatriation of territory from Pakistan against migration, 290
MRTP Act, 657
Mountbatten, Lord, 31
Moplahs, 184
Mudgal (M.P.), expulsion of, 255-264
Mudie, 373
Mukherjee, H.N, 136, foreign policy, attack on, 315-325, speech on UGC Report on higher education, 532-540
Mulukola (journal), 374
Mundhra scandal on LIC shares, 466-474
Munshi, K.M., 111
Munshi, K.M. — Uniform Civil Code, 105-9
Muslim League — Separate electorates, 42
Muslim Personal Law, 111-112
Nagarpalika bill passed, 798-812
Naidu, Sarojini national flag, 23-26
Najma Heptulla, speech on vital national issues, 913-921
Narayan, Jayapataka, 689
National Flag, 344
adoption of, 11-19
colours, importance of, 21-22
design of, 15
dharma chakra, 20
Naidu Sarojini on, 23-26
Radhakrishnan, S. on, 2-22
National Income Committee, 202
National Integration Council, Srinagar, 616
National Labour Commission, 911
National Security Amendment Act.
Ordinance (1984), 724-736
Naziruddin Ahmed, 134-135
Nehru, Jawahar Lal, Communal Organisations, for ban on, 55
Constitution Assembly, 1-10
Constitution First Amendment, 212-54,
4th Amendment, 387-407
midnight historic speech, 14-15 August 47
Mudgal, expulsion of, 255-264
National Flag Resolution, 11-19
seeks confidence in his government, 550-572
parliamentary system, reasons for, 444-449, press freedom, 222-226
tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, 47-51
Nehru, Uma, 384
Nepal, 171, 179
Noakhali happenings, 292
No-Confidence Motion, Nehru defends his government, 550-572,
Indira Gandhi defends her government, 630-641,
railway strike, 680-686,
Janata government, 708-715
Noncooperation movement, 143
Non-Proliferation Treaty, Gandhi, Indira, against signing of, 641
see also disarmament
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 319
NEFA, 567
North West Frontier Province, 112
Obituary, Gandhi, Indira, assassination of, 737-740
O'Connell, Daniel, 143
Official language, 161
Official Language Commission Report, discussion on, 491-505
Pakistan, creation of, 11, 167, 180, refugees from, 269-295
Panchayats, 77, 88, panchayati raj bill passed, 798-812
Panchshel, 565
Pandit, Vijaya Lakshmi, foreign policy defended, 326-333
Pant, Gobind Ballabh, abolition of capital punishment, 475-480
joint electorates, 42-46, prev. of corruption, 422-427, States
Reorganisation Bill, 428-435
appointed chairman, Parliamentary Official Language Committee, 491-505
Paramountcy, 150
Parliamentary Democracy, 138
Official Language Committee, 491-505
system, 67, reasons for, 444-449
Patel, H.M, resolution on restructuring centre-state relations 769-778
Patel, Sardar Vallabh bhai, 151
Patil, Shivraj V, on blueprint of reforms, 950-971
Patriarchal law, 112
Peace Treaty, New York, 24
Per capita income, Lohia on three anna earnings, 573-579
Planning, 199, Five Year Plan debate and resolution, 361-372, Mookerjee, S.P comments, 297-314,
poverty alleviation, 747-757
Politics, criminalization of, 871-884, of vote bank, 972-985
Pollution see environment
Population control see family planning
Portugal-Goa Liberation Movement, 408-421
Poverty alleviation five year plan, 747-757, removal programme 822, 950-971
Powers, distribution of, 160
Praja Parishad, 340
Prasad, Rajendra, Constitution adoption 148-66
Prasad, Rajendra, first day of Independence speech, 36-41
President, powers of, 66
Presidential system, 123
Press Freedom (Nehru for restraint), 222-226
Press (Objectional Matter) Amendment Bill, 373-379
Press, repeal of repressive laws, 373
Press, role of, 373-379
Prevention of Corruption Act (Amending Bill) debate, 422-427
Preventive Detention Act, opposition against, 450-465
Princes Protection Bill, 376
Provinces, Reorganisation Bill for, 428-435
Public Security see National Security
Radhakrishman, S. dawn of freedom speech, 30-35
on national flag, 20-22
Railway workers strike, 680-686
Raj Bahadur, 183
Rajagopalachari C., 374
Rajju, 194
Rajpramukhs, 219
Rajya Sabha, debate on abolition of, 386-396
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pages</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ranga, N.G.</td>
<td>critique of the constitution, 95-99</td>
<td>pleads strong centre, 716-723, regional demands, 769-778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rao, P.V. Narasimha</td>
<td>presents status paper on New Education policy, 741-746</td>
<td>Gupta, Indrajit opposes motion of No-confidence, 857-866, speaks on state of the nation, 933-949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)</td>
<td>311, 693, 857-866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rau, B.N.</td>
<td>131, 135, 152, 163, 165, 175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee problem</td>
<td>269-295, massive migration from Bangladesh, 642-646</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Table Conference</td>
<td>57, failure of</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Table (magazine)</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy, Jaspat</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Universities</td>
<td>306</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahaya</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangma, Purno A.</td>
<td>for a Second Freedom Struggle, 899-912</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarda Act</td>
<td>188</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarkaria Commission Report on centre-state relations, 789-797</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarpa agreement</td>
<td>194</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyagraha movement, 143, Goa Liberation, 408-421</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satyamurthy</td>
