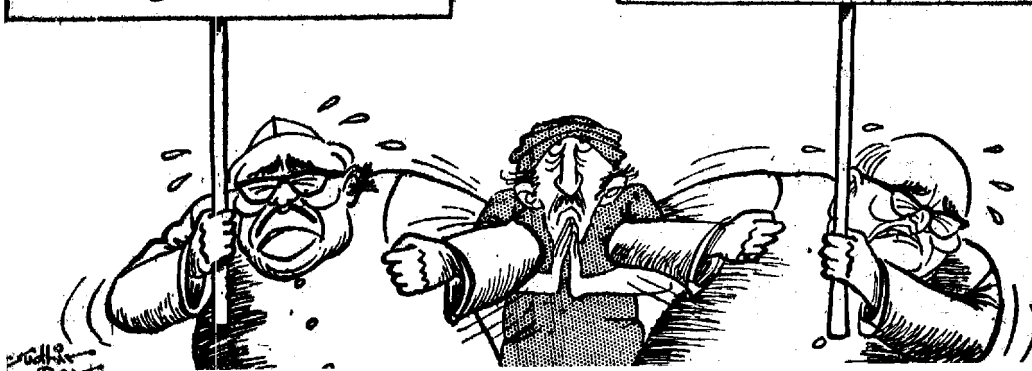
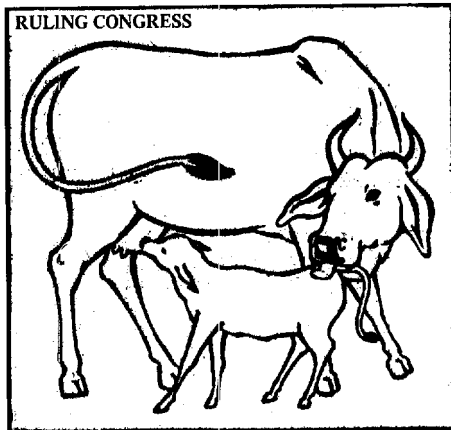


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*Two New Election Symbols  
for the Now-Split Congress Party*



*Old United Congress  
Symbol  
in 1967 Election*

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following the split, it is questionable whether she can make gains there against an opposition that includes a number of princes and prominent businessmen.

Orissa is one of three states to hold concurrent state and national elections. In early January the four-year-old Swatantra-Jana-Congress coalition government fell, and both parties pressed New Delhi for simultaneous state assembly elections. The Ruling Congress and the locally oriented Jana Congress have discussed possible collaboration—thus far inconclusively—and Mrs. Gandhi's prospects for increasing her representation in this state are not bright.

As for the races in India's generally small union territories, the Jana Sangh is likely to retain its hold in Delhi—the most important—while Mrs. Gandhi should hold her own in the others.

#### *Prospects Are for a Unique Election*

The separation of national and state elections (except in three states) challenges the basis on which the united Congress Party and other major parties have operated since independence. Confronted with the rise of numerous non-Congress state governments following the setback of the still-united Congress Party in the 1967 elections and a weakened Ruling Congress government in New Delhi in 1970, Mrs. Gandhi concluded that the old style of patronage politics built around dual elections could no longer ensure success. She is now betting that national issues are capable of swaying substantial portions of the electorate. By asking the electorate to vote almost solely on national issues, she is hoping to bypass locally dominant, traditional groups who formerly played the most important role.

In the past, a candidate's stand on state and national issues was almost irrelevant, and he was elected largely because of his proven or potential ability to provide his constituency with ample government largesse in terms of agricultural credit, fertilizer, seeds, irrigation facilities, wells,

roads, and schools. With almost 4,000 seats being contested in the past in the two simultaneous races, caste, linguistic, factional, and religious groups engaged in highly complex bargaining arrangements, swapping support for their various candidates. Until the 1971 results are in, one can only ponder whether the "new" politics has really taken hold.

To win a majority Mrs. Gandhi must do well in the major cities where she has held few seats and among young people who are voting for the first time, and she must regain that segment of the Muslim minority that defected from Congress in the 1967 national election. The fight will be particularly stiff in those states where her party's organization is weak at the grass-roots level. The princes, who are smarting from her policy on the privy purse issue, could pose a serious threat in some 40 constituencies where they still retain power.

Mrs. Gandhi has considerable advantages, however. She has better material resources than the opposition, including air transport for country-wide campaigning, and she receives widespread media coverage. Although a Supreme Court ruling denied both Congress Party factions the use of the traditional symbol of yoked bullocks, the Ruling Congress has the edge because of Mrs. Gandhi's national image as Nehru's daughter and as prime minister during the last five years.

There is no means of surveying pre-election trends among the mass electorate of 225 million rural, predominantly illiterate, tradition-oriented Indians who will determine the electoral outcome. Less obscure are the 50 million urban voters who are more or less modernized. This group appears to be increasingly dissatisfied with the government's performance in all spheres and is demanding relief from the confusion, petty maneuvering, and bureaucratic inertia that have characterized India's first experiment in coalition government. Despite the radical rhetoric from the podium and in India's free press, however, it

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appears that the vast majority of Indians are moderate centrists.

Many objective observers expect Mrs. Gandhi at least to hold her own and possibly to win a few additional seats though falling short of an absolute majority. If the increase is large

enough, she can lessen her dependence on assorted leftists, regionalists, and independents, and a stronger, more effective government—with center-left leanings—might emerge. If not, Mrs. Gandhi will continue to head the largest single party, but the government will lack the stability and decisiveness needed to grapple with India's overwhelming problems.

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