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RECEPTION COMMITTEE

III National Convention Against Communalism,
1969

Telephones { 2612 G. Secretary
3620 Con. P. Committee

Reception Committee

Chairman

Dr. Tarachand

General Secretary

B. N. Pande

Preparatory Committee

Chairman

M. R. Shervani M.P.

Convenor

Smt. Rajendra K. Bajpai M.L.A.

National Convention

Convenor

Subhadra Joshi

Secretary

D. R. Goel

142, AZAD SQUARE
ALLAHABAD-I

Dated 12-1-1970

Dear Shri Vasani,

This is to request you to address the III National Convention against Communalism that we are organising at Allahabad on 8-9-10 February, 1970.

Ours is a non-party movement against communal forces. Members and associates in our work include people belonging to various political parties as well as those who do not belong to any party. Only those people are excluded who subscribe to any communalist ideology or are associated with communal parties.

The two earlier conventions were held in New Delhi in November 1966, and in December, 1968, respectively. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Home Minister Y.B. Chavan, Education Minister Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao Food & Agriculture Minister Jagjivan Ram, Shri D. Sanjivayya, Shri A.N. Mulla and Shri C. Rajeshwar Rao were among those who addressed these Conventions. A Parliamentarians' Convention organised by us in 1968 was addressed by Shri S.M. Joshi, Shri S.A. Dange, Smt. Tarakeshwari Sinha and Shri Raj Narayan.

A copy of the report of our last convention is attached herewith. It will give you an idea of the work we are doing.

We are sure you will appreciate the movement and will find time to address the Convention, preferably, its inaugural session, on the 8th February or the concluding session on the 10th.

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SPONSORS

Sampradayikta Virodhi Committees
New Delhi & U. P.

Secular Democratic Forum
ALLAHABAD

Could you kindly drop a line indicating which of the above dates would suit your convenience for addressing the Convention?

In case, you are not able to attend personally may I request you kindly to send your valued message for the Convention?

With kind regards,

Sri Massani
2 Tagalak Road

Yours sincerely,

S. J. Joshi
(SUBHADRA JOSHI)

Could you kindly drop a line indicating which of the
above three would suit your convenience for attending the
convention?

In case, you are not able to attend personally may
I request you kindly to send your valued message for
the convention?

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

W. J. L.
(CORRADINA JOHNS)

REPORT ON SAMPRADAYIKTA VIRODHI COMMITTEE
Speech by Smt. Subhadra Joshi

Respected President, Shri Sanjivayya and friends

I have no intention of inflicting a speech on you. I am here only to say a few words about the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee which has sponsored this Convention. And that is more in the nature of an apology. It has to be so. We take pride in bring a people moulded by Mahatma Gandhi. We are also proud of our leader Jawaharlal Nehru who gave to our country a modern outlook and the aspiration to take our place in the front ranks of humanity by sharing in man's struggle against nature and by evolving for ourselves a social system that may be a model for others. What Gandhi and Nehru aspired for was not a position of power over others but distinction through love and friendship with people all over the world. And all this was and is the continuation of the rich cultural tradition of this land which we can trace back via Gandhi, Vivekanand, Moinuddin Chishti, Nank, Akbar, Ashoka and Buddha to the sages of the vedic times.

And if despite this tradition we have today to encounter such doctrines of nationalism which would keep almost one fifth of the Indian population out of its pale and if a small organised group inspired by those sectarian ideas should be able to create a sense of fear and insecurity in a sizeable section of the Indian people, it is a matter of concern and anxiety for all of us who want to live up to this great Indian tradition. That is why I say that it is no cause for pride that we are trying to build an organisation and a movement which should prevent the possibility of the Indian people being put on the wrong path. It is a shame that while our fellow beings in other countries are reaching the moon, we are still fighting against political sectarianism and social obscurantism.

I have had, I should say the misfortune, of visiting most of the riot-affected areas. And this has been the case since 1947 when Gandhiji came to Delhi to quench the fires of communalism. I cannot claim to be a perfect Gandhian in all respects but I do claim that I have been affected deeply by his ideas on communal harmony and I would consider my life worthwhile if I can make some contribution towards realising that ideal. It is this motivation that has taken me to all places where communal trouble erupted.

