

પારસિયાના

Federation and private trusts

Federation delegates debate the price
of the Tithal Sanatorium land deal.

Arnavaz S. Mama

The announcement of 11 acres of the Patel Sanatorium land in Tithal being leased to a Jain trust for 99 years at a token annual rent of Rs 1,43,880 was greeted with surprise and disbelief by the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India at its executive council meeting at the Royal Connaught Boat Club, Pune, on February 22 and 23, 1986.

The terms of the lease, in an area where the market price of land is almost eight lakhs of rupees per acre, led to a discussion on the Federation's role vis-a-vis private trusts administering substantial community properties.

Since it was noted that some sections of the community were hesitant about using the word "reservation" in seeking restoration of the founder's quota in institutions created from community funds, Federation vice-president and president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman (DPA) Shiavax Nargolwala has suggested that the Federation substitute

"protective discrimination" in favor of Parsis, in its place.

The plan to upgrade the Delhi dadgah to the status of an adaran has been abandoned on the advice of the high priests. The elevation had been intended as a part of the Delhi Agiary's silver jubilee celebrations in December this year. The Anjuman intends to invite Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to inaugurate the Federation's executive council meeting due to be held in Delhi at the same time.

The rise in the community's divorce rate and the increasing problems of children of emotionally unstable families has led to the provisional acceptance of a research survey on the attitude of young adults to the institution of marriage. A second project being undertaken by a postgraduate Parsi student seeks to assess the traumas of divorce on the affected children.

The first edition of the Federation's Gujarati newsletter was published,

thanks to the enterprise of Navsari businessman Dara Deboo who had the December issue of the Federation's English newsletter translated, cyclostyled and distributed. The very short mailing list of the Gujarati newsletter rendered it impractical for the original intention of a normal, printed format. Deboo's initiative was greeted by the delegates with ready applause.

Two amendments have been made to the Federation's constitution to enable the all-India body to tackle the properties of defunct anjumans as well as to suggest schemes to the concerned authorities where there is mismanagement, or the purposes of the trust are not being carried out.

The increasing cost of hosting Federation meetings gave rise to the suggestion that the host anjuman could charge a delegate fee if it so wished. At present the cost is borne either wholly or partly by the anjuman or the individual trustees. Travel costs are borne by

the anjuman sending the representatives or by the representatives themselves.

In the hope of breaking the deadlock between the World Zoroastrian Organization (WZO) and the Federation, an impromptu lunch meeting was held on February 2, 1986 at Bombay Parsi Panchayat (BPP) trustee Jamshed Guzder's residence at the request of Shahpur Captain, vice-president and Shahrokh Shahrokh, joint honorary secretary of the WZO who were on a visit to India. But as the WZO subcommittee had not met to discuss the proposals nor was any background paper circulated on the subject, no new decisions were taken in regard to the Federation's membership on the WZO.

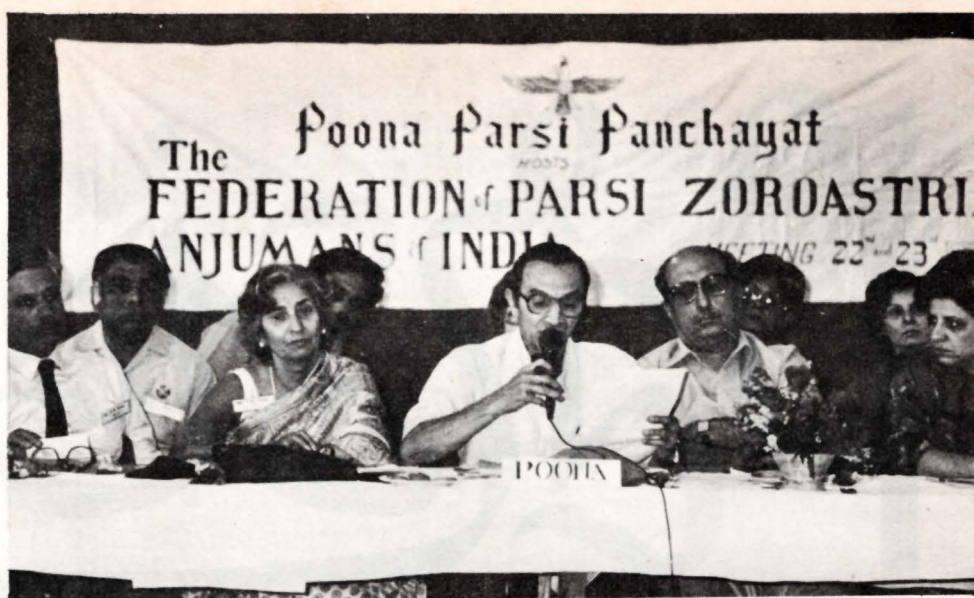
A more positive development concerned the problem of Indian visas for Irani Zoroastrians. Some members of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman are slated to get a hearing from the foreign ministry, thanks to the intercession of Marazban Patrawala, the Congress(I) MLA from Bombay.

Debates on procedural tangles were the hallmark of the two-day meet as the all-India body wrestled with the nitty-gritty of implementing its many schemes. School and family counselling, the rehabilitation of drug addicts, the uses of the Women and Children's Fund, the salvaging of defunct anjumans' properties, have all reached the hump where paper ideals need to be translated into work-a-day programs.

The session saw the major anjumans dominate the discussions, with the problems and views of the smaller anjumans being ignored. Several of the delegates complained about not being allotted time to speak.

Over 60 assembled delegates stood in silent memory of the late B.K. Boman-Behram, before proceeding with the work at hand. Ex-chairman of the BPP and one-time president of the Federation (before he became its arch critic), Boman-Behram had been a community stalwart and the Federation accorded him gracious respect.

Poona had attracted the maximum number of delegates for the Federation meet, proudly noted Marzban Kaikobad, president of the Poona Parsi Panchayat (PPP), and Federation president and BPP chairman Dr Aspi Golwalla acknowledged, "Some of us had enjoyed the hospitality of Poona Parsis; others had heard about it. And I am sure they'll ask for it again soon!"



Almost every delegate had been housed with a host family who not only "opened their homes and their hearts to make the stay of the delegates a pleasant one," as noted PPP trustee Tehmi Grant, but cheerfully ferried them over the long Poona distances.

Flowers in baskets, bowls and posies enlivened the tables of the conference room and sweetened the warm air. Each delegate was also presented a metal farohar button as a memento. The guests were in total agreement with Kaikobad: "The volunteers had indeed carried out their duties creditably." And what is more, as Kaikobad noted, "A second line of defence is being groomed. New trustees will come from among today's volunteers."

Defunct anjumans

Eleven acres of land on the seashore of Tithal near Bulsar, belonging to the decrepit Patel Sanatorium, are said to have been given on a 99-year lease to a Jain trust for an annual return of Rs 1,43,880. Only one acre now reportedly remains under the control of the independent Patel Trust which administers the property. The Patel Trust plans to rehabilitate the sanatorium from the monies forthcoming under the lease. The Gujarat Government had wanted to acquire one acre of land but the order has since been withdrawn, ostensibly at the behest of the Jain trust. BPP's chief executive Rustom Anklesaria, who briefed the delegates on the matter, noted that Golwalla had written to each of the Tithal trustees to ascertain the truth of the matter and one trustee confirmed the information.



"Is this fair compensation?" enquired the Federation's honorary secretary Keki Gandhi. "Is there any safeguard for the return of the property to the (Patel) Trust at the end of the lease period?" But BPP trustee and Federation joint honorary secretary Eruch Desai noted, "We're treading on the autonomy of the (Patel) Trust. It will raise criticism against the Federation." Gandhi persisted, "When one acre of land was to be requisitioned," the Federation was willing to intervene so why should the body not be concerned

whether the compensation was fair or not. Dr Golwalla as chairman of the Federation and the BPP had even sought an appointment with the chief minister of Gujarat in an attempt to get the order withdrawn. The outbreak of riots in Ahmedabad however led to political changes there and the idea was dropped.

"The autonomy of an anjuman we respect. (What we are concerned about is) are the trustees doing the right thing?" continued Gandhi. Surat Parsi Punchayet's (SPP) chief executive

Patel, though initially reluctant to talk, stated, "We first offered (the property) to the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, the Surat Parsi Punchayet and Bulsar. All of them said 'No.' The Gujarat Government had (begun acquisition proceedings for) two acres of land. We were helpless. We had no funds to repair (the sanatorium)."

Patel added, "(The Jain trust) will build a new sanatorium of eight blocks (on the one acre of land remaining with the Patel Trust). They will look after the land and do everything. (Solicitor) Burjor Antia of Mulla and Mulla drafted (the agreement). The BPP has all the details."

Bamji corroborated much of Patel's statements regarding the Jain trust's commitment to build the new sanatorium and added that it would be ready in a couple of years, once the charity commissioner's sanction is obtained. Bamji however noted that the leased area was between 12 and 12.5 acres and the annual lease was about one lakh and twenty thousand rupees.

Narielwalla refused to answer *Parsiana's* queries, stating that she was not aware of anything and questioned *Parsiana's* interest in the matter. Narielwalla eventually said, "I'll let you know afterwards, not now."]

Minochaher Bharucha of Bhavnagar who has been running from pillar to post in his effort to recover the old trust deeds, etc pertaining to the community property in Diu, reported that 20,000 square meters of the property is encroached upon. Parsis had one agiary and two dokhmas in Diu with substantial land. The unencroached area is close to the sea and said to be very rocky. Gandhi noted that the community had only two alternatives — to take back the land from the encroachers or to settle with them. "Let us see what they're offering," he suggested. "We can write to the collector and request him not to pass the order (regarding the tenancy, if not already passed) and let the collector call for the records (which have not been tracked down so far). Alternatively, we can institute court proceedings." But Katpitia informed the council that the records are said to be transferred to Daman and he had asked Dossabhai Oliaji, proprietor of Duke's Hotel in Devka, to get the requisite information.

Referring to the cantonment area land of the J.J. Agiary in Poona,

(Facing page) Top: Dr Irani, Grant, Marzban Kaikobad, Dinshaw Anklesaria and Variava

Left: Bharucha

Below: (from left) Shivax Nargolwala, Golwalla, Gandhi and Desai

Above: (from left) Gheyara, Katpitia and Modi

Sorab Katpitia stated, "Whenever trust property is leased beyond three years, the permission of the charity commissioner is necessary. We presume that the charity commissioner is satisfied."

