The alleged world Zoroastrian Congress-Bombay Panchayet Trustees discard the voice of the Community.

Exhibition of the Jewel pieces of Ignorance twice a week in Parsi Colums of Mumbai Samachar.

Parsis of India have a public life, like the one in politics. There are leaders and factions, newspapers and journalists, speeches and writings, assemblies and meetings, congresses and quarrels. At any point of time there are some questions, public and burning: they burn with a lot of heat and it would seem the whole community is ignited. And then they burn out as if nothing had happened. In the process, we see lots of fun. But all funs are not funny; some are tragic also.

If you examine a little closely these intermittent fires breaking out since last 75 years, you will see that the only cause of each fire is the Juddin question. It is that hydra which spits out its fire through its few mouthpieces. The question is not only social but also religious. And there lies the trouble. Because Religion, to-day on our planet, is on the wane. Most of the humans appear to have forgotten it. They do not even know that Religion is inseinterwoven with every moment of a human life, whether he is conciously aware of it or not. Soul of life is God i.e. Religion. And that is not a subject to he toyed with. It is the Science of Life and therefore covers the tiniest existence, and the smallest event happening inside and outside this human insect. And yet we Parsis have the sorry spectacle of the

most ignorant rushing out to discuss the lofty subject of Religion in public. Why? Are they very much interested in the subject? No! Two factors bring them out: One is the Juddin question and the other is the mentality of throwing away the disciplines of Religion.

These two go together. Juddin marriages are prohibited in our Religion. Any prohibition is a discipline. So the question is asked by the indisciplined, why this prohibition? And then it is extended to, why that prohibition? Like — why the prohibition against taking out Sudreh and Kushti? And then why Manthra Prayers? and why Fire temples and Dokhmas? And ultimately: why Parsis and what Parsis? Again the Juddin question! The vicious circle is complete!

The Juddin hydra has always 'a companian — let us call it the "throwaway phobia", as it wants to throw away the whole Society of Parsis along with its soul, Religion, and Its disciplines, into the ditch.

This Juddin hydra and the throwaway phobia threaten to spit out their poison at the on-coming so called world Zoroastrian congress. Everybody knows this, more so its sponsors—the trustees of the Parsi Panchayet. And yet they have actively become a party to it!!

Panchayet is not the sponsor; the Federation is; but (i) the Chief of the Federation is the Chief of Panchayet; (ii) Panchayet is the founder of the Federation; of the eight signatures on the forms of application for registration, five are of the Panchayet Trustees; (iii) Panchayet has thrown Rs. 25,000|- on the congress farce and (iv) to-day if Panchayet discards the congress, it falls.

Discard? 'No' its Chief says, "we will fight out' — this, with a big voice! And then "please be with us, you, the religious minded people" — with a small, almost trembling, voice!!

That is the present mentality of the Panchayet as declared by its President trustee towards the Congress.

I'll tell you some pieces of news reflecting this mentality.

On 4th September, 1977, Mr. Boman-Beheram called a meeting at his residence where some known public workers were present. When most of the participants expressed their view that Panchayet should come out of the congress, Mr. Boman-Behram stated that they would see what happens at the executive council of the Federation to be held in Poona on the 10th and 11th September and would then decide whether to have the congress postponed. Mind, 'postponed'! Not 'discarded'.

The meeting at Poona was held. What happened there was published in Jam-e-Jamshed of 15.9.1977. This report is stated to be the Panchayet's version. (Mr. Boman-Beheram said so in another meeting of 4.10.1977 — but as to that, later). It said that at the executive council of the Federation at Poona, it was decided not to allow discussion on any topic if it is likely to wound the religions feelings of any

section of the community and the Presiding Officer will have the right to stop such discussion.

That sounded good, though not so good. It was slighty away from the assurance Mr. Boman-Behram had given on 30.7.1977 at a public function at Allbless Bag that there would be NO controversial subjects in the Congress.

But in Mumbai Samachar of 25.9.1977, Mr. S. D. Nargolwalla came out with the story that the version published in Jame-e-Jamshed garbled. According to him, it decided at the Poona meeting that "the Paper readers will have complete freedom to state their views in their Papers and it would be made clear that the views contained in the Paper were those of the Author. The discussion will be completely free and frank except that the Presiding Officer would have the right to control the discussion if there is any disorder or likely to be any disorder during the discussion."

So there will be discussions, and they will be on the controversial subjects — Juddin question including! Presiding Officer will intervene only if there is, or is likely to be, a breach of peace!

