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SYED SHAHABUDDIN,
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REPRESENTATIVES OVERSEAS

- U.K. Dr. Roohi H. Majid
7, Woodville Road,
London.N.W.11,
Tel: 455-6281.
- U.S.A. Dr. K.A. Mallick
810-73rd Street,
Downer's Grove, ILL 60516
Tel:(708)969-6755
- K.S.A. Syed Shariq Ali
P.O.Box 11447
Jeddah-21491.

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حیدرآباد



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RUMBLINGS IN MUSLIM INDIA FOR ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY

Over the political trajectory they have traversed since the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, in particular since the fall of Delhi to the Marathas and then to the British, towards the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century, the Muslim Indians have been in search of a viable political role in the Sub-continent. Fed with delusions and illusions, obsessed with dreams and hallucinations, they have landed in blind alleys and into dark nights of alienation. Overtaken by the rising wave of nationalism and democracy, failing to reach an honourable accommodation with the Hindu majority they sought refuge in separatism and division. Today, half a century after Partition and Independence, they have woken up to realise that in the contemporary world, no minority group can dominate a political system; nor can it demand or seek parity with the majority group nor can it expect the Most Favoured Community treatment, or deserve any special status. But, individually and collectively, it can ask for and has a right to receive its due i.e. proportionate share in governance, in development, in welfare. It is a long and tortuous journey from the demand of Restoration to the quest of Parity, to the desire of Proportionality. Their legitimate aspirations may still be resisted but it makes democratic sense in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society which claims to dispense social justice.

The Muslim Indians constitute 12.5% of the Indian people. But against their due share of 70 seats, actually in 1996 there were only 26 Muslim MPs, which means an under-representation of 63%. This political representation has been steadily falling since the high mark of 48 reached in 1980. In the State legislatures, with the exception of J&K, their under-representation is even worse. In some States, there is no Muslim MLA!

Election after election, in State after State, the pattern of under-representation persists and raises a question-mark on the place of the second largest community of the country in the political order.

Since the inception of the Constitution, the Muslim Indians have committed themselves to Democracy, Secularism and Social Justice which form the essential framework of national governance and alongwith the rule of law, provide built-in safeguards for the protection of their human rights and their rights as a minority group.

The Muslim Indians, particularly the youth, is feeling increasingly disenchanted with the working of the secular order.

The Muslim Indians find themselves powerless - under-represented not only in the legislatures but in the power structure as a whole, the Government, the Bureaucracy, the Judiciary, the Armed Forces, the Mass media.

They are unhappy with the secular parties whom they have wholeheartedly supported because they care for

their own caste base and show little understanding, far less patience for or sensitivity to their anguish and agony. They all exploit them in elections and seek their votes without paying any price; without doing anything for them after the election, without, in any way, endeavouring to reduce the space of hostile discrimination, of humiliation and harassment and expanding the area of equality and justice. **In the existing order the Muslim Indians are guaranteed life but not livelihood, physical survival but not dignity and equality.**

The Muslim Indians realise that the political parties - national or regional - all have a narrow focus, well-defined social constituencies and they act as vehicles for promoting the entry of particular sections of the rising Shudras, Achhuts and Adivasis into the corridors and the halls of power, despite resistance from the high castes which continue to rely on the Congress and the BJP.

The Muslim Indians see their 'leaders' as passive tools in the hands of their political masters, the leaders of the secular parties, which have deliberately reduced their Muslim workers to the level of vote brokers and no more, to be paid in terms of memberships of Wakf Boards and Haj Committee and Urdu Akademis and occasional directorships in a public sector bank and even less frequent governorships or Vice-Chancellorships.

No leaders of any secular party, with one or two honourable exceptions, have ever permitted a Muslim worker to emerge as a leader of the party, or even of his community. No leader of any political party is prepared to tolerate a Muslim intermediary between himself and the Muslim 'voters'. In the "secular parties" Muslim workers do not occupy any decision-making position; they adorn the Minority Cells or serve as ornamental Vice-Presidents; the highest are no more than errand boys of the mighty party bosses. Every secular leader wants to serve his own caste, clan and tribe but aspires also to be recognised as a Muslim leader because, only with the added support of the available Muslims, he can strut about on the national stage as a 'national leader', win a score of parliamentary seats, even less, and get a better share of power for his social constituency! Since in the inner struggle of the Hindu society, each caste group wants Muslim support to bolster its own claim but without an equitable quid pro quo, for an assurance to Muslims for due share in power, this has been the common political culture of the national leadership, whichever the party, and try as they might, the Muslim Indians do not see a Muslim face anywhere.

So, while all secular parties including the Congress, which is also shifting gear from high caste to the Shudras, desire Muslim support to sustain their political campaign and expand their vote-base, while all Hindu leaders -

Vajpayee and Advani included - desire to be accepted as national leaders by the Muslim Indians, no one - not the most secular of the lot - would like a Muslim member of his own party to be someone on his own, lest he argues on equal terms and articulates Muslim demands and aspirations.

Moreover, while the Hindu community and every sub-community thereof is consolidating itself for participation in governance, for a share in power, the Muslim Indians are dividing themselves into sub-communities so that their 'caste leaders' can sell the support-base of at least one section of the community, to political parties which are eager, in their struggle for power, to have a part, if they cannot have the whole on their side.

The Muslim Indians feel suffocated, oppressed, distrusted, humiliated, reviled, alienated, they are forced to lead a double existence, take it all lying down, live on the margin of existence, accept a back seat, a second class status, or else.

Muslim Indians know that with all their zeal the RSS and the Hindutva forces cannot exterminate, or liquidate them or push them into the sea or across the border into Pakistan/Bangladesh. But even under the secular order they find the social environment getting increasingly communalised. Feeling threatened by assimilation, absorption, Hinduisation and sensing psychological and physical pressure at every step, deprived of any symbiotic or empathic relationship with the power structure subjected, to inequality and injustice, linguistic and cultural genocide, brain-washing and vicious propaganda, they question whether it could be worse under the Hindu Raj! •

Why is no one prepared to give the Muslim Indians their due or at least show concern with their existential problems - with their education, livelihood, health, and environment? At the back of it all, rankles the 'original sin' of Partition. Didn't the Muslims of India participate, desire, demand and receive their 'share' in the form of Pakistan? How dare they demand any further share? These are the unstated questions in everyone's mind. Mass consciousness is also kept ablaze with one-sided and exaggerated versions of a thousand years of 'Muslim' rule. Every effort is made to generate fear of the Muslim Indians' territorial connections!

Muslim Indians are not in a position to change the rules of the democratic game - under-enumeration in census, omission in electoral registration, dismemberment of Muslim concentration pockets in delimitation of constituencies, reservation of Muslim concentration constituency for SC's, bias in selection of candidates, the entire electoral system are all consciously weighted against them.

This is the sum total of the situation fraught with inequity and injustice, which the Muslim Indians face 50 years after Independence.

The Muslim Indians are frustrated and angry, irritated by the constant calls to save democracy and secularism. Indeed they have been so wrapped up in the democratic game, and electoral politics, that they can hardly conceive any other alternative strategy or tactical line, though their faith in the secular order stands eroded. They have not even developed any forum for collective thinking, thanks to their fragmentation among secular parties.

The Muslim Indians know that the Hindu Indian is not the oppressor, for a vast majority of the oppressed are also Hindus. Then, is the Hindu belonging to the twice-born high castes the common oppressor? The Hindu elite? To a large extent, yes, with some notable exceptions. But the high caste elite do not have the votes; they have to generate a national constituency. This was provided by the Congress and is now being done by the BJP by consolidating the votes of the Hindu masses, in the name of Hinduism in the interest of the Hindu elite, to maintain the status quo. This explains the Hindutva wave, the deep and the pale saffron penetrating and even substituting the party colours.

Having seen through the mask of secularism worn by the Indian state and discovered, to their disbelief and horror, the ugly face behind it, the Muslim Indians have realised the truth and yet many are prepared to give the system a chance, to play the political game, if the rules of the power game are changed

- 1) to introduce reservation in legislature and public employment or proportionate representation.
- 2) to universalise welfare and development or provide for proportionate share at every functional level to all social groups, on the basis of uniform criteria.

Some are thinking of joining a political party en masse and make it the historic vehicle of their aspirations.

Some are even thinking of forming a political party with themselves in the driving seat, keeping its doors open to all and its antenna sensitive to all.

Let me add, the Muslim Indians do not see any future in separatism or fundamentalism or confrontation or pan-Islamic consolidation. They have played the communal game and lost. They demand justice not only for themselves but for all the oppressed groups in the country, and work in, for and through a political party or alliance which stands for Justice to All and Welfare of All.

If the secular parties do not see the writing on the wall, the dark clouds gathering on the horizon, if they continue to dissipate their energy and strength in internecine fights, if they do not forgive-and-forget but carry on with their old feuds to the bitter end, if they are objectively helping the fascist, anti-secular, majoritarian forces, then why should the Muslim Indians alone champion the cause of secularism? Why not, in the name

of secularism, enter the political arena like other social groups as an autonomous factor and not as a subservient element?

Like all 'secular' parties the Muslim secular party will primarily promote the interests of the Muslim Indians defined as broadly as possible: Equality, Justice and Welfare of all, irrespective of religion, caste or language.

Never mind, if the advent of a Muslim party rocks the ship of State, destabilises the system, disrupts the status quo.

Never mind, if Muslim Indians are charged with paving the way for Hindu consolidation.

Never mind, if Muslim Indians are called communal and separatist and even Pakistani agents and pan-Islamic fundamentalists and hurled all the other abuses in the political dictionary.

The adversaries would know that the Muslim Indians are not communal, because they want all communities and sub-communities and sub-sub-communities to enjoy equality and justice and they do not want any special rights, privileges or status for themselves, except keep their religious identity.

They would realise that the Muslim Indians cannot entertain separatism, because, with the exception of the Valley, there is no border region in India with a Muslim majority which can secede or even demand autonomy.

They would appreciate that the Muslim Indians cannot be pro-Pakistan; because Pakistan cannot even take care of its own Muslims.

They would consider that the Muslim Indians cannot bank on Pan-Islamism, because the Muslim World stands divided and 50-odd Muslim-majority states can do nothing for Muslim minorities.

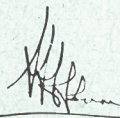
They know the Muslim Indians cannot adopt Fundamentalism, because even in their wildest dreams they cannot hope to restore Muslim rule over the country.

They know that the Muslim Indians have to eschew violence because the ever-increasing spiral of violence always harms a dispersed minority.

But they must also know that no oppressed group puts its trust in the status quo; nor is it permanently committed to 'stability' or order; nor does it remain a silent spectator for long, or accept continuity.

All over the world the oppressed groups, when they lose hope and faith, demand Change and are prepared to face discontinuity, instability, disorder, chaos, to lose what little they have but threaten to bring down the house, if it does not become a home!

This is the mood of Muslim India today. No doubt a black mood, a portent for dark days, if we have the eyes to look into the future.



(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

New Delhi,
1 March, 1998

**WITH BEST
COMPLIMENTS**

FROM

**KALEEM
KAWAJA**

**THE ASSOCIATION
OF INDIAN
MUSLIMS OF
AMERICA**

**THE ORGANIZATION
FOR UNIVERSAL
COMMUNAL
HARMONY**

**WASHINGTON DC
USA**

Shahabuddin's Open Letter to L.K. Advani, President, BJP

New Delhi. 24 January, 1998

During your Swarna Jayanti Rath Yatra, you had issued an appeal to the Muslim Indians urging them to understand Cultural Nationalism and forge "heart-unity with their Hindu brethren". Since your appeal went largely unnoticed by the target group, out of political compulsions, you repeated your appeal at the BJP's "Muslim Youth" Convention in New Delhi on 4 December, 1997.

Shorn of rhetoric and verbiage, your thesis may be summarised as follow:-

1. BJP's basic ideology is Nationalism. India is One Nation, One Culture and One People. Since one culture is the basis of national unity, BJP believes in Cultural Nationalism. While recognising the cultural diversity presented by Sub-Cultures, based on region, religion, race, caste and language, the BJP equates National Culture with Hindu Culture.
2. BJP supports the construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya, not only because of the religious sentiments of the Hindu community but also because Ram is a symbol of India's culture. If Muslim leadership withdraws all claims to the Babari Masjid, you are willing to help Muslims have a fruitful dialogue with the VHP so that the Kashi & Mathura disputes are sorted out amicably.
3. BJP stands for communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim unity; it is against fanaticism, fundamentalism, communalism and terrorism.
4. BJP is opposed to any discrimination among people of India on the basis of caste, creed and ideology.
5. BJP stands for justice for all and appeasement of none. BJP is opposed to minorityism.
6. BJP finds it repugnant that Muslims have less than proper representation in the political affairs of the nation.
7. BJP recognises that Muslim Indians face poverty and employment and lack of educational facilities.
8. BJP would like Urdu to grow.
9. BJP regards communal riots as a blot on India's culture and civilisation and is committed to building a riot-free and violence free India.
10. So-called Secular parties - UF/LF and Congress - have used Muslims as a vote bank to keep themselves in and BJP out of power. They are hypocrites as they have done nothing for Muslims. The BJP is not a hypocrite; "what is in our mind, is on our tongue, is in our

IDEOLOGY OF HINDUTVA OR HINDU RASHTRAVAD

Advaniji, the crux of the problem is your ideology of Cultural Nationalism. Once you equate Indian Culture with Hindu Culture, your Cultural Nationalism is exposed as nothing but Hindu Nationalism. Indian people are largely but not wholly Hindu. The core of the composite Indian Culture is Hindu culture but many peoples, religions, languages and cultures have contributed to building its superstructure.

National Culture is not static; it is dynamic, ever-evolving; it is not today what it was when Islam appeared on the scene or when the British colonised the country. Today the Indian Culture is a Composite Culture. The BJP defines Culture in Static terms. This is a call for obscurantism and goes against the Indian genius.

India is one nation-state today, but equally the homeland of many nationalities, sub-nations and communities, big and small. Indian society is not homogeneous; it is plural, multi-segmented, multi-layered, multi-ethnic. Even the Hindu community is divided by region, caste, race, language, geography and history. So is the Muslim community. But it is also pan-Indian like the Hindu community. As a minority group, it tends to be more consolidated.

Incidentally I feel grateful to you, Advaniji, for having recognised the existence of the Muslim Indians as a community and as a religious minority. At least you regard it, unlike Shri Golwalkar, as theoretically equal. You have not dubbed it as "guests" in a Hindu home.

FUNDAMENTALISM AND CHAUVINISM

All political parties project the same self-image - they are all for virginity and motherhood! But was it not a fanatical chauvinist and fundamentalist act to raze the Babari Masjid? Is it not majoritarianism to threaten to demolish Mathura Idgah and Gyanvapi Masjid and to occupy hundreds of other Masjids throughout the country? Isn't it chauvinistic to treat other religions as 'panths' of your religion and seek to absorb them through education, mass media and terrorisation?

BJP: MAJORITARIAN AND COMMUNAL

India belongs to not only to the Hindu community but also to all non-Hindu communities which are rooted in it and love it as their motherland though they may not worship it as Bharat Mata. India's unity lies in acceptance of diversity and not in imposing uniformity, of language, culture or religion. Your ideology - the ideology of assimilation - creates apprehensions, assumes

Hindu state, based on Hindu culture, in which other religions are merely 'Panths' i.e. denominations of the Hindu Dharma. It is this narrow vision which makes BJP a Hindu and, therefore, a communal and majoritarian party.

MUSLIM BACKWARDNESS

Advaniji, thank you also for recognising the political, economic, social and educational backwardness of the Muslims. Yet you charge that they have been pampered and 'appeased'! This implies that they would have been worse off, if your people been in power since 1947.

It is not our case that the Muslim Indians have made no economic progress but that despite their progress, in 50 years after independence, they are a deprived community. There are complex reasons for this. One factor is educational backwardness. Another is hostile discrimination. You know well that all minority groups, at all levels of governance, irrespective of religion, caste, language or race - are subjected to hostile discrimination and lump it as the state is powerless to provide protection. The only known anti-dote to hostile discrimination is Reverse Discrimination and Positive Affirmation. But you do not go into the root causes of their backwardness, their permanent state of deprivation or suggest remedial action. You promise non-discrimination but you know that there can be no equality among unequals and that unequals deserve special supportive measures like reservation and quotas. But such thoughts are blasphemy to you and your party would condemn them as 'minorityism'. Advaniji, how can you perch yourself on a moral high ground, if you support reservation for SC, ST and OBCs but oppose it only for Muslims. Yet you say you are not communal.

Muslim backwardness, for which Advaniji you have shed a few crocodile tears has many historical and contemporary reasons. The test of equality in a secular democratic society is that in each income-group, in every sphere of human activity, at every political or administrative level, one should find more or less a proportionate percentage of different religious, caste and ethnic groups. This is the ideal. We cannot reach it but can't we try to reach it in good conscience and without any mental reserve.

EDUCATION AND URDU

If you are concerned about our educational backwardness, why does not your party demand educational facilities in accordance with national norms in areas of Muslim concentration? On the other hand, it demands the abolition of Article 30, even though if already stand diluted by administrative and legal means. In Hindi State, your party deprives Muslim children from learning their mother-tongue Urdu and uses the educational system to Hinduise them by Hinduising

school culture, by making them study Sanskrit in lieu of their Mother-Tongue, by propagating Hindu religion in the name of moral education and by imposing Hindu Sanskars. All this alienates Muslims from the educational stream.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

I must also thank you, Advaniji, for your statement on communal violence. But riots after riots have been instigated by persons who believe in your ideology or work for your party. In riot after riot the administration and police personnel imbued with your philosophy have joined hands in killing Muslims. I have been in politics since 1979. I have never heard you or any other leader of your party condemn the culprits, not even after the cold-blooded massacre of the Hashimpura youth, not even after the Nellie or the Bhagalpur massacres or the post-Demolition killings. How many riot-affected towns and cities have you visited or organised relief in? In how many riots have you demanded compensation for loss of life, honour and property? Your government in UP is sleeping on Hashimpura Report. Your government in Maharashtra sought to stop the Sri Krishna Commission of Inquiry and has filed away thousands of riot cases. The fact is that you and your party have never shed a tear or said one word of sympathy or applied even a healing touch on the bleeding wounds. On the other, your party and colleagues have always shifted responsibility on the Muslims and denounced the victims as "aggressors"! **Indeed your promise to build a riot-free India is itself a confirmation of the fact that the riot squads are under your command. Who knows whether you will not arm and unleash them, once you are in power?**

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Please tell us, Advaniji, what you and your party have done so far to ensure proper representation for the Muslim Indians in the political affairs of the nation? Please let us know the number of Muslim candidates of BJS, and later the BJP, have put up for the central and state legislatures since their foundation? And particularly for the ensuing election? Please let us know how many Muslims you have inducted in your party structure (barring the Minority cells!). And if the Muslim representation is indeed pathetically low, as a responsible party hoping to run the country, please spell out what you propose to do to ensure due representation of 12 per cent of our people. The least you can do is to stop the 20 year long campaign of summary disenfranchisement against the Muslims on one pretext or the other, without due process of law, in Assam and elsewhere.

VOTE BANK - MUSLIM OR HINDU?

The Muslim Indian understands the political game. They have not served as an exclusive vote bank to any party; they have voted for different parties in different

states and in different constituencies in the same State. Muslims tend, as all minority groups all over the world do, not to divide their votes at constituency level and cast it as unitedly for a candidate of their choice who is rarely a Muslim. But you forget, Advaniji, your own constant endeavour to consolidate and maintain your Hindu vote-bank. Certainly it does not lie in your mouth to accuse your adversaries of trying to create a Muslim vote bank. We may have been fooled by other parties, just as you are trying to fool us now, but the real question is that when there is a gap between their profession and practice, as there has been because all parties are hypocrites to some extent or the other, not only towards Muslims but towards the people as a whole, we can argue with them, we can shame them. But since your communal and majoritarian approach is blatant and clear and clad in the garb of Hindu Nationalism and since you do, what you say and you say, what is in your mind - how can we ever argue with you?

BJP: A THREAT TO ISLAMIC IDENTITY

Advaniji, we are not afraid of the BJP. We have learnt to live with riots. We know that we cannot be liquidated, nor thrown into the sea, nor driven across the border. But under BJP rule, we shall be brainwashed and harassed and humiliated and pressurised to give up our Islamic identity. It is in this sense that BJP is perceived as a threat by the Muslims. If the secular order survives, one day, the Muslim Indians shall get his due; if Hindu Nationalism takes over, the Muslim Indian is doomed!

RELIGIOUS INSECURITY AYODHYA, MATHURA AND VARANASI

Now Advaniji, let us come to your gracious offer on Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi. You and your party as masters of double-speak have been speaking variously on the Babari Masjid question. But one thing is clear. Since you have no case in law, you have threatened, time and time again, to change the law and take over the site by legislation. This, you have affirmed, you will do once you have a majority in the Parliament. Let me advise you, Advaniji, such a law will be unconstitutional because it violates its basic structure. A secular state cannot take over the place of worship of one religious group to hand it over to another. Of course, once you have a 2/3 majority, you can even change the Constitution! But that is not very imminent.

You believe in the rule of law. Why are you mortally afraid of letting the law take its course? The site is under judicial protection but in the custody of the central government. Even when you form the central government you cannot fulfill your commitment. You will have once again to violate the sanctity of the Constitution and the majesty of law.

Your modus operandi in Ayodhya has been well-

structured. First you ask your brothers in saffron - the RSS and the VHP to prepare the ground. Then you incite religious sentiments of the Hindus by undertaking a Yatra; then you install a government in the state which gives a free hand to Ram bhaktas and orders the police not to interfere and in collusion with Narasimha Rao, you demolish the Masjid; then your Kar Sevaks create a new reality, the make-shift temple on the debris of the Babari Masjid. But now you get stuck. Already your colleague Uma Bharati is threatening Muslims with another 'humiliation'. So while your party threatens us, you plead with us to sign on the dotted line.

You say that Mathura and Kashi are not on your agenda, not just yet. Until 1989, even Ayodhya was not but suddenly it became a question of Hindi, honour, dignity and awakening.

You are asking Muslims to forgo their constitutional and legal rights out of fear. Is it fair, Advaniji? Why don't you commit yourself to accept the judicial verdict and join us in pressing for expeditious hearing of the title suit?

RIGHTING HISTORIC WRONGS - WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE?