When Gandhi suggested that a protest be filed with the charity commissioner if the Bombay Parsi Punchayet and the Surat Parsi Punchayet were dissatisfied with the terms of the lease, Katpitia and Anklesaria replied that under the circumstances, the terms were reasonable.

[*Parsiana* contacted the three trustees of the Patel Sanatorium at Tithal — Ms Shirin Narielwalla, Dr Rustam J. Patel and Jehangir D. Bamji — who seemed to feel that the lease was justifiable in view of the fact that the sanatorium was dilapidated and totally stripped of all furnishings, and there was encroachment on the land. The impression was created that the late B.K. Boman-Behram, ex-chairman of the BPP, who had been the most well-known trustee on the board, was responsible for the deal.





(From left) Rustom Anklesaria, Balsara, Rabadi and Katpitia (facing others)

Shiavax Nargolwala advised the PPP to avail of the defense ministry's new policy of selling off land in demilitarized zones at the market rate. Interest some builder to buy the land and put it to community use with low cost housing for the community and commercial establishments at the ground level, he added.

Minoo Dinshaw, a Poona builder, contended that he had presented the trustees with a drawing on similar lines but the trustees had informed him that the land would have to be converted to freehold which would cost about 40 lakh rupees.

Nargolwala replied that the policy had changed since then and added that he had "requested the military authorities to take a sympathetic view to which they have agreed," the purpose of the purchase being to provide housing for the underprivileged.

The Belgaum delegate Ms Maneck Kapadia, interposed, "Our agiary is also in the cantonment area and we're also thinking of building houses. In 1991 we're celebrating our centenary." Nargolwala told her, "The policy is the same. If we get a precedent in Poona, you can use it in your favor."

Reservation

Though the executive council agreed in Madras to seek limited reservation for Parsi students in technical and medical institutions founded by Parsis, opposition to the idea from respected professionals has led to some dithering.

As Adi Rabadi, trustee of the Cal-

cutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds, noted, to avail of reserved seats might result in diminished social standing.

Shoring up the Federation's stand, Shiavax Nargolwala reminded the gathering that an "august body like the High Powered Minorities Panel... had unanimously recommended reservation for Parsis... Let us not use the word 'reservation' if its flavor is unacceptable." Nargolwala suggested that the term 'protective discrimination' in favor of Parsis be substituted in its place.

In the community's mind the word 'reservation' has always been equated with the backward classes of society, but Gandhi noted that there is reservation for Marathi speaking people from Mauritius, for the children of freedom fighters and even for the children of non-resident Indians. There was no harm in Parsis staking their claim, when the community was known to have benefitted the country without ever asking for special favors. Gandhi was at pains to explain that the community was asking for the normal donor's quota which it had initially waived, as in those days it had not been deemed necessary.

Maneck Kapadia of Belgaum cited the case of her own son Farhad who would not have had a chance to become a doctor had he not availed of a special reserved seat for Maharashtra in Belgaum. Neither the boy nor the family had suffered any erosion in their social standing thereby, she said.

Saronda Anjuman's Nariman Balsara noted forthrightly that those who oppose the move to seek reservation are "not enlightened but affluent members of the Parsi community. The advantages of reservation would accrue to the backward class of the community. I, who come from the rural

There are less than 100 anjumans all over the world. Their voice would be drowned if anjumans and individuals have one vote each.

area, know where the shoe pinches."

Gandhi called upon the member anjumans to once again research the medical and technical institutions in their areas and identify those founded by Parsis, for how many years the normal founder's quota lasted and why it lapsed. He also called upon the local anjumans to plead the community's case with the institutions in question as well as the local state governments to create a favorable climate for a formal appeal on behalf of the community. "Poona would be the right place to start if the body (PPP) is sympathetic," he added. The suggestion was accepted by PPP president Marzban Kai-kobad.

In an attempt to produce a time bound program, Visakhapatnam's Capt Jal Postwalla suggested that the anjumans supply Gandhi with the information he needs so that he can publish the list of institutions in the Federation newsletter and the anjumans can liaise locally — all within the next three or four months, before the next council meeting.

Attention turned towards other avenues for medical and technical education. Golwalla noted that "78 per cent of Indians who go to the United States for studies, do not return to India. In the case of Parsis, the figure may be higher." Grant suggested that instead of spending two and a half lakh rupees annually on students who go abroad and do not return, "we can subsidize one seat in an engineering college." Gandhi suggested that pun-

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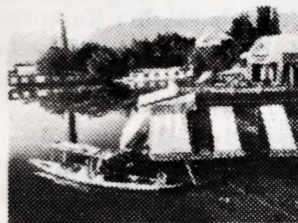


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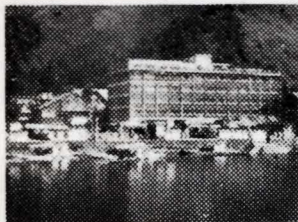


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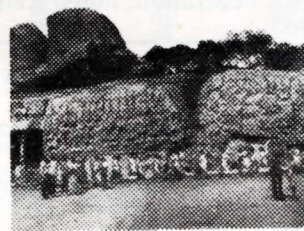
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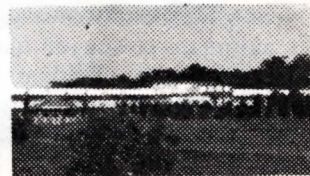
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chayets can give loans for school fees and college capitation fees. Apart from capitation colleges there are high fee colleges. "Seven thousand rupees a year, for five years of engineering, is not much," he noted. "Industrialists can also sponsor students and take service bonds. But this should not militate against our request for reservation. All measures should be taken concurrently." But Gheyara pointed out, "Trustees are bound down by the Income Tax Act, the Charity Trusts Act, donors' specifications..."

It was also pointed out that the government consults prominent people in the community when it receives a request such as one for reservation. Hence it was very important that the elite of the community should be explained the Federation's point of view so that they may buttress the Federation's request to the government. Golwala was requested to meet the critics and convince them of the need for limited reservation as the delegates viewed it.

In the meanwhile Gandhi once again invited the anjumans to suggest names of Parsi experts in various fields so that the list may be forwarded to the government for inclusion on its various panels. Gandhi noted that he had received a list of names from Jamshed Guzder. He also informed the delegates that Golwala had written to the Andhra Pradesh Government recommending Federation vice-president Bejan Dittia's membership of the Selective Services Board of the state. While the "government may not choose from our list," Gandhi was worried lest the community's opportunity for representation "go by default" for not complying with the request.

Research and counselling

To ascertain the attitude of young Parsis (age-group 18 to 35 years) to marriage, Professor Noshir Kaikobad of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences has suggested data collection via a questionnaire. A sample of 200 respondents will be drawn from among couples married for three to five years with or without children, as well as from those seeking matrimonial assistance from the BPP and other match-makers. Kaikobad hopes that the study, whose estimated cost is Rs 28,000, will establish how the young view the role of both partners in marriage.



(From left) Dr Wadia, Prof Kaikobad and Peshotan Nargolwala

The findings of the study, will be useful for the marriage and family counsellors in their work of counselling young couples and enable the development of an appropriate marriage guidance program for the family counselling center recently conceived by the Federation, noted Kaikobad.

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being made to
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Kaikobad also stated that conscious efforts are being made to encourage Parsi postgraduate students of social work to undertake research on Parsi problems. One student has taken up a challenging study of the impact of divorce on adolescent children ("Some children have even considered suicide," noted Kaikobad). It is suggested that the Federation consider giving token financial assistance to Parsi students in the field of research.

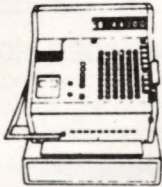
The two projects were offered as substitute for the establishment of a

data bank which had been the Federation's aim at the Bombay meet. The Federation had offered Rs 10,000 for funding the data bank, but Kaikobad declared that the amount would not be adequate. Kaikobad's two projects were approved on principle.

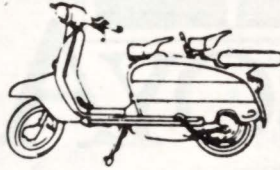
Desai suggested that some part of the Women and Children's Fund be utilized to fund the Golvad School for Girls which badly needed assistance, but Gandhi stated that the Women and Children's Fund should contribute to an all-India project and not to existing institutions. Grant noted that the recent Poona census had revealed the existence of old women in Poona who had no one to support them. Could the Federation do something for them? Nargolwala welcomed the suggestion as a good one but noted that "the real purpose (of the Fund) was to do something in a broad way to benefit women and children all over India." The real object of Kaikobad's research was to collect data to assist in decision making, he added. A more positive response to Grant emanated from SPP ex-president Maneck Gheyara who suggested that 10 old women, who had no one to look after them, be sent to the Nariman Home in Surat and undertook, on behalf of the SPP, to pay their rail fare.

Kaikobad, clarifying his own ideas, noted, "the Women and Children's Fund (should) be of a pathfinding, innovative nature. (For example) the Parsi community spends so heavily on

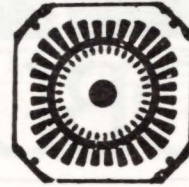
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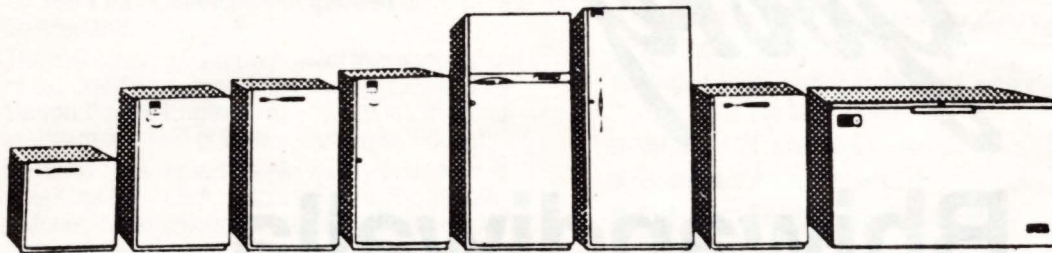
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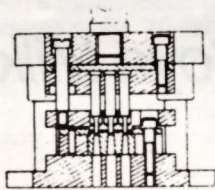
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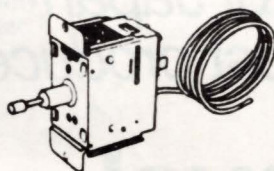
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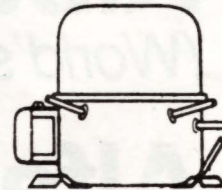
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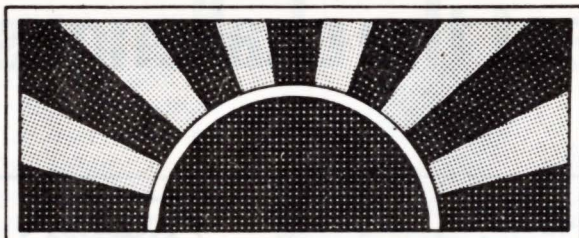


