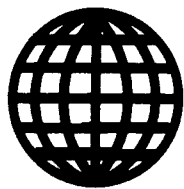


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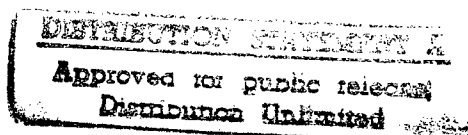


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Near East & South Asia

INDIA



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Near East & South Asia

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International Affairs

U.S. Seen Supportive in Government Fight Against Terrorism

93AS0730B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 18 Mar 93
pp 1,9

[Article by Arati R. Jerath: "Now Even America is Helping India in the Fight Against Terrorism"]

[Text] New Delhi, 17 March. President Bill Clinton has expressed full support for India in dealing with the present terrorist problem. In a personal message sent to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao he said that his government strongly supports India. He repeated his offer of U.S. assistance in apprehending the criminals involved in the Bombay bombing.

The Indian intelligence agencies assume that there is a planned terrorist conspiracy behind these bombings to disrupt the stability of the country. Therefore, the American President's message is very important because it only strengthens the Indian intelligence agencies' assumptions.

The Indian High Commission in Islamabad warned about such a conspiracy in the middle of February. High Commissioner S.K. Lamba said in a very confidential telegram that the Indian cities would be unsettled during the month of Ramazan. The telegram did not detail the kind of attacks that were possible. However, it was clearly stated that Bombay, along with other large cities, was a definite target. This warning was sent to all related agencies immediately.

No Proof of Pakistan's Inter Service Agency's (ISI) involvement in the Bombay bombing has not been obtained yet. However, since the Indian High Commission in Islamabad had learned first about the possible terrorist activities in Indian cities, it is suspected that some group or groups in Pakistan are behind these blasts. However, the government officials are hesitating in accusing Pakistan. They are being careful. No accusation will be levied until a clear connection between the terrorists and the Pakistani government or any of its agencies is established.

India has started a campaign to declare Pakistan a terrorist nation. In this context, President Clinton's message received today only strengthens India's position. The United States itself has been a target of international terrorism. Therefore, U.S. sympathy toward India over the new face of terrorism that emerged in Bombay and Calcutta is natural.

Until now, India's activities against Pakistan were limited to what was happening in Kashmir and Punjab. This sphere has expanded after what happened in Bombay and Calcutta. India has joined the long list of victims of international terrorism now. The result of this will be of much more significance than the present difference between the two countries. It is expected that the chasm

between the United States and Pakistan will widen now, even though the United States desires to have equitable relations with all the countries on the Indian subcontinent.

The investigations of the bomb blasts in Bombay increasingly point to involvement of some west Asian terrorist groups and the hawla bazaar [black market]. India has increased cooperation with foreign intelligence agencies and other groups to apprehend the criminals. It is believed that contacts were made with Mosad, the dangerous Israeli intelligence agency, for assistance. Efforts to arrest the Memon brothers also have been accelerated. It is said that the Memon brothers were behind the blasts and they are hiding in some Gulf country.

Delhi is increasingly worried now because of the blasts in Calcutta yesterday, which took place only four days after the terrible blasts in Bombay. They feel the need to deal with it immediately. This is made clear by the minister of state for internal security Rajesh Pilot's sudden visit to Calcutta. There are clear connections between the blasts in Calcutta and Bombay. This has strengthened the belief that there is a planned effort to disrupt peace in the nation.

Active groups in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are prime suspects. It is believed in government circles that these blasts were carried out by fundamentalist groups who for their vested interests want to halt the economic liberalization process. There is no doubt that this deadly action in Bombay was carried out with the help of underworld criminals there. It is believed that Daud Ibrahim's gangs most likely have cooperated in these blasts.

After the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Interpol warned that the armed fundamentalist Islamic terrorist groups were planning to create havoc in India. It is clear that this warning was not taken seriously. That is why the intelligence agencies failed to learn about all the conspiracies even after the dreadful riots in Bombay.

Pakistan has denied any involvement in these incidents. Still, the Indian agencies cannot rule out the hand of Pakistan's intelligence agency, Inter Service Intelligence (ISI). ISI involvement is suspected because of its role in the Kashmir valley. It is suspected that the ISI had sent some young Kashmiri men to Bombay for this purpose. The need to make the home ministry and the intelligence agencies more effective is being felt again. However, not much can be done under the present situation. All intelligence agencies were involved in the present investigation. The officials in the ministry are hopeful of a major success soon. Special courts are being established to try the criminals.

Charles Joseph Clark, Canada's minister for legal affairs, met with Defense Minister Chavan today. He gave assurances that his country will provide all kinds of assistance to India to deal with terrorism. Meanwhile,

Shivraj Patil, the Lok Sabha president, also met with veteran home ministry officials to discuss security in the Parliament House.

Regional Affairs

Pakistani Nuclear Program Activities Detailed, Seen as Threat

93AS0734J Bombay *THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 9 Apr 93 pp 8-10

[Article by Aabha Dixit: "The Pak Bomb"; italicized words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] India and Pakistan refuse to perceive each other's nuclear programmes without misgivings. In international fora, both countries use every opportunity to highlight and focus attention on the other's nuclear designs. Last week, however, the Pakistan foreign minister, Mohammed Saddique Kanju, and the Pakistani ambassador to the U.S., Abida Hussain, laid all speculations from the Indian side at rest when they admitted, in separate interviews to the American press, that Pakistan had nuclear weapon capability. Hussain insisted that Pakistan must have such a deterrent against India, and that her country's nuclear programme was designed to "deter nuclear blackmail" by India.

Earlier, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, during his meeting with a visiting Japanese envoy, Donawaki, spoke of India having unsafeguarded production facilities, by storing plutonium for 200 bombs. By using western countries, both States are actually playing into the hands of non-proliferationists whose influence in the decision-making portals is greater. This makes way for strengthening non-proliferation regimes across the board. Rather than working to remove their nuclear misperceptions through a bilateral mechanism, both countries actually work to denigrate the nuclear CBMs that they have agreed to in the past few years. Even the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R. could not agree to such wide-ranging nuclear CBMs in such a short period of negotiations.

There is scarcely any doubt as to the weapons orientation of Pakistan's nuclear programme. The nuclear power programme begun in the '50s was aborted by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in favour of weaponisation as early as 1972. Since then, all nuclear developments have pointed towards acquiring the wherewithal to manufacture, store and launch the weapon. In this obsessive search for the weapon, Islamabad broke international rules, stole technology and parts, and continually denied having any intentions to produce the bomb. But the Kahuta plant became the symbol of all that was murky about its nuclear intentions. The laboratories and plants gave concrete evidence that the nuclear programme gave priority to weapons over peaceful uses. The father of Pakistan's bomb, Dr A. Q. Khan, set up the nuclear weapon shop with stolen designs of a Dutch-British-German uranium-enrichment plant. Using the

contacts that Khan developed while working at the URENOC facility in Holland, he was able to use front companies to clandestinely procure equipment critical for making the bomb.

In December 1988, the German press gave details of two German companies, New Technologiem Gmbh (NTG) and Physikalisch Technisches Beratung (PTB), which exported components for production of fuel plants. In October 1990, the WASHINGTON POST reported that Pakistan used Switzerland, Canada and France or procure high-temperature furnaces to process zirconium which is used to sheath reactor fuel. These furnaces, it was reported, could be used to make special metals (Khan's professional specialisation) for delivery missiles also. Other disturbing evidence, as unearthed by David Albright and Mark Hibbs in their recent article in the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, includes the existence of over 9,000 operational centrifuges at Kahuta that could make more than eight crore nuclear devices. Reports of clandestine re-fitting of the F-16 and Mirage Vs to carry nuclear devices, along with weapon miniaturisation, have also surfaced. The China connection with the reported transfer of designs of a successful nuclear test and sale of the nuclear-capable M-11 missile are unerring evidence of Pakistan's weaponisation. Albright and Hibbs have concluded that, given Pakistan's scientifically deduced stock of uranium hexafluoride, the annual production at Kahuta in 1993 could be around 60 to 100 kg of weapons-grade uranium.

Pakistan had the good fortune of having the Soviets in Afghanistan to push ahead with the nuclear weapon programme. Reports have been surfacing with regularity that the U.S. intelligence knew the exact progress of the nuclear weapon status at Kahuta in 1983 itself, but political considerations submerged any action from being taken to stop the programme. Thus, Islamabad fully exploited the dilemma that Washington faced. It followed a strategy of calculated ambiguity—while Zia gave assurances to Reagan of not crossing the five-per cent threshold in enriching uranium, Abdul Qadir Khan "used" Kuldip Nayar to confirm the nuclear weapon status.

Ever since the sensational 1987 disclosures, Islamabad's strategy came under intense pressure. The ambiguity over the direction of the programme eroded and the Soviets walked out of Afghanistan which prevented another waiver to the Pressler Amendment. By 1990, there was hardly any doubt that Pakistan was a *de facto* nuclear weapon State (see box). The only difficulty it has encountered is how to come out of the closet. The escalation of tensions over Kashmir saw a jittery military leadership in Islamabad send signals that the nuclear weapon was in place and could be used. It saw Robert Gates, then deputy director of the CIA, break off a visit to Moscow to cool passions in Islamabad.

With the cat out of the bag in 1990 itself, Islamabad took over two years to actually confirm the worst fears of the international community. The Shahryar Khan interview

in Washington in February 1992 was carefully worded to leave little doubt over Pakistan's nuclear weapon status. But it brought little relief to Islamabad in terms of resumed aid or even being accepted as a *de jure* nuclear weapon State. The Pakistan leadership went back to denying weaponisation.

Obviously frustrated at not being able to derive dividends from exposing its nuclear weapon status, Islamabad has changed its tracks to systematically "taint" New Delhi. The Indian nuclear programme is being made to look larger than life and more threatening than ever before to international security. Absar Hussain Rizvi wrote in THE NEWS: 'India's resources of uranium of various grades are of the order of 60,000 tonnes of which 13,000 tonnes are of 0.05 per cent U305 grade and above.' The former chairman of the PAEC [Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission], Munir Ahmed Khan, in an article in the same newspaper, tried to cloak his country's nuclear weapon programme with benign intentions while projecting India as having 'developed capabilities in uranium extraction and enrichment, fuel fabrication and reprocessing.' EAS Bokhari, writing in THE NATION, referred to India storing 290 kg of weapons grade plutonium in 1991 itself.

A domestic upheaval in Pakistan over the nuclear issue has gathered momentum in the run-up to the presidential elections. The former army chief, Mirza Aslam Beg, has used the nuclear issue as a plank to further his prospects for occupying the Aiwan-i-Sadr (President's Palace) in August 1993. Beg has pushed for making the possession of the bomb official, knowing the effect it would have on the common man's emotions. This would force the present troika members to surrender the advantage to Beg, in case they decide not to bite Beg's bait of going public on the nuclear weapon issue. On the other hand, if they go public to counter Beg, they would expose themselves to international pressure, which Beg could use to make them look like sell-outs to the West.

The most difficult part of unveiling their nuclear weapon status is: how to make the transition from the closet legally acceptable? By making a series of rash and contradictory statements over the past five years, Islamabad finds that the all-win situation of the Reagan years can never come back. Nobody accepts its pious platitudes of having peaceful intentions and neither do many believe that Islamabad's nuclear bomb is not usable. They have declared their capability but found no credible principle to base it upon. They have attempted to magnify the Indian nuclear threat but found virtually no takers. The Indian programme is far too open and well-documented to startle the informed. It is also too widespread in civilian sectors for Islamabad to mimic.

Commentators in Pakistan have consciously tried to project the unsafeguarded element of India's nuclear programme, ascribing the entire civilian nuclear development programme as a facade to cover up the weapons intention. The former PAEC chief, Munir Ahmed Khan, in a recent article tracing the growth of the Indian

nuclear industry, concluded that 'India's nuclear programme clearly indicates that it had all along wanted to go nuclear, and that it was not a reaction to either China's nuclear explosion in 1964 or Pakistan's nuclear programme of later years.' Even the choice of technology has drawn ominous notice from across the border, by projecting it as being clandestine. They tried to establish that the plutonium route was adopted to utilise the fuel available from the Cirus research reactor supplied by Canada. Similarly, the entirely indigenous efforts to build the Dhruva reactor are portrayed as efforts to cloak over a weapons programme. Pakistani scribes and academicians have concluded that the 20-25 kg of plutonium produced at Dhruva goes for making nuclear weapons. Cold calculations based on Dhruva's optimum capacity gave India about 290 kg of weapons-grade plutonium by 1991.

Other indigenous attempts too have been viewed with traditional suspicion: BARC [Bhabha Atomic Research Center] is the hub of India's weapons designs and, according to Pakistani sources, is concentrating on uranium-enrichment technology. Similarly, the fast-breeder reactor programme is bereft of civilian uses. Islamabad quotes extensively from western sources to buttress its claims. Of special value to them are Leonard Spector and Gary Milhollin. Spector's jaundiced version of the Indian nuclear power programme is evident from his "special" report of 1990 that puts MAPS I and II in the same category as Dhruva, which, "together with two plutonium extraction plants at Tarapur and BARC, form the backbone of India's nuclear weapons capability by permitting the production of plutonium not subject to international non-proliferation controls." However, in the long run, Islamabad can never absolve its own clandestine operations to become a nuclear weapon State. Spector's objective in painting the Indian programme in such absurd terms is to achieve non-proliferation of nuclear technology and allow the discriminatory NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] regime to continue. For Pakistan, the same facts are used to take the pressure off their own nuclear programme. But in the process, they allow the likes of Spector to become legitimate and push ahead a non-proliferation deal that hurts both countries.

Did Pakistan Intend to Use It? [Box, p 9]

Speculations were set at rest when Islamabad officially confirmed its *de facto* status of nuclear weapon capability. But two questions remain unanswered: when did Pakistan actually cross the threshold, and how does Islamabad actually perceive the possession of the bomb?

The first speculation has seen divergent opinions emerge. Many observers believe it was as early as 1983 based on the progress of the Kahuta facility. Working virtually unnoticed, Dr Khan had procured all the critical elements into Pakistan from 1978 to 1981. He must have developed at least a crude device in under two years. Three are others who feel that the crossing could

have come a few years later, by 1987. They base themselves on the decision by Qadir Khan to make a radical statement to Kuldip Nayar, which was supported by Zia's subsequent interview to TIME. Both statements, followed by denials and pleas of being misquoted, revealed that the process of making the weapon had been mastered. Another group believes that the Khan and Zia interviews were deliberate bluffs to make the West ease pressure on Islamabad. These observers point to its continuing clandestine procurement of basic items required to produce the bomb. They put the year for "going" nuclear at 1989. Significantly, neither Nawaz Sharif nor Shahryar Khan have divulged when Islamabad changed its nuclear status. Most observers agree that the Pakistan admission has come, at the very least, three years late. But the first cracks came from Mirza Aslam Beg. It is a well-known fact that the military controlled the programme after the July 1977 *coup d'etat*. Beg, according to THE NEWS on January 7, asserted that "there has been no change or progress in Pakistan's nuclear programme since 1987." At a seminar at the Rawalpindi Press Club, Beg debunked the theory that Pakistan crossed the nuclear threshold in 1990. The issue is complicated because of Beg's personal involvement. He became vice-chief of army staff in 1987 (and with it, possibly the operational head of the nuclear weapons programme) and could have palpably been trying to claim credit for himself by setting back the date to 1987. With Beg taking the lead in trying to become the foster Father of the Bomb, one can be sure that Ghulam Ishaq or Abdul Qadir Khan or even Zia-ul-Haq (if he had been alive) would not allow Beg alone to walk away with the plaudits.

The second speculation causes more worry. If the bomb has been part of Islamabad's military arsenal from 1987 (if Beg is to be believed), there are disconcerting questions that need to be answered. It is universally acknowledged that Islamabad sent a signal to New Delhi of using the bomb over Kashmir in early 1990. This sent Robert Gates scurrying to South Asia to smooth ruffled feathers and take back the impression that South Asia had become unalterably nuclear, requiring a change in Washington's policy towards the sub-continent. The fear of the "usability" of the weapon has been the most disturbing aspect of the nuclear weapons programme. In the hands off a select few, as Benazir acknowledged in an interview to NBC television, the possession of the nuclear weapon could indeed be the moving spirit behind Islamabad's interminable support to insurgency in Kashmir, Punjab and other parts of India. Pakistan has achieved what former terrorist-sponsoring States like Libya and Syria could not achieve—to combine the threat of using the nuclear bomb with its terrorism-exporting tactics.

Another question that haunts decisions-makers in neighbouring capitals is whether the bomb is part of the operational strategy of its military doctrine. Zarb-e-Momin was launched in 1989, a twilight year in Pakistan's nuclear history, and handled by General

Hamid Gul, whose desire to extend Islam's boundaries required the use of every possible advantage. Did Zarb-e-Momin carry a secret nuclear element? The strategy of 'offensive defence' without nuclear back-up means very little as the exercises themselves proved. Another nuclear nightmarish scenario, if one were to stretch the issue further back, emerges during Operation Brass Tacks in 1987. Did Zia's cricket diplomacy result from his inability to rein in the nuclear hounds bent on using the bomb to repulse the threat posed by Operation Brass Tacks? No one may ever know.

Kashmir Liberation Front Cofounder Interviewed

93AS0744A Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
10 Mar 93 p 6

[Article by Chitra Subramaniam: "India 'Walked Into' Pak Trap"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Geneva—The co-founder of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front [JLKF] has said Pakistan has a clear and precise plan to foment trouble in Kashmir and that India has walked into the trap set by the country's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

"The idea was that to provoke India to such a point that the situation gets out of hand—in that Pakistan has succeeded," Hashim Qureshi told this correspondent in an exclusive interview.

The exiled leader, who lives in Amsterdam, said India could—"and should"—expose Pakistan's designs on Kashmir. "If New Delhi announces that it is willing to sit down and discuss all aspects of the Kashmir issue, Pakistan will stand exposed in the international arena," Qureshi said.

By "all aspects," he said he meant not only the issue of Kashmiri independence, but also that of Jammu, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Ladakh. Qureshi said were elections to be held in Kashmir today, Muslim fundamentalists would carry the day. "Pakistan has succeeded in driving a wedge between the people of Kashmir and India—and they have used their brand of Islam to do this," he said.

Qureshi, who is very critical of the Indian security forces, said it was India's actions in recent years that had driven the people of Kashmir toward fundamentalist. "The fundamentalists fire one shot, and the Indian security forces go on a rampage destroying entire villages. By doing this, India behaved just like Pakistan wanted to," he asserted.

He said if New Delhi wanted to regain the confidence of moderate Kashmiris, perpetrators of Sopore-like incidents will have to be brought to book. "Unless people are punished, the average Kashmiri will continue to think that New Delhi is behind the carnage."

Qureshi, who shot to fame after he hijacked an Indian Airlines plane in 1971, now swears by Mahatma Gandhi.

"One didn't expect anything from Pakistan, given their track record, but one had a lot of hope in India, the country that gave the world Mahatma Gandhi," he said.

Commenting on Pakistan's campaign against India at various international fora, especially at the Human Rights Commission in Geneva, Qureshi said these were all attempts to embarrass India since Pakistan has no concern for human rights. "Look at what they have been doing in their own country for the past 45 years," the exiled leader said.

People of Kashmir should be told that Pakistan is defending neither Muslims, nor Islam, nor for that matter human rights.

Hijacker Admits Connection With External Terrorists

93P50154A Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 31 Mar 93 p 1

["Hari Singh's Relationship With 'Tigers' Explored"]

[Text] Recently an Indian Airlines jet was hijacked. The hijacker, Hari Singh, has been ordered into police custody by Chief District Magistrate Sarma.

The public special prosecutor argued to keep him in detention for 14 days. The prosecutor further revealed that the criminal had admitted visiting the Pakistan High-Commission and the Pakistan House in Tilak Marg. The prosecutor said that Hari Singh also had connections to the Liberation Tigers of Sri Lanka.

Proof of Pakistani Aid to Terrorists Produced

93P50154B Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 1 Apr 93 p 4

[Article: "Pakistani Assistance To Punjab Terrorists"]

[Text] On Wednesday, Union Minister of State for Home and Parliamentary Affairs Rajesh Pilot said in the State Legislative Assembly that it has been proved that Pakistan has been supplying arms to terrorists in Punjab, Jammu, and Kashmir.

In the last three years, lots of illegal arms have been confiscated along the Indo-Pakistani border, with 395 AK-type rifles and 350 handguns among them.

He pointed out that there has been an influx of refugees from Bangladesh, and India is eager to talk with them.

With regard to the bomb blasts in Bombay, he said that various establishments are assisting the police in their investigations.

He mentioned that families of those who lost their lives at that incident have been given Rs [Rupees] 92 Lakh as compensation, and those injured Rs 19.50 Lakh each.

In answering a question, he said no one was being permitted to worship in Ayodhya. The Home Minister

Mr. S.B. Chavan said, however, that worship has been banned since five religious men were found conducting worship services.

Erosion in Ties With Afghanistan Examined

93AS0740A Madras THE HINDU in English
10 Mar 93 p 9

[Article by K. K. Katyal: "Afghan Accord: Many Questions Remain"]

[Text] New Delhi, March 9. Whether the Pakistan-brokered agreement among the warring faction leaders of Afghanistan works is hard to say, but the recent events confirm India's irrelevance in an area, where it mattered the most not long ago.

Islamabad has heavy stakes in the development in Afghanistan, because of their direct impact on the most sensitive region of Pakistan, the North-West Frontier Province [NWFP]. This, and its involvement with the decade-long Mujahideen struggle against the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul, "made Pakistan an active player in the moves for peace in the war-torn neighbouring country. By contrast, India has no immediate, short-term compulsions though Afghanistan's importance in the region could not be minimised. But that is only one part of the story.

Pakistan's connections with the rival leaders of Afghanistan give it a leverage, which India completely lacks—the past contacts of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad with the different Mujahidin representatives notwithstanding. At one stage last year, the Indian embassy in Kabul did succeed in evolving a working relationship with the regime there, so much so that it nearly arranged a Presidential visit to New Delhi, but the plan did not materialise. Thereafter, there was a steady erosion of whatever influence India enjoyed in Kabul. This was symbolised by the closure of the Indian embassy.

This contrasts sharply with the influence India wielded in Kabul in the eighties and even earlier. Pakistan was then worried by what was seen as a nexus between New Delhi and Kabul, feeling threatened because of its vulnerability on two fronts. It has no such worry now though there are other reasons for it to feel concerned.

From among the dozen of Mujahideen faction leaders, Pakistan had favoured Mr. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the chief of Hezb-e-Islami but, because of the queer turn of events after the fall of the Najibullah Government, it was not he but his bitter foes who gained control of the Government in Kabul. This placed Pakistan in an acute predicament—it had, on the one hand, to deal with the new rulers in Kabul and, on the other hand, reckon with the exclusion of its favourite from the new power structure.

Threat to Pak: The active hostility between the leaders of the Kabul Government and Mr. Hekmatyar, who vowed

to throw them out of power, also represented the ethnic divide. Mr. Hekmatyar belongs to the Pushtoon segment, constituting the majority of the population which had provided rulers to Afghanistan in its 250-year history. Those who wield real power in Kabul, belong to the Taajik and Uzbek groups. Mr. Hekmatyar's frustrated ambition could lead him to carve out the Pushtoon-dominated area, where he holds sway, into a separate State. This, in turn, could exercise a powerful pull on the Pushtoon-speaking people of the NWFP and pave the way for a bigger Pushtoon State. This is a real danger for Pakistan and its rulers are aware of it.

Imponderables: The agreement, worked out under Pakistan's auspices, has many imponderables. New Delhi will be happy if it serves to restore peace and bring respite to the Afghans but what has been left out of the agreement is as important as what has been included in it. And the fate of the arrangement depends on the left-out portion. The agreement is silent on the rule of Mr. Ahmed Shah Masood, the guerilla commander whose strategic capabilities helped end the communist rule in Afghanistan. He is now the Defence Minister, and the President, Mr. Burhanuddin Rabbani, counts on him for survival. The agreement also does not specify the position of the most powerful commander, Mr. Abdul Rashid Dostam, the fierce Uzbek warlord and a former communist general. The two control the important parts of Kabul—Shah-e-Nau, the airport and the areas where the presidential palace and radio station are located, as also the Salan tunnel, the vital link with the Central Asian republics. Will they agree to give up the present advantage for the sake of an uncertain future?

Infiltration From Bangladesh Said Rapidly Increasing

93AS0727D Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
23 Mar 93 pp 1, 9

[Article by Sumit Sen: "Bangladeshi Infiltration Picks Up Pace"]

[Text] Bangladeshi infiltration through the West Bengal border has picked up pace since the end of January. Till late last year the "Operation Pushback" controversy had put a dampener on the influx but as a sequel to the onslaught on minorities in Bangladesh after the December 6 incident in Ayodhya and the subsequent turmoil in various parts of India, the flow has started again.

Highly placed Union Home Ministry officials, the top brass in Intelligence wings and experts on India-Bangladesh affairs fear a massive, if not unprecedented, influx of mostly minorities.

Dr. Amalendu Dey, Guru Nanak Professor of Indian History, Jadavapur University, a Marxist scholar and expert on India-Bangladesh affairs, says that going by current developments 800,000 to one million are expected to infiltrate into India mostly through West

Bengal, possibly by this year itself. Post-Ayodhya developments in Bangladesh have completely upset the minorities, which is why they are trying to sneak into India in a determined way.

Apart from creating economic pressure on India, the main danger of infiltration is mounting social tension. He identifies Bangladesh by and large as a source of communal tension in eastern as well as large parts of north-eastern India. This country's secular fabric is bound to be affected if Bangladesh loses its multi-religious character.

Mr. Santimoy Roy, a Leftist academic and well-known expert on the subject, says the latest trend in infiltration clearly indicates that unlike in previous years the infiltrators are pouring in in a well-planned manner. He says that going by the 1991 Bangladeshi census its population was certainly less than what it should have been as per both the Government's earlier projections and United Nations' estimation.

While the Bangladesh 1991 census report estimated the total population at over 104.17 million, according to the Government's earlier projections it should have been between 112 and 114 million in the same year. The United Nations' previous estimate predicted a population of between 117 and 118 million. The net shortfall is thus between 7.3 and 9.3 million judging by earlier official projection and 12.3 million using the U.N. projection. It can be safely assumed that the shortfall is mainly due to the migration of millions to India, Mr. Roy feels. At present its population is 110 million.

Paramilitary sources say that while a few hundreds had been pushed back, a substantial number has already entered West Bengal. Before the Ayodhya incident the ratio of Muslim and Hindu infiltrators was 4:1. Now it is just the reverse.

According to Union Home Ministry sources, about 14 million Bangladeshis have sneaked into India mostly through West Bengal over the past 10 years. Alarming proportions were achieved when General H.M. Ershad was President and the country a theocratic state. A rapid worsening of the economic conditions of the country is borne out by the fact that today 11 per cent of Bangladeshis have no roof above their head, prompting many from the majority community as well to settle down in India for survival.

Mohammed Abdul, who is now a resident of Khudiram Palli near Duttapukur railway station in North 24-Parganas, says: "About 50 Muslim families from Bangladesh, mostly masons and farmers, have come here for sheer survival. Everybody here earns between Rs [Rupees] 20 and Rs 25 per person per day. Almost an impossible proposition in Bangladesh". Amir Ali Sheikh (65) says he came here with three sons from Khulna and is happy that they are better off than their Bangladesh days.

Hindu infiltrators have almost the same story to tell. Dr. Bibek Sikdar, a homeopath by profession, relates how many like him were compelled to come to West Bengal from Bangladesh and settle down near Guma railway station and elsewhere in North 24-Parganas. In many cases, the settlers were protected by political parties for electoral considerations.

Dr. H. Majumdar, a well-known demographer and former lecturer with the United Nations Regional Institute for Population Studies in Ghana, feels that as a fallout of infiltration the disproportionate growth of border population comprising two communities will inevitably lead to a escalation of tension and other related problems. He describes such a change in the demographic composition of border districts as something unique.

Dr. Jayanta Roy, Centenary Professor of International Relations, Department of Modern History, Calcutta University, who is also an expert on India-Bangladesh relations, regrets that those in the saddle have failed to realize the long-term impact of infiltration of the socio-economic fabric of India. Only a short-sighted approach had been attempted so far.

Knowledgeable sources say certain quarters in Bangladesh have been propagating the concept of "lebensraum" or "living space" to push the excess population into India.

Many feel the current process of fencing the Indian border will bear little fruit as the area is vast and porous and undergoes drastic changes during the monsoon. There ought to be a move to internationalize the issue and put pressure on Bangladesh.

Mr. Chitta Mridha, chairman of the Bangladesh Freedom Fighters' Council, an organization of a few thousands who took part in the 1971 liberation war, says: "We want to go back to Bangladesh. But a congenial atmosphere has to be created there. For this, the infiltration and the situation which leads to such an exodus of Bangladeshis should be raised at the United Nations".

Internal Affairs

Secularism Seen Essential for Communal Harmony

93AS0728A Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA
in Bengali 28 Mar 93 p 10

[Article by Abdur Rauf: "The Crisis of an Open Mind"]

[Text] A free-minded, rational person faces a lot of problems in a society in which the influence of fundamentalism is strong. These problems are magnified manifold when religious fundamentalism forcefully raises its head. So writes Abdur Rauf.

To begin with, our own difficulties: It is the enigma of those who are strictly neither text-book religious persons,

nor atheists. We do not have the yen to alienate ourselves from the daily joys and sorrows, happiness and grief of those among whom we were born and align ourselves with a certain group or a party. But alienation sometimes appears inescapable. The reason, I feel, may be our rationalist attitude of mind. Our minds do not want to accept anything blindly as a result of our modern education and impact of the times.

We also feel proud of the glorious historic role of Islam. We feel deeply confident about the conviction of Manabendranath Roy when he said, "The truly educated persons in the present world had to abandon the opinion, 'Islam's rise is the triumph of orthodoxy over docile and patient people.' The cause of this winning campaign of Islam was hidden in a revolutionary tune, yet unfelt; a huge number of the population faced the most extreme suffering as a result of the decadent old civilizations in Greece, Rome, Persia, and China, even India. Islam saved them and provided a direction towards a resplendent land. Hence its phenomenal spread was possible."

But those rules and customs were devised as a must for the observance of the public about 1,500 years ago. To what extent would those truly be followed! It is not possible at all to free our minds from the tendency of critiquing these. Our tendency is to look for scientific rationale for any religious behavior. This mind tends to think—what might be the anthropological reason behind the emergence of the custom of Korbani (animal sacrifice)? What is the history of the gradual evolution of Ramajan fasting? From what necessities did these traditions evolve in the society? What were the social urges present in those days behind polygamy or quick divorce? Does a similar social demand still exist? How far is the sun-baked, sand-storm-prone, dry Arabian climate related to the veil system? There men also look as if they are wearing veils! Is there any necessity to wear the exact Arabian dress in our countries? The timing for prayers and fasts were fixed in consonant with the geographic climate of a basically livestock-rearing population busy doing export-import trade; won't it create problems if religious practices of a basically agrarian and industrialized country continue without any change of those fixed times? How will the fasting hours of the Muslims' Ramazan be determined in Greenland? There, is a six-month night cycle. What rule will prevail for fasting in places with a 22-hour day or night time? How will the prayer hours be calculated—hours that are fixed for various periods of the day and night?

All these questions naturally arise in our minds—not at all to embarrass anybody. Yet the religious purists feel encumbered and start viewing our faith in God with doubt. That is why we see in reality that it is not possible to maintain a soul relationship with our own society in spite of enough sincerity.

