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حیدرآباد



روزنامہ

روزنامہ ”عوام“ ملت کی تعلیمی تحریک کو پروان چڑھانے کے لئے اپنی اشاعت کے ذریعے اپنی ایک سالہ خدمات کا ایک مختصر مدتی لیکن شاندار ریکارڈ رکھتا ہے۔
اس عرصے میں ”عوام“ نے جس موثر انداز میں ملی مسائل تعلیم کے عصری رجحانات اور دیگر سیاسی، معاشی، تہذیبی، مذہبی، سماجی اور ثقافتی امور کو اپنے قارئین کرام کی خدمات میں پیش کیا ہے، وہ اظہار من القمیس ہے۔
اقلیتوں کی فلاح و بہبود کے ذریعے ملک و ملت کی بھلائی اور عوامی خدمت کے مقصد سے شائع ہونے والے روزنامہ ”عوام“ کی بقاء و ترقی کا اہم تقاضہ ہے۔ اس کے لئے ضروری ہے کہ

آپ

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Caste Census: A Step towards Social Justice

The announcement of just the possibility of a caste census in 2001, after a lapse of 70 years, the last caste census having been held in 1931, has, as it were, set a cat among the pigeons. There is political protest and academic uproar; the high caste intelligentsia is up in arms.

It is being proclaimed that the Indian state has turned its back on the long held ideal of a casteless society; that caste consciousness will erode and dilute national consciousness, decelerate Hindu consolidation and engender social fragmentation, that the process of Sanskritisation will be inverted into the process of De-Sanskritisation. As it is, to take advantage of reservation in public employment for SC and ST and other governmental measures to promote their education and welfare, members of high castes offer enter into the reserved queue on the basis of false claims of caste affiliation based on false low caste certificates, granted by high caste officers. It has been prophesied by no less a person than Prof. Srinivas, the doyen of Indian sociologists that violence will break out in the streets and youth will set themselves ablaze to stop this atrocious move.

On the face of it, there is nothing reprehensible about a caste count because the caste, as a social institution, is not only recognised by the Constitution; but is a living, indeed flourishing, institution, because the Constitutional reservation for the SC and the ST and the innumerable Central and State Government schemes palpably for their benefit are based on caste-identity and because the latest reservation for the OBCs in public employment - Mandalisation - is also caste-based.

What is more important, the political system, from selection of candidates by parties to formation of Council of Ministers is caste-based. Behind the scene, even the selection of judges for the High Courts is caste-based. The recent introduction of the Panchayati Raj institution, the Gram Panchayat, the Prakhanda Samitis and the Zila Parishads allows proportionate representation of the OBCs. How the 10th Lok Sabha unsuccessfully took up the official bill for reservation for women in the legislatures speaks for itself. There is no doubt that all over the country the representation of the OBCs, all them intermediate castes or Shudras has expanded as the representation of the high castes, the Savarnas has gone down. It is a moot question whether it has led to equality of opportunity and justice for all or whether it has merely substituted the Brahminical

dominance by Shudra dominance and that too by a well-defined section of the Shudras - the land-owning and the cultivating class. In any case the Age of the Shudras has dawned.

Yet, real power continues to be exercised by the high castes. Under the Sangh Parivar dispensation, as earlier under the Congress dispensation, the Brahmins overwhelmingly occupied the seats of real power. They controlled the commanding heights in the bureaucracy, the armed forces, the para-military forces, the police machinery, the academic world, the mass media and the judiciary. Democracy based on one-man, one-vote, made the OBCs aware of their latent power, generated a hunger, nay, a lust for politics; the legislature was the first to fall to the waves of democracy.

Yet it will take generations before the composition of the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the coercive machinery of the state, the mass media and the academe change. There is in-built resistance - thanks to the succession principle, to the system of 'sifarish' and 'pairvi' and occasional hark-back to the merit principle.

But the instruments of affirmation, active or positive, discrimination have never been effective for lack of accurate and authoritative information which is basic to the implementation of the reservation policy as an instrument of social change and to periodical monitoring of such changes. It is one thing to give away some thing to a persistent beggar; it is another to share power on the basis of social justice.

Given the structure and architecture of the Indian society, the term 'Backward Classes' (which includes the social groups constitutionally labelled as the SC and the ST) largely means the Backward Castes - whether we measure the collective backwardness of all the castes which form the constitutional groups of the SC's, ST's or OBC's together or the individual backwardness of each component caste separately.

Lack of reliable data about the population or the educational or economic backwardness of the caste groups leads to many anomalies and contradictions, fallacies and flaws in the scheme of reservation. For one thing, every caste group, as it wakes up to the reality of deprivation, tends to magnify its population or at least its proportion therein. Secondly, it tends to exaggerate its backwardness; both to get not only sympathetic consideration of its case for protective discrimination but also for as large a piece of the cake as possible.

Lack of data has also led an august body like the

Supreme Court to put a 50% limit on the totality of reservation. This is an arbitrary and even absurd limit as the situation may vary from level to level and state to state. That is why some states like Karnataka and Tamilnadu have defiantly pegged their total close to or even exceeding 80. What has been missing in any calculation or computation is a scientific concept of index of backwardness. That there are gradations of backwardness, even if backwardness is defined as below the national or state average in a set of universally accepted and measurable parameters. Earlier, we had a two-fold gradation and categorisation - Backward and Most Backward (the OBC and the MBC, apart from the SC and the ST) in Bihar. Now in Karnataka we have 5 or 6 grades. The quota for a Backward Class (caste, race, tribe, religion) should be indexed to its population and to its level or index of backwardness. The sum total of the individual quotas (for a state or for the country) should be the upper limit for the state or the country, as the case may be. The individual quotas and, therefore, the upper limit should be monitored and they should hopefully fall every 10 years - thus enlarging the open or free space (call it 'merit zone', if you like).

While the quota for any group should be based on its population, the individual beneficiary must belong to a well-defined section - families which are in fact deprived. There is again no doubt that every Backward Class has an elite - educated, land-owning, propertied, rich, well-positioned. Their children enjoy all the advantages. Why should they be permitted to lap up the quota of the community/caste/group/tribe to which they nominally belong? Inversely, those are deprived families within the so-called forward castes. Logic demands that even the forward castes - individually or collectively should enjoy a quota, proportionate to their population and index of backwardness, which should be available for the deprived families among them. Mandalisation supports the logic of this demand.

One needs, therefore, the population, educational and economic data about each segment of society - identified by caste, tribe, race or religion - to work out a rational, universal system of reservation. What mechanism do we have for such data collection except the decennial census?

A Caste Census has yet another advantage. Since it will cover the entire population, it shall serve scientifically to demonstrate which social groups - self-conscious and identifiable, even though they belong to the 'devijas' or the Malechhas are backward and which belonging to the Shudras, the Achhuts and the Adivasis are not. Thus the constitutional remedies can be applied

where they hurt.

The question has been asked as to how the thousands of castes, sub-castes, sub-sub-castes are to be counted. The reply is very simple. The census should not go beyond the caste and the sub-caste and the census should also, by reference to the original vocation/profession of the caste/sub-caste establish a system of equivalence, so that, on one hand, the number of categories, can be reduced and, on the other,

The population and the index of backwardness of a caste can be properly determined in the national context. Already every caste-group is seeking a pan-Indian identity whether it is the Vaishyas or the Kurmis or the Yadavs. The Brahmins and the Rajputs were always Pan-Indian in their outlook and intercourse. This is how the caste, instead of being divisive, as is commonly alleged, becomes an integrative force.

The lower Shudras (the MBCs) form, along with the backward SCs and STs, the most deprived social group in the country. They have not woken up; they have no leadership; they continue to be exploited by the feudal classes which include the new land-owning castes the Yadavas and the Kurmis and the Koeris. The census will help to rouse them from centuries of stupor; they shall realise their strength and the opportunity that democracy opens for them; the awakening will throw up their leaders. They shall demand liberation from the shackles of Kurmivad and Yadavvad as the Kurmis and Yadavs liberated themselves from Brahminvad. So the census will accelerate the march to social justice.

The Muslim community - as a minority group unitedly or as a conglomerate of social sub-groups at different levels of backwardness, will also demand their due share. Even sub-groups, if they are big enough, may. But no more a special share, but a proportionate share. The Indian state will be stronger and the Indian society healthier if Muslim Indians as a group or as a collection of sub-groups are a contented lot. They have been enumerated in every census but now, one hopes, the cross-tabulated educational and economic data will be published which will indicate the level of backwardness at a given point in time and provide logical and rational support for their developmental aspirations. These aspirations have not received mental attention because the national block created by the Partition still exists and the Muslim Indians - even in their miserable state - are seen as a historic and political adversary!

It is interesting to note that the column 'caste' did exist in the census form but it was not tabulated or published. The decision of the Government to enumerate caste is a progressive step and fulfill a longstanding

demand of various social groups. Specially among the Shudras and the religious minorities. It is always open to anyone, any family who has evolved beyond the caste system to declare that they have no caste. If the number of such persons is sizeable, the Census may have an additional column. It may be added that Caste Census categorised cannot be based on assets or income or education but purely on his social identity. These data on each group will enable their subsequent classification as Backward Classes.

The essential question is whether enumeration of caste will mean its perpetuation or its annihilation?

Caste cannot be annihilated by recitation of the mantara of nationalism, national unity or even Hindu identity. It cannot be suppressed by administrative means; it cannot be abolished by being swept out of sight, under the carpets, it only goes underground. Caste cannot be ignored in political and electoral equations as it is an existential reality and determines the primary political alignment of most of the voters. It cannot be worked out of the system by education alone because outside the textbooks, in the market place, and what is more important, in the social milieu and in the employment avenues, caste continues to determine choice and selection. Caste cannot be banished by inter-caste marriages because such marriages are too few to make any difference. It cannot be killed even if caste surnames are banned - as in a largely immobile society, one is stuck with the caste he is born in.

Caste can be annihilated only by giving equal opportunity, equitable share, equitable say in the management of the society to all caste groups - by nursing the weak and encouraging them up the ladder, till they rub shoulders with the high castes; till they are purged of all sense of inferiority, till they become - in the second, if not the first, generation - visible in every sphere of life. When they are educationally and economically equal and enjoy social dignity under the integrative impact of Freedom and Development - of One Nationhood - caste will stand annihilated. Srinivas bemoans de-Sanskritisation. But social dynamics will mean that those in the upper strata will come down, those in the lower strata will go up and some day, some where, the two shall meet as equal citizens of Free India, all sons of a common motherland.



New Delhi,
1 June, 1998

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

**WITH BEST
COMPLIMENTS**

FROM

**KALEEM
KAWAJA**

**THE ASSOCIATION
OF INDIAN
MUSLIMS OF
AMERICA**

**THE ORGANIZATION
FOR UNIVERSAL
COMMUNAL
HARMONY**

**WASHINGTON DC
USA**

POPULATION

1991 Census: Districts of Muslim Population Above 2 lakh

S.No.	District	Muslim Population			
Uttar Pradesh					
1.	Moradabad	1,759,562	55.	Hoogli	632,175
2.	Bijnor	990,405	56.	Kochbihar	506,728
3.	Muzaffarnagar	981,296	57.	Jaipauri	281,054
4.	Meerut	947,991			A 15,697,556
5.	Bareilly	926,545			B 97.65
6.	Gonda	906,131			C 23.06
7.	Deoria	895,910	Bihar		
8.	Saharanpur	834,111	58.	Katihar	726,566
9.	Bahraich	827,043	59.	Araria	651,556
10.	Rampur	720,258	60.	Purnea	648,820
11.	Allahabad	636,680	61.	Kishanganj	648,624
12.	Varanasi	624,225	62.	Purba Champaran	560,393
13.	Ghaziabad	572,254	63.	Darbhanga	555,429
14.	Bulandshahr	563,850	64.	Pashchmi Champaran	480,343
15.	Lucknow	543,045	65.	Madhubani	473,340
16.	Barabanki	524,895	66.	Sitamarhi	471,508
17.	Budaun	505,756	67.	Bhagalpur	444,298
18.	Sitapur	496,199	68.	Muzaffarpur	437,081
19.	Siddharthanagar	491,247	69.	Hazaribagh	374,493
20.	Aligarh	482,073	70.	Siwan	373,562
21.	Basti	452,072	71.	Sahibganj	366,961
22.	Kheri	437,099	72.	Giridih	358,679
23.	Kanpur	430,492	73.	Saharsa	358,560
24.	Azamgarh	410,333	74.	Dhanbad	328,590
25.	Faizabad	398,929	75.	Gaya	305,284
26.	Shahjahanpur	349,169	76.	Gopalganj	282,287
27.	Farrukhabad	345,786	77.	Palamau	281,578
28.	Hardoi	345,654	78.	Samatipur	273,751
29.	Hardwar	338,146	79.	Patna	271,072
30.	Sultanpur	331,220	80.	Rohtas	270,866
31.	Jaunpur	313,023	81.	Saran	252,141
32.	Agra	301,726	82.	Munger	249,320
33.	Pilibhit	296,717	83.	Ranchi	229,181
34.	Pratapgarh	292,913	84.	Begusarai	223,359
35.	Maharajganj	266,459	85.	Vaishali	202,602
36.	Rai Bareli	263,531			A 11,100,244
37.	Mau	258,933			B 86.80
38.	Etah	254,222			C 12.85
39.	Gorakhpur	248,103	MAHARASHTRA		
40.	Ghazipur	243,365	86.	Greater Bombay	1,670,170
41.	Fatehpur	238,789	87.	Thane	407,775
42.	Nainital	234,520	88.	Nasik	392,028
43.	Unnao	234,502	89.	Jalgaon	350,811
Commulative Total (A)		22,515,179	90.	Pune	320,504
%age of State Muslim Population (B)		93.39	91.	Akola	317,650
%age of Total State Population (C)		16.18	92.	Sholapur	309,740
West Bengal					
44.	Murshidabad	2,910,220	93.	Nanded	284,197
45.	North 24 Parganas	1,759,839	94.	Amravati	271,075
46.	South 24 Parganas	1,711,297	95.	Parbhani	267,883
47.	Maldah	1,252,292	96.	Nagpur	229,039
48.	Bardhaman	1,182,755	97.	Buldana	220,338
49.	W. Dinajpur	1,149,560	98.	Latur	219,876
50.	Nadia	959,998	99.	Ahmednagar	214,130
51.	Medinipur	898,478			A 5,475,216
52.	Birbhum	844,987			B 71.77
53.	Havdigh	828,740			C 6.94
KERALA					
100.	Malapurram	2,085,961			
101.	Kozhikode	949,194			

103.	Kannur	591,553
104.	Thrissur	437,064
105.	Kollam	424,866
106.	Ernakulam	394,976
107.	Thiruvananthapuram	377,839
108.	Kasargod	345,458

A 6,211,263
B 91.50
C 21.35

ASSAM

109.	Dubri	938,789
110.	Nagaon	893,332
111.	Barpeta	776,974
112.	Kamrup	467,544
113.	Cachar	419,150
114.	Darrang	415,323
115.	Karimganj	406,706
116.	Goalpara	335,275
117.	Mariagaon	289,835
118.	Bongaigaon	264,393
119.	Hailakundi	246,016
120.	Nalbari	202,653

A 5,655,990
B 88.75
C 25.23

ANDHRA PRADESH

121.	Hyderabad	1,238,074
122.	Kurnool	492,960
123.	Guntur	436,863
124.	Anantpur	356,359
125.	Cuddapah	337,524
126.	Rangareddy	299,182
127.	Nizamabad	287,503
128.	Chittoor	287,006
129.	Mehboobnagar	266,389
130.	Medak	261,395
131.	Nellore	216,177

A 4,479,432
B 75.62
C 6.74

KARNATAKA

132.	Bangalore	634,991
133.	Dharwad	576,020
134.	Gulbarga	444,644
135.	D. Kannad	399,273
136.	Bijapur	391,978
137.	Belgaum	363,118
138.	Raichur	293,163
139.	Kolar	252,750
140.	Bidar	241,978
141.	Mysore	231,199
142.	Bellary	228,231
143.	Chitradurg	212,824
144.	Shimoga	210,533

A 4,480,702
B 85.61
C 9.96

JAMMU & KASHMIR

145.	Baramula	646,707
146.	Srinagar	642,106
147.	Anantnag	627,721
148.	Pulwama	387,414

149.	Badgaum	352,355
150.	Kupwara	320,629
151.	Doda	243,666
		A 3,220,598
		B 63.66
		C 41.38

ORISSA

152.	Cuttack	228,352
		A 228,352
		B 39.52
		C 0.72

GUJARAT

153.	Ahmedabad	516,142
154.	Kheda	355,181
155.	Surat	311,870
156.	Vadodara	257,905
157.	Bharuch	256,738
158.	Kachh	247,896
159.	Rajkot	232,423
160.	Jamnagar	203,245
		A 2,381,400
		B 66.02
		C 5.76

MADHYA PRADESH

161.	Bhopal	323,860
162.	Indore	219,615
		A 543,475
		B 16.56
		C 0.82

RAJASTHAN

163.	Jaipur	381,214
164.	Nagaur	259,632
165.	Alwar	255,436
166.	Jodhpur	224,731
167.	Sikar	210,025
		A 1,331,038
		B 37.76
		C 3.02

TAMIL NADU

168.	Thanjavur	341,740
169.	Madras	333,672
170.	N. Arcot	284,610
171.	Tirunelveli	225,630
172.	Tiruchirapalli	200,283
		A 1,385,935
		B 45.40
		C 2.48

DELHI

173.	Delhi	890,000
		A 890,000
		B 100.00
		C 9.45

HARYANA

174.	Gurgaon	394,304
		A 394,304
		B 51.63
		C 2.39

Commulative National Muslim Population		
Covered		85,990,684
% of National Muslim Population		80.62
% of National Population		10.16

Kuldip Nayar on Vajpayee Government

To most Indians, Atal Behari Vajpayee has been the right man in the wrong party. His personal views are more liberal than conservative. Yet he has been a life-long member of a conservative party, which is even fundamentalist in approach. Now that he is India's Prime Minister, the question is: will he stay liberal or let the conservative streak guide him? To put it bluntly, whether he is a mask, as RSS ideologue Govindachari described him once, or whether he has been awaiting the opportunity to prove his liberal credentials.

His few days of prime ministership sends both messages. The allocation of Home to L.K. Advani and Human Resource, including Education and Culture ... to Murli Manohar Joshi indicates that he has gone by the RSS advice. Both are hardliners and both will set about their task like an evangelist. On the other hand, the appointment of Jaswant Singh as the Planning Commission's Vice-Chairman shows that Vajpayee has opted for a broad-minded person despite pressure. Jaswant Singh is the RSS bete noire... Is this Vajpayee's way to balance power or to send a polite message to the RSS to leave him alone?

When Advani was driving the rath towards Ayodhya, Vajpayee came to London. I was then India's High Commissioner. I asked him how he had come to London at a time when his party was in the midst of rath yatra. His reply was that all those who were Ram bhakt had gone to Ayodhya and those who were Desh bhakt had come to London. Still, one day after the demolition of the Babari Masjid, he told me in reply to my repeated pleas to him to leave the BJP: "Let the temple come up."

A similar evidence of dichotomy was visible when Vajpayee attended the party's meeting to prepare the election manifesto and when he sat with the allies to finalise the National Agenda. At the first place, he went along with the arguments on constructing a Ram temple, deleting special status for Jammu and Kashmir and adopting a common civil code. At the second, he not only kept out the three contentious issues but also promised to take such measures for the country's welfare as gladdened the heart of ... all ... with secular credentials.

As Foreign Minister in the Janata Government (1977-79), Vajpayee behaved generously during his visit to Pakistan... What left Islamabad speechless was (his) reported remark that they should forget what he said in the past because he was then the Jana Sangh member and was now part of Janata Party... Did the real Vajpayee emerge? Or did he act to suit the ambience?

Riding two horses at the same time can be an acrobatic feat. But it cannot be the way of governance. The gift of gab that Vajpayee possesses has helped him to span the conflicting situations. He has even evaded

through ticklish situations. Some time he has simply shrugged his shoulders. But as Prime Minister he will have to take a categorical stand on certain issues. The buck stops at his table. The speeches made from the BJP pulpit, probably delivered to placate the fanatics, cannot fit into the demands of a pluralistic society... Can he retain (his image) without making the party echo his thoughts, which are often at variance?

What everyone wants to know is how the BJP-led government will be different from the Advani-led BJP... Sunder Singh Bhandari ... has said in a TV interview that the BJP will continue to demand the construction of temple, deletion of Article 370 ... and adoption of uniform civil code. But the government, he has argued, will follow the National Agenda, which the coalition members have adopted. This means there will be two points of decision-making: the party and government. Where will the authority of one end and that of the other begin?... How does the party rectify 'the mistakes' of government? Does it mean that the party is at liberty to start an agitation any time? ...

Still another challenge before Vajpayee is how he distances himself from the RSS for all to see. he has stood in khaki shorts at the rallies over which RSS chief has presided. he has also written an article, My soul is the RSS, which extols the organisation's philosophy. Yet ... the National Agenda gives the allies and others an impression that he does not want to mix religion with politics nor the state with Hindutva. If this is so, why does not Vajpayee assert himself and say so? The RSS leaves none in doubt that the BJP is guided by it.

Vajpayee's equivocal stand on this point only strengthens the general impression that he is the RSS product. And there is no doubt (that) the RSS use his liberal image for gaining strength. Why does he avoid the issue? Or is it an identity of views? The BJP's own pronouncements that it has been compelled to postpone its agenda by its allies indicates only a change of tactics, not policies. What the party is trying to convey is that it will bring to the fore the thesis of Hindutva for implementation once it attains a clear majority in Parliament on its own. The RSS 3-day conclave at Bangalore last week made it clear that they were looking a "a 25-year perspective", nothing immediate. It is a waiting game. More ominous is, however, the statement by Madan Das, joint general secretary of the RSS, that there was no question of dropping ... the claims to Kashi and Mathura. True, this is not on the agenda of the BJP. But, unfortunately, the party always adds the words, "for the time being". It is now for the allies to consider whether they will continue to allow the BJP to fatten itself at their expense. Some of them may be harboring

Seema Mustafa on the 'Mask'

... The BJP came to power on the Hindutva platform... On no other ticket but discord, dissension, communal strife. The demolition of the mosque hurt our middle class sensibilities. And that is why the change in image. Sniping away at the minorities every day is all right so long as it is not visible. A fascist agenda is fine so long as it is not translated into action where the middle class is under pressure to take a position. Innocents can be arrested and victimised for being Bangladeshi immigrants in the eyes of the BJP but this is acceptable as long as it remains confined to the borders... Hundreds can be arrested under TADA, under false cases but this is fine so long as it is confined to the ghettos of Mumbai. Villages can be terrorised with all able-bodied men locked away under NSA, but who cares so long as this happens in the remote village of UP. Women can be gang-raped in Surat but this is fun for the middle class which entertains itself with video films of the horrific scenes. As for the statements and anti-minority assertions, well that is all part of the game. After all statements do not hurt. They only create an environment that hurts, but then that is beyond the middle class comprehension.

