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- Editor

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Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi [Ali Mian] (1914 – 31 December, 1999)

Exemplar of Islamic Living, Exponent of Islam, Defender of Islamic Identity

During the twentieth century, Muslim India has produced great Islamic theologians, interpreters of the Quran, scholars of Hadith, Islamic jurists, historians, propagators of the faith, social reformers and educationists, but one cannot name another Islamic scholar whose concerns covered the entire spectrum of the collective existence of the Muslim Indians as a living community in the national and international context, who, for decades, enjoyed universal respect, and who was accepted by the non-Muslims, at the highest level, as the legitimate spokesman for the concerns and aspirations of the entire community.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi was indisputably one of the greatest exponents of Islam in the second half of the twentieth century and because of his command over Arabic, through his writings and speeches, he had a wide area of influence extending far beyond the Sub-continent, particularly in the Arab World.

His exposition of Islam was marked by moderation. He was not a fanatic in any sense of the term but he believed in Islam as a blessing for mankind and as a positive and creative factor in human history. In a sense Islam was perceived by him as a civilizational force which retained its relevance in the modern age as a viable counterpoint to the Western civilization with all its excesses.

The Maulana's forte was his extraordinary grasp of Islamic history. It is this historic sense of the rise and fall of Islam in different ages and regions, which prompted him ever to take a long-term rather than a short-term, a broad rather than a narrow, view of the problems the contemporary community faced.

The Maulana was the very anti-thesis of the media image of the fire-eating, narrow-minded Mullah. Orthodox as he was, he was far from being conservative in his approach. Umma-conscious as he was, his love for the motherland knew no bounds. He never preached 'Jihad' to restore Muslim dominance; He stood for mutual respect, for peaceful coexistence, for human values, for establishing a social ambience based on tolerance and harmony in India and in the world at large.

The Maulana understood the spirit of the age. He appreciated the role of Democracy and Nationalism. With his deep insight into the Quran and his understanding of the personality of the Holy Prophet, he understood the implications of a multi-religious world, a global village divided into multi-religious States.

Scion of an illustrious family which has produced

scholars and spiritual preceptors like Shah Alamullah Naqshbandi and Syed Ahmad Shaheed, the Maulana's father, Hakim Syed Abul Hai, was an eminent scholar of his time, immortalised by his encyclopaedic work, *Nuzhatul Khawatir*, (in eight volumes) containing about 5,000 biographical notes on Muslim scholars, theologians, jurists, etc. of India, apart from other notable works.

Syed Abul Hasan Ali was born in 1333 A.H. (1914 A.D.). Having lost his father at the age of nine, he was brought up by his elder brother, Dr. Syed Abul Ali Hasani who practised medicine at Lucknow. He specialised in Arabic literature at Nadwatul Ulema, Lucknow, studied Hadith under Sheikh Husain Ahmed Madani at Darul Uloom, Deoband and Tafsir under Maulana Ahmad Ali of Lahore where he came in touch with Iqbal whose poetry left an abiding impression on him. Besides literary and theological studies, Maulana developed keen interest in Islamic history and also learnt English in order to keep himself abreast of contemporary thought. He taught Arabic literature and Tafsir at the Nadwatul Ulema for ten years.

After the demise of his elder brother, he became the Secretary of Nadwatul Ulema and subsequently as Rector he supervised both its academic and administrative management.

In 1947, the Maulana could have followed his mentor Syed Sulaiman Nadvi and migrated to Pakistan but he did not.

In his formative years, the Maulana was associated with the Jamaat-e-Islami for a few years after its establishment by Maulana Abul Ala Maudoodi. Then he turned to the Tablighi Jamaat founded by Maulana Ilyasi's. But the Maulana's genius demanded a wider horizon for its unfolding.

Spiritually a disciple of Maulana Abdul Qadir Raipuri, the Maulana belonged to the Sufi Silsila Qadiriya Naqshbandia.

Apart from his long association with Nadwa (as student, teacher, Secretary and Nazim), he served on the Shura of the Darul Uloom, Deoband, chaired the Managing Committee of Darul Musannefin, Azamgarh and established the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications at Lucknow.

A prolific writer his works have been prescribed in the courses of study in a number of Arab Universities. His notable Arabic work *Maza Khasera al-Alam b'inhatat-il-Muslimeen* was not only widely acclaimed but also carved out a place for him in the literary circles of the Arab

world. Several of his works have since been translated into Arabic, English, Turkish, Bhasha Indonesia, Persian, Tamil and some other languages.

Karvaan-e-Zindagi, his autobiography in 8 volumes, and Purane-Chiragh (life sketches of contemporary personalities), his biography of Syed Ahmad Shaheed, his biography of Hazrat Ali (KW) and his Tarikh-e-Dawat-o-Azimat are his permanent contribution to Urdu literature.

He was an Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, Damascus and Academy of Arabic Language, Amman and served as Visiting Professor in a number of Arab universities.

Internationally recognised, he was one of the Founder Members of the Rabita at-Alam-al-Islami, Makka, (1963), and served on the Higher Council of the Islamic University, Medina, the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat, and as the Chairman of the Board for the Centre of Islamic Studies of the Oxford University. The lectures he delivered at Indian, Arab and Western Universities have been highly appreciated as original contribution to the study of Islam and on Islam's relevance to the modern age.

In 1980, he received the Faisal International Award, followed by the Brunei Award and the UAE Award in 1999.

A great scholar, the Maulana was not confined to the cloister. Not involved in active politics, he never participated in party or electoral politics. He did not even join the All India Muslim Majlis, established by his protégé Dr. A.J. Faridi in 1967, as it took to electoral politics. The Maulana was one of the founders of the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (1964), the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (1972) and the All India Dini Talimi Council. He presided over the Milli Convention in 1979. He also extended his patronage to the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the All India Milli Council when they were established.

To promote communal harmony, the Maulana became one of the founders of FOCUS which was later transformed into Society for Communal Harmony. He also established a movement 'Pyam-e-Insaniyat' to preach the gospel of universal love and brotherhood.

The Maulana valued the Constitution and the secular order as a guarantor of the Islamic identity of the Muslim community and of non-discrimination against them in various spheres of life. But he clearly saw the historic process of assimilation at work in India and the long-term objective of Hindu Nationalism to absorb the Muslim Indians into the Hindu fold. That explains his firm stand on the question of Muslim Personal Law against any interference through legislation or through judicial

pronouncement and on introduction of Saraswati Vandana in Schools in UP.

The great political battles of the Muslim community during the last decades of the century were fought under his guidance. The A.I. Muslim Personal Law Board launched in 1985 the movement for legislative nullification of the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano Case which the Muslim Indians saw as the thin end of the wedge for interference with the Shariat and for distorting the Islamic identity of the community. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorcees) Act, 1986 was its fruit; though it had several inbuilt flaws which has landed the community subsequently in endless litigation.

With the Maulana's consent in 1986, the AIMMM and the AIMPLB took up the question of restoration of the Babari Masjid when the unlocking of its doors in January 1986 for regular darshan and puja converted it into a de-facto temple. Though he did not directly involve himself in the Babari Masjid Movement (whose Coordination Committee was later split to form the A.I. Babari Masjid Action Committees), he guided it at all critical points and participated in negotiations with the government as well as Hindu representatives. Subsequent to the Demolition, the AIMPLB, under his presidency took the question in its own hands including the direction of the proceedings in the title suit, the criminal case and the inquiry.

In the last decade of his life the Maulana served as the final arbiter, the last word, the 'Marja', the ultimate point of reference, on any intra-communal differences, even if he did not play any active role in resolving them. He counselled commitment with patience and wisdom, movement within the framework of democracy and rule of law, and dignity and not rhetoric in utterances.

With his off-repeated commitment to the principles of Democracy, Secularism and Non-violence as the only viable foundation for the Indian polity, his constant endeavour for inter-religious dialogue and for reconciliation and harmony, he commanded universal respect for his moderation, learning and integrity, for his influence in the Muslim community and for his outreach in the Islamic world,

Assiduously sought by eminent political personalities from Indira Gandhi to Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Maulana acted as the bridge between the government and the national parties, on one hand, and Muslim community, on the other.

The Maulana, it has been correctly observed, stood for social reform, religious revival and political awakening but not for Islamic Revolution. He was realistic enough not to chase mirages or instant solutions. He saw clearly

IN MEMORIAM

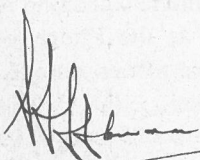
that the destiny of Muslim Indians was intertwined with that of the Indian people as a whole and that, in the age of democratic pluralism, an Islamic Revolution or the restoration of Islamic power was out of the realm of possibility but it was possible for the Muslim Indians to lead an Islamic life and at the same time participate in managing the affairs of the country and contribute to its progress and development. This was the basis of his efforts to reduce the distance between the Muslims and the Hindus, to demolish the wall of distrust between them and to create bonds of understanding and cooperation in rebuilding relations on the terms of common moral values of the society which he saw as being engulfed by dark forces of hatred and violence.

All his active life, with Lucknow as his base, he wandered ceaselessly, not only within the country but in the Arab-Islamic world and the West, in a constant search, it seems to me, for reconciliation between Islam and the West, between rival ideologies in the Arab-Islamic world, between India and Pakistan and between the Hindu and Muslim Indians. Cautious in taking positions, he always looked beyond the turbulence of the time, through the flames of the current controversy. Even when he took part, his role was that of a mediator, of counselling patience, of avoiding confrontation, of appealing to reason.

A man who personified Islamic values, soft-spoken, cultured and courteous to the core, humility and modesty, patience and tolerance, moderation and balance, generosity and compassion – all Islamic values – marked his personality. Neither a politician, nor a publicist, essentially a scholar, a man of religion, a spiritual person, a modern Dervish, a Mard-e-Momin who combined in himself the highest values of the Shariat and the Tariqat, of orthodoxy and Sufism and who commanded respect for his transparent sincerity, for his simple living and for his selfless devotion to the common cause of the Community and the Nation, a man who lived for Allah alone and who wanted nothing but the good of all is no more.

His demise is the end of an era in the history of the Muslim India and has created a void impossible to fill in the foreseeable future.

May his soul rest in eternal peace, Ameen!



(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

New Delhi,
1st February, 2000

*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.**

Asghar Ali Engineer on India, Minorities & the 21st Century

India is one of the largest democracies in the world. It also has one of the largest minorities... If we take (all religious) minorities into account the number will exceed 15 crores...

A true democracy ensures not only individual rights but also rights of minorities as a community. Our Constitution has laid down in Articles from 25 to 30 the rights of religious, cultural and linguistic minorities (and) makes India a truly democratic and pluralist nation...

But of course there was a big gap between noble intentions and actual realisation. The minorities continued to face several problems. The most important was of security, especially as far as Muslims were concerned. One can argue, and rightly so, that it was basically the legacy of the Partition...

In a democracy, minorities' problems can be sorted out, despite their apparent enormity, given commitment to principles... What is needed is mutual trust between various communities...

...With the birth of the two nation-States - India and Pakistan - loyalty became a major issue in the communal dynamics in India. In many riots, the slogan *Musalman jao Pakistan or qabristan* (Muslims go to Pakistan or to the cemetery) became quite common... Some (Muslim) thought that Pakistan was an Islamic country and hence their real homeland. But the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 shocked such Muslims and it brought about a transformation in their thinking.

But still the distrust continued. In the Eighties it acquired religious rather than nationalistic overtones. Two major issues arose - the Shah Bano case and Ram Janmabhoomi. The Muslim leadership rejected secular law ... and the Sangh leadership equated Hinduism with nationalism. Both were violative of the spirit of nationalism and secularism. Muslims living under a secular dispensation should not always insist on finality and immutability as far as social issues are concerned...

Those Hindus who insisted on demolishing the Babari Masjid and constructing a Ram Mandir should realise that a modern nation-State has its own logic, and majoritarian attitudes weaken rather than strengthen it. A modern nation-State can be run only on the basis of a Constitution and secular laws. A majoritarian mind-set can be destructive of the healthy spirit of nationalism. A modern democracy cannot succeed until the minorities feel completely secure. Now at the fag end of Twentieth century, the Christian minority is also under attack on the issue of conversion... Christians as a whole have come under attack as if all of them are engaged in conversion and a ban is being demanded. This demand is not justified, as it will be a flagrant violation of constitutional rights.

... The 21st century will be the century of democracy and human rights. India can be justly proud of being democratic... The task is to further deepen and consolidate democracy. And this certainly depends on the treatment of minorities. In real democratic governance, minorities should be treated with justice and dignity.

... As the quality of democracy improves, the

minorities will get all opportunities for their own creative contribution to the process of nation building. The minorities will also have to adopt a more positive and constructive approach. Democratic culture should prevail among all sections of society. Pluralism should be respected.. (Social) reform will have to be ushered in. However, no one should be coerced... It has to be a democratic process.

The 21st century will be a century of ... dialogue. The culture of dialogue is essential for democracy and for creating mutual trust. Both the majority and the minorities will have to realise that confrontation leads to destruction and dialogue promotes mutual understanding.

The majority should realise that the more secure the minorities feel, the more they will contribute to nation-building. And the minorities should realise that the more they contribute to nation building, the more they will be respected. Only both together can ensure better quality of democratic governance in the next century.

(Source: The Hindu, 31 December, 1999)

National Code for Minorities A Must

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindu, 1 Jan., 2000

Apropos A.A. Engineer's plea for a culture of dialogue between various religious communities (31 December, 1999), I would like to point out that the concept of minorities in India cannot and should not, be limited to religious minorities only and then to the Muslims' relations with the Hindus. Indeed at one functional level of the other - and there are five from Panchayat to the Union - diverse social groups form a majority at one level and a minority at another and even the same group forms a majority somewhere and a minority elsewhere at the same level. These social groups are identified not always by religion but by sect, caste, sub-caste, language and domicile of origin.

Indeed India is a land of minorities. What we need to develop through dialogue is a uniform national norm for the treatment of minorities at various levels, whatever their label of identity. Thus, whether it is the Hindu minority in J&K or Muslim minority in UP or Christian minority in Orissa or whether it is the Rajput minority in a Yadav-dominated village or vice-versa, or whether it is a Marathi-speaking child in Karnataka or a Kannada-speaking child in Maharashtra, or whether it is a Mizo in Nagaland or a Naga in Mizoram, they should be treated uniformly in accordance with nationally accepted norms, their identity should be respected; their dignity should be protected and they should be entitled to equality in the public space. Whichever group forms a minority at a functional level, its participation in governance and its share in development and welfare benefits must be assured through appropriate regulation against majoritarian aggrandisement, leading to deprivation of the 'others'. The ethos of plurality must cover all aspects of peaceful and creative co-existence so that the minority groups everywhere feel that they are getting their due and that they should equally endeavour for the common good.

Proceedings of the Parliament (15 – 23 December, 1999) I – Rajya Sabha

Papers Tabled:

- 15 Dec : A.R. of Carpet Export Promotion Council for 1997-98.
: A.R. of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts for 1998-99.
: A.R. of Handloom Export Promotion Council for 1997-98 and 1998-99.
17 Dec : **A.R. of IGNOU for 1997-98.**
: A.R. of N.I.E.P.A. for 1997-98.
: **A.R. of Sahitya Akademi for 1997-98.**
: A.R. of Sangeet Natak Akademi for 1997-98.
: A.R. of JNU for 1997-98.
22 Dec : A.R. of HHEC for 1998-99.
: A.R. of NHBC for 1998-99.
20 Dec : A.R. of Delhi Urban Arts Commission for 1998-99.
: **34th Report of the Commission for Linguistic Minorities for 1993-94.**
23 Dec : **A.R. of AMU for 1997-98.**
: A.R. of NCPUL for 1996-98 and 1997-98.
: **A.R. of NCERT for 1998-99**
: **A.R. of UGC for 1997-98.**
: A.R. of NOS for 1997-98.
: A.R. of ICSSR for 1997-98.

Special Mention:

- 15 Dec : On Ayodhya Issue by S. Pachauri.
R.S. Kaushik, S.S. Pradhan, R.D. Bhandary, N. Basu and V. Naidu participate. Jaswant Singh, MEA replies.

Discussion:

- 15 Dec : On Haj Air Charter raised by K. Rahman Khan.
Md. Azam Khan, K.R. Malkani, G. Zahidi, Md. Salim, K.M. Saifulla raise question. Sharad Pawar, Minister of Civil Aviation, replies.

Information:

- 15-16 Dec : Manmohan Singh raises question about transmission of Gen. Parvez Musharraf's letter to Hurriyat leaders in Jodhpur Central Jail. MHA Advani informs R.S.

II – Lok Sabha

Discussion

- 14-15 Dec : On Rise of militancy in NE and J&K raised by V. Muttemwar. MHA Advani replies.
22 Dec : PM responds to A. Pradhan's submission to safeguard interests of SC & ST government employees.
HM responds to S. Kurup, Indrajit Gupta and

M.S. Aiyer on tension in Halmodi, Gujarat.

Matter under Rule 337

- 21 Dec : On setting up another Commission of Inquiry to probe 1984 anti-Sikh Riots by Z.S. Mann.

Government Bills

- 20 Dec : The Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 1999 passed.
: The Marriage Law (Amendment) Bill, 1999 passed.
23 Dec : The Constitution (85th Amendment) Bill, 1999 (Women's Reservation Bill) introduced by Law Minister Jethmalani.

Private Member's Bills

17 Dec : Introduced:

- The Ban on Cow Slaughter Bill, 1999 by Aditya Nath.
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1999 (to omit Article 44 etc.) by Aditya Nath.
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1999 to amend Article 1 by Aditya Nath.
The National Commission for the Aged Bill by S.K. Shinde.
The Population Control and Family Welfare Bill by S.K. Shinde.

Discussed:

- The TADA (Withdrawal of Legal Proceedings) Bill, earlier moved by G.M. Banatwalla. Discussed inconclusively.

Reconstitution of National Commission for Minorities

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Chairman | : | Justice M.M. Shamim |
| Vice-Chairman | : | Trilochan Singh |
| Members | : | Lt.Gen. A.H. Sethna |
| | | P.K. Lochan Tolku |
| | | J.M. Joseph |
| | | Shamim Kazim |
| | | Vijay Kumar Dar |

The Istar Party culture which began during the tenure of V.P. Singh as Prime Minister in 1990 has now become a month-long political event.

- The National Observer

Ayodhya – A Programme, not an Ideology, for BJP

V. Krishna Ananth on BJP's Game Plan to Reshape India Ideologically

... It is indeed a fact that the BJP's leadership was forced into disowning its own past only because the party's allies in the ruling alliance insisted on it. And the high point of this "return to sanity" was the contempt with which Vajpayee referred to such "tall" leaders in his party... But then, the reality is not all that plain; and the most appropriate statement to this effect came from none other than the BJP's president, Kushabhau Thakre. In his own way, Thakre made it clear, on a private TV channel, that "Ayodhya was only on the BJP's programme and never the party's ideology". He must have known what he was talking about and so must have those in the RSS. Only the politically naive would feel convinced that Thakre's statement was a virtual compromise or a climb-down.

Instead, the imperative for the present is to understand that a "programme" cannot but be internal to the "ideology" and that while any "programme" has to be time-bound, the "ideology" is not. In other words, Thakre had conveyed that the Ayodhya issue was only an aspect of the BJP's ideological movement and that construction of a temple there was not the end in itself.

The message is that Ayodhya became an important part of the BJP's programme only at a given point in time. After all, the Jan Sangh (1952 and 1977) and the BJP (since 1980) existed very much as political parties even before February 1986 (when Ayodhya crystallised into a political issue). The Jan Sangh came into existence in 1951 as a political party wedded to the notion of cultural nationalism as opposed to the nationalism that was born out of the one of the mightiest struggles against colonialism. The Ram temple was not even thought of in the Jan Sangh during most part of its existence as a party. And yet a cross section of the political groups in the country, despite their opposition to the Congress, refused to ally with the Jan Sangh; each of these platforms had their own objections to aspects of the Jan Sangh's ideological positions. For instance, the Jan Sangh, in its "Principles and Policies" (a 1965 document) declared: "All the creeds that form the commonwealth of Bharatiya Rashtra have their share in the stream of Bharatiya culture which has flowed down since the Vedas in unbroken continuity, absorbing and assimilating contributions made by different peoples, creeds and cultures that came in contact with it in the course of history in such a way as to make them indistinguishable part and parcel of the main current... Any talk of composite culture, therefore, is not only untrue but also dangerous, for it tends to weaken national unity and encourage fissiparous tendencies."

Neither has the BJP taken a position, at least in public, against this understanding of the Indian nation nor have its allies in the NDA bothered to clarify with the BJP on this. And yet, such parties as the DMK, the MDMK, the Telugu Desam and the National Conference are at ease.

And far more significant in this context is the Jan

Sangh's prescription (handed out in a resolution at its all-India session at Jodhpur on January 1, 1955) on education reforms: "The nation today requires an education which would have a proper blend of the ancient Gurukul system, in which emphasis is laid on moral values and character and the modern system based upon the latest scientific discoveries. For familiarity with the great Indian tradition and instructions in moral behaviour it is necessary to lay emphasis on the study of Sanskrit language and literature." It further stressed that "for discipline and physical well-being there should be adequate arrangements for physical and military training".

(There are) striking similarities between (Joshi's proposal) and the Jan Sangh's prescriptions. It is another matter that these prescriptions are being followed in their entirety in the schools run by the Sangh Parivar outfits - the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and the Vidya Bharathi schools in the Northern States - even otherwise. And yet, there seems to be a celebration that the BJP is no longer the party of the "bad boys" as it used to be.

If these are only 'small and minor' expressions of the communal-fascist agenda, there cannot be a more dangerous manifestation of the ideology at work than the passion with which the Prime Minister has hit at Pakistan in the context of the plane hijack. One only has to go back to the Jan Sangh's 1965 document: "The existence of Pakistan not only means a separate political entity on Indian soil, it also amounts to a refutation of the fact of one nationhood and one culture and a bid to keep alive the theory of two nations and two cultures... It shall be an objective of the Jan Sangh policies to end the separation of India and Pakistan and to bring the two together." There certainly is a continuity between the Jan Sangh's article of faith and the BJP's line of thinking...

Ayodhya was only a programme for the BJP and not its ideology. The ideology is much larger and the BJP has certainly not compromised on that.

(Source: The Hindu, 11 January, 2000)

Contradictions to the Fore Editorial, The Hindu, 15 December, 1999

... The sudden resort to the Ayodhya rhetoric by sections in the BJP is a cause for concern in the larger sense. The Sangh Parivar's Ayodhya campaign in the past had caused serious harm to civil society; the number of communal clashes that were witnessed across the country during the past decade ... has also left the polity fractured and fragmented on communal lines. Any attempt to revive the Ayodhya rhetoric at this stage will make the situation worse. And in this sense, it will not do for Vajpayee to merely distance himself from such attempts. Instead, he is bound ... to ensure that such attempts ... are thwarted. The drift, if allowed to persist, will harm not only the ruling coalition but will also do incalculable harm to the polity. □

Akshaya Mukul

On Gujarat as Laboratory of Hindutva Rashtravad

The dividing line between old and new in Ahmedabad is the decrepit wall erected in the 15th century by its founder Sultan Ahmed Shah. Today, it's called the 'Berlin Wall' because it has become, over the last decade, both a physical and an emotional-psychological barrier, separating Hindu settlements in spanking new areas from Muslim clusters in the walled city. Those who, consciously or otherwise, choose to defy this segregation do so at their peril.

