

FRIGHTENED P.M. MEETS COMMAND AUDIENCES:

The Madam Prime Minister's programme in Bombay started with the early morning arrests of Socialist workers including Mrs. Phalnikar, Zelum Varde, Sulekha Tawde, Neela Chemburkar and others. Some Jan Sangh workers were also arrested. All of them were released only after the Madam was safely away in her helicopter !

The people, the great silent people, also found ways of expressing themselves. On posters Wel-coming the Saviour of India, they had pasted stickers with one word 'ruined'. At many places a black cross was drawn across the face of the 'Saviour' or the posters were just torn. No wonder the P.M. told the Shivaji Park audience that dangers were still lurking in the dark !

CROWDS MANIPULATED:

Herculean efforts were made to collect crowds on the street and a command audience for the rally. Schools were given special instructions to bring their pupils on the street. Factories and big establishments were asked to provide trucks and ofcourse truck loads of people. A large number of people were seen leaving the rally as soon as the P.M. started her speech. They felt that they had earned their keep by just coming to the park !

At the Ravindra Theatre where a women's rally was held half the Theatre was empty !

FIRST ARRESTS THEN RALLY:

First arrests then meeting then more arrests - this is the pattern of the P.M.'s meetings every where and also that of her worthy Chief Minister S.B. Chavan. Recently when he toured Ratnagiri District 145 people were arrested. Six people were arrested for raising slogans in his meeting and Nana Tari Melwankar, Dr. Natu were detained under MISA.

In Gujarat despite the disruptive tactics of Hitendra Desai the Janata Front Government remains firmly in the saddle. In congress-ruled provinces elections to local bodies were postponed under the pretext of Emergency, in Gujarat elections were duly held and the popular support to Janata Front was clearly demonstrated.

The Satyagraha movement in Gujarat is equally powerful. A total of 2325 Satyagrahis courted imprisonment. They came from 167 centres from all over Gujarat.

In January the press where Bhoomi Putra is printed was confiscated by the Central Government. But this did not stop the paper. It comes out regularly.

FOREIGN PRESS ROUND UP:

The P.M. is furious with the British and American press because despite her fulminations it continues to expose her fascist face to the world.

Commenting on the dismissal of the Tamil Nadu Govt. and the dissolution of the State Assembly the London Times says "...her take over seems unduly authoritarian only a few weeks before the State Government mandate was due to expire" (2.2.1976).

OPPOSITION SUPPRESSED

The Economist observes "If any thing is clear in today's India it is that opposition, any opposition cannot be tolerated". In Tamil Nadu, it says "the object of the presidential exercise was not to concentrate the minds of the feuding politicians but to eject a local party with a strong political base and an overwhelming majority".

The British press also carries very comprehensive analyses of the emergency and an analyses of its political and economic impact.

The Statesman (Feb.13,1976) published a long article by Mr.Paul Murray titled "Indira's Democracy" Mr.Murray writes.

"The monolithic calm is illusory...Big bureaucratic decisions are becoming more difficult to take as the punishment for failure grows more severe. The police with more power, are more corrupt, where a bribe was 20-30 rupees bribe was once adequate small offenders are now paying 100 or 500 rupees to have charges dropped. The new powers of arbitrary dismissal and premature retirement in government service have increased in security, and correspondingly, the bribes.

"Uncontroversial manifesto regulars have been revamped as P.M.'s 20-point programme. But despite a growth in bureaucracy by 3.5 percent this year there is no opportunity for implementing the much mouthed radical reforms. Land distribution is vital to the success of India's self-sufficiency in agriculture. Yet at the last count only 137000 acres had been given to the landless harijans since June. The abolition of bonded labour remains a mirage while alternative sources of rural credit are unavailable to the debtors. Nor can headway be made in the countryside where 80 per cent of India's 595 million live until there is a political organisation of peasants to break the veto that the gentry and kulaks exercise in congress. This is the real contradiction of Mrs.Gandhi's socialism; her party lives like a saprophyte on the rural system it is committed to destroy.

NO CIVIL LIBERTIES:

Civil liberties of those who enjoyed them have suffered a mortal assault. A University dean told me that in Delhi alone 600 university teachers have been moved to whereabouts unknown."

"..No attempt is made to curb the fast growing luxury goods sector, a primary requirement if the rate of capital formation is to be boosted.

"...The gap between radical words and fumbling deeds which yawned open last year to create Narayan's agitation has not yet been closed and there are no signs that it will be. Where it cannot be filled by an even trenchant populism, it is being filled by repression".

The Times correctly concludes that "the decision not to hold the elections due this spring exposed Mrs.Gandhi's unwillingness to put her popularity to the test...worst of all are the signs that Mrs.Gandhi's leadership in the Congress party is more and more managed by a cabal of personal advisors, not all of them persons who have won national repute. In short the charge made when the emergency was first imposed that it was done to prolong and strengthen Mrs. Gandhi's personal power still lies".