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Churn on diligently

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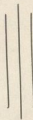
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## The Great Debate Is On . . .

IN AUGUST 1984, we in the Deendayal Research Institute, decided to have, on Oct. 28, a one-day in-depth seminar on national consensus for national reconstruction. Letters went out to about forty leaders of thought. This letter said :

*The country has come quite some way since 1947. But it has a long way to go before it becomes the strong, united and happy India of our dreams.*

*There are no doubt material hurdles in the way. But vastly more important are the mental, moral and emotional factors. In this sphere, some of the questions in the mind of thinking Indians, are :*

1. *How do we forge unity without imposing uniformity ?*
2. *How do we reconcile group expectations with preception of national interest ?*
3. *How do we channelise people's energies in national reconstruction ?*

We also invited the participants to send notes for consideration.

The response was very good. Among those who conveyed their acceptance were Sarva Shri Achyut Patwardhan, Badruddin Tyabji, Dharma Vira, Rustamji, B.G. Verghese, Ashis Nandy, Aroon Shourie, A.J. Kidwai, Iqbal Masud, Claude Alvares. Shri M. Hidayatullah regretted his inability to come all the way from Bombay so soon after he had retired from the Vice-Presidency in Delhi, but wrote to say : "I am in sympathy with what you are doing."

Mrs. Bilkees Latif, wife of the Governor of Bombay, wrote that but for her prior engagements, she would have loved to join in the discussions.

Notes were received from Sarva Shri M.V. Kamath, Sita Ram Goel, K. Sudarshan, Dr. Sujit Dhar, H.V. Seshadri, A.R. Shervani. Shri Romesh Thapar, editor 'Seminar', suggested the incorporation of the following points in a statement that may be adopted at the seminar :

- "1. So many of us, described in babu English as VIPs or VVIPs, are much involved in repeating our pet theories, but have never taken the trouble to assess them against experience and new facts.

- "2. The consensus frame has to be a decentralised political structure. There is no other way.
- "3. The society we are part of, will, around the year 2000 AD, be anything around 1000 millions—and this influences the "texturing".
- "4. The priorities concern housing and transport, education or training for jobs, health and environment, productivity and the nature of progress or growth, and our external neighbourhood, its relationship to the world. All this for 1000 millions.
- "5. The alternative has to be based on this consciousness. First, let us share it. Second, let us realise that our model cannot be imitative of others. Third, the society we build must have the dignity to stand on its own. Fourth, it must integrate itself multi-culturally, in mutual self-respect, and in moral and ethical bases which are largely common. This is the meaning of Indian democracy, Indian secularism and the Indian sense of economic justice which we call socialistic. These three pillars of the national consensus buttress a decentralised federal structure of involvement and governance. We have to find ways of providing sustenance and nourishment—particularly at this hour of need.

"These five points should surface, if carefully elaborated. All else is opium. And the sooner you chase away the opium-peddlers the better—or you'll be back to the starting point."

Shri P.N. Haksar wrote to say that he would have made it a point to attend, had it not been for a prior important engagement abroad on those dates. He added :

"In the meantime I thought I should share with you my difficulties. And one of my major difficulty is that I just cannot think about 'mental, moral and emotional factors' as isolates. I have even greater difficulty in thinking about ways and means of channelising 'people's energies' in national reconstruction. The very word channelising means a direction. Similarly, how can we channelise energies for reconstruction unless we create an architectural design or a vision of India? It seems to me that without a vision of India, we can hardly exhort anyone to respond to moral exhortations or bring about appropriate mental attitudes or generate emotional fervour.

"I admit that my knowledge and experience is very limited. But from what little I know and have learnt, I have come to the conclusion that

discussions which cannot relate themselves to the kind of India we want, soon degenerate into exercises in disembodied words."

We wrote to him : "You have hit the 'nail' on the head when you say that we must first be clear about the kind of India we want. Let's hope the men of goodwill gathering here on Oct. 28 will be able to agree on some vision of India". And Shri Haksar responded : "If, as you say, I have 'hit the nail on the head', how then do we set about designing the vision? If one were to proceed by way of an analogy with a piece of architecture, we must ask ourselves : What shall be the building blocks of this India? Or, if we change the analogy and think in terms of the weaving of a fabric, we must ask ourselves : What shall be the warp and the woof of this fabric?"

"It is easy to ask these questions, but it is extremely difficult to find the answers. We are not a *Tabula rasa*. We have a long and continuous past. What is valid in this past and also relevant to the designing or weaving of the vision? Can we wish away our diversities—linguistic, cultural, ethnic, historical etc.? Can we subsume these diversities within a religious frame or bring them within the frame of *Vedanta* or *Quran* or *Bible*? If we are to organise ourselves within a framework rooted in religion, who shall interpret a *Sutra* or an *Ayath* or sermon on the mount, or the meaning of a *Jataka* story? What shall we do to the primordial building block of our ancient society which is *Jati*? What is the relevance of *Varna Ashrama Dharma* to the vision of India? Even if we were to take a village in our country, how come that it is still not a community? It is fragmented vertically and horizontally.

"Another lot of difficulties arise when we begin asking ourselves : How we came to be in the state in which we are and the most palpable and measurable thing is the persistence of mass poverty and mass illiteracy? Can we bridge the gap between the rich and the poor in our country by resurrecting Gandhi's concept of trusteeship which Gandhi ji in his own life time could not enforce? What really are the reasons for the Hindu-Sikh divide, Hindu-Muslim divide, Hindu-Christian divide, the divide between the Nagas, the Mizos, the Khasis etc. and the rest of us? Even assuming that we could design a vision, what instrument needs to be forged for converting that design into an edifice? What political instrumentality is necessary without sacrificing, in any way, democracy?"

In response to our next note, Shri Haksar said : "Reading through the draft declaration as well as the points raised by Dr. Sujit Dhar and Shri K.D. Sudarshan, I felt that there is great need for a debate and dis-

cussion with an open mind. How, for instance, valid is the classification of peoples of India between those who profess a faith of indigenous origin and those who profess faith of foreign origin? The whole of Europe and America follow a faith of totally foreign origin. So do the Buddhists outside India, be they in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indo-China states, China or Japan. A large number of adivasis of India have embraced foreign faith, namely Christianity. Do we then divide the people of India in terms of their religion? Do we explain conflicts or divisiveness within our country based on Jati? Where do we fit in the conflicts in Punjab? There are so many questions which we need to debate and discuss in the light of reason and facts. All this makes me feel very sad that I will not be there to participate in the discussion as I am leaving New Delhi on the 27th of October and shall not be back until 22nd of November.

"Whatever view of history one might take and whatever philosophical stand one might adopt, each would have to relate itself to our problems. Some of the problems are relatively quantifiable, i.e. extent of poverty, extent of illiteracy, wide prevalence of malnutrition among our children, very unequal distribution of assets in the rural and urban areas of our country etc. etc."

Although Shri Haksar could not attend, his three comments became a valuable contribution to the discussion.

We in the DRI circulated a draft statement that read: "The Country has come a long way since 1947. But it has a much longer way to go before it becomes the united, strong and happy land of our dreams of yester-years. Meanwhile the country is actually regressing on many vital fronts. More and more millions are falling below the Poverty Line every year. The autonomy of institutions has been eroded. A general atmosphere of *asatya* and *himsa* fills the air. In the minds of thoughtful people, a question-mark has appeared over the future of India. This must not be.

"A brief fifteen years hence, at the turn of the century, India will be a full thousand million strong. We must so organise our affairs betimes, that this teeming population becomes a healthy happy mass of humanity. The economy must be so reorganised as to maximise production and spread the fruits of labour far and wide. There must be Food for All, Work for All, Health for All, Education for All. And above all there must be Justice for All. The Directive Principles of State Policy concerning the uplift of the poor, as enunciated in the Constitution, must be implemented without any further loss of time.

"Today most of our rivers have been polluted, our air fouled, our forests felled. The integrity of our Environment must be restored.

"The autonomy of our institutions—whether it is the Courts, the Universities, the Press or the federal constitution—must be safeguarded and strengthened.

"Today an air of violence hangs over the land. A man's life, limb or honour may be taken with impunity. Particularly reprehensible is the general decline in the respect for women. Any Government worth the name must secure the citizen's life, liberty and honour.

"Thanks to our traditional freedom of thought and belief, our Society has always been, and will always be, pluralist. There can be diversity without division—unity without uniformity. Differences are inevitable in a vast, varied and vibrant society. But we don't have to exaggerate them—or perpetuate them. Problems are there to be solved. We must never forget that we are one people, children of the same motherland—and act accordingly. We must integrate inter-culturally, in mutual self-respect, and in moral and ethical bases which are largely common. In this context we would urge the introduction in schools, of moral education that will be non-denominational and character-building.

"Nor need we stop at school. The family is the cradle of every nation, every civilization. Parents must take a more active and positive interest in fostering healthy *Sanskars* in their children.

"In every clime and time, the men of idealism are the salt of the earth. More and more of such idealistic young men and women should come forward and help the poor to come up. Only such a total and concerted effort can pull the country out of the present rut and take it forward."

The Seminar was held on Oct. 28 and its Report appears in the following pages. However, on Oct. 31, a great tragedy hit the country. Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated. And that delayed the preparation and publication of the Seminar Report.

WHILE THE FIRST PART of this issue of 'MANTHAN' deals with the Seminar, Part II deals with State-Centre relations. Events in Andhra Pradesh in August last very much shocked the country. The whole thing seemed to be a body-below to our federal system, which ensures autonomy to the states. This section throws much light on the position of the Governor as contemplated by the framers of the constitution—and the misuse of their powers by the Governors during the last 34 years. It will be read with the greatest interest. □



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## Ten-Point Plan for National Revival

by

M. V. Kamath



SHRI K. R. MALKANTI of the Deendayal Research Institute has raised three questions of major import :

- 1 How do we forge unity without imposing uniformity ?
- 2 How do we reconcile group expectations with perception of national interest ?
- 3 How do we channelise people's energies in national reconstruction ?

Two years ago, I edited, on behalf of the India Book House, a volume entitled : *The India of our Dreams : The Fourth Estate Speaks*, which set out to provide answers to precisely these questions.

Incorporated in the work was an abridgment of *An Agenda for the Eighties* which had been jointly prepared under the signatures of Romesh Thapar, Kuldip Nayar, Bashiruddin Ahmed, B.G. Verghese, Raj Krishna, Mrinal Dutt-Choudhury and Rajni Kothari.

Other contributors to the volume were R.K. Karanjia, V. K. Narasimhan, Nikhil Chakravarty and Rajmohan Gandhi.

This volume bears scrutiny two years later. I strongly recommend it to the participants of the seminar and considering that the contributors have made several detailed recommendations, I don't feel it is necessary for me to repeat them here and now.

Having said that, let me make some additional and brief observations :

**ONE :** As long as Mrs Indira Gandhi remains at the helm of affairs, I honestly don't see any positive action being taken towards the goals we have in mind. I would imagine that the first order of priority is to defeat Congress (I) at the forthcoming elections. That should be, and is, the immediate objective, over-riding everything else.

**TWO :** To forge national unity, we must first undo one fact that has been the cause of national *disunity*, namely, the linguistic state

These states should be scrapped at the earliest possible moment. They have done more harm than good and pitched one segment of the population against another.

**THREE :** Furthermore, the very concept of a megastate must be done away with. The unit should be the district which should be encouraged to order its own priority consistent with the interests of the nation as a whole. I would be happy to enlarge on my concept of a unitary form of government.

**FOUR :** We must get the government off our backs and give the task of national reconstruction back to the people.

**FIVE :** The concept of "socialism" or "socialistic pattern of society", alien to our national genius, must be given the go-by. More people have been pushed down the Poverty Line since Avadi. Let Private Enterprise, adequately tamed by proper safeguards, take over the national economy. Why not try out the Trusteeship Principle for a change ?

**SIX :** Sell all the Public Sector companies to private bodies in a well-ordered manner. Swap the enormous amount of black money now floating in the economy.

**SEVEN :** Bring the Ganga down to Kanyakumari and put the enormous energies of the people to constructive use. This calls for imagination and the harnessing of our national talent of which there is an abundance. (see Karanjia's contribution to *The India of Our Dreams*).

**EIGHT :** Call for volunteer service from the young. They will respond

with joy. The young are looking for the leadership unselfish, the vision uncluttered, the task beyond their strength. Once this is unfolded (as in linking the Ganga with the Kaveri) the people will look beyond their narrow expectations. See what the *Ekatmata Yajnya* achieved.

**NINE :** Free the Universities from the stranglehold of the government. Permit each college to hold its own examinations, give its own degree. Let Universities stick to research and post-graduate work without being burdened with holding examinations.

**TEN :** Give each *district* a project in which the entire community can be involved (de-silting rivers, afforestation of hills, repair of ancient monuments etc., etc).

I have purposely stated my views in a simplistic manner, rather than clothe them in high-falutin' language.

The judicial system needs to be simplified so that people can get ready and *quick* justice. What can we expect of people who spend a major part of their life seeking elementary justice ?

(Kalyanpur House, Third Road, Khar, Bombay-400052)

## How Hinduism Survived in Hindustan

**WHAT TOOK PLACE HERE** was a struggle between a quite primitive people whose only spiritual possession was a recently accepted Islam, whose inner worth even their leaders were not yet able to understand, and an old civilization whose superiority they might have instinctively felt, but tried to compensate for their lack of understanding of it by showing an exaggerated contempt...

**TWO WAYS** were open to the Hindus; conversion to Islam, or retiring into their own shell and living as it were in a ghetto, avoiding contact of any sort with the hated oppressors. The majority chose the latter way. What the Brahmins as protectors of their culture achieved in those days has never been properly recorded, probably because a considerable number of people belonging precisely to this class, had been slaughtered. If success was obtained in preserving Hindu culture in the hell of the first few centuries, the credit goes undoubtedly to the Brahmins.

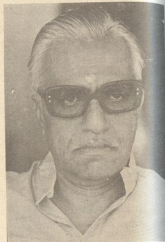
(Wilhelm von Pochhammer, German Consul in India, 1924-1947, in his book 'India's Road to Nationhood'.)

## Thinking Workers and Working Thinkers— That's What We Need

*Writes*

**H. V. Seshadri**

RSS in charge, South India



WITH REFERENCE to your three questions which are extremely relevant to the present day situation, here are three aspects which may somewhat help in arriving at certain commonly agreed lines of action:

1. *What can be the motivation for our people to involve themselves voluntarily in the gigantic process of national reconstruction?*
2. *Who is to take the lead in this process?*
3. *How should they proceed? What are the practical ways they have to adopt?*

THE ONE CHIEF REASON for the present-day all-round depression lies in a lack of right motivation at all levels. Right kind of motivation alone can make the people rise above their personal and group loyalties and interests, and hold their loyalty to the overall national interest supreme.

It is obvious that the distinguishing feature of our Bharatiya culture of recognising and reinforcing unity amidst diversity alone can bring about the harmonisation of group expectations with those of national interest and of strengthening the roots of unity without steam-rolling the variety into a dead uniformity.

The unified national consciousness of the people can be roused only by appealing to the inherent spirit of nationalism dormant in every heart. The first and foremost aspect of this spirit is to look upon Bharat not merely as a territorial entity but as our adored Motherland where our national life has been unfolding itself over the past scores of centuries.

The experience of our recent freedom struggle, when invocations like 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Vande Mataram', inspired thousands to sacrifice themselves in the cause of the nation, and broke down all barriers of caste, sect, creed, language and province, and gave rise to a great national upsurge, should be proof-positive of the efficacy of this appeal of the integrated concept and vision of our Motherland.

The integrated vision of a single national entity can be evoked by appealing to the noble and sublime cultural values embodied in the lives and messages of our great national heroes, seers and saints. This moral, cultural and spiritual ethos is common to all groups and denominations in the country although their external outfits are of a wide variety.

The call to live up to this priceless heritage of Bharat (which has also been our greatest contribution to world thought and culture) has been the greatest single factor in bringing about the unity of mind and purpose for all our people.

If we could fire the imagination and emotions of our people with these ideas and ideals, the necessary national motivation of our people could be achieved.

NEXT, WHO is to take the lead in rousing this sense of national purpose among all sections of our people? Obviously, those who are themselves committed to these ideals and are prepared to serve, suffer and sacrifice for their fulfilment. They alone can carry conviction to others. Example, and not mere precept—well, that is what is required.

And such living examples will have to be provided by men of character, of thought and action, in every field of national activity. Mere intellectualism without corresponding action, is sterile. Unfortunately, our intellectuals have woefully failed in this crucial aspect of matching their actions with their intellectuality. That is why they have alienated themselves from the mass of people and have little impact on them. The shocking experience of how, many intellectuals betrayed their much-trumpeted ideals of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of press etc., during the Emergency, should serve as an eye-opener in this respect.

