

BUSINESS, LABOUR AND OPPOSITION
MOVEMENTS IN THE POLITICS OF
AHMEDABAD CITY, 1960-72

by

Bharti Pradyot Kansara

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is a study of the nature of the political system in Ahmedabad City during the 1960s and early 1970s. It looks at the interaction between the institutional and agitational modes which characterize political behaviour in the City, and examines the ability of the political system to cope with the challenges of rapid urbanization and large-scale migration.

Chapter I introduces the themes of the thesis; Chapter II describes the unique historical evolution of Ahmedabad City and gives a socio-economic profile of the City. Chapter III outlines the functions and powers of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in the context of considerable State Government control.

Chapter IV examines the unique role played by the business community in the political life of Ahmedabad City in collaboration with the Gandhian-inspired Majur Mahajan (Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association), as exemplified in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation between 1961 and 1965, when business-labour political relationships paralleled model employer-employee relationships in the economic sphere. Chapter V examines State-Local political linkages and their impact on city developments.

Chapter VI looks at agitational politics through the career of the Janta Parishad, which broadened from a party of linguistic agitation in the 1950s to a party embracing economic agitation centred on the textile workers' dearness allowance issue in the 1960s. Chapter VII analyses the difficulties of sustained mobilization, party maintenance and goal attainment experienced by the Janta Parishad in its period of power in the Corporation from 1965 to 1969.

Chapter VIII studies anomic agitation as exemplified in the City's Communal Riots of 1969. Chapter IX looks at State-Local linkages after the Congress split of 1969. Chapter X draws together the various strands of the thesis.

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N.B. In order to protect the identities of the people concerned, where interviewees have discussed matters of opinion, judgement and interpretation, their name is replaced with a coded letter.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AICC	All-India Congress Committee
AITUC	All-India Trades Union Congress
CEC	Central Election Committee
Congress (O)	Organization Congress or Old Congress
Congress (R)	Ruling Congress
CPI	Communist Party of India
CP(M)	Communist Party (Marxist)
d.a.	dearness allowance
DCC	District Congress Committee
DEC	District Election Committee
GPCC	Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee
INTUC	Indian National Trades Union Congress
JP(MGJP)	Janta Parishad or Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad
MGMMU	Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MM	Majur Mahajan
MOA	Millowners' Association
MPCC	Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee
NMGJP	Nutan Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad
PEC	Pradesh Election Committee
PSP	Praja Samajvadi Paksh
SP	Socialist Party
SSP	Samyukta Samajvadi Paksh
SS	Sangram Samiti
TLA	Textile Labour Association (Majur Mahajan)
UDCP	Urban Community Development Project
UP	Uttar Pradesh

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEMES OF THE THESIS

The process of urbanization in India as a whole has progressed relatively slowly over the last few decades. The proportion of urban population has risen comparatively modestly from 11% of the total population in 1911 to 18.1% in 1961, and 19.87% in 1971. This is compared to an urban population of 78.87% in the UK, 68.09% in Japan, 55.85% in the USSR, and as much as 41.64% in the UAR. Thus, just over 80% of India's population continues to live in villages, and agriculture is still the primary occupation of almost 75% of the population. It is in India's villages and districts that the real dynamics of social and political change in India are to be found.

What then is the justification for a study of Indian urban politics beyond the obvious desire to extend our knowledge of all political processes? The point is that, despite a relatively low rate of urbanization in the country as a whole, there is a strong trend towards concentration of population in the big metropolitan cities of India, of which Ahmedabad is one. While the relative proportion of urban population in Class II (50,000-100,000 population) and Class III (20,000-49,999 population) towns taken together has remained practically constant, i.e. around 28-29% between 1901-71, and the relative proportion in Class IV (10,000-19,999 population), Class V (5,000-9,999 population) and Class VI (less than 5,000 population) towns has actually declined sharply from 48.7% in 1901 to a mere 18.1% in 1971, the proportion of urban population in Class I towns (100,000 plus population) has risen from 22.9% in 1901 to 52.4% in 1971. According to the 1971 Census, the average population per town has risen by about 25% in Class I towns alone between 1951 and 1971, while there have been very marginal

deviations in the average population in Class II, Class III and Class IV towns. Thus metropolitan towns are growing at a much faster rate than the rest of the urban population of India.¹

Ahmedabad is one of the eight largest cities of India, the million plus population cities, whose combined population in 1971 was over 25 million. As much as half of Ahmedabad's population is composed of migrants, and the problems imposed by migration and urbanization on the political and administrative and financial resources of the city are enormous. Rajni Kothari² has focused on the urban component of Indian political performance, identifying it as a major crisis point in the emerging political and policy profile of the country. He feels that the Congress party, dominated by the overall ideology of "village development" and motivated by the numerical and electoral strength of the rural areas, has failed to respond to the constantly deteriorating conditions of urban life.

Thus a study of the nature of Ahmedabad's political system, and the ways in which it has been able to cope with some of these challenges is of very definite interest. In combination with other studies of metropolitan city politics in India,³ it could provide an interesting picture of the differences and similarities in the ways in which different metropolitan cities were tackling problems of migration and urbanization, influenced by their respective regional cultures and social structures. It could also provide an insight into the nature

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1. See Ruddar Datt, Urbanization and Economic Growth, (1972).
 2. See Rajni Kothari, Politics in India. Little Brown Country Series (1970).
 3. For example, Ali Ashraf, The City Government of Calcutta: A Study of Inertia (1966); Mary Katzenstein, "The Origins of Nativism: the Emergence of the Shiv Sena in Bombay" Asian Survey, vol.13, no.4 (April, 1973), pp. 386-399.

of the Congress party in the various metropolitan centres.

The study of urban politics has been hampered to some extent by a persistent attitude on the part of a large segment of the Indian intelligentsia that municipal government ought somehow to be apolitical, the exclusive realm of neutral bureaucrats. Even the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee was guilty of this attitude in its 1966 Report:⁴

".. Municipal utilities, sanitation, public health and provision of various other amenities are meant for the convenience and the well-being of all citizens and should not be matters of political controversy. The Committee are of the view that most of the local bodies in India are torn by party factions and do not fully devote their time and energy to serving the people. It seems, therefore, necessary to rid the local authorities of party factions and sectional or group interests. .."

However, the problem of urban development, like that of national development, is ultimately a political problem - it is a function of the commitment and capability of the political system to foster development. The provision of municipal services and amenities, and the carrying out of public improvements require large-scale finance and fairly radical legislative and administrative measures. The sine qua non for this is effective and dynamic political leadership, interested in development programmes and capable of the resourcefulness and drive to carry these through.

In addition, at a more basic level, politics and 'party factions' are inescapable in the municipal sphere since the city is composed of a large number of different interests competing for the differential distribution of benefits in the power of the municipal government, and

4. See Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Planning : June 1966).

for the most favourable allocation of tax burdens.

Many studies of urban politics have primarily been concerned with exploring the phenomena of voting behaviour per se, using city constituencies merely as constituencies, and not really concerned with exploring the conditions of the urban political system as such.⁵ Many economic and demographic surveys of a number of cities and towns in India exist⁶, but few have attempted to link these to political phenomena and explore the political implications and aspects of economic and demographic trends, and to examine the problems facing cities of developing into viable and stable communities.⁷

This study is an attempt to look at the structure and pattern of political leadership in Ahmedabad City; the changing social bases of politics, and the problems connected with the politicization of various groups and their recruitment into the political system, e.g. migrants, casual labourers (the Badlis⁸) and the urban periphery of the unemployed and underemployed. Throughout, an attempt has been made to relate political phenomena to changing social and economic as well as political circumstances, to look at the phenomenon of migration, for example, in relation to politics, to relate changing economic circumstances to political outcomes. The study is looking at the city

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5. For example, see V.M. Sirsikar, Political Behaviour in India : A Case Study of the 1962 General Elections. (Bombay : 1965); Aloo J. Dastur, Menon vs. Kripalani: North Bombay election, 1962. (Bombay : 1967); Paul Brass, "An Industrial Labour Constituency : Kanpur". Economic Weekly Special Number, vol. 14, nos. 28, 29, 30 (July, 1962), pp. 1111 - 18.
 6. See, for example, A. Bopegamage, Delhi; a Study in Urban Sociology. (1954); V.K.R.V. Rao and P.B. Desai, Greater Delhi; A Study in Urbanization. (1966); D.R. Gadgil, Sholapur City. (1966); and D.N. Majumdar, Social Contours of an Industrial City. (1960).
 7. There are, however, an increasing number of studies of the urban political system as such, for example, D.B. Rosenthal, The Limited Elite. (1970), and Rodney W. Jones, "Linkage Analysis of Indian Urban Politics", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 25 (June 17, 1972), pp. 1195 - 1203.
 8. See Chapter V.

as a whole, at its economic, social and political life enmeshed together, rather than trying to study particular political processes such as voting behaviour in particular constituencies per se, or factionalism per se. Problems of urban finance and development - municipal finances and the Urban Community Development Project - have also been examined in the context of the particular political configuration in Ahmedabad.

The pattern of Ahmedabad City politics has been produced by the interaction between the shaping force of the city's unique historical evolution, economically, socially and politically, and its regional culture on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the structural forms and constraints imposed by the framework of the one-party dominant federal political structure of India, in which State governments have considerable autonomy and power vis-à-vis both the Central Government and Local Governments, resulting in a political system of bargaining, and the subtle exercise of influence and pressure by each level in the political system.

In Ahmedabad, predominantly a textile industrial centre, strongly influenced by the Jain-Bania ethos of its business entrepreneurs and the practical idealism of Gandhi, the pattern of politics largely consisted in the 1960 s (this study is concerned largely with the time-period 1960-72) of the dialogue and the interrelationship between the mill-owner - dominated business element and the Majur Mahajan trade union element within the City's Congress party. This dialogue bore striking parallels to the dialogue which had evolved over decades of labour relations between the textile magnate employers and the Majur Mahajan "outsider" top leadership, drawn from a similar caste, linguistic and regional background. Thus the pattern of political life on one level has a strong institutional basis with the business community

and the Gandhian-inspired Majur Mahajan as principal political actors.⁹

Despite the limited autonomy of municipal governments vis-à-vis State governments in the Indian context, the business-Majur Mahajan partnership in the Municipal Corporation and other arenas of the urban political system was able to exert a strong influence on the nature and shape of governmental outcomes affecting the city. In comparison to the decision-making power of American municipalities, it might be argued that studies of civic decision-making are inappropriate in the Indian context, where municipal government is relatively powerless with little autonomy. However, although not directly in the chamber of the Municipal Corporation, major governmental decisions about city life are being taken, and city actors, at least in Ahmedabad, have managed to acquire a large say in the outcomes of these decisions. This was due in large part to their power and prestige within the city, and their state-level linkages¹⁰, which enabled them to be far more than the "limited élite" by which D. B. Rosenthal characterizes municipal actors.

9. The Majur Mahajan trade union and the business element in Ahmedabad city politics should not be viewed primarily as interest groups in the Western sense. They both have a mixed character of modern and traditional aspects: the role of the traditional family and kinship structures - preserved through the ingenious device of the managing agency system - has been a key factor in the organization of business and industry in India. Similarly, family, community and caste loyalties have played a considerable role in the operation of trade union organizations in India. In the context of India's mixed economy, with the government as the prime legitimate instrument for modernization and economic growth, there is no role for "interest groups" in the Western sense, and the strength of autonomous interest group associations is very limited. They can only operate effectively from within the coalitional structure of the dominant party, rather than as discrete organizational entities. They have to work within and through the political system, its parties and factions. See Rajni Kothari Politics in India, (Little Brown Country Series; 1970).

10. Political linkages are defined here as channels for the transmission of influence, patronage, support and information between allied and interdependent political participants. This definition is very close to the one employed by Rodney Jones in "Linkage Analysis of Indian Urban Politics," Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 25 (June 17, 1972), pp. 1195-1203.

This brings us to the crucial dimension of state-local linkages in Ahmedabad city politics. In Ahmedabad, access to state-level leaders and patronage forms an important element in maintaining and exercising power within the city. Both the business élite and the Majur Mahajan played a part in state-level factionalism, and had access to state-level patronage and decision-making authority. They were able to manipulate state-local linkages to secure considerable benefits for their clientèle, the middle class and the élite of industrial workers in the modern sector, devising important mechanisms of control over State Government decision-making and financial resources. Given the statutory and financial limitations of municipal governments vis-à-vis the State Government, it was remarkable what local political actors could achieve on behalf of their clientèle in the city in the multiple political arenas of the city - the Municipal Corporation, and the arenas produced by state-level bodies functioning in the city, and the host of voluntary developmental associations financed largely by the State Government. The absence of state-level sources of support to the agitation-based Janta Parishad opposition party, when it came to power in the Corporation in 1965, was a significant factor in the difficulties it experienced of sustained mobilisation, goal attainment and party maintenance.

There were also strong agitational undercurrents to the city's political life, whose mainspring lay in the widespread sub-standard living conditions in the city, and the increasingly pluralistic complexion of Ahmedabad society, due to large-scale migration from other areas of Gujarat State and from other States of India, and the strains in terms of housing, education, civic amenities etc. placed upon the city's economy by the growing urbanization in the twentieth century, creating a fragmented and restless lower class. Agitational

politics in the city surfaced first in the linguistic movement for Maha Gujarat in the 1950 s, and later in the economic agitation, organized by the Janta Parishad and its labour wing, the Sangram Samiti, on the textile workers' dearness allowance issue. Plural antagonisms in the city reached a climax in the Communal Riots of 1969, which were not only anti-Muslim, but also anti-migrant in character. Problems of political integration are of primary importance to all of India's million plus cities with their large heterogeneous populations.

Thus this study is looking at the urban political system as such - defined in terms of the multiple political arenas mentioned above with linkages with the state level - of a large metropolitan city. It is attempting to relate it to socioeconomic and cultural trends, seeking to isolate what is unique about Ahmedabad city politics as well as what it may have in common with the problems of other metropolitan cities in India.

Chapter II

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION AND SOCIOECONOMIC

ANALYSIS OF AHMEDABAD CITY

1. Historical sketch of Ahmedabad City, emphasizing the importance of the Jain-Bania ethos, which has striking parallels with Weber's thesis of the link between the rise of Puritanism and the growth of capitalism, in the city's culture. Gandhi's contribution to Ahmedabad political culture is also described.

The importance of the Jain-Bania ethos in the city's cultural life

Historically, and even today, to a large extent, the Banias of Ahmedabad comprise the city's élite, not only economically but socially also. The ritually higher castes, the Brahmins and the Writer castes, which provided the Bhadraklok élite of Calcutta, were relegated in Ahmedabad to a far less powerful position. The 1879 Gazetteer on Ahmedabad described the 10,754 Brahmins, who constituted 11.6% of the city's total Hindu population of 92,619 in the following terms: "... except the Nagars of whom many are in good condition, the majority of Brahmins live on alms..." The Nagar Brahmin caste was a major exception: many had risen to high positions in Government service, others had become clerks, lawyers, moneylenders and merchants.¹

The Writer Castes were numerically too tiny to have much impact on the city's power structure. They constituted only 0.04% of the total Hindu population of the city in 1879, and comprised three castes: 226 Brahma-Kshatriyas, 105 Kayasthas and 45 Parbhus. The Brahma-Kshatriyas, somewhat like the Nagar Brahmins,

1. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV Ahmedabad (1879), pp. 34-35; 292-294.

were an important minority group, often rich property owners engaged as lawyers, moneylenders and in Government service. With the Nagar Brahmins, the Brahma-Kshatriyas were often the pioneers of social reform and literary activities in the city.

However, it was the Bania caste, the traders, who formed the city's élite, challenged only in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries by the growing power of the Patidar caste. In 1879, they constituted 20,115 or 22.4% of the city's total Hindu population. The Banias were divided into two major groups: 8,952 Vaishnava Banias (otherwise known as Meshri or Brahmanic Banias), while 11,763, in 1879, were Jain Banias (otherwise known as Gujarati Shravaks). The Jain Banias had had the edge in terms of wealth and influence over the Vaishnava Banias, and one of their number held the highest civic office of Nagar Seth or City Head. But, by the mid-nineteenth century, the two groups were almost equal in numbers, wealth and influence. From these two groups came the bulk of the city's financiers and moneylenders, and merchants and dealers in cloth and foodgrains.

Of the numerous castes of Husbandmen in the city in 1879, which together constituted 24,727 or 26.6% of the total Hindu population - 19,440 Kanbis, 2070 Kolis, 1463 Rajputs, 1308 Kachhias and 446 Malis - the Kanbis were undoubtedly the most important, an upwardly mobile caste, comprising 21.1% of the total ^{Hindu} population of the city, subdivided into the Leva and Kadva subcastes, who were to challenge the old-established élite in the early twentieth century and eventually form part of the élite themselves. In 1879, although many were engaged in agriculture or worked as skilled weavers and artisans,

some had already risen to high positions in Government service or acquired wealth in trade. The 1879 Gazetteer on Ahmedabad described them in glowing terms as "sober, peaceable, industrious, and, except on occasions like marriages, thrifty."

Of the remaining Hindu castes in the city, there were 9,231 craftsmen castes, or 9.9 % of the total Hindu population; 11,598 artisan castes comprising 12.6% of the total Hindu population; 2,556 domestic servant castes comprising 2.78% of the total Hindu population; 5,079 low or backward castes of labourers and miscellaneous workers, comprising 5.49% of the total Hindu population; and 7,022 unsettled and depressed classes comprising 7.6 % of the total Hindu population. The 1879 Gazetteer on Ahmedabad gives further details of the caste composition.

The caste structure of Ahmedabad City has a Jain and Vaishnava Bania elite, with the Brahmin and Writer castes playing a relatively small role, but another crucial factor is the great spread of intermediate castes in the caste structure and the relatively small percentage of untouchable depressed classes, who comprised only 7.6 % of the total Hindu population of the city in 1879. This augured for a relatively stable caste structure, which would change gradually and incrementally, rather than with violent upheavals like the Brahmin-non-Brahmin struggle taking place in South India in the late nineteenth century.

In communal terms, the city's population of 116,873 in 1872 was divided into 92,617 Hindus, 23,491 Muslims, 264 Christians and 499 Parsis, Jews and others. Among the Muslims, many were handloom weavers and calico-printers and dyers, who played an important part in the labour force of the new textile mills of

the second half of the nineteenth century. There were three important Muslim castes of traders and shopkeepers, descendants of converted Hindus - the Bohras, Memons and Khojas. However, they played a relatively insignificant role in the foundation of Ahmedabad's modern textile industry.

The actual founders of the city's modern textile industry were members of the old-established elite with a few Kanbis or Patels and Parsees in addition. The Gazetteer of 1879 carefully noted this burgeoning capitalist class:

"As to the caste of the superior capitalist classes it may be noted that in former days they were mostly Shravak Banias, but of late the predominance of that sect has been impaired by the Vaishnavas, that is to say, by the Mesri Banias and Kanbis... To these may be added ... a few Parsis."

The motivational springs of this industrial entrepreneurship, as well as the source of much of the city's political culture, lay in the Jain Bania ethos which dominated the city's cultural life, affecting the Vaishnavas as much as the Jains and permeating the whole cultural life of the city.

Ahmedabad was the headquarters of the Gujarati-Jain sect, which had more than 120 temples in the city in the early twentieth century.² Facets of Jainism provide striking parallels with Weber's thesis of the link between the rise of Puritanism and the growth of capitalism in the West. Curiously Weber himself, in his book, The Religion of India: the Sociology of Hinduism, argues that Asian religious doctrines are so irrational and other-worldly, when their psychological consequences are traced, as to be incapable of

2. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Abazai to Arcot, vol. X (1908), pp. 106-111.

providing a rational, this-worldly secular ethic of the kind required, in his opinion, to originate industrial capitalism. Weber was so convinced of the "anti-capitalistic spirit" of Hinduism that he seriously believed in the possibility that the industrial institutions brought into India under British influence, and even the Indian nationalist movements, would collapse with the withdrawal of that influence. Although he saw that Jainism provided something of an exception with its rudimentary "this-worldly asceticism", which was "similar to the ascetic Protestantism of the Occident", he concluded that the nonviolence of the Jains had prevented them from taking up industry and agriculture, and they had "remained confined to commercial capitalism" and had "failed to create an industrial organization... due to their ritualistically determined exclusion from industry"³.

However, there did exist several strands in Jainism which could and did provide a motivational frame-work suitable for success in banking and commerce, and eventually for industrial entrepreneurship. These ideas and values, coupled with the corporate traditions of a strong urban mercantile bourgeoisie in Ahmedabad, also permeated the political culture of the city.

The Jain belief in ahimsa or nonviolence meant that many occupations, particularly in agriculture, were not open to them. The devout Jain layman vowed to be very careful, in choosing a profession, to avoid any business which involved the taking of life, however low in the scale, even insect life. Thus the Jains

3. See Max Weber, The Religion of India: The Sociology of Hinduism and Buddhism. (Trans. and ed. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale) (Free Press of Glencoe: 1958), p 200; and Milton Singer's review of the book in the American Anthropologist, vol. 63, no. 1 (Feb., 1961), pp 143 - 51.

of Western India, and particularly of Ahmedabad, were led to specialize in moneylending, banking and commerce, developing crucial commercial and trading skills which contributed to their successful adaptation in the latter half of the nineteenth century to modern industrial production. (However, structural as well as ritual factors played a part here, since the Jains of South India, in the Karnatak region, remained largely illiterate agriculturalists, whereas the Jains of Western India were orientated towards commerce, since the cities of Gujarat and Rajasthan were often strategically situated on the crossroads of many trading routes, and were thus favourably disposed to develop into ancient trading entrepôts.)

Jainism also had humanistic and individualistic strands. The Jains believe that man by his own efforts can attain the divine, or become God. Mahavira, the great hero and principal Jain saint, had unaided worked out his own salvation. In one of the Jain sacred books, the Acaranga Sutra, it is written, "Man! Thou art thine own friend; why wishest thou for a friend beyond thyself?" Mahavira in one of his sermons is declared to have said that one might be reborn as an animal, a god or a demon, but only to a human being is the chance of moksha or release from the cycle of rebirth and the results of past karma or actions given. The Jains, unlike the Hindus, do not believe in a Supreme God who takes any active part in the world's governance, declaring that karma, the law of action and reaction, acts automatically, without any outside intervention. The great ideal of the Hindus, absorption into the Supreme, is alien to Jain thought. The twenty-four Jain Saints, known as the Tirthankara, or the Siddha, perfected ones,

will maintain their separate identity through all eternity.⁴

The Jain religion is characterized by the strictness of its moral code, and the austerity which it teaches, which goes, perhaps, even beyond the Puritan tradition of austerity in the West. The great schism in Jainism between the Svetambara and the Digambara sects, which reveals the depths of this austerity, is rooted in a dispute about nudity - the Digambara maintain that Jains have so little concern for material things that they have no need to wear clothing, whereas the Svetambara (this sect is predominant in Western India) maintain that light simple clothing is necessary. In Jainism, there are certain sects, for example the Sthanakavasi, who are against any form of idolatry. The Jains believe that self-purification and the performance of tapasyas or austerities are necessary and good in themselves. The Jain lay vow to avoid falsehood and exaggeration (one of the twelve lay vows) has important repercussions in enhancing the reputation for commercial honesty of Jain bankers and merchants. The vow does actually concern itself with commercial honesty as such, forbidding a man, for example, when selling land and houses to describe the boundaries or the number of trees on the estate falsely. If the man taking the vow is a banker, he is urged to keep any deposit honestly and give it back when demanded, even if no receipt is produced. There is also a stricture not to cook the accounts! This emphasis on austerity is so vital an influence in Jainism that even today's millwallahs of Ahmedabad, the elite textile magnates, often multi-millionaires,

4. See Mrs. Sinclair Stevenson, The Heart of Jainism, (1915). Mrs. Stevenson, a former scholar of Somerville College, Oxford, lived in Ahmedabad and Gujarat for many years as part of the Irish Mission in Gujarat. She spent more than ten years studying Jainism, reading widely and discussing with Jain philosophers.

nevertheless eschew ostentation as much as possible. They are often pure vegetarians, do not touch alcohol, and try to live a strict and simple life in their personal habits.⁵

The Jains have shrewdly realized that the true way of increasing one's wealth is to curb one's desires. This capacity for self-denial and self-discipline proved very important for Jain businessmen in enabling them to forgo present consumption for the sake of saving and capital accumulation. An important Jain lay vow was the vow of limitation of possessions (although the priests could still be fairly generous!):

"... I take a vow not to possess more of the following things than I have allowed myself: a certain fixed quantity of houses and fields, of silver and gold, of coins and grain, of two-footed or four-footed creatures, furniture and plenishing. Beyond this limit, I will regard nothing as my own possession..."

The case of a Mr. Popat Amarcanda of Cambay, in the early twentieth century, was by no means an isolated one. Mr. Amarcanda, when quite a poor man, had promised he would never possess more than Rs. 95,000. Later, he became a highly successful businessman, but as soon as he had made the prescribed number of rupees, he gave all the extra money he made to the building of temples or the foundation of animal hospitals. The successful mill wallahs of Ahmedabad have kept up the tradition of donating huge sums of money, gained in business, for public welfare.

Jainism encourages the belief that one's physical and mental state - one's health, intellect and fortunes - are a reflection of

5. This image of plainness and austerity is so well cultivated by millwallahs of Ahmedabad that recently (late 1972), when a group of them were caught surreptitiously drinking liquor at a party (Gujarat is a dry state), this created a major scandal.

the accumulation of either one's good or evil karma or past actions. Thus Jains have a very healthy respect for the prosperous and the successful. Success in business is very much seen as a sign of grace, the fruit of good moral conduct in the past. It was also recognised that to act in accordance with one's caste dharma was also a way of doing one's religious duty and attaining salvation, providing one's actions are carried out with disinterested motives. Thus to be a scrupulous and successful businessman or a judicious and thrifty householder was also a way to salvation. A householder was encouraged to be thrifty and prudent, to regulate his expenditure according to his income, and to set aside a quarter of his income for savings, a quarter for investment in trade, a quarter for household expenses and the rest for charitable purposes.

However, although certain strands in Jainism (many of these values were also held in common by the Vaishnava Baniyas and permeated deep into the city's cultural life) encouraged a practical asceticism, with certain parallels to Western Puritanism, and provided a motivational framework for industrial entrepreneurship and a set of values for the city's cultural life, the institutional channelling of these motivations and values in strong urban and business institutions over the centuries provided the concrete structural and institutional basis for later adaptation to modern industry and changing forms of urban government.

The existence in Ahmedabad of a powerful urban bourgeois culture and institutions over the centuries

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 A.D. by Sultan Ahmed Shah of Gujarat on a site close to the much older trading centre of Ashaval (or Ashapalli or Karnavati). Gujarat and Marwar had long been the

loci of ancient entrepôt cities with highly developed business cultures with knowledge of multiple-entry bookkeeping and well-developed systems of commercial arbitration and insurance, credit and speculation.⁶ Ahmedabad, situated on the crossroads of trade routes radiating from Sind with its port of Tatta to the West, to Rajasthan and Delhi in the North, Malwa to the East and the ports of Cambay, Surat and Broach to the South, became an important centre of indigenous financial, commercial and industrial activity. It specialized in the manufacture of textiles, and there is an old proverb which says that the prosperity of Ahmedabad hangs on three threads, silk, gold and cotton.⁷

Ahmedabad, under the Gujarat Sultans, who encouraged trade, became an important centre of trade and industry. Its fortunes declined temporarily with the decay of the Gujarat dynasty and growing Portuguese interference with its trade. In 1572, Ahmedabad became part of the Mughal Empire, and its prosperity quickly recovered and reached new heights. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Ahmedabad was one of the most splendid cities of Western India, perhaps even of the world. At the height of its prosperity, the city is said to have contained a population of about 900,000. So great was its wealth that some of the traders and merchants were believed to have fortunes of not less than a

6. See T.A. Timberg, "Industrial Entrepreneurship among the Trading Communities of India. How the Pattern differs." (July 1969), Economic Development Report, no. 136 for the Development Advisory Service of the Centre for International Affairs, Harvard University. Henceforth to be known as Timberg Report.

7. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Abazai to Arcot, vol. XC (1908), pp. 106-11.

million sterling.⁸ From its workshops came masterpieces in cotton, silk, velvet and brocade with astonishing figures and patterns, knots and fashions. In 1626, the English traveller, Sir Thomas Herbert, gave the following description of Ahmedabad:

"... the megalopolis of Gujarat, circled by a strong wall with many large and comely streets, shops full of aromatic gums, perfumes and spices, silks, cottons, calicoes and choice Indian and Chinese vanities, owned and sold by the abstemious Banians who here surpass for number the other inhabitants..."

Mandelslo in his "Voyages" described seventeenth century Ahmedabad craftsmen as famous for their work in silk and cotton, steel, gold, ivory, enamel, mother of pearl, paper, lac and bone.⁹

With the close of Aurangzeb's reign (1707), a period of disorder began, which saw the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. Mughal Viceroys and Marathas battled over the city. The suburbs, deserted at the approach of the Marathas, were never repopled. From 1738 to 1753, Ahmedabad was ruled jointly by the Mughals and the Marathas. In 1757, the city passed completely into Maratha hands, where it remained until it was annexed in 1817 by the East India Company. The excessive greed of the Marathas as sole rulers of Ahmedabad caused great discontent. At the time of transfer to the British, Ahmedabad was in a sorry plight; the walls were in ruins and inside were large tracts covered with fallen houses, mosques and tombs, the resort of thieves and highwaymen. To escape taxation, some people had taken to living in the suburbs. Trade and manufactures

8. Ibid.

9. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad (1879), p. 254.

were almost at a standstill, and there was a great scarcity of coin. Imports were charged from 10-25⁰/o of their value, and manufactures were still more heavily burdened by taxes and dues. The British re-established order and security and lowered the town dues, giving a great impetus to trade. The population rose from 80,000 in 1817 to 116,873 by 1872. Prosperity and wealth returned fairly quickly to the city and trade and manufacture began to flourish.¹⁰

Thus, even if Ahmedabad did not enjoy urban autonomy on the European model, ancient urban and mercantile values and institutions survived there, long after their disappearance in other parts of India. Ahmedabad, in the nineteenth century, had a well-developed corporate tradition and spirit, a long history of trade, finance and industry, a powerful mercantile élite and old urban institutions of the Nagarseth, or city head, and the mahajans or trade guilds. The financial and social powers of the mercantile élite and the mahajans was so great that the city government - whether of the Sultans, the Mughals, the Marathas or the British - was compelled to take account of their wishes, and very often to rule through them. Successive rulers had sought to foster trade and favour traders and financiers, since, by contrast with the Gangetic plain area the land revenue in Gujarat was limited by the lower productivity of the soil in many areas and very great political fragmentation, whereas it was often very lucrative to tax the extensive trade which passed through Ahmedabad

10. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad (1879), pp. 255-261.

on the way to north India.

The hereditary bourgeois elite consisted of highly respected Jain and Vaishnava Vania mercantile and sarafi families. The sarafi families were "bankers" and financiers, who used their own capital in the main. They had acted as paymasters and financiers to princes and merchants. In the time of the Mughal Emperors, the head of the Jain community, Shantidas Jawahari, was the court jeweller and financier. They had also been farmers of the land revenue and tolls, provided insurance, served as trustees for religious and charitable purposes and often engaged in commercial activities on their own account.¹¹

The institutions of mahajans, or trade guilds, and panchs, or artisan guilds, were well developed in Ahmedabad, and survived long into the British period, forming the institutional basis for the business and trade union organisations, the Ahmedabad Mill-owners' Association and the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, of the twentieth century. There were about forty trade guilds in Ahmedabad in the nineteenth century, predominantly Hindu or Jain bodies with hereditary heads known as seths. The heads of the artisan guilds, or panchs, were known as patels. The most important trade guilds were the sarafs' mahajan, the cloth dealers' mahajan and the raw silk dealers' mahajan, although almost all trades or crafts from metal-workers to oil-pressers were organized in guilds. Admission to the guilds was hereditary or by purchase. A guild could embrace members of several castes, and a caste member

11. Kenneth Gillion, Ahmedabad, a Study in Urban History. (1968), pp. 16-18.

could belong to several guilds, but very often memberships of caste and guild were coterminous. So closely were the institutions of caste and guild inter-related that penalties for breaches of caste rules could be enforced even by a guild composed of several castes as well as in situations where caste and guild were coterminous. Such penalties often extended to economic sanctions. The 1879 Gazetteer of Ahmedabad District quoted a recent example of an unfortunate Visa-Shrimali Vania of Ahmedabad, who had offended his caste by marrying a widow. He was expelled from the cloth dealers' mahajan to which he belonged, and, as a result, was obliged to close his shop and leave the town.

The guilds had authority over all matters affecting the particular trade or craft: they could sanction or prohibit an improvement; fix wages and sometimes prices; fix the hours of working and trade-holidays; keep up standards and take any action safeguarding the interests of their members against the government, other guilds and outsiders. They provided trade security, but they generally restricted competition and acted as a brake upon innovation and improvement. The 1879 Gazetteer gives a telling example of the restriction of competition by guilds: in Ahmedabad, outside masons settled in the city and began working for eight annas a day instead of ten, the lowest rate allowed by the local guild of masons. In order to stop this competition, the aldermen of the masons' guild induced the aldermen of the potters' guild to issue orders that no building materials of any kind should be sold except through the agents, dalals, of the former. The rival masons were thus driven out of the field, being unable even to get sand for their mortar. Perhaps the most important function of a guild was to arbitrate in

trade disputes.¹²

The breach of a guild rule was usually punished by a fine. Refusal to pay a fine or any other very grave offence was followed by expulsion. Expulsion entailed very grave consequences: if the man expelled was a master manufacturer, no skilled labourer would enter or stay in his service. If he was an operative, no one would lend him tools or work along with him, and the ganger, mukkadam, would arrange for him only at boy's wages. If he was a dealer in exports or imports, the guild brokers would refuse to act for him, and, according to the market custom, business was impossible without their intervention.

The wealthier guilds had a considerable income from a small tax on the import and export of the principle articles of trade; from death-bed donations or donations by heirs; from fines and entrance-fees; from the auction sale of the right to open a shop or from fees levied on those who wished to do business on holidays; and from land and sometimes from household property. These funds often went to the support of panjrapol or animal homes, strong evidence of the pervasive influence of Jainism on all the merchants of Ahmedabad. The wealthier mahajans also performed many of the welfare functions of modern municipal governments: they often provided food kitchens, places for the supply of drinking-water to travellers, road-side resting-places, parks, hospitals and schools. Road-cleaning, and even the maintenance of an adequate watersupply, was often left to the large mahajans.

¹²Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad (1879), pp. 106-113.

The corporate authority of the guilds was buttressed by the policy of Government officials to use the agency of the guilds for collecting and enforcing their irregular exactions. Even under British rule, the guilds were, for a time, utilized in collecting trade cesses, which were imposed in lump sum on each guild, and the responsibility for realizing this sum was left to the aldermen.¹³ By the end of the nineteenth century, the guilds were less able to enforce penalties against individuals, who could resort to the protection of the courts. The guilds started to practice more internal democracy, with constitutions and elected officials and less control by the hereditary seths and patels. However their influence was still considerable, although it was soon to be replaced by more modern forms of trade union and business organisation.¹⁴

The official head of the financial and mercantile élite and the city as a whole was known as the Nagarseth or city head. He was also the head of the sarafs' guild, and of the Jain community, another striking example of the strong influence of the Jain community in the city's life. The title of Nagarseth was formally conferred by the merchants on the head of a family long held in respect for its wealth and public spirit and liberal support of the Jain faith. The duties of the Nagarseth were largely honorific and symbolic: in times of public calamity, the citizens looked to him to perform penance for the whole people, for example, if the rain held off, he was expected to circumambulate the city walls pouring out milk to appease Indra, the offended ruler of the skies.

13. Ibid.

14. Kenneth Gillion, Ahmedabad. (1968), p.61.

However, normally, he did not attempt to deal with any public matter without first consulting the chief alderman of the cloth-dealers' guild, known as the Chautano seth, or market chief, who was also the head of the Vaishnava sect. (So complex were the inter-relationships between the institutions of sect, caste, guild and Nagarseth and Chautano seth, that, although the Nagarseth was head of the sarafs' guild and leader of the Jain religion, and the Chautano seth was head of the cloth-dealers' guild and head of the Vaishnava sect, both sarafs and cloth-dealers could be either Jains or Vaishnava Vanias.) The Nagarseth and the Chautano Seth together could usually carry the bulk of the mercantile community on public and religious matters, although in trade matters the guilds functioned fairly independently.¹⁵

Thus Ahmedabad had a powerful urban bourgeois culture and institutions of long-standing. It had a long corporate tradition and spirit, a largely hereditary bourgeois élite, a long history of indigenous financial, commercial and industrial activity and well-developed trade institutions, the mahajans and panchs. This set the tone and milieu for much of the city's political culture, and provided a structural basis for the transformation of a strong indigenous financial and mercantile élite into a modern industrial élite in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries - an élite which was for long dominant in the political as well as the economic life of the city.

15. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad (1879), pp. 113-114.

The transformation of the old-established Ahmedabad financial and mercantile élite into a modern industrial élite in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

It was by no means inevitable that Ahmedabad would develop into an important centre of modern textile industry. Ahmedabad's location - inland, with no suitable port or fuel deposits nearby, and only cotton suitable for coarse yarn and cloth production growing nearby - meant that fuel (coal) and materials for industry (machinery, long-staple cotton and mill stores) had to be carried for hundreds of miles at discriminatory rail rates¹⁶ from Bombay, Bengal and Central India. In addition, the climate was very dry, and, as a result, there was a tendency for thread to break in the machines.

Ahmedabad was never exposed to large-scale Western influence and the widespread effects of Western education in the nineteenth century, which were thought to be (erroneously) an essential prerequisite for industrialization. Social change in Ahmedabad, in contrast to that in Calcutta, and even Bombay, was slow and selective. The British presence in Ahmedabad was never obtrusive: there was no sizeable English business community there, as in Calcutta, and the bulk of the administration and police was Indian. The British respected the traditional city offices. The Nagarseth was often used as the medium of communication between the sarafs and the Government, and was granted an annual allowance in lieu of his rights to collect dues on the city trade. The Kazi was regarded as the head of the Muslim community, and both the

16. The railway companies had tariffs which favoured long-distance traffic to and from the ports, since they naturally charged low rates on routes where they had competition from other railway companies and high rates where they had no competition.

Kazi and the Nagarseth were appointed as a matter of course to all important committees.

The progress of Western higher education in Ahmedabad was slow. The first two government vernacular schools opened in 1826, but the first government English school only opened in 1846. By 1878, there were twenty-three government schools, including one high school and two training colleges, and only six private schools. In 1879, the first arts college was opened, but, on the whole, there was no great surge among the middle classes to acquire Western learning, or, except for the Nagar Brahmin caste, to gain admission to government service or the legal profession. In 1885, there were only six graduates, eighteen pleaders and three licenciates of medicine, surgery and civil engineering. In the early crucial stages of industrialization, Western education was not needed. However, Ahmedabad was quick to respond selectively to the need for technical education in later years: in 1886, under the guidance of the first textile entrepreneur in the city, Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, who had been made President of the Ahmedabad Municipality, the Municipality withdrew its contribution to the high school and decided to help technical education, instead. In 1902, the Ranchhodlal Chhotalal Technical Institute was opened, thanks to a large donation by Ranchhodlal's son.

The cause of social reform and religious reform was largely pioneered by British officers and enterprising Nagar Brahmins and Brahmakshatriyas. Its influence was largely limited to the spread of women's education, for which wealthy mill owners were prepared to give funds. In 1848, the Gujarat Vernacular Society was founded

by Alexander Kinlock Forbes, Assistant Judge at Ahmedabad, with the object of encouraging vernacular education and literature. Later, Indians joined the Managing Committee. In 1849, the Society started the first Gujarati newspaper, a weekly Vartman, and the first public library. In 1851, its press started printing school textbooks and Gujarati grammar books, and, in 1854, the Society took over the monthly, Buddhi Prakash. In 1857, it was renamed the Hemabhai Institute. Bholanath Sarabhai, a Vadnagara Nagar Brahmin and a first-class subordinate judge in the British service, organized the Dharma Samaj, a religious reform society, in 1858, and, in 1871, founded the Prarthana Samaj, also in the interests of religious reform. Both Bholanath Sarabhai and another Vadnagara Nagar Brahmin, Mahipatram Rupram Nilkanth, worked for the cause of women's education. The first girls' school was founded by funds given by the Jain financier and millowner, Maganbhai Karamchand, and the widow of another Jain financier, Hathising Kesrising. This school, together with another co-educational school, was taken over and run by the Gujarat Vernacular Society in 1850. Later, another millowner, Bechardas Ambaidas, endowed the Mahalakshmi Female Training College. However, the impact of social reform was limited, and, throughout the nineteenth century, there was no loosening of the traditional family structure and the institutions of caste.¹⁷

Thus Ahmedabad is a striking example of industrialization achieved with limited accompanying Westernization and disturbance to its traditional social institutions. There was very little

17. Kenneth Gillion, Ahmedabad, (1968), pp. 62-69. (Gillion is the source for much of this section.)

British investment in Ahmedabad, no English press and the English language was only understood by relatively few Ahmedabadis. Even the introduction of Western law was not an essential prerequisite for Ahmedabad's industrialization, since there already existed there a well-developed market economy, based on contract, indigenous systems of banking and insurance, a high level of commercial morality, and machinery for the settlement of disputes through the mahajans and seths. The industrial entrepreneurs of Ahmedabad were economically progressive, while remaining socially conservative. The indigenous advantages possessed by Ahmedabad, largely in terms of human skills and enterprise, were sufficient for effective industrialization and outweighed the disadvantages.

An important advantage was its long specialization in textile manufacture. It possessed a relatively skilled work force with much knowhow which could be adapted to the machine age. The small plants, put up initially by Ahmedabad's entrepreneurs, were fairly readily accepted, since they did not require any radical changes in behaviour patterns or social relationships - the various textile departments and processes were organized caste-wise.

Ahmedabad also possessed a skilled class of capitalists, who constituted a prestigious elite of long-standing. The Jain Bania ethic of hard work, frugality and money-making was dominant in the city's culture. In Ahmedabad, trade and finance were not divorced from production: the sarafs had long been accustomed to financing trade and industry. In India's industrialization, capital was often the scarce factor of production, and successful Indian industrial entrepreneurs were most likely to be traders with large accumulated capital or access to its surrogate, credit.¹⁸ By the

18. See Timberg Report.

mid-nineteenth century, there were quite a few bankers and merchants in Ahmedabad with large amounts of capital. The Gazetteer of 1879 noted that, according to the 1872 Census, 12,080 persons, besides well-to-do cultivators and professional men, "occupied positions implying the possession of capital". These included 1,656 bankers, money-changers or shopkeepers; 8426 merchants and traders; and 1,998 persons drawing incomes from the rent of houses and shops, from funded property, shares, annuities etc. The Gazetteer also noted:

"Although the capitalists of this district, more especially those carrying on business in the city, suffered heavily on the collapse of the share-mania in 1866, there are still among them men known to be worth as much as £100,000 to £120,000 (ten to twelve lakhs of rupees)."¹⁹

Many of these men had prospered recently in the opium and cotton trades. However, due to the contraction of former capital outlets, such as moneylending to princes and armies, the restriction of the opium trade and the decline of their insurance business because of better security and competition from the branches of English banks, many were looking for profitable new avenues of investment. Since the city had a long association with textile manufacture, they were willing to listen, in the mid-nineteenth century, to schemes of setting up modern textile factories in Ahmedabad, particularly after carefully observing the success of the first cotton textile mills in Bombay. As another incentive to the industrial entrepreneur, interest rates in the city were low - only about 2-4% per annum.

19. Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad, Chapter V Capital (1879).

The example of Britain's own Industrial Revolution with textile manufacture setting the pace was of crucial importance. The availability, by the mid-nineteenth century, of British textile machinery and technical expertise was essential for Ahmedabad's entrepreneurs. Many of the first weaving masters were from Lancashire, sent out by English firms, such as Platts of Oldham. Many engineers were also British, as well as Parsi and Hindu. The buildings and technical side of the industry were closely modelled on Lancashire. Ahmedabad, by specializing in cloth produced for the domestic market, avoided the effect of the decline in the foreign market which ruined the old Dacca textile industry.²⁰

However, the traditional institutions of joint family and caste were also utilized by the Ahmedabad entrepreneurs to provide assured, long-term capital and credit networks. Various techniques had been developed to spread the credit and capital managing ability of the family "peak" firm as widely as possible. The most important innovation was the managing agency, which came to be used in Ahmedabad. For the most part, the managing agencies were either family units or small private companies dominated by the members of one family. Since a contract to manage a business was made by the agency and not by individual members of the agency, those in charge of the agency could make all appointments, and usually members of the agency family automatically occupied key positions in the control of the companies managed. The merchants and financiers of Ahmedabad belonged to relatively few castes, and many were also related by birth and marriage, for example the

20. Gillion, Ahmedabad, (1968), p.78.

families of the Nagarseths, of Hathising, of Maganbhai, and Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, are all Jains and related by marriage.

Therefore, in general, the Ahmedabad mill agents cooperated with each other, rather than competed. They regarded their firms as family trusts to be conserved. Thus the secret of successful Indian entrepreneurship often lay in the strong particularistic joint family and caste loyalties, which gave a corporate confidence and security to business operations.²¹

The first two textile mill entrepreneurs, Ranchhodlal Chhotalal and Becharadas Ambaidas Lashkari, were, to some extent, outsiders to the old-established Jain and Vaishnava Bania mercantile and financial elite. Ranchhodlal Chhotalal was a Nagar Brahmin, from an old Ahmedabadi administrative, not commercial, family. He joined government service in 1845, but his head was buzzing with business schemes. In 1849, seven years before the first successful textile mill in Bombay, Ranchhodlal tried to found a mill in Ahmedabad, but the Ahmedabad sarafs were reluctant to risk their capital on this venture at that stage, until the success of the Bombay mills a few years later convinced them of the genuineness of the opportunity. By 1861, Ranchhodlal was able to secure the financial backing of the leading bankers of Ahmedabad and build the Ahmedabad Cotton Mill, which was owned by the Ahmedabad Spinning and Weaving Company, a joint-stock company formed in 1859. Other shareholders in this company included the most important members of Ahmedabad's traditional financial and mercantile elite: Maganbhai Karamchand, Nagarseth Premabhai Hemabhai, and Hathising Kesrising,

21. Gillion, Ahmedabad, (1968), pp. 91-94; see also the Timberg Report and A.K. Rice, Productivity and Social Organization, The Ahmedabad Experiment, (1958).

all three were Jains.

The second entrepreneur, Bechardas Ambaidas Lashkari, was also somewhat of an outsider. He had made his money in speculation, army contracting and moneylending and was himself a leading financier. He established the Bechardas Spinning and Weaving Mill in 1867. The first Jain factory promoter was Mansukhbhai Bhagubhai, a Visa Porwad Jain, who opened the Gujarat Spinning and Weaving Mill in 1878, and later founded three other mills. Soon most of the traditional mercantile and financial elite families of Ahmedabad had set up textile mills.

Almost all the Ahmedabad mills were built in about equal numbers by members of the local merchant Jain and Vaishnava Bania communities. Among the early Jain entrepreneurs were the following: Maganbhai Karamchand, Kasturbhai Manubhai and Sardar Seth Lalbhai Dalpatbhai. In 1880, Maganbhai Karamchand bought up the Calico Mill, a steam calico-printing mill that had failed, and converted it into a spinning and weaving mill. He was a Dasa Shrimali Jain of the old sarafi firm of Karamchand Premchand - his family is better known today as the Sarabhai family. In 1895, Kasturbhai Manubhai, a Visa Oswal Jain, established the Hathising Mills Co. In 1897, Sardar Seth Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, also an Oswal Jain, promoted the Saraspur Mills. His son, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, is one of the leading textile magnates in Ahmedabad today.

There were also many noteworthy Vaishnava Vania entrepreneurs. In 1888, Harilal Harivallabhdas, a Lad Vania, Parikh Trikamlal Jamnadas, Narottamdas Gulabchand, Trikamlal Bhogilal and Girdharlal Amrutlal started the Trikamlal (later known as Maneklal) Harilal Spinning and Manufacturing Company under a partnership agreement.

Seth Motilal Hirabhai, a Modh Bania, founded the Telia mill in 1889, the Ahmedabad Sarangpur Mills Co. in 1896, and thereafter nine more mills in Ahmedabad and elsewhere. Balabhai Damodardas and Mangaldas Girdhardas Parekh, both Visa Porwad Meshri Banias, started the Aryodaya Spinning Mill together in 1892. In 1894, Balabhai and his brother, Amrutlal Damodardas, started the Ahmedabad Cotton Mills. In 1893, Seth Trikamlal Jamnadas, a Pancha Nagar Bania and well-known saraf of Ahmedabad, promoted the Manekchowk and Ahmedabad Manufacturing Company.²²

By 1904, there were thirty-four mills with about 569,000 spindles and 7,035 looms, employing 18,000 to 20,000 workers daily and representing a capital of 150 lakhs of rupees.²³

The influence of Gandhi on Ahmedabad's political culture and its municipal institutions.

Gandhi made Ahmedabad his political base from 1915 to 1930, and brought the city under the wider influence of the Nationalist Movement, involving the textile magnates and textile workers in modern political activity for the first time.

Before 1915, there had been little modern political activity in Ahmedabad, and, what little there was, had largely been the work of newcomers to the city. In 1872, the Ahmedabad Association had been formed to represent "the wants of the people" to the government. It was succeeded in 1885 by the Gujarat Sabha, whose leading members were pleaders and often outsiders to the city, like M.P. Modi, a Parsi, and Govindrao Apaji Patil, a Maharashtrian Brahmin. The Gujarat Sabha successfully asked the government for special representation on the Municipal Commission for the educated classes.

22. Gillion, Ahmedabad, pp. 81-89; see also Timberg Report.

23. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Abazai to Arcot, vol. X, pp. 106-11.

However, it unsuccessfully sought the right, for the Municipal Commission, to elect its own President. It started a Gokhale Society and a Dadabhai Naoroji library, and published a monthly paper for a time. In 1902, the Indian National Congress held its annual session in Ahmedabad, attended by the Nagarseth and leading millowners, but, except for this occasion, the mercantile community and the mass of citizens took little active interest in nationalist politics. Active political interest, at this stage, was largely confined to professional people, mainly Brahmakshatriyas, Nagar Brahmins and Lewa Patidars.²⁴

However, the decision by Gandhi to make Ahmedabad his base in 1915, and the setting-up, in October, 1916, of a branch of the Bombay Home Rule League in Ahmedabad by Maganbhai Chaturbhai Patel and Jivanlal V. Desai, two local pleaders, with the help of the Swadeshi Mitra Mandal and the Gokhale Society, changed the situation. Gandhi became President of the Gujarat Sabha and revitalized it. In August, 1917, about fifty traders of Ahmedabad enrolled in the Home Rule League, and a ladies' branch was formed by Ansuyaben Sarabhai, sister of the textile magnate, Ambalal Sarabhai, and Mrs. Sumant Mehta. In November, 1917, the first Gujarat Political Conference was held at Godhra with Gandhi as President.

In these years, Gandhi brought Ahmedabad and Gujarat into the mainstream of the Nationalist Movement, arousing mass participation by linking the Nationalist Movement with the redress of popular local grievances. The Rowlatt Satyagraha, which was accompanied

24. See Kenneth Gillion, "Gujarat in 1919." In R. Kumar (ed.) Essays on Gandhian Politics, The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919. (1971), pp. 126-144.

by riots in Ahmedabad, marked the entry of Ahmedabad into the Nationalist Movement, and the replacement of the moral authority of the British by that of the Congress. Nationalist politics were skilfully associated with local grievances. Gandhi and the Home Rule League were associated with the campaign in Kaira district against the payment of land revenue after disastrous harvests. This had the effect of mobilizing the enterprising caste of Lewa Patidars, who were to provide the backbone of Congress strength in Gujarat for many decades.

Gandhi also successfully sought both the financial backing of the large Ahmedabad textile millowners and the mass support of the textile workers. By 1919, Ahmedabad had 51 mills, employing nearly 40,000 workers, and a majority of the population had come to be directly or indirectly dependent on the mill industry. Gandhi organized the textile workers during their famous strike from February-March, 1918, against the millowners' withdrawal of the plague bonus. He also helped them found a strong trade union organization, the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, also known as the TLA or Majur Mahajan. However, he did not antagonize the millowners in the process - indeed, they came to respect his methods of non-violent arbitration in industrial disputes.

Gandhi's idea of labour-capitalist interdependence and his belief in the necessity for labour-capitalist harmony and cooperation in fulfilling the goals of industry permeated deep into the psychology of both textile magnates and workers. Kasturbhai Lalbhai's address to his fellow millowners, at the time of the opening ceremony of a crèche in Raipur Mill, revealed the extent of the acceptance of Gandhi's ideas:²⁵

25. Young India , 15 May, 1928.

"You (the mill owners) should hold all your riches as a trust to be used solely in the interest of those who sweat for you, and to whose industry and labour you owe all your position and prosperity. I want you to make your labourers co-partners of your wealth. I do not mean to suggest that unless you legally bind yourselves to do all that, there should be a labour insurrection. The only sanction I can think of in this connection is of mutual love and regard as between father and son, not of law. If only you make it a rule to respect these mutual obligations of love, there would be an end to all labour disputes, the workers would no longer feel the need for organizing themselves into unions. Under the ideal contemplated by me, there would be nothing left for our Ansooyabens and Shankerlals to do."

Gandhi's appeal to the deeply-rooted psychological acceptance of self-sacrifice as a means of arousing one's opponent to moral awareness was an important principle in his concept of labour relations. The Marxist concept of class antagonism and warfare, by contrast, made little appeal at first to the Gujarati psyche. Gandhi expressed his ideas in the following way:

"Pure justice is that which is inspired by fellow-feeling and compassion. We in India call it Eastern and ancient justice. Where there is no place for fellow-feeling or compassion, it is known as devilish or Western or modern justice. ... In giving up for another, the giver experiences a feeling of pride and considers it a sign of his strength and not of weakness."²⁶

Gandhi's distinct political style, which involved the use of the fast, the technique of non-cooperation with government, the seeking of maximum public support for his campaigns, his willingness to suffer hardship and jail rather than surrender his principles, and his ideal of effecting political and economic change through an appeal to the justice and compassion of one's opponent,

26. M.K.Gandhi, Righteous Struggle, (translated by Mahadev Desai,)

owed much to the prevailing political practice in Kathiawad, where he spent his schooldays and where his father had been Prime Minister to the ruler of Rajkot State. In Kathiawad's numerous small principalities, where political relationships were intensely personal and localized, and political struggles often took place between members of the same family or clan, a form of political protest had survived, whose essence lay in inflicting or enduring suffering oneself, or severing relations temporarily in order to arouse the moral conscience of one's opponent. This technique relied for its effectiveness on the basic mutual interest and friendship of the parties concerned. In its nonviolence, this technique was also consonant with Jain and Vaishnava traditions, which emphasized the fast and self-suffering as means of self-purification. Gandhi's genius lay in translating these techniques on to the all-India stage and making them techniques of mass action.²⁷

He also utilized his Bania heritage in securing a strong financial and organizational base for his national political activities, and, for this end, he successfully sought the financial backing and support of Ahmedabad's Bania millowners, who also had a long tradition of political self-assertiveness and of social service. Although many Ahmedabad industrialists pledged to use only handspun, handwoven cloth, even though they themselves ran textile mills, this should not obscure what was a shrewd economic motive in their support of Gandhi and the Nationalist Movement - they stood to gain a great deal from the encouragement of the Swadeshi movement, the use of home-produced, instead of foreign, products. As early

27. See Howard Spodek, "On the Origins of Gandhi's Political Methodology: The Heritage of Kathiawad and Gujarat", Journal of Asian Studies, vol. 30, no. 2 (Feb., 1971), pp. 361-372.

as 1903, Ahmedabad businessmen had established an Indigenous Articles Protection Association to encourage the use of Swadeshi goods. Kasturbhai Lalbhai, a leading mill magnate, led the struggle in the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi for the removal of the cotton excise duty and the extension of tariff protection for Indian industry. Ambalal Sarabhai, another leading textile magnate, led the movement in Ahmedabad to Indianize management cadres in his Calico Mills.²⁸

The textile magnates of Ahmedabad gave generous and devoted support to Gandhi. When he opened his ashram to untouchables, many people deserted him, but Ambalal Sarabhai donated Rs. 13,000 to save the ashram. Kasturbhai Lalbhai became Secretary of the Gujarat Famine Relief Committee, and, in 1918, trekked the famine-stricken Gujarati villages with Sardar Patel and G.V. Mavlankar. Kasturbhai, with Amrutlal Hargovandas, provided financial support for the Ahmedabad Education Society, which was originally formed to build nationalist colleges in the 1930s, although it continued to sponsor new colleges even after independence.

Other industrialists, like Nandas Haridas of Vijaya Mills, Ambalal Himatlal of Ahmedabad Sarangpur Mills and Vadilal L. Mehta of Sayaji Mills, attended the Vidyapith, the university established by Gandhi in Ahmedabad. In 1930, Ranchhodlal Amrutlal of the Ahmedabad New Cotton Mills served as President of the INC.