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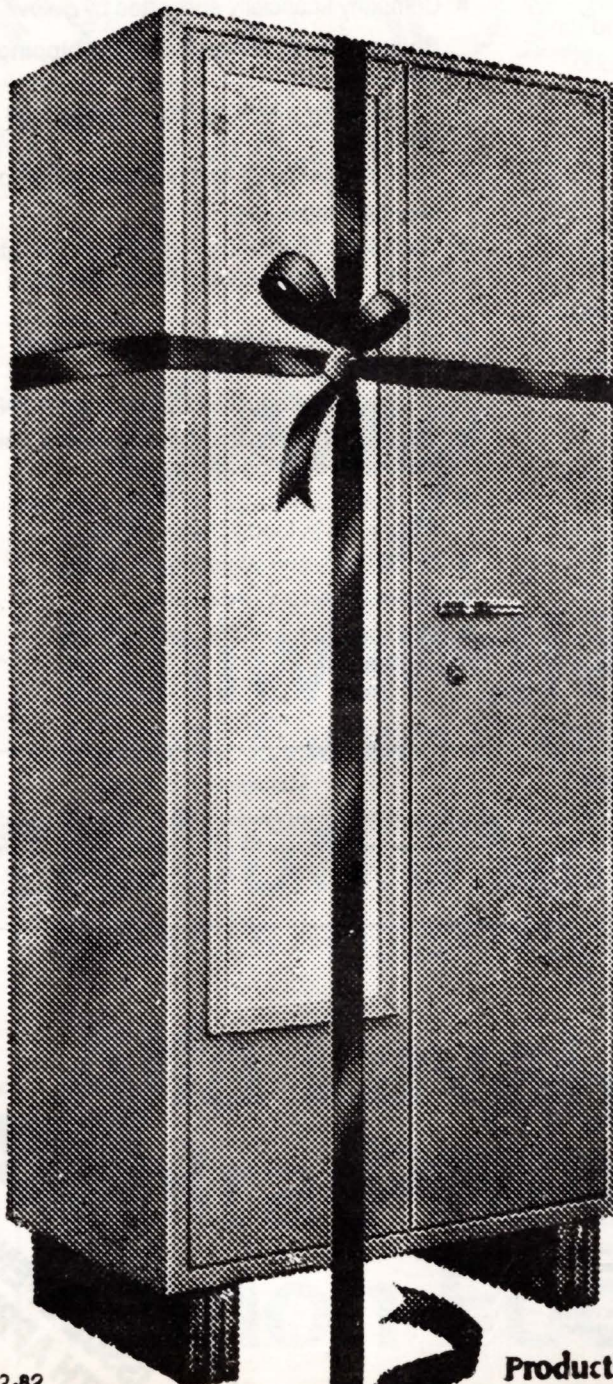
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medicine and nutrition and yet has a bad diet. Research in the interest of the family should be the goal of the Federation."

The school counselling project which has been concentrating on the three Parsi schools — Byramji Jejeebhoy Parsi Charitable Institution, Bai A.F. Petit Girls' High School and Cowasji Jehangir School — has registered an increased number of cases, noted Kaikobad. Group counselling has also been expanded. The knowledge level in mathematics needed propping and the professor stressed the need to adopt the "teacher plus approach." Kaikobad seeks to involve individuals who are not professional teachers but have some knowledge of remedial education.

There was need for comprehensive education of parents in drug awareness and sex education, requiring qualified counsellors, said Kaikobad, who noted that good counsellors would only be available if their jobs are secure.

For exceptional children who show very high IQ but do not achieve, Kaikobad proposed psychological help and comprehensive education with the

help of the UNICEF-aided Institute for Exceptional Children in Bombay.

Women and Children's Fund

Gandhi announced that the Delhi Anjuman and the SPP had donated Rs 5,000 each to the all-India Women and Children's Fund, instituted by the Federation, quietly building up to what may have been the most lighthearted moment of the two-day meet: "I am happy to announce that Desai has not collected Rs 10,000 as promised, but Rs 21,005 (Rs 15,000, the largest single donation, coming from orthodox Parsi businessman Dinshaw Merchant of Bombay)." As Desai happily accepted the applause of the delegates, Gandhi picked up a floral decoration from the table and presented it to Desai with a flourish, "I pass this bowl to Desai as a gesture of thanks." The delegates responded to the good-humored clowning with ready laughter.

After the mirth had subsided, Gandhi was back to business: "How much will each of you collect? (Professor Noshir) Kaikobad needs Rs 25,000 (for the new community research projects). Everytime we have a new project it's

put in the lap of the BPP. But the Federation and the BPP must go into it in partnership."

Government service

An arts graduate from Bulsar has opted for the BPP's tutorial scheme which gives free coaching to any Zoroastrian boy or girl in India desirous of appearing for competitive government service exams, informed Rustom Anklesaria. Of the current batch of nine boys and girls, four are Iranis, he said. Boman Khodaiji of Lucknow added that two boys had reached the interview stage in Uttar Pradesh and one girl had entered the Income Tax department there.

The scheme was undertaken when the BPP realized that there are now hardly any Parsis left in government service, especially in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), the Indian Police Service (IPS), etc. Jamsheed Kanga and Bomi Hirjee are the last two Parsis in the elite IAS. Even second class students with good coaching can come up, Anklesaria said. Although it is debatable how far the economic aspect of government service is worth

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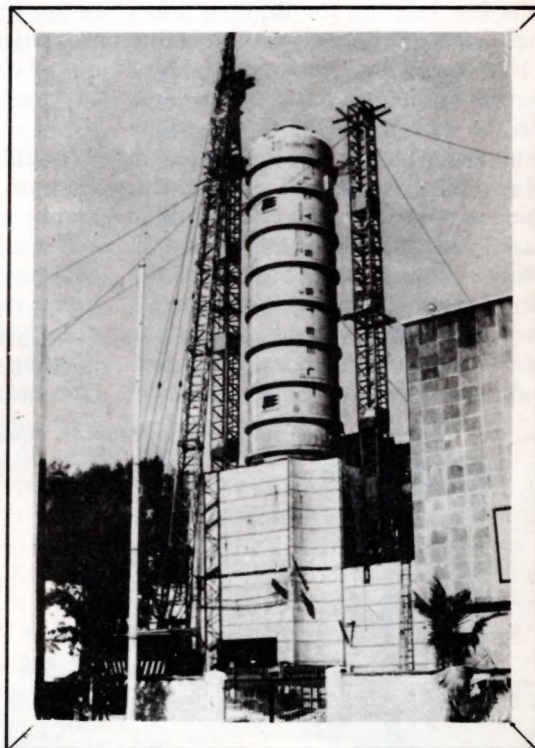
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pursuing, Anklesaria opined, "money is not everything. Sometimes what a mamlatdar (revenue collection officer in charge of a taluka) can do, a multi-millionaire cannot do."

The BPP is on the lookout for a qualified social worker to sift out promising candidates from the community.

While the community spends nearly six-and-a-half lakh rupees for higher education of Parsi students here and abroad, the Federation feels the various trusts donating money to the students do not emphasize the need for the students to subsequently donate to the trusts. "It will need all the persuasive powers of Eruch Desai (who has recently taken up chairmanship of the BPP's educational grants committee) to make the contributing trusts see the light," noted Anklesaria.

Golwalla has written to past recipients of loans and grants from Parsi charities whose addresses were available, asking for contributions, to enable the BPP to provide for its several financial commitments. The BPP is now awaiting their response.

Drugs

At the last meeting the Bombay Parsi Punchayet trustees had mentioned that the BPP was willing to fund a lakh of rupees — subject to certain safeguards — to the new Seva Dhan drug addict rehabilitation center to be located in Kalyan. The money, if sanctioned, would be paid from the cosmopolitan Davar Trust, said Golwalla. The administrative costs of the center, to be run by former addict Russell Pinto, are expected to be borne by the Indo-German agency, Caritas India. The BPP's contribution is aimed at securing treatment

facilities for Parsi drug addicts.

Updating the delegates on the subject, Rustom Anklesaria noted that the BPP had made a condition with Pinto, that the land must be mortgaged with the BPP until the project gets underway: "Our one lakh must be safe," he said.

Prof Kaikobad further suggested that the BPP also seek representation on Seva Dhan's board of trustees.

The subject of drug addiction gave rise to a general discussion on whether community trust funds should be given to institutions run by other communities, especially those with a possible zeal to convert.

Noting that "the dignity of human life is superior to religion," Anklesaria added, "If (a reformed addict) converts, it's the failure of Zoroastrianism — our failure, the social structural failure."

Prof Sarkari, retired professor of the Indian Institute of Technology, Powai noted, "Conversion has never been forced. If a boy is so blank on his own religion (that) he picks up the new religion, it's our fault if he is converted." Marzban Kaikobad felt that it was essential that a person be rehabilitated rather than worry about what religion the patient follows: "Let him be pulled out of drug addiction than be a Parsi" — "and dead," added Anklesaria.

But Eruch Desai questioned, "Should we set apart a substantial amount from the monies bequeathed by our ancestors for an objective that will not subserve the interest of the community... where the beneficiary (may) cease to be a Parsi? Should we directly or indirectly be a party to expending a substantial sum (under these circumstances)?"

Putting himself "in the shoes of the Parsi parents," of a cancer patient (or a drug addict), Keki Gandhi pleaded, "For them it is more important that the child survives. The family continues to be Zoroastrian. It is only a doubt. There is a possibility that (conversion) may never happen. Do you have the right to deny the chance...?"

But Desai registered reservation to funding any institution in which a Zoroastrian may be lost to the community unless adequate safeguards were provided.

Newsletter

Since the Federation newsletter has been running into increasing problems of finance, Marzban Kaikobad suggested that the punchayets contribute. Adi Rabadi, finance director of M.N. Dastur and Company of Calcutta, who had initially sponsored one issue, volunteered to sponsor a total of three — one on behalf of the Calcutta Zoroastrian Community's Religious and Charity Funds of which he is trustee, and two in his individual capacity. The Parsi Punchayets of Bombay, Surat and Poona, the Delhi Anjuman and even Sholapur, where there are only 45

"If (a reformed addict) converts, it's the failure of Zoroastrianism — our failure, the social structural failure."

