

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

L.K. Gujral

Former Prime Minister of India

Saiyid Hamid, IAS (Retd.)

Former Vice-Chancellor, AMU,

Secretary, Hamdard Education Society, New Delhi.

Khushwant Singh

Former MP, Former Editor,

Illustrated Weekly of India.

V.R. Krishna Iyer

Former Judge, SC of India.

S. Muzaffar Husain Burney

Former Secretary, GOI,

Former Governor of Haryana &

Former Chairman, Minorities

Commission

EDITOR

SYED SHAHABUDDIN, ex-MP

SUBSCRIPTION RATE

Inland: Life Rs.1500

Annual Donor Rs.150

Annual Ordinary Rs.120

Overseas: Life US\$200

(By Airmail) Annual US\$25

Per copy £1, \$1.50, IR.10, SR 6

Outstation Clearance Charges Rs.15

ADVERTISEMENT TARIFF

Outer Cover Rs.3,000

Inner Cover Rs.2,500

Full Page Rs.2,000

Half Page Rs.1,000

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

Muslim India Monthly

Behind 29, Feroze Shah Road,

New Delhi - 110001 Tel: 378 2059

Representatives Overseas

UK Dr. Roohi H. Majid

7, Woodville Road, London,

NW11 9UH. Ph: 4556281

USA Dr. K.A. Mallick

810-73rd St. Downers Grove

IL-60516-3818 Ph:(630)9696755

KSA Syed Shariq Ali

PO Box 11447, Jeddah-21491

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

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

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

- Editor

Muslim India

MONTHLY

JOURNAL OF REFERENCE, RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

VOL. NO. XVIII NO. 209

CONTENTS

MAY, 2000

*Chronology of the Month (16 March - 15 April, 2000), 239, *From the Editor's Desk: Secularism and the Sangh Parivar, 194.

Babari Masjid	: Shahabuddin Letter to Advani against Changes in Status-quo.	218
	: Shahabuddin on VHP Case, 25 March, 2000.	219
Communal Violence	: PUCL Report on Communal Situation in Chikamangalur.	221
Cow Protection	: Gujarat's Draconian Law to Save Starving Cattle.	229
Education	: The Statesman Editorial on Gujarat Textbooks.	234
Government	: Senior Muslim Officers as on 1.4.2000.	201
	: Editorial Comments on RSS's Shadow over Government.	202
	: B. Raina & S. Islam on Relations between Govt., BJP & RSS.	
Haj	: Haj, 2000: Statistics.	208
	: Shahabuddin's Demand for Inquiry in Charter Operation.	
Human Rights	: US State Dept.'s Report on Human Rights, 2000 - India - I.	222
Indo-Pak Relations	: Aijaz Ahmad on Possible Rationale Behind India's Hard Line.	232
	: Shahabuddin on Pakistan Phobia.	233
Jamia	: Insaf Morcha's Support to Demands.	217
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to VC & Delhi C.M and VC's Appeal.	
Kashmir Question	: Views of Hurriyat Leaders Geelani and Lone.	210
	: K. Singh's Views and Editorial Comments on Anantnag Massacres.	211
	: Shahabuddin on Urgent for Substantive Indo-Pak Dialogue.	213
	: Khushwant Singh on Anantnag Massacre and Editorial Comments.	
	: Prem Shankar Jha and Harish Khare on Kashmir Question.	214
	: Jean Dreze on Kashmir Problem.	216
Minority Welfare	: NCM: Chairman Justice Shamim's Views.	205
	: Kerala H.C. on Right to Vend Meat and on Land for Qabristan.	
Monuments	: Harbans Mukhia on Language of Demolition.	234
	: Razia Sultan's Grave in Decay.	
Muslim World	: Shahabuddin's Letter Focus on 'Islamic Terrorism'.	235
	: UK: Human Rights Report, 1999 (Extracts).	
	: Amir Taheri on Religion and National Culture in Iran.	
	: A.M. Sameem on Muslims of Sri Lanka.	
National Politics	: Sanjay Kumar on RJD's Return in Bihar.	206
	: V. Subrahmaniam & P.K. Roy on Assembly Elections.	207
Other Minorities	: Insaf Morcha's Statement on Vananchal State.	231
Other Languages	: Konkani-Marathi Tangle in Goa.	220
	: Shahabuddin on Suppression of Other Languages.	
Overview	: T.K. Oommen on Threat of Hindu Rashtravad.	197
Parliament	: Parliamentary Proceedings (23 Feb. - 16 March, 2000).	200
	: Shahabuddin's Plea for Delimitation of Constituencies.	
Places of Worship	: Insaf Morcha's Appeals for Repeal of Religious Buildings Laws in MP, Rajasthan & W.Bengal.	209
Reservation	: Delhi: List of OBC's, 2000.	204
	: Supreme Court on Exclusion of Creamy Layer.	
RSS	: Press Comments on Sudarshans as RSS Chief.	224
	: ABPS Resolution (Extracts).	
	: Amulya Ganguli on RSS Strategy for Hindu Rashtra.	226
Secularism	: Swagato Ganguly on Secularism.	198
	: Shahabuddin's Views on Nationalism and Secularism.	199
	: Insaf Morcha for Continued Ban on Satanic Verses.	
Urdu	: Shahabuddin's Letter to Delhi CM.	220

A PUBLICATION OF MUSLIM INDIA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL TRUST

Website: www.muslimindiajournal.com

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

Secularism and the Sangh Parivar

In a recent article in Manthan, the RSS leader Nanaji Deshmukh defines Secularism as "freedom to follow any form of worship and equal respect to all forms of worship". This is a partial and misleading definition. Secularism is not only concerned with the respect for religious freedom of individuals or of groups by the State but with the secular character of the State itself and its non-discriminatory role of in dealing with various religious groups, big or small, at the interface, and particularly with protection of religious minorities against majoritarian pressure of assimilation and hostile discrimination.

Further there is an element of illogicality in his definition. One should certainly respect all religions but religions are more than "forms of worship". No one who professes and practises a religion can honestly respect all other religions or denominations **equally**. Otherwise, why should he profess and practise a particular religion or belong to a particular denomination? An individual has the freedom to choose. However, the State, having no religion, does not have to make any such choice.

Deshpande attacks Secularism on many counts. But behind his opposition to Secularism lies his ardent desire to absorb all religions practised in India within his concept of Hindu Dharma and all cultures prevalent in India within his concept of Hindu Culture. He sees the salvation of India in uniformity and unity. That is why he is anxious to do away with religious, denominational and cultural divisions and even with the caste system, so that the Brahminical dominance is ensured. This is an impossible task. India is and shall remain a multi-religious, multi-cultural country and, multi-lingual country and also a multi-caste country in the foreseeable future.

The Deshpande thesis identifies India with Hinduism. No doubt Hinduism is Indo-centric; other religions are not; they are universal but being universal, they recognise the racial, linguistic and cultural diversity of Man and yet proclaim his equality before God. That is why Secularism should be defined not in terms of confrontation between State and Religion but in terms of recognition by the State of Religion as a legitimate social institution, and of many religions and denominations, its neutrality and equidistance towards all religions and non-identification and non-alignment with any one of them. It should not be partial or incline towards any side in a situation of inter-religious conflict of interest.

It is another matter that the Indian secularism, in practice, under constant pressure from Hindu Rashtravad and its ideological infiltration, has not always lived upto

this definition. The problem does not lie in conception and definition but in the unrelenting bid of the Hindutva forces to give Hinduism a higher position, an umbrella status, only because the Hindus form a majority. Deshpande, thus desires the democratic system to result in unalloyed Hindu Raj and sees Indian Nationalism as synonymous with Hindu Nationalism.

Religious Classification and Hierarchy

Deshpande blames the British for treating Hinduism on par with Islam and Christianity and categorising the people as such in the decennial census. He must be aware that the procedure of categorising people by religion, not only as Hindus and Muslims but as Sikhs, Christians, Jains and Buddhists and as 'Other Religions', has been continued in the census operation after Independence. So the authorities are not prepared to accept Deshpande's advice and declare everyone as Hindu. And even if they do, will it really contribute to the making of the Indian nation? Will it make the religious differences disappear? Or, will it merely provide a cover for Hindu dominance and, within that, of Brahminical dominance? Will such dominance be accepted by the other religious groups or by the Shudras, the Achhuts and the Adivasis, some of whom today voice their protest at being called Hindu!

Misinterpretation of History

Deshpande is equally selective about history. For him the Hindu is the original inhabitant; all others are foreigners; Therefore history must be rolled back to the period of Hindu dominance and glory, presumably the Gupta Age. Deshpande forgets that beginning from the Aryans, many peoples entered the Indo-Gangetic plains from outside the Sub-continent. They are all of foreign stock. He forgets that the Muslim rule in Delhi and in various regions of the country was not colonial rule like the British rule which exploited the land and transferred its wealth to the metropolitan country. It was rooted in the soil; it had no foreign linkages.

Deshpande wants Islamic remains – which he attributes to 'vandalism committed by foreign Muslim invaders in the name of religion' – to be razed to promote his concept of "communal harmony, nationalism and secularism". He asks Muslims to dissociate themselves from these "misdeeds of the foreign invaders" and voluntarily hand over the Babari Masjid at Ayodhya, the Gyan Vapi Masjid at Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah Masjid at Mathura. He should ask the Hindus to accept the history of the motherland in its totality and stop looking upon the Muslims as a foreign presence or as a subject people. **Nationalism unites and does not divide the people. Communal harmony comes from treating**

all communities justly and fairly. Secularism, above all, means that the modern State does not rewrite history or demolish ancient monuments.

Muslims and the Freedom Movement

Deshpande criticises the national leadership during the Freedom Movement on the ground that it failed to inspire the Muslims to join hands with the Hindus, even Gandhi and Nehru failed to carry the Muslim masses with them and in 1946, 99 per cent of the Muslim voters chose to follow Jinnah and not Azad. This is nothing but an oversimplification. Indeed the Muslim masses were throughout more uncompromisingly anti-British than the Hindu masses. However, when the devolution of power began, the Muslim Indians found that they were no match for the educationally and economically advanced Hindu community and they had no place in the political and administrative space. Not unnaturally they demanded guarantees of equitable participation. This was the genesis of the 'communal problem'. Had the national leadership evolved a fair and equitable scheme to give the Muslims their due in proportion to their population at every level, throughout the country, in legislatures and in public services, there would have been no Partition. The United States of India would have been born - and sooner than in 1947. **But a political problem over the rights of the biggest minority group was turned into a religious problem, by the hidden desire to impose Hindu dominance over Muslims. The Hindu-Muslim problem was not an imperialist concoction; it was our own creation, the result of our shortsightedness and our pettiness and our secret designs.** In any case, the Partition was too hastily conceded by the Congress leadership, perhaps out of fatigue, perhaps out of some anticipation which proved to be false. But along with the country, a living community was first bifurcated and then tri-furcated. The Muslim community was the biggest loser.

Surely, in 1947, independence came for all the people of India, not only for the Hindus, and power was transferred to the Congress because it represented them, all the people of India including the Muslims. Power was not transferred to the Hindu Mahasabha or the RSS!

Deshpande regrets that even after the Partition, Muslim Indians have not changed. He accuses them of defending 'minority identity' and reviving 'separatism', and being unwilling to join in building a 'homogenous national society'. By using the word 'homogenous', Deshpande lets the cat out of the bag and in the process answers his own question. **It is the quest of homogeneity and uniformity, in the name of Nationalism, which has given rise to tensions in the body politics and may further disintegrate the**

country because no religious, cultural, linguistic or social minority - all desirous of having their identity recognised - will ever accept such an imposition or homogenisation. Deshpande cannot hold them together, not even those who call themselves, or are called, Hindus, if he denies their identity, and the human and constitutional and internationally recognised rights that go with the concept of Identity and endeavour to assimilate them. Religious assimilation, cultural submergence and social absorption is facing increasing resistance all over the world which has adopted Multi-Culturalism and Ethnic Identity. To Nanaji, the overwhelming majority of Muslim Indians are unpatriotic and illiberal and he appeals to the patriotic and liberal Indian Muslims to assent themselves. Let me assure him that no amount of endeavour on his part can persuade the Muslim Indians to give up their religious identity, even at the cost of being termed 'fundamentalists', 'revivalists' and 'obscurantists'.

Muslim Block-Voting

Deshpande then harps on Indian politics being bedevilled by Muslim presence because political parties indulge in the politics of Muslim block-votes. **But the party, which the RSS created and controls, thrives on Hindu block votes!** If Deshpande looks at the world, he would find that in every democratic country the minority groups tend to vote as a block because that is the only way they can exert any influence on the system. Indeed that is the only way they can survive the majoritarian pressures and protect their identity. Secondly, if Deshpande looks at the suffering, deprivation, persecution and oppression of the Muslim Indians after Independence, he would understand why they have supported any party which promises to protect them or defend their legal and constitutional rights. Should they support their oppressors? Should they withdraw from the political arena? **But over the years, Muslim Indians have learnt the art of tactical voting at the constituency level, they are no longer the bonded labour of any political party at the national or state level. There is no national or even State level Muslim vote-bank today for any party to draw upon.**

Hindu Secularism vs Muslim Orthodoxy

Nanaji also claims that the Hindus are inherently more secular than the Muslims or the Christians. To think on these lines is in fact an anti-secular approach. Hinduism has no claim to be regarded by a secular State as per se superior to other religions. A secular state has equal regard for all religions professed by its people; none is better or worse, none is higher or lower. As stated above, the individual may make his choice; the State does not. A secular state does not and cannot recognise religious

hierarchy; an individual may.

As for his depiction of Islam as essentially anti-secular, it only shows his ignorance. Islam presages a multi-religious world and ordains justice among all groups and individuals, irrespective of their religion and grants non-Muslims in an Islamic State the right not only to freedom of worship but also to their own family codes which are directly related to their religion.

Deshmukh goes on to compare 'secular' Hindu society with 'anti-secular' Muslim community. This is totally inapt. Was Abul Kalam Azad, an orthodox Muslim, less secular than Gandhi who was an orthodox Hindu? The difference in the nature of Muslim and Hindu orthodoxy lies in the fact that Islam is a religion of dogmas, Hinduism is not. So the Muslims tend to appear orthodox, while the Hindus appear to be heterodox. Orthodoxy is not a vice; fanaticism is.

50 years after independence and after the adoption of the principles of Democracy, Nationalism and Secularism as the foundation of the Indian State, the RSS leadership has not accepted these principles. On the other hand, it tries to redefine, erode and distort these basic principles to conform to its own ideology of Hindutva. It constantly engages in subverting and demolishing the Indian State as it finds that these foundational principles of the Indian State are not compatible with its ideology and stand as obstacles in the forced march of the country towards Hindu Rashtra. That is why its spokesman debunk the secular, democratic nation-state, or speak of transforming the Secular into the Hindu State, as and when an opportunity arises..

Deshpande does not understand and is perhaps incapable of understanding that the Indian society, as a whole, is passing through a period of restructuring. Democracy has raised expectation of equality. People are no longer struggling only for bread but for Dignity, and **Dignity lies in Identity**. The Brahminical order is doomed; the Age of Social Justice has set in, with Secularism as its essential component.

Projecting the Muslim Indians as the historic adversary, as the villain, as the foreigner and Secularism as the appeasement of Muslims will not consolidate the Hindus. Indeed the deprived groups look upon Muslim Indians as their allies. The Muslim Indians themselves are ready to enter the arena as a partner and as an ally in this great battle for Equality, Justice and Fraternity. India and the Indians, and not Hinduism and Hindu Rashtravadis will be crowned with victory in this epic battle that the RSS chief Sudarshan threatens.

New Delhi,
1st May, 2000

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)



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

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

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



AKSHARMA - 2592

Two spoonfuls. Twice daily.

GET MORE OUT OF LIFE - WITH CINKARA

T. K. Oommen on Threat of Hindu Rashtravad

Recently, the newly appointed RSS Sarsanghchalak, K.S. Sudarshan, stated that India will soon witness "an epic battle between the Hindu and anti-Hindu forces". Sudarshan's "war cry" clearly divides the Indian nation-state along religious lines. The RSS agenda of "Hinduising" Indian society is a part of a process of homogenising national culture which openly challenges the notion of cultural pluralism.

To fathom the ongoing contest between "cultural pluralism" and "cultural nationalism", one must understand the tension between the nation-state and religion and their struggle to establish supremacy. Religion and the nation-state cannot be linked. A nationalism based on religion is not tenable because whichever way one defines a nation, the concept of a "common homeland" is necessary for it to exist.

One cannot have a part of one's nation in Asia and the other part in Africa or America. Separated sections become ethnic communities like the Sindhis in India or they establish new nations in new "homelands" the way French Canadians did. On the other hand, religious communities are always territorially dispersed and have no common homeland.

This does not apply only to religions like Christianity, Islam and Sikhism which have the concept of conversion at the core of their belief systems. Geographical dispersion can also occur through migration or colonisation. Thus Judaism, without being vigorously proselytising, is one of the most geographically dispersed religions in the world.

Hinduism does not convert, but gradually assimilates... But Hindus do migrate as in the case of countries such as Fiji and Mauritius. In such cases, an automatic link between religion and territory is disturbed. Therefore, any effort to establish a nation based on religion is doomed to fail.

If religion was indeed an accepted basis of nation formation, there would have been only a few nations in the world. If religion alone had been the basis of the nation-state, Pakistan would not have splintered to create Bangladesh. Also, there would be no rationale for Pakistan and Afghanistan to remain separate states.

Religions are diverse and heterogeneous from within. Intra-religious intolerance is as much pronounced as inter-religious animosity...

To confuse matters more, Hutus and Tutsis — fierce enemies in Africa — are both Catholics. In the case of Hinduism, deep divides based on castes and languages is also prevalent. Therefore, the proposition of "one-nation, one religion" is untenable.

Is the commonly floated idea of "one culture, many religions" then plausible? The postulate is a summation of a basic confusion, as the coexistence of many religions necessarily implies the existence of different layers of

culture. To bring all these layers under one cultural rubric — whether one calls it Indianisation or Hindutva — is to homogenise them. To annihilate their specificities is the exact opposite of cultural pluralism.

... There are two inevitable consequences in establishing a religion-based nation — genocide and/or a systematic liquidation of cultures. Both are utterly anti-democratic and admittedly fascist. If culturocide is attempted, this should inevitably lead to homogenisation of cultures and hegemonisation by the dominant community...

... In a multi-religious democratic nation, the customs of all religious communities ought to be respected. This is the essence of cultural pluralism.

If a nation based on religion is established, those who do not belong to the "national religion" are not simply "minoritised", they are also marginalised as a whole. Buddhists, Christians and Hindus are marginalised in Bangladesh as well as in Pakistan. In Sri Lanka, Hindus, Christians and Muslims are marginalised.

In India, although Hinduism is not the official religion, for all practical purposes Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists — particularly the first two — are marginalised. Additionally, the majority religious community of the country may be marginalised in some parts of the country, as in the case of Hindus in Kashmir.

Some religious minority groups are even viewed as outsiders. This is the case of Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Baha'is and Jews in India...

Even states with official religions treat co-religionists as outsiders when they are outside their homelands. Thus, Muslims who migrated to Pakistan from Uttar Pradesh with great enthusiasm are now treated as outsiders or mohajirs. It is a similar case for Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh. A state based on religion provides no guarantees to treat dislocated co-religionists as co-nationals.

In a polity in which an exclusionary religious orientation prevails, secularists, agnostics and atheists will have no freedom of expression... When actual or contrived mass protests ... that both the state and oppositional forces are intimidated by violent protests...

It is argued that Hinduism cannot be fundamentalist because it does not have an identifiable founder, an ultimate text and a regulating church. And ... both Gandhi and his assassin Godse are widely perceived by conflicting groups as "good Hindus". The difference between the two is fundamental. While Godse championed the cause of a Hindu nation and state, the former rejected such a notion lock, stock and barrel. It is this exclusionary orientation which tends to make Hinduism fundamentalist...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 23 March, 2000)

Swagato Ganguly on Secularism

... Secularism would mean confining religion to the private sphere, so that the private beliefs of individuals are not allowed to influence public matters. In return, the state guarantees freedom to individuals to pursue their religious beliefs.

... Indian national identity has been yoked to its **religiosity**, perceived as a defining characteristic of Indian civilisation...

... Indian secularism has come to mean, not so much that religion should not play a part in public matters, but that the state should provide, and be seen to provide, equal patronage to all religions. This is a task of stupendous difficulty, and the recurring crises of Indian secularism may be traced to this difficulty.

One of the most obvious ways in which religion impinges on secular matters are personal laws, where marriage, divorce and inheritance are governed by religious affiliation... This violates the secular principle of equality of all citizens, regardless of caste, creed and gender. It is one of the ironies of the Indian political landscape that the only advocate of a uniform civil code is the BJP, which also favours razing mosques, banning conversions, and having bureaucrats attend Hindu fundamentalist camps. In these circumstances, the suspicion cannot be avoided that pushing a uniform civil code is only a way of foisting Hindu norms on everyone else.

In keeping with its role as a patron of religion, the government doles out largesse to various religious denominations. For celebrating 300 years of the Khalsa panth last year, the government shelled out Rs 100 crores. It provides a similar amount annually in the form of subsidies, to enable about a lakh of Haj pilgrims to travel to Mecca, in contrast to neighbouring Bangladesh, where Hajis foot their own bills despite Islam being the state religion. India provides government jobs to Hindu OBCs and SC/STs, but ignores disadvantaged Muslims and Christians. Schoolbooks are doctored to confer an imaginary victimhood on Hindus. In government schools in UP, prayers to Saraswati, a Hindu goddess, are forced down the throats of non-Hindu children. During communal confrontations, police and local authorities generally side with Hindus against minorities. Each denomination cites the favours dispensed to other denominations as evidence of discrimination.

Apart from heads and "representatives" of various religious denominations and causes, politicians are the biggest beneficiaries of such an arrangement. If civil society is seen to consist of consolidated religious communities always at odds with each other, government and its functionaries can appear as saviours, the sole

guarantors of social peace. This perpetuates, in effect, obsolete colonial model...

... Community laws take precedence over the rights of a citizen of a free nation. For this reason personal laws must be respected. To cite Congress(I)'s 1998 election manifesto, the idea of a uniform civil code is against the very nature of Indian civilisation:

Such regard for community values occurs concurrently with a periodic incidence of communal riots and pogroms. The BJP has found them convenient as a tool of electioneering, as a communally polarised situation tends to yield to them the majority vote... Although the BJP and the Sangh Parivar are the principal exponents of communal politics today, none of India's "secular" parties can claim to be proof from the communal virus.