It is not possible for many other reasons. In our minds, we have a place for worldly humanist values and as result, much of our appreciation of various literary, film, musical, painting, and sculptural issues does not get any

sanction from the religious perspective. For example, we judge on the basis of human values various relationships between men and women, especially illicit love, in stories and novels—though they are contrary to religious ethics. If the songs about Kali or Kirtan are sung in a melodious voice, we are overwhelmed. We believe that the rendition of Kirtan in a passionate voice would excite any Bengali heart. In painting or sculpture too, some themes with hints of traditional gods or goddesses move us. Dance forms attract us, especially Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, etc. These forms create such appeals sometimes that we feel moved. This sort of attitude would never get the approval of any Muslim who is a pure religious practitioner. So when we say that we are not atheist, nor anti-Islam, on the contrary we have a pride in those glorious chapters of Islamic history because of our birth into Muslim families, then our own religious purists cannot accept these words as true.

In all religions of the world, there are certain fundamental issues which demand unconditional trust or blind faith, or one is not regarded as a true religious person. Perhaps because of this, pure Muslims do not want to accept skeptics like us as one of them, though we were born into their families. Though we are not really worthy Muslims from the perspective of religious faith, we outwardly represent the Muslim society according to the tradition of ascertaining the identities of our countries' citizens. Because there is no other recognized society for people like us who are skeptics and are indifferent to religious practice of the establishment.

Needless to say, the Hindu society has more people who have a similar mental makeup. When we socialize with them we notice that the question of whether we are Hindus or Muslims becomes easily secondary. We frankly discuss the faults and vices, good and bad elements of all societies, irrespective of religion, cast, or creed. We do not hesitate to strongly criticize the Hindus, because we are Muslims. Hindu friends, too, at least do not feel any caution in criticizing strongly the Muslims in front of us.

But when these criticisms spill over outside the circle of our handful of friends, then an uneasy social reaction can be noticed. We, the so-called Muslims, are directly branded by the Hindus as communal. On the other hand, the Muslims start doubting our Hindu friends' liberalism and turn more ruthless toward us because we belong to their own society. These angry Muslims put a label on our foreheads saying that "we are the touts of the Hindus always hankering after their mercy." There is no other option but to feel a pain in this predicament. Because we do truly hate from our core to become "communal" and "tout." We only want freedom of conscience. We want to describe openly the good as good and the bad as bad according to our free judgement. And we want to express our minds' doubts, conflicts, hesitations, etc., without any fear of being harassed.

The study of Islamic history shows that all along there was a tradition of free rationalist thinking among the Muslims. Any knowledgeable person would know that such a rationalist group at the beginning of the Islamic civilization was the "Mutajela." In the modern era too, people like Sir Syed Ahmed, Kazi Abdul Odud preferred to call themselves "neo-Mutajelaists." These rationalist pro-Mutajela persons were never in favor of following the Shariat blindly. If we observe the mental attitude of a large section of intellectuals in neighboring Bangladesh, we would notice that most of them are the disciples of Kazi Abdul Odud or "neo-Mutajelaists."

Mostly inspired by their example, we thought that there should be some respite for those unjustly divorced women in our present society of insecure employment and earning. If this warrants new interpretation and change of the Shariat, it should be carried out. This sort of thought is naturally stimulated by so much suffering of many helpless women.

But our thoughts were not valued. The nation's political leaders put emphasis on those persons' opinions who do not want to redress the sufferings of these unjustly divorced women. They think about elections. In India, a new law has been passed to stop the tradition of using the criminal code to remedy injustices to the Muslim women. The flag-bearers of orthodoxy are happy about it, but the so-called secular heads of the country have blackened our faces.

In this regard, we do not find any difference between the leftist and the rightist leaders. It is known to all that the resignation of a certain central minister in protest against the passing of a bill that goes against the interests of Muslim women were not given proper attention to please the standard-bearers of orthodoxy. I cannot help mentioning in this context the pain of one senior leftist leader. He had the foresight of an experienced lawyer and tried at that time to keep the criminal code in force to lessen the sufferings of these unjustly divorced Muslim women. He was instrumental in arranging his own party's organized Muslim section to raise a protest against making this new law. But his efforts did not get any support from the leaders of the big Marxist party. Everybody knew that the politics of election is at the root of this attitude.

Being unable to do any substantial work, most of the so-called secular politicians tried their best to please this anti-progressive standard-bearers of orthodoxy so that they could attract more votes than their rival candidates. In reality, there could be seen a latent competition among the so-called leftist and the rightist secular parties in this regard. This can be described as process of appeasement, though especially Muslims have nothing to gain in cash from this.

Truly speaking, most of the political leadership seems not to want the Muslim society to become free from religious orthodoxy. If progressive thoughts spread

among them, they become conscious, that they understand their own welfare. Especially those leftist and non-leftist leadership

'Westernized Elite' Said Alienated From Indian Ethos

93AS0691H Bombay SUNDAY OBSERVER in English
28 Mar 93 p 13

[Article by M.V. Kamath: "Westernized Elite Fail to Know Indian Ethos"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] One of the curious and unexplained phenomena of our age and times is the instantaneous hatred of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] and Hinduism in general that one notices among our 'intellectuals' who are too well-known to be named. Why are they so allergic to the BJP? Why does the very mention of Hinduism arouse negative feelings in their hearts? They are, let it be stated here and now, to a man, born Hindu though it may be aeons since they last visited a temple or accepted 'prasad' from a priest. They cannot be ignorant of what Hinduism stands for though they may not necessarily pass a test on the Upanishads and the Gita. One presumes, literate as they must be, that they have read the Gita and have a nodding acquaintance with at least some of the major Upanishads. One further presumes that their womenfolk, at least, perform at some time or other a few rituals and that, therefore, there is in their separate homes an awareness of what passes for Hinduism. Granting all that, one wonders why there is an appreciable rise in their blood is mentioned. What are they ashamed of?

One answer has been provided by an American sociologist, Matthew A. Cook, in a paper submitted as an 'EAP Independent Study Project' that may or may not give a clue to the behavior and responses of some of our Hindu westernized 'elite', but is nevertheless significant. According to Cook, the defining of the BJP as espousing fundamentalist and theocratic philosophies when analyzed with binary or dialectic theory, "begins to look suspiciously like an incarnation of Edward Salid's concept of Orientalism." Cook noted that "the branding of the BJP as Nazis seems to be the historical theme of 'Oriental despotism' rearing its head in the modern discourse of journalism."

Cook said that when he arrived in India he was shocked to find that the Indo-Anglian press was saying the same things as the accounts he read back home in the United States. The Hindu westernized 'elite' had the same mind-set as its purely western counterpart. The two thought alike Anglicization—or westernization—had succeeded beyond the dreams of Macaulay to the point, in the words of Bipin Chandra Pal, that "in mind and manners (the westernized Indian) was as much an Englishman as any Englishman." No greater tragedy could happen to India.

The Hindu westernized 'elite'—a cumbersome description but not the less accurate has opted out of Hindu

society and is even ashamed of it and would like, wherever possible, to be distanced from it. Hence the derogatory references to 'trishul-wielding' sadhus and sants, the sense of repugnance at anything suggestive of Hinduism and unease of this crowd in the midst of contemporary middle class Hindu society. Notes Cook: "The positions from which Indian and 'Western' journalists write, overlap... Both, by labeling the BJP 'fundamentalist' and 'Nazi' are invoking the themes of 'Orientalism' and 'Oriental despotism'. Both are exposed to these themes about the 'East' through education in similar, if not the exact same, institutions and, in many cases, contact with much the same media. Therefore, it is not surprising to find themes traditionally found in western discourses popping up in Indian journalism too."

Cook wrote that he was in agreement with Walter K. Anderson who, in his book 'The Brotherhood in Saffron', said: "There are significant differences with the European expressions of fascism that should caution one to handle the comparison (between European fascism and the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh]) carefully." Anderson had noted that the RSS rejected the fascist concept that the national will is embodied in one leader and the RSS leaders were not particularly charismatic nor did the RSS seek "to destroy or to seize control of all existing centers of socio-political and economic power like fascists do."

Cook himself points out that if 'Hindu' is an inclusive term, referring to the entire cultural mosaic of modern day India "then the correlation between the BJP and the Nazi Party in Germany which revolves around the exclusion and persecution of minority groups (be they Jews or Muslims) is baseless." After all, Cook wants to know "how many Jews were members of the Third Reich, not to mention its general secretary?"

In his seminal paper Cook notes that "the description of the BJP as the Nazi Party of India becomes even more questionable when the political philosophy of the two groups are further examined." The Nazi political philosophy was what could be called 'unity without diversity.' Fascists historically desired cultural uniformity. But the BJP did not actively seek the establishment of a pan-Indian language. And, noted Cook, "The BJP/Nazi correlations fails to hold when examining the BJP's philosophy concerning the relationship between the Center (or federal) and state governments. The BJP, unlike the fascist, does not support the centralization of government power."

All this, any thinking individual would say, is elementary and does not need profound elucidation. And yet, how come that some, at least, of our 'intellectuals' find it necessary to justify their hatred of Hinduism by ceaselessly attacking the BJP as Nazi? What is it that alienates them from Hindu society—the Hindu society not of the 'elite' that guzzles scotch at the elite clubs whether in Delhi, Calcutta, Madras or Bombay, but of that society which, for example, stands in a queue for long hours in

front of the Siddhi Vinayak Temple in Bombay or attends an 'aarti' in the temples of Mylapore?

One suspects that there is a crisis of understanding. One section of Hindu society—luckily an infinitesimally small section—does not understand the other, more rooted in the Indian (shall we call it 'Hindu') tradition. But the trouble is that the small section wields immense power through the media, and has the capacity to confuse and confound the rest with its virulent anti-Hindu stand, shorn of all logic and sense of direction. The hatred of Hinduism spread by this minuscule minority is unbelievable, and what is more, pitiable. Even worse is its assertion of intellectual superiority that would be amusing were it not so misleading.

Somewhere in its subconscious the westernized Hindu 'elite' has come to confuse in the best style of western understanding of India, the words 'oriental' with the 'East' East with 'India', 'India' with 'Hinduism,' 'Hinduism' with 'despotism' and 'despotism' with the BJP. Romila Thapar in her article "Interpretations of Ancient Indian History" once argued that history texts in the past had conceptualized the Indian political system as being despotic and the historian/anthropologist Ronald Inden in 'Imagining India' similarly had argued that 'despotism' was the 'leit motif' found in discourses on the 'East'.

Notes Cook: "The same 'leit motif' occurs in journalistic accounts of the BJP, expressed through metaphors that invoke Hitler and the actions of the Nazi Party. History has shown that the Nazi Party and Hitler fit Inden's definition of despotism, despite being 'western'. By correlating the BJP and Nazism, the press is not-so-subtly hinting that the former is despotic in nature. It is in this manner that the BJP becomes a contemporary incarnation of the old theme of 'Oriental despotism.'

But surely there is more to the westernized Hindu elite's hatred of Hinduism than mere transference of thought. Can it be that the BJP, by compelling this minority to re-examine its own faith, has made it uncomfortable for it to continue with its intellectual hedonism and thereby shamed it? Too westernized to retract gracefully, too self-indulgent to admit to being in the wrong, the elite's instinctive reaction to challenges from the BJP is to indulge in abuse which excuses it from doing serious thinking on its own. It is a pathetic situation.

It is the elite that sustains the thinking of the likes of V.S. Naipaul who takes infinite delight in running down India in season and out. The worst aspects of what passes for Hinduism are taken to stand for Hinduism as a whole and then damned, as in the case of a recent writer in the Calcutta-based 'The Telegraph' who wrote to say that he was ashamed of being a Hindu because of what Manu had laid down in his 'smrutis'. And because of two or three cases of 'sati' that had occurred in recent years, Indian journalism is singularly blessed with such mules without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity.

The worst part of it all is that elite has to be exposed for what it is: a conglomeration of shallow men who think that self-Swami Vivekananda at the BJP at the slightest provocation in order to justify their own venom.

Somewhere down the line this elite has to be exposed for what it is: a conglomeration of shallow men who think that self-flagellation is co-terminous with secularism and who desperately seek the plaudits of the minority in their search for intellectual legitimacy. It is a sad and pathetic lot that one supposes one had to live with, the better to understand and appreciate the sheer catholicity of Hinduism and the Hindu's capacity for forgiveness.

Hindutva Defended Against Charges of Fundamentalism

93AS0734E New Delhi ORGANISER in English
28 Mar 93 pp 9, 14

[Article by Bhai Mahavir: "On the Fundamentalism of Hindus"; italicized words as published]

[Excerpt] Two millennia and five decades ago there appeared in this hoary land an extraordinary man. Not much is known of his ancestry or upbringing. What is known is that he faced and defeated the Shaka hordes from Central Asia which had virtually gobbled up a third of India and were poised for a final overrun. This youth who drove out and chased them right up to river Oxus became a symbol of national resurgence and reassertion of our challenged glory.

Vikram's prowess in battle was matched by his brilliance as an administrator, wisdom as a dispenser of justice and kind-heartedness as a father to his subjects. So much so that his throne came to be believed as gifted with mystical power which could transform a raw illiterate lad into a paragon of wisdom. A grateful people conferred upon him a singular honour of naming an era after his name to commemorate the reassertion of national prestige. Subsequently his name itself became an honorific title which emperors aspired for. The era, it is believed, was timed to begin the same day of the year as Ram, Rajya was established and Yudhishthira ascended the throne with Shri Krishna's divine blessing.

Only a nation with some pride in its past achievements can hope to win laurels in the future. It would have been in the fitness of things if at least after attaining freedom we had adopted the Vikram era for our national calendar and the Hindu new year day had been celebrated with due gaiety. It would have rejuvenated our sinking spirits to recall that even in remote past we overcame challenges which wiped out many a civilization. It would have made more sense than the crazy scenes and hullabaloo at our hotel bars in bidding good bye to a year and welcoming the next. One often wonders about its significance: is the sun that rises on the 1st of January any different from the one that sets on the earlier evening? Christmas and New Year have significance for Christians. But what is in it for us who boast of a much older and more glorious civilization? Can it be a matter for

song and dance to admit (by implication at least) that we never had any concept of a calendar or a new year?

The examples of a galaxy of such heroes as Vikramaditya did indeed sustain us through eight centuries of barbarous attacks on our freedom and culture. The Islamic hurricane which swept people after people into abject cultural annihilation utterly failed to overawe this land. "India on the eve of the Muslim invasions," says Prof. S. R. Sharma, "was both weak and unconquerable. She was politically most vulnerable but culturally all but impregnable" (*Crescent in India*). A peculiar quirk of our recent history, however, virtually derailed our thought process. During the struggle for Independence from British rule, we strove for putting up a united Hindu-Muslim front. This natural anxiety, however, made us oblivious of the essential nature of the philosophy which had brought over us the onslaught of horde after horde without any provocation. It is not that our scholars had failed to warn us, rather, we failed to pay heed to them.

Is it anything but an irony that what was (or had to be) adopted as a policy of compulsion for facing a third party, became such an article of faith with us that we started questioning our own claim to nationhood. We inflicted on ourselves a paralysing bane: Are we a nation at all? It is a worse pity that the so-called intellectuals and more especially the self-proclaimed progressives among them have made it their business to prove that we are not a nation. At the most we are one in the making and can become one only when we disown the essentials of our Hindutva and prove that we have more of a foreign content. This means we have to refuse to acknowledge existence till very recent times of any attributes of nationhood: community feeling, common cultural values, shared travails and ambitions, and a deep attachment to a distinct geographical unit as Motherland, etc. On the contrary we have to make a conscious effort to prove that in the past we were all the time fighting among ourselves, divided in numerous castes and classes and having little to boast of by way of cultural attainments.

The nation we were supposed to be becoming was to be born after Hindu-Muslim unity was attained. At least Gandhiji emphasized this no end and spared no pains to help in attaining it. And what was the type of colleagues he acquired in this experiment. Persons like Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. In Azad, *Islam and Nationalism* published by the infamous Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee. Z. A. Ansari elucidates Azad's concept of National Integration. "His nationalism was uncompromisingly Islamic implying non-cooperation with non-Muslims including the British."

In an article on September 8, 1912 Azad says: "It is regrettable that Muslims (of today) have not seen Islam at its zenith. If they had, they would not be bowing their heads in subjection to the Hindus..."

He declared unequivocally that the aid of his *Weekly Al Hilal* was to exhort Muslims to follow the *Book of Allah*

and the *Shariat* of the Prophet. Answering a question if Muslims should join non-Muslims in political matters he replied: "Islam is so exalted a religion that its followers are not constricted to ape the Hindus for the formulation of their political policies."

Again, "non-Muslims can, like other nations revive their self-awareness on the basis of secular nationalism but it is indeed not possible for Muslims." Up to 1920 he used to consider himself a citizen of the International Brotherhood which was then known as the "The Turkish Khilafat." He was anti-British mainly because he thought the "Britishers were the enemy of Islam and Muslims."

After the abolition of Caliphate by the Allies, Muslims were practically wild with rage. "The Maulana wanted to take advantage of the Khilafat movement in order to bring Muslims and Hindus together... to fight... against rule." For this he took the consent of Gandhiji who in fury persuaded the Congress to make Khilafat demand a part of national demand.

"Though Azad was successful in bringing Hindus and Muslims together, the effort was not based on the consideration of a common nationality (composite nationality). To Azad it was a temporary cooperation in order to attain the freedom and drive the Britishers out of the country...."

"...While addressing a Provincial Assembly of Khilafat movement at Agra on 25th October 1921 he referred to Hindu-Muslim cooperation as the covenant of the Prophet Mohammad entered between Muslims and other residents of Medina..."

But what was the practical impact of this treaty? As Koenraad Elst has explained, "...within a few years, two of the Jewish clans in Medina had been chased away, and the third clan had been massacred to the last man.... Maulana Azad could mention Mohammeds treaty with the Jews as a model for Hindu-Muslim cooperation only because he was confident that few Hindus were aware of the end of the story, and that better informed Hindus honoured a kind of taboo on criticism of Islam and its Prophet." (*Negationism in India*, p. 33).

What was there in this covenant of Mohammed which so enchanted Gandhiji that he persisted in his efforts to placate the Muslims by conceding their ever multiplying demands from Communal Award (which incorporated virtually all their communal demands enlisted in the Delhi Proposals of 1927 and Jinnah's 14 Points of 1929) via blank cheque and parity, right up to Partition? The Congress did not oppose any of the concessions given by the British government to them for fear of forfeiting their non-existent support. The moderate Azad, as Congress president and nationalist Muslim opposed Pakistan not because he rejected the concept of a Muslim state but because he aspired to make the whole of India one. He was no less a believer in the notion of *Darul Islam* than the Deoband ideologues. Whatever change was apparent in his attitude regarding cooperation with Hindus could

not have been deep-rooted; it was caused by a visit to Arab countries (after the collapse of Khilafat) and a glimpse of the "geographicalism" he saw there.

How far those countries have risen above their "Islamic nationalism" even seven decades after that need not detain us here. Our intellectual snobs basking in the patronage of official media persist in pouring out sanctimonious humbug in the same vein. Khushwant Singh, for example, referring to the question of the singing of *Vande Mataram* or *Jana Gana Mana* at the start of a Parliamentary session disapproved of both and that for the prodigious reason that he understood neither! One would consider this to be so much the worse for the wizard rather than for the anthems. But there was some more to it. He said he preferred Iqbal's:—"Sare jahan se achchha Hindostan hamara." A man minting money and rolling in luxury through the jugglery of words can perhaps be excused for limiting his vision to wordy superficiality. But the fate of nations is not decided by sheer verbosity or lack of it. It is men of inspiration, dedication and sacrifice that make or mar a nation and lots of such men were inspired by *Vande Mataram* alone. What inspirations does one get from a man who pens that line and then sets out to make that "best country of the world" the bloodiest and the most problem ridden? Iqbal was the father of Pakistan. He launched the ideal in 1930 which was adopted by the Muslim League ten years later. It was as a concession to the claims of democratic thought that Iqbal reconciled himself to a piece thereof otherwise he had proclaimed: "All land belongs to Muslims, because it belongs to their God." Khushwant Singh or someone else out of the secular tribe could consider suggesting for our national anthem another line from the same Mohammad Iqbal:

"Muslims hain hum watan hai sara jahan hamara." It is not that the leftists and pseudo-secularists are unaware of the concept of nationhood upheld by great nationalists whose shelter they have suddenly started seeking. Romila Thapar, one of the foremost among them quotes three such Titans in her *The Past and Prejudice*.

Aurobindo describes nationalism as: "...not a mere political programme, nationalism is religion that has come from God... When it is said that India shall expand and extend itself, it is the *sanatanadharma* that shall expand and extend itself over the world.

"One of the characters in Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novel *Anandmath* explains that British rule in India was predestined in order that pristine power of Hinduism be born."

Swami Vivekananda said "this is the great ideal before us and everyone must be ready for it—the conquest of the whole world by India... Up India and conquer the world by your spirituality... we must go out, we must conquer the world through spirituality and philosophy..."

But there is none so blind as those who refuse to see.

Apart from the egoistic pleasure of sitting in judgement one wonders if these pseudo-secularists honestly believe in what they are alleging while talking of Hindu fundamentalism. Have they really lost the prudence to distinguish chalk from cheese? They would do well to ponder over the challenge Vivekananda threw to the world to show one instance in the vast Sanskrit literature where it is laid down that only Hindu will attain salvation.

In *Recovery of Faith*, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has given the following quotations about Christianity, the other religion [passage omitted]

Commentary Explores Basics of Dissension

93AS0724A Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 23 Mar 93
p 6

[Analysis by Dr. M.S. Udayamurthi: "Thoughts of Dissension: What Are The Underlying Causes?"]

[Text] Whenever there is a problem, such as violence or an uprising anywhere, we immediately suppress it with the help of the police and the army. Beyond that we do not care to investigate why this uprising started in the first place. We do not take any interest in determining the underlying reason for this violent eruption. We do not try to remove the root cause-grievance for this outburst of violence.

Recently in the United States in the Watts section of the city of Los Angeles, where Negroes live, this urban area was burned. Immediately, the authorities began to investigate the underlying reason for the fire. Relief measures were immediately undertaken.

We can examine three important problems in our country. They are: (1) there are divisive forces operating in our country; (2) currently the religious passions that have flared up in the country; (3) the basis for our day-to-day life, the economic condition.

In the first place, we find in Kashmir, Punjab, and Assam extraordinary violence is widespread. Guerrilla warfare is on. With foreign aid and training, they vigorously operate, kidnap officials, plant bombs in crowded shopping areas, and buses carrying a full load of people are being burned. People go to other states as refugees. For the past four or five years this has been going on.

The people of Kashmir do not call themselves Indians.

On Independence Day celebration they hoist the national flag of Pakistan. They have a special law for their state which states that no person belonging to other states can buy any landed property in the state. In short, they demand a separate nation for themselves. They get help from Pakistan. The struggle for a separate nation was for so long made only by a minority. It has become a demand accepted by a large number of people. For a small state like Kashmir, we spend an enormous amount of money. We struggle in the United Nations to survive

the pressure tactics adopted by the Muslim nations joining hands against India.

In Punjab they demand a separate nation—Khalistan. They are angry that they have not been treated justly in the matter of their capital city, river water supply, and certain other matters. In the whole of the Indian Union, Punjab is the state with the largest amount of revenue. They think, as a separate nation, they would be well off economically and in facilities. That is why they are waging a war with guns.

Just like Punjab, there has been a demand for a separate nation in the state of Assam. This began just as a student's protest. People from other states were pouring into Assam for settling down permanently and the Assamese felt their job opportunities were snatched away. Hence to them, it was a life and death struggle.

In the same way, the Government of India's audacious attempt to impose Hindi on the Tamils has created fear and hatred among the people. They fear that their culture would be destroyed and rights taken away. Thus fear has been in their minds for so long, coming out openly sometimes. This fear drives some people to engage in violence in various places.

Even if for a moment we suppose that an uprising could be contained with the help of police and army, it may not last long, whichever side win.

Tamil saint Thiruvalluvar's words on diseases and symptoms are noteworthy. If there is a swelling in a part of the body, applying ointment on the area is just a temporary treatment. We have to find out what is the cause for the swelling and then only medication can be prescribed. The swelling is just an indication, a messenger conveying that something is wrong somewhere.

But we do not worry about the basic reason. What is the underlying cause?

In the Soviet Union now there is no communist rule. So many of its provinces have fallen out of the union and became independent countries. So also the countries under the domination of the Soviets. East Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia have become independent nations and have thrown out communism. In the case of Yugoslavia, today there is a big power struggle going on to divide the country into three small nations.

Throughout the world, in a given period of time, sometimes one and the same idea is used to inspire people. We find this same kind of thing in our country, too.

The reason for this is that in India we do not have a broad-based federal setup. All the powers are concentrated in the hands of the Central Government in New Delhi. We have to depend on the Center for everything. To start a new industry, a license has to be obtained from Delhi. The Central Government may decline to issue a passport to a chief minister of a state when he or she desires to visit foreign countries. In the name of income tax all the money goes to Delhi and comes back to the

states in the name of five-year plans. The Central Government has the power to dissolve state governments, citing some reason or other. In the past 25 years, Tamil Nadu has not been given its just due of new industries and this has caused backwardness. Scholar Anna's (C.N. Annadurai) words are memorable on this issue. He said, "The cremation grounds belong to the state government but not the mineral wealth that lies beneath them." Who needs the cremation grounds, its ashes and bones? We actually need the minerals.

Our nation is made up of so many people speaking so many different languages, different cultures and varied ways of life—an amalgam, to put it precisely. These separate entities should be united just like a garland of flowers, giving to each one of them due importance and respect. Only then can the unity in diversity, of which the nationalists often speak, can become a reality. On the contrary what are they doing?

The majority of Hindi-speaking people thought that Hindi would be spoken widely, used in religious prayers, and would be fully immersed in cultural fields. With this good intention, they tried to bring about unification. They, by force of circumstance, adhered to the policy that gave rise to the unexpected upheavals against the imposition of Hindi in Tamil Nadu in 1965. The agitations have given the people bone-chilling experience and a fear that we do not have the basic protection here.

Only when this is fully realized can India be saved. Here there is no guarantee of an individual's culture. In Tamil Nadu, this fear is reflected in the matter of the language; in Kashmir, it is religion. In Punjab the grievance that justice has not been done to Punjab whereas, Haryana was treated nicely, has grown so much that [it] has resulted in the demand for a separate nation.

Likewise in Assam, people fear that "one day we may not be here, because people from other states will become rulers of our state." This kind of fear has been growing so much for so long that it has brought about the current situation.

Psychologist Maslo says that it is essential that every one have a basic sense, instinct that "I have security here." Just as food is a basic necessity, so, also, is security for the well-being of mankind.

We may argue that it is not right to say there is no sense of security here. But we have to understand how the affected people view it, and only from that viewpoint comes the sense of security.

Those people have been talking, complaining about their grievances, and appealing to the authorities, but nothing has happened. Out of this frustration they concluded that "no justice is possible here;" this complex of fear produces so many aftereffects. In other words, the after-effect becomes far away from the realm of reasoning, a state of mind, full of emotion. We should have corrected this fear earlier, identifying this aspect. We failed in this, the reason being we were careless about it.

We are all Indians. We are going to make it as one country. This kind of feeling should have come naturally to the people in Delhi. In the course of time, this should have happened and certainly it will happen. What is it we see today? They seem to be beating it with a stick to make the fruit ripe. Our leaders' words and actions are not understandable at all. This state of affairs is not good for our country at all.

A good thing, in the normal course, could have happened. The leaders, in their haste and arrogance, diverted it in a different direction.

The great need for our country at the moment is a broad-based federation, modeled after the setup we see today in Russia and the east European countries. It is a federal political system.

The universe—the earth—revolves alone on its own, as well as in unison with the sun and the moon, at the same time. Just like this we need to act alone and also jointly. In our country we have people in so many walks of life—such as musicians, scientists, spiritualists, and movie stars. Is it possible to transform everybody into musicians, scientists, spiritualists? It would be sheer stupidity. Just like this, it would be stupidity not to understand the state of the mind, the mental make-up of the varied languages and cultures. We feel that our leaders refuse to understand and realize this aspect.

It would be mere madness if one were to function on the basis of brutal majority. Equality, in fact, is a reality, and it should be respected. Truths of lasting nature alone could bring forth to us a permanent peace and prosperity. This will pave the way for bringing out in full measure the constructive talents in every individual.

In the United States today there may be many shortcomings. When we observe the country from abroad, we may evaluate it on the basis of divorces, low mortality, from our own standards. Indira Gandhi once asked, "Are there not scandals in America?" Forgetting that in America, percentage wise, the rate of scandals is only two to five, we tend to justify that scandals and irregularities are everywhere in the world.

More than anything else, in America every individual enjoys personal freedoms. The creative talents of every person have a great scope to develop fully, not only for their own good, but also for the good of his country. There are people of many races and religions; also many states. Individualism is respected there.

The direct expansion of this idea is the individualism of the states and the rights of the states, which is precisely expressed in the term decentralization.

In our country there are a dearth of erudite scholars, capable administrators. Yet, why do we refuse to find out the root cause for the problems? We refuse to think nor talk about it. Why they refuse to come forward to find the answers, I cannot comprehend.

Today's situation is only the result of yesterday's politics. The government functioned in utter disregard of individualism and even worked against it. In our Union of States, the powers with the Central Government are enormous. We should realize that individualism has a relationship. There should be a justifiable balance between them. We must realize it, we should search for it, and we will certainly achieve it.

National Convention: Rao Reiterates Secularism

93AS0724C Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 28 Mar 93
p 7

[Rao: "We Shall Stop Religious Intervention in State Affairs by Legislative Means"]

[Text] Surajkund, March 27—Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao vowed today that through legislation, he will prevent any misuse of religion for political ends. He added that the government has been considering legislation to prevent misuse of religion for political ends. The government will make full use of all its power in the matter. He gave assurances that this will be done without interfering with the religious freedoms guaranteed to every individual by our Constitution. At a critical juncture, all of us should give full cooperation to protect our country.

Inaugurating the two-day convention of the All India Congress Committee at Surajkund, Narasimha Rao made these observations.

He also revealed a two-point plan to prevent misuse of religion for political gains and to fight against communalism. He also said:

"We fully consider the misuse of religion for political gains. It seems possible to bring in necessary legislative articles to prevent the misuse.

"An individual's right to practice a religion of his or her choice is well protected by various clauses in the Constitution. But it does not give anybody any right to exploit the religion or the religious institutions for political gains. The Constitution does not prohibit in any way government bodies from bringing about regulations in this regard. I am making this statement with a great sense of responsibility after consultations with law and constitutional experts and experts.

"In this complex situation today, more than the political problems, it is a subject of great importance that we should at the national level develop a consensus in the matter of secularism. Some people are claiming that they alone adhere to secularism and indulge in self-praise. All these things will not benefit anybody."

Prime Minister Rao also emphasized that the concept of secularism, which remains with us as a policy, should be effectively translated to the people as a matter of faith, as a way of life. We should prove it by leading a secular life.

Strong Condemnation of BJP

Speaking on the secularism issue, Prime Minister Rao made a frontal attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. Those who speak so vigorously on secularism do not have any sincerity at all. Except us—the Congress—none has adhered to the policy of secularism.

Prime Minister further said: "The BJP has been using religion as weapon to capture political power. Those who talk so much about Hinduism should first adhere to its tenants. In fact the BJP does not view Hinduism as the religion that gives guidance to its followers. On the contrary they look upon it as a means to gain political power. The BJP's claim to secularism is meaningless."

