

Weekly Copy Ps. 5

Annual Subscription Rs. 2

OPINION

Vol. XX

25th DECEMBER 1979

No. 34

"A! FREEDOM IS A NOBLE THING"

THIS is the last issue that will reach readers before the election. Accordingly, it is necessary to reiterate "the order of priorities for all true lovers of the country. One, Indira Gandhi must not have power again, be Prime Minister. Two, she must not have a share in power, be a member of a ruling coalition with another party. Three, she must receive punishment for her crimes during the Emergency". This, said on October second this year, has been the burden of *Opinion's* argument since the dissolution of the Lok Sabha and the announcement of fresh elections many months ago. It is now for you, bestowers of the vote, to bring this about for the real good of our country.

In this connection, you will find of great interest and profit the following editorial article from that very distinguished, independent journal of global readership, *The Economist* of London. In its issue of December Eighth, it says:

"India's 350 million voters have it in their power to make the United States the world's biggest democracy. This could happen, a month from now, if India cedes the title by re-electing Mrs. Gandhi. The recent lemming-like rush of politicians and power-brokers to her side confirms that the tide is running strongly in her favour. If it cannot be turned back, Indians will need to stack sandbags around any institutions they hold dear.

"Make no mistake about the frail, grey-haired woman who is battling against what once looked like insurmountable odds to get back to power. She is the same iron-willed autocrat who closed down Indian democracy for 20 months in 1975-77. She has never disavowed the ends or the means of that contrived "emergency", except to shift the blame to subordinates. The accessories to those "abuses", starting with her notorious son Sanjay, are still her closest advisers. Moreover, they are carrying on exactly as before, threatening to throttle the press by reinstating a Tass-like government news agency and using gangs of hooligans to intimidate opponents, including judges in their own courts.

"Mrs. Gandhi herself continues to display a flagrant disregard for truth or the public good: she exploits communal tensions while proclaiming herself India's only "secular" leader; she encourages the unions to make the same inflationary demands for which she clobbered them while in office; and she invokes imaginary conspiracies involving the present government and Pakistan. Although other opportunistic politicians are also latching on to the anti-western bandwagon, Mrs. Gandhi has given her demagogic appeal a particularly irresponsible twist by suggesting that the

fence-mending agreements which her successors signed with India's neighbours were give-aways that ought to be undone.

"Indira Gandhi is an all-too-well-known quantity to India's electorate. The self-serving illegalities of her emergency rule have been exhaustively documented: in the three-volume report of the Shah commission and in the separate inquiry into the corrupt dealings of her son's Maruti car company. Yet, less than three years after she was decisively rejected by Indian voters for the subversion of their system, those same voters look like bringing her back. Why?

"Mainly because of the self-serving follies of her successors and rivals. The Janata party which defeated her in March, 1977, was never a party in more than name. The assorted peacocks who joined together to oust Mrs. Gandhi soon lapsed into preening their own feathers and feathering their own nests. The resulting administration, while not malevolent like Mrs. Gandhi's, was—apart from a few shining exceptions including its foreign policy—simply inept. Last June it died as it had lived, in an undignified scramble for advantage.

"The collapse of Morarji Desai's government was the saving of Mrs. Gandhi. With it went the last pretence of principle in Indian politics. Was there anything to choose between the avatar of the emergency and Mr. Charan Singh who, having manoeuvred himself into unelected office as prime minister, proceeded to revive the very same preventive detention laws which Mrs. Gandhi had abused in 1975? Only a rosy-coloured memory of order in the streets, price control and trains running on time, and so Mrs. Gandhi's comeback began.

"Politics is always about winning but never more so than when party lines and policies have ceased to count. With Mrs. Gandhi looking more and more a winner, more and more of her former enemies have been reaching out for her sari tails. Even the man who is ostensibly her chief rival, the Janata leader, Jagjivan Ram, is reported to have been bargaining with her until just before their respective manifestoes were released recently; he is sure to start dealing again if the election produces a less than decisive result.

"Last summer this newspaper endorsed Jagjivan Ram as the least bad leader for India. Given the debased standards of Indian politics today he remains that, in spite of his flirtation with Mrs. Gandhi. And, for all his failures of courage during the emergency, he could be something else too: the least unreliable bulwark, in or out of government, against a return to autocracy. This is what Indian voters must be looking for in an election which offers no clear moral choices. Now that party labels and alliances have become all but meaningless, the best a voter can do is to opt for the anti-Indira candidate with the best prospect of saving his soul in the inevitable parleys with the devil.