Parsi families, volunteered to sponsor one each while Saronda and Golvad agreed to sponsor one issue jointly.

Kaikobad had complained of extra copies of the newsletter being posted to the same family as also to deceased members; but Gandhi was quick to remonstrate that the mailing list of the newsletter was compiled from the anjuman directories and requested the PPP for a mailing list eliminating all common residents and those who are deceased.

Kaikobad had been emphatic that each anjuman should be obliged to

continued on page 20a

(From left) Khodaiji, Mehernosh Mehta, Marker, Dandiwalla and Deboo





Readers' views are welcome on any subject of interest to the community and should be sent to the Editor, Readers' Forum, Parsiana, G.P.O. Box 892, Bombay 400 001. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space and clarity.

"Marketing manager"

In the Business column of *Parsiana* (January 1986) short write-ups have been given on Russi Engineer, Cyrus Bagwadia, Zarine Commissariat and Lila F. Poonawalla, giving the impression that all are Zoroastrians. Lila F. Poonawalla is not a Zoroastrian, hence mention of her in *Parsiana* is out of context.

Her achievements are exceptional even by international standards. Only a few reach that position and yet never fail to remember friends of yesteryears. If your write-up is a tribute to an outstanding woman, then you deserve kudos for finding place for her in *Parsiana*.

While we do appreciate news of goings-on in our community, could we not have more letters and articles from

Parsis — just anything interesting to the common Parsi besides the volumes of controversies which the recent issues of *Parsiana* are so full of? You could give information on education scholarships, funds for medical help, old age homes, facilities of sanatoriums and dharamshalas in various places, job placements, etc for Parsis.

F. KOTHAVALA
Poona

"Argument for acceptance"

Michael Simmons had kindly apprised me of his research on Marco Polo and so I do understand his legitimate concerns (*Parsiana*, December '85). I had told Simmons after he had reviewed my manuscript prior to publication — and as I have made it explicit in the text — that S.J. Bulsara's views may be outdated and later research may contradict some of his conclusions. But Bulsara was cited "for the very fact that he had said, four decades ago when orthodox feelings ran so high, that 'at the court of Kublai Khan, Zoroastrianism was practiced as can be borne out by the facts mentioned by Marco Polo...'" What is evidently more important here than other factors is: if only a Mazdayasni could be Zoroastrian, how could a noted Parsi scholar even contemplate saying what Bulsara did?

All the same Homi Rogers' stand (*Parsiana*, December '85) seems vindicated by Harvard's Dr Frye who found in central Asia: "a local form of Mazdaism (versus Zoroastrianism), a special cult devoted to the Iranian mythical hero Siyavush...the identity of Tokharistan people (as) Iranicized, if not originally Iranian in speech...the Arabs did not encounter (there) the Zoroastrian state religion but local cults, Mazdaist and others... (burial and no dokhmas), clay idols or statues...the identification of Nanai as a mother goddess...the priests without much of the secondary literature...the existence of literature separate from *Avesta*, attested by Al-Biruni...many ancient beliefs and rites, nominally Mazdaist, even indicating pre-Zoroastrian survivals...varied local practices in the Mazdaism practiced in central Asia," and above all, "ancient beliefs and practices, such as rites with incense

to keep away the demons (being) more important than any formal, organized religion...the persistence of ancient rituals and folk beliefs (being a universal) phenomenon." (*The Golden Age of Persia*, pp 28-44).

My reason for citing Bulsara stands: nothing brings out better the absurdity of a medalist ex-student being disowned and dismembered by his school for the very views propounded and published by its first and famous principal (Bulsara).

KERSEY H. ANTIA
Chicago, USA

Our Religion series

Our Religion series of illustrated children's books, published by the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, have sold well. Out of 5,000 copies of Book I, *Zarathushtra*, less than 200 copies remain; out of 3,000 copies of Book II, *The Navjote*, less than 400 copies remain; out of 3,000 copies of Book III, *The Kusti Prayers*, about 800 copies remain, and of Book IV, which includes Book V, about 1,000 copies remain out of a total of 3,000.

Our Religion activity books, designed to complement the above series, have been prepared by Ms Pareen Lalkaka, and illustrated in color by Ms Tenaz Irani. The titles of the activity books are Book I *Zarathushtra and Me*; Book II *The Navjote and Me*; Book III *The Kusti Prayers and Me*; Book IV (which includes Book V) *Ahura Mazda, the Creation and Me*. Printing a total of 15,000 copies would cost around one lakh rupees, while the cost of paper is estimated at Rs 50,000.

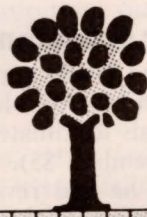
Manuscripts of the activity books were shown to member anjumans present at the executive council meeting of the Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India on February 22 at Poona. Dr A.F. Golwalla, president of the Federation and chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet who presided at the meeting, stated that the Punchayets of Bombay, Surat and Poona would club together and consider raising the one lakh needed for the printing. Mr Naoroji Godrej has consented to organize the printing and storage of the books, while Ms Lalkaka has offered to help with the proofs. The other anjumans stated they would con-

It will do everything to fin except print

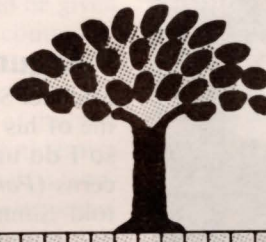
Promotion of
companies



Venture
capital



Merchant
banking



Leasing of
immovable property



As elsewhere in life, there are fashions in finance, too. Equipment leasing is one such trend. Unlike abroad, however, property leasing and real estate development for commercial purposes have not come into their own as yet.

Broader perspective.

Actually, leasing is only one of the many funding options open to a corporation for acquiring assets. Of course, now that investment allowance has been withdrawn, it is an especially attractive alternative for financing

equipment acquisition. If, however, the finance company approached is a leasing-only outfit, chances are it may push leasing as the only viable route irrespective of the relative merits of the other alternatives.

Spreading investor's risk.

Also, from the point of view of the investors in the finance company, the more varied its field of activities, the lesser its vulnerability to setbacks because "all its eggs are not in one basket". Equally important, a broader spectrum of financial services allows it to cast its marketing net wider and to bag a larger number and better

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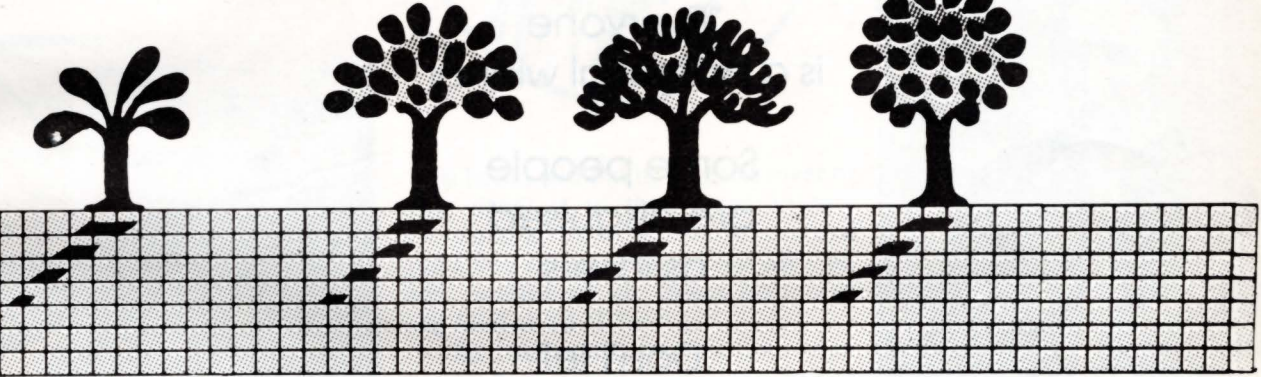
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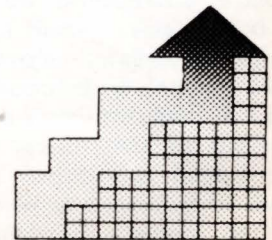


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tribute towards the paper cost according to their individual capacities.

The Bombay Parsi Punchayet announced, through its trustee Mr Eruch Desai, that it would buy 500 sets of the activity books when printed. The Poona Panchayat, through its president Mr Marzban Kaikobad, announced it would buy 50 sets. The other anjumans said they would consult their members and buy according to need. The Neterwala Trust has already offered to buy 1,000 sets of the activity books.



(Far left) Jungalwala: working on children's books

(Left) Rustomjee Cowasjee Banajee: built fire-temple "for service of God"

(Below) Manackjee Rustomjee: first Indian sheriff of Calcutta



Mr Shiavax Nargolwala, vice-president of the Federation and president of the Delhi Parsi Anjuman, suggested it would be cheaper in the long run to print the entire series at one time, provided the money could be raised for the same. He added that the Delhi Parsi Anjuman would contribute handsomely towards the cost of the activity books.

PILOO N. JUNGALWALLA
New Delhi

"Reform Zoroastrian..."

With reference to Ervad D.N. Sethna's letter "Reform Zoroastrian bodies" (*Parsiana*, December 1985) I wish to state that one should first study deeply what his Prophet teaches before making statements. It is the uneducated mobbed class that has brought the community into the state it finds itself in at present.

T. KAPADIA
Middlesex, UK

Calcutta's memoirs

I recently came across an old volume giving a descriptive history of Calcutta.

This book, without its original cover or title page, is in the Nilgiri Library (founded in 1859). It was written and published around 1909 by one Mr Cotton, brother of Mr Julian Cotton of the Madras Civil Service.