Assuming that Babari Masjid site is indeed the birthsite of Shri Ram Chandraj, assuming that a standing Ram Janambhoomi Mandir was demolished to build Babari Masjid on that site in 1528, assuming that it was a dilapidated place of worship, assuming that the Muslims had not offered Namaz in it "since 1934", as you allege, does it give you the legal right to take it over, to demolish it and to build a temple in its place? No law in any civilised country permits vandalism against a historic monument. No law anywhere permits desecration of a original place of worship. Once the law of "might is right" or your principle of the majority is right prevails, how will you silence claims on thousands of temples built on Buddhist viharas and indigenous shrines. How many Vaishnav and Shaivinite shrines will have to be restored to each other? How far back and forward in history are you prepared to go? When do you demolish the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the Parliament House - both symbols of slavery? And would you spare the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort?

If you are a true nationalist and a patriot if you believe in India's destiny as a great nation, you would not open the Pandora's box and strive to waste national energies on rewriting our history in blood and tears?

Advaniji, in all you speech, you have not uttered one word of regret about the past, one word of retraction from you exclusivist philosophy of Hindutva, one word of remorse over what happened. Nothing that you have stated raise any hope of equality and dignity for which the Muslim Indian yearns.

POLITICAL COMPULSION

Advaniji, your well-written speech is nothing more than an electoral gimmick. You know that your party commands only 20 per cent of the votes; with all your allies, you may command 30 per cent but that is not enough for you to capture Delhi. You have reached a plateau; your majoritarian Hindu vote bank will not give you the quantum jump you need. You need the support of other groups like the Muslims. **You need the floating voters; you need the votes of the secular, liberal Hindus. So this Convention was nothing more than a scene in the drama enacted by your party for electoral benefit.**

NO POSITIVE AND CONCRETE MEASURES

Had you been prepared to announce positive and concrete measure for the welfare and development of the Muslim community - on employment, education, political representation, religious security, cultural and linguistic progress, had you expressed regret at the demolition of the Babari Masjid and closed the chapter of revanchism for all times to come, had you supported teaching of Urdu to Urdu-speaking children and their primary instruction through Urdu-medium, had you defined national culture as composite culture, with a Hindu core, had you proposed statutory compensation for all loss of life, property and honour in communal riots and other form of social violence and summary punishment for the culprits, you would have indeed deserved a heart-response from us, Muslim Indians.

As it is we thank you for the verbal morsels you have thrown at us - your recognition of Muslim Indian as a community, as a minority group, your acknowledgement that they face serious problems and handicaps, your admission that Muslims have made some valuable contribution to the national culture, your respect for Muslim freedom fighters and achievers.

MUSLIM ASPIRATION

But we ask for no special rights; we want participation in equality, our place in the sun, our share of the national bread, our physical security and the right to be what we are - Muslim Indians, Indians who profess Islam, who will never trade off Roti with Masjid.

The BJP does not enjoy the monopoly of Nationalism or patriotism. All Indians who see their life and the destiny unbreakably linked with that of their motherland India, are nationalists and patriots.

The Indian Nation is not a Hindu nation.
The Indian Culture is not Hindu Culture.
The Indian people are not the Hindu people alone.
INDIA is not HINDUISM
Hindutva is not Bharatiyata.

Advaniji, you are a learned man. Please do not confuse integration with absorption or unity with uniformity. Please do not equate a part, howsoever big, with the whole. Please do not try to change the gorgeous multichrome of India to a dull monochrome. Please do not row against the current of History - which is taking all mankind towards Social, Justice, Human Rights, Minorities Rights, Multi-Ethnicity, Multi-Culturalism and Universal Participation in Governance. Please do not reduce our Democracy to "Majorityism", the perpetual dominance of a "permanent majority" over "permanent minorities".

Please jettison the mental baggage of hostility, distrust and hatred, so that we, all of us, can move forward, shoulder to shoulder and make India, our motherland, a model for the world of the Future.

RSS: Golwalkar's Thoughts

We (Hindus) began to class ourselves with our old invaders and foes under the outlandish name - Indian. The result of this poison is too well-known. We have allowed ourselves to be duped into believing our foes to be our friends and with our own hands are undermining true nationality. That is the real danger of the day, our self-forgetfulness, our believing our old and bitter enemies to be our friends.

The non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language... So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences they cannot but be only foreigners...there are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at the sweet will of the national race... they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment - not even citizen's rights... In this country, Hindus alone are the Nation and the Muslims and others, if not actually anti-national are at least outside the body of the Nation".

Those who declared 'No swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity' have thus perpetrated the greatest treason on our society. These leaders were telling the Hindus to ignore, even submit weakly to the vandalism and atrocities of the Muslims.

Forget all that the Muslims have done in the past and all that they are now doing to you... If they carry away your wives and daughters, let them. Do not obstruct them. That would be violence."

BJP: Election Manifesto, 1998 (Extracts)

Cultural Nationalism: The BJP is committed to the concept of "One Nation, One People and One Culture"... Our nationalist vision is not merely bound by the geographical or political identity of Bharat but it is referred by our timeless cultural heritage. This cultural heritage which is central to all regions, religions and languages, is a civilizational identity and constitutes the cultural nationalism of India which is the core of Hindutva. This we believe is the identity of our ancient nation "Bharatvarsha".

... Hindutva (is) consistent with the true meaning and definition of secularism... Hindutva accepts as sacred all forms of belief and worship. The evolution of Hindutva in politics is the antidote to the creation of vote banks and appeasement of sectional interests. Hindutva means justice for all.

Ram Janmabhoomi movement for the construction of Shri Ram Mandir at Ayodhya (is) the greatest mass movement in post-Independence history; (it) reoriented the disoriented polity in India and strengthened the foundation of cultural nationalism.

The BJP is committed to facilitate the construction of a magnificent Shri Ram Mandir at Ram Janmasthan in Ayodhya where a makeshift temple already exists. Shri Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness. The BJP will explore all consensual, legal and constitutional means to facilitate the construction of Shri Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.

Constitutional Reforms:

1. The BJP will appoint a Commission to comprehensively review the Constitution of India, in the light of the experience of the past 50 years and make suitable recommendations. The Commission will comprise constitutional experts and eminent parliamentarians.
 2. The BJP will carve out Uttaranchal, Varnanchal, Vidarbha and Chhattisgarh as separate States. Delhi will be given full Statehood.
 3. The BJP will abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution.
- Commitment to Minorities: Towards Equal Opportunity and Prosperity**

The BJP's concept of Positive Secularism is: Justice for All, Appeasement of None... The minorities have been cynically used for the purpose of garnering votes these past 50 years, but their socio-economic problems have remained unattended. The true meaning of "secularism", equal respect for all faith - sarva panth samadar - has been perverted by the pseudo-secularists into appeasement of regressive elements.

The coming election provides a window of opportunity to the minorities to take a fresh look at the options that are available to them. They should not go blindly with the so-called "secular" parties that have done

nothing to solve their real socio-economic problems. Instead, they should make a clean break with the past and support the BJP... We offer - equal rights, equal opportunities, equal privileges and equal responsibilities. Above all, we have proved in the States where the BJP is in power that we can maintain communal peace and harmony; we can ensure security of life and property; and, we can protect the honour and dignity of the minority communities. In keeping with this commitment, we will:

1. Provide all minority communities with equal opportunities for prosperity;
2. Encourage access to education which is the key to social and economic progress;
3. Give all incentives to artisans, especially those involved in traditional arts and crafts;
4. Initiate special self-employment schemes and the requisite training programmes;
5. Launch community programmes for raising the level of awareness among women members of the minority communities and providing them with education;
6. Amend Article 30 of the Constitution suitably to remove any scope of discrimination against any religious community in matters of education;
7. Entrust the responsibilities of the Minorities Commission to the Human Rights Commission, thus providing greater protection to members of minority communities;
8. Set up special courts to try cases of communal violence and, if necessary, amend existing laws to provide for exemplary punishment to those inciting or taking part in communal or sectarian violence. The BJP's commitment is to create a riot-free India;
9. Protect Wakf properties from being usurped by unscrupulous individuals and help wakf boards to develop these properties for the welfare of poor Muslim families; and
10. Ban job advertisements which require applications to declare their religion.

President Narayanan's Republic Day Message

President K.R. Narayanan has asked the people to mobilise themselves and harness their energies to deal with "dark forces" of communalism, casteism, corruption, violence and criminalisation of politics.

"The state and the government have the responsibility of dealing with these forces which are threatening the fabric of our society and cherished values. But people themselves have a responsibility to play". ...

(Source: The Times of India, 26 January, 1998)

Congress(I): Election Manifesto, 1998 (Extracts)

Babari Masjid: The BJP made solemn commitments to the Supreme Court, to Parliament and to the National Integration Council that the Babari Masjid would be protected. The Congress government at the Centre believed that these commitments would be honoured both in letter and spirit. It was betrayed.

Even so, it unreservedly apologises to the people of India that it could not prevent the tragic event of December 6th, 1992. The Congress gives a solemn pledge that such events will not take place again.

It is clear that such commitments were only a smokescreen, a ruse. The main actors of this demolition squad proudly asserted that "matters of faith are not subject to the law and the Constitution".

The BJP is not apologetic. It wants to repeat Ayodhya at Kashi and Mathura.

Secularism: To the true Congress worker, secularism is an article of faith, a way of life. The Congress does not consider secularism to be anti-religion or the rejection of religion. It means Sarva Dharma Sambhaava, equal respect for all religions. It means the rejection of the use of religion for political ends, the rejection of the mobilisation of people by stirring up religious passions.

The Congress has always believed that an India that is not secular just cannot survive. Democracy and social harmony can never flourish in a society that is not secular. Indian civilisation has lived and grown over the past 5000 years and more only because of its secular tradition. We are the world's oldest and largest pluralistic society. That heritage is under attack. Pluralism under attack means democracy under attack.

The vandals belonging to the Sangh Parivar, who pulled down the Babari Masjid were not just destroying India's composite culture. They were, in fact, also destroying Indian democracy. Religious passions are being unleashed and people are being mobilised in the name of religion. India's hallmark has been both its desire and capability for synthesis. That is sought to be rejected in the name of uniformity or "cultural nationalism", whatever that might mean. The Congress regards all citizens as equal.

Yet, it recognises minorities of several kinds because of the special disadvantages that they suffer and the special help they need. This is the burden of history. This is not appeasement. This is simply heeding the call of the Indian Constitution. The Congress rejects communalism of all kinds, communalism whatever its source.

Neither the Congress nor the country can ever forget that we have lost two of the most precious lives of India at the altar of secularism: Mahatma Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. Since its inception, the Congress has fought against communal forces in all forms. The Congress has never compromised with the BJP. Nor will it ever do so.

Education: ... The Congress will launch a new scheme Desh ke Liye - Ek Saal. Educated youth will be mobilised and paid for their involvement for a year in mission-

oriented projects in areas like literacy drives, afforestation schemes, family planning programmes, social reform movements, legal rights awareness campaigns. The choice of opting for this programme after school or college will be a matter of individual choice.

Minorities: Indiraji's 15-point programme for Minorities continues to be our blueprint. Each and every element of this programme will be implemented with renewed vigour. The Congress will create a new Ministry for Minorities to ensure better coordination and integration. A high-powered Commission will be set up to examine and give recommendations on how the representation of minorities in public services could be enhanced in a meaningful manner.

The Congress will amend the Constitution to establish a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions and provide direct affiliation for minority professional institutions to central universities.

New middle-level technical institutions in clusters where, for example, artisans and weavers are concentrated will be started.

The Congress will substantially enhance the corpus of the Maulana Azad Educational Foundation to spread education and literacy among minority communities.

In 1996, the Congress took the initiative to establish the Maulana Azad National Urdu University at Hyderabad. This University will impart higher education, particularly vocational and technical education, in the Urdu medium specially to women. The Congress will ensure that this University emerges as a centre of excellence. The Congress Government made Urdu the second official language in UP and Bihar. However, no follow-up action was taken by subsequent governments. The Congress will give Urdu its due status.

The Congress respects the personal laws of all communities and rejects that idea of a uniform personal law for all Indians. This goes against the very nature of Indian civilisation itself. Reforms of personal laws of communities will be considered only when there is a demand for change from the communities themselves.

The Congress enacted the Protection of Places of Worship Act in 1991. This freezes the status of all places of worship as on August 15, 1947. This law will be strictly enforced. On Ayodhya, the Congress will abide by the ruling of the Supreme Court. No other outside court solution will be allowed. The Congress will include socially and educationally backward minorities in the list of beneficiaries entitled to reservations and other special measures intended for the OBCs.

Special security and insurance schemes for weavers and handloom workers, fishermen, toddy tappers, leather workers and plantation labourers will be introduced.

A special drive will be launched for the recruitment of minorities to the police, paramilitary forces and the armed forces. Communally-sensitive districts and places will be kept under special watch.

CPI(M): Election Manifesto, 1998

(Extracts)

Secularism and Federalism: Secularism has been defined as a basic feature of the Constitution by the Supreme Court. This constitutional principle expresses the reality of the daily life and experience of the millions of Indians who live and work harmoniously together irrespective of caste, creed and religion. However, secularism has come under continuous assault by the forces represented by the BJP and its mentor, the RSS. There can be no compromise with those who wish to erode the secular basis of the State and the political system.

The Left parties will work for:

- * Legislation for separation of religion and politics
- * Prohibition on use of religious issues for electoral purposes by political parties.
- * Reference of the Ayodhya dispute to the Supreme Court under Article 138(2) for a speedy judicial verdict.
- * Protection of the basic right of religious belief and practicing one's religion.
- * Implementation of the "Protection of Places of Worship Act" which prohibits change of the character of religious places of worship after 1947.

Jammu and Kashmir: Maximum autonomy for the state of Jammu and Kashmir by maintaining Article 370 of the Constitution, regional autonomy to be provided to Jammu and Ladakh regions within this framework.

Education

- * Introduce compulsory primary education accompanied by free mid-day meals, provision of text books and other education materials.
- * Free and universal education must be guaranteed for all children upto the age of 14 years. The 83rd Constitutional Amendment making education a basic right should be adopted for children upto the age of 14.
- * Syllabus and curriculum to inculcate secularism, progressive values, scientific temper and national unity.
- * Support to mass literacy programmes.

Housing

- * Housing to be accorded the status of a basic right; housing schemes for urban and rural poor to be stepped up.

Employment

- * Guarantee right to work as a fundamental right.
- * Ensure adequate credit for self-employment schemes for educated unemployed, artisans and handicapped persons.

Rights of Minorities

- * Protection of the just rights of the minorities; implement provisions of the Constitution to prevent discrimination.
- * Special schemes for promoting educational facilities for deprived minorities.

United Front: Election Manifesto, 1998

(Extracts)

Secularism: ... The UF reiterates that secularism means the separation of religion from the State. Secularism has been defined as a basic feature of the Indian Constitution by the Supreme Court. The efforts by communal forces to undermine the multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-linguistic character of our society will be strongly rebuffed.

The UF will strictly implement the Protection of Places of Worship Act. It will actively combat all efforts by the communal forces to create fresh disputes in Kashi and Mathura. The Babari Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute at Ayodhya will be resolved with reference to the Supreme Court or on the basis of a consensus.

The right to freedom of religion contained in the Constitution will be fully respected and protected. The personal codes of different religious communities will not be altered unless and until a consensus emerges for bringing about such a change.

Jammu and Kashmir: The UF is committed to granting maximum autonomy to state of J&K maintaining Article 370 of the Constitution and regional autonomy to Jammu and Ladakh regions within this framework.

Social Justice: The UF reiterates its commitment to the empowerment of the underprivileged, deprived sections and communities...

A large number of Scheduled Castes and other backward classes are dependent on their traditional occupations. On the one hand, the door of access to other occupations has been barred to them while, on the other hand, there is a sharp dwindling of opportunities and incomes in their traditional occupations... There is still a long way to go before these sections achieve true equality of opportunity. The UF will make all efforts to attain this objective.

Protection of Minority Rights: Special efforts will be made to improve the living conditions of the minorities with respect to education, employment and other opportunities. ...The UF is committed to establish Urdu Primary Schools to eradicate illiteracy among the minorities within a time-bound programme.

The UF is also committed to provide guarantee in aid to non-governmental organisations who will come forward to start minority educational institutions.

The UF government shall undertake a comprehensive economic package for improving their standard and quality of life.

- * Protection and encouragement of Urdu language.

Media and Culture

The State should provide facilities for development of secular and democratic culture. The diverse cultural traditions of the people must free expression and equal treatment by the State.

All national languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution should be equally encouraged and developed.

Janata Dal: Election Manifesto, 1998

(Extracts)

Special Attention to Minorities: The Janata Dal will ensure that the religious minorities receive full protection to enjoy their freedom of religion, religious practices, modes of worship and to develop their institutions.

The Janata Dal will establish a separate **Ministry of Minorities, under a Cabinet Minister.** All issues pertaining to minorities, including the working of the Wakf Boards, Haj Pilgrimage, etc., will be brought under that Ministry.

The Janata Dal will establish **Urdu Primary schools in all those areas where the Urdu-speaking population is more than 25% in order to enhance the literacy level of this population. These Urdu schools will be funded entirely by the Central Government.**

The Janata Dal will provide grant-in-aid to NGOs which come forward to establish educational institutions for minorities.

The Janata Dal will set up a Minority Development Authority, with adequate finances to promote the economic development of minorities particularly the rural artisans and educated unemployed youth.

The Janata Dal will appoint a Special Commission to examine the present reservation policy and **to make recommendations for providing adequate representation for minorities in all government jobs.**

The Janata Dal will **appoint a Commission to formulate a suitable policy for providing reservation in jobs and admission to educational institutions for the backwards among the Muslims and other religious minorities within the guidelines provided by the Supreme Court judgement:**

The Janata Dal will provide for jobs reservations to Dalit Christians.

The Janata Dal will enhance the corpus fund of Maulana Azad Education Foundation to Rs. 150 crores.

In the Ninth Five Year Plan, Rs. 1000 crore will be provided for the educational institutions of minorities.

The Janata Dal will extend, under Article 15(4), reservation to OBCs in admission to educational institutions.

The Janata Dal will establish a Backward Class Finance Development Corporation with adequate funds for it.

The Janata Dal **favours a Constitutional amendment to provide reservation for the economically backward among the forward castes.**

Coalition politics has become a reality but coalition culture has not.

- I.K. Gujral, Prime Minister of India



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Organiser/Internet Unmask Vajpayee's Views on RSS, Islam, Muslims & Demolition

... The RSS has a two-fold task before it. One is to organise the Hindus. To build a strong Hindu society... The other task is to assimilate the non-Hindus, like Muslims and Christians, in the mainstream.

Minorities

They can follow the faith of their own conviction. No one can object to it... But this country must be looked upon as the Motherland by them. They must have a feeling of patriotism for this country.

Islamic Inj

But the Islamic division of the world into Darul Harab and Darul Islam comes in the way. Islam has yet to learn the art of existing and flourishing in a country where Muslims are in a minority. They cannot convert the whole of India to Islam. After all, they have to live here. So they have to recognise this fact. And today it has become a matter of grave concern and deep thinking in the Muslim countries. Because Quran offers no guidance in this regard. It only talks of killing kafirs or converting them to Islam. But they cannot do it always and everywhere.

How can they do it where they are in a minority? If they try to do it, a major clash will take place and only the members of the minority will be killed. But Muslims themselves have to change this state of affairs. We cannot change it for them.

Three Alternatives

Congress has not correctly understood the Muslim problem. They continue to carry on their policy of appeasement. But to what effect? The Muslims of this country can be treated in three ways. One is tiraskar which means if they will not themselves change leave them alone, reject them as our compatriots. Second is puraskar, which is appeasement, i.e. bribing them to behave, which is being done by the Congress and others of their ilk. The third way is parishkar meaning to change them, that is, restore them to the mainstream by providing them samskaras.

We want to change them by offering them the right samskaras. Their religion will not be changed. They can follow their own religion. Mecca can continue to be holy for the Muslims but India should be holier than the holy for them. You can go to a mosque and offer namaz, you can keep the roza. We have no problem. But if you have to choose between Mecca or Islam and India you must choose India. All the Muslims should have this feeling: we will live and die only for this country.

The Demolition

... We (Hindus) did pull down the structure in

Ayodhya. In fact it was a reaction to the Muslim vote-bank. We wanted to solve this problem through negotiation and legislation. But there was no puraskar for burai (evil act). We change burai also with parishkar. Now I think, the Hindu society has been regenerated which was the prime task of the RSS...

(Source: The Organiser, 7 May, 1995)

(Courtesy: The Communalism Combat, February, 1998)

Views of Vajpayee, the Liberal

I

India will continue to be a secular state if the BJP comes to power: "India will not be a theocracy. We believe in positive, not negative secularism. Minorities are Indian citizens with rights and privileges. There will be no discrimination on the basis of religion".

There is extensive scope for a dialogue (on Ayodhya). We are sure some solution can emerge."

(Source: The Indian Express, 10 January, 1998)

II

A new programme will be formulated for the new combination. The BJP programme will not be adopted as the programme of the government of a new combination. It will have to be amended.

(The BJP) is going to become the mainstream. The Congress is vacating the space. Apart from the BJP no one can fill this vacuum.

Muslims are not alienated. They come to our rallies. They listen to us. Now they are getting disillusioned with other political parties. They think they are being treated as vote banks. They like the BJP because it is a frank party. By now most of their apprehensions have been allayed after seeing the BJP State governments in operation.

(It is ridiculous to say) that if there are fewer communal riots in States ruled by the BJP.

Once we come to power we have to uphold the law. We are committed to 'Raj dharma'. The raja must be above all favouritism and discrimination.

We will not allow Ayodhya to be repeated anywhere. That is my assurance. The VHP and RSS have views of their own. The BJP too has its own views. Mathura and Kashi are not on our agenda.

There is no need to apologise for Ayodhya. The party did not do anything. The party was asking the people not to demolish. But the people went out of control. If anybody is to be blamed, it is the Central Government. Kalyan Singh ... was the Chief Minister. He tried. He failed. He paid the price...

(Source: The Indian Express, 25 January, 1998)

BJP: A.B. Vajpayee's Views

A new programme will be formulated for the new combination. The BJP programme will not be adopted as the programme of the government of a new combination. It will have to be amended. The BJP is going to become the mainstream. The Congress is vacating the space. Apart from the BJP no one can fill this vacuum.

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It is ridiculous to say if there are fewer communal riots in States ruled by the BJP, it is because earlier our party helped engineer such trouble.

Once we come to power we have to uphold the law. We are committed to 'Raj dharma'. The raja must be above all favouritism and discrimination.

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Kalyan Singh ... was the chief minister. He tried. He failed. He paid the price.

(Source: The Indian Express, 25 January, 1998)

RSS: Rajender Singh's Views

On BJP's Alliances:

The BJP might have alliances but each party has a different manifesto and they are fighting on their own agenda. It's only a question of seat adjustments to make sure that their votes don't get divided and the third party doesn't win. And the BJP has not done anything which we don't approve of.

On Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura:

Being a political party, the BJP thinks and talks about the immediate issues. They need not think about the questions of the future. At present we cannot do anything about Ram Janmabhoomi because the land surrounding it has been taken over by the government.

On BJP's Policies:

Kalyan Singh inducted people with criminal links in his Cabinet to show that the BJP was not an untouchable. To show that you can't make a fool of us every time and topple our governments. For abnormal times we have to adopt abnormal policies.

On Godse:

Godse was motivated by (the philosophy of) akhanda Bharat. Uske mantavya achhe thhe par usne achhe

Shiv Sena: Bal Thackeray's Views

... I was never against Muslims. I have always sympathised with them for they have been cajoled, exploited and treated as mere vote-banks by politicians. This beleaguered community has been exploited by the Congress for almost 50 years.

... With me, Hindutva is a personal force, imploring me to be a better Hindu. A good Hindu is one who doesn't hurt the feelings of the members of other communities.

... The Hindu-Muslim problem is a gift of the English after 1857... For them communal riots were games to be relished. Today this game has been played by the politicians and we have to see through this game and work steadily for firmly cementing Hindu-Muslim reconciliation on the unexceptional principle of "justice for all and appeasement for none". ...

Over the last 50 years the politics of opportunism and appeasement has taken not only Muslims but the entire country to the bank of collapse... While the common Muslim is still languishing in his ghetto, the Congress has treated this community as their vote bank.

... I have always desired that Muslims must join the mainstream. In Maharashtra we have launched a social upliftment scheme, "Taleem, Tijarat Aur Tarbiyat" (education, commerce and training)...

Hindutva is always at the core of my heart... What's wrong in being a staunch Hindu or Muslim? Hindutva has unfortunately been interpreted as a movement to annihilate Muslims. It's not so. Hindutva doesn't mean fighting Muslims or driving them out of India.

I have never been against patriotic Muslims. But it hurts when sweets are distributed and crackers burnt after India is defeated in a cricket or hockey match against Pakistan. This is not patriotism. I still maintain that those Muslims who side with Pakistan need introspection since India is their homeland...

Honesty speaking, to a "Sangh Parivar" member an Indian Muslim appears to be aggressive, belligerent, intolerant, fanatically rooted to the past glory, resistant to any change and a drag on the nation's march to the 21st century... They need to come out of their ghetto mentality. The educated, progressive and secular Muslims must come forward to lead the community. A broad world view is needed for the Indian Muslims... Hindu-Muslim relations in multi-religious, multi-cultural India can be reconceived. Hindus and Muslims of India are linked with each other and communal harmony without leaving one's identity, should be the watchword today.

(Source: The Times of India, 9 February, 1998)

was good but he used the wrong methods)... He was shocked to see crores of people migrate (from Pakistan) and wanted to kill all the leaders.

A Plea for Liberal Hindutva

... The BJP - broadly positioned as a "Hindutva fundamentalist party" - has become a powerful force. None of the mainstream political parties, or even the amorphous mass called the "Third Front", are willing to touch the BJP with a barge-pole - although, surprisingly, they have no such reservations while dealing with the Muslim League or Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait's Indian National League, if the situation so warrants.

However, the BJP has only itself to blame for its unenviable situation. Why can the BJP not genuinely embrace the Supreme Court's idea of Hindutva and see the difference it makes?

Why can it not shake off the influence of the semi-literate, self-styled "clerics" who overrun every party event with swastikas and saffron pennants..? Why can the party not acknowledge the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual character of India, leave alone its multi-religious nature?

Already, the BJP has begun to soft-pedal the issues that it held dear, like the uniform civil code (an unexceptionable proposition), the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution (a debatable point depending on how you look at it) and the construction of the temple at Ayodhya, to commemorate Lord Rama's birth...

If Hindu fundamentalism defines itself in terms of a reaction to Muslim fundamentalism, bigotry will inevitably beget bigotry and close the doors of harmony and understanding...

It is all very well to bolster Hindu self-esteem. But that ought to be done under the aegis of the "kinder, gentler face" ... Vajpayee supposedly represents. It cannot be done under the war-banner of the zealous RSS, the Shiv Sena, or any of the ultra-fundamentalist sections within the BJP.

It was Hindu fundamentalism that was responsible for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, whose "Gandhian socialism" the BJP now professes...

But ... religion does not foreclose "western" freedoms or a liberal lifestyle. Israel's religiosity does not preclude the existence of a free society for all practical purposes, with minimum religious interference only in the lives of those who opt for organised religion. For example, there are shops selling kosher food for the devout, while others can live as they please. The polity, culture and private life are free of religious imposition.

... There is also the example of the Christian Democrats in Germany, or the True Path and Motherland parties of Turkey, who are fighting hard to fend off religious extremists...

(Source: The Kshemendra Upadhyaya in The Times of India, 25 November, 1997)

BJP: Murli Manohar Joshi's Views

In recent times, the Bharatiya Janata Party has been accused of throwing principles to the wind in order to win allies ... but we found ourselves in a situation where the more we played by the rules, the more others were violating them... We upheld our principles only to be treated as pariahs so we decided to teach everyone a lesson. But we will definitely go back to principles once this political transition is over..

The BJP is the only party which has a clear goal, that of stability under the leadership of A.B. Vajpayee. There are several aspects to stability - a stable country, a stable government and a stable dynamic economy. ...

Minority Policy

The BJP's performance in the various states it rules disproves the theory that it is biased against the so-called minorities. We believe in the credo justice for all, appeasement of none... About the BJP's agenda vis-a-vis the Muslims, ... we want the Ayodhya dispute to be resolved either through dialogue or legislation, not litigation and that Kashi and Mathura are definitely not on our agenda. ... I personally do not consider Muslims or Christians to be minorities. It is this philosophy of minorityism that has resulted in a social and religious divide. After all, the majority of Muslims and Christians are of Indian stock. Ways of worship may be different but that does not transform a person from majority to minority.

The religious bogey is just another stick to beat the BJP with. India has never been a Hindu state. India can never be a theocracy because the Hindu mind is secular.... The perception of the BJP as some sort of Hindu party is the result of the sustained onslaught on us in which the media has played a major role. Our demand for a uniform civil too has been misinterpreted by many as a ploy to impose a Hindu code on the country. This is absolutely untrue, we want a situation where everyone gets a fair deal before the law. Personal laws at present discriminate in matters like inheritance which are particularly prejudicial to women. ...

The RSS Facto... We are close to the RSS. We certainly do listen to it and take its advice, but there is no question of the RSS, controlling the party. All the BJP's leaders grew up in the RSS tradition and it continues to help us whenever we are in difficulty. ...

(Source: The Times of India, 5 February, 1998)

The three Cs, namely, the criminal, the corrupt, the casteist, are at the helm of affairs in Independent India.

- S.K. Sinha, Governor of Assam

Bipan Chandra on the BJP's Ideology

... Hindu communalism as also Muslim, Sikh and Christian communalism have, however, grown since 1977... Sections of the middle classes and the intelligentsia ... have (not) gone over to communalism, but rather they have failed to understand the basic character of BJP. Many see it as some sort of right-of-the-centre Christian Democratic type of party with some religious or cultural appeal for Hindus. They also regard it as functioning within the limits imposed by its own constitution, leaders and programme. Both these assumptions are wrong.

There is also a misunderstanding regarding communalism. Communalism is not a set of specific policies such as the building of a temple at Ayodhya or the enactment of a uniform civil code. Communalism is basically an ideology, a belief system, a way of looking at society and polity. Various policies acquire a communal character only when they are articulated with a communal ideology...

BJP ... is a communal party because it is structured around communal ideology. The cadres of BJP (and RSS) - the sinews of any party or movement - are recruited and enthused over the years through strong and naked communal ideology. To suggest that BJP minus communalism would be 'alright' is to ignore the centrality of communal ideology to its existence. BJP minus communalism would not be 'alright', it would be a big zero - and BJP leaders know it. They can sugarcoat the communal ideological pill but they cannot function without it. Many people also think that once in power, BJP would be 'tamed' ideologically and would gradually get humanised and secularised, especially under the leadership of liberal and decent persons like Vajpayee and Advani. Such people forget that once an ideology spreads widely and prevails for a long enough period it acquires a life and force of its own and not even those who nurtured and spread it can control its effectivity. ...

Furthermore, and above all, BJP is not its own master. Like its predecessor, Jan Sangh, it is a creation of RSS; its ideological character and strength and its cadres - its steel frame - are provided by RSS. Critically important in this respect is the thought of M.S. Golwalkar, the only major ideologue of RSS, whose two books, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* and *Bunch of Thoughts* continue to be the only ... ideological guidelines for RSS and BJP cadres.

Some object to this critique of ... BJP-RSS on the ground that all this was said and written in the past and Golwalkar has in any case been dead for years. But apart from the fact, pointed out earlier, that Golwalkar's writings are the only published works (on the) ideology (of) RSS and its front organisations, their basic content is daily propagated orally among young persons in the RSS

shakhas. It is also to be noted that RSS and BJP leaders have at no stage publicly or in their two journals *Panchjanya* (Hindi) and *Organiser* (English), disowned or critiqued or even expressed their disagreement with any of Golwalkar's views. In fact, the very opposite. In the pages of their two journals, the RSS ideologues and propagandists continue to propagate the basic ideas of Golwalkar...

Lastly, the danger of BJP coming to power is not that it would immediately take anti-Muslim or anti-Christian steps or that it would start implementing its agenda regarding temple construction at Ayodhya, Article 370, etc. or that it would not give enough or important portfolios in its Cabinet to its secular allies such as Samata Party, Hegde's Lok Shakti or Jayalalitha's AIADMK. The real and long-term danger is that it would start using state power to communalise society. The State can through its myriad channels, from educational system to mass media and administrative measures, promote various elements of communal ideology. BJP-RSS can also start penetrating the state apparatuses, the educational institutions and the information channels through hardened communal cadres recruited and communalised at an early age.

In fact, this is precisely what they attempted even in 1977 and, of course, later when they were in control of several state governments. They could not go far because their rule in the states did not last long; and what is more important because basic state power in India lies with the Central Government which has been hitherto under the control of Congress, Janata Dal or the UF.

To learn and understand what happens when communal-type forces capture state power, we have the experience of not only Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Japan under Fascism but also of Pakistan where the secular forces find it difficult, and even impossible, to get out of the quagmire after the communal forces captured state power in 1947 under the leadership of the mild-mannered, sober and personally decent persons like Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan...

(Source: *The Hindustan Times*, 13 February, 1998)

Prof. Walter Hauser On Caste in Indian Politics

... The political history of India cannot be written with out reference to caste... Why should caste be seen as a problem? Caste is nothing but an ethnic identity. Tell me which country in the world is free from ethnic divisions, and if you like, tensions? Take the case of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, or, for that matter, the present-day USA. Ethnic mobilisation is a reality, everywhere...

(Source: *The Times of India*, 14 January, 1998)

Malini Parthasarathy

On BJP as Peril to National Unity

... The ground realities militate against illusions that the BJP can successfully reincarnate as a right-wing version of a modern liberal party. The party's ties with its alter egos in the Sangh Parivar are as firm as ever before, even as the party leadership remains anchored to the belief that the essence of the BJP's appeal is its challenge to the prevailing political ethos in this country.

... The BJP's platform today is ostensibly decorated with slogans not of Hindutva but with those that have an unquestionable and pervasive appeal - Suchitha (probity in public life), Suraksha (security), Samarasta (social harmony) and of course, Swadeshi (economic nationalism). The shift in the accent of the BJP's strategy from Hindutva to Suchitha is clearly intended to increase the party's attractiveness to potential supporters who until now might be wary of the abrasive implications of the Hindutva campaign.

... The BJP's successful strategy of painting the "secular" parties as the primary culprits responsible for the perceived decay of the political system also simulates the conditions of an "organic crisis" as once described by the political philosopher Antonio Gramsci, when "social classes become detached from their traditional parties".

... Yet a closer scrutiny of the BJP's strategic outlook makes it clear that the BJP's new hardsell of itself as a party for every Indian who wants corruption-free governance has not included a jettisoning of its majoritarian view of Indian politics and society. The BJP's approach to the minorities, particularly the Muslim community, is still resolutely rooted in a worldview that resists the perception of the Indian nation-state as presiding over a multicultural, multiethnic and multireligious civil society.

Interestingly, neither ... Vajpayee, denies that Hindutva remains the BJP's weltanschauung... One essay on Hindutva that figured prominently on one of the BJP's websites on the Internet, Kamal Darshan, proclaimed extravagantly that the future of Bharat is set, Hindutva is here to stay. It is up to the Muslims whether they will be included in the new nationalistic spirit of Bharat. It is up to the government and the Muslim leadership whether they want to increase Hindu fury or work with the Hindu leadership to show that Muslims and the government will consider Hindu sentiments. The era of one-way compromise of Hindus is over".

... The BJP's vision of India is that of a Hindu India, a perception that is sharply at odds with the vision sketched by the Constitution-framers in 1947 who recognised that India would not remain a viable nation-

state if it embraced any particular religious, linguistic or ethnic affiliation...

The secular political parties have not yet effectively refuted the BJP's attempts to portray itself as no longer communal. The real danger in the BJP's political challenge is not so much its mobilisation of Hindu chauvinist sentiment. More disturbing is the threat posed by its majoritarian outlook to the political culture of this country. The BJP is unabashedly canvassing its majoritarian view of the national ethos. It makes clear that minorities will have to get used to living in a Hindu country and according to the Hindu way of life...

Given that the BJP's principal political strategy is still anchored to mobilisation by communal polarisation, the BJP's strategists are not unduly alarmed by their party being labelled communal... It would therefore be more politically accurate and more effective to define the BJP's challenge as "majoritarian" rather than just "communal". The onus of preserving harmony between the majority and the minorities, according to the fundamental norms of civil society, would obviously rest on the majority rather than the minorities. Thus it is critical that ... secular parties and groups ... recognise that the essence of the BJP's challenge is its espousal of a majoritarian ethos rather than its communal identity. The people of India deserve to know that in the campaign to make India a Hindu nation, what is really at stake is the survival of a pluralist and multicultural civil society in which their dreams and aspirations can find legitimate expression.

(Source: The Hindu, 19 January, 1998)

Irfan Ahmed on BJP's Dilemma

... The dilemma before the BJP is ... not simply about Muslim vote or to capture power. It is much more grave, one that of Hamlet's: "To be or not to be". The party at present is working on the principle that if it jettisons the virulent anti-minority stand there is no reason why, in future, Muslims will not vote for it. Minus its anti-Muslim posture, the BJP is like any other party, be it the Congress, Janata Dal or Samajwadi Party all of whom have exploited the minority for electoral gains. But it negates its basic principle of being a value-based party "with a difference".

The BP must come to terms with the fact that with the demolition of the Babari Masjid, it has left an indelible scar on the psyche of Indian Muslims - a scar perhaps no less poignant than that of Partition...

(Source: The Pioneer, 20 February, 1998)

Insaf Morcha: National Convener Shahabuddin's Statement On BJP Manifesto of General Elections, 1998, 7 February, 1998

"The BJP Manifesto released on 3 February, 1998 serves to set all speculation about its 'liberalisation' at rest and to put a seal on the ideologically anti-secular character of the party which is no more than the political front of the RSS to promote and implement its long-term mission to transform the Indian state into Hindu Rashtra. As disciplined foot-soldiers of Hindutva, the BJP has finally toed the line and exposed its real face.

As far as the religious and linguistic minorities are concerned, the Manifesto confirms the communal and majoritarian character of the BJP and strikes them as 'old wine in the old bottle with a new label'. Far from announcing any positive and concrete programme for the progress and development of the minorities, the Manifesto maintains eloquent silence on the future of the PM's 15-Point Programme, the Minorities Finance and Development Corporation, the Abul Kalam Azad Educational Foundation, the Abul Kalam Azad Urdu University, the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 and the place of Mother-tongue in the Three Language Formula. On the other hand, the BJP threatens to erode Religious Freedom by announcing reformulation of the Muslim Personal Law, in the name of gender justice, in an extra-religious framework.

On the Babari Masjid question, the BJP reiterates its well-known position and confronts the Muslims with extra-constitutional legislative expropriation, if they do not agree to sign on the dotted line. On this question, the BJP blatantly ousts the Jurisdiction of the judiciary because it is a question of faith!

On Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP seeks to reverse the current of history on Special Status with Autonomy for the State and expand the area of conflict with Pakistan.

While paying lip service to the State's duty to protect Wakf properties, the Manifesto seeks to stir class conflict and remains silent on the vacation of existing encroachment of hundreds of thousands of Wakf properties, which stand usurped not only by private interests but by the government and semi-government agencies.

The Manifesto seeks to abolish the Minorities Commission on the specious plea of 'providing greater protection of minorities through the Human Rights Commission'. In our context, minorities rights, as group rights, are too sensitive a matter to be lumped with the general question of human rights, which largely relate to the rights of the individual.

The Manifesto promises a 'riot-free India'. This a BJP government may well be able to achieve because it is

the activists of the BJP and its sister organisations which have always ignited the fire or thrown out over raging fires. The Manifesto is totally silent on the day-to-day harassments, humiliation, pressure and coercion which the minorities daily experience under a majoritarian regime.

While offering a programme for the relief and rehabilitation of the Pandits displaced from the Kashmir Valley, the Manifesto is silent on the proposal for statutory compensation for loss of life, limb, honour and property in the communal violence like the recent disturbance in Coimbatore and on the need to expedite the prosecution of the culprits of the major communal disturbances like Moradabad (1980), Nellie (1983), Hashimpura (1987), Bhagalpur (1989) and Bombay (1992-93).

The proposed total ban on slaughter of cow progeny, whatever the age, and on trading, not only threatens to put lakhs of people out of employment but place animal protein out of reach for the common man and impose an unbearable burden on the national economy.

In a word, the BJP Manifesto is true to its ideology of Cultural Nationalism and the RSS vision of Hindutva of the Indian Society and Polity.

This Manifesto should open the eyes of all secular-minded Indians, some of whom appear to have been mesmerised by the MASK and influenced by the **DOUBLE-TALK**.

The BJP Bolus

Editorial, The Times of India, 5 Feb., 1998

.. The BJP's manifesto can be interpreted to mean all things to all citizens - plus a little extra on some. The two most prominent - and controversial - points relate to Ayodhya and to Article 370. Dispelling its recent ambiguity on the subject, the party has now come out loud and clear about its intention to build a temple in Ayodhya, though it has 'softened' its original stand by promising to resolve the issue through debate and legislation rather than confrontation. On Article 370 the BJP might be on trickier ground given that scrapping the provision will require a constitutional amendment, too ambitious a task for the party seriously to contemplate at present. Taking into account the party's proposal to appoint a law commission to help to evolve a common civil code, what the BJP seems to be prescribing is a ... national pep will which could be described as consensual Hindutva, easily digestible and equally invigorating for minorities as well as the majority community...

CPI(M) on BJP Manifesto

The BJP Manifesto has once again clearly demonstrated its real communal agenda for the nation. Construction of the temple at the same Ayodhya site, abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution, promulgation of Uniform Civil Code, the reassertion that Hindutva continues to be its ideological commitment and forth, indicate that all the talk of moderation in which BJP leaders indulged to lure certain allies and individuals to its parlour was all a mask, a pretence. A few of them are on record opposing these which are of vital importance for the future of the nation. It remains to be seen how they can reconcile themselves to alliance with the BJP which has forthrightly stated its outlook. Obviously, their alliance will be nothing but an opportunist gang-up for somehow making a bid for grabbing power. BJP has returned its old agenda of Hindutva. It is an admission that it has failed to woo the voters in its changed Avtar.

The Manifesto also talks of appointing a commission to review the Constitution. This is pregnant with dangerous implications. Our Constitution has undergone several amendments with the passage of time and the needs of progress. However, its basic core has remained unaffected. Is it the intention of the BJP to review the parliamentary system itself, which is appropriate to the multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-cultural character of

our country, and properly reflects its pluralist character? The cat is out of the bag when Shri Advani states that, "had there been a presidential system Mr. Vajpayee would have romped home with a majority". Apart from indicating the BJP's apprehension along with its allies that it does not hope to get a majority in the present or future election under the present parliamentary system, it shows the BJP's desire to replace it by a presidential system, which is by no means, appropriate for our country. Besides, when such a commission is set up, the question of reviewing even the secular democratic character of the country and replacing it by the concept of a Hindu Rashtra so dear to the RSS can be raised. Thus, the BJP's intention of playing with our Constitution in the name of reviewing it, has serious implications.

The Manifesto itself projects Mr. Vajpayee as the candidate for prime ministership, crediting him with attributes like 'ability, integrity and charisma'. Are we to believe that in this country there is only one such person with these attributes? In whose name is the BJP soliciting votes? In the name of its Manifesto and performance, or in the name of an individual? There is an attempt here to hoodwink the people, to mix up issues, to orchestrate an exercise in ideological confusion, and to get votes under false pretence. The watchful voters should look through all this, and rebuff the BJP"

(Source: The New Age, 8-14 February, 1998)

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Committee for the Defence of Secularism, New Delhi

Appeal to the Secular Voters

India is a secular state because the overwhelming majority of the Indian people are secular in their outlook and have faith in the secular order. Yet, today, the secular order faces the most serious threat to its survival, since Independence.

In 1996, 75 per cent of the voters cast their votes for the secular parties. However, the BJP and its allies which secured only 25 per cent of the votes cast emerged as the single largest group, largely because the secular votes were divided among rival parties and alliances and there was no nation-wide Secular Alliance which could give one-to-one fight to the BJP-led alliance in every constituency.

Today, on the one hand, the BJP has not only entered into more opportunistic electoral alliances with parties which do not share its ideology or mission, but is also strenuously presenting a 'liberal' face in order to attract not so much the Muslim voters but the secular Hindu voters who are disenchanted with other parties or are sitting on the fence.

On the other hand, the secular parties continue to be divided, having generally failed even to make mutual adjustment or reach some understanding. Some are even contesting against each other in several constituencies! It is obvious that while in a triangular contest, the BJP-led alliance may gain, in a four-sided contest it may sweep the poll!

Deeply concerned at the implication of this disunity for the future of the country, the undersigned, having constituted themselves into a Committee for the Defence of Secularism have decided to appeal directly to the secular voters in each constituency to step in wherever the parties have failed and, rising above religion, caste, language, geography, party label or personal considerations, support the strongest candidate of one secular party or the other who has the best chance to win and thus to ensure the secular character of the post-election government and defend the secular ethos of the Indian state.

To assist the Secular Voters, the Committee has also decided to suggest candidates, constituency-wise, selected on the basis of the simple principle that other secular parties generally concede a Constituency to the secular party which won it, or lost it to the BJP or its allies, in 1996, subject to marginal adjustments arising out of changed circumstances.