The responsibility, therefore, devolves on action-oriented intellectuals, to give the lead.

**H**OW SHOULD such motivated persons apply themselves to the task?

- a) Education is the most vital field where the upcoming generation has to be imbued with the correct perspective of national priorities and motivation to put in their best in the task of national reconstruction. Education should, therefore, be totally freed from political interference. Experts in the field should have unfettered freedom to formulate the guidelines in this regard. Care should be taken to see that no religious pressure groups or political "isms" distort the right type of national pattern of education. A body of educationists and social thinkers, endowed with the right perspective, men who would pursue the project with vigour and determination, should be constituted towards this end.
- b) Journalists, who are one of the more potent agencies influencing the public mind, should be urged to highlight the positive and reassuring aspects of public life so as to dispel the present diffidence and infuse confidence in the success of efforts for setting things right. The undeserved publicity often given to avowedly anti-national persons and movements, only helps boost their image.
- c) Forums of enlightened newspaper readers, radio listeners and TV viewers at least in all state capitals, could act as watch-dogs to raise their voice against any misuse of mass media, which leads to the degeneration of moral and cultural standards.
- d) Teachers constitute another powerful factor in shaping the character and calibre of the coming generation. Special efforts should be made to involve them more and more in the task of harnessing youth power. The various teachers' organisations and educational institutions could be approached for their views and their co-operation.
- e) All such voluntary social and cultural organisations which are genuinely interested and are actively engaged in the pursuance of the objectives we have in mind, should be contacted and their co-operation sought.

- f) The police is another crucial force, which has unfortunately lost its credibility, leading to increasing breakdown of law and order, riots and crimes. One of the chief reasons, as is well known, is political interference. We should come up with suitable constitutional and legal provisions to free them from political clutches, as has been done in the western democracies. The usefulness of liaison committees comprising of representatives of police, public and students, for improving their mutual understanding and co-operation in eliminating anti-social elements from exploiting any untoward situation, could also be considered.
- g) The people can be energised only when they feel that their well-meaning efforts yield positive results. Corruption is one such field where, if some solid results could be shown, the public will naturally be electrified. Public legal committees (as in U.S.A.) through which public-spirited lawyers can legally tackle cases of corruption which affect large sections of society, can be one such effective endeavour.
- h) We have to start identifying such areas where the nation's integrity is sought to be challenged and the people's psychology distorted, by false and secessionist slogans, under separatist garbs of language or religion or race ('Dravidasthan', 'Khalistan', 'Sons of the Soil' theory etc.). All such dogmas, whether political, economic or religious—which impair the integrated loyalty to our country and our people as a whole, will have to be effectively rebutted. We have to expose all such forces inside and outside the country, which aim at the de-stabilisation and disruption of our national fabric.
- i) Towards this end, all kinds of funds flowing from foreign sources directly into the hands of social, religious and political bodies, will have to be screened. Government should enact suitable legislation to channelise all foreign money through governmental agency only, and also keep constant watch over the proper use of that money by the concerned agencies.

I do hope that every one of us who have positively responded to join this great crusade you have launched will, in addition to his intellectual participation, also apply himself to any special field of his choice and be able to come up with some positive results.

It may also be advisable to follow up the present initiative by making this an annual feature for sharing of experiences and planning for future.

(Keshav Krupa, Shankarpuram, Bangalore-560004)





Shri K. S. Sudarshan

Dr. Sujit Dhar

## Firm Commitment to Three Principles

Say

Dr. Sujit Dhar

and

K. S. Sudarshan

### I. How to forge unity without imposing uniformity ?

- A) This will be easy to bring about if there is an intrinsic respect for diversity—both of thought and action—among the people. Unity in diversity being the fundamental principle of this land, those religions which had their roots here, did not find it difficult to get assimilated into a general pattern of social life, where they could preserve their own special characteristics, while at the same time they respected others' point of view and in the interaction that followed, influenced and got influenced by each other. The Syrian Christians and the Parsis could also conform to the

general pattern. But those of our countrymen who have accepted faiths originating in other lands during the course of history are yet to evolve a proper theological rationale which will make them accept diversity as a fact of life because they lay greater stress on uniformity. The co-existence that has been there all these years has been rather an uneasy one, often experiencing stresses and strains and, in the process, creating a crisis of confidence; which is there for all to see. Hence the question which has to be deeply thought over is how to bring about the required psychological change among the common men of such faiths that will make them accept diversities of thought and action, not out of convenience but out of conviction. Then we can proceed to the question of unity.

- B) Unity envisages a firm commitment to a few principles. In the national context they should be :—

i) *Primary loyalty to the motherland* :—This also does not pose any problem to those who are following faiths born in this land or those who are already integrated in the broad social life of this country. But it does pose a problem before our people following faiths born in other lands because the concept of brotherhood fostered by those faiths is transnational. During times of crises they are faced with the dilemma of choosing between loyalty to the country and loyalty to the faith. How can this dilemma be resolved so that a faithful is not inhibited in discharging his duties towards his motherland even though the opposing nation may predominantly belong to the same faith. What can be the theological formulations ?

ii) *Respect for common ancestry* :—Change of faith should not warrant a repudiation of our own forefathers. Respect for common ancestry forms one of the greatest bonds of unity. But the process in which the alien faiths were brought into this land expected from the new adherents to cut themselves off from their past and adopt mores and manners of the conquerors. This resulted in a vast majority of people adopting the new faiths rejecting their common ancestry, thus snapping the very bond which bound them with their countrymen. In Iran and Indonesia and Japan, however, the picture is quite different where even after adopting a new faith they have not snapped their ties with their earlier



ancestors. Those few in this country who took pride in the ancient heritage have found a niche in the hearts of the people of this land. How can those examples be emulated by the common masses, is a subject to be given careful consideration.

- iii) *Acceptance of the unifying principle of this land* :—The one ultimate cosmic reality may be given any name or form, depending upon the level of enlightenment of different sections of the people. This has been the bedrock on which the religious edifice of our country has been built up, which has thrown up innumerable forms of deities and their worship. The only unifying factor in this plethora of Gods and Goddesses is the general agreement that through different forms the same ultimate omnipresent and omniscient reality is cherished. Acceptance of this principle obviates the necessity of proselytisation which, now-a-days, has more to do with politics than genuine inner urge.

Commitment to these principles will bring about the necessary national unity without imposing uniformity.

## II. *How to reconcile group expectations with perceptions of national interest ?*

Group expectations manifest themselves mainly in the areas of a) job reservations and b) sharing of political power. Both, if not properly tackled, may create situations going counter to wider national interests

- a) Faulty planning, relying heavily on capital-intensive western models, having little relevance to the Indian situation, has resulted in a condition where the number of job-seekers far outweighs the number of jobs available. The resulting heavy competition leaves a majority of them frustrated. This frustration expresses itself in the demand for reservations based on caste, class, language, religion, sect or region, thus making competence and quality, the casualties. Political leaders are always there to exploit the situation. Hence the urgency of proper planning to provide work for all. This will be instrumental in reducing group expectations in this area and thereby reducing group tensions. A few suggestions regarding the planning process, could be made here :

- i) Microplans to be chalked out at the gram panchayat level to be subsequently integrated in the plans of the next higher units, and thus reaching the national level. Necessary expertise to be provided at all levels to enable people to participate meaningfully in the planning process, which will inspire them to actively co-operate in its execution also.
- ii) Processing facilities to convert the raw materials into finished products to be provided at the village level itself, which will reverse the unhealthy migration of men and money from the village to the city.
- iii) Small-scale technology to be so evolved as to augment the capacity of individual workers without creating unemployment by replacing labour. Family to be made the basic unit for planning ;
- iv) Areas of operation of small, medium and large sectors to be well defined to prevent unhealthy competition;
- v) Persons having higher qualifications to be debarred from jobs requiring lower qualifications. This will tend to reduce the present rush for higher education, which is there more for ensuring job opportunities than, out of a genuine urge for knowledge;
- b) The western model of political institutions, not quite in tune with the realities of Indian life, has put a premium on divisions of caste, creed, sect, religion, language etc., which are easily exploited by politicians by dishing out half-truths and even falsehoods to inflame passions for their immediate narrow, political ends, setting in motion trends that are ultimately detrimental to wider national interest. The caste system, once evolved as a part of socio-economic planning, though it has been reduced to total irrelevance in the contemporary context, it has been kept alive by the politicians because of its vote-catching potency.

Strangely enough the journalists also have contributed to the continuation of caste consciousness by basing their electoral calculations mostly on caste factor. Hence alternative systems, more attuned to our requirements, will have to be debated seriously so as to reduce stress on divisions of caste, creed, religion etc. For example, the Lists System and Functional Representation System may go a long way in curbing emphasis on caste and similar other factors.

The very concept of India being a multinational State and its constitution, a federal one, is a distortion of reality. Since ages, this country, bounded by the Himalaya and the seas, has been one nation in the minds of the people, bound by strong cultural ties. Hence a unitary constitution, with proper devolution of political and economic powers at various levels, is a must. The old 52 Janapadas with proper modifications could provide a model worth trying.

A concerted effort should be made to make the people realise that diversity is the greatest stimulant to progress and we are fortunate to have the maximum amount of diversity of tastes, languages, religions, traditions, customs and manners. All those points that unify us, and the philosophy sustaining it, should be stressed by making them an integral part of our educational curricula which could have two components—first, an all-India component stressing the basic unity and its underlying principles and, second, the regional component stressing the local specialities, with special emphasis on how they enrich the nation as a whole.

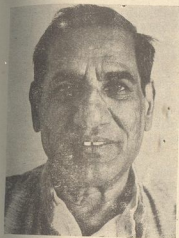
The medium of Education, Administration and Justice should be in people's own languages, with a common all-India technical, administrative and legal vocabulary and one of our national languages to act as the link language. Study of foreign languages should be optional.

### *III. How do we channelise people's energies in national reconstruction ?*

- a) Educate the people to *not* depend on the Government for solution of all their problems. It is their own job. Government can only help.
- b) Involve the people in the plan-making process.
- c) Voluntary agencies should be geared to act as motivators, inspiring people to participate in nation-building activities and also mobilising the bureaucracy to provide the necessary material and technical inputs for the projects.

Innumerable organisations, which have already accomplished astonishing results in different parts of the country in this direction, could be brought together to evolve a co-ordinated approach.

(8/1B, Chakraberia Road South, Calcutta-700025)



## **National Unity Possible only on a Hindu Base**

*Says*

**Sita Ram Goel**

### *1. How do we forge unity without imposing uniformity ?*

1. To my mind, this question raises another and a more fundamental question : unity among whom ?
2. One proposition is that our country consists of a conglomeration of communities and cultures which have to be integrated into a nation around some concepts borrowed from the modern West or evolved out of our own political experience.
3. Another proposition is that there exists in this country a national society and a national culture, with which the communities and cultures crystallised by foreign invasions, should come to terms.
4. The founding fathers of the Indian Republic preferred the first proposition. They envisaged India as a conglomeration of communities and cultures and hoped that this chaos could be converted into a national order with the help of the Constitution they had framed.
5. To start with, the dominant concepts in the Constitution were : i) democracy, ii) federalism and, iii) secularism. Socialism was added, at a later stage, as a fourth incentive to national integration.

6. This scheme of forging national unity has been tried during the

last 35 years. The dominant trends that have emerged are far from reassuring. The national scene seems to be fraught with forces of disintegration.

7. Democracy has degenerated into a free-for-all, with no holds barred. Power-hungry politicians have fragmented further an already fragmented society by carving out and consolidating vote-banks on the basis of religion, caste, language, and several other secondary differences. Elections have become a farce in which money and muscle power, rather than an awakened public opinion, play the major role. Representatives of the people that have been thrown up in the process are a species of social riff-raff. They have reduced all politics to empty slogan shouting, sycophancy, rowdism and horse-trading. National concerns are nobody's business.

8. Federalism has either not functioned at all or has become a cover for separatist and secessionist movements. The Centre has tried to reduce the states to mere satrapies and never hesitated to hound out State governments formed by patriotic and democratic parties of the opposition. On the other hand, the same Centre has felt helpless in the face of regional movements and State governments which openly declare their anti-national, anti-democratic and disruptionist aims.

9. Secularism has been distorted and turned into Hindu-baiting pure and simple. A so-called Hindu communalism has become a smoke-screen behind which all sorts of separatism have been stealing a march. Communities wedded to theocratic ideologies have managed to masquerade as guardians of secularism. Urgent social reforms have been resisted in the name of preserving religious and cultural identity. Minorities have perfected a politics of contrived grievances and found it highly profitable. Communal riots have become more and more frequent and brutal. Massive amounts of foreign money are being used by minority politicians and missionaries in order to propagate closed creeds and alienate more and more people from the mainstream.

10. Socialism in this country has been, from its very inception, a system of state capitalism. Parasitic and corrupt politicians and bureaucrats have acquired a stranglehold over all strategic sectors of the economy and the social welfare schemes. The poorest sections of the people have been plundered through ever-mounting indirect taxes in order to finance a public sector which has not only failed to produce the promised profits but which has also been frittering away big slices of scarce capital invested in it at different stages. The inflationary spiral has broken the back of all classes which do not derive their incomes from business or industry or

corrupt practices. Less said about the pattern of industrialisation, the better. It has concentrated wealth into fewer and fewer hands and continued to multiply unemployment. The countryside has been reduced to a vast whirlpool of destitution, while the cities have tended to become sprawling slums sans most of the basic civic amenities. The ecological devastation brought about in the process defies all description. This sort of socialism has also encouraged the so-called minorities to clamour for all sorts of reservations and economic concessions.

11. The experiment in national integration on the basis of the Constitution framed in the aftermath of independence is thus fast moving towards total failure. Public cynicism towards all varieties of political leadership has increased by leaps and bounds. There is little respect left for due processes of law in an order which provides justice only to those who can pay for it. Seats of learning have become centres of hooliganism. But the most momentous portent of an impending disintegration is the increasing use of armed forces for maintaining internal peace.

12. The other proposition is, therefore, well worth trying. It promises to be pregnant with immense possibilities for welding this country into a coherent nation.

13. According to this proposition the vast and variegated society and culture which have come to be described as Hindu society and Hindu culture in recent times, constitute the national society and national culture. This society and this culture have lived and flourished in this country for ages past and made great contributions to human culture at large.

14. On the other hand, foreign invasions of India in historical times have crystallised in this country: i) a Muslim community and culture, ii) a Christian community and culture iii) a Westernised community and culture. It is these self-alienated communities and cultures which are finding it difficult to get reconciled to the national society and culture and coming in the way of national unity.

15. Muslim community and culture have already partitioned the country by means of sustained violence. They are hostile to the national society and culture and reject all national norms in the name of a divinely ordained code of socio-political conduct. Foreign invaders and imperialist tyrants are their heroes, and national freedom-fighters are villains in their eyes. They refuse to recognise as their own any Indian languages or culture and continue to demand special privileges in the name of their religious and cultural identity. And they take to street riots at the slightest pretext. Massive amounts of Arab money have made them more aggressive

in recent years, as is evident from the increasing number and scale of communal riots.

16. Those who think that Muslim community and culture can live in peace and harmony with other communities and cultures are living in a dreamland. No country in the world has ever succeeded in solving its Muslim problem. Wherever the Muslims are in a minority, they do not permit the majority to live in peace. Wherever the Muslims are in a majority, they do not allow any non-Muslims to exist as citizens with respect.

17. Muslim community and culture will remain the greatest hurdle in the path of national unity so long as the fundamental premises of Islam are not radically revised. According to these premises as laid down in the Quran, the Hadis and the various schools of Islamic thought : i) Islam is not only a superior but also the only true religion; ii) followers of other religions should be converted to Islam by all means, including force and fraud; iii) Muslims in India are closer to their co-religionists in other countries than to their non-Muslim neighbours; iv) Muslims cannot separate religion from politics and should function as a solid vote-bank on the basis of religion; and v) India was once conquered by the sword of Islam and it is her destiny to become an Islamic theocracy in due course.

18. Muslim community and culture can get integrated in an Indian nation only if Muslims concede that i) Islam is only one of the ways of worship, and respects all other ways of worship; ii) conversions to Islam, except by conviction cause disruption and disharmony; iii) Muslims in India should share the national version of Indian history and feel closer to their non-Muslim neighbours in India than to their distant co-religionists; iv) Muslims should never mix religion with politics and stop demanding concessions in the name of cultural identity; and v) accept that the destiny of India is to become a strong, secular and modern state rather than an Islamic theocracy. Muslims must dissolve their vote-bank, shun foreign money for making conversions and mounting political campaigns and stop making use of every political platform for seeking special concessions. Otherwise they shall continue to act like a poison in the national body politic.