... There is no such thing as a "universal" religion. Religions are inherently particularistic. The question is how much of a role can they be allowed to play in national affairs? In trying to dispense equal favours to all denominations, the Indian government is in the position of the man who marries four times, then tries to follow the Koranic injunction of treating all four wives equally. This gives rise to continual friction and conflict. The government should neither be polygamous, as many "secularists" argue, nor monogamously wedded to Hindu values, as the votaries of Hindutva propose. Untrammelled bachelordom is the best course as far as religion is concerned.

(Source: The Statesman, 29 February, 2000)

Shahabuddin's Response Letter to The Statesman, 28 March, 2000

I have just read Swagato Ganguly's article on Indian Secularism (29 Feb). Having defined secularism in the European context, he was bound to misunderstand the Indian situation. The Indian Constitution lays down the political code for the State, not a social code for the Society. Indian Secularism does not aim at the secularisation of the Indian society which is, as Mr. Ganguly, says, defined by its religiosity. It aims at establishing a Secular State — inter alia to defend the rights of religious minorities against majoritarian pressure — which should act as neutral, non-aligned and equidistant to all religious groups, without leaning to any side in crisis or conflict.

Thus personal religion ideally should not affect the public behaviour of public servants and functionaries. But to what extent can the personal behaviour of ordinary mortals be immune from this religious bias? Where then to draw the line between State and Religion in protecting a

(Contd. on Page 200)

Indian Nationalism Cannot be Anti-Muslim Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 11 Apr., 2000

In her article "Indian Nationalism cannot be Anti-Hindu" (11 April), Sandhya Jain takes it for granted, without presenting an iota of evidence, that Masjids and Madarsas serve as bases and sanctuaries for the ISI and that Muslim Indians are in league with the ISI and, therefore, need to be 'educated to have no truck with it' and that the minorities believe that religious freedom, granted to them by the Constitution "co-terminus with virulently anti-Hindu postures and activities". She suggests that the State should look into the funding of these institutions

Following the UP Government's line, she justifies the controversial Bill on these ground. Her article thus confirms that the UP Bill is directed against the Muslim Indians and against their religious institutions.

One would like to ask Ms. Sandhya some questions: Why the Central and State Governments have not so far prosecuted the management of any Madarsa or Masjid for collaborating with the ISI? How will the proposed law deal with the existing Masjids and Madarsas, by demolishing them or by obstructing their repair and maintenance till they fall into ruins? Why can't the IPC and the Act of 1985 against the misuse of religious places be invoked?

The secular parties have objected only because any law whose premise and purpose are both anti-Muslim cannot be secular.

Chauvinism thrives on distrust and fear. Sandhya Jain has done no service to the cause of the nation by pondering to Islamophobia, generating distrust against the second largest community in the country, by linking it with Pakistan and questioning its loyalty and igniting fears and hatred in the Hindu mind. Hatred and fear lead to confrontation and violence. Will that be in national interest?

I agree that Indian Nationalism cannot be anti-Hindu but I assert that it cannot be anti-Muslim, either. Indeed, Indian nationalism cannot be equated with Hindu Nationalism, just as the Indian State is not a Hindu State. At least not yet.

The Secular Mask

Today they (BJP) are wearing a mask of secularism to trick you. But these are the people who demolished a religious shrine and who even today are attacking minorities in certain states.

- Sonia Gandhi, Congress(I) President

Loyalty Test for Minorities

Shahabuddin's Letter to Pioneer, 18 Feb., 2000

Apropos Mr. Prafull Goradia's article "The Need for Nationalism" (18 Feb, 2000), he has kindly acceded that not all the people of a nation-state may have a common tradition or speak the same language or profess the same religion but such people would nevertheless be admitted to the common citizenship, **if they love the country and are loyal towards it.**

The question arises whether love and loyalty be presumed, in the absence of any act or word to the country, or whether they will be subjected to some test to determine their love and loyalty or whether they will be deemed to be disloyal or unloving members unless they prove themselves to be otherwise.

If they are to be subjected to a test, who will take the test and declare the result?

I must say that the option, adopted in practice will decide whether the nation-state is democratic or fascist. A democratic nation-state does not categorise its citizens by birth in this manner or subject them to any 'virginity test'. Nationalism, in its true sense, is all-inclusive and not an exclusive privilege of the religious or linguistic or cultural majority.

Insaf Morcha Appeals to Government to Reject Rushdie's Proposal for Lifting Ban on Satanic Verses, 22 April, 2000

"Mr. Salman Rushdie, on a visit to India has appealed to the Government of India, to lift the ban on his controversial novel "The Satanic Verses". The book was banned because it hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslim Indians. That it was equally reprehensible to all the Muslims of the world is attested by the fact that it has been banned in all Muslim countries, and that it has been hailed and acclaimed by the anti-Islamic lobby in the West and elsewhere.

Many books are proscribed in India by the Government on the same count that they hurt the religious susceptibilities of one religious community or another. **No exception should be made in the case of Muslim Indians:**

Lifting the ban will be considered by the Muslim Indian community as yet another manifestation of the essentially anti-Muslim character of the present Government. The Government should not succumb to pressure tactics."

Parliamentary Proceedings (23 February – 16 March, 2000)

I – Rajya Sabha

New Members

23 Feb : A.R. Kidwai (Delhi).

President's Address

23 Feb : Tabled.

Papers Tabled

28 Feb : Kargil Review Committee Report.

1 Mar : Annual Report (AR) of NHPC for 1997-98.

13 Mar : A.R. of National SC/ST Finance and Development Corporation for 1998-99.

14 Mar : A.R. of Lalit Kala Akademi for 1997-98.

16 Mar : A.R. of AMU for 1998-99.

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

Special Mentions

29 Feb : On Withdrawal by ICHR of 2 Volumes of Towards Freedom by Shabana Azmi, E. Faliero and B. Das Gupta.

1 Mar : On Fear and Insecurity in public due to bomb blasts by J. Misra.

: On ULFA activities in Assam by D. Borgohari.

2 Mar : On Smuggling of Fake Currency from Pakistan by B. Alphonso and M.N. Das.

Discussions

28 Feb : On Failure of Govt. to discharge Constitutional Responsibility to protect Secularism, raised by Manmohan Singh.

1-2 Mar: O.K. Azmi, Kuldip Nayar, Ram Jethmalani, K. Sibal, S.I Ansari participate. HM Advani replies.

II – Lok Sabha

Motion of Thanks to President

16 Mar : Moved by M.L. Khurana.

Papers Tabled

1 Mar : AR of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation for 1998-99.

3 Mar : National Population Policy, 2000.

Matters under Rule 377

16 Mar : Need for Delimitation of Parliamentary Constituencies by V. Goel.

: Problem of Indian Nationals Abroad, particularly in Gulf countries by A. Kutty

On Secularism

A. Krishnaswami Ayyar in the Constituent Assembly, 23 Nov., 1949

... While religious freedom is guaranteed to every individual and every religious persuasion, the state does not identify or ally itself with any particular religion or religious belief. There is no such thing as a state religion in India.

Shahabuddin's Plea for Delimitation Letter to Prime Minister, 3 April, 2000

On 15 February, 2000, the Government were reported to have decided on a freeze on the number of Lok Sabha Constituencies, State-wise, upto 2026. This would mean that the inter-State divergence in the population per constituency shall go on increasing. This is, to my mind, not only undemocratic but also it goes against the basic concept of the Indian people as One People. In the House of the People, it is the People, not the States, which are represented.

However, I understand why under pressure from the States which have implemented their population control effectively, the Centre has to accept the existing limits on the representation of States in the Lok Sabha.

In this context, we welcome your move towards re-delimitation of Lok Sabha Constituencies in each State, not only to equalise the electorate among various constituencies, but also to rotate the reservation for SC/ST from the existing to other Constituencies, with high SC/ST electoral proportion.

We hope the Delimitation Commission shall complete its work before the next General Election due in 2004.

(Contd. from Page 198)

citizen's life, honour and property? This is a dynamic balance and varies in time and space.

In India, it is impossible to force common birth, marriage and death rites even food habits on all the people because these are related to one's faith. So religions cannot be obliterated from private life and the State has to take cognizance of the fact of religious plurality and, therefore, of social plurality. No doubt every society goes on changing at its own pace under external influences but at a given point in time it is largely static.

This does not mean that the State should subsidise Haj (or Kailash-Mansarowar pilgrimage) or build temples or fund the tercentenary of the foundation of the Khalsa? Or manage religious complexes. These are no more than political compulsions of the ruling elite.

The State may, on the other hand, encourage progressive tendencies specially those related to social reform but cannot and should not substitutes an ersatz law of its own concoction. If it does, laws turn into dead letters and the society does not change. We have been witnessing this in India since 1950.

*We have to consider whether it is the
Constitution that has failed us or whether it is
we who have failed the Constitution.*

- K.R. Narayanan, President of India

The Siege Within

Editorial, The New Age, 13 February, 2000

It is no more a hidden agenda. The BJP, the largest constituent of the so-called National Democratic Alliance may take any posture for public consumption ... the fact is that it is bound by the agenda of the Sangh Parivar. It will go to any extent to justify the acts of omission and commission of the members of the Parivar. Karunanidhis and Chandrababu Naidus may fume and fumble but will not have guts to bridle the BJP.

The latest instance is the lifting of ban on participation of government employees in the activities of the RSS. The Gujarat government, the model of Hindu Rashtra, as the Sangh Parivar proudly project it, first withdrew the circular banning participation of government employees in the activities of the RSS. It was followed by the announcement by UP CM...

... Both the chief ministers have made it clear that they are not bound by the NDA agenda and will go ahead with the implementation of the BJP manifesto of 1998 which includes all the contentious issues. And this has been approved by both PM Vajpayee and HM Advani.

While Vajpayee claims that as RSS is a social and cultural organisation, there can be no ban on the participation of government employees in its activities, the home minister has gone a step ahead by saying that all such ban will be reviewed at the central level as well. From all these pronouncements of the BJP leaders, it is obvious that the party is working on a plan for insidious penetration and subversion of the system.

RSS has always ... interfered in politics, directly and indirectly... It controls many organisations which are active on various fronts. BJP is its political wing and its leaders have always followed the diktats from Nagpur. Hence, RSS cannot claim to be a non-political organisation.

Secondly, RSS claims to be working for a theocratic state which it terms as "Hindu Rashtra". This is totally in variance with the concept of secularism enshrined in the Constitution... From this angle, RSS ... preaches against the very basis of our Constitutional system. Hence participation in its activities will mean working against the Constitution and the system prevailing in the country. Can government employees be allowed to participate in activities which may subvert the Constitution and the system?

The power hungry allies of the BJP who swear by secularism are ignoring this stark reality. One can understand the somersault by the ex-socialists like Fernandes, Sharad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan as they are known to be fair-weather cocks. But what about those regional satraps who are wallowing the mud in the name of stability?

... Sangh Parivar will (use) this opportunity to

(Contd. on Page 206)

Badri Raina

On No Longer the Hidden Agenda

An eminent historian and a distinguished writer were recently ejected from the Prasar Bharati... Two volumes of history, long commissioned by Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) as part of the "Towards Freedom" project, have been recalled from the printing press, reportedly at the behest of the HRD Ministry. The humanities and the social science are the terrain which is seen to harbour potential for ideological use, either inimical or congenial to the fascist enterprise... Ideology is perceived by the saffron satraps as the primary site of battle. Ideological and theoretical considerations pertaining to concepts such as the nation-state, civil society, rights and polity in general are considered central to the work in humanities and the social sciences. The suppression of such intellectual output is one easy way to score a victory...

At a time when reviews are sought to be made of major definitional constructs and of the Constitution itself, historians, social scientists, litterateurs and cultural workers come to occupy centre-stage whether they like it or not... Thus, it is not for nothing that ministries that relate to such areas of thought are handled by hardcore RSS loyalists. A look back at the report of the first ever Education Commission, written by S. Radhakrishnan, illuminates the crux of the ideological contention today. Radhakrishnan wrote: 'We know what Hitler did in six years with the German youth. The Russians are clear in their minds about the kind of society for which they are educating and the qualities required in their citizens... Our education system must find its guiding principle in the aims of the social order for which it prepares'.

A holistic enunciation of that "social order" was to be enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The pillars upon which it stood were parliamentary democracy, federalism, social and economic justice, self-reliance, protection of the minorities, and the right to profess, practise and propagate religious beliefs within a multi-cultural and multi-religious nation. Whatever may be their sins, secular historians and social scientists - including avowedly leftist ones - have functioned within the nation-building framework postulated both in the Education Commission Report and the Constitution over the last five decades.

Instead, our present day fascists seem to want to pick up Radhakrishnan's text and give it their very own twist: they want to do in six months "what Hitler did with the German youth in six years". Every recent move and occurrence initiated by the Sangh Parivar over the last year through State power, and from satraps from the outside, conforms to that aspiration: the desire to displace parliamentary democracy with a centralised authoritarian leader, conversion of the multi-cultural, multi-religious polity into one nation, one culture and one people;

(Contd. on Page 207)

Shamsul Islam

On Contradiction between State and RSS

The Prime Minister ... does not seem to be aware that government employees by joining the RSS anywhere in the country are bound to have divided loyalties. It will be a constant struggle between a secular India and a 'Hindu Rashtra'. In fact, such government employees can be held guilty of contempt towards the Constitution and the national flag. Their activities will also be a direct violation of the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act 1971...

The government employees who are supposed to be committed to "the sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic" and the tricolour as the national flag would in reality be glorifying the cause of a 'Hindu Rashtra' and the saffron flag by participating in the activities of the RSS, thus insulting both the Constitution and the tricolor. The choice, it must be understood, is between a 'Hindu Rashtra' and ... the Constitution ... between theocracy and democracy.

(Source: The Hindu, 14 February, 2000)

(The writer is Reader, Department of Political Science, Satyawati College, Delhi.)

Bid for RSS Takeover

Editorial, The People's Democracy, 20 Feb., 2000

... Both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister shared the dais with the RSS (chief) Rajendra Singh, at a function organised by the RSS paper, Panchajanya. In their presence the RSS boss declared that, except for the police and the judiciary, all other government employees should be allowed to join the RSS.

Three days after this meeting, the RSS leader issues a statement saying that the RSS does not demand the ban to be lifted at present. This is then used by Vajpayee to announce that since the RSS does not want a change in the rules, the government does not propose to do so.

The entire episode is typical of the way the RSS and the BJP function and their interrelationship. The Prime Minister has, by this drama, publicly revealed that he will ultimately go by what the RSS wishes to do. After testing the waters to see how far officially, the RSS can be promoted to penetrate the government, the Vajpayee Government finally retreats from the brink after getting clearance from the RSS itself. In the process, the signal is sent out to the civil services at all levels that joining the RSS is patronised by the highest executive of the land and there will be no problems in associating with the communal and semi-fascist organisation...

The CPI(M) had warned from the outset that the BJP coming to power at the Centre would primarily pose a threat to the State apparatus. The first aim of the BJP would be to facilitate the RSS penetration into all the

Shakha and the State

Editorial, The India Today, 28 Feb., 2000.

... There is the unfairness of allowing the RSS the privilege of enrolling state employees but deaying this to equally politico-cultural bodies such as the Majlis-e-Mushawarat. It is not the state's right to decide which organisation is kosher and which is not by applying patently subjective norms of ethical cleansing... It is incumbent upon the Prime Minister to ask Gujarat and the other states to backtrack.

... Indoctrination poses an even greater danger; it not merely slackens administration but absolutely strangulates it... In a time when there is talk of rolling back the state, of making officialdom more responsive and efficient, to give employees such an umbrella is illogical. What if bureaucrats organise themselves under the banner of, say, the RSS and seek to elevate rampant trade unionism to a moral principle?

Double-Speak on RSS

Editorial, The Times of India, 4 Mar., 2000

... Over the Gujarat government's decision to allow enrolment of government employees in the RSS ... Advani typically took refuge in officialese: There was no constitutional provision by which the Centre could intervene in the decisions of ... State. He then ... launched a fierce defence of the RSS... In fact, saw shades of 1979 in the current attack on the RSS...

Advani is protesting far too much. The dual membership issue went against the Jan Sangh, a party whose commitment to the RSS was complete. The BJP that is currently in government, we have been repeatedly assured, is mint fresh and different: It is reasonable, pragmatic and more than willing to bypass the RSS on all contentious issues. For proof, we need only look at the national agenda of governance drawn up by the different constituents of the NDA. Why then does a BJP stalwart like Advani see a comparison between 1979 and now? Could it be that the BJP is, in fact, the old Jan Sangh in new clothes? It might seem so going by the many instances of Sangh Parivar-inspired vandalism that we have recently seen... The BJP as a political party supports the RSS – and its rampaging affiliates – and acts as a policeman against (foreign) cultural influences... It is inevitable that this kind of duplicity will turn off more and more people. Some will take to the streets in protest, others will show lukewarm interest in the party...

institutions of the State. Once this was accomplished, it would be able to effectively subvert the secular state and eventually the Constitution. This must become a central issue in the fight against the BJP-RSS combine.

NCM: Chairman Justice Mohd. Shamim's Views

(The Commission) was never as relevant as it is today. Its importance has increased manifold: At no point of time the minorities needed the sort of representation, they need now... Muslims ... are the most backward minority community in the country. There is a great need to uplift the minorities socially and economically. Education is the field where they need great attention. There is a need to work in an environment where the majority and the minority communities could come together. In fact it is also the task of the Commission to reduce the chasm between different communities in the country...

... We have an efficient judiciary. If any problem ... arises we should approach the judiciary. Agitating on the road has never been a good idea for fighting the communal tension. There are more important issues among the community to be tackled at this point of time.

(Source: The Milli Gazette)

Affirmative Inaction Little Merit in a Runaway Quota System Editorial, The India Today

On March 29, the Union Cabinet approved the delinking of backlog of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe vacancies in government jobs from the overall 50 per cent ceiling on reservations... If the entire Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe quota has not been filled in year one, it will be carried over to year two and so on... The Parliamentary Committee for Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (has) recommended a constitutional amendment for reservations in the judiciary. If this is allowed, there is no ... reason why the Union Cabinet itself should not be subjected to caste-based reservations... The Indian state is closing its doors to homegrown talent. The 50 per cent limit was an eminently sensible one that reconciled social justice with meritocracy. Now the balance is gone; forever.

... Without a strictly economic parameter the quota system can never be foolproof. What it has done is to create a sub-elite among the traditionally indigent classes. There is no provision, for instance, to prevent the same family from using the reservation facility for, say, more than three generations. It is ridiculous to treat the daughter of an SC secretary to the Government of India at par with the son of a Dalit labourer...

Injecting a dose of rationality into affirmative action will only hasten the journey to social equity. Rather than take piecemeal decisions on reservations, shouldn't the Government study the Indian experience with the quota system in its entirety? ...

Kerala High Court I - On Right to Vend Meat

John Mathew, Petitioner v. Vechoochira Grama Panchayat and another, Respondents.

G. SIVARAJAN, J.

Kerala Panchayat Raj Act (13 of 1994), Sections 229 to 231 – Right to vend meat in public markets – Auctioning of – Failure on part of Panchayat to establish any public or licensed slaughter house as contemplated under Sections 229 to 231- Panchayat was interdicted from auctioning right to vend meat.

(Source: AIR 2000 Kerala 65)

II - On Allotment of Land for Qabristan

M.H. Surendran and another, Appellants v. The District Collector, Trissur and others, Respondents.

AR. LAKSHMANAN Actg. C.J., S.

SANKARASUBBAN AND C.S. RAJAN, JJ.

Kerala Panchayats Act (32 of 1960) (since repealed), Section 129 – Kerala Panchayats (Burial and Burning Ground) Rules (1967), Rule 6(8) – License to open burial ground in panchayat area – Application, for – Time limit of six months for passing order by Collector on application as provided by Rule 6(8) – is mandatory.

(Source: AIR 2000 Kerala 103)

AP: District Minority Welfare Offices

In (1996) District Minorities Welfare Offices (were created) in eight (8) Minority concentrated districts of the State to implement various schemes for the Minorities and to ensure proper utilisation of funds being released by the Government for the welfare of Minorities, besides coordinating and supervising the activities of the Andhra Pradesh State Minorities Finance Corporation, Andhra Pradesh State Wakf Board and the Urdu Academy of Andhra Pradesh.

(Under) the Minorities Welfare Policy Initiatives – 1999 (Roshni) in Andhra Pradesh announced on 1.7.1999 ... after careful consideration, Government (have) accorded for creation of four (4) District Minority Welfare Offices in the following Minority concentrated Districts viz. (1) Chittoor (2) Mahaboobnagar (3) Adilabad and (4) Krishna.

The District Minorities Welfare Officer will function under the control and supervision of the Secretary to Government and ex-officio Commissioner, Minorities Welfare Department.

Sanjay Kumar on the Return of the RJD in Bihar

For both the National Democratic Alliance and the Rashtriya Janata Dal, the two principal contenders for power in Bihar, the outcome of the Assembly elections represents a setback, in different ways. It is more pronounced in the case of the NDA... The RJD, which won 124 seats and secured 28.2 per cent of the popular vote, emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly; the Bharatiya Janata Party finished way behind, with 66 seats and 14.5 per cent of the vote.

The RJD too suffered a big erosion in its legislative strength, and to that extent experienced a setback. Even so, the RJD's defeat is being read as a victory. This is because pre-election opinion polls in the media, which were largely insensitive to ground-level polarisations in Bihar, had painted a bleak picture of the RJD's prospects, and in the end the RJD won many more seats than had been forecast.

Laloo Prasad Yadav presided over a historic shift in the social balance of political power in 1990; that shift was reaffirmed by the results of the 1991 Lok Sabha elections and the 1995 Assembly elections. However, the results of the parliamentary elections of 1998 and 1999, and the Assembly elections of February 2000, have shown up Laloo Prasad's inability to consolidate the social shift into an enduring political entity, as the Left Front has done in West Bengal. The loss of 43 seats as compared to the 1995 Assembly elections must be read as a verdict against the RJD's poor record of governance... The NDA, however, claims that this was no coincidence: it alleges that pressure on administrative officials... proved decisive when the race was close...

