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The 1962 Election in North Bombay

Norman D. Palmer*

FOR INDIA the year 1962 opened with jubilation tempered by doubts and ended with dismay tempered by determination. At the beginning of the year Indians were still rejoicing over the military occupation of Goa in December 1961, although strong criticisms of the Goa action in the United Kingdom and the United States soon produced sober second thoughts as well as an upsurge of indignation. In the closing weeks India was still trying to recover its political, military, and mental equilibrium after the Chinese attack, although the weaknesses so starkly revealed by the Chinese successes were at least partially offset by a new spirit of national unity and determination.

The main political events of 1962 in India were the third general elections in February and the Chinese offensive in late October and November. The former event was an impressive demonstration of India's democratic competence and achievement; the latter was an alarming demonstration of India's political and military and psychological unpreparedness and lack of realism. The Chinese attack tended to offset some of the trends which had been reinforced by the election results. It adversely affected the prestige and position of Prime Minister Nehru himself, just as the general elections had greatly enhanced his prestige and position. It wrecked—at least temporarily—the political career of V. K. Krishna Menon—a career which had received a tremendous boost by his overwhelming victory in North Bombay in the February elections.

At the present time (mid-1963) the crisis with China overshadows all other aspects of Indian political life. While this crisis has apparently reversed some of the political trends that were manifest after the third general elections, and has presented a real challenge to India's capacity to survive as a democratic nation, it has by no means lessened the significance of the steady progress which India has been making, under formidable handicaps, in the direction of political and economic development, as illustrated by the third general elections and the Third Five-Year Plan. Just as India is determined to achieve security and economic development through planning, it is also determined to achieve security and political development along democratic lines. As a landmark in India's political development the

*The author was in India from October 1961 to April 1962. He visited Bombay several times and made a special study of the campaign in North Bombay. He was in Bombay during the final days of the campaign, and in North Bombay during the voting on February 25, 1962.

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third elections were a major event in India's history as an independent state, and their continuing significance should not be overlooked.

On the whole, the third elections¹ were less exciting than the first and second nationwide elections, in 1951-52 and 1957. This was perhaps a testimonial to the growing experience and maturity of the Indian voters, as they participated in "the world's largest democratic elections." In some of the states, however, the election results revealed significant shifts in the balance of political forces, and in all of them some of the contests were of particular interest.

Unquestionably the contest which attracted the greatest attention, in India and elsewhere, was "the battle of the giants" in the constituency of North Bombay. In this contest the incumbent Member of Parliament, India's Defense Minister, V. K. Krishna Menon, one of the best-known and most controversial of living Indians, backed by Prime Minister Nehru, the Congress Party, and the Communist Party, was opposed by another Member of Parliament, Acharya J. B. Kripalani, an old Gandhian who in the course of a long and varied political career had been at one time or another President of the Indian National Congress, Chairman of the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, and Chairman of the Praja Socialist Party.

"No political campaign in India," declared *The Sunday Standard* (Bombay) on the day of the voting in North Bombay, "has ever been so bitter or so remarkable for the nuances it produced."² The contest was widely proclaimed to be of great national, and even international, significance. "It is the most important election in the history of our democracy," asserted *Link*, a leftist journal which is known to express Krishna Menon's views.³ "It is the future of Indian democracy and our spiritual values that are at stake," warned Jayaprakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader and formerly a leader of the P.S.P., in a statement expressing his firm opposition to Krishna Menon.⁴ Shortly after Acharya Kripalani announced his decision to run against Krishna Menon, *The Indian Express*, which throughout the campaign carried on a ceaseless verbal warfare against Krishna Menon, predicted that "This will be an election . . . not only of local importance but of national and international significance. Both India and the Congress party stand at the cross-roads and the outcome will forcefully indicate which way the country and the party are to go."⁵ The contest was regarded as particu-

¹ For an analysis of these elections see Myron Weiner, "India's Third General Elections," *Asian Survey*, II (May, 1962), 3-18; and *Seminar* (New Delhi), No. 34, June, 1962, a symposium, entitled "Election Analysis," on "the trends revealed by the results of the third general election."

² *The Sunday Standard* (Bombay), Feb. 25, 1962.

³ *Link* (New Delhi), Feb. 25, 1962.

⁴ The text of this statement, issued on February 12, 1962, was printed in *The Times of India* and most of the other leading Indian newspapers on February 13th.

⁵ Editorial entitled "Trojan Horse," *The Indian Express* (Bombay), Oct. 18, 1961.

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larly important because of the forceful personalities of the two leading candidates, the clashing views and ideologies which they represented, the personal intervention of Prime Minister Nehru, and the symbolic significance which was attached to the outcome.