So many other parties also use religion for political gains, he added, but he did not name those parties.

At whatever price, we should prevent mixing religion with politics. It is the duty of congressmen to work for this cause, Narasimha Rao emphasized.

A Two-Point Campaign To Fight Communalism

The two-point campaign calls for identifying the forces that mix religion with politics and expose them in the parliament and also weaken those evil forces through administrative and legal measures and also by amending the Constitution. The Prime Minister made an appeal to the party workers to fight communalism with this campaign.

"To us this kind of effort is nothing new; from the early days of our freedom struggle, the Congress Party has been vigorously engaged in fighting the communal forces. With the same vigor and enthusiasm, we should now wage a war against them.

A massive campaign is needed with processions, Pada yatras (travel by walking) production of publicity materials and seminars to educate the public on the importance of secularism.

Narasimha Rao also said: "The concept of secularism is not imported from any foreign country; nor was it borrowed from other concepts. It is not against our Indian culture or tradition. It is not imposed on us by anybody. A virulent type of anti-Congress propaganda has been carried out, depicting secularism of the Congress Party's secularism as pseudosecularism. We have now to counter the mischievous propaganda at all levels. The concept of secularism evolved in our own soil. It is an integral part of our Indian cultural tradition. All these facts must be explained to the people living even in the remote corners of the country."

The prime minister also referred to the criticism about Article 370 of our Constitution granting special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, also the issue like uniform civil code and the Minorities Commission. He emphasized that at the present critical juncture, these are indeed very essential for the good of our country.

Agreement on Jharkhand Autonomous Territory

93AS0741A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 22 Mar 93 pp 1, 30

[Article by Janak Singh: "Pact on Jharkhand Reached"]

[Text] New Delhi, March 21. A broad agreement has been reached on the formation of a Jharkhand Swashashi Kshetra (Jharkhand autonomous territory), with a view to ending the 70-year-old agitation for the formation of a separate tribal homeland, following talks between the Center and representatives of the 14-party Jharkhand Rajya Sarwadaliya Sangharsh Samiti.

After over 20 rounds of talks with the minister for internal security, Mr. Rajesh Pilot, Jharkhand leaders have reportedly agreed to the formula, which envisages the formation of an elected council for the tribal region with financial and administrative powers that are greater than that of the Bodoland council and according the tribal territory the status of a kind of sub-state within Bihar.

Jharkhand leaders are likely to meet the prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, shortly to express their satisfaction with the formula, which has been reportedly hammered out in consultation with representatives of the Bihar government. Barring unforeseen problems, a tripartite agreement involving the Center, the state government, and the leaders of the 14-party Sangharsh Samiti, may be signed soon to bring to an end the economic blockade in Bihar's mineral-rich areas that entered the fifth day today.

Under the provisions of the formula worked out to meet tribal aspirations without resorting to geographical division of Bihar, the proposed Jharkhand territory will have an elected council comprising 125 members. The leader of the majority party in the council will be designated as chief executive counselor (CEC). Besides, there will be a deputy chief executive counselor. The CEC will constitute his cabinet or the executive council which will run the administration of the territory.

The council will have more or less complete financial and administrative autonomy with powers to frame laws for the Jharkhand territory comprising the tribal districts of Ranchi, Lohardagga, Gumla, East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Chhatra, Hazaribagh, Giridih, Dhanbad, Bokaro, Deogarh, Godda, Sahibganj, and Dumka. The council will have powers to frame laws on 50 subjects in the state and concurrent list, including irrigation, education, excise, law and order, revenue, power, mines and minerals.

Regarding the most controversial issue of revenue-sharing between the Bihar government and the Jharkhand territory, it was decided that guidelines in this regard would be laid out by the Center in consultation with the two parties. The Center's recommendations will be binding on both the parties. In case of dispute over any issue, the matter will be referred to the Bihar

governor for adjudication. He will also be the governor of the tribal territory. The comptroller and auditor-general of India will audit the tribal territory's account, and his report will be laid annually on the table of the Bihar assembly.

The assembly will continue to have members as now from the tribal region until the tribal territory is transformed into a full-fledged state after some time. While Bihar assembly members will continue to be elected as before, roughly two blocks will elect a member for the proposed council for the Jharkhand region. An officer of the rank of additional chief secretary will be the chief secretary of the tribal territory and shall be ex-officio chief administrator of this area. Similarly, an officer of the rank of additional director-general of police will head the police department of the new region.

The JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha] president, Mr. Shibu Soren, and the Congress MLC [member of Legislative Council] from Ranchi, Mr. Gyan Ranjan, who has been spearheading the campaign for a separate homeland for tribals, said that, though the proposed formula did not grant a full-fledged state status to the adivasi homeland, they and other leaders of the 14-party sangharsh samiti had agreed to it because they did not want to precipitate needless violence and destruction of government property and assets, taking place now because of the economic blockade.

They said it was incumbent on the Center to make the Bihar government agree to the formula and hasten a settlement. This would bring credit to the country, because the tribals would be getting their due in what has been declared by the UN international year of the indigenous (tribal) throughout the world.

The 14 parties, which constitute the sangharsh samiti, represent almost all political streams barring the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] now active in the tribal region. They include the Congress, the JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Jharkhand Liberation Front)], both factions of the Janata Dal, the All Jharkhand Students' Union, the Jharkhand Peoples' Party, the Sadans Vikas Parishad, and the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Surprisingly, the Jharkhand Party led by Mr. N.E. Horo, who was among the prominent leaders fighting for a separate tribal homeland, is not a part of the samiti. Mr. Horo maintains that the settlement, which would not include the tribal districts of West Bengal, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh, would not be acceptable to him.

But several tribal leaders who are now aligned with the state chief minister, Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav, have been reportedly supporting the demand for a separate tribal territory. For instance, Mr. Karamchand Bhagat, a state minister, has been reportedly going around in his constituency and urging his supporters to resort to the economic blockade, according to reports reaching here.

Even though tribal leaders have been agitating for the Jharkhand state for a long time, it gathered momentum only recently with the open espousal by Mr. Gyan

Ranjan, Mr. Sarfraz Ahmed, and several other Congress leaders. Notwithstanding strong opposition to the demand by the chief minister, the Center was pressured into considering it sympathetically possibly among other things on account of political considerations. Mr Ranjan reportedly told the Prime Minister that there was little hope for the ruling party in the area unless it identified itself with tribal aspirations.

PTI adds: Meanwhile, Jharkhand leaders today urged the Centre to immediately take some concrete measures for creating separate state for tribals.

In a joint statement here, they claimed the current economic blockade launched by them in south Bihar to press the demand for a separate Jharkhand state was "a grand success."

Criticising the "repressive measures" taken by the Laloo Yadav government to crush their movement, they charged it with making all efforts to turn up their peaceful movement into a violent one.

They said the movement had so far been peaceful and warned that the state government would be fully responsible if there was any untoward incident.

Nationwide Ramifications of All Hindi Program Feared

93AS0721B Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 25 Mar 93

[Editorial: "Is It Necessary?"]

[Text]

Is It At All Necessary?

All India Radio's announcement that Central Hindi New Division will be started as of 15 August 1993, will give rise to fears in the non-Hindi speaking areas and particularly in Tamil Nadu. Whatever the objective is for this move, the current use of English for news transmission will be progressively eliminated, and Hindi will eventually take its place. To get the news, non-Hindi speaking areas will have to be dependent on the Central Hindi News Division. All these moves will certainly not help in promoting the quality of news broadcasts.

This move, initiated by an official who is overly attached to Hindi, will bring about undesirable results. Is it all necessary at a juncture like this when the country is politically so full of tensions?

Lately, the country has been shaken very much by a series of violent events. In various parts of the country divisive forces are making headway in various degrees. Due to the wrong approaches in handling emotional issues such as religion, language, race, and areas, there are already so many grievances among the people. In a situation like this, is it at all necessary to bring in a new problem?

In every society, language is the symbol of the culture and as such an emotional and sensitive subject. In particular, the people of Tamil Nadu always have a justified sense of pride as Tamils. If only one could turn the pages of history, it would be abundantly clear that anti-Hindi agitations were not a mere problem of law and order but a challenge to the nation's Constitution itself.

The people of Tamil Nadu are already annoyed that Hindi programs are imposed on television screen. Recently Chief Minister Jayalalitha expressed her anger while speaking to the Legislative Assembly. DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] leader Karunanidhi, to promote and strengthen sentiments against Hindi domination, has convened a conference at Coimbatore. The Congressmen in Tamil Nadu cannot openly support their Central Government's stand in this matter. Also any party in the non-Hindi speaking areas that is desirous of promoting its interests, cannot support this move.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, who is a linguist, understands people's emotions regarding the language problem. Before the situation grows out of control he should order All India Radio to give up this thoughtless move.

Politicians Blamed for Lack of Police Discipline

93AS0691A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
25 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by N.S. Saksena: "Law and Order Scapegoats"; italicized words as published]

[Text] The people of India have many lessons to learn from the experiences of 1992-93. Especially in the realm of law and order. Drawing on four decades of service in the police force and in the light of the recent incidents in India I have come to a few conclusions on this issue. My conclusions are taken from the angle of a professional policeman. One thing I can say from the start, the events of the last four months can almost be described as a crash course in public awakening.

After the bomb blasts in Bombay on March 12 the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, assured Parliament the government would revamp the intelligence agencies as a consequence of their failure to anticipate the explosions. Practically all newspaper editorials labelled the intelligence agencies as inefficient. This is a wrong and premature assessment. The fault lies elsewhere.

The first indication of this can be had from the writings of Mr. B.N. Mullik who was director of the Intelligence Bureau [IB] between 1950 and 1964. He writes the bureau prepared election forecasts, advising Jawaharlal Nehru on every problem including the internal affairs of the Congress. A study of Mr. Mullik's three books makes it clear a good many of the problems he was asked to comment on had nothing to do with India's enemies,

internal or external. They had everything however to do with the opponents of the Congress.

What started in a mild manner under Nehru became an established norm under Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and other prime ministers. Thus the top echelons of the Intelligence Bureau became, and this is said without exaggeration, *ex officio* members of the Congress high command. Two senior bureau officers were rewarded with governorships as a result. They did not distinguish themselves in these assignments.

The Janata Party under Mr. Morarji Desai decided to put an end to the political exploitation of the IB and the Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI]. A committee was set up for this purpose with Mr. L.P. Singh as its head and Mr. D.P. Kohli, the first CBI director, as member. The two eminent administrators submitted a detailed report. But the government did not implement the recommendations. It was promptly forgotten when Indira Gandhi came to power for the second time in 1980.

It rests on the public, the media and the intelligentsia to agitate for its implementation. The CBI and IB have the best men from the Indian police service at their command. Their failure is not due to their inefficiency but because their energies are directed not at the enemies of the nation but those of the ruling party.

Criticism of police inaction in combating organised crime is also misguided. It is an established fact mafia gangs flourish because of ministerial support. The police never get the nod from the political executive to take action against them. The police is more than well aware of the existence of the mafia groups, their associates and hideouts. The instant political support for the criminal elements is withdrawn and the same police who seemed guilty to ineptitude and laxity are successful in apprehension.

In June 1991 when the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] assumed power in Uttar Pradesh it discovered areas like Noida, Ghaziabad, Meerut and Bulandshahar were virtually being run by criminal groups patronised by the previous government of Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. The new chief minister, Mr. Kalyan Singh, gave full freedom to the police to break this reign of terror. Within six months the gangs were eliminated. More than 200 mafia leaders and their associates were put behind bars.

Till the tragedy in Bombay occurred the police were not allowed to raid the sprawling empire of the city's underworld don, Mr. Ibrahim Dawood. He was, after all, the financier of several ministers. But once an inquiry was ordered, positive results were achieved within five days. The same goes true for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The moment political support was withdrawn after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination the group was eliminated from its bases in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

When Indira Gandhi came to power in 1980 she was a totally different political personality. Loyalty and political pliability were given prominence over competence in the selection of senior bureaucrats. However her senior advisors from the Indian administrative service and IPS [Indian Police Service] made a mess of the crises in Punjab, Kashmir and Assam. When sycophancy paid greater dividends, professional skill was quickly dispensed with.

Of late this trend has started in state administrations too. Nowadays a police chief is less likely to be a respected head of the force than a political puppet. The police force in some parts of the country revolted over this development but in vain. In many states civil servants have an exhaustive knowledge of chief ministers as well as those close to him politically. This knowledge is acquired through the expenditure of much valuable time that would be better used acquiring professional expertise.

The best proof of this lies in the happenings at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. Six IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officials signed affidavits to fulfil the conditions laid down by the Supreme Court regarding the Babri Masjid imbroglio. No police force in the world could have implemented this undertaking. Yet the director general of Uttar Pradesh police offered to resign if the Babri structure was damaged. The undertaking said kar sevaks would be allowed to do symbolic *kar seva* without any restriction on their numbers, no construction would be permitted and no damage would be done. Despite the chief minister's repeated assurances no bullets would be fired, the job was clearly impossible after 200,000 people had assembled at the site.

The Indian public is fed up with the pontifications of political leaders exhorting them to follow the teachings of a near two dozen leaders whose birthdays are celebrated with much fanfare. These are nothing but diversionary tactics aimed at concealing the politician's incompetence if not involvement. Instead of moral lectures concrete action in the form of arrests and prosecution of law breakers is what is needed.

The flabby nature of the criminal justice system also does not help matters much. Ayodhya was not the first scene of communalism. Vicious communal riots have taken place earlier also as in Bihar in 1964, Ahmedabad in 1969, Nellie in 1983 and the anti-Sikh carnage in the capital in 1984. The BJP was then not even a political force. But India's political leaders go on mouthing false history to explain events.

India's leaders are responsible for destroying the efficacy of the police force. Politicians have no right to reprimand policemen for custodial deaths, talk of recruiting Muslims in the force and making the police non-communal, speak of improving their training or accuse the intelligence agencies of failure. These are small links in a big chain. Follow the chain and you will find a politician at each end.

The recommendations of the national police commission should have been heeded. The entire police machinery needs to be rejuvenated and reformed. It needs to be made into a thoroughly professional unit that will no longer be the lapdog of the ruling party but a watchdog for the nation.

The media has an important role to play in this regard. They should prepare a list of half a dozen promises made by the prime minister and his colleagues and ask them every alternate month what became of them. India has not entered the danger zone yet, but it is skirting the edges of disaster. Mao Zedong had an earthy way of putting things but he made the point when he said thought without action was more useless than cowdung.

Meeting of Jayalalitha, Advani Detailed

93AS0691G New Delhi HINDUSTAN TIMES
in English 25 Mar 93 p 11

[Text] New Delhi: When Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] supremo Jayalalitha called on senior BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader L.K. Advani at his house some time back, a snack made out of lotus stem was in the sumptuous menu that his daughter Pratibha served the distinguished visitor.

Whether the lotus stem was a cue also, we do not know. However, Ms. Jayalalitha and Ms. Pratibha did discuss for some time the relative place of lotus stems and other things in the Tamil versus Sindhi cuisine.

The visitor from Tamil Nadu then moved over to the cultural significance of lotus in the Hindu outlook. And from there it was one step ahead of Jayalalitha to confess that she had great admiration for the leader of the opposition both as an individual and a political personality with a breadth of vision, an acute political comprehension and felicity in communication.

Advani also complimented her. Giving his own assessment he said that the fact that after being kept out of the party and later challenged by an array of forces ranged against her, she was readily accepted by the AIADMK, that she had the charismatic appeal after MGR [expansion not given], this and more raised the esteem about her political capabilities and personal qualities.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister did not fail to give vent to her growing disenchantment with the Congress and specially with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

In her assessment the Prime Minister wanted to assume the same role as that of Bangarappa (who was then chief minister of Karnataka) vis-a-vis the Central leadership of the Congress, particularly in regard to party resources.

The visitor left no doubt in the BJP leader's mind that she believed that Rao was definitely behind the impish pinpricks that the Janata Party leader Dr. Subramaniam Swamy was giving her in her own bailiwick.

The Tamil Nadu supremo was quite confident of facing an election again, if it came to that. It was not the Congress which gave her strength but it was she who had provided an umbrella to the Congress.

The two leaders did not at all discuss anything about a possible tie up between their two parties, though it was obvious to the BJP leader that the relationship between the AIADMK and the Congress could not last long. And Advani gave his assessment that it was the Jayalalitha factor which held to the total drubbing of the DMK in the last election.

That the two leaders were developing an understanding and appreciation of each other was evident in the talk. The talk did turn to religion, for instance, the great regard in which the Kanchi seer was held by the bulk of the people in Tamil Nadu.

Explaining the AIADMK attitude to religion, the Chief Minister said that she had also tried to curb the anti-religious sentiments within her party. At the same time she had incurred the wrath of some religious leaders when she sought to impose some reforms in temple administration and rites.

That led to Ayodhya. Jayalalitha did not hesitate to distance herself from the stand taken by the Congress. She gave what, according to her, was the general run of the feeling in the state. And said in Tamil what the common man was saying that there should be a temple on the spot.

According to BJP sources, even now there is no talk of any tie up between the two parties. Nor does the BJP want to force the pace on the AIADMK. After the historic summit, there have been contacts at the lower level.

Apart from mutual appreciation, there was some mutual criticism also in the talk. Advani wanted the Chief Minister to deal with the issue of corruption. Jayalalitha had to recall the campaign that a section of the press was carrying on against her.

Advani suggested that she be softer with the press. As for criticism, she was in the same boat as others in politics, not excluding himself.

Arjun Singh Seen Disruptive, Unlikely Prime Minister

93AS0691C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
26 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by S. Nihal Singh: "Challenger Who Lacks Punch"]

[Text] The intriguing question behind the high drama in the Congress party culminating in the marathon working committee session is why Mr. Arjun Singh is raising the stakes almost to the point of no return. It must be clear to him, as it is to everyone else, that for Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao to give up the party presidency under

the present circumstances would be the beginning of his political end, with a rival centre of power harassing him at every turn.

Mr. Singh's public challenge to Mr. Rao using every conceivable occasion must be ascribed to two factors. He feels there is little profit for him politically to go down with the leader in election to the four states once ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP]. Second, he seems to have come to the conclusion that there is enough depression and gloom in the Congress to strike a heroic posture to rescue the party.

The provocation for this new heightened challenge to Mr. Rao's position has been the planned session of the All India Congress Committee [AICC]. The proponents of the one man one post idea are, in the Congress code, gunning for the prime minister. Mr. Singh's problem is that in his last statement castigating Mr. Rao's performance as the party president he went too far. Most of his party colleagues recoiled from the nature of the attack. However, by the time the working committee meeting was concluded, they had managed to evolve a patchwork solution.

Mr. Singh has indeed left himself with few options. He either goes along with the bulk of the party which despite its unhappiness does not want to create a crisis. Since a crisis may lead to a split, thereby seriously affecting the party's chances of returning to power. Alternatively, he boldly leaves his ministerial office to pose a no holds barred challenge to Mr. Rao within the Congress or outside it.

One result of the working committee meeting finally succumbing to the traditional support to the leader is that it has damaged Mr. Singh's credibility. Given the nature of his last missive to the prime minister, he should have announced his resignation from the cabinet. That he chose not to do so places him in the familiar mould of the Congress leader, a person who does not take his battle to its logical conclusion.

However, the new crisis in the Congress does little credit to Mr. Rao and his party. Mr. Singh and others of his ilk could not have created the flutter they did had it not been for the perception, in large sections of the party, that the party president has been proved inadequate in discharging his double charge.

The Congress has faced many crises in the past, most significantly during Indira Gandhi's tenure. But the striking difference between the two splits she engineered and the present situation is that she was calling the shots, taking calculated risks. Mr. Rao, by contrast, is fending off challenges to hold on to power by the skin of his teeth.

The Congress, in effect, is a prisoner of its past and Mr. Rao's style of decision making does not suit the party's mores. But for the short Shastri interregnum, the Congress has been led by recognised leaders or, as in Rajiv Gandhi's case, a person living in the reflected glory of his lineage. Indira Gandhi had to win her spurs in 1969 to

prove that she was the boss. After her humiliating defeat in the post-Emergency elections she had to prove yet again she was the leader.

The very Congressmen who berated hereditary rule are today missing the smack of firm leadership. Mr. Rao's perceived weakness appears even more tragic in the face of the BJP's determined challenge to the Congress's traditional hold on power at the Centre. The post-Ayodhya riots and the bomb blasts in Bombay have served to deepen the gloom in the party.

In this situation elections to the four state assemblies towards the end of the year have acquired the character of a referendum on the Congress. If the party fares poorly in these states there would be immense pressure on Congressmen to seek a new leader in the hope of warding off the BJP's challenge in the next general election.

There are no accepted rules for replacing a leader in the Congress. Mr. Rao survives because the only person itching to occupy his seat is not acceptable to the majority in the parliamentary party. Mr. Sharad Pawar has, by his own admission, deferred his ambitions by two years unless a dramatic situation develops to persuade him to advance his schedule.

Unless Mr. Singh chooses to spring a surprise the Congress is destined to live in a twilight zone until the assembly elections in November. After the working committee's labours the AICC session at Surajkund has been robbed of much of its thunder and Congressmen will seek solace in such titillations as taking umbrage over aspersions cast on Rajiv Gandhi, with worthies such as Mr. K.K. Tiwari declaring their resolve to fast as their mark of protest.

An unintended comic element has always been part of the Congress culture. But the party's waning fortunes might lead to the birth of black humour, uncharacteristic though it has been of the Indian temperament. The working committee has still to resolve to move from mattresses spread on the floor to tables and chairs. The obvious discomfort the participants are subjected to perhaps has the effect of chastising them.

One way out of the crisis would be for Mr. Rao to advance his plans for holding elections in the four states. It seems unlikely the Congress will be able to perform miracles by November and early elections would have the merit of testing the BJP's strength on the ground. Besides, nothing concentrates Congressmen's minds as much as impending elections. After the squabbles over obtaining the party ticket are over their waking hours are taken up with performing a familiar drill with the sole aim of winning.

Mr. Rao perhaps saw himself as a modern day Chanakya and felt that despite indications to the contrary he would get the better of the BJP and its motley allies last December. His over-confidence led to the tragedy of the demolition of the Babri mosque. He chose not to resign

in atonement for this major political blunder, even as the country was convulsed with communal riots and deaths.

Worse still, when Bombay went up in flames witnessing a pogrom on Muslims Mr. Rao and the Congress chief minister of Maharashtra, Mr. Sudhakar Naik, seemed paralysed. Many died, more were rendered homeless. Thanks only to the offensives of Mr. Pawar's followers to remove Mr. Naik did the prime minister strike upon the formula of sending the defence minister back to his state. Mr. Pawar was, therefore, in the chief minister's seat when a third tragedy struck the country's financial capital. A series of coordinated bomb blasts on a single day.

Apart from doggedly promoting the government's economic reform programme Mr. Rao has shown little resolve in tackling the political problems facing the country and has not provided leadership in meeting the challenge of the BJP. Rather, he has seemed more at home in fighting his intra-party battles.

A charismatic leader cannot be produced like a rabbit out of a hat. Tragic circumstances brought him to power even as he was packing his bags to retire to Hyderabad. Having assumed the prime ministership and party presidency Mr. Rao dug his heels in to flattering notices. But the refrain in the country's Press changed dramatically as he fumbled, compounding his offence by harping on the BJP's "perfidy" at Ayodhya.

Thus far, Mr. Singh has exploited the atmosphere of disillusionment in the Congress and the country to try to unseat Mr. Rao. He has not succeeded because he has not come across as a convincing replacement, apart from not having sufficient votes in the Congress parliamentary party. We shall have to wait and see what Mr. Singh does next to enliven the political scene even as he has, for the moment, retired bruised from the fray.

External Affairs Ministry Condemned for Inaction
93WR0192A Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 26 Mar 93
p 6

[Editorial: "Sleeping, Snoozing External Affairs Ministry"]

[Text]

The Sleeping Foreign Ministry

In order to defend his ministry, the external affairs minister on Wednesday submitted in Parliament a report detailing exactly what the ministry did and failed to do in the effort to locate the Memon family, who is sought in connection with the recent bomb explosions in Bombay. This belated report does not seem to answer effectively the criticism of the steps taken by the ministry. The passports of the Memon family members who were charged with the bombing were canceled very late indeed. Though it cannot be said that the cancellation

was done as result of the demands made in the press and the Parliament, the cancellation in fact came about following these demands.

Police officials have been reporting to the foreign ministry every hour about the movements of the Memon family. More important than this is another fact, namely that the Indian intelligence agency made a formal request to the foreign ministry on 14 March that the passports of the Memon family members be canceled and extradition papers be filed to have them handed over to India. All these facts give room for grave concern. Under the circumstances, the foreign ministry officials acted at a snail's pace, and their belated actions in the matter can create doubts in the minds of the public and nobody could find fault with it.

The Memon family members escaped from the United Arab Emirates a day before the Indian Ambassador formally delivered a request to hand them over to India. When such is the case, it is surprising that Minister Dinesh Singh said that the Memon family, on seeing the news reports in the papers about the efforts to arrest them, fled from Dubai. Based on the actual time when the first news item appeared in the press and the time when the Memons fled from Dubai, it is clear that only if the foreign ministry had acted in time, the escape of the Memons could have been averted and they could have been arrested. It is now exposed in public view that, either due to laziness or inaction and lack of decisive action or other evil motives, everybody, including foreign ministry officials, has been messing up before and after the bomb explosion. Though there were advance indications of the dangerous events to follow, the atrocious activities of the Memon family could not have been averted. The situation is indeed very grave. They allowed the culprits to escape. It is clear that there is something fishy that deserves to be investigated in full. It is better that Dinesh Singh order a full-fledged inquiry into this matter. If this is not done, so many unpleasant, inconvenient problems will have to be faced.

Change in Attitudes of Muslims Seen Essential for Harmony

93AS0727F Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
27 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Abdur Rauf: "Minority Metamorphosis"; italicized words as published]

[Text] There is no need to state the relations between Hindus and Muslims in India are gradually deteriorating. The recent Bombay riots illustrate the cruel fate that can await India's Muslims. Canards, iterated and disseminated by the *sangh parivar*, have gained credence among a large section of the Hindu community. Religious fanaticism is being interpreted as nationalism.

It is fortunate the Bombay bomb blasts are not being discussed in a way that would spark off renewed communal tension. It is also fortunate the threat of the Shiv Sena leader, Mr. Bal Thackeray, to avenge this mindless

violence on innocent men and women has not been taken in serious earnest by the Shiv Sainiks. Triggering off RDX plastic explosives in such an organised manner can only be the handiwork of a few. Others should not be made to pay the price for a crime in which they did not participate.

Communal riots are not a new phenomenon in India. The experience over the past few decades, since the violence that preceded independence, makes it evident that the country's economy suffers a lot during riots. But normalcy does return after some time. As do harmonious relations between communities.

This has not been the case in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition. The rift the Ayodhya violence has caused is too wide to be bridged easily. Take for example the present situation in Bombay. Even after the riots subsided, Muslim employees were not allowed to resume duty at their workplaces.

If this outlook takes root among the majority, the future of the Indian Muslim may be as bleak as that of a Jew during the initial years of Nazi rule. Muslims identify themselves whenever they scribble their names on application forms of educational institutions or make reservations for train journeys or airplane flights. The fear is that a time will come when by identifying themselves as members of the single largest minority community, Muslims will open themselves to humiliation if not danger.

But striking such a note of doom is at present premature. There is still hope. Light is still visible at the end of the tunnel. Humanists and progressive Hindus are very active and desperately trying to provide a healing touch. India's English language newspapers have played a positive role.

At this crucial moment, India's Muslims will have to be extremely alert and careful. They should desist from any action that would serve as grist to the communal propaganda mill of the *sangh parivar*. On the other hand, they should initiate activities that would embolden secular Hindus and help them take up the cause of their Muslim brethren.

In a recent newspaper article a writer who introduced himself as "coming from communally mixed parentage" sharply criticised Indian Muslims for supporting Pakistan during cricket matches. His argument is based on facts and cannot be rejected outright. But the irrational attachment of some Muslims to a particular sporting side cannot be assumed to imply the entire community is unpatriotic.

Support lent during a cricket match is an expression of a blind sentiment in the same way Muslims tend to be emotionally attached to the Mohammedan Sporting Club. At this sensitive time, Muslims have to carefully weigh the pros and cons of continuing to show their fondness for foreign cricket teams. Such support only provides the *sangh parivar* with a tar brush with which to blacken the image of Indian Muslims.

Nonetheless it is puzzling that this blind support should persist among some Muslims so many years after independence. There is a need to assess what the rationalist Muslims intellectual and the Urdu newspapers have been doing all these years to remove this misdirected loyalty. Some introspection as to what went wrong is needed. If the trend persists, catastrophe may be the result.

If there is still a feeling that nationality should be based on religion it is an attitude that needs to be tackled and changed. Those who subscribe to this view must be reminded of the misfortune that befell those Muslims of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh who so vociferously demanded the creation of Pakistan and who were among the first to migrate in the Partition period.

The tragedy these people encountered in Bangladesh is well known. In Pakistan, they are still treated as refugees. India's Muslims cannot afford to keep these meaningless sentiments alive. Such sentiments must be shed at all costs.

To achieve this end, the Urdu media must play a leading role. Only the Urdu media has a wide audience among that section of Muslims which is still politically immature and socially backward.

There is also need for progressive and educated Indian Muslims to be more realistic about a uniform civil code. An overemphasis on a separate religious identity only strengthens the cause of Hindu fundamentalists.

Progressive Indian Muslims are aware of the humanitarian basis of Islam. Being a comparatively young religion, the rules and regulations stipulated by Islam are much more realistic in their perception of complex social problems. There are several aspects of Muslim personal law which are both humane and down to earth.

Indian Muslims themselves must come forward and say they prefer a uniform civil code but that any new legal framework should incorporate the humanitarian and scientific portions of the ancient civil codes. If this demand is met, the new code will enshrine a number of acts of legislation that are part of Muslim personal law.

This will provide an opportunity for Muslims to make Hindus understand that four marriages and three *talaqs* are not the principal features of the civil code of Muslims. Hindus must be aware that four marriages and three *talaqs* are aspects of Muslim personal law which are restricted by various legal provisions in some Muslim majority countries. By accepting a uniform civil code, Muslims can then demand the abolition of the Hindu civil code and lob the ball into the *sangh parivar's* court.

Enlightened Muslims can also claim the pre-Islamic heritage of India as their own. Muslims should not hesitate in making this legitimate demand. After all, they are primarily of Indian origin and converted over the past several centuries. Persian and Indonesian Muslims have not only accepted their ancient pre-Islamic heritage

but are proud of it. If Indian Muslims state emphatically they have an equal right to the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the two epics, the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*, the saffron brigade's argument Muslims do not belong to the Indian mainstream will simply deflate.

The poet Kazi Nazrul Islam freely used elements of these ancient texts in his creative works. An Islamic identity will not be lost by embracing the rich heritage of one's ancestors. If there was such a possibility Iran's Muslims would never have been regarded as true Muslims.

The *madrassa* system of education also needs important structural changes. The system should learn from the way the Christian missionaries have gone about spreading education and enlightenment in India. These schools are run by missionaries and named after the Christian saints and spiritual leaders.

The basic tenets of Christianity are taught to students of mixed religious backgrounds under various pretexts. Admission forms to these institutions often categorically state the school or college is primarily meant for Christian students but non-Christians may also enroll. Yet, these institutions attract a large crosssection of the non-Christian community principally because they impart modern and meaningful education.

