

ing in 1973, Jha was free to reinvigorate his international connections and pursue professional elite preoccupations in a semi-official capacity at government expense. During this period, Jha helped to establish the Brandt Commission.

By 1980 Jha was ready for a new foray. His book, *Economic Strategy for the '80s*, coincided not a bit accidentally with the Indian government's decision to take an unprecedented huge IMF loan of \$5.6 billion to paper over serious balance of payments gaps and formulation of the Sixth Five Year Plan. Jha's strategy is a blueprint for freezing India's progress, already nearly crippled by the 1966 events, at the present subsistence level and in effect turning the clock back. Jha recommended that India cease efforts to expand its base of producer and investment goods in favor of expanding production of consumer products. He lied that India had more than enough capital goods, and held criminal silence on the crucial matter of India's terrible power shortage. These lies are in the service of Jha's fervent advocacy of the World Bank's colonial staple—labor-intensive employment schemes.

The strategy is a bald statement of treason against the nation of India, fully consistent with Jha's own prior record.

While Prime Minister Gandhi declined to take Jha into her government this time around, he was given an office in New Delhi, where he has access to government officials, and a commission against which to run an expense account.

It was apparently all he needed.

Gandhi strengthened as summit nears

by Paul Zykofsky in New Delhi

The results of the Feb. 5 elections here are being accurately viewed as a vote of confidence in the government of Indira Gandhi, following acute defeats for her Congress-I Party in elections in two northern states a month ago. In the keenly contested New Delhi race for municipal administrative positions, the Congress-I won 34 of the 56 seats on the Delhi Metropolitan Council and 56 of the 97 seats counted thus far in the Delhi Municipal Corporation—gaining control of these two bodies for the first time in 16 years.

Based on a 65 percent voter turnout, the Congress victory came as a result of ballots cast both by the very poor and the educated middle class, who saw the need to strengthen Mrs. Gandhi's hand in national and international affairs.

The campaign itself focused on "for or against Mrs. Gandhi." The leading daily *Times of India* commented in an editorial following the election: "The verdict in Delhi gives

Mrs. Gandhi, her party, and the country as a whole a breather and an opportunity to halt the drift toward a disastrous collapse of the system. Altogether the conclusion seems inescapable that Delhi's enlightened voters have evidently decided to give Mrs. Gandhi not another shock or push, but some respite and another chance."

The Congress-I's victory is a setback to recently revealed Anglo-American efforts to undermine the Gandhi government, especially on the eve of the summit of Non-Aligned nations to be held in this city early next month. Gandhi herself had warned recently that certain outside forces were determined to weaken India and make the government "more pliable."

Following the elections in the South, efforts were also being made to portray the defeat of the Congress-I by smaller regional parties as the beginning of the collapse of the Gandhi government. The victory of her party in this city of more than 5 million people, with a population from all parts of the country, will obviously help to strengthen the Gandhi government.

The Congress victory dealt an important setback to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the leading opposition party, whose leader, former Foreign Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, has tried to portray himself as "the major alternative to Gandhi." In its previous incarnation as the Jana Sangh and Janata parties, the BJP—which is largely under the control of the Hindu chauvinist Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS)—had held majority control of the Delhi Metropolitan Council and Corporation since 1967. Following the party's Feb. 5 defeat, BJP leader Vajpayee submitted his resignation as party president.

The Delhi results also serve to weaken the forces led by fundamentalist members of the Sikh religion in the northwestern state of Punjab, which have been demanding greater autonomy for their state. Despite a call by the Sikh leaders in Punjab for a boycott of the election by the 500,000 Sikhs who live in Delhi, a large proportion of the community turned out to vote.

While the Delhi victory will provide the Gandhi government with greater strength to deal with the emergence of these regionalist forces, it remains to be seen if there will be any impact on the situation in the troubled northeastern state of Assam, where student-led agitation against "non-Assamese aliens"—primarily Muslims from neighbouring Bangladesh—has been going on for more than three years now.

Elections to the state assembly, which was dissolved over a year ago by the central government, are scheduled for Feb. 15. The agitational leaders have called for a boycott of the election, and a large police contingent has been deployed in the state in the wake of several bombings and attacks on candidates. According to Western press reports, agitators have shut down two of the state's three oil refineries, whose output is a critical part of India's domestic energy supply.

Despite the disturbances in the state, Prime Minister Gandhi will campaign there on Feb. 10 and 11.