

1971 Elections and India's Future

M. R. Pai

THE people of India desired a change. Mrs. Gandhi promised it. So she has won a massive mandate to fulfil her promise.

It is said that there are two tragedies in life: one, to desire something and not to get it; the other, to get it. Both the people and Mrs. Gandhi face the latter situation today. The basic assumption of the electorate and Mrs. Gandhi's Congress that political power by itself can solve the problems of a people is an obsolescent concept. Be that as it may, a few significant things about the 1971 Lok Sabha elections deserve attention.

The election was held in a situation of political fragmentation. The undivided Congress Party, over the years, had been devoted to the concept of total power. Except during Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri's brief rule, no attempt was made to share that power with other political groups which represented significant sections of the public.

However, the logic of history pursued the Congress Party. Over the years, it had withdrawn its huge cash balance of public goodwill earned during the Independence movement from the People's Bank. Political deceit and personal hypocrisy, and derivative political phenomena like defections, became an integral part of the political scene. To make matters worse, without a proper economic policy for promoting public welfare, under the slogan of socialism, a parasitical class of professional politicians, corrupt officers and corrupt business men had evolved. They were living on the labours of trusting masses which were being deprived of the fair rewards of their labour and the economic welfare and opportunities which they desired and deserved.

In this situation of economic stagnation and political opportunism the country was groping for a change. The shift in favour of the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and regional parties like the D.M.K. in 1967 elections was an attempt by the people to secure such a change.

Though no clear-cut solution emerged, by 1969 the internal contradictions in the Congress Party came to a bursting point. As a result, the old bosses, who had become *politically outdated*, formed the Organisation Congress. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, whose politics is nothing but the logical culmination of the old bosses' political behaviour, led the rest clinging to an economically outdated ideology, but promising change.

With the 1971 elections, the rout of the old group in the Congress is complete. The only option before their party now is to evolve a new political group by merger with other political forces.

The idea of the Democratic Front in recent elections was the last ditch attempt of the Organisation Congress to retain its political identity. In reality, it was nothing more than a seat adjustment alliance. Till the last date for withdrawal, barely three to four weeks ahead of the polling date, the front partners were at each other's throat. In the meantime, Mrs. Gandhi had completed her first round of election meetings!

Politically, the Front was bankrupt because it did not offer to the electorate even a minimum programme, but concentrated on the negative theme of "Indira hatao". Mr. M. R. Masani's desperate plea for a minimum programme went unheeded. Had there been a minimum programme such as a promise to establish law and order, give roads, drinking water (one out of four villages has none), approach roads (one out of three has none), educational facilities to every village, and to make life better for the economically weaker sections of the public by curbing price rise and stimulating a job-oriented economy it would have had an appeal for many in the country. Front partners would have got more seats.

In fairness to the Front allies, it should be added that their defeat at the polls goes well beyond these factors. What they are facing was not Mrs. Gandhi's Ruling Congress, but the entire machinery of the Central Government. Mrs. Gandhi had perfected the practice of cynical disregard for democratic proprieties which earlier Congress Governments right from Nehru's time had indulged in. Use by Mrs. Gandhi and others of Air Force or government planes at nominal charges, DAVP advertisements and posters (with themes, but not name of Ruling Congress), generous but unworked out promises by the LIC Chairman to the public, nationalised bank loans to party candidates under cover of hire-purchase finance, diversion of jeeps from the Defence quota to the party and blatant propaganda over the All-India Radio—in fine, the entire govern-

mental machinery and resources were effectively pitted against the Front allies.

Add to this the role of the Election Commission which has unfortunately lost its image as an impartial agency. It attracted criticism by virtually acting as a wing of the Ruling Congress, by obliging it at every turn. First the election dates were changed reportedly to suit the astrological predilections of that party; not only were the electoral rolls frozen by giving hardly any time to new voters to enrol themselves, but also large blocks of educated voters (generally hostile to the Ruling Congress) were found to be missing from the final rolls; what is worse, a controversial symbol was allotted to the Ruling Congress to boost its electoral prospects.

As against these formidable handicaps, the Front could command the limited support of four state governments controlled by it—Mysore, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

In spite of its defeat, the Democratic Front has served two useful purposes. First, by offering an alternative political combination, the country has been psychologically prepared for an era of coalition governments which are inevitable in a country of continental size that India is. Secondly, the very formation of the Front neutralised the Ruling Congress manifesto which would otherwise have approximated the CPI Manifesto.

Though the Ruling Congress has won two-thirds of the total seats, and many of them by handsome margins, the Lok Sabha does not mirror the country's mind fully. The present electoral system is an outmoded one. Had we adopted proportional representation the relative strength of all parties would have been mirrored faithfully in the number of seats they get in Parliament. The voters unrepresented in Parliament at present are a good number and constitute an influential segment of the population.

Some other noteworthy features of the election scene were: First, there was the revived interest of the educated classes, which had withdrawn from public life on attainment of Independence, in the affairs of the country.

Secondly, keen competition had forced all parties to put up good candidates in many areas. The result would be an intellectually more capable Parliament than so far. One can expect better legislation than hitherto.

Third development—an unfortunate one—was the revival of communalism in politics. In 1967, the minority communities like Muslims and Christians had entered public life and were getting integrated into the political structure of the country through various political parties on a secular basis. Mrs Gandhi has reversed this healthy trend.

Fourth, the public could not be taken for granted. Even the mighty leaders had to go to the people on bended knees begging for their support. For the first

time, our leaders have had to learn the virtue of humility.

The lessons of the election results should not be lost on parties. Mainly, they are:

(a) Big names no longer fascinate the electorate which is getting, demographically speaking, younger. Leadership in India will become again a *function*, not a *status*: a sacred trust derived from public service, and not a "meharbani" (favour) on the crowds. Even Princes, supposed to be strong in some areas, are losing their hold over the public. In future, those who take the people for granted will find themselves at a loose end.

