

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

- * **I.K. Gujral**
Former Prime Minister of India
- * **Saiyid Hamid** IAS (Retd.)
Former Vice-Chancellor, AMU,
Secretary, Hamdard Education
Society, New Delhi.
- * **Khushwant Singh**
Former MP, Former Editor,
Illustrated Weekly of India.
- * **V.R. Krishna Iyer**
Former Judge, SC of India.
- * **S. Muzaffar Husain Burney**
Former Secretary, GOI,
Former Governor of Haryana &
Former Chairman, Minorities
Commission

EDITOR

SYED SHAHABUDDIN, ex-MP

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Inland: Life	Rs.1500
Annual Donor	Rs.150
Annual Ordinary	Rs.120
Overseas: Life	US\$200
(By Airmail) Annual	US\$25
Per copy	£1, \$1.50, IR.10, SR 6
Outstation Clearance Charges	Rs.15

ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

Outer Cover	Rs.3,000
Inner Cover	Rs.2,500
Full Page	Rs.2,000
Half Page	Rs.1,000

Payable by MO/Bank Draft/ Cheque in the name of:

Muslim India Monthly

Behind 29, Feroze Shah Road,
New Delhi - 110001 Tel: 378 2059

Representatives Overseas

- UK** Dr. Roohi H. Majid
7, Woodville Road, London,
NW11 9UH. Ph: 4556281
- USA** Dr. K.A. Mallick
810-73rd St. Downers Grove
IL-60516-3818 Ph:(630)9696755
- KSA** Syed Shariq Ali
PO Box 11447, Jeddah-21491

Printer and Publisher Syed Shahabuddin, Behind 29, Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi and Printed at Dawat Offset Printers, 802, Chhatta Sheikh Mangloo, Jama Masjid, Delhi-110006.

Any material may be reproduced without prior permission but with due acknowledgement.

The Views expressed in the articles and statements published in the Journal are those of their authors and do not necessarily represent the view or opinions of the Editor or the Members of the Editorial Board.
- Editor

Muslim India

MONTHLY

JOURNAL OF REFERENCE, RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

VOL. NO. XVIII NO. 205

CONTENTS

JANUARY, 2000

- * Achievements, 45, *Chronology of the Month (16 November - 15 December, 1999), 46,
- *From the Editor's Desk: Future of Urdu in India in the Coming Decade, 2

Babari Masjid	: AIMPLB-BMC, BMMCC & AIBMAC's Statement, 26 Nov., 1999.	15
	: Citizens for Secularism: Citizen's March in Delhi, 6 Dec., 1999.	
	: National Seminar on Babari Masjid: Joint Statement, 7 Dec., 1999.	16
	: Editorial Comments on Babari Masjid Demolition Anniversary.	17
	: Saeed Naqvi on Incongruity in Ayodhya and Shahabuddin's Response.	18
Communal Riots	: Kanhaiah Bhelari's Report on Bhagalpur Massacre.	37
	: Gujarat: First Hindu Rahstra in India.	
	: Intellectuals' Appeal to PM to Prosecute Bajrang Dal.	
Conversion Education	: Sumit Sarkar on Conversion and the Sangh Parivar.	34
	: Shahabuddin on Muslims Need for More Education and Reservation.	26
	: Shahabuddin's Letters on Urdu in Primary Education to CM's of Delhi and Maharashtra.	
	: Achin Vanaik on Saffronisation of History.	27
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to HRD Minister on Modernisation of Madrasa Education and on Moral Education in Schools	28
	: BJP: M.M. Joshi's Views.	
	: Law Commission's Proposed Amendments in AICTE Act and Shahabuddin's Letter to Law Minister, 6 December, 1999.	29
Government	: S.C. on Priority in Admission to Minority Technical Institutions.	
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to PM on A. Shourie's Appointment as Minister.	5
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to AP C.M. on One Muslim Minister in AP.	
	: MHA: Report on TADA Cases/Detenues and Shahabuddins' Reply.	
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to PM on Anand Math Anniversary.	6
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to HM Advani on ISI Operations in India.	
History	: S. Subbanna on Hinduism's Assimilation of Buddhism.	38
	: S.V.Naipaul on Islam's Impact on India and Historian Mushirul Hasan on Naipaul's Islamophobia.	39
Indo-Pak Relations Kashmir Question	: Shahabuddin's Reply to Chandan Mitra on Indo-Pakistan Hostility	43
	: Amanullah Khan on Unification and Independence of J&K.	19
	: Michael Krepon on Imperative of Negotiation and Settlement.	20
	: Amitabh Mattoo on Promising Signals from Kashmir.	21
	: Praful Bidwai on National Sovereignty, Islamic Militancy and Kashmir.	22
	: Suhit Sen on Cleavages within the NDA.	8
National Politics	: Shahabuddin's Letter to Sonia Gandhi on Hinduisation of Congress.	9
	: Vir Sanghvi on Mistakes of Congress.	
	: Amulya Ganguli on BJP's Hidden Agenda.	10
	: Vrinda Gopinath on Saffron Brigade in the Lok Sabha.	11g
	: Harish Khare on Kalyan Singh Episode and Editorial, Times of India.	12
Mass Media	: Arvind N. Das on Media's Softness towards BJP.	40
Minority Rights	: Iqbal A. Ansari on Minorities Rights in the Constitution.	40
Muslim Extremism	: SIMI's Call for Islamic Resolution in India.	33
Muslim Politics	: M.A. Siraj and Atiq Khan on Muslim Voting Pattern.	13
	: BSP Electoral Strategy, 1999.	
	: Sociologist T.K. Oommen on Communalisation of Indian Politics.	
Muslim World	: Shahabuddin on Dialogue with BJP-led Government.	144
	: Gen. Talat Masood on Coup D'etat in Pakistan.	444
	: Indonesia's Gandhian President.	
	: Rape and Domestic Violence in Pakistan.	
Overview	: Muslims in India: Past, Present and Future.	441
Parliament	: Parliamentary Proceedings (21 Oct-29 Oct/29 Nov-15 Dec, 1999).	77
Places of Worship	: Shahabuddin's Letter to Haryana CM on Demolition of Masjid in Hansi.	188
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to Karnataka CM on Threat to Baba Budhan Dargah.	
	: Shahabuddin's letter to Governor of Delhi on A Temple on Wakf Land.	
Reservation	: M. Vijayanunni on Need for Caste Census in 2001.	233
	: Shahabuddin on Muslim Quota for Backward Muslims.	
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to Pioneer on Inclusion of Muslims in SC List.	244
	: Insaf Morcha's Statement on Universal Reservation.	
	: Socialists' Open Letter to MP's and Shahabuddin's Reply to Rabi Ray.	245
RSS	: IOS, New Delhi's Seminar on Political Empowerment, 6-7 Nov., 1999.	
Social Environment	: Ashok Nehru on the BJP and the RSS.	335
	: Superstitious Politicians, Bhoomi Puja Before a Secular Party Rally, Atrocities against Untouchables and Shudra Family and Dowry-related Violence	411
Urdu	: Prof. Umar Memon on Urdu in India: Some Observations.	200
	: Shahabuddin's Correspondence with Lok Sabha Library on Urdu Books.	231
	: A.R. Fathihi on Urdu Education in UP.	232

A PUBLICATION OF MUSLIM INDIA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL TRUST

Website: www.muslimindiajournal.com

E-mail: muslim@del3.vsnl.net.in

FUTURE OF URDU IN INDIA IN THE COMING DECADE

Like any other living language, Urdu is not the exclusive language of a religious group but 50 years after the Partition, Urdu as a Mother Tongue and as a Medium of Primary Instruction or as a Second Language in High School stands almost totally rejected in India by the non-Muslims. Therefore, for all practical purposes it is today overwhelmingly the language of the Muslims. Urdu, at the same time, is not the language of all the Muslim Indians. The coefficient of Urduisation of Muslim population varies from State to State as may be seen below:

State	Urdu-speaking Population (in Millions)	Muslim Population	Urdu Coefficient i.e. % ratio of Urdu and Muslim Population	SUP as % of NUP	Cumulative % of NUP
INDIA	43.41	101.60	42.7	100	
UP	12.49	24.11	51.8	28.8	
Bihar	8.54	12.79	66.8	19.7	48.5
A.P.	5.56	5.92	93.9	12.8	61.3
Maharashtra	5.74	7.63	75.2	13.2	74.5
Karnataka	4.48	5.23	85.7	10.3	84.8
W. Bengal	1.46	16.08	9.1	3.4	88.2
M.P.	1.23	3.28	37.5	2.8	91.0
Tamilnadu	1.04	3.05	34.1	2.4	93.4
Rajasthan	0.95	3.53	26.9	2.2	95.6
Gujarat	0.56	3.61	15.5	1.3	96.9
Delhi	0.51	0.89	57.3	1.2	98.1
Orissa	0.50	0.58	86.2	1.2	99.3
Haryana	0.26	0.76	34.2	0.6	99.9

[Note: States/UT's with less than 100,000 Urdu-speaking population have been left out].

Thus, 5 States UP, Bihar, AP, Maharashtra and Kerala account for 84.8% of the National Urdu Population (NUP); with the coefficient varying between 51.8 (UP) and 93.9 (AP). Nearly 45% of Urdu population is in non-Hindi States.

What is most important is the fact that Urdu unlike other MIL's has no home-base in as such it is a Minority Language in every State/UT.

Urdu's future in India, after 50 years of struggle, is indeed at a critical juncture. **Urdu is lost between its growing popularity as a spoken language and its receding presence as a written language.** It is this dichotomy, call it a contradiction if you like, which neither the government, nor the Urdu experts have been able to resolve and reconcile with its future as a distinct language and not as another form of Hindi. They have both consequently adopted a policy of drift and the 'mediators' – the Urdu-speaking elite, the managers of government agencies, the academicians, the poets, writers and journalists, have like an ostrich, buried their neck in the sand and adopted the Hedonist approach of making hay while the sun shines, organising and participating in Conferences, Symposia, Seminars, Workshops and Mushairas, praising the Government for its support and

back-slapping each other for their contribution.

Such endeavours, specially those by official agencies, however, serve to keep alive the illusion that Urdu is not only alive but making progress in India, the land of its birth.

The fact is that **while Urdu has become an international language and is prospering in foreign countries, in India it is a dying language.** It is one thing to declare Urdu as the Mother Tongue or the Household Language, it is another to know Urdu which implies, inseparably the knowledge of the Urdu script. With every census, the number of persons who can read and write (and not only speak in Urdu) is proportionately growing down, even while the area of literacy and of education is expanding.

Urdu's future in India does not depend on Urdu's progress in other countries or the adoption of more Urdu words of Arabic and Persian origin in the 'Hindi' news-reports in the electronic media or even in print media, the dialogue and songs in Hindi films or dramas or even in Hindi poetry. **It depends solely on the percentage of children from Urdu-speaking population permitted to learn Urdu at the school and to use it as the medium of instruction at the primary level.** Except to some extent in Bihar, Maharashtra and AP, the proportion is on the decrease. Indeed facilities are being restricted with every passing year. Even demand is going down under the triple impact of deliberate banishment and consequent non-availability of facilities, preference to learn Hindi in Hindi States and, regional languages in non-Hindi States. Even minorities educational institutions established by the Urdu-speaking people in Urdu-speaking areas for Urdu-speaking children are not providing adequate teaching facilities for Urdu because of government regulations and the prescribed syllabi.

Some optimists relate Urdu's future in India to teaching of Urdu and the use of Urdu as medium of instruction in Madarsas. While this may be true to some extent of Madarsas in the 'Urdu States', in the Madarsas in the non-Urdu States Urdu remains a tertiary language, ranking along with Arabic as a religious resource. To my mind this does not materially affect the future of Urdu as the % of students attending Madarsas is very small as compared to the total population or the students attending mainstream schools, government or private.

The Urdu elite sends their children to English-medium schools; the emergent classes see education purely as the doorway to gainful employment – public or private – and are, therefore, comfortable with their children learning Hindi or the regional language or both in non-Hindi States.

It is amazing that since Independence, no organised political pressure has been applied to stop the deliberate policy of Sanskritisation let loose by the powers that be in Hindi-speaking States in violation of Constitutional rights,

educational principles and internationally recognised minorities rights. As if Sanskrit was not enough, southern languages were sought to be introduced in the north as Optional Languages, as a quid pro quo for acceptance of Hindi in the Southern States. The idea was to occupy all linguistic space and leave none for Urdu as Mother Tongue or as Second Language. The Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu-Hind has raised the question of Urdu as the second official language in various States, but it has never pressed the question of Urdu as the Medium of Primary Instruction to Urdu-speaking students and as the First Language (as the Mother Tongue) in the Three-Language Formula at the junior and high school levels. What is worse, it did not offer consistent opposition to the de-facto substitution of Urdu, by Sanskrit or some other Language, even as the Second or the Third Language. It may be noted that in non-Hindi States, Urdu or any other non-Hindi linguistic minority requires a Four Languages Formula. But in the case of Urdu, a composite course of Hindi-Urdu can reduce the requirement to THREE: Urdu/Hindi, State Language and English.

Except in Bihar, Urdu, for all practical purposes, is out of school syllabus whether it is UP, MP, Rajasthan, Haryana or Delhi. One recalls Choudhury Charan Singh's brutally frank assertion that one of the greatest achievements of independent India was to make UP unilingual!

It is equally surprising that the Gujral Committee Report which we all acclaim and adopt as our Bible for the Urdu Movement, carefully chose not to make any emphatic recommendation on the use of Urdu as the Medium of Primary Instruction for Urdu-speaking students and as the First Language in the Three Language Formula. Perhaps such non-recognition of Urdu accorded with the political climate and what is more important, the ethos of the new Muslim bourgeoisie which was anxious only to share the development cake and prepared to do so at the cost of cultural heritage. In any case Gujral himself has repeatedly claimed that notwithstanding what Ale Ahmad Suroor and Ali Sardar Jafri Committees may have said, all the recommendations of his Committee stand implemented!

Urdu protagonists are happy with the establishment of Urdu Academies (with annual increase in the budget), with state patronage of Mushairas, with the setting up of more or more Urdu Departments. In Colleges and Universities (whose long-term contribution has been to render the Muslim youth with Ph.D. in Urdu more unemployable, and not to develop Urdu language or literature), with the sweet rhetoric of praise for the language and support to its 'cause'.

What about Urdu literature? Rich as it is in poetry, fiction, literary criticism, history, Islamic studies, Urdu cuts a sorry figure as a vehicle of physical sciences, even of social sciences, not to speak of applied sciences and modern technology. In this sense, perhaps all modern Indian languages lag behind English and other European

language and are falling more and more behind with every passing day. But Urdu had made a glorious start in the 20's in the Osmania University. That great experiment was abandoned in the heat of the Partition. Now Urdu does not even have proper school textbooks of a national standard for all subjects for the high school, the higher secondary and the degree courses.

The idea of establishing Urdu University was initiated to put Urdu back on the road of development. I had proposed the conversion of JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA, in accordance with its original charter and its very *raison d'être*, into an Urdu-medium University under Article 30 for the Urdu-speaking linguistic minority. Many interests combined to defeat the idea. Now the Abul Kalam Azad National Urdu University has been established. So far all it has done is to duplicate distance education in Urdu, something which could have been done, at much lower cost, by the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The Urdu University must affiliate Urdu-medium schools and degree colleges throughout the country, whose instruction can then be standardised and deliberately implement a programme of producing original and translated textbooks for degree and post-graduate level. But again, under economic pressure, the University is likely to concentrate on certificate courses with employment potential, to the utter neglect of its real objective – the development of Urdu as a modern language and of Urdu-Hindi composite courses for AP, Karnataka and Tamilnadu to fit in with the Three-Language Formula.

The strategy of seeking 'Second Official Language Status' for Urdu, granted in Bihar and AP, has also proved to be an exercise in tokenism. In Bihar, Urdu translators and typists were recruited (much less in number than the government propaganda made it out to be) but they are being largely used as Clerks in various district/block offices. What can they do if hardly any petitions in Urdu are received from the public? What are they to translate and what are they to type in reply? And will the officers, under whom they serve, not be inclined to put them otherwise to work?

The simple point is that if the population which reads and writes Urdu (and not merely speaks Urdu) goes down, the Second Official Language strategy is bound to fail.

And why is the Urdu-reading population going down? Primarily because less and less number of school going children are studying Urdu or through Urdu. And why are they not? Primarily because the Urdu-speaking population – largely Muslim – hesitates to make the cause of Urdu a political and, at that, a communal issue, and because, in its heart of hearts, it sees little economic benefit in its children learning Urdu. Neither does it see the enormity of the consequent cultural loss.

For the last 20 years, I have been knocking at every door, raising my voice against the exclusion of Urdu from the primary and secondary schools but with little or no support from the institutional and individual Mujawirs of Urdu in our country.

Prof. Mohd. Hasan is one figure from the Urdu world who saw through the utter hypocrisy of sprinkling water on the leaves while cutting the vines at the roots engaged in by successive national governments.

Today the leaves have begun to turn yellow. Soon they shall drop off the vines. Tomorrow the vine will turn into dry stick. Yet the roots of Urdu are there in the cultural soil of our country. Urdu can sprout again and nourish new vines, provided the Urdu fraternity adopts a Programme of Survival and Regeneration and struggles for its implementation at every level, in combination with other linguistic minorities of the area and people. The programme include:-

- i) Declaration of Urdu as Mother Tongue by all Urdu-speaking families in Census and educational Surveys and determination to teach Urdu to their children.
- ii) Primary instruction in Urdu to all Urdu-speaking children in all Schools without any numerical limits.
- iii) Teaching of Urdu as Mother Tongue/First Language under the Three-Language Formula to all Urdu-speaking children.
- iv) Establishment of Urdu-medium Primary Schools in Urdu-concentration areas, in accordance with national norms at least one Urdu-medium High School, one Higher Secondary School and one Urdu-medium Degree College in every district headquarter in which Urdu-speakers constitute 10% of the district population.
- v) Development of Abul Kalam Azad National Urdu University as the nodal affiliating University for all Urdu-medium high schools, higher secondary schools and degree colleges throughout the country and for development of Urdu as a vehicle for science and technology of modern thought.
- vi) Use of Urdu for specified official and administrative purposes in all Panchayats, Tehsils/Blocks, Municipalities, Districts and States where the Urdu-speakers constitute 10% of the population.
- vii) Due allocation to Urdu out of the central and state budgets for development of languages.
- viii) Due allocation out of central and state advertisement budget to Urdu newspapers and periodicals.

Urdu is neither the Language of Muslim Indians only nor of all Muslim Indians but today Urdu is the Mother Tongue of at least half the Muslim Indians, the repository of Muslim Religious and Cultural Heritage. But it is an Indian language and the language of its Composite Culture.

Nationalism and Secularism, Social Justice and Human Rights, the Constitution and the International Law demand not only that it survives in India but that it is given a rightful place in Education, Administration and Informations.

New Delhi,
1st January, 2000

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

*With Best
Compliments*

from

**KALEEM
KAWAJA**

**THE ASSOCIATION
OF INDIAN
MUSLIMS OF
AMERICA**

**THE ORGANIZATION
FOR UNIVERSAL
COMMUNAL
HARMONY**

**WASHINGTON D.C.
U.S.A.**

Shourie Represents Anti-Minorityism

Shahabuddin's Letter to PM Vajpayee, 25 Nov., 99

As a citizen, I wonder at your political compulsion in elevating Mr. Arun Shourie to the Ministership, as if nomination to the Rajya Sabha was not an adequate reward for the vast contribution he has made to the RSS mission by vilifying the religious minorities, bringing them down in the eyes of the majority community, widening the gulf of mutual distrust and suspicion and, thus, vitiating the social environment in the country.

Mr. Shourie has attributed motives to the Christian missionaries and questioned their faith. He has vilified the Muslim Ulema and mocked at Muslim's faith in the Holy Quran. He has accused the Dalits of 'worshiping false gods'. He has questioned the motive and standing of eminent historians and thus provided tactical support for the Sangh Parivar's objective of saffronisation of history books. He has tried to redefine secularism to suit the philosophy of Hindutva. Mr. Shourie has made an enormous contribution, under the garb of scholarship, to put the religious minorities, as it were, in their place and to tell them where they stand. Mr. Shourie has played to the gallery; one cannot credit him with promoting mutual understanding or contributing to academic discourse.

Mr. Shourie may be considered an intellectual giant by his admirers but as an individual he is persona non grata with the religious minorities and the secular intelligentsia. Such a controversial person is totally unfit to be a Minister.

Yet, you have chosen him - perhaps deliberately. By so doing, your Government has identified itself with his views and approach which rubbishes everything the religious minorities, the dalits and those committed to secularism hold dear and sacred.

The inclusion of Mr. Arun Shourie in the Council of Ministers is yet another evidence of the current of anti-minorityism which permeates through the mind and structure of the BJP-led Government. I wish you had not.

Why Only One Muslim Minister in AP?

Shahabuddin's Letter to C.M. Naidu, 10 Nov., 99

From the reports I have, the Muslim community in A.P. is disappointed at the inclusion of only one Muslim in your Council of Ministers. The Muslims constitute nearly 10% of the population of A.P. and while they may not have wholly voted for the TDP, they should have their due and equitable representation in the government. Apart from the Muslim MLAs of your party, there are many apolitical and professionally competent Muslims in AP who are in a position to extend valuable support to you for the progress of the State under your enlightened leadership. You have a wide field of choice. Indeed, the field would have been wider, had you fielded more Muslim candidates from Muslim concentration Constituencies. I request you to ensure that the Muslims of AP do not nurse a feeling of deprivation and have an opportunity to join hands with you in taking the State forward.

Situation Report on TADA Cases/Detenus

MHA's Letter to Shahabuddin

i.) No. of pending TADA cases	-	4,988
ii) No. of individuals involved	-	14,667
iii) No. of individuals enlarged on bail	-	12,036
iv) No. of individuals under detention	-	718
v) No. of individuals against whom TADA charges have been dropped on the basis of administrative reviews by the States/UTs.	-	23,862

(Your) suggestions that those who were enlarged on bail should be permitted to report to the local police where they reside and that those who have not been chargesheeted after one whole year of detention should be discharged and the trial of those under prosecution should be expedited fall within the jurisdiction of the concerned State Governments/UT Administrations.

Moreover, Ministry of Home Affairs has requested the State Governments/UT Administrations that all pending TADA cases, especially those which are pending investigation where no chargesheet have been filed and also cases where the accused are under detention be reviewed thoroughly. Concerted efforts are being made that the few cases pending investigation are either chargesheeted or TADA charges are dropped depending upon the gravity of the case and evidence available. This Ministry will pursue this matter with the concerned States/UTs.