19. Muslims should also stop pressurising India's foreign policy in favour of the Islamic bloc. Foreign policy issues should be judged from a national point of view. At the same time, Muslims should appeal to Muslim countries abroad to allow to non-Muslims the same freedom of worship which Muslims enjoy in India and elsewhere.

20. Christian community and culture have also bred separatism

wherever they have become significant. The mischief in this case is centred in the foreign missions which import massive amounts of foreign money to build more missions and train an ever increasing army of native missionaries for subverting the national society and culture. The missionaries work in the name of Jesus Christ but are in most cases, instruments of foreign policy establishments of West European nations and the United States of America. The social services in which the missions are engaged are only a cover for advancing anti-national causes.

21. Christianity shares its fundamental premises with Islam and will continue to act as a poison in the national body politic unless those premises are radically revised. The first need, however, is to close down all foreign missions and stop the flow of foreign money for training native missionaries and multiplying missionary establishment. The Liberation Theology, which is the latest missionary masquerade, should be exposed as a method of national subversion.

22. The Westernised community which forms the ruling class, and the Western culture which has become the dominant culture, are closer to the national society and culture in so far as the former share their humanism, universalism and secularism with the latter. But they go astray and become disruptive when they want to copy blindly Western patterns of society, economy, culture and polity without taking into account national environment, resources, talents and traditions. They obtain their image of the national society and culture second-hand, mostly from Christian and other foreign accounts, which have been either hostile or ignorant. As a result, they have little sympathy with the aspirations of the national society and culture and easily join hands with Muslims and Christians in maligning both.

23. The most disruptive section of this Westernised community are the Communists. They are positively hostile to the national society and culture and want to subvert them for a totalitarian model borrowed from abroad. The Communists have to be isolated and immobilised. So long as they are active, they will continue to sabotage all efforts at national unity.

24. The Westernised community in general has to turn its face away from foreign countries and employ its humanism, rationalism and universalism in studying the national society and culture more closely and at first hand. They will find that the national society and culture have all the elements of democracy, federalism, secularism and socialism and that they can build a strong, secular and modern Indian nation on these foundations. The national society has always been ready for all social, economic and



cultural reforms. It has never been in love with fossilized forms, as is evident from the reform movements it has thrown up throughout its history.

25. The key to bringing about national unity is a reconciliation between the national society and culture on the one hand, and the Westernised community and culture on the other. If the national society and culture are to be modernised, the Westernised community and culture should become nationalised in the first instance. The latter should stop maligning Indian nationalism as Hindu communalism.

## II. *How do we reconcile group expectations with perception of national interest?*

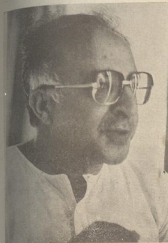
1. Once national unity is forged on the basis outlined in 1—25, the group interests which are not in harmony with national interests can be rejected without remorse. In fact, many groups which have come into existence in the free-for-all atmosphere prevailing at present, will cease to exist. Group politics becomes profitable only in the absence of national politics.

2. The first priority of a united nation will be the welfare of its weaker sections without distinction of caste, creed, sex, language or region. But welfare schemes will not be allowed to perpetuate groupism. Nor will the nation entertain contrived grievances of any group.

## III. *How do we channelise people's energies in national reconstruction?*

There is no spirit as strong as the national spirit, once it is allowed to surface out of the welter of personal and group ambitions which are vitiating the polity at present. We shall have a political elite which has a national vision and engages itself in nation-building as a vocation. The prevailing cynicism among our people towards all politicians is bound to disappear. When power-hungry politics is eliminated in favour of a purposive and principled politics, a cultural elite will come forward and transform the quality of national life. The Gresham's Law—the bad driving out the good—which has been continuously operating in all fields, can be defeated only when the best comes to the top and sets an example in dedication to the nation as well as in self-sacrifice. That is the lesson we have learnt from the struggles for freedom against various foreign invaders.

(2/18, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110002)



**Let us all be  
Good Hindus  
and work  
for Akhand  
Bharat**

*Writes*

**Ahmed Rashid Shervani**

THE MORE I think of it, the more convinced I become, that more than half of all our problems, and almost all our more difficult problems, arise out of the unnatural partition of our beloved Motherland. Unless and until the partition is undone, these problems cannot be solved. How, for instance, would we defend our Motherland when the resources and the strength of one-fourth of it are pitted against the three-fourths? How will we establish what we fondly call "secularism" here, when the basis of the creation and existence of Pakistan and Bangladesh is communal fanaticism? How will we evolve and develop the one-nation theory here, when the two horrid monuments of the hateful two-nation theory are standing on the sacred soil of our own Motherland on either side of us? Impossible!

The most surprising, the most painfully shocking, fact is that hardly anyone seriously even *thinks* of reunifying our Motherland, much less *act* for it. Even those who would have us believe that they are real sons of Bharat Mata (while we all are *sautelas*, step-Sons, perhaps) dare not open their mouths to say "Akhand Bharat", dare not even say that it is their aim (or even their desire, dash it) to have a united India, even by peaceful means. No political party, worth the name, has the courage to even say that little. When even the self-styled monopolists of *Bharatiyata* and *Rashtriyata* do not have the guts, who would?



Anyway, I firmly believe and unequivocally declare that we must strive for the reunification of the sub-continent—by peaceful means, if possible, by force, if necessary.

India, that is Bharat, is Hindu. Everything Indian must bear the Hindu imprint. Before these words overgladden the hearts of Hindu communalists I would like to clarify and emphasise that I mean the imprint of Hindu greatness and not of Hindu pattniness; of Hindu wisdom and not of Hindu stupidity; of Hindu broadmindedness and large-heartedness, and not of Hindu narrow-mindedness, small-heartedness; the progressive Hindu imprint and not the regressive, retrograde Hindu imprint. Let me elucidate.

What do I mean by 'Hindu' and the 'Hindu imprint'? When I say India is 'Hindu', Hindu includes Gautama the Buddha who questioned, even denied, the very existence of Brahma, the metaphysical supreme being of the then dominant Brahmanical religion, who questioned and controverted the basic ideas on which, what even now some people take to be, the main Hindu faith rested.

For me the greatest thing in Hinduism, the loveliest aspect of Hinduism is that it is not a dogma, not even a religion *per se*. It does not try to make you a stereotype. It lets you be whatever you want to be. It does not exclude; it includes, it encompasses, it encircles and surrounds everything. It immerses you into itself, it embraces you, it does not let you get out. It is this Hinduism that I love, accept, embrace; not that Hinduism which calls some people *mlechhas*, *chandaalas*, *danavs*, *rakshasas*; not that Hinduism which calls some of high-birth and others of low-birth; not that Hinduism which says that one-third of the children of Bharat Mata are "untouchable"; not that Hinduism which exhorts its followers to treat fellow human beings with contempt, hatred; that Hinduism (which was, and is, just a distortion, a perversion of the real Hinduism) my ancestors gave up, rejected centuries ago and I am glad and proud they did so.

This does not mean that I am against those who still follow that type of Hindu religion. The question does not arise. They are my brothers, flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, bone of my bone. I love them and am loved by them. They are the children of my Mother and I am a child of theirs. Together we have to serve our Motherland, to make Bharatvarsha progress and prosper, be strong and mighty. And I am, indeed I am, glad that most of them still retain some of the real Hinduism, the liberal magnificent munificent Hinduism which I equate with Indianness, and of which I am an integral part.

I am a Hindu who believes in but one God and not in a plethora of gods and goddesses. I am a Hindu who believes that all men are born equal (*musawaat*) and not that some are born high, and some low. I am a Hindu who believes that all men are brothers (*ukhuwwat*) and not that the touch of some would pollute others. And if anyone says that all these ideas are derived from Islam, which is a foreign religion, and are hence un-Indian and un-Hindu, I would say that all these ideas were there in the ancient Indian scriptures and thoughts and that Islam was not born in Arabia; these ideas were preached by over a hundred thousand persons (whom I believe to be the messengers of God) in all countries and climes, in all periods and times and by many of them in our own Motherland. So, Islam is not just an Arabian faith, it is truly universal. It is also Indian. Further, my Hinduism, true Hinduism, real Hinduism, does not prevent a Hindu from accepting what he feels to be good ideas from anywhere in the world. I feel that even if I am the follower of a foreign faith I am a true Hindu. A Hindu does not cease to be a Hindu if he accepts what he thinks is a good idea from anywhere. In fact, I believe he is a better Hindu than that Hindu who has restricted and confined himself to only local ideas, who shuts himself in to keep away from all ideas emanating from anywhere else in the rest of the world. I would call this attitude of such of my Hindu brothers, most un-Hindu. So, if you please, I am a follower of a foreign faith and yet I am a true Hindu. Any objections? If none, then I repeat that India is Hindu and everything Indian must bear the Hindu imprint.

The solution of the communal problem in our subcontinent has to begin with the most valid Hindu idea of *Sarva Dharma Sama Bhava*, Hindu philosophy, Hindu learning, Hindu wisdom, Hindu culture, Hindu arts etc. are the common heritage for all of us. I love and cherish these. Philosophically and culturally, I am a Hindu. I am the inheritor of all that is great and glorious in the Hindu past. So is every Indian, every child of Bharat Mata. But the trouble starts when some zealots try to impose those ideas on other Indians, other Hindus, which these bigots wrongly believe to be the be-all and end-all of Hinduism, ideas which most thinking Hindus no longer accept. The hall-mark of real Hinduism is the intellectual and spiritual freedom of a Hindu, of each and every Hindu, to think and choose for himself what he wants to believe, what he wants to think and feel. Those who strive to curb this freedom of the Hindus are themselves doing something most un-Hindu.

I do believe that those in India who follow what are called foreign religions, must not cut themselves off from Hindu culture, philosophy, learning, arts, etc. They should love and cherish these. If they do not, then

indeed they are un-Indian. I do not deny that there are some such persons. However, I also believe that those who seek to impose some brand of what they call 'Hinduism' on every Indian, are also enemies of our Motherland's unity. And these two types constantly strengthen each other by sowing seeds of dissension and reaping harvests of frenzy and violence: Only by curbing and defeating both these unhealthy trends (which are complementary to each other, and sustain each other) can we be in a position to march rapidly forward towards the goal, the destination of building a united, prosperous, strong and mighty India, the Akhand Bharat of our dreams!

(12-A, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001)

### —“Partition Must Go” said Sri Aurobindo

on August 15, 1947

*INDIA is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom. At one time it almost seemed as if she might relapse into the chaos of separate States which preceded the British conquest. Fortunately there has now developed a strong possibility that this disastrous relapse will be avoided. The wisely drastic policy of the Constituent Assembly makes it possible that the problem of the depressed classes will be solved without schism or fissure. But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country.*

*It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled, or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest.*

*The partition of the country must go—it is to be hoped by a slackening of tension, by a progressive understanding of the need of peace and concord, by the constant necessity of common and concerted action, even of an instrument of union for that purpose. In this way unity may come about under whatever form—the exact form may have a pragmatic but not a fundamental importance. But by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be.*

## The Great Debate

THE SEMINAR began in the Deendayal Research Institute, New Delhi, at 10-30 AM on Oct. 28, 1984. The following were present: Sarva Shri Badruddin Tyabji, Dharma Vira, K.F. Rustamji, Prof. Rajendra Singh, Ashis Nandy, Iqbal Masud, Rajgopal, Arun Shourie, K. Sudarshan, A.R. Shervani and Nusrat Shervani, Dr. Sujit Dhar, Sitaram Goel, Claude Alvares.

Also present, from the Institute side were Sarva Shri Hansraj Gupta, Nana Deshmukh, Devendra Swaroop, Dr. Shreedharan and K.R. Malkani.

Some other friends who had earlier intimated their decision to attend could not do so due to sudden change in their programme. They were: Sarva Shri Achyut Patwardhan, B.G. Verghese, Cho Ramaswamy, Noorjahan Razack, Ramesh Thapar, A.J. Kidwai, Hakim Haji Abdul Hamid and Dr. Gopal Singh.

Nanaji welcomed the participants.

**NANAJI:** It gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome you here this morning. Thirty-seven years after Independence, our problems are more complex than ever before. A question-mark has appeared over the future of India. All of us here are non-political persons. Perhaps we can consider matters coolly, diagnose the nature of the national malaise and even suggest a course of action. Once again I welcome you all heartily. I would now request Malkaniji to introduce the participants.

**MALKANI:** Nobody here needs an introduction. All of you are well-known. However, many of us have known one another by name but not by face.

Shri Dharma Vira, ICS, retired as Cabinet Secretary and later became Governor of West Bengal. He is a patron of all good causes.

Shri Badruddin Tyabji, ICS, retired, is the scion of a great family. He retired as Secretary, External Affairs Ministry, served as ambassador in Iran, Indonesia, Japan, and later became Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University. He is a man of light and learning.

Shri Rustamji retired as Commandant, Border Security Force, later sat on the National Police Commission. He is the organ voice of law, order and justice in a situation of mounting disorder and injustice.

Prof. Rajendra Singh, formerly of Allahabad University, is General Secretary RSS. He personifies Mathew Arnold's definition of culture as "sweetness and light".

Shri Ashis Nandy works with the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. He is one of our more perceptive writers.

So, too, is our friend Iqbal Masud, whose real name is F.G. Jilani. Shri Jilani is retired Income Tax Commissioner of Bombay. You will wonder why and how he has come to be known as Iqbal Masud. During the Emergency he very much felt like expressing himself on the subject. As a Government Officer he could not write in his own name. He, therefore, adopted this new name; and now it has stuck to him nicely.

Shri Rajgopal is a distinguished retired Officer who was secretary to the Shah Commission.

Shri Arun Shourie needs no introduction either by name or by face. He is not only a distinguished writer but a crusader in all good causes.

Shri Sudarshan is Baudhic Pramukh of RSS. He hails from Karnataka but his HQ is Calcutta and he has made a special study of the North-East.

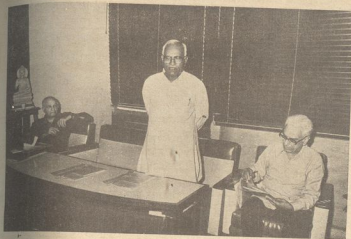
Shri Shervani comes from a family which distinguished itself in the Freedom Movement. He is an unusual industrialist, in that he takes active interest in the education of Muslims. So does his wife, Nusrat Behn.

Dr. Sujit Dhar is a leading doctor and RSS Secretary of Calcutta. He is a keen student of Indo-Pak-Bangladesh relations.

Shri Sitaram Goel is a well-known writer whose pen is as powerful as it is lucid.

Claude Alvares is a brilliant writer who is more interested in the gut issues of agriculture and environment than in the ephemeral issues of Politics.

The DRI welcomes you all to this Great Debate. I would now request Shri Tyabji to set the ball rolling.



Nanaji welcoming participants. Seated (L to R) Tyabji, Malkani.

**BADR-UD-DIN TYABJI** : Frankly, I have attended so many seminars, and also written so much on this subject that I was not greatly enthused when Mr. Malkani kindly invited me to attend this one. I did, however, suggest to him that it was most important to get together representatives of what one may call the "right-wing orthodox" Indian political, religious or ethnic groups, to face each other across a common table, and frankly try to convince each other by their arguments or be prepared to modify their own views. I am glad to see that this is being attempted.

I did not send a written note as invited to do, largely for the reason given above. I am glad now I did not do so; as much of what I would have said has been expressed in better terms in the notes sent in by other participants. There are of course also elements in their presentations with which I strongly disagree; but that too can perhaps be better dealt with in a reply to specific written statements than by a prior formulation of one's own views.

I shall now take up the various notes circulated in answer to the three questions posed by Mr. Malkani :

1. *How do we forge unity without imposing uniformity ?*
2. *How do we reconcile group expectations with perception of national interest ?*

### 3. How do we channelise people's energies in national reconstruction?

The first note I received was Mr. M.V. Kamath's, who I had got to know fairly well when we were both operating in Germany, nearly 26 years ago.

I agree in principle with practically everything he has said, except perhaps in his singling out Mrs. Indira Gandhi as the prime impediment to our national regeneration. There, he seems to be indulging in a terminological exaggeration as Mr. Winston Churchill might or might not have said.

I also do not agree with part 9 of his note regarding 'education', though there again it is perhaps more a question of the language he has used than its substance. The general thrust of his argument requires to be worked out in practical workable terms.

The second note received was that from Mr. P.N. Haksar. He has wisely remarked that "no discussion can be worthwhile unless it is fertilized by men and women who have deep understanding of the implications of modern science and technology and possess historical insights."

As I can claim only a modicum of the latter, and practically nothing of the former, I shall not say anything more, except to say that I agree with him.

Then, there is a suggested draft statement by Mr. Romesh Thapar with which I would be prepared to go.

