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Blitz 9/1/71

Personal

The report that Raj Narain showed a shoe to Masani has been denied; that Masani literally pounced on George Fernandes is not denied...

IT IS AN IRONY that MINOO MASANI who, together with BALRAJ MADHOK, had fathered the idea of Grand Alliance of the Right, had to stage a walk-out from the nocturnal ceremony held to announce it.

With the SSP sneaking in through the side door, Masani ran out of his brief and stormed out through the front door, with S. N. Mishra holding on to his Jodhpuri coat in a vain attempt to prevent his exit.

It was a great melodrama centred round the mansions of Nijalingappa and Masani. It was both fun and enlightenment for the journalists. Apart from this, one should not read much into it.

The not-so-Grand Alliance has arrived, notwithstanding the declaration being not signed by Masani at the appointed hour. The Swatantra, depleted of late by mass defections from its legislative ranks, will have to return to the fold.

Just one issue:
PM's ouster!

Judging by the outpourings of that senile old man of Mysore Masani's self-imposed holiday from coalition politics will be drastically cut short. On Monday, Rajaji called upon his flock to choose JUST ONE ISSUE in the election and forget the rest.

AND THAT ISSUE IS THAT INDIRA GANDHI SHALL NOT BE PERMITTED TO AMEND THE CONSTITUTION. "UNITE, UNITE IS MY APPEAL," THE ANCIENT SCREAMED AT THE TOP OF HIS VOICE.

Be that as it may, the developments which provoked the Swatantra boss to clear out throw a great deal of light on the utterly opportunistic perambulations of the parties concerned.

Cong-O touches nadir of degradation

Take the case of the Cong-O. Any one who has closely followed its peregrinations from Ahmedabad to Lucknow would be convinced that it has touched the nadir of degradation.

At its Ahmedabad session, soon after the split, the Cong-O staged a competition in radicalism. The 10 Points were retained in what Asoka Mehta called the "economic profile." The resolution invited everybody to the "glorious festival of reconstruction and renewal."

There were three trends in the Syndicate Working Committee held on the eve of the Ahmedabad show. Nijalingappa and Patil called for a low key business in the interest of attracting the co-operation of the

was clear to all that the June resolution was the illegitimate child born of illicit liaison between the Swatantra and Jan Sangh.

Tripartite war on progress

It paved the way for talks on the Alliance. And for the last six months and more, they have been planning for a Tripartite Aggression against all progressive forces. Despite sectional opposition from the Cong-O ranks, they have steadily gone ahead with the business of ousting Indira Gandhi from power.

In retrospect, it is interesting to note that in the June resolution the Syndicate had retained the words "SECULARISM" and "SOCIALISM." In December last, at Lucknow, these fig leaves were removed, and the decks cleared for the gang-up. Nijalingappa was authorised to consult with like-minded parties for electoral adjustments, supposedly to save Indian democracy.

Since then the Syndicate Chief has been going through all the motions assigned to him. The Cong-O, Jan Sangh and Swatantra decided on programmatic unity.

On December 20, what is called the "programme for action" in the election was finalised and signed by both Vajpayee



COSA NOSTRA: The Synod of the Grand Mafia Alliance-turned-plain Front deliberates on the One-Point, Multi-Year Oust Indira Gandhi Plan in New Delhi. Pic shows (l. to r.) RAM SUBHAG SINGH, RABI RAY, ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE, GEORGE FERNANDES and RAJ NARAIN in "deep freeze"!

NOCTURNAL FARCE BY NOT-SO-GRAND ALLIANCE

The only fly in the SVD ointment, as we write this, is Charan Singh. He had demanded 50 out of the 85 seats in UP. No Grand Alliance partner can afford to concede that many. They are prepared to give him 35 seats.

Charan Singh as Prime Minister!

But the major problem in adjusting with the BKD is not the number of seats. Incredibly enough, Charan Singh has been asking for the naming of the Shadow Prime Minister. Armed by astrological predictions, this ante-diluvian wallowing in the swamps of the Ganga, insists that he be considered the next Prime Minister.

His vitriolic outbursts at the BKD conference at Rohtak against the Prime Minister and his exhortation to remove her from power are regarded by some observers that he has finally broken with the ruling Congress. But some others still insist on treating him as a chameleon.

If the BKD goes it alone in UP, it will be to the advantage of the Congress. But if it chooses to ride on the SVD boat, the Congress, especially in Western UP, will find the going hard.

armed with a mendacious mandate from the SSP's Poona conclave, were at work throughout the day.

Masani was convinced that the SSP-ers brain-washed "THE GOAT, THE JELLY-FISH". These are the expressions used in the Masani circles to describe the simpleton called Nijalingappa. Masani had refused to meet Limaye in the company of Ram Subhag Singh.

In the evening, at Nijalingappa's residence, the discussion among Masani, Nijalingappa and SSP leaders bordered occasionally on virtual fisticuffs. The report that Raj Narain showed a shoe to Masani has been denied; that Masani literally pounced upon George Fernandes is not denied. Nijalingappa was almost in tears when he met the Press after Masani stormed out.

No democracy!

No socialism!

Vajpayee, who had signed the declaration over a fortnight ago, reached the scene after the walk-out. The SSP leaders, who had convinced Nijalingappa not to speak of Ram Subhag Singh,

Abolition, setting up of the Monopoly Commission and against V. V. Giri. It is a sordid essay in politics shorn of principles.

Politics shorn of principles

On the face of it, the new arrangement would somewhat free the Cong-O units in Gujarat and Mysore from their obligations to concede seats to the Swatantra Party. But in the final reckoning, the Swatantra will come for seat adjustments in most States.