

Bangla Desh

Adam Adil

PAKISTAN is in the midst of a civil war, which has resulted in the declaration of independence of Eastern wing from the Western wing. The Eastern wing has called itself independent sovereign state of Bangla Desh with Mr. Nazrul Islam as acting President (in the absence of Mr. Mujibur Rehman, who is supposed to be in Pakistani custody) and Mr. Tajuddin Ahmed as Prime Minister.

The earlier expectations that the impressive victory of Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party in the Western wing and spectacular success of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman's Awami League's in the Eastern would lead to stability of Pakistani Government have been belied. Both Mr. Bhutto and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman took up irreconcilable positions. President Yahya Khan initially played in the hands of West Pakistani leaders little realising the adverse reaction it would evoke from the people of East Pakistan. It was a mistake on the part of President Yahya Khan to have postponed the National Assembly which was scheduled to meet in Dacca on March 3.

The genesis of Pakistan's ailment is the wheat-growing Western wing with its tall light-skinned people is more prosperous and better off than the rice-growing Eastern wing, with its small dark skinned people, although the latter boasts of majority of the people of Pakistan and earns most of the foreign exchange. Secondly, the personnel of the army and civil service is heavily drawn from the Western wing and whenever there is trouble in the Eastern wing it is the soldiers from the Western wing who are used to suppress it. All this, the Bengalis hate and this hatred is naturally extended to the people of West Pakistan.

It will be recalled that the serious rioting that took place in East Pakistan, coupled with the agitation in the West, helped the exit of President Ayub Khan two years ago. The main cause of the rioting in East Pakistan then was the neglect of the region and the abject poverty of its people. President Yahya Khan, however, has not been able to mend matters although, in fairness to him, it must be stated that in the begin-

ning he gave evidence of his desire of according greater voice to East Pakistan in running the country.

Frankly East Pakistanis were not satisfied. Mujibur Rehman talked in terms of separate constitutions for two wings. His six points included greater autonomy for Eastern wing with only foreign policy, defence and currency remaining with the Central Government based in Islamabad in the Western wing. Mujibur's demands were not acceptable to the leaders of the Western wing, especially Mr. Bhutto. It is clear that President Yahya Khan acted on the advice of Western wing leaders.

When talks with Mujibur broke down instead of acting with caution and allowing democratic procedure to take its own course by convening the National Assembly, President Yahya Khan suddenly unleashed a reign of terror in the Eastern wing, with entire military might being used against the unarmed and innocent people of East Bengal. It was, therefore, quite evident to the people of East Bengal that a point had been reached when reconciliation with West Pakistan was impossible. The people of the Eastern wing had no alternative but to reorganise their own forces, including Bengal Rifles into a Mukti Fouj and resist the armed might of West Pakistan.

The declaration of independence was a natural consequence. The entire people of East Bengal have risen against the near-imperialistic policies of West Pakistan and are presenting a formidable front against the Pakistani army, although the latter is far superior in arms and ammunitions. The Pakistani army has resorted to wanton destruction of cities, towns and villages. Dacca and Chittagong have met the fate of total destruction. Dacca University is completely destroyed. Intellectuals are particularly picked up for physical liquidation. Yet the spirit of the people of Bangla Desh is not broken. Greater the ferocity of the Pakistani army firmer the determination of the people of Bangla Desh to resist and be independent.

The Provisional Government of Bangla Desh has appealed for recognition. No government in the world has so far recognised the Bangla Desh, although many governments have castigated the Pakistani Government for the wanton destruction. The events in Bangla Desh have direct impact in India. Apart from the universal sympathy it has evoked in this country, the problem of refugees who are pushed into India by the Pakistani army is assuming perilous proportion. Since the fighting began, nearly three and half lakh

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Novosti After Ten Years

IN February, 1971, *Novosti* celebrated its tenth anniversary. The tenth year of operations has been marked by a general shake-up in the Soviet information services — reflecting Moscow's dissatisfaction with their performance — and the appointment of a senior party and government official as head of *Novosti's* board. The effect has been to underline the agency's political importance and further erode the Soviet claim that it is "non-official", being sponsored by "public" bodies. Boris Burkov, who had been head of the agency since it began on February 21, 1961, went "into retirement" in September 1970.

Under Burkov, *Novosti* grew into a major international channel for Soviet propaganda, with a worldwide network of about 600 staff journalists and an unknown number of regular contributors, and its own publishing house. In contrast to the official news agency, *Tass*, *Novosti* concentrates on producing feature articles and translations.

Writing in the magazine, *Za Rubezhom*, a weekly review of the foreign Press and an organ of the USSR Union of Journalists, Burkov said that *Novosti* was sending material to 110 countries and publishing 49 magazines and five newspapers abroad. Burkov added "Peaceful coexistence of States with different social systems does not, of course, signify coexistence of ideologies . . . a mortal struggle of two worlds and two ideologies is going on" thus giving an indication of *Novosti's* real purpose.

When *Novosti* was set up, its sponsors were the USSR Union of Journalists, the USSR Union of Writers, the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and the All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge. The agency was declared to be a "public" — i.e., a non-governmental — organisation.