Then follows a joint note by Dr. Sujit Dhar and Mr. K.S. Sudarshan. In paragraph A) of their note, their reading of history and of current events and thought seem to go completely counter to my own understanding of it. They say "those of our countrymen who have accepted faiths originating in other lands during the course of history are yet to evolve a proper theological rationale which will make them accept diversity as a fact of life because they lay greater stress on uniformity."

I presume that the reference is to Christians and Muslims in particular? If so, as far as I am aware, the bulk of Christians and Muslims in India lay much more stress on diversity of religions and culture in India than the majority community admits. It is the latter that harps continually on uniformity, not the other way round.

Anyway, I shall be very happy to support any action they contemplate to bring about "the required psychological change among the common

## No reasonable Muslim would disagree with Sita Ram's five criteria

man (of all faiths) that will make them accept *diversity* of thought and action in the followers of *all* religions."

In B) ii) *Respect for common ancestry*, I agree with the gravamen of the charge made here, but one of the principal reasons for this is that very little effort has been made by the majority community also, to understand the new faiths, that were brought into this land and to appreciate their values. Things were very different in Akbar's India. Unless there is a mutual appreciation of the values of different religions by the followers of all of the others, there cannot be a real understanding between them. The recent Hindu-Sikh divide and misapprehensions of each other among them largely arise from this. It is the majority community's emphasis on the unity, or rather uniformity, of the two faiths that basically aggravates their mis-understanding of each other.

Regarding the rest of the note, I would go along with much that has been said, except when in paragraph II) they say that the "concept of India being a multi-national State and its constitution a federal one, is a distortion of reality", and go on to wax lyrical on "the age-old unity of India". One wonders then whether their imagination and wishful thinking have not outrun their sense of reality.

And, finally, one comes to the note of Mr. Sita Ram Goel. He does not pull his punches. I read his first 11 paragraphs with some admiration. He has unsparingly castigated the way in which our country has been run in the last 37 years; but then instead of suggesting ways and means by which these defects could be made good, he proceeds altogether to dismantle the constitution, and particularly the concept of "unity in diversity" (and *not* uniformity).

Reading him it would almost seem as if in the last 37 years it was the minorities, and particularly the Muslims, who had been ruling this country, and were responsible for all the failings and shortcomings of the government. It is an extraordinary conclusion to have drawn when many Muslims feel humiliated at the choice that the majority party makes of in selecting minority figure-heads for filling the few posts that convention and public opinion demand should be allotted to the minorities. These figure-heads have had nothing whatsoever to do with the real governance of the country, except to kowtow to the political chiefs of the majority



community that have ruled and ruined it throughout the period after Independence.

In paragraph 16 he goes so far as to say "those who think that (the) Muslim community and culture can live in peace and harmony with other communities and cultures are living in a dreamland". Then for good measure he goes on to add that this has not happened in any other country, nor can it happen here.

I can only say that Mr. Goel's reading of history and knowledge of what has happened in other countries is very different from mine. But then in paragraph 18 he makes almost a complete U turn. He puts forward five criteria which, if observed, he says, might result in the Muslim community and culture being integrated in an Indian nation.

Curiously enough, I find nothing in these five criteria with which any reasonable Muslim would disagree; I personally would certainly support them.

Mr. Goel's venom is then turned against the Christians. Being myself beholden for my early education to a Jesuit School and College, I find it difficult to restrain myself in repudiating and expressing my indignation on what he has written about Missionary efforts in India.

There seems some disease in the mentality of people who will do nothing for their own stricken people except prevent them from being salvaged by others with a more humane view regarding them.

Personally, I have no objection to what he has said in paragraph 25 except to stress that "the national society and culture", of which he speaks, should be defined as an all-inclusive society and culture, and not an exclusive one, confined only to that of one particular community, however large it may be.

The draft declaration forwarded seems to me quite innocuous. I should have no objection to it, except that I think it is far too bland and requires to be made much more purposeful, if it is to do any good except serve as a bromide.

II. Regarding broad national issues, such as the need forming a common Civil Code, if there is a national consensus about it, there should be no hesitation in bringing practical legislation to give effect to it before parliament for its approval. If there are any elements in it, that, on grounds of religion or other strongly held sentiments, particular groups or segments of society consider as violating their religious percepts or

faith, the application of those clauses to them should be made optional, till such time as they were socially and psychologically prepared to accept them. The latitude given in this regard in the application of the Civil Marriage Act is a good example of how such issues can be handled in a diverse religious and social society as ours.

Then in regard to the very justified complaint that Muslims in particular lag behind others in social welfare work, interest in Family Planning and other such activities, what should be borne in mind, and drastically remedied, is: first of all that the bulk of the Muslim community in India, after Partition, has been bereft of leadership, a solid middle class, and of course an active top affluent and leisured class. All social activity carried on by the State is almost entirely concentrated in the hands of the majority community from the Chaprasi upwards. They have no understanding, and even less sympathy, for the Muslim masses whom they are expected to 'salvage' from their ignorance and apathy. The social services of the State should be staffed by persons capable of dealing with the kind of people whom they are expected to reform. This is not the case now. In general it is the root cause of our deteriorating administrative efficiency.

The very popular cry of the "separation of religion from politics" that has become one of the main planks of 'Secularism', is in a way becoming its most destructive element. As religion is, for the bulk of the Indian people, the sole source from which they imbibe their principles of ethics, their moral values, and their norms of social conduct, a divorce of religion from politics, in practical terms for them, means a divorce of ethics morality and social conscience from politics.

Thus, we see politics in India increasingly divested of these values and restraints. It is highly important to emphasise that a separation of religion from politics is not meant to do that; *only* to discourage the exploitation of religious differences to create differences in the social and political structure and institutions of the State. For example, the Muslim abhorrence for pigs and pork-eating; the Hindu's for beef-eating; the Parsi and Sikh's for smoking; and other pro and contra predilections, prejudices or taboos, such as vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism, prohibition and non-prohibition. All these in a 'secular' State need to be tempered with tolerance, and applied only by the consent of all concerned, not only of dominant community, or the most clamant.

Religious values that are common to all religions must, however, continue to govern all our actions and, *ipso facto*, our politics. *The more this is done, the better.*



**AROON SHOURIE** : The draft statement circulated by Mr. Malkani is much too mild. It should have some operational content.

**TYABJI** : I agree. It should be redrafted by Mr. Goel.

**SHOURIE** : I will not discuss the various notes circulated. We have to go to the core of the matter.

In the Fifties, the State was viewed as agent of growth. Now the State has become the private property of some people. And the masses have acquired in that situation. Corruption has been legitimised. Such a state cannot serve the people. We have to have a lean but efficient state. There was black market and corruption in cement only because it was short. Let the State become an instrument of performance.

In the name of secularism we are told to play down religious tradition. You can comment on Hindu scriptures but not on Muslim scriptures. Hindus are told not to comment on Sikhism. Why not? Is not Sikhism a part of the Hindu heritage? We imbibe traditions in the family early in life. Why can't we correct each other later in life?

What we need is not a syrupy secularism but rationality.

**K. F. RUSTAMJI** : The political scene is one in which there is a great deal of disgust shown by the common man for all politics and politicians.

There is a great deal of anger regarding defections, corruption and all that is eating into the vitals of the nation.

The selfishness and disunity that is being shown by the opposition, gives the feeling that they may not hold together, and, worse still, that they will be doing exactly what the ruling party is doing when they come in power.

The sum total of what is being done in the political field gives the impression that we are a sick society.

At the same time as this has been taking place in the political side, there has been a change in the intellectual climate because of numerous disappointments.

We were brought up on science and on Gandhi—and a feeling of goodwill towards your neighbour, very inadequately expressed by the word 'secularism'.

People believed in evolution and Marx, and we had a lack of faith

## *"There is a funereal atmosphere in the country today"—Rustamji*

in some of the traditional rights and practices which were in vogue earlier.

The intellectual climate has suffered because of disappointments. Marx and socialism were unattainable. The worst blow was struck by the fact that all the old values seem to be crumbling. Today we feel as though we were returning from the funeral of a friend, and all that we can do is to blame the USA and USSR for destroying the hope that was held out to mankind in which there was equality and brotherhood.

The disappointment with politics and the basis of it—that is, the intellectual effort—has led people to think of options, and those options are notably connected with what held people together in the past, that is religion or plain force.

The revivalist movement in Christianity was taken up by Islam and gave rise to pan-Islamism, and now the worst tragedy is that Hindu society which seemed to be totally protected from any type of fanaticism, seems to be moving towards it. We have seen what damage occurred to the Sikhs because of a similar movement. This trend in Hindu society is, I hope, disputable, and will not be acceptable to the masses.

Today we are suffering from a loss of faith, and that in a poverty-ridden country can have serious consequences. It can in the first place lead to uncontrollable violence.

Our biggest dangers arise from the fact that we have not been able to perfect the rule of law and have not been able to give adequate attention to rural poverty. These are two imperatives to which we must pay immediate attention if we do not want the year 2000 A.D. to become a year of horror.

Our criminal law system does not function; our Police is corrupt and incompetent; our courts are somnolent; our jails are hell-spots. In this situation we will be lucky if we have a revolution. Actually, all we may have, is chaos.

The approach paper on Seventh Plan has given a focus on rural development. The opposition has already accepted this. Whichever party comes in power, the main effort will be rural development. The major part of our resources must be committed to well-organized rural projects.

Our failure in the past was due to the fact that no suitable machinery existed. Panchayati Raj inaugurated by Pandit Nehru, was never given a proper chance. Village agencies were excluded from all planning and implementation. The study of L.C. Jain on rural development is worth serious attention.

On the other hand we have the Gonda project—33,000 tubewells—the innovations in the field of irrigation, the help to artisans, fishing, poultry, cattle breeding, seeds, fruits, training, social uplift.

The most important observation one can make is that rural India seems to be at the take-off stage. If we realise that today, and put in all efforts at rural development, the return will be very considerable. A word about the work of Nanaji Deshmukh. In a totally dedicated manner, he has pursued a cause which can give a meaning to rural development. The important point that arises from this is that there is a place for non-political persons. They have the support of the countryside and, if the work that they are doing is encouraged and developed on the right lines, it can bring a great deal of relief to the misery of the rural poor.

The 'hawa', or the wind of change, sweeping over the land is an ill-wind. It is a wind which is carrying fundamentalism, communalism, social conflict, the criminalisation of politics.

We have seen the slow decline of law and order, a decline that gives encouragement to any type of group that wants to secure dominance, as in Punjab, with the help of religion.

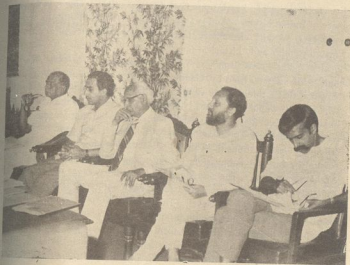
We have seen the increase in communal rioting:

The infection of the police and the administrative agencies of the virus of communalism.

In brief, we have seen the failure of the criminal justice system, and that can have serious consequences. We must take steps to protect the country internally.

**IQBAL MASUD:** I regard the second and third questions—those relating to group expectations and channelising people's energies—more relevant than the first one viz., "forging of national unity". But since the trend of discussion has centered on "national unity", I shall concentrate on it.

The papers sent in so far, with respect, have laid too much stress



Seated (L to R) Sarva Shri Rajgopal, Arun Shourie, Rustamji, Ashis Nandi and Claude Alvares.

"national unity". Last week I was in Pakistan. The animosity between Sindhis and Punjabis there is more intense than anything in India. The one explosive situation we have is in Punjab. It can create great tragedies but it cannot, even at the worst, break the nation.

Let us deal with the "communal"—specifically the Hindu-Muslim—problem. This has complex origins. In the pre-partition period a large portion of blame would certainly attach to Muslims in initiation of riots. But in the post-partition period they are at the receiving end.

We have yet to understand "Indian Islam" as a phenomenon by itself. There is no doubt that "Islam" has come to India from "outside" and it is both a world religion and a missionary religion. But the Aryan element of Hinduism has also come from "outside". The question is whether the fact that Islam is a world missionary religion (qualities not shared *in toto* by Hinduism) makes Muslims a non-assimilable element in the Indian social set-up. When you ask this question, the normal Hindu reaction is to recall all the Muslim invasions, the acts of cruelty by individual Muslim rulers and, of course, the great watershed of Indian history, Partition. What is forgotten is that the thousand-year Hindu-Muslim contact was not limited to rulers. Perforce Hindus and Muslims had to

live cheek by jowl and each was affected by the other. This is a commonplace of Indian history. And yet when we discuss these things in seminars we forget prosaic, elementary facts and search for "cultural patterns", "macro-trends" and "historical imperatives". We talk of "transnational loyalties" and "revivalism", as if these are products of to-day. We forget that "Khilafat" was used by Gandhiji to reunite Hindus and Muslims. How is it that a thing which was good in the twenties is vicious to-day? The answer would be: look at the rise of revivalism in the Middle East. But you forget that what you call revivalism in the Middle East is a political response to specific situations. Khomeini was a response to the cruel and tyrannical Shah. The 1979 Mecca uprising was a response to corruption in, and submission to, American imperialism by the Saudi Arabian monarchy. The assassination of Sadat was a response to his submission to both America and Israel. National and regional self-respect asserted itself at a popular level. This took the form of a religious movement. This is not uncommon in history. One can refer to European peasant uprisings which took the form of religious movements. To-day Latin American Catholic priests are fighting against their dictators. So to establish a connection between Islamic revivalism and the so-called obduracy of Indian Muslims, is misleading.

What is the tangible evidence for such a connection? What is the tangible evidence for flow of foreign funds?

It is said Islam is not an "open" religion like Hinduism. Any Hindu can write a book critical of the Vedas or Krishna; but can a Muslim do corresponding things about their religious texts and personalities?

I think the question is being raised in a simplistic form. Certainly a lot of re-interpretation of conventional Islam (which, in effect, means criticism of established positions) is going on inside Islam. If most of it is going on outside India, the reason is two-fold:

Intellectual leadership of Indian Muslims in all areas, including religious thought, has declined since Partition. This is an understandable but transitional phenomenon.

Communal riots since mid-sixties have put Muslims in a position of *basic physical insecurity*. As long as that lasts, one cannot expect Muslims to become culturally "open". Make them physically and financially secure and their genius will flower.

A large number of temples have been replaced by mosques. The injustice, it is said, should be reversed.

## *Islam, as practised by Indian Muslims, is interwoven with Hinduism.*

With all respect, I question the wisdom of raising this question after a long lapse of time. It is obvious that this is being done to highlight an "issue" to "unite" the Hindus. But from the point of view of national unity surely this is counter-productive at the moment. These questions are under negotiation and little constructive purpose is served in taking it to the arbitration of the crowd. Surely Hindus can be better united by constructive work rather than by rhetorical gestures.

Again it is asked, why don't the Muslims join a Common Civil Code? Polygamy and lack of birth control will give the Muslims a population edge over Hindus.

The question of Common Civil Code has been there for a long time. Muslims in the mass are against this demand in the aggressive manner in which it is put forth from outside the community. Instead of bringing national unity, it will destroy it. There is no use pointing to the reform in other Muslim countries. Those countries are not democracies like ours and amendments were practically made by executive or elitist fiat. The position in India is different. In a democracy we have to work through persuasion. Persuasion will work only when it comes through the community's leaders.

The question of leadership is important. There is no use blaming the Muslims for failure of Chagla and Dalwai. Chagla never identified himself with the Muslims. Dalwai was always appealing to the bar of non-Muslim opinion, to redress the alleged wrongs in the Muslim society.

The problem of reform of some aspects of what is called "Muslim law" is very much there and the work of re-interpretation is going on. The leaders are in a difficult position. On the one hand, they have to lead the Muslims out of their present morass. On the other, they have to keep their credibility among Muslims. No doubt all this looks like special pleading to a non-Muslim. I would appeal for patience and understanding of a complex historical phenomenon.

As far as overtaking the Hindu population is concerned, this looks to me an absurd proposition unworthy of serious consideration. I would like to see the working on which such prognosis is based.

The need of the hour is a continuous dialogue between various communities at a serious and fairly objective level. This should be both

conceptual and practical. We should talk as well as fabricate devices to meet actual riot situations. Nothing is gained by close study of another community's texts or behaviour to find chinks in them. The problem is to *live with each other*. A profound truth is contained in the proverb: "Ignorance is bliss". The kingdom of all religions is not of this world. In this world in which we live, let us be less rigid, more accepting, more tolerant—even if that means hypocrisy.

I was in Government service for 35 years. I've seen the deterioration in the services. There is no integrity. The problem of urban poverty has nothing to do with the communal problem. From Churchgate to Mulund in Bombay, it is slums and slums all the way.