The candidates and their supporters often resorted to the standard political technique of exaggeration in attempting to define and simplify the issues involved. Nehru himself said that the choice was between "socialism and reaction." Kripalani said it was between "Gandhism and Marxism." *The Indian Express* often echoed this description, and at other times it maintained that the contest was one between socialism and communism, or between Gandhism and communism. Communist and other extreme left-wing supporters of Krishna Menon called Kripalani a "Fascist stooge" or worse. Kripalani repeatedly referred to Menon as a "crypto-Communist," and some of his supporters flatly accused the Defense Minister of being a Communist. R. K. Karanjia, the editor of the fellow-traveling weekly, *Blitz*, on the day before the voting described the line-up as follows: "On one side, you can see MENON with NEHRU beside him and GANDHI behind them. And on the other, stands KRIPALANI backed by GODSE [Gandhi's assassin] and JINNAH and the fanatical hordes of Jan Sangh and Muslim League killers." "IN ONE SENTENCE," affirmed *Blitz*, with a liberal use of capitals and bold-face type, "THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN THE MAN-EATER AND HIS VICTIM MAN!"⁶

The objects of all this propaganda barrage and concentrated attention were the more than 750,000 voters of North Bombay, one of the four Lok Sabha constituencies in the City of Bombay. This constituency was generally regarded as a Congress stronghold. Krishna Menon had stood from this constituency for the first time in the second general elections in 1957. Fresh from his marathon speech on Kashmir and his fainting spell in the Security Council of the United Nations, "the hero of Kashmir" returned to India only a few days before the voting, and made a whirlwind last-minute campaign in North Bombay. He defeated his main opponent, Peter Alvarez, by a margin of approximately 48,000 votes. Alvarez himself was a respected but not a strong opponent, but he received substantial support from many Maharashtrians and Gujeratis in North Bombay who would normally vote Congress, because in 1957 most of the opposition parties in the Maharashtra and Gujerat sections of what was then an undivided Bombay State joined in anti-Congress coalitions—the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and the Mahagujerat Janata Parishad—with the demand for separate states of Maharashtra and Gujerat as their unifying appeal.

The Lok Sabha constituency of North Bombay consists of the six state Legislative Assembly constituencies of Mahim, Bandra, Kurla, Chembur,

⁶ R. K. Karanjia, "An Open Letter to the Voters of North Bombay," *Blitz* (Bombay), Feb. 24, 1962. Capital letters are in the original.

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Parle-Andheri, and Borivli, in the vicinity of the suburb of Santa Cruz, where the Bombay airport is located, and to the north of this area. Some of the suburbs, such as those in the Mahim and Bandra constituencies, have a largely middle class population, while others, such as those in the constituencies of Kurla and Chembur, are inhabited largely by factory workers and other laborers, with a substantial number of refugees. Labor unions, especially those connected with the Congress and Communist parties, are strong in the working class areas. This was a source of great strength for Krishna Menon in these areas.

A break-down of the North Bombay electorate into the major linguistic, regional, and religious groups would reveal the following pattern:⁷

1. Maharashtrians—approximately 280,000, most of whom generally vote Congress or Communist.
2. Gujeratis—about 140,000. By tradition and convention the Gujeratis are staunch supporters of the Congress. Kripalani had hoped to make considerable inroads into this group, but apparently his expectations were not realized.
3. North Indians, mostly from Uttar Pradesh, numbering over 100,000. They included a large number of Kripalani supporters, for the Acharya was well known for his constructive work in U.P.
4. South Indians, about 75,000, most of whom could be counted upon to vote for Krishna Menon, who was himself from South India.
5. Sindhis, numbering somewhat more than 20,000. These people could be depended upon to vote heavily for Kripalani, who was himself a Sindhi, and who of course spoke the Sindhi language.
6. Muslims, at least 80,000. The Muslim League, which re-emerged as a minor factor in the politics of North Bombay, appealed to all Muslims to vote for Kripalani, but apparently this advice was not always heeded.
7. Christians, numbering about 100,000, rather evenly divided between Protestants and Catholics. The Catholic Association directed its followers to vote for Kripalani, and some of the Protestant leaders gave the same advice, but Kripalani did not get the percentage of Christian votes which he had expected to obtain.

In contrast to the relatively apathetic and listless campaign in the three other Lok Sabha constituencies in Bombay City—and for that matter in

⁷I am indebted to Dr. Aloo Dastur, Head of the Department of Civics and Politics, Bombay University, and Professor Ram Joshi, Professor of Political Science and Vice-Principal of S.I.E.S. College in North Bombay, for information on the composition of the North Bombay electorate. Dr. Dastur and her colleagues in the Department of Civics and Politics at Bombay University made a detailed study of the campaign in North Bombay, and the results of the voting. Their findings will soon be published in monograph form. See also the figures given in "North Bombay Battle of the Titans," *The Statesman* (New Delhi), Jan. 13, 1962.

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most of the country—the campaign in North Bombay was exciting and hectic, and aroused the widespread interest of the electorate, who seemed to be pleased that two outstanding personalities were competing for their favors and who seemed to enjoy their moment of glory on the national and even the world stage.

The tactics employed by the two candidates varied greatly. A study of these contrasting styles of campaigning would be of interest to almost any student or practitioner of the art of politics. In the campaign Kripalani was the attacker, the accuser, the full-time campaigner, whereas Krishna Menon, whose duties as Defense Minister and foreign affairs adviser kept him out of the constituency except for one or two visits a week until a few days before the voting day, generally ignored Kripalani and his charges altogether and concentrated largely on broad national and international issues.

Kripalani was of course the elder statesman. For more than a generation he had been a prominent, if somewhat mercurial, figure in Indian national life. Many Congressmen were reluctant to attack the Acharya, a close associate of Gandhi, a man of abstemious habits and unquestioned reputation, who had once held high offices, including the office of President, in the Congress itself. Nehru had no such scruples. He respected Kripalani, as he usually called the Acharya, but the two men had parted company in their political views long ago, and Kripalani had been one of the most vocal and effective critics of Nehru's policies, especially policies toward China, in the Lok Sabha.