Soviet Press, (*Zhurnalists's* predecessor), described *Novosti* as the "younger brother of *Tass*", and said that in several countries, including Britain, India and Ceylon, the agency's material was being distributed via the press or information departments of Soviet Embassies. *Novosti* has consistently reflected the official Soviet line—and its fluctuations.

Novosti sends abroad translations of articles, despatches and interviews from various Soviet newspapers and periodicals. These include *Pravda*, *Izvestiya*, *Trud* (organ of the trade unions); *Krasnaya Zvezda* (*Red Star*, organ of the Soviet Ministry of Defence); *Komsomolskaya Pravda* (organ of the Young Communist League), etc. *Novosti*, according to Burkov,

translates all its material into 16 foreign languages "and into Ukrainian, Armenian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian and Hebrew for the Press of emigrant groups".

Novosti has sought to make an impact in the developing countries by providing material tailored to local audiences. Some of its magazines are glossy and general in scope, while others are specialised, dealing, for example, with science and technology or sport. These magazines are distributed by subscription or sale (at a subsidised price) or free, according to local conditions.

India has long been a priority target for *Novosti's* output. Its principal periodical is *Soviet Land*, a lavishly produced fortnightly magazine, which appears in 12 Indian languages and also in English. Its circulation is 550,000. Subscribers to *Soviet Land*, according to Soviet sources, are said to be "workers, farmers, students and clerks as well as the intelligentsia, the petty and middle bourgeoisie". *Soviet Land* also produces *ad hoc* booklets in up to 13 languages. They have dealt with such topics as China, Vietnam, Muslims in the Soviet Union and Soviet pharmaceutical projects in India.

In 1969, *Novosti* reached a syndication agreement with the Indian Press Information Bureau (PIB) and in December that year Burkov visited India with a view to "laying the foundations for a new kind of news link between the two countries".

Novosti supplies similar propaganda literature to several African countries including Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Zambia. On November 10, 1969, *Moscow Radio* announced that the first issue of a weekly magazine called *Ash-Shabab as-Suviyati* (Soviet Youth) had appeared in Cairo. "It takes its material from *Novosti*", *Moscow Radio* added.

Although Communist Press agencies cannot compete in efficiency with their Western counterparts, their services are offered at much lower cost and they do not press for payment. Gifts of equipment and technical aid are made to selected foreign information media.

Novosti correspondents have been found engaging themselves in intelligence and subversive activities. These have led to their expulsion from several countries. Many African countries had to take that step during the last few years.

Novosti's involvement in subversion has not been confined to non-Communist countries: it has also been exposed for interference in the domestic affairs of a "Socialist" country — Cuba.

Notes

Revolt in Ceylon

IT is clear from all accounts that the insurgency which broke out in Ceylon in the first week of April was not minor as appeared in the beginning. It was a very serious affair. It could be put down only after a strenuous fight extending over three weeks in the course of which a large number of troops with tanks and armoured cars and helicopters and planes had to be mobilised and help from foreign countries had to be secured in order to deal effectively with the rebellion.

The rebels were, it appears, young educated persons. They took to the path of rebellion because the Government could not provide them the jobs that they needed and for which they had qualified themselves. Frustrated and embittered, they fell an easy prey to the propaganda and blandishment of professional revolutionaries whose only aim is destruction of the established social order with all its institutions and values. Having decided to rise in revolt, the youths collected a large quantity of arms and ammunition and also built a social base for themselves. That is what made the rebellion so formidable.

The insurgents are described as Che Gueverites. The name need not be taken as an indication or proof of foreign inspiration or affiliation. Ceylon has a long tradition of all manner of leftist groups ranging from mild Socialists to fire-breathing Trotskyists. All of them have been essentially indigenous groups, except for their ideology. It will not be a matter of surprise if one more group had sprung up drawing its inspiration from the life and teachings of Che Guevara. Ceylon has all along been a fertile ground for the growth of such revolutionary and pseudo-revolutionary social and political groups.

There is a suspicion that the Embassy of North Korea might have given some help to the insurgents. The Government of Ceylon have not yet published the information which gave rise to the suspicion. However, they ordered the closure of the Embassy and the expulsion of Embassy officials. Whatever the complicity, it could not have played a major part in the organisation of the revolt. The major part was undoubtedly played by the social, economic and political conditions prevailing in the island.

And that has a lesson and a warning for India. India has also a large mass of educated and uneducated, unemployed young persons. Their number is growing from year to year and also their frustration and bitterness. They constitute a big volume of combustible

material. Hairbrained idealists or evil-minded agitators can, without much difficulty, set it ablaze. The Government can, no doubt, quench the fire, but only at a great cost to the country and the society. It is not desirable to allow things to be carried to that length. The better course will be to take curative as well as preventive measures before things get out of hand. Immediate and vigorous steps must be taken to tackle the problem of unemployment. It is heartening to note that, instead of talking and thinking all the while of big industries for making the country strong and self-sufficient, the Government have now begun to pay attention to small and medium industries with a large employment potential. They have also begun to think of rural development programmes which again can provide large employment opportunities. These constructive measures are essential. The Government should at the same time take preventive measures to stop anti-social elements from exploiting the ignorance, the backwardness and the frustration of the unemployed and inciting them to violence. Ceylon has provided a warning which we can ignore only at our peril.

