

The rise and fall of V.P. Singh

By M. J. Audi

The 11 month old National Front Government was thrown out on November 7, 1990 by 356 to 151 votes on the floor of the Lok Sabha. Mr. V.P. Singh began with a bang and ended with a whimper. His rise and fall provide eight lessons on how India is governed ever since Swarajya.

Corruption

In the Ninth General Elections, the nation voted against Corruption in high places. The foundations of corruption in India were firmly laid by the British. Swarajya provided new vistas. In India to-day, one lives in the universe of corruption which exists at every level in every walk of life. The roots of corruption in India are in high places in politics, business, civil service and even the judiciary as April-June 1990 charges of corruption against the learned judges of Bombay High Court and the Union Carbide Case show. Abraham Lincoln's assessment of American judges holds good of the learned judges of all countries. Lincoln said: "Our judges are as honest as other men and not more so. They have, with others, the same passions for party, for power and the privilege of their corps".

As a Finance Minister and Defence Minister in the second Rajiv Gandhi Cabinet, Mr. V.P. Singh un-masked several "tallest" captains of industry. But for him, the Nation would have never known such scandals as the Bofors and HDW submarine. Mr. Singh promised to the Nation that given an opportunity, he will disclose the names of Bofors beneficiaries within a month of assuming office. Naturally, the Nation had great expectations of him. He proved to be a great disappointment. As a Prime Minister, Mr. Singh sermonised that the law shall take its own course and the arm of law shall spare none. The first lesson is that the course of law in India is con-

trolled and dictated by the political bigwigs. The arm of law is twisted and even cut off by the moneybags. Bhopal and Bofors are the finest examples. As poet Goldsmith found Law grinds the poor and the rich rule the Law.

Before the fall, Mr. V.P. Singh posed as a lonely crusader of value-based politics. India is yet to see even one statesman or woman committed to the values. The commitment of our politicians from *galli* to Delhi is to pelf and power. Mr. Singh had not "risked his chair" for secularism, social justice and unity of India. He desperately clutched the chair which became shaky with his move on the report of the Mandal Commission and shakier with his handling of Ram-Janmabhumi issue. The second lesson is that India's politicians are committed only to chair-based politics and they want chair only to make maximum money within minimum time.

Martyr

Fallen, Mr. Singh flattered himself as a martyr to the cause of secularism, social justice and emotional unity of India. A Prime Minister devoted to social justice will never waste eleven months. He would have given to every person in India right to work with decent living wage the moment he entered office. He would have firmly fixed the prices of basic needs of people. During eleven months, Mr. V.P. Singh offered generous and liberal concessions to the trade and industry. It was reported that he gave back hundreds of crores of rupees to the manufacturers which were collected by the Government as Excise Duty. Mr. Singh's secularism was a shrewd stroke to seize the "vote bank" of religious minorities. Pitiably, he failed to grasp that unity of any Nation never rests upon the emotions, but always rests upon the iron will of its Government. Terri-

torial integrity and security of country are nowhere debatable issues. Whoever dares to challenge them are everywhere treated as traitors and promptly punished.

Before him, the Prime Ministers of India waxed eloquent on the poverty line. Mr. Singh's song was the wealth line — the *amiri Rekha*. None can lower the poverty line nor raise the wealth line without controlling the profit line of the traders and quality line of the goods and services rendered to the society. Third lesson is that the Prime Ministers of India are the handmaids of big business. In a parliamentary democracy, the Prime Minister is the controller of all levers of power. Hence, as long as the Prime Minister is the handmaid of big business, there cannot be social justice in India.

In India, the change of Prime Ministers has been only a change from King Log to King Stork. As Mahatma Gandhi recorded: "I do not hesitate to say that the Prime Ministers have neither real honesty nor a living conscience". So far, *swarajya* India does not know even one honest and unselfish person in power at the Centre and in the States. Fourth lesson tells that the fights among the politicians in India are not great battles for the sake of values. They are only the scuffles between the kites and crows for crumbs. Prime concern of every Prime Minister so far is not the prosperity of the Nation, but prosperity of his kith and kin. Imitation, said Samuel Johnson, is the sincerest flattery. What the Prime Minister does at the Centre, the Chief Ministers do in the States and other Ministers at Centre and in the States faithfully follow them. All are eager to make hay while the sun shines.