During the Quit India movement of 1942, Ahmedabad millowners and millworkers cooperated in a three and a half months' protest strike, in which millowners shut down production, even though the

28. Ibid, pp. 365-6.

demands of the Second World War promised large profits. The strike was finally terminated because of the suffering of the workers.²⁹

In the municipal sphere too, until the advent of Gandhi in Ahmedabad and the election of his lieutenant, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, in 1917, as President of the Ahmedabad Municipality, municipal politics had had little concern with wider national or provincial issues.

The Ahmedabad Municipality was established in 1857. Before this, there had been a Town Wall Committee, consisting of the Collector, Judge, Kazi and Nagarseth, which had raised a "town wall fund" to repair the town walls, and some of this fund was made available for municipal purposes.³⁰ In 1882, with the reforms of local government by Lord Ripon, half the members of the Municipality were now elected (excluding the President) and the other half continued to be appointed by the government. The Government appointed the first Ahmedabad industrial entrepreneur, Ranchhodlal Chhotalal, to be the first non-official President and Chairman of the Municipality's Managing Committee. He made bold proposals for increased taxation and improvement of the water-supply and drainage of the city, which he carried out in the teeth of strong opposition by the majority of ratepayers. After Ranchhodlal's death in 1898, the Municipality failed to achieve anything of note, and was superseded in 1910 by the government for incompetency.

It was not until the restoration of the elective principle in the Municipality in 1915, and the election of Gandhi's lieutenant, Sardar Patel, to the Presidency of the Municipality in 1917 that the Municipality was drawn, under Gandhi's influence, into the politics

29. Ibid, p. 366.

30. Imperial Gazetteer of India, Abazai to Arcot, vol. X, pp. 106-111.

of the Nationalist Movement.

In 1921, following Gandhi's call for a boycott of government educational institutions, the Ahmedabad Municipality started a policy of noncooperation with the government in educational matters, for which it was promptly superseded by the government in 1922. In 1924, it was reinstated with Sardar Patel again elected President. Although he resigned in 1928 after losing his majority to a group led by Ambalal Sarabhai, by this time, the Municipality was firmly committed to a policy of nationalist agitation. The Municipality was again superseded in 1942 for endorsing the "Quit India" resolution of the AICC. In the municipal elections of 1944, the Congress won a great victory, but the Municipality was promptly superseded again until 1946, when the newly-elected Municipality declared the previous supersession illegal.³¹

Thus Gandhi exerted a tremendous influence on Ahmedabad's political culture as well as its labour relations, bringing Ahmedabad and Gujarat into the mainstream of the Nationalist Movement, and mobilizing the textile magnates and workers and the Patidar peasantry in the countryside. The textile magnates and textile workers, organized into the TLA, were the principal actors in Ahmedabad's political life after Independence, and much of their thinking had been profoundly shaped by the ideas of Gandhi, who instilled in them ideas of partnership, cooperation and mutual interest.

31. Gillion, Ahmedabad. (1968), pp. 153-174.

The linguistic agitation of the 1950s.

The linguistic agitation of the 1950s for the bifurcation of Bombay State into the separate States of Gujarat and Maharashtra was a formative and crucial period in the political history of Ahmedabad. Ahmedabad, long recognised as a Congress stronghold, became anti-Congress in the General Elections of 1957, held in the midst of the linguistic agitation. The Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad, the major opposition party to the Congress in the 1960s, was born in these turbulent years.

The linguistic agitation was a prototype and precursor of the agitational movements of the 1960s, involving angry demonstrations and police firing, although it remained largely a middle class movement, lacking the mass base that opposition movements in the 1960s acquired. Even at the height of the movement for Maha Gujarat, the Congress employed the industrial labourers, who largely remained loyal and disciplined under the leadership of the Majur Mahajan, as a counterpoise to the middle class upsurge.

The linguistic movement brought to the surface many oppositional elements in Ahmedabad's political life, and was a countercurrent to the general stability of Congress dominance and business-Majur Mahajan partnership. It revealed the very real constraints under which Congress dominance operated, being subject to dissent and dissidence from within which coalesced with angry opposition from both the right and left wing parties and groups into the umbrella organization, the MGJP.³²

32. The Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad is known in abbreviation as the MGJP.

The issue of linguistic provincialism could be traced back to 1920, when Gandhi reorganized the Congress party on the explicit basis of Congress-formulated "linguistic provinces", not on administrative lines drawn up by the British.³³ This gave tacit support to movements for the reorganization of states into linguistic units.

However, by the time of Independence and Partition, Congress was reconsidering the wisdom of its commitment of almost thirty years to the reorganization of states on linguistic lines, motivated, as it now was, by considerations of "national integration" and nationbuilding. The Dar Commission appointed by the Constituent Assembly in 1948 under the chairmanship of S.K.Dar, a former Judge of the Allahabad High Court, to make recommendations on provincial reorganization, recommended putting off provincial reorganization altogether until there was greater "national integration", and emphasized that language "should not be the decisive or even the main factor" in provincial reorganization.³⁴

Regarding Bombay State, the crux of the problem of dividing it into two linguistic States of Marathi-speaking people and Gujarati-speaking peoples was the question of what was to happen to Bombay City, with its cosmopolitan, polyglot population. Although the Marathi-speakers had a slight numerical majority of Bombay City's population, much of the industry, trade, commerce and political life of the city was dominated by Gujarati trading classes in particular,

33. See the Report of the 35th Session of the INC, held at Nagpur on the 26, 28 and 31 Dec. 1920, mentioned in R.W.Stern, The Process of Opposition in India, Two Case Studies of How Policy Shapes Politics, (1970), p.10.

34. See the Report of the Dar Commission in 1948, mentioned in R.W.Stern, The Process of Opposition in India, (1970), p.12.

and also by Parsi, Marwari and Sindhi businessmen. Gujarati, Parsi, Marwari and Sindhi industrialists and merchants largely controlled the Indian Merchants' Chamber and the Bombay PCC, although its President was a Maharashtrian, S.K. Patil. They formed the Bombay Citizens' Committee, consisting largely of representatives of business and the professions, including Tata, Birla, Kilachand and Modi, to put their case before the Dar Commission, and its successor, the States Reorganization Commission. The Bombay PCC, the Bombay Citizens' Committee and the Indian Merchants' Chamber complained that their control of the city was not only being challenged on linguistic grounds, but also by anti-capitalist sentiments expressed by the Communist-dominated Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad.³⁵

Until 1959, the Congress Government elite refused to allow the establishment of Bombay city as the capital of the unilingual State of Maharashtra. The Dar Commission rejected the SMP's claim on Bombay City, recommending that, in the event of Bombay's division into linguistic provinces, Bombay City should be established as a separate political unit, because of the belief that Bombay City's attachment to a linguistic province would mean its rapid descent from its present commanding position "as the nerve-centre of our trade and commerce, and our biggest window to the outside world".³⁶

The States Reorganization Committee, which presented its Report in September 1955, was also reluctant to concede Bombay City

35. The Samyukta Maharashtra Parishad is known in abbreviation as SMP.

36. See the Report of the Dar Commission in 1948, mentioned in R.W. Stern, The Process of Opposition in India, (1970), p.17.

to the Maharashtrians. It finally recommended the establishment of a "balanced bilingual" Bombay State, "balanced" between 46% Marathi and 37% Gujarati-speakers. The balance was to be achieved by incorporating Gujarati-speaking Kutch and Saurashtra, and Marathi-speaking Marathawad, but not Nagpur and Vidarbha, into the new State.

This was rejected by the Maharashtra PCC and the SMP. In October 1955, the Maharashtra PCC suggested to the Working Committee the alternative of a "big bilingual" Bombay, a huge state which would incorporate all Gujarati and Marathi-speaking areas, including Nag-Vidarbha, with the provision that Gujarat, if it wished, could exercise an "option" to leave the composite State after five years.

The Gujarati position was complicated by a reluctance to give up Bombay city, which had strong financial and economic ties with Gujarat, in order to gain Maha Gujarat. The Maha Gujarat Parishad, in its Memo to the States Reorganization Commission in 1954, claimed that the argument that Bombay was "built by the labour of the working classes of Maharashtra and, therefore, they should be the masters of the city" was "novel", "futile", and "invalid". The Gujarat PCC and its allies, the Gujarat Sima Samiti, an ad hoc "citizens' group" auxiliary of the Gujarat Congress composed of lawyers, academics and businessmen who were concerned with staking out the borders of a possible Gujarat State, and the Gujarat Sahitya Parishad (Gujarat Literary Society), dominated the testimony presented to the States Reorganization Commission on behalf of Gujarat. They argued, in view of the close ties with Bombay city, in favour of the multilingual status quo.

Morarji Desai, boss of the Gujarat Congress organization, was even more reluctant than other GPCC leaders to separate Gujarat off from Bombay city and state. He had strong ambitions in the national political arena, and was angling for the post of Chief Minister of Bombay State, which would give him great power at the centre. The last thing he wanted was the carving up of the territory of Bombay State, and he was even prepared to go along with the Maharashtra PCC's ambitions for a "big bilingual" Bombay State rather than find his power-base shrunk to the confines of a separate State of Gujarat.

Only the Maha Gujarat Parishad, a small group, made a case before the States Reorganization Commission in favour of the creation of a unilingual state in preference to the maintenance of the status quo.

In the GPCC resolutions on the States Reorganization Commission Report, passed at its Mehmedabad session on October 25th, 1955, (published in Congress Patrika, Nov. 10th, 1955),³⁷ the GPCC accepted the States Reorganization Commission's proposals for a "balanced bilingual" Bombay State in preference to the proposals of the MPCC for "big bilingual" Bombay, where they might be forced to exercise their option leaving Bombay city behind, but it favoured as an alternative the "three-unit formula", the creation of three separate units of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bombay city.

Ultimately, the "three-unit formula" was incorporated into the States Reorganization Bill of 1956, and the GPCC had come to accept the idea of a separate State as a better alternative to the

37. D.N.Pathak, M.G.Parekh and K.D.Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat, (1966), pp. 52-61.

scheme suggested by the MPCC. However, when the bill in this form came to a vote in Parliament in August, 1956, an ad hoc multi-party group of MPs, including leaders of the Bombay PCC, pressed the Government to withdraw the "three-unit formula" in favour of a "big bilingual" scheme, which would not include a quit "option" for Gujarat. The Government yielded to this demand, and a bill to this effect passed in the Lok Sabha by a vote of 241 to 40, and "big bilingual" Bombay became a State on Nov. 1st, 1956.³⁸

This created a furore in Gujarat, which had hitherto remained relatively quiet. The local GPCC leaders and other prominent citizens of Ahmedabad had never even been consulted about this revision of the States Reorganization Bill. The movement for Maha Gujarat developed as a reaction to the movement for Samyukta Maharashtra, and particularly as a reaction to the sudden creation of a "big bilingual" Bombay in which Gujaratis felt their voice and influence would be submerged, and which was viewed as a concession by the Congress Government elite to the Marathas. Press and public opinion in Gujarat came out strongly against the move. All the opposition parties, the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association and the Bar Association protested strongly.

On the 8th August 1956, after the withdrawal of the "three-unit formula" had been confirmed, a large group of students, who were bitterly disappointed that their new State was suddenly denied them, since education, the key to middle class employment, is primarily a State rather than a Central responsibility, marched to Congress House in Ahmedabad in protest. The situation became

38. R.W.Stern, The Process of Opposition in India, (1970), p.19.

violent with police firing in which some students were killed and wounded. The Kotwal Commission Report, which also commented on the police firings of 1956, concluded that the 1956 disturbances "broke out spontaneously because of a sense of frustration and shock among the people in Ahmedabad as a result of the denial to them of a separate State of Gujarat and the firing at the Congress House."³⁹ The police firings on the students aroused strong public sympathy for the cause of Maha Gujarat, for which the dead students had become the first martyrs. There were also demonstrations and police firings at Kalol in North Gujarat and Nadiad in Kaira district. In this delicate situation Morarji Desai behaved with singular tactlessness and insensitivity: instead of visiting Ahmedabad at this time, he chose to go straight to Bombay from Delhi, and declared his determination to crush any opposition to the bilingual experiment.

Under the leadership of Harihar Khambolja, a law student, the students formed the Maha Gujarat Vidyarthi Samiti and controlled the movement for about a month.

Soon, in September 1956, a heterogeneous group came together to found an umbrella organization to campaign for the cause of Maha Gujarat. A citizens' convention- Nagrik Parishad - was called at Ahmedabad on the 9th September 1956, attended by nearly 1,000 delegates from all over Gujarat. The Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad was born in that convention, and Indulal Yagnik, a popular, charismatic, radically-inclined political figure, was elected as President.

39. See Shri Justice S.P. Kotwal, Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Cases of Police Firing in Ahmedabad on the 12, 13 and 14 August, 1958. (Government of Bombay.)

The Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad, henceforth to be known as the MGJP, consisted of the PSP, the Communists, right wing groups, radical independents and dissident Congressmen.

The backbone of the MGJP consisted of dissident Congressmen - many of them businessmen and landholding farmers. Businessmen, particularly those in Ahmedabad, wanted a State capital of their own to which they could have ready access since economic success was all too dependent on the right political contacts. A more particular reason was that many leading businessmen in Ahmedabad had made speculative land purchases in anticipation of the construction of the new State Government buildings - land deals which backfired with the news of the creation of "big bilingual" Bombay. The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, known as the MOA, the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and other commercial associations in Ahmedabad strongly condemned the "big bilingual" scheme. Soon afterwards the business-dominated Ahmedabad City Congress Committee, by a vote of 13 to 4, denounced the "big bilingual" solution, and dissolved itself into the Nagrik Paksh under the leadership of a prominent textile magnate, Chinubhai Chimanlal Seth. It formed an uneasy alliance with the MGJP, and won 46 out of a total of 64 seats in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections in April 1957. Landholding farmers, led by Bhailalbai Patel in Kaira district, Purshottamdas Patel in Mehsana district and Dadubhai Amin in Ahmedabad district, were ready recruits for the Maha Gujarat movement since the creation of a separate State of Gujarat would put land reform legislation in the hands of "their" government, which, they hoped, would be more responsive to their wishes.

The Maha Gujarat movement was confined largely to northern and central Gujarat, particularly the districts of Ahmedabad, Mehsana and Kaira. Its nerve-centres were the cities of Ahmedabad, Nadiad and Kalol. The movement was weak in Saurashtra and Kutch which had strong ties with Bombay city. In the former areas, it achieved great success in the 1957 General Elections, often challenging the Congress in straight fights. The Congress lost 5 out of the 15 Parliamentary seats, and 29 out of the 132 assembly seats to the MGJP, which secured second place in 52 other assembly seats. Other parties and Independent candidates were totally overshadowed by the rise of the MGJP. Compared to the 1952 General Elections, Congress suffered a fall of nearly 56.6% in assembly seats in the three districts of Ahmedabad, Mehsana and Kaira, but in the rest of Gujarat (including Saurashtra and Kutch) it improved on its 1952 record. Of the 29 JP candidates elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly in 1957, it is important to stress that 19 were dissident Congressmen, who also constituted 3 out of the 5 Janta Parishad candidates elected to the Lok Sabha in 1957.

The leftist elements in the Janta Parishad soon fell out with the more rightist elements. Even the two left-wing parties, the PSP and the CPI, found it difficult to get on together: the PSP was bitterly anti-Communist, and was unwilling to run its candidates under the Parishad's banner in Southern Gujarat and Saurashtra in the 1957 General Elections, and failed to arrive at an amicable division with the Communists of some constituencies in Ahmedabad's industrial areas. Most businessmen favoured the "three-

unit formula" which would preserve the independence of Bombay city which was so important in economic terms for Gujarat. However, the left-wing elements in the MGJP, which came increasingly to be dominated by the Communists, declared themselves perfectly willing to surrender Bombay city to the Maharashtrians in order to get Maha Gujarat. In June 1957, the executive committee of the Ahmedabad City Janta Parishad, against Indulal Yagnik's advice, alienated the business-dominated Nagrik Paksh by taking a stand against the "three-unit formula", declaring that it was not a "practical proposition", and worse, that it was a scheme of "the Congress and the capitalists for continuing the present set-up". Naturally, after this outburst, the MGJP began to lose business support.

The increasingly left-oriented MGJP was the precursor of the main opposition party to the Congress in the 1960s, the Janta Parishad. In by-elections held in the years following the Second General Elections for the assembly seats of Anand, Himmatnagar and Jamalpur in Ahmedabad City, the Janta Parishad lost every seat. Jayanti Dalal, a prominent PSP leader and member of the MGJP, confirmed before the Kotwal Commission of Inquiry a steep fall in the membership of the MGJP from 182,000 in December 1956, to 37,000 in June 1958. Left-wing Janta Parishad leaders resolved to adopt militant "direct action" techniques to recapture their popular support. Their militancy centred on the issue of the memorial to the student martyrs of 1956. They requested permission from the Nagrik Paksh -controlled municipal government to erect a martyrs' memorial in front of Congress House. Their request was denied, but in spite of this left-wing leaders put up a memorial, which was removed by the police a few days later in the early morning of the

12th August, 1958. Police action was followed by riots in Ahmedabad City, and more incidents of police firing. Thirteen Corporators resigned from the Nagrik Paksha on this issue, and formed themselves into a radical left-wing Janta Samiti party. In re-elections held in December 1958, all but one were re-elected. However, even before the final creation of a separate State of Gujarat in May, 1960, the Janta Samiti steadily lost support - the three by-elections held in the first half of 1958 went against the Janta Samiti.

Direct action, however, played an important part in securing a reversal of the Congress Government elite's commitment to a "big bilingual" Bombay. The Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and the MGJP threatened a massive joint campaign of direct action to begin in November 1959 to compel the Congress Government elite to bifurcate, or, failing that, to topple the Bombay Government. In August, a month after the joint agitation threat was first made, the Congress Government elite decided to reopen the Bombay reorganization issue. In the negotiations that followed, bifurcation was decided upon, with Bombay city conceded to Maharashtra, and financial and territorial compensation, including the territory of Dangs, given to Gujarat.

On the final resolution of the linguistic issue by bifurcation in 1960, the MGJP organization was dissolved. Congress dissidents, by and large, returned to the Congress fold. The Nagrik Paksh of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation rejoined the Congress in April 1960. The Mehsana group, which had organized the landholding farmers, led by Purshottamdas Patel, also rejoined the Congress,

but a powerful section of this group refused to join the Congress, and, with other leaders of the landholding farmers, like Bhaialalbhai Patel of Kaira district and Dadubhai Amin of Ahmedabad district, provided the main strength of the incipient Swatantra Party. The PSP became an independent group, and only the Communists and radical followers of Indulal Yagnik remained to form a new organization named the Nutan Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad.

The linguistic agitation of the 1950s had brought out the brittleness of Congress party dominance in Ahmedabad city, and even of the business-Majur Mahajan partnership that dominated city politics. However, oppositional elements had coalesced and focused on a particular issue, which/^{tapped} deep-rooted popular interests and sentiments, but there was no viable permanent structure of opposition that seemed capable of challenging the Congress in a sustained manner without appeal to a "great issue", public emotions and "direct action" techniques. The left-dominated MGJP, however, gained a new lease of life in the 1960s, when it found another "great issue", this time in the economic sphere. Ahmedabad city in the 1950s and 60s offered fertile ground for agitational oppositional movements in contrast to the norm of Congress-party dominance and business-Majur Mahajan alliance that regulated the city's political life.

2. Socioeconomic profile of Ahmedabad City, showing the preponderance of the textile industry, the fact that diversification has also been undertaken by the textile magnates, the impact of urbanization and migration etc. A wardwise socioeconomic analysis is also made.

The following section seeks to depict and analyse the nature of the social change brought about in Ahmedabad City by the interaction of the forces of industrialization, urbanization and migration. The impact of this interaction on the socioeconomic profile of the city, on its industrial structure, its ethnic structure, its social mobility patterns etc. is analysed. The socioeconomic reality and ethnic mix of the city, portrayed below, has had a profound influence on the forms of sociopolitical conflict and cooperation between different segments of Ahmedabad society.¹

Examining first the phenomenon of industrialization, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, Ahmedabad has gradually transformed its functional characteristic from trade and commerce to manufacturing industry, largely through the growth and expansion of the cotton textile industry and its ancillary industries in the city. So widespread has this change-over been that the 1961 Census of India's Special Report on Ahmedabad City noted that the city's "main functional characteristic is industrial, its sub-functional type also industrial and manufacturing, the degrees of other functions being low service and moderate trade and transport."²

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1. For a general discussion of the inter-relationship between socioeconomic factors and political developments in the Indian context, see Ali Ashraf, The Study of Urban Politics in India: A Note, (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology in Kanpur: 1971).
 2. Census of India (1961), vol. V Gujarat, Part X-A(i) Special Report on Ahmedabad City, henceforth to be known as Census Special Report I.

Table 1. Industrial classification of workers in Ahmedabad City 1901-61.³

Year	Population (in lakhs)	Growth rate over earlier census	I-IX Total	I	II	III(a)	III(b)	IV+V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	Participation Rate:
1901	1.86		100.00	-	0.87	2.31	0.01	44.52	1.80	13.17	1.50	35.82	41.9
1911	2.17	(+16.6)	100.00	1.70	0.63	1.16	0.04	53.12	3.43	15.11	4.86	19.95	43.3
1921	2.74	(+26.4)	100.00	1.89	0.73	0.82	0.00	48.48	3.85	10.87	1.12	32.24	44.0
1931*	-	(+13.1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1951	7.88	(+170.1)	100.00	0.55	0.49	0.67	0.00	53.62	1.87	18.55	3.93	20.32	35.4
1961	11.50	(+37.4)	100.00	0.17	0.13	0.31	(a)	3.05(b) 50.58(c)	2.66	15.45	5.77	21.88	31.1

* figures for 1931 not available

(a) Included in III(a)
(b) Household Industry
(c) Manufacturing other than Household Industry

Key to Industrial Classification

Category I	=	Cultivator
" II	=	Agricultural labourer
" III(a)	=	Worker in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and plantations, orchards and allied activities
" III(b)	=	Worker in mining and quarrying
" IV	=	Worker in household industry
" V	=	Worker in manufacturing other than household industry
" VI	=	Construction worker
" VII	=	Worker in trade and commerce
" VIII	=	Worker in transport, storage and communications
" IX	=	Worker in other services

The changes in the economic structure of the city can be seen in a comparison of the proportions of persons working in various industrial categories during the last sixty years (Table 1). As might be expected in a large urban centre, the primary sector shows a steady decline in all categories between 1901 and 1961, while there is a significant increase in the proportion of workers engaged in manufacturing industries, worked on a household as well as a non-household basis, from 44.52% in 1901 to 53.63% in 1961. There has been a correspondingly small rise in trading and commercial activities in the city, since workers in trade and commerce constituted only 15.45% of total workers, as against 13.17% in 1901. The proportion of workers employed in transport, storage and communications increased from 1.5% to 5.77% between 1901 and 1961, while the proportion in construction activities only increased from 1.70% to 2.66%. However, there was a marked fall in the proportion of workers engaged in other services from 35.82% in 1901 to 21.88% in 1961.

The pattern of industrial employment in Ahmedabad, as shown in Table 1, is in strong contrast to that in Kanpur City, another important textile centre of roughly similar size (Kanpur had a population of 971,062 in 1961). During the early decades of the twentieth century, the biggest growth sector in Kanpur had been manufacturing industry, and the relative importance of manufacturing, trade and construction had been growing at the cost of miscellaneous services. However, between 1951 and 1961, this trend was reversed. Absolute numbers in the secondary sector remained almost level, but in proportion manufacturing visibly shrank. The tertiary sector, however, exhibited a marked increase. Trade and commerce of the tertiary sector showed a lowering of proportion, although the actual

numbers engaged in trade rose. A small increase occurred in transport, but the chief increase was in the case of miscellaneous services whose actual number and proportion both showed a marked rise, as the following table indicates:

Table 2. Number of workers of various industrial categories in Kanpur in 1951 and 1961, and the percentage increase.⁴

	Workers in 1951	Workers in 1961	% Increase
<u>Total population of city</u>	705,383	971,062	37.7
<u>All workers</u>	258,018	316,581	22.7
<u>Categories:</u> I	1,817	8,410	-
II	204	2,245	-
III	1,380	1,992	-
IV + V	116,429	119,372	2.5
VI	4,600	8,004	74.0
VII	50,972	57,085	12.0
VIII	18,749	25,343	35.2
IX	63,867	94,130	47.4

Thus the main trend of the decade 1951-61 in Kanpur was to increase the importance of miscellaneous services and to lower the importance of manufacturing in the livelihood structure of the population to a very appreciable degree. This showed that the increased population found more avenues of employment in administration and miscellaneous services than in industry and trade, contrary to what had happened during the forty years between 1911 and 1951 in which the city had

4. See Census of India (1961), Vol. XV Uttar Pradesh, Part X, Special Report on Kanpur City.

made a great advance in manufacturing and commerce. Thus in Kanpur in 1961, 37.9^o/o of total workers were engaged in manufacturing (household as well as non-household), whereas in Ahmedabad, 53.63^o/o were so employed. In Kanpur in 1961, 29.3^o/o of total workers, as opposed to 21.88^o/o in Ahmedabad, were employed in other services. In Kanpur, the tertiary sector as a whole (industrial categories VII, VIII and IX) gave employment to 55.8^o/o of total workers, whereas in Ahmedabad the proportion of workers in the tertiary sector was only 42.1^o/o.

A sectoral analysis of the working population of Ahmedabad City in 1961 reveals the overwhelming preponderance of the secondary sector, employing workers in manufacturing industries - household as well as non-household - and in construction activities, over the tertiary sector, employing workers in trade and commerce; transport, storage and communications; and other services:

Table 3. Number and proportion of persons in various categories of workers in Ahmedabad, 1961.⁵

Total Population	Total of all sectors	Primary Sector			Total of I, II & III
		I	II	III	
1,149,918	357,395 (31.1)	615 (0.01)	456 -	1,093 (0.01)	2,164 (0.2)
<hr/>					
		Secondary Sector			Total of IV, V & VI
		IV	V	VI	
		10,892 (1.0)	180,776 (15.7)	9,493 (0.8)	201,161 (17.5)
<hr/>					
		Tertiary Sector			Total of VII, VIII & IX
		VII	VIII	IX	
		55,224 (4.8)	20,633 (1.8)	78,213 (6.8)	154,070 (13.4)

Note: Figures within brackets denote ^o/o to total population.

Out of a total working population of 357,395 or 31.08% of the City's total population, the secondary sector provided work to 201,161 workers or 17.5% of the total City population, whereas the tertiary sector engaged only 154,070 workers or 13.4% of the City population. The existence of a relatively low proportion of workers in the tertiary sector, particularly in trade and commerce and other services, and the apparent inability of the large manufacturing industrial sector to influence and accelerate growth in trade and commerce and other services (the tertiary services sector possible of the economy) indicates a weakness in the economic structure of the City and an impediment to the process of modernization.

In comparison with other cities in India with a population exceeding one million in 1961, Ahmedabad was on a par with Bombay in having the highest proportion of workers in the secondary sector, but had the lowest proportion, out of all the million plus cities, in the tertiary sector:

Table 4. Percentage of workers in each sector in the cities of India with population over one million, to total population, 1961.⁶

<u>City/Town-group</u>	<u>All sectors:</u>	<u>Primary Sector:</u>	<u>Secondary Sector:</u>	<u>Tertiary Sector</u>
Greater Bombay	40.6	0.8	17.6	22.2
Calcutta	40.4	0.1	11.8	28.5
Delhi Town-group	31.7	0.5	8.5	22.7
Madras	30.5	0.5	9.5	20.5
Hyderabad Town-group	29.9	1.0	6.9	22.0
Bangalore M.A. Town-group	32.4	2.5	13.0	16.9
Ahmedabad Town -group	31.1	0.2	17.3	13.6
Ahmedabad City	31.1	0.2	17.5	13.4

6. Census Special Report I, p.231.

Ahmedabad is shown to have the smallest services sector.

On a detailed comparison of the industrial structure of Ahmedabad and Bombay City, according to the Standard Industrial Classification employed in the 1961 Census of India, it becomes clear that manufacturing offers the maximum employment to workers in Ahmedabad numbering 189,047 or 53.06% of the total of all industrial divisions of the Standard Industrial Classification, whereas in Bombay workers in manufacturing number 688,485 persons and constitute 40.05% of total workers. Trade and commerce account for 55,224 workers in Ahmedabad, or 15.50% of total workers, whereas the corresponding figures for Bombay are 303,817 persons or 17.6% of total workers. Transport, storage and communications account for 20,633 workers on 5.79% of total workers in Ahmedabad, whereas they account for 189,260 workers or 11.2% of total workers in Bombay. The services division accounts for 66,178 workers or 18.57% of total workers in Ahmedabad, whereas in Bombay it accounts for 395,709 workers or 23.5% of total workers. Thus in Bombay the tertiary sector of trade and commerce, transport, storage and communications, and services is appreciably larger than in Ahmedabad.⁷

On analysing a more detailed breakdown of the services sector (classified according to the National Classification of Occupations), one can see the lower proportions of persons engaged in professional, technical and related work, such as scientists, engineers, technicians, accountants, doctors and labour and social welfare workers in Ahmedabad

7. Census Special Report I, pp. 244-5. See also Census of India (1961), vol. X Maharashtra, Part X(1-B), Greater Bombay Census Tables.

as compared to Bombay in 1961. In Ahmedabad, 15,828 persons or 4.4⁰/o of total workers were employed as professional, technical and related workers, compared to 88,743 persons or 5.2⁰/o of total workers in Bombay. The proportion of administrative, executive and managerial workers in Ahmedabad was also lower in comparison with Bombay: in Ahmedabad, 7,476 persons or 2.1⁰/o of total workers were employed as administrative, executive and managerial workers, compared to 67,816 persons or 4⁰/o of total workers in Bombay.⁸

This relatively small proportion of workers engaged in a professional, technical, administrative, executive and managerial capacity in Ahmedabad, coupled with the relative smallness of the services sector as a whole, highlights **one** source of weakness in the economic structure of the City. The overwhelming preponderance of manufacturing industry in Ahmedabad, and the relatively small size of the services sector has had important implications for the process of modernization in Ahmedabad: industrial activity has failed to generate a corresponding growth in the services sector, which is a normal feature as incomes grow and demands become more varied. This has had important consequences in the political sphere too - it has diminished the share of those engaged in community service and the liberal professions and likely to have liberal values in the political power system of the City, and, it has created, in conjunction with the pervasive Jain-Bania tradition, the conditions for making the all-important dialogue between business and labour the dominant feature of the Ahmedabad political system, and for

8. Census of India (1961), vol. V Gujarat, Part X-B Special Tables on Cities and Block Directory, pp. 90-92 (henceforth to be known as Census Special Report II). See also Census of India (1961), vol. X Maharashtra, Part X(1-B), Greater Bombay Census Tables.

giving political authority above all to business and trade union leaders.

In the industrial structure of the City, there has been growing diversification since Independence. The following industries have experienced 100⁰/o or more increase in the number of factories or workshops belonging to them in the period between 1956 and 1960, according to figures made available by the Gujarat Bureau of Economics and Statistics: they include the manufacture of rubber and rubber products, basic chemicals, including fertilizers, the manufacture of miscellaneous chemical products, basic metal industries, ferrous, and the manufacture and repair of railroad equipment.⁹ However, the textile industry and its ancillary industries continued to dominate the industrial life of the City. The 1961 Census Special Report on Ahmedabad City reveals that, regarding the number of workshops and factories classified by selected groups of industries, the contribution made by textiles was still the highest, as this industry accounted for 31.50⁰/o of the total industrial establishments in the City. Foodstuffs came next with 12.64⁰/o of the total industrial establishments, followed by transport equipment with 12.07⁰/o, miscellaneous manufacturing industries with 11.00⁰/o, machinery (of all kinds other than transport) and electrical equipment with 10.94⁰/o.¹⁰

Due to this continuing preponderance of the textile industry, it is not surprising to find that the elite structure of Ahmedabad is dominated by the textile magnate elite, who are also responsible, to a large extent, for much of the diversification of industry,

9. Census Special Report I, pp. 256-258.

10. Census Special Report I, p. 253.

particularly in the fields of chemicals and machinery manufacture. The entire textile industry is owned by some fifteen business-houses, which, in turn, are related by matrimonial ties. This small, close-knit character of the textile magnate élite, coupled with the unifying Bania ideology (although the Bania caste in Ahmedabad is divided to some extent between the puritanical Jain Banias and Hindu Vaishnavite Banias¹¹), is the key to their success, both economic and political. Their power is also buttressed by the fact that they are an indigenous, homogeneous group with a strong confidence in their élite status due to the legitimization of their power by their historical traditions of leadership, their strong roots in Gujarati culture and the major role they played in the modernization and transformation of Ahmedabad from a trading and commercial centre into a more modern and industrialized city in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They have thus combined in themselves the roles of both traditional and modern élites. With their homogeneity of outlook and their confidence in their élite status they have had a deep impact on the political culture of the City: they have a high degree of legitimacy and they are an overlapping élite in the sense that they are dominant in various fields, not only economic but political and social also, and take a widespread interest in all fields of activity, including City government.¹²

Despite the numerical preponderance of small-scale units in the industrial structure of the City, the large-scale textile mill industry dominates the employment field in manufacturing industries,

11. Kenneth Gillion, Ahmedabad, a Study in Urban History, (1968), pp. 22-24.

12. See K.D. Desai (Lecturer in Politics at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad), Some Theoretical Formulations about Ahmedabad Politics, (1971).

providing employment to 133,061 persons out of a total labour force of 189,047, i.e. it accounts for 70⁰/o of the total work-force engaged in manufacturing industries in 1961, as the following table shows:

Table 5. Workers in selected divisions, major/minor groups of industrial classification, Ahmedabad City, 1961.¹³

<u>Divisions 2 & 3 - Manufacturing</u>	<u>Total Workers:</u>
(Household and non-Household Industry)	189,047
Major Gr. 23 Textile - Cotton	142,067
Minor Gr. 232 Cotton spinning and weaving in mills	133,061
Major Gr. 27 Textile - Miscellaneous	7,798
Major Gr. 36 Basic Metals and their Products, except Machinery and Transport Equipment	9,172

Textile factory workers are a "labour aristocracy",¹⁴ compared with rural sector workers, workers in household industry and many in the services sector, and even those engaged in other fields of manufacturing industry. According to a family living survey conducted among industrial workers in Ahmedabad in 1958-59, the average wage differential between workers in cotton spinning and weaving in mills, and workers engaged in other industrial occupations was very significant - in fact, cotton textile mill workers earned on average almost twice as much as other industrial workers in the rest of industry.

13. Census Special Report I, p.244.

14. Phrase coined by Eric Hobsbawm.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of industrial employees by sex and adults/children, and by average monthly income per employee in cotton spinning and weaving in mills, and in the rest of industry in Ahmedabad, 1958-59.¹⁵

<u>Industry</u>	<u>% Distribution of Employees by sex and adults/children</u>				<u>Total No. of Employees</u>	<u>Average monthly income in Rs. per employee</u>
	<u>Men:</u>	<u>Women:</u>	<u>Children:</u>	<u>Total:</u>		
1. Cotton spinning & weaving in mills	94.78	5.22	-	100	58,772	122.44
2. Rest of industry	<u>81.01</u>	<u>14.31</u>	<u>4.68</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>5,252</u>	<u>67.83</u>
All	93.65	5.97	0.38	100	64,024	117.96

Textile millworkers of Ahmedabad are also comparatively better off than their counterparts in the rest of the country with higher wages, a better rate of bonus, high dearness allowance and relatively good job security due largely to the considerable bargaining power of their powerful representative trade union, the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association (TLA for short), also known as the Majur Mahajan Sangh. By 1970, their wages had risen by astute bargaining to a range between Rs. 215 and Rs. 325 per month, and their dearness allowance by this time was more than Rs. 175 a month. Their relative prosperity can also be gauged from a comparison with the low wages, chronic under-employment and job insecurity of the substitute or temporary labour force, known as Badlis, who are given occasional employment, on a daily basis, in place of absentee permanent textile millworkers. The Badlis number approximately 7,000 workers, and

15. See Labour Bureau, Simla (Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India), Report on the Family Living Survey among Industrial Workers in Ahmedabad, 1958-59.

their income ranges only between Rs. 80 and 125 a month. A sure index of the elite status of a permanent textile mill worker could be seen in the desirability of securing permanent employment status to a Badli, who coveted the permanent employee's high wages, job security and attendant privileges, won by the powerful Majur Mahajan, such as the Employees' Provident Fund Scheme, gratuity schemes, retrenchment compensation, Employees' State Insurance Schemes, leave with wages and provision of mill canteens and rest rooms, in addition to the manifold social welfare activities provided by a benevolent trade union with a strong financial base, including a workers' cooperative bank with a working capital of Rs. 75 lakhs and 37,000 members. Through the efforts of the trade union, about 12,000 textile mill workers have also constructed their own houses under cooperative housing schemes, and 14,000 live in small tenements provided by the Gujarat State Housing Board on a subsidized rental basis.¹⁶

Thus Ahmedabad textile mill workers are relatively better off than other groups on the industrial scene. However, their living standards were still fairly low, especially in the 1960s, a period of great price inflation of essential commodities. A survey, conducted by Mr. Jitendra Dholakia, reader in Economics in the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences, to discover how textile mill workers in Ahmedabad use their bonus, found that 78% are in debt. The average debt of a textile mill worker was estimated at Rs. 1,422.63, which is roughly equivalent to seven months' pay. The main cause of this indebtedness was found to be "the inability to pay for

16. See G.Y. Patel, "The Ahmedabad Textile Worker" In The Times of India (Ahmedabad), 31 Oct. , 1971.

regular living expenses". Therefore, at least 5.5⁰/o of the mill worker's monthly income, or his entire bonus, was found to go towards debt repayment. This recurrent shortfall in their domestic budgets compelled most of the millworkers to look for extra work, except for about 20,000 Patidar workers who have small holdings in their villages. As a result, over 20,000 millworkers reported for work on Sunday, their weekly holiday. This system, known as "rokdi" (cash wages are given for work on Sunday), affected the workers' efficiency on the following day. Over 10,000 millworkers took up part-time employment in their spare-time to supplement their income: they sold vegetables, served in restaurants, worked as electricians or manual labourers, etc. Apart from about 30 well-managed mills (out of 71 in 1961¹⁷), millworkers in the rest of the mills had to work in sub-normal conditions: the machinery was old, the humidity plants were often defective, inferior cotton and other raw materials were sometimes used which put a great strain on the workers because, due to frequent breakage, they were subject to unjust penalties. According to a survey conducted by a team of doctors of the tuberculosis section of the Civil Hospital, more than 15⁰/o of the workers in spinning departments of textile units were T.B. victims, largely because of fuming in the spinning departments. The living conditions of 40,000 textile millworkers who lived in chawls and of 10,000 who lived in hutments were terrible. According to one housing study, the average per capita floor area for a textile workers is 44 sq. ft. and only 21⁰/o of all their households have independent bathrooms and latrines. On top of this, the textile millworker has to contend with

17. Census Special Report I, p.9.

a certain amount of corruption on the part of jobbers and shop stewards in order to secure his rights. The unemployment figure in Ahmedabad is also fairly high, although it is almost certainly an under-assessment and does not reflect a great deal of under-employment. In 1961, the total number of unemployed persons aged 15 and above was 14,244, of whom one-third were in search of employment for the first time and two-thirds were employed before but were now out of work seeking employment.¹⁸ Out of 381,534 males in the working ages 15-59, 13,708 or 3.59% were unemployed. During the 1960s, particularly during the later 60s, many thousands of textile millworkers lost their jobs due to mill closures.

Growing Impact of Migrant Labour Force on the Economic and Social Life of the City.

Turning to examine the phenomenon of urbanization, Ahmedabad has followed the typical pattern of staggering growth experienced by large metropolitan cities in India over the last decades.¹⁹ Between 1872 and 1961, the population of Ahmedabad increased more than ten times from 119,672 in 1872 to 1,149,918 in 1961. The annual average growth rate between 1872 and 1961 was 9.67%. However, really rapid increase occurred particularly from 1931 onwards: 1931 to 1941 saw a growth of 90.73% in the City's population, which rose from 310,000 in 1931 to 591,267 in 1941. During this period Ahmedabad saw intense industrial and commercial activity, reflected in the rise in the number of textile mills from 60 in 1931 to 81 in 1941, and the development of various other ancillary industries and general growth of trade

18. Census Special Report I, pp. 259-66.

19. Ruddar Dutt, Urbanization and Economic Growth.

and commerce. In the subsequent two decades the City's population grew by the considerable figures of 41.59% or 245,896 persons between 1941 and 1951, and by 37.36% or 312,755 persons between 1951 and 1961.²⁰

A very large part of this tremendous growth of Ahmedabad City's population since 1872, and particularly since 1931, can be attributed to migration.²¹ In the population of Ahmedabad City in 1961, 584,423 persons or 50.82% were migrants, of whom 71,742 or 12.28% were born elsewhere in the district of enumeration; 321,642 or 55.04% in other districts of Gujarat; 170,313 or 29.14% in other States of India; and 20,654 or 3.53% outside India. Thus, a little more than two-thirds of the migrants came to the city from areas within the State, while 32.67% of all migrants came to the City from areas outside Gujarat, the bulk of these from other States of India. Compared with Kanpur, the population of Ahmedabad was far more diversified and plural, although Kanpur had a bigger refugee population from outside India. Out of a total migrant population of 49.4% in Kanpur, 16.6% were born elsewhere in Kanpur district; 67% in other districts of U.P.; 11.2% in other States of India, and 6.5% outside India.²²

Among migrants from other districts of the State, the neighbouring districts of Mehsana and Kaira contribute 17.63% and 8.45% respectively of the total migrants to the City. Thus these two districts

20. Census Special Report I, pp. 42, 44-5.

21. 1961 Census statistics on migration are based on data relating to place of birth which, if different from the place of enumeration, constitutes evidence of migration.

22. See Census of India (1961), vol. XV Uttar Pradesh, Part X, Special Report on Kanpur City.

together account for 26.08⁰/o or almost half of the migrants in this category. The majority of migrants from other States come from the neighbouring States of Rajasthan, which accounts for 57,743 migrants or 9.88⁰/o, Uttar Pradesh, which accounts for 47,371 migrants or 8.11⁰/o of all migrants, and Maharashtra which accounts for 33,924 migrants or 5.80⁰/o of all migrants. These three States together account for 23.79⁰/o of all migrants to the City, or approximately 83⁰/o of migrants from other States of India.²³

On analysing place of birth according to whether it is rural or urban, 397,818 or 68.07⁰/o of the total migrants have come from rural areas as against 165,737 or 28.36⁰/o, who have migrated from towns.²⁴ Out of all the migrants from the district of Ahmedabad and other districts of Gujarat, 288,591 or 73⁰/o are of rural origin. Out of a total of those migrants born in other States of India, 109,227 or 64⁰/o are of rural origin. Thus a large proportion of migrants from within the State of Gujarat are of rural origin as compared to migrants from other States of India. Of the three States which together account for 83⁰/o of the migrants born in other States of India, Rajasthan has sent 44,129 migrants or as much as 77⁰/o of its migrants from rural areas; U.P. has sent 34,932 migrants or 73⁰/o of its total migrants from rural areas. In contrast, Maharashtra has sent 15,330 migrants or only 45⁰/o of its migrants from rural areas. Other States of India, of which the most important are Madhya

23. From Census of India (1961), vol. V Gujarat, Part X-C Special Migrant Tables for Ahmedabad City, pp. 6-7 (henceforth to be known as Census Special Report III).

24. 20,726 or 3.55⁰/o come from outside India, and 142 or 0.02⁰/o are unclassified.

Pradesh, Madras, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Mysore and West Bengal, have sent a high proportion of urban as opposed to rural migrants, i.e. 16,432 migrants or 52⁰/o of their total migrants are from urban areas.

An examination of the communal character of migration is also very revealing.²⁵ In the total population of the City, Hindus numbered 884,756 or 76.94⁰/o, whereas Muslims numbered 178,398 or 15.51⁰/o in 1961. However, in the migrant population in 1961, Hindus numbered 479,522 or 82.05⁰/o, whereas Muslims numbered 63,098 or only 10.80⁰/o of total migrants. From the table below, it can be seen that the proportion of Muslims has fallen from 20.53⁰/o in 1901 to 15.51⁰/o in 1961. The upheavals of Partition, coupled with the nature of migration, have largely contributed to making Ahmedabad City more Hindu in composition and character over the last few decades with important political consequences, not least by providing more fertile ground for the Jan Sangh. Table 7 illustrates these changes.²⁶

A comparison of literacy and educational levels among migrants and the general population of Ahmedabad City shows higher levels of achievement in attaining teaching, medical, engineering and other technical qualifications by migrants. A larger proportion of migrants have attained matriculation and University degrees than in the general population of the City. Thus migrants are educationally equipped to play a very important role in the employment structure of the City, and are particularly well qualified for jobs requiring technical

25. Census Special Report I, pp. 202, 154.

26. Census Special Report I, p.202.

Table 7. Numerical Strength of major religious communities in Ahmedabad City, 1801 to 1961

Religion:	1901:	1911:	1921:	1931*	1941:	1951:	1961:
All religions	185,889 (100.000/o)	216,777 (100.000/o)	274,007 (100.000/o)	234,265 (100.000/o)	591,267 (100.000/o)	788,333 (100.000/o)	1,149,918 (100.000/o)
Hindu	129,505 (69.670/o)	152,102 (70.170/o)	198,596 (72.480/o)	161,703 (69.030/o)	426,468 (72.130/o)	590,440 (74.900/o)	884,756 (76.940/o)
Muslim	38,159 (20.530/o)	45,282 (20.890/o)	53,828 (19.640/o)	62,883 (26.840/o)	116,301 (19.670/o)	137,404 (17.430/o)	178,398 (15.510/o)
Sikh	57 (0.030/o)	8 (N)	5 (N)	71 (0.030/o)	825 (0.140/o)	1,669 (0.210/o)	3,059 (0.270/o)
Christian	1,264 (0.680/o)	1,224 (0.560/o)	2,405 (0.880/o)	3,277 (1.430/o)	8,467 (1.430/o)	11,207 (1.420/o)	15,853 (1.380/o)
Jain	15,460 (8.310/o)	16,086 (7.420/o)	17,312 (6.320/o)	4,796 (2.050/o)	30,935 (5.230/o)	45,370 (5.760/o)	64,341 (5.600/o)
Others	1,444 (0.780/o)	2,075 (0.960/o)	1,861 (0.680/o)	1,535 (0.650/o)	8,241 (1.400/o)	2,243 (0.280/o)	3,511 (0.300/o)

N = Negligible

* figures for 1931 Census do not reflect the correct position as that census was boycotted to an appreciable extent in Ahmedabad as a result of the non-cooperation movement started by Gandhi.

education.²⁷

The crucial role of migrants in the economic life of the City can be seen in the fact that of the total labour force of 351,395, as many as 255,042 or 71.36⁰/o are migrants. The following table gives a detailed breakdown of the contribution of migrants in different industrial categories of workers:²⁸

Table 8. Migrants classified by category of workers and nonworkers in Ahmedabad City, 1961.

<u>Category of workers and non-workers:</u>		<u>Total population:</u>	<u>Total Migrants:</u>	<u>% Distribution of Migrants:</u>	<u>% of Migrants to total of each category of workers/non-workers:</u>
Total		1,149,918	584,423	100.00	50.82
I	As Cultivator	615	253	0.04	41.14
II	As Agricultural labourer	456	367	0.05	67.32
III	In Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry*	1,093	815	0.14	74.57
IV	At Household Industry	10,892	6,227	1.08	57.63
V	In Manufacturing other than Household Industry	180,776	133,904	22.91	74.07
VI	In Construction	9,493	7,288	1.25	76.77
VII	In Trade and Commerce	55,224	33,902	5.80	61.39
VIII	In Transport, Storage and Communications	20,633	15,616	2.67	75.68
IX	In Other Services	28,213	56,680	9.70	72.74
X	Non-workers	792,523	329,381	56.36	31.07

* Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities

27. Census Special Report I, pp. 144-5.

28. Census Special Report I, p.155.

The largest proportion of working migrants are in manufacturing industries other than household (22.91% of total migrants), followed by other services (9.70% of total migrants) and trade and commerce (5.80%). The contribution of migrants to the total working force engaged in cultivation and household industry is the least, being 41.14% and 57.63% respectively. In all other nonagricultural activities, migrant workers contribute more than 60% of the total working force, and this figure rises to more than 70% in mining and quarrying, manufacturing industries other than household industry, construction, transport, storage and communications and other services. It is also interesting to note that 8 out of 10 migrant workers are employees. It is also highly significant that out of the 133,904 migrants engaged in manufacturing industries (including household), 110,542 or 82% are engaged in the textile-cotton, jute, wool silk; and textile-miscellaneous groups.

A detailed occupational breakdown of migrants by place of birth (see Table 9 overpage) gives a very interesting picture of the socioeconomic structure and roles of migrant groups of different regional origin. First of all, making a detailed comparison of the migrant population as a whole with the general population in various occupational categories, we find that, although migrant workers are heavily represented among transport and communications workers, and craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, they also form a significant proportion of white-collar workers in middle class and upper middle class occupations, such as teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers and surveyors, administrators and executive officials in government,

Table 9.29 Selected Occupational Classification of Workers in the General and Migrant Population of Ahmedabad City by place of birth, 1961.

[illegible]

22 Table 9 ctd.

Occupational Division/ Group/Family	Workers in general population	Workers in migrant population	Col. 3 as a % of col. 2	Migrant workers from other areas of Gujarat State	Col. 5 as a % of col. 3	Migrant workers from other Pradesh:	Col. 7 as a % of col. 3	Migrant workers from Rajasthan	Col. 9 as a % of col. 3	Migrant workers from Maharashtra	Col. 11 as a % of col. 3	Migrant workers from other States of India	Col. 13 as a % of col. 3	Total migrant workers from all States of Gujarat	Col. 15 as a % of col. 3
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Division 3 Sales Workers	47,801	29,149	61	18,325	62	1,928 (6.39%)	7	4,061 (13.9%)	14	687 (5.37%)	2	1,205 (8.9%)	4	7,881	27
Group 30 Working Proprietors, Wholesale and Retail Trade	23,430	14,277	61	8,943	63	754 (2.56%)	5	1,844 (5.59%)	13	346 (2.79%)	2	655 (4.49%)	4	3,599	25
Group 33 Salesmen, Shop Assistants and Related Workers	19,154	12,799	67	7,947	62	1,101 (3.69%)	12	1,984 (6.0%)	16	299 (2.29%)	2	475 (3.19%)	4	3,859	30
Family 331 Hawkers, Pedlars and Street Vendors	7,565	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Division 4 Farmers, Fishermen, Hunters, Loggers and Related Workers	4,963	3380	68	2,562	76	431	12	261	8	25	1	57	2	774	23
Division 5 Mines, Quarrymen and Related Workers	3	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Division 6 Workers in Transport and Communications	14,033	10,534	75	5,967	57	724 (2.41%)	7	2,495 (8.9%)	24	531 (4.0%)	5	370 (2.59%)	4	4,120	39
Division 7-8 Craftsmen and other non-agricultural workers and related workers	197,361	146,101	74	82,793	57	23,074 (7.69%)	16	19,294 (5.99%)	13	8,415 (6.39%)	6	9,643 (6.49%)	7	60,426	41
Group 20 Spinners, Weavers, Dyers and Related Workers	121,494	92,672	77	48,812	53	18,078 (6.09%)	19	12,210 (3.89%)	13	5,628 (4.39%)	6	6,768 (4.59%)	7	42,684	46
Group 25 Tool-Makers, Machine Fitters, Plumbers, Welders, Riggers and Related Workers	11,552	7,785	67	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Group 26 Electricians and related Electrical and Electronic Workers	2,664	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Group 83 Chemical and Related Process Workers	494	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Division 9 Service, Sport and Recreation Workers	33,181	25,514	77	15,075	59	2,438 (8.0%)	9	3,585 (11.0%)	14	1,550 (12.0%)	6	1,702 (11.0%)	7	9,275	36

N.A. = Not Available

†: the percentages in brackets are proportions of migrant workers in various occupational divisions to the total

directors and managers in wholesale and retail trade; directors, managers and working proprietors in nonfinancial institutions, and clerical workers.

The nature of migration to Ahmedabad City has had an important influence on the political life and culture of the city.³⁰ Ahmedabad City culture has been moulded by the dominant Jain and Hindu Bania economic élite which is an indigenous and homogeneous group with a strong sense of legitimacy and long historical traditions. The middle class in Ahmedabad has emerged largely as an appendage and offspring of the commercial and industrial economic élite, sharing a common cultural outlook and sensing a strong identity of interests with the economic élite. Thus these two groups are closely interlinked, and, as a result, middle class leadership in various fields has found it difficult to adopt a hostile or defiant stance towards the dominant economic élite.

In contrast to these two closely-linked and largely homogeneous groups, the lower class in Ahmedabad City has increasingly during the twentieth century become composed of heterogeneous migrant groups, a class of "outsiders" with an increasingly large non-Gujrati component. This sociostructural pattern of a closely-knit, cohesive, highly legitimised and dominant upper class on the one hand, and a very fragmented lower class on the other hand, with a wide gap and lack of communication between them, has considerably retarded social and economic mobility in the city, particularly of non-Gujrati groups. Figures drawn from Table 9 give some indication of this: whereas migrant workers from other areas of Gujarat State, who constitute 41.5% of total workers in the

29. Table compiled from Census Special Report II, pp. 90-99 and 296-304 and Census Special Report III, pp. 60-165.

30. See K.D. Desai, Some Theoretical Formulations about Ahmedabad Politics. (Ahmedabad: 1971).

general population, have made some impact in various high status and white collar occupations - they constitute approximately 52⁰/o of professional, technical and related workers; 47⁰/o of administrative, executive and managerial workers; and 50⁰/o of clerical and related workers - migrant workers from other States of India, who constitute 25⁰/o of total workers in the general population, form a very small proportion of these occupations: they constitute, approximately, only 12.5⁰/o of professional, technical and related workers; 15⁰/o of administrative, executive and managerial workers; and 10⁰/o of clerical and related workers. In contrast, migrant workers from other States of India form much larger proportions of the work force engaged in working class and lower middle class occupations: they form 30⁰/o of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified;³¹ 29⁰/o of workers in transport and communications; 16⁰/o of sales workers; and 28⁰/o of service, sport and recreation workers. Migrant workers from

31. Uttar Pradesh had the largest concentration of its migrant work force in the category of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, i.e. 23,074 or 76.0⁰/o, and 18,078 of these or 60⁰/o of its total migrants worked as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers in the textile industries. Rajasthan, Maharashtra and other States of India had lesser, although still very sizeable proportions of their migrant workers in these two occupational categories: 19,294 or 59⁰/o of all Rajasthan's migrant workers were craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, while, of these, 12,210 or 38⁰/o of its total migrant labour force are employed as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers. The corresponding figures for Maharashtra were 8,415 or 63⁰/o as craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, and 5,628 or 43⁰/o as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers in the textile industries. The figures for migrants born in other States of India were 9,643 or 64⁰/o as craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified.

other areas of Gujarat State, on the other hand, form 41⁰/o of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified; 43⁰/o of workers in transport and communications; 37⁰/o of sales workers; and 45⁰/o of service, sport and recreation workers.

In the face of the socioeconomic and political and cultural supremacy of the indigenous economic élite of Ahmedabad City, migrant workers from other areas of Gujarat State have tended to seek accommodation and integration with the dominant culture, rather than to challenge the indigenous culture style; whereas non-Gujrati migrant groups have tended to remain on the periphery of the City's cultural life with a low level of legitimacy, efficacy and self-confidence. This situation, coupled with the Gandhian principles of trusteeship and nonviolent labour-capitalist harmony and cooperation, which have permeated, to a large extent, the dominant trade union, the TLA or Majur Mahajan, and the textile magnates, has contributed, in large part, to the long history of relatively peaceful labour relations in the city during the twentieth century. However, the evolution of this sociocultural pattern of a closed and homogeneous and indigenous dominant economic élite on the one hand, and a fragmented, heterogeneous, increasingly non-Gujrati and migrant labour force on the other hand, was potentially a politically dangerous one.

Wardwise Socioeconomic Profile of Ahmedabad City.

After analysing socioeconomic structures and changes at an all-city level, we now turn to look more closely at the microlevel socioeconomic patterns in different areas and wards of the City.

The 1961 Census Special Report on Ahmedabad City contains a very useful map, illustrating the ecology of Ahmedabad City and showing centres of administration, industry, trade and commerce, transport, education, old and modern residential areas etc., which can be visually correlated with a map showing municipal election wards in 1969.³²

From these maps and other information in the Special Report, it is clear that Ahmedabad City is divided into two main segments, east and west of the Sabarmati River, with strongly contrasting levels of socioeconomic development and prosperity.