(b) Regional parties like the Akali Dal have little prospects at the national level unless they ally themselves with national parties. Regionally, however they may continue to be powerful.

(c) Though casteism is still a powerful force in Indian politics, the rout of B.K.D. has shown that a caste-based party has no future at the national level.

(d) National parties like Jana Sangh, SSP, PSP, Swatantra, Organisation Congress, CPI and CPM have to participate in the formulation of new political forces, more cohesive and integrated, or face long periods of political wilderness, and for some even extinction.

Next arises the crucial question as to what Mrs. Gandhi and the Ruling Party will do for the country.

It would be unwise to assume that by giving a big majority for Mrs. Gandhi, and insuring her against the sense of insecurity under which she has laboured since 1969, the people can *ipso facto* expect stability in the country. Political stability is not mainly a matter of party majorities. It primarily derives from the democratic character of the Constitution and the respect of the public and political parties to the spirit and letter of that Constitution. Mrs. Gandhi's performance *vis-a-vis* constitutional processes in the past is not such as to inspire any degree of confidence that she will abide by it. Her proposal to amend it, if effected, is bound to destroy political stability in the country, in spite of a huge majority for her party.

There is another hazard. Most of her followers are defectors from Old Congress or the communist party who have assumed a new garb because it gains entry for them into corridors of political power. In a background of such political opportunism, elements of cohesion in the party, which is a requisite for stability, may not be present in the necessary quantum.

As against this, there are two factors conducive to stability. First, the presence of intelligent people in the party who will not swallow the line laid down by the party leaders or bosses as during the Nehru regime. Second, among the unknown entrants in Parliament there may be more responsible elements not given to opportunism as a way of life.

The crucial test of the Indira Government will,

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Election In West Bengal

K. K. Sinha

THE results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly in West Bengal have cleared much of the deck which was so long littered with small parties, each of which were further splintered. The long overdue polarisation of forces has taken place. The CPM has emerged as the main and dominating leftist force and the Congress(J) has become the rallying ground of those who feel threatened by the emergence of the CPM. The CPI has secured less than half of what it had in 1969 and that also because in many places the Congress(J) did not put up its candidate. The Socialist Unity Centre which claims to be more radical than the CPM and which was opposed to the CPM, maintained its 7 seats, but no sooner the results were announced than its theoretician, Shibdas Ghosh has hastened to make up with the CPM in order to help formation of a CPM-led ministry. The Muslim League is in an appropriate position to be wooed like in Kerala by either of the two leading parties. The CPI is on the horns of a dilemma. To go with the Congress would mean being isolated from the left forces and ridiculed by the CPM and it is extremely doubtful if the 8-party unity can be retained as a unit. There is already a severe strain within the CPI. If, on the other hand, it chooses to negotiate the best terms with the CPM, it will lose its force and its rank and file will for all practical purposes be allied with the CPM and thus it will become an ineffective factor soon enough. The SUC will under no circumstances go with the Congress. The Forward Bloc may go that way under very favourable terms and conditions but with a great deal of mental reservations among its followers.

The CPI has, as an all-India party, other considerations in mind. Its coalition ministry in Kerala may be in trouble if in West Bengal the CPI allies with the CPM. Its pro-Indira posture at the Centre, howsoever queered during election time for tactical reasons, will be awkward if it takes an anti-Indira, anti-Centre stance in West Bengal. But if the CPI has to retain a leftist image of some worth in West Bengal, how can it go with the Congress, having organised an eight-party front? It is therefore desperately trying to have a Kerala-type ministry as a face-saving formula. But evidently that will be a temporary stop-gap measure.

So far as the Congress(J) is concerned, it has secured much more than one had expected realistically. This is due to the 'Indira-Wave' that swept all over the country. The people felt that as against the CPM it would be better to strengthen Smt. Gandhi's party which is in power at the Centre. But it should be noted that the Congress(J) could have done still better if it were not also to fight Congress(O) and

Bangla Congress candidates. In fact before the elections, at the time of finalising alliances, a serious proposal, I understand, was made by Congress(O) that let all the three Congresses set up a Committee headed by Shri Ajoy Mukherjee and let that Committee nominate all the candidates. In that event Sri Atulya Ghosh and Badu Babu, the right hand man of Shri Ghosh, would withdraw and that the Congress(O) would accept any candidate set up by such a committee even if not a single Congress(O)-man was given the ticket. But the Congress(J) did not agree to this proposal. The negotiations between Bangla Congress and Congress(J) broke down too and they put up candidates against each other. But the bulk of the Bangla Congress walked over to the Congress(J), and that explains the collapse of the Bangla Congress.

However, immediately after the results were declared, Sri Prafulla Sen and Sri Atulya Ghosh declared without reservations that Congress(J) is the real Congress. This is indeed a good sign, even though a little belated. Let us hope that all the three Congresses will even now forget and outgrow their pettiness against the obvious threat of political annihilation, and merge and work together. A new spirit must, however, emerge and the only hope is the detached leadership of Sri P. C. Sen on the one hand and the active support of the new and younger generation that has made itself felt during the election.

