

THE PARSEE VOICE

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Entering The 3rd Year...

Readers will notice that with this issue, we have done away with giving two fortnightly dates for the month, under the masthead. From now on, the name of the month and year alone will be mentioned.

Future Imperfect

As we cast a glance on the two years gone by, we are filled with remorse. Each year seems to be getting worse than the previous year! But the picture visible on the distant horizon is even worse! We are neither defeatists nor doomsday prophets. On the contrary, our great religion has taught us to be incorrigible optimists. Yet, the way events have taken place, particularly in the last year, when Parsees were in the news throughout, for all the wrong reasons though, have displeased us no end.

We have always maintained that we have no personal animosity against anyone. But when the innocent, gullible average Parsee is bombarded week after week with hackneyed century-old shibboleths, when untruths

and blatant lies masquerade as hard facts, when a totally baseless fear psychosis is sought to be created, e.g. the declining Parsee population, etc., and when "Deen-Dushmans" try to blatantly torpedo basic Zoroastrian tenets and traditions, **The Parsee Voice** has to speak up, and will always do so, for the sake of **Truth, Justice and Right!**

The Pahlavi writers of the 9th century A.D. described their future as *siha, siha bût* (dark, very dark!) Today, the scenario unfolding in the Parsee community is a tiny copy of what happened just before the downfall of the Sassanian Empire: internecine feuds, inter-faith "marriages" and a complete decline in the virtues and the ethos of the followers of the Mazdayasni Zarthoshti Deen, thanks in particular to the exploits of Mani and Mazdak! Today, we have in our midst, modern-day Mazdaks and Manis, who have no compunction in claiming that they are the puny saviours of the Zoroastrian religion!! **May the true Saviour come soon!**

FPZAI Meet : Of Politics & Panjandrums

Report by H.M. Mistry

What used to earlier be a very non-descript affair, has, since the last couple of years, become an event of interest to that section of the community, which takes active interest in its affairs. We refer to the bi-annual meetings of The Federation of Parsi Zoroastrian Anjumans of India (FPZAI), the last of which was held on the 3rd and 4th of September 2005 in Mumbai.

Readers may recall the highly motivated and biased reports which appeared in the Parsee Press after the Ahmedabad meeting of FPZAI, when a majority of Anjumans decided that they had had enough of the bullying and pressure tactics of the FPZAI functionaries and had voiced their dissent to the decision proposed to be taken with regard to the FPZAI joining the cosmopolitan World Body of Zoroastrians.

It was evident that the events at Ahmedabad had not been easily erased from the minds of those who were at the receiving end then. Minoo Shroff, Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet, who is also President of the FPZAI, was clearly ill at ease. Instead of standing up to his reputation of being *saave* and *debonair*, he started the proceedings on a grumpy note, virtually cautioning the delegates against giving a repeat performance of Ahmedabad, explaining that the Federation meetings were meant to provide a platform to meet and exchange ideas to lead the community.

However, on the issue of confirmation of the minutes of the Ahmedabad meeting, Areez Khambatta, Vice President of FPZAI and Chairman of The Ahmedabad Parsi Punchayet, raised an objection to the minuting of the fact

that he had apologised. He explained that he had not done anything wrong and that the apology tendered then was only for the commotion. There was no wrong done by him. Putting it on record in this manner would be wrong. After some discussion, he was requested to redraft that portion for the Chairman's consideration and approval.

After this initial hiccup, the representatives of the various Anjumans were invited to introduce themselves. Representatives from more than 50 out of 69 Anjumans were present.

Foundation for Development of Udvada

The first salvo was fired by Jamshed Mohta, the President of Bardoli Jarthoshti Anjuman, during *matters arising out of the minutes*, on the issue of Udvada, which appeared under the heading "pavitra yatra dham" in the minutes of the Ahmedabad meeting. He questioned D.K. Tamboly, Managing Trustee of the Foundation for Development of Udvada (FDU), on the wisdom of amending the objectives of the FDU Trust Deed to include objectives of a general, and cosmopolitan, nature. **(Readers will recall that "The Parsee Voice" has been repeatedly questioning the motive behind this move).**

The amended generalised Trust Deed, he said, sidelines the main objectives and enables the money collected to be utilised for any purpose anywhere in the world. If the money was for Udvada, why diversify the objectives, he queried. **Tamboly trotted out the lame excuse that the expansion of the objectives in the FDU Trust Deed was done with a view to induct more Trustees, but Tamboly didn't have too many buyers for that one!** More questions started pouring in but Tamboly stalled all further discussion on the FDU by saying that he was not obliged to answer to the FPZAI. **Mohta objected to this highhanded attitude and insisted that Udvada and Iranshah belonged to the whole community and not to any Trust and, therefore, the FDU must show accountability to the community.** He also felt that since Udvada desperately needed funds for infrastructural development like roads, stable electricity and water, security, flooding and erosion problems etc. the Govt. should use the money for that purpose.

