

Advertising films in India are neither slick nor informative even after 25 years iii

In Vienna, where people waltz and the Danube is always blue, is a Sardar whose heart remains in Jullundur iii

They were young, Indian and female and they conquered a 22,000 ft. peak which had defeated many foreign expeditions iv

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES MAGAZINE

SANJAY

Ever since beautiful, 19-year-old Maneka Gandhi burst onto the Indian political scene — a scene peopled largely by the ugly and the old — she has been the object of much speculation. She has been described as a tigress who fought back ferociously when her husband was under attack; as an enterprising, energetic investigative journalist; as an ambitious go-getter who used her position as the wife of the Prime Minister's son for self advancement and favours for her own coterie of supporters.

There is also the image of the pert, bouncy Sardarni who doted on her husband; the desolate young widow of 24, mother of a tiny son; the tragic figure who watched with such dignity as her young husband was brought home for the last time; and recently, of the vulnerable young pawn in the game of political succession.

But which is the real Maneka Gandhi? H.T. Staff Correspondent NANDINI MEHTA tried to find out the answer to this question in an exclusive two-hour interview.

They talked in her sitting room at 1, Safdarjang Road, the official residence of the Prime Minister. It is a small, cluttered room, everything in it strictly functional, with no attempt at "decor" — a plain green carpet, a faded sofa set of the PWD variety. Bookshelves (designed by Sanjay) line two walls — a complete set of Jane's books on aircraft and infantry in his shelves, a complete set of Agatha Christie in hers.

Maneka's eight-month old son Feroze Varun crawled around, and her two outside, ferocious-looking dogs wandered in and out, as she fielded questions with the assurance and dexterity of one who has learnt the game the hard way.



'He was a very good husband'

Q: THIS week Sanjay Gandhi would have been 34 years old. How did you celebrate birthdays — as a family occasion or a public event? What presents did you give each other?

A: Sanjay hated being feted. On his birthday we usually called friends over. And many other people came to wish him throughout the day. He got lots of flowers, and lots of people sent him cakes — so whenever about 50 had been collected we used to send them to a hospital. Among the presents he got last year were a watch and a calculator and by the evening he had given them away. The people who gave the gifts knew we wouldn't keep them, some of the people who came knew they would be given Sanjay's presents! What did we give each other? Well, my present was a sort of a yearly ritual — I gave him that year's Jane's book of aircraft. Last year on my birthday he gave me the Encyclopaedia Britannica set because I'd been nagging him for them — but they're the most useless set of books, I find.

Q: The book you've written

on Sanjay — how did that come about?

A: About a week after Sanjay died, I was looking at photographs of his, and then my mother-in-law asked me to do the book. There were pictures none of us had ever seen before, some without negatives, just contact prints. It took three months to restore the photographs, a month to chronicle them — actually I just supplied the material and text. T. S. Nagarajan put some discipline into it, gave it a shape.

Q: What kind of husband was Sanjay — with all his other activities, did he have much time for you?

A: He was a very good husband and showed it in so many ways. . . . it all sounds so trivial when I put it into words, I don't really know how to say it. For instance when the baby was born, he sensed I was worried that now the baby would get more of his love than I would, so he focussed his attention entirely on me. . . . he was in the labour room with me; he would hold my hand whenever I had injections, he knew how

terrified I was of them. Most political wives spend their evenings alone, while the husbands are out with the boys. Well, Sanjay made it a point to have dinner with me always — only on two occasions in our married life did he go out for dinner and then, he promised he would be back early. A lot of people said I was a super girl to have stayed with him when he was down and out — but I just felt I was exceedingly lucky to have him.

Q: Were you in awe of him?

A: Oh no, I didn't put him on any kind of pedestal. I thought the world of him, I respected and believed in his views because I never found any reason not to. He was never peremptory.

Q: You never quarrelled, never argued?

A: Oh, we argued all the time, incessantly — on politics, about what food to give the dogs, on whether the baby was too warm or too cold.

But we never disagreed on fundamentals. . . . Sanjay had a very even temperament, no moods, never raised his voice. . . .

Q: He never got angry with you?