Muslims should model their *madrassas* on these Christian institutions. They should even try to attract Hindus to these schools. Why should *madrassas* provide a kind of education that only helps in clinging to a Muslim identity? Christian identity is not being threatened in any way by running Christian schools in a scientific manner. Christians have, in fact, carved a niche for themselves in Indian society by spreading the cause of, good education.

These are decisions that will have to be taken by India's Muslims. Time is of the essence, given the rapid rise of Hindu fundamentalist forces. Resistance cannot be offered by uniting Muslims alone. Indian Muslims must also ensure the support of the secular Hindu.

The need of the hour is for the enlightened Indian Muslim to come forward and take over the leadership of his or her community. Otherwise the opportunists who thrive in circumstances of tension will broaden the communal rift and cause further harm.

If the ugliest attributes of fascism become ingrained in the psyche of the Hindu majority, the ethnically cleansed fate of Bosnia's Muslims could befall their co-religionists in India. Events in Bombay provide enough indication the Muslim community may face a terrible fate if Hindus abandon reason and sanity.

Article Views Plans for DMK Rally

93AS0724B Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 27 Mar 93
p 6

[Text] Coimbatore, March 26—The Dravidian Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK], in an effort to display its influence and strength, held a massive grand rally at Coimbatore on Friday.

On the first day of the three-day conference, this mammoth procession started from Ukkadam at 1630. Friday, until 0030, the last batch of the procession had not reached the specially erected main conference hall.

M. Kannappan, chairman of the reception committee, former minister and secretary of the district DMK, presided over the conference.

DMK leader M. Karunanidhi, general secretary Anbhazhagan, Sadiq Pasha, Nanjil Manoharan, P.U. Shanmugham, Aaladi Aruna and other notables were on the dais, reviewing the march of the grand procession. The beautifully decorated dais in the conference hall—especially erected hall—was near the Lakshmi mills at Pappanaicken Palayam.

The volunteers in the procession were shouting slogans like, "We will fight religious fanaticism," "We will preserve friendliness," "We want joint rule at the Center and regional autonomy," "O Central government! Implement recommendations of the Mondale commission report."

The grand procession started in Ukkadam and marched through lengthy areas including Oppanakkara Street, Mempaalam, Gandhipuram, Pappanaicken Palayam, Mani high school area, and Avinashi Road before reaching the main conference hall.

Viewed from Avinashi Road, there were thousands of people crowding the entire area—on the roof tops of the shops, at the top of the trees, high-rise buildings, on the top of the traffic control stands, and even hanging on to whatever support they could lay their hands on.

As the procession was passing through the central dais, there were darkened skies with showers, yet the people did not seem to mind it at all, and the volunteers enthusiastically shouted slogans.

The DMK state conference began as per its agenda on Friday morning with DMK leader hoisting the party flag at the conference hall.

At 1025 Karunanidhi, accompanied by Professor Anbhazhagan and M. Kannappan [came] by car. Arcot Veeraswami, L. Ganesan, Murasoli Maran, Ponn. Muthuramalingam, Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, and others also arrived by day.

The parade volunteer corps' captain, Misa Ganesan, welcomed the leader and led him to the parade dais. With Karunanidhi, Professor Anbhazhagan and Sadiq Pasha reviewed the parade and took the salute.

Karunanidhi hoisted the party flag in front of the conference hall and inaugurated the conference. Though the flag hoisting was to take place as the first item as per the announced schedule, it was delayed by an hour. At the flag hoisting ceremony, M.K. Stalin, V. Gopalaswami and Nanjil Manoharan did not participate.

At the conference hall are still left many pieces of wood, etc., burned by an accidental fire last Thursday. Yet Karunanidhi ordered according to the party circles that the conference be held as announced.

It was earlier thought that a big shamiyana (tent) would be erected over a two-hundred-thousand-square-foot area. But due to a lack of facilities, this idea was dropped. Hence they decided to put up a hall covered with thatched sheets on all sides.

Just before the general committee began its deliberations, the members stood and observed silence as a mark of respect to the late Anbil Dharmalingam, who passed away. Then the pressmen and photographers were asked to move out of the hall.

Congress (I) Seen Disintegrating at State, National Levels

Cannot Win Elections

93AS0735A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
31 Mar 93 p

[Article by Kuldip Nayar: "Congress Losing Its Hold"]

[Text] There were times when no one doubted the victory of the Congress at the polls; now no one doubts its defeat. It may not even emerge as the single largest group in the next Lok Sabha. The party is sliding down so rapidly that its very future is uncertain.

To attribute this to the holding of the Congress president's office by the Prime Minister is an oversimplification. Those who have been agitating for the "one-man, one-post" norm may have seized on the issue to attack Mr. Narasimha Rao's style of functioning without coming into the open. But they are aware that he realizes that it is not the principle they are after but Mr. Rao himself.

Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi combined the two positions. When Purshottam Das Tandon was elected the Congress president, despite Nehru's reservations, the former had to go. Later, Indira Gandhi went to the extent of splitting the party when S. Nijalingappa sided with the old guard to select Sanjiva Reddy as the party's presidential candidate in the face of opposition from her. Rajiv Gandhi never took any chances.

Mr. Rao has been quite right in objecting to a parallel point of power. The Congress president, the organizational head, is bound to clash with the executive chief

because one has all the trappings of position without power and the other has all the power.

The issue is not that of sharing power. The crisis stems from the realization among Congressmen that they cannot win the next elections with Mr. Rao as their leader. They want a vote-catcher.

Consequently, there has been a fresh move to draft Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. One wonders if she can win at the polls. The respect she commands is because she is, like the Queen Mother, not in politics. BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leaders say that they have only to project her Italian connexions to deflate the balloon.

No wonder party men feel that, at some stage, Priyanka, Rajiv Gandhi's daughter, should be projected. They believe that the magic of the Gandhi dynasty and her youthful image could arouse sentiments of the old days. This may well be part of a long-term strategy but it does cut Mr. Rao to size. Priyanka may not be a Prime Minister-in-waiting but Mr. Rao has still to convince his supporters that he is worthy of the office he holds.

The real problem with the Congress is that it is a non-action and non-thought party. Dissidents are trying to refurbish the old image. Mr. Arjun Singh's call for confrontation against the Bharatiya Janata Party or the other RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] front, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad [VHP], is meant to restore the Congress(I)'s appeal among Muslims who at present dislike the party more than the BJP. Some other critics have brought in liberal economic reforms to rope in people who have been left out in the new policy.

There are two reasons why the Congress(I) is losing its hold. One is internal squabbling; every State Congress(I) organization is riven by dissension. Backstage politics and meetings in private have returned. This is nothing new but in the past the Prime Minister was powerful enough to impose his or her will. Mr. Rao has been a consensus candidate and has failed to acquire the image of an unquestioned leader.

Bombay Games

Take Maharashtra. He tried to build up a lobby against Mr. Sharad Pawar and selected Mr. Sudhakar Naik as Chief Minister. The ploy failed when Mr. Sharad Pawar decided to challenge Mr. Naik. In the old days, the Prime Minister's wishes would have prevailed. But Mr. Rao could only show his authority to the extent of pushing Mr. Pawar, then Defence Minister, from the Centre. Mr. Rao did not have the strength to sustain Mr. Naik. It must have been a slight for him when four Central Ministers formed the entourage escorting Mr. Pawar to Bombay from Delhi.

A few months ago, the story in Karnataka was not very different. Mr. Bangarappa continued as the Karnataka Chief Minister despite Mr. Rao hinting that he should step down. The battle of nerves between the two raged for more than six months, making a mockery of Mr.

Rao's authority. Mr. Bangarappa eventually stepped down on the persuasion of some mediators but he made it obvious that he would start a new regional party, the formation of which is now at an advanced stage. The challenge which the present Chief Minister, Mr. Veerappa Moily, is facing at the hands of dissidents may be the start of a split in Congress(I)'s ranks.

In Orissa, the two factions in the Congress(I) came to blows the other day. Despite Mr. Rao's repeated appeals, they have not narrowed down their differences, much less come together. One faction has openly said that it would rather have the continuance of Janata Dal Government then accept the opposite faction. The Bihar Congress(I) has been reduced to Mr. Jagannath Mishra's fiefdom. He goes his own way and listens to Mr. Rao whenever it suits him.

In Lucknow

The Congress in U.P., the biggest State, is in a shambles. Mr. Rao has been able to win over Mr. N.D. Tiwari, former Chief Minister, who once felt alienated. In fact, the Prime Minister is consulting him regularly and may even induct him into the Union Cabinet. But Mr. Tiwari cannot unite the party. Nor can he retrieve the State which has practically gone to the BJP. Mr. Rao, unlike Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi or even Mr. V.P. Singh, has little following in the State.

Madhya Pradesh is the scene of open fighting between Mr. Arjun Singh and Mr. V.C. Shukla, who is reportedly running the State Government, at present under Central rule, after the dismissal of the BJP Ministry. This is one State from the earlier four BJP-run States which can be won back by the Congress(I). But factionalism is so deep and so wide that rivals are bent upon defeating each other even at the expense of the BJP's return.

Mr. Rao's threat of taking strong action against anyone "crossing the bounds of discipline" in the party is not only late but also lacks credibility. Congress(I) leaders realize that history may repeat itself. Mr. Arjun Singh could become a V.P. Singh who, when ousted from the Congress(I), first provided a rallying point for dissidents and then went on to become Prime Minister. The other reason why Mr. Rao is on a weaker wicket is the demolition of the Babari Masjid. He has been seen as a helpless figure. Congress members from the minority community suspect him of being in league with the BJP. Some say that he ultimately wants to head a coalition with the BJP.

The signs of this unholy alliance were visible when he had a Congress(I) M.P. elected as Speaker of the Lok Sabha after agreeing in advance that the post of Deputy Speaker would go to the BJP. I recall the RSS chief, Mr. Balasaheb Deoras, praising Mr. Rao in my presence for doing what he described as a "good job".

Mr. Rao and his ardent supporters believe that their forte is the liberalization of the national economy. But the party on the whole is still used to exhortations in the

name of Socialism. In fact, he had to defend himself from attacks that his policies fitted into Nehru's overall vision. This reasoning would have gone a long way if there had been more employment, bigger investment and a rapid acceleration of growth. Congressmen see failure on all fronts. Probably the gestation period will be long but party men are impatient for quick results.

Indeed, the impatience of members is the biggest handicap of the party. A person joining the Congress(I) today wants office tomorrow. In any case, he starts spreading himself from day one to extract as many gains as possible. "It is terrible to think that we may be losing all our values and sinking into the sordidness of opportunist politics", Nehru wrote to Krishna Menon in a letter nearly 35 years ago.

In the past two decades, there has hardly been any Congress leader at the Centre or in the States above the taint of nepotism. Rajiv Gandhi's Bofors gun deal still rocks the nation. Mr. Rao's own family is said to be involved in land and business scandals. How does a Congressman at the grassroots defend his party and what inspiration does he draw? And how does the ousting of some from the party help it face the people's disillusionment?

Rao Victory Called 'Hollow'

93AS0735B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
30 Mar 93 p 8

[Editorial: "A Hollow Victory"]

[Text] Though Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao's new-look machismo at the AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] session in Surajkund has fetched him an unequivocal victory against Mr. Arjun Singh and pushed the latter to the ropes, he has in no way succeeded in stamping out dissidence or emerging as the unquestioned party supremo. The Prime Minister's position will be far more secure if he unleashes a pre-emptive body blow against the dissidents' consolidation in the party but reasons of realpolitik and deeply ingrained personality traits stand in the way. The Surajkund skirmish was more an initial round of a grim power struggle than a decisive turning point as Mr. Rao's supporters are making it out to be. The Prime Minister has been forced to effect major compromises to keep his party presidentialism intact. Mr. Sharad Pawar has re-emerged from the crisis as a key player on the national scene and Mr. Narain Dutt Tiwari has been resuscitated from the wilderness and will seek a free hand in Uttar Pradesh to keep at bay the Rajiv brigade. Mr. Karunakaran has confirmed his status as the kingmaker in Mr. Rao's southern pocket borough and will have to be kept in good humour. With Miss Jayalalitha snapping ties with the Congress(I) and dissidents in the South tentatively trying out Mr. Arjun Singh, the Prime Minister will have to devote more time and attention there even at the danger of getting bogged down. With Miss Jayalalitha turning her back on the BJP after the shortest honeymoon in

politics, he has an interesting prospect opening before him. While Mr. Pawar and Mr. Tiwari have never felt comfortable with Mr. Arjun Singh's overweening ambition, they are unlikely to sit back and watch the latter being flattened by a road-roller since that would tilt the delicate equilibrium of power within the Congress(I).

The dissidents have been emboldened in no small measure by the recent antics of the lady at 10, Janpath and the realization that a few members of Parliament can upset Mr. Rao's apple cart, given the wafer-thin majority that constrains the Prime Minister at every step. Mr. Narasimha Rao lacks the instinctive feel and the ruthlessness to which Congressmen have become accustomed. While the party rank and file has never been hard to control, the middle ranking leaders tend to judge the party president by his ability to look after them and ensure their success at election time. Mr. Rao lacks both; he is more at ease in New Delhi's corridors of power than among the people in the heat and dust of India's towns and countryside. The Prime Minister needs stirring electoral gains to consolidate his position. In Tripura, which he gifted to the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)], the Congress(I) is careering towards defeat while in the four former BJP States, elections might prove disastrous for Mr. Rao. Only Madhya Pradesh could have returned the Congress(I) to power but Mr. Rao would not like to risk an election there if it is likely to propel Mr. Arjun Singh to power. Power struggles and dissidence at the State level are unlikely to die down and attempts at discipline could end up swelling the ranks of the dissatisfied. The Prime Minister is right in saying that turbulence in the party hits the country hard. The country has every right to ask what the party has done to check it.

Congress Committee Called 'Disgrace'

93AS0735C Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
1 Apr 93 p 8

[Editorial: "A Disgrace"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The more frightened people become, the more they console themselves with delusions of grandeur. When the curtains came down on the two-day charade called the AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] session at Surajkund, there were a lot of deluded leaders around. They had milked the public exchequer, put the country on hold, spent hours shouting themselves hoarse over non-issues. At a time when a dehydrated nation is desperate for an effective political challenge to the BJP's twisted agenda, they—after protracted "deliberations"—just doled out hollow cliches. The "dissidents" in the party did not help. Their dissent was limited to decibel counts and a hunger-strike before hunger had a chance to get a hold. Perhaps, the only redeeming feature of the Surajkund session was that the nation got to witness the further degradation of what passes for its ruling party. No one seems to realize that the old vocabulary of threat and counterthreat darkened by the shadow of Indira Gandhi and her family, all the vapid

debates over loyalty and patriotism, all the resolutions, all the amateurish muscle-flexing, is as remote from the country's needs as the gibbering of apes.

There were no specifics on how to formulate a coherent response to the yawning communal divide—just an ambiguous, fatuous phrase saying that the Congress(I) was committed to the construction of a temple and a mosque at Ayodhya. There was nothing by way of substantive debate over the future of the country, except for a 14-page economic policy resolution that read like a Finance Ministry handout. The five-page resolution on foreign affairs betrayed a dangerous lack of any perspective or planning. Once again, it was the familiar refrain that has for long been the hallmark of India's sidewalk diplomacy. Pakistan was branded a terrorist State, concern was expressed over the Bosnian crisis and an appeal was made to Israel to "rise to the world's expectations"—the usual tripe. For all this, houses were razed, ostentatious tents built, television sets installed, dish antennae rigged up and the Haryana State Government pressed into service. The estimated cost of Rs [Rupees] 5 crores should hardly raise eyebrows since the nation's elected representatives have not often been wracked by guilt when it came to taking their electorate for a ride. Also, the Prime Minister must be a happy man, considering that the myopia that passes for foresight often suits immediate interests. With a floundering, impotent Opposition, he does not have much to worry about. At the end of the session, party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, said that the Congress(I) was like chewing gum and could withstand pulls and pressures. He prudently forgot to mention what happens to the gum after the chewing is over.

Nation Seen Threatened

93AS0735D Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
31 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Harihar Bhattacharya: "United India: Disintegrating With the Congress"]

[Text] Recent socio-political events in the Indian polity justify apprehensions about the future of this relatively successful and stable post-colonial democracy in the world. The current spate of "communal" violence and riots are only the symptom of much deep-rooted malaise of the Indian political system. Those who analyse Indian politics in purely communal terms, on the basis of the on-going riots, fail to offer a long-term view. The need is to relate recent occurrences to long-term processes in Indian polity, within which alone they are meaningful.

Some sections of the Indian Left who perceive the growth of fascism in and through the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] variety of communal politics—a view which needs closer examination—highlight the Congress failure to launch a vigorous campaign against communalism and for secularism. But is the Congress organizationally capable of doing the job. Can it do so when its

own organizational decline has been the most important determinant of the communal riots, giving birth to the forces of instability?

Unstable Centre

As Morris-Jones said, it was "the nation-wide stabilizing element without whose management capacity the system continuously falls apart with a centre which does not effectively hold". Most scholars of the Congress evolution point to the 1960s as the beginning of its decline. Others like James Manor differ, in attempting to locate the roots of the Congress decline in the fundamental transformation of the party towards the dawn of independence from "a once great movement" into a "political machine" by "attracting opportunists".

These newcomers are people with influence in local power centres, usually with land and connexions with relatives and fellow castemen, also owning land, who lent money and could muster clout. They were driven to the Congress by the scent of spoils and Congress leaders at and below the State level took them in because they needed them to win elections. Most constructive workers and genuine Gandhians would not or could not turn themselves into harvestors of votes which the new rules of politics demanded. Some could and did, but in the process made so many compromises with parochialism, bribery and the like that they ceased to be Gandhians.

Nonetheless, the Congress remained until the late 1960s the "central integrating institution" in the country. The "serious decay" took place later, according to one interpretation, for two reasons: ossification of the old transactional machine as the key operatives became aged or complacent, and the bogus membership list which put the party leadership in considerable uncertainty about their support base.

The famous Kamraj Plan to rebuild organizationally the Congress largely failed. The role of Kamraj Nadar, Congress president, was described by Stanley Kochanek as: "Unfortunately, organizational reconstruction was ignored during the four years of Kamraj's tenure as Congress president. The inertia of the president affected the entire organization". One argument is that behind the failure of attempts at reorganizing the Congress until about 1966 was the Nehru factor, which kept all the pressing questions of party reorganization in the background.

Was Nehru then responsible for the decline of the Congress? Gandhiji obviously was opposed to rebuilding Congress as a political party; he believed that the Congress was an instrument for achieving freedom. Hence when freedom was won it would be superfluous. On January 11, 1948, he suggested that it would be better "to dissolve Congress than to allow it to continue functioning, as it was full of decay and decline, and power politics and corruption". Can we then blame Gandhiji, the Father of the Nation, for the latter day decline of Congress?

The causes of the Congress decline can be enumerated as: dominance of personal loyalty as the touchstone of preferment and promotion, demise of mediated politics in favour of plebiscitary politics, importance of waves rather than organization in winning elections, absence of intra-party democracy, non-organizational sources of a leader's support and legitimacy, adoption of non-party criteria in selecting and nominating candidates in elections and so on.

These factors were in sharp focus during Indira Gandhi's regime when party matters received low priority and the party at all levels fell into disuse. The speech of the Congress president, Rajiv Gandhi, to the Congress Centenary celebrations in December 1985 in Bombay read like a funeral speech of Congress: "We Congressmen obey no discipline, no rule, follow no principle of public morality, display no sense of social awareness, show no concern for the public weal. Corruption is not only tolerated but even regarded as the hallmark of leadership."

Goonda Raj

Even at the local level, in West Bengal for instance, between 1967 and 1972 the State Congress was radically transformed: the old guard was replaced by a youthful and militant leadership; the introduction of "mustans" in various neighbourhoods altered the character of local Congress units; the new cadre underwent little political socialization within the party ranks, and were quite accustomed to the use of violence to achieve ends.

An incident in the mid-1980s in connexion with the appointment of a new president of the Calcutta-based West Bengal Youth Congress is worth describing here: "The Youth Congress-I president, Prodyut Guha's car was stopped by his own party men. The windscreen and windows were smashed. Mr. Guha was dragged out and stripped, made to take a dip in the municipal drain and his hair was clipped. His wife Ranjana witnessed the scene. He went home in his underpants after he gave an undertaking in writing that he would not participate in politics again".

Atul Kohli has written in his book *Democracy and Discontent* (1992) that in most parts of India the Congress as a party declined. In the Balgaum district of Karnataka the "Congress organization is wiped out". Only when the M.P.s come, "their houses become the centre of activities". This organizational decline was central to the party's failure to mobilize opposition to the ruling Janata Party in 1986 and to the fiasco the party ultimately faced. It is the same story in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

In Andhra Pradesh, this organizational decline was caused by two reasons: nationally, the central intervention, and regionally, the erosion of traditional authority in the social structure. The result was a power vacuum, much abhorred in politics, and utilized by the Telugu Desam of NTR [expansion not given]. This also resulted in the radical transformation in the attitude of the

ordinary man towards the Congressman from that of the "saviour" of the country to "that of a crook".

Danger Man

In the Kheda district of Gujarat, the same factor, lost the Congressmen the reputation of being sevaks or problem-solvers. They are much dreaded now as men from whom the "local peasant would hide his young daughter". Thus, in about three decades (1960s-1980s), the Congress almost totally vanished as an organization—a conclusion shared by many.

Rajni Kothari noted a major effect of this Congress decline during the regime of Indira Gandhi: she shifted the institutional bases of Indian politics from the party system, including her own party, to the State apparatus, and within the State apparatus, from the federal structure to the Centre, to the Prime Minister's secretariat which emerged as the most potent political base of her power. Rajni Kothari termed this "depoliticizing the public affairs". This is an extreme concentration of power in the State. If Congress was powerful enough organizationally, it might have been able to resist this centralization of power which produced disastrous consequences.

Such a party in decline cannot launch anti-communal campaigns and engage itself in the struggle for secularism. Its organizational decline, however, is correlated to the tendencies towards disintegration in the country at large. This is missed in most accounts of the problem of integration in India. What is also forgotten is that mobilizational strength of a party is the function of its organization. This is most powerfully illustrated in the case of the CPI(M), particularly in West Bengal. The Congress decline does, however, offer little scope for rejoicing. On the contrary, it alerts us to the danger ahead of this nation-State. For the Leftists, this means the toughest job since a Left-Right divide in Indian politics at the present conjuncture is deadly for the people.

BJP Economic Policies Contrasted With Those of Congress (I)

93AS0734D New Delhi ORGANISER in English
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[Article: "A Study in Contrasts: BJP and Congress Economic Policies"; quotation marks as published]

[Excerpt] The Finance Minister has presented his Budget. The position is clear. The Government quietly takes two steps backwards and then, with a fanfare, it takes one step forward and shouts how brave it is. That is the nature of its no-new-tax budget.

In the last few months they have collected over Rs [Rupees] 10,000 crore from the people in the form of "administered prices," and now they have given a "relief" of less than half that amount; and they want a pat on their back for being such good boys. The price rise

is a direct burden on the people. The 'reliefs,' given to business, may or may not be passed on to the consumers.

Additionally, Government has increased railway freights and fares by Rs 1,800 crore. For the first time, concessional freight charges for essential items like foodgrains have been withdrawn.

Ever since the Government "nationalised," that is Congressised, the Banks—costing the country this year alone, Rs. 10,000 crore in "bad debts"—interest rates have gone up and up. In the last twenty months alone, they have jumped 4 per cent. As a result interest rates are twice as high in India as in any other country with a significant economy. This leads to a high-cost economy, raising internal prices and pricing many of our products out of the export market. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] had demanded cut in interest rate of at least 4 per cent. Government has made a cut of a beggarly one per cent and thinks it has done a great favour to the country.

Likewise Government is pleased with itself because the inflation rate, it says, is below 10 per cent. It forgets that in economics run responsibly, inflation rate is only 2 to 3 per cent.

Government has been incurring debts not only on capital account but also on current account. There is a current account deficit this year of 2.9 per cent of GDP [Gross Domestic Product]. They think they will do a great thing by trying to bring this down next year to 1 per cent of GDP. The BJP position on this issue is very clear: there must be no deficit on revenue account. The Party has demanded amendment of Articles 292 and 293 of the Constitution, to put a ceiling on Government borrowing—as is the case in Germany—and limiting it to borrowing for productive purposes only, and not for financing any revenue deficit.

The BJP stands for a low-cost low-tax economy so that prices can stabilise and employment and exports can grow. This requires lower customs duties and much lower excise duties. But the Government has done the exact opposite; it has lowered customs duties much more—by 13 per cent—than excise duties, which have been reduced by only 4 per cent. The object is clear; under IMF pressure, it has drastically cut customs duties to allow more imports, to benefit foreign business. As a result of this policy, imports will go up, depleting our foreign exchange reserves, hurting many local industries and throwing many people out of employment. In spite of a double devaluation last year, our exports grew by a minuscule 4 per cent and imports, by a whopping 16 per cent. Given the Government's subservience to foreign interests, our balance of trade will continue to be adverse.

No wonder the Indian economy is growing at a snail's pace. Last year they said the economy will grow by 2.5 per cent; it actually grew by a miserable 1.2 per cent. This year the finance Minister says it will grow by 4 per cent and his Secretaries claim it will be 5 to 6 per cent. But judging by its track record, it may grow at only half the

claimed rate. On the other hand, the Chinese economy is growing at a sturdy 12 per cent.

It is significant that Government did not raise the income tax exemption limit—to leave some more money in the hands of the people, so that they could spend or save it as they liked. It gave excise concessions on particular items, many of them produced by MNCs [expansion not given]. When asked what the Government would do if these excise concessions were retained by Big Business, and not passed on to consumers, pat came the Finance Minister's response; "We have the import tap ready with us to bring order in the market." Once again he showed weakness for the foreign lobby working on him. This weakness also shows in the import of foodgrains even in a year of bumper crop. No wonder many Indian entrepreneurs feel that they are being treated as second class citizens in the Indian economy.

There is something topsy-turvy about Government approach to the National Economy. The BJP is all for 'liberalisation.' But it would like to liberalise internally first. Let the economy adjust to the new winds of change, and liberalise externally later and slower. But Government has liberalised externally more than internally. This has adversely affected Indian economy and encouraged imports at a time when we can afford them the least.

It is significant that Government has cut customs duties at a time when tariff walls are rising higher in the developed Western economies. For example, U.S.A. has threatened punitive duties on imported cars and Russia has slapped 600 per cent duty on Indian Whiskey.

Concessions are being given to foreign goods and foreign capital in the name of foreign investment. The BJP position is that investment would be welcome in high-tech industries. But much of it is coming only in junk industries.

Nowhere does the difference in BJP and Government economic policies show as starkly as in the approach to foreign banks. Indian banks have to give loans to agriculture, cooperative societies and small scale industry at concessional rates of interest. None of this applies to foreign banks operating in India. BJP's Economic Policy document, therefore, demanded that "foreign banks in India should also be asked to adhere to priority sector lending, as is required to Indian banks. Foreign banks should function on par with Indian banks with regard to fulfilment of social objectives." But Government has done nothing in this direction. Given this preferential treatment, foreign banks are making super-profits in India. They are repatriating more, profits than all other foreign companies put together. The JPC [Joint Parliamentary Committee] has found many faults with these foreign banks in the matter of securities scam. But this Government dare not touch them; it wants to negotiate more foreign loans—and put the country more securely in the debt trap.

It will thus be seen that there is a fundamental difference between BJP and Government economic policies. While the BJP policy is people-centric, Congress policy is IMF-centric.

[Passage omitted]

Budgeting for Foreigners and Multinationals

The Government of India is too committed to, and compromised with, the IMF and World Bank, to liberalise internally more than externally, or to cut excise duties more than customs duties. But surely it does not have to discriminate between Indian and foreign businessmen within India, to the disadvantage of Indian Business.

The Budget is highly discriminatory against Indians as compared to foreigners as regards tax. Foreign Investors will pay Capital gains Tax of only 10 per cent on long-term investments, whereas Indian investors pay 20 to 30 per cent. On speculative profits, Foreign Investors pay 30 per cent tax whereas Indians pay twice that amount. This is wholly untenable. Indians should not have to pay more tax than foreigners on the same type of income.

The argument given by the Government that this will promote investment in the stock market is also fallacious. Indian investors have built up the stock market over the last 10 years so that the Market Capitalisation is Rs. 3,00,000 crores. No significant foreign investor has come in. If the same tax concessions are given to Indians, investment by Indians will go up even more.

Excise duty concessions are expected to benefit local industry. But this budget gives special excise concessions in areas dominated by the subsidiaries of multi-national corporations. For example Excise Duty concessions of about Rs. 150 crores have been given to the cosmetic industry. The main beneficiaries are Multinationals like Hindustan Lever, Colgate, Nestle. Likewise, in the realm of electronic goods, much of the excise concession will go to a foreign company like Philips.

Nor has the iniquity of the Budget stopped there. Excise tax concessions aggregating Rs. 200 crores have been quietly withdrawn from Small-Scale Industry. This has been couched in such vague terms that not many have been able to detect it; but a cross-check with figures makes this attack on small-scale industry very clear.

Also the Budget has done nothing for the relief of the hard pressed middle class and the development of backward areas. The Finance Minister should have raised the income tax exemption limit—and re-defined backward areas. But he has not.

Secondly the 5-year tax holiday for industries should not be limited to backward States. It should be extended to all backward areas, including backward districts. There are districts in India that are bigger than whole States. That being so, the 5-year tax holiday should be extended

to backward areas, whether these are big backward districts or small backward States.

BJP Political Strategy in South Detailed, Analyzed

*93AS0727A New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
31 Mar 93 pp 54-55, 57-58*

[Article by Raj Chengappa, with Girish Nikam, T.N. Gopakumar, Saritha Rai, and M.A. Mannan: "Southern Skepticism"; boldface and italicized words as published]

[Text] For the south, the Hindutva slogan is more of an appendage to speeches: "By the way, we are also battling for a Ram Mandir at Ayodhya." For good reason. For unlike the Hindi north, the response of the four peninsular states to the Ayodhya issue has been quite tepid. As the saffron clan plans a major southern assault in the coming weeks, it has realised that it has to radically alter its strategy and rhetoric if it is to make political inroads in these states.

For the Sangh brotherhood, the south has become a key factor for several reasons. With Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao largely dependent on the 88 Congress(I) MPs [Member of Parliament] from the south to prop him up, it is keen on destabilising his base. If it has to muster a majority in the event of a mid-term parliamentary poll and also live up to its claim of being a national party, it will have to win substantial support in the south—something that has always eluded it. In the 1991 Lok Sabha elections the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] could win only five of the 129 seats that these four states contribute and came second in only 13 seats. Its target now is a modest 40 seats in the next elections.

However, it finds that none of the issues that made it a force to reckon with in the north seem to have an impact in the south. The battle cry of "*Mandir wahin banayenge*" is hardly ever chanted at its meetings in the southern states. For the southerner Ayodhya is as remote as Amritsar. Karnataka Chief Minister Veerappa Moily observes: "The Ayodhya issue has been viewed more as a battle between Aryan Muslims and Aryan Hindus." Ram in fact has to compete with a multiplicity of other deities in these states.

The clan's propaganda war of freeing India from centuries of Muslim domination—an effective slogan up north—leaves southern crowds cold because the four states were relatively free of major foreign invasions in the past. Also, the minorities are far better integrated in the south, not only conversing in the local language, but also following local customs and rituals. In fact, if the south is resentful of anything in recent times it has been over the domination by Hindi-speaking states.