(Source: Joint Secretary, MHA's Letter No. II/13014/12/99-Legal Cell dated 8 December, 1999 to S. Shahabuddin)

Shahabuddin's Reply, 9 December, 1999

... I appreciate the legal position but may I request that on compassionate grounds my suggestion mentioned in Para 4 of your letter be conveyed to the State Governments/UT Administrations for sympathetic consideration.

On Proposed TADA-like Legislation

Shahabuddin's Letter to Sonia Gandhi, 11 Dec, 99

As you are aware, the TADA was repealed in 1995. Now the Vajpayee Government is proposing to enact a similar law ostensibly to fight terrorism and subversive activities.

The proposal, perhaps in the form of a draft bill, was sent to the Law Commission to elicit its views. It is reported that the Commission has endorsed the idea but suggested amendments to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill 1995, which was dropped by the Narasimha Rao Government.

I request you, as the Leader of the Opposition, to suggest to the Prime Minister that the national political parties be consulted and the advice of the National Commission on Human Rights be sought before finalising the proposed legislation.

Commemoration of 125th Anniversary of Anand Math Improper

Shahabuddin's Letter to PM Vajpayee, 11 Dec., 99

As you are aware, the National Song "Vande Mataram" consists of only the first two stanzas of the song included in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's novel Ananda Math, and that too, as a composition in itself and not in the context of the novel which is rabidly communal in theme and content.

It is, therefore, beyond my understanding how Shri Ananth Kumar, Minister for Culture, has decided to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the publication of the Ananda Math by organising speeches, youth rallies and essay competition throughout the country for a month and a march on the midnight of 31 December, 1999 - 1 January, 2000. The campaign is misconceived and calculated to redefine patriotism in Hindu terms and separate the Muslim youth from the process of national integration.

I request you to reconsider the programme.

ISI Operations in India

Shahabuddin's Letter to HM Advani, 4 Dec., 1999

Please refer to my letter dated 26 October, 1999 regarding the ISI operations in India. May I draw your attention to the report in the Indian Express (26 November, 1999) on circulation of fake notes. A police officer A.K. Mitra, IGP, Meerut Zone, UP has been reported as saying that "ISI agents select Muslim dominated areas as it is easier for them to mingle with the local population". Funnily enough, the report does not quote a single Muslim name to support the thesis of ISI operating through Muslims in Muslim dominated areas.

Why can't the police deal with the fake currency racket without communalising it? Why can't the BSF stop smuggling of fake currency notes from across the border? Why can't the police apprehend the ISI agents and their Muslim/non-Muslim collaborators?

May I request you that in the larger interest of national harmony, you instruct the State authorities not to communalise such issues and deal with them as a challenge to their professional competence?

Harassment of Muslims over Enemy Property

NCM: Annual Report, 1998-99

In recent months, a large number of Muslim occupants of old and dilapidated properties in the walled city in Delhi have complained of "harassment" by a local authority acting under the directions of the Bombay-based office of the Custodian of Enemy Property attached to the Union Commerce Ministry. NCM has checked on the matter with the Bombay Office of CEM and also taken it up both with the Union Government and the Government of Delhi. The Enemy Property Act 1968, passed after the Indo-Pak war of 1965, seems to be wholly outdated...

Recommendation: Recommended that the Enemy Property Act 1968 be repealed forthwith and all cases pending under it, in Delhi and elsewhere, be wound up without taking any further action under its provisions.

Hamdard

Cinkara, a non-alcoholic health tonic full of vitamins and minerals extracted from herbs. Assimilates in the system naturally.

It helps you :

- Overcome fatigue ● Resists infection ● Increases stamina
- Improves mental performance ● Cures anaemia during pregnancy.

So, for you and your family's year round good health and happiness, go for Cinkara.



Two spoonfuls. Twice daily.

GET MORE OUT OF LIFE -WITH CINKARA

Parliamentary Proceedings

(21 October –29 October/29 November-15 December, 1999)

I – Rajya Sabha

Oath

21 Oct : Ahmad Patei (Gujarat)

Obituary

21 Oct : Salay Mohd. Sait, Maqsood Ali Khan.

Felicitations

21 Oct : Dy. Chairperson Najma Heptulla's election as President of IPU.

President's Address

26-28 Oct: Motion of Thanks discussed. Manmohan Singh, Ranganath Misra, K.R. Malkani, K. Nayar, K. Sibal, K.M. Saifullah, Md. Salim participate, P.M. replies. Approved.

Special Mention

27 Oct : On Visit of Pope to India by E. Falerio and 12 others.

: On exclusion of Marxism from school books by G.D. Gupta.

30 Nov : On AMU disturbance by M. Salim.

9 Dec : On appointment of self-confessed rioter in NCERT Selection Committee by E. Faleiro.

13 Dec : On withdrawal of 1991 Meerut Riot cases by UP Government by R.G. Yadav.

: On Campus murder of Jamia Hamdard Student by M.O.K. Azmi.

Government Bills

1 Dec : The Marriage Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1999 passed.

Babari Masjid

6 Dec : Manmohan Singh, Mohd. Salim, O.K. Azmi, Samad Samadani, Fali Nariman and 11 other raise question of expediting criminal case and inquiry relating to demolition.

Private Member's Resolution

10 Dec : On review of the Constitution by Ramlal Agarwal. Discussed.

II – Lok Sabha

21 Oct : 2 take oath in Urdu.

President's Address

25 Oct : President addresses joint session of Parliament. Tabled.

26,28-29 : Motion of Thanks discussed and passed; MOH Oct Farooq, Rashid Alvi, A.M. Naik, participate.

Election

27 Oct : P.M. Sayeed elected as Deputy Speaker.

Report Tabled

27 Oct : Law Commission 160th Report on amendment to AICTU Act, 1987; 165th Report on Free and Compulsory Education of Children; 170th Report on Reform of Electoral Law.

29 Oct : Wadhwa Commission Report on Staines

Killing.

30 Nov : A.R. of Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati.

: A.R. of L.B.S. Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi for 1997-98.

1 Dec : A.R. of UPSC for 1997-98.

: A.R. of ICAR for 1998-99.

7 Dec : A.R. of CSIR for 1996-97 and 1997-98

: 3rd Report on SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 for 1993-95:

: A.R. of Maulana Azad Ed. Foundation for 1998-99.

: A.R. of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan for 1997-98.

Matters under Rule 377

26 Oct : S. Murmi on inclusion of Santhali in 8th Schedule.

: Hasan Khan on allround development of Kargil and Leh.

29 Oct : G.M. Banatwalla on proscription of Khushwant Singh's novel "The Company of Women"

9 Dec : Reform of Christian Personal Law by B. D'Souza.

10 Dec : Construction of Airport in Ajmer by R.S. Rawat.

Babari Masjid Demolition Case

7 Dec : Mulayam Singh Yadav, P.R. Das, S. Chatterjee, Inderjit Gupta, Raghuvansh Pd. Singh, Uma Bharati, Rasheed Alvi, G.M. Banatwalla make submissions. PM replies.

10 Dec : P.R. Dasmunshi, R. Pinto, M. Singh, M.S. Yadav, S. Chatterjee, make submissions on statement of UP CM in Ayodhya.

Government Bills Passed

10 Dec : The Indian Majority (Amendment) Bill, 1999 discussed and passed. Banatwalla participates.

Private Bills

3 Dec : Introduced by G.M. Banatwalla: The Reservation Bill, 1999 and The TADA (Withdrawal of Legal Proceedings) Bill, 1999.

Democracy in Pakistan

What the Western world may be looking for is the label of democracy. Inshallah, I will put this label of democracy some time in the near future.

- Pakistan's CE, Gen. Pervez Musharraf

Suhit Sen on Cleavages within the NDA

The National Democratic Alliance has done well. Now that it has a majority of about 30 seats in Parliament devotees of stability will wish them a long stint in government... Many will, nevertheless, recall that the previous BJP-led alliance had a majority, with its allies, of about 20.

Factoring in the four Bihar constituencies where elections are pending, the stability quotient is up by about 15 points. This is bolstered, public opinion now says, by the absence of the likes of Jayalalitha and Subramanian Swami in the coalition. So far so good. But badmouthing this pair, a justifiable pastime, is not exactly a great feat of political analysis. It does not follow from their delinquencies that other politicians in the soon to be ruling alliance or elsewhere are paragons of virtue. Jayalalitha ditched the government not because of some genetic volatility - she did so because vital interests were threatened.

And the BJP let her slip out of the alliance only after George Fernandes had demonstrated that his unmatched skills at grovelling were not enough to convince the grande dame that she was being given enough protection.

So much for history. This time around the BJP's alliance has all of 24 constituents. Most of them are on a personal level less objectionable than Jayalalitha. But they are subject to the compulsions of politics - and when vital interests are threatened they may well emulate (her). Among likely candidates are former cronies like Vaiko and, indubitably, the five-man brigade led by Om Prakash Chautala.

Apart from these loose cannons, there is likely to be a political contest with the Janata Dal (United)... But the JD-U does not have too many options given the current state of the third front. The Alliance is relatively safer this time.

The foregoing is not a prophecy of doom... The coalition will in all probability survive and given minor miracles, could well go the distance. The main problem for the BJP's coalition managers will not be the acquisitiveness or other delinquencies of alliance partners. **The principal problem is the party itself. Issuing sanitised manifestos is relatively easy. But reining in the Sangh Parivar is another matter altogether.**

The Sangh Parivar is unlikely to take a charitable line on Vajpayee's coalition compulsions. Majoritarian fascism is intrinsically linked to the Sangh Parivar's identity - if it gives up the Ram mandir issue and turn itself into a harmless constitutionalist organisation it will cease to exist. And the Sangh Parivar is the backbone of the BJP. Both Advani and Vajpayee know that - the only difference is that Advani, with the likes of Govindacharya and Murli Manohar, refuse to be coy about their politics, while Vajpayee beset with the responsibility of running a coalition, attempts to make the correct moderate noises. But despite Vajpayee's much hyped stature as a statesman, he is also an RSS man of 50 years' vintage.

The ideology of Hindutva lies at the heart of the BJP's agenda, and, indeed, political existence. It is not up to Vajpayee to reinvent the party assuming that he has the will and the desire... In the Hindi heartland and the bastions of Hindu fundamentalism in western India particularly, but also elsewhere in the country, the BJP exists because it espouses militant Hindutva to create a Hindu political community. This is also true of "progressive" Bengal into which the BJP has made inroads, by leave of the self-proclaimed Marxists...

Once the Sangh Parivar starts playing up its agenda through speech and action, some of the BJP allies will be forced to review their support to or partnership in the alliance. The TDP, which has built a base in AP on a modernist development-centric platform, will probably be unwilling to be seen abetting the medieval politics of the Parivar. Naidu has clearly retained the confidence of the Muslims - but that is principally because he has supped with the devil with a long spoon. This confidence, as Naidu has acknowledged, cannot be taken for granted.

The DMK too has joined the alliance under compulsion. There is no "natural" affinity between them and the BJP. If the BJP fails to rein in its own lunatic fringe as well as the Sangh Parivar, the DMK's support will be severely tested. The same applies to Mamata Banerjee. Her relationship with the BJP, as she makes abundantly apparent, is based on her allegiance to Vajpayee. If she wants to make a serious bid for power in West Bengal she cannot be seen to condone the excesses of the BJP... For the moment, however, the NDA seems safe, especially with the Congress's debacle.

But for the moment the liberal and progressive space that India's flawed democracy has successfully defended, despite many vicissitudes, is threatened...

(Source: The Statesman, 11 October, 1999)

The Times of India Poll On Indians of the Century, 1901-2000

Fields	Total	Muslims
<i>Creators of Wealth</i>	25	1
<i>Great Minds and Spiritual Lights</i>	25	3
<i>Leaders and Politicians</i>	25	2
<i>Artists and Entertainers</i>	27	5
		Azim Hasham Premji
		A.P.J. Abdul Kalam
		Salman Rushdie
		Iqbal
		Sheikh Abdullah
		M.A. Jinnah
		M.F. Husain
		A.R. Rahman
		Zakir Husain
		Mohammed Rafi
		Dilip Kumar

Conspicuous Omissions:

Abul Kalam Azad, Syed Ahmad Khan, Zakir Husain, Mohd. Azharuddin.

Editor

On Hinduisation of Congress Shahabuddin's Letter to Sonia Gandhi, 25 November, 1999

The Statesman has given front-page coverage (24 November, 1999) to Shri V.N. Gadgil's letter to you suggesting a radical re-orientation of the Congress ideology and policies. This is not the first time he has tried to move the Congress into friendly proximity or peaceful co-existence with the ideology of Hindutva or Cultural Nationalism, while the Congress has always stood firmly for Secularism and Composite Culture.

Whatever be his purpose and motive, one may well question his arguments. He attributes poor performance by the Congress to rejection of its policy and ideology by 70% of the electorate. Congress may have received 30% of the votes in 1999 but the BJP has received only 25%. Secondly, Congress, even in its hey day, did not receive more than 50% of the votes cast. Thirdly, Mr. Gadgil ignores that the BJP itself had to put on a secular mask and tactically jettison its pet projects related to Hindutva to attract several parties, which believe in secularism, but were opportunistic ally inclined to share power. This also got the BJP some votes from the fencesitters.

At its core, the BJP still remains a Brahmin or a high caste party. It has tried to expand its social base but, with its Brahminical philosophy, it is finding it hard to resolve its internal contradictions, caused by the rise of the OBC's, SC's and ST's or its ranks.

For a multi-religious country like ours, secularism is the **only** option. For a multi-cultural country like ours, Multi-culturalism or a composite national culture is the only option. Secularism and Multi-culturalism have today been adopted by the whole world as they fit in with the universal recognition of human rights of individuals and of social groups.

I am not a member of your party but I deem it my national duty to request you that you must reject Mr. Gadgil's plea with the contempt it deserves and keep the Congress resolutely on the right track. In my view the Congress' failure has not been due to its ideology and policy which have stood the test of time but to its occasional failure to apply them forthrightly due to personal or local compulsions.

One R.S. Ticket for Muslim from Delhi Shahabuddin's Letter to Sonia Gandhi, 24 Nov., 99

As you are aware, the Congress did not give a ticket to any Muslim in the Lok Sabha Election, 1999 from Delhi, although at least in one Constituency Muslims constituted more than 33% of the electorates.

Now the Rajya Sabha elections are due. I request you that at least one ticket should be given to an eminent Muslim from Delhi.

Vir Sanghvi On Mistakes of the Congress

Sonia Gandhi has called for a period of introspection to work out why the Congress did so badly in the elections... Admittedly, there is nothing in the party's behaviour to suggest that it has changed the habits of a lifetime – and some serious soul-searching will take place... Congressmen must begin by asking a basic question: did the BJP's ideology defeat the Congress' secular world-view?

No matter how much the BJP exults in its victory, it would be hard to argue that the verdict at this election had anything to do with the ideology on which the Sangh Parivar is predicated. Hindutva, for example, was almost a dirty word during this campaign. Instead, the BJP borrowed the Congress' clothes. It fought on an entirely secular platform ... and – in imitation of the Congress tradition – spent most of its time projecting a single leader.

The Congress now needs to ask itself how it was that the BJP got away with being a better Congress than the Congress itself. Until it comes to terms with this paradox, there is little hope of the party recovering from the humiliation of this defeat.

Part of the answer has more to do with the BJP than it does with the Congress. The party proved more successful in hiding the Hindutva loonies than anyone had dared hope a year ago (when there was talk of surreptitiously building a temple at Ayodhya); it made the right alliances and in A.B. Vajpayee, it has the one widely respected veteran statesman left in Indian politics.

But the Congress also made mistakes that could easily have been avoided... Vajpayee went into the election with the halo of a statesman who had been gratuitously humiliated by a power-hungry party... The first manifestation of this new approach came with the decision to oppose the imposition of President's rule in Bihar...

From that point on, it was downhill. The Congress opposed everything and sent out signals that it was only a matter of time before the Vajpayee government fell; "a government that lives on daily wages" was the preferred formulation because it suggested that the end was near... The same (people who) had propped up Rabri and Laloo needed Jayalalitha's support... The Vajpayee government fell under the weight of its own contradictions. But as this election demonstrates... The electorate has concluded that greedy Congressmen conspired to bring down a Prime Minister who was doing his best.

And yet, there are compensations for the Congress in the election results. Its share of the popular vote has actually gone up (though it is hard to see how the party could have done worse than it did under Sitaram Kesri) and – more significantly – it has become a force to reckon

(Contd. on Page 25)

Amulya Ganguli on BJP's Hidden Agenda

... Before the BJP embarked on its policy of embracing whoever came in the way if he could promise a few seats, there was at least no doubt about its ideology. Now there is no such certainty. True, it is believed that the party has not really deviated from its prescribed course of ushering in a Hindu Rashtra and that its present posture is only a tactical retreat. Even then, at least for the present, one has to accept the BJP's assertion that it abides only by the agenda of the National Democratic Alliance and has put its own on the back burner.

The danger is that the absence of an agenda — or the denial of one — can set the country on an uncertain course. This is a new and highly disturbing development for a democracy like India's which is still evolving. The central point of the democratic experiment is that the political arena is a battlefield for competing ideologies...

... An agenda can also be suddenly sprung on an unsuspecting nation...

... The step resembles the first BJP government's nuclear tests were carried out although the party's election manifesto only said that the nuclear option would be reviewed — something which earlier governments had also indicated when they said that the option would be kept open.

But, suddenly, the people of India were presented with a fait accompli in May 1998 merely to boost the BJP's image... A "nuclear India" was always the Sangh Parivar's cherished dream — its hidden agenda — and the moment the saffron camp got the chance it conducted the Pokhran II blasts, reflecting the typical militarism of a fascist mindset, without caring for either national or international opinion or their unfavourable security implications like negating India's huge conventional military advantage over Pakistan.

One of the dangers about the ambiguity of a party's agenda is that it can foster crass opportunism... Once it decided to follow the covert path of saffronising textbooks and appointing RSS pracharaks as educationists instead of the overt path of building a temple, it gave an excellent opportunity to time-servers like Hegde, Kumaramangalam, Paswan, and other stalwarts to jump on to the saffron bandwagon, arguing that the BJP has changed or, at least, is no longer as threatening to a multicultural society as before.

What also emerges from their behaviour is the possibility that they personally never had any agenda at all but that of getting a ministership... Indeed, the alacrity with which "socialists" like George Fernandes — and that, too, with an international tag! — have embraced fascism underlines their bankruptcy. Fernandes is actually on

record for saying that he had stopped thinking from the time he switched his allegiance overnight from Morarji Desai to his opponents in 1979.

It is not that an agenda is sacrosanct... But there is nothing hidden about them. Even the half-hearted nature of a change can be explained ... but it is still open to public view.

There may also be a tactical change as in the case of the CPI-M participating in India's parliamentary democracy although it remains formally committed to a dictatorship of the proletariat. But no one is unduly worried because, first, the ideology has collapsed worldwide and, secondly, the CPI-M's fraternal outfits are not seen striving for that ideal either in word or deed...

But ... the dictatorship of the Hindus is very much a part of the Sangh Parivar's agenda, and the BJP as the Parivar's political arm cannot deny that it is not its own as well. The rewriting of the school textbooks is only the first step in its project of injecting the communal virus in impressionable minds. Who can say that with the help of its naive and greedy allies, it will not use a fixed term of the Lok Sabha to push through its agenda with greater vigour although it never featured in its manifesto?

... There is nothing wrong with a party openly advocating a radical revision of the statute book. But it is the surreptitious implementation of its programme which is unacceptable.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 15 November, 1999)

Shekhar Iyer

On BJP's Omnipresence in Government

... The BJP, which claimed to have made a big "sacrifice" by agreeing to give major ministries to them, has ... "planted" its Ministers of State as if to keep a watch on senior ministers.

The Railways portfolio, which went to Ms Banerjee, has now two Ministers of State — Digvijay Singh (Janata Dal-U) and Bangaru Laxman (BJP)...

Right from the beginning, Ram Vilas Paswan (JD-U), who got Communications, had to work with Lajpat Sikdar of the BJP, who was made his deputy. Even Defence Minister George Fernandes, who enjoys the confidence of the BJP top brass, had two Ministers of State belonging to the BJP — Harin Pathak and Bachi Singh Rawat — until yesterday's changes. Civil Aviation Minister Sharad Yadav of the JD-U has Chamanlal Gupta of the BJP as the Minister of State.

Nitish Kumar of the JD(U), who was shifted to agriculture, has Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav as Minister of State.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 24 November, 1999)

Vrinda Gopinath

On the Saffron Brigade in the Lok Sabha

The BJP may have shelved its temple-building plans for the moment because of the elusive magic figures in Parliament, but this cumbersome fact has in no way crushed the exuberance of the colourful band of sadhus, sants and sanyasins who have romped into the Lok Sabha on the mandir issue. Since 1991, almost every election has seen the return of the faithful, though their influence has waned considerably over the years. The battle-cry of 'Jai Shri Ram' which resounded in the halls of Parliament in the initial heady years was gradually muted and has finally fallen silent, now that the BJP has cast aside its Hindutva agenda for the more acceptable common minimum programme.

But this motley crew of spiritual messengers' have lingered on. Their numbers have not gone beyond a frugal half-a-dozen, but their fortunes have been marked by some stunning wins and losses.

There are two distinctive categories of the Ram Brigade — the saffron-robed, vermilion-smeared sadhus and sadhvis like Ram Vilas Vedanti, Mahant Avidyanath, Uma Bharati and the like, and committed warriors of Ram such as Bajrang Dal chief Vinay Katiyar, former SSP of Faizabad D.B. Rai, who was rewarded with a ticket in 1996 and 1998 for exemplary service at the height of the Ramjanambhoomi movement and S.C. Dixit yet another high-ranking police officer who joined the VHP after his retirement in the mid-eighties. They were all given a BJP ticket to contest the elections.

Charmed by their own conceit, these self-proclaimed (sadhus and sadhvis) carved a niche for themselves out of their devotion and unflinching dedication to build a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya. But soon, political ambitions and more importantly, the deadly spectre of casteism made an appearance, putting their (spirituality) on the back burner. The increasing pulls and pressures of OBC aspirations in a largely upper-caste party like the BJP has almost fissured the movement...

The Ram movement lost one of its most vocal and dedicated voices with the incapacitation of senior BJP leader Vijayeraje Scindia, the erstwhile Maharani of Gwalior. One of the prime movers of the temple cause, Scindia inspired thousands of Ram bhakts with her stirring speeches and discourses. She went on to become the vice-president of the Ram Janambhoomi Nyas, the core organisation for the movement. But before she could claim the rewards that would have come her way, Scindia fell seriously ill. She is still fighting her terminal illness.