A: The only thing that used to irritate him was my habit of using words like "stupid" and "idiot" — that's the way we talked to each other in my mother's home. But the Gandhis never use such words even to each other. And I never know when to keep my mouth shut — Sanjay had to tell me when to shut up. We talked to each other a lot — he was interested in whatever I was doing; after the baby was born he'd keep telling me to get back to journalism. We laughed a lot, you know, and everyone around us laughed a lot too. This room was always full of friends — it was a 24-hour pot luck.

Q: Which people? Who were your close friends?

A: None of the people you hear about. . . . None of our friends were political. The friends that used to come when Sanjay was alive, still come. Yes, I know a lot of people go around at parties saying how close they are to the "household", how they've heard something straight "from the horse's mouth" — and always they're people one doesn't even know!

Q: Has marriage changed you in any way? Do you like being in the public eye?

A: I was very immature when I got married — but I think marriage sharpened the few qualities I had. I was never interested in politics before I married Sanjay, I'm

not interested now, I was never in the public eye.

Q: But you used to campaign with Sanjay and tour with him all the time.

A: That's because Sanjay used to say to me, "It will be more fun if you come". I went along just to be with him. And because I wasn't involved in politics, Sanjay always had a merry wife to come back to after a hard day's work.

Q: But you don't give the impression of being uninterested in politics — you seem to have fought the family's battles more ferociously than anyone else during the Janata years.

A: Not ferociously — vociferously. I'm always happiest when my back is to the wall. But I did it all for Sanjay, not because I was involved in politics. Actually, those years were the happiest years I had — I was happy professionally, running Surys; they were the happiest years of my marriage — Sanjay and I were together all the time, it was a lot of fun.

Q: How did you meet Sanjay? What was your first impression of him?

A: We met at a cousin's wedding. I found him very intelligent, very easy to be with, and we made each other laugh.

Q: Was it to set an example of family planning that you waited five years to have a child?

A: Rubbish — I wanted to wait ten years — this baby wasn't planned, I wanted to have my husband to myself.

Q: Does the baby keep you busy all the time now, keep you up at night?

A: He doesn't sleep with me, he sleeps with my mother-in-law, I spend afternoons with the baby.

Q: How do you feel about people who were against Sanjay, or people who were turncoats, who came back when Sanjay was back in power? Do you feel bitter?

A: As to the people who were critical of Sanjay — I don't give a damn, it just shows they have no brains. And the turncoats — I haven't given them a thought — if they can do what they've done and have sleepless nights trying to justify it, that's their problem, not mine.

Q: Did you see Sanjay as a future Prime Minister of India? What qualities did he have that made him a leader?

A: I definitely saw him as Prime Minister of India one day. Oh, not because he had any 'divine right' to it, but because he was extremely cap-

It is difficult to sum up Sanjay Gandhi's achievements in words. "Talk less, work more" was an integral aspect of his character.

He had no angularities in his style of living. He lived sedulously like a common man. No flamboyance in appearance, no exclusiveness in everyday living, and no extraordinary habits. He belonged to an extraordinary family, but refused to accept the inheritance of the family greatness. No feet-touching, no garlands, no camera-clicking.

From childhood onwards, he tried hard to move in, and familiarise himself with, the world of ordinary men with whom he always felt a deep affinity. He was disinclined to hollow intellectual pursuits. Instead, he felt naturally inclined to the action-oriented life of a mechanical and automobile engineer. He planned to set up a car-factory, which he later relinquished to enter politics, which provided him with opportunities for exploiting his unbounded and irrepressible dynamism.

Sanjay Gandhi stands in danger of being sanctified. He may come to be worshipped, but not understood. In time to come, people may throng at Shanti Vana, and offer prayers and flowers at his samadhi. Sanjay is defenceless against this meaningless adoration. The man who spurned bouquets and garlands in his lifetime would hardly approve of them being

heaped on the site of his cremation.

Sanjay had no time for abstract intellectualism, moral-spiritual equivocations, constitutional wranglings and legal hair-splitting.

Most tributes paid to him appear to have highlighted not the real, but the imagined, conventionally poeticised, Sanjay. While some have chosen to stress that he drank nothing but water and milk, or, that

pleasures of life. On the contrary life's pleasures to him did not consist in merely indulging the body but in serving the downtrodden, being open and honest with his own self.