One secular vote, not cast or wasted on a weak losing candidate, may mean victory for BJP-led alliance candidate in a Constituency and one seat more for their alliance may mean a BJP government in Delhi.

* The Committee appeals to the secular voters of all constituencies not only to vote massively but unitedly for the suggested candidates.

* The Committee appeals to all political parties, groups, formations as well as independents, to withdraw in favour of the suggested candidates in order not to divide the secular votes in any constituency.

* The Committee also appeals to all democratic and secular organisations and personalities to endorse the Appeal and the suggested candidates.

T.T.P. Abdullah	Saiyid Hamid	Ali Mohd. Khusro
Amrik Singh	(Co-Convenor)	Azeez Burney
V.R. Krishna Iyer	Kuldip Nayar	Moosa Raza
S.M.H. Burney	S. Nizamuddin	Rabi Ray
Rajendra Sachar	Rajni Kothari	
S. Shahabuddin (Co-Convenor)		

All India Milli Council : Resolution, 18 January, 1998

On a call given by the All India Milli Council, representatives of Muslim community from various states gathered in Delhi on Sunday, January 18 to take stock of the existing political situation in the backdrop of the ensuing election for the Lok Sabha. After detailed discussion and in-depth analysis it was observed that India today stands at a critical juncture where not just the Muslims but the whole nation is confronted with the issue of the basic structure of the country, whether it will be a land of aggressive communalism and fascism, or would take to the road of democracy, religious neutrality and equality.

It is unfortunate that mutual wrangling among the secular forces, on the one hand, the well-knit organization, adherence to the ideology and deep planning of the communal elements on the other, have aggravated the situation. The Sangh Parivar through clever use of the media and propaganda technique is creating an artificial atmosphere in a bid to capture power to achieve its cherished nefarious designs.

Realizing the potential of Muslim votes the BJP and its communal allies have embarked in a campaign of wooing Muslim voters... The Milli Council calls upon the Muslims not to get carried away by the ... propaganda nor to get disheartened but to gird up their loins and contribute their mite to put India on the track of democracy, social justice and religious neutrality... The Council calls upon all the forces believing in democracy to sink their differences and rising above partisan considerations, unite and defeat the fascist forces.

The Milli Council notes with concern that Muslims representation in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies is steadily on the decline... The secular parties should give thought to this phenomenon...

... The Milli Council appeals to all Muslims ... to treat it as their national duty to lead every voter, male and female, to the polling booths and have their votes cast...

Javed M. Ansari on Options before Muslims

Every election eve, self-appointed leaders of the Muslim community set out to market votes of India's largest minority. This time, the sale began on December 28, when Javed Habeeb - former general secretary of the Babari Masjid Action Committee - called the Qaumi Mushawarat, a gathering of little-known Muslim organisations. A five-member Ittehad Committee was set up and authorised to negotiate with different political parties.

Syed Abdullah Bukhari, the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid and his son, Ahmed Bukhari, were not to be outdone. Having exhausted most political options, they began sending feelers to the BJP... While the BJP has so far kept these leaders guessing, Madhavrao Scindia, the Congress general secretary, has been talking to Habeeb.

The ruling United Front (UF) is not a favourite with the Bukharis and the Habeebs because is planning to bypass them and depend on Mulayam Singh Yadav to woo Muslims. At the Qaumi Mushawarat, Habeeb made it clear he was available for auction....

... Clearly, the largely Delhi-centric spokespersons for India's Muslims are keen to ingratiate themselves with any political force which seems likely to form the next government at the Centre. Unfortunately for them, they are completely out of tune with the people they claim to represent.

The period after the destruction of the Babari Masjid has seen a churning within the Muslim community, particularly in northern India... Voting strategies have thus been recast...

Today, even Syed Shahabuddin acknowledges "Muslims must vote for secular candidates constituency-wise, rather than for a particular party". Agrees Imtiaz Ahmed, professor at Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University: "It is unlikely that Muslims will vote as a monolithic body for any single party."

So much for the theory. What of the reality? How will Muslims vote in the coming elections? Support for the BJP looks unlikely...

Even so, a rethinking vis-a-vis the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition is evident in Maharashtra. True, a section still regards the ruling alliance a pariah and seems set to back Samajwadi Party (SP) or Congress candidates...

The real laboratory for Muslim politics, of course, Uttar Pradesh, where the community form over 20 per cent of the electorate in 170 of 425 Assembly seats. Post-Ayodhya, Muslims realised that they could only succeed if they formed social coalitions with other prominent communities - such as the Yadavs and the Dalits. The precise grouping checked the BJP in 1993. This time,

while the bulk of the Muslim vote is likely to go to Mulayam, his failure to join hands with the Congress and the BSP has proved a setback...

There is greater clarity in neighbouring Bihar. While the Muslim-Yadav vote bank has been loyal to Laloo Prasad Yadav, his decision to align with the Congress has caused some disquiet...

Karnataka is another state where the Muslim vote is expected to be divided between the JD and the Congress...

Muslims make up 21 per cent of the voters in West Bengal. By and large they have been true to the Left Front (LF) but in some urban pockets have backed the Congress...

In sum, Muslims across the country are going to vote with their heads rather than their hearts...

(Source: The India Today, 19 January, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindustan Times, 28 January, 1998

Apropos Shri Praful Goradia's letter Electoral Fodder (20 Jan., 98). Much as I share the vision of Sub-continent as a zone of peace, good neighbour and cooperation, which would benefit all its people. I do not see why he identifies it with Muslim Indians, a minority group in India, voting for the BJP which is a majoritarian party.

On one hand, it is not true that the Muslim Indians vote for any one party throughout the country or even within one state, it is also true that the BJP has a Hindu vote bank and almost all parties rely on the support of one or more Hindu sub-communities. The Yadavas, the Kurmis, the Koeris, the Chamars, the Disadhs, not to speak of the high castes, all, serve in greater measure, as electoral fodder for parties of their choice. Of course, at the Constituency level, every minority group tends to vote en masse for a party/candidate which it finds more sensitive to its concerns. And that is how it has to be.

BJP: Advani's Assurance to Minorities

... Under a BJP-led government ... the Muslims will finally begin to experience genuine equality of participation in the nation's social economic, education and political activities.

Ours is the vision of a "secular" India, where every Indian, irrespective of his or her faith, has the same rights, opportunities and responsibilities with the government itself carrying the denomination of no particular faith...

(Source: The Pioneer, 18 February, 1998)

Asghar Ali Engineer

On Likely Muslim Voting Trend

... The real question is whether the common Muslims will be convinced by what the BJP has started saying. So far, there has been no convincing evidence. In UP, the overwhelming majority of Muslims will vote for Mulayam Singh's party. In Bihar, the Muslims still seem to be with Laloo Yadav and his allies... In Gujarat, they have suffered so much in communal violence that the BJP cannot convince them of any real change in its attitude. They will go along with the Congress-RJP alliance. In Karnataka, the Muslims will support the JD and a section might vote for the Congress...

In AP, the Muslims are still with Chief Minister Naidu and the BJP has not been able to attract them. In Tamil Nadu, they will go along with DMK-TMC alliance which seems to be the best bet for them. The recent riots in Coimbatore and the role of the Hindu Munnani have further alienated them from the Sangh Parivar... The Hindu Munnani is seen to be part of the Sangh Parivar. In Kerala, there is no question of the BJP attracting the Muslims as they go along with the Muslim League and its allies. In Maharashtra, a small section of the Muslims might vote for the Sena-BJP alliance but a large majority will swear by the ... Congress-SP alliance... In Madhya Pradesh, despite Aslam Sher Khan joining the BJP, the Muslims do not seem to be enthused. Thus, in the entire Hindi belt, where the Muslim vote matters much, there is no palpable change in the voting trend. In the south, too, the BJP can hardly appeal to the Muslim voters. Why then all this exercise to woo the Muslims as the Congress has been doing? Perhaps, it is the first step the BJP has taken and it has to go a long way to convince the Muslims.

(Source: The Hindu, 31 January, 1998)

R.C. Batura

On the Muslim 'Herd Instinct'

... The BJP ... is being seen as the next ruling party at the Centre. It is this prospect of the BJP riding on a popular wave to power that has put a question mark before the Muslim voter: **Where to go? The Congress has failed. The UF has failed. What next? This is what worries the Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Jawed Habib of Mushawarat, leaders of the Personal Law Board and the Milli Council and of course the Muslim masses. That is why they are looking towards the BJP also.** Some like Aslam Sher Khan and Ayub Khan have taken a conscious decision to cast their lot with the BJP. There must be many more who are as yet undecided because it is not just a question of Congress, UF or BJP. If the Muslims want to be in the mainstream politics they cannot afford to be treated as a herd or pocket borough by any party or a combination of parties because the solution

N.R. Mohanty

On Caste Conflict among Muslims in Bihar

... Muslims ... had overwhelmingly voted in favour of Laloo Yadav in the last assembly and Lok Sabha elections in 1995 and 1996, respectively, for ensuring a communal riot-free environment in the state. Now the community has shifted its focus to demand such as better education and greater job opportunities, areas in which Laloo Yadav has delivered little. This apart, the Janata Dal has been systematically trying to undercut Laloo's Muslim vote base by seeking to divide them along backward-forward lines. JD candidate in Darbhanga Ghulam Sarwar has floated a Backward Muslim Morcha with a view to weaning away the numerically preponderant Backward Muslims from Laloo's fold.

The Morcha claims that backward sections within the Muslims have got a raw deal under successive state governments (and) that despite his social justice plank, the Laloo regime has mostly accommodated forward Muslims in important positions. ... Laloo's stock has also come down among his ardent admirers because of his total unconcern for development issues. Everywhere in his campaign trail, people raise the issues of price rise and lack of electricity and irrigation facilities. Laloo tries to skirt these issues by asides and innuendoes, but it is obvious that it does not cut much ice with the people.

(Source: The Times of India, 14 February, 1998)

K. Srinivas on Futility of Political Dialogue with Muslims

Some Muslim organisations seem to be wanting to parley with the BJP for the latter to give them certain promises in return for delivery of Muslim voters...

... When P.V. Narasimha Rao was the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, a Muslim delegation, led by Syed Salahuddin Owaisi, (the leader of MIM, the inheritor of Kasim Razvi's Razakar Movement) gave a long list of demands to be met with by the Government to do justice to the minorities. Narasimha Rao patiently read the entire list and at the end is reported to have said: "Owaisiji! you have forgotten to include one most important demand". Owaisi asked what it was. Narasimha Rao said: "You forgot to include the demand to restore the Nizam's rule in Hyderabad".

The BJP should not forget history...

(Source: The Pioneer, 27 January, 1998)

of their problems does not lie in isolation but in gaining the confidence and support of all. BJP is no exception. But in order to join the mainstream politics, Muslims have to shed their own herd instinct. If they want secularism to prosper in politics, they should talk in secular terms. The sooner they do so, the better for them...

(Source: The Organiser, 4 January, 1998)

HINDU CHAUVINISM

M.V. Kamath's Epitaph On 'Secular Nationalism'

... Congressmen and their intellectual backers do not seem to realise that tectonic changes are taking place in Hindu society that perhaps even those who are participants in the change are but dimly aware of. The truth is that secular nationalism more or less divorced from the country's cultural heritage is seen to be no more a viable proposition...

In 1947 when our forefathers worked on a Constitution their desire for a secular republic was ... honest. The trauma of Partition left them no other alternative but to talk of secularism in exalted terms. They willingly suppressed their inner urges to build a nation on the basis of their long-suppressed civilisation in order that peace is first established. These urges are now bursting forth with explosive vigour and they cannot be suppressed. The task of our leaders should be to understand them for what they are and canalise them for constructive purposes..

We need a new Vivekananda ... to understand the dynamics of social action and explain it in meaningful terms. India is in the process of defining India in Indian terms. We are at a crucial point in history... The larger emerging picture ... is one of an assertive Hinduism emerging triumphant and sweeping everything before it. But is it necessarily hostile to other religions and minorities...

For the Hindu self-renewal was an impossibility under the deadening hold of the secular ideology. That ideology had to be discarded, lock, stock and barrel and the process has begun. One cannot renew Hinduism if one does not accept its reality. Secularism denied that reality. In consequence, secularism has had to be sacrificed. Belittling Hinduism, or Hindutva may constitute an amusing secular exercise, but the more it is belittled, the more condemned it will rise like the phoenix to haunt its torturers...

Islamic invaders ... suppressed cultural and religious practices, damaging the pristine vigour of Hindu religion, preventing the intensification of Hindu culture and ending the creative impulse in all realms of thought and action... What is currently being sought to be done is to reverse the process. It will be accompanied by some damage and some violent but hopefully it can be checked by an understanding and respect for the Hindu psyche... An entire civilisation is crying to be born or reborn. We are its rightful heirs. Once India is liberated from the secular bonds that is presently tying it down to earth there is no knowing to what heights of glory it can rise, as once it did. The BJP is not the instigator but merely an instrument of social change. Indeed even the BJP may

Shashi Tharoor on the 'Secular' Character of HINDUTVA

... India's secularism is paradoxically made possible by the fact that the overwhelming majority of Indians are Hindus. It is odd to read today of 'Hindu fundamentalism', because Hinduism is a religion without fundamentals; no organised church, no compulsory beliefs or rites of worship, no single sacred book. 'Hindu fundamentalism' ought to be a contradiction in terms.

The name 'Hindu' itself denotes something less, and more, than a set of theological beliefs...

'Hinduism' is the name others applied to the indigenous religion of India, what many call Sanatam Dharma. It embraces an eclectic range of doctrines and practices, from pantheism to agnosticism, from faith in reincarnation to belief in the caste system. But none of these constitutes an obligatory credo for a Hindu; there are none. One cannot say, for instance, that a Hindu is someone who prays to Ram, worships at a Shiva temple, believes in caste and in reincarnation, reads the Vedas, treats the Bhagavad Gita as holy writ, heeds the injunctions of the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram, considers the cow sacred, abjures beef, wears ash on his forehead and washes away his sins in the holy Ganga, because it is possible to do none of those things and still consider oneself a Hindu.

... The Hindu idea (is) that religion is an intensely personal matter, that prayer is between you and whatever image of your maker you choose to worship. In the Hindu way, I was to find my own truth.

... And I am happy to describe myself as a believing Hindu: not just because it is the faith into which I was born, but for a string of other reasons, though faith requires no reason. One is cultural: as a Hindu I belong to a faith that expresses the ancient genius of my own people. ...

As a Hindu I belong to the only major religion in the world that does not claim to be the only religion. I find it immensely congenial to be able to face my fellow human beings of other faiths without being burdened by the conviction that I have embarked upon a 'true path' that they have missed. Hinduism asserts that all ways of belief are equally valid, and Hindus readily venerate the saints, and the sacred objects, of other faiths. Hinduism is a civilisation, not a dogma. There is no ... Hindu heresy.

How can such a religion lend itself to 'fundamentalism'? And how can it become a litmus test for Indianness?...

(Source: The Express Magazine, 8 February, 1998)

find itself pushed aside as the dynamics of change get into its stride. We are ... at a nodal point in our history...

(Source: The Organiser, 15 February, 1998)

Zafar Jung on Hindu-Muslim Dialogue

... The wall of distrust between Hindus and Muslims must be demolished and open-ended dialogue started between the two communities... There is a communication gap between the two communities. Muslims need to explain their position on issues concerning Muslim identity, loyalty and their personal laws so that mutual antagonism between the two communities comes to an end.

The dialogue has to take place essentially at the non-political level... Both the Hindus and Muslims should understand that aggressive and ambitious leaders do not represent the masses...

The most common complaint against Muslims is that they are preoccupied with their separate identity and refuse to become a part of the mainstream. Muslims must make Hindus understand that they are an integral part of the Indian mainstream, as distinct from the Hindutva mainstream. Muslims represent various regional cultures with the unmistakable stamp of naive Indian influences. However, Muslims cannot be expected to give up their religious beliefs as demanded by the RSS under the garb of "cultural assimilation".

A related myth propagated by communal forces against Muslims is that their loyalty lies with the Islamic world. Muslims have to dispel this notion by making it clear that their only link... is with the holy (places)...

Muslims have to stress that they consider Kashmir an integral part of India and will not be found wanting in defeating Pakistan's designs. Hindus need to be reminded that there have been three wars between India and Pakistan, and Muslims have always stood solidly (besides them).

Muslims should proudly assert their Indian identity. They need to reiterate that they do not harbour any protective feelings towards migrants from Bangladesh. They are not against their deportation to their own country, but would favour proper identification through a competent administrative machinery to ensure that poor Indian Muslims are not victimised.

There are widespread misconceptions among Hindus about the position of women in Muslim society. The position of Muslim women is no different from that of Hindu women. There is statistical evidence that Muslim society is relatively free from the evils of dowry and female infanticide. Even the rate of divorce among Muslims is lower than that among Hindus. Similarly, incidents of polygamy are higher among Hindus than among Muslims. The level of literacy among Muslim women is definitely much lower and there is a pressing need for reforms in this area.

But reforms take their own time. Nonetheless, there

is a case for reforming Muslim personal law just as there is an equally strong case for reforming other personal laws. In the process, some uniform norms and standards may evolve. Large parts of the civil and criminal law are, in fact, common already. Only marriage and succession laws are at issue...

The misconception that Muslims are trying to overtake the Hindu population by multiplying fast needs to be countered. Islam is not opposed to family planning, and a sizable section of the community practices it... According to experts, the Muslim population is expected to stabilise at around 15% of the total population. In socially and educationally advanced States like Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the Muslim population growth is less than that of the majority community in Bihar, Rajasthan and UP.

Any confrontation (between) Hindus and Muslims (will cripple) the nation... They should seriously reassess the situation and do a little bit of introspection and self-criticism...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 19 February, 1998)

Navid Zafar on Muslim Minorities: A Question of Survival

Islam is character is the religion of majority... Four out of five basic principles of Islam can thus prosper only if the government and the governed are both Muslims.

The Prophet of Islam spent his first thirteen years of prophethood in Makkah, where Muslims were in minority. Hence no Friday congregations, no Hajj, although they lived and visited the Holy Kaaba every day. No Zakat and no Jihad. As the Prophet proceeded to Madina, everything changed and the crux of the change was, because Muslims had increased from minority to majority.

As Islam spread from Madina to the world outside, no conscious effort was made to change the religion of the local population and the areas to come under Muslim influence invariably had minority governments... There were countries in Europe like Spain and Sicily and in Asia like India, Malaysia and Philippines, where Muslims were in power for centuries and yet their number could hardly touch 10 per cent of the local population.

... Whenever the Muslim population was subjected to live in situations where their rulers were non-Muslims, they were required to live not only as second class citizens, but very often were asked to vacate if they insisted on maintaining their Muslim character... Why is it not possible for the Muslims to survive as minorities?

...

(Source: The Firmest Bond)

S.S. Gill on Muslim Indians and Secular Order

... The Muslims ... constitute the real minority in India. And unless one gets into the shoes of the Indian Muslims, it will be difficult to have a correct idea of communalism in India and assess the efficacy of Nehru's approach to it. Like most minorities, the Muslims suffer from numerous handicaps. They are the poorest, the least literate, and the most backward section of the Indian population. Their share in civil and military services is far below their numerical ratio. In no sphere of economic activity are they anywhere near the top. Some of the reasons for this sorry state are objective and historical; others flow from their minority status.

India's partition delivered them some staggering blows. Whilst most upper class Muslims migrated to Pakistan, their poor compatriots in India were left leaderless and rudderless. The Muslims who stayed behind were considered crypto-Pakistanis and their loyalty to India was suspect. And the educated, well-to-do section of the Muslims left behind shied away from providing leadership to the community. Owing to their anxiety to establish their nationalist and secular credentials, they preferred to keep aloof from the affairs of their co-religionists. The Congress also unwittingly aggravated the situation. With a view to enlarging its base, it opened its doors to the nationalist Muslim leaders and offered them organizational posts. The resultant departure of secular leadership from within the Muslim community left the field open to the communal elements.

These setbacks left the community floundering and alienated, facing a serious identity crisis. But what has made recovery even more difficult is the existential reality of an Indian Muslim, placed as he is in a sea of Hindus which outnumbers him in the ratio of one to seven. Well-wishers keep advising Muslims to join the national mainstream. But communities are not streams of water which can intermix when brought together.

The predicament faced by Indian Muslims is very real and must be duly recognized. Aside from their all-round deprivation, they continually face discrimination in daily life. It is understandable when many Muslims do not qualify for higher posts. But when they are denied jobs even as peons and constables in fair proportion, it hurts. When in communal riots they are not only the worst sufferers but even the local police and administration play a partisan role, it hurts. When these riots occur mostly in areas where the Muslims have been able to improve their economic status and when whole communities of Muslim craftsmen are wiped out, it hurts. All these hurts convey a clear and distinct message: you are the target and the victims because you are a Muslim. This not only tends to reinforce their religious identity, but communalizes it to some extent. Against this background, when Muslims are asked to join the national

mainstream, they find it a cruel joke. ...

It is easy to criticize Indian Muslims, as they are vulnerable on many fronts. Living on an environment which they perceive to be hostile, they withdraw into the shell of religiosity. Being on the defensive all the time, they have developed a siege mentality. Their vulnerability impels them to strengthen the fortification within.

"Honest communalism is fear; false communalism is political reaction", said Nehru... Living in a climate of fear and discrimination, the Muslims had some reason to be communal. But what about the majority communalism, when the Hindus form more than four-fifth of the population and control every aspect of the country's economic and political life?

In fact Hindu bigotry has a pretty ancient lineage. From the earlier times - when the Brahmanical onslaught overcame the challenge of Buddhism, destroyed Buddhist monasteries and killed monks - to the destruction of Babari Masjid, Hinduism has been occasionally seized by bouts of intolerance. The modern phase of Hindu communalism starts with the creation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. Its ideologue, Golwalkar, said: "Non-Hindu people in Hindustan must either adopt the Hindu culture ... or may stay in the country as wholly subordinate to the Hindus".

What helped the Hindu communalists to stoke the fires of hatred were certain emotive issues of high visibility. In the face of the monolithic doctrinal solidarity of Islam, Hindu pluralism appeared weak. Therefore, some Hindu zealots embarked on a campaign of imparting to Hinduism also a greater cohesion of dogma and practice. The most powerful argument with the Hindu communalists was the Islamic injunction of converting followers of other faiths to Islam. Exaggerated accounts of forcible conversion of Hindus by the Muslims rulers were already a cause of deep offence to the Hindus. When this practice of conversion continued even after Independence, it touched a raw nerve and became a provocation communal issue.

