

AN ALTERNATIVE

(The Times of India - September 17, 1979)

Sir - In your editorial "Fights it Straight" (September 8 /10) you have observed that Mr. Indira Gandhi was not vindictive and she didn't harass her political foes as some of them have harassed her.

How could you forget so soon the treatment meted out to the opposition leaders by Indira Gandhi during the emergency? Several of them including Gayatri Devi and Mrinal Gore were subjected to severe mental torture. And there were countless incidents of physical torture. The only fault of most of these people was that they were opposed to her authoritarian rule.

To a layman the apparent gains of the emergency may seem to be more impressive than the democratic rule provided during 28 months of Janata rule. In fact, most of the dictatorships have provided initially better in comparison to the democracies they have replaced. However, as Lord Acton has said, 'All power corrupts and absolute, power corrupts absolutely.' In the long run, barring a few, all dictators deteriorate.

The truth is that under the parliamentary system of democracy, we have not been able to achieve our true potential as a nation. It is high time that we thought of other forms of democracy. With some modifications, the Presidential system as adopted in the USA with all the checks and balances provided by members of the Congress might be the answer. The basic advantage of this system of democracy is the direct induction of top professionals into the cabinet. Whether you call them presidential aides or anything else, they are far more talented than our politicians. The latter have indeed made a mess of country's affairs.