Worse, the communal violence, especially in Bombay, that broke out after the Babri Masjid's demolition has seen the BJP lose much of the ground that it had steadily been gaining in the south. The four states have always voted solidly for issues like national unity and a stable

Central government and the rent violence has shaken its confidence in the party. Admits K.N. Govindacharya, the BJP's general secretary and chief southern strategist: "There is sympathy for Ram in these states but if we have to make electoral gains here we have to do so on a multiplicity of issues and not just Ram."

In these states party leaders are now told to focus largely on local issues such as farmers' problems and corruption. Ram is cleverly tagged on. But the party faces other major problems. The RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] has been expanding its cadre base in these states of late and now has 7,400 shakhas. But what the Sangh brotherhood lacks in the south is credible candidates and local leaders to cash in on support for their cause. Also it does not have an effective party infrastructure at the district and tehsil levels. Admits Na Krishnappa, chief co-ordinator for the RSS' southern activities: "Lack of effective political leadership in the south has been our shortcoming. And it is better that we build up a good leadership instead of hurrying to capture political power in these states."

The gameplan now is to emerge as a major political alternative in the south and take any step to loosen the Congress(I)'s grip. Wooing Tamil Nadu chief Minister J. Jayalalitha and pushing her into breaking the alliance with the Congress(I) is part of the strategy. However, their best bet for making major gains is in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Not because of any Ram fervour but because the people in these states are becoming increasingly disillusioned with the Congress(I) rule.

Karnataka

Congress Misrule, Not Ram Strengths: Emerging as an alternative to the Congress(I). Identifying with local issues. Congress misrule.

Weaknesses: Lack of credible leaders. No backward class base. Image as a party out of control.

In the past three months, B.S. Yediyurappa, the greying state president of the BJP, has addressed over 450 mini-rallies. His speeches, however, are not dominated by Ram. The stress is on farmers' problems and state corruption. He says: "*Raita* (farmers) and Ram go hand in hand in most of our meetings."

For the Sangh brotherhood, Yediyurappa and his stand typifies the problems they face in the south. Despite his efforts, the party president, who belongs to the dominant Lingayat caste, has yet to emerge as chief ministerial material. And barring a few of his colleagues, they do not have credible leaders and electoral candidates at all levels.

Yet, if there is any southern state where the BJP can emerge as a major alternative force to the Congress(I) it is Karnataka. Even before the Ayodhya issue blew up, the party had been gaining strength. Although in the 1989 assembly elections it won only four of the 224 assembly seats and polled 4 per cent of the total votes, by

1991 the state was beginning to like the colour saffron. In the Lok Sabha elections, for the first time the party won four seats and in all polled 29.6 per cent—second only to the Congress(I).

It was not so much Ram that held sway but the growing disillusionment that people had with both the ruling Congress(I) state government as well as state Janata Dal leaders such as Ramakrishna Hegde. Far from being reversed, in the past two years, that negative trend is only being strengthened in the BJP's favour. With S. Bangarappa's government regarded as among the most corrupt the state has ever had, the people are upset by the way the Congress(I) has been handling the state. And Moily's shaky beginning has only heightened that feeling.

An ongoing survey on the alienation of urban youth by the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore is confirming such trends. A majority of the youngsters quizzed said they would vote for the BJP. Not for the Ram mandir issue but because they felt only that party would give them a clean and disciplined government. Psychiatrist R.L. Kapur, who is conducting the survey, however, feels the mood in the city has been changing ever since the Bombay riots: "Intellectuals who earlier supported the Hindutva movement are now turning against it as they feel it would divide the country."

Also, there is resentment growing over the politicisation of the Ram issue. Says S.M. Krishna, deputy chief minister: "People are upset that religion is being reduced to a BJP Ram or a Congress Krishna. They feel it debases their gods." Nor does Ram dominate the gods that the people in the state worship. There are a lot more temples dedicated to Anjaneya (Hanuman) and Shiva in the villages.

The unified Hindu concept that the brotherhood is trying to project does not go down well in the state. People still vote largely on caste lines. Lately, the backward classes have gained dominance. The BJP finds it difficult to shake its image of being a party dominated by forward castes. And only now are they making efforts to woo the backward castes.

Meanwhile, finding the Ram issue getting only a lukewarm response, the BJP has been desperately trying to rake up local issues that would symbolise their Hindutva fight. The state had witnessed Muslim rule under Tipu Sultan. Though he is a local hero, the BJP has been attempting to portray him as some kind of southern Babar—but without much success. Meanwhile, they have concentrated their efforts on the Idgah Maidan, an acre of controversial land in the heart of the bustling Hubli city in northern Karnataka. Communal tension increased on Republic Day when the BJP insisted on hoisting the national flag in the Maidan. But Moily's Government foiled the move by clamping curfew in the city and bringing a huge contingent of forces to guard the area. Now the BJP wants to make it a major issue with the slogan: "*Jhanda wahin peherayenge*." (We will hoist

the flag there only.) But it would be wiser for the party to concentrate on issues of economics and governance if it has to make major gains in Karnataka.

Tamil Nadu

Piggyback on the AIADMK

Strengths: Able to woo the AIADMK. Strong party general secretary. Waning Dravida movement.

Weaknesses: Political non-entity. Strong Hindi stand. Shiva, not Ram dominant.

For a state made famous by its rationalist leaders and a political movement spawned on anti-Hindi, anti-Brahminical and agnostic sentiments, last week's political developments have left several ideologies standing on their heads. In the bastion of Dravidian culture, the ruling party, the AIADMK, headed by the mercurial—some would say whimsical—Jayalalitha, is now actively considering tying knots with a Hindi-belt party. And that too, a party riding on a wave which the state only two decades ago would have dismissed as an Aryan fantasy spun by north Indian leaders with Brahminical ancestry.

Yet none of these strange developments had any conventional Hindutva logic to stir them. True, both Jayalalitha and her mentor and predecessor, the late M.G. Ramachandran, had brought religion back into official celebrations, undoing decades of Dravida Kazhagam rationalism. And the RSS with its political front, the BJP, was beginning to find its feet in the state especially after Harijans down south began converting to Islam in the early '80s. Yet even at the climax of the Ayodhya dispute, the state remained muted in its response. BJP General Secretary Govindacharya would like to interpret it as "the subtle, psychological way that the south imbibes such messages".

Yet, despite the setbacks, in a state where the Sangh brotherhood had no clout—polling barely 4 per cent of the votes in the 14 Lok Sabha seats it contested—it is pulling a coup of sorts. It accelerated the rift between the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] and its ally, the Congress(I), thereby succeeding in its first objective: weaken Narasimha Rao wherever possible. And now riding piggyback on the AIADMK's popularity, it hopes to gain a much bigger foothold in the next elections.

But it is still a risky game for both Jayalalitha and the BJP. If they are banking on a dormant Hindu wave, it may not surface at all during the next election. Already, its political opponents, such as the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Pattali Makhil Katchi (PMK), have begun anti-Hindi rallies. Their strategy is to revive state antagonism to the BJP's avowed stance of making Hindi a second language and stir up Tamil Ealam sentiments.

Even pushing the Ram Mandir issue is risky. In the '60s, the state lionised Ravana and regarded Ram as an Aryan

bully. Moreover, it is Shaivism that has been the dominant religious force. And it is Lord Muruga, son of Shiva, who is worshipped most among the Hindus. As state Congress(I) leader G.K. Moopanar says: "Though Lord Ram is respected, there are hardly any Ayodhya fanatics in the state."

The BJP would find it difficult to go it alone in the state for other reasons. "Our Achilles' heel in Tamil Nadu has been the lack of acknowledged political leadership," admits Govindacharya. Moreover, all the three major parties—the AIADMK, DMK and Congress(I)—share between them nearly 80 per cent of the votes. And it would take years of toil for the Sangh brotherhood to emerge as a major political alternative in the state.

Andhra Pradesh

No Hindu Star Rising

Strengths: Growing support in Telangana region. Congress(I) and Telugu Desam misrule.

Weaknesses: Other deities have bigger draw. No big names in the BJP. Can't woo Telugu Desam.

If the Hindutva family has been successful in wooing Jayalalitha in Tamil Nadu, they have made no headway with the other southern film star-tuned-regional leader: N.T. Rama Rao. The Telugu Desam chief has repeatedly stressed his reservations about entering into any pact with the BJP. Mainly because his party has allied itself with the National Front and would like to be part of the secular alternative to the Congress(I). And also because the former chief minister senses that the Ram issue has evoked only a lukewarm response in Andhra Pradesh.

That has left the Sangh brotherhood a poor third force in a state they had hoped to make much headway. True, Andhra Pradesh had provided the largest number of kar sevaks from the south. And the rising tension between Hindus and Muslims in the area ruled by the former Nizam of Hyderabad has seen a swing towards saffron. But as in other southern states, the Hindutva movement faces major hurdles in its bid to improve the BJP's vote share of a mere 4 per cent.

At the top of the list is that while Ram is revered in the state, the person most likely to benefit from the fall out is N.T. Rama Rao. His legendary portrayal of Ram in a film is still a vote-catcher and it will be the Telugu Desam and not the BJP that is likely to benefit from Hindu sentiments. Also, given the Telugu culturalism—fostered by the Telugu Desam itself—the BJP is still regarded as a Hindi belt party and there is concern that it may impose its northern cultural imperialism.

Moreover, the state has an impressive line-up of its own powerful temple and spiritual leaders. Going to Tirupati's Lord Venkateshwara or Srisailem temple is more important to Andhra Hindus than a visit to Ayodhya. And so, to, is visiting Sai Baba at Puttaparthi or Shirdi Sai Baba's temples. "Hindus are as religious as Muslims

but have certainly not become fashionable fanatics," says Ram K. Reddy, a political analyst.

The Hindutva brigade has to face the challenge from the strong left forces in the state that has spawned a vibrant Naxal movement. They are also hamstrung by a lack of state leaders with stature and, more importantly, as one analyst points out, don't even have a film star to draw crowds. Instead, they have been concentrating on winning over rebel leaders from both the dominant parties. Top on the list is former Union minister and Telugu Desam strongman P. Uppendra. Says Vidyasagar Rao, the BJP's leader in the legislature: "We cannot come on our own considering our weak organisation. But we will emerge as an alternative to reckon with." A pragmatic assessment.

Kerala

Left Gains, Not Hindutva

Strengths: Maximum shakhas in southern states. Muslims turning militant

Weaknesses: Strong rationalist movements. Dominance of other deities. Not a political force.

Kerala may have the most number of shakas in the south, but it is also the Sangh's weakest southern base. The BJP did not win a seat either in the assembly of Lok Sabha elections held in 1991 and bagged only 4 per cent of the votes.

Post-demolition, its prospects haven't brightened. Reason: minority communities—Muslims and Christians—form 42 per cent of the population in Kerala. And, along with the Hindus, they have built an enduring communal amity.

Moreover, the conversions of local populations in the past were done largely without invasive force. "The arrival of Islam in Kerala was through trade and not through conquerors," says Hafiz Mohammed, a well-known writer. Upper class Hindus of Malabar in the past took pride in getting their daughters married to Arabs.

Even among the Hindus, the RSS would find it difficult to garner support for its Hindutva philosophy. Kerala has spawned a rationalist movement rivalling Tamil Nadu. Its famous social reformer, Narayana Guru, who belonged to the backward Ezhava community, succeeded in playing down the importance of religion. Many decades of rule by communist parties have strengthened that trend. Says Vayalar Ravi, state Congress(I) chief: "We have a cultural ethos that Hindutva would find difficult to penetrate."

Though Ram is revered in parts of the state, he is not part of its main pantheon. Kerala's most famous shrine—the Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala—is visited by all the communities. Its other popular place of worship—Guruvayoor in Trichur—is devoted to Lord Krishna. Result: when the *Ramayan* was telecast, viewership in Kerala was among the lowest in the country.

Significantly, immediately after the demolition in Ayodhya, both the Ezhavas and the Nairs—the dominant backward and forward class communities—strongly condemned the act and the subsequent violence. Says social scientist Thomas Issac in Trivandrum: "With Hindus, Muslims and Christians living in close proximity any communal violence has serious repercussions."

There are, however, certain factors that have heightened communal tension such as the growing clout of the militant Islamic Sevak Sangh and the construction of a large number of mosques after the Gulf money flooded into Kerala. This has given rise to fears among the Hindus and many help push the BJP support by a few notches. But it is unlikely to win seats for itself. The main loser here would be the ruling Congress(I). Its ally, the Indian Union Muslim League, is upset at the demolition of the mosque. The Hindus are also drifting away from it. The gainers: not the BJP but the communists, who form the other large electoral force in the state and will mop up the negative votes.

Criminal Elements Said Thriving Under CPM Rule

93AS0727E Calcutta *THE STATESMAN Supplement* in English 28 Mar 93 pp 1

[Article by TELEGRAPH Reporters: "Dons Rule the Red Bastion"; italicized words as published]

[Text] "*Yeh mere bhatija hai.*" This is how a former CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] MLA [Member of Legislative Assembly] of central Calcutta often introduced the suave and mild-mannered Rashid Khan at police stations of the neighbourhood more than a decade ago. The respectable legislator was well aware of the young man's activities and knew he was aspiring to be a satta don. Yet, he encouraged Rashid and his associates.

When the turnover of votes becomes the primary concern of a political party entrenched in power for more than 15 years, the differences that a civilised society demands between the legal and illegal disappear. Criminals thrive and power emanates from the underworld. The Bowbazar blast is an eye-opener in this respect. That the ancient adage "absolute power corrupts absolutely" holds good for the CPI(M) and its subservient police top brass, has now been proved beyond doubt.

The CPI(M) realised after 1982 that the prestigious Assembly and parliamentary constituencies in Calcutta were not returning its nominees. In central Calcutta, over which the Congress(I) enjoyed a stranglehold, some extreme measures were necessary to change the voting pattern. A hunt was launched for mafia chiefs who could provide the necessary assistance to stem the ascendance of satta don Mir Muhammad Omar known for his leanings towards the Congress(I). The CPI(M) created Rashid and catapulted him to overnight notoriety. Even senior police officials cooperated with the party to

ensure that Rashid's vertical climb in terms of money and muscle-power was unhindered.

Therefore it is hardly surprising that Rashid's diary, recovered during raids at his residence, reads like a Who's Who with names, addresses and telephone numbers of a number of politicians, police officers, legal luminaries and respectable citizens. With the help of his associate, Insaf, now behind bars, Rashid greased the palms of these influential personalities. Where gifts mattered, he sent sleek refrigerators. Where monetary benefit was the sole concern, he sent wads of notes decently packed in envelopes. The diary, currently in the custody of the city's police chief, Mr. Tushar Talukdar, gives an amazing insight into the ramifications of Rashid's vast network and reveals how unencumbered his reign was as the satta don.

Among the beneficiaries who accepted a share of Rashid's ill-gotten gains without qualms, was a former senior bureaucrat, a former police chief and a host of officials involved in decision-making. Rashid had contacts in the Calcutta district committee of the CPI(M) and used them to have his acquaintances in the police echelons get lucrative posts. He kept his neighbours happy and, unlike other petty criminals, did not harass local businessman or extort them. He distributed clothes on Id and enjoyed the image of a philanthropist.

But Rashid, who combined in him the acumen and the sensibility of a businessman, branched out into other trades. Buying up hotels and cars became his passion. He even started taking an active interest in real estate. While these businesses brought him wealth and respectability, he continued looking for greener pastures and ventured into arms smuggling. His several foreign trips bear testimony to the wide range of his acquaintances abroad. At home, he kept his political patrons happy. He equipped CPI(M) cadres and enriched the party's coffers, then under acute pressure with the rising number of wholetimers. He gave donations for the functions organised by the party's frontal organisations.

Rashid's diary provides a detailed account of the gifts he lavished on his contacts and the money he advanced every month to his friends in the establishment. It mentions that a fridge was given to a former bureaucrat and records the names and phone numbers of at least seven IPS [Indian Police Service] officers. It states the amount given to officers at the thana level and in the corridors of the detective department, specially its anti-rowdy wing. Had the blast not claimed more than 70 lives, Rashid's career would have maintained the same near-vertical ascent, with the graph registering little or no resistance from any quarter. If the diary is made available to the media, many heads will roll and a number of dignitaries will have to provide satisfactory explanations to get themselves off the hook.

It was during the height of the Naxalite movement that the police first allied itself with lumpen elements to control violence. The then police chief, Mr. Ranjit

Gupta, along with his trusted lieutenants, Mr. Debi Roy and Mr. Runu Guha Neyogi, hit upon the clever plan of infiltrating the ranks of the Naxalites. The gamble paid off.

Hardened criminals flaunting Mao-Zedong's texts mingled with the extremists' brain trust and smuggled out strategies that were about to be implemented. The police justified the method as the only available option to crush Naxalites who had turned the metropolis into a killing field.

This not only gave the underworld entry to the private chambers of law-keepers but also won for its members temporary jobs as homeguards without uniforms whose job was to penetrate Naxalite ranks and extract information. Among the toughs who later stole the limelight were Hemen Mondal, now the notorious operator of illegal auction, Mir Mohammed Omar, the present secretary of Mohammedan Sporting Club, Jaga Mitra and Paresh Pal, both Congress(I) councillors.

The movement petered out. Policemen emerged victorious in the battle for control of the city's streets. The decades of stability were ushered in. But the nexus between law-keepers and law-violators continued to prosper and the symbiotic relationship benefited both sides. The top rung of police officers, presiding over meetings at Lal Bazar, could never forget how indebted they were to these hoodlums. More than that, however, was the gradual realisation that criminals could be money-spinners.

Initially, corruption was largely confined to the lower ranks of the police. The first allegation against an IPS officer surfaced in the early seventies when Mr. Harris James, the police superintendent of West Dinajpur, was suspended on charges of amassing wealth beyond his means. It was alleged that Mr. James had been bribed by dacoits, who were arrested for robbing a bank in the erstwhile East Pakistan. Mr. James was suspended for 18 years though the vigilance commission and the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] failed to substantiate the charges. Similar charges levelled against another senior officer, Mr. Simon Philips, could not be proved.

The criminal-politician nexus developed almost simultaneously. President's rule was clamped in 1971. In 1972, the polls were rigged with the brazen deployment of lumpen elements. At several booths, the election was over by 10 am. Armed rowdies took over the city on polling day while policemen stood guard as mute spectators.

It is ironic that the CPI(M), which had promised the electorate that both the polity and administration would be thoroughly cleansed, failed to live up to it. Criminals, however, had restricted contact with the CPI(M) till the death of the party's venerated state chairman, Promode Dasgupta. When the second Front government took over, criminal dons were first witnessed sneaking into party offices and rubbing shoulders with respectable comrades. Veterans and old-timers, were aghast at these

developments and issued stern warnings. But they were dismissed as "obsolete idealists" and gradually faded away from the scene.

While the hammer, sickle and star emblem was taking root in the underworld, policemen learnt that they were in for bad times. Pressure kept mounting on them. There was a virtual tide of directives, threatening transfers and insignificant postings, if they took action against criminals patronised by the party. As the Congress(I)'s political base eroded further, hoodlums and rowdies willing to serve the Marxist cause swelled in number. Since promotion mattered, a larger number of policemen including senior officials, decided to toe the line.

In 1984 the police-criminal-politician nexus came to the fore after the brutal killing of the then deputy commissioner of police (port), Vinod Mehta. The key suspect, Mohammed Idris, facing murder charges, was beaten to death in the Lalbazar lockup, fuelling suspicions that the police were desperate to provide cover to their political masters. Idris could have revealed important names. The role of the present state minister for agricultural marketings, Mr. Kalimuddin Shams, was widely discussed in connection with criminal activities in the port area but few of the allegations levelled against him could be substantiated.

Mr. Nirupam Som, the then police chief, was removed from his post following mayhem in the city in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Described as an "honest man but incapable of warding off political pressures," Mr. Som was reportedly surprised by his removal. He informed the chief minister of his displeasure despite succumbing to the whims and fancies of his political mentors.

After Mr. Som's departure, corruption was institutionalised at Lalbazar. The names of promoters, satta dons, gamblers and other criminals were bandied about in the police headquarters during the tenure of the next incumbent, Mr. B.K. Basu. Rashid Khan started making a name for himself. It was also at this time that the former joint commissioner (arms), Mr. Sultan Singh's name was linked to a cheat. Mr. Singh was embroiled in another controversy following the arrest and subsequent release of a Bihar MP, Mr. Prakash Chandra from, who was picked up from a city brothel.

The same trend persisted during the next police chief, Mr. Biren Saha's reign at Lalbazar. Mr. Saha's connection with a city promoter, Pradip Kundalia, was highlighted following the collapse of a multi-storeyed building in south Calcutta. Even when the CPI(M) rigged the polls unabashedly in 1990 with comrades brandishing pistols in broad daylight, Mr. Saha came to its rescue. The scene was a grim reminder of and even worse than the irregularities in the 1972 polls. Mr. Saha lent tacit support to Mr. Lakshmi Dey, currently chief whip in the state assembly and reportedly Rashid's mentor, when he tried to strengthen the CPI(M)'s base in the Muchipara area. Mr. Saha was accused of releasing a

notorious druglord of Barabanki by one of his deputy commissioners. It was Swapan De's desperate appeal for help during Satyajit Ray's cremation that paved the way for Mr. Saha's exit. Rashid, it must however be acknowledged, was not patronised by Mr. Biren Saha.

Mr. Talukdar's tenure has been tarnished by false promises and assurances. On several occasions, he reassured the Press that strong action would be taken against criminals stalking the city. But his dual attempts to pin Rashid in his own den failed to yield positive results. His tenure as police supremo has two black spots. A constable dared to rape a pavement dweller. A blast within 300 metres of the police headquarters and 500 metres of the seat of state administration, the Writers' Buildings, took a heavy toll. Mr. Talukdar has not been able to give up the strong political connections which evidently paved the way for his appointment.

For Rashid and his like, it has been an easy climb. Graft has achieved miracles. It has opened up new avenues and the floodgates of corruption. The CPI(M) discards these friends only when they cause nuisance. As long as Swapan Chakraborty delivered the goods in Kasba, there was no one to prevent his onslaught. But when Swapan Chakraborty began to consider himself bigger than the party, he needed to be sacrificed. It is the same story with Sridhar, the notorious criminal from Tollygunge, whom the present police chief failed to arrest during his year-long tenure.

Rashid's meteoric rise in the underworld followed a simple modus operandi. He believed in goodwill and used contacts to be introduced to another. He was careful in treading in the right direction. He first cultivated sources at the political level and then graduated to the zonal committee before taking a plunge for Alimuddin street. Similarly, while befriending policemen, he worked his way upwards from the thana level. Even after acquiring a base at the detective department, he attempted to rope in the services of the more corruptible among the IPS officers.

And policemen were easily entrapped. The same building at Bowbazar was frequented by hordes of them. Rashid knew that the criminal-politician-police nexus was the order of the day and only followed the rules of the game of which he was a master.

[Begin boxed item p I]

A den of rowdies

Two spacious rooms on the third floor of the detective department house the "controversial" anti-rowdy department. "Controversial" because the department has imbibed the art of doing exactly the opposite of what it is supposed to do, say Lalbazar insiders. It is sheltering rowdies and advising them how to carry on their activities without raising many eyebrows.

Corruption apart, the department suffers from the additional handicap of political pressure. Instructions are

continuously hammered from the top. No wonder then that the post of the assistant commissioner of the anti-rowdy section (ARS) is considered a prized one with policemen going out of their way to lobby for it at the right places.

The department, despite its limited activities, has increased in size. Previously, there used to be one assistant commissioner, four inspectors, 24 sub-inspectors and 25 constables. During the past three years, the number of sub-inspectors has risen to 49 while the constables number 125. They have all been shifted from other departments at the intervention of political leaders.

Earlier, police officers were appointed on the basis of their expertise. Now, their political connections are explored.

The job of an ARS [Agricultural Research Service] man is easy. In the evenings, he goes to redlight areas and satta dens in privately-hired cars and returns by midnight. Calcutta is then left to the mercy of antisocials and clandestine rackets prosper. An assistant commissioner even volunteered to forego his promotion to the deputy commissioner's post a couple of years ago.

The ARS has not been arresting any of the major rowdy elements over the past few years. The reason is not difficult to guess. Not only are the politicians issuing strong directives, the policemen's pockets are also being lined by the prospering underworld dons.

'Personality Cult' Claimed Destroying CPM

93AS0727C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
28 Mar 93 p 3

[Article by Mihir Mukherjee: "Veteran Marxists Disillusioned"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Veteran Marxists, who have been eagerly waiting for the announcement of the new party programme by the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)], wonder whether any preliminary work in this connexion has been undertaken at all. At the 14th party congress of the CPI(M), held in Madras in January last year, the demand for a new party programme in view of the changing situation was raised by the section of the delegates at the conclusion of the session.

It was pointed out that the last party programme, adopted at the Seventh party congress, held in Calcutta in 1967, had become obsolete. Besides, there had been more violations of the old party programme than its adherence on the ground that it was not relevant to the current situation. The CPI(M) is no longer in favour of a united struggle of the working class and peasantry against monopoly capital, both indigenous and foreign. Rather it is keen that big industrial houses set up units in West Bengal, the only State under its control.

A five-member drafting committee, which included Mr. Jyoti Basu and Mr. Anil Biswas from West Bengal, was set up to prepare a draft of the party programme to be placed at the Central Committee meeting. But at the last meeting of the Central Committee of the party, held in New Delhi in last November, no such draft was placed nor any discussion started.

The 14th party congress had also decided to organize an international seminar on ideological points of Marxism in May in Calcutta. There was some controversy at that time about the invitees to the seminar from within the country. But it appears now that there is little possibility of such a seminar being held, which would have helped party workers to clear a lot of confusion in their minds regarding ideological issues. All these have led to many party workers becoming anxious and perplexed.

Veteran workers of the party new sidelined, argue that the basic strength of the Communist party lay on the ideological conviction of its members. They lament that these days no ideological classes are held to train workers and inner-party discussions initiated from the grass root level. The old workers muse wistfully on how in earlier days ideological issues used to be thrown up by politburo, which were debated at the level of cell, branch and local committees, now known as zonal committee. There would be further discussions at the district committees, provincial committees and central committee. But all these have now become things of the past.

The meeting of the committees are held now. But the main purpose of these meetings is to chalk out plans to ensure the survival of the CPI(M) Government in power by frustrating all Opposition attacks against it. In the last party congress there was a slight criticism on this aspect and it was argued that too much stress on economism would lead to corruption. There was a reference in a Central Committee Resolution of 1991, which dealt with the collapse of Communism in East Europe, about suppression of people's movement and forceful imposition of Stalinist socialism in the satellite countries of Moscow.

The dedicated party workers allege that the CPI(M) is now suffering from a personality cult, which was faced by the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era between 1924 and 1953. The accusing finger point at Mr. Jyoti Basu, who as Chief Minister of the State for the past 16 years, has built-up his position in the party and usurped all decision-making powers. There is nobody in the CPI(M) now to challenge him and his position has further been strengthened with the death of veterans like Basavapunniah, Randive, Sundarayya, Harekrishna Konar and Promode Dasgupta. Mr. E.M.S. Namboodirpad, the lone voice of dissent in the party, has been relegated to the sidelines. Mr. Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the general secretary of the CPI(M), about whose many activities some party workers have reservations, has always had a good rapport with Mr. Basu. It is regretted by many party workers that there is nobody in the CPI(M) now to stand up to Mr. Basu.

It is stated that Mr. Basu is more dependent on outsiders than party workers for his decisions on administrative matters and national issues. In fact some outsiders and bureaucrats are closer him than party activists. A journalist, who died some time ago, had direct links with Mr. Basu and it was through him that many influential people established contacts with the Chief Minister.

This development of a personality cult in the CPI(M), the faithful Marxists think, had led to corruption in the ruling party and criminalization of politics. Some young leaders in the party, the names of Mr. Biman Bose and Mr. Anil Biswas are mentioned in this connexion, are stated to be against this trend. But their voice is feeble. They express their resentment within close circle but so far has not dared to raise their voice against the personality cult in any party forum.

The veterans of the party like Mr. Benoy Chowdhury and Mr. Niren Ghosh, a trade union leader, prefer to keep silent on this matter though they are known to be unhappy about these trends. The other discontented lot have also followed the footsteps of the veterans as they worry about their future once driven out of the CPI(M). A fear psychosis now grips the CPI(M). The situation is similar to the one prevailing in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era. But it took less than 40 years since the death of Stalin for the monolithic structure to crash, warn some party workers.

Female Members of CPM Said Joining BJP

93AS0727I Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
28 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] Calcutta, March 27: Swayed by the Sangh Parivar's Hindutva wave, a large number of women activists from the CPI(M)-led All India Democratic Women Association, are switching over to the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in north Indian villages in the aftermath of the Ayodhya demolition.

This was revealed here today by the association's president, Ms. Sushila Gopalan who came to address an open rally at Sahid Minar. The West Bengal unit of the association organised the rally on the occasion of its two-day 20th state conference beginning here from today.

Congress (I) Said 'Bent on Destroying Itself'

93AS0727B Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
27 Mar 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Lemmings in Congress (I)"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] A recent issue of the New Scientist suggests that volcanic eruptions—not an asteroid hit—hastened the extinction of the dinosaurs. That seems a particularly apt analogy for another present-day leaden-footed political animal which could begin an irreversible slide into oblivion if Mount Surajkund erupts around March 27.

Whereas political conferences generally act as a tonic, the forthcoming AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] session is being viewed by the party high command and the dissidents' lobby, particularly by the latter, as a marvellous opportunity to tighten the noose. Almost irrespective of the outcome, the Congress(I) will be the real loser, its authority dwindling even faster than its political strength. Already the peripheral forces are gaining in confidence to defy the Centre without trying to sugar the pill. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister has virtually ordered her administration to ignore Congress(I) leaders visiting the State. The Prime Minister and his trouble-shooters, whether Mr. Dinesh Singh or Mrs. Margaret Alva, have cut a sorry figure in trying to maintain the myth of an alliance with her. The lady is in no hurry to forge an alternative alliance with the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and Mr. Advani is well aware of the pitfalls but it needs to be said that perhaps never before has the Congress been so peremptorily dismissed and humiliated as in Tamil Nadu. Who let Dr. Subramaniam Swamy loose in the State has never been explained. The Left Front's unassailable power in West Bengal enabled it to have its way on Tripura and Mr. Narasimha Rao was widely perceived as caving in to hardnosed political pressure. The bureaucracies of the four States ruled by the BJP have been brazenly partisan towards their former political masters though these States are under President's rule.

If minor political forces have been tweaking the giant's nose, their inspiration is the infighting in the Congress(I) where the party president is finding it difficult to enforce discipline against his senior colleagues. The result is a comic bouffe opera in which the Congress(I)'s No. 2 man claims in public that his leader is incapable of holding two posts at the same time and makes accusations of telephone-tapping with an apology of a denial in Parliament. A former Chief Minister of Maharashtra accuses the Union Defence Minister of patronizing the underworld; yet both remain in the same party fold. The Union Home Minister and his deputy have been shadow-boxing for some time now and it would not be surprising if it soon degenerates into name-calling. With no personality in sight to put a brake on this mad scramble, the Congress(I) seems all set to begin a journey of precipitous decline from Surajkund. Even the choice of the venue seems ill-conceived; for a party in the thick of trouble the place is uncomfortably close to Panipat, or even Kurukshetra. Now that the battle of numbers has begun in right earnest, the party will be less capable of organizing a campaign on any issue or reclaiming territory it has lost to others. The dissidents too are a heterogeneous group with Mr. Argun Singh coming across as a man grasping at an opportunity without much concern for the party to which he belongs. It is not very likely that Mr. Rao will lose out but, if he does, the party will have to confront fissures that run parallel to geographical lines. If he does not, the confrontation may get more bitter on personalized issues. Either way, the

Congress(I) seems bent on destroying itself. The seeds sown by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi are now ready for harvest.

