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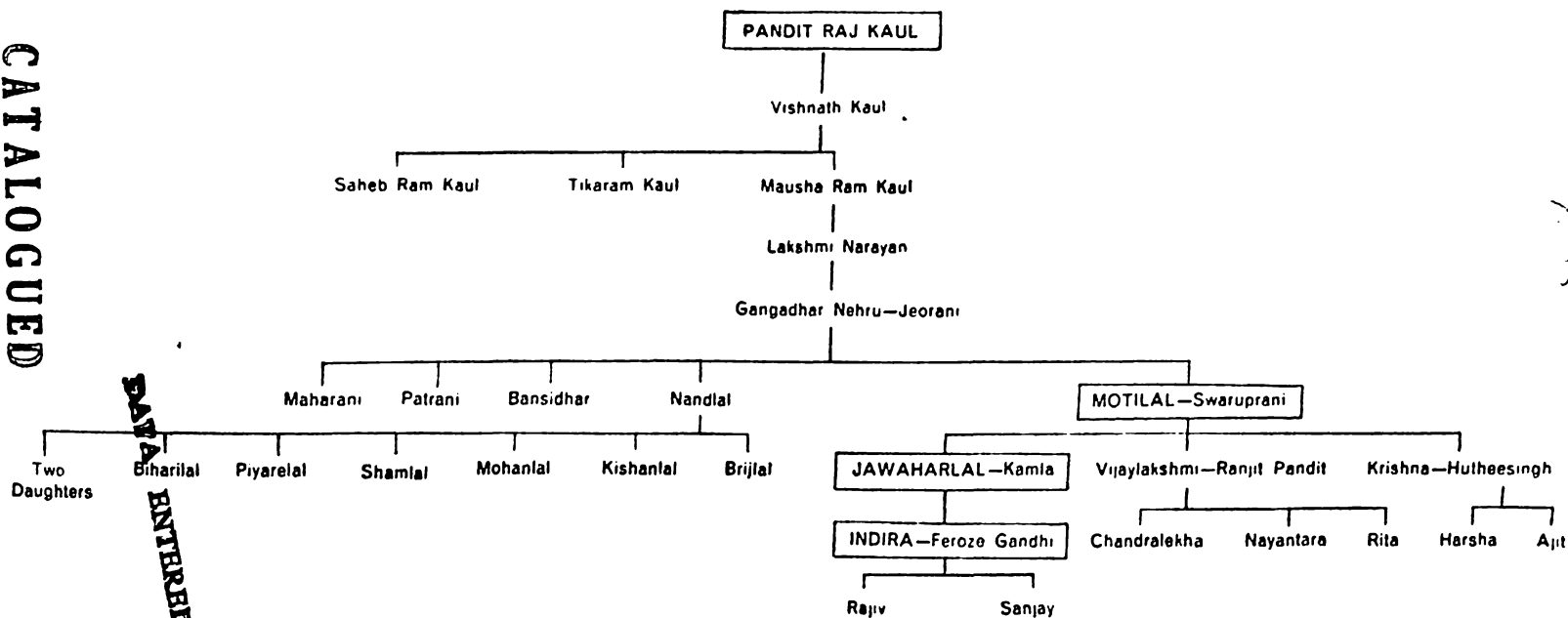


**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ADVANCED STUDY
SIMLA**

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DATA ENTERED

THE FAMILY TREE



INDIRA PRIYADARSHINI

M. CHALAPATHI RAU
UMA PARASHER
INDER MALHOTRA
KRISHAN BHATIA
K. M. AGARWALA
'RANGA'

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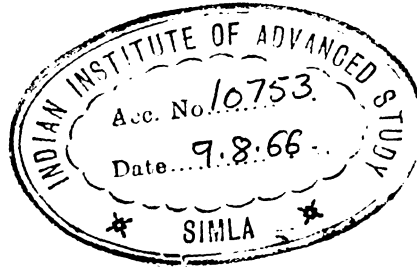
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*This book is dedicated to
the ever Loving Memory of my
Sister 'Promilla'*

Publisher's Note

For the second time in two years India has proved that Democracy has taken firm roots in her soil and the loss of a national leader does not lead to political disruption and disintegration. As the whole world now knows, the vacuum created by Lal Bahadur Shastri's sudden and untimely death at the height of his power, glory and accomplishment was filled by a smooth democratic process of electing a new leader.

The election of a woman to lead the world's largest democracy has surprised many who associate Indian womanhood with the *Purdah* and domestic chores. But those who have followed the career of Indira Gandhi would see in it a natural climax to a career marked by hard work, sacrifice and effective leadership.

In this collection of articles specially written for this publication, five eminent people, who have followed her life and work at one stage or other, write about her, each in his own individual style. Ranga, the famous cartoonist, has added a section of drawings which speak more loudly than words. A number of well selected photographs reproduced in the book give a graphic account of the life and career of the Prime Minister.

If this collection makes the Indian people know a little more about their popular leader, the purpose of the book will have been served. It is also hoped that this book will be our insightful introduction for the foreign reader who may be a little puzzled at a woman having been elected to solve some of the most complex problems that a free democratic Government faces.

SHEILA

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance given to us by the contributors who have written the articles at such a short notice. A part of the article by Inder Malhotra appeared in the *Statesman* dated 20-1-66, who have kindly allowed us to reproduce it. Some of the photographs in the book are from the collection of photo library, Government of India. We offer our special thanks to the USIS, Delhi, for allowing us to reproduce some of the pictures from 'Span'. Our thanks are also due to our printers, Oxford-Printcraft, and our numerous friends who have rendered us generous help in this first venture as publishers.

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
M. CHALAPATHI RAU	
Indira : A Portrait in Outline	9—20
UMA PARASHER	
Indira : Her Early Life	21—40
INDER MALHOTRA	
Indira : A Profile	41—52
KRISHAN BHATIA	
Indira : In Political Life	53—68
K. M. AGARWALA	
Indira : As Congress President	69—78
INDIRA GANDHI	
Some Significant Thoughts	79—84
CHRONOLOGY	85—90
RANGA	
Cartoons	91—100
PLATES	101—116

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

C A R T O O N S

Off to the U.S.A. carrying the wishes of the Nation
'Sweeping clean'
'The Perfect Harmony'
'Snake charming'
'That is my guiding Star'
'Washington Post'
'A Bad News for you, Mr. Ayub . . .'
'That is all for You'

P L A T E S

Acknowledging Greetings
A Family Portrait
With Mahatma Gandhi ; her mother Kamla
With her parents—Jawaharlal and Kamla
Growing up Gracefully
As a Bride
A Charming Hostess
With her Father Jawaharlal
With President Radhakrishnan and Jawaharlal
With Jawaharlal and Mr. & Mrs. Kennedy
With Mrs. Bandaranaike ; Mrs. Barbara Castle ;
Mrs. Johnson
With Lyndon B. Johnson
At Work
Cultural Activities
With Lal Bahadur Shastri
Being Felicitated by the Mayor of Delhi

Indira : A Portrait in Outline

First impressions can be misleading but they may offer some insight. I first saw Indira Gandhi at the AICC session in Allahabad in January 1942, in a tension ridden atmosphere. I was to report the session for the National Herald; working with my mind and not with a hurried pencil and a tickling typewriter. As I watched her, I noticed the features of her face, and while you see such Grecian outlines in many places, the sombreness of her mood, with some lava and brimstone bubbling underneath, struck me as something too grave for a young person. She was a volunteer but she was probably thinking of something far beyond her work.

Indira had been launched as a fairies' child who received the historic gift of a rambling but highly readable and serious book of history

from her father, different from H. G. Wells and far different from Spengler. What she was as a child in her childish romanticism was yet to be seen; the story of the **Vanar Sena** (Monkey Brigade) came later. The photographs made her look fragile. From unpublished, still unexhibited letters, I know Jawaharlal Nehru was writing to Dr Atal and other friends that she did not like her being made to feel like an invalid and that she should always be thrown into the world of the sun and open air. Some fragility remained, seasoned by strength of feeling. On her return from Europe, she delivered a presidential address to a youth conference in Kanpur. In editing it, I found there was the expected youthfulness but also some freshness and freedom from cliches. This was something unusual in a pre-war atmosphere ringing with cliches. Munich was probably the most sinister of them.

The Nehru family as a family has never been much of my concern. Jawaharlal Nehru was the whole of it for me and he seemed to contain multitudes, the whole of the human family. I had first seen him at the Madras Congress of 1927-28, when I was an undergraduate, speaking stridently on Independence in Hindi; I was more overwhelmed by the exuberant eloquence of Malaviya, Mahomed Ali and others. In 1936, he visited Madras again, skipping over surging crowds, and after reading his autobiography, a classic of reticent

self-revelation, I was fascinated by him and wondered if I would ever know him. Within two years I was not only to know him but to work with him, and know him probably as few others did. My good fortune has been that he came to know me and understand me more than any one else did.

At the time of Indira's marriage, there was much discussion, and Jawaharlal Nehru was to explain the event. I knew Feroz, fresh from London, with a bagful of enthusiasms including enthusiasm for the Soviet Union and for machines, but it was a casual acquaintance. After the war, we were thrown together; we cooperated closely to produce some magnificent supplements and differed often. Throughout we hit it off well, and I was later to find that I had discovered and valued qualities in him which were to make him famous and known to the world later. This discovery led to another discovery. The first person who had known his qualities of persistence and courage and charm had been Indira. She had rightly made up her mind about him, to the end a half-submerged personality of elemental promise who may have grown into some Colossus.

Indira, like John Kennedy, could describe herself as an idealist without illusions. I met her soon after her return from the 1949 American tour of her father, and she had seen through the mechanical formalities of ticker tape receptions, which the Shah of Iran was

also to receive soon after Jawaharlal Nehru. I saw her after her visit from China, and while she had no closed mind, she had no illusions.

The 1955 tour of the Soviet Union, Poland and Yugoslavia was probably the most rousing of Jawaharlal Nehru's tours, with populations turning out wholesale everywhere, and whatever the organization behind it, there was enough disorderliness and frenzy to show there was much spontaneity. As leader of the press delegation, I had my share of protocol, and many difficulties in keeping my delegation together and disciplined. I was often to join the Prime Minister's banquets, leaving my delegation to elect ad hoc leaders, which proved an odd affair, and could see Jawaharlal Nehru's reactions, between the spells of tiresome toasts, to all kind of things. Indira maintained her poise and enthusiasm, and was a good mixer, especially in the relaxed atmosphere of the short voyages on the Black Sea and the Volga. And news was coming in occasionally of new-born Russian girls being called Indira. The original had only a smile or a shrug for this oddest of tributes in a country where Indian film stars were also popular.

Indira's attitude on the problems of the day was not romantic even when revolutionaries indulged in romanticism. She had been probably too educated enough and mentally disciplined at an impressionable age by

"Glimpses of World History", and her father's experiences, always with enough of endless challenges and surprises, provided a hard school of experience. Behind the screen of shyness, the occasional smile and the abrupt words, there must have been an inner hardening.

At breakfast and lunch and dinner, I was to see her as a hostess, though for so unobtrusive and informal a guest like me, Jawaharlal Nehru, a host in himself, looked after much. For some years, there was frequent confusion. Was I a vegetarian or a non-vegetarian? I had been for years a vegetarian, when Jawaharlal Nehru would seek to persuade me to help myself at least with some fish, and then I became a non-vegetarian. It took some years before I could get established in my new carnalism. I was such a heavy practitioner of the new cult soon that once Jawaharlal Nehru, taking rather an unusually personal view, suggested I was beginning to look a non-vegetarian. And then, the box of cigars would come invariably, for Jawaharlal Nehru knew I was an inveterate smoker. Suddenly, I once said I had given up smoking, and he was startled and pleased; he himself had reduced his smoking to five cigarettes a day. But he was to discover I was giving up smoking too often. Indira would watch the operations of her father and the behaviour of the guests stoically, occasionally offering some help. The father was active, giving a lead hectically

in serving himself with porridge or in cutting papaya and distributing pieces, and nobody could cut fruit with the grace and artistry with which he could. Then, occasionally, he would confide a bit, fall into a reverie, or meditate. And, beside the Rodin figure of the great man sat the daughter, nibbling at food but silently imbibing history.

Indira was drawn into solving more than one crisis of which I was the centre in my organization and her handling was deft, delicate and mature. On one occasion, she learnt of the crisis at the last moment before her arrival in Lucknow, asked me if it was true, and settled it in a few moments. On another occasion, I was surprised to hear her phone to me from Delhi and ask me to make a trip to that place and stay with them, though this was not the first time and the invitation was backed by a letter from Jawaharlal Nehru. A third time, when things seemed crumbling all round, she assumed an imperious attitude which put heart into the directors. At meetings of directors, her appearances were uncertain, but she listened attentively, and then if she had something to say, it was the only sensible conclusion. When she became Congress President, she resigned from the board; again when she became a minister, she resigned. That was the convention which Jawaharlal Nehru had laid down the moment he had become a minister.

The question had arisen when he formed the interim Government. C. H. Bhaba had to resign from many lucrative directorships. Jawaharlal Nehru told Wavell he was the director of only one company, a non-profit-making one, and it was found not necessary for him to resign, but that he would prefer to resign as a matter of propriety.

The directors insisted he should not resign. I agreed with him. "I do not want to embarrass Chalapathi Rau and I do not want to be embarrassed by him", he said, and it seemed to me it was a correct, fair and far-seeing attitude. He always nursed and cherished my freedom, and set an example to all, directors or ex-directors.

Indira emerged into a major role as Congress President. Jawaharlal Nehru's reactions were mixed, as those of many of her friends. The prospect had both advantages and disadvantages. She was hard pressed, and she had to make her own decision. She did not consult her father. He did not try to influence her. She first refused it, then she accepted it. Probably her experience as a member of the Working Committee had left her in two minds. Jawaharlal Nehru was more than candid under cross-examination at a press conference. The world was to know that in such matters, father and daughter cast away personal considerations. The historical sense dominated them.