Something unfortunate happened in Srinagar last year. The radio and TV kept repeating the "unholy happenings in Srinagar" for three days. Was it fair? Actions like these only endanger the unity of India.

As Income Tax Commissioner of Bombay, I found that a majority of the black list of fiscal offenders consists of Muslims. There are few senior Muslim officers anywhere. In IAS, Muslims are just 2.5 per cent, as against their population strength of 12.5 per cent. We are very safe in this room but we do not feel quite safe in the country.

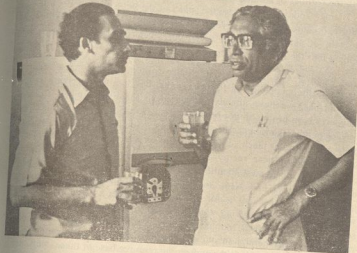
In the situation of Muslim poverty, Muslim smugglers have become Muslim heroes. The moment Haji Mastan was arrested, Bhandi Bazar spontaneously closed down. I can assure you that if I were arrested, not one shop would close.

There are superstitions in all religions. But this is a sensitive matter. Let us be content with 'the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man'.

The popular version of Islam, as practised by Indian Muslims, is interwoven with Hinduism. There are links at the popular level, not at the classical level. There is a tacit understanding for co-existence and peace.

**ASHIS NANDY:** There is no disagreement over diagnosis, only about the means of initiating a new way of looking at things. And here the role of the State is crucial. The central challenge today is to redefine the role of the State.

Ours is the only continuous civilization over a period of four thousand years. At the centre of that civilization is the pre-modern theory



Arun Shourie (left) in conversation with Iqbal Masud.

of the State which says that the State should serve culture. Today the entire modern sector in India is trying to alter Indian culture to subserve the Indian State. This is obvious even in trivial things. When Indian sportsmen lose to their Pakistani counterparts, Indian sports writers say we have "no killer instinct". But Pakistanis feel the same way. And both blame their cultures. This is the fate of every Third World country. We all feel we have lost to the White man because we were not strong, ruthless or masculine enough and that our State at least should be masculine and tough. Even Dayanand and Vivekananda thought we were not a martial people and therefore our culture should be altered. They forgot that it was the so-called non-martial people of East India who defeated the so-called martial people of north-west India, and that the idea of martial races was an imported one.

If culture comes before the State, there is no harm in saying that we are Hindus first or Muslims first—and not Indians first. Today, there has been such erosion of the norms and values of the Indian State that Hinduism and Islam have nothing to learn from the state. We must derive our values from our religions and remodel the State accordingly.

At one time the missionaries used to compare the values of the Bible



with the *realities* of Hinduism and Islam, not with the values of Hinduism or Islam. Today we compare the *values* of the State with the *realities* of culture, because the realities of the State are ugly. In such a world even the talk of national security, socialism, secularism and science plays straight into the hands of the State.

To give two instances, the State in India has become a security threat to the people. On the excuse that Pakistan was receiving a few F-16 planes, we have already purchased six times the number of planes they have been promised, not because of our security needs, but because defence purchases mean excellent kick-backs. Similarly from our science budget we spend as much as Rs. 900 crores on Research and Development in space and nuclear energy and only about Rs. 1.5 crores on R & D in education. Our greatest scientific achievement after 37 years of Independence is that we have sent an Indian in a foreign craft from a foreign launching pad, speaking a foreign language, under a foreign captain, to space. I can go on giving similar examples to show how development, secularism and socialism, too, have become new means of assault on the poor and the peripheral, how our state has become a private corporation, a means of attack on all faiths and on the resource base of those who are not a part of the modern market in India.

At such a time, we must learn to derive our political values from our civilization, not from our State. That was also Gandhi's message.

**CLAUDE ALVARES** : I must at the very beginning declare myself out of sympathy with the preoccupations and anxieties that most of my colleagues, except for Ashis Nandy, have manifested, with regard to the present situation in the country. Mr. Rustamji, for example, is very worried about the law and order situation. Others have expressed themselves about the need for unity. But where they see vices, I tend to see virtues. All talk of unity has benefited a small class, it has emanated from that class, a class that has sold the country down the drain for its own interests, political or economic.

Before we go into whether we require a national security system and defence, we should try to discover whether the class that is so preoccupied with it needs to be defended in the first place—for it is essentially a class without moral conscience, and as far as its values are concerned, eroded to the bone.

As an anarchist, I am only worried about the power of the State—for it seems we are helping create a situation wherein we can only perhaps survive on the State's terms. The State has been hijacked by private marauders, it is true. But today the very existence of the state provides

## *The country needs more diversity and less uniformity, Says Claude*

in itself legitimation for a series of external initiatives that must lead to the destabilizing of Indic civilization as we know it. It is because of the existence of the state, that such activity seems appropriate or benign. Let me illustrate how the Indian state is leading us to kill ourselves. We don't need the help of the Soviets or the Americans at all for this. I am being specific because otherwise discussions of the sort we are having now invariably get bogged down in repetitious pronouncements or analyses.

Take the issue of seeds. Seeds are basic to civilization. The germ-plasm locked in seeds is equivalent to the soma of Indic life. In rice, for example, our farmers have helped develop, over the centuries, more than 1,20,000 varieties. Today, because of the State, thousands of these indigenous varieties have disappeared. The number is down to 30,000. And sarkari scientists wish to bring the number down further to ten or twelve, so-called high-yielding varieties, but all of them susceptible to viral diseases and pests. No effort has seriously been made to improve our own varieties, even though we have had a terrific range in rice variability, from the "saathi" variety which can be harvested in sixty days, to other seeds that can produce 9500 kgs per hectare, more than three times the output of the so-called HYVs of seeds imported from Manila.

The same situation obtains with cattle. While Brazil has built up its entire stock from the Ongole herd of Andhra, and while New Zealand imports Sahiwal animals from north India, we attempt to import contaminated semen of Holstein and Jersey animals mostly unsuited to our climatic and environmental experience. The creativity of our scientists is dead.

Instead of unity, therefore, (for there is real danger in any unity meant to further madness) we should talk of diversity and only diversity, for a change. In 1961, Goa was "liberated!" from the Portuguese. Today Goans can only say, "Oh God, save us from our liberators!" Every mile of Goa's beaches is being covered by five star hotel chains, and in some beaches, Goans may not play the radio. In the name of foreign exchange, the Japanese have been permitted to indulge in the worst form of strip mining and, in the process, to cut our forests. In the administration most of the senior officers are non-Goans. Today Assam and Punjab are angry. Tomorrow it will be Goa.

Let us have no more of "liberal" solutions, or, for that matter,

Marxist ones. We need indigenous solutions. The present leadership cannot understand this, and can only offer more updated versions of older (already failed) proposals. We have to widen the ambit of the public discourse, get larger numbers of people into the debate. That may lead somewhere.

**AHMED RASHID SHERVANI :** The draft statement circulated by Mr. Malkani is beautiful—but it is too mild.

While agreeing with Mr. Alvares' protest against the all-powerful state, I am for a strong unitary state. India is smaller than USA, USSR and China. Look at the map of the world and you will see that India is quite small.

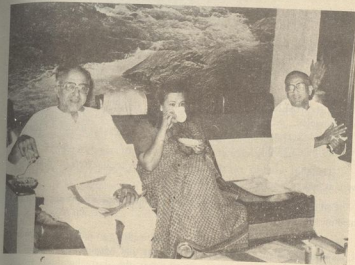
I am all for defence—and all against the kickbacks in defence purchases. I am for Akhand Bharat and I regard Pakistan and Bangladesh as monuments to a horror.

India has a large Hindu majority. Nobody therefore should object to its being called a Hindu country.

We are all Hindus culturally, though not religiously. Even Buddha, who denied Brahma, was a Hindu. The world knows Indians as "Hindus". Muslims loyally served Pratap, Shivaji and Guru Govind Singh. Our Muslim soldiers have fought Pakistan. But today, unfortunately, we have only 1% Muslims in the Army. We don't have to pamper Muslims; but we must not deny them their pride. If Punjab and Bengal can have their identity, if even Sanatanists and Arya Samajists have their identity, why should we frown on Muslim identity? The liberalism of the Hindu is his greatest asset. If wish Muslims, Christians and Jews were not so close-minded.

In my native area, Vaarah-Bhagavan is worshipped. The Lord had once assumed the shape of a pig, they say. It is this form in which many people of my area worship the Lord. There are many temples of the "pig-god" in sacred Soron, four miles south of our house. In fact the name "Soron" itself is derived from *Soaron*, pigs.

Once, near the window of my grand-father's room some persons were just having a casual chat. Some Hindu farmers complained of the drought and the severe damage it had done to the crops. A Muslim remarked: "Your god, the pig, should give you rain. Go, pray to Him." Another Muslim laughed. The Hindu farmers were left dumbfounded. My grand-father heard the conversation from inside his room. He came out and shouted at the Muslims: "Don't you know it is written in the



Seated (L to R) A. R. Shervani, Nusrat Shervani and Dr. Sujit Dhar.

Quran that you are not to talk disparagingly of anyone's *mabood* (object of worship, god). You two must hold your ears and apologise at once. (*Kaan pakar kar maafi mango*). Anyone who cannot respect the religion of others can never have true respect for his own religion." And they had to apologise accordingly.

This was my first lesson in secularism which I learnt when I was three or four years old.

If we want to find faults with scriptures—any scriptures—we can always find them. But that will not take us anywhere. What is needed is a constructive debate. I have been asking the Majlis Mushawarat to have a debate with Hindu Rashtravadins. A Muslim with Muslim personality can be very good for India. As Maulana Azad used to say: "I will not give up even 1% of either my Indian or my Muslim personality."

**DR. SUJIT DHAR :** There is agreement on diagnosis but not about the cure. It is this common concern for the right remedy that has brought us all together.

I must say I was very happy to hear Mr. Shervani speak for

Akhand Bharat. I am glad to see that I am not a lone dreamer of that dream.

The State should not be all-powerful. It should be one of several institutions serving the citizen. We've to be clear as to which other institutions have to do what. The State should encourage the non-controversial and the purposeful.

**K.R. MALKANI:** The Hindu-Muslim problem is very old and quite complex. My friend Devendra Swarup thinks it has been there for a thousand years and it will still be there a thousand years hence. Can we do something about it?

Gandhiji used to say that Shaiva-Vaishnavite quarrels in their day were as bad as Hindu-Muslim quarrels now.

**SITARAM:** This is not correct. Gandhiji was not properly informed on the subject.

**MALKANI:** Okay. But can we do something to reduce the dimensions of the problem? Hindus have a feeling that Muslim population is growing faster. Every census report over the last hundred years, proves that. The Hindu attributes this partly to polygamy among Muslims. But the Muslim defends polygamy as a religious right. If Pakistan can introduce monogamy, why can't India? Why does India have to be more Islamic than Pakistan?

**IQBAL MASUD:** Pakistan was able to amend the Muslim Law during Ayub's Military Rule. It would not have been possible under a civilian government so easily.

Recently there was a proposal to reverse the amendment, but Mrs. Zia came out against any such move.

Even under the present Muslim Law in India it is possible to insert clauses in the marriage contract to ensure equality between husband and wife and restrict polygamy.

**ASHIS:** I don't agree with Malkani that this is at all the Hindu perception.

**IQBAL MASUD:** I am inclined to agree with Mr. Malkani that this, indeed, is the Hindu perception. But I say it is not correct because even at the present rate of growth it will be centuries before noticeable imbalance takes place.

**RUSTAMJI:** I think the "lower" classes multiply faster. Tribals do the same. The relevant factor here is class, not religion.

## *Government can, and should, enact a Uniform Civil Law*

**TYABJI:** The question is, why can't the Government of India pass a uniform civil law, giving conscientious objectors the choice to opt out of it, and continue with their respective old laws? I myself married under the Muslim Law and then I chose to be married again under the Civil Marriages Act, as I wished to give my daughter an equal share in my property. This was both Islamic and practical—more than if I had tried to do it in accordance with the traditional regulations.

It should be clearly understood that Koran does not encourage polygamy. It was permitted chiefly to take care of a large number of war widows. And there are strict injunctions which, if observed, practically rule out plural marriages.

In any case, modernising Islamic law is not un-Islamic. "Apply my law with reason", said the Prophet. Being the latest major religion, Islam is remarkably modern in many respects. For example, Muslim marriage is a contract and not a sacrament; beliefs have to be justified by reason, not just blind faith.

**NANAJI:** What do you think of family planning among Muslims?

**TYABJI:** Muslim staff—or at least staff well-versed with Islamic mores—should be put on this job in Muslim areas. They will be able to speak in the same idiom as that of the persons whom they are to teach and reform and understand each other's point of view better. Most Muslim women would love to plan their families, if it was properly explained to them.

**DEVENDRA SWAROOP:** Why is it that Muslims have too few voluntary organisations doing social work?

**TYABJI:** Because after Partition, much of the upper and middle class left for Pakistan, leaving mostly the backward and down-trodden behind.

**PROF. RAJENDRA SINGH:** I came more to listen than to speak. Shri Rustamji is very right. The common man is still good at heart. Poverty is bad; but injustice is worse.

The important thing is culture, not creed. And Hinduism is a culture, and not a creed. Caste was a kind of omnibus trade union—and

not a religious institution. In early times, selfless men used to guide the ship of State. What we need today is selfless veterans to influence the youth, who are very disturbed.

Even the king of Saudi Arabia said Muslim Law can be up-dated. But most Muslims in India don't agree.

Sheikh Abdullah once told me Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir lived in peace. But I pointed out that Shias and Sunnis fought each other. When Bhutto was hanged in Pakistan, there was violence in Kashmir. Again when there was trouble in the Mecca mosque, there was violence in Kashmir.

Sheikh Saheb attributed this to Radio Pakistan.

I pointed out that there was a Saddam Nagar and a Khomeini Nagar in Srinagar, and the two kept fighting. There is a certain lack of tolerance among Muslims. Hindus unhesitatingly bracket Ishwar and Allah, Ram and Rahim, but the Muslims don't. We should emphasise reason—and encourage tolerance.

**K. SUDARSHAN :** I entirely agree with Sherwaniji. But how many Muslims will agree with him?

Riaz Ahmed is the Principal of a college in Imphal. Presiding over an RSS function, he spoke of Akhand Bharat. But he later told me that when he talked to Muslims like that, they regarded him a 'Kafir.' Prophet Mohammed says in the 'Hadis' that at first even 10% deviation would be ruinous, but in later times, even 10% compliance would be enough. Rumi said that Muslims must discard the bone and keep the marrow. This thinking needs to be broadcast among Muslims. Unfortunately there are too few social reformers among Muslims.

**IQBAL MASUD :** As M.R.A. Baig used to say, the Muslims are in a dilemma. Islam is not nationalist or internationalist or even humanist; it is trans-national.

**ASHIS :** We talk of the nation-state. But there are pre-modern concepts of the state, desired from traditional tests which are different.

**SHERVANI :** Muslims have one God; but we also have Ferishtas—angels—like your many gods. Also since Hindus have their scriptures, even in orthodox Islamic thought, Hindus are Ahle-Kitab (People of the Book). The Prophet recognised 1,40,000 earlier prophets. After the defeat of Uhud, the Prophet invoked God to guide him because Mecca was 'Kafir' but it was also his 'Qaum'.



(L to R) Rajendra Singh, Sudarshan, Sita Ram Goel, Devendra Swaroop.

Sudarshanji agreed with me but said not many Muslims would agree with me. Well, I plead for 'Akhand Bharat' and fifty Urdu papers, owned by Muslims, publish my views.

Jinnah divided Hindus and Muslims even on the language issue. He said Hindi is Hindu, Urdu is Muslim. Fact is, in my Urdu class, there were 69 Hindus and 15 Muslims.

I keep telling Muslims that even if they think that they, and they alone, will go to heaven, why do they have to say it to the irritation of others? But things like these take time to sink in. The Great Debate is on.

**SUDARSHAN :** Muslim Indians should use the Indian idiom and the Indian analogy, more and more. They should view Holi and Divali as national festivals and not some kind of religious festivals of Hindus. Once that is done, nobody will quarrel with different life styles. After all there is polygamy among Hindus in Himalaya. There is polygamy among the weavers (Gunkar) of Nagpur also. Once the hearts are united, there are no problems.

Chagla once said to me: 'I am Hindu. Do you recognise me as a



Swamyasevak of RSS?" There were tears of joy in the eyes of both of us.

**IQBAL MASUD :** We should study Indian Islam, that is, Islam as practised in India—and not classical Islam, or Islam as it is practised, say, in Arabia. Indian Muslims observe may Indian rituals.

Muslims in India are scared because the State has failed to protect them. During the recent violence in Bombay and Bhiwandi, the Chief Minister said he did not know what was happening.