On the eastern side or left bank of the river lies the old city area, enclosed by the old fort wall, which is the centre of banking, insurance, commerce, and the wholesale and retail trade in both durable and perishable goods. It is also an old residential area of very high density and congestion, largely composed of middle and lower middle class persons, such as small businessmen and traders, teachers, professional men, municipal and government employees, shopkeepers, hawkers, etc., who never quite reached the point of affluence which would have taken them out into the prosperous, modern suburbs of Ellisbridge and Navrangpura on the west bank. It comprises the municipal election wards of Khadia, Kalupur, Shahpur, Dariapur and Jamalpur. The railway runs along the eastern edge of the old city area from north to south, and it is here that the main goods transport centres by rail and by truck are located. The first textile mills were built on the periphery of the old city to the left of the railway line, but most industrial expansion, including the establishment of heavy and light engineering centres, took place

32. The map of municipal election wards in 1969 was produced by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

east of the railway line, although a few factories have also been constructed in the residential localities close to the old city wall to the north and south, and along the river front. The eastern part of the city extending into Asarva, Saraspur, Gomtipur, Khokera-Mehmedabad etc. is predominantly a working-class area with factories and industrial complexes interspersed with residential areas of working-class chawls and tenements. It comprises the municipal election wards of Asarva, Saraspur, Rakhial Gomtipur, Khokera-Mehmedabad and Maninagar-Behrampura³³. The municipal election ward of Raikhad contained a pocket of the cotton textile mill industry within the old city area. Apart from Shahibag and the Cantonment area to the north and some areas around Kankaria Lake in the south-west, including Maninagar, where some of the élite and well-to-do reside, the area to the east of the Sabarmati has witnessed a deterioration in the environment in terms of greater congestion, high density, increase in slum areas, etc.

In contrast, the municipal wards of North and South Ellisbridge, west of the Sabarmati River, contain the spacious residential bungalows of the upper and middle classes. It is a well-planned suburban area with a large number of parks and recreation centres and educational and institutional buildings, including the University Campus, the Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association (ATIRA) building and the Indian Institute of Management.

Thus the disparity in socioeconomic development and living conditions between the two regions, east and west of the Sabarmati,

33. These are 1965 Municipal Election wards.

is very great. In per capita terms, facilities and conditions in the east as compared to the west, are totally inadequate,³⁴ e.g. water consumption on the west side is almost three times as high per capita as that on the east side; similarly road length per capita on the east side is very much less compared to that on the west side.³⁵ In fact, a strong contrast has been drawn between the "garden suburbia" of the west bank and the "decaying ghetto" to the east.³⁶

Wardwise differences in living conditions and socioeconomic structure are very pronounced. Measures of varying living conditions in different wards and areas in Ahmedabad City are the nature of housing, the extent of single-room households and slum conditions, and the provision of amenities and facilities, such as educational, medical, recreational etc. The extent of rented accommodation as opposed to owned accommodation in different areas of Ahmedabad City is a reflection of the pressures of rapid urbanization and immigration accompanied by the increasing scarcity of housing, particularly cheap housing, and the inadequacy of new construction, particularly for low-income families.

A comparison of Census statistics with those collected in a survey conducted in 1956-57 by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in connection with the preparation of slum clearance schemes revealed the extent of rented as opposed to owned accommodation in the old

34. An impression gained from discussions in March 1971 in Ahmedabad with Mr. Mahesh Bhatt, Reader in Public Finances at the University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad, who was to undertake a project which should prove very illuminating in this connection and which involves a cost-benefit analysis of the various municipal election wards in terms of the per capita tax burden of different wards, compared with the per capita amenities provided and developmental expenditure incurred by the Municipal Corporation.

35. See B.K. Roy Burman, "Social Profile of Ahmedabad", Seminar, No. 125 (January, 1970), pp. 33-38.

36. Ibid.

city area within the fort wall, and the suburban area, and its change over a three-year period in these two areas.

Table 10. Comparison of Census statistics, 1961
with survey conducted by Ahmedabad
Municipal Corporation, 1956-57.³⁷

<u>No. of families/households:</u>	<u>Area within</u> <u>city walls:</u>	<u>Suburban</u> <u>area:*</u>	<u>Total area:</u>
i) according to Corporation Survey	76,192	97,461	173,653
ii) " " Housing Census	76,192		
<u>% of families residing in</u> <u>owned houses</u>			
i) according to Corporation Survey	27.87	6.23	17.08
ii) " " Housing Census	28.93	8.85	17.99
<u>% of families residing</u> <u>in rented houses</u>			
i) according to Corporation Survey	72.13	93.77	82.92
ii) " " Housing Census	71.07	91.15	82.01

* excluding Dariapur-Kazipur, Ellisbridge and Sabarmati wards

It is clear that the incidence of rented dwellings is very much higher in the suburban areas, where migrants have largely settled in response to the demand largely for textile and other factory labour, than in the area within the city walls, where the indigenous population largely resides. Thus, in the suburban areas as many as 91.15% of families lived in rented accommodation, compared to only 71.07% in the area within the city walls in 1961.³⁸

37. Census Special Report I, p.90.

38. Between 1957 and 1961, due to the promotion of house construction activities by the formation of cooperative housing societies, receiving aid from the State Government in the form of acquisition of land, advance of loan at a reasonable rate of interest and repayment by easy installments, there has been a small reduction in the percentage of families living in rented accommodation from 93.77% to 91.15% in the suburban area, and from 72.13% to 71.07% in the area within the city walls.

The extent and location of slum areas can be gauged from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's classification of certain hutment and sub-standard housing areas as "slum" areas, which are located in 15 out of the 29 Census wards in the City. In these 15 wards,³⁹ we can assess the extent of single-room households and the number of persons per room, a sure index of deprivation, from the following table:

Table 11. Households by number of rooms and number of persons occupying them, 1961, in the "slum" wards of Ahmedabad City.⁴⁰

No. of Households according to number of persons in the Household						
<u>No. of Rooms:</u>	<u>Total number of households</u>	<u>1 person</u>	<u>2-3 persons</u>	<u>4-6 persons</u>	<u>7-9 persons</u>	<u>10 persons +</u>
No. regular room	1	1	-	-	-	-
1 room	16,971	1,449	4,849	7,556	2,575	542
2 rooms	1,396	36	254	613	360	133
3 "	147	1	24	45	40	37
4 "	90	2	8	35	19	26
5 " and more	47	2	5	14	10	16
Total	18,652	1,491	5,140	8,263	3,004	754

Out of a total number of 18,652 households living in the 15 wards containing substantial slum areas, 16,971 or 90.99% inhabit one-room tenements; 1,396 or 7.48% two-room tenements; and only 284 or 1.53% live in more than two rooms. Out of a total number of

39. These fifteen "slum" wards are as follows: Jamalpur - 1, Raikhad, Kalupur, Shahpur - 1 and 2, Ellis Bridge, Dariapur-Kazipur, Shaherkotda, Asarva, Rakhial, Rajpur-Hirpur, Khokera-Mehmedabad, Kankaria, Jamalpur T.P.S. and Baherampura.

40. Census Special Report I, p.105.

16,971 single-room households, 10,131 or about 59⁰/o contain between 4 and 9 persons. Thus, not only are single-room households predominant, but the majority of these also contain over 4 persons.

A study of the socioeconomic conditions of the slumdwellers of Ahmedabad City, sponsored by the University of Gujarat's School of Social Sciences, gives an idea of the caste, occupation and income-level of the slumdwellers.⁴¹ As might be expected, Scheduled Castes and low castes constitute roughly 50⁰/o of slumdwellers:

Table 12. Caste-wise distribution of slum households.⁴²

<u>Caste:</u>	<u>Household Number:</u>	<u>%:</u>
Vaghri	120	34.2
Harijan	36	10.3
Rabari	19	5.4
Kumbhar	3	0.9
Lohar	1	0.3
Rajput	30	8.5
Brahmin	5	1.4
Muslim	24	6.8
Others	<u>113</u>	<u>32.2</u>
Total	351	100.0

In terms of occupation, about 60⁰/o of slumdwellers are self-employed in the sense that they are not in any regular job

41. See Mahesh Bhatt and V.K. Chawda of the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences, A Preliminary Report of the Study of the Socio-economic Condition of the Slum-dwellers in Ahmedabad City, obtained in March 1971. The Study is based on a survey of 351 households in 5 out of the 15 wards classified by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation as containing substantial slum areas.

42. Ibid.

and, therefore, have to depend on any type of physical work on which they can lay their hands. The largest category of slumdwellers - 26.5% - consists of those pulling carts and doing other manual work. Only 15% of slumdwellers are millworkers, and 10.5% are low-paid Government employees. This is shown in the following table:

Table 13. Occupation-wise distribution of slum households.⁴³

<u>Occupation:</u>	<u>Household Number:</u>	<u>%:</u>
1. Cart-pulling ("Hathlari") and other manual work	93	26.5
2. Making rope, baskets, toys and dolls etc.	53	15.1
3. Rickshaw driver	18	5.1
4. Domestic servants	5	1.4
5. Hawker	27	7.7
6. Cattle-rearing and milk selling	21	6.0
7. Government employee	37	10.5
8. Mill and factory worker	55	15.7
9. Miscellaneous work	<u>42</u>	<u>12.0</u>
Total	351	100.0

Looking at income-levels, 56% of slumdwellers obtain a monthly income of Rs. 100 or less, while only 10% of slum households get a monthly income of more than Rs. 200. The average monthly income per household was only Rs. 124-30, as the following

43. Ibid.

table shows:

Table 14. Group-wise income distribution of slum households.⁴⁴

<u>Income-group</u> <u>(in Rs. per month):</u>	<u>Household Number:</u>	<u>%:</u>
up to Rs. 50	42	12.0
51 - 100	155	44.1
101 - 100	72	20.5
151 - 200	42	12.0
201 - 300	31	8.8
300 and above	<u>9</u>	<u>2.6</u>
Total	351	100.0

Comparing the average monthly incomes of a slumdweller and a millworker makes it strikingly clear that the average textile millworker constitutes a "labour aristocracy", an élite in relative terms. In the previous section (see p. 71) we have seen that the average millworker was earning wages of between Rs. 215 and 325 per month, and his dearness allowance had gone up to more than Rs. 175 a month by 1970.

Variations in the socioeconomic structure of the different Gujarat State Assembly constituencies, located in Ahmedabad City, can be determined exactly by using the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order of 1966, which gives information on the particular 1961 Census wards which make up each Assembly Constituency. Thus, using the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order of 1966 coupled with the Primary Census Abstract in the 1961 Census Special Report on Ahmedabad

44. Ibid.

City, one can determine the exact extent of literacy and the Scheduled Caste and Tribe population, and the occupational structure of all the Ahmedabad City State Assembly electoral constituencies in 1967. The resulting information has been compiled into a table (see Table 15).⁴⁵ Unfortunately it is not possible to obtain an exact correlation between 1961 Census wards and Ahmedabad municipal election wards, thus socioeconomic information relating to the broader category of State Assembly Constituency serves to give a broad differentiation of municipal areas.

From Table 15 one can see the wide range in literacy among the various State Assembly constituencies from the high level of literacy in Khadia constituency (72⁰/o) to the relatively low level of 41.9⁰/o in Asarva constituency. In general, old city constituencies have markedly higher literacy levels than the constituencies located in the suburban areas. The literacy levels for old city constituencies are in descending order - Khadia with 72⁰/o, Kalupur with 63.3⁰/o, Jamalpur with 57.1⁰/o, and Shahpur with only 49.9⁰/o. This low figure for Shahpur is largely explained by the fact that Shahpur Assembly constituency contains parts of the more working-class, suburban area of Dariapur-Kazipur). Among suburban constituencies, Ellis Bridge has the highest literary level of 57.8⁰/o, followed by

45. Table compiled from the Election Commission of India (1967), Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order of 1966, and the Census Special Report I, Primary Census Abstract, pp. 292-3. In making estimates of the literacy, the percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population, and the occupational structure of Asarva, Dariapur-Kazipur, Kankaria and Shahpur State Assembly Constituencies, it was necessary to use the Block Directory, giving information on the population of circles within Census wards, contained in the 1961 Census of India, vol. V Gujarat, Part X-B Special Tables on Cities and Block Directory. The estimates made with the use of the Block Directory are necessarily approximate as it is not possible to know exactly the distribution of the population in various circles among the categories of literates, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes etc., so one can only approximately calculate the population proportions of various circles in different occupational categories etc. in a particular constituency.

Table 15. Literacy, occupational structure and proportion of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the State Assembly electoral constituencies of Ahmedabad City, 1967. (The percentages in brackets are of total constituency population.)

State Assembly Constituencies	1961 Census wards of Ahmedabad City comprising the constituencies	Total Population	Literates	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes	Total Workers (I-IX)	Occupational Categories (see key overpage)								
							I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Ellisbridge	14 - Ellisbridge + 29 - Beleranpur	121,689	70,369 (57.8%)	13,576 (11.2%)	632 (0.5%)	37,328 (30.7%)	343 (0.3%)	281 (0.2%)	429 (0.4%)	1,751 (1.4%)	10,175 (8.4%)	2,031 (1.7%)	5,400 (4.4%)	1,771 (1.5%)	15,147 (12.4%)
Danapur-Kazipur	15 - Sabarnati + Circles 14 and 22 in 16 - Danapur-Kazipur + Circles 6 to 17 in 20 - Asara and Gantmant Asara	125,606	60,247 (48%)	18,916 (15.1%)	1,575 (1.3%)	44,533 (35.5%)	51 (0.04%)	8 (0%)	161 (0.1%)	1,246 (0.9%)	22,262 (17.7%)	1,571 (1.2%)	4,106 (3.3%)	2,716 (2.2%)	8,110 (6.5%)
Asara	18 - Shakerborda + 19 - Saraspur + 20 - Asara including Circles 6 to 11)	135,767	59,920 (44.1%)	21,766 (16%)	710 (0.5%)	49,670 (36.6%)	50 (0%)	11 (0%)	36 (0%)	933 (0.7%)	33,146 (24.4%)	843 (0.6%)	4,456 (3.3%)	3,629 (2.7%)	6,566 (4.8%)
Khadia	1 - Khadia + 2 - Khadia II + 3 - Khadia III + 7 - Kalupur I + 17 - Railwaypura	117,319	84,435 (72%)	770 (0.7%)	16 (0%)	32,185 (27.4%)	21 (0%)	-	17 (0%)	577 (0.5%)	11,057 (9.4%)	580 (0.5%)	9,385 (8.0%)	1,452 (1.2%)	8,434 (7.2%)
Kalupur	8 - Kalupur II + 9 - Kalupur III + 10 - Danapur I + 11 - Danapur II	134,672	85,214 (63.3%)	3,439 (2.6%)	96 (0.07%)	36,712 (27.3%)	10 (0%)	-	22 (0%)	1,249 (0.9%)	15,973 (11.9%)	702 (0.5%)	10,048 (7.5%)	1,384 (1.0%)	7,321 (5.4%)
Shahpur	12 - Shahpur I + 13 - Shahpur II + 16 - Danapur - Kalupur (excluding circles 14 to 19 and 22)	134,424	67,044 (49.9%)	12,512 (9.3%)	1053 (0.8%)	38,604 (28.7%)	17 (0%)	-	100 (0.07%)	1,555 (1.2%)	18,209 (14.3%)	989 (0.7%)	6,422 (4.8%)	2,154 (1.6%)	9,157 (6.8%)
Tanapur	4 - Tanapur I + 5 - Tanapur II + 6 - Raikhad	116,553	66,502 (57.1%)	9,504 (8.1%)	893 (0.8%)	32,693 (28.0%)	17 (0%)	6 (0%)	108 (0.09%)	1,655 (1.4%)	13,116 (11.3%)	783 (0.7%)	7,157 (6.1%)	1,841 (1.6%)	8,010 (6.9%)
Kankaria (Scheduled Caste Reserved Seat)	22 - Gomtipur + 23 - Rajpur-Hirpur + 24 - Rajpur-Hirpur-Near Linet + 26 - Manivagar TPS + 27 - Kankaria TPS + 28 - Tanapur TPS	132,494	63,981 (48.3%)	32,075 (24.2%)	140 (0.1%)	41,181 (31.1%)	15 (0%)	79 (0.06%)	124 (0.09%)	1,115 (0.8%)	22,827 (17.2%)	1,505 (1.1%)	4,537 (3.4%)	2,351 (1.8%)	8,628 (6.5%)
Raktakera	21 - Raktakera + 25 - Raktakera Medved-	131,394	57,777 (44.0%)	9,718 (7.4%)	589 (0.4%)	45,139 (34.4%)	86 (0.07%)	69 (0.05%)	97 (0.07%)	813 (0.6%)	34,010 (26.6%)	740 (0.6%)	2,885 (2.2%)	1,663 (1.3%)	4,779 (3.6%)

Key to Occupational Categories of Workers:

- I As Cultivator
- II As Agricultural Labourer
- III In Mining, Quarrying, Livestock, Forestry, Fishing,
Hunting and Plantations, Orchards and Allied activities
- IV At Household Industries
- V In Manufacturing other than Household Industry
- VI In Construction
- VII In Trade and Commerce
- VIII In Transport, Storage and Communications
- IX In Other Services

Kankaria with 48.3^o/o, Dariapur-Kazipur with 48^o/o, Rakhial, with 43.9^o/o and Asarva with 41.9^o/o.

Looking at the extent of Scheduled Castes among the various State Assembly constituencies, it is clear that they are very much scarcer in the old city constituencies - particularly in Khadia and Kalupur, where they only constitute 0.7^o/o and 2.6^o/o respectively of the population. They are more numerous but still below 10^o/o in the remaining old city constituencies of Jamalpur and Shahpur, where they constitute 8.1^o/o and 9.3^o/o respectively of the population. Apart from Rakhial, where Scheduled Castes form 7.4^o/o of the population, they form above 10^o/o of the population in all the suburban constituencies. In Ellis Bridge, they constitute 11.2^o/o of the population, in Dariapur-Kazipur, 15.1^o/o; in Asarva 16^o/o; and in the Scheduled Caste Reserved constituency of Kankaria they form 24.2^o/o or almost a quarter of the population. Scheduled Tribes are far less numerous than Scheduled Castes in the Assembly Constituencies of Ahmedabad City. They are negligible in Khadia and Kalupur, i.e. below 0.1^o/o. In other old city constituencies, they only constitute 0.8^o/o of the population in both Jamalpur and Shahpur. Among the suburban constituencies, they constitute the least ^o/o in Kankaria (0.1^o/o), and form 0.5^o/o only of the population in Ellis Bridge, Asarva and Rakhial. Dariapur-Kazipur contains the largest proportion of Scheduled Tribes with 1.3^o/o.

The old city constituencies all contain lower proportions of total workers, i.e. all below 30^o/o, than the suburban constituencies. Of the suburban constituencies, Ellis Bridge has the smallest proportion of total workers (30.7^o/o), followed in ascending order by Kankaria with 31.1^o/o, Rakhial with 34.4^o/o, Dariapur-Kazipur with

35.5^o/o and Asarva with the largest proportion of 36.6^o/o. There are insignificant proportions, i.e. below 1^o/o of cultivators, agricultural labourers and workers in mining, quarrying, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting and plantations, orchards and allied activities in all the Assembly constituencies of Ahmedabad City. The proportion of workers in household industries is the highest in Jamalpur constituency (1.4^o/o), and also Ellis Bridge with 1.4^o/o, followed in descending order by Shahpur with 1.2^o/o, Kalupur and Dariapur-Kazipur with 0.9^o/o, Kankaria with 0.8^o/o, Asarva with 0.7^o/o, Khadia with 0.5^o/o and Rakhial with 0.6^o/o.

The lowest proportions of workers in manufacturing other than household industry occur in the old city constituencies and Ellis Bridge. Ellis Bridge has the lowest with 8.4^o/o, followed in ascending order by Khadia with 9.4^o/o, Jamalpur with 11.3^o/o, Kalupur with 11.9^o/o, and Shahpur with 14.3^o/o. The suburban constituencies, barring Ellis Bridge, are primarily industrial with very large proportions of workers in manufacturing industry. The most heavily industrial constituencies are Rakhial with 25.9^o/o of its population engaged in manufacturing industry and Asarva with 24.4^o/o. They are followed in descending order by Dariapur-Kazipur with 17.7^o/o and Kankaria with 17.2^o/o.

The highest proportions of workers in construction are in Ellis Bridge, which has 1.7^o/o of its population so employed; in Dariapur-Kazipur with 1.2^o/o of its population, and Kankaria with 1.1^o/o. Asarva (0.6^o/o), Rakhial (0.6^o/o) and all the old city constituencies - Khadia (0.5^o/o), Kalupur (0.5^o/o), Shahpur (0.7^o/o), Jamalpur (0.7^o/o) - have very much smaller proportions (almost half)

of their population working in construction.

The old city constituencies of Khadia, Kalupur and Jamalpur are undoubtedly the centres of trade and commerce in the city with 8.0⁰/o, 7.5⁰/o and 6.1⁰/o respectively of their populations engaged in trade and commerce. Shahpur and Ellis Bridge have a fair proportion of their population engaged in trade and commerce - 4.8⁰/o and 4.4⁰/o respectively. The remaining suburban constituencies have very much smaller proportions of their population working in trade and commerce - Kankaria has 3.4⁰/o, Dariapur-Kazipur 3.3⁰/o, Asarva 3.3⁰/o, and Rakhial only 2.2⁰/o.

The constituency with the largest proportion of its population engaged in transport, storage and communications is Asarva with 2.7⁰/o, followed by Dariapur-Kazipur with 2.2⁰/o and Kankaria with 1.8⁰/o. Shahpur and Jamalpur have 1.6⁰/o and Ellis Bridge 1.5⁰/o. Rakhial has 1.3⁰/o, and the constituencies with the smallest proportions of their population working in transport, storage and communications are Khadia and Kalupur with 1.2⁰/o and 1.0⁰/o respectively.

As regards the proportion of the population engaged in other services, Ellis Bridge constituency has by far the largest with 12.4⁰/o, followed by the old city constituencies in descending order - Khadia (7.2⁰/o), Jamalpur (6.9⁰/o), Shahpur (6.8⁰/o) and Kalupur (5.4⁰/o). Among the suburban constituencies, Dariapur-Kazipur and Kankaria have a fairly large proportion of their population engaged in other services - 6.5⁰/o for both - but Asarva and Rakhial have a relatively small proportion- 4.8⁰/o and 3.6⁰/o respectively.

From examining the literacy and occupational structure of State Assembly constituencies in Ahmedabad City, we turn to look

at the caste structure of municipal election wards. The relationship between politics and caste is a highly complex and interacting one. Caste does provide, particularly in intraconstituency electoral politics, the raw material of politics so to speak, but traditional caste loyalties and divisions are often transformed by the political process, by political organization, tactics and leadership, which provide values and incentives which frequently cut across traditional loyalties. This has been demonstrated many times by Indian political scientists. Rajni Kothari, in his study,⁴⁶ in collaboration with Tarun Sheth, of the 1962 Gujarat Legislative Assembly election in Baroda East constituency, has clearly shown the ability of politics to cut across caste and ethnic loyalties, for in this election no community or caste, except the Muslims, voted en bloc for any party's candidate. Among Hindu voters, although there was a pattern of voting in proximate voting booths, voting was based more on individual and family preferences, and community leaders were often split between various parties. As regards the Muslims, in the reverse direction, politics was able to transform their multiform internal divisions (those between Shias and Sunnis, and, within these two main groups, between various 'Jamat' organizations, such as the Sulemanis, Alvis, Tais, etc., and between all these groups and the Vora, Memon, Khoja and Shaikh communities) into political cohesiveness. Thus politics more often transforms rather than reflects the loyalties and divisions within the underlying social structure in a fairly complex manner.

46. See Rajni Kothari and Tarun Sheth, "The Extent and Limits of Community Voting: the Case of Baroda East!" In Rajni Kothari (ed.), Party Systems and Election Studies, (1967).

In Ahmedabad, before the relationship between politics and caste can be fully explored, there is a great need for a minute anthropological analysis of the caste structure of the metropolis, comparable to the work of Owen M. Lynch on social change among the untouchables in Agra. Some progress is being made towards a statistical picture of the caste structure of Ahmedabad City - Dr. V.P.Shah, at the School of Social Sciences at the University of Gujarat in Ahmedabad is involved in a project to find out the caste distribution in Ahmedabad based on a random sample survey of the rolls and registers of Middle and High Schools covering nineteen geographical areas of the city. However, the results of this project have yet to be published. A unique feature of Ahmedabad life, closely related to caste, is the insular and inward-looking poles, founded by particular caste leaders.⁴⁷ These poles are arenas for social intercourse, neighbourhood patriotism and internal factional fights. They tend to conserve traditions. A sociological study of their power and factional structure, interpole rivalries, role of pole activists and rowdies, and linkages

47. See Imperial Gazetteer of India, Abazai to Arcot, vol. X, pp. 106-111; and the Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency, vol. IV, Ahmedabad (1879), pp. 294-5, for a detailed description of Ahmedabad poles (the word literally means gates). According to the latter, poles date from the time of divided rule in the City (1738-1753), when Hindu-Muslim fights were very common. Afterwards, from about 1780 to 1832, when the decaying town walls had ceased to provide shelter from marauders, the pole-gate and watch must have been a very necessary protection. Each pole, or house group, has only one or two entrances, protected by a gateway closed at night as a safeguard against thieves. Inside there was one main street with crooked lanes branching on either side. Most poles varied in size from five or ten to fifty or sixty houses. Poles were almost entirely inhabited by Hindus, in some cases by a settlement of families belonging to one caste, and in others by families of several of the higher castes, Brahmins, Vantias, Suthars and Kanbis. Most of the poles were established and provided with a gateway, at the expense of some leading man whose name the pole in many cases bore, and whose family held a position of respect as the heads of the pole. The house property in the pole was to some extent held in common.

with political life needs to be undertaken before a real microlevel understanding of the interaction between caste and politics can be achieved.

Urbanization and industrialization in Ahmedabad are transforming the traditional caste structure of power, based on the traditional leadership of poles and panchayats, the residential segregation of castes, and ascribed and exclusive occupational statuses. The spread of education, the changing distribution of wealth through the increasing use of the market system, the growing use of modern litigation as opposed to the traditional justice of caste elders, the growth of voluntary associations and social reform associations organised on modern lines, and, above all, the impact of elections and the party system and the government's developmental programmes and schemes for new subsidized housing and slum clearance etc. have greatly modified and, in many cases, transformed older patterns of caste behaviour and organisation. A new leadership has arisen, rooted in the new organisations of the party system, which has helped to mediate these changes.

However, in the absence of a detailed anthropological analysis of the changing patterns of caste in politics, one can only give an impressionistic outline of these changes, and of the caste composition of the Municipal election wards, based on interviews and newspaper information. During the twentieth century, and particularly since Independence, the Brahmin-Bania dominance of the party system has been increasingly and successfully challenged by the rising political power of the Patels or Patidar caste, whose main divisions are into Leuva and Kadwa Patidars.⁴⁸ Internal Congress

48. See D.F. Pocock, Kanbi and Patidar, The Study of the Patidar Community of Gujarat, (1972).

party politics have largely been dominated by the factional conflicts along personalistic lines of leaders and aspiring leaders drawn from the Brahmin-Bania-Patel upper caste groups, which dominated the positions of leadership within the party into the 1960s. Intermediate and low caste political figures are slowly becoming more prominent, largely due to the influence and power of the Majur Mahajan within the Congress party. Muslims have largely been denied an important role in Congress internal politics, and consequently the more active elements among them have often turned to the opposition parties, such as the Janta Parishad, for greater political scope. A more detailed analysis of caste and politics in Ahmedabad City will be made in subsequent sections.

Here, the caste, communal and ethnic composition of the various Municipal wards of Ahmedabad City in 1969 will be briefly described from data drawn primarily from interviews and newspaper information. The data is necessarily impressionistic since the 1961 Census gives no wardwise breakdown of caste, communal or ethnic groups in Ahmedabad City.

Table 16.* Ward-wise caste, communal and ethnic composition of Ahmedabad City, 1969.

<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Major caste, communal and ethnic composition:</u>
1. Khadia - 1	high-caste Hindus, particularly Patels (Leuva), many Jains
2. " - 2	high-caste Hindus, many Patels and Jains, and Brahmakshatriyas
3. Kalupur South	large proportion of Muslims, Jain Banias and Marwaris
4. " North	large proportion of Jain and Hindu Banias, Brahmins and Muslims
5. Gheekanta	predominantly Bania, some Patels and Muslims

<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Major caste,communal and ethnic composition:</u>
6. Dariapur	Patels, Muslims, low, and intermediate castes like Panchals and Prajapati.
7. Vadigam	Patels, some Muslims and Marwaris, and intermediate castes like Rajputs and Khattris
8. Shahpur	Muslims, intermediate caste Hindus, low caste such as Vagris,Rajasthanis, Sindhis and other non-Gujaratis,some Patels.
9. Khanpur	Patels, Parsis and Muslims.
10. Manekchowk	Banias, Jains, Marwaris
11. Jamalpur	Muslims primarily and some Marwaris
12. Raikhad	Muslims and intermediate caste Hindus
13. Paldi	upper caste Hindus, particularly Patels, Banias, Brahmakshatriyas.
14. Gandhigram	mixed locality: Patels, Brahmins, Banias, Harijans, Thakkardas (backward class)
15. Vadaj	intermediate Hindu castes, some refugees from Pakistan
16. Sabarmati	Patels, Brahmins, Jains, Sindhis, Kshatriyas
17. Dudheshvar	mixed locality: Patels, Brahmins, Banias, Marwaris, Harijans
18. Madhupura	Banias, Harijans, Vagris, some Muslims, Rajasthanis and other non-Gujaratis, some Kshatriyas
19. Girdharnagar	high-caste Hindus
20. Asarva	some Patels and Muslims, intermediate and low castes: Kanbis, Harijans, Vagris
21. Chamanpura	some Patels, intermediate and low castes: Harijans,Vagris
22. Naroda	" " " " " " and Sindhis
23. Saraspur	" " and Banias, Muslims, intermediate and low castes
24. Potalia Talav	low castes: Harijans, Vagris, and some Muslims, Banias and Patels
25. Bapunagar	intermediate and low castes,some Patels, Muslims, Maharashtrians and Sindhis
26. Rakhial	intermediate and low castes, some Punjabis, Sindhis, Bhayyas of U.P.

<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Major caste, communal and ethnic composition:</u>
27. Gomtipur	intermediate and low castes
28. Rajpur	intermediate and low castes, some Patels
29. Amraivadi	intermediate and low castes
30. Khokera- Mehmadabad	intermediate and low castes, some Patels, Maharashtrians and South Indians
31. Maninagar	high-caste Hindus: Brahmins, Baniyas, Patels
32. Kankaria	high-caste Hindus: Brahmins, Baniyas, Patels, some Harijans and Vagris.
33. Behrampura	intermediate and low castes, some Muslims and Baniyas.

* Compiled from interviews with the Ahmedabad Census Officer, Mr. Doctor, and a lecturer in Social Sciences at Gujarat University, Miss Taraben Patel, and a useful description in an Ahmedabadi newspaper, Sandesh, 8 March , 1969.

Chapter III

OUTLINE OF THE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF

THE AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Showing the role of the legislative branch and the executive, and constraints on the Corporation's powers and overall control by the State Government under the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act of 1949.¹

In statutory or formal terms, as defined in the BPMC Act of 1949 under which Ahmedabad became a Municipal Corporation in 1950, an unequal balance of power exists between the urban locality and the State Government, to the very definite advantage of the latter. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has very little autonomy vis-à-vis the State Government. It has circumscribed and limited statutory powers, and both its legislative and executive processes are susceptible to direct and indirect control by the State Government.

This was, to a large extent, a legacy of the British imperial pattern of State-local relations, whose original purpose was to legitimize the extraction of local revenue for local services, while maintaining centralized control.² It was also buttressed, after

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1. The Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporations Act henceforth to be known as the BPMC Act of 1949.
 2. A critic of the BPMC Act of 1949, Mr. Yusuf Meherally, a State legislator from Bombay City, protested, during the debates on the Act, that now that India was an independent and not a colonial nation, the Municipal Commissioner, a State Government appointee and head of the Corporation's executive wing, should no longer continue to have such extensive powers. He said: "With the example of the Bombay Municipal Corporation in mind, I cannot help feeling that the powers vested in the Municipal Commissioner are very extensive, and that they do not need to be so extensive. ... We became members of the Corporation at a time when the foreign government was in power, and the Municipal Commissioner was the watchdog of that government. He was the

Independence, by the desire of State Governments, with a heavily rural bias in terms of State legislators, to control all other potential foci of power, particularly urban municipalities and corporations. Mr. G.D. Vartak, who was the Minister for Local Self-Government in the Bombay State Government responsible for drafting and proposing the BMC Act of 1949, professed to be anxious to follow the City of Bombay Municipal Act of 1888, drafted by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, which gave considerable powers to the Municipal Board and the Mayor. However, he insisted that the new BMC Act was like the younger brother of the former Act, and that, whereas the elder brother had acquired experience, the younger brother required some sort of assistance in the form of supervision and control by the Provincial Government.³

The BMC Act provided for almost complete separation of powers between the executive and the legislature. All executive authority is vested in the Municipal Commissioner, a career civil servant from the State administrative service or the "State cadre" of the IAS, appointed by the State Government. He is solely responsible for the execution of policy. According to Clause 67 of the BMC Act:

"Subject, whenever it is in this Act expressly so directed, to the approval or sanction of the Corporation or the Standing Committee, and, subject also to all other restrictions, limitations and conditions imposed by this Act or by any other law for the time being in force, the entire executive power for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act, and of any other Act for the time being in force, which imposes

special officer who was appointed to safeguard the interests of the foreign power against rising democracy which clamoured for more authority. Resolution after resolution that the Corporation passed was blocked by the Commissioner..." See Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates. Official Report, Monday, Sept. 19, 1949. Municipal Corporations Bill (First Reading).

3. Ibid., Tuesday, Oct. 11, 1949, Municipal Corporations Bill.

any duty or confers any power on the Corporation vests in the Commissioner."

The Municipal Commissioner holds office for a period not exceeding three years in the first instance, determined by the State Government, and renewable from time to time for further periods not exceeding three years at a time. He may at any time be removed from office by the State Government for incapacity, misconduct or neglect of duty. His salary and allowances, from the Municipal Fund, are determined by the State Government after consultation with the Corporation.⁴ His attentiveness to the wishes of the State Government are further increased by the fact that his future postings will be in the bureaucratic agencies of the State government.

The top administrative personnel in the Corporation - Deputy Municipal Commissioners, Assistant Municipal Commissioners, the Transport Manager, the City Engineer, the Medical Officer of Health and the Municipal Chief Auditor - are all appointed by the Corporation, but subject to approval and confirmation by the State Government. Their salaries and allowances are fixed by the Corporation with the approval of the State Government. No new permanent office with a minimum monthly salary, exclusive of allowances, of Rs. 500 or with a maximum monthly salary, exclusive of allowances, of Rs. 800 or more, could be created without the sanction of the State Government. An increase in the salary of any permanent office is deemed to be the creation of a new office, if, by reason of such increase, the minimum monthly salary, exclusive of allowances, amounts to Rs. 500 or more.⁵ In this way, the State Government controlled the senior

4. See the BPMC Act of 1949, Clause 36.

5. Ibid., Clauses 45 and 51.

executive positions in the Corporation.

The executive wing of the Corporation is responsible for preparing the budget, and implementing policy. The Municipal Commissioner prepares the budget estimates, making proposals concerning taxation and other sources of Corporation income, and suggesting the likely expenditure on fixed projects and past commitments and any new ventures.⁶

The Corporation raises most of its revenues from the following sources: property taxes, consisting of a water tax, a conservancy tax, a general tax of not less than 12⁰/₁₀₀ of the rateable value of lands and buildings, and betterment charges levied from 1964 onwards.⁷ Regarding the general tax, a higher rate could be levied in respect of buildings and lands in which any particular class of trade or business is carried on by an amount not exceeding half of the rate so fixed. The conservancy tax could also be fixed at special rates in respect of any hotel, club, stable or other large premises. Octroi tax is levied on goods entering the city for sale, use or consumption in the city. Licence fees are exacted for the licensing of surveyors, architects or engineers, structural designers, clerks of works and plumbers, and for making available trade licences and other licences for keeping animals and certain articles, licences for sale of articles in municipal and private markets, licences for sale of articles of food outside markets, licences for dairy products and hawking, and licences for butchers.⁸

6. Ibid., Clause 95.

7. Ibid. The clause on betterment charges was added by Gujarat State Act No. 19 of 1964, s.5.

8. Ibid., see Chapter XI, Municipal Taxation, and Chapter XXII, Licences and Permits.

Another major source of revenue, although a fluctuating one, comes from grants and loans from the State government.

The following table outlines the obligatory and discretionary taxes available to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation under the BPMC Act of 1949.

Table 1. Showing the Obligatory and Discretionary Taxes Available to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation

1. Obligatory Taxes:
 - a) property taxes
 - b) a tax on vehicles, boats and animals
3. Discretionary Taxes:
 - a) octroi
 - b) a profession tax
 - c) a tax on dogs
 - d) a theatre tax
 - e) a toll on animals and vehicles entering the city
 - f) any other tax which the State Legislature has power under the Constitution to impose in the State, subject to the sanction of the State Government.

The last section of discretionary taxes provides ample scope for conflict between the State Government and the Municipal Corporation, as one critic of the BPMC Act of 1949, Mr. Mirza Akhtar Hasan, who had himself worked as a municipal councillor in the Bombay Corporation for fifteen years, had perceived during the debates on the Act. He had warned:⁹

"In the absence of a clear-cut division of taxation (between the State and the Municipal Corporation), I feel there will be conflict."

9. Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates. Official Report, Monday, Sept. 19, 1949. Municipal Corporations Bill.

In many Municipal Budget Estimates during the 60s, the Municipal Commissioner repeatedly called (in vain) for a share by the Corporation in certain State taxes and sources of income which related to the city, e.g. the motor vehicle tax, the entertainment duty tax, the surcharge levied in addition to the electricity duty for consumption of electricity in the Municipal area etc.¹⁰

In general, the State Government exercises considerable control and supervision over the financial resources of the Municipal Corporation: all proposed increases and changes in municipal taxation require the approval of the State Government. Through its grants and loans to the Municipal Corporation also, the State Government could influence the financial ambitions and viability of the Corporation. The Corporation also requires the sanction of the State Government for borrowing or taking up at interest by the issue of debentures any sum on the security of any immovable property vesting in the Corporation or proposed to be acquired by it or of all the taxes or of any tax, which it is authorized to levy. However, it is permitted to borrow from any bank in which the surplus moneys at the credit of the Municipal Fund or the Transport Fund are deposited against any public securities in which the cash balances of the Corporation are invested.¹¹

The functions of the Corporation are divided into obligatory and discretionary duties as set out in the following table:

10. See Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Budget Estimates, 1968-69, 1969-70 for example.

11. BPMC Act of 1949, Clauses 109, 110.

Table 2. Showing the Major Obligatory and Discretionary Duties of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.¹²

Obligatory Duties:

1. cleaning of all public streets and places in the city
2. collection, removal, treatment and disposal of sewage
3. construction, maintenance and cleansing of drains and drainage works
4. establishment of a Fire Brigade
5. construction, acquisition and maintenance of public hospitals and dispensaries, and other measures necessary for public medical relief
6. lighting of public streets, municipal markets and public buildings vesting in the Corporation
7. regulation of all markets and slaughter-houses
8. maintaining, aiding and suitably accommodating schools for primary education
9. road-building and repairs
10. water-distribution
11. enforcement of building codes and licensing.

Discretionary Duties:

1. organization, maintenance and management of maternity and infant welfare homes or centres, and institutions for the sick and disabled.
2. provision of milk to expectant or nursing mothers or infants or schoolchildren
3. swimming pools, public wash houses, bathing places and other institutions designed for the improvement of public health
4. dairies or farms within or without the city for the supply, distribution and processing of milk or milk products
5. provision of public parks, gardens, play-grounds and recreation grounds
6. the construction, establishment and maintenance of theatres, rest houses and other public buildings
7. the building or purchasing and maintenance of dwellings for municipal officers and servants

8. any other measures for the welfare of municipal servants or any class of them
9. provision of electricity and gas
10. provision of transportation facilities within the City
11. other educational objects and making grants to educational institutions within or without the City
12. the establishment and maintenance or the aid of libraries, museums and art galleries, botanical or zoological collections
13. the building or purchasing and maintenance of suitable dwellings for the poor and working classes
14. any other measure likely to promote public safety, health, convenience or instruction.

The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has been rather enterprising, and undertaken a fair number of discretionary duties of wide scope, as well as pursuing fairly rigorously its obligatory duties. Since 1947, it has operated a system of local transportation, the Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service or A.M.T.S. It plays a vital role in public health services, running seventeen dispensaries, fifteen maternity homes, nine family planning centres, three general hospitals and a Medical College. It runs 242 municipal primary schools and an industrial school in the municipal workshop. It is responsible for implementing numerous town planning schemes and city development plans, controlling land use through zoning and providing infra-structural facilities, like roads, water etc. in undeveloped areas. It also runs a Municipal Dairy, distributing on average 57,000 litres of milk per day, a Children's Park or Balvatika, a Zoo, a Museum and several libraries and reading rooms. It is also responsible for licensing and food-control, and the regulation of shops and commercial establishments.¹³

13. Census Special Report 1, pp. 277-285.

All these operations of the municipal government are very dependent on State supervision, and often financial aid. Basic municipal services, such as the police, education, public health and public works, if not directly under State authority, are deeply influenced by the actions of State officials. The power of the Corporation to make rules and by-laws is subject to the sanction of the State Government. In some cases, the power of the Municipal Commissioner to make Standing Orders, and of the Standing Committee to frame regulations concerning the grant of leave and other conditions of service of municipal officers and servants requires approval by the State Government.¹⁴ All improvement schemes require the sanction of the State Government. The Municipal Commissioner's power to declare an area to be a clearance or re-development area requires not only the approval of the Standing Committee, but also the State Government.¹⁵ The State Government has the power to require the performance of duties in case of defaults by municipal authorities, to call for extracts from the proceedings and other documents, to direct a special audit and to suspend action under the Act. If all informal controls fail, the State Government has the final power to supersede the Corporation in case of incompetency, persistent default or excess or abuse of powers, and to govern the municipality directly through bureaucratic officials.¹⁶

14. See BPMC Act of 1949, Chapter XXIX, Rules, By-laws, Regulations and Standing Orders.

15. Ibid., Chapter XVI, Improvement Schemes.

16. Ibid., Chapter XXVIII, Control.

In view of these financial and legal restrictions on the Municipal Corporation, the ability of the deliberative and elective wing to make an important contribution to policy-making is severely restricted. The deliberative wing consists of a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, three statutory committees and eight other special committees. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor must be members of the Corporation, and are elected by the Corporation at its first meeting after the municipal elections, and at its first meeting in the same month in each succeeding year.¹⁷ The following table gives details of the statutory and special committees of the Corporation:

Table 3. Statutory and Special Committees of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.¹⁸

<u>Name of Committee:</u>	<u>No. of Members:</u>
<u>Statutory Committees:</u>	
1. Standing Committee	12
2. Transport Committee	9 including 4 non-councillor members and Chairman, Standing Committee as an ex-officio member
3. School Board	41 including 3 members appointed by the State Government.
<u>Special Committees:</u>	
1. Public Works Committee	12
2. Health Committee	12
3. Refuse and Sewage Committee	12
4. Recreational and Cultural Committee	12
5. Town Planning Committee	12
6. Legal Committee	3
7. Milk Committee	12
8. Housing and Improvement Committee	12
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17. Ibid., Chapter II Constitution.	

Half of the members of the Standing Committee retire every succeeding year. Those retiring after one year are selected by lot, and in succeeding years the members who retire are those who have been longer in office. All members are eligible for reappointment. In the Transport Committee, half of the members retire in every second year. The members who retire two years after their appointment are selected by lot, and thereafter the members who retire are those who were longest in office. Members of the Transport Committee and all other Special Committees are appointed every year, and are eligible for reappointment.

The most important committees are the Standing Committee, the Transport Committee, the Public Works Committee and the Housing and Improvement Committee. The most important posts in the Corporation are the posts of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the four committees mentioned above. Perhaps the single most powerful person is the Chairman of the Standing Committee, although this depends also on the personalities of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, who could also exert considerable influence, although, in terms of formal power, the Mayor does little more than preside at council meetings and ceremonial functions. The Chairman of the Standing Committee, who chairs the most important committee in the Corporation on which he has an extra tie-breaking vote, and is also ex-officio member of the Transport Committee, is often the leading figure in the Corporation.¹⁹

The deliberative wing has the authority to amend the budget, and sanction expenditure, and pass by-laws, although the actual

18. Census Special Report 1, p.278.

19. Interview with the Municipal Secretary, other Executive Staff and leading Corporators in March, 1971.

room for initiative and manoeuvre is limited. Although the Corporation can levy the general property tax on a graduated scale and fix the rates of general taxation and other taxes, the rateable value of property and lands on which the general tax is assessed is determined by the Municipal Commissioner on the basis of the amount of the annual rent for which such land or building might reasonably be expected to ^{be} let from year to year.²⁰ The Corporation may require any of its officers to attend any meeting of the Corporation at which any matter dealt with by such an officer in the course of his duties is being discussed. Corporators also have the right to question officers about their administrative actions and departments.²¹ Compared to Municipal Boards of Municipal Boroughs, whose members served on committees, which exercised authority over particular departments, and which, as a whole, had virtually unfettered control over the hiring and promotion of staff, the sum total of the formal powers of control which Municipal Corporators have over the administrative wing is far from impressive.

During the debate on the BPMC Act of 1949 in the Bombay State legislature, there was a very interesting divergence of opinion between legislators, who were ex-Poona City municipal councillors and other Maharashtrians on the one hand, and those who had been Bombay City councillors. The latter were fearful of the excessive powers granted to the Municipal Commissioner under the BPMC Act, whereas the former, Maharashtrians from both rural and urban constituencies, welcomed State supervision and a stronger Municipal Commissioner.

20. BPMC Act of 1949, Clause 129 and Schedule A, Chapter VIII.

21. Ibid Clauses 43 and 44.

Ex-Bombay councillor legislators, who prided themselves on the efficiency and progress of the Bombay municipal council, and on the excellent leadership provided by important figures in the Nationalist Movement, like Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Sir Dinshaw Wacha, who served their political apprenticeship in the Bombay municipal council, looked on the new Act with hostility and misgivings. A vociferous spokesman of this group, Mr. Mirza Akhtar Hasan of the Trade Unions of Seamen and Dock Workers, who had been a Bombay municipal councillor for over fifteen years, was aghast at the powers entrusted to the Municipal Commissioner. He declared:

"From my experience of the working of the Bombay Corporation, extending over fifteen years, I can say that the Municipal Commissioner is the Act personified. He has been given tremendous, and if I may say so, monstrous powers under the Act, and the same powers are contemplated in the present Bill ... Generally ... when an executive officer is made to work in a democratic institution like a Municipal Corporation, he is not able to reconcile himself to the acts of commission and omission of people's representatives, and there is a struggle between the representatives and the executive officers...I would suggest to the Honourable Minister (for Local Self-Government, Mr. G.D.Vartak) that when the Bill goes to the Select Committee the powers of the Commissioner should be defined and a provision should be added in the Bill whereunder some machinery can be set up to harmonize the relations between the executive and the deliberative parts of the Corporation."²²

Mr. Yusuf Meherally, another ex-Bombay councillor of long-standing, deplored the reduction of the Mayor to little more than a figurehead:

"Today, the President of the Ahmedabad Corporation... is a definite personality ... What I mean is that because of their present large powers they can leave

22. See Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates, Official Report, Monday, Sept. 19, 1949, Municipal Corporations Bill, p. 593.

their impress on municipal administration ...
 (Mayor, as envisaged, will be) a decorative figure...
 I do not think that it is of any considerable advantage to have a Mayor who is merely a figurehead."

Mr. Meherally also hoped the Corporation would fully exploit their own sources of income before coming to the State Government for assistance, and would take the initiative in municipal projects.²³

Yet another ex-Bombay councillor, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola, criticized the enormous powers of supervision and control by the State Government over Municipal Corporations:

"The Honourable Minister has taken great pains to explain to us the circumstances which have led to the introduction of this Bill, and he has also at great length given us an idea of how he has been anxious to follow the Act which is now in force in Bombay, and which, as he rightly points out, was drafted by the late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta ... I have been able to glance at the provisions of the Bill, and being once a member of the Bombay Municipal Corporation for not less than fifteen years, I can say that this Bill is not all like the Act which is in force in Bombay. In almost all the provisions of this Bill, there is supervision and control by the Provincial Government unlike in the City of Bombay Municipal Act..."²⁴

In contrast, ex-Poona City municipal councillors and other State legislators from Maharashtra, including the rural areas, accepted the fact that the whole rationale behind the strict separation of powers in the Act seemed to be to eliminate the authority and "interference" of councillors. They wholeheartedly accepted the proposals of the Minister for Local Self-Government. Ex-Poona City councillors, disheartened by the corruption and inefficiency displayed by Poona municipal councillors, welcomed

23. Ibid., Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949, p. 658.

24. Ibid., Tuesday, Oct. 11, 1949.

the curtailment of their powers and a strengthening of the executive. Mr. A.A.Khan of Poona District, a former Poona councillor, expressed their case in strong and picturesque language:

"Mr. Speaker, Sir, on several previous occasions I had mentioned the mismanagement in the municipal affairs of the local bodies of Poona. Some more instances have been given by my honourable Friend, Mr. Popatlal Shah ... We have confessed - and we have confessed in very clear terms - that the affairs of the Poona City Municipality were in a deplorable state, that it was a skeleton which we kept in a cupboard for as long as we patiently could and, eventually, we brought it out and made a public exhibition of it so that Government may be moved to improve the fate of the poor man in the street and come to his rescue. In fact things were so bad that as my honourable Friend, Mr. Karandikar, said we felt that any change would be a change for the better, and that instead of a municipal borough, if we had a municipal corporation with centralization of powers, we would prefer it rather than put up with the state of affairs which had become unbearable..."²⁵

The State legislators from Ahmedabad City, who had also been ex-municipal councillors, took a third and highly illuminating standpoint. Mr. A.A.Khan expressed astonishment that ex-Ahmedabad municipal councillors, whose municipal council was generally praised for its efficiency and progress and sound financial position, should support an Act which seemed to curtail their powers. The major speakers from Ahmedabad City: Mr. Bhogilal D. Lala, an important city faction leader and spokesman of the textile magnate and business element in the Ahmedabad municipal council, and Mr. Khandubhai Desai, prominent Majur Mahajan and INTUC trade union leader, both spoke

25. Ibid., Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949, pp. 644-5.

in favour of the Act. Behind this seemingly surprising support lay a shrewd and realistic confidence in the ability of elected representatives to influence and work successfully through municipal administrators, despite the enormous power of the State Government and the Municipal Commissioner in Corporation affairs. Mr. Bhogilal Lala declared: "Now under the Corporation Act, a Commissioner will be appointed with very wide powers. ... and in spite of the increased expenses, I think on the whole it will be for the benefit of the inhabitants and voters of the city."²⁶ Mr. Khandubhai Desai was no less emphatic. "I am standing to support wholeheartedly this Bill ... We find that our city is expanding and many fresh problems have arisen as a result of it, and that unless we have a corporation with an executive officer of the rank of Municipal Commissioner under the control of corporation, the efficiency of the administration is likely to deteriorate."²⁷

Despite the financial and legal restrictions imposed by State Governments on Municipal Corporations and outlined above, which curtail the ability of Corporators to make important decisions about priorities in public policy, Corporators can and do exert important informal influence over the administrative process. Corporators largely lack the ability to make policy initiatives, but in the Indian context of "administering scarcity", there can be little debate about the necessity for an adequate water supply, sewage disposal, clean and lighted streets, slum clearance etc. The overall concern is for

26. Ibid., Monday, Sept. 19, 1949, p. 621.

27. Ibid., Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949, p. 663.

ensuring an efficient and equitable allocation of municipal services, and it is here that Corporators play perhaps their most important role as intermediaries between the ordinary citizens, their constituents, on the one hand, and the often inefficient and corrupt municipal bureaucracy, on the other hand, in routine administrative matters concerning adequate street lighting, road repair, provision of water-taps, licence applications and tax assessments. Although he has no formal control over administrative matters at all, the Corporator is above all concerned with developing informal means of control over the interpretation and application of administrative decisions.²⁸

The most effective informal means of control by Corporators over municipal administrators lies in the political backing a Corporator can command in his dealings with administrators. Thus leaders of important political parties in the Corporation exert a great deal of informal influence over administrators, since they can threaten leading State-appointed officers with a vote of censure, for the BPMC Act provides for the removability of the Municipal Commissioner and the top administrative personnel in the Corporation. The Municipal Commissioner can be removed by a ⁵/₈ majority of Corporators voting to censure him. The Transport Manager and other senior officers, the Deputy Municipal Commissioners, Assistant Municipal Commissioners, City Engineer, Medical Officer of Health, Municipal Chief Auditor and Municipal Secretary, can be removed from office for misconduct, incapacity or neglect of

28. See Roderick Church, "Authority and Influence in Indian Municipal Politics: Administrators and Councillors in Lucknow", Asian Survey, vol. 13, no. 4 (April, 1973), pp. 421-38.

duties on the votes of not less than half of the total Corporators.²⁹ Leading Corporation figures can also use their influence at the State-level and their contacts with State-level leaders to intimidate senior administrative personnel, for in this way Corporators with State-level influence can engineer the transfer of the Municipal Commissioner and other State-appointed personnel.³⁰ This State-level political backing is largely the preserve of the Corporation's Congress leaders. However, other Corporators can get their "work" done through approaching their party leaders, who need to insure their support.

In addition, many municipal administrators tend to accept the idea that they should be responsive to democratically elected leadership. To guard against the possibility of removal by the Corporation, the Municipal Commissioner is careful to build a coalition of support in the Corporation by fulfilling the administrative demands of some of the more influential Corporators. Top administrators also discover that in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the Corporation they need the cooperation of at least the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Chairman of the Standing Committee and other important committees. The Municipal Commissioner finds that he must work closely with the Corporation and its leaders, especially in the Standing Committee.³¹

The Standing Committee, in particular, has important powers, which the Municipal Commissioner and senior executives of the Corporation

29. BPMC Act of 1949, Clauses 36 and 50.

30. Transfers of all important Corporation officers lie with the State Local Self-Government Department.

31. Interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

have to take into account. The Standing Committee considers in detail the Budget Estimates and proposals of the Commissioner, and has the right to make modifications and additions. The Transport Committee has similar powers with regard to the estimates of expenditure and income of the Transport Undertaking, which are prepared annually by the Transport Manager. The Standing Committee fixes the rates of taxation, and can scrutinize the accounts of the Corporation. The Commissioner can make a contract involving an expenditure exceeding Rs. 5,000 only with the approval of the Standing Committee. Every contract the Commissioner makes over Rs. 1,000 and not exceeding Rs. 5,000 must be reported by him to the Standing Committee within fifteen days. All improvement schemes planned by the Municipal Commissioner, and his power to declare an area to be a clearance or redevelopment area, require the approval of the Standing Committee and the Corporation. The Corporation also sanctions the rate of licence fees.³²

With regard to the appointment and conditions of service of municipal officers and servants, the Standing Committee has the power to determine the number, designations, grades, salaries, fees and allowances of auditors, assistant auditors, officers, clerks and servants immediately subordinate to the Municipal Chief Auditor and the Municipal Secretary, and to approve their appointment. The power of appointing municipal officers, whether temporary or permanent, whose minimum monthly salary exclusive of allowances is or exceeds Rs. 400 vests in the Corporation. No new permanent office

32. BPMC Act of 1949, Clauses 105, 73, 270, 272, 276, 280 and 386.

with a minimum monthly salary, exclusive of allowances, of Rs. 100 or more can be created without the sanction of the Corporation, and an increase in the salary of any permanent office is regarded, as the creation of a new office, if by means of such increases, the minimum monthly salary, exclusive of allowances, amounts to Rs. 100 or more. The Municipal Commissioner cannot dismiss a municipal officer or servant, whose monthly salary exceeds Rs. 200, and the Municipal Auditor and Municipal Secretary cannot dismiss a municipal officer or servant whose monthly salary exceeds Rs. 150 without the previous approval of the Standing Committee. Any officer appointed by the Corporation, except the Transport Manager, can be suspended by the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee can regulate the grant of leave to municipal officers and servants and, in general, prescribe any other conditions of service for them.³³

Thus the Municipal Commissioner and senior Corporation executives need the cooperation and support of at least the more powerful elements in the Corporation - the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, the Standing Committee and other leading Corporators - to safeguard their position and enable the smooth functioning of Corporation business. As many of the speakers in the debate on the BMC Act of 1949 commented, the whole successful functioning of the Corporation depends on having a flexible and accommodating Municipal Commissioner, on "whether he is bureaucratic or willing to share his powers with the Mayor, the Standing Committee and the Corporation as a whole." Mr. Yusuf Meherally, who had been Mayor of the Bombay Municipal Corporation, went on to say of Mr. M.P. Bhatt, who was Municipal

33. BPMC Act of 1949, Clauses 51, 53, 56 and 465.

Commissioner during his period of power as Mayor:

"When on several occasions substantial differences of opinion arose he did not hesitate to differ from the opinion of the Mayor or of the Corporation. But in spite of difference of opinion, he acted according to the opinion of the Corporation, recognising that that was the voice of democracy. Where the opinions of the Corporation have not been considered, the results have been very bad."³⁴

As we have seen, on the whole, it is in the interest of the Municipal Commissioner and his senior executives to be flexible and work with Municipal Corporation leaders. On this score, speakers in the debate on the 1949 BMC Act from Ahmedabad were very confident of the ability of Corporators who had the strong support of their constituents, and power and backing in the Corporation, to handle the Corporation's administrators. As Mr. Gulamhaider Valimahomed Momin said:

"Now the question is, who controls the bureaucratic executive officer? It is the elected representatives of the people who control him. If these play their part well and if they do not betray the confidence reposed in them by those who elected them, then it would be extremely difficult for the executive officer to behave like a bureaucrat. If the representatives have done some selfless work by moving about in their wards, villages, cities and towns etc. they would be able to control the executive officer effectively. I have myself, as a municipal councillor moved about in the various wards in Ahmedabad with Shri Nandaji, with Shri Khandubhai Desai and other distinguished Ahmedabad municipal councillors who have done very good service to the citizens of Ahmedabad. Having found out what is necessary to be done the elected representatives can approach the executive officers of the Municipality to see that the machinery under them carries out the necessary duties."³⁵

The Major Mahajan spokesman in the debate on the BMC Act of 1949 in the Bombay State Legislature, Khandubhai Desai, was

34. See Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates. Official Report. Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949, p. 656.

