

One Year of Non-Congress Governments

M. D. Kini

NOT many would shed tears over the passing away, rather peacefully, of so many non-Congress governments in Haryana, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. It looks that the days of the United Front in Madhya Pradesh are also numbered. Even the stable DMK in Madras and the United Front Government in Kerala have failed to make much difference to the common man. The only government which has done something silently for the people is in Orissa. Disenchantment of the people with the non-Congress Governments is more rapid than that with the Congress. What took twenty years for Congress has been achieved by the non-Congress governments in one year. One of the reasons why people were disappointed with the performance of the non-Congress governments is that these parties promised too much without expecting that they would be called upon to do it immediately. One can understand the failure of Communist dominated United Front Governments in West Bengal as well as in Kerala in ameliorating the conditions of the people since they are more interested in creating "revolutionary situations" to overthrow bourgeoisie set-up by sharpening class conflict. The failure of others is unpardonable. It may weaken the faith of the people in parliamentary democracy itself. And the undermining of this faith creates very bad and sad consequences. People may either become too indifferent and embrace a kind of fatalism. Or, it may make them more violent. Herein lies the tragedy of the situation.

West Bengal has the unique distinction of being in the headlines of newspapers constantly during the last year. *Gheraos* and Naxalbari are the two big achievements of the United Front government of West Bengal. Many small factories were closed, quite a few thousand people lost their employment, State exchequer lost a few lakhs of revenue, thanks to *gherao*. Terror reigned supreme in Naxalbari for a couple of months. A few people were killed. And the Communists gave a preview of the shape of things to come if ever they come to power, Mr. Subodh

Banerjee's controversial broadcast was another landmark. Then there was the continuous war with the Centre on the allocation of foodgrains. Mr. Ajoy Mukherjee's letter of resignation, that was never delivered, marked the high watershed of the regime. He was afraid that Communists would create another Vietnam in West Bengal with the help of foreign powers. But he changed his mind on the assurance of the same Communists. Communist alibi and excuse for their failure were the limitations put by the Constitution, Judiciary and the Central Government. Practically the same is true of Communist-dominated Kerala coalition. Mr. E. M. S. Namboodripad has made history by being the only Chief Minister in India to be convicted for the contempt of court. Kerala communists should be given due credit for organising Kerala Bandh against Centre while in power and building up a Gopal Sena.

The DMK was pleasantly surprised when it was catapulted into the throne in Madras. It was swept into the office by the wave of the language controversy. Ever since it has kept itself on the crest of this wave by strengthening it. They are riding a tiger which they will not be able to dismount. It had promised three measures of rice for a rupee to all in Madras State. Now it provides one measure of rice per rupee in Madras and Coimbatore only. Its failure to redeem its pledge on the bread front, has been made up by organising a big circus. It organised the Second World Tamil Conference on a massive scale.

The only non-Congress Government which has done something for the people is in Orissa. It abolished land revenue and earned kudos even from Dr. Lohia. Recently, *Hindu* reported from Bhubhaneshwar: "There was a perceptible change in the attitude and behaviour of public servants towards the people because of the high moral standards maintained by the leaders in the administration. The police was behaving in a responsible and restrained manner. The administration has been generally free from political pressures and therefore all decisions were taken on merit." This is quite an achievement which deserves wide publicity and creates hope about the future.

Haryana is a class by itself. The defecting legislators have brought popular ridicule and contempt to democracy itself. Nearly 37% of M.L.A.s have crossed the floor at least once. One had changed sides five times, one four times, two three times and six members twice. At the time of the declaration of President's

(Continued on page 8)

Of Cabbages And Kings

Emdeeke

DO you know why we have so many political parties while U.S.A. and U.K. have only two or three parties? Oh! it is very simple. We are more democratic. We vote for a party of our choice. We have as many parties as we have opinions. A voter in U.K. or U.S.A. votes for a party which is likely to keep out the party which he dislikes most. Anti-voting is the main reason for the two-party system. This, of course, is not my discovery. This is a theory propounded by Harold Perkin in the *Guardian* recently after years of observing the pattern of voting by his friends. He has appropriately called it "Perkins Law of Anglo-Saxon Politics." Now, we have every reason to feel proud that we are more democratic than the West. But, this silver lining has a big dark cloud. Now that there is going on in India what is called polarisation, we may become less democratic with a two-party system!

It has been well said that in Italy a shapely blonde can stop traffic while in England a dog on a leash and in U.S.A. a family with three children. But in Bombay, as I. S. Johar puts it in *Filmfare*, only George Fernandes can do it. I, for one, enjoyed the show put up by Fernandes. My only regret is that it is all over within so few a days. I enjoyed the walking from my place to the railway station, nearly a mile away. Many people, I am sure, have rediscovered the pleasures of the forgotten art of walking. I could go late to office without being reprimanded by my boss. More than anything else, I liked the look of Flora Fountain area. It looked so much better without buses. Only other time I had a similar feeling was on the day the Shiv Sena took out a procession to the Kala Ghoda. Not a single hawker was within the sight of Flora Fountain and its pavements, for once, were at the disposal of pedestrians!