But the demolition of the Masjid was offensive. The middle class saw it on television. The details were carried in the newspapers and magazines. The world was horrified at primitive India. And the Indians shopping for their daily needs in the markets of Europe could not really justify this to the world. So the BJP came under pressure from its real constituency. And decided that it was time to change tack.

Take away Advani and bring out Vajpayee. His is the acceptable face, Advani is too crude for the sophisticated. Vajpayee more than passes muster. Besides his language is such that it further lulls the middle class into a sense of complacency: the BJP has changed, is their assessment. This is exactly what the RSS and the BJP hardliners want to hear. The BJP in power cannot afford to bring in Hindutva: music to the RSS ears. The BJP in government will be very different: the RSS is swaying in ecstasy. And to feed this gullible lot, the national agenda devotes a long paragraph to "genuine secularism". So everyone is happy: the BJP, the RSS and the middle class. The RSS most of all because it has finally achieved harmony, it has won over the middle class which is the custodian of morality in this country and is now working to a careful plan being set deliberately and quietly into motion.

For those who are dancing along there along there is one question: why should the RSS and BJP change the line that has brought them into power? Theirs is a fascist

Kuldip Nayar on BJP's Immaturity

... After Independence, eminent persons were made governors. Mrs. Gandhi's nominees were either those who had served her well or those who she thought would be useful against state governments. For her, eminence was not an issue. But after her time, the office came to be depoliticised.

The Vajpayee government has violated this practise as well. It has brought in its own men, even from the RSS, to occupy a position which is crucial at the time of ministry-making... A person, defeated at the Lok Sabha polls, has been posted to UP...

Apart from raj Bhavans, it is filling government offices with employees with BJP leanings. It is a sort of infiltration. Even the sanctity of tenure of a post is being violated, keeping in view the party's interest. In fact, the tenure has no meaning if the appointees are expected to quit with a change of government. India looks set to have a long string of coalition governments. The tenure system becomes a necessity for the sake of continuity in the administration.

Prime Minister Vajpayee has introduced yet another practice: administering the oath to persons whom he gives Cabinet status... Giving Cabinet status to defeated candidates is blatantly wrong. Anointing them conveyed a message: we will do whatever we like, without caring for legal or moral sanction.

(Source: The Indian Express, 28 April, 1998)

Spirit of Mandate Editorial, The Pioneer

For the fourth consecutive time, the electorate has returned a fractured mandate... The distinctive feature of the verdict... However, is that while he letter is still slightly illegible, the spirit appears quite transparent. First, it marks an emphatic rejection of the United Front which has governed India since mid-1996. Second, it does not suggest any endorsement of the Congress which has managed to improve upon its 1996 score by less than 10 seats... The third facet of the mandate clearly suggests that the only possible claimant to its spirit is the BJP-led alliance. Arguably, there is an equivocal element in this. But considering the BJP's national spread (albeit in the company of its pre-poll allies), and the widespread personal popularity of Atal Behari Vajpayee, it would be dishonest to speciously contend that the 1998 mandate is a verdict against this formation.

ideology with a defined vision of India. it became unpalatable to some after December, 1992. The RSS effected the necessary cosmetic changes to good advantage. It is now in government. The "mask" is in place, to be discarded when the time comes.

(Source: The Asian Age, 21 March, 1998)

Bhaskar Roy on In-built Instability of BJP-led Government

... As if handing down a collective punishment to the entire political establishment for its irresponsible and reckless behaviour, the Indian voter decided to prolong the excruciating phase of instability... So the verdict was once again split, the mandate withheld for the third time running and the numbers eluding the political contenders.

The voter seemed least bothered about the fate of the government and unconcerned over the stability factor. It is for the fractured, fragile coalition desperately trying to manage a majority, to fend for itself. The onus is not on the electorate, but on the would-be beneficiaries of power to clear the path for their ascent to office.

If prices continue to soar, official corruption is part of everyday experience and development remains a mirage ... the common man ... just cannot make any meaning of the powerplay being enacted on Delhi's mean street of politics. If one coalition collapses and the other fails to stand even on crutches, the common man is just not bothered. If there are elections again by the turn of the year or a little later, he will derive pleasure from the prostrations and perspiring roadshows of the politicians... He will vote more or less with the same indifference as in the past three elections, teaching one fellow a lesson and giving another bloke a few more votes.

Given this all-encompassing mood of cynicism and despondency, the partners in power should sit back and see the writing on the wall...

the BJP being the single largest party has to demonstrate the kind of flexibility so badly needed to run a heterogeneous combine of people from as diverse origins as Congress, the socialist movement and the Janata school of politics. If the hardliners in the party have any ambition of implementing their Swadeshi or Sangh agenda, they can only do so by hastening the death of yet another experiment and jeopardising the party's

future prospects. ...

The BJP's own growth in these elections is nothing very exciting to write home about... Despite its advantages, an effective campaign blitzkrieg and more importantly the disarray in the Congress camp, the party could add only 17 more seats to its 1996 tally of 161. And quite a few of these seats clearly came courtesy the poll partners. Without the alliances the BJP had no hope of opening its account either in Tamil Nadu or in West Bengal. almost every third MP in the alliance belongs to a non-BJP outfit. This reality has to be recognised...

But the allies too have a role to play if they want to put an end to the tragicomedy being enacted on the political stage. If each one of them demands his or her pound of flesh and tries to push a personal agenda, the coalition cannot work. Like the BJP, they too have benefited from the seat adjustments and the united campaign.

If they act irresponsibly now and indulge in the game of brinkmanship, the coalition might collapse. For the BJP it is not a new thing to happen - it has missed the proverbial bus so many times already. But the allies will be wrecking their own political future as well. If elections take place again, say a year or two later and some of these allies go to the polls separately, fighting each other and without the benefit of being part of a major front, they might find it impossible to repeat the performance of 1998.

This is as much true for ... Samata Party, as for AIADMK and Trinamul Congress. Electoral success does not give a licence to act irresponsibly, nor does it provide a passage to political opportunism forgetting the pledges of the not too distant past. The sooner the allies realise this, the better.

(Source: The Times of India, 13 March, 1998)

I.M.A.N.A. Scholarships for Medical Students

The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) offers 30 means-cum-merit scholarships of Rs.600/- p.m. for Muslim students enrolled for MBBS course in a recognised medical colleges in India for 1998-99. The scholarship may be extended till completion of the MBBS course, subject to satisfactory academic performance. The Muslim India Educational and Cultural Trust, Patna, has been appointed by the IMANA to collect and process the applications.

Those interested may obtain prescribed Application Forms from and apply to:

**The Programme Coordinator (IMANA),
The Muslim India Educational and Cultural Trust,
Ehsan House, Road 6B, Rajendra Nagar, Patna - 800 016 (Bihar).
Late date for application is 31 August 1998**

BJP: President Khushabhau Thakre's Views

The BJP, which is the inheritor of the legacy of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, owes its birth to the idea of nationalism. This is the core of our ideology; for us India is one nation, one people and one culture.

... Notwithstanding diversities such as region, religion, caste and language, India had evolved a common way of life rooted in a shared cultural heritage.

It is this common way of life which is unique to India that we call Hindutva or cultural nationalism. You could call it by any other name - Indianness or Bharatiyata, but the core remains the same... Hindutva by definition was an all-inclusive concept and was in perfect harmony with the true meaning of secularism. It means justice for all citizens. And it is this inherent strength of Hindutva that has helped check the vote-bank politics of the pseudo-secularists. As a matter of fact, all organisations inspired by the RSS are free to take their own decisions. This is because the very idea of centralised control is non-Hindu.

... Wherever the party was in power, it had ensured the security and dignity of the minority communities.

Now that the BJP leads the Central Government, we will further prove our detractors wrong. In this general election, Muslims have voted for us in large numbers, defying the allurements and grim prognostics of our opponents. I have no doubt that more and more members of the minority communities will opt for us and free themselves from the practitioners of vote bank politics.

India needed to be firm with Pakistan which was responsible for fomenting terrorism in J&K by sending foreign mercenaries and arms across the border.

Good relations between India and Pakistan will be possible only when the latter reciprocates by discontinuing the policy of fomenting violence in India that it has been pursuing all these years. The situation brooks no further delay in bringing Pakistan to heel.

The BJP Government would be able to check ISI activities and identify the culprits and make facts public. ... What had further aggravated the internal security scenario was continuing large scale illegal infiltration across the eastern border.

Apart from creating economic and social tensions in the north-eastern States. West Bengal and Bihar, unchecked infiltration also poses a severe internal security problem to underestimate it would be to court disaster. ...

(Source: The Hindu, 4 May, 1998)

BJP President Thakre's Views

... India is a multi-religious country. In the name of freedom of expression and art, nobody has the right to denigrate any community's religious feelings. It doesn't matter which religion. Sita is our mother. Can one paint Sita like that? Or Prophet Mohammed or Jesus Christ?

BJP: National Council Resolution Gandhinagar, 4 May, 1998 (Extracts)

... The BJP today is the principal and stable pole of Indian politics. The Congress is the other pole... In the new Indian political order, alignments can only take place around these two poles. As of today, most of the regional parties are with us as our allies in government or as supporters. We resolve to further expand and consolidate this alliance...

The litmus test of any civil society is whether it is free of discrimination in any form. India has so far failed to pass this litmus test. But we can take our society closer to the cherished goal of equality and fraternity; we can help and discriminations that still exist - be it caste discrimination, gender discrimination or class discrimination. The National Council urges the Government to move rapidly in this direction...

We appreciate the Government's decision to rename the Welfare Ministry as Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment... Empowerment of the deprived and weaker sections of society, especially the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes and women, is one of the goals we have set for ourselves...

The very fact that a large number of Indians belonging to the minority communities have voted for us in the recent election indicates our success in convincing them of what we believe is positive secularism. It also marks the defeat of pseudo-secularists whose fear campaign has begun to yield diminishing returns...

The National Council appeals to the minority communities to take a decisive step and break free of the clutches of peddlers of vote-bank politics and join hands with the BJP. Their future lies in the new India we all aspire for, not in the morass of minority-majority politics or appeasement that may benefit regressive elements but deprives them of progress and justice.

We call upon party ... to create public awareness about ... India's population explosion (which) is a national issue...

... A comprehensive review of certain sections of the Constitution, without in any way altering its basic structure, is overdue...

... Ours has been a mission to re-establish nationalism as the guiding beacon for every activity in public life... We resolve to continue our struggle till such time every Indian finds his and her rightful place in an egalitarian society and India finds her rightful place in the comity of nations...

There are two types of people in this country. Those who are secular and those who are normal.

- George Fernandes, President, Samata Party

Purshottam Agarwal on BJP's Inheritance of Kautilya

The BJP's claim of being a party with a difference rests on certain idealised notions, carefully nurtured and propagated. Other parties clamour for power at any cost, while the BJP's pursuit of politics is dictated by the farsighted agenda of realising an alternative vision of India. Other parties readily compromise on their principles, while the BJP is uniquely virtuous inasmuch as it prefers a splendidly moral isolation to the capture to power.

Other parties are only too willing to provide sanctuary to all types of shady characters, whereas the BJP puts a premium on the integrity of its members. All other parties share the faulty Congress vision, characterised by myopic appeasement of Muslims going in the name of "pseudo" secularism, and the BJP cherishes its own idea of India which is not only authentic but also essential for undoing the damage wrought by the self-serving Congress and its paler versions.

The USP of the BJP lies in this 'difference' in terms of vision and behaviour. In fact, this 'difference' has been its self-proclaimed *raison d'être*. Objectively speaking, however, the BJP has been no different in its political behaviour. Only, it has stridently been detailing an alternative vision rooted in a fundamental rejection of much of what constitutes the consensual idea of India...

... Instead of trying for a different kind of consensus, the BJP is attempting to appropriate and usurp that very consensus which it has been deriding constantly. Worse, this appropriation in no way reflects any genuine subscription to the assumptions and ideas implicit in this consensus. So far as claims of a higher measure of political morality are concerned, they are more a myth sustained with the help of a media which, due to its social composition, generally shares the fears and anxieties of the BJP. Much before the so-called aberration of UP, the party had managed a majority in Rajasthan through not-so-moral means. When UP happened, it indicated only a higher degree of a pre-existing amoral disposition which has now been given the attractive name of 'Pragmatic Idealism'.

Had the BJP demonstrated an inclination towards putting the "contentious issues" on the back-burner after having won a mandate on its own, it certainly would have been a welcome shift! As of now, the BJP's denial of a hidden agenda is at best only a tactical posture... BJP leaders ... have never spoken of reconsidering their position on the very nature of Indian nationhood, its identity and culture. It is from this position only that the contentious issues are framed. Then why has the BJP committed its government to a consensual National Agenda? Is it just a matter of political expediency and opportunism? Most BJP-baiters would have us believe so.

It is opportunism but not of a here-and-now type. This apparent expediency is dictated by the BJP's long-term strategy and agenda...

... Its own vote share has stagnated. The option is either to make peace with this plateau or to somehow control the formal mechanisms of political power and exploit them in replacing the existing notions of consensus with exclusionist and aggressive ones. BJP ideologues are quit correct in their assertion that their party evolves its strategy within the framework of a long-term plan... It is in fact only a tactical move in a coolly thought out game.

The growth of the BJP can at least partly be attributed to its acceptance among sections of the upwardly mobile and vocal middle class. The perpetual undercurrent of sympathy for its viewpoint amongst mediapersons, officials and other sections of the intelligentsia would have been impossible without this acceptance. In fact, the party's imagination of India is coterminous with the self-serving perceptions this class holds as a natural truth. The dexterity of the BJP as a political formation lies in its capacity to present these perceptions not only as natural but also as just. It is in a way trying to reassure its middle-class core by going soft on corruption... In this respect, the BJP is quite seriously committed to Congressing itself. ...

The BJP has the capacity to just look different where it actually is not and be different where it really matters. The reason is simple, yet most fundamental. The RSS and its various offshoots have deliberately chosen to adopt the cunning of Kautilya instead of the wisdom of Vyasa... At present, the BJP is indeed no different...

(Source: The Outlook, 20 April, 1998)

N.M. Ghatate on BJP and RSS

... To BJP's critics, the party is just a front organisation of the RSS; and to those without an RSS background, it is a subject of curiosity. What is the common thread that runs through the BJP, the BMS, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the ABVP, Kalyan Ashram, etc?

The moving spirit of the organisation are those who joined the RSS as young boys and were inspired by it to love and serve the country...

... The unique and common feature of the members of the sangh parivar is a transparent devotion to the welfare of the country...

One unique feature of RSS and sangh parivar organisations is that they do not depend on government patronage like other NGOs. This is their strength. They are beyond influence and control of the government...

Nothing is further from the truth than to say that the RSS controls the organisations. Leaders of these organisations belong to the RSS. They do consult each other on problems facing the country. It is a very simple and open relationship.

V.M. Tarkunde on BJP's Changing Face

... Two facts about the present political situation ... support the view that an attitude of responsive cooperation, instead of one of hostility, should be adopted by secular democrats towards (Vajpayee) government.

The first fact is that the President was not in a position to form any government other than the one led by the BJP...

The second fact ... is the wisdom shown by the BJP leadership in keeping the aggressive part of its communal programme on the backshelf...

... In a meeting of the National Executive ... L.K. Advani as the outgoing president of the party, recommended that there should be a reorientation in the policies of the BJP and that instead of dwelling in the past, the party should concentrate on its programme for the future.

The obvious objective of these remarks was that the party should abandon, or at least water down, its antipathy towards the Muslims ...

... Soon thereafter, both Advani and A.B. Vajpayee declared that the party had not given up its programme of Ram mandir, Article 370 and the Common Civil Code. These items were kept aside only for the sake of coming to power at the Centre, and that these would be implemented when the party obtains an absolute majority in the future... The writer is inclined to endorse the latter reaction...

... No party based on Hindutva as its main plank has a chance of obtaining an absolute majority in India, either today or in the future. The majority of Hindus, consisting of the OBCs, Dalits and tribals, have no particular attachment to Hindutva, which is naturally regarded by them as the domination of the upper caste Hindus.

The minorities, particularly the Muslims and Christians, will also be opposed to a party having Hindutva as its main plank. It is more than likely that the BJP leadership is now well aware of the virtual impossibility of getting a majority in the general election on the basis of Hindutva. They know, of course, that the party grew in strength because of its Hindu communalism but they also know that the further growth of the party is not possible if they stick to Hindu communalism. Also, it would be virtually impossible for the party to get a sufficient number of coalition partners if they stick to the Hindutva ideology... If the party finds that it cannot come to power ... it is likely to adopt some other ideology more acceptable to the majority of the people. Such a change would mean a decline in Hindu communalism and that should be welcomed to all secular democrats.

... Apart from its aggressive communalism, the BJP

also adopts the ideology of chauvinistic nationalism. It is the combination of aggressive communalism and chauvinistic nationalism which makes the party a potentially fascist movement. However, the communalism of the BJP appears now to be melting away. The party's chauvinistic nationalism is presently expressed in a two-fold programme - Swadeshi ... and "inducting" an atom bomb in India arsenal...

In both these parts of the programme, the party is softening its attitude... (Source: The Pioneer, 1 May, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 5 May, 1998

I have read with interest Shri V.M. Tarkunde's article "Willing to learn" in your issue of 1st May 1998. I feel that Justice Tarkunde is being over-optimistic about the future conduct of the BJP. He has not taken into consideration that while the BJP has adopted different policies in its various incarnations, its basic purpose, its very *raison d'être*, remains unchanged: to promote the long-term objectives and to realise the vision of the RSS, its mother. While replying to the debate on the Motion of Thanks to the President, Prime Minister Vajpayee and Home Minister Advani proudly flaunted their association with the RSS.

What the RSS is and what it is not is to be judged from the writings of its founders Hegdewar and Golwalkar. No BJP leader has ever criticised far less dissociated himself from the ideology propagated by the RSS and contained in Golwalkar's writings.

I agree with Shri V.M. Tarkunde that the BJP faces an existential crisis. It cannot attain power without compromise and its leadership is, therefore, prepared to defer the so called controversial points in its Manifesto. But, to keep the support and morale of the faithful, in the very breath it announces its intention that if through good governance with the help of its Allies in the coalition it is able to muster a Parliamentary majority in future, it shall implement its original agenda.

The RSS has allowed this transitory back-track, only because a BJP-led regime provides an umbrella for promoting the activities and advancing the objectives of the RSS and other Members of the Sangh Parivar. Thus, even the present interlude is to be used for questionable purposes not by the BJP but by the RSS and 100 and odd other organisations in the Sangh Parivar.

The fact is that BJP cannot be treated as a mainstream political party. It has no independent status or autonomous existence. It is nothing but the political front of the RSS. That is why, the secular democrats should not take the cosmetic changes in the physiognomy and the vocabulary of the BJP at their face value.

M.D. Nalapat

On BJP's Adjustment with Indian Reality

... BJP leaders, who today appear to be at loss over how to deal with being the party of governance rather than a permanent opposition, need to identify and actualise the course corrections required for their party to replace the Congress as the natural beneficiary of the public trust. What served the party well during its ascent may prove less effective now that it has become the largest national party.

The reaction to the destruction of the Babari Masjid on December 6, 1992, is an illustration of how different India is from countries like Bangladesh... The destruction of a disused mosque generated a national uproar. Six years after the event, the antics of the kar sevaks are still highlighted by the international media ... rather a recognition of the belief in India as a secular state.

Strong Centre

... The vandals who lowered the prestige of 970 million people on December 6, 1992, have gone against the very heritage that they claim to project. Another example of such behaviour among the self-proclaimed 'Hindutva' fold was the ransacking of Maqbool Fida Husain's home in Mumbai... The concept of a unified 'Hindu' society is a relatively recent phenomenon. Logically, all those who believe in moderation and respect for different perspectives that characterise the philosophy of Hinduism should be accepted as being within the fold of 'Indutva' or Indian culture.

... Rather than an all-powerful central government, what will preserve the unity of India is the acceptance of a strong social centre that avoids extremes and works towards a synthesis of different trends...

Thus, rather than return to a political centralisation that was the economic ruin of India, our major national parties need to focus on social and cultural ecosystems, linking them together across regions and communities. For example, the BJP will never realise its goal of getting a parliamentary majority on its own unless it can attract a significant party (at least 25 per cent) of the Muslim vote. The Bajrang Dal rhetoric which scares away Muslims will also keep away the moderate Hindus...

... A combination of the Advani line of external relations and the Vajpayee thinking in domestic policy would serve the country well. However, elements in the BJP appear to want to reverse the order, putting into play a soft external approach with a more exclusivist domestic approach.

... Above all, we must preserve the moderate traditions that have nurtured Indian culture for millennia. These are among the strands that the BJP needs to knit together for its future survival.

(Source: The Times of India, 8 May, 1998)

CPI(M) Central Committee: Statement on Election Review

The Central Committee of CPI(M) noted the fact that in the 1998 mid-term elections, the BJP increased its percentage of votes from 20.29 to 25.47 (and) it could increase its tally by 18 seats. Along with its allies, it came close to a majority, but did not get the majority. It was only the position taken by the Telugu Desam Party, which betrayed its own commitment to secularism and the United Front, that helped the BJP-led government to assume office.

The Congress party continued its declining trend. Its voting percentage declined from 28.8 to 25.88 (and) managed to just about retain its tally of the 11th Lok Sabha.

The United Front received a severe setback.... While the CPI(M) retained its 32 members, the major constituent of the United Front, the Janata Dal, was trounced.