35. Ibid., Monday, Sept. 19, 1949, pp. 616-17.

very confident of the ability of Major Mahajan Corporators to work through the Corporation executives, and negotiate successfully with the municipal authorities on behalf of the working class. He said:

"I am standing to support wholeheartedly this Bill... Personally, I think that, though the powers of the Municipal Commissioner look wide, they are necessary if we want to see that the administration of a corporation runs efficiently. We have our own opinions about the Municipal Commissioners appointed by a foreign or alien Government. But now the Commissioners will be appointed by the democratic provincial Government, and the people would have a voice in the appointment of such Commissioners; so that he would indeed be a bold Municipal Commissioner who would defy even now and then, either directly or indirectly, the behest of the people or their elected representatives. There is a provision in the Bill under which he is removable by a 5/8th majority... so honorary Members need have no apprehension on the score of the powers proposed to be given to the Commissioner..."³⁶

In view of the fact that the Major Mahajan bloc of Corporators in Ahmedabad represented a powerful trade union in the City and State, and were a tightly-knit cohesive body, an important element not only in the local Congress party, but having great influence and power at the State-level which they could bring to bear on the city, this optimism was well-founded.

The Ahmedabad business element was represented in the 1949 State legislative debate by Bhogilal Lala, whose confidence in the Bill also rested on the enormous prestige and independent standing of the textile magnates in the City, and on their State-level contacts and influence. He declared in the debate:

"I am of the opinion that, by giving wider powers to the chief executive officer, namely, the Commissioner under this Bill, the morale of the municipality will be enhanced. ... Government must be very careful about the choice of executive officer, because the

36. Ibid., Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949.

whole working of the Bill, when it becomes an Act, will depend upon the sort of Commissioner whom we are going to appoint."³⁷

Interviews with leading Corporation figures and Corporation executives also substantiate this informal influence of Corporators on Corporation administrators. This can be based not only on political backing within the Corporation and at State-level, but also on personal ties with key administrators based on friendship, caste affinities, doctor-patient and teacher-pupil relationships, and the fact of being old class-mates, neighbours or customers in one way or another.³⁸

The lack of influence at the State level does hamper a party in power at the local level, which was in opposition to the party in power at the State level, in its efforts to influence Corporation administration. Mr. Yusuf Meherally commented on this point in the debates on the 1949 BPMC Act in the Bombay State Legislature. He said:

"The last point I would like to mention regarding the Municipal Commissioner is that, so long as the party in the municipality and the party in the Government is the same, the scope for conflict becomes limited, since the same party holds the reins of office both of Government administration as well as of municipal administration. If one party is in power in the municipality and a different party in Government ... there is bound to be greater scope for friction..."³⁹

Thus the legal restrictions of the BPMC Act would circumscribe such a party to a far greater degree than the ruling party in power at local and State levels. However, it is possible for

37. Ibid., Monday, Sept. 19, 1949

38. Interviews with leading Corporation figures and Corporation executives in Ahmedabad in March 1971. See also Roderick Church, loc.cit.

39. See Bombay Legislative Assembly Debates. Official Report, Tuesday, Sept. 20, 1949.

opposition Corporators to exercise informal influence over Corporation administration, if they have a sufficient bloc vote in the Corporation, and, on an individual basis, through the mechanisms of agitation and blackmail. The threat of agitation against administrators, whether by taking over Corporation meetings or organizing public demonstrations in the streets, gives the opposition Corporator leverage with Corporation officials who, above all, seek to avoid public exposure and unfavourable publicity. The threat of blackmail by Corporators, who have discovered some improper behaviour by administrators, also relies on the administrators' dislike of public exposure and desire to operate discreetly and inconspicuously.⁴⁰

The political processes described above are the major means by which municipal administrative systems, dominated by formally non-responsive bureaucrats, are made responsive to the preferences of a body of locally-elected representatives.

Since, almost all segments of the Corporation certainly all the most articulate and competent Corporators, manage to exert informal mechanisms of control over Corporation administrators, it is hardly surprising that so few efforts are made by Corporators, with the possible exception of some Janta Parishad leaders, to change the Corporation form of government to give Corporators more authority in administrative matters.

To sum up, the State Government exercises considerable supervision and control over municipal government, and the fact that leading Corporators, in order to influence administration,

40. See Roderick Church, loc.cit.

require political backing at the State-level, and, indeed, require State-level influence in order to accomplish so much of their "work", reflects the very real weakness of local autonomy, and the many tentacles of State power in municipal life. However, despite financial and legal restrictions, and a general inability to take policy initiatives, enterprising Corporators can employ various informal mechanisms for controlling routine administrative decisions, and an influential Mayor, with personal prestige, financial expertise and a strong hold over the Congress Corporation party and sound backing at the State-level, can secure a large degree of cooperation from senior Corporation executives, and thus exert a creative influence over municipal government. This was attempted in Ahmedabad with a fair degree of success during the Mayorship of the textile magnate, Chinubhai Chimanbhai Sheth, between 1950 and 1961, and by his successor, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, between 1961-65.

CHAPTER IV

BUSINESS - LABOUR POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS IN AHMEDABAD CITY, 1961-65.

The importance of the textile magnate élite and the textile labour force, as represented by the Textile Labour Association, in the economic life of Ahmedabad City was reflected in the city's political life in the early 1960s. As we have seen, the textile industry, despite growing industrial diversification,¹ was still crucial to the city's economy in the 1960s. In 1961, there were 62 cotton textile mills in Ahmedabad City - three spinning units and the rest composite units having an installed capacity of 2,092,540 spindles and 41,639 looms. Most of the mills were fully equipped with modern processing plants for bleaching and finishing, and several with plants for mercerising, sanforising, dyeing and printing of cloth manufactured by them, all installed at a capital cost of Rs. 72 crores. The mills turned out finished fabrics of the value of Rs. 90 crores every year, and gave direct employment in 1961 to over 130,000 persons.² During the 1960s, Ahmedabad accounted for half of Gujarat State's labour force employed in the modern sector, and over 50% of income generated by the manufacturing sector.³

The TLA had an unparalleled position of strength among labour unions in India with a membership of over 80% of the textile labour force in Ahmedabad, compared with about 35% unionization for the

1. It is important to note that industrial diversification in Ahmedabad City, which has taken place in the fields of light and heavy engineering, particularly the manufacture of cotton textile machinery and diesel engines, and chemical industries, has also been largely pioneered and financed by the Ahmedabad textile magnate élite.

2. Census Special Report I, pp 8 - 9.

3. Financial Times (Bombay) Supplement on Gujarat, 3 November , 1972.

relatively well organised Indian cotton textile industry as a whole.⁴ The TLA had a stable and gradually expanding membership in sharp contrast to the typical extraordinary fluctuations in membership of many other unions, such as the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union, in response to the ebb and flow of industrial crises.⁵ Its finances were also strong. The monthly income of the TLA was Rs.53,991 in 1950 in contrast to the annual average for all Indian unions in 1952-53, which was Rs.1906 per month per union. In addition, the TLA, with a membership of less than 100,000, accounted for over 80% of welfare expenditures incurred by all unions in India, serving approximately two million members.⁶ It also had the advantage of a full-time leadership, and a union staff of nearly 200.

The textile magnate élite, which had transformed itself from a trading and commercial élite into a successful industrial élite, had a large degree of legitimacy as an indigenous élite with a historical role of city leadership developed over many centuries and deep roots in Gujarati culture and language. The strength of this élite was further reinforced by its close-knit and homogeneous nature. About sixteen managing agency groups - almost all from the local Gujarati business community - controlled the local textile industry. These business houses share a common cultural outlook and attitudes, profoundly shaped by the puritanical Jain Bania complex, and had a tradition of intermarrying among themselves and, occasionally, with other large industrial concerns, mainly in Bombay City, thus preserving their

4. Subbiah Kannappan. "The Gandhian Model of Unionism in a Developing Economy: The TLA in India", Industrial and Labour Relations Review, vol 16, no. 1 (1962), pp 86-110, to be known henceforth as Kannappan III.

5. S.D. Punekar, Trade Unionism in India . (1948).

6. Government of India, Labour Bureau, The Indian Labour Year Book, (1953-54).

cultural homogeneity and the concentration of wealth.⁷ The following tables showing the family trees of six of the leading Ahmedabad business families, going back 3 - 4 generations, illustrate the close-knit and homogeneous nature of the Ahmedabad élite, preserved by judicious marriage-alliances among themselves and with certain important, largely Gujarati, industrialist families in Bombay City.

Since, in Ahmedabad, there is a considerable overlapping of élites with the economic élite dominant socially, culturally and politically too, many of these business houses, particularly the houses of Shri Lalbhai Dalpatbhai and Shri Harivallabhdas Kalidas, have close connections with the political life of the city, and the leadership of the apex business organisation of the city millowners, the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.⁸ All but six mills in Ahmedabad are members of the MOA, which was founded in 1891. Power and influence within the Ahmedabad MOA are tilted in favour of the larger mills, for voting rights are determined on the basis of the number of spindles and looms of member mills: a member mill has one vote for every 1000 spindles or part thereof and also one vote for every 250 looms or part thereof. In 1968, seven units had from 300 - 500 looms, 39 from 500 - 1000, 9 from 1000 - 1500, and two had over 1,500 looms. In the same year, two units had between 10,000 - 20,000 spindles; 13 between 20,000 - 30,000; 21 between 30,000 - 40,000; 10 between 40,000 - 50,000; seven between 50,000 - 60,000; three between 70,000 - 80,000; and three between 90,000 - 100,000.⁹

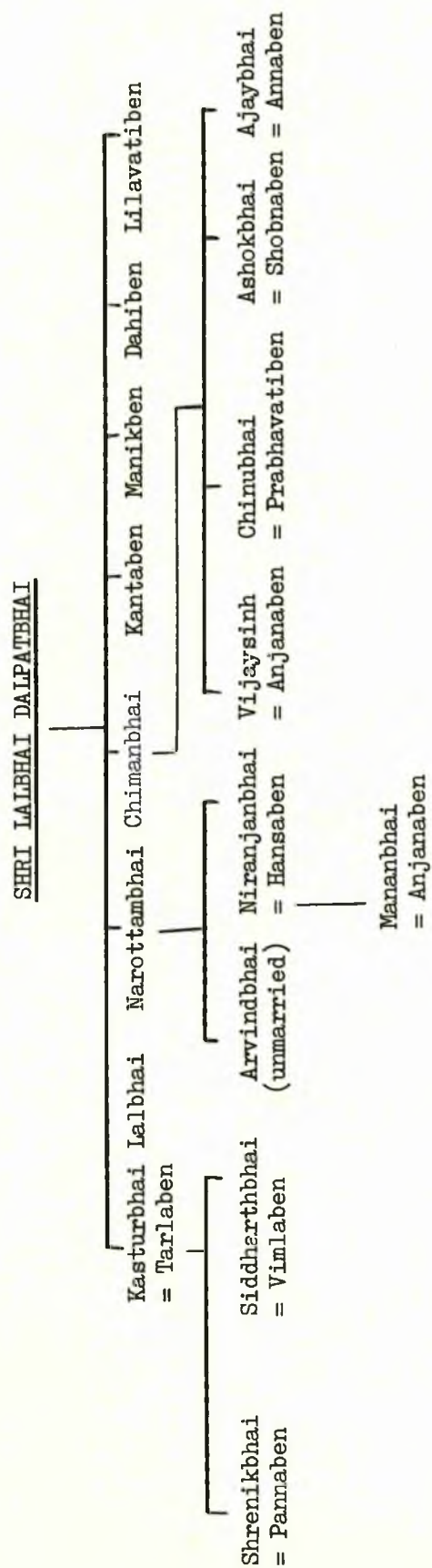
The family-tree of one of the most influential business families in Ahmedabad, the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai family, is presented overleaf.¹⁰

7. K.D. Desai (Lecturer in Politics at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad), Some Theoretical Formulations about Ahmedabad Politics. (Ahmedabad: 1971).

8. Henceforth to be known as the MOA.

9. The Ahmedabad MOA, Annual Report (1968).

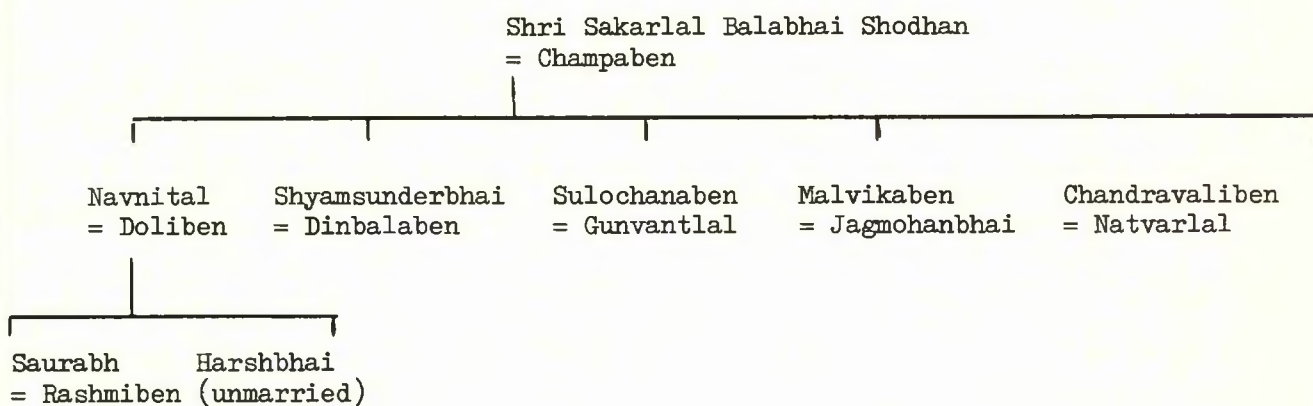
10. These family-trees of important Ahmedabad business families have been made available by Shri Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.

TABLE 1. FAMILY-TREE OF THE LALBHAI DALPATBHAI FAMILY

Two important marriage-alliances were contracted in this family: Siddharthbhai, son of Kasturbhai Lalbhai, married Vimlaben, daughter of Bhogilal Laherchand of Batliboys, a large industrial group in Bombay. Mananbhai, grandson of Narottambhai, brother of Kasturbhai Lalbhai, the present head of the family, married Anjanaben, who belongs to the Garden Silk Mills of Ahmedabad. Among the important business offices held by members of this family were the following: Kasturbhai Lalbhai was himself President of the Ahmedabad MOA from 1935 - 1937 and again in 1939. His nephew, Arvindbhai Narottambhai, was President of the MOA from 1957 - 58 and again from 1961-62. Another nephew, Chinubhai Chimanbhai, was President of the MOA in 1964-65, and yet another nephew, Ajaybhai Chimanbhai was a member of the Managing Committee of the MOA in 1969-70. The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai family has taken a keen interest in city politics, both indirectly through contributions to Congress party funds, and directly through active participation. Chinubhai Chimanbhai was active in City Congress politics in the 1950s. He became the leader of the Nagrik Paksh in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, which dissented from the official Congress line on the issue of a separate linguistic State of Gujarat. He was Mayor of Ahmedabad between 1957-61. His wife, Prabhavatiben, also took an active part in politics. She was a Congress Municipal Corporator between 1961 and 1965, and was a member of the Public Works Committee, one of the four most influential Corporation committees between 1963 and 1965.

Another influential big business family was the Sakarlal Shodhan family:

TABLE 2. FAMILY-TREE OF THE SAKARLAL SHODHAN FAMILY

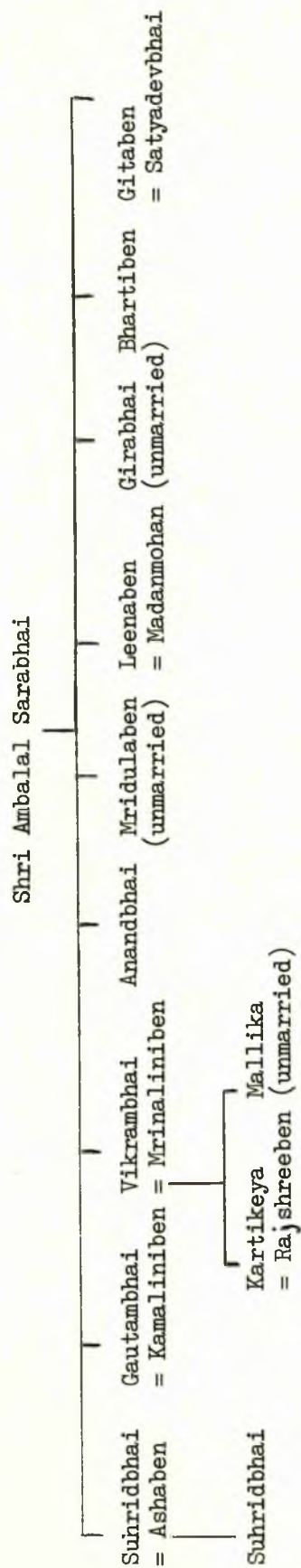


There were two important marriage-alliances in this family: the family-head, Shri Sakarlal Balabhai Shodhan, had married Champaben, who was a member of the Mangaldas Girdharlal family, a large textile group in Ahmedabad, whose family-tree is included among the six presented here. His son, Shyamsunderbhai, was married to Dinbalaben, daughter of Shri Bhogilal of Batliboy Group (a large group manufacturing machinery) in Bombay. The Shodhan family had also taken its turn as leaders of the Ahmedabad MOA: Shri Sakarlal Balabhai Shodhan was President of the MOA from 1937 - 1939 and again from 1942 - 1946. His son, Navnitlal Sakarlal, was President of the MOA in 1953-54, and represented the MOA on the Gujarat University Senate in 1967 and 1968. The political involvement of the Shodhan family was indirect rather than direct.

The family-tree of the extraordinary Sarabhai family, whose talents extend from shrewd business acumen to an appreciation of and involvement in the arts and sciences¹¹, is presented below:

11. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai was head of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, and his wife, Mrinaliniben, is an accomplished Indian classical dancer.

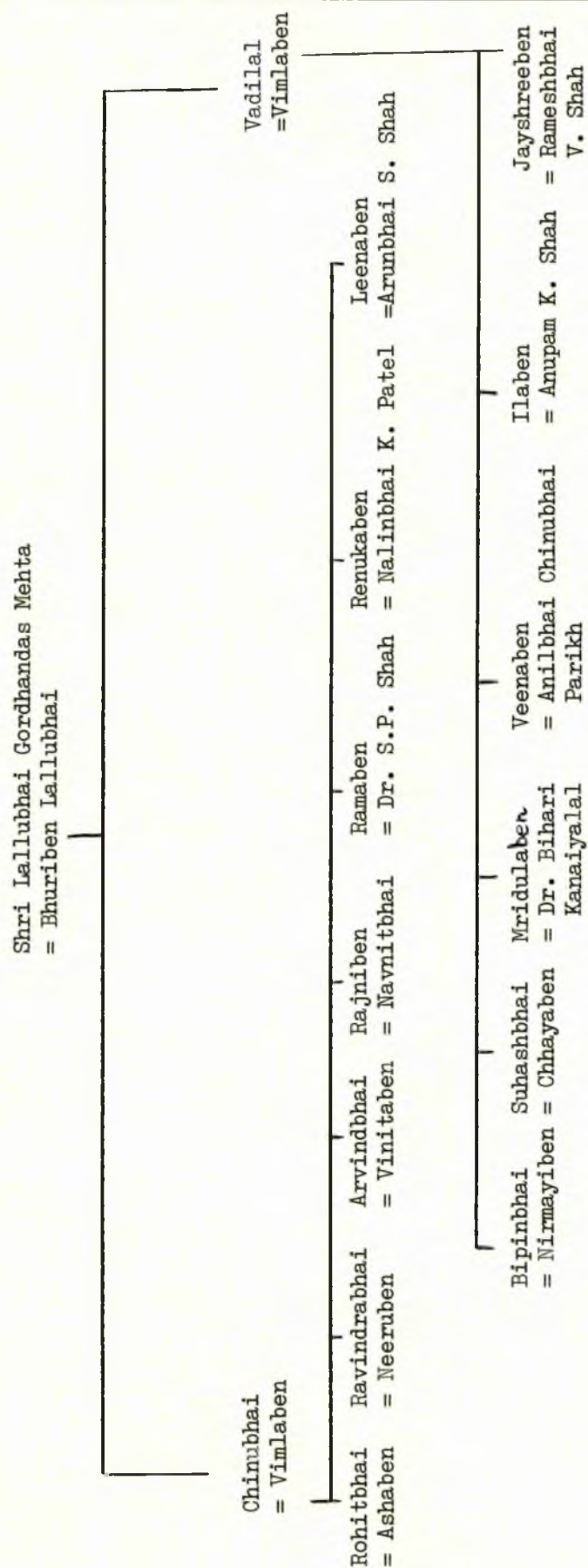
TABLE 3. FAMILY-TREE OF THE SARABHAI FAMILY



Three important marriage-alliances have been contracted by this family: Gautambhai, son of Shri Ambalal Sarabhai, the family head, had married Kamaliniben, who belongs to the family of the Khatau Makhanji Group, the largest textile mills group of Bombay. Leenaben, daughter of Shri Ambalal Sarabhai, married Madanmohan, son of Mangaldas Girdharlal of Aryodaya Mills of Ahmedabad. Kartikeya, son of Vikrambhai Sarabhai, married Rajshreeben, who also belongs to the Mangaldas Girdharlal family of Ahmedabad. Shri Ambalal Sarabhai was President of the Millowners' Association in 1918-19 during the historic period of the Weavers' Strike of 1918 when Gandhi espoused the cause of the textile workers of Ahmedabad. However, subsequently, the Sarabhai family have withdrawn from the Ahmedabad MOA, and do not participate actively in politics. They are still, however, a very influential family on the Ahmedabad scene with wide business interests, for, besides textiles, they are now concerned with engineering and petrochemical industries and the communications industry, including television.

Another important big business family in Ahmedabad is the Lallubhai Gordhandas Mehta family of the Rohit Group of Enterprises:

TABLE 4. FAMILY-TREE OF THE LALLUBHAI GORDHANDAS MEHTA FAMILY

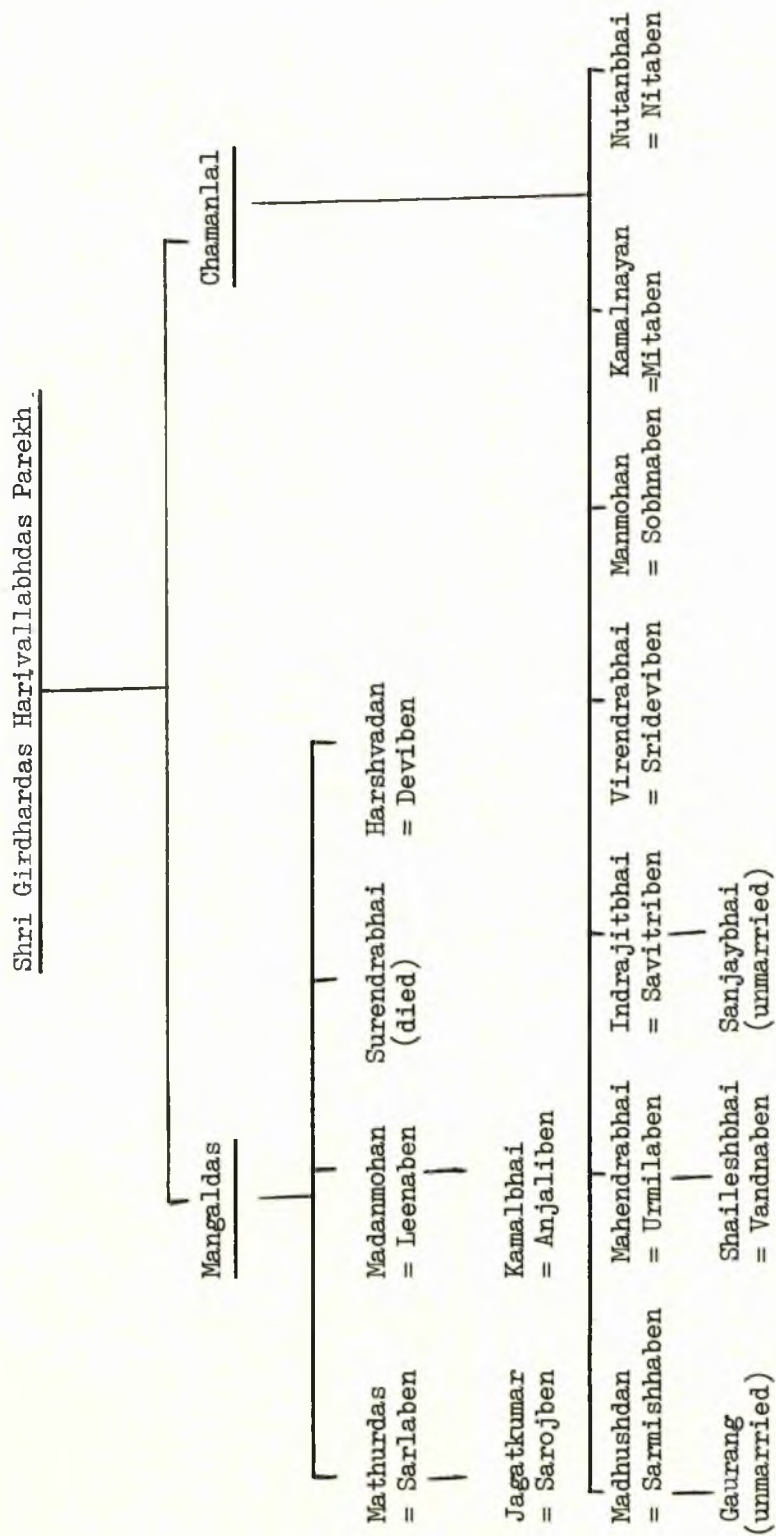


There have been three important marriage-alliances contracted in this family: Ramaben, daughter of Chinubhai Lallubhai, married Dr. S.P. Shah, Managing Director of Tarun Commercial Mills of Ahmedabad. Mridulaben, daughter of Vadilal Lallubhai, married Dr. Bihari Kanaiyalal Shah, Managing Director of Ahmedabad Kaiser - I - Hind Mills Ltd., and Veenaben, another daughter of Vadilal Lallubhai, married Anilbhai Chinubhai Parikh, Managing Director of Ajit Mills Ltd., of Ahmedabad. Rohitbhai Chinubhai Mehta was the first member of this family to assume leadership of the Ahmedabad millowners, when he became President of the MOA from 1969-70. He was also Chairman of the Gujarat State Export Corporation from its inception in 1965. The Mehta family, particularly Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta, played an important part in district and State politics. Vadilal Mehta was, at one time, President of the Ahmedabad DCC, and Chairman of the Ahmedabad District local Board, and Chairman of the Gujarat State Transport Corporation. In the State factional conflicts of the early 1960s between the organizational wing, represented by Morarji Desai and Balvantrao Mehta, and the ministerial wing, headed by Dr. Jivraj Mehta, the Chief Minister, Vadilal Mehta came down in support of the losing side of Dr. Jivraj Mehta, and subsequently resigned from the Congress, and, a little later, went over to the Swatantra party. In the 1967 General Elections, he was elected to the Gujarat Legislative Assembly from Daskroi constituency in Ahmedabad District on the Swatantra party ticket.¹² Soon after the Congress split in 1969, he threw his lot in with the Ruling Congress. Thus the Mehta family took a rather independent and unconventional line in politics, compared to other Ahmedabad millowners.

The family of Shri Girdhardas Harivallabhdas Parekh was also a leading and influential textile magnate family of Ahmedabad, whose family-tree is presented below:

12. Vadilal Mehta had a very comfortable victory in a straight fight against the Congress candidate, Chhotabhai Jivabhai Patel. Mehta secured 34,395 of the votes polled, as against Patel's 17,268 votes, see Indian Election Commission Report on the Fourth General Election (Delhi: 1968).

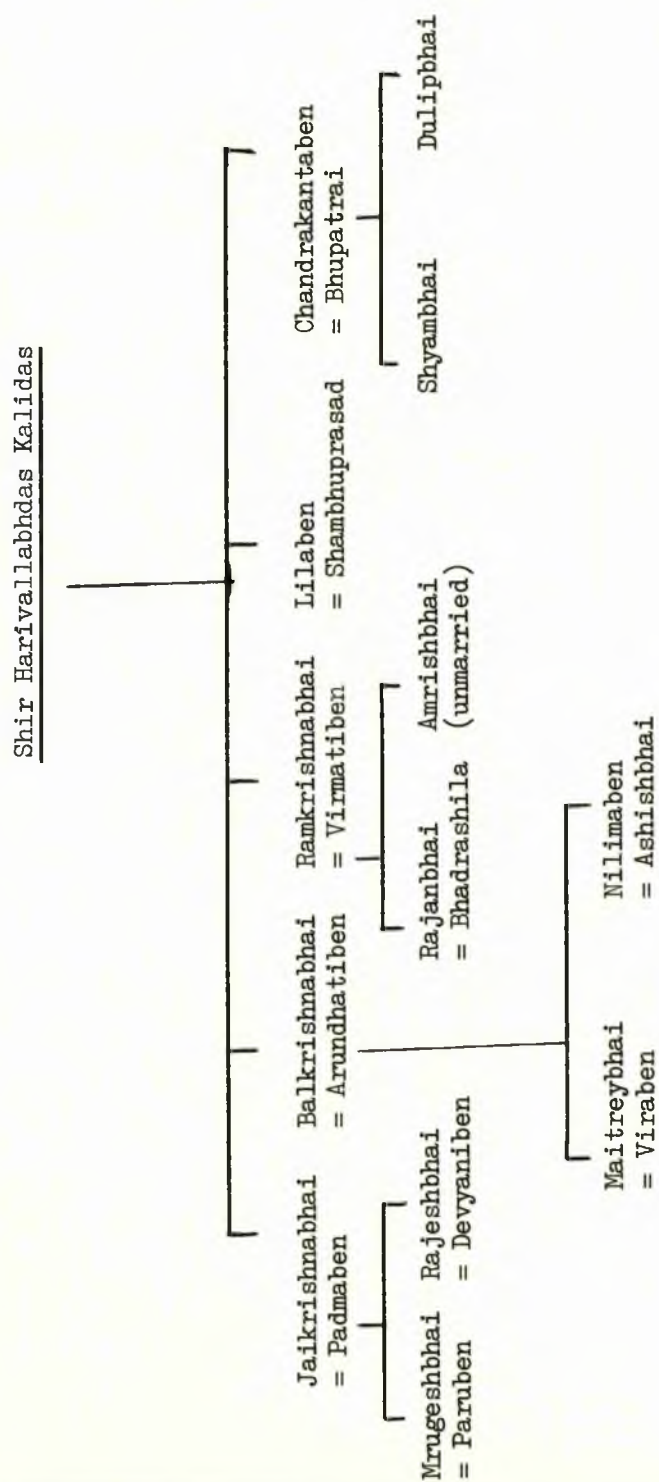
TABLE 5. FAMILY-TREE OF THE SHRI GIRDHARDAS HARIVALLABHDAS PAREKH FAMILY



Three marriage-alliances contracted by this family were particularly important. Madanmohan Mangaldas married Leenaben, daughter of the late Shri Ambalal Sarabhai. Kamalbhai, his son, married Anjaliben, daughter of Hutheesing, head of a large engineering group of Ahmedabad. Mahendrabhai Chamanlal married Urmilaben, daughter of Shri Chandrakant Jagabhai of Bihari Mills of Ahmedabad. This family played a prominent leadership role among Ahmedabad textile magnates. Mangaldas Girdhardas had been President of the MOA in 1916-17 and again between 1920-23. During the latter years, he had represented the millowners on the newly-constituted Permanent Arbitration Board with Gandhi as the representative of labour. His brother, Chamanlal Girdhardas, had been President of the MOA for a whole decade from 1924-34. Madanmohan Mangaldas was President of the MOA in 1955-56 and again in 1958-59. Later on he was elected President of the Indian Cotton Mills Federation, the apex body of Indian cotton textile mills, in 1967 and again in 1968. Harshvadan Mangaldas, his brother, was President of the MOA in 1965-66. The family of Shri Girdhardas Harivallabhdas Parekh played an indirect rather than a direct role in politics through their enormous economic power and their donations, political as well as humanitarian.

Perhaps the most politically-conscious and prominent textile magnate family in Ahmedabad is that of Shri Harivallabhdas Kalidas, whose family-tree is presented below:

TABLE 6. FAMILY-TREE OF THE SHRI HARIVALLABHDAS KALIDAS FAMILY



There have been three important marriage-alliances contracted in this family. Balkrishnabhai Harivallabhdas married Arundhatiben, sister of Shri Arvind N. Mafatlal of the powerful Mafatlal group of Bombay.¹³ Rajeshbhai, son of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, married Devyaniben daughter of Shri Laxmikant Bhagubhai of Cellulose Products, a large industrial house of Ahmedabad. Balkrishnabhai Harivallabhdas's daughter Nilimaben, married Ashishbhai, son of the late Punamchand Kamani of the Kamani Group of Industries of Bombay. Jaikrishnabhai and Balkrishnabhai Harivallabhdas have both played an important business leadership role both at the State and city level. Jaikrishnabhai was President of the MOA in 1956-57 and again in 1960-61, while Balkrishnabhai was President of the MOA in 1967-68. The Harivallabhdas family has been keenly political with its ambitions centred on the political fortunes of the head of the family, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas. In the 1952 General Elections, Jaikrishnabhai was elected Congress MLA to the Bombay State Assembly from Kalupur-Dariapur constituency, which contains a large number of Patels, the caste-group of the Harivallabhdas family. He succeeded in polling 58.58% of the total votes in a four-cornered contest with a 67.15% voting turnout.¹⁴ He was elected a municipal corporator in the 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections from the Dariapur constituency on a Congress ticket. He secured 8,381 votes out of a total of 95,734 votes in a five-seat ward. He was made Mayor of Ahmedabad from 1961-65, and was re-elected to the Municipal Corporation in the 1965 municipal elections. Later on in early 1971 he was the unsuccessful Congress (O) candidate for the Ahmedabad Parliamentary seat in the mid-term elections.

13. The Mafatlal family are of Gujarati origin, but their economic empire is now based in Bombay.

14. D.N. Pathak (Professor of Political Science) and K.D. Desai (Lecturer in Political Science at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad), A Study of Political Behaviour in Gujarat with Special Reference to the Fourth General Elections in 1967.(1970).

Thus the Ahmedabad textile millowners not only had a very great indirect influence over city politics, since the textile industry dominated the economic life of the city, accounting for a preponderant share of the labour force in the manufacturing sector, strongly affecting the city's employment and prosperity, and providing much of the surplus for improving city living standards and amenities, but they also played an important direct role in political life in the city, particularly in the 1950s and early 1960s. They were in this period a multi-role élite, accustomed to providing leadership not only in economic and social matters, but also in civic affairs.

The presence and activities of this indigenous and dominant élite over centuries have given a sense of cohesion and continuity to Ahmedabad life, and have led to the evolutionary and incremental growth of city culture, based on the life-style and values of the Jain Bania ethos. There has been a slow pragmatic merging of the traditional and modern elements rather than any abrupt cultural breaks and discontinuities. In business, commercial attitudes, centred on appreciation of tried methods, predictability and pragmatic submissiveness, are slowly giving way to more entrepreneurial attitudes, involving belief in innovation, risk-taking and confident aggressiveness. In political, social and economic life, there is a judicious willingness to adopt modes and procedures that are shown to be constructive and to "work" in the context of perceived needs and goals.¹⁵

This historical leadership of the city by the dominant economic élite has given it a unique sense of responsibility and involvement in city and municipal affairs, enhancing the importance of the municipal

15. K.D. Desai (Lecturer in Politics at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad), Some Theoretical Formulations about Ahmedabad Politics . (1971).

arena in Ahmedabad City, as against other municipalities such as Indore,¹⁶ because of this personal and paternalistic interest by the business élite in municipal affairs and because of their tradition of financial largesse for civic improvements. The Lalbhai Dalpatbhai family, for example, has donated as much as Rs.1.26 crores for charity since Independence. The bulk of it - Rs. 75.56 lakhs - has gone towards educational schemes. The Mafatlal family has earned a reputation for itself for its relief works during times of natural disaster, drought and famine. The family of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas has donated about Rs.30 lakhs over the years. On average, it spends about two lakhs every year on charity, and every four years donates a much larger sum for some special purpose. Schools and hospitals have been constructed throughout the city by the Municipal Corporation with the help of lavish business donations, for example the Vadilal Sarabhai General Hospital, the Nagri Eye Hospital, the Lallubhai Gordhandas Hospital, the Shardaben Chimanlal Saraspur Hospital, the Chinai Maternity Home etc. all resulted from the munificence of local millowners.¹⁷

The Gujarat Vidyasabha, whose forerunner was the Gujarat Vernacular Society established by Colonel Alexander Kinlock Forbes in 1848, received great encouragement from the business élite: Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai donated Rs. 13 lakhs for the development of its activities and the construction of a new building for it. The Ramanand Mahavidyalaya Arts College, run by the Gujarat Vidyasabha and established under the auspices of the Brahmchari Vadi Trust, received a further donation of Rs.3 lakhs from the Sheth Harivallabh Kalidas Trust for its building.

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16. See Rodney W. Jones, Indian Urban Politics (Berkeley: 1974), in which, using Indore as a special case-study, Jones argues that the municipal political arena is a fairly small and circumscribed one.
17. R. Srinivas, Article on the Ahmedabad millowners, Financial Express, 3 Nov., 1972.

The Vidyasabha also runs the R.B. Ranchhodlal Chhotalal Girls' School founded in 1892, and the B.J. Research Institute for postgraduate research, established with the help of a donation of Rs.200,000 from Sheth Bholabhai Jesingbhai.¹⁸

The Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service, created in April 1947, was the first municipal transport service in India, and it was formed due largely to the insistence and backing of the local millowners, for the State Government was reluctant to put through proposals establishing it.¹⁹ An important mill magnate, Narottam Chandulal was Chairman of the AMTS for about ten years during the time Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth was Mayor of Ahmedabad. The financial expertise of the textile magnate élite who helped to run the Corporation was a major factor in the launching of bold business ventures by the corporation at this time.²⁰

Perhaps the greatest single contribution by the Ahmedabad textile élite to the life of the city, and indeed of Gujarat as a whole, was the paramount role they played in the establishment of the sprawling, 100-odd acre campus of Gujarat University in Navrangpura. A separate university for Gujarat was one of the aims of the Ahmedabad Education Society, which was established in May, 1935, by G.V. Mavlankar, Balwantraï Thakore and Jiwanlal Diwan and others. The local business élite were from the first closely associated with the work of the Ahmedabad Education Society: in the first election under the constitution

18. Census Special Report 1, pp. 187-96.

19. Interview with Mr. P in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

20. Interview with Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, July 1973.

of the society, Acharya Anandshankar Dhruva was elected president and Sheth Kasturbhai Lalbhai chairman of the governing body. With the generous financial assistance of the business community, the Society was able to establish colleges and other institutions of higher education at Ahmedabad, which were to form the basis of Gujarat University. A donation of Rs.60,000 by Sheth Tribhovandas Hargovandas and Sheth Amrutlal Hargovandas enabled the first college, the H.L. College of Commerce, to be started by the Society in June, 1936. In June 1937, a donation of Rs.2 lakhs by Sheth Chimanlal, Sheth Kasturbhai and Sheth Narottambhai, sons of Sheth Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, enabled the S.L.D. Arts College to be started. A huge donation of Rs.7 lakhs by Sheth Navinchandra Mafatlal went towards the establishment in June, 1946, of the M.G. Science Institute. The Shri Lallubhai Motilal Pharmacy College was established in June 1947 from the donation of Rs.301,000 made by Sheth Lallubhai Motilal's widow. The Physical Research Laboratory came into existence in 1950 with the cooperation of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai. The A.G. Teachers' College and the A.G. High School were started from donations received from the Achratlal Girdharlal Charities Trust; and the H.K. Primary Training College and the H.K. Primary School from donations received from Sheth Jaikrishna Harivallabhdas and his brothers. Sheth Kasturbhai donated Rs. 25 lakhs for an agricultural college at Anand so that Gujarat University, which was established as a teaching and affiliating university in 1949, could have all the requisite faculties.²¹

The textile magnate élite in Ahmedabad has exerted such a profound influence on the social, economic and political life of the city that its cultural values have been absorbed by the emerging middle class

21. Census Special Report I pp. 187-192

which remained to a great extent an offspring and appendage of the textile magnate élite, culturally closely homogeneous with it, and with a close identity of interest perceptions. Thus, for a long time, middle-class leadership in various fields found it difficult to adopt hostile or defiant attitudes to the dominant élite.²²

The overwhelming characteristic of Ahmedabad as an industrial and manufacturing centre, and the prevalence of the Jain Bania ethic, meant that business-labour relations tended to dominate the life of the city. In the economic sphere, a unique system of employer-employee relations evolved gradually over time between the apex body of millowners, the MOA, and the most powerful textile union, the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association. These relationships had a profound impact on relationships between the millowners and the TLA in the political sphere too. The relationship between the MOA and the TLA was moulded by the ideas and practice urged by Mahatma Gandhi, who had taken a leading part in the peaceful resolution of an industrial strike between workers and millowners in 1918, had helped to found a permanent trade union for the workers in 1920, which was officially welcomed by the millowners, and had taken an active part in bringing about the agreement between millowners, workers and their respective organisations to establish permanent conciliation and arbitration machinery for the final settlement of disputes. Gandhi was directly associated with the work of this machinery for the first difficult eighteen years of its existence as the workers' representative.

Gandhi's philosophy of industrial relations emphasised that a "righteous struggle" could result only in victory for both parties for what was won was justice. Labour had a right to "equality" with capital, Gandhi felt, but it would realise this only by reform from within, by seeking higher levels of responsibility and, ultimately, it would be absorbed as co-owner of industry. Workers should regard

22. K.D. Desai, Some Theoretical Formulations about Ahmedabad Politics. (1971).

themselves, not capitalists, as their enemy, and recognise the necessity for education and self-help, and for evolving strong union organisations by their own efforts. He wrote in "Young India", "There is no royal road, I repeat, to gaining your rights, except self-purification and suffering".²³ Thus, the TLA, in absorbing these principles, laid stress on developing into a self-sufficient and disciplined union organisation, placing as strong an emphasis on internal reformation as on material rewards for the workers, emphasising peaceful settlement of disputes, failing which the workers should resort to arbitration, and the constructive role of the labour organisation in maintaining industrial harmony and as a trustee to the country.²⁴

So profound an impact did Gandhi's ideas of labour-capitalist interdependence and harmony have on the Ahmedabad élite, that a segment of that élite itself, the Sarabhai millowner family itself and upper class professional people, played a crucial role in the establishment of a powerful trade union movement in Ahmedabad, the TLA. On the 14th March, 1914, Ansuyaben Sarabhai, sister of Ambalal Sarabhai, started a small school for workers' children in the Amraipura Chawl opposite the Jubilee Mill. When, through this contact with the workers, she came to know that mills illegally worked more than twelve hours a day, and children were made to work a full day in different mills under different names, she drew this to the attention of the Inspector of Factories.²⁵

23. Young India , 4 Aug., 1927.

24. See TLA's Constitution, and the pamphlet on the TLA by Khandubhai Desai, TLA Ahmedabad, An Indigenous Experiment in Trade Union Movement . (1948).

25. Shantilal Desai, An Outline of the History of the TLA . (1957) (in Gujarati); S.G. Banker, Gandhi and the Labour Movement . (1965); The History of Wage Adjustment, published by the TLA; and an unpublished Ph.D. thesis by Paresh Majumdar on the TLA at Gujarat University.

In 1916, Ansuyaben and Shankerlal Banker, who had worked in the Home Rule League, with the help of two Ahmedabad lawyers, Krishnalal Desai and Kalidas Zaveri, founded the Majoor Mitra Mandal (Workers' Friendly Society), forerunner of the Majur Mahajan, to educate workers and give them medical facilities, promote saving and cooperation amongst workers' families and remove their grievances relating to pay. They formed a cooperative credit society of twelve residents of the Amraipura Chawl to extricate them from debt. Ansuyaben led the Warpers' Strike on 4th December, 1917 (Labour Day), and, under the inspiration and cooperation of Gandhi, who had become involved in the Weavers' Strike of 1918, Ansuyaben and her upper-class friends played a large role in the establishment of the TLA on the 25th February 1920. ²⁶

The Weavers' Strike of 1918 was of crucial importance in establishing for the first time, at Gandhi's suggestion, the principle of submission of industrial disputes to voluntary arbitration, to which the millowners agreed when Gandhi undertook a fast. Due to the responsible behaviour of the Majoor Mitra Mandal, and the fasting and advice of Gandhi, Ambalal Sarabhai, President of the MOA at that time, suggested to its members to agree to the establishment of craft-wise organisations of workers in Ahmedabad mills so as to make it easier to negotiate with them, and also to agree to refer disputes not solved by negotiations with workers' organisations to a board of arbitration. Negotiations

26. Shankerlal Banker and Kalidas Zhaveri were full-time workers in the TLA; other high-status "outsider" leaders, Khandubhai Desai and Gulzarilal Nanda, joined the TLA as full-time paid officials in 1922. Sometime before the Satyagraha movement of 1930, other important high-status "outsider" leaders joined the TLA: the late Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, the late Ambalal Trivedi, the late Somnath Dave, the late N.H. Shaikh, and A.S. Pandya.

were subsequently carried on between Gandhi, representing the workers, and a subcommittee of the MOA which resulted in the creation of a permanent arbitration board, composed of Gandhi and Sheth Mangaldas Parekh, then President of the MOA, to which disputes were to be referred in future. The awards of the Board had only a moral binding force, and if the two arbitrators could not reach a joint award, an umpire was to be called in.

The main features of Ahmedabad's experiment in labour relations, as represented by the arbitration machinery created in Ahmedabad, were as follows: the procedure before the Permanent Arbitration Board was of a judicial character in an effort to reach solutions with the comparative detachment and objectivity of a judicial inquiry. The parties submitted statements of their claims in the impersonal language characterising pleadings, and, throughout the proceedings, emphasis was placed by the arbitrators and the parties on facts and factual arguments, eschewing as far as possible emotive appeals and reliance on abstract principles. The Ahmedabad TLA, supported by Gandhi, insisted that the millowners should provide it with relevant information and facts concerning the economic and financial position of the mills and the industry as a whole. The umpires were carefully chosen men of high calibre and esteem, respected by all the parties concerned as men of broad experience and human understanding. Although the awards had only moral force, the TLA learned to rely for their enforcement on the procedure of settlement of complaints at the mill level, leading eventually to the Arbitration Board, or to refer more serious or general disputes directly to the Board.

In reality the work of the Arbitration Board was not arbitration in the strict sense, for the arbitrators were partisan representatives of the parties to the dispute, and the real arbitration was done by the umpire, when they themselves could not come to an agreement.

It was a highly developed form of negotiation and conciliation, of collective bargaining. By following the procedure of arbitration, i.e. the submission by the parties of their statements or pleadings, the presentation of oral and documentary evidence in the manner of a judicial inquiry, the task of negotiation and conciliation became oriented to a search for relevant facts and data. However, the joint awards arrived at were, in essence, collective agreements rather than arbitration awards.

Despite initial difficulties, when trade union obstruction and victimisation, and the violation of awards and demands for wage increases caused union-sponsored strikes (although these were usually confined to a limited number of mills and workers), both the MOA and the TLA adopted a highly practical and realistic approach to their experiment and came to value its contribution to industrial peace. A sensible attitude of give and take was adopted: in 1923, the one and only general strike carried out under the auspices of the TLA was a disastrous failure, seriously weakening the unions, and, at this stage, the employers could have crushed the union out of existence. However, they chose instead to negotiate and compromise, giving some concessions to the union. Thus, unlike other Indian unions, the TLA did not have to fight for the mere right to exist and be recognised with the resulting legacy of bitterness. The tradition of business sense and compromise, built up as a part of local commercial practice, enabled the millowners to see the practical value of organising their relationships with labour on an orderly basis. In turn, the labour union made it quite clear to the millowners that they were not anticapitalist and did not seek class war, but rather sought an intelligent partnership with the employers to bring prosperity to the industry and the workers. The employers appreciated the union's policy of not making or supporting false or exaggerated demands, and its strong policy towards

unauthorised strikes.²⁷

By the 1930s, both parties had come to value their experiment in collective bargaining. The President of the MOA, in a speech at the MOA's Annual General Meeting, referred to the umpire's award in the 1936-37 disputes against reduction of wages, which was a great disappointment to the millowners, in the following way:

-- "Although the price we have to pay for industrial peace is substantially heavy, if we were to take a long view of the matter I cannot come to any other conclusion but that in the interest of all concerned the machinery which makes for peace should be preserved at all cost." --²⁸

In a TLA statement of Aug. 4th, 1934, submitted to the Arbitration Board on the millowners' proposal for a wage reduction, the following is asserted:

-- "The union wishes to assure the Association (MOA) of their abiding interest in the welfare of the Industry. The union is not unwilling to consider any proposal which may emerge from the Association and which could result in the good of Industry being established without harm to the wage earners."--

In another TLA statement, submitted to the Arbitration Board in connection with the 1933-34 wage disputes, the following remark was made:

--"The stability of the industry and the good of labour entirely depend upon the machinery of arbitration slowly built up by a line of traditions, convention and precedents." --²⁹

27. Subbiah Kannappan, "Ahmedabad Experiment in Labour Management Relations: I," (April 1959) and "The Ahmedabad Experiment in Labour Management Relations: II" (May 1959) International Labour Review, vol. 79, nos. 4 and 5, pp. 343-79, 511-36. To be known as Kannappan I and Kannappan II.

28. Report of the MOA. (1936)

29. History of Wage Adjustment in the Ahmedabad Textile Industry, Vol III, published by the TLA.

The relative industrial peace won through the use of Gandhi's arbitration machinery could be seen in the following figures showing the loss of man-days in strikes at various textile centres in Bombay Presidency between 1926-33.³⁰

TABLE 7. LOSS IN MAN-DAYS THROUGH STRIKES IN VARIOUS TEXTILE CENTRES IN BOMBAY PRESIDENCY BETWEEN 1926 AND 1933.

TEXTILE CENTRE:	AVERAGE NO. OF WORKERS:	NO. OF STRIKES:	TIME LOSS OF MAN-DAYS:
Whole Presidency		471	38,848,898
Bombay City	130,000		32,000,000
Sholapur	18,000		1,000,000
Ahmedabad	70,000		138,000

The thorny questions of rationalisation and profit-sharing bonus, which have plagued the Indian industrial scene and caused considerable industrial unrest in India, particularly in Kanpur and Nagpur in the 1950s,³¹ were successfully dealt with in Ahmedabad under the existing machinery of direct negotiations and collective bargaining. The Delhi Agreement of 1935 marked the acceptance of the principle of rationalisation with safeguards for the workers. The Ahmedabad Textile Industry's Research Association, widely known as

30. The Report of the Departmental Inquiry on Wages and Employment in the Bombay Textile Industry, appointed by the Government of Bombay (1934).

31. Kanpur and Nagpur in the 1950s witnessed great industrial unrest caused by rationalisation problems.

ATIRA,³² came to play an important part in the settling of highly technical questions, such as rationalisation, by undertaking scientific studies on rationalisation, work loads and job evaluation at the joint request of the MOA, or individual mills, and the TLA. These scientific studies and reports became the basis of discussion between the parties. In 1951 an important agreement was concluded on rationalisation between the MOA and the TLA, which also declared that mills should provide suitable working conditions, and agreed that ATIRA should give technical advice to complement joint investigation of working conditions, which would lay down the standards to be adopted by the mills. In this way, ATIRA has become a sort of catalytic agent in removing misconceptions from the minds of the parties and in helping them to a common understanding of their problems.³³

32. ATIRA, the first cooperative research association, was established in 1946 by the mills at a capital cost of Rs.69 lakhs. It is the first enterprise of its kind in which the cotton textile industry and the Government of India have cooperated in the field of technical research. A contribution of Rs.52 lakhs was given towards the initial expenses by 71 founder-member mills supplemented by Rs.19 lakhs by the Government of India, which contributed a further Rs.14 lakhs in 1957 towards its capital funds. The recurring expenses are shared equally by the industry and Government. Membership has been made available to mills all over India. See Census Special Report I and Kannappan II.

33. ATIRA evolved a procedure for making the studies a cooperative effort of the parties concerned: when a joint request is received, a team is formed for the collection of data composed of a management representative, a TLA representative and an ATIRA representative to allay workers' suspicions.

Regarding the problem of bonus, wage disputes came, in practice, to centre on the annual bonus, and only at longer intervals on fixed wage rates. Bonus negotiations became recurring occasions of annual crises in industrial relations. However, the 1955 Bonus Pact negotiated by the parties for five years, and followed by a four year Bonus Pact in 1961 ensured industrial peace in Ahmedabad. The principles evolved through these Pacts became the core of the Bonus Act of 1965.

When the parties decided in 1939 to abandon the system of the private Permanent Arbitration Board and to submit their disputes to government-established procedures for settlement under the Bombay Industrial Disputes Act of 1938, and later the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946, they were, in essence, continuing their previous practice under the Permanent Arbitration Board, with the only difference being that arbitration came to be exercised not by a body of their own creation but by Industrial Courts and Tribunals provided by the Government.

The leaders of the TIA and the MOA were involved in negotiations together over a long period of time, and evolved a close and informal relationship. Under the 1955 arbitration agreement, the two sides of industry each appointed its own panel of arbitrators, from whom the negotiating parties in industrial disputes were to be drawn. The MOA appointed 29 arbitrators on its panel: the President and Vice-President of the MOA, and managing agents or managers of some of the member mills. The TIA had 20 arbitrators on its panel, which was made up of the General Secretary, three Secretaries and other senior officers of the union. Except for changes in the officers of the MOA, the composition of the negotiating committees has remained relatively stable over time with the result that negotiators from both sides have become very well acquainted with each other, and their meetings, which are often held in the MOA premises, have an informal character.

Over the years, certain traditions and attitudes regarding the process of negotiation have been developed: the tradition of reliance upon facts and factual arguments built up during the period of the Permanent Arbitration Board has become a feature of bargaining. The parties have developed pragmatic and flexible attitudes to industrial disputes: there is little rigid adherence to abstract principles or inflexible maintenance of the initial stands taken by the two sides. A search for compromise and practical solutions have come to characterise the bargaining process.³⁴

This largely successful working relationship between the leaders of the MOA and the TLA has been greatly facilitated by the fact that both are drawn, unlike many other industrial centres in India, from the same caste, regional and linguistic groups. Both groups of leaders are largely high caste,³⁵ and share a common loyalty to Gujarat and the Gujarati language. Outside leadership of the TLA was inevitable due to the illiteracy, fear of the employers and caste divisions among the textile workers. In addition, due to caste distinctions and conventions, it was very unlikely that the millowners would have had dealings with trade union leaders drawn from the mills, particularly not in the early years of the TLA.

The degree of confidence felt by MOA leaders in the ability and sense of responsibility of the TLA and its leaders can be seen in its consistent stand against any change in the BIRA of 1946, which stipulated that there should be only a single representative

34. Interviews with leading TLA officers, such as Shyamprasad Vasavda and Manharlal Shukla, March 1971 in Ahmedabad.

35. TLA leaders are largely drawn from the Nagar Brahmin and Bahia castes.

union per industry in the local area. In the MOA's reply to the Questionnaire of the National Labour Commission in 1967, this point was made repeatedly as follows:³⁶

--"We, however, can attest to the great advantage of recognition of a single trade union as the sole representative of labour in all industrial matters as provided in the BIRA Act, 1946. Recognition of a number of unions simultaneously in an establishment or a local industry will be a great menace to industrial peace."--

This unique relationship evolved in the economic sphere between leaders of the TLA and business leaders was bound to have a profound bearing on their political relationship within Ahmedabad City.