<td>373</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saxena (Prof.)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Chamber, 157, debate for abolition, 386-396</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secular state, concept of, 100-4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security Council, Korean conflict deadlock, 177</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sen, A.K.</td>
<td>Dowry Prohibition Bill, introduced by, 487-490</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate electorates, 42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seshan, T.N.</td>
<td>867</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shah Commission Report</td>
<td>see Mass media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shah, K.T. on amending rules 114-19, federal, secular and socialist concept, 100-4, 136, 210</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Market, Mundhra scandal</td>
<td>unearthing, 466-474</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shariat law</td>
<td>106, 112-13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh Abdullah</td>
<td>295, 342-353, detention of, 465</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shimla Agreement (India — Pakistan war)</td>
<td>661-669</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiv Sena</td>
<td>857-866</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidhva</td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>142</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindh, invasion of</td>
<td>141</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindri Project</td>
<td>309</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singh Buta, Sarkaria Commission report placed in Lok Sabha, 789-97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singh, V.P. Gandhi, Rajiv denounces government of, 813-841</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singhvi (Dr.), resolution on education Policy, 592-597</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinha, Nageswar Prasad</td>
<td>395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinha, Satya Narain</td>
<td>395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Party</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa Constitution 133-134</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Constitution</td>
<td>245</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker, Mavalankar, G.V. elected</td>
<td>265-268</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Police Establishment, 425</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard of Living, Lohia on (three) anna daily earnings, 573-579</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States, accession of, 40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States, integration of, 84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States Reorganisation Bill, 1955, 428-435</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States, representation of, 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone, I.F.</td>
<td>698</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strikes, moratorium on, 655, railway workers, 680-686</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subramaniam, C., on No-Confidence Motion in Janata government, 708-715</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession law, debate on, 107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sundaram, Lanka, abolition of 2nd chamber, 392-396, role of press, 373-379</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme Court</td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swamy, Dr. Subramaniam, resolution on centre-state relations, 716-723</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swarajya, ideal of, 34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Swaran Singh, 661
Swell, G.G. speaks on achievement and problems on fifty years of Independence, 927-932
Tagore, Dr. Rabindranath, 194
Tandon, Babu P. Das, 311
Tashkent Declaration (India — Pakistan war), 598-601
Taxing power, 128
Telengana, violence in, 228
Terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, 843-850
38th Parallel, 175-6
Tibet, 167-171, Indian role, 179, demand for reference to UN, 481-486
Tiwari-Mudgal case, 259-60
Tolerance, philosophy of, 34
Trade Unions, Act opposed, 450-465
Tribes and tribal areas, 159
Tryst with destiny, Nehru, J.L., 27-29
Ujala (journal), 374
Uniform Civil Code, debate on, 105-13
United Kingdom Constitution, 216
United Nations, 7, Korean conflict, 175-6, Indian role, 327-331; Tibet refugee demand, 481-486
United Provinces, 112
United States, 7, Warships visit Pakistan, 336
United States, Constitution, 66-71, 216
United States Information Service, 258
United States, Korean conflict, 169
University Grants Commission Report on higher education, 532-540
Unmad & Masti (journal), 374
USSR, planning in, 361, 368
Tashkent Declaration (India — Pakistan war), 598-601
Vajpayee, Atal Bihari, Tibet issue reference demand to UN, 481-486, resigns as prime minister after speaking on motion of confidence 885-898
Village Panchayats, 77, 88
Village republics, 91
Vohra Committee Report see Criminalization of Politics
Watson (Lord), 128
White Paper on misuse of mass media, 702-707
Wells, H.G., 33
Women, equality to 108
Women, succession rights for, 188-189
Yagnvavalkya, 107
Yuga Sandhi, 93
Zamindari system, abolition of, 229
Woodhead Commission Report, 302
Zakir Husain (Dr.), death of 615
Zafar Miraj, 834-835
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