Senior journalist Ashraf Sayeed ... tried to purchase a house in posh Gandhinagar, his prospective neighbours forced the Hindu property owner to rescind the deal. Today, he lives in ... a Muslim neighbourhood.

Similarly, Hanif Lakdawala ... could not rent space for their Institute for Initiatives in Education... The obverse is equally true: Hindus in Muslim areas face a backlash... The state which produced the apostle of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, is a simmering cauldron of hatred. The few who care are mocked at. Meanwhile, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh utilises the Bharatiya Janata Party's being in government to relentlessly push its divisive agenda.

The public has been so co-opted that the state government's recent decision to lift the ban on its officials joining the RSS was met with indifference. Similar was the response when banners declaring, "VHP welcomes you to Hindu Rashtra's village" mushroomed in several villages following the anti-Christian incidents in Dangs in 1998.

"Only a few decisions are taken publicly," says former chief minister Shankarsinh Vaghela, once a leading light of the RSS in Gujarat. "The rest is a covert RSS operation, deftly planned and executed. In doing this, the RSS can go to any extent, even kill."

But killing is usually unnecessary. Threats and intimidation are enough to hasten ghettoisation. When this fails, minorities, especially those in petty business, are boycotted. This is precisely how Muslim autorickshaw drivers were driven out of Bardoli last year.

State home minister Haren Pandya protests that "a communal hue should not be imparted to local issues." He euphorically cites statistics to show that the number of people killed in communal riots has dipped during the BJP's five-year tenure.

A senior bureaucrat counters: "The idea is to exert constant pressure on the minorities, and make them realise that the terms of their existence will be set by the majority. Since the government is a party to this, you don't have to achieve this through riots and killings."

Adds Lakdawala, "Even the recent Christian bashing was well-planned. You could read slogans like *pehle kasai, baad mein isai* — first butchers (Muslims), then Christians — on public walls in interior Gujarat way back in the Eighties." Why is the RSS using Gujarat as a laboratory for its Hindutva project? And when did this process begin? Replies Achyut Yagnik, coordinator of the Centre for

Social Knowledge and Action, "It began with the 1969 riots in which nearly 2,000 people were killed. The involvement of the RSS, Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti and Jan Sangh was brought out by the P. Jagmohan Reddy inquiry commission."

Gujarat politics underwent a change in the Seventies. The hegemony of the powerful Patidar (Patel) community, exercised through the Congress, was being increasingly challenged. Following the famous Nav Nirman Movement against Congress chief minister Chimanbhai Patel, the party realised that, post-Emergency, it needed a new social alliance to stay in power. Consequently, it forged the KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, Muslim) coalition and stormed to power. When Madhavsingh Solanki formed his Cabinet, Patidars found themselves out of favour. Says Yagnik, "For the first time, there was a divorce between political and economic power. It was an impossible situation." Looking for new patrons, Patidars found their opportunity in the anti-reservation struggle that began a year later. The BJP, whose earlier incarnate, Jan Sangh, had built a strong upper caste base through the RSS, grabbed the leadership of the movement.

The picture was now clear: upper castes were drifting towards the BJP; OBCs, Dalits and Muslims towards the Congress. (Dalit-Muslim unity was easily forged because the strong influence of vegetarianism ... forced them to live in the same neighbourhoods.)

In 1985, Solanki increased OBC reservations from 10 to 28%, incurred the wrath of anti-reservationists — and bagged 84% of the seats in the election that year. The Sangh, now fearing that its patronage of the anti-reservation stir would alienate it from lower castes, gave a communal twist to the movement. A series of riots inexplicably broke out in the walled city.

The focus shifted. A section of OBCs were wooed and coopted into the Sangh's upper caste alliance. Simultaneously, Solanki could not uplift the marginalised sections among the KHAM alliance — and disenchantment set in. Thus, in the late Eighties, the BJP began invoking religious symbols to cash in on the dissatisfaction. Since tribals (7%) and Dalits (15%) constituted a substantial vote bank, the Sangh's myriad outfits ... started working among tribals, providing relief and indoctrinating them. The attempt to break tribal-Dalit-Muslim unity succeeded in 1987 when, during a riot in Virpur on the Kheda-Panchmahal district border, tribals attacked Muslims for the first time. KHAM had given way to the politics of religion. This mobilisation was complete when Advani's infamous Rath Yatra was flagged off on September 25, 1990 from the Somnath temple, its place in Hindu-Muslim communal history acting as the catalyst.

In 1990, the BJP's alliance with VP Singh's Janata Dal helped it increase its seats and enter the coalition government. And in 1995, the BJP was in power on its own. Gujarat was thus a successful test case for the BJP,

proving the virtues of wooing the middle classes and gobbling allies. But why is the average Hindu Gujarati inclined towards extreme and divisive politics? Yagnik traces this to the rapid urbanisation of Gujarat: "This led the middle class to see itself as a block. It realised that the Hindu identity could counter KHAM."

Similarly, at the block and village level, the capitalist growth of agriculture and the White Revolution enhanced the prosperity of the farming community, which now wanted to express itself politically. Upwardly mobile farmers were attracted to the VHP and Bajrang Dal because they provided an alternative to subaltern politics. This has resulted in the BJP controlling the state's powerful and rich cooperatives. Even tribal and Dalit government officials ... find the Hindutva ideology resolves their identity crisis in cities, where the upper-caste dominated middle classes scoff at lower-caste identification. Obviously, it also helps to get co-opted.

"Hindutva rhetoric wasn't just meant for coming to power," Vaghela points out. "The idea is to perpetuate it for eternity." For this, the RSS needs yes-men in the BJP and government. This was the reason, claims Vaghela, he was sidelined despite building the party in the state. "I could have posed difficulties for their fascist mechanism of zero-debate," he says.

Vaghela says even PM Vajpayee has experienced the RSS' intolerance for debate. In 1980, he wrote an article, "Whither RSS?", in a national daily. "So furious was the Sangh leadership that it decided to defeat Vajpayee in the 1984 election — and it did. Vajpayee seriously contemplated leaving the RSS, and even wrote a poem, Jayen to jayen kahan. (Where should I go?) But he missed the bus," says Vaghela. But RSS propagandist Mukund Deobhankar ... argu(es) that a Hindu state has its advantages: "If we grow, the minorities will be safe. For, the followers of other religions will have to share our vision of India and its culture. **Then, we won't mind accommodating two more gods (Allah and Christ) along with our 33 crore gods and goddesses.**"

(Says) home minister Pandya, "When the chief minister and I are from the RSS, how does it matter if an employee goes to the shakha?"

But a senior bureaucrat in his ministry warns, "Those Hindu employees who don't join the RSS will be isolated. And your RSS link will become a deciding factor in promotion. I am dead set against the move." ...Gujarat is clearly a laboratory where the RSS is conducting its communal experiments. Gujarat today, India tomorrow?

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 16 January, 2000)

Gujarat Lifts Ban on RSS

Editorial, The Statesman, 10 Jan., 2000

What Gujarat does today, India does tomorrow — so says the BJP. Gujarat is the BJP's model state and with its vast cadre network and clear majority in government it is the testing ground for the entire RSS family... The latest attempt to saffronise the state is the lifting of the ban on government employees joining the RSS. According to civil service rules, government servants are not allowed to

Steady Implementation of RSS Agenda

Insaf Morcha Convener's Statement, 7 Jan., 2000

"The introduction of a private bill by a BJP MP for introduction of uniform civil code in the last session of Parliament, the lifting of the ban on government servants against association with the RSS in Gujarat and the legislation in UP to subject construction of places of worship and religious instruction to the whims of the bureaucracy are clear indications of the steady implementation of the HIDDEN AGENDA of the Sangh Parivar, under the benign umbrella of the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the States.

The ceaseless quest of the uniform civil code is an expression of the majoritarian pressure for religious and cultural assimilation so as to destroy the religious identity of the Muslim Indians.

The step in Gujarat is a signal to the administration at all levels not to interfere in the activities of the Sangh Parivar, including the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, as they are all 'innocuous social service organisations' in the eyes of the ruling party.

The new law in UP shall be used by the RSS-friendly administration to harass the Muslims, interfere with their freedom to practice their religion and to establish educational institutions of their choice, on false pretexts of linkage with ISI which has so far remained unsupported by evidence. What is worse the law serves to generate suspicion and distrust in the Hindu mind against all Muslims and Muslim Institutions.

The three, taken together, **constitute a matter of grave concern to the religious minorities, particularly the Muslims and to the secular forces.**

The Insaf Morcha appeals not only to the opposition parties but also to the leaders of the coalition parties including George Fernandes, Sharad Yadav, Ram Vilas Paswan, Nitish Kumar, M. Karnuanidhi, Mamata Banerjee and Chandra Babu Naidu to stop Sangh Parivar from playing the vicious game of targeting the Muslims and poisoning the social environment"

be members of any political parties, or have anything to do with 16 banned organisations... Keshubhai Patel ... has lifted the ban on the RSS saying that ... he cannot find "anything unlawful about its activities".

The first steps on the BJP's real agenda have been taken. There is no denying that many bureaucrats already harbour RSS sympathies, with the lifting of the ban they will be able to wear their khaki shorts over their trousers. The BJP have been trying to legitimise the RSS for sometime... but all it requires is a single reading of their mouthpiece, the Organiser, to see their communal fangs... The BJP, in Gujarat first, has embarked on the long-term goal of gaining acceptability for the Parivar. Once the RSS is rehabilitated then VHP, Bajrang Dal and Hindu Jagaran Manch can follow. By experimenting in Gujarat where it needs no allies, the BJP is testing the reaction of other constituents of the alliance... The NDA partners should seriously consider the developments in Gujarat and take remedial action. Tomorrow may be too late. □

BJP: National Council Meeting – Declaration (Extracts)

Chennai, 28-29 December, 1999

... For most part of this millennium, which ends in another year, India was not a master of her own destiny...

We have the highest number of MPs belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes...

Disproving all the vicious propaganda against us, our Government has achieved an exemplary record of communal peace... We are now well on our way to becoming India's natural party of governance...

Our party now has the opportunity, and the obligation, to give a new direction to politics and governance in India. We can succeed in this task, provided we remain committed and loyal to the ideals and the ideology that brought us into existence as a political party – first as the Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951 and later as the Bharatiya Janata Party in 1980. Although the ideals are constant, the policies and their interpretation in the light of the changing needs of new situations and challenges, have to be renewed from time to time. This quality of principle-centred flexibility, adaptability, and self-renewal, while being true to one's essential nature and purpose, is the hallmark of any living human organisation. The BJP, and earlier the Jana Sangh, has demonstrated this quality in ample measure...

The BJP, which has replaced the Congress as the principal pole of Indian politics, is conscious of its responsibility to give India a new political culture... We are committed to the objective of transforming India's Swaraj (self-governance), debt-free economy and confrontation-free polity...

We believe in a modern India and a moral India... An India without either social or regional disparities and imbalances... We are committed to protecting and promoting the interests of India and, therefore, of all Indians – irrespective of gender, caste, region or religion...

... India has always been one and indivisible – geographically, culturally and civilisationally. India is home to many religions and several languages and dialects... We are proud of this rich diversity, which is a source of India's strength, not of weakness. But there is a silken thread that binds us together – and that silken thread is our national identity, our Bharatiyata (Indianness). We reject the thesis that India is a "multi-national" entity. If we have survived centuries of aggression and colonial rule in our pre-independence history... it is because India has always been one country with one people, with a common national identity and a common cultural heritage. This, simply put, is what is meant by Cultural Nationalism...

... We shall remain committed to protecting India's secular character, which is integral to our civilisation and which imparts to it its unique greatness. We reject western and communist notions of secularism, whose true meaning

is 'Sarva Panth Samaadar' (Equal respect for all faiths). We remain opposed to theocracy in any form.

The key to building a strong country, a confident and prosperous society, and a resurgent nation is mutual respect, understanding and cooperation. We shall never allow inter-faith differences to come in the way of nation-building. We believe that all long-pending inter-faith issues can be resolved through dialogue based on trust and a concern for the larger national good. Minorities, whether linguistic or religious, are an integral part of the "Great Indian Family". We need to nourish them so that a time comes when India shall be free of artificial divisions like majority and minority.

... The BJP expresses the confidence that every party worker understands that our agenda for governance is the National Agenda for Good Governance.

The party's spectacular growth in recent years has been because of its ability to expand its appeal into newer social and geographical spaces. The party shall consolidate its growth in these spaces... The BJP's onward march depends critically on its ability to reach out to those sections of Indian society who have, for various reasons, remained uninfluenced by its appeal. It has, especially, become necessary to expand the party's support base among religious minorities, who are an integral part of our society. The party shall thoroughly review its existing relationship with religious minorities consistent with its resolve to strengthen Indian nationhood. Based on a sincere and principled approach of espousing and redressing their issues in a just and non-appeasement manner, the BJP shall make intensified efforts to increase its support base among religious minorities.

... The triad of universal education, universal employment and universal opportunities for participation in youthful activities is the best guarantor... for rekindling in them the natural qualities of idealism, patriotism and voluntarism. A new National Youth Policy, fully reflecting the necessary steps in these three areas, should be formulated soon. The laudable scheme of the National Reconstruction Corps (Rasthra Punarnirmaan Vahni), which was launched last year, should be effectively implemented all over the country...

... The BJP urges the Government to bring in statutory provisions for implementation, after a specific date, of a strict two-child criterion for induction and promotion in government services. Similarly, persons have more than two children should be barred, after a certain date, from fielding themselves as candidates in any election, from Panchayat to Parliament.

... Issues of national security – internal or external – can no longer be separated from cross-border terrorism,

(Contd. on Page 77)

Praful Bidwai

On Kalyan Singh's Expulsion

... Vajpayee appears allergic to ... aggressive OBC politics. He has long been uncomfortable with the "social engineering" approach once advocated by the likes of Govindacharya, and, to an extent, Advani, which tries to co-opt OBC self-assertion into the broader Hindutva framework. That alone explains why Kalyan Singh was singled out, why other OBC leaders and his nominees from the Loktantrik Congress and Janatantrik BSP, were allotted low-grade portfolios in the UP cabinet, and why rumours persist that Singh's 60-odd recent appointments are to be reversed. This too is clearly linked to the caste dynamics of BJP politics in UP, and the stark choices it today poses between the upper castes and the restive OBCs. Vajpayee has virtually taken overall charge of the UP BJP, but attempted no reconciliation or compromise.

... In UP, the stakes are even higher. The BJP organisation is in deep trouble. In the latest elections, the party led in less than 120 Assembly segments, of a total of 425. Its OBC base is rapidly shrinking. Kalyan Singh is a formidable opponent...

Mr. Singh can create real trouble for the BJP... This could well precipitate fresh Assembly elections, which the BJP cannot relish. The UP Rajya Sabha elections too are four months away. The BJP needs every seat it can find to beef up its poor presence in that House...

Kalyan Singh has, for the moment, chosen to move rightwards by adopting a hardcore Hindutva line and drumming up the temple issue. But he may only be reminding Vajpayee of his importance in the "Ayodhya factor" and its contribution to the BJP's jump from two Lok Sabha seats to 89. At any rate, he will (not) forever reject the option of joining hands, openly or secretly, with non-BJP leaders, including Mulayam Singh and Laloo Prasad Yadav. In UP, OBCs with substantial Muslim support, could form a formidable, potentially winning, combination...

... It underscores Hindutva's limitations or failure in homogenising a divided community, and the upper caste bias of its ideology. Singh is not just another BJP politician. He is quintessentially an OBC leader. Indeed, he represents a unique confluence of two streams: Hindutva and OBC-based politics. No other leader of stature has been able to co-opt OBC politics into the Hindutva framework the way he has. He embodies the greatest success of the "social engineering" strategy of accommodating plebian groups into Hindutva's hegemonic project.

... Singh is not just the BJP's ablest non-upper caste leader. He is potentially a candidate for India's first Prime Minister shaped by "backwardist" politics. Losing him ...

Lancy Fernandes

On Kalyan Singh's Options

... Kalyan Singh's options are severely restricted. His espousal of the Ram Mandir cause makes an open alliance with Mulayam Singh Yadav impossible. If he drops the Ram Mandir issue, he gives up his USP (unique selling point). On the other hand, any attempt to revive the temple movement can only get off the ground if there is a serious split between the hard-liners and liberals in the Sangh Parivar. This seems unlikely with the BJP leadership united on the question of preserving power at all costs at the Centre and the RSS leadership preferring to make use of a BJP-led government at the Centre to spread its tentacles throughout the country. Even at the ground level, the conditions are not fertile for a Ram Janmabhoomi type agitation. Neither the classes nor the masses would support it.

Thus, beyond further eroding the OBC base of the BJP in UP, Kalyan Singh has a limited political role to play. At the most, he may bring down the BJP state government in UP... However, the political outfit he intends to float does not have a bright future. In a way this is a step forward. When a man's political rise is intimately connected to fomenting Hindu-Muslim tension and conflict, the only progressive role he plays is after he is consigned to the garbage bin by his own party.

(Source: The Voice of People Awakening, December, 1999)

New Kalyan and His Backwards Flock
Editorial, The Statesman, 15 Dec., 1999

... (Kalyan Singh's) rhetoric has undergone a drastic transformation: it is now radically mandalised. He talks of social engineering, social justice for backwards, rails against the Brahmin prime minister and his erstwhile upper caste colleagues, is reinventing himself as a caste leader, either in the hope of weaning away the backwards or forging some kind of a broad OBC alliance with Mulayam Singh Yadav... With the Hindutva plank an alliance with Mulayam was impossible, so out goes the plank. Although insuperable difficulties may be foreseen, firstly he is charged for his role in the demolition of the Babari Masjid, and secondly, from his own chief ministerial ambitions that the SP supremo is unlikely to tolerate...

The BJP ... cannot pretend ... that caste arithmetic is not pertinent to performance.

could well inaugurate (BJP's) reduction to a largely urban upper caste, upper class, elitist party. Such a party could still have a significant presence in politics, but it could hardly hope to come to power on its own, even less to transform India the way Hindutva aspires to do.

(Source: The Times of India, 26 November, 1999)

Electoral Strategy for Muslim Biharis

In the recent Parliamentary elections, Muslims voters successfully adopted the principle of Tactical Voting wherever they had a political option among the competing secular parties, such as in UP, Maharashtra and Karnataka. This shows that the Muslim voters have become politically mature to use their vote to serve themselves and not any political party. Thus they have liberated themselves from enslavement to the will of any political party in the name of secularism. However, they realise that their political status in the country is linked to the survival of Secularism, Social Justice and Indian Nationalism and to the defeat of Hindu Nationalism, represented by the BJP and its allies.

Tactical voting implies that the Muslim community has not pledged itself to any one particular secular party throughout the country or throughout a State. It also implies that it does not harbour any ill-feeling or hostility towards any particular secular party. And it is prepared to support any secular party on a **constituency-by-constituency**, if its candidate in a given constituency is the strongest, with a strong social and party base of his own and is sympathetic to the legitimate Muslim aspirations of Dignity, Equality and Justice.

Muslim Political Objectives in the Coming Assembly Elections, 2000

In the coming Assembly elections in March-April, 2000, the Muslim Biharis have two major political objectives to achieve: 1. To defeat the BJP-led NDA candidates; 2. To increase their representation from the present deprivation level of 50% (24 out of 324).

Muslim Concentration Constituencies

The Muslim Biharis form 15% of the population of Bihar and as such have legitimate claim to 48 seats in the Assembly of 324. However they are dispersed widely and there are few Muslim majority constituencies. Roughly speaking, by population, they are entitled to at least one seat in most districts, two in some districts and 3 only in Kishanganj and Katihar. The attached Table gives the district-wise total and Muslim population, the no. of constituencies and the number due to Muslims.

We should identify, apart from Muslim majority constituencies, other constituencies, in every district, with high Muslim concentration, say, above 20%, to a total of around 50. To begin with, the Assembly Constituencies in which a Muslim candidate was placed in the first or second position in 1990 and 1995 may be identified, district-wise.

General Approach

Generally speaking, in 50 odd Muslim majority and high Muslim concentration seats: 1) Muslims should identify the strongest and the most winnable **Muslim** candidate and support him unitedly, irrespective of the party.

In case there are more than one Muslim candidates in any 'Muslim' constituency, the candidate belonging to the largest Muslim sub-community in the Constituency, and

or to the party which won it in 1995 should be preferred.

In 275 odd other constituencies, Muslims should identify the strongest candidate against the BJP, **irrespective of his religion and of the party.**

Political Options in Bihar

BJP commands only 25% of the votes in the country. Muslims, as a whole, and Muslim Biharis generally, do not vote for the BJP. That is one of the reasons why the BJP has established the network of alliance with local parties in order to attract anti-BJP votes indirectly. **In Bihar this role is being played by the Samata and the JD(U) which have many 'secular' faces.** However, they are today no more than B-Teams of the BJP. Their object is to bring BJP to power in Bihar. They are hypocrite and opportunists. **If a voter rejects BJP, he must also reject its alliance partners.**

The choice in Bihar is, thus, limited to the RJD, the Congress and the CPI which will all have their alliances. None of them commands strength all over Bihar. Since There is no point in voting for a weak candidate who is likely to be defeated, Muslims Biharis cannot support any of them all over Bihar. They should support only strong candidates likely to defeat the BJP and BJP-led alliance candidate and WIN, to whichever group he may belong.

Role of Imarat-e-Sharia

Since there is no Muslim-driven political party in Bihar which could negotiate on equal terms with the other secular parties, the Imarat-e-Sharia, Bihar, the most representative Muslim institution in the State, should form a Political Committee to guide the Muslims to ensure effective use of their votes and thus revive the tradition of its founder, the late Maulana Sajjad.

The object and purpose of the Committee will be :

- 1) To make Muslims conscious of the value of their votes and persuade them to cast their votes **massively and unitedly** for one identified candidate in each constituency.
- 2) To persuade Muslim voters not to have personal or local deals with any candidates.
- 3) To persuade Muslim voters to vote for the candidate, whatever the political party, as decided, on a constituency-by-constituency basis, by the Political Committee in accordance with the collective decision.

The Political Committee should formulate a Muslim Agenda for Bihar and place it before all secular parties/formations for acceptance. It should also request them to come to mutual understanding, at least in respect of Muslim seats to give one-to-one fight to the BJP-NDA candidate.