Chagla never spoke as a "Muslim". Hamid's influence on Muslims is nil. On the other hand there are "Sarkari Muslims", what the Sikhs will call "Tankhaiya". Some time back there was a big trouble in Hyderabad over the putting up of a small idol in Char Minar. I said Char Minar is not a mosque or a tomb; it is a secular structure. If somebody sets up a temple in a corner, it is a matter between the Hindus and the State, and not an issue for Muslims.

All this becomes a big dilemma for Muslims.

For the Jamat-i-Islami strictly, both India and Pakistan should be Dar-al-Harb. Islam is cosmetic in both countries. The biggest business in Pakistan is heroin. Indian Muslims felt for Pakistan in 1965, but not in 1971.

I know how the Hindu mind works because many Hindus think 'Jilani', my real name, is a Sindhi Hindu.

**SHERVANI :** Same with me. Because of the 'ani' in my name, many think I am a Sindhi Hindu.

**DEVENDRA SWAROOP :** Maulana Azad was a great Muslim and a great nationalist. On the other hand Mr. Jinnah was Muslim only in name. He said no namaz and relished pork. The Muslims followed Jinnah, not Azad. Why?

On the other hand the Hindus did not follow Veer Savarkar who was a revolutionary nationalist, a great writer and great orator. They preferred Mahatma Gandhi, who was not a fiery orator or a forceful writer, and whose Hinduism was of a liberal, almost compromising, kind. Why this difference in Hindu and Muslim preferences? Why did 99% Muslims vote for the League in 1946?

**TYABJI :** Muslims were interested in power and not in religion. Mr. Jinnah promised them more power.

## *The 1946 Election was the only one the Muslim League Ever Won :*

**SHERVANI :** Also, Mr. Devendra Swaroop's figures are wrong. In UP, Muslim League got 64% vote and nationalist Muslims, 36% vote in 1946. And don't forget, there was no adult franchise at the time. In my village of 300 adult Muslims, there were only FOUR voters.

The only election the Muslim League ever won, whether before 1947 or after, and whether in India or Pakistan, was that of 1946. It was the 'one time exception' of India politics. Even in Aligarh Muslim University, the Muslim League did not win the Students Union Presidency until 1941.

We all know what kind of Muslim Mr. Jinnah was. He said Urdu was the language of Muslims. He addressed a meeting in Allahabad. When he wanted to say the Muslim League had grown, he said : "*Muslim League lamba ho gaya hai*". I thought 'lamba' meant "long" or "big". But when we say something has gone 'lamba', it only means it is dead. That was Jinnah Saheb's understanding of Urdu.

Hindus might have rejected Savarkar; but I can tell you he was my hero.

I think the Congress erred badly in rejecting Jinnah and boosting the Ali Brothers. Gandhiji seemed to think Maulana Mohammed Ali was more important than Mr. Jinnah.

Hindus patronised stooges, neglected good Muslims.

**NANAJI :** Not quite. The Congress had men like Azad, Kitchlew and Kidwai.

**SITARAM :** The trouble is that good ("Sharif") Muslims are often rejected by the Muslims.

**RUSTAMJI :** Jinnah was discontented. He recaptured Muslim leadership through British hands. They staged riots. Now it is the Hindus who are on the offensive. These are the facts. We must build bridges of understanding.

**ALVARES :** The danger is that there may be more violence now than even in 1947. Today's discussion shows that we all have a lot to learn, study.

**MALKANI:** More Hindus followed Gandhi than Savarkar for a variety of reasons. For one thing, leadership is something much more than oratory. And in any case, Gandhi was a more basic thinker, and more effective writer, than Savarkar. As for their Hinduism, Savarkar was a political Hindu, while Gandhi was a social Hindu. The Hindu is cool and moderate by nature; he is not revolutionary by temper. Therefore, Gandhiji suited the Hindu character more than Savarkar.

As for voting in 1946, in Sindh, for every four Muslims who voted for the League, three Muslims voted against it.

**ASHIS:** In retrospect, Azad emerges much greater than Jinnah. I think intolerance is higher in those on the margin of religion. Jinnah was a Khoja, Hitler more Austrian than German. Aurangzeb had lot of Hindu blood in him. Bhutto's mother was Hindu.

**TYABJI:** Secularism should not be anti-religion. Morality and ethics are essential in politics. Otherwise politics will become a cynical game. For the bulk of the Indian people, morality and ethics are derived from religion. If religion is divorced from politics, then ethics and morality also go out of it. That is fatal to society.

**SITARAM:** Hindus can't be fundamentalist. Jains can say Sri Krishna is in hell because he blessed a war; but nobody will quarrel with them for that reason.

**DEVENDRA SWAROOP:** I am afraid the Parliamentary system of Government does not suit India. Elections are fought on caste and community lines. As a result, instead of integration, there is disintegration. It is this system which, instead of evolving unity within our diversity, has sowed the seeds of disunity in our apparent diversity. I have a shrewd suspicion that the Britishers introduced this system to divide us. The pioneers of the freedom movement, from Arabindo Ghosh to Mahatma Gandhi, were all unanimous in their view that the Westminster model was not suited to India.

**MALKANI:** The Britishers did introduce separate electorates to divide us. But I don't think they introduced the parliamentary system to divide us. They introduced it because that is the system they knew. We have our troubles with this system, not because we are running it on the Westminster model, but because we are running it on the feudal model.

Perhaps many of the faults of the system can be corrected by Proportional Representation or Functional Representation.



Nusrat Shervani in conversation with Rustamji

**NANAJI:** Our deliberations are now coming to an end. This is our first meeting of its kind. I hope there will be many more. We therefore need not adopt any statement today. The more important thing is to delve deeper in the matter and arrive at a basic consensus that will show a new way to the country.

On behalf of Deendayal Research Institute let me thank you all for the illuminating discussion. Thank you all once again.

□

"There is, in Hinduism, room enough for Jesus, as there is for Mohammed, Zoroaster and Moses. The majority of the Muslims of India are converts to that faith from Hinduism through force of circumstances. They are still Hindu in many essential ways, and in a free, prosperous, progressive India, they would find it the most natural thing in the world to revert to their ancient faith and ways of life."

—Mahatma Gandhi

## Some Arguments . . . . . . Some Answers

THE NOTES sent by some of the invitees to the Oct. 28 Seminar, and the discussions at the Seminar, make very instructive reading. One may or may not agree with all the points made. But there can be no doubt that these are honest opinions, strongly held.

We here will deal with some of the points—to carry the debate forward.

**WE WILL BEGIN** with Shri Madhav Kamath. He thought that the first problem was to defeat the Congress-I led by Mrs. Gandhi. Now Mrs. Gandhi is unfortunately gone. And as we write these lines, the country is going to the polls. Whether Congress-I wins or loses, the basic problems will remain. Individuals may aggravate problems; but the problems themselves are rooted in the confusion of thought and devaluation of values, that have plagued our country since Independence.

Shri Kamath wants linguistic states scrapped. What shall we have in their place? 'River States'—as recommended by late Shri P. Kodanda Rao? A unitary state, with 50 Janapadas—as recommended by Shri Sudarshan and Dr. Sujit Dhar?

These are possible solutions. But the Indian polity is not a clean slate on which we can write what we like. How exactly do you get people's approval to these proposals? Secondly, have the linguistic states done any particular serious damage that will be remedied by their abolition? A careful artist does not quarrel with his brush.

A federal system is natural in a vast and varied country like India, governed on democratic lines. Our real problem is that our federal system is being worked as if it were a unitary system, presided over by a monarchy. The solution to this problem lies in working it in the democratic and federal spirit—and not standing the system on its head.

Shri Kamath suggests winding up of public sector companies. Only a "Swatantra Party Government" can think of doing that; and we don't have even a Swatantra Party around. Opponents of the proposal will dub it as "anti-socialist" and "anti-people". And the staff employed on these projects would be up in arms. No, this is not practical politics.

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The public sector must be made productive—and profitable. This could be done by ending public sector monopoly in any field; it could also be done by associating top private sector executives with the running of the public sector. As far as the dismantling of the public sector goes, it will have to be confined to small and extreme cases.

The Ekatmata Yajnya was a great and successful effort at mobilising the people. But can it really be compared to the Ganga-Kaveri project? According to some experts, lifting the Ganga waters over the Vindhya hump to the Deccan, would require astronomical power loads. Where do we get them?

**SHRI SUDARSHAN** and Dr. Sujit Dhar in their joint note have made the point that the problem arises because of certain religions which have had their birth outside of India. The obvious reference is to Christianity and Islam.

The two thinkers do have a point. But a few questions arise: Why do we have problems between Sikhism and mainstream Hinduism, though both are India-born? Why do we *not* have problems with Parsis or Syrian Christians, though their religions were born abroad?

Also, my friend Rafiq Khan of Varanasi (Institute of Gandhian Studies) tells me that Islam came to India before Muslim invaders; that there were some 10,000 Muslims in Prithviraj's Delhi; that they fought on the side of Prithviraj—against Mohammed Ghori.

It would seem that trouble arises with a religion when it is identified with invaders—or when it has politics mixed up with it.

In pre-Islamic Iran, Hindus there had serious trouble with Zoroastrianism; but Hindus had no problem with Zoroastrian Parsis, when they came to India as honest refugees. Likewise, India had no problem with the peaceful introduction of Christianity in Kerala 1800 years ago; but we had—and still have—lot of problems with Christianity introduced by the Portuguese and English invaders of India.

In the case of Islam, there are no traces of the few pre-Ghazni Muslims in India. All Indian Muslim, therefore, are identified with invading Muslims.

A solution to this problem lies in Muslim Indians consciously dis-associating themselves from invading Muslims. Already, in Sindh, the local Muslims have begun to look upon Raja Dahir as hero—and Mohammed Bin Qasim, as villain. As Punjab and Frontier Muslims grow in political maturity, they may also come to look upon Anangpal and Prithviraj as

heroes—and Ghazni and Ghori as villains. That will be the real turning point in national consciousness in India.

**SHRI SITA RAM GOEL** in his Note says that "those who think that Muslim community and culture can live in peace and harmony with other communities and cultures, are living in a dreamland."

Shri Sita Ram is right to the extent that a creedal Islam and a Sanatan Hinduism do not make very comfortable company. But, at the people's level, Islam is not all that creedal—and coexistence is a fact, and not a dream.

We don't have a serious Muslim problem either in Russia or in China. Also the Balkan countries have been able to reduce their "Muslim problem" to manageable proportions. So can we.

Shri Sita Ram says Muslims should "stop pressuring India's foreign policy in favour of the Islamic bloc". Very right. But are we sure that it is Indian Muslim opinion that determines New Delhi's West Asia policy? Is there a Muslim factor in our anti-Taiwan policy? Why do we refuse to recognise South Africa, even though the Indians settled there, very much want India to normalise its relations with South Africa?

It would seem that the aberrations of New Delhi's foreign policy are more due to a general anti-west and pro-communist stance, than to any particular solicitude for Muslim Indians.

India has not followed Muslim Egypt in recognising Israel. But let Russia recognise Israel—and New Delhi will follow suit... as it did in Kampuchea!

**SHRI RUSTAMJI** is shocked that now there is a Hindu Fundamentalism also. He thinks that before Partition Hindus used to suffer more by rioting, and now the Muslims are at the receiving end.

A fundamentalism is possible only when there are certain basic religious beliefs and practices which must be subscribed to, on pain of penalties. We don't have that kind of situation in Hindu Dharma or Hindu society. All that we have is a certain Hindu consciousness of Hindu rights—a notice that Hindus shall not be trifled with. It is the Hindu Society's defence mechanism at work.

An official survey of communal violence in Independent India shows that nine out of every ten riots were started by Muslims—even though the eventually suffered more by it. While Muslims suffer more loss of life Hindus suffer more loss of property.

However, we don't have to count Hindu corpses and Muslim corpses, they are all Indian corpses. Property loss, also, is not Hindu loss and Muslim loss, but Indian loss. The whole thing is a crime against the country—and it must be treated as such.

**SHRI IQBAL MASUD** has made many points. He says that Muslims are not safe in India; that Indian Muslims are lagging behind because their middle class left for Pakistan after Partition; that Islam is being rationally re-interpreted in Muslim countries; that Koran should not be read just to find fault with Islam; that there is an Indian Islam; that too much emphasis on unity—for example uniform civil law—tends to retard that very unity; that there is no proof of foreign funds for Muslims in India; that there should be no agitation for the restoration of mandirs-turned-mosques; that Hinduism is not missionary—unlike Islam; and that Aryan content of Hinduism also came from outside.

Communal peace is the norm; communal rioting is the exception. It would be a gross exaggeration to say that Muslims are not safe in India.

Can the Hindus be held responsible for the backwardness of Muslims, just because the better off Muslims left for Pakistan?

If Islam can be rationally interpreted in Arabia and Egypt, why can't it be up-dated in India? What is the Aligarh Muslim University doing? What is Deoband doing?

Scriptures certainly should *not* be read with a view to finding faults in them. When, however, a community behaves irrationally, scholars have a duty to study the roots of their irrational behaviour.

We are all happy to hear that there is an Indian Islam. Perhaps friends like Iqbal Masud would like to enlighten the country more on that subject. Our friend, late S. Jeelany of Calcutta, was of opinion that there was no such thing as "Indian Islam".

Undue emphasis on anything can be counter-productive. But, not to emphasise a desirable course of action, can also be unproductive. Where shall we draw the line?

The Reserve Bank will tell you how much Arab money is coming to India. By the by, who is financing the sudden and simultaneous installation of public address systems in mosques throughout the country?

During Muslim invasions, thousands of temples were razed to the ground or forcibly converted into mosques. The more important of these are Ram Janmasthan Mandir in Ayodhya, Krishna Janmasthan Mandir in



Mathura and Kashi Vishwanath. Nobody is asking for complete restoration of all such places. But return of the more important ones will be a healthy gesture. It will symbolically close an unhappy chapter.

A few years back when China and Japan were signing their Peace Treaty, China asked for a formal apology, for the Japanese invasion of China. Japan appreciated the point—and made due amends. It is in this spirit that Indian Muslim leadership should view this suggestion.

Hinduism is not missionary in the sense that it does *not* spread its mission with fire and sword. But otherwise it is very missionary. The Buddhist branch of Hinduism spread over all Asia; Hinduism is still a fact in Thailand, Bali and elsewhere. And throughout Muslim rule, Indians outside the pale of Hinduism, continued to enter the fold. According to Max Weber, Hinduism gained more converts among innumerable tribes, than it lost people to Islam, during this period. Sociologists have described the process as progressive "Sanskritisation".

As for the "Aryan content of Hinduism" being as foreign to India as later imported religions, less said the better. The Aryan invasion theory is the invention of British historians, out to legitimise British invasion. In any case, let Indian Islam—and Indian Christianity—become as integral and indistinguishable a part of Hinduism as "the Aryan content of Hinduism"—and the problem will have been solved for good!

(K.R.M.)

For forms of government let fools contest ;  
 Whate'er is best administered, is best ;  
 For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight;  
 His can't be wrong whose life is in the right ;  
 In faith and hope, the world will disagree,  
 But all mankind's concern is charity.

—Alexander Pope  
 'An Essay on Man'

## II

### What the Constituent Assembly thought of the office of Governor

*From time to time, there are serious complaints of the governor acting as an agent of the ruling party at the centre, to throw out a duly elected government.*

*The question therefore arises as to what are the proper functions of the governor.*

*Here Shri Jagdish Sharma, former Under Secretary, Union Law Ministry, goes into the Constituent Assembly Debates on the subject—to see what was the intention of the framers of the Indian Constitution, concerning the office of governor.*

—Ed.

UNDER ARTICLE 163 of the Constitution, "there shall be a Council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions" except for those which he may exercise in his discretion. So it may be said that under the Constitution, the Governor, practically in all matters, has to exercise his functions with the aid and advice of the Ministers. The framers of the constitution intended that the Governor would act as a constitutional head. This became abundantly clear when they opted for appointment of the Governors by the President and gave up all the other proposals on the subject. These were:

- Choice of the Governor on the basis of universal suffrage;*
- Election of Governor by a majority of the lower House or of both houses;*
- Selection of a panel by the Lower House in the State, from which choice may be made by the President of the Union.*

The language of the Constitution, however, does not make the concept very clear, whether the Governor will *always* be bound to take

the advice of the Ministry. The Constitution nowhere states that the Governor will *not* exercise his individual judgement. For instance it seems the Governor will not always be bound to accept the advice for dissolution of the Assembly, given by his Ministry. The framers of the Constitution realised this but abandoned the idea of making specific provision to this effect. Obviously they had very strong faith in the good democratic behaviour of the Indian people. For instance Prof. K. T. Shah tabled an amendment to clause (1) of article (130) of draft constitution (now article 154) to the effect that the executive power of the State be vested in the Governor and it shall be exercised by him in accordance with the Constitution and the law. While moving this amendment, Prof. Shah wanted that the Constitution should make it "imperative for the Governor to use his powers in accordance with the constitution and the law, that is to say, on the advice of his Ministers." He stated that the Governor had considerable number of powers, not necessarily those for which Ministers were responsible to the legislature, but other powers as well to be exercised in his discretion. It was therefore but right and proper that the Executive head of a State should use his powers in accordance with the law and the Constitution.