It is not easy to be open and honest with one's own self. Whatever Sanjay did, he did with immense conviction, and unshakable honesty. Even when he made mistakes, he remained honest to himself. In a society where dishonesty

sidential colonies, have nothing but blessings for Sanjay. They lived like herds of cattle before; now they have become human beings, having their own homes, modern in their attitude to work and to the world. They realise that Sanjay aroused in them aspirations, and created in them a drive to better their own lot. He was, after Jawaharlal Nehru, the first great moderniser of Indian society on a national scale.

Pandit Nehru's endeavour to modernise Indian society remained unfinished for two reasons: by and large the common masses remained uninvolved, and leadership went into the hands of the westernised elite which did not share the common man's aspirations.

Indira Gandhi carried Nehru's unfinished task forward, through various measures such as nationalisation of banks, implementing land-reforms, encouraging industrialisation and export-oriented business, placing more funds at the disposal of scientific and technological research.

Indira Gandhi had considerable success in this direction but not to the extent that would make modernisation a self-generating process. This task Sanjay had begun. He succeeded in creating the climate for a break-through in the modernisation process. Had he lived longer he would have ushered in an age of affluence in India.

Worshipped but not understood

BY AKHILESHWAR JHA

he never even looked at any other girl but the one whom he later married, some others have pointed to the simplicity of his dress—invariably pyjama and kurta. If these tributes are to be believed, Sanjay would appear to be a potential yogi, or, a potential mahatma, rather than the astute politician and radically pragmatic moderniser that he was.

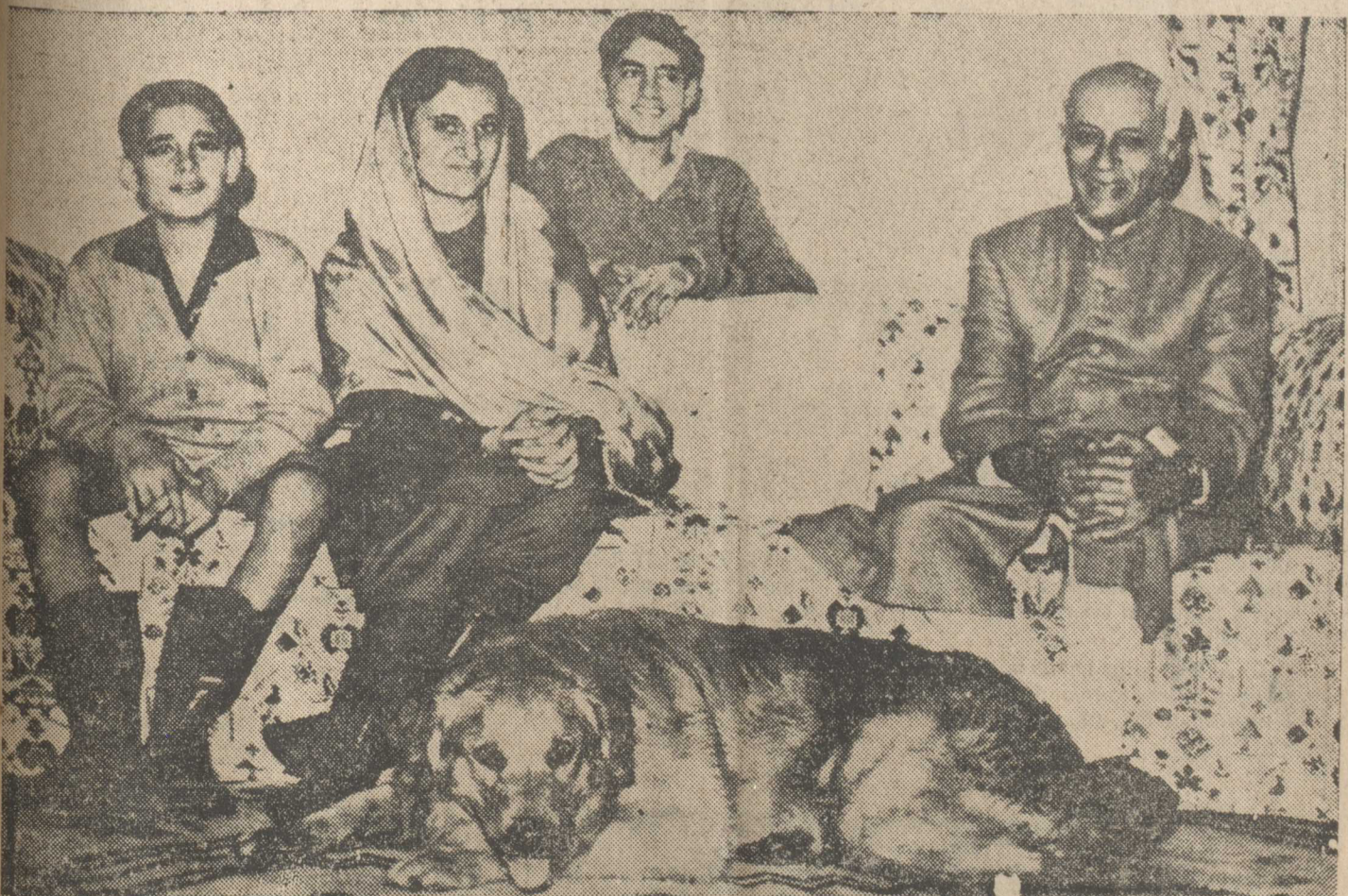
There were indeed elements of puritanism in Sanjay. He was puritanical in certain habits and tastes, not because he was averse to the