If this is true, no doubt Mr. Boman-Beheram has shifted a long way from his assurance of 30.7.1977.

But is Mr. Nargolwalla's version correct?

Sorry to say, it is!

That I learnt in another meeting called by the Panchayet trustees on 4th October 1977. There again, some public workers were called and the crowd was bigger. All the trustees were present. Dastoorji Meherjirana and Dastoorji Kotwal were present

besides the usual so-called orthodox front.

At the meeting Mr. Boman-Beheram read out the minutes of the Poona meeting which clearly showed that Mr. Nargolwalla's version was nearer to truth!

There will be discussions in the Congress on the questions flowing from that Juddin hydra and the throwaway phobia. Nobody has any doubt on that. Not even the trustees and their Chief. Because in that meeting he and Mr. Gazdar invited the attendants to come in the congress and "fight out" the irreligious elements and "strengthen the hands" of the trustees!

"I am deliberately jumping in fire, but you also jump in with a fire extinguisher to help me!"

That is the message of the Trustees of Parsi Panchayet to the community.

And what are the views of the community? More than 2,000 signatures are appended on a requisition to the trustees entreating them to boycott the congress!

But they say, "It is not now possible". They are too much involved and too much committed!

But if there is courage of conviction in them, they can boycott the congress even on the last day.

But conviction requires study. And they have not studied their own files on the Juddin question. Had they done that, they would have known how their predecessors had dealt with the Juddin hydra. In the public function of 30-7-1977, Mr. Boman-Beheram was asking for Dastoorjis' opinions on one aspect of Juddin question, whilist his own files are full of numerous coinions of Dastoors and scholars on that aspect.

The trustees are only convinced

in one thing. There will be a lot of garlands in the congress!

And I am also convinced of one thing. The congress, like the previous ones, is going to be a colossal waste of time, money and energy of the community and this time it will leave a wound in the Community's confidence in the Panchayet trustees. The roses in the garlands will bleed. Another piece of news is that the spokesmen of Juddin hydra, are making preparations for bringing in the juddin question and that throw-away phobia in the congress. And Panchayet is well aware of that

MUMBAI SAMACHAR IGNORANCE EXHIBITION

In the mean time, the notorious exhibition of ignorance continues in the Parsi Columns of Mumbai Samachar twice a week.

God! What ignorance and what arguments?

The Editor Mr. Jehan Daruwałla has so far displayed his utter lack of knowledge in every subject he has touched - law, sociology, physical sciences, oriental studies and above all Zarathushtrian Religion itself. It is like a child with a toy-aeroplane boasting to be a jet-plane pilot or even its builder! Talking of scriptures, it is obvious that he has not read even one line of any scripture to understand what it is. Talking of Avesta translations, he refers to "a Bengali scholar" and "Mr. Sethna of Karachi". He forgets Kanagaji, Chiniwalla, Mills, Darmesteter, Harlez, Masani and a host of others. Has he even heard of them? In law, he has not read Justice Daver's judgement in the original Law Report, or if he has, it has gone over his head. All he has read on the Juddin question is an old antiquated collection of certain articles and writings in a book titled:

પારકી દીનવાળાઓને જરથાશ્તી દીન મધે દાખલ કરવાની તરફેણની શહાદતો, તકરારા તથા એ સંબંધના બીજા લખાણોના સંત્રહ: કરનાર એક માઝદયરનાન (૧૯૦૯)

- (Sorry to divulge your secret, Mr. Daruwalla). It contains convenient extracts from Justice Beaman's judgement (which Jehan quoted pompously in Kaiser-i-Hind): also the opinions of some old scholars and some old scientists. Mr.Jehan was using that book himself so far, but has now given its benefit to his other hired correspondents. For instance. Mumbai Samachar of 27.11.1977, there are verbatim extracts from this book. under the title "Theory of Mixed blood". All that material is dated 1905! And today science changes every day.

Mr. Jehan is not aware (one more ignorance) that all the arguments in this book are shattered 60 years back! Just see the files of Jam-e-Jamshed. And to quote the science of 1905 in 1977 is the reflection of a fossil mentality. Are these the alleged 'writers' of our enlightened community?

Another event in the life of the Parsi Column of Mumbai Samachar is that it has delivered its soul to the famous Faramji Fasli, the champion of "ખૂરીની રાહ્યારી" (meaning the purchased guidance), the interfactional — sorry, international figure who sang Gathas in a Pop-Raga in U.S.A. and rang bells in gardens of Germany and became the saviour of the Bansda illegitimates. The delivery is complete.