By now, Tamboly's discomfort was visibly evident. He assured that FDU funds would be used only for Udvada. Tannaz Parakh requested Tamboly to repeat his above statement for the record. She asked for a categorical confirmation that the money received by FDU would be used only for the welfare of Udvada. Quite obviously, Tamboly was unable to give this confirmation and mumbled that whatever money was given for Udvada would be used for Udvada. In short, if a donor did not specify the end use of his donation, which in most cases nobody does, the FDU was free to use it for any of its other

objectives (which include projects abroad) unrelated to Udvada and Iranshah.

Yazdi Desai representing the Jabalpur Anjuman, argued that because of the very title of the Trust, funds solicited by the FDU, would imply that they were for Udvada, when in fact they can now be used for any other purpose unrelated to Udvada. This was clearly misleading the community.

Keki Gandhi, the Secretary of FPZAI, came to Tamboly's rescue by stating that the Federation forum could not be used for discussing other matters, **conveniently sidestepping the fact that the whole discussion was prompted in the first place by the mention of this matter in the minutes of the Ahmedabad meeting which were awaiting adoption. Not just that! In the two FPZAI meetings in June, 2003 and June 2004, Tamboly himself had volunteered the skimpy information about the formation of the FDU and what the Collector of Valsad was asked to do!!**

Non-receipt of Notice for the meeting and other papers in time

President of the Dahanu Anjuman raised the issue of Dahanu not receiving the Notice, Agenda and Minutes of the Federation meeting, till just a few days prior to the Meeting and requested that these be sent at least 21 days in advance of the meeting. **Other delegates complained about not receiving the Notice at all.** Gandhi informed that he had sent them much earlier by UCP and could not be held responsible for non-delivery by the postal authorities. Then, Dahanu Anjuman raised the issue of payment of their yearly fees, **(for which they had proof of posting)** which the Secretary claimed had not been received by him. **This would debar Dahanu from voting. Several other anjumans also faced disqualification for non-payment of fees: Poona, Jhansi, Nargol, Vizag, among others. Hoshang Wania (Nargol) complained that though the FPZAI registered office was in Mumbai at the BPP's address, they had refused to accept payment of fees there, which was incorrect on their part.** Some arrangements should be made at this address for keeping of accounts and collection of fees, since it was the official registered office of the Federation, he said.

In view of the Bombay office not accepting the fees, repeated appeals were made by many Anjumans to accept fees in the form of demand drafts, before the elections, which were to be held the next day, but Gandhi was unrelenting!!

Jamsheed Kanga now representing the Satara Anjuman, suggested that fees could be directly sent to an FPZAI account in Bombay. Gandhi turned down the suggestion. Kanga also requested Gandhi to send out the draft minutes within three months of the Meeting, stating that sending them after 8 months as was done this time, was too long a

time. Gandhi replied that it was not possible to send them out earlier!!

Management of affairs/properties of defunct Anjumans

S. R. Katpitia was then called upon to give a detailed account of his activities dealing with recovery of properties of defunct Anjumans. What followed was a lengthy report stating the actions taken in various cases.

At this point, **Areez Khambatta**, the irrepressible patriarch from Ahmedabad, at whose insistence defunct anjumans were put on the Agenda (Khambatta showed us several letters written to the President, FPZAI urging the leadership not to neglect this vital matter any more) was on his feet and **derided the FPZAI for being unable to take care of our poor humdeens in the remote parts of India, because FPZAI seems to be too busy running after foreign Zoroastrians and wants to accommodate the so-called 'Zoroastrians' the world over.** He wanted to know what outcome Katpitia's legal processes had achieved in real terms and not mere hopes of recovery. At this point, B.H. Antia, BPP Trustee, under whose legal instructions Katpitia was acting, interjected to say that approx. Rs. 75 lakhs had been recovered. Khambatta thundered that the Federation needs to know how much the properties (that got in 75 lakhs) were actually worth. **There were no answers forthcoming.** Khambatta had clearly made his point, that the community was losing hundreds of crores of rupees due to the slow working of the Federation, which has entrusted this mammoth task to a single man, who is over 80 years old **and** who, infact, had been summarily dismissed by Antia!