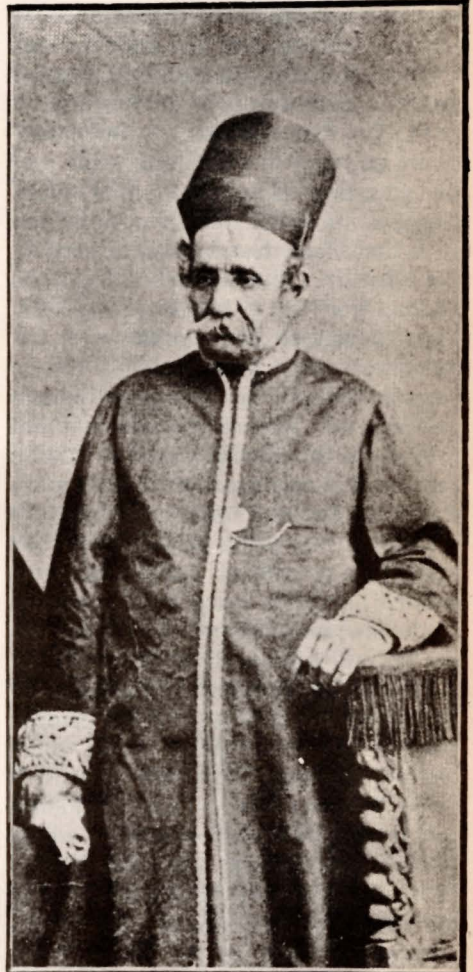
This book contains three bits relating to Parsis, which certainly add to the "Parsi lustre on Indian soil."

The Agiary referred to in the extracts is unfortunately no longer there, for reasons best known to the trustees of that institution. The faith our forebears had in God and in religion has certainly waned but it does one good to read of what they did in their days:

The Parsi Agiary, or Fire Temple

Situate on No. 26 Ezra Street, was built by the late Mr Rustomjee Cowasjee, the well-known merchant and one of the largest shipowners of Calcutta, and was consecrated on September 16, 1839. The Rustomjee family has been domiciled in Calcutta for over a century and its members have always occupied a leading position in the city. The present head of the family is Mr Rustomjee H.M. Rustomjee, the grandson of Mr Manackjee Rustomjee who died on December 22, 1891, and son of the late Mr Heerjeebhoy Manackjee Rustomjee, CIE, (Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire) whose death occurred in the year 1904. On a marble slab at the entrance to the temple is the following inscription:

"In the name of the holy Hormuzd, this Fire Temple was built at Calcutta by Rustomjee Cowasjee Banajee, Esqr, and was consecrated according to the rites of the Masdiasna religion for the



service of God and the observance of sacred rites of the Zoroastrian religion in the third year of the reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria on the seventeenth day Shurosh of the first month of Furvurdeen Kudmee in the year of Yezdezard 1209 and of Zoroaster 2229 (corresponding with Monday, September 16 of the Christian year 1839)."

The Parsi Tower of Silence

Situate on Balliaghatta Road, (the Tower of Silence) was erected by the late Nowrojee Sorabjee Bengalee, and was consecrated on January 28, 1822. He was a Parsi merchant in Calcutta, and the grandfather of the late Mr Sorabjee Shapoorjee Bengalee, CIE, well-known as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council during the eighties.

The Town Hall

(Extracted from a description of the portraits of eminent persons hung in the main Town Hall.)

Mr Manackjee Rustomjee, whose portrait by Puckle Roper hangs next in order, was one of the foremost Parsi merchants of his day in Calcutta. He was the grandson of Mr Cowasjee Banajee, the head of the once famous Calcutta house of Rustomjee Cowasjee and Co, and was born in Bombay in 1815. The firm was actively and extensively engaged in the China trade and owned a fleet of no less than 30 opium clippers, of which the reputation was such that 15 of them were chartered by the British Government during the China war of 1839. In early life, Mr Manackjee Rustomjee was for some years in China, but in 1837 he came to Calcutta and was admitted as a partner in his grandfather's and father's firm. Having taken a leading part in the organization of the Union Bank he became, unfortunately, very seriously affected by its failure in 1849 and, the system of companies with limited liabilities being then unknown to the law, he was compelled to surrender his entire property to his creditors. Although he continued in business, he was unable to regain the commanding position in the mercantile world which he had enjoyed until this disastrous event; but he never lost the confidence and respect of his fellow-citizens which he had already won, and until the day of his death in 1891, he was regarded as one of the forefathers and most public-spirited members of the Indian community in Calcutta. In 1870, he was appointed Persian Consul, and in 1874 Sir Richard Couch, the then Chief Justice, conferred upon him the high distinction of selecting him as the first Indian to fill the distinguished office of Sheriff of Calcutta. For many years he was also a local Honorary Magistrate and Justice of the Peace and was on more than one occasion nominated by the Government as a Commissioner of the Municipality.

In unveiling on February 1, 1898, the portrait which hangs before us and which was the outcome of the public subscription of all classes of the community, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, summarized his career in the following appreciative words: "There was no man in all Calcutta more respected and esteemed by every section of the com-

munity, European and native. In all the public offices, he did his duty in a quiet, unobtrusive, unostentatious way, and never dreamt of making office serve him. In this way he won for himself a reputation and position which was unique. To me of the present generation, he was a living link with the past. He had seen 15 Governors-General come and go, and known them all, and his memory had stored up a wealth of experience such as no other man in Calcutta could pretend to. This experience and hoarded wisdom he devoted to the cause of peace and goodwill, and he inherited in the love and respect of every class of the community that blessing which is the sure reward of the peacemaker under whatever religious persuasion he may be found."

He was worthily succeeded in the position of public usefulness by his son Mr Heerjeebhoy Manackjee Rustomjee, CIE, who succeeded him as Consul for Persia and in 1902 filled in his turn the office of Sheriff of Calcutta. The sudden death of this distinguished Parsi citizen of Calcutta in the early portion of 1902 has created a gap which has been sadly felt not only in the public life of the city but also in the world of Freemasonry, in which for nearly a quarter of a century he occupied a position as prominent as it was useful.

N. H. VAJIFDAR
Ootacamund

Din at Parsi functions

Our social functions, such as weddings, navjotes, etc are well-organized and systematic, and in every way worthy of praise, specially in punctuality and method. But two aspects seem to spoil the entire show. Firstly, the music in attendance is so loud and clamorous that after many efforts at making oneself heard, the wise arrive at a decision to remain silent, watching the people who in spite of the din and noise take pleasure in contributing their voices to the already existing confusion.

It is said that "music composes our thoughts, delights our ears and is soothing — the music that is soft and distant." As such, if the music is heard from a distance, the guests could move about freely, meet and talk to each other, as well as enjoy the melody.

Secondly, when dinner time arrives most people decide not to wait to be called. Consequently, all efforts and

requests on the part of the people who are in charge of dinner arrangements prove futile and utterly helpless. They see their guests rushing in and taking their seats, even before the tables are fully laid. It is no exaggeration to say that this gate-crashing crowd is followed by the rather shy and not so courageous throng, who quietly slip in to their seats most times, much against their wishes, leaving the non-Parsi guests in wonder and amazement.

If these two unpleasant aspects are corrected, our functions can be more enjoyable.

MANFEZAH B. KAVASJI
Hyderabad

"Dokhmenashini..."

Against the views of foreigners and others who have visited Doongerwadi but not critically seen the insides of our dokhmas, it would be better for Mani Patel (*Parsiana*, February '86) to rely on the Parsi Punchayet's unemotional and authentic description of dokhmenashini by their letter No R-925 dated October 25, 1967, and the views of S.R. Vakil and the late Dastur Daboo.

Under false sentiment of not polluting fire, which in fact is meant to burn away rubbish for man's hygiene, to cook food for his health and to turn industrial wheels for his prosperity, the Parsis created the dokhmas. Don't we roast fish and fowl on fire? Fire, a purifying agent, cannot itself be rendered impure. Why then the hypocrisy? Before the advent of the first dokhma, built in Bombay about 400 years ago, we Parsis must only have been burning our dead.

The drama behind the high walls that surround the dokhmas is no different to dead dogs being torn to bits by carrion birds in the streets. *Khurshed Nagirashni* i.e. to expose the dead to the rays of the sun in the dokhmas, is like Bombay ducks being dried under the heat of the sun at the Mahim creek.

Dokhmenashini is not part of our religion. The *Vandidad* condemns this old-time system of open-air graves, built upon the surface of the earth, as being most unhygienic.

Our Prophet has granted us freedom of thought — *Gatha* 30.2 — to choose the right from the wrong, and *ahurvata* — progress — is its keynote. Zoroaster has not shown any particular method for the disposal of our dead as the way to God.

DARA J.D. CAMA

From trust to foundation

By an "overwhelming" majority, the proposal to transfer the ownership of the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr property from the Arbab Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr Zoroastrian Temple to the Rustam Guiv Foundation of New York was rejected at a general meeting of the Zoroastrian community of New York convened on December 15, 1985. Alternatively, a resolution calling for the formation of an ad hoc committee was approved "to further counter all ramifications of the proposal as well as alternatives," notes the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York (ZAGNY) newsletter of January 12, 1986. The report of the ad hoc committee chaired by Astad Clubwalla was scheduled for discussion at ZAGNY's annual general meeting held on March 22, 1986, notes ZAGNY's February newsletter. The ad hoc committee representing both Parsi and Irani interests comprises Lovji Cama, Farrokh Tarapore, Parviz Ardeshirpour, and Esfandiar Anoushirawani (who, representing the Iranian Zoroastrians, was said to be favoring the transfer).

Dr Rostam Sarfeh, president of the board of trustees, Rustam Guiv Trust and Rustam Guiv Foundation of New York, said at the meeting that if the proposed transfer were not soon effected, then his lawyer was prepared to take legal action. According to Sarfeh, in the hurry and confusion of concluding the transaction of the New Rochelle property, "technical" errors were committed, reports the ZAGNY newsletter of January 12. In his letter of December 18 to the "congregants," Sarfeh wrote, "I have consulted Mr Sanford Pollack, the Foundation's legal advisor and he advises that this case has dragged on enough... Mr Pollack has proposed February 1, 1986 as the time limit, after which date if no answer is received from the congregation, the matter should be referred to the court of justice."

Reiterating the Foundation's point of view, Sarfeh noted, "I was trying to present to the members of the communities (sic) certain facts concerning the issue of the ownership... the property as such in New York was never donated to the community, but only the use of the property under the conditions

set up in the bylaws and constitution was donated to the community, while the ownership (was) kept for himself (Guiv), and this procedure he has maintained with the other six darbe mehrs which he has established on this continent, Canada and Australia. The same has been his policy in organizing the Rustam Guiv Charity Foundation in Tehran, Iran."

Sarfeh listed certain conditions which the Foundation was willing to abide by if the ownership of the Darbe Mehr were ceded to it. These are: "the Foundation will agree to be bound by the lease agreement which existed between the Foundation and ZAGNY and also continue the yearly donation for maintenance of the building; the terms in the bylaws and constitution will be respected by both parties; the Foundation is a tax exempt organization but if any property tax is involved, the Foundation is responsible for its payment; the board of trustees of the Rustam Guiv Darbe Mehr will function as before."