Electoral System

LITTLE thought has been given in our country to the electoral system which plays a vital part in any democracy. The system that is prevalent at present is the one that we blindly borrowed from Great Britain. It was thought at one time that that is the one and the only system that a democracy can adopt. The belief is no longer valid, as a number of democratic countries have resorted to other systems without in any way endangering their democratic polity.

The strange results that the existing system produces are known to all. It gives over-representation in legislatures to a dominant party and under-representation to others. In the last mid-term election the Ruling Congress won 350 seats in the Lok Sabha on the basis of roughly 63 million votes, while the Organisation Congress could win only 16 seats on the basis of its little over 15 million votes. Similarly in Tamil Nadu, while the DMK secured 183 seats on the basis of its 46.5 per cent vote, the Organisation Congress got only 15 seats on the basis of 33.1 per cent vote. Any number of such instances can be quoted from the election results since the first general election of 1952.

It is not desirable to just sit back and regard these as vagaries of the election system. It is necessary to think of ways and means to end them and, if that is not possible, to reduce them as far as possible. If democracy is to be real, the representative assembly which is entrusted with state power must be as truthful a reflection of the society as possible.

It is admitted on all hands that proportional representation is the best method for securing the most adequate and realistic representation of all sections of the people in an elected assembly. The only grounds urged against it are its rather complicated procedures and the difficulty of making them clear to a large and ignorant mass of voters. It is also urged against it that it will lead to the growth of a large number of small parties and groups and thus to political instability. It is not beyond human ingenuity, however, to find ways for getting over these difficulties.

But apart from the P.R., there are other systems, like the French and the German, which can be considered for adoption with such modifications as may be necessary. Political scientists should immediately begin a study of all these systems and evolve a model that may be suitable to the conditions of the country. The growing mass of voters is also going to pose a big problem. Then there is the problem of election expenses and of corrupt practices. The election system and law need improvements in many respects. This is the time when we should start thinking about them.

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refugees — both Hindus and Muslims — have crossed into West Bengal. It has not only adversely affected the economy of West Bengal but added to the serious social problems of the State.

India has not recognised the free government of Bangla Desh yet. It may not do so in near future. But people's pressure is mounting on the Government of India to accord recognition. Since Bangla Desh will never reconcile to remain a part of Pakistan, India will have no alternative but to recognise the Government of Bangla Desh some day. Other governments may too follow India's action. In that case, Pakistan would obviously regard India's step as hostile action, and, with hysterical Bhutto having a say in Pakistani affairs, it may embark upon a mad adventure against India. India, therefore, will have to be vigilant and remain in a constant state of preparedness. The Defence Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram hinted at it in a public meeting in Bombay the other day. Pakistan must have no illusions about India's strength although India seeks nothing but peace with its neighbours.

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Bangla Desh - Second Phase

K. K. Sinha

WITH the capture of most of the major towns and cities by the Pakistani Army on the one hand and with the establishment of an independent republican Government of Bangla Desh on the other, one chapter of the struggle for independence of East Bengal has ended. A new chapter has begun — a chapter that is expected to be long and more arduous.

Before we try to look into the future, let us try to reflect on the immediate past.

There can no turning away from the naked reality that the people of East Bengal were being exploited by the Islamabad regime and the ruling classes of West Pakistan. Not merely in terms of domination in the field of administration but also economically the Bangalees were being treated as second class citizens and were used as drawers of water and hewers of wood. East Bengal was earning foreign exchange through export of jute but its advantage was being taken mostly by West Pakistan. Most of the foreign aid was being utilised in West Pakistan. Lately, under pressure from the aid-givers some industrial development was being promoted in East Pakistan. But such industrial development was controlled by non-Bengalee industrialists. The economy was virtually being monopolised by men from West Pakistan. The recruitment to the Army officers cadre was also similarly weighted against East Pakistan.

The attempt at foisting Urdu as the sole official language of Pakistan was made at an early stage and this led to the movement for Bengalee.

Thus the Bengalees began to realise that unless they resisted this domination by West Pakistan they would soon become impotent slaves although they constitute the majority of the population of Pakistan.

It would thus be seen that the issue of parity between East Pakistan and West Pakistan became a live one as time went by. This was further heightened to the issue of one-man one-vote, giving a place of majority to East Pakistan in the National Assembly. It was only lately (28.11.69) that the Pakistan President gave in to this one-man one-vote demand.

Meanwhile West Pakistan itself was not a homogeneous unit. NWFP, Sind, Baluchistan — all these three felt that they were not getting their rightful place and they did not like the one-unit theory. There had been severe public disturbances for the break up of the One Unit.

The recent elections clearly indicated that the popular will for autonomy was overwhelmingly strong. The Sheikh emerged as the single most dominant figure. Maulana Bhashani has his independent following in some parts of East Pakistan both among peasants

and workers. The Maulana was afraid that the Sheikh might again go with Yahya Khan and compromise, while he (Bhashani) insisted that nothing less than independence should be fought for.

It was thus becoming clearly evident that the clash between East Pakistan and Islamabad was inevitable, that it was brewing fast and that it was bound to come to a breaking point sooner or later. No one could avoid it any more.

In this context, the election results came as a bolt from the blue. West Pakistanis had not anticipated that the Sheikh will secure an absolute majority even in the Constituent Assembly. But after having the elections, how could the train of normal events be halted? The Constituent Assembly was called to meet. But Yahya suddenly postponed it on the pretext that Bhutto would not attend. But this was too flimsy a pretext. One should have waited to see what Bhutto and other West Pakistan members did.