Jamsheed Kanga felt that since Khambatta was monopolising the discussion he should be handed over the task of looking after the defunct Anjumans in and around Ahmedabad, to which Khambatta replied that he would be happy to do that. He urged that a strong team (committee) be immediately formed to look after properties of defunct anjumans.

At this stage, the Surat delegation was up in arms against Katpitia whose certain activities in and around Surat had offended their sensibilities. It seemed he had actually attempted to close down the Nanpura (Palia Mohalla) Dadgah, and that too, during the time of offering Bui to the Padshah saheb. **They stressed that Katpitia's services were terminated by the Surat Parsi Panchayat due to allegations of financial impropriety.** He was also a self-confessed follower of the Muslim faith, thus making him unfit to hold his present position. The Surat delegation sought answers from Katpitia to the above but the Chairman stepped in to state that they, the Federation, had appointed Katpitia and that all queries should be directed at them. The Chairman repeated what Katpitia had earlier stated, namely that it

was difficult to recover properties of defunct anjumans as trustees in those areas were not co-operating.

Surprisingly, as many as three young and dynamic members of our community had been invited as Guest speakers! 1) Jimmy Mistry, a successful entrepreneur, was described by the Chairman as a role model for our youth. Young Jimmy Mistry who came up with ideas and schemes for maintaining and upgrading our fire-temples and improving the economic status of our mobeds, was given some sound advice by Khojeste Mistree. When the younger Mistry said **he did not agree that priests should be in charge of religious matters**, Khojeste advised that just as other professionals have the last word on matters concerning their profession, priests should have the final say on issues concerning religion. He also informed Jimmy that there were many learned scholar Dasturs and mobeds available even today. **We hope the passionate young Turk takes this sound advice to heart and moves in the right direction, taking guidance from our learned scholar priests.**

2) Dr Anahita Pundole, who was manning the BPP's Fertility Clinic along with Dr. Pervin Dadachanji, Psychiatrist and rendering free services to Parsee couples who sought advice and treatment, was the speaker in the afternoon session. Out of 90 couples who had availed of this service, 27 women had conceived. Dr. Pundole's service to the community was highly appreciated and Khojeste Mistree suggested introducing this facility in other parts of the country, too. 3) Boman Irani, a successful young entrepreneur, who is into construction, explained that his concept of entrepreneurship was, taking responsibility for one's actions and to own every part of an organisation. His mission was to lead others, not to be selfish and to make others learn. Delegates were appreciative of all three presentations, which were delivered with passion and drive.

However, there was heartburn among many delegates who felt that due to an excess of guest speakers (perhaps deliberate), the Open Forum on both days of the Meeting, which many were looking forward to, in order to voice concerns that were not on the Agenda, was not held. Therefore, the very reason for which these deliberations are held, were not addressed as most of the time was given to guest speakers who would have better served the community had they been on the agenda of the Zoroastrian Chamber of Commerce. Perhaps this was a deliberate ploy on the part of the FPZAI leadership which now is constantly having to face up to the inadequacies of an organisation that has failed for 25 years to effectively address the real needs of the Anjumans!

Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna's shenanigans

A delegate's concern for dwindling numbers led Lt. Gen. Adi Sethna to mention that Minoo Shroff was shortly due to appear before a Parliamentary Committee to put forth what is required to help in increasing the Parsee population.

The Parsee Voice sees this as the General's attempt to rake up the issues of Adoption, acceptance of women's children and conversion, *by* using the bogey of dwindling numbers. **Chairman Shroff is being readied to become the "sacrificial lamb" for Delhi Anjuman's special agenda of rapid and vapid reform in the community. For all these years Delhi has been the albatross round the community's neck, for the radical changes it has made in the religious fabric of the community. Now Delhi wishes Mumbai and other Anjumans to share their soiled image and what better way than to drag the seemingly guileless Minoos Shroff and the BPP also into the quagmire of unrestrained reform!!** We hope better sense prevails and the BPP Chairman remembers that our learned High Priests have clearly opined that all the above positions advocated by Delhi, go against our Religious tradition.

It is ironic that on the one hand General Sethna exhibits concern for the preservation of Parsee heritage through the activities of Parzor and on the other, is determined to destroy our practices and way of life. We call upon the community to reassess the support they have so unstintingly given to General Sethna and Parzor. General Sethna must once and for all tell the community the truth. Is Parzor a coverup for General Sethna's ambition to radicalise the practices of our religion?