Political leaders masquerading as labour leaders are bringing disrepute to labour unions. The B.E.S.T. strike is the best example of this. It has not benefitted anybody, not even the workers. Now it is the turn of the Bankmen to demonstrate and strike. The Bankmen are complaining that their inherent fundamental right is sought to be denied by a forthcoming legislation. One of the clauses prohibits demonstration within

ten metres of the Bank premises. I do not find much of a restriction here. A couple of years back, during a strike in the Syndicate Bank in Bombay, I reliably learnt, the Bankmen had the discourtesy to spit on the officers inside the premises of the Bank. It is even alleged that these "gentlemen" had the temerity to follow the officers chanting funeral hymns. A few months back I was a mute witness to a similar act. Two meek old gentlemen were followed by a dozen fierce-looking youngmen shouting militant slogans even inside the local railway compartment. The only crime that these old men had committed was not to join a strike by LIC employees against automation, even after the LIC had promised not to retrench anybody on that ground. There is something wrong somewhere when trade unions descend to this level. One thing is certain: labour barons become more irresponsible with more power.

Now that the municipal elections are here, it is a problem for me whom to vote. I would have gladly voted for Shiv Sena, if not for anything else, at least for the promise of getting Flora Fountain area rid of all hawkers. But one thing terrifies me about them. Bal Thackeray recently declared that they wish to make Bombay beautiful by keeping it clean. So far so good. But he also promised that he would see that nobody throws any rubbish on the roads. That is excellent. He further said that he would ask his *sainiks* to slap if anybody does so. That's it. This militant efficiency is rather disconcerting.

Swatantra has promised to eliminate all non-civic issues out of the Corporation. I am all for it. They are a sensible and practical people. But, they have not been able to reach the people. They have failed to catch the imagination of the masses. Am I wasting my vote? Dedication and honesty of Jan Sangh is commendable. But, the militant nationalism is too militant for me. Their outlook is too rigid for my taste. One of their speakers even disapproved clapping because it is not an Indian custom. Congress deserves praise for being firm during the illegal strike of the B.E.S.T.. But I am tired of Congress. So, my problem remains. But it has been solved for me by the bureaucracy of the Corporation. I have been disfranchised. I have no vote and so have no problem, "whom to vote".

Notes

Need of the Hour

A NUMBER of anti-Congress United Front Governments have already fallen and the few that remain may not last long. This result was inevitable as the only bond that united the diverse parties which formed the Governments was hatred for the Congress. Such a negative sentiment could not hold them together for long. As soon as the Governments began to tackle problems differences began to erupt as there was no common agreement on how to solve them. It was moreover realised that each party was utilising its position in the Government for strengthening itself rather than for advancing public good. Under the circumstance the break-up of the uneasy, unprincipled coalitions was but a matter of time.

In their chagrin over the loss of power non-Congress parties find it convenient to put the whole blame for their misfortune on the shoulders of the Congress. It is, they contend, the evil machinations of the Congress which are responsible for the dissensions in their ranks. In that connection they point to the resolution recently adopted by the Congress at its annual session in Hyderabad. It is clear, however, that this is nothing but a face-saving device. If they had remained united, the Congress could not have subverted them. And, if they had the right to gang up against the Congress, the latter had an equal right to work against them. The fact remains, however, that they fell mainly through internal disruption and not through the machinations of any external agency.

It is regrettable that in most cases the fall of the United Front Ministries has led to the imposition of the President's Rule. That happened in Haryana immediately and after a few months in Bengal, U.P. has followed and Bihar may not be far behind. This is, indeed, a sad development which reflects very badly on the functioning of democracy in the country. Mid-term elections will follow in due course, but they may not lead to the formation of stable governments, unless all parties, including the Congress, undertake a good amount of rethinking on the strategy and tactics to be adopted for the solution of people's problems.

The non-Congress parties do not appear to have learnt any lesson from their experience of the last few months. They are still thinking in terms of a united front to fight the Congress in the elections. As a result, they may conceivably succeed in denying the Congress a majority, but that will not surely enable them to form a stable government. There will be a repeti-

tion of the previous experience and again the imposition of the President's Rule. That will be the most effective way of discrediting democracy and rendering its functioning impossible. Are non-Congress parties believing in democracy interested in bringing about this result?

They could also be a little more clear-headed about their allies, the Communists, Rightists as well as Leftists. Both have during the last few months given ample evidence of the fact that they have no faith in and no attachment to democracy and that they are out to use every democratic process and institution only for strengthening their party. They have also proved that they have no feelings of loyalty for their allies and will not miss any opportunity to undermine the strength and influence of the parties associated with them. Will not this experience teach them to be on their guard against the Communists?

If in spite of all this, non-Congress democratic parties persist in running after a heterogeneous united front based only on blind anti-Congressism, the conclusion that will follow will be that they are interested only in the loaves and fishes of office and not in building up a democratic alternative to the Congress. Democrats can then have little regard for them.

The Congress, on the other hand, also appears to have learnt little from the bitter experiences of the last year. If it had learnt anything it would have taken steps to purge from its ranks corrupt and discredited persons who are responsible for giving it a bad name amongst the people. That would have immediately improved its image. As a result of its failure to take that step, in spite of their disappointment and disillusionment with other parties, the people are not turning in the direction of the Congress as they would have done otherwise.

Another important lesson the Congress has to learn is that it can no longer claim a monopoly of power. It must be prepared to share it with others if, as professed, it is really interested in preserving democracy and political stability. It must get ready to make alliances with likeminded parties and groups. It must also win back the support of those who left it in recent times for reasons which had nothing to do either with programme or ideology. They left it out of disgust with the actions and policies of some leaders. The Congress must be broadminded enough to welcome them back into its fold or, in case that is not possible, to establish relations of cooperation and collaboration with them. Its attitude so far has been one of irrational rigidity. It must be replaced now by an attitude of compromise and accommodation.