Indira's experience as Congress President had its painful periods; on the whole, it toughened her personality. With her father as Prime Minister, her task could be ticklish, and this was the bothersome part of such a combination. On the controversial Kerala issue, once her mind was made up, she looked to the President to act, not to the Prime Minister. This was constitutionally correct, though politically baffling. Again, her mind was clear about the bilingual state of Bombay, and she worked single-mindedly for bifurcation, and Maharashtra was created. These two episodes stand out in the brief history of her Presidentship. She had herself looked upon it as an interim affair and wanted to give a direction to trends; she had no hope of doing much. And she stepped down, without presiding over a Congress session and without delivering a presidential address. The descent from Motilal Nehru through Jawaharlal Nehru to a third generation President was clear but not complete. She had no regrets. The experience had made her know the pattern of Congress politics and the personalities of Congress leaders intimately as nothing else could have done.

"What am I to speak of Indira"? said Jawaharlal Nehru, on another press occasion. He just referred to her honesty and truthfulness and left the rest to his highly imaginative audience. He could have said much more, for instance, that she often differed from him,

not on policies but on personalities and on what he himself exactly said or did. I could sometimes see these differences in the open myself, and they were the freest and fairest of exchanges, with a touch of humour.

Indira did not want to be a minister soon after her father's death. She had to accept pressure from Lal Bahadur who felt she represented a continuity which would be of help to the new cabinet. She did not know what portfolio she would get. And, though the Information and Broadcasting Ministry did not rouse her enthusiasm much, she accepted the opportunities to increase mass communication as far as she could. She disturbed dove-cotes, rumped red-tape, and wanted near perfection, almost the impossible. She was always looking for ways of doing something, and she was prepared to break through the massed brick walls of bureaucracy. She would have soon learnt, as she may learn as Prime Minister, that while policies and attitudes can be changed, it is better not to quarrel with one's tools. Gandhi did not quarrel with his tools; Jawaharlal Nehru came to high office with contempt for the inefficiency and wastefulness of the bureaucracy, but he too could not quarrel with his tools.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry, I could see, was becoming a dawdling hide-and-seek affair with wearisome discussions on minor personalities; it was not much of a test,

there was not much of an opportunity. The field of mass communication was vast, the means too small.

There is always freshness about what Indira Gandhi thinks or says or writes. Her utterances are always clear; she never wobbles. She consults as many people as possible, but she makes up her own mind. In whatever she has tried to be, her strength of character emerges. Then there is her awareness, her capacity, in spite of silences, to come to the point, her outspokenness to the point of outrageous candour. She is basically a political being, with no pretention to being a blue stocking even among blue stockings, with no intellectual pose or of any kind. She has immense political understanding and a wide experience of men and affairs and of the world's continents and countries. All these and other qualities may not be enough to make a successful Prime Minister. Luck is necessary.

"What is my inheritance? What am I heir to?" asked Jawaharlal Nehru. To talk of Indira's inheritance as only part of a paternity is rather a petty view. She is also heir to the ages through which India has passed, and she will never dishonour herself or her country.

There are differences between Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira. Only the discerning can see them. With all her inheritance, she is herself. While all Prime Ministers will find Jawaharlal Nehru's example useful, she will

have to depend on her own intellectual and moral resources.

What else? There is no Prime Ministership without problems. Indira is facing these problems without saying that these were left over by her predecessors.

It is difficult to prophesy, to predict. Indira may think of herself as still not a fully tested person. But her performances in Parliament show that she is responding to challenges.

There is a childhood story about her wanting to be Jeanne de Arc. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote to her of it in one of his letters to her, and spiritedly recalled the history of that period, the courage and shining sacrifice of that story.

It is a distant parallel. Indian democracy has its own patterns, its own problems, and its own perils. Whatever the challenges, Indira has something of the spirit of Jeanne de Arc. She may not be urged by voices and she need not don armour, but if there is an issue which consumes all other issues, she will have the spirit enough to go to the stake, if necessary.

That in essence was the story of Jeanne.

Uma Parasher

Indira : Her Early Life

January 11, 1966.

News arrived early in the morning that Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India, had suddenly died of heart failure at Tashkent. He had gone there in search of peace and gave his life striving for it. Deep sorrow was mingled with the inevitable question, "Who, next?" There were a few claimants but those who knew the pulse of the nation were in little doubt about the successor. It was in no mood to accept any person who wanted the glittering office for its own sake. The mounting problems, domestic and foreign, needed a new approach and devoted action. And Mahatma Gandhi had echoed their feelings, "Power that comes from service faithfully rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service ...is a delusion and a snare to be avoided".

As the days passed by the outcome was hardly in doubt.

January 19, 1966 was the day of election. Congress MPs had gathered from all over the country to elect their leader. Men, women and children flocked to the Parliament House and waited impatiently in the square outside for the result. As time passed, tension mounted—a gentleman stepped out of the Parliament House. “Is it boy or the girl?” asked the swelling crowd. “The girl”, he said. “Hurrah! It’s the girl”, shouted everyone in unison. Similar scenes were witnessed everywhere.

Indira thus became the Prime Minister of the largest democracy in the world. It was a triumph for those who wished to see India a modern, secular, democratic State. It was a measure of success of Nehru’s policies and faith people had in Indira to carry them forward in the best, Indian tradition. It also meant a rebuff to reaction, and tendencies which were narrow, parochial and inward looking. Her election was also a crushing blow to prejudices against women. She brought a feeling of joy and hope to millions of her countrymen. It was in many ways an echo of an earlier past.

2

November 19, 1917.

“A girl”, cried the agitated nurse and Jawaharlal Nehru stopped pacing the room and rushed towards the door. Besides the mother,

lay a sweet little child breathing fast. He bent tenderly over her and whispered in her tiny ears "*Priyadarshini*"—Dear to the sight—and "*Priyadarshini*" she has remained ever since.

Indira was born twenty one months after her father's marriage with Kamala. The Nehrus at that time were considered real aristocrats, Motilal, her grand father, had already become something of a legend. His fabulous fees as a lawyer, his princely ways, his lavish spending, were known all over the country. His suits were made in Saville Row and it was whispered that his clothes were sent to Paris for washing. He purchased a big mansion on Church Road, Allahabad, and named it "*Anand Bhavan*"—The Abode of Delight. It was expensively furnished and had the latest gadgets. Every evening the top gentry of the town repaired to his house for a pleasant chat over the choicest of wines.

Motilal had built up his power and position with his own efforts. As a child he had suffered the hardship of an uprooted home. His ancestors had migrated from Kashmir and settled in Delhi in 1716. Their house was on the bank of a canal (*Nehar*) and, therefore, they came to be known as "*Nehrus*".

The Mughal empire gradually disintegrated during this period and the British came upon the scene. Indian troops drove them out for a brief period from Delhi and some other centres in 1857 but they soon returned. The triumphant

British soldiers shot their way back to the city and many families fled from there to Agra. Gangadhar Nehru was one of them. He died soon after. Three months after his death, Motilal was born.

Family fortunes fluctuated and Motilal grew up to be a strong, self-reliant, determined person who knew that he will have to work hard to succeed. And he did achieve great success in his life. He became one of the greatest lawyers of the country. His son, Jawaharlal, was born on November 14, 1889. He was brought up in the best manner possible. He had an English governess, and an Irish tutor, and was then sent to the famous public school in England—Harrow. He later went to Cambridge and was called to the Bar. Motilal's aim was clear. "It is a question of making a real man of you, which you are bound to be", he wrote to his son in England. "I think I can without vanity say that I am the founder of the fortunes of the Nehru family. I look upon you, my dear son, as the man who will build upon the foundations I have laid and have the satisfaction of seeing a noble structure of renown rearing up its head to the skies." And never did a father's prophecy about his son come so true.

The immediate problem on his return from abroad was, of course, his marriage. Kamala Kaul was chosen as his bride. She was slender, tall, fair, and extremely beautiful. She belonged

to an orthodox Kashmiri family and was completely Indian in her outlook. She came to a house where the style of living was alien to her's. She soon adjusted herself to the new environment but remained intensely devout and religious at heart. She was kind and forgiving but had a will of her own and was utterly selfless and brave; qualities which Indira has inherited from her.

The infant Indira was brought up in a princely manner. Her pram was specially ordered by her grandfather from a famous firm in Calcutta. "I am always thinking of Indira", he wrote, "the very thought of a personification of innocence is soothing. By a very easy slip, it justifies idol worship". Everyone adored her. She seemed to be fully conscious of her position. "You were the proudest looking baby I had ever seen", told Sarojini Naidu endearingly to her years later. She was six months old then and had come in the arms of her grand mother to receive the celebrated poetess on the steps of Anand Bhavan.

Motilal was looking forward to the young Nehru settling down to a comfortable life at the Bar. But fate had decreed otherwise. The country was slowly awakening from her wintry slumbers of slavery and began to feel the irritating humiliation of its chains. Annie Besant influenced Indian thought and stirred Indian conscience by her clarion call of "Home Rule". A frightened alien bureaucracy passed

Rowlatt Acts to curb the national sentiment. It led to the tragedy of Jallianwalla Bagh where soldiers under O' Dwyer mercilessly killed innocent people on 13th April, 1919. A wave of horror swept through the country and those who earlier wavered became confirmed nationalists. Jawaharlal decided to devote his whole life to the freedom struggle. Motilal first hesitated and then adopted the path shown by his noble son. Anand Bhavan was dedicated to the Nation and soon became the storm centre of Indian politics. Gandhiji, Malaviya, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Sarojini Naidu, all came there for deliberation and political decision. For young Indira, they were her charming playmates. She would wander into their meetings and listen attentively to what was being discussed there. She would then collect the large retinue of servants around her and perched on a table harangue them using fragments from the talks she had heard earlier.

As a child, she saw Anand Bhavan transformed from a grand luxurious palace to an austere abode of selfless disciplined soldiers of freedom movement. National songs became her lullabys, and marching footsteps of Congress volunteers, their measured beats.

The Indian National Congress appealed for boycott of British goods. It was decided to destroy all the foreign stuff of which Anand Bhavan was full. She recollects seeing the finest foreign silks and expensive fabrics being

heaped in piles on the terrace of Anand Bhavan. "What rich material, what lovely colours, what fun for a toddler to jump on", and soon they were a part of a big bonfire.

A relation of her brought a beautiful frock for her from Paris. She liked it so much and wanted very much to have it. Her mother left the decision to her. But then she thought to herself "How can I accept it, it is foreign made," and politely declined to accept the present. Her relation felt hurt and taunted her, "Then why do you play with a foreign doll?". She was carrying a doll which she loved so much that it had almost become a part of her. Her words were like a stab in her conscience. She brooded for days and then quietly went up the house and set fire to it. The thought of that doll tormented her but sense of duty had triumphed over personal feelings in the young mind.

3

Anand Bhavan became a place of pilgrimage and the crowds from all over the country flocked to it. She was often awakened by the lusty cheers of those people and shouts of "*Jawaharlal Ki Jai*". The atmosphere about the house was quite tense for a small child. She often heard the harsh footsteps of the hated police who came in to arrest the inmates of the house or to carry away its rare treasures—art collections, jewellery, furniture,

expensive china—for auction, since the freedom fighters refused to pay the fines imposed by the British courts. She felt infuriated at these depredations and would sometimes protest by trying to snatch things away from them. Deep anger welled up in her against foreign rule. She would read the story of Joan of Arc and picture herself riding with a sword in her hand to drive out the British from the country.

She was taught from the beginning to be brave and fearless. Jawaharlal himself knew no fear. When she was a small girl, Nehru took her to the Frontier Province. His friends warned him that the burly pathans disliked strangers and felt instinctively hostile to them. He took her with him all the same and told the pathans of the village far out in the arid hills beyond Peshawar that he would leave her in their care when he went out for his work. They all replied in chorus, "She is our child and we will protect her".

In 1930, Nehru wrote to her, "Never do anything in secret or anything that you would wish to hide, for the desire to hide anything means that you are afraid, and fear is a bad thing and unworthy of you. Be brave and all the rest follows". Years later she played a heroic role during communal disturbances that followed in the wake of partition. She worked in areas where communal passion was the worst and saved many lives. She had at that time a small son but she did not care for his safety

as well. Once she saw a man surrounded by a menacing crowd. She immediately ran towards them and saved him at the risk of her own life. Mahatma Gandhi praised her work in no uncertain terms during those days.

She is generally the first national leader to go to the danger spots. When the Chinese attacked the country, she went to Tezpur. She was in Madras to explain Union Government policies during the worst language riots in that area. She was in Kashmir during the recent conflict and went to Hajipir. As her helicopter hovered over the mountain, the whole range reverberated with cheers of the Jawans "*Indira Gandhi Ki Jai.*"

Jail going became a normal feature of the life of the inmates of Anand Bhavan when she was but a child. During Motilal's trial, Indira, then a child of four, throughout sat in her grandfather's arms in the dock. Her father was also arrested at about the same time. On hearing the news, she went to her nursery, stood on a small table, and exhorted the vast concourse of dolls to court arrest along with her father. Jawaharlal was frequently in what he termed his "other home". Once some people came to call on them. She met them at the doorstep and quietly informed them that both of her parents were out in the jail. She was thus left loftily alone in that big mansion. Nehru realised what it meant for a young child to be left alone most of the time. He tried

to keep her company through the meagre allowance of letters permitted by jail authorities. On January 1, 1931, he wrote to her from prison:

“Here we are on either side of Jumna river—not far from each other but the high walls of Naini prison keep us effectively apart—you must be rather lonely. Once a fortnight you may see mummy and once a fortnight you may see me, and you will carry our messages to each others...Meanwhile you sit in Anand Bhavan, and mummy sits in Malacca Jail, and I, here in Naini prison, and we miss each other sometimes, rather badly, do we not?”

All this must have made a deep impression on her sensitive mind. It was indeed a tragic grandeur for her; she became reserved, quiet, compassionate and forbearing in the process. In moments of stress and tension she silently withdraws to herself. Those who know her often notice the impenetrable barrier that separates her from others but they forget the ordeals through which she has passed in her earlier days. Even now amidst all her preoccupations she quietly withdraws to her inner self and remains austere and aloof.

5

She was brought up in an atmosphere where higher duty to motherland was all that mattered in life. Everything else—personal feelings, affections, comforts—was to be sacrificed at this

high altar. Her parents were a living example of it. Kamala Nehru was seriously ill and hovered between life and death. Jawaharlal was in prison and his presence by her side would have made all the difference. "Two prison terms" reflected Nehru sadly, "had come in between me and her just when our need for each other was the greatest—I might have been of some help but not from jail." The British rulers, however, would not release him unless he gave an assurance that he would not take part in politics for the rest of the term. When he was brought to her, she was in a daze of high fever. She slowly whispered to him, "What is this about your giving an assurance to the Government? Do not give it". And before he was out, she was in Europe along with Indira desperately struggling to live so that she could see him for the last time.

