

JUNE 1977

EDITOR: M. R. MASANI

HOW THE PEOPLE REALLY VOTED

M. R. Masani

WE in India have a peculiar knack of failing to interpret correctly the significance of election results. In 1971, almost the entire press announced that Mrs. Gandhi had won a spectacular victory in the parliamentary elections and it was widely claimed that she had received a "massive mandate". As I pointed out at that time and have not tired of doing since, Mrs. Gandhi received no such thing. What she got was 43 percent of the votes cast, these being 54 per cent of the electorate. Statistically, she got 23.9 percent, say 24 percent, of the electorate behind her. She was thus a minority leader. But she got 352 seats in the Lok Sabha. She misused her huge Parliamentary majority to amend the Constitution and finally to get enacted the infamous 42nd Amendment which deserves to be repealed *in toto*.

Now we are back at the same old game of distorting the current election results by the assumption that the Janata Party lost disastrously in the South and obtained a smashing victory in the North. It is interesting that even a commentator like Mr. Shamlal of the *Times of India* who opposed the New Delhi case for forcing the dissolution of the State Assemblies in nine States could not desist from accepting these false premises. In an article on the subject on 27th April, he referred to nine States where the Congress Party "has been wholly rejected by the people in the elections to the Lok Sabha". Similar statements have been made about the wholesale rejection of the Janata Party in the Southern States.

It is desirable that we should consider to what extent these assumptions are correct because it is good for the country that political controversy should be based on fact and not on fiction. The overall picture provided by official figures is that the Janata Party and the Congress for Democracy, which had a common symbol on the ballot paper, polled 43.17 percent of the votes cast, while the Congress Party polled 34.54 percent of the votes cast. Those who voted constituted 60.54 percent of the electorate. In so far as seats in the Lok Sabha are concerned, the Janata-CFD combination got 298 seats (52%) while the Congress Party got 153 seats (30%) in a House of 542. For once, the "multiplier" worked against the Congress Party.

North vs South

Carefully examining the figures published by the Election Commission, in the Southern States we find

that those opposed to the Congress Party got not less than 42.64 percent of the votes polled in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, in Karnataka not less than 43.26 percent voted against the Congress Party. Does this amount to such a smashing victory for the Congress Party and such a humiliating defeat for the Janata Party? Similarly, in the North we find from official figures that a sizeable minority in the Northern States voted for the Congress Party. The impression created is that we are hypnotised by the number of seats in the Lok Sabha obtained by these parties and forget the extent to which those results have distorted the will of the electorate.

Here are the figures for some of the major states in the North which show the percentage of Congress Party votes cast in each of these States compared with the corresponding percentage in the 1971 elections in brackets: Assam 50.56% (56.18%); Orissa 38.18% (38.46%); Punjab 35.86% (45.96%); Madhya Pradesh 32.5% (45.6%); Rajasthan 30.56% (45.96%); West Bengal 29.39% (28.23%); Uttar Pradesh 25.04% (48.56%); Bihar 22.90% (40.06%); Haryana 17.95% (52.56%).

It will thus be seen that while in Haryana the Congress vote slumped disastrously, as it also did to a large extent in Bihar and U.P., in the remaining States the loss was substantial but not sensational, while in Orissa it was negligible, and in West Bengal the Congress vote actually went up a little. The Congress vote in the Northern States had traditionally been less than 40 percent of the votes cast ever since Independence. It is only in Haryana, Bihar and U.P. that it dropped radically on this occasion.

If we had any fair system of election such as exists in most democratic countries, the Congress Party should have won a fourth of Lok Sabha seats from

(continued on page 14)

IN THIS ISSUE

The aftermath of the Parliamentary Elections naturally gets pride of place in this issue, what with Mr. Bernard Levin's comment in the London *Times*, Prof. S. P. Aiyar's article on the "Indian Ballot-Box Revolution" and the Editor's analysis on "How the People Really Voted".

By way of contrast, Geeta Doctor contributes a travelogue of olden times.

Between You & Me and The Lamp Post



Levin on Amin

PRESIDENT Amin of Uganda has capped, in characteristic style, the controversy in England as to whether or not he should be admitted into that country at the time of the Commonwealth Conference in June and, if not, how he should be denied entry, whether as an undesirable immigrant or otherwise. In the course of a telegram to the Commonwealth Secretary-General, President Amin has requested that, if adequate hotel arrangements cannot be made for him, "arrangements should be made for him to stay at Buckingham Palace".

While this ambition of Amin's may no doubt be expected to create an even greater furore in Britain there is one eminent British commentator who, most unexpectedly, has written an article entitled "Let us give President Amin a welcome that will change his whole life". No, he is not an MRA spokesman, nor even a Gandhian who believes in a change of heart. The advice that Amin should be welcomed to Britain comes from no less a person than Bernard Levin who wrote about this in *The Times* of April 26.

Let us hasten to reassure any perturbed reader who might be outraged by this suggestion that Mr. Levin has excellent reasons for his plea. To start with, he points out that it is a little difficult to draw a distinction between one murderer in office and another. The Labour Government having welcomed Mr. Shelepin and Mr. Ponomarev from the Kremlin, it might now be somewhat difficult to draw the line against President Amin. A more important reason, however, that Mr. Levin gives for his suggestion is that it is very much in the interests of the oppressed people of Uganda. Recalling how another hated African dictator, Nkrumah of Ghana, was overthrown during a visit to China, Mr. Levin believes that if only Mr. Amin could be detained long enough in Britain, the people of Uganda could be trusted to arrange for a similar fate to overtake Amin whose position in his view is far more precarious than that of Nkrumah. There is, however, the problem, according to Mr. Levin, that "in view of the cowed and crushed nature of the people he would be leaving behind him, time is needed for his overthrow to be organised. He has been out of Uganda several times already, but never for more than a week or two; a month in Europe should suffice—with luck, much less".

We are inclined to agree with Mr. Levin—on condition of course that HMG and the Commonwealth Secretariat can manage to detain President Amin long enough in the U.K. for the purpose Mr. Levin has in mind.

Dr. Miracle

DR. Ludwig Erhard, former Chancellor of West Germany from 1963 to 1966, died of a heart attack at the age of 80 in Bonn on May 5. His passing away brings to an end the era of the 'German Miracle' of which he was quite rightly described as the father.

Drafted by the Allied Commanders in charge of Germany after World War II from the obscurity of a Nuremberg market research institute, Erhard soon displayed two outstanding qualities. One was sound liberal economic wisdom which he has set out in his book *Social Enterprise*, namely enterprise with social responsibility on the lines advocated by Jayaprakash Narayan in our own country. This involves a removal of all controls and the unhampered operation of the competitive free market economy. The second quality Erhard displayed, which was as important as his economic wisdom, was courage. When the Allied Generals would not let him as Economic Affairs Minister in the new German Government abolish all controls, Erhard went on the radio one evening and announced the abolition at midnight of all economic controls in defiance of the Allied Commanders.

General Lucius D. Clay, then the US representative, whom I had the pleasure of meeting many years later in New Delhi, told me what happened the following morning. Erhard was called and put on the mat. "My advisers tell me this is a disastrous move", said General Clay sternly to Dr. Erhard, "So do mine", replied Dr. Erhard, coolly puffing away at a cigar.

Shaken by the courage of this man's convictions, the Allied Generals—with an angry Soviet General dissenting—decided to give Dr. Erhard six months time to try out his liberal economic policies. By the time the period had ended, the 'German Miracle' was on its way.

When Dr. Erhard visited India in October 1958, he opined that, unaided, India would take too long to release its people from poverty and distress and this could endanger the democratic system itself. That was why he said: "The Western Democracies are ready to extend assistance to your people". Unfortunately the Indian Government of the time continued with its retrograde policies of suspicion against foreign equity capital and hostility to trans-national corporations. Even today, these policies have not been jettisoned.