Gandhi had envisaged an increasingly important political role for the TLA. He wrote in a letter, dated May 10, 1927:³⁷

--"Its direct aim (the TLA) is not in the last degree political. Its direct aim is internal reform and evolution of internal strength. The indirect result of this evolution when, and if, it ever becomes complete will naturally be tremendously political. I have, therefore, not the remotest idea of exploiting labour or organising it for any direct political power of first class importance when it becomes a self-existing unit. Labour, in my opinion, must not become a pawn in the hands of the politician on the political chessboard. It must, by its sheer strength, dominate the chessboard." --

This was not an unduly modest ambition for labour's political future by any means.

36. MOA Report of 1967.

37. In M.K. Gandhi's Sarvodaya. (edited by Bharatan Kumarappa)
(Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House; 1954)

The TLA early became involved in the politics of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.³⁸ By the 1961 Municipal elections, it captured a preponderance of seats in the Corporation, winning 29 out of the Congress party's total of 50 seats in a house of 70 Municipal Corporators. It had succeeded in cornering a large number of Congress electoral tickets for the 1961 municipal election, in a tussle between its General Secretary and political leader, Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, and the GPCC President, Thakorebhai Desai. This was due to its loyalist stand on the Maha Gujarat issue, when it supported the official Congress policy favouring a bigger bilingual State of Bombay, and also to the heavily industrial character of Ahmedabad City, which had risen in political significance since becoming the capital of the unilingual Gujarat State in 1960. However, despite the numerical preponderance of TLA candidates, business elements in the Corporation had the edge of a partnership with Labour elements in the Corporation.³⁹

38. Clause 10 in the Objectives of the Constitution of the TLA reads: "to promote the civic and political interests of the work people". From 1936 on, the TLA has been contesting elections in the Provincial, State and Central Legislatures. In 1924, for the first time, an untouchable worker nominated by the TLA was elected to the Ahmedabad Municipality on behalf of the INC. During 1924, the TLA started a new activity of recording workers' complaints regarding municipal services, and solving them through negotiations with municipal authorities. By 1927, the TLA was actively participating in the affairs of the Municipality. In 1927, Gulzarilal Nanda scored a notable victory over his millowner rival in the municipal elections. In 1930, the TLA had calculated that there was a deficit of 26,179 tenements for Ahmedabad workers. Nanda fought hard in the Municipality and got his scheme of building an additional 500 working-class tenements at a tax cost of Rs.400-500 per each mill sanctioned. But the millowners outwitted him by persuading the Government of Bombay not to sanction its implementation, promising the Government that they would themselves build up to 1000 tenements themselves. By 1937, the TLA had consolidated its position in the Ahmedabad Municipality - out of 36 members elected on general seats, 9 or 25% belonged to the TLA. See Majur Sandesh, 10 Aug. 1933, 10 Dec. 1936 and 28 Oct. 1938, and also Faresh Majumdar's unpublished Ph.D. thesis from the University of Gujarat on the TLA.

39. Interviews with Mr. B and Mr. L in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

A close examination of the socioeconomic composition of Congress Municipal Corporators between 1961 and 1965 reveals a very interesting picture:⁴⁰

TABLE 8. SOCIOECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF CONGRESS MUNICIPAL CORPORATORS
IN AHMEDABAD, 1961-65.

<u>SOCIOECONOMIC CATEGORY:</u>		<u>NO. OF CONGRESS CORPORATORS:</u>	<u>%</u>
Major Mahajan Candidates	Millworkers/trade unionists	20	39
	Businessmen/social workers	9	18
			57%
	Big Businessmen	8*	15.7
	Other medium and small businessmen	6	11.8
			27.5%
	Professional men	7	13.5
	White collar workers	1	2
		<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL:		51	100

* Including Shrimati Prabhavatiben Chinubhai, wife of the textile magnate, Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth.

What strikes one immediately is the relatively large number of big businessmen, most of whom were textile magnates - 8 or 15.7% - and the comparatively small number of representatives of the professions i.e. doctors, teachers, lawyers and social workers - 7 or 13.5%.

Among the Major Mahajan candidates, a very large proportion, 20 or 39% of total Congress Corporators, were mill workers and full-time trade unionists. However, 9 were businessmen or social workers, increasing the business and professional elements among Congress Corporators.

There was only one white-collar worker.

40. Socioeconomic data compiled with data provided by the Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad.

TABLE 9. SOCIOECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF MAJOR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
COMMITTEES, 1961-65,⁴²

SOCIOECONOMIC COMPOSITION									
NAME OF COMMITTEE:	Doctor	Lawyer	Teacher	Social Worker	Big. Bus.	Med. Bus.	Other Bus. (including small).	Trade Unionist/ Mill workers	White Collar Worker
Standing Committee:									
1961 - 62	1	2	-	-	4**	-	2	3MM***	-
1962 - 63	1	2	-	-	3**	-	3	3MM	-
1963 - 64	1	1	-	1	3**	1	1	3MM	1
1964 - 65	1	3	-	1	3**	-	1	3MM	-
Transport Committee:									
1960 - 61 *	-	1	1	-	2	-	3	1MM	-
1961 - 62 *	-	1	1	-	2	-	2	1MM	1
1962 - 63 *	-	3	1	-	2	-	1	-	1
1963 - 64	1	1	1	-	2	-	3	-	1
1964 - 65	2	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	1
Public Works Committee:									
1961 - 62	-	1	-	-	1	2	4	3MM	1
1962 - 63	-	1	-	-	1	3	3	3MM	1
1963 - 64	1	1	-	-	2	1	4	3MM	-
1964 - 65	1	-	-	-	2	1	2	4MM [⊕]	1
Housing and Improvement Committee:									
1964 - 65	-	3	-	-	3	1	3	2MM	-

* +1 managerial worker

** Including one Majur Mahajan candidate, Vimalbhai N. Shah, industrialist. ⊕ +1 Janta Parishad member.

*** Majur Mahajan representative.

42. Compiled with data made available by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, former Mayor of Ahmedabad.

Thus, although the Majur Mahajan got greater representation in 1961-65 on Municipal Corporation committees,⁴¹ the relatively large big business and business elements continued to be dominant within the Municipal Corporation.

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41. In 1961, there was a bitter controversy between Shyamprasad Vasavda and the powerful President of the GPCC on the propriety of the jurisdiction of the latter over the determination of the personnel of the Standing Committee of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in which Congress was in a majority. Vasavda said it was up to the Congress municipal members, a majority of whom were from the TLA, not the President of the GPCC, to determine who should constitute the members of the Standing Committee. Vasavda's view was upheld in arbitration by Khandubhai Desai, a senior Congress leader. See unpublished Ph.D. thesis by Dr. Paresh Majmudar of the University of Gujarat.

In all the above committees, the business element, with a large big business component, exceeded the Majur Mahajan element during these years. The top leadership positions in the Corporation - the coveted positions of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the four most influential committees in the Corporation - the Standing Committee, the Transport Committee, the Public Works Committee and the Housing and Improvement Committee - largely went to big businessmen. So customary was the leadership of the textile magnate élite in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation that the name of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, the multi-millionaire business tycoon who was Chairman and Managing Director of Shri Ambika Mills Ltd., and member of the board of directors of nearly 20 leading companies including New Shorrock Mills Ltd., the Nirlon Synthetic Fibres and Chemicals Ltd., Baroda Rayon Co. Ltd., and the Central Bank of India Ltd., was put forward for Mayor of Ahmedabad by Congress leaders as early as the time of the January 1961 Congress AICC Session at Bhavnagar, a few months before the municipal elections. Morarji Desai was among the influential State Congress leaders who suggested Jaikrishnabhai's name as the possible future Mayor of Ahmedabad.⁴³

At the meeting of the executive committee of the GPCC and the Corporation Congress members to decide on the leader of the party in the Corporation, Jaikrishnabhai was chosen for the post of Mayor. However, as he himself was the first to admit, he was utterly dependent on Majur Mahajan support in the Corporation. He said, "Even I was utterly dependent on the support of the Majur Mahajan, I would not have become Mayor but for their support." The Mayor has an important part in the selection of Congress Chairmen of the various Corporation committees, and the heads of the most

43. D.N. Pathak , The 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Elections , (published in Gujarati) (1962).

influential committees were almost all big businessmen:⁴⁴ Biharilal Popatlal Shah, who has a screen-printing business and owns several cinema-houses, was made Chairman of the Standing Committee between 1961 and 1965. Narottamdas Chandulal Shah, an Ahmedabad millowner, was Chairman of the Transport Committee from 1960-64, while Dr. A.P. Shukla was Chairman from 1964-65. Jayantilal Bhikkabhai, another important Ahmedabad millowner and future President of the MOA (1968-69), was Chairman of the Public Works Committee from 1961-65. The first Chairman of the newly-established Housing and Improvement Committee between 1964-65 was Narottam K. Jhaveri, a factory owner engaged in the cotton vest export business and director of many Ahmedabad mills and other industrial concerns. The President of the Ahmedabad City DCC and faction leader with Majur Mahajan support, Vimalbhai N. Shah, was also a big businessman and textile magnate.

The period 1961-65 saw a mirroring in the political sphere of the Municipal Corporation too of the model employer-employee relations between business and the TLA, which had evolved in the economic sphere. Both Majur Mahajan leaders and Congress leaders of this period testify to very good relationships between the Majur Mahajan and the business element in the Corporation.⁴⁵

The TLA secured a large amount of control over the Urban Community Development Project, which was initiated in Ahmedabad in 1962 with the help of funds from the Ford Foundation. It also secured some civic improvements, including slum clearance schemes and housing programmes for industrial workers. To help chawl-dwellers, whose chawls were in a very dilapidated condition, lacking amenities, (since the Rent Restriction

44. Interview with Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, March 1971.

45. Interviews with leading business and Majur Mahajan personalities in the Corporation, March 1971 in Ahmedabad.

Act took away any incentive on the part of chawlowners to improve and keep up their properties) the law, which had prevented the Municipal Corporation from taking action with regard to private premises, was amended to allow the Municipal Corporation to clean chawls and provide water and other connections by contract, sharing the costs on a 50-50 basis with the chawlowners or tenants.⁴⁶

However, the TLA thought it wiser to lie low on the issue of the concessional rates of municipal taxation imposed on the millowners. Millowners had clashed with the Corporation over the municipal taxation of Special Properties, including textile mills, in the early 1950s, and, through the arbitration of G.V. Mavlankar and H.V. Divetia, it was decided to adopt the floor area method of assessing mill taxation, whereby a certain rate was fixed per 100 sq. ft. of the mill area per month, a formula which proved highly concessional to the millowners as against the alternative method - the contractors' test method - by which a mill is assessed for municipal taxation according to its present capital value, after taking depreciation into account. The TLA Corporation members also acquiesced in the rejection of the demand that octroi tax on industrial raw materials should be paid by the millowners ad valorem instead of on weight as was the prevailing practice, on the argument that "the burden of taxation would be too much for the industry to bear."⁴⁷

The main policy decisions of the period 1961-65 bore the unmistakable imprint of the vision and ideas of the business elite, facilitated by good relations with the TLA element in the Corporation, and State-level leaders and bureaucrats. Such was the permeation among the middle class of the values of the textile magnate elite that they

46. Interview with D.K. Patel, Deputy Mayor in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, March 1971 in Ahmedabad.

47. See later chapter on the financial structure and policy of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, (A.V. 11, 3.).

largely identified during the period 1961-65 with the aims within the Corporation of the big business leaders, who stamped their vision on the work of the Corporation during this period.

A unique and ingenious mechanism was devised in the first months of power of the municipal Congress party for formalizing constructive relations with the State Government, and tapping State-level financial resources. This was undoubtedly a consequence of strong State-local linkages possessed by both business leaders and Majur Mahajan leaders in the Corporation. A City Coordination Council was instituted in July 1961 with the approval of the Chief Minister, Jivraj Mehta. Balvantrai Mehta, who became Chief Minister of Gujarat in 1963, continued to support the Council. It was initially envisaged for a five-year period i.e. 1961-65.⁴⁸

Such a City Coordination Council, drawing upon the resources of various authorities and talents, particularly at the State-level, was instituted with a view to facilitating the integrated development and beautifying of the city as a whole. The Council included the following members:

1. The Chief Minister, who headed the Council.
2. The Mayor, textile magnate, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.
3. The President of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.
4. The President of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
5. The President of the Panchkuva Cloth Merchants' Association.
6. A Labour Representative from the Majur Mahajan.
7. The Municipal Commissioner.
8. The Chairman of the Municipal Corporation's Standing Committee.
9. The Police Commissioner of Ahmedabad City.
10. The President of the Sports Council of Gujarat.
11. An Opposition Member of the Corporation.

48. Information on the City Coordination Council supplied by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.

The Council was empowered to make analytical studies of the various civic problems of Ahmedabad, and to suggest ways and means of solving them. The projects implemented under its direction were financed partly by the Municipal Corporation and largely by the State Government.

The financial know-how of business leaders and their strong sense of civic duty was of vital importance in effecting civic improvements and the provision of municipal services and amenities. For example, one of the achievements of the City Coordination Council was the initiation and implementation of a large-scale Sewage Disposal Scheme at Vasna and Pirana . The problem of sewage disposal had been a long-standing one for the Municipal Corporation, plagued by continual shortage of funds. Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, the textile magnate Mayor, agreed at a meeting of the City Coordination Council to arrange for funds, provided the State Government would guarantee them, which it promptly agreed to do. Within a very short time, Jaikrishnabhai had arranged a loan of Rs.4.25 crores from the Life Insurance Corporation of India under Government guarantee, and the project, whereby purified sewage could be used for agricultural purposes, could be got underway.⁴⁹

Other large-scale capital-intensive projects, initiated by the City Coordination Council, were a water-supply scheme and construction of a water-tank at Dudheshwar, and the building of Netaji Subhas Bridge, started in 1963, and the Nehru bridge.

Large-scale schemes for city beautification and development were initiated. A grandiose City Development Scheme was initiated to avoid congestion and to give the city a rational format of development, defining residential, industrial and commercial zones, and demarcating a green belt. (This green belt was later to make the Congress very

49. Interview with Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, July 1973.

unpopular with the farmers on the periphery of the city - a local grievance which contributed to the Congress defeat in the Municipal Corporation elections of 1965). It was also stipulated that no cinema-houses and theatres (whose licences were granted by the State Government) would in future be constructed without airconditioning; and permission would no longer be granted for the construction of new buildings with more than four floors, unless they provided facilities for lifts and adequate parking for vehicles.

Recreational, leisure and sports facilities were also envisaged. The Kankaria lake and its surroundings were developed into pleasure gardens, with a special Children's Garden or Balvatika. The Sardar Garden was also built at Lal Darwaja. Schemes for stadiums for sports and gymnastics, the Sardar Patel Stadium and the Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium, were finalised. Three additional swimming pools, one at Kankaria, one at Saraspur and the third at Maleksabha Stadium, were constructed to supplement the sole existing public swimming pool in the city. Many of these schemes received financial support from the City Coordination Council.

Educational and cultural institutions and facilities were strongly encouraged during this period by the City Coordination Council and business donations.⁵⁰ Through the Corporation, vast lands were made available to the National Institute of Design, the Indian Institute of Management, and the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, a foremost all-India cultural and educational organization, which were established in Ahmedabad at this time. Plans were prepared and work started on a lavish Tagore Memorial Theatre on the banks of the River Sabarmati. From the estimated costs in the Public Works Committee, the actual cost of the Tagore

50. Interviews with leading Corporation executives, and D.K. Patel, Deputy Mayor of Ahmedabad, 1969-72, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Theatre was four times higher and nearly Rs.28 lakhs.⁵¹ Although education beyond the primary stage was not the responsibility of the Municipal Corporation, a donation of Rs.14 lakhs by the Ahmedabad textile magnate, Shri Amrutlal Hargovandas, encouraged the Municipal Corporation to start a Municipal Medical College to supplement the sole Medical College in Ahmedabad City till 1962. The N.H. Medical College was started in June 1963 with a student in-take of a hundred. A generous donation, from the textile magnate, Rasiklal Nagri, enabled the Corporation to start the Nagri Eye Hospital in Ellis Bridge in 1963.

With the aid of Rs.26 lakhs from U.N.I.C.E.F. and Rs. 30.80 lakhs from the State Government and Rs. 33.20 lakhs drawn from Corporation resources, a major business enterprise, the Municipal Dairy Project, was started in 1962. It was begun to help keep milk prices under control and to supply pure milk to the people. The idea was mooted at a meeting between the Mayor and other Corporation leaders and Dr. Kurian of the Amul Dairy in Anand, who promised to give all assistance. A unique example of enterprise and initiative by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, the Municipal Dairy eventually produced 1.10 lakh litres of milk per day, and many other dairy products like ice-cream, butter, ghee etc. An Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service Workshop was also built during 1962-63 at a cost of Rs. 21 lakhs to repair and renovate the vehicles employed by the A.M.T.S., another scheme which owed much to the entrepreneurial skill of the textile magnates of Ahmedabad.

Thus the period, 1961-65, when the business and trade union elements in the Corporation worked in a spirit of cooperation and compromise, and the State Government was receptive to Corporation plans and projects, Corporation business functioned fairly smoothly.⁵² Some

51. Interview with Jayantilal Raval, member of the Public Works Committee, 1961-65.

52. Interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

concessions were made to the needs of labour in the form of a certain amount of slum clearance, the starting of an Urban Community Development Project, which operated largely in labour areas, and a project for the Municipal Corporation to clean the chawls by contract. However, the actual number of tenements constructed by the slum clearance schemes of the Municipal Corporation fell far short of the targets. Out of a total of 8,714 tenements proposed for construction under various schemes at an estimated cost of Rs. 32,609,188, the Municipal Corporation had built only 2,400 towards the close of the year 1961. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that 1,476 of the completed tenements could not be utilized for the rehousing of slumdwellers, but had to be temporarily given to Government civil servants transferred to Ahmedabad after the bifurcation of the bilingual Bombay State. As a result, only 396 tenements, or less than half the total number proposed were allotted to the Rabaris a Scheduled Tribe group who formed 2,500 families or 63.91% of the total number of 3,912 families to be rehoused.⁵³

During this period land values were rocketing sharply as the following table shows:⁵⁴

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53. Census Special Report I, pp. 107-8. The extent of the slum and housing problems of Ahmedabad City can be gauged from the fact that in 1960-61, some 18,652 households lived in areas regarded as slums. By the later 60s, 60,000 hutments had been constructed within the Municipal limits and there were some 1,140 chawls. See Mahesh Bhatt and V.K. Chawda, A Preliminary Report of the Study of the Socioeconomic Condition of the Slumdwellers in Ahmedabad City. (Ahmedabad: 1970).
54. Mahesh Bhatt, Housing Problems of a Growing Metropolis. (Ahmedabad: 1970).

TABLE 10. TOTAL LAND VALUE PER SQUARE YARD: AVERAGE VALUE OF THE LAND
AND PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE IN LAND VALUE BY YEARS:

YEARS:	TOTAL NO. OF SOCIETIES*	TOTAL LAND VALUE PER SQ. YD IN RS.	AVERAGE LAND VALUE PER SQ. YD. IN RS.	% of INCREASE IN AVERAGE VALUE AS COMPARED WITH 1947-50	% of INCREASE IN VALUE AS COMPARED WITH 1960	% of INCREASE IN AVERAGE VALUE AS COMPARED WITH 1961
1941-50	7	38.56	5.51	-	-	-
1951-55	21	127.24	6.06	9.98	-	-
1956-59	128	1277.06	9.98	81.12	-	-
1960	97	1477.13	14.92	170.78	-	-
1961	42	564.96	13.45	144.10	9.85	-
1962	55	875.10	15.91	188.75	6.64	18.29
1963	30	497.35	16.58	200.91	11.13	23.27
1964	29	669.98	23.10	319.24	54.83	54.82
1965	18	548.53	30.47	452.99	104.22	126.54

* Cooperative Housing Societies.

When the Ashram Road area in Ahmedabad was declared a commercial area without taking adequate care to control land speculation, the land value rose four or five times.⁵⁵ A similar effect had occurred when the site of the University Buildings and the Oil and Natural Gas Commission Headquarters were being decided upon- people in the know purchased land here and in the surrounding area, anticipating rising land values.

The Urban Community Development Project was also unable to accomplish very much, particularly in its first four years.⁵⁶ Little was done to rationalize the tax system - to make octroi taxation ad valorem instead of on weight. Taxation of Special Properties remained highly concessional to the millowners.

Thus, although the 1961-65 Corporation did not deal adequately with the housing problem, especially the need to concentrate on subsidized low-income housing, or cope with the scale of amenities required, particularly in the chawls and slum areas, and with taxation problems, many large-scale capital projects were undertaken to improve the water-supply and sewage disposal, and for educational and recreational purposes, and the Urban Community Development Project was instituted. Thus a fair amount was achieved, although largely to the benefit of the middle class and the comparative 'elite of textile industrial workers. The Corporation functioned smoothly during this period due to the spirit of compromise and understanding shown by the business and Majur Mahajan elements in the Corporation, mirroring constructive and purposeful relations evolved in the sphere of industrial relations, and a large degree of cooperation and assistance from the State Government was secured.

55. B.K. Roy Burman, "Social Profile of Ahmedabad", Seminar No. 125 (1970), pp 33-38.

56. See section later on, on the Urban Community Development Project.

CHAPTER VSTATE-LOCAL LINKAGES AND POLITICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND
THEIR IMPACT ON CITY DEVELOPMENT.

Vertical State-local linkages are highly significant in determining the distribution of power and decision-making authority within the urban political system. The urban political system is made up of multiple arenas. In Ahmedabad, despite the importance of other arenas more directly representative of the State Government in the city, the single most important arena is undoubtedly the municipal arena. In contrast to smaller municipalities, like Indore, which only control minor functions, such as sanitation, water distribution, road building and repair, enforcement of building codes etc.¹, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has a very much wider field of patronage and control, including the vital jurisdictions of public health, local transportation, public education and Town Planning, which directly affect the daily lives and well-being of Ahmedabad citizens.

However, as we have seen outlined in Chapter III, due to the nature of the unequal balance of power between urban locality and State, as a result of the BMC Act of 1949, much decision-making and patronage in the municipal arena is dependent on having access to State-level leaders and Ministers, who have ultimate control of important jurisdictions relating to the city and the municipal arena.

Other important political arenas are often directly dependent on State Government funds and control. State-level

1. See Rodney Jones's revealing article "Linkage Analysis of Indian Urban Politics", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 25 (June 17, 1972), pp. 1195-1203, which discusses the question of State-Local relationships in urban politics, using Indore as a special case-study.

agencies in the city, such as the Gujarat State Housing Board and other State-level organizations concerned with labour, health, education etc. are important centres of influence and patronage, having a bearing on conditions within the city.

The host of "quasi-governmental" associational enterprises spawned by the co-operative movement and other developmental programmes of the State Government, such as co-operative housing societies and educational societies, are largely dependent on massive State subsidies, but the distribution and allocation of these State-level developmental resources are left to a loosely-regulated and highly decentralized administrative process. Thus these co-operative housing societies, educational associations etc. provide excellent opportunities for the growth of political roles of mediation between public authorities and popular demands on the public purse, generating important political "micro-arenas".² These micro-arenas have become so important that they are often employed by Municipal Corporators to gather support and votes in municipal elections. Indeed, those who have succeeded in building up a strong leadership and reputation in these micro-arenas are often drawn successfully into the municipal arena where they become influential figures. The importance of holding executive office in local voluntary associations, particularly co-operative housing societies and educational societies, is evident in the high proportion of Municipal Corporators who have cultivated these positions. Out of the total of 90 Municipal Corporators in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1969, 88% held executive

2. Robert C. Wirsing, "Associational Micro-Arenas in Indian Urban Politics." Asian Survey, vol. 12, no. 4 (April 1973), pp. 408-420.

posts in at least one voluntary association, and altogether they had 229 such executive affiliations to their credit.

Thus the local politician seeking influence in either the municipal arena, or arenas directly controlled by the State Government, or the numerous State-subsidized micro-arenas of local voluntary associations, must either cultivate links with State-level leaders or try to become State-level politicians themselves by translating electoral strength in the municipal and local arena into power and office at the State level, which, in turn, can buttress and consolidate their local power through attention to local needs and the dissemination of local patronage.

To ensure that development policies will benefit their interests, to secure State compliance and funds for large-scale projects, such as slum clearance schemes, low-income housing projects, sewage disposal projects etc., and for local voluntary associations, and to influence the conditions of industry, labour and employment in the city, the establishment of linkages, i.e. channels of communication and influence, with State-level leaders is crucial for local politicians. The major actors on the Ahmedabad political scene, the textile magnates, the Majur Mahajan and the City Congress bosses, derive much of their local strength from linkages at the State level and from participation in State-level power cleavages. Conversely, it was the lack of leverage at the State level, and the obdurate attitude of the then State Congress Government that was a major element in the difficulties experienced by the Janta Parishad in its four-year rule in the Corporation from 1965 to 1969.

It is, therefore, very important to explore the system

of State politics during the period 1960-72, and to establish the points of interaction of State and local politics, and the connections of local politicians with State-level personalities and their rivalries.

1. State-level Power Cleavages, 1960-70: An Outline.

In Gujarat, regional loyalties and divisions are fundamental in analysing State-level power cleavages. Caste loyalties are a secondary source of conflict at the State-level, interacting with basic regional cleavages; at the same time they are important sources of intradistrict conflict. In the various districts and regions of Gujarat, dominant caste groups have managed to exert a preponderant political influence, such as the Anavil Brahmins in South Gujarat, the Patels in Kaira district and the Baniyas in Ahmedabad. Rivalries usually between dominant caste groups, such as that between Baniyas, Brahmins and Patels in Ahmedabad, with lower castes often acting as subordinate allies of dominant caste groups, form much of the substance of factional conflict within districts. In these dominant caste factional struggles, power and personality conflicts form the basis of cleavages. However, there are too many divisions (in terms of caste hierarchy and economic interest) between Bania, Brahmin and Patel groups from different districts for them to form State-wide alliances based primarily on caste. Only the Kshatriyas succeeded to some extent in forming a State-wide caste federation.³ In many districts, intermediate castes of Rajput origin began to coalesce under the Varna rubric of Kshatriya, against the dominant caste leadership

3. Rajni Kothari and Rushikesh Maru, "Caste and Secularism in India", Journal of Asian Studies, vol.25, no.1 (November, 1965), pp. 33-50.

which was largely Patidar. In this, they were helped by their numerical strength - they constitute about 40% of the population of Gujarat as against the Patidars who constitute about 20-22%. Bhailalbhai D. Patel, leader of the Gujarat Swatantra Party during much of the 60s, successfully based the strategy of the Swatantra Party on accommodating the Kshatriya-Patidar alliance.⁴ For long the mass base of support for the Congress, Kshatriya leaders succeeded in demanding better representation within Congress ranks.⁵ However, there was no state-wide Kshatriya organisation which could successfully bridge the differences between Saurashtra and Gujarat Kshatriyas, who were divided in socioeconomic and status terms.⁶ Separate organizations were maintained, the Gujarat Kshatriya Sabha and the Saurashtra Khedut Sangh, which seldom took common political action.

For example, in the 1957 and 1962 General Elections, the Kshatriyas of Saurashtra largely remained loyal to the Congress, whereas the Kshatriyas of Gujarat were largely supporting Swatantra in 1962.⁷ Thus, although caste was important, particularly in intraregional and intradistrict terms, the basic pattern of political antagonisms at the level of the State as a whole can best be explained in terms of a regional analysis of State-level cleavages.

4. K.D. Desai, "Socioeconomic Infrastructure of Gujarat Politics". In Iqbal Narain (ed.), State Politics in India. (Meerut: 1968).

5. Myron Weiner, "Segmentation and Political Participation: Kaira District." In Party-Building in a New Nation. (1967), pp. 69-129.

6. Saurashtra Kshatriyas were largely landlords with Patidar tenants, whereas Gujarat Kshatriyas were tenants or former tenants of Patidar landlords.

7. D. N. Pathak, M. G. Parekh and K. D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat. (Ahmedabad: 1966).

The first major State-level power cleavage of the decade, 1960-70, and, in many ways, the basic power cleavage of much of the decade, was the factional conflict, which erupted in the early 60s between Jivraj Mehta, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, Morarji Desai, the State Congress boss, and Balvantrai Mehta, who gained control of the GPCC in the early 1960s, won over the support of a majority of MLAs and brought about the fall of the Chief Minister against the wishes of Prime Minister Nehru. At one level, this was a manifestation of the clash between ministerial and organizational wings of the Congress, taking place in many Indian States at that time in an attempt by the party to reassert itself after long years of domination by Nehru, who had maintained the supremacy of the governmental wing of Congress. In this process, Congress organizational elections in Gujarat, which put Balvantrai Mehta and his colleagues in power, and the selection of Congress candidates for the 1962 General Elections played an important role.⁸ However, from a deeper perspective, rivalry between Saurashtra leaders on the one hand, and Central and Southern Gujarat leaders, on the other hand, formed the core of the GPCC - ministerial rivalry that ultimately resulted in 1963 in ousting Jivraj Mehta, the Chief Minister, and his Saurashtra colleagues, Rasiklal Parikh and Ratubhai Adani, from power.⁹

To fully appreciate the nature and force of regional loyalties and divisions in the State politics of Gujarat, it is necessary to have an understanding of the diverging economic

8. Rajni Kothari, "The Congress System in India." In Party System and Election Studies. (1967).

9. D.N. Pathak, "State Politics in Gujarat: Some Determinants". In Iqbal Narain (ed.), State Politics in India. (Meerut: 1968).

interests and other tendencies towards separation of the various regions. The Saurashtra-Gujarat rivalry and sense of separateness has deep socioeconomic and political roots,¹⁰ reflected in weak communication links between the two regions. Until the coming of the railway in the late nineteenth century and the construction of all-weather roads after 1948, Saurashtra was cut off from the rest of Gujarat during the monsoon each year, and even now Saurashtra has a metre-gauge rail system, whereas mainland Gujarat has a broad-gauge system. The pattern of agriculture and industry have been very different in the two regions. Over centuries, patterns of trade in Saurashtra developed closer links through the Saurashtra ports with Bombay City, and indeed foreign countries and ports, rather than with the cities of mainland Gujarat. Since Independence Saurashtra has come increasingly to specialize in the cultivation of groundnuts. It produces today annually about 1,306,000 tons of groundnuts or one-third of India's total groundnut production, utilizing 43% of its total cropland for this purpose. Its industries have been largely small-scale agro-industries, particularly groundnut-based oil and extractive industries and small-scale engineering industries geared to the needs of agriculturists. It produces today about 50,000 diesel engines per year (20% of India's total production), which are used mostly by the larger farmers in well-irrigated areas and in groundnut extraction industries. The Gujarat State Government's regulation of the marketing of groundnut products, and State tax policies inimical to Saurashtra's growing agro-industries have caused continual tension

10. Howard Spodek, "The Case of Injustice to Saurashtra," Asian Survey, vol. 2, no. 5 (May, 1972), pp. 416-28.

between the two regions and a feeling by Saurashtra that it was not getting adequate support for its economic development from the State Government. This was aggravated by long-standing feuds between the ruling groups of the two areas and by their very diverse caste hierarchies.

In mainland Gujarat, on the other hand, although there has been substantial investment in small-scale industry, there has been a tendency to specialize in large-scale undertakings.¹¹ This was so marked, particularly in the 1960s, that there seemed to be a structural shift in the locational pattern of the State's economy with heavy industry clustering increasingly in the Central and Southern Gujarat regions. With the establishment of large-scale cotton textile mills, pharmaceutical and chemical factories in the Ahmedabad region, and the expansion of the Ahmedabad thermal power plant in 1962; and with the establishment of an oil refinery, the Dhuvaran thermal power station and a huge fertiliser factory near Baroda and a petrochemical complex in South Gujarat during the 60s particularly, new and particularly heavy industries seemed to be gravitating towards Central and Southern Gujarat. This development was undoubtedly helped by the discovery of oil in Ankleshvar near Surat and in the Gulf of Cambay, and by a combination of other, less purely accidental factors e.g. the fact that these areas were already financially and technologically the most developed areas of the State and, therefore already had a fairly well-developed industrial infrastructure invited further development. They were also the most densely populated of all the regions of Gujarat, containing the bulk of the State's twenty million population, whereas Saurashtra

11. Ibid.

had only four million inhabitants scattered across 20,000 square miles. Central and Southern Gujarat also contained some of the most prosperous and politically powerful groups in the State, such as the Anavil Brahmins in South Gujarat, from whose ranks the State Congress boss, Morarji Desai, was drawn, Ahmedabad Banias who provided many leading big businessmen, and Kaira District Patels. Thus the Central and Southern parts of the State seemed, particularly in the 60s, to be getting a disproportionate share of Government and private investment, especially in heavy industry. This was a major source of conflict with Saurashtra, and led to allegations by Saurashtrians of the economic neglect of Saurashtra by the State Government. The other peripheral regions of North Gujarat and Kutch too joined with Saurashtra in making allegations of economic neglect of their areas by the State Government.

In addition to these deep socioeconomic differences between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat, there were also important political differences and grievances. Saurashtra had a distinct political style, stemming from centuries of rule by petty principalities with its politicians trained in the smaller more intimate arenas of local durbars.¹² Saurashtra politicians were more concerned with avoiding confrontation and more adept at finding a compromise and accommodating as many interests as possible. Mainland Gujarat had been under direct British rule and was, therefore, more exposed to the forces of Western liberalism, English education and technological innovations. This was particularly true of the Ahmedabad-Surat axis area, which had also come under the direct and

12. John R. Wood, "The Political Integration of British and Princely Gujarat" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University; 1971), quoted in Howard Spodek, "The Case of Injustice to Saurashtra", Asian Survey, vol. 2, no. 5 (May, 1972), pp. 416-28.

intense influence of the Nationalist Movement led by Gandhi. Its political leaders tended to be more combative, more direct and more aware of class conflicts.

It is interesting to note, however, that internal rivalry in Saurashtra between the various former princely states could sometimes be more acute than that between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat. This was particularly so with the former State of Bhavnagar, which stood somewhat apart from the other States, and whose leaders often collaborated with mainland politicians. Geographical proximity and a historical pattern of trade with British India had kept Bhavnagar closely in touch with the mainland, and less concerned about affiliation with Saurashtra. Bhavnagar had also not gone in for specializing in groundnuts as had most of the other Saurashtra States, and its chief cash crop remained cotton. Bhavnagar-Rajkot rivalry was particularly intense. It is highly significant that Balvantrai Mehta was from Bhavnagar. The aloofness of Bhavnagar from the rest of Saurashtra explains to a large extent his collaboration with mainland leaders to oust the old Saurashtra leadership of Jivraj Mehta and his colleagues from the State Government in 1963.¹³

Mainland Gujarat had a strong political grievance against Saurashtra in the early 1960s. By a combination of factors, Saurashtra leaders were over-represented in the Gujarat Cabinet in the early 1960s. When the bilingual State of "Bigger Bombay" was created in 1956 as a response to the linguistic agitations taking place in both Maharashtra and Gujarat, Saurashtra, which had been a separate unit from 1948-56, was now merged in this bigger bilingual State. Having been a

13. Spodek, p.422.

separate unit previously with the status of Statehood most of its political personnel, including some Ministers, were transferred to Bombay. Thus Saurashtra, as a separate unit, got over-represented in the Government and civil service compared to Gujarat proper.¹⁴ In addition, the 1957 General Elections were fought in Gujarat on the issue of Maha Gujarat, whose appeal was largely confined to the areas South and North of Ahmedabad. The linguistic agitation had little influence in Saurashtra and Kutch, which had close economic and social ties with Bombay city, and were, therefore, less enthusiastic for a separate State of MahaGujarat, which would exclude Bombay City. Thus, while Congress candidates fared badly in many areas of mainland Gujarat,¹⁵ where the political supporters of the MahaGujarat movement secured all their electoral gains of five Parliamentary seats and twenty-nine State Assembly Seats,¹⁶

14. Saurashtra had separate Statehood and a separate Cabinet structure between 1948-56, and influential political leaders in nationalist and post-Independence politics e.g. U.N. Dhebar was at one time President of the A.I.C.C. and very influential with Prime Minister Nehru. This accounts to some degree for the extra political weightage of Saurashtra in the Cabinet of the 'big bilingual' State of Bombay, and subsequently in the Cabinet of the separate State of Gujarat.

15. Morarji Desai, the Gujarat State Congress boss, in order to try to secure his ambitions in the national political arena, which would be better served by a more powerful bigger bilingual State of Bombay than by a truncated separate State of Gujarat without Bombay City, persuaded the G.P.C.C. to back the bilingual experiment, and go against the regional aspirations of the people, see pp.48-59.

16. Compared to 1952, in the 1957 General Elections, Congress suffered a decline of nearly 56.6% in the State Assembly seats won in the three districts of Ahmedabad, Mehsana and Kaira. See D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and Kirtidev D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat: Development of a Decade, 1952-62. (Ahmedabad: 1966).

Saurashtra remained solidly Congress in the 1957 elections. Two of the ministerial incumbents from mainland Gujarat were defeated and could not be included in the Ministry of the bilingual State. When the separate State of Gujarat was eventually formed in 1960, fresh elections were impracticable, so the Ministry was formed out of those who were already in the composite Ministry of the bilingual State. Consequently, three out of five Ministers were the Saurashtrians, Jivraj Mehta, Rasiklal Parikh and Ratubhai Adani.¹⁷ Therefore, the Ministerial set-up in the new State had little direct relationship with the G.P.C.C., which now in common with other State P.C.Cs was attempting to exert stronger influence on the State Government. Thus the G.P.C.C.-Ministerial rivalry of the early 1960s between Jivraj Mehta, the Chief Minister, and his colleagues on the one hand, and Morarji Desai and Balvantrai Mehta on the other, can be explained in terms of Saurashtra - Gujarat rivalry, and an attempt by mainland Gujarat leaders to correct the ministerial imbalance which was in favour of Saurashtra at the inception of the State. Balvantrai Mehta's ministry (he was Chief Minister between 1963 and 1965) was constructed with a view to balancing the Saurashtra and Gujarat elements in the Cabinet; and, on the accidental death of Balvantrai Mehta in a plane crash in 1965, the choice of Hitendra Desai of Surat as the new Chief Minister clearly showed that the pendulum of political power had swung unmistakably in favour of Central and South Gujarat leaders.¹⁸

Keeping in mind this socioeconomic and political background of the Saurashtra-Gujarat rivalry, we now turn to

17. These three together monopolized most of the important portfolios, such as Home, Co-operation, Agriculture.

18. D.N. Pathak, "State Politics in Gujarat: Some Determinants". In Iqbal Narain (ed.), State Politics in India. (Meerut: 1968).

analysing the State-level factional conflict of the early 1960s. The Gujarat-Saurashtra rivalry had remained in check under the composite State of Bigger Bombay. However, with the creation of a separate State of Gujarat in 1960, this narrower field of political activity brought political rivalries to the fore. The factional dispute goes back to the Bhavnagar Session of the A.I.C.C. in 1961, when the Congress President, K. Kamraj, put forward the Ten Year Rule, requiring Ministers and M.L.A.s of more than ten years standing to resign and devote themselves to party work, as a device to cleanse the Congress of its corruption. The G.P.C.C. wing led by Morarji Desai and Balvantrai Mehta, who had gained control of the State Congress, seized upon this as an excellent instrument with which to dislodge the Saurashtrian Ministerial trio of Jivraj Mehta, Rasikal Parikh and Ratubhai Adani from the State Government.¹⁹ The G.P.C.C. leaders' demand that the Ten Year Rule should be meticulously observed in the selection of candidates for the third General Elections in 1962 clearly showed their determination to keep the Saurashtrian trio of Ministers out of the elections.

However, Jivraj Mehta and his colleagues were determined to contest the elections in spite of the hard-line taken by the organizational wing of the G.P.C.C. They set about consolidating their positions in their respective constituencies of Amreli, Junagadh, and Surendranagar. The D.C.Qs of each of these constituencies demanded that the sitting Minister alone should be given the Congress ticket for the constituency, despite the Ten Year Rule. The G.P.C.C. condemned this practice

19. Times of India (Bombay), 7 Jan., 1961.

of the Mandal and District Committees adopting resolutions favouring particular candidates from their areas. The Ten Year Rule would have affected about 40 M.L.As and 8 M.Ps. Of these only 18 reapplied, and 10 of these withdrew at the appeal of Morarji Desai.²⁰ Jivraj Mehta and his colleagues, however, remained adamant in their determination to contest the elections. Finally, an understanding was reached with Morarji Desai on July 26, 1961, whereby it was decided to leave it to the P.E.C. to decide whether applications for party tickets were according to the rules or not.²¹

Although Jivraj Mehta and a few of his colleagues were finally given tickets, the bulk of candidates selected by the P.E.C., which was dominated by the organizational wing of the party, were sympathetic to that wing; this was a crucial tactical gain since, after the elections, the next Chief Minister would be chosen by a majority of Congress legislators. Jivraj Mehta wrote to the Central Election Committee complaining against the selection of candidates. He declared that the G.P.C.C. had never adopted the Ten Year Rule, and that it had no authority to make such a rule, which only the A.I.C.C. could do. He refuted the G.P.C.C. claim that all but two of the candidates were selected unanimously. In a statement on November 16, 1971, he added that he had expressed his dissent in the G.P.C.C. meeting, which had decided to implement the Ten Year Rule, and his determination to write to the C.E.C. urging a reconsideration of 21 seats allocated by the P.E.C. and insisting that applications for party tickets which had been withdrawn by applicants under pressure of the so-called Ten Year Rule

20. Gujarat Samachar, 11 July , 1961.

21. Times of India (Bombay) 17 July , 1961.

should be reconsidered by the C.E.C.²²

Morarji Desai took this as a direct challenge to his leadership, and, at a closed-door meeting of the G.P.C.C. on November 11, 1961, he condemned the activities of those who were challenging the decisions of the P.E.C.²³ The leaders of the organizational wing declared that the selection of all but two of the Congress candidates had been unanimous, and that Jivraj Mehta was present at the meeting in which the selection was made, thus he had no right to challenge these decisions. The decision about the implementation of the Ten Year Rule was taken at a combined meeting of the P.E.C. and G.P.C.C., and was recorded in the minutes of the G.P.C.C., signed by Jivraj Mehta, so it was alleged. In spite of this, organizational leaders said the objections of certain Ministers were taken into account, and the selection of candidates was made entirely on the merits of the case and not according to the Ten Year Rule.²⁴

The upshot was that, although Jivraj Mehta and his colleagues received tickets, the C.E.C. accepted most of the suggestions of the G.P.E.C., and made only four changes in the assembly nominations, only two of which corresponded with the suggestions made by Jivraj Mehta. Thus, out of 48 Ten Year Rule-wallahs i.e. those affected by the Ten Year Rule, only five were given tickets and two more were accommodated by the decision of the C.E.C. All seemed to be going smoothly for the organizational wing, and the G.P.C.C. let it be known that the new Cabinet would be composed of Balvantrai Mehta as Chief Minister, Thakorbbhai Desai of South Gujarat, who was the G.P.C.C. President, and Babubhai J. Patel of Kaira district. However,

22. Gujarat Samachar, 11 Nov. , 1961.

23. " " , 11 Nov. , 1961.

24. " " , 11 Nov. , 1961.

the whims of the electorate upset these elaborate calculations, for all three stalwarts of the organizational wing were defeated in the elections, and Jivraj Mehta once more headed the Cabinet with his two colleagues.

Despite this setback, the organizational wing still held the winning card: they commanded a majority of the newly-elected Congress Party legislators, and an absolute majority in the State Assembly. Thus, in 1963, Balvantrai Mehta got into the Legislative Assembly from a conveniently vacated seat in Sihore constituency and forced a showdown with Jivraj Mehta. A majority of Congress legislators were loyal to the organizational wing, and voted out the Jivraj Mehta ministry, and gave Balvantrai Mehta his chance to be the Chief Minister.²⁵

This set the factional stage for the rest of the decade: the State Government was dominated by leaders from South and Central Gujarat and Bhavnagar till the end of the decade; so much so that an Ahmedabadi Congress politician could say that Gujarat was ruled by a clique from Surat, headed by Morarji Desai and Hitendra Desai, the Chief Minister after 1965.²⁶ The three Saurashtrian leaders remained in the political wilderness for many long years, nursing their grievances. In the 1967 General Elections, the G.P.E.C. avoided giving tickets to the dissident group, led by Rasiklal Parikh and Ratubhai Adani.²⁷ Unlike the 1962 General Elections, the D.C.Cs. were not allowed

25. D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and Kirtidev D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat: Development of a Decade, 1952-62. (Ahmedabad: 1966).

26. Remark made by Trikamlal Patel, former Ahmedabad D.C.C. President in an interview in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

27. P.N. Sheth, "Elections in Gujarat: The Emerging Pattern". In S.P. Varma and I. Narain (eds.), Fourth General Election in India, Vol. 1: Political Surveys. (Bombay: 1968). Jivraj Mehta was for some years absent from Saurashtra as High Commissioner in London.

an effective say in the allocation of tickets, which was finally decided by the P.E.C. Congress defections in Saurashtra, particularly in Jambusar, Surendranagar, Junagadh and Rajkot, gave Swatantra its chance to win a sizable number of seats in Saurashtra: it captured the parliamentary seats of Surendranagar, Junagadh and Jamnagar and retained that of Rajkot. An important factor in the Swatantra success was their ability to win over the Agriculturists' Association of Saurashtra, controlled by the newly-rich farmers-cum-traders of that region, who were sympathetic to the Rasiklal group. These rich farmers joined the Swatantra party before the election on the promise of free trade in groundnut seeds and groundnut oil.²⁸ The Congress strength in Saurashtra fell considerably in 1967 compared to 1962: in 1962 Congress had 34 seats out of 43, whereas in 1967 it secured only 23 out of 46, losing 11 seats.²⁹

During the mid-60s a separatist political movement grew up in Saurashtra, but it failed to gain any real emotional hold over the Saurashtra people and leaders. A Rajkot lawyer and Congress party leader, Ratilal Tanna, who voiced the grievances of Saurashtra against the State Government, and demanded a separate State of Saurashtra, ³⁰ contested the 1967 Parliamentary election from Rajkot as an Independent on a separatist

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28. "Gujarat Letter: Behind the Saurashtra State Demand." Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 1, no. 2 (August 27, 1966), pp. 70-1; "Gujarat Letter: Congress vs. Swatantra in Gujarat." EPW, vol. 1, no. 10 (October 22, 1966), pp. 398-403; "Gujarat Letter: Defections Galore." EPW, vol. 1, no. 17 (December 10, 1966), pp. 723-5; and Anil Bhatt, "Two-Party System Emerging in Gujarat." EPW, vol. 1, no. 17 (December 10, 1966), pp. 711-12.
29. "Gujarat Letter: Fewer Seats, but Congress more Cohesive." EPW, vol. 2, no. 9 (March 6, 1966), pp. 476-9.
30. See Ratilal Tanna, Alag Saurashtra Sha Naate ? (Why not a Separate Saurashtra State ?) (1967).

platform, but lost outright, polling only 9.07% of the total vote. However, demands for economic justice for Saurashtra during the '60s met with greater success: before the 1967 elections, the Gujarat Government tried to defuse a major economic issue by cancelling the restrictions on the sale of groundnut oil, which had been in effect for two years.³¹ In the early 1970s, the oil millers of Saurashtra, led by Vallabhbhai Patel, successfully rose up against the Gujarat Government's declaration that 15% of all groundnuts and 20% of the amount being exported from the State would be subject to procurement at especially low prices for later sale in government-subsidized shops. Vallabhbhai Patel railed against the Gujarat Government for penalizing the farmers, millers and merchants of Saurashtra for the benefit of the upper middle classes of Ahmedabad.³² He led the millers of Saurashtra on strike and rallied Congress(0) and Opposition legislators against the State Government's policy. Saurashtra's agro-industrial bloc secured almost immediate relief: on Jan. 27th, 1970, the State Government terminated the oil levy and replaced it with a policy of voluntary procurement at a much higher price level.

However, the political ambitions of Saurashtra leaders, as opposed to their economic demands had little success or outlet until the Congress split in 1969 and the growing strength of Indira Gandhi's Ruling Congress party presented them with an unprecedented opportunity, which will be dealt with subsequently. (See Chapter IX).

These State-level struggles were immensely important for Ahmedabad city politics: Central and South Gujarat leaders

31. Spodek, pp. 424-5.

32. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 17 Jan. , 1970.

had secured dominance in the State P.C.C. and State Government, and Morarji Desai, Thakorebhai Desai and Hitendra Desai of Surat, and Babubhai J. Patel and Tribhovandas Patel of Kaira district, had emerged as key Congress leaders at the State level. This was the new framework of State power with which aspiring Ahmedabad politicians had to come to terms.

2. Business and State-Local Linkages.

The textile magnate élite of Ahmedabad played a crucial role in city politics during the 1950s and 1960s. A representative of the textile magnates, the wealthy millowner, ~~Chinubhai~~ Chimanbhai Sheth, was Mayor of the Ahmedabad Corporation for much of the 1950s, and big business men occupied the three most influential positions in the Corporation, those of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Standing Committee for much of the 1950s and 60s.

During the early 50s, the Ahmedabad textile élite was staunchly Congress. However, Ahmedabad business leaders for the first time took an anti-Congress stance during the Maha Gujarat movement for a separate linguistic State of Gujarat.³³ During this period, for the first time, they came into conflict with the national-level leaders of Gujarat, and the State Congress party leaders, who went along with the ambitions of national-level, Gujarati leaders in favouring a bigger bilingual State of Bombay. It was better for national-level, Gujarati leaders to have a bigger, bilingual State, which included the important city of Bombay, over which Gujarati leaders had a powerful hold, than a small unilingual region as a bargaining counter in national politics. Morarji Desai also had aspirations

33. R. W. Stern, The Process of Opposition in India, Two Case Studies of How Policy Shapes Politics, (1970).

to become Chief Minister of Bombay State. The bigger bilingual State which would send 66 (22 from Gujarat and 44 from Maharashtra) members to the Lok Sabha, and would include Gujarati-dominated Bombay, would provide greater bargaining power to the national Congress leadership of Gujarat. It was for this reason that Morarji Desai was prepared to sacrifice the regional interests of Gujarat to build up his own power at the national level.³⁴ Business leaders, however, wanted a State capital of their own so they could be near the seat of political power and have access to more responsive political patronage. However, at the same time, the financial interests of Gujarat and Bombay City were interconnected and Ahmedabad business leaders wanted to preserve close ties with Bombay city. Thus, although they initially backed the Maha Gujarat movement and the M.G.J.P., they came to regard the three-unit formula for separate linguistic States of Gujarat and Maharashtra and autonomy for Bombay City as the only really satisfactory solution. Thus the capitalist and upper class elements of Ahmedabad, who had walked out of the Ahmedabad City D.C.C. on the linguistic issue and supported the Mahagujarat movement, soon backed out and established the Nagrik Paksh or Citizens' Party in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation under the leadership of Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth winning an impressive victory of 46 out of the total of 64 Municipal Corporation seats in the 1957 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections. The loss of business and middle class support caused the first major dent in Congress electoral hegemony in Ahmedabad City.³⁵

34. D.N. Pathak, "State Politics in Gujarat: Some Determinants." In Iqbal Narain (ed.) State Politics in India. (Meerut: 1968).

35. D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and K.D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat. (1966).

The estrangement between Ahmedabad business leaders and the State Congress, however, did not outlive the creation of the separate State of Gujarat in May, 1960, and business leaders soon reaffirmed their loyalty to the Congress, disbanded the ~~Nagrik~~ Paksh and returned to the Congress fold. The factional rivalry between the G.P.C.C. and the Jivraj Mehta ministry of the early 60s found business leaders divided to some extent in their loyalties. Some business leaders of Ahmedabad, notably Vadilal Mehta and Amrutlal Hargovandas sided with Jivraj Mehta in this State-level factional dispute, and, on the removal of Jivraj Mehta from power, they moved away from the Congress.³⁶ Many others, however, including Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas were in the camp of Moraji Desai and G.P.C.C. leaders. In the A.I.C.C. session at Bhavnagar in early 1961, the G.P.C.C.-ministerial dispute first came to the fore and, in addition, discussions were held by G.P.C.C. leaders on the coming Municipal Corporation election in Ahmedabad later that year, which was viewed as an important rehearsal and indicator for the 1962 General Elections. It is highly significant that the name of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas was put forward even at this stage for the post of future Mayor of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, and Moraji Desai himself favoured Jaikrishnabhai as the Congress nominee for Mayor.³⁷ Jaikrishnabhai had a very good understanding and relationship with the victors of the State factional dispute of the early 1960s,³⁸ who were in power in the G.P.C.C. and the Congress legislature party till the end of the decade, and this enabled

36. K.D. Desai, "Socioeconomic Infrastructure of Gujarat Politics." In Iqbal Narain (ed.) State Politics in India. (Meerut: 1968).

37. D.N. Pathak, The 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections, (1962) (in Gujarati).

38. Interview with Mr. GG in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

him to accomplish many important projects in Ahmedabad City during his Mayorship with the co-operation of State-level leaders.³⁹ It was, for example, during the Mayorship of Jaikrishnabhai that the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation undertook the establishment of a large-scale Municipal Dairy in 1962 to provide a permanent solution to the city's problem of acute shortage of pure milk. This project required an investment of Rs.90 lakhs. When approached the State Government was willing to provide a subsidy of Rs.30.80 lakhs; a donation was received from U.N.I.C.E.F. of Rs.26 lakhs, and the rest of the money was raised by the Corporation.⁴⁰ This and other important projects of the period received assistance and co-operation from the State Government - a very different situation to that faced by the Janta Parishad in its tenure of power in the Corporation from 1965 to 1969, when it experienced great difficulty in obtaining State Government financial assistance.⁴¹

Ahmedabad business leaders also benefited from the increasing emphasis on economic development and large State investments particularly in Central and Southern Gujarat with the shift in State power to Congress leaders of Central and Southern Gujarat in the early 60s. With the discovery of oil in Cambay in 1958 and Ankleshvar in 1960, the Gujarat State Government established the Koyali oil refinery near

39. State Government co-operation and financial assistance during this period was symbolised in the City Co-ordination Council, see Chapter IV.

40. Information provided by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.

41. Indulal Yagnik, The Successful Work of the Janta Parishad in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. (The Janta Parishad's 1969 Municipal Election Manifesto.) (Trans. from the Gujarati.) (Ahmedabad: 1969); and interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Baroda, and by 1964 the supply of natural gas to the Dhuvaran power station and the Uttaran power-station in South Gujarat had begun. Thus private industrial units at Baroda, Ahmedabad, Surat and Kalol began to receive the benefits of a new supply of cheaper and more convenient fuel in the place of coal.⁴²

In 1968, the State Government undertook a Regional Development Plan of the Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat region, which represented the first attempt at State-level regional planning of a highly developed area of Gujarat with complex problems of urbanization, transportation etc.⁴³

The increasing collaboration between the new State Government and business leaders was epitomized in the establishment in 1961-62 of the first joint-sector enterprise, involving massive State investment and drawing on the managerial skills of business leaders. This was the setting up of a nitrogenous fertilizer factory near Baroda, which was the most important industrial project of all the schemes included in the Third Plan (1961-66). It envisaged an investment of more than Rs.34 crores, and gas and naptha were made available from the newly-established Koyali oil refinery to feed the new fertilizer plant, which played an important part in the petrochemical complex established in the region surrounding the refinery.⁴⁴ Thus the Gujarat State Fertilizers Co. Ltd. was formed in 1961 to establish and run this vital new joint-sector project, and significantly the Chairman appointed by

42. H. S. Sawhney, The Oil and Natural Gas Commission's Role in the State's Growth, Financial Express (Bombay), Supplement, 3 Nov. 1972.

43. Gujarat, 1969, (a reference book), p.190.

44. Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Socioeconomic Review of Gujarat State: 1965-66. (Directorate of Information, Government of Gujarat, Ahmedabad: 1966).

the State Government was a leading Ahmedabad textile magnate, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas who has remained Chairman of this highly successful, profitable and innovative enterprise for over a decade. In this way, State-business collaboration grew, and the State Government helped Ahmedabad textile magnates to diversify their economic interests. The State Fertilizer plant was also the first venture in rural-urban industrial co-operation, for the manufacture of fertilizers had important consequences for agricultural methods and production, and the Gujarat State Fertilizers Company Ltd. provided an excellent after-sale service, giving guidance and help to farmers in how to take the maximum economic benefit from the input of fertilizers.⁴⁵

Before 1960, the industrial development of Gujarat had suffered from the remoteness of Gujarat business leaders from the centre of State power in Bombay City. Before 1960, there was not a single public sector undertaking in Gujarat. However, with the creation of a separate State of Gujarat in 1960, the new State Government collaborated with business leaders, and gave important concessions and incentives to encourage rapid industrial development in the State, particularly in the Central and Southern Gujarat region. Consequently, the real industrial development of Gujarat started after 1960: total industrial investment, which was about Rs.175 crores in 1960 went up to about Rs.850 crores by March 1972. After

45. Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, Article on the Gujarat State Fertilizer Company. Financial Times (Bombay), Supplement, 3 November, 1972.