6

Indira's lonesome grandeur must have been quite trying at times. She would wander about the corridors of her big house lost in thought or stand silently near the mantelpiece of her spacious room, brooding, or sit in the huge library of her father browsing through books. Nehru was painfully aware of his responsibilities but the call of the nation came first. He wanted to harness the restless energies of a growing child towards something constructive and let her feel that she was fulfilling an im-

portant role in the national struggle. He wrote to her on October 17, 1922.

"Learn to write letters and come and see me in gaol. I am longing to see you. Have you plied the new spinning wheel which Dadu (her grandfather) has brought for you? Send me some of your yarn. Do you join mother in prayers, everyday?"

On October, 26, 1930 he reminded her, "Do you remember how fascinated you were when you first read the story of Jeanne d'Arc, and how your ambition was to do something like her?" Indira, on her part, devoted all her attention to the service of the people. At the age of ten she used to bicycle every Sunday to Naini, six miles out of Allahabad, to work in a Home for Lepers. When she was in Poona, she regularly worked in slum areas. At the age of twelve she formed a children's section of Mahatma Gandhi's *Charkha Sangh* (Association of hand spinners).

Then came the Non-cooperation Movement of 1929. There was a popular upsurge against the British rule. Women who had earlier felt shy of even talking to their neighbours boldly picketed liquor shops, and shops that sold foreign cloth. They patiently bore the brunt of police bludgeons, but would not leave picketing. There were frequent lathi charges and hundreds of men and women were arrested every day. Men must be relieved of routine duties and Indira hit upon a plan. She im-

mediately organised children to help the movement by taking over these duties and called it *Vanar Sena* (Monkey Brigade). Those were stirring times and Indira had sometimes wished that she were a boy so that she could do more daring work for the national struggle. But at the age of sixteen she says, "the delight of being a woman began to unfold itself and almost overnight the longlegged tomboy in frocks changed into a sari-clad young lady".

7

Indira was not educated on conventional lines but the circumstances and the personality of her father combined to give her one of the rarest education that a person can aspire. Nehru took keen interest in her education and encouraged her to read and think for herself. While he was away, he carried on with the Great Dialogue through letters though he certainly did not consider it a satisfactory arrangement. "Tomorrow it will be three months since I saw her", he wrote on August 18, 1922, "I wish some arrangements were made for Indira's lessons. I am confident that I could have managed her easily—but I am in Barrack No. 4".

He then wrote letters to her which were later published under the title '*Letters from a Father to His Daughter*'. "They were personal letters written to a little girl ten years old", he wrote in the preface of the book. He wanted

that "such of them as read these letters may gradually begin to think this world of ours as a large family of nations". She learnt music and dancing and after matriculation from Poona she was sent to Santiniketan. Nehru had a dislike of Indian Universities as run at that time. "The whole atmosphere that envelopes them is official, oppressive, authoritarian", he said.

At Santiniketan Indira was "painfully shy with strangers (and) was rather overawed by Gurudev's magnificent presence". But soon she got over it and participated fully in the life of the institution. She says in retrospect: "These were moments of serene joy, memories to cherish." Rabindranath Tagore spoke highly of her achievements there. "She is such an asset to our place", he wrote to Nehru. "I have watched her very closely and have felt admiration for the way you have brought her up. The teachers all in one voice, praise her and I know she is extremely popular with students". And when she left the place, Gurudev wrote, "she is a charming child—she has your strength of character as well as your ideas." She then went to Switzerland and Oxford and took an active part in student movement there. This varied and rich education in India and abroad has enabled her to possess a deep appreciation of Indian values with an essentially modern outlook.

Indira returned to India in the middle of the last war and married Feroze Gandhi, a Parsee gentleman, in March 1942. Anand Bhavan wore a festive look after a long time; Indira was particularly happy that her father was present on the occasion. He was in a prison on a four-year term and had only recently been released. Indira looked lovely in a saree made of fine Khadi woven by her father in jail. They moved to a small house in Tagore Town, Allahabad. A few months later Gandhi ji started "Quit India" movement. British administration was paralysed in many areas. Leaders were immediately taken into custody and among them were Indira and her husband. She was kept in Central Prison, Naini. Thirteen months later she was released.

Her first son was a few months old when she got secret information that her father was being transferred to Naini Jail by car on a particular evening. She very much wanted that he should see her son even for a moment. She trudged along with the child in her arms over that weary long road in the gathering dusk and crossed the bridge over the Ganges to wait patiently for that car. After what appeared to be an endless wait, a car passed by and a startled figure peered out of the closed window in the fading light. She held the child aloft in both arms but the car was gone. And

she found herself alone in the enveloping gloom and surging darkness.

9

With Independence, Indira's responsibilities increased considerably. She became the hostess of the Prime Minister's house. It was indeed a delicate task. "For the women especially there is the constant battle with protocol", she said. "It is like walking on a tight rope to adhere close enough to the formal side of protocol so as not to offend even most particular of dignitaries and yet not to stifle the human element and keep the function interesting and homely; the daily struggle with menus to suit all tastes; the intricacies of decorating a State House and so on". She won praise from all the high potentates who came to the famous house from all over the world. Lord Pethick Lawrence described her as "a charming hostess" and spoke highly of her "selfless devotion to the highest ideals of service". She was the guide of Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife when they visited India in May 1961. Lyndon Bird Johnson later said "to know India you must have a teacher like Indira Gandhi."

Jawaharlal worked hard and long and there were endless streams of visitors, meetings, and public functions. She looked after him with tender care and shared his innermost ideas and thoughts. She, thus, helped him considerably

in the formulation of policies and vital decisions and after Bhubaneshwar when he became really ill, Prime Minister's decisions were to a great extent, her decisions.

Her political training has been long and varied. She was elected Congress President in 1959. Three generations of Nehrus thus held this high office and she kept up the unique family tradition. As Congress President she took some vital decisions; dismissal of the Communist government in Kerala was due largely to her insistence, so was the creation of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

She has remained a member of innumerable top public Committees and Boards. She has consistently worked for the welfare of women, children, Harijans and the unity of the country. She took an equally important part in the village contact movement of the Congress party.

Her work in public life is enough to absorb the energies of even the most untiring person and yet amongst all her preoccupations and public responsibilities, her main interest is still the home. "The social side, the political sphere, the welfare angle, the myriad other activities—have been laid bare to the public eye", she said. But "Running through them and linking them together is domesticity. What a gentle word is domesticity"! She believes that to a mother her children must always come first because they depend on her

in a special way. Sanjay, her son, proudly proclaimed as a young boy, "My mother does a lot of important work, yet, she always plays with me". And she loves children. "Child Welfare work is nearest to my heart", she says.

As Prime Minister she has an extremely busy schedule but she still finds time to attend to household duties and can be seen early in the morning arranging flowers in her rooms. Life in 1, Safdarjang Road (her official residence) has her personal, informal touch which she has given every home she has set up.

10

"I am fundamentally interested in growth and development of democracy in India and also its economic development", said Indira recently. India is at present beset with formidable problems of growth and international stability. There are economic difficulties, food shortages, rising prices and growing unemployment. There are then those who equate private welfare of certain sections with the general good of the community. There are tendencies towards bringing down political debate from principles to persons. Indira as Prime Minister, indeed, faces serious problems. But she is adequately fitted for the new role assigned to her. She combines humility with courage, compassion with justice and intellectual curiosity with immense faith in her principles.

"I am not one of those who would make compromises just to hold on to power", she told some persons at Allahabad last year. Her whole approach to public life is based on truth and attainment of certain goals for the community. She firmly believes that there are certain principles that must be upheld in public life. Politics are for the benefit of the individual and not for his annihilation. She inherits from her father her great love for people. During the recent Prime Minister's election some VIPs had come to meet her in that connection. There were also a few common people gathered on the lawn outside. She came out to meet them first and then went to the waiting VIPs.

Behind her soft exterior and gentle smile, lies indomitable spirit and the courage to do what is right. She possesses elegance, grace and great charm. She is a person of transparent honesty and begets trust. She has legendary reputation for sincerity; she is natural and she is consistently true to herself. She has, what is impossible in politics to keep, only one face. She has lived up to the advice of Gandhiji. "Indira, there are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Belong to the first category."

Indira's election to the high office marks a change in the temper and mood of the nation. She is a bridge between two generations; one which fought the Independence struggle and the other which is anxious to make the best

use of it. She may be able to evolve a new harmony based on science and culture and give a useful lead to the younger generation distrustful of old values and apt to lose itself in the twists of a fast rhythm. Possessed of the lofty idealism of Nehru and the unerring instinct of a woman for the practical, she may yet prove to be the fundamental statesman of our era.

Indira : A Profile

As the new Prime Minister of 480 million Indians, Indira Gandhi today becomes perhaps the most powerful woman in the world, even if she has to concede to Sirimavo Bandaranaike the distinction of being history's first woman Prime Minister.

The thought that Indira Gandhi might be Prime Minister one day had occurred to many during recent years. But those who wished that she should reach this Olympian height of political office and others who feared that she might, were agreed on one thing; that Indira Gandhi could be the Prime Minister of India only if her ageing father openly and actively promoted her candidature for succession to himself.

This never came to pass. Today, Indira Gandhi becomes Prime Minister in her own

right, on her own merit, and without the magic key of powerful parental sponsorship. In a strange, shattering way, history has confounded those who believed that with the passage of time, after Jawaharlal Nehru's death, Indira Gandhi would gradually dwindle politically or might even join the daughter of Sardar Patel and the sister of Jinnah in the political backwaters bordering on the political wilderness.

Surely this could not have happened had Indira Gandhi been nothing more than her illustrious father's dutiful daughter? Of course, it is true that circumstances make the man, or for that matter the woman. Powerful circumstances there were which combined to bring Indira Gandhi to the fore. But when all is said and done, the fact remains that there is something in the personality of this attractive and charming lady of 48 which, in the hour of darkness following Lal Bahadur Shastri's sudden death, made her an almost inevitable choice for the top job : a choice so eloquently endorsed by the rank and file of the Congress Parliamentary Party.

The first and foremost of Indira Gandhi's qualities is magnetism, which she seems to have inherited from her father. Her mass appeal is and has been greater than that of any other leader after Nehru. It was only after the September war with Pakistan that the late Shastri began to attract colossal crowds.

Until then, Indira Gandhi alone was in a position to do so.

Let it be said right away, however, that while Indira Gandhi is undoubtedly the darling of the crowd, she is by no means adept in endearing herself to individuals, unless of course, they happen to know her well and or work in close association with her. Any visitor to Lal Bahadur Shastri felt perfectly at home with him, he was indeed overwhelmed by the great man's modesty. The same cannot be said about Indira Gandhi. She has in her a streak of forbidding aloofness, which keeps a visitor on edge and appears to some to be arrogance. At any rate modesty is not among her principal attributes. Like her father, she can be very impatient, but unlike her father, she is not known to have lost her temper in public.

At the same time, Indira Gandhi can be extremely kind and considerate not only to those who work with or for her but also to strangers and mere acquaintances. In office as out of it, in joy as in sorrow, she can be intensely human. On the night following Nehru's death she went into the kitchen at Teen Murti House and made sure that the scores of people on the Prime Minister's staff got something to eat. Next morning she collected all those who had stayed up all night, and told them to go home, shave, bathe and change and then come back. "My father",

she said, "never liked slovenliness in life: he would not like it after his death."

To write about the life and person of Indira Gandhi is not easy. There was a time when it was believed that there was nothing much to write about. But this notion was totally mistaken, as Welles Hangen, the author of "After Nehru Who?" quickly discovered and handsomely acknowledged. The present problem is that Indira Gandhi is so well known to newspaper readers at large that it is difficult to tell them anything new about her.

When Lal Bahadur Shastri became Prime Minister it was a fascinating assignment to explore his past and to write about his modest beginnings. What research can one do about the early days of the only child of Jawaharlal and Kamla Nehru?

A child of the Indian revolution, Indira Gandhi was born, perhaps appropriately in 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution. Her birthday falls five days after that of her father. She was named Indira Priyadarshini Nehru. The middle name means "beautiful to behold" and as Indira grew up she lived up to the name. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia once said in the Lok Sabha that he would like Indira Gandhi to be the Prime Minister of India, if for no other reason, simply to look at a pretty picture in the newspapers everyday. The fact is that the new Prime Minister looks even better than the newspaper pictures show her to be.

Indira was a lonely child and this fact may well have affected her personal make-up profoundly. Her parents were almost always in jail. The thin little girl was reduced to exhorting her dolls to court imprisonment, too. Not only were adult members of the Nehru family all marched away to prison frequently but the police often seized most items of movable property at the famous Nehru residence, Anand Bhawan, at Allahabad.

Jawaharlal Nehru wrote in his autobiography : "It was the Congress policy not to pay fines. So the police came day after day and attached and carried away bits of furniture. Indira, my four-year old daughter, was greatly annoyed at this continuous process of despoliation and protested to the Police and expressed her strong displeasure. I am afraid those early impressions are likely to colour her future views about the Police force generally." One hopes that Nehru's expectation has turned out to be correct. In these days of a permanent emergency and Defence of India Rules, a healthy distrust of the police would do the Prime Minister and the country no harm.

Indira was educated at Allahabad, Poona, "Visva Bharati" and Oxford, and in Switzerland. But her education was constatly interrupted by her parents' continuous jail-going, World War II, and illness—firstly her mother's and then her own. She never took a degree,

although later in life, universities began showering honorary degrees on her. Many more universities are bound to vie with each other to do so in future.

But degree or no degree, Indira had one advantage in schooling over every other child. She learnt world history through letters written to her by a loving father, who combined in himself the roles of a maker of history and a keen student of it. It could be from these letters—written mostly from prison and later published under the caption “Glimpses of World History”—that Indira acquired a Fabian and socialistic outlook on life which continues till today.

At a youthful age, Indira suffered from a severe attack of pleurisy, which has left her weak and frail since. But fears that her health may not stand the strain of onerous responsibilities need not be taken seriously. Over the recent years she has demonstrated that she has, in an ample measure, the strength and stamina of her father. Furthermore, she leads a regular and well regulated life. She works hard, sometimes extremely hard, but keeps regular hours and respects the time of meals and the time of sleep.