Tamil Nadu BJP Leader Forecasts Strong Alliance with AIADMK

93AS0727J Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 26 Mar 93 pp 30-31

[Govindacharya Interviewed by N. Sathiya Moorthy: "The BJP Will Fill the Void in Tamil Nadu"; italicized words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] could not have asked for more. Devoid of friends at the national level, the rift between the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] supremo and Tamil Nadu chief minister, the temperamental Jayalalitha, and the stoic Narasimha Rao has been a godsend for the beleaguered party. The signs have been apparent for a while now. Jayalalitha threw her weight behind the BJP by backing it at the pre-demolition National Integration Council [NIC] meet on Ayodhya in December. Similarly, senior AIADMK minister V.R. Nedunchezhiyan pepped up the morale of the Hindutva party after the aborted Delhi rally of February 25, by speaking of an alliance of the two parties at the Centre.

Despite all this, however, none would have thought that such a relationship was possible, given the backdrop of the AIADMK's "time-tested" alliance with the Congress. And if such an alliance has come into being, it is thanks entirely to the efforts of BJP general secretary K.N. Govindacharya and Janata Party President Subramaniam Swamy—who though they have been working against each other and at cross-purposes for the last six months, are both happy with the end result.

Subramaniam Swamy has been stealing the thunder in Tamil Nadu for over six months, now it is Govindacharya's turn to be in the limelight. With BJP leader L.K. Advani's Madras rally scheduled for March 21, and the break in the AIADMK-Congress alliance, Govindacharya talks of the BJP's plans *vis-a-vis* the other parties, including the one ruling the state. Excerpts from a forthright interview:

How do you envisage the BJP's emerging relationship with the AIADMK in the light of the party's experiences with alliance politics in 1977 and 1989?

Understandings and alliances are just part of electoral politics. The grammar of electoral politics is that in establishing relationships with others, one should not lose sight of one's own ideological moorings. Devoid of an ideological foothold, there is every possibility of the relationship degenerating into opportunism.

Nineteen seventy-seven was an honest experiment at forging a new path in Indian politics, but underestimation of factors like the cross-political ambitions of individuals, and other realities, led to its failure. Taking a

lesson from this, in 1989 the BJP was insistent on not shedding its ideological stance and not buckling under the pressures of the Janata Dal. The party's Phalhanpur resolution that year testifies to this. Reciprocity of conduct and commonality of interests made us pass the resolution despite the apprehension and misunderstanding among others. For instance, you have our decision to ally with the Shiv Sena and the demand for the Ram temple. Despite the Janata Dal's opposition, we passed the resolution.

Political understandings can never come off unless interests are common and the respect mutual. If a proper distance is not maintained, it could lead to subordination.

What will be the new equation with the AIADMK?

I have always stressed that our relationship with the AIADMK stems from the perception that the AIADMK is committed to weeding out terrorism and combating separatism. Jayalalitha's speech at the National Integration Council was an important cornerstone in our relationship. Her opposition to the dismissal of the governments in the four BJP-ruled states was one more positive step towards building up trust and mutual respect.

Now that the alliance between the AIADMK and the Congress is practically over, the second phase is yet to begin. That requires a cautious and patient approach. One need not pre-commit oneself to a particular type of political tie-up or understanding between parties.

The relationship can be solely for poll purposes. It can also be for joint action on certain issues, on which the approach and interests are common. In this, headway has yet to be made. For elections, relationships can take shape in different ways that depend upon the political needs and commonalities of interest existing then.

On issues like a common civil code, respecting majority sentiments and opposition to 'minority-ism' in politics, both the BJP and the AIADMK have a similar approach. But on the language issue, for instance, we have to candidly admit the differences in our respective approaches. Similarly, the differences between the political needs of the BJP's all-India image and outlook and the AIADMK's regional outlook and emphasis are also important factors.

What went wrong with the AIADMK-Congress alliance?

In my view, right from the '70s, the Congress had preferred to shed its ideological moorings and direction for immediate political and electoral gains. They never based their relationship with other political parties on an ideological base, power alone being the be-all-and-end-all of the opportunistic formula for alliance and understanding. It was short-term gain, but long-term loss. They preferred it that way, and invented excuses for their alliances with different regional parties and groups.

Can it be said that the BJP and its banned allies have won over a friendly administration in the state by moving closer to the AIADMK?

I don't agree with that pro-position. We have not won over anything. Our democratic functioning and adherence to peaceful methods, coupled with our principled and credible image, has won over the sympathies of all good persons from all walks of life. And that is our strength.

Yet, the state government might not have granted permission for the March 21 meeting of Advani...

No government with a democratic attitude could have denied permission for a political rally. Unfortunately, the Centre has tread on that path which is forbidden in democracy.

But similar complaints have been made against Jayalalitha too. Subramaniam Swamy says he was denied permission to hold public meetings on 17 different occasions...

At different times, reasons may be different for granting or not granting sanction to hold a public meeting or rally. I do not know the situation under which Swamy was denied permission. But I am of the opinion that political challenges should always be met politically. Suppressing the democratic rights of any political party has to be criticised.

And that's what the AIADMK government has been repeatedly charged with doing...

Anybody resorting to undemocratic methods has to be criticised and condemned, irrespective of political affiliations. Unfortunately, the BJP alone has evolved a code of conduct, but even we are finding it increasingly difficult to follow it unilaterally. This requires the collective attention and efforts of all political parties.

Coming to Tamil Nadu, there is a background to such conduct and behaviour. Even the dignity of women was not spared under the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] regime. This is very, very unfortunate.

What is the BJP's strength in the state?

Our all-India credibility and image and also the quality of our cadres in Tamil Nadu are our greatest assets. The decay of the Dravidian movement has created a political void, which could not be filled by the Congress or other parties for various reasons. The changing nature of the political atmosphere here over the last 20 years could not be appropriately gauged by others. The BJP aspires to fill this void, and that's the political space that is likely to be carved out for the party. Also, our ideological plank of decentralisation of power is capable of blending the all-India outlook and the imbalance in the relationship manifested in the form of regional aspirations.

What is your party's electoral strength in the state?

We feel we have been able to grow well in the Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Pasumpon, Thevar and Madurai rural districts in the South, and Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Dharmapuri in the West, and also in some pockets elsewhere in the state. Receptivity to the BJP among the masses has increased overall. We are now studying our strength at the grass-roots level.

In moving closer to the AIADMK, how do you propose to reconcile to the Dravidian party leader's habit of sidelining the local leaders of their national partner, and doing business only with the high command?

We are aware of this phenomenon. We will be able to tackle it effectively when we come to it. Our political character and style of functioning gives us the confidence.

Congress Leader Has Doubts About Aligning With DMK

93AS0721C Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 26 Mar 93
pp 1, 10

[Interview with S.R. Balasubramaniam by P. Jagadeesan: "There Is No Chance of an Alliance with DMK"]

[Text]

No Possibility for Aligning with DMK Says SRB

The Muslim League President Samad's statement regarding the legislative assembly bi-election for Ranipet Constituency deserve to be considered. Said S.R. Balasubramaniam leader of the opposition in the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly.

In a special interview with DINAMANI he said that at present there is no possibility of an alliance between the Congress Party and the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (Dravidian Progressive Foundation)]. Behind the scene dealings between Bharatiya Janata Party and the ADMK [Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] are becoming known little by little he said.

Here are a few excerpts from the interview:

Question: League President Samad has appealed to all the parties to give their support to the Muslim League candidate. Will the Congress give support to the League?

Answer: We respect the views of the Muslim League President Samad. But with regard to the election alliances, the role of the Congress in the election will have to be decided by our All India headquarters.

Question: Is there any possibility of restoring ties with AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]? In case it comes about, will your party people support it?

Possibility for Alliance with ADMK Slim

Answer: The Congress workers feel very much hurt. Jayalalitha had already stated that there is no chance at all for forming an alliance. So unless there is a completely changed atmosphere, there is absolutely very little chance of an alliance.

Question: Earlier in the bi-election of Thirupathur MGR [J.G. Ramachandran] on his own came forward to give his support to the Congress candidate, as the Congress won that seat in the general elections. Just like that at the Ranipet Constituency will you give support to the AIADMK?

Answer: It is not correct to say that MGR gave up the Thirupathur Constituency for the sake of the Congress Party. Indira Gandhi, in an appeal said that Congress had put up its candidates in the constituencies where Congress triumphed last time and asked all parties and people in Tamil Nadu to support our candidates. MGR voluntarily came out and supported our candidate. With regard to the Ranipet, elections our party headquarters will have to make a final decision.

Question: The possibility of an alliance with DMK?

Answer: At the present time there is no possibility of any such relation. On Karunanidhi's view.

Question: Karunanidhi said in an interview that due to an extraordinary atmosphere to protect the country, DMK, will examine the possibility of forging an alliance with Congress.

Answer: I believe he has pointed out that there are possibilities of non-religious forces joining hands. We have to prevent and put an end to the rise of religious fanatics. Otherwise these evil forces will endanger the unity of the country.

Question: DMK's Coimbatore Conference is called an anti-Hindi conference. Any views on that?

Answer: So far as the Dravidian movement is concerned, whenever its influence is sliding away, it always opposes the imposition of Hindi, making a hue and cry and creating fear among the people. The Congress Party also opposes the imposition of Hindi. Nehru's assurance on the language issue has always been guaranteed. Nehru promised that so long as non-Hindi speaking people want, the English language will continue to be in use.

BJP ADMK Relations

Questions: Is there any relation between BJP and ADMK?

Answer: Whatever happened between the two behind the scenes has been coming out little by little. Advani himself made clear that they are emotionally united. He also praised Chief Minister Jayalalitha at the public meeting held at Madras, saying that she was the only

chief minister who echoed the BJP views fully at the meeting of the national integration council.

So far as the Ayodhya's problem was concerned, BJP wants to build a sanctum for a temple for Rama at the spot under the central dome of the mosque that was razed. Advani claimed that Jayalalitha spoke in favor of that policy and this itself confirms the ties between the two parties.

The chief minister had earlier denied on the floor of the Legislative Assembly that she supported the policy. Advani's speech at Madras came after the chief minister's denial. Jayalalitha said in a way to mean that at the present time ties with BJP cannot be ruled out. From all these it seems clear that Jayalalitha is afraid to reveal in public her relationship with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

CPM Said Dependent on Criminal Elements

93AS0691B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
24 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by Tarun Ganguly: "Dangerous Liaisons"; italicized words as published]

[Text] The violent explosions in Bombay and Calcutta resulting in the loss of many lives left politicians with little choice but to disown links with the underworld. Already moves are afoot to shift the focus of the inquiries from the politician-mafia don nexus to a few underlings of the criminal bosses.

The arrest of a few smalltime operators is not the answer. It would only give a new lease of life to the perpetrators of the crime. They will get another opportunity to play with the lies of innocents.

The chief minister of West Bengal, Mr. Jyoti Basu, needs to answer to the people of the state why the police and the administration were ignorant of the stockpiling of explosives within half a mile of Writers' Buildings.

What were the intelligence agencies doing since the December riots? Why are known criminals not arrested? Who are the politicians who have no qualms about hobnobbing with underworld dons for political gains?

Every time violence breaks out political leaders solemnly declare no criminal will be spared, no matter what his political connections. But each time the situation reverts to normal, the police "forgets" about the arrests. There should be an end to this kind of police and administrative indifference.

That Mr. Rasid Khan, the prime suspect in the Bowbazar blast, is the principal vote getter for a Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] member of the state assembly from central Calcutta is no secret. But the party has never taken the legislator to task for this.

The police knew Mr. Khan ran an illegal *satta* den in the city. Yet, the police brass looked the other way. No

action was taken to close down the den, although it was located only a few blocks away from the police headquarters, Lalbazar.

It can only be hoped the deaths of so many people will compel the chief minister to ask the police to get cracking. However, the refusal to allow the Central Bureau of Investigation [CBI] to carry out a thorough probe indicates this may not happen. Mr. Basu cannot absolve himself of his responsibility by saying the Bowbazar blast had no connection with the ones in Bombay.

The December 1992 riots had exposed the inadequacy of the police in the state. After the demolition of the Babri Masjid Calcutta witnessed unprecedented violence for about a week. On the night of December 7 as many as 1,700 army men were out on the streets to quell the violence.

The CPI(M) in its party letter number one—circulated only among its cadres—this year admits fundamentalist forces and vested interests took advantage of the tense communal situation in December.

The document states that except in Tangra, Muslims caused the violence and arson. It maintains a section of Congressman along with the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee [AIBMAC] and the Muslim League were responsible for communal violence. The party admits even people who generally support the Left Front were carried away by emotion and joined in the arson and looting.

It is evident from the document the CPI(M) does not want to overlook the explosive situation.

What has perturbed the leadership is the understanding between fundamentalist Muslim forces and the Congress at the lower level and the growing influence of the Bharatiya Janata Party in refugee pockets, border districts and areas of mixed population. Cadres have been directed to wean Muslim masses from fundamentalist influence.

The document is a clear admission the party is aware it is skating on thin ice. A detailed plan of action has also been mentioned to combat the situation. But, all said and done, the party has not been unable to motivate the police and the administration.

No chargesheet was framed against the miscreant who created an uproar at the Keoratala burning ghat during the cremation of Satyajit Ray. He was released subsequently. In the past six months, at least half a dozen drug lords have been arrested and released without any cases being presented against them.

Bhalluk and Jhunnu, known criminals, may also be allowed to go scot free. After Bhalluk's arrest, a senior CPI(M) leader even threatened to paralyse Tangra if he was not released on bail.

Despite claims to the contrary the CPI(M) has become a prisoner of its own rhetoric. In public, the leaders swear

by Marxism. But when it comes to winning elections they become increasingly dependent on muscle power. In the last civic elections a number of party candidates in central Calcutta took the help of the local mafia to get elected. In assembly elections too both the Congress and the CPI(M), at least in central Calcutta, depend on underworld dons for votes. The explosion in Bowbazar has placed these elements in a somewhat unsavoury situation.

During the 15 years of Marxist rule, the police has become so subservient to the CPI(M) that it has virtually lost all motivation. The situation reached such absurd proportions on the night of the blast that no one in the administration deemed it necessary to inform the state chief secretary, Mr. N. Krishnamurthy, even two hours after of the incident. He learnt of the tragedy from a reporter late in the night.

It is precisely this kind of apathy and corruption that explains why no action is taken against the builders' lobby which merrily violates rules to construct multistoried buildings in congested localities. Drug lords flourish with the right political connections. Every violator of the law has a political godfather.

It is for the CPI(M) to clean up the state's politics. Going by existing norms it will not, however, be surprising if the kingpins of the underworld come overground and claim a share of the political cake. It is common in Bihar. West Bengal cannot be far behind.

All-India Congress Committee Meets 27-28 Mar

27 Mar Session

93AS0742A Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 28 Mar 93 pp 1, 28

[Article by Subhash Kirpekar: "AICC Okays Dual Posts for Rao"; quotation marks and italicized words as published]

[Text] Surajkund, March 27. The Prime Minister and Congress president, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, received overwhelming support from AICC [All India Congress Committee] members as was proved by his being authorised to nominate two members to the Congress working committee (CWC).

Further proof was the passing of the official resolution, endorsing the CWC resolution of February 9, saying that the "one-man," "one-post" principle was not applicable to Mr Rao.

Mr Vyalor Ravi of Kerala moved the resolution authorising Mr Rao to select two members for the CWC and this was seconded by Dr Jagannath Mishra of Bihar. The official resolution on the "one-man," "one-post" was moved by Dr Balram Jakhar and seconded by Mr Sharad Pawar, both CWC members.

Mr Arjun Singh, commenting on the resolution, said it would have been better if Mr Rao had opted for elections. Mr Sitaram Kesari said the decision, taken openly in the AICC, to authorise the leader was correct. He said those opposed to the party's decision could quit the Congress.

While Mr Arjun Singh was speaking there were some noisy scenes as Mr P. Shiv Shankar, Mr K. N. Singh and Mr Aslam Sher Khan began moving along the aisles towards the dais to oppose Mr Rao on the CWC issue.

They were finally pacified by some senior Congressmen including Mr Santosh Mohan Dev and the Haryana chief minister, Mr Bhajan Lal. Most AICC members submitted that the tall claims made by the dissidents over the last few weeks were collapsing.

The stark isolation of the dissidents was fully exposed and the futility of their exercise was evident. A week earlier, over 250 AICC members were supposed to be backing the dissidents. Last night, it was claimed, the number could be over 650.

Mr Narasimha Rao said, "members could have different views but my request is do not cross the '*lakshman rekha*' beyond which dissent becomes counter-productive. A divided Congress means a divided country. A divided Congress means an unstable country."

He urged those holding different views not to present a picture of disunity as that was not in the national interest. "There is mountain of work ahead. We are not Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi. From where can we bring them back? But their memory and their inspiration is what should lead us," he said.

PTI & UNI add:

"I want to say categorically, after patiently watching for several months, that the time has come to put a stop to such activities to enforce discipline without which no party can survive," he said.

In a scathing attack on the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], Mr Rao said the party "does not want Hinduism as a religion, per se, guiding the individual lives but as a vehicle over which they ride to political power."

Mr Rao indicated the government's intention to bring a comprehensive legislation to prevent use of religion for political purposes and sought the co-operation of all "in this crucial task infringing on nation's survival."

On the basis of study made so far, "it appears possible to think of legal provisions to prevent the use of religion for political purposes, without infringing the fundamental right of association," he said in his opening remarks at the two-day AICC meeting.

Various provisions of the constitution suggest that what was protected was the right to the freedom of religion and not the right to use religion and religious institutions for political purposes, he said.

"The constitution does not prevent the state from regulating such activities," Mr Rao who presided over the AICC said.

Describing this attitude of the BJP as "the exact anti-thesis of secularism," Mr Rao said, the hijacking of religion for use as a political and electoral tool has to be stopped forthwith.

This could not be done merely by persuasion because political parties generally do not "want to give up electoral windfall which they get simply by whipping up frenzy over a religious issue," he said.

Mr Rao asked his partymen to concentrate on elucidating some matters which have become medium and anti-Congress propaganda, they included uniform civil code, Article 370, family planning for all the education rights for minorities.

The civil supplies minister and CWC member, Mr A. K. Antony, today called upon his party rank and file to gear themselves to meet the challenge posed by the BJP-RSS [Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] combine.

Moving the political resolution at the AICC session, he said the "supreme task" before the country today was restoration of communal harmony which had been fractured by the activities of this combine.

Describing the demolition of the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi structure on December six by the "RSS-BJP-Bajrang Dal activists" as a "national shame," Mr Antony said it would take a long time to heal the wounds caused by the action.

He said the Central government had taken a "clear-cut decision" to meet the challenge of communal forces. An action plan against the BJP would be prepared soon, he added.

Mr Arjun Singh, made a forceful plea to the party high command to come out with an action plan to effectively fight the communal forces posing a threat to the country's unity and integrity.

Mr Singh cautioned the party against the nexus between the vested interests and the fundamentalists, saying the country would have to be saved from "this unholy alliance."

The links between the vested interests and fundamentalists smacked of fascism and if they came to power, it would be end of democracy, he warned.

"We have to hit them directly otherwise we cannot weaken them," he said.

Mr Arjun Singh was critical of the administration in four northern states under President's rule particularly in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. "We do not want to

misuse power but the administration in these states have not taken any firm steps to improve the lot of the weaker sections," he said.

Meanwhile the Congress today asked the government to carry out its liberalisation policy full steam and concentrate on the agriculture sector in order to generate surplus and achieve a near-full employment scenario by the turn of the century.

The economic policy resolution, which was unanimously approved by the AICC session here, set the immediate tasks and long-term policies needed not only to make India economically powerful but also to improve the health of its financial sector.

The resolution called for thwarting of 'nefarious attempts by fissiparous forces to destabilise the polity and strike terror in some parts of the country.' It asked the people to defeat such attempts so that the task of economic reconstruction could be pursued vigorously in an atmosphere of peace and harmony.

Participating in the debate various speakers endorsed that the immediate tasks were evolving a national employment strategy plan by the planning commission, an action plan to achieve higher exports and effective import substitution, reforms in the banking sector, increased credit limit for farmers and updating of land records.

Mr Pranab Mukherjee said the government would not deviate from the basic national objectives of social justice and poverty eradication while negotiating the Dunkel proposals.

Participating in the discussions on the economic resolution at the AICC session here, Mr Mukherjee stoutly defended the economic reforms, saying the prophets of doom had been proved wrong. The economy was on the right course of recovery and buoyancy, he declared.

Refuting charges that the role of public sector was being undermined, Mr Mukherjee pointed out that the functional areas of the public sector has been "shifted" to the development of infrastructure for power transport and communication.

He said the public sector should generate resources to expand its activities for the overall improvement of the economy.

Pawar on Bombings

93AS0742B Bombay THE SUNDAY TIMES OF INDIA
in English 28 Mar 93 p 1

[Article: "ISI Behind Blasts: Pawar"]

[Text] Surajkund, March 27. The Maharashtra chief minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, today said there was clinching evidence of the involvement of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in the March 12 bomb

blasts in Bombay and demanded declaration of that country as a terrorist state, reports PTI.

Addressing the AICC [All India Congress Committee] session here, Mr Pawar said that the investigations conducted so far had conclusively proved Pakistan's hand in the blast which left 250 dead and over 1,200 injured.

He said those who were involved in the blasts were given training near Lahore and Rs [Rupees] 15 crores were spent for purchase of explosive material and for making other arrangements.

Mr Pawar said the conspiracy was to set off a series of blasts in other parts of the country with the objective of creating communal riots and to disrupt the nation's economy.

He said it was reassuring that the Bombay police had seized the entire explosive material sent for disruptive activities. "Every ounce of this explosive material has been accounted for and now there was no fear of any major explosion."

As he was making this point, a section of the crowd shouted and wanted to know about the Calcutta explosions.

28 Mar Session

93AS0742C Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 29 Mar 93 pp 1, 28

[Article: "Congress Clarion Call To Fight Sangh Pari-var"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Surajkund, March 28: The AICC [All India Congress Committee] session today sounded the bugle for the party to prepare for meeting the challenge of communal forces in the country spearheaded by the BJP, particularly in the four states of U.P., M.P., Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, where assembly elections are to be held this year by November.

The Prime Minister and the Congress president, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, undoubtedly emerged triumphant from the two-day session and acquired pre-eminent position where his leadership cannot be challenged. There is little doubt that Mr Sharad Pawar, Maharashtra chief minister, played a significant role in tilting the scales in favour of Mr Narasimha Rao, whom he repeatedly referred to with respect and affection.

Mr Rao's frontal attack on the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] while summing up the two-day discussions dispelled the notion that he was soft toward it. The Prime Minister's speech, for one thing, carried the clear message that Mr Arjun Singh, the human resource development minister, was not the lone champion, in the party itching to fight communal forces. Mr Rao almost said: 'we are the real champions.'

The Congress would probably give more teeth to its proposed aggressive psychological warfare against BJP propaganda when a special session of the AICC is held soon after Mr Rajiv Gandhi's martyrdom day on May 21 is observed. The main agenda is the panchayati raj and local self-government system by which the Prime Minister lays great store.

In terms of loss and gain, while the Congress and its president were immensely strengthened, Mr Pawar appeared to have travelled a great distance in one year from Tirupati. He drew applause for several of his observations on Pakistan and the ISI [Inter-Service Intelligence], communal forces and BJP-Shiv Sena, and on party affairs.

Seemingly, Mr Pawar's stock had gone down in the capital following his relinquishing the defence portfolio and returning to Maharashtra. But his swift action following he multiple Bombay blasts and his role in trying to defuse the situation in the party in Delhi and here, together with the expression of his views is easily understandable. Hindi, saw him virtually stage a come back as a leader with a national status.

On his arrival from Bombay in Delhi, Mr Pawar had driven from the airport straight to 1, Race Course Road to discuss the problem of dissidence with Mr Arjun Singh. On his way to Bombay today, he again stopped at Mr Arjun Singh's residence to have a chat with him. Mr Pawar also spent almost five hours from near midnight on March 26 with Mr K. N. Singh and other dissidents to persuade them to give up their idea of a protest fast at the venue of the AICC sessions. In retrospect, the isolation of the dissidents who were just about a dozen would suggest that they should have known when to need good advice and end their brinkmanship.

The Maharashtra chief minister, while winding up the debate on the political resolution, ruled out a ban on the BJP and the Shiv Sena as proposed through an amendment by an AICC member from Bihar. Mr Pawar said that banning an organisation was not a solution. "We will fight the battle politically and ideologically," he said stating that the Congress had been fighting communal forces even before Independence and after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

He disagreed with Mr Arjun Singh's contention that unity without a purpose did not exist in the Congress today. Unless there was unity and discipline in the party, how could it achieve its goal? How could anyone say that the Congress had no objective? he asked. There was always the objective, at all times, of the party carrying the nation forward through its policies, principles and programmes, he said.

Noting that partymen were facing different kinds of challenges in different states like Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Maharashtra and the four states ruled earlier by the BJP, Mr Pawar complimented the workers for keeping the party flag high against all odds, despite killings of partymen in Punjab and J & K.

Mr Pawar accepted an amendment moved by Mr S. S. Ahluwalia in the political resolution. The member wanted immediate action on the Verma commission report on Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. At the Tirupati sessions, Mr Ahluwalia had successfully moved an amendment to a similar resolution demanding a ban on the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam].

Mr Arjun Singh made a tactical retreat on sensing the mood of the AICC members on the first day of the session. But the fact that a large number of partymen surrounded him as he came down from the dais after speaking on the political resolution yesterday, suggests that he is a force and cannot be written off as his critics would like to think. On the second day today, he came late and did not speak but denied that he had been marginalised. Whether his clout has been reduced or not in public after the AICC sessions, will be seen when he goes campaigning in Madhya Pradesh.

Among those who attacked Mr Arjun Singh directly or indirectly in their speeches were the Punjab and Haryana chief minister, Mr Beant Singh and Mr Bhajan Lal, respectively, Mr Priyaranjan Das Munshi, Mr Tarun Kanti Ghosh, Mr S. S. Ahluwalia and Mr H.K.L. Bhagat, Mr Arjun Singh remained cool.

Mr S. B. Chavan, Union home minister, who was prominent in Tirupati, did not make his presence felt in this session.

Foreign Affairs Resolution Passed

93AS0742D Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 29 Mar 93 pp 1, 8

[Article by Janak Singh: "AICC Deplores Pak Attitude"]

[Text] Surajkund, March 28. The minister for external affairs, Mr Dinesh Singh, said here today India was strong enough to fight Pakistan but did not wish to exercise this option because the people of Pakistan sincerely desired friendly relations with people of India with whom they share much of the history and culture of the sub-continent.

While moving the resolution on international affairs at the AICC [All India Congress Committee] meeting, the minister said it was wrong to assume that India did not go to war with Pakistan because of weakness. The more important consideration of good neighbourly ties prevented the government from taking any precipitate action even though there was little hope of improvement in bilateral relations between the two countries.

What was aggravating the situation was Pakistan's persistent attempts to sponsor terrorism in Punjab, Kashmir and other areas. "While India stands for resolution of disputes between the two countries by dialogue in terms of the Shimla accord, it is doubtful if any fruitful outcome as Pakistan's improvement in terrorism in India continues to expand," Mr Singh said.

Another thing queering the pitch of friendly relations between the two countries was the fact that Pakistan's government was divided and facing serious internal problems. There was a growing tendency in Pakistan to blame India for the problems the country faced. "Notwithstanding these difficulties we have to go on trying in the hope that sober and saner elements would come to the fore in Pakistan and see the futility of confrontation with India," the minister said.

Tracing India's relations with other neighbouring countries, the minister said India's image had suffered on account of the Ayodhya happenings and the recent communal riots. But there was a realisation abroad that under the leadership of Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, the country would be able to pull through these difficulties. Not only that, India's prestige had gained because of the sound economic policies introduced to tone up the sagging economy during he past two years.

Mr Singh said the country's foreign policy was often the reflection of internal strength. Because of the realisation that India has embarked on the road of prosperity now, there was greater respect for the country. It was amply reflected in the visits of foreign dignitaries during the past few months. India's relations with the U.S. were also improving and there was frequently mutual consultation whereas this was not the case in the past.

India favoured strengthening of the U.N. and also wanted its neighbouring countries to make SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] a more vibrant and vigorous body. While other neighbouring countries also favoured strengthening of SAARC, Pakistan was still lukewarm about it. However, there was a resurgence of the Asian spirit and identity as visualised by Gandhiji and Nehru when India hosted the Asian Relations Conference in 1947.

Mr V. N. Gadgil, Congress spokesman, who seconded the resolution, said in the rapidly changing international scenario India had come to command respect and dignity which was denied to it in the past. The ruling party favoured strengthening of the Security Council with the induction of India, Japan and Germany as its new permanent members.

This was important in view of the changed geo-political and geo-economic situation today. Unless the international organisations reflected the true global picture, there was every danger of these becoming redundant. The League of Nations collapsed because it did not reflect the power balance existing in the world then.

Mr Gadgil said the Congress was not happy with the Human Rights Commission also. In fact, this organisation had become the champion of the human rights of terrorists and did not bother to see the plight of their victims.

When the resolution was being discussed, some AICC members protested that it did not contain any reference to the problems created by people from Bangladesh or to

the question of dual citizenship. The Prime Minister and AICC president, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, assured them that the government was examining both the questions and in view of the concern expressed by members would also consider these issues at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee.

The resolution which was passed unanimously made a broad review of the country's relations with its neighbours to emphasise the point that barring Pakistan India was "winning friends and influencing people" all over the world under the Congress rule. The resolution also called upon the government not to bow or bend with regard to signing of nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Consistent with its political and strategic interests India should be prepared to steer any non-proliferation proposal that is non-discriminatory and takes care of the security interests of all the countries.

The resolution took note of the breakthrough in improvement of India-China relations achieved during Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Beijing in 1988 and reinforced by the visit of the Chinese premier, Mr Li Peng to India. Among other things it said the AICC is confident that this process will pave the way for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the long standing border question.

Dealing with the Prime Minister's visit to Japan and Nepal, the resolution said Asia must take full advantage of the emergence of Japan as one of the most decisive players in the global economy, of the unprecedented high rates of growth attained in East and South-East Asia, of the great oil wealth of West Asia, including Iran and of the immense potential in human resources.

The resolution reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation in South Asia through SAARC, in accordance with its charter. "The AICC urges a return to peace, tranquillity and prosperity in Afghanistan with the cooperation of all its people. It once again expresses its concern over the continuing incarceration of Madam Aung San and her associates who had secured the people's mandate in Myanmar.

Regarding the continuing ethnic strife in Bosnia, the resolution said it clearly shows what could happen if narrowminded chauvinism of ethnic and religious prejudices are allowed to determine state policy. The AICC commended the solidarity shown by the government with the people of Somalia. Also, resolution drew attention to the stumbling blocks in the path of dismantling apartheid and the establishment of a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

The resolution appreciated the government's efforts in reorganising and revamping the conduct of foreign policy to better serve national economic goals. In this context, the major thrust being given to the upgrading of India's relations with such major global economic powers as the European Community is of special significance.

Economic Policy Resolution

93AS0742E Madras *THE HINDU* in English
28 Mar 93 p 1

[Article: "AICC Resolves To Banish Unemployment by 2000"; boldface words as published]

[Text] Surajkund (Haryana), March 27. The All India Congress(I) Committee today resolved to banish unemployment in the country by 2000 AD and urged the Government to direct the Planning Commission to present a concrete strategy for a national debate to attain the goal.