The Political Committee should appoint a District Convener in every district who should form a District Committee of 5-7 Eminent Muslims, representing a cross section of the community who generally command respect and who are not themselves involved in politics but who are politically aware. The District Committees should

(Contd. on Page 78)

Muslim Agenda, 2000 for Bihar

1. Elections for Panchayati Raj Institution and effective decentralisation of power down to the Panchayat level.
2. Establishment of Department of Minority Affairs, directly under the Chief Minister.
3. Creation of Joint Committee on Minorities in the Bihar Legislature.
4. Introduction of Reservation for Muslims and Other Backward Classes in both Houses of the Legislature as well as in the Panchayati Raj Institutions, in proportion to their population at the functional level.
5. Empowerment of the State Human Rights Commission for the defence and protection of human rights in accordance with the Constitution and International Covenants, Conventions and Declarations and for the investigation of form and extent of discrimination against the minorities and other weaker sections of the people with a view to suggest suitable remedial measures.
6. Empowerment of the State Minorities Commission for the defence and protection of minorities rights in accordance with the Constitution and International Conventions and Declarations.
7. Determination of citizenship status in doubtful cases, in accordance with law, through Tribunals established under the IM(DT) Act, 1983.
16. Facilitation by State authorities of flow of foreign contribution for educational purposes as well as for providing relief to the victims of social violence and natural disaster.
17. Modernisation and standardisation of Madarsa Education, so as to facilitate switch over of students on completion of primary, middle, high, intermediate and degree levels to general educational stream.
18. Upgradation of Bihar Madarsa Examination Board to the level of a University.

Economic Development

19. Reservation in public employment under the State Government for Muslims in all services and cadres, at all levels, in accordance with the population.
20. Allocation of proportionate share in the benefits of all social and economic development schemes, centrally sponsored and State, in proportion to their population at the operational level.
21. Adequate capitalisation and expansion of activities of the Bihar Minorities Finance and Development Corp.
22. Institutional measures for adequate flow of bank credit to Muslim entrepreneurs, specially at the district level.
23. Provision of capital as well as technological, raw material and marketing support to artisans, particularly in the field of handloom and handicrafts.

Religious Rights

24. Expeditious implementation of the Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act, 1991 for restoration of the status quo of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947, particularly those unlawfully occupied since 1989.
25. Effective measures for protection of the dignity of the Muslim community, their institutions and organisations against chauvinist propaganda, communal vilification and violence.
26. Recognition of Public Wakf properties as 'Public Premises' for the purpose of vacation of unlawful occupation.
27. Exemption of Public Wakf properties from the operation of rent control, urban ceiling and land reform legislation.
28. Payment of compensation at market rate by the occupant including the government or a semi-government agency for Wakf properties which have been transformed beyond restoration.
29. Provision of financial assistance to the Wakf Boards for construction of boundary walls to all graveyards.
30. Reconstitution of the State Haj Committee and construction of Haj House in Patna.

Promotion of Urdu

31. Allocation of 10% of Government advertising budget for Urdu papers.
32. Activation of the Bihar Urdu Academy.
33. Appointment of Urdu-knowing staff at all levels, from the State Secretariat to the Panchayats, to facilitate use of Urdu as additional official language.
34. Facilities for training of Urdu and Urdu-medium teachers in all subjects. □

Physical Security

8. Provision of uniform compensation for loss of life, limb, property and honour of the victims of social violence on par with those of Anti-Sikh Disturbances in 1984 and such payment to all victims and the next-of-kin since 1989.
9. Expeditious disposal of criminal cases relating to communal disturbances in Bihar since 1989.

Educational Advancement

10. Establishment of State Council for Minority Education, as a statutory body, to facilitate recognition and affiliation of and grant-in-aid to minority educational institutions.
11. Publication of community-wise cross-tabulated census data on education and employment in Bihar.
12. Unconditional use of Urdu as medium of primary education and as the First Language under the Three Language Formula, with timely supply of Urdu textbooks and appointment of Urdu and Urdu medium teachers according to total requirement, assessed district-wise.
13. Establishment of educational institutions of all levels by the Government in areas of minority concentration, in accordance with the national norms.
14. Reservation for Muslims and other educationally backward groups in all model schools and technical training institutes as well as in higher and professional education.
15. Establishment of a Permanent Committee of Scholars to scrutinise objectionable content from school syllabus, curricula and textbooks as well as to ensure that the school culture has a non-denominational character.

MUSLIM POLITICS

SP	: 863.75
SMP and % of SP	: 127.88, 14.8%
Population per seat	: 2.67
No. of Assembly Constituencies	: 324
Muslim Share	: 48

Population/ Assembly Seat	Total Population (in millions - 1991)	Muslim Population (in Millions - 1991)	Total Consti- tuencies	District-wise Muslim Share of Con- stituencies
West Champaran	23.34	4.80	9	2
East Champaran	30.43	5.60	11	2
Gopalganj	17.04	2.82	6	1
Siwan	21.71	3.74	8	1
Saran	25.73	2.5	10	1
Vaishali	21.46	2.03	8	1
Muzaffarpur	29.54	4.37	11	2
Sitamarhi/Sheohar	23.92	4.72	9	2
Madhubani	28.32	4.73	11	2
Darbhanga	25.11	5.55	9	2
Samastipur	27.17	2.74	10	1
Begusarai	18.15	2.23	7	1
Madhepur	11.78	1.22	-	-
Saharsa/Sapaul	24.75	3.59	14	1
Purnea	18.79	6.49 }	13	2
Araria	16.12	6.52 }		2
Kishanganj	9.84	6.49 }	3	2
Katihar	18.25	7.28	7	3
Sahebganj	13.01	3.67 }		
Pakur/Deoghar	9.33	1.67 }	18	2
Dumka	14.96	1.51 }		
Godda	8.61	1.53 }		
Bhagalpur/Banka	32.03	4.44	12	1
Munger/Jamui }				
Lakhisarai/ }	30.60	2.49	16	1
Sheikhpura }				
Khagaria	9.87	0.96	-	1
Nalanda	19.98	1.70	8	1
Patna	36.18	2.71	13	1
Bhojpur }	28.8	1.88	11	1
Buxar }				
Rohtas/Kaimur	29.01	2.71	11	1
Aurangabad	15.40	1.46	6	1
Jehanabad/Arwal	11.75	0.95 }	15	1
Gaya	26.65	3.05 }		
Nawada	13.60	1.51	5	1
Kodarma / }				
Hazaribagh/ }	28.44	3.75	9	1
Chatra }				
Giridih	22.26	3.59	8	1
Bokaro/Dhanbad	26.75	3.29	8	1
E. Singhbhum	16.13	1.30 }	14	1
W. Singhbhum	17.88	0.42 }		
Ranchi }	22.14	2.29 }		
Gumla }	11.54	0.35 }	15	0
Lohardaga }	28.89	0.41 }		
Palamu/ Garhwa	24.51	2.82	9	1

Bihar Assembly Election, 2000: Muslim Aspiration

Shahabuddin's Letter to Secular Parties,
18 Jan., 2000

I am enclosing herewith for your kind consideration the **Muslim Agenda, 2000** for the ensuing Bihar Assembly Elections. I request you to consider these suggestions and incorporate them in your party's Manifesto for this Election. The Muslims constitute 15% of the population of Bihar. As such they aspire to 48 seats in the Assembly. The number of Muslim MLA's has varied between 12 & 27 since 1950. In 1995, 24 Muslim MLA's are elected. Thus their deprivation level was 50%. **Although there are more than 60 Constituencies in Bihar with at least 20% Muslim electorate.**

In our segmented society, every segment aspires to be duly represented in the power structure. Every community or group looks up to the MLA's who belong to it, irrespective of party affiliation and constituencies they represent, to voice its legitimate grievances, to ensure its due share in development or welfare benefits and to guard its interest in the formulation of the Government policies and implementation of Government programmes.

The Insaf Morcha requests your party to field Muslim candidates from Muslim majority or Muslim concentration Constituencies.

The Muslim community would welcome electoral understanding and agreement among all secular parties so that there is one common Muslim candidate in the field. In case there are more than one Muslim candidate in any such Constituency, **it will support the strongest winnable candidate who can defeat the BJP-NDA candidate, irrespective of party affiliation.**

Possible Constituencies in Bihar, 2000

1 st Position in 1995	2 nd Position in 1995
25. Barauli	5. Sikta
32. Ziradei	8. Bettiah
56. Kanti	14. Dhaka
70. Sonbarsa	67. Sitamarhi
79. Paudaul	74. Bisfi
85. Bahera	82. Laukaha
90. Keoti	89. Darbhanga
91. Jale	95. Samastipur
118. Mahisi	131. Sikti
119. Simri Bakhtiarapur	133. Bahadurganj
132. Jokihat	134. Thakurganj
135. Kishanganj	138. Kasba
136. Amour	144. Barsoi
137. Baisi	151. Pakaur
141. Barari	156. Sarath
146. Manihari	164. Mahagama
155. Jamtara	243. Kurtha
157. Madhupur	245. Jahanabad
167. Nath Nagar	250. Gaya Town
174. Banka	267. Ramgarh
185. Munger	269. Hazaribgh
216. Arrah	276. Dumri
235. Dehri	278. Bermo
280. Tundi	282. Sindri
	292. Jamshedpur

Mushirul Hasan on Fabricated Nationalism

Nationalism is understood to be an umbrella term under which were subsumed the related phenomena of national identity and consciousness; occasionally, it is employed to refer to the articulate ideology on which national identity and consciousness rested. True, nationalism lends itself to several different meanings because of its fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous character. Yet it continues to fire popular imagination in many countries enabling politicians and publicists to mobilise, though not always for the right reasons, large segments of society in the name of nationalism...

Indian nationalism, though marred by Muslim estrangement, had its finer moments... In its heyday, nationalism was defined and constructed differently by the elites and the "subalterns". Yet the ambiguities were the greatest strength of Indian nationalism. This is not something the post-modernists should frown upon, for the discourses of scores of groups, though often at variance with one another, were located and expounded within the anti-colonial paradigm. The evolution of institutional pluralism, democracy and political stability was not contingent upon a unified or monolithic interpretation of nationalism. At a time when state-sponsored nationalism is being imposed on our society, this is a lesson that we will not well to remember. In free India, the finest hour in the tortuous career of nationalism was perhaps the drafting of a democratic and secular constitution, with a pronounced egalitarian thrust...

Nehru underlined in 1951 that India had infinite variety and there was absolutely no reason why anybody should regiment it after a single pattern. This ... is what secular nationalism is all about... A secular state as a political solution for modern India was based on the contention that it afforded the optimum freedom for the citizens to develop into fully integrated beings. This was a modern goal, rational and scientific, and in addition a specifically Indian goal...

Yet the "nationalist dynamic" ... has dissipated in several countries... (In) India ... the demise of inclusive nationalism has been hastened by three factors. First, the historical experience of resistance against colonialism does not find a place in the collective consciousness of the nation; secondly, secularism as an important component of nationalism has been assailed, for a variety of reasons, in different quarters; thirdly, the persistent failure of the state machinery to reduce social and economic inequities has raised doubts over the efficacy of nationalism, as an ideology that cements the bond of unity; finally, the hegemonic language of nationalism has no appeal to the 'new' groups trying to assert their regional, linguistic and ethnic identities.

As a consequence, nationalism and secularism have become contested terms and grown out of their anti-colonial ranks into ethnic and untutored religious

consciousness. Doubtless, these trends are incompatible with democracy and institutional pluralism. But what must cause greater concern is that ethnic collective consciousness in India, as indeed in South Asia generally, manifests itself politically and expresses itself in violent forms. The other disconcerting element is that ethnic nationalism, though objectified by perceptions of relative economic deprivation, has so easily merged with religious fundamentalism...

What we experience today is state-sponsored nationalism or militarism that comes into play only when a nuclear explosion takes place, or when the country is at war with Pakistan. Otherwise, our nationalism remains dormant. Once the war euphoria is dissipated, the deep-seated fissures in our polity and society surface... We valorise the martyrs of Kargil, but forget those killed in Sri Lanka. We fund war memorials, but do precious little for the millions affected by the cyclone in ... Orissa...

How do we travel into the next millennium with this ideological baggage? The ride is bumpy; the journey hazardous..

(Source: The Indian Express, 29 December, 1999)

Amulya Ganguli

On Clash of Interest between BJP & Country

Till such happy times the party's interest and that of the country do not coincide. So ... the BJP's interest will tally with that of the country only when its formula of "one people, one culture and one nation" is the mode of governance. Until such times, ... the BJP's and the country's interests will be at cross purposes...

India is witnessing a political tussle, therefore, between two groups of parties, each guided by totally opposing sets of beliefs. Theoretically, this is what politics is all about, excepting that a free market versus controlled economy debate does not undermine a country's social unity to the extent that one on multicultural versus unicultural society does. The reason is that in the former, even if the rich-poor divide widens because of the pursuit of either policy, it does not easily reach an explosive stage of a kind which the communists may find favourable.

In the pluralism versus homogeneity tussle, however, the differences between the communities can acquire a sharp edge, detrimental to the country's unity, because of the religious factor. Hence, the parties of the centre and the left argue against the mixing of politics and religion. Caution is needed all the more because India has already experienced a partition because of such a mixture. The interests of these parties and of the nation are, therefore, one and the same where the separation of politics and religion is concerned. The far right, however, believes that the volatile combination will help their majoritarian cause, for their vision of the country, where the minorities will be relegated to a secondary status, as citizens, is different from that of the others. But the India of today will suffer.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 17 January, 2000)

Rajindar Sachar On Kashmir Problem

Poor governance coupled with rampant corruption by the Jammu and Kashmir administration spread over decades are accepted as the main reasons for the militancy in the valley. Added to this, the near fraud of parliamentary elections in 1999 in J&K has shaken the confidence of the people in the state about its commitment to democracy. This was clear to me during my recent visit to Srinagar. These developments are unfortunate because from 1996 onwards, it looked as if given honest administration, greater recognition of human rights and letting people exercise their democratic right to choose their own representatives, normalcy may be restored. But alas, the rulers in New Delhi, of whatever hue, have refused to learn. So unfortunately J&K seem to be slipping back, though an objective appreciation of the situation can still retrieve the position...

... The High Court Bar complained of making a mockery of habeas corpus petitions against detention. Out of 19,000 such petitions which were filed, only 2,000 were heard and the rest became infructuous because of the expiry of the period of detention. This is a matter of grave concern because as Justice Brennan of the US Supreme Court warned "Nothing rankles more in the human heart than a brooding sense of injustice. Illness we can put up with but injustice makes us want to pull things down"...

The role of surrendered militants however is a cause for alarm. Allegations are made of their misdeeds under the protective shield of the Special Task Force (under the Jammu and Kashmir Police) and Rashtriya Rifles.

I found, however, that if somehow the bona fides of the government for a respectable settlement can be established there may be a response from the various groups in J&K. Though in the past various militant groups always emphasised the holding of tripartite talks including Pakistan, they are now agreeable to holding the initial talks bilaterally with the Government of India. There is sufficient recognition by these groups that geopolitical considerations and internal compulsions in the country cannot permit any government to arrive at a solution which permits Jammu and Kashmir to opt out of India. It appears to me that a broad agreement can be arrived at on the basis of the LoC becoming an international border along with grant of the pre-1953 status to J&K, subject to the holding of fresh elections to the J&K Assembly under the supervision of body of non-political personnel.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 23 December, 1999)

If Pakistan feels it can annexe Kashmir through acts of hijacking and terrorism, it must be day-dreaming.

- BJP President Kushabhau Thakre

K.M. Seethi On Human Cost of Kashmir Conflict

... How do we account for (the) political tragedy (in Kashmir) when we are increasingly obsessed with national security...? Are we supposed to stand united in liquidating these people? Should we show restraint when they are subjected to repression and systematic killings? Reports say that more than 40,000 people have been killed (official figures are much less) during the last 10 years in the mutual encounters between militants and the Indian army. Are we supposed to enlarge the scope of mutual extermination by militarising the entire region...? The civil society will have to address this question most seriously.

... The nuclear hawks in both countries argued that the nuclear weapons capability would restrain the two countries and that there would be mutual respect and recognition of each other's power and potentials. In fact, the Kargil conflict has easily demolished this myth of deterrence. Interestingly, when the Kargil operations were over, the very same nuclear hawks seized the argument that the nuclear weapons have greatly restrained the two countries from escalating into a major war. But they conveniently forget the fact that **there was no war between 1972 and 1998, and the nuclear tests have greatly enhanced Pakistan's self-confidence in undertaking a cross-border operation in Kashmir** in spite of Vajpayee's Lahore trip and the joint declaration that followed. Though it failed to achieve anything in Kargil, Pakistan was able to tell the world once again its own version of the Kashmir struggle.

The one and only option to end this human tragedy and get over the continuing dilemma is democratisation of the Kashmir society on both sides of the LoC. The most urgent task is to win over the people, not militarily ... but through a series of mature political engagements. This certainly requires statesmanship, political honesty and courage. The alternatives to this will be frustrating and disastrous; we will have to face more Kargils, more intrusions, more mutual killings and a tragedy of more betrayals. (Source: The Economic and Political Weekly, 11 Sept., 1999)

Killings and Destruction in J&K (October 1996 to November, 1999)

S.No.	Period	Total Killings	Killed under Custody	House Burnt or Blasted
1.	Oct - Dec., 96	605	54	76
2.	1997	2793	410	706
3.	1998	2984	298	1396
4.	Jan - Nov., 99	2821	206	422
	Total	9203	968	2600

(Source: APHC)

Prospects of Formal Negotiation between GOI and Hurriyat Parveen Swami in The Frontline

... Whether an official dialogue with the APHC has already started or is only being considered, its initiation would serve several interests. For one, officials in New Delhi, as well as a spectrum of politicians, make no secret of their belief that Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's three-year reign has undermined the gains made in 1996. There is unanimity here about the poor administration and the corruption, but as an alternative, no viable Opposition is in sight. Starting a dialogue with elements within the APHC would, at least, open the prospect of some secessionist leaders joining mainstream politics. This should enable the NDA Government to meet U.S. pressure by proclaiming that dialogue has been opened with representative leaders of Kashmir.

But it is far from clear whether a formal dialogue with the APHC could in fact come into being. Most APHC leaders have historically shown little inclination to seek confrontation with terrorist groups, who are certain to be incensed by any bilateral dialogue. In September, Umar Farooq condemned Hizbul-Mujahideen demands for the termination of all cable television services in Srinagar, suggesting cautiously that educational and news broadcasts were not un-Islamic. The Hizbul-Mujahideen promptly issued press releases virtually asking the religious leader to mind his own business. Subsequently, Umar Farooq failed to condemn the murders of at least four cable network operators in Srinagar city.

More important, it is near certain that major Pakistan-based terrorist organisations such as the Lashkar-e-Taiyba and Harkat-ul-Jihad Islami would in fact ignore calls by the APHC for an end to violence, an important component of any dialogue. Nor is it clear whether Hindu chauvinists within the BJP, and the party's rank and file in Jammu, would allow any kind of autonomy negotiations with the APHC to proceed...

Alternative deals appear more probable. The State government's plans to partition J&K into a series of provinces along communal lines, as Balraj Puri has suggested, could dovetail with its demands for greater State autonomy. "You might see," Puri said, "the Union Government granting autonomy to the Kashmir valley, Rajouri, Poonch, Doda and Kargil in return for a greater integration into the Union of the predominantly non-Muslim areas of Jammu, Leh and Udhampur. Such a deal could be packaged as meeting the separate aspirations of religious communities throughout the State." Such an autonomy deal would not only meet U.S. demands for progress in the Kashmir Valley, it would also allow the BJP to keep Hindu hardliners quiet.

The proposition is not as bizarre as it seems. Politics in J&K is built around three forces, each legitimising the existence of the other. Should a partition of the State come through, the BJP would secure its ranks in Jammu, the

N.C. could proclaim victory for its core Kashmiri Muslim constituency, and the APHC could continue with its anti-India platform undisturbed...

The new political processes set in play inside or outside J&K have ensured that ... no one is certain just where events might go from here...

(Source: The Frontline, 24 December, 1999)

Greater Kashmir Srinagar's Report On Human Rights Violations in J&K

Despite the return of 'popular rule' in October 1996, human rights abuses in Kashmir are unabated. The data collected by various agencies indicate the violations registered an increase ever since Dr. Farooq Abdullah took over the reigns. The past three years witnessed an alarming increase in rapes, molestation, property destruction, extra-judicial executions, fake encounters and enforced disappearances.

As many as 6406 persons were killed during the past three years... The Constitution of the State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) did not bring any relief to the hapless people (as) it cannot punish the guilty. It can only recommend against the security forces. This has not rendered it ineffective in containing violations but a l s o

**6406 Killings
including 768
Custodial
Deaths and
167 Rapes in
3 years Alleged**

encouraged the personnel of the armed forces to resort to extra-judicial means. The three years that passed witnessed death in custody even of 65-year old Hamidullah Shah of Pulwama and cold blooded murder of 4-year old Sanobar Amin in Kupwara, conveying thereby that the security forces kill innocent people regardless of their age and gender that too without any accountability.

... 167 other rape victims during the past three years in different parts of the Valley ... mock at the tall claims of the Government... The security forces blasted 18 year old Gulzar Ahmad of Saderkote Bala in Baramulla district into pieces on February 3, 1999... The police have not registered an FIR till date. The villagers have identified the persons involved in the gruesome murder... The security forces dismiss these allegations as propaganda carried out "at the behest of militants to malign the image of the security forces" ... The government could take suo moto cognizance of published reports ... and launch legal proceedings against the perpetrators... Dr. Farooq Abdullah could, at least, for the sake of record, institute ... probe into the countless rights violations on the basis of the plethora of reports available with his government.

(Source: Zahir-u-Din in The Greater Kashmir, 24 December, 1999)

Arun Joshi

On Post-Election Developments in Valley

The journey from 1996 to 1999 has been a bag of mixed experiences for Kashmir. The year 1996 saw two elections, but the Assembly elections in September were seen as a turning point, as Kashmir was reintroduced to the democratic process. The separatist conglomerate All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) termed the polls as a "farce" and claimed victory of sorts. They said the people were "forced to vote" by security forces and that an overwhelming majority of population had "boycotted" the polls.

But the "real electoral victory" was claimed by the National Conference of Farooq Abdullah that romped home with a two-third majority. The people who participated or stayed away from the polls had a great deal of expectations from the government...

The message was clear even from the bitterest of critics of Farooq Abdullah that he stood a chance if he "performed". In the first two years of the Abdullah Government, the hopes of the people sustained and they thought they had seen light at the end of the tunnel. People could roam freely in Srinagar and other towns and the feeling of "militancy is fading" was gradually gaining ground. But common Kashmiris were not taking any chance.

And, Kashmiris soon saw the return of militancy in the face of corruption by some of the ministers and indifference of the administration coupled with inaccessibility of the government to the people. The militants reappeared on the scene by massacring people all across. Two major factors were contributing to the negative developments. The victims of militancy felt that the government was unable to protect them from militants' violence. On the other hand, those suffering at the hands of security forces also felt that the government was unable to guard them from the men in uniform.

That was inevitably seen as a failure of the government in taming forces of violence and excesses. Farooq was caught in a bind for he could not openly criticise the security forces for the human rights violations as he did before regaining power... Also, the political leadership failed to promote confidence in the people of the remote and militancy affected areas.

Finally, the demand for additional troops and funds to the Centre went unheeded. This resulted in mounting problems for the state and then came the Kargil conflict which further thinned the presence to troops deployed on internal security duty.