It is difficult to say who will form the ministry — the CPM or the Congress. The CPI has the key but its mind is divided, as it always happens to be at crucial moments. The directive from Moscow will be decisive. Moscow of course would like to cultivate Smt. Gandhi, now that she can rely on her own strength in the Parliament. But the CPM as a regional communist force has shown that it is a power to reckon with and may play a vital role in the strategic eastern India with East Bengal and China on its borders and the Bay of Bengal and South East Asia on its south. Therefore, it would not be surprising for Moscow to think of cultivating and humouring the CPM too, particularly when the latter is tending to emphasize its differences with the Centre. The CPM's relations with China are not very clear, but it is worthy of note that the CPM never fails to emphasize that relations with China and Pakistan should be normalized and the defence budget of India should be drastically cut. Moscow may thus develop a double-edged policy — one for Delhi and another for Calcutta — that may be seemingly at cross purposes. That may put the CPI in a rather awkward posture. But if Moscow decides

on this twin-policy, it cannot be helped. It has often been the fate of communist parties which are remote-controlled.

There are thus four alternatives: (a) A CPM-led ministry, (b) a Congress(J)-led ministry, (c) a CPI-led ministry on the Kerala pattern and (d) continuance of the Presidential Rule.

Whatever be the form of rule, the elections have made one thing clear — the smaller parties have been put in their place and the struggle for power has been set between the CPM as a regional communist party well entrenched in the State, and the Congress(J) as the party of the Prime Minister who has secured a full throated support all over India and is confidently entrenched at Delhi. The CPM's manifesto, it may be noted, has laid its greatest stress on Centre-State relationship and this will now be the focal point of attack, in contrast to 1969.

Though the CPM has secured overwhelming support in the districts of Burdwan, Hooghly, Howrah, 24-Parganas, Nadia, Birbhum and Bankura with considerable influence in some other districts too out of a total of 16 districts, it should be noted that the defeated candidates of the CPM have polled high against the winning candidates. Thus its political following is more widespread and organised and conscious and of the activist type than that of the Congress(J). As I have been stressing frequently, CPM is not an ordinary political party. It is more a paramilitary party which is preparing to confront the real

enemy, namely, the Army, and electioneering is considered only a part of that preparatory game.

Thus, this "struggle for power" in the CPM ~~seems~~ has entered into a higher stage as a result of the elections, and in this "battle" CPM has come out victorious in spite of the free time that Smt. Gandhi's administrative and party machinery had during one year of the Presidential Rule.

One crucially significant development that has taken place during the elections was the intrusion of the Army in *all* the police *thanas* (about 300) of the State in order to maintain law and order. They will take time to withdraw. In the last one year the Army has had ample scope and experience in studying the problems of handling law and order in all types of areas, both of the Naxalite variety and of the group-clash type. Their officers have had an opportunity to study the typical political and anti-social problems that may arise in future. One type of problem, however, has not yet been faced by them as yet sufficiently, namely, rural-revolts in out of the way semi-liberated areas. But all this advance training, I believe, would stand them in good stead. On the other hand, the fear and the terror associated with a military presence is wearing thin among the potential trouble-makers. So there are both pros and cons.

I should therefore expect the continuation of a prolonged and protracted political warfare across the "class" barricades, with its progressive militarisation and guerrillisation, the Naxalites and the CPM activists becoming interchangeable.

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2. A lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge
4. Any change in a wart or mole
5. Persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
6. Persistent hoarseness or cough
7. Any change in normal bowel habits.

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Election Trends In Tamil Nadu

“Atreya”

WHEN the Prime Minister announced mid-term elections for Parliament, on the plea that she would like to obtain a fresh mandate from the people for her policies and programmes, surprisingly the D.M.K. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu also announced the intention of his party to seek a fresh mandate. This was surprising because unlike the Prime Minister who was running the Government as a minority party with the support of other allies — position she did not find comfortable and hence decided to have the mid-term elections — Mr. Karunanidhi and his party did not have any such problems in Tamil Nadu. The D.M.K. enjoyed an extremely comfortable majority. Questions were therefore asked why the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu should decide on a dissolution of the Legislative Assembly and making the mid-term elections both for Lok Sabha and Assembly. Some felt that the Chief Minister was motivated to do this out of a desire to cash in on the Prime Minister's popularity and the alliance the D.M.K. had with the Prime Minister's party. This explanation is hardly tenable when one remembers the toughness with which he bargained with the New Congress representatives in Tamil Nadu over allotment of Parliament seats. As far as Tamil Nadu itself was concerned, Mr. Karunanidhi established beyond all doubt that the New Congress could have no relevance whatsoever and there could be no sharing at all or allotment of any Assembly seats for New Congress. Mr. Karunanidhi accepted only the Old Congress as having a relevance. He was willing to accommodate the New Congress only in relation to Parliament and Central Government. In fact Mr. Karunanidhi's approach to the New Congress was that of a strong man who was the boss of an independent country that was willing to be friendly and fraternal to another neighbouring country like India. It was like the Mexico-USA relationship. This apparently he learnt from the Prime Minister herself because the Prime Minister followed a similar pattern of attitude in dealing with Moscow-lining Communists. Just as she had told the CPI right boys that they would be welcome provided they assumed the new Congress identity formally and not if they continued with their separate CPI identity, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had apparently made it clear that the New Congress could never be permitted to have a separate identity in so far as the Assembly elections were concerned.

The second reason advanced for the Chief Minister's decision is that realising the eroding popularity of the D.M.K., he realised that in one more year, there was likely to be a further deterioration. At that time of normally scheduled elections, the entire focus of campaign will be over Tamil Nadu issues and he felt

that the D.M.K. might fare badly. Therefore, though he felt he might not get the same number of seats as his party had prior to the election, he could still salvage a working majority now which he might not get one year hence. There was some substance in this analysis and this analysis was closest to the truth.

The manner in which large-scale irregularities in electoral compilations, outright removal of nearly 50,000 names from the Chief Minister's constituency and inclusion of thousands of names of people who were living in temporary hutments, all were indicative of the fears and apprehensions of the leaders.