All the constituents of the United Front need to make a proper review of their performance.

... Though important advances were made in the spheres of foreign policy, centre-state relations and strengthening secularism, unfortunately many of the promises in the economic sphere were not implemented. The decision to provide foodgrains at half the price to the people below the poverty line, though taken in principle, never saw the light of the day in many parts of the country... It is only the Left and the Samajwadi Party that have been able to receive some degree of wide support from the people.

During the election campaign, the United Front failed to effectively project itself as an alternative with a distinct policy and programme. **The lack of proper seat-sharing amongst its constituents, particularly in the Hindi-speaking state, led to a division of votes which directly benefitted the communal alliance.**

... The United Front's tally was (thus) reduced by nearly a half to 99.

The Central Committee decided that, under these circumstances, the unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces should be strengthened. The CPI(M), along with its allies in the United Front, shall make all efforts to build up this alternative to the communal forces and the Congress.

The Central Committee decided to strengthen ... the Party through mass mobilisation and protest actions against the anti-people policies of the present government.

(Source: The People's Democracy, 26 February, 1998)

The yardstick used in the case Mr. R. Muthiah should be applied to those who have a charge-sheet or cases pending or an FIR against them. The Ministers do not step down on their own, the Prime Minister must remove them. Those facing similar charges must follow (Muthiah)'s example.

- Ms. Jayalalitha, President, AIADMK

Muslim Reaction to BJP's Rule

The Week, 12 April, 1998

... For years most Muslims complacently believed the BJP would never succeed in ruling the country. With the demolition of the Babari Masjid the Ayodhya movement ran out of steam, and on the question of secularism the BJP (along with the Shiv Sena) stood isolated. The party came to be viewed as a 'political untouchable'.

Yet, a little over five years after the smashing of the Babari Masjid - one of the defining moments of post-Independent India's history - the BJP has achieved its ultimate dream. What do the Muslims expect under this new dispensation?

No doubt about it: most of them are apprehensive. The national agenda, adopted as a policy framework by the BJP government, may have no reference to the BJP's pet themes - Ayodhya, Article 370 or the Uniform Civil Code - but Muslims realise that this is only to placate its numerous allies, none of whom, barring the Shiv Sena, shares its Hindu aspirations...

While Muslims expect no major offensive against them, they are convinced that small, subtle means of cultural assimilation will be employed. "If nationalism is the BJP's main concern, why does it not lay emphasis on eradication of poverty, illiteracy and unemployment? Why concentrate only on the Uniform Civil Code?" asked a social activist in Hyderabad.

"I had expected the BJP to keep the home, human resource development (HRD) and information and broadcasting (I&B) portfolios for its own people," said ex-MP Syed Shahabuddin, "and sure enough it has done so. These are the ministries which it employs for indoctrination. We will not be sent to the gas chambers, but will be administered slow poison."

"Since the HRD ministry has been vested with Murli Manohar Joshi," said Dr Mumtaz Ali Khan, Bangalore sociologist, "we have this fear that the educational system may be tampered with to sow seeds of hatred amongst children. Grants to minority educational institutions may be curtailed or even suspended."

"It is quite possible the BJP may try to revise school textbooks in a manner that depicts Muslims as villains," feared Maqsood Ali Khan, chief editor of Salar, Bangalore.

Although the BJP government is barely a fortnight old, a number of minor developments were mentioned by Muslims as instances of what lay in store for them. The barricade on one side of the controversial Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi had been removed to enable Hindus to worship the idol of ... Shringar Gowri... At Pirana, 20

km from Ahmedabad, a dargah had been forcibly occupied by local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) workers.

In Rampur where the BJP's sole Muslim MP - and now minister of state for I&B - Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi won the poll, Bajrang Dal workers, alleged Shahabuddin, attacked a Muslim mohalla from where Naqvi had not received a single vote. "When the residents went to complain, the thanedar told them, 'Yeh tho sirf shurwat hai (this is just the beginning)'," maintained Shahabuddin.

... It is the RSS and its parivar whom Muslims fear even more than the BJP itself. "The RSS is a mission and the BJP is its political wing," insisted Shahabuddin darkly. "It is not as if political power is its sole end, and Hindutva just a means. In that case they would have given up issues like Ayodhya, once they captured power. It is the other way round: Hindutva is the end, political power a means. The organs of the state, the media, the educational infrastructure, these too are means the RSS wants to employ in the pursuit of its end, which is to completely absorb Muslims into the Hindu fold."

Javed Ali Khan of the SP echoed this view. "We fear that institutions of the state may be subverted or misused by the BJP government in such ways that they may suffer permanent damage, which even future governments may find difficult to rectify," he said. "For instance, in UP the Provincial Armed Constabulary acquired a notorious character after certain RSS-minded officers came to occupy its top positions, and gave the entire force a certain orientation. The same may happen with the IB, CBI and RAW. By inducting communal-minded people in crucial positions, this government can wreak a lot of mischief."

Not all Muslims, however, were so pessimistic. The presence of Atal Behari Vajpayee as Prime Minister, the total dependence of the BJP on its allies for survival and the strength of the opposition were cited as mitigating factors.

"The other BJP leaders display their iron hands, but Vajpayee sports velvet gloves over this iron hands," declared Maqsood Ali Khan...

But how decisive would Vajpayee be in the face of hardliner pressure? "The fear is that he too may succumb to pressure," said Mumtaz Ali Khan.

Though a liberal by instinct, can Vajpayee stand up to the RSS? asked Shahabuddin bluntly. "SO many times his initial stand and final stand on a particular issue have been very different. He was genuinely shocked at first by

the Babari Masjid demolition, but later he refused to condemn it". ...

The Muslims have clearly trusted the BJP-allied parties' protestations of secularism...

Not all however were willing to let the allies off lightly. "As far as Muslims are concerned, even the BJP's allies should be regarded as political untouchables," said Mumtaz Ali Khan...

Shahabuddin too remained sceptical: "Many of the allies, such as Mamata Banerjee, have secular credentials and have won with considerable Muslim support. But they compromised their secular ideology to join hands with the BJP and share power. Will they be willing to give up power if the BJP takes steps which are not to their liking? They may well look the other way."

Agreed Dr. Rafiq Zakaria, former politician, scholar and chairman of the All India Khilafat Committee: "It may not be easy for the allies to break away as that might result in another election. I would put more faith in the opposition keeping the BJP government in check... The government just cannot afford to ignore the opposition."

The BJP proudly claims - and the Muslims concede - that the party won a small section of the Muslim vote in virtually every state...

The BJP national vice-president Sunder Singh Bhandari claimed that in UP the party got around six per cent of the Muslim vote, and three per cent in Bihar...

In Karnataka the BJP is making a conscious attempt to woo the Muslims. "We will be starting with a massive state level minorities convention in Bangalore in mid-May," said Suresh Kumar. The BJP is also going to rejuvenate its minorities cell in the state.

In turn what do the Muslims expect? Can the BJP ever hope to win their support? "Not so long as the BJP continues to move along the direction given to it by (RSS founder) K.S. Hegdewar and his successor Guru Golwalkar," said Javed Ali Khan. "The party has to first reject Golwalkar's A Bunch of Thoughts for reconsideration to be possible".

For Haneef Jawaaid, the party has to "sever its umbilical cord with the RSSs, give up once and for all those controversial issues it has merely sidelined at the moment, and accept the plurality and diversity of Indian culture".

Both Jawaaid and Maqsood Ali Khan strongly felt the BJP should also initiate programmes to overcome the educational and economic backwardness of the Muslims.

... Concluded Dr Rafiq Zakaria. "As Oscar Wilde said, 'Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future'. The BJP's past does go against it, but if the national agenda is the yardstick, they deserve to be given a chance to behave better in the future".

John Dayal on the BJP's Slogan

"One Nation, One People, One Culture and the Pluralistic Nature of Indian Society"

... Thakre's focus is, expectedly, on the latest embellishment to the RSS thesis on Hindutva.

One nation, one people, one culture, he says as he calls on the minority communities to "break free of the peddlers of vote banks" and join the BJP. The minorities' future, Thakre ... says lies in "new India we all aspire for, not in the morass of minority-majority politics or appeasement that may benefit regressive elements, but deprives them (the minorities) of progress and justice". Too true, Kushabhau Saheb... But for the minor fact that you do not care to explain why do you fall back on the RSS agenda of Hindutva if it is not to appease the more stringent and nefarious segments of society to keep them intact as your vote bank. The inaugural speech, and the political resolution are a long litany of appeasement, not to the underprivileged and the downtrodden, not to the minorities and those who feel under stress because of the hooliganism of your hoodlums whose idea of celebrating a BJP victory somewhere is to rush to the nearest place of worship, or group of worshippers and pummel them...

Would there be some appeasement also in the corny relationship with the Akali Dal, India's only theocratic party, and the men in Amritsar who have been given a few more vassals to control in the latest gift of places of worship now forced to listen to the diktats of what one-time supercop K.P.S. Gill calls "former murderers and their friends... One nation, one people, one mode of expressing self-interest. The country is going to have an enjoy his good friends. And for the intellectuals, he promises a riddle a day. Yesterday's riddle is to find a common thread between his four statements.

Statement one: All organisations inspired by the RSS are free to take their own decisions. This is because the very idea of centralised control is non-Hindu.

Statement two: It is the common way of life that we call Hindutva or cultural nationalism.

Statement three: Ghauri was the first Muslim invader to attack Delhi in 1191, and Pakistan is warning that history is repeating itself.

And finally, statement four: Samanvaya or synthesis is the overarching principle which helped to create one nation from diverse influences, revitalised by the ancient Hindu texts and the scriptures of the Buddha, the Jain munis and Guru Nanak.

Some of us, pseudo-secularists, thought that the people of Christ who are in two years' time celebrating 2,000 years of Christianity in India, and the Sufis ... had also contributed to the shaping of the one culture, if one may call it that... Thakre... may want to make the definition of One Nation, One People, One Culture more cultured.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 9-15 May, 1998)

G.S. Radhakrishna on TDP's Support to BJP-led Government

When N. Chandrababu Naidu became the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo, minorities in Andhra Pradesh had found a new messiah. They believed here was a man who would look after their interests and will not neglect the Muslims like his predecessors.

But within two years (1996-1998), Muslims in Andhra Pradesh have become a disgruntled and disillusioned community. And the last straw was Naidu's decision to go with the BJP after the 1998 elections. Today, Naidu has lost the faith of the Muslims and there is trouble in his own party where the minority leaders are openly revolting against his leadership...

Before the 1996 parliamentary polls, Naidu told the Muslims in a meeting: "Treat me as your brother, we are one". And to drive his message home, he even launched a policy for the advancement of the minorities in Andhra Pradesh. And just before the polls, in order to appease the Muslims, Naidu provided them with several important positions - vice-presidency of the TDP, a Rajya Sabha seat, a Cabinet post and a Vice-Chancellorship. This was a calculated move and it paid off in the polls.

During the 1998 general elections, Naidu promised the Muslim community that he would give Rs.5 crore to the Wakf Board for repairing the dilapidated mosques in the state. A Cabinet sub-committee was also formed to consider the 26-point raised by a Muslim delegation... The Puttuswamy Commission looking into the backward classes categorisation was asked to include Muslims as a backward class...

The Muslims constitute nearly 8.6 per cent of the population in Andhra Pradesh. Nearly 60 lakh Muslims hold the balance of power in almost 100 Assembly segments and 12 Lok Sabha seats. And the strength of the Muslims is most visible in the Telengana and Rayalaseema region of the state.

This time round, the Muslim voters in Telengana numbering around 22 lakhs were instrumental in returning nine TDP candidates to the Lok Sabha... The Muslim population in Rayalaseema is around 14 lakhs and in coastal AP about 12 lakhs. While Muslim voters of Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra voted moderately for the TDP, it was the minority voters of the Telengana that ensured TDP's success this time.

Muslim leaders had campaigned very hard in Telengana and Rayalaseema region to ensure victory for the TDP candidates. But all that now seems to have gone in vain. The Muslims feel dejected and believe that Naidu had let them down...

(Source: The Sunday, 19-25 April, 1998)

JD: National Executive Political Resolution New Delhi, 17-19 April, 1998 (Extracts)

... The Janata Dal must, in the coming months, accord high priority to streamlining its organisation as an effective instrument to work and fight for the people's problems, particularly the deprived sections of the population like Dalits, Adivasis, other backward classes, minorities and women, kisans, workers and unemployed youth.

Organisationally a powerful Janata Dal will be a source of strength to the United Front of like-minded parties committed to a common social, economic and political perspective. This can be achieved by revitalizing the organisation and structures of the party units from the grassroot level upwards and activating and training the party cadres...

The present Government of the BJP and its allies came to power on the slogan of stability but right from its inception, it is submerged in instability, serious allegations of corruption, subversion of federalism and undermining of all democratic norms.

The manner in which the Union Government had dismissed Governors and blatantly resorted to the appointment of identified BJP-RSS men, decided to allow the 'Prasar Bharati' Ordinance to lapse with a view to destroying the autonomy of the Prasar Bharati and pack it with its own partymen, have made a mockery of democratic institutions under the garb of "Review of Constitution".

The new Government led by the BJP and its allies through its irresponsible pronouncements is building up a war psychosis undermining the good work for peace and amity by the previous Government.

While the present Government swears by the so-called National Agenda for governance the mask of this agenda is thoroughly unmasked demonstrating that the so-called 'hidden' manifesto of the BJP has surfaced through the actions of the Government. Even the pronouncements and action of the BJP Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh are an indication of reviving the Mandir-Masjid controversy at Ayodhya.

While the United Front Government made a provision of Rs.1000/- crore in the 9th Plan for minorities' educational institutions, the BJP Government is seeking to subvert this scheme and divert the amount...

Against this background, education of the people about UF's achievements through mass mobilisation and organisation is necessary.

In this task we will continue to retain our bonds with the forces which have resolutely stood by us in our struggles and endeavour.

(Source: The Janata, 10 May, 1998)

UNESCO: Intergovernmental Conference On Cultural Policies for Development

Stockholm, 2 April, 1998

Action Plan on Cultural Policies for Development

The Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held at Stockholm (30 March - 2 April, 1998).

1. Reaffirming the fundamental principles of the ... Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies, which stresses "that in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs";
2. Recalling that the World Decade for Cultural Development stressed the importance of acknowledging the cultural dimension of development; asserting and enhancing cultural identities, broadening participation in cultural life; and promoting international cultural cooperation;
3. Conscious of the efforts needed to face the challenges of cultural development and preservation of the diversity of cultures, as expressed in "Our Creative Diversity", the Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development.
4. Emphasizing ... the importance of national measures to harmonize national cultural policies and the need to preserve the pluralism of grassroots cultural initiatives in order to promote mutual understanding as well as respect and consideration between individuals and nations in view of the risk of disagreements and conflicts; ...

Recognizes the following principles:

1. sustainable development and the flourishing of culture are interdependent.
2. One of the chief aims of human development is the social and cultural fulfillment of the individual.
3. **Access to and protection in cultural life being a fundamental right of individuals in all communities, governments have a duty to create conditions for the full exercise of this right in accordance with Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**
4. The essential aims of cultural policy are to establish objectives, create structures and secure adequate resources in order to create an environment

conducive to human fulfillment.

5. The dialogue between cultures appears to be one of the fundamental cultural and political challenges for the world today; it is an essential condition of peaceful coexistence.
6. Cultural creativity is the source of human progress; and cultural diversity, being a treasure of humankind, is an essential factor of development.
7. New trends, particularly, globalization, link cultures ever more closely and enrich the interaction between them, but they may also be detrimental to our creative diversity and to cultural pluralism; they make mutual respect all the more imperative.
8. Harmony between culture and development, respect for cultural identities, tolerance for cultural differences in a framework of plural democratic values, socio-economic equity and respect for territorial unity and national sovereignty are among the preconditions for a lasting and just peace.
9. Acceptance of cultural diversity helps to highlight and strengthen intercommunity links rooted in values that can be shared by all the different socio-cultural components of national society.
10. Creativity in societies favours creation, which stems above all from an individual commitment. This commitment is essential to building our future heritage. It is important to preserve and promote the conditions for such creation - in particular the freedom of the creative artist - within every community.
11. The defence of local and regional cultures threatened by cultures with a global reach must not transform the cultures thus affected into relics deprived of their own development dynamics.
12. We must therefore empower all people and communities to harness their creativity and to consolidate and forge ways of living together with others, facilitating genuine human development and the transition to a culture of peace and non-violence.

The Conference in Consequence affirms that:

1. Cultural policy, as one of the main components of endogenous and sustainable development policy, should be implemented in coordination with policy in other social areas, on the basis of an integrated approach. Any policy for development must be

- profoundly sensitive to culture itself.
2. The dialogue between cultures should constitute a fundamental aim of cultural policies and the institutions which embody them at the national and international level, universal freedom of expression is vital for this interaction and for effective participation in cultural life. ...
 5. Cultural policies should promote creativity in all its forms, facilitating access to cultural practices and experiences for all citizens regardless of nationality, race, sex, age, physical or mental disability, enrich the sense of cultural identity and belonging of every individual and community and sustain them in their search for a dignified and safe future.
 6. Cultural policies should aim to create a sense of the nation, as a multifaceted community within the framework of national unity...
 7. Cultural policies should also aim to improve social integration and the quality of life of all members of society without discrimination.
 8. Cultural policies must respect gender equality...
 12. Cultural policies should place particular emphasis on promoting and strengthening ways and means of providing broader access to culture for all sectors of

the population, combating exclusion and marginalization, and fostering all processes that favour cultural democratization.

13. Cultural policies should recognize the essential contribution that is made by creators to improving the quality of life, to promoting identity and to the cultural development of society.
14. Any cultural policy should take into account all the elements that shape cultural life: creation, preservation of the heritage and dissemination. A balance should be struck between these factors.

Policy Objectives Recommended to Member States:

- Objective 1: To make cultural policy one of the key components of development strategy.
- Objective 2: Promote creativity and participation in cultural life.
- Objective 3: Reinforce policy and practice to safeguard and enhance the cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, moveable and immovable, and to promote cultural industries.
- Objective 4: Promote cultural and linguistic diversity in and for the information society.
- Objective 5: Make more human and financial resources available for cultural development.

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VHP's Defence of BJP and National Agenda Maharashtra President Chowgule's Letter

For a Mumbai base TV news programme I was asked what would be the reaction of the VHP if the BJP gave up issues relating to Hindutva, viz., Ramjanambhoomi, Article 370 and uniform civil code. The question was based on the pressure or compulsions from the alliance partners of the BJP. As President of the Mumbai VHP, I have replied as follows:

Firstly, ... the BJP has in any way diluted or given up the core ethos of Hindutva, nor does it have any rethinking on its own on the three issues mentioned above. The manifesto of the BJP has come out after the alliances were finalised, including that of the seat adjustment with specific constituencies to be contested by each partner. Hence, the BJP's allies are fully aware of the views of the party...

Secondly, the BJP has clearly stated that the issues will be discussed not only with the alliance partners but also with the whole society. Solutions to contentious issues have to be put in place only by taking all the sections of the society along...

Thirdly, the issues are being mixed up at the level of electoral politics, and the merits are deliberately muddled up. Each of the three issues has to be first determined on the basis of the logic of the case, and once the consensus on the issues is on the table, then it is easy to find solutions...

The fact that the VHP had made an attempt to get the (Ayodhya) site back in a peaceful manner through negotiations is also hidden from the people. This was as far back as December 1990. It was only when the negotiations were frustrated that the tension on the issue increased... This is not an anti-Muslim issue, but one of the Hindus establishing their legitimate claim on a holy site. Similarly, Article 70 and uniform civil code are not communal issues but secular ones. They have been turned into communal by those opposing the ideology of Hindutva for purely political purposes...

UCC is not a legal issue but a social issue. One should discuss whether it is desirable to have a UCC. Any sane person will not dispute about the desirability, and that there are infirmities not only in the Muslim law but also in other laws... it is also hidden from the people that the way to go about it is not to make the Hindu Code Bills applicable to all, but to ask the Law Commission to come out with a new law that would meet the requirements of today.

The advantage of having a BJP government in place is that there will be sane discussions at non-political level... For example, when it is accepted that a UCC is desirable, then the issue also becomes why UCC should

RSS: G.S. H.V. Seshadri's Call to Muslims to Denounce Each Other

(It is not too late for the nationalist Muslims) to come out openly against the patently anti-national actions of their co-religionists acting as the enemy's agents.

Hence, now the time is congenial for the nationalist Muslims to raise their voice against such blatantly anti-national activities being indulged in by the enemy, their agents and protectors here, whoever they may be. Thereby they will be doing a signal service to their community who badly needed it all these past decades.

This last point needs a little more of frank elucidation. There is no use denying the fact that those who led the movement for the Partition of the country were drawn from these very parts which have remained with that is now called Bharat and very few of them had left for Pakistan during 1947-48 and an overwhelming majority of them had remained behind... However, when the present-day Muslim leadership identifies itself with even the predatory actions of foreign invaders like Babur and Aurangzeb who were not even their ancestors, then is it any wonder that the Hindus feel that the overall Muslim psychology has not changed a whit even to this date? And when the present Muslim League also proudly claims that it is the same party which dismembered the country and the entire Muslim community supports that League in Kerala, does it stand to reason to condemn Hindus if they refuse to take the protestations of the Muslim leaders of their loyalty to the country at its face value? Suspicion is further strengthened when they find practically no voice being raised from among the prominent Muslims against the present-day Muslim leadership and their supporting parties who are shielding the enemy's strategy.

Hence this is an appeal to the genuine nationalist elements among the Muslims to ... speak out their minds and give a new lead to their hitherto misled Muslim masses. And they can certainly hope to receive not only overall national support but more so from among their own-co-religionists...

(Source: The Organiser, 17 May, 1998)

(Continued from page 265)

before the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court as one of the issues in the title suit. Your advice should have been rendered to the Muslim community, to the leaders of the AIMPLB and the Babari Masjid Movement. Your advice to Advani sounds more like a move to cury favour with a new regime, forgive me for saying so. After all, Darbardari is in our genes.

VHP from undertaking a programme to educate to the people. We have done it when there was no BJP government at the Centre, and we have no hesitation on taking the programme forward. After all, we are separate organisations with our own programmes.