1960, new industries were exempted from the payment of electricity duty on power consumption for the first five years, and self-generating units were exempted for ten years. The Gujarat Government developed numerous State Corporations to act as major instruments of rapid industrial growth. The first, the Gujarat State Finance Corporation, was set up in 1960, and, between 1960 and 1972, it sanctioned loans to industrial units to the value of Rs.37.05 crores. The Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation was also set up in 1962. It was concerned to provide infrastructural facilities like power, water, roads, industrial sheds, post-offices, telephones, banks etc. to encourage the establishment of new industrial units. The Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation developed various industrial estates: the pioneering estates being those of Naroda, Odhav and Vatva near Ahmedabad. At the recommendation of the City Coordination Council, Ahmedabad (consisting of City leaders and State-level leaders), the Government of Gujarat decided to establish an industrial township near Ahmedabad. The Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation was given the task of developing the three industrial estates of Naroda, Odhav and Vatva near Ahmedabad. Naroda is about three miles away from Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation limits on the Ahmedabad-Delhi National Highway No. 8-A. The Odhav estate is just four miles from Ahmedabad railway station, adjacent to the municipal limits; and Vatva township is only two miles from the municipal limits, and provides large plots for large-scale industries requiring railway sidings facilities.⁴⁶ In 1968, the Gujarat Government set up the Gujarat Industrial

46. See Census Special Report I, pp.11-12.

Investment Corporation to help finance small entrepreneurs, since the State Finance Corporation and the banks could not innovate and experiment in this regard due either to statutory limitations or conservative policy traditions. In collaboration with the Gujarat State Finance Corporation and the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, the Gujarat State Industrial Investment Corporation has implemented two pioneering schemes: a Technicians' Scheme, providing technicians initially with 100% finance to establish an industrial enterprise, and an entrepreneurship development scheme.⁴⁷ State aid, particularly financial aid, and development of infrastructural facilities for industry, was of inestimable value to private businessmen, whose dependence on the State for licenses for establishing and expanding undertakings, permits for the import of raw materials, machinery spare parts and technological expertise, financial assistance etc. was crucial.

Ahmedabad business leaders played a prominent part in many of these State-level Corporations: Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas was the Chairman of the Gujarat State Fertilizer Company, the first joint-sector enterprise. His brother, Balkrishna Harivallabhdas was for a time Chairman of the Gujarat State Finance Corporation. Before him, from 1960 to 1964, Shri Amritlal Hargovandas, influential Ahmedabadi textile industrialist, was Chairman, succeeded by another prominent Ahmedabad industrialist, Shri Navnitlal Sakarlal Sodhan.

47. Ghanshyambhai Oza, "Gujarat Looks Ahead: Perspective Plan." and Chimanlal Patel (then Minister for Industries and Power), "Strategy for Speedy Development". Financial Times, Supplement, 3 November, 1972.

Chinubhai Chimanlal, textile magnate and former Mayor of Ahmedabad, was Chairman of the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation for five years between 1962 and 1967. Another leading Ahmedabadi business leader and former President of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, Jayantibhai Bhikhabhai, was Chairman of the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation between 1970 and 1972. Another Ahmedabad business tycoon, Rohit C. Mehta, was Chairman of the Gujarat State Export Corporation, set up in 1965 to promote the growth of exports. Shri Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta, textile industrialist of Ahmedabad, was Chairman of the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation between 1960 and 1966.⁴⁸

During the textile crisis of the mid and late 1960s, when textile mills were suffering from the general industrial recession, the effects of devaluation of the rupee, acute raw material shortages, rising wage bills, lack of working capital etc., the Ahmedabad textile élite received considerable help from the State Government. Up to 1968, the Gujarat Government provided guarantees worth Rs.198.50 lakhs and Rs.106.75 lakhs under reduced margin to textile units.⁴⁹

Thus Ahmedabad business leaders, in their political leadership of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and in their wider economic and business interests, established vitally important linkages with State-level political leaders, and obtained access to important State-level Corporations with their wider patronage powers as well as essential political

48. Gujarat, 1969. (a reference manual), pp. 58-60, and information provided by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.

49. Gujarat, 1969. (a reference manual), pp.58-60.

and economic support from State-level leaders for expansion, diversification and in periods of economic difficulty. In municipal matters, from trying to establish important projects and schemes for the Municipal Corporation to trying to gain reductions in octroi and Special Property taxation, Ahmedabad business leaders were well aware of the importance of access to and influence with State-level political leaders.

3. The Majur Mahajan and State-Level Linkages.

The Majur Mahajan had evolved a unique form of trade unionism under the guidance of Gandhi, based on non-violence, co-operation between employers and workers, conciliation and voluntary arbitration rather than resort to strikes in the settlement of industrial disputes, workers' education and uplift. This was backed by an efficient and disciplined trade union organization with large and stable membership figures and a sound financial base, and the development of a rank and file leadership drawn from the working-class, who were elected as shop stewards or pratinidhis in each mill.

Its continuing and growing power was, however, dependent on close links with the Congress party at the local, State and national levels, and on influence and power in State and national trade union circles. Its top-level leaders, particularly Gulzarilal Nanda and Khandubhai Desai, had close links with State Congress and national-level Congress leaders, particularly Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Morarji Desai. T.L.A. leaders, particularly Khandubhai Desai and Gulzarilal Nanda, each at one time General Secretary of the T.L.A., exerted an enormous influence on labour legislation in Bombay State and in India as a whole, when they were elected to the State and

national legislatures and made Labour Ministers. Gulzarilal Nanda was largely responsible for framing the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946, while he was Labour Minister in the second popular Kher Ministry. The B.I.R.A. regulated labour relations in Bombay State and continues in force in Gujarat State today. Khandubhai Desai a member of the Working Committee of the A.I.C.C. was Central Cabinet Minister for Labour from 1954 - 57, and on his resignation, the Ministry went to Gulzarilal Nanda who later became Home Minister. Thus T.L.A. leaders were able to mould labour legislation at both the State and Central levels according to the experience and principles of the Gandhian trade union movement of the T.L.A.⁵⁰

In addition, a powerful apex body of Gandhian-inspired trade unions, the Indian National Trades Union Congress, was established in 1947 by T.L.A. leaders, with the help of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the Congress Working Committee, to counteract the Communist domination of the All India Trades Union Congress. Gandhian principles of labour relations and trade unionism had been disseminated to labour leaders in training classes held in Ahmedabad in 1937, and these leaders later became key figures in the I.N.T.U.C. In 1938, a formal body, the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh, had been set up to propagate Gandhian principles of trade unionism. The H.M.S.S. was later instrumental, with the help of the Congress Working Committee, in setting up the I.N.T.U.C. On the 3rd and 4th May, 1947, the H.M.S.S. called a conference in Delhi to establish the I.N.T.U.C. at which representatives of 200 trade unions with a total membership of 575,000 attended. The I.N.T.U.C.'s

50. Pamphlets on the T.L.A. by Khandubhai Desai (1947), and T.L.A. Annual Reports.

constitution was similar to that of the T.L.A. with its emphasis on negotiations between labour and employers, conciliation and adjudication of industrial disputes in preference to strike action, the responsibility of workers towards the industry and the community, and the use of non-violent constitutional means to redress grievances. Throughout the 50s and 60s, the top I.N.T.U.C. leadership was largely in the hands of T.L.A. or Ahmedabad-trained leaders. Khandubhai Desai was the first General-Secretary of the I.N.T.U.C. and Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, General-Secretary of the Ahmedabad T.L.A. during the 1960s until his death in early 1973, was also a General-Secretary of the I.N.T.U.C. Majur Mahajan leaders, notably Somnath Dave, N.H. Shaikh and Arvind Buch, all Secretaries of the Ahmedabad T.L.A., have dominated the leadership of the Gujarat Branch of the I.N.T.U.C. As principal labour representative in most of the tripartite bodies constituted by the government from specific wage boards to more general policy-oriented bodies at the Central, State or industry-level, and as labour representative at the annual All-India Labour Conference, in many State cabinets and in various I.N.C. bodies, such as the key Working Committee and its subcommittee to evaluate the progress of the Plans, the I.N.T.U.C. exerted an enormous influence over labour policy formation. I.N.T.U.C. leaders were also represented on the boards of several of the nationalized public sector enterprises. Thus close links with the Congress party and its leaders at the Central and State levels, and active involvement in Central and State legislation, and committees, and bodies, through the I.N.T.U.C. enabled Ahmedabad T.L.A. leaders to consolidate and extend their hold over the Ahmedabad working-class, and to deliver the goods, in

terms of high wages, bonus, housing etc. through State and Central influence to the benefit of the Ahmedabad worker. Although there was a genuine attempt by T.L.A. leaders to influence All India labour welfare through the I.N.T.U.C. and relationships with the Congress party at State and Central levels and play a national role, the undoubted feedback of this influence on the Ahmedabad worker was a major element in the retention by the T.L.A. leaders of a strong trade union base in Ahmedabad.⁵¹

Looking in detail at Majur Mahajan State-local linkages in the context of Gujarat in the late '50s and throughout the '60s, the Majur Mahajan played a vital role in the local and State Congress party. During the Maha Gujarat movement, when Trikamlal Patel, then President of the Ahmedabad City D.C.C., took a majority of City D.C.C. members out of the Congress to join the Maha Gujarat agitation and eventually form the Nagrik Paksh which captured power in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, the Majur Mahajan remained loyal to the Congress party over the linguistic issue, which largely animated the middle-class rather than the working-class of Ahmedabad. The Majur Mahajan constituted about ten to twelve members out of a total of seventy in the Ahmedabad D.C.C. and these aligned themselves with the Vimalbhai N. Shah faction, known as the most loyal faction for its loyalty to Moraji Desai and the G.P.C.C. stand on the linguistic issue.⁵² Many Majur Mahajan leaders were largely Banias and Nagar Brahmins, and they had an excellent relationship with Vimalbhai N. Shah, who was

51. Kannappan III.

52. Interviews with Mr. B and Mr. H in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

also a Bania and a Robert Owen-type industrialist with a deep interest in trade union activities. Another faction was led by Jamnashankar Pandya, a Brahmin, which was known as the loyal faction, since, although it dissented from the official State Congress line on the linguistic issue, it was not prepared to leave the party on this issue. This group was allied with the Vimalbhai N. Shah faction. The third faction, at this time, was led by Trikamlal Patel and was known as the disloyal faction for its defection from the Congress on the linguistic issue. Although this contained a large Patel element, factions did not present clear-cut divisions along caste lines. There was competition and rivalry among the dominant castes of Brahmins, Banias and Patels in the factional politics of Ahmedabad City, but personality conflicts and differences between the Majur Mahajan element and business elements were cross-cutting influences in factional disputes, preventing any rigid divisions along purely caste lines.⁵³

Thus, during the linguistic agitation, the Majur Mahajan, in alliance with the Vimalbhai N. Shah faction gained control of the Ahmedabad City D.C.C., which left it in a strong bargaining position in 1960 on the establishment of a separate State of Gujarat. Unlike, for example, Madurai,⁵⁴ where the local I.N.T.U.C. union had no formal representation on neighbourhood mandal Congress committees and, therefore, little influence in the City D.C.C., the Ahmedabad Majur Mahajan was strongly represented on mandal and taluka Congress Committees,

53. Interviews with Mr. L and Mr. M in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

54. See Myron Weiner, "Variations on Rural Themes: Madurai." In Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress. (Chicago: 1967), pp. 381-456.

especially in industrial labour wards of the City, and thus exerted considerable influence in the City D.C.C., enabling it to try successfully for Congress tickets for municipal corporation State legislative assembly and parliamentary elections.⁵⁵ The increased importance of Ahmedabad as the temporary capital of the new State of Gujarat and its predominantly industrial character also increased the political leverage of the Majur Mahajan in G.P.C.C. circles, where its representatives, Shyamprasad Vasavda, Khandubhai Desai, Manharlal Shukla and Shantilal Shah, exerted a great deal of influence. Shyamprasad Vasavda clashed with Thakorebhai Desai, who was President of the G.P.C.C. in 1961, and demanded greater power for the Majur Mahajan - in view of the increased importance of Ahmedabad City whose large industrial labour force was controlled largely by the T.L.A. - in the selection of candidates for municipal, State Assembly and Lok Sabha elections from Ahmedabad City and greater say over the composition of the Municipal Standing Committee in particular. Shyamprasad Vasavda also demanded that a representative of the T.L.A. and the Gujarat I.N.T.U.C. should be taken into the Cabinet as Labour Minister as a matter of policy. A tussle ensued between the

55. From the grass-roots upward, the Majur Mahajan was strongly represented on Congress party committees, e.g. in the largely industrial ward of Baherampura, a 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal election ward, two of the three Congress candidates were Majur Mahajan workers, members of the Majur Mahajan for many years. In addition, one of them, Madarsing Kalusing, was a member of the Kankaria - Baherampura Congress Taluka Committee, and the other, Khemabhai Maganlal Leva, was a member of the Baherampura Ward Committee for thirty years. Many Majur Mahajan candidates were Presidents and Vice-Presidents of their ward and Taluka Congress Committees, see Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election, 1969: Our Candidates, a publication of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, giving a political and socioeconomic portrait of all party candidates.

Majur Mahajan and the Congress party elements in the G.P.C.C., in which Vasavda threatened that, despite a good working relationship with the Congress for years, it was not impossible for the Majur Mahajan to think of leaving the Congress.⁵⁶ As a result, in the 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections, the Majur Mahajan was given the final power of selection of 31 candidates drawn from the Majur Mahajan and representing industrial labour wards in the city. The overwhelming success of the Majur Mahajan's municipal candidates, 29 of whom succeeded in winning the elections, reinforced the bargaining power of the Majur Mahajan in the 1962 General Elections, for with 29 Majur Mahajan municipal corporators, the Majur Mahajan element in the Corporation for the first time outnumbered the business and middle class element in the Congress Corporation party of 50.

Thus in the 1962 General Elections, the Majur Mahajan secured the right to nominate four of its own candidates for State Assembly seats from industrial labour constituencies, and the Lok Sabha candidate from Ahmedabad City. Although the prestige Lok Sabha seat contested by Vasavda himself was lost to Indulal Yagnik, the M.G.J.P. candidate, the four Assembly Candidates of the Majur Mahajan: Jesingbhai Parmar, Mangubhai Patel, Mohanlal Popatlal Vyas and Mangaldas Uttaram Pandya, were all successful from their respective constituencies of Gomptipur, Shaherkotda, Dariapur-Kazipur and Asarva. In addition,

56. See unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Majur Mahajan by Dr. Paresh Majumdar, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad. Vasavda is quoted in the Majur Sandesh, 18 Jan., 1961, as saying, "We have worked with the Congress for years. But at present no such situation has arisen as would compel us to think of severing our relations with it so long as all these things exist there is no reason for us to get out of the Congress. But it is true that, if the Congress gives up its principles and capable leaders walk out of it, we too may think of doing so."

an unwritten convention came to be established that a Majur Mahajan leader would be taken into the State Cabinet as Labour Minister. This commenced with the appointment of Mohanlal Popatlal Vyas of the T.L.A. as Labour Minister of Gujarat State in 1962. Vasavda was able to select the Labour Minister of his choice. In the 1967 General Elections, the Ahmedabad T.L.A. again secured the Lok Sabha ticket from Ahmedabad City for Vasavda, and four Legislative Assembly tickets from Ahmedabad City. In 1967 also Vasavda was defeated by Indulal Yagnik, and the former Labour Minister of Gujarat, Mohanal P. Vyas, was also defeated in the State Assembly election from Shahpur constituency. However, the other three T.L.A. State Assembly candidates: Jesingbhai Parmar, Manharlal T. Shukla and Shantilal R. Shah were all successfully elected from Kankaria, Asarva and Rakhial constituencies respectively.⁵⁷

The swing of political power during the early 60s away from ~~Saurashtra~~ leaders to the leaders of Central and Southern Gujarat also benefited Ahmedabad and the Majur Mahajan, and good working relationships were established between Majur Mahajan leaders, like Khandubhai Desai and Vasavda, and ~~Momaji~~ Desai, the State Congress boss. The Majur Mahajan also gained power in State-level decision-making structures having an important bearing on Ahmedabad City, which gave it control of important patronage with which to consolidate its dominant position in Ahmedabad City. For example, Nurmahomed Shaikh, T.L.A. Secretary, was made Chairman of the Gujarat State Housing Board in September 1967. Manharlal Shukla was a member of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation.⁵⁸ The effectiveness

57. Interviews with Majur Mahajan leaders in Ahmedabad in March, 1971.

58. Majur Mahajan Annual Report (1967).

of industrial labour lobbying can be seen in the preference shown by the Gujarat Housing Board towards industrial housing schemes, many of which were located in Ahmedabad City, as the following table shows:

Table 1.⁵⁹ Housing Schemes operated by the Gujarat State Housing Board up till 1969.

<u>Housing Schemes:</u>	<u>No. of Tenements completed plus under construc- tion on 31.3.'69.</u>	<u>Expenditure incurred up to 31.3.'69.</u>
1. Subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme.	19740 plus 150	Rs.727.72 lakhs
2. Low Income Group Housing Scheme	2362 plus 1574	Rs.256.81 lakhs
3. Middle Income Group Housing Scheme	606 plus 402	Rs.137.74 "
Total:	22708 plus 2126	Rs.1127.27 "

Ahmedabad, being the centre of the modern sector, benefited most from industrial housing Schemes (State-subsidized housing tenements were built in many labour wards of the city). Out of a total investment of Rs.112 727^{lakhs}/by the Gujarat State Housing Board by the end of 1969, the bulk of it, Rs.727.72 lakhs went to benefit the industrial workers, particularly of Ahmedabad, who constituted, as we have already seen, a labour aristocracy, a relative élite thanks to the efforts of powerful trade union organizations, such as the Majur Mahajan. A relatively small proportion of total investment Rs.256.81 lakhs, went to help the city's low-income groups. Under the Employees' State Insurance Scheme, the Housing Board had undertaken works to the value of Rs. 3 crores, and had constructed thirty-three dispensaries in Ahmedabad by 1969, and handed these over to the

59. Table taken from Gujarat, 1969, p.252.

Employees' State Insurance Corporation. It was also engaged in constructing a 200 bed T.B. Hospital at Naroda, Ahmedabad, and a 500 bed General Hospital at Bapunagar, Ahmedabad. Thus the first beneficiary of the activities of both the Gujarat State Housing Board and the E.S.I. Corporation was the city of Ahmedabad.

Shantilal Shah, another Majur Mahajan leader, was a member of the Gujarat State Finance Corporation in 1962, and of the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation up till 1967, and, subsequently, as Labour Minister of Gujarat State from 1967, he was able to obtain important legislative and bureaucratic support for his lieutenants in the Ahmedabad labour arena, enabling them to consolidate Congress control of the textile labour force after the inroads made by the Sangram Samiti in the mid 60s.

As Labour Minister⁶⁰ Shantilal Shah had a unique chance to influence industrial workers' housing development. He made it possible for industrial workers, with State help, to eventually become owners of their own homes. A subsidized Housing Scheme was in operation, by which industrial workers in cooperative housing societies could build houses, on the basis of a 50% loan, repayable over a long period, and a 50% subsidy by the State Government, in which they would be paying subsidized rent. Shantilal Shah succeeded in removing the subsidy element to enable the industrial worker to eventually become a house-owner by the principle of hire purchase i.e. after paying back the loan to the State Government in installments he would change from a tenant to the owner of the property. The return of the subsidy element would be utilized for the construction of more houses. Shantilal Shah had to bargain hard with the Central Government's Housing Ministry, which felt that this would mean the liquidation of the property

60. Interview with Shantilal Shah, March 1971, in Ahmedabad.

of the State Housing Board through which it was receiving regular rents. Eventually the Gujarat Labour Minister was given his way and permitted to give 16,689 tenements to industrial workers on a hire purchase basis. These tenements were sold to the workers at a value less than their market price.

Shantilal Shah also brought in a revised and updated Minimum Wages Act covering 22 industries. He also amended the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1947, making a strike in consequence of the nonpayment of industrial wages a legal not an illegal strike, by which a worker striking in such a case would not lose his privileges such as his provident fund contribution, gratuity etc. This was done because, during the crisis which developed in the textile industry in the late 1960s, consequent on problems caused by devaluation of the rupee and general economic recession, when sick mills began to close down, the mill owner would very often refuse to make payment for work done. He also started schemes to give alternative occupations and retraining to textile workers made redundant by the closing of sick mills, such as starting 30 Ambar Charka (spinning wheels with six spindles) spinning centres in which an industrial worker could earn Rs. 6 a day by spinning; providing redundant workers with training in driving cars, trucks and rickshaws and getting them licenses and employment (a special quota of rickshaw licenses for unemployed workers and some employment in the State Road Transport system was granted by the Government of India); and providing training in small-scale industries. Thus the Ahmedabad textile labour force was in many ways an élite, compared to less organised sectors of industry and rural workers, with a powerful bargaining position at the Local and State level to secure its interests.

During the textile crisis of the late 60s, the Ahmedabad TIA displayed its ability to obtain State and Central level support to stem redundancy due to the closure of sick mills in Ahmedabad. So powerful was the labour lobby that it secured the establishment of the National Textile Corporation

to take over the running of sick mills through individual State Textile Corporations. The TIA General Secretary, Shyamprasad Vasavda,⁶¹ played a crucial part in getting this solution to the crisis in the textile industry. The TIA, learning from its mistake of tardiness in the dearness allowance issue, acted very promptly in this case, and Vasavda used his influence at the Centre to secure the establishment of the National Textile Corporation. He felt that State-level Corporations alone could not provide all the capital necessary for running the sick mills, thus he suggested the establishment of a National Textile Corporation which would provide funds in the ratio of 51:49 with the State Government for the running of sick mills. This was in the face of the desire of the more aggressive Ahmedabad millowners, as expressed in the Manubhai Shah Textile Reorganisation Committee Report of August 1968,⁶² to scrap the sick mills, and criticism from industry and the press, summed up in a Times of India editorial in 1971, which was equally applicable to the earlier period: ---- "the authorities must realise that even from the point of view of creating more job opportunities it will be far better to deploy scarce resources for setting up a new plant than to fritter them away in running a sick factory as a giant unemployment relief scheme" ---⁶³

In 1969, the Gujarat State Textile Corporation, chaired by Vimalbhai N. Shah, was running three Ahmedabad mills: the New Maneckchowk Spg. & Wvg. Co. Ltd., the Ahmedabad New Textile Mills Co. Ltd., and the Himabhai Mfg. Co. Ltd.⁶⁴

61. Interview with Shyamprasad Vasavda, March 1971, in Ahmedabad.

62. The Report of the Textile Reorganisation Committee (appointed by the Government of Gujarat; August 1968).

63. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 2 September, 1971.

64. Gujarat State Textile Corporation's Second Annual Report (1970).

During the textile crisis, Shantilal Shah, Gujarat's Labour Minister, was prepared to extend every assistance to mill owners to prevent them from closing down their mills: he was prepared to give a Government guarantee for any advances they might want from bankers. However, when even this failed and the newly-appointed State Textile Corporation began to take over sick mills, Shantilal Shah had to negotiate with bodies like the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the Ahmedabad Electricity Company for a suspension to be followed by a payment of arrears in taxation etc., in easy installments. The State Government also had to make provision for arrears in money owed to workers and to provide retrenchment compensation to the workers. With the revival of public expenditure and the introduction of an export subsidy scheme for the textile industry, the millowners started an upward swing in profits and lost their strong objections to the Government's running of the old, sick, loss-making mills at the cost of the consumer i.e. paid for by taxation and successive upward revisions of textile prices.⁶⁵

Thus Majur Mahajan power among industrial labour in Ahmedabad enabled it to bargain successfully for patronage and decision making power at the State level, helping to explain its preponderance in the 1961 and 1969 Municipal elections and in the State Assembly elections of 1962 and 1967 in Ahmedabad City. However, the disastrous outcome of the 1965 Ahmedabad municipal elections, from the Majur Mahajan viewpoint, showed the extent to which even the pragmatic Ahmedabad worker could go in expressing ideological hostility to excessive Majur Mahajan insistence on labour-capitalist cooperation instead of conflict, and dissatisfaction with certain elements of the trade union e.g. the venality of many of the shop stewards, the tight control of upper echelons of the union by upper caste, non-worker "outsiders" etc. For practical purposes, particularly when

65. Interview with Shantilal Shah, Ahmedabad, March 1971.

alternatives such as the Janta Parishad and the Sangram Samiti were at a low ebb, the Ahmedabad worker generally supported the Majur Mahajan. However, the ambivalence in his relationship with the dominant Majur Mahajan can be seen in his rejection of Shyamprasad Vasavda, the powerful TIA and INTUC leader, in favour of Indulal Yagnik, the pro-Communist radical leader of the Janta Parishad, whose burning oratory⁶⁶ raged against the Majur Mahajan as a company union out to hoodwink workers, and an agent of the exploiting class of millowners. On the whole, however, the Ahmedabad worker would, apart from exceptional circumstances as in the 1965 Ahmedabad municipal election, tend to vote for Majur Mahajan representatives at municipal and State Assembly elections.

The Majur Mahajan explanation for the continued defeat of Vasavda as Congress candidate for the Lok Sabha seat from Ahmedabad City was that the industrial labour constituencies of the City are divided between Ahmedabad City and Sabarmati (1962) or Gandhinagar (1967) Lok Sabha constituencies, and that the Ahmedabad City Lok Sabha seat is dominated by middle class elements who are anti-labour. As the TIA Annual Report of 1967 recorded: --"Although the Congress candidate for Parliament (in Ahmedabad City) did not get success because he did not get majority of votes from non-labour areas, labour voters indeed deserved greetings for bringing victory to Assembly candidates." --

This explanation has some validity in the 1962 General Election.⁶⁷ Indulal Yagnik secured 134,324 votes or 52.64%, whereas Vasavda secured 112,731 votes or 44.18% of the total votes. Indulal Yagnik got a lead in five out of the seven assembly segments of the Ahmedabad City Lok Sabha constituency: these were Shahpur - Ellisbridge, Dariapur - Kazipur,

66. See copies of Indulal Yagnik's speeches at the mill-gates in the Vakil Report on the disturbances in Ahmedabad in 1964.

67. D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and K.D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat: Development of a Decade, 1952-62. (Ahmedabad: 1966); Indian Election Commission. Report on the Third General Elections in India, 1962. (2 vols.) (Delhi: 1963-66).

Jamalpur, Khadia and Dariapur. He lagged behind Vasavda in the two pre-dominantly industrial labour constituencies of Asarva and Sherkotda. However, he did secure a lead, although a narrow one, in the largely industrial labour constituency of Dariapur - Kazipur. In the State Assembly elections, the Majur Mahajan candidate had only secured a very small margin of victory here: Mohanlal Popatlal Vyas secured 18,166 votes compared to the CPM leader, Dinhar Mekta's 17,237 votes in a straight fight, thus he won by only 929 votes. Khadia and Dariapur, two assembly constituencies which Congress lost to the PSP candidate, Brahm Kumar Bhatt, and the Janta Parishad candidate, Manubhai Palkiwala, respectively, gave Indulal Yagnik the biggest support. In the Ahmedabad industrial labour constituency of Gomtipur, which formed part of the Lok Sabha constituency of Sabarmati in 1962, the Congress Lok Sabha candidate, Muldas Vaishya, secured a significant lead. The Majur Mahajan candidate from Gomtipur in the State Assembly elections, Jesingbhai Parmar, also secured more than 68% of the total votes, polling 21,589 votes compared to 7,460 votes secured by the Republican candidate, Somchand J. Makwana, who came second. Although this gives some support to the Majur Mahajan explanation, except in the case of Dariapur - Kazipur constituency with its large industrial labour element, it must be remembered that, in February 1962, there was no viable alternative to the Majur Mahajan in the trade union field: the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad was a much weakened body, after the demise of the linguistic issue in 1960, and had not yet received a transforming impulse to widen its support - base in the labour areas through the Sangram Samiti.

However, in the 1967 General Elections,⁶⁸ after the success of the Sangram Samiti and the Janta Parishad in the Municipal elections of 1965, there was a possible alternative to the Majur Mahajan, although the Sangram Samiti trade union lacked credibility as a practical union able to deal successfully with day-to-day trade union matters. Thus, in 1967,

68. Indian Election Commission. Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967. (2 vols.) (Delhi: 1968).

the Ahmedabad worker expressed his ambivalence towards the Majur Mahajan by supporting its State Assembly candidates, but rejecting the Majur Mahajan boss, Vasavda, even more emphatically than in 1962 as the Lok Sabha candidate from Ahmedabad City. There was clear cross-voting between the Assembly poll and the Lok Sabha poll in 1967 even in the one strongly labour constituency of Asarva, which came within the Lok Sabha constituency of Ahmedabad City. In the 1967 State Assembly election, Asarva returned the Majur Mahajan candidate, M.T. Shukla, to power with a majority of 19,733 votes, although his nearest rival, Gordhanbhai L. Patel, the CPI leader, secured a fairly impressive number of 17,673 votes. However, in the Lok Sabha election, as the following table shows, there was definite cross-voting in the Asarva segment:⁶⁹

69. Electoral figures made available by the Majur Mahajan office in Ahmedabad.

TABLE 2. The Voting Pattern in the 1967 Ahmedabad City Lok Sabha Elections

CANDIDATES*

ASSEMBLY SEGMENT	Indulal Yagnik	M.A. Sharma	P.H. Mansuri	P.G. Sovani	R.S. Parmar	R.O. Munshi	S.R. Vasavda	TOTAL VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES
Khadia	28,954	138	973	300	197	507	7,973	39,042	1,931
Kalupur	30,870	117	3,699	442	202	556	8,864	44,750	2,999
Shahpur	26,749	108	1,063	211	974	247	11,996	41,348	1,906
Jamalpur	22,851	107	2,276	371	239	298	11,292	37,434	2,775
Ellis Bridge	26,387	122	1,826	524	1,345	1,032	16,416	51,006	3,354
Dariapur Kazipur	21,463	194	2,968	126	576	219	18,702	44,248	5,352
Asarva	22,215	1,006	872	276	1,345	145	18,769	44,628	2,850
	179,489	1,692	13,577	2,250	4,878	4,004	94,012	302,456	21,867

*Indulal Yagnik was the Janta Parishad candidate, Vasavda the Congress candidate, all others were Independent candidates.

Indulal Yagnik won by an enormous margin of 85,477 votes in 1967 over Vasavda compared to a margin of only 21,593 votes in 1962. In 1967, he had almost double the number of votes that went to Vasavda, compared to a far closer situation in 1962 when he had 134,324 votes compared to Vasavda's 112,731 votes. In 1967 all assembly segments without exception gave a lead to Indulal Yagnik. He secured a massive lead over Vasavda in Khadia, Kalupur, Shahpur, Jamalpur and Ellis Bridge, and a strong lead in the two industrial labour constituencies of Dariapur-Kazipur and Asarva. In Asarva, Yagnik got 22,215 votes to 18,769 votes gained by Vasavda. Vasavda's crushing defeat by Yagnik occurred despite a vigorous campaign carried out on his behalf by various TLA and INTUC leaders. A one rupee per member election fund was solicited from Majur Mahajan workers, and 300 election meetings were called in various labour localities in support of Vasavda three months prior to the elections. Top-level TLA leaders, such as Nurmahomed Shaikh, Shankerlal Banker, the founder member and adviser of the TLA, Arvind Buch, TLA secretary, and Khandubhai Desai, all openly campaigned on behalf of Vasavda. In an election meeting, Arvind Buch, General Secretary of the Gujarat INTUC, declared:

--"If you hope for better results from leaders of the Institutions which work for you, you must be more vigilant and bring them success for the increase of their strength." --

and Khandubhai Desai, veteran TLA leader, had frankly admonished:

--"Behind the Janta Parishad there is naked communism which has no feeling of oneness for our country. Think before you vote for it," 70

It is also significant that the Majur Mahajan lost the Shahpur assembly constituency. The former Labour Minister of Gujarat State

70. TLA Annual Report (1967)

and Majur Mahajan candidate, Mohanlal P. Vyas, was decisively defeated, securing only 13,472 votes compared to the victor, Somabhai Desai, the Janta Parishad candidate's 24,075 votes. Even in the MLA constituencies which the Majur Mahajan won in 1967, the margin of victory was invariably less than in 1962. In 1962, although Mohanlal Vyas had only a narrow victory over the CPM leader, Dinkar Mehta, in Dariapur-Kazipur, the other Majur Mahajan candidates had huge majorities: in Asarva, Mangaldas Uttaram Pandya won by 15,549 votes, more than double the votes of the Janta Parishad candidate, Prahladbhai J. Mukhi, who came second. Mangubhai Patel inflicted an even more crushing defeat over his nearest Janta Parishad rival, the CPI leader, Gordhanbhai L. Patel, securing 22,149 votes as against the Communist leader's 8,181 votes in Shaherkotda constituency. In Gomptipur constituency, Jesingbhai Parmar inflicted an equally crushing defeat on Somchand Makwana of the Republican party who only secured 7,460 votes compared to Jesingbhai's 21,589 votes. The picture was very different in 1967. Manharlal T. Shukla, Majur Mahajan candidate, secured the Asarva Assembly seat with 19,733 votes against a very respectable 17,673 votes secured by the CPI leader, Gordhanbhai L. Patel, who came second. In Kankaria, Jesingbhai's margin of victory was considerably reduced: he gained 19,620 votes, but his nearest rival, Narsinhbhai Makwana, secured 15,874 votes. In Rakhial Shantilal Shah, the Majur Mahajan candidate, won more comfortably with 25,092 votes; however, his nearest rival, Abdulrazak Biban Shaikh, a CPM candidate and prominent Sangram Samiti worker, secured as many as 17,041 votes.

Thus the Majur Mahajan had important Central and State-level linkages, both in the Congress party and government, which enabled it to maintain and consolidate a unique influence among the industrial labour force in Ahmedabad through access to considerable patronage and decision-making power on questions affecting labour welfare. However, particularly

in the 1967 General Elections, the ambivalence of the Ahmedabad worker towards the Majur Mahajan can be clearly seen in cross-voting between Lok Sabha and Assembly elections and in reduced margins of victory for Majur Mahajan candidates in industrial labour constituencies. In general, the Ahmedabad worker continued to support the Majur Mahajan electorally to secure practical benefits, particularly in local and State elections, apart from the 1965 Ahmedabad municipal elections, which proved a fiasco for the Majur Mahajan with the successful challenge of the Sangram Samiti. However, in the Lok Sabha elections, the working-class desire by 1967 for a more militant trade union attitude and dislike of shop steward corruption and "outsider" leadership became manifest in cross-voting in the industrial constituencies of Asarva and Dariapur-Kazipur between State Assembly and Parliamentary elections.⁷¹

4. CITY CONGRESS LEADERS AND STATE-LEVEL LINKAGES

In the early 1950s, Kantilal Ghia, Ahmedabad district boss (he was for many years President of the Ahmedabad Zilla Parishad), with the support of Kanjibhai Desai, GPCC President from 1948 to 1960, controlled the Ahmedabad City DCC. Trikamlal Patel, who had been part of the old Arjun Lala faction, which had opposed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Ahmedabad City, initially cooperated with Ghia and was given control of the Congress Organization in Ahmedabad City and became President of the Ahmedabad City DCC between 1953 and 1956. (He had been

71. According to a survey of the Ahmedabad electorate, concentrating on the Kalupur State Assembly constituency, in answer to the question, "Would you say the Government is run for a few big interests or for the interests of all?", 70% of Ahmedabad voters thought the Government was run for a few big interests. This shows the radical bent in Ahmedabad politics, see K.D. Desai and D.N. Pathak, A Study of Political Behaviour in Gujarat with Special Reference to the Fourth General Elections in 1967. (Ahmedabad: 1970).

a Secretary of the Ahmedabad City DCC between 1946 and 1950, and Vice-President from 1951-52).

However, the linguistic agitation for Maha Gujarat caused Trikamlal Patel to fall out with the official GPCC line in favour of the bigger bilingual State of Bombay. He led a large element of the Ahmedabad City DCC out of the Congress on the linguistic issue. Thus Trikamlal Patel's faction came to be known as the disloyal faction for its defection from the Congress on the linguistic issue. This gave the Vimalbhai Shah faction, supported by the Majur Mahajan and known as the most loyal faction for supporting official GPCC policy on the linguistic issue, an opportunity to control the Ahmedabad City DCC. With the death of Kanjibhai Desai, GPCC President, in 1960, Ghia's influence in Ahmedabad City politics diminished considerably, and he soon fell out with Trikamlal Patel. Ghia's influence in Ahmedabad City revived again only in 1969 with the upheavals of the Congress party split.⁷²

Thus, in the early 1960s, Majur Mahajan power at the local level was very great, and its State-level representatives in the GPCC, particularly Vasavda, were able to secure control of a large number of tickets from labour areas in the 1961 Municipal Corporation elections. The tremendous success of the Majur Mahajan in the 1961 election (29 out of 31 Majur Mahajan candidates were elected, a dominating element in the Congress total of 50) reinforced their power and control over the City DCC.

72. Interviews with Mr. S and Mr. FF in Ahmedabad in March 1971, and London in June 1973 respectively.

In the mid 60s, however, Trinkamlal Patel struggled to gain control of the Ahmedabad City DCC. He had taken a vigorous part in the State-level factional struggle between Jivraj Mehta, the Chief Minister, and the GPCC leaders on the side of Morarji Desai and the Organizational leaders. It was Trikamlal Patel, who, in fact, suggested that Jivraj Mehta himself should be removed from power since he was openly challenging Morarji Desai's leadership and demanding total control of the allocation of portfolios. Morarji Desai had been concerned, at first, only to remove Jivraj Mehta's two lieutenants, Ratubhai Adani and Rasiklal Parikh (Minister for Agriculture and Cooperation, and Home Minister respectively), from power. Trikamlal Patel consistently wooed Morarji Desai at this time, supporting him in his national ambitions, while a member of the AICC, to become Prime Minister on the death of Nehru and again on the death of Shastri.⁷³

In addition, the 1965 electoral fiasco, in which every single Majur Mahajan candidate for the municipal elections was defeated in a wave of support for the Janta Parishad and Sangram Samiti leaders, gave Trikamlal Patel his chance and justification for winning control of the Ahmedabad City DCC again. He had clashed bitterly with the Majur Mahajan just before the election. He resented the Majur Mahajan's power to allocate seats in the labour areas, since his own local power-base was in Dariapur-Kazipur, an industrial labour locality, which he felt entitled him to some tickets in industrial labour wards. Bitterness over the English language question bought many Congressmen, including Jamnashankar Pandya and his group (known as the loyal faction for opposing the official GPCC line on the linguistic issue but remaining within the Congress fold) to oppose Vimalbhai Shah's faction, which received all the opprobrium attached to the official State policy on the

73. Interview with Mr. L in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

English language question. Many Mandal Samitis were in revolt on the English question and wanted a bigger say in the selection of candidates than the GPCC and Ahmedabad City DCC would allow.⁷⁴ Following the suspension of former City Congress President, Vadilal Mehta, from the Congress party for his stand in opposition to the GPCC on the English language question, 50 leading Congressmen of Ahmedabad, including Jamnashankar Pandya, issued a statement on February 5th, 1965, disapproving of the GPCC decision to suspend Mr. Mehta and requesting the GPCC to revise its stand on the issue of the teaching of English in schools.⁷⁵ Thus, in addition to strong Janta Parishad and Sangram Samiti opposition, internal Congress factionalism also sabotaged the Congress's chances in the 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal elections. The Vimalbhai N. Shah faction was held responsible for the crushing Congress defeat in these elections and this enabled Trikamlal, with the support and help of GPCC President Tribhovandas Patel to gain control at long last of the Ahmedabad City DCC. He superseded Vimalbhai Shah as President in 1965, and Jamnashankar Pandya became his Vice-President and loyal second in command.

Trikamlal Patel had never been on good terms with the Majur Mahajan group: he had, on the Maha Gujarat issue, opposed the Vimalbhai Shah faction, supported by the Majur Mahajan, and resented the power given to the Majur Mahajan of selecting party candidates in industrial labour constituencies. The Majur Mahajan and Trikamlal Patel factions clashed again over the selection of candidates for the Legislative Assembly elections from Ahmedabad City in 1967. The Majur Mahajan had gained control of four MLA tickets from Ahmedabad City constituencies. However,

74. Sandesh , 17 January 1965.

75. Indian Express , 6 February , 1965.

they refused to allow Trikamlal to have a ticket from their quota. Eventually Trikamlal Patel managed to secure the MLA ticket in the Dariapur-Kazipur constituency, an industrial labour constituency, previously the constituency of the former Gujarat Labour Minister, Mohanlal Vyas, through influence with GPCC leaders. He also wanted his lieutenant, Jamnashankar Pandya, to be given a ticket from Shahpur constituency, however, the Majur Mahajan were determined to put Mohanlal P. Vyas forward as the Congress candidate from this constituency, and in this case they succeeded in overriding the ambitions of Jamnashankar Pandya.⁷⁶ Other nominees of Trikamlal's in Asarva, Rakhial and Kankaria constituencies were also overruled by Majur Mahajan influence in the GPEC.

Trikamlal managed to get elected as MLA from Dariapur-Kazipur constituency, despite stiff opposition from the CPM candidate, Dinkar Mehta, who secured 19,574 votes, compared to Trikamlal's 20,887 votes.⁷⁷ On becoming an MLA, Trikamlal Patel quit his position as President of the Ahmedabad DCC and helped his faithful lieutenant, Jamnashankar Pandya, to step into the Presidency of the Ahmedabad DCC, confident that in this way he could retain control of City politics while he was an MLA. Flushed with his victory over the arch-Communist leader, Dinkar Mehta, Trikamlal eagerly sought a Cabinet post in the Hitendra Desai Ministry. However, he was not accommodated in the Ministry, although the Majur Mahajan again secured the post of Labour Minister for their representative, Shantilal Shah. Trikamlal Patel, who felt that his victory over the Marxist Labour leader, Dinkar Mehta, gave him the right to represent Ahmedabad labour, was disgruntled that his claims had been rejected in favour of a Majur Mahajan candidate for a Cabinet post. This alienated

76. Faction fighting between the Majur Mahajan and Trikamlal Patel played a part in the defeat of the former labour Minister, Mohanlal P. Vyas, in Shahpur in 1967.

77. Indian Election Commission. Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, 1967. (2 vols.) (Delhi: 1968).

him from the GPCC leadership, particularly from Hitendra Desai, the Chief Minister, and he began to indulge in anti-Chief Minister activities. The fourth General Elections in Gujarat had left the Congress in a much weakened position vis-a-vis the Swatantra party as the following table shows:

TABLE 3⁷⁸ PARTY ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE 1962 and 1967 STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN GUJARAT

<u>Name of Party</u>	<u>No. of Candidates</u>		<u>No. of Seats Won</u>		<u>% of Votes Polled</u>	
	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1967</u>
Congress	154	168	113	93	50.77	45.9
Swatantra	106	148	26	66	24.32	38.2
Jan Sangh	26	18	-	1	1.33	2.1
SSP	-	15	-	-	-	0.4
PSP	53	38	7	3	7.88	3.3
Republican Party	12	3	-	-	0.38	0.1
Janta Parishad	33	3	1	1	4.24	0.5
Independent	115	220	7	4	10.28	9.5

The already narrow margin of seats between the Congress and Swatantra became still more narrow as all opposition elements united to topple the Chief Minister and the Congress Ministry's position became highly precarious. Trikamlal. took part in some of these toppling movements against the Hitendra Desai Ministry.⁷⁹

78. D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and K.D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat, (1966); The Fourth General Elections: An Analysis. (Indian Ministry of Information and Broadcasting: 1970).

79. Interview with Trikamlal Patel, Ahmedabad, March 1971.

While Trikamlal Patel was moving away from the Chief Minister, Jammashankar Pandya began to assert his independence and courted the favour of the Chief Minister. Although two of the four Ahmedabad City DCC Secretaries were loyal to Trikamlal, Jammashankar Pandya consolidated his hold on other DCC executive members and established fairly good relations with the Majur Mahajan group. In 1968, during the unprecedented floods in August, Jammashankar Pandya worked hard to organise relief work from Ahmedabad to help the disaster areas and the Chief Minister's campaign to save Gujarat from natural calamities. This brought Jammashankar Pandya into political favour with the Chief Minister.

Seeing his power-base in Ahmedabad City begin to crumble and deciding against defection to the Swatantra party, which was deeply divided into two groups, one led by H.M. Patel and the other by the Kshatriya leader, Jaideepsinkji of Baria,⁸⁰ Trikamlal Patel now concentrated on reversing his anti-Chief Minister activities and tried to win the Chief Minister's favour. He now exerted himself to save the Hitendra Desai Ministry from falling, particularly after the Congress split in 1969. Allegations were made that the Swatantra and after the split the Indicate⁸¹ too were trying to kidnap MLAs belonging to the Organisation Congress, and induce them to defect, thus causing Congress (O) strength to fall very low. So Trikamlal Patel acted as a watchman and guard at the MLA hostels to prevent this from happening. On March 21st, 1969, the Gujarat Assembly rejected the opposition motion of no-confidence brought against the Hitendra Desai Ministry by 98 votes to 62, and the proceedings were enlivened by the narration by the Congress whip, Mr. Indubhai Patel, of a midnight car chase.

80. After the Congress split, Jaideepsinkji of Baria led 32 MLAs out of the Swatantra party in protest against the Swatantra Party's refusal to allow him to topple the Hitendra Ministry. He formed the Gujarat Praja Parishad, but soon joined the Congress (O) which later accommodated him and two of his colleagues in the Ministry, see the Times of India (Bombay), 22 March, 1969.

81. The "Indicate" was a popular term for Indira Gandhi's Ruling Congress party current at this period, a play on the word "Syndicate", which was a term used to describe the Old Congress or Organization Congress, as most of the Congress High Command "Syndicate" members had, in fact, plumped for Congress (O).

and an alleged unsuccessful opposition bid to whisk away a Congress MLA.⁸¹ So strenuous were Trikamlal's efforts to save the Ministry that he eventually won the friendship of Hitendra Desai. He also secured the support of the GPCC President, Vajubhai Shah, and the powerful GPCC Secretary, who had defected in 1966 from the PSP to the Congress, Brahm Kumar Bhatt, who both played an important part in preventing Jamnashankar Pandya from getting his way in the selection of Congress candidates for the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

During the 1969 municipal elections, allegations were made against Jamnashankar Pandya that he sabotaged the attempt by the former Chairman of the Standing Committee, Biharilal P. Shah, who was in line to be the next Mayor, to be elected from Maninagar ward, so that his own protégé, Narottambhai K. Jhaveri, could become Mayor instead. In the event, Biharilal Shah suffered a surprising defeat at the hands of the Jan Sangh, who, for the first time ever, scored a success in the Municipal Corporation elections, with two of their members being elected from Maninagar. Other allegations of shady business deals in real estate made against Jamnashankar Pandya further turned City Congress opinion against him. At the Lucknow session of the Organisation Congress, Morarji Desai first put forward his highly controversial plan for a Grand Alliance of the Swatantra, Jan Sangh and Congress (O) against Indira Gandhi's Ruling Congress party, which was bitterly opposed by many GPCC leaders. Shrewdly, Trikamlal Patel supported Morarji Desai over this unpopular issue, and thus built up enough support to overthrow Jamnashankar Pandya from his position in the Ahmedabad City DCC. This was made easier by

81. Times of India (Bombay) March , 1969.

Jamnashankar Pandya's anti-party speeches, and eventually he defected to the Congress (R), leaving the Ahmedabad City DCC once more in the hands of Trikamlal who now made another of his lieutenants, a former City DCC Vice-President, Ranchhodlal Thakur, President of the City DCC.⁸²

Thus local Congress politicians were intimately concerned with State-level political faction struggles, and realised the importance of securing allies at the State-level in terms of political patronage i.e. power over the selection of Congress candidates in various elections, Cabinet positions, which would catapult them into the rank of State-level leaders, and other material benefits, which could also help consolidate their local power-base.

82. Interview with Mr. L in Ahmedabad, March 1971. Kantilal Ghia, another political opponent of Trikamlal also defected to the Congress (R) when he did not obtain adequate support in a Peoples' Cooperative Bank election.

CHAPTER VI

AGITATIONAL POLITICS IN AHMEDABAD CITY: THE CAREER OF THE JANTA PARISHAD

1. From Linguistic Movement to Economic Agitation.

On the formation of the separate State of Gujarat in 1960, most of the constituent elements of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad, which included almost every shade of political opinion, felt that, as the *raison d'être* of the organisation had been achieved, it should now be disbanded and only a small committee should be appointed to try to have a martyrs' memorial statue put up before Congress House for those who had lost their lives in the police firing of 1956.¹ However, at the Nadiad convention in June 1960, some Independent radicals, led by the MGJP President, Indulal Yagnik, decided to continue the organization, under the name of Nutan Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad, as an independent pressure-group, which would work to ensure that the Gujarat government, formed as a result of the creation of a separate linguistic state through popular agitation, would indeed be a "Peoples' Government" ("Janta Raj") i.e. run on broad socialist lines for the benefit of the mass of kisans and mazdurs. They felt that the representative Government of Gujarat and its administration should be conducted in the language of the people in order to carry out the aspirations of the mass of the people.² The NMGJP was largely an organisation of middle-class radicals from inner-city areas such as Dariapur and Shahpur (i.e. middle-class and lower middle-class areas as opposed to working class areas), which had been most strongly affected by the linguistic agitation. It tried to dissociate itself from partisan influences by including in its constitution a clause that no member of any political party as such

1. Justice N.K. Vakil, Report on the Incident of Police Firing at Ahmedabad on the 5th August, 1964, and other Incidents on the 5th and 6th August, 1964 (henceforth to be referred to as the Vakil Report), p. 158

2. Interview with Indulal Yagnik in Ahmedabad in February, 1971.

can become a member of the new organisation.³

Due largely to the carry-over of linguistic sentiments and emotional feelings on the issue of the martyrs' memorial, aroused during the linguistic agitation, and to the considerable constituency "nursing" of its candidates, it secured nine seats out of a total of seventy in the 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections. Although it was the main opposition party with one seat more than the PSP, its impact was considerably reduced by the massive Congress majority of fifty out of seventy seats in 1961. As the table below shows the majority of these successful Janta Parishad candidates were high caste, often professional men, whose electoral strength was concentrated in the inner-city areas:

TABLE 1.⁴ The Ward, Caste and Occupation of Janta Parishad Corporators elected in 1961.

Name	Ward	Occupation	Caste
1. Ashok C. Mehta	Kalupur 2	Doctor	Jain Bania
2. Somabhai C. Desai	Kalupur 2	Doctor	Kadwa Patidar
3. Gokuldas S. Patel	Kalupur 2	Small Businessman	Patel
4. Manubhai Palkiwala	Dariapur	Lawyer	Jain Bania
5. Jayantilal K. Raval	Dariapur	Employee in private firm	Brahmin
6. Vasudev N. Tripathi	Shahpur	Doctor	Brahmin
7. Purshottam D. Patel	Shahpur	Small Businessman	Patel
8. Shamsuddin G. Munshi	Shahpur	Lawyer	Muslim
9. Purshottam Madavji	Shahpur	Social worker	Harijan

3. Vakil Report, p.152

4. Compiled from data made available by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in March 1971.

i) Communist Party Penetration of the NMGJP

At the 6th Conference of the Gujarat State Committee of the Indian Communist Party in 1962, the Gujarat State Communist Party claimed much of the credit for achieving a separate linguistic state through the efforts of Communist party members in the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad. Its General Secretary, Mr. Dinkar Mehta, expounded the strategy of a combined peasants' and workers' movement in the country side and the cities, and the tactical advantage to the Communists in achieving this of joining United Front movements, like the Janta Parishad.⁵ Following these tactics, the Communist Party was opposed to the dissolution of the MGJP, and very vocal on the question of the continuation of the organisation. The NMGJP was founded with Communist support although Indulal Yagnik tried to preserve its independent nature by the clause that no party member could join the NMGJP. However, about a year later the clause was dropped, and Communist party members began to penetrate the new organisation. Indulal Yagnik's thesis of "Janta Raj" was one which was acceptable in ideological terms to the Communists. In the elections to the executive committee of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad (on the 6th Jan., 1964, the organisation decided to drop the word "Nutan" in its title and reverted to its original name), held during the MGJP Conference in Ahmedabad on the 25th and 26th January, 1964, Dinkar Mehta, General Secretary of the Gujarat State Communist party and leader of the Ahmedabad City Communist party, was elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the MGJP, and many Communists from Ahmedabad were elected to the executive committee. The following table⁶ of the officeholders of the Central Executive Committee of the MGJP, elected in January 1964, shows that, out of the total of thirty-two, twelve were Communist party members, and, out of the Ahmedabad contingent of thirteen, seven were Communist party members:

5. Vakil Report, p.173

6. From the Resolutions of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad's Jan.25-26 (1964) Conference.

TABLE 2. The Proportion of Communist Party members of the Central Executive Committee of the MGJP elected in January, 1964.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Region</u>	<u>Party Membership</u>
1. Indulal Yagnik	President	-	-
2. Dinkar Mehta	Vice-President	Ahmedabad	Communist
3. Jashwant Chauhan	Vice-President	Surat	
4. Janab Esadali Sayyid	Vice-President	Broach	
5. Mithabhai Parsana	Vice-President	Saurashtra	
6. Keshavlal Bhatt	Vice-President	Ahmedabad	
7. Ratilal Shah	Secretary	Ahmedabad	
8. Manubhai Palkiwala	Secretary	Ahmedabad	
9. Chandubhai Patel	Secretary	Baroda	
10. Kantilal Choksi	Secretary	Broach	
11. Manubhai Patel	Treasurer	Ahmedabad	Communist
12. Somabhai Desai	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	
13. Ashok Mehta	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	
14. Vasudev Tripathi	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	
15. Naliniben Mehta	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	Communist
16. Sohrabbhai Murtuja	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	Communist
17. Abdulrazak	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	Communist
18. Gordhanbhai Patel	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	Communist
19. Sakharam Rathod	Exec. Member	Ahmedabad	Communist
20. Shantilal Vasa	Exec. Member	Jamnagar	Communist
21. Popatlal Patel	Exec. Member	Rajkot	
22. Niruben Patel	Exec. Member	Bhavnagar	Communist
23. Harubhai Mehta	Exec. Member	Rajkot	
24. Pranlal Shah	Exec. Member	Bhuj-Kutch	
25. Balchandra Trivedi	Exec. Member	Baroda	Communist
26. Vishnuprasad Shastri	Exec. Member	Baroda	
27. Premchand Jain	Exec. Member	Petlad	
28. Thakorbbhai Shah	Exec. Member	Broach	Communist
29. Natubhai Shah	Exec. Member	Surat	
30. Amrutlal Desai	Exec. Member	Surat	Communist
31. Mohansinh Barad	Exec. Member	Surat	
32. Dilipchand Thakor	Exec. Member	Mehsana	

In the following year, Dinkar Mehta was elected President of the Ahmedabad City Janta Parishad in place of Indulal Yagnik. In September 1963, the Samyukta Kamdar Sangram Samiti (United Workers' Battle Committee) was set up as the labour wing of the MGJP, and all-India Communist leaders, Mr. Dange and Mr. Patkar, were invited to address a public meeting held by the SKSS on the 26th January 1964. Members of the SKSS, including Mr. Indulal Yagnik himself, attended AITUC meetings, and when the Rashtriya Sangram Samiti was established in October 1964, AITUC members were represented in it.⁷

ii) Focus on Economic Issues:

During the mid-60s, the MGJP, which during the linguistic agitation had been almost exclusively dependent on middle and lower-middle class support confined to the inner-city areas, tried to broaden itself from a narrow linguistic agitation appealing to middle-class sentiments and interests into a radical economic movement, centred on the explosive dearness allowance issue and the spiralling cost of living, appealing directly to the working class, especially to the textile mill workers, who constitute the dominant element in the labour force. Textile workers number about 140,000 and, constitute approximately 84% of the labour force⁸ in manufacturing industry.

The mid-60s, from about 1962, saw a gradual deterioration in the economic situation not only in Ahmedabad City and in Gujarat but in the whole country. As with most economies heavily dependent on the dominant primary sector, bad climatic conditions and the failure of harvests saw a deepening food crisis in which the effect on prices generally and the necessity to import large quantities of wheat and rice caused a general economic recession. It became obvious that greater priority would have to be given to the agricultural sector in future Plan outlays. As shown

7. Vakil Report, p.159.

8. Census Special Report I, p.244.

in Table 3, the All-India wholesale price index rose by 11.9 per cent between 1963 and 1964, and by 8.8 per cent between 1964 and 1965. The rise was particularly sharp in the case of edible oils, cereals and pulses. In 1964, the index for edible oils was 26.8% higher than in 1963. In the case of cereals, it was 20.2% higher, and in the case of pulses 40.8% higher. This resulted in a 16.6% increase in 1964 over 1963 for the group "food articles". Calculating the average of the percentage variations over the preceding years, it is found that the wholesale prices of all commodities during 1961 to 1965 increased at an average annual rate of 6.5%. This rate of increase was particularly marked in the case of pulses (18.0%), cereals (9.2%), edible oils (7.7%) and all food articles (8.6%)⁹

The situation in Gujarat, which was a food-deficit State, was particularly serious. The Gujarat State retail price index numbers, calculated on the basis of the prices collected at the District Headquarters with the base year 1962, showed a marked upward trend in the prices of foodgrains, pulses, ground nut oil and gur. Important foodgrains like wheat, bajri and jowar showed increases of over 50% and pulses of almost 80% in 1965 over 1962. Ground nut oil and gur prices went up by 35% or more. Correspondingly, the index numbers of consumer prices for the working class in Ahmedabad from 1962 to 1965, compiled by the Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, with base year 1960, showed a steep rise especially during 1964, as shown in the following table: (Table 4)

9. Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Socioeconomic Review of Gujarat State: 1965-66. (Directorate of Information, Government of Gujarat, Ahmedabad: 1966).