There can be no question in my mind that unless the policies Dr. Erhard practised in Germany to "let the men and the money loose and make the country strong" are followed, there can be no Indian Miracle. It would be wonderful if Mr. Morarji Desai and his

Government could be persuaded to give a free field for one year to Dr. Erhard's liberal, anti-State Capitalist policies.

Educational Autonomy

CERTAINLY at least one of the Ministers in Mr. Morarji Desai's Cabinet, the Union Education Minister appears to be geared to precisely such a change. It is reported that when the Prime Minister informed Mr. Pratap Chandra Chunder of his appointment as Union Education Minister, he told him: "I want you to create a revolution in education". Dr. Chunder did not lose much time in getting started. In an interview in *Himmat* published on April 8, he expressed the view that the previous government had gone wrong by interfering with the working of educational institutions and robbing the teachers of all initiative. "There should be the least degree of Governmental interference in the field of education—universities and teachers should be able to tackle their problems independently. Official interference not only takes away academic freedom, but also stifles initiative."

Autonomy for AIR and TV

ANOTHER Minister who is on the right track is Mr. L. K. Advani, the Union Minister for Information, who has repeatedly confirmed the pledge given in the Janata Party manifesto that the Radio and Television services should be freed from government control and interference by their being established as autonomous statutory Corporations on the lines of the BBC and the ITA. He has also said that the Films Division should similarly become autonomous.

We hope that Mr. Advani will not be diverted from the right path on which he has set his feet from carrying out this election pledge by cynical counsel that the Janata Government, like that of Mrs. Gandhi, should not give up these valuable instruments of propaganda. More power to your elbow, Mr. Advani.

Gherao Debunked

KUDOS also to the Minister for Labour, Mr. Ravindra Verma, on a very imaginative statement that he has made in regard to gheraos published on May 2. Dealing with the crop of gheraos which are raising their ugly head once again in many parts of the country, the Labour Minister has announced "that the Government's stand is that it will not regard any agreement entered into by an officer while under gherao or physical duress as an agreement voluntarily entered into after a full and dispassionate consideration that should govern all decisions. In fact, the Government has stated it would have no option but to consider all such agreements entered into under duress invalid".

It is good that Mr. George Fernandes, the Union Minister for Communications, made it clear at a meeting with the Madras Press Club on May 7 that

he fully agreed with this policy statement and went on to say: "I shall not support any agreement signed under duress in my own Ministry".

How to Help The Vietnamese

MR. Bertram D. Wolfe, who died recently, was perhaps the most perceptive student and observer of international communism and the Soviet scene (See Obituary note in our April 1977 issue). He often said that one could not be a friend of the people of Russia and also at the same time of the Kremlin since the dictatorship was at permanent war with the people of Russia. One had to choose one's side.

This of course is true of all dictatorships as we in India were to discover during the past two years when the Kremlin supported our own authoritarian regime and the press and people of the Western Democracies supported the people of India in their resistance to it.

A similar choice seems now to face President Carter's Administration in regard to Vietnam. Recent refugees from Hanoi who were interviewed in Japan by Peter Hazelhurst of *The Times* told gruesome stories of the horrors of the communist takeover in South Vietnam. The testimony comes from Mr. Nguyen Cong Hoan who was a member of the National Congress in Hanoi. Mr. Hoan tells how he was one of a group of refugees from South Vietnam in Guam who decided that they would like to return to Vietnam under the new regime. On October 16, 1975, these Don Quixotes sailed from Guam, ran up the North Vietnamese flag on their ship and displayed a huge portrait of late Ho Chi Minh. Mr. Hoan and some of his colleagues, sadder and wiser men, have now fled from the concentration camps in which most of them had been kept under barbarous conditions as a reward for listening to the promises of the Communist regime. Far from being welcomed, the returnees were bunged into a concentration camp where food was sparsely rationed, there was no medicine and nearly all the prisoners developed yellow fever and hundreds died of disease and overwork. There are a large number of such concentration camps in Vietnam and the optimists from Guam were lodged in Camp 20. Unlike his colleagues Mr. Hoan himself was picked out for somewhat different treatment and was made a member of the National Congress in Hanoi. He was told however that his parliamentary privileges would not include the making of any speeches. "All we were told to do is applaud and raise our hands in assent when proposals were presented by the Standing Committee".

A sadder and wiser man, Mr. Hoan told Mr. Hazelhurst: "The people of Vietnam wanted peace at all costs after 30 years of war. That is why we opposed the United States. But after two years of oppression under communist rule, we want to fight again". Mr. Hoan ended up with an appeal to the U.S. Government to give arms to the patriotic guerillas in South Vietnam to carry on their resistance against the communist occupiers from the North.

INDIA'S BALLOT BOX REVOLUTION

S. P. Aiyar

THE country has emerged from one of those political experience which, in the perspective of History, account for the great tides of change in human affairs and, by any test, the ballot-box has produced a revolution in Indian politics. A revolution, it has rightly been said, constitutes a drastic reallocation of power and this is precisely what has happened. The thirty-year old monopoly of the Congress has ended and the tenacious myth of its invincibility dissolved. The significance of this is not lessened by the fact that the scene of the great change is north India and not the states in the South. As yet, no satisfactory explanation has been offered for the dramatic contrast in the political choice of the people in the north and in the south of this sub-continent; obviously there can be no overarching theory of political behaviour in all the Southern States and local factors must be taken into account.

Rule of Caprice

What the Sixth General Election has achieved is without parallel in the history of democracy for the people have expressed themselves and passed a judgement on the rulers after a period of emergency during which a coterie of men surrounding the prime minister had sought to make the country into a prison-house for the freeplay of their impulse. True, the scene of their operations was in the north, east, west and the south largely escaped the rigour of the mechanism of terror which had been set up. But the suppression was everywhere, a pall of fear fell over the country and the people had been governed not so much by the rule of law as by caprice. Writing during the high noon of the emergency, a contributor to *The New Statesman* who understandably preferred to remain anonymous, expressed the view that no one could ever be so naive as to imagine that the emergency, and the system of government it had given rise to would end in the foreseeable future. It was the general belief that the emergency had come to stay and the media men had worked feverishly to give it an air of legitimacy. When the election was announced on January 18, the emergency was "relaxed" but not lifted and all evidence seems to support the view that it was the intention of the Congress to continue with it and "consolidate" the gains after it had secured a fresh mandate by the people, ultimately, the emergency was "lifted" not by Mrs. Gandhi but by the people of India, specially of Rae Bareilly.

The election results exploded with a surprise and leading newspapermen the world over were pathetically striving for the right words to describe this most extraordinary event in the Asian scene. The words they seized upon were intended to capture the element of high drama; "earthquake" and "volcano" were freely used and in India, "wave" and "hurricane" were em-

ployed. These expressions, to my mind, are not only inadequate but are also apt to be misleading because they give us no clue to the nature of the phenomenon or the forces underlying it.

Democracy Versus Dictatorship

India's ballot-box revolution has a significance for our own political development as well as that of other developing countries. Unlike previous elections, the exercise of the franchise this time has a certain epic dimension and as in all epics there is a main theme as well as its sub-plots; its ennobling characters as well as its despicable villains. The sub-plots and the activities of the villains will undoubtedly become clear when the separate official investigations are carried out and the results made known to the public. However, these are linked up with the main theme of democracy versus dictatorship—one of the principal strands in the manifesto of the Janata Party.