The need of the hour is to bring together all those who believe in democracy and are pledged to work for a rapid but peaceful social change. Unless they come together they will not be able to resist the forces of disruption which are seeking to gain the upper

hand. They are evident everywhere, in States under the Congress rule as well as in other areas. United Front Governments in Bengal, Bihar and U.P. encouraged them instead of curbing them. In the end they turned against the U.F. Governments themselves and brought about their downfall. The President's Rule imposed in some States has provided a short respite; but it is not a permanent cure. A permanent cure will become possible only if there is a realignment of genuinely democratic forces and a rethinking on the ways and means for tackling the problems before the country.

Kutch Award

THE Kutch award of the International Court of Justice has gone against India on some points. They are essentially minor points and Pakistan does not get more than ten per cent of the area to which she had staked a claim. The award can be therefore regarded by far and large as a vindication of the Indian case.

Even on this pragmatic ground the award should have won immediate acceptance. But there are some people in the country who would not like to accept an award unless it is wholly in their favour. This is a position which no reasonable person will accept. An award of a freely selected Tribunal must be accepted by both parties, irrespective of the fact whether it accepts or rejects the claim or claims of either. Without this commitment there can be no settlement of a dispute through arbitration.

India has all along advocated peaceful settlement of border disputes. A peaceful settlement involves arbitration by a third party when the two parties are not able to arrive at an agreement. In the case of Rann of Kutch there was already an acceptance of the fact that there was a dispute and an agreement to refer the dispute to arbitration. The late Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and his Government merely gave effect to that prior commitment. Their action was endorsed by Parliament. It is too late in the day now to condemn that step merely because the award has gone against us on some minor points.

It is heroic to say that we will not part with even an inch of our territory. But the statement begs the question. The question is whether and what part of the territory belongs to us. As the issue was in dispute it was referred to the Tribunal for decision. According to its decision, the particular territory does not belong to us. There is therefore no question of surrendering any part of our territory. What will happen after the implementation of the award is only this that the territory which belongs to Pakistan will go back to her. Our insistence on regarding it as our territory will not carry conviction to anybody now that an International Tribunal has decided against us.

It is, of course, easy to arouse passions on an issue like this. That is what the Jan Sangh and the Samyukta Socialist Party are trying to do. They will utilise this for their campaign against the Congress and the Central Government. It is not likely, however, that they will get much support in the country. Their action and attitude are understandable, but what can one say of an eminent person like Mr. M. C. Chagla, a one-time Education and External Affairs Minister and a former Chief Justice of a High Court, who has chosen to advise against the acceptance of the award? According to him, it is vitiated because it is based on political and not on judicial considerations. Mr. Chagla forgets that, once parties are allowed to indulge in such arguments, no award will be safe as a dissatisfied party will always find one argument or the other for rejecting it. Mr. Chagla has rendered a distinct disservice to the country by joining his voice with those who are out to prevent the country and the Government from adopting an honourable course.

The honourable course is to accept the decision and implement it as early as possible. The decision may have partly gone against us, but it is binding upon us. We cannot get away from our international commitment without irreparable damage to our prestige and standing in the world community of nations. The Government of India have realised this and have declared their decision to accept and implement the award. This is a highly commendable decision. It is to be hoped that the Government will remain firm and will take early steps to implement it. It is to be further hoped that this correct action on our part will to some extent at least help to improve our relations with Pakistan.

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INDIA'S Republic Day Celebrations on the 26th of January 1968, provided the background for serious confabulations between Prime Minister Kosygin, President Tito and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The fact that the visit of Prime Minister Kosygin was not merely for the ceremonial purpose of joining Republic Day celebrations was quite obvious. According to earlier reports, initiative and earnest endeavours to ensure a visit by Mr. Kosygin came from Mrs. Gandhi, and Mr. Kosygin had pleaded inability to attend the Republic Day celebrations. However, the Soviet Prime Minister subsequently decided to come to Delhi for a more serious visit than a mere ceremonial one. This is clear from the fact that the Soviet Prime Minister came with a team of officials. This indicated that Mr. Kosygin attached much greater importance to the visit than mere reciprocity of the fraternal visit which Mrs. Indira Gandhi made to the Soviet Union a few months ago to participate in the 50th Anniversary celebrations of the Russian Revolution.

President Tito was also invited for the Republic Day celebrations and he arrived with Madame Tito. The visit of the Yugoslav President and his Lady, however, seemed to be primarily ceremonial, and related to personal friendship with Mrs. Indira Gandhi rather than a special concern for official consultations.

Mrs. Gandhi seemed to have attached much greater significance to the Soviet Prime Minister's visit than was the case with the Soviet Prime Minister in regard to India. The West Asian crisis, India-Pakistan Relations, reviving of the stagnant Indian economy, the lessening of Mrs. Gandhi's leadership eminence in the Indian political complex, appeared to be the main motivations for arrangement of this meeting. From the point of view of the visiting dignitaries, India's role must have presented an unimpressive factor in all these issues. On the West Asian crisis, India could hardly make any positive contribution on account of a very close and identical alignment with Soviet, Yugoslav and Arab positions. India's role in the West Asian crisis, for the purposes of the New Delhi little summit conference could have been nothing better than a chorus of claque in support of each of the three participants. The hard reality of the West Asian crisis that hurt India utmost is the closure of the Suez Canal and no way by which it could be reopened in the foreseeable future. For the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Suez closure does not represent such a painful fact as for India. Mrs. Gandhi could not possibly seek from her Yugoslav and Soviet guests any guidelines on how the West Asian problem could be equitably solved and the

canal reopened, because she and the Indian Government have been too busy in a stance more partisan than the Arabs themselves. Apart from anything else, this has resulted in a barren situation with no creative contributions possible by India excepting mutually self-congratulatory feelings among the three participants. But the price for India in the long closure of Suez Canal is rather heavy to pay for the emotional satisfaction of being in the closest possible alignment with Arab, Yugoslav and Soviet positions on this issue.