The Congress(I) went it alone this time, perhaps hoping for a revival of the sort it experienced in Uttar Pradesh. But that was not to be. It won only 24 seats and secured 11.1 per cent of the popular vote...

Taken together, the CPI, the CPI(M), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) and the Marxist Coordination Committee, won 40 seats in 1995; this time their collective tally fell to 13. Both the CPI and the CPI(M) faced an overall decline. After a long time, the CPI contested without a mainstream party as its ally and fared badly: it won only five seats, down 21 seats since 1995, and lost its position as the dominant Left party in the State. The CPI(M-L), which contested fewer seats than the CPI, won six seats, one more than the CPI. The CPI(M), which was in alliance with the RJD, won two seats, down four since 1995, but its vote share remained much the same. A.K. Roy's Marxist Coordination Committee, which won two seats in 1995, was blanked out this time.

A comparison of the performances of the constituents of the NDA shows that the BJP performed much better than its allies in all three regions...

Although the RJD's seats tally has seen ups and downs in the past few elections, the party's vote share has

remained fairly steady - an indication that it has a committed support base. But does this mean that the same group of people voted for the party over the years? The CSDS-NDTV survey's analysis of the social profile of the RJD vote showed that it had not changed in the last few elections.

There is a sharp contrast between the profiles of those who have always voted the RJD and those who have never voted for the party. While more than 50 per cent of the RJD vote comes from Yadavs and Muslims, only 6 per cent of those who have never voted for the RJD belong to these two social groups. Among the other backward classes (OBCs), the RJD has at best mixed support. On the one hand, nearly 21 per cent of the RJD vote comes from OBCs; on the other, of those who have never voted for the RJD, 26 per cent belong to the OBCs. There is practically no change in the composition of the RJD vote... There is firm opposition to the RJD from among the upper castes, who account for half of those who have never voted for the RJD in the last 10 years. Among Dalits and Adivasis too, there are some sections that have never voted for the party.

The vote in Bihar this time was sharply polarised on caste lines. Yadavs and Muslims offered solid support to the RJD, but **the proportion of Muslims who voted for the party was lower than expected.** The upper castes decisively tilted in favour of the NDA, although the polarisation here was much less pronounced. Dalits and the lower OBCs were clearly split. However, such levels of polarisation are not uncommon in Bihar.

No caste or community except Yadavs can be said to constitute a "vote bank", for there is a fair degree of cross-voting in each section. Yadavs tend to favour the RJD to a higher extent than any other caste favours any other party... The RJD managed to secure a fair share of the votes of Dalits. A gravitation of the votes of Muslims towards the NDA is discernible, but the RJD nevertheless enjoys some support among the minority community. There are sections among Rajputs who voted for the RJD. Besides the votes of Adivasis, the Congress(I) secured a fair share of the votes of Brahmins...

(Source: The Frontline, 31 March, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 202)

penetrate and subvert the system. It is already packing the sensitive departments like education, mass media, culture and youth affairs with diehard Sanghis. It is bent upon subverting the education system to condition the future generations to the fascistic ideology of RSS. Now making the government employees subservient to the commands of RSS will ruin the very edifice of our polity and society... Indeed ... our secular and democratic constitution is being besieged from within.

Vidya Subrahmaniam On Tactical Voting in Bihar

... Together the constituents had wrapped up the caste spectrum — Brahmins and Rajputs from the BJP and the BPP, Kurmis and Koeris from the Samata Party and a section of Dalits and Yadavs from the JD-U. Far and away the best any party/coalition could put together, the caste combination made for roughly half the electorate...

In contrast, the Yadavs clung desperately to their Muslim-Yadav base... What the Ranbir Sena is to the Dalits, the RSS is to the Muslims. In the general elections, a section of Muslims had voted for the NDA. Not this time. If anything, the community seemed deeply worried, especially by such recent developments as the Constitution review, the UP Religious Places Act and the enlarged role of the RSS at the Centre. Result: A renewed determination among Muslims to defeat the NDA.

So, the vote in Bihar was not so much for Laloo as for a certain idea he represented. For the underclass, the overwhelming need was to defeat the NDA — somehow, anyhow. Since Laloo's vote remained static, the 13 per cent slide in the NDA vote obviously went to other parties. In other words, like in Uttar Pradesh, **Bihar had voted tactically**...

(Source: The Times of India, 29 March, 2000)

BJP's Electoral Setback Editorial, The Mainstream, 4 March, 2000

... Taking a dispassionate view of what has happened one cannot but conclude that in the wake of the RSS' attempts to come out with the Sangh Parivar's hidden agenda (perhaps a sign of overconfidence after the NDA's convincing victory at the hustings in October, 1999, and restoration of the Vajpayee Government at the Centre) the electorate has reacted with characteristic wisdom once again. This rebuff to the RSS' machinations must compel the BJP leadership and notably Vajpayee himself, to engage in honest soul-searching. It is time at least the PM draws the necessary lesson from the setback for his party in these State Assembly elections: the Indian voter will not accept any group espousing a sectarian cause threatening national unity. The Assembly poll outcome has clearly provided a measure of the liability — in electoral terms — the RSS, the ideological and organisational backbone of the BJP, has become for the principal constituent of the NDA.

(Contd. from Page 202)

subversion of institutions (from the office of the President itself) and of democratic practices.

Added to this is the selective use of State apparatuses to foster ideological allies and tyrannise designated ideological 'enemies', letting loose gangs to terrorise artists, intellectuals and writers who do not see eye to eye with them. In other words, there is an effort to spawn a militarist national psyche among the populace at large, and create adversaries within and without to justify such

Beyond Pachmarhi Editorial, The Hindu, 29 March, 2000

The recent political developments in Bihar and Pondicherry suggest that a sense of hard-headed realism has finally prevailed over the Congress. It was less than two years ago, during the three-day conclave at Pachmarhi, that the party rejected coalition politics — at least to the extent of resolving it would enter into coalitions as a last resort and that too only on the basis of programmes that do not compromise its basic ideology. Issued at a time when the BJP-led coalition Government seemed in danger of being undone by its fractious allies, the Pachmarhi declaration reflected the prevailing confidence that the Vajpayee regime would crumble under its own contradictions and that, in a matter of time, the Congress would be able to reestablish its political primacy. A fair amount has happened since then to suggest that the Congress is prepared to abandon its self-imposed isolationism and willing to embark on pragmatic political partnerships...

... The debate on whether the Congress has killed the spirit of Pachmarhi should not cloud the fact that, in the long term, the real answers about reviving the party's fortunes ... neither lie in eschewing coalition arrangements nor entering into them willy-nilly. Rather they depend on the adoption of measures which convince people that the party is firmly committed to providing a clean, secular and democratic governance.

P.K. Roy

On Congress Electoral Debacle

The ignominious electoral debacle suffered by the Congress(I) in the recently held by-elections in eight Assembly and one Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, wherein each of the party's nine candidates forfeited their deposits, underlines the fact that the party's downward slide in the State has not stopped.

The verdict reflects on the party's central leadership which has failed to revamp the organisation which is run on an ad hoc basis by political lightweights...

In the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat, the party candidate, Satyadev Tripathi, secured 7,598 votes out of the 7,10,082 polled which amounts to a little over one per cent. Kannauj has a sizable chunk of Brahmin voters and Tripathi is himself a Brahmin and a former Minister...

The Cong(I) fared equally badly in the Assembly bypolls... Save for the Sahabad constituency in Rampur district where the party candidate secured 11,242 votes, in the rest of seven seats, the Cong(I) candidates did not cross the four-digit mark... (Source: The Hindu, 28 Febr., 2000)

militarism. And to round off this exercise, they employ substandard hacks to erase the history of secular and democratic struggles and substitute them with venomous revivalist myths.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 23 February, 2000)

Haj, 2000 Statistics on Number of Pilgrims

State	Pilgrims	State	Pilgrims
A.P.	3,459	Assam	620
Bihar	1,580	Delhi	3,077
Gujarat	7,250	Haryana	867
J&K	4,443	Karnataka	4,447
Kerala	6,969	Lakshadweep	205
Maharashtra	10,218	Manipur	126
M.P.	3,614	Orissa	240
Punjab	158	Rajasthan	3,985
Tamil Nadu	3,537	U.P.	13,786
W. Bengal	2,227	Other	225
Govt. Quota	450	Haj Committee	426
		Total	71,909

Chartered Flights

S.No.	Embarkation Point	Flights	Pilgrims Arrived
1.	Delhi	58	26,580
2.	Mumbai	42 + 2 Add.	14,422
3.	Ahmedabad	27	7,287
4.	Bangalore	18	7,961
5.	Cochin	24	7,189
6.	Calcutta	11	4,810
7.	Chennai	8	3,660
	Total	191	71,909

Deputationists

1)	Doctors	90
2)	Paramedics	125
3)	Assistant Haj Officers	39
4)	Haj Assistants	124
	Total	378

Seasonal Staff

1)	Clerks	204
2)	Data Entry Operators	22
3)	Drivers	25
4)	Messengers	65
	Total	316

Khadimul Hujjaj

S.No.	State	No. of KH	First Timers
1.	A.P.	8	-
2.	Assam	1	-
3.	Gujarat	15	8
4.	Karnataka	4	2
5.	Kerala	15	9
6.	M.P.	6	-
7.	Maharashtra	3	-
8.	Punjab	1	1
9.	Rajasthan	4	4
10.	Tamil Nadu	9	9
11.	Uttar Pradesh	7	7
12.	W. Bengal	1	-
13.	J&K	10	-
	Total	84	40

Shahabuddin Demands Inquiry in Charter Operation

Letter to Civil Aviation Minister, 10 April, 2000

As you must be aware the Haj Charter Operation - Phase II for the return of Haj pilgrims to India broke down on the very first day, 21st March, 2000 and the backlog of stranded pilgrims accumulated to about 4,000 at the Haj Terminal, Jeddah by the 25th March. Individual flights were delayed by as much as 74 hours 30 minutes (more than 3 days) with lack of proper accommodation, food and other convenience. You can well imagine the discomfort and the suffering of the stranded pilgrims.

I have gone into the matter and I find that this dislocation was largely due to the fact that **Tower Air 747 603 FF**, leased by the MEADOWS under charter to Air India, **which was damaged during Phase I was not replaced by 21 March, 2000.** This aircraft finally got its certificate of air worthiness only on 24 March and became operational on 25 March.

It is obvious that the return operation could not be carried out as per agreed and announced schedule without the full complement of aircrafts.

To keep the schedule Air India should have anticipated the problem and put into operation **one more aircraft for 3-4 days.** This was not done. This was done only after the PM and you intervened and then the backlog was cleared.

It is also true that the local agents of Air India Attar Travel Co. utilised the Bay reserved for Indian pilgrims for the flights of their other principals, Lufthansa and KLM and even their check-in staff stopped the check in mid-way to attend to those flights. This further delayed the check-in and embarkation of Indian pilgrims and the return flights.

Air India is publicly and perhaps internally, giving all sorts of reasons but, in essence, the problem arose because of non-availability of one chartered aircraft, the utilisation of the Air India Bay for other airlines and the non-cooperation of the local agent.

I request you to order an inquiry into this muddle which has caused so much physical suffering to thousands of Indian pilgrims and even to those waiting to receive them in India.

I also request that the charter company Meadows be fined for non-performance of charter contract and also pay for the additional aircraft provided by Air India to clear the backlog. This should not be added to the subsidy. I also suggest that Air India be directed to review its agency in Jeddah.

Cordial Felicitations

to

Indian Pilgrims, Haj 2000

MP, Rajasthan and West Bengal Governments should Repeal Laws Regulating Religious Buildings

Insaf Morcha Convener's Statement, 3 April, 2000

"Muslim Indians have massively protested against the UP Public Religious Buildings and Places Bill, 2000, now pending before the President of the Republic, for his assent and have requested him to withhold his assent and return the Bill.

The Muslim Indians rightly apprehend that although the laws are universally applicable, in the existing social environment and with the growing communalisation of administration, the brunt will be borne by them and not by any one else.

Such a law constitutes a direct interference with the freedom of religion guaranteed in the Constitution and particularly the religious right of a Muslim to endow his property as Wakf for a Masjid or Madarsa or Qabristan.

However, it is notable that the major opposition parties, including the Congress and the CPI(M), have remained largely silent on the question. The only exception is the Samajwadi Party which has decided to launch an agitation for its withdrawal.

The silence is largely due to the fact that the two Congress-ruled States, namely, Rajasthan and MP and one Left ruled State, namely, West Bengal have similar laws on their statute books. These laws may not be as draconian as the Uttar Pradesh Bill but essentially they all make construction and even repair of religious places subject to prior approval by the administration.

It is also true that the laws have largely remained on paper and have not been used even to dislodge the religious places and shrines which had occupied the public land unlawfully.

The existence of such laws in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal provides an alibi and a smoke-screen to the BJP-led Government in UP for its motivated and deliberate assault on the religious freedom of the Muslim community and their harassment in rural areas.

The Insaf Morcha, therefore, appeals to the Congress(I) and CPI(M) to instruct their Governments in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal a) to repeal their Acts and b) to utilise their existing laws to remove all unauthorized shrines and religious places which encroach on public land.

All India Convention Organised by AMU Old Boys Association, Aligarh

This Convention organized by AMU Old Boys (Alumni) Association, Aligarh strongly condemns the communal bias of the state and Central Government especially the recent black legislation the "U.P. Regulation of Religious and Public Places Bill, 2000...

The Convention welcomes the action of all secular parties for opposing the above (Bill and) also congratulate (them) on their success in reversing the Gujarat Government's decision for allowing Government employees to join the RSS.

Minorities in general, and the Muslims in particular, believe that the above Bill in question of the U.P Govt. is unconstitutional and is aimed at curbing their fundamental right to practice their religion and impart religious education... There can not be a bigger lie than to claim that any of the existing 35000 Madarsas and the Mosques in the Country are involved in the activities of ISI...

If the present trends go unchallenged the next in line may be Muslim archeological sites Dargahas, Qabristan, Wakf premises, Qurbani and finally on Namaz and Quran... The same treatment is likely to be meted out to other minorities like Christians, Buddhists and Sikhs...

This Convention, therefore, requests the President of India not to accord approval to the "U.P. Regulation of Religious and Public Places Bill, 2000...

Calcutta High Court On Demolition of Namaz Ghar

Idris Ali and others, Petitioners v. State of West Bengal and others, Respondents.

S.B. SINHA, Actg. C.J. AND M.H.S. ANSARI, J.

Constitution of India, Article 226 - Public interest litigation - Beautification and development of Riverfront - Demolition of Namaz Ghar ... alleged in petition - Open space covered by tarpoline was provided for Namaz... - was a temporary structure and not a building which can be said to have been demolished - It was not the petitioner's case that facility for offering Namaz was now not available as before - Held, no case for issuance of directions for restraining respondent authorities from demolishing Namaz Ghar was made out.

(Source: AIR 1999 Calcutta 337)

APHC: Chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani's Views

... Why were we arrested when we had committed no offence? We were held on September 8 while campaigning for a boycott of the general election. Election Commissioner GVG Krishnamurthy himself had declared that just as campaigning for elections is lawful, campaigning against elections too is lawful. Since there was no justification for our arrest, why should we consider our release as a goodwill gesture?

The situation arising out of the massacre of the Sikhs, the gunning down of the alleged killers whom people thought were innocent, the public furore over this, and the death of seven in police firing in the consequent demonstration, illustrates that Kashmir is on the boil. The situation demands an immediate resolution of the Kashmir problem.

The way out is tripartite talks involving India, Pakistan and Kashmir. Our experience of 52 years tells us that the issue can't be resolved bilaterally...

... The only viable way of ending the strife is tripartite talks involving the Hurriyat (as representatives of the Kashmiri people), India and Pakistan. It would be unfair and unwise to exclude the Kashmiris from any process of settlement. Similarly, without involving Pakistan, we can't have a durable solution. It's a party to the dispute and holds one-third territory of Kashmir.

War can't solve any problem. But when a problem is not addressed through peaceful means, people will be forced to do war.

We want peace from the core of our hearts. But the impediments to peace have to be first removed.

Initially, the Kashmiris were fighting... What did India do to resolve the problem when 90 per cent of the militants were local Kashmiris? In any case, India's interpretation of right and wrong is selective...

Ours is a freedom struggle. Every quom (community) has a right to struggle for its freedom. Indian Muslims are Indian by option. Kashmir has nothing to do with Indian Muslims... All these can be discussed in tripartite talks. I'm not willing to say anything more about what deal would be acceptable to us at this stage.

The autonomy package proposed by the Farooq Abdullah Government is not acceptable, because it neither involves the Hurriyat nor Pakistan.

If there's a formal invitation, we will consider. Some of our men are still in jail. We're prepared for polls to select the representatives of the Kashmiris, provided these are held under international supervision. But, who established that Yasser Arafat was the representative of the Palestinians? Did elections determine this? Who established that Mandela was the representative of the South African blacks? ...

We want a comprehensive solution to the Kashmir problem. Elections, whether to panchayats or the assembly or Parliament, are no solution. They haven't worked.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 9 April, 2000)

APHC Leader A.G. Lone's Views

... If all concerned (parties) to the Kashmir problem honestly and meaningfully decide to address its basic cause, violence can end.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir ... stands bifurcated and is under the possession of India and Pakistan. Both challenge one another's de jure or de facto right of possession of the state.

... Both these countries are parties to the dispute. The people of J&K are the subject matter of this dispute... They are the basic party to the dispute.

Their right to decide about their future stands admitted both by India and Pakistan and is also ratified by the UN. As such, India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir are the three parties concerned with whose concurrence the Kashmir dispute can be settled once and for all.

... Why should there be any doubts about Hurriyat's representative character now? The Hurriyat will have to be involved in any dialogue on Kashmir.

... Today elections in Jammu and Kashmir are stage-managed by India. However, any question can crop up and certainly be discussed during the dialogue and this issue can be taken up then.

Pakistan is a benefactor of Kashmiris ... to the extent that it supports the ... right of the people to decide about their future. India, on the other hand, says no such right exists...

The freedom struggle is an indigenous movement of the Kashmiris and the issue is to be settled through dialogue with them. In a tripartite dialogue, whatever solution is agreed upon by the three parties to the dispute will be acceptable to (the Hurriyat).

... Kashmir dispute cannot be settled militarily ... in the changed global scenario... Dialogue is the only way out and not the use of force, more so in underdeveloped countries like India and Pakistan. They will have to behave in a more responsible manner as they need to keep in mind that they are nuclear powers now... As Clinton said: "Redrawing the boundaries of the countries through blood was not possible".

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is not home to only one religious or ethnic group. It has three distinct regions with different cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. If anything is decided about their future way of life, it will have to be decided through consensus through representations of all three regions ... having full regard to the wishes and aspirations of the every group. It is rather unfortunate for the people of India that their successive governments have shied away from playing their true role in the global politics and it has involved itself in the complicated Kashmir issue which has put the leadership always in a defensive position...

(Source: The Times of India, 8 April, 2000)

On Anantnag Massacres of Sikhs and Muslims

Khushwant Singh
On Anantnag Massacre

When you don't know who did it, why they did it, all you can do is to gnash your teeth in rage and shed tears of sorrow to condole with those who have been so cruelly deprived of their fathers, brothers and sons. I refer to the dastardly killing of 36 of our countrymen, all of whom happened to be Sikhs of village Chattsinghpura in Kashmir.

The finger of suspicion points directly at infiltrators from Pakistan. **Pakistan denies it or any of its agencies had a hand in the massacre of innocents.** On the contrary, it casts the blame on some Indian agency to further blacken the name of Pakistan. **So far none of the terrorist groups active in the Valley have owned responsibility for the crime.** Kashmiri Muslims rightly proud of their tradition of fraternal relationship with Hindus and Sikhs have condemned it and again affirmed their cordial feelings towards their fellow Kashmiris. Under the circumstances, however enraged we may feel, we owe it to ourselves not to harbour ill-will against our Muslim brethren nor vent our anger against public property...

Having said this I think we have every right to express our lack of confidence in the people whose duty it was to ensure the safety of our citizens. Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's writ does not run in the State any more. Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani entrusted with the job of maintaining law and order and proper functioning of our intelligence agencies must answer for their failure in forestalling the incident. And Defence Minister George Fernandes who has deployed a substantial proportion of our army and paramilitary forces in Kashmir must answer for their continuing failure to prevent infiltration of elements hostile to us entering our soil and gangs of terrorists ability to strike at different targets of their own choice.

There may be some truth in Advani's fears that in targeting a Sikh village there may be a sinister design to force Sikhs out of the Valley as they forced out Kashmiri Pandits. This must be resisted at all costs... We must not allow a repetition of what happened at the time of the partition of the country in 1947.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 1-April, 2000)

We had agreed to live like brothers, in peace and amity, break away from the paranoid existence which was perpetrated by the British policy of divide and rule... This mutual strife has made both our countries unworthy of the sacrifices and sufferings of those thousands of people who laid down their lives for the cause of freedom.

- Yusuf Sarwar Khan, MP on Kashmir Conflict

Massacre in the Valley

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 23 Mar., 2000

The wanton killing of members of the Sikh community by terrorists in south Kashmir sets two dubious records.

It is the largest group massacre ... in the Valley since Pakistan started its low-intensity warfare in Kashmir a decade ago. It is also the first time that the minority Sikh community of Kashmir has been targeted. So, quite possibly, the perpetrators are now looking at ethnic cleansing as an objective, having earlier driven out most of the minority Hindus. Clearly, both Srinagar and New Delhi have been caught unawares...

It is a truism to suggest that the timing of the carnage was dictated by President Clinton's visit to this country. It is equally a truism that terrorist outfits nurtured and abetted by Islamabad have perpetrated the grisly act. So, clearly, a not-so-subtle political message is being conveyed by Pakistan to both India and the US... What really concerns every citizen in Jammu and Kashmir — and in the rest of the country ... — is that a basic modicum of security is not being provided to those living in J&K.

Yet the official machinery continues to pat itself on the back. The tone of its statements is self-delusory. It does not care to explain how the presence of foreign mercenaries has risen so menacingly ... since Kargil. Clearly, an integrated plan, combining political steps and hard measures to deal with the terrorist mercenary, simply does not exist, whatever the officials boast...

Prosecute the Culprits

Editorial, The Times of India, 7 April, 2000

... The first step that must be taken immediately is for the government to bring an end to the often insensitive and sometimes illegal behaviour of the security forces in the Kashmir valley. Although the Army tends to behave in an exemplary fashion — jawans who cross the line are invariably punished — the same cannot be said for the Border Security Force and the various state-level police and paramilitary outfits.

