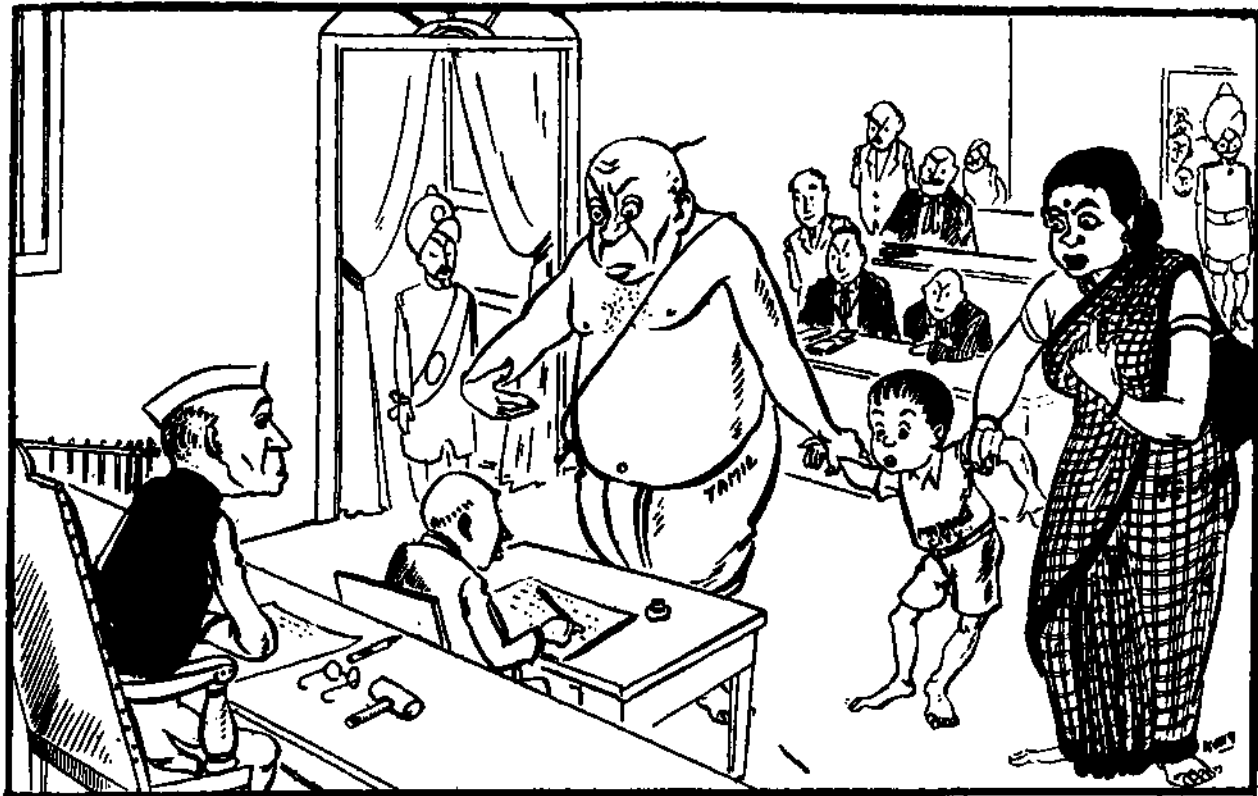


This week 25 years ago

Divorce Proceedings



Who will get the custody of the child?

—Shankar's Weekly, Sept. 25, 1949

In a Quandry

NIXON'S exit from the hub of world politics has created a stir among American cartoonists. They are as restless just like school children who were denied their daily quota of ice cream cones.

So long as Mr Nixon was in power, they could twist and turn his face, stretch his nose or add a scowl or widen his forehead to create delectable cartoons. For, as Pat Oliphant of Denver Post commented, 'Nixon's face was covered with things that said what you wanted them to say.' He gave a further dimension to his stature by raising the sluices of Watergate and kept the tribe of cartoonists ever on their toes, inspiring them to reach

greater heights. Nixon's reign, whatever one might say, was indeed the golden age of cartooning.

But, the golden age has petered off, rather suddenly. And cartoonists are at their wit's end. In President Ford, they have a leader who doesn't show himself off, either through a face that is amenable to cartooning or through a flamboyant display of strength, determination and ruthlessness. The more they see this face, the more they feel frustrated. His is a face that will not easily adapt itself to caricature. There is virtually nothing on the face that gives the man a stamp of individuality.

Cartoonists are on the look out for some feature which would go well with the President's image — something like Chamberlain's umbrella; or Rajaji's sun-glasses; or Nehru's achkan and rose in the button hole; or Stalin's moustache; or Churchill's inseparable cigar.

But, American cartoonists are not giving up the chase. They are fragmenting the face, magnifying each bit, confident of finding that elusive element — a flaw in the flawless image.

Tom Darcy of Long Island's Newsday comes out with the conclusion that 'Ford's chin looks like giving birth to a golf ball.' Hugh Hynle of the Louisville Courier Journal

notes that 'the new President possesses an extraordinarily mobile mouth which flaps like a flounder in heat.' Don Wright of Miami News finds that 'Jerry Ford's face has a striking similarity to the back side of my thumb.'

Which of these will become the most cartoonable feature of Ford's image? That is the big question. None knows whether Ford will end up in the image of a thumb or lose himself in a flappable mouth or grin and bear the birth pangs that go with the delivery of a golf ball.

R K M