and hypocrisy constitute the norm, the fierce honesty of Sanjay naturally appeared a glaring deviation.

He knew his critics were hollow men, scarecrows, and that ultimately, he would triumph. He kept his cool all through the period of adversity, and ultimately, triumphed. The common people, who had fallen victim to the hypocrite-politicians, rallied round the one with whom they had always felt an affinity. Today, the lakhs of people who had been evicted from Delhi's slums and resettled in new re-



Maneka with her eight-month-old son Feroze Varun.



Sanjay (Extreme left) with his family on a holiday in Simla.

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A NIGHT

THE night was still and quiet. It was around 5.30 p.m., and the sun had set half an hour earlier. The moon had not yet risen, and it was pitch dark. I crept among the trees on my way to my machan.

The night noises started. A peacock wailing on its way to its nest, the crickets among the bushes, and the frogs in a distant lake. Some birds winged above me, their cries



sounding like a factory siren signalling the end of the day. I was a journalist, accredited to the National Geographic Magazine. I had been detailed to report on a night in an Indian forest. That was why I was now roaming about in the Bandipur National Park. I had with me a pair of binoculars which would illuminate the scenery and animals, without throwing out a glare. I had left my other things



SCHOOL BULLETIN
OUR school organises a sports day every year. This year it was a spectacular show different from the earlier ones. All the children, juniors and seniors, participated with great enthusiasm. A grand show was for the parents. All the students from class VII to X marched past and saluted our chief guest, the Union Deputy Minister of Information and Broadcasting, The Olympic torch was lit by some senior boys. Later all the sports events took place like obstacle race, arithmetic race, hurdles race and

'He was a very good husband'

Continued from page 1
able. But the curious thing is that if one day Sanjay felt that he'd given it all he'd got and he couldn't achieve any more, he would have chucked it up, just the same as he'd done to anything else. He knew very clearly what had to be done, and how to make people do it. They listened to him because they knew they were where they were because of him, that he would stand by them before, he never told them lies.

Q: Was he a good judge of people?

A: He was, he saw through people, he knew their weaknesses. He had only just begun his work. After some years, a lot more people would have accepted him. There are a lot of peculiar people in politics — not only in India but everywhere — but Sanjay knew how to make the best use of the material we have.

Q: What did you think of Sanjay's daredevilry, in flying, in driving?

A: It wasn't daredevilry so much as reaching the peak of excellence in whatever he did. When he had mastered something, a subject, he went on to something else. Before it was boats, then dogs...

Q: And cars...?

A: Yes, cars — but he'd lost interest in cars after Maruti was taken over, and taken up flying.

Q: Were you afraid about his flying?

A: I wasn't afraid, because Sanjay was a perfect pilot. Nobody was terribly keen about his flying, but no one stopped him. I'd started flying too — I like trying new things until my interest wanes — which is very fast. Anyway, I gave up flying because I had a rotten instructor...