A case in point (is) the March 25 'encounter' killing of five persons the security forces claimed were terrorists responsible for the Chattsinghpura carnage. Prima facie, the security forces' case ... seems weak, especially given the 'coincidental' disappearance of five villagers in the vicinity of the 'encounter' a day earlier.

Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has done well by ordering the bodies of the five to be exhumed for DNA testing. The government must now ensure that the testing is done promptly and accurately. In the event that foul play is established, adequate compensation must immediately be paid to the families of the murdered men and those guilty of the shooting should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law...

Killing of Citizens by Security Forces Judicial Probe Demanded

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 10 April, 2000

The army and police constitute vital arms of the state. They need to be deployed to protect the state and society against internal subversion or external aggression. But in a democracy, the fundamental rule is that the "law enforcement instruments" must remain accountable to the people.

That is, the state must act according to the law laid down by the people themselves through their representative institutions. The latest news from Kashmir, therefore, is disconcerting. Though a judicial investigation is underway to unearth the facts regarding the five exhumed bodies at Anantnag, there are indications that the law could have been turned on its head by the law enforcement agencies themselves. Innocent villagers were killed and their bodies burned — so as to make post-mortem recognition difficult, if not impossible — before being buried. Such acts belong to lawless dictatorships, not to practising democracies... The worst thing is that this crime was apparently enacted to boost the official claim that the foreign mercenaries who mowed down the Sikhs at Chhattisinghpura in cold blood were in turn killed in an open encounter by our alert security forces...

... Hence, the judicial probe will have to bring out the truth: Was it only a case of trigger-happy men in uniform going berserk, or was a secret nod given to them by those high up in the ladder? ... Elements wielding state power have indulged in gross violations of human rights all over India, and not just in Kashmir. And it is not only Naxalites. People in the Northeast as well as ordinary citizens caught in communal flare-ups have also borne the brunt of police violence. Those accused of petty crimes are also victims of police brutality. This trend can be reversed if the civil society remains vigilant against the aberrant behaviour of the state and its law enforcement agencies.

Manoj Joshi On Anantnag Tragedy

Events in Anantnag seem to be unfolding with the inevitability of a Greek tragedy. The horrific massacre of 35 Sikhs in Chittisinghpura village of the district on March 20 seems to have been forgotten. The killing of five apparently innocent civilians on March 25 by the police followed by seven more protesting this event has unleashed a cycle of violence that has negated the considerable gains Indian security forces had made in this region since 1994...

In an area where the security forces had been able effectively to curb militancy for the past five years, the recent incidents must be seen as a serious setback... Whether or not the Pakistani *jihadis* are able to capitalise on this will depend on the measures that the administration now takes...

(Source: The Times of India)

*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.**

President Clinton On Kashmir Problem

Extracts from Address to People of Pakistan

I believe it is also in Pakistan's interest to reduce tensions with India. When I was in New Delhi, I urged India to seize the opportunity for dialogue. Pakistan also must help create conditions that will allow dialogue to succeed. For India and Pakistan this must be a time of restraint, for respect for the Line of Control, and renewed lines of communication.

... I understand your concerns about Kashmir. I share your convictions that human rights of all its people must be respected. But a stark truth must also be faced. There is no military solution to Kashmir. International sympathy, support and intervention cannot be won by provoking a bigger, bloodier conflict. On the contrary, sympathy and support will be lost. And no matter how great the grievance, it is wrong to support attacks against civilians across the Line of Control.

... We want to be a force for peace. But we cannot force peace. We can't impose it. We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the dispute in Kashmir. Only you and India can do that, through dialogue.

Last year, the world watched with hope as the leaders of India and Pakistan met in Lahore on the road to better relations. This is the right road to peace for Pakistan and India, and for the resolution of the problems in Kashmir. Therefore, I will do all I can to help both sides restore the promise and the process of Lahore...

Joint Guarantee for Autonomous Valley Khushwant Singh's Solution

... We regard the (people of Jammu and Kashmir) as one people because they were ~~one~~ under Dogra rule. They in fact have four distinct ethnic identities: the people and area in their occupation, people of Ladakh, Jammu and the Valley of the Jhelum. Without doubt, those living in Pak-held Kashmir would like to stay where they are; those of Ladakh and Jammu, save perhaps one district, would opt for India. Our only dispute is over the Valley. If given the choice of opting for India or Pakistan, it would opt for Pakistan. If given a third choice of being masters of their own destiny, they would vote for a state of their own.

The Valley is too small to become a viable independent state. **At the very best it can be fully autonomous with its autonomy guaranteed by both India and Pakistan.** But this little autonomous state must on its turn guarantee lives and properties of its religious minorities take back and rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits and Sikhs who were forced to flee from their homes. This is not too much to ask from civilised states like Pakistan and India.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 8 April, 2000)

Substantive Indo-Pak Dialogue Urgent Shahabuddin's Views

Letter to The Pioneer, 30 March, 2000

Apropos Brij Bhardwaj's article on the Kashmir situation (29 Mar), I broadly agree with him that a substantive and formal solution should be found urgently and that negotiations between India and Pakistan should be held as soon as Pakistan stops training, arming and infiltrating militants across the LOC. But Bhardwaj does not see that the status of the Valley is the crux of the problem, it is the real bone of contention, the apple of discord. And it is not a desolate area like Aksai Chin or Siachen but a territory humming with life, with nearly 2/3 of the people of the State, as a whole.

Bhardwaj has ruled out any change in the status of the Valley on the ground that 'Kashmir Valley supports India'. This would indeed grade as the overstatement for all times to come. The Kashmiri people of the Valley are, to say the least, not happy with their present status. Most of them want 'Azadi'; some want Valley to join Pakistan. But none of the three — India, Pakistan or Kashmiris — can decide the future of the Valley on their own terms. So a compromise is a must.

The only workable solution appears to lie in reducing the Kashmir problem to the Valley, through integration of other parts of the original territory with India and Pakistan and then placing the Valley under a special regime. The Valley could have the status of an autonomous non-sovereign territory, geographically and ethnically delimited, under the joint control of India and Pakistan, within the larger context of a permanent Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the two major States of the Sub-continent. Such an approach will give the substance of Azadi to the Kashmiris, apart from other benefits by access to both countries, Pakistan, a toe-hold in the Valley and India, a continued role in the affairs of the Valley. And the people of the Sub-continent shall have a sigh of relief and devote all their energy and resources to development.

(Contd. from Page 214)

regularly occur when the SOG gets too greedy or shows an excess of zeal. An amnesty for all militants against whom there are no specific charges of having committed serious crimes is therefore long overdue. So is the removal of the ban on the JKLF, a ban that serves no purpose...

... Every step towards political normality in the valley will not only strengthen India's position in relation to Pakistan, but also increase General Musharraf's room for manoeuvre within the Pakistani establishment, by allowing him to claim credit for improving the lot of the Kashmiris in India.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 6 & 7 April, 2000)

Prem Shankar Jha on Fresh Start in Kashmir

... The predicament in which (Pakistan) establishment finds itself is unenviable. Even more than President Clinton's blunt words, the circumstances surrounding his visit to Pakistan — the elaborate security arrangements ... the difference between it and his visit to India, and his uncharacteristically sombre "body language" in Pakistan — have forced Pakistan's rulers to come to terms with their country's isolation in the world today... For Pakistan isolation is psychologically devastating, for it has relied on outside support to bolster its self-confidence and political viability from its birth.

... For almost a decade after the Cold War ended, it got the US to turn a blind eye to its instigation of insurgency in Kashmir, by dangling the carrot of access to Central Asia before the State Department's eyes. This tacit support began to be withdrawn in 1997 but Pakistan continued to deceive itself till the Kargil war... Isolation is thus an entirely new and terrifying experience for most Pakistanis.

The vulnerability that Pakistanis feel is compounded many-fold by its economic fragility... Its military establishment therefore knows that it can neither sustain a war against India, nor seriously contemplate the risk of using nuclear weapons to offset India's conventional advantage... But its options, which were already narrow enough before the Kargil war, have been narrowed further by the ISI's partial loss of control over the jihadis.

... Pakistan is therefore witnessing a competition between Islamic factions to outdo each other in Kashmir that the ISI is barely able to control. And this is dragging both countries towards a war that neither wants.

New Delhi is therefore right to insist that Musharraf should bring these factions to heel. Its assessment that Musharraf can stop them in their tracks is also undoubtedly correct... But to stop the jihadis from coming into Kashmir he will have to crush their organisations in a military crackdown. But a military crackdown ... would make the jihadis turn against the Pakistan Government (and) deprive Pakistan of the only leverage that it still has for bringing India to the negotiating table. Musharraf would therefore be most reluctant to take such a drastic step against the jihadis until after he has arrived at an acceptable settlement with India.

... To break this impasse, the two countries need to define for themselves, in broad terms, the kind of agreement they can live with, and explore through diplomatic back channels whether there is sufficient common ground to make a dialogue fruitful. Only then can they map out a course for the future. At present, a dialogue is completely ruled out by the fact that there is not only no common ground, but Pakistan's rulers have

not even the haziest idea of the kind of agreement with India that they could live with...

Pakistan has no "bottom line" position on Kashmir because it is trapped between what it wants but cannot have and what it can have but does not want. What it can readily have is negotiations that make the Line of Control the starting point of the search for an acceptable solution... What it wants, plainly and simply, is to annex the Valley of Kashmir with a few parts of Jammu and Poonch thrown in for good measure.

Only in recent months has ... Pakistani establishment begun to come to terms with the fact that neither military force nor a spontaneous insurgency will deliver the Valley to them and begun to explore alternatives like independence, or an international trusteeship for Kashmir valley. But these alternatives are too woolly and one-sided at present to become a basis for serious discussion...

... Against this background New Delhi needs to re-evaluate Musharraf's offer of talks... Pakistan's rock hard position on Kashmir has begun to thaw. This process needs to be aided. A peremptory refusal by India to talk till Pakistan verifiably ends all cross-border infiltration is likely to slow down the thaw, if not reverse it. On the other hand, an agreement to talk, and the talks themselves can speed it up as Pakistan comes to understand the limit within which Indian governments have to function...

... India should lay down pre-conditions for the resumption of a dialogue ... that Musharraf can meet without compromising his own capacity to promote the thaw and explore new avenues to a solution of the dispute. One move that India could reasonably ask for and which Musharraf has already indicated (in an interview to the Financial Times) that he could meet, is to rein in the jihadis...

Musharraf and other Pakistani spokesmen have indicated that this can be done provided India simultaneously reduces the intensity of security operations in the Valley... The government should explore ways to reduce the pressure on ordinary Kashmiris that arises from their living in what has become a battle zone, and to restore political normalcy.

... India (cannot) thin down the presence of the army because that will disrupt established intelligence networks and make the jihadis harder to control in the future. But it can rein in the Special Operations Group of the Kashmir Police... The chief cause of the people's alienation and fear is the penchant of the SOG for descending upon the homes of identified but dormant former militants (of whom there are 31,000 in the valley and parts of Jammu) and extorting money from them. Custodial deaths

(Contd. on Page 213)

Farooq Abdullah Politically Paralysed, Advani Reconciled to Drift

Harish Khare on Kashmir Situation

... Even after the Clinton visit, there is no fundamental change in the basic approach in New Delhi to the Kashmir problem: the policy-making elite, political and bureaucratic, refuses to acknowledge that in the first place the 'problem' arose because of indigenous alienation and anger among the Kashmiris with India, or more precisely, with its 'democratic' representatives in Srinagar.

Partisan games played by political leaders of the Congress(I), and the National Conference made a mockery of the Kashmiri regional sentiments; an overbearing Centre saw each expression of regional sentiments as an exercise in secession. The gun was used to silence the dissident and the critic; the game changed when the 'dissidents' and 'separatists' also got hold of the gun.

Now there are too many guns on both sides of the dispute; and, if anything, the alienation on the Kashmiri side has remained unaddressed. Hence, the fundamental element in the Kashmir "problem" as it has manifested itself since 1989 has remained unchanged...

On their part the 'leaders' of Jammu and Kashmir, especially of the 'separatist' school, remain prisoners of their past, rhetoric and the blood that has been shed for over a decade now. No one is sure as to how autonomous the Hurriyat leadership (or some of its sections) are of Pakistani patronage; but the undifferentiated high-handedness of our security forces bestows on all of them a halo of 'leadership'...

Because the thinking in New Delhi refuses to see the colours of alienation in Kashmir and because there is an insistence on seeing all protests as Pakistan-inspired, there is never any anxiety to break out of the paradigm of violence-for-violence. Blood of young men, whatever the colour of the uniform, produces its own intransigence, stubbornness and anger. The BJP leadership's own past rhetoric of irrational intransigence and aggressive nationalism prevents L.K. Advani from breaking out of the self-inflicted stalemate. Many responsible and concerned citizens entertained that the BJP alone would be able to do "something" about Kashmir...

To the extent Clinton is presumed to have spoken bluntly in Islamabad, he has only added to the creeping desperation in the Musharraf court. And, this desperation, the argument goes, would compel the self-appointed "saviour" of Pakistan to keep things on the boil in the Valley, if only to compel Clinton to have one more fling at peace-making. The deadlock remains hopelessly unmovable. The voice of civil society is totally lost.

... For now, there are three major identifiable factors that prevent the Vajpayee Government from trying to get out of the quagmire. □

First, Farooq Abdullah's political paralysis has acquired a momentum of its own, and now practically pre-empts any attempt to move forward in Kashmir. To the extent the Vajpayee Government, too, concedes the logic of "there is no alternative to Farooq Abdullah", Chief Minister has no interest in changing his playboyish spots.

He continues to believe and behave as if the Kashmir Valley was part of his ancestral zamindari, providing him with immunity from such minor democratic inconveniences as governance, accountability and seriousness.

He is more hawkish against Pakistan than any of the RSS ideologues; at the same time, he holds the Centre to a ransom to bail his Government out of financial bankruptcy every so often; and, to complicate things further, he has come out with his own idea about "autonomy" for Kashmir.

Second, since Abdullah has so gallantly absolved himself of the responsibility of meeting the challenge of terrorism, it is left to the much-maligned security forces to hold the ground.

And ... no one has the stomach, or the stature, to stand up to the armed forces, their understanding, their demands and their high-handedness.

Third, probably there is a realisation on Advani's part that he has lost much needed time in being a clever politician rather than a wise Home Minister...

Not only has Advani squandered his carefully cultivated image of a 'tough' administrator ... he has also squandered his options of expanding the non-separatist democratic space... Advani ... is reconciled to letting things drift in Kashmir. (Source: The Hindu, 2 April, 2000)

The Kashmir Answer

Editorial, The Times of India, 7 April, 2000

... India has an excellent record of opening negotiations with militants of all sorts and there is no reason for Kashmir to be an exception. Kashmir may have an international dimension given Pakistan's involvement and interest but New Delhi should remember that there are diplomatic processes by which even seemingly insurmountable hurdles have been crossed. The once intractable Irish question is heading towards a solution and Turkey and Greece have also begun to mend fences. What is needed in Kashmir is a vocabulary which will allow both India and Pakistan to talk and for all sections of the Kashmiri people to have their concerns addressed. For years, the country has grappled with what has come to be called the 'Kashmir Question'. It is time the government moved towards finding the answer. □

Jean Dreze on Kashmir Problem

... Riding around the Valley and talking with local residents... It turned out to be difficult not to focus on people's overwhelming concern: the endless zulm (repression) unleashed by the security forces.

The security forces were rarely out of sight, even in remote villages. As far as the local population is concerned, Kashmir is "occupied" by a foreign army. Everywhere I went, there were sobering tales of harassment at the hand of the Indian Army and paramilitary forces: curfews, searches, interrogations, killings of suspected militants, and accidental as well as intentional killings of innocent civilians, to name a few complaints...

Most people trace the beginning of this nightmare to 1989, when violence first spread in the Valley... As for the militants, they seem to enjoy varying degrees of popular support, partly due to their decent behaviour towards the people (often contrasted with the brutality of the security forces), partly because they are seen to be upholding the common cause - azadi. Azadi has come to be identified with an independent state, but the main concern of ordinary people is to be able to lead their life without harassment, and to be free from Delhi's yoke... Of course, it is possible that most people would in fact be willing to accept a compromise, for the sake of ending zulm, if it involves the substantive freedoms they aspire to. Those who are unlikely to compromise are the hard-core "militants", whose power and influence has been greatly enhanced by the Indian Government's iron-fist approach to the situation.

Asked whether the ongoing conflict was in part a Hindu-Muslim conflict, people emphatically said "no". Some respondents even had difficulty understanding the question: it simply had not occurred to them to think in those terms...

Considering that this is a situation where, effectively, a predominantly Muslim population is brutally policed by a predominantly Hindu army (which takes its orders from a BJP-led Government), it is remarkable that the conflict has not taken a more communal turn...

Kashmiris come across as deeply peace-loving people, and they are even said to take pride in their non-violent nature...

The non-communal and peace-loving outlook of the Kashmiri people, however, is in danger of subsiding as Army repression pushes them into the hands of foreign-sponsored, fundamentalist groups...

There is no simple solution to the Kashmir impasse. What seems clear is that the present stand of the Indian Government is a trifle contradictory. In international fora,

mediation is rejected on the grounds that Pakistan and India have agreed to resolve the Kashmir dispute bilaterally. When Pakistan approaches India for talks, it is told that Kashmir is an internal matter (despite India's own claim to "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir"). Within India, however, Kashmir is treated like a colony, unworthy of democratic rights. It is no wonder that the Indian Government's attempt to entice the State into the national fold has failed to strike a chord with the Kashmiri people.

(Source: The Hindu, 29 March, 2000)

(The writer is Honorary Professor at the Delhi School of Economics)

France: External Affairs Minister Hubert Vedrine's Views on Kashmir

... As far as relations between India and Pakistan are concerned, we feel that the Shimla agreement and the declaration adopted in Lahore - especially the spirit in which it was adopted - opens an extremely encouraging path, despite what happened later, particularly Kargil. We hope that the process, which began in Lahore, continues. The responsibility for breaking the impasse lies, first and foremost, with India and Pakistan together.

This alone will minimise the consequences of the situation and help to take confidence-building measures and eventually to settle the fundamental issue. We are equally well disposed to all other forms of actions and initiatives, which can improve matters. Meanwhile, let me repeat, it is in nobody's interest that Pakistan be further destabilised.

There is no European position in such on (Kashmir). There is no European initiative. However, there is an exchange of information and analyses. We share the same concerns. Obviously, we hope that things do not deteriorate further. If India and Pakistan both desire a European initiative, we would obviously be open to the idea...

(Source: The Times of India, 22 February, 2000)

The K Factor

The Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 28 Mar., 2000

... From the time of Benazir Bhutto's celebrated "azadi, azadi, azadi" speech in favour of Kashmir's "freedom" that Pakistan's support for the subversives in the Valley is a riposte for the help which India provided to the Mukti Bahini in the Bangladesh war... The Kargil intrusion was only the latest episode in the decade-long proxy war which Pakistan has been waging for this purpose. However, in the aftermath of the US intervention

(Contd. on Page 221)

Withdraw False Cases, Institute Judicial Inquiry, Pay Damages & Formule Long-term Modus Vivendi, Insaf Morcha Statement, 21 April, 2000

"The Insaf Morcha condemns the barbaric police action against the Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), on 9 April, 2000 and unequivocally supports the just and reasonable demand of the Jamia Millia Islamia students for the unconditional withdrawal of the false cases filed by the Delhi Police against the students and for due compensation to them for the physical injury and the humiliation suffered by them in the police assault.

The Insaf Morcha calls upon the Jamia authorities to assess the damage to its property in the course of the police action, to file an FIR against the Delhi police and claim damages from the Delhi Police.

The Insaf Morcha requests the Central Government immediately to institute a judicial inquiry into the incident whose terms of reference should include the formulation of a modus vivendi between the JMI and the Delhi Police to regulate police entry into the campus and calls upon the Police Commissioner of Delhi to suspend and prosecute the police personnel involved in the unprovoked action which was loaded with communal overtones.

The Insaf Morcha also appeals to the students of the JMI to suspend their agitation and press their legitimate demands through the Jamia authorities, political parties and sympathetic national organisations and restore normalcy on the campus, so that the academic year is not lost."

Shahabuddin's Letter to Vice-Chancellor 12 April, 2000

The senseless police action in the Campus of the Jamia on 9th April, 2000 has shocked the entire community and the academic fraternity. This is not only a matter of immediate concern but raises the question of long-term modus vivendi between the Jamia and the Delhi Police.

I am glad that the Jamia has stood by its students and decided to provide legal aid to those who have been falsely charged and put behind the bar and medical care to those who have been hospitalised. I would request you to depute the senior officers of the Jamia regularly to visit those in jail and in the hospital. You may also visit them in due course.

I would suggest that the Jamia should claim full compensation for the physical damage wrought by the police to the Hostel and the Masjid and also an apology for the unauthorised entry in the Campus and assault on the students.

The Jamia will remain where it is. Hence it is essential that the Jamia and the Delhi Police should work out a mutually acceptable arrangement for interaction when the

Jamia VC Shahid Mehdi's Appeal 23 April, 2000

More than a fortnight has passed since the unfortunate incident but the situation in the Jamia campus is not yet fully back to normal. On behalf of your teachers and well wishers and on my own behalf, I once again reiterate my appeal to you to work for the restoration of the academic atmosphere and utilise your time to prepare yourselves for the examinations resuming from April 26.

As far as your demands and our grievances are concerned, I have taken them to the relevant quarters of the Government. I have had discussions with the Home Minister, L.K. Advani, Lt. Governor Delhi, Vijai Kapoor and Chief Minister of Delhi, Sheila Dikshit. These discussions have produced some favourable results. In this day and age of stiff competition, time is of the essence. The examinations should resume from the announced date, otherwise losses suffered by you will be difficult to compensate and it will have adverse consequences for your career. This crucial aspect of the situation should not be lost sight of. Your guardians and well wishers have already advised you to this effect.

Through this letter, I once again request you to assist your teachers and elders to bring back normalcy on the campus and concentrate fully on the preparations for your examinations.

Shahabuddin's Letter to Delhi C.M., 13 April, 2000

I appreciate that you visited the Jamia Millia Islamia and saw with your own eyes the havoc and destruction wrought by the police on 9 April, 2000 in its barbaric assault on the students in the Hostel and the attached Masjid which have shocked the University and the Muslim community.