It seems the Sheikh also made some major mistakes. He should not have discussed the basis of the future Constitution with other leaders *before* the meeting of the Constituent Assembly.

President Yahya Khan seemed to be genuine in trying to hand over power to a constitutional authority. But he did not seem to wield real power himself. It was the Military Junta and Bhutto who operated behind the scene that wielded real power. Only when Bhutto returned from Dacca after his discussion with Mujibur that the decision was taken to postpone the Constituent Assembly. Time was taken to bring in the military reinforcements to "teach the Bengalees a lesson". Yahya was given the task to continue talking with Mujib, giving him hopes of a settlement till the last moment.

It was significant that Yahya Khan left Dacca on the 25th of March before Bhutto left. Bhutto saw Dacca burn in flames before he departed. All the other West Pakistan leaders then in Dacca were told to leave before the zero hour and adequate transport was arranged for them.

Then the massacre started.

Had not Mujibur realised that such a lesson-teaching programme was being planned? He did realise that *to some extent*. In his speech on March 7 he gave a call for non-cooperation and hartal and showed his real power over the people. But perhaps he had thought that the army will do only some shooting to terrorise people and the people will resist and then the administration will become powerless. He could not imagine that the Army terror will be on a genocidal scale. While the Awami League as an electoral machine

was very effective throughout East Bengal, it was not a militarist organisation capable of facing the well-prepared aggressive Army operation. Of course, the resistance by the people was much more than the Army had expected.

The question then arises: What were the alternatives before Sheikh Mujib? One could be, to compromise on his 6-point demand and to secure control at least over the provincial apparatus for the time being. The other was to have prepared much earlier for a prolonged *non-violent* non-cooperation struggle, so that the people in West Pakistan as well as in the world would have been aware of the nature of this struggle. However, this is no time or place to discuss what can no longer be altered.

Now, after a heroic resistance by the Mukti Fouz of Bangla Desh, a stage has been reached where the tasks facing the new government have to be clearly visualised and executed with great stamina and skill.

The first task is to conduct the struggle more in the guerrilla fashion. For that purpose the command of the Fouz has to be consolidated and coordinated, the dispersed army has to be regrouped and trained, new recruits have to be trained and equipped, political education of the people has to be conducted on an extensive scale through all media.

Secondly, refugees from the towns have to be looked after and help from outside has to be effectively utilised. The specialised elements among them have to be classified and their abilities fully utilised.

Thirdly, the large number of villages under its control have to be administered properly and detailed instructions have to be given to them.

Fourthly, full scale efforts to establish friendly contact with other States have to be made and their recognition and help sought, and the propaganda against the Government by interested quarters has to be counteracted. Particular effort has to be made to educate Muslim opinion as to the real facts of exploitation of Bangla Desh.

Fifthly, study cells have to be established to formulate perspective plans for economic and political development of Bangla Desh as and when completely recovered. The question of quick, workable recovery of the economy from damage and devastation made during the conflict will be urgent.

To take up all these tasks together by the present Government in the midst of a situation that is far from optimistic is not at all easy. Unfortunate still that Sheikh Mujib is not in their midst. Otherwise it should not have been difficult for them to rise to the occasion. But there are a number of capable leaders and scholars as well as administrators who, if allocated specific responsibilities, would prove their mettle. I have not had adequate contact with the leaders of Bangla Desh but my impression is that the Awami League was still in the stage of a broad popular move-

ment and its leaders were good political spokesmen of that movement against authority. But to build and to construct a state almost from scratch and under such a difficult political situation will require different type of orientation and attention. Given the leadership, there is the will power and determination which can be shaped and channelised to this task. Once the nucleus of the administration is set up with the right spirit, the tempo of organised work will develop its own momentum.

I am afraid that in the months ahead the situation will be unfavourable to the Mukti Fouz. The rains may not be such an advantageous factor as it is being made out, unless the guerrilla forces are very well trained and determined. Upon their effectivity will depend the morale of the local population. The disorganisation of the agricultural as well as industrial economies will create a tragic situation for them, with transport severely disrupted by the Mukti Fouz.

The refugee burden will be extremely heavy. But the refugee centres should be the base for raising new guerrilla forces as well as the nucleus of the "new society". These, therefore, should not be run as mere camps but as regular units of the new administration.

If the foreign powers have really understood that even if the Pakistan Army is now able to hold out in East Bengal, in the long run it is not possible to reconcile the two wings, they should recognise the new Government early and help negotiate a "partition" settlement. To delay this would prolong human agony and exacerbate a festering sore that may add to the troubles and instability already existing in South East Asia.

So far as India is concerned, she should recognise Bangla Desh without delay, without waiting for the super-powers to do so. In fact the people of India have already expressed themselves clearly and have also extended help to Bangla Desh in many ways. As the refugees are pouring into India, she will have no option except to take care of them. Her relations with Pakistan are such that she will in any case be branded as the instigator. Therefore, by not recognising Bangla Desh India is not going to save herself from such criticism. By such recognition India will help Bangla Desh at a crucial moment of her birth; it will also enable others to come forward and recognise the new regime.