The 1999 parliamentary polls saw the lowest ever voter turnout in the nineties. This was a fallout of the increasing violence and particularly the attacks on the Army camps.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 1 January, 2000)

KAC, Washington, DC Spokesman: Ghulam N. Fai on Hijacking by Militants

Kashmiris universally deplore the extremist hijacking and terrorism inflicted on innocent civilians irrespective of their purported political objective of liberating Kashmir. There is no room for debate over hijacking. It is criminal. It is brutal. It is sinful. And it is an evil that begets only more evil. No political motivation justifies such terrorism against innocent civilians. The sole beneficiaries are those who prefer violence to peace and anarchy to civilization.

... The APHC strongly condemns the hijacking of the Indian Airlines as a means to achieve their goal. Kashmiris prefer continued suffering at the hands of 700,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces and deferral of self-determination than corruption of their humanitarian souls in furtherance of political aims. Kashmiri culture is neither vengeful nor retributive. It teaches sympathy and compassion for all humans of whatever station, religion, ethnicity or ideological persuasion. Kashmiris are deeply empathetic towards the victims of terrorism and other manifestations of human rights abuses because they daily experience the horrors themselves.

Blood-Soaked Territory With Alienated People

... When the army is pointing a gun at your head, it is difficult to feel affection for it. And after ten years of such oppressive military domination over all civil life, you cannot expect the local populace to feel great warmth for India.

It is true that there has been ... a big fall in public support for militancy, as compared to the early nineties. But this is not the result of a thaw in the relations between the Kashmiri masses and the ruling establishment. It is the result of the actions of the Pakistani-backed terror squads ... whose atrocities have been as bad as those by the Indian State... The Kashmiris soon found themselves increasingly caught in the heavy crossfire between these savage and heavily armed mujahideen and the equally harsh ... Indian army. As a result, they are today exhausted and hungry for peace. But they still want justice...

The only way to fight Pakistani infiltration in Kashmir ... is through armed militias of the local people or a Kashmiri battalion within the Indian army (which should) guard the borders, as they did in Kargil...

But there are some who will be shocked by the very idea, saying that the Kashmiris cannot be trusted with arms and military training. This is really the crux of the whole issue. How can (then) we insist that the Kashmiris remain with India? ... Does nationalism mean that the army holds us together as a nation? What is a nation? Land or people? Can a blood-soaked territory with alienated peoples live as one nation?

(Source: Amita Kanekar in The Voice of People Awakening, September, 99)

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Views of Ramchandra Das Paramhans

... Hindu is not the name of any particular ... community. It is the symbol of culture and nation. Whosoever follows the culture of this country as his own is a Hindu. I call Jains as Jain Hindus, and the Buddhists as Baudh Hindus and the Muslims as Muhammadan Hindus. And I also want to say one thing that in India there is no threat or danger from the Hindus to the Muslims...

We did not demolish any mosque, but a disputed structure. There was neither a mosque, nor a temple. Some officials of Babur demolished the temple and left merely a structure. And according to our deep faith this was the birthplace of Lord Rama. We have no hobby to demolish mosques. We have neither demolished the 'Jama Masjid' of Delhi, nor the 'Dargah' of Ajmer. A mosque can be constructed at anyplace, and it can be displaced. A number of Masjids have been displaced in Arabian countries. But the birthplace of Rama cannot be changed.

The demolition of Babari mosque ... was not a terrorist activity. Rather, it was the result of running out of our patience. To make the claim of Rama temple at this disputed place, I moved the court when I was 40 years old. Now I am 82. When the court could not decide the case even in 40 years, I withdrew my suit. There is no utility of such laws that cannot understand the feelings of the nation and the people. Such a constitution and the books of law should be burnt at a cross-road.

The BJP was fighting only for getting into power. They are least worried for the construction of Rama temple. Atal Behari Vajpayee expressed his remorse over the demolition of so-called mosque. He called it a national calamity. I am still unable to understand what they have in their minds... Now, I will not ask any political party or the government for the construction of temple. Nor will I ask any permission from the court for it. The material for temple will be ready in the next three years. When I get the material ready, I will construct the temple with the help of those very hands which demolished the structure.

(Source: The Inter Religious Dialogue, December, 1999)

Kalyan Singh's Views

The decision to disassociate myself from the RSS and the VHP was not taken on my own. I wanted to retain my links with them. However, they decided to disown me. Meetings were organised all over Uttar Pradesh to warn RSS and VHP volunteers to keep away from me. In such a situation, there was no point in keeping a one-sided commitment.

... Hindutva is not the monopoly of any organisation or individual. Similarly, all Ram bhakts want a mandir constructed at Ayodhya. However, I do not plan to do anything in haste to advance the mandir agenda...

(Source: The Frontline, 7 January, 2000)

VHP: VP Acharya Giri Raj Kishor's Views

(Babari Masjid) was never a mosque. It was a monument in the memory of Babar's victory over India. Only in the nineteenth century the people started calling it a mosque...

Never after 1934 any prayer was offered in the structure by Muslims. The site of the mosque is never disputed, but in this case Muslims themselves stopped offering prayers in the structure shows that it was never a mosque...

Who are (Muslims) not to allow us? We are fully capable to do things according to our plans. We have made comprehensive plans regarding the construction of Ram Mandir at the site where a Mandir is functioning even now.

... I assure you that the majority of the MPs want to see the temple on the same site, and Atalji is no exception.

We are waiting for the verdict of the Court. We will abide by the Court order. **But if it goes against us we will start a massive agitation. And will force the government to make a law that will pave the way for constructing the Mandir at the same site.**

We will start construction work at the site in 2001. We expect that till then the Court will deliver its verdict. And it will be in our favour. All the preparations for construction of the Mandir have been completed.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 20-26 December, 1999)

BJP: D.B. Rai's Views

D.B. Rai was the Senior Superintendent of Police in Ayodhya when the Babari Masjid was demolished. Rai was suspended and subsequently reinstated. He resigned from the IPS and joined BJP and was elected twice to the Lok Sabha.

When the mosque was being demolished I did not receive any orders from the PM or the CM to control the mob. The Prime Minister and the Chief Minister have no right to order a police officer on the duty to fire or not to fire. Law has left it to the conscience of the Police officer. There were lakhs of Karsevaks and thousands of the policemen... Had I given the order to fire at the mob at that time, there would have been thousands of casualties. I fear that hundreds of Police personals might have also died on the spot. When lakhs of people are around, you can't ignore the fact that they may snatch the arms of police and fire back at them.

There were two IGs and five DIGs. They did not do anything. Were they at the site to participate in Karseva? Why no action was taken against them. Why I was singled out for the act that I had not committed.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 20-26 December, 1999)

A.G. Noorani on Prosecution of Advani for Demolition

A Minister in government who provides moral help to militants up in arms against the state is a certifiable security risk. If he happens to be Home Minister in charge of national security as well, he deserves a resounding order of the boot from the President. L.K. Advani says that the demolition of the Babari Masjid was a "political offence". What will he say to the militants who offer the same defence after killing a Minister, as in Madhya Pradesh, looting a bank or attacking an army camp in Srinagar? Advani faces a First Information Report (FIR) prepared by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which is now under his control. The FIR, dated October 5, 1993, alleges, after a thorough investigation, that he participated in a conspiracy to demolish the Masjid on December 6, 1992 and committed grave offences in pursuance of that conspiracy. Also charged were two other Union Ministers, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharati...

On August 27, 1994, Special Judicial Magistrate Mahipal Sirohi found that a *prima facie* case existed which warranted committal of those accused by the CBI to trial by a Sessions Court which alone could pass sentence in a grave case like this. On September 9, 1997, Jagdish Prasad Srivastava, Additional Sessions Judge (Ayodhya Episode), Lucknow, "concluded that in the present case a criminal conspiracy to demolish the disputed structure of Ram Janam Bhoomi/Babari Masjid was hatched by the accused persons in the beginning of 1990 and was completed on 6-12-1992. L.K. Advani and others hatched criminal conspiracies to demolish the disputed premises on different times at different places. Therefore, I find a *prima facie* case to charge Bala Saheb Thakre, L.K. Advani, Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar" and others under Sections 147, 153(A), 153(B), 259, 295(A) and 505 read with Section 120(B) of the Indian Penal Code.

Thus, the case was found proved *prima facie* warranting a regular trial. *Matters had gone far beyond a charge-sheet filed in a court by the police. Two judicial officers, the committing Magistrate and the Sessions Judge, found that a *prima facie* case was established on the facts.*

However, one formality remained for the trial to begin. Section 228(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code lays down that where the Sessions Judge "frames any charge", as in the Ayodhya case, "the charge shall be read and explained to the accused, and the accused shall be asked whether he pleads guilty of the offence charged or claims to be tried". In short, the accused must himself be *physically present* in order that his or her plea to the charge is recorded. The lawyer's presence will not suffice.

Accordingly Judge Srivastava ordered: "All the accused persons are directed to be presented in the Court on 17-10-1997 for framing of the charges." By filing revision applications in the Allahabad High Court and

absenting themselves, the accused have averted opening of the trial for a full two years since October 1997.

... The Sessions Judge's 61-page order is a published document which (has been) published in full as a CPI(B) publication. It is entitled "Ayodhya Conspiracy of Saffron Brigade Unmasked" (CPI(M); A.K.G. Bhavan; 27 B, Vir Singh Marg, New Delhi-110001; Rs.3). The Sessions Judge's order recorded: "On 5-12-1992 a secret meeting was held at the house of Vinay Katiyar which was attended by L.K. Advani, Pawan Kumar Pandey and others. The final decision to demolish disputed structure was taken. Their argument was that there was a ban on construction not on demolition and accused No.1 to 38 assembled near Ram Janam Bhoomi/Babari Masjid on 6-12-92 and L.K. Advani categorically said in his public speech before the demolition of disputed structure that 'Today is the last day of Kar Seva. Kar Sewaks would perform last Kar Seva.' When he came to know that central force was proceeding from Faizabad to Ayodhya then he (Advani) asked the public to block National Highway so that central forces do not reach Ram Janambhoomi. Prosecution has also contended that when disputed structure was being pulled down Advani asked Kalyan Singh not to tender his resignation till the disputed structure is completely pulled down" (emphasis added).

What was Advani's defence? "No Masjid existed on the spot, as no Namaz was ever held there. Disputed structure was a mandir for centuries. The court had restrained from constructing mandir. There was no injunction against demolition of the mandir."

And the Sessions Judge's finding? "On a careful perusal of evidence produced by the prosecution in the present case, I have come to conclusion that the *prima facie* evidence as alleged against the accused persons is made out."

... In a recent interview (*Outlook*, December 20, 1999), Advani said: "I had nothing to do with the demolition." The Judge's Order, however, recorded, "As per Ruchira Gupta, PW-145 that Shri Advani declared that CRPF may arrive at any time. Therefore, all the people should raise barricade on the main roads so as to prevent CRPF from coming near the spot." This was also reported by the correspondents of *The Hindu* and *Indian Express* (December 7, 1992) who had personally heard Advani urging the men to block the roads so that the Central police could not reach the spot and prevent the demolition. His denial is a brazen lie...

This brings us to his stand on law and propriety. "As for the demand for my resignation, there is a clear distinction between a political case and being charge-sheeted in any other case, however motivated it may have been." The hawala case, over which he resigned from the

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Lok Sabha on being charge-sheeted, "involved moral turpitude of sorts, relating to corruption". The implication is plain - demolition of a house of worship does not involve "moral turpitude". Prime Minister Vajpayee sang the same tune on December 7, 1999. "There is no corruption charge against them, nor any allegation of misuse of office. You know there is a difference between charges of corruption and this kind of case."

By the Vajpayee test if a Minister is charged with taking the law into his own hands to accomplish a political objective by recourse to violence, he can continue in office, nonetheless. But can the demolition of a house of worship be characterised as a "political offence" at all as the expression is understood in the civilised world?

... In an article in *Indian Express* on October 16, 1990 and in a box item in *Frontline*, May 22, 1998. Jethmalani ... said: "There is no loophole or ambiguity in the law." However, as Minister in the Vajpayee Government he shifted his position. On April 17, 1998, Jethmalani drew a distinction between those charge-sheeted by the police and the ones against whom charges were framed by the court. By this very test, Advani must quit. Charges were framed against him and others on September 9, 1997. Only their pleas to the charges await the recording for the trial to begin... Only those of the Sangh Parivar would claim demolition of a mosque as a legitimate "political activity".

The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) was enacted in 1985 in the context of terrorism in Punjab. The terrorists sought not only to undermine the authority of the state but to create a schism between Sikhs and Hindus who had lived together peacefully for centuries. Law Minister A.K. Sen noted in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, dated May 17, 1985, the (terrorists) object was "to disrupt communal peace and harmony"... Section 3 of TADA was carefully crafted to cover terrorism by communal elements...

Trials under TADA are speedier. They are conducted in Designated Courts. Why Advani & Co. were not charged under TADA needs to be explained. By all established definitions of "terrorism", the demolition of the Babari mosque was a "terrorist act"... It is disgraceful that in order to save Advani's tarnished skin, he and the Prime Minister should dishonestly stretch the law and set a dangerous precedent for use by law-breakers in power in the future and armed militants on the rampage at present.

... In the hawala case the Supreme Court ordered the CBI not to take instructions from the Government because Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was himself under a cloud. Does not the principle apply also to Advani as Home Minister? The court can be asked to rule on this issue. He has an honourable alternative - resign. There is good precedent for it...

It is unthinkable, of course, that Advani would do the decent thing. Every facet of his record since 1989 belies the hope. Whether the tortuous proceedings in the courts

Jethmalani's Legal Opinion in 1990 On the Law and the Masjid's Demolition

"The Indian Penal Code makes it a serious criminal offence to pull down any place of worship. It is no defence in law that the place of worship was constructed five hundred years ago on the site of another demolished place of worship belonging to the community of the accused. The throngs that threaten to converge on Ayodhya and pull down the mosque will in the eye of law be an unlawful assembly determined to commit offences of mischief, criminal trespass, wounding of religious feelings and desecration of a holy place. Grievous injury and killings as possible consequences will be within the reasonable contemplation of its members. It would be the plain duty of the Government to tackle this situation according to the law of the land. The law doubtless requires the state to use all the force at its command to disperse the unlawful assembly and prevent the commission of the threatened offences. The resulting mayhem and loss of life will only be legitimate consequences of the execution of legal and constitutional duty. Every sane person must therefore pause and do a bit of rational introspection while there is still some time left - however short.

"The time bomb is ticking away. When it explodes communal harmony and national integration will be the prime casualties. The nation will not emerge stronger but weakened and debilitated beyond measure. L.K. Advani is a Member of Parliament. He has sworn to uphold the law and the Constitution.

"While he will lead the assembly of law-breakers what does he expect the U.P. Government to do? Its Ministers are also sworn to uphold the law and Constitution. The police force is statutorily committed to neutralise the marching hordes even though composed of Sadhus, Acharyas and otherwise respectable political leaders. There is no loophole or ambiguity in the law." - *Indian Express*, October 16, 1990.

(Source: The Indian Express, 16 October, 1990)

(Courtesy: The Frontline, 7 January, 2000)

result in a conviction or not, Advani knows what he has done. Like a bishop unfrocked he tries to brazen it out. But Advani will never feel clean for the rest of his life. He is uneasily conscious of that.

And that is true no less, of course, of his even more distinguished ministerial colleagues - M.M. Joshi and Uma Bharati. To all three, one would pose two questions: Were the ones who attempted to assassinate Sri Lanka President Kumaratunga on December 18, 1999, out to commit a "political offence"? And, pray, what about the assassins of Gandhi, led by the RSS' own Nathuram Godse, and those of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi? Were they also political offenders like L.K. Advani, M.M. Joshi and Uma Bharati?

(Source: The Indian Express, 16 October, 1990)

(Courtesy: The Frontline, 7 January, 2000)

Ambrose Pinto on the Significance of the Demolition

... The attack on December 6, 1992 was more an attack on the secular Constitution of the country than on the Babari Masjid or the Muslims of the land. The Babari Masjid was merely a symbol. It was essentially the demolition of a Constitution that provided space for every culture, religion, language and all walks of life. On January 26, 1950 when the Constitution was promulgated a foundation stone for a nation of multi-cultures, languages, religions, beliefs was laid. Pluralism was to be our way of life. Unity in diversity was the key word.

On December 6, 1992 that edifice built on the foundation stone of "unity in diversity" was demolished. Simultaneously, a new foundation stone for a "Hindu Rashtra" was laid. It was to be a nation totally homogeneous with no kind of dissent. Unity in diversity was replaced by Unity in Uniformity. And in that nation of "Hindu Rashtra", there was to be no place for mosques, churches, gurudwaras... etc. It was to be an intolerant nation of Hindutvavadis where all were to follow the dictates of the Hindu bigots.

The nation was sharply divided between "We" and "They". In the "We" were included all Hindus irrespective of caste, sub-castes, creeds and beliefs. In the "They", besides the minorities and the Marxists were the Anglicised establishment and the self-confident social elite. The act of the demolition was to assert the power of the Hindu might to shatter the government, to unite all Hindus, humiliate the Muslims, minorities and other progressive secular groups. It was truly the exhibition of the Hindu strength and a clear message of defiance to all those who had banned or derided the RSS at one time or the other.

There was a feeling of triumph. The upbeat post-demolition atmosphere was pervaded by a vengeful feeling. There was boldness, militancy and vindictiveness. The message was crystal-clear: finally the time has come to restore the Hindu Rashtra. The secularists, Marxists, Congressmen and progressives can no longer control the Hindu power. Those who went on appeasing minorities and compromised on the basic tenets of classical Hindu ideology were shown their place. The violence on the Muslims was to tell all others who oppose the construction of Hindu Rashtra, the consequences of the opposition to the project. Justice is going to be done to the Hindus at last. There will be no more pseudo-secularism. The Sangh Parivar was finally recognised as large and powerful, even more powerful than the institutions of the state. The state in fact was made to feel helpless.

It is seven years since that act. The BJP supported by other parties took over power three times ever since – in 1997 for 13 days, 15 months after the elections of 1998;

and in 1999. From a numerical strength of mere two in Parliament prior to the demolition, the party has arrived at the present number of 182. The way the secular parties have supported the group is an indicator of the increasing power of the Hindu Right. From (being) untouchable, the party is playing a central role in politics. Other than the Marxists, nobody thinks of the party as untouchable anymore. As for the Congress, several of their yestermen are in the party and many from the BJP have jumped into the Congress bandwagon. After all, there was not much difference between the two groups at the time of the demolition.

The consequence is that the project of constructing a Hindu Rashtra is far more strengthened. If one has to go by the recent election results, the party has won 21 out of 33 seats in the tribal belt. The SCs have been Hinduised too... A large audience ... has come to accept the philosophy of the Hindu Rashtra in 1999 than in 1992. The group has found support from sizeable numbers in the media. In the colleges and universities more and more student unions and staff associations have won elections on the ideology of Hindutva.

The minorities and other progressive secular groups are still perceived as major enemies of the project. The attacks then were on the Muslims. The Christians have now been targeted. Amounting to 2.3 per cent of the nation's population with roots in the country for almost 2000 years, the community has been termed as belonging to an alien faith or the religion of India's colonial rulers...

The attacks are meant to wean (Christians) away from Christianity and convert them to Hinduism. Kabir Panthis too have been under attacks. Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains on the other hand are treated as part of the Hindu fold and coopted to the Hindutva project. To further consolidate the project of Hindutvaisation, the latest scheme is of rewriting history and other books to inculcate in the young the existing social and ritual hierarchies. Now that the party is in power, the Hinduisation of the media, judiciary, academic bodies, universities, civil society and various other organs of the state are pursued much more vigorously.

... Presently there is a social churning in the party. The tension will weaken the party. Vaghela in Gujarat has shifted to the Congress. Kalyan Singh has begun his war on the upper-caste control in the party... Several backward class leaders are likely to abandon the party. Though tribals and Dalits have voted for the party, there is no guarantee that they would remain within its fold... Though Hindu nationalism has developed and expanded in the heart of the large and expanding middle class, it is yet to be consolidated among the millions of marginalised poor

Six Questions to Opposition Parties

BMMCC Statement, 16 December, 1999

"The Babari Masjid Movement is indeed gratified that the entire opposition led by the Congress(I) has raised in both Houses of Parliament vital issues related to the Babari Masjid – the deliberate evasion of presence in the CBI Special Court by the accused including L.K. Advani, M.M. Joshi and Uma Bharati to defeat the ends of justice by delaying the framing of charges as well as the reiteration of Ram Janambhoomi Mandir being on the BJP Agenda by the CM, UP, and other leading lights of the party. The clarifications given by the Prime Minister do not carry credibility. He has not stated categorically that the construction of the proposed Mandir and the take-over of the Shahi Idgah Masjid, Mathura and Gyan Vapi Masjid in Varanasi are no longer on the BJP's agenda. The BJP's doubletalk and its control by the RSS have thus been exposed. However, **no opposition party has come up with a positive agenda for the solution of the Babari Masjid Question.**

The Babari Masjid Movement would like to know:

- * Whether they will question the legality of the makeshift temple and the on-going puja and darshan or, alternatively, press for permission to the Muslim community to perform Namaz on the site, till the title is decided?
- * Whether they will come forward to testify before the Liberhan Commission of Inquiry and assist it to unravel the conspiracy behind the Demolition?"
- * Whether the opposition parties will press the Government to expedite the proceedings in the title suit pending before Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court?
- * Whether they will commit themselves to the execution of the final judicial verdict on title, whatever the political cost?
- * Whether they will propose the formation of a Parliamentary Committee to monitor the progress of the Title Suit, the CBI Case and the Inquiry?
- * Whether they will support a permanent solution based on restoration of Babari Masjid site to the Muslim community and the construction of the proposed Ram Temple on an adjacent site?

Government Statement

On Babari Masjid Question

In compliance with the Supreme Court's Judgement dated 24.10.1994... the Central Government, as a statutory Receiver is duty bound to maintain status quo as on 7.1.93 in the disputed area. Status quo ... is being duly maintained and so far there has been no violation of the Court orders... Four title suits in respect of the Disputed Ram Janmbhoomi-Babari Masjid site are pending before the Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court. The proceedings ... are continuing. In none of the ... suits is the Union of India a party.

(Source: LSSQ No. 104 dated 6.12.1999 by G.M. Banatwalla)

Prafull Goradia's Plea

For Surrender of Shahi Idgah in Mathura

... Let me quote from (a book) published in 1882. A District Memoir of F.S. Growse of the Bengal Civil Service and the Collector of Mathura... "There is not a single building of any antiquity either in the city itself or its environs. Its most famous temple – that dedicated to Kesava Deva – was destroyed, as already mentioned in 1669, the eleventh year of the reign of the iconoclastic Aurangzeb. The mosque erected on its ruins is a building of little architectural value. The so-called Katra, in which it stands, a place to which frequent allusion has been made in the previous chapter is an oblong enclosure, like a sarai, **104 feet in length and 653 feet in breadth.** In its centre, is a raised terrace, **172 feet long and 86 feet broad** upon which now stands the mosque or Idgah".

"By beyond all doubt this was the last of the famous shrines of Kesava Deva. To judge from the language of the author of the Maasir (Maasir-e-Alamgiri was the full title of the book), its demolition was regarded as a death blow to Hinduism"... Having destroyed the Kesava Deva temple, Aurangzeb proceeded to build a mosque or an Idgah occupying its entire length, but only 60 feet of its breadth. About five feet lower is another terrace, measuring 286 feet by 268...