The above conditions answer partially, ZAGNY's stipulated six demands for: a new five-year lease on the Darbe Mehr property, with successive options to renew for five years at a time; all taxes levied on the property be paid by the Guiv Foundation (hitherto the property, being owned by a religious organization, had been tax exempt); a written agreement from the Guiv Foundation guaranteeing that \$5,000 per year will be paid to ZAGNY for maintenance and repair of the property; ZAGNY to have appropriate representation on the Trust which will own the property; the attorney general of the State of New York approving the transfer; and all the necessary documents signed simultaneously.

Individuals who had been involved in the purchase of the New Rochelle property in 1976 were of the opinion that the Arbab intended to donate the property to the Zoroastrians of New York and a transfer of ownership would "therefore do disservice to the wishes of Arbab Guiv," notes the write-up.

Other views expressed at the meeting were: The Darbe Mehr has been a house of peace and should remain so for both Iranian and Indian Zoroastrians; if the property were no longer to

belong solely to ZAGNY then the \$10,000 to \$12,000 spent annually by them on building maintenance as against the \$5,000 contributed by the Guiv Trust, may not be justified; the real reasons for the transfer and the subsequent repercussions on ZAGNY's position seemed questionable, states the release.

The 1983 resolution adopted by ZAGNY, whereby Iranian Zoroastrians are guaranteed three seats on the ZAGNY board, is to be revoked if the ZAGNY members agree. As is known, since December 1984, Iranian Zoroastrians of New York have formed a separate organization known as the Iranian Zoroastrian Association (IZA). "Iranian Zoroastrians (except a few) are now not members of ZAGNY. As such the ZAGNY board feels that the reasons behind the 1983 resolution no longer exist," notes the newsletter.

Positions for president, joint-secretary and one member at large are open on ZAGNY's new board of directors for the years 1986 to 1988. However, nominations have been received for the posts — vice-president, Lovji Hakim; treasurer, Vispi Kanga; secretary, Ms Teshtar Irani; and members at large, Astad Clubwalla, Shahpur Doctor and Fred Morris. Elections were scheduled for March 22, 1986, as per the February newsletter.

A job for a resident caretaker at the New Rochelle Darbe Mehr has been advertised in the ZAGNY newsletter. "The job requires the person to live at the Darbe Mehr and attend to the maintenance, upkeep and general well-being of the Darbe Mehr property under the direction and supervision of the ZAGNY board," adds the write-up.

American federation

True to the recommendation of the Fifth North American Zoroastrian Congress held last year, a constitution is to be drafted for the Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America. Rohinton Rivetna of the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, in consultation with all other associations in USA and Canada, will draft the constitution, notes the



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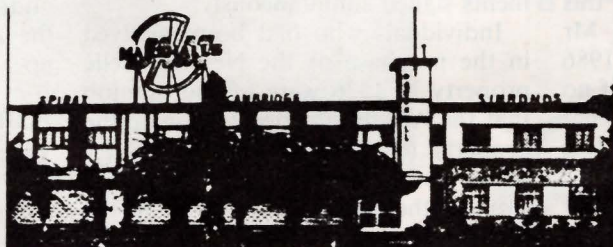
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January issue of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO) newsletter.

"It is conceivable that in addition we may also need a Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of Canada, to deal with purely Canadian issues and to represent such issues jointly to the Federal Government and/or to all Canadian non-governmental organizations," adds the write-up.

"The *Avesta* prayer book is now available at the Canadian Citizenship Court in Calgary and Edmonton, and Zoroastrians taking up Canadian citizenship are requested to ask for the *Avesta* when swearing the oath for Canadian citizenship," informs the Alberta Zoroastrian Association in the ZSO newsletter.

The religious sub-committee of the ZSO is compiling a register on births, navjotes, marriages and deaths of Ontario Zoroastrians, to be kept at the ZSO's office of archives, notes the December 1985 issue of the ZSO newsletter. Accordingly forms were to be mailed to all Zoroastrian families for them to fill in the required data up to December 1985 and return to the ZSO

As of 1986, records of navjotes, marriages and deaths will be compiled by the practicing mobeds. Details of births however, are to be sent to Sabar Balsara, editor of the ZSO newsletter, and registered with the ZSO's archivist.

California's Dar-e Mehr

The inauguration of the new Rustam Guiv Dar-e Mehr of the Zoroastrian Center, California, was slated for March 23, 1986, as per the invitation from Ms Morvarid Guiv, wife of the late Arbab Rustam Guiv, the Rustam Guiv Foundation and the California Zoroastrian Center.

Complying with the wishes of the late Arbab, the California Zoroastrian Center will welcome all Zoroastrians, members or not, to hold their socio-religious functions at the new Dar-e Mehr, informs the December issue of the newsletter of the Zoroastrian Society of Ontario (ZSO). The conditions include prior reservation, a refundable deposit and a nominal fee.

The new Dar-e Mehr has a prayer hall for about 30 persons, a hall where 400 people can gather for religious and social functions, three classrooms,

which can be converted into dining rooms, a kitchen and parking space which can accommodate 71 cars, adds the newsletter.

The Zoroastrian Center, California, a chapter of the California Zoroastrian Center, will move to the new premises and thereafter be known after its mother association — California Zoroastrian Center, notes the January issue of *The Zoroastrian*, the three-year-old newsletter of the Zoroastrian Center, California edited by Ali A. Jafarey.

The new address is: California Zoroastrian Center, Rustam Guiv Dar-e Mehr, 8952, Westminster, CA 92683, USA. Telephone: (714) 893-4737.

Gynec with a difference

The chief guest at the annual meeting of the Planned Parenthood Federation, USA, was Dr Pouru Bhiwandiwala, medical director for Family Health International (FHI), the largest non-profit international center for research into fertility and maternal health in the world, informs Bhiwandiwala's mother, Kate. Slated for the first week of April in California, the Federation has organized a special TV

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interview for Dr Bhiwandiwalla, which is to appear on the national network in this connection, she adds.

"As medical director at FHI, a post she attained in 1983 after about 10 years of work in other capacities there, she collaborates with researchers all over the world. Her role is part researcher, part administrator, part educator," notes a profile on the doctor by Lynn Jaluvka in the September 28, 1984 issue of *The Durham Sun*, a US publication.

"Outside of her eight post graduate degrees, her teaching and five positions she has held in FHI alone, she lists (in her 13-page curriculum vitae) pages of research papers she has presented and publications, including three books, she has co-authored. She is consultant to a number of professional associations and lists membership in eight... She has won awards for excellence in teaching and for excellence as a student," adds the write-up. For "outstanding performance and professional promise," Bhiwandiwalla was conferred the 1984 Sidney S. Chipman Award, instituted by the Department of Maternal and Child Health of the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill.

Of the opinion that tetanus is the "number one killer of babies" because traditional birth attendants are "just not trained," Bhiwandiwalla rejects the assumptions of bureaucrats that uneducated women will not remember to take their birth control pills. This, she notes, often stands in the way of individual and national health and well-being. "When you actually go out and provide the pill to them... continuation rates are better than in the urban areas," declares Bhiwandiwalla in the interview.

When she accepted work at the FHI, Bhiwandiwalla thought she'd spend three to five years at it — "do my bit to be sure of a place in heaven," she quips and adds, "But I've become so involved." Notes one of her students in the interview, "At work she'd stay later than anyone — until 10 or 11 o'clock. She was 100 percent committed to her work."

Having won "awards for elocution, debate, dramatics and community service, not to mention the trophies for horseback riding, automobile rallies and athletics," Bhiwandiwalla was a table tennis champion and captain of her college basketball team. She has

studied Spanish and French and is fluent in Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Konkani, adds the write-up.

Born and educated in Bombay, it was assumed that Bhiwandiwalla would participate in the family business when old enough. However, she went to medical school, where she chose



Bhiwandiwalla: "professional promise"

obstetrics and gynecology, because she felt the need to do something different, notes *The Sun* report.

Dr Elton Kessel of Chapel Hill, founder and former director of the International Fertility Research Program now called Family Health International (FHI) met Bhiwandiwalla when she was a fledgling obstetrician/gynecologist in India, and in recruiting her took her to "what is probably the worst slum in the world." Standing in that Calcutta slum and recognizing "for the first time the extent of poverty and overpopulation in her native India" was a turning point in Bhiwandiwalla's vision of the world and her place in it, says the report.

"The root of all poverty," says Bhiwandiwalla, "is these huge masses of people... I decided a certain part of my life I should devote to this."

ZANC's new board

The new board of directors of the Zarthoshti Anjuman of Northern California (ZANC) for the year 1986-87 are: Darius Captain, president and Erach Tarapore, vice-president being in charge of the social and religion committees, respectively; Firoze Doctor, secretary with the newsletter and press releases portfolio; and Mahiyar Irani, treasurer. The members at large include Dinyar Lashkari who has been given the additional responsibility of

the youth committee along with Perviz Malbari; Jimmy Makujina, whose job is fund raising, membership and directory; and Bejan Malbari who'll be in charge of the Dareh-Mehr, notes the February issue of the ZANC newsletter.

"Your elected officers have identified Dareh-Mehr as a high priority. We have already surveyed two possible sites in the Bay Area and will provide you with a complete status once we meet with the PZO (Persian Zoroastrian Organization — the other organization in California) representatives," notes a message from the ZANC president in the newsletter.

The message also lists a set of five goals which ZANC hopes to achieve in the next two years. They are: improving social and religious activities, focusing on the youth and planning more activities which will ensure their participation, working closely with the PZO to establish a Dareh-Mehr, amending their constitution and bylaws and raising donations for ZANC activities and charities.

In the meanwhile, over a 100 people attended the Christmas-New Year's potluck dinner and dance, sponsored by ZANC on December 29, 1985, where, after a long time, the PZO and ZANC members got together and had a lot of fun, notes the newsletter. "The youth of both the associations utilized the opportunity to get together and form an informal network through an exchange of names and phone numbers, (and) a follow-up party at Tina Patell's place," adds the newsletter.

Hong Kong directory

The new 1986 directory of Hong Kong Zoroastrians lists 71 families residing in Hong Kong. The 26-page directory, published by the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau, devotes a page to the 1986-87 calendar of events significant to Zoroastrians settled in Hong Kong, gives the address and telephone number of the Zoroastrian Charity Funds of Hong Kong, Canton and Macau and the Zoroastrian Parsee Cemetery and provides a three-page list of addresses of overseas relatives and friends.

