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# OPINION

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## SHALL INDIA DISINTEGRATE ?

Shall India disintegrate ?  
Then six hundred million  
Indians will want the reason why.

SO greatly in despair are quite a number of Indians at the state of the country—following upon three decades of indifferent government, rising population, lack of attention to essentials, failure of moral values, general corruption and cynicism, gigantomania and facadism—all made even more apparent than usual by Indira's non-performance, pie-in-the-sky, constantly-lying eight months old regime, that they begin to consider the disintegration of India no longer an impossibility. 'Wouldn't we be much happier with our own smaller state,' they wonder, 'we'd make phenomenal progress. What is the rest of India but a drag upon us? And what opportunities for each one of our people to show his or her mettle! The Centre is no longer worthy of respect, nor does it command it. It is only a divisive and delaying factor. Away with it then, each one of us a new Singapore, a new Ceylon, respected in our own right among the nations of the world. The old India has served its turn; it is no longer of any use to us; it cannot give ordinary safety of life and property to the citizens of its own capital city, how can it keep the country together?'

There you have it, in that last question is the answer. In the ruin of the administration lie the seeds of the disintegration of India. Some time in the late fifties, in presenting his report on the Mysore administration this writer told the people of Mysore that if they thought good administration a worth-while thing, it was their duty to see to it that it was preserved. They, their representatives, the legislators, and the men selected by the legislators, the Ministers, were the people who had power over the administration. Each one of them could impair it to the point of ruin; the Ministers, acting on their own if unchecked by the other two, could do it; the legislator could do it; the people could do it. The Minister and the legislator acting together could increase the pace of the movement towards ruin; all three working together could bring it

about more speedily. And he warned that while there was a good deal of ruin in an administration, that it could be brought about, there was no doubt.

Thirty-three years after Independence, we seem to have reached that point. The Ministers, from Nehru downwards and onwards, and the legislators have directly ruined the administration. The people have helped to a certain extent by voting for such unworthy legislators and venerating such ministers. They were very gullible, and they are paying dearly for their gullibility. The administration being ruined, naturally doubts have arisen about the preservation of the country as one, for however much many so-called lovers of their land may choose to deny and controvert, the fact remains that the existence of India as a political unit was due to the administration. It forged the political unit of India out of several states and kingdoms, it gave it a generally uniform system of laws and management, a language in which most western-educated Indians could communicate with one another, laid the foundation of democratic political institutions which finally climaxed in our parliamentary system, a method of easy communication through the posts and telegraph and a easy way to travel through the railways. For the better running and development of its various activities, it created one of the finest of the world's high instruments of Administration, the Indian Civil Service, one of the principal concepts of whose thinking was that the official is no man's servant, but that all officials, elected and appointed, are colleagues, whatever their rank or position, and that they all serve the state equally, doing each his duty in his proper degree. This colleague-ship made it incumbent for the official to state his views frankly and fairly, following only the laws without fear of consequences and not allowing himself to be moved by the predilection or other feeling of the man he was working under. Another important concept of its thinking was that integrity was the principal administrative virtue, that to fail in it was to disgrace oneself utterly and could never be forgiven. Not unnaturally, as elected MPs of experience have themselves borne witness, failure of integrity among this top echelon was very, very rare.

The new Ministers and most of the new legislators had little regard for these high concepts of administration. They thought of themselves as the pride of the earth, colleagueship with appointed officials ! Nonsense, they were their personal servants and the sooner they learned this, the better all round ! As for integrity, very sound talking-point of course but politics has its own imperatives, and a departure from the straight and narrow, now and again, in the political master's interest, why, highly creditable; goodman, knows how to adjust himself ! Now, of us Indians generally it can be postulated that we rarely have standards of our own and live by them. We shape our standards and behaviours by those of persons we consider above us. And so the deterioration spread throughout the Indian world. No section, no group remained unaffected. Now, as the Spanish proverb has it, 'God says, do what you like, and pay the

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price !' And so we are paying the price, we are paying the price through Indira, through disintegration talk, through lack of confidence in one another, through continuous suspicion about who is trying to do down whom, through intrigue and corruption. Can the ruin of the administration still be averted, or its effects be reduced appreciably ? All things are possible to the mercy of God. 'His river flows steadily, no cold freezes it, no tiger seizes the pilgrim who approaches it. It is open to all, sinner and saint.' And yet it seems to this fallible and deficient intelligence that even to this there must be exceptions. If Indira approached it with a sincere heart, would the ruin be averted, would talk of disintegration cease ? Aye, there's the rub. Indira and a sincere heart, a contradiction in terms to begin with.

(To be continued)

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