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For Survival of the Secular State: Electoral Strategy for General Election, 1999

On the eve of the General Election, 1999, it is frightening to note that with only 5% additional votes the Sangh Parivar will establish its ideological hegemony over our country and with a BJP Government as its effective instrument will be well poised to realise its ultimate objective of Hinduising the Indian Society.

In 1996, the RSS realised the BJP's electoral limitation and allowed the BJP in 1998 to adopt a new electoral strategy. The objective was to broaden its appeal, secure the support of the fence sitters and entice a section of the secular and liberal Hindu voters and even some Muslim voters to its fold. To this end, the BJP projected the humane face of Atal Behari Vajpayee, entered into alliances, adjustments and understanding with some regional parties. To secure the formation of a Government under its leadership, it put away its own Manifesto and it adopted a National Agenda of Governance excluding its highly controversial and blatantly communal commitments such as the construction of the Ram Janambhoomi Mandir on the site of the Babari Masjid, the introduction of Uniform Civil Code and the deletion of Article 370 which governs J&K's relationship with the Union.

The National Agenda was a calculated exercise in deceit, to induce even those parties (or to provide an excuse to them) which had contested the 1998 election against the BJP such as the TDP and the J&K NC to support its Government. Once secure in power, the BJP-led Government has silently and discreetly provided protective umbrella under which the RSS has flourished and carried on its mission with impunity, especially in the BJP-ruled States.

BJP's Electoral Strategy

Unfortunately for them, the Vajpayee Government fell and the country is facing another general election, the third in 3 years. But the RSS has not given up. Indeed its appetite for power has been whetted. Today it is busy sharpening its strategy to secure a majority in the Lok Sabha and enter confidently upon a full term in office. The RSS plans to penetrate the administrative machinery, infiltrate into the coercive and intelligence apparatus of the State, even the defence and paramilitary forces occupy the strategic points in the power structure and generally utilise state resources to reward its friends. Only future will tell whether they shall allow themselves to be dislodged, once established in power.

Critical Targets

The critical targets in the RSS-BJP's electoral strategy are the secular parties and the Muslim voters. If the secular parties are united and jointly give a one-to-one fight to the BJP, its score will be down to 50. And the Muslim-concentration constituencies (about 100) will be out of its reach, if the Muslim vote unitedly and massively for **one** winnable candidate of a secular party.

So the BJP has to use every trick in the trade to break the unity of the secular forces and particularly to scatter

votes in Muslim-concentration constituencies.

Since the BJP and its allies will not put up Muslim candidates, the **first trick** is to finance anyone with a Muslim name who is prepared to contest as an independent so that he may drain away a few thousand Muslim votes; **Secondly**, they will finance small local parties which have some influence among those Hindu castes which are not inclined towards the BJP; **Thirdly**, the BJP which does not lack financial resources; will open its money bags to secure the services of its moles in the secular parties and its agents in the Muslim community to create confusion and misunderstanding so that they may never come together.

But, apart from these underhand methods, the BJP will also launch a P.R. campaign to persuade the liberal and secular voters, and specially the Muslim voters, to give it the additional 5% votes it needs to come to power.

BJP's P.R Campaign

Today, the BJP is no longer politically untouchable as it was in 1996. This year, it has already formed a pre-electoral alliance. It has found a new friend in Karunanidhi who no longer finds BJP communal. It may yet persuade Chandra Babu Naidu and Farooq Abdullah to join its caravan and extol its virtues. With Assam's Prafulla Mahanta, West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee and Akali Dal's P.S. Badal, it already has an understanding.

Erosion of Secular Values

To the common voter, the line of separation between secularism and communalism has all but vanished. The people question how can a party, or a leader, be communal one day and secular the next day or vice versa. The erosion of secular credentials helps the BJP.

Over the years, the concept of secularism has itself undergone saffronisation. The confrontation with Pakistan over Kashmir has forced even the Left to adopt a 'nationalist' posture and the ultimate effect is apathy towards the Muslim Indians, the hesitation to defend their legitimate interests and the omission to articulate their grievances and a shift from secularism towards Hindutva. Every party asks itself how many Hindu votes will it lose, if it supports a Muslim cause? It also asks often. Whether it should put up a Muslim candidate and if so, how many of its votes it will be able to deliver to its Muslim candidate?

By creating a communal environment, the BJP has managed to ensure that there are not many Muslim candidates in the field and those who are audacious enough to enter the field are defeated. **So it is not worried about Muslims playing a role in government formation or reaching responsible positions.** Its concern is limited to Muslim voting. Preferably he should not vote but if he votes, he should scatter his vote among several candidates so that the real adversary of the BJP does not get the full backing of the Muslim electorate. And finally, why do not some vote for the BJP?

So, a vital element in its electoral strategy is to 'soften' the Muslim voter. To that end it plays up the liberal face of Vajpayee: it sheds tears for Muslim economic and educational backwardness; 50 years after independence it blames the secular parties, thus sowing the seed of discontent against secularism in the Muslim mind; it highlights that no major communal riot, no massacre, has taken place since it came to power; it projects the Bus ride to Lahore, as if friendly and good neighbourly relationship with Pakistan is not a national imperative but a concession to the Muslim Indians! It makes promises and gives assurances for the advancement of the Muslim Indians, though not a single substantive step has been taken in the BJP-ruled States or under Vajpayee Government. Look, it has even jettisoned its anti-Muslim baggage!

- * The BJP has placed the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir on the backburner but **has not given up its commitment to construct it on the site of the Babari Masjid when it comes to power on its own.** Its leaders have persistently blocked the progress of the criminal case in which Advani, Joshi, Kalyan Singh, Thackeray and many other top leaders stand accused. Behind the scene, it has tried to reduce the Babari Masjid question once again to a local dispute and work out a settlement with some local Muslim leaders.
- * The BJP has placed the question of uniform civil code on the backburner but given all encouragement to all those in the Muslim society and in the larger Indian society who want to 'modernise' the Shariat.
- * The BJP has placed the question of Article 370 on the backburner but ensured that the goal of 'autonomy' remains an elusive dream.

The BJP has, in the meantime, tried to saffronise the educational system with a view to brainwash and Hinduise the Muslim children. The BJP has curbed large scale communal violence no doubt but created a communal environment in which a Muslim Indian becomes a helpless spectator, when his graveyard is occupied, when he is prevented from building a mosque on his own land, when his religion, his Holy Prophet and the Holy Quran are vilified in print and in words, when he is forced to build a Hanuman Temple for a monkey he accidentally kills, when his madarsas and masjids are labelled as dens of the ISI.

There is fear and terror in the air. There is also an air of helplessness, frustration and despair. And there are riots. By Advani's own admission, there are over 600 communal incidents during 1998-99!

The RSS has mastered the art of propaganda and the technique of brainwashing. On the eve of the election, many farcical Tanzeems, Majlis and Forums etc. have sprung overnight. With no credentials, no public record, no political experience, they act as the persuaders, presume, to advise the Muslim community to reconsider their political views, in short, to give up their hostility towards the BJP and support BJP or at least not oppose it.

The Muslim Indians are told day in and day out that the secular parties have failed the community. So they

should give a chance to the BJP, particularly when it is led by a nice guy called Vajpayee. They are also told that only when the Indian State become a Hindu State, the Muslim Indians shall be protected and not looked upon as a political adversary.

The Muslim Indians are indeed unhappy with the secular parties which all operate under 'democratic compulsions' of social demography. But any minority group, which aspires to maintain its identity and resist absorption and assimilation, despite all the shortcomings and failures of the political system, cannot afford to abandon Democracy, Secularism and Social Justice; it cannot ignore the line of demarcation between the secular and anti-secular forces, it cannot withdraw from politics, it cannot give away its right to decide who its friends and who its enemies are and whom to vote for in the election. **It has the duty to use its votes to tilt the balance in favour of the most winnable secular candidate against the candidate of the Sangh Parivar.**

Muslim Indians must not forget that elections come and go, the governments come and go but the RSS, for the last 75 years, has been working, with missionary zeal to translate the thoughts of Golwalker into action. **Not even Vajpayee has disowned a syllable of the RSS ideology to this day.**

Muslim Indians must realise that the RSS represents the Brahminical Order which is facing a crisis. The emergent social groups – the Shudras, the Achhuts and the Advasis – are struggling for social justice – for participation, for empowerment, for an equitable share in the benefits of development and of welfare programmes. So are the Muslim Indians. The deprived stand to gain or lose together. **Any support by a section of the Muslim Indians, which helps the BJP win a seat, is an act of betrayal of the common cause. It is more than that; it is suicide.**

The secular voters, the Muslim and the non-Muslim alike, should not allow themselves to be taken in and entrapped by this soft and gentle approach, by charm and friendliness. They should remember that the leopard does not change its spot, that, **once in power, the Sangh Parivar can throw away the National Agenda of Governance**, even change the Constitution on the lines of the draft Hindu Constitution already in circulation.

True to our national character, once the Sangh Parivar is established in power, many people whose decency we never questioned shall come out with open arms to embrace the Sangh Parivar, worship the rising sun and jostle with each other for crumbs. And why should anyone be foolish enough to stand up for his convictions against the combined might of the State and the Party? And why should anyone worry about the sensitivities of those wretched Muslims and Christians, who should only be thankful that they have not been treated the way Hitler treated the Jews – liquidated in gas chambers!

This is a chilling but not an impossible scenario. And it may well happen if the average voter thinks of the BJP as just another political party, which it is not. It is the political arm of an ideological mission whose objective is total Hinduisation.

(Contd. on Page 258)

Eqbal Ahmad on Roots of Right Wing Religious Resurgence

... The mistakenly called "fundamentalists" are a modern phenomenon, a response to the crises of modernity and identity. Modernity is a historical process. It refers to the development of societies from one mode of production to another: in our age, from an agrarian or pastoral mode to the capitalist or industrial mode of production. The shift from one mode of production to another mode invariably brings revolutionary changes in society. It compels a new logic of social and economic life, threatens inherited styles of life and forces transformations in the relationship of land, labour and capital. As such, it requires adaptations to new ways of being and doing and demands drastic changes in human values and in relations between and among sexes, classes, individuals, families and communities. It transforms the co-relation and arrangement of living spaces, requires change in how the workplace is organised, how new skills are gathered and distributed, and how people are governed.

When this process of change sets in, older values and ways of life become outdated and dysfunctional much faster than newer, more appropriate values, and ways of life strike roots. The resulting social and cultural mutations are experienced by people both as threat and loss. For millennia, humanity experienced this unsettling process...

The industrial mode threatened nearly all values and institutions by which people had lived in the agrarian order... A transformation so systemic was bound to threaten old ways of life... In brief ... puts into question, and increasingly renders dysfunctional, traditional values and ways of life. Yet, cultures tend to change more slowly than economic and political realities. All societies caught in this process undergo a period of painful passage. How peacefully and democratically a society makes this journey depends on its historical circumstances, the engagement of its intelligentsia, the outlook of its leaders and governments and the ideological choices they make.

...When faced with a crisis so systemic, people have tended to respond in four ways. We might call these the restorationist, reformist, existential and revolutionary responses.

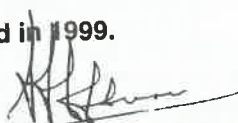
(Contd. from Page 291)

The General Election, 1999 is not just another election. It is a decisive round in the long struggle between Hindu Nationalism and Indian Nationalism, between Hindutva and Multi-Culturalism, between Godse and Gandhi.

- There can be no compromise with the RSS philosophy.
- There can be no truck with the agents of the BJP.
- There can be no secular votes for the BJP or for its allies.

The BJP must be defeated in 1999.

New Delhi,
1st July, 1999


(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

The restorationist wants to return somehow to an old way of life, re-impose the laws or customs that were, recapture lost virtues, rehabilitate old certainties and restore what he believes to have been the golden past – Hindutva and Ram Raj, Eretz Israel, Nizam-e-Mustafa. Restorationism invariably entails rejection of the Other – for example, Muslim, Arab, Hindu, Christian, Ahmadi – and what are construed to be the Other's way which can range from a woman's dress and a man's beard to song, dance and such symbols of modern life as the television and radio. The restorationist ideology and programme can range from relatively moderate to totally extremist...

The reformists are of modernist disposition – men and women who care deeply about preserving the best and most meaningful in their religious tradition while adapting them to the requirements of modern life. The obverse is also true – they seek to integrate modern forms and values into inherited cultures and beliefs... The first great Indian Muslim reformist was Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and the last to be so regarded was Mohammed Iqbal, whose Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam is a quintessential example of reformism in modern Islam... Like the restorationist, the reformist trend emerged as a response to the perceived decline of Muslim power and encounter with the colonising Western powers. From the second half of the 19th century, it gained hegemony in the Muslim world, but stagnated in the post-colonial period... Mustapha Kemal's was the first revolutionary response in the Muslim world. He abolished the Caliphate, established an uncompromisingly secular republic, suppressed many religious institutions, proscribed the veil, prohibited polygamy and enacted secular laws regulating property rights and women's rights on the basis of equality. No other Muslim country has so far equalled Ataturk's radical break from tradition and from the association of Islam with state power... Under partial reformist influence, the nationalist regimes in a number of states – Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Indonesia and Malaysia among others – instituted secular constitutions without effecting a radical break from the tradition of associating religion and power. Many of these secular authoritarian regimes are now being challenged by Islamist movements.

With the exception of Pakistan, the secular alternative has been in post-colonial South Asia... In recent years, the rise of Hindu nationalists to power in several provinces, and recently in the federation, has greatly undermined the secular character of the Indian republic. In Pakistan, on the other hand, the issue of the relationship between religion and the state has remained a source of confusion, instability and misuse of Islam in politics.

The dominant feature of the post-colonial period has been the existential style of deploying religion whenever it suits the political convenience of those in power, and of ignoring the challenge of defining the relationship of religion and politics when governments and the ruling

(Contd. on Page 303)

Eminent Sociologist T. K. Oommen

On Conceptualization of Nation and Nationality in South Asia-I

There have been several attempts to conceptualize 'nation' and 'nationality' in South Asia, given the multiplicity to cultural identities in the region. The present effort is ... to locate the different modes of conceptualizing nation and national identity and to understand the rationale behind them...

The compulsion for conceptualizing an Indian nation was largely the outcome of the British colonial presence and its articulations... The British colonial administrators did not view the Indian sub-continent as one nation. Strachery (1888:5) wrote "... there is not and never was an India ... no Indian nation, no people of India." In the same vein Seeley (1883:255) commented: "India is ... only a geographical expression like Europe or Africa. It does not make the territory of a nation and a language, but the territory of many nations and languages". Understandably, therefore the initial efforts to conceptualize India were meant to counter this orientation but gradually different modes of conceptualizations emerged in response to the unfolding realities.

Broadly speaking one can identify seven ways in which nation in South Asia has been defined. These are: (1) an ancient civilizational entity, (2) a composite culture, (3) a political entity, (4) a religious entity, (5) a geographical/territorial entity with a specific cultural ethos (6) a collection of linguistic entities and (7) a unity of great and little nations. The first three of these are predominantly pre-partition conceptualizations. The fourth initiated the impulse of partition, achieved that objective and continues to provide a source of legitimation. The fifth, sixth and seventh conceptualizations largely belong to the post-partition period. However, it is important to note that these conceptualizations did not always surface in the order in which they are listed; some of them co-existed and competed for legitimacy simultaneously.

Ancient Civilization

The attempt to conceptualize India as an ancient civilization emphasizes the wholeness of India due to its geography and the predominantly Hindu culture. Radhakumud Mookerji (1914) asserted the existence of an essential unity of India based on natural geography, an ancient pan-Indian Hindu culture, economic self-sufficiency and the interdependence of her constituent regions. Further, he alluded to the 'national' consciousness, which had become a 'settled habit of thought' since ancient times. In the same vein Beni Prasad (1941), a quarter of a century later referred to India's 'geographical wholeness' and her '... urge to political unification in defiance of vast distances and immense difficulties of transport and communication.

The reasons invoked to justify the essential unity of an Indian 'nation' indeed are disparate: natural geography,

ancient Hindu culture, the urge for political unification among others. If geography were the basis of constituting nations, there would have been only a handful of them in the world and quite a few nations would not have emerged at all. The reference to Hindu culture as the element which provides the essential unity implies that (a) the time-referent is prior to Muslim and British intrusion/intervention, (b) the contributions of these elements are completely ignored and/or they are treated as alien (c) these elements indirectly 'disturbed' the unity provided by Hindu culture to India and (d) religion is a necessary element in the conceptualization of nation and national identity. The reference to the 'urge for political unification' implies that a nation is a united political entity, comprising cultural multiplicity.

The points I want to make for the moment are the following. The two writers, Mookerji and Prasad, are mistaking civilizations for nations although the former is a much broader entity as compared to the latter. Generally speaking several nations and/or states co-exist within a civilizational region. Second, neither 'natural geography' nor religion are necessary conditions for a nation to emerge and exist. Third, a nation is essentially a cultural entity and it is not natural for a nation to establish its own state as is widely believed...

Composite Culture

Those who describe India as a composite culture emphasize the fusion of Hinduism and Islam, as against the distinctiveness of Hindu culture. This fusion, a product of conflict and synthesis, although started since ancient times, is believed to have intensified with the Muslim conquest. 'As soon as the first waves of conquest, plunder and desecration had spent themselves, there began the operation of the forces, inherent in human nature, which interknit contacts into conational wholes and transform plurality into community' (Beni Prasad 1941:8). Tarachand (1963) graphically described the efforts of Kabir, the saint-poet, to fuse Hinduism and Islam; Humayun Kabir (1955) referred to Akbar's effort as the first conscious attempt to establish a 'secular state'. Nehru was more explicit: 'Akbar became the great representative of the old Indian ideal of a synthesis of differing elements and their fusion into a common nationality. He identified himself with India, and India took to him although he was a newcomer...

The Muslim 'conquest' provides the cut-off point in Indian history to those describing India as a composite culture. In contrast those who describe India as an ancient Hindu culture and civilization consider Aryans as the original inhabitants and to them the Aryan 'advent' marks the beginning of Indian history. For both, pre-Aryan culture either did not exist, or if it did, it was a 'low

OVERVIEW

culture' contributing nothing to 'Indian culture'. Thus, this conceptualization ignores the pre and non-Aryan peoples – the Dravidians, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes – which together constitute nearly 50 per cent of the population of India. If Hinduism provides the essential content of Indian nationalism, in the first of the seven modes of conceptualizing India, it is the fusion of Hinduism and Islam which provides content to Indian nationalism according to the second mode.

There are other difficulties and contradictions in the 'synthetic' view. If conflict and synthesis are inherent in human nature, as Beni Prasad suggests; then it should happen everywhere and we cannot anchor Indian specificity to that process. The transformation of plurality into community is an assumption and not a fact. The belief that Hinduism and Islam had fused, as Tarachand assumes, is not only contrary to facts but probably also denies the possibility of the two co-existing without fusing. Humayun Kabir's notion of a secular state or Jawaharlal Nehru's idea of 'nationality' does not fit into any of the accepted versions of conceptualizations. The use of the adjective 'newcomer' to refer to Akbar points to his being regarded as an outsider; it exposes the persisting tension between insiders and outsiders and is contrary to the spirit of an evolving composite culture.

Those who characterize the fundamental unity of the Indian 'nation' in terms of composite culture invariably recall the examples of emperors like Chandragupta Maurya (a Hindu), Asoka (a Buddhist) and Akbar (a Muslim) as shining examples of statesmen who nurtured this idea. But it is often forgotten that in empires there are elites, subjects and slaves and therefore the adjective 'composite' connotes different layers of a hierarchy. In contrast, by definition the people-at-large constitute a nation, a community in which they share a common culture, notwithstanding class differences.

Apart from this, one notices a glaring omission: the contribution made by Jainism and Sikhism in evolving the composite character of Indian culture. This 'takes-for-granted' the religions of Indian origin other than Hinduism (Oommen 1990 (a): 43-66) which denies autonomy to them. Further, Buddhism the main proselytizing religion of India was practically banished from India, instead of being retained, nurtured and assimilated into the composite whole. In retrospect it would seem that the very characterization of Indian culture as a composite one was a political project to mollify both Hindus and Muslims and to avert the partition of India. Despite the nobility of intention, the project failed and in the process an erroneous conceptualization, namely, the 'two-nation theory' got wide currency. Compositeness implies assimilation and fusion, and hence is the very antithesis of pluralism, which instead is the celebration of diversity in order to facilitate the co-existence of cultures, in spite of their distinctiveness.

(To be concluded)

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Robin Archer on Secularism in the Indian Political Context

Much of the Indian debate on secularism is built around what seem to be the common sense assumptions about India and the west. But a close look at the impact of Protestant Puritanism on the relationship between religion and politics in the US suggests that these assumptions are mistaken. Far from having fundamentally different experience, there are some striking similarities between India and the US: similarities which draw attention to potential long-term dangers for India.

... What insights does this comparison provide for those seeking, either to influence future developments in India, or to understand their likely course? A few simple points are worth emphasising.

First, the fear that the establishment and maintenance of a secular state will necessarily weaken religious beliefs and institutions, and the charge that pro-secular attitudes are necessarily anti-religious, are both completely misplaced. In the US, a long line of distinguished sociologists, from Tocqueville (1969) to Lipset (1996), have observed that quite the reverse is true. The long separation of religion and politics has fostered a continual process of renewal, which has enabled religious institutions and beliefs to flourish to an exceptional extent.

Second, comparison with the US raises important questions about what criterion should be used for judging whether or not secularism has been successfully institutionalised. If religious activism in politics is seen as evidence that secularism has failed in India, then secularism must also be judged to have failed in the US.

Third, comparison with the US highlights the importance of disaggregating categories like Protestantism and Hinduism, if an adequate understanding of the political impact of religion is to be reached. Clearly caste communities frequently have radically different political loyalties. But it would also be interesting to explore whether Hindus committed to Bhakti and other 'personalist' traditions, have different political loyalties to Hindus committed to more 'ritualist' traditions, just as pietistic and liturgical Protestants have different loyalties in the US.

Here, however, I am more concerned to draw attention to some other, potential long-term consequences of current developments in India. The similarities between the party system now emerging in India and the American party system of the second half of the 19th century, suggest that consideration of the subsequent history of the US may help to clarify some of these potential long-term consequences... In no democracy is the party system a simple reflection of the multiple interests and issues which are present in that society. For the party system also helps to pick out and strengthen the salience of some of these interests and issues, and weaken the salience of others. In short, the party system helps to establish which interests and issues are to be recognised as politically important. By reinforcing the salience of ethno-religious interests, the US party system in the second half of the 19th century

undermined the prospect for class politics, by weakening the salience of economic interests and of distributive justice. Voters were, of course, concerned about their economic interests, but, by and large, when they went to the polls, taking their cue from the agenda set by the party system, they voted not for their class, but for their ethno-religious interests.