I have known many Muslims... I cannot believe that anyone of them would have not agreed to let the Hindus have their Krishnajanmabhoomi. The stumbling block is politics and election. If only responsible people could resolve to keep the issue completely out of ulterior considerations there would be no controversy left in Mathura. If only a hundred or more non-political Muslim luminaries were invited to Mathura and acquainted with this history, I feel an overwhelming majority would let the Hindus have their Krishnajanmabhoomi. My experience has been that the Muslims are particularly generous where sentiments are involved. What goodwill and a generous gesture at Mathura would create among Hindus not only in India but for those who reside abroad!

(Source: The Organiser, 16 January, 2000)

Shahabuddin's Reply to Prafull Goradia

Letter to The Organiser, 11 January, 2000

May I refer to Shri Prafull Goradia's article "Temple and Muslim Magnanimity" in your issue of 16 January, 2000. The fate of historic places of worship cannot be decided on the basis of the observations of the erstwhile colonial rulers or the sentiments of the contemporary knights-errant of Hindu revisionism. It can only be demanded in accordance with law. The law is absolutely clear.

Firstly, the Shahi Idgah Masjid was a functioning Masjid on 15 August, 1947 and has been so since then. So, it is protected by law. Mr. Goradia knows this and that is why he is making sentimental approach to Muslim magnanimity.

(Contd. on Page 75)

Uttar Pradesh Public Religious Buildings And Places (Regulation) Bill, 2000

Main Provisions of Bill as Approved by UP Legislature

Introduction

3. ... Any building or place, which was not used as public religious building or place, prior to promulgation of this Act, shall not be used as a public religious building... place except under the bylaws of this Act...

4. A person who (desires) to use a building as public religious building or a place as a public religious place, or (to) use that place to construct a public religious building shall apply to District Magistrate...

5. (On receipt of) application ... the District Magistrate, after making such enquiry as he deems necessary (may grant permission) without any condition or with conditions ... or deny permission.

No permission shall be granted if the District Magistrate decides that

- (a) It is the essential to do so in the interest of public order, morality and health.
- (b) It will be interference in one's following his religion without any restriction of performing the rites and rituals of his religion.
- (c) The use of the building or place applied for is prohibited by any law, or the purpose of any law will fail if permission is granted.

6 (1) Whenever the District Magistrate receive (information and) on such enquiry as he deems proper (and concludes that) that in violation of this Act -

- (a) A building is being used or is likely to be used as a public religious building.
- (b) A place is being used or likely to be used as a public religious place.
- (c) A public religious building is being constructed or likely to be constructed

he will issue an order (to) the person concerned (to stop) such activities or remove such ... building and if (he has) any objection to do so, he (may) appear on the specified time and place before him, may show cause why the order be not made (absolute)...

7 (1) A person aggrieved by the order of the District Magistrate under Section 5 or 6, may appeal to the Commissioner within three days from the date of the (receipt) of the order...

8. An order issued under this Act either by District Magistrate or Commission in appeal, shall be deemed final and shall not be questioned in any civil court... □

Times of India Editor Uttam Sengupta's Comments

... After having failed to stop gods from taking over public places, police stations and even offices, the state government, if it is to be believed, has now set out to stop them, at least some of them, taking roots in rural areas! After all, who is not aware of the temples dotting national highways and G.T. Road, many of which serve as sanctuary for the smuggling of narcotics.

... The attempt may even have won the government some approval if it had the required credibility or honesty. But the secular figleaf, with which the controversial Bill is covered, was unceremoniously removed by the movers themselves when they declared that the objective of the Bill was to counter anti-national and ISI activities in the state. The text of the Bill, of course, says no such thing...

Had the government been sincere or wise, it would have provided for participation by members of different communities in deciding the desirability of having yet another temple or a mosque in a locality. Screening by the community and backed by the recommendation of its influential members would have provided a safeguard against the misuse of the law. But, deliberately or otherwise, the Bill leaves the entire discretion to the DM. And if the experience in UP is anything to go by, this species cannot be trusted. After all, it was a district magistrate who, in 1949, ordered the closure of the Babari Masjid... The Bill makes it even worse by barring all judicial relief since no appeal to the law courts is allowed against the order of the DM or the commissioner who alone can hear an appeal.

Only deeply prejudiced or shortsighted minds can assume that terrorist and anti-national activities can be carried out only from mosques and madarsas. Even if one buys the argument, for argument's sake, the Bill can actually make no difference because such activities can surely continue unabated from the existing mosques or, for that matter, even homes. A similar legislation in Rajasthan, which has apparently existed for four decades, has clearly not been effective enough in curbing the 'all-powerful' ISI... By the state government's own admission, during the last two decades, around 80 new mosques have come up in the border areas along Nepal extending to over 800 kilometres. Which practically means an average of eight mosques covering a length of 100 kilometres! Are eight mosques in twenty years worth creating a fuss, one wonders. The mushroom growth in the number of temples, mosques and mazaars are evidently linked to lack of employment opportunities... That's why the Bill is a glaring admission of failure, of both governance and of social engineering... The law is destined to be a dead letter, even if the courts uphold it, and will be resurrected from time to time by mischievous or fanatic elements within the establishment.

(Source: The Times of India, 10 January, 2000)

*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice
everywhere.*

- Martin Luther King

The Meantime, Bangalore's Report On AIMPLB Session in Mumbai, Oct.-Nov., 1999

... The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) is still grappling with the same old problems which have plagued the Muslims for the last several decades. The Personal Law Board is the highest representative body of Muslims. Almost all Muslim organisations, ulema, academicians, legal luminaries, eminent social activists etc. (are) represented in the apex body. The board was formed to safeguard Muslim Personal Law from external interference and introduce social reforms in the largest minority of the country.

The thirteenth session of AIMPLB was held at Mumbai on October 28th - 30th, 1999. However, as expected nothing concrete emerged - except for reaffirming its earlier stand - out of its three-day session... There are apprehensions that the AIMPLB will soon be losing its relevance for the Muslim community. Some Muslim intellectuals allege that the Board has been reduced to a legal forum constantly fighting court cases pertaining to Babari Masjid, Muslim Personal Law etc. The Board has largely failed to implement the reforms it had planned for the community.

Syed Shahabuddin, former MP and a member of the Board's executive committee says the apex body needs fresh blood. "For several decades now, it's the same old people who have been running the board. The religious leaders dominate the board, and only religious leadership cannot solve the problems of the community. Ironically Muslim intelligentsia also keep its distance from the community mainstream as it would like to be seen as secular. As a result, the gulf between Muslim intelligentsia and ulema is widening."

Mujahidul Islam Qasmi, one of the founder members and an executive committee member, believes that the structure of the Board needs to be reviewed... He admits that the board has been rather laid-back in its approach towards social reforms in the community. "Board is unable to interact closely with its member units with the result that it has failed to launch a mass social reform movement in the community."

Advocate Nilofer Akhtar, a personal law specialist believes that ... "The community has developed no mechanism nor any platform through which women can fight for their legitimate rights. The Board must accept the proposed nikahnama (Marriage contract) to guard the rights of Muslim women"... Nilofer says that the Board must ... realise how serious is the issue of the exploitation of Muslim women...

Advocate Yusuf Muchala, legal advisor and member of the Board says unless Muslim women demand their legitimate rights they will continue to suffer. "Women themselves are not demanding their rights and male ego would not allow it to concede these demands. Women have to fight their own battle".

Syed Shahabuddin while agreeing that the Muslim women should organise themselves to fight for their rights says, "the problem is, very few Muslim women are

socially active. The need is that more and more women take up these issues and demand the status given to them by Islam... The AIMPLB must realise that the Muslim community looks towards it for providing leadership, says an expert on the Muslim affairs. "It's time the Board seriously pursued the agenda for the social and economical resurrection of the community".

Maulana Sirajul Hasan, the vice-president of the Board and president of the Jamaat-e-Islami seems to agree with the demand for the re-orientation for the Board. However, he emphasises the need to amend the AIMPLB constitution to accommodate more representation of women in the Board. He says, without the participation of women, the objective of social reforms cannot be achieved. "Social reforms can be brought through the route of social welfare. More efforts are required in the social sector to gain the confidence of the masses." Indian National League leader Sulaiman Sait points out that the defensive approach of the Board is responsible for its growing irrelevance and weightlessness.

General Secretary Maulana Syed Nizamuddin sees the 'reactionary attitude' of some sections of the community as the biggest hurdle in the path of social reforms... Nizamuddin says the Board has decided to set up Shariat Panchayats throughout the country to step up the process of social reforms in the community. "The codification of the Muslim Personal Law which is near completion will also help the reforms." However, how serious and determined the Board is in pursuing its agenda of reform and re-orienting to the changing times will perhaps be known only in its next round of deliberations.

(Source: M.H. Lakdawala in The Meantime, 21 November, 1999)

Eminent Sociologist Imtiaz Ahmad On Codification of Muslim Personal Law

Muslim women have become more dependent on their community because of the growing threat of Hindutva and the communalisation of civil institutions like the police and judiciary. Orthodox sections of the Muslim community are trying to keep the community identity intact by exerting greater control over women's lives. This makes Muslim women's struggle for equity and social justice more difficult...

What has been wrong with Muslim Personal Law in India is not that it is necessary unjust and discriminates against women. What is really wrong with it is that it has not been codified. This leaves room for social practices that are discriminatory to women to take precedence. It also leaves loopholes that can be used by unscrupulous men to shortchange their wives. Orthodox Muslim opinion should ...work towards codification of Muslim Personal Law with a view to ensuring equity and justice guaranteed to women by Islam but gradually denuded in social practice. If all schools of law -Shafi, Maliki, Hanafi, Hanbali are taken into account, it should be possible for a good Muslim Personal Law ... to be codified...

(Source: The Nation and the World, 16 December, 1999)

Walter Fernandes On Caste and Conversion

Five events in the last few months point to the same conclusion, that maintenance of the caste system is a vested interest of the dominant classes and that conversion is often a search for freedom from it. The first event is the threat of 200 Dalit families at Jind in Haryana to become Christians. The second is a covering letter to the president of the NCCI accompanying a scurrilous pamphlet. The third is the threat of 300 high caste Gaonkars in a Goan village to revert to Hinduism if Dalits are admitted to the parish councils and the fourth, the attack on a group of students near Bangalore. The fifth is the uproar created by the Pope's call to conversion...

... The scurrilous pamphlet in which Christians are declared a danger to the nation ... the writer adds that people oppose conversion because "the total rejection by the converted villagers of one's family heritage, traditions, village festivals, dead disposal, family marriage etc. is horrible and intolerable in any country." That is the crux of the problem.

The high castes need the Dalits to beat the drum at marriages and funerals, to dispose of the dead and to perform other "impure" functions. These functions also symbolise their subjugation and are essential to maintain an unequal system. So their conversion is a threat to those whose riches and power depend on their poverty...

... The habitual Christian-baiters ... have taken the (Pope's) call out of context instead of seeing it as an integral part of the Synod document "Church in Asia". The theme of the Synod from which this document emanates was "Jesus Christ the Saviour and his mission of love and service in Asia"...

... The Deep Darshan High School at Ahwa in Gujarat was attacked by alleged Sangh Parivar activists on Christmas 1998. As the report of the Independent Commission ... states, the reason for it is not conversion. Most of its students are tribals, only 10 per cent of them Christians.

The real crime of the management is that they teach the students the forest laws and what they are to do when the police arrest their parents. So this education is a threat to the vested interests. They use religious conversion as a bogey to prevent the tribals from being exposed to secular education.

These are the vested interests behind the uproar against the call... They take it out of context in order to create an opinion against any move that can lead to equality. **Caste has to be maintained and the poor have to be suppressed in order to maintain a minority in power...**

(Source: The Hindu, 4 January, 2000)

State Not to Monitor Conscience Or Protect Hinduism

Shahabuddin's Letter to Statesman, 10 Dec., 1999

I appreciate your editorial "Atrocious Dignity" (11 December, 1999). There is no right to convert but there is Freedom of Conscience and, consequently, the right to change religion. No one can be compelled to profess the religion he was born in. In case he was misled into changing his religion, by use of 'allurement, force or fraud', the easiest course is for him to revert to his original faith or adopt another religion of his choice. He may also file a complaint under the existing law of the land.

But a democratic State has no business to function as the conscience-keeper of its citizens and monitor their conscience from time to time.

You have rightly raised the question as to whether educational and medical facilities or any welfare programme undertaken by a religious group is to be dubbed as an 'allurement'. Then what about State-funded activities of the R.K. Mission and other 'cultural organisation' in the tribal areas? And, what about welfare measures by the State to keep some SC and ST from abandoning Hinduism?

Urine Therapy against Conversion!

Sister Ruby came to Bihar from Pondicherry 15 months ago, fired by a passion to serve oppressed women... On September 20, the 25-year-old nun (working at) St. Joseph's Health Centre, Jalalpur, near Chapra (was taken by) an autorickshaw (driver and 2 others) ... to a lonely place near a grove. They tied her hands behind her, stripped her and forced her to drink their urine. They asked her why the sisters converted people to Christianity and warned her of dire consequences if she did not leave the district...

The four nuns at the health centre live in fear and are keen to move to any safer place... The Director-General of Police ... has constituted a three-member inquiry committee... (Source: The Week, 10 October, 1999)

(Contd. from Page 72)

Secondly, the Masjid is also protected by the 1969 Agreement between the Masjid authorities and the Krishna Janamsthan Trust, under which the Muslims ceded to the Trust all the land next to the wall of the Idgah to its north west and south. **Today, a beautiful Krishna Janamsthan Mandir stands to the immediate west of the Idgah. One thought that the chapter was closed. But it is being reopened by a new Trust and its ideological supporters.**

I would also like to ask Mr. Goradia how far back in history he is prepared to go and whether there is any point in reviving painful memories of the past or in inflicting more pain when we have no option but to live together.

Sub-quota for Muslim & OBC Women in Reservation in Legislature

Shahabuddin's Appeal to Sonia Gandhi,

21 December, 99

Your support to the proposed Women's Reservation Bill, as it stands, makes its passage certain, but I request you to reconsider your unconditional support which goes against the legitimate interests and aspirations of the OBC's and the Muslims.

The Muslim representation which today stands at 5 per cent (against 12.5 per cent in population) is likely to go down to 3 or 3.5 per cent, as very few Muslim woman candidates will be fielded by the major political parties for fear of loss of seat in the prevailing environment.

Secondly, the castes which are in a position to field more qualified women will reap the benefit.

I may add that considerable opinion in the country sees the Bill not as a step towards gender justice but as a token gesture which is essentially a manoeuvre by the high castes.

I would request you to introduce amendments to the Bill to reduce the reservation to 15-20 per cent to begin with, with 5 per cent increment in every successive general election, and to introduce sub-quotas for the Muslims and the OBC women and also to propose a separate Bill requiring all political parties to include 33 per cent women in their structure and in their list of candidates in any election.

Rite to Equality

Editorial, The India Today, 1 January, 2000

... That the Women's Reservation Bill was introduced ... was more a matter of posturing, of competitive showmanship between the BJP and the Congress. That little game having concluded, the larger question arises about the logic and probable upshot of setting aside a third of legislative seats for women.

It is easy to suggest that this "symbolic" gesture will go a long way in redressing traditional gender imbalances. Having said that, there is the argument that the election of a few hundred or even a few thousand, female MPs and MLAs will scarcely mean the uplift of millions of women... In sum, will there be any trickle down effect?

... The problem with (quota) is that it ignores and even militates against the idea of a national legislature, a parliament that represents the best of a nation rather than the best of its constituent parts. Democracy is an elevated idea; don't reduce it to a conglomeration of quotas. The fact that not enough women are entering public life is no doubt worrying. As the chief election commissioner has suggested, political parties could be forced by law to nominate a certain percentage - a quarter, a third, even half - of women candidates... Why not give this proposal a shot?

Madhu Kishwar's Views

The proportion of Muslims in Parliament and the state legislatures does not match their numerical strength in the population ... can we consider a quota for Muslim women without conceding a quota for Muslim men? It is obvious that Muslim male leaders are bringing in the issue of religion-based quotas through the backdoor, using their women as a sword rather than fighting their battle on their own strength... By polarising the issue on gender lines, the pro-reservationists have actually exposed the weakness in their own ranks. They claim to speak on behalf of all of India's women. Yet OBC and Muslim women prefer to go along with their men's politics, no matter how chauvinist, no matter how dishonest, rather than with the feminist lobby... (Source: The Hindustan Times, 28 December, 1999)

Shahabuddin's Response

Letter to The Hindustan Times, 7 Jan., 2000

Madhu Kishwar's article "Logic of Quotas", 28 Dec., 1999) points out several absurdities and incongruities in the current debate on reservation for women in legislatures. But she is factually incorrect when she asserts that the leadership of the freedom movement had rejected the idea of communal electorate. The freedom movement never rejected the idea of reservation for Muslims in Legislatures. Indeed it was incorporated in the draft Constitution. Only later, at the fag end of the deliberations, through a political coup d'main, this was omitted.

The freedom movement always took a stand against separate electorate (even though Congress participated in all pre-1947 elections which were all held with separate electorate). Today no one favours separate electorates. Hence a quota for Muslims based on joint electorate as in the case of the SC's or the ST's would be fulfilling the original promise in the Constitution. If reservation for women increases the degree of deprivation of Muslims from 50% to 75%, does it serve the national interest?

Women do not form a class, caste or community. Their status varies from one social group to another. It is legitimate to strive for gender equality and for women's participation in public life but the dynamics will vary from group to group. Under the existing circumstances, even if reservation is allowed for women, they shall be operating as the instruments of their menfolk, their social groups or their parties and not purely as women.

Yes, the logical course would be to provide reservation for OBC's and Muslims as already exists for SC's and ST's. Or make it mandatory, by law, for all political parties, to field a given percentage of women among their candidates, beginning with, say 25%, and going incrementally, upto 50%. This would enable women of all social groups and political linking to enter public life and to make their weight felt on all matters of national concern including the backwardness of women. □

Let's Struggle Unitedly for Reservation for Muslims in Public Employment

Shahabuddin's Letter to Ashraf Husain Ansari, ex-MP, 11 January, 2000

Granted that the Muslim Indians are 'largely descendant of converts and that violating the spirit of Islam, those of foreign descent look down upon those of indigenous, descent, how does it change the nature of injustice, oppression and discrimination they suffer in a communally changed environment? Do the rioters and even the police force even distinguish between the 'Ashraf' and the 'non-Ashraf', the Syeds and the Jolahas during the riots?

All over the world, religious minorities hang together, seek support, solace and solidarity from each other. Religious solidarity is a natural inclination to protect themselves, to defend themselves. It does not serve the Muslim Indian community to divide them in the name of identities based on hereditary occupations, which are being constantly eroded by horizontal and vertical mobility due to educational progress and consequent occupational and professional changes?

Even if Muslim Indians are seen as a set of discrete sub-communities, each of them, by any national standard, today constitutes a Backward Class and, therefore, the community, as a whole, constitutes a Backward Class within the meaning of Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution.

You are mistaken that the Constitution bars reservation on the basis of religion. If this were so, how would be Muslims of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Manipur be recognised as Backward Class. You are also mistaken that the arbitrary limit of 50% is permanent. It is not. All this is anti-Muslim propaganda to demoralise them. There is also a clear endeavour to divide them.

You are also confusing group backwardness and individual beneficiary. The quota is relative to the population of the group (and it should also be relative to its level of backwardness) but the beneficiary must logically be from a backward family. Will it be logical that the children of Class I government servants, big businessmen, university professors etc. take advantage of the 'quota'? Therefore, in a Muslim quota, the better off Muslims, largely Ashraf, would be out; only some may be in. But among the non-Ashraf, some may be out; most will be in.

All Muslim Indians would benefit if the Muslims jointly strive for a quota, with a better chance of success, which, by my reckoning, would not be less than 10 per cent for the Union (and at least 14 per cent for UP). Then we have 3 options:-

- 1) Keep out the creamy layer, and
2. Reserve 80 per cent to candidates from notified Backward sub-communities.
- 3) Or, give first preference to candidates from notified Backward sub-communities so that if there are

sufficient number of such candidate **with minimum qualification**; no one from the so-called Ashraf may benefit.

You have repeatedly asked for support of the so-called 'Ashraf' in securing a separate 3 per cent quota for the Backward Muslims out of the Mandal dispensation of 27 per cent, but you are not prepared to extend your support to them for a common benefit!

You are prepared to divide the Muslim community for the sake of 3 per cent, I am prepared to give you all of 10 per cent, if we secure it with joint effort, your and mine.

Anuradha Dutt

On Reservation for Dalit Muslims

... The latest demand for a quota for Dalit Muslims akin to that envisaged for Dalit Christians adds another dimension to the matter. The advantage that Islam and Christianity enjoy over Hinduism is the absence of caste... But by reclaiming their scheduled caste status, that defined their social position prior to conversion, the so-called Dalit Muslims and Christians would in effect be returning to the Hindu fold. This in turn would fortify the Hindu revivalist's definition of Muslims as Mohammediya Hindus and encourage their designs for reconversion. Such a measure, in fact is bound to prove counter-productive for the community... (Source: The Pioneer, 25 November, 1999)

(Contd. from Page 58)

religious fanaticism, infiltration by Bangladeshis and their settlement in the border States of the North-East and West Bengal as also in UP and Bihar along the Nepal border, illegal overstay of a large number of Pakistani nationals... The hand of the ISI can be seen in many of these nefarious activities... It is the duty of every citizen and every community to discharge their due responsibility in this regard. And it is the duty of the Government to facilitate the enthusiastic participation of citizens and communities in strengthening our security...

Continue the multi-pronged strategy to bring about peace and normalcy in J&K. The Government should tackle the Pakistan-aided terrorist and separatist groups with an iron hand... At the same time, the Centre and the State Government should accelerate their joint efforts to implement developmental projects, create greater employment, promote tourism, rebuild the educational establishment and promote people's welfare. Creating a corruption-free environment and increasing the democratic participation of the people in the State's governance are very important for the success of our Kashmir strategy. The test of peace and normalcy in Kashmir is the honourable return of all the refugees. □

Iqbal A. Ansari on the Origin of Term 'Backward Classes'

... The pre-natal history of the present Article 16(4) is also worth noting. Clause (5) of the Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee Report providing for 'equality of opportunity in matters of public employment' came up for consideration of the Sub-Committee on Minorities between 17 and 19 April, 1947. Sardar Ujjal Singh made a plea that 'this clause should not debar rules being made for giving special consideration to minority communities in recruitment to public service', which was incorporated in the recommendations urging that 'a note should be made as in clause 14(1) to make it clear that a proviso may have to be added to meet the claims of minorities to special representation in the services'. The proceedings of the Advisory Committee from 21 to 22 April, 1947 on clause 5 and its proviso throw full light on how the 'minority' came to be substituted by 'classes of citizens not adequately represented in public service'.