On the India-Pakistan question as well, India's bargaining capacity before Soviet Union and Yugoslavia is practically non-existent. The Tashkent Agreement transferred the initiative on Kashmir problem from West to USSR. The real challenge for India was how to transfer the initiative in this problem to herself from others, and this task has never been accomplished in all the two decades.

The stagnation in Indian economic policies closely patterned on the Soviet inspiration represented another issue for serious confabulations with the visiting Soviet dignitaries. This question should have been the real meat of the New Delhi confabulations that necessitated high-power teams on both sides. If the situation has become difficult with the West on the question of aid to India, it is no less so with the Soviet Union. Soviet aid and numerous Soviet projects in India under the public sector are going through numerous stresses and strains. Apart from limitations on the Soviet side for increasing aid to India, the political and economic developments in India do not provide incentives for the Soviets for massive underwriting of India even if they could do so. The cautious balancing act done by the Soviet Union between India and Pakistan after the Tashkent Agreement, the continued attack on Indian leaders and Government policies by the Radio for Peace and Progress which cannot be done without official Soviet approval, the annoyance of the Soviet Government at the dismissal of the West Bengal Ministry, the Soviet anger at the third dramatic defection after Tarasov and Svetlana, on Indian soil, are all factors not very much in India's favour in Soviet eyes.

India's constant advocacy of pacifism to big powers, but her refusal to subscribe to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty between U.S. and U.S.S.R., the small vestiges of genuine non-alignment on this issue by India, justified by the delinquency of Peking and bellicosity of Peking behaviour, in short genuine self-interest of India, must have irritated the Soviet Union in some degree.

The Soviet Prime Minister was not at all inhibited in attacking the United States. New Delhi, on the eve of, on and after the Republic Day, was no longer considered non-aligned and therefore inhibitive for the Soviet Prime Minister to unleash a broadside against the United States, with Indian Prime Minister watching. These attacks were made by the Soviet Prime Minister in reply to the toast proposed to him by Indira Gandhi and in the Soviet Prime Minister's toast in reply. Strong attacks on the United States, which the Indian Government also considers to be a friend of India, were made at a reception given to the Soviet Prime Minister by the Indo-Soviet Cultural Society, a front of the Moscow-leaning section of the Communist Party of India. A similar scathing attack on the United States was made by Mr. Kosygin at the Civic Reception accorded to him in Delhi.

The Soviet Prime Minister visited Hardwar and Rishikesh where Soviet projects are located. Before his departure back to the Soviet Union, Mr. Kosygin had a meeting with the leaders of the Moscow-lining faction of the Communist Party of India, consisting of S. A. Dange, Rajeshwar Rao and G. Adhikari.

In the Joint communique signed by Mr. Kosygin and Mrs. Indira Gandhi the following points are of considerable significance:—

"Both sides confirmed their intention to continue regularly their exchange of opinions on political matters of mutual interest.

"(They) expressed their concern about the war in Vietnam. They were deeply concerned that there had been so far no stoppage of the bombing of the territory of D.R.V. They consider that unconditional stoppage of the bombing of the D.R.V. would create conditions for negotiations aimed at a political settlement. (They) reaffirmed their support for Cambodia in her determination to preserve her sovereignty, independence and neutrality in accordance with the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and agreed that there was no justification to violate Cambodia's frontiers...

"The two sides attach great importance to personal contacts and the exchange of opinions between leading personalities of the two countries."

Mrs. Indira Gandhi was officially invited to visit the Soviet Union and she was reported to have accepted the invitation with "much pleasure".

Critics of Indian Prime Minister have commented that she worked out the visit of Mr. Kosygin and President Tito to bolster her position within the ruling party and also to provide a morale booster to the flagging "Socialist" fringe within the ruling party. Interestingly enough, this comment was also made by supporters of the Prime Minister and the "left fringe". A comment in *Blitz* of 17th February runs thus:

"Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin's visit also provided an occasion for Mrs. Gandhi to assert herself. Every Minister who met Mr. Kosygin was accompanied by

the topmost officials of the External Affairs Ministry. This represented a break from practice, and is believed to have its own significance in relation to the Prime Minister's views on how discussions with important foreign dignitaries should be conducted, and by whom."

Peking comment was true to expectations. It characterised the meeting as "international scheming by a number of accomplices and running dogs of U.S. imperialism." Peking attached sinister significance to Mr. Kosygin "rushing to India" immediately after seeing Mr. Harold Wilson, and said this was to "plot jointly with President Tito and Mrs. Indira Gandhi on behalf of the common enemy of the world's people — the U.S. Imperialism." The "closed conference" which Mr. Chester Bowles had with President Tito was cited by Peking as evidence of the conspiracy being hatched in New Delhi.

The U.S. Government has evinced keen interest in the comment in the Joint communique concerning the "intention of both sides (India and USSR) to continue regularly their exchange of opinions on political matters of mutual interest."

The operative features of the New Delhi little summit will manifest themselves during the coming months.