This is one of the main reasons, why, even in the late 19th and early 20th century, when the US had become one of the leading capitalist economies in the world, it still failed to produce an electorally important labour or socialist party. It also helps to explain why, to this day, the US has weak unions, insecure workers, negligible interest in redistributive policies, and no real welfare state.

Can these outcomes be avoided in India? It hardly needs to be said that no society is destined to simply follow a path already laid down by others. The enduring role of religion in the US is itself evidence of that. But the similarities between the American party system in the second half of the 19th century, and that now emerging in India, should give pause for thought: especially to those motivated by the ideals of the socialist tradition.

Through the first third of the 20th century, when labour and socialist parties became major contenders for government in every advanced capitalist society, in the quintessentially capitalist US, political controversy was focussed on issues like the prohibition of alcohol, and on whether to teach Biblical or Darwinian science in schools [Marsden 1991]. Not until a quarter of the labour force was thrown out of work in the Great Depression of the thirties, did a social democratic tinge appear in American politics. Roosevelt responded to the depression with his 'New Deal' programme, which repositioned the Democrats as a semi-social Democratic Party, and forced a realignment of the party system. But by the last third of this century, ethno-religious issues had reasserted themselves. The cadres of the Christian coalition are now more important to the Republic Party, than union activists are to the Democrats and issues like abortion and the sexual behaviour of the president dominate political space.

My argument in this article is informed by a large concern about the use of all-embracing concepts like 'modernity' and the 'west'. These terms are frequently used to suggest that western societies share a common core of cultural characteristics, one of which is secularism. But in the norms that govern that attitudes to religion and politics, western societies share no such cultural core. In these matters, even a single, paradigm, western society like the US has no common core of cultural norms.

The anti-secularists are right when they say that India has a political culture which is deeply influenced by religious traditions. But they are wrong when they say that India does not have a secular political culture. **For, just like the US, it has both.** Each country has two powerful political subcultures, tied together by a mix of ideology

(Contd. on Page 299)

'Politics is not a Permanent Landscape but an Ever-shifting Cloudscape' V.P. Singh on the Political Situation and his Future Role

... There will be three forces in India now – the BJP, the Congress and the third front. I would have wanted the third force to occupy government and the Congress to occupy the Opposition. The third force has deep political roots. There are a large number of people who don't want the BJP or the Congress. But they are not a cohesive force.

The Left will always play an important role. I would want a strong third force and a strong Congress...

In a political scenario, there must always be a ruling space and an opposition space. I would have wanted both spaces to have remained secular and not wanted any space to go to any force which is causing division. This is where the third force comes in.

... No party should have a hate agenda... The BJP along with its various associates – Bajrang Dal, VHP and RSS – have a palpable hate agenda. It may not be in their constitution, it is not mouthed by their top leaders, but it is there. And this is not conducive to the larger interests of the country. Any party with hate agenda, even if it is a caste-based agenda, is not conducive. This has been my position. Other parties do not have a hate agenda.

The smaller parties will be eliminated in the next elections. Everything will be streamlined. It is a historical process. People will make broad choices. At the regional level they will carry – TDP, AIADMK, DMK, Akali Dal – but they will all get into settled formations.

And as in Kerala, settled formations will emerge. There will be a long-term realignment of the third force. The pattern will be that they will be led by larger parties and will be more stable with a third force as a strong force as well.

... India is a large and diverse country. You cannot have a homogeneous system. There will always be regional parties.

... (The Left) has a definite political agenda, installation of the Congress. At the party level they will fight both Congress and the BJP... The position that the Left had taken was the correct position. The Left has also been fighting the Congress, but the political perception is that there should be a change. National issues put personal considerations in the background. Personal animosities have nothing to do with governance. The big parties in the future will be the Congress and the BJP but the Left will always be there and the regional parties...

Coalition will always be there. But it will be a maturer coalition... Coalition partners will learn that it doesn't pay to cause instability...

... This episode with a majority of one and the fact that an alternative government could be formed, does give a setback to the non-BJP formation. The argument is that

there are conflicts within the Opposition... But how long this disadvantage will last is questionable. Politics is a constantly changing scene. It is not like drawing a landscape, where there is a hill and it remains there. It's a cloudspace. After five minutes, it has changed, it has vanished and a new formation has emerged...

The exile period is over. After my treatment, I will be a free man. I will keep my options open. And I don't think I have lost a lot in five years...

(Source: The Sunday, 9-15 May, 1999)

Prime Minister Vajpayee's Message On Urs-e-Razvi, 7 June, 1999

... Ala Hazrat Ahmed Raza Khan was not only a scholar ... but a great social reformer... Islam's universal message of peace and brotherhood was carried far and wide by Sufi saints like him. This message mingled with the culture and ethos of this land to produce a unique spiritual heritage that is India's gift to the world. No wonder, the tradition of Urs has struck deep roots in most parts of the country and attracts devotees from all communities...

India is facing many difficult challenges today. One of the most pressing challenges is to consolidate and render permanent the atmosphere of communal peace and amity that has been building up in the country for the past few years. Another challenge is to rapidly promote the economic, social and educational development of the minorities – especially the Muslim community – so that they can make their fullest contribution to national development. The Government and the various organisations of the minority and majority communities have to work together in a spirit of trust and cooperation for the success of this mission...

... I seek the blessings of Ala Hazrat for all my countrymen and myself.

Muslim Representation in CPMF

... Every effort is being made to give adequate representation to all the groups and, particularly, minority communities in the CPMFs. The CPMFs have been taking special steps to motivate young men and women to join these forces by making wide publicity in the areas where there is concentration of minority. The Minorities Commission and educational institutions of minority communities are also being informed of the recruitment.

We have further directed the CPMFs to take all possible steps to increase recruitment from such sections of society.

(Source: MHA' Advanis Letter No. I-45020/16/98-Pers.II dated 26 May, 1999)

Malini Parthasarathy on Congress(I)'s Moment of Truth

The current of blind faith that runs through the Congress party in the magical properties of the Nehru-Gandhi dynastic name ... is indeed the party's fatal flaw as much as it is its talisman for recovery... The question raised by Pawar, Sangma and Anwar is one that must be dealt with by the party leadership on the basis of a recognition that the issue posed has unquestionable validity and legitimacy, especially in an election context. If the party leadership is to perceive the raising of this issue as an act of treason and lese majeste, it would be doing a grave disservice to the imperative of transforming a hitherto moribund organisation into a dynamic electoral fighting force.

Yet, it must be recognised that if today, Ms. Sonia Gandhi ... an undisputed suzerainty over the party, it is because most of its members had no doubt at all that despite her Italian origin ... she was the party's natural leader. If the Congress(I), a few years ago had seemed to be a deeply divided house, with various factions rearing their heads, during the regimes of Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao and Mr. Sitaram Kesri, it was an incredible transformation when Ms. Sonia Gandhi emerged from her existence as a private citizen to take a more active role in party affairs. Suddenly the feuding chieftains within the party whose loathing for one another was barely concealed meekly fell in line to urge Ms. Gandhi to take over the leadership of the party. It must also be recalled that nobody within the higher echelons of the party questioned the doctrine thrust on the rank and file that without Ms. Gandhi, the Congress(I) was doomed to swift marginalisation within the political arena increasingly dominated by the BJP alliance.

Ms. Gandhi's presence at the helm ... did have the rallying effect ... with various groups that had walked out ... returning like prodigal children to the fold. Second, it was Ms. Gandhi's leadership last year which categorically restored the emphasis and the cutting edge to the party's traditional platform advocating secular governance and pluralism. Thus ironically while the party organisation may have believed itself to have been "given new life" ... it could well have been because the Congress(I) had finally shed its ambivalence in regard to its political platform, restoring its appeal to the alienated minorities and the Dalits.

The Congress(I)'s senior leaders are today plainly apprehensive of the implications of projecting a person of foreign origin as a Prime Ministerial candidate in an election contest vulnerable to the BJP's communal and xenophobic campaign... The very fact that until now, nobody within the party thought it fit to point out that the party's demonstrated revitalisation owed more to its having adopted a more assertive stance appealing to

minorities alienated by the BJP's majoritarian stance rather than to the Nehru-Gandhi dynastic magic, is revealing of the absolute disregard that the party's senior leaders have of the obligation to rebuild the party as a secular nationalist political force.

... The question posed by Pawar and Sangma has a resonance that extends beyond the party. The suggestion that Ms. Gandhi makes clear that she is not in the running for Prime Ministerial office is an opportunity for her to clarify and redefine her role within the party set-up...

...It would be churlish and tactically unwise on the part of the Congress(I)'s senior leaders to sideline her at the moment that the party appears to be coming into its own, at long last, in part due to her efforts. This would probably account for the respectful tone of the letter asking her to take the initiative to bar persons of foreign origin from occupying the top posts in the country. It does appear that if Ms. Gandhi were to continue as party president and to nominate some one else for the Prime Ministerial candidacy, the crisis that is now manifesting will be successfully defused. Ms. Gandhi would have to recognise that her own limitations in this context have the potential of negatively affecting her party's chances in the forthcoming elections. Without allowing the present controversy over her possible candidacy to blow up into a major confrontation that could cause a split ... Ms. Gandhi should perceive that this is the real test of her commitment to the Congress(I)'s survival as a credible political force and that if her candidacy becomes an issue in this election, she would be responsible for a sidetracking of the election discourse from the main issue...

The Congress(I) is facing its moment of truth. This is not the time for either Sonia Gandhi and her advisors or Pawar and his supporters to turn this into a personal contest of wills or strength. The core issue that stares the party in the face is not really Ms. Gandhi's origin but its own lack of an inner-party democracy which would allow the party to be much more in tune with the fast changing political realities. The recent track record of the Congress(I) and its leadership offers little evidence of a sense of urgency in relation to the national interest and the fundamental political values at stake in this election. For instance, the party's recent pronouncements ... insisting that the party is not in favour of a coalition with other groups, are dangerously unrealistic and do not reflect the ground reality of a sharply fragmented social base from which the secular parties are to draw their support. If the party insulates itself from the reality that the prospect of Sonia Gandhi's candidacy for Prime Minister is of debatable electoral benefit ... the Congress(I) would be inviting upon itself further marginalisation and irrelevance.

(Source: The Hindu, 17 May, 1999)

Harish Khare on the Rebellion in the Congress

On the evening of May 20, the Congress Working Committee found itself railroaded into expelling Pawar, Sangma and Anwar from the primary membership of the Congress(I) for six years. The three gentlemen were accused of daring to question Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's suitability to be the Congress(I) candidate for Prime Minister. This was pure heresy and had to be put down with a firm hand. "Off with their heads," became the war cry inside and outside the CWC...

... Mrs. Gandhi's "resignation" was sought to be portrayed as an act of renunciation and did help erase, even if only partly, the image she had acquired of late of a "woman in hurry" to grab power. But all these gains become insignificant compared to the strategic loss for Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress(I): for the first time, she has become the cause of division and discontent rather than the force of unity and enthusiasm.

Mrs. Gandhi's finest achievement is that ... stopping the internal bleeding, she became the instrument of organisational healing...

The replacement of Kesri was sought to be justified on the ground that the announcement of his intention to resign had created a dangerous and unacceptable organisational void, and that a major political party could not tolerate this kind of uncertainty; now, no one is talking about the "uncertainty" created by Mrs. Gandhi's announcement of her resignation.

And an entirely new and unconstitutional precedent has been established in the last few days. The CWC has met twice without being summoned by the party president (who has resigned); the CWC has not made any alternative arrangement, and now a session of the All-India Congress Committee(I) has been convened - presumably without the participation of the president, Mrs. Gandhi in the decision-making. Her friends and partisans have established a precedent for future conspirators.

... Not only has Mrs. Gandhi been shown to be the cause of division and splits, the Congress(I) has also lost its trump card as the party of stability. The next Lok Sabha election was presumed to be a final debate on the question of inevitability of a coalition government (as ... asserted by the BJP) and the desirability of a single-party ruling at the Centre...

The Congress(I) ... argued ... that there was nothing inevitable about coalition arrangements, and that the Congress(I) was still capable of providing stability of a single-party government... The country has seen for itself that the party has not recovered from the process that began with Arjun Singh's revolt in 1995 against P. V. Narasimha Rao's leadership. That process continued with the departure of Mamata Banerjee and other leaders during 1996-97. Now Pawar will do to the Sonia Congress what Arjun Singh did to the Narasimha Rao Congress in 1996...

Congress (Tiwari) did become the cause for the defeat of the Congress candidates in about 30 Lok Sabha constituencies; the end result was that Rao was effectively prevented from becoming the Prime Minister.

For a few months, Arjun Singh and Tiwari even became part of the anti-Congress(I) United Front coordination committee crowd; they returned to the party when Rao quit as the AICC president, and then began on their habitual journey of intrigue...

Pawar cannot be underestimated at least in Maharashtra. His proposed new outfit will become the accommodating platform for all the disgruntled and discontented Congressmen. Should Pawar be able to win a dozen or so seats in the next Lok Sabha and cause the defeat of Congress candidates in 20 more constituencies, the game would be over for Mrs. Gandhi.

... The hardliners and the loud-mouths have practically stymied Mrs. Gandhi's chances of becoming the Prime Minister... Anything short of a 240-plus figure for the party would be construed as a vindication of the Pawar-Sangma-Anwar contention.

(Source: The Hindu, 23 May, 1999)

K. K. Katyal

On Developments in Congress(I)

... The recent development has hit the Congress(I) hard. Till recently, Mrs. Gandhi enjoyed unchallenged supremacy. It was inconceivable, if not blasphemous, for anyone - let alone the three members of the Working Committee, one of whom was the leader of the parliamentary group in the dissolved Lok Sabha - to question her position. But the unthinkable has happened and the party could not escape the fallout, whether or not she chooses to remain president...

The Congress(I) ... worthies are certain to make much of her consent to continue to lead the party and project it as a major event, with a potential for a tremendous boost to its standing and morale, and to dismiss the recent episode as of little consequence. But the fact of the setback, though not major, will remain. Also, the question of Mrs. Gandhi's foreign origin has come to the fore. Whether it will help or hurt the party in the long-run is not clear but, at present, a sense of unease cannot be avoided...

... The issue of foreign origin - and the suggestion of a constitutional amendment vis-a-vis occupying the country's three top positions - could have been addressed dispassionately. Had that been done, the rejection of the trio's demand would have carried conviction. Its summary disposal, followed quickly by the expulsion of the three ... evoked widespread revulsion...

The show of solidarity with Mrs. Gandhi could have been effective had it been dignified and orderly...

(Source: The Hindu, 24 May, 1999)

Amulya Ganguli on Hindutva and the BJP

The BJP's preference for a common manifesto with its allies for the next general election marks yet another stage in the party's tactical manoeuvres...

... So, for all practical purposes, the BJP's 1998 claim that "Shri Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness" has been discarded even by the party.

To a newcomer on the Indian scene, therefore, the manifesto of the BJP and its allies will give no hint of what the party had stood for since 1989, when it first endorsed the VHP's plan to "liberate" Ramjanmabhoomi. The newcomer would not know that the Ram temple was supposed to stand for a rejuvenated India sans Article 370 and Articles 25 to 30 dealing with minority rights. It will be like communism without Stalinist tyranny or Hitler without his Final Solution. To many, this may be a welcome development, marking a taming of the Sangh parivar's extremist fringe.

However, any satisfaction among those who would like to see the BJP flourish without its hardliners will be misplaced. The BJP's acceptance of a common manifesto does not indicate a change of heart. It is only a tactical retreat intended to camouflage its real agenda and induce a sense of complacency among its present allies. The BJP is a past master at such deception. Its entire Jan Sangh past was built on masking its intentions so cleverly that it constituted an integral part of the then anti-Congress alliance including the communists, the anti-Indira Congressmen and secular stalwarts like V. P. Singh. Any devotion for Ram was kept strictly under wraps and no one breathed a word about demolishing the "ocular provocation" (Advani's phrase) which was the Babri Masjid.

When the events of December 6, 1992, revealed its "hate" agenda, as V. P. Singh says, the BJP lost its place in the anti-Congress formation and replaced the Congress as the untouchable of the Indian political scene till it was able to gather bits and pieces from other parties and form an alliance of sorts...

This motley group may have enabled the BJP to shed its untouchable image but, at the same time, it has also made the party temporarily shelve its primary agenda. Simply put, its agenda is the theocratic one of "cultural nationalism" (one people, one culture, one nation) in which the culture of the Hindus will prevail at the expense of the culture of the other communities. Thus, if the Hindus want Vande Mataram and the Saraswati Vandana to be sung at official functions even if these militate against the religious beliefs of other communities, they will still be sung. It is this kind of harsh majoritarianism prevailing in the Islamic theocracies which the Hindutva votaries want to imitate.

Mercifully, none of the BJP's new partners (barring the Shiv Sena) endorses this fascist-fundamentalist line. The reason is presumably their past as members of parties subscribing to the concept of a multicultural society where no single religious group will have pride of place and

where the state will be strictly neutral in matters of religion. ... Although their presence in the BJP camp will automatically ensure that few Muslims and virtually no Christians will vote for them, they still do not want to cut themselves off completely from these communities. Whatever the reason, it is clearly their refusal to accept the BJP's line which has forced the party to put its agenda in cold storage for the present.

What is evident from this retreat is that the BJP and the Sangh Parivar, or the extended Parivar including the Shiv Sena, stand totally isolated where their Hindutva campaign is concerned. For the resistance to it has come this time not from the treacherous Muslim and Christian-appeasing pseudo-secularists beholden to an Italian, but the BJP's own much pampered allies who naturally belong to the patriotic camp. However, these patriots seem to believe with the "traitors" that India does not belong to the Hindus alone and that other communities, too, must live in this country with pride and dignity and cannot be disenfranchised if they refuse to sing Vande Mataram, as a Sangh Parivar stalwart once suggested.

Since both the BJP's friends and foes, who together represent an overwhelming majority of the people, are opposed to Hindutva, it follows that this "way of life" has the support of only the dyed-in-the-wool saffron group (Sangh Parivar and the Shiv Sena) whose total voting percentage at the national level cannot be more than 10 or 12. The 25 per cent vote which the BJP received in the last election is an inflated figure caused by both the fact of its presence in an alliance and the dropping of its controversial agenda. If the BJP and the Shiv Sena contest with their Hindutva agenda, they will be relegated to the fringe where they belong.

... Apart from Vajpayee, the number of moderates in the BJP can be counted on the fingers of one hand. It is worth noting that but for the accident of the hawala cases, Vajpayee — the right man in the wrong party — would not have been the BJP's prime ministerial candidate. In his absence, the wrongness of the party would have become even more apparent.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 17 May, 1999)

(Contd. from Page 295)

and self-interest. One seeks to subvert the religious neutrality of the state. The other seeks to maintain it. In complex democracies like India and the US, political culture is not monochromatic: it is composed of multiple competing traditions, of which these two are the most important.

In both countries there is a constant political struggle to see which of these traditions will prevail. But in both countries there is also a vital, often-ignored, meta-struggle about the salience of these traditions, and about whether or not they should continue to define the main terms of political conflict.

(Source: The Economic and Political Weekly, 10 April, 1999)

CPI(M): Electoral Strategy for 1999 Central Committee's Communiqué

... The Central Committee discussed the tactics the CPI(M) should adopt for the forthcoming elections. The results of these elections are going to be of crucial significance. The central question will be whether the BJP will continue in power or a secular government will be put in place. The return of the BJP to power will be extremely harmful for national unity, parliamentary democratic system and the secular-democratic framework. The defeat of the BJP and its allies, is the central task before the CPI(M) and the Left and all the secular and democratic forces.

The record of the 13-month rule of the Vajpayee government has been one of disaster for the country. The economic policies pursued by the BJP government have heaped misery on the people. The reactionary character of the BJP rule is before the people...

The BJP rule has meant penetration of RSS in the state apparatus and pushing the Hindutva agenda... The BJP government made efforts to communalise the educational system.

The BJP trampled on democracy by the use of Article 356 in Bihar.

The BJP will be in the dock for the shameful attacks on the Christian community.

The BJP is responsible for the jingoism and the chauvinism associated with its policy of nuclear weaponisation, which has spoilt relations with our neighbours...

It is this record of the BJP-led government, which will be rejected by the people... The people will vote on the basis of experience of its disastrous record.

The Central Committee decided to work actively for the defeat of the BJP and its allies. For this, at the national level, all efforts will be made to **unite the Left, democratic and secular forces**. At the same time, at the state level, appropriate tactics will be formulated keeping in mind the overall objective of fighting the BJP and its allies effectively.

While directing the main fire against the BJJP, the CPI(M) will also oppose the Congress party's politics and policies in such a manner as to project the need for a third alternative...

The Central Committee decided to make all efforts to strengthen the representation of the Party and the Left in the Lok Sabha... The Central Committee ... authorised the Polit Bureau to work out appropriate tactics and forge electoral understanding with the parties and forces who will firmly fight the BJP and its allies...

(Source: The People's Democracy, 16 May, 1999)

Those who trust me come along, those who think otherwise are free to part ways.

- Mrs. Sonia Gandhi at the AICC Session

The Third Front is shrinking with its constituents going astray... I am fed up with the experiment.

- Chandra Shekhar, President, SJP

CPI(M): On Split of Congress Statement, 23 May, 1999

... Sharad Pawar, P.A. Sangma and Tariq Anwar ... have announced the formation of a new party after their expulsion and continue to focus on the demand that the prime minister of the country should not be a citizen of foreign origin... They are only echoing the BJP stand.

... The BJP's stance on this issue is motivated by chauvinism with a communal tinge. It will be anti-democratic to deprive any citizen of his or her rights under the Constitution... (Source: The People's Democracy, 30 May, 1999)

'Equidistance' Conceals Pro-BJP Orientation Insaf Morcha: Shahabuddin's Statement, 28 May, 1999

"The newly formed Nationalist Congress Party has not yet made any policy statement but its leaders have repeatedly reiterated their '**equidistance**' towards the **BJP and the Congress**."

One can appreciate its political compulsion in not categorising Congress with other secular parties and its reservation on any understanding with the party from which its leaders have just been expelled.

Yet, to equate the Congress which, all said and done, is a secular party with the BJP is unfortunate.

The BJP stands for Hindutva, sometimes called Hindu Nationalism and sometime Cultural Nationalism. It is nothing more than the political front of the RSS which is known for its chauvinistic outlook and which, in league with other members of the Sangh Parivar, is looked upon by all religious minorities as a hostile adversary.

Unity of secular parties alone can defeat the BJP. Any party which divides secular votes helps the BJP.

Thus, one concludes that **the newly formed party has a pro-BJP orientation and will directly or indirectly help the BJP in its goal of coming to power during and after the general election.**

A party with such lack of ideological clarity deserves no support from the secular forces. The Insaf Morcha cautions the people, and particularly the Muslims, to beware of the unfolding conspiracy."