The office-bearers of this organization continue to be: Noshir Pavri, president, Erach Mehta, secretary, and trustees Keki Jokhi, Viraf Parekh and Jal Shroff.

continued from page 10

publish its own newsletter. Taking the cue, the chairman looked around at the delegates asking, "Any new newsletters?" and buttonholed Surat, whose new president Dr Sam Bhacca responded, "We'll think about it."

The Federation's Gujarati newsletter has at last been published, thanks to the dynamism and initiative of Dara Deboo of Navsari. Deboo translated, cyclostyled and despatched the December issue of the Federation's English newsletter. Ms Farida Antia of Vizag had translated earlier copies of the newsletter but these would now not be circulated. The Federation voiced its deep appreciation of both Deboo and Antia's selfless efforts.

Religious books

"Without a strong Zoroastrian base or backbone, the community will be disintegrating despite worldly success," believes Piloo Jungalwalla, author of *Our Religion* series of books for children, who spoke to the delegates regarding the new series of workbooks created by her sister Paireen Lalkaka, who is said to be well-versed in the preparation of workbooks. "Not a single book had been put into print until it was (tested on) groups of Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian children," added Jungalwalla. Jungalwalla noted that paper for 15,000 copies would alone amount to Rs 50,000.

Golwalla, who agreed on behalf of the BPP to buy 500 copies, congratulated Jungalwalla, "We're very impressed with the books." He then added impishly, "Nargolwala is waiting for me to thank him and the Delhi Anjuman." Shiavax Nargolwala had mentioned earlier that Jungalwalla's preliminary series had been a pioneering project of the Delhi Anjuman.

Prof Kaikobad informed the gathering that Prof Driver who was working on a book on Parsi history and Zoroastrian religion, had met with an accident and needed crutches to move around. When the subject of Driver's book had been discussed at the Bombay meet, BPP trustee Naoroji Godrej had stated a desire to see the manuscript prior to making any commitment regarding its publishing cost.

Priests

Peshotan Nargolwala, who is secretary of the BPP's mobed amelioration

scheme, noted that the BPP will distribute about one lakh rupees annually among 40 low income mobeds plus 10 to 12 disabled mobeds, all in Bombay, beginning 1986.

Gheyara and Bhacca pleaded with the Bombayites that "rural mobeds are poorer than Bombay mobeds" and urged them to at least extend the benefits to include those serving in the four atash bahrams of Gujarat. Gheyara noted that there is an "acute shortage" of mobeds in the mofussil areas and therefore a financial inducement would help to keep the mobeds in Gujarat.

Other delegates noted that despite being offered substantially larger emoluments by major anjumans out of Bombay, mobeds are unwilling to go and tend agiaries there. They were afraid that the BPP's subsidies to mobeds would further deter them from leaving Bombay to serve elsewhere.

Desai, who is now president of the mobed amelioration subcommittee after Jal Vimadalal's resignation from the BPP's board of trustees, agreed to review the scheme in light of these apprehensions.

The Delhi Anjuman was to employ its third priest on March 1, 1986, thereby increasing its ability to help neighboring anjumans. Nargolwala informed that the DPA also intends to construct separate quarters for the

priests and was looking for donations.

Gandhi called upon the anjumans to "motivate and nominate Zoroastrians to be trained in a few basic necessary ceremonies," and urged them to get in touch with Peshotan Nargolwala, the Federation's specialist on the subject of para mobeds.

WZO

At the request of Shahpur Captain, vice-president and Shahrokh Shahrokh, honorary secretary of the WZO who were visiting Bombay, an impromptu meeting was convened over lunch at Jamshed Guzder's residence on February 2, 1986, which Golwalla, BPP trustee Jamsheed Kanga, Desai, Guzder, Mani Clubwalla, the Federation's co-opted member from Madras, and Gandhi attended. At the meeting, the WZO delegates had reportedly insisted that the summing up by Dr Farhang Mehr, who chaired the session which deliberated the formation of an appropriate world body of Zoroastrians at the Fourth World Zoroastrian Congress, was binding on the Federation. They were also said to be adamant on equal representation for anjumans and individuals on the WZO's executive committee.

At the last meeting, the Federation's executive council had decided to shelve further parlays with the WZO unless it

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acceded to the Federation's basic demand of two-thirds majority for anjumans as against the present WZO set-up of one vote each for individuals and anjumans.

Captain was quoted as having stated that "people around the world were not able to understand why you object to equal representation." Captain was supposedly willing to agree on safeguards regarding certain types of decisions, explained Desai. The safeguards would pertain to such delicate issues as identified by Dadi Engineer, the WZO's India representative, and he (Desai).

However, a letter dated February 3, 1986 from the WZO recording the discussions had noted that Federation representatives had agreed that anjumans and individual members would be equally represented on the managing committee and that on vital matters — to be stipulated by Desai and Engineer. — two-thirds majority would be required and the views of the anjumans would be considered.

Noting that "that was not the understanding reached," Desai recorded his dissent in a letter to the WZO on Feb-

ruary 19. Drawing an analogy with the recent changes introduced in the Federation constitution whereby no representation would be made to the Government without the majority approval of BPP trustees, Desai described the safeguards clause as "an extension of the (same) safeguard against hasty action, to retain control over individual members in important matters where we want to retain control."

"The analogy of the Federation does not arise because the Federation consists of anjumans only," protested Gandhi. "We came down from 75 per cent (weightage for anjumans) to two-thirds. Now if we accept their (version of equal representation on the executive committee and) individuals continue to have the main voice on the general body, where is the voice of associations?"

Shiavax Nargolwala was more vehement in his reproach. Objecting "on principle," Nargolwala noted that the Federation's executive council had established a subcommittee which "has not even met. When you go for an important contract you must have a consensus and then put it across. Desai

and Gandhi (two members of the subcommittee) are speaking with separate voices... How can (Desai) make a commitment without Gandhi agreeing? It is a matter of propriety... In the general body (of the WZO) also there must be pro rata representation. There are less than 100 anjumans all over the world (Their voice would be drowned if anjumans and individuals have one vote each). The management of the WZO should be more realistic. The managing committee meetings should be held all over the world. There should be some representation from the Federation on the managing committee."

Desai staunchly defended the initiative he had taken. "We need a breakthrough...this is just to break the stalemate... I have only come to the Federation's rescue by correcting a statement of Shahrokh Shahrokh and Shahpur Captain at the earliest..."

Gandhi undertook to summarize all that had transpired and circulate a note, inviting Desai to put his thoughts on paper. He further promised to hold a meeting of the WZO subcommittee before the next executive council meet.

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UNESCO

The council was urged to consider affiliation membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) which the Federation has a chance to join as the largest representative of Parsis as an ethnic group. Without the Federation becoming a member of the World Zoroastrian Organization, the WZO has little hope of UNESCO membership, noted Shiavax Nargolwala. It is expected that UNESCO's membership will enhance "professional and business liaison with co-religionists worldwide," as noted Gandhi. Nargolwala, who has been in correspondence with the acting chief of UNESCO, considered the primary advantage to be the chance to participate in meetings "when ethnic and refugee problems are discussed."

Desai however called for "a small explanatory memorandum...to help members make up their minds," and suggested that the discussion be deferred to the next meeting.

Annual and special general meeting

Four amendments to the Federation's constitution were passed unanimously at the special general meeting. Two amendments enshrined what has been the Federation's normal practice — that no representation be made to the government on the community's behalf without the majority approval of the trustees of the BPP, and that all member anjumans are free to manage their own affairs, the role of the Federation remaining that of friend, philosopher and guide.

The other two amendments state that the Federation be authorized: "To manage religious, charitable or other trust funds created for the general benefit of the Parsi community or for some specified purpose and entrusted to the Federation for management by the settlers or trustees or the charity commissioner or a court of law or any other authority having jurisdiction in the matter.

"To submit, on behalf of religious, charitable and other trusts declared by Parsi Zoroastrians, and by others for the benefit of Parsi Zoroastrians, applications seeking approval of the charity commissioner or other prescribed authorities, or district courts or other courts having jurisdiction over such trusts, for a scheme for administration of the trust or for the amendment of

the purposes of the trust or for any other matters, in order to ensure proper utilization of the trust funds and carrying out the purposes of the trust."

An explanatory statement detailing the reasons for the introduction of the two amendments notes: "A situation may arise whereby the Federation may be requested to manage the affairs and properties of religious, charitable or other trust funds. It is considered desirable to incorporate a suitable provision in the object clause of the memorandum to take care of such an eventuality.

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"The attention of the Federation has been drawn to several instances in which religious charitable and other trusts created for the benefit of Parsi Zoroastrians have either ceased to function, because their purposes are not capable of being fulfilled, or are not being fulfilled due to a variety of reasons. The law of the land prescribes certain procedures for resolving such situations. It is felt that the Federation which is an apex body of Parsi Zoroastrians in India, should examine individual cases and try to resolve the situation through consultations and negotiations with the concerned trustees and seek the intervention of the prescribed authorities, if found necessary."

What provoked sharp exchanges between some of the delegates, however, was Shiavax Nargolwala's vain attempt to seek deletion of Rule 35, which arms the president of a meeting of the executive or the general body with discretionary power to prevent any discussion which in his opinion would be detrimental to the well-being of the community in India as a whole, "unless 80 percent of the members present and voting demand that the question be discussed."

He noted, in support of his recommendation to drop the constitutional gag, that "Godrej had also said that if

veto power is given to the BPP (to determine what representation may or may not be made to the government), there is no harm in free and frank discussion."

Desai was on his gingery feet, "Sorry to have to take the floor on such matters again and again... it will raise old controversy, old issues... Godrej wanted stronger provisions, extra provisions that whenever any representation is made to authority, it shall meet with approval of the BPP. Representation is one thing, discussion another... So that we may not come back to the position of 1978 (when the BPP walked out of the Federation)... I urge you to summarily reject this proposition with one voice."

Gheyara, another staunch conservative and ex vice-president of the Federation, made a more personal plea to Nargolwala: "Ten of the Federation's executive council founder members are dead. You and I are the only ones left. I request you most earnestly to drop it."

Determined "to make his position clear," Nargolwala said there was "Only one occasion in 15 years of the Federation when this rule was used to prevent discussion and I was presiding and I (myself) used the rule. It should not be misrepresented."

The cost of attending the executive council meetings and the cost of hosting them engrossed the attention of delegates. The system differs from anjuman to anjuman with the Delhi Anjuman absorbing the cost of second class rail fares of all its delegates as well as the cost of hosting the meeting in Delhi.