He and Mr. Jehan often congratulate each other. "Oho Rupam, Oho Dhvani"! The donkey tells the camel "how beautiful you are!"; and the camel to donkey, "what a beautiful voice you have!" Jehan is completely hypnotised. His very eyes declare that he is highly hypnotisable, If his old college friend, our Editor Dosabhai Desai, sees him, say, half an hour per day for six months, I am sure he will become a writer in Dini Avaz! Don't be shocked at this idea! Mr. Jehan! Welcome to our Journal - but after cultivating some profoundity maturity. Not with your present smoke balloons.

An instance of the delivery to Mr. Bode is the chapter of the learned Mr. Khojesteh Mistry. He is a scholar who has independently studied our Religion. It is his intense craving that Parsis may see the loftiness of their Religion and its disciplines like Sudreh Kushti and non-prosyletism, and infuse them in their daily lives. That sincere attempt is described as "low key orthodoxy" and "Oxford Circus" in Mumbai Samachar on the one hand, and on the other hand Mr. Bode rushes to 'Tata's asking, "why one of you is a party to this?" But when he is asked to see the real sponsor, his courage vanishes and so also he himself. What a pair?

That Jehan Bode & Co. are the champions of the World Zoroastrian Congress. — One the hypnotised ignorance, and the other well you know it.

- K. N. Dastoor



"" World Zarastrian Congress-" an Expensive Exercise in Futility Nothing FAIR in its Birth, Life, Death and Postmortem.

How the Parsi Community Prepared itself Against the Onslaught of the Irreligious Fanatics

The third alleged 'world' Zoroastrian Congress was held, under the auspices of The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans, from 4th to 8th January 1978, at C. J. Hall, Bombay.

This Federation is an undemocratic body of several Parsi Panchayets and Anjumans, where an Anjuman, representing 10 persons and having a fund of Rs. 5000/- is on par with an Anjuman or Panchayet representing 50,000 persons and having a fund of more than Rs. 50 lakhs! Both have one vote each at a meeting of the general Body of the Federation. How the trustees of Bombay Parsi Panchayet took a lead in forming this house of disparity, is a tricky riddle!

But that is not the only beauty point of the Federation. Right from its inception, it was clearly intended to raise the notorious Juddin question in the Community. The definition of a Parsi Zoroastrian in its constitution was full of mischief. It not only included the child of a Parsi father by a non-Parsi mother, but tactfully kept the door open for the child of a Parsi mother by a non-Parsi father! This intention of making the Juddin hydra hiss again, and this time with greater force and

more poison, found its climax in this-the third Z-Congress.

Two of such congresses were held more than a decade back and their results were a big dot and a bigger dot. This time the third one has achieved nothing practical for the community, and has done something more—in the negative It has thrown the Zoroastrian virtue of TRUTH to dogs, and that too, by the hands, mouths and pens of the very persons, who boast of these virtues every alternate day! The birth, the life, the death and the postmortem of this congress were all dipped into the mud of lies and hypocrisies.

What was the official aim of the congress is not known. The unofficial trumpet was very loud in blowing that the congress was to have 'free and fair discussion' on Parsec problems. But if any thing was most conspicous by its absence in the congress, it was FAIRNESS.

The Parsi problems were reduced to six subjects. It was decided (but not publicly announced till at a very late stage) that papers would be read on the subjects and discussions held. Whose papers? Would they

be invited from the whole of the community in India and abroad? No! That, it was said, was physically impossible. It would be too burdensome to manage. They would have to appoint a fair and impartial board to go through the papers and make a selection of nicely written papers, covering all shades of views, without any bias for any particular view. But, that the organisers could not do although there was nothing difficult about it. The paper readers were selected not arbitrarily, but we dare say. cunningly and discriminately, in particular on the controversial subjects. These were: subject No. 5 which had the impressive title: "Social and Cultural Survey of Zoroastrians in the Recent Past and Guidelines for the Future;" subject No. 6—Setting up of a World Organisation; and subject No. 3: Upliftment of the Priestly class.

