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National Govt. not utopian

2345

Continued from Page 1

He may be old, but there is a lot of wisdom in him. I'd say M.C. Chagla if he were alive. The former Bombay University Vice-Chancellor, Mr M.S. Gore, The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr Ramkrishna Hegde, the Janata Party leader, Mr Madhu Dandavate... In the old days, you know, we could think of so many names..."

To Nissim Ezekiel, retired Professor of English at Bombay University, and well known poet, the crisis is "So profound, that substituting one Government by another will not solve the problem. It will still be then a party Government or a continuation of parties. But it's not enough to be a National Government. It must function as one. For, it is a Government formed in a crisis by the very nature of things. Suppose the country is attacked by, say China or some other country, are we going to speak in different voices or are we going to say "For God's sake, let's unite to save the country".

You see, England in wartime conditions before the Nazi blitz was a very good example of National Government. The whole country should be able to stand together."

"What binds all of us who are signatories to the letter together," adds Ezekiel, "Is the sense of crisis. We don't really believe this Government can accomplish anything...It's plausibility has collapsed. And plausibility is one of the essential characteristics of any Government in power. For no one, ultimately, can claim to have the whole truth. So, there must be large mindedness to put aside party convictions, down-grade them, keep them pending. The National Government must first win the confidence of the people who support its formation." Most of the signatories of the letter reject the criticism that their proposal is utopian and essentially unrealisable. Says Gandhi, "Ah yes, on the face of it, it is Utopian. But Gandhiji was termed Utopian when he talked of the village in-

dustry. There are those who might even say those of us who believe that God exists in everyone are Utopian."

With the exception of Gandhi, the three other signatories were loathe to name likely candidates to the National Government. "It's wrong for me to even answer that," says Masani. "I shouldn't. My giving names would be wrong. It would pre-empt the prerogative of the President who should appoint these persons. The new Government should include persons from the Opposition parties." To be specific, honest politicians, persons from all walks of life apart, should form such a Government, he says.

The country, he believes, has no dearth of honest people who can hold the fort as it were. Not forever of course, but till new elections are called for. "They could be members or non-members of Parliament. The important thing is they should be persons of integrity."