

it was believed and propagated that Indian politics were dominated by religious factions and sentiments. They have rejected appeals of the extreme right and of the extreme left, of reactionaries and of ultra-revolutionaries, and have supported the democratic middle path to socialist development."

The author comments: "In India it is now clear that political democracy could not work without commensurate spread of the fruits of economic progress to ordinary, poor Indians." It is precisely because of this that, under the emergency, a variety of radical measures have recently been undertaken by way of land reforms, distribution of land to the landless, the abolition of bonded labour and a comprehensive and radical population policy. Such measures had been planned before, but certain provisions within the Constitution and judicial processes were such that these measures could not be implemented. Effective steps have now been taken to amend the Constitution by a popularly-elected Parliament. This does not mean the death of democracy in India since both the federal and most of the state parliaments are functioning. The Prime Minister has repeatedly stated that the Indian Constitution is basically sound but democracy is an evolutionary process and the Constitution must march in step.

While mentioning the setback to the Congress Party in the general elections of 1967, the author ignores the fact that Mrs. Gandhi adopted certain radical policies which led to a split in the Congress Party and that she won the 1971 general elections by an overwhelming majority both in the Federal Legislature (the Congress Party has a two-thirds majority) and most of the Indian states. Elections in India have been postponed, as provided for under the Constitution, in order to consolidate the gains under the emergency, and not even the unfriendliest foreign critic has suggested that machine-guns have been brought out, and hundreds of Commonwealth parliamentarians who visited India late last year are witness to the fact that there was no evidence of the Army in the streets nor of any extraordinary police presence.

India is one of the few countries in the world that have within two years brought down inflation from 34 per cent to below zero, and it has been freely acknowledged that prices have come down. A press release issued by the World Bank after the India Consortium meeting in Paris last month stated: "The members of the Consortium commended the Government of India for the measures taken to improve economic performance during 1975-76, when agricultural production had reached record level, power shortages had been largely overcome, export volume had increased by 8 per cent in an environment of declining world trade, monetary stability had been maintained and the output of most public-sector enterprises — particularly coal, steel, fertilizers — had improved significantly." Since the emergency, black-marketeers have been severely dealt with, as also hundreds of corrupt officials.

In India last year, politicians of varying hues openly expressed their intention to overthrow a popularly elected Government by force and called upon the armed forces and other Government bodies to disobey Government orders. Their arrest was, therefore, inevitable, but many have since been released.

Van Praagh accuses India of wanting to become a super-global power; this apparently is a sin for an underdeveloped country but a virtue for those already developed into "super-powers". However, the Prime Minister of India has repeatedly stated that India has no desire to become a "power" or "super-power". India does *not* have a nuclear bomb, but it has to take measures to maintain sufficient armed strength to protect its territorial integrity, which the author would like to see destroyed.

The author's perceptions of India's foreign policy are equally uninformed. India's relations with Iran are excellent and there is growing economic co-operation and collaboration between the two countries. Relations between the two are marked not by rivalry but a desire for mutual help and progress; the Shah of Iran and his Prime Minister have testified to this.

The author refers to a non-existent "desperate Hindu nationalism in North and East India", which poses a threat to Bangladesh. India's record of help bears out its goodwill towards this new country and India is more than willing to collaborate with Bangladesh and other neighbouring countries and solve mutual problems through bilateral negotiations.

The dangers to India, the subcontinent and Asia would, in fact, arise if the prescriptions suggested by the author were applied.

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