Rajesh Joshi on Sangh Parivar's Overtures to Muslims

From Delhi to Rampur and Lucknow, the Muslims are busy hatching a dangerous plot, piling up arms and mobilising their men... to strike from within when Pakistan decides upon an armed conflict with our country" - RSS chief Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar in the late '60s.

Three decades later, there is a discernible change in the tone and tenor of pronouncements by senior RSS leaders. These days Prof. Rajendra Singh, the present RSS chief, eschews all talk of Muslims "hatching plots" and instead sees "unmistakable signs of a welcome change" in the attitude of the Muslim intelligentsia towards Hindutva. In fact ... in Bangalore, Rajju Bhayya took pains to emphasise that Hindutva "upholds equally the genuine interests of all sections of people, including theirs (the Muslims)".

Indeed, recent years have witnessed the opening up of a traditionally cocooned organisation. With the installation of a BJP-led government at the Centre, the RSS is now ready to go the whole hog to exploit the "Hindutva-oriented atmosphere" to expand its base. It is significant that Rajju Bhayya is no longer averse to regular interaction with the media...

Given the RSS' history and style of functioning, any shift in attitude towards the Muslims is bound to be viewed with suspicion. It is doubtful if it will translate into a dilution of the Hindutva agenda. The changes ... if any, can be better understood in the light of its efforts to come out of a long spell of isolation which increased with the demolition of the Babari Masjid, when the RSS and its 100-odd pocket organisations were condemned for damaging India's secular fabric. The recent utterances by RSS leaders about Muslims can at best be seen as an attempt to put up a more tolerant face, not a dilution of Hindutva.

The ideas propagated by RSS founders like Hedgewar and Golwalkar are still the source of inspiration for their successors. The ultimate goal is to transform the Indian society into a formidable monolith with "one nation, one people and one culture". The Sangh parivar realises that this cannot be achieved without a thorough change in the Constitution. In fact, the BJP's commitment to review the Constitution in its election manifesto is just a reiteration of Golwalkar's wish expressed 42 years ago...

Golwalkar ... wanted to "bury deep for good all talk of a federal structure of our country's Constitution" and realise his desire for "One Country, One State, One Legislature, One Executive". Golwalkar mooted the idea of redrafting the Constitution way back in 1956. Immediately after the publication of the report of the States Reorganisation Committee, he wrote: "Let the Constitution be re-examined and re-drafted, so as to establish this Unitary (read centralised) form of Government."

That the so-called change in the tone is hardly a pointer to the dilution of the RSS' Hindutva agenda is evident from the reiteration by Rajju Bhayya recently that "these

monuments (mosques at Kashi and Mathura) are a slur on our independence; they should go". Points out Mahesh Chandra Sharma, a BJP Rajya Sabha MP associated with the Deen Dayal Research Foundation: "We believe in the ultimate goal, the means to achieve it is not important to us. Gandhiji would have differed on this matter. The RSS is ready to even tear off the dark chapters of history. We only want to highlight the glorious past of the country".

Some sympathisers and activists of the RSS took the initiative to break the isolation of the Sangh parivar by holding a 'samvaad' at Vrindavan in January 1993. Former prime minister Chandra Shekhar ... even hosted one such meet in 1996 at his Bhondsi ashram... The RSS drew a lot of flak at these meetings for its "antagonistic" attitude towards the Muslims and other minorities.

Acceptability became especially crucial after the BJP fared poorly in the mid-term elections to four state assemblies in 1993. The defeat was attributed, among other things, to its anti-Muslim image and RSS activities...

The whole exercise is aimed at gaining more acceptability not only for the RSS itself but for the BJP too. At the pratinidhi sabha in Bangalore the RSS top brass went to great lengths to drive home the point that "the minorities need not be apprehensive".

It is in this context that the RSS agreed to put "contentious issues" - Ram Janambhoomi, Article 370 and a common civil code - on the back-burner despite its rider to the BJP that Hindutva should not be diluted. Significantly, RSS general secretary K.C. Sudershan warned the BJP not to dilute Hindutva just when its prime ministerial candidate Vajpayee started soft-peddalling on Ayodhya and Article 370 during his poll campaign. The result: Hindutva was uppermost in the BJP's manifesto.

... With a friendly government at the Centre, the RSS leadership has chalked out a detailed expansion plan. The number of shakhas is sought to be increased from 27,000 to 50,000. The swayamsewaks, the RSS chief has declared, "will now concentrate on turning the popular Hindutva-oriented atmosphere into expanding the enduring organisational set-up". The organisation will now explore new areas of activity where till now it had no presence...

An equally important task for the RSS is finding berths for its sympathisers in important positions in the bureaucracy, judiciary, foreign office, etc.

... For an organisation banned three times during its 72-year existence on charges of inciting violence and hatred, it is time to strike firm roots and branch out.

(Source: The Outlook, 6 April, 1998)

Supreme Court On Filling up Legislative Void

Vineet Narain and others, Petitioners v. Union of India and another, Respondents.

J.S. VERMA, C.J.I.,

S.P. BHARUCHA AND S.C. SEN, JJ.

Constitution of India, Articles 141, 32 - Supreme Court - Power to issue directions, guidelines to fill the void in the absence of suitable legislation to cover the field - Has now become well settled and well recognised practice in India.

There are ample powers conferred by Article 32 read with Article 142 to make orders which have the effect of law by virtue of Article 141 and there is mandate to all authorities to act in aid of the orders of the Supreme Court as provided in Article 144 of the Constitution. In a catena of decisions of Supreme Court, this power has been recognised and exercised, if need be, by issuing necessary directions to fill the vacuum till such time the legislature steps in to cover the gap or the executive discharges its role.

It is the duty of the executive to fill the vacuum by executive orders because its field is coterminous with that of the legislature and where there is inaction even by the executive, for whatever reason, the judiciary must step in, in exercise of its constitutional obligations under the aforesaid provisions to provide a solution till such time as the legislature acts to perform its role by enacting proper legislation to cover the field.

(Source: AIR 1998 Supreme Court 889)

Gauhati High Court On Allotment of Government Ads

Sushil Choudhury and another, Petitioners v. State of Tripura and others, Respondents.

A.K. PATNAIK, J.

Constitution of India, Articles (19)(1)(a) and 14 - Freedom of press - Violation of and also of right to equality - Allotment of 30 per cent of Government advertisements to a category of newspapers - Memorandum of State allotting 24 per cent out of total quantum of advertisements to only one daily and remaining 6 per cent to other dailies belonging to same class - It is violative of freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) - It is also violative of equality clause - Enforcement of policy contained in aforesaid memorandum - It affects formation of healthy public opinion necessary for good democracy.

(Source: AIR 1998 Gauhati 28)



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- Cures anaemia during pregnancy.

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



Two spoonfuls. Twice daily.

BMMCC: Convener Shahabuddin's Statement, 11 May, 1998

"His Eminence Shri Jayendra Saraswati, Shankaracharya of Kanchi Peetam is reported to have stated that "For all practical purposes, the subject had been closed after the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya. Nevertheless, whether or not there should be a temple in its place should be decided only by the followers of both religions.":

The BMMCC is convinced that the case is far from being closed, as the demolition on December 1992 has not made any difference either in religion or in law, to the existence of the Masjid on the site. In fact, the title suit is being heard on instruction of the Supreme Court by the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court, while the disputed site and the lands attached thereto are presently in the custody of the Central Government and only after the title is decided, the Supreme Court shall allocate the disputed land, including the site of Babari Masjid for any construction.

An unlawful act like the demolition, in total violation of the dignity of the State, the Judiciary and the Legislature, cannot be final by any standards. In Islam the Masjid is the consecrated site which cannot be changed and not the structure, which can be re-built.

The demolition of the Babari Masjid not only violates the Constitution but goes against the very ethos of Hinduism. That is why, its destruction pained millions of Hindus all over the country.

The BMMCC recalls that the Muslims have always been prepared to accommodate their Hindu brethren by giving their consent to the construction of a Ram Mandir, as a gesture of respect for the Hindu sentiments, west to the site of the Babari Masjid on a part of the disputed land. In fact, the Convener himself had proposed this to the late Pramacharya of Kanchi Peetam Shri Chandra Sekhar Saraswati.

The BMMCC appreciates the suggestion of the Shankaracharya to the VHP not to press for the immediate construction of a mandir on the site of the Babari Masjid but requests him not to raise false expectation for the construction of mandir in anticipation of the final judicial verdict".

A Letter on Shankaracharya's Stand

Sri Jayendra Saraswati says in his interview (November 8) that the Ayodhya problem is over. "The Lord has reclaimed his birthplace. There is no more any issue". This is exactly what the BJP extremists have been saying all these years. It is unfortunate that His Holiness has taken the same stance...

(Source: Mira Pande in The Times of India, 1 December, 1997)

Shahabuddin's Letter to Home Minister L.K. Advani, 11 May, 1998

The VHP has claimed that the construction of the proposed Ram Temple at Ayodhya has already begun.

As you are aware, the disputed land, including the site of the Babari Masjid is in the custody of the Central Government as ordered by the Supreme Court and the status quo shall be maintained till the title thereto is decided by the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court.

I would request you to confirm that the status quo in respect of the disputed land including the site of the Babari Masjid is being maintained and that no construction of any sort has been undertaken, with or without the approval of the Central Government, by any person or organisation.

Government's Reply

I am in receipt of your letter dated 11th May, 1998 regarding maintaining the status quo in respect of the disputed land in Ayodhya.

(Source: Home Minister L.K. Advani's Letter No. I-460/98-HMP dated 19 May, 1998 to S. Shahabuddin)

Sage Advice

Editorial, The Times of India, 1 May, 1998

Politicians and parties ... would do well to heed the call of the Shankaracharya of Kanchi, Swami Jayendra Saraswati, to keep off the Ram Janambhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy... The sage of Kanchi has urged politicians to stop any further dabbling in this issue in the greater interest of the country. Instead, he has suggested that they should turn their attention to the pressing problems of poverty, price rise, unemployment and tensions from across the border... He feels that for all practical purposes the subject had been closed after the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya, and whether or not there should be a temple in its place could be decided only by the followers of both religions... His message carries particular significance for the BJP-led government.

... The suggestion now made by the Shankaracharya can be seized by the BJP to free itself of the pressures of rabid elements in the Hindutva ranks, and move towards a reconciliation...

Murli Manohar Joshi is misleading the House. He talks of new technology and makes the poor worship a brick (implying the bricks collected for construction of a temple in Ayodhya)

- Laloo Prasad Yadav, President, RJD

**On Resignation of 'Tainted Ministers'
Jayalalitha's letter to Prime Minister,
18 April, 1998 (Extracts)**

... It is rather strange and unfortunate that there has been a failure on your part in adopting the same set of principles with regard to persons who are similarly placed, if not placed in a worse position than Mr. Sedapatti R. Muthiah. To quote a few, Mr. Buta Singh ... has been chargesheeted for allegedly bribing JMM MPs... A Constitution bench of the Supreme Court delivered a significant judgement in the JMM bribery case on 17.4.1998 and ruled very clearly that trial must proceed against Mr. Buta Singh. ...

Mr. Ram Jethmalani ... is reported to have made certain admissions under oath before a Metropolitan Magistrate Court in Bombay with regard to the illegal receipt of 200,000 U.S. dollars while abroad, which amounted to violation of Section 8(1) of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act. The Enforcement Directorate is reported to have initiated action suo moto on the above information and after investigation sought the Prime Minister's sanction to prosecute Mr. Ram Jethmalani for the offence under Section 8(1) of the FERA...

There are also several other allegations against some more members of your Cabinet who are facing criminal charges. Apart from the fact that the above incidents should be within your knowledge based on information, it is also to be mentioned that some Members of Parliament have sought the above acts to your notice through letters addressed to the Prime Minister. Having regard to the above facts it would be in the fitness of things that you should adopt a uniform policy/standard by requesting the Ministers in your Cabinet who are involved in criminal cases to submit their resignation from the Cabinet forthwith.

... I would think that it would be proper for the Prime Minister to drop them from the Cabinet... If however, you are of the view that accusation cannot take the place of proof and should not be the basis to oust the Ministers from their positions, then it is legitimate that the said principle is extended and applied to Mr. Muthiah also by reinducting Mr. Muthiah into the Cabinet forthwith.

(Source: The Hindu, 19 April, 1998)

CPI Demands

Resignation of Advani and Others

Central Secretariat Statement, 8 May, 1998

The CPI has taken serious objections to interpretation from the PMO sources to dub the act of demolition of a place of worship as a political act. This is mockery of politics and adds insult to the injury inflicted on the minorities.

**On Removal of Chargesheeted Ministers
Shahabuddin's Letter to
The Hindustan Times, 4 May, 1998**

Shri Vir Sanghvi in his article "Guilt and Innocence" (HT, 1 May) has pleaded for the principle, innocent till proven guilty." His analysis which covers the chargesheeted or tainted Ministers; overlooks two factors: First, submission of the chargesheet by the CBI in the case preceded by intensive investigation by a specialised official agency namely the CBI and secondly, the subsequent acceptance of the chargesheet and framing of charges by the Court.

He has also overlooked the anomaly in the case of a member of the Union Council of Ministers that the State itself is the Prosecutor in a criminal case, and since the Government is nothing but the instrument of the State and because under the parliamentary system the Council of Ministers has collective responsibility, how can the Government prosecute itself?

In the case of L.K. Advani, the Home Minister, the situation is yet more anomalous, to the point of being ridiculous. As the Home Minister, he is himself involved in directing the prosecution and appointing Judges!

However, I endorse Shri Sanghvi's view that no distinction can and should be made between a criminal charge involving moral turpitude and another involving assault on person, property or honour of an individual. The violation of the dignity of the Constitution and the State and of a community as a whole cannot be brushed aside as being 'political'. There may be political motivation but that does not provide legal immunity against criminal prosecution when the Laxman Rekha between the propagation of the political view and the commission of a criminal offence in pursuance thereof is crossed.

My own view is that considering the delays inherent in our judicial system as well as the rising level of criminalisation of politics, a healthy polity cannot afford governance by those accused of criminal offence, till the cases are finally decided. However, a line needs to be drawn when a person in public life is only accused or charged by the investigating agency and when a prima facie case is established to the satisfaction of the Court and the Court decides to frame charges.

In fact the demolition ... is a heinous crime - a crime against the secular foundations of the country and its Constitution. How can people alleged to have a role in such a crime remain ministers? How can any one expect an impartial probe and justice when a chargesheeted person heads the Home ministry? Therefore, the CPI demands their resignation or removal from the Cabinet, immediately.

Kuldip Nayar on Morality of Chargesheeted Ministers

... Home Minister L.K. Advani, Human Resource Minister Murli Manohar Joshi and the State Education Minister Uma Bharti have been chargesheeted in the Babri Masjid demolition case. Jayalalitha did not name them but it was clear to everybody that she meant all the three.

... Crime is after all a crime. They have been accused of complicity in the destruction of a structure that represented India's pluralistic society, its composite culture. And how can anyone forget the enormity of Hindu-Muslim riots in the wake of Babari Masjid's destruction? According to an Intelligence Bureau report, the killing and the looting were the worst since Partition.

In fact, the three should have themselves refused to join the Cabinet, knowing well that they had been chargesheeted... Those who claim to stand by values cannot afford to compromise for the same of office. He, and for that matter, the BJP itself, have lessened their credibility.

The President also cannot run away from his responsibility. He tries to give an impression that he is not a rubber stamp. But he tends to go along. He was not bound to accept the list of ministers that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee had submitted. He should not have administered oath to such persons who had been chargesheeted. The nation would have been saved from the embarrassment its faces today. ...

... The BJP and its allies are trying to differentiate between those who have been chargesheeted and those against whom the cases are pending. How does it matter as long as their crime has been delineated? The rest is the bureaucratic procedure. At least Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharti should quit because they have been chargesheeted.

Agreed, political cases should not be linked with those relating to corruption. But how do you define political cases? The general understanding is that such cases as are filed against protestors, agitators or processionists, relate to politics. During the entire history of national struggle, the civil disobedience and the acts of defy British authorities were political crimes because they violated the pernicious laws. Surely, the crime committed by Advani and the co-accused not fall in that category. The definition of political crime does not cover those who, despite the Supreme Court's order to protect the Babari Masjid, are involved in its destruction.

In fact, my fear is that the government may not pursue the cases on the Babari Masjid destruction, at least not as rigorously as before. It is difficult to image a CBI officer dragging his boss, Home Minister Advani, to the court or interrogating him to testify how the destruction took place. Officers have already got the message when the persons they chargesheeted are sitting in the chairs of authority. I shall not be surprised if the CBI takes the initiative in the next few days to tell the court that there was very little to proceed in the case...

Placed as the BJP is, it has only two options. Either the party comes clean or makes compromise. The BJP appears to have gone for the latter. The first one would have spread message that it is cut above the rest in toughness and credibility. The second shows that the party has been sucked into the vicious circle of power. It is a sad spectacle because the party is blamed for pursuing communal policy, but not for compromising on principles easily...

... By retaining ministers who have been criminally chargesheeted, the party or, for that matter the government cannot talk standards. Power is necessary but so is the image... Already the Vajpayee government looks too compromising...

(Source: The Radiance Viewswkely, 3-9 May, 1998)

Rafiq Zakaria

On Babari Masjid Question, 10 May, 1998

... The Quran explicitly prohibits the demolition of places of worship of others... That is the reason the Grand Imam of Masjidul Haram, the holiest mosque attached to the Kaaba, stated, during his recent visit to India, that if there was really a temple at Ayodhya where the Babari Masjid stood, then that site could not be used for a mosque and must be handed over to the Hindus. I told Mr. L.K. Advani, the Union Home Minister, when I saw him recently that instead of seeking a solution of the dispute through legislation or even consultation, he should ask the Supreme Court to decide whether a temple existed at the site. There need be no legal quibbling about it: whether the reference should be under this or that article of the Constitution. The judges should be requested to determine the fact of the existence of the temple; if there was one, no Muslim can object to the construction of a temple. The religious position is clear. Moreover, to ascertain the fact should not be difficult because the event took place as late as in the sixteenth century...

(Source: The Hindu, 10 May, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Letter to Rafiq Zakaria

12 May, 1998

I have read your advice to the Home Minister L. K. Advani. It is apparent that you do not realise the long-term affect of your advice. It will keep the judiciary engaged for a century or more to deal with one religious group's claim against another over the original complexion of the places of worship! That is why the Parliament passed the 1991 law to protect the status of places of worship as on 15.8.1947. This is the law which the BJP is committed to repeal.

Secondly, there is no law, even otherwise in our country under which a functional place of worship may be handed over to or taken possession of by, another religious group on a historical ground.

Incidentally, what you have suggested is already

(Continued on page 260)

OIC: Islamic Summit Resolution on Protection of Holy Places

Tehran, 9-11 December, 1997

The Islamic Summit Conference (Session of Dignity, Dialogue, Participation) held in Tehran, 9-11 December, 1997,

... **Recalling** the resolutions of the OIC on the unified stand against the desecration of Islamic Holy Places, specially Resolution No. 3/6-C(IS) of the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference;

Recalling that the OIC made several appeals to the Indian Government to prevent any violation of the sanctity of the Mosque and emphasised the responsibility of the Government of India for safeguarding the inviolability of the mosque and protecting its building against attacks by Hindu extremists;

Expressing deep concern at acts of vandalism and violence perpetrated by Hindu extremists in India against the Muslim minority aimed at uprooting the Islamic culture and culture in India. ...

1. **Recommends** the Member States and the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to follow up the implementation of the operative paragraphs of resolution 18-7-C(IS) of the Seventh Islamic Summit Conference held in Casablanca from 13-15 December, 1994 which states the following: (The Conference):

- (a) **Strongly condemns** the destruction of the historic Babari Mosque in Ayodhya, India, by Hindu extremists and holds them responsible for this outrageous act of desecration and sabotage.
- (b) **Express deep regret** over the failure of the Indian authorities to take appropriate measures to protect this important Muslim holy site.
- (c) **Condemns** the continued killing of thousands of innocent Muslims in various parts of India and expresses deep concern over the safety and security of the Muslim minority in India.
- (d) **Welcomes** in this respect, the decision made by the Supreme Court of India on 24 October 1994 that "the settlement of disputes were outside its jurisdiction".
- (e) **Calls upon** the Government of India to:
- (i) **Ensure** the safety and protection of the Muslims and all Islamic Holy sites throughout India in accordance with its responsibilities and obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments.
- (ii) **Take immediate steps** to implement its solemn commitment to reconstruct the Babari Mosque on its original site, to restore it as a holy place for Muslims, and to punish those guilty of the

religious symbol of the Islamic world.

- (ii) **Remove** the makeshift Hindu temple, put together on the site of the Babari Mosque which is a continuation of the acts of desecration and an affront to the feelings of the Muslims in India and all parts of the Muslim world.

- (iv) **Take immediate steps** to ensure the protection of about 3,000 other mosques especially those at Mathura and Varanasi, which have been the targets of threats and destruction attempts by Hindu extremists.

2. **Requests** the Secretary General to follow up the implementation of this resolution and submit a report thereon to the Ninth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference.

WAC Intercongress on the Destruction and Conservation of Cultural Property Brac (Croatia), 3-7 May, 1998

The Plenary Session of this Intercongress of WAC recognises WAC's commitment to the preservation of the cultural heritage and supports its uncompromising opposition to the infusion of racial, religious or national chauvinistic claims into archaeology. It also unreservedly condemns any use and manipulation of archaeological evidence to justify the destruction of, or damage to, historical, archaeological and sacred structures carried out in order to further such claims or in consequence thereof.

This Intercongress of WAC specifically condemns the demolition of the Babari mosque at Ayodhya in India and appeals to all governments to protect the cultural heritage and sacred sites against vandalism and deplores the failure to do so wherever such failures occur.

This conference condemns the use of archaeology to promote ethnic, religious and political conflict and calls on archaeologists world-wide to respect the full complexity of their country's history in the conservation of all aspects of cultural heritage.