All the three subjects are full of several conflicting view points. And if the FAIR-NESS was the standard, each such view point should have found a representation in at least one paper. But that was not done. On subject No. 5. five readers were selected in the first instance, not one of whom was any serious student of the Zarathushtrian Religion, its Scriptures, and its Spiritual Institutions: and moreover, they were more or less inclined towards the Juddin hydra. One was over-specialised in law, another in population figures, and a third, with a louder voice, was the self-appointed champion of, what he himself called, progressive views, which in fact and truth were century old and all exploded! All that these progressive views meant was the Juddin hydra and that Sezdo-phobia! There was no paper reader who was strongly against these hydra and phobia. Because of the pressure from some quarters, one name having the orthodox views was added almost on the last day. And what happened at the Congress at the session of this 5th subject, was most interesting. (Reported, elsewere in the issue.)

On subject No. 3 viz. the upliftment of mobeds, there were only 3 paper readers, of which only one was a mobed; that too, he was a Panthaki. The problem of mobed is a highly complicated tangle. There are various sections amongst mobeds, conflicting interests e g. 'Panthaki's and 'Non-panthaki's. There are Alaat problems, pay-Mahel problems, Dastoor problems, Faith problems, apart from the economic problems. There was no reader who could say anything on these, with some authority One nonmobed reader did not even know the right classification of mobeds! The most neglected thing in this session was the poor mobed himself. No mobed was allowed to speak, even at the workshop!

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That was much boasted FAIRNESS of this congress!

And was it FREE? No! Only that Parsi could participate who paid Rs. 50 or Rs. 250! The common Parsi was not represented. The poor and middle classes, whose problems were alleged to have been discussed, were not only not represented but their attendance was inhibited by prescribing these fees. That was the FREE AND FAIR criterion of the congress.

But there was another death blow to the poor fairness of this congress. As it was approaching, the 'madari's of Juddin cobra became busy playing their 'Poongie'. And the sound coming from it showed beyond doubt

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the aim of the congress was not to solve any problems of the community or to do any good; it was just to make the congress a platform for throwing irreligious poison in the guise of "progressive views" and "Zoroastrian virtues"! That was the inner cunning aim even of the Federation. "We will have free and fair discussions; we will do something in the congress and follow it up for future action." that was the Poongie's tune. The shrewd of the community could well hear the juddinmarriage-navjote note in the tune. Some newspapers started a campaign. "You want to change something in your religion? Go to Z-Congress"-that was the burden of their song. The renowned scholars and Dastoors saw through the game. They decided to boycott the congress.

A large part of the faithful common Parsis desired that Panchayet Trustees should come out of the congress. A representation to this effect was signed by about three thousand Parsis from Bombay, Navsari, Surat, Poona and other places. But in vain.

Ultimately a meeting of the Parsis was organised by Dini Avaz Committee (the owners of this humble magazine), Bombay Athorvan Jashan Committee, Mandal, and Temp. and Parsi Veg. Society in Mody Hall, on 22-12-1977. The hall was overflowing with the faithful Parsis. Dastoorji Meherjirana presided and spoke. Dastoorji Firozji Kotwal of Wadiaji Fire Temple and Dr. Minochaher Karkhanawalla also spoke at the meeting and advanced irrefutable arguments against the Juddin hydra. Erved K. N. Dastoor of our Dini Avaz Committee moved a Resolution to the effect that the Z-Congress had no representation of Dastoors, scholars and common faithful Parsis; and that any resolution or consensus or discussion passed or held there shall not represent the voice of, and shall not be binding on, the Community. The English translation of this Resolution appears elsewhere in this issue. It was seconded by Sheth Saheb Cowasji Dinshah Adenwalla and passed unanimously under a thunderous applause.

Thus the Community had prepared itself in advance against any onslaught on the Religion and its spiritual traditions and institutions which might have been attempted through the congress. However, the congress failed to achieve anything. Even then, if the disappointed hydrachampions would ever try to rely on anything alleged to have happened in the congress, the community is ready to foil the attempt.

One may be wondering why Bombay Punchayet Trustees did not pay any heed to the voice of the community. They were perhapes too much involved and too much committed. Yet they did achieve something. At the Executive Committee meeting of the Federation held at Poona it was resolved to the effect that the views of all paper-readers in the congress would be their own individual views and not those of the congress or Federation or Punchayet or Community, and that no resolutions would be passed or decisions taken at the congress. A huge Jhamela having half a dozen 15-30 minutes paper speeches and 2 dozens two minutes workshop speeches in each of the six sessions without there being anything to decide, was itself a biggest farce on earth!

Thus, the congress was just a huge waste of time, money, energy and it has kept some persons busy proclaiming lies, more lies and and still more lies.