Anahita Desai stood up to inform the delegates that Gen. Sethna is misusing his position as a member of the Minorities Commission, to influence the Government to bring about changes in our Parsee laws, under the guise of decreasing numbers. She decried the fact that the Minorities Commission, under Sethna's guidance, had organized a so-called community meeting at Sahyadri, a few months ago, at which only known proponents of conversion, (Berjis Desai, Jehangir Patel, Dr. Armaity Desai, and the General himself) were invited as panellists. She cautioned that this one-sided report, is being presented to the Government on behalf of the community. **She was, however, not allowed to continue by the Chair and was rudely asked to sit down, with no further discussion on the same!!**

Rohinton Rivetna's presentation on World Body of Zoroastrians

Minoos Shroff then introduced Rohinton Rivetna, the first President of FEZANA, who gave a presentation on the current status of the proposed cosmopolitan World Body of Zoroastrians, although the item on the Agenda stated, Report on the 8th World Zoroastrian Congress. **No new or concrete facts were presented about the proposed World Body. He kept stating that 35% of the votes would be in favour of India and, thus, no resolution of importance could be passed without India's concurrence. He underplayed the fact that complete non-Zoroastrians would also end up being members of this Zoroastrian body.**

Rivetna's presentation and talk were uninspiring, to say the least. He spoke in Gujarati and was distinctly ill at ease while communicating. He failed miserably in convincing those present, of the need to have a World Body of Zoroastrians in the first place and more so, the need to let complete non-Parsee Irani Zoroastrians become members of the world body. He tried to impress that there was no way he could control the fact that certain North American Zoroastrian associations had allowed admission to non-Zoroastrians as members but that we, in India, should overlook this matter and magnanimously make adjustments in our thinking (by giving up our age old practices) and join the World Body. It seemed to matter little to him that in the process we could be destroying the Zarthoshti religion and our Parsee/Irani community.

Homi Ranina's rejoinder to Rivetna

Homi Ranina represented WAPIZ. He mentioned that WAPIZ was formed to bring together Parsee and Irani Zoroastrians of the World, to defend, uphold and strengthen tradition. He said that tradition is being put on the back burner today, and we are told to change with the times. While we are aware that times are changing, **we believe that Zoroastrian values are strong and deeply rooted and should not be thrown away. Zoroastrian values did not change with the times, he stressed.**

He recalled that when they had studied the draft of the World Body, they had immediately realised that something was amiss. The definition of who is a 'Zoroastrian' was missing. Zoroastrianism was the very core and fundamental issue on which the World Body of Zoroastrians was to be formed. Whether one calls the WB a political, social or welfare Body, the fact remains that the word 'Zoroastrian', which is inseparable from the Parsi and Irani identity means the same. Referring to the 1990 edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica, **he mentioned that for Zoroastrians, religion and ethnicity are interlinked and cannot be bifurcated.** He requested the World Body authorities to take this into account and not divide the community for the so-called converts who are already members of associations abroad. **He asserted that the definition of 'Zoroastrian' as laid down in the FPZAI constitution should be accepted by all. He infact pleaded with Rivetna, that why should North American Zoroastrians wish to revolt against their own community of Parsees and Iranis of India for the sake of just a handful of converts. In fact he stressed you all should abandon the converts and join us instead!**

He also dismissed the oft-repeated argument that the IZO leadership would always be people of Parsee Irani origin and that converts could not become office bearers. He emphasized that this could be challenged in a court of law. He contended that if a Zoroastrian organisation accepted non-Parsee Irani Zoroastrian members, in 10 years, these converts would outnumber the genuine Zoroastrians. Thus,

the important thing was to define who is a Zoroastrian. He reiterated that converts should not be allowed to be members and membership should be confined to Parsee Irani Zoroastrians only.