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Alliance That Never Was

S. V. Raju

SOON after the Congress split, Mrs. Indira Gandhi kept on proclaiming that 95 per cent of the people were behind her. The elections at least disproved this, for, according to the figures issued by the Election Commission 43.64 per cent of the 54.84 per cent of those who voted were behind Mrs. Gandhi. In other words, 23.91 per cent of the total electorate are behind Mrs. Gandhi—undoubtedly, a far cry from her tall claim—a claim one usually associated with dictators.

It is my belief that for even the 43.64 per cent of the votes that she received she should be grateful to her opponents! She was able to derive maximum advantage of the weakness of the partners of the alliance. A leader of the Swatantra Party in Andhra, who was in Bombay recently, made the very interesting observation that for the first time in his political career as an Opposition campaigner, he found himself on the defensive instead of the offensive posture that he was used to all these years. And thereby hangs a tale.

When Napoleon Bonaparte was once asked which were his greatest victories he is reported to have replied that his greatest victories were those which he fought against an alliance of powers because the field commanders of the alliance powers would never agree on a common strategy. How very true of this so-called Grand Alliance.

In an article in the December 1970 issue of *Freedom First*, this writer had pointed out that the kind of alliance envisaged by the AICC(O) resolution of June 28, 1970, was not conceived "as a marriage of convenience of disparate groups welded together with the negative aim of toppling Mrs. Gandhi's Government but a positive one of providing the people of India with a democratic alternative to the party in power." But this is exactly what the Alliance turned out to be.

What started on June 28, 1970, with a bang ended with a whimper on January 3 this year less than two months before polling began. The Samyukta Socialist Party sitting on the fence all through, walked in at the last minute and with their tactics that are by now well known were able literally to gherao the leadership of the Congress(O) and got them to scuttle their own common programme. Even in the communique that was issued, the word "democratic" was dropped wherever it occurred so as to facilitate the SSP to come to its own private arrangements with the Communist Party (Marxist).

Moreover the SSP was able successfully to sell their slogan "Indira Hatao" to the Congress(O) and the Jan Sangh.

The Swatantra Party to its credit had, from the beginning, opposed their negative slogan but had insisted on a positive programme which an alternative government could carry out.

The Swatantra Party did the right thing when it walked out of the Alliance on January 3; however, it had to back out five days later on January 8 and join the Front as its National Executive felt that it was in the larger interest and that half a loaf was better than none.

Why did the Congress(O) and the Jan Sangh who had more or less accepted the need for a common programme cave in on January 3? It is my view that both these parties saw in the entry of the SSP two advantages viz.,

- (a) giving the Front a radical image, and
- (b) the feeling that the SSP was a force to reckon with in the northern States particularly in Bihar and UP. Their participation in the Front would therefore enable the Front to meet effectively Mrs. Gandhi's challenge in UP and Bihar.

The leaders of the Front formed a Coordinating Committee to hammer out an adjustment of seats amongst the alliance partners. The Committee began its 'talkathon' in Delhi on 18th January and went on for over a week. The proceedings of the Coordinating Committee were, on many occasions, marked by acrimonious wranglings. It was almost as if, for the benefit of the people of India, the Coordinating Committee had put on a nationally televised show from India's capital. Unfortunately, the show exposed the acute differences among the alliance partners and made people wonder, quite rightly, how these gentlemen who were arguing in Delhi and who were unable even to agree on seats, could be entrusted with the governance of the country.

While this quarrel over seats was on, Mrs. Gandhi was busy touring the countryside by every available mode of transport. The slogan "Indira Hatao" she very effectively demolished by saying that she was interested in "Garibi Hatao". She rammed home very successfully the slogan "For Stability and Progress Vote New Congress" by pointing out to the gentlemen in Delhi who were quarreling over seats.

In regard to the allocation of constituencies among the alliance partners while no agreement was found possible in regard to settling the principles on which seats should be divided, it was expected that that Party which carried that constituency in the last General Elections to the Lok Sabha or in a subsequent by-

election, would be entitled to nominate its candidate and that the allocation of seats would only arise in respect of those constituencies which had either been annexed by the undivided Congress and held by the Congress(R) or those which were not held by any of the partners of the alliance. By not agreeing on certain basic ground rules, the Coordinating Committee often presented a picture of helplessness. The problems created in respect of the South Bombay and Rajkot Parliamentary constituencies are cases in point.

In the case of the South Bombay constituency it was with considerable difficulty and after a lot of needless public controversy that the seat was finally left to the SSP incumbent. In the case of Rajkot, until the very last moment, the Jan Sangh and the local Congress(O) kept up a war of nerves claiming the seat which was held by Mr. Masani.

At the organisational level, there was no real camaraderie let alone joint campaigning among the members of the Front. Party-mindedness and the ambitions of local politicians played a decisive role in determining the extent to which a candidate of the Front belonging to a particular Party received the active support of members belonging to the other parties of the Front.

All the parties constituting the Front were very conscious of the fact that Assembly elections in their States were not far away. Each party unit at the constituency level therefore decided what should be the extent of support it should give, after weighing the effect such support would have on their candidates in the Assembly elections. This was of course not so in the case of Orissa, Bengal and Tamil Nadu which held simultaneous Assembly elections. It is interesting that in both Orissa and Bengal Mrs. Gandhi did not enjoy the kind of sweep she did in other States. In Tamil Nadu, however, the vagaries of our electoral system routed the Alliance. It should be remembered that as against 76 lakhs of votes polled by the DMK-Congress (R) combine, the Alliance in Tamil Nadu secured as much as 59 lakhs votes.