Shri Mohammed Tahir went still farther. He suggested an amendment, according to which the Executive power of the State be vested in the Governor and it might, on behalf of the people of the State, be exercised by him in accordance with the Constitution and the law.

Even referring to the Governor's powers in grave emergencies and powers relating to promulgating of ordinances, Shri H.V. Kamath who had supported the system of appointment of Governor in various States by the President, noted that the maximum period during which the Governor would be invested with these extraordinary powers should be two weeks. He realised that one could work wonders or play havoc even within twenty-four hours, and so he drew attention to the fact that the Governor had to forthwith inform the President of the action taken. Therefore, really speaking, the Governor divested himself of responsibility as soon as possible in any situation that might arise in the State on account of emergency and the President took all the powers in his hands. Supporting him, Shri Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar also felt that in the normal working of the Constitution, the convention will grow up, of the Government of India consulting the provincial cabinets in the selection of the Governor. If the choice is left to the President and his cabinet, the President may, in conceivable circumstances, with due regard to the conditions of the province, choose a person of undoubted ability and position in public life, who, at the same time, had not been mixed up in provincial

party struggles or factions. Such a person is likely to act as a friend and mediator of the cabinet and help in the smooth working of the entire Government. The fact to be remembered is that the Governor is to be a constitutional head, "a sagacious counsellor and adviser to the Ministry, one who can throw oil over troubled waters". If that is the position to be occupied by the Governor, the Governor chosen by the Government of India, presumably with the consent of the provincial government, is likely to discharge his functions better.

While replying to the debate as to whether it was wise at all to invest so much power in the Prime Minister or in the President, Shri Ayyar said he had no objection. Under the Constitution, he was empowered to appoint Ambassadors, Commander-in-Chief of all the forces, Judges of Supreme Court/High Court. So the powers of appointment of Governor could be safely entrusted to him. At the same time he also thought that a convention of consulting the provincial cabinet might easily grow up. Such a convention had grown up in the appointment of Governors in Canada. In Australia, too, though under a different constitution, a similar convention had grown up and the Governor of a state was appointed on the advice of the provincial Cabinet.

Shri B.G. Kher realised that the Governor could do a "great deal of good, if he is a good Governor, and he can do a great deal of mischief, if he is a bad Governor, in spite of very little power given to him under the constitution." He noted that the powers that we propose to give him and the functions that we assign to him, are very few, such as summoning and dissolving the Assembly, to give assent to the Bills passed by the State Assembly, to act as representative of the State, to nominate the Premier after the general election, on the resignation of the Ministry, to represent the province on ceremonial occasions and such powers as we give to act in an emergency. He is the symbol of the State and we have found in actual practice that if he is an active Governor, a good man, he can, by means of getting into touch with opponents of the party which is in power, reconcile them to a good number of measures and generally by tours and other means, make the administration run smoothly. Similarly he can do a great deal of mischief. Therefore "having deliberately chosen a British model of responsible Government and decided to give the Governor the position that we decided to do", Shri Kher felt that the "only insurance of smooth government in the provinces is to allow the President to nominate a person who enjoys the confidence, which certainly means, the confidence of his Cabinet, as also the Cabinet of the province, to be Governor of the province."

Shri Hriday Nath Kunzru conceived of a time when the Central Government might not inspire as much confidence as some of the provincial governments. He said if "you entrust the central executive with power to exercise control over the province in all important matters, there is the serious danger of the country falling under a dictatorship. There are countries in which federal system of Government prevails and there are differences of opinion there, from time to time, between the federal and the State Government. In Canada a provincial Government went so far as practically to change the prevailing system of currency. The Centre was able to deal with the situation because in its opinion this was the matter exclusively under its control. It did not utilize the position of Governor or any other method of asserting its power for this purpose. Similarly when conflicts arise between the provinces and the centre in this country, it is very probable that if they are of a serious character, they will relate to matters coming within the purview of the centre, and in that case the centre under the constitution has adequate means of dealing with such a situation. But let us divest ourselves completely of the notion that the Governor is to be used in any way in order to carry out the wishes of the central Executive."

The recent happenings in Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh, however, bring to light certain trends in politics which highlight the dangers inherent in the system. Talyarkhan in Sikkim, Jagmohan in J & K and Ramlal in Andhra Pradesh were clearly conducting themselves as agents of the Central Government in the drama of toppling the respective State Governments. What the constitution makers were thinking as improbable, has been happening in Indian politics and the Governors have shown themselves as men of straw. As Shrimati Durga Bai had rightly put it, the institution of Governor was introduced in the constitution because "we thought that an element of harmony would be there and that that institution would bring about some sort of understanding and harmony between the conflicting groups of people, if really the Governor is conscious of his duties and he functions well. It is only for this purpose that this is proposed, the governing idea is to place the Governor above party politics, above factions and not to subject him to the party affairs."

The Governors' appointments now show that the Central Government appoints Governor out of the disgruntled lot of party politicians who have lost election or ministerial office, and who cannot be easily thrown away into the dustbin. Naturally they behave as agents of the Central Government and try to influence local politics in the light of the exigencies and requirements of the Central Government. They no longer represent any-

body in the State, neither the people, nor the Government, on whose advice they are expected to act. In such a situation the constitutional provision that the Governor is not to be a member of either House of the legislature, or even if he was member at the time when the choice may fall on him, he is expected to resign before he is appointed, is frustrated. For, the present situation in which Governors are behaving as centre's agents, would not have been different, had they been allowed to function as members of political parties as well. The whole idea of his being above party politics is gone now.

The question naturally arises what should be done to remedy the situation. How to bring about a change in the institution of Governor so as to inspire people's confidence in it. Pandit Nehru, while replying to the debate in the constituent Assembly, had envisaged that "I think it would be infinitely better if he (Governor) was not so intimately concerned with the local politics of the province, with the factions in the province... And would it not be better to have a more detached figure, obviously a figure that is acceptable to the province, otherwise he could not function there? He must be acceptable to the province, he must be acceptable to the Government of the province, and yet he must not be known to be part of the party machine of that province. He may be sometimes, possibly, a man from that province itself. We do not rule it out. But on the whole it probably would be desirable to have people from outside—eminent people, sometimes people who have not taken too great a part in politics." How to ensure that Governors act in accordance with the spirit of the constitution and the law, as envisaged by the framers of the constitution?

This leads us to consider if it would be desirable to provide constitutional safeguards in the matter of appointment of Governors and lay down guide-lines for exercising discretionary powers vested in them.

## —When Morarji Defamed Churchill—

Morarji Desai is one of the better type of politicians. But even his attitude to defections has been less than healthy. He did try to pass the anti-Defection Bill in Lok Sabha in 1978. But when P.C. Ghosh formed an anti-Communist Government, Congress and Morarji backed, it, even though Ghosh's PDF included some expelled Congressmen. Morarji's position was that "there is no *maryada* in politics. People come and go. Churchill crossed the floor three or four times." It was a defamation of Churchill. Churchill did not change parties for profit; he did so out of conviction. And, in the process, he suffered much—and went into the wilderness for long years. Indian-style defections are unknown—and unthinkable—in UK.

## "The Rape of the Constitution"— —That's What Article 356 Is,

said

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

**E**VEN MORE serious than the vague article on the functions of the Governor, is Article 356, which empowers him to declare that "the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution". He then goes on to impose his own rule on the state.

The British Governors had been rarely arbitrary in this respect. And so Dr. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, did not think it necessary to dwell on the subject at any length in the Constituent Assembly. He just said: "It would take me very long to go into a detailed examination of the whole thing and referring to each article, say this is the principle which is established in it and say, if any Government, any legislature of a province does not act in accordance with it, that would act as a failure of the machinery. The expression 'failure of the machinery' I find has been used in the Government of India Act, 1935. Every body must be quite familiar, therefore, with its *de facto* and *de jure* meaning. I do not think any further explanation is necessary."

However, there were members who saw danger in this article. Shri Naziruddin Ahmed said: "This Article says practically nothing. It says almost everything. It enables the Centre to interfere on the slightest pretext and may enable the Centre to refuse to interfere on the gravest occasion. So carefully guarded is its vagueness, so elusive is its draftsmanship that we cannot but admire the Drafting Committee for its vagueness and evasions."

But Dr. Ambedkar reassured the members: "The President, who is endowed with these powers, will take proper precautions before actually suspending the administration of the provinces. I hope the first thing he will do would be to issue a mere warning to the province that has erred that things were not happening in the way in which they were intended to happen in the constitution. If that warning fails, the second thing for him to do will be to order an election, allowing the people of the province

to settle matters by themselves. It is only when these two remedies fail that he should resort to this article."

However, even in the first few years of the operation of the new constitution, this Article was so much misused that Dr. Ambedkar was driven to say on Sept. 16, 1953: "The people have got a very legitimate ground for suspicion that the Government is manipulating the Articles in the constitution for the purpose of maintaining their own party in office in all parts of India.... This is rape of the Constitution."

Since then, the working of the constitution has taken a nose-dive. State Governments have been displaced for a variety of wrong reasons—for the convenience of the ruling party, or the ruling faction—at the Centre. The obliging Governors have gone ahead to:

- (i) dismiss the Ministry despite a majority in the Assembly;
- (ii) dissolve the Assembly immediately after election, without giving the largest party a chance to explore the possibility of forming a Government;
- (iii) deny the Opposition a chance to form the Government after the vote of no-confidence had been passed against the Ministry;
- (iv) direct the Chief Minister to resign so that the internal dissensions of the party in power may be resolved;
- (v) dissolve the Assembly on the recommendation of the Chief Minister who anticipated defeat on the floor of the House;
- (vi) dismiss the Ministry without giving it a chance to prove its majority on the floor of the House;
- (vii) dismiss the Ministry on the ground that the major coalition partner had resigned, leaving the Chief Minister belonging to the smaller party no right to stay in office;
- (viii) dissolve the Assembly on the pretext that a stable government is not possible;
- (ix) dissolve the Assembly on the ground that the party in power had lost the confidence of the electorate;
- (x) dismiss the Ministry on the ground that the Ministry had a narrow majority; and
- (xi) suspend the Assembly immediately after election on the pretext that the claimants for the office of Chief Minister had not proved their majority support in Raj Bhavan.



All these unreasonable reasons for toppling State Governments have led many people to demand deletion of Article 356. These include the Tamil Nadu Committee on the subject, consisting of Shri P.V. Rajamannar, former Chief Justice of Madras, P. Chandra Reddy, former Chief Justice of Andhra and Dr. A.L. Mudaliar, leading educationist.

If the demand has not been conceded so far it is only because it does not suit the party that has been misusing this Article all along.

But the situation is really worrisome. It could reduce India to Pakistan. As E.M.S. Nambodiripad has pointed out the end of democracy did not come in Pakistan suddenly, but by a general process in three stages. "In the first stage a State Government was dismissed by the Centre; in the second stage, the Central Government was dismissed by the Governor-General and in the third stage the Governor General was dismissed by the Army Commander."

"KAMAL"

### How Defections Led To Pakistan !

Although there were historic and imperial reasons for the Partition of India, the immediate reason was, defections, organised by Congress in 1937.

When 1935 Reform Act was passed and provincial Assembly elections were held, the Congress did not expect to sweep them. It had, therefore, entered into an informal agreement with Muslim League to form a Congress-League coalition in UP after the elections.

For months after that, Congress did not form the ministries, until assurances were forthcoming from the British. Meanwhile, a UP Muslim League MLA died and the League, as a friendly gesture to Congress, allowed Congressman Rafi Ahmed Kidwai to contest the election. But when the time came to form the ministry, Congress went back on its pledged word. It persuaded Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim, Muslim League MLA, to leave that party, join the Congress and become a minister.

UP Muslims were shocked. Their leader, Chaudhury Khalique-zaman, stormed all UP with the roar : "If we cannot rule together, we cannot live together." When, in 1940, the League adopted the Partition resolution, the one crore UP Muslims, many of them educated, influential and articulate, plumped for it. At the root of it was Congress-arranged defection of Hafiz Mohammed Ibrahim !

## How Governors have misbehaved in the Various States from time to time

BIHAR :

Kanungo's  
tantrums  
in Bihar

SINCE the Constitution of Free India came into operation, Governor's Rule has been imposed as many as sixty-two times so far.

In many cases the Congress de-stabilised non-Congress Governments—and the Congress-appointed Governors played the Congress game. Even a brief account of these sixty-plus cases would fill a volume. But a recital of the more important cases would give a good idea of the misuse of the office of Governor in this respect.

The 1967 elections in Bihar produced the following results : Congress 126, SSP 68, BJP 26, CPI 24, BKD 27, PSP 18, Swatantra 3, CPI (M) 4, Jharkhand 9, Independents 11,—total 318.

The Governor of Bihar at the time was Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha. He functioned very fairly. He invited the leader of the Congress Assembly Party, Shri Mahesh Prasad Sinha, to form the government. The latter expressed his inability to do so. Thereupon the Governor asked Shri Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, elected leader of the main opposition parties, to form the government. And the latter did so.

But Congress would not let the SVD Government function. One P. Mandal, MP (SSP), was included in the State Cabinet. When he failed to get elected to the State Assembly within six months, he resigned

And now Congress used him to break the SVD. They offered to make him Chief Minister with Congress support, if he got some MLAs to defect with him. Now 22 MLAs defected and formed Shoshit Dal.

When the government was defeated by 163 votes to 150, it resigned. Meanwhile Ayyangar had given place to Kanungo as Governor. Kanungo declined to invite Mandal to form the new government since he was not a state legislator. So, one Satish Prasad Singh was made Chief Minister for just sixty hours. During these hours, he got the Governor to nominate Mandal as member of the upper House! Mandal was then appointed CM!

The spirit of the Constitution had been sacrificed to the letter.

However, the installation of Mandal led to a revolt in the Congress and formation of Lok Tantrik Dal under the leadership of Bhola Paswan Shastri. The Mandal Ministry lasted only 45 days.

Although Bhola Paswan now had the majority support of SVD, the new Governor would not invite him to form the Government. He now insisted on a joint agreed programme—although he had placed no such condition on the Congress-Shoshit Dal combine. Paswan met the condition and formed the Government, but went out of office after three months. The Governor now again invited the Congress to form the govt., but it could not. Paswan again asked to form the govt., but the Governor now refused to give him a second chance—on the ground that he would need defectors for the purpose. He now had the House dissolved. It became clear that Governor Kanungo was neutral in favour of the Congress and its friends of the Shoshit Dal. He blamed the situation on defectors but overlooked the fact that defections had been organised by Congress.

Two years later, this Governor gave repeated chances to the Congress Harihar Singh and Daroga Prasad Rai, to form the government with defector support.

In 1970 this same Governor did not accept Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur's advice to dissolve the House. But when Paswan, now of Congress (R), lost his majority, the Governor did heed his advice and dissolved the Assembly.

For Governor Kanungo, all parties were equal but Congress was more equal!

## HARYANA :

## Chakravarty's inexplicable conduct

What happened in Haryana, put Bihar to shame.

After the 1967 elections, 12 Congress legislators, led by Rao Birendra Singh, joined hands with the opposition and brought down the Congress ministry of Bhagwat Dayal. Although MLAs were defecting to and fro, Governor Chakravarty did not say or do anything. Even when on Oct. 30, 1967, there were 38 MLAs with the government and 41 against it, the Governor did not do anything. He said on that day: "I am not under any obligation to do anything, unless it is shown that others have joined together and formed a Coalition." He further said: "It is not incumbent on the Rao Ministry to resign immediately because Rao Birendra Singh is still the leader of the largest single party and the Opposition has not demonstratively shown that it has a substantial majority." Asked what he would consider a substantial majority, Chakravarty told ENS that at least a majority of five or six should be able to prove that the Opposition has scored over Government. He cited in this respect the precedent of Canada, and said that in Canada a Minority Government (which, though, was the largest single party) continued in office for nearly two years.

And yet, suddenly, on Nov. 17, he dismissed Rao Birendra Singh, even though he had a majority at the time.

The Governor's argument was that Birendra had taken too many ministers—23 out of the ruling combination's strength of 41.

Many questions arise: If Chakravarty thought that Birendra was inducting too many ministers, why did he administer the oath of office to them, in the first place? And did he warn Birendra about the size of the ministry before dismissing him on that ground?

It is true Haryana had an over-size ministry. But so had many other states from time to time.