Pawar: Cause of Worry for Congress

... The kind of success Pawar has had is at total variance with the impression created by the AICC managers for Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's benefit. The Congress(I) president was made to believe that when it came to the parting on ways Pawar would not be able to carry with him more than a handful of legislators and other party men. That assessment has been proven wrong.

Mrs. Gandhi and other AICC bosses had assumed that they had won a major psychological battle when they got Suresh Kalmadi to join the Congress(I). For his own reasons, Kalmadi also engaged in Pawar-bashing...

Ghulam Nabi Azad, crisis Manager Sushil Kumar Shinde, S.B. Chavan and Prataprao Bhosle have proved extremely inadequate in meeting the Pawar challenge.

(Source: The Hindu, 5 June, 1999)

UP: Situation Report - Muslims Shift from S.P.

The HindustanTimes, 28 April, 1999

In the caste-dominated electoral politics of the State, the upper castes and minorities once again hold the passport to power for the major players.

As always, Uttar Pradesh will remain the nerve centre of the forthcoming battle of ballots with ... 85 Lok Sabha seats. The Other Backward Classes and Dalits decided the fate of candidates from the end of 1980 till recently. Now, however, the upper castes and minorities are in the limelight. The reasons are several. Of late, there has been a perceptible change in the mood of the minorities towards the Congress. The reasons are two-fold. First time, the best healer, has worked to the advantage of the Congress as the animosity of the minorities towards the Congress of the Narasimha Rao days is becoming diluted with each passing day.

Second, the minorities have seen the party revive and recover under the leadership of Congress president Sonia Gandhi even as the Third Force failed to fight the BJP at the national level... Added to this, the government-formation fiasco has made them angry with the Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav. The common refrain here has been that he should have allowed the Congress to come to power. However, this does not essentially mean that the minorities have decided to desert Mr. Yadav completely. The SP's campaign ... would focus on minority-related issues like reservations... On the other hand, the Congress ... may find it difficult to take a very aggressive pro-Muslim stand fearing an upper caste backlash. Nevertheless, the minority vote is likely to be divided between the SP and the Congress, which will work to the advantage of the BJP.

But, for the BJP too, the path to victory is not going to be that easy, specially as the upper castes have been unhappy with it... Thus a division in the upper castes' vote bank cannot be ruled out completely.

The Hindustan Times, 12 May, 1999

The battle between the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Congress(I) in Uttar Pradesh is getting fiercer day by day with the trading of charges and burning of effigies...

Clearly, both the Congress(I) and the SP have the Muslim vote bank, which accounts for about 16 per cent of the votes in Uttar Pradesh, in their sights and are, therefore, trying to gain the upper hand on the eve of Lok Sabha poll. The SP owes much to the combination of Yadav-Muslim votes for its success in netting as many as 20 out of the 85 Lok Sabha seats in the State during the previous elections. The Congress(I) had drawn a blank in comparison against the five it won in 1996...

The fate of the SP depends largely on the attitude of the Muslims, who are presently gripped by a confusion over the developments at the Centre...

Mulayam Singh has little to worry regarding the

Muslims, who are not likely to waste their ballots to concede any advantage to the BJP.

Except in the case where the Congress(I) goes in for seat adjustments with the BSP, which has refused to ally with any party, Muslims are unlikely to desert Mulayam Singh in a decisive manner. In that case, the BSP will lay its claim to over three-fourths of the Lok Sabha seats, which the Congress(I) is unlikely to accept.

The Pioneer, 25 May, 1999

... The winds of change sweeping the region are hardly pleasant for Mulayam Singh Yadav and are bound to send shivers down his spine. The reason is simple enough, the Muslim vote is floating. The mood of the community is undergoing a change. The SP is slowly being dismissed as a party which has outlived its utility and the Congress is being touted as 'not all that bad', having apologised and renewed its pledge to secularism.

It would be naïve to say that the SP has been done away with... The feeling has rekindled old loyalties in the people who joined hands with Mulayam in a reaction against the Congress... Interestingly, the Muslims, as a vote-base, are losing their influence because the Hindu-Muslim polarisation, the glue which helped keep the community together, at least electorally, is gone.

The Muslim mood is swinging curiously, even in constituencies which should continue with the SP... The chances of division of Muslim votes to the benefit of BJP is being considered by all, but few seem to care... What has provoked people to rethink about the Congress is its being a serious contender for power and its appeal among the upper caste Hindus, who, Muslims feel, will never opt for Mulayam. The SP leader, on the other hand, has failed to play a significant role in the state and the Centre...

But Muslims are still vacillating and are yet to arrive at a decision. They are thinking of the Congress while Mulayam is still their leader. The anger against the SP chief is clearly divided along rural-urban lines. The disenchantment with him is evident in cities but is absent in villages... The fall of the Union government is not an issue in the dusty villages and there are no complaints against *netaji*.

However, SP diehards-now-Congress-converts feel the mood will reach villages as elections come closer... One wonders why should Muslims desert SP when the Congress is not even standing on its legs in terms of organisational infrastructure, the car reaches Deochara, the mid-point on the Badayun-Bareilly road.

Mahaul is the key word for a party which has nothing to lose vis-à-vis the Muslims. The clerics, intellectuals and commoners from the community say the decision will be taken only when elections are near but say the tension between Muslims and the SP is palpable.

(Source: The Pioneer, 25 May, 1999)

AP: Tainted TDP's Fears of Minority Retribution

The minorities, not just Muslims but also Christians/dalit Christians, will be one of the most crucial factors in the coming elections in Andhra Pradesh.

With the TDP 'tainted' for having supported the BJP, Muslims are more reluctant than ever to support it. This, despite the urban, educated middle class minority segments sharing the general perception that the Naidu regime has performed well.

Though Muslims, who constitute 10 per cent of the A.P. electorate, have some pockets of influence in Rayalaseema and Andhra regions, it is in Telengana (15 Lok Sabha seats), that they are mostly concentrated. (Apart from) Hyderabad ... held by Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (MIM) for the past one-and-a-half decades, there are many other constituencies like Secunderabad, Nizamabad, Medak, Karimnagar, Peddapally, Nalgonda, Mehbubnagar, Warangal, Hanamkonda and Adilabad, where Muslims are a force to reckon with.

In Rayalaseema, the Muslim voters are a decisive influence in constituencies like Nandyal, Kurnool, Cuddpah, Anantapur and Hindupur. And in the Andhra region it is the Guntur and Krishna districts where Muslims have a sizeable presence...

... Muslims, angered by the demolition of the Babari Masjid and subsequent atrocities, turned against the Congress in the 1994 general elections. The same trend continued in 1996. But the situation started changing from 1998 when the Congress saw a change in its leadership. While for the Muslims in Andhra and Rayalaseema, the Congress was no more pariah, the Telengana Muslims saved the day for the TDP. Out of the 12 seats the TDP won last year, half were from the Telengana region with a sizeable Muslim population. Even in Rayalaseema the Muslim-dominated Nandyal went to the TDP.

However, over the past year the alienation of Muslims from the TDP has increased (due) to its entry into the BJP-led alliance... However, the party tried to regain its lost ground by reiterating its commitment to secularism and attacking the BJP government on issues such as Saraswati Vandana ... and attacks on Christians.

Despite all this, there is a big question mark on whether the Muslims will go with the TDP. A lot will also depend on whether the TDP goes in for an alliance, with the BJP... The Congress, meanwhile, is closely watching the situation...

(Source: The Pioneer, 25 May, 1999)

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Mushirul Hasan on Muslim Salvation through Secularism

... The reality that is still not adequately recognised in government and bureaucratic circles, is that India's 110 million Muslims lag far behind other communities in literacy, government and private employment, business and industry. They have low levels of income in urban areas, especially when measured in per capita terms.

More than half of the population live below the poverty line: fewer urban Muslims work for a regular wage or salary than members of other religious groups. Widespread illiteracy and a higher dropout rate at the elementary stage are additional problems. That is why the average literacy rate among Muslims is much less than the national average. Most Muslim women, in particular, do not receive school education, let alone higher education. Their empowerment is both a challenge and an urgent necessity.

It is true that there are regional variations, especially where the Muslims, along with Christians, enjoy benefits in the shape of liberal admission to institutions and scholarships, or in states where job opportunities have steadily increased after Urdu earned its rightful status... Yet the overall picture is disconcerting. The worrying aspect is that they will remain, unless remedial measures are taken, outside the area of state employment and in the unorganised sector either as workers or as self-employed petty bourgeoisie...

(Many) bemoan ... that opportunities for economic advance are specially blocked for Muslims because of official neglect and discrimination. This, they insist, has contributed to Muslims being 'the hewers of wood and drawers of waters'.

... Some other individuals and groups ... floated the idea of launching not one but several Muslim political parties... This may turn out to be an ominous trend. My fears are based in part on past experiences and, in part, on present-day social and political realities. Among other things, I recount the fate of the Majlis-i Mushawarat (in the 1960s) in UP ... For one, democratic institutions, though easy to work with, do not always lend themselves to being effectively used or manipulated by religious collectivities.

Second, the Muslim share of the votes is, all said and done, small in most constituencies, though they can tilt the balance in some. So that, as the sole spokesmen of their co-religionists, Muslim political activists, regardless of their tall claims, have not carried much influence in decision-making processes. Nor have they succeeded in acquiring the profile of the backward caste leaders in UP or Bihar. Here the caste configuration has not only altered the political landscape but also ensured that Muslims play second fiddle to the more dominant caste alignments. Although politicians of all hues would continue to court Muslims for electoral gains, the steady decline of the Congress has, in reality, gradually diminished the value of the 'Muslim vote'.

In effect, Muslim leaders, unless tied with progressive

political formations, would remain minor players in any electoral or political arrangement in New Delhi as well as in Lucknow and Patna. What they can do best, more so after the collapse of the Congress hegemony, is to make their choices from a large number of secular options available in the political marketplace and hitch their fortunes with the secular combinations. After all, this strategy has paid off in recent decades, though perhaps not to everybody's satisfaction...

... The moral of the story is that the Muslim communities, whether for tactical or other tangible reasons, must work out, as they have so often done after independence, cross-community linkages, not community-based ones. In other words, the secular and democratic regime, rather than the Islamist dimension, must provide the overarching framework to build new political networks. Taking refuge in or drawing sustenance from fundamentalist organisations ... is a recipe for disaster.

Nobody can take exception to the pursuit of one's faith. Nobody can object to Muslims starting schools and colleges, including madarsas, reforming charitable endowment (auqaf), improving the status of Muslim women, generating employment and energising the defunct Muslim institutions... It is patently foolish and counterproductive to do so. Serious and fundamental issues of poverty, education and social emancipation that afflict the Muslim communities cannot be resolved by flexing one's muscles. (Source: The Indian Express, 5 June, 1999)

(Contd. from Page 292)

elites feel secure and contented. This posture came under assault with the rise of Islamic militancy in the 1980s and the 1990s, a period that witnessed accelerated globalisation of the world economy. The Islamists were further propelled by the Iranian revolution (February 1979), and, more important, by the Afghan Jihad which, thanks to the generosity of the United States, became a transnational project. Ironically, the pro-US governments of Egypt and Algeria later became the prime targets of the Afghanistan-trained Mujahideen.

The resurgence of right-wing religious movements in the 1980s and the 1990s was a worldwide phenomenon. They have played a most violent role in Israel... In India, the Hindu movement launched a campaign against the Babari Masjid as part of its effort at mobilising mass support. It ended with the destruction of the 17th century mosque, widespread communal violence, and the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party to national power. After the Russians withdrew, the victorious and faction-ridden Mujahideen of Afghanistan tore the country apart. In Sudan, an Islamic government imposed a reign of terror and mismanagement which has yielded a horrific famine. Christian orthodoxy linked with Serb nationalism and Milosevic's diabolic opportunism has aided a reign of terror and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and now it battles on it Kosovo.

(Source: The Frontline, 12 March, 1999)

Joint Statement of Muslim Organisations New Delhi, 6 June, 1999

The four most eminent Muslim organisations in the country held a meeting at the residence of Prof. Saifuddin Soz on 4 June, 1999, and after prolonged discussions on the current political situation, issued the following statement:

"At the initiative of Prof. Saifuddin Soz, Maulana Mohd. Sirajul Hasan, Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, Qazi Mujahidul Islam Qasmi, S.G. of the A.I. Milli Council, S. Shahabuddin, V.P., All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, Maulana Shafi Moonis, GS, A.I. Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat and Mr. Abdur Rahim Qureshi, Secretary, A.I. Muslim Personal Law Board attended the meeting to discuss the role of the Muslim community in the present political context. Others who attended the meeting included Maulana Ejaz Ahmad Aslam, Secretary, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Mr. Kamal Farooqui of the All India Milli Council.

The Muslim leaders came to the unanimous conclusion that the emergence of the ideology of Hindutva, as the major contestant for power was a grave threat to democracy and secularism and for the survival of the secular order. The Muslim community has to play a effective role in the coming elections keeping in view not only their own interest but the larger interest of the country, in general and the Backward Classes and the weaker sections, in particular.

They decided to undertake a joint campaign for the mobilisation of the Muslim masses for participation in the democratic process through enrollment of all eligible voters, to be followed by massive voting in the election as well as to evolve a joint strategy for the coming elections.

They also decided to formulate an Agenda which would cover the legitimate aspirations of the social groups for peaceful co-existence, empowerment and participation of all sections of society, including Backward Classes, the SC, the ST and the minorities for social and economic justice.

They further decided to take steps to arrest the moral decline in the Indian society and eliminate corruption, criminalisation and communalism from the public life.

They also decided jointly discuss the Agenda with all the secular parties in order to maximise their area of agreement and to emphasize the need for all an alliance of all secular forces in order not to divide the secular votes and thus to arrest and contain the chauvinist upsurge.

Prof. Soz has been authorised to hold further joint meetings of these organisations.

Maulana Asad Madni, President of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hind was also invited to the meeting but he could not join the meeting as he was out of town. He is expected to attend future meetings.

All India Qaumi Tanzeem: National Council's Resolution

The National Council of India Qaumi Tanzeem expresses deep concern over the recent trends and developments in the socio-political life of the country which indicate serious threats to the values that inspired India's struggle for freedom and which are enshrined in our Constitution. A situation has arisen in which the democratic polity, which has thus far sustained the unity and integrity of the nation, is being pushed towards totalitarianism at home, isolationism in international politics and slavish dependence in economic affairs.

In this golden jubilee year of the adoption of the constitution which enshrines the most noble principles of human rights and freedom, the Constitution is sought to be changed by the very forces who have been guilty of violating these principles. The talk of revision of the Constitution is only a ... cover for divesting it of its democratic and secular features. The BJP Government has conducted itself in a manner that has struck terror in the minds of large segments of the nation as respect for minority rights is being condemned as appeasement and freedom of religion and conscience is sought to be interpreted as one way restriction on conversion... The N.C., therefore, appeals to all secular democratic nationalist forces to overcome their differences and unitedly struggle against this menace.

Muslim Employees Cultural Association, Cochin's Memorandum, 24 May, 1999

1. Seats are to be reserved for Muslims in the Indian Parliament and State Legislatures to ensure the proportionate representation, as being done in the case of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
2. Adequate percentage of seats is to be reserved for Muslim women as part of the proposed reservation for women in Indian Parliament and State Legislatures.
3. Muslims all over India are to be declared as Socially and Educationally Backward Community and a separate quota of 12% to be reserved for Muslims alone in the recruitment to Central and State Govts. services and public sector undertakings.
4. Seats to be reserved for candidates belonging to Muslim community in admission to educational institutions levels including plus two, undergraduate, post-graduate and professional course.
5. All impediments on the way of establishing minority educational institutions be removed and Muslim community organisations to be granted sanction to start their schools, colleges and universities.
6. Special riot prevention and control Police Force to be constituted in all riot-prone states with equal representation to various religious communities.
7. The site of the demolished Babari Masjid to be handed over to Muslims for the reconstruction of Masjid there.

Balraj Puri on Possible Relevance of Belfast Agreement to Kashmir

The first anniversary of the Belfast Agreement took place on April 10, 1999. This Agreement brought peace to Northern Ireland after 32 years of violence...

What is more relevant for us in India is the spate of writings recommending its application to resolve Kashmir problem; which is no less intractable than what the Belfast Agreement is supposed to have resolved... A Hurriyat leader, the largest conglomeration of the secessionist groups in Kashmir, has offered to consider the Belfast Agreement as a solution to the problem. ...

A key aspect of the Agreement is the new 108-seat Assembly for the people of Northern Ireland which will have full executive and legislative responsibility for subjects like Finance and Personnel, Education, Environment, Health and Social Services, Economic Development and Agriculture. Elections for it took place on June 25, 1998 under the system of proportional representation; so that minority rights are secure. Care has been taken to ensure that all communities are represented in the decision-making of the Assembly. Decisions on sensitive issues will be subject to approval on a cross-community basis and requires a majority of both Nationalists (Catholics) and Unionists (Protestants) voting or a total of 60 per cent with at least 40 per cent of both communities.

In recognition of the legitimate nationalist aspirations, a North-South Ministerial Council (between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic) will be set up for mutual consultation on areas like tourism promotion, inland fisheries and strategic planning.

In addition, a new body (including the British and Irish Governments, devolved institutions of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and representatives of the Channel Islands) will be set up for consultation and cooperation on issues like environment, transport and approaches to EU issues.

Further, the Human Rights Commission and Equality Commission reflecting the community balance will protect the interests of both communities so that they get equitable opportunities in all fields.

The Agreement stipulates decommissioning of all para-military arms within two years. (In practice it means surrender of arms by the IRA). It introduces a mechanism for an accelerated programme for the release of political prisoners irrespective of the nature of their crime including that of murder within a fixed time frame. It also provides for making the composition of police, which at present is about 90 per cent Protestant, more balanced.

...According to the Agreement, the First Minister and First Deputy Minister must belong to two different communities.

The Agreement ensures safeguards for the two communities in political, cultural and administrative fields.

It is a complex response to a very complex problem.

There are still formidable difficulties in the implementation of the Agreement... More confidence building measures are needed before ... the Agreement can be implemented.

The main lessons of the entire exercise of restoring peace in Northern Ireland and its possible relevance for Kashmir may be summarised as follows:

1. All sides realise the limitation of violence in solving any dispute.
2. A diverse society must first work out the mechanism for reconciling and accommodating the interests and aspirations of each community. The mere principle of majoritarianism is neither democratic nor workable.
3. The involvement of autonomous regional governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales alongwith Irish and British Governments in the British-Irish Council was an important part of the Peace Agreement. Can autonomous regional governments of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Pak-part of the State and Gilgit be formed and included in peace talks and a joint India-Pak Council.
4. Independent institutions, intellectuals and conflict-resolution scholars must be respected by all concerned; so that they can work out confidence building measures between different regions and communities of the State and between a composite personality of the State and the Governments of India and Pakistan which must precede a discussion on concrete solutions.
5. ... Pakistan's active involvement and support to the militant movements in Kashmir must end and its relations with India should further improve.

(Source: The Mainstream, 15 May, 1999)

CPI: G.S. Bardhan On Kargil Conflict

... We should take firm steps to clear the Indian soil from the infiltrators... At the same time we should not allow this serious conflict to escalate into a general conflagration, or allow chauvinism to be whipped up...

Alongside military actions, political initiative should be taken at the highest level to ensure that the infiltrators are made to withdraw from our side of the LOC, and that the conflict de-escalates.

The Ministry of Defence owes an explanation to the country as to why its vigilance was down, while infiltration across the border, according to its own admission, had been going on since January 1999, and systematic efforts were being made by the infiltrators to occupy the heights and dig in... We must warn against the attempts by BJP ... to draw political mileage from this incident...

(Source: The New Age, 30 May, 1999)

Regional Autonomy Committee Report

Summary by Balraj Puri

A five tier political set up – at state, regional, district, block and panchayat levels – an equitable and objective formula for financial allocation of funds to reduce inter-regional and intra-regional imbalances and a rational policy for promotion of languages and cultures of various ethnic communities of the state are the highlights of the report that Bajraj Puri submitted as Working Chairman of the Regional Autonomy Committee to the Chief Minister of J&K.

... According to Mr. Puri, concretises and elaborates the conceptual framework that the Committee had unanimously adopted and the commitments that national and state leaders, including Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah had made from time to time since 1952.

The Committee was appointed by the state government on 29th November, 1996 and included besides Mr. Puri, the Chief Minister who was its Chairman and four other members of the ruling National Conference. It received 75 written representations and held discussions with about 500 persons from different parts and communities of the State...

Regional autonomy, the Report states, is a logical extension of the principle of federalism from centre-state to state-region relations which alone can ensure unity in a state as rich in diversities as J&K. It envisages an elected regional authority with political, legislative and executive powers to deal with the subjects of regional importance. Autonomous regional authorities are linked with the three tier Panchayati Raj institutions for further devolution of political power upto the village level.

The report makes a case for modifying the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989, to bring it at par with the provisions of the 73rd amendment to the Indian constitution. As the state law provides for nomination of the head of the District Boards, 33% representation of women as also of SC and ST an already centralised system would be further regimented, the Report adds.

The decentralised institutions recommended in the report would not only have powers of fund raising but also receive financial allocations from the state government on the basis of a formula which would take into account social indicators adopted by the UNDP like female illiteracy, infant mortality, road mileage as percentage of area, share in government services and admission to technical institutions besides population and area.

Finally, the report pleads for a rational and well thought cultural policy for recognition and promotion of all cultural identities, including those which transcend district and regional boundaries. It recommends trifurcation of J&K Cultural Academy into three

academies of languages and literature, theatre and music and fine arts on the pattern of Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi at the national level. It has ... demanded full autonomy for trifurcated academies which should be headed by full time non-government cultural personalities. The report deals with problems of the languages used in the state and suggests a full-fledged Translation Department to translate selected literatures of various languages of the state into one another. ... While releasing the Report to a select audience in New Delhi on 27 May, 1999 Mr. Balraj Puri reiterated his view that most of the complications in Kashmir problem could be directly traced to its internal tensions. The political, economic, cultural and other measures suggested in his report for reconciling the diverse interests and aspirations of the people and thus evolving a harmonious and composite personality of the state, according to him, would enable it to play its destined role in the affairs of the country...

Jason Burke on Recruitment and Training of Mercenaries in Pakistan

... Harkat-al-Mujahideen (is) one of the groups that recruits, trains and arms the fighters for Kashmir. Volunteers sleep, eat and pray in its unfurnished rooms while waiting for transport to the Line of Control – the de facto border that has split Kashmir between India and Pakistan since 1949. (It claims that) six British nationals of Pakistani origin were fighting the Indians with his organisation.