That all the swamis rode in on the crest of the Ram Mandir movement is evident from the fact that almost all

of them entered Parliament after 1989. The only veteran among them is Mahant Avidyanath, who was elected member of the UP Legislative Assembly as early as 1962 and returned once again in 1970. But the Mahant had to flounder in anonymity for almost two decades after (a) spectacular beginning and was salvaged from near-extinction by the temple movement to be elected in 1989. As 'spiritual head' of the Shri Gorakhnath Mandir, Avidyanath ran a fiefdom in Gorakhpur. He was an unlikely sight for a swami. His devotees in the ashram carried guns and lathis instead of garlands and lamps.

...The Mahant ... finally retired from public life two years ago because of ill-health and appointed his trusted chela and nephew, Yogi Adityanath, who won both the subsequent elections (1998 and 1999)...

So far, the swamis have displayed uncanny resilience and staying power, but as long as they continue to sit on the back benches, the message they send out is clear: their time is not yet come.

(Source: The Indian Express, 23 October, 1999)

BJP: Sikander Bakht's Views

I don't believe in quotas. Once in the Rajya Sabha, a colleague Satish Aggarwal pointed out that his party had made a Muslim as the group leader. I got up to protest that he had pained me greatly. If I don't deserve to be there on the basis of my own capability but merely because I am a Muslim, I don't deserve to be there at all. Politics is flourishing on the divisions in society. If you are going to take on the basis of communities, then, yes, maybe some Muslim should be there. They have taken two as ministers of state...

Can you say I was a token Muslim? If I was a token Muslim then I should be ashamed of myself. My politics has not been popular with my own community since the days of the freedom struggle when I supported Maulana Azad. In the dispute over the RSS issue in the erstwhile Janata, my point was that the yardstick for secularism must be the same for Hindus and Muslims.

The BJP for Muslims goes about begging for Muslims to join them. Why are the Muslims not doing it?

... Simply because a majority of Muslims think it is a communal party therefore nobody should go near the BJP? ...

(Source: The Indian Express, 5 December, 1999)

Harish Khare on Kalyan Singh Episode

... The Kalyan Singh episode has ramifications way beyond the BJP... This unifying development has unwittingly brought to the fore the kinds of balances that need to be maintained if we have to have a degree of political coherence in our governance at the Centre. It is all very well for the self-serving National Democratic Alliance partners to keep talking about the age of coalition, but the fundamental, abiding and unchangeable requirement of coherence at the Centre cannot be achieved without an effective national political party. The Kalyan Singh affair carries with it a promise that the BJP leadership is beginning to appreciate the requirements of coherence in a continental polity like ours.

... It is simply unnatural for a Chief Minister to think of himself or herself on a par with the Prime Minister; such an equation would be unnatural, and, if conceded, disastrous...

This Kalyan Singh business ... has to be seen in the larger context of the absolute imperative of having a working party system, based on a set of well-structured and wisely-led national political parties, if India is to survive and prosper as a nation-state. Political parties - reasonably united, reasonably ideologically-oriented, reasonably disciplined - are at the core of civilised competition within the democratic framework; viable political parties provide the organisational format for expression of conflicting visions, ideas and ideologies.

It necessarily follows that each coherent party has to have a hierarchy of decision-making which cannot countenance, beyond a point, individualistic views and personal whims.

Admittedly in recent years political parties, as organised expressions of ideologies and programmes, have suffered a palpable erosion, both in terms of effectiveness and popular support. But it is also possible to argue that the crisis of governability that has overtaken the Indian polity in the last decade or so can be easily traced to the decline of political parties, especially of the pan-Indian variety. Unless that party system is nursed back to a reasonably good health, the much sought and much touted political stability will continue to elude us.

The reason is obvious. The political parties and its mascots - the politicians - have fallen prey to the concerted attack on their acceptability and legitimacy from the vendors of the market economy; if the Indian state had to be dislodged from the commanding heights of the economy, the Indian politician and his political party had to be discredited...

... At least two generations of political activists, ideologues, commentators, pamphleteers and other propagandists have subscribed to the view that it was possible to govern India from New Delhi without the Centre making any demands for discipline, obedience, and

deference from the state leaders.

It was deemed to be politically correct to talk and promote "creative federalism", without the regional leaders, voices and interests having to acknowledge and without having to defer to the pan-Indian concerns and compulsions. The Kalyan Singh episode should per force prompt a rethinking on our current infatuation with the regional leaders and parties, and on the larger assertion that New Delhi can be governed only from the states.

... No Prime Minister can lead - and more importantly can be perceived at home and abroad to be leading - an effective national government if he is not palpably seen as commanding the support and allegiance of a "national" constituency. Above all, though a Prime Minister still has to act wisely and thoughtfully, he must necessarily be seen to be able to demand unstinted allegiance from within his own party.

(Source: The Hindu, 1 December, 1999)

Kalyan's Last Stand Editorial, The Times of India, 27 Nov., 99

... What sets the rebel apart from the malcontent is leadership quality. Indira Gandhi had it as did V.P. Singh. The former is the only rebel Prime Minister this country has known: she revolted; broke the Congress and walked away, not with a faction, but the parent party. V.P. Singh's success wasn't quite as spectacular, but he nevertheless brought down a government and changed the course of history. Now, we have Kalyan Singh threatening to go down the same path... Ayodhya ... earned for him a fan following which became a crucial factor in every political party's electoral calculations... As if by sleight of hand, he produced a majority in the assembly after the Mayawati government's exit... (He) engineered for the BJP the electorally unbeatable upper caste-OBC combination. The big question is: Does Kalyan Singh have it in him to strike out on his own? More importantly, will the Kalyan fan club go along? Where Kalyan Singh differs from Indira Gandhi and V.P. Singh is in the target he has chosen... Kalyan Singh ... has taken on Prime Minister Vajpayee, easily the most popular political figure of current times. Vajpayee's phenomenal personal popularity rating aside, he enjoys the confidence of the two dozen allies who together make up the National Democratic Alliance. Indeed, he is the only reason for them to hang together. Within the larger Sangh Parivar, too, Vajpayee has firmly established himself, having subdued whatever opposition there was to him last year... (Kalyan Singh) has not only chosen to swim against the current, he has chosen a theme that has lost currency. Nor is Kalyan Singh's Ayodhya obsession likely to find favour with Mulayam Singh Yadav, with whom he might otherwise have formed a formidable OBC alliance... For all that, the fate that awaits him seems that of the lonely plodder.

M.A. Siraj and Atiq Khan On Muslim Voting Pattern

Muslims voting against the BJP is no surprise. The effectiveness of their participation in the decimate-the-saffron-surge in Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and to some extent Maharashtra, without bringing passions into the campaign, yielded handsome dividends...

In a rare show of maturity and unity of purpose for the first time in the decade, they poured out their vengeance in a cold, calculated manner and voted tactically to defeat the BJP candidates. That is the picture emerging according to the voting patterns in some of the larger states. They did not allow their votes to be split due to multiple secular choices... In a ... subtle exercise, the Khadimane Mulko Millat (KMM) in Karnataka mobilised support for the potent challengers against the BJP... According to KMM secretary Masood Abdul Khader in Bangalore, 125 of the 197 candidates for the Karnataka assembly and 17 of the 28 Lok Sabha candidates from secular parties, mostly from Congress(I), identified by the outfit scored victories...

... Kalyan Singh himself acknowledged that the Muslims' pattern of voting had contributed to the BJP's reverses... "The minority community supported only those candidates whom it considered could defeat the BJP. Muslims did not vote en block for any party as such. Their strategy differed from constituency to constituency."

It was this strategic 'shift' in the voting that had not only ensured that BJP's defeat in several Muslim-dominated constituencies, but also made it possible for the SP, the BSP and the Congress to post notable victories... Significantly, the exercise was backed by elaborate research and the community ensured that the winnable candidate, in the first instance, enjoyed solid support from a sizeable section of the Hindus...

... (It is) clear that the Muslims have emerged out of the stupor and are putting their resources to best use. They neither want to be intimidated into voting for the communal forces nor are they in the mood to allow those

BSP: Electoral Strategy, 1999

Indeed, the firebrand leader of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati ... has proved the prophets of doom wrong... What was the secret of (her) success?

Former BSP minister and Mayawati loyalist R.K. Choudhary explains: Kanshi Ram and Mayawati have diligently followed the slogan - each one's share according to his strength. Thus, they gave 17 per cent tickets to Muslims, 38 per cent to backwards, 20 per cent to Dalits, and 10 per cent to upper castes. They also developed leadership across the state in the castes neglected by other political parties such as Pal, Shakya, Baghel, Maurya, Pushkar, and Saini among the backwards, and Sankhwar, Pasi, Dhobi, Valmiki and Khatiks among Dalits. This paid dividends.

Then, having decided to fight the Lok Sabha election alone, the BSP leadership took three major steps:

- Early selection of candidates...
- Setting up a poll management system by dividing Vidhan Sabha segments into sectors of 20 polling booths...
- Identifying winning seats, which included those 16 in which the BSP had ended second in 1998.

The result was spectacular. The party won 14 seats and finished second in another 14. Of the 16 it concentrated on, it won seven... The basic strategy was to evolve a constituency-specific "winning caste combination". This explains the party's fielding a Brahmin in Jalesar and a Thakur in Sultanpur...

... Away from the media glare, she campaigned in all 85 constituencies by road. The party did not hire filmstars or resort to any gimmicks. In the end, she convinced her flock that she could best protect their interests...

(Source: The Times of India)

who encouraged the communalists through their indifference. 'Judge the candidates and the parties by their word and deeds' seems to be the winning mantra.

(Source: The Meantime, 21 October, 1999)

Eminent Sociologist T.K. Oommen On Communalisation of Indian Politics

The fact that communal/caste parties such as Shiv Sena and BSP and the predominantly OBC parties such as PMK, Samajwadi and RJD have emerged as visible entities in the all-India political arena unfolds an important lesson for the hitherto politically divided religious minorities. Although Muslims and Christians (unlike the Sikhs) are thinly dispersed all over India they do have the numerical strength to constitute independent or coalitional enclaves in some pockets in India. **It is expedient that in such enclaves they become active political actors and share power.** The likely criticism to this suggestion is that this will further communalise policies in India.

My responses to this criticism are the following. First, Indian politics is already communalised to the advantage of the majority community. To organise the religious minorities for political rights is party to reduce the communal hegemony of the majority community. Second, political action by minority communities are intended to bring about social justice and equity. Third, this process will enhance the process of democratic dispersal of power to marginalised groups. Finally, bargaining is no sin in a democratic polity and only those who have political clout will get justice.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 16 November, 1999)

Dialogue with BJP-led Government, Yes: Dialogue with Sangh Parivar, No Shahabuddin's Letter to The Nation and the World, 23 November, 1999

With reference to your editorial on General Election, 1999, permit me to make a few comments with reference to the role of the Muslim community during and after the Election, particularly in UP.

It is not correct to say that the Muslims were 'as loyal to Mulayam Singh Yadav as in the past'. But it is a tribute to their political maturity that they did not discard him altogether. Indeed they supported his party wherever it was in the strongest position to defeat the BJP, exactly as they supported the BSP and the Congress in other places. It is this tactical voting which made the biggest contribution to the loss of nearly 25 seats by the BJP. There were no doubt other factors but division of Muslim vote in the some constituency between three aspirants was not one of them.

A beginning was made to formulate an Agenda and make rational and practical suggestion to all the secular parties and, in fact, some ideas were adopted – not in the measure expected. But the ice has been broken.

I do not agree that the Muslim Indians are called upon to 'choose between the two major national parties'. For one thing, neither the INC nor the BJP is a truly national party in terms of social and geographical outreach. Secondly, the next electoral choice may be years away. Thirdly, there are other regional parties in the fray and the spectrum varies from state to state. In some states it likely to remain what it is, INC vs BJP, and the Muslims may have to choose one over the other. In that event, even though the INC was not been as responsive and generous as it could have been, the Muslims have backed the INC. And rightly, because as long as the BJP adheres to the philosophy of Hindutva and Cultural Nationalism, so long as it remains the political front of the RSS whose ideology and long-term mission are a negation of our basic concepts, the BJP and those who seek their fortune opportunistically in alliance with it, shall remain an anathema to the Muslims as to the other citizens committed to secularism and democracy. Wherever there is a choice, the Muslim Indians should vote en masse, at the constituency level, for the strongest secular candidate.

You should not be taken in by the tactical withdrawal of some openly pernicious parts of its real agenda for the sake of gaining electoral support and constituting the electoral alliance. Having gained power, the RSS and the BJP shall continue to work for the realisation of their real agenda. Even some BJP leaders have gone on record to say that they have not changed their ideology nor dropped their agenda and that when they are in a position to form a government on their own, they would implement them. Muslim Indians are not in a state of panic or nurse any

senses of defeatism. But they have not and will not give up their quest for equality and justice under the Constitution.

Having said the above, the Muslim Indians, individually and collectively, have to deal with the government irrespective of its ideological label. So I support the idea of a dialogue on the problems facing the community, on question of policy as well as specific issues in the light of the NDA's agenda, the Constitution and the official policy pronouncements, with the Government of the day, but **not with the BJP, as a political party**. The Government, once established democratically is our Government as much as any one else's. We should speak to it and it should listen to us. But there is no question of paying homage to its ideology – as a dialogue with the BJP would imply.

The problem, however, is to form a representative group to interact with the Government on behalf of the Muslims. Perhaps the five leading Muslim organisations may be persuaded to come together for this purpose.

Muslims and General Election, 1999 Editorial, The News from India

... The real fight was witnessed in the populous state of Uttar Pradesh with the most 85 parliamentary seats. It was here, where Babari Mosque was razed down by the Hindu hoodlums grouped under Sangh Parivar and led by the BJP, that the Muslim electorate forced their arch enemy, the BJP, to retreat. This time, Muslim voters displayed the height of political maturity. They did not make a 'Mulla' out of Mulayam Singh Yadav or a 'Bahenji' of Ms. Mayawati or were awe-struck by Sonia Gandhi. Rather, their choice of the SP, BSP and the Congress in the state was political out and out – tactical that carried the single most motive of defeating the BJP.

It was this that enabled the three to create history of sort in the state. BJP was cut down to size from 58 seats in 1998 poll to just 29, while SP increased its tally from 20 to 26 and the BSP rose to an incredible 14 from just 4. Congress got 10 seats (against) 0 in the last.

Shahabuddin's Response, 18 November, 99

In your editorial in the latest issue, you have advised UP Muslims to stand behind 'a party of their own'. I would like to sound a note of caution. It will mean a Muslim party to many of your readers.

What Muslims need is not a Muslim party but a non communal Muslim-driven party, committed to secularism, democracy and social justice. Only such a party can bargain with other like-minded parties to form viable and winning social combinations. A Muslim party, simply, will not do.

On 7th Anniversary of the Demolition AIMPLB-BMC, BMMCC & AIBMAC's Statement, 26 November, 1999

"To mark the 7th Anniversary of the Demolition of the Demolition on 6 December, 1999, the Babari Masjid Movement, represented by All India Muslim Personal Law Board - Babari Masjid Committee, Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee and All India Babari Masjid Action Committee have decided to organise a National Seminar in New Delhi.

The Seminar will serve to inform the people of the VHP's unlawful plans in Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi and suggest ways and means to expedite the hearing of the title suit pending before the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court, the inquiry in the circumstances of the Demolition by the Liberhan Commission and the prosecution of the criminal case by the Special Court of those charge-sheeted by the CBI.

Eminent Jurists, political leaders and academicians are expected to participate in the Seminar. The Committees request the secular parties to organise befitting programmes on 6 December, 1999 to expose and foil the game plan of the Sangh Parivar and to raise the Ayodhya/Mathura/Varanasi situated in the Parliament during the Winter Session and press the Central Govt. to take all possible steps to curb the bellicose tendencies of the Sangh Parivar and to protect the status quo on the disputed site in Ayodhya and in the Masjids in Varanasi and Mathura.

The Committees have decided to give a free hand to the State and district units to observe peacefully the Anniversary of the Demolition in any manner they deem fit and extend full cooperation to any secular party or NGO in organising a programme to mark the occasion. They may also arrange their own programme, if they so wish, such as local bandh, post-Namaz Doa, hall meeting etc. But in order to avoid confrontation, they should not take out a procession or stage a demonstration or a rally."

Balraj Madhok

On Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi

The question of a Ram temple at Ayodhya was solved when the structure built by Babar after destroying the Shri Ram temple was removed and a makeshift temple came up on the original site. Who renovates it or reconstructs it is not a major issue now. It will become an issue if any attempt is made to remove the temple from its original site once again. But the issues pertaining to the temple of nativity of Shri Krishna at Mathura and Shri Vishwanath at Kashi are very much alive. Any nationalist government worth its name will have to tackle this issue sooner or later. Opposition to their restoration to Hindus and their reconstruction is basically communal and against the spirit of secularism. It is time the political elite, particularly the leftist intellectuals and writers, as also nationalist Muslims rethink about ... the Hindutva agenda.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 3 December, 1999)

Citizens for Secularism

Citizen's March in Delhi on 6 Dec., 1999

Once again it is the sixth of December. Seven years ago on this day, the forces of the Sangh Combine demolished the Babari Masjid. With that act they dealt a grievous blow to the foundation of our secular, democratic, republic and inaugurated their programme to transform India into a fascist, communal "Hindu" Rashtra. In every sphere today we see the successful unfolding of that plan. Today the close ally of these communal forces, the BJP, holds power in Parliament. Despite all the constraints of coalition rule the BJP has, over the last couple of years, taken our country steadily forward on the path prepared by that terrible, blood-soaked act seven years ago...

Not a single one of the guilty in all these cases has been punished, nor the victims given compensation. The judicial investigation into the demolition of the Babari Masjid remains at a standstill. Indeed, the most prominent among those who proudly owned responsibility for that deed is now the Home Minister of our country. And the manner in which the BJP is filling the judiciary with its candidates bodes ill for the future.

We can no longer depend on mainstream political parties to save democracy. We believe that this overwhelming threat to our very existence as a democratic and plural society can be met only by an independent citizen initiative. Let us launch a struggle against these reactionary and anti-democratic forces. Let us pledge to fight together, unrelentingly, against these forces and to rebuild a secular and democratic India.

We demand

- A speedy resolution of the investigation into the demolition of the Babari Masjid, and swift and exemplary punishment to the guilty.
- Arrest of L.K. Advani and all others guilty of any role in the demolition.
- (Settlement) through constitutional and legal means.
- Strong and immediate measures against those guilty of attacks on minorities.

Citizens for Secularism

All India Federation of Trade Unions
All India People's Resistance Forum
Citizen's Committee for Secular Action
Citizens for Democracy
CBCI

Forum for Democracy and Community Amity
Indian Radical Humanist Association
Minorities Council of India
National Alliance of People's Movements
People's Movement for Secularism
People's Union for Civil Liberties
People's Union for Democratic Rights and others

All India Muslim Personal Law Board - Babari Masjid Committee
Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee
All India Babari Masjid Action Committee
National Seminar on the Question of Babari Masjid
Joint Statement, 7 December, 1999

To mark the 7th Anniversary of the Demolition of the Babari Masjid, the Babari Masjid Movement organised a National Seminar on **National Seminar on the Question of Babari Masjid** in New Delhi on 6 December, 1999.

The Seminar was attended by Maulana Sirajul Hasan, President, Jamaat-i-Islami Hind, Member, AIMPLB-BMC; Maulana Shafi Moonis, General Secretary, All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM), Member, BMMCC; Maulana Ahmad Ali Qasmi, ex-GS, AIMMM, Member, BMMCC; Gen. J.S. Arora, ex-MP, President, A.I. Sikh Forum; Mr. V.T. Rajshekar, Editor, Dalit Voice; Rev. Fr. T.K. John, Vidyajyoti, Delhi; Mr. N.D. Pancholi, Convener, Citizens for Secular Action; Mr. M. Afzal, ex-MP, Editor, Akhbar-e-Nau Weekly; Mr. Kamal Farooqui, G.S., A.I. Milli Political Forum; Mr. Azeez Burney, Editor, Rashtriya Sahara Daily; Mr. S.R.Q. Ilyas, Editor, Afkar-e-Milli Monthly; Mr. Navaid Hamid, Secretary, Movement for Empowerment of Muslim Indians; Mr. Qamar Alam, Executive Member, AIBMAC; Mr. Shahid Badar, Representative, SIM; Mr. Shamshad Husain, Secretary, SIO; Mr. Anis Suharwardy, Advocate, Supreme Court of India and Mr. S. Shahabuddin, Convener, BMMCC. The participants adopted a Joint Statement:

Text of the Statement

"The Participants in the Seminar organised by the ALMPLB-BMC, the BMMCC and the AIMBAC to mark the 7th Anniversary of the Demolition of the Babari Masjid in New Delhi on 6 December, 1999,

REGARD the Demolition of the Babari Masjid as a blot on the fair face of the country and as a blow to the Secular Order and the Rule of Law, which form inalienable parts of the basic structure of the Constitution, to the supremacy of the Parliament, the dignity of the Judiciary and the credibility of the Executive and as an offence to the legitimate religious sentiments of the Muslim Indians, who form the second largest community in the country;

TAKE NOTE OF the continuous mobilisation by the forces of Hindutva to re-enact the Ayodhya Tragedy at Mathura and Varanasi, by demolishing the Shahi Idgah and the Gyan Vapi Masjids, situated there, despite their protection under the Act of 1991 relating to the protection of the religious status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947 and call upon the Govt. and the people to defend these two places of worship against any onslaught;

EXPRESS their unhappiness at the unsatisfactory progress of the civil proceeding in the Title Suit pending before the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court, Lucknow, the criminal case pending before the Special CBI Court, Lucknow, and the inquiry undertaken by the Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry, and demand day-to-day hearing as well as expeditious disposal by the High Court of petitions filed by those indicted to obstruct and delay the course of justice, and the Constitution of a Joint Parliamentary Committee to oversee the progress of the title suit, the criminal case and the inquiry;

TAKE NOTE, with appreciation, of the exemplary restraint and patience shown by the Muslim community in not demanding the immediate demolition of the concrete platform constructed unlawfully in July 1992 and the dismantling of the make-shift temple illegally constructed on the Babari Masjid site and not insisting on the

immediate reconstruction of the Babari Masjid on the original site in accordance with the law of the land, and request all secular political parties, individually and collectively, at least to assure them that **if the final verdict on the question of title is in their favour, the Babari Masjid shall be rebuilt forthwith at its original site, whatever the political consequences;**

DEMAND that like the Babari Masjid site, the security of the Masjids in Mathura and Varanasi be the undivided responsibility of the Central Government and that the Central Government maintain the status quo in Ayodhya, reject any pressure, for relaxing the security or darshan regime at the disputed site and **not undertake any renovation or reconstruction of the make-shift temple without express approval of the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court;**

TAKE NOTE of the suggestion of the Prime Minister to resolve the dispute through negotiations and, in this context, welcome the standing offer of the Muslim community to permit the construction of the proposed Ram Mandir in the proximity of the Babari Masjid, so long as the actual site of the Babari Masjid which is not negotiable, is restored to the community for reconstruction of the Masjid;

REITERATE that all divisive campaigns – speeches, yatra and publications – which violate the national consensus embodied in the Act of 1991 be banned and all those who incite any section of the people to invade and take over a place of worship belonging to another be prosecuted; and

THANK the political parties which have commemorated the 7th anniversary of the Demolition, for warning the nation against the long-term objectives and short-term plans of the forces of Hindu Chauvinism, Fascism and Fundamentalism which have gained strength, become active under the benign umbrella of the Vajpayee Government and constitute a grave threat to the unity and integrity of the nation."