(Continued from page 269)

- (i) The Haj Committee Act 1959 should be thoroughly revised;
- (ii) Composition of the Haj Committee should be changed so as to include in it accredited representatives of the community;
- (iii) Headquarters of the Haj Committee should be shifted from Bombay to Delhi; and
- (iv) A post of a full-time Director (Haj) should be created in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The recommendations were endorsed and adopted by

A Report on Accumulation of Assets and Mutual Recrimination

... Accusations were precipitated by Shabbir Shah's move to donate his property to a trust which will work for the relief and rehabilitation of the widows and orphans in the State. On April 13, 1998, Shabbir Shah disclosed that he possessed property worth Rs 1 crore and declared that he planned to donate it for the benefit of the destitute and needy. Naeem Khan, one-time close lieutenant of Shah and chairman of a breakaway group of pro-Pakistan People's League ... challenged Shah on the ground that since the assets belonged to the People's League and were not Shah's personal Property, he could not unilaterally decide on the fate of the funds. He also alleged that the actual funds were 50 times more than the amount which Shah had disclosed.

Even though in the Valley's past nine years of turbulent history, the inter and intra-party fracas among the separatist groups is nothing new, it is for the first time that the donations accumulated by the parties and persons during this period have made the secessionist leaders to go public against one another.

It is generally felt that the separatist leaders of all hues in Kashmir have amassed large amount of wealth through donations received from different parts of the world, ever since armed insurgency erupted in the Valley in late 1989. Cases are reported to have been registered against quite a few of them for alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act...

While the leaders of All Party Hurriyat Conference, the premier platform of secessionist political groups, have repeatedly denied having received any outside donations, Shabbir Shah, perhaps to score a moral point over others, candidly admitted of receiving cash and kind from abroad.

... It is perhaps impossible to figure out precisely just how many destitutes, widows and orphans were created by the years of turmoil. And the unending violence continued to increase their number terribly. Those who die or have died are definitely prayed for and remembered, but the miseries and helplessness of the survivors, particularly of women and children, are unimaginable...

Instances abound of slain militants' families living in abject misery and it may need volumes of paper to pen down the neglect and disregard that the hapless widows and orphans in the Valley are going through for years. Few people pause to consider their wretched condition, least of all those claiming to champion their cause. It may perhaps sound proper to say that the Kashmiri people are presently going through a phase which leaves little room for assimilating many-sided truths. The harshest truth of all is that the Valley gave birth to class of people in the past nine years who made good fortunes out of the miseries of others.

The so-called leaders in and outside the All Party

Hurriyat Conference are no exception. Few of them can claim to have resisted the glamour and fascination of money and power. Even those who ... used to give sermons on "simple life in simple society" are themselves living a lavish lifestyle equivalent to the five-star culture.

Almost every self-proclaimed leader has a car (a large number of them have more than one), palatial houses, and all the comforts that money can buy. Even the people around them are availing every luxury of life...

(Source: Shabbir Ahmad in *The Pioneer*, 4 May, 1998)

Joint Statement On Outrage in J&K

The killing of ... Prankote ... presumably by some foreign militants on the night of April 17, must be condemned without reservation. It appears to us that the attack was a deliberate attempt to communalise the Kashmir struggle...

The earlier killing ... in Wandhama ... in the Valley received condemnation even from militant leaders like Yasin Malik, Shabbir Shah and other Hurriyat leaders. However, as long as militancy continues in Kashmir, such barbaric attempts to communalise the Kashmir situation are bound to be made by foreign militants. While we have condemned the excesses repeatedly committed by the security forces in Kashmir, we have equally condemned the militancy in that state and have urged upon the leaders of the militants to call on their followers to abandon terrorism and adopt peaceful means to attain their objectives. If violence is voluntarily given up ... further communalisation of the Kashmir issue would stop and it would become much easier to solve the issue in a satisfactory manner.

V.M. Tarkunde
N.D. Pancholi

Balraj Puri
and others

Iqbal Ansari

(Continued from page 248)

the belief that the party will change once it rubs shoulders with them. In this context, one is reminded of the Janata days. It was the Gandhian Jayaprakash Narayan who put his faith in the Jana Sangh and ... was disappointed when it did not break its ties with the RSS. he even said that he felt cheated...

At times Vajpayee ... acts as if he is reciting an ever-lengthening poem, which he memorised through the years. It is superb recitation because he loves both the poem and the audience. But does it say anything beyond words? What one admires in him is that he does it with sincerity, with warmth and with calm and gentle dignity... The nation will feel luckier if he can bring about conciliation in the country, as he has promised in his first address to the people...

(Source: *The Hindustan Times*, 28 March, 1998)

Kerala High Court On Use of PA System in Shrines

Chairman, Guruvayur Devaswom Managing Committee, Guruvayur, Appellant v. Superintendent of Police, Thrissur and another, Respondents.

U.P. SINGH, C.J. AND S. SANKARASUBBAN, J.

Constitution of India, Article 226 - Relief - Use of horn type loudspeakers by petitioner - Guruvayur Devaswom in and around temple premises - Petition for restraining respondent-authorities from removing it - Dismissal of, on basis of circular issued under Police Act banning its use - Expert opinion sought from State Pollution Control Board pending appeal - Report of Board showing there was no noise pollution by use of such type of loudspeakers - Petitioners entitled to use of horn type loudspeakers.

... As per the decision of the Managing Committee, loudspeakers were installed in the temple premises. Through these loudspeakers, every day in the early morning, devotional songs were being transmitted. Further, inside the temple premises, some loudspeakers were installed in order to give directions to the pilgrims as well as to the ... Devaswom staff... Over and above these, during festival season as well as Sabarimala season, the authorities used to instal loudspeakers in a radius of nearly 1 kilometer from the temple... The Devaswom has been following this system for a large number of years. During the month of November 1996, respondents-police officers in the State directed the Managing Committee to remove the horn-type speakers. Otherwise the Committee was threatened that the loudspeakers will be removed by them. Apprehending such removal, the petitioner approached this Court by filing O.P. ...

... Guruvayur Devaswom had approached the Kerala State Pollution Control Board to get expert opinion regarding the use of horn-type loudspeakers. After inspection, the Kerala State Pollution Control Board has filed a reported. The Kerala State Pollution Control Board has been impleaded as a party in this case. The report is as follows:

"The Devaswom is using the PA system for broadcasting devotional song ... every day from 2.30 hrs. to 4.30 hrs. The audibility of the devotional song is limited within the temple area and it is serving the purpose of a wake-up call for devotees who have to attend morning pooja.

... The PA system is used only for very essential announcements about missing persons, lost wallets etc... During Sabarimala season ... In different languages of announcements meant to guide devotee from outside the State. These announcements will continue into the night hours as long as there is arrival of fresh batches of pilgrims... The net work will then be extending up to

Punjab Wakf Board: Performance During 1997-98

During 1997-98, the Punjab Wakf Board has achieved a record revenue collection of Rs. 10.24 crore. This is higher by Rs. 3.07 crore over the previous year... During the year the Board has spent Rs. 2.79 crore on various social welfare and educational development schemes for the benefit of members of minority community and backward classes in its jurisdiction namely Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh. This amount is higher by Rs. 20 lacs from the previous financial year... Ever since the Board was superseded in 1981 by the Central Government its revenue collection has been showing an upward trend and the administration of the Board by serving civil servants resulted in its turn-around from mounting deficit and near bankruptcy to respectable income.

The Board plans to set up Wakf College of Information and Technology in Chandigarh with an estimated cost of Rs.15 lacs for providing quality education in field of information technology ... a maternity hospital at Malerkotla with an estimated cost of Rs.1.95 crore and construction of office-cum-shopping complexes at Rajpura, Khanna, Phillaur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Sangrur, Malerkotla, Ferozepur and Batala in Punjab, Bilaspur, Yamunanagar, Karnal and Ambala in Haryana and Ogli, Amb and Solan in Himachal Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs.2.88 crore and the provision of a mobile dispensary at Malerkotla...

During 1997-98 Rs. 1.2 crore have been spent on schools, vocational centres, computer centres and monthly aid ... to a number of educational and religious institutions being run by the community...

Merit-cum-means ... and special scholarships was granted to 548 students and old-age/orphans pension scheme was availed by 92 persons. Around 1529 widows are also getting pension from the Board and this year an amount of Rs. 19.91 lacs was spent on this account ... 46 educational and vocational centres, run by the public, are receiving monthly aid from the Board. 426 Dini Maktaba/ Masjids and Madrasas are also receiving monthly aid of Rs. 32.59 lacs from the Board.

During the year under review, Shri A.A. Siddiqui, IPS, Addl. DGP, Punjab served as the Administrator.

(Source: Press Release dated 29 April, 1998)

been no complaint by devotees against noise from loudspeakers. The final report filed by the Board was very specific to Guruvayur and was based on field observations...

In the result, Guruvayur Devaswom is allowed to use horn-type amplifiers in and around the Sreekrishna Temple premises as required by them. If any permission is needed from the police authorities, the police authorities are directed to give sanction ... to erect the

Haj Goodwill Delegation, 1998 (Composition)

1. Mohammed Fazal, Leader of the Delegation
2. Mohammad Abdul Ali, former Nawab of Arcot, Deputy Leader
3. (Smt.) M. Fathima Beevi, Governor of Tamil Nadu
4. B.A. Khan, Judge, Madhya Pradesh High Court
5. E. Ahamed, MP
6. P.M. Sayeed, MP
7. Nasru Khan, Minister, Rajasthan
8. Aizaz Rizvi, Minister, UP
9. Ali Mohammed Sagar, Home Minister, J&K
10. Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Minister, UP
11. N. Mohammed Farook, Dy. Speaker, A.P.
12. Abrar Ahmad, Former MOS for Finance and Parliamentary Affairs
13. Abdul Hafiz, Chairman, Delhi Pradesh Minority Morcha, BJP
14. Abdul Sattar, Delhi
15. Abdul Rasheed, Delhi.
16. Aslam Sher Khan, former MOS (PMO)
17. Laljan Bash, former MP (AP).
18. Shakir Hussain Ansari, New Delhi.
19. Hasan Ahmed, New Delhi.
20. Akbar-ul-Hasan Naqvi
21. Khwaja Afzal Nizami, New Delhi
22. Syed Yusuf Ali, Chairman, AP State Waqf Board
23. Mohd. Mahir Azad, former MLA (Rajasthan)
24. Usmani, Badaun
25. Mohd. Arif, New Delhi
26. Tahseer Ahmad Ismail, Ujjain
27. Umair Ahmad Ilyasi, New Delhi
28. Shakeel Ahmad, Joint Secretary, M/o Welfare - Member Secretary

Estimated Expenditure

Accommodation	}	
Transport	}	
D.A.	}	Rs.2,08,,51,000
Telephone	}	
Entertainment Grant	}	

(Source: Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India's Letter No. 769/JS(Haj)/98 dated 23 April, 1998 to S. Shahabuddin)

NCM on Haj Legislation

After the Mina fire tragedy following the annual Haj pilgrimage of 1997, the Commission had recommended to the Government that the Haj Committee Act 1959 must be suitably amended to streamline the State supervision of arrangements for the Indian pilgrims.

Later, the Chairman addressed two important letters to Prime Minister I.K. Gujral and the Minister of State for External Affairs Saleem Iqbal Sherwani suggesting that:

(Continued on page 266)

Stop Official Delegation

Shahabuddins's Letter to PM, 28 April, 1998

I am surprised to find that your Government sent a Goodwill Delegation to Saudi Arabia for Haj, 1998.

The Delegation consisted of 29 members of whom at least 10 were unknown non-entities. At an estimated expenditure exceeding Rs. 2 crores, one is left to wonder how much goodwill such a delegation generate among the people of Saudi Arabia or the Muslim community of India!

You may kindly recall that in 1978, as Foreign Minister, you had agreed with my proposal to stop such Haj Delegation. The then Prime Minister had agreed and had in my presence told the Leader of the Haj Delegation, 1978 (which had by then been issued) that such Sarkari Haj will not continue. Unfortunately in 1979 he was no longer the Prime Minister and the incoming Governments, since then, have thought it best to continue with this blatant exercise in political patronage.

At that time the Delegation consisted of 3-4 persons. Now the size has risen to 25-30. At that time, the cost of the public exchequer was a lakh or so. Now it is in crores.

A Goodwill Delegation at the time of Haj seasons no useful as every one in Saudi Arabia is too busy for a fruitful exchange of views. If the purpose is commercial, it can be well-served by deputing one VIP who should gather around him 3 or 4 eminent personalities from among the pilgrims themselves to convey our felicitations to the Custodian of the Holy Places, H.M. the King of Saudi Arabia and to partake of his 'mass' dinars.

On the other hand, the presence of such a Delegation consumes the working capacity of the Embassy of India and the C.G. of India and detracts them for paying their undivided attention to the pilgrims.

I request you that the utility of this exercise should be reassessed and no such Delegation should be deputed for Haj, 1999.

'No Quota, No Subsidy'

Shahabuddin's Letter to MEA, 11 May, 1998

The Chairman, Haj Committee has thankfully acknowledged the cooperation of the External Affairs and the C.G.I. during Haj, 1998. But he has floated an idea of freezing the Haj quota at 66,000.

In my view, there is no justification for a freeze. Indeed, the Government, as I have suggested in the past, simultaneously abolish the Haj Quota (which has no meaning now) and the Haj charter subsidy.

I would also suggest that through better liaison with the Saudi Arabian Consul authorities, the particulars of pilgrims travelling on regular passports on their own or through Haj tour operators should be obtained, so that the Government/Haj Committee have a complete record of

(Continued on page 270)

Mohammed Iqbal's Report on Ajmer Disturbances, February, 1998

Unprecedented violence ... has not only left the residents of the city aghast, but also does not portend well for this land of composite cultures. Never before had this popular pilgrimage centre ... witnessed a quarrel over trifles snowballing into a major conflict...

The sad aspect ... is that it all happened in the vicinity of the final resting place of the Sufi mystic, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The historic Dargah of the Sufi saint is revered equally by both the communities, and the sudden eruption of violence in the city, known for its communal harmony, is indeed baffling as one views the stream of pilgrims visiting the mausoleum again after restoration of peace.

... Normalisation ... is only a superficial phenomenon, as the undercurrent is that of a strong resentment against the District Administration, police machinery and the local political leaders. What initially started as a quarrel over buying of trinkets first changed into communal clashes and then converted into hostilities between police and the local residents.

The minor dispute between a group of "Zaireen" (pilgrims) comprising both Hindus and Muslims, and a local shopkeeper, on February 17 soon turned into communal violence when a huge crowd gathered on the spot and took sides. The police stepped in to control the situation only when the hooligans had torched a number of shops and the rioting mob had started attacking each other... The residents ... blame it for taking "wrong" actions.

That the policemen themselves were the targets of attack ... was clear from the version ... of the District Collector, Mr. Karni Singh Rathore. He said that hundreds of people, perched on the roof of the ... entrance gate of Dargah, were throwing stones on police personnel. A lathi-charge could disperse the rioters on the road, but it was difficult to deal with the attackers ... on the rooftop.

While the District Administration insists that police fires five rounds "in the air" to quell the rioting, the Khadims of Dargah allege that the firing was directed at the historic gate... Anjuman Khuddam Syedzagdan, claimed that there were marks of bullets on the gate and the policemen, while firing, stepped with their shoes on the staircase.

The Khadims, who claim to be descendents of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and number about 2,000 launched an indefinite dharna at the entrance gate during the curfew to protest against the alleged firing. The District Administration ... promised to hold an inquiry into the matter... Then the Khadims lifted the dharna.

What added fuel to the fire over the tussle of local

populace with the police were the incidents of February 20, when a crowd insisted upon offering Friday prayers in the historic "Dhai Din Ka Jhonpra" mosque, situated at a distance from the Dargah, violating the curfew in force. Some people had succeeded in entering the mosque, who were allegedly pulled out by policemen and others were dispersed by lathi-charge, ... teargas and firing in the air.

The District Administration has come in for severe criticism for its "mishandling" of situation on Friday. Though it had been apprised in advance of the importance of congregational prayers of Friday... The District Administration failed to take a final decision on relaxation of curfew till Friday morning.

... Mr. Rathore said that information about no relaxation in the curfew had been supplied to the local newspapers which had carried it (but) no announcement ... was made over loudspeakers. ...

As a number of lethal weapons were allegedly used in the attack on police, a massive clamp-down was launched to unearth the arms in the houses in Andarkot. The local residents allege that the police and Rajasthan Armed Constabulary (RAC) jawans barged into their houses, damaged household goods in the name of search, beat up the menfolk, misbehaved with the womenfolk and took away huge amounts of cash and jewellery. (One could see) the furniture and doors badly damaged and the household goods, utensils and clothes scattered around in several houses. ...

... Police have so far arrested 99 people on various charges... People claimed that the majority of these cases were false and fabricated.

The Police said that they were not from a single community, though the majority of them belonged to one particular community. But he admitted that the shopkeeper who initially started the dispute had not been arrested, as he was not a "named accused". ...

(Thus) the way the situation was handled ... turned it into a fight between the police and a community...

(Source: The Hindu, 28 February, 1998)

(Continued from page 269)

Haj pilgrims for the year. The information can be computerised so that no Haji should normally be permitted a second Haj within 5 years.

Later, the pilgrims passes may be abolished and replaced by short-term (1 year) regular passports.

Once the Haj charter fare subsidy is abolished, the Haj Committee - and not the Air India - should be responsible for charter fare negotiation with the bidders in an international tender with technical advice from DGCA and Air India

Mahesh Vijapurkar On Srikrishna Commission Report

The Srikrishna Commission which probed the communal riots in Mumbai, during December 1992 and January 1993, has seen the Muslim rioting in the wake of the Ayodhya demolition on December 6, 1992, as a spontaneous reaction to the incident and the later Hindu response as engineered.

While the Shiv Sena chief, Mr. Bal Thackeray, comes in for very adverse mention for his not insignificant role, the Commission has also held the then Sudhakarrao Naik Government responsible for not being able to handle the riots.

The one-man panel headed by Justice B.N. Srikrishna, which laboured for nearly five years, has not gone with Mr. Naik's contention that the army was not available in time to render assistance to civil administration. The commission has also quantified the number of persons who lost their lives community-wise...

... That the contents are quite embarrassing to the Government, especially the Shiv Sena, is evident from the manner in which the report is being handled.

It is now known that three elements - spontaneity of the Muslim response to the Ayodhya demolition, the Sena's involvement in provoking a communal dimension and the failure of the Naik Government in coping with the crisis - are the highlights of the report.

The 700-page report handed over to the Maharashtra Government in mid-February remains shrouded in secrecy... All accounts ... indicate that it is meticulously documented and "explosive" with one source saying, "It is like a cache of RDX. No wonder it is being handled with care".

... The least the Government would like is to have the courts telling it that the report should be published and, if forced to, the Sena would like to see how the contents could be exploited to consolidate the Hindu voters. Another riot as a consequence to the report's publication, is feared by the administration ... and is being cited in support of the argument...

The BJP, which helped vitiate the air by its "Maharati" programmes in retaliation to the Muslim practice of spilling out on the streets from the congested mosques for their Friday prayers, too, is mentioned. But the BJP's discomfiture has to do with being allied with a party that has been named in the report...

The Shiv Sena ... has publicly demanded that Vajpayee intervene to ensure that a report presumed to be partisan is not published.

(Source: The Hindu, 13 May, 1998)

Supreme Court On Ancient Monuments

Rajeev Mankotia, Petitioner v. Secretary to the President of India and others, Respondents.

K. RAMASWAMY AND G.B. PATTANAIK, JJ.

Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (24 of 1958, Section 4 - Historical monument - Preservation of ... directed Government of India to maintain all national monuments under the respective Acts and ensure that all of them are properly maintained...

... The cultural and historical heritage of India and the beauty and grandeur of the monuments, sculptures secured through breathless and passionate labour workmanship, craftsmanship and the skills of the Indian architects, artists and masons is continued to be preserved. They are pride of Indians and places of public visit. The tourist visitors should be properly regulated. Collections of funds by way of admission/entrance fee should be conscientiously accounted for and utilised for their upkeep and maintenance under respect regulations/rules. Adequate annual budgetary provisions should be provided... Equally all the State Governments would do well vis-a-vis monuments of State importance, though given power under Entry 12, List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution...

(Source: AIR 1997 Supreme Court 2766)

CPI(M): Politbureau on Delay in Publication of Srikrishna Commission Report

22 April, 1998

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the dilatory tactics ... by the BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra in further delaying in making public the findings of the Srikrishna Commission Report ... given ... to the government on February 16...

... The state government is suppressing the report in order to shield many top leaders of the BJP-Shiv Sena who were responsible...

The BJP-Shiv Sena government cannot be allowed to subvert democracy in such a blatant manner... The BJP-Shiv Sena combine's culpability in protecting the guilty is now thoroughly exposed.

The CPI(M) demands immediate publication of this report and firm action against those found guilty...

If the BJP is committed to secularism, it should respect the Places of Worship Act, 1947, and abide by the judgement on Ayodhya dispute"

- Dr. Manmohan Singh, Congress Leader

Objectives and Purposes of AKA Urdu University,

Shahabuddin's Letter to VC, 11 May, 1998

I have before me a press report on a Symposium in Patna on 5 May, 1998 regarding the proposal to establish a regional Centre of the Maulana Azad Urdu University in that city. You are reported to have stated that the University proposes to provide distance education through the medium of Urdu in all modern subjects and that the University will have courses which are employment-oriented. For distance education, your University is reported to have entered into agreements with the IGNOU, New Delhi and Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad.

To my mind, the provision of distance education through the medium of Urdu cannot be the principal object of the establishment of the Urdu University. This facility can well be provided with very little additional investment by the IGNOU. Indeed, the agreements that have been entered into will only imply that the courses will be designed by the existing open universities and they shall be translated into Urdu by your University. This work alone does not justify the establishment of the Urdu university because such translation of the existing academic material into Urdu can well be undertaken by the existing open universities through a team of translators.

To my mind, the main objective of the Urdu University whose establishment I had very warmly welcomed was to revive the use of Urdu as a medium of instruction for under-graduate and post-graduate courses in various subjects and faculties with a view to gradually move towards technical and professional courses. For this it is absolutely essential that the Urdu University shall establish basic facilities and faculties in areas of Arts, Science, Commerce, Education, Social Sciences and Humanities.

To the best of my knowledge, although the University came into official existence some time back, no such academic facilities yet exist on its campus in Hyderabad. Secondly, the Urdu University should affiliate Urdu medium degree colleges throughout the country.