A third reason advanced to explain the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's decision was the cost factor. This can straightaway be rejected because the D.M.K. had no problems concerning resources, especially as a ruling party with a comfortable majority.

It is in such a background that elections came to Tamilnad. As happened all over India, the results of the elections not only trounced everyone excepting the Prime Minister's Party, D.M.K. and CPI(M) but it numbed and overwhelmed even the victors into an overawed paralysis. It was not a question of the losers having to explain their defeat. It became really a question of the victors explaining the flood-tide of victory in which they were carried.

For the Lok Sabha from Tamil Nadu, the D.M.K. contested 24 seats and won 23 seats with a total vote of 5,622,758 amounting to 33.94 per cent of the total polled votes. The New Congress was allotted 9 seats and it won all the 9 seats allotted by polling a total 1,995,567 votes equivalent to 12.04 per cent. The Muslim League won 1 seat, the CPI 4 seats and Forward Bloc 1 seat.

The Old Congress contested 29 seats and the only win was Kamaraj's seat. It however polled 4,853,534 votes representing 29.29 per cent. The Swatantra Party contested 9 seats and lost all of them, but polled 1,479,693 votes equivalent to 8.93 per cent of the votes. The D.M.K. and its allies bagged 38 out of the 39 Parliamentary seats they contested the lone defeat being the one which Kamaraj inflicted. Kamaraj's was the only win for the opponents of the D.M.K. In terms of the votes polled the D.M.K. and its allies polled 53.57 per cent as against 42.91 per cent of the votes polled by the opponents of the D.M.K. alliance. More or less the same pattern was seen for the Assembly elections.

D.M.K. contested 201 of the 234 seats for Assembly and won handsomely 183 by polling 7,610,766 or 46.5 per cent. Its allies won 26 seats with marginal votes. As against this the Old Congress won 15 out of 194 seats but with a voting figure of 5,405,856 amounting to

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America And South Asia

[An extract from the Report to the Congress by the President of the United States of America]

AMERICAN policy toward the great subcontinent of South Asia parallels that toward the East Asia and Pacific region. Our aim is a structure of peace and stability within which the people of this region can develop its great potential and their independent vision of the future. Our policy is to help these nations deal with their own problems, and to bring our activity into a stable balance with that of the other major powers with interests in the area.

In the pursuit of that goal in South Asia, however, both the nature of our interests and the condition of the region permit a sharper focus of our efforts. South Asia's fundamental problems are two: to meet the challenge of economic and political development and to turn the relationship between India and Pakistan from hostility to cooperation.

More than elsewhere in Asia, the subcontinent entered the postwar period with an established institutional structure, with a considerable reservoir of trained personnel, and with a commitment to democratic self-government and independent policies which strengthened the world's sympathy and interest in its success. Against these assets, however, were substantial liabilities. Our effort to assist the countries of the area in overcoming these liabilities has determined and still determines the structure of our policy toward South Asia.

The seven hundred million people of the subcontinent face perhaps the world's most cruel imbalance between human needs and available resources. Even with the full application of modern science and technology, with all its potential for righting such an imbalance, the problem remains severe. For India, the mere size of its population and the need for large infusions of external resources, make extremely difficult the task of organizing the society to meet its problems. For Pakistan, the difficulties are compounded by the need to harmonize the interests of two regions widely diverse in social patterns and traditions and physically separated. The smaller countries of South Asia face similar or greater barriers to progress given their limited trained manpower and natural resources.

South Asia's progress is important to us. We cannot deny our humanitarian interest in the well-being of so many people with such exigent needs. Nor can we be indifferent to the fact that the lack of progress in South Asia could encourage the polarization of the world between the developing and the industrial countries. Finally, we recognize that the unmet needs of South Asia, and its unresolved enmities, could make the area vulnerable to an undesirable level of foreign influence.

We have a deep interest in ensuring that the sub-

continent does not become a focus of great power conflict. Over the past decade the major countries of South Asia have profoundly changed their relationships with the rest of the world. Pakistan has gradually moved from its position of close association with us to a complex triangular relationship, balancing her contacts with the three great powers with interests in South Asia—China, the USSR, and ourselves. India continues to follow a policy of non-alignment but of a cast significantly changed since the Chinese attack of 1962. These policy changes, by definition, affect the intimacy of our relationship with the countries of South Asia. We have no desire to try to press upon them a closer relationship than their own interests lead them to desire.

During the past year we have continued our bilateral programmes of financial, technical and food assistance. South Asia is, in fact, the largest recipient of our economic aid. We are also providing large-scale assistance to India's crucial family planning efforts. We will continue to help through those programmes, and through the activities of the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

We were faced during the past year with a particularly difficult decision in regard to Pakistan's request for an exception to our general embargo on the sale of weapons to the subcontinent. We decided on a one-time sale of a limited amount of military equipment. We believe that this modest exception should not upset the military balance in the area.

In the 1970's, it is important that South Asia be able to rely on the steadiness of our policy. We will do what we can to help the countries of the area meet their economic and social needs. Recognizing that the success of that effort will be diminished by a continued failure of India and Pakistan to establish normal relations, we will, without trying to dictate to those directly concerned, encourage more normal relations between them.

We will try to keep our activities in the area in balance with those of the other major powers concerned. The policy of the Soviet Union appears to be aimed at creating a compatible area of stability on its Southern borders, and of countering Chinese communist influence. The Peoples Republic of China, for its part, has made a major effort to build a strong relationship with Pakistan. We will do nothing to harm legitimate Soviet and Chinese interests in the area. We are equally clear, however, that no outside power has a claim to a predominant influence, and that each can serve its own interests and the interests of South Asia best by conducting its activities in the region accordingly.