Local politicians were equally concerned with preserving their own skins particularly if such gentlemen happened to be in the Panchayats or Zilla Parishads. Would supporting the Alliance candidate endanger their position in the Panchayat or the Zilla Parishads? This was their basic criterion. For them, Delhi was too far away. For these *chota nawabs*, preserving their powers of patronage was more important.

These were the people who really counted and without their cooperation no Alliance could succeed. These gentlemen had their ear to the ground and what they heard was not favourable to the Alliance. The slogan of "Garibi Hatao", the spectacle of a woman being pilloried by the Grand Alliance partners was something they realised that touched the sympathetic chords of the ordinary voter.

An alliance without a programme blurred the image of the parties constituting the Front. Each partner was tarred or later claimed it had been tarred with the brush of the other. It was claimed that because of the Jan Sangh, minorities who saw nothing objectionable in either the Congress(O) the Swatantra and SSP, turned away from even these three parties. At public meetings, some SSP candidates are reported to have explained that though they were in the Alliance with Swatantra, they (SSP) had no sympathy for the policies of the Swatantra Party and that they had only come together to prevent Mrs. Gandhi from coming into power.

Another brush that tarred was the misdeeds of the undivided Congress for the last 23 years of power. Earlier, in this article I pointed out the comment of a politician from Andhra who said that for the first time he found himself fighting a defensive campaign. The reason being that the other three parties found themselves in the unenviable position of having to defend candidates of the Congress(O) who were identified with policies and actions which the partners in the Alliance had in previous elections bitterly criticised.

When is an alliance, an alliance? Can it be called as such in the light of the foregoing; when there is bickering over seats; when the rank and file of each party constituting the Alliance does not feel a sense of identity with their counterparts in the Alliance; when each Alliance partner, even while coming together for this elections has his eyes fixed on the Assembly elections with the prospect of having to fight his Alliance partner then. I for one, would say that this is a case of the Alliance that never was. At best, it was an adjustment on a national level with the links between the parties being at best tenuous. Looking from hindsight, it is surprising that the leaders of the Alliance should have seriously thought that they could carry conviction with the electorate despite these handicaps.

If there is a lesson to be learnt from these elections it is that by and large the electorate desires stability and abhors opportunistic pacts on the SVD model. The people have conclusively rejected the politics of opportunism.

BOOKS RECEIVED

1. *Indo-Iran Relations - Cultural Aspects*, Dr. N. S. Gorekar, Sindhu Publications Pvt. Ltd., 6, Oak Lane, Bombay 1.
2. *Mutiny of Innocents*, P. K. Dutt, Sindhu Publications Pvt. Ltd., 6, Oak Lane, Bombay 1.

Electoral System In Germany

Horst Hartmann

WEST Germany holds its elections by a system which is generally described as the mixed system. This system combines direct personal election and proportional representation. The whole Federal area is divided into 248 constituencies. Each of these constituencies returns one member to the Bundestag, the German Lok Sabha. These 248 members are elected directly. The candidate who receives the majority of votes in his particular constituency is elected to the Bundestag. The winning candidate does not need an absolute majority in the constituency.

But German voters have two votes. The first is used to elect the candidate directly to Parliament, the second vote is to elect a party of their choice. In all the Federal States of Germany the parties lay out so-called Federal State lists. This means that the parties decide which candidates are represented on the list and in what ranking order. The order determines the probability and the certainty with which a candidate can count on a seat in Parliament. The second vote for candidates on the Federal State list finally decides the proportionate strength of the parties corresponding to the total number of votes for all the lists.

The composition of the Bundesstaat according to political parties is based upon the votes cast for the land list. For this the system D'Hondt is applied. The D'Hondt maximum number method received its name from D'Hondt, a Belgian. It is a method of counting which aims at allocating the mandates for each party as fairly as possible on the basis of the votes given. The 248 directly elected members are joined, therefore, by 248 members elected on the Federal State List.

All together the electoral system implies that 248 deputies are elected directly in the constituencies, and the same number through the landlist so that Bundestag is composed of 496 elected deputies. A dislocation may however occur in the form of a surplus mandate, which occurs in case more candidates from a certain political party are elected in one or more States (lands) by direct election than would be the case according to the second vote. The Bundestag election of 1961 resulted in 5 such surplus mandates.

In addition twenty-two deputies sit in the Bundestag for the electorate of Berlin. They are elected by the House of Representatives in Berlin. By reason of the peculiar constitutional status of Germany since 1945, these deputies have an advisory function only.

A distinguishing feature of the German system is a provision which prevents the emergence of splinter parties. The German electoral law provides that only that party would be entitled to a share in the additional seats allotted on the basis of Party Lists as have

secured either five per cent of the valid votes polled for the Federal elections, or won at least three constituencies.