The Economist has recently observed that "Never again will anyone be able to claim that democracy is unsuited to any developing country or that the poor and hungry do not value their rights. India shot down these condescending dogmas... along with Mrs. Gandhi and her Congress Party." It is true that ordinary men and women who have been denied the advantage of formal education cannot understand the abstract arguments of freedom and equality as expressed by political and constitutional pundits; equally true that the harsh realities of the underdeveloped world make survival more important for people than political battles. What is forgotten, however, is the fact that human beings will rebel against injustice and any threat to their dharma or way of life. Why did Mrs. Gandhi lose in her own constituency with so big a margin despite the fact that it had been carefully nursed for many years and had many benefits bestowed upon it? Why is it that practically every one closely associated with her and having a reputation for highhandedness was defeated at the polls? Why is it that the normal inducements offered to poor voters in cash or kind or the variety of pre-election sweeteners promised by State Governments had little or no effect in many prestigious constituencies? The election has shown beyond the shadow of doubt that the voter, urban as well as rural, literate as well as illiterate, could not be deflected from his decision to vote in the way he wanted. There was widespread fear that the election would be rigged and rumours afloat in Bombay suggested that what ever the electorate did the result would be a victory for the Congress. Yet this did not happen and is the greatest achievement of this revolution through the ballot-box. It has given rise to a tremendous confidence in the power of the vote and the secrecy of the ballot-box. The result was a powerful demonstra-

tion of *Jana Shakti* the power of the people. The Constitution of India spoke of "We, the People" but this was generally taken to be no more than a rhetoric of the eighteenth century; the election demonstrated the reality of popular sovereignty.

Any evaluation of the historic significance of our recent political experience must acknowledge with pride the work of the Election Commission and the Returning Officers who brought to bear on their work the spirit indispensable for a free election. What Vinod Malhotra, the Returning Officer at Rae Bareilly, did when confronted by a petition for a repoll presented by Makhanlal Fotedar, Mrs. Gandhi's Election Agent, and the timely intervention of P. B. Dutt, the Election Commission's observer, indicate that the spirit of freedom had not been snuffed out.

Divine Right Delusions ?

What destroyed the Congress image was its *hubris*, its belief that it was its historical destiny to rule India and provide the stability which its leaders believed could not be provided by any other political party. What gave credence to this belief was the splintered nature of the opposition in the country's political development. For more than a decade, Indian political scientists following their Western masters propounded the theory that having a party like the Congress, representing a broad consensus in a dominant position, was the best thing that India could have. It followed logically that although the country could have other political parties they could only function in opposition and exert pressure on the ruling party. This was at best a rationalization of an historical accident and at the worst a subtle variation of a Divine Right Theory. The notion that only one party has a monopoly of political wisdom to rule this large country was not only out of tune with the realities of a plural society but it also carried within it the implication that opposition is irrelevant to a country like ours. Mr. Borooah was only explicitly stating what was in the minds of most Congressmen when he boldly declared that the opposition was irrelevant. In a similar strain, Mrs. Gandhi declared during the emergency that the opposition had been vanquished but not destroyed. Uma Vasudev's almost fulsome biography of Mrs. Gandhi clearly mentions that many years ago—long before she became minister—she had gone to the extent of saying that to make the foundation of the country strong it was better not to have opposition parties. This is a dangerous doctrine. The election has not only destroyed it but also created a situation in which people can hope to have an alternative government. Mr. Y. B. Chavan recently warned the Janata Government that if the Congress with its long history could have its parliamentary majority reduced from 352 to a 153 it would not take much time to reduce the Janata Party's majority 270 to 70. He was right and this is a clear indication that the principle of alternative government is now a reality. It is significant that it did not occur to him to make a similar statement after the

1971 election.

Volatile Loyalties

In the current euphoria one is likely to forget that political loyalties are extremely volatile; so is the mood of the people. For the moment, the Janata Party has roused high expectations—political as well as economic. Its manifesto has promised the implementation of political charter, including the full restoration of civil liberties and the rule of law. The restrictions on the freedom of the Press are being rapidly removed and the relationship between Parliament and Judiciary will be restored to the form envisaged by the framers of the Constitution. Parliament is once again becoming the vital centre of our political system and there is every hope that new conventions will develop between government and opposition. Congress leaders have shown restraint in their pronouncements and a willingness to cooperate with the government within the framework of the Congress policy. One can also expect the government and opposition to function as integral parts of democracy and play the game according to the rules.

In the post-election period, the relations between the Union Government and the States, particularly those in the South, can be expected to have their strains but much depends on the new government's capacity to build up an image of impartiality. Most important of all, the earlier promises on the question of language will have to be kept. The Janata Party leaders may have to temper their utterances and explore every possibility for harmonizing relationships with Congress governments in the South.

Most important of all, the new government will be judged by the effectiveness of its economic programmes, its capacity to create jobs in urban as well as rural areas, keep prices of essential commodities from rising stimulate industrial and agricultural production and inspire confidence in the economy. In this endeavour, policies can not differ fundamentally from those of the Congress although the emphasis might well change. One of the major casualties of the recent election might well be a disastrous set back for family planning for the words themselves have come to acquire an unsavoury connotation in the public mind. Unfortunately the Union Minister for Health and Family Planning has been indulging in a form of demagoguery on this matter. The failure to control the population would mean pushing more and more people below the poverty line, and, given the return to a liberal democratic system, conflicts and pressures will build up rapidly and the opposition can once again exploit such a situation. Indian society cannot change overnight and the soil is ever fertile for the demagogue. There was a time when we believed that a totalitarian system was not possible in India. But we came very close to it. We must not delude ourselves a second time by saying that it will not happen again. The ballot box can bring about a political revolution by changing the structure of power but it cannot by itself produce a social and economic transformation.

ONE IN THE EYE & A SALUTE TO THE BRAVE

Bernard Levin

I have forbore to comment on the Indian election result hitherto because it was so inexpressibly splendid that I felt like a character in a fairytale who has only to pronounce the forbidden name or ask the forbidden question, for the prince and his entire castle to vanish instantly and forever. But now, when the morning-after strain on the coalition appears to have been lessened, through the tact of Mr. Morarji Desai, the sickbed wisdom of Mr Jayaprakash Narayan, and the magnanimity of Mr. Jagjivan Ram, it seems to be time.

In circles where the glib, silly folk of our tired society gather, it has been possible for a good many years now to hear an argument that goes something like this. Since China was liberated into the delights of communism, it is true that there have been no free elections there (though, of course, that doesn't matter, because Chinese communism makes those who live under it so free that they don't need or want elections); likewise, there is no freedom of speech, of trade union activity, of residence or travel, of labour, of reading or religion. (These trifling restrictions, which in any case are much exaggerated, are likewise enthusiastically welcomed by the entire population.) Yet the Chinese people are not only happy; they have solved the population problem, the food problem, the disease problem, the distribution problem, the poverty problem, and for that matter the problem problem.

Turn now, says the gentleman with a glass in one hand and a sausage on a stick in the other, to India. There, they have elections, poor benighted heathen that they are: most of them are illiterate, of course, and have no idea what they are voting for, nor do they much care. Which is not surprising, because the elections make no difference; hunger, disease and poverty still stalk the land, and no detectable improvement will ever take place until they adopt—as, of course, they enthusiastically would if only they had access to the real information—the system of China. The indifference, if not contempt, of the Indian people for democracy could not be more complete; it is fully justified; and Indian elections, therefore, constitute a pointless farce. Verb, sap.

Enter, and pass across the stage, several hundred million Indians. Some push and shove, others patiently wait their turn; some are coughing in an ominous manner, others could clearly do with a square meal; here, one appears to be praying to some outlandish god; there, a group are huddled together talking excitedly in Peter Sellers accents. India passes; and when she has passed—lo! there remains democracy, and a tenacious hold on it that puts our homegrown *faineants* to shame.

Mrs Gandhi's gamble, when she took it, looked

almost impossible of failure; which is presumably why she took it. She had everything she wanted for the security of her rule: the constitution had been rewritten, the judges were either tamed or threatened, tens of thousands of her opponents in jail, the press mostly controlled and, in those instance where it refused to be controlled, persecuted, Parliament a stringless instrument in her hands, and Mr. Michael Foot capering, kow-towing and buttering in her wake.

She had, then, everything her rule needed, save the thing it needed most: legitimacy. To gain that, she had to hold an election and a free election too. So most of the restrictions on most of the press were lifted; most of those detained without trial were released; and she went to the country, clearly confident that she would be returned overwhelmingly, with no one and nothing to stand in her way after. The rest is history: and so is she.