Until recently, at least, Krishna Menon was almost an unknown in Indian political life, although he was well known in international circles. His work on behalf of Indian independence in England, his defense of the Indian position on Kashmir and on other issues in the United Nations and at international conferences, and his clearly-entrenched position with Nehru himself, had gained some reputation for him inside India, and had marked him as a man to be watched: but not until his appointment as Defense Minister in 1957, and especially until the military take-over in Goa in December 1961, and his decisive victory in North Bombay in February 1962, could he be said to have become a major political leader in his own right. Thus if Krishna Menon risked much by remaining in the fight in North Bombay against a man of such towering reputation as Kripalani, instead of seeking a safer constituency, he also had much to gain from a decisive victory in this prestige fight.

Kripalani announced his decision to run against Krishna Menon in North Bombay as early as October 1961. In the following month he began his active campaign, and he did not relax his fight until the eve of the voting, more than three months later. Although he was 74 years of age and in poor health, frail and emaciated in appearance, he carried out a schedule which would have taxed the physical and nervous capacities of any cam-

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paigner. He addressed public meetings almost daily, sometimes as many as ten a day. He engaged in lengthy group discussions with voters in North Bombay, and he made himself as accessible as possible to these voters. He even engaged in house-to-house canvassing on an extensive scale. He personally directed almost every aspect of his campaign, and he set the broad lines of the strategy to be followed.

His main strategy was starkly simple—*l'attaque, l'attaque, toujours l'attaque*. The attack was of course directed against Krishna Menon. In this respect Kripalani faced a troublesome dilemma, which he was never able to resolve. He tried as best as he could to make his case against Krishna Menon personally, rather than against Nehru and the Congress Party as such, which had great prestige and support. While Kripalani had often attacked the policies of Nehru and the Congress, especially in foreign affairs, he had publicly expressed his general agreement with the broad lines of the policy of non-alignment abroad⁸ and with the policy of democratic socialism at home. Moreover, he was not unaware of the difficulties in attacking Nehru in a constituency where the Prime Minister's prestige was unusually high; and Nehru himself, by his personal intervention in the North Bombay campaign and by his insistence that a vote against Krishna Menon was a vote against him and the Congress, struck powerful blows at Kripalani's basic strategy.

Kripalani repeatedly insisted that the issue was one between Gandhism and Marxism, and he constantly referred to Krishna Menon as a "crypto-Communist." The nature of his main attack can be summed up in his own words: "I charge him with wasting the money of a poor nation. I charge him with the neglect of the defence of the country against the aggression of Communist China. I charge him with having lent his support to totalitarian regimes against the will of the people."⁹ One slogan used for posters and banners read: "MENON REPRESENTS CHINA—NOT INDIA." Another slogan, coined in obvious rejoinder to a pro-Menon banner—"FOR MORE JETS—VOTE MENON"—read: "FOR MORE JEEPS—VOTE KRIPALANI."

Kripalani enjoyed the support of virtually all parties and political groups except the Congress and the Communist parties. His main support came from the Swatantra Party, the Jan Sangh, and the Praja Socialist Party—a strange coalition, but not so strange as many other anti-Congress alliances in India (including the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, which in the second general elections in 1957 wrested a number of seats from the Congress in

⁸ In an article in the October 1959 issue of *Foreign Affairs* Kripalani wrote: ". . . the principles upon which the Indian foreign policy of non-alignment is based are correct. They are generally accepted by the country and are in keeping with the genius of our people It is in details of diplomacy that our foreign policy has been weak and has sometimes gone wrong." "For Principled Neutrality," *Foreign Affairs*, XXXVIII (October 1959), p. 60.

⁹ Quoted in *Time* (Asia Edition), Feb. 2, 1962, p. 16.

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Maharashtra). The relative role of these three parties in support of Kripalani, who ran as an Independent, is hard to determine. A staff reporter of *The Indian Express* wrote on the eve of the election: "The Bharatiya Jan Sangh, which has risen like a new star on Bombay's political horizon, is providing much of the muscle for the campaign against Mr. Menon, . . . while the Praja Socialist Party on the Left and the Swatantra Party on the Right have provided the brain."¹⁰ Other parties or groups which openly supported Kripalani included the Muslim League, the Catholic Association, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, the Republican Party (the successor to the Scheduled Castes Federation, and therefore rather different from the American party of the same name), the Peasants' and Workers' Party, and the Akali Dal (the Sikh Party).

Since the majority of the voters of North Bombay normally voted for the candidates of the Congress Party, Kripalani obviously had to make substantial inroads into the Congress ranks in order to win. He seemed to be having real success in this effort. It was an open secret that a number of prominent Congressmen had protested to Nehru and the Congress high command against Krishna Menon's renomination in North Bombay. Some Congress members openly worked against Krishna Menon during the campaign, and others, including even S. K. Patil, Central Minister of Food and Agriculture, and a candidate for re-election to the Lok Sabha from South Bombay, and Morarji Desai, the Finance Minister, former Chief Minister of Bombay State, were conspicuously inactive and unenthusiastic in support of the Defense Minister. Protesting that because of Menon's "pro-Communism, the future of the country is not safe," some twenty-five members of the Bombay Pradesh Youth Congress resigned from the Congress Party. It was with reference to this group that Nehru, in a speech before a vast audience in Shivaji Park in North Bombay, made his much-publicized and no doubt much-regretted comment that they could "go to hell."