On C. Rajagopalachari's suggestion to make the protection explicitly for minorities **Ambedkar expressed his willingness to use 'minorities' instead of 'classes'**. On a specific clarification about whether it was 'classes' or 'minorities' which was being given protection, K.M. Panikkar, who was responsible for initial change of words, explained that besides recognized religious minorities there might be many classes among Hindus not adequately represented in services who would require such protection. **Syama Prasad Mookerji suggested the phrasing 'minorities and other classes'**. The Chairman finally approved 'classes' which besides minorities would cover Hindu sections requiring special provision. Sardar Ujjal Singh suggested 'minorities and backward classes' without any reference to their inadequate representation. Frank Anthony wanted to have it as 'classes and minorities'. Ujjal Singh himself agreed to having 'classes' which covered minorities. Panikkar suggested a new phrase 'classes including minorities', on which the Chairman, Sardar Patel observed 'Minorities is included in classes'. He explained: 'This is simple English. Classes include minorities. This (i.e. "including minorities") is absolutely unnecessary: 'It is as clear as daylight... The whole basis of the provision is minorities. You say the state will exclude minorities? Classes is a wider term. It is better to use a wider word.' To support this K.M. Munshi said: 'In section 153 A, the term classes of His Majesty's subjects has been used. "Classes" have been interpreted as minorities or religious communities also. Nobody has ever interpreted it as not meaning minorities. Thus the word 'classes of people' received approval with the explanation from the Chairman that 'the whole basis of the provision is minorities', which was considered, linguistically as well as legally, to be included in the term classes. As adopted by the Assembly in April-May 1947, clause (5) of Fundamental Rights stood as follows: 'There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of public

employment. Nothing contained herein shall prevent the state from making provisions for reservation in favour of classes who in the opinion of the state are not adequately represented in the public services.'

It is this endeavour to safeguard the minority's fair share in public employment which got finally reflected in its new configuration as 'any backward class of citizens' in Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India. In his speech concluding the debate on 30 November 1948 on Draft Article 10(3) [present Article 16(4)] B.R. Ambedkar admitted that 'the Drafting Committee undertook on its own shoulders the responsibility of introducing the word "backward" which, I admit, did not originally find a place in the fundamental right in the way in which it was passed by the Assembly...' However, Ambedkar freely used 'community', 'class' and 'caste' as variants, not indicating that the new expression excluded 'minorities', with regard to whom he observed that 'there is a special reference in Article 296, where it has been laid down that some provision will be made with regard to minorities.'

It may give some comfort to minorities that the Supreme Court judgement on reservation for Backward Classes has quoted is shown to have been used as a generic term inclusive of community. Para 80[C] of the judgement notes:

That it is significant to notice that throughout his speech in the C.A., Dr. Ambedkar was using the word communities (and not castes) which expression includes not only the castes among the Hindus but several other groups. For example, **Muslims as a whole were treated as a backward community in the princely state of Travancore...** The word 'community' is clearly wider than 'caste' and 'backward communities' meant not only the castes, wherever they may be found – but also other groups, classes and sections among the populace.

But minorities seeking protection of Article 16(4) may find that much will depend on the proclivity of the bench. It may interpret the clause without any regard for its pre-natal history, as the Supreme Court has done on more than one occasion.

(Source: Minority Identities and the Nation-State)

(Contd. from Page 60)

assess the prospects of the candidates in their districts and recommend the name of the candidate whom they consider to be the strongest and the most acceptable to the Muslim voters and who are prepared to commit himself to work for the Muslim Agenda.

The recommendation should then be vetted by the Political Committee in Patna and the approved names should be formally announced.

The Political Committee should issue individual and collective appeals to the electorate in favour of selected candidates as well as urge the Muslim electorate to make full use of their voting power.

Hindi Plus Urdu in Both Scripts as National Language

Gandhiji's Rationale in Harijan, 26 April, 1942

... I admit that in asking people to learn the Persian script I have at the back of my mind a contribution to Hindu-Muslim unity. There has been a longstanding conflict between the Hindi and Urdu tongues as between the two scripts. Today it has assumed a virulent form. In 1935, in Indore the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, while defining Hindi, gave a definite place to the Persian script. In 1925, the Congress gave the national language the name of Hindustani. Both scripts were made permissible. Thus, Hindi plus Urdu was recognized as the national language. The question of Hindu-Muslim unity was definitely in the forefront in all these decisions... If we want to develop the national language to the fullest extent, it behoves us to give the two scripts an equal status. In the end whichever is appreciated more by the people will be the more widespread.

The provincial languages are closely allied to Sanskrit, and it is true that lacs of Muslims are conversant only with their provincial languages, and that Hindi and the Devanagari script will, therefore, be easier for them to learn than Urdu and the Persian characters. My scheme will not interfere with this. In fact the people will benefit more than ever by learning the Persian script. Your trouble arises because you look upon this as a burden. Whether it is a gain or a burden depends on the outlook of the learner. He who is filled with a love of country will never consider such learning a burden. There will be no compulsion by my scheme. Only those who consider it a gain will learn the Persian script or the Devanagari as the case may be...

The question of everyone learning Hindustani does not arise. Indeed everyone will never do so. The necessity is for those who have to travel and those who want to serve. The latter's ability for service will be greatly increased by a knowledge of both languages and scripts. If you agree, your opposition and suspicion should subside.

... In my eyes he who knows only one of the languages and one script will be half-equipped... And unless this number goes on increasing there will never be a proper blending of Hindi and Urdu. The Congress ideal of Hindustani will never be fulfilled. That Hindus and Mussalmans in the Hindi-knowing provinces should have a common speech is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Many of us cling to this hope, and some day it will certainly come to pass.

... There is no question of giving up anything that is ours by tradition. It is a question of adding to or improving what already exists. If I know Sanskrit, what harm if I learn Arabic too, or vice versa? The result will probably be an enrichment of my knowledge of either language. And my contacts with the Arabs or Hindus, as the case may be, will increase. Surely there can be no opposition to the acquiring or right knowledge in any sphere... Devanagari is not to be displaced. It is a question of adding to the existing knowledge.

... English no doubt is the international language. But can it ever be our national language? The latter must be the common property of millions of our people. How can they sustain the burden of learning the English tongue? Hindustani is the natural national language, for it is already understood by 21 crores. The remainder of the population can also easily understand it. But English may be said to be the mother tongue of a mere handful – say, a lac at the most. If India is a nation, it must have a national language. English will appropriately remain the international language with the Roman script. But the latter can never be the script of the national language.

Urdu in Railways

Shahabuddin's Letter to

Minister for Railways, 8 November, 1999

The Ministry of Railways had some years back decided that the Railway Stations located in those districts with a substantial Urdu-speaking population, the Name Boards on the platform will carry the names in Urdu also.

Unfortunately, the decision has not been implemented in full and wherever it has been, it is marred by wrong spelling and poor calligraphy.

I request you to instruct the Railway Board to have names in Urdu, wherever applicable and to have them properly spelt and calligraphed.

Minister for Railway's Reply

I am in receipt of your letter dated 8th November, 1999 regarding implementation of Railway Board's earlier decision to have name boards on the platforms in Urdu at stations located in the districts with a substantial Urdu-speaking population. I am having the matter examined.

(Source: M/Railways Letter No. MR/B/624/99 dated 17 November, 1999 to S. Shahabuddin)

(Contd. from Page 88)

Muslim community (but) helped the Hindutva forces to organise their vote bank in the name of fighting Islamic fundamentalism. The CPI(M) in Kerala is guilty of maintaining a soft line towards different Islamic terrorist groups that have propped up after the demolition of Babari Masjid... For all practical purposes, these political parties ... know that a religious dispute is an instrument of power politics. Yet nobody's rules of the game subvert the principles of Constitutional governance as much as the BJP's, which is guided by the M.S. Golwalkar's RSS philosophy of lambasting the Muslims, Christians and Communists as India's internal enemies. No wonder then, its rise to the power in an era of religious hatred (1984-92) has been phenomenal... Now with the third BJP-led government at the centre in a short span of four years, a spell of gloom has been cast over many people who are concerned with the future of the Indian democracy...

(Source: R. Sinha, K. Nayan & B.K. Joseph in The Microcosmic, Dec., 99)

Murli Manohar Joshi's 'Project Prejudice' as 'Education' Praful Bidwai on Revision of School Curriculum and Textbooks

If Human Resource Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi has his way, our children and grandchildren will grow up believing that "Hindu culture", as the Sangh Parivar defines it, is the sole influence that has shaped India since the Vedic times. This culture, they will learn, has remained unchanged since time immemorial. All other cultures, civilisational influences and traditions are extraneous, "impure", alien, not part of the Indian "heritage". They are at best only marginal to the values relevant to us. In this view, "Bharatiya culture" is mankind's highest achievement. It is at once all-encompassing, but also infinitely tolerant (never mind the contradiction between the hegemonic ambitions of being "all-encompassing", and respect for other views).

Among the other "truths" and "values" that textbooks will teach our school children:

- ❖ The Aryans were India's original inhabitants; they never displaced or colonised Dravidians or indigenous tribal people and forest-dwellers.
- ❖ According to the Ramayana legend, Sri Lanka was an opulent "city". It had "excellent houses, decorated with wonderful ... jewels, golden archways, pearls, diamonds, gems, silver, etc..." But it was not "cultured". In "refreshing contrast, Ayodhya was both civilised and cultured. People were learned, free from greed, truthful and with no proclivity towards stealing or petty-mindedness"
- ❖ There was no contradiction between Hinduism, on the one hand, and Buddhism or Jainism, on the other – despite rich evidence on the hounding and banishment of these faiths and their followers. Hinduism merely "absorbed" Buddhism.
- ❖ Indians are "a race". More, they have "a mission" as a race. This race must understand "the destiny it has to shape, the place it has to occupy in the march of nations..."
- ❖ Hindu and Muslim "periods" clearly mark the relevant watersheds in Indian history.
- ❖ It is "a fundamental postulate of Hindu thought that every way of life has its own contribution to make..." But "the ultimate reality" is defined by Krishna alone. "He proclaims a doctrine which is fundamental to all Hindu thought... Owing to this approach we are reinterpreting our own doctrines and doing readjustment (sic). For example, we have absorbed Buddhism..."
- ❖ "Our concept of the joint family is a unique contribution in the history of mankind. Generation after generation we have developed it". The break-up of some of the oppressive structures of the joint family is thus not progressive, but a setback.
- ❖ India, irrespective of who ruled it, has never tried to dominate or subjugate other people, cultures or lands – never mind our marauding kings, brutal rajahs or the

fact that whole ministries were once assigned by "Hindu" kings to the specific task of destroying and looting temples!

- ❖ "Bharatiya culture is the only culture which has understood the life problems (sic) in their totality and has made a continuous effort to solve them. In the history of the world, it is the only effort to see the science, philosophy, religion, psychology and social life in an integrated form." (sic).
- ❖ "Spirituality is the core of our culture. We have tried to see the reality or truth hidden in the material world. This is the theme of Bharatiya life work. This is the theme of Bhartiya life work. It is the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being – the spiritualisation of the human race." (sic).
- ❖ The "spirit of Bharat" and "Bharatiyata" is Dharma. This is "the ultimate source of all values of human society". In the Vedic period, "there existed no state, no king, no penalty and no criminal, all protected one another by virtue of Dharma". The best description of Dharma is naturally to be found in the Manusmriti, "which gives ten characteristics which are related to human conduct..."
- ❖ "Naturally, Bharat excelled in every branch of Science – Mathematics, Astronomy, Chemistry, Sculpture. Pharmacology, etc. Our sages realised reality lying in every sphere of life". Bhaskaracharya, were Hindus. Also, "in each and every field of art, architecture, sculpture, painting, dance, drama and music, we were the leaders". Our temples "... may perhaps be said to be infinitely superior to the cumulative achievements of our artists." (sic).
- ❖ "When the central idea driving and inspiring the way of life ceases to exist, a culture dies along with its adherents. The cultures of Greece, Rome and Egypt died the day the representatives of those lands failed to find fulfillment in living up to its values. So it is our duty to preserve our ancient heritage..."
- ❖ "We firmly believe in the Vedantic concept that each soul is potentially divine... We have to reach the concept of 'I am God'..." The basic task of education today is to inculcate this knowledge.

These ideas form the core of the "discussion papers" being prepared by some of the principal institutions that draw up school curricula, including the National Open School (which has over a million pupils, and from whose document the verbatim quotes are taken here). Other bodies such as the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are also about to adopt a similar approach to defining "Bharat" and promoting "Bharatiyata" through education. These papers not only stipulate the general objectives and goals that educational courses must achieve, but also substantially lay down some of their core content. The emphasis is on Hindutva

with its exclusivist, chauvinist notions of nationalism.

All future writers of our textbooks will have to conform to these values, objectives and content descriptions. In practice, this will apply not just to the Central elementary schools and the CBSE systems, but to educational institutions at the State level too. Most of these participate either in the donor-driven District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), or the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which Joshi has just inaugurated to consolidate all non-formal education – even as he has more or less dismantled the National Literacy Mission. These include the Saraswati Shishu Mandirs and the Vanvasi Shiksha Kendras set up by RSS pracharaks, schools run by Friends of Tribals Society of Sangh sympathiser P.D. Chitlangia, and other non-governmental organisation of the saffron variety... This adds up a massive brainwashing programme – to be accomplished through the simple device of an administrative fatwa issued by the Human Resource Development Ministry for curriculum revision. No one has ever attempted anything one-tenth as ambitious as Joshi has actually ordered into existence. Earlier, textbooks, especially history textbooks, were manipulated to introduce a communal bias. There have been many instances of extravagant claims about India's achievements and arrogant or disdainful statements about other cultures and peoples. But this is the first time that the whole curriculum for Classes X and XII is being so comprehensively rewritten. This is not revision with a view to updating it. It involves violent recasting and radical changes – in particular, changes in values and ideologies.

These "discussion papers" are reminiscent of the fatwas issued in Hitler's Germany to inculcate the spirit of "nationalism" among schoolchildren, and to specify in the minutest detail what constitutes authentic. "German culture", why the idea of racial purity, and the sacred nature of the Aryan "master race" must never be questioned...

M.M. Joshi is clearly the most dedicated hardcore RSS Minister in the present government. An RSS insider has been quoted as saying: "We think Joshiji has done the best work. He is the most frequent to come here to consult RSS organising secretary K. Sudarshan. We know that our project of nation-building cannot be accomplished without basic education". Joshi is certainly a pillar of Hindutva...

... Hindutva's education and culture project ... is far more dangerous and insidious than the construction of the Ram temple. It involves manipulating minds, infiltrating hatred into them, encouraging them to think smugly in stereotypes, and making people's self-identity dependant on bigotry and false pride. Ultimately, the project means yoking the mind to a hateful, communal, nationalism – for generations to come. Textbooks are not revised frequently. The last major curriculum revision was way back in 1976.

What happens to today's battle over school curricula will influence a whole generation. That's why Joshi's despicable Project of Prejudice must not be allowed to prevail.

(Source: The Frontline, 24 December, 1999)

Setting up Aunt Sallys to Knock Down Editorial, The Statesman, 22 Dec., 1999

Is there a deliberate and concerted plan to promote the Hindutva vision of history in the fields of primary education and scholarly research? ... A "discussion paper" on syllabi says that the "curricula must inculcate and maintain a sense of pride in being an Indian" and that "the remnants of the alien legacy of the pre-Independence period have to be shed completely". There is nothing wrong with that, except that ... writing history for school children or for adults, for example, is not about glorifying Indian culture and Indian civilisation, especially when the word "Indian" is defined to suit partisan and ideological needs. History is about objectively re-evaluating the past in the light of all the material available at a given moment... Marxists and Nationalists never gave Golwalkar and his brood a fair hearing... But, they did not hallucinate. Like K.S. Lal, who attributes the migration of indentured labour to Mauritius and the West Indies to the fiscal exactions of the Khilji era? Or like the people who devised the Sanskrit Jnan course for the RSS-run Vidya Bharati schools and who teach that China was first populated by Indians.

One can multiply examples. An NCERT textbook, meant to "inculcate a sense of pride in being an Indian" makes Subhas Bose the leader of an agitation in AP and dates the coming of Europeans to this country from 1748. **This reflects the general Hindutva disregard for facts...** There is no way in which academic establishments can be made to serve a specific political purpose ... - refashioning cultural identity – and remain serious, mainly because things like culture and history are not entirely orderly phenomena and their purpose is not to supervise and justify the creation of a specific type ... for instance, a proud Hindu or an Aryan master race. Such an order can be imposed, such a purpose attributed ... by regimes in position to exercise a totalitarian control over knowledge.

Instructions in RSS-run Vidya Bharati School

The Sanskriti Gyan course teaches:

- The first people to inhabit China were Indians.
- The first people to inhabit Iran were Indians.
- Thousands of opponents of idol worship, the followers of Islam, go to the pilgrimage centre of the Islamic community at the Kaaba to worship the Shivalinga.

Some questions with answers:

Ques: Why is the Babari Masjid not a mosque?

Ans: Because Muslims till today have never offered Namaz there.

Ques: Between 1528 and 1914, how many devotees of Rama laid down their lives to liberate the Rama temple?

Ans: Three lakh fifty thousand.

Other questions include: 'When did Ramabhakta kar sewaks unfurl the saffron flag on the Shri Ram Janambhoomi' and 'mention the name of the young boys who laid down their life while unfurling the saffron flag'.

Akshaya Mukul on NCERT Project to Review Textbooks

On July 14, 1999 ... Union Human Resource Development Minister Murli Manohar Joshi appointed J.S. Rajput as director of the NCERT, apex body responsible for preparing school textbooks and framing syllabi. Since then, its sylvan campus has been reeling under attempts to "indigenise" education and promote Hindutva – often at the expense of knowledge.

NCERT received its first shock in July 1999 when Rajput decided not to replace the Class X course B Hindi textbook, Sanchayika Bhag II. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) had prescribed it in 1993 to bring out the "proud tradition of the country, and the values of life inherent in it, in the areas of literature, society, art, science, etc." But later, NCERT's books evaluation committee found that Sanchayika contained several historical inaccuracies and peddled distorted notions about Indian culture. It was labelled "unusable", and a replacement was sought.

... The manuscript, meanwhile, was sent to the new director for a foreword... But Rajput ... argued, "Since an overall change of NCERT textbooks will be undertaken shortly, why change only one textbook?" The prospect of an "overall change" was ominous enough. The immediate result was that CBSE reverted to the book the evaluation committee had rejected... The 'discussion paper' (Rajput) has prepared for laying down guidelines to frame syllabi, (says). "...The curricula must inculcate and maintain a sense of pride in being an Indian, through understanding of the growth of Indian civilisation and contributions of India to world civilisations in thoughts, actions and deeds. The remnants of the alien legacy of the pre-Independence period have to be shed completely. It has to be a totally indigenous curriculum."

"Textbooks should reflect the changes in the socio-political and cultural scene of the country **in the past one decade.**" ... Academicians are suspicious of Rajput's quest to indigenise education. RS Sharma, the doyen of ancient Indian history, says, "Of course, India's contribution must be presented. But this should not be used to assert that Vedic mathematics was more advanced than modern mathematics, or that Hindus are Aryans who originated in India and, therefore, Muslims and others who came later are non-Indians."

Syllabi apart, many are perturbed at the concerted attempt to pack NCERT with Hindutva votaries (including) that of Krishna Gopal Rastogi, a known RSS functionary..., a hardcore RSS footsoldier who shot dead a Muslim woman during Partition...

Similar is the story of R.H. Dave, who has been entrusted with preparing a module for minimum levels of learning... He head(ed) the Hamburg unit of the VHP. But 'consensus' is Rajput's favourite word. It was in this spirit that he visited liberal academicians like Bipan Chandra, Ravindra Kumar, Satish Chandra and Namvar Singh... Chandra (says): "I frankly told him there is nothing called consensus in social science, especially history. Instead of trying to arrive at a unanimous opinion, all scholarly

opinions should be accommodated. How can there be a consensus on a contentious issue like communalism? Can Gandhi and Golwalkar sit together and arrive at a mutually acceptable conclusion?"

NCERT sources dismiss Rajput's attempts at "consensus" as a cover while he pushes the Hindutva agenda and eliminates dissent. ...

But why target NCERT? A senior CBSE official ... explains, "After the fiasco' at last year's education ministers' conference, the BJP has realised textbooks cannot be changed openly. NCERT is ideal for doing it surreptitiously. It has a countrywide presence. At one stroke, they can capture the entire landscape."

Teesta Setalvad, editor, Communalism Combat, says institutions like NCERT are vulnerable because education hasn't been a priority for other political parties... "Which party other than the BJP has made education and its content a consistent issue for mobilisation and campaigning?" she asks.

Now, as the BJP promotes Hindutva through education, the country faces the prospect of having the nation's children completely dyed in saffron.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 19 December, 1999)

Moral Instruction:

Another Tool for Saffronisation

I was happy to see reports that the HRD Ministry is planning to introduce moral education in schools. In the name of secularism, we have been preventing our school-going children from getting moral education and have allowed agnosticism to grow.

No religion advocates anti-social activity. If carefully selected and introduced in the form of textbooks, the essence of great religious' like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, etc. could be used to impart basic moral education to our children in their formative years. **Care should be taken to ensure that the various religions are not compared and the need for respecting all the religions should be emphasised in these textbooks.**

- Letter of B. Krishnamoorthy in
The Indian Express, 6 November, 1999

On Joshi's Role

It is widely held that M.M. Joshi has been allotted the Human Resource Development portfolio because of the importance the RSS attaches to influencing the minds of the young through education.

In his first term Joshi stirred a hornet's nest when he sought to inaugurate a Conference of State Education Ministers with ... Saraswati Vandana. The leftwing lobby in leading academic and research institutions bristled at his 'interference'. But Joshi has by no means been cowed down. Starting his new term in the old ministry, he has again been quick off the mark, making a spate of controversial appointments...

[S. Murthy and D. Mukerji in The Week, 14 November, 1999]

Maulana Azad Education Foundation: Annual Report, 1998-99

Maulana Azad Education Foundation is an organisation established to promote education amongst the educationally backward minorities. The aim of the foundation is to formulate and implement various educational schemes and plans through NGOs all over the country. Fully funded by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, GOI, (its) office (is at) 25, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110 001.

Educational Schemes

- i) To establish residential schools especially for girls ... belonging to educationally backward minorities.
- ii) To promote ... technical education amongst the educationally backward minorities.
- iii) (To provide) financial assistance for hostel accommodation for girls ... belonging to the educationally backward minorities.
- iv) (To provide) financial assistance for remedial and pre-examination coaching for students belonging to educationally backward minorities...

Corpus Fund: The Foundation has received a Corpus Fund of Rs. 70.01 crore...

Annual Income: During ... 1998-99 the Foundation earned ... Rs.9.06 crore ... as interest on investment and an amount of Rs.3.75 crores (was) provided by the Government of India as recurring Grant.

Grant in Aid for Schools/Residential Schools & Colleges mainly for Girls: ... The Foundation sanctioned grant-in-aid amounting to Rs.10,26.3 lakhs to 77 NGOs for the purpose of construction/expansion of schools/colleges/hostels buildings and released an amount of Rs.508.5 lakhs to 72 NGOs.

Grant in Aid for Technical Education: The Foundation sanctioned grant in aid amounting to Rs.204.3 lakhs to 18 NGOs ... for technical education and ... released Rs.149.5 lakhs- to 17 NGOs.