Nehru had once observed, "the communalism of a majority community must of necessity bear a closer resemblance to nationalism than the communalism of the minority." Not surprisingly, the incisive and catchy slogan of the RSS is: Hinduism is Nationalism. All Hindu communalists speak in the name of Hindu Rashtra. Whereas all Hindus are supposed to be nationalists by right, the non-Hindus have to prove their patriotic bonafides. These attitudes confront the Muslims with a peculiar dilemma: on the one hand they are accused of not joining the national mainstream; on the other they are found ineligible to join it.

(Extracted from *The Dynasty* by S.S. Gill)

MHA: Annual Report, 1996-97 (Extracts)

On Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babari Masjid Issue

The hearing in the 4 suits related to the title of the disputed area, on which the Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babari Masjid Structure (including the premises of the inner and outer courtyards of such structure) had stood, continued before the Special Full Bench of Allahabad High Court at Lucknow. After a detailed hearing, the Court has framed some additional issues and also recast some of the issues which were framed in these suits prior to their abatement w.e.f. 7.1.1993 following the promulgation/enactment of the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Ordinance/Act, 1993 by which the Central Government acquired the disputed and some other adjacent area at Ayodhya in the wake of the demolition of the RJB-BM Structure on 6.12.1992. The Court has started recording of evidence in these title suits.

On Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry:

Proceedings before the Liberhan Ayodhya Commission of Inquiry set up to enquire, inter-alia, into the sequence of events leading to the events in the RJB-BM complex at Ayodhya on 6 December, 1992 continued. The Commission permitted S/Shri Prabhat Kumar, Shekhar Agarwal and other 8B noticees, who had gone in writ (against the 8B notices issued to them by the Commission) and whose writs were dismissed by the Delhi High Court, vide its order dated 23.7.1996, to inspect, if they so desired, the records available in the Commission, to enable them to prepare their defence. The Commission also directed them to file lists of the witnesses they wished to examine/cross examine. The Commission continued with the investigation.

VHP Views on Recovery of Religious Sites

Singhal on Advani's Offer

... When asked to clarify the VHP stand on the reported statement by the BJP President, L.K. Advani, that he might intervene to influence the VHP over the issue of Krishna Janmabhumi and Kashi Vishwanath shrines, if the Muslims withdrew their claim from the disputed shrine at Ayodhya. Mr. Singhal said what Mr. Advani had said was only that he would intervene to influence negotiations. As far as the VHP was concerned, it would go by the decision of its "margdarshak mandal". This body, at its meeting in October, 1997 had already included the issue of Kashi and Mathura in the five point-Hindu agenda.

(Source: The Hindu, 30 December, 1997)

On Babari Masjid Question

The temple at Ram Janmabhoomi is not one of bricks and mortar. It is an issue which is related to our culture and civilisation... The temple issue has to be first looked at from the historical context of the site. It has been well established (sic) that in 1528 AD, at the instruction of the Moghul invader Babar, an existing temple in honour of Lord Ram was destroyed and the Babari structure built in its place. The belief that this site is the Ram Janmabhoomi has a history of more than 3000 years (sic) when there was no need to create a controversy if it was not a fact... Having established the historical importance of the site for the Hindus, the right question that has to be answered is why the temple should not be built.

It stands to reason that any structure which has come up after destroying a temple, cannot have any religious significance. If (religious) significance is applied in this case, then clearly such people would like to uphold the memory of Babar over Lord Ram. The attachment of such people to our civilisation and culture should then be questioned... The Babari structure was an ocular reminder

Mathura Spokesman

On Mathura and Varansi Questions

As far as we are concerned, Mathura and Kashi are very much on our Hindu agenda. It is not important if the BJP has not taken a stand on them in its manifesto. Due to political compulsions at the moment, they may not like to admit certain things. But BJP is the only party which is so close to our Hindu ethos. Sooner or later, they will act in our interest. Whether Congress forms government at the Centre or the BJP does it, our stance will not change. The only thing is that if there is a non-BJP Government, we (the VHP) will have to work harder to achieve our aim".

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 10 February, 1998)

that there was an Islamic rule even over the holy Hindu sites... The Babari structure should not have been allowed to stand in a free India.

A valid issue that comes about is where does one stop in recovering the religious sites of the Hindus. The answer can be obtained from the statement of the VHP in January, 1991, at the time of the negotiation for the peaceful return of the Ram Janmabhoomi site. The essential message was: "We do not even demand the return of the thousands of places of worship that have been forcibly replaced with mosques... We merely want three places back, three age-old sacred places. And we would prefer getting them back from the Muslim community to getting them back by an official decree... Muslims should understand what kind of message they are sending by insisting on continuing the occupation of our sacred places, and occupation started by fanatics and mass-murders like Babar and Aurangzeb. We do not like to think of our Muslim compatriots as heirs and followers of such invaders and tyrants. It is up to them to make a gesture that will signify a formal break with this painful past." - Ashok Chowgule in *Hindutva and the Religious Minorities*

Noted Jurist P.P. Rao on Legality of BJP's Commitment to Construct Ram Mandir on Disputed Site

The BJP's election manifesto says: "The BJP is committed to facilitate the construction of a magnificent Shri Ram Mandir at Ram Janmasthan in Ayodhya where a makeshift temple already exists. Shri Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness. The BJP will explore all consensual, legal and constitutional means to facilitate the construction of Shri Ram Mandir at Ayodhya.

This raises serious questions of law. May be the draftsmen's attention was not drawn to the judgement of the Supreme Court in S.R. Bommai's case. Upholding dissolution of the Legislative Assemblies in UP, MP, Rajasthan and HP following the demolition of the Babari Masjid in December 1992, the Court spelt out the implications of secularism which is a basic feature of the Constitution.

The Court considered the party's manifesto for the mid-term poll to Lok Sabha in May 1991 which said: "BJP firmly believes that construction of Shri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan is a symbol of the vindication of our cultural heritage and national self respect. For BJP it is purely a national issue and it will not allow any vested interests to give it a sectarian and communal colour. Hence party is committed to build Shri Ram Mandir at Janmasthan by relocating the Babari structure with due respect".

The Union Government justified dissolution of the Assemblies pointing out that the very manifesto and programme of action of the party was such as to hurt the religious feelings of the Muslim community. The disputed structure had become the bone of contention between two religious communities. The process which resulted in the demolition and the manner in which it was perpetrated, dealt a serious blow to the communal harmony and peace in the country. It was absolutely necessary to recreate the feeling of security among the Muslims. It was not possible with the BJP governments in power. They had to go.

The Court accepted this argument and observed: "The communal situation was tense. It could explode anywhere at any time. On the material placed before us, including the reports of the Governors, we cannot say that the President had no relevant material before him on the basis of which he could form the satisfaction that the BJP governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh cannot dissociate themselves from the action and its consequences and that these governments, controlled by one and the same party, whose leading lights were actively campaigning for the demolition of the disputed structure, cannot be dissociated from the acts and deeds of the leaders of the BJP".

On the questions of political parties raising communal issues, Justice K. Ramaswamy declared: "Political parties, with a view to come to political power,

should abide by the Constitution and the laws. They should not mix religion with politics. The manifesto of a political party should be consistent with these fundamental and basic features of the Constitution, secularism, fraternity, unity and national integrity.

"Introducing of religion into politics is not merely a negation of the constitutional mandate but also a positive violation of the constitutional obligation, duty, responsibility and positive prescription of prohibition specifically enjoined by the Constitution and the R.P. Act." Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy held: "If the Constitution requires the state to be secular in thought and action, the same requirement attaches to political parties too. The Constitution does not recognise, it does not permit, mixing religion and State power. Both must be kept apart.

"Introducing religion into politics is to introduce an impermissible element into the body politic and an imbalance in our constitutional system. If a political party espousing a particular religion comes to power that religion tends to become, in practice, the official religion. All other religions come to acquire a secondary status. This would be plainly antithetical to Articles 14 to 16 and 25. Under our Constitution, no party or organisation can simultaneously be a political and a religious party. It has to be either. The same would be the position, if a party or organisation acts and or behaves by word of mouth, print or in any other manner to bring about guilty of an act of unconstitutionality. It would have no right to function as a political party."

The Representation of the People Act, 1951, provides for registration of political parties and requires all political parties to bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution and to the principles of secularism and democracy and uphold the sovereignty, unity and integrity of India. All recognised parties have secured registration under Section 29-A and obtained symbols.

The Election Commission has power to deregognise a party under Article 29-A of the R.P. Act, 1951. Under Clause (16A) of the Election Symbols Order, 1968, it can issue show cause notice to the party as to why the party should not be deregistered for its religious appeal to the voters contained in the manifesto and its anti-secular activity and why the recognition and symbol given to the party be not withdrawn. Even if the Election Commission is unmindful of its statutory duty or allows the BJP's commitment to construct the temple in Ayodhya made in the manifesto to have its sway over the votes, there is nothing to prevent the unsuccessful candidates to file election petitions challenging the election of successful BJP candidates on the ground of corrupt practice contained in Section 124(3) namely making an appeal to voters in the name of religion... This promise may lead to legal complications...

(Source: The Times of India, 16 February, 1998)

Response to M.V. Kamath's Article in Glory of Demolition

J.B. D'Souza

Mr. M.V. Kamath ... sits ... with me, on the advisory board of a new monthly publication, *One India*, One People, whose central theme, in the words of its publisher-editor, is "to build a strong united India with its ancient civilisation, an abundance of natural resources, a great history and last, but not least, concerned, committed intellectuals". A great history... Then do we want to undo that history in anger and malice? Mr. Kamath calls the Babari Masjid a standing insult to Hinduism, deliberately built in Ayodhya at a time when Hinduism was in its periodic decline. He hails its demolition as an act of self-respect on the part of the Hindus, adding that "(t)here is no reason why a masjid should have been built in Ayodhya of all places - just as there was no reason why other masjids should have been built at Varanasi and Mathura".

With due respect to Mr. Kamath's superior wisdom, let me now suggest that: (1) It is absolutely immaterial whether the Babari Mosque was built on a site where a temple once existed. Or, for that matter, a Buddhist vihara. It is even more immaterial whether the site where the masjid existed is the exact birthplace of Sri Ram. (2) It is no argument to say that one is correcting historical wrongs. How many mosques are we going to demolish before our sense of outrage is satiated? (3) The past is dead and gone and should be left undisturbed in its grave. Grave diggers will only succeed in letting ghosts fly out. There are ghosts everywhere now, and in the end they will swallow us up. (4) Barbarism cannot be counteracted post facto by more of the same.

All four suggestions are lifted practically verbatim from (what) Mr. M.V. Kamath (had) written in *The Independent* seven years ago. Have these seven years brought maturity to his views, so as to reverse them? ... Or should we expect still further maturity, another revulsion against barbarism, another reversal, this time to sanity - in the years to come.

(Source: Letter in *Times of India*, 1 January, 1998)

Anil Nauriya

... In Mr. Kamath's view, all Muslims built the Babari Masjid and all Hindus were under a duty to see it reduced to rubble. Hindus and Muslims are seen by him as part of a chronological continuum and embody in themselves the entire past insofar as it is remembered. On this logic, all Hindus today are responsible for every Sati committed in the past.

No living person can be held answerable for what happened or did not happen in Ayodhya centuries ago. Nor can every Hindu countenance the proposition that what happened in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992 was in defence of his self-respect. ...

Writing in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* of July 6-12, 1980, Mr. M.V. Kamath had paid tribute to the members of the Constituent Assembly of India. There were giants in that Assembly, he had said, and wondered whether India would ever have such a distinguished

Aditya Sarkar

Mr. M.V. Kamath's article ... is a vitriolic attack on democracy and secularism... His claim that a historical wrong was corrected by the demolition of the Babari Masjid is both historically and ideologically flawed.

First, the evidence of there ever having been a Ram temple at Ayodhya is flimsy. Tulsidas's *Ramacharitamanas*, composed within 30 years of the alleged destruction of the temple, makes no reference to it. Second, even if such a temple did exist, the issue of its demolition by Babar is redundant today, nearly 500 years later. By this logic, should Hiroshima not be avenged by dropping an atom bomb on the United States? And contrary to Mr. Kamath's views, the Babari Masjid did not embody an insult to Hinduism, because until 1949, Hindus and Muslims worshipped side by side at the shrine...

Mr. Kamath evidently sees political power in religious terms, which is contrary both to democracy and secularism. His exhortation to Muslims to "show their unity with the majority" is a clear ultimatum to minorities to subjugate themselves to the leadership of the majority community. He also implies that it is the Sangh Parivar which embodies true Hindu interests. Are the many Hindus who do not accept the Hindutva doctrine of exclusivism, then, to be branded as renegade? What Mr. Kamath seeks to do is to transform a battle waged by (some Hindu) chauvinists ... into ... a battle between communities. He propounds a virulently communal agenda. However, in so doing he has unwittingly ... highlighted the communalism that still constitutes BJP ideology, despite the moderate face it has projected of late.

(Source: *The Times of India*, 5 January, 1998)

galaxy of men and women to draw up its laws.

That galaxy did not feel that Ayodhya was an issue, let alone a major issue. The giants in the Constituent Assembly surely understood concepts like self-respect. But they were concerned with the self-respect of individual Indians it was through such means as providing for their health care, economic and social development and education...

What we have instead is a divided intelligentsia frenetically obsessed with other matters... (One) section, of which Mr. Kamath seems to be a part, collaborates with Hindu sectarianism by seeking to replace Indian nationalism with Hindu nationalism. If Hindus are a nation, then Jinnah's two-nation theory stands accepted. Mr. Kamath now falls directly in the line of Savarkar who on August 15, 1943 declared, "I have no quarrel with Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory. We, Hindus, are a nation by ourselves and it is a historical fact that Hindus and Muslims are two nations"

... Nor those affirming faith in "Hindu nationalism" take account of the many who reject it underlying object...

(Source: *The Times of India*, 8 January, 1998)

Shiv Sena: Bal Thackeray's Proposal

What I am suggesting is an ideal via-media to resolve the prolonged Ayodhya dispute - construct a national monument at the disputed site, allot separate sites for construction of Ram Mandir and mosque and stop the damned dispute.

There could not be any better solution than this to avoid a communal riot and to ensure harmony between Hindus and Muslims in the country.

The via-media is essential when we do not have a strong government at the Centre and we cannot afford to let the issue linger this long through litigations. The courts have taken unnecessarily long to decide on the dispute, despite the corroborating evidences produced before them by both the communities.

I would not budge from my current stand on the Ayodhya issue, even in the event of the BJP and its allies coming to power at the Centre after the Lok Sabha polls. Muslims in the country want peace. As long as they believe in national tri-colour, why should we fight them? Hindutva does not mean that we should always be fighting Muslims. (Source: The Pioneer, 10 January, 1998)

BMMCC: Reaction to Thackeray's Proposal Shahabuddin's Statement, 29 January, 1998

"Following his proposal for the resolution of the Babari Masjid dispute, the Shiv Sena Pramukh Shri Bal Thackeray has suggested the construction of a Memorial to Mangal Pande, one of the heroes of the First War of Independence, 1857 on the Babri Masjid site.

However, Mangal Pande, had nothing to do with Ayodhya. In Oudh, the region in which Ayodhya is situated, the revolt against the British was led by Begum Hazrat Mahal. A memorial must be suitable sited. There are memorials to Mangal Pande in Ballia and to Begum Hazrat Mahal in Lucknow. Therefore, Shri Thackeray's suggestion does not make situational or historic sense.

For the present, the Babari Masjid site should be demarcated, the make-shift temple removed and the debris fenced. That will itself serve as a historic monument until there is a national consensus on the nature and design of the proposed monument.

Kuldip Nayar

On Thackeray Proposal

... The proposal made by Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray to build a national monument at the site where the BJP wants to raise a Ram mandir is worth implementing. Coming from a staunch Hindu as the proposal does, it should find support the BJP.

Narasimha Rao's Claim to Fame

... If I were Rao, I would expect to be recognised as a great Hindu like Shivaji.

On December 6, 1992, I knew something historic was going to happen. And it did. I do not know who brought down the three domes of the Babari edifice

Thackeray's Turnaround

Editorial, The Indian Express, 12 January, 1998

... The sobriety of Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray's remarks on the Ayodhya issue takes one's breath away. In complete contrast to his boast about his followers being responsible for the destruction of the Babari Masjid, he currently recommends a national monument at the site and separate plots for Hindus and Muslims. It is a sensible way out of the impasse of conflicting demands. Thackeray should be congratulated for having the good sense to realise this at long last and for saying it out loud... There is nothing very wrong with a pragmatic shift induced by external circumstances. A great deal of healthy change has come about in this fashion...

To jettison Ayodhya, to concede equal status to all religions and to prescribe an end to the harassment of Muslims, as Thackeray has done, comes close to abandoning Hindutva as many see and practise it. Consequently, the distance, in a rhetorical sense at least, between the Sena and ... the BJP has increased. Even in its more moderate avatar and its efforts to reach out to Muslims, the BJP has not given up on its project of building a Ram temple. But it has learnt to live with such contradictions...

Rajindar Sachar

On Political Parties and the Demolition

...I have always maintained that December 6 should be observed as a National Repentance Day in token of our collective shame. It is, however, amazing that the Congress(I) should think that it can absolve itself by a mere verbal apology, considering that Rajiv Gandhi had got the doors of the mosque unlocked and also performed 'shilanyas' in preparation for the 1989 general elections. That Rajiv Gandhi was prepared to lay down his life to prevent the demolition by blocking the entrance to the mosque against the BJP hordes is revelation to me, because no such indication was given either by him or on his behalf at a special meeting of the National Integration Council, attended by me and which had been called by Mr. V.P. Singh, immediately before the start of Mr. Advani's Rath Yatra at the end of 1990, notwithstanding my suggestion that all the political parties form a human chain around the mosque. ...

(Source: The Hindu, 13 February, 1998)

between 2.30 p.m. and 4.30 p.m. All I can say is that my government and its paramilitary forces did not interfere.

I dismissed the Kalyan Singh government by 5.30 p.m. that evening when eight 30-inch walls of the now topless structure were still intact. The UP governor as well as the advisors were obedient and diligent. Over the next 60 hours, they demolished the walls, cleared the debris and built a flat roof temple for Ram Lalla.

I am the first Hindu to have brought down a hall of alien prayer. I solved a national problem. If I had allowed the walls to remain standing, they could have been the casus belli of another Mahabharat war.

(P.D. Purushottaman's Letter in The Indian Express, 28 Jan., 1998)

MHA: Annual Report, 1996-97 (Extracts)

Assembly Elections: On 9th October, 1996, the President issued a Proclamation revoking President's Rule in the State. The same day, a National Conference Government headed by the Dr. Farooq Abdullah was sworn in, which included 13 Cabinet Ministers, 12 Ministers of State and 2 Deputy Ministers. The inaugural Session of the State Assembly was held in Srinagar on 18-25 October, 1996.

The successful conduct of Assembly elections and installation of a popular Government in the State after a period of over six years of President's Rule, can be seen as a significant watershed in the recent history of the State. It is also hoped and expected that they would also serve as a significant further step towards the restoration of complete peace and normalcy in the State, notwithstanding the continued efforts of Pakistan and its surrogates to keep up violence, disturbances and to try to derail the democratic process and institutions.

Security Situation: ... The overall level of violence, in terms of the number of incidents, came down significantly during the current year, as compared to the previous year. This was despite the fact that there were deliberate attempts by the terrorists, and their mentors across the border, to set up violence in a desperate effort to try and thwart the restoration of the political and democratic process, and the conduct of the Parliamentary and Assembly elections in the State. There was an over 40 per cent reduction in attacks on the security forces, while there was an increase in attacks on and the number of casualties among civilians. This demonstrated that the security forces had continued progressively to gain effective domination on the militants, as also the desperate effort of the latter to keep the people in a state of fear and terror through targeted as well as random killings of civilians, which further intensified the growing disillusionment among the people with the activities of the militants. It is also significant that, during the year, the number of civilian casualties in cross fire and in security force actions was only 83 as compared to 171 in the previous year.

Economic Package Announced by the Prime Minister: In the light of the successful holding of Parliament elections and in view of overall improvement in the situation, it was felt that effective steps should be taken for economic development of the State. In view of this, an economic package was announced by the Prime Minister in both Houses of Parliament on 23.7.1996 and 2.8.1996. The salient features of the package are detailed below:-

- 1) Central Government would expedite the implementation of the new Railway line project from Udhampur to Srinagar and then to Baramulla in Kashmir Valley covering a distance of about 290 kms. The Project was approved by the Central Government at an estimated cost of Rs.2,500 crores. This railway line, will provide an all weather cheap

means of communication between the Valley and rest of the country and is expected to mitigate the sense of isolation of the people living in the Valley, besides providing a much quicker means of transportation for export and import of perishable goods like fruits and vegetables.

- 2) Expeditious construction of Mughal Road as a viable alternative link between J&K as a part of Centrally Sponsored Schemes of "Roads of Economic Importance" at a cost of nearly Rs.77.40 crores would be taken up. The cost of the project will be shared between the Centre and the State at a ratio of 50:50.
- 3) Work on the construction of Dulhasti and Uri Hydel Projects in the State would be expedited so as to provide much relief to the power starved State.
- 4) The situation in the State in the last few years had greatly effected economic activities in the State. Activities related to tourism, industry, trade, transport, house boat business were badly affected. To revive these activities, loans where the initial borrowing was upto Rs. 50,000/- would be waived off. It was also decided to examine the possibility of relief to the borrowers whose initial borrowings were more than Rs.50,000/-. For this purpose, an Inter-Ministerial Committee would be set up.
- 5) To bridge Non-Plan gap of J&K State, a Special Central Plan Assistance would be made, so that entire plan outlay for the current financial year can be utilised for the development schemes without having to divert any part of it to meet the non-plan gap.
- 6) A grant of Rs.6.6 crores for improvement of camps in Jammu & Kashmir for migrants would be made.
- 7) A grant of Rs.2.40 crores would be given for setting up of a Convention/Conference Centre at Leh to give a further fillip to tourism in this area.
- 8) High priority for development of airport at Kargil at a cost of Rs. 25 crores will be given to ensure completion of the project within a two years period. In the meantime, the Government would provide weekly helicopter service in Kargil instead of present fortnightly service.
- 9) In order to meet longstanding demand that Jammu city should be granted B-2 status, Government of India has decided to upgrade the status of Jammu city to B-2 city.

Follow-up action is being taken for implementing above mentioned announcement in a time bound manner. The progress is being monitored closely.