Until the final stages of the campaign, apparently in deference to Kripalani's wishes, few of the leaders of the parties supporting the Acharya took a personal part in the fight in North Bombay; but Kripalani received the "blessings" of many eminent Indians, including Rajagopalachari and Jayaprakash Narayan. The former, although in his eighties, as the super-chief and mentor of the Swatantra Party campaigned actively on behalf of candidates supported by the new party and constantly inveighed against the policies and orientation of the Congress Party and the Indian Government. He was especially vitriolic and vocal in his references to Krishna Menon. On the eve of the election he issued the following appeal to the voters of North Bombay: "Much has been said and argued about Sri V. K. K. Menon's candidature in North Bombay. I once again appeal to all patriotic men and

¹⁰ *The Indian Express*, Feb. 24, 1962.

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women not to be led away from the simple issue by personal and other irrelevant considerations. We must in this case follow the principle of national safety and security that governs the law of Preventive Detention. We may not secure hilt-proof but there is enough to justify preventive action in the interest of national security and refuse to vote for Sri Krishna Menon.”¹¹

On February 12, 1962, Jayaprakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader and one of the best known and most widely respected men in India, issued a remarkable statement. “Unfortunately,” he wrote, “Shri Menon has willingly allowed himself to be used for all he is worth by the Communist Party for the purpose of securing a commanding position in the very heart of the Central Government and the Congress Party . . . his victory would in effect be a victory of the Communist Party. On the other hand, though it might appear paradoxical, Kripalani’s victory, even though he is fighting a Congress candidate, would be a victory for the values and ideals for which the Congress stood in its best days under Gandhiji. . . . It would be childish, therefore, to believe that the issue involved is just one of somebody’s defeat or victory or the Prime Minister’s prestige. It is the future of Indian democracy and our spiritual values that are at stake.”¹² This statement was widely distributed and discussed, and was generally regarded as a major boost to Kripalani’s campaign. Even some Congressmen publicly acknowledged that they had been impressed with Jayaprakash’s solemn warning. One of them, V. L. Mehta, a former Congress Minister, a man of abstemious habits and great reputation, a dedicated worker for rural development, and brother of G. L. Mehta, former Indian Ambassador to the United States, wrote to Jayaprakash: “If I had the authority or competence, I would have expressed the same sentiment, though in poorer language and much less effectively.”¹³

Prime Minister Nehru, obviously stung by Jayaprakash’s words, flatly repudiated the warning, and remarked: “As for Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, I do not know where he stands . . . I think he should decide whether he is on this side or that, in politics or out of it.”¹⁴ Two days before the voting in North Bombay Jayaprakash referred to Nehru’s comments, and reaffirmed his warning: “Much abuse has been heaped over my head since I spoke out in support of Acharya Kripalani. Even the Prime Minister has chosen to use invective rather than reasoned argument. It all goes to show how weak is their case. As a matter of fact, the Communist Press itself, notably the ‘New Age’, has indisputably vindicated my stand that Mr. Menon’s victory would in reality be a victory for the Communist Party and would clear the way,

¹¹ For a facsimile copy of this hand-written letter see *The Indian Express*, Feb. 23, 1962.

¹² See above, footnote 4.

¹³ Quoted in *The Times of India*, Feb. 23, 1962.

¹⁴ Quoted in *Link* (North Bombay Supplement), Feb. 25, 1962.

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as a 'New Age' headline has actually put it, 'for the Communist mahout to seize control of the Congress elephant.'"¹⁵

All of the major English-language newspapers in Bombay City, notably *The Times of India* and *The Indian Express*, strongly supported Kripalani and mounted a running attack on Krishna Menon. This attack naturally infuriated the supporters of Krishna Menon, especially the Communists and other extreme left-wing groups. Nehru himself criticized "the rich people of Bombay and the people who own big newspapers" for backing Kripalani.¹⁶ *Blitz* inveighed ceaselessly against "the Jute Press" and the "press pindaris" (i.e., thugs). Even such a responsible person as Mrs. Violet Alva, then Deputy Home Minister in the central Government, suggested that strong action should be taken against *The Indian Express*, whose editor was the well-known journalist, Frank Moraes. Some reports indicated that she had even advocated burning the building occupied by the *Express*.

Blitz claimed to see "The American Hand Behind" the campaign against Krishna Menon. "The United States," it charged, "is a direct participant in the North Bombay struggle."¹⁷ In support of this claim it cited a statement in the special feature on the Indian elections in *Time* magazine of February 2, 1962, that "Americans have an important stake in this outsize election." The *Time* story, and the portrait of Krishna Menon on the front cover, flanked by a hooded cobra and a snake-charmer's flute—"the stereotyped and slanderous symbolisation of India given a vicious anti-Menon slant"—was of course excellent grist for the *Blitz* mill. *Time* referred disparagingly to India's "dhoti democracy," and to "Nehru's aggressive socialism and left-leaning neutralism." It played up India's "appeasement" on the China issue, and gave special and sympathetic attention to Kripalani, Rajaji, and the Swatantra Party. The appearance shortly before the Indian elections of such an obviously unsympathetic story, with Krishna Menon's portrait on the cover, was bound to boomerang. In any event, the *Time* effort undoubtedly gained support for Krishna Menon, and seemed to give some basis for his occasional oblique hints that "foreign powers" were working against him in North Bombay. In any event, the *Time* treatment gave *Blitz* an opportunity to raise the American bogey in North Bombay. *Blitz* charged that Kripalani was "the pro-American candidate," that CIA agents had been functioning through former I.C.S. officers, notably A. D. Gorwala and V. P. Menon, through former Congress M.P.'s like K. M. Munshi and M. R. Masani, through such "propaganda lobbies" as the Forum of Free Enterprise, in which Tata men were active, and through the Swatantra

¹⁵ Quoted in *The Indian Express*, Feb. 24, 1962.