The squabbling opposition could never unite, said the western wiseacres; its members were too ambitious, too greedy for power, too like Mrs Gandhi themselves. The squabbling opposition thereupon united. Well, but the apathy of the people would show clearly how little weight the intellectuals' complaints about freedom carried with them. Then the biggest political crowds seen in India for decades began to turn up to the Opposition's meetings. Ah, they had only come to gaze at the strange antics, like visitors to a zoo, and on polling day they would vote for Mrs Gandhi and stability, and not for such trumpery decorations as democracy. And, duly, on polling day, the Indian people voted for the vital decorations and against the false stability. The largest democracy in the world had remained true to democracy.

Right at the end of the campaign, Mr Jayaprakash Narayan, half-dead from incarceration, sickness and campaigning, wrote a final appeal to the voters. I think it is worth quoting, for it clearly expresses the very spirit in which the Indian people went to the polls. This is what JP wrote:

"In the name of all those who struggled for our country's freedom, I appeal to each one of you: free India, defeat the dictators. This is the last chance. If you falter, 19 months of tyranny shall become 19 years of terror.

Freedom is the first requisite... How will the rulers be accountable if the Judiciary is robbed of all effectiveness? How can you end corruption if you cannot even talk or write about it? How can we have accountability if power is exercised by back-room operators who do not even hold office? The terrors of the black 19 months herding hundreds of thousands into jails, the tortures inflicted on them, the

(continued on page 7)

DRIVING ACROSS THE DECCAN

Geeta Doctor

WHEN my grandfather travelled, the manoeuvre was planned with all the pomp and circumstance that befitted a representative of the British Raj, even though as a District Forest Officer he was but a minor one. An advance party was sent to alert the officials in the area of his visit, his personal belongings were then despatched, tents, easy chair, books, scientific equipment, for he was an amateur botanist, and all the provisions needed for a siege of six or eight weeks. On the appointed day if the time for departure was set at 10 a.m. my grandfather would emerge on the stroke

of ten, impeccably dressed and set off for "camp". The rest of the family, comprising of my grandmother, who described this scene to me, as also the children, assorted guests and a number of pets which at various times included monkeys, dogs, and peacocks, would then follow at a respectful distance.

These days, however, one just informs the travel agent and depending on one's resources one is carried in varying degrees of discomfort by air or rail or sea and dumped at the port of exit as unceremoniously as a parcel. In fact many of the holidays are even advertised as "packaged tours". There is none of the anticipation of a long journey by road where one may encounter one knows not what, or the thrill of coming across some long lost fortress gleaming for an instant in the light of the morning sun with the bright clangour of a romantic past, or the soothing repetition of rural scenes that reassures one with the thought that life has been going on like this for the past thousand years and will continue to do so long after one has passed. Nobody has the energy anymore, whether in terms of human resources or of petrol. Nobody has the time.

ONE IN THE EYE & A SALUTE TO THE BRAVE (continued from page 6)

untold sufferings of their families, mutilating laws so that a citizen does not even have the right to life, illicit as well as legal extortions, destroying homes of the poor—these are not chance happenings. They are what dictatorship is about... Many efforts have been made to hoodwink you... They have tried to inflame communal passions, to frighten minorities... to scare you with stories of violence, of external and internal threats. They have issued sham apologies. They have tried to pass the blame for their dastardly deeds to officials, even to us who were in jail. They have tried to bribe you with last-minute concessions. They have tried to mislead you with lies..."

JP was right. But in this world it is rarely enough to be right. What was so heartening about the Indian election result is that the people—most of them poor, many hungry, many homeless, many diseased—did not vote to fill their mouths, to exchange the clash and buzz of democratic politics for the ordered silence of dictatorship, to forget the tradition left to them by the Raj, the Mahatma and Mrs Gandhi's father. Instead they voted in a way which puts ancient and sophisticated democracies to shame—the United States with its wretched turnout of under 60 per cent, France and Italy with their willingness to roll over and let communism tickle their bellies, the United Kingdom with one constituent part torn by unending war.

The Indian people voted for the greatest cause that can be put to an electorate: freedom. For 19 months they had sampled the quality of life under an authoritarian regime, and they were then offered the chance to turn that authoritarianism into real and lasting dictatorship. They rejected that alternative, and showed the way to those who suppose themselves India's betters. Let us salute them; and let us also resolve that when we are offered such a choice, we shall choose as India did.

—Courtesy: *The Times*

Tracks of Shivaji

This at least was obvious when we drove across the Deccan recently in a slow winding arc which took us from Bombay to Hyderabad and then curving southwards to Bangalore and Mysore until we were lured into the cool green clutches of the Kerala coast. For miles and miles we did not encounter a single car, or even a lorry, for lorries only ply the main arteries linking the big cities. The first lap took us from Poona to Sholapur in the tracks of Shivaji, into the heartland of the Maratha country which shone now not with swords but the waving spumes of sugarcane. The earth was rich and dark chocolate fudge and against this the brilliant orange and magenta of the turbans worn by the men stood out like flames. Every now and then we would pass a farmer riding a bicycle with his wife sitting daringly across the front bar. Invariably the sight of a car would be so unsettling that both husband and wife would jump off in acute embarrassment and continue walking in the manner prescribed for a respectable married couple.

We spent the night at a travellers' bungalow just outside Sholapur. It had been built in 1850 with the kind of spaciousness meant to accommodate large caravans of people but was renovated now with brand new bathroom tiles and a modern flush system, formica tables, fans, telephone and electricity. There were dressing rooms with oval shaped mirrors and long verandahs along the two lengths of the house. A caretaker welcomed us with old fashioned hospitality and hot water for our baths. All this was ours for just five rupees. During the evening we were entertained with the stories

that had grown up around the place, which was famous for its temple of Sidheshwara, a bachelor god, we discovered the next morning, who would not tolerate any females to enter the sanctorum. Once, said our caretaker friend, an English Collector had come to stay at the traveller's bungalow and tried to put a stop to the beating of drums that went near the temple. "That very night", he said pointing dramatically to the windows, "Huge snakes appeared on all sides around these very windows. The Englishman was so frightened, he immediately took back his words and from that time the drumming has never been stopped." This was indeed true. Low drumming sounds throbbed through the darkness but I, looking anxiously out of the windows, half afraid that the Nagas would reappear, did not complain at all.

We were in the Kingdom of the Bahmani Shahs the next day inspecting one of their forts at Naldurg which sprawled across the bald heads of at least three hills. Hasan Ganju the founder of the kingdom started life as an underlying in the army of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and finished founding a kingdom that controlled a strategic slice of the Deccan for over three centuries. Some say that Hasan was an Afghan soldier whose fortunes were promoted by a Brahmin astrologer named Ganju who happened to be on good terms with the mercurial Tughlaq. In gratitude for this Hassan not only took the name of his former master but called his dynasty after the Brahmin or Bahman who had helped him. Others point out that Hasan was a Persian who named his kingdom after the legendary Bahman of Persian history from whom he claimed descent. He won his kingdom, say the supporters of this theory, through honest battle rather than by favour and as a token adopted the black flag of the Persian Abbasids.

None of these problems worried us as we stood in the summer quarters of the long dead Bahmani Shahs at Naldurg. This most exquisite of rooms had been built across a river that cut through two of the main hills covered by the fortress. A stone staircase led like a secret passage from the top of the dam into the very heart of it where rooms with long colonnaded windows and high ceilings looked out into the gorge below. On one side along a sheer precipice bordering the river, the King could watch his criminals being flung to their death. The real charm of the room however, was that it had been so designed that the damned up water fell over it at both sides like cool green curtains that kept the air of the imperial chamber plangently moist but fully dry. In the centre of the room as though to augment this pleasure in the endless play of running water a marble fountain had been built. A simple inscription marked the name of the architect who had designed this engineering marvel. It was in Persian reflecting the temperament of a race which more than any other has incorporated the sound and flow of running water into the daily pattern of their lives.