Sanjay had taken me up in the Pitts the day before he died — I told him not to fly the Pitts, but that was just because I felt afraid in it, no other reason.
Q: Do you get on with your mother-in-law, your sister-in-law?

A: Very few women would choose to stay with their in-laws after their husband was dead. If I didn't get on with them, wouldn't I have moved out? I've no dearth of options if I wanted to leave.
Q: Do you see much of each other?

A: Meals are always together. Otherwise we all lead very independent lives. We are a very close family, but no one falls over each other or confides secrets. My mother-in-law is there when we need her, but she never pushes or pulls one, tells one what to do. She knows I hate cooking, housekeeping — I've never even seen the kitchen of this house this year — but she's never tried to change me.

Q: How did Rajiv and Sanjay get on?

A: As a family they were close, but they had very different lifestyles.

Q: How do you spend your day now? What are your interests?

A: As I said I hate housekeeping. I haven't been shopping for four years now. I'm probably the worst dressed person in the entire world, thanks to Sanjay, who couldn't care less what I wore. In fact, neither Sanjay nor I were hung up on things or places — we had no favourite books or favourite places or favourite food or clothes or whatever — in fact no kinks of that kind. What am I interested in? Nothing, at the moment. I own a truck business — Rajdhani Trading and I go there in the mornings. Afternoons I'm here at home,

reading, with the baby, or I play with the dogs. I never go out anywhere — no parties, no movies, nothing. Do I get bored? I'm never bored when I'm by myself. I'm bored only when I'm surrounded by people.
Q: Do you miss being a celebrity?

A: I've never been a celebrity, never been treated like one. People don't recognise me, really. Once I had taken my sister and Sushmita Ghosh, Editor of Surya, to the Taj, and at the entrance I saw these two people whispering and pointing to me. Finally one of them came up to me. I put on this bored expression that celebrities are supposed to put on and said, "Yes?" "Excuse me," he said, "but aren't you Nazia Hasan?"

Q: You certainly don't give the impression of being a stay-at-home type, "not interested" in anything.

A: I keep hearing about the kind of person I'm supposed to be. In fact, I find it much more amusing to hear about what I'm supposed to be than what I really am.
Q: It doesn't make you angry?

A: No, I find it a big laugh. You know, I'd gone for ten days to Bombay to finish the book and Mrs Gandhi took Peroze (the baby) to some functions with her and of course people started saying, "Did you notice, she didn't bring Maneka." Earlier, we didn't take Peroze out much, because that baby is a car addict — after a short ride in the car, he would howl all day, wanting to go back into the car. Well, I heard this rumour that went around — people were saying that the child is mentally retarded, so he can't be seen publicly!

Q: Do you believe in astrology?

A: I think it's fun to have your palm read — but they always know who I am and tell me all sorts of rubbish. I once went with a friend to a palmist — my friend wore my wedding ring and had her hair open, and I went in pig-tails, as a 'friend of Maneka Gandhi'. The palmist told my friend she would be a bigshot in politics, and he told me — I could hope to get married after about four years!

Q: What are your plans for the future? Isn't this room too full of memories for you to want to stay here?

A: The only memories I have are happy ones, so I'm not afraid of memories. As to the future — I think I'll retire. At 24, I've worked hard enough, as hard as people who retire when they are fifty. (Laughs) No, I haven't thought about the future. At the moment I'm not interested in anything particular. Well, I'm intensely interested in animals. My sister-in-law is interested in so many things, my mother-in-law has tried to get me interested in everything — social work, other things, but I need a year to myself. I've withdrawn into myself now — I think I need a year before I can make any plans for the future.

Q: Has Sanjay's death brought you closer to Mrs Gandhi?

A: Death does not bring one closer to anyone else. You can't expect other people to heal your wounds for you — you have to wait for the wounds to heal themselves. But she has helped a lot.

The photographs used in this feature are from "Sanjay Gandhi". By Maneka Gandhi; Vakil, Feffer and Simons; Bombay. (Distributed by Macmillans).