STATEMENT ABOUT OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS OF FREEDOM FIRST

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(Sd/ March 1968

V. B. KARNIK
Signature of Publisher

The Image Of The Indian Economist

M. R. Pai

IF the image of the Indian politician today is a deplorable one, that of the Indian economist seems to offer a competition to it. No less a person than the doyen of Indian economists, Prof. C. N. Vakil, had to plead before the economists gathered at the Golden Jubilee Conference of the Indian Economic Association to take care of their doings in order to maintain professional dignity and prosperity.

He said: "It is a poor state of affairs when the degree of competence in economic matters is adjudged by the jelliness or the malleability of view-points of individuals in the face of conflicting political or opportunistic pressures. *The standards of economic competence must be set within the profession and not without.* It is here that a strong Economic Association means a strong bulwark for democracy."

The politicians fell from public grace because of their own doings. The fall of the Indian economists is likewise their own doing.

The era of planning opened new opportunities to economists to come before public eyes by rendering a useful service by employing the tools of economics to solve the economic problems of the country. But that opportunity seems to have been lost.

Many economists have used their economic tools for demonstrably political purposes, and in the bargain sacrificed what should constitute professional standards. An impression has gained ground that many have fallen prey to the lure of public office, and that the butter of government patronage has been allowed to be applied to the economist's research bread.

This careerism has advanced to such a stage that even among economists, the very mention of the name of a former academician now in governmental authority is greeted with sneers.

Many economists have proved themselves in public eye as mere theoreticians incapable of getting in touch with economic realities. This has happened in two ways.

Some of them seemed too eager at one stage to endorse government's economic policies which are subsequently discredited in practice. At that stage, with tide of public criticism running strong against the Government's policies, these economists started criticising the very policies they earlier endorsed. One major instance is that of the Second Plan.

An official publication, comprising Papers Relating to the Formulation of the Second Plan, gives the views of the Panel of Economists of the Planning Commission on the Second Plan Draft. With the exception of Prof.

B. R. Shenoy, whose minute of dissent proved prophetic, all others endorsed the Plan. Later on, when the Plan brought disaster to the country, some of the economists started vehemently criticising the Plan. The public was thus free to draw its own conclusions; these economists had either endorsed the Plan to please the Government and mobilised sufficient courage to criticise it only when the public became restive, or that they were mere theoreticians who had no idea of realities.

Another way economists were discredited was when they handled economic affairs from position of power. Some of them, known for their discourses on economic subjects, made complete shambles of their portfolios.

Lack of restraint is another reason for the fall of the Indian economist in public eyes. One instance is the recent report on industrial licencing. This valuable analysis has been vitiated because, in the process of analysis, an impression has been created that it is an attack on one business house. It is of the essence of public policy that individuals should not be singled out for attack unless they are guilty of transgressing the laws of the country in which case established procedures are to be followed.

Also the reference to "Marwari Capital", "Gujarati Capital" and "Parsi Capital" in an official document, at a time when the need for national integration in the face of sub-nationalism is great, is a deplorable lapse on the part of the author of the report who should have known better than to lay stress on communal aspects of ownership of capital.

Lack of restraint, and a possible desire for publicity, once again characterise the same report when the economist by his own admission, "oversteps" the terms of reference, and recommends nationalisation of commercial banks.

Another glaring example of economists giving up a scientific approach to economic problem is to be found in the so-called report of four economists on bank nationalisation. It is not a research document, but a tendentious pamphlet based on the apparent ideological bias of its authors in favour of bank nationalisation. Economists, like other citizens, are free to hold any ideology of their choice. But they should be careful to present their ideological thesis as *ideological thesis* not as a *research document*. In presenting it as a report of economists they seem to have lent themselves as a tools in the hands of professional politicians. Prof. Vakil aptly remarked at the recent conference that: "We must remember that economists are not saints. They have their own careerist goals and aspira-

tions. They too are tempted by the lure of office, by the glamour attached to association with those who wield power and authority. The dreams of all economists may not wholly be in the sphere of scholarship. It is therefore not proper to consider the viewpoint of any economist as the economic viewpoint under all circumstances. Hence, it is a special task of all economists, or it should become their task, that they should drastically and ruthlessly criticise one another's viewpoints. They should constantly lay before the profession and before the public the different aspects of an economic issue. Only then can the public be made aware of when and where an economist who steps into the world of policy has drawn a conclusion based upon his non-economic bias, or upon the non-economist influences operating upon him. It is well known that the men in authority are always on the quest for those who will support their particular positions. The public may be deluded in thinking that such and such an economist influences the politician or the authorities, though more often than not, it is the latter, who by

picking the suitable brand of advisers, gets some technical support for his own positions."

The independence of many economists has been seriously compromised by their acceptance of research assignments from Governmental agencies, particularly the Planning Commission. In private, some economists admit this as having happened in their case. They regret their inability to appear on public platforms where they may have to express views which would be unpalatable to the powers that be, and thus jeopardise the patronage doled out to them.

Many an Indian economist has fallen into another trap also. He has sought to become a politician in order to gain "popularity". At best they have become half-backed politicians just as many a full-fledged politician has become a half-baked economist with disastrous results to the country. The economic mess in the country is a tribute to the combined efforts of both.

Unless the economists adopt a code of conduct and assert their independence of thinking and maintain their integrity, they will incur the wrath of the public for dereliction of their duty.

