

by discussions here) on which I should be grateful for any new material you can send.

### 15. INTERNATIONAL LAW COMMISSION (1948-51)

While he was representing India at the United Nations, B.N. Rau was elected as a member of the International Law Commission and he held the office of Vice-President of the International Law Commission for some time. A reference to an article in a Brazilian journal written by a Brazilian colleague of B.N. Rau at the United Nations is appropriate at this stage. That article said:<sup>24</sup>

In 1947, the Assembly 'in acknowledging the utility of creating a Commission composed of persons of acknowledged international legal competency and who jointly represent the first forms of civilisation and the principal systems of law', elected the 15 members of the Commission.

I shall never forget that first meeting (in 1949), that first contact with men so different, coming from such different latitudes, representing juridical systems and forms of civilisations so diversified, some even opposed to each other.

The meeting had been called in order to establish the activity programme of the Commission. After a long discussion during which all the members had talked with the exception of one member of the Commission, the second Vice-President, Sir Benegal Rau, who had been taking notes, started to speak; and with a very clear voice and melodious accent he read what he had written from the notes he had taken. His language was almost precious due to its perfection. The way of talking was elegant and somewhat remote—as if the speaker were not there... But he was there... And the solution he proposed was practical and under the circumstances the only one capable of satisfying everybody. Agreement was immediately reached. The Commission was able to start in the following session on its work, knowing what it was doing.

---

24. B.N. Rau, *India's Constitution by the Making*, *supra* note 3 at p. xxv.

A man of angelic appearance, extremely sweet in manners, a full idealist, but capable of dealing with reality and coldness from the right angle and not in a dreamy way, Sir Benegal is a man possessing the gift to surprise us when we least expect it. I do not wish to imply that Sir Benegal will solve a conflict which presents itself to many historical fates. It is not my purpose to give Brazil the hope that Sir Benegal may be able to bring peace and free us from the threats which are accumulating in Korea and China. But it is, indeed, a privilege to be able to put before the eyes of my countrymen such a beautiful expression of humanity, representing the highest and noblest human expression, indeed extremely human, the mirror of a culture many thousands of years old, which employs the language of the West in a better way than Occidentals do, because they do not possess the sense of eternity, of the everlasting. And it pleases me, in addition, to acquaint the Brazilian people with the fact that I work abroad in their name alongside Sir Benegal.

## 16. THE QUALITY OF HUMANNESS

Rau was very much pained at the use of the atomic bomb on humanity. While he was in the United States of America, he said in one of his speeches delivered at Philadelphia in October, 1950:

The atomic bomb is the greatest explosive force that we know in the physical world today. Yet, what starts this tremendous explosion is one single neutron—an infinitesimal, invisible particle which, acting as a kind of gun, first sets off two other guns and then each of these two sets off two others and so on, until there is a terrific force of almost earthshaking dimensions. What is true of the physical world is also true of the moral : there also we may have vast chain-reactions radiating from a single individual. One of the lessons which we may learn from modern science, therefore, is the importance of the infinitesimally small and, by analogy, the tremendous potential worth of the individual human person and the immense