Stand on Ayodhya

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 9 Dec., 99

Notwithstanding the carefully choreographed drafting of resignation letters by Advani and Joshi and their prompt rejection by the Prime Minister — the entire exercise evidently intended to deflect attention from the charges against the two ministers relating to the Babari Masjid demolition — there is little doubt that the opposition, for once, has put the government on the defensive. Although it is true, as Vajpayee has explained, that an accused cannot be deemed guilty unless the final verdict is delivered, there is an element of incongruity in such a person holding high office. The situation is even more odd in Advani's case because, as the Union Home Minister... It is just as well, therefore, that he and Joshi offered to resign. But it would have been better if they had insisted on the Prime Minister's acceptance of their letters... In any event, the controversy has provided an opportunity to both the government and the two ministers to explain where exactly they stand on this crucial issue. Unfortunately, even seven years after the tragic incident, their positions still remain unclear.

Vajpayee has been the only one among the BJP leaders who has unhesitatingly expressed regret for the tragic act. The stand of the others has been ambiguous, to say the least. They, including Advani, have given the impression that what they regretted was not the demolition of the "dilapidated structure" so much as the abrupt manner in which it was carried out, indicating a breakdown of discipline in the saffron camp... Those at the lower levels, not to mention the people belonging to the party's fraternal organisations, have not always cared to hide their delight over what happened on December 6, 1992. What is worse, they have occasionally threatened to indulge in more such acts of desecration, notably in Varanasi and Mathura. It will not do, therefore, for the BJP leaders merely to make an offer which they do not intend to honour. Instead, there must be a clear articulation by them, leaving no scope for ambiguity, about the events of that fateful day and a promise that they will stoutly resist any such assault on other places of worship. It is not enough to say that the shrines in Varanasi and Mathura are "not on the BJP's agenda." They must denounce even any threats against them...

Just Cause

Editorial, The Times of India, 8 Dec., 1999

Parliament was brought to a standstill on Tuesday by legislators demanding a speedy trial in the Babari Masjid demolition case even as elsewhere in the Capital judges took a pledge to conduct themselves so as to be more accountable to the common people... It is a valid charge that those accused of complicity in the demolition of the Babari Masjid are today in key positions of power. This raises questions about the meaning of justice, and about a yardstick that seems determined entirely by who is controlling the levers of power... Brutal damage was done

Shahabuddin Cautions

BJP's Allies in NDA, 13 December, 1999

May I draw your attention to the Statement of the UP CM Shri Ram Prakash Gupta in Faizabad — Ayodhya on 12 December, 1999. He is reported to have stated:

"The Ram temple construction issue may not be on the Central Government's agenda. But it is very much on the BJP's agenda... The BJP has never ignored the temple issue. ... The BJP is increasing its strength. **The temple will be built when the BJP has enough strength.**"

Obviously, the secret agenda of the BJP is to exploit the present coalition for building up its strength at the cost of its allies **till it is in a position to form its own Government at the Centre.** Then it can go ahead and implement its real agenda.

I hope your party would not permit itself to be used in this manner for promoting Hindutva objective.

Sakshi Maharaj

Denies Role in Demolition

Sachidanand Sakshi Maharaj, who joined the Samajwadi Party (on 12 October, 1999) denied that he had participated in the demolition of the Babari Masjid.

"I am against the demolition of any religious place and had vehemently opposed the Masjid being demolished"... The Masjid had been demolished under a conspiracy hatched by the Sangh Parivar members, including Ashok Singhal, Acharya Giriraj, Murli Manohar Joshi and the Uddipi Shankaracharya. The conspiracy had the blessings of then prime minister Narasimha Rao...

He said the same people had wanted to demolish the idgah at Mathura but "as the local MP, it was me who thwarted their plot". The angry Sangh Parivar members had then presented him with bangles...

Six years earlier on 11 October 1993, a magistrate had taken cognisance of a CBI chargesheet that accused him of participating in the Masjid's demolition.

The CBI SP, M. Narayanan said in the chargesheet that Sakshi Maharaj was "present in the proximity of the disputed structure at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 amongst others and they deliberately with the object to achieve the ends of the conspiracy which emphatically envisaged demolition ... involved themselves by active participation and for incitement and active contribution to achieve the ends of the conspiracy ... which in the ultimate analysis was completely erased by the evening of December 6, 1992".

(Source: The Statesman and The Indian Express, 13 October, 1999)

to the basic structure of society; the attack on a religious structure held sacred by one community was an attack, in fact, on the idea of India... The perpetrators of both crimes remain outside the pale of law.

Not that things were ever any different: the worst has come to be expected of the judicial establishment: It is taken as given that either the wheels of justice would not move at all or grind so slowly as to render meaningless any relief granted...

Saeed Naqvi on 'Incongruity' in Ayodhya

... Tirupati, Rishikesh, Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi are ... towns and cities which are as Hindu as Mecca is Muslim or the Vatican is Church.

A temple or a mosque in the Vatican or a church in Mecca would militate against the sheer aesthetic harmony of these places. Should it then be difficult to realise that mosques in the heart of the most prominent temples in Varanasi, Ayodhya and Mathura would be aesthetically revolting for any Hindu? ...

Have you ever visited the mosques in Varanasi, Ayodhya and Mathura? I did and I did not like what I saw. Any Hindu would be hurt.

That such things happen in history is true. The history of civilisation is also the history of their eclipse by decay or conquest. That irrational act apart, the fact of the matter is that the mosque in Varanasi and Mathura are, aesthetically, as incongruous as the one in Nazareth will be, if it ever is built...

(Source: The Indian Express, 3 December, 1999)

Ominous Prelude to Demolition in Mathura and Varanasi

Shahabuddin's Response, 4 Dec., 1999

Mr. Saeed Naqvi's article "The Aesthetics of Faith" has an ominous ring. Is it a prelude to the take over and demolition of the Shahi Idgah Masjid in Mathura and the Gyan Vapi Masjid in Varanasi?

Cultures (with its aesthetic expressions) is not static but dynamic. Therefore, practically no religious place on earth, with the exception of Mecca and Medina, has remained unchanged with time. For at least 800 years, Ayodhya was a centre of Sufism; and a seat of Islamic learning; consequently many Islamic myths have become associated with Ayodhya. That is why, it has acres of graveyards and more than a score of Masjids and Maqbaras, apart from other Islamic shrines. What should Ayodhya express? India as it stood before the advent of Islam? Or, as it stood before Jainism and Buddhism was overlaid by Hinduism? Or as it stood on 15 August 1947 at the advent of independence? And will Mr. Naqvi endorse violence to hearts, minds and structures, to restore the 'original' religious character of a place?

In hundreds of places in India, we see places of worship of different religions standing in dignity by the side of each other. That is our glory. For at least 200 years, Ram Janambhoomi Mandir stood north of Babari Masjid in Ayodhya till the latter was demolished.

I will not go into the history of Varanasi and Mathura because the Masjids there are protected by the Law of 1991, as all the other places of worship in the country against any move to 'convert' them! It is not relevant how Mr. Naqvi felt when he visited them. Suffice it to say that the Krishna Janmasthan Mandir with the backdrop of the Idgah means the essence of India.

The inner harmony of the composite culture, of which Mr. Naqvi often writes, is based on the co-existence of Masjids, Mandirs, Gurudwaras and Girjas, on mutual respect and tolerance, and not religious exclusivity. □

Masjid Demolished in Hansi, Haryana

Shahabuddin's Letter to C.M., 11 Dec., 1999

May I draw your attention to the partial demolition of the Masjid in Bajaria Chowk, Hansi on 6.12.1999 by the local leaders of the Sangh Parivar.

In 1988, the Masjid, on release to the Punjab Wakf Board, had been illegally occupied and an idol was placed there. I had personally visited the Masjid then. In the consequent legal proceeding the Masjid had been locked and the Tehsildar had been appointed as the Receiver.

It is reported that on 3 December, the local SDM lifted the lock-out and handed over the Masjid to the RSS-BJP backed Bharat Bhakti Trust. Taking advantage of physical possession they demolished part of the Masjid.

I request that the Masjid be vacated and repaired until the title is decided by a High Court.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Administrator, Punjab Wakf Board, Ambala for appealing against the SDM's order which was ex-parte.

Threat to Baba Budhan Giri Dargah in Chikmagalur

Shahabuddin's Letter to Karnataka CM, 9 Dec., 99

You must be aware of the persistent threat of the Sangh Parivar to convert the Dargah of Baba Budhan Giri in Chikmagalur into a temple.

After the burial of the late Sajjadanashin Pir S.M. Shah Qadri Qalander on 25.10.1999 on the precincts of the Dargah, the Sangh Parivar is demanding exhumation of his body and the non-recognition of his successor. However, the bandh called by them was a flop and the Hindus of Chikmagalur, in general, kept aloof. They again tried to create trouble on the 40th day of the Pir's demise.

I am writing this to request you to deal firmly with this group which is determined to erect another Babari Masjid.

The Dargah is a Muslim shrine which has been open to devotees from all religions but simply because Hindu devotees have been permitted for ages, it cannot become a Hindu shrine. Since a Dargah is a Wakf by definition, I also strongly urge you to hand over its control and superintendence to the State Wakf Board.

A Temple on Wakf Land in Delhi

Shahabuddin's Letter to Governor, 6 Dec., 1999

May I draw your attention to the newsitem which states that a temple is being constructed on Wakf land which forms part of the Masjid Race Course in New Delhi near the Prime Minister's Residence.

The Delhi Wakf Board has already asked the authorities concerned to stop the unlawful construction. I would request you to look into the matter and instruct the authorities concerned to comply with the request of the Delhi Wakf Board.

Amanullah Khan on Unification and Independence of J&K

... The main reason for the (Kashmir) issue remaining unsolved has been the subsequent selfish and unethical attitude of India and Pakistan towards the issue, both making it a matter of their national pride and ego, ignoring their erstwhile promises, each others' genuine rights and problems and the real wishes and aspirations of Kashmir people. To add ... the United Nations ... pushed the issue to its cold storage.

... As a matter of fact both India and Pakistan have lost many times more by keeping Kashmir hanging in the balance than they would have lost by parting with their controlled parts of the State. What is worse, the issue continues to hang on their heads as a sword of the possible third Kashmir-war, perhaps a nuclear one.

The recent history of and circumstances prevailing in Kashmir make it crystal clear that India's hope that time itself would solve Kashmir issue to her exclusive advantage is tantamount to living in fool's paradise, so is Pakistan's hope that Indian occupied part of Kashmir will fall into her lap sooner or later... As such, the sooner India and Pakistan accept these bitter but undeniable realities, the better for both of them, for Kashmir and for the world.

... The issue can be solved only if the solution does not hurt the national egos of India and Pakistan, does not jeopardise their national ideologies or harm their legitimate national interests, does not cause mass migrations, bloodshed or communal/ethnic disturbances and is based on the national aspirations and unfettered will of Kashmiri people and if international community takes due interest and uses its good offices and influence to solve it.

The only practicable solution that fulfills all these conditions is that the divided Jammu Kashmir be reunited and made a fully independent state for say 15 years, with a democratic, non-communal and federal system of government, having friendly relations with both India and Pakistan, with international community undertaking that nobody would interfere in the internal affairs of the new state or violate its frontiers and the new state undertakings that it would not allow its soil to be used against any country.

After 15 years there be a referendum under UN auspices asking Kashmiris whether the state should perpetuate its independence or become part of India or Pakistan and that popular verdict be accepted by all concerned as final settlement of the issue and implemented...

For all practical purposes both India and Pakistan have to ... concede complete independence to the reunited Jammu Kashmir State. For India, preferring status-quo will mean continuous trouble in Kashmir resulting in

heavy and continuous loss of life, money, property and grace in addition to the most destructive effects and after effects of a possible Indo-Pak war including heavy loss of life, property and foreign investment.. Independence of Jammu Kashmir can change it from an apple of discord into a bridge of friendship with Pakistan and Kashmiris heralding the dawn of a peaceful, prosperous and respectful future for all the three and for their about one and a quarter billion inhabitants.

It will also solve the issue without hurting the national ego or jeopardising the national ideology (secularism) of India as the part of Kashmir seceding from India will not go to Muslim Pakistan on account of its Muslim majority. India's legitimate national interest will also be safeguarded in the sense that the soil of Kashmir will not be used against India. Moreover, the choice of joining India will be open to Kashmiris at the time of referendum. Independence of the entire state will not cause any mass-migration, bloodshed or communal/ethnic disturbances as every state national will have to remain at his own place.

Pakistan opting for status-quo will ... mean betraying and stabbing those Kashmiris in the back who have (made) sacrifices ... at the altar of their freedom movement... Re-unification and independence of the state will benefit Pakistan the same way as it will benefit India...

In a nutshell, re-unification and complete independence of the divided Jammu Kashmir State on aforementioned pattern followed 15 years later, by a UN supervised referendum to determine the final constitutional status of the state, is not only in the best national interests of India, Pakistan and Kashmiris but can also ... strengthen world peace...

(Source: The Greater Kashmir, 13 November, 1999)

Pran Chopra

On Secession under Canadian Law

... Canada has set up a major think tank for a comparative study of federations. Named "Forum of Federations: An International Network on Federalism," the think tank was inaugurated at a mega event in October, 1999 in Quebec, with over 600 participants, including many heads of state or government, most notably U.S. President Clinton... The occasion was dazzling enough to establish the Forum as a presence astride the Canada-Quebec divide...

On August 20 last year, the Supreme Court gave a ruling which ... in substance said that while the right to secede existed it could not be exercised unilaterally...

(Source: The Hindu, 26 November, 1999)

Michael Krepon On Imperative of Negotiation and Settlement

... Substantive negotiations between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute have yet to begin... Violent acts will take place during a peace process or in the absence of one... If peace making appears to be making headway, irreconcilable will seek to stop positive momentum. Serious efforts at peace making, however, offer the promise of an end to violence. In contrast, the absence of a peace process invites never-ending sorrow.

In South Asia, unlike the Middle East, the "political track" to conflict resolution has been almost entirely absent. Substantive dialogue between India and Pakistan or between Indian officials and disaffected Kashmiris has rarely occurred. In the absence of purposeful dialogue between aggrieved parties, counter-insurgency operations can have only limited effect.

In India, this conclusion is not broadly accepted and has not yet translated into changes in government policy. As a result, the Government of India relies heavily on a one-track policy based on counter-insurgency operations. New Delhi's Kashmir policy therefore places a heavy burden on Indian security forces and a heavier burden on Kashmiris. A reconsideration of India's one-track Kashmir policy might therefore be wise. It would also be very difficult to do, given India's domestic politics as well as Pakistan's ... policy toward Kashmir.

Successive governments in Pakistan have publicly maintained that their support for insurgency is limited to moral, political and diplomatic initiatives. But it is widely accepted that Pakistan's military and political leaders have been deeply involved in providing material support to militants in Kashmir... By supporting the "Kalashnikov culture" ... Pakistan is also playing a very heavy price. The gun culture and the sectarian violence within Pakistan are growing. The rule of law is endangered. Critical social indicators are trending downward. Meanwhile, militant groups involved in the Kashmir and Afghan struggles educate and train new cadres within Pakistan...

Pakistan's Kashmir policy might also benefit from a fundamental re-evaluation. Who is benefiting from Pakistan's Kashmir policy? How has a decade of support for the struggle in Kashmir helped Kashmiris or helped Pakistanis? Is Pakistan better off now, after a decade of support for insurgency, than before?

... Pakistan's wellbeing must be won in Pakistan, not in Afghanistan or in Kashmir.

Pakistan, like India, has at present a one-track strategy for Kashmir. ...Pakistan's strategy revolves around support for insurgency. Diplomatic efforts by both

countries are designed to place the other in a negative light, not to resolve basic issues. Of course, these one-track strategies are mutually reinforcing. They combine to create misery for Kashmiris and for villagers on both sides of Kashmir's Line of Control - the dividing line over which India and Pakistan fought so intensely this summer.

One-track strategies succeed only in negative ways. They succeed in allowing ... governments to avoid hard political choices, and they succeed in imposing pain and suffering. The impact of these complementary, one-track strategies differs, however: India appears able to absorb the challenges of counter-insurgency. It is less clear whether Pakistan can continue to absorb the domestic challenges of support for insurgency.

Does this mean that India or Pakistan should give up its claims over Kashmir? No. It means that India and Pakistan should settle their differences in an honourable way, and in a way that involves centrally those who have suffered so much as a result of this dispute. South Asia needs a peace process ... seriousness of purpose.

In the fall of 1998, India and Pakistan finally agreed on a structure for substantive bilateral discussions on Kashmir, peace and security, and on a variety of other topics. Since then, both countries have been on a roller-coaster ride, including nuclear weapon tests, an extraordinary summit meeting in Lahore and the undeclared war this summer along the northern reaches of the Line of Control.

After this undeclared war, trust is in short supply in South Asia... The Prime Minister Vajpayee has said that (he) is willing to resume substantive dialogue, but that Pakistan's support for militancy across the Line of Control must subside. This is a reasonable position. The new Chief Executive of Pakistan, General Musharraf, has stated his willingness to resume substantive dialogue with India.

Bilateral dialogue is likely to resume before too long. Whether these talks are serious or proforma will depend, in large part, on whether Pakistan and India re-evaluate their separate but interlocking Kashmir policies. If these talks remain rooted in mutually reinforcing one-track strategies, we will continue to witness a dialogue of the deaf. Meanwhile, nuclear capabilities on both sides are growing, along with political alienation in Kashmir and centrifugal forces within Pakistan.

(Source: The Hindu, 10 November, 1999)

[Michael Krepon is President of Henry L. Stimson Center and Kashmir Study Group]

Amitabh Mattoo on Promising Signals from Kashmir

... Although most of the provisions of the Accord were never translated into reality, it is the spirit behind the compact of 1974 that needs to be revived once again. Despite the grim situation in Jammu and Kashmir today, the political and social climate is arguably right to begin a broad-based dialogue that could lead to a new accord...

The situation today, while strikingly different in several respects, is similar in at least three ways. First, there is ... strong disillusionment with Pakistan. The political and social conditions prevailing within Pakistan have not gone unnoticed in the Valley. The near total absence of a civil society, the ethnic conflict in Sindh and other areas, and the almost Orwellian control that is exercised in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, has gradually left a deep impression on the Kashmiris. Although it is too early to gauge what impact the recent military coup by General Pervez Musharraf will have on Kashmiri public opinion, it may well strengthen the growing feeling that a country, whose commitment to democracy is so weak and imperfect, can hardly be a real supporter of the democratic aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, the Kargil debacle has signalled once again that Pakistan cannot annexe Kashmir by force.

Second, at least some Kashmiri 'secessionist' leaders seem to be coming down from the maximalist positions that they had adopted during the last decade... Many leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference ... seem to have indicated their willingness to enter into a dialogue with the Centre.

The Hurriyat's shift seems to be rooted in the recognition that the current phase of militancy in the Valley, almost entirely foreign inspired and controlled, is leading to the marginalisation of Kashmiri leaders. True, there is no leader in the Valley today with either the popularity or legitimacy of Sheikh Abdullah, but a dialogue can help create the conditions under which it will be possible for the real leaders of the people to emerge and enter into an agreement with the Centre.

Finally, after a nearly a decade, there is a strong and stable government in place at the Centre... Vajpayee can ... articulate Kashmir-sensitive policies that will not be seen as appeasement or a sell-out by public opinion.

... There was no militancy in the Valley in 1974 (but) the popular alienation from the Centre's policies was equally intense... However, this need not be a hurdle in the way of an imaginative political initiative.

Today, there is an overwhelming Kashmiri sentiment against violence, irrespective of its origin. Militancy may not be down and out, but it has lost a great deal of popular legitimacy. "Peace with dignity" is the slogan that perhaps most suitably captures the prevailing mood of ...

Kashmir...

Finally, there seems to be a genuine desire to recover the social capital lost in the last decade, and to restore Kashmir's traditional society based on the common synergetic identity of Kashmiriyat. A new accord will, of course, not resolve the problem of terrorism, or end the problem of foreign militants. But then the battle against terrorists will reduce itself to being a law and order problem that will be fought primarily by ordinary Kashmiris rather than by security forces from outside the state.

(Source: The Times of India, 3 December, 1999)

Tavleen Singh On Kashmir Problem

... It really is time that our home minister woke up to the fact that we need to do something about Kashmir. Some kind of talks with Kashmir's more moderate secessionist groups are becoming increasingly necessary. Since Advani took charge of the Home Ministry his approach has been military rather than political. This approach has not worked and it is time to consider what else can be done and how. There is no point in blaming the whole Kashmir problem on cross-border terrorism because we all know that when Kashmir exploded in 1989 after a decade and a half of peace, it was entirely the fault of our own policies. Pakistan got into the act afterwards.

Only when the home minister examines the Kashmir problem from a political angle rather than a military one will we come any closer to solving it... Advani needs to ask himself what has gone wrong in Kashmir. If he does that he may discover that the crux of the problem is that his policy has been completely lacking in a political element.

Let us also not forget how quickly yesterday's terrorists become today's political leaders. Remember that Farooq Abdullah, now a nationalist hero, was considered a terrorist by Indira Gandhi in 1984. His alleged support for terrorism was the justification she gave for dismissing his government...

So, if we want a solution in Kashmir we need to begin by revising our domestic policy in the valley. We need to find out why ordinary people continue to be so angry with India and what can be done to assuage some of this anger. There is no point pretending that a military solution is the only answer. Jagmohan tried that as governor and nearly pushed Kashmir over the edge... Let us concentrate on our internal problems in Kashmir. We could find that Pakistan becomes irrelevant to Kashmir, as it did between 1975 and 1989, if we manage to solve our domestic problems in the Valley.

