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# OPINION

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## AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND INDIA

THE lengthy and learned disquisitions on the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan we have recently been inundated with notwithstanding, the basic facts remain that :

- (1) The takeover by the Russians is dangerous to us ;
- (2) The further take-over of Pakistan will be even more dangerous to us ;
- (3) It is very much in our interest that the second should not take place and the first be reversed.

All steps taken to bring about the desired results ought therefore to be welcomed by us.

We should in fact by this time have made common cause with Pakistan to help defend that country and by a united show of strength have caused the Soviet Union to desist from further aggression. Not only have we not done this, but we attempt to put every obstacle possible in the way of others who wish to help Pakistan resist the Russians, and so actually help us too. We object to the Americans giving Pakistan military aid, we object to the Chinese helping to shore up Pakistan's military strength, we object to the arming of Afghan refugees in Pakistan to fight for the freeing of their own country from the Russian yoke. Almost it seems we want the Russians to occupy Pakistan, despite the clear and immediate danger that would mean to us. Has the pro-Russian section obtained such sway over the minds of our rulers and intellectual elites that they begin to think it is a good thing to be Russified, included in the Soviet Empire ? Tired of democracy internally, our people fall willingly to the lures of plausibly masquerading dictatorship. In line with that kind of thinking, are they also tired of Independence and the many problems that flow from it in the modern complicated world and wish to rest their weary minds by throwing all the burdens together with all the power on broad Russian shoulders ? Come, come, fellow-citizens, think again, Indian independence is only thirty-three years old, and is surely well worth sustaining, even at the cost of much wrath in the Kremlin.

If Pakistan receives military aid, it may attack us, is the argument of the objectors to its receiving aid from foreign donors. But surely that is rather far-fetched at this moment when the Bear is growling menacingly on its doorstep. Everything it has and gets, it will need to try and keep him out. Ah but what of the future, say our wise men, the balance of power in the sub-continent will be irretrievably disturbed. To which

the answer is 'is it better that the balance be disturbed temporarily and the Russian expansion effort be defeated, or for the balance not to be disturbed, and certainly Pakistan, and probably India, be taken over and occupied by the Russians?' These are not vain imaginings, friends. There are a hundred thousand Russian troops in Afghanistan as I write and an endless cavalcade of motorised and aerial transport, with hundreds of further divisions to back them up at a day's notice, and the Russians are already at the Khyber. So stop worrying about the disturbance of the balance of power. Or better still, say to the Americans, all right, but for every dollar of military aid you give to Pakistan, the same amount of the kind of military aid we need to us. Then we shall see that they do not become stronger than us, and peace will prevail in the sub-continent.

Our present attitude would be appropriate if we held either that there was no danger to us from the current Russian aggression or that the results of that aggression would be good both for Pakistan and India, that in fact the world would be a better place if these countries lost their independence and became Russian satellites. Otherwise, it makes little sense.

It is quite unnecessary to get enmeshed in the details of the occupation of Afghanistan by the Russians, Who brought whom, was there an invitation or did they come of their own accord, etc., etc. It is enough that the Russians have seized the country, that it is not their country, that the rulers they have set up, and that these are their puppets. Accordingly it becomes the duty of every patriotic Afghan to fight against them and free his country from them. It is surely not for us to question the *bona fides* of such fighters, to term them rebels, to object to aid being given to them. They are in reality helping to ward off the danger from you, friends. They deserve your encouragement and assistance. Our rulers in this country have unfortunately over the years got so mixed up with the Russians that now they judge in their favour even when the facts are clearly against them. It is time you stopped being misled by them, and sharply reprimanded them for misleading you.

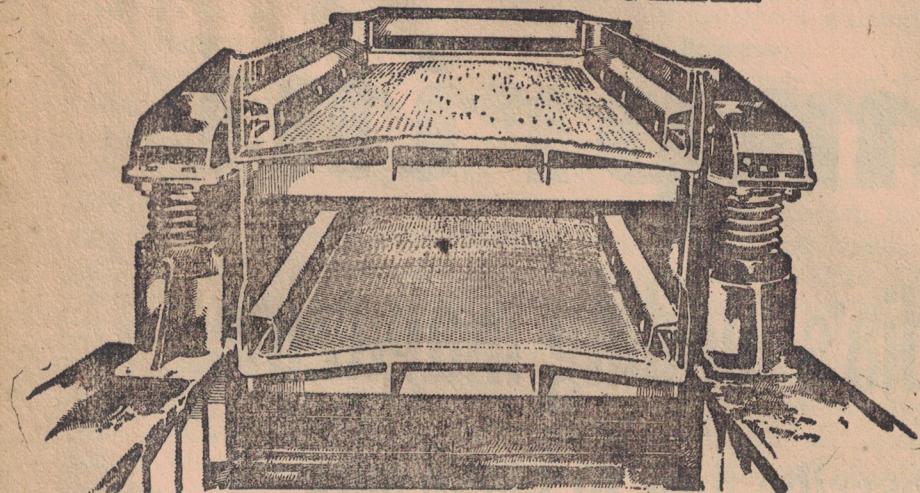
## POLITICAL CRICKET

SMITA BANKESHWAR

**I**NDIRAJI won the toss in 1977 and elected to bat without realising the condition of the pitch (damaged by the Emergency) much against the advice of the 'gang of four'—Bansilal, Shukla, Om Mehta and Sanjay Gandhi, with the result that the entire Congress party collapsed against the hostile bowling of J.P., Morarji Desai, Vajpayee, George Fernandes, Charan Singh etc.