Politics, it need hardly be said, runs in Indira Gandhi's blood. She recalls that she attended her first political meeting at the age of three—in the arms of her grandfather, Motilal Nehru. She did a 13-month stint in jail,

almost immediately after her marriage. Only after she had been served the warrant of arrest did she deliver a speech "to justify the honour of being arrested". In jail, where she could meet her husband only twice a week, she was made to live in an overcrowded dormitory under intolerably harsh conditions.

Indira's marriage to Feroze Gandhi on March 26, 1942, was against Mr. Nehru's wishes. It was also opposed by the whole Nehru family and by Mahatma Gandhi. But in the clash of wills, Indira won.

Feroze had been Indira's playmate in Allahabad. Later he had looked after Indira's ailing mother in Switzerland. He courted Indira assiduously when she was at Oxford and he at the London School of Economics. Both were also active in the India League, headed by Krishna Menon. The two sons of Feroze and Indira Gandhi, Rajiv and Sanjay, are being educated in the U.K.

Feroze Gandhi died after a second heart attack in 1960. He was then as old as Indira Gandhi is now. By then he had made for himself a tremendous name as the most effective private MP India has ever known. But even before Feroze's death, Indira Gandhi and her husband had very little time that they could spend with each other. Indira Gandhi was constantly busy looking after her father and housekeeping for him. Feroze had his own interests and career to pursue.

Ever since independence, Indira Gandhi was under strong pressure to join active politics and to contest an election to either the U.P. legislature or Parliament. She resolutely refused to do so until after her father's death, even though from the early fifties she took an active part in the Congress Party electioneering and other activities. (In her childhood at Allahabad, she had organized "Vanar Sena" or the "monkey brigade". It was a volunteer corps which ran errands for the Congress).

Her involvement with Congress politics became steadily deeper. She became a member of the Congress Working Committee, of the Congress Election Committee and the Congress Disciplinary Action Committee. Eventually, she was elected Congress President in 1959. Her tenure as Congress President demonstrated her organizational ability as well as political acumen. She played a decisive part in the overthrow of the Communist regime in Kerala. Later, she took the lead in forming the coalition which eventually routed the Reds at the polls.

Here, the narrative of Indira Gandhi's political activities may be interrupted to point out that her interest in the social welfare of the country, especially the welfare of the poor and down-trodden, is deep. It would take too much space to catalogue her activities. It must also be recorded that Indira Gandhi is a

patron and promoter of the arts and a source of encouragement and support to painters, dancers, etc. A sensitive person, she is acutely alive to beauty, elegance and refinement. K.P.S. Menon, who travelled with her in the Soviet Union, records Indira Gandhi's reaction to Tbilisi, the beautiful capital of Georgia : "Anybody can get drunk on wine. But it is the beauty of the places like this that intoxicates me."

What does Indira Gandhi stand for? The best and the briefest way to answer this question would be to say that she aspires actually to achieve what her father willed and planned. This, coupled with Indira Gandhi's known attitude to socio-economic questions as well as her associations, has given rise to fears—or hopes, depending on the way one looks at it—that she might give a sharp Left-wing twist to the country's politics. It is exceedingly doubtful, however, if this would ever happen. For Indira Gandhi is wedded to no dogma. Indeed, a sharp antipathy to doctrinal rigidity is among her strong points. She has declared repeatedly that she does not like "any particularism". Besides, she is a liberal in the best sense of the word, and dislikes totalitarianism.

Broadly speaking, therefore, she would be following the same policies that Shastri did for they were broadly the policies laid down by Nehru. The approach underlying these policies may be summed up as pragmatic socia-

lism. There is likely to be one essential difference however. While practising pragmatic socialism in his own way, Shastri would instinctively bend more towards pragmatism than towards socialism. Indira Gandhi's instinct is likely to drive her the other wayabout.

But as her record as Congress President shows, what she will eventually do will be guided very much by the realities of the situation. It would depend also on who her advisers are. Some people think that as Information and Broadcasting Minister, Indira Gandhi did not surround herself with the best possible advisers. But even they feel confident that she would choose her future advisers with much greater care.

Power, Jawaharlal Nehru said, brings responsibility, and responsibility brings constraint and mellowness. And it goes without saying that more than anything else, Indira Gandhi's paramount objective in the coming month will be to preserve the national unity to which she has become a shining symbol.

POST SCRIPT

Illness prevented me, to my great regret, from writing a fresh article on Indira Gandhi. A brief post-script to the article which I wrote on the day she became Prime Minister seems to be the only practical proposition.

Even so dynamic a leader as John Fitzgerald Kennedy laid down 100 days as the mini-

mum period for which a politician should be in power before he can be judged. Indira Gandhi has been in power for less than half that period. To make any judgments about her would, therefore, be less than fair.

But no reporter of Delhi's political scene could have missed the sureness of touch with which the new Prime Minister has gone about her tasks of governing a country of India's size and complexities. Difficult problems have accumulated lately with unprecedented speed. But in face of them, Indira Gandhi has displayed a degree of unflappability which has surprised even her friends. At the height of every crisis she has been cool, collected, and supremely in control.

She has taken decisions which might have disconcerted her illustrious father. The painful conflict over a Punjabi-speaking State plagued the politics in this country for over a decade; Indira Gandhi took the bold decision to cut the Gordian Knot in less than 10 days.

Lal Bahadur Shastri reached the summit of political power in India practically without any experience of foreign affairs. Indira Gandhi, on the other hand, has served a long apprenticeship under her father. As Nehru's companion she has travelled to more countries and talked with more world statesmen than any other Indian leader.

Yet, her State visit to the USA would be her first essay in summit-level international

diplomacy in her own right. The outcome of this visit can only be awaited. But hitherto Indira Gandhi has maintained, in her handling of international affairs, a style which is a cross between those of her two predecessors.

She has moved away from Shastri's "Little India" posture; but she has scrupulously refrained from following in her father's footsteps and getting entangled in intricate international issues. Vietnam is an eloquent example.

Indira : In Political Life

Indira Gandhi is a child of destiny. Few people in recent history have been so disinterested in power and yet have had so much responsibility and authority placed on their shoulders as Indira Gandhi.

During the past few years, whenever she has held political office, it was always the office which had gone in search of her rather than her looking for it anxiously. In 1959, when U.N. Dhebar stepped down from presidentship of the Congress Party in the middle of the term, many an older and senior leader looked at the vacant seat covetously but Indira Gandhi, as those close to her testify, did not even entertain the thought of seeking it. When top party leaders invited her to take over as President, she was surprised and reluctant. It was after a great deal of persuasion on the

part of Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders that Indira Gandhi accepted the burden.

A year later, when her temporary charge ended and she was urged to continue for a full term of two years, Indira Gandhi firmly declined. During the year that she had been the head of the party she had wielded considerable influence and earned much personal prestige but that apparently was inadequate incentive for her to continue in office. Her first duty, she told her supporters, was to look after her father who, having crossed 70, needed her attention more than ever before. Her responsibilities as Congress President distracted her attention from attending to her father and that was sufficient reason for her to decline the offer. Even personal pressure from Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, India's then Home Minister, who had known her since her childhood and whom she held in high personal esteem, failed to change her mind.

Another attempt to draft Indira Gandhi for active political work was made in January 1964. As many as twelve State Chief Ministers wrote to the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, urging him to include her in the Central Cabinet. The move had developed suddenly at Bhubaneswar where top party leaders from all over the country had assembled in connection with the Congress party's annual session and where Nehru suffered a mild stroke. The Chief Ministers realized that the Nehru era

was drawing to a close and with no natural successor in sight a situation may arise in which Indira may have to be called upon to fill the void. In Congress party politics, the Chief Ministers are admittedly a factor to reckon with. They made the request about Indira Gandhi's appointment as minister with obvious earnestness. Also, Jawaharlal Nehru himself had no doubt that the end was approaching. Yet, the move ended abruptly because Indira Gandhi was not willing.

Even after Nehru's death in May that year, office and power held little fascination for her. Few who were acquainted with the mood of the party and the country at the time would question the statement that if Indira Gandhi had wanted to become Prime Minister she would have achieved that end without any difficulty. Lal Bahadur Shastri who was chosen to succeed Nehru entertained deep loyalty towards Nehru's daughter and would have readily withdrawn in her favour and sincerely supported her candidature for Prime Ministership if only she had shown any interest.

Even after his election as party Leader, Lal Bahadur Shastri visited her at her house and offered to follow her should she choose to lead. This, of course, was a sentimental gesture and Indira Gandhi responded to it similarly. He also invited her to hold the prize portfolio of Foreign Affairs in his Cabinet. Many others in the party would have given

much to be India's Foreign Minister, an office that Nehru himself had held for seventeen years in addition to being Prime Minister and to which he had lent an air of distinction blended with controversy. As Foreign Minister of a country like India, particularly with her family background and political training, Indira Gandhi would have had a prestigious role to play in international politics. All the same, she declined. Only when Lal Bahadur would not take total no for an answer to his invitation she agreed, with unconcealed reluctance, to join the Cabinet as Minister for Information and Broadcasting.

In January 1966, when Shastri's sudden death in Tashkent once again raised the leadership issue, Indira Ganddi, from all appearances, was not averse to ministerial office but she was by no means consumed by political ambition as some of her older and more seasoned colleagues were. She probably wanted a better portfolio—perhaps Foreign Affairs—and, as subsequent event showed, was not unwilling to become the Prime Minister but she was definitely not running any race for it. In the fortyeight hours following Shastri's death, some other Congress leaders engaged themselves in a hectic, often unseemly, struggle for power but Indira Gandhi did nothing to push herself forward in any manner. She watched the scene with the detached attitude of one who had no personal stake in what was happening. Within three days of Shastri's death,

most people in the party had realized that neither of the two active contenders, G.L. Nanda and Morarji Desai, had the requisite support. It was then that the Congress President, Kamaraj, and Indira Gandhi met at the former's suggestion and Indira Gandhi was persuaded to offer herself for the post. She told reporters that day that she would be willing to stand for Prime Ministership "if Kamaraj wanted her to." This was virtually the first glimmer of interest on her part in political power.

This account of her unwillingness on successive occasions to accept office should not create the impression that Indira Gandhi is not interested in politics or that she is the retiring housewife who has been dragged into active politics by circumstances. Such an impression would be totally erroneous.

Long before she was called upon to become Congress President, she was invited to become a member of the party's principal executive and she had agreed readily. Dhebar, whom she later succeeded as Congress President chose her to be member of the Congress Working Committee as part of an attempt to introduce fresh blood into the party and add a measure of vitality to its thinking. Nehru had that year politely declined to join the executive and advised the Congress President to look round for political talent among the younger members of the vast party. Indira Gandhi agreed

unhesitatingly and in the years that followed she took an active part in the executive's deliberations.

Another occasion when she came forward with much enthusiasm was in October 1962 following the treacherous Chinese attack on India's eastern and north-western border. The need had then arisen to unite the country to meet the challenge. She readily accepted the chairmanship of the National Citizen's Council and handled with untiring efficiency the task of mobilising public support for the soldiers fighting on the battle front. Earlier, when a sudden flare up of Hindu-Muslim rioting in Jabalpur in Central India highlighted certain distressing hostility amongst the elements that comprised modern India, Indira Gandhi had no hesitation in joining the National Integration Council set up hurriedly to watch and combat forces of disintegration and division. It is perhaps significant and underlines a trait of the new Prime Minister's character that in recent years the posts that she has accepted willingly have all been advisory in nature and carried no trappings of power.

For one who walked into office with such lack of personal ambition, Indira Gandhi has always attended to her responsibilities with tremendous gusto. When she was Congress President many of her well-wishers often shook their heads in grave concern over the pace at which she wanted to go. Neither the people

around her were accustomed to it nor was the party machine geared to move at that speed.

Even those who jeered that she had become Congress President because of the accident of birth, later admitted that she had been a successful, almost dynamic, head of the aging (the Congress party was formed in 1885) organisation. Over the years, particularly after 1950, the office of Congress President had declined in authority and prestige. Up to a point the decline was inevitable. From a party in conflict with a foreign imperialist power, the Congress had moved to the other side of the fence and become India's ruling party and it was natural that the centre of prestige and effective power must shift from the party office and its President to Parliament and the Cabinet. But the process of decline was accelerated by the fact that for several years Nehru himself held the office in addition to being Prime Minister and thereby blurred the separate identity of the party president. Later, thanks to a combination of circumstances, the office was held by persons whose political stature, intellectual calibre and capacity for leadership was somewhat limited.

It would not be correct to say that Indira Gandhi restored the office to its former glory. She neither had the time nor perhaps the intention to achieve anything of this kind. However, during her year in office she did take some major decisions and implemented them

effectively. In taking them she showed a measure of personal courage and independence which was in refreshing contrast to the way other leaders tended to watch Nehru's mood before forming their own views on any controversial issue.

The biggest challenge that the Congress Party—in fact democracy—faced in this country came from the Communist regime in Kerala and it was given to Indira Gandhi to face it during her one year as Congress President. Unlike in other countries where Communists had risen to power in the wake of subversion and unrest, in Kerala they had assumed office through the ballot box. To that extent their regime in India's smallest State enjoyed a Constitutional and moral justification which similar regimes in other parts of the world could not claim. It was perhaps consciousness of this difference which made the Indian Government hesitate in dealing firmly with the Kerala Communists even when they blatantly violated the Constitution and normal standards of public life. At least for some time Nehru himself suffered from a mental conflict on this issue. Indira Gandhi happily did not seem to show signs of any such conflict.

The Communist Ministry in Kerala headed by E.M.S. Namboodripad, a leader of considerable intellectual attainment, had been behaving oddly. Perhaps the sheer novelty of the fact that they had come to power through

normal elections and had not risen from the ashes of an established political order staggered them. It was too good to be true. It disproved the entire thesis of their great masters and hence, the Kerala Communists presumably told themselves, there must be something phoney about it. Having acquired power the easy way they proposed to consolidate it through the use of normal Communist methods. The political accident of the type which had brought them into office may not happen again and they were determined to create conditions which might enable them to perpetuate their hold on the State's administration. To this end they employed methods which Communists in other countries traditionally employ to overthrow a non-Communist authority. The Constitution of India which had made it possible for them to establish a foothold in the vast country was not sacred to them. Nor were the rights of the people of Kerala who had voted for them. Systematically they began to subvert the Constitution and the Fundamental Rights that it assured the people. In this task they employed the entire Government machine, particularly the police and the education department.