A 13-page draft "economy policy resolution" moved by the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. D. Tiwari, for the consideration of the delegates at the session while fully backing the new economic policies of the Narasimha Rao Government has made out a case that these initiatives are the best bet to tackle the twin problems of unemployment and poverty. Interestingly, there is no reference in it to the concept of Nehruvian socialism.

Economic reforms: It makes laudatory references to the reforms initiated in several sectors of the economy and asserts that under the leadership of Mr. Rao, India can look forward to emerge as a major player on the international economic scene. It seeks to allay the apprehensions voiced by critics that these policies would convert India into a colony of multinationals with their urge for political domination and goes on to list seven points in support of its contention. "The impact of the new economic policies will be just the opposite to what the prophets of dooms are advocating," it said.

Stating that people from different walks of life should be involved in the national debate on banishment of unemployment, the AICC [All India Congress Committee] urged the Government to launch the plan "Employment-for-all-by-2000" at the earliest to harness the full potential of available resources and energies.

Explaining the rationale and philosophy during the new economic policies the document has said the Congress(I) economic policy over the years has been "dynamic crystallisation" depending on the needs of the country from time to time. It says there is a thread of continuity in these policies aiming at the same goals—faster growth, self-reliance, poverty alleviation and social justice.

The document has said in keeping with the global trends and the needs of the country the role of the State is being redefined. It would mean that "the State would withdraw from areas where the private sector has sufficient capability and focus more on employment creation and welfare spending."

It has maintained that as a result of the new policies the Government could allocate more funds to sectors like agriculture, rural infrastructure, poverty alleviation and employment generation programme in the recent Budget presented to Parliament.

Manmohan's speech: The Union Finance Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, who seconded the resolution expressed the confidence that if the country followed the present economic policies vigorously by the end of the century it would emerge as a front-ranking nation. He took the opportunity to assure that interests of the working class and weaker sections of the society would be protected as part of the policy in structural reforms.

However, some of the speakers were not impressed by the speech of Dr. Manmohan Singh and urged the leadership not to be guided by the market philosophy alone in its approach to new economic policies. Veteran trade union leader, Mr. Samat Mehta, has complained that the economic resolution sounded like budget speech of Dr. Singh in parliament and wondered whether the Congress(I) was meant to endorse his speech or to provide the lead in shaping of the policies. He pleaded for more welfare-oriented policies.

Communist Splinter Groups Form Confederation

93AS0745A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA*
in English 22 Mar 93 p 7

[Article: "Communist Splinter Groups Unite"]

[Text] Thiruvananthapuram, March 21 (PTI): A national confederation of six Communist groups, which have broken away from the two mainstream Communist parties over the years, has been formed here at the initiative of the communist Marxist Party (CPM).

The confederation, which was formed at a meeting yesterday, consists of the Orissa Communist Party (OCP), Marxist Kendra (MK), United Communist Party of India (UCPI), Marxist Samanuaya Samiti (Bengal) (MSV), Marxist Communist Party of India (MCPI) and CMP.

The CMP leader and Kerala cooperation minister, Mr M. V. Raghavan, the UCPI leader, Mr Mohit Sen, Mr Ajay Routh (OCP) Dr Somanta Hera (MCPI) and Mr Sasankar Kaul (MSV) were elected as conveners. The UCPI leader and the Lok Sabha member from Tamil Nadu Mr D. Pandian, was also present.

The leaders said the confederation's main objective is to fight communalism and foster unity of social democratic forces in the country.

Fight For Leadership of Bihar Janata Viewed

93AS0730C New Delhi *JANSATTA* in Hindi 28 Mar 93
p 2

[Article by Surendra Kishor: "The Quarrel Within Bihar Janata Dal"]

[Text] Patna 27 March. The political warfare between Lalu Prasad and Sharad Yadav has reached its decisive round.

According to sources within the Janata Dal, Ramai Kaka, the president of Bihar's Janata Dal, is fighting with Lalu Prasad on behalf of Sharad Yadav. The Sharad-Ramai-Nitish camp is attacking Lalu Prasad quietly. The chief minister's camp retaliated and bloodied the Sharad camp.

The Sharad-Ramai camp has appointed Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav Ravi, the Rajya Sabha member, as election officer for the party elections. The chief minister's camp, however, has rejected Dr. Ravi's appointment. The chief minister's camp has also declared the coordination committee to be unnecessary and threw it in the waste basket. Sharad Yadav, the Janata Dal secretary general, established a seven-member coordination committee during his visit to Patna in the first week of February. This committee was formed to establish cooperation between the party and the government. The goal was to remove differences between Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar.

The differences between these two leaders were not removed, and the coordinating committee was declared dead. There is a confrontational situation now. Ramai Ram, the state party president, is trying to make one kind of decision in his meetings, and Chief Minister Lalu Prasad is making a totally different decision in the Janata Dal legislators' meeting. All decisions are opposed to each other.

Officials and district chairmen of Bihar State Janata Dal met (at Ramai Kaka's official residence) on 14 March. A decision was made to continue the membership campaign until 27 March. However, in the party legislators' meeting held on 18 March at the chief minister's residence, they decided to continue the membership campaign until 31 May. A state minister alleged in the legislators' meeting that Ramai Kaka was cheating in the membership registration.

According to informed sources, Ramai Kaka silenced the pro-chief minister members by ruling out that only the district chairmen were permitted to speak in the party meeting. The voice of Ramai Kaka supporter was also suppressed in the legislators' meeting. It was announced in the legislators' meeting that the seven-member coordination committee was unnecessary. Anger was also expressed at Ramai Kaka's high handedness in forming a district Janata Dal committee without the chief minister's input. The legislative group instructed Ramai Kaka to form a district committee with the chief minister's input. The chief minister said in the legislators' meeting that establishing these committees without much thinking could result in many new problems. These committees should be formed, keeping the next elections in mind.

The political tug-of-war between Lalu and Sharad Yadav is over control of the Janata Dal. According to informed sources, the chief minister's camp feels that the Sharad-Nitish camp is using Ramai Kaka to control the Bihar Janata Dal. Their purpose is to nominate candidates of

their own choice during the next elections. The chief minister's camp, however, is aware of this strategy. Lalu Prasad is trying to foil Ramai's efforts through the legislative group. The Ramai-camp accused the legislative group of unnecessarily interfering with the party's work.

The major issue is over the recent decision to appoint Dr. Ramendra Kumar Yadav Ravi the election officer. Ramai Kaka did not get the chief minister's approval before he sent Dr. Ravi's name. Ira Sejhian has been appointed election officer for the national organizational elections of the Janata Dal. Mr. Sejhian wrote a letter to the state Janata Dal presidents on 21 October 1992 asking them to send three names for appointment to the position of state elections officer. Ramai Kaka, the Bihar Janata Dal president, sent three names, after consulting with Sharad Yadav. These were: M.A. Fatmi, Chhedi Paswan, and Dr. Ramendra Kumar Ravi (Rajya Sabha member). The central committee approved Dr. Ravi's name.

The chief minister's camps became very upset at Dr. Ravi's appointment. The chief minister's camp has been angry at Dr. Ravi from the day he vacated the Lok Sabha seat from Meghpura for Sharad Yadav. Dr. Ravi had not consulted Lalu Prasad before doing this. It should be known that the chief minister's camp did not want Sharad Yadav to strengthen his hold in Bihar. The danger is visible now and the chief minister's camp alleges that Sharad Yadav is causing problems for the chief minister. Meanwhile Dr. Ravi is supporting Nitish Kumar's campaign. Nitish raised his voice in support of the Karpuri formula in job reservations last January. Lalu Prasad had already announced the decision to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendations in Bihar.

Chander Bhushan Dube, general secretary of Bihar State Janata Dal, told the JANSATTA that Ramai Kaka did not follow the high command's instructions in sending the panel of names to Delhi. It would have been better if Ira Sejhian had determined that his instructions were followed before he approved Dr. Ravi's name. Mr. Sejhian had instructed that the panel of names be prepared by the state Janata Dal's working committee or the core committee. This working committee does not even exist and the core committee has only two members—the chief minister and the president of the state Janata Dal. However, the state president did not consult the chief minister.

According to informed sources, Ramai Kaka has proposed the names of people to lead the Student Janata Dal and the Youth Janata Dal who openly work for the Sharad Yadav-Nitish Kumar camp. He did not consult the chief minister in this affair either. One Janata Dal commented on the Ramai-Lalu debacle that Lalu Prasad had replaced Ram Sunder Das, a person with a weak spine, with Ramai Kaka, who is spineless, as the president of Bihar Janata Dal last year. However, Ramai

Kaka is standing erect now with the help of Sharad Yadav. Sharad Yadav is acting behind the scenes in this fight.

This is causing problems for the chief minister. He is waiting for Chandra Shekhar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, and Ajit Singh's parties to merge with the Janata Dal, so he can replace Ramai Kaka with someone else as the state party president. Sharad's camps are opposing his effort to replace Ramai at this time.

Meanwhile, a chief minister camp member asked Ramai to relinquish one of the two positions he was holding. He is also the state's welfare minister.

Janata Dal Leaders Said Beginning To Put Pieces Together

93AS0730A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 18 Mar 93
p 9

[Article by Kumar Anand: "Those Who Tore Janata Dal Apart Have Now Begun To Put it Back Together"]

[Text] New Delhi, 17 March. Now that the very existence of the party is threatened, the feuding leaders who had joined forces under the Janata Dal banner in 1989 are trying to put the pieces together. The efforts are focused at joining the factions led by Somappa Rayappa Bommai, Chandra Shekhar, Ajit Singh, and Mulayam Singh Yadav. Even Ajit Singh, who is very close the Congress party, is not opposed to these efforts. Meanwhile the changing situation within the Janata Dal is also calling for unity. In spite of this positive atmosphere, the route to unity is very long and complicated.

The directors of this unity are Ramakarishna Hegde, Karnataka's former chief minister, and Biju Patnayak, Orissa's chief minister. Bihar's chief minister Lalu Prasad also supports it. He has talked to the Samajwad Party's Mulayam Singh Yadav several times. The changing equation of the Yadavs' politics in Bihar is also the cause of this effort. This also happened because of the emancipation from Sharad Yadav's shadow and becoming his opponents. The Janata Dal leaders have always considered Sharad Yadav an opponent of cooperation with Mulayam Singh Yadav. The separation of Lalu Prasad has reduced Sharad Yadav's influence on the Janata Dal.

In order to implement the plan to unite, a committee composed of Biju Patnayak, Ramakarishna Hegde, and George Fernandes was formed within the political affairs committee on 12 March. Meanwhile, Chandra Shekhar, the Janata Party (S) president, presented the topic of unity in the 12 March meeting of the working committee. He is said to be prepared to join the Janata Dal or collaborate with it. Recently, he talked with V.P. Singh three times. V.P. Singh's participation in public affairs is almost zero now because of kidney problems. According to Janata Dal leaders, his attitude has changed because of his poor health.

The new efforts for unity were started in the beginning of February. Mr. Patnayak invited Chandra Shekhar, V.P. Singh, Mr. Hegde, and Ajit Singh for dinner at Orissa Bhawan. Ajit Singh, however, did not attend the dinner, but came over later. Later, Chandra Shekhar visited V.P. Singh. Former parliamentarian, Santosh Bharatiya, helped set up this meeting. The third meeting was held at Chandra Shekhar's residence during the Iftar banquet. According to Satya Prakash Maulaviya, secretary general of the Socialist Janata Party, the talks are still in their initial stage. According to our sources, Chandra Shekhar has asked that Subrhaynam Swami, the Janata Party president, also be included in this political equation.

These sources also indicated that Biju Patnayak had talked to Mulayam Singh. However, is unity possible seeing how Mulayam Singh is acting? In response to this question, Janata Dal legislator Mohan Singh said that Mulayam Singh was opposed to unity even in 1989. He was not willing even to attend the meeting held in Malvalankar Hall in Delhi. Arun Nehru and Aarif Mohammed brought him around and told him that he would be made the chief of Uttar Pradesh. He agreed at this point. However, he came to the meeting alone. Therefore, if a solid situation develops, he will also join them. Perhaps, he wants to be assured about his own situation.

Ajit Singh has talked to Biju Patnayak and Ramakarishna Hegde three or four times. Some of his associates are also pressuring Ajit Singh. However, he is also feeling the pressure of the case filed by the Lok Sabha president over the 20 Lok Sabha members. Ajit Singh was totally opposed to the Janata Dal in the beginning; however, the situation has changed. If these developments are accelerated, the Congress party will lose still another backer. What did Patnayak and Hegde discuss with him? Ajit Singh replied that they were all discussing that the anti-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] votes should not be divided. Question: Are they trying to unite the 1989 Janata Dal again? Answer: We all want the party to unite. I was expelled from the Janata Dal the last time. Not only northern India but southern states like Karnataka will also be influenced by this unity. Question: How successful were the talks? Answer: There is a lot of time for the elections. Everyone knows that the elections will not be held before November. Not only Janata Dal, the Congress party is also checking on its situation in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and other states.

Ajit Singh also had talks with Kanshi Ram recently. George Fernandes talked with Rasheed Massaud. According to the sources, several Janata Dal leaders in Uttar Pradesh want to include Ajit Singh in this unity. The reason for this desire is not just the political situation in western Uttar Pradesh. They feel that it is necessary to balance Mulayam Singh. Meanwhile, it is said that Mulayam Singh wants V.P. Singh to talk directly with him and assure him about the future plans. Meanwhile, Mr. Bommai is also ready to talk with Kanshi Ram. According to Harkishore Singh, the Janata Dal spokesman, the attitude of the members and the

pressure of the present atmosphere points to unity. The average members of the Janata Dal factions were feeling this for a long time, now the leaders have also begun to feel that way. Therefore, we should be optimistic about it.

According to Satya Prakash Maulviya, secretary general of the Socialist Janata Party, Biju Patnayak had talks with V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar and discussed the importance of unity because of the present situation about a month ago. Bommai, Hegde, and Dev Gauda were also present in the second meeting. The question of joining the Socialist Janata Party with the Janata Dal in Karnataka was also raised. However, later it was decided since they were discussing unity at the national level, doing it at state level was not appropriate.

George Fernandes has always been associated with the socialist movement and has called a meeting of various leaders in Hyderabad for 20-21 March. Chandra Shekhar and Satya Prakash Maulviya are also attending this meeting. This meeting is also trying to unite. In the invitation, George has mentioned the post-Ayodhya incident situation in the country and expressed his fears about the lack of unity and the possibility of a civil war in our country. At the same time, he asked them to attend the meeting to discuss the future political situation in the nation.

Congress (I) Split Seen Possibility

93AS0729B Varanasi AJ in Hindi 25 Mar 23 p 6

[Article by R.C. Pandit: "Let Not Congress Government Be Split Asunder"]

[Text] The feeling of insecurity that people are feeling after the worry and warnings from the bomb blasts first in Bombay and Calcutta, and then in every corner of the country, has not only shaken up the government, but also the legislature. Everyone in the Lok Sabha is saying that the terrorists shook up the whole of Bombay within one and one-half hours and the intelligence agencies could not inform the leaders and cabinet members in the government. They ask: What could be more saddening and pathetic than this? It is being said in political circles that, if some international power is behind this, then the carelessness of the government still is its inefficiency. The incidents in Bombay and Calcutta are an embarrassment to the whole nation and the failure of the government system has become a worrisome question for the prime minister and the ruling party. Discussions at high levels continue about this. In order to raise confidence in the Lok Sabha, the prime minister, the home minister, and the additional minister of state for defense explained that a plan has been sent to the states from the Center to deal with such situations. However, we cannot ignore the truth, that is that we must strengthen the higher officials who are responsible for coordinating the efforts of intelligence units and administrative agencies to enable the intelligence agencies to work more effectively. It was also

suggested in the Lok Sabha that a cabinet level committee be formed to oversee the work of the intelligence agencies. The government rejected this suggestion, because every cabinet member has the right to get information about these agencies. If a cabinet member hesitates in getting information, this would be useless. Rajesh Pilot gave his own example of how he used to get any information about Kashmir when he was the minister of communication. Still, the opposition members were disappointed at the statements given by the home minister and others.

Mamta Banerji, former Congress (I) cabinet member, said that the Mafia, which is stronger than the state governments, is controlling the states. The government does express regret over such incidents, but the accusation of inefficiency against the government still stands. The opposition repeatedly asks the government to declare how protected our country is. They demanded that subversive elements be dealt with with a strong hand because Lal Krishna Advani, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the opposition leader, claims that the country's enemies can do whatever they want in any part of the country. These enemies are confident that the Central Government lacks the willpower and the ability to implement its policies to control them.

In spite of the fear of still another bombing conspiracy and the wave of dissatisfaction rising within the Congress, P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Congress president and prime minister, is still confident that he will, in time, be able to take control of the situation. He was observed to be depressed over the news of the Bombay incidents last Wednesday; however, he still looked confident that he was going to overcome the situation. However, it is a common practice to show such courage in the prime minister's outer camps. However, he cannot hide his helplessness in a closed room. His supporters are concentrating all their efforts to deal with this situation during the All India Congress Committee meeting to be held at Surajkund. It is hard to say at this point how this situation will be changed by the meeting scheduled for 26-28 March; however, the possibility of moving these dates cannot be considered unthinkable. This Congress (I) meeting is taking place at Surajkund, after many years, and its historical importance is related to the fact that the last time they had this meeting in Surajkund, the veteran Congress leaders considered this site to be a bad omen. How true was that prophecy? No opinion can be expressed about it. Still, the prime minister of Haryana and his government is working around the clock to make this convention successful and to oversee the decorations of the five-star hotel they will use. Only the future will tell what results this meeting will have; however, the area in and around Faridabad is being totally overhauled. Streets are being changed, routes are altered, and homes are being torn down. The opposition leaders have criticized all these efforts in the Parliament and in public. Mr. Bhajan Lal, the Haryana chief minister, has openly declared that no home was torn down. If Bhajan Lal is honest, then why did Digvijay Singh, the Socialist Janata

Party legislator, accuse the government of dislodging 5,000 persons in Mithapur village, while building a new road leading to the convention site? Why did Legislator Yashwant Sinha announce a sit-in in Mithapur village? Mrs. Heptullah, the vice president of the Rajya Sabha, has asked Margaret Alva, legislative state minister, and Abrar Ahmed, minister of state for finance, that this situation be clarified to all cabinet members associated in this affair. Even after the Congress (I) Working Committee has turned down the dissident members' requests related to the issue of one-person-one-position and holding the conventions before the budget session, the dissatisfied faction of the party is still active in creating a disfavorable atmosphere for the leadership. As a part of this effort, they are asking that a commission be established to investigate corruption, nepotism, and fraud at all levels of the party. This demand is considered simple, but a lot is hidden in its depth. The party leadership has shown its political shrewdness and has gradually removed all cabinet members and leaders who have been publicly attacked for corruption. The supporters of the prime minister believe that, if the dissidents are using this demand for one-person-one-position just to force the demand for establishing a commission to investigate corruption, the dissidents will lose badly. Their belief is based on an informal statement made by the leader of the dissidents. He said that, if the prime minister has special privilege to have more than one position, then demanding the establishment of a commission to investigate corruption is the next step for him. Therefore, it is possible that the main purpose of this proposal is only to confuse the leadership. If such a proposal is not accepted, the credibility of the party becomes suspect. When this issue was discussed with some perceptive leaders of the party, they said that the dissident members should not forget they are not fully honest themselves. It clearly indicates that the dissidents who are making noise now will be quiet when the time comes. This tendency is evident if one turns the pages of Congress Party's history. The signature campaign that the dissidents had started last week is losing momentum as the convention dates approach. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's name was also brought up in this context. The purpose was simply to get Sonia Gandhi angry and open her debate with Rao. However, when Rao visited Sonia Gandhi in his frustrations and asked her for support, she rejected him, asking him to keep her out of this quicksand. She said that she would respond to the request to address the convention later. Mr. Rao had the opportunity to say in response to a question raised by Arjun Singh that Sonia Gandhi has agreed to take action against the people who are trying to blacken the name of the late Rajiv Gandhi. It should be remembered that Rajiv Gandhi was accused of endorsing BJP policies and of having encouraged the BJP the same way as Rao is doing now. It is surprising that the government is risking its pride for following democratic principles while involved in banning political rallies. The opposition is accusing the government of suppressing the people's political rights behind the facade of communal goodwill. Such accusations were made in the Lok Sabha by Janata

Dal's Ramvilas Paswan, Congress party's Jagjit Singh, Pawan Kumar, George Fernandes, Lok Sabha's opposition leader Lal Krishna Advani, and left-wing's Somnath Chatterji. They all wanted to know why rallies were banned. The government stopped BJP's "national awareness" rally and then stopped Prakash Singh Badal's rally in Jalandhar. The Central Government asked the Tamil Nadu government to ban the BJP rally in Madras. The whole opposition asks if this practice reflects the imposition of emergency rule or a prelude to it.

In the context of restricting rallies and seeing the mood of the whole opposition, Vidya Charan Shukla, parliamentary proceedings minister, had to say that all fears about an emergency rule being imposed are unfounded. He gave assurances that the government is opposed to imposing any kind of restrictions on the democratic rights on political parties.

During the discussions, it was sensed that the Congress and the ADMK have grown apart, and that Jayalalitha was leaning toward the BJP. However, it is not fully clear what will happen tomorrow. Jayalalitha has not expressed any opinion about ADMK-BJP collaboration. However, it was observed in the Lok Sabha during the discussions on the Bombay bombing on Monday that the ADMK members did not raise their hands in support of the Congress (I) during the voting. The opposition would have won if Ajit Singh's group had not supported the Congress Party. At Jayalalitha's loud declaration that she is able to win the elections on her own, the prime minister's supporters are trying ceaselessly to make sure they do not lose Jayalalitha's support. Recently, Jayalalitha met with Lal Krishna Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi, Sikandar Bakhat, and several other opposition leaders. Now political observers are wondering if Vidya Charan Shukla and prime minister's political adviser, Jitendra Prasad, would be able to control this situation.

Congress (I) Future Seen Uncertain, Unclear
93AS0729A Varanasi AJ in Hindi 25 Mar 93 p 6S

[Article by Vijaylakshmi Trivedi: "Has Congress Become Directionless?"]

[Text] After completing 100 years of its political life, the Congress (I) is standing on a new crossroads today. The Congress (I) is tormented not only by the aggressive attitude of the rival parties, but also by the increasing number of dissatisfied members within it. The internal dissatisfaction of the Congress (I) is also evident now. After seeing this internal discord of the party and struggle for power of its members, one wonders if this party of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi will face yet another split. Will the Congress be able to protect its greatness, which was earned by its dedication during the struggle for independence? Will it continue to move away from the people because of the attacks of its members against the party high command?

It has been the Congress Party's destiny that it had to depend on the Nehru and Gandhi families for leadership. After Sonia Gandhi's refusal in June 1991, the Congress party had no alternative left. In desperation, the central leadership of the Congress was given to Narasimha Rao. Most of the Congressites did not want a person who could not even get a ticket to run for the Lok Sabha when Rajiv Gandhi was alive be given the leadership of the party. Some leaders raised this question again when Mr. Rao was to be elected parliamentary leader. These leaders know that Mr. Rao's being an option for leadership was not possible, however, they did not stop their attacks.

After the 6 December Ayodhya incident, the non-BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] opposition parties and the dissatisfied Congress faction accused Mr. Rao of causing the unfortunate incident of Ayodhya because of his wrong policies. Had he made a good decision in time, the nation would not have faced this calamity. Mr. Rao could neither stop that unwanted incident from happening, nor could he take any steps to stop such incidents from happening in the future.

The BJP wants to hold mid-term elections as soon as possible to reap as many benefits as it can. It is clear that the BJP will use the post-6 December political situation and the resulting strife within the Congress party for its own political gains. It will not miss any opportunity that helps it get into power. How can the Congress, which is suffering from internal strife, counter the BJP challenge, which is surrounded by internal discord and hankering for power. Even though the prime minister has announced in many public meetings that there is no need for mid-term elections, this possibility seems more feasible because of the way the situation is changing. We are afraid that the country will be forced into unwanted mid-term elections. At present, the non-BJP opposition does not favor holding mid-term elections. That is why the mutilated Congress Party is somehow pulling the country in spite of the struggles within and without it.

On one side is the anti-Rao campaign, which is collecting signatures to convene an All India Congress Committee meeting immediately. On the other hand, there is the statement of seven Congress Rajya Sabha members accusing those who want to become leaders of breaking up the party. This is enough to establish that the Congress Party has inner conflicts.

A look at the internal discord and conflict within its leadership indicates that neither the satisfied nor the dissatisfied members of the Congress Party have any worry about the effect of this fray at the Center on the average members and the voters.

The vocal criticism of the party policies heard during the party conventions held in Haridwar and Allahabad in January as part of the strategy formed by the central command also focused light on the strife within the party. It has become so bad that Mr. V.N. Gadgil, the

general secretary of the party, had to announce that there are no problems within the party.

After the Bombay riots, the Congress (I) members revolted against the chief minister of Maharashtra and demanded his immediate resignation. There was a big fight with bolster pillows and fists during the 12 February legislative group's meeting. Those who revolted against Sudhakar Rao Naik were the supporters of Pawar who had once appointed Naik to the position of chief minister. Moopnar, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, and H.K.L. Bhagat were named to control the riots within the Maharashtra Congress that followed the Bombay riots. However, they returned without being able to control the situation. Finally, Mr. Pawar, the defense minister, had to defend Maharashtra by becoming its chief minister for the third time.

The struggle for leadership at the top was still going on when the situation in Tamil Nadu over the question of Hindi language became explosive. Even mutual relationships were severed. It is clear from the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections from 1977 to 1991 that whenever the Congress party wins in the north, it has to face disappointment in the south, and whenever it is successful in the south, it has to gamble its election glories in northern India. If we were to have elections today, the BJP could defeat the Congress in a direct competition for votes. At the same time, the BJP will not miss the opportunity to attract Jayalalitha and the southern voters by ignoring its Hindi language policy. It is not possible for the BJP and the ADMK [Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] to collaborate over the question of Hindi; however, the BJP will not consider compromising its policy over Hindi too expensive in order to gain power. If this happens, we cannot deny the possibility of the Congress Party's situation in south India becoming even more precarious. Moti Lal Vora and K.V. Thangabalu have been sent to Madras to analyze the situation and to get Jayalalitha's support. To satisfy their impossible-to-appease desire for changing leadership, the Congress people have shot their own feet by starting this campaign against Narasimha Rao. All in all, there is not one state in the country where the Congress people are not fighting among themselves. The episodes in Andhra Pradesh and Tripura clearly show that the number of rebels in the Congress Party are increasing daily.

Though late, the ruling Congress Party has tried to control the situation both at the government and party levels. Restructure of the central cabinet, recruitment of new faces in lower ranks, and appointment of some veteran leaders to vacant cabinet positions are part of this effort.

The veteran party leader, Narayan Dutt Tiwari, has emphasized the importance of party unity because of the present political situation and while preparing for the convention of the Congress (I) at Faridabad on 27-28 March. Still, we cannot deny the possibility of dissatisfied Congress members' challenging Narasimha Rao's leadership again during the Congress (I) convention.

They may have the goal of removing Narasimha Rao from the party presidency, if not from prime minister's position.

At this time, it appears that the personal preferences and interests of the Congress (I) leaders are undermining the global institutional interests of the party. At a time when the nation's ideology, unity, and communal harmony are being attacked continuously, all Congress (I) leaders should show their unity and try to resolve their mutual misunderstanding through talks. How can the people believe that major national problems can be resolved, when talks within political party cannot even resolve problems among its membership? An average Congress Party member is badly confused now because of the struggle within the Congress Party and war of statements issued against each other.

Recently, when pressure was put on the party to discipline K.N. Singh, the leader of the dissatisfied faction, there were indications that pro-Rao leaders would not let the rebels raise their voices either in the party or in the legislature. Narayan Dutt Tiwari, Bihar's Jagan Nath Misra, Sitaram Kesari, and Dinesh Singh are leading this campaign.

Analyst Reports on CPI Organizational Congress

93AS0746A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
26 Mar 93 p 8

[Article by V. Krishna Ananth: "The New-Look CPI"]

[Text] The Communist Party of India [CPI] is all set to have a new look party structure. The special organisational congress was held recently at Thrissur amidst the flux in the national political scene and the purported aim was to gear up the party organisation to face the multifarious challenges ahead.

The resolution adopted in this regard was to abolish the Central Secretariat and restrict to two terms the period during which leaders could continue to occupy their positions in the party forums. The CPI claims that these changes will go a long way in reactivating the party which, on its own admission, had gone into an inertia in the past. The inertia, according to the party general secretary, Mr. Indrajit Gupta, was in spite of "opportunities knocking at the doorsteps—be it the problems facing the farmers, working class and all such constituents of a progressive people's movement."

Critical of the inertia, Mr. Gupta urged the delegates to "set the house in order," instead of shedding tears over the developments in the erstwhile socialist bloc. The question, however, is whether the decisions taken at the session will help in gearing up the party, especially in the wake of the growing communal challenge and the state of affairs in the Congress(I).

Will the new look party structure remove the inertia and help in the expansion and consolidation of the organisation? Similarly, is the new structure more democratic as argued by those who favoured this change?

Such questions are significant because the two-tier party structure is a reversal of what was chosen in 1958, when after a series of debates, the CPI adopted a three-tier leadership structure. In fact, this was one of the differences within the CPI and when the split took place in 1964, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] preferred a two-tier structure—the Politburo and the Central Committee. It was the considered opinion of the CPI at that time that democracy in party organisation could be ensured only by having a three-tier structure.

In a sense, what happened at Thrissur was a reversal of an understanding arrived at three decades ago. Far from being a hindrance to democratic functioning, the three-tier structure, according to a large section of the delegates, was responsible for the shrinking influence of the party.

While this was the overall spirit of the arguments, the immediate provocation that kindled the arguments for and against the need for a change in the party structure was provided by the developments in the former Soviet Union. Mr Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika found their reflection in the CPI too. Demands were raised by a section to remove the phrase "democratic centralism" and in its place adopt "democracy" as the guiding principle in the leadership structure of the party.

Unlike the CPI(M), which continued to put up its "in the fettle" image and managed to retain the conventional form as far as the party structure was concerned, the virtual disintegration of the Eastern bloc created a stir in the CPI. Dependent on the CPSU [expansion not given] for funds, ideological legitimacy as well as party structure, the CPI came to be dogged by the developments there.

The stir was so intense that the 15th party congress of the CPI held at Hyderabad in April 1992 witnessed concerted moves seeking to amend the preamble of the party constitution. The changes sought were to replace "Marxism-Leninism" with "teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin," and more importantly, replacing "democratic centralism" with "democracy" alone.

Even while these moves were "averted," the section demanding a change did succeed in pushing to the fore the demand for dismantling the nine-member central secretariat and restricting the number of terms the party leaders could remain in office. This took place even while a significant number of those at the helm of affairs in the party had wished such a demand away.

For the first time ever in its history, the established leadership in the party had to concede the demands made from the floor of the congress. The special congress at Thrissur was a mandate of the Hyderabad party congress. The two lines—on whether to maintain status

quo in the party structure or to adopt a "two tier" structure which was considered to be more democratic—also were debated at block, district and State levels of the party immediately after the party congress in April last.

On their own admission, the party was divided on the issues and the division was vertical, with a majority of the leadership sticking to retaining the status quo. The majority opinion in the 31-member Central Executive Council when it met before the Thrissur session was to retain the "three-tier" structure. In their opinion the complex nature of political developments does warrant a compact Secretariat above the CEC [expansion not given], which is a larger body.