The Islamic militants are a mixed bunch. Many are Kashmiri Muslims fighting what they see as a war to free their homeland. For others, home is far away. The Indians refers to the militants as Pakistan's Foreign Legion.

The reference is not only to their varied origin but also to the fact that many are paid to fight. The going rate for a three-month tour of duty in Kashmir is between £1,000 and £3,000. There are recruits from almost every country with a substantial Muslim population...

There are 13 main militant groups and most of those engaged in the battle near Kargil in Kashmir are from the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba ... based in Muridke, near Lahore.

The Lashkar is known to have strong links with Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), the powerful and secretive agency widely believed to be masterminding the militants' operations.

Indian officials say they have intercepted radio messages in Pashto proving that many of the militants are Taliban militiamen from Afghanistan...

(Source: The Independent, London)

Kashmir: Sources of Conflict, Dimensions of Peace

Sumantra Bose in *The Economic and Political Weekly*, 27 March, 1999

This article identifies and develops essential elements of a multi-dimensional approach to gradually, incrementally de-escalate the Kashmir conflict. It first pinpoints the essential features of that conflict, stressing that the problem has both exogenous sources in the form of the broader regional conflict between India and Pakistan, and endogenous sources, in the form of the existence of several fundamentally different political allegiances and preferences among the socially heterogeneous population of Kashmir. It also explains why neither plebiscite nor partition present viable means of resolving the Kashmir conundrum, using analogies and examples from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Quebec in the process. The article then develops one by one three interlocking dimensions of an alternative peace-building approach which takes account of the complex intersection of multiple, cumulating 'domestic' and 'international' factors that collectively define the contemporary Kashmir problem. This three-track approach is inspired by the ongoing strategy of building peace in northern Ireland and derives much of its substance from the central aspects of the Good Friday Agreement. The approach takes into account the legitimate concerns of Indian and Pakistani state elites with basic issues of territorial sovereignty, national interests and security, while accommodating the equally legitimate aspiration to self-rule of a large segment of the population of Kashmir.

Conclusion

... It is within the realm of the possible that ... progress can in the foreseeable future be achieved in Kashmir. In the best case scenario – which of course is itself a highly optimistic assumption – the kind of multi-dimensional, interlocking approach I have outlined has the potential to unfreeze a 50-year stalemate.

This approach takes full account of the unavoidable exigencies of realpolitik the legitimate concern of the Pakistani and Indian states and their elites with basic issues of state sovereignty, national interests and security. The present de facto sovereign jurisdictions in Kashmir cannot and will not change in the foreseeable future. The borders drawn in blood through Jammu and Kashmir in 1947-48 are here to stay – albeit, hopefully in a minimal form in the future – just as those even longer borders drawn in blood between India and Pakistan at the same time are a permanent reality. However, it is still in the interests of both India and Pakistan to find a viable, durable way out of a conflict that saps so many resources, causes so much tension, and which neither country can ever hope to unequivocally 'win'.

At the same time, this approach offers to the frustrated, fractured and utterly demoralised independence movement in Kashmir the prospect of a genuine voice in the making of Kashmir's future and a major role in the operation of its reconstituted institutions of governance. That, whatever its limitations, would not be something insignificant. The alternative, in any case, is even less palatable for all sides involved – a dead end status quo built on obsolete assumptions and ridiculous posturing which normalises conflict rather than peace.

Flare-up in Kashmir

Editorial, *The New York Times*, 27 May, 1999

The snow has usually melted in the Himalayan foothills by this time of year, and it is not uncommon for India and Pakistan to engage in artillery fire across their disputed border. Yesterday, however, tensions between these two nuclear powers escalated sharply with an Indian air attack on alleged infiltrators from Pakistan in Indian-held territory in Kashmir. The new hostilities are dangerous. Both nations should exercise military restraint, pull back from their confrontation and renounce the use of force to settle their conflict.

... Since both nations tested nuclear devices a year ago, any flare-up is reason for concern... The United States and other countries should make clear that India and Pakistan cannot afford this kind of brinkmanship. They should return to the cooperative spirit of February, when Prime Minister Vajpayee of India visited Prime Minister Sharif in Lahore and the two leaders pledged to redouble their attempt to reach agreements on nuclear and other issues.

... India has long asserted that Islamic militants from Pakistan and Afghanistan have infiltrated with aid from the Pakistani military, a charge that Pakistan denies. **There is credible evidence, however, that in the last week or two several hundred invaders have intruded on the Indian side of the 50-year-old border.**

... Neither Sharif nor Vajpayee can afford to be distracted by internal politics. They need to do more to ... defuse the tension on the border ... and pull back forces before hostilities spin out of control.

In this entire episode, the Pakistan Army has hatched a conspiracy to push into the infiltrators and the Nawaz Sharif Government did not have a major role. The ISI which we know initiates such activities has not played any role.

- George Fernandes, Defence Minister

D. Mandal on the Controversial Inscription from Babari Masjid

In this paper ... presented at a Seminar of the Association for the Study of History and Archaeology in Calcutta in February 1999, the author questioned the very provenance of the inscription as claimed, and after micro examination found that it was never recovered from the Babari Masjid.

This paper attempts to examine the authenticity of the place of origin (provenance) of the controversial inscription, a chance discovery from Ayodhya, as claimed ... not its content. It does not mean that the content is not or less important. ...

... When the genuineness of the chance discovery itself is questionable, then the question of provenance of the find, of course, becomes important more than the content.

The Inscription: The inscription is engraved on a slab of buff sand stone. It is rectangular in shape, measuring about 5 feet in length and 2.25 feet in width. Its thickness is hardly about 2 inches. **It was intact at the time of discovery.** Its right upper portion developed an oblique vertical crack during transit resulting in the damage of a few letters towards the end of the first few lines. It has been observed that it is probably incomplete, it ends abruptly with the name of Ayusthyachandra.

It bears a long inscription comprising 20 lines in the Nagri script datable to about mid-twelfth century AD. It commences with the salutation to Siva "Om namah Sivaya". It was said to have been "fixed at the entrance of the temple of Vishnu-Hari..." Its decipherment, as claimed, established the existence of a Hindu shrine at this site, at least, about four centuries prior to the erection of Babari mosque...

First, about the state of environment of the area on the December 6, 1992, the day the controversial inscription was claimed to have been recovered... That black day, the area looked like a segment of a battle field of the days of Mahabharata. The road leading to the mosque was flooded with well built young karsevaks, sadhus and sanyasis in violent moods and temper, holding high trishulas and talwars and chanting in high pitch 'Jai Shri Ram', 'Jai Shri Ram'. The emotionally charged atmosphere was resonant with the sound of shankha, mridanga, ghant and ghariyal and resounded with shameless communal and provocative slogans. The motive of this march was obvious from the repeated slogan "*ek dhakha aur do, Babari Masjid tor do*".

This was not all. By the afternoon of 6 December, 1992 all entry points to the area were sealed... The karsevaks played key role in the so-called discovery of the inscription and other remains of the temple. They identified, removed and took them to Ramkathakunja.

What was Karseva? ... Whatever it meant it did start about 12.30 pm. Vajpayee says, "the karsevaks had stormed the structure at 12.30 pm (ibid). The so-called discovery of the inscription was made under this constructed situation. It is ridiculous to equate this chance discovery with those as were made in normal and/or other

situation...

Of the actual place of its recovery Ajay Mitra Shastri says that it was presumably embedded in the lower portion of the wall, probably within about 4 feet. (Ajay Mitra Shastri: "The Hindu Temple at Ayodhya" Pre-Babari Mosque Sanskrit Inscription from Ayodhya; World Archaeological Congress, Croatia, May 1998). One of the eyewitnesses who located the inscription categorically states that it was, then, partly hanging in the crumbling wall (S.P. Gupta, "An archaeologist's open letter to the Prime Minister, Organiser, Vol. 18, 1994).

State of Recording: As available from some of the dependable information two things are quite obvious. First, that every bit of the demolition of the Babari Masjid was, photographically recorded. Besides some of the historians and archaeologists, both from the print as well as electronic media from, perhaps, all over the world, were there to record this event. The minutest details of the performance of the karsevaks were recorded...

B.B. Lal writes, "the contention of some historians that the inscribed slab was surreptitiously placed there does not hold good. He asserts there are photographs to contradict this stand. He mentions of the two photographs published by India Today on page 33 of its issue dated Decemebr31, 1992. In this connection he mentions also a slid. (B.B. Lal's paper at World Archaeological Congress, Croatia, 1998).

... Referring to the inscription he says that "This can easily be made out from the amateur photographers and video films made hurriedly on the spot by a few but leading archaeologists and press photographers which have helped scholars to partially decipher it". (S.P. Gupta, ibid.)... **It is surprising, however, that not a single in-situ photograph of the inscription is available.**

Secondly, what is also obvious is the fact that the inscription was photographically recorded only at the Ramkatha Kunj, a temporary hutment near the site that it **was not photographed at the site of demolition is evidence by the categorical statements of some of the activists... It has been also stated that the inscription was photographed only on December 7 at Ramkatha Kunj** (Sudha Malaiya, "Archaeological evidence of Ramjanmabhoomi temple, Ayodhya and the role of media").

Yet another activist says we "took its (inscription) first estampage, photographs and video films on December 13, 1992 between 11 am and 2 pm at Ramkatha Kunj in Ayodhya" (ibid.). The emphasis on the exact timing of the act done is interesting, it plays a key role in the FIR.

Evaluation: The objective as stated above is to examine the question of provenance of the controversial inscription. Shastri deciphered it and interpreted its contents. He concluded that it was an "incontrovertible epigraphic evidence structure at Ayodhya during the closing years of the eleventh century AD. The inscribed slab - was actually fixed on the entrance wall of this temple." From this incontrovertible evidence, if it is so at

all, it appears that the original place of the inscription was the "entrance wall of the temple".

Its place was the temple, not the walls of the Masjid. The temple, as claimed, existed below the Babari Masjid.

Thus, the question of its provenance, basically, is the question of the existence of a temple below the mosque. If there was no temple below the mosque, then, the provenance of the inscription, as claimed, becomes spurious.

We, therefore, propose to deal, first, with the question of temple. **We have sufficient positive evidences which clearly show that there was no temple below the mosque. These have been discussed in detailed** in the little book of this author. The book has been submitted also to the Supreme Court (D. Mandal, Ayodhya: Archaeology After Demolition).

It may be observed that, perhaps, none of the evidences contained therein was refuted, on academic level, by any senior professional archaeologists or historians till date, not even by those who pleaded for the existence of a temple at the site. The archaeological credibility of these evidences is, thus, obvious. A brief summary of the same may be relevant here.

No Temple: Positive Evidences: Of all the available archaeological material brought to light so far regarding the mosque-temple issue, only those from the excavations carried out by B.B. Lal in 1976-77, near the mosque actually count as primary archaeological evidence. The other materials, particularly, those collected in course of the 'land levelling operation' and the 'operation demolition' do not possess the merit of evidence. It may be noted that all archaeological finds are not necessarily evidence.

Among the finds of Lal's excavation the most important, as used in the controversy, is the discovery of a series of "burnt brick pillar bases". Though, he himself did not mention of these finds in the initial report.

However, after about a decade or more these suddenly became crucial. It was in October 1990, Lal first made the claim of these finds in the RSS magazine, Manthan. The entire thesis of the existence of a temple below the mosque, in fact, rests mainly on the poor shoulder of these so-called 'pillar bases'.

The following positive evidences not only refute the existence of the 'pillar bases' but also prove that there was no temple at the site of the Babari Masjid.

1. There is clinching stratigraphical evidence clearly shows that the so-called 'pillar bases' were not contemporaneous. They belong to at least five different sequential structural phases. The lack of contemporaneity means that what has been called a series of 'pillar bases' never functioned as a single structural unit.
2. Architecturally, these (pillar bases) are too poor to bear the vertical load of large-sized stone pillars, as frequently asserted. They are constructed of haphazardly laid brick-bats, no use of headers and stretchers method; have no evidence of foundation pit,

rest directly on living surfaces; none of the four faces of any of the bases forms a straight line, horizontally or vertically.

3. The available structural evidences show that the so-called 'pillar bases' are actually the remnant portions of walls of different phases which formed room complexes.
4. Regarding the discovery of a 'hoard of stone sculptures' from a large pit there are several positive evidences which clearly show that it was in fact a big hoax. For example, the evidence of violent digging, ignoring all norms of archaeological excavation; the evidence of the destruction of stratigraphic context; the evidence of not having a single in-situ photographic document of the sequential stages of the so-called finds; the evidence of the marks of colour variation on the sculptural pieces, it is clear indication of their being in the two different physical condition simultaneously i.e. partly buried and partly exposed, this condition evidently was not available in the pit.
5. Further, the evidence relating to the findings as derived from the spatial distribution of the stone objects. About 340 square meters of the site were dug, the so-called 'hoard material' was confined only to about 5 square meters; strangely enough, the remaining 335 square meters area did not yield any piece of stone architectural element. Why? It is obvious.
6. Yet another, and the most important positive evidence. It is the occurrence of the Islamic glazed ware from the upper levels of Lal's excavations firmly datable to from 13th century AD to the 15th century AD. It clearly shows that there was Islamic occupation at the site, at least, for about three centuries that preceded the construction of the mosque. The associated structural remains were portions of room complexes. Thus, the question of there being a temple at the site during these three centuries does not arise at all.

The Claimed Provenance: No Positive Evidence:

Let us now examine the provenance of the inscription as claimed... The first deals with that aspect due to which it could not be photographed in-situ.

We hopefully believe that Shastri was not there to observe what he narrated of the state of its recovery. Naturally, somebody else communicated him the details he narrated. That, this somebody is expected to have witnessed the entire 'operation recovery'. Evidently, there was also sufficient time otherwise the observations with such minute details as narrated could not have been possible. For example, that initially it was intact, not broken; that it was embedded in the lower portion of the wall; that it was there within about 4 feet etc. Of course, the time constraint was not a problem.

... The presence of photographers with films is evident from ... positive evidences... It is misleading to propagate that the inscription in question could not be photographed in-situ as films were exhausted or photographers were not allowed or there was no time in

BABARI MASJID

the 'hum-drum'... **The reality is that the inscription was never in-situ, as claimed, either having been in the wall or lying in the debris. ...**

Now, the second aspect of the situation. It has been asserted that the objects discovered in the mosque were found in 'some sort of a compartment between two walls behind the left and central domes. Archaeologically, it may be possible to verify minimally and without much difficulty, that a pair of walls was built with a small gap between them. ...

... The authenticity of an in-built construction may be investigated... Yet another dimension of the issue. Imagine a situation. The domes completely fallen, the walls were falling, the remains of temple including the inscription started coming out, some were detached from the walls, several were hanging, and many others still embedded with the walls. Such a situation, naturally, would have been extremely suitable to achieve the objective of the 'Operation Demolition'.

All the desired evidences were there in-situ. Strategically, it would have been thus, the most appropriate moment to stop the 'operation' immediately, so that the entire evidences could have been shown to the world in-situ. Had it been so, the commanders of the 'operation' would have certainly stopped it.

But, they did not do that. What they did was complete demolition. Why? Obviously, because there was hardly anything in-situ as claimed. Similar was the situation at the time of the 'Operation Levelling' as well. Then also, the operation was not stopped when the architectural stone pieces of temple, as asserted, had started appearing in a

huge pit. Was there not an identical strategy with similar design in the two 'operations'?

There is, in fact, not a single positive evidence in support of the recovery of the inscription either from the wall or from its debris... From the point of view of archaeology, only the contextual photographic document can be considered as positive evidence, particularly, in such a controversial situation. Here the context constitutes of the walls, the debris, the setting and the environment of demolition. Is there even a single contextual photograph of the inscription? Definitely, none.

The other means of investigating the authenticity of the discovery is, of course, a physical and scientific examination of the inscription itself. If it was secreted away in a compartment during the process of construction of the mosque, and evidently, mortar and plaster were readily available at the spot, then there is every reason to expect, under the situation, the presence of the remains of mortar and plaster on the inscription.

A comparative study of the chemical composition of the same occurring on the inscription, on the one hand, and that as used in the general construction of the Babari Masjid, on the other, may be quite fruitful.

The inscription may or may not be fake, however, its provenance is definitely not the walls of the Babari Masjid as claimed. If it is a genuine inscription, and if the information as contained therein is correctly interpreted, in that case, the temple as referred to should be looked at somewhere else, as there was no temple at the site of the Babari Masjid in Ayodhya...

(Source: The New Age, 11-17 April, 1999)

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Illegal Immigration from Bangladesh Adds to Continuous Migration from Other States

A Fresh Look at Infiltration in West Bengal by Prof. Samir Guha Roy, Indian Statistical Institute

... The spurt in the refugee movement from Bangladesh in the wake of the 1971 war of liberation, when some 75 lakh took shelter in West Bengal, was temporary. About 60 lakh of these refugees are reported to have been repatriated to the newly formed State of Bangladesh within a year. It is however suspected that a larger number of them than is reported somehow overstayed and got mixed with the mainstream population. These people have actually been staying in West Bengal illegally since 1971. Again it is not unlikely that some earlier refugees and immigrants returned home after liberation, perhaps compensating for the influx to a degree. As a matter of fact, 1971 is a cut-off point since the situation before was different as the massive immigrant population, mostly Hindus, from what was then East Pakistan were treated as refugees and later given Indian citizenship.

Since natural increase registered a decline, illegal migration is obviously held responsible for the relatively higher decennial growth rate (24.6 per cent) in 1981-91 as compared to the previous decade (23.2 per cent); it is thus thought by many that the districts in West Bengal bordering Bangladesh have experienced higher growth rates than other districts. Going by the Indian census reports this is not true for most of such districts. Out of 17 districts 7 have an international border with Bangladesh. Two such districts – Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri – show uniformly a declining rate of growth over the period 1961-91. Nadia and Murshidabad, the two other border districts, also show lower growth rates in 1981-91 than in 1971-81. In the case of 24-Parganas and West Dinajpur the rates of growth have significantly decreased from the high 4 plus level of 1961-71. Among the border districts only Maldah registered a slight increase; even this rise may not be due to any Bangladeshi migration and can be accounted for by the differential levels of enumeration in the consecutive censuses. So the political interpretation that infiltrations in the border districts have contributed to "a silent demographic invasion" of the State is untenable.

A close scrutiny reveals that the estimates of illegal migration are, perhaps, motivatedly exaggerated. This becomes clear when placed against internal migration i.e. migration from the other States... The estimates are based on the differences in the overall growth rates and the rates of natural increase. The fact that West Bengal is under considerable migratory pressure is obvious and according to the place of birth statistics from census reports, 65 per cent of the total population of the State were born within

the State itself, 14 per cent in the other States of India, while the remaining were foreign-born. In the last category only less than one per cent were born in Nepal and the rest in Bangladesh.

Sizeable migration flows from the different states to West Bengal, a factor often cunningly overlooked, should be recognised as an important component in the overall migration to the State which has been attracting industrial labour migrants from other Indian States, particularly the neighbouring ones, over a long period of time. Although the general belief is that such migrations have been on the wane in recent decades, supposedly for industrial stagnation, the real picture is different. ...

A break-up of the estimated total immigrants of 16 lakh or so during 1981-91 reveals that the share of the Bangladeshi migration to West Bengal was 9.1 lakh. The rest i.e. 7 lakh constitute inter-State movements. In other words an annual average of 91 thousand Bangladeshi nationals might have crossed the international border during the decade but how many of them were identified and pushed back is not known. It is possible that a portion of these immigrants returned on their own to their place of origin.

... Even if there were foolproof restriction on international movements, the population of the State would continue to grow more than the natural increase for sometime to come. The reason lies in the sustained flow of population, not necessarily all labour migration, from other States. We must also distinguish between two circuits of international mobility – the movement of the Bangladeshi nationals to West Bengal and the reverse flow of these infiltrators to Bangladesh. The former flow, however, still outnumbers the latter movement, accelerating in part the population growth...

(Source: The Miscellany, 11 September, 1998)

(Contd. from Page 329)

magnificent temple of Sri Ranganath, Sri Narasimha and Sri Gandeswara, situated near Tipu's palace at Srirangapatnam, bear eloquent testimony to his liberalism...

... Tipu Sultan was the only leader in Indian history who never allied with the English against a native ruler, Hindu or Muslim, though he had sufficient reason to settle scores with them. His example sets at naught the widely held opinion that India's struggle for political emancipation started with the Mutiny of 1857.

(Source: The Statesman, 30 May, 1999)

NCM Committee on Communal Riots – Highlights of the Report, 5 March, 1999 Prevention

Statutory Community Relations Commission (CRC) entrusted with the responsibility of study, monitoring, prediction, and peaceful resolution of inter-group conflicts, having powers to initiate legal proceedings against mediapersons and leaders u/s 153A, 295 and 505 etc...

Mohalla and District Peace Committees to function under the supervision of CRC.

Special Intelligence Units (SIU) at national and state levels for collection of intelligence related to communal disputes (with) adequate representation of minorities and weaker sections and to be specially trained...

Enactment of ... Political Activities (Regulation) Act prohibiting political activities based on seeking dominance of any religion or culture.

Right to take out procession to be strictly regulated and restricted.

The Press Council to have powers to initiate legal proceedings against papers responsible for aggravating communal situation leading to violence.

The NCERT and the UGC to have Standing Committees to review all teaching-reading material from primary to undergraduate levels to remove communal prejudices.

Control

Statutory State Security-cum-Administration Commission (SAC) for i) laying down policies ii) periodic review of administrative and police performance iii) controlling appointment, posting, promotion, transfer, suspension etc. Of senior officials.

Statutory district-level watchdog bodies to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of the administration and the police.

DM and SP to be held responsible for failure to prevent and stop riots. Service rules to be amended providing for disciplinary action against erring officials for serious dereliction of duty.

Inquiry Commissions (IC) to be appointed by the SAC in the event of casualties being 3 to 20 and by the panel of Chairmen of NHRC, NCM and SAC when casualties exceed 20. The IC to fix official responsibility for failure and to determine the loss of life and destruction of property and the amount and kind of compensation to be paid to sufferers of riots.

The governments not to reject the findings and recommendations of the IC.

Training of police officers and men and other law-enforcement personnel inhuman rights, with a special course on removing prejudices and negative stereotypes;

(Contd. on Page 313)

Teesta Setalvad On Bajrang Dal's Anti-Muslim Campaign

Bajrang Dal launches fresh anti-Muslim campaign in Mumbai.

In what seemed like the launching of yet another hate campaign, at a public meeting in Mumbai on February 21, the Maharashtra unit of the Bajrang Dal issued a call to arms, exhorting the 5,000-strong crowd "to lay hand on weapons", to for the "killers of cows" and "drink the blood of sinners".

(For it) the fact that the Muslim festival of 'Bakri Eid' and the Mahavir Jayanti for Jains fall on the same day – March 29 – is obviously an opportune coincidence. "See to it that a not a single animal is slaughtered on Ahimsa Day (March 29)", was the war cry sounded.