BIRTHDAY FORECASTS

December 14: Despite fluctuations in other spheres, a slow and steady upward swing is visible in income or profession. Introduction of new circle of friends gives a good outlook on life. Financially, you are pin-pricked and worried, you tide over them by resorting to economy.

December 15: Lack of adequate resources may cause a slight setback to your plans. The danger is you bite off more than you chew and ignore the right priorities. Visit to a hill station is not out of the question. November is to explore new avenues, be unmarried, an exciting and time-ahead.

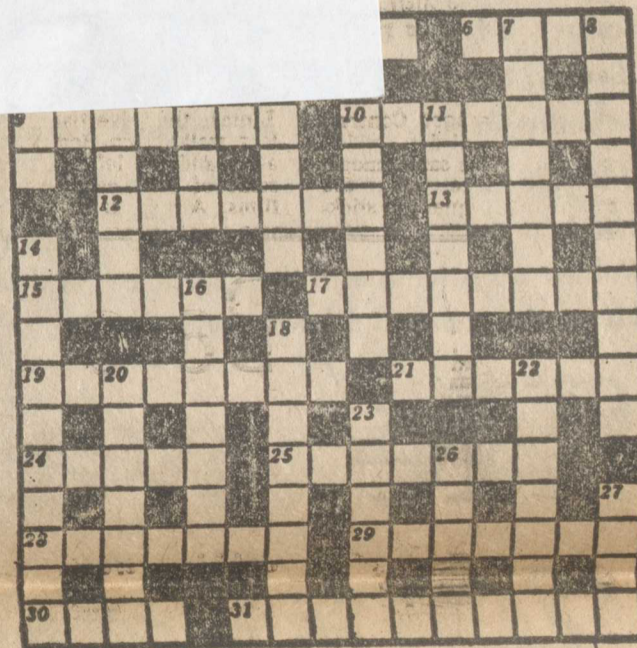
December 16: Marriage problems or daughter may be upper in your mind. Skilful management of financial affairs helps esmen tide over temporary lites. Rain dislocates your time or work schedule at the moment. A few youths are sed in competitions.

December 17: The year starts in a sunny but ends better. Winter is up some family problems. Inheritance matters claim a considerable part of attention. Persons in service to keep afloat well enough lally, but other factors cause ke.

December 18: There is a possibility of something memorable during the year. Your social life puts a strain on ties. Some youths risk a recently developed friendship a rash action. Some can crash through to succeed bold tactics are adopted. Some puts some restrictions on pursuits.

December 19: A friend or colleague is on promises of others, destined to play a prominent role in your affairs. But before on your own efforts is on promises of others, a strenuous recreation promise of fun and excitement, expected after is found unby employees. The year, ends hopefully.

December 20: Possible switch of tances around mid-year. It ark the beginning of an which keeps you absorbed rest of the year. Some may themselves caught up in a romantic tangle. For business-pleasant things happen not expected.



- 9 A crack (7)
- 10 Copy (7)
- 11 Comes out (7)
- 12 Grammatical time (5)
- 13 Give up work (6)
- 14 Commemorative structure (8)
- 15 Extinct bird (4)
- 16 Continue (4, 2)
- 17 Turn out (5)
- 18 Bother (7)
- 19 Pushes (7)
- 20 Commercial people (7)
- 21 Eastern people (10)
- 22 DOWN
- 23 Part of a court (4)
- 24 School official (7)
- 25 Select group (5)
- 26 Easiness of transport (6)
- 27 Something left out (6)
- 28 One learning (7)
- 29 Foreman's rivine (10)
- 30 Enter uninvited (7)

- 31 Stentac men (8)
- 32 Died (7)
- 33 Stop (7)
- 34 Shakespearean heroine (6)
- 35 Noisy quarrel (5)
- 36 Request (4)

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Across: 1 Telescopes; 6 Ache; 9 Galileo; 10 Parsnip; 12 Apparel; 13 Siena; 15 Spying; 17 Heights; 19 Original; 21 Assign; 24 Irish; 25 Tackles; 26 Hoarder; 29 Measles; 30 Deep; 31 Assistants.
Down: 1 Tugs; 2 Lullaby; 3 Sleep; 4 Owders; 5 Expelled; 7 Content; 8 Explaining; 11 Resigns; 14 Astonished; 16 Nettle; 18 Pastures; 20 Intimate; 22 Insulin; 23 Scamp; 26 Least; 27 Isis.