"Once the politicians have done their worst, the burden of preserving India's freedoms will be shared across a much wider base. It was not only Mrs. Gandhi's parliamentary colleagues who crumbled during the emergency; it was the pillars of Indian society; the industrialists who filled Congress party coffers (and individual pockets) in return for the

opportunity to make quick money at the expense of workers whose wages had been frozen and whose rights to industrial action had been taken away ; the bureaucrats who did the nepotic bidding of Mrs. Gandhi's son while raising their own under-the-counter charges for performing their jobs ; the newspaper proprietors who allowed their publications to become vehicles for government propaganda ; the police who gloried in their own untrammelled power to oppress. All these people owe a debt to India. They can settle it by resisting every attempt to resurrect the Indira Raj." Stark and clear is the choice before you—Slavery or Freedom.

FROM THE DAYS OF INDIRA'S DICTATORSHIP

"Professional defenders of the Government of Mrs. Gandhi, Ambassadorial and other, might at least reflect on how ridiculous they sound when they maintain that the Emergency was essential because conditions had deteriorated so badly that nothing else would do. Don't they realise that in saying this they are condemning most completely Mrs. Gandhi and her Government? Here is a Chief, with the largest majority in Parliament any Prime Minister has had, a Party solidly behind her, the governments of all the states but two belonging to it, an obedient administration, loyal regulatory forces, an arsenal of laws to meet all contingencies, allowing conditions to so deteriorate! What after that, can possibly be said in her favour!" (May 4, 1976)

And this is the person who promises you stability and order, if returned to power now !!

* * * *

"And what is this truth ? First and foremost, that for no public purpose was the Emergency imposed. You had powers enough, laws sufficient, instruments ample, to have dealt fully and effectively with the situation at that time, a situation that in fact would not have emerged at all if you had not, for purposes of your own, wished it to. Putting it so bluntly to so great a person no doubt sounds harsh, yet things being as they are, it is not for this student to temporize or be evasive. Secondly, the ill-effects of the Emergency are many and far-reaching. They have gone beyond the physical ; they have affected the Indian psyche most detrimentally. Because of your Emergency, the Indian today is a lesser person than he or she was, a more ignoble specimen of humanity than in the past. Something of incalculable value has been lost. The consciousness of being a free person, of being able to say what he thought, and do as he liked, that is no longer here. He has generally to look over his shoulder before he opens his mouth, to move carefully, to be ever watchful lest officialdom be offended. Not what is right, not what is reasonable, can be his criteria, but what will please authority, what will save him from even the shadow of ever-present danger. At any moment, by night or by day, his bell may be rung, his door knocked upon, and a policeman be there with a warrant to take him away into the unknown. Why ? What has he done ? He need not be told. What is the remedy ? None under the Emergency. But, but surely he can do something about it ? No, nothing, it is fate, inexorable,

OPINION, December 25, 1979

Tata Steel introduces special structurals for power towers

Tata LA-50, Tata Steel's new high yield, high strength, fine grain microalloy structural have been developed specially for use in such heavy load bearing applications as powerline towers, bridges and factory structures.

LA-50 structurals' microalloying elements permit the use of lighter sections of uniform strength, saving steel and cutting costs in every area : transportation, fabrication and erection. LA-50 also welds and forms with ease as the carbon percentage is restricted to just 0.2.

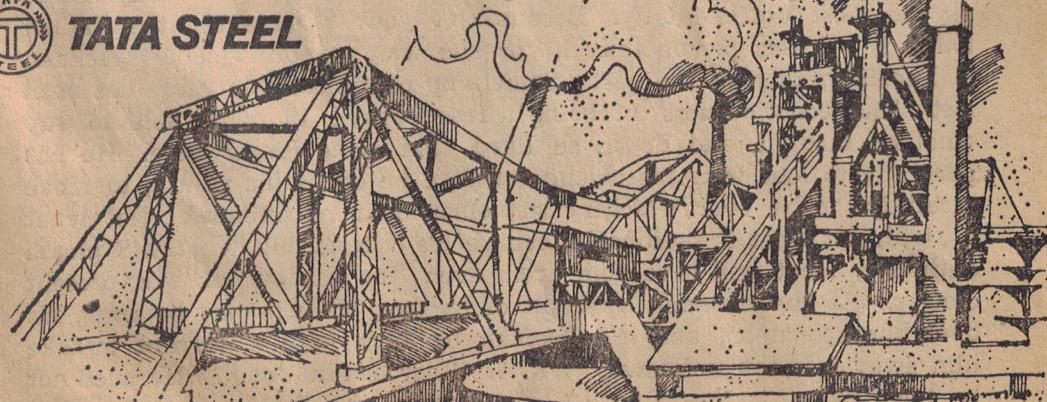
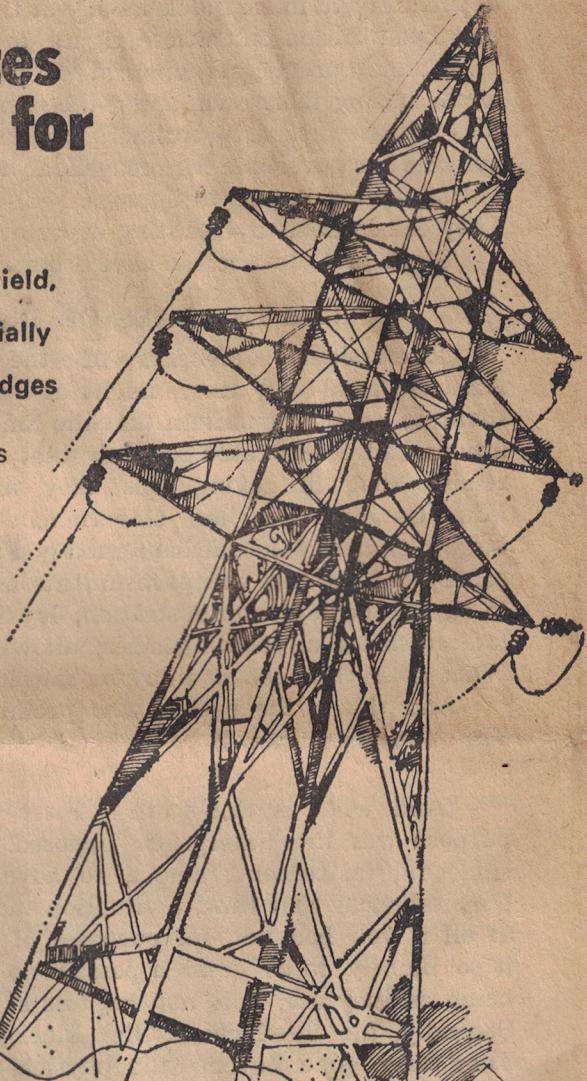
Tata LA-50 is available in most of our rationalised sizes of structurals.