I request you to advise the Lt. Governor to suspend the police officers concerned and prosecute them for criminal acts unworthy of public servants.

I also request you to advise the authorities concerned to withdraw the false cases against the students and to release them unconditionally.

The incident also brings to the fore the question of long-term modus vivendi between the Jamia and the Delhi Police. The Jamia is an autonomous University. Its autonomy should be respected. The Jamia and the Delhi Police should work out a mutually acceptable arrangement for police intervention - which may include the entry of the police in the Campus - with prior knowledge and permission of the University authority, if and when the circumstances so demand. Unless such an arrangement is made, ugly confrontation are bound to recur.

circumstances so demand. In view of the autonomy of the Jamia, this agreement should be based on the principle that the police shall not enter the campus without prior permission of the Jamia authorities.

Any Change in Status-quo by Receiver would be Illegal Shahabuddin Cautions Home Minister Advani

I - Letters of 25 February, 2000

You are aware that the Supreme Court in its Judgement and Order of October 24, 1994 generally upheld The Acquisition of Certain Areas at Ayodhya Act, 1993, appointed the Government of India as the Statutory Receiver and ordered the status quo to be maintained until the title to the disputed areas included, pending before the Allahabad High Court was decided and the Supreme Court itself allotted the land to various parties in the light thereto.

The Government of India has appointed the Commissioner of Faizabad to discharge the function of the Receiver.

The status quo is being maintained since then.

We understand from the press report in the Dainik Jagran of 17.2.2000 (copy attached) that the Commissioner of Faizabad has submitted a proposal to the Central/State Governments to change the status quo within the acquired land, with a view to facilitate the 'darshan' of the deity placed in the make-shift structure unlawfully constructed on the debris of the Babari Masjid, by reducing the distance between the entry and the deity as well as to reopen the other temples which had been acquired under this Act.

The proposal would constitute a blatant violation of the Order of the Supreme Court and add to the security risk, particularly when the VHP is threatening to construct the proposed Mandir on the disputed site at a time of its choosing in defiance of the law.

We request you to reject the proposal and instruct the Commissioner to maintain the status quo exactly in accordance with the Supreme Court Order.

In case the Government wish to make any change, we request that the matter must be placed before the Supreme Court and its order must be obtained to make any change whatsoever in the management of the acquired land and the structure thereon.

II - Letter of 20 April, 2000

Please refer to my letter of 25 February, 2000 drawing your attention to the proposal of the Receiver of the Acquired Areas in Ayodhya (the Commissioner of Faizabad) to change the status quo near the Babari Masjid site.

I had requested you to reject the proposal and instruct the Commissioner to maintain the status quo in accordance with the Order of the Supreme Court. I have not received any reply from you.

I would be grateful to be informed where the matter stands.

**Shahabuddin Opposes S. Patil's Proposal
Letter to The Mainstream, 10 April, 2000**

Apropos Mr. Sharad Patil's "Open letter to President K.R. Narayanan" (8 April, 2000), his proposal on the Babari Masjid Question is illogical and impracticable. Having stated 'whether a Ram Temple stood prior to the construction of the mosque is still not clinched by historical evidence', he proposes the construction of a Temple and a mosque alongside, what he calls, Loka-Kuta in between. If the disputed site is the birthsite of Ram Chandraj, a Ram Mandir would have marked the site. If that standing Mandir was demolished to construct the Masjid in its place, there is no moral, though not a legal case for the reconstruction of the Ram Mandir on the spot. Otherwise, why shouldn't the Babari Masjid be rebuilt on the site? The Muslim community is agreeable to the construction of a Ram Mandir on an adjacent site, which may wholly or partly occupy the disputed 6 acres of Wakf land outside the Masjid.

Hundreds of temples and mosques stand side by side in many places in our country without any communal tension or a buffer structure between them.

Adding a new dimension of glorification of "the victims of Ram" will only create new controversies and delay the solution of the Ayodhya dispute.

Even if it is admitted that some monuments in India stand on the debris of earlier structures, there is no law which would legitimise the demolition of existing structures to rebuild the earlier. In fact the law prohibits it. So do international conventions. The question also arises how far back in history will we go?

On Babari Masjid Question Kalyan Singh, ex-CM, UP

The only solution is through negotiation among non-political religious leaders of the two communities. The issue cannot be solved by courts or legislation.

A Ram temple should be constructed at the site where the makeshift temple now exists and a mosque should be built outside the Ram temple area.

R.P. Gupta, CM, UP

Kalyan Singh believes in Ramjanmabhoomi. He played a major role in the issue and has remained a hero of mandir movement.

I will not question Kalyan Singh. Nobody is in disagreement over building of the temple. The question is how and when. I will not even go into the question of whether putting aside the mandir issue was the reason for party's defeat in UP.

**My Stand Remains Unchanged
Shahabuddin's Letter to Ram Gopal,
25 March, 2000**

... My stand on the Babari Masjid question remains unchanged. I could not have spelt out the details in short private communication to you.

It is indeed immaterial whether the alleged Mandir was magnificent or modest. Anyone who builds a Masjid knows that a Masjid cannot be built on usurped land. The essential question, therefore, is whether the Babari Masjid was built on the site of a pre-existing, standing temple; after destroying it. It is the anti-Masjid agitators who claim that the Mandir marked the birth-site of Ram Chandrari. So it could not have been just an ordinary temple.

Mir Baqi is not a fictitious name. Babar Nama has some pages missing. So there is not even a reference to Ayodhya in Babar Nama. Again it is not important who built it. Or whether it was rightly called the Babari Masjid. In fact it was called by various names at various times.

Frankly I do not understand how a Mandir can be 'shaped' into a Masjid, using the same foundation. The genuineness of the 'archaeological' material alleged to have been discovered in the ruins of the Babari Masjid has been questioned. The trouble is that you swallow everything that the Hindutva -leaning historians or archaeologists state.

The presumed date of construction of the Ram Janambhoomi Mandir was shifted by the VHP from pre-historic time to the 11th Century to fit in with available material. But there is no other Ram Temple in the whole of the country dating earlier than the 16th Century when the Ram cult came into vogue. The excavations near the Babari Masjid site undertaken in 1976-77. It would be useful for you to read the complete reports.

Ayodhya Mahatmya, I am advised, gives the directions to locate the Janambhoomi but they do not lead to the Babari Masjid site!

Yes, as a lawyer, I would say that the claimant has to prove his case, not the defendant. It is the VHP which has been agitating the question. No one did until 1949 and more precisely until 1983.

Incidentally, the VHP does not base its claim on the miraculous emanation of Ram idols in the Babari Masjid on 22-23 December, 1949!

So far, I have not come across any objective evidence that the Babari Masjid site was the Grabh Griha site, or that the Babari Masjid was built after destroying the existing Ram Janambhoomi Mandir on the site. But I know that the Hindu claimants have already made up their mind that a Masjid has no right to exist on the commanding heights of Ayodhya, not after the Hindus regained 'freedom after 1000 years of slavery'. So it has to go. So it is no longer a question of reason but of power. □

*With Best
Compliments
From*

*Nalanda
Export
Pvt. Ltd.*

**98 Mittal Chambers
Nariman Point,
Mumbai - 400 021
© 202 3390**

Konkani-Marathi Tangle in Goa

S. Prabhudesai in *The Pioneer*, 2 April, 2000

Konkani was recognised by the Sahitya Academy in 1975 as an independent language – not an dialect of Marathi as claimed by the Marathi protagonists.

In 1987, State-wide violent agitation had forced the then Congress Government to make Konkani official language of Goa. It has now even been included in the eight schedule of the Constitution. "As the High Court has put an end to all the controversies going on till date, the Government has to be now pressurised to fully implement the Official Language Act and make Konkani compulsory even for jobs here", says A. Uday Bhembre, a journalist and president of Goa Konkani Academy.

The language controversy has kept Goans fighting amongst themselves all these years since its liberation in 1961...

The age-old language controversy has erupted once again in Goa as the High Court, almost 13 years after the Official Language Act was passed, has ruled that Konkani is the sole official language of the State and not Marathi.

It is for the first time the court has interpreted the controversial Official Language Act, which was passed by the Assembly of Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu after violent agitation by Konkani and Marathi protagonists, which even took a communal turn and paralysed the whole State for a fortnight during tourist season in 1986.

In order to claim down the situation and resolve the issue amicably, **the State Assembly had then passed a legislation stating that Konkani was the official language of the State while Marathi would also be used for the official purposes.**

"Undisputedly Konkani is the official language. Mere use of Marathi for official purpose to reply the communication received in Marathi by itself cannot afford the status of official language to Marathi or equal status with Konkani. The fact that 90 per cent of people of Goa speak Konkani is not in dispute", states the court now.

The Marathi Rajyabhashs Prasthapan Samiti, whose petition has now been dismissed by the local bench of Bombay High Court, had challenged Government notifications making knowledge of Konkani essential and that of Marathi desirable for employment purpose.

As the same court had once observed that Marathi enjoys equal status on par with Konkani, the Marathi protagonists had filed the petition against, discrimination. "The order is really shocking and it needs

Recognition of Urdu as Official Language

Letter of Thanks to Delhi C.M., 10 April, 2000

Please accept my sincere thanks and cordial felicitations on the passage of the Bill giving the status of Second Official Language to Urdu and Punjabi.

The Rules should be framed at the earliest so that the Bill may be implemented.

I would suggest that the Department of Official Language and not the Urdu or the Punjab Akademis should be entrusted with the implementation of the Bill. The Akademis should monitor the implementation and act as watch-dogs just as Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu Hind, Delhi.

- Syed Shahabuddin

On Suppression of Minority Languages and Dialects in Hindi Majority Region

Shahabuddin's Letter to the Indian Express,

10 April, 2000

Prof. Seema Alavi has very ably brought out the divisive dimensions of the attempt to impose Hindi as 'the national language'. In fact Hindi is one of the 18 National Languages enumerated in Schedule 8 of the Constitution. Hindi has, however, the unique status of the Official Language of the Union, alongwith English as the Associate Official Language and, therefore, eventually slated as the link language between the Centre and the State and among the various States, subject to nationwide acceptance.

But Hindi enthusiasts need to take into account the rise in the demand for English all over the country in view of its global reach. So the question will arise as to why English cannot serve a dual purpose - as the link language within India, and as the link language with the outside world.

The Hindi enthusiasts should also look back at their record of deliberate and systematic suppression of minority languages and the absorption of living dialects in the Hindi-speaking region. By making their region 'unilingual', they have sown seeds of fear in the non-Hindi regions.

The question of 'one language' is as divisive for India as the question of 'one religion' or 'one culture'.

to be reviewed by the Supreme Court", says former Union Law Minister Ramakant Khalap, who had led the State-level agitation in favour of making Marathi the official language. He has, however, been targeted by the Marathi protagonists now, accusing him of misguiding them that Marathi enjoyed equal official status.

The Marathi protagonists ... are bent upon starting a State-wide agitation to make it Goa's official language. □

PUCL-Karnataka: Fact-finding Team's Report On Communal Situation in Chikamangalur

A fact-finding team commissioned by the People's Union for Civil Liberties – Karnataka, which included members of Citizens for Democracy – Karnataka and South India Cell for Human Rights Education and Monitoring ... visited Bababudangiri and Chikamangalur on the 21st and 22nd of January, 2000... The following are the findings of the team.

1. The fact-finding team is of the opinion that Bababudangiri represents a unique example of composite culture of India. Hindus and Muslims alike offer their obeisance to the place in a very cordial manner. It was never a point of dispute throughout the centuries.
2. It is only after 1975 that the dispute emerged regarding the management of the Dargah/Peetha. The then caretaker of the Dargah, Shah Khadri and two Hindu litigants challenged the government order, making it a Wakf property. The judgement pronounced that the shrine is revered equally by the Hindus and Muslims, and ordered the status quo to be maintained. The court also upholds the rights of Shah Khadri regarding the inheritance.
3. In the post-Ayodhya development, the Sangh Parivar took up the programmes to make it a controversial spot. After the fizzling out of the Idgah Maidan issue in Hubli, they targeted Bababudangiri/Datta Peetha Dargah to rouse communal passions. This is connected with the BJP's game plan of securing a foothold in Karnataka and to extend its supremacy.
4. From 1984 onwards, the Datta Jayanthi celebrations were made a formal affair. The various Hindu swamijis who had never bothered to visit the place earlier made a beeline to the shrine. With this, the shrine which was the property of a single family suddenly came under attack as though it was a public property...
5. The whole issue reached a flash point in 1998, with the Sangh Parivar's aggressive politics of confrontation wherein the rathayatras were organised to rouse communal passions. The Sangh Parivar succeeded in making it an all-Karnataka controversial issue and a flash point of communal confrontation.
6. (In) December 1999 ... the State administration allowed the Sangh Parivar-led Hindutva forces to perform Hindu rituals including yagnas and homas and installation of idols which were never a tradition in the shrine nor were allowed by the Court of law which in fact had directed all the parties to the dispute to maintain the status quo...

7. The local administration was hand in glove with the activities of the Sangh Parivar by providing all facilities and support.
8. Overall, it is the state Government which has fallen into the trap of the Sangh Parivar foregoing its secular responsibilities.

Recommendations

- The status quo ante of 1975 should be maintained.
- The Sangh Parivar should not be allowed to hijack the affairs of Bababudangiri.
- The government should take firm measures to stop the Sangh Parivar from repeating its machinations to rouse communal passions...
- The State machinery should stop providing facilities to the activities of the Sangh Parivar to perform Datta Jayanthi and also prevent vandalism...
- The district administration which was hand in glove and connived with the Sangh Parivar should be completely revamped.

(Source: PUCL Bulletin, April, 2000)

Rajindar Sachar

On Criticism of PUCL by RUHR

... The gratuitous and baseless allegation that PUCL has provided a platform for Hindutva ideology is the unkindest cut of all. PUCL and its Bulletin have been the first to condemn communal politics. It produced the investigative report, "Who are the Guilty?" in collaboration with PUDR on the 1984 killings of Sikhs in Delhi; it was active during the Srikrishna panel enquiry; and many other investigative and enquiry reports relating to communal riots, atrocities on Dalits, etc.

PUCL held public protest meetings to demand implementation of Srikrishna Commission report. It has repeatedly demanded that 6 December be declared a Day of Repentance every year to atone for the demolition of Babari Masjid.

(Source: PUCL Bulletin, April, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 216)

in July (1999) ... the impossibility of pursuing their game-plan much longer in Kashmir may have dawned on Islamabad.

Yet, a retreat under pressure from the US will undoubtedly put any government in Pakistan — whether military or civilian — under tremendous pressure. It is in this context that President Tarar may have spoken of Kashmir being crucial for Pakistan's survival... Now that a serious setback is staring it in the face, Pakistan may have begun to have doubts about its own survival. □

US State Department's Report on Human Rights, 2000 - I

Relevant Extracts on India

... (During 1999) there continued to be significant human rights abuses, despite extensive constitutional and statutory safeguards. Serious human rights abuses included: political and other extrajudicial killings, including faked encounter killings and deaths of suspects in police custody throughout the country and excessive use of force by security forces combating active insurgencies in Jammu and Kashmir and several north-eastern states; torture and rape by police and other agents of the Government; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention in Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast; continued detention throughout the country of thousands arrested under special security legislation; lengthy pretrial detention; prolonged detention while undergoing trial; lengthy delays in trials; occasional limits on freedom of the press and freedom of movement; harassment and arrest of human rights monitors; extensive societal violence against women; legal and societal discrimination against women; female bondage and forced prostitution; child prostitution and infanticide; discrimination against the disabled; serious discrimination and violence against indigenous people and scheduled castes and tribes; widespread intercaste and communal violence; societal violence against Christians and Muslims; widespread exploitation of indentured, bonded, and child labor; and trafficking in women and children.

Many of these abuses are generated by intense social tensions, violent secessionist movements, and the authorities' attempts to repress them, and deficient police methods and training. These problems are acute in Jammu and Kashmir, where ... security forces summarily killed suspected militants and civilians; with few exceptions, they acted with impunity.

The concerted campaign of execution-style killings of civilians by Kashmiri militant groups, begun in 1998, continued and included several killings of political leaders and party workers. Separatist militants were responsible for numerous, serious abuses, including extrajudicial executions of members of the armed forces and civilians and other political killings, torture, and brutality. Separatist militants also were responsible for kidnapping and extortion in Jammu and Kashmir and northeast India...

Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing

Political killings by government forces (including deaths in custody and faked encounter killings) continued at a high level in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and several northeastern states, where separatist insurgencies continued. Security forces offered bounties for wanted militants brought in dead or alive...

Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

... Torture is common throughout the country, and authorities often use torture during interrogations. In other

instances, they torture detainees to extort money and sometimes as summary punishment...

Arbitrary Arrest, Detention or Exile

... There were credible reports of widespread arbitrary arrest and detention under (special security) laws.

Although ... the TADA, lapsed in May 1995, 1,502 persons previously arrested under the Act continued to be held as of January 1, 1997, in a number of states... Few persons have been released as a result of the review. Criminal cases are proceeding against most of those still held under the TADA...

Denial of Fair Public Trial

... In Jammu and Kashmir, the judicial system barely functions... Courts there are reluctant to hear cases involving terrorist crimes and fail to act expeditiously on habeas corpus cases, if they act at all... There were a few convictions of alleged terrorists in the Jammu High Court during the year. Many more accused militants have been in pretrial detention for years... There were no reports of political prisoners.

Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

... The authorities in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Assam have special powers to search and arrest without a warrant...

The Indian Telegraph Act authorizes the surveillance of communications, including monitoring telephone conversations and intercepting personal mail... Every state government has used these powers, as has the central Government.

Use of Excessive Force and Violations of Humanitarian Law in Internal Conflicts

Government forces continue to commit serious violations of humanitarian law in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir... Under the Jammu and Kashmir Disturbed Areas Act, and the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, both passed in July 1990, security forces personnel have extraordinary powers, including authority to shoot suspected lawbreakers and those persons disturbing the peace and to destroy structures suspected of harbouring militants or arms.

Civilian deaths caused by security forces appeared to diminish for the sixth consecutive year in Jammu and Kashmir, although final statistics for 1999 were not available... The security forces have not ceased to abduct and extrajudicially execute suspected militants, nor have they accepted accountability for these abuses... (There is) transfer of some of such actions to government-supported counter-militants...

Kashmiri militant groups also committed serious abuses. In addition to political killings, kidnappings and rapes of politicians and civilians... Insurgents engaged in extortion and carried out acts of random terror that killed hundreds of Kashmiris. Many of the militants are not

Indian citizens, but are Afghani, Pakistani, and other nationalities... In the fall there was a significant upsurge in militant violence towards security forces, and a tendency to use heavy weapons...

There was a parallel decline in massacres of unarmed civilians; nevertheless, such attacks continued. Militants carried out several execution-style mass murders of Hindu (Pandit) villagers in Jammu and Kashmir...

Respect of Speech and Press

... Under the Official Secrets Act, the Government may restrict publication of sensitive stories; however, the Government sometimes interprets this broadly to suppress criticism of its policies... The 1971 Newspapers Incitements to Offences Act remains in effect in Jammu and Kashmir...

The Government maintains a list of banned books that cannot be imported or sold in the country...

Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

... Srinagar and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir occasionally came under curfew but more often were affected by strikes called by militants.

... The Government implemented a new requirement that NGO's secure the prior approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs before organizing international conferences...

Freedom of Religion

... No national law bars proselytizing by Indian Christians. Foreign missionaries generally can renew their visas, but since the mid-1960's the Government has refused to admit new resident foreign missionaries... During the year, as in the past, state officials refused to issue permits for foreign Christian missionaries to enter some northeastern states...

Missionaries and religious organizations must comply with the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) which restricts funding from abroad and, therefore, the ability of certain groups to finance their activities. The Government is empowered to ban a religious organization if it has violated the FCRA, has provoked inter-community friction, or has been involved in terrorism or sedition...

Speaking publicly against other beliefs is considered dangerous to public order, and is prohibited...

In February, 1999 following a series of attacks on Christians, the office of the director general of police in Gujarat reportedly sent a circular instructing district officials to collect information about Christians, including the number of missionaries, their funding sources, and the "tricks" they used to convert persons... On March 2, the government of Gujarat withdrew the effort. However, in December, 1999 the United Christian Forum for Human Rights ... expressed concern to the press about a "survey" of Christian institutions and missionaries allegedly being conducted by the Delhi police... Hindu extremist groups continued to attack Christians. In many cases, the government response was inadequate, consisting largely of statements criticizing the violence ... but with few efforts to hold accountable those ... responsible... Throughout the year, the Government generally described the violence

and attacks as a series of isolated local phenomena, in some states, calling for a national debate on conversions...

In 1998 and early 1999 there was an unusual and serious outbreak of societal violence against Christians, apparently sparked by rumors of "forced conversions" of Hindus to Christianity...

On occasion, Hindu-Muslim violence led to killings and a cycle of retaliation. In some instances, local police and government officials abetted the violence, and at times security forces were responsible for abuses. Police on occasion accompanied Hindu fundamentalists who were responsible for violence...

... The RSS ... believes that all Indians should adhere to Hindu cultural values... Most BJP leaders are also RSS members. The BJP's longstanding cultural agenda includes calls for construction of a Hindu temple ... on the site of a mosque in Ayodhya that was destroyed by a Hindu mob in 1992 ... and for the enactment of a uniform civil code that would apply to members of all religions. All of these proposals are opposed strongly by some minority religious groups. However, the BJP-led national Government took no steps to implement these measures... Some Christian groups have noted the coincidence of (BJP's) coming to power and an increase in complaints of discrimination against minority religious communities. These groups also claim that BJP officials at state and local levels have become increasingly uncooperative.

Freedom of Movement within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration and Repatriation

... On September 23, the Government prevented Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Maulana Mohammadi Abbas Ansari, two members of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a Kashmiri separatist group, from leaving the country to attend a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference...

Vehicle checkpoints, at which Border Security Forces routinely frisk and question occupants, are a common feature throughout most of Jammu and Kashmir.

... The occasional deportation of Bangladeshis judged to have entered the country illegally continued during the year, but there was no repetition of the systematic roundup of Bangladeshis for mass deportation that was conducted by the government of Maharashtra in 1998. The Government estimates that there are 10million Bangladeshis living illegally in the country...