Philip Spratt - A Tribute

A. B. Shah

PHILIP SPRATT was one of those rare westerners—I know of only one other, Edward Shils—who could understand India from the inside. This was not solely due to his having lived in India for more than forty years. Many others have done so but that did not take them beneath the outer crust of the Hindu personality. Nor was it solely due to his earlier training in natural science or his later studies in philosophy and social sciences. The secret of Spratt's understanding of India lay in a combination of all these with Christ's love of man and Freud's insight into the workings of his mind. His magnum opus, *Hindu Culture and Personality* (Manaktalas, Bombay 1966, 1968) bears testimony to this.

Spratt came to India in 1926 on behalf of the Communist Party of Great Britain and was soon involved in what came to be known as the Meerut Communist Conspiracy. Prison gave him time to re-examine the Marxist Philosophy and the communist strategy based on it. Thus began a process which led him in turn to M. N. Roy's non-conformist Marxism and 'scientific' humanism, and finally to non-doctrinaire, liberal humanism. If accident had not cut short the latter's intellectual quest, I have a feeling that Roy would have endorsed Spratt's position.

I had known about Philip Spratt for nearly twenty years before we first met at Bangalore in 1962. At that time he had, after nearly twenty years' study, practically formulated in its final shape the central thesis of *Hindu Culture and Personality*. Little did I then imagine that three years later I would have the privilege of finding a publisher for it. The story is significant and bears mention here.

Spratt had sent the typescript to a major Indian publisher-cum-book-importer, who referred it to a British publishing house for its opinion and advice. The latter, being used to publishing the rhetorical drivel of a best-selling 'philosopher', felt that Spratt's book would not sell and, in any case, might hurt Hindu susceptibilities. As may be surmised, the Indian publisher turned down the typescript.

The book could have easily been published in the US through the good offices of a senior American social scientist. But Spratt was keen that it should be published in India, though publication in the US would have brought him bigger royalties—which he needed—and wider recognition, which he deserved. The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom offered to sponsor the book and underwrite the expense in connection with it in case the Government were to ban it in response to public agitation. It is to the credit of Mr P. C. Manaktala that he ultimately decided to

publish the book on his own. It may also be added that there was no outcry against the book and though almost all the Indian reviews were unfavourable, the first edition was sold out in less than two years.

I have mentioned all this for two reasons. Unlike the scintillating intellectuals of New Delhi and Bombay, and the 'progressive' academicians keen on building 'socialism' in India with American aid, Spratt was truly committed (without quotation marks) to the modernization and free development of Indian society. He believed that this was not possible unless Indian publishing developed qualitatively as well as quantitatively and outstanding Indian authors played their part in this process.

Secondly, Spratt's book is indispensable for understanding the Hindu mind though, some may add, not the whole of it. *Hindu Culture and Personality* lays bare the structure of the Hindu psyche as it has been shaped over the centuries, and to a considerable extent is still being shaped, by the Hindu tradition and social institutions. By doing so it not only enables one to understand certain features of Indian history but, what is more important, those of our national experience since 1947. Spratt did not explicitly indicate the application of his hypothesis to this latter field—for fear, I suspect, of being misunderstood by his adopted countrymen. But I would prescribe his book as compulsory reading for everyone who wishes to understand India, more so if wishes to change it.

Spratt was simple, indeed austere in his personal life. At sixty, he used to ride a bicycle from his home to the *Mysindia* office in Bangalore, and one arm of his spectacles was made up of a piece of string since the original plastic one had broken apart. Though Spratt was never rich like the latter-day Marxists and Malcha Marg socialists, his simplicity was the outer expression not of poverty but of the Rishi's unconcern with the trappings of worldly goods. One felt humble in his presence.

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *A Crisis of Conscience*, Rajinder Puri, published by the author, A 422, Defence Colony, New Delhi. Rs. 20.
2. *India: The Critical Years*, Kuldip Nayar, Vikas Publications, 5 Daryaganj, Ansari Road, Delhi 6. Rs. 20.
3. *The Reform of Muslim Personal Law in India*, Asaf A. A. Fyzee, Nachiketa Publications Limited, 22, Naushir Bharucha Road, Bombay 7. Rs. 2.

Election Results at a Glance

PARTY POSITION IN PARLIAMENT

SEATS

Party	1967	Dec. 1970	After 1971 Election
Congress (R)	279	220	350
Congress (O)		65	16
Swatantra	44	44	8
Jana Sangh	35	35	22
CPI	23	23	23
CPM	19	19	25
SSP	23	23	3
PSP	13	13	2
Others	44	44	53
Independents	35	35	13

VOTES POLLED IN 1971 ELECTION

Party	Number	Percentage
Congress (R)	63,050,474	43.64
Congress (O)	15,252,340	10.56
Swatantra	4,445,143	3.08
Jana Sangh	10,808,454	7.48
CPI	7,059,327	4.89
CPM	7,184,560	4.97
SSP	3,516,731	2.43
PSP	1,410,508	0.98
Others	19,704,053	13.54
Independents	12,030,888	8.33

PARTY POSITION IN STATE ASSEMBLIES

WEST BENGAL

Results declared: 277 (Election postponed in three constituencies)

Total seats: 280

Total electorate: 21,714,745

Total votes polled: 13,238,430

Valid votes: 12,516,103

Invalid votes: 722,327.