For details please write to any of the following :

- 1 Director of Marketing, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, 43 Chowringhee Road, Calcutta-700 071
- 2 Joint Chief of Production Control, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, Jamshedpur-831 001
- 3 Sr. Application Engineer, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, New India Assurance Building, 87 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 001
- 4 Sr. Application Engineer, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, Bank of Baroda Building, 16 Parliament Street, New Delhi 110 001
- 5 Sr. Application Engineer, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, 20J Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bangalore 560 001
- 6 Sr. Application Engineer, The Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd, Park Centre, 24 Park Street, Calcutta 700 016



TATA STEEL



OPINION, December 25, 1979

unyielding, let him resign himself to it, that is all. The atmosphere evoked by this state of affairs is enhanced by the rumours of happenings, strange and oppressive, that always arise when censorship makes news untrustworthy and comment unfree. Realise then, great lady, what you with your Emergency have made of the ordinary Indian citizen. Sycophancy and knee-bending it has established as the primary virtues, independent thinking and impartial judgement as the worst faults. Among the poor as among the well-to-do, it has induced an atmosphere of fear. Both are uncertain, knowing not what may come next, apprehensive in the extreme. It has added a terrible dimension to Indian life. Is this your much-bruited discipline? If so, none can welcome it, not even those who in the short term benefit from it, provided of course, they have any regard for the country." (22-6-1976)

And this is the person who wants you to give her full power again !!

* * * *

"The time between the proclamation of emergency in 1975 and the call for new Lok Sabha elections in 1977 may well be termed the period of the Triumph of the Lie. During this period the lie spread throughout the country, trampling underfoot any that opposed it in the slightest degree, silencing by force or fraud the very few who dared to challenge it, altering the laws themselves to suit it, rewarding the many culpable that gathered round it knowingly or foolishly.

Nor have the originators and sponsors of the lie forsaken it to this day. On the contrary, they desire to raise its triumph to a new height by obtaining for it the suffrage of the people. You and I, good citizens, they wish, should put the noose around our necks with our own hands and entrust the rope to them to pull at their will....

"The Triumph of the Lie clearly necessitated the elimination of even the slightest sign of its opposite, nobility of character and mind expressing the truth. It did not matter if the quality was displayed, as in several of the instances, over two thousand years ago. Ancient or modern, it was anathema to Indira and her myrmidons. Their regime, born through lies, nurtured by lies and flourishing on lies, could not tolerate it. Will you let this Triumph of the Lie continue? Or will you firmly say to it, its authors and sycophants, 'Enough; tomorrow belongs to the truth and me'?" (March 15, 1977)

You said so then. Two and three-quarter years later will you change and help the Lie to Triumph?

54. Shri B. Venkatappiah,
B3/59, Safdayang Endow,
New Delhi 110 016.

Posted at Central Packet Sorting Office, Bombay on 25-12-1979

Regd. No. BYW 69

Licence No. 14. Licensed to post without pre-payment

Edited and published by A. D. Gorwala at 40C Ridge Road, Bombay 400 006 and printed by him at the Mouj Printing Bureau, Khatau Wadi, Bombay 400 004.
Proprietor: A. D. Gorwala.