This, however, did not carry weight in the special congress where a majority of the delegates did feel that democratic functioning of the party suffered with the three-tier structure. The Secretariat was accused of usurping the powers of the CEC. The criticism, in a sense was that the "Stalinist party structure" that was shown its way out in the former Soviet Union had no place in the Communist Party in India.

A much more "democratic structure" in their opinion could pull the party out of the inertia. What was missing in the entire exercise was that the protagonists of this change did not care to acknowledge the fact that the option made in 1958—switchover to the three-tier structure—was a mistake. It was indeed strange that the Communist Party should refuse even a cursory glance at its own history.

Now that this has been sanctioned, much to the displeasure of the established leaders, will the party wriggle out of the stagnation? This indeed was the moot question that came to the fore and despite the confidence expressed by the pro-changers that "the message of the Thrissur session was the determination to activate the cadre and a will to fight," it remains to be seen whether the party will be able to expand its spheres of influence.

It is indeed strange that the changed structure, consisting of a 21-member National Executive Council (NEC is the new name to the erstwhile CEC) at the helm of affairs could help in ensuring a more democratic functioning. Strange in the sense that, by its very composition, the NEC will consist of members from all over the country and thus inhibit all its members from being present at the party centre. This in turn will leave at the hands of the general secretary, all immediate decisions to be taken, considering the pace at which political developments take place.

In a nutshell, far from ensuring democratic functioning, the new setup has much more potential to encourage decision-making by a single individual—the general secretary. Seen in the wake of the sharp criticism that the Secretariat had perpetuated its will over that of the National Council and powers of the lower bodies were usurped by the top brass, the alterations made have only set the ground for restricting the scope of democratic functioning further.

The other aspect that attracted one's attention was the influence of the party. There could be no two opinions that the CPI's presence is marginal in many parts of the country and even where the party could claim an electoral appeal, it is in combination with other forces such as the CPI(M) in West Bengal and Kerala and the Janata Dal in Bihar.

It is pertinent to look at the call given by Mr. Indrajit Gupta at the Thrissur meet that the Left parties including the Indian People's Front (IPF), an outfit of the CPI(ML)-Vinod Mishra faction, should assert themselves "to resist the inconsistencies within the Janata Dal and other partners in the National Front."

This brave face that was put up is far from reality—that the influence of the Left is restricted to pockets in West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala. Similarly, despite repeated overtures, the IPF has consistently refused to go ahead with a political alliance with the CPI and the CPI(M). That the very first party congress of the CPI(ML)-Vinod Mishra faction held in Calcutta recently resolved to build an alternative to the Left coalition in West Bengal is sufficient indication of this, despite some instances of joint campaigns against the new economic policy in the recent past.

Far from these, the wranglings that were witnessed in Bihar during the elections to the State Assembly as well as the Lok Sabha between the CPI and IPF are not very old. The sort of animosity raised on issues of seat adjustments are sufficient indication that Mr. Gupta's call can at best be wishful thinking.

Cho Retracts Praise

[93P50161B Madras THUGLAK in Tamil 1 Apr 93 p 5]

[Prominent Southern Indian Political Analyst 'Cho' Ramaswamy Brings To Light 'False' Reporting By INDIA TODAY]

[Text] Cho Ramaswamy: In the last issue of THUGLAK, I commended INDIA TODAY reporting on one of its commentaries. It had been written in a manner that refuted BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] claim that "any Hindu temples in Kashmir have been demolished."

There were many vivid pictures included in the commentary. In addition to this there was a very small item included as an interview of Advani, which showed him not answering satisfactorily their queries regarding this matter. I believed it and had written so also. When I met Advani, I asked him for an explanation. He said, "It shocks me that people like you believed that reporting. Take the photos they had published for instance. They had focussed on the unaffected portions of the temples only. They had purposely avoided showing the demolished portions. The commentary itself was not based on facts. A minister from the Congress (I) Party itself has admitted to the Parliament that 39 temples have been destroyed in Kashmir. Even the PUCL [People's Union for Civil Liberties], which is always highly critical of us,

has indirectly admitted to this in its report. INDIA TODAY has been clever about the whole thing, that's all."

"When a reporter from INDIA TODAY wanted to ask me about this on the phone, he was asked to come and meet me in person. But he wanted to speak to me in a rush and my assistants gave the phone call to me. That reporter asked me, 'How many temples were destroyed in Kashmir? What are the details of this?' He did not mention that he planned to publish that telephone conversation as an interview, nor did he say that it was my opinion he was seeking on this issue. Since he had wanted the number of temples brought down, etc., in order not to be inaccurate, I told him those details were not in front of me just then, and that I was preoccupied with another matter, which I was, when he had called. That's all that happened in truth. He went ahead and published it, as if it were an official interview, and as though I were not facing up to the issue. This is very wrong. My party's statements on the destruction of Hindu temples in Kashmir are factual." I am left wondering if I had praised the INDIA TODAY commentary too quickly!

CPM Seen Sympathetic, Protective of Criminal Elements

93AS0749C Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA
in Bengali 7 Apr 93 p 4]

[Artical by Shivdas Bandhapadhyay: "Anti-Socials Have Found a Playground in Calcutta Due to CPM's Providing Them a Safe Outpost"]

[Text] The recent explosions in Bombay and Calcutta have thoroughly baffled the investigating agencies. There is no doubt on one issue—the job was done by criminals, some of whom are scattered and others belong to mafia groups. It cannot be said that the real culprits have been identified or the causes established.

The impertinent and reckless attitude of the smugglers, organizers of gambling dens, has stunned everybody. It should be remembered that they are at the height of their power at a time when the fire of communal tension is burning all over the country. Moreover, the share scam has proved that crime has now gained a socio-political legitimacy. Big crimes like the share scam, unconstitutional crimes like the destruction of the Babri Mosque, and the increase in the number of social crimes like rape all point to a special trend.

The poor, unemployed people of West Bengal have witnessed that capitals are being transferred from Calcutta and its surroundings; the city is becoming a rubble and those on whom they bestowed their hope for a new age have turned into selfish and opportunist souls. Like Bombay, Ahmadabad, Surat—the incidents that are happening in Calcutta are, therefore, expressions of a political degeneration. Since independence, political parties and leaders traditionally did this to embarrass or triumph over each other by any means for the interest of

election politics. That disease has now spread all over the social fabric, especially in the remote corners of urban life. The government administration has sold its own independence to politicians; the judiciary, too has not been able to retain its impartiality.

The goons in Calcutta started to gain social legitimacy after the pre- and post-partition communal riots. At that time, circumstances compelled both the communities to depend on these goons for the protection of their lives and properties. Some of them acquired fame and repute as saviors of one community or the other. In return, they extracted a lot of money. From those dark days until now, no conscious efforts have been done to sever the unholy alliance between these goons and a section of the public, and, over time, with the ruling party's politicians. In the beginning, Congress alone enjoyed the benefits of this alliance. Later, the Left Front internalized that tradition; the CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has taken advantage of the alliance since the middle 1970s.

At first, there was the same logic for the CPM to win over these goons. In the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, the Marxists were, on the one hand, the target of the radical Leftists, such as the Naxalites, and on the other, the target of the staunch Rightists, such as Ranjit Gupta. The CPM tried to induct these lumpen local youth for their muscle power only to safeguard its existence. They joined in the force to save the lives of honest and ideologically faithful CPM workers.

In later years, this connection blossomed into a multi-level and multifaceted affair. It is certainly a matter of credit that the CPM, after capturing power, did not allow its cadre to become vengeful and reigned them in, in spite of sacrificing so much blood in the past. In fact, the CPM did not stage any notable incident of political vendetta after the landslide victory in 1977. Even their rival Congress Party was surprised. At that time, it was possible because the party was not that big; it could be controlled. The discipline and order among the party workers and their security guards were strict.

The party's size expanded tremendously after this. And there is a quantum leap in the party's connection and proximity with the goons. The goons' help was necessary not only to consolidate election victory, but also the goons equally needed political patronage. The union of mutual interests remained intact. The incidents of the Alam brothers or the Rashid story has openly uncovered the character of this alliance and connection. The ideological debate in the party that took place at the Salkia plenum did not help much. Whether the party could be run with the help of these goons, whether the party could use them in resisting future electoral attacks—these complex references were not addressed. The problem was allowed to become wide and deep, consciously or inadvertently. There are an abundance of these examples in the industrial surroundings of Calcutta, in the fisheries of northern and southern 24 Parganas, in the border districts like Darjeeling and Murshidabad. The party

leadership used these goon leaders either to protect their bases or to ransack their rivals' bases. In return, these goons got open license for earning money as promoters.

The second level CPM leaders (such as Kanti Ganguly, Tarun Gupta, or Kanai Kundu) have come up through this process. Many of them are in important posts in the party from where they can influence the administration, especially the police. At one time, the CPM's Murshidabad district committee had 10 such members against whom there were police cases. This type of examples are many. This proves what sort of decadence has crept into the CPM.

At the beginning of the 1980s, from the penumbra of light and darkness, these young "workers" or their elders went straight to the dark side and there was a spurt in robberies in and around Calcutta. The rest changed into "revolutionaries" or "Leftist goons." Not everybody among the leadership was uninformed about the result of using this dangerous process basically for self-defense and self-development. They judged that the Congress vote had become somewhat stable, which means the lumpen goons have mostly tilted towards the Leftists. Secondly, the party now has upper class representatives who are also busy with many shady deals. This has made the party's problems deeper and more complex. These new-comers have quickly become close to the leadership of the party in Calcutta and several other districts. A section of the state leadership expressed doubt in this matter from the very beginning. Their order was not to extend more patronage to them. But who cares for orders! The late Pramode Dasgupta also harbored such doubts—the attempt to alienate and expel these new-comers would perhaps hamper the party. Neither he nor Jyoti Basu ever said—enough is enough and no more patronage to these anti-socials. That's why the party could not enforce the discipline today that it applied in 1977 when it did not allow the party to attack the Congress.

In the post-1987 days, the so-called business class started to spread their influence inside the CPM. Certain leading personalities of Calcutta's business circles are included in this list. Many partymen ask: Why does the party need so much money? Simultaneously, the entente among the police, CPM, and the anti-socials blossomed and gained force in such a way that the party has developed the habit of closing its eyes to any kind of illegal activities, except murder.

The Rashid story has projected the present crisis of the CPM beautifully. It has been known through party sources that Rashid used to provide cars and money to most of the bureaucrats and politicians, which were mostly forms of deferred payment-in-kind or expressions of gratitude. Literally, the CPM has turned itself into a safe haven for the anti-socials and has increasingly become dependent on the police and become greedy for money. Now, it is not possible for the party leadership to tackle the goons without touching the partisan patrons seated in high posts of the party and government. In

Calcutta, the party leadership has to be revamped thoroughly. The Rashid incident has shown clearly that the task—though not impossible—is daunting. The release of the goon leader, "Bhalluk," arrested on charges of conspiring in the communal riots, is another glaring example. They are scot free because, either the police did not properly file the chargesheet against them on time or the lawyers failed to submit that chargesheet in court on time. Is that possible without the political, administrative orders?

Party sources have admitted that Rashid has the blessings of a senior and top leader of the Calcutta District Committee who happens to be a member of the Secretariat. Badsha Alam was also like this. This entente was developed to stop Omar, leader of another mafia group. But another senior leader of the CPM's Calcutta District Committee, State Council and State Cabinet deals him with a special favor.

In this situation, the small group that is trying to break this alliance among the police, politicians, and the anti-socials is facing a daunting task. Because, their counterforce in the party, known as the Realists, is no less powerful. If they, in fact, proceed adamantly to break this unholy entente, it would become a struggle between the theoretical ideologist and the Realists. That would be a fight to defeat the forces of time, because the Realists are winning now. But it is the last chance of the leadership to cleanse themselves. They should understand how their friendly mafia dons could stop the metropolis momentarily. So it will not be wise to waste the chance of restraining them.

Cho Interviews BJP Leader Advani

*23P50161A Madras THUGLAK in Tamil 1 Apr 93
p 4-5*

[Interview of BJP Leader Advani by Prominent Southern Indian Political Analyst 'Cho' Ramaswamy Interviews Chief Opposition Party BJP's Leader Advani: "Advani Says: 'I Have Not Yet Spoken to Jayalalitha About an Alliance'"]

[Text] Cho Ramaswamy: "I met Advani recently, when he had come to Madras. We discussed many matters. There was the usual clarity in his thoughts and decisiveness in their expression. I had not requested an interview with him specifically for publication, and yet once we started talking, many facts came to light that merit publishing. I have given below sentiments expressed by him which were definitely not "unpublishable."

Advani firmly believes the Pakistanis were responsible for the explosions in Bombay. I asked, "Has this destruction been the work of Islamic fundamentalists or the result of a conflict between two warring illegal organizations, would not the targets have been different?"

Advani said, "Yes. Those who targetted Bombay's commercial nerve-center could not have based their action on Islamic fundamentalism. Two mutually hostile

underworld organizations also have no need to choose these targets. This looks like the maiden effort in uprooting the Indian economy, and no one other than Pakistan comes to mind who could justify that. Some others may have helped, but it is only Pakistan that carried it out."

He continued with regret, "It is too much to say that the government must have seen this coming and prevented it, but it is unpardonable that the government procrastinated and was generally so inefficient after the event that the culprits could get away so easily." He felt that the Calcutta blasts seemed different from the Bombay incident. In his opinion, that may well have been the result of hostilities between two warring unconstitutional organizations. We discussed also the 6 December happenings in Ayodhya. He said he was also sorry that it happened. [cf. to the demolition of the mosque by the karsevaks]. He said that he was determined that was the site of Rama Temple, but was unhappy that it had to come to this. He added, "At the same time, the way the Government and the media acted following the event, helped me forget my regrets. Our governments in some states were dismissed; many papers demanded that our party be banned; we were described as religious fanatics; we could not convene public meetings; organizations like the R.S.S. were banned; the widespread campaign of disinformation against us... all of these combined together made me think. It was a planned defamation campaign, based on lies; blatantly unconstitutional activities; anti-democratic bans - in comparison to these, I truly started wondering if the one act of desperation by the karsevaks, who had been utterly dismayed and disillusioned because of not getting any justice, was that much of a crime, or just the unavoidable result of the Government's own indecision and indifference? When the outfits elected to keep justice and to govern impartially do not carry out these responsibilities, then it is natural that the people will try to install justice back in the system. That's what happened in Ayodhya also.?" I asked, "Then, won't everyone dissatisfied in some way with the Government start taking the law in their hands? Won't that lead to small groups forming to decide issues on their own without regard to the elected Government, leading to anarchy?" He replied, "That's true. It is highly undesirable to have crowds delivering justice as they please. That's what displeased me about Ayodhya. But, we have to try and understand emotionally and mentally what the state of the karsevaks had become by then. Everyone must comprehend the danger of the desperation resulting from complete blockage of justice in the proper channels. When establishments continuously ignore their responsibilities, people lose their faith and

confidence in them. Having lost their faith in the capability of the establishment, they set out to serve themselves. It is not just the indifference and nonchalance shown by the Government prior to the incident in Ayodhya, but also the partiality, injustice, and deception that followed the event only help reiterate this." "Now the Muslims have also started realizing this. Majority of the Muslims have started realizing that under the guise of leadership, many self-serving individuals are showing them the wrong direction. This is a good sign," said an optimistic Advani. Advani said BJP's support was growing in the southern states, and I asked if he saw an alliance with AIADMK coming. He explained, "There has not been another opportunity for a contact between us since the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister met with me in Delhi. There has been increased co-operation between our parties in the Parliament. No definite step has been taken towards an alliance between our parties. If such a proposal is advanced, our position is that we are prepared to examine it." In describing the state of the Center, he said, "Narasimha Rao's government is facing daily uncertainties. I am not saying that Congress is going to crumble and fall. But, there are plenty of opportunities for this administration to fail. Didn't Chandrashekhar's administration come down with the mere issue of a constable? In the same way, just one small straw is all that is needed for this one to come down, that's how weak and eaten away it really is." I talked with him at length about a misgiving I have had for sometime. I asked, "There are very few true leaders today in this country. It is my opinion that only Chandrashekhar and you have the capacity to become primeministers in the future. But then, sometimes you make stage appearances in the company of saints and sadhus [religious men]. It is very embarrassing. Is this a desirable association? If you become obliged to them now, and later become politically successful, won't they demand a voice in the parliament, and cabinet posts?" I elaborated my fears further. Advani listened to me patiently and then replied with conviction: "Your fear is baseless. The sadhus are not expecting anything political from us. There is not even a likelihood of any demands or directives emanating from them. This is exactly how we were portrayed as the slaves of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad once, but did anything come of it? Were there seats kept aside for the V.H.P.? This is the result of the disinformation campaign being conducted against us. There need not be any fear that any of this will ever happen. I was convinced that Advani absolutely did not want any such opinion forming about the BJP. That's good. Advani comes through as a person of conviction, and displays clarity of thought. He does not lose his temper even in the face of confrontational questions. It is in the favor of the nation to honor such classy statesmen. In the interest of both himself, and the country, he should reduce his associations with religious representatives. I am optimistic that this will happen.

More Trade With Central Asian Republics Sought*93AS0743A Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
10 Mar 93 p 13*

[Article: "India Seeking Better Trade Ties"]

[Text] New Delhi—The Indian industry is exploring possibilities for exports, investments and joint business opportunities in three Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

According to Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which has sent a 12-member delegation to these states of erstwhile U.S.S.R., the Indian industry has a good potential of supplying textile machinery, agricultural machinery, power sector, mining, components, commercial vehicles, office equipments and software etc.

In a bid to establish greater trade and business association with these countries, CII has developed links with various organisations and institutions in the Central Asian Republics. These organisations have played a crucial role in chalking out the programme of the CII delegation which includes interaction with industrial undertakings and senior government officials in the Central Asian Republics.

The delegation of Indian business would meet President of Kyrgyzstan, first deputy prime minister and foreign trade minister of Kazakhstan apart from other government officials.

Several members of the delegation are themselves keen to form joint ventures with businessmen in the three Central Asian Republics for tannery shoes, garments, automotive components, textiles and financial services etc.

Though these countries are going through economic difficulties, they would offer good opportunities for business and trade once their economies are back on the growth path.

Several developed countries have evinced keen in expanding their trade links with the countries which were a part of the erstwhile U.S.S.R.

West Bengal Budget Attacked as 'Unconvincing Fiction'*93AS0727G Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
23 Mar 93 p 8*

[Article by Alok Chatterji: "To Err Is To Be Left Front"; quotation marks and italicized words as published]

[Text] The 1993-94 West Bengal budget was not path-breaking. It was not expected to be. The state finance minister, Mr. Asim Dasgupta, was not only hamstrung by the past profligacy of his own government but also the resource crunch arising out of the Centre's attempts to set its own fiscal house in order.

The state's finances could have improved had Mr. Dasgupta resolved to do away with the costly and very poorly thought out policies that ostensibly promote welfare. However, the minister has chosen not to disturb the holy grail of misguided Marxism. The budget imposes taxes on white goods. This avenue of raising money has the additional qualification of being "politically correct"—taxing the rich.

As for the poor, the budget sees no reason to disbelieve doles, even relatively meagre doles, to the disadvantaged will do them good. They do not. Neither does the loudly proclaimed decentralisation in the budget. What the minister claims will put decision making in the people's hands actually amounts to increasing the remit of the panchayats. These are rural organisations by no means free of corruption, hierarchy and elitism.

Mr. Dasgupta, however, added a twist to the "power to the people" tale. While severely censuring the Centre for its new found penchant to privatise, he announced during the course of his budget speech the West Bengal government has been implementing and will continue to implement a different form of withdrawing bureaucracy from economic activity. Decentralisation without private initiative or enterprise from big capital.

The 1993-94 budget is not the first time this vision of an alternative strategy has been raised. The state's plan proposals under the eighth five year plan contained a similar message. Essentially, the strategy rests on creating purchasing power for the people through encouragement of small farms and business.

To counter the charge that this is pure baloney inspired by socialist romanticism, there is the argument that, in West Bengal, small is productive. For proof, there is a statistic—small peasant farms account for 70 per cent of agricultural land holdings in West Bengal. The all India average is a mere 29 per cent.

Not surprisingly, this figure reveals more than it conceals. The proportion of small farms are, at best, an indication that the state had a relatively successful land reforms programme. A laudable achievement. But one that has exhausted its potential in terms of increasing productivity.

Hence the increase in foodgrain production, from 7.6 million tonnes in 1976-77 to 11.8 million tonnes at present, in the state must be put in the proper perspective. Both from the point of view of the performance of states such as Punjab, Haryana and Andhra Pradesh and the plateau that West Bengal has reached *vis a vis* food production.

The attraction to tailor facts to meet one's ends is strong. Especially so in the case of a finance minister who has to explain away some very uncomfortable facts. The "decentralisation and land reforms programme" is the myth the Left Front uses to divert attention from agricultural stagnation.

Discrimination and conspiracy—principally attributed to New Delhi—is the official explanation for the serious lack of industrial investment in the state. That the labour problems of West Bengal invite comparison with anarchical industrial relations, that the state's infrastructure is among the worst in the nation has not been admitted.

Instead, we have been treated to brazen untruth. The budget claims there is a "new potential of industrial revolution in the state". By way of evidence, the 1992-93 *Economic Review* for West Bengal points out the large numbers of industrial entrepreneurs' memoranda that have been filed over the past financial year.

The numbers have not, however, been bolstered by any details of the nature and the timeframe of the industrial projects that the government insists will soon change the economic face of the state. A similar lack of details characterises the boast that non-resident Indians have come with almost 40 investment proposals or the jubilation over the supposedly larger amount of investment in the Falta Export Processing Zone.

Agriculture may stagnate, industrial progress may be a chimera but success stories are not in short supply. Till last year the finance minister took credit for presenting zero deficit budgets. This year he seeks kudos for presenting a "limited deficit" one. That is all that has really changed in the fiscal arithmetic.

Non-plan expenditure maintains its commanding position among the budget provisions. An impressive Rs [Rupees] 68.1 billion out of a total budgeted expenditure of Rs 84.2 billion. And nearly half of this non-plan expenditure, Rs 32 billion, will go towards paying for the state's huge army of penpushers.

The priorities remain one and the same. If you are desperate for some evidence of innovation, you can latch on to the ways and means advance the finance minister has openly admitted the exchequer will have to take recourse to.

Even a generous public employment policy cannot tackle the problem of unemployment that afflicts the state. The fact a better industrial relations climate could encourage more private investment in the state and thus promote employment without bleeding the treasury is obviously inadmissible among Marxists.

A severe financial crunch has forced a deceleration in the state government's hiring policy. Presently, as the budget shows, it thinks its duty is done the moment some allocation, however small, is made for "employment generation". The 1993-94 budget provides little more than one billion rupees for employment.

This financial year the targeted additional employment is that for 1.8 million people. Over three million is the target for the period that ends in 1995-96. The state's plan document argues schemes such as the Integrated Rural Development Programme [IRDP] will take care of

this level of labour absorption. Further, the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is supposed to promote self-employment during the lean season.

Ignoring the fact these schemes are Centrally worked out and sponsored, it needs to be pointed out the optimism in the budget and the plan document is completely unwarranted. Anti-poverty programmes in West Bengal, as in many other parts of the country, have suffered grievously from poor implementation, leakage of funds and even poor planning at the ground level units.

Merely allocating a little more money will do nothing for the estimated seven million people who will be seeking jobs by the end of 1997. A conducive climate for private industrial investment and a revitalised *panchayati* system will do plenty. But if the 1993-94 budget is any indication the finance minister considers the first to be already achieved, since he has proclaimed a new industrial revolution is in the offing, and the second to be unnecessary, since the *panchayati raj* in Left Front mythology is a big success.

A good illustration of the futility of persisting with the present format of tackling poverty and creating employment opportunities are the following statistics, vouched for by the project officer in Midnapore. The IRDP scheme in that district has officially covered 2,228 families over the sixth and the seventh plans. However, not more than 33 could be test checked. Out of the families whose progress could actually be monitored not one had managed to cross the poverty line.

And what about the allocations for social sectors? The budget has allocated, of the total expenditure, 7.6 per cent for education, 2.3 per cent for health and family welfare and 4.3 per cent for other social services. Not only are these allocations likely to be as ineffectual as that for employment but they also hide something extremely undesirable.

Social services include social forestry. Seventy per cent of the additional forest cover constitutes eucalyptus trees. These trees grow fast, are commercially lucrative and very harmful for the soil which they grow on. Growing eucalyptus is not social forestry.

Such distinctions, however, are not relevant for a government busy trying to pass off an economic disaster as a people's paradise. The 1993-94 West Bengal budget is another piece of unconvincing fiction promoting that lost cause.

Concern Expressed Over Continuing Rupee Devaluation

93AS0721A Madras DINAMANI in Tamil 25 Mar 93
p 6

[Editorial: "Declining Rupee Value"]

[Text]

Falling Rupee Value

In the course of less than two years the value of the rupee has been devalued three times. But as per an official announcement it was devalued only once in 1991-92. In order to increase the value of the American dollar from Rs [Rupees] 20.50 (June) to Rs 25.50 (July) the value of the Indian rupee was decreased in two consecutive installments. Nobody cared about the official 17 percent estimate of the devaluation, because in fact the value of the dollar rose by 24 percent. That year one dollar cost Rs 26. In 1992-93 when dual exchange rates were introduced, the rupee value declined again on its own accord. To put it correctly, the value of the rupee was not decreased. Therefore Rs 26 was considered to be the official exchange rate. On the basis of this rate, 40 percent of imports were officially recorded; the rest of the imports were mostly in separate accounts on the basis of the second exchange rate value. As a result, the value of the dollar was Rs 30. In 1992-93 the average value of the dollar was more than Rs 2.40 per dollar. The recent budget replaced the dual exchange rate with unified exchange rates. With the help of the Reserve Bank this unified rate has been determined. The unified rate value of the dollar is Rs 31.42. Thus in the course of 22 months since June 1991, the value of the dollar went up three times, that is 53 percent.

Does the Government want to permit the mighty fall? Of course it's true to the extent that the import tax was reduced and import expenditure declined. Yet, in view of the fact that the rise of the dollar has been substantial, the inflation in the country does not seem to have come down from the July 1991 level. If only the loan from the International Monetary Fund [IMF] had not been utilized to offset the trade deficit, which was caused by inflation, the value of the rupee would have gone down further, to the level of 1992-93.

The commodity index price increase reflected this year will add further to the increase in inflation. Due to the reduction of excise taxes, etc., the demand for imports will on the whole increase.

Due to the attraction of the internal market, the growth of exchange will be light. Though the international price of oil has not increased, the value of the rupee may progressively fall. In order to meet the internal demand, if the IMF loan is utilized for promoting the rupee value, the national economy will definitely become shaky very soon.

So among the various options, namely, to generate increased internal demands, to reduce dependence on foreign loans, to increase exports—which of these will truly help in promoting our economic growth?

Italians Said Assisting Leather Industry Growth

93AS0691E Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
26 Mar 93 p 12

[Boldface words as published]

[Text] The Italian Trade Commission has woken up to the commercial possibilities of Calcutta. It had offices in Delhi and Bombay and will also be represented in the city by a liaison officer at the Consulate General of Italy, to handle the commercial aspects with particular emphasis on sectoral marketing, according to Dr. Maurizio Ragnini, Italian Trade Commissioner, in his welcome address at the conference on Italian tanning and footwear industries at Calcutta on Wednesday.

This liaison officer's first priority would be the leather industry. In fact, Dr. Ragnini said that the Italian Government had a very ambitious plan for relocation of the tanneries out of Calcutta. This would also include the use of new anti-pollution technologies and upgrading of industrial production. This plan has been offered to the Central Government for feasibility study.

The conference was organized by the Italian Institute of Foreign Trade Rome, and its network abroad, the Italian Trade Commission. The Commission is the technical arm of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, which is responsible for implementing Italian commercial policy.

The future for the Indian leather industry was bright, Dr. Ragnini said. Quoting Indian Government sources, he said that the Indian leather industries' share of the global market had reached 3.5 per cent and is expected to expand to 10 per cent by the turn of the century. It will be one of the export thrust items.

There was great scope for Italy and India collaborating both in technology and commerce in this export endeavour. To underscore the importance of footwear and tanning machineries in Italy, Dr. Ragnini said the Italian footwear machinery comprises 125 major manufacturers, employing about 5,000 people. Fifty-three per cent of their production is exported, valued at \$400 million. The major importers are Germany, Russia, Spain, France, Portugal and Japan.

There are 60 major manufacturers of tanning machinery employing about 2,000 people. It exports about 75 per cent of its total production, the major importers being Russia, Germany, Korea, Argentina and Mexico.

About 65 per cent of India's total machinery imports of both sectors is from Italy. In 1991 the value of Italian exports to India was \$7 million for footwear and \$6 million for tanning machinery, components and spare parts.

Dr. Ragnini talking about Indo-Italian collaboration said, "Our duty as an institutional entity is to pave the way for further developments since we all know that a great potential exists in our two systems. We have a similar industrial structure, mainly composed of small and medium companies".

The Trade Commissioner informed the participants that his office along with the two associations ASSOMAC and CIMACO [expansions not given] would provide

whatever further information was required. He, however, felt that in today's world there was no substitute for direct visits and personal contacts were essential for better understanding and quicker responses.

Financially Italy is committed to industrial development in India. Last year the Italian Government had agreed to renew a credit of \$400 million for exports of machinery and industrial plants to India. The Trade Commission would continue to participate in the leather fair in Madras and organize training courses and this time Calcutta would be one of the centres for the programme which will be organized in collaboration with ILPA [expansion not given].

Italy will also be the partner country in the next Indian engineering trade fair to be held in Delhi in 1995. This would give Italy an opportunity to become even a more important partner of India.

Committee System To Discuss Budget Approved

93AS0737A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
30 Mar 93 p 7

[Boldface words as published]

[Excerpts] New Delhi, March 29. The Rajya Sabha today adopted a motion by voice vote which would enable the Government to switch to the committee system for discussing budgetary demands of Ministries. [passage omitted]

Broad consensus: So far the Lok Sabha considered the demands for grants and during the period it did so the

Rajya Sabha went into recess. When the proposal comes into effect, it is these standing committees which would perform this task instead.

The reports of the committees are to be based on a broad consensus, but a member may give note of dissent.

Replying to the clarifications sought, the Speaker said the importance of the idea lay in the fact that now it would be possible to scrutinise the demands for grants annually totalling over Rs. 2 lakh crores.

17 committees: The 17 committees to be formed are:

Part-I:

Commerce (Commerce and Textiles), Home Affairs (Home, Law, Justice and Company Affairs, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions), Human Resource Development (HRD and Health and Family Welfare), Industry (Industry, Steel and Mines) Science, Technology, Environment and Forests (S and T, Electronics, Space, Ocean Development, Biotechnology, Environment and Forests) and Transport and Tourism (Civil Aviation, Surface Transport and Tourism.)

Part-II:

Agriculture (Agriculture, Water Resources and Food Processing), Communications (Information and Broadcasting and Communications), Defence, Energy (Coal, Non-Conventional Energy Sources, Power and Atomic Energy), External Affairs, Finance (Finance, Planning and Programme Implementation), Food, Civil Supplies and Public Distribution (Food, Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution), Labour and Welfare, Petroleum and Chemicals (Petroleum and Natural Gas, Chemicals and Petro-Chemicals and Fertilizers), Railways, and Urban and Rural Development.—PTI, UNI

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