Respect for Political Rights: The Right of Citizens to Change Their Government

... More than 100 persons were killed in election-related violence in various parts of the country, predominantly in Kashmir, Tripura, Assam, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Bihar and there were localized allegations of voter fraud. Human rights groups reported that security forces in some parts of Jammu & Kashmir compelled residents to vote and that at least three persons who refused were killed... In Jammu and Kashmir, militants committed numerous abuses - many against civilians - to disrupt voting...

(To be Concluded)

Sudarshan's Call for Epic War against non-Hindus Communal Delirium at its Worst

... The clue to the Sudarshan coup may be found in the grand exhortation with which the newly crowned RSS supremo has chosen to open his innings. Strikingly out of context and wholly from nowhere, **he has invented the need for the Hindus to wage an epic war against the non-Hindus.** It does not have to be argued that this is communal rhetoric at its virulent worst, in relation to which the Ayodhya discourse sounds like a nursery rhyme.

The compulsion for this call is writ large over the political plight of the BJP. Contrary to expectations, the political graph of the party has flattened out in a short span of time. For all the calculated game plans and war-games waged against innocent and helpless people, the party's electoral fortunes have dried up, consigning the party hawks to the vexatious need to put up with the allies who are unwilling to toe the RSS line. The BJP's political momentum has always been drawn from the RSS, and the compulsions of the present scenario make it difficult and dangerous to own up this intimate relationship in public, causing a great deal of heartburn in the RSS camp.

Being in power is a mixed blessing for the BJP. It is a blessing insofar as the party now has access to unlimited money, which counts a lot in Indian politics. It also controls the media, which is a decisive advantage in democracy. The mystique of power, besides, has enhanced the political image of the party nation-wide at a time when the memories of the freedom struggle and the assassination of Gandhiji are fading in the minds of the people. The BJP has a respectability today that it could not have dreamt of a decade ago.

Assuming the reins of governance is also, at the same time, a disadvantage for the BJP for a number of reasons. First, the party's genius is essentially negative and destructive, and is suited more to pulling down mosques and churches than developing the country or ensuring the wellbeing of the people. The fiery rhetoric and dramatic strategies that appealed to the frustrated youth of this country, for instance, are a liability for the party when it occupies the treasury benches. Second, the people will now judge the BJP in terms not of its promise but of performance; and the performance has been dismal so far. This compels the party to work out strategies to deflect the attention of the people from the failures of the government and the misery of the people resulting from it. The Clinton visit is a case in point... Third, the coalition politics has the potential to strain the relationship between the party and the Parivar. Fourth, the regional parties seem to be strengthening their popular base, upsetting BJP's hopes of being able to thrive at their expense sooner or later. Evidently the BJP strategy is first to grow at the expense

of the Congress and the Leftists and then, once the required strength is attained, to consume the coalition partners one after the other. This now seems a trifle far-fetched, forcing the more ambitious among the Parivar protagonists to push the issues to a crisis.

The call to begin an epic war against the non-Hindus is a calculated move to coerce unity in the Hindu fold. Today the truth stares the Parivar in the face that the followers of Hinduism in this country are too sane to buy the fundamentalist project in a state of rational thinking. Sudarshan's call craftily and deceptively evocative as it is of the Hindu epics, is aimed at by-passing rationality and creating a pseudo-religious wrapping for the RSS communal agenda. Politically, this is aimed at reducing the options available to the coalition partners who are being compelled to buy the Hindu card. Once the Sudarshan's dharma yudh is launched, any freethinking on the part of the partners can easily be discredited and pilloried as anti-Hindu.

The ascent of Sudarshan is also a clear warning to Vajpayee. Perhaps it signals that the days of mask-wearing are over, and that the RSS wants the government to be more strident in converting secular-democratic India into Hindu Rashtra. It is also a message to the RSS cadre that the days of restraint are over, and that they can now roam around like communal cowboys in the wild East...

With the call to this epic war, the RSS has fully unfurled its flag of conflict and violence. The RSS has as much need to foment Hindu-Muslim disunity as the British had to keep the sub-continent under their iron grip... The irony is that the RSS needs to divide India to unite Hindus under its banner.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 9 April, 2000)

Akhil Bharatiya Pratinidhi Sabha: Resolutions (Extracts)

Resolution on Conversion

... The ABPS therefore, ardently appeals to the various Hindu religious bodies to come together and evolve a concerted plan to not only halt the rampant conversion, but also bring back to our fold those that were converted to intolerant faiths by force, fraud or allurements...

Resolution on Cow Protection

The ABPS urges the Central Government to initiate legislation banning slaughter of cow and her entire family through out the country... The meeting also appeals to the farmers and the peasantry to exercise utmost concern towards the welfare of cows and bullocks as they are integral parts of the farmers family.

(Contd. on Page 226)

Nagpur Calling

Editorial, The Times of India, 13 Mar., 2000

K.S.Sudarshan ... new sarsanghchhalak of the RSS ... has ... an ideological tough mind... At a recent function to honour 'nationalist' journalists, Sudarshan and Vajpayee had openly disagreed. Expounding on the now-familiar 'India versus Bharat' theme, Sudarshan said that whereas Bharat was a civilisational concept, India was a gift from the departing British. Bharat was one united nation; India was many nations in one. Bharat was held together by a single strong culture; India argued for multi-culturalism. Then came the tricky bit. Sudarshan wondered how any self-respecting country could allow English to co-exist with its own national language. Of the BJP's two dozen allies in government, there are several who cannot and will not speak Hindi, much less accept it as the sole national language... Little wonder then that at the same meeting the Prime Minister asked the RSS not to cross the Laxman rekha.

... Will the RSS further enlarge its role under Sudarshan? In the nearly two years that Vajpayee has been in office, he has had many run-ins with the RSS, including that time in December 1998 when the Sangh bristled at the government's pro-liberalisation moves... Crisis blew over thanks to the excellent rapport between Vajpayee and Rajendra Singh... Sudarshan, on the other hand, is a die-hard Swadeshi... Under the new chief's stewardship the RSS has passed a resolution expressing "concern about economic policies of the current government". However, the RSS is also a pragmatic body... A BJP government, liberalisation and all, is better for the RSS than an inimical Congress government headed by a foreign-born woman. The Vajpayee government can expect a lot more pinpricks, though. In the end, only a conscious moving away from the influence of the RSS can save the BJP...

V. Venkatesan

On RSS-BJP Relations under Sudarshan

... What does Sudarshan's elevation signal for the RSS and the BJP? Insiders in both organisations deny the general perception that Sudarshan is a "hard-liner" and the age barrier between him and the present BJP leadership might be reflected in the equations between the two organisations. These leaders point out that the RSS has always functioned as a collective entity and that there is no scope for decision-making by individuals. Although Rajendra Singh and Seshadri may not hold any post in the organisation, they will be consulted by Sudarshan before every decision is taken, they claim...

The Advani camp in the BJP does not expect any significant change in RSS-BJP relations after Sudarshan's elevation. A senior BJP leader said that Vajpayee had no reason to be worried about Sudarshan, whose views on swadeshi, Hindutva, the environment and human development were fairly well-known. Sudarshan is not a hard-liner but a clear-headed personality, claimed K.R. Malkani, editor-in-chief of the BJP's official organ, *BJP*

Sudarshan's War

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 17 Mar., 2000

The first mistake in RSS leader K.S. Sudarshan's interpretation of the Mahabharata is that it was not a conflict between Hindus and anti-Hindus, as he has claimed while predicting another similar "epic war" in India, but a battle between two closely related families ... were Hindus, although it is doubtful whether they would have used the term for themselves. However, ... the battle which he foresees may well be within another family — the Sangh Parivar — because it is unlikely that the BJP will be pleased with his grim prognostications. Even if there is some convergence in the strategic vision of both the RSS and the BJP, it is clear enough that the latter's tactics emphasise the soft-peddalling of the issues which are close to Sudarshan's heart...

The entire focus of the BJP's recent politics has been to downplay the contentious issues with which it used to be associated earlier in order to widen its scope for acceptability by other parties. Implicit in this approach is the recognition, as underlined by L.K. Advani some time ago, that "the country is so heterogeneous that ... an ideological party, be it the communists or the Jan Sangh, cannot hope to come to power at the Centre on its own". It is the evident compulsions of a multicultural society which have made the BJP shed its ideological straitjacket, even if as a tactical gesture. The essence of such a society is that the various communities in it are not seen as being antagonistic towards each other. The RSS leader's neat division of the citizens of India between Hindus and anti-Hindus and, what is more, the prediction of a war between them may well raise the question whether the temporary tactics and the ultimate strategy of the Sangh Parivar is beginning to converge.

Such suspicions about the Perrier's real agenda may gain credibility in the wake of the latest pronouncement because it is quite in line with Golwalkar's categorisation of non-Hindus virtually as second class citizens. In envisaging a war between the two, however, Sudarshan has gone one step beyond his mentor. **Unless the BJP dissociates itself completely from this particularly offensive remark**, misgivings about its objective will continue to persist. Indeed, ... doubts about even the BJP's intentions will not totally disappear. The BJP, therefore, has entered perhaps the most critical phase in its history because Sudarshan hard line has brought it face to face with issues basic to the Perrier's ideology which it has been trying to gloss over so far.

Today.

Whatever the nature of the relationship between the BJP and the RSS in the coming days, it is certain that Sudarshan has a heavy agenda before him... Seshadri Chari, editor of the RSS mouthpiece, *Organiser*, told *Frontline* that the accent under Sudarshan would be on increasing the pace of the Sangh's activities, rather than changing its direction...

(Source: The Frontline, 31 March, 2000)

Amulya Ganguli on RSS Strategy for Hindu Rashtra

If there is one aspect of the RSS-led Sangh Parivar which evokes admiration, it is candour...

The observations of the new RSS chief, K.S. Sudarshan, including his eager anticipation of a new battle in the fields of Kurukshetra against anti-Hindus, confirm this penchant for truthfulness. They show that the organisation remains as firmly committed to its sectarian world-view as before. His arguments for swadeshi to placate the local merchants and the domestic manufacturing class who have always been the Jan Sangh-Bharatiya Janata Party's supporters, his pleas against cow-slaughter, his condemnation of Valentine's Day, his demand to change the Constitution — all underline a carefully crafted policy to build up and sustain the support base of tradition-minded Hindus.

Such a conservative community, wary of modernity and of foreign influence in the economy or in art and culture, constitutes the base of all fundamentalist forces...

In Hindu Rashtra, too, as Golwalkar pointed out with remarkable clarity, "The non-Hindu people ... must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and revere Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but the glorification of the Hindu nation, i.e., they must not only give up their attitude of intolerance and ingratitude towards this land and its age-long traditions, but must also cultivate the positive attitude of love and devotion instead; in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment, not even citizens' rights."

What is noteworthy is that this parochial view has few takers in today's world. Even the BJP avoids mentioning this passage if it can help it. The RSS cannot be unaware that the expression of such religious chauvinism will hurt the Vajpayee-led coalition. Why, then, does it continue to adopt an extremist posture when it knows that the fallout can damage the Government's wider acceptability? ...

Is adherence to truth and faith in success the only reasons for the candour of the far right, or is there something else — a special game plan? In his book, *The Dark Side of Europe*, on the neo-Nazis, Geoffrey Harris writes: "Fascist groups operate on the basis of control by a strong leader with a small inner circle... The aim is not necessarily immediate mass mobilisation or electoral success. It is the creation of tension, the incitement of hatred and the sapping of confidence in democratic society."

So, when the RSS focuses on the Ayodhya temple, the "liberation" of the Mathura and Varanasi shrines, Article 370, special privileges for Haj yatis, forcible conversion by Christians, rewriting history, etc, it is not looking for immediate success but only to pave the way for it. And its

purpose is served, for the society remains on edge and there is a feeling of nervousness among the minorities...

The fascists ... have been faring much better recently than in all their seven-decade old history. Except for two things. The voters are seemingly losing their earlier preference for them. And, secondly, there is resistance from the moderates within the Sangh Parivar to the RSS hard line. If the RSS has opted for a "strong leader" it may be because of the second reason.

The uneasiness of the moderates is perhaps due to the fact that they have realised that the surge in popular expectations ... is petering out, as the recent election results in Bihar, Orissa and Haryana have shown. What is more, the party suspects that the adoption of a hard line at this stage will hasten the process of its decline.

The same factors, however, have made the RSS draw the opposite conclusion. First, it probably believes that as a result of the BJP's success in the last 10 years, India is ready to be transformed into its cherished Hindu Rashtra and that all that the Parivar needs to do is make a determined final effort. Secondly, to do so, an unadulterated version of its philosophy has to be presented in order to enthuse the committed who, in its view, constitute a clear majority.

What is more, the RSS probably feels that it hasn't waited seven decades to reach a stage when success seemed within grasp only to begin a return journey to the political periphery...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 27 March, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 224)

... The ABPS suggest that the Government should appoint a Rashtriya Gau Sewa Ayog empowering it with financial and executive powers adequate enough to provide for the protection of cattle-wealth.

In short, our overall national scenario presents, both a positive and powerful nationwide Hindu awakening, on the one hand, and, on the other side, every conceivable anti-national, anti-Hindu force — both internal and external — joining hands in a concerted no-holds-barred vicious attack on our national unity, integrity and points of honour... They are all — every one of them — scared of the fast-growing Hindu awakening, which has already started unmasking their real face and exposing their nefarious designs and slogans. And the half-a-century long unchallenged hold on their safe seats of enjoyment of every kind of name, fame and creature comforts in every field of national field have started tumbling.

The message is, therefore, ringing forth to every ardent lover of our country, our culture and our national unity and integrity to apply himself ... to push forward the ongoing irrepressible movement of Hindu Renaissance and take it to its glorious consummation.

(Source: The Organiser, 26 March, 2000)

S. Dasgupta and F. Ahmed on Sudarshan and the BJP

...Sudarshan ... perceives himself in a more proactive mould. Although insisting that the RSS is merely a "sorting house" of ideas that could be passed on to the Government, Sudarshan likes to play both philosopher and field marshal... He also seems completely impervious to the possible ramifications of his utterances on a coalition government in which the BJP is a part... He demanded the scrapping of the Indian Constitution. He followed it up by speaking menacingly of an "epic war" between Hindus and anti-Hindus.

For Sudarshan, politics is a black-and-white game and part of the unending quest for ideological supremacy. The RSS may have been started by Hedgewar in 1925 to "pour some cement into the spine of Hindus" – as a BJP minister described it quaintly – and create a moral leadership for national regeneration. To Sudarshan, however, Hindutva is a holistic approach with definite views on everything from politics to economics... From being a way of life or, at best, a code of conduct (dharma), Sudarshan wants to turn Hinduism into an ideology – complete with sub-branches of Hindu economics and Hindu science.

For the government, this is a potentially nightmarish development... Vajpayee doesn't want to be in a situation where the RSS is either setting the agenda or is at loggerheads with the ruling coalition. More than communalism – essentially a problem linked directly to the Babari Masjid conflict – the emerging faultlines are over economic policy.

... There is a belief in BJP circles that Sudarshan has become an unwitting victim of corporate lobbies, draped in swadeshi clothes.

Indeed, one of the main criticisms against Sudarshan is that he is very impressionable... Compounding this selective understanding is the fact that the new RSS chief keeps himself wonderfully insulated from external influences...

But if BJP politicians view Sudarshanomics with some disdain, verging on utter contempt, the RSS chief has his quota of admirers. The Swadeshi Jagran Manch and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), for example, see him as a powerful patron. Unlike Rajju Bhairya who was averse to embarrassing the Vajpayee Government, Sudarshan suffers from no such inhibitions. Says Mohanrao Bhagwat, a veterinary doctor who has been chosen as the new general secretary: "The Sangh is not concerned with day-to-day politics or electoral politics. At the same time, we cannot be unconcerned when something affects the nation or society, even if it is about politics." Adding to the twist was the assumption behind the Pratinidhi Sabha's (General Council) decisions: "This is not a BJP government; the BJP is merely in the government".

Ominously for the Vajpayee Government, this new

sense of detachment could become the justification for a new adventurism... The newly appointed Joint General Secretary, Madandas Devi ... could emerge as a foil to Sudarshan's rigidity... Madandas could ... forge a supportive relationship between the RSS and the NDA Government...

... RSS collegiate's definition of its priorities. Topping the list is not the Vajpayee Government's ideological heresies but shakha work. In the past decade, the RSS has grown exponentially, from 25,000 to 40,000 shakhas... As RSS chief, Sudarshan's priority is to strengthen the shakhas, if necessary through innovative schemes like inter-shakha cricket tournaments...

such an ambitious programme could be better served by having a friendly government in Delhi. The RSS may be unhappy with some policies of the NDA Government but it is unlikely to do anything to actively destabilise it... "There is no question of confrontation between the Government and the RSS", says BJP General Secretary, Govindacharya, a trusted RSS pracharak. ...

In a sense, the RSS is caught in a peculiar dilemma. The BJP has evolved from being an extension counter of Nagpur to an organisation whose appeal is far greater than the parent body... After the Chennai Declaration, the BJP, in fact, has taken steps to look for an identity beyond the RSS, despite the awareness that during elections it is the Sangh network that gives it organisational muscle. As things stand, both need each other, even if the relationship is mutually exploitative.

But if Sudarshan decides that ideology is supreme and Hindutva the millennium theme, he could alter the terms of engagement. That would spell big trouble for the Vajpayee Government.

(Source: The India Today, 27 March, 2000)

The Historical Record will Stand

Editorial, The Statesman, 19 February, 2000

Cultural policing, intellectual censorship – this is the world on offer from the BJP and its Parivar. The decision of the ICHR authorities – packed with saffron sympathisers – to suspend publication of Sumit Sarkar and K.N. Panikkar's volumes in the "Towards Freedom" series is an ominous sign of what could happen in an India governed by the BJP, unrestrained by the compulsions of coalition politics... The ICHR authorities claim that volumes by P.S. Gupta and Basudev Chatterjee have belittled the role of the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha and highlighted the role of Communists in the nationalist movement... Charges of deliberate falsification are contemptible, especially when they come from people with an avowed agenda of rewriting history with a narrow, sectarian politico-cultural focus.

(Contd. on Page 228)

D.R. Goyal

On RSS as a Political Organisation

... Post-Independence, the RSS hoped to be invited to participate in government... The hope died with the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi... So intense was the public outrage against it that open political activity was just out of the question.

... It, therefore, took recourse to launching a political party which could defend the RSS in the political sphere and, simultaneously, build public sympathy for its ideology. S.P. Mookerjee's exit from Nehru's Cabinet provided the opportunity. The RSS needed a publicly-known personality; and Mookerjee was looking for an organisation. So was set up the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was kept under control through the network of organising secretaries who, according to its leader Balraj Madhok, were all RSS pracharaks, paid by the RSS and answerable only to it.

Over time, the RSS cadres attached to Mookerjee learnt the ways of politics and emerged as public figures. And yet they never developed the confidence to snap the umbilical cord that tied them to the RSS...

At the founding conference in Bombay, the BJP adopted a public posture that made its ideology look different from the RSS. The camouflage did not bring the expected political dividends in the 1984 elections and the party veered back to the old Jana Sangh ideology. It was not openly flaunted because the party did not want to lose the respectability it had found in the anti-Congress conglomerations.

The objective of the political formation has been to build and consolidate a separate Hindu political entity. Towards that end it had been adopting agendas calculated to widen the communal gulf. If it was the demand for a uniform civil code and abolition of Article 370 at one time (1951), it later became ban on cow-slaughter (1967) and revengeful demand for return of temples supposedly destroyed by Muslim rulers.

For creating popular hysteria, other RSS fronts like the Hindu Dharam Raksha Samiti (Ahmedabad, 1969), the Rashtriya Utsav Mandal and Shree Ram Tarun Mandal (Maharashtra, 1970), and Bajrang Dal (Moradabad, 1980) were floated... The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal have been quite prominent during the last two decades.

To deny that the RSS is a political organisation is to fly in the face of facts. The only difference from what we generally recognise as political parties is that it is neither democratic nor secular. American researcher Donald E. Smith had come to the conclusion: "Nehru once remarked that Hindu communalism was the Indian version of fascism, and, in the case of the RSS, it is not difficult to perceive certain similarities. The leader principle, the stress on militarism, the doctrine of racial-cultural superiority, ultra-nationalism infused with religious

Parivar and Prehistory
Editorial, The India Today

In recalling its order allowing state servants to join the RSS, the Gujarat Government may have bailed out its partner at the Centre. It has done nothing to bridge the distance between the Sangh Parivar and its substantial opponents. While the antagonistic reaction of political rivals of the BJP was expected, even lay people found the idea of the RSS mingling with the bureaucracy disagreeable. Indeed, if anything the episode has reinforced stereotypes about the RSS – a body devoted to recondite debate, not given to democracy and transparency and rigid to the point of extremes. The RSS often tells sections of society – religious minorities, Macaulay's children and other special-interest groups – to "join the national mainstream". It needs to ask itself if, in method and mindset, the RSS itself can claim to conform to contemporary India. The RSS' nationalism, sense of duty and love for India are unquestionable. It has to realise through that it cannot query the patriotism of fellow Indians either. The hour of shibboleths is over, the debate about, say, Partition is history. India has moved on. Why hasn't the RSS?

The RSS is at once an avowedly cultural and in practice political body. This is dualism at its most disingenuous. It is there for all to see when the RSS patently interferes in the working of the Government. It wants to veto appointments – the last-minute deletion of Jaswant Singh's name from the Union cabinet in March 1998 being the most infamous example – and manipulate policy. Its economic frontal bodies are, at best, promoting a swadeshi autarky that went out of fashion with Enver Hoxha's Albania. At worst, and which is sometimes more than likely, they are spokespersons for business lobbies. To promote specific aims but cloak them in moral rhetoric is not a stratagem that can work every day. It certainly didn't in Gujarat. The RSS knows why. The question is: what will it do about it?

(Contd. from Page 227)

The decision to "review" Sarkar and Panikkar's volumes is obviously a part of the saffron censorship agenda... Such gross, fascist behaviour is to be expected from the Sangh Parivar and assorted hangers-on.... That the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS kept aloof from the "Quit India" movement is a matter of historical record... This censorship is intolerable – and if the BJP's secular allies acquiesce in it, they will have reduced their share of power for a mess of pottage. □

idealism, the use of symbols of past greatness, the emphasis on national solidarity, the exclusion of religious or ethnic minorities from the nation-concept – all of those features of the RSS are highly reminiscent of fascist movements in Europe."