The Foundation released Rs.262.1 lakhs to 57 NGOs as subsequent installments of grant in aid sanctioned during earlier years.

Vocational Training Centre: ... The Foundation is running a Vocational Training Centre for Girls at Delhi ... (with 7) courses.

State-wise Break-up of Grants Released, 1989-99

S.No.	State/UT	Amount (in Lakhs)	No. of NGOs
1.	Uttar Pradesh	707.56	87
2.	Karnataka	355.80	24
3.	Bihar	185.40	15
4.	West Bengal	142.40	8
5.	Kerala	106.30	6
6.	Maharashtra	89.30	12
7.	Gujarat	69.50	7
8.	Tamil Nadu	62.50	3
9.	Rajasthan	59.50	4
10.	Assam	57.50	6
11.	Andhra Pradesh	53.45	12
12.	Punjab	51.67	6
13.	Madhya Pradesh	49.40	6
14.	Delhi	34.36	7
15.	Jammu & Kashmir	23.71	2
16.	Manipur	17.10	1
17.	Haryana	11.25	1
18.	Others	9.72	2
	Total	2086.42	207

Standard

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UGC Scheme of Coaching Classes for Competitive Examinations For Weaker Sections of Educationally Backward Minority Communities

...Since 1984 the UGC is implementing Scheme of Coaching Classes for the Weaker Sections Amongst Educationally Backward Minority Communities in Universities and Colleges... Muslims, Neo-Buddhists are identified as Educationally Backward Minorities. In general, it is observed that most of the Muslims and Neo-Buddhists are not only educationally backward but also economically weaker, while revising guidelines for 9th plan the spirit for providing more opportunities to the persons belonging to these categories so that they can be benefited and prepare themselves for various competitive examinations... In addition to Muslims and Neo-Buddhists, it was agreed that State Government(s) may also identify other groups who are educationally backward at the State level and they can be given benefit under the Scheme... The guidelines have been prepared with the help of Standing Committee on Minority Coaching. ...

List of Universities and Colleges

1. Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
2. Allahabad University, Allahabad
3. Bangalore University, Bangalore
4. Barkatullah University, Bhopal
5. Bombay University, Mumbai.
6. Calicut University, Calicut
7. Chaudhury Charan Singh University, Meerut
8. Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore
9. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Agra
10. Gauhati University, Gauhati
11. Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur
12. Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi
13. Jammu University, Jammu
14. Kakatiya University, Warangal
15. Kashmir University, Srinagar
16. L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga.
17. Lucknow University, Lucknow
18. M.D. University, Rohtak
19. Nagpur University, Nagpur
20. Osmania University, Hyderabad
21. Patna University, Patna
22. South Gujarat University, Surat
23. Anjuman-e-Islam's Nehru Arts, Science and Commerce College, Hubli
24. Anjuman Arts, Science & Commerce College, Bijapur
25. Anjuman-e-Islam's Akbar Peerbhoy College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai
26. APN Degree College, Basti
27. Akka Mahadevi Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Bidar.
28. Acharya Narendra Deo Kisan PG College, Gonda
29. D.A.V. College, Jalandhar.
30. Degree College, Pratapgarh
31. D.S. College, Katihar
32. Dr. Ambedkar College of Commerce & Economics, Walda.
33. Dr. Ambedkar College of Arts and Commerce, Gulbarga.
34. Farooq College, Calicut
35. Government College, Malerkotla
36. Government Mahila Post Graduate College, Rampur
37. Government College, Kasaragod
38. Gandhi Faizan (PG) College, Shahjahanpur
39. HKE Society's M.S. Irani Degree College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Gulbarga.
40. Smt. V. Gangasri College for Women, Gulbarga.
41. HKE Society's Arts, Science & Commerce College, Aland.
42. Hamidia Girls Degree College, Allahabad.
43. Halim Muslim Degree College, Allahabad.
44. Halim Muslim Degree College, Kanpur.
45. Hasanath College for Women, Bangalore.
46. Iqbal College, Trivandrum
47. Islamiyah College, North Arcot.
48. Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchirapalli.
49. Karamat Hussain Muslim Girls Degree College, Lucknow.
50. Karnataka Arts, Science & Commerce College, Bidar.
51. K.S. College, Darbhanga.
52. Karim City College, Jamshedpur.
53. Kandi Raj College, Murshidabad.
54. Lucknow Christian Degree College, Lucknow.
55. Lilong Haoreibi College, Manipur.
56. MES Kalladi College, Palghat.
57. Mazharul Uloom College, North Arcot
58. MES Manpad College, Mallapuram.
59. MES Ponnani College, Ponnani.
60. Maulana Azad College of Arts, Science & Commerce, Aurangabad.
61. Maulana Azad College, Calcutta.
62. MES Asambi College, Trichur.
63. M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad
64. MLSM College, Darbhanga
65. Marwari College, Kishanganj.
66. Mirza Ghalib College, Bodh Gaya.
67. Osmania College, Kurnool.
68. Pocker Sahib Memorial Orphanage College, Tirurangadi.
69. Rajah Serfoji Government College, Thanjavur.
70. St. Mary's College, Wynad.
71. Sree Narayana College, Trichur.
72. Saifia College, Bhopal.
73. Shibli National College, Azamgarh.
74. SECAB Association's Abdur Razzaqa Inamdar College of Arts, Science and Commerce College for Women, Bijapur.
75. Sir Syed College, Taliparamba
76. S.D. College, Hoshiarpur.
77. Al-Ameen Arts, Science & Commerce College, Bangalore.
78. Zakir Hussain College, New Delhi.

(Source: UGC Secretary's Letter No. 4-2/99 (CCM) dated 7 December, 1999 to Mr. S. Shahabuddin)

Muslim Period in Indian History Limited Only to 60 years of Aurangzeb!

S.K. Balasubramanian in The Bharatiya Pragna, December, 1999

... We are told that India was under Islamic rule and influence for nearly 1000 years and that Islam came to Sindh in 705 AD. The first invasion in 705 was no more than an incursion since it lasted for not more than five years. The Arab Muslims were driven back as fast as they came. The assertion of an "Islamic period in Indian history" came about because the British thought of Delhi as India. While there is no denying that Delhi and its hinterlands, Punjab and the Gangetic Plain, were prime jewels in India's crown, India was far bigger than Delhi. Islamic rule in Delhi could not be construed as an Islamic shroud over India.

From about 705 AD there had been Islamic (Arab, Afghan or Persian) incursions into Hindusthan... The only period when a major part of India was under an Islamic regime was from Akbar to Aurangzeb - a period of 155 years (1550- 1705).

From 1100 AD to 1840 (sic) there were six successful attacks on India from the west, an average of one attack in 100 years - Ghazni, Ghoris, Khilji, Babar, Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah. The first three were Afghans. The fourth one was a Mongol of Turkmen origin. The fifth was Persian and the sixth Afghan... Because of the destructive nature of some of these attacks their memory is still raw. Statistically speaking, this country had repelled attacks for one hundred years before losing once. This is not as great a military debacle as historians would like us to believe...

Ghazni's intent was to loot. He looted Somnath and went back. In fact, all Afghan incursions, except Khilji, were for loot and rapine. The destruction was quite large. Civilized and prosperous societies elsewhere also had found similar tribal incursions difficult to contain. The cost of maintaining a standing army imposed a heavy burden and there was always the fear of the army becoming too powerful. For the attacking tribes the loss was only in manpower which could be recouped in another 10-12 years for the next round of attacks. Their lands, being unproductive, had no attraction for the civilized peoples to engage in "hot pursuit" or "fight to the finish".

Ghoris was beaten several times before he could win. He succeeded at last because of division in the Hindu ranks and not due to the Muslim military superiority...

The next successful incursion which endured for some time was the invasion by Babar... His son Humayun was driven out but returned some time later. All these Muslim reverses are painted as having been at the hands of Muslims or an intra-Muslim affair. The Hindu role in these has to be examined... The majority is treated as if they were no more than dumb animal-like spectators.

Akbar could not be called a full Islamicist. Jehangir was a playboy. It was Aurangzeb who showed Islamic zeal and perpetrated harsh cruelties. It was but natural that ... alienated the majority of Hindus. Muslim power in India could not prevail after that.

... Muslims formed about 35% in pre-Independence India and coincidentally the Buddhist percentage in India was not far different... I conclude that the Buddhists were the predominant converts to Islam...

If the Buddhist Muslim equation is not accepted, we have to explain: Where did the Buddhists go? By the time the British came to India, Buddhism had completely disappeared... They certainly did not revert to Hinduism. The absorption into the hierarchical caste system would have been difficult...

Professor Aziz Ahmad

On Iconoclasm by Muslim State in India

"Iconoclasm was considered by some Muslim sultans and their generals as a pious performance ancillary to the greater and more strenuous virtue of jihad; it also served as a proof for the self-satisfaction of the invaders that the wars they were waging were not for self-glorification or for acquisition of plunders or the carving out of an empire, but had religious justification.

"Iconoclasm was a pseudo-religious wartime sport that survived in Muslim India until the end of the 17th century (till the time of Aurangzeb). The saintly Iltutmish otherwise quite tolerant to the Hindus sacked the temples of Bhilsa and Ujjain after his siege of those cities. Idol-breaking occurred frequently during Jalal al-din Khilji's expedition against Jhaban and Ala-al-din's vast conquest in the Deccan and Gujarat.

Peacetime (when Muslim supremacy was established by such vandalism) instances are rare. Among these exceptions which prove the rule are the cases of iconoclasm by Sikandar Butshikan (idol-breaker) of Kashmir and Sikandar Lodi (whom Babar defeated in 1520). The latter (Lodi) is reported to have converted Hindu temples at Muttra (Mathura) into caravan-serais and to have given away broken pieces of idols to butchers—to serve as meat-weights... The theoretical policy of the Muslim state in India was to withhold the permission of new temples and to discourage the repair of old ones. This appears to have been aimed at a gradual and tactful elimination of idol worship. But **judging from the extremely large number of temples that have survived from medieval India the policy seems to have been seldom enforced.**" (Pp. 87-88).

(Source: The Organiser, 26 December, 1999)

CPI(M)'s Organ People's Democracy on Riots in Phalodi, Rajasthan

The enquiry committee constituted by the non-Congress, non-BJP parties in Rajasthan has squarely held the BJP and Shiv Sena guilty of inciting communal riots in Phalodi town of Jodhpur district...

At Phalodi, the committee came to know that 4 FIRs were registered in the police station in connection with the riots, but 16 out of the 18 persons arrested were from the minority community... The enquiry revealed that it was the BJP and Shiv Sena who instigated communal riots in the town by propagating that the cattle heads being carried in a train were meant for slaughter... (The annual cattle fair was held from December 3 to 10, where 2,940 buffaloes and 96 camels were sold... Traders from UP, Bihar and other states also come. The animals are allowed to be taken out of the state only after their medical check-up.

Railway authorities at the Phalodi station told the committee that this year the traders ... were given 40 wagons by the railways for December 20. On the day, by about 10 a m, the traders had got the cattle loaded on the wagons and an engine was already in place to pull the train when a crowd, led by Balkishan Thanvi, former MLA, squatted in front of the train... Hundreds of people began to drag the animals out of the wagons. This process continued till 5 in the evening...

... No quarrel took place at the time the crowd was dragging the animals out of the wagons. It began when the crowd turned its attention to the buffaloes ... tied near the madrasa situated close to the railway station. It was said that the police also attacked the madrasa... The team also went to see the kiosks (of) poor shopkeepers gutted by fire... The team concluded that the district administration allowed the BJP and Shiv Sena leaders to instigate riots in this otherwise peaceful region of Rajasthan. For more than 15 days, leaders of these two parties were spreading rumours that the cattle were meant for slaughter, but the administration took no notice. The intelligence machinery of both the centre and state badly failed...

The BJP and Shiv Sena are also guilty of conspiring against the livelihood of lakhs of herdsmen in the state. It will be noted that several official and non-official organisations of Rajasthan organise cattle fair in various parts of the state at different levels from village panchayat upto state, and at different intervals — like every year, every six months or every three months. It is at these fairs that peasants sell or purchase cattle or draught animals. These fairs were being organised even when the BJP was in power in the state, and its government had even formulated rules for the purpose. But now, if the BJP and Shiv Sena succeed in preventing the holding of such fairs, it would only kill the livelihood of the herdsmen and peasants who are already suffering from rising costs of living and declining prices of the commodities they produce. This will further push them into the arm of the same moneylenders and usurers who support parties like the BJP.

and other animals that were dragged out of the railway wagons and freed, were roaming in the area adjoining the Phalodi railway station. None of the so called defenders of bovine wealth had taken care to feed them or give them water. (The Committee noted) the helplessness of the ruling Congress party vis-a-vis the communal forces. None of the Congress leaders had the courage to condemn the communal riots and those who had instigated them...

The committee has demanded that the entire episode be probed by a serving judge of the High Court. Other demands put forth by the committee are arrest of and punishment to Balkishan Thanvi and others who spread rumours, incited communal violence, arsoned the railway property and dragged the animals from wagons which amounts to looting the property of cattle traders; compensation to the people whose shops were set ablaze; compensation to the traders who have suffered losses...

(Source: Sanjay Madhav in *The People's Democracy*, 9 Jan., 2000)

Withdrawal of Meerut Riots, 1991 Cases Editorial, *The Indian Express*, 22 Dec., 99

Time is expected to heal all wounds. After the bout of communal blood letting that Meerut witnessed eight and a half years ago, the state of UP, in its magnanimity, has decided to acquit those accused in engineering the riots. Incredible as this sounds, it has justified the move "in larger public interest and communal harmony"... In the eyes of the law, a murder remains a murder, even one committed in the distant past. In the eyes of the law, the murder of one person in an individual attack, or of several people in a riot, remain heinous crimes that deserves to be punished and socially condemned in the strongest possible terms.

Bringing justice to riot victims is a social imperative.... Yet, in riot after riot, in inquiry after inquiry, justice has remained elusive. The cavalier fashion in which the BJP-Shiv Sena government treated the Srikrishna Report on the Bombay riots of 1992-93 is too well-known... In case after case, whether it is the Bhagalpur riots of 1989 or the Maliana riots involving the Public Armed Constabulary, the authorities have preferred to adopt the posture of the ostrich in dealing with them. Inquiries are instituted often merely to buy time... Very few state governments have bothered to even table such reports before the Assembly...

But the UP government has gone one step further. By withdrawing the case, it has in effect actually pardoned those behind the riots before the trials could even begin. What makes the action even more suspect is the fact that some of the accused were close to the BJP or are BJP functionaries themselves. This newspaper reported on Tuesday how one of the accused men went on record to state that he is a sincere party worker and was particularly close to the former UP chief minister. The state government, by withdrawing from the case, presented the judiciary with a fait accompli...

Microcosmic Report on Majoritarian Communalism with Nationalist, Democratic and Secular Mask

... Communalism always thrives when it appears as nationalism.. Quite paradoxically, while minority communalism is lambasted as separatism, the majority communalism appears to be promising as mainstream nationalism. The question, however, is that in the garb of a secular democracy should a majority community in the name of ethnic superiority make the minority toe its line?

In recent years, the temptation to answer this question has been in affirmative, thanks to the myriad my this which have been sustained with the help of the media, which, due to its social composition, generally shares the fears and anxieties of the BJP. High sounding words like political morality and pragmatic idealism have enabled the Hindutva forces to make significant inroads into the middle class, media, academia, bureaucracy and even the armed forces. Putting some of the contentious issues like the Ayodhya Mandir, the Uniform Civil Code and Article 370 on the backburner is only a strategic shift, born out of political compulsions. But mere absence of overt communal overtones cannot be fool the world into believing that the BJP has had a new avatar, and it has become different... The party will take no time to take U-turn to bring the contentious issues in the front row as and when the situation is perceived to be favourable to them. Even today, amidst 23 un-like and not-so-like-minded friends, a hysterical attempt is being made to rewrite the Indian history and saffronise the cultural heritage. By excessive and slated glorification of the past, impressionable minds are made to believe the RSS philosophy of Hinduism as something close to nationalism.

The Indian history, on the contrary, does not suggest that communal ideology which serves the interests of the ruling elite and propertied classes has been the guiding force of nationalism... Mass mobilisation, using communal ideology is non-existent. However, the revolt of 1857 proved to be a watershed for the growth of communal politics in India; for, then onwards the British policy took a decisive shift to encourage every possible existing division within Indian society.

The spread of modern education and western ideas gave the Indian middle class new social and political insights. The western ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity led to new political aspirations. The advent of modern industrialisation had given rise to new social classes with antagonistic class relations – the nascent bourgeoisie and impoverished proletariat. The colonial rulers had, by then, realised the socio-political consciousness evolving in both the communities – the Hindus and the Muslims. And they quite successfully managed to channelise it within the parameters bound by the religion.

There has been a variety of complex historical reasons for the growth of communalism in the early 20th century. Contradictions inherent in the form and content of our Independence movement paved the way for communalism to transform itself into an alternative ideology of mass

mobilisation. The Partition witnessed the killing or maiming of over two lakh people. More than a million walked their way for almost 15-20 days in 24 foot convoys to reach this country and many more moved in the opposite direction, "filling up the mirages of freedom with tears and irrigating the wilderness of the new republics with migration." As per one estimate some 170 lakh people had moved out of their homes. If that had failed to awaken the conscience of people then perhaps nothing can.

In the post-Independent India ...the poor economic growth and degradation and deterioration of our democratic institutions caused the gradual departure of the Indian elite from secular principles of democracy to pragmatic communalism. The internal Emergency, imposed in 1975-76 by Indira Gandhi provided an opportunity to the communal forces to acquire political legitimacy. Thus, the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the precursor of the BJP, which had polled just about 3.06 percent votes and won 3 seats in the Lok Sabha elections of 1952, entered into the Janata Party government in 1977 as a respectable entity. Nevertheless, communalism was confined to a few political parties during those days with no popular appeal. It was only since the late sixties that religious sentiments had started emerging as a major feature of electoral politics.

The non-BJP political parties and their secularism are part of this conflict that cause fear psychosis among different communities. During the Emergency, Indira Gandhi realised that pampering of the minorities alone would not ensure an electoral success... Since then, the Congress has kept the minority and majority communalists on either side of the track and has exploited one or the other when it suited them. Rajiv Gandhi won the elections after the massacre of Sikhs in 1984 by appealing to Hindu sentiments. Bowing before the Muslim fundamentalists after the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case, a year later... It then supported the Hindu militant outfits in opening the locks of the Babari Masjid. Three years later his representatives – Buta Singh and N.D. Tiwari – entered into a pact with the VHP. And thus, in 1989, while the Indians were looking up to him for his promise to take the country into the 21st century, the 'energetic' prime minister was busy in ... allowing shilanyas of the mandir... (By) 1992, the pseudo-secular credentials of the Congress were thoroughly exposed with its top leaders, including the prime minister, hobnobbing with the Hindu frontal outfits during the latter's march to the demolition of the Babari Masjid.

The slate of the third forces and the Communist parties have also not been very clean either. In the name of discarding the Hindu communalism, these Third Front leaders like late H.N. Bahuguna, V.P. Singh and Mulayam Singh Yadav pampered the Muslim sentiments and thus was introduced the phenomenon of fatwa into the Indian electoral politics. This fatwa politics did no good to the

(Contd. on Page 70)

Sangh Parivar's Paradigm Shift from Muslims to Christians

The ... Sangh Parivar outfits ... love playing with the absurd. These absurdities can flow from anywhere. In case they do not exist then they are also quite good at inventing one or many, from time to time, as the occasion demands. For instance, this could be their ... considering the entire Muslim population in the country as Babar ki aulad or (their) believing that the natural conditions for any one in this part of the globe is to live the life of a Hindu...

In the recent past, one notices a paradigm shift in (the Parivar's) approach towards the Muslims. This shift was a watershed for both the Muslims and the Sangh Parivar. In the past, the Muslims were their enemy number one. After the BJP assumed power at the centre and more so after the Sonia-led Congress sent the two BJP-ruled States of Rajasthan and Delhi packing and retaining the hold over Madhya Pradesh in the November 1998 Assembly polls, there has come a change in their approach towards the Muslims. Since the Parivar cannot do without a whipping boy for long, they had to invent another vulnerable enemy to keep the communal hatred alive. Hence the numerically weak Christians become a soft target.

Reasons are not much harder to fathom as to why Christians became their target. Firstly, for the reason that they cannot sustain themselves without Hindutva ideology and for that they must invent anti-Hindutva forces; secondly, in their perception this community is insignificant both politically and numerically and; thirdly, their tirade against Christians will hardly affect their prospects during the elections. Whereas in the case of the Muslims, it was exactly the opposite. On the contrary, the Christians are dispersed all over the country unlike the Muslims, exception certain pockets like in some of the north-eastern States – Meghalaya, Mizoram and Manipur – where they are in majority. After all, the north-eastern States have only seven MPs. In Goa, (Christians) form a massive 40 per cent of the total population...

... The 1989 General Elections were a political watershed for one and all. The elections catapulted the two-member party that the BJP was after the 1984 polls into an 85-member strong political bandwagon, enabling the saffron league to lick from the power cake for the first time. This again forced the Parivar to remould their communal and political stratagem. That was the time when the Parivar began to realise the need for a wider political acceptability among the masses, especially, in the northern India. For, they know that it was always the north which had decided the political destiny of this nation. They were also aware that the southern States were dominated by regional parties, which have had a general anti-Hindu and anti-Hindi feelings.

And the BJP's growth during the five-year period has been unprecedented... the culmination of this phenomenal

growth was ... the most blatant act on December 6, 1992... the onset of the coalition era changed the very fabric of the national polity. The Parivar had to chalk out a new cunning method to remain floating. This was further necessitated by the 13-day wonder of the Vajpayee government...

They realised that Ram could not fetch them numbers and that the idols of Ram and Sita had to be relegated to the background if they were to remain at the forefront. This again necessitated another hunt for a new villain.

But ... the Parivar has been preparing grounds for this pogrom against the Christians as back as from 1964, when the RSS created the VHP. The Parishad was formed with two major objectives i.e. to prevent the overseas Hindus from getting assimilated into the Western/Christian mould and to prevent the Christian ... proselytisation in the tribal areas... The VHP formed the Vanvasi Kalyan Kendra in 1971... In 1977, the RSS formed yet another outfit, the Bharatiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, to reconvert the tribals who had got converted to Christianity... The formation of the Bajrang Dal in the mid '80 gave the VHP the much-needed mass base and social following...

But the irony is that ...the Sanatana Dharma ... does not believe in proselytising in any manner. The VHP is still going ahead with this move and terms it parivartan, a turning back, which even meant bringing into its fold even non-Christian tribals. But the fact is that majority of tribals are not Hindus... Leave alone the 6th-9th centuries' Hindu oppression of the Buddhists, the decade of '70s saw the VHP indulging in reconversion of Muslims of the Cheeta-Merat-Rajput Muslims in Udaipur, Pali, Bhilwara and Ajmer districts of Rajasthan. The VHP claims that by 1981-82, the number of reconversions had reached 22,000 of whom 13,000 were Rajput Muslims from Rajasthan. In other States the reconversions were of Christians, who were of either Scheduled Caste or tribal origin... In July, 1998 ... the much-publicised 'homecoming' of the tribals in MP's Chhattisgarh region, turned out to be a damp squib.