When the Janata party opened its innings, the pitch was perfect, the Congress party was handicapped with all its top batsman, bowlers and

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fielders on the injured list, with the sole exception of India's greatest all-rounder Indiraji. Yet, the Janata opened its innings disastrously just in the manner of our Test Cricket team in the first innings.

It was sheer bad batting and there was no excuse. The Congress(I) bowling was, in fact, very mediocre, although Indiraji used to bowl a few bouncers occasionally. The Janata team just collapsed although it had star batsmen, outstanding bowlers and alert fieldsmen.

The reason was simple. The team spirit was lacking in the Janata team led by Morarji Desai. Everybody in the team wanted to be the captain. Nobody co-operated with him. Every batsman, including the tailenders wanted to open the innings. The batsmen used to advise bowlers how to bowl; the bowlers used to advise batsman how to bat and the wicket keeper used to advise both batsmen and bowlers how to bat and bowl! All thought that they were all-rounders! When the Congress(I) opened its innings, Morarji's field placing was sabotaged by his fielders. Two or three fielders used to be off the field always on some excuse or the other. A fielder requested to stand in the slips would stand at short leg. The wicket-keeper used to remove his gloves and pads, and return to the pavillion without any reason and without the permission of the Captain! A person requested to stand at gully would go to third man. A person requested to stand on the boundary line would give lectures to the spectators enjoying oranges and bananas offered by them, instead of fielding and taking catches offered by the batsman with the result that more than three or four boundaries used to be scored even by tail-enders in each over and the Congress(I) thus piled up a huge total in the second innings.

The Vice-captain of the team, Shri Charan Singh, a self-styled expert, in the meantime had by then spoiled the wicket beyond repair by his disastrous budget. The pitch was so damaged that the entire Janata team collapsed for a miserable total. The Congress(I) team thus won a spectacular victory over the Janata.

Charan Singh has damaged the wicket so much by his last disastrous budget that it has now become almost unplayable for any team for the next ten years. No team will be able to retain the Rubber for more than two or three years!

The Congress(I) team which has won a spectacular victory over the Janata, has only one all-rounder, no batsmen, no fast bowlers, no spinners, only a poor wicketkeeper and poor fielders—all new and inexperienced, who have not even played in league matches!

I wonder how the Congress(I) will face the next Test match when the wicket has become unplayable, unless the umpires come to its rescue and it discovers a Gavaskar, a Viswanath, a Kapil Dev and a Kirmani outside its own ranks and inducts them into its team. The possibility is that it might refuse to play any further Test matches and keep the Rubber permanently for itself.

OPINION, January 22, 1980

## COMMENT

The whole trend of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's behaviour since her becoming Prime Minister is to put the Emergency in the background, to get us, the people, to forget it ever happened. She could have attempted to do this straightforwardly saying "That was a most deplorable period in which I sinned grievously. I erred here, and here and here. I am indeed very sorry. Please forgive me." This she could have done genuinely and with grace after her overwhelming election victory. But if she had done this, she could scarcely have claimed thereafter, as she obviously means to do and as she often did during the election, that the Emergency was necessary and that there was much good in it. So, let us not be deceived by her current putting of the men of the Emergency, Sanjay, Shukla, Bansilal, etc., etc., into the background. These are tactics. Her goal remains the same as ever, absolute power.

\* \* \* \*

The Information Minister wants the Press to censor the word censorship itself. Consider it non-existent, he cries out pleadingly. At the same time, he says he will judge it by the test of its objectivity. And what pray may that be ?

Leaning over in favour of the Government ? Ah what an objective editorial ! Praising the Prime Minister for her marvellous skill in dealing with a crisis ? Splendidly impartial, first-rate, here's real objectivity ! Criticising the handling of the Soviet-Afghanistan affair by the Prime and Foreign Ministers ? How very prejudiced ! What a fall from objectivity ! And they don't want us to have censorship ! How can it be avoided when people write and publish such stuff !

Remember, friends, that under the kindly aegis of the same benevolent Prime Minister as at present, her myrmidons "killed" passages from the Bhagwad Gita and Plato's Socrates. And this same Information Minister was vociferous then in praise of his Prime Minister and her acts. So when he talks of objectivity, Pah !

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