Indira Gandhi saw the danger clearly and well in advance. Almost immediately after she took over as Congress President she began drawing the attention of other leaders to the perilous implications of what was happening

in Kerala. By then, Congress party members in Kerala were straining at the leash to launch an agitation against the ministry. The Catholic Church which occupies a position of honour and influence in Kerala and which had suffered heavily due to the Government's vindictiveness and narrowmindedness was already in virtual revolt against Namboodripad. But the Congress leaders at the Centre were hesitant. For one thing they did not wish to be accused of acting in a highhanded manner towards the only non-Congress ministry in the country and for another they were seemingly worried about adverse reaction that the overthrow of the ministry might cause abroad, particularly in the Soviet Union.

The Congress President appeared to look at the problem somewhat differently. As the principal opposition party in Kerala, the Congress had every right to agitate for the removal of the Namboodripad ministry and, she felt, it could not be denied the right to demonstrate peacefully. At the same time, the Ministry, through its disregard of the Constitution and misuse of the administrative machinery had forfeited the right to continue in office and the Central Government must dismiss it to pave the way for fresh elections. The virulent form which the public agitation against the ministry had taken and the danger of violence and lawlessness which was inherent in the situation offered added justification for such

a step by the Centre. This reflected aggressive thinking on her part, but there was no element of political vendetta involved in her reasoning. This was evident from her belief that should the Communists be returned to power again they should be allowed another fair chance to rule the State.

It was in the middle of 1959 that the Central Government resorted to its special powers to oust the Kerala ministry and ordered fresh elections to be held after six months. This placed on Indira Gandhi's shoulders the responsibility of supervising the party's performance at the polls. Winning the election was not only a matter of prestige, but of considerable political significance in as much as the Communist success for the second time would have consolidated their position in the state and would almost certainly have influenced electoral verdicts in their favour even in some other states.

In devising the election strategy against the Kerala Communists, she was assisted by S.K. Patil, India's present Minister for Railways, who, over the years has acquired the reputation of being a tactician of consummate skill. The Congress did win the election and succeed in keeping the Communists out of power but in doing so Indira Gandhi, along with many kudos, also earned some justified criticism.

That the Congress should enter into a local electoral alliance with the Praja Socialist Party,

as it did, was easily appreciated. Such alliances are valid tactics and the PSP was only a pale version of the Congress comprising largely those who had drifted away from it due to personal, rather than any strong ideological reasons. But what was generally considered objectionable was that the Congress should have entered into a similar arrangement with the Muslim League, an avowedly communal group. It was the Muslim League which had propounded the sinister two-nation theory and caused the partition of India in 1947 and to many in this country it seemed highly improper that the Congress, proud as it was of its secular character, should, for the sake of power in a small State, effect a marriage of convenience with the League. The only defence for the party's action is that it saw the realities of the situation in Kerala and decided to adopt a pragmatic attitude.

Pragmatism and realism were apparently also the principal considerations with Indira Gandhi when during her brief term as President the Congress decided to revoke an earlier decision and agree to the division of the large State of Bombay into two separate linguistic States of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Much blood had been shed in the streets of Bombay over the question of its bifurcation but in 1956 the Centre had stubbornly decided to keep the State united even while the rest of the country was reorganised on linguistic basis. The fires

of separatism were, however, smouldering and, displaying a measure of political sensitiveness lacking in many others at the top, Indira Gandhi sensed the danger of conflagration. She successfully urged the Government to revise the earlier decision and not stand in the way of the aspirations of the people of Maharashtra and Gujarat. That Nehru himself was closely associated with the earlier decision did not deter her from suggesting its revision.

Curiously, the first major decision that Indira Gandhi has taken as Prime Minister also involves revision of a policy that her father had evolved after carefully considering various factors and balancing conflicting forces. The Centre has now agreed to the reorganisation of the border State of Punjab to create a Punjabi-speaking State to meet the aspirations primarily of the militant Sikh community. The Government fully subscribes to the reasons which had made Nehru reject the Akali demand earlier. The creation of such a State, it recognises, was not in the best interests of the community or the area. Nevertheless, if the Sikhs had set their heart on such a State it felt that it would be pointless refusing them their demand.

Perhaps this decision has been influenced by the Prime Minister's amazing capacity to sympathise with the feelings of the various minorities. This is a quality that she has inherited from her father who was totally

lacking in narrowmindedness or bigotry of any kind. Nehru was a jealous guardian of the interests of the minorities of all types, religious, cultural and linguistic, and there is every reason to believe that Indira Gandhi will continue the tradition. It was she who rushed from Delhi to Madras in January 1965 to soothe those who were rioting because they believed the country's Hindi-speaking majority was coercing them to learn Hindi. That she herself came from Uttar Pradesh which is admittedly the principal citadel of Hindi fanaticism did not stop Indira Gandhi from publicly appreciating the fears of the non-Hindi speaking people of South India.

Perhaps it is not correct to say that she comes from U.P. Her ancestral home is in Allahabad and she speaks the language of U.P. but still, like her father, not many in India think of her as from U.P. in the manner in which, for example, they would of the late Shastri. There is an air of statelessness about her which is a valuable asset for the leader of a country comprising so many different States.

Indira Gandhi has reached the top at an early age but she has not travelled much politically yet. Her real work is not behind her but ahead of her. Her emergence as the leader has marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of modern Indian politics. It means the end of the generation which had directed and fought the battle of independence,

and the transfer of power to the next generation. Indira Gandhi apparently is conscious of it. That explains her appeals to the youth of India to come forward to help her in the enormous tasks that confront her. The transition from one generation to the other is not yet complete. Indira Gandhi is frankly looking towards the younger elements for help but in the Government she is still surrounded by several leaders belonging to the departing generation. Fading away is always hard and few accomplish it gracefully. Before the younger generation takes over the reins of power, the departing one may yet challenge Indira Gandhi to a last battle.

Indira : As Congress President

Nothing could be more erroneous than the notion in some quarters that Indira Gandhi's elevation to high office of Prime Minister of India was a consequence of her belonging to the Nehru family. The world has known quite a number of instances where the son followed his father, not on the dynastic principle, but because qualities demanded for the occasion pointed unerringly to such a succession. Similar murmurs of family affiliation leading to positions of power were heard when Indira Gandhi took over the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress, but any one with a sense of fact and history could see that in that brief eleven-month period, she exhibited an independence of outlook and a capacity for leadership, these murmurs died down soon enough and her solutions to several ugly problems held

the day. It was surely not a matter of any design or contrivance that Mahatma Gandhi found in Motilal Nehru a valiant soldier, an able commander, and also a rare parliamentarian to lead and fight the battle of freedom. Nor did Jawaharlal get to where he did—through manoeuvre or manipulation. And if it is Indira's turn now, it is so just because the logic of the situation demanded it.

Indira Gandhi was elected President of the Congress on February 2, 1959. She was the third in three generations of the Nehru family to succeed to the 'gaddi' of the national organisation; her grandfather, Motilal Nehru, was president for two terms in 1919 and 1928; her father, Jawaharlal Nehru, was the head for six one-year terms. She was the fourth woman elected to this high office. The others were Dr. Annie Besant, who presided over the session at Calcutta in 1917, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, at Kanpur in 1925, and Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta, again at Calcutta in 1933, during the civil disobedience movement.

On the occasion of Indira's taking over, Nehru said that her election was an indication that the doors of the Congress were open to youth, women and everyone who desired to serve the country. He also added that he was proud of her temperament, energy, affection and integrity—qualities which she had inherited from her mother. Later, once in a Congress Party meeting which was being held under

her Presidentship, saluting her Nehru remarked humorously, that at first Indira was his friend and advisor, then she became his companion and now she was his leader.

There was no ambiguity about her when Indira took over the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress and expressed her faith in the ideal of a socialistic pattern of society. With great clarity, she stated that the strength of the Congress was a factor of the service rendered to the masses and of the goodwill it earned from the people. She went further and said that merely clinging to high office and organising annual melas would not strengthen the Congress. And for the first time, it was during her tenure of office that she Congress President invited the cooperation of the opposition parties. Not only did she bring a sense of urgency to her mission as she conceived it, she saw to it that specific individuals were responsible for specific jobs. It was on one of her birthdays that her father said, "be brave, and all the rest will follow", and all her actions since have been a commentary on that exhortation.

Indira Gandhi reacts quickly to things and takes prompt decisions; her utterance on vital issues are unambiguous; she is firm about our policy on democracy and socialism; and also on our foreign policy of peaceful co-existence and non-alignment. At the same time, one may expect her to adapt and adjust herself to

new situations. A brief glance at what she did as President of the Indian National Congress on the home front and in the international field would be rewarding. The Kerala situation was boiling over, the fragmentation of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat was in the offing, Orissan politics was moving towards a shrill tempo, Tibet and the Sino-Indian border disputes were louring clouds on the horizon, the National Council for Africa was in the process of formation and the Ooty Seminar on the Third Five Year Plan clamoured for proper guidance. In all these situations, Indira displayed an extraordinary sense of course and direction and proved herself equal to the tasks assigned to her.

Soon after coming to power in 1957, the Kerala communists assumed their true colour by throwing away the garb of "champion of the down-trodden" and "saviour of democracy", and created a reign of terror in Kerala. During these difficult times Indira Gandhi toured the State to obtain first-hand knowledge of things there. Realising that the State was virtually on fire she persuaded the Centre to intervene in Kerala and order a fresh election. With great finesse, she obtained the support of other parties including the Muslim League, to establish a comparatively stable Government in the State. Doubts were expressed against the suitability of her action in this regard. Yet the time has proved that this was the best thing Indira could do.

The next important problem she had to grapple with was the re-opening of the delicate issue of Bombay State. There were powerful popular upsurges both in the Maharashtra and Gujarat regions and reactionary forces appeared to be gaining ground. Indira sensed the voice of the people and felt the force of the powerful popular upsurge. She appointed a nine-man Committee to report on the situation to the Congress Working Committee and the conclusions reached by the Committee recommending bifurcation on the linguistic basis was put through resolutely even though her father had set his face against it. Her solving of this issue is ample evidence of the fact, that she had her own independent thinking and the courage to express boldly and explicitly what she thought to be correct.

In Orissa the strength of the Congress Party in the State Legislative Assembly was 66. Besides this, five members of the Jharkhand Party were also with the Congress. On the other hand, the strength of the combined opposition was 67. Due to this slender majority, the Congress suffered a defeat on February 23, 1959 in a snap vote at the time of introducing the Municipal Election Bill. The snap defeat of the Congress in the Orissa Assembly created a situation which should have been most embarrassing, had she not taken the initiative towards the formation of a stable coalition government. At the suggestion of

Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, the then Chief Minister of Orissa, a secret session of the A.I.C.C. was held to consider the negotiations that were going on between the leaders of the Congress Party and the Ganatantra Parishad. The Committee decided to authorise the Congress Parliamentary Board to negotiate with the Ganatantra Parishad on the formation of a coalition Government. At the instance of Indira the three-man Congress-Ganatantra coalition Ministry, headed by Dr. Mahtab was sworn in on May 22, 1959. Later on this Ministry was expanded by taking an equal number of Ministers from each of the two parties. In this way the Orissa problem was solved.

The third Five Year Plan was finalised during her presidentship. The Sub-Committee held a week's seminar at Ooty from May 30 to June 5, 1959. The Ooty meet was a great success both in regard to clarifying the Congress standpoint on the socialist pattern and giving a clear lead on matters of planned development.

In the international sphere, the massive threat to civilisation from Communist China resulting in the naked invasion of Tibet and a genocide which shocked the world, Indira's leadership in the Congress was positive, and the grant of asylum to the Dalai Lama was a bold lead. China also started intruding into our territory and resorted to violence during Indira's Presidentship. She toured the country during the Chinese aggression visiting the jawans

and people in the forward areas and built up the morale of the people.

Indira has always evinced keen interest in developments in Africa. To express solidarity with the people of that continent, a National Council for Africa was formed during that period, and her own lead in this direction and cordial relations with the people of Africa, is still being kept up actively.

It is not merely in political leadership that she distinguished herself. A number of public organisations for child welfare, public health and women's education have called upon her for leadership and advice. Like her father, she believed that scientific and technological advance was mainly for the welfare of humanity, and in this respect she realised the grave responsibility of women for creating a proper atmosphere to preserve peace and save society from destruction. Women had to join massively in the struggle against poverty and unemployment. National defence effort, communal harmony, education, the calamity of soaring prices, world peace—all these had to have a major participation by women of the country. Her exhortation to women to give up their traditional shyness and join hands with men in the task of nation building is well-known. She felt that women's individuality was more important than men's because of their position in the family as an influence on children. She wanted the women of India to lay more

emphasis on a coordinated effort to channelise valuable human energy in such a manner as could prove more effective than atomic or nuclear force. Free from political bias and couched in the language of the heart, her utterances as the President of the Indian National Congress were a clarion call to women asking them to realise the great part they would have to play in national betterment.

How unfortunate it was that the tenure of Indira's presidentship was so brief. There was pressure on her from all quarters to continue for a longer period but the deteriorating health of her beloved father, Jawaharlal, demanded her utmost care and attention and she had to relinquish the office of the Congress President so soon. For her the welfare of her father was her first duty and perhaps the best service she could render to the nation. Although her tenure was so short, yet the study of this period reveals that she made tremendous impact all around.

All those who have witnessed the election proceedings at the Central Hall of the Parliament could not but be impressed by the decorum and dignity with which these proceedings were conducted. The transition from Nehru to Shastri was smooth and the transition from Shastri to Indira was an index that Indian democracy was mature. If the maxim that the 'hand that rocks the cradle rules the world' has a ring of reality it is because, in spite of the

'backwardness' attributed to womanhood through the ages, India does occasionally produce Sarojinis and Indiras. The Congress and the country needs new blood. Indira—the illustrious daughter of India—promises to infuse it in full measure. Commenting on her election as Prime Minister of India, the wife of the American Ambassador, Chester Bowles, remarked that it was a unique thing that a woman, and a young woman at that, should be Prime Minister of the world's largest democracy. And to think that they had never even elected a woman Vice-President. Such a thing has not been in their thinking. Traditionally Indian women have progressed politically and are far ahead. They went to jail along with men in the country's freedom struggle.