TABLE 3. All-India Wholesale Price Trends, 1961-65.

(Base: 1952-53 = 100)

Group	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
I Food articles	119.5	124.9	132.7	154.7	166.0
(a) Cereals	101.6	105.7	111.6	134.1	144.8
(b) Pulses	91.2	103.7	108.7	153.1	167.1
(c) Edible Oils	158.2	154.7	148.6	188.4	221.2
II Liquor and Tobacco	103.6	99.5	115.4	126.9	137.8
III Fuel, Power, Light & Lubricants	121.8	123.1	136.4	142.8	148.5
IV Industrial raw materials	147.7	137.3	137.3	156.4	180.7
V Manufactures	127.0	128.2	130.3	134.9	145.7
(a) Intermediate Products	138.4	139.8	138.2	148.3	166.4
(b) Finished Products	125.2	126.3	129.0	132.7	142.3
ALL commodities	125.8	127.2	132.5	148.3	161.3

TABLE 4.¹⁰ Index numbers of consumer prices for industrial workers in Ahmedabad City, 1962 to 1965. (Year 1960 = 100).

<u>Months</u>	<u>General Index for</u>	<u>1962:</u>	<u>1963:</u>	<u>1964:</u>	<u>1965:</u>
1. January		102	103	111	130
2. February		103	104	115	127
3. March		103	105	116	125
4. April		103	106	117	125
5. May		104	106	118	128
6. June		105	107	119	127
7. July		105	108	122	128
8. August		105	108	121	131
9. September		105	109	124	131
10. October		105	109	126	130
11. November		106	110	127	131
12. December		105	111	130	132
Annual Average:		104.3	107.2	120.5	128.8

1964, a year of industrial unrest and political agitation in Ahmedabad, showed the most startling rise in consumer prices of all the years between 1962 and 1965: the consumer price index rose by almost 20 points between January and December 1964, whereas it had only risen by 3 points between January and December 1962 and 8 points between January and December 1963, and only 2 points between January and December 1965. Table 5¹¹, which shows a break-down of the consumer price index numbers into group indices differentiating between prices for food, housing, clothing etc. for the years 1964 and 1965, reveals that the food index, which stood at 110 in January 1964, reached the level of 138 in January 1965. Among other indices,

10. From the Gujarat State Socioeconomic Review (1965-66), p.27.

11. From the Gujarat State Socioeconomic Review (1965-66), p.89.

TABLE 5. Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers at Ahmedabad, 1964-65. (Base: 1960 = 100).

[illegible]

the index numbers for all groups except pan, supari, tobacco and intoxicants were higher in January 1965, than in January 1964. These figures directly link up to years of particular political and industrial unrest: August 1963 and August 1964 were months of high-pitched industrial unrest and political activity marked by hartals. 1963 and 1964 were years when the labour wing of the Janta Parishad, the Sangram Samiti, was gaining its maximum support.

The Central government's interim measures to deal with the food crisis and consequent inflation and hoarding of agricultural commodities were price controls, enforcement of stock declaration, a credit squeeze, proposals for State trading in foodgrains and the creation of food zones, limiting the free movement and trade of agricultural commodities. The Gujarat Government bitterly opposed the food zones policy which resulted in delays and inefficiency, and was dependent upon inadequate local production and massive Central aid which, in 1964, amounted to 60,000 tons of wheat and 20,000 tons of rice every month, rising to 100,000 tons of foodgrains per month in 1965 by the increase of 20,000 tons, which included coarse grains.¹²

Against this background of food shortages, inflation and economic recession, the conservative, constitutional and non-militant trade unionism, represented by the Majur Mahajan, came under attack by a new, militant, agitational trade union and labour movement under the leadership of the Samyukta Kamdar Sangram Samiti, the labour and working class wing of the MGJP. It represented an attempt by the MGJP, under the impact of Communist penetration and the economic situation, to break the hold of the Majur Mahajan over the working class in Ahmedabad City. It reflected as much as it created a mass movement against rising prices and inadequacy of dearness allowance paid to industrial workers, but it was also a genuine attempt to create an alternative trade union structure to that of the Majur Mahajan.

12. Times of India (Bombay), 30 Jan. , 1965.

The transformation of the NMGJP can be seen in a comparison of the 1962 General Election Manifesto of the NMGJP with the much more economically incisive and detailed Resolutions and Manifesto of the Maha Gujarat Kamdar Parishad, resulting from its Conference in Ahmedabad on the 25th and 26th January, 1964, to which the all-India Communist trade union leader, Mr. Dange, was also invited.¹³ The former¹⁴ concerned itself with deploring the excessive expenditure involved in the construction of the new capital city of Gandhinagar, which it considered unnecessary anyway; protesting against the Government's ban on the use of loudspeakers in public meetings; demanding a memorial for the martyrs of 1956; and agitating for land reforms and government concessions to small farmers and owner cultivators. Only a small paragraph was devoted to the problems of industrial workers with a passing reference to the lack of reality in the figure for house rents used in the assessment of the dearness allowance and the meagreness of the bonus paid to the workers in comparison to the enormous profits of the millowners.

In the January, 1964, Resolutions and Manifesto of the Maha Gujarat Kamdar Parishad, the questions of dearness allowance, bonus, wages and conditions of work are dealt with at length in an incisive, urgent and authoritative manner. At a huge workers' procession and meeting on the 26th January on the Sabarmati River bed, Indulal Yagnik made this rousing speech, deploring the fact that the Congress Government had not achieved the goals for which the Maha Gujarat struggle was fought:

--"Thirty young people have given their lives in order to fulfil the dream of the formation of Maha Gujarat by brave Narmad (a Gujarati poet)

13. On the evening of the 25th, Mr. Dange lectured before a huge meeting of workers which was organised on the dry Sabarmati River bed.

14. NMGJP Election Manifesto (1962).

and respected Gandhiji and Sardar. The people of Gujarat have acquired this Maha Gujarat after suffering many difficulties and cruelty, and still many troubles of middle class Gujaratis and workers and farmers and farm workers have not been removed. For four years, this Gujarat Congress Government has failed to achieve economic, social and cultural freedom. Even after 15 years of Independence, the Indian Congress Government has not been able to progress fully. Independence has been obtained by precious sacrifices, but the economic independence has not come, and that's why in the nation there is a feeling of despair and darkness.. In the country, the tussle between the rich and the poor is getting worse." --

The Parishad passed resolutions demanding increased bonus; a 25% rise in wages; immediate improvement in the assessment of the dearness allowance and an ad hoc increment of Rs.25 per month; a reasonable minimum wage, especially for municipal employees (who were engaged in bitter wage negotiations); that all workers of every industry should get social insurance schemes, a provident fund scheme, 21 days leave with pay, 15 days sick leave with pay and 10 days casual leave with pay; and that mills should provide workers with proper housing accommodation, and no new permits should be given to start new industries without suitable accommodation for workers. A detailed criticism was made of the shortcomings and partiality of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946. A proposal was put forward by Ratilal Shah and seconded by Shantilal Vasa for the abolition of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act; it demanded that the worker should have the right to appeal individually and directly to the Labour Court for any dispute and not necessarily through the representative union, the Majur Mahajan. The Workers' Manifesto sought solidarity between industrial workers and insecure middle-class employees and white-collar workers such as clerks, teachers, government and municipal employees, shop assistants, bank, insurance and postal employees. It also appealed strongly to the urban

periphery of the unemployed, underemployed and casual labour force: --"The labour class has been crushed under the mill of exploitation and suppression for a long time. Farm workers in the villages, untouchables, scheduled Tribes and poor backward class people do not earn enough to subsist on in the present days of high cost of living. They live in hunger and unemployment for 3-4 months in the year. For them there is no bonus or dearness allowance, no legal rights, not even huts to live in. Even in a big city like Ahmedabad, lakhs of these labourers live in 60,000 filthy hutments, and thousands in little rooms in overcrowded and dirty tenements....Wages are not steady in small industries and hours of work are also not fixed. There are no Laws and even if there are, they are not obeyed. People work like slaves. If somebody complains and demands, the sword of unemployment hangs over him, and there is no amount of injustice and insults... In mills, contract system is still existing. For years all the workers are called temporary and permanent workers are deprived of their rights. The owners earning crores of rupees use various tricks by which workers do not get dearness allowance and their proper rights"--¹⁵

The Communists overtly tried to dominate the economic movement, centred on the dearness allowance issue, by making their own trade union,¹⁶ the Mill Kamdar Union, the principal vehicle of the movement, but Indulal Yagnik, with a mixture of his characteristic ideological ambiguity and shrewd political sense, refused to work with an overtly Communist union; and it was also generally felt that more workers would be weaned away from the Majur Mahajan if a new less explicitly Communist union was formed. Thus the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union was formed on January 1st, 1964, and the Communist Mill Kamdar Union merged with it. As a consolation to the Communists

15. Workers' Manifesto and Resolutions of the Maha Gujarat Kamdar Parishad at its meeting on the 25-26 January 1964 in Ahmedabad.

16. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

the name of Mill Mazdur Union which was the name of the original Communist textile workers' trade union, which was declared illegal in the 1930s, was adopted. A formula of having as equal a number as possible of Communist and non-party members of the executive committee of the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union was worked out, and, when the Gujarat unit of the Communist Party split into two in September 1964, an attempt was made to maintain a balance between CPI, CPM and Janta Parishad executive committee members. However, the Communist party, and, after the split in 1964, the CPM became and remained the most active element in the new trade union. The following table¹⁷ indicates the extent of the Communists as office-holders in the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union in January 1964:

17. From the Workers' Manifesto and Resolutions of the Maha Gujarat Kamdar Parishad, (25-26 Jan. 1964).

TABLE 6. The Proportion of Communist Party Members as Office-holders in the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union in 1964.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Party Membership</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Party Membership</u>
President	1. Indulal Yagnik		Exec. Com. member	25. Aglitkumar Dantali	
Vice-President	2. Dinkar Mehta	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	26. Abdulrazak Sheikhban	Communist (CPM)
Gen. Secretary	3. Ratilal C. Shah		Exec. Com. member	27. Ramu Shivram Kotekar	
Secretary	4. Sohrabali Murtuja	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	28. Mahmudumar Ansari	
Secretary	5. Hanumansing Bajrangsing	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	29. Mohanlal Acharya	
Secretary	6. V.G. Bhole		Exec. Com. member	30. Bachubhai Abesing	Communist (CPM)
Secretary	7. Nathusing Indrasing	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	31. Vagjibhai Valjibhai	Communist (CPM)
Treasurer	8. Somabhai C. Desai		Exec. Com. member	32. Jaswantsinh Bahadur	Communist (CPI)
Exec. Com.member	9. Sarjuprasad Jokanlal		Exec. Com. member	33. Narayan Sirpukar	
Exec. Com.member	10. Keshavlal Maheshrimil		Exec. Com. member	34. Javid Ansari	Communist (CPI)
Exec. Com.member	11. Ganpat Ramratan	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	35. Purbhai Mansuri	
Exec. Com.member	12. Amarsing Gyansing		Exec. Com. member	36. A. Raheman Alihasan	
Exec. Com.member	13. Nurmahomed Sheikh	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	37. Babubhai Yasinbhai	
Exec. Com.member	14. Preamsinh Kishansinh		Exec. Com. member	38. Chimanlal Ambaram	
Exec. Com.member	15. Trikamsing Morlising		Exec. Com. member	39. Chintamani Jaganath Pajankar	Communist (CPM)
Exec. Com.member	16. Vadilal Sakalchand	Communist(CPI)	Exec. Com. member	40. Ranchodlal Harilal	
Exec. Com.member	17. Pursottam Jivansing	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	41. Ranchodlal Rajeshri	
Exec. Com.member	18. Abdulvahid A.		Exec. Com. member	42. Sanpat Shripat	
Exec. Com.member	19. Bhagvanbhai Gopalbhai		Exec. Com. member	43. Pursattam Parmar	Communist (CPI)
Exec. Com.member	20. Vasantlal Tulsidas	Communist(CPI)	Exec. Com. member	44. Vasantlal Chauhan	Communist (CPI)
Exec. Com.member	21. Mahemud Chedi	Communist(CPM)	Exec. Com. member	45. Naliniben Mehta	Communist (CPM)
Exec. Com.member	22. Dhanjibhai Bhuldas				
Exec. Com.member	23. Abdul Majid A.Shakur				
Exec. Com.member	24. Abdul Mahmud Azaz Beg				

The economic movement launched by the Samyukta Kamdar Sangram Samiti, which coordinated the labour activities of the MGJP, and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union,¹⁸ derived its impetus largely from the dearness allowance issue, which provided a powerful platform from which to challenge the credibility and the legitimacy of the Majur Mahajan, the Gujarat Government and the textile millowners. Although the SKSS also tried to organise unions of engineering workers, transport workers and shop assistants, 90% of its membership and much of its impact was on the Ahmedabad textile labour force.¹⁹ The dearness allowance paid to textile workers of Ahmedabad before 1964 was computed on the basis of the cost of living index series, which in turn was based on the Inquiry into the Family Budgets of Industrial Workers in Ahmedabad, made as early as 1926-27. The purpose of the dearness allowance was to neutralise price increases so that the workers' real income and standard of living would not fall with price rises. The Majur Mahajan had appealed to the Industrial Court in 1940²⁰ for the first time to grant a dearness allowance to the textile workers due to the sharp price rises as a result of wartime conditions, black marketeering and profiteering. The Industrial Court accepted the necessity for granting d.a. at the rate of Rs.3-8-0 paise per month on every rise in the cost of living index of eleven points for the duration of the war. It accepted the 1926-27 Industrial Workers' Family Budget Inquiry as the basis for the cost of living index and calculations of the d.a. At the end of the war, the Majur Mahajan appealed

18. The SKSS was founded in September 1963 as the labour front of the MGJP to coordinate the labour and trade union activities that the MGJP was about to undertake. The Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdoor Union was formed on the 1 January 1964. Similar unions were established for transport workers and shop assistants (Gomasta Mandal), and there was also an Engineering and General Workers' Union. There was considerable overlapping among the top leadership of the SKSS and the MGMMU.

19. Interview with Dinkar Mehta in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

20. Majur Mahajan pamphlet, Your Dearness Allowance, (translated from the Gujarati, Tamaru Mongvari Bathu) (Feb. 1964).

to the Industrial Court to continue d.a. due to the continuation of high prices. Finally in the Court's 1948 Award, the principles for granting d.a. were fixed permanently, and it was decided that the least paid worker should get 100% neutralisation of price increases, and should receive d.a. at the rate of Rs.4-3-8 paise per month for every rise of eleven points in the cost of living index i.e. 2.84 paise every day for every one point rise in the index.²¹

However, with the passage of time, serious anomalies became apparent in the Government of Gujarat's cost of living index series on which the d.a. was calculated. There were four main discrepancies in the cost of living index by the early 1960s. The figure for house rents had been kept frozen since 1930, when the last inquiry into house rents had taken place, at the amazingly low figure of Rs.4.91 n.p. The SKSS justly pointed out in their propaganda that even subsidized rents of rooms in government and municipal housing tenements were more than this, and were considerably higher in privately-owned chawls and even hutment-dwellers paid more than this.²² Similarly, the price of cloth had been kept fixed since 1952-53 due to the rapidity with which the varieties of cloth stated in the 1926-27 Inquiry, and similar varieties went out of production. Only thirty items were taken into account in the calculation of the cost of living index, and many important items such as medical expenses, expenses of education, soap, shoes etc. were omitted. The weight of miscellaneous expenditure had been kept at four, although it now constituted 13% of expenditure.²³

21. Ibid.

22. The monthly economic rent for tenement rooms constructed by the Gujarat Housing Board in 1964 varied from Rs.23.70 to Rs.87.35, and subsidized rent per month varied from Rs.13.00 to Rs.43.75. See Census Special Report I, p.110

23. See Dinkar Mehta, Dishonesty in the Assessment of the Dearness Allowance. (translated from the Gujarati, Mongvarina Ankni Chetarpindi). Pamphlet published by the SKSS in Jan.1964.

The SKSS based its blistering propaganda against the Gujarat Government, the Majur Mahajan and the millowners for neglecting these anomalies in the calculation of the cost of living index series, and thereby in the assessment of d.a., on the publication in March 1963, in the Indian Government's Labour Gazette, of the results of a fresh inquiry into the family budgets of Ahmedabad workers. Following the recommendation of the Second Five Year Plan, the Labour Bureau, Simla and the Central Statistical Office had conducted a fresh family budget inquiry for industrial workers in Ahmedabad in 1958-59, which was based on a new price evaluation of 222 items in working class expenditure.²⁴ With this as the basis, the Government of India had started publishing the new cost of living index for Ahmedabad, which started at 100 for the base year, 1960. Central government experts had recommended that the new cost of living index series should be linked with the old Gujarat State index with the linking factor of 2.98, arrived at by taking the annual average of the monthly index numbers of the State series for the year 1960, which was 298.²⁵ The Government of India had been trying to persuade the Government of Gujarat to adopt the new cost of living index series and its linkage factor, after first removing the anomalies in the old State series. The SKSS based its popular agitation on these new facts, and also criticized the Government of India and the Government of Gujarat for not seeking to remove the anomalies in the old State index series before linking it to the new index. The SKSS called for the granting of d.a. for one year on the basis of the revised and improved old Gujarat State cost of living index after which a fresh Family Budget Inquiry should take place, which would take account of the higher workers'

24. Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India. Report of the Family Living Survey Among Industrial Workers (in Ahmedabad), 1958-59.

25. See Paresh Majumdar's unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Majur Mahajan. (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad : 1970).

living standards and pattern of expenditure, resulting in a greater and juster assessment of the d.a.²⁶

The strength of the SKSS's appeal lay in its macrolevel approach to industrial disputes. It focused attention on the totality of the problem of d.a., as it affected all mills and all textile workers. It highlighted the total conditions of the industry and the workers, and its propaganda that, in 1961-62, using the old cost of living index, actual wages did not reflect accurately price increases and thus the workers' real wage was less than during the Second World War, proved devastating.

The Majur Mahajan had a more microlevel piecemeal approach to industrial problems. It took up the problem of d.a. in one mill and tried to resolve it, and moved on to try to solve another mill's problems. The Majur Mahajan reacted rather late to the trends regarding d.a., and thought that the existing machinery was good enough to generate change. In its pamphlet, "Tamaru Mongvari Bathu" ("Your dearness allowance"), published in February 1964, it tried, somewhat unconvincingly, to justify and rationalise its delay in responding to and agitating for the removal of the anomalies in the cost of living index, and in seeking to get a fresh Family Budget Inquiry instituted. It asserted that, according to expert opinion, changes in the pattern of life and expenditure of the workers can only be discerned after a period of 10-15 years. Thus, according to this reasoning, a new Family Budget Inquiry should have been made in 1940-41, but, as the Second World War was going on with all its attendant problems of shortages, rationing and inflation, information collected at this time would have been misleading. Nevertheless the Central Government made an Enquiry into Family Budgets in 1944-45, but the Majur Mahajan refused to accept this as a true reflection of workers'

26. See Dinkar Mehta, Dishonesty in the Assessment of the Dearness Allowance.

living conditions since people could not use adequate amounts of clothing, kerosene, food etc. due to wartime shortages and rationing. The Majur Mahajan asserted that an Enquiry could only be held in normal conditions, free from the distortions of war and its aftermath, and thus it had accepted the 1926-27 Inquiry as the basis for the assessment of d.a. in the 1940s. However, even this reasoning could not quite justify a delay until 1956 before the Majur Mahajan began to tackle this problem, having conducted a small investigation of its own into house rents and cloth prices. Even then, it only called for piecemeal changes in the old cost of living index series, and did not call for a new Family Budget Enquiry. It chiefly concerned itself with writing to the Bombay Government about changes in house rents. The Bombay Government replied that, as there was a Rent Control Act in Ahmedabad, the question of a rise in house rents did not arise! It added that to make an inquiry into house rents alone and improve the index only on this score was not scientific. In writing to the Central Government about changes in house rents and cloth prices, it received the reply that, in a short time, a new inquiry was to be made into the whole problem of Ahmedabad workers' living conditions. Thus the Majur Mahajan's delayed, piecemeal approach to the dearness allowance problem contrasted strongly with the SKSS's broad contention, on which its agitation was based, that the workers' real wage had fallen since his pay packet did not adequately neutralise sharp price rises due to anomalies in the old cost of living index.

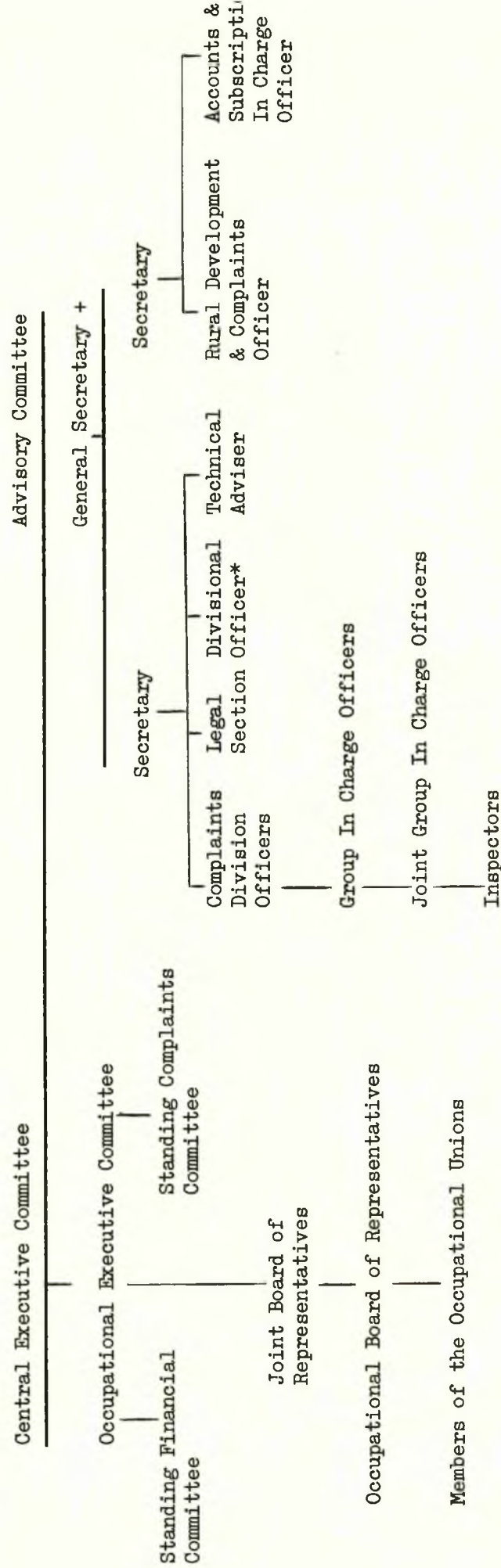
The SKSS took advantage of the intergenerational leadership struggle going on within the Majur Mahajan at this time, and of the workers' dissatisfaction with Majur Mahajan representatives (Pratinidhis), many of whom were trying to rival the old-time jobbers in corruption.²⁷

27. Discussions with Jitendra Dholakia, Reader in Economics, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, in March 1971.

During the early 1960s, the older, paternalistic, middle class leadership of men like the General Secretary Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, and like the two Secretaries, Arvind Buch and Manharlal Shukla, was being challenged by the Inspectors and shop stewards recruited from the rank and file of the working class.²⁸ S.R. Vasavda, Arvind Buch and Manharlal Shukla were all Nagar Brahmins, coming from the distinguished caste which provided so many leading administrators and professional men in Gujarat. A large proportion of the officers in the Secretariat of the Majur Mahajan, as set out in Table 7, were older high-caste men from middle class backgrounds or older conservative Harijans, most of whom had been politically activated during the Nationalist Movement.

28. Subbiah Kannappan in Kannappan III writes of evidence of an independence of outlook among newer workers and the younger leaders. Their desire for more responsibility and leadership is one of the greatest challenges in the development of the Majur Mahajan.

TABLE 7. The Administrative Structure of the Textile Labour Association. 29



* The Divisional Officer is in charge of educational activities, ward unions, welfare activities and complaints other than industrial disputes.

+ The General Secretary and the two Secretaries are elected by the Central Executive Committee, and the General Secretary appoints the officers of the Secretariat.

29. See Pareesh Majumdar's unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Majur Mahajan. (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad: 1970).

Another factor in the leadership struggle was the contention that political nominees of the Majur Mahajan, especially for the State Legislative Assembly seats were drawn largely from high caste, middle-class trade union leaders with the exception of a conservative Harijan nominee in a Reserved Constituency.

Parallel to the leadership struggle there was considerable dissatisfaction felt by the textile workers with Majur Mahajan representatives, especially long-entrenched ones, for the workers' job security and conditions of work were often dependent on the goodwill of the shop steward. Many shop stewards, especially long-entrenched ones, wanted their palms to be greased by the worker for good offices in securing him recruitment, retrenchment compensation according to the Industrial Disputes Act, seniority, promotion,³⁰ a loan from the Majur Sahkari Bank (Workers' Cooperative Bank, run by the Majur Mahajan) and any other benefits despite the fact that the shop stewards are elected by the workers.³¹

30. The MOA, in its replies to the Questionnaire of the National Commission on Labour (see MOA Annual Report for 1967, Appendix, p.8), admitted that a rational promotion policy did not exist in the Ahmedabad textile industry, where traditional promotion methods were largely followed, resulting in the fact that the highest, most coveted post to which an employee could aspire was that of jobber, for which leadership qualities rather than technical expertise were necessary, since the jobber had a large say in promotion and many other aspects of a millworker's condition of work. The limited existence of opportunities for promotion helped to perpetuate this system, and due to an entrenched distrust of modernism and sophistication, partly resulting from an imperfect understanding of Gandhianism, the TLA did not object very vigorously to this state affairs.

31. G.Y. Patel, The Ahmedabad Textile Worker, in the Times of India (Ahmedabad), 31 Oct. , 1971. The shop steward had stepped into the shoes of the old-time jobber, described in the Royal Commission on Labour's Report in 1930, who used to lend money to the workers at exorbitant interest rates and help get them accommodation in overcrowded slums. All powers regarding the punishment of workers were vested in him. See Paresah Majumdar's unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Majur Mahajan. (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad: 1970).

Indeed so profitable and sought-after was the post of TLA mill representative that prospective candidates were prepared to spend Rs.2000 or more in securing their election. Workers reacted by resentment against the Majur Mahajan and a demand for the substitution of the entrenched shop steward by a younger, better educated man. In the mid-60s the SKSS seemed to provide a possible alternative to the Majur Mahajan, and an opportunity to canalize their frustrations with the Majur Mahajan into a constructive outlet.

The SKSS made considerable in-roads into the Majur Mahajan support base, which is only partially reflected in the steady decline in Majur Mahajan membership figures during the mid-60s (See Table 8), because many textile workers during this period had a duplicate membership of both the Majur Mahajan and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union. Estimates of the peak membership figures of the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union vary from 50,000 claimed by SKSS members to 20-30,000 claimed by more impartial sources.

TABLE 8. Majur Mahajan Total Membership Figures, 1957-1967.³²

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>Total Membership</u>
1957	78,811
1958	97,795
1959	95,876
1960	101,114
1961	104,040
1962	101,315
1963	93,770
1964	82,287
1965 March:	94,654
December:	93,687
1966	103,705
1967	111,296

32. Majur Mahajan Annual Reports, 1957-67.

It was largely more militant Muslim, Patidar and non-Gujarati textile workers from the weaving section of the Majur Mahajan, who joined the SKSS and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union.³³ The higher caste workers in the weaving section tended to have a more militant political consciousness than the more conservative and apathetic Harijan workers of the spinning department. Non-Gujarati textile workers, from states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, were more militant because they had come from states with more radical working class traditions. The weavers were also technically more advanced, more skilled workers and had always been in the forefront of demands for higher wage levels and improved working conditions. Even the Textile Labour Association's Annual Report for 1963-64 commented on the fall in membership figures, noting that the largest reduction was of 6986 workers from the weaving department, whereas in the throstle and reeling departments (dominated by Harijans) membership actually increased. (See Table 9).

TABLE 9. The Department-wise strength of Majur Mahajan membership 1963-64.

<u>Group</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>No. of Members</u>	
		<u>1962-63</u>	<u>1963-64</u>
A.	Frame, Card	11,870	10,517
B.	Throstle	21,174	22,000
C.	Reelers	664	740
D.	Winders	4,015	3,734
E. (1)	Weaving	32,194	25,208
(2)	Warping	3,335	3,029
F. (1)	Folding	3,565	3,289
(2)	Sizing	5,693	4,383
G.	Jobbers, Mukadams	-	-
H.	Clerks	2,664	2,667
I.	Engineers, Mechanics	5,638	4,356
J.	General	2,958	2,364
		<u>93,770</u>	<u>82,287</u>

33. Interview with Dinkar Mehta in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Although no exact figures are available, it has been estimated that non-Gujaratis constitute 20% of the membership of the TLA,³⁴ and the following table gives a rough impression of the caste and communal composition of the TLA.

TABLE 10. Approximate caste and communal composition of the TLA.³⁵

<u>Department</u>	<u>Composition</u>
A. Frame, Card	Dominant group: Vagris + Thakurs and U.P. workers.
B. Throstle	} Dominant group: Harijans, some Thakurs
C. Reelers	
D. Winders	
E. Weaving, Warping	} 10-15% Muslims + upper castes especially Patels, Barots and Brahmins + many non-Gujaratis.
F. Folding, Sizing	
G. Jobbers, Mukadams	
H. Clerks	} Upper castes
I. Engineers, Mechanics	

One can also gauge the strength and significance of Muslim and non-Gujarati-speakers among the industrial labour force of Ahmedabad City from the "Report on the Family living Survey Among Industrial Workers in Ahmedabad, 1958-59", which reveals the following data:

TABLE 11. Data on the Linguistic and Religious Composition of Ahmedabad Industrial Workers, 1958-59.

1. % Distribution of industrial workers' families by religion:

Hind _i :	Islam:	Others:
83.25	15.56	1.19

2. % Distribution of Industrial workers' families by mother-tongue:

Gujarati:	Hind _i :	Urdu:	Marathi:	Others:
52.93	26.63	12.20	3.50	4.74

34. Interview with TLA Secretary, Manharlal T. Shukla, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

35. Ibid.

The 1961 Census³⁶ also gives a sense of the importance of migrants in the Ahmedabad labour force, especially in manufacturing, construction and transport. (A migrant is defined by the 1961 Census as a person not born in Ahmedabad city, so it would include a large proportion of Gujaratis from surrounding districts). According to the 1961 Census, 71.36% of the total labour force are migrants, and the strength of migrant workers in manufacturing industries other than household and in construction, transport, storage and communications exceeds 70%. However, the core of SKSS strength among the textile labour force of Ahmedabad City consisted of Muslims and non-Gujarati-speakers.

The SKSS and its trade union also attracted younger textile workers, between the ages of 20-30 years, a reflection of intergenerational conflict in the trade union movement, and succeeded in getting many of its members elected on to mill committees, such as canteen committees, Provident Fund committees and cooperative committees of various kinds.³⁷ It also organized for the first time a large section of the temporary or casual labour force, known in Ahmedabad as Badli workers i.e. substitute, temporary labour as opposed to permanent operatives. Badli workers constitute approximately between 7-10% of the total labour force. According to Majur Mahajan sources in 1962, out of a total of 142,303 workers on textile mill registers, 10,987 were Badlis, who thus constituted in 1962, 7.75% approximately of the textile labour force.

The Badli worker was a victim of chronic unemployment, economic insecurity, low wages and poverty, and thus was particularly badly hit by rising prices and inadequate d.a. The Badli system of substitute labour evolved as a method to meet the day-to-day shortages of the

36. See Chapter 2.2 The Section on the "Growing Impact of the Migrant Labour Force on the Economic and Social Life of the City"

37. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

labour force due to widespread absenteeism in the cotton textile industry. The Badli worker was expected to wait regularly every day at the mill-gates at the start of the first shift. He was given a Badli card on which the supervisor or time-keeper marked "P", if he was employed in place of a permanent operative that day, or "I.U." (Involuntarily Unemployed) or "N.B." (No Badli), if there was no vacancy that day, in which case he had either to go home or try to get work as a casual labourer in the mills i.e. as a bricklayer, carpenter, mason, selling vegetables and other goods etc. As a casual labourer, he was not entitled to get his name registered on a Badli register, and, in all cases, his income would be less than from Badli work. In a labour-surplus economy, the Badli system worked well to the advantage of the management, but the Badlis themselves were invariably the victims of economic exploitation.³⁸

The Badlis were, by no means, an ephemeral labour force, but strongly rooted in Ahmedabad City and committed to the industrial way of life. 89% of Badlis had lived in Ahmedabad since childhood. The rest had come from certain districts of North Gujarat, Saurashtra and from Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madras and Bengal, but the majority of even these had lived for approximately the last ten years in Ahmedabad City. Badlis, by and large, had severed their major connections with the village, were dependent essentially on industrial employment for their livelihood and their persistent demand was to become permanent mill operatives, having a secure and dependable job at the relatively high wages fixed by Wage Board Awards or collective bargaining, and enjoying all the benefits intended only for permanent workers in the Factories Act, Employees' Provident Fund Act and

38. See Jitendra Dholakia, Employment, Output and Wages of the Substitute Labour. (1968).

Employees' State Insurance Act, and the additional benefits given by the mills i.e. paid privilege leave, casual leave and sick leave. (Badlis would be entitled to the latter benefits only if they had completed 240 days of work in the preceding year, and they were almost never allowed to complete this). Badlis did not receive regular presence allowance and bonus. The Badli was usually a committed worker, permanently attached to a particular textile mill and a particular occupation in that mill. About 98.7% of Badlis wanted to become permanent workers in the same textile mills where they were frequently employed on Badli work. They were generally efficient and disciplined workers, whose productivity was often equal to, if not slightly superior, to that of the permanent worker, because this helped them to secure permanent jobs.

The evils of the Badli system were chronic underemployment - Badlis worked on average only 167 days a year, and approximately 84.5% of them remained unemployed when no Badli work was available - denial of many rights enjoyed by permanent operatives, particularly regarding forms of insurance, low wages and widespread indebtedness. According to a survey in 1967, 33.7% of Badlis had a total income (basic wages plus d.a.) of about Rs.100 per month, and 58.7% earned between about Rs.100 and Rs.125 (see Table 12). This was less than half the average monthly income of a permanent worker, which came to Rs.248.75.

TABLE 12.³⁹ Distribution of Badli Workers by Income Group, 1967.

<u>Income Group in Rs.</u>	<u>No. of Workers:</u>	<u>% of Total Workers in Sample:</u>
0-100	185	33.7
101-125	138	25.1
125-150	178	32.5
151-200	48	8.7
	<u>549</u>	<u>100</u>

39. Ibid, p.13.

The average income of a Badli worker was Rs.120 per month, but his average expenditure was Rs.210. Only in the case of 14.2% of Badlis was there some relief from the additional income earned by other family members, thus 85.8% of Badli families were in debt. The debt was normally not incurred mainly for marriage and religious ceremonies, but largely to finance the consumption of essential commodities, thus the basic underlying cause of indebtedness was the inadequacy of the Badlis' wages and d.a. to cover ordinary living expenses at a subsistence level. The average debt of a Badli worker was found to be Rs.1566 i.e. it exceeded thirteen months' income of the indebted household, thus the debt-income ratio which is a measure of the economic burden of indebtedness was found to be as high as 13:1. Almost none of the Badlis resorted to borrowing for the purpose of building a house, purchase of land or for education, which can be regarded as productive borrowing because it creates income-yielding assets. The majority of Badli workers used money-lenders, Pathans and Sahukars as their main source of credit, but the rate of interest charged by this source was very high, ranging from 37% to 60%. (See Table 13).

TABLE 13.⁴⁰ Distribution of Borrowings of Badli Workers According to the Sources of Credit.

<u>Sources of Credit</u>	<u>% of total amount of loan taken</u>
1. money-lenders, Pathans and Sahukars	72.30
2. relatives	20.20
3. friends and fellow workers	5.50
4. jobbers and clerks of the textile mills	2.00
	<hr/> 100

There was also great dissatisfaction among Badli workers regarding their method of recruitment for Badli work, and their promotion to

40. Ibid, p.18

the state of permanent worker, which took on average about eight to ten years for a Badli to achieve. Although recruitment and promotion were, in theory, granted according to seniority on the special register of Badli workers and according to efficiency and productivity, in many cases, influence, nepotism, or corruption played their role in the calculations of jobbers and supervisors, who were responsible for recruitment and promotion. The enormous industrial problem caused by disputes about workers' status can be seen in the records of the Majur Mahajan, where complaints about presence and muster, i.e. a worker's status as substitute, temporary, permanent etc., constituted the second greatest source of workers' complaints, and, in 1965, superseded complaints about wages as the greatest single cause of workers' industrial complaints. (See Table 14). (It must be borne in mind that non-Majur Mahajan members were entitled to use its very effective complaints machinery to redress their grievances).

TABLE 14.⁴¹ Analysis of the Nature of Complaints recorded by the Majur Mahajan, 1962-1963, 1963-64 and 1965.

<u>Nature of Complaints</u>	<u>Number of Complaints</u>		
	1962-3	1963-4	1965
1. Wages	6074	4960	1997
2. Hours of work	336	299	143
3. Holidays	179	47	90
4. Conditions of work	4328	4012	2320
5. Unjust penal	2530	2435	1591
6. Treatment and procedure	2469	2059	1374
7. Sanitation	127	92	47
8. Mahajan activities	30	25	11
9. Muster	4894	4030	2896
10. Residence and welfare	31	29	11
11. Miscellaneous	308	330	121
TOTAL:	21,306	18,491	10,601

41. See Textile Labour Associations Annual Reports.

SKSS propaganda in the mid-60s that the Majur Mahajan was only interested in the skilled and semi-skilled permanent operative and not in the Badli labour force stuck a deep chord of response in the Badlis. The Badlis had good cause to fear the entrenched Majur Mahajan shop stewards and jobbers who controlled so many of the economic decisions affecting their livelihood. The 1967 Survey of Badlis also reveals that the Badli workers were largely in debt to money-lenders, Pathans and Sahukars because they felt they could not borrow from the Majur Sahkari Bank, managed by the Majur Mahajan, because they felt that it and other cooperative credit facilities, organised by the Majur Mahajan, were intended only for permanent workers. Thus many Badli workers in the mid-1960s were organised for the first time by the SKSS and recruited into the leftist Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union. Unionisation among the Badlis reached the level of 79.2% by the time of the 1967 Survey.⁴²

Thus the Majur Mahajan failed to anticipate textile labour opinion politically on the d.a. issue. It was in many ways more like a social welfare organisation, working within a caste framework (it had a section of welfare workers for each of the Scheduled Caste and Backward Class groups, such as the Thakurs, Vagris, Vanzaras etc.) to improve working class conditions socially and economically and believing in class collaboration, than a radical trade union forging a united political consciousness upon the textile workers. When economic conditions were good and thus collective bargaining successful, it was dominant. However, in conditions of economic crisis, as in the mid-60s, it was wide open to challenges from more militant, leftist trade unions with their thesis of a united working class political consciousness and class struggle. The Majur Mahajan thought that the normal machinery was good enough to resolve the d.a. issue. However, SKSS agitation for dramatic change and propaganda pitched workers' demands very high, so, in order

42. Jitendra Dholakia, Employment, Output and Wages of the Substitute Labour. (1968), p.30.

to undercut the appeal of the SKSS on this issue, the Majur Mahajan used its influence with the State government to get an expert committee of inquiry appointed to look into the d.a. question in Gujarat, to remove anomalies in the old Gujarat State index and link the revised index to the new cost of living index series, prepared by the Government of India. Thus the M.B. Desai Committee was appointed by the Government of Gujarat in September 1963.⁴³ It revised the old State index by eight points for house rent and eleven points for cloth on the basis of the 1958-59 Family Budget Inquiry, thus revising the Gujarat Government's 1960 index from 298 to 317, and making 3.17 the linking factor between the revised old State index and the new index. Thus, on the basis of this, the Majur Mahajan, embarrassed by its failure to anticipate the strength and urgency of the d.a. issue, sought to claim the credit for solving the d.a. problem. However, the intransigence of the millowners, who, while agreeing to pay d.a. on the basis of the revised old index under protest, which was only a matter of a further Rs. 5, refused to pay d.a. according to the new index with a linking factor of 3.17, which would have meant a large increase in the existing d.a. which was approximately Rs.70-80, kept the issue alive throughout 1964, and thus provided the chief *raison d'être* for the SKSS. As no settlement could be arrived at between the TLA and MOA regarding the adoption of the Simla Bureau cost of living index series and the payment of d.a. on the basis thereof - on TLA pressure - the Government of Gujarat referred the dispute to the arbitration of the Industrial Court, which fixed its hearing on the 5th August 1964, and on that day the SKSS organised a massive hartal.

43. Discussions with Jitendra Dholakia, who was a member of the M.B. Desai Committee, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

iii) Successful Use of Agitational Techniques.

The SKSS successfully used agitational techniques, already employed during the linguistic movement, and added new techniques. Virulent propaganda against the Majur Mahajan, the Gujarat Government and the millowners was disseminated through the paper, "Janta Raj", edited and published by Indulal Yagnik from May, 1964, to September, 1964, and restarted in November 1964, with a Communist editor, Subodh Mehta,⁴⁴ through pamphlets such as "Mongvarina Ankni Chetarpindi" ("Dishonesty in the Assessment of the Cost of Living"), written by Dinkar Mehta; and through fiery speeches and meetings at the mill-gates.

"Dishonesty in the Assessment of the Cost of Living" claimed that, on account of anomalies in the old index, the textile workers had been exploited and cheated since Independence to the extent of nearly sixty crores of rupees. It attacked the Majur Mahajan as a company union in collusion with the millowners and the Government to defraud the workers. 8,000 copies of the first edition of this booklet were sold out in one week, so a second edition was brought out in January, 1964. The anti-Majur Mahajan tone of this booklet was bitter and sardonic:

--"In Ahmedabad, on the 4th December (1963), an earth-shattering event occurred. On the forty-seventh anniversary of the Majur Mahajan, Vasavda called a public meeting for Nandaji, but hardly 8-10,000 workers went to this; whereas 2 lakhs of workers gathered in Kankaria Football Ground to attend the meeting called by the three-month old United Workers' Battle Committee ! With this earth-shattering event, the Majur Mahajan, which had been bearing down on the workers (i.e. oppressing them) rolled down with a crash. Because of this miracle, on the 27th December, 1963, in Delhi, at last, the Labour Minister, Nandaji, agreed that there was some mistake in the assessment of the dearness allowance. After 32 years, someone at last spoke up!

44. Vakil Report, p.159

But what is this mistake? One can call it a mistake if it is a matter of a few annas, but this is a difference of Rs.25 per month at least! Every year a cut of Rs.300! And in the last 15 years since Independence, Rs.4,500 has been stolen from the pockets of each Ahmedabad worker. Each year $4\frac{1}{2}$ crores of rupees have been looted from $1\frac{1}{2}$ lakh millworkers, and in 15 years, Rs.67 crores worth of cheating has been going on. An honest businessman would say that the mistake can be rectified. Are Nandaji, Vasavda, the Government and millowners honest enough to be ready to say that they accept the mistake? Pay back Rs.4,500 to each worker, and from now on give Rs.25 more dearness allowance per month, then we will believe that you are honest, and that it was only your mistake. Otherwise all will say that this is not a mistake, but looting, trickery and cheating, and now this must be brought to an end." --

The booklet also sought solidarity with lower middle class and white-collar workers, also badly hit by rising prices; one of the major demands of the SKSS was the following:

--"Join their dearness allowance to the cost of living index, and give full dearness allowance to all industries and occupations and government employees, bank and insurance company employees, school and college teachers etc., in short all workers and white-collar workers"---⁴⁵

Speeches, especially by Indulal Yagnik, as reported in the Vakil Report, at the mill-gates were highly incendiary and intemperate in their abuse of the Majur Mahajan, the millowners and the Government. The flavour of these speeches can be seen in this quotation from a speech made by Indulal Yagnik at a meeting held on the 31st December, 1963, near Jay Bharat Mills:

--"Let the Police be called out; let there be lathi charges; we are not going to be defied. If you spill young blood, there will be

45. Quotations from Dinkar Mehta, Dishonesty in the Assessment of the Dearness Allowance. (1964).

revolution. Chimneys of the mills are really symbolic of the owners. Your chimneys may be at their highest and so may be the walls, but the awakened workers will make a gap and will get in. The day on which the workers of Ahmedabad will come out for their rights, on that day they will take possession of these mills. Let the walls be as high as possible and let there be barbed wires but these will not deter the workers of India and Ahmedabad, and if any blood is spilled, flames of revolution will rise and the Shethias and Managers will have to run with the back part of their Dhotis in their hands" --

Indulal Yagnik was an indefatigable speaker and a brilliant orator with an earthy, highly picturesque use of the Gujarati language.

In addition, a hartal was called out on the 8th August, 1963 (to coincide with the anniversary of the death of the Maha Gujarat martyrs outside Congress House) in protest on the d.a. issue and against rising food prices. Again, on the 5th August, 1964, a more widespread "Ahmedabad bandh" was called out, in conjunction with a "Gujarat bandh", on the d.a. issue, which was planned to coincide with the day fixed by the Industrial Court for the hearing of the millowners' dispute with the TLA on the payment of d.a. according to the new cost of living index with a linking factor of 3.17.⁴⁶ This day was chosen in order to pressurize the Industrial Court into accepting the demands of the SKSS for an ad hoc rise in d.a. of Rs.25 per month for one year before a new Family Budget Inquiry should be introduced, and a demand for Rs.200 per year as bonus.⁴⁷ The Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union claimed that

46. The political character of the strike was confirmed by the mixing up of demands for a martyrs' memorial and introduction of English from the 5th Standard (see next section) with a demand for an ad hoc rise in d.a. of Rs.25 per month, and bonus as high as Rs.200.

47. Times of India (Bombay), 6 August, 1964.

a ballot was held in all mills concerned, and mill workers had voted in favour of a strike by an overwhelming majority of 90%. It seems, however, that a red box and a white box were placed at the entrance of each mill and that, in meetings and pamphlets, the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union explained that those who wanted d.a. according to the new cost of living index series should vote in the red box, while those who wanted d.a. as it stood frozen by the millowners on account of the cessation of publication of the old index should vote in the white box.⁴⁸ It was hardly suprising, therefore, that a 90% majority of votes was recorded in the red box! However, the 1964 hartal was a serious and extensive disturbance which affected both the mill areas and the inner city areas. The Times of India, from Bombay, reported, on August 6th, "day-long clashes between lathi-swinging policemen and hysterical mobs", in which a police constable was butchered in the mill areas, several people lost their lives in police firing on a dangerous mob gathered before Kalupur Police Station, and several mills, shops and AMTS buses were attacked and damaged.

In protest against the food crisis, Indulal Yagnik in early 1965 called on the people to form food committees all over the State to bring pressure on the Government to improve the civil supplies administration.⁴⁹ Indulal Yagnik himself wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri, deploring the acute food crisis in Gujarat, and the inadequate measures taken by the Gujarat Government, and requesting massive Central assistance.⁵⁰ He went on a fast from December 25th, 1964, to January 6th, 1965, demanding a proper and equitable distribution of foodgrains and edible oil by the Gujarat Government, and in particular that the Gujarat Government should

48. Vakil Report, p.153

49. Times of India (Bombay), 3 Jan , 1965.

50. Times of India (Bombay), 2 Jan , 1965.

immediately fulfil its promise of providing ground nut oil to the people at Rs.1.95 per kilo, and that, at least part of the rice procured under the levy system should be released for sale in fair price shops. Yagnik's fast aroused such strong public emotions, that Shastri himself sent him a telegram on January 1st,⁵¹ which went as follows:

--"I can assure you we are doing everything possible to increase the supplies of wheat and coarse grains to Gujarat even by cutting down allotments to other States. There are, however, physical limits. All I can do is to assure you that we are doing, and will continue to do our best. I would earnestly suggest your now breaking your fast." --

To which, Yagnik sent the reply:

--"Thank you for your wire and for expediting despatch of foodgrains to Gujarat. The Gujarat Government has created serious crisis in the distribution of rice in spite of a bumper crop and failed in securing surplus oil stocks to sell at reasonable prices to the people. Earnestly request good offices of your Food Minister in Gujarat immediately. Regret inability terminate fast till these minimum conditions are satisfied" --

Finally Yagnik ended his fast following a letter from Mr. Vijaykumar Trivedi, Civil Supplies Minister of Gujarat, assuring him of the Government's determination to take all steps to overcome the present difficulties.⁵²

Thus the SKSS used a variety of agitational techniques, of a similar kind to those used during the linguistic movement: published material, meetings and speeches at the mill-gates, processions, rallies (often parallel to and in direct competition with Majur Mahajan rallies especially on Labour Day, December 4th, 1963), hartals, peoples' committees and the fast. The new feature of agitational politics in the mid-60s was

51. Ibid.

52. Times of India (Bombay), 2 Jan. , 1965.

its overtly economic nature, its extension into working-class, mill areas and its use of the general strike or hartal.

2. From Agitational Opposition to Ruling Party.

- i) A major issue in ~~the~~^{1965 municipal} elections was the d.a. issue, outlined in detail above, coupled with the issue of rising prices, especially of food grains and edible oils. The Congress administration both at the Centre and at the State level was closely identified with the food crisis and with the tardiness and inadequacy of measures taken to deal with it, and this had a profound impact on ^{the}/Ahmedabad Corporation elections.⁵³

The Central government was heavily criticised by the Gujarat Government and many organised bodies in Gujarat for its policy of food zones and control on the free movement of wheat and rice, which resulted in inefficiency and delay in the delivery of foodgrains to Gujarat. When Mr. Subramaniam, Union Minister of Food and Agriculture, came to Ahmedabad on July 21st, 1964, at the request of the State Government to study the food situation, representatives of the Congress Party and various trade associations, such as the Food-Grain Dealers' Association, the Gujarat Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Sugar Merchants' Association etc., in their memorandum to the Minister, emphasized the need of evolving a national food policy to meet the requirements of the entire country, pleaded for the abolition of food zones and the free movement of wheat and rice throughout the country and urged that, until the zonal system was done away with, the Union Government should see that Gujarat got adequate and regular supplies of rice and wheat.⁵⁴

53. Thus municipal elections, at least in a metropolitan city such as Ahmedabad, were far from being a matter merely of "sewers and drains", and purely localised issues. The Indian polity was sufficiently integrated by this time for actions of Central and State Governments to have a direct bearing on local elections.

54. Times of India (Bombay), 21 July, 1964.

The Government of Gujarat was also open to widespread criticism for its insensitive handling of the food issue. Due to its partiality to the farmers and its reluctance and delay in imposing price controls, a very necessary ban on the export of groundnuts and groundnut oil, and strict and full rationing in the major cities, it failed to get adequate supplies of food at reasonable prices to city-dwellers. All political parties in Gujarat were united in pleading with the State Government to take action to stop the export of oil to other areas.⁵⁵ At that period, the State produced annually more than 1,000,000 tons of groundnut oil. The quantity required for local consumption was not more than 125,000, thus leaving large stocks for export. However, in the mid-60s, oil-millers and dealers had been pumping out all available oil to other States, thereby creating near oil-famine conditions in Gujarat itself. The Gujarat Government declared that a tin of oil should sell for Rs.35 but the price in mid 1964 was Rs.46 and rising all the time. For a long time the State Government declared that it was against any bans and restrictions, but eventually circumstances left it with no alternative but to ban all exports of oil to other States in July 1964. Despite confident assertions to the contrary, the Government experienced difficulty in securing even coarse grains like jowar, bajri and pulses from surplus States. On September 22, members of the ruling party and the Opposition in the Vidhan Sabha criticised the Government for not taking remedial measures in time to ensure regular supplies of edible oils, and the Civil Supplies Minister, Mr. Vijaykumar Trivedi, admitted that the ban on exports and the price control on groundnut oil should have been imposed earlier.⁵⁶ The Government was also criticised for inefficient and inequitable distribution of Central government supplies of wheat and rice, and for its half-hearted attempts at food rationing in the six major cities of Ahmedabad, Baroda, Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Surat. The

55. Times of India (Bombay), 21 July, 1964.

56. Ibid.

system of rationing introduced in these six major cities and extended to other cities with a population of 50,000 or more was an informal one, with a free market functioning side by side, subject to many abuses and all the evils of endless queueing.⁵⁷

Thus a major issue in the 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election was that of rising prices, closely linked with the d.a. question, on which for the first time the politically conscious textile workers were united in an anti-Congress stance, with the lower middle classes of the inner city areas, people in government employment and with fixed salaries who were hit very hard by the large price increases. The Janta Parishad, in its election manifesto, promised to raise the wages of municipal employees and to increase the incidence of taxation on the rich and decrease it on the poorer sections of the community.

Another issue which broadly affected the middle classes, including the upper middle and business classes, residing in the prosperous new suburbs west of the Sabarmati, was the English language question. The issue centred on the conflict between the Gujarat Government's resolve, and especially that of the GPCC in which representatives of rural areas predominated, on the one hand, that, in accordance with the policy (adopted on the creation of the State) of vernacularizing education and administration, English should be taught in schools only from the eighth standard, and the Central Government's directive, on the other hand, following the dangerous language riots in parts of India, that both English and Hindi should be taught from the fifth standard. Fourteen Zilla Panchayat Presidents and Presidents of Zilla School Committees met on the 21st October, 1964, under the chairmanship of the GPCC President, Tribhovandas Patel, and in the presence of

57. Times of India (Bombay), 23 September, 1964.

Morarji Desai, and unanimously resolved that the present policy of the Gujarat Government that English should only be taught from the eighth standard was correct.⁵⁸ However, in many urban areas, especially in Ahmedabad, the State's administrative and business capital, the desirability of teaching English early and at a high standard was obvious from the point of view of securing white-collar employment and higher-status jobs. Thus this issue was another reason for the city's anti-Congressism in the Municipal Corporation elections in 1965.

