PREFACE

This book is the third unit of my trilogy on Indian political society. The first was published in 1968. As its title *Social Tensions in India* indicates, it dealt with social tensions, but with only some of them, that occurred in the Indian polity. Integration and not assimilation being the fundamental tenor of the Constitution of India, I expounded in it the nature of these tensions, excluding the ones concerning inter-State and Nation-State relations. The tensions dealt with concerned linguistic, cultural and ethnic interrelations, prefaced by a detailed discussion of the social phenomena of tension, conflict and integration as well as their presence and treatment in the past and in other national societies. As I stated in my preface to that book I was guided in my endeavour by the conviction which Abraham Lincoln, the greatest of known practical democrats had declared, "If we could first know what we are and whither we are tending we could better judge what to do and know how to do it".

The second book of the trilogy is named *Whither India?* In it, I attempted to follow up Lincoln's guideline and as befitted the occasion, the silver jubilee of the independence of the country, I presented how the nation had moved during the first twenty-five years. The brief account of how the noble Constitution of India was implemented is calculated to indicate the trend, or the 'tending' in Lincoln's words. The considerations of the kinds of tensions not dealt with in the first book, the distinct emergence of quite new political practices, and the breakaway from the old moorings by the then Prime Minister and her party, necessitated more an interrogative than an interpretative approach to the facts as revealed in the daily news-
papers. This explains the title of the book, *Whither India?* However, as is made clear in its preface, from time to time the interpretative approach did crop up and in a few places and on certain matters my own view of the situation finds unequivocal expression. For example, I have expressed quite definitely my view about the then existing poll-law being very defective as also about the elections of 1971 and 1972 as having been far from fair and free. I have found the nature of the then rulers, i.e., Mrs Gandhi with the Congress, as power-hungry and power-conscious, and have suggested that their attitude towards the opposition parties and democracy, representative and parliamentary, was not likely to be healthy. More positively I have asserted that Mrs Gandhi and her Congress appear to be set against a free press and a strong independent judiciary. All this was not only written but also the typescript of it ready before August 15, 1972. With all the delay that accompanies the process of getting a manuscript put into the hands of a willing publisher and at that particular time with all the trouble of shortage of paper and of power cut in force, Mr. Sadanand G. Bhatkal was able and kind enough to present me a printed and bound copy of the book on my birthday, i.e., December 12, 1973. However, the book actually went on the market only in February 1974.

I had every hope when I wrote *Whither India?* that I myself would be able to answer the query in the book and would complete my trilogy on the Indian Political Society. In that hope I went on keeping relevant cuttings from the two English dailies of Bombay, the *Times of India* and the *Indian Express*. By the beginning of 1975, with the Bihar movement at its crest, I felt sure the way my answer would go. The lightning strike of the Emergency, however, quietened my enthusiasm. Yet I persisted in my business of keeping the cuttings. Later by the end of June 1976, I began to formulate my answer which under the circumstances of the day took a different shape and form. With a tentative formulation of the answer I commenced sorting out the newspaper cuttings. When I had gone through a part of the work, Mrs Gandhi's order to prolong the Emergency and the life of the Lok Sabha became known. In utter despair I stopped my work. For with the kind of rigorous regulations and peremptory disposal of matters, a person like me could not hope to get a book of this kind published at all. It would have been a sheer waste of energy and time, both of which I am in very short supply. I began working on another book till the day when Mrs Gandhi — two days previous to the one on which Mr. Jimmy Carter, one of the most versatile, informal and democratic of Presidents of the USA, was to have entered on his high office — announced that elections to the Lok Sabha would be held in March. With as much alacrity as I could manage at my age, I turned to write my answer to the question posed by my *Whither India?*

This time, my inner voice told me that the Congress of Mrs. Gandhi will not get the kind of majority it had. The reasons for my firm belief were two: First, the generalisation of James Bryce, perhaps the prince of English academic intellectuals of his time — he had at that time, i.e. 1921, no less than thirty-one honorary degrees — a wise statesman, an eminent historian and writer on political science, that “throughout the course of history every winter of despondency has been followed by a joyous springtime of hope”, was ringing in my ears. Second, the stir started by students and youths of Gujarat at the end of 1973 and in the early months of 1974, whatever its origin, was called by them Nava Nirmana, “New Creation”. It was their stir and their sacrifice, as Jayaprakash Narayan so generously acknowledged, that was the inspiration of the Bihar students' movement which under his guidance and leadership soon grew into a national struggle. The Bihar youths, when they began to stir against rising prices, and rampant corruption, also named their stir-groups Nava Nirman Samitis. J P spelled his idea of total revolution, which is more ‘Nava Nirman' than mere overthrow of a ministry, whether of a State or of the Union. Such calls under the leadership of an earnest and unselfish leader like J P could not fail to have effect on Indians.

The Gujarat elections of 1975 were successfully fought by a front, which, consisting of the chief four opposition parties other than the CPI and the CPM, called itself Janata Front.
India Recreates Democracy

The Front had not come up to the composite party type expectations of Jayaprakash Narayan.

J P, when he came out of the Emergency regime's solitary confinement, in spite of the total breakdown of his health, took the earliest opportunity to announce the formation of a Janata Party. The stir was also for preserving democracy which was rightly seen by J P and others to be in danger. Through the nineteen months of Emergency Mrs Gandhi had given a death-blow to democracy. She had very dexterously brought about a situation in which one win at the general elections for the Lok Sabha would have made her a legitimatised supreme ruler, in other words a dictator, without the need to use that word which is obnoxious to many nations in the world even today. The move that Mrs. Gandhi made for that denouement was totally and yet so silently foiled by J P-led India.