Dadi Engineer waxes eloquent

Dadi Engineer, BPP Trustee, jumped to Rivetna's rescue and gave the audience an insight into his own thinking (misplaced and misguided as it was). **He tried to impress that the constitution of the new World Body had adequate safeguards (we've heard that often enough and know that it is not true), and that it was not a religious body. He assured that the World Body would not engage in conversion anywhere in the World but admitted that non-Zoroastrian spouses were members of certain Zoroastrian associations and could not be thrown out. He said that Tradition was in our genes. But in the next breadth, he asked people to keep an open mind. One wonders where all of Engineer's traditional up-bringing goes when he asks us to be broadminded and accept converts as Zoroastrians, much against the tradition followed by our sagacious forefathers!**

At this stage, Keki Gandhi, in his usual attempt to shroud the truth, attempted to fool the community by stating that only organisations were joining WZO (F), thereby implying that the question of entry of non-Zoroastrians as members did not arise. Gandhi and Co. conveniently did not mention (leave aside circulate) that the Constitution of the WZO (Individuals), the main arm of the world body, (which is now being called the WZO-W,) **clearly allows converts to become members.** It is this kind of underhand deceit that the traditionalists have to deal with and **"The Parsee Voice" urges the trustees of all Anjumans, big and small, not to fall prey to this propaganda but to boldly and firmly condemn it.**

Khojeste Mistree launches broadside

Khojeste Mistree gave a fitting response to M/s. Rivetna and Engineer. He said that it's time we stopped fudging issues and call a spade a spade. We were being asked to delink ethnicity from religion on a global level, which is unacceptable. He said that it was easy to be fooled by what was said about the IZO and WZO, when we are deliberately not given the whole picture. He said that it was legally untenable to have only Parsee Irani Office bearers and yet the leadership continues to promote that idea. He said that Rustam Dubash of WZO has, in the Federation newsletter itself, admitted, that it is possible for converts to become office bearers. The North American Mobed Council, had also clearly changed the definition of 'Zoroastrian' and stated that a Zoroastrian is not necessarily a Parsee. **He reiterated that Zoroastrianism and Parseeism were interlinked. It would be wrong to legitimise taking converts on board.**

He stated that at the London Congress, Dorab Mistry, President of ZTFE had revealed that 2000 Kurds had approached the British Government saying that they were Zoroastrians. Could we not see the danger we are posing to our future generations?

Mistree asked if it was sensible to change our laws to accommodate the converts. The community in India was strongly traditional. Our forefathers had died to protect the faith. He stressed that the voting weightage had not changed. He wondered why we had to rely on the outsiders to give us a draft constitution and why we couldn't make one ourselves. **He emphasised that our religion was not negotiable.**

In response to Rivetna's theme song of Hamazori, Mistree said that Hamazori was acceptable but with our own Parsee Irani Zoroastrians. It would be right to be united based on ideology where the term 'Zoroastrian' is defined.

Khojeste's explanation was greeted with loud applause. Mr Rivetna was given the message loud and clear - No World Body of Zoroastrians was acceptable to the Parsees, if it included non- Parsee Irani Zoroastrians as Members.

He regretted that the BPP had so far not commented on the recent establishment of a Prayer Hall in Mumbai, which all our Priests had said was wrong. To this the Chairman commented that since the BPP had, in the past, been chastised for dabbling in religious matters, they had no comment to offer this time. A fine excuse for wriggling out of a tight situation!

In the matter of voting rights in the new World Body, Wania sarcastically queried what was the use of 35% voting rights in the new body when the said rights would be exercised by people like Dinshaw Tamboly, Dadi Engineer and Keki Gandhi? The sarcasm was not lost on Tamboly who unsportingly reminded Wania that they were the community's elected representatives whereas he, Wania, had lost the election. *Implying that as elected representatives they could do what they chose and no one can question their credentials or their actions. Such is the arrogance of our present-day trustees!*

Young Zarvan Patvi, from Surat wanted Burjor Antia, (who had during his recent visit to Surat, spoken against Conversion) to give his views on the World Body. Instead of giving the young lad a straight answer, Antia thundered back that he was disgusted with the community's attitude. He insisted that he was a traditional! What are your views on the Cosmopolitan World Body then, Burjorji? Fearful of being caught riding two horses Burjoji resorted to the oldest trick in the world, usually the prerogative of a woman scorned. He lost his temper and the war with it. But truth has an uncanny way of being heard. Burjorji caught in a twist of his own making was laid bare by a simple question.

Election drama

The way the Executive Council elections and General Body Meeting procedure were conducted by the Shroff-Gandhi duo would have made a politician blush. The speed and the high-handedness with which the proceedings were conducted were a clear indication of how transparency and accountability were shown the door. Most of the time, Mr Shroff, Chairman, sat tight-tipped *while* Gandhi was steam-rolling the proceedings.