(Source: The India Today, 22 November, 1999)

National Sovereignty, Islamic Militancy and Kashmir

Praful Bidwai in The Frontline, 22 October, 1999

... New Delhi has become an obsessive defender of absolute national sovereignty – unfettered by human rights or other universal criteria. It failed to take a stand on the vital issue of human rights in Kosovo. It only opposed the NATO-led multilateral action as a violation of national sovereignty. But surely, in extreme, exceptional situations, for example apartheid or genocide, sovereignty must yield to other criteria.

On East Timor, India has not let out a squeak on the horrific repression unleashed by the Indonesian forces – one of the worst cases of near-genocidal terror anywhere, killing a third of the population... Perhaps (the) reason is New Delhi's Kashmir and Pakistan preoccupations. It fears that supporting intervention in one region – however genuinely humanitarian, well-intentioned, multilateral and balanced it may be – would invite similar demands in Kashmir, opening a can of worms.

India's insecurities over Kashmir have intensified despite Pokhran-II. After all, nuclear weapons are utterly useless in the face of low-intensity warfare or insurgencies... There is no coherent link between India's foreign policy and its pursuit of democratic domestic priorities.

With the BJP's aggressive, bellicose, chauvinistic, nationalism, these tendencies have got further accentuated. New Delhi's notion of sovereignty is divorced from the people and the public interest... It affirms sovereignty only when it comes to human rights violations, threats to religious freedom, and the "right" to make weapons of mass destruction. Such sovereignty is irrelevant, even hostile, to the public interest.

Freed from a commitment to principle or universal doctrine, India's foreign policy establishment now takes whatever positions seem expedient... the latest shibboleth, fashion, or flavour of the month, is "counter-terrorism" and the "global" fight against (Islamic) fundamentalism. This has become a bandwagon slogan. In place of the K-word (Kashmir), which long spelt embarrassment, we are told, South Block has moved on to the T-word (Terrorism or Taliban), about which it can feel upbeat. The T-word gives India respectability, a feel good proximity to, and a joint project with, the Great Powers, above all, the US, no less.

That is why Jaswant Singh in the UN General Assembly went all out to underline not just Pakistan's role in "terrorism" in Kashmir, but its links with Afghanistan and the "larger disorder" that makes it the main source of global terrorism. Jaswant Singh, Vajpayee and Advani have been at pains to present the anti-terrorism platform as the principal plank of India's new foreign policy. It is not hard to see the real motive: to focus on "Islamic fundamentalism" as the root of contemporary "terrorism"

in its most menacing form; and then make a come hither gesture to the US (and secondarily to Russia too, which faces the Daghestan and Chechnya crises) and to campaign jointly with New Delhi.

South Block's fond hope here is that this will help it isolate Pakistan and build a strong strategic relationship with the US under which Washington decisively distances itself from Islamabad...

This Brave New Campaign against Terrorism has an implicit, unstated, anti-Islamic angle, building as it does on prejudices prevalent in the West, and the need for its right wing to find new enemies to perpetuate high levels of military-nuclear preparations. It confuses popular Islam, first with political Islam, and then the latter with fundamentalism. In reality, there is little in common between practised Islam and the fundamentalism associated with the Taliban and so on.

The azadi movement in Kashmir can be hardly assimilated to Taliban fundamentalism. The Hurriyat has explicitly distanced itself from the Taliban. Omar Farooq has emphatically said: "Laden has no role in Kashmir... He has no locus standi in the Valley... his movement is aimed at spreading Islamic jihad which is not our objective".

It is also wrong to believe that foreign militants' or mercenaries' weight has increased in the current movement in Kashmir, especially after Kargil. Going by the Army's own figures, the proportion of foreign militants to the total number of those killed was 22 per cent over the past three years. It has fallen to 15 per cent in 1999. The militancy is primarily domestic and must not be falsely "externalised".

We have to deal with it without creating scapegoats. Another pitfall of the counter-terrorism shibboleth is that it wholly ignores state terrorism, which tends to be far more effective, widespread, institutionalised and vicious than sub-state terrorism, and which state-based systems like the UN do not question...

Time to Drop Religious Iron Curtain

Editorial, The Statesman, 4 November, 1999

In a joint declaration Catholic and Lutheran leaders have formally set aside doctrinal differences, bringing to an end one of the great ideological divides of the millennium...

.... In today's context, where Christian countries in the affluent West are overwhelmingly secularised and religion itself is approaching marginal status, such doctrinal differences as exist must appear minor and arcane. This provides the backdrop for the settling of differences between these two major branches of Christianity, which once seemed as irresolvable...

M. Vijayanunni On Need for Caste Census in 2001

... The Constitution only prohibits any discrimination based only on caste or other grounds specified, and not any collection of caste data. The population figures of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes are required to be collected for the purpose of reserving seats in legislatures for them. In many cases, data will have to be collected even about patently illegal matters in order to form an idea about the incidence of such activities. Child marriage and child labour are two examples... Concrete data on the extent and whereabouts of their occurrence would be essential to deal with them. Caste in India is no doubt highly complex and the number of castes is legion. (In 1872) there were no caste-based quotas or other government policies and programmes based on caste.

The position has changed radically since Independence. Reservation in service has been extended to the backward castes after 1991. Governments have launched many welfare schemes for the backward classes. There are separate ministries and departments both at the Centre and in the states to look after the welfare and development of the SCs, STs, and the backward castes. There are also separate corporations and agencies for implementing welfare schemes and providing financial assistance to such castes.

The caste composition of the society is assiduously followed in the selection of ministers at the Centre and in the states, members of the Public Service Commissions and chairmen of state corporations. Caste composition, encompassing both the forward and the backward, is invariably taken into account by political parties while picking contestants for the legislatures and local government bodies. Our society and polity are steeped in caste in all matters of power, position and patronage and there is no point in turning a blind eye to this reality. The census holds a mirror up to contemporary society and mirrors do not lie... For the purpose of enumerating the SC and ST population, the census enumerator relies on the notified lists for each state, but there is no such unambiguous and uniform list in the case of backward castes (BCs). There are two separate lists a Central list and a state list of BCs. Even these lists have many inaccuracies and incongruities and other complicating factors...

Caste-wise break-up of the population will facilitate cross-classification with various social, economic, cultural and demographic characteristics and thus provide a wealth of data on the levels achieved by each community in various indices like literacy and education, work characteristics, age at marriage, fertility, infant and child mortality, and death rate. This will help governments and social organisations give special attention to backward communities in achieving social and economic progress by identified indices.

There have been demands since 1991 for inclusion of the question on caste in the census from various quarters. Writs have also been filed in many high courts. A case

Muslim Quota Preferentially for Backward Muslims

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Statesman, 6 Dec., 99

Mr. M. Haseen's article "Backward Factor" is largely concerned with the political, economic, educational and social backwardness of the Muslim Indians, as a whole but then switches over to question of under-representation of the Backward Muslims in the 'Muslim leadership' and ends up by aligning the Backward Muslims with the Samata Party. The so-called "Ashraf", who constitute about 25% of the Muslim community, are indeed disproportionately visible. But that is due to historical factors. This can be changed and will change over a period of time, once education and employment reach all those who are deprived today.

The basic issue is very simple: Muslims constitute a Backward Class: they also constitute a high profile, visible minority and, therefore, they cannot win the battle of reservation in legislatures, public employment, higher and professional education, development and welfare benefits – in short for Empowerment and Participation, except as a united community. Mr. Haseen denies caste system in Islam and yet divides the Muslims into Forward and Backward. This is not a new game. It is being played for many years by those who wish to emasculate the Muslims by dividing them.

The real issue is not the leadership but the objective: provision of a separate quota for Muslims on ground of backwardness, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu provides such a quota in public employment, apart from admitting Muslims to quotas for backward professional groups.

Is Samata Party prepared to fight for a separate quota for Muslim in the country or at least in Bihar? In political representation, education, public employment and development and welfare benefits. Or does it merely wants to use, Backward Muslims as pawns in its battle against Laloo? The Muslim intelligentsia is of the view that the separate Muslim quota, when it comes, should be preferentially available to the candidates from notified Muslim backward sub-communities and only if there are not enough candidates with minimum qualification, the vacancies should be available to other Muslims.

filed in the Kerala High Court at the time of the 1991 census was disposed of with the direction to the Union government to consider the question of inclusion of caste in the 2001 census. A writ has recently been filed in the Karnataka High Court by a former Law Minister of Karnataka and others seeking directions of the court to include caste in the 2001 census questionnaire. Only a small section has been opposing the inclusion of caste...

... The course of democratic India has seen the resurgence of caste in the polity through the decades, with caste awareness reaching a high in the post-Mandal 1990s. The first census since then, in 2001, is the right time to reintroduce the caste question in the census questionnaire and fill the glaring sociological data gap.

(Source: The Indian Express, 19 November, 1999)

No Point in Including Muslims in SC List Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 16 Nov., 99

Apropos Rajeev Deshpande's dispatch "Rao, PV for Dalit Muslim Quota?" (The Pioneer, 12 Nov., 1999), may I say that the AIBMM has been making this demand for nearly a decade and had earlier claimed to have converted H.D. Deve Gowda and several of his colleagues Ram Vilas Paswan and Sharad Yadav to their point of view. I have had long discussions with its leadership. No one has answered my query about the % of the Muslim population covered by the 5 'Dalit Muslim' castes. In my view they constitute less than 0.5%. So even if they are included in the list of SC's, it would not make an iota of difference to the status of the community. The real motivation, I found, is the reservation for SC's in legislature. But how can a Muslim Dalit win against a Hindu Dalit, with almost negligible population in a given constituency, when national parties find it difficult to field Muslim candidate even in Muslim concentration constituencies? Thirdly, no SC leader has publicly supported inclusion of 'Dalit Muslim' in this category.

There is a lot of confusion. The question of Dalit Christian has emerged out of change of religion by some of them from Hinduism to Christianity. If Article 25 is sacrosanct, reservation for SC's in public employment or legislature should not be used to coerce a person to remain a Hindu against his conscience. Moreover, his social status does not change overnight with the change of religion. So at least the Dalit Hindu who becomes a Christian or for that matter adopts any religion of his choice, should continue to enjoy the benefits accruing to him as a SC for him and his immediate family. This implies that such a person and his progeny should continue to figure on the SC list and the Constitutional Order of 1950 should be amended accordingly. It may be added that the Order is not per se unconstitutional, because the very class of SC was created by the Act of 1935 of which categorised the Hindu sub-communities who were regarded as untouchables were put in a Schedule. Thus SC's are by definition Hindus, ab initio. The criteria was not only the work they did but whether they suffered from this social disability, Christians and Muslims doing the same work did not and do not.

Universal Reservation on Basis of Population & Level of Backwardness

Insaf Morcha's Statement, 18 Nov., 1999

"Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav, MP, President of Samajwadi Party, has demanded an increase in the reservation for OBC's in public employment from 27% to 54%.

In principle, the Insaf Morcha supports the demand for relating the OBC quota to its population as in the case of the SC's and the ST's, but considers Shri Yadav's approach to be piecemeal and fragmented.

Keeping in view the social and political developments that have occurred since the Mandal Commission submitted its report in 1980, the Insaf Morcha emphasizes the need for a comprehensive Scheme of Reservation with the following essential elements:-

1. Every self-conscious and identifiable social group, who know the basis for its identity, which seeks reservation, should be given a quota based in its population and its level of backwardness relative to the Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes, as determined by a competent authority based on uniform nationally accepted parameters.
2. Some social groups more or less at the same level of backwardness be permitted to form a single category for purposes of reservation.
3. There should be no fixed or arbitrary limit to the total reservation quota for a category or for all categories taken together i.e. for a State or for the Union.
4. A social group whose population constitutes at least 1% of the State or the Union, as the case may be, may opt for a separate quota for itself. Smaller social groups may aggregate to form a single group or attach themselves to bigger social groups of their choice.

The Insaf Morcha requests Shri Mulayam Singh Yadav and other leaders of the Backward Classes Movement to agitate for the formulation and acceptance of a Comprehensive Scheme of Reservation and for Caste Census and for extension of reservation to the representation in legislatures, higher and professional education, flow of development and welfare benefit and bank credit."

*Best Wishes and Cordial Greetings
For the New Year and Id-ul-Fitr
To All Our Subscribers and Readers*

Socialists' Open Letter to MP's

... Sardar Patel, who was chairman of the Minorities Committee of the Constituent Assembly, had proposed reservations for the Muslim community but leaders of that community could not appreciate the advantages flowing from that and therefore they rejected it. Hence the provisions in the original draft of the Constitution which were numbered 292 and 294 had to be deleted. However, under the Mandal Commission's recommendations, 67% of the Muslims have been included amongst the backwards and have been covered by the recommendations. **It may be appreciate now that the religious minorities particularly those sections amongst them which are still denied reservations are provided the same.**

**Rabi Ray Surendra Mohan Purushotam Kaushik
Ram Raj and 6 others**

Shahabuddin's Letter to Rabi Ray

3 November, 1999

I have seen your Appeal dated 8.10.1999 to newly elected MP's. In para 2, you have credited Sardar Patel with proposing reservation for Muslims which the leaders of the community rejected! This is far from the truth. The whole story is that the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights in favour of Reservation for Muslims in Legislatures (without separate electorate) and in Public Employment was incorporated in the Draft Constitution. Only at the fag end of the deliberations, Sardar Patel re-opened the issue and got 2 or 3 Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly to oppose reservation in lieu of 'fair and generous treatment of the minorities by the majority'. Ambedkar and Nehru fell in line and the fate of the Muslim community was sealed.

Indeed I appreciate your call for reservation for religious minorities in the present circumstances. I presume this applies both to representation in the legislatures and the public employment.

More Muslim Judges in SC/HC

Shahabuddin's Letter to Law Minister, 4 Dec., 1999

I welcome your statement in the Rajya Sabha regarding systematic effort to have more High Court judges from the SC/ST and OBC's.

I recall that earlier the Government had included Muslims in the list of groups which the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices had been asked to consider and locate suitable advocates therefrom.

The omission of Muslims from the list of under-represented groups in your statement is somewhat ominous. I hope in your advisory, you include Muslims also, since there are very few Muslim High Court judges today.

Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi Seminar on Political Empowerment New Delhi, 6-7 November, 1999

Resolution

1. ... Positive efforts should be made to initiate and concretise affirmative actions, both by the Central and State Governments, including reservations in different spheres.
2. ... The relevant Article on reservations (should be amended) by replacing the words "socially and educationally backward classes" by "socially and economically backward classes". [What is vague is social backwardness and needs to be eliminated and replaced by economically – Editor].
3. ... The Muslim community (should) consciously venture into creating opportunities for increasing capabilities among the Muslim youth...
4. An integrated plan of action should be initiated for greater participation of Muslims in the grassroot-level political for a...
5. ... Parliamentary and State Assembly Constituencies need to be (reviewed) before the delimitation of the Constituencies in 2001.
6. Muslim representation should be ensured in all statutory bodies both in the Centre and in the States, including the Election Commission.
7. ... Regional Muslim for a need to be activated in different States, in cooperation with other like-minded sections of the people (to) be coordinated at the national level as a viable political entity, for the benefit of the Muslim community.
8. ... Steps (should) be taken to establish information-sharing networks of Muslim organisations (to cover) states and regions.

(Contd. from Page 9)

with in UP for the first time in a decade... Moreover, the UP results suggest that the minorities are finally returning to the Congress.

All this should offer some comfort to the Congress. If you take the V.P. Singh line that this election is only a semi-final and that the next one, three years from now, will be the real battle, then the Congress has much to look forward to. The BJP cannot play the Vajpayee card again and again, nor can it go on about Sonia's foreign birth a second time. On the other hand, the Congress will represent the dominant ideology in Indian politics (so dominant that the BJP stole it this time) and will at last have some kind of base in northern India...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 15 October, 1999)

Muslims Need More Education as well as Reservation

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Azad Academy Journal, 17 November, 1999

May I refer to Prof. Naseem A. Zaidi's rejoinder in your issue of November, 1999.

Prof. Zaidi seems to be obsessed with the Public School System and with English as medium of instruction.

I do not think he has analysed the results of the Civil Services etc. Examination conducted by the UPSC for the last two decades. An increasing proportion among the entrants to the highest services in the country have a rural and middle class, even lower, background.

The Muslim community, as usual, delays until after the situation changes. It began establishing public schools and English-medium schools, **after** they lost dominance, under democratic compulsion in recruitment to public employment. And why should he presume that the Muslim asses can only produce shopkeepers, artisans and subordinate service holders!

Nor does Prof. Zaidi realise that a vast majority of candidates entering professional degree courses, who come through State level admission tests, come not from the elite but the masses. And the competitive spirit that Prof. Zaidi speaks of arises from the very fact of schooling which permits human genius to flower, which opens eyes and generates aspirations and which makes parents suffer deprivation to give best possible opportunity to their offspring.

The IQ, let me assume Prof. Zaidi, knows no class. Nor has Allah discriminated in any way in the distribution of brain cells that a child possesses.

Soon, hopefully universal elementary education shall be introduced. This will lead to neighbourhood schools. I hope and pray that all Muslim children will benefit. Statistically, if all Muslim children enter the primary school and if the drop-out rate is zero, or at least no higher than national rate, upto high school, the wide base will produce enough deserving Muslim candidates for higher and professional education and a very small % of them will come from Prof. Zaidi's elite!

Of course we have to keep an eye on the content of education and the school culture, but that is another question.

On the question of mother tongue as medium of instruction for primary education, there can be no compromise. Urdu-medium primary student will not learn only Urdu; he will also learn the principal language of the State e.g. Hindi in UP and shall not find it difficult to switch to it as medium of instruction in higher classes. A child proficient and articulate in his M.T. can easily pick up a second or a third language.

Prof. Zaidi is wrong when he says that the Christians are less endowed. They have vast reasons – internal and external – both individually and collectively.

Yes, the Muslim community lacks the missing zeal. But I am the last person to advocate that Muslim children

should go exclusively to Muslim educational institutions. Indeed we have neither the resources nor the manpower nor the experience to take over the task of educating our community on our own. Muslim community must demand educational facilities on par with others.

Once again Prof. Zaidi has pitted reservation in government employment against competition in the job market. Does he realise that 80% of the total budget of the Union and the States goes to Government employees – high and low. We should have our due share. Secondly, there is increasing demand for reservation in public and private sectors of the economy as well as in higher and professional education. It will come.

Thirdly, if the Muslims do not enjoy reservation as a Backward Class, they shall compete only for the ever-decreasing General Pool. Can even the Muslim elite compete in the General Pool against the communities which are far more advanced and which offer far greater number of over-qualified candidates?

On Urdu in Primary Education Shahabuddin's Letters

I - To C.M. of Delhi, 22 October, 1999

While I welcome the decision of the MCD to introduce English from Class I. I am left to wonder about the academic space left for the Mother Tongue of the students whose M.T. is a language other than Hindi.

I, therefore, request you to ensure that the introduction of English does not mean elimination of Urdu and Punjabi from the School curriculum.

In the spirit of the Constitution the children of the linguistic minorities should be able to learn M.T., Hindi and English and, to the extent possible, receive primary instruction through the medium of their M.T.

II - To C.M. of Maharashtra, 9 December, 1999

I have learnt from the newspapers that the Government of Maharashtra propose to introduce English from Class I w.e.f. January 2000.

This would imply that the Marathi-speaking student shall have Marathi, Hindi and English and Marathi shall be his medium of instruction.

I would be grateful to be informed of the scheme for non-Marathi children belonging to linguistic minorities. Their medium should be their mother tongue and they will have to learn 4 languages: Mother Tongue, Marathi, Hindi and English. Wouldn't this be a very heavy load for young children. May I suggest that a composite course of Hindi and Marathi be evolved for non-Marathi-speaking children? In the case of Urdu-speaking children, a possible allocation is a composite Hindi-Urdu course.

I would be grateful for your kind consideration.

Achin Vanaik on Saffronisation of History

... It is still disturbing that so many people are prepared to say that the BJP-RSS should now have 'their turn' rather than insisting on greater administrative and institutional rectitude and impartiality.

The fact that many in the Indian elite ... can be swayed by this argument indicates just how much confusion there is about the relationship between history and politics, especially nationalist ideology and politics.

Can history writing and interpretation be separated from the clamour of politics? That is the only honest answer is an ambiguous one – yes and no. Yes, there is such a thing as truer and better histories; more accurate accounts which better respect the controls provided by evidence and plausibility of interpretation. Historical accounts can never be bias-free but all biases are not equal. Some accounts and approaches are worse and more error-filled than others. Indeed, too much of history influenced as it has been by a 'feel-good nationalism' contains myths, half-truths, outright lies, and inventions because the construction of modern nationalist self-images almost always involves "getting history wrong" at least some of the time...

When the nationalism of a country and of its dominant elite is relaxed, confident, generous, humane, and democratic the chances of writing and understanding one's own history better becomes more likely. All this is the exact opposite of what has been happening over the last fifteen years in India. Today's national elite is in the main more belligerent, intolerant and self-righteous than ever before... An elite suffering something of a collective identity crisis makes it much more susceptible than ever before to the attractions of a history reconstituted by a particularly narrow-minded and dangerously intolerant brand of identity politics – Hindutva.

Since history is always a dialogue between the present and the past, it also cannot be fully separated from the politics and concerns of the present. So new questions are constantly being posed and new ways of connecting the past and present regularly need to be uncovered. This is neither problematic nor undesirable provided the primary purpose of such reinvestigations – reinterpretations is the unveiling of better histories, correcting older biases and weaknesses, exploring new directions, using hitherto untapped or little-used sources, making better use of older sources, applying the lessons of theoretical advances made by history and other social science disciplines, etc.

All this is far removed from the preoccupations of the Sangh combine... A history-telling which is reduced to, or dominated by instrumentalism cannot be a meaningful history though it can certainly be meaningful politics, which indeed is precisely the ambition of the Sangh!

So history may not be separable from the passions of politics at any given time but this must never be made into

an excuse for promoting either relativism (anything goes) or myth-making as history... India had an enormous flowering of history writing and research that, for all its pre-Congress and nationalist biases and weaknesses, was not only far superior to colonialist histories but in its range, depth and general quality the envy of all post-colonial countries and many an advanced one as well...

In all this the contribution of historians-scholars-ideologues aligned with, or influenced by Hindutva, has been utterly negligible. But the influence of Marxists and Leftists has been considerably greater though never near as much as made out by the Hindutva brigade...

Nobody should claim there is no space for newer and better approaches to history writing, research and teaching. But it has to be better! Even as the strengths of earlier nationalist historiographies need to be overcome. The Sangh, however, given its ideological predilections, cannot hope to do this; it can only reinforce its most central weakness. This was always in the domain of cultural histories where elite nationalism from the mid-nineteenth century was strongly influenced by a Western paternalist Orientalism that was obsessed about 'civilisational essences' and 'essential differences' and therefore promoted a Brahminical-philosophical centred view of Hinduism, Indian society and culture. It is ironic but entirely accurate that the Sangh, self-proclaimed defenders of indigenist 'authenticity' are the most faithful offspring of Western paternalism in historical research, understanding and writing.