However, ... the anti-Christian pogroms have not reached an alarming proportion as was in the case of the Muslims... The explanation for which lies in the power politics. Once the Parivar feels that the BJP can stand on its own, they will not hesitate in going berserk with their agenda...

(Source: The Microcosmic, December, 1999)

There is no question of our party discarding its ideology. Don't be apologetic about it.

**- L.K. Advani at the BJP's
National Council Conference, Chennai**

RSS Not a Social or Cultural Organisation

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 14 Jan., 2000

Shri Maloy Dhar's apologetic article in defence of the RSS (11 January, 2000) is largely irrelevant. The simple question is whether RSS is a non-political, social, cultural and religious association. Though steeped in both micro and macro politics, it is **not** a political organisation as such as it does not contest elections in its own name but the services of its permanent cadre are lent to its political front, the BJP and in fact the BJP is largely run by them.

Secondly, according to Dr. Dhar RSS tried to add **Indian identity** to the struggle for freedom. This is absolutely untrue. RSS then and now endeavours to impose 'Hindu identity' over all things Indian. It stands for and preaches Hindu Nationalism, not Indian Nationalism; it teaches its members to treat non-Hindu citizens as foreigners and as adversaries; it tries, through brainwashing, to create a Hindu mindset which looks upon India as the exclusive land of the Hindus; it distorts Indian history as a continuing struggle of the Hindus vs the non-Hindus, it rejects age-old cultural synthesis and jeers at non-Hindu elements in the composite Indian culture and tries to efface all traces thereof. It is the antithesis of what an Indian cultural organisation should be.

It is not a social organisation because it divides the Indian society on religious lines and teaches the Hindu community to distrust and even hate the minority communities for what they are and for what their forefathers allegedly did to the country.

It is wrong to say that the RSS played a positive and constructive role during the Partition disturbances. A senior civil servant the late Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal has written about how the RSS planned to force out the Muslims from western UP. In riot after riot, the Swayemsevakas have participated in rumour-mongering and incitement of violence against the non-Hindus.

The RSS ideology and its long-term mission are based on the writings of Shri Golwalkar. My simple question is: Has the RSS disowned the thoughts of Shri Golwalkar?

And if an organisation has the reputation of being against a section of the people, should any decent government prepare the ground for its penetration in the administration? Is it the way to make governance credible in the eyes of the religious minorities?

May I add that any organisation which works positively for the uplift of any community is not per se communal. It becomes communal only when its activities are negatively directed against another community which is projected in the darkest possible colour. □

(Contd. from Page 91)

handed over to Hindus to build a great Ram temple.

To Advani, the mosque had become only a "structure", which was his to demolish. The fact that

A True Muslim Forgives.....

Mehmood Khan Saves Aurangabad

The heartbeats of Aurangabad, a town of over eight lakh people, stopped when it heard on December 11 that 26-year-old Ayub Khan had been killed. Memories of nightmares from the city's past came rushing back: burning houses and bodies, blood on the streets; men hunting men. Then, Mehmood Khan spoke. After laying his son to rest at the Nawabpura graveyard, he said: "If it be the wish the Allah that my son should die thus, then so be it. But let no one else meet with the same fate. Let us seek insaaf through the rule of law and not revenge."

The three brief sentences restored peace in the town, one of the most communally sensitive places in the country, in a way no law and order machinery could have done. Ayub was the victim of the brutal police lathi charge on a morcha on December 6, the anniversary of the demolition of the Babari Masjid. There were at least 75 more, who had sustained severe injuries in the incident. Except for a handful, all of them were Muslims... The police (had) delayed the announcement of Ayub's death for five days... Mehmood, a Class IV employee with the Aurangabad's People's Cooperative Bank, says "... I have seen enough of these bloody battles in my lifetime. They don't bring back your lost children". Realising that passions were running high (he) chose a shorter route for the funeral process (and to offer Namaz-e-Janaza) at the graveyard itself...

Mehmood also did away with the practice of holding a condolence meeting that follows a burial, at his house... "The tension and anger in the crowd was palpable", says Manzar Moinuddin, a renowned academician and former principal of the Maulana Azad College who was present at the burial.

"The mob seemed too restless to listen to anybody... Is really feared for the worst to happen. In the end the passionate words that came from the heart of an illiterate man overpowered all other emotions that day." Special Inspector General of Police, S.S. Suradkar ... says... "the way Mehmood took charge of the situation that day only goes to show how much a common man values peace in society."

(Source: The Indian Express, 3 January, 2000)

namaz was discontinued only because the idol was installed surreptitiously, was forgotten. From 1989, when the foundation stone for a Ram Mandir was laid in the mosque premises to 1992 when the mosque was demolished, the issue was politicised by the VHP the fallout of which was communal riots, damage to the social fabric of the nation, communal polarisation of votes and the BJP's rise in national politics.

With the RSS's attention currently shifted to Christians, the Hindu Jagaran Manch is planning to repeat the Babari Masjid-like situation in Halmodi village in Gujarat... □

Manas Dasgupta on Shilanyas of Ram Mandir in Halmodi

The BJP Government in Gujarat may have scored a point or two by ensuring a peaceful passage of the controversial stone-laying ceremony "shilanyas" for a proposed Ram temple in Halmodi village and the Christmas celebrations in the tribal-dominated Dangs and other ... districts but it does not ensure a lasting peace in the region.

The Sangh Parivar is not reconciled ... and is certain to try to disrupt peace at the slightest provocation...

What caused particular concern ... was the timings of the Hindu rallies and the "shilanyas" which was originally scheduled for Christmas-eve and to continue on December 25...

The Hindu organisations, particularly the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Hindu Jagran Manch have their own explanation for the timing. It was during Christmas that the missionaries indulged in "large-scale conversions" of tribals. Hindu rallies on the same day in the tribal areas had brought down conversions to considerable extent... Such rallies had been going on in the last five years but they attracted media attention for the first time last year due to "Christian attacks on the rally", the spokesman claimed...

The Government did succeed in forcing a number of concessions from the Hindu fundamentalists starting with advancing the "shilanyas" programme to December 22 and confining the ceremony to just three hours to avoid a possible communal clash. It also compelled the HJM to cancel the post-ceremony community lunch... They ... were also made to call off the rally on Christmas Day at Ahwa, district headquarter of Dangs, and other south Gujarat towns having a fair amount of Christian population, and to cancel the protest "Dharma Sabha" in Surat - which the authorities feared was intended at instigating people against the Christian missionaries. In addition, it also warded off another threat of idol installation at a Hanuman temple in Bhilmoda village in the neighbouring Navsari district.

In return, the Government conceded the VHP and HJM demand for the withdrawal of a notification ... banning religious gatherings of one religion on the major festival days of another religion. Though the notification was applicable to all religions...

The withdrawal of the notification ... has drawn flak from Christians who ... think that yielding to the VHP-HJM pressure is tantamount to giving an "open licence" to the Hindu fundamentalists to wage a war against the minority communities...

The Government had no option but to take a strong stand after the loss of image it suffered worldwide for the alleged Christian-bashing by Hindu fundamentalists in the months following Christmas last year. It also faced an enormous setback in industrial development owing to the drying up of investments from the European countries in the aftermath of the Christian bashing.

Because of the serious global implications and the

credibility of the Vajpayee Ministry being at stake, the Centre too was keen on the State Government keeping the Hindu fundamentalists in check.

Besides, it was the time the BJP tried to make amends on the minority front since it had already reaped a rich harvest of Hindu votes in the wake of the Hindu-Christian communal divide and had dislodged the Congress(I) for the first time from all the four tribal-dominated seats in south and central Gujarat in the last Lok Sabha elections...

... The Gujarat High Court on a public interest litigation, held the Government responsible for protecting the lives and property of the minorities and directed it to appoint two senior Government officials as the court's observers for the Halmodi shilanyas and the Dangs Christmas celebrations...

... The Government permission for the "shilanyas" has evoked criticism. But an official spokesman claimed that it was the "best solution in the given situation"...

The shilanyas would have gone unnoticed at any other time. A former converted Christian, who re-converted to Hinduism two years later, the tribal owner of the land, Ukadiabhai Konkani, has shot to prominence... His major son was opposed to his father donating the land for the Ram temple, just as he was opposed to the donation of another piece of land for a church when he became a Christian in 1995. The plot on which the makeshift church stood was taken back by him earlier and the church demolished but the shilanyas for the temple was performed on a nearby plot and not on the debris of the church.

(Source: the Hindu, 26 December, 1999)

Building a Temple inside a Church Editorial, The Statesman, 6 December, 1999

... The foundation stone for a Ram temple in the premises of an old Protestant church on Christmas eve.. (rings bells) is not this exactly how the Babari Masjid issue was created? In 1948 three sadhus, in the dead of night, surreptitiously placed an idol of Ram inside the mosque premises. In the morning it was announced that Lord Ram had decided to make a home for himself here and the mosque which until the day previous was used to offer namaz was now a temple. The mosque was sealed by the local DM supposedly in the interest of law and order and Muslims were prevented from entering the premises, but permission was given for a pandit to carry out puja every day. Even as the courts were moved, politicians conveniently forgot that a wrong had been committed in Ayodhya... Forty years later in a shameless exhibition of playing politics with religion, Rajiv Gandhi, in his cowardice, opened the locks of the mosque and allowed Hindus to have darshan of the idol. From here the BJP and its affiliated organisations hijacked the issue claiming that it was the precise spot of Lord Ram's birth and as puja had been taking place for the last forty years and the mosque was now being used as a temple, it should be officially

(Contd. on Page 90)

Move to Declare Champaner Remains in Gujarat as World Heritage

... Four Indian sites have made it to the latest list of the 100 most endangered sites by the World Monuments Fund (WMF), a New York-based private organisation, which has been conducting a World Monuments Watch programme since 1996. Started with a gift from the American Express, it supports conservation work, (one of the four ... sites are ... Champaner in Panchmahals district along the eastern border of Gujarat (at the instance of) a Baroda-based NGO, Heritage Trust... Working for the conservation of Champaner since 1985, the Heritage Trust is now seeking cooperation of the ASI and the local government to plan a strategy for getting Champaner declared a heritage site and on to UNESCO's World Heritage List...

Champaner has been lying in a state of utter neglect, though it is a living village. The medieval city spread over 6 sq. km lies partly buried and in ruins, dominated by the Pavagadh hill. The 69 standing monuments, 38 of them protected by the ASI, are a rich pointer to the wealth underneath.

... The Kalika temple on the hill attracts a lakh Hindus and Jains every month. The Juma and Nagina Masjids, too, have a steady flow of the faithful. The Jain temples are more than six centuries old, and a number of ponds, cisterns and residential units of the period exist.

The Panchmahals district gazetteer mentions, "On the north-east was constructed the vada talav (great lake), fed by a canal from the eastern hills. On the bank of the vada talav stand the ruins of a Sultan's summer resort. Ruins of beautiful workmanship are scattered over the whole area, and five of the mosques are still in a fair state of preservation.

The Juma Masjid is known for its grandeur, and the Nagina dazzles for its pure white sandstone. From atop the Juma Masjid are visible the minarets of another mosque. These remains apart, excavation of a haveli in the 1970s revealed sophisticated architectural and engineering planning of those times...

It was the late R.N. Mehta of the Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, who led the excavations at Champaner in the 1970s, detailing the townscape, and plotting its main features and the designs of important structures, a team from the university established that Champaner had existed even in the prehistoric times...

The area was perhaps under the control of Gurjara Pratihars and Rastrakutas during their struggle for supremacy. Later, the Parmaras of Dhar and Chalukyas of Patan might have made a claim on it. The only monument of this period, 10th-11th centuries, is a temple on top of Pavagadh...

The earliest authentic account of Champaner is of AD 1300 when it was captured by the Chauhan Rajputs who fled from Mewar and the invading Alauddin Khilji...

... The Chauhans (were) later occupied by the Sultans of Gujarat, Mughals, Marathas and then the British.

Sonawane observes that Champaner was a fortified area (and) a fairly developed city. "The water problem might have been solved by building check-dams on the streams coming from the hill". There were seven storage tanks and the embankments still exist...

The Chauhans ruled over the city up to 1484, when Mahmud Shah-I captured it. Better known as Mahmud Begda, the powerful Sultan established much of medieval Champaner and made it the second capital of Gujarat.

At that time, Champaner had strategic importance; the high plateau of Pavagadh served as a good observation post. It was located on the route to Malwa from Dahod in Gujarat...

... The Sultan laid the foundation of the Juma Masjid as a token of his determination of capture the fort, which fell after a 20-month long siege... He made it his capital, and styled it as Mahmudabad-Champaner. "Many imposing buildings, mosques in particular, were constructed and gardens laid out, well-fitted with fountains and waterfalls. Merchants and craftsmen thronged the streets. Champaner sword-blades became noted for their sharpness and Champaner silks for their bright colours..."

The glory of Champaner was short-lived. In 1535, it was pillaged by Humayun and within a year the capital was transferred back to Ahmedabad... Champaner-Pavagadh was ... declared a National Project along with Fatehpur Sikri and Hampi. But (it has) remained neglected.

(Source: The Week, 9 January, 2000)

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Kesava Menon

On the State of the Muslim World

Like most people in India, the majority in West Asia and North Africa have been made to contemplate the significance of a millennial year in a calendar which is not indigenous to them.

In acknowledging the significance of the Christian calendar they have to perforce recognise the current ascendancy of Western civilisation and the probability that this mode of tabulating time will prevail henceforth. A juncture at which important elements of civilisational autonomy appear to have been lost is being seen as an appropriate one at which to reflect on past triumphs and the prospect of an inglorious future.

To the Arab world, the end of the second millennium of the Christian era is a particularly poignant moment. At the beginning of that millennium, the Arab and Muslim world was at its zenith with its political boundaries stretching from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Pyrenees to the edges of the Sahara. Within this region there were great centres of learning, its people contributed hugely to growth of the sciences and its traders conveyed the wealth of the world.

At the time, Western civilisation barely deserved the name, mired as it was in superstition, poverty and squalor. Today, the roles are not exactly the reverse but while Western civilization is at the top of the spiral, the Arab, and to a great extent the Islamic world, are at the bottom.

Surprisingly, and unfortunately, the Arab world does not appear ready to make a serious stock-taking... Life in the Arab world is largely run according to the Christian calendar except when deference is paid to Islam in respect of the weekly break and the holidays. This pride-filled rejection of reality is a tendency which pervades other aspects of the Arabs' world view.

Pan-Arabism has failed and so has pan-Islamism. Specific nationalisms are now the *leit motif* in every Arab country but the liberalism which is so necessary for nationalism to thrive is stifled by rulers who are either dictators or control so much power that the difference does not matter. There is still the yearning for a composite Arab ethos which is liberal and progressive but the articulations of it are lost in the clattering crash of the other "isms". At a period when the Arab world is being penetrated by the West on almost every front, there is no concerted effort to prepare for the future.

Two other Islamic peoples of West Asia appear to be doing better. The Turks and the Iranians are digging into their past to discover the identity and the historic lessons which will help them position themselves better in the world of the future... In relatively isolated Iran, there are efforts at various levels to acquire modern knowledge, skills, technologies and habits of thought... The Iranians and the Turks have broken out of the cycle of defeatism which still grips the Arabs.

Another West Asian people are undergoing transformations of a different kind. After two millennia

Mosque in Nazareth

Editorial, The Radiance, 21-27 Nov., 1999

The students of Christianity remember that after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), the Church had asked the Christians to "acknowledge, preserve and promote the values of other faiths". A noble piece of advice indeed!

Amidst the Christian crusades – Islamic Jihad days too, one comes across glimpses of Christian-Muslim entente. In 1076 CE, the Muslim Emperor Anzir of Mauritania sent some gifts to Pope Gregory VI. The Pontiff acknowledged the gesture by an extraordinary letter. The Pope said: "Almighty God Who desires all human beings to be saved (1 Tim.2:4) and none to perish is well pleased to approve in us most of all that besides loving God, humans love fellow-humans and do not do to others anything they do not want to be done unto themselves (Mt 7:14). We and you must show in a special way to the other nations an example of this charity, for we believe and confess one God, although in different ways".

Had Pope John Paul II cared to remember the exemplary precedents set by his revered predecessors, he would not have created an unseemly row by showing reluctance in going to Nazareth, which the Christians believe, is the boyhood home of Jesus Christ (Blessings of Allah be upon him). The Pontiff was scheduled to go there during his millennium year trip. The reason of the possible cancellation of the next March Papal visit is the planned construction of a mosque, next to the Basilica of Annunciation. The Christian leaders in Jerusalem announced that "All sanctuaries of the Holy Land will be closed on 22 and 23 November 1999 to express disapproval of the plan for a mosque near the a Basilica of the Annunciation...

... The statement also implies that the Christian groups would take further action if the Israeli Government did not ... prevent mosque construction... The United States National Conference of Catholic Bishops has urged President Bill Clinton to "express the United States concern" over the mosque construction and ask Prime Minister Barak "to consider the impact of Israel's credibility in serving as a guardian of the Holy Places".

... It is clear that to the Catholic Bishops, a mosque, a House of God, near Basilica would damage the sanctity of the Basilica... Nazareth is the biggest Arab city (in) Israel. The proposed mosque is not an encroachment. The Israeli Government ... gave the go-ahead to build a mosque. Two years ago, the Municipality of Nazareth had cleared the said construction... The Muslims the world over are stunned at the Christian protest and its possible fall-out...

during which they did not exist on the political map of the world, the Jews have returned as a politically organised community. Having contributed so hugely to the progress that the West has made in the last 500 years, the Jews have no reason to feel civilisationally challenged or diminished... The Jews ... are perhaps entitled to call Western civilisation their very own...

(Source: The Hindu, 6 January, 2000)

CHRONOLOGY

24 hours, 3 militants and 8 policemen killed (27-28 Dec).

*Lashkar's chief in J&K killed (29 Dec).

*Militants attack Army camp in Surankote in Poonch (1 Jan). *Bomb blast in Srinagar market kills 19 and injures 26 (3 Jan).

*3 militants storm Brigade headquarters of Rashtriya Rifles in Anantnag. All killed (13 Jan).

Indo-Pakistan Talks: *Pakistan asks India to stop 'terrorism' in Kashmir and create proper atmosphere for talks. Rules out troop withdrawal from LoC (18 Dec). India reiterates stand of no talks until Pakistan stop support to militants.

*Musharraf pledges support to militants; demands 'sincere' approach by India to resolve issue by talks (18 Dec) rules out lasting peace unless Kashmir issue resolved (19 Dec). Threatens India with nuclear war (4 Jan). Defence Minister Fernandes flays Pakistan (5 Jan).

Hijacking of IC-814: India agrees to release Masood Azhar, Mushtaq Zargar and Sheikh; FM Jaswant Singh flies with three to Kandhar. Passengers return safely to New Delhi after 8 days ordeal (31 Dec). GOI thanks Taliban regime.

*Bilateral relations touch a new low as India alleges ISI hand.

*Hijackers reported to have entered Pakistan. Pakistan denies hand in hijacking and their presence in Pakistan; Musharraf slams India for implicating Pakistan (28 Dec).

*Mushtaq Zargar surfaces in PoK (4 Jan). Masood Azhar welcomed in Pakistan, campaigns to liberate Kashmir (5 Jan).

*H.M. Advani identifies hijackers as Pak nationals; 4 associates - 2 Pakistanis, 1 Indian and 1 Nepali arrested in Mumbai (6 Jan). India demands action against hijackers (7 Jan).

*Pakistan describes Advani's revelation as 'manufactured evidence'. F.M. Sattar denies presence of hijackers in Pakistan (7 Jan). India formally demands handing over of hijackers (15 Jan).

*Muslim leaders and organisations condemn hijacking as anti-Islamic; offer full support to government; appeal to hijackers to release hostages.

OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

AMU: *AIMMM, AIMC and AMU Action Committee collectively urge Visitor to direct VC to initiate process for selection of successor to present VC; oppose any extension or interregnum. Members and ex-Members convened on 15 Jan.

*AMU Staff Association demands inquiry in Campus violence.

*2 Students held under NSA; 17 served with Show cause notice (1 Jan). 7 expelled (11 Jan). *University reopens (11 Jan).

Communal Violence: *Former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar, accused in Anti-Sikh Riots, 1984, acquitted (6 Jan). *Union Government establishes one-man Commission of Inquiry for fresh probes (12 Jan).

*RSS activists detain cattle and attack Muslim property in Phalodi, Rajasthan (See Text).

State Violence: *National Muslim organisations jointly condemn police violence against Muslims in Aurangabad

on 6 Dec. and demand compensation to victims and punishment to culprits (12 Dec).

Places of Worship: *The UP Public Religious Buildings and Places (Regulation) Bill, 2000, passed by the UP Legislature in record time despite opposition protest (5-6 Jan).

*Bill denounced by Congress(I), CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML), SP, A.I. Milli Council, JUH and Muslim leaders. National press condemns Bill as unconstitutional and directed against Muslims (See Text).

Cow Protection: *Gujarat launches 2 month intensive drive to check cow slaughter (15 Jan).

*SC admits petition against constitutionality of Rajasthan law against slaughter of cattle (5 Jan).

*Jain and Hindu organisations demand ban on meat export and declaration of cow as national animal (1 Jan).

Personal Law: *A private member Bill seeking common civil code introduced in Lok Sabha by a BJP member (17 Dec).

*Muslim group in Mumbai to campaign against misuse of Talaq (27 Dec).

Muslim Organisations: *JUH organises Id Milan with Congress President as Chief Guest (12 Jan).

Mass Media: *Press Council directs media to headline in accordance with content (23 Dec).

Offensive Writings: *Bangalore Muslims protest against offensive article in New Indian Express (2 Jan). Paper expresses regret (3 Jan).

Other Minorities: *Sikh body protests against offensive depiction of Sikh community in Hindi film (21 Dec).

*Shilanyas of Ram Temple performed close to a Church in Halmodi (Surat) on land earlier gifted to Church (22 Dec). Proposed VHP Rally on December 25 abandoned. DMK protests (See Report).

ISI Scare: *UP Government 'finds' ISI active in 23 districts and all along Indo-Nepal border; organises campaign of calumny against Masjids and Madrasas; discovers handbills praising hijackers and Masood Azhar's cassettes in Kanpur and other cities (12 Jan).

*One Imam detained in H.P.

Muslim World : Pakistan: *Pakistan SC declares 'interest' un-Islamic.

*Indian scholar Abdul Karim Parekh expresses agony at mass murder of children by serial killer in Lahore.

Chechenya: *All national Muslim organisations collectively denounce Russia's war on Chechenya (See Text).

Commemoration: *Death anniversary of eminent freedom fighter Saifuddin Kitchlew observed in New Delhi (15 Jan).

Obituary: *Eminent Islamic scholar Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, 85, passes away in Takia, Rae Bareilly on 31 December, 1999. Demise mourned by President, P.M., national leaders, Muslim community, innumerable institutions and admirers all over the world (See Editorial).

*Maulana Ishaq Sambhali, ex-MP and CPI leader passes away in Sambhal (7 Jan).

*Eminent Urdu poet Hafiz Meeruti, 77, passes away in Meerut (9 Jan).