We sum up some of the reasons why the congress was not a fair, free just or justifiable forum for discussing or even

just talking (as it turned out to be) on any problems touching the community, and did not represent any voice of the commuity:

- 1. The participation was not open to all Parsis; in particular, the Priestly class and poor and middle class whose problems were to be 'discussed' or tall-talked, were neither represented nor even present.
- 2. Paper-readers were selected one sidedly and discriminately.
- 3. Renowned Dastoors, scholars and students of Religion were not present either as paper-readers or even as delegates.
- 4. The common faithful members of the community had declared their distrust against the congress:
- (i) by signing a representation requesting Punchayet Trustees to boycott the congress, and
- (ii) by passing a resolution at a public meeting held in an overflowing Mody Hall, declaring that nothing in the congress shall represent the voice or view of the community.
- 5. Last, but not the least, the actual proceedings of the congress were unjust and unfair, even to the participants.

The first four of the above oints are touched in this article. The fifth is in another article, giving a report and review of the congress, printed elsewhere inis issue.

- Dini Avaz Committee

RELIGION & FAITH

Men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything but live for it.

— Colton

Religion is caught. not taught. — Inge

The just shall live by faith.....Be not faithless but believing. — Bible

- PROCEEDINGS OF ZOROASTRIAN CONGRESS,
 NOT THE VIEWS OR VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY

 RESOLUTION PASSED AT A HUGE MEETING
 HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
 "DINI AVAZ COMMITTEE" & OTHERS

 Here is the English version of the Resolution passed at the huge meeting of the Parsis held on 22-12-1977 at Modi Hall Bombay.

 The meeting was presided by Dastoorji Meherjirana of Navsari. In addition to Dastoorji Meherjirana, Dastoorji Firozji Kotwal and Dr. M. D. Karkhanawalla spoke at the meeting. The Resolution was moved by Ervad K. N. Dastoor, and seconded by Sheth Cowasji Dinshah Adenwalla. It was passed unnanimously.

 "This meeting of the Parsis held at Sir Jivanji Modi Hall, Cama Institute, Bombay on 22nd December 1977 under the auspices of the Dini Avaz Committee. Bombay Zoroastrian Jashan Committee, Parsi Vegetarian and Temperance Society and Athornan Mandal, records and resolves as under:—

 1. This Meeting records that in the alleged 'world' Zoroastrian Congress there is no representation of the common faithful class of the Parsi Community as also of the honorable Dastoorjis and the prominent scholars of Religion.

 2. This Meeting expresses its utter displeasure against the public game of using the said congress as a platform for the propaganda of those fads which would uproot the foundation of the existence of the Parsi Community and the Zarathushtrian Religion.

 3. This Meeting declares that whatever discussions are held or consensus taken at the Congress and in particular whatever reports thereof are written and published regarding any matters of Religion-like Juddin marriage, Juddin Navjote and Conversion fad; allowing a non-Parsi to come near the dead body of a Parsi on which Sachkar ceremony is performed; allowing entry to the non-Parsis in Atush Beheram's and Agiary's, and any other matter whatsoever connected with the Zarathushtrian Religious Life-are not and shall not be binding on the large class of the Community consisting of the common fathful and religious Parsis.

 4. This Meeting records with regret that in spite of

DINI AVAZ 11 VOL. 3 No. 1

A Report & Review of the Session on the Fifth Topic

How the Voice of the Faithful Dominated in spite of all well-prepared Trickeries!

The Great Nargolean Fiasco --- Bombay Parsi Panchayet Withdraws From Federation of Anjumans

In the so-called World Zoroastrian Congress held at Bombay from 5-1-78 to 8-1-78 there were six topics for the alleged free and fair discussion. Four of these were connected directly or indirectly with Religion.

Only two viz. the topics relating to (i) education and (ii) economic uplift, were independent of Religion.

(i) Upliftment of the Priestly class, (ii) Religious education for younger generation, (iii) Social and Cultural survey of Zoroastrians and (iv) Setting up of a world organisation—these were the four topics, with distinct religious flavour.

THE BACKGROUND

So far as Religion is concerned, there are two opposite views in the Parsi community. A very large section has inherent faith in Religion and all its spiritual institutions, like Sudreh-Kushti; Manthra prayers; Yasnaceremonies; Atash - Beheram, Adaran and Dadgah; Manashni, Gavashni, Kunashnithoughts words and deeds prescribed as

good by the prophet and His Scriptures; and Dokme-Nashini. This large section has also an inherent conviction that the Religion can survive only if the Parsi community preserves (i) these institutions and (ii) its genetic heritage by avoiding an inflow of mixed blood and genes. This is normally known as the orthodox class.