West Zone Wranglings

For the first time in the history of the FPZAI, two nominations were received for the West Zone A and B. The nomination of Firdaus Kayani of Pune was disqualified as Pune had not paid its fees and Rustom Cursetji of Thane was elected in his place, representing West Zone A. For West Zone B, Daraius Master of Surat was declared elected as Gandhi claimed that no other nomination was received. This was objected to by Khambatta of Ahmedabad who had also filed his nomination. Gandhi refused to accept his nomination although the papers were filed at the registered office in Mumbai. **After much acrimony and pressure from other delegates did Gandhi condescend to accept Areez Khambatta's candidature for the post of Vice President. But he promptly threw another spanner in the works by announcing that elections to this post would be held at the next General Body Meeting and hence the post would remain vacant for one year. Homi Ranina, a highly respected corporate lawyer, opined that this was an absurd rule and liable to be challenged. Dinshaw Mehta, a member of the Executive Council, and a BPP trustee, also voiced his opposition to this interpretation, but to no avail. Many other delegates opposed this blatant attempt to misinterpret rules but the voice of reason was silenced in a rude and high-handed manner. However, the issue was settled when the other candidate from West Zone B, Daraius Master, President of Surat Parsi Panchayat, withdrew his candidature in favour of Mr Khambatta. This move caught the wheeling-dealing leadership by surprise. Daraius Master deserves our support and our hearty congratulations for he showed the leadership the meaning of grace and decorum.**

Fees Farce

The issue of payment of fees was also made another bone of contention. Those Anjumans who had not paid their fees requested that they be allowed to tender the same by demand draft. This was one day before the elections. Gandhi was initially unrelenting but after repeated requests accepted the fees. He, however, continued to maintain that the respective delegates would be debarred from voting or being nominated for the Executive Council as the fees would be considered as paid only after they were credited into the Federation bank account in Delhi. Surely, Gandhi's knowledge of banking matters is not so

limited to be unaware that a demand draft is like cash in hand!! The delegates then asked Dadi Engineer, a member of the Executive Council to use his legal experience and opine whether the Rules were being followed while conducting the elections. He requested time to read and decide and promised to revert later with his ruling. This 'later' never came. This, of course, was Engineer's well planned tactic to confuse and lull those opposing his good friend Keki Gandhi!!

Step Down, Keki!

Khojeste Mistree accused Gandhi of inventing his own rules. He also suggested that Gandhi should step down as Federation Secretary. This suggestion found favour with many delegates with someone proposing the move, another quickly seconding it and a large number of delegates standing up, in support. But Gandhi, who is obviously playing for higher stakes, turned a deaf ear to this suggestion. He had the temerity to state that the Gandhis had the habit of being assassinated but did not step down. Only, he forgot that *hoi pollois* don't get "assassinated". Gandhi's comrade-in-arms, the ever obliging Chairman, jumped to his rescue and chided the members for not realising Gandhi's worth in spite of his having served the Federation for 25 years. ***Shroff, more than anyone, should know, that only in the third world countries ruled by military dictatorships do individuals rule for 25 years at a stretch!***

Alluding to the issues being raised by various delegates questioning the validity of election procedures, Jamsheed Kanga emphatically told the Chair that we should not tolerate this 'goondagiri'!!! **While there was a lot of argument and cross-talking, there was definitely no 'goondagiri' as alleged by Kanga who was there as usual to support his own brand of misplaced reformism. It should be remembered that it was the very same Kanga who, at the height of the Doongerwadi crisis, had said some very disgusting things about our nassasalars.** Tannaz Parakh rightly objected to the general discussions being referred to as 'goondagiri'.

The Chairman then introduced Jamshed J. Irani, the new Vice President from the Eastern Zone. Irani requested the delegates to disagree without being disagreeable and to observe decorum. Throughout the meeting Irani appeared to be either dozing or playing with his mobile phone!

DPA should be out of FPZAI

Tannaz Parakh questioned Delhi Anjuman's membership of the Federation. Gandhi gave a lengthy talk on the genesis of this matter but skipped the main point raised, which was that **under FPZAI Rules and Regulations, Delhi does not qualify to be a member of the Federation.** The Hon. Secretary's ruling was that if anyone had a problem with Delhi's membership, they would have to seek remedy at the appropriate forum. **Much of the angst**

against Delhi stems from the fact that Delhi controls the Federation (one of the BPP Trustees admitted that he was unaware that he was a member of the Executive Council after having supposedly served on it for 2 whole years!!) **and is driving the Federation in a direction diametrically opposite to that envisaged by our traditional forefathers of yore and by our scholar Priests today. The Parsee Voice appeals to the traditional Anjumans to prevent the Federation from being hijacked by the smooth talking, powerful and highly influential, but religiously ignorant leadership of the Federation.**

The Youth Wings of various Anjumans were then allowed to give reports on their various activities. The Chairman remarked that we should pick up budding talent and help them.