"Main to kahta hoon, sala Mussalman gaddar hai", thundered one of the speakers... A civic issue that has acquired communal overtones in recent years – the use of loudspeakers in mosques for calling the azaan – was also raked up. A deadline of May 15 was set for Muslims to pull down loud-speakers from all mosques, failing which the Bajrang Dal threatened to take matters in its hands.

As reported by newspersons ... the next day, the statements, threats, slogans and exhortations at the meeting included the following:

- Cut off the heads of those who kill cows.
 - Halt trucks carrying cattle for Bakri Eid and teach the truck drivers a lesson!
 - Come out on the streets and show your strength. If they show knives, you show swords.
 - Hindus are compared to cows. But once the cow charges with horns, nobody can stop her.
 - Drink the blood of sinners.
 - It's time to lay your hands on weapons.
 - Let Salman Rushdie come to India, 75 crore Hindus will protect him.
 - Ours is not a Ganga-Jamuna culture. When the Jamuna meets the Ganga, it become the Ganga. So also the mainstream in Bharat is Hindutva and everyone has to accept it.
 - Until Hindus react, no one will listen to us.
- 'Ayodhya to sirf jhanki hai, Mathura Kashi baki hai'**

Such remarks made at a public meeting, are clearly violative of sections 153a and 153b of the IPC, which relate to "incitement of hatred and violence against certain sections on the basis of religion". In other words, they are criminal offences punishable by law. However, inquiries made by Communalism Combat with the Azad Maidan police station and senior police officials indicated that, even three weeks after such blatant incitement, the Mumbai police had failed to initiate any penal action against the Bajrang Dal leaders...

(Contd. on Page 322)

Violation of Rights of the Minorities: Communalisation and Minorities

Indian Social Institute's Report on State of Human Rights in India 1998 (Extracts)

The events of the 1998 demonstrated the true character of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, or RSS, which wields enormous influence over the Central Government. The justification by the VHP of the rape of nuns in Jhabua as an expression of "the anger of patriotic Hindu youth against anti-national forces" the shameless and blatant goondaism of the Shiv Sena in disrupting cricket matches and film-shows; and the brutal murder of Staines and his two small children, are all integral aspects of the agenda of this brand of "Hindu Nationalists". The BJP is not a moderate party with a lunatic fringe out to embarrass it, nor is the RSS one of its marginal associates. It is the RSS which controls the BJP as it also controls the VHP, Bajrang Dal, BMS, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, and various other organisations.

For the RSS, history is a chronicle of defeat, victory, strength, weakness, etc. Revenge is the motive force of political mobilisation. Violence and the constant threat of its use is the RSS's ultimate instrument. It calls itself a cultural organisation, for its goal is to reconstruct Indian culture to the point where its philosophy of violence replaces the culture of tolerance, consensus and non-violence. The RSS's claim that it has never been indicted for communal activities by official inquiries is a lie. A glance of some of these enquiry commissions – Ahmedabad, Bhiwandi, Tellicherry, Jamshedpur, Kanayakumari – clearly show that RSS has been indicted repeatedly in communal violence.

V.D. Savarkar, President of the Hindu Mahasabha is one of the heroes of the RSS. He was one of the prime accused in the Gandhi murder case along with his protégé Nathuram Godse. Though he was acquitted for lack of evidence, his sympathy for the politics of that assassination was no secret. The RSS itself has never condemned Gandhi's assassination. Soon after January 30, 1948, it was banned by the Home Ministry under Sardar Patel (supposedly the role model for the current Home Minister L.K. Advani) for inciting hatred against minorities, attempting to suborn the loyalty of the police and military, stockpiling weapons and generally being responsible for the climate within which Gandhi was murdered.

The justification for violence in the RSS philosophy has led to the brutalisation of its leadership and given a strong impetus to the criminalisation of Indian politics. The DGP of the Gujarat police force has openly stated that "the activists of the VHP and Bajrang Dal were taking law into their own hands which posed a serious danger to peace in Gujarat". The ex-Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Manohar Joshi, brazenly congratulated his party men for vandalising a cinema house, and stated that no action was

necessary to punish the men responsible for breaking into the BCCI office and destroying its properties. The Home Minister of India, L.K. Advani's lack of concern for upholding the law of the land is evidence in his "clean chit" to the Bajrang Dal in the aftermath of the Staines murder without any inquiry whatsoever. The recent "census" of Christians in Gujarat, with its openly communal bias, is another example of the plight of the law in BJP run states.

It is not the goal of the RSS to wipe out the minorities from India. Rather, the RSS aim is to terrorise the minorities to submission, subvert Indian democracy and public institutions into a system amenable to its complete control, a system where all citizens, especially Hindus, will practice only the RSS brand of certified Hinduism, see only duly certified films, wear approved clothes and costumes, learn only the approved version of history and practice the RSS version of Hindu culture. Above all, democratic rights and privileges will be destroyed, and citizens prevented from defending their economic and social interests as workers, professionals, artists etc. The recent Dharmasansad at Ahmedabad organised by VHP, reiterated this message when it asked the "political authority" to submit to "religious authority".

The attack against minorities must be seen in the context of a much larger attack on Indian democracy and its attempted subversion. However, the recent mobilisation of people against such attacks shows the strength of the secular and democratic consciousness of the people. We believe the Indian people will not be silent spectators to the destruction of democracy and will act to defeat such designs.

(Contd. from Page 312)

periodic training of police officers for riot control.

Police and other agencies involved in law-enforcement to have 25% representation of minorities.

Use of firearms for mob control by the police not to be encouraged especially at the initial stage for deterrence.

Prosecution

Apart from constituting Special Investigation Squads, Special Prosecutors and Special Courts for trial of riot related cases, special trial procedures to be provided...

Compensation

All those killed in riots after 1984 in any part of the country to be paid uniform compensation of Rs.2 lakhs with interest according to the Delhi High Court judgement of 5 July, 1996.

A Central law on riots to provide for, among others, restitution and payment of compensation to all victims of riots for loss of life, property and injuries during riots.

Private Affirmation Creates New Black Middle and Professional Classes

Bowen & Bok's Study on Considering Race in University Admission

Review by Ethan Bronner in the New York Times, 9 September, 1998 (Extracts)

A major new study of the records and experiences of tens of thousands of students over 20 years at the nation's elite colleges concludes that their affirmative action policies created the backbone of the black middle class and taught white classmates the value of integration.

The study, which challenges much of the conservative thinking about affirmative action (has been published) by Princeton University Press in a book titled "The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions." It was written by two former Ivy League presidents, William G. Bowen of Princeton University, an economist, and Derek Bok of Harvard University, a political scientist.

Examining grades, test scores, choice of major, graduation rates, careers and attitudes of 45,000 students at 28 of the most selective universities, the authors say that although they are both advocates of race-conscious admissions policies, they wanted to test the assumptions underlying such policies.

Having completed the work, they say it should put to rest major objections to such policies... With its rich database and carefully calibrated tone, the study will most likely lead the charge in a liberal counteroffensive to recast the debate over affirmative action, which in the last two years has been rolled back...

The counter-offensive ... seeks to broaden the notion of merit beyond tests and grades and hails affirmative action less as a means of overcoming past discrimination – an older argument with decreasing political support – and more as a way to insure a healthier future for whites and blacks.

The Bowen-Bok study limits itself to the practice of race-conscious admissions in elite higher education; that is, to considering the race of applicants to be a critical factor in whether they should be admitted – as important, say, as where they are from or extracurricular activities.

The study begins by documenting the problem: blacks who enter elite institutions do so with lower test scores and grades than those of whites. And as they work their way through colleges like Yale and Princeton and state institutions like the Universities of Michigan and North Carolina, blacks receive lower grades and graduate at a lower rate.

But after graduation, the survey found, these students achieve notable successes. They earn advanced degrees at rates identical to those of their white classmates. They are even slightly more likely than whites from the same institutions to obtain professional degrees in law, business and medicine. And they become more active than their white classmates in civic activities.

The authors call black graduates of elite institutions "the backbone of the emergent black middle class" and say that their influence extends beyond the workplace.

"They can serve as strong threads in a fabric that binds their own community together and binds those communities into the larger social fabric as well", the

authors say. ...

Skeptics might argue that the success Professors Bowen and Bok think they witnessed in those studied was simply a result of continuing preferences granted them by institutions and corporations as they rose. But Bowen said that those who entered college in 1976 were today about 40 years old and had had to demonstrate that they deserved the opportunities offered them.

He added, "The overwhelming nature and magnitude of the results is so striking that it is hard to attribute them to preferences".

Bowen and Bok say in their book that a "race-neutral" admissions policy would be disastrous for American society, reducing black percentages at top colleges to less than 2 per cent from 7 per cent. ...

A more troubling question, the authors acknowledge, regards the white students whom these black students displaced. Would society have been better off if they had attended instead of the blacks?

"That is the central question", the authors write, "and it cannot be answered by data alone". It is a clash of "principle versus principle, not principle versus expediency". They come down firmly on the side of admitting the blacks, saying that society needs them. ...

Bowen and Bok point out that if more than half of the blacks accepted at selective colleges had been rejected, the probability of acceptance for another white applicant would rise only 23%, to 27% from 25%.

Like handicapped parking spaces, they say, race-conscious admission policies have a major impact on the minority in question whereas eliminating them would only marginally help members of the majority.

One commonly voiced objection to affirmative action that the authors seek to demolish is the assertion that since blacks admitted through race-sensitive policies do not keep up with their white colleagues, they end of failed and stigmatized. ...

Affirmative Achievement

A new study of graduates from a group of 28 highly selective colleges and universities gives support to race-conscious admissions policies. Here are some of the study's findings.

Percentage of Graduates who attained a Doctoral or Professional Degree

	Black	White
From the group of elite schools	40	37
From all schools	8	12

Percentage of Graduates from the group of elite Colleges who have led Community or Social Service Activities since College, by type of Advanced Degree and Race

	Black	White
Law Degree	21	15
Medical Degree	18	9
Business Degree	14	8
Doctoral Degree	33	6

NCM Explanatory Note on Educational Rights of Minorities: Latest Legal Position

No Special Bench of the Supreme Court

1. No Special Bench of the Supreme Court of India is at present re-examining the import and implications of Article 30 of the Constitution. Such a Special Bench was constituted in January 1997 by the then Chief Justice of India A.M. Ahmadi. After his retirement on 31 March, 1997, the Special Bench did not have any further hearing of the case. In July 1997, on the retirement of Justice K. Ramaswami the Special Bench got dissolved and has never been reconstituted since then.
2. During its few hearings until 31.3.1997, the Special Bench had not issued any order or instructions for the stay or abeyance of the law on the subject as then in force. The said law, therefore, remains wholly unchanged. There is no judicial ban whatsoever on adhering to and pursuing the dictates of Article 30 of the Constitution as per the settled law.

Latest Ruling of the Supreme Court

1. Much later, on 7th September, 1998, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court has delivered a very significant judgement on Minorities' Educational Rights in the case of N. Ammad vs Manager, Emjay High School (JT 1998 (6) SC 221)
2. This latest Ruling of the Supreme Court of India has emphatically held as follows:

- (i) A Constitution Bench of seven judges of this Court in Re Kerala Education Bill case – AIR 1958 SC 956 – has laid down the following proposition:

“This right guaranteed under Article 30(1) is a right that is absolute and any law or executive direction which infringes the substance of that right is void to the extent of infringement. But the absolute character of the right will not preclude making of regulations in the true interests of efficiency or instruction, discipline, health, sanitation, morality, public order and the like, as such regulations are not restrictions on the substance of the right guaranteed by the Constitution.

- (ii) The aforesaid proposition was approved by another Constitution Bench of this Court in Sidhrajibhai Sabbai vs. the State of Gujarat (AIR 1963 SC 540) and also by a 9-Judge Bench of this Court in Ahmedabad St. Xaviers, College Society vs. State of Gujarat (1975 1 SCR 173). Thus the legal position adumbrated in Re Kerala Education Bill (supra) remains unchanged now.

- (iii) For a Minority Educational Institution, the

management's right to choose qualified persons (for staff) is “well insulated by the protective cover of Article 30(1) of the Constitution and it cannot be chiselled out through any legislative Act or executive rule except for fixing up the qualifications and conditions of service for the post.”

- (iv) As regards a Minority Educational Institution already in existence, when the Government declares it as a Minority institution it merely recognizes “a factual position that it was established and is being administered by a minority community. The declaration is only an open acceptance of a legal character which should necessarily have existed antecedent to such declaration.”

(Source: NCM Newsletter, Vol. III, 1999)

Madras High Court

On Establishment of Technical Institutions

All India Council for Technical Education, Petitioner v. Sri Devi Karumari Amman and others, Respondents.

S.S. SUBRAMANI, J.

All India Council for Technical Education Act (52 of 1987), Section 10- Establishment of Training Institute – Application for – State Government has to consider each and every application independently on merits as to desirability of establishing a college in proposed location – State Government cannot take a policy decision and refuse permission merely on that ground.

(Source: AIR 1999 Madras 206)

Karnataka High Court

On Establishment of Medical College

Al-Mahmood Education Society, Shimoga and etc. etc., Petitioners v. State of Karnataka and others, Respondents.

G.C. BHARUKA, J.

Constitution of India, Article 226 – Educational institution – New Medical College – Establishment of – Grant of essentiality certificate required under Regulation 1993 – State Government cannot refuse it on policy consideration simpliciter and required to consider qualifying criteria provided under Regulations in each case.

Indian Medical Council Act (102 of 1956), Sections 10-A, 33.

(Source: AIR 1999 Karnataka 223)

60,000 Students in Educational Institutions Anjuman-i-Islam, Mumbai - A Report

Around 1874 a number of enlightened Muslims of Bombay ... led by eminent lawyer Badruddin Tayabi formed themselves into an Association and named it "Anjuman-i-Islam" and set up the spread of modern education as its basic aim. In the initial stages, 'Special Hindoostani Classes' were begun at G.T. School, Mumbadevi (1878) and at the Imambara of Haji Zainul Abedin at Babula Tank (1880) where instruction was given in Persian, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi and English.

The Anjuman's own school was opened in 1893 at its present prominent location. A hostel was also constructed. Handsome donations for scholarship and development of institutions came from the Nizam of Hyderabad, Sir Agha Khan, Nawabs of Rampur and Junagarh, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Nakhoda Mohammed Ali Rogay, Haji Yusuf Sobani and Adamji Peerbhoy, among others. It was the beginning of a movement and not just an institution. ...

In 1946, Saif Tayabji, grandson of Badruddin, got the Anjuman incorporated as a non-profit making company under the Indian Company Act which allowed it to act as a motawalli of waqfs. This enabled the Anjuman to take up sole trusteeship of several Trusts.

At present, 60,000 student out of which 22,000 are girls, are studying in various institutions controlled by the Anjuman. It manages more than fifteen trusts.

Among the luminaries who have led the Anjuman are Badruddin Tayabji, Cumruddin Tayabji, Kazi Kabiruddin, Faiz Tayabji, Rahamatullah M. Sayani, Sir Currimbhoy Ebrahim, Justice A.M. Kajiji, Osman Sobani, Sir Sulaiman Cassum Mitha, A.E. Maskati, Hadi C. Tayabji, Saif Tayabji, Akbar Peerbhoy, A.K. Hafizka, A.R. Antulay and Moinuddin Harris. The present President is Dr. M. Ishaq Jamkhanawala who ...has embarked on a many-pronged expaznsion programme.

Among the further projects are: College of Pharmacy and Architecture, College for Nursing, an Institute for Business Management and a Women's University.

Though the Anjuman was established and is managed by India's largest minority, its doors are open to all communities...

The annual budget comes to about Rs.60 million and most of its institutions are recognised by the government as well as Universities and receive government grants. They have been accepted as a minority institutions and enjoy minority character status.

Apart from 6 Primary Schools, 13 High Schools (5 for girls), 5 Higher Secondary Schools and 1 Public School are running. The Anjuman runs 8 Colleges, 4 Polytechnics and 3 Institutes. The Anjuman also runs Coaching Centre for Central and State Services.

Plea for Cross Tabulated Socio-Economic Data on A.P. Muslims Muslim Education Society, Hyderabad's Statement

... It is necessary to gather relevant data on income level, literacy percentage, occupational pattern, industrial potential, employment position (in government and private sector) position in trade and commerce, size of the family, mode of accommodation and various other aspects.

The comparative study of Muslim minority with

- a) Other minorities
- b) Majority and
- c) Reserved classes will help to know the position of Muslim minority.

The Muslim Educational Society suggests that the census authorities in the state ... provide an accurate and factual study on Muslim minority in the state. This may be done either by, census machinery or the commission may depute social science researchers to gather the figures scattered in the census records.

The Muslim Education Society, Hyderabad feels that only statistical data can provide an authentic basis both to the Minority Commission as well as to the Government in solving the problems of the minority. If the government and the commission are able to produce this data, it will establish their credentials and reflect a genuine desire to look into the minorities problems. The financial constraints should not come in the way of getting the valuable data...

The Society, therefore, requests the Minority Commission and the Chief Minister to initiate the work on this project so that the government and the policy maker develop a methodology to solve the problems of the minorities.

M.A. Ahmed, Secretary

Mathew Strozier On Hinduism in US School

In Suburban school in Westchester county, New York, a third-grade teacher has regularly taught a lesson on Indian culture in which students, after hearing stories about the Hindu god Ganesh, are asked to make their own Ganeshas from paper.

But, now a Federal Judge has ruled that the ... School District must stop this lesson and two other activities because they violated students' ... right to religious freedom.

The Judge found "subtle coercive pressure to engage in the Hindu religion"... Despite the seemingly innocuous nature of some of the activities, the case was said to be important by legal experts for its potential implications for how schools taught religion....

(Source: The Pioneer, 24 May, 1999)

Naseem A. Zaidi on Muslim Education

... To conclude, Muslims in general, have shown a lower degree of excellence at school level as compared to their counterparts in other communities. Muslim either due to their choice or as a result of incapacities have shown lesser inclination towards job-oriented courses. Poor schooling in Urdu/Hindi medium schools and unfriendly environment categorised by a large number of factors were found to be the main obstacles in the way of academic excellence among the Muslim students.

Who should break the vicious circle – government, the Muslim NGOs or the Muslim individuals? The government has always followed a lukewarm approach towards the education of the minorities. Further, the

government's assistance is limited upto providing financial ... assistance mostly to Hindi/Urdu medium schools only...

The rhetorics of blaming the government for educational backwardness will not solve the problem... In the short run, the Muslims should diversify and modernise their economic activities... (and) improve their economic condition but the remedy can not provide a big push necessary to break the vicious circle.

Opening excellent schools, at least one in each town and city seems to be a panacea for solving the colossal problem.

(Source: The Azad Academy Journal, 1-30 June, 1999)

Shahabuddin's Comments Letter to Azad Academy Journal, 4 June, 1999

Prof. Naseem A. Zaidi's article "What is Wrong with the Education of Muslims" in the June 1-30, 1999 issue of your esteemed journal suffers from serious lacunae. Since it deals exclusively with Muslim minority schools established by the Muslim community. Also, his prescription – establishment of English-medium public schools - is limited to the children of the elite.

A vast majority of Muslim school students are enrolled in government schools. The Muslim community does not have the resources to establish schools of its own for all its children and run a parallel educational system.

Secondly, Muslim community following the current craze, is also establishing English-medium schools. Admittedly the standard of teaching in all Muslim schools is very poor. But they have a limited role in educating Muslim children!

The real issue, in my opinion, is low enrollment level and high dropout rate. To raise enrollment level, social pressure to increase educational consciousness is necessary. But also the government has to be addressed to open primary, middle and secondary schools in Muslim-concentration Panchayats and Mahallas, in accordance with the national norms, to provide access to secular education to the Muslim masses.

The second reason is the diversion of Muslim children to Madarsas. All Muslim school going children may also attend a Maktab in the local Masjid for basic Islamic instruction as in Kerala and Gujarat. Depending on the demand for theological and religious functionaries, some children may not be enrolled in schools and only study in Maktab and then go on to Madarsas. But there are no statistics to show the percentage of Muslim children of the appropriate age-group 1) not enrolled, 2) enrolled in Maktab/Madarsas and 3) enrolled in schools (government or Muslim). I request Prof. Zaidi to undertake a 'whole universe' survey of the situation, say, in Aligarh district.

The medium of instruction has to be the Mother Tongue, at least at the primary level and the syllabus and the textbooks and the school culture have to be in accordance with the spirit of our multi-religious society and secular order to attract Muslim parents. This is the third reason for Muslim educational backwardness.

Finally, no parent will invest in education unless they see employment prospect for their children. In Indian conditions, public employment carries social protégé. To eliminate the burden of communal bias, Muslims, an educationally, economically and socially backward employment, deserve reservation in public employment **at all levels**, not only in Category A & B.

To sum, what is needed is educational consciousness, which is rising, compared with more government schools in Muslim areas, secular education and, finally, reservation in public employment. Unless all these 4 conditions are met, Muslim Indians will remain educationally backward.

On Admission to Christian Schools

Virender Kumar, The Indian Express, 21 Jan., 1999

... In ... Gujarat where Christians are singled out for serial attacks, most of the Sangh parivar bigwigs send their children and grandchildren to missionary-run schools... The Sangh leaders find nothing wrong in criticising the missionaries in public and sending their children to their schools...

The logic of convenience is clear: education is good for people like 'us' but bad for the poor people in the poorest district of the Dangs...

Will the Muslims also withdraw their children from Christian institutions where prayers to Lord Jesus are said.

- Kalyan Singh, UP Chief Minister

On Reservation for Muslims in Education

I - Shahabuddin's Letter to Ashok Gehlot, CM, Rajasthan, 6 May, 1999

Your Government has increased the reservation quota for SC and ST in public employment and professional education as well as introduced a quota for the OBC in professional education. This is most welcome.

You will appreciate that even though some Muslim sub-communities are included in the State list of OBC's, they are not likely to benefit much because of competition with relatively advanced OBC's.

This is the reason only the Government of Karnataka introduced a 5 fold categorisation of backwardness so that backward groups **at the same level of backwardness** would not have to compete with other relatively advanced backward groups and fixed a separate quota for each category.

Secondly, Karnataka has also declared the Muslim community as such a Backward Class (BC) and placed it in a separate category along with a few other groups.

Thirdly, Karnataka has, since there are no religious qualifications for BC identified by their traditional Profession or vocation, has included permitted eligible Muslims from the quota as well. Than all thatchers or potters or weavers are covered, irrespective of religion.

I request you to consider the Karnataka Model for application in your State and to declare the Muslim community of the State as Backward Class and, along with some other comparably backward groups and give them a separate quota of half their proportion in the population of the State and also make Muslims eligible under the quota applicable to the occupational OBC's, if they engage in the same occupation.