Autonomy: An important issue during the discussions pertained to the question of Autonomy. The Government, in the Common Minimum Programme, has stated that it is in favour of "Maximum Autonomy" for the State. It was also stated during the inter-party discussions, and in Parliament that the details in this regard could be worked out only after further discussions and consultations when

(Contd. on Page 128)

KASHMIR SITUATION

CPI Statement On Massacre in J&K

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party of India expresses its anguish at the massacre of 23 pundits ... near Srinagar on the eve of the Republic Day... It is a cold-blooded killing by the militants who are suspected to be Pakistan's ISI. It is a deliberate and nefarious design to create communal clashes at the time of general elections in the country...

The CPI urges upon the state ... and the Union Governments to take stringent action against those responsible for this inhuman atrocity...

Insaf Morcha: National Convener Shahabuddin's Statement

On Killing of Kashmiri Muslims, 5 Feb., 1998

"Soon after the tragic massacre of 23 Kashmiri Pundits by militants at Wandhama Village in the Kashmir Valley has come the report this morning, no less shocking and tragic of the killing by the Army of seven or more Muslims coming out of a mosque after offering Eid Prayers in Malang Village in Doda District.

Frankly, I fail to see any reason why the cordon and search operation must continue even on the Eid day! I recall one such cordon and search operation in Srinagar in 1990 on the Eid day in down-town Srinagar which had contributed in a large measure to the aggravation of alienation among the Kashmiris.

The surprising thing was that though the net was cast wide, not a single militant was identified or captured, although hundreds of thousands of people had to suffer indignity and many of them were even detained for interrogation.

We have to continue with the anti-insurgency operation, but not in a manner that it becomes counter-productive. Also, our Security Forces could do with a little more common sense.

I presume that the Ministry of Defence will immediately conduct a high level inquiry in this tragic incident, in consultation with the State Government. I also hope that both the Central and the State Governments would apply a healing touch".

NCM: Chairman on Kashmiri Pandits Massacre, 28 January, 1998

On behalf of the National Commission for Minorities, I vehemently condemn the brutal killing of innocent persons in the Kashmir valley... The Commission would urge the Union and the State Governments to take all possible measures to protect the lives and constitutional rights of the Minority community...

... I ... fully endorse the NHRC decision to investigate into this inhuman act....

Final Communiqué of Islamic Summit Conference, Tehran, 9-12 December, 1997

(Extracts)

On Jammu and Kashmir: The Conference called for a peaceful settlement of the J&K issue in accordance with the relevant UN Resolutions and as agreed upon in the Simla Agreement. It condemned the continuing massive violations of human rights of the Kashmiri people and called for the respect of their human rights including the rights of self-determination. It also called upon Member States to take all necessary steps to persuade India to cease forthwith the gross and systematic human rights violations of the Kashmiri people and to enable them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as mandated by the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

The Conference affirmed that any political process or elections held under foreign occupation cannot be a substitute to the exercise of the right of self-determination by people of Kashmir as is provided in the relevant Security Council Resolutions. It supported the initiative of the Government of Pakistan to engage India in a dialogue for resolving all outstanding issues including the core issue of J&K and encouraged India to reciprocate positively. It commended the efforts being made by the OIC Contact Group on J&K.

The Conference appreciated the efforts made by the Secretary General for enabling the true representatives of the Kashmiri people to have their views expressed in OIC and other international fora, and requested him to continue to take all necessary steps in this regard.

Meeting of the Contact Group on J&K at the Summit Level: The Conference took note of the Meeting of the OIC Contact Group on J&K at the Summit level which adopted a **Statement on J&K** and a **Memorandum presented by the true representatives of the Kashmiri people**.

(Contd. from Page 127)

there is an elected Assembly and Government is in position, where after the Government of India would take appropriate decisions in the matter.

The State Government set up two Committees to deliberate on the question of Autonomy for the State, and Regional autonomy within the State respectively. The Committee for the former is headed by the former Sadr-e-Riyasat, Dr. Karan Singh and comprising eight other members; while the Committee relating to internal autonomy is headed by the Chief Minister, with Shri Balraj Puri as the working Chairman, and comprising four other members. A committee was also set up by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister and comprising the Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary/Secretary, Department of J&K Affairs and the Law Secretary, inter alia to deliberate on the question of autonomy.

Kerala: Muslim Representation in Public Employment

In the state of Kerala ... the condition of Muslims is far from satisfactory. The percentage of Muslims and Christians in Kerala are 22.23 and 21.60 respectively... The percentage of Muslims in different cadres such as IAS, IPS, Income tax service, Railway and Traffic Account Service is 3.03, 2.85, 3.06 and 2.65 respectively. Even in Class IV posts of various services, Muslim representation is less than 10 per cent. A study of Dr. S. Navalakha of the Institute of Economic Growth revealed the lamentable position of Muslims whose percentage of elites is 4.5, though their population share is 12 per cent. Christians seem to be in the forefront as the percentage of elites among them is 3.5 against the population share of 2.6 giving a CE value of 135. In the case of Muslims CE works out to 40 only.

Muslim Representation in Various State Government Deptts/PSUs: Kerala

Department/PSU	Percentage of Muslim
Police	8.5
Water Authority	4.47
Secretariat Employees	8.07
Health	7.35
Animal Husbandry	2.52
KSRTC	9.37
Electricity	6.87
Statistics	2.15

Muslim Representation in University/College level jobs

Designation	Total	Muslims	% of Muslims
Registrar	7	1	14.1
Jt. Registrar	7	NIL	0.0
Dy. Registrar	7	NIL	0.0
University Teachers	1432	79	5.51
Non-Teachers	6040	694	11.49
Medical College Teachers	1271	143	11.25
Engg. College Teachers	1044	120	11.49
Non-Teachers	1425	180	12.63
Law College Teachers	32	NIL	0.0
Non-Teachers	57	14	24.56
B.Ed. Teachers	161	9	5.59
Non-Teaching	165	14	8.48

The Table indicate that Muslims are unable to avail the allotted 12% of reservation of Government jobs and hence considerable efforts are called for on the educational front even to fill up this gap..

(Source: The Message, December, 1997)

Barelvi-Deobandi Clash in Mumbai Mobin Pandit in Afternoon Bombay, 1 February, 1998

An uneasy calm grips Muslim areas of the city, especially in south Mumbai, even as the leaders of the two warring schools of thought in the majority Sunni sect have thrashed out a temporary truce. The leaders from both sides met here about a week ago and issued a joint appeal for peace.

Days have passed since two brothers were done to death by some irate Barelvis after they emerged from the Jama Masjid in Umerkhadi having attended a congregation of the Deobandi-backed Tableeghi Jamat.

The local Barelvi leader, Maulana Abdul Quddoos Kashmiri, however, likes to tread a cautious path. "Some external forces are trying to divide Muslims here", he alleges. "They could be Jews, the United States or even the Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but who knows..." he says evasively.

According to him, although the Barelvi-Deobandi differences are decades old, the recent skirmishes between the followers of the two rival schools of thought were triggered after the Shiv Sena openly supported the Tableeghis to organise their religious congregation (Ijtema) at Bandra late last year. Mr. Bal Thackeray and Mr. Sabir Sheikh, extended them active help," claims Maulana Kashmiri...

"It is surprising that the Shiv Sena, which claims to be against anti-national Muslims, should support such India-haters as Deobandis," says Mr. Noorie.

Maulana Kashmiri, the milder among the Barelvi leaders, stresses that amity is the need of the hour. "We want a peaceful settlement to the raging imbroglio," he says, claiming that some prominent leaders from both the sides, including him, had met in the city about a week ago to thrash out a truce...

Sectarian Harmony

Editorial, The Pioneer, 26 January, 1998

History has been made in Lucknow with Shia and Sunni sects simultaneously taking out azadari and madh-e-saheba processions ... after more than 20 years. It is a matter of added satisfaction that the entire exercise has passed off peacefully... Religious leaders of both the sects will do well to carry forward their new-found attitude of conciliation. Having made a beginning, there is no reason why they should look back. Their effort must be directed at burying once and for all the ghost of the 1977 riots and remove all traces of bitterness between the two sects... It is a feather in the cap of the Kalyan Singh Government that there is, finally, hope of permanent peace returning to Lucknow...

SYED SHAHABUDDIN'S

Profile of Urdu Under Census 1991

Census of India: 1991 - Series I - INDIA: Paper-I of 1997 on Language which has just been published indicates that Urdu is steadily declining in all Urdu-speaking States, in other words, it is dying a slow death, though it still retains its pan-Indian character as no other scheduled, far less a non-scheduled language does. According to the Census it ranks 6th, after Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi and Tamil in the number of persons who declared it as their Mother Tongue. Table I shows the relative pattern of the languages which were declared at their Mother Tongue by at least 1% of the total national population:

Table - 1
Scheduled Languages in Descending Order of Strength, 1991

Language	Persons who returned their Mother Tongue	Percentage to total population
Hindi	337,272,114	39.85
Bengali	69,595,738	8.22
Telugu	66,017,615	7.80
Marathi	62,481,681	7.38
Tamil	53,006,368	6.26
Urdu	43,406,932	5.13
Gujarati	40,673,814	4.81
Kannada	32,753,676	3.87
Malayalam	30,377,176	3.59
Oriya	28,061,313	3.32
Punjabi	23,378,744	2.76
Assamese	13,079,696	1.55

Urdu has the same position that it had in 1971 and 1981, except that while the proportion of Hindi has grown from 38.04 to 38.71 to 39.85, that for Urdu has gone down from 5.22 to 5.11 and 5.13, as may be seen from Table 2:

Table - 2
Comparative Strengths of Scheduled Languages, 1971, 1981 and 1991

Language	Percentage to total population		
	1971	1981	1991
Hindi	38.04	38.71	39.85
Bengali	8.17	7.51	8.22
Telugu	8.16	7.41	7.80
Marathi	7.62	7.24	7.38
Tamil	6.88	**	6.26
Urdu	5.22	5.11	5.13

** Full figures for Tamil for 1981 are not available as the census records for Tamil Nadu were lost due to floods. Therefore, percentage to total population is not given.

THE CASE OF HINDI:

As the following table would show the Census includes under Hindi nearly 104 million persons (to be exact 103,839,829) who have not declared Hindi per se as the Mother Tongue but other languages which are akin to

or associated with Hindi or considered to be its dialects.

Table - 3
Languages Specified in the Eighth Schedule (Scheduled Languages), 1991

Language	Total No. of Speakers	No. of speakers of Main Language	No. of speakers of Associated Non-Scheduled Languages (above 1 million)
Hindi	337,272,114	233,432,285	Bagheli/Baghel-khandi 1,387,160 Bhojpuri 23,102,050 Bundeli/ Bundel Khand 1,657,473 Chattisgarhi 10,595,199 Garhwali 1,872,578 Harauli 1,235,252 Khortha/Khotta 1,049,655 Kumauni 1,717,191 Lamani/Lambadi 2,054,537 Magadhi/Magahi 10,566,842 Maithili 7,766,597 Malvi 2,970,103 Marwari 4,673,276 Mewari 2,114,622 Nimadi 1,420,051 Pahari 2,179,832 Rajasthani 13,328,581 Surgujia 1,045,455 Other 13,103,375 Total: 103,839,829

It is interesting to note that if, these non-Hindi languages were taken out of the count, the proportion of Hindi would fall from its inflated level of 39.85% to 27.58%. This would still be much higher than the corresponding figure for the next most widely spoken language, Bengali, with only 8.22%. What is important is the likelihood that many Urdu-speaking persons in the areas where these non-Hindi languages (included under Hindi) are spoken, would have declared the latter and thus been included under Hindi. But there is no way to check this hypothesis.

Before further analysis, we have to make a basic assumption. Urdu has become synonymous with Muslim Indians. Though it is not the Mother Tongue of all Muslim Indians, almost all those who declare it as the Mother Tongue are Muslim Indians.

State-wise Distribution of Urdu

As may be seen from the Table-4 only 8 States namely, A.P., Bihar, Karnataka, MP, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, UP and West Bengal have more than 1 million Urdu speakers, totalling to 93.4% of total Urdu-speaking population. Next in importance fall 5 States: Gujarat, Haryana, Orissa, Rajasthan and Delhi which have more than 100,000 but less than 1,000,000 speakers. These 13 together account for 99.1% of Urdu-speakers in

the country. But Urdu is spoken in all States and U.T.'s. It is the second or the third language in all Hindi States, Chandigarh and Delhi and outranks Hindi in 3 major States namely A.P., Karnataka and Tamilnadu and even in Goa.

Table - 4
Distribution of Urdu Language - India, States and U.T.'s, 1991

States	Urdu Persons	
India	43,406,932	
States:		
Andhra Pradesh	5,560,154	Manipur 193
Aunachal Pd.	1,370	Meghalaya 2,863
Assam	3,935	Mizoram 349
Bihar	8,542,463	Nagaland 1,381
Goa	39,944	Orissa 502,102
Gujarat	547,737	Punjab 13,416
Haryana	261,820	Rajasthan 953,497
Himachal Pd.	8,252	Sikkim 1,703
Karnataka	4,480,038	Tamil Nadu 1,036,660
Kerala	12,625	Tripura 173
Madhya Pradesh	1,227,672	UP 12,492,927
Maharashtra	5,734,468	West Bengal 1,455,649
Union Territories:		
A&N Islands	1,492	Delhi 512,990
Chandigarh	4,570	Lakshadweep 37
D&N Haveli	198	Pondicherry 6,170
Daman & Diu	84	

Table - 5
Relative Position of Urdu and Hindi, Hindi-speaking & Non Hindi 'Urdu' States

State	Hindi	Urdu
A.P. *	3	2
Bihar *	1	2
Goa	5	4 (after Konkani, Marathi & Kannada)
Gujarat	3	4 (after Gujarati, Mrathi & Hindi)

Haryana	1	3 (after Hindi and Punjabi)
H.P.	1	2 (Neg.)
Karnataka	7	2
M.P. *	1	3 (after Hindi and Marathi)
Maharashtra *	2	3
Orissa	2	3 (after Oriya and Hindi)
Rajasthan	1	2
Tamilnadu *	Neg.	4 (after Tamil, Telugu and Kannada)
U.P. *	1	2
West Bengal *	2	3 (after Bengali and Hindi)
Chandigarh	1	3 (Neg. after Punjabi)
Delhi	1	3 (after Hindi and Punjabi)

* more than 1 million Urdu Speakers.

Decadal Growth Rate:

Urdu's decadal growth rate is considerably lower than Hindi as may be seen from the following table:

Table - 6 Decadal Growth Rate		
Language	1971-81	1981-91
Hindi	26.86	27.51
Bengali	14.52	35.67
Telugu	13.11	30.41
Marathi	18.41	26.35
Tamil	—	—
Urdu	22.08	24.23

Let us examine the growth rate of population in Hindi and "non-Hindi Urdu" States.

It is interesting to note that while the decadal rate of growth of Muslim population in Hindi-speaking states and non-Hindi Urdu States and the country as a whole during 1981-91 is 26.21, 22.22 and 27.22, the rate of growth of Urdu-speaking population in Hindi States and in the country as a whole is much less at 18.93 and 22.89 respectively. On the other hand it is much higher in non-Hindi Urdu States. This supports the hypothesis that for one reason or the other, by choice or by compulsion of

Table - 7
Growth Rate of Urdu in "Hindi" States, 1991

State/UT	1991		1981		Growth Rate 1981-91				
	Total	Population Urdu	Muslim	Total	Population Urdu	Muslim	Total	Population Urdu	Muslim
Hindi States:									
Bihar	86.374	8.543	12.788	69.915	6.956	9.875	23.54	22.81	29.50
Haryana	16.466	0.262	0.764	12.922	0.227	0.524	27.43	15.42	45.89
H.P.	5.171	0.008	0.089	4.281	0.013	0.070	20.79	38.46(-)	28.04
M.P.	66.181	1.228	3.283	52.179	1.131	2.502	26.83	5.58	31.21
Rajasthan	44.006	0.954	3.525	34.262	0.725	2.492	28.44	31.59	41.46
U.P.	139.112	12.493	24.110	110.862	10.767	17.658	25.48	16.03	35.78
Chandigarh	0.642	0.005	0.017	0.452	0.003	0.009	42.04	66.67	91.73
Delhi	9.421	0.513	0.890	6.220	0.363	0.482	51.46	41.32	84.64
Total	367.373	24.006	45.466	291.093	20.185	33.612	26.21	18.93	35.27
Non-Hindi-Urdu States:									
A.P.	66.508	5.560	5.924	53.550	4.169	4.534	24.20	33.37	30.66
Gujarat	41.310	0.548	3.607	34.086	0.609	2.908	21.19	10.02(-)	24.05
Karnataka	44.977	4.480	5.234	37.136	3.513	4.164	21.11	27.53	27.52
Maharashtra	78.937	5.735	7.629	62.784	4.319	5.806	25.73	32.79	31.40
Orissa	31.660	0.502	0.578	26.370	0.372	0.422	20.06	34.95	36.83
Tamilnadu	55.859	1.037	3.053	48.408	0.865	2.520	15.39	19.88	21.14
W. Bengal	68.078	1.456	16.076	54.581	1.200	11.743	24.73	21.53	36.89
Total	387.329	19.318	42.101	316.915	15.047	32.097	22.22	28.38	31.17
India	846.368	43.407	106.657	665.288	35.323	80.013	27.22	22.89	32.80

URDU

circumstances, the Muslim community in Hindi-speaking States is distancing itself from Urdu to the advantage of Hindi, specially in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. On the other hand, in the non-Hindi States, the Urdu rate of growth parallels the Muslim rate, except in Gujarat. Urdu is thus under assimilation in Hindi States. The trend is the same even in relation to the rate of growth of total population between 1981-91. This may be seen in the following table.

This hypothesis is further confirmed by the following Table related to major 'Urdu' States only.

Table - 8

State/UT	% of Muslim Population	% of Urdu Population	Coeffective of Urduisation
A.P.	8.91	8.37	94
Bihar	14.80	9.89	67
Gujarat	8.73	1.33	15
Haryana	4.64	1.59	34
Karnataka	11.63	9.96	86
M.P.	4.96	1.86	38
Maharashtra	9.66	7.27	75
Orissa	1.83	1.59	87
Rajasthan	8.01	2.17	27
Tamilnadu	5.47	1.86	34
UP	17.33	8.98	52
W. Bengal	23.61	2.14	9
Delhi	9.44	5.45	58

Indeed, except for Bihar, A.P., Orissa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, with the highest Coefficients of Urduisation are non-Hindi states. The case of UP needs to be taken not of because in UP lives 23% of the total Muslim population of the country and yet the Coefficient is as low as 52, though MP, Rajasthan and Haryana are ever lower. But both Muslim and Urdu population are much smaller in them.

Assuming, within Hindi-speaking States, there was a one-to-one relationship between Muslims and Urdu, the Urdu-speaking population in the country goes up to 7.64%, as may be seen from the following table:

Table - 9

	Total Muslim Population Population in Hindi States (in millions)	Urdu-population as declared in non-Hindi State (in millions)
UP	24.11	12.50
Bihar	12.79	8.54
Rajasthan	3.53	0.95
M.P.	3.28	1.23
Haryana	0.76	0.27
Delhi	0.89	0.51
Total	45.36	24.00
A.P.	5.92	5.56
Karnataka	5.23	4.48
Maharashtra	7.63	5.73
Gujarat	3.61	0.55
Orissa	0.58	0.50
Tamilnadu	3.05	1.04
W. Bengal	16.08	1.46
	12.10	19.32

Supreme Court Order On Tombs of Ghalib and Zauq

... The operative part of the Report (of the ASI-MCD Team on Zauq's Tomb) is as "There are no Architectural or Town Planning norms/standard for the area requirement for a grave or a monument. Therefore, the area of the grave for the monument of another eminent and contemporary poet Mirza Ghalib was considered as a guide.

Keeping in view (i) the high density of habitation in the locality and (ii) the area of Mirza Ghalib's Mazar, the team has come to the conclusion that approximately an area measuring 25m x 21.5m (537 sqm) is required for proposed retrieval/construction of the grave of poet Zauq. The Archaeological Survey of India is of the opinion that keeping in view the prevailing exigencies of the situation, this is the minimum requirement of the area for construction and maintenance of a monument of national importance.

A tentative list of occupants of houses/shops requiring relocation/rehabilitation is attached as Annexure-B'. The list has been prepared on the basis of enquiries at the spot and gives an approximate idea of the extent of demolition and subsequent rehabilitation required.

Relocation of Public Convenience (Lavatories)

The team also explored the area for identifying a suitable site for relocating the toilets presently constructed over the grave of poet Zauq, in a nearby area so that the public is not inconvenienced. A vacant plot measuring 16.20 X 12m located towards the north east direction of the grave was found suitable for this purpose. The proposed plot is lying vacant at present and being misused unauthorisedly. This is the only vacant space available in the locality where alternative lavatory block could be constructed".

... We agree with the recommendations of the Committee as given in para 6 of the Report regarding relocation of public convenience (Lavatories), quoted

(Contd. on Page 133)

This forms 7.64% of total national population and elevates Urdu, above Marathi and Tamil, to the 4th position, after Hindi, Bengali and Telugu.

Conclusion:

In Hindi States, as a matter of state policy, the educational system, the administrative machinery and the mass media have been deliberately and effectively used to "Hindi-ise" the Urdu-speaking population. The younger generation has been largely deprived of the opportunity to learn Urdu and, as such, it knows no other language except Hindi, though, in its speech and writing it may continue to use many Urdu words of Persian and Arabic origin. Thus Urdu has been sought to be reduced to a spoken dialect of Hindi and sentenced to a slow lingering death - a process of painful or painless linguistic assimilation, depending upon one's point of view.

Gandhiji**On Hindustani as National Language**

It is quite correct that you should write in Hindustani. All our dealings should be in Hindustani, not in Hindi or Urdu. Hence I would not regard the expression 'nirvachit' which has been used in the resolution that we have passed, as Hindustani. There must be a simpler equivalent for it. If 'nirvachit' means 'one who has been elected', why can't we say 'chuna hua'? This is only by way of an illustration. Why should the constitution of our organisation be in English. It should be in beautiful Hindustani. Even now we should have it rendered into

(Contd. from Page 132)

above. The plot measuring 16.20 X 12M is a vacant plot... We direct the DDA to hand over vacant possession of the plot to MCD before 6 PM today, November 6, 1996... We direct the ... MCD Chief Architect, to prepare the Plan in respect of the public convenience (lavatories) at the new site... We request Mr. V.K. Duggal, Commissioner, MCD to have the work executed according to the time-schedule fixed by us.