Name of Party	Seats contested	Seats won	Votes polled	Percentage of valid votes	Seats at the time of Dissolution
Congress (N)	236	105	3,732,582	29.82	38
Congress (O)	221	2	739,216	5.91	13
CPI	111	13	1,075,936	8.60	30
CPM	237	111	4,233,670	33.83	80
Bangla Cong.	136	5	686,358	5.48	33
Forward Bloc	52	3	357,152	2.85	21
RSP	41	3	280,199	2.24	12
PSP	16	3	95,856	0.77	5
SSP	25	1	91,355	0.72	9
SUC	26	7	208,875	1.57	39
Muslim League	70	7	343,262	2.74	
Gorkha League	3	2	38,380	0.32	
Jana Sangh	24	1	90,428	0.72	
FBM	3	2	64,638	0.51	
RCPI (Kumar)	4	3	38,615	0.30	
Workers' Party	3	2	62,927	0.50	
Biplabi B C	10	1	45,355	0.36	
Jharkhand	15	2	39,005	0.32	
Lok Sevak Sangh	11	—	41,130	0.33	
Hindu Mahasabha	4	—	6,292	0.06	
Independents	152	4	244,872	1.95	
	1400	2,77	1,25,16,103	100.00	

TAMIL NADU

Electorate: 23,064,652; Total seats: 234; Total votes polled: 16,346,220; Invalid votes: 676,574.

Party	Seats Contested	Seats won	Votes Polled	Percentage
PROGRESSIVE FRONT:				
DMK	201	183	7,610,766	46.5
Muslim League	7	6	191,730	1.2
CPI	10	8	364,803	2.2
Forward Bloc	9	7	268,893	1.6
Tamil Arasu Kazhagam	2	1	43,436	0.2
PSP	4	4	147,985	0.9
DEMOCRATIC FRONT:				
Old Congress	194	15	5,405,856	33.1
Swatantra	19	6	465,112	2.8
Tamil Nadu Toilers Party	6	—	83,187	0.5
RPI (C)	1	—	25,667	0.15
SSP	2	—	37,491	0.2
CPM	37	—	246,325	1.5
Jana Sangh	5	—	9,716	0.06
Independents	140	4	768,679	4.60
	637	234	15,669,646	100.00

In Quest Of Justice

V. K. Sinha

A LONG wintry night of brutal repression ended with the death of Stalin in 1953. Thirty years of inhuman repression of even the most faint murmur of dissent had crippled Soviet cultural life. Denied all freedom of expression, Russian literature became dreary, mechanised, inane and insufferably dull. The novels written under the so-called "Socialist Realism" portrayed heroines whose exclusive and overwhelming passion was to overtake production targets! Heroes expressed sublime passion through love of tractors. The death of Stalin, chillingly portrayed by Siniavsky in his *On Trial*, left a whole generation of Russians in a state of bewildered and ambivalent state.

In 1956 came the secret speech of Khrushchev in the Twentieth Party Congress indicting Stalin and his rule. One almost feels that Khrushchev was expressing his and party colleague's feelings of long years spent in humiliating subservience to Stalin. The cult of leadership was rejected and the Party was proclaimed as the real guardian of the Revolution. Khrushchev's speech had consequences which probably the Soviet leaders never visualized. Several questions began to be asked for which no clear answers could be given: one of the principal questions which seemed to puzzle many young Russians was that if Stalin were such an autocrat, what were the present leaders of the party doing. Were they accomplices of Stalin's dark deeds? The Party could ill afford to give clear answers to these questions, lest it undermine its own authority.

Stalin's death led to a thaw. Writings began to appear which seemed to break away from the dreary forms of socialist realism. Ilya Ehrenburg's *Thaw*, Dudintsev's *Not By Bread Alone*, promised a new resurgence. But the thaw somehow never led to spring. Stalin had been repudiated, but not Stalinism. The Party after initial laxity in control of literature, swamped down on all writing not in keeping with its ideological aims. Repression with occasional mild doses of laxity has continued till today.

However the Stalinist past could not be revived and questioning among intellectuals and writers could not be halted. From mid-fifties to mid-sixties, the writers began to clamour for greater freedom of expression, freedom to portray real emotions in literature, and to assert the autonomy of private feelings. However, the protesting voices did not question the validity of socialism, nor were the dissenters anything but ardent patriots. Their demands were for literary and not political freedom.

A turning point came in the history of protest movement in Russia with the trial of Siniavsky and Daniel in February 1966, a trial which would go down in history as one of the great landmarks in the struggle

for freedom. It is this trial that jolted writers and intellectuals not only in the USSR but in the entire communist world. In the USSR itself, writers realised that artistic freedom could never be secured without at the same time ensuring civil liberties. An incipient movement began in Russia demanding just and equitable application of laws. A struggle in quest of justice was launched. What the protesters demanded was protection and guarantee of the Fundamental Rights which were already in the constitution of the USSR. What they further demanded was making real the Rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which the USSR was a signatory. The Siniavsky-Daniel trial exposed most vividly the gulf between the professed law of the land and its actual perversion by the courts.

Since the 1966 trial, there has been a growing movement of writers and intellectuals, scientists and artists, even among some peasants and workers, demanding fair justice and greater freedom. This has been extensively documented in *In Quest of Justice*^{*} a remarkable collection of documents on protest and dissent in the Soviet Union today. It includes protests demanding artistic freedom; protests against perversion of laws; demands for religious liberty; and protests from 'subject' nationalities against "Russification". Most of the writings in this volume have appeared earlier in the journal *Problems of Communism*.

Brumberg's volume comprises three parts. The first part consists of 'Commentaries'—informative, well studied articles on intellectual and religious dissent. Soviet law and problems of nationalities. The second part of documents is the most extensive and remarkable section in the book. No mere reportage or analysis can do justice to this section of letters and petitions, transcripts of trials and appeals for justice. They are a witness to the great struggle for civil liberties going on in the Soviet Union today. Bukovsky and Litvinov, Grigorenko and Ginzburg, Galanskov and Larisa Daniel and host of others by their remarkable courage and sacrifice have shown that no totalitarian system, however strong and efficient, can destroy the urge for freedom. A Russian writer (unknown) while referring to Siniavsky-Daniel trial wrote: "Siniavsky and Daniel denied the charges of anti-Soviet activities. And well they might. Such writings as theirs can only be beneficial. Just think, old friend! In the courage of Siniavsky and Daniel, in their nobility and their victory, there is a drop of our blood, our sufferings, our battle against humiliation and lies, against murderers and traitors of all sorts. What is slander? You and I remember the

^{*}In *Quest of Justice*, Edited by Abraham Brumberg, Praeger Publishers 1970.