In the Federal elections the members for the Bundestag get a mandate for a four-year period, provided the Bundestag is not dissolved earlier. There are no by-elections. Upon the death or resignation of a member of the Bundestag, the next-in-line on the Party's Federal State List accedes automatically.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany says: "The members of the German Bundestag are elected by general, direct, free, equal and secret ballot." It means that all citizens, regardless of sex, income or wealth, position, education or religious affiliation have the right to vote. Formerly they had to be twenty-one years old. The voting age has recently been reduced to eighteen. Members of Parliament must be at least twenty-five years old and hold German nationality for at least one year.

The normal funds of the political parties come from membership fees. The Federal budget, however, provides especially for campaigning costs a sum according to the votes polled by the party at the last elections. Donors, industrial houses or private persons, are not now allowed to deduct contributions to party funds from federal or other taxes. Time for campaigning on TV and radio is allotted equally to all parties according to their strength. Apart from the general rules of penal law, the fair conduct of election campaigns is subject to agreement between the parties. Such agreements are regularly concluded.

If one counts the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) as a single party which is in correspondence with the reality in the Bundesstaat and the political activities of both, there were in the first German Bundestag of 1949 ten parties. In the second Bundestag there were six parties and in third Bundestag there were only four parties CDU/CSU, The German Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Free Democratic Party (FDP). Thus the number of parties has been reduced from election to election. The reasons for this process are manifold and cannot be related only to the electoral system. Besides political factors personal, economic and social factors exercise their influence on the voting behaviour of the people. When the first general elections to the Bundestag were held, the economic situation in the Federal Republic was at its lowest. There was no national leadership and a lot of social unrest among the people. Further, the parties were still in a rather rudimentary shape. The result of all this was the disintegration of the party system, which reminded one

of the Weimar Republic. As you will know, one of the main reasons, if not the most important, for the collapse of the Weimar Republic was the disintegration of the party system, which led to governmental instability and finally to the advancement of Nazism in Germany. The members of the Parliament Council, the Constitutional Assembly, to which the drawing up of the basic Law was entrusted, were aware of that fact. They were looking for an electoral device to avoid a situation like that which the Weimar Republic had experienced. Finally, the electoral system as it operates nowadays in West Germany was born.

After the first general elections in 1949 the future of democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany did not look very bright as far as political stability was concerned. It took a lot of time before a coalition Government was formed under the leadership of Konard Adenauer. The coalition embraced the CDU/CSU, the Free Democratic Party and some other splinter groups. The coalition was not very homogeneous and a lot of rambling characterised its life.

However, in the succeeding elections voters concentrated more on the three present parliamentary parties and withdrew support from the fringe parties especially in the case of the extreme right and left parties. The trend is towards the centre. One of the reasons for that development can be seen in the five per cent clause mentioned earlier.

The most important reason for the concentration on the three present parties lies in the economic and social stability of the country. The rapid growth of the economy and widespread social satisfaction of the

people offered no grounds for radical slogans of extremist parties. Hence the trend towards the centre was favoured. To make this point clearer, it is worth mentioning that the rightwing NPD gained ground when the economy was hit by a marginal recession in the late sixties. During those years the NPD was able to send deputies of its colour into the Federal legislature.

It was this trend towards radicalism which led to a rethinking regarding the effectiveness of the electoral system. There were people who privately or officially blamed the mixed system as it operates in Germany for promoting and favouring radical parties like the NPD. A change in the electoral system was suggested, and the CDU officially took the stand to bring about an amendment of the electoral law aiming at the adoption of the plurality system of voting as it operates in Great Britain and in India. In fact, when the grand coalition between the CDU and SPD was formed in 1966, the governmental declaration contained the clause that the coalition should endeavour to readjust the electoral system. However, the SPD was divided on that subject, as some people in that party were afraid of losing ground whereas others claimed that a change in the electoral law would turn out favourably for the SPD. The FDP, of course, totally objected to any change as it was afraid of being extinguished by it. This amply shows how varied the ideas are and from how many different angles any electoral system is evaluated by different parties and even by different sections within the same party.

—Based on a talk given at the Democratic Research Service.

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Reviews

For the Good of the Cause

Alexander Solzhenitsyn; National Academy, Delhi. Rs. 4/-.

WITH his *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* published in 1962 Solzhenitsyn became a world renowned writer. He has written several books since then but each book earned him more and more of the anger and resentment of the Russian rulers. In the end they clapped him in a mental asylum for some months and then a few months back in a corrective labour camp. The award of the Nobel Prize angered them still more and they did not allow him to accept it.

For the Good of the Cause was published in 1963 when writers, including Solzhenitsyn, were enjoying a certain amount of freedom. That freedom was taken away from them in a short while and most of them were soon reduced to silence. *For the Good of the Cause* is a satire on the soulless functioning of the party and the governmental apparatus. It is very effective because it is written without any exaggeration and tells the bitter story in a few but telling words.

The story revolves round a technical school in a town a long distance away from Moscow. It is housed in a place which has little accommodation for laboratories and class rooms and is totally unsuitable. The boys and the staff have been promised a new building several times. In the end they build one for themselves and eagerly look forward to the day when they could shift to the new place. In the meanwhile, a ministry in Moscow decides to establish a research institute in the town and allocates the new building to that institute. The principal, the staff and the students are aghast when they are informed of the decision at the last minute. They fret and fume but are unable to do anything to change it as the district party committee has approved of it. Some members of the committee had incidentally a personal motive in according their approval to the decision.