I would be grateful for your kind consideration.

Inclusion of Muslims in SC List Harmful Shahabuddin's Reply to Ejaz Ali, 16 June, 1999

Your Memorandum of 23.2.1999.

It is factually incorrect to state that Muslim Sub-communities (listed by you), which are professionally similar to SC Hindus, 'constitute the major chunk (85%) of the total Indian Muslim population.' In fact they constitute less than 5%.

Secondly, the SC were defined as Hindu untouchables (Achhut) since 1935 and not only in 1950.

Thirdly, Article 15 & 16 and not Article 341 form the basis for special measures including reservation in public employment for the OBC's which include many Muslim Sub-Communities.

I would reiterate my view that any division of the Muslim community, on caste line among SC, ST and OBC's which forms a religious minority, will reduce their political weight and their bargaining power. As minority community can get its due only through consolidation and not through division. Any internal disparity must be tackled through internal adjustment.

II - CM's Reply dated 7 June, 1999

... I thank you for welcoming the decision of my government to increase reservation quota for SC and ST in admission to professional colleges and introducing a quota of 21 per cent for the OBC in professional education. I appreciate and share your concern that though some Muslim sub-communities are included in the state list of OBC's they are not likely to be benefitted much because of competition from relatively advance communities of OBC's.

As mentioned by you I have instructed concerned officers to obtain the details of steps taken by Government of Karnataka in introducing 5 fold categorisation of backwardness to safeguard the interests of comparatively disadvantaged sections of OBC's.

As regards declaring Muslim community as such a Backward Class and place it in a separate category and doing away with religious qualifications for Backward Classes identified by their traditional profession or vocation I will have to get these two issues examined in the socio-religious context of Rajasthan.

I would like to mention here that the state government have an open mind on these issues and based on the recommendations of State's OBC Commission and other important sociological parameters necessary steps would be taken to secure social justice for under privileged sections of the OBC's irrespective of their religious identities.

(Source: CM of Rajasthan's Letter No. CMR/SCM/SP-3 dated 7 June, 1999 to S. Shahabuddin)

Results of Civil Services (Main) Examination, 1998

Total	:	470
Muslims	:	13
		1. Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi
		2. Parwez Ahmad
		3. Reyaz Ahmad
		4. N. Gulzar
		5. Nazli Jafri
		6. Syed Md. Andaleeb Razi
		7. Hoveyda Abbas
		8. Mohd. Salman Khan
		9. Zaigham Ali Khan
		10. Faisal Imam
		11. Mahfuzur Rahman
		12. Hena Usman
		13. Mohd. Mansoor
Percentage	:	2.77

I regard your move as disruptive, divisive and harmful.

However, I support lifting the religious restriction for SC's so that those who wish to adopt other religions are free to do and are not restrained by fear of deprivation of their privilege.

Madhu Kishwar on the Fate of Urdu

Very few Hindus realise that the largest surviving group of victims of the Partition are those Muslims who chose to stay in India. They came to be mistrusted and despised in the land of their birth. Nothing symbolises their more poignantly than the treatment meted out to Urdu in post-Independent India. This can well be described as linguistic genocide.

Most people are just as unaware that in the region that gave birth to Urdu and was the traditional centre for Urdu learning for centuries, namely Uttar Pradesh, there is not a single Urdu medium primary or junior high school. The only two Urdu medium high schools are those run by and affiliated to AMU. Consequently, very few among the post-Independence generation can read or write Urdu.

All those families who are keen to have their children pick up some Urdu have to send their kids to religious *madrasas*. Thus Urdu learning gets divorced from secular education and religious leaders alone get associated with the defence and spread of Urdu. This strengthens the hold of those Muslim leaders who want their community to limit their concerns to religious issues and ignore the secular interests of Urdu speakers. This further widens the gulf between Muslims and other communities.

Why this attempt at decimation of Urdu? Many Hindus have been misled into believing that Urdu is an alien language, that it was once the language of foreign invaders and that for this reason their supposed descendants made it the language that helped bring about the partition of India. The actual facts tell a very different story. The foreign invaders who brought Islam to India were Turks who knew no Urdu simply because Urdu did not exist at that time. Though their own language was Turkish, their successors, the Mughals, used Persian as the court language ... established...

... The great Mughals considered Urdu too plebian for use as a royal language. Only later lesser Mughals whose empires had shrunk in both size and glory began using Urdu at court...

Urdu was not the language of Muslim rulers but grew on Indian soil as a language of the bazaars and Chhavis (Military garrisons) of north India out of the interaction between Persian and Khariboli. Just as Hindi is Sanskritised Khariboli, Urdu is Persianised Khariboli and, therefore, Hindi and Urdu are close kin. Urdu was the language of the educated elite among both Hindus and Muslims for a few hundred years until English replaced it.

Thus, contrary to popular belief, Urdu is not the language of Muslims alone. Both Hindus and Muslims joined together in creating this beautiful language. It is no less incorrect to stigmatise Urdu as the language that created the partition of India. The very idea of Pakistan

was conceptualised in England by a handful of Western educated Muslim intellectuals like Jinnah and Iqbal. They cooked up this fantasy influenced by European nationalism — an ideology that has been responsible for some of the bloodiest massacres and wars known to human history, including two world wars.

It was an anglicised intellectual, Jinnah, who hardly knew any Urdu and was not even a practising Muslim, who was able to convince large numbers of educated Muslims that they were not just a community, but a separate, distinct nationality and, therefore, needed a separate homeland and nation state. Almost till the very end, the indigenous educated ulemas and maulanas sided with the Congress and opposed the partition. Thus, the ideology that led to the disastrous partition of India was the product of Western education rather than that of Urdu or Islamic tradition...

Nevertheless, the Hindu elite has been taught to mistrust Urdu because it was adopted as the national language of Pakistan. Ironically enough, despite fifty years of brainwashing of Pakistani Muslims into accepting Urdu as their national language, it has very weak roots in Pakistan. Urdu is an alien language for most Pakistanis, barring the minority who migrated from Uttar Pradesh at the time of partition. Most Pakistanis speak very clumsy Urdu with a distinct accent... The real Urdu speaking people are still called Mohajirs, that is, foreigners. The party of the Mohajirs, the MQM, is locked in a deadly battle with the Pakistani political establishment. Many people in Pakistan's provinces feel Urdu is an unwelcome imposition on them and they are extremely hostile to Urdu speaking Mohajirs.

Just as the political establishment in India has tried to wipe out Hindustani from official use, which is indistinguishable from Urdu, and substituted a Sanskritised Hindi, so also the Pakistani establishment is at pains to ruin Urdu by stuffing their official language with as many Arabic words as possible while also distancing it from Hindustani. The result might be considered comic were it not for its tragic consequences... The Sanskritisation of Hindi, courtesy the Bharat Sarkar, is part of a political exercise meant to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims in north India. Similarly, while most who know Hindustani in India can enjoy Pakistani popular entertainment and ghazals, we find it hard to follow the language used in the news bulletins of sarkari PTV.

... A section of the Muslim leadership has been working hard to force all Muslims — no matter if they live in Kerala, Karnataka, Assam or Gujarat — to adopt Urdu as their mother tongue. This amounts to driving a wedge

(Contd. on Page 320)

On Declaration of Urdu as Second Official Language in Delhi

Shahabuddin's Letter to CM of Delhi, 26 May, 1999

As a person whose mother tongue is Urdu, I thank you for the decision of your Government to declare Urdu as an additional Official Language in Delhi. I am certain that this decision would be appreciated and welcomed not only by those like me whose mother tongue is Urdu but all lovers of Urdu language and literature who regard Urdu as a symbol of our composite culture.

(Contd. from Page 319)

between them and the local culture and community in which they are now rooted.

The language of every community in India is region-specific, not religion specific. Just as Hindi is not the language of all Hindus in India, Urdu cannot and is not the language of all Muslims in the sub-continent. Muslims will have the incentive to stay rooted in their regional and linguistic identities only if they feel secure and confident that their religious, cultural, economic, political and citizenship rights are secure. If they are victims of hatred and violence, if they don't feel physically secure, politically confident and culturally fulfilled, they are likely to seek security in huddling together defensively as an inward looking religious community that uses formal adherence to Urdu for symbolic purposes alone.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 4 June, 1999)

On Declaration of Hindi as Official Language by Constituent Assembly Shahabuddin's Letter to The Urdu Duniya/ Hamari Zaban, 4 June, 1999

In his article on "Baba Rajendra Prasad and Zaban ka Masala" in Hamari Zaban, Prof. Shakilur Rahman has stated that Hindi in the Dev Nagari script was declared as the official language of India by the casting vote of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of the Constituent Assembly. This is not a fact. There was no voting in the Constituent Assembly on the subject. The chair announced a consensus on the subject on the floor of the Assembly towards the end of its proceedings. The consensus was based on behind-the-scene negotiations and decision by the Congress Group.

Secondly, he has attributed to the Partition the rejection of Mahatma Gandhi's desire to have Hindustani in Hindi and Urdu scripts as the official language. If despite Partition, India could be declared a secular and not a Hindu state, surely Gandhiji's wish could also have been fulfilled. I think the reason lies in the longstanding rivalry between Hindi and Urdu for official status since the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in UP, which influenced the thinking of even the Gandhian and secular leaders of our Freedom Movement. Of course, shell-shocked as they were by the Partition, the Urdu-speaking leaders kept mum and did not press the case of Urdu or Hindustani.

MUSLIM INDIA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL TRUST

I - IMANA SCHOLARSHIP FOR MUSLIM MEDICAL STUDENTS

The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) had been offering means-cum-merit Scholarships of Rs.600 p.m. for Muslim students of recognised medical colleges in India for many years. In 1998-99, the number of scholarship was 30. For 1999-2000, the number has been increased to 60. Subject to satisfactory academic performance, the past recipients may also apply, if they have not yet taken the final MBBS II Examination.

Those interested may obtain prescribed application forms from:

The Managing Trustee
Muslim India Educational and Cultural Trust
27, Feroze Shah Road,
New Delhi-110 001.

Last date for application is 30 September, 1999.

II - SCHOLARSHIP

Muslim India Educational & Cultural Trust, 27, Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi-110 001 offers, **Merit-cum-Means Scholarships** to Muslim students for:

1. Coaching for Civil Service, Banking etc. upto 50% of the cost.
2. M.B.A., M.C.A. and other Professional P.G. courses @ Rs.300 p.m.
3. Engineering and other professional degree courses @ Rs.200 p.m.
4. Coaching for admission to Medical/Engineering courses upto 50% of the coaching cost.
5. Vocational/Technical training @ Rs.150 p.m.

Apply in prescribed form with academic record and means certificate before 30 September, 1999.

Syed Shahabuddin
Managing Trustee

AMU: Annual Report, 1996-97 (Extracts)

Introduction:

The Aligarh Muslim University is a Residential Academic Institution established in 1920. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan ... started a school as back as 1875 which later became a college and ultimately became a university in 1920.

This is premier Central University with several Faculties ... and draws students from all corners of the country as well as from foreign countries, especially Africa, West Asia and South East Asia. It is open to all persons ... of all races, religions, creeds or castes. The first graduate was Raja Mahindra Pratap Singh and post-graduate was Dr. Ishwari Prasad.

According to Section 2(1) of the AMU Act, 1920, the University means the "educational institution of their choice established by the Muslims of India, which originated as the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College, Aligarh which was subsequently incorporated as the Aligarh Muslim University. The powers of the University, its aims and objectives, have been defined under Section 5 of the AMU Act (as amended upto 1981) which are:

- 1) (a) to promote oriental and Islamic studies and give instruction in Muslim theology and religion and to impart moral and physical training.
- (b) to promote the study of the religions, civilisation and culture of India.

Faculties: The University has the following 11 Faculties:

1. Arts
2. Commerce
3. Engineering and Technology
4. Law
5. Life Science
6. Management Studies and Research
7. Medicine
8. Science
9. Social Science
10. Theology
11. Unani Medicine

Centres of Studies include Centre for Career Planning, competitive Examinations Coaching and Guidance and Promotion of Cultural Advancement of Muslims in India.

Students:

The University had 14,700 students on its rolls excluding 3599 school students. The enrollment was 3093 in Engg. and Technology, 180 in Management, 1280 in Medicine and 2155 in Science and 7992 in others.

State-wise Strength:

State	Total
Andhra Pradesh	158
Bihar	3065
Delhi	360

Jammu & Kashmir	395
Uttar Pradesh	13677
West Bengal	325
Other States	1150
Foreigners	771
Total	18,299

Foreign Students

Country	Total
Bangladesh	400
Jordan	140
30 other States	231
Total	771

Teachers Strength:

Professors	283
Readers	418
Lecturers	546
Total	1247

Non-Teaching Staff:

Category A	131
Category B	196
Category C	2588
Category D	3028
Total	5943

Hostels:

There are 16 Halls of residences (including 3 Halls for girls and one non-resident students centre with a capacity of 8032 but actual allotment to 10,360 students.

Library Facilities:

Maulana Azad Library of the University works round the clock on all days ... (except) a few holidays of national and religious importance.

(The total) collection of books in the library as on 31.3.1997 comes to 9,00,379.

The library subscribed to 555 foreign ...and 638 Indian journals... The library preserves 14,570 prestigious and invaluable manuscripts.

Games Facilities:

The University Games Committee ... runs 10 main clubs and 9 sub-clubs with 700 student participants...

Welfare Activities:

The University has registered Staff Association/Union including the Teaching Staff Association.

Finances:

The University had on 31.3.1997 investments amounting to Rs.4302.74 lakhs in the form of Government securities/FDR's etc.

Income Head	(Rs. in Lakhs)	
	Revised Estimate	Actual Exp.
Income from investments	40.00	113.34
Income from fee	170.00	266.12

AMU

Income from other sources	60.00	83.22
State Government Grants	2.62	2.12
Electricity supply service	355.00	248.13
J.N. Medical College Hospital	6.00	1.65
Maintenance Grants from UGC	9081.00	7505.84
Total	9714.62	8220.42

Expenditure

Salaries	7388.00	6182.60
Other Charges	1919.49	1686.49
Total	9307.47	7869.09

Plan Budget:

... During the year under review the figures of receipt and expenditure under Plan included besides VIII Plan, continued schemes of last plan, spill overs, research projects and schemes financed by various agencies, were as under:

S.No. Purpose	Receipt (Rupees in Lakhs)	Expenditure (Rupees in Lakhs)
1. Building	112.90	176.89
2. Books	11.20	21.83
3. Equipment	60.33	175.37
4. Furniture	3.50	1.88
5. Salaries and Other Misc.	126.58	249.02
6. Research in Unani Medicine	0.50	0.99
7. Post Partum Programme, JNMCHospital	1.50	18.57
Total	316.51	644.55

Development Activities:

The building department of the University was engaged in maintenance and repair of the University buildings and also in execution of various building projects sanctioned by the UGC. During the year 1996-97, the department has undertaken, the following major activities of Water supply and sewerage.

The building department has undertaken the construction of the following major building projects:

- 1) Construction of the Institute of Agriculture.
- 2) Construction of I.S.M. and Homeopathy building in A.K. Tibbiya College.
- 3) Construction/extension of Allama Iqbal Hall.
- 4) Construction of Jr. Doctors Hostel
- 5) Construction of Nurses Hostel
- 6) Construction of Library, Women's College.

(Contd. from Page 312)

Political observers are also raising questions whether it is a matter of design that ... the Bajrang Dal and not the Shiv Sena has been chosen to flag the saffron ... campaign... Is this yet another strategy of Hindutva to allow outfits like the VHP-Bajrang Dal to whip up public sentiments, the political fallout of which could later be harvested by the SS-BJP coalition?

(Source: The New Age, 18-24 April, 1999)



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GET MORE OUT OF LIFE -WITH CINKARA

Supreme Court On Public Temples

Hindu Public and another, etc., Appellants v. Rajdhani Puja Samithee and others, etc., Respondents.

M. JAGANNADHA RAO AND M.B. SHAH, JJ.

Societies Registration Act (21 of 1860), Sections 1, 20 – Applicability of Act – Society established for religious purpose – Can be registered under Act – ‘Charitable purpose’ in Sections 1 and 20 includes religious purpose.

Orissa Hindu Religious Endowments Act (2 of 1952), Section 3(15) – Public temple – Members of public of a city conducting pujas and religious festivals on Government land for years – Society thereafter formed to obtain the Government land on lease – Leased obtained, religious functions carried on and temples put up by society through public money – Keeping membership of society open to members of all communities – Or adding some secular objects to memorandum of association and restraining activities only to its member – Cannot change basic religious character – Temples of society are public temples.

... (Source: AIR 1999 Supreme Court 964)

Calcutta H.C. on Rights of Worshipper

Samit Pani Brahmachary and others, Appellants v.

Mayapur Chaitanya Math and others, Respondents.

GITESH RANJAN BHATTACHARJEE AND SUJIT BARMAN ROY, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 25 – Worshipper

– Can file suit to protect his right to worship and to protect deity – Need not implead deity as necessary party.

(Source: The AIR 1999 Calcutta 132)

Allahabad High Court

On Construction of Masjid on Own Land

Mohd. Sharif Saifi vs. State of UP

M. KATJU AND S.I. SARAF, JJ.

Heard the petitioner in person and learned Standing Counsel. The petitioner has prayed in this petition that he wants to make a mosque on the land in question which is in village Kuri, Tehsil Thakurdwara, district Moradabad. It is alleged in paragraph 4 of the writ petition that the respondent No.4, the SHO of P.S. Dilari, Distt. Moradabad has restrained the petitioner from building the mosque in question till permission is obtained from the D.M. ...

We are not entering into the factual controversy as to who is owner or bhumidhar of the land in question, and this dispute can be decided by the Civil/Revenue Court. However, we wish to lay down the law in this connection.

This is a free and secular country. Subject to public order, morality and health, anybody is entitled under Article 25 of the Constitution to build any house of worship, whether it is mosque, church, temple etc. on his own land or on any one else's land with the consent of that person. Article 25(1) of the Constitution states:-

“Subject to public order, morality and health and to be other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion”.

Hence, we make it clear that the petitioner is fully entitled to make a mosque on his own land or on someone else's land with the permission of that person, and if he does so the authorities will give him full protection, and take strong action against anyone interfering with the petitioner's right. No permission of the D.M. is required for this. ...

‘Not Haji Malang, it's Machindranath’

Haji Malang, is a 300 year old dargah at Kalyan, in Mumbai, where Baba Abdur Rehman Malang has been buried. Malang was a Sufi saint who came to India in the 12th century AD from the middle east. Haji Malang ... one of the few dargahs where a Hindu vahivatdar (traditional priest from the Hindu Karandekar family) and a Muslim mutawalli (claiming to be distant kin of the saint), had both been officiating at religious rituals.

In 1986, however, the Shiv Sena kicked up a controversy over the dargah claiming that it was actually the site of a 700 year old Machindranath temple. Thane Sena leader, Anand Dighe in particular, espoused the cause in early 1996 and declared that they had been trying to “secure justice” for several years... “Now that Shiv Shahi has been established in Maharashtra, it is but appropriate that the original temple be restored and regular pooja be resumed at the site”, he declared in Feb. '96. Though the renaming of the shrine was “one of the foremost objectives” of the Sena, according to Dighe, he declared that they would not do it that year... On Feb. 3, 1996, the day the annual urs was to commence (traditionally on Magh Purnima), Dighe insisted on

leading 20,000 Sainiks to the shrine to perform puja. Chief Minister Manohar Joshi along with Uddhav Thackeray, also attended the pooja that year and declared there that the Malang Hills would be developed into an all-religious shrine along the lines of Shirdi.

It is ironic that the opposition to the shrine come from Shiv Sena which constantly harks back to Maratha glory... The shrine actually shot to prominence due to the Peshwas. The first Peshwa came to the dargah with offerings when he won his throne, as he attributed his victory to the dargah... Till today the dargah is looked after by the Hindu family, whose forefathers are believed to have guarded the shrine at the time...

The way to the dargah is lined by temples of Shankar, Shiva and Ganesh. Hundreds of Sainiks led by Dighe were arrested later the same year for breaking the police cordon and insisting on carrying out pooja at a nearby Durga temple on Eid day, on April 29... The shrine, though usually deserted (attracts) Sainiks as visitors, twice a year, on the occasion of Eid, when the namaz is to be held at the dargah.

(Source: The Communalism Combat, April, 1999)

Shahabuddin - A.A. Engineer's Dialogue on 'Islamic State'

I - Shahabuddin's Letter to Asghar Ali Engineer, 13 May, 1999

I have just read your paper "The Concept of Islamic State" in which you have equated it with or reduced it to a modern democratic pluralistic state.

In a democratic state all citizens, irrespective of religion enjoy equal rights and equally participate in the formation of the government. In a Islamic State, the head of the State and of the Government, apart from the holders of other key posts at policy-making and decision-making levels must be Muslims. In an Islamic State, non-Muslims and Muslims are thus not equal, though the non-Muslims are fully protected.

The object and purpose of an Islamic State is to promote Islam, to implement the moral code of conduct and to punish deviation from the moral code according to Islamic penal law. A modern democratic state wields no such moral authority, what to speak of taking upon itself the task of organising the practice of what you call 'rituals'.

Islam accepts religious plurality but encourages voluntary conversion of people of other faiths to Islam. An Islamic State must also encourage conversion to Islam. Logically it would punish conversion from Islam. A State which sees one religion as superior to others is not a secular state. A modern democratic state is a secular state.

I agree with you that the Quran says little about the form of government or the structure of governance. The Quran is not a textbook of politics or a Constitution (as some Islamic fundamentalists would like us to believe). You are also right in saying that the Quran sees 'Justice' (Adl), as the essence of governance, and denounces 'Zulm' and 'Udwan'. While political forms and constitutional systems go on changing, these principles are eternal.

To sum up, Islamic State is basically a religious state which a modern state is not. I think it is misleading to draw the equation you have drawn and to prove your thesis wrung the religious substance out of the body.

II - A.A. Engineer's Letter to Shahabuddin, 17 May, 1999

What you have pointed out is correct as per medieval theory of Islamic State. My purpose of writing this paper was precisely to **rethink** the medieval theory in keeping with the modern conditions. States like Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh etc. have substantial non-Muslim minority... **As far as citizenship is concerned all should be equal - Muslims as well as non-Muslims with same political rights.**

I do not agree with you that the **Islamic state**

should convert non-Muslims to Islam... Even the Da'wah is not the duty of Islamic state. It is voluntary function of Muslim individuals. It is not obligatory (fard) on Muslim individuals to convert people to Islam. It is voluntary.

Yes, the executive head would be a Muslim. Strictly speaking it goes against the theory of equal rights as citizens in a secular state...

... The views expressed in the paper are mine. One may or may not agree with those views...