NON-CONGRESS GOVERNMENTS — Continued from page 1

rule, Haryana had a Ministry of 23 in a House of 81 and the United Front had the support of 40. Technically, the Centre was not legally correct in imposing President's rule when the Ministry had the support of a majority in the legislature. The Centre could have waited a little longer, given a longer rope to the United Front and kept itself scrupulously aloof till the ruling coalition lost its majority. Centre has to maintain not merely constitutional proprieties but seem to be doing it. The eight-party United Front government of Punjab headed by Mr. Gurnam Singh had one thing to its credit. It had promoted Hindu-Sikh unity which never existed before. And the odium of bringing this government down should squarely be placed on the shoulders of the Congress. Congress supported the defection of 16 U.F. members headed by Mr. Lachman Singh Gill to form a minority government.

The fall of the United Front governments in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is mainly due to their own internal strains and contradictions. The constituents of the United Front were not even united on their minimum programme. In Bihar, for example, there was a controversy over the recognition of Urdu and about some land reforms. In U.P. there was a raging controversy over the release of the arrested State government employees and the abolition of land revenue. There were allegations that all ministers were strengthening their own parties using the official machinery and that all advisory committees of the ministries were filled with partymen. In U.P., Communists and S.S.P. ministers resigned so that they could freely criticise and agitate.

The Congress has not covered itself with glory in Bihar by supporting the ministry of Soshit Dal headed by Mr. B. P. Mandal. Mr. Mandal is not a member of the legislature and he was a minister for six months. Now he has been nominated to the Council by the Governor.

There are rumblings in the ruling Samyukta Vidhayak Dal of Madhya Pradesh. The Chief Minister Mr. G. N. Singh has promised to support a Soshit Dal of Adivasis and Harijans. The constituents of S.V.D. are suspicious of each other.

The problem of defection has assumed gigantic proportions. No party has come out of this unscathed. And, every party has burnt its fingers. The blame for this state of affairs should be shared by all parties. If the so-called major national parties refuse to reward defectors with ministerships, there would not be any more defections.

The United Front governments all over India have failed. But, they should succeed. Because on their success depends the success of democracy. The Congress which provided a stable government upto now has lost ground and is losing it rapidly. No alternative party seems to be emerging to take its place. All opposition parties are gaining at the cost of Congress. And the United Fronts seem to be inevitable. So, U.F. governments should succeed. May be, out of the experience of the working of the U.F. governments, polarisation of political forces may take place and a two or three party system may emerge in India too.

Withdrawal Of British Forces

Adam Adil

"THE sun never sets on the British Empire" was the complacent British belief in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Even while facing worst days of the Second World War, Prime Minister Winston Churchill in a fit of imperialistic arrogance, declared that he had not become His Majesty's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire.

But hardly did the then proud Britishers or the doggedly strong-willed Churchill realise that even the mighty British empire was subject to change and would be ultimately liquidated, and that Britain would be reduced to a second rate power. Recently British Chancellor of Exchequer Roy Jenkins admitted "we are no longer a superpower."

The metamorphosis in the character of Britain as a world power began with the decision of Labour Government in the wake of its coming to power in 1945 under the leadership of Prime Minister Clement Attlee, to grant freedom to British colonial countries like India, Burma and Ceylon. These and other countries which were under hegemony of Britain for well over a century became free in 1947 and after. Now, there are few countries on British imperialistic roll. Such countries as are still on that roll, like Swaziland, are scheduled to attain freedom within a short while.

Nearly 20 years after the momentous British decision to permit the liquidation of British empire, England has taken another, no less a momentous, decision. That is to liquidate its military bases east of Suez. These bases had remained as the last relics of British imperial might and reminded the powers that be that Britain was still a power to count.

As a result of this decision, Britain will withdraw 35,000 troops from Singapore and 6,000 from the Persian Gulf areas, by 1971. It will retain only 10,000 troops in Hong Kong. The main reason behind the decision to withdraw forces is Britain's inability to bear the heavy financial burden involved in maintaining such a large force on foreign soil. It cost Britain nearly 2.4 billion dollars.

The decision to withdraw British forces east of Suez is a simple one so far as Britain is concerned. But it has created a number of problems for other countries especially in those which derived financial and political stability from those forces.

Undoubtedly the withdrawal of British forces will create a big power vacuum in the region comprising the Federation of Malaysia and the nearby island of Singapore. This region, constantly under the shadow of Chinese threat had its morale boosted by the presence of the British troops as well as by the strategic

accessibility of the British fleet on Far Eastern waters. The withdrawal of the British troops would in a way result in the loss of self confidence on the part of countries affected to resist Chinese threat. Fortunately, however, both the Federation of Malaysia and Singapore have taken steps towards organising a NATO-style defence agreement with Australia and New Zealand. Although such an agreement may not adequately compensate for the pull-back of the British troops, it is bound to lay the foundation of a permanent defence arrangement which will ensure the safety and security of the region. Further, on its own Singapore is moving closer to Japan, which will help the island's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, to quote his own words, "to develop my own muscles."

The power vacuum in the Middle East, where the British troops guarded the Persian Gulf oil route will not be as great as that in the Far East. A number of oil States namely Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain, have already shown a desire for a strong self-help alliance. Further, troops affected in this region by the withdrawal is not as large as in the Far East. Secondly, the oil States did not have to depend upon the British troops for their economic stability as has been the case with Singapore. Yet, the pull-back does constitute a risk which the oil countries must safeguard against. The most likely trouble-makers in the region will be the militant leftist parties or groups who are under the influence either of Russia or China.