(Source: The New Age, 21-27 November, 1999)

Report on Saffronisation in UP Schools

... The education department in Uttar Pradesh (has) instituted a series of measures towards the saffronisation of education in the state.

March 1998: Directive from the state's education minister, N.K. Gaur, to make the recitation of Saraswati Vandana and Vande Mataram ... compulsory.

September, 1998: ... Kulp Yojana ... was made compulsory for all primary schools in the state. It was aimed at the 'moral and physical development of the child'. Through it, schools have been directed, especially in rural areas, to involve the RSS pracharak in 'naitik shiksha' (moral education). Aim of the scheme: To orient all state-run schools in UP along the lines of the RSS-run-Saraswati Shishu and Bal Vidya mandirs.

While announcing the scheme in UP the minister said that 'kulp' was being introduced to 'enhance the qualitative standard of education' in schools and to ensure that 'teachers are an intermediary between school, family and society'. Contents of the scheme: Hinduising education and educational institutions...

(Source: The Indian Currents, 13-19 September, 1999)

On Modernisation of Madrasa Education Shahabuddin's Letter to HRD Minister, 16 Nov., 99

According to press reports, your Ministry is setting up a Committee to suggest ways to modernize Madarsa education in the country.

As you are aware, a Central Scheme for this purpose is already in operation for several years and has made little impact simply because most Madarsas would not like to increase area of dependence on the Government or to add the school syllabus to the existing Madarsa syllabus.

However, the Muslim community has been progressively reforming the Madarsa system since the beginning of the Century. Many Madarsas without official support, teach English, the principal language of the State and elements of arithmetic, history, geography and even sciences. But the Madarsa education has a basic purpose — to produce not only religious functionaries but experts in the Quran, the Traditions and the Shariah. If Madarsas burden themselves with double courses in the quest of clerical jobs, they lose their *raison d'être*. However, it is possible to re-organise Madarsa education in a manner that at various terminal point, a student may switch to general educational stream and vice versa.

I wonder why the Government, instead of laying emphasis on providing general educational facilities for the Muslim community, which is educationally deprived, in every Muslim Mohalla and tota, is anxious about modernising Madarsa education. The Government does not even collect statistics about the % of Muslim children who never see the face of a school or Madarsa and of those who go to a Madarsa or to a school. I think the Government should begin with a National Educational Survey of the Muslim Community to find out what needs to be done, when and at what level.

I suggest that after the Survey is done, the Central Government should finance opening of primary schools according to national norms in every Muslim Mohalla and tota.; Secondly, secularise the school syllabus and culture so as to dispel the apprehension of the Muslim community that the Government school system is meant to Hinduise them; Thirdly, also ensure that the Mother Tongue is the medium of instruction, where it is different from the principal language of the State, and give Mother Tongue the position of First Language in the Three-Language Formula. Finally, the Government should provide financial and material incentives for all poor parents to send their children to schools. If the Government is really serious about uplifting the Muslims educationally and economically, emphasis on general education and not Madarsa education is the key.

BJP: M.M. Joshi's Views

... India is now 64 per cent literate. My aim is to make it 75 per cent... Secondly, we must find innovative methods and low-cost systems of imparting education. Thirdly, ... the country must be ready to fund education expenditure even by having an education cess. So there should be a three-pronged approach.

My second priority is higher education. We want to improve the quality and make it accessible to the meritorious among the poor. Curricula and syllabi should be constantly updated... (We must) inform our students about India's contribution to world civilisation...

... I call my critics academic fascists, those who do not want to listen to anyone else. Should students not know that there is a chapter on fundamental duties in the Constitution? ... Why shouldn't the contribution of Netaji be taught to students? Or the role of Jayaprakash Narayan in the freedom movement? The role of Birsa Munda? All I'm saying is: please update the whole thing and give the total picture. Why should revolutionaries not find a place?

... People acquire a Hindu nationalist background because I have appointed them... Culture is a vast area and deserves greater attention than it was getting as a part of the HRD ministry. There are others who feel that education and culture should go together. I am comfortable with both views...

(Source: The Week, 14 November, 1999)

On Moral Education in Schools Shahabuddin's Letter to HRD Minister, 2 November, 1999

The Indian Express has reported on 30 October, 1999 that you have constituted a panel to 'prepare' school textbooks for moral education for class I to XII.

I presume the textbooks will be first prepared by the NCERT and then scrutinized by the Committee you have set up. There is need to eliminate the common apprehension in the religious minorities that in the name of moral education, the theology and the cultural ethos of Hinduism will be imposed on the non-Hindu children of the country and that they will thus be brainwashed of their religious and cultural particularities.

I request you to include one eminent theologian each from the Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities in this Committee.

I also request you to have a copy of the Terms of Reference of the Committee sent to me.

Law Commission Proposes Amendment in AICTE Act

Conclusion

On 28 July, 1998, the Law Commission of India has recommended that present clause (k) in Section 10 of the All India Council for Technical Education Act be deleted ... and a new Section – Section 10-A, be inserted to the following effect.

"10-A. Grant of Approval of Starting Technical Institutions and new Courses and programmes

- (1) A person desiring to establish a new technical institution shall apply to the Council for approval in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the rules and the Regulations made thereunder...
- (2) (a) The application mentioned in sub-section(1) shall be accompanied by a letter of consent from the concerned State Government or the Administration of the Union Territory, as the case may be;
(b) An application for grant of consent made to a State Government shall be considered fairly and promptly and in accordance with law in force in the State...
- (3) Where the technical institution proposed to be established proposes to affiliate itself to a university, the application contemplated by sub-section (1) shall be accompanied by a letter of the University, agreeing to consider the request of the institution for affiliation after it obtains the approval from the Council. In such a case, the approval granted by the Council shall become effective and operative only on the grant of affiliation by the University, whether provisional or final...
- (4) No technical institution shall commence functioning except after obtaining the approval of the Council under this section and the affiliation of the concerned University wherever affiliation is proposed with a University.

Shahabuddin's Letter to Law Minister Jethmalani, 6 Dec., 1999

With reference to the Law Commission of India's 160th Report proposing amendments to the AICTE Act, 1987, submitted to the Government on 6.8.1999, may I make the following submission for your kind consideration: -

- 1) The proposed amendments ignores the exercise of the constitutional right of a minority under Article 30 of the Constitution to establish an educational institution of its choice, which may include a technical institution. The right is not subject to prior consent of the Central or State Government or of a University or even the approval of the AICTU. However, for the purpose of recognition and affiliation, such a minority educational institution has to comply with all the academic and infra-structural requirements as other institutions. This calls for a special provision in the Act.
- 2) In several States, the Universities cannot grant affiliation to any technical institution without the approval of the State Government. In such cases the concept of 'autonomy of the University' on which the Commission relies, become redundant. I, therefore, suggest that on par with medical colleges, establishment of engineering and technical degree colleges should also be subject to the consent of the Central Government only, which may consent the State Government concerned, if it so-desires.
- 3) The proposed Sec. 10A (4) will act as an unnecessary constraint on expansion of technical education. The authorities of a technical institution may commence academic functioning once the application they have made to the Council has been found in order and accepted for consideration. Formal approval of the Council and the affiliation may follow.

Supreme Court on Priority in Admission to Minority Technical Institutions

Mathammal Sheela Engineering College, Petitioner vs State of Tamil Nadu and Others, Respondents.

G.B. PATTANAIK AND U.C. BANERJEE, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 29 and 30 – G.Os. No. 220 dated 1.6.1998 and 172 dated 26.4.1999 – Technical Institutions run by linguistic or religious minorities – Admissions to – Held, the linguistic or religious minority institutions will have to grant admission to candidates belonging to the minority community from and within the State of Tamil Nadu at the first instance and, in respect of remaining vacant seats it will be open to such institutions to grant admission to candidates belonging to the minority community hailing from outside, if the minority community is recognised as such in the State of Tamil Nadu – All seats remaining vacant and unfilled by

minority institutions after 31st of August should be intimated to the Director of Technical Education who can fill them up under the Single Window System ... within a period of three weeks from the date of the communication and after three weeks from the date of the communication received by the Director of Technical Education, if those seats are not filled up by the Government concerned then such minority institutions would be free to fill them up by their own candidates – any seats belonging to the 50% Government quota which is not filled up by the Government or the appropriate authority ... will be open for those minority institutions to fill up with their own candidates belonging to the minority communities.

(Source: 1999(4) SCALE)

Prof. Umar Memon

On Urdu in India: Some Observations

... That Urdu is not the language of Muslims alone... Serves an important rhetorical and political purpose,, but has little analytical value. Hindi, for example, is not the language of Hindus alone, nor, for that matter, are Tamil, Gujarati, Bengali etc...

... Since 1947 Urdu has become in India a language exclusive to Muslims, and that the questions concerning the 'development' of Urdu and Urdu education should be considered only with reference to Muslims... Currently, the discourse on Indian Muslims is too emphatically directed by concepts of 'religious minority' and 'reservations'. We should not let these almost twin concepts exclusively govern any discussion of Urdu education in India. Likewise, we should bear in mind that questions concerning the socio-economic plight of Indian Muslims should not be considered with reference to Urdu alone. 'Backwardness' of Indian Muslims does not exclusively, or even primarily, come from the terrible state of Urdu education. Its cause is the overall very low presence of education or even simple literacy among the Muslims... Does Urdu's future development lies in an increase in the number of its speakers? In that case, there is nothing to worry about. According to the 1981 census, there were 34.9 million speakers of Urdu in India, a definite increase over the 28.6 million recorded in 1971.

Or, does 'development' mean an expansion of Urdu's lexicon and those areas of its speakers lives in which Urdu is presently used? If so, how do we measure it? Should we judge it by the quantity and quality of Urdu publications (books, magazines and newspapers)? The question of quantity is easier to explore... According to the Statistical Abstracts published by the Government of India, 428 Urdu books (titles) were published in 1974, as compared to 182 during 1967-68. The same source also provides the following figures: Number of Urdu newspapers and periodicals published in India: 929 in 1975; 1492 in 1984.

As to the questions of quality and subject matter... Urdu Literature (poetry, fiction, criticism and history) seems to be the dominant category, followed by the category of Islamics (commentaries and translations, religious law, sectarian tracts, Sufi literature, etc.) The quality of books in these categories seems to have remained unchanged – a few truly significant books come out every year. Current events, political and economic history, sociological issues and such have never been big in Urdu and that continues to be the case... Urdu as such is (not) going downward, for in whatever sense it might be doing so in India that can't be true in Pakistan too. In other words, we need not worry about the language itself.

What is worrisome is the ambivalence – and worse – one presently seems to feel between Urdu and the Urduwallas in India... To give one example, among the 34 million speakers of Urdu in India, there certainly must be

34 hundred persons of means who can spend a thousand rupees annually on Urdu books. But do they? Even the best Urdu books come out in minuscule first editions, and very few get a second printing. Urdu doesn't have any national weekly publication of the kind that are numerous in English and plentiful in such regional languages as Bengali and Malayalam. Even Hindi has a couple of them. The only weekly or fortnightly magazines in Urdu are a few shrill rags that devote themselves to fiery headlines concerning the 'plight of Indian Muslims' and seem to toe the ideological line of one or the other of the so-called Muslim countries; Libya; Iran; Saudi Arabia. There are only four kinds of monthly magazines in Urdu: literary; quasi-literary and movies oriented; religious; and women's magazines. There is no magazine for children of the quality that is found in several other Indian languages and did in fact exist in Urdu in 1947. Urdu journalism, as a whole, is in a very sad shape, particularly in what is described as the 'heartland of Urdu'. There is not a single flourishing Urdu newspaper in Delhi, UP and Bihar...

Why this depressing state? Is it because the number of Urdu speakers who can afford to subscribe has gone down or is it because they prefer to spend their money elsewhere? I would very much like to find out what effect the Tablighi Jama'at and the Jama'at-e-Islami have had on the reading habits of the educated Muslims of North India. Where do their members, particularly the members of the first group, get their information about the world around them? What publications do they buy? Also, what are the bestsellers in Urdu in India and what can they tell us about the cultural and educational goals of their readers? ...

Some Urdu intellectuals suggest that Urdu should be written in the Devanagri script in India... I don't believe that Urdu should change its script, but I also think that ... if the script is changed, Urdu will have as much, if not more, effect on Hindi. We have the example of the so-called Hindi films; they use a language that is not the cherished variety heard on official bulletins or in the corridors of Hindi institutions. The Hindiwallas are always nervous around Urdu, particularly Urdu texts and authors. They may call Urdu a shaili or style of Hindi, but they will never include Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz (or Sarshar, Ruswa and Qurratulain Hyder) in the Hindi canon. Yes, they have made their own Insha's Rani Ketki ki Kahani and some of Nazir Akbarabadi's poems, but it will be a cold day in hell when they do include a selection of classical Urdu ghazals in Hindi textbooks...

... The (students) know Urdu but are less conversant with its script than with Hindi? If that's the case, shouldn't they be learning how to read and write Urdu rather than its literature? The problem is that at the Aligarh Muslim University and elsewhere, instruction in Urdu means reading Urdu literature. The two tasks, however, are

entirely distinct and should be engaged in separately. Equally importantly, there has to be some strong motive for the students to learn Urdu. They come from a culture where their parents determine what they study, and I have rarely met a parent who knowingly urged any slightly smart progeny of his to study Urdu at the university level. These students take up Urdu because they have no other choice or, more commonly, because the institution requires them... What is intellectually depressing is not that the AMU failed to produce its much ballyhooed History of Urdu Literature, but that it never bothered to publish a complete – or even partial – edition of its own founder's extraordinary writings, much less to make them a serious part of its Urdu syllabus... Statistics (are) often invoked to show how very few Muslims got into the administrative services in India in the Fifties and the Sixties; what is not brought out is the small number of Muslim graduates who actually tried for those services in India in those decades...

... Self-help is best. The Urduwallas will have to take the initiative and find the needed resources themselves. Self-pity and putting blame on others will not get them far. If Muslims can teach their children to vocalise the Qur'an, they can also simultaneously teach them to read Urdu... **Where they have to fight against the prejudice of the authorities is in the area of primary education, which should be available to every child in his or her mother tongue.** That, unfortunately, has not been the case – particularly in the so-called Hindi belt. There, even the facilities available in 1947 were deliberately destroyed by the official proponents of Hindi. The criminal damage they caused has not been corrected yet. According to R.K. Sharma, Director, NCERT, a state institution of utmost importance in the field of Education, of a total of 90,000 schools in UP, only 400 were Urdu-medium, all at the primary level (i.e. upto grade 5), and 70 per cent of Muslim students never reached the 10th grade. Also, according to Mr. Sharma, "in some schools near the Jama Masjid at Delhi there were Urdu teachers who didn't know Urdu at all. But if the powers-that-be are not fair and just, it is much more important presently for Muslim children to be well educated through whatever language is available than poorly or not at all. That is the only way they can successfully compete with their peers in these radically changing times..." (Source: The Ambiguities of Heritage)

The English language has become a global resource. As such, it does not owe its existence – or its future – to any nation, group, or individual. Inasmuch as a language belongs to any individual or any community, English is the possession of every individual and community that wishes to use it, wherever they are in the world. It is in effect as democratic and universal an institution as humankind ever produced.

- World English in Encarta
[This applies to Urdu as well – Editor]

On Urdu Books in Parliament Library Shahabuddin's Correspondence with Lok Sabha I- Letter to Speaker, 10 November, 1999

The Parliament Library has an Urdu Section. However, recently the Urdu books were removed from their repository behind the Librarian's Office to a far off corner in the mezzanine and literally dumped there. The books of all the National Languages continue to occupy the same hall. Urdu alone has been thrown out.

Secondly, I am a regular user of the library for the last 20 years. Hardly any new books have been added to the Urdu collection of late. May I, therefore, request you:

- to restore the original repository of Urdu books – at least to stock them on the main floor of the library;
- to have them properly categorised and arranged;
- to spend at least 5% of the annual acquisition budget on purchase of Urdu books, in consultation with the Urdu-knowing MP's and ex-MP's.

II- Reply from Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1 December, 1999

... Regarding shifting of Urdu books to the Mezzanine floor, I may like to mention that we have been forced to resort to this relocation in our continuous search for space to accommodate the evergrowing collections. In this process we had even to shift books pertaining to certain other regional languages section to one of the buildings outside the Parliament premises. We also must admit that some derangement in stacking during the shifting process had indeed taken place but the same has since been rectified.

As regards spending any fixed percentage of the allocated budget on Urdu books, it may be stated that normally books in regional languages are received gratis under the Press and Registration of Books Act. However, specific suggestions for acquisition of regional language books received from users are considered favourably...

III - Shahabuddin's Rejoinder, 7 Dec., 99

Thank you for your letter No.9/2/99/LY(FF) dated 1 December, 1999 regarding Urdu Section of the Parliament Library.

You will appreciate that all books published in India including Hindi and English books are received gratis in the Parliament Library under the Act cited by you. Yet the budget is largely spent on purchase of English and Hindi books. I would request you to check and let me know the total amount spent on purchase of books during the last 5 years and its break-up by foreign and Indian origin, the latter language-wise.

I would also request you to have a separate cataloguing of Urdu books and of all books **by language** for ease of reference. I hope that as soon as the new building for the Library is available, books in Urdu and other national languages, apart from Hindi, shall be properly stocked.

A.R. Fatihi on Urdu Education in UP

Paper Presented at National Seminar in New Delhi

... In UP the provision of teaching Urdu at the primary stage is available in separate Urdu medium schools. Provision also exists that if enough number of Urdu-speaking children were not available arrangements can be made in the schools where the majority language may be the medium of instruction. It has been accepted from a practical point of view that there should be not less than forty students in the school, or ten students in the class for appointing a teacher to teach Urdu. The educational facilities for instruction through Urdu at secondary level are discouraged by the government authorities in UP, as the UP High School and Intermediate Board has decided not to grant permission for teaching through the medium of Urdu in 1952 at the high school level... The decision not to grant permission for teaching through the medium of Urdu at the high school level is discriminatory, because it prevents the students from having a language of his choice as the first language (and) place the Urdu-speaking students in a disadvantageous position from the students who comes with Hindi as first language from the first standard. In this paper, it is not possible to present a comprehensive account of problems of Urdu education for several reasons...

The provision of educational facilities through Urdu in UP is shown in the *table below*. It provides data on number of schools, teachers and students for the academic year 1994-95.

... A comparative analysis of the figures of the two levels of schools indicates that the percentage of drop out is alarmingly high. Only 14% of the total students joining Urdu primary schools take up Urdu as a medium or subject at Junior High School (JHS) level. In other words, a total drop out percentage at JHS level of those students who join Urdu primary schools is so high as 86%. In Urdu medium JHSs the drop out percentage goes up to 99.7%. It shows that only 0.83% students of Urdu medium primary schools continue their study at Urdu medium JHSs.

... The figures indicate that despite the provision for appearing for the JHS level examination in the Urdu medium in the state, the total number of such students is

very small. In the academic session of 1994-95, the total number of students opting for Urdu medium schools at JHS level goes down to 62,213 from 4,43,000 students in primary Urdu schools... This requires further research in the following two important areas.

First it would be interesting to find out the language medium to which majority of Urdu-speaking children switch over at the JHS level. It would be further interesting to study their proficiency in the language which they adopt as their medium of instruction. The reasons for which the Urdu-speaking children switch over from their mother tongue to other language need to be studied. This would provide insight into attitudes of the Urdu-speakers towards their own mother tongue, its function and status in the state. Another area which deserves a detailed study is the level of bilingualism among Urdu speakers and its impact on their educational achievements...

A linguistic study of Urdu education in UP reveals that the most significant pedagogical issue concerns the willingness and development of appropriate resources and implementing machinery on the part of the state government to make provision for education through minority languages of the region... Thus the use of Urdu as medium of instruction can not be extended beyond the primary and JHS level under such constraints.

The second issue concerns the teaching of Urdu as a subject after the primary level... The teaching of Urdu as a subject could be extended to majority linguistic group to promote linguistic integration. It will contribute to a greater understanding and tolerance on the part of both minority and majority linguistic groups.

The Urdu-speaking linguistic minorities in UP are not unaware of the importance of learning the majority language for educational and employment purposes... This is a healthy trend and adequate facilities should be provided by the language planners to meet the demands of the Urdu-speaking community... The sociological and economical dimensions of Urdu need to be emphasized in the context of globalization to make Urdu education market oriented.

Urdu: Primary Schools, Teachers and Students in UP (1994-95)

Type of School	N u m b e r		
	Schools	Students	Teachers
Primary Schools where Urdu is taught as a subject	5,581	1,75,000	6,082
Urdu medium Primary Schools	422	2,68,000	
Recognized Maktabas	1,155		
Aided Maktabas	814		

Junior Urdu Schools, Teachers and Students in UP (1994-95)

Urdu medium Government Junior Schools	00 }		
Urdu-medium Private Junior High Schools	18 }	224	73
Govt. Jr. High Schools where Urdu is taught as a subject	4,453 }		
Private Junior High Schools where Urdu is taught as a subject	364 }	59,972	4,817

SIMI's Call to Prepare for Islamic Revolution in India

... On the 25th of April 1977 the caravan of the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) set forth on its long and arduous journey from the hallowed precincts of the Aligarh Muslim University. Today, more than two decades later, it finds itself at the vanguard of the Muslim community in India... A combination of its own negligence and apathy towards the Divine instructions of Islam ... and the unrelenting tyranny of the rule of Unbelief (Kufr) ... has resulted in the decline and decay (of) the Muslim community.

(There is) a dark and unholy conspiracy hatched by the enemies of Islam who are united in their efforts to the extinguish the light of Islam... (The world Muslim community) is today wallowing in the depths of despondency and uncertainty. Its proud sons who were once restless in their desire for conquest after conquest are today forced to live off the mercy of others. The brave knights who ... trampled crowns in disdain ... themselves embroiled in bloody, internecine feuds. All (this) makes the Muslim Ummah an inviting ... morsel for fascist, Hindus and Jews... The community which was divinely chosen as the "best community raised from mankind", and a "witness for the people" is today compelled to shirk its ... responsibilities. The reins of the world are today in the bloody hands of those who have chosen to trend the wrong path and are guilty of flagrant violations of the rights of others.