Bombay's trustees, on the other hand, have been paying for both, their travel and for hosting meetings, from their individual pockets though Gollwalla felt that with a clear pro-Federation majority having emerged on the BPP board, the Punchayet may henceforth bear some of the costs. The Madras Anjuman bore the cost of the executive council meeting there, and for meetings elsewhere absorbs the conveyance costs of delegates who request the facility, noted Minoo Belgamvala, president of the Madras Parsi Zarhosti Anjuman. In Poona the trustees absorbed both costs personally while in Calcutta, Rabadi noted, the hosting in 1984 was entirely financed from contributions; nothing came from the anjuman's coffers.

Gandhi considered it "criminal to expect trustees to bear the costs. Being a member of the Federation is essential for every anjuman. It should be quite just and proper for the anjuman to bear the cost. People are inhibited from attending because of the cost of fares."

In the matter of hosting the Council meets, Gandhi clarified that all anjumans were invited to send delegates to the executive council, irrespective of whether they are members or not. He suggested that whilst the stay of all official delegates on the executive council and a minimum of one delegate per anjuman who were not represented on the council could be hosted free, the host anjumans would be justified in expecting contributions in respect of delegates in excess of the above and family members of official delegates.

"The smallest member," as Balsara referred to the Saronda Anjuman which he represents, registered strong dissent. "Whatever we do, we do from our own pocket. BPP is a giant; it can do anything. Even the Surat delegates do not take a single pie from the Anjuman's funds. It should be done in that spirit. You will be inflicting a disease. Members of the anjuman will prevent (delegates) from attending the council meeting."

Saronda's outburst led Golwalla to retract: "The BPP hasn't — and I think it will not — draw on BPP funds. They're meant for charity."

Gheyara suggested that the host anjuman bear the expenses of the official delegates to the executive council, while the cost of additional delegates and family members could be borne by the individuals themselves or their own anjumans in the form of a delegate fee. The regular salaried staff of the diffe-

rent punchayets — specifically the chief executives of Bombay and Surat, Anklesaria and Katpitia respectively, as also Ms Gool Tata, joint secretary of the BPP, who is the executive secretary of the Federation — should be exempt from such payment.

While Nargolwala commented that such a policy may need a change in the rules, Desai noted that there was no express prohibition in the rules. Noting that "the expenses of attending far-off meetings can be an impediment which all are not sufficiently well placed to meet," Desai supported Gandhi's suggestion with the proviso that each anjuman can decide for itself. "We shall continue with sharing of expenses in the BPP. Saronda's example should be emulated by others."

Desai's commendation emboldened Balsara to speak of the function held in Sanjan in 1978 when 600 people arrived in place of the 200 expected. A table for voluntary donations, more than made up for all the costs involved, he said. "Parsis, when they come to such functions, carry the load of their host. But it should be voluntary — not a fixed fee."

The matter was left to be decided between the host anjuman and the anjuman bringing additional guests. Gandhi went "on record to say that if any anjuman wishes to pay the travelling expenses of its delegates, it is free to do so. It should not feel hampered."

Membership

In order to bolster the Federation's funds and permit it to undertake social projects, Shiavax Nargolwala suggested that the major anjumans increase their subscriptions to the all-India body. Though the Federation's membership fee is only Rs 50 per annum,

Bombay, Surat and Calcutta had already been paying Rs 2,000, 1,500 and 1,000 respectively. However, in 1978 before it withdrew from the Federation, the BPP used to pay Rs 5,000 and now, on behalf of the premiere body, Golwalla agreed to hike Bombay's fee to Rs 5,001. Surat's Bhacca and Calcutta's Rabadi followed with Rs 5,001 and Rs 5,000 respectively. Poona and Madras agreed to raise their fee to Rs 2,000, the Iranian Zoroastrian Anjuman to Rs 1,000, Zai Bordi, Karanj and Baroda to Rs 501, Sholapur to Rs 250; all the rest doubled from Rs 50 to Rs 100, after little Saronda took the lead.

The normally generous Delhi Anjuman was the only major anjuman which did not immediately hike its subscription, having too many commitments for the present, but promised to think about it next year. The Delhi Anjuman has also contributed to several Federation expenses.

No new members were reported though the Bardoli Anjuman was said to have enquired regarding application formalities and a query from Bharuch concerned the 1986 subscription rate. Grant informed the council members that the Punchgani Association could be a potential member. Gandhi suggested that the zonal vice-presidents should start a membership drive.

Venue

At the Madras meeting in July, 1985 Jamshedpur's Homi Bodhanwalla, who is vice-president of the Federation, had extended an invitation to the delegates to congregate in Jamshedpur in January/February '86 to coincide with the silver anniversary celebrations of the local agiary. However, in the eventuality of Bangalore returning to the fold, the council preferred to meet in Bangalore in January '86 to join in celebrating the Bangalore agiary's diamond jubilee. It had been agreed that if Bangalore did not rejoin, the January meeting would be held in Jamshedpur.

When the executive council met in Bombay in November '85, it was learnt that Bangalore had decided to defer its decision to rejoin the Federation. The Jamshedpur Anjuman, did not attend the Bombay meeting. In the absence of a representative or a letter from the Jamshedpur Anjuman, the council delegates inadvertently overlooked Jamshedpur's invitation and decided



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to meet in Poona in February.

The Jamshedpur Anjuman was reported to be upset at the slight. The Federation passed an official resolution, apologizing to Jamshedpur.

It was decided that if Jamshedpur is still willing to host the Federation in July, August or September, the next meeting of the council would be held there. Surat is the alternate site.

Shiavax Nargolwala reiterated his invitation to the council members to the Delhi Dar-e-Mehr's silver jubilee celebrations on December 25 and 26 and thereafter for the council meeting on 27 and 28.

The original intention had been to upgrade the dadgah fire in Delhi to the higher level of the adaran. An adaran fire, it was learnt however, required constant tending by qualified yozdathregar mobeds whose number in the community has been dwindling. Unless such service is regularly performed, the fire reverts to the status of a dadgah. It was the opinion of the high priests that to create an adaran knowing that its future upkeep may not be feasible, was a great sin.

Another necessity of an adaran was the presence of a *varasiaji* or white bull. Like its counterpart the white tiger, the white bull is fast becoming extinct. Moreover, none except a Parsi may touch or tend the *varasiaji*. So to find and transport one to Delhi would itself be a major hurdle.

In light of these difficulties, Nargolwala said that the adaran project had been given up, although the jashan and other festivities would continue. Nargolwala said he hoped to invite Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to inaugurate the council meeting on December 27.

Those present at the meeting were: Mehernosh Mehta of Ahmednagar, Capt Homi P. Dandiwalla of Allahabad, Shavak Patel and Baman Cama of Baroda, Ms Maneck Kapadia of Belgaum, Minochaher B. Bharucha and Ms Banoo Bharucha of Bhavnagar, Dr Aspi Golwalla, Eruch Desai, R.K. Anklesaria and Prof Noshir Kaikobad of Bombay, Adi Rabadi of Calcutta, Shiavax Nargolwala, Keki Gandhi, Zal Nowsherwanji, Ms Farida Variava, Rustom Daroga, Ms Piloo Jungalwalla, Ms Nergish Nargolwala and Ms Zal Nowsherwanji of Delhi, Ms Daulat Irani of Hyderabad and Karnataka, Aspi Irani and Peshotan Nargolwala of the Iranian Zoroastrian Anju-

man and Ms Piroja Nargolwala, N.N. Dinshaw and Ms Gover Dinshaw of Jhansi, P.B. Karanjia and Ms P. Karanjia of Karanj, Dr Sarosh Wadia of Kutch, B.J. Khodaiji of Lucknow, Minoo Belgamwala and Ms Meher Belgamwala of Madras, Group Captain D.M. Marker of Mhow, Dara Deboo of Navsari, Marzban Kaikobad, Ms Tehmi Grant, Dinshaw Anklesaria, Minoo F. Dinshaw, M.A. Irani, K.M. Irani, Dr R.N. Marolia and R.M. Dubash of Poona, Homi Palsetia and Nariman Balsara of Saronda, Ms Nergis Panthaki of Shahabad, R.N. Daru-

khanawalla, J.F. Dhabhar, P.H. Amroliwalla, N.H. Amroliwalla, M.E. Pithavalla and P.S. Daruvala of Sholapur, Dr Sam Bhacca, Maneck Gheyara, Sorab Katpitia, Davar K.T. Modi, Ms Roshan Modi, Ms Parvin Modi and Ms S. Bhacca of Surat, Capt Jal Postwalla of Visakhapatnam, and Homi Mehta, Firoze Patel, Navel Mulla and Keki Irani of Zai Bordi. The guest speakers were Darayus Forbes, Rohinton Aga, Dara Damania, Dr (Ms) Roshan Master, Dr Dinshaw Kelawala and Major General Minwalla. *Parsiana* represented the Press.

IN MEMORIAM

A man of letters

Died: Russi D. R. Wadia, 63, editor of the controversial cyclostyled letters that espoused the orthodox point of view, on January 21, 1986 at the B.D. Petit Parsee General Hospital in Bombay following cardiac arrest.

A marketing consultant and proprietor of R.D.R. Enterprises, Wadia would work day and night on his newsletters, sometimes typing well until one o'clock in the morning, informed his colleague of five years, Faribourz Nariman.

"With considerable sacrifice in terms of time, energy and money, he brought a number of important issues to the notice of his readers," notes Nariman. "He tried to educate the community regarding the danger underlying the Adoption of Children Bill, 1980... he would (write) without any fear or favor, though never with malice. Because of this, he used to receive threats of legal proceedings." His attack on the ailing reformist priest Framroz Bode was in poor taste and almost resulted in legal action being initiated against Wadia.

"He never claimed to be very knowledgeable as far as matters pertaining to our religion and community were concerned, but he used to consult dasturs, scholars and knowledgeable men regarding various issues. Sometimes he used to commit blunders but whenever the same were pointed out to him, he never hesitated to apologize," recalled Nariman.

As a founder member of the Council of Vigilant Parsis, Wadia announced

the formation of the Council in one of his cyclostyled letters in 1982, but his writings sometimes found him at odds



Wadia: "tried to educate"

with the other members and he had to part ways.

Wadia completed his schooling from the Master Tutorial School in Bombay and later proceeded to obtain his diploma in commerce from London, informed Nariman. He gained work experience in several concerns before launching his market research consultancy firm of R.D.R. Enterprises.

Wadia is survived by his brother, Soli.

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