¹⁶ Quoted in *Link* (North Bombay Supplement), Feb. 25, 1962.

¹⁷ All of the quotations from *Blitz* in this paragraph are from an article entitled "The American Hand Behind . . ." in the issue of Feb. 24, 1962.

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Party. All in all, *Blitz* had a "field day" during the North Bombay campaign. Its circulation must have increased considerably during this period.

Krishna Menon drew his main support from many different sources, chiefly from the voters who were accustomed to vote the Congress ticket and from the Congress and Communist party organizations. The Communists not only openly supported him—while at the same time they were fighting the Congress in the other constituencies in Bombay and throughout the country—but assumed a major role in the conduct of his campaign. Krishna Menon himself seemed to prefer to work with Communists and fellow-travelers like Dr. Baliga, an eminent Bombay surgeon who was well known for his fellow-traveling propensities, rather than with the leaders of the Congress organization in Bombay. Early in the campaign four Congress workers wrote, in an "open letter" to S. K. Patil, Y. B. Chavan, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, and B. M. Yagnik, the President of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee: "Lately, to our great disappointment and consternation we find that especially in North Bombay, communists and fellow-travelers have not only captured the election machinery of the Congress but even the Congress offices; we also find that even important leaders of the Bombay Suburban District Congress Committee take orders from communists and fellow-travelers regarding the conduct of the election organization and campaign work."¹⁸

Krishna Menon took a haughty position regarding all charges that he was a "crypto-Communist" or even a Communist. He obviously welcomed the support of the Communist Party, the Communist-dominated remnants of the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, and fellow-travelers like Dr. Baliga. He was equally disdainful of the other charges levied against him by Acharya Kripalani. Whereas Kripalani attacked Krishna Menon vigorously in almost every public utterance during the entire course of the campaign, Krishna Menon almost never even referred to Kripalani by name. He also said very little about Goa, although many of his co-workers, in public meetings, claimed that Krishna Menon deserved the support of the voters of North Bombay because, among other reasons, he had had a major hand in the events leading to the occupation of Goa. In his public utterances in North Bombay Krishna Menon concentrated on the position of the Congress Party on national and international affairs and on the ineffectiveness of any opposition to the Congress. For obvious reasons—he is fluent in no Indian language, not even his native tongue, Malayalam—he spoke only in English, which most of the voters in North Bombay could not understand.

Only a few of the prominent national leaders of the Congress Party campaigned actively for Krishna Menon in North Bombay, although many of the leaders did refer to this contest in their public statements elsewhere. Mrs. Indira Gandhi, U. N. Dhebar, a former President of the Congress,

¹⁸ Quoted in *The Times of India*, Feb. 23, 1962.

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Morarji Desai, S. K. Patil, and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Prime Minister of Kashmir, spoke on Menon's behalf in North Bombay, although, as has been noted, Patil and Desai took relatively little part in the contest and showed noticeably little enthusiasm for their colleague in the central Cabinet. The popular Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Y. B. Chavan, gave Menon solid support, and during the final stages of the campaign he spent more time in North Bombay than in his own Assembly constituency, where he had won by only a slight margin in 1957 (this time he won handsomely).

The most decisive support of all, of course, was given by Prime Minister Nehru. In many of his election speeches, especially in the last weeks of the campaign—when he traveled some 15,000 miles in twelve states, addressed some ten million people in innumerable speeches, sometimes as many as ten a day, and was seen by at least another ten million¹⁹—Nehru referred to the special significance of the election in North Bombay; and his personal appearances in the constituency attracted huge crowds, and undoubtedly gained many votes for Krishna Menon. Many of the pro-Krishna Menon posters, banners, and signs on walls and buildings did not even mention the candidate himself, but instead played up the importance of supporting Nehru and the Congress Party. Typical slogans were: "A VOTE FOR MENON IS A VOTE FOR NEHRU," "VOTE FOR NEHRU—AND CONGRESS." Both sides tried to enlist the support of popular film stars, dancers, and other performers, but undoubtedly more of these name people worked, spoke, and performed for Krishna Menon than for Kripalani.²⁰

In all the excitement created by the active campaigning by supporters of both of the major candidates in North Bombay, and because of the many factors involved, it was difficult to predict the outcome of the voting. Although Krishna Menon seemed visibly to be gaining support in the final stages of the campaign, the pro-Kripalani forces were apparently convinced up to the last moment that they had a good chance to score a victory. *The Indian Express*, a day before the voting, under a subheading which read: "SOLID PHALANX FOR KRIPALANI: ODDS AGAINST MENON," declared: "The tacit Congress-Communist alliance in the North Bombay constituency was totally isolated from the body politic on Friday, hours before the last of the campaign meetings for the two major contenders dispersed." *The Times of India* was convinced that Kripalani had "an edge" over

¹⁹ "Nehru Completes Marathon Tour," a P.T.I. report in *The Times of India*, Feb. 23, 1962.