The Team has also recommended in para 4 of its Report that approximately an area measuring 25 X X 21.5 M (537 sq. m) is required for the proposed retrieval/construction of the grave of poet Zauq. We agree with the recommendation in principle... We are of the view that as at present, the area comprising all existing toilet and the

URDU Programmes on Doordarshan

TV Kendra	Total Programme duration per week	Urdu Programme duration per week
Delhi	22 hours	30 minutes
Lucknow	18-1/2 hours	30 minutes
Jalandhar	18-1/2 hours	30 minutes
Jaipur	13 hours	30 minutes
Srinagar	19 hours	3 hours
Calcutta	22-1/2 hours	NIL
Bhubaneswar	12-1/2 hours	NIL
Patna	5 hours	NIL
Mumbai	24 hours	30 minutes
Ahmedabad	21-1/2 hours	NIL
Bhopal	7 hours	NIL
Madras	24-1/2 hours	NIL
Hyderabad	24 hours	30 minutes
Bangalore	22-1/2 hours	30 minutes
Trivandrum	22/25 hours	NIL
North East	55 hours	NIL
Gauhati	14 hours	NIL
Total	294 hours	6-1/2 hours

area in possession of occupants 1, 2, 3, and 4 shall only be taken over for the purpose of retrieval and construction of the Monument. The construction at 1, 2, 3 and 4 ... have to be demolished. These persons shall be paid compensation for the super-structure. The land belongs to DDA. They shall also be rehabilitated by providing them alternative residential/non-residential premises...

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Tel: 202 3390**

A Report on Jamia Hamdard, Delhi

... Situated in the midst of the sylvan surroundings of Jahan Panah City Park, the Tughlaqabad Institutional Area and the Tughlaqabad Fort in south-east Delhi, Jamia Hamdard seeks to focus on environment and health...

This brain child of Janab Hakim Abdul Hameed that owes its inception to his vision and pragmatic wisdom began in the shape of a disparate group of colleges. In 1962, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation-stone of the Institute of History of Medicine and Medical Research (IHMMR) and the new building of the Institute was inaugurated by Mrs. Indira Gandhi on February 14, 1974.

Other institutes and institutions that sprang up on the 90-acre Hamdard Nagar campus were the Institute of Islamic Studies, Majeedia Hospital, College of Pharmacy and Tibbia College. It was an uphill task to weld together this conglomerate of diverse institutions. Saiyid Hamid, a retired civil servant and a former Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University strung together these scattered beads into a University project and processed it with the UGC and the Ministry of Human Resource Development... These efforts culminated with award of a 'deemed University' status under the label Jamia Hamdard.

The Faculty of Unani Medicine of the University happens to be one of the institutions out of three in the country (Jamia Hamdard, Aligarh Muslim University and Health University, Vijayawada) awarding Ph.D. degree in Unani Medicine - the Unani system of medicine is recognised by the WHO, UNICEF and other international bodies. Even in the West Unani is being accepted as an alternative system of medicine known as "greenwave". Recently, Harvard University established the Department of Ancient Medicine (including Unani).

The Faculty of Unani Medicine is engaged in teaching and clinical research programme. The faculty has seven departments including a Department of History of Unani Medicine and Sciences... The teaching programme includes BUMS course of 5 years and MD course of 3 years in the area of pharmacology and medicine... Jamia Hamdard has a 150-bed hospital dealing with both Unani and modern systems of medicine. The Majeedia Hospital also provides herbal medicines and drugs prepared in the Hamdard Waqf Laboratory. Thus one can find linkage and interaction among university, hospital and industry. The hospital also provides facilities for practising herbal medicines and facilitating clinical support to teaching and research wings. During 1995-96, the hospital admitted 10,000 patients and 150,000 patients were treated by the OPD...

The Faculty of Nursing ... provides diploma/degree

course in nursing. The University has also introduced B.Sc. course for nursing...

Jamia Hamdard is a pioneer in the field of pharmacy, imparting education at the diploma degree, post-graduate and doctoral levels. Diploma and degree courses, recognised by the AICTE as well as the Pharmacy Council of India, are rated amongst the best in the country. In pharmacy, we have added king of Unani as a new exposure and experiment.

The Department of Pharmaceutical Chemistry has been working on synthesis of new compounds of potential pharmaceutical interest and on prodrugs which have attracted the interest of agencies abroad to test their activity against AIDS and cancer. Progress in the standardisation of Unani drugs in this faculty ... is a challenging task before us...

The Science Faculty ... has research and teaching programmes lays stress on health and environment. One of the major interests of the Department of Bio-chemistry is to study the biochemical basis of action on herbal drugs in collaboration with national institutions such as the National Institute for Immunology and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences... The Department of Botany has introduced certain innovative programmes of study such as Environmental Botany, the Centre for Biotechnology and the Department of Medical Elementology and Toxicology. The faculty studies the impact of environmental stress caused by air pollution on growth performance of medicinal plants and on the amount and quality of compounds contained by the plants.

... The Institute of Islamic Studies, the Centre for Federal Studies and the Centre for Socio-legal Studies even part of Jamia Hamdard... The Department of Islamic Studies focuses on the issues confronting the Indian minorities and contemporary Muslim world...

In 1994, the University established the Centre for Federal Studies (CFS) which seeks to pursue research on different aspects of Indian federation and other federal constitutions. Associated with International Association of Centre for Federal Studies (AICFS), the CFS is the only Centre of the kind in Asia. It has come out with some important ... books and research papers which provide useful ideas and information for federal governance... The University has started MCA course in the Computer Centre under self-financing scheme. Its **management course programme has also been approved** and is likely to start in the coming session.

The Jamia Hamdard Library is fast developing into an important centre of manuscripts on Islamic studies, medicine, Indian civilization, religious and Central Asia.

(Contd. on Page 135)

Supreme Court

On Teacher's Rights in Private Institutes

K. Krishnamacharyulu and others, Appellants v. Sri Venkateswara Hindu College of Engineering and another, Respondents.

K. RAMASWAMY AND S. SAGHIR AHMAD, JJ.

Constitution of India, Articles 226, 39 (d) - Equal pay for equal work - Claim for - Employees of private educational institutions - Proper forum - Executive instructions issued by Government giving them right to claim pay scale at par with Government employees - However, no statutory rules issued in that behalf and institution in question not receiving any grant-in-aid - Institution in question catering to element of public interest - Remedy would be available under Article 226 and not under Industrial Disputes Act - They would be entitled to pay parity with Government employees.

Articles 226, 21 - Writ jurisdiction - Available to teachers in private educational institutions - State has obligation to provide facilities and opportunities to people to avail right of education - Private institutes caters to need of educational opportunities which has element of public interest - Teachers can, therefore, avail remedy under Article 226.

(Source: AIR 1998 Supreme Court 295)

(Contd. from Page 134)

The Museum on the History of Medicine has a wealth of information on the evolution of the herbal medicine system. A well-planned Convention Centre ... and the Scholar House have attracted major industries and agencies to have it as a venue for holding various programmes and seminars.

The University has started work on a gymnasium and other sports facilities... The total strength of the students has reached 1500... However, paucity of funds has hampered ... development and institution building. There are three main sources of funds - the University Grants Commission, Hamdard National Foundation and self-generated income..

Vice-Chancellor Allauddin Ahmad has had a long experience in research and administration. For three-and-a-half years he was Deputy Director-General (Education) in Indian Council of Agriculture Research and Vice-Chancellor of S.K. University of Agriculture Science (J&K) for about 10 years. Recently he was elected as the Vice-President, Association of Indian Universities and member of the Council of Association of Commonwealth Universities for 1996-98. In 1997 he became the Vice-Chancellor in the Executive Council of the International Islamic Forum for Science, Technology and Human Resource Development.

(Source: The Nation and the World, 1 February, 1998)

Allahabad High Court

On Minority Institutions

Committee of Management, Isabella Thoburn College, Lucknow, Petitioner v. State of Uttar Pradesh and others, Respondents.

S.H.A. RAZA AND I.P. VAVISHTHA, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 30(1) - Minority institution - Admission to courses conducted by it - Minority College making admission to all seats, claiming right to do so in view of Article 30(1) - University by its circular, denying right of college to make admissions to seats exceeding 50% of seats in view of decision of a full bench of Supreme Court - Correctness of said Supreme Court decision doubted by another Supreme Court decision rendered by equal number of judges and matter referred to larger bench - High Court approving admissions for year in question - Direction given that admissions for subsequent years be made in accordance with decision of larger bench of Supreme Court to which reference was made.

(Source: AIR 1998 Allahabad 48)

Shahabuddin's Letter to Deeni Taleemi Council, UP, 13 February, 1998

Thank you for instructing your office to send me the proceedings including the Resolution adopted by the U.P. Deemi Taleemi Council on 8.2.1998 and literature published by it.

I do not think the programme envisaged meets the gravity of the situation or is likely to have any effect on the Kalyan Singh Government.

In my view it is essentially to take the following steps:

- 1) to introduce Sare Jahan Se Accha Hindustan Hamara in all minority institutions;
- 2) to file a writ petition in the Allahabad High Court against introduction of Hindu rites and Vande Mataram in roll and call, separately against introduction of Sanskrit as compulsory subject;
- 3) to take up the case with the Government of India, National Commission for Minorities and Commission for Linguistic Minorities, Allahabad;
- 4) to organise a joint delegation of all Muslim organisations of national level and submit memorandum to Governor of UP and President of India. The Memorandum should threaten a total boycott of government schools, in case these orders are not withdrawn.

I would also advise you not to seek the same status for Deeni Taleemi Council as the Shiksha Parishad. This would be a fatal step.

Asghar Ali Engineer on Communal Violence in 1997

... In 1997 most of the riots - except the one in Coimbatore in the first week of December - were on a small scale. All these years the south, particularly Tamil Nadu and Kerala, was free from communal violence. In fact communalism and communal violence were considered a north Indian phenomenon. But of late the virus has spread to the south too and is becoming more and more virulent. In Kerala, the BJP and the RSS are trying to get a toe-hold and in Tamil Nadu, the Hindu Munnani and Muslim ... al-Umma are spreading their tentacles. While Kerala has seen warfare between CPI(M) and RSS cadre, Tamil Nadu is witnessing it between the Hindu Munnani and al-Umma... Coimbatore has been smouldering for quite some time. Mr. M. Karunanidhi, Chief Minister, said 50-60 persons had been murdered in the last 10 years. He held extremist elements in both the communities responsible for the violence...

Though the Shiv Sena-BJP Government boasts of a riot-free Maharashtra, Buldana district witnessed communal violence on January 26... The police resorted to firing... One person was killed and another injured, both Muslims. Fourteen others were injured in the clashes...

... Patna came under the spell of communal violence in late January. A Saraswati procession was attacked on a Friday afternoon by some anti-social elements and this led to clashes, in which an STD booth owner - a Muslim - was killed... According to (Muslims) the processionists (had) looted Muslim shops near the Sabzi Mandi and also indulged in eve-teasing.

Jammu reported communal clashes and sporadic arson on March 26 ... following an altercation over the massacre of seven Kashmiri Pandits in the Valley a few days earlier and police firing on demonstrators in the city on March 25...

In Mathura ... on March 26, 1997, at least two persons were killed and 21 injured in clashes, which followed the stabbing of a youth by a Muslim criminal the previous day. Another youth ... died the next morning... The VHP activists tried to instigate the Valmiki as it was not getting any response for its yatras and yagnas...

Shahidnagar near Delhi witnessed a communal flare-up on April 6. The police resorted to firing in which two persons were killed and about a dozen injured. It started with a dispute over a piece of land...

On May 19, there were clashes between Hindus and Muslims in ... Laksar (Roorkee) ... in which a police constable and a teenager were killed... Trouble started

persons were hacked to death and 13 seriously injured when two communities clashed on June 22. The violence was sparked by an attack by miscreants on a convoy of leaders of a community, touring riot-hit villages...

On October 17, 1997, **a Hindu mob attacked a Muslim religious procession injuring at least 20 persons, including two policemen, according to police.** Eyewitnesses said the policemen accompanying the procession could not control the fighting between two groups and fled. The attackers, some of them armed with swords, threw bottles and stones at the procession. The attack was certainly unprovoked.

On November 15, the Osmania University campus in Hyderabad was the scene of communal strife and a scooterist lost his life... The Vice-Chancellor ordered closure of the University to thwart the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad's bid to escalate violence...

In UP, 24 persons, including a Home Guard, were killed in clashes in Khanpurband village in Sambhal district on October 21... The clash erupted when members of a community objected to the opening of a ration shop in the village.

Uttar Pradesh witnessed communal clashes in five places in early November after the BJP Government headed by Kalyan Singh assumed office.

The Muslims began to feel insecure. Gonda, Kanpur, Barabanki, Bulandshahar and Saharanpur had disturbances... Several houses and shops belonging to Muslims in Katra Bazar in Gonda district were looted and burnt on October 31. Curfew was imposed and the Muslim leaders alleged that the Kalyan Singh Government and the district administration sided with the miscreants.

In Maharashtra, 50 persons, including five policemen, were injured when a Hindu religious procession was (attacked) near a mosque on November 15 at Nagar Deola in Pachora taluk of Jalgaon district sparking a riot. The agitators went on the rampage, setting fire to five shops...

A constable charged two Muslim fundamentalists belonging to the al-Umma with violating traffic rules and took them to the police station ... the police officer let them go. On their way back, they were again booked by a traffic constable for violation. They stabbed the constable and ran away. All this happened on November 29... The Hindu Munnani and others gathered in strength at the Government hospital where the body of the constable, Selvaraj, was kept. The Hindu activists attacked a ruling DMK MLA Dhandapani, and set his car on fire.

MHA: Annual Report, 1996-97 (Extracts)**On TADA**

The Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987 was allowed to lapse on 23rd May, 1995. With a view to ensure that no mis-carriage of justice took place, Review Committees for reviewing each individual case have been set up both at the level of Central Government and State Governments. Instructions have also been issued from time to time to the State Governments and Union Territories emphasising the need to take timely and adequate measures for expeditious investigation and prosecution in TADA cases. Further, the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations have also been requested to issue suitable instructions to their prosecution branches not to seek adjournment in TADA cases and ensure speedy trial. As a result of periodical reviews undertaken by the Review Committees, TADA cases have been dropped altogether against more than 19,000 persons. As on 30th April, 1996 only 1,986 persons were under detention in various States whereas the number of such persons under detention in January, 1996 was 5,111.

On Kabir Puraskar

... The awards for the year 1995-96 were announced on 2nd October, 1996. Three persons were selected for the Kabir Puraskar - one for Grade-I and the other two for Grade-II.

(Contd. from Page 136)

business establishments of Muslims, killing six persons (including) one torched alive... Violence continued sporadically for a few more days and the toll rose to 20...

In Jaipur, Rajasthan, six persons died in police firing on December 15 in Shastri Nagar thought it was not a communal riot...

A look at all the riots which have occurred this year shows that they were mostly spontaneous outbursts of violence rather than planned incidents. Most of the clashes which took place before 1992-93 were planned with the backing of one or the other political party. But the post-Babari riots have largely been unplanned ones and thus could be controlled easily with the minimum loss of life and property. In a country of India's dimensions, it may be difficult to eliminate communal violence completely but it can be at least minimised if anti-communal campaigns are conducted regularly.

The political situation keeps on changing. In today's circumstances, the saffron family has been compelled to change its strategy and is promising a riot-free India to attack the Muslim vote. However, this should not make us complacent. The situation may change once again and religious aggressiveness which does not evoke much response from people today may become relevant again. It is, therefore, necessary that the anti-communal

SC & NHRC Guidelines**On Arrest, Detention and Interrogation**

... Being acutely conscious of such inhumane practices, the Supreme Court in the case of D.K. Basu vs State of W. Bengal (writ petition CRL No. 539, 1986) had laid down the procedures to be followed by the police in cases of arrest or detention... By inference, these procedures apply to all law-enforcing agencies in the country. The guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court include:

- * Police carrying out arrest and handling the interrogation of an arrestee must wear visible, clear identification and name tags giving their designations. Particular of such officers should also be recorded in a register.
- * A memo of arrest should be prepared at the time of arrest, and the memo should be attested by a member of the arrestee family or a known and responsible person from the neighbourhood.
- * The arrestee is entitled to keep a family member or a relative or a friend with him during the course of interrogation.
- * The arrestee must be medically examined at the time of arrest.
- * The arrestee must go for medical examination every 48 hours of detention.
- * The arrestee is permitted to meet his lawyer during the course of interrogation.

What makes these guidelines sacrosanct is that the apex court has accorded them a sanction of commitment of contempt for breach or violation.

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has ... communicated these guidelines to all director-generals of police and heads of other agencies... The Ministry of Home Affairs needs to vigorously follow their implementation by all agencies.

To curb the tendency of law enforcement agencies of resorting to third-degree methods, the NHRC has recommended several steps which include:

- * Surprise visits of police stations by senior officials, and if one is found violating human and legal rights, severe punishment should be meted out to officials.
- * A magistrate must ask the arrestee whether he was beaten. If yes, a medical examination is to be done and injuries are to be recorded.
- * State training institutions must pay heed to imparting proper interrogation techniques, and
- * Supervisory ranks should eschew essentially statistical approach in highlighting an organisations performance.

campaign should go on without any let-up. The secular forces should not slacken their vigil on communal forces whether they are aggressively active at a given time or not.

(Source: The Hindu, 29 and 30 December, 1997)

A.P. High Court**On Delegation of Power by Wakf Board**

M.A. Aziz, Petitioner v. A.P. State Wakf Board and another, Respondents.

B.K. SOMASEKHARA, J.

Wakf Act (43 of 1995), Sections 27, 18 - Wakf Act (29 of 1954), Section 18 - Wakf Board - Delegation of powers - Blanket delegation of all its powers by Board to Chairman or other person - Not permissible - Order to constitute new committee for disputed Mosque - Passed by Chairman of Board on basis of vague resolution as to delegation of all existing powers to chairman - Order is illegal - More so when passed without hearing existing committee.

(Source: AIR 1998 Andhra Pradesh 61)

WAKFS

A.P. High Court**On Removal of Encroachment**

G. Devendranath and 9 others, Petitioners v. Executive Officer, Secunderabad Cantonment Board, and others, Respondents.

P.S. MISHRA, C.J. AND P. RAMAKRISHNAM RAJU, J.

Constitution of India, Article 226 - Encroachment on land - Removal - Flats constructed on grabbed land - Flat owners not responsible of land - Paying price for their flats and in most cases by borrowing from financial institutions - Their plight cannot be ignored by Courts - Removal of flats not ordered.

(Source: AIR 1998 Andhra Pradesh 72)

Karnataka High Court**On Gift in Muslim Law**

Abdur Rahman and others, Appellants v. Smt. Athifa Begum and others, Respondents.

CHIDANANDA ULLAL, J.

Muslim law - Gift - Essentials of - Possession of gifted property not made over to beneficiary by gift deed - Beneficiary not in actual or symbolic possession of property till death of donor - No recital in deed that gift was accepted by beneficiary - Held, it was not valid gift.

The three essentials of a gift under Muslim law are as follows: i) declaration of the gift by the donor, ii) acceptance of the gift so made by the donee and iii) delivery of the possession or the usufruct of the subject property so gifted. Courts have consistently held that when where is no compliance of any of the above three essential conditions, the gift rendered itself as invalid.

(Source: AIR 1998 Karnataka 39)

A Report on Incidence of Polygamy

A substantial number of Indian men, irrespective of their religion or community, practise polygamy finding ingenious ways to get round the law.

Some enter into conversations of convenience others resort to "friendship pacts" or live-in relationship - all pointing to a need for more stringent legislation...

A sample survey by Dr. Kanti Prasad of the Indian Statistical Institute reveals that contrary to popular belief 72 out of 1,000 non-Muslims have more than one wife while only 15 Muslims in 1,000 practise bigamy.

Social scientists maintain that as the conditions under which polygamy could be permitted are no longer exist, the practice has been severely restricted. Legal restrictions over the years have, to a great extent, succeeded to preventing the ... practice and made way for monogamy. But quite a few men would like to adopt a polygamous lifestyle...

In a recent case, the Supreme Court decided that "a non-Muslim husband whose personal law does not allow bigamy cannot, by announcing conversion to Islam, marry again without divorcing his first wife according to law".

According to author Dr. Zeenat Shaukat Ali, a study of the laws of various countries show how directly or indirectly monogamy has been introduced.

She points out in her book the Empowerment of Women in Islam that in India and Pakistan, the dissolution in the Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 has contributed a great deal toward discouraging the practice of polygamy. ...

(Source: The Indian Currents, 17-12 January, 1998)

MUSLIM INDIA BOUND VOLUMES 1983 - 1997

YEAR	Rs.	YEAR	Rs.
1997	125	1989	325
1996	150	1988	350
1995	175	1987	375
1994	200	1986	400
1993	225	1985	425
1992	250	1984	450
1991	275	1983	475
1990	300		

M.D. Nalapat

On Prospects of Indo-Islamic Cooperation

... India is the only technologically advanced power that has a significant Islamic tradition. This is a moderate strand much more in sync with the needs of an interdependent world than the fanatical variants now being tested in Afghanistan...

India is home to the Hanafi school, which stresses moderation and the amicable co-existence of different faiths. The overwhelming majority of the country's 100-million strong Sunni population follow the Hanafi teachings in preference to sects that promote socio-religious exclusivity. As for the four Shia schools in India, all promote co-existence. This is particularly marked in the case of the Bohras and the Ismailis, both of whom have distinguished themselves by their industry and moderation. Indeed, India can be said to be the epicentre of the moderate strain that is dominant not only here but in a wide arc ranging from Syria, Egypt and Iraq in the west to Malaysia and Indonesia in the east.

Despite the powerful influence of Islam in its heritage, why is there not greater co-operation between Muslim-majority states and India? The answer lies in the incessant propaganda by Islamabad that India is an "anti-Muslim country". Thanks to this, numerous initiatives aimed at joint action have not taken off, to the detriment of both India as well as the Muslim-majority states...

By their actions, other sections ... who seek to distance India from its cultural cousins are Hindu exclusivists. Had such groups conducted an international agitation against the demolition of dozens of places of worship in Pakistan, their role would have been positive. Instead ... they are seeking to demolish religious structures in Kashi and Mathura. That India is not Pakistan became clear from the outcry that greeted the destruction of the Babari Masjid, as compared to the silence within Pakistan on the marginalisation of the minorities and the organised destruction of their places of worship... After all, *Himsa dooyathe ithi Hindu* (Only those who abjure violence are true Hindus). Should the ... Hindu (fanatics) recognise this reality, it would help to turn followers of another great faith away from the fanatics who seek to imprison Muslims in the pit of exclusivism... New Delhi needs to work towards much greater cultural and business cooperation with this vast region, so as to make it the pivot of the international economy in the coming millennium. This is possible only if syncretic traditions are maintained. ...

Despite the efforts of fundamentalists of varying faiths, the odds favour India and the Muslim-majority states working together. Such interpretation will not only spur economic development but will also promote the moderate social attitudes needed to sustain it. The advantages of closer cooperation will soon negate the efforts of the ... fanatics to prevent India from providing its due help in the development of its cultural cousins.