III - Shahabuddin's Reply to A.A. Engineer, 24 May, 1999

Thank you for your letter of 17 May, 1999.

Rethinking on the theory of Islamic State has to be within the four walls of the Quran and the Traditions, not on the basis of what a modern man thinks, it should be.

If you agree, I would be grateful if you would explain to me how you derive the concept of equality of citizenship (for Muslims and non-Muslims) from the original sources. It is not only the question of the religion of the head of the State/Government but of all persons holding policy-making and decision-making positions. This limitation infringes on the equality of rights in an Islamic State.

Secondly, I never said that the Islamic State **should** convert non-Muslims to Islam. Change of faith is indeed a personal act. However, the Islamic State, by definition, would try to encourage such conversion. Also can the Islamic State treat a Muslim becoming a non-Muslim with non-chalance?

I know what you write is your view but since your views are in the public domain, a reader may humbly ask for clarification. So do I.

IV - A.A. Engineer's Reply, 27 May, 1999

...First of all let me tell you there is nothing in the Holy Quran whether citizens of an Islamic State could be equal or unequal or whether state should encourage its people to convert to Islam or not.. It was the 'Ulema and the jurist of the medieval period who gave their opinions and we want to hold on to these opinions as if these are divine... My earnest desire is to develop the Islamic thought in the light of the Quranic values and contemporary developments.

The Quran has given full freedom to follow ones own religion... It is certain not the task of state but of its citizens to preach and convert through *da'wah* provided it is in goodly manner and with wisdom and not through coercion. Similarly if anyone wants to renounce Islam it is for people to dissuade him through wisdom not to do so and state should not intervene. That the state should intervene and behead renouncer of Islam is the view held

(Contd. on Page 325)

Shahabuddin's Comments on B.G. Verghese's Article on Conversion The Tribune, Chandigarh, 26 March, 1999

Thank you for sending me your articles in the Tribune which I would have otherwise missed.

You have painted a vast canvas, which makes it difficult for me to comment upon.

Granted that there is need for social reforms, it cannot be a 'national' or 'state' endeavour but an inner stirring within each social group in a plural society. However, in a situation when all non-Hindu/non-savarnas groups are targetted, day in and day out, on one excuse or the other, their normal tendency is to seek cover, to consolidate, to conserve. This is what deflects the social reform wave – particularly in religious minorities and in peripheral and marginalised groups.

Social reform will take place and a community will change but at its own pace, under internal pressures and under the impact of modernisation. Any coercion or external imposition will be seen as a violation of its basic religious beliefs, or religion-based social norms – as an interference with religion and thus reinforce the hold of no-changers.

The Hindu society must take the lead; push back the waves of revivalism and obscurantism; remove the fear in religious minorities of cultural submergence and religious assimilation, practised and enforced in the name of nationalism, patriotism, uniformity and even modernisation. Each group has its own dynamics but spurred by the renaissance of the Hindu society, they shall follow the lead, so long as they are not pressed to become Hindus, in the bargain! Identity is the core issue, today.

Permit me to say that while I broadly endorse your thesis, I think you need to brush up your knowledge of Islam. Historically Islam reached the shores of India in the 7th century itself. For 250 years, the Afghans and the Turks had established themselves in the Indus Valley, before they foraged into the Gangetic plain. Secondly, culture is largely secular but it cannot be totally delinked from religion. In cultural transformation and synthesis, there is a line which cannot be crossed. In Islam the line is Monotheism. That is why no Muslim can participate in Bhoomi Puja or Saraswati Vandana. So while the individual and even the group are free to do what they like, a Secular State is not. And if it does succumb to majoritarian pressures to adopt religious rituals, it has no right to call itself Secular. India cannot be a Secular and a Hindu state at the same time.

As for change of religion, every individual has the freedom of conscience and no external authority, not even the state, has the right to explore his conscience. The State comes into the picture only if a person complains of coercion etc. Then the law should take its course. There is

nothing to debate. Let the secular state stop protecting the Hindu bigots and the fanatics. Let the secular state not act as if it was the defender of the Hindu faith and offer, incentives and development packages to prevent any defection from the Hindu fold or to promote Hindu influence over non-Hindus or even to act as the Hindu synod except to provide statutory support when called upon do to so by any religious group.

Our task is to stabilise and strengthen, the secular state not to 'secularise' the Indian (or Hindu or Muslim) society.

(Contd. from Page 324)

by jurists and not the injunction of the Quran.

V-Shahabuddin's Response, 1 June, 1999

The Holy Quran is not a treatise on political science in the same way as it is not a textbook of science and technology. In fact, the Holy Quran does not guide us on how to perform the Namaz. So, to seek guidance, we have to consult the Traditions (Sunna) of the Holy Prophet which include his acts and commands as the supreme authority in Madina, the proto-type of the Islamic State.

Your approach, based solely on the Holy Quran, amounts to denial of the Sunna – the words and deeds of the Holy Prophet (and of the Enlightened Caliphs who followed him).

But you have raised an important point. Is Islam personal piety or collective power? If it is piety, the very concept of Islamic state is irrelevant. It follows that what we call Muslim rule is correctly speaking Arab or Iranian or Turkish rule – by various peoples/rulers, who called themselves Muslims, at various points in history, as other peoples, who were non-Muslims, before and after.

But in that case, you do not need to equate the modern, democratic, secular, multi-ethnic state with Islam. There is no point in such a comparison between a religion and a political system.

VI - A.A. Engineer's Reply, 10 June, 1999

... I do accept authentic *hadith* from all sources and there is no question of denying their great relevance in understanding many verses of the Holy Qur'an and other practices of the *Shari'ah*. One has to make distinction between what Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also said '*ibadat*' and '*mu'amalaat*'. The '*ibadaat*' and their performance depend wholly on *hadith* be in *namaz* or *roza* or *haj* or *zakat* or similar other practices and there is no question of any change in these practices. **But as far as *mu'amalaat* are concerned we have to keep on re-thinking from time to time and *ahadith* in this respect will be more contextual than normative. Whenever I talk of re-thinking issues it is in respect of *mu'amalaat* and never '*ibadaat*'.**

Rajesh Ramachandran : Post-script to Meenakshi Puram

... Meenakshipuram alias Rahmat Nagar sparkies clean. The villagers have stopped rearing pigs –most are now Muslims. The congregation (prayers in) the mosque, built four years ago... (On) February 19, 1981 around 300 Dalit families of the Pallan subcaste converted to Islam ... Mohammed Mustafa (Muniyandi till he was 60) ... blurts out ... "Conversion was the only way to gain respect and equality."

Meenakshipuram did not decide to convert in a day or even a year. It has never been desperately poor, and has always had its own primary school. The villagers are mainly landless sharecroppers. Reservation in education and jobs brought about awareness – and resentment at the way the landlords (mostly Thevars, an 'other backward caste') treated them. ...

"Acceptance, equal status and self-respect were the reason for the conversion of 20 families in Paruthiyar Kuruchi", says ISM Hussein, a Muslim leader who helped Meenakshipuram villagers convert. In the village, they cite a newspaper report that the Tirunelveli district collector, while inspecting tea shops in the district, found 13 instances of the two-tumbler system: one set for Dalits, another for the rest. ...

... "Reminisces Muhammed Raja Sharief when atrocities continued for a year in 1980, we decided to go ahead. Japa Mani, the headman, and a few of us took the villagers' consent and approached the South India Isha Athul Islam Sabha. Thus we got converted".

Born Hindus, Japa Mani (now Jamaat chief Zafarulla Khan) and Raja Sharief first converted to Christianity, only to find the caste system had followed them – they were Harijan Christians...

They believed they have found their dignity in Islam. Sharief married into a prominent Muslim family of the neighbourhood. Many point to their marriages into "old" Muslim families as proof of the respect they have gained.

Their Hindu relatives agree. Headman Udayar, a Hindu, leads the way to the Kalliamman temple, and the Muslims troop in as well. "The incessant police raids led to the conversion", he concurs. Why didn't he convert? Udayar was a bonded labourer, a "slave" and could not survive without Thevar patronage. He laments that he commands no respect. Any Thevar child can call him by name, but the day his son dons the cap and walks out of Meenakshipuram with a new name, he is called Bhai.

Many others remained Hindu because they were sharecroppers in land owned by the Thirumala temple, the biggest in the neighbourhood, and Kalliamman. Upper caste Hindus threatened to keep converts out of the temple fields. This led to some friction because, when some Kalliamman trustees themselves got converted, they claimed the property. Anantha Rama Seshan, who spearheaded the Hindu reconversion movement and got 185 neo-Muslims to re-convert a week later, claims he helped a villager Shivanu to reclaim the Kalliamman property.

For non-converts, Hinduism was never a cause in itself; it was just that, if not dignity, it afforded other benefits...

Raja Sharief's brother Pandaram, who works in the telecom department, remained a Hindu because he feared he would lose his job. Village development officer Thurairaju got the job in the reserved quota, and was suspended when he converted. The suspension was revoked only after he re-converted.

Then, why did others who enjoyed the benefits of reservation converts?... Says Khwaja Moiddeen. "I had some land. Now my elder son has a diploma in engineering and is in Saudi Arabia. The younger one is running a poultry shop. If he were still a Harijan, no upper caste would have touched his chicken".

Local Muslims helped by getting some of the leaders, including Raja Sharief, jobs abroad.

Outside the mosque, the villagers are curious but taciturn... Was this true? Supraich, a cattleman, responds: "I had six daughters to marry off and Muslims ask for a huge dowry. But conversion was necessary".

... Seshan says it was all for money: "Outsiders came here and got a few converted with money and promises". However, the "promises are not very apparent. Just a handful of people, including Hindus, found jobs in the Gulf. "If promises lured us, then we should have re-converted by now because there were none", says Hussein. Also, the Hindu organisations' attempts to woo the converts has failed. Seshan admits the school he opened in Meenakshipuram attracts no students. The RSS shakha, opened in the wake of the conversions, too has closed.

"Before 1981, there were just five or six shakhas in Thenkasi taluka", explains Rajendran, a Thevar and former local RSS chief. "After conversions, we had 22, but to no avail. The Harijans somehow feel the RSS is of the upper caste."

"Now it is they who harass us", says Kuttralingam Thevar...

The socio-economic changes have affected local politics. Very much part of the Dravidian movement, the Thevars are now drifting away from the DMK towards the BJP...

With every Muslim having a Dalit relative and vice versa, the Dalits and Muslims of Meenakshipuram live in perfect harmony. They appear the same, dress the same and live together – often there are Hindu and Muslim houses in the same compound...

Though Seshan thunders that conversion is a grave threat to the country's peace, the people of Meenakshipuram have been living for 18 years in harmony. And, if there is a call from their new leader, Dr. Krishnaswamy of the New Tamizhaga Party, they warn that those who haven't yet will also convert. They know that the threat of Meenakshipuram completely merging into Rahmat Nagar is a potent weapon.

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

Exemption of Wakf Properties from the Operation of Rent Control Act

UP Wakf Board Note (Extracts)

... There has been unprecedented rise in the market value of land and buildings. A large number of shops and buildings dedicated for religious and charitable purposes including Wakf properties which have been in the occupation of tenants for a long time on nominal rent... The Mutawallis of the Wakf are not in a position to demand higher rent from the tenants because of the provisions of the Rent Control Act. It is, therefore, vital to ensure that the income from such Wakf properties increase in proportion to the general rise in the market value of land and buildings... After defraying expenditure on account of payment of municipal dues etc. practically nothing is left to meet the expenditure on their repair, upkeep and maintenance. Since labour charges and cost of building materials have gone up manifold...

Moreover there is great disparity between the rentals of endowed properties and those of other similar private properties in the same neighbourhood whose rent could be substantially increased under the Rent Control Act... The development of the Wakf properties becomes difficult owing to lack of financial resources, as also because of the limitation imposed on the lease, mortgage and sale of Wakf properties. In the circumstances a rise in the rental income of the buildings belonging to Wakfs in keeping with prevalent market rates is the only possible solution of raising the income of the Wakfs to enable the Mutawallis to adequately maintain the Wakf buildings and also to carry out the charitable purposes of the Wakf.

In December 1960, the Government of India convened an Inter-State Conference at which it was suggested that Wakf properties should be exempted from the application of the Rent Control Act of the various State Governments. In support of the above suggestion, it was felt that the religious and charitable institutions of all communities had been suffering from neglect and misuse for a long time.

The All India Wakf Boards' Conference held at Bhopal in April-May, 1983 had also strongly recommended that Central Government be requested to direct the State Governments, in which exemption has not so far been granted, to exempt all Wakf properties from the purview of the State Rent Control Acts...

It was on the recommendations of the Government of India that Andhra Pradesh Government and Punjab Government exempted the buildings, godowns etc. belonging to the religious and charitable institutions in the States from the operation of their Rent Control Acts. Likewise a number of other State Governments has already amended their respective Rent Control Acts so as to exempt a class of houses from the provisions of their Rent Control Acts. The position in relation to Rent Control Acts of such State Governments is summarised below: -

The Mysore House Rent and Accommodation Control Act 1951 (Section 20)

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Act, the State Government, may, by notification in the Mysore Gazette exempt any house or class of houses from all or

any provisions of this Act.

The Orissa House Rent Control Act, 1958 (Section 17)

(2) The State Government may, by notification, exempt any other house or class of houses from all or any of the provisions of this Act.

The Madhya Pradesh Accommodation Control Act, 1955 (Section [3])

The Government may, by notification in the Gazette, exempt from all or any of the provisions of this Act any accommodation which is owned by any educational, religious or any or charitable institution or by any nursing or maternity home, the whole of the income derived from which is utilised for that institution or nursing home or maternity home.

The East Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act, 1949 (Section 3)

The State Government may direct that all or any of the provisions of this Act shall not apply to any particular building or rented land or any class of buildings or rented land.

The Rajasthan Premises (Control) of Rent and Eviction Act

Section 2C and 2D exempted places of Public Endowments or sport and certain premises belonging to local authorities from the application of the Act.

UP: Ordinance of 1977 Withdrawn

Proposals for the exemption of the Wakf property from the purview of the UP Rent Control Act have been under consideration of the State Government for over two decades.

... What is needed is to add a clause in the Rent Control Act to confer authority upon the State Government on the lines of the Mysore, Orissa, M.P., Punjab and similar other State Government Rent Control Acts to exempt a class of houses from all or any provisions of the UP Rent Control Act... In 1977 an Ordinance was promulgated whereby buildings belonging or vested in public and religious institutions were exempted from the operation of the UP Rent Control Act on the analogy of the buildings of Government, local authority or building in a public sector. But within a month of its promulgation this Ordinance was withdrawn, presumably on the ground that there would be large scale uprooting of the tenants occupying Wakf premises. There was absolutely no intention to have the Wakf premises vacated from the existing tenants. Later on in 1982 this question came for the consideration of State Government again but the proposal did not make any progress for one reason or the other. The apprehension that the tenants of the Wakf properties might be ejected ... in large numbers is unsound for the obvious reason that charitable institutions cannot afford ... to indulge in protracted litigation... What is needed is that the houses or shops belonging to religious and charitable institutions should carry rent which is fair and compares favourably with the market rent prevailing in respect of similar houses or shops in any locality...

Seminar on Awqaf Experiences in South Asia

New Delhi, 8-10 May, 1999, Resolution [Extracts]

Organized jointly by the Institute of Objective Studies, New Delhi, Islamic Research and Training Institute of the Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah (K.S.A.) and Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation (Kuwait), this International Seminar on "Awqaf Experiences in South Asia, resolves as follows:

1. The large number of Awqaf of an exclusively religious nature ... in all countries of South Asia need suitable legislative, administrative and fiscal measure for their due preservation, maintenance, development and use for their assigned objects within the parameters provided by the Shari'ah. All such measures already in existence should be examined afresh, and wherever necessary new measure should be adopted ... in all countries of the region.
2. The numerous Awqaf of a charitable nature with which South Asia abounds are in need of a systematic exploration of their development potential ... to ascertain ways and means for their optimum utilization for the socio-economic advancement of the local Muslim communities... Steps should be taken on priority to initiate and complete such exploratory exercises...
3. South Asia has a rich treasure of national legislations, administrative rules, and regulations and judicial decisions relating to the substantive, procedural and managerial aspects of Awqaf. They are in need of a comparative and critical study and research... Academic institutions, research organization and welfare agencies in all parts of South Asia should give ... it a place of priority...
4. The role and purpose of all ... categories of Awqaf in South Asia are to be suitably re-determined with a view to effectively tackling and successfully solving the problems of educational backwardness, economic poverty and overall underdevelopment of the local Muslim communities... All possible measures should be adopted for this purpose in accordance with the authentic Awqaf jurisprudence and the relevant national laws.
5. There is ample scope in South Asia for regional cooperation in the field of ... Awqaf. The countries in the region should consider the feasibility of and the modalities for ... collaboration in such joint academic ventures and experience-sharing exercises.
6. ... It is advisable that those engaged in studies and research relating to Awqaf in the countries of this region duly takes into account the Middle Eastern expertise and experiment in the field through interaction with appropriate institutions.
7. An International Awqaf Development Fund should be established.

Supreme Court

On Creation of Public Wakf by Religious Order

Wali Mohammed (dead) by L.Rs, Appellants v. Smt. Rahmat Bee and others, Respondents.

M. JAGANNADHA RAO AND M.B. SHAH, JJ.

Muslim Law – Gift – Suit by 'B' for declaring his right to manage and possess suit property – Finding therein that property in question is Wakf property – Operating as res judicata in subsequent suit filed by 'A' as Mutawalli against 'B' for possession of property – Claim for title to house property therein by 'B' on basis of registered gift deed alleged to be executed by his father in his favour – Not maintainable.

Muslim Law – Wakf – Creation of – Grant was by head of the order and related to prayers at number of tombs – It can be said that Wakf of public nature was created.

The directions for conduct 'Fateha' at the graveyard and to use the house for those purposes are certainly valid objects of a Wakf. In the instant case, the offerings of prayers are not confined to prayers at the tombs of the grantor or his family members. The grant was by the head of the order and related to prayers at a number of tombs in the graveyard. It is, therefore, clear that a Wakf of a public nature was created.

(Source: AIR 1999 Supreme Court 1136)

Haj Committee, 1999-2002: Composition

Chairman	: 1. Tanveer Ahmad
Vice Chairmen	: 2. Gul Mohd. Mansoori 3. Nasir Jamal
Members	: 4. Obaidullah Khan Azmi, MP 5. Sabir Shaikh 6. Khan Mohd. Ali Shah 7. Shakeel Ahmad 8. Yusuf Abrahani 9. Mohd. Suhail Lokhandwala 10. Shahzada Qayed Johar Bhai 11. Mirza Taqui Raza 12. Lok Sabha MP – Vacant 13. Lok Sabha MP – Vacant
Ex-officio	: 14. Commissioner of Customs 15. Chairman, Mumbai Port Trust 16. Principal Officer, Mercantile Marine Deptt. 17. Commissioner of Police 18. Municipal Commissioner, Greater Mumbai 19. Port Health Officer, Mumbai

Eminent Analyst A.G. Noorani On Gandhi-Azad Equation

Dr. Syeda Saiyidain Hameed is not the only one to get the Gandhi-Azad equation and Azad's place in the Congress wrong. "Had Azad rather than Nehru or Patel occupied political centre-stage with Gandhi during the years preceding Independence, India's history could have taken a different course". This hypothesis "receded" from her mind as her research proceeded but nowhere does she give any hint of a Gandhi-Azad rift except in 1942 as quoted above. Their relationship was never free from strain. On 15 July 1937 Gandhi wrote to Patel: "We already know about his dilatory ways". Azad became a member of the Congress Working Committee only in 1937 Nehru's prison diary, which the author ignores, despite its perceptive remarks on Azad, recorded Azad's fundamental differences with Gandhi.

There are two utterly neglected letters by Gandhi which reflected their relationship graphically. Shortly after his release from prison, Azad wrote a letter to Gandhi, on 2 August 1945, suggesting a "rough outline" of a solution, while rejecting Pakistan. It envisaged a federal India, with the right to secede; joint electorates with reservation of seats; and Hindu-Muslim parity at the Centre. It was open to criticism, but Gandhi's reply on 16 August 1945 was strange; "I did not infer from your letter that you are writing about my Hindus. Whatever you have in your heart has not appeared in your writing. But don't worry. We will talk the matter over when next we meet if you so desire. Whatever you want to say about the communal problem should not be said without consulting me and the Working Committee. I am also of the opinion that it would be better to keep quiet ... party can give its opinion after consultations with you. They have the right to do so. Besides, it is their duty. My opinion differ from your (sic)... I do not feel the urge to do anything hasty".

During the negotiations with the Cabinet Mission in 1946, Azad counted for little though he was Congress President, Nehru told the Mission in Azad's presence: "The Congress were going to work for a strong Centre and to break the Group system and they would succeed. They did not think that Mr. Jinnah had any real place in the country." Twice, on 27 April and 23 June 1946, Azad approached the Mission behind the back of his colleagues, a fact Gandhi resented when he discovered it although he and Patel had also held private parleys.

Gandhi's ire ran so deep that he wanted to exclude Azad from free India's first Cabinet. The Mahatma was not such a forgiving person as is imagined. His letter to Nehru on 24 July 1947 cited two witnesses in support - Patel, no admirer of Azad, and the towering figure of

Abdus Subhan on Tipu Sultan: Tribute on Martyrdom Bicentenary

"Ladies and gentlemen, I drink to the corpse of India". So did Richard Wellesley (Lord Mornington), Governor-General of India (1798-1805) raise a toast on receiving the news of Tipu Sultan's death. That he regarded his fallen adversary as the "life" of India was borne out by the fact that when Tipu fell fighting within the confines of Srirangapatnam Fort on 4 May 1799, the spirit of native resistance to colonial domination finally died. And the sub-continent was destined to remain enslaved for nearly another 150 years.

The infrastructure of Tipu's political power was assiduously built by his father, Hyder Ali, who first burst upon the stage at the age of 27. With military genius and skilful diplomacy, he saved the quasi-independent state of Mysore, much in the same manner as Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) did England and modern historians came to see him as the "Napoleon of India" instead of Hyder Ali the "usurper".

During his 17 years of rule, Tipu hardly ever enjoyed any respite from aggressive and plotting neighbours. And he had to contend with the treachery of his Diwan, Mir Sadiq, who did to him what Mir Jafar had done to Sirajud Daula in Bengal nearly half a century earlier. The British were bent on either encaging the "Tiger of Mysore" or shooting him dead. Tipu preferred a soldier's death.

Of his life and work, little is unknown though much of this is a mixture of aspersion, vilification and adulation. Imperialist chroniclers darkened the vision of later annalists and the bias became so deeply embedded that on Tipu's death centenary in 1899 the then Maharani Regent of Mysore Durbar insisted the occasion be observed not in memory of Tipu's martyrdom but for the restoration of the Hindu dynasty...