I had drawn the attention to the then Prime Minister Mr. Gujral that, if necessary, the Act should be amended, so that the University provides basic University level education through the medium of Urdu and affiliate Urdu-medium colleges throughout the country.

Thirdly, the Urdu University should offer vocational and functional and professional courses through the medium of Urdu which have a demand in the employment market.

I do not know how the priorities have been determined. I would be grateful to be informed whether the Urdu University shall undertake any under-graduate teaching through the medium of Urdu from the academic

Shahabuddin's Plea for Electoral Rolls in Urdu

Letter to CEC, 24 April, 1998

At present the policy of choice of language for printing electoral rolls and ballot papers is weighted against the linguistic minorities in any state. I request you to reconsider it in the light of the following suggestions:

- 1) Apart from the principal language of the State, any minority language, being a Scheduled Language, which is spoken by at least 10% of the electors in any parliamentary or a sector thereof or any assembly constituency, may be used for printing the electoral roll and the ballot paper of that constituency.
- 2) The minority language shall be so used, only if there is a demand in writing from a representative body of the linguistic minority in that constituency.
- 3) The linguistic data of the last decennial census shall be the basis for the count.

Shahabuddin on Urdu Journalism

Letter to Press Council of India, 27.3.1998

I am appalled by the report of the Kazim Rizvi Sub-Committee's Report on Urdu journalism which is no more than a rehash of a report which is somewhat out of date and has gathered dust for 25 years.

The Committee has not gone into two aspects which are of utmost importance: the fall in readership of Urdu press, particularly of 'ghost' newspapers in Urdu, with phantom circulation figures, serving as a means of political patronage and means of livelihood.

Rationally speaking, why should public money be spent on advertising in such papers with very small circulation.

If the Government, as a matter of policy, wish to promote small, local papers, it should and would have a common policy for all languages. Urdu press cannot ask for special terms or preferential treatment.

Unless Urdu is taught to the younger generation - to Urdu-speaking children as First Language and to some at least of non-Urdu-speaking children as Second Language circulation of Urdu press will fall steadily with diminishing income from advertisements. Patronage cannot revive a gasping patient; only oxygen can. How long can the Urdu press survive with artificially inflated figures of circulation.

In one word, Urdu journalism must stand on the rock of its readership, must struggle for teaching of Urdu atleast in schools and fight against hostile discrimination by the government and other organs of State. It should not hold a begging bowl.

Urdu-medium higher secondary schools (intermediate) and degree colleges throughout the country.

I would also like to know the brief particulars of the various professional courses that University plans to

Salman Khursheed on Urdu

When contemporary scholars discuss the destiny of Urdu in India they often underscore the history of the language and its uniquely secularly character and traditions... Less scholarly assessments emphasise Urdu's linguistic melodiousness and sweetness. Most admirers of the language link Urdu's decline with partition...

It can be argued that the decline of Urdu has largely been caused by insensitive policies. After Independence, Urdu was undermined at all the educational institutions of northern India, the region where it was born flourished... North India's culture of yore had already suffered a blow with the migration of educated Muslims. Contemporary Urdu speakers in India are mainly lower middle class Muslims who obtain their education mostly in dini madaris (religious learning centres). They learn Urdu not for its synchronic value or for it being a living reality of their cultural and social life but because it appears to them to be the only avenue to the discovery of their religion and access to a livelihood. Their contribution to Urdu as a literary language remains negligible. To make matters worse, there are no real avenues of income for persons equipped only with Urdu.

... Many Urdu academics at the universities are products of minimal competition. Their degrees apart, they have little exposure or opportunity to develop and fine tune their academic skills and competence. Students at universities generally opt for Urdu as a soft, last option having failed to secure admission in their preferred subjects. These reluctant students in due course obtain masters degrees and later even Ph.Ds in Urdu. Thus the vicious cycle of mediocrity permeates the world of Urdu learning. Clearly this situation will persist unless Urdu is included in the syllabi of primary education and professionally taught, as well as attractive professional opportunities offered at the other end.

... Teaching Urdu as an optional subject in schools and colleges, particularly for Muslims and certainly for other students who wish to learn it, would be immensely salutary... The state's myopia has resulted in its cultivating a whole breed of pro-establishment Urdu intellectuals and scholars now somewhat contemptuously referred to as Urduwallahs. Most of these people are destined to miss the big time and spend their energies looking for a chance to enter the establishment and be accommodated. They are so pre-occupied with their own survival that they unwittingly become indifferent to the survival of Urdu, despite it being their *raison d'être*. Urdu thus faces a threat not only from an insensitive bureaucracy but from the Urduwallahs themselves.

It will be gross self-deception to hope that the use of Urdu in popular films and ghazals will be adequate in reviving and preserving Urdu culture, especially as the younger generations grow increasingly ignorant of the

great literary tradition and heritage of the language. To save Urdu from extinction ... it is essential to introduce Urdu as a subject at every level of the education system. If future generations remain ignorant of Urdu literature, it will result in an irrecoverable loss for our common cultural heritage. The survival of Urdu is necessary not merely for aesthetic reasons but also to save a valuable dimension of the secular character of the world's largest democracy.

(Source: The Times of India, 21 April, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Response

The Times of India, 24 April, 1998

Apropos Mr. Salman Khurshid's article on "Dying Urdu" (21 April), there is a national consensus on the mother tongue being the medium of instruction at the primary level. I, therefore, question Mr. Khurshid's assertion that Urdu-speaking masses think otherwise. He may be right as far as secondary, higher secondary and college education is concerned. At the secondary levels, it is not adequate to introduce Urdu as an optional subject but as the compulsory First Language for Urdu-speaking children. Urdu should also be introduced as an additional language for specified administrative purposes in Panchayats, Prakhands, Nagars, Zilas and States in which Urdu-speaking people constitute at least 10% of the population.

If the roots are not nourished, the tree is bound to wither away no matter how the branches are watered, how many eulogies are rendered to extol Urdu's sweetness and its secular traditions and character.

Ashish Sharma

On Ghalib in Urdu's Future

... While successive generations have grown up on Ghalib's poetry, the fifty years since Independence, the very period that Gopi Chand Narang identifies as the time of Ghalib's belated blossoming across the world, have seen a perceptible decline of the language in the land of its birth. Ghalib's eternal appeal may then well turn out to be the brightest ray of hope for Urdu-wallahs whose complaints against official apathy are justified. Urdu may yet thrive on Ghalib... For the uninitiated, his poetry still remains the best introduction to the poet.

(Source: The Indian Express, 22 March, 1998)

Albright, Gujral and Urdu

Assistant Secretary Inderfurth called to my attention on Urdu couplet which he said you have recited: 'O, morning tide, come this way too. Some people are still watching the storm from the shores. They are only wetting their feet rather than taking the plunge.' "In the spirit of that verse, you did not shrink from the turbulent sea of foreign affairs in an innovative foreign policy. I believe you will be long remembered for this spirit and for that policy."

(Source: The Hindu, March 29, 1998)

Noted Economist Abusaleh Shariff

On Relative Educational Backwardness of Muslim Indians

Educational Levels and Schooling

Educationally Muslims are much worse off than the rest of population, however, next only to the SCs and the STs. Only about 50 per cent of Muslims are literate compared with about 60 per cent of the caste - Hindus. Literacy is a stock measure and it changes slowly over time. But a matter of concern is that the enrollment rate among the Muslims is only 62 per cent compared with about 72 per cent for all India and 77 per cent for the caste - Hindus. The enrollment is a flow variable and can be improved within a relatively shorter period of time. But a larger disparity in enrollment among the Muslims compared with the disparity in levels of literacy suggests that the Muslim female enrollment rate in elementary schooling have been falling in the immediate past. This also suggest that some sections of the Muslims are unable to utilise the schooling and educational opportunities provided by the respective state governments. While there is considerable difference in terms of level of literacy between communities, the gender differentials measured in terms of the female-male ratios are marginal between the Muslims and the overall population.

Another important fact to highlight is the onset of private schooling across India, more so in northern Indian states such as, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Muslims send their children relatively more to the private elementary schools compared with all other communities. There appears to be some sort of resentment on the part of Muslims to send their children to government schools. Since, schooling and education is a state subject important policy initiatives have to be taken by the states to set right this anomaly in providing equal opportunities and appropriate education at least at the primary and elementary levels. A thorough investigation preferably by the national efforts should be initiated to find out as to why the Muslims children are being withdrawn from the publicly provided, the so-called free schooling in India. Allowing this trend to continue is also likely to affect female education among the Muslims much more. One should take a serious note of this and appropriate policy interventions have to be initiated taking help from multinational agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank.

Considering education as one of the main parameter of human development, clearly the Muslims are larger in most of the output indicators such as the literacy rate, enrollment rate, discontinuation rate and percentage of population (aged 17+ years) completing matriculation. A

relatively greater dependence on private schooling, which is disproportionately expensive and especially given the low economic conditions, seems to be due to compulsions emerging out of inappropriate education.

Levels on Literacy and Schooling

		SC	ST	High Caste Hindus	Muslims	All
Literacy rate	Total	39.9	41.5	59.4	49.9	53.5
	Male	51.4	53.4	72.3	59.5	65.6
	Female	26.0	28.2	45.0	38.0	40.1
Enrollment rate	Total	60.3	62.5	77.4	61.6	71.4
	Male	67.6	69.6	83.0	66.2	77.1
	Female	51.5	54.7	71.1	56.6	64.8
Discontinuation rate	Total	7.2	7.0	5.5	6.9	6.0
	Male	6.6	5.7	4.1	6.4	4.8
	Female	8.0	8.8	7.3	7.7	7.6
% Matriculation 15+ years	Total	4.9	10.2	5.9	8.6	--
	Male	3.2	5.8	11.1	13.3	9.8
	Female	3.8	6.9	12.3	14.4	10.8
Private Schools	Total	2.3	4.2	9.3	11.9	8.3
	Male					
	Female					
Annual Household Expenditure on Schooling	Govt.					
	Schools	397	450	573	515	539
	Aided					
Private	Schools	664	544	717	542	665
	Total	869	832	1338	1247	1262

(Proceeding of IOS Seminar on Muslims in India since Independence, 29 March, 1998)

University of Delhi, Ph.Ds, 1 March, 1998

Faculty	Total	Muslim
Arts	78	3 Urdu 2, Buddhist Studies 1
Science	81	0
Law	2	1
Medical Science	4	1
Education	8	1
Technology	9	1
Social Sciences	25	2
Music	11	1
Math. Sciences	9	0
Manag. Studies	5	0
Applied Science	17	0
Applied Social Sciences	3	3
Commerce & Business	5	0
Total	257	13 5.1%

Eminent Economist Abusaleh Shariff

On Relative Economic and Social Deprivation of Indian Muslims

Economic Conditions

The distribution of population according to 'monthly per capita expenditure' class is a good indicator of relative levels of living. Accordingly about 53 per cent of Muslims fall in to the category of less than Rs. 160 MPCE, this percentage was only 36 among Hindus (NSSO). Over all, the Head Count Poverty and Capability Poverty Ratios are considerably higher for the Muslims compared with the all India average and the caste - Hindus. The percentage of population below the poverty line is 43 for Muslims compared with only 32 for caste - Hindus and 39 for the whole population.

A recent survey conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in 1994 provides distribution of household income for various religious and caste categories for rural areas. Muslims on the whole are worse off than their Hindu counterparts. Not only is the household income of Muslims only Rs.22,807, 23 per cent lower compared with Rs. 29,786 for the high caste - Hindus, but also it is eleven per cent less than the national average for rural India that is Rs.25,653 in 1993-94 (see table below). The differentials in fact get widened when the per capita income is considered mainly because of relatively larger family size among the Muslims. This brings to fore the lack of access to asset and other types of employment and wage stability for the Muslims. Land is the most preferred and valued asset across India; but 43 per cent of Muslims households are landless compared with only 30 per cent among the Hindus. Hindus also have a relative advantage of owning land in larger size class, for example, while one-fifth of Hindus own five acres or more of land, only one-tenth of Muslims belong to this category. On an average the high caste Hindus own 5.1 acres of land compared with only 3.6 acres for Muslims.

The official statistics suggests that only 36 per cent of Muslims undertake agricultural occupations compared with 44 per cent among all Hindus (including the SCs and the STs). The proportion of income derived from agriculture and allied activities among the Muslims is much lower than the Hindus; where as their share of income is disproportionately large from artisan and industrial work. This is at the outset appears a positive feature, but in fact it is not. In rural areas stable and higher level of income is derived from land and agriculture followed only by the salaried class. In Urban areas only 29 per cent of Muslims are employed in regular wage/salaried occupations compared with 47 per cent of all Hindus. Muslims by and large (53 per cent) are the self-employed in India. It is also found that the Muslims in rural areas depend relatively more on wage

labour and the number of days of wage employment is also higher, more so in case of women. The work participation rate of Muslims is much lower suggesting relatively higher unemployment rate. Employment of Muslim women in any sort of occupation is extremely low.

Levels on Income and Material Well-being

	SC	ST	High Caste Hindus	Muslims	All
Household Income (Rs.)	19556	17465	29786	22807	25653
Per Capita Income (Rs.)	3504	3237	5113	3678	4485
Work Participation} Male	51.6	52.8	52.2	48.0	51.9
Rate } Female	27.7	23.0	16.6	9.6	18.4
Source of Income :Agricul.	55.6	37.7	60.0	44.1	55.0
: Artisanhip	2.7	5.7	4.2	8.3	4.5
: Salaried	14.8	15.2	16.3	14.7	16.5
Land Holding/Reporting					
Household (acres)	4.3	2.8	5.1	3.6	4.5
%age Kutch Houses	47.0	66.6	47.7	65.9	55.4
%age Electric Connections	29.7	30.7	50.1	30.0	42.9
%age Protected Water	61.6	72.8	72.2	78.1	72.0
%age Having Toilet	12.2	8.3	15.2	26.7	15.3
%age Using PDS	37.5	32.1	34.2	21.8	33.2
Poverty Head Count Ratio	51.0	50.0	32.0	43.0	39.0
Capability Poverty %	68.0	60.0	49.0	56.0	52.0

(Source: Seminar Paper, IOS, 29 March, 1998)

AP's G.O. on Rural Development

Programmes: Proportionate Benefits under IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM etc. to Minorities

Memo No. 10519/RD.III/96-I dated 18.3.1996

Government have taken a policy decision for the advancement of Minorities. Among other issues, it has been decided to earmark proportionate percentage of funds for the benefits of Minorities under select anti-poverty programmes like IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM and all other Rural Developmental Programmes in the Districts.

The District Collectors and Chairmen, District Rural Development Agencies and all Project Directors of District Rural Development Agencies ... are therefore, requested to identify the Minorities in Rural Areas below the Poverty line in their respective districts, and earmark funds in proportion to the percentage of population in Rural Areas of the District to the District population while implementing all Rural Development Programmes like IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM etc., hereafter...

They are also requested to open an additional column in the progress report to indicate the actual number of minority/beneficiaries, for Government review, even though the same is not provided in the present proforma.

Reservation for Muslims in Public Employment and Legislature

**K.R. Malkani's Letter in
The Hindustan Times, 2 May, 1998**

... There is no doubt that the Muslim presence in various services and professions is very low. But is that due to 'prejudice'? According to a study, while Muslim population in India is 12 per cent plus, Muslim school population is only about 2 per cent. Can this situation be attributed to non-Muslim 'prejudice' against Muslims?

Government schools are open to all. If Muslims don't avail of these facilities and help themselves, nobody else can. As the Urdu saying goes, "Himmat Mardan, Maddad Khuda (God helps those who help themselves).

... Dr. Rafiq Zakaria says that while Muslims are 12 per cent plus in a population of 100 crores, there are only 20 Muslim MPs in a Lok Sabha of almost 550.

However, it is not a fact that scores of non-Muslim MPs get elected only because Muslims vote for them in a big way? Would the Congress in Maharashtra have done as well as it did, but for the Muslim support thrown behind it by Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party? Muslim influence on Indian polity cannot be judged by the number of Muslim MPs. It will have to be judged by the number of MPs who get elected only because they are favoured by Muslims.

Supreme Court on Reservation in Promotion

Suresh Chandra, Appellant v. J.B. Agarwal and others, Respondents.

K.RAMASWAMY AND G.B. PATTANAIK, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 16(4) - Reservation - Promotional post - Can be reserved by applying rule of roster.

(Source: AIR 1997 Supreme Court 2487)

Shahabuddin's Response to The Times of India, 5 May, 1998

Apropos, Shri Patwant's Singh's plea for a Sikh Judge in the Supreme Court (TOI, 3 May, 1998), I would like to state that unless and until the proposed Indian Judicial Service sees the light of the day and the principle of reservation is extended to the Judicial Service and to religious groups in public employment, there is no way to ensure the presence of a Sikh or for that matter, a Muslim Judge in the Supreme Court or a High Court. The best alternative is to have a regime based on universal reservation under which in all institutions at every level, all social groups are proportionately represented and the recruitment or appointment, as the case may be, follows a prescribed roster.

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindustan Times, 5 May, 1998

Apropos Shri K.R. Malkani's letter 'Muslim presence' (HT, 2 May) the poor participation of Muslim in the government schools has many reasons. Firstly areas of Muslim concentration do not have adequate schooling facilities.

Secondly, in the Hindi-speaking States, where nearly 60 per cent of the Muslims of the country reside, their mother tongue Urdu has been virtually banished from the schools.

Thirdly, the school culture has been Hinduised and caused discontent among Muslim parents. Fourthly, Muslim parents, conscious of discrimination against Muslim applicants even for Class IV jobs do not see any attraction in wasting time and money in education.

Mr. Malkani admits the under-representation of Muslims in the Legislatures, which is an undeniable fact. But he wants Muslims to be content with using their votes to elect non-Hindu legislators. The Indian society as presently constituted functions on the basis of social symbiosis and every social group, whatever its identity, wishes to see its face not only in government offices but in legislatures.

Under-representation is really due to the secular parties not putting up adequate number of Muslim candidates even from Muslim concentration constituencies. They admit privately that in the present communal ambience, they cannot get non-Muslims to vote for Muslim candidates.

On the other hand, Muslims generally vote for one of the non-Muslim candidates who is most acceptable to them. They do not vote for Muslim candidates, independent or put up by a political party to divide votes. The second reason for the under-representation is that even when secular parties have the courage and the wisdom to put up a Muslim candidate from Muslim concentration constituencies, such candidates are often pitted against candidates of other secular parties and a candidate of the BJP.

So the secular vote is divided and the Hindutva vote gets undivided. The beneficiary more often than vote is a communal party which banks on Hindu solidarity and relies on its Hindu vote bank.

In the circumstances, unless there is an alliance of secular forces, Muslims cannot have adequate representation without reservation, as promised in the draft Constitution.

Gujarat High Court Strikes Down Total Ban on Slaughter

In a landmark judgement, a Gujarat High Court division bench of Chief Justice K. Sreedharan and Justice A.R. Dave on April 16, 1998 held that the total ban imposed by the state government on slaughter of bulls and bullocks by passing Act 4 of 1994 (which amends Bombay Animal Preservation Act, 1954) was unconstitutional.

The petitioner, Mirzapur Moti Kureshi Kassab, had contended that the provisions of the Act (banning the slaughter of bulls and bullocks) interfere with the petitioners' fundamental right to carry on business.

Contending that the Act was violative of provisions contained in Articles 14 and 19(1)(g) of the Constitution, the petitioners prayed that provisions of the Gujarat Act 4 of 1994 be declared as illegal and unconstitutional.

But the state government in its affidavit contended that the total ban was imposed for the interest of the general public, and that it sought to impose only "reasonable restrictions" on the fundamental rights of the petitioners.

Besides, it was contended that the number of bulls and bullocks slaughtered was very small, and so the ban would not affect the "negligible" number of people who are engaged in slaughtering of these animals.

Also, the state government affidavit contended that the objective of the total ban was to protect and preserve cow and its progeny, and that the entire cow family was necessary to support farming as it provides cost-free and rich manure.

Besides, it was contended that the amending Act is protected under Article 31C of the Constitution as it has got the President's assent. Therefore, it was outside the challenge of being violative of provisions of Articles 14 and 19 of the Constitution, it was contended. "The Amending Act has imposed an unreasonable restriction on the fundamental rights of the petitioners and to that extent, it is ultra vires of the Constitution. The effect of this would be that there would not be a total ban on the slaughter of bulls or bullocks above the age of 16 years. In other words, animals can be slaughter in compliance with the provisions of the parent Act, as it stood prior to the amendment brought out by Gujarat Act 4 of 1994", the court observed...

(On) Article 48 of the Constitution .. the court observed, "It does not contemplate ban of slaughter of all types of cattle or bulls or bullocks. The State is to prohibit the slaughter of milch and draught cattle only. It is not to prevent slaughter of all types of cattle".

(Citing) the judgement of a Constitutional Bench in

Mohammed Hanif Qureshi and others vs State of Gujarat... The Court observed "any law, which wants to get the protection of Article 31C read with Article 48, should be in relation to cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle".

Also, to state government's contention that the dung of the bulls and bullocks is cheaper manure and raw material for generating bio-gas, the court observed that it was for the individual farmer to arrange for manure. "For the said purposes, a complete ban on slaughter of bulls and bullocks is not warranted", the court observed.

(Source: The Times of India, 18 April, 1998)

A Hindu Served Beef in USA

A Letter in Los Angeles Times, 1 Feb., 1998

We sympathise with the plight of a fellow Hindu Indian, Mukesh Rai, who was carelessly served a beef burrito by Taco Bell (January 25). However, as an educated and established immigrant, Rai should perhaps have recognised that beef is ubiquitous in the US, and that fast-food orders can be mixed up. Nor could a low-wage employee be expected to have the international sophistication to realize the gravity of possible error. In his situation, a cursory check before eating might have been prudent.

The experience must undoubtedly have been painful. However, Rai may perhaps find some comfort in the knowledge that the eating of beef was not uniformly considered sinful by our Vedic ancestors: "Now if one wishes ... a son, learned, famous, a frequenter of assemblies ... they should have rick cooked with meat and eat it with clarified butter, then they should be able to beget (such a son), either veal or beef." (Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, VI.4.18, "The Principal Upanishads", translated from the Sanskrit by S. Radhakrishnan).

