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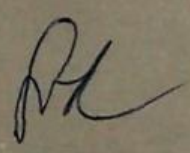
December 13, 1974.

Mr. Bhatia.

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I see no reason why letters addressed to me by name, even if carrying my old designation, should be opened by you or anybody else. You can take it that I still retain my integrity to return letters to you which are of an official nature.

Will you kindly desist in future from opening any letters addressed to me by name even if they carry my old designation? The latest example is a letter from Smt. Dhawthree Sarasamma which has been cheerfully opened by you and then marked for me, even though the envelope has the sender's name and address. I think this practice which has become a habit whether they are letters or files, is highly objectionable.


S. V. Raju.

SSM.

Bihar movement : an assessment

GEORGE FERNANDES

[The following article is a part of a paper presented by the author for the consideration of the meeting of political leaders, other social workers and intellectuals convened by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan on 25 and 26 November, 1974 in Delhi.

In the last two articles Mr Fernandes recalled how Mrs Gandhi was responsible for toppling the Kerala ministry headed by Mr. Namboodripad in 1959. He also brought out how the movement in Bihar is being carried out for the same reasons as were advanced by the Congress against the Namboodripad ministry in 1959. He has also discussed electoral reforms.

We invite our readers to express their views on the issues raised by Mr. Fernandes in these articles—Ed.]

That the Bihar movement has added a new dimension to our national life is beyond question. Its convulsions are reverberating across the country as nothing else has done since Independence. It has roused hopes among even the most cynical of our people. Never was the country so decisively divided between changers and no-changers as in the case of the Bihar movement.

Splits in parties

The movement has occasioned splits in all political parties of any consequence in Bihar. The Socialist Party and the Bharatiya Lok Dal (Samyukta Socialists), the Jan Sangh and the Congress (O) have split. Even the Congress Party has had its dissenters who have chosen to either defy the Party and resign and take part in the movement, or have poured total contempt on the highest and the mightiest in the Party by openly advocating JP's cause and case. That senior and influential Congressmen have been trying to fraternise with JP when the Prime Minister and her Party Presidents (rightly called as court jesters by JP) have been seeing the hidden hand of the C.I.A. in the Bihar movement and when their allies, the Right Communists, have been threatening to create rivers of blood in Bihar should the Bihar movement succeed in achieving its objectives, means that either these Congressmen are beginning to appreciate the meaning of Bihar or they are seeing the writing on the wall for themselves and for their party.

Irrelevance of political parties

Be that as it may, the split that has overtaken all these parties is only helping to highlight the irrelevance of these parties in the eyes of the people, or, at the least, their total ineffectiveness in the situation in which

the country finds itself.

New recruitment

On the other hand, the Bihar movement has released new forces in the national body politic which were so far lying dormant. One sees the emergence of forces that had so far looked at politics as the game of scoundrels and, therefore, had kept themselves aloof from it.

These people are not motivated by the ordinary concepts of politics. They are asking serious questions. Why things have gone wrong, who is responsible, what needs to be done, and what can we do?

Moral issues highlighted

The third and, perhaps, the most important achievement of the Bihar movement is to make moral issues once again relevant in our public life. The Congress in general and Mrs. Gandhi in particular, have done everything within their power to make politics the most immoral profession in our country. Lies, slander, deceit, dishonesty and double talk have been raised to national virtues, and in the process, a whole generation of Indians have either been persuaded into believing that all public life is personal aggrandisement at public cost, through the foulest possible means, or to lead a life of cynicism and total helplessness.

The Bihar movement was striking at all that was ugly in our body politic and was bringing back on the agenda the moral and ethical questions of public life.

Programatic contents

Some arm-chair critics of the Bihar move-