East dealer. Both sides vulnerable.
NORTH
♦ Q 10
♥ K J 10 7 4 2
♦ 9 5 3
♠ 3
WEST
♦ K 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A K J 8 2
♠ A 10 5
EAST
♦ 9 6 3 2
♥ 8
♦ Q 10 7 4
♠ K 9 7 6
SOUTH
♠ A J 5
♥ A Q 9 6 5
♦ 8
♣ Q J 4 2

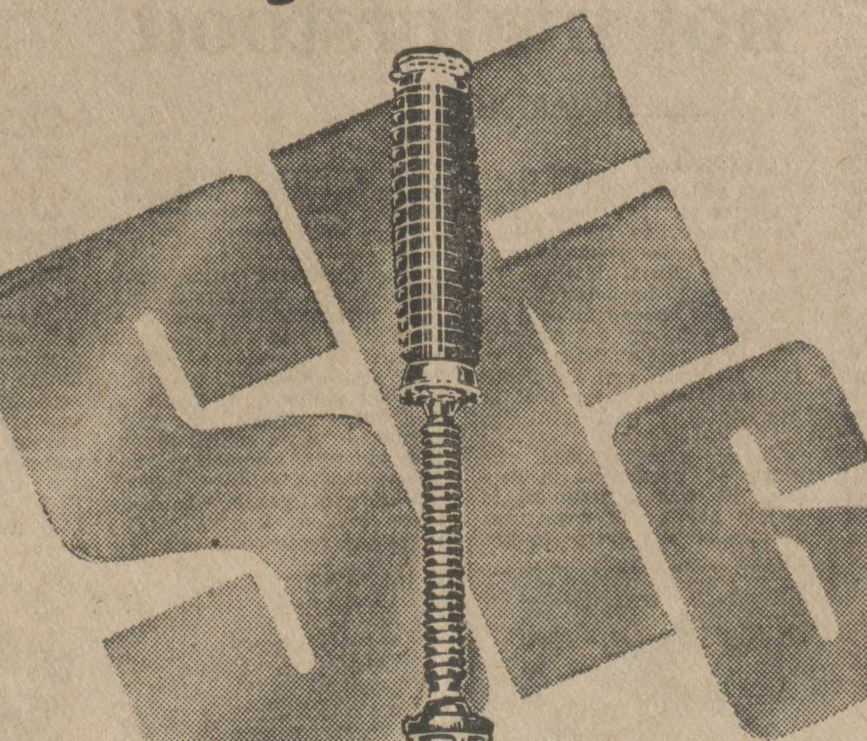
The bidding:
East South West North
Pass 1 ♥ Dble 4 ♥
Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead — king of diamonds. Good defence is not really difficult if you approach the play carefully. Most defensive errors are usually due to a failure to view the play of the hand as a whole. Let's assume you're East, defending against four hearts. Partner leads the king of diamonds and, when dummy appears, you should feel that there's a reasonable chance to defeat the contract. This is because the dummy, aside from his trumps, does not pose much of a threat. You signal with the seven of diamonds, asking West to continue the suit and hoping to snatch

three diamond tricks right away. But declarer ruffs the next diamond lead and you must now revise your thinking so that your goal to win four tricks can be met in some other way. Declarer plays a trump to the ten and then leads a club from dummy. If you follow low, in line with the rule of second-hand-low, you will later regret it. South plays the jack of clubs and West the ace, but the battle is practically over. Declarer soon leads another club from dummy. You win with the king and return a spade, but South makes the contract after he wins the spade with the ace and discards the queen of spades on his queen of clubs. Note that if you go up with the king on the first club lead from dummy and return a spade, South goes down one. Furthermore, that's the play you'd make if



your earlier thinking had followed the proper channel. After declarer trumps the diamond at trick two, it is clear that your side must win three tricks in the black suits to stop the contract. If South has the A-Q of clubs, your king is dead anyhow, so rising with the king of clubs will do you no harm. But if West has the club ace, and a spade trick besides, going up with the king will defeat the contract.

ALIND Breaking new grounds in switchgear technology



WES SLADE, Deputy Marshal