After we had left Hyderabad, the next place we stopped at, was definitely Hindu in its style and conception—Srisailem, an ancient complex of temples

painted in white, perched like a flight of doves, at the head of a steep gorge through which the river Krishna rejuvenated by the Tungabhadra makes its eastern exit. Shivaji had ridden all the way across the forested hump of the Deccan plateau to come and pray at this temple. It was so remote from civilization that in the early dawn, as the sun began breaking across ridge after ridge of crested forests and clouds, welcomed by the age old chanting of Vedic hymns and the sound of temple bells, we felt that we must be the only human beings around to witness this daily miracle.

A Lascivious King

Far away below, a green thread in a blue valley, the river Krishna was foaming impatient at being hemmed in by the slate grey rocks on either side. We could not see it from where we were standing, but at the entrance of the gorge where it was at its narrowest, the Srisailem dam was being built. Jawaharlal Nehru who had inaugurated the construction had described it as one of the new temples of modern India. When we went down we could see why. Twenty thousand men and women were at work scooping out the mountain-side it seemed almost with their bare hands, to build the 470 ft dam which will double the power resources of the State. Three times, the earthen dams that hold back the water so that the main dam side is clear, have been washed away and three times they have been re-built. The ferocity of the river Krishna is such that whole chunks of masonry have been swept away legend does not lag behind in giving explanations for the notoriety of the place. A King, it is said, was enamoured of his own daughter that he sought to force his attentions on her. She cried for help to Shiva who turned him into a boulder of greenish hue and cast him down till he sank into the furthest reaches of the river. True enough that particular spot is so deep that nobody has yet been able to plumb its depths and the colour of the water is a peculiar green reflecting the plight of the lascivious King.

The next day we drove along the areas which would be inundated by the water upto the town of Kurnool. The plains which were now dry and burnt to a grey blackness by the sun would take on a green covering of prosperity once the dam has been commissioned. Everything appeared to be sun-baked at present—the land, the people with their taut dark skins stretched over set bones, without a tint of colour in their clothes, even their teeth were stained black, the grim boulders scattered across the countryside, and the stark vegetation. Every now and then we passed old fortresses that were scarcely distinguishable from the granite ribs of the Deccan plateau, that stuck out in the most grotesque formations. We crossed the railway line near Putuparthi which is the last stop on the way to the Sai Baba's "Abode of Bliss". From the plains a more desolate and bleak place could not have been imagined and yet thousands of devotees who flock to his retreat have spoken of the atmosphere of

(continued on page 15)

WORLD NEWS

RUSSIAN AID REFUSED BY INDIA

INDIA'S month old Janata Party Government yesterday spurned a Soviet offer of credit for expansion of a public sector steel mill.

A Government statement said Indian engineers will build a cold rolling mill for the second stage of the steel plant, located at Bokaro in Eastern India.

The statement said an earlier proposal to import the rolling mill from the Soviet Union has been dropped. The announcement came barely four days before an official visit of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Mr. Gromyko.

The Government decision is in line with the Janata Party's policy announcement that it would develop the nation's economy as far as possible with its own resources, and that it would not be overdependent on any foreign nation for assistance.

The Soviet Union offered a credit of roughly \$450 millions for the rolling mill three months ago. The Indira Gandhi Government, which was in power then, had accepted the offer, but had not signed any contract.

—The Guardian, April 21.

SOVIET EXPERTS HELP AMIN'S KILLERS

SOLDIERS of the Uganda Army who have managed to escape into neighbouring countries in recent weeks says that Russian security experts are now working in President Idi Amin's State Research Unit, which is alleged to be involved in many of the secret killings that have occurred in Uganda in recent years.

Its head, Colonel Ali Toweli, has been named as one of Amin's chief executioners by prominent Ugandan refugees who previously held high office in the Uganda administration.

It is possible that these instructors might be East Germans or come from other East European countries, but the soldiers do not distinguish between Russians and others coming from Soviet bloc countries.

They confirm that a number of Palestinians are also employed in the unit. But they dismiss as entirely inaccurate recent reports about Cuban military instructors or troops being in Uganda.

The soldiers say that over 100 Soviet instructors are training the Ugandan Army in the use of tanks, missiles and artillery.

They believe that there are between two and four squadrons of MiG-21s at the air base of Nakasongola, 70 miles north of Kampala. These are still flown by Russians and Palestinians since no Ugandans are yet qualified to fly these advanced planes.

—The Observer, April 3.

THE BATTLE AGAINST HUNGLISH

ENGLISH is enjoying an unrivalled vogue in Eastern Europe but its latest illegitimate linguistic offspring

—Hunglish—is being viewed with distaste by the Hungarian authorities.

President Giscard d'Estaing's tough administrative measures in France against "Franglais" have struck a sympathetic chord in the official and self-appointed guardians of linguistic purity in Hungary.

But since the ruling Communist Party has not yet deemed it advisable to curb the popularity of English by decrees, attempts are being made by philologists and journalists to counter the pre-eminence of English words in science, culture and commerce.

But the trend is against them and, to judge by the widespread use of English words in preference to perfectly adequate Hungarian expressions, Hunglish is here to stay.

The use of English words is alleged to be a kind of status symbol of the educated elite and the Budapest newspaper *Magyar Nemzet*, which coined the words Hunglish, has urged radio and television "szpikers" (announcers), journalists and lecturers to be in the vanguard of the fight against this linguistic misalliance.

The hardline news magazine *Magyarország* suggests that all foreign words, proper and place names included, should be spelt as pronounced in Hungarian which, if pursued to its logical conclusion, would reduce Shakespeare to "Sekszipir".

Hunglish has made inroads into virtually every aspect of life "Teenagers" do their "shopping" in the "feasonable" Vaci-street of Budapest. In the "super-market" girls buy "szpre" (spray) perfume and "face cream" while their boyfriends purchase "after-shave" lotion and fashionable "farmer" trousers (jeans).

There are "hobby" shops and "camping" stores, where Hungarians can stock up on "bekon (bacon), "jam", orange "juice" and "lunchkrem (pate).

In the evening, people go to a "drink bar" for a little "dancingolas" or buy a "tikket" (ticket) to a cinema. Theatregoers can choose between a "show", a "musical", or a "black comedy". Travellers taking a "flight" can while away the tedium of the journey with a "paperback" until "lunch" when they might be served "bifsztek.

In business "marketing know-how", and "public relations" appear to have gained full acceptance, and the growing advertising industry is based entirely on English expressions.

The way a new sporting award was named and adjudicated earlier this month shows the uphill struggle facing the defenders of Hungary's unique Finno-Ugrian tongue.

The 1976 "Fair Play" prizes were decided by a "zsuri" (jury) and the winners feted at a "party". A "futball" player and a "hoki" (ice-hockey) player were turned down because of their overuse of the "bodi-check) and "faul" (foul) in championship "meccs" (matches).

—The Times, April 16.

DJILAS' COUSIN ARRESTED

A cousin of Milovan Djilas, Yugoslavia's leading dissident, has been arrested and indicted for "hostile propaganda," and Mr. Djilas has been accused in the controlled press here of being a "provocateur" in the pay of foreign powers.

Friends of the Djilas family said it appears that President Tito's government is preparing a new campaign against Mr. Djilas, who, when vice-president of Yugoslavia, was considered President Tito's possible successor.

The arrest of Mr. Djilas's cousin Vitomir Djilas occurred March 14 in Titograd, and he was indicted last week. The 41-year-old lawyer was arrested because of an unpublished letter he had written to the editor of Politika, a Belgrade daily newspaper. A copy of the letter was seized from his desk by police arresting him, and part of it was quoted in the indictment.

In it, Mr. Djilas wrote: "I am interested in knowing whether we in Yugoslavia can also fight for democratic society [truly democratic], whether there is now the possibility of free speech and freedom of the press here, or does fear of arrests and repression still exist?"

His conviction on charges of violating the Criminal Code's Article 118, which prohibits "hostile propaganda," could bring seven years or more of imprisonment. Several hundred Yugoslaves are currently believed to be imprisoned on such charges.