Hypocrisy

During the debate on the Motion of Confidence in the Lok Sabha, (Contd. in Col, 7 & 8)

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(Contd. from Col. 5)

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi pinpointed that hypocrisy and duplicity are the methods by which all are holding the highest offices in India. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's hypocrisy and duplicity lie in his "unconditional support" to Mr. Chandra Shekhar. Every Shylock wants his pound of flesh and every supporter is paid his price. Mr Rajiv Gandhi's price is the burial of the Bofors, the Submarine and Airbus A 320 deals involving nearly 5000 crores of rupees. Fifth lesson indicates that deceit, money, muscle, servility and sycophancy is the *panchsheel* that governs social behaviour in India.

Progress of our parliamentary democracy is from decay to degeneracy. The President of India invited Mr. Chandra Shekhar to form the Government on November 10 and asked him to face the Lok Sabha on November 16, 1990. Heavens would not have fallen nor earth crumbled if the President had allowed the *kamchalau* Prime Minister, Mr. V.P. Singh, to continue till Mr. Chandra Shekhar proved his majority in the Lok Sabha. Mr. Chandra Shekhar's vote was 269 to 204 with 51 absences in the House of 524. Definitely he cannot claim the mandate of people of India or the Lok Sabha to govern the Nation. The Government of Mr. Chandra Shekhar is violent molestation of parliamentary democracy. Mr. Chandra Shekhar is a *kathaputali* in the hands of Congress (I) boss. How Rajiv Gandhi conducts the puppet show remains to be seen.

From Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to Mr. Chandra Shekhar, every Prime Minister adores Mahatma Gandhi and kills the principles for which Gandhiji lived and died. The Mahatma always practised what he preached. Gandhiji never lived a luxurious life at the expense of public exchequer of a poor country. The Mahatma bluntly stated that "to live above the means befitting a poor country is to live on a stolen food". Gandhiji forbade his children, relations and favourites to amass wealth using his position. Children, relations and favourites of the Prime Ministers have made mil-

lions during their rule. Gandhiji's greatest ambition was the emancipation of the poorest of the poor. The Prime Ministers of India excel in making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Vested Interests propagate that Democracy and Secularism are the final goals of the Indian Constitution. This is an outright lie. The Constitution of India has only one goal. It is the liquidation of economic slavery of people of India. The Constitution wants an egalitarian society in India where every Indian will flourish morally, materially, culturally and spiritually. Indeed, but for the Preamble and Directive Principles of State Policy, the Indian Constitution is a dull, drab and dreary document devoid of inspiration.

Every person holding the highest office in the Governments and in the private and public sectors should be compelled to declare his wealth which is presently skillfully concealed in the names of wife, children, relations and favourites. Should the Guinness Book decide to record *Benami* holdings of wealth in the world, Indians will top the list. Declared wealth of everybody must be open for public scrutiny and verification. Sixth lesson informs the Nation that next to businessmen, the greatest owners of wealth in India are the politicians of all shades and the holders of top offices in various services of State.

Seventh lesson tells that just as Anti-Corruption Laws cannot end corruption, Anti-Defection Laws cannot end Defections in India. Basic purpose of such laws is to give protection and legitimacy to corruption and defections. Glory of India's Rule of Law lies in making laws with loopholes to help the corrupt and the opportunist. Eighth lesson teaches that ever since *Sya-rajya*, the greedy exploit the needy in India. So far, the greedy have masterfully cheated and robbed the needy. Paid pipers on the payroll of greedy rationalise the exploitation as the survival of the fittest. In truth, it is the survival of the robbers. lect