The story is simple and is also told in a simple manner with just a few details, to bring out the characteristics of the persons involved in it, mainly Fyodor Mikheyvich, the principal, Lidia Georgievna, the enthusiastic teacher who organised the students for constructing the new building and Victor Knorozov the secretary of the district party committee. None of the persons connected with the party except Ivan Grachikov, the secretary of the town committee, come out well in the story. It is this which angered the party and the Government and was the cause of the harsh treatment that was meted out to the author.

The publication of the story gave rise to a controversy. Some condemned it as an attack on the party, while some others applauded it. A part of that controversy is published as an appendix in the book. It shows how in Russia books are evaluated not on the basis of their literary merit but on the basis of their portrayal of the Russian scene.

This is one of the minor works of Solzhenitsyn, but it gives an adequate idea of his power as a writer. The National Academy deserves to be congratulated for making it available to Indian readers in a cheap Indian edition.

V. B. K.

The Prague Spring: 1968

Victor M. Fic, Nachiketa Publications Ltd., Bombay 7
Rs. 6/-.

THIS monograph is a case study of social change which had been planned by the communist under its liberal leader Alexander Dubcek and his associates during the spring of 1968" states the introduction.

The cruel fallibilities of the Marxist theories and their fanatically hypocritical propagation by the Communists are graphically brought to light by Mr. Fic, who amply enlightens those who are still under the influence of the illusory blessings of Communism.

The pangs of injustice become intolerable as one reads through the pages an account of the atrocious Russian machine used to ruthlessly crush Czechoslovakia's dream of breathing a free and fresh life. Which, if it were allowed to materialise, would have seriously undermined the prospects of survival of the monolithic nature of the communist bloc.

V. B. PATANKAR

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Shri M. R. Pai's article on "1971 Elections and India's Future" is timely. I appreciate it for its bold statements on the reasons for Indira Gandhi's success in the elections.

As you have pointed out in your magazine, Shrimati Gandhi has secured 43 per cent votes of the electorate. Shri Jagjivan Ram has admitted that they have won the elections because of weaker and poorer sections. Now, the Indira Government have two alternatives before them; they are (1) a welfare state by means of private enterprise and (2) a welfare state by means of public enterprise. The people will have to wait for the results. Shri Masani has quoted the result of Shrimati Bandaranaike's promises (cheap ones) in this connection.

The nationalised banks have pumped out their resources for the poor and weaker sections without knowing their repaying capacity. On the other hand, if the Government of India would have brought measures like that of New Deal of America during 1930s, the productivity would have been increased. It would have solved the drastic unemployment problem.

I doubt whether any democracy will be sustained in future. Anyhow, let us work for the betterment of our people.

Radha Nagar, Madras 44.
13th April, 1971

R. SRINIVASAN

With Many Voices

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

Secession cannot easily get support from abroad. There are too many potential seceders in too many countries for this support to be allowed to build up.

—*Swiss Press Review and News Report*, April 5.

Perhaps Mrs. Gandhi will be India's answer to Mao, the alternative she herself believes she is — who will be able to combine progress along with a commitment to progress.

—Nayantara Sehgal, *Sunday Standard*, April 4.

The genius of the Indian people for improvisation and pragmatism should be given free and full play.

—Badr-Ud-Din Tyabji, *Indian Express*, April 7.

That India's heartstrings have been wrung by the ghastly happenings in East Pakistan is natural enough.

—Piloo Mody, *March of the Nation*, April 17.

It is ludicrous to pretend that East Pakistan is a little local difficulty.

—*Sunday Times*, (London), April 18.

But now that the full gravity of the situation is apparent, there seems something horrifying about the continued lack of any serious international effort at mediation in East Pakistan.

—*The Observer*, (London), April 11.

To the Editor,
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C/o Democratic Research Service,
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Bombay 1.

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The revolution of rising expectations, turned into a revolution of rising frustrations has taken to arms.

—Denzil Peiris, *Times of India*, April 20.

Tall promises and halting performance usually breed violent action, whether you call it Naxalism or Guevarism makes little difference.

—*Janata*, April 18.

A dictatorship rarely has a human face. The Communist one has proved this time and again.

—Inge Deutschkron, *Thought*, April 17.

We allowed Pakistani propaganda to lend a communal colour to the rising in Bangla Desh.

—*The Illustrated Weekly of India*, April 25.

The Pakistani army in East Bengal appears to have achieved an all-time record in indiscriminate violence and mass shooting of men, women and children.

—K. Santhanam, *Swarajya*, April 24.

One of the great fears of both Russia and China has been that the other would make friends with the United States, and thus create a situation of two against one.

—*Swiss Press and News Report*, April 26.

Probably never before in history has a sport been used so effectively as a tool of international diplomacy.

—*Time*, April 26.

For all her words about genocide in East Pakistan, Mrs. Gandhi may have a little secret sympathy for General Yahya Khan. She knows what it is to have a Bengali problem.

—*The Economist*, (London), April 10.

Marxists used to dream of a future society without politics in which the "administration of things" would replace the "government of people". Russia is miles away from such a goal.

—*The Economist*, (London), April 10.

Any nation who takes the opinions of its youth too seriously wants its head examining.

—Ernie Gilbert, *The Economist* (London), March 27.