The other is a small section which calls itself 'reformist' or 'progressive'; but its one and single aim is to encourage Parsi youths to marry outside the community and brand their children and even non-Parsi spouses as Parsis. This sole aim drags them directly into the field of Religion. The whole structure of the Religion as observed by Parsis is such that any mixing of blood and genes is entirely inconsistent with it. This small class, therefore, is forced to attack Religion and all its spiritual institutions and Yogas. They have to find some cliches and excuses for this mundane job. These are mainly two: (i) Our population is dwindling and we must therefore increase

COFFEE COUPONS - THE ITEM OF GREAT RELIEF IN THE "KIT FOR THE CONGRESS"

our numbers by mixed marriages and (ii) the world is changing, therefore we must change our Religious disciplines and institutions. The first is a license to marry a non-Parsi spouse and the second is a mere elimination process. We will, therefore, call this class as 'eliminators' as an euphemism for 'destroyers'. Their aim is to destroy Religion and tace, which are inseperably intermingled.

Since the beginning of this century, the eliminators are trying to raise their voice in one form or other. Their latest attempt was this Z Congress. It was they who mooted the ideas of the Federation and the alleged world congress, with the sole aim of thrusting their elimination game on the community.

THE GAME

The game was to bring in the pet ghost of elimination through innocent looking topics. In particular, topic No. 5 viz. "Social and cultural Survey of Zoroastrians in the recent past and suggestions for the future"—was a hiddenly fertile ground for the game. Mark the absence of the word 'religious'. It was only to be a "social and cultural" survey. And observe the words "suggestions for the future". That means: in future let our boys and girls marry non-Parsis and multiply.

The eliminators proceeded with great hope that this time their voice would be effective. But unfortunately for them, as always, the community prepared itself in advance and succeeded in reducing the congress into a great farce. How that was achieved and how in the name of proposed free and

fair discussions, freedom and fairness both were mercilessly murdered, before the congress met, is set out in the article on pages 6 to 9 of this issue. I tell you here how the actual tamasha went on.

A session on each topic was divided into two parts. During the first, the paper readers read their papers; and the second part was called a workshop where, in theory, any participant could speak. The duration of the first part was 1.5 or 2 hours; that of the talk-shop 1.5 hours.

The papers were printed and given to the attendants about 5 to 6 days in advance, in a plastic bag, impressively called a "KIT FOR THE CONGRESS", which also included a batch, a pad, a ball pen and coffee coupons. The last item was most material and important; it was the only item which could inspire the participants to suffer in sileace the long boredom loaded upon them. It was not merely coffee or tea, but about half a dozen biscuits too. I felt, Mr. Adi Marzban's favourite Popatji would have been still better.

But of all the papers, one paper and its reader were singled out for advanced publicity—and that was Mr. S. D. Nargollawaha's. In the issue of the Sunday preceeding the congress, i.e. of 1–1–1978 of Mumbai Samachar, the paper was published with bold headlines. That was the first deed of fairness' done on the first day of the new year by the Parsi editor of that paper. Fairness is a Zoroastrian virtue—only its definition is relative.....

But the quantum of fairness reached

HOW MR. NARGOLLVALLA'S PAPER WAS SINGLED OUT FOR UNFAIR ADVANCED PUBLICITY!

infinity, when at the special inaugration ceremony held at Birla Hall, the copies of that issue of Mumbai Samachar containing Nargollvalla's paper, were placed on each chair quite some time before the people arrived!! But some unfair minded organisers did not appreciate the fairness of this Zoroastrian deed and the c pies were removed by them under the leadership of Mr. Vachha, the secretary of the Parsi Panchayet.

Are you surprised ! But that is just a firt dose of fairness. Please read further.

Let me describe a typical session. Its Chairman would throw some pompous remarks, the substance of which would be that time was short and everybody should run with minutes. The running exercise would then begin. The paper reader would read whole of it or extracts from it. Delegates would keep the paper open in their hands and try to follow the reading. The scene would be like a teacher reading a lesson to school children. (Not all teachers are good readers, you know.) This would happen as many number of times as there would be paper readers-minimum 3, maximum 7. Beauty of it was that papers were given away to delega'es a few days back and several of the delegates had already read them at home in a more peaceful and absorbing atmosphere. What was the idea of subjecting them to a boring reading exercise,

only the organisers knew. After 1.5 to 2 hours, the reading excercises would be over, much to the relief of the attendants; they would rush for utilising their coffee coupons.

