

and has the support of a quite a good section of the urban middle class.

By the urban middle class, I mean white-collar employees, engineers, teachers, scientists, and these comprise a very powerful section of the population in formulating policies and programs for India. They have come around to Mrs. Gandhi.

A good section of the industrial working class and trading class are not reconciled to her. There are certain castes, which have had a good share in the power in the states in the past two years, who are also hostile to her. But whichever angle you look at it from, Mrs. Gandhi is the accepted national leader in India.

**Q:** *What will a victory for Mrs. Gandhi mean for India?*

**A:** It will mean a restoration of the traditionally accepted national policies in both the internal and external spheres. It means a return to a development orientation, and the relaunching of a political fight for the New International Economic Order as the crucial issue of the Nonaligned Movement. Mrs. Gandhi was one of the initiators of the New International Economic Order, and she knows what it means.

Her victory also means a decisive rebuff to Anglo-American imperialism on the Indian subcontinent. She is in sympathy with the fight of the Vietnamese and wherever she speaks, she tells the Indian people of the holocaust in Kampuchea. But her victory will be a blow to the entire policy being pursued by the Anglo-American circles. By this I mean the murder of Mujib Rahman (head of state of Bangladesh), the murder of Bhutto, and the destabilization of Indochina. Her victory will begin the reversal of this policy, because if India starts acting as it should, it gives the needed strength to the fight for development in Southeast Asia and Asia. That is why many nations in Asia are looking toward the elections in India.

**Q:** *And lastly, Mr. Shukla, what will be the role of your newspaper, *New Wave*, in this process?*

**A:** Since we came into existence in 1971, we have been fighting the International Monetary Fund's design to stop India's development, to destroy India's sovereignty. We are working for a broad alliance of prodevelopment forces in India to facilitate the industrial development of the country and all around the world. And irrespective of who the power may be, we have been and we continue to point out, in a real progressive sense, the programs and policies that serve our nation best.

We know that winning the elections is not an end in itself, but just a means. If Mrs. Gandhi wins, as we hope she will, she will have to create a new consensus in the country as Nehru had created during the fight for independence, that takes this nation forward. She is very much conscious of it, and in this process, *New Wave* has a very significant role to play.

## 'For stability, unity and progress' in India

*Following is the text of a statement on the political situation adopted by the All India Congress Committee (AICC-I) on Thursday, Sept. 14. This text originally appeared in the progressive Indian newspaper *New Wave*.*

With the dissolution of the Lok Sabha a tragic chapter, dismal and dark in the history of the country comes to an end.

The national scene left behind by the Janata Party is one of desolation, distress, disgrace and disintegration. The economy today is in a shambles. Galloping inflation, spiralling up with irresistible momentum, has overtaken the country. Working class cost of living index has shot up to 354, the highest ever. Money supply has reached an appalling figure of 33 thousand crores, the highest ever. Industrial growth, on the negative side, has reached the nadir, the lowest ever. Unemployment figures have soared to the highest levels ever. Essential commodities are in short supply so that the country has become a paradise for hoarders, black marketeers and smugglers. The self-sufficient structure of our economy, so carefully built up over the years, has been left badly fractured. The damage done to our economy has reached the point of irredeemability.

On the social front the nation is in deep crisis. Divisive forces and sectional passions have taken the upper hand. The minorities, the weaker sections, the Harijans and the Adivasis are living in acute distress and under growing sense of insecurity. The standard of public conduct and political morality has never been so low. The atmosphere is thick with vile and vicious charges traded against one another by Cabinet Ministers and quietly withdrawn on convenient reconciliation, with the result that the system itself is facing a crisis of confidence. The breakdown of law and order has become a regular feature of life. Security to life and property no more seems to be an obligation of the Government. Added to this, regional conflicts are assuming menacing dimensions.

### **Policy reversal**

On the international front the nation has lost its leading position of respectability and moral authority. Even in the non-aligned movement of which India was one of the founding fathers, the country has come to play the role of a back bencher. The reversal of the policy of the nonalignment with the spurious phrase of "genuine nonalignment" has cost the country dearly. Despised by

the advanced nations and disowned by the Third World, India is today, like a rudderless boat, without direction in the rough waters of international affairs and is fast becoming a target for threats and menacing postures from neighboring areas. Rumbblings are already audible from the northeastern and from the northwestern corners. The security of the nation is today under threat. To be or not to be, that is the question before the nation in every aspect of its life.

Archaic and obscurantist elements who took over the administration had during the two-and-a-half years of misrule mounted an onslaught on Jawaharlal Nehru and all that he stood for. They ridiculed, scuttled and abandoned the 20-point program which had come to the common man as a boon and as a forward leap. The momentum of progress was halted and the nation was put in the reverse gear. The result is the appalling scene of desolation that the Janata Party has left behind.

While the nation was looking up to the Janata Party Government for the solution to the problems of poverty, misery, disease and squalor, the Janata Party Government wasted vindictive action against Smt. Indira Gandhi and thousands of other Congressmen. They resorted to unlawful arrest, vindictive prosecutions, misuse of the machinery of Commission of Inquiry, meddling with the judiciary and manipulation of publicity media. The Janata Party Government misused its majority in Parliament to expel Smt. Indira Gandhi after she had secured a massive mandate from the electorate in Chikmagalur. All of these served only to alienate them from the people. They sacrificed the nation at the altar of personal vengeance against Smt. Gandhi.