Patiently bearing his diseases and courageously defying death J P led the nation, and brought back the soul-lifting and peace-giving institution, called Democracy, for us Indians of today and of the days to come. Young Nachiketas, 2500 years before J P, had dared the God of Death in his den and had exacted from Him some metaphysical doctrines, which have ever since become a part and parcel of the composite culture of India (Bharat).

J P's role in the second liberation of the country received an extraordinary tribute from President Carter of the United States who, going beyond the bounds of protocol, sent Jayaprakash Narayan, who had no diplomatic status but was only a private citizen going to the USA for medico-surgical treatment, a telegram on his landing on the American soil. The telegram of welcome also contained the following statement: "Your devotion to freedom and democracy have inspired us all". This compliment from the President of the country of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln combined with the fact that the movement, which J P led to success was named Nava Nirmana, new creation, has led me to give the name to this book that it has. Democracy was said to have died by some gentlemen who had introduced in the death columns of the Times of India, on 28th June 1975, a notification which announced the death of D-Ocracy, D-E-M, i.e., death of democracy. Demo-
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Mrs. Gandhi Acquires Supremacy in the Congress

sation or posing with the Malaysian leader and the Secretary-General of the World Muslim Organisation Mr. Tunku Abdul Rahman, all published on August 5, 1971. On August 10, the Times of India carried a radio-photo in which Mrs. Gandhi figures standing with Mr. Andrei Gromyko, distressed in look but evidently spelling out to him the whole predicament created by Bangla Desh refugees. The next day the same newspaper printed a fine radio-photo in which Mrs. Gandhi stands out as a grand dame superbly majestic yet gracious. She is seen presenting a bouquet of flowers to the President Mr. V. V. Giri on his 77th birthday. She appears far too portly to judge by her other photos, but quite befitting the situation, in view of the body-build of the President.

I may confide to the reader that my scruples regarding my remarks about dress and personal appearance were overridden partially by the observation of Mrs. Mrinal Gore about Mrs. Gandhi having appeared in a nine-yard sari in her Maharashtra tour in her campaign of 1972, and more particularly by Mrs. Gandhi's own specific remarks about her dress and personal appearance made in late 1975 and early 1976 (T.I., 2-4-76). My listless collection terminates the month, very significantly with Mrs. Gandhi this time almost a senior college girl in appearance, close up with Mr. Charles Percy, U.S. Republican Senator, a slim, tall but rather young gentleman (T.I., 30-8-71). If Mr. Percy was trying to cajole Mrs. Gandhi, it is clear he miserably failed. In all probability he was attempting the impossible viz., of explaining Mr. Nixon's, the Republican President of USA, stand in an apologetic manner.

Mrs. Gandhi finding that her hectic, nay even frantic, phone calls on the power-world of humanity had failed to achieve much, but most laudably resolved to try the way of peaceful settlement till the last, even under the great strain of the Governmental duties, undertook a tour of some parts of that power-world. She very rightly fixed upon the great country USA as her main and central concern. Mr. Nixon, the President of that great democracy, evidently tried to impress his pro-Pakistani point of view but her personality triumphed. When she returned to India, Mrs. Gandhi resolutely went into the fray for a righteous cause undeterred by whatever threats Mr. Nixon might have held out to her.

The handling of the whole situation, in the way she had done, immediately raised Mrs. Gandhi's international stature and made her almost an idol for Indians. When the decisive victory came, thanks to the daring of our nascent navy and the courage of our airmen and soldiers, Mrs. Gandhi's image in the public eyes is indicated by the epithets which many of her more devout admirers applied to her. She was called an incarnation of demon-killing Durga.

While one must be all praise for her firm resolve, patient handling and unilateral cease-fire, one cannot feel quite happy about the large gathering that Mrs. Gandhi got up through her admirers, almost on the eve of the end of the conflict. The specially organised meet was utilized—and one cannot help thinking that it was so designed in full knowledge that enemy planes by then were incapable of penetrating into Delhi—to stamp the Durga image on the minds of the people. It indicated that Mrs. Gandhi was going personally to cash in on the victory which the Indian armed forces had secured for the nation. The inferential indication turned into an actual fact, when immediately after the declaration of cease-fire by her, i.e. the day after the cease-fire announcement she gifted to herself, of course through the medium of the President, the award of the honour Bharata Ratna, the highest that is there in this land, though in contravention of a distinct provision in the Constitution. The President is the technical bestower but as the Indian President is held to be acting only on the advice of his Cabinet which, virtually and almost theoretically means the Prime Minister, the gift was in reality of the Prime Minister! None of the military personnel involved in the war was awarded any honour before Mrs. Gandhi. Democratic tradition would have been respected if Mrs. Gandhi had got the award later, say sometime in 1972. First the fighting personnel, at least that section of it that had lain its life for winning the war, should have been honoured. The procedure adopted, over and above showing indecent haste, was technically wrong. According to Art. 53(c) of the Constitution of India the Supreme Command of the Defence Forces of the
Humbly dedicated

to

the men and women
who got imprisoned and exiled during the emergency
June 26, 1975 to March 24, 1977

or

died as prisoners
in the emergency gaols
as well as to
the families of all these

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