In 1954, Travancore-Cochin had 11 ministers, when the ruling party had a strength of only 19. Punjab in 1967 had 19 ministers out of 22 ruling party members. West Bengal in 1967 had 17 ruling party members—and 11 of them were ministers. Bihar, of course, was the limit in this

respect : Congress-backed Shoshit Dal had 38 MLAs—and ALL of them were ministers.

Punjab in 1971 had 57 ruling party MLAs, and 29 of them were ministers. Nagaland in 1975 had 32 ruling party MLAs—and 19 ministers.

An even more pertinent question is : Haryana had a 23 member ministry since June 1967. Why did Governor Chakravarty suddenly wake up to the problem in November ?

Nor did Chakravarti stop there. Once the Congress was re-installed in office in Haryana, he forgot all about corruption. He went on issuing ordinances, declaring certain offices of profit as "not of profit"—so that Congress could buy MLAs with such offices, when it could not make them ministers.

Though a former judge, Chakravarty, appointed Governor by Congress, now became a full-fledged Congress agent.

This quite shocked Pavate, the educationist-Governor of Punjab, who refused to issue any such immoral ordinances. In his *'My days as Governor'* (Vikas 1974), Pavate writes :

"My next door neighbour, the Governor of Haryana, had issued similar Ordinances only a few days earlier, removing the disqualification of members of the Assembly incurred by becoming chairmen or directors of corporations. I, however, had not the slightest doubt in my mind that such an Ordinance would result in political corruption which, as the head of the State, I should try my best to stop."

## KERALA :

### Fraud on Constitution in Kerala

Kerala probably has had worse experience with its Governors than any other State.

The 1957 elections returned 60 Communists, 43 Congressmen, 9 PSP men, 8 Muslim Leaguers and 6 Independents—total 126—to the State Assembly. With the support of Independents, who had been backed by CPI, the latter had absolute majority. A Communist government, led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad, duly took office. But Congress would not let it

function in peace. (Mrs. Gandhi was congress president at the time) Congress General Secretary S. N. Agarwal said the 'totalitarian' CPI was "subverting the Constitution," without saying how. Law Minister B. N. Datar took the State Government to task for commuting a death sentence to life imprisonment. When the State Government introduced a bill to correct the abuses in private schools, all hell broke loose. Thousands went to jail in the name of freedom of education and rights of minorities. Taking advantage of this situation, the Centre dismissed the ministry and dissolved the assembly, although the government's majority was *in tact* till the end.

In the name of democracy, many well-meaning nationalists also lent their support to the agitation against the Communist government; but it was an unfortunate assault on the constitution—and on States' rights. Here was Article 356, threatening to devour the Constitution itself—even as the Weimar Constitution had been devoured by its Article 48.

The 1960 elections gave 63 seats to Congress, 20 to PSP, 21 to ML, 26 to CPI, 3 to CPI Independents, 1 to RSP and 2 to Independents—total 136. A PSP Government was installed with outside support of Congress and ML. When this and subsequent governments fell in 1964, the Governor invited SSP (15), ML (11) dissident Congressmen (15) and Kerala Congress (19) to try form government. But he did not even once invite CPI.

However, worse was to come in 1965. The new elections in that year returned 40 CPI (M), 36 Congress, 24 Kerala Congress, SSP 13, Independents 10, ML 6, CPI 3, Swatantra 1—total 133.

Marxists had won 40 seats, even though all their leaders, with the exception of EMS, were in Jail. Twenty-nine of the new CPI (M) MLAs were detenus. EMS told the Governor he was in a position to form the government with the support of 13 SSP, 3 CPI and 4 Independents—all committed to a non-Congress government. But the Governor, A.P. Jain, refused to call him. And since no other party (or parties) was in a position to form the government, the assembly was dissolved *without even being summoned*.

N.C. Chatterji, Hindu Mahasabha M.P., was shocked. "This is a fraud on the Constitution. You did not allow the normal machinery of the government to function. How can you say that the Government of the State of Kerala cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, when you do not allow the government to be formed to all. How can you say that the government cannot be carried on according to Parliamentary democratic methods when you do not allow

the Legislature to meet? ...you do not allow the leader of the largest party to enter into negotiation and to form a coalition..."

Assuming CPI (M) had not succeeded in forming a coalition, as the largest single party, it had a right to be called to try. It might even have secured the outside support of CPI, SSP, etc. Also, we have had many cases of minority governments. Pattom Thanu Pillai's 1960 Government was a minority government of 20. So was Mrs. Gandhi's government in 1969-71. Indeed, minority governments are by no means unknown in the Parliamentary system of Government. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, for instance, once gave the list of minority Governments in England, showing that they were in office from 1839 to 1841, 1846 to 1852, from 1858 to 1859, from 1866 to 1868, from 1886 to 1892 from 1910 to 1915, in 1915, in 1925 and from 1929 to 1931—that is, for 26 years out of one hundred.

The Governor's refusal to call EMS went counter to the spirit of the Constitution. Governor A.P. Jain had monkeyed with the constitution.

## ORISSA :

### High Court Condemned Jatti

ORISSA had not returned any party in a majority in 1952, 1957, 1967, 1971 or 1974. The only exception during this period was 1961. And this position made it possible for the Governor to play many partisan pranks.

In 1957, Dr. Mahatab, leader of the largest single party, Congress, was asked to form the Government. And he was given three months in which period to collect a majority. But when the Mahatab Govt. fell two years later, the same governor gave R.N. Singh Deo, leader of the opposition, only three days to prove his majority.

In 1971, Chief Minister R.N. Singh Deo resigned and recommended dissolution of the House. The Governor was in such a hurry, that he accepted his resignation immediately—at 8.30 PM, Jan. 9, 1971. He forgot even to ask the outgoing CM to continue in office till alternative arrangements were made. As a result, for the next two days, there was no government in law in the State!

This Governor also refused to dissolve the House; he kept it in animated suspension. His argument was that this recommendation had reached him *fifteen minutes after* he had already accepted this ministry's resignation at 8.30 PM! He took this line even though 96 of the 140 MLAs had expressed themselves in favour of dissolution. The only reason for not dissolving the Assembly in January 1971 was that Congress did *not* want Orissa State elections along with Lok Sabha elections, but wanted them held *only after* those elections. The party saw more advantage in State elections detached from Central elections, although that meant botheration for voters and extra expenditure for the Exchequer. And the Governor was bent on obliging the Congress.

The March 1971 elections did *not* give Congress a majority. Utkal Congress, Jharkhand and Swatantra came together, constituted a majority of 72 in a House of 137, elected Biswanath Das leader. But Governor Ansari took ten days to swear in Das!

In 1972, Biju Patnaik, Mahtab and Singh Deo came together and formed the Pragati Party, with a majority of 72 in a House of 140. Governor Jatti recognised this fact in his report to the President. And yet he accepted the advice of Nandini Satpathy, the outgoing CM, who had lost her majority, and recommended dissolution—on the ground that a government led by Biju would not be stable! Even the fact that that very day—March 2, 1973—the Pragati Party had defeated Congress for a Rajya Sabha by-election, was lost on the Governor.

Biju and 73 other MLAs moved the Orissa High Court (OJNO 334 of 1973, decided on Oct. 22, 1973), which found fault with the Governor. But Governor Jatti did not resign! He was soon rewarded by the Congress with appointment as Vice-President of India!

## PUNJAB :

### Mrs. Gandhi angry with Pavate

IN PUNJAB Dr. Gopichand Bhargava had a stable majority in the Assembly—and in the Assembly Party. But Prime Minister Nehru did not like him because he had been pro-Sardar Patel. He wanted Sachar. So a vote of no-confidence was got moved by Kaifon in the Assembly Party. When that was defeated, Nehru asked Bhargava to resign, which



the latter did. Since Sachar still could not have a majority, the Governor obliged by dissolving the Assembly!

In 1966, the Ramkishan ministry was dismissed, and the assembly suspended, just because there was an inner party revolt against that Chief Minister.

In 1967 an Akali-BJP etc. coalition ruled the Punjab. Congress organised defections and reduced the ministry to minority. Chief Minister Gurnam Singh recommended dissolution, but the Governor did not heed his advice—and instead installed Congress puppet Lachman Singh Gill as CM. Sixteen of the nineteen defectors were sworn in as ministers!

In 1971, when Badal's Akali ministry was reduced to minority, the Governor agreed to dissolve the House. But Mrs. Gandhi was very unhappy with him for not installing a Congress-Akali rebel regime. Wrote Pavate in his memoirs: "She was perhaps annoyed with me for having upset her party's apple-cart, but by the time I saw her, she had cooled down a great deal and the effect of my interview was to cool her still further."

Meanwhile lesser Congressmen attacked the relatively independent educationist Governor right and left. For example, S. D. Sharma, then General Secretary of the Congress, and now Governor of Andhra, said: "The Governor was in league with Sant Akali Dal and the out-going Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal. The Governor was guilty of gross constitutional impropriety." Krishan Kant, another General Secretary of the Congress, also criticized the Governor. K. C. Pant, the Minister of State for Home Affairs, said that the Governor of Punjab should not have "exposed himself" to criticism in taking a decision to dissolve the Assembly on the advice of the out-going Chief Minister.

Pavate, who had done the wrong thing in 1967, at last did the right thing in 1971.

## RAJASTHAN :

### When Even Sampurnanand erred badly

IN 1967, Rajasthan did not give majority to any party. The position was: Congress 88, Swatantra 49, BJS 22, SSP 8, CPI 1, Independent 15—total 183. Immediately, 92 opposition MLAs came together and

formed the United Front. But Governor Sampurnanand refused to call their leader, Maharwal Lakshman Singh, to office.

In the second stage, he called all the MLAs for a personal physical check. But when he found the SVD side had a majority, he refused to count the Independents—on the ground that they had no policy or programme!

Even when Sukhadia resigned as caretaker CM, the Governor did not call Maharwal. Instead, he recommended dissolution of the House, without even once letting it meet.

The President, in his wisdom, did not dissolve the House, but only suspended it.

This was a broad hint to MLAs, that if they persisted in opposing the Congress, the House would be dissolved; but if they came round, the suspended House would be revived! In this situation Congress succeeded in securing a few defections and showing a majority.

Even a savant-scholar like Sampurnanand forgot that, as Governor, he should be impartial, remembered his old Congress associations, and went very much out of the way to instal a Congress ministry in Rajasthan.

## U. P. :

### Gopala Reddy's shameless Partisanship

IN UP when instability hit that state after 1967, Governor B. Gopala Reddy repeatedly favoured Congress leader C.B. Gupta—and he repeatedly frowned on SVD leaders, including Charan Singh. He dissolved the House in April 1968, though a majority of legislators were against dissolution.

B.G. Reddy kept asking SVD members about their party differences; but he never raised these questions when Congress formed a coalition with other parties. Even the fact that two SVD candidates had defeated Congress candidates for Rajya Sabha poll, did not impress Reddy.

Although C.B. Gupta lost his majority in November 1960, with half the ministers—including Deputy Chief Minister Kamalapati Tripathi—walking out on him, the Governor retained Gupta as CM for three long

months. His argument was that "a minority government is not an illegal government till it is proved to be lacking majority support."

While he gave three months to Congressman Gupta, he would not give Charan Singh even four days to prove his majority in 1970. It is also strange that the Governor, instead of taking the legal opinion of the Advocate General in the first instance, referred the matter to the Attorney General in Delhi simultaneously. And without waiting for the report of the Advocate General, he asked Chief Minister Charan Singh to resign as soon as he received the report of the Attorney General. It meant that the Governor had already made up his mind *not* to consider the report of the Advocate General seriously, else he should have waited for that report before asking for the Chief Minister to resign. Moreover, a consultation with the Attorney General, in the first instance, made his action suspicious, by linking it with New Delhi.

The dismissal of Charan Singh was also objectionable in the sense that even the normal procedure was not observed. Normally, the Governor's report first goes to the President and then he asks his Secretariat to refer it to the Home Ministry for advice. But in this case, the Governor's report was sent to the President's Secretariat which, instead of sending it to the President, sent it to the Home Ministry. Then the Cabinet took a decision and made its own recommendations, which were sent to the President in Kiev in U.S.S.R., through a senior official of the External Affairs Ministry. The President signed the Proclamation there. It meant that right from referring the matter to the Attorney General, to the signing of the Proclamation in Kiev, everything was done in great haste and in bad faith.

This shows that in this case the Governor should not have asked the Chief Minister to resign when the Assembly was to meet just after four days and that the dismissal of the Chief Minister was wrong. K. Subba Rao, former Chief Justice of India, commenting on the dismissal of Charan Singh, said: "The imposition of the President's Rule in UP was indefensible from the viewpoint of legal, practical and parliamentary democratic conventions." Commenting on the imposition of President's Rule, C. Rajagopalachari said that "it is disgraceful misuse of power."

Said Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit: "The basic issue is: did Charan Singh enjoy the confidence of the majority, or did he not? Should this issue have been decided on the floor of the Assembly or in the private study of the Governor...? The Constitution does not recognise either parties or coalitions—it only demands that whoever is the Chief Minister, should

enjoy the confidence of the House. Charan Singh had already called the meeting of the Assembly on October 6, and had also expressed his willingness to summon it earlier, should the Governor so desire. It is clear that the Assembly was deliberately prevented from expressing its view barely 96 hours before it was scheduled to meet.

The Jana Sangh contrasted the Governor's "leslie approach" to Gupta, with his "astounding alacrity" at the time of removing Charan Singh's Government.

## W. Bengal :

## Unfair to CPI (M)

THE 1967 elections gave 127 seats to Congress in West Bengal. The rest were: CPI (M) 43, CPI 16, Bangla Congress 34, Forward Bloc 13, SSP 7, PSP 7, Lok Sevak Sangh 5, Gorkha League 2, SUC 4, Workers Party 2, BJS, Swatantra and RSP one each, Independents 12—total 280. Congress having expressed its inability to form the government, eleven opposition parties united under the leadership of Ajoy Mukherjee. But on Nov. 2, 1967, P.C. Ghosh, with seventeen others, defected. On Nov. 7, the Governor asked the CM to call a session by Nov. 23 to prove his majority. The CM fixed Dec. 18. On this issue the Governor dismissed the ministry!

P.C. Ghosh was installed CM with Congress support. He never faced the Assembly. And instead of giving Mukherjee another chance, the Governor dissolved the House in February 1968. (In Bihar, Governor Barua gave the local Congress ministry in trouble full five months in a similar situation.)

The 1969 elections returned CPI (M) 80, Bangla Congress 33, CPI 30, Forward Bloc 21, RSP 12, New Congress 34, Old Congress 16—and other parties in smaller numbers. Once again a coalition was formed by Mukherjee in cooperation with CPI (M) etc. But it could not go beyond March 1970, when the two main partners fell out.

Jyoti Basu claimed to be called, as leader of the largest party. He claimed that many members of other parties were willing to support him. But the Governor would not give him a chance. The Governor demanded to know the names—and see the letters—of these MLAs. But Jyoti Basu refused to divulge the same—for fear of leakage to the opposite party.

And so the House, was dissolved in March 1970 and new elections held in March 1971. The third Ajoy Mukherjee government lasted only 86 days. The CM resigned and the Governor dissolved the Assembly. The CPI (M), with a strength of 111, was never given a chance. It was an improper effort to keep the CPI (M) out of power through repeated misuse of the office of Governor.

Forsey in his book, Dissolution of Parliament, after surveying all the incidents that have taken place in Great Britain, in Canada, in Australia, in South Africa and other Common wealth countries Writes : "Whether an alternative Government is possible, may not always be clear at a glance. With multiplicity systems, it may be necessary for the Crown to refuse dissolution, and to consult the Leaders of the various opposition parties or even prominent private members, or to call on such personages successively, to form Governments. If all possible Prime Ministers decline the task, there would be no course open but to retain the existing Government in office, and grant its request for dissolution. If on the other hand an alternative Government assumed office and asked for an immediate dissolution, or was at once defeated on critical division, it would be the duty of the Crown to re-call the former Government and grant dissolution."

### When Governor Sri Prakasa obliged— C. Rajagopalachari

In 1952, Congress in Madras got 155 seats in a House of 321. The remaining 166 MLAs formed the Democratic Front, under the leadership of T. Prakasam. But Governor Sri Prakasa did not invite Prakasam.

The Governor was bent upon installing a Congress Ministry. This could be done only by CR. But CR was not a member of the Assembly.

Sri Prakasa therefore asked CR to seek election to either House. But CR told him, it was like his asking his own father, Dr. Bhagavandas, to seek election. He persuaded Sri Prakasa to nominate him a member of the Upper House.

CR was duly nominated an MLC. He was then asked to form the government, which he did. Meanwhile 16 opposition MLAs were persuaded to cross over. Government-by-defection had begun !