Stalin era—the concentration camps on an unprecedented, super-Hitlerian scale. Auschwitzes without ovens, where millions perished. We know the corruption, the bloody corruption of those in power who, having repented, to this day do not want to tell the truth.....”

Censorship in the Soviet Union has compelled many young writers to seek “non-official” channels to express their creative urges. Typed and some even clandestinely printed, “underground literature” in Russia today “occupies a unique position in the Soviet literary world”. A sample of this is included in part three of this volume. It includes historical and political essays (none of them could be even remotely considered slanderous of Soviet Union), literary criticism, short stories and poems. It includes a remarkable piece of literary criticism (‘In Defence of Pyramids’) on Yevtushenko by Siniavsky, a touching story by Bukovsky, two short chilling stories by Karaguzhin (‘Stalin’s Charm’ and ‘Stalin’s Smile’) and Kushev’s (tried and convicted in 1967) long interesting poem ‘Decembrists’.

The battle for freedom continues to rage in Russia, despite farcical trials and KGB threats. There are signs that the struggle for civil liberties in the Soviet Union is even assuming more organized form. The document included at the end in Brumberg’s volume seems to confirm this. It is a petition addressed to the Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations. And what is significant is that it is signed by a body (names are given) which calls itself “The Initiative Group for Defense of Civil Rights in the U.S.S.R.” No ringing down of curtains yet on the Soviet drama in quest of justice!

Review

India’s Constitution and Politics

A. G. Noorani, Jaico Publishing House, Rs. 10/-.

THIS is a companion volume to Mr. Noorani’s book that was reviewed last month. It brings together articles on constitutional and political topics written over a period of about nine years. The book is of about 600 pages and the price is only Rs. 10.

Mr. Noorani is a prolific writer and his range of interest is wide, though it is confined in this volume only to current political affairs including the consideration of some constitutional questions that arose. The articles in the first four chapters on the position of the President and the Governor, the Cabinet System, Parliamentary Privileges, the Attorney General and relations between Ministers and Civil Servants, based as they are on a detailed discussion of the provisions of the Constitution and debates in the Constituent Assembly, are such as would do credit to any eminent constitutional lawyer.

Of greater interest to ordinary readers will be Mr. Noorani’s articles on the Muslim problem collected together in one chapter. They discuss in a dispassionate and rational manner the position of Muslims in India, their grievances, the injustice done to Urdu and the problem of communal riots. Two articles “How a Riot Begins and Spreads” and “The Famous 23 Riots” deserve particular mention. They tear to shreds many a myth about communal riots sedulously propagated by Hindu communalists. The volume contains many other thoughtful articles on a variety of topics. They can be re-read with profit. V.B.K.

ELECTION TRENDS IN TAMIL NADU — (Cont’d from page 5)

33.1 per cent of the polled votes. The Swatantra won 6 of the 19 seats it contested polling 465,112 votes in all amounting to 2.8 per cent.

The Tamil Nadu results indicate not much of a radical change in attitude patterns of voters’ preferences, but the scope for fantastic changes that are possible as a consequence of poor and unstructured organizational strategy. The mid-term elections were bitterly fought unlike in any other earlier elections. This was to be natural in the climate of hard politics which the Prime Minister introduced as a style for the first time in the country in her own form of purges. The Salem incidents insulting Hindu Gods by followers of Octogenarian Ramaswamy Naicker, removal of names of large number of voters and inclusion of massively large number of new voters from temporary hutments, some murders—all indicated greater bitterness in the contest. This bitterness will tempt retaliation in the massive victory that has been obtained by the D.M.K. in regard to the number of seats.

A lot depends upon the styles that will be pursued by the D.M.K. leadership in Madras after a victorious election. If they are conscious of the large percentage of opposition votes polled, they could learn the skills of efficient and clean administration and uphold democratic traditions. Should they be tempted to read exaggerated significance in the number of seats they have won and continue with their old ways of cynically retaliating against those who do not agree with them, they will be adding to the bitterness. The D.M.K. contains eminent intellectuals who could steer the party in the right direction in this “crisis of victory” because in many respects the overwhelming victory and the knock-out of all opposition represents a real crisis to the victors because they could not hope to get a hearing. The temptation to break-up opponent’s organizations such as their cooperatives, unions, their business etc., will be very much there, as a retaliation. Such temptations should be firmly resisted.

1971 ELECTIONS AND INDIA'S FUTURE — (Cont'd from page 2)

however, be in the economic field. Her economic philosophy is a carbon copy of the Stalinist programme. More controls (including the economically impossible one of price control), a confusion of size with concentration of economic power (which ignores the logic of modern technology and structure of a dynamic economy), expansion of public sector and nationalisation of industries and trade for sake of expansion of the state sector (a drain on the economy as socialists in Europe have found out) have been promised by Mrs. Gandhi's Congress. The experience of even communist countries and our own in past 15 years shows that this is no formula for economic welfare of the masses.