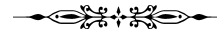
The afternoon session was taken up by various Anjumans giving their reports and detailing their problems. A common problem that was mentioned was the paucity of mobeds to man the local Agiaries.

The way the meeting was conducted left one with a bitter taste. Mino Shroff, as the Chairman, in spite of his so-called corporate experience of decades, proved completely at sea as the Chairman. It was evident that the all-powerful Secretary, Keki Gandhi, was calling all the shots. **This duo definitely needs to step out of their ivory**

towers to realise that gone are the days when the Anjuman members would meekly surrender to their abrasive and dictatorial way of functioning. They still continue talking down to people who have a different viewpoint and refuse to give such delegates a chance to voice their views and objections. This is what leads to acrimony and outbursts. **It was obvious that the leadership was trying to make a decided attempt to pack the Council with like-minded people and keep traditional and outspoken persons like Khambatta out. The election procedure was motivated, manipulated, unfair and arbitrary. But can we really expect anything better from a man who claims that he will hang on to power until he is “assassinated”.** Such is the power and lure of the chair!

Two sessions were given to the young entrepreneurs. These sessions were out of place at an Anjuman meeting. It was quite obvious that the intention was in effect not to give time to the delegates to discuss and question the World Body of Zoroastrians, the Foundation for Development of Udvada, and other contentious issues.

This election of the Federation spelt the death of Democracy in the community. And the Obituary could read : **Died Democracy Truth and Fair play in the Parsee community. Murdered by Keki Gandhi**



Our Observations :

“The rape of the Federation” & Murder of Democracy! *Bulldozing and Browbeating – order of the day*

Part of the top heading, in quotation marks, has been taken from *Parsiana’s* editorial in its issue of 21st September 2005, the remaining half is ours. Both halves typically symbolise the rough-shod manner in which the elections of the Executive Committee members of the FPZAI were conducted by the Jt. Hon. Secretary, Keki Gandhi, tacitly supported by the President of the FPZAI along with his colleagues of the BPP. **In 15 minutes flat, both the Annual General Meeting and the elections of the new Executive Council from all over India – to fill up 30 posts! – were completed on the morning of Sunday, the 4th September.** Strange that the over-resourceful CEO, B.T. Dastur, of BPP, who was present on both the days, did not deem it fit to send this feat of Gandhi & Co. for consideration to the Limca Book of Records, if not to the Guinness Book of Records!

The strategy for Sunday’s elections were obviously pre-planned and pre-meditated by the caucus a few days in advance. Dadi Engineer gave the secret away when he declared a day earlier that Areez Khambatta would be “clean bowled” the next day! However, he had to eat humble

pie when, on Sunday, he realised that he had not seen the umpire’s right hand shoot out at 90°, while he was bowling. May be, Engineer forgot to do his mandatory **Kusti** after answering Nature’s call, that day! Khambatta did emerge again as the Vice President of West Zone B. Gandhi’s deplorable subterfuge that the nomination letter was not received by the Federation secretariat in Delhi, when he and the entire calculating cabal knew very well that the registered office of FPZAI is in Mumbai, at BPP’s headquarters, didn’t behove the fevi-stick Jt. Secretary’s chair!

These are the rapists of the Federation and the murderers of democracy! Unfortunately, so strong and heady has been the Ahmedabad hangover, that even after nine long months (December 2004–September 2005), it refused to let go not only the FPZAI top brass and the BPP trustees, but even it seems the senior editorial staff of the erstwhile reasonably balanced ‘Parsiana’. While we do not wish to carry journalism to Tehmulji’s, we shall most certainly say that the “morning after”, which seems to have been a difficult gestation period for ‘Parsiana’, has seen

some hopelessly biased and myopic “Editorial Viewpoints” from the pen of a senior Parsee journalist! The “Viewpoint” of the September 21st issue on the Federation meeting touched the nadir of Editorial writing! Holes can be picked in every single paragraph, full of personal attacks and vindictive malicious remarks! All we can say, at this juncture, is, *et tu* Jehangir?