²⁰ See *Blitz*, Feb. 24, 1962, for the text of an open letter addressed to "Fellow-Citizens & Friends," and signed by fourteen prominent "film folk," including Raj Kapoor, Dalip Kumar, Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, Dev Anand, Rajendra Kumar, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, B. R. Chopra, and Balraj Sahni. This letter referred to the treatment of the Indian elections in the Feb. 2, 1962 issue of *Time*. "The *Time* article," it declared, "has revealed to us clearly that the attacks on Krishna Menon, from various quarters, are only cover to attack our beloved Prime Minister, to weaken and undermine his basic national policies and to overthrow his inspiring leadership."

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Krishna Menon. Apparently the same opinion was held by many anti-Krishna Menon Indians, especially members of the Swatantra Party, and by many observers overseas, including the United States.

Here we encounter a perfect example of the wish being father to the thought. As a matter of fact, the odds were heavily against Kripalani from the start. Any detailed study of the composition and voting habits of the North Bombay electorate would have revealed what a head-start Krishna Menon had, even over an opponent as well-known as Acharya Kripalani; and a study of the other factors involved in the contest would have indicated that Kripalani could win only by a minor miracle, which would have persuaded large numbers of persons habitually inclined to vote the Congress ticket to change their vote. The miracle did not occur. But not even the most ardent supporters of Krishna Menon expected that the controversial Defense Minister, who came from another part of India and who could not speak any of the prevailing languages in North Bombay, would win by one of the largest pluralities of any candidate anywhere in India. The margin of Mr. Menon's victory, if not the actual victory itself, came as a real surprise.

Over 60 per cent of the more than 750,000 eligible voters in North Bombay cast their ballots on Sunday, February 25, at some 760 polling stations. Contrary to the fears of many persons, the voting proceeded quite peacefully, with no major incidents and with relatively few cases of attempted intimidation or impersonation or bribery. Since the voters were using the new form of the ballot for the first time, requiring them to stamp a ballot paper between the name of the candidate and the symbol of the party for which they wished to vote, and to go through this process twice, once in voting for their candidate for the Lok Sabha and again for the State Legislative Assembly, rather than to deposit a ballot paper in a box bearing the symbol of the party for which they wished to vote, as they had done in previous elections, the voting proceeded rather slowly; but apparently there were relatively few cases of invalid votes due to unfamiliarity with the voting requirements and procedures.

Krishna Menon won by a landslide, gaining nearly twice as many votes as Kripalani. The votes for the two leading candidates, on a constituency by constituency basis, not counting postal ballots, were as follows:²¹

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Menon</i>	<i>Kripalani</i>
Mahim	30,044	15,281
Bandra	41,003	27,550
Kurla	50,350	20,643
Chembur	67,519	34,315
Parle-Andheri	51,112	21,195
Borivli	57,585	33,203
Total	297,613	152,187

²¹ This table is taken from *The Times of India*, March 1, 1962.

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What were the main reasons for Mr. Menon's overwhelming victory, in a contest which most observers expected to be very close? Late in March 1962, Mr. Menon himself told me that his victory was due "obviously to the common sense of the voters of North Bombay." Putting aside this typically-Menonesque observation, the following factors, arranged more or less according to my own view of their order of importance, may be mentioned:

1. The basic fact, which has already been mentioned, that North Bombay was a traditional Congress stronghold, and that the majority of the voters were accustomed to vote the Congress ticket.
2. The strength and effectiveness of the Congress-Communist alliance. The President of the Congress Party, Sanjiva Reddy, attributed Krishna Menon's victory primarily to "the basic strength of the Congress organization." While the Congress and Communist Party organizations did not always work well together, their combined efforts were quite successful. The Communist support was obviously a major accretion of strength, especially since it brought with it the support of the labor unions in North Bombay which were under Communist control.
3. The prestige and support of Prime Minister Nehru, who staked his own prestige in North Bombay, who campaigned actively for Krishna Menon, and who helped to nullify Kripalani's attempts to concentrate his fire on Krishna Menon, rather than on Nehru or the Congress Party. Obviously many of the tradition-minded voters of North Bombay were reluctant to vote against Nehru and the things for which he stood.
4. The importance of local issues, and of caste, communal, linguistic, religious, and regional considerations, should not be overlooked. These considerations come home more closely to the Indian voters than larger issues of national or international policy. The North Bombay contest seemed to be the major exception to the generally valid statement that such local issues and considerations were the primary determinants of the voting behavior of the great majority of the Indian electorate, for in North Bombay major issues of domestic and foreign policy seemed to be involved, nationally-prominent leaders—including the Prime Minister himself and the two major candidates—participated in the campaign, and the contest attracted national and international attention; but it would be interesting to know how many of the nearly half a million voters of North Bombay who went to the polls on February 25th were more affected by these larger considerations than by more immediate factors and interests. The answer might surprise those who are not familiar with the motivations of the Indian voter.
5. The prestige and active support of the young and popular Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Y. B. Chavan, and the advantage deriving from

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the effective organization of the Congress Party in Maharashtra under the leadership of Chavan and from the relative lack of internal dissensions and rivalries within the Congress ranks, in happy contrast to the internal divisions in many of the other states.