—*International Herald Tribune*, April 13.

JAPAN UNITED AGAINST 'SOVIET BULLY'

JAPANESE Communist today joined conservatives in condemning Moscow for a new breakdown in negotiations over fishing agreements, which has stopped Japanese fishing operations within the Soviet Union's recently imposed 200-mile coastal zone. Leading newspapers voiced national indignation by calling Russia a "big power bully".

Anti-Soviet emotions began to build up in Japan today when Mr. Zenko Suzuki, the Japanese Minister for Fisheries, returned to Tokyo from Moscow and declared that his second round of talks on an interim Russo-Japanese fishing agreement had ended in deadlock.

Mr. Suzuki told journalists that agreement had been reached on all other articles of the document. But the negotiations had collapsed because his Soviet counterpart, Mr. Alexander Ishkov, had insisted that the disputed islands, north of Hokkaido, should be delineated as Soviet territory. Japan had refused to accept the demand which would prejudice Tokyo's 30-year-old claim to the territory, Mr. Suzuki said.

Commenting on the controversy today, the *Japan Times* warned the Soviet Union that all political parties will meet next week to form a national consensus. "With the Upper House elections less than three months away there is little chance that this political unity will be broken. The Soviets face the prospects of having the election turn into an anti-Russian field day ... if all else fails to turn the Soviet Union away

from their territorial blackmail," the paper declared.

The measure of resentment was reflected again today when Mr. Kenji Miyamoto, the chairman of the Japan Communist Party who recently attempted to patch up his party's 10-year-old ideological feud with Moscow, condemned the Soviet Union and supported the conservative Government's stand on the issue. Insisting that the four islands were indeed Japanese territory, Mr. Miyamoto declared that Moscow was totally to blame for the deadlock in the fishing agreement.

—*The Times*, April 18.

MOZAMBIQUE TERROR CAMPS

REFUGEES arriving in Lisbon from Mozambique have claimed that up to 100,000 people are being held in detention camps throughout the country.

They say that men, women and children are made to undergo a "re-education" programme involving forced labour in intolerable conditions. Beatings of those who refuse work and the rape of women prisoners are commonplace, they claim. Several cases of murder by guards have also been reported.

The flood of refugees fleeing from the former colony during the traumatic deconolisation process in 1975 has become a trickle of escapees, mostly youngmen, who have escaped from the camps and prisons of the

With best compliments of

Orient General Industries Ltd.

6 GHORE BIBI LANE

CALCUTTA 700 054

Manufacturers of 'Orient' fans

French regime. Those who reach Beira, Maputo, or South Africa are helped by the Portuguese consular authorities, who provide them with the airfare to Portugal if they have a reasonable claim to Portuguese nationality.

They have been joined this week by the first of thousands of free Portuguese nationals who are expected to arrive in Portugal, after being ordered to leave Mozambique within two months by President Machel.

The escapees have now named more than 20 camps in various parts of the country. The biggest, according to their reports, contain up to 10,000 prisoners and include base Gugunhana and base central in the province of Niassa; Nhangau in Manica; Centro-Piloto in Cabo Delgado; and Milanje in Zambezia, where up to 10,000 Jehovah's Witnesses are said to be held.

The refugees say that arrest and internment follow automatically any act which suggests lack of enthusiasm or interest in Frelimo, such as failing to attend revolutionary classes at high school, unwillingness to enlist, or refusing to sleep with a Frelimo soldier. "There are many people in the camps who do not know why they are there," said one. "In some you can find the entire population of a village where in an escaped prisoner has been sheltered."

"Re-education," the refugees say, consists of work from dawn to nightfall, usually digging latrines and cutting trees. This is interrupted once, sometimes twice, by an elementary meal and is followed by a session of revolutionary songs and speeches organised by camp personnel. There is seldom more than three or four hours for proper sleep, they say, and no shelter or blankets except in some camps where prisoners have built rudimentary wooden huts.

The camps are open, but surrounded by jungle or bush. Escape is theoretically possible but risky. "The real problem is the guards," said Ildo Vegas, a 21-year-old student who was moved between four camps before escaping to Maputo.

"There is no rule of law—the guards are all-powerful and do so as they please. They have no sense of responsibility to the prisoners. I have seen guards rape women several times. Once I saw they bayonet a girl to death afterwards."

"Another time I was on the way to a different camp with 60 other prisoners. We wanted to stop beside a lake to wash for the first time in months. They stopped instead by the river further along, which was full of crocodiles. They forced some of the men into the water and one was attacked and drowned before he could get out."

Typical punishments for "insulting" guards or failing to work involve being spreadeagled on the ground and beaten, hung by the feet from trees, and being forced to dig holes endlessly.

Death from exhaustion, tetanus, snake bites, and fever is common, the refugees say. Few of the camps have medical facilities and sick prisoners are taken by truck to the nearest hospital usually when it is too late.

Most of the prisoners are black and of mixed race,

the reports say. But recent arrivals say that there are also many whites and estimate the number of Portuguese nationals at more than a thousand.

—*The Guardian*, April 2.

SOVIETS DENOUNCE "DR. ZHIVAGO"

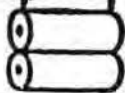
THE Kremlin, which dictates taste to 260 million persons, now has acted to censor the selection of films shown at the U.S. Embassy and homes of U.S. diplomats here.

A strong worded protest was handed to U.S. political counselor William Brown yesterday charging that "Doctor Zhivago" and "The Girl From Petrovka" were slanderous of the Soviet Union and their showing here with some Russians present, was provocative and incompatible with friendly relations.

Mr. Brown went back to the Foreign Ministry today on orders from Ambassador Malcom Toon and rejected the Soviet note as "an unwarranted intrusion in the internal affairs of the U.S. Embassy," it is understood.

The U.S. objections were deliberately mimicking the recent Soviet complaint that Carter administration human-rights efforts were unacceptable interference in Soviet internal affairs.

They also reflected the embassy belief that the Kremlin was acting sophomorically. U.S. diplomats will remain free to invite whom they wish to view movies and the Soviet Union can bar the door to its citizens, it



**To create
a good impression
use West Coast Paper
for writing
printing
packaging
and many other uses**

WEST COAST PAPER

Shreenivas House,
Hazarimal Somani Marg, Bombay 1

was said, if it fears for the security of the state because a few Russians see "Doctor Zhivago."

The Soviet note claimed that the films "crudely falsified Soviet history and the life of Soviet people in a deliberately tendentious and slanderous manner," and that the "act of showing them, not to speak of inviting Soviet officials, was frankly provocative." It then called for a stop to showing such films because such action was not compatible with friendly relations.

"Doctor Zhivago" had been shown here soon after its release—but only privately, for some of the elite. The Soviet public never saw it.

—*International Herald Tribune*, April 16.

KISSINGER WARNING ON ZAIRE INVASION

MR. Henry Kissinger has given a characteristic warning that if what he calls the invasion of Zaire is "supinely accepted by the international community, sooner or later events will get out of control."

The former Secretary of State, giving his first public speech since his departure from office, took the opportunity of a lecture at Georgetown University last night to deliver a not too subtle homily to the Carter

administration about its handling of foreign policy.

But Dr. Kissinger was bluntest about "irresponsible and dangerous" Soviet involvement in the Zaire affair.

He declared with reference to the incursion of Katangans from Angola: "It is clear that the attack took place across a sovereign border from a country in which the Government was installed by Soviet arms and the military personnel of a Soviet client state."

"It could not have taken place—and it could not continue—without the material support or acquiescence of the Soviet Union, whether or not Cuban troops are present. Such irresponsible acts set a dangerous precedent."

"If all African problems are to be settled hereafter by radical means with weapons brought in from outside, a catastrophic race war in southern Africa will become more and more likely with profound implications for us both at home and around the world. If attacks across sovereign borders are supinely accepted by the international community, sooner or later events will get out of control," he stated.

—*The Times*, April 7.