Whatever may be the repercussion of the British decision to withdraw troops from east of Suez, the British financial plight due to large defence commitments is genuine. Britain has 4,29,000 men in uniform; its navy has always been in the trim and streaming regularly through the oceans of the world, its military bases are situated at most strategic places, its air force keeps a watch from Cornwall to Hong Kong, it maintains 52,000 troops on the Rhine, and supports a sizable part of West's defence potentiality. All this means money—tremendous money, which Britain, under present circumstances, can hardly afford. Recently, Britain was forced to cancel an order for 50 U.S.A.-111 swing-wing jet craft in order to save one billion dollars over ten years.

Under the circumstances Britain's decision to withdraw its troops from the east of Suez is understandable. But the decision calls for certain immediate safeguards against communist infiltration in the affected regions. Fortunately, as stated earlier the regions themselves are alert against such a danger and are planning to take

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Higher Education In India*

R. Srinivasan

WHILE higher education in India ambles along there gather books and more books analysing the maladies, suggesting cures, and generally offering wholesome advice. Either the suggestions remain mere paper exercises or perhaps the advisors get vicarious satisfaction—you may not be able to politick through the countless committees and boards that infest our universities, but you may at least write to get things off your chest. Thus most writings on the improvement of higher education remain mainly academic exercises; the universe that is analyzed may well exist in the Antipodes or on the moon. For this, certainly the analysts are not to be blamed. We have to lay the blame on the system. What is true of higher and lower education in our country is true of our public corporations, of our transport service or our government.

Therefore, educationists take each other's washing and the system if anything needs a thorough cleansing, a more thorough clean-up than was envisaged nearly seventy years ago. Our educational system is responsive only to student mobs who will *gherao* university officials, to politicians who will happily use it for bestowing their favours, to the baits of the University Grants Commission and to the big stick and soft words of Foundations, native and foreign. In this context writings on Indian education remind us of those exotic plants kept in the waiting rooms of international air terminals; artificially lighted by electricity, they have no value except as poor decoration.

Against this state of educational affairs, a few optimists have been battling, but in vain. Professor Shah collected a magnificent volume of essays on *Education, Scientific Policy and Underdeveloped countries*. Along with Principal Airan he edited another volume, *Climbing a Wall of Glass*. While the earlier mentioned book was noticed well by the press, in the educational circles, curiously, there was not a ripple. The present volume on higher education originally appeared in a special issue of the *Quest*. The *Quest* contributions were supplemented by about half a dozen pieces and the result is the present volume. Its merits are several. It contains some excellent analysis on the system of higher education; for instance, the piece by Edward Shils has been rescued from the near oblivion of an old *Encounter* file. One may not at all agree with Professor Kamat's analysis of the recommendations of the Education Commission. He is too worried about the possibility of casteism creeping into higher education, were the universities to be classified into major, minor and

infant. But why should not casteism of a sort enter into education? The first class of a university examination do form a caste-for "a non-first class" cannot enter into the charmed circle. Colgate University is not Harvard; neither is Agra, Delhi. Why not then recognize this? But whatever, the opinions of Professor Kamat, they are worthwhile reading, thinking has gone into his formulations and one can respectfully differ from him. Principal Dhabolkar takes the limited theme of creatively channelizing the widely prevalent unrest among the youth of the colleges, and his suggestions are definitely worthy of consideration. Professor Hulbe's piece on the work that his college did by way of rural reform is virtually a repetition of an earlier piece that he wrote in another book on education. The only saving grace of its inclusion here, is that the other book has joined the diplodocus. Professor Taylor again repeats a theme on which he has written earlier—the reform of our examination system and a proposal for boldly reorganizing the entire scheme. But though his theme is old, his suggestions are novel and the details worked out indicate careful consideration of the problems from several angles. Mr. V. V. John's essay is inconsequential and the volume would have lost nothing by its exclusion.

Though academic men perhaps have some claim to write on higher education, have other sections forfeited the right? The businessmen, the bankers, the political leaders, the social reformers have as much a stake in higher education as have educationists—in fact education is too precious to be left solely to the educationists; the public should debate the issues involved. If this is a legitimate claim, the book does suffer from a rather narrow orientation—for no non-academic person has been asked to contribute to this volume.

Surprisingly, when one tries to think of another book on higher education in India, which has a similar wide coverage, one finds that there is none such. This is perhaps the greatest value of this. But the lack of an index makes it difficult to use and the editor would perhaps agree with your reviewer that this indeed is a serious shortcoming.

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effective precautions. But United States has its own role to perform in this respect. It may not seek to fill the power vacuum created in the regions by its own military presence. But it cannot obviously absolve itself of its responsibility, in the interest of world peace and the political stability of these areas, of strengthening and consolidating the mutual defence arrangements among countries both in the Far East and the Middle East, affected by the British decision for troop pull-back.

* Edited by A. B. Shah, Lalvani, Bombay 1967. Rs. 15.

Reviews

The South East Asian World

Prof. Keith Buchanan, G. Bell & Sons, London (1967), 27s. 6d.

SOUTH East Asia has now acquired immense importance in world politics. As a result there is a spate of books and articles on the region. Prof. Buchanan's book, however, stands as a class by itself. It has many rare qualities such as depth of scholarship, an original point of view and a comprehensive presentation of the subject. The book enables the reader to have a panoramic view of the region, of the life there and of its manifold problems. It is written in a mellifluous style.