6. Related to the previous point, and to a large degree stemming from it, was the general swing toward the Congress Party in the state of Maharashtra as a whole and in Bombay City in particular. This swing undoubtedly helped Krishna Menon immensely. If the trend had been in the other direction, and if the Congress leadership and organization had been weak and divided, as they were in 1957, his task would have been all the more difficult. Whereas in 1957 the Congress had won 157 of the 264 seats in the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, including only 13 of the 24 Assembly seats from Bombay City, and only two of the four Lok Sabha seats from Bombay, in 1962 it won 214 Assembly seats, including all but three of the seats from the City of Bombay, and it gained all four Lok Sabha seats from Bombay. Even the popular Communist leader, S. A. Dange, who had been elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957 by the largest plurality any candidate had received throughout India, was defeated by the Congress candidate in Bombay City Central (South) constituency. Krishna Menon, therefore, was riding a wave of Congress popularity, due almost entirely to internal developments in Maharashtra since 1957. Actually, in 1962 the Congress scored greater gains in Maharashtra than in any other state in India.

7. The personalities and appeal—or lack of appeal—of the two major candidates themselves. Some observers called attention to the fact that these two men resembled each other in physical appearance, in that each was rather tall, hawk-faced, frail, in rather poor health, and somewhat emaciated in appearance. Both men, they pointed out, had a sharp tongue and a barbed wit, and possessed considerable histrionic ability. Kripalani, so they said, looked like an older version of Krishna Menon (there is a difference of ten years in their ages). In most respects, however, the two men are quite dissimilar, in personality as well as in views. Kripalani has a considerable amount of charismatic appeal. Many of the voters of North Bombay must have been impressed and flattered when the nationally-famous Acharya chose to seek their votes, and when he campaigned assiduously and informally among them. Others, however, may have been alienated by his “intervention,” or by his notably mercurial record in Indian politics, or by his vitriolic attacks on Krishna Menon. Krishna Menon’s more aloof tactics and his more frigid dignity must have appealed to many voters, as did, no doubt, his posing as a victim of criticism by “right-wing reactionaries” and “foreign imperialists,” and his national stature as Defense Minister and intimate associate of Nehru. On the other hand, some of the voters must have been alienated from

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the caustic and temperamental Krishna Menon, and a few at least must have seen some cause for concern in the charges levied against him.

8. With the partition in 1960 of the former undivided Bombay State into the two states of Maharashtra and Gujerat, and the solution of the problem of the status of Bombay City, the linguistic issue, which had been exploited effectively against the Congress in the 1957 elections by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, was no longer an important political issue. Most of the parties formerly associated in the Samiti had withdrawn, and most of them supported Kripalani, leaving the Samiti a shell of its former self, essentially a Communist and Communist-front organization. Krishna Menon got little support from the weak Samiti, but he did benefit greatly from the backing of the Communists, the main group still associated with the Samiti, and he benefited even more because he did not have to take an unpopular position on the linguistic issue, as the Congress Party did in 1957.

9. The charges, hammered home by Kripalani, that Menon was a "crypto-Communist," that he was soft in his China policy, that he was neglecting the defense and security of his country, that he was a champion of Communism at home and abroad, apparently had relatively little appeal to the voters of North Bombay. As one Menon supporter in North Bombay told me—and he spoke with considerable bitterness—"calling Krishna Menon a 'crypto-Communist' might lose votes for him in America, but not in North Bombay." It is possible that the "crypto-Communist" and related charges, and Kripalani's relentless personal attacks on Krishna Menon, actually backfired, and won votes for Menon, who seems to thrive most when he can pose as a victim of persecution. Obviously, if the election had been held after the Chinese attack on India, when the deficiencies in India's military preparedness and in its China policy were glaringly exposed and publicly admitted, Krishna Menon would have been much more vulnerable to the kind of charges which Kripalani pressed. Indeed, it is doubtful that Menon could have been re-elected in North Bombay, or even nominated for re-election, in the aftermath of the Chinese offensive.

10. The Indian occupation of Goa in the preceding December, and Krishna Menon's part in this operation. The Goa action was generally popular in North Bombay, as it was in almost every other part of India. Whereas Krishna Menon was "the hero of Kashmir" in 1957, and still was to some extent in 1962, in the latter year he was to many "the hero of Goa." When I asked him what part the Goa take-over had played in the North Bombay contest, he replied with some heat: "I did not get one vote—not one vote—because of Goa." This answer may be dismissed as representing either undue modesty on his part, or as a "tongue-in-cheek" pronouncement, or as a considerable underestimation of the importance

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of the Goa issue. Krishna Menon undoubtedly did get some votes because of Goa, and the issues involved in the Goa affair, but it is impossible to assess the relative importance of this particular factor. In all probability the Goa action was one of the least significant of the major reasons for Menon's electoral triumph, although a failure on the part of the Indian Government to take action after the military build-up along the Goa border in December 1961 would undoubtedly have hurt his chances. Clearly he was fortunate to be seeking re-election in North Bombay a few weeks after the Goa affair, rather than shortly after the Chinese attack.