India's Prime Ministership and the Congress Presidentship are not hereditary. What she has earned for herself has often been mistakenly, and rather uncharitably, ascribed to her lineage. The part she played in the national struggle is often forgotten. The role of Indira as Congress President ended six years ago and now she has entered entirely a new sphere of responsibilities as the first woman leader of the world's largest democracy. The whole world is watching eagerly how she fares in her new role.

Indira Gandhi

Some Significant Thoughts

On being a Woman Prime Minister

Although I am in no sense a feminist, I happen to believe in the possibility of women being able to do everything.

If a woman has qualifications and ability for any profession, she should be in it. A woman's work is more difficult than a man's because she has to look after the work as well as her home. I do not believe that a person who neglects the home can do other things well.

On Youth

Youth is a matter of age but is also a question of mentality—courage, a sense of adventure and a scientific and rational outlook.

Youth must have greater opportunity. The young people of India must recognize that

they will get from their country tomorrow what they give her today. The nation expects them to aspire and excel.

On India's Problems and Policies

To millions of our people mere political freedom has not brought prosperity, nor can it do so unless we can translate political freedom into social and economic security.

Poverty is indeed the central problem facing us and it is by the way in which we set out to tackle it that we as a nation will be judged. It is a long and arduous battle that we have to wage. It demands of us all the perseverance, the discipline and the hard work of which we are capable. There will be no glamorous victories, no easy rewards.

Many of the difficulties we face today are really problems of growth and development. They can be postponed but they cannot be bypassed. If we are more cautious in our approach we might have fewer problems, but we would also solve fewer problems.

In economic development, as in other fields of national activity, there is a disconcerting gap between intention and action. To bridge this gap we should boldly adopt whatever far-reaching changes in administration may be found necessary. We must introduce new organizational patterns and modern tools and techniques of management and administration.

On Secularism

Secularism is not a denial of religion but an affirmation of the sacredness of all religions.

On Socialism

By this (socialism) we do not mean any test-book definition of socialism or any pre-conceived theory, but that we should evolve a direction suited to the needs of the Indian people.

If we look at other countries, whether they be capitalist or socialist countries, we will find that those who have achieved notable progress are those who have laid the greatest stress on efficiency.

Education

Education is not just the passing of examinations or even the gathering of knowledge. It is the training of the mind to think and to judge; to discriminate between what is of true value and the excitement of a passing fad; to tolerate sincere differences of opinion or customs, but to be intolerant of insincerity, hypocrisy and shoddiness, no less than of crime and evil.

On Foreign Aid

We are taking foreign aid and I believe we shall have to take it for some more time. But aid is not charity. We take aid in a spirit of co-operation. The real objective of taking

foreign aid is the ultimate elimination of such aid. It is only to help us to stand on our own feet.

Defence and Development

We must strengthen our defence forces and the preparedness of the nation, industrially, and socially to meet all developments, whether on our borders or within the country. At the same time we must try to look at the problem from a long distance point of view which cannot be isolated from the future of the countries around us nor indeed from the future of the world.

On Non-Alignment

The concepts of non-alignment and peaceful co-existence have served the world well. They have reduced tension and promoted friendship. They are as valid today as they were a decade ago.

On China

China's main intention is not merely territorial gain over India but to prove that India's policy of democratic socialism and non-alignment is wrong. I think China has expansionist tendencies. I believe that the best way of containing China or weakening her influence is for India and other South-East Asian countries to become economically stronger, stable and united.

The mere fact that China has exploded a nuclear device I do not think is sufficient for us to change our policy on this matter. We are anxious not to do anything which will precipitate the crisis and lead to the development of nuclear weapons in many more countries.

Relations with Pakistan

We feel that if we have greater economic collaboration, and bring the situation to normalcy, it will be good. If both countries get involved in each other's development, it is the surest safeguard against any recurrence of fighting.

Tashkent Declaration

The Tashkent Declaration has opened a door and provided a new opportunity for rationalizing relations between India and Pakistan. The main significance of the Declaration is the renunciation of force in the settlement of disputes. This is consistent with India's stand that differences between countries can and should be settled by peaceful methods.

On Vietnam

India's position in this regard is clear. We are distressed and concerned about the danger of escalation of the conflict and we feel that all efforts towards a peaceful solution, specially on the basis of the Geneva Agreement, should be pursued. We have a special responsibility as

Chairman of the Commission for Control and Supervision.

Attitudes

I am not much of a believer in rituals. Having lived in the midst of crisis from the earliest childhood, I am not overawed by our present difficulties.

(Asked whether she was a representative of the Left): I am a representative of all India which includes all shades of opinion.

*Compiled by the Publisher from various statements
issued by Indira Gandhi.*

Chronology

1917 Indira Gandhi, the only child of Jawaharlal and Kamla Nehru, born at Allahabad on November 19.

(Nehrus are Kashmiri Brahmins settled in Allahabad. Jawaharlal born 14.11.1889 died 27.5.1964; Kamla born 1.8.1899 died 28.2.1936.)

1921 First experience of dock; present at trial of her grandfather sitting in his lap.

Attended Congress Session at Gaya.

1926 In March accompanied her father and mother on a tour of Italy, Switzerland, England, Belgium, Germany and Russia. Returned to India *via* Colombo.

1927 Worked in Naini Leper Home every Sunday.

1928 Started Children's Section of Mahatma Gandhi's Charkha Sangh (Spinning Association).

1929 Her father presided over Lahore Session of Congress and declared "Complete Independence" as its goal. Took active part in non-cooperation movement.

Letters written to her by her father were published under "Letters From a Father to His Daughter".

- 1930 Formed 'Vanar Sena' (Monkey Brigade)—Children's Organisation to help the Indian National Congress during Non-cooperation Movement. It performed many odd jobs such as of office work, carrying messages, cooking food, first aid, sewing and hanging flags etc. to relieve adults for more important work. It also helped shops set up to popularise hand spun cloth and Indian made goods.
- 1931 Her grandfather Motilal died on February 6.
- 1932-33 Studied in Poona, worked in slum areas.
- 1934 Studied in Santiniketan under Rabindra Nath Tagore.
- 1935 Went to Switzerland for studies at Bex. Accompanied her father on a brief visit to England.
- 1936 On February 28, her mother Kamla died in Switzerland. Left for England to study History at Oxford. Joined the British Labour Party.
- 1937 Took active interest in Student Movement.
- 1938 Her grandmother Swaruprani died.
Became a member of the Indian National Congress.
- 1941 Returned to India
- 1942 March 26th, married Feroze Gandhi; a few months later arrested along with her husband for participating in "Quit India" Movement. Went to prison for 13 months.
- 1944 Her first son, Rajiv, born
- 1946 Her second son, Sanjay, born.

- 1947 Worked in riot affected areas under Mahatma Gandhi's instructions and helped settling refugees.
- Also became hostess of the House of the First Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru.
- 1948 Accompanied Prime Minister Nehru on October 6; on his visit to London in connection with the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and Paris where he addressed a special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.
- 1949 April 19, accompanied Prime Minister Nehru on his official visit to the United States and to attend Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference.
- 1951 January 3, accompanied Nehru on his visit to Geneva, London and Paris
- 1952 February 27, Mrs Roosevelt came to stay.
- 1953 Received Mothers' Award—U.S.A.
Prime Minister Nehru entertained at his house on May 12, Adlai Stevenson and on May 20, John Foster Dulles and Harold Stassen. On May 28, accompanied Prime Minister Nehru to be present at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1954 On January 27, invited to dinner Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller. In October accompanied her father to China and on December 26, to Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Penang.
- 1955 Elected as a member of the Congress Working Committee and secured the highest number of votes. present at Afro-Asian Conference at Bombay in April.

Organised village contact movement of Congress Party.

- 1956 On June 21, accompanied her father who was attending the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Nehru Conference and then visited Ireland, West Germany, France, Yugoslavia, Greece, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon.

On December 14, accompanied the Prime Minister on his official visit to the United States and Canada.

- 1957 On June 14, accompanied her father on his goodwill visit to Syria, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and on October 4 on his official visit to Japan.

- 1959 Elected Congress President.

During her term, decision regarding creation of new States of Gujrat and Maharashtra was taken. It was also marked by the fall of Communist Government in Kerala State.

- 1960 Her husband, Feroze Gandhi, died of second heart attack on 8th September.

Received Yale University's Holland Memorial Prize.

Visited France, Turkey, Egypt and Lebanon. Member Indian Delegation to UNESCO 1960-64

- 1961 Member, Central Election Committee of Indian National Congress Party—Elected by All India Congress Committee before the General Elections for selection of Party candidates to Parliament and State Assemblies and contesting of elections.

Member, Parliamentary Board of All India Congress Committee's which deals with bye elections and other problems of State Governments.

Acted as hostess and guide to Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife on their visit to India in May.

Visited United States in November on her father's ten-days State visit to that country.

- 1962 During Chinese attack on India worked untiringly and arranged various services for the welfare of Jawans, visited the front lines. As Chairman Citizens' Central Council gave an impetus to Nation's defence efforts.

Member, National Defence Council.

- 1964 Her father suffered stroke at Bhubaneswar during Congress Session in January and died on May 27.

Became Minister for Information and Broadcasting in Prime Minister Shastri's Cabinet and ranked 4th.

Elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh.

Attended Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in July and visited United Kingdom, Yugoslavia and U.S.S.R. in October.

- 1965 In January, went to Paris to attend the meeting of Executive Board of UNESCO; and New York to inaugurate the Nehru Memorial Exhibition.

Received Isabella d'este Prize on Nov. 23, for outstanding work in the field of diplomacy from the Italian Government.

1966 Elected, Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party (January 19) by securing 355 votes out of 526, with a majority of 186 over her rival Morarji Desai, and sworn in as Prime Minister of India (January 24).

Visited Calcutta and Assam during the recent disturbances and her firm handling brought the situation under control.

Reorganisation of present Punjab State on a linguistic basis accepted "in principle" by Union Cabinet on March 21.

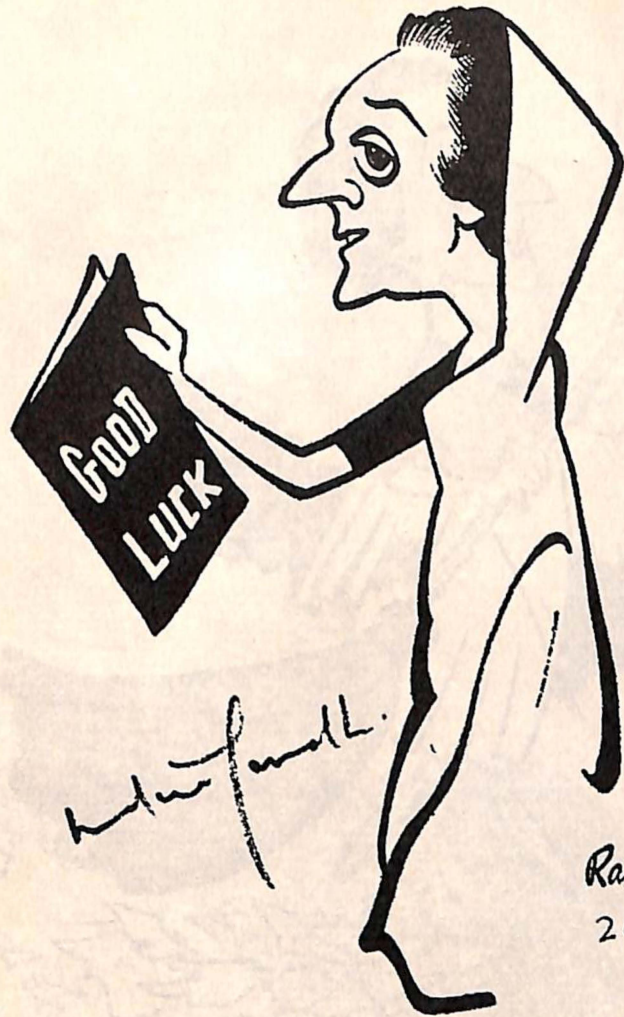
Her first visit as Prime Minister of India to the United States of America at the invitation of President Johnson on March 27. On her way to the U.S.A. she met President de Gaulle of France and on her return Journey, she met Harold Wilson, Prime Minister of England, and Premier Kosygin of U.S.S.R. Exchanged greetings with President Ayub Khan while flying over Pakistan.

Returned on April 3, from her 10-day trip abroad full of confidence that all the nations she had visited would be better friends. Reporting to a cheering Lok Sabha on April 7, she said that she had found a growing understanding of the significance of India's foreign policy and its efforts for development.