*This name's
your
Guarantee*



JYOTI

front-rank
makers of
VERTICAL
TURBINE PUMPS
C. F. PUMPS
ELECTRIC
MOTORS and
SWITCHGEAR

everest/549 n.j.y.



Jyoti Ltd. VADODARA

HYDRAULICS • ELECTRICALS • POWER ELECTRONICS

Letters

ESSENTIAL FIRST STEPS

After the epoch-making victory of democracy in India our thoughts should immediately turn to ensure the survival of democracy in the country and a way of life where fear and intimidation would never again stalk the people in the land of Gandhiji.

Some urgent steps have to be taken. First, we must undo 'Samachar'. The name itself has acquired a Goebelsian stink in its short life. It tried to brain-wash India's teeming millions and to regiment India's million-faceted life through control of the printed word. Responsible, competing news agencies are a must for informing and educating public-opinion in a healthy democracy.

Further, for a wide dissemination of reliable news the interest of small newspapers throughout the country, both in English and in the regional languages, must be protected. News must be made available to them at rates well within their reach and they must be encouraged to reflect the immense diversity of India. For, they are the very lungs of democracy.

It must be remembered that infinite variety is the hall-mark of the Divine, of the Infinite itself. India's immense variety is an eloquent example. Uni-directional regimentation and coercion, which appear to be effective and "progressive", are antinature and lead only to imbalance and boredom, because life then ceases to be meaningful. Western civilisation is slowly finding this out at its cost. We must get back quickly to a well orchestrated system of news distribution. There is no place for monopoly here.

The next step is to convert the mighty instruments of mass media into autonomous bodies where they do not have to be the mouthpiece of Ministers and the ruling party. All India Radio, Doordarshan and the Films Division must be freed from Government control if we are serious about building up democratic institutions in the country. Together they wield immense power which must not be with the government.

But this is not enough. Their leadership must not be drawn from bureaucrats and politicians. It must not be farmed out as prizes for services rendered. It must be entrusted to independent men who have proved their mettle in public affairs and have won the esteem and affection of the people. Men who have concerned themselves with values, with the ideals of citizenship and who steadily hold the eternal verities as their guiding star and not what is politic or expedient for the moment.

Finally, the sanctity of the rule of law must at once be restored; all fetters removed; the judiciary restored to its pristine strength. Let it never be slighted again and held in derision for there is nothing higher than the rule of law in a civilised society. None is above the

law: no Prime Minister; not even God! The rule of law is rooted in the Divine.

Jayaprakash must give the call himself, if he believes in this, and get it implemented through the Janata Government Implementation of these measures alone will give credibility and establish the bonafides of the new Government.

"God, give us Men! A time like this demands.

Tall Men, sun-crowned, who rise.

And live above the fog of immediacy."

DINSHAH K. MALEGAMVALA

April 11.

ELECTIONS 1977

India is a land of miracles. Like a materialization act of some Baba the Janata Party materialized a sweeping miraculous victory. I and my friends had pored over the various big books on Indian Elections. We discussed the caste factor, the religious factors, lack of grass root organization, lack of resources, the various percentages and had drawn some scientific conclusions. As the results began to come we began to reject our conclusions. Not a single conclusion proved correct.

Let it be remembered that the victory has been won on a protest vote. As tales of misdeeds and terrorism practised during the emergency began to come before the public it created a feeling of disgust and hatred.

I am really sorry that the excesses committed under the name of Family Planning Campaign has earned a bad name for a very important and absolutely necessary programme of population control. I am sure the Janata Party will carry it on with vigour.

One of the sorry facts on the Janata side was the introduction of the religious heads as campaigners. As things stand the Janata Party will have to pay the price for his indiscretion. It may be an exaggeration but I put it in the category of the Khilafat mistake in India politics.

So the Parliamentary Elections are over and the drums of State legislature elections have begun to beat.

Congress is finding it hard to get candidates to take its ticket. The crowd which gathered at the Congress doors has moved to the Janata doors.

People are not so keen about these elections as they are about the performance of the new Government.

I hope the 1977 elections will be kept in mind by the powers that be. People are not going to tolerate the old game and they have realised their power to teach lessons to their masters. Let there be no mistake about it.

N. C. ZAMINDAR

April 4.

HOW THE PEOPLE REALLY VOTED—M. R. Masani

(continued from page 1)

U.P. and a fifth of the seats from Bihar. Similarly, the Janata Party, which was decimated in the South equally unfairly, should have got a fair number of seats from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, and we would have had a more balanced and representative Lok Sabha.

On the basis of this distorted Vote-Seat ratio, various conclusions have been drawn. Some of these have been in connection with the argument as to whether or not the Acting President was justified in signing the Proclamation dissolving the State Assemblies in nine States. An equally important issue, however, is that of the North *versus* the South. It is true that the present Parliament presents the unfortunate spectacle of almost all members from the North being on the Government benches, while almost all the members from the South are to be found in Opposition. Such a development is bad for the unity of the country. Let it, however, be clearly said that this is not the fault of the people of India but of the electoral system we have adopted from the British. This is generally described as "first past the post". While in Britain it has often distorted the will of the electorate, in India ever since Independence it has been an unmitigated disaster and a blight on our young democracy.

British System—A Disaster

The British electoral system has enabled a minority party, the Congress Party, which has ever since 1950 failed to get more than 48 percent of the votes polled in any Parliamentary election, to get fictitious parliamentary majorities which it has misused to enact no less than forty-two Amendments to the Constitution including the infamous 24th, 25th and 42nd Amendments, which have sought to destroy the Fundamental Rights of the citizen and the Rule of Law.

It has now created an altogether artificial barrier between North and South. Until later elections mitigate this distortion, all that can be done is to show the greatest care in avoiding anything which might appear to weaken States Rights or to destroy the autonomy of the States under our Federal Constitution. The other thing is to go easy with the language issue and eschew anything which may be considered an attempt to impose the Hindi language on the South.

It is time we now turn to consider the electoral system which has led to these distortions and to the unfounded assumptions which are based on them. To me it has always been a matter of deep regret that we failed to get some system of Proportional Representation embodied in our Constitution. A move I had made in that direction in the Constituent Assembly was opposed by leaders of the Congress Party to which I then belonged. Now the chickens have come home to roost.

JP's Committee

The Committee on Electoral Reform appointed by my friend Jayaprakash Narayan on behalf of the

Citizens for Democracy has in its Report, which was published in February 1975, well before the present elections, some interesting things to say on the subject. The Committee consisted of Mr. Eric da Costa, Mr. V. M. Tarkunde, Mr. P. G. Mayalankar, M.P., Mr. A. G. Noorani, Prof. K. D. Desai and myself.

The Committee was

"impressed by the near unanimity of opinion on the basic premise that the present system of election of 'first past the post' does not lead to a fair reflection of the popular will in the legislatures. On this point opinion is fairly unanimous, and, indeed, the figures cited in the successive reports of the Election Commissioners prove it.

What grave proportions the seat-vote distortion has reached in India is shown by the following figures in the Committee's Report, the figures being the percentage of Congress seats with the percentage of Congress votes in brackets :- 1952—74.4% (45%); 1957—75.1% (47.4%); 1962—73% (44.7%); 1967—54.4% (40.9%) 1971—67.9% (43.5%).

In the light of this, the Committee went on to observe :

"The objections to these distortions are not academic or abstract. They have led to concrete evils and have created a situation where there is danger of people losing faith in democratic institutions and the electoral process. Such a situation is generating large scale popular alienation and apathy".

In the end, the Committee suggested an alternative system based on the West German system, which is described as a "mixed system". It provides for the election of one-half of the members of the Bundestag by single member constituencies on the model prevailing in India, and the remaining half of the members of the Bundestag from lists of candidates submitted in advance of polling by the various recognised parties in such a way that the Bundestag as a whole fairly represents the voting strength of the various parties and groups.

A formula which the Committee commended for study as a desirable alternative to the present law on the subject runs as follows :

"1. The country would remain divided into single member constituencies, both for Parliament and the State Assemblies, as at present. As at present, candidates of political parties and independent candidates can stand for election. The polling would take place as at present.