The whole Islamic world is groaning under the cruel and corrupt governments and false gods. Irreligious secular leaders are leading the Millat itself to its destruction. The youth of the Ummah are whiling away their time in luxuries and extravagances. The learned Ulema are woefully unaware of the demands of the times and blissfully unmindful of the need to revive the Islamic political institution of Khilafat... Petty sectarian prejudices have divided the religious scholars and played havoc with the fabric of the Muslim society. And as each episode of this sad drama unfolds, the Muslim community in general and its youngsters in particular, look on from their safe-houses...

In such a (situation), it is the responsibility of this ... community to ... face the challenges that surround it, to revive Deen, to lead and guide not only the Islamic world, but all humanity along the 'Straight Path' and rescue it from the clutches of the Satanic powers...

It is with this purpose that SIMI strives tirelessly... to inculcate Muslim students and youngsters with Islamic principles, mould their characters along Islamic lines, and prepare them to struggle for the truth. They are also trained and exhorted to invite to their non-Muslim brethren to the Right Path...

Important Sections of SIM Tehreek-e-Tulbah-Arabiyyah

SIMI feels an acute need to instill students of madrasas (religious schools) with the revolutionary spirit and to encourage them to rise above petty, sectarian differences. It is expected that their ranks will provide the ... leadership which will ultimately be instrumental in rousing the Muslim masses for an Islamic Revolution... This section has been a huge success...

Girls Wing: ... SIMI has organised a Girls Wing and young girls have responded to it throughout the country...

Shaheen Force: Shaheen force works among children to educate them about Islam and build up their character on the lines of Islam. Various programmes that would interest children like quiz competitions, picnics etc. are conducted for this purpose.

Come and Join us in our Struggle

If you are below thirty years of age then you can join the ranks Ikhwaan, Ansaar or A'wan of our organisation. And even if you are more than thirty, there are ways in which you can still fulfill your responsibilities towards Islam.

(Source: The Islamic Movement, Vol. I, 1999)

Islamic Monotheism & Hindu Pantheism

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Organiser, 22 Oct., 99

Shri G.P. Jain in his letter "Islamic Dogma" (Organiser, 24 October) has tried to equate Hindu pantheism with Islamic monotheism. Philosophically and conceptually the two cannot meet. Secularism lies in accepting the difference and respecting each other's faith, not in participating in rituals which militate against one's faith.

Muslim believe that the Holy Prophet was the last (not the sole) Messenger of God to mankind. In fact Muslims believe that Allah appointed Messengers in all ages to all human communities. Islam envisages a multi-religious world and, therefore, does not permit use of force or coercion against non-Muslims in matters of religion.

The word 'Kafir' is a descriptive term to denote a person who 'denies' the existence of God or does not believe in Islam but it is wrong to say that non-believers 'deserve submission by force'.

Democracy implies freedom, including freedom of conscience and of religion. Personal law of all religious communities is based on religion and in the case of Muslim, rests on scriptural authority. If majoritarianism rides roughshod over basic beliefs and fundamental rights of religious minorities, India will no longer be a democracy.

Sumit Sarkar on Conversion and the Sangh Parivar

... Today, with Ayodhya for the moment allegedly on the backburner, Christian conversion ... being sought to be made into key national issues. Meanwhile, the BJP and the Government it leads ... talk about the need for a "national debate" on conversions and do nothing to seriously curb the anti-Christian campaign by other Parivar affiliates like the VHP. The ground for the Ramjanambhumi agitation had been prepared in a similar manner by the VHP for years, before the BJP formally took it up. Already in Gujarat, where the BJP is solely in power, a bill has been circulated to punish conversion through (a very vaguely defined) "allurement" by a minimum of three years in jail.

What is worrying is the way terms of discourse and commonsensical everyday assumptions are getting moulded, as had happened during the Ayodhya agitation... Conversion is always assumed to be Christian (or, in different contexts, Islamic or any other non-Hindu) conversion. The systematic work of the VHP ever since its foundation in 1964 to spread high-Hindu practices and norms among adivasis is never acknowledged as conversion, but described by terms like shuddhi (purification), 'reconversion', or paravartan (turning back). The implicit assumption behind the use or acceptance of such terms is that **being a Hindu is somehow the "natural" condition of any Indian.** Discursively, therefore, we are already perilously close to Hindu Rashtra. And "Hindu", as defined by the Sangh Parivar, is obviously worlds removed from the devotion of a Ramakrishna for whom the difference between Ishwar, Allah and God mattered as little as that between jal, pani and water.

The surprisingly apologetic tone about conversions, even among many critics of the anti-Christian campaign, makes necessary the restatement of (the) obvious. Conversion in the sense of voluntary change of religion is not just a logical corollary of the Article 25 clause about the fundamental right to "preach, practise and propagate" religion (why else should anyone seek to "propagate"?). Freedom of conscience surely includes the right to change one's ... religion, and a curbing of that right can lead to restrictions on freedom of choice in general, with dominant groups dictating what one can think or do in politics, artistic tastes, dress, ways of life. Conversely, conversion by force or fraud is equally reprehensible, and one fails to see the need for any "national debate" about it. Given the current political and administrative situation in a country where even Dara Singh can roam around freely, it should be obvious that groups like the VHP are far more likely to indulge in such methods. There is ample evidence, notably from Gujarat, that forcible or fraudulent Hindu conversions are in fact going on a significant scale in adivasi areas (see, for instance, the Citizens Committee Report on Incidents in Dang District, Delhi, 1999).

The total implausibility of forcible Christian

conversion in today's India makes necessary a constant harping on Inquisition atrocities centuries ago. This extends to Christians the old Sangh Parivar strategy of branding all Muslims as 'Babar-ki-aulad'. All modern political movements deploy 'history' to enhance legitimacy and more. It needs to be emphasised, however, that 'history' is vital for the Hindutva project on a qualitatively higher scale: hence history text-books and funding bodies have always been the first target of saffronising drives whenever the Sangh Parivar has got into the corridors of power... Hindutva ... has been always marked by significantly gaps and displacements. Thus a foundation-text of the movement, Savarkar's *Hindutva/Who is a Hindu* (1923), written just a few years after Jallianwalla Bagh and the massive Hindu-Muslim unity of the Non-Cooperation-Khilafat movement, managed the remarkable feat of virtual silence about British rule through turning the edge of an admittedly-powerful and seemingly nationalist rhetoric entirely against medieval 'Muslim' invaders and oppressors. The gap widened even more once Muslim communalism ceased to be a major political tendency after 1947 in the Indian part of the sub-continent.

Two inter-related questions arise here. Why target Christians, then, and how is the campaign attaining some plausibility?

Christians, as a small and electorally insignificant minority in most parts of the country, are in the first place a conveniently safe target under conditions of coalition government. Adverse foreign reactions have so far been kept within limits by the new strategy of, not big riots, but everyday petty humiliation of Christians in many parts of the country, interspersed with occasional gross acts of violence against individuals. Attacking them helps to keep the wilder elements within the Sangh Parivar both satisfied and in good fighting trim for future, more aggressive phases. Perhaps more important, Christians represent a convenient and not entirely implausible surrogate for 'swadeshi' at a time when ... Government have speeded up the opening-up of the country to multinationals.

... It remains an elementary fallacy to hold today's Christians (or Muslims) responsible for atrocities committed by some of their co-religionists centuries back... Recent historical research is increasingly highlighting the extent to which sustained Christian philanthropic and educational work have had an empowering impact on significant sections of adivasis, dalits and poor and subordinated groups in general.

... Today, with the churches clearly changing in quite striking ways, there is ample evidence of far greater awareness of such issues among many - though of course very far from all - Christian activists in India. And perhaps it is precisely these aspects that arouse the greatest anger and fear among adherents of Hindutva...

(Source: The Hindu, 9 November, 1999)

Ashok Nehru on the BJP and the RSS

... The BJP is the parliamentary wing of the RSS and represents the beliefs of its parent organisation, which has not budged a whit from its central core. The spin-doctors and marketing managers of the RSS are using techniques practised by successful companies in the great Indian marketplace to meet the organisation's objectives.

Attractive Personality

The RSS takes an overview of the electorate like any professional fast-moving consumer goods producer, segmenting the market to ensure that all consumers are covered. For the RSS/BJP, its beauty soap is Atal Behari Vajpayee... Appealing widely to the upper market segment by projecting a liberal face for the organisation, ... promising to protect the minorities, especially Muslims ... in rather the Nehruvian mould.

Such a man, feels the upper market segment, would never knock down a mosque - it remembers how, after the Babari Masjid was destroyed, he was seen wringing his hands in great distress and saying, "this should never have happened." It chooses to forget, however, that the next day he jumped on the party's bandwagon...

If Vajpayee is the luxury soap, the RSS/BJP's equivalent for the mass volume middle class product is of course L. K. Advani, who offers vigour, drive and an articulate, hard-line approach, especially towards the minorities. None will forget his Rath Yatra starting from Kanyakumari, traversing the length of this vast land, spewing hatred in public meeting... Television viewers would recall his declaring on the night of December 6, 1992, that the tearing down of the mosque was all the fault of the Government and its incorrect policies.

For the lowest segment of the market, there is the ordinary utility soap. For the RSS, this segment of the electorate is covered by its extremist wings, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, whose storm-troopers carried out dry-runs of the breaking down of the Babari Masjid months in advance and then smashed the structure on December 6. This segment forms a vast pool of support for the RSS/BJP.

With a continuous marketing barrage through all the media segments, the RSS ensures its sales are targeted at the consumers of its choice, and adjusts its strategy to changes in the mood of the electorate with great effect. Its marketing managers, aware of the current mood for a stable long-term Government, have projected the luxury toilet soap brand - Vajpayee to capture voters, specially the upper middle class intelligentsia who influence and control mass media. These controllers of public opinion in turn handle Vajpayee with kid gloves, and inadvertently - or perhaps intentionally - fall in with the RSS's phraseology!

Question: Mr. Vajpayee, what do you intend to do about the mosques at Kashi and Mathura, the temple at Ayodhya, Article 370, a common civil code?

Answer: They are not on our agenda.

And the questioner passes on swiftly to the next subject.

Such kid-glove treatment of a Prime Ministerial candidate by the media is a patent disservice to the Indian voter. The media's duty is to inform, educate and only then influence the public. If a public figure tries to fudge or obfuscate, the media's duty is ... not allow an evasive answer. It is not enough to say that these issues are not on the agenda, or are on the back burner. This implies clearly that if the BJP wins enough seats in this or another election, they will be put on the front burner.

It is our duty as responsible citizens to vote in elections only after being aware of, and considering carefully, the serious issues at stake. We have to cut through emotions and media hype to focus on the core. For the educated Indians, especially of the upper middle class, the responsibility is commensurately greater.

We must remain aware ... that the common goal of the RSS, its parliamentary wing, the BJP, its unparliamentary wings, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, and its many other front organisations, is to set up a Hindu Rashtra, a Hindu theocratic state. This would be a mirror image of the Islamic State of Pakistan.

The RSS's philosophy is that "Hindus alone constitute the Indian nation since they are India's original inhabitants and sole creators of its tolerant society and culture, that this tolerance has been mistaken as weakness by other, later, religions" (*"Khaki Shorts and Saffron Flags"*, *Orient Longman*, 1993); and that those religions are dependent on their future well-being on the Hindus, who must not be trifled with. This attitude is summed up in its formulation "Pitri Bhumi, Punya Bhumi" or "Fatherland, Holy Land", which asserts that for Hindus, India is the holy land, while for Muslims and Christians it is Mecca and Jerusalem respectively. The loyalties of Muslims and Christians are therefore suspect by definition. All Indians will have to abide by the rules laid down by the Hindus, and these will be directed by the RSS, which is authoritarian like other cadre-based fascist parties, such as the Nazis in Germany.

Hitler had strongly influenced M.S. Golwalkar, the RSS chief, who wrote approvingly in 1938 of the purging of the Jews as a consequence of the near impossibility of different races and cultures being assimilated into one united whole, "a good lesson in Hindustan to learn and profit by."

Constitution Violated

This obnoxious muscular Hinduism, otherwise known as Hindutva, propagated by the RSS and its front organisations, negates the basis of the Indian Constitution ... that India is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-lingual state, with the rights of all citizens protected under the rule of law. These principles of pluralism and secularism, however imperfectly administered, have formed the bedrock of India for the half-century since Independence.

... When Gandhiji was shot dead by Godse ... in the environment of hatred fostered by the RSS, the Government banned the RSS... The ban was lifted after a year on certain conditions, one of which was that the RSS adopt a written constitution and work in the cultural field only.

The RSS, thus created a political party in 1951, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (later the BJP)... It also drafted its most promising pracharaks to assist the new organisation. The three best known were Vajpayee, Advani and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya. The first two are now Prime Minister and Home Minister respectively after almost 50 years of devoted service to the RSS ideals.

It is difficult to believe that they are anything

but the dedicated pracharaks they have demonstrated themselves to be, and that the aim of the RSS/BJP is anything but what it has always been - to establish a Hindu Rashtra.

... Such narrow-minded, bigoted intolerance, which clearly discriminates between Indian and Indian on the basis of religion, and by extension envisions second-class rights for non-Hindus, can in no way be dignified with the name of Hinduism or any name similar to it. The RSS ideology is a total distortion of the hugely, perhaps even excessively tolerant, view of life of the majority of the population of India...

Sections of the media and industrialists have done the RSS/BJP the great service of making this fascist party look respectable...

... If the RSS/BJP are voted to power... Mr. Vajpayee is a mere mortal; when he goes, or is made to go by party hard-liners, who will the RSS offer as Prime Minister of India... Advani? Joshi? Pramod Mahajan? Govindacharya? Singhal? This galaxy of stars makes secular, middle-of-the-road India shudder, and even keener to ensure that we do not usher in a fascist future.

(Source: The Hindu, 5 October, 1999)

With Best Compliments

from

Associate Lumbers Limited

TIMBER MERCHANTS, IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS
India's First and Largest Group of Timber Importers

Regd. Office: "ASSOCIATE HOUSE", 85-A, Victoria Road,
 Mustafa Bazar, Mumbai - 400 010

☎ 3717777/3728820/21/22 Fax: (91-22)3738787/3732222

BRANCH OFFICES: **MANGALORE:** (0824)
 "Associate House"
 Vas Lane,
 Mangalore - 575 002
 ☎ (O) 407726 & 407588
 (F) 407000 @ 423340

DELHI: (011)
 (F-22, Bhagwant Singh
 Market, Sadar Bazar
 Delhi - 110 006
 ☎ (O) 7775066
 (F) 7524310 @ 3540594

KANDLA: (02836)
 "Associate House"
 National Highway(8-A)
 Gandhidham - 370 201
 ☎ (O) 23955 & 22873
 (F)33965 (R)32894 & 22894

Festering Wounds of Bhagalpur Massacre Kanhaiah Bhelari's Report in the Week

... 116 persons were killed in a communal riot in Logai in Bhagalpur district on October 27, 1989. It was one of the worst communal riots, with more than a thousand killed in the district. The rioters in Logai buried the bodies in a field and planted vegetables there, defying curfew... Officer in charge of Jagdishpur P.S. and the Block Development Officer allegedly helped in burying the bodies... The case has not yet come up for hearing... Special Public Prosecutor says the delay is mainly because some of the accused are absconding. But he also blames the police for not showing any keenness to trace them...

Those who had migrated from Logai ... after the massacre, never mustered courage to return, even though strangers had usurped their land... Malka Begum of Chanderi, whose leg was chopped off. The marauders, who killed 66 persons in her village, left her in a pond for dead. Soldiers rescued her and took her to a hospital...

In all, 811 FIRs had been filed after the riots. The police filed 302 chargesheets, and the lower courts have disposed of 152 cases, acquitting the accused in 119 cases. In the remaining 33 cases, the District and Sessions Court punished many of the accused with life imprisonment. Most of them have appealed to the High Court. The other cases are pending before the special courts.

The state government gave compensation of Rs 1 lakh each to the families of 634 victims. Some also got Rs 10,000 from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

The administration rejected 169 pleas for compensation... (though) the Sessions Court has directed the district administration to pay compensation in some of these cases... Most of the accused have got bail while others are persuading the appellants to withdraw their cases. Some witnesses do not turn up during hearings as the police do not provide them any security... (Some) got anticipatory bail. **All the 24 accused involved in the riots in Chanderi are on bail.** The hearing in these cases is yet to begin.

The state government had constituted three special courts, exclusively for riot cases. It also appointed two special public prosecutors who were later replaced by five SPPs in 1995. A special court judge (said) that the police were not keen on producing the witnesses or tracing the accused, even after receiving several court notices.

On the other hand, many (Muslims) claim that the police falsely implicated them... With financial help from Tisco, the district administration had built 200 houses at three riot-hit villages for those affected. But in Chanderi, only 5 of the 27 affected families live in these houses. The rest are occupied by anti-socials... The riot-hit families have no hope that the marauders will ever be brought to book...

Gujarat: First Hindu Rashtra in India

The advent of the BJP as the ruling party in Gujarat (has) been accompanied by communal riots. Not that the state remained peaceful at other times. Communal riots have almost become a part of the life of Gujarat, which the Hindutva brigade earlier called the laboratory of Hindutva and now proudly calls "The First Hindu Rashtra".

Only in July, 1999 Juhapur village witnessed a riot which uprooted 900 tribal families. Almost simultaneously state capital Ahmedabad was rocked by a communal riot. These were preceded by the attacks on the Christians all over the state, particularly at Dangs, where the churches were burnt. The Christians ... live under a perpetual threat of riot... At the entrance of over 1,200 villages hang banners welcoming the visitor to the "First Hindu Rashtra"...

(Source: The New Age, 5-11 September, 1999)

Prosecute Bajrang Dal Intellectuals' Appeal to Prime Minister

... We bring to your notice the threat issued by Pratap Chander Sarangi, convenor, State Bajrang Dal, Orissa, in which he has said, "If statements against the Bajrang Dal do not stop forthwith, the consequences will be dangerous and disastrous... My organisation will not be responsible for these "consequences".

This open criminal threat to democratic institutions and religious minorities violates the provisions of the law. This is a threat meant to intimidate and silence by a show of force all investigations and social responses to the brutal slaying last week of the Catholic priest, Father Arul Doss and before him, of the Muslim trader, Sheikh Rehman, in the Mayurbhanj area of Orissa.

This threat is a part of a three-point strategy to divert attention from the reign of terror that has been let loose against the minorities in the tribal areas ranging from Orissa to Gujarat...

The strategy of the Sangh Parivar is clear. Manufacture half-truths and lies to divide communities and foist a minority sectarian point of view of its own; secondly, to demonise religious and cultural groups and their clergy; and lastly, to give a clean chit to the killers and the communal and fascist ideology that fuels their murderous activities...

... The silence of the Prime Minister and important functionaries of his party and the Government, we fear, act as an encouragement to these forces.

We expect the Prime Minister to direct his Home Minister and the CBI to register criminal cases against Mr. Sarangi (and) to direct the CBI to ensure that it arrests Dara Singh.

Kamal Chenoy
Joseph de Souza

Denzil Keelor
Ambrose Pinto

John Dayal

S. Subbanna on Hinduism's Assimilation of Buddhism

The Hindus ... appropriated the Buddhist sacred places and shrines in the due course and supplanted the Buddha's images with those of Vishnu or Surya or even Shiva-Bhairava. Apart from converting thousands of Viharas into important centres of Hinduism, the most important Buddhist shrines which met this fate include the great Maha Bodi Temple at Buddha Gaya...

When Cunningham in 1860-61 discovered Kushinara, the sacred spot where the Buddha had entered *Mahaparinibbana*, he found that the cremation *stupa* had been converted into a Hindu temple and on the top of it stood the shrine of *Rambhar Bhavani*.

Among the Buddhist shrines which still continue to be dedicated to the Hindu gods include Caityas of *Cheerala* and *Ter* in Andhra Pradesh as *Shiva* and *Vishnu* temples respectively.

Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu, at present one of the abodes of Shankaracharya, was till the 14th century A.D. a famous Buddhist centre... Nobody can ignore the story of the *Vishnupada* temple at Gaya which is at present an important place of pilgrimage for Hindus... Though the footprints in *Vishnupada* temple have been venerated by the Hindus as the legendary feet of *Vishnu*, yet in reality, it is not so. The footprints are the Buddha's footprints and not of *Vishnu*, and were appropriated by the Hindus after the fall of Buddhism in Gaya and around...

The *Gayawals*, the priests of the *Vishnupada* temple are, in the opinion of some scholars, the descendants of the Buddhist *Bhikkhus* who were converted by Shankaracharya and persuaded them to act as Hindu priests under the name of *Gayawals*. Significantly enough, the *Gayawals*, having no base within the Hindu caste system, claim themselves to have been specially created by the Brahma to act as *Shradha* priests of Gaya.

... Jagannath ... *Vaishnavite* temple (at Puri) till the 9 century was a very flourishing Buddhist institution when Buddhism disappeared it was taken over and converted into a Hindu institution... What Harekrishna Mehtab, freedom fighter, Governor and C.M. of Orissa, has written in his book entitled "*The History of Orissa*". He says:

"There is no doubt that at one time the symbols of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha were being worshipped all over India. Recently a stone of Asokan polish with the symbols of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha at the top has been found out at Bhubaneswar and it is now preserved in the Ashutosh Museum at Calcutta. The symbols are a little different from those found out at Sanchi and other places but the Bhubaneswar symbols are almost exactly like the images of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. The Bhubaneswar discovery proves that in Orissa the worship of the symbols was prevalent since the Asokan period.

"From the foregoing considerations we may conclude

that during the reign of Asoka, the Savaras of Orissa were converted to Buddhism. A Buddhist *stupa* was constructed at Puri and the symbols of *Tri-Ratna* was there..."

Most of the early works of Indian Art are Buddhist. There are no examples of buildings from pre-Mauryan or Mauryan times except the sand-stone columns of the palaces of Asoka unearthed in the excavations near Patna ... of which ten bear inscriptions speaking of Asoka's efforts to popularise the Dharma among the people. Many of these pillars bear the figures of lions, bulls or elephants. The lions on the pillar of Sarnath representing the fearlessness of Buddha's preaching...

Vincent Smith records a shrine in Sholapur district, originally Buddhist but later converted into a Brahminical temple and so preserved from destruction. At Cherala in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, we have also a free standing Chaitya hall (now converted into a Hindu temple) with a wagon-vaulted roof...

(Source: The Dalit Voice, 16-30 November, 1999)

[S. Subbanna is a Retired Ad.D.G. of the AIR]

Illogical Propaganda on Muslim Conquest Shahabuddin's Letter to Organiser, 9 Dec., 99

Mr. Daya Krishna's article "Muslim Rule" (12 December, 1999) suffers from a clear logical flow. He attributes Muslim conquest primarily to the Buddhist emphasis on non-violence and mentions the NW region as peopled by the Buddhist. Yet according to him, "it took Muslim 400 years for conquering NW of India". But they took "only 20 years more for conquering the Gange Valley and only 10 years more for conquering whole of Deccan and South India". This appears to be illogical.

