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It's Gandhi vs Marx in India: Masani

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"It is Mrs. Gandhi who stands for status quo, and it is we who stand for change", said Mr. M. R. Masani here today. He elaborated: "She wants permit-licence raj and food zones, a losing public sector and mounting inflation to continue, whereas we want Gandhian decentralisation of economy, free movement of foodgrains and a stable price level."

Mr. Masani was addressing the Press Club of India.

Earlier he said that Marx was right when he said that the proletariat had been deprived of its property and enslaved. However, he went wrong in his conclusions when he wanted everybody to lose his property. The logical conclusion of Marx's analysis was that everybody should own property.

Mr Masani made it clear that while property was a fundamental right, it was not an absolute right, because it was subject to reasonable restrictions. He said it was necessary to keep property right fundamental because otherwise the right itself may get extinguished: already the daughter wanted to lower the ceilings fixed by the father. The contest in India, he said, was between Gandhi and Marx.

PM's GAMBLE

Answering questions, Mr. Masani said he thought Mrs. Gandhi's gamble on elections would fail. He did not think she could maintain her old position.

In answer to another question he said it was ridiculous for Mrs. Gandhi to pay 38 paise for a mile by Air Force planes—something which even cycle-rickshaws won't accept.

On the hijacking of the Indian plane he said he condemned it as an act of criminal piracy. He said that by failing to condemn the Arab hijacking of last year Mrs. Gandhi had provided an alibi to Pakistan.

Asked about his wife and son working for Mrs. Subhadra Joshi (Cong-I) in Delhi he said they were adult persons and he would not like to impose his will on them. He added: "Everybody with a heart is a socialist at 21. But if he is still socialist at 41 he obviously has no head."