### **Vision**

In contrast, the story of the nation, under the stewardship of the Congress, after independence was one of sustained growth, development and consolidation. Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of the Congress movement had given to the Congress and to the nation the vision of the India to be. Jawaharlal Nehru truthfully and faithfully interpreted the vision of the Father of the Nation and had, during his period of stewardship, enabled the people to evolve the concept of the India of their dreams. Mrs. Indira Gandhi during the decade of her stewardship had taken the country further forward on the path of democracy, socialism, and secularism which the Nehru line of thinking had initiated for the nation.

The disintegration of the Janata Party was inevitable. The seed of disintegration was planted in the party on the very day of its formation. As repeatedly pointed out by the Congress, it was a conglomerate of disparate constituents covering a wide spectrum from Socialists to Swatantrites and from the statusquoists to anarchists. Unable therefore to pursue any positive policy it was bound to drift aimlessly. This resulted in inner party

tensions, personality conflicts and power struggle. Realizing that the ship of the Janata party was sinking, persons and groups of persons started jumping out. From the hypocritical scene of massive oath-taking at Rajghat in 1977 to the present spectacle of the two halves of the Janata Party flinging abuses against one another, the nation has witnessed a picture of dismal national betrayal.

Clinging to the chairs of office, although rejected by the Parliament and by the people, the Janata (S) pretends to be free of responsibility for the mess that the country is in. The Janata (S) cannot escape responsibility for all the sufferings that the people are undergoing. Now that they are sticking on in their respective chairs without any conceivable moral sanction their answerability is all the more manifold. The Janata (S) Government is, in effect, standing guard for the anti-social elements and the economic offenders to manipulate products and market and to fleece the people.

### **Instability**

The Janata Party and the Janata (S) are both chips off the old block. Carved out by a vertical split and retaining their character as the conglomerate of disparate constituents a repeat performance of undivided Janata Party is all that can be expected from both. Both of them carry the menacing promise of instability and anarchy in the same measure as did the original Janata Party. Both of them carry the stamp of reaction, retrogression, communalism and casteism, no less than did the original Janata Party. Both the parties jointly and severally are the worst reaction entrenched in Indian politics. They stand four square against the path of progress and development that Pt. Nehru delineated for the nation and they both seek to take the nation backwards and away from that path.

Loud noises are being made by a few persons and groups claiming themselves to be leftists. Their clatter about authoritarianism is an exercise to hide their own totalitarian character and their gang up with reactionary forces. It had been their misfortune to operate in isolation, isolated from the national mainstream and aligned with reactionary forces. They could never accept the democratic socialist movement of India which the Congress alone has been representing.

The AICC affirms that, spearheading as it does the democratic socialist movement of the country, the Congress and the Congress alone represents the national leftist mainstream in tune with the genius of India. All else, talking the language of ultraleftism is puerile adventurism. So far they have been hand in glove with the Janata (S) which, for all to see, is the symbol of the crudest type of casteism, anti-Nehruism, kulakism and reaction. That the democratic socialist movement will have to contend with the combination of the forces of the right reaction and the left adventurism was a

warning given long years back by the Congress and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The warning is again proving true at a crucial movement of the history of our country.

### **Rump**

In the backyard of the parties and groups that count more or less, feeble noises are made by a group in the name of the Indian National Congress. Deserted by the millions of Congressmen, that group is left with nothing that is akin to the Congress. That this small rump should call itself the Indian National Congress is an insult to the majesty and to the might of the Congress movement. Now that it has adopted the leadership, the election symbol and the manifesto of the Janata (S) the last of what little of Congress semblance it had, has been abandoned. Its political significance on the Indian scene has become too irrelevant to deserve attention at the hands of the AICC.

### **Undignified attack**

Afraid of going to the people, the Janata Party has launched an undignified attack on the President for calling the general elections. By launching a crude and vicious attack on the President, the Janata Party has attempted to strike at the center of the Constitution. The motivation behind this attack is their guilty conscience and their fear to go to the people. The AICC welcomes the decision of the President to order the general elections. To refuse the election would have been to reject the demand by all the parties in the Lok Sabha. Nothing could have been more undemocratic and more against the people.

The Congress considers its political task as not one of mere operation but as a continued revolutionary endeavor for the transformation of the society. The fundamental process a long way through, calls for

resumption after the unhappy interruption by the Janata interludes.

It has become an imperative duty of the Congress to restore India's prestige in the international world by reviving and strengthening the non-aligned movement, establish a stable, sound, secular and democratic administration in the country, restore the confidence of the Harijans and Adivasis, the minorities and the backward classes, in the future of the nation, rejuvenate the economy with appropriate policies so that economic growth and stability may ensure the elimination of poverty and the establishment of an egalitarian society and may provide all around progress in the development of science, technology, art and culture.

Summoned to the polls, the nation is approaching a moment of destiny where the electoral verdict of the people will be decisive for the future of the country and for long years to come. The task before the nation is stupendous. A clear-sighted, strong and able administrative leadership, committed to the cause of democratic socialism, secularism and self-sufficiency and having the determination to defend the weak and the lowly is imperative to lift the country from the morass into which the Janata Party has plunged it. A halting electoral verdict endangering stability at the center will endanger democracy itself.

The AICC calls upon the millions of Congress workers and the larger number of its sympathizers to fan out to every nook and corner and to explain to the people the vital issues involved in the forthcoming elections. The AICC appeals to the people to rise to the occasion and, taking into account the basic issues involved, give an electoral verdict giving to the Congress a mandate in no uncertain terms, to resume the task of taking the country forward on the path laid out by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.