After the break, the 'workshop' would begin. I do not know why it was so called. The word is used as a pompous jargon in management seminars. And there too, nobody works and there are no shops. (It is like Dhobi Talao of Bombay where there is neither a Dhobi nor a Talao.) Some called it talk-shop or still better tall-talk-shop. Speakers would speak for 2 to 3 minutes. But which speakers? Those who desired to speak gave their names to the Chairman during the coffee break and their number would be too large to be accommodated in the specified time. The Chairman had therefore, either to select himself or draw lots!

How can the chairman know who was to speak what? He selected either at random or more often only those he knew. And the result was that many who had something real good to speak were left out. Same happened in sessions where the lots were drawn. In the 5th topic—that 'survey' business—90 participants had given their names and only 34 could speak, by lots, 3 minutes each!

Was all this worth doing? What constructive could at all be attained by this, 'I spoke, you spoke, he spoke not' method?

And quite some of these workshoppers talked off their hats.

What was to be the result? Nothing!! Because no resolutions could be passed and no decision could be taken! It was a game declared to be result-less even before it started!

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I'll now present before you a report and a review of the session on that mischevious 5th topic.

Mr. N. A. Mody, Advocate was the Chairman. He handled the session in a typical lawyer-like fashion. He made it clear that the President of the Congress (i. e. Mr. B. K. Bomanbeheram) had already declared that nothing expressed in the hall was to be taken as the views of the Congress as a whole or of the Federation or Panchayet or community. He then said that the speakers were free to disagree but in an agreeable way. He then made the usual chairmanlike referance to the short time at his disposal. Since the number of paper readers had increased to 7, each would be given 15 minutes.

MR. S. F. DESAL OF POPULATION FIGURES FAME!

And the show began. Two readers read or summarised their papers. Both had a tilt towards the elimination fad. Mr. Shapur Desai, being over specialised in population figures had forgotten how Religion was preserved in his own native place, Navsari, and suggested shortening of Manthra prayers and performance of Yazashney as "common offering" for "psychological effect"! As if Yazashnev and Psychology, both are talkshop subjects! He said Nirangadin had become scarce. Being a man fond of fingures. he should have referred to Dastoorji Meherjirana and obtained statistics about how many inquiries for Nirangdins were received in Navsari.

THE HERO ARRIVES

Mr. Nargolvala then arrived. Here was the hero. The hero was booming. "To-day's gathering is the largest" he said. He perhaps

'PROGRESSIVE' VIEWS A CENTURY OLD!

thought it was to have a look at his august personality. He came then to the point—a sharp one, by referring to some article of Mr. Minoo Masani wherein he had writtren something about and against Jam-e-Jamshed. And then came the spins; change was necessary; population was declining; but mixed marriages should be avoided as far as possible; yet conversion by marriage was better; and there must be no distinction between Parsi father's and Parsi mother's children by non-Parsi spouses; law was in favour of this.

And then came the third googley; Trustees of Parsi Panchayet should be elected by adult franchise. And then the fourth; let there be a world body of Zoroastrians, but "for God's sake, don't have it in Bombay!" And.....Rterrrinnng......The Chairman had struck! One minute more please...... Chairman again.....Curtain!

And people clapped, not for long; but it was not clear whether they did it at the merits of Mr. Naragolavaila's speech or as an expression of a sigh of relief because of the closure of the speech. Anyway, the claps went out of C. J. Hall and by the time they reached Mumbai Samachar's office, they were converted to a "thunderous applause" and "wide acclaim" and Mr. Nargolavalla transformed to a man of the match—sorry—of the congress,

That was all wrong and untrue. A large number of delegates were strongly against his views as it was to be revealed during the next hour.

MR. NARGOLAVALLA'S PAPER

As to his paper, it contained exactly the same views which his predecessor—eliminators had put forward infinite number of times since last 75 years! If anything requires a change, it is the arguments of these alleged progressives. The same 78 Rivayats, the same law judgements, the same talk of rigid and outdated customs, the same conspicous absence of any references to any Holy scripture, the same ignorance of the spiritual side of the Religion, of its language, institutions, disciplines and teachings and last but not the least the same inconsistencies.

I'll refer to a few. "Prima facie as more girls are marrying outside the community, inter-community marriages would lead to a decline of the Parsi population." (page 4). This 'prima facie' turned into a positive statement on page 6. In the fourth line under the heading "Inter community marriages", he says, "But the problem assumes great importance for Parsi community because it leads to a decline in the Parsi population."