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 13 February, 2000)

Bharat Putra

On Gujarat's Draconian Law to Save Starving Cattle

... The law passed by the Gujarat Assembly ... banning cow slaughter in the State and bringing the violators of the law within the purview of the draconian Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Act (PASA) will soon enthuse other BJP governments. Whatever may be one's opinion on cow protection, the ... Patel Ministry must be complimented for the alacrity with which they implemented their pre-election promise to save the cows of the state. At this juncture, one can only wish that it would show similar enthusiasm to protect the interests of the poor people of the state also.

Before I go further on the subject, let me make it clear that I was brought up in a family which considered beef loathsome. My mother never touched it even with a barge pole. Nor did my grandparents with whom I lived during the formative period of my life. Thus on my first visit to a European country, it was natural for me to order chicken or mutton, instead of beef. But a fellow visitor, who styles himself as an ideologue of the BJP and who once wrote a stinging article demanding removal of a mechanised abattoir in Andhra Pradesh, was always found savouring different varieties of beef. I had another experience of attending a party with a journalist of similar persuasion. On offer was fried beef, which the journalist first refused on grounds of religion. But as temptation grew, he had a taste of it, only to ask for more and more. So much for his religiosity! I personally believe that a person should not be judged by his food habits, which are dependent on a host of factors...

In Nagaland, dog's meat is considered a delicacy. In a restaurant in Beijing, I was shown a live reptile, which could be on my table after 15 minutes or so, if only I had ordered it. In Bihar, the Musahars, one of the lowest castes, are known as rat-eaters. I personally know a cat-eater. It is futile to make value judgements. In Mongolia, where the temperature often dips to 40 degrees at night, the people cannot be expected to survive on rice and dal. They need meat...

Let us come back to the Gujarat Assembly. The House witnessed uproarious scenes when members cutting across party affiliations flayed the government for doing nothing to prevent 886 cattle, including 133 sacred cows, starving to death at Virpur, a village not very far from Gandhinagar...

... (A) discriminatory attitude is manifest in the Gujarat law. While the butcher, who puts a cow or its progeny on the chopping block, will be held under PASA, the one who sold the animal to him and made money will not be touched. With the ban imposed on cow slaughter, thousands of cows, which have crossed the productivity stage, will be rendered "destitute" in the state. How many of their owners will provide them with fodder and water when they won't get anything in return from the animals except cowdung? Can the state government look after

thousands of "orphaned" cows? Will the government use the provisions of PASA against those who starve the cows to death? ...

For the RSS, the cow has been an article of faith. Writes Walter K. Andersen and Shridhar D. Damle in *The Brotherhood in Saffron*, "Golwalkar's personal involvement in the late 1952 agitation against cow slaughter gave the RSS a chance to influence the Hindu religious establishment as well as to build up its popular support. At the grassroots level, the agitation depended heavily on RSS volunteers who were largely responsible for the collection of signatures petitioning the President of India to ban cow slaughter... The involvement in the anti-slaughter agitation boosted RSS morale and demonstrated to the membership that the organisation had the capacity for mass action". (Page 112)

The Indian Penal Code stipulates under Section 295 that "whoever destroys, damages or defiles any place of worship, or any object held sacred by a class of persons, with the intention thereby of insulting the religion of any class of persons, or with the knowledge that any class of persons is likely to consider such destruction, damage or defilement as an insult to their religion, shall be punished by imprisonment." But in 1888, the High Court of the Northwestern Provinces decreed that a cow was not a sacred object. Six years earlier, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, founder of the Arya Samaj, formed the first Gaorakshini Sabha in the Punjab (Making India Hindu, Oxford, Page 216). Hindu communal elements used the symbol of Mother Cow to unite Hindus causing riots at times. "The riots occurred in such far-flung cities as Bombay and Rangoon, and so Cow Protection should not be seen as a strictly North Indian phenomenon. But the heart of the movement lay in the Bhojpuri region overlapping eastern UP and Bihar... By reinforcing the value system of the twice-born Hindus, the movement also underscored certain traditional social schisms, setting up all those outside this cultural system – such as Muslims, Chamars and Christians – as targets"...

... Rafiq Zakaria hits the nail on the head when he says that the real reason for their objection lies in the Hindu animosity towards Muslims rather than their reverence for the cow...

At the level of the common Hindu, there is a general misconception that Muslims slaughter cows, which are sacred to them. There is no basis for it; even under Muslim rule, often the slaughter of cows, in deference to the religious sentiments of the Hindus, was banned. Moreover, there is no religious obligation to eat beef...

But the same cannot be said about the Hindu religion as Modhumita Mojumdar has rightly pointed out, "They conveniently forget the fact that the men who gave us the most ancient texts which the Hindu claims as the precious heritage – the four Vedas – were beef-eaters themselves

COW PROTECTION

and made no bones about it. This demand, therefore, is not intended as a tribute to our Aryan ancestors but designed to turn secular India into a Hindu Rashtra where, even in the choice of food, the minority communities will be unable to exercise their options, but shall be coerced to comply with the fads of the Saffron Brigade."

The only reason for Muslims to opt for beef is its cheaper price; poor Muslims find it more economical than mutton...

In *Missionaries in India* (ASP), Arun Shourie rationalises worshipping of cows "as the entry-point from which to develop reverence for all animal life" (Page 52). Vishal Mangalwadi in his *Letters to a Postmodern Hindu* (Good Books, pp. 552, Rs.225) asks Shourie, "Can you provide a single piece of evidence from traditional Hinduism for this modern justification? Few societies ill-treat animals more than ours"... Mangalwadi concludes, "When we worship cows, we make ourselves incapable of exercising our dominion over them, of manipulating and improving their breed". ...

How did the veneration of cow begin, particularly when during the Vedic period, even Brahmins ate beef? It, most probably, was a clever device to prevent people from eating cows during droughts and famines. If they ate up their cows, they would then not have any oxen. In the absence of oxen, agriculture would become so much harder when the rains did return. The cow was deified in an era when a law enforcing machinery did not exist...

Statistics ... prove that India's cattle strength is beyond what the country's biosphere can accommodate. "Cows that are abandoned by the owners are left to roam around, unattended. The streets of every city and town in the country are witness to cows wandering at will amidst the traffic and eating at garbage dumps. The plastic bags they ingest as a result can sometimes cause painful deaths", editorialises the Indian Express (March 31). This is known to the Gujarat rulers. They also know that there is no better stick to beat the minorities with than the humble cow. Hence the PASA.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 9 April, 2000)

Sangh Parivar Unloads Cattle

Activists of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal, the RSS and, interestingly, the Youth Congress, (23 October, 1999) forced the administration to agree to their demand for unloading 624 bullocks at the Jalandhar Cantt. Station from a train bound for West Bengal. Even as railway officials claimed they were being transported after fulfilling all legal procedures, the district administration said the step was taken only to prevent a law and order problem... After the permission to unload was granted, a motley group of Sangh Parivar activists and others took it upon themselves to carry out the task...

After off loading the cattle, they proceeded to the railway station and blocked a passenger train...

(Source: The Indian Express, 25 October, 1999)

With Best Compliments
from

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

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

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

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

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

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

Now RSS Targets Sikh Brothers Editorial, The Statesman, 13 April, 2000

The RSS has targetted Punjab as the next state to extend (its) base... The one state in the north which had eluded (it) so far... Punjabi Hindus, particularly those who suffered during partition, are a natural base for the RSS to extend its anti-Muslim bias. But the Sikhs see themselves as a separate community... To increase (its) potential vote-bank, last year the Sangh expanded the term Hindu to include Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. Of these, Sikhs hold a dominating position in Punjab and constitute a large minority in Delhi and other states. Using the tri-centenary of the Khalsa Panth, (it) has been actively engaged in organising celebrations. To bring Sikhs under the Hindu umbrella, the RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan has been propagating the idea that the community was a warrior race created to protect the Hindu religion.

The reaction from the Sikh community however is not favourable. Leading Sikh institutions see it as an attempt to subvert Sikh culture and identity and to impose a hegemonistic agenda on the community. The RSS on its part has set up a Rashtriya Sikh Sangat which projects the Khalsa Order as a sect of Hinduism. It argues that the Sikh gurus are descendants of Luv and Kush, sons of Ram. Sudarshan has equated Guru Govind Singh with Hedgewar the founder of the RSS... Sikh religious leaders are even more annoyed at the "distorted" verses of Guru Govind Singh and the attempt to lure Sikh youths to RSS shakhas. The Sikhs ... cherish their separate identity. They will not brook any nonsense. If the RSS hopes to rope them into their Hindutva agenda using the "Sikhs are Hindus first" argument, they will find the exercise self-defeating.

Parsi Migration to India

When we were kicked out of Persia by the Arabs thirteen hundred years ago... We got into boats and sailed to India... Our forefathers were not given even permission to disembark!... (They) waited for four days (in the boat) not knowing what was to become of them. Then, at last the Grand Vazir (of the local Raja) appeared on dock with a glass of milk filled to the brim... It was polite message from the Prince, meaning, 'No, you are not welcome. My land is full and prosperous and we don't want outsiders with a different religion and alien ways to disturb the harmony... Our forefathers carefully stirred a teaspoon of sugar into the milk and sent it back'. The Prince understood what it meant: the refugees would get absorbed in the country like the sugar in milk. And with their decency and industry sweeten the lives of his subjects.

The ... Prince ... gave our ancestors permission to live in his kingdom...

- Bapsi Sidhwa: *Ice-Candy Man*

(Source: The Organiser, 10 April, 2000)

Vananchal Will not End Tribal Discontent Carve Tribal Majority State out of Bihar, Orissa & MP and Create Santhalisatan

Insaf Morcha Convener's Statement, 5 April, 2000

"The creation of proposed Vananchal (Jharkhand) State consisting of 18 districts of Bihar will not serve the real interests and legitimate aspirations of the tribal people of Chhota Nagpur for two basic reasons:

- 1) In the proposed State, the tribal population will be only 30% of the total population and, therefore, the State shall be controlled by the non-tribal people.
- 2) The tribal people of contiguous areas in Orissa and MP shall be left out.

I have studied the pattern of distribution of tribal population in this area.

I find that in Bihar, only the districts of Lohardaga, Gumla, Ranchi and W. Singhbhum have a tribal majority along with some contiguous tribal majority blocks of neighbouring districts E. Singhbhum and Palamau. They should form the core of the tribal state. The final delimitation of the boundary can be close with revenue villages as the unit on the basis of contiguity and tribal majority. The adjacent tribal majority areas of Orissa [the whole or part of districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh and Sambalpur] and MP [the whole or part of Raigarh and Surguja] should form part of the proposed State, alongwith contiguous tribal areas of W. Bengal.

There is another tribal pocket in Bihar consisting of Rajmahal district with contiguous tribal majority blocks in Dumka and Godda. This is largely a Santhal area. There is no physical continuity between the two tribal pockets of Bihar. Also their ethnic character is different. Therefore, Santhalistan may form a Scheduled Area within Bihar.

In sum, Insaf Morcha proposes:

- 1) **Establishment of a tribal-majority State, carved out of Bihar, Orissa, MP and W. Bengal.**
- 2) **Establishment of a Scheduled Area for Santhals in Eastern Bihar.**

Both the units should be delimited on the principles of tribal majority and contiguity and revenue village as the unit, beginning with districts, adding contiguous blocks and then revenue villages of tribal majority.

It is possible that some non-tribal majority blocks or villages may be included, if they are embedded within tribal majority area and excluded, if they are on the border and not completely surrounded by the tribal units.

Such reorganisation alone will quench the fire of discontent in the tribal areas. It will make the tribals masters of their land and its resources, give them the authority to utilise their income and central allocations for their development according to their priorities.

Will Talibanisation of Pakistan Pave Way for Saffronisation of India?

Aijaz Ahmad on Possible Rationale Behind India's Hard Line

... Indian national interest requires that we not help create a situation where the Far Right takes over in Pakistan. Towards that end, India must deal with Musharraf not as a General but as the only leader that country currently has, just as Pakistan must deal with Vajpayee as the Prime Minister of India regardless of his life-long RSS credentials.

Why has India then adopted a posture where we insist that nothing but bilateral talks would solve the problem but also insist that we shall not talk until after Pakistan returns what we call PoK and they call "Azad Kashmir"? Why is the Indian Defence Minister expounding a doctrine of "limited war" directly in relation to Pakistan, if not to hold out the threat that India now reserves the right to send its troops across the Line of Control (LoC)? And why is Vajpayee so keen to deploy his characteristically cynical double-speak where he says in one breath that Indian nuclear policy abjures the right of the first strike and says, in the very next breath, that India is "not going to wait"?

These men are neither inexperienced nor dim-witted. Where, then, lies the method in this madness? First, our rulers are yet to overcome the delirium caused by the Pokhran lunacy... Second, we are more or less intoxicated now on the prospect of a "strategic relationship" with the U.S., hoping that the messiah shall bring hard cash and help us bully our neighbours, quite forgetting that the plight that Pakistan is in today is in considerable measure a product of the "strategic relationship" that Pakistan used to have with that same country. We wish to be where Pakistan was until quite recently, unmindful of the fact that in consequence of this change of roles we shall one day be where Pakistan is today. The hope in India, before the rise of the RSS to power, was that Pakistan, authoritarian at home and a U.S. client in foreign relations, shall one day follow in the footsteps of a non-aligned and democratic India; the result of the RSS coming to power is that India is following in the footsteps of Pakistan, authoritarian at home and begging the sole superpower for a smile and a wink.

Third, though, behind this show of cockiness there is also a real panic. Even in the dead of winter the insurgents have struck with great impunity at any target in Kashmir or Jammu that they have chosen; what will happen when summer comes? ... The panic, combined with the intoxication on the prospect of hosting Clinton, expresses itself in the swagger, the rhetoric, the threat of crossing the LoC, teaching Pakistan a lesson, dropping a nuclear bomb, if necessary.

Fourth, the bluster is meant to conceal the reality of

extraordinary diplomatic isolation on the core question of Kashmir which we are unwilling to acknowledge. The Western countries ... do not approve of Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism or its deployment of its own troops beyond the LoC. Those same powers, though, regard Kashmir as a "disputed territory" and, even more significantly, are not willing to brand all Pakistani involvement in Kashmir as "terrorism". They wish to restrain Pakistan in some important ways but they also want India to respond; hence the emphasis on "bilateral talks" but also, as high up as Clinton himself, the offer to "mediate" - "if asked". Has the mediation actually begun... The line between "mediation" and "consultation" is always thin...

This problem is compounded by India's even greater isolation in the very environment in which Pakistan lives and where India once had much greater presence and influence, namely the so-called "Islamic World"... The Indian State finds it difficult enough to represent the generality of Indian Muslims at home (except its own clients among them). It does not even try to represent them abroad, except in such politically inconsequential matters as arranging for the pilgrimage to Mecca. Pakistan does live within its own environment ... we now have very little relationship with that world... Our delusions of grandeur conceal from us how isolated we actually are in the world of Asia, and therefore in the world of small and medium-scale powers in the world that we, objectively, share with Pakistan.

... Against whom is this "strategic partnership" of India with the U.S. being forged? ... Who is the enemy in Asia, for NATO, but then also for India?

The real method behind New Delhi's move to a hard line on all issues pertaining to Pakistan may actually lie elsewhere: in the calculation that a Pakistan ruled by Islamic extremists would in fact help the RSS build the kind of a National Security State of the Hindu Right that it aims to do and to emerge as the U.S.' great ally in the containment of "fundamentalism" - implicitly a counterweight against China as well. Full-scale Islamisation of Pakistan is thus expected to make the saffronisation of India that much easier. Jehadi groups becoming the official paramilitary units of the state in Pakistan would help further justify the integration of the Indian police forces with the RSS and the emergence of the Bajrang Dal as the Patriotic Youth of India, so certified by the state itself.

Foreign policy thus emerges yet again as an extension

(Contd. on Page 236)

PIPPFD: Statement 27 March, 2000

The Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy strongly condemns the wanton and motivated killing of 36 Sikh civilians... Killing innocent civilians is the worst form of terrorism and it cannot be justified...

Such acts of violent terror ... expose the tragic futility of the state's obsessive emphasis on military means to tackle political problems. It reinforces the urgent need for civil society to reassert the primacy of the democratic politics of engagement and dialogue so as to wrest back the terrain from the forces of terror who know no other language than violence... It is ... imperative that the democratic peoples of India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir from both sides of the LoC, should together pressurise the governments of India and Pakistan to immediately declare cease-fire and rein in the armed forces... (and) to resume a political dialogue...

The Forum believes a cease-fire by all armed actors, state and non-state, is an essential precondition for the free ... participation by the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir in a sustainable peace process. (Source: The Mainstream)

Joint Statement of Indo-Pakistan Women's Solidarity Conference (Extracts), 29 March, 2000

... The Conference ...urges both governments to end the rhetoric of violence and suppression...

This Conference demands an end to violence against women, be it on cultural, political or economic grounds...

This group is convinced that in order to restore ... there is an urgent need for confidence building... To achieve this, several steps need to be taken. Among them are:

- Intolerant militant forces in India and Pakistan have to be marginalised and the Governments of Pakistan and India urged to remove all Government patronage to such forces.
- The arms race and nuclearisation of the sub-continent must come to an end...
- All educational curricula must be purged of inaccuracies, biases and prejudices...
- Visa restrictions for travel to India and Pakistan should be removed...

... This Conference demands the establishment of a South Asian Human Rights Court where individuals who fail to get justice within their domestic jurisdiction can seek redress from this regional institution. India and Pakistan should immediately start a dialogue leading to the signing of a bilateral treaty of peace...

This Conference pledges to make peace a reality in the sub-continent... (Source: The Mainstream, 8 April, 2000)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Times of India, 30 March, 2000

Reading through N.S. Sarila's article on "Islamabad's Illusions" (25 March), one feels a sense of 'deja vu'. During the freedom movement, a section of our leadership never tired of pointing out the presence of Afghan, Iran and Turkey to our West, ready to cross the Khyber Pass at the behest of the Muslims in the Sub-continent. At the end of the century, we once again see Pakistan spearheading a Jihad against India with the support of the militants in the Muslim world.

By having a longer-than-life misperception of Pakistan's strength and ambition, we only succeed in distorting our own vision of the future. In a way, we thus prepare the ground for withdrawing from our responsibilities as the strongest, the most advanced and the most progressive State in the Sub-continent and for nurturing the seeds of authoritarianism in our own country.

Pakistan is no match for us, USA, China and the Islamic world will not back Pakistan in a show-down with us - not even Iran or Saudi Arabia. Pakistan, even by diverting all its budget to the ISI, cannot wreck or dismember us. Pakistan is, no doubt, obsessed with a limited objective - of completing what it calls 'the unfinished business of partition' by annexing the State of J&K, at least the Valley. Can it do so by force, at the point of the gun? Will the Kashmiris like the Valley to be turned into a cinder, a devastated landscape?

Sarila speaks of the Pakistan rulers' belief that Indian leaders can be 'correct'. Into what, one may ask? Surrender the country to Pakistan? Accept restoration of Muslim rule in the Sub-continent?

So the thinking that Kashmir problem is a symptom, not the disease needs to be discarded. This is a diversion. We should at least, make an earnest, sincere effort to find a solution which gives something to all the three parties concerned, in the larger interest of all the people of the Sub-continent in the context of a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the two States.

Destiny is knocking at our door. As the bigger of the two brothers we cannot escape our duty and responsibility. Time has become for India and Pakistan to turn a new leaf, purging ourselves of our illusions and frustrations and, what is more important, of all our complexes inherited from the dead past.

The Kashmir issue is perhaps the most dangerous one in the world today because you have got two nuclear powers here who are somewhat uncertain about one another.

- Bill Clinton, US President

Redefining Hitler Gujarat Textbooks Glorify Fascism Editorial, The Statesman, 9 April, 2000

Children all over India are taught the virtues of democracy and the dangers of fascism and Nazism — except those in Gujarat... The textbooks are silent on the violent treatment of minorities and ethnic cleansing... Hitler is described as a nationalist who lent dignity and prestige to the German government. The holocaust is described merely as opposition to the Jewish people. The RSS has always admired Hitler so much so that their ideologue Golwalkar advocated copying Hitler's policy towards Jews in India with reference to non-Hindus to create a strong Hindu "rashtra". It is not surprising then that an opportunity has been grasped to influence textbooks. The Sangh Parivar has defined fascism as an ideology to be admired and emulated.

... Apart from the redefinition of fascism, Nazism and secularism, the RSS aims to wipe out the negative image of the Sangh, particularly its non-cooperation in the freedom struggle and Nathuram Godse's links with their organisation. These are the two millstones around its neck that the RSS would like to shed. Another change is to deny the role of Mughal rule in the evolution of the country. Muslim rulers are referred to as temple-razing barbarians... Rajput rulers are glorified as patriots and their treachery ignored... The RSS want to brainwash children. If this dangerous trend is not checked quickly and reversed, the next generation may consider Hitler a freedom fighter and the Mahatma, a coward.

Admission Procedure for Minority Colleges AP: Government's G.O.Ms. No. 1 of 3.1.2000

The G.O. stipulates that:

- Along with the concerned colleges the application forms should also be made available through the concerned Commissionerates/Directorates and State Council of Higher Education.
- The list of those who have applied should be published by the college along with the merit list.
- Except in case of Muslims and Christians bearing popular Christian names or showing baptism certificates, and candidates from other religious linguistic minority should produce a certificate from the M.R.O.
- After the cut off date, all the-unfilled seats should be surrendered by the society to the concerned convenor of admissions.
- All fees should be taken by cheque draft only.

Harbans Mukhia On Language of Demolition

... History has forever been viewed as a clash of civilisations, of religions, of nations, of classes...

The tradition of looking at history in India in terms of conflict of religions and sects goes back to hoary days within the fold of the Hindu religion, between the Vaishnavites and the Saivites; between the Hindus and the Jains and the Buddhists; between Brahminical Hinduism and ethnic groups, derisively referred to as the dasyus, and so forth.

In India's medieval centuries, one important construction of history was in terms of conflict between Islam and kufr. The innumerable instances of the demolition of Buddhist viharas by Hindu rulers, in some cases of Hindu temples by Hindu rulers themselves even within their own territory, of temples by Muslim rulers, of mosques by some local level Hindu rulers — all these, on one hand, reflect the assertion of state power by the rulers in the form of their religious identity, and on the other, their search for legitimisation in a vision of history.