Dilip & Chitra Adarkar, Manhattan Beach, Los Angeles

Whence, and at whose call, so many streams of humanity came in an irresistible flow and lost themselves in this sea, nobody knows.

Aryans and non-Aryans, Dravidians, Chinese, Sakas, Hunas, Pathans, Mughals here merged in one body. Now is open the gate in the West. There will be giving and taking, association and assimilation and no going back from this great shore of India's Humanity.

- Free translation from Tagore's Gitanjali

Historian P.N. Chopra on Ban on Cow Slaughter

.. There was never a total ban on the slaughter of cows or any other animal even though rulers like Ashoka and Kumarapala were champions of Ahimsa. The insistence on a ban on cow slaughter is of recent origin, mostly as a reaction against Islam rather than from any genuine and real love for the cow. In fact, cow and ox have been one of man's most common sources of food from pre-historic times... However, it is also true that the cow and ox formed the main source of man's wealth as can be seen in the Mahabharata and Ramayana...

... For nearly three hundred years after the Buddha and Mahavira, the two greatest preachers of Ahimsa, flesh-eating flourished in India and neither the cow nor the ox was spared...

Dr. (Mrs.) Shah's report based on excavations at Maski, Tekkalkota, Sanganakally and Hallur in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have yielded bones of cow and ox in large quantities. According to Dr. Shah it can be said that cows and oxen were eaten by the inhabitants of the ancient Cambay from 4th-5th century BC till almost AD 12th century.

Evidence of a similar nature is available from Hastinapur. Here bones of cow and ox have been found from a later period (400 BC to AD 1200) as well. The excavations at Maheswar and Navadatoli, Poona and Baroda by H.D. Sankalia, B. Subbarao and S.B. Deo further corroborate that the inhabitants are meat of cow and ox... The excavations at Nasik and Jorwe and at Nevasa (District Ahmednagar) yielded bones of ox ... from the layers of early historical Sankalia. Dr. Sankalia further observes that the bearers of the painted grey ware culture whose remains have been found throughout Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and up to the Nepal Terai and in Rajasthan also loved to eat beef. Large quantities of animal bones have been found in the early layers at Hastinapur, the home of the Pandavas and Kauravas and according to one view these are the people who belonged to one of Aryan groups, probably the last one, and dated to about 1000 BC. This provides additional proof to what is mentioned in the Rigveda and Vedic literature. P.V. Kane in History of Dharma Sastra (Volume II) has discussed the evidence in detail. It is clear from this that although the cow was venerated as a divinity throughout this period (C. 1500 BC), it was killed on several occasions and particularly for (i) Sraddhas, (ii) distinguished guest, and (iii) in Astika Sraddha. It is, however, probable, as Kane says, that during the Vedic period only barren cows were killed. Panini in his Paniniya Sutra (iii, IV, 73, Dasagoghnam Sampradane

... Strangely enough, the Chinese travellers Fa-hien, Yuan Chwang and I-Tsign who visited India between 5th and 7th centuries refer to several taboos on food in India, such as non-eating of onions and garlic, but there is no reference to non-eating of beef. Yuan Chwang refers to the Buddhist practice of eating three kinds of meat obtained without destroying the animal intentionally. According to Yuan Chwang, this would have included beef.

Thus it is apparent that cow ... slaughter for food was prevalent till the 1st century... The practice did not die out completely and continued till the 7th century... However, the advent of Islam and the indiscriminate killing of cows by Muslims led to resentment among Hindus though there was no bar in our scriptures and even the Upanishads permitted the killing of old and uneconomic cows. ...

.... In course of time cows came to be revered and respected by Hindus all over the country, possibly due to the beneficial qualities of cow's milk and also by association of cows with Lord Krishna. Therefore, the cow assumed a religious invocation...

The respect for cow was further reinforced by the Hindu belief in the transmigration of souls...

... In the Punjab and Bengal even Brahmins are meat and fish, and Rajputs all over the country were accustomed to animal diet. The Hindu masses were vegetarian from habit and economic necessity...

... Article 48 of the Constitution categorically states that "the State shall take steps for preserving and improving the breeds and prohibiting the slaughter of cows and calves and other milch and draught cattle". This would appear to mean a complete ban on cow slaughter but the courts have interpreted it to mean that aged or disabled bulls can be slaughtered...

(Source: A Nation Flawed by P.N. Chopra)

MUSLIM INDIA BOUND VOLUMES, 1983-1997

YEAR	Rs.	YEAR	Rs.
1997	175	1989	375
1996	200	1988	400
1995	225	1987	425
1994	250	1986	450
1993	275	1985	475
1992	300	1984	500
1991	325	1983	525
1990	350		

D.R. Goyal on Secular Agenda Revisited

... The election results are a reminder to advocates to secularism to coolly contemplate whether their conduct thus far has advanced the cause they presume to uphold. The largest party in the secular sector, the Indian National Congress, must ponder whether the growing lust for pelf and power among its leading lights has not caused the despair and alienation which has facilitated the growth of a fascist-monster...

Similar introspection is called for on the part of the Left, especially of the Communist variety, which takes pride as upholder of unalloyed secular politics. The Communist movement was born in this country around the same time as the RSS. How is it that its political wing is today standing at the portals of power in New Delhi while the Left remains precariously perched in some peripheral pockets? Is it because the communists have remained exclusively preoccupied with the economic demands of the organised working class? Without caring for the social and cultural needs of that class?...

What dividends have accrued from the mountain of labour expended on developing a third force? Has its fetish of anti-Congressism not provided a respectable cover for the communal outfits to move into the spaces vacated by the Congress? Every chip falling away from the Congress bloc was hailed but did those chips ever coalesce into a bloc to become a viable alternative? More importantly did they, collectively or severally, espouse a more progressive policy, show greater probity in public life, than Congress? Did it not result in demolishing an existing edifice without building an alternative shelter?

The dream project of third force ... is already a laughing stock of political India. Its core sector, the Janata Dal, is in a shambles, its pieces scattered all over. Its kingpin, the prematurely hailed as the wise man of the combination Chandrababu Naidu, is mocking at its fundamental premise... It is high time the high priests of this force sit back and review their strategy rather than scamper around to put the humpty-dumpty back on saddle.

The arguments behind the efforts to simultaneously fight the BJP and the Congress was that the former was communal and the latter's economic policies anti-people... For defeating both parties based on castiest and regionalist platforms were courted to evolve a federalist formation which eventually turned out phoney. Each component of the new structure developed cracks within and conflicts with partners in other castes and regions long before a consensus could be evolved. personal egos rather than policies and interests invariably dictated the conduct.

The fact is that anti-Congressism anti-dates anti-BJPism. The Third Force idea is only a later variant of the anxiety to develop an alternative to Congress... No lessons

have been learnt from the failure of the Left formations to come together either politically or organisationally over the last half century. Whereas the Congress had not crumbled, though occasionally some chips have fallen away, the Left has been behaving amoeba-like disintegrating with disconcerting regularity. The dismal scenario we witness today is no more than a repetition...

The initial political success of the Congress developed a power-centred mindset and Congress became more and more an election-machine to the exclusion of social values. The distortion percolated all around. The final result was exclusive preoccupation with power to the total neglect of party building as instrument of social transformation through popular mobilisation. That led to reliance on emotional issues to the exclusion of identification with and service of the people.

Effective secular agenda has to be adoption of secular issues for mass mobilisation as Gandhi did with his constructive programme. It cannot be based on negativist approaches like anti-BJPism or anti-Congressism...

(Source: The Nation and the World, 16 April, 1998)

STATEMENT ABOUT OWNERSHIP AND OTHER PARTICULARS

FORM IV (See Rule 8)

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I, Syed Shahabuddin, hereby declare that particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dated: 1 June, 1998

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

Rise of Communalism and Fascism in India

CPI(M) Leader Sitaram Yechury in The People's Democracy, 3 May, 1998

... The vision of India which through the freedom struggle ... came to be accepted by a majority of the Indian people, is today facing unprecedented challenges. The assumption of the reins of state power by the BJP, puts the whole future of such a vision in jeopardy...

The clash between the visions of India's future ... begins not with the dawn of independence. It is fact dates back to the twenties when the formation of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh brought into existence a force that wanted to convert India into a theocratic Hindu Rashtra...

The RSS vision ... was articulated in a chilling treatise by its Sarsanghchalak or supreme leader Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar titled "We or Our nationhood Defined" written in 1938, first published in 1939 and later in 1947, after independence. There it is stated in unambiguous terms:

"... The conclusion is unquestionably forced upon us that... in Hindusthan exists and must needs exist the ancient Hindu nation and nought else but the Hindu Nation (emphasis added). All those not belonging to the national i.e. Hindu Race, Religion, Culture and Language, naturally fall out of the pale of real 'National' life. "We repeat: in Hindusthan, the land of the Hindus, lives and should live the Hindu Nation - satisfying all the five essential requirements of the scientific nation concept of the modern world. Consequently only those movements are truly 'National' as aim at re-building, revitalizing and emancipating from its present stupor, the Hindu Nation. Those only are nationalist patriots, who, with the aspiration to glorify the Hindu race and nation next to their heart, are prompted into activity and strive to achieve that goal. All others are either traitors and enemies to the National cause, or, to take a charitable view, idiots" (page 43 & 44).

It then continues: "...We must bear in mind that so far as 'nation' is concerned, all those, who fall outside the five-fold limits of that idea, can have no place in the national life, unless they abandon their differences, adopt the religion, culture and language of the nation and completely merge themselves in the National Race. So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners (page 45).

And in this regard: "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 its mercy so long as the national race may allow them to do so, and to quit the country at the sweet will of the national race.

... From this standpoint, sanctioned by the experience of shrewd old nations, the foreign races in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no idea but those of the glorification of the

Hindu race and culture, i.e., of the Hindu nation, and must lose their separate existence to merge in the Hindu race, or they 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. There at least should be, no other course for them to adopt. We are an old nation; let us deal, as old nations ought to and do deal with the foreign races who have chosen to live in our country" (pp 47-48).

Notwithstanding all the subterfuge that the leaders of the Saffron Brigade indulge in today to state that this book had been subsequently withdrawn, there is no official testimony to this fact. In fact a sympathetic account of the RSS (J A Curran, *Militant Hinduism in Indian Politics - A Study of the RSS*) states that "the genuine ideology of the Sangh is based upon principles formulated by its founder Dr. Hegdewar. These principles have been consolidated and amplified by the present leader in a small book called *We Or Our Nationhood Defined*" written in 1938. 'We' can be described as the RSS 'bible'. It is the basic primer in the indoctrination of Sangh volunteers." (This was written in 1979). Golwalkar's abiding influence over the Saffron Brigade was ensured through an ideological formation not merely in terms of ideas and principles, but also in terms of establishing an organisational structure to obtain realisation of these ideas.

The Sangh Parivar

Golwalkar was primarily instrumental in establishing the organisational structure of what is now known as the Sangh Parivar. The strategy was clear. In the public eye the RSS would confine itself to "cultural activity", while the affiliates would branch out into the various fields and sections spreading the message of "Hindu Rashtra". These seemingly independent tentacles were to be welded together by the RSS. This organisational network is today there for all to see.

An important initiative came in the mid-1960s, when Golwalkar gathered the Hindu religious leaders" to discuss ways in which various Hindu sects and tendencies could sink their many differences, work together and establish contacts with Hindus residing abroad. Thus was laid the foundations of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and an RSS pracharak, Shivram Shankar Apte, became its first general secretary. The subsequent career of the VHP, today the most formidable of the RSS affiliates, demands a separate study".

Another organisational measure taken by him was to utilise this organisational structure of the "family" to create a political front which would always be under the leadership and control of the RSS. In 1951, he sent cadres to help S P Mukherjee to start the Bharatiya Jan

Sangh, whose subsequent incarnation is today's BJP. It is instructive to note who were the persons among these emissaries - Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, A.B. Vajpayee, L.K. Advani and S.S. Bhandari.

British Raj not the Enemy

All through the freedom struggle and later this sectarian and communal strand of thinking was always in contention with the major stream which envisaged a multi-cultural, pluralistic independent India. The enemy for the RSS were not the British against whom the Indian people were fighting. Hate against the Muslim community was sought to be spread much wider and deeper than against the British, precisely because, by opposing the British, the Indian people could not be rallied for a "Hindu Rashtra". This was so because the anti-British feelings found expression in the united freedom movement that embraced Hindus, Muslims and others to a progressively increasing extent. It was for this precise reason that the RSS never nailed down the British as its enemy during the freedom struggle.

Even sympathetic accounts of the RSS (The Brotherhood of Saffron by Anderson and Damle amongst others), detail the virtual absence of the RSS in the freedom movement and the consequent concessions it gained from the British. We have Nanaji Deshmukh's testimony for this. "The RSS as an organisation", he writes, "did not take part in the National Liberation Movement" (RSS, A Victim of Slander, page 29).

The Bombay Home Department, during the 1942 Quit India Movement, observed: "The Sangh has scrupulously kept itself within the law, and in particular, has refrained from taking part in the disturbances that broke out in August 1942..." (quoted in Anderson and Damle, pp. 44).

Thus the urge to establish a 'Hindu Rashtra', drove the RSS to being a virtual ally of the British. The freedom struggle and the Congress were regarded as a diversion from their objective. The animosity grew particularly after the AICC announced (at the Karachi Congress, 1931) that free India would be a secular, democratic republic. This was seen and quite correctly from their point of view, as the very antithesis of the RSS conception of a Hindu Rashtra.

Mahatma Gandhi, the tallest of devout and practising Hindus, was assassinated because he, along with the majority of the Indian people, embraced secular democracy rejecting the RSS ideology.

Divide and Rule

Parallel to the emergence and growth of such a retrograde vision were certain developments that provided sustenance to the communal forces.

Learning well the lesson from the experience of the 1857 Revolt, the British quickly realised that continuation of their rule over India would not be possible if they allowed Hindus and Muslims to join together in common cause. They could not afford a repetition of a devout Hindu, Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi hailing the Moghul emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar as her

monarch! Their fear and hatred of such a thing happening again found vivid expression in the documenting of these events by a contemporary British chronicler, Thomas Lowe: "The infanticide Rajput, the bigoted Brahmin, the fanatic Mussalman joined together in the cause. Cow killer and the cow worshipper, pig hater and the pig eater revolted together!"

In order to prevent the recurrence of such a 'fearful' happening, the consolidate their rule, the British with a vengeance, brought into play their infamous 'Divide and Rule Policy', fomenting venomous hatred between Hindu and the Muslim. Administrative measures such as separate electorates etc., gave a permanent structure to such a divide. In this process, the British were admirably aided by communal forces on both sides. This policy ... climaxed in the horror and disaster of Partition... The wounds of the Partition fester even today, fifty years after it took place, on both sides of the divide.

Revivalist Influence

While the majority of the participants in the freedom struggle opposed the retrograde vision of an independent India, it needs to be noted that there was a trend within the freedom movement itself which permitted such communal feelings to survive. A revivalist ideology existed among a number of leaders of the freedom movement. Coming from an upper caste Hindu background, some of the leaders in the struggle against the British drew sustenance from India's past. For a long time leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha were concurrently leaders of the Congress party...

Rajni Palme Dutt in his *India Today*, has summed up this tendency most appropriately:

"So from the existing foul welter and decaying and corrupt metaphysics, from the broken relics of the shattered village system, from the dead remains of court splendours of a vanished civilisation, they sought to fabricate and build up and reconstitute a golden dream of Hindu culture - a 'purified' Hindu culture - which they could hold up as an ideal and a guiding light, against the overwhelming flood of British bourgeois culture and ideology, which they saw completely conquering the Indian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia.

"They sought to hold forward a feeble shield of a reconstructed Hindu ideology which had no longer any natural basis for its existence in actual life conditions. All social and scientific development was condemned by the more extreme devotees of this gospel as the conquerors' culture: every form of antiquated tradition, even abuse, privilege and obscurantism, was treated with respect and veneration" (p.327).

Thus the communal and revivalist ideology that struck root during the freedom struggle, continued to remain alive in the absence of a sustained ideological struggle against it. Only the Communist Party of India saw in this ideological trend the seeds of a potential reactionary and retrograde movement that might well hijack and disrupt the gains Indian people made during the freedom struggle and after.

CPI(M): Statement

On Attack on M.F. Hussain, 2 May, 1998

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) strongly condemns the attack by Bajrang Dal activists on the residence of renowned painter and artist M.F. Hussain in Mumbai. This is not the first time that Hussain has been a victim of rabid intolerance of the Hindu communalists...

Such ... intolerance, smacking of fascists behaviour was also in evidence recently when the renowned Pakistani singer Ghulam Ali and others were prevented from performing in Mumbai...

... Such extreme cases ... are seeking to browbeat intellectuals and artists into falling in line with the communal ideology of the ruling party...

Such developments do not augur well for the future of secular democracy in India...

(Source: The People's Democracy)

On SS Assault on Husain's Paintings

This is in response to the letter, 'Husain: Horsing Around' (May 7), from Mandakini Sankhder on MF Husain. I (have) 10 questions ... addressed to all those who (have condemned) M.F. Husain...

One, have you ever seen the two paintings?

Two, do you know these were painted decades ago... and do you truly believe that when he painted them he "intended to hurt people's sentiments"?

Three, is nudity the main issue and, if so, would you recommend thousands of temples and lingams in India should be raised to the ground for depicting our gods and goddesses without garments? Will Bajrang Dal ban Naga sadhus or is male nudity alright?

Four, what percentage of people visit art galleries and are, therefore, exposed to these so-called "obscene" paintings? On the other hand, why are millions of people being allowed to view Indian women being dragged by their hair and gang-raped on the screen on a daily basis?

Five, are Hindu activists not going to raise their voice against the filthiest dances in the world, and against vulgarity in our films which ... incite the youth to commit sexual crimes?

Six, do you know who are the politically motivated people who have suddenly dug out these half-forgotten paintings in a premeditated move to target India's most eminent Muslim? Aren't they, rather than Husain, the ones who deliberately "arouse public passions and disturb communal harmony"?

Seven, did you know that a portrait of Lord Ganesh painted by Husain adorns hundreds of Hindu homes?

Eight, did you know that 20 years ago Husain did ... 300 paintings on the epic Ramayana which no Hindu painter has even attempted?

(Continued on page 284)

Rajindar Sachar's Statement, 7 May, 1998

The hate campaign started by Shiv Sena and now endorsed by Chief Minister of Maharashtra against Pakistani musician Ghulam Ali Khan is most shameful and condemnable. BJP is a partner in Government. If the miscreants are not punished, Vajpayee's Government claim to give equal protection to the minorities will be a false promise.

The arts, music and culture have no boundaries. Relation between India and Pakistan are political. They need to be improved but that cannot be done by goons thus damaging our multi-cultural society as they have done not only by disrupting Ghulam Ali Khan's musical evening but also damaging our great painter Hussain's house. The guilty must be punished immediately; if it is not done, a case for dismissal of Maharashtra Government would be inevitable.

Hindu Manch Activists Beat up Priest

A rowdy mob of activists belonging to Hindu Manch severally beat up the Christian priest Father Octavio Nevis and disrupted a mass which was in progress at School in Ambarnath Town near Mumbai on Sunday, 11 May. The priest was rushed to a hospital and given emergency treatment. The attackers accused the Church of promoting proselytisation of the Hindus...

The assailants led by manch convenor, Satyapal Malani... Mr. Malani was later arrested under Section 324 of Indian Penal Code for causing injury with a sharp weapon. He was released on bail by a local magistrate later....

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 13 May, 1998)

NCM: Chairman's Statement on Shiv Sena's Assault on M.F. Hussain, 4 May, 1998

The touch of obscenity in M.F. Hussain's paintings of Hindu gods and goddesses is un-Islamic ... and immoral. There is nothing in the Muslim religion which can justify such indecent art hurting religious sentiments... The Holy Quran enjoins the Muslims never to denigrate in any manner gods and goddesses worshipped by others. Hussain must respect this Islamic injunction... He must take corrective measures...

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 5 May, 1998

I am surprised by the statement of Dr. Tahir Mahmood, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities (The Pioneer, 5 May). The Chairman of the NCM, even if a Muslim, is not a Mufti, competent to judge whether a given act is un-Islamic or otherwise or to counsel a person who is apparently a Muslim that he is not acting in accordance with direction of the Shariah, correct his conduct.

Soroor Ahmed

On Christian Targets of Chauvinism

Brother Luke has joined the ranks of Father Christudas and Father Thomas who fell to miscreant's design... Brother Luke, died in mysterious circumstances in Nawada district while he was returning to Gaya from Calcutta in a truck a few days back.

Several factors are attributed to the rise in the recent incidents of violence against the Christian missionaries. Social thinkers and journalists have blamed the criminalisation and communalisation of society as some of the factors. But one thing which remains unexplained is the silence of the State government ... and the indifference on the part of those non-political organisations claiming to be engaged in a crusade against communal forces. Why is it that the Christian community was left alone when they took to streets in protest against the disrobing of Father Christudas? Why is it that hardly any secular leader decided to condemn the grisly murder of Father Thomas, who took up the cause of a rape victim or Brother Luke?

If the so-called secular parties ... showed little concern for the Christians it is understandable as with 0.98 per cent population Christians do not constitute a formidable vote bank in the State. It is a known fact that for the political parties secularism and communalism have much to do with the caste and community arithmetic and less with commitment. The irony is that their victimisation evokes little sympathy (while) the work being done by them, especially in health and education sectors, are appreciated by common mass. Many non-political and non-governmental organisations have joined hands with them ... yet again they have left the priest in lurch at the time when they deserve help - and that too when it is the human rights issue.

... Since many of these organisations are Left-leaning and non-religious - if not anti-religious - some of their activists too look with suspicion the activities of the Church. Their role as preachers as well as proselytizers seldom goes down well with the secular social activists - not to speak of communal forces or even ultra-leftists.

But the Church too is to be blamed for their isolation from the masses. Rightly or wrongly it is in running the educational institutions that they have acquired the image of exploiters and money-minters. The irony is that if a section of priests is involved in the literacy mission campaign in the interior villages of the State those involved in running convent school have associated themselves with the elites and semi-elites of society. This fails to evoke sympathy of the common man whose children can never enter such schools. This section of people look at them as a businessmen and not as missionaries... It is time for the missionaries to probe the factors responsible for their isolation from the society...