And then further on came the law and the change, and the necessity to accept children of Parsi mothers by non-Parsi fathers, "with suitable safeguards and by "a Navjote properly performed." No comments.

Another glaring inconsistency was a very short reference to amelioration of priestly class at one place and suggestions to discard rituals and ceremonies at other places.

SPONTANEOUS AND SINCERE ACCLAIM TO MR. B. H. ANTIA'S PAPER

Why not then discard the class also? What are we going to do with Mobeds if ceremonies are to go? I think Mr. Nar'lla would make them clerks in the office of his world organisation at... where? Should I suggest Geneva, or better Nargol—a place only 7 miles distance from Sanjan, where our fore-fathers, landed—for preservation of race and religion?

And lastly the paper lamented the lack of right type of leadership. Why! We know who could be......The man of the match should be the future captain of the team.

Mind! All this is from his paper which he did not read. He only summarised it, rather badly, because he wasted a few precious moments of his 15 minutes performance in blaspheming (i) Jam-e-Jemshed, (ii) Parsi Panchayet and (iii) the Parsis of Bombay.

The spoke Nargaulwalla — Walla kya bat hai?

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Two more papers then went by. Mr. R. S. Gae was so much carried away by his legel over-specialisation that except barely refering to 'Navjot', there was no reference to keligion. His father was my teacher. Had Gae-master been alive.....Rusi!

Then came the last man Mr. B. H. Antia. He was the only man supposed to have voiced the views of the orthodox. His paper could have contained more cogent and effective arguments and facts against the eliminators static views; yet, when he started by saying that we came to India to preserve our religion, culture and herediatary characteris-

stics, there was a mild electrification in the audience. There was acclaim and applause. And as he went on, it was clear that the large part of the audience was against Mr. Nargolawalla's outdated views. It was a great relief to them that here was somebody who is not following the tilt of the six preceeding speakers. They had made the ground too much dry with their fever of faithlessness. And here were a few drops of rain from the cloud of faith. The nearing coffee break was forgotten. Mr. Antia said. persons who challenge the religious tenents were only (i) affluents who scoff at our priests and rituals and ceremonles, (ii) the self-acclaimed scholars and reformists who were arrogant enough to claim a right to pass judgements on the most obstruse and recondite ceremonies, without having any knowledge of the underlying basic principles and (iii) the self interested who had personal axe to grind.

Right! Well said! Shabash....the voices broke out from every corner.

There was a vilification campagign, he said, against religious institutions. These compaigners should first endeavour to understand our religion and culture. It is our duty to protect all our institutions left to us by our ancestors.

And when he finished by reciting the Pazend prayer "Nar Asho Farzand Za-ayad....."—May holy child be born who may preserve culture and the name of the community—there was an ovation for about four minutes. It was spontaneous and much much different than the alleged acclaim to Mr. Nargolvalla.

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NEXT SEAT OF FEDERATION AND CONGRESS IN GENEVA......OR NARGOL??

Even the Parsi editor of Mumbai Samachar was for a moment thrown out of his hypnotic spell. He admits that there was applause, but he now tries to explain it away by saying that Mr. Antia "was given a big hand for his eloquence and logic," which "proves that the vast audience was fair and sporting." (Mumbai Samachar, 29-1-78). That is the typical Daruwalla twist! Ask anybody present, the acclaim to Mr. Antia was spontaneous, sincere and an eye-opener to the eliminators that the pluse of Bombay Parsis was against the Nargolean views. And there is no doubt about that. Those who were present in out public meeting of 22-12-1977 in Mody Hall, felt this pulse unmistakably. Mr. Nargole-and Daru-wallas should have attended that meeting.

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The strong non-Nargolean views of the delegates were then further reflected in the workshop. 90 delegates gave their names to

speak. Lots were drawn. 34 could speak. Out of 34, 18 speakers voiced their strong opposition to the views of Mr. Nargolawalla; only three supported him, the rest were merely inquiring and some of them not on religion at all.

This is the TRUTH.

The reports in the eliminators, newspapers are false, one-sided, twisted, distorted and above all frustrated.

The congress has given shock to the climinators, I assure you. They are trying to absorb it, but cannot. Their disappointment oozes out from their reports.

And their frustration is now complete, as their over-acting has resulted in the Bombay Parsi Panchayet with drawing from the Federation. They resolved to so withdraw on 25-1-1978. Please see Jam-e-Jamshed of 31-1-1978.