One really wonders how hopelessly one-sided Parsee journalism has become in recent years. There’s this apparently coke-snorting columnist of a weekly, who obviously bangs at a contumelious computer ! When he is not day-dreaming, he suffers from an acute viral bout of PVP, or ‘Parsee Voice’ Phobia! Is someone calling the shots from behind all these pen-pushers?

FDU In FPZAI!

The “Foundation for Development (sic) of Udvada” (FDU) featured in the FPZAI meetings of June 2003, June 2004 and December 2004. In the first two, it was the master-misdoer, D.K. Tamboly, who gave extremely sketchy details about the formation of the FDU. In the December 2004 Federation meeting also, Tamboly had murmured a few words about FDU, which was duly minuted for the September 2005 meeting. Naturally, Bardoli Anjuman’s President Jamshed Mohta, queried Tamboly, the

brain behind the two cosmopolitan Trust Deeds supposed to “develop” Udvada, about the need for a second Trust Deed in two years, during which there were **no** activities undertaken by FDU. So, why were the “objects” increased in 2005? (**The Parsee Voice** had published a thorough exposé in its June 2005 issue).

Tamboly, who is always at loggerheads with Truth, instead of giving a proper reply, hedged by stating that he was not obliged to reply to the FPZAI about FDU!! Why? When it was he, who first grandiosly proclaimed at the June 2003 meeting of the FPZAI that the FDU was formed, with Dastur Khurshed Dastur Kaikobad of Udvada as the Chairman, as Udvada was to be declared a “Pavitra Yatra Dham”! How many wrongs and falsehoods will Tamboly hide, so as to shirk giving a straightforward answer and instead, wait for Keki Gandhi to come to his succour?! What is shocking is that **Parsiana’s** report in this matter by Arnavaz Mama takes up cudgels for Tamboly by stating: “Tamboly, a trustee of the FDU, had been keeping the all-India body informed of developments in a spirit of camaraderie”!! Then, let him now reply to legitimate questions regarding FDU in the same “spirit of camaraderie”. The September FPZAI meeting was certainly a blot on those members, who thought nothing of piercing a stiletto in the back of democracy — that democracy which these executive committee members never tire of paying lip sympathy to! — *Editor*

Community Capers

(1) Behram-e boundary maari!

No, this is not a new Parsi play being rehearsed by Yezdi Karanja or Dinyar Tirandaz! This is our BPP Behram, the Behram, not of Bardoli, but of Bandra, who got himself into the Guinness Book of World Records! What did he do? He thought of newer/bizarre ways to increase the Parsee population? Or, did he come out with a new translation of the **Haptan Yasht**? Or, did he give a novel interpretation of rule, A,B, C of the FPZAI Constitution?

No, no! Nothing of the sort. B.T. Dastur bombarded editors of the world’s newspapers with the largest number of missives (2,493) and created a world record of penning letters. Of course, that did not include any letter he wrote, to **The Parsee Voice**. Is there any other **bawa** who can better Behramji’s record? If Burjorji Bharucha (Ba-fa-bha) were alive today, may be he would have pipped B.T. at the post?

(2) Shaking up “Rasna”

Ever since the Ahmedabad FPZAI meeting, so we hear, D.K. Tamboly, Minoobhai Shroff, Burjorji Antia, Jehangir Patel and people of their genre have stopped drinking **Rasna** and

Cola-cola. Not because they don’t like Hrithik Roshan or Karishma Kapoor, but because they (the drinks, that is) were the favourites of their nemesis, Areez Khambatta. So, the World Body guys preferred the US-based Kraft Foods’ Tang! In the latest Federation meeting in Mumbai (so a bird tells us), Jimmy Caterers were expressly asked not to serve the Pioma products.

But they had not reckoned with Old Boy Areez! He had already passed on the mantle of Chairman and Managing Director of Rasna group to his very able and dynamic son Piruz! And, what do you know! As the saying goes, *Baap kartaan beto savayo!* Piruz has, in a short time turned the whole Piona Industries on its head. Like a doughty warrior of yore, he first took on **Tang** and toppled it. Now, his sights are on snackfood market, where Pepsico’s and Saif Ali Khan – Preity Zinta’s Lay’s products are his first target.

Maybe, at Ratlam’s FPZAI meeting, early 2006, they may not be able to serve the western-flavoured chips, but thereafter, in the Mumbai meeting even, the hard-boiled Keki Gandhi will not be able to say ‘no’ to the potato, corn-based savoury! Atta boy, Piruz! **Futeh Karo!**