(Source: The Times of India, 8 April, 1998)

Destruction of Church in Ahmedabad

Shahabuddin's Letter to NCM, 24 April, 98

May I draw your attention to the demolition of 2 Churches, one far long in existence and the other under construction, in Naroda village, falling under Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority on 16 April, 1998 by the BJP-dominated Panchayat authorities on the strength of a resolution adopted by it.

The press report (Indian Express, 17 April, 1998) state that the Catholic Diocese of Ahmedabad had purchased the land and sought no objection from the Authority. To the best of my knowledge, the Panchayat has no political or police powers. Hence, even if the construction was illegal, the Panchayat had no authority to demolish it. In the case of the old Church they have no excuse whatsoever. This is an example of the 'rule of law' in Gujarat, under a 'friendly' government.

This is a serious matter. I request the Commission to take serious and urgent notice and despatch an investigating team.

The Impact International, London

On Mark Tulley's Quest of Hindu-Christian Solidarity

... Mark Tulley, OBE ... is a former but most famous correspondent of the BBC World Service and a recipient of the ... Indian award, Padam Shri. The Hinduist BJP organ BJP Today devotes seven pages of its recent issue to the thoughts of Tulley. His advice, 'Take pride in Hinduism,' was given earlier to the National Hindu Students Forum of the UK ... is a member of the ... 'Sangh Parivar'... Mark Tulley's advice is but commonsense ... though Tulley himself is not sure 'whether there is such a thing as Hinduism'. Historical Hinduism was syncretic; therefore, necessarily pantheistic. It also had a set of moral and spiritual values, part historical and part contemporary. But all that was impaired after the British colonial experts ... tried to create ... 'Hinduism', as a countervailing factor against Islam. RSS too was a British creation... The idea was to sow the seeds of division between Hindus and Muslims, but it also wanted to splinter the broad Hindu coalition, along the lines of caste, region and tribe...

In any case, Tulley's advice make sense in that westernisation and secularism have created a deep moral and spiritual chasm in Indian society, especially among those who used to think of themselves as Hindus.

But the Calcutta-born Tulley may not be a disinterested friend of the Hindus. He is 'a fanatic Christian'... He has other interests too. Among others, he was producing a ten-part series on India independence, setting up a new radio station Calcutta - and he has told Indians that they should not fear the entry of foreign media into their country.

Kuldip Nayar

On Pakistan and Muslim Situation in India

Even after 50 years, Pakistan has not realised that ... Indian Muslims, for better or worse, have more or less merged with the mainstream. After a great deal of trouble and hardships, they have been able to carve a place of dignity in society. A strong wind of fundamentalism blowing within the country and from abroad continues to torment them but they have the faith - and confidence - that they will not be swept off their feet.

The main problem, however, in Pakistan which does not leave them alone... 'Hate India' is the ethos of Pakistan... Indian Muslims are India's concern. There is enough of strength in the country's secular opinion to take the government to task, as was evident after the demolition of Babari mosque. In fact, such instances have strengthened the Muslim community's trust in the sense of accommodation and tolerance that the country has nourished over the centuries. By exaggerating the travails of Muslims, Pakistan is playing the Islamic card to foment trouble, which the ISI is already doing through its agenda. Persistent propaganda against India has conditioned the minds of most Pakistanis to such an extent that India is seen as an embodiment of evil..

That the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) should back Pakistan to the hilt is surprising because the bee of liberalism has stung even some leading Muslim nations...

Indian Muslims ... are not getting their due. Their population is 12 to 15 per cent in the country but their share in employment, business and industry is not even a fraction of that. True, the improvement in their lives is crucially dependant on the pace of economic progress in the country. But why should they be at the end of queue? They are the last to be hired and the first to be fired. The deteriorating law-and-order situation is only making their situation worse.

Lack of action against those who instigate communal riots is a sad commentary on the authorities. They are slack and unaccountable. The result is that the guilty have not been punished. This is true as much of riots in Moradabad (1980) or Nelli (1983) as the massacre of Muslims in Maliana (Meerut) (1987). Cases of killings following the demolition of the Babari mosque are either at the inquiry stage or are stuck in the lower courts even after five years. Then there is no government proposal to give compensation to the families of riot victims. This is lop-sided justice... The Sikhs who suffered in the 1984 - are compensated. But Muslims are generally left out.

Muslim fundamentalists ... started the recent

constable. But the violence which Hindu fundamentalists and police unleashed in retaliation against the Muslim community was indiscriminate and inhuman and the government was party to it.

I shudder to think what will happen during or after the elections if the parties peddling fundamentalism are not restrained now... Home Minister Inderjit Gupta, whose secular credentials are impeccable, has done little to bring communal police officers to book. Probably, he could not do anything about the communalised police forces in the various states, but he should have initiated some steps to cleanse the BSF and CRPF, which are under the Home Ministry, of this virus.

(Source: The Indian Express, 23 December, 1997)

Shahabuddin's Letter to President of Pakistan, 11 May, 1998

May I first offer you my sincere felicitations on your election as the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan?

I have just seen your statement in Islamabad on April 18, 1998 in which you have said "We should rekindle the concept of Islamic Ummah. We should keep in view the collective interests and resources of the Islamic world while making any future planning."

The term 'Islamic Ummah' or the Islamic world includes the Muslims who are living in various Muslim minority States. India has the largest such community. I would like to know whether you have in your speech offered any ideas as to how to reconcile the national role of the Muslim minorities with the "collective interest and resources of the Islamic world".

I would also be grateful to be informed whether you have formulated any meaningful and effective lines of moral and material support to the Muslim minorities which is what is implied by the concept of "Islamic Ummah". In case you have spelt out this in any speech or statement, I would be grateful for a copy.

(Continued from page 282)

Nine, do you realise that breaking into someone's home is against the law and the Constitution, and tomorrow if the Bajrang Dal finds that you do not practice your religion as they prescribe, they could break into your home as well?

Finally, it is not time (to) examine the facts objectively and fairly minus the hysteria?

(Source: Anilole Ela Menon in The Express)

OIC: Islamic Summit Resolution on Defending Rights of Muslim Minorities Tehran, 9-11 December, 1997

The Islamic Summit Conference, meeting in its Eight Session in Tehran, 9-11 December, 1997.

Recalling that Muslim communities and minorities living in Non-OIC Member States account for over one third of the Islamic Ummah;

Recalling also the principles and objectives of the OIC Charter, the Resolutions adopted by Islamic Summit Conference, Islamic Conferences of Foreign Ministers and international Conventions, declarations and agreements, particularly those calling for observance of human rights, namely, political social, cultural, economic rights and religious freedoms;

Further recalling UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief;

Reaffirming its commitment to Muslim communities and minorities living in Non-OIC Member States and expressing its concern at the forms of intolerance towards some of these communities and minorities in particular in the western hemisphere;

Condemning persecution and violations, especially those committed by aggression or occupation forces against Muslim communities and minorities in a number of non-OIC Member States;

Having considered the Report submitted by the Secretary General on the situation of Muslim communities and minorities (Document NO. IS/8-97/MM/D.1); ...

Confirms that preservation of the rights of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States is, essentially, the responsibility of the governments of these states...

Calls upon Member States and the OIC Subsidiary, Specialized and Affiliated Institutions ... as well as non-governmental Islamic organisations, bodies and institutions, to provide the OIC General Secretariat, as early as possible, with available information, studies and statistics on the situation of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States so as to establish an advanced data-base...

Prompts the OIC General Secretariat to receive representatives of some Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States aimed at closely being informed about the conditions of these Muslim communities and minorities ... within the framework of respect for the sovereignty of the states in which they live in accordance with paragraph 5 of Resolution No. 38/24 - adopted by the Twenty-fifth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

Urges Member States to pay special attention to those Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States who are exposed to persecution or

oppression because of their religious beliefs and to know their needs which are to be communicated to the Member States so as to provide the necessary capabilities... material, human and in kind. Also to intensify the cultural and educational Islamic activities as well as various human assistance so as to accord more attention to improving the general conditions of the Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States in general...

Urges Member States to coordinate efforts for preparing able workers who can perform Islamic Dawah missions among Muslim communities and minorities...

Requests the OIC General Secretariat and the Islamic organisations and bodies that are members of the OIC Committee for the Coordination of Islamic Action, to hold an early meeting to consider drawing up an action plan...

Requests the OIC General Secretariat to make contacts with the governments of the states that have Muslim communities and minorities in order to be familiar with their problems and needs as well as the attitude of these States on finding a cooperation formula with the OIC aimed at making the required contributions for improving the conditions of these Muslim communities and minorities and preserving their religious and cultural identity...

Urges the OIC Member States to exert efforts with governments of Non-OIC Member States where violations of the rights of Muslim communities and minorities take place so as to urge them to take necessary and immediate procedures to stop these violations and restore matters to normal course.

Commends the efforts of the Contact Group requested to study the conditions of the Muslim minorities in New York and Geneva and encourages it to deal with cases of violation of the rights of these Muslim minorities and communities in non-Member States...

Invites the OIC General Secretariat to follow up the UN activities relevant to the minority issue so as to be informed about developments on the situation of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States...

Welcomes the recommendation contained in the report of the Third Meeting of the Inter-Governmental Group of Experts entrusted with the following-up of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, to coordinate with the Expert Group on considering the conditions of Muslim minorities and communities aimed at carrying out a comprehensive survey of the conditions of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC Member States, and at a later stage to make the necessary arrangements at international fora for preserving their rights...

Chronology of the Month

(16 April - 15 May, 1998)

NATIONAL POLITICS

Nuclear Test: *Underground nuclear tests by India in Pokhran (12 May), greeted generally with nationwide euphoria but international concern. US and Japan apply sanctions; UN Security Council is critical (14 May). P.M. declares India nuclear weapon state; Defence Minister Fernandes wants induction of nuclear weapons.

Constitutional Review: *Home Minister Advani reveals plan of constitutional review to include consideration of presidential system and other drastic changes. More widely criticised by Left parties and Muslim organisations.

Reorganisation of States: *Vananchal move opposed by Bihar parties, Samata seeks compensation for Bihar (19 April).

*Bodoland movement turns violent; kills Santhals (3 May).

Election Commission: *Recognises 13 State parties including UMFA and RJD.

BJP: *National Council meets in Bhopal; elects RSS activist Khushbhau Thakre as President.

*Political resolution skirts Ayodhya, Article 370 and UCC but leaders affirm commitment to Hindutva and Cultural Nationalism. RSS assumes control.

*Party seeks to guide Government but Government sees party as link between itself and government. BJP sees itself a national party of governance.

*BJP wins Udhampur seat in J&K (4-5 May).

*Parivar unmasks itself as guardian of national morals and defender of Hinduism; M.F. Husain's apartment ransacked (6 May).

*Ghulam Ali's concert in Bombay disturbed; beauty contest in Ahmedabad disturbed. All invite wide condemnation.

Coalition Partners: *Trinamul Congress and BJP fail to make electoral adjustment for Panchayat polls in W. Bengal (18 April).

*Jayalalitha forces Vajpayee to dismiss Buta Singh; presses for other Ministers to step down. While Jain Report absolves DMK, reiterates plea to Centre to dismiss DMK Government in Tamilnadu; expects her nominees in Central Government to take orders from her and help her in extricating herself from judicial net. Opposes Power Ordinance.

*Samata Party unhappy at big brother attitude of BJP (24 April).

*NC disunited on support to coalition government.

*Swamy revolts on non-inclusion first in Government and

then in Coordination Committee.

UF-LF-Janata Parivar: *JD National Executive meets to take stock of post-election situation; fails to effect consolidation; gropes over revival, maintains equidistance between BJP and Congress.

*Moopanar of TMC sees Congress as only alternative to BJP.

*SP holds national convention in Mumbai (18 April).

*SP leader Mulayam Singh to back Congress in bid to form Government (4 May). SP threatens to leave UF (9 May).

*BJP leader Mayawati moves SC against UP Speaker's order on defection of BSP MLAs (17 April).

*On eve of State Convention, TDP threatens to withdraw support if minorities are harassed (5 May).

*Left Parties indicate soft line towards Congress.

Congress: *Sonia Gandhi assumes full control over party apparatus; appoints Task Force under Sangma for reorganisation; plans move to regain Muslim support; takes clear stand against Sangh parivar.

*Sharad Pawar calls for unity of progressive and secular forces (2 May). However, internal tension builds up between Sharad Pawar and Sonia Gandhi.

Corruption: JMM Scam: *Supreme Court gives green signal for trial of Narasimha Rao and Buta Singh but accepts plea of parliamentary immunity for those who took money to save Narasimha Rao Government.

Housing Scam: *President gives assent to prosecution of Sheila Kaul, Thungon and Sukh Ram (27 April). Sukh Ram steps down (30 April).

Land Scam: *Housing Minister Jethmalani orders take over of posh Dairy Farm Colony in New Delhi.

Hawala Case: *All Hawala Case accused discharged, except Sharad Yadav and 3 others.

*Bihar AH Scam makes slow progress.

BABARI MASJID QUESTION

BMMCC: *BMMCC Convener Shahabuddin rejects Kanchi Shankaracharya's assertion that demolition has settled Babari Masjid issue (14 May - See Statement).

*Many Muslim organisations expresses concern at preparation for construction of Mandir in Ayodhya.

CBI Case: *On being dropped from Cabinet, Buta Singh points fingers at Advani, Joshi and Uma Bharati, all chargesheeted by CBI in the Demolition Case (20 April). Government and BJP both defend them on basis of specious distinction between political agitation and act of corruption (7 May). Allahabad H.C. admits accused's petition challenging summons by trial court and asks trial

court to defer framing of charges (15 May).

*S. Swamy demands Advani's exit (16 April). Congress and RJD make same demand (1 May). CPI & CPM target Advani (8 May).

Liberhan Commission: *Expresses dismay over official inaction to get stay order against 17 Sangh Parivar leaders vacated. Records evidence of M.S. Yadav who squarely blames Sangh Parivar.

*Swamy seeks ban on VHP for clandestine preparation for illegal construction of Mandir (11 May).

*Fernandes criticises statements by Kalyan Singh and Singhal (14 April).

Government: *Leader of official Haj Delegation to Saudi Arabia Mohd. Fazal dismisses Babari Masjid as 'unused Masjid' and endorses demolition. Muslims all over India protest (24 April).

KASHMIR QUESTION

Insurgency: *13 Hindu villagers cruelly killed by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba in Prankote in Jammu followed by other atrocities and killings in Jammu region (17 April). Advani and Abdullah visit site and hold Pakistan responsible (20 April). Hurriyat condemns killing (10 May). Violence sets off migration and demonstrations. Poonch placed under curfew (6 May). Doda observes protect bandh (6 May).

*General strike in Srinagar to protest against killing of Hizbul Mujahideen leader Omar Sultan (17 April). People's League Chairman S. Hamid killed in encounter (18 April).

Political Developments: *Hurriyat leaders visit Delhi to canvass cause with foreign missions (10 May).

*Government bans Moharrum procession in Srinagar (7 May).

*Former Governor Shafi Qureshi finds ground situation unsatisfactory (22 April).

*Hurriyat's new chief Gilani forced by colleagues to cancel talks with Defence Minister George Fernandes (1 May).

Pakistan's Role: *Pakistan Information Minister visits Markaz Dawa-tul-Irshad, whose armed wing Lashkar-e-Tayyiba operates in J&K. USA expresses concern (1 May).

OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

Haj: *Apart from 34 Indian pilgrims who died in Mina Stampede, Haj passes off well.

*Government urged to enact new Haj Committee Act. Shahabuddin supports end to airfare subsidy and quota system.

Wakf: *Punjab Wakf Board Annual Reports for 1996-97 and 1997-98 shows record revenues and extensive outlay on education, welfare and maintenance of Masjids (See

Report).

*Delhi Wakf Board Chairman seeks CBI inquiry in misappropriation of Wakf land by mafia (14 May).

*UP C.M. lays foundation of hospital on subjudice Wakf land near Lucknow.

Sectarian Conflict: *Peaceful Azadari processions brought out in Lucknow after 21 years (3 May). Kalyan Singh Government claims credit for Shia-Sunni accord (27 April).

*Shia-Sunni clash in Bahraich; 6 injured (11 May).

*Bareilvi-Deobandi conflict in a mosque in Delhi; one killed (30 April).

Freedom of Religion: *Tamilnadu Hindu Munnani demands ban on change of religion.

*Sangh Parivar launches campaign against Christian missions in Orissa and MP (29 April).

Cow Protection: *UP Government instructs administration to enforce strictly ban on cow slaughter (20 April).

Terrorism: *Tamilnadu CM confirms Advani as target of Coimbatore blasts (11 May).

*Bail of Al Umma leader Pasha cancelled; hundreds of Muslim languish in prison in Tamilnadu.

*Madras HC moved against search of Muslim houses without basis (16 April).

TADA Cases: *SC sets aside life term for 11 in Radhabhai Chawl Case (16 April).

*SC acquits TADA detainee and award compensation for prolonged detention (11 May)

Communal Clash: *Major communal clash in Moradabad; 4 killed, curfew imposed in 4 Thanas (8-14 May).

*Sporadic communal violence in UP, 4 killed in Azamgarh (24 April).

*Namaz Chabutra demolished by police but reconstructed in Shamli (29 April).

*Parekh Commission Report blames Shiv Sena and RPI for '89 Riots in Mumbai (21 April).

*Maharashtra Government defers publication of Srikrishna Commission Report to July. Sena M.P. Sarpodkar acquitted arson case (6 May).

Reservation: *SC rules out 100% reservation in single post cadre (18 April).

*Chairman of NC for SC & ST sees indefinite continuance of reservation; demands reservation in armed forces and judiciary.

*Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind demands reservation for Muslims in public employment, education and legislature (25 April).

Infiltration: *AASU demands repeal of Tribunal Act, 1983 (19 April).

*Home Minister Advani hints at fresh attempt to identify and deport Bangladeshi immigrants (9 May).

Education: *HRD Minister Joshi favour primary education through Mother Tongue (10 May).

Muslim Organisations: *AIMPLB Working Committee meets in Delhi (25 April). Reiterates stand on Uniform Civil Code, Babari Masjid case and Hinduisation of School education. Rejects proposed review of Constitution.

*A.I. Milli Council also sees threat to democracy and secularism in proposed review (30 April).

*A.I. Milli Council hold consultative meeting and forms an Adhoc Committee for organising Milli Political Forum on All-India basis (27 April).

*Tehrik-e-Shaban floats Minorities Democratic Party in Hyderabad.

*JUH opposes compulsory introduction of Vande Mataram in School (25 April).

Commemoration: *2 day Seminar on life and work of Ashraf Ali Thanvi held in Thana Bhawan.

*Delhi Mayor pays tribute to Asaf Ali on 110th birth anniversary.

Obituary: Famous Ghazal Singer Talat Mahmood, 75, passes away in Mumbai (9 May).

Other Minorities-Sikhs: *SGPC obtains control of 37 historic gurudwaras (29 April).

*Akal Takht bans private publication of Guru Granth Saheb.

Jains: *SC rejects petition by Jain sect from sole management of Parasnath Hills shrine.

Muslim World:

Pakistan: *Catholic Bishop Joseph's suicide and resulting demonstrations by Christians in Pakistan elicit sympathy in India; Catholic Bishops Conference demands repeal of blasphemy law (8 May).

*Minorities Council of India expresses concern over status of minorities (11 May).

*UN Reports massive human rights violations in Pakistan.

*MQM demands creation of more provinces in Pakistan (9 May).

Central Asia: *Uzbekistan and Tajikistan join with Russia to combat Islamic terrorism in Central Asia (6 May).

Egypt:

*Visiting Muslim scholar Tantawi of Al Azhar advises French Muslims to respect French laws on ban on veils in schools (14 April).

Afghanistan:

*Peace negotiation on Afghanistan break down on composition of religious panel to resolve difference (21 April).

Some Books of Interest

- BABB, LAWRENCE A. & WADLEY, SUSAN A.** : Media and the Transformation of Religion in South India. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.
- BHARGAVA, RAJEEV** : Secularism and Its Critics. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- CHOPRA, MOHINDER SINGH** : 1947: A Soldier's Story. Aegean Offset Printers, New Delhi.
- GOODWIN, JASON** : Lords of the Horizon: A History of the Ottoman Empire. Historical Travel Book.
- GRAFF, VIOLETTE** : Lucknow: Memories of a City. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- HASAN, ZOYA** : Quest for Power: Oppositional Movements and Post-Congress Politics in Uttar Pradesh. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- KHAN, SILA** : Conversions and Shifting Identities: Ramdev Pir and the Ismailis in Rajasthan. Manohar Books, 1997.
- MOHAN, SURENDRA** : Awadh under the Nawabs: Politics, Culture and Communal Relations, 1722-1856. Manohar Books, 1997.
- MEMON, RITU & BHASIN, KAMLA** : Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Pakistan. Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1998.
- NANDA, B.R.** : The Making of a Nation: India's Road to Independence. Harper Collins Ltd.
- RAI, VIBHUTI N.** : Combating Communal Conflicts - Perception of Police Neutrality during Hindu-Muslim Riots in India.
- RAJAN, NALINI** : Secularism, Democracy, Justice: Implication of Rawlsian Principles in India. Sage Publications, 1998.
- SCHOLBERG, HENRY** : The Biographical Dictionary of Greater India. Promilla & Co., New Delhi, 1998.
- SENEVIRATNE, H.L.** : Identity, Consciousness and the Past Forging of Caste and Community in India and Sri Lanka.
- SINGH, IQBAL** : The Ardent Pilgrim - An Introduction to the Life and Work of Mohammed Iqbal. Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- SINGH, PRASAD & SAXENA, REKHA** : India's Political Agenda: Perspectives on the Party System. Kalinga Publishers, New Delhi.
- SINGH, SANGAT** : The Sikhs in History. Uncommon Books, 1996.
- SMITH, ANTHONY D.** : Reviving Nationalism: Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era. Cambridge.
- SRINIVAS, SMRITI** : The Mouths of People, the Voice of God: Buddhists and Muslims in a Frontier Community of Ladakh. Oxford University Press, 1998.
- UBEROI, J.P.S.** : Religion, Civil Society and the State: A Study of Sikhism. OUP,