Prof Buchanan rightly claims this volume to be primarily concerned with trends and forces that have been shaping the diverse nations of the region. In the opinion of the author there are many common problems in S.E. Asia despite glaring diversities. He discerns the growth of a cultural revolution in the area as a reaction to the humiliating treatment meted out to the indigenous culture by the colonialists.

The term 'predeveloped region' is used to describe S.E. Asia as this was in the past a region of developed and sophisticated societies whose progress was retarded and stifled by Western colonialism.

The easy accessibility of these countries, their rich rice-growing soil and the absence of dense population are the reasons cited to explain the heavy migration into the area as well as the racial, cultural, religious and linguistic diversities to be found there.

The author narrates how the second World War altered the situation and how the Japanese success disproved the myth of European invincibility and how the Japanese controlled areas began to smoulder with nationalist feelings which gradually weakened the colonial structure. One of the most important aspects of political geography of S.E. Asia, we are told, is the search for national identity as those countries had to accept after independence territorial demarcations arbitrarily settled by the foreigner. Prof. Buchanan maintains that the geopolitical study of this region would be incomplete without reference to the personalities of Charismatic leaders and their ideologies.

Three geopolitical forces clash or converge here in the region according to the author. They are:

- (1) the struggle of the emergent countries to assert their individualities and achieve an economic breakthrough
- (2) the influence of the Asian communist regime
- (3) the attempts of the West and especially the U.S. to channel the first and counteract the second.

The countries of the region are going through a stormy period of transition. The new regimes are

struggling in their experiments with different political systems. It is a struggle between life and death to them.

The reader is fascinated as he glances at the 'plates' which include many attractive pictures depicting the life, art, architecture, agriculture and natural vegetation of the region very graphically. This section enhances the intrinsic value of the book.

V. B. PATANKAR

Can Indira Accept This Challenge?

S. Vijayanand Bharathi, Distributors, Vora & Co., Bombay, Rs. 20/-.

THIS big book of over 500 pages is a bold attempt towards exposition of problems facing the country since the struggle for Independence entered the final stage. In the introductory chapter, the author has discussed, rather deeply, the working of the Indian National Congress. Here, he has also taken pains to analyse the role of religion in Indian politics.

After Independence, Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, as the first Prime Minister, started shaping the destiny of the country. It was difficult for any author not to take a note of his decisions and directives. While upholding the bold and sound decisions of Mr. Nehru and supporting his brave and timely actions, Shri Bharathi spares no words to expose his short-falls and his wrong decisions. Pointed reference has been made by the author to the dreams of Nehru which were based, he says, on no scientific basis. The chapter on Nehru and his policies is rather lengthy but rightly so.

The author needs to be complimented for his efforts to make his study complete from all angles. Firstly, it is an objective study. Secondly, he has scrupulously refrained from being drawn into party politics. This has helped him to paint an unbiased picture of the political life as it exists today.

The chapter on 'Defence of India' needs particular mention. Every reader can draw from it lessons for himself and for the country. In fact, this chapter should be also read abroad. It provides a suitable reply to the question 'Defence against whom?' which used to be a favourite question of Mr. Nehru and his most inefficient Defence Minister at the time when Communist China invaded India in 1962.

The question "What is Planned Economy?" has also been ably discussed in the chapter devoted to planning.

On the background of the national vacuum created by Mr. Nehru's death, Mr. Shastri assumed the responsibility by becoming the second Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy. His career was, however, short. Mrs Indira Gandhi has been leading the country since his untimely death. The author introduces her, but stops there. Presumably, to wait and watch how she moves further. He has only posed the question. Can Indira accept this challenge? He has not presumed to answer it.

ACHYUT GARGI

With Many Voices

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

Mr. Johnson has made it clear where he stands. He is a global American. This is the real issue of the election, and on this issue Mr. Johnson represents what is radical and adventurous in the American spirit.

—*The Economist*, December 30.

Democratic socialism, like vintage capitalism, is the natural victim of modern technology and associated organization and planning.

—J. K. Galbraith, former U.S. Ambassador in India, *The New Industrial State*, February 3.

It was the sudden gleam in the human mind that generated ideas. Committees did not discover penicillin or invent the jet engine.

—Dr. Atma Ram, *Times of India*, January 4.

Now I can tell you that the so-called planning never helps the peasants but creates difficulties!

—Gulzarilal Nanda, *March of the Nation*, February 3.

Tito seems convinced he has found a way to make a Communist system work—abandon it.

—*U.S. News & World Report*, January 15.

People with a little, rather than people with nothing, make revolutions.

—Colin Cross, *Observer*, February 4.

It is patriotic to die, but not to lie, for one's country.

—Aleksandr Ginzburg, Soviet writer, quoted in *Time*, January 19.

In India more than in most countries the political climate is determined largely by the economic atmosphere.

—Frank Moraes, *The Indian Express*, February 5.

If any millowner closes his mill saying no profit, we shall catch him and put him in prison and make him do hard labour until he vomits every pie of the workers' money.

—S. A. Dange, *The Hindu*, February 2.

Burn the Courts, Tear the Constitution, Hang Indira Gandhi.

—Slogans raised by students of Marxist-led Kerala Students' Federation, *The Indian Express*, February 19.

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

Please enrol me as a subscriber to FREEDOM FIRST.

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The eventual fate of South and Southeast Asia depends more and more on the decisions of America, China and Russia than on the decisions of the nations of the area.

—Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew quoted in *Time*, February 23.

The Marxist party has established itself as the most prosperous capitalist enterprise in the State (Kerala).

—M. Sivaram, *The Economic Times*, February 27.