As a people with history, therefore, we should not be taken by surprise at instances of this nature in any part of our remote past, for this was its language. The problem, however, arises from our assumption that this was the past's only language, that the state did nothing else except demolish (places of worship) and subjugate people of other faiths to its own, that historians never viewed history except as interminable religious clashes organised by the state. It is thus that just about any testimony, textual or archaeological, bearing upon history is immediately constructed as a proof of the state's religious intolerance.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 19 March, 2000)

Razia Sultan's Grave in Decay

Outside the yellowing pages of history, the first and the only women to reign over Delhi as Sultan is a forgotten figure. So are the tales of her valour and the heroic battle she fought against her brother who murdered and dethroned her.

Little wonder that a few remember ... Sultan Razia's mausoleum at Bhojla-ki-Pahari. It's now an easy prey for encroachers, who have hung ugly plastic sheets around the ... monument and turned it into an urban ghetto.

The place ... is (in) the heart of old Delhi ... in the dingy cat-alleyes of the Pahari, behind the Turkman Gate.

... The tomb has been co-opted by the locals as an extension of their residential area — a kind of place to offer prayer next-door... The tomb has unpretentious architecture with an enclosure on a central platform. It has two graves, but the identity of the second is not known...

The young Imam from Samastipur was out, his brother Abdul Kalam ... in all innocence blurted out that they have covered up the tomb with plastic sheets recently after they started living inside the tomb.

(Source: Santwana Bhattacharya in The Indian Express, 7 Feb., 2000)

Do Not Identity Islam with Terrorism Shahabuddin's Letter to Hari Sharan Chhabra, 28 March, 2000

In the issue of World Focus for January, 2000, Shri D.R. Goyal has written on what he calls "Islamic Terrorism". Shri Goyal has largely castigated the West, particularly the USA, for raising the sceptre but has swallowed their designating it as 'Islamic'. Just as there cannot be an Islamic Bomb or a Hindu Bomb, there cannot be an Islamic or Hindu terrorism. The Bombs have no religion nor ideology; The terrorists have no religion; they may exploit religious sentiments just as the VHP did in India in mobilising Karsevaks to demolish the Babari Masjid – an act of terrorism per excellence. But can we or should we call it an act of Hindu Terrorism. In any case the Serb-terrorists were not called Orthodox or Christian Terrorists. Nor are Latin American terrorists called Catholic Terrorists. Nor are Irish terrorist designated as such. There are innumerable examples.

Pakistan is training and arming terrorists into Kashmir but that does make them Islamic terrorist. They may be Afghans, Pakistanis, Kashmiris etc. and they may flaunt their religion but one should not make the mistake of taking them on their self-defined terms.

My short point is that equating terrorism with a particular religion casts an untenable aspersion all those who follow a particular religion, humiliates and alienates them. That would be totally unwarranted. Do the terrorists in Kashmir enjoy any sympathy among the Muslim Indians. But if you call them 'Islamic terrorists', are you, by inference suggesting that those terrorists are acting on their behalf and enjoy their sympathy? And if you do, doesn't this provide wind for the sails of Hindu Rashtravad?

Russian Secret Police Behind "Chechenya Terrorism"

Russian leader Vladimir Putin's line (is) that Chechen terrorists were responsible for the explosions that killed more than 200 Russians (in 1999). Two bombs went off in Moscow, but a third bomb planted in Ryazan, 100 miles south, was defused...

The third bomb did not go off because the bombers were caught red-handed. They were Russian, not Chechen, and when they were arrested by local police they flashed identity cards from the FSB - the new styling for the KGB, the secret police Putin headed before he became Russia's acting President. Two days later the FSB announced that the third bomb had only been 'a training exercise'. The Kremlin's evidence that Chechen terrorists bombed Moscow is extremely thin. After the bomb outrages, secret police in the FSB handed out pictures of

UK: Islamic Human Rights Commission: Annual Report, 1999 (Extracts)

Current statutes, in particular the Race Relations Act, discriminate against Muslims. While the law in the UK protects two religious minorities (Jews and Sikhs) on the pretext that they can be defined as a race, other religions are left to suffer harassment and discrimination at the hands of xenophobes with no legal recourse. What is significant is that there are examples of selective bigotry, where the perpetrators deliberately target Muslim groups...

A clever xenophobe will know that, if he wishes to attack someone and not risk an increased sentence, he is better off to pick on a Muslim than a Sikh, and abuse his victim as a Muslim rather than as a Paki. Likewise it is better for the bigoted arsonist to burn down a Mosque rather than a Synagogue or a Gurdwara... After 2 October 2000 ... once the Human Rights Act 1998 comes into force Muslims will be able to rely on Article 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights to protect themselves against religious discrimination, but only so far as that discrimination relates to their rights under the Convention.

Therefore schools can no longer exclude students for wearing a headscarf or growing a beard, as that would be contrary to Article 9 (Freedom of Religion) and Article 2 Protocol 1 (The Right to an Education). However, an employer could still have a policy of not employing Muslims, as there is no right to employment under the Convention. The convention will not, however, solve the fundamental flaws in U.K. law as it stands. It will merely ... create needless litigation which will overburden the Court System... It is likely if no laws are brought in to end religious discrimination that both the Courts and the Home Secretary will be very busy... Experience shows that some Learned Judges will find a host of intellectually dishonest methods to ensure that the Convention rights will not be applicable in relation to Muslims... Religious minorities (will continue to) feel that they are second class citizens in the UK... □

unnamed Chechens. No suspects were arrested and no convincing explanation was given to the public.

The third bomb was found in the basement of the flats on the night of 22 September at around 9 pm...

The local police arrested two men... They showed FSB identity cards.' Then, the headquarters of the FSB in Moscow intervened, the two men were quietly let go.

The following day, on 24 September, the FSB, Moscow announced that there had never been a bomb, only a training exercise. (A resident) said: 'I heard the official version on the radio... It felt extremely unpleasant'. □

Amir Taheri

On Religion and National Culture in Iran

Stalin ... and others like him, were prompted by a hubris that made them to perceive society as a blank sheet of paper on which they could draw whatever mad design came into their minds. The original leaders of the French Revolutions hated that illusion. They decided to "cancel the whole of human history and introduced a new calendar, which began with the year zero. Needless to say, they ended up headless after a brief encounter with the very guillotine that they had installed at what is now the Concorde Square in Paris.

The hubris of trying to reshape an entire society at will is a disease of all those who have lost faith in humanity ... all spoke of "a second creation"; as if the first creation had been nothing but a draft for their imagined masterpiece.

In every case, a single concept is magnified into a monster of monistic mania and used as a means of destroying society. The concept chosen by the leaders of the French Revolution was "la nation" (the nation). Lenin and Stalin used the concept of "proletariat". Hitler used the concept of "race". Mao Zedong's favoured concept was "the people". Khomeini, for his part used "Islam" as the abstract concept to use as a weapon against the people.

The entire exercise represents the most corrupt version of Platonic idealism imaginable. The "Ideal" is built as an enemy of the "Real", with the assumption that the latter must ultimately submit to the former. The problem is that the "Ideal" must be pure; it must be self-contained and exclusive. Reality is never like that. Reality is impure, complex and inclusive.

When the French Revolution came, most inhabitants of France did have a vague notion of belonging to a French entity. But there was no French nation in the sense intended by the party of the guillotine. The attempt at imposing the "Ideal" on reality provoked revolts on the part of the latter. In the city of Lyon alone the French revolutionaries killed almost 100,000 people in a week. The massacre of the peasants in Vandee by the French revolutionaries is one of the darkest chapters of human history.

The concept of "proletariat" produced similar disastrous results. First invented by Feuerbach, it was turned into a phantasmagoria passe-partout of pseudo-philosophy by Marx and Engels. Lenin and Stalin transformed it into the engine of a diabolical state machine. The two dictators could not understand that man cannot be reduced to a single aspect of his existence.

Hitler, for his part, believed that being German

required being Aryan, an artificial and largely meaningless word invented by philologists for entirely different purposes. He feigned to ignore the fact that the German state, created in 1866 was a largely Jewish project, designed by Jewish intellectuals and politicians and financed by Jewish capitalists. The Jews also enjoyed an overwhelming presence in the German literary, scientific and artistic elite. Francois Poncet was not wide off the mark when he claimed that Germany, as created by Bismarck, had been a largely Jewish project.

Khomeini used his ... version of Islam as the "Ideal" he needed in his attempts at destroying reality. He could not understand that a man could be both a pious Muslim and a patriotic Iranian... He saw man as a one-dimensional being...

Now-Ruz ... survived Khomeini's assault. And there is already much talk of restoring the lion and the scimitar as the symbol of the Iranian state. Reality always wins. Reality is never partial and exclusive. As Iranian families gather together to celebrate Now-Ruz, a copy of the Holy Quran is given pride of place on the beautifully decorated table where the symbols of the Iranian existence are laid out. Non-Muslim Iranians will, of course, give their own holy books pride of place. **In other words, culture does not exclude faith. And faith should not be used to exclude culture either.**

The Khomeinists have begun to learn that Iran will forever be Iranian. The more militant anti-Khomeinists who confound Islam and Khomeinism, also have a lesson to learn. It is a simple one: Iran will forever be Islamic, also.

(Source: The Arab News, 19 February, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 232)

of domestic policy and the new-found bellicosity is directly related to a new political offensive at home, underwritten by the comfortable margin that the BJP-led Government commands in Parliament, the supine character of its allies and the utter disarray in all sections of the Opposition...

The radical shift in our posture towards Pakistan is part of this larger pattern. The "limited war" doctrine of George Fernandes is the other side of the gangs of self-appointed defenders of Indian culture at home... We intend not to resolve but to intensify the conflict, so as to institutionalise a permanent war psychosis which can be used to constitute a right-wing consensus at home... It is becoming difficult to say just where this politics of violence, hysteria and spectacle is taking the country...

(Source: The Frontline, 17 March, 2000)

A.M. Sameem on Muslims of Sri Lanka

... During the pre and post-Independence era, the Muslims gradually lost their hold on business. The passage of the Citizenship Act ... disfranchising the Indians, gave a severe blow to the business activities of the Indian Muslims. These Citizenship Acts were in part aimed at the Indian Muslim business community as well. There were also other causes for the downward trend in the activities of the Muslim businessmen, e.g. the relative backwardness in education and business methods in a changing society, non-adaptation to the modern pattern of trade, lack of facilities for capital formation or credit, non-provision of reserves by way of sound investments or savings and wasteful expenditure. The Muslims (were unable to meet) cut-throat competition (from aliens).

Even in the plantation sector the Muslims were losing ground. In 1952, the Muslims owned about 60,000 acres out of a total of 1.5 million acres and in 1966, they owned about 38,000 acres out of a total of nearly 900,000 acres in both cases they never exceeded more than 4 per cent of the total acreage... The Muslim ownership in agricultural lands in the Eastern Province received a severe blow by the colonization policy of the successive Governments after Independence. Muslim agricultural lands were taken over for colonization by the Sinhalese... Acquisition of the agricultural lands belonging to the Muslims in the Sammanturai area for sugarcane cultivation and for the 'Digawapi Vihara, greatly reduced the Muslim ownership...

But the greatest blow to Muslim ownership of land (was) the takeover of lands by the Government in 1972. The United Front Government which came to power in 1970, under Mrs. Bandaranaike, adopted a series of radical economic and social changes, the most far reaching were the Land Reform Act of 1972 and the Nationalisation of Plantations in 1975 and the state control in trade and industry... Measures, such as the ceiling on the ownership of house and property, the takeover of the export-import trade and the extension of the cooperative system in the sphere of local trade broke the backbone of the Muslim bourgeoisie which had been playing a dominant role in the political and economic activities of the community.

The overthrow of the nationalist bourgeois class in the post-independence era, began with the MEP Government of 1956, which was dominated by radical elements in the Sinhalese community. A series of legislations were passed by this Government which resulted in the nationalisation of transport and the port of Colombo, the establishment of the Cooperative Wholesale Establishment, the Sinhala - Only Act, undermined the economic and political power of this 'Mudalali' class as it was called in local jargon.

These measures marked the beginning of a process

of state control over the economy which came to be accelerated under the aegis of the S.L.F.P. in 1960 and after. Under Bandaranaike, the principle of planned economic development came to be accepted...

The S.L.F.P. Government of 1960, with Mrs. Bandaranaike as Prime Minister, wooed the Muslim community mainly through its educational policies. Badi-ud-din Mahmud a teacher by profession ... was appointed as the Education Minister. This government in its attempt to break the power of the national capitalist class which comprised the UNP, its arch rival, also broke the influence and power of the Muslim business community which had been supporting the UNP throughout. Badi-ud-din Mahmud as the Education Minister was ... responsible for the development of Muslim education. Muslim schools were opened in every Muslim village, and elementary Muslim schools were upgraded to the status of senior secondary schools and a large number of Muslims was recruited to the teaching profession. He also opened the way for Muslim women to enter the teaching profession. The Muslim teacher now began to exert his influence on the Muslim community...

Badi-ud-din Mahmud, in short, institutionalised the ideal of the teacher. He also created an Islamic sensibility among the Muslims. ... modern, future-oriented and nationalistic. (In the late) 1960s he organised the Muslims into a national political organisation as an important component of the political movement that finally overthrew the then government at the General Elections of 1970, and helped to form the United Front Government. The UF and in particular the SLFP had good reasons for elation for detaching a substantial section of the Muslims from their traditional links with the UNP into supporting the SLFP and the UF. This was masterminded by Mahmud... He was again given the crucial post of Minister of Education in the UF Government of 1970. In his hands this Cabinet post became at once a political base and a fountain of patronage, to be used to strengthen the ties, between his community and the party to which he belonged the SLFP. His success ... was by its very nature transient... His educational policy was one of the major points of divergence between the government and the Tamils. More significantly, by 1973 anti-Muslim sentiment was kindled among the Sinhalese by charges of favoured treatment of Muslims in the sphere of education. In 1974-75, there were sporadic Sinhalese-Muslim clashes in various parts of the Island, with a dangerous confrontation at Gampola in the last week of 1975... The clash in early 1976 at Puttalam, a Muslim stronghold in the north-west of the Island, was ... the worst episode of communal violence since the Sinhalese-Tamil riots of the

CHRONOLOGY

Apr).

Autonomy: *J&K Assembly take up discussion on Autonomy Report (8 Apr).

Pakistan: *President Tarar considers Kashmir 'crucial to Pakistan's survival' (23 Mar).

*Musharraf denies incitement for Jihad (24 Mar); reiterates call for dialogue; asks India to respond (27 Mar). F.S. of Pakistan denies territorial interest (29 Mar). F.M. Sattar raises issue in NAM Foreign Minister's Meeting at Cartagena (9 Apr). Musharraf calls Kashmir key to Indo-Pak normalisation (15 Apr).

India: *Fernandes expresses readiness for talks if Pakistan stops shelling across LoC (15 Apr).

UN: *UN Security Council's South Asia task Force ask India and Pakistan not to alter LoC by force (1 Apr).

Foreign Reaction - USA: *Clinton emphasises US interest in Kashmir (15 Apr).

OTHER MATTERS OF CONERN

AMU: *Executive Council recommends 5 names including present VC and former Ambassador M.H. Ansari (8 Apr). Court recommends to Visitor 3 names, including these two (10 Apr). VC claims full backing of Central Government for reappointment.

JMI: *Delhi Police enters Campus; ransacks hostel, beats up students, desecrates Masjid (9 Apr), 17 students hospitalised, 66 detained (10 Apr). Later released on bail. Congress and Muslim organisations condemn police action and demand judicial inquiry and compensation. VC denies giving permission to police; demands compensation.

Education: *Parliamentary Committee on HRD criticises NCERT's Discussion Document on School Curriculum on ideological grounds (29 Mar).

*Leading academicians criticise saffronisation of education and research institutions (13 Apr).

Communal Violence: *Tension and violence in Ahmedabad before and during Id-uz-Zuha. 1 man killed (18 Mar). Again violence erupts (20 Mar).

*Christian school attacked in Mathura (6 Apr). Another school attacked (10 Apr).

Wakf: *Rajasthan Wakf Board launches survey of Wakf properties (2 Apr).

Personal Law: *National Commission of Women releases report on status of Muslim women; proposes codification of family law, registration of all marriages and prior permission of first wife for second marriage (3 Apr).

*Centre proposes amendment to Hindu Succession Act to give property right to women in joint family.

Haj: *Haj charter return arrangement fails; stranded pilgrims face mounting delay due to non-availability of charter aircraft; PM intervenes; Shahabuddin demands inquiry in fixation of charter fare and collusion between Air India and the carrier.

Conversion: *VHP reiterates demand for national law against conversion (16 Mar).

*VHP 'reconverts' 50 tribals in W. Bengal (13 Apr).

Cow Protection: *Gujarat Assembly declares cow slaughter 'anti-social act' punishable under draconian PASA (29 Mar) while 70,000 cattle face starvation and thirst (23 Mar).

Rushdie's Visit: Salman Rushdie visits India. Lionised by the elite; faces hostile demonstration by Muslims & JD(S) (14 Apr).

Urdu: *Delhi Assembly adopts Bill recognising Urdu and Punjabi as Second Official Languages (3 Apr).

*A.P. Govt. notifies 8 more districts for official status of Urdu (30 Mar).

*Delhi Govt. celebrates Ghalib's birthday.

ISI: *Police claims breaking up ISI/Lashkar-e-Taiyaba ring in AP (7 Apr).

Assam Situation: *Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hind organises rally in Guwahati to protest against vilification and disfranchisement of Muslims; initiates formation of common platform of Muslim political groups (29 Mar).

*CM Mahanta maligns Muslim community because of stray cases of Muslim militancy (1 Apr). CM informs Assembly of ULFA's linkage with ISI (6 Apr).

Monuments: *Delhi passes Bill to protect historic monuments, not under ASI (29 Mar). Muslim members demand opening of Protected Masjids for Namaz.

Indo-Pakistan Relations: *India urges NAM to expel all militancy regimes (10 Apr).

*5th Convention of PIPFD, in Bangalore calls for peace talks (4 Apr).

Other Minorities: *Christians demand subsidy on travel to Holy land to mark 2000 years of Christ's birth (26 Mar).

*Sikhs holy book Granth Sahib declared 'juristic person' by Supreme Court (2 Apr).

Muslim World - Pakistan: President Clinton visits Pakistan and calls for stop to export of terrorism, respect of LoC, restoration of democracy and dialogue with India (21 Mar).

*Nawaz Sharif convicted and sentenced for life (6 Apr). Appeals against conviction (12 Apr).

*15 Shias shot dead in mosque near Islamabad (12 Apr).

Palestine: *Pope Paul II visits Holy land, supports Palestinian right to homeland (22 Mar).

Afghanistan: *UN Council condemns Afghanistan for training terrorists and threatens fresh sanctions (8 Apr).

Chechenya: *UNHRC visits Grozny, calls on Russia to investigate human rights violation by Russian forces (2 Apr). *Council of Europe suspends Russia.

Turkey: *PM Bulent Ecevit visits India (28 Mar) receives doctorate from Shantiniketan (2 Apr).

Obituary: *Eminent Shia scholar Zeeshan Haider Jawwadi passes away in Abu Dhabi (15 Apr).

Commemoration: *Seminar on Khwaja Hasan Nizami held in New Delhi on occasion of Urs (22 Mar).

*Government issues stamp to mark 125 years of foundation of Arya Samaj. PM calls on youth to follow Swami Dayanand's teachings (5 Apr).

کے۔ ایم۔ عارف الدین کی ادارت میں شائع ہونے والا ایک منفرد اردو ”روزنامہ“

حیدر آباد

ہمارا عوام

روزنامہ

☆ غیر جانبدار ☆ غیر جماعتی ☆ غیر وابستہ ☆ ایک مکمل اخبار ☆ تعلیمی تحریک کے دو کامیاب سال کی تکمیل ☆
اقلیتوں کی فلاح و بہبود، ملک و ملت کی بھلائی کیلئے وقف اردو کا واحد اخبار

”ملی مقاصد کو پورا کرنے والا آپ کا اپنا ترجمان“

حیدر آباد

ہمارا عوام

روزنامہ

ایک تعلیمی تحریک ہی نہیں بلکہ سیاسی، معاشی، تہذیبی، مذہبی، سماجی اور ثقافتی امور
کو جامع طور پر پیش کرنے والا جدید اخبار

روزنامہ ”عوام“ کے خریدار بن کر اس کی تعلیمی تحریک میں معاونت کریں

نڈر، بے باک، منفرد ”روزنامہ“ جو آج کے ضروری تقاضوں کو پورا کرتا ہے

پتہ:- 106-9-5 پبلک گارڈن روڈ حیدر آباد- 500 001 اے۔ پی۔ فون نمبر: 243428 فاکس نمبر: 040-2333553

MADINA EDUCATION & WELFARE SOCIETY

Himayatnagar, Hyderabad - 500 029 (AP)
Phone: 3221855/3222350

HOLDS UNDER ITS UMBRELLA 11 LANDMARK INSTITUTIONS

- MADINA PUBLIC SCHOOL
- MADINA JUNIOR COLLEGE FOR BOYS & GIRLS
- MADINA COMPUTER CAMPUS
- MADINA I.A.S. HOSTEL
- MADINA MEDICAL CENTRE
- MADINA HOUSE FOR FLOERS
- MADINA SUPER SCHOOL
- MADINA DEGREE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
- MADINA I.A.S. STUDY CIRCLE
- MADINA STUDENTS HOSTEL
- MADINA EDUCATION CENTRE

THE FUTURE OF A SELF-RELIANT COMMUNITY IS IN
EDUCATION. MADINA IS COMMITTED TO ATTAIN IT

By educating themselves to achieve the objectives of
ALL RINDS by working in THE FUTURE OF

EDUCATION. MADINA IS COMMITTED TO ATTAIN IT
By educating themselves to achieve the objectives of

ALL RINDS by working in THE FUTURE OF

EDUCATION. MADINA IS COMMITTED TO ATTAIN IT

By educating themselves to achieve the objectives of

ALL RINDS by working in THE FUTURE OF

EDUCATION. MADINA IS COMMITTED TO ATTAIN IT

By educating themselves to achieve the objectives of

ALL RINDS by working in THE FUTURE OF

PRESIDENT: KHUJA HANAFI KHAN

SECRETARY: ILM AMFODDIN