Ranga



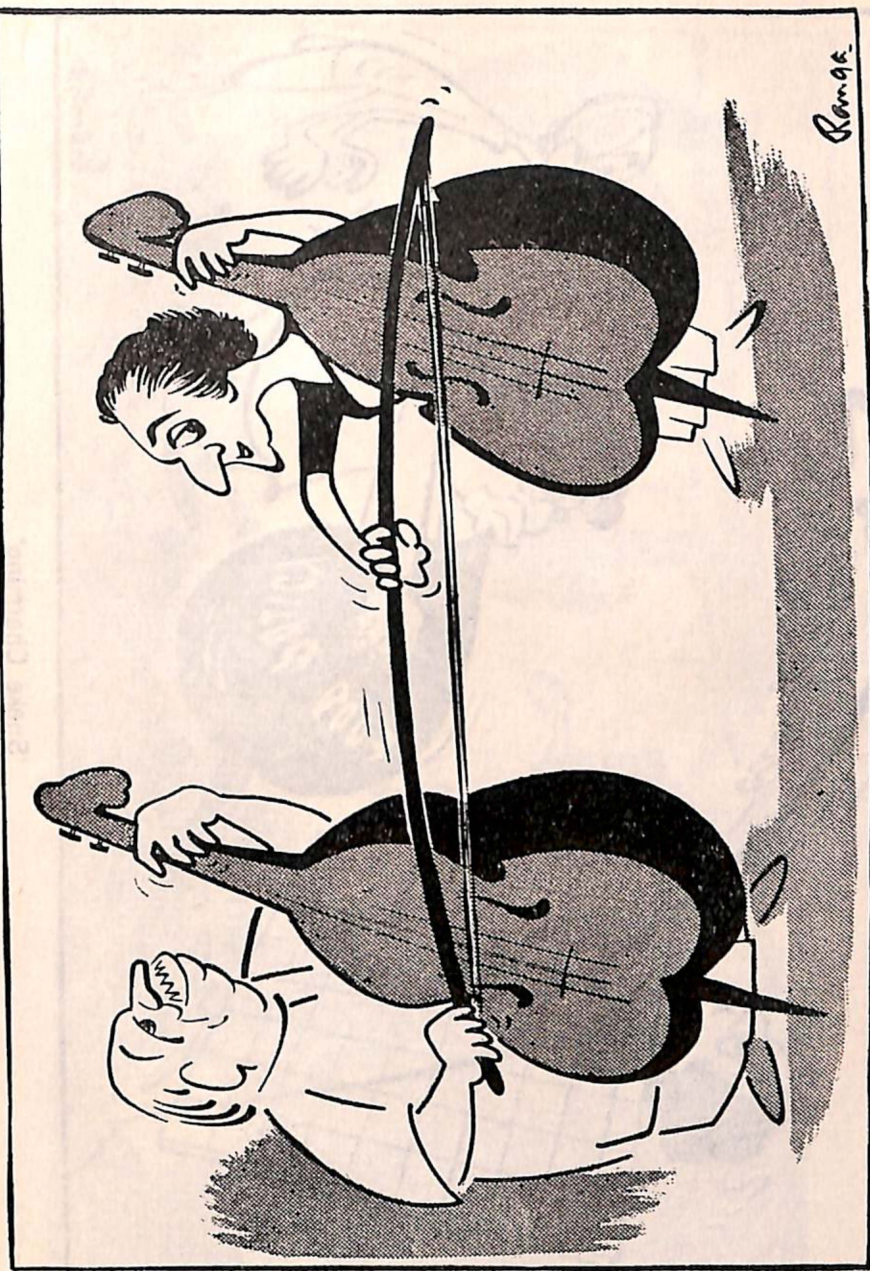
Cartoons



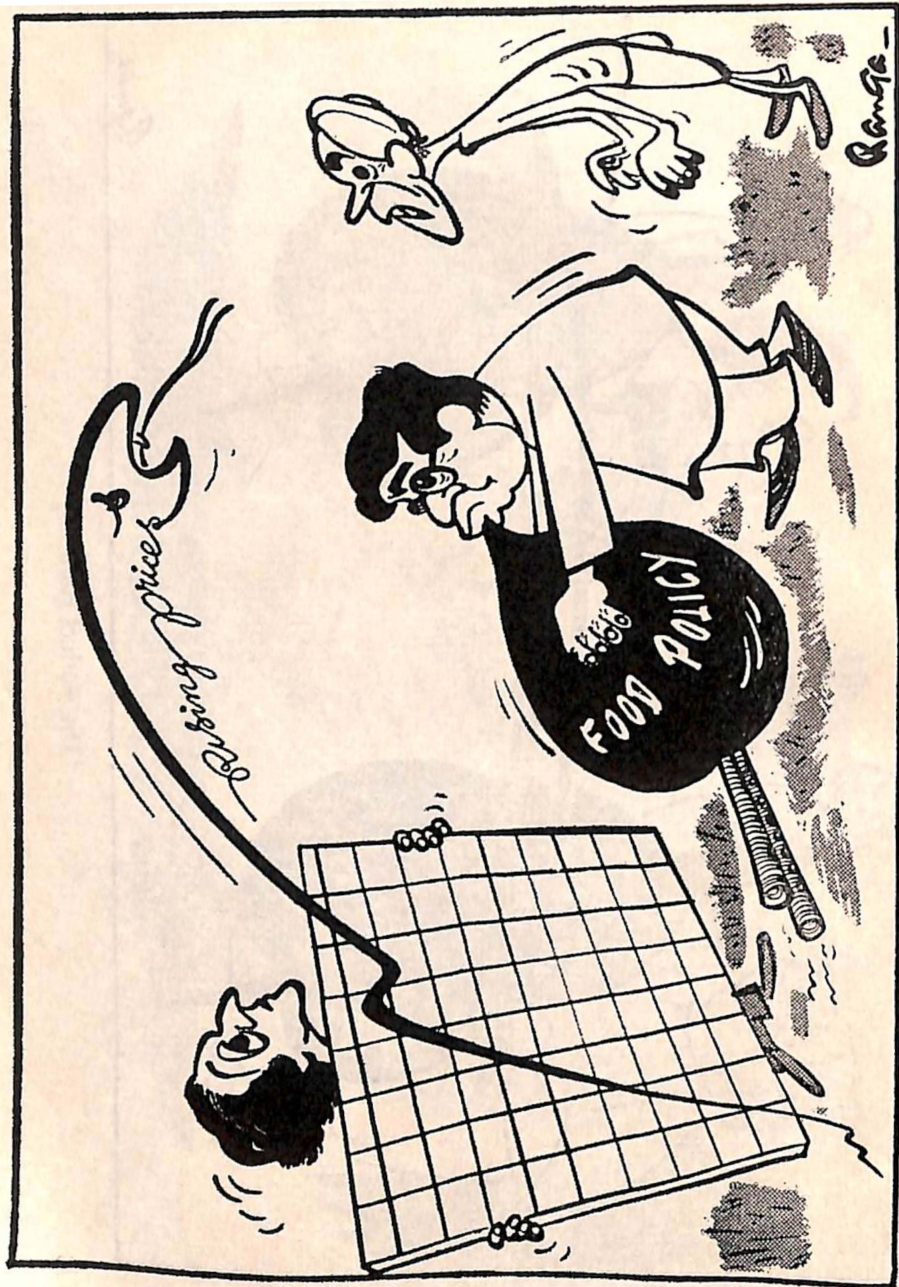
Off to the U.S.A. carrying the wishes of the nation



'Sweeping Clean'

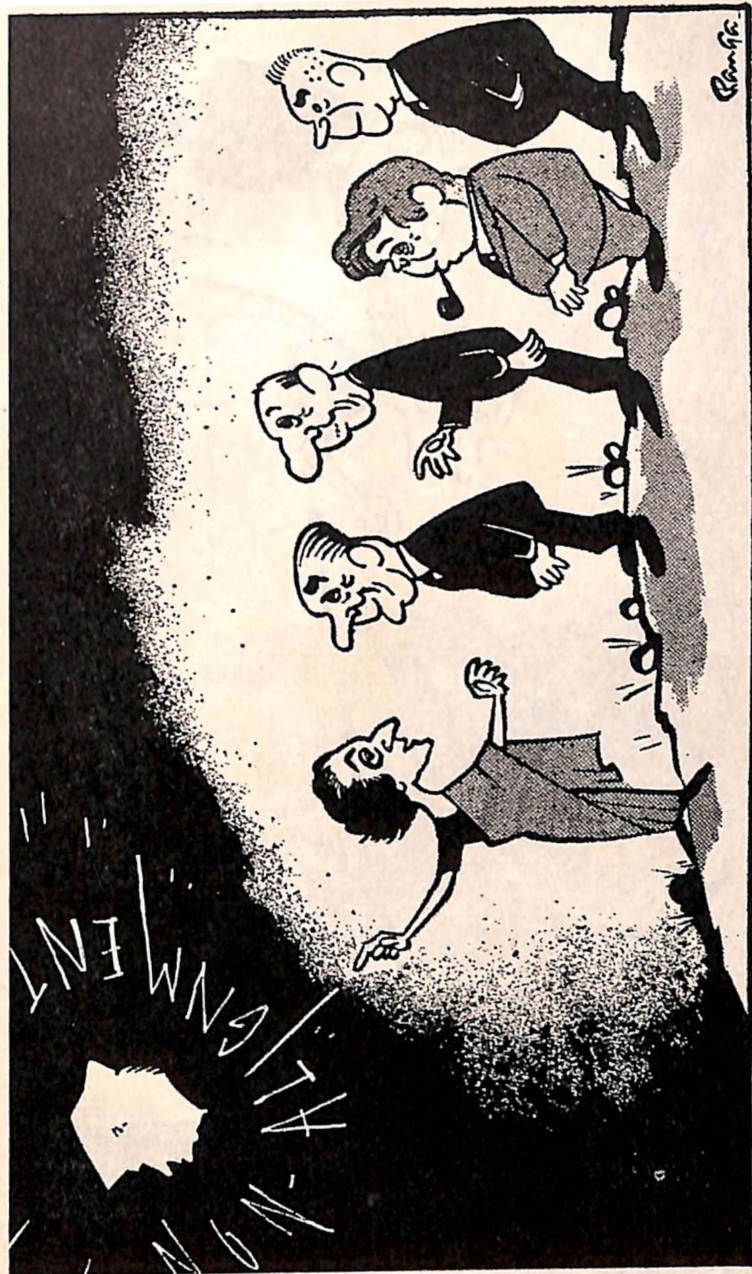


'The Perfect Harmony'

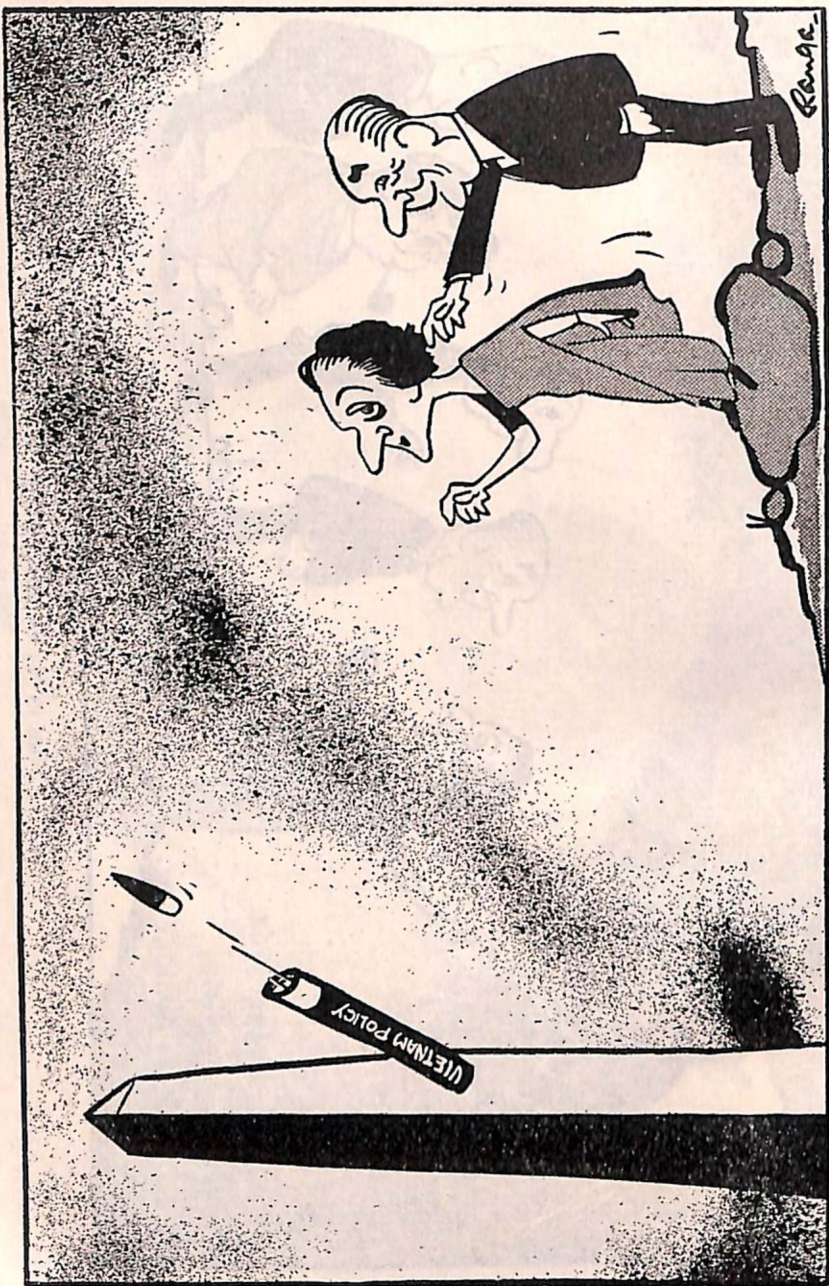


'Snake Charming'

Range -



'That is my Guiding Star'



'Washington Post'



'A Bad News for you, Mr. Ayub...'