Such a statist economic philosophy will produce an economy which lacks diversity, cost consciousness (which even Mr. Brezhnev has recently recognised as the heart of the 'economic system') and managerial competence. It will fail to fulfil the aspirations of the people for a better life and economic opportunities. What is more, in an effort to administer such an economy, the Government will dissipate its energies and resources, and fail to fulfil its basic obligations like provision of law and order, education and other items of the infrastructure. Problems of rising prices and unemployment will grow and crush the fixed income groups, like the middle classes and the urban poor, and the landless labour as in the past.

Unorganised consumers will have to pay a heavy price under such a system. They are already doing so, for instance, as depositors of nationalised banks whose service has deteriorated, passengers of IAC or policy-holders of inefficient LIC. Their misery will increase manifold as their choice of producers is narrowed down to state monopolies.

It remains to be seen whether even at this late stage any economic pragmatism will dawn on the Ruling Party. The answer is likely to be a No, because the present statist policy means "bread and butter" for professional politicians, their corrupt officer lackeys and corrupt businessmen friends. There does not seem to be any instance in history where parasitical groups have voluntarily given up their victims.

Then remains the big question of egalitarianism which has been promised. An attack on the propertied class in urban areas can safely be predicted. But an overall solution will remain a pipedream for a number of reasons.

First, inequality in the modern economy is functional and can be destroyed only by destroying the prosperity of the masses. Second, the present hypocritical system of drawing small salaries and huge perquisites by legislators and ministers, in order to fool the public will continue. The example will spread all down the line. Third, the Ruling Congress is a party of mostly "vested interests". Its composition is revealing—sugar syndicate bosses of Maharashtra (who have no hesita-

tion in muleting consumers), a lawyer who thought (and rightly so) that for his skills the salary of a High Court judge was inadequate, some of the biggest landlords of Andhra Pradesh, and professionals without sense of professional restraints who ran away from their responsibilities as Chairmen of public sector undertakings when the elections came, or people who discovered drawbacks in their own parties and virtues in the Ruling Congress on the eve of elections. Such people have no moral capacity to work sincerely for an egalitarian society even if such a society were possible. Social justice and egalitarianism are not fruits which grow on the tree of political opportunism.

It is not these things which should bother all those committed to democracy and who differ from Mrs. Gandhi's economic approach. Nor should they be disturbed by the cries of "Sanjay Gandhi ki jai" with its dynastic overtones which her dutiful followers raised as election results came flowing in. What is ominous is India's destiny as an independent nation in view of Communist Russia's growing influence in India and Mrs. Gandhi's excessive attachment to that country and her reliance on Indian politicians who till recently were devoted mental slaves to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Russia has already started the economic loot of our country. The recent deal to buy the surgical instruments from the outmoded factory she supplied us at Madras is but one typical method of modern economic colonialism practised by USSR on gullible or weak countries—dump outdated capital equipment and technology at heavy cost on poor people and when they are stuck up with it, import its product at rock-bottom prices! Thus the Russians get cheap stuff without capital investment and the "colonies" suffer the losses!

The encirclement of India by establishing her Navy in the Indian Ocean and neutralising the balance of power on the sub-continent by arming Pakistan while dumping obsolescent military hardware on India (without needed spares or servicing) are other means of modern colonialism. If the present trends continue, it will only be a question of time before we have exchanged White colonialism for Red colonialism with a brief span of Independence in between.

Yet in another way, 1971 marks a complete swing of the pendulum in the public life of India. The Gandhian era, with its emphasis on purity of means and power of the people is completely dead. Mrs. Indira Gandhi represents the new mood, namely, any means are good enough so long as objectives are obtained, and a *ma baap* sircar can submerge all individuals. Whether the country will lose both its independence and soul, or emerge as a strong and prosperous Republic after undergoing an ordeal of fire, only time can tell.

With Many Voices

"The deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world."
—Tennyson.

The handling of prisoners of war by North Vietnam is a story of cruelty rarely matched in history.

—David Lawrence, *U.S. News & World Report*,
March 8.

It is no mere wind of change. It is a hurricane and it has battered out of shape all those pitted against the new Congress.

—Sham Lal, *Times of India*, March 12.

The independence of Pakistan has not in fact meant real independence for East Pakistan; it has meant for its subordination in every respect to West Pakistan.

—*Opinion*, March 9.

For the present the outlook for an independent Cuba is not bright. It has become one of the colonies of the Soviet Union, bought by Russian money.

—David Lawrence, *U.S. News & World Report*,
March 15.

India's people have given Mrs. Gandhi an unqualified mandate according to the rule of law as laid down in India's Constitution.

—*March of the Nation*, March 20.

Mrs. Gandhi's finest hour is also her greatest challenge.

—Observer, *The Century*, March 13.

The people of Calcutta have made their terms with violence, in some sections of society with unbelievable nonchalance.

—*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 21.

All the reactionary forces that had become divided into the Indicate and the Syndicate are going to line up under the Indicate leadership.

—E.M.S. Namboodiripad, *Hindu*, March 15.

The Lady is riding the tiger of roused expectations.

—*Janata*, March 14.

Confiscation of lawfully acquired properties and efficiently conducted concerns is certainly not the way to reduce economic disparities.

—*The Radical Humanist*, March 1971.

Great Britain is no longer a great imperial power. It has divested itself of all its colonies, except those which are too small to be divested of easily.

—Ian Tickle, *Swiss Press Review & News Report*,
March 22.

To the Editor.

FREEDOM FIRST,
C/o Democratic Research Service,
127, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Bombay 1.

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 5.00

Name:

Address:

Signature

Much of our labour-management relations and laws and practices are out of tune with the times.

—Railway Minister, K. Hanumanthiya,
Indian Express, March 26.

Will "some day" ever become "today" for the Russian consumer?

—*Time*, March 29.

The war for Bengali Independence will be a reality from now on whatever the outcome of the current show of force.

—Selig Harrison, *Washington Post*, March 28.