What were the consequences of Krishna Menon's sweeping victory in North Bombay? The most obvious one was that it was a great boost to his personal prestige and position in Indian political life, and marked him as a man who would have to be reckoned with in the future, even after Nehru went. Whether, as *Time* believed, he had become "after Nehru, the second most important figure in Indian politics,"²² is a matter of opinion, but after the election he was certainly a political figure in his own right. His victory, in addition to other results of the elections, also immeasurably strengthened the more extreme left-wing elements in the Congress Party and the Government, and placed them in a better position, either openly or behind the scenes, to influence Nehru's actions and policies in the last years of his long political career and to assume the leadership of the Congress and the Government when Nehru passes from the scene. The North Bombay election may also be interpreted, perhaps more accurately, as a personal victory for Nehru, and a new mandate for his basic policies and orientation—for example, for a continuance of nonalignment in foreign affairs and "socialism" at home.

Almost exactly eight months after Krishna Menon had become a major factor in Indian politics by his victory in North Bombay, the Chinese Communists launched a powerful offensive against India in the North East Frontier Agency and in Ladakh. This unexpected event caught India unawares and unprepared, mentally as well as militarily. It changed many aspects of Indian life and thought, and it brought into question the bases of the policy of nonalignment and of India's whole approach to world affairs. Among other results it wrecked the political career of Krishna Menon. What his critics in India and the United States had failed to accomplish, his Chinese "friends" brought about with amazing suddenness. A few days after the Chinese attacked, Nehru, under strong pressure from leaders of his own party, dismissed Krishna Menon as Defense Minister. Menon's eclipse has visibly affected the balance of political forces in India, and has changed the likely answers to the question, "After Nehru, who?" Nehru's successors

²² *Time*, March 9, 1962.

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are now more likely to come from the moderate or even from the conservative groups in the Congress Party, and the left wing of the Party, which seemed to be in a strategic position after the February 1962 elections, has been considerably weakened.

To the extent that the charges levied against Krishna Menon by Kripalani and other critics—who abounded in India as elsewhere—had some basis, his enhanced role in Indian political life after the third general elections was a matter of justifiable concern to those who sought to prevent Communist infiltration of the Congress and the Government and who were troubled by the official policies regarding China and national security. On the other hand, after the extensive airing of all possible charges against Krishna Menon during the North Bombay campaign, and the many warnings against Communist infiltration and against the consequences of a neglect of adequate security measures, all subsequent decisions and actions of Nehru and his associates will surely be made in the light of these publicly-voiced reservations and concerns. If India falls under Communist influence at home, or neglects its defenses, or takes an unrealistic position on world issues, it will not be by default.

All of these eventualities are far less likely in the aftermath of India's new crisis with China. The Chinese actions have greatly embarrassed and divided the Indian Communists, they have led India to turn seriously to the task of strengthening its defense position, with the assistance of the United States and other Western nations, and they have instilled a far greater sense of realism in Indian leaders and in the Indian people generally. This brighter picture may gradually fade, but for the time being at least India seems to be more truly united and alert than it has ever been in its history as an independent nation.

Possibly those who hoped for a defeat, or at worst a victory by a slender margin, for Krishna Menon in North Bombay were unwise to focus so much attention on the contest and to insist, in the words of *The Indian Express*, that "the outcome will forcefully indicate which way the country and the party are to go."²⁸ It is quite possible that the significance of the North Bombay election was greatly exaggerated. We may say that many factors were involved in the election, and in the minds of the voters of North Bombay. We may say with equal certainty that many factors will be involved in shaping India's future, and that the election in North Bombay gave no more than a few clues to this future. In any event, the consequences of the election have been overshadowed, and to a large degree counteracted, by the new confrontation with China since October 20, 1962. Those who were most unhappy with the results of the voting in North Bombay could find some consolation in the wise words of the wise old mentor of the Swatantra

²⁸ See above, footnote 5.

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Party, who had as much reason as anyone to regret the decision of the voters in North Bombay. "Whether we win or not," declared Rajaji during the electoral campaign, "making the attempt to really oppose is worthwhile."²⁴

University of Pennsylvania, April 1963

²⁴ Quoted in *Time* (Asia Edition), Feb. 2, 1962, p. 18.

NOTE ON THE MANILA CONFERENCE AND DECLARATION

ON AUGUST 5, 1963, the heads of the governments of Indonesia, Malaya and the Philippines ended a seven-day "summit meeting" with a joint statement in which they agreed to ask the U.N. Secretary-General to appoint a commission to ascertain whether the elections recently held in Sarawak and North Borneo accurately indicated the wishes of the majority of the populations of those territories to enter the Malaysian Federation at the end of August. Although it was apparently thought possible that the commission could complete its inquiries by then, it was agreed that if necessary the formal establishment of the Federation might be postponed about two weeks. Observers from the three governments were to work with the commission. The three leaders also agreed to prevent any extension of foreign military bases in the Philippines and Malaysia and their statement mentioned the temporary nature of the present American and British bases in those areas.

In their Manila Declaration the leaders also established a new consultative arrangement (to be known as "Maphilindo") under which the three governments promised to refrain from "the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers."

While the agreements indicated that President Sukarno had retreated somewhat from his earlier position of strong opposition to the establishment of the Malaysian Federation on August 31, his remarks on his return to Jakarta after the conference indicated that he still hoped the people of North Borneo and Sarawak would refuse to join the Federation. (The background of the Federation is described in the article by Gordon P. Means on p. 138 below.) Moreover, various press reports suggested that he would use Maphilindo as a vehicle to express further opposition to the existence of Western military installations in other parts of the Far East.—*Editor*.

August 9, 1963