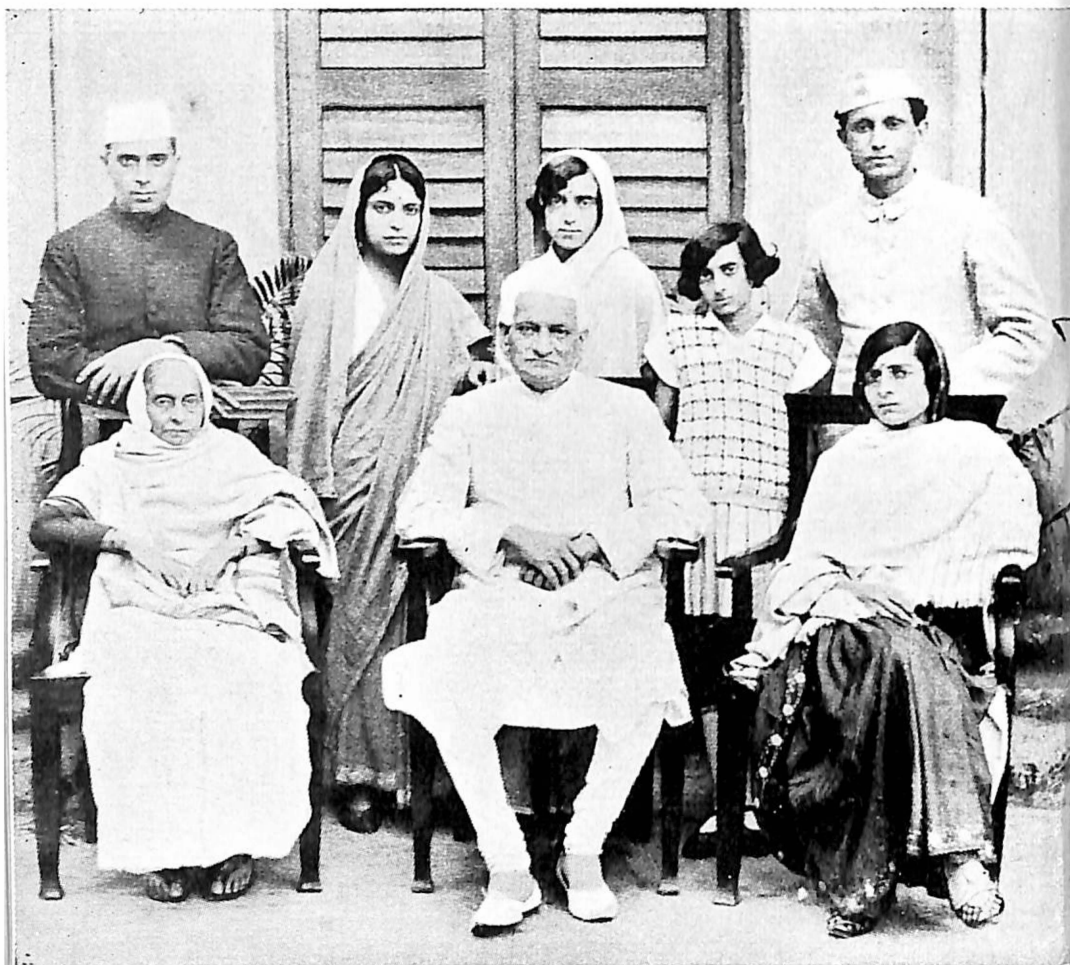
'That is all for you'



Plates



Acknowledging Greetings



A Family Portrait



As a Child sitting besides Mahatma Gandhi



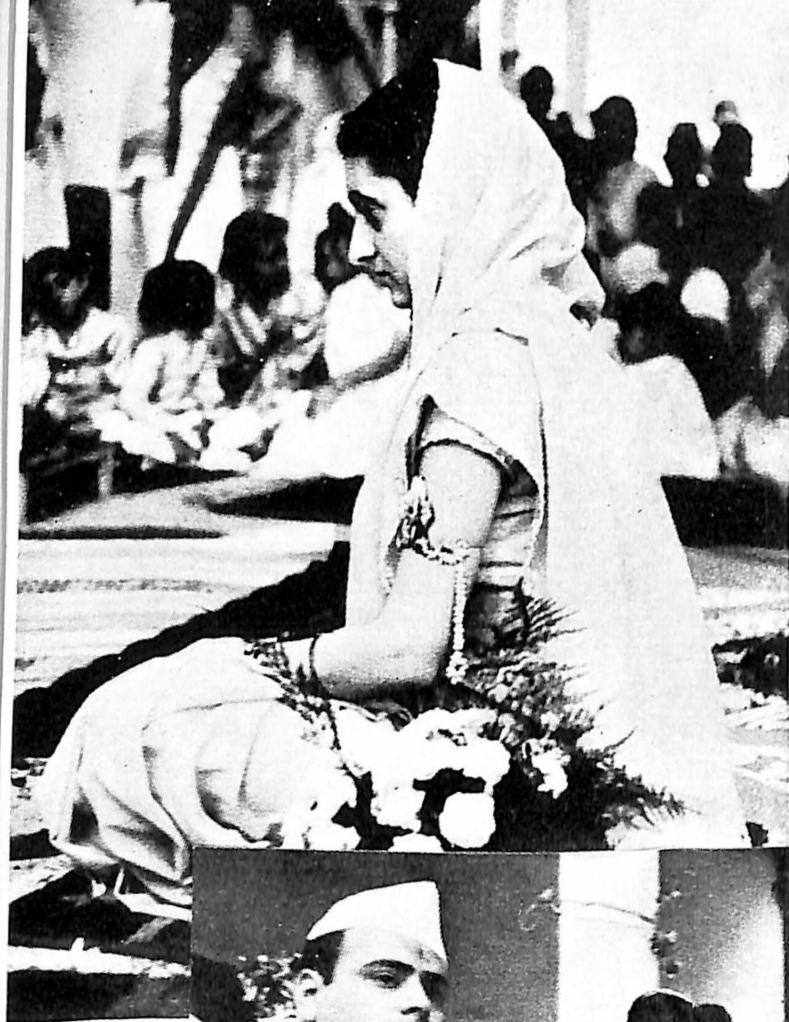
With her Mother—Kamla



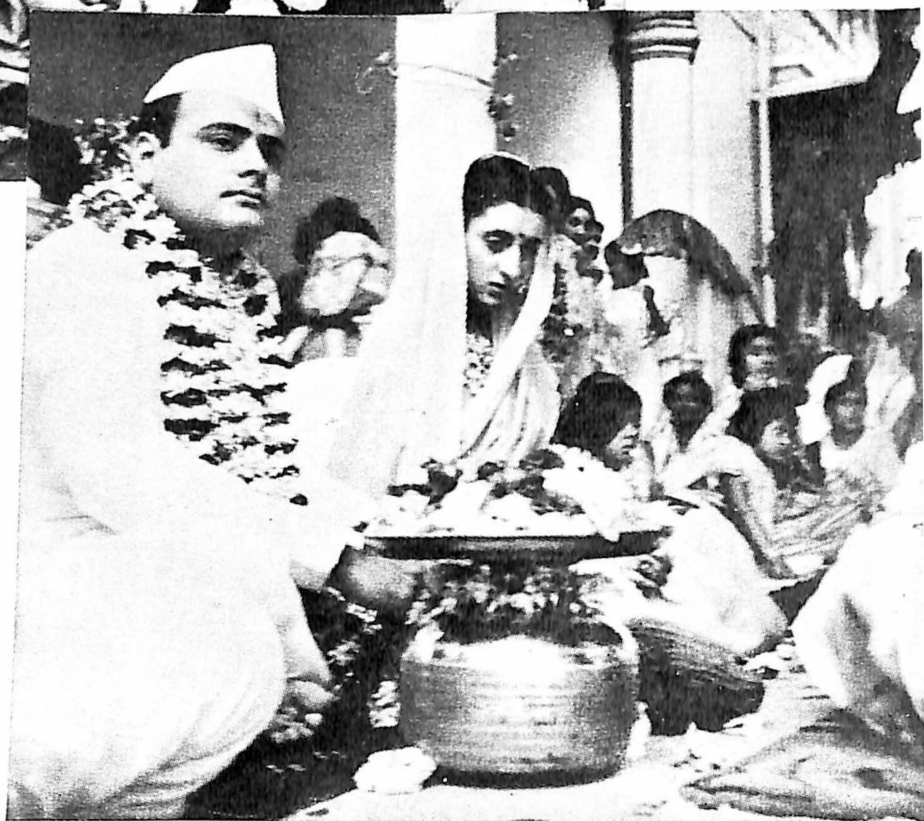
With her Parents—Jawaharlal and Kamla



Growing up Gracefully



As a Bride



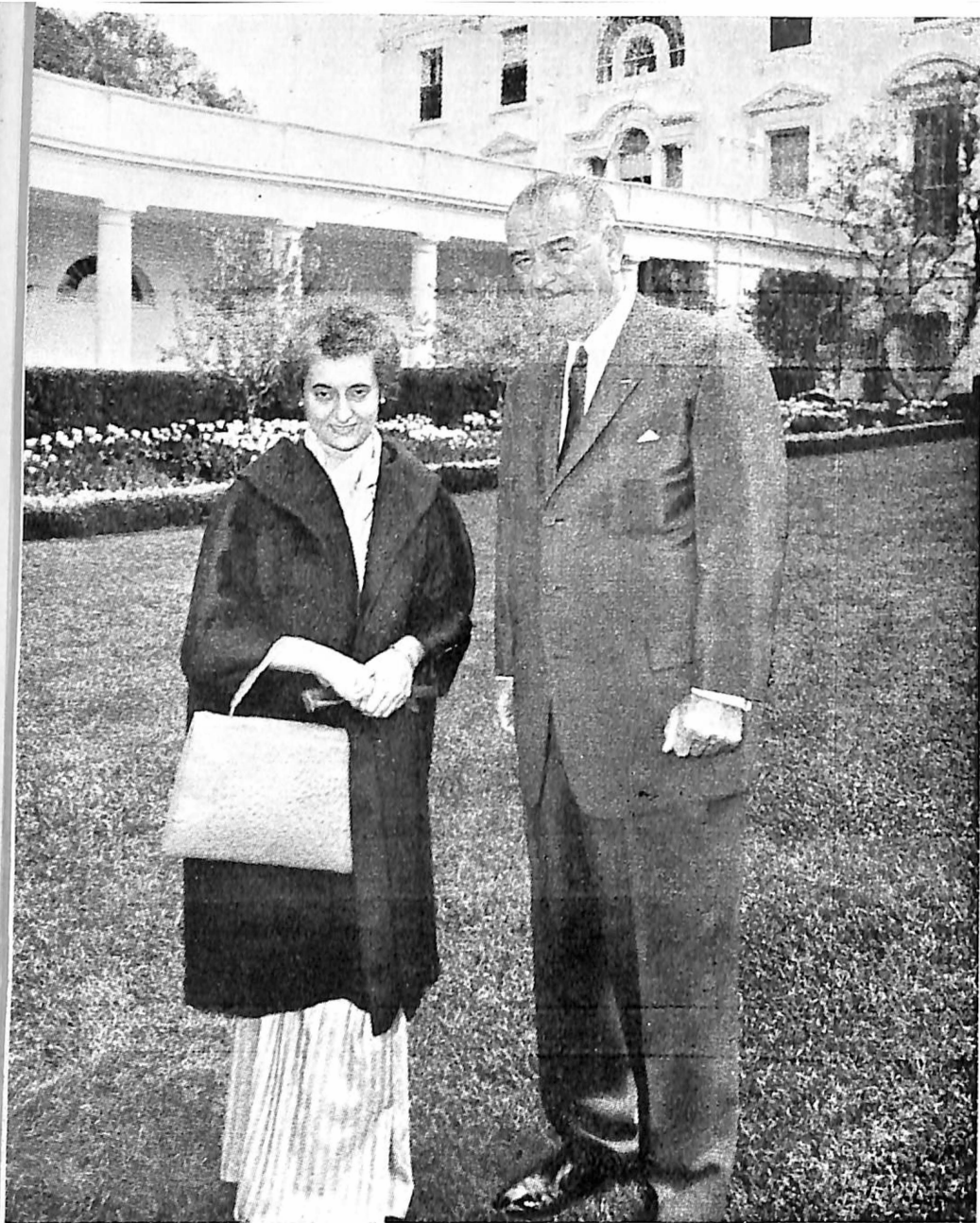


With the world's first Woman Prime Minister - Mrs. S. Bandaranaiake of Ceylon

With Mrs. Barbara Castle—the British Cabinet Minister

With Mrs. L.B. Johnson



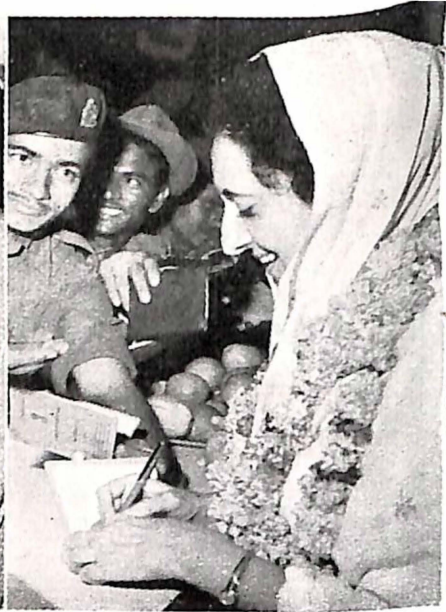
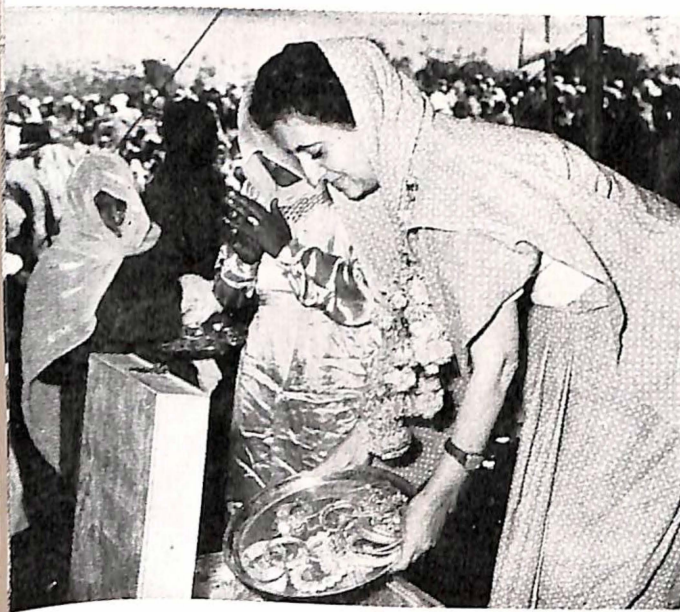


With Lyndon B. Johnson

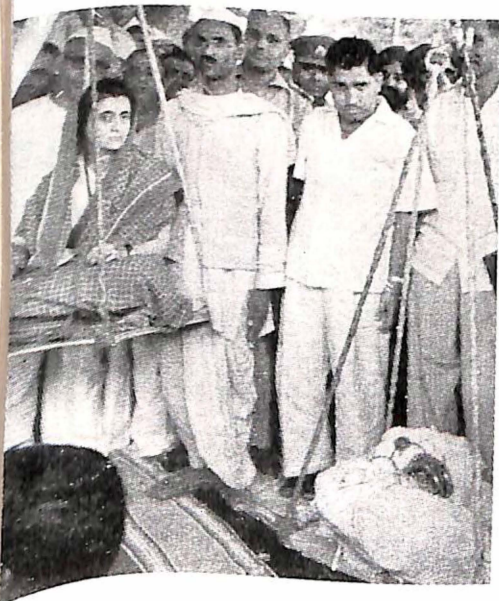


At work





Cultural Activities

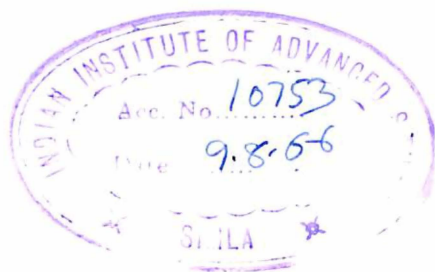




With Lal Bahadur Shastri



Being Felicitated by the Mayor of Delhi



10-10-10

10-10-10