Secondly, the basis for K.S. Lal's compilation of Muslim population upto 1800 is not known. In 1901, there was a census. So it was, every 10 years. It should have been better to quote the official census. As it is, the total population is said to have increased by 223.53 between 1810 and 1947 and Muslim population, by 384%.

How is this difference to be explained? No Buddhist people were conquered by Muslims during this period; there were no military expedition by Muslims and no 'mass enslavement', no Jizia, no Aurangzeb, not even Tipu Sultan, and certainly no immigration. Can this all be explained by conversion of Hindu males for marriage with Muslim females? Even if this is assumed to have occurred on a large scale between 1800 and 1947 (which did not), this would not contribute to the high growth rate of Muslim population as the number of child-bearing females remained unchanged.

Will Mr. Daya Krishna explain which part of his thesis applies to the period 1800-1947?

Eminent Historian Mushirul Hasan on Naipaul's Islamophobia

... (Naipaul a) writer of Indian origin has chosen to fulminate against Islam and the Indian Muslims... Having explored an area of darkness and chronicled the histories of a wounded civilisation and a million little mutinies in India, he decided to fire his shots at the world of Islam. This was the beginning of a long-term laboured project. Long before Samuel Huntington earned his reputation for expounding the clash of civilisations theory, the Trinidad-born writer alerted his Western readers to the growing Islamic menace. Among the Believers, his Islamic journey to Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia, led him to represent Islam as a hostile and aggressive force, and caricature Muslim societies as rigid, authoritarian and uncreative. "Is-lam sancti-fied rage, rage about the faith, political rage: one could be like the other. And more than once on this journey I had met sensitive men who were ready to contemplate greater convulsions."

India: A Million Mutinies, published in 1990, conjured up the same images... He referred to the 1857 revolt as the last flare-up of Muslim energy in India until the agitation, 80 years or so later, for a separate Muslim homeland. He found bazaars in Lucknow expressing the faith of the book and the mosque. Everything in the bazaar, he felt, served the faith (For all these years, I have searched in vain for such a bazaar in a city that I know better than Naipaul). Two years after this book was published, he came out in virtual defence of the demolition of the Babari Masjid...

Today, Naipaul's worldview remains unchanged. Hindu militancy, he says in a recent interview to the Outlook magazine, is a necessary corrective to the past, a creative force. To say that India has a secular character, he adds, is being historically unsound. This makes Naipaul a worthy chairman for the committee that is being readied for a major political rehearsal – the review of the Indian Constitution. He rejects the possibility of Islam working out reconciliation with other religions on the subcontinent. Islam is a religion of fixed laws. This, he points out, goes contrary to everything in modern India. This is, in just a few crispy sentences, the clash of civilisations theory

applicable to the subcontinent.

There is a great deal of talk nowadays of re-writing our history. Naipaul has quite a few brilliant ideas for the newly appointed chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research. One of them is to give voice to the 'defeated people.' Mind you, not the poor or the downtrodden but the Hindus living in 'Hindu India.' To add poignancy to our historical narratives, Naipaul suggests that we concentrate on a more tragic and more

illuminating theme. That theme is the 'grinding down of Hindu India.' So, revive memories of temples being destroyed, Hindus being forcibly converted to Islam, and Sikh gurus being mercilessly executed by the Mughal emperors.

If one has to build a modern India by invoking the brutal past, the prescription is to rubbish the forces of assimilation and integration in Indian society. Finally, if the ICHR pays heed to Naipaul's advice, he would drop Gandhi from the history syllabus. That is because Naipaul regards the Mahatma as uneducated, and not a thinker. He has no message today...

Naipaul's exposition is clumsy, naive and gibberish. He is as much ill-informed about India as Samuel Huntington is about the world outside the Western hemisphere.

He talks of India's fractured past solely in terms of the Muslim invasions and the grinding down of the Hindu-Buddhist culture of the past. He must know that celebrating the coming of the Turks or the vandalism of the Islamic zealots is nobody's favourite pastime. The historian's job is to come to terms with Turkish, Afghan and Mughal rule, study their politics objectively, and examine the consequences of their policies dispassionately. Fuming and fretting ... takes you nowhere. Anger, remorse and bitterness are not a substitute for serious study and analysis.

We have both inherited and self-created problems and difficulties. But we must have time and our own spaces to sort them out...

(Source: The Indian Express, 27 November, 1999)

S.V. Naipaul On Islam's Impact on India

'Fractured past' is too polite a way to describe India's calamitous millennium. The millennium began with Muslim invasions and the grinding down of the Hindu-Buddhist culture of the North. This is such a big and bad event that people still have to find polite, destiny-defying ways of speaking about it. In art books and history books, people write of the Muslims 'arriving' in India, as though the Muslims came on a tourist bus and went away again. The Muslim view of their conquest of India is a truer one. They speak of the triumph of the faith, the destruction of idols and temples, the loot, the carting away of the local people as slaves, so cheap and numerous that they were being sold for a few rupees. The architectural evidence – the absence of Hindu monuments in the North is convincing enough. This conquest was unlike any other that had gone before. There are no Hindu records of the period. Defeated people never write their history. The victor writes the history. The victors were Muslims. For people on the other side it is a period of darkness.

... The terrible Akbar ravages Orissa in the east. This means that while a country like England is preparing for greatness under its great queen, old India, in its sixth century of retreat, is still being reduced to non-entity.

To say that India has a secular character is being historically unsound. Dangerous or not, **Hindu militancy is a corrective to the history I have been talking about. It is a creative force and will be so. Islam can't reconcile with it.**

- V.S. Naipaul's Interview with Onlooker

Arvind N. Das

On Media's Softness towards BJP

... Witness the manner in which the free press has covered the political developments. If politicians have been making the most convoluted twists and turns, the journalists have been no better in taking positions that conform to the political contortions. Newspapers might grandly proclaim "Let Truth Prevail" on their mastheads but many of them have behaved as if they believe that **whatever prevails is the truth**. Thus, if one day, Sharad Yadav, of the felicitous "parkati" phrase fame, visits The RSS headquarters at Keshav Kunj and quietly becomes a member of the Cabinet which, inter alia, proposes to reserve parliamentary seats for women, the media go along with him in a willing suspension of disbelief. If George Fernandes, that doughty slayer of many a multinational monster, meekly stands in the line to welcome foreign insurance firms, the press does not deem it necessary to ask questions. If L. K. Advani himself claims that he "abhors communalism" even as his colleague Murli Manohar Joshi packs textbooks with communal propaganda, the dichotomy is treated as simple duality. Indeed, some of the most respected commentators have appeared to take the philosophical position that what is real must also be rational.

Notice the manner in which such journalists have related to the fresh wave of reservations bestowed on the new backward castes in northern Indian states. The same champions of merit who proclaimed ten years ago when Mandal was announced that civilisation itself had been subverted have humbly endorsed the expansion of the lists of backward beneficiaries.

Also, note the manner in which such journalists have changed their approach to their former bete noire, V.P. Singh, that destroyer of merit. A few years ago, he was for them the vilest politician ... a person steeped in cynical and shortsighted casteism who had destroyed the very foundations of the meritocracy that had sustained India for centuries and led it to its glorious position in the world...

However, this time round their approach to V.P. Singh has changed. The man remains the same but he has acquired a sudden sagacity and respectability as far as such media commentators are concerned. Not only was he given enormous exposure on the post-election telecasts but he was shown deference due to a statesman...

The response of such commentators to Atal Behari Vajpayee is in a way similar in its simple-mindedness. They have been taken in by the affability of the avuncular poet-politician and swayed by his oratory. So much so that they refused to see that the colossus that they have been admiring not only has feet of clay but also that there are

Iqbal A. Ansari

On Minorities Rights in the Constitution

... (A) discussion of the fate of minority rights in the Constituent Assembly brings into focus the following: that the leading lights of the Indian National Congress were inspired by a vision of a homogenized unitary cultural nationalism, and that the circumstances in which partition was effected cast their shadow on the whole process of constitutional protection of minorities, robbing it of much of its content. The same unhappy denouement of partition rendered the position of the Muslim minority in India more vulnerable to the extent that in sections of the national political leadership and more so in bureaucracy the community came to be treated as suspect. It also helped to exhume buried ghosts of perceived wrongs done during the time of the so-called Muslim rule in medieval India. Today, nearly fifty years after the working of the Constitution and the unfolding of the shape of the polity, it should be obvious that whatever extent of India's unity and solidarity, it is the result not of homogenization but of federalism and pluralism. This is also the lesson drawn the world over during the last decade by all centralizing-homogenizing states. 'Pluralism in togetherness' or 'togetherness in pluralism' has become the watchword of the day wherever there are sizeable minorities based on race, religion, language or ethnicity.

It is therefore, time that a thorough review of the Constitution is undertaken in the light of its effectiveness in protecting the rights of minorities to survival and development with dignity and freedom and in promoting cherished features of their identity:

It is worthwhile examining how the assurances of ensured participation in the political process and here in power of minorities – while doing away with statutory reservation of seats in legislatures for them –and the promise of fairness in securing them their due share in public services, have really worked through policy and programme on minorities.

A review of the Constitution is also required to bring its provisions on minorities into conformity with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted on 18 December, 1992.

It needs to be stressed that while minority rights cannot be relativized, as affirmed by Ambedkar at the early stage of the framing of the Constitution, the universality of minority rights, as of human rights, in general demands that South Asian multi-lateral instruments are adopted providing for a machinery of implementation of equal rights of minority in all SAARC countries, especially in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

(Source: The Politics of Constitution Making in India)

(Contd. on Page 43)

Muslims in India: Past, Present and Future

Navaratna S. Rajaram

Extra-territorial Loyalty in the Past

Gandhi's first major act upon gaining control of the Congress was to (launch) Non-Cooperation Movement known as the Khilafat (sic). It was for the restoration of the Sultan of Turkey who had been defeated in the War. The Sultan had pretensions to being the successor to the Caliph – a claim not recognized by the Muslims outside India. So it was a strictly Indian movement but with a foreign focus – in support of a transnational theocratic institution of no relevance to India...

With the benefit of hindsight one can see that the Khilafat Non-Cooperation Movement (as it was called) was a watershed in more respects than one. First it sowed the seeds of Muslim separatism leading to the Partition. Second, it marked the eclipse of the nationalists in the Congress and the dominance of the moderate wing that was willing to make compromises with the British on basic principles like Swaraj...

... Gandhi ... was prepared to concede separatist demands of the Muslim leadership to achieve unity! ... Gandhi said: "We talk of Hindu-Mohammedan unity. It would be an empty phrase if the Hindus hold aloof from the Mohammedans when their vital interests are at stake. 'This vital interest' was the restoration of the Khilafat in faraway Turkey at the cost of national freedom! On this the eminent historian R.C. Majumdar commented:

"If a hundred million Muslims are more interested in the fate of Turkey and other Muslim states outside India than they are in the fate of India, they can hardly be regarded as a unit of Indian nation. By his own admission that the Khilafat question was a vital one for the Indian Muslims, Gandhi himself in a way admitted that they formed a separate nation; they were in India, but not of India."

(Source: The Organiser, 19 September, 1999)

SK Sadar Nayeem

Targets of Hindu Communalism Today

In the years immediately following independence and partition of India, the position of Indian Muslims vis-a-vis Hindus was being viewed as a trilateral one, with the presence of Pakistan an essential factor. During this turbulent period of Indian history, the continued presence of the Muslims in India even after the creation of Pakistan was thought to be against "a natural cultural ecology", hence unnatural, even though the Muslim masses never wanted Pakistan...

... The partition of India ... created an illogical, yet inescapable situation for the Indian Muslims who did not go to Pakistan in 1947. Under those circumstances, if the Hindu attitude towards Muslims in those years had been "a mixture of indifference tinged with contempt and fear", that attitude was understandable. But gone are the days of isolation of Indian Muslims from the vast majority of the country. No doubt, the majority of Hindus believe in

Rafiq Zakaria

Bright Future in Motherland

... Today all Indian Muslims wish that India had remained united. There would then have been five important states (Punjab, Sind, the Frontier, Assam and Bengal) under Muslim majority rule; consequently they would have exercised considerable influence on the Centre. Today they hardly have a voice in Delhi.

Time is, however, the best healer; Indian Muslims are gradually getting over their misfortunes. But they have realised that they have no friends; to survive they must rely on their own strength. They must work hard and make themselves useful to their motherland. They are beginning to re-orient their approach to life and its problems. They have begun to cultivate Hindus to win them over, for they are aware that goodwill begets goodwill. They are now less inclined to waste their energies on non-issues. Their main concerns are education and employment.

Functioning in a free, democratic and secular set-up, their vision has broadened... The poor, who form the vast majority, have still a long way to go but even they are planning ahead for their children...

On the whole, Indian Muslims are marching ahead, facing new challenges bravely. The 20th century has been a tragic period, full of pain and anguish for them, but the new millennium promises a more hopeful and prosperous future. And who knows? They may be able to show the right path of enlightenment and progress to the Muslims all over the world and play an effective role in re-uniting India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in a loose federation...

(Source: The Times of India, 15 August, 1999)

secularism and largely because of their secularism, India remains a secular country. And 50 years after the partition 200 million Muslims, more than the entire population of Pakistan, live in secular India without either being subjugated or swallowed by the Hindu majority. Therefore, the survival of Indian Muslims with honour in independent India, puts a big question mark on the very rationale behind the creation of Pakistan itself.

Unfortunately, the current Kargil conflict showed that as far as India's secularism is concerned, all problems are not yet over. There are still people whose political careers thrive on stirring the communal cauldron...

... People like Bal Thackeray and his Shiv Sena sprang into action to find out who among Indian Muslims is not nationalist. After Ali Mian, the next in queue was Dilip Kumar... Bal Thackeray cannot call himself a nationalist when he has always tried to destroy the secular democratic fabric of the Indian nation. Therefore, what right has he got to ask proof of nationalism from the Indian Muslims?

The question now is, who will rein in those elements who are trying to communalise the Kargil conflict by projecting Indian Muslims as anti-national in order to reap electoral benefit...

(Source: The Statesman, 22 September, 1999)

Superstitious Politicians

Superstition and politics go hand in hand, so it seems from Delhi politicians' apparent hesitation to contest from a Lok Sabha seat three times in a row.

The 'third-time-unlucky' jinx, appears to have made several politicians switch over to a new constituency after two wins... Believers of the "third-time-unlucky" jinx cite the example of Sushma Swaraj who has decided against contesting the South Delhi seat... It would have been her third contest in a row after two successive victories.

(Source: The Times of India, 25 August, 1999)

Bhoomi Puja Before a Secular Party Rally

... The Lok Shakti is all set to have an alliance with JD(Patel). As a first step, a bhoomi puja was performed on Thursday at the National College grounds before the JD-Lok Shakti combine holds a rally at the same venue.

(Source: The Times of India, 8 August, 1999)

Atrocities Against Untouchables

... A Scheduled Caste woman and her alleged lover were publicly humiliated ... on the directions of the Panchayat. Their heads ... were tonsured and their faces painted black. Then they were taken out in a procession...

The Panchayat of Scheduled Caste community was summoned to decide their fate...

Senior residents of the village supported the verdict of the Panchayat...

(Source: S. Raju in The Hindustan Times, 10 October, 1999)

Atrocities against Shudra Family

A local BJP leader and his influential sons allegedly stripped three girls belonging to a backward caste ... in Bilhaur near Kanpur.

According to eyewitnesses, the family members of the victims were brutally beaten up...

Supporters gheraoed the Bilhaur police station and mounted pressure on the cops not to register a case. However, a case was registered...

... The BJP leader Shiv Dularey Awasthi ... had blocked the way to a temple by constructing a wall... To take a short-cut Mamta was trying to jump over the wall where Awasthi and his sons reportedly dragged her down... She was stripped and beaten till she lost consciousness... Later (Awasthi) and his sons barged into Mamta's house and overpowered her two other sisters, Maya and Meena and beaten up...

Ramlali and her family had been beaten up by the Aswasthis at least three times in the recent past. The BJP leaders were pressuring the police to register a case against Ramlali and her family, (the SP) said.

(Source: The Hindustan times, 19 October, 1999)

Women not Entitled to Independence, Property, Religious Learning Views of Swami Nishchalanand

... I do not want to see any change in the social structure of Hindu religion. **Our scriptures command that women are not entitled to read the Vedas**, and I am merely following the commandment...

The women command many religious rights (for example) an important role to play in a yagya. On other religious occasions too she plays an important role. We give her a very respectable position... In every situation (the woman) lives under the guardianship of a man. That is why **she needs no property**.

... **The scriptures do not accept her independence**. ... Hindu religion (has) taught the world how to respect a woman. This is the religion which says that 'the gods abode there where the women are respected'. Hindu religion does not (see) her as a means of enjoyment. On the contrary, she is believed as the 'better half' (ardhangiri) of a man. Devdasis and the 'apsaras' are the part of religion. They have their work to do. It is of no use to cast any doubt on them.

(Source: The Inter Religious Dialogue, May 1999)

(Courtesy: The Indian Currents, 8-4 November, 1999)

Dowry-Related Violence Tally 5000 lives

Dowry-related violence claims the live of over 5,000 women each year... During 1996, domestic torture constituted 30.4 per cent of the total crimes committed against women in India. In the guise of family honour, culture and tradition ... there is a general acceptance of violence against women... A spot survey conducted by Sakshi in Delhi in 1996 by involving 87 Govt. and private sector employees revealed that 60% of women respondents had either experienced sexual harassment at their work place or knew of other women who had experienced such harassment. Another similar survey in Kerala, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Bhubaneswar and Bangalore revealed that 72% of women respondents had either encountered or heard of such harassment.

"According to a WHO review of Commonwealth government initiatives to combat violence against women, there is relative paucity of campaigns dealing with violence, particularly rape and sexual assault. Women's group in several countries and most certainly in India have offered support across a range of women's issues. Several women, who are victims of sexual violence, are reluctant to report the crime to the police, family or others. This may happen also because, as a part of a subordinated group, women's own definition of their injuries is shaped by their assessment of whether they could get anyone to do anything about it", the Sakshi statement said.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 10 December, 1999)

Compulsions of History, Geography, Culture and Economics will Assert in Long-run Indo-Pakistan Hostility Neither Permanent Nor Irremediable Shahabuddin's Reply to Chandan Mitra

With reference to the article "Pakistan's India Problem and Vice Versa" (21 Nov., 1999), by Chandan Mitra, it does not diagnose the malady correctly and, what is worse, pronounces it as incurable. No doubt, an average Indian and Pakistani, despite all their familiar similarities, look at each other with suspicion while they both wallow in self-righteousness. No doubt Pakistan, 50 years after its birth, is still wandering in quest of its identity. No doubt for 50 long years, India and Pakistan have fought with each other or lived in uneasy peace. Yet 50 years of separation is too short a period as compared to 5000 years of unity. So the compulsions of history, geography and culture, no less of economics and national, regional and international interests as developing states are bound to assert themselves in the long run.

Chandra Mitra's proposition of a 'historic civilizational conflict between Islam and Hinduism' is questionable. The interaction of Islam and Hinduism on the soil of the Sub-continent produced a cultural synthesis – in literature, mysticism, fine arts and architecture and a common way of life which gave us Urdu, Ghazal, Hindustani Music and Mughal Miniatures, not to speak of the Taj Mahal. No thesis of civilizational conflict can explain them away, or the composite culture which is the common heritage of the people of the Sub-continent. Chandan Mitra reiterates this false thesis to justify his notion of perpetual hostility. Little does he realise that his thesis serves to justify the creation of Pakistan and, what is worse, condemns the Indian State to a permanent 'civil war' between the Hindus and the Muslims who are both Indians.

To understand Pakistan and the diplomatic and military games it plays, one has to go back to the political evolution which culminated in partition and independence. Pakistan was seen as a solution to India's communal problem; creation of Pakistan merely internationalised it. Quest for parity was their war cry. It remains Pakistan's quest to this day. Partition was seen by the Muslims of the Sub-continent as the antidote to religious and cultural submergence. Having experienced Muslim invasions from the west the Hindus were equally apprehensive of the restoration of Muslim rule with 'foreign' Muslim assistance. Their mutual fears proved to be the psychological barrier to national integration and the result was Partition.

Pakistan and India have intensified their mental block which expresses itself primarily in the conflict over the state of J&K. But Pakistan should appreciate that it is no match for India and India should not show off its inherent superiority.

The economic fall-outs of a settlement of the J&K

problem are so enormous and so much in keeping with the real interest of the people of the Sub-continent that all of us should exert ourselves to find a workable compromise. I do not agree with Chandra Mitra that even if Kashmir problem is resolved, Pakistan will pick up another bone of contention! Even the Pakistani establishment will find it difficult to invent a 'Kashmir' to maintain the atmosphere of hostility in Pakistan. Neither will the Hindutva hawks in India find it possible to sell their wares.

The Muslim world has not launched a Jihad against India. So there is no question of Pakistan being in its 'forefront', as Chandan Mitra graphically describes. If Pakistan uses a religious diction for its territorial dispute with India, it does so to mobilise its people and gain the sympathy of the Muslim World, which it has demonstrably failed to get over the last 50 years.

I think that a compromise agreement over J&K allowing Pakistan to keep the NA and the Punjabi-speaking region, integrating Ladakh and Jammu with India and establishing an internally autonomous region in the Kashmiri-speaking Valley, **under the joint control of the two**, will generate an avalanche of friendly, good neighbourly, brotherly cooperation, not only between the people of India and Pakistan but among all the peoples of the Sub-continent and release their energies to achieve their due place in the world. If they continue to be consumed by distrust, suspicion and hostility, subtracting from rather than adding to each other, the Sub-continent cannot be one of the poles of the multipolar world in the 21st century.

(Contd. from Page 40)

serious and disturbing flaws in the politics that he represents. For instance, they have failed to ask why the party failed to get even one more seat in the 13th Lok Sabha than it had in the 12th Lok Sabha. They did not question the reasons why days after the BJP claimed victory on the basis of the electoral performance of parties like the Telugu Desam, which are not even members of the NDA. The party lost three parliament seats in Bihar where it had sitting candidates...

The fact is that just as politics in India has been reduced to mere realpolitik shorn of all pretences about policies and principles, journalism too has become, by and large, shameless worship of the powerful. Criticality has been replaced by naivete at best and even complicity and many journalists have become mere publicists... But then in these times when liberalisation only means libertinism, there is a different interpretation of what is the truth. And, like the jesting Pontius Pilate, we do not wait for the answer.

(Source: The Indian Express, 15 November, 1999)