2. Any candidate with more than 50 per cent of the valid votes in the constituency would be declared elected.

3. Where no candidate gets an absolute majority of the votes polled, the seat allotted to that constituency will not be filled as a result of this direct election.

4. Before the day of polling, each recognised party will be asked to submit a list of its candidates in order of preferences statewide for the Lok Sabha and districtwise for the State Assembly, which would be publicised in advance of polling.

5. All seats which are not filled by direct election will, after polling, be distributed, Statewise in the case of Parliament, Districtwise in the case of a State Assembly, among the various parties in such manner that the total number of seats they get in the Lok Sabha or in the State Assembly, as the case may be, are in proportion to the valid votes polled by each of them. This would be done by declaring elected as many members from the top of each party list as will result, as in West Germany, in the total strength of each party, including directly elected members as well as these elected from the Lists, being roughly proportionate to the votes polled by each party, including those polled by its successful candidates".

The Pendulum Swings

It is to be hoped that those in authority today who have, for a change, benefited from the present system on this occasion will avoid the temptation to cling to it as had the Congress Party during earlier years. The Congress Party would have done better and the Janata and CFD combination not so well in the elections of March 1977 if they had accepted Proportional Representation.

In these matters the pendulum swings and if electoral reform on the lines recommended by the Committee on Electoral Reform appointed by Jayaprakash Narayan is not introduced, the day may come when those in office will regret their folly. It is therefore suggested that the Report of the Committee be carefully examined by the Government of the day and by members of Parliament of all parties. It is essential that we work out a system of election where the vote cast by a voter has equal value with those cast by others and that millions of voters, both in the North and the South, are not cruelly disfranchised, as has happened in the recent Parliamentary elections of March 1977.

DRIVING ACROSS THE DECCAN

(continued from page 8)

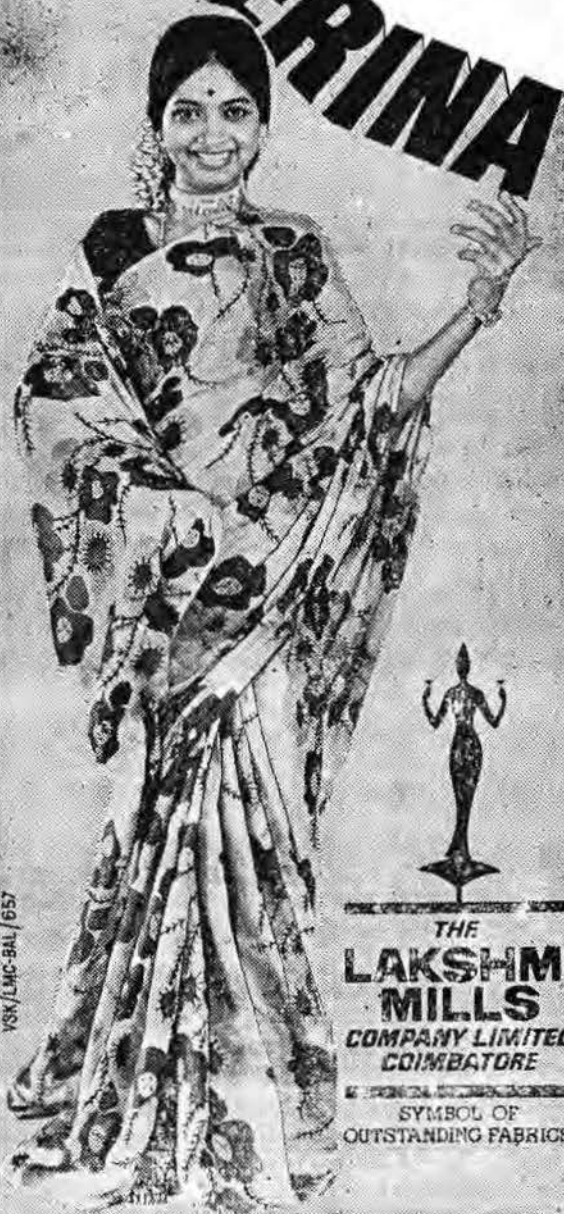
serenity that surrounds the place. If we give credence to even a quarter of what is said about him he seems most like Gray's desert flower blooming unseen in the most inaccessible of places and yet spreading his influence far and wide.

By the time we reached Bangalore in the evening it appeared to us like an oasis of light and freshness. Trees in a profusion of green, hinting at the colour that would soon be spilling out in all their spring beauty of reds and purples and pinks, seemed to live up to their reputation of making Bangalore a garden city. The major part of the journey was over. Now we would be wandering over the more prosperous areas of Mysore dotted with temples, Halebid, Belur, Hampi, like discarded gems from a more glittering past and covered with lush green forests of golden bamboo and silent teak. The ancient Kingdom of Vijayanagaram, the more recent battlefields of Tipu Sultan lay waiting for us. At Bangalore, tired, but expectant, we paused for a moment in the tracks of our southern Odyssey.

A CHARM FOR THE CHARMER

Lakshmi's
BALLERINA voile sarees

Enchanting. Wear for work
Wear for fun. Around the town.
Around the picnic spots.
Any where and BELLERINA
will please you every wear
Made from 90s & 100s
pure imported cotton.



THE
LAKSHMI
MILLS
COMPANY LIMITED
COIMBATORE

SYMBOL OF
OUTSTANDING FABRICS

YSK/LAC-BAL/657

WITH MANY VOICES

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

—Tennyson

Mr. Carter is being true to his system : Mr. Brezhnev, in rejecting all criticism, to his.

—*The Economist*, April 9.

Weapons and wars are not chickens and eggs : wars cause weapons, not the other way round.

—*The Economist*, April 9.

As most non-elected rulers have discovered, there is no middle way between democracy and authoritarianism.

—*The Economist*, April 9.

His country's image abroad would be more favourable if Germany were the size of Luxembourg, and its past did not include Hitler and Auschwitz.

—Chancellor H. Schmidt in the *Economist*, April 9.

Women political leaders are not doing well at the moment.

—Mr. Greville Janner, MP in *Observer*, March 27.

There are three houses of the Indian Parliament : Rajya Sabha, Lok Sabha and Jaskok Sabha.

—Editor's page, *Illustrated Weekly*, April 7.

What the hell is the office of Prime Minister ? I

FREEDOM FIRST,

C/o Democratic Research Service

Maneckji Wadia Bldg., 4th floor

Bombay 400 023 (Phone : 27 39 14)

Please enrol me as a subscriber to *Freedom First*.

I remit the annual subscription of Rs. 5.00

Name :

Address :

Signature

am more concerned about my place in history.

—Mr. Bhutto quoted in the *Statesman*, April 24.

Marxism has failed in India, The Communists should now search for another country.

—Mr. Subramaniam Swamy, MP, quoted in the *Statesman*, April 24.

One cannot simultaneously be a Christian and a Marxist.

—Pope Paul quoted in the *Statesman*, April 24.

We all agree that pessimism is a mark of superior intellect.

—Professor J. K. Galbraith quoted in the *Statesman*, April 24.

No word in the vocabulary has been debased and abused as democracy.

—Lord Showcross quoted in the *Observer*, April 24.

People who are anti-dog are anti-sex.

—Jully Cooper quoted in the *Observer*, April 24.

A good Indian is generally at least half-an-hour late for any appointment, and is generally quite indignant if the fact of his lateness is pointed out to him.

—*Opinion*, May 10.

Trouble explodes all around Mr. Andrew Young as round a drunkard wandering about a minefield.

—Editorial in *Daily Telegraph*, May 9.

It is good to have one Birla for every situation.

—Editorial in *National Herald*, April 29.

What is it that is missing in one's character that makes men behave like rats ?

—Mr. George Fernandes quoted in the *Statesman*, April 24.

When in doubt hold a summit.

—John Palmer in *The Guardian*, May 6.