Hemmed in as he was by enemies, Tipu had to maintain a well-oiled war machine. But war apart, he set up commercial departments and factories, introduced novel methods of agriculture, ended the feudal system and brought about reforms in coinage and currency. Dubbed an intolerant bigot by contemporary British writers such as William Kirkpatrick and Mark Wilks, who were among the dramatic personae of the Anglo-Mysore Wars, the slandering continued with later historians such as Colonel Roberts and G. Sardesai. Mohibul Hasan Khan was the first modern historian who attempted to blow away the cobwebs.

There is evidence that the great Math at Sringeri was the recipient of Tipu's patronage. Others receiving gifts and grants were the Gopur Temple of Conjeevaram and the Nanjandeswana Temple of Nanjangud. The

(Contd. on Page 331)

(Contd. on Page 311)

Baren Ray on Maulana Azad's Last Ditch Effort to Avoid Partition

... (After) the Shimla Conference broke up on July 16. within a fortnight Azad had ... worked out his last ditch attempt – a scheme of Hindu-Muslim compromise on the basis of power sharing – in order to avoid ... partition. He is supposed to have despatched a summary of his scheme to Gandhiji on August 2. Gandhiji replied advising him not to make any public statement even in his personal capacity and to only present his proposals before the Working Committee. The Working Committee was scheduled to meet on September 15, still about a month away, and Maulana Azad wanted to give the country a hint of his ideas to begin a discussion on the fundamental issues. He, therefore, produced a self-censored bowdlerized version of his scheme (without spelling out his specific suggestions) in the form of a 1500-word statement and issued it through the Associated Press of India from Kashmir where he was recovering from exhaustion and ill health.

The statement was published in full in almost all newspapers across the country and most nationalist papers wrote favourable editorials as well. However, none of the senior Congress leaders made any comment. The special correspondent of the Bombay based Times of India had a long interview with Azad before the meeting and the interview underlined how serious and persistent Azad still was, since issuing his statement, about his scheme. But the Working Committee meeting at Pune on September 15-16 took a very hard-line decision with regard to further negotiations with the Muslim League.

... Azad's plea for fresh appeal to the Muslims on the basis of a federal solution with autonomous units (with right of secession) and his warning that any attempt to form a unitary government will fail, were rejected in toto.

Maulana Azad had specially appealed to his Hindu friends "to have entirely to Muslims the question of their status in the future constitution of India. (This principle he had originally enunciated in his presidential address at the Ramgarh session in 1940). Azad was confident that if Muslims were satisfied, even at a late stage, that a decision was not being imposed upon them by a non-Muslim majority, they would drop the demand for partition and realize that their interests were best served "by a federated and united India".. No records of the working committee proceedings have been found. It is, however, on record that Jagat Narain Lal, who had shot into prominence as the one who moved the resolution in the AICC at Allahabad in 1942, restricting the sense of the Working Committee statement on the question of self-determination made in response to the Cripps proposals, had participated in the committee meeting at Poona on special invitation. (He had been a leading member of the Hindu Mahasabha for

many years during the Forties).

A few days later the AICC had its session at the historic Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay when the Working Committee resolutions were generally passed with some minority amendments. The resolution on the question of self-determination was not placed before the AICC, but on the main political resolution when Dr. K.M. Ashraf attempted to move an amendment on that subject he was shouted down. Mian Iftikhar-ud-Din, President of Punjab PCC, attempted a similar amendment to the effect that the elected representatives of the Constituent Assembly in areas where the Muslims are in a majority should be free to decide as to whether they should join the Indian Union or not. The Congress must awaken the Muslim masses and win them over to their side, he said. This speech called forth a riposte from Nehru who asserted that ... the Congress had done its best in the past to come to an understanding with the Muslim League, but it had now "come to the conclusion that it is in the best interests of the country to keep away from the Muslim League leaders hereafter." Winding up the debate, Sardar Patel took a similarly aggressive attitude towards the League. "There shall be no more offers to the League"...

As is well-known ... in the elections to the Central and Provincial Assembly ... the Congress lost practically all the Muslim seats to the League.

A few weeks after the elections, however, the Aga Khan visited India for consultations with Muslim leaders. He too approached Sardar Patel and said that he found Jinnah in a more receptive mood and would therefore suggest direct talks by the Congress leaders with him. But the Congress did not respond to the suggestion.

At the penultimate stage of the freedom struggle, Azad's behaviour reflected democratic centralism and inner-party discipline. In spite of holding definite views which were diametrically opposed by the majority of his colleagues, he did not air his differences in public till the very end.

Even though no original copy of Azad's scheme and the covering letter to Gandhiji has so far been traced... They had been intercepted by the British Government Intelligence and promptly transmitted to Whitehall... Reproduced in the Transfer of Power, Vol. VI, doc. 68, pp.155-157...

... More than being worried about the problems the Muslims left behind in India would face Azad was more concerned with the spectre of the coming into existence of two hostile states in the subcontinent whose mutual enmity would very likely derail them from their most fundamental tasks of funneling all energy and resources for the

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P.C. Punnen on Saffronisation of Press

... A slow but insidious saffronisation of our 'objective' media is happening since the Vajpayee government took office at the Centre.. On October 22, 1997, when President Narayanan returned to the Union cabinet its recommendation for imposition of President's rule in Uttar Pradesh, all newspapers hailed the President's action...

... Later, when the same governor sacked the Kalyan Singh Government during the elections, all newspapers were unanimous on one thing: the Governor's action was indefensible, it was tantamount to murder of democracy.

The same President, on September 25, 1998, returned to the cabinet its proposal for dismissing the Rabri Devi Government in Bihar... Nobody wrote any signed edit on that slap on the face of the government. No newspaper thought it worthwhile to do a story on the crime situation in Bihar compared with that of states ruled by the BJP or its allies. Such a story was in order since the Prime Minister on his return from the United States, insisted that there was 'mafia raj' in Bihar...

... All the edits were namby pamby ones skirting the issue of the BJP which had claimed to be different from the ruck showing its true colours... An indication that the big guns in the print media have, all of a sudden or of late, developed a soft spot for the BJP.

Now see the contrast. The CPM, at its party Congress in Calcutta, decides to consider the BJP as its enemy number one... This was provocation for many learned writers to lambaste the CPM's rank political opportunism. They seemed to have forgotten one fact. In a democracy, political parties have the right to change tack; and it does not behove opinion makers to forget the simple fact that the BJP while in power has had to eat crow over all the sacred principles it had mouthed while in opposition.

Let us take another example. Newspapers which used to rant and rave against corruption in high places, reported the umpteen corruption scandals involving the BJP government of Delhi ... in a matter-of-fact fashion. Even the Khurana-Sahib Singh feud ... skimpily reported in the national press.

Let us examine the reasons for this sorry state of affairs. The saffronisation of the media was not at all unexpected. Any media watcher with a modicum of perception could have seen it coming in March itself, on account of two factors.

The first one relates to the class that controls the media. The owners and bigwigs in the media and the rumour columnists do not have anything against the BJP; they have only permanent interest. The saffron think tank has cashed in on this. That class is quite adept at running with the hares and hunting with the hounds... Rank

opportunism forces them at times to mouth secular slogans. If the Congress is in power and a Narasimha Rao turns it into a carbon copy of the BJP, that class would welcome it. If a doddering Sitaram Kesri takes over the party that class would chant... If the lady of 10 Janpath is seen as a perfect pick-me-up by thousands of Congress wallahs and the elections are round, the corner that class would hedge it bets, and advance clever arguments.

The second factor is that the BJP is more adept at handling the press than its political rivals. It has a media cell manned by persons who know their onions. The Congress cottoned on to the idea only recently... Scan the letters to the editor columns of mainline newspapers and see what mischief is afoot.

Small wonder then that editors are serenading well known saffron columnists. But why is the saffronisation of the media a bad augury?

It bodes ill because of a host of reasons. Once the purveyors of untruths and falsehoods hijack the media and distort stories, half the battle against communal forces will be lost. The media savvy saffronites seem to have taken to heart the communist dictum: "The first step in the science of revolution is the art of confusing the people with words that have a pleasant meaning."

Another disturbing thing about this saffronisation is that it is not transparent but terribly insidious and would destroy the basic character of the Press...

(Source: The Meantime, 11 November, 1998)

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Amrit Kaur. It reads thus "I did not say anything yesterday about the Maulana Saheb. But my objection stands. His retiring from the Cabinet should not affect our connection with him. There are many positions which he can occupy in public life without any harm to any cause. Sardar is decidedly against his membership in the Cabinet and so is Rajkumar. Your Cabinet must be strong and effective at the present juncture. It should not be difficult to name another Muslim for the Cabinet".

In December 1947, Azad convened a conference of Muslims in Lucknow. On 7 January 1948, Patel said at a public meeting "In the recent All-India Muslim Conference why did you not open your mouth on the Kashmir issue?" - making one's views on the dispute a loyalty test, besides casting aspersions on Azad. In a letter to Gandhi on 13 January, Patel wrote "The Maulana too is displeased with what I am doing and you have again and again to take up cudgels on my behalf." Evidently Azad had received short shrift from Gandhi when he complained of Patel.

(Source: The Statesman, 24 August, 1998)

Hindu Deity and Land Reform

... A two-member bench ... has reversed the verdict of the Patna High Court ... that one of the deities consecrated in a temple in a Bihar village is fake and, therefore, not entitled to exemption under the state's land ceiling act. The Supreme Court judges have argued that once a deity is consecrated according to proper religious ceremonies, then "There cannot be any fake deity"...

This judgement, which sanctifies anyone constructing a temple and vesting an idol with land will open the floodgates for circumventing the ceiling laws. The Patna High Court had rightly rejected such a dubious route to avoid the land ceiling laws. By expounding on the Hindu rituals of consecration of idols and then pronouncing on their divinity, the Supreme Court judges have trespassed into an area where religious ceremonies can become the cover for holding land illegally...

... The Supreme Court bench has done a great disservice to the cause of land reform... It is imperative that a larger bench of the Supreme Court review this verdict... (Source: The People's Democracy, 30 May, 1999)

Devadasis Working as Prostitutes

... A study conducted by the National Commission for Women (NCW) points out: while there are more than 10,000 devadasis in Maharashtra and Karnataka, less than 10 per cent of the women who are followers of Yellamma enter into sex work. Most remain in religious work and often live through their life with one man, though without a legally recognised marriage.

Yet, the degeneration of the system over the years has resulted in many devadasis functioning as prostitutes at the behest of the priests. While the profession is not as "lucrative" as it is believed to be for the sex workers, the mainstream has developed an economy of more than Rs. 200 crores around these women, says the NCW study. This excludes the money they cough up for donations, be it for election campaigns or festivals, religious or otherwise... (Source: The Hindustan Times, 21 May, 1999)

Environmental Benefits of Yagnas!

... A yagna a day keeps the doctor - and malignant microbes, ambient pollutants, soil infertility and soul impurities - away. Scientific experiments on yagna have revealed that, this philosophy-powered Hindu ritual is more than a show of burning a medley of organic substances. They help reduce the levels of sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide in air and bacteria count in water. It has also been found that bhasm or ash, the yagna residue yields phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and nitrogen, which act as a non-toxic fertiliser for healthy plant growth.

Research data prepared by the Hardwar-based Brahmavarchas Shoudh Sansthan were later verified by Dr. Rajani R. Joshi of the Indian Institute of Technology, Mumbai... (Source: The Hindustan Times, 17 May, 1999)

Puri Shankaracharya Bans Cricket Ball

... Jagatguru of Puri Mutt, Swami Nischalananda Saraswati (has given) a clarion call to stop using cricket balls because these are made of cow hide...

The manufacturers concede the Shankaracharya's religious sentiments for the cow. But then why the hue and cry over the ball which uses only bull hide, they argue. "The cricket ball industry uses the hide of dead animals," said T.N. Anand, director of ... a cricket gear manufacturer in Meerut... He felt that using cow hide does not amount to slaughter...

Cow hide owes its acceptability to its texture which makes it easy to mold, according to Ravish Bharadwaj, another manufacturer... Other advantages include the colour that the hide imparts to the ball and its density which is just right for an easy grip.

A ban would affect the nearly two lakh labourers engaged in manufacturing cricket balls... The ban, the manufacturers feel, would benefit the cricket ball industry in Pakistan... (Source: R.Pegu in The Week, 2 May, 1999)

Dalit Lovers Killed for Elopement

In a brutal act reminiscent of the medieval times, two young Dalit lovers were publicly killed at Shimla village in Kaithal district of Haryana on 29 March, 1999 for having dared to elope. The bodies were then dragged to the cremation ground and set on fire.

The police have registered a case under Section 302 and 201 of the IPC against 15 villagers... However, no arrests have been made so far. ...

(Source: The Indian Express, 31 March, 1999)

Muslim 'Donation' for Hanuman Temple

... Pappu, son of Salim, a tobacco businessman, reportedly killed a female monkey with his airgun while scaring away birds from his mango grove on June 10.

... Villagers of Gurdeen Khera, dominated by Yadavs and Lodhs, rushed to the spot and brought home her body (which) was kept on the roadside for last 'darshan'. "We received a donation of Rs.333 for the burial", said Ramesh alias Baba, the priest of the Hanuman Mandir.... The funeral procession was taken out (with) over 100 villagers, including women and children...

The procession, after passing through the Kakori market (went to) police station. The police summoned Salim, who agreed to donate money for the monkey's last rites... At 10.30 pm, the Circle Officer of Kakori, along with the SO and two constables, brought the ... body to the Gurdeen Khera village in a government jeep. The last rites were performed at midnight. The monkey was given a bath and covered with a yellow cotton cloth and laid to rest in a small ditch adjacent to the Hanuman temple.

... Salim also donated 250 grams of Laddoos, half a kg of batashas, incense sticks and flowers... On June 12, Salim finally decided to donate Rs.7,000 for the temple construction. (Source: The Hindustan Times, 17 June, 1999)

Ajeet Jawed: Secular and Nationalist Jinnah

Review by C. Haldar, *The Hindu*, 1 November, 1998

In the history of post-Independence India, Mohammed Ali Jinnah has been dubbed a die-hard communalist, a Muslim fanatic, a separatist, an egotist, an arrogant ally of the British imperialism, an opponent of the freedom struggle, an enemy of the Congress – Nehru, Gandhi and Patel. With freedom at night, Jinnah passed into immortality as the apostle of discord.

This book questions many of the myths that have grown around the Father of Pakistan and reinterprets his persona. Jinnah, who ... seldom crossed the threshold of a mosque, was ignorant of Islamic rituals. He dressed in western clothes and was christened Quaid-e-Azam by the Muslim clergy. That was the poignant tragedy in Jinnah's life, the book emphasises.

Jinnah's acceptance of the Cabinet Mission scheme suggests he was seeking a major role in united India rather than the separate Islamic State of Pakistan. So the creation of Pakistan must be attributed to Congress leaders. They realised Jinnah had won from the Cabinet Mission a large share in the proposed distribution of power and the Congress's ambition to rule an effective united government was frustrated.

The author rightly argued that a homeland for Indian Muslims was a Utopian idea and any territorial division was bound to leave many millions as aliens suspected of disloyalty to the land they lived in. But like a gambler overconfident of his wits, Jinnah staked high and could not pull out. He must have been frightened by the spectre of success, when it came within the reach of possibility. But then it was too late to retreat. It was the case of a man getting inextricably entangled in power politics without having a lust for power.

Impartial historians like Patrick French have harped on this point too... Undoubtedly, Jinnah was a staunch apostle of secularism. But he was essentially a politician.

The book fails to point out this glaring inconsistency in Jinnah's character. He joined with the sectarian and obscurantist maulvis to take revenue on the Congress with their support. But he was annoyed and disgruntled to be branded a theocrat by the illiterate masses.

All historians have subjective views. Ajeet Jawed decides to mix other people's first person narratives with pure factual history in order to give some sense of the human impact of the events of 1947, for instance, the plight of Biharis or stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh, the rise of Hindu nationalism in Indian politics and the strife in Karachi between the Mohajir Qaumi Movement and the state.

A closer study of Jinnah reveals a far more complex

figure who remained an Indian nationalist and secularist till his death. Jinnah and the Muslim League were pushed into an extreme political position during the Thirties and Forties, largely because of the intransigence of the Congress in meeting justifiable demands by Muslims and by the refusal of Nehru, Gandhi and Patel to accept that Jinnah had the democratic support of a substantial minority. The Book is revisionist as a direct result of the author's research in the archives.

To say that Jinnah was pushed into a corner and had no choice but to demand Pakistan is to state the obvious. There was so little accommodation of Muslim demands that Partition was inevitable... Jinnah was handicapped by the very nature of the volcanic forces he had aroused. The fanatics tolerated Jinnah till Pakistan was achieved.

... Jinnah ... made a violent effort to convert the Muslim League into a secular organisation, membership to be thrown open to all citizens of Pakistan regardless of religion, but failed. Cut off from the best elements in Hindu society with whose help he could have given a determined fight to the maulvis threatening to set the clock back in united India, Jinnah became a pathetic figure. He couldn't undo his past. Haunted by his own forces and inhibitions, blackmailed by extremists in his own camp and overwhelmed by the revivalist mood that always dominated a stricken people, the aged Qaid-e-Azam found himself a hapless prisoner in the topsy turvy world of his own creation.

The truth about Jinnah is that Pakistan itself has been uncomfortable with the Father of the Nation. It was only in 1993 that his papers were published. This is yet another book by an Indian who impartially assesses Jinnah's achievement, partly flawed but phenomenal.

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development of their peoples. Possibly the Indian leadership had even expected that a poor, less developed and resourceless Pakistan would before long fall on its face and return to the Union, duly humbled. But that was counting without the ... forces of imperialism in world politics who would do everything not only to keep the seceding state afloat but also to use it as a military base to keep the parent state busy with ever-rising military programmes.

Azad rightly understood that to hold together in a loose confederal arrangement was likely to be far more successful than embarking on a confrontational course which would more likely lead to mutual ruin.

(Source: *The Hindu*, 21 March, 1999)

CHRONOLOGY

- *USA attributes Kargil conflict to intrusion of militants across LOC (30 May). Expresses hope for peace. Clinton asks Sharif to respect LOC (4 June). Repeats calls to Sharif to withdraw (15 June).
- *China calls for restraint.
- *EU expresses concern. G-8 Foreign Ministers hint at intervention to stop conflict (12 June).
- *Russia supports Indian military action.
- Pakistan:** *Militant groups, based in Pakistan call for Jihad, reject offer of safe passage, reiterate vow to 'liberate' Kashmir.
- *Pak PM Sharif reiterates moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiri cause (22 May).
- *Pakistan Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz questions existence of LOC in Kargil sector. Visit to Delhi after initial rejection, fails (8 June).
- *Pakistan press and opposition lament international isolation (13 June).
- *Former P.M. Benazir Bhutto proposes 'open border' in J&K (26 May). Proposes reconciliation on Arab-Israeli model (9 June).
- India:** *GOI asks Pakistan to stop intrusion and respect LOC (21 May). PM Vajpayee terms Kargil a challenge on invasion and vows to push back infiltrators (25 May). Vajpayee visits Kargil front and rules out any dialogue with Pakistan till Kargil conflict ends (13 June).
- *Congress cautions Government against Pakistan's bid to change LOC (4 June).
- *Many Muslim organisations throughout country support government action.
- *Opposition objects to briefing by Army to BJP National Executive; accuses BJP of politicising Kargil.
- *Jan Sangh leader Madhok proposes delinking of Jammu and Ladakh from State (19 May).
- *ABVP (students wing of BJP) demands 'liberation' of POK (24 May).
- *Hurriyat condemns Kargil operation (27 May).
- *Hurriyat fails to get endorsement of independence at Hague Appeal for Peace Conference (17 May).
- *Hurriyat decides to boycott parliamentary elections (18 May).
- *Hurriyat observes death anniversary of Mir Waiz Maulvi Farooq (21 May).
- OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN**
- Muslim Politics:** *AIMMM, AIMC, JUH, JIH and AIMPLB, 5 eminent Muslim organisations have consultation on Muslim Agenda and electoral strategy for coming general election (4 June). Prof. Saifuddin Soz's initiative (See text of Joint Statement).
- Urdu:** *Delhi decides to grant additional Official Language status to Urdu and Punjabi. Move widely welcomed.
- Wakfs:** *SC recognises Hindu deity as person, entitled to own land and property (17 May).
- *SC authorises A.I. Imams Organisation to serve notice by hand on various Wakf Board (7 May).
- Personal Law:** *Aawaz-e-Niswan organises national convention in Mumbai for protection of rights of Muslim women (4 June).
- Public Employment:** *13 Muslims only figure in UPSC Civil Services List of 470 (25 May).
- Infiltration:** *Claims for inclusion in electoral roll show unusually high increase in some border constituencies of W. Bengal fuelling suspicion of large scale infiltration (3 June).
- *3-4 lakh Muslim voters of Assam unlikely to be included in electoral rolls as case pending in Supreme Court shows no progress.
- Sectarian Clash:** *Shia-Sunni clash in Lucknow, 24 injured (15 June).
- AMU:** Staff Association up in arms against VC for 'autocratic, undemocratic and arbitrary style of functioning' and 'misuse of emergency powers' (23 May).
- *Students protest against order to close hostels during vacation.
- Culture:** *M/HRD Joshi warns against linguistic hegemony by technologically advanced countries (15 May).
- *GOI allocates 5 crores for observance of 1999-2000 as Year of Sanskrit (13 June).
- *GOI bans cable transmission of Pak TV; move widely criticised (4 June).
- Education:** *Detention of Prof. A. Mogni, VC, Mithilia University on charges of complicity in multi-crore racket of award of B.Ed. to fake students shocks Muslims in Bihar. Moghni granted bail by H.C. Faces fresh charge sheet (29 May).
- *Rajasthan reviews school textbooks for objectionable contents and bans several (18 May).
- Cow Protection:** *UP appoints a 21 member 'Gau Seva Ayug'.
- Muslim World - Kosovo:** *Milosevic accepts G-8 plan (1 June), agrees to withdraw Serb troops from Kosovo and allow NATO forces (12 June). Refugees begin to come back.
- *Democracy restored in Nigeria.
- *Elections held in Indonesia.
- *Journalist Najam Sethi released in Pakistan, following worldwide protest.
- Commemoration:** *Urs of Abdul Qadir Bedil observed in New Delhi (18 May).
- *Urs of Ahmed Raza Khan held at Bareilly (8 June).
- Obituary:** *Eminent Urdu poet Shamim Jaipuri, 75, passes away in Delhi (30 May).
- *Social activist Anwar Sadat, 45, passes away in Mumbai (8 June). *Abdul Hafiz Salfi, former President of Jamaat-a-Ahl-e-Hadith, 80, passes away in Darbhanga (7 June).