(Source: The Times of India, 18 December, 1997)

Algeria: A Country in Terror Amnesty International's Appeal for International Investigation

Over the past year thousands of civilians, many of them women and children, have been massacred with unspeakable brutality by armed groups. Most of these massacres have been committed in regions around the capital, Algiers, and often right next to army barracks and security forces posts. Yet, in spite of the victims' cries for help, the sound of gunshots and explosions, and the smoke and flames of burning houses, the security forces have never intervened. The attackers have been allowed to leave every time. Why?

The authorities blame all the massacres on armed groups such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). But there are allegations, including some from survivors and families of victims, that some of the massacres were committed by groups acting on the instructions, or with the consent, of certain army and security force units. Victims have included people suspected of links with armed groups and their relatives, and those who had refused to join the militias armed by the state.

These massacres have taken place against a background of increasingly widespread violence and gross human rights abuses committed by the security forces, by armed opposition groups which call themselves "Islamic groups", and, more recently, by militias armed and encouraged by the state. Since the imposition of the state of emergency in 1992, violence has spiralled and the civilian population has found itself increasingly caught up in the conflict and denied state protection.

The international community has failed to take any action to address the plight of the victims. Moreover, when Algerians have attempted to escape death by seeking refuge in western countries, they have often been refused protection by western governments. Recommendations made in September 1997 by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the European Parliament that Algerian asylum-seekers should benefit from international protection have yet to be translated into action.

Words of condemnation and expressions of concern about the Algerian human rights tragedy are not enough. The lack of action has contributed to a climate of impunity for the perpetrators of massacres and other gross human rights abuses. Urgent steps must be taken to ensure that the civilian population in Algeria is given adequate protection and that those responsible for massacres and other abuses - whoever they may be - are brought to justice.

AI has launched a joint appeal with the International Federation for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, and Reporters Sans Frontieres, calling for an international investigation to be set up to establish the facts, examine responsibilities and make recommendations for a long-term ... plan to end the crisis in Algeria.

(Source: Amnesty International News)

Palestine: MWL's Memorandum to US Congress

... In the light of the ... historical reality and Israel's defiance of will of the international community, as manifested by the prevailing situation in Al-Quds (Jerusalem), the Muslim World League would like to emphasize that, the recent decision of the US Congress to consider Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the eternal capital of Israel, apart from being a gross injustice, is detrimental to the credibility of the US attitude towards maintaining peace and security in the world. The decision, not only entangles the government and the people of the United States of America in problems relating to international law, and the historical rights of the Muslim inhabitants of the Holy City, but also stands at variance with the resolutions of the UN and the Security Council.

Hence, while placing this brief memorandum before the august house of the US Congress for consideration and subsequent adoption of positions compatible with historical facts, the Muslim World League cherishes the hope that, while doing so, the Congress would also take the strong relations binding the US with Muslims, as well as the various real interests of the American people into consideration. Indeed, it is not unbecoming of the US Congress to speak out the truth, even if, in doing so, it would have to retract its position and nullify its decision, which is seen by Muslims by the Israeli Knesset or the fanatic government of Benjamin Netanyahu. ...

Indeed, it is expected that the Congress would make all possible efforts to abide by the provisions of international law that outlaws occupation of other people's territory by force, so that the aggressor is not rewarded for committing acts of aggression.

Moreover, the MWL would like to prevail upon the Members of the US Congress, who belong to various religious and ideological persuasions, to stand up against the forces of violence and to persuade Israel to desist from the acts of demolishing Palestinian homes and the evicting forcefully the Arab inhabitants of Al-Quds from their homes. Peace must be restored to the Holy City and its Muslim, Christian and Jewish inhabitants...

Final Communique of Islamic Summit Conference, Tehran, 9-12 December, 1997 (Extracts)

On Muslim Communities and Minorities

The Conference welcomed the "peace agreement" between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front officially signed on 2 September 1996, and expressed its consideration for the important steps taken towards its full implementation. It also called on the Government of the Philippines and on the Moro National Liberation Front to preserve the gains resulting from signing the peace agreement.

The Conference commended the efforts of the leaders of the Moro National Liberation Front and of the Government of the Republic of the Philippines for establishing peace in the south of the Philippines and asked the Secretary General and all concerned parties to continue extending the appropriate assistance in order to ensure the full implementation of the peace agreement during the transitional period until a self-rule zone in the south of the Philippines is established.

The Conference expressed satisfaction with the Secretary General's efforts to implement the adopted resolutions on Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States, and particularly with the creation of a Contact Group from the Member States' permanent delegations at the United Nations in New York and Geneva to examine the cases of violation of the rights of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States.

The Conference reaffirmed the need to take action for the attachment of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States to their religious and cultural identity, to a fair treatment in terms of rights, commitments and duties, and to the provision of all their rights, civil or religious or other, without discrimination or segregation.

The Conference reaffirmed its commitment to Muslim communities and minorities living in non-OIC Member States.

Indian Muslim Federation UK: Charter of Demands, London, 7 Feb., 1998

1. Rebuilding of the Babari Mosque on its original site.
2. Protection of Muslim Personal Law.
3. Protection of religious places and educational institution of minorities.
4. Stern and swift action against those who indulge in violence against minorities.
5. Adequate representation of minority communities ... in education, medical and technical institutions.
6. Maintenance of the status quo in Kashmir including Article 370.
7. Upgradation of the Minorities Commission to ministry level.
8. Proportional representation of the minority community ... in Rajya Sabha, Legislative Councils...
9. Proportional representation of the minority community in the judiciary system.
10. Annual quota ... for all types of educational institutions, taluka, district and state-wise, for the granting of permission.
11. Reservation in public employment...
12. Representation in political parties at various level...
13. Immediate release of all detained under TADA. Investigation of police atrocities, punishment of the guilty officers and compensation to the victims.

Treaty Between Hungary and Romania on Understanding, Cooperation and Good Neighbourhood, 16 January, 1996

Provision on Respect for National Minorities

- (1) (a) In regulating the rights and duties of persons belonging to national minorities living on their territories, the Contracting Parties undertake to apply the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe for the protection of national minorities, if more favourable provisions concerning the rights of persons belonging to national minorities do not exist in their domestic legislation.
- (b) Without prejudice to the contents of the preceding paragraph, the Contracting Parties shall, with the aim of protecting and developing the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the Hungarian minority in Romania and the Romanian minority in Hungary, apply as legal obligations the provisions defining the rights of persons belonging to such minorities as contained in the documents of the United Nations, the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe...
- (2) The Contracting Parties reconfirm accordingly, that these (minorities) shall have, individually or in community with other members of their group, the right to freely express, preserve, and develop their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity. Accordingly, they shall have the right to establish and maintain their own educational, cultural and religious institutions, organisations and associations which are entitled to seek voluntary financial and other contributions, as well as public support in accordance with the domestic legislation.
- (3) The Contracting Parties shall respect the right of (these) persons ... to use freely both orally and in writing their mother tongue in private and in public. They shall take the necessary measures to ensure that such persons can learn their mother tongue and have adequate opportunities for being educated and trained in this language at all levels and forms within the framework of the State education system, according to their needs. The Contracting Parties shall ensure the conditions allowing the use also of the mother tongue of these persons in their relations with local administrative and judicial authorities, in accordance with the domestic legislation and the international obligations the Contracting Parties have subscribed to. These persons shall have the right to use their surnames and first names in their mother tongue and to have them officially recognised. In areas where persons belonging to the minority concerned live in a substantial number, both Parties shall allow the display, also in the language of the minorities, the traditional local denominations, street names and other topographical indications intended for the public.
- (4) The Contracting Parties shall respect the right of (these) persons ... to have access, in their mother tongue, to information and to the electronic and printed media, as well as to freely exchange and disseminate information. The Contracting Parties shall, within the framework of their domestic legislation, grant the possibility to establish and operate their own media.
- (5) The Contracting Parties shall ensure the right of (these) persons ... to effectively participate, individually or through their parties or organisations, in the political, economic, social and cultural life and through their representatives elected to central and local public authorities and administrations, in the settlement of issues representing national or local interests. Both Contracting Parties shall, in the process of decision-making concerning questions related to the protection and enforcement of the national identity of these persons, consult the organisations, political parties or associations of these persons according to democratic decision-making procedures as provided by the law.
- (6) The Contracting Parties shall respect the cultural and historical heritage of the national minorities and shall support their efforts to preserve the architectural monuments and memorial sites related to minority culture and history, and will take appropriate measures to allow citizens living in regions of mixed population to become acquainted with Hungarian and Romanian cultural values.
- (7) The Contracting Parties shall respect the rights of (these) persons ... to maintain free contracts among themselves and across frontiers with citizens of other States, as well as to participate in the activities of national and international non-governmental organisations.
- (8) The Contracting Parties agree that, in the exercise of their rights ... (these) persons ... similarly to any other citizen of the state concerned, shall respect the national legislation and the rights of others. These persons shall enjoy the same rights and have the same duties of citizenship as other citizens of the State in which they live.
- (9) Without prejudice to measures taken in pursuance of their general integration policy, the

(Contd. on Page 144)

Chronology of the Month

(16 January -14 February, 1998)

General Election: Manifestos: *BJP, Congress, UF, LF and JD issue Manifestos reiterating well-known position. Congress Manifesto pays special attention to problems of religious minorities. BJP Manifesto commits itself to construction of Ram Janambhoomi Mandir on Babari Masjid site; omits mention of Mathura and Varanasi Masjids.

Congress: **Sonia** Gandhi's election campaign restores sagging morale to Congress cadre; puts President Kesri out of business. Sonia Gandhi emerges as prime contender for leadership of Congress parliamentary party or at least as most decisive factor in choice, regrets Demolition, Operation Blue Star and Anti-Sikh massacre. Attacks BJP as communal and divisive, a threat to secular order and national unity. Also highlights long experience and dynasty's role.

UF-LF: *Secular parties fail to form a nationwide alliance, giving rise to triangular contests everywhere - BJP, Congress and UF-LF. But UF parties having failed to reach seat adjustment, UP and Bihar most crucial States face four or even five-sided contests. Mulayam Singh Yadav refuses to terms with Congress or BSP or accommodate even JD or Left. In Bihar adjustment between Congress and Laloo Prasad Yadav's RJD fails to materialise. Negotiation between Congress and Vaghela's RJP in Gujrat and between Congress and BSP in MP also fail. In Maharashtra Congress, RPI and SP and in Punjab Congress and BSP form alliances. Congress splits in Bihar. Mishra's Jan Congress joins hands with SP.

*PM Gujral's candidature from Jalandhar with SAD's (and indirectly BJP) support faces much criticism.

*UF-LF harps on clean record.

BSP: *Kanshi Ram does not rule out deal with BJP after election (18 Jan) but raises battle cry against saffron wave (20 Jan).

BJP: *BJP weaves national network and enters into alliance with Samata Party (Bihar), Trinamul Congress (W. Bengal), AIADMK (TN), SAD (Punjab), HVP (Haryana), TDP(NTR) (AP) and Hegde's LS (Karnataka). *BJP promises 'common programme', if alliance is voted for power (30 Jan).

*BJP gives tickets to some defectors from Congress and other parties but not to all; 6 Muslims got BJP tickets but not Aslam Sher Khan or Ayub Khan or Abrar Ahmad. Fails to make dent in Muslim ranks, despite Advani's soft tones and Vajpayee's liberal mask. Vajpayee's article on web-site raises furore and exposes real face of Hindu fascism.

*Vajpayee and Advani emerge as major campaigners on

slogans of stability, ability and good governance.

Post-Election Coalition: *With consensus on re-emergence of hung parliament, anti-BJP parties test waters for viable coalition while reiterating old positions. UF-LF and Congress leadership establish informal contacts on possibility of coalition.

*CPM does not rule out joining coalition.

*Congress likely to emerge as the largest party inclined to head coalition and not extend support from outside.

*V.P. Singh urges Congress and UF not to take hostile public postures and keep doors open for talks.

*Shahabuddin foresees Congress-led coalition (13 Feb).

Terrorism: *Special Court's judgement in Rajiv Gandhi assassination case does not cut any shadow on DMK thus vindicates UF Government's refusal to drop DMK Ministers as demanded by Congress.

*Serial bomb blasts in Coimbatore on eve of Advani's visit kill at least 32 and injure over 50 persons; Muslim terrorist outfits Al-Umma and Jihad Committee held responsible and banned (14 Jan). Both PM and CM see ISI's hand. *Communal violence and police repression follow (15 Jan).

Human Rights: *US State Deptt's Human Rights Report for 1997 indicts India for violation, in comparatively soft terms (30 Jan). 22 US Congress ask for economic sanction if Amnesty and other Human Rights groups not allowed to visit India (13 Feb).

Muslim Politics: *JIH pleads for democratic alliance to field common candidate in every constituency and, failing that, for voters to choose strong anti-fascist and trustworthy candidate with good character.

*AIMC calls upon voters unitedly to defeat BJP and its allies and refrain from dividing their votes.

*Majlis-e-Ulema-Hind expresses appreciation for Congress apology, calls for secular unity, embracing Congress, in order to defeat fascist and communal forces.

*Indian National League supports SP in UP, RJD - Congress in Bihar, TDP in AP and DMK-TMC in Tamilnadu and generally asks secular voters to defeat BJP.

*AMU Students Union supports Congress.

*Bombay Muslims decide to vote for candidates capable of defeating BJP-Shiv Sena candidates.

*Bukharis criticise all political parties and asks Muslims to vote for 'good and honest candidates' of secular character. Appeal generally interpreted as supporting voting for good candidates of BJP as well.

*Committee for Defence of Secularism appeals for massive support to the strongest candidate of a secular

party to defeat BJP and its allies, irrespective of religion, caste or party label (See Appeal).

*Forum for Communal Harmony appeals for support to secular candidates.

Scams: *Assam Governor Sinha rejects CBI's plea for sanction to prosecute C.M. Praful Mahanta in LOC Case (5 Feb).

*President Narayanan refuses CBI's request to prosecute former ministers Satish Sharma, Shiela Kaul and P.K. Thungan in petrol and gas dealership and housing and shop allotment cases (10 Feb).

***Bofors:** Sonia Gandhi demands publication of Bofors papers to identify beneficiaries and to absolve late Rajiv Gandhi. BJP supports demand; Government refuses on account of prior commitment to Swiss authorities, sous not to scuttle further probe (17 Jan).

KASHMIR SITUATION

Insurgency: *Massacre of 23 Kashmiri Pandits by foreign mercenaries in Vandhama near Srinagar universally condemned by political leaders (26 Jan). PM Gujral and CM Abdullah blame Pakistan (28 Jan). Hurriyat calls for protest bandh (1 Feb). Kashmiri organisations in USA appeal to UN to save Pandits (4 Feb). State Government plans to shift Kashmiri Hindus to safety (5 Feb).

*Massacre of Muslim villagers by Security forces in Doda Distt, on Id-ul-fitr; 11 killed, 40 injured during cordon and search (30 Jan); Jammu Muslims observe bandh (31 Jan). Hurriyat organises protest bandh in Valley (2 Feb). Shahabuddin asks PM to stop operations on festivals (3 Feb).

Political Developments: *JKLF President Amanullah Khan calls on India and Pakistan to quit Kashmir and reiterates independence as only solution (28 Jan). Admits that liberation movement in Valley has faded with installation of elected Government (2 Feb).

*Shabbir Shah supports Hurriyat's boycott of Lok Sabha election (18 Jan).

*Congress leader Mufti Md. Sayeed calls for unconditional talks with all groups (1 Feb).

*Valley commemorates 14th death anniversary of Maqbool Batt with total bandh (13 Feb).

*Farooq Abdullah warns of revolt if Article 370 be scrapped (11 Feb).

*Hurriyat leaders seek permission to participate in international conference abroad (12 Feb).

*Farooq names son Omar as NC candidate from Srinagar.

Pakistan's Stand: *PM Sharif calls Kashmir core issue which should be sincerely addressed by India (17 Jan).

*Pakistan demands Indian apologies for atrocities by security forces (31 Jan).

*Sharif reiterates readiness to engage in talks on Kashmir

with any government after general election.

*Sharif accuses India of building war-machine for hegemony over South Asia (14 Feb).

Foreign Reaction - USA: *US Congressman Pablone wants 'internally displaced people' status for Kashmiri Pandits (29 Jan).

BABARI MASJID QUESTION

General Election 1998: *Sonia Gandhi claims Rajiv Gandhi, had he been alive, would have intervened to save Babari Masjid. JD refutes claim on ground of Rajiv Gandhi's role in unlocking in 1986 and Shila Nyas in 1989. Mulayam Singh also cautions Sonia Gandhi to steer clear of Ayodhya issue (18 Jan).

*Congress manifesto offers unconditional apology for demolition, holds PM Rao responsible (24 Jan). Denies him party ticket but for some other reason (29 Jan). UF ridicules Congress (25 Jan). Arjun Singh feels apology come too late to influence voters (30 Jan). Shahabuddin calls repeated apology too little, too late.

Thackeray Proposal: *Shiv Sena leader Bal Thackeray proposes construction of monument on disputed site and of Mandir and Masjid on separate plots (9 Jan). VHP criticises proposal and BJP dissociates itself (10 Jan). Samata Party President Fernandes hopeful of BJP adopting pragmatic stand (11 Jan). BMMCC considers proposal as starting point for negotiation by all concerned (14 Jan) Singhal calls Thackeray unreliable (18 Jan).

*Thackeray suggests construction of memorial to 1857 hero Mangal Pandey on Babari Masjid site (25 Jan). Shahabuddin rejects suggestion.

*Tahir Mahmood welcomes proposal.

BJP Stand: *BJP presses for construction of proposed Mandir on Babari Masjid site (17 Jan). Katiyar speaks of settlement on lines of Somnath (19 Jan). Advani rules out apology for demolition (17 Jan). Vajpayee proposes legislation if negotiations fails (28 Jan) but prefers consensus.

*AIADMK asks BJP to put Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi in backburner or in deep freeze for at least 20 years.

*Another BJP ally Trinamul Congress offers apologies (7 Feb). *Samata calls demolition a national tragedy.

Criminal Cases: *UP Government withdraws criminal cases pending since 1990 against Karsevaks; clarifies that cases relating to demolition will be considered later (4 Feb). EC refuses to intervene.

*BJP/VHP leaders appeal to H.C. against Special Courts order for attending hearing (23 Jan).

OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN TO THE MUSLIMS

Personal Law: *BJP reiterates commitment to introduction of uniform civil code in its manifesto; proposes a Commission to draft composite code with

CHRONOLOGY

elements from all personal laws for national debate.

***Advani allays Muslim fear of imposition of Hindu laws on them (4 Feb).** G.S. Naidu emphasises voluntary and optional character of UCC so that people may follow their own personal law (5 Feb).

Electoral Registration: *Supreme Court admits JUH's petition but reforms to stay Election Commission's order to deny voting right to 3.75 lakh voters, mostly Bengali-speaking Muslims, on ground of disputed citizenship (16 Feb).

Haj: *Ministry of Civil Aviation proposes per capita subsidy of Rs.18,000, totalling to Rs. 122 crores on airlift for Haj 1998 (12 Feb). Shahabuddin objects to hike of Haj charter fare to normal airfare.

Sectarianism: *Barelvi-Deobandi clash in Bombay; 2 killed (19 Jan).

*Shias and Sunnis peacefully take out Azadari and Madhe-Sahaba processions in Lucknow after 2 decades; Kalyan Singh and BJP claim credit (21 Feb).

Reservation: *J&K directs strict implementation of reservation for SC (8%) and ST (10%) in public employment (21 Jan).

*Madras High Court rules against mandatory reservation in promotion.

*National Commission for SC/ST submits special report to President on erosion of reservation for SC/ST, particularly in promotion (5 Feb).

Education: *UP Deeni Talimi Council protests against introduction by State Government of Sanskrit as compulsory, of worship of Bharat Mata and of Vande Mataram in roll-call in primary schools (8 Feb).

*Karnataka decides to transfer 5 residential schools for Muslims from C.M. Ibrahim's Trust to State Minorities Commission (12 Feb).

*SC stops ad-hoc appointment of lecturers by universities (5 Feb).

*Dalai Lama visits AMU; asks Muslims to act as bridge of understanding between Islam and rest of humanity (3 Feb).

Wakfs: *Delhi wakf Board reclaims graveyard in east Delhi. Construction of boundary wall leads to clash of Hindu mob with police (3 Feb).

*Delhi High Court decides to proceed with DWB case against Imam and Naib Imam of Jama Masjid for unlawful construction and defalcation of income (7 Feb).

Cow-Slaughter: *VHP activist Rithambara supports candidates pledged to total ban on slaughter of cow and progeny (16 Feb). Singhal demands central legislation.

Commemoration: *21st death anniversary of late President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed official observed in New Delhi (11 Feb).

Obituary: *Eminent Islamic scholar Syed Salman Nadvi

passes away in Durban (8 Feb).

Muslim World: Pakistan: *P.M. Nawaz Sharif calls mistake refusal to hand over power to Mujibur Rahman in 1970; agrees to resolve issue of Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh since 1971 (17 Jan).

Turkey: *Constitutional Court dissolves Erbakan's Islam-based Welfare Party for anti-secular activities (17 Jan).

Algeria: *E.U. Mission fails to secure Algerian consent to European intervention to stop massacres (27 Jan).

Iraq: *US prepares to attack Iraq; P.M. Gujral cautions US and other Permanent Members against military intervention in Iraq (21 Jan).

(Contd. from Page 141)

Contracting Parties shall refrain from policies or practices aimed at the assimilation of persons belonging to national minorities against their will and shall protect these persons from any action aiming at such assimilation. They shall further refrain from measures which by altering the proportions of the population in areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities are aimed at restricting the rights and freedoms flowing from the international standards and norms listed in paragraph 1 of this article.

(10) The Contracting Parties shall assist each other in observing the implementation of the present article. For this purpose they will also examine, in the framework of the regular consultations referred to in Article 5 of this Treaty, those questions of their bilateral cooperation related to national minorities concerning the implementation of this Treaty and shall establish an intergovernmental expert commission. They will cooperate in the appropriate operation of the mechanisms of the Organisation on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe verifying compliance with obligations contained in the documents of these organisations and to which the Parties have entered into.

(11) The Contracting Parties shall cooperate in further developing the international legal framework for the protection of national minorities. They agree that they will apply as part of this Treaty the provisions ... contained in those international documents to which they will subscribe in the future.

(12) Neither of the obligations ... shall be interpreted as implying any right to engage in any activity of perform any act contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, other obligations of international law or the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, including the principle of the territorial integrity of states.



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