When communal riots occurred in 1961 at Jabbalpur, Aligarh and other towns of North India, it was a matter of great shock to me and to many others like me. Some of us visited those areas and worked for relief of the affected people. It was a shocking experience for us. Loot, arson and killing is by itself bad enough. That it should be done in an organised way by spreading rumours, marking out houses as targets is worse. Through rumours and false propaganda the entire society is paralysed and the communal elements rule the roost. There were complaints about partiality or inaction on the part of administration. In all this there was a silver lining too. We met hundreds of people who risked their lives protecting their neighbours of the other community. They did it just out of their innate humanity and goodness and not for any personal or political reward. We saw that such people, though perhaps more numerous than the trouble-makers, were working only as individuals. Their actions lack coordination and organisation. So their impact on the total situation was less than that of the organised communalists. This happens everywhere with the result that the communalists are able to poison the society and organise carnages and the society as a whole gets characterised by their words and deeds.

It was this realisation that led to the formation of the Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee in 1962, immediately after the III General Elections. The date of its formation is significant because the Committee is sometimes misrepresented by interested parties as an election manoeuvre of the Congress. Among its promoters were people belonging to different political parties excluding, of course, those who are based on communalist

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ideologies and ways of thinking. We are of opinion that unless they are isolated and shown up in public what they are the common people are likely to be taken in by their subtle and wily propaganda. It is particularly so because, as we have seen organisations like the RSS do not believe in the democratic process of honest discussion but in methods of camouflage.

The first task that the Committee undertook was to make a study of the ideology and methods of the RSS which is the main spearhead of communalism. This organisation has been poisoning young minds and surreptitiously trying to subvert the democratic discussion by undermining democracy and secularism through a vast and expanding net work of rumour carriers who introduce false ideas into the stream of national consciousness through whisper talks. The Committee collected this material and made the knowledge about this organisation available to opinion makers. It stressed that the real political character and motivation of the RSS should not be lost sight of merely because it professes to be a cultural organisation. The demand for a legal ban on it was pressed in the Parliament and outside because of its double-faced, secretive and para-military character.

The Committee and its members have been active in studying the causes of riots. Our members try to stand against the mischief makers and stop them as far as possible. We have published some studies about riots which have been found very useful.

The Committee has not been oblivious of the communal, sectarian and separatist trends among the minority communities. It has never hesitated to criticise and expose them. But we do not equate the communal trends in the majority community and those in the minority. The former is more dangerous than the latter. Whereas the minority communalism is suicidal for the minorities the majority communalism threatens our very existence as a united and free nation. Also once the majority adopts and asserts the non-communal character of Indian nationhood the communalism of the minority will have no soil to grow. Communalism is essentially a result of fear complex. Once we remove fear from society it will evaporate. That is why we lay stress on curbing the militant and aggressive postures of the RSS. The minority community by the very fact of its being a minority cannot afford to be aggressive even though some of its leaders may make foolish speeches in aggressive tones.

This Conference has been called to find ways of meeting the ideological onslaught against nationalism by the RSS Chief Golwalkar. The Committee organised a similar national convention in 1966 also. In that Convention besides other things demand was made that the RSS and other such organisations be banned as they pose a danger to democracy. We may legitimately claim that we have been a factor in making the government realise the true nature of the RSS and it is now being treated as a political party.

The Sampradayikta Virodhi Committee is an attempt at coordinating the activities of all those individuals and organisations which endeavour to fight out communalism and to establish secularism and communal harmony. We have organised many activities in cooperation with such sister organisations as Council for Promotion of Communal Harmony of Calcutta and the Secular Forum in Delhi.

To promote the ideas of secularism and communal harmony we organise conferences, symposia, seminars, exhibitions and study groups besides publishing the literature that many of you might have. An exhibition 'Dosh Ki Pukar' which we organised in Delhi in 1964 was seen by more than 5 lacs of people. Last December we organised in Delhi a Convention against Obscurantism in which eminent scholars from all over the country participated. We hope that this conference which is starting today will prove a landmark and help us to evolve ways whereby we may be able to build mighty resistance in the nation against this pernicious tendency.