All opposition parties, parents' organisations, student bodies, and trade and commercial organisations in Ahmedabad city and a majority of the non-Government employee members of the Gujarat University Senate protested against the teaching of English from the eighth standard only and demanded its teaching from the fifth standard. An English Fifth Standard Committee of Ahmedabad was set up to protest against the State Government's English policy. On March 29th, 1965, Seth Amrutlal Hargovandas, a prominent Ahmedabad textile magnate, wrote to the Chief Minister, Mr. Balvantray Mehta, asking him to take into account the public opinion of Gujarat on the English question.⁵⁹ The Gujarat Students' Union and the Youth Association jointly called for a one-day token strike in all schools and colleges in Ahmedabad on March 10th to protest against "the refusal of the State Government to reconsider its English-teaching policy". A programme to observe an "English-teaching week" and organise demonstrations in the last week of March was planned by the Gujarat State Federation of Secondary Teachers' Association.⁶⁰ Even the Congress members of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation opposed the State Government's English policy. On February 16th, 1965, the Congress Corporation members passed a resolution urging the State Government to review the policy of teaching English in the

58. Gujarat Samachar, 22 October, 1964.

59. Sandesh, 21 March, 1965.

60. Times of India (Bombay), 8 March, 1965.

State without prejudice. On March 26th, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation adopted a resolution urging the Gujarat Government to hold an "impartial examination" of the English issue by experts and reconsider its present policy on the basis of their recommendations, although it rejected a resolution, moved by PSP member Dr. Suresh Shah, urging the Municipal School Board to provide for the teaching of English from Standard V in the Board's schools from June.⁶¹

The only concession that the Chief Minister would make was his announcement on March 30th that private schools were free to teach English from the fifth standard on a voluntary basis and at their own expense, and that the present policy of teaching English only from standard eight in Government schools would not be modified. He also announced that standards first to seventh would be considered as primary, declaring that more than 8,000 primary schools in the rural areas had seven standards, whereas only 575 secondary schools had included Standards V, VI, and VII in the secondary stage and this anomaly had to be ended.⁶² This was also bitterly resented by the teaching profession, parents and students in Ahmedabad schools and colleges because it meant that in schools wishing to teach English from the fifth standard, fees would have to go up, grants to schools which had previously considered themselves secondary would be cut, and the pay of such secondary school teachers would fall to primary school level. In these circumstances, the English Fifth Standard Committee of Ahmedabad counselled its supporters not to vote for Congress at the coming Municipal Corporation election.⁶³

Another source of weakness for the Congress in this election was that the Ahmedabad City Congress Committee and the Congress Corporation party and Congress workers at the ward level were split into factions

61. Times of India (Bombay), 27 March , 1965.

62. Times of India (Bombay), 31 March , 1965.

63. Sandesh , 3 April , 1965.

on the English issue. The most loyal faction in the Ahmedabad City Congress (for a detailed account of Congress Party factionalism at this time refer back to Chapter V), led by the then current President of the Ahmedabad DCC, Vimalbhai N. Shah, supported by the Majur Mahajan group, was placed in an uneasy and difficult position of reluctant opposition to the GPCC on the English question. However, the loyal faction and the disloyal faction of Jamnashankar Pandya and Trikamlal Patel united internally in opposition to the State Government's English policy, and, after the débâcle of the 1965 Municipal elections, they jointly ousted Vimalbhai Shah from power and gained command of the Ahmedabad City Congress.⁶⁴ Vadilal L. Mehta, industrialist and former Ahmedabad DCC President, came out in overt opposition to the State Government's English policy, and he and his supporters went from door to door during the election campaign asking voters to elect only those who supported the demand for teaching English from Standard V. On January 27th, the Gujarat PCC Executive suspended Mr. Vadilal Mehta for three years for expressing views contrary to the State Government's policy on the teaching of English in secondary schools, declaring that his campaign against the English policy of the Government was intended to see that those who supported the Congress and the Government's policy were defeated in next month's municipal elections in Ahmedabad.⁶⁵ Mr. Vadilal Mehta and his supporters had, indeed, been intending to contest seats against the official Congress candidates on the English question, and were negotiating an electoral agreement with either the United Front of Janta Parishad, SSP and one faction of the Republican party or the Democratic Front of Jan Sangh, PSP and the

64. Interview with Mr. L in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

65. Times of India (Bombay), 8 January, 1965.

Swatantra party and the other faction of the Republican party. All opposition parties had agreed to leave Ellisbridge ward free to enable Vadilal and his friends to engage the Congress in a straight fight for all the seven Ellisbridge seats. Following the suspension of former City Congress President, Mr. Vadilal L. Mehta, from the Congress, fifty leading Congressmen of Ahmedabad, including Mr. Jamnashankar Pandya, issued a statement on February 5th, 1965, disapproving the GPCC decision to suspend Mr. Mehta and requested the GPCC to revise its stand on the issue of the teaching of English.⁶⁶ Although Vadilal Mehta revised his decision to contest all seven seats in Ellisbridge against the official Congress candidates on an assurance from the Chief Minister that the Government would appoint a commission to inquire into the controversy, the Congress remained deeply divided in almost every ward on this issue to such an extent that no election manifesto was issued - reliance being placed entirely on the past services of the Congress Party in the Corporation.⁶⁷ The Chief Minister's conciliatory gesture to Vadilal Mehta was severely criticised by the GPCC executive which insisted that there was no reason why the English policy should be discussed further after a firm decision had been taken. Nevertheless, a joint meeting of the GPCC and the executive of the legislature Congress Party decided to set up a four-man (Balvantrai Mehta, Hitendra Desai, GPCC President, Mr. Tribhovandas Patel, and former President Mr. Thakorebhai Desai) committee to seek out a consensus of the members of the GPCC and the legislators on the English policy. However, its findings, which were not announced until after the Municipal Corporation election, did not affect that election.⁶⁸

66. Indian Express (Bombay), 6 February, 1965.

67. Times of India (Bombay), 3 April, 1965.

68. Ibid.

Thus the English policy of the Gujarat Government provided another major issue in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election of 1965, which proved highly divisive to the Ahmedabad Congress. There was a conflict over the selection of candidates between the Majur Mahajan, supported by Vimalbhai Shah, and the Jamnashankar Pandya and Trikamlal Patel factions, and Congress candidates were so divided on the English question that in 1965 they did not campaign in a united panel in each municipal ward, but campaigned separately, often against fellow-Congress panel members.⁶⁹

ii) The April 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections: Voting Analysis.

The overall results compared with the 1961 municipal election are as follows in Table 15:

TABLE 15.⁷⁰ Comparison of the Overall Results of the 1961 and 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

<u>Party:</u>	<u>1961 (out of 70 seats):</u>	<u>1965 (out of 78 seats):</u>
1. Congress	50	13
2. Janta Parishad	9	42
3. Republican	0	5
4. PSP	8	9
5. SSP	0	0
6. Jan Sangh	0	0
7. Swatantra	Did not contest	0
8. Other Parties	0	0
9. Independents	3	9
	<hr/> 70	<hr/> 78

The real strength of the Janta Parishad was 50 in 1965, because 3 Independents, (Bachubhai Kapadia and Navanitlal Shah from Ward No. 3

69. More localised issues such as the question of the short-fall of Rabari rehousing by the Municipal Corporation, and the anger of the farmers, especially of Navrangpura, over the proposed green belt, have been mentioned in Chapter IV.

70. Much of the data in this section is from the election files of Gujarat University's School of Social Sciences.

Kalupur-1, and Jaimal Thakore from Ward No. 9 South Ellisbridge) and 5 Republican Party members were elected with Janta Parishad support. It was a crushing defeat for the Congress and particularly for the Majur Mahajan. The Mayor, textile magnate, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, was forced to shift his constituency from Dariapur Ward, where he would almost certainly have been defeated on the English issue, to Khokera-Memdabad Ward in which his own cotton textile mills were situated. The Deputy Mayor, Narottambhai K. Jhaveri, a big businessman, lost his seat from Kalupur Ward No.4 for the first time since he entered the Corporation in 1949. Dr. Amubhai Shukla, Congress Chairman of the Transport Committee, was defeated from Jamalpur Ward No. 7. Both the President and Secretary of the Ahmedabad DCC, Vimalbhai N. Shah and Maneklal Shah, were defeated from Saraspur and Shahpur wards respectively.⁷¹

The Majur Mahajan had secured 29 out of a total of 50 Congress seats in 1961, thus making it numerically the preponderant force in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Congress party. However, in 1965, it was wiped out as a political force within the Corporation since all its 26 candidates were defeated, including the veteran INTUC leader, Manharlal Shukla, member of the Health Committee and the Standing Committee between 1961 and 1965.

The success and popularity of the SKSS can be seen from the fact that eight out of its nine members, held in detention under the Defence of India Rules for their part in the hartal on the 5th August, 1964, most of whom were left Communists, were elected to the Municipal Corporation while they were in jail, since they were not allowed to be released on parole by the Government of Gujarat for the duration of the

71. Sandesh, 7 and 8 April, 1965.

election. These eight included Dinkar Mehta, leader of the CPM, other left Communists, such as Hanumansing Bajrangsing and V.B. Patel, and Ratilal C. Shah and Sohrabali Murtuja Hussein, secretaries of the SKSS.

A remarkable feature of the election was the success of Lilabhai Rabari from Shahpur ward. He was the first of his community, the Rabaris (a Scheduled Caste of cowherds, who were very numerous in Ahmedabad City), to ever become a city father. He also won, not from a Reserved constituency, but as an Independent, not connected with either the Majur Mahajan or the Janta Parishad, and without spending a paisa. Women from lower middle class families, grateful for his help in solving their household problems, training them to run cooperative societies, organising a women's deputation to the Union Food Minister on rising prices of foodgrains and edible oils, getting sick persons admitted to hospitals, raising funds to help provide text-books for poor school children etc., collected money and presented him with a bicycle. They also pooled their resources to pay his security deposit and meet other election expenses, after persuading him to stand as an Independent in the 1965 Corporation election. On the day of the election, 150 women contributed flour, vegetables and oil and worked as cooks to feed the 500 students and others, who had volunteered to carry on a house-to-house campaign to secure the victory of the first Rabari city father. Not surprisingly, the ~~percentage~~ women voting was the highest in Shahpur ward.⁷²

Comparison of the 1961 and 1965 Municipal Corporation Elections.

On the establishment of a separate State of Gujarat in May 1960, the Janta Parishad lost its main raison d'être, apart from continuing the fight for a Martyr's Memorial, and PSP and SSP supporters fell away.

72. Times of India (Bombay), 12 April , 1965.

The Mehsana group of the Janta Parishad led by Purshottamdas Patel joined the Congress, and rightist elements joined the Swatantra. The Maha Gujarat sentiment, particularly over the Martyrs' Memorial issue, was still strong enough, particularly in the old city wards, to enable nine Janta Parishad members to be elected in the 1961 Municipal Corporation elections in Ahmedabad, although this election was primarily a Congress, and especially a Majur Mahajan victory with 29 Majur Mahajan candidates and 21 other Congress candidates elected. In the 1962 General Elections, Maha Gujarat sentiment secured the election of Indulal Yagnik as the Lok Sabha member from Ahmedabad against the powerful Majur Mahajan chief, Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, and the election of Manubhai Palkiwala as MLA in Dariapur ward. In Dariapur-Kazipur, the Communist leader, Dinkar Mehta, missed victory by only 929 votes. However, in Ahmedabad District as a whole, the poll percentage of the Janta Parishad fell from 48.04% in 1957 to only 13.02% in 1962. In 1957, the Janta Parishad had won 29 L.A. seats and 5 L.S. seats. In 1962, it won one L.A. and one L.S. seat, and from being a plausible State party, had become localised to Ahmedabad City as its major centre of support.⁷³

The Janta Parishad did not recapture its electoral verve until the linguistic agitation had been broadened into a popular economic agitation, centred on the issue of the dearness allowance of textile workers and rising prices, in the mid 1960s. In the 1961 Municipal Corporation election, the Janta Parishad was not very strong in the Labour areas, but, in the 1965 Municipal Corporation election, with the rise of the leftist rival trade union to the Majur Mahajan, the Sangram Samiti, established by Janta Parishad and Communist workers, the picture had been transformed:

73. D.N. Pathak, M.G. Parekh and K.D. Desai, Three General Elections in Gujarat. (1966).

TABLE 16: ⁷⁴ A Comparison of the Wardwise % of Votes and Seats Secured by the Congress and the Janta Parishad in the 1961 and 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Elections.

Ward:	Congress			Janta Parishad			Ward:	Congress			Janta Parishad		
	% of Votes	Seats	1961 Election	% of Votes	Seats			% of Votes	Seats	1965 Election	% of Votes	Seats	
1. Khadia-1	35.7	1	7.2	-	-	1. Khadia-1	25.13	1	23.41	-	-	-	-
2. Khadia-2	36.6	-	6.4	-	-	2. Khadia-2	19.08	-	33.58	1	-	-	-
3. Kalupur-1	43.4	2	-	-	-	3. Kalupur-1	16.62	-	27.50	3	-	-	-
4. Kalupur-2	43.7	2	53.5	3	3	4. Kalupur-2	32.69	-	50.40	5	-	-	-
5. Dariapur	39.2	3	41.9	2	2	5. Dariapur	34.54	-	55.90	5	-	-	-
6. Shahpur	39.4	1	45.8	4	4	6. Shahpur	26.19	1	38.97	3	-	-	-
7. Jamalpur	36.5	4	13.4	-	-	7. Jamalpur	30.81	-	19.85	1	-	-	-
8. Raikhad	40.1	4	-	-	-	8. Raikhad	36.99	1	24.31	1	-	-	-
9. S. Ellis Bridge	53.1	5	17.5	-	-	9. S. Ellis Bridge	44.19	2	-	-	-	-	-
10. Shahibag	60.8	5	32.1	-	-	10. N. Ellis Bridge	41.28	2	-	-	-	-	-
11. Asarva	36.8	4	21.6	-	-	11. Sabarmati	55.82	3	18.93	-	-	-	-
12. Saraspur	48.0	6	30.7	-	-	12. Shahibag	25.79	-	38.48	3	-	-	-
13. Gomtipur	42.5	6	11.7	-	-	13. Asarva	36.57	-	43.83	5	-	-	-
14. Khokera-Mehmedabad	40.8	4	6.3	-	-	14. Saraspur	34.52	-	45.52	5	-	-	-
15. Maninagar-Baherampura	50.2	3	-	-	-	15. Rakhial	38.43	-	37.02	3	-	-	-
						16. Gomtipur	35.15	-	47.18	4	-	-	-
						17. Khokera-Mehmedabad	35.18	1	55.93	3	-	-	-
						18. Maninagar-Baherampura	33.80	2	13.56	-	-	-	-
TOTAL:	43.8	50	21.4	9		TOTAL:	32.87	13	35.72	42	-	-	-

74. Compiled from data made available by the University of Gujarat's School of Social Sciences in Ahmedabad.

In the 1965 Municipal Corporation election, the Janta Parishad sought an alliance of the middle and upper-middle class, on the one hand, on the issue of the teaching of English in schools, and the industrial working class, on the other hand, on the dearness allowance issue. Table 16 clearly establishes the retention by the Janta Parishad of important support-bases in the old city wards in 1965, and its striking new gains in votes and seats in the labour constituencies for the first time in 1965. In 1965, the Janta Parishad raised its percentage of total votes from all the wards from 21.4% in 1961 to 35.72% in 1965. In the old city wards, it raised its voting percentage very significantly in 1965 as compared to 1961 in the wards of Khadia-1 and 2, Kalupur-1, Jamalpur and Raikhad. In Khadia-1, it raised its percentage from 7.2% to 23.46%, although it failed to secure any seats. In Khadia-2, it raised its voting percentage from 6.4% to 33.58%, and managed to gain one seat. In Kalupur-1, which it had not contested at all in 1961, it secured three seats on the basis of 27.50% of the votes, pointing to the highly competitive tussle of parties, particularly the PSP and the Congress, in this area. In Jamalpur, it raised its voting percentage from 13.4% in 1961 to 19.85% in 1965, and managed to secure one seat. In Raikhad, which it had not contested in 1961, it secured one seat in 1965 on the basis of 24.31% of the votes. In Kalupur-2, it managed to win all five seats in 1965 on the basis of a slightly reduced vote of 50.40%, compared to 53.5% in 1961, when it won three seats. In Dariapur, it raised its voting percentage considerably in 1965 as compared to 1961 i.e. it rose from 41.9% to 55.90%, while the number of seats won was five compared to two in 1961. In Shahpur, a Janta Parishad strong hold, surprisingly enough the Janta Parishad percentage of votes and number of seats actually went down in 1965 compared to 1961 i.e. percentage of votes fell from 45.8% to 38.9%, and number of seats from four to three. The explanation for this lies in the considerable factionalism within the Janta Parishad in this ward in 1965 over the selection of candidates, which caused

the temporary resignation of Janta Parishad leader, Dr. Somabhai C. Desai, from the Janta Parishad's Parliamentary Board on February 17th, 1965, and the decision by Shamsuddin Munshi to resign as Corporator and not to recontest the election from Shahpur.⁷⁵ In all the suburban labour wards, apart from Ellis Bridge and Sabarmati, the Janta Parishad made impressive gains in 1965 in seats and votes, compared to 1961. In Shahibag, it increased its voting percentage from 32.1% to 38.48% and won three seats, compared to none in 1961. In Asarva, it more than doubled its voting percentage, which rose from 21.6% to 43.8% in 1965, and won a clean slate of five seats in 1965, compared to none in 1961. In Saraspur, its voting percentage rose from 30.7% in 1961 to 45.52% in 1965, and the seats gained from none to five. In Rakhial, the Janta Parishad did well in 1965, gaining three seats on the basis of 37.02%. In Gomtipur, the Janta Parishad more than quadrupled its voting percentage, which rose from only 11.7% in 1961 to 47.18% in 1965, and won for the first time four seats. In Khokera-Mehmedabad, the Janta Parishad voting percentage rose more than nine times from 6.3% in 1961 to 55.93% in 1965, and for the first time it won three seats. In Maninagar-Baherampura, which it had not contested at all in 1961, it gained 13.56% of the votes, although it could not gain any seats.

In contrast, in comparison with its reasonable performance in the old city wards and very good performance in the labour wards in 1961, the Congress fared poorly in both these areas in terms of seats and votes in 1965. However, the Congress fared comparatively worse, in 1965, in the old city wards than in the labour wards. In Khadia-1, although its voting percentage fell from 35.7% in 1961 to 25.13% in 1965, it managed to retain one seat, but in Khadia-2 its voting

75. Sandesh, 17 February, 1965; and Gujarat Samachar, 21 Feb., 1965.

percentage was almost halved and again it could not secure any seats. In Kalupur-1, its voting percentage fell drastically from 43.4% to 16.62%, and it could not retain either of its two seats in 1965. Similarly, in Kalupur-2, its voting percentage fell markedly from 43.7% to 32.69% in 1965, and here also it failed to retain either of its two seats. In Dariapur, it failed to retain any of its three seats of 1961, although its voting percentage fell only from 39.2% to 34.54% in 1965. In Shahpur, it managed to retain one seat, although its voting percentage fell sharply from 39.4% to 26.19%. In Jamalpur, it lost all the four seats it had won in 1961, although its voting percentage only fell from 36.5% to 30.81% in 1965. In Raikhad, in 1965, Congress only retained one of its four seats of 1961, and its voting percentage decreased from 40.1% to 36.99% in 1965. In the labour areas, Congress lost seats heavily in 1965 - in Shahibag it lost all its five seats of 1961, in Asarva all its four seats of 1961, in Saraspur all its six seats of 1961, in Gomptipur too it lost all its former six seats, in Khokera-Mehmedabad it only managed to retain one of its previous four seats, and in Maninagar-Baherampura it retained two of its former three seats. In 1965, in the new ward of Rakhial, it could not obtain any seats. However, in terms of voting percentage, although this fell considerably in 1965, particularly in Shahibag, the Congress still had a reasonable core of labour support, despite the success of the Sangram Samiti. In Shahibag, its voting percentage more than halved from 60.8% in 1961 to 25.79% in 1965, but in Asarva, it remained fairly constant, being 36.8% in 1961 and 36.57% in 1965. In Saraspur, it fell markedly from 48% in 1961 to 34.52% in 1965; in Gomptipur it fell from 42.5% in 1961 to 35.15% in 1965. In Maninagar-Baherampura, it fell markedly from 50.2% in 1961 to 33.80% in 1965, but in Khokera-Mehmedabad, it fell less dramatically ^{from} 40.8% in 1961 to 35.18% in 1965. Thus, although the percentage of votes secured by the Congress fell considerably in 1965 compared to the remarkably

high figures of 1961, it still had a reasonable core of labour support, around 35%, in 1965, which indicated that the Sangram Samiti would have to work very hard to consolidate its sweeping gains in 1965. The main areas of Congress support in 1965 were the Ellis Bridge and Sabarmati regions, from where it secured seven out of its total of thirteen seats in 1965. In North and South Ellis Bridge, its voting percentage fell somewhat to 41.28% and 44.19% respectively in 1965 from the figure of 53.1% for Ellis Bridge ward in 1961; however, in Sabarmati, it secured its highest voting percentage in 1965 of 55.82%.

Since the Congress, even in 1965, managed to retain a core of about 35% of votes in the labour areas, the striking victories of the Janta Parishad owed a lot to higher voting turnouts in the labour areas in 1965 compared to 1961, due to a large extent to the strong politicizing impulse of the Sangram Samiti and the campaign on the dearness allowance issue and against rising prices.

TABLE 17:⁷⁶ Comparison of Voting Turnout in the Ahmedabad Municipal Elections of 1961 and 1965, Wardwise.

1961 Election			1965 Election		
Ward:	Voting Turnout		Ward:	Voting Turnout	
1. Khadia-1	69.2%	(1)	1. Khadia-1	68.3%	(3)
2. Khadia-2	67.8%	(2)	2. Khadia-2	70.5%	(1)
3. Kalupur-1	67.8%	(3)	3. Kalupur-1	64.7%	(6)
4. Kalupur-2	58.7%	(11)	4. Kalupur-2	63.6%	(9)
5. Dariapur	65.2%	(4)	5. Dariapur	69.3%	(2)
6. Shahpur	56.8%	(13)	6. Shahpur	60.2%	(12)
7. Jamalpur	64.9%	(5)	7. Jamalpur	64.0%	(8)
8. Raikhad	61.1%	(6)	8. Raikhad	57.4%	(17)
9. Ellis Bridge	59.1%	(9)	9. S.Ellis Bridge	52.0%	(18)
10. Shahibag	56.5%	(14)	10. N.Ellis Bridge	59.0%	(14)
11. Asarva	58.7%	(12)	11. Sabarmati	58.8%	(16)
12. Saraspur	59.3%	(8)	12. Shahibag	60.0%	(13)
13. Gomptipur	58.8%	(10)	13. Asarva	63.1%	(11)
14. Khokera Mehmedabad	59.3%	(7)	14. Saraspur	64.9%	(5)
15. Maninagar- Baherampura	56.1%	(15)	15. Rakhial	65.0%	(4)
			16. Gomptipur	63.3%	(10)
			17. Khoke ra Mehmedabad	64.7%	(7)
			18. Maninagar- Baherampura	58.9%	(15)

Thus, in almost all the wards, voting turnout was considerably higher in 1965 compared to 1961. In the old city wards, a very high turnout was maintained in Khadia-1; in Khadia-2, it rose from 67.8% in 1961 to 70.5% in 1965, the highest of any ward. In Kalupur-1, it fell somewhat from 67.8% in 1961 to 64.7% in 1965; however, in Kalupur-2, it rose considerably from 58.7% in 1961 to 63.6% in 1965. In Dariapur and Shahpur, turnout also rose significantly from 65.2% and 56.8% respectively in 1961 to 69.3% and 60.2% respectively in 1965. In Jamalpur, it remained fairly constant

76. Compiled from data made available by the University of Gujarat's School of Social Sciences, Ahmedabad.

in 1961 and 1965. In Raikhad and South Ellis Bridge, it actually fell in 1965 compared to 1961, and in North Ellis Bridge it remained constant, as also in Sabarmati. In the labour wards, voting turnout was unusually high, and well above the 1961 figure in almost all the wards; in Asarva, it rose from 58.7% in 1961 to 63.1% in 1965; in Saraspur it was 64.9% in 1965 compared to 59.3% in 1961; turnout in Rakhial in 1965 was very high at 65%; in Gomptipur, in 1965, turnout was 63.3% compared to 58.8% in 1961; in Khokera-Mehmedabad, turnout rose from 59.3% in 1961 to 64.7% in 1965; and in Maninagar-Baherampura, it rose more moderately from 56.1% in 1961 to 58.9% in 1965. In 1965, the labour wards of Saraspur and Rakhial came within the top five wards with the highest voting turnout, whereas in 1961 the two labour wards with the highest turnout Khokera-Mehmedabad and Saraspur, came seventh and eighth respectively in order of wards with the highest voting turnout.

The greater politicization of the working class in 1965 compared to 1961 can also be seen in the marked increase in the wardwise number of invalid votes cast in 1965 compared to 1961, which was particularly high in the working-class wards in 1965:

TABLE 18.⁷⁷ Wardwise Comparison of Invalid Votes in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Elections of 1961 and 1965.

<u>1961 Election</u>			<u>1965 Election</u>		
<u>Ward:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>		<u>Ward:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>	
1. Khadia-1	1.1	(10)	1. Khadia-1	1.92	(18)
2. Khadia-2	1.4	(2)	2. Khadia-2	1.99	(17)
3. Kalupur-1	1.2	(7)	3. Kalupur-1	2.75	(15)
4. Kalupur-2	1.2	(8)	4. Kalupur-2	4.92	(5)
5. Dariapur	1.3	(5)	5. Dariapur	4.86	(6)
6. Shahpur	1.2	(9)	6. Shahpur	5.07	(3)
7. Jamalpur	1.1	(11)	7. Jamalpur	4.12	(10)
8. Raikhad	1.4	(3)	8. Raikhad	4.17	(9)
9. Ellis Bridge	1.0	(13)	9. S. Ellis Bridge	3.01	(13)
10. Shahibag	1.0	(14)	10. N. Ellis Bridge	3.00	(14)
11. Asarva	1.4	(4)	11. Sabarmati	2.72	(16)
12. Saraspur	1.3	(6)	12. Shahibag	4.77	(7)
13. Gomtipur	1.5	(1)	13. Asarva	5.98	(1)
14. Khokera-Mehmedabad	0.9	(15)	14. Saraspur	5.67	(2)
15. Maninagar-Baherampura	1.1	(12)	15. Rakhial	4.55	(8)
			16. Gomtipur	3.94	(11)
			17. Khokera-Mehmedabad	3.61	(12)
			18. Maninagar-Baherampura	4.98	(4)

In 1961, the percentage of invalid votes varied only between the highest, 1.5% in Gomtipur, to the lowest, 0.9% in Khokera-Mehmedabad. The difference between the old city wards and the labour wards was not very great, and, indeed, the labour wards of Khokera-Mehmedabad and Maninagar-Baherampura were among the wards with the lowest percentage of invalid votes. In 1965, the picture was very different. The range of invalid votes was very much greater varying from only 1.92% in Khadia-1 to 5.98% in Asarva. The percentage of invalid votes was considerably higher in all the 1965 election wards, compared to that in the 1961 election wards, and this was particularly

77. Ibid.

marked in the old city wards of Kalupur-2, where it had risen from 1.2% in 1961 to 4.92% in 1965; Dariapur, where it had risen from 1.3% in 1961 to 4.86% in 1965; Shahpur, where it had risen from 1.2% in 1961 to 4.07% in 1965; Jamalpur, where it had risen from 1.1% in 1961 to 4.12% in 1965; and Raikhad, where it had risen from 1.4% in 1961 to 4.17% in 1965. The increase in 1965 was also very marked in the labour wards - the percentage in Shahibag had risen almost five times from 1.0% in 1961 to 4.77% in 1965; in Asarva it had risen more than four times from 1.4% in 1961 to 5.98% in 1965; in Saraspur too it had risen more than four times from 1.3% in 1961 to 5.67% in 1965; in Rakhial, it was very high at 4.55% in 1965; in Gomtipur it had more than doubled from 1.5% in 1961 to 3.94% in 1965; in Khokera-Mehmedabad it had more than trebled from 0.9% in 1961 to 3.61% in 1965, and in Maninagar-Baherampura, it rose almost five times from 1.1% in 1961 to 4.98% in 1965.

The success of the Sangram Samiti in the mid 1960s in making inroads into the seemingly entrenched power of the Majur Mahajan could be seen in the almost total reversal of the Majur Mahajan success at the polls in 1961, in the 1965 Municipal elections. In the 1961 election, the Majur Mahajan had a 93.55% success with its candidates, as the following table shows:

TABLE 19.⁷⁸ Candidates of the Majur Mahajan Sangh in the 1961 Municipal election - their wardwise distribution and success or failure at the polls.

<u>Name & No. of Ward:</u>	<u>Seats:</u>	<u>Candidates who stood:</u>	<u>Won:</u>	<u>Defeated:</u>
6. Shahpur	5	1	1	0
8. Raikhad	4	1	1	0
10. Shahibag	5	5	5	0
11. Asarva	5	5	4	1
12. Saraspur	6	6	6	0
13. Gomtipur	6	6	6	0
14. Khokera-Mehmedabad	4	4	4	0
15. Maninagar-Baherampura	4	3	2	1
TOTAL:	39	31	29	2

78. From D.N. Pathak, The 1961 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Election. (Ahmedabad: 1962).

Thus, in 1961, the Majur Mahajan secured 29 out of a total of 50 Congress seats, making it numerically the preponderant force in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Congress party. In 1965, despite bitter Congress factionalism, the Majur Mahajan secured the right of selecting twenty-six candidates in various wards as the following table shows:

TABLE 20.⁷⁹ Wardwise distribution of candidates put up by the Majur Mahajan in the 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

<u>Name and No. of Ward:</u>	<u>No. of Majur Mahajan nominated Candidates:</u>
6. Shahpur	1
8. Raikhad	1
11. Sabarmati	1
12. Shahibag	3
13. Asarva	4
14. Saraspur	4
15. Rakhial	3
16. Gomtipur	3
17. Khokera-Mehmedabad	3
18. Maninagar-Baherampura	3

However, in the 1965 Municipal election, the Majur Mahajan was wiped out as a political force within the Corporation since all its 26 candidates were defeated, including the veteran INTUC leader, Manharlal T. Shukla, member of the Health Committee and the Standing Committee between 1961 and 1965, and Shantilal R. Shah, the prominent TLA leader, who was later to become the Labour Minister in the Hitendra Desai Ministry in 1967.

The greater politicization of the electorate in 1965 as compared to 1961 can also be seen in the fewer number of candidates standing as Independents, which fell from 78 in 1961 to 65 in 1965, although more intense factionalism within the Congress and the Janta Parishad

79. Sandesh, 17 February, 1965.

meant a larger number were elected - 9 in 1965 compared to 3 in 1961 - particularly in the Ellis Bridge area, whose Congress circles were bitterly divided over the issue of the teaching of English in schools. However, many of these so-called Independents were in fact supported by one or other of the political parties - the Janta Parishad in particular backed a fair number of Independent and Republican party candidates.

In 1961, attempts were made by the various opposition parties, particularly the two main opposition parties, the PSP and the Janta Parishad, which also included the Communists, to reach an electoral understanding regarding the allocation of seats, although ideological differences made a coalition or United Front impossible. Secret negotiations took place between the PSP Secretary, Brahm Kumar Bhatt, and the Janta Parishad leader, Indulal Yagnik. The Gujarat Swatantra leader, Bhailal bhai Patel, was anxious for the success of these discussions and for the participation of the local Swatantra party in them, and he was aided in his desire by Dr. Ganpatram Patel, a Janta Parishad leader. A meeting was arranged on March 13th, 1961, between candidates of the Swatantra, PSP and Janta Parishad, but this proved unsuccessful, and eventually not even a limited understanding on seat distribution could be agreed to by the opposition parties against the Congress.

Thus wherever there happened to be a straight fight between the Congress and an opposition party, the opposition party fared relatively well, but, in triangular and multicornered contests, the Congress usually had the upper hand. For example in Kalupur-2 ward, there was a straight fight between Congress and the Janta Parishad. No other party had put up a candidate here, except for the Muslim League, which was a fairly insignificant party, which put up a sole candidate

in this ward, who got a mere 2.8% of the votes. Here the Congress and Janta Parishad each put up five candidates. The Congress polled 29,856 votes or 43.7% of the total vote, and got two seats, whereas the Janta Parishad polled 36,566 votes or 53.5% of the total votes, and secured three seats. However, the presence of another party's candidate, particularly the PSP, would have meant an inroad into the Janta Parishad's votes and seats. Similarly, in Kalupur-1, both the Congress and PSP put up five candidates and both secured two seats each on the basis of 39,332 votes or 43.4% of the total votes, and 40,443 votes or 44.6% of the total votes respectively. One Independent candidate also stood, gaining the largest number of votes of all the candidates in this ward and winning one seat. However, had he not stood, a great many of his 10,810 votes would have gone to the PSP.

In contrast, in a multicornered contest in Dariapur ward, Congress fared comparatively well. Congress and the Janta Parishad had put up candidates for all the five seats, but the PSP had also put up two candidates, and there were also four Independent candidates. The Congress won three seats on the basis of 37,523 votes or 39.2% of the total votes, and the Janta Parishad won two seats only on the basis of 40,090 votes, or 41.9% of the total votes. The PSP secured 9,205 votes or 9.6% of the total votes, and the Independent candidates secured 8,916 votes or 9.3% of the total votes. Thus had the PSP and the four Independents not contested, most of the PSP votes and some of the votes of the Independents would have gone to the Janta Parishad.⁸⁰

In 1965 too, attempts were made to form a United Front of all the opposition parties against the Congress, including a dissident Congress faction led by a former City DCC President and an important industrialist, Vadilal Mehta, who had decided to fight against the

80. D.N. Pathak, Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Election of 1961.

official Congress candidates on the English Language question. The first step was a meeting, presided over by Ratilal Khusaldas Patel, an important figure in Ellis Bridge, on 21st December, 1964, to form a nonpolitical "Peoples' Party" on the English Language question, at which Swatantra and Jan Sangh leaders, including Bhailalbhai D. Patel, Vasant Gagendragadkar, leader of the State and City Jan Sangh, and Shambhu Maharaj, an important Hindu religious figure, were all present.⁸¹ A little later, a meeting took place between Janta Parishad, SSP and Republican party leaders on the formation of a United Front against the Congress.⁸² However, from the beginning, there were strong differences of opinion about the allocation of seats between the various parties, and cracks in the United Front began to form: Manubhai Palkiwala was particularly insistent on more seats for the Janta Parishad.⁸³ Eventually the PSP joined the Praja Paksh of the Jan Sangh and Swatantra, and it was renamed the Democratic Front; thus there were two opposition electoral coalitions in existence, the United Front of the Janta Parishad, including the two Communist parties, the SSP and the Republican Party, and the Democratic Front of the PSP, Jan Sangh and Swatantra.⁸⁴ Vadilal Mehta had negotiations with both sides, with both Indulal Yagnik on the one hand, and Brahm Kumar Bhatt and Bhailalbhai Patel on the other, about forming a Citizens' Party on the English question.⁸⁵ The Janta Parishad was ready to give Vadilal Mehta's group all the Ellis Bridge seats, despite strong opposition from the Ellis Bridge Ward Janta Parishad party, but Vadilal Mehta said he would prefer the Democratic Front, who were ready to give him more seats (17 as against 10-11)

81. Gujarat Samachar, 21 Dec. , 1964.

82. Sandesh, 21 Dec. , 1964.

83. Gujarat Samachar, 5 Jan , 1965.

84. Gujarat Samachar, 18 Jan , 1965.

85. Gujarat Samachar, 21 Jan , 1965.

and to accept his condition that if Vadilal's followers were elected and the English language question was solved, they would return to the Congress.⁸⁶ However, eventually Vadilal Mehta's group decided not to contest against the Congress official candidates, after Vadilal had a talk with the Chief Minister, who reassured him that a Special Commission would be set up to look into the English Language question.⁸⁷ Eventually the two shaky coalition groups, the Democratic Front and the United Front reached a very imperfect understanding on the allocation of seats.

However, in 1965, the multiple-member constituency system, where the percentage of votes secured by a party is not always reflected in the number of seats won, worked to the advantage of the Janta Parishad, and not the Congress. For example, in Jamalpur, although the Congress secured 27,302 votes or 30.81% of the total votes, it secured no seats at all, whereas the PSP, with only 20,772 votes or 23.44% of the total votes, won two seats. In the labour wards too, such as Saraspur, Asarva, Rakhial and Gontipur, the Congress secured on average about 35% of the total votes, but it failed to win a single seat. In Rakhial, although Congress secured 38.43% of the total votes it failed to win any seats at all, whereas the Janta Parishad with only 37.02% of the total votes won three seats - its votes being concentrated among three contenders, rather than split between five. Thus, in 1965, multi-cornered contests posed no threat to the Janta Parishad, and actually seemed to work in its favour very often, a complete reversal of the position in 1961. In Dariapur, despite candidates put up by the PSP and the Jan Sangh as well as Independent candidates, the Janta Parishad had such a massive lead over the Congress with 60,152 votes or 55.90% of the total votes as against the Congress's 37,165 votes or 34.54% of the total votes, that the 9%

86. Sandesh ,8Feb , 1965, and Gujarat Samachar ,10Feb , 1965

87. Sandesh ,20Feb , 1965.

(approximately) of total votes secured by the PSP, Jan Sangh and Independents failed to have any impact. In Rakhial in 1965, votes going to Independent candidates (2,458 or 4.17% of the total votes), the Jan Sangh (1,649 votes or 2.8% of the total votes), PSP (1,696 votes or 2.88% of the total votes), and the Republican party (8,670 votes or 14.7% of the total votes) might well have detracted from potential Congress strength. The ^{presence of the} Swatantra Party, which had entered the electoral fray for the first time in 1965, the Jan Sangh, which increased somewhat its electoral impact in many more wards in 1965 than in 1961, and the Republican party, which considerably improved its electoral performance in 1965 compared to 1961, and the PSP seemed to operate to the disadvantage of the Congress.⁸⁸

There was undoubtedly a polarization of forces between the Janta Parishad and the Congress in 1965, brought about by growing intensity of support for the Janta Parishad over the d.a. issue and through the Sangram Samiti and a negative distrust of the Congress over its handling of the English language question. A partywise analysis of deposits lost clearly shows that the Congress and the Janta Parishad, and to a lesser extent, the PSP, were the only really serious contenders for power:

TABLE 21.⁸⁹ % and number of candidates who lost their deposits in the 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election.

<u>Name of Party:</u>	<u>No. of Candidates:</u>	<u>Deposit Lost:</u>	<u>%</u>
1. Congress	78	1	1.28
2. Janta Parishad	59	-	-
3. PSP	25	2	8.00
4. Swatantra	11	6	54.55
5. Jan Sangh	9	4	44.44
6. Republican	13	6	46.15
7. Other	4	2	50.00
8. Independents	65	34	52.31
 TOTAL:	 264	 55	 100

88. Municipal voting data made available by the School of Social Sciences, University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad.

89. Ibid.

However, the power of the multiple-member constituency to exaggerate the lead of the Janta Parishad could be clearly seen: although the Congress vote-share as a whole fell from 43.8% in 1961 to 32.87% in 1965, the difference between its vote-share and that of the Janta Parishad (35.72%) was fairly small, and yet the discrepancy in seats was very large - 13 for Congress as against 42 for the Janta Parishad. Thus only a fairly small shift in support was needed to bring the Congress back to power.

The Janta Parishad had increased its vote-share from 21.4% in 1961 to 35.72% in 1965 due largely to its popular economic agitation on the dearness allowance issue and the very high prices. The change in the nature of the party from a middle-class, linguistic agitation-based party to a more working-class agitational party, centering on economic issues, can be seen in a comparison of the socioeconomic background and political histories of the Janta Parishad Corporators elected in 1961 and 1965, as shown in Table 22.⁹⁰ In 1961, all the nine Janta Parishad Corporators were from the old city wards exclusively. They were mainly high-caste Hindus: Brahmins, Baniyas and Patels, with only one Muslim and one Harijan among them. They were almost all in middle-class occupations, and a large proportion of them were doctors (3), lawyers (2) and small businessmen. One was an employee in a private firm, a white-collar job, and only one was primarily a left-wing trade unionist. Almost all were mainly connected with professional societies or social welfare societies. They were largely middle-class Radicals.

In 1965, on the other hand, a majority of Janta Parishad Corporators (23) were elected from suburban labour wards, compared to 19 from the old city wards. The caste and communal picture had also changed-

90. Compiled from data made available by the Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad and from interviews in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

although Patels were still the largest group of Corporators (12), followed by Banias (7), there was a significant increase in the number of Muslim Corporators (6), who outnumbered Janta Parishad Brahmin Corporators (6). There was also an important increase in the number of Harijan Corporators (4), Rajput and intermediate caste Corporators (4) and non-Gujarati Corporators. In terms of occupation too, there was an enormous change in 1965 - the largest single group was now that of millworkers/trade unionists (15), followed by mainly small businessmen (11), doctors (5), lawyers (4), ^{white-collar} employees (2) and teachers (2). In 1961, there had only been one left wing trade union Janta Parishad Corporator, but, in 1965, there were fifteen, the majority of whom were members of the CPM. Indeed, the Gujarat leader of the CPM, Dinkar Mehta, had been elected, along with two powerful CPM executive committee leaders, Abdulrazak Shaikhiban Shaikh and Sohrabali Murtuja Hussein. The degree of penetration of the Sangram Samiti among the Ahmedabad working class could be seen in the fact that eleven Sangram Samiti office-bearers and workers were elected as Janta Parishad Corporators, which included eight out of the nine Sangram Samiti members, held in detention under the Defence of India Rules for their part in the hartal on the 5th August, 1964, who were elected from jail, since they were not allowed to be released on parole by the Government of Gujarat for the duration of the election.⁹¹ The increase in the number of Muslim, Harijan, Rajput and intermediate caste and non-Gujarati Janta Parishad Corporators is an indication of the new segments of the population politicized by the Sangram Samiti, which contained a fairly large proportion of Muslim and non-Gujarati workers. Muslim migrant workers proved particularly militant since a large proportion were from urban areas with fairly militant trade union movements.

91. Times of India, 11 April, 1965.

	Name of Corporator:	Ward:	Education:	Caste:	Occupation:	Major Political & Social Activities:
37.	Nankubhai B. Parmar	Rajpur Gomtipur	-	Harijan	Trade Unionist	CPM worker
38.	Vasantlal T. Chauhan	Rajpur- Gomtipur	-	Harijan	Millworker	CPI worker, exec. committee member of the SS
39.	Ratilal I. Patel	Rajpur- Gomtipur	-	Patel	Millworker	-
40.	Chintaman J. Pajankar	Khokera- Mehmedabad	VIIth Standard Gujarati	Interme- diate	"	CPI worker, exec. committee member of the SS.
41.	Praladbhai K. Patel	Khokera- Mehmedabad	-	Patel	White- collar worker	-
42.	Bhimjibhai K. Mistry	Khokera- Mehmedabad	-	Interme- diate caste	Businessman	-

KEY: MGM = Maha Gujarat movement

SS = Sangram Samiti.

A castewise analysis of party candidates in the 1961 and 1965 Municipal elections gives an indication of the changing caste and communal composition and relative strength of groups seeking political power and position through a particular party, as the following table shows:

TABLE 23.⁹³ A Castewise Analysis of Party Candidates for the 1961 and 1965 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Elections.

1961 Election

Party:	Bania	Brahmin	Patel	Muslim	Harijan	Others	N.A.	Total:
Congress	12 (17.1%)	10 (14.2%)	16 (22.8%)	6 (8.5%)	8 (11.4%)	8 (11.4%)	10 (14.2%)	70
Janta Parishad	3 (7.5%)	5 (12.5%)	6 (15.0%)	3 (7.5%)	2 (5.0%)	5 (12.5%)	16 (40%)	40
PSP	6 (15.7%)	4 (10.3%)	4 (10.3%)	4 (10.3%)	1 (2.6%)	3 (7.9%)	16 (42%)	38
Jan Sangh	-	5	-	-	-	2	6	13
SSP	-	-	-	1	1	1	4	7
Republican	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	11
Other Parties	-	-	-	-	-	1	4	5
Independent	3	7	8	2	3	7	48	78
	<u>24</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>104</u>	<u>262</u>

1965 Election

Congress	16 (20.5%)	10 (12.1%)	20 (25.6%)	11 (14.1%)	6 (7.7%)	8 (10.7%)	7 (8.9%)	78
Janta Parishad	12 (20.3%)	11 (18.6%)	15 (25.3%)	9 (15.2%)	1 (1.2%)	10 (16.9%)	1 (1.7%)	59
Republican	-	-	-	-	13	-	-	13
PSP	7 (28%)	7 (28%)	5 (20%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	25
Swatantra	1	-	5	2	-	1	2	11
Jan Sangh	-	1	1	-	-	4	3	9
Other Parties	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	4
Independent	13	5	11	6	5	16	9	65
	<u>51</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>264</u>

93. Ibid.

First, it is interesting to note that, although the total number of candidates in 1961 and 1965 was almost exactly the same, the number of Bania candidates almost doubled in 1965, due largely to a fourfold increase in the number of Janta Parishad Bania candidates, a 33% increase in the number of Congress Bania candidates, and a very great rise in the number of Independent Bania candidates. The total number of Brahmin candidates remained almost the same in 1965, the slight increase being mainly due to a doubling of Janta Parishad Brahmin candidates in 1965. The total number of Patel candidates rose significantly in 1965 from 34 in 1961 to 57 in 1965, due largely to a 25% increase in the number of Congress Patel candidates, an increase in the number of Janta Parishad Patel candidates by two and a half times, a small increase in the numbers of Independent Patel candidates and an entry for the first time in 1965 of five Swatantra party Patel candidates. The total number of Muslim candidates very nearly doubled in 1965, from 16 in 1961 to 30 in 1965, due to almost double the number of Congress Muslim candidates in 1965, and a trebling of the number of Janta Parishad and Independent Muslim candidates. The total number of Harijan candidates in 1965 remained constant, although there was a 25% fall in the number of Congress Harijan candidates and a 50% fall in the number of Janta Parishad Harijan candidates, and a compensatory slight rise in the number of Republican party and Independent Harijan candidates in 1965. There was also about a 33% rise in the total number of other caste candidates contesting in 1965 compared to 1961.

The most noteworthy features are the significant increases in the Janta Parishad of upper caste and Muslim elements among its electoral candidates in 1965: Banias constituted 20.3% of all Janta Parishad candidates in 1965 compared to 7.5% in 1961; Brahmins constituted 18.6% in 1961 compared to 12.5% in 1961; Patels constituted 25.3% in 1965 compared to 15% in 1961, and Muslims constituted 15.2% in 1965 compared to 7.5% in 1961. Although there was a very slight reduction

in the percentage of Janta Parishad Harijan candidates in 1965 compared to 1961, this was offset to a large degree by the electoral understanding between the Janta Parishad and the Republican party with its 100% Harijan candidates. Thus the Janta Parishad seemed to have succeeded in 1965 in forging an alliance between the middle and working class on a combined platform of the English language issue and rising prices and the dearness allowance issue.

An analysis of the caste and communal composition of Municipal Corporators of various parties, elected in 1961 and 1965, reveals more clearly the crystallisation of caste and communal forces within various parties:

TABLE 24⁹⁴ Castewise analysis of Municipal Corporators of various parties, elected in 1961 and 1965:

Party:	<u>1961 Election</u>								Total:
	Bania:	Brahmin:	Patel:	Muslim:	Harijan:	Rajput:	Inter mediate:	Other:	
Congress	15	6	14	5	7	2	-	1	50
Janta Parishad	3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	9
PSP	2	3	2	-	-	-	1	-	8
Inds.	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
	21	11	20	6	8	2	1	1	70
	<u>1965 Election</u>								
	Bania:	Brahmin:	Patel:	Muslim:	Harijan:	Rajput:	Inter mediate:	Other:	
Congress	4	1	6	1	-	1	-	-	13
Janta Parishad	7	6	12	6	4	2	1	4*	42
PSP	3	2	2	1	1	-	-	-	9
Republican	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
Inds.	4	-	2	1	-	1	-	1	9
	18	9	21	9	10	4	1	5	78

* including three non-Gujaratis.

94. Ibid.

The number of Banias and Patels remained fairly constant in 1965, compared to 1961. However, as a proportion of the total Corporators, they fell slightly in 1965. In 1961, Congress had the lion's share of Bania Corporators, whereas in 1965 the Janta Parishad had the largest group of Banias in the Corporation - 7 compared to the Congress's 4. In 1961, the largest group of Patel Corporators belonged to the Congress, but in 1965 the Janta Parishad had almost doubled the number of Congress Patel Corporators. The number and proportion of Brahmins fell slightly in 1965 compared to 1961, and their number and strength within the Congress and Janta Parishad parties was exactly reversed in 1961, the Congress had 6 and the Janta Parishad had 2 Brahmin Corporators, but, in 1965, the Janta Parishad had 6 and the Congress had only 1 Brahmin Corporator. In 1961, Muslim Corporators were almost entirely within the Congress fold i.e. 5 out of 6 were Congressmen. In 1965, however, an overwhelming majority of Muslim Corporators were to be found in opposition parties, particularly in the Janta Parishad. The same is true of the Harijan Corporators who, in 1961, were almost entirely members of the Congress, whereas in 1965 they were all to be found in various opposition parties, particularly in the Janta Parishad and the Republican party. In 1965, Rajputs, intermediate castes and other castes, including three non-Gujaratis, were all to be found, for the first time, among the Janta Parishad Corporators. Thus the widespread appeal of the Janta Parishad in 1965 seems very clear. They appealed not only to larger proportions of Banias, Brahmins and Patels, the traditional upper castes, but increasingly to Muslims, Harijans, Rajputs, Intermediate castes and non-Gujaratis. The wide spectrum of caste and

communal and non-Gujarati elements represented among Janta Parishad Corporators in 1965 reflected the width and thrust of their appeal among major segments of Ahmedabad society, and, for the first time, to non-Gujarati groups.

CHAPTER VII

DIFFICULTIES OF AN AGITATION-BASED LOCALISED PARTY IN POWER

Difficulties of sustained mobilization, party maintenance and goal attainment experienced by the Janta Parishad in its period of power in the Corporation, 1965-69, due in large part to difficulties of access to State-level patronage and decision-making authority.

1. Difficulties of Sustained Mobilization: advantages of the Majur Mahajan with its unique social and trade union organization and State-level linkages over the Sangram Samiti, which began to decline.

Although, as shown by its successes in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election of 1965, the Labour wing of the Janta Parishad, the SKSS and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union, mobilized the periphery of the underprivileged and the underemployed, such as the Badlis and low-paid municipal employees; swung over a significant section of textile labour from the Majur Mahajan; aroused lower middle class support and even middle and upper middle class support, it failed to sustain this mobilization and these support-structures. This was because, being merely a locally-based agitational party, it failed to form a strong corporate identity and it failed on the criteria of performance, of delivering the goods, due to the hostility of powerful elements in its environment, particularly the textile magnates, and its inability to match the Congress, especially its powerful component, the Majur Mahajan, in access to significant patronage and decision-making authority at higher levels in the political system, particularly at the State level.

In this section it is proposed to deal with the failure of the Janta Parishad to sustain its thrust from the lower middle and middle class support-structure of its linguistic agitation into the working-class, especially textile labour, support-base it achieved culminating in the success of the 1965 Municipal election. It failed largely

because of the Majur Mahajan's enormous influence, through the Congress party, over the State Government apparatus¹ and its consequent tight organizational hold over the textile labour force; the unwillingness of the business élite to cooperate with the representatives of the SKSS and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union; and its own internal dissensions.

The leaders of the Ahmedabad TLA had a major part in framing labour legislation in the old Bombay State and in India as a whole, especially in the drawing up of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946, which is still the main act regulating labour relations in Gujarat State today. Thus both State and Central labour legislation were permeated with the ideology of the Ahmedabad TLA, and the machinery set up for negotiations and arbitration between management and labour and the legal adjudication of disputes by the Industrial Courts was based largely on the practice of labour relations as it evolved in Ahmedabad from the time of the inception of the TLA in 1920.

The particular labour legislation affecting industrial relations in Gujarat, the Bombay Industrial Relations Act of 1946, was framed largely by Gulzarilal Nanda, when he was elected to the Bombay State Legislature with Khandubhai Desai in 1946, and was appointed Labour Minister in the second popular Kher Ministry. This was based on TLA practice and was heavily weighted in favour of one dominant representative union per industry in each local region to the exclusion of other smaller, rival trade unions, who were thus handicapped in many ways in their bid to assume control of the trade union movement in any locality.

The Act² set up the machinery of Industrial Courts for the regulation of labour disputes and made a provision for the establishment

1. See previous chapter containing a section on the Majur Mahajan and State-local linkages.

2. K.L. Sethi, Bombay Industrial Relations Act and Rules . (Bombay:1970).

of joint committees of workers' representatives and management in various occupations and undertakings. It also classified trade unions into the following categories: approved or representative union, qualified union and primary union, assigning to them obligations and rights. A representative union could only be so designated if it could prove at least 25% membership in an industry for the local area for three months before application for registration from the State Government. An approved or representative union was obliged to have a membership subscription of not less than fifty paise a month; executive committee meetings at intervals of not more than three months; record resolutions passed in a minute book; provide for government audit of accounts once a year; offer disputes not settled in conciliation to arbitration; not resort to strikes unless all the methods provided by the Act had been exhausted and a majority of the members of the union voted for a strike by ballot. The representative union had the right to collect subscriptions and dues on the premises and put up a notice-board in industrial undertakings; it had the right to hold discussions on the premises with employees to prevent or settle an industrial dispute, and to meet the employer or his agent to redress the grievances of members, and to inspect any place in the undertaking. The representative union had the extremely important preferential right of appearing and acting in any legal proceedings under the Act, and, according to sections 32 and 33 of the Act, no employee would be entitled to appear in any legal proceedings in which the representative union had done so. In addition, in important proceedings, the representative union was given legal aid at government expense.

The Act also specified the categories of qualified and primary union. If in any local area there was no representative union, a union with 15% industrial membership could take its place as a qualified union. If in any local area neither a representative nor a qualified union existed, a union with 5% minimum membership in any occupation of the industry could

be alternatively registered as a primary union. The sine qua non of such a primary union becoming the representative of the workers in the industry was its being placed on the approved list. It was also made very clear that there could not be more than one representative union in the industry: when two or more unions, fulfilling the conditions necessary for registration, applied to become the representative union, the union having the largest membership would be registered.

Thus the provisions of the Act virtually entrenched the representative union in power and militated against its supersession by another union, especially a militant, Communist-inclined union. All the multifarious rights accruing to a representative union- particularly the sole right of legal representation of the employees in industrial disputes and the right to collect subscriptions and dues on the premises of an industrial undertaking- meant that it could consolidate its power, with a secure financial base, and become the sole vehicle for the redress of workers' grievances and thus gain a tight organizational hold on the workers, which it would be extremely difficult for a rival union, denied these powers and rights, to break.

Thus a union, like the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union of the Janta Parishad could achieve a temporary popularity and widespread following through agitational techniques and by taking advantage of the workers' frustrations with the Majur Mahajan's shop stewards, but it could not sustain this because it could not handle the routine aspects of trade unionism, the day-to-day settlement of individual and collective grievances and complaints through the machinery of the Industrial Court, which only allowed the representative union, the Majur Mahajan, the right to legal representation of the employees.

The MGMMU could not match the excellent complaints department run by the Majur Mahajan with a full-time staff, which recorded every single

complaint made by every worker (non-members also were allowed to use the complaints machinery) in every department, concerning grievances about pay, hours, holidays, conditions of work, unjust penalties, conduct and procedure, sanitary arrangements, rights of workers about their status as substitute temporary, permanent workers etc., grievances against the Majur Mahajan and even grievances against the municipality regarding the workers' housing and welfare in their areas of residence.

The grievance machinery of the Majur Mahajan works as follows: grievances are brought by workers to their mill representatives, who put them into writing and take the matter up with the mill authorities, first the workers' immediate supervisor, and if the matter is not resolved with him, then the department head. The union representative may ask the assistance of the TIA inspector for the mill. About 80-90% of complaints are settled in this way.

If the complaint is not settled in the department, it is recorded at the TIA's Central Office, at which point an investigation is made to determine whether the complaint is justified and, if it is not, the worker is asked to withdraw it. If the complaint seems to be justified, the appropriate group in the Complaints Department (refer back to Chapter VI Table 7 showing the administrative structure of the TIA) takes up the matter, first with the department head and the supervisors concerned, then with the mill manager and finally with the managing agent. The senior officer in charge of the group may intervene either with the mill manager or managing agent. When a settlement is not reached, the group sends a notice of arbitration to the manager or managing agent.

In 1955, a standing Complaints Committee was set up to examine how each complaint is settled and the time taken in their disposal. This was with the objective of creating uniformity in agreements and settlements arrived at with individual mills on the same type of questions and to avoid undue delays in settling complaints.

In recent years, workers have become more conscious of their individual rights, quicker to assert claims under the agreements and awards, and to protest against injustices. Their complaints and grievances have grown in volume, and the importance of providing satisfaction to the workers has been increasingly reflected in the need for a prompt and equitable settlement of their complaints and grievances. Thus in the mills this has become a critical area in the relations between management and workers, and it has also become the most important of all the TLA's day-to-day activities.³

The following table shows the number of complaints and their analysis by results in 1965 and 1963-64.

TABLE 1.⁴ ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS DEALT WITH BY THE MAJUR MAHAJAN BY RESULTS, 1965 and 1963-64:

YEAR	TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	SUCCESSFUL	COMPROMISED	FALSE	TRIVIAL AND CLOSED AFTER INQUIRY	LEGAL ACTION	PENDING OF LAST YEAR
1965	10601	7291	814	-	2239	168	8046
1963- 1964	18491	11849	2203	231	3849		5758

Referring back to Table 14 in Chapter VI reveals the quantum and nature of complaints recorded by the Majur Mahajan in 1962-63, 1963-64 and 1965. The following table reveals the incidence and results of complaints specifically regarding municipal work.

3. See Kannappan I, and Dr. Paresh Majumdar's thesis on the Majur Mahajan. (Gujarat University, Ahmedabad: 1970).

4. See TLA Annual Reports (1965 and 1963-64).

TABLE 2.⁵ AN ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS DEALT WITH BY THE MAJUR MAHAJAN
REGARDING MUNICIPAL WORK, 1965.

<u>NATURE</u>	<u>ARREARS</u>	<u>NEW</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SUCCESSFUL</u>	<u>CLOSED</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>OUTSTANDING</u>
Estate	28	83	111	82	10	92	19
Health	31	116	147	107	14	121	26
Engineering	11	36	47	35	1	36	11
Water	19	54	73	53	5	58	15
General	17	111	128	108	9	117	11
Tax	13	18	31	23	?	23	8
Light	12	21	33	24	2	26	7
Bus	7	11	18	11	3	14	4
Education	-	6	6	5	-	5	1
City Survey	3	12	15	12	-	12	3
Dispensaries	2	3	5	3	-	3	2
Gardens	2	2	4	3	-	3	1
Births & Deaths	-	4	4	4	-	4	-
Rent Control	94	127	221	131	29	160	61
Police	49	185	234	202	6	208	26
Misc.	17	24	41	29	4	33	8
TOTAL:	305	813	1118	832	83	915	203

5. Ibid

Thus, although the SKSS and the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union claimed to have controlled effectively about twenty-five mills during the height of the d.a. agitation and forced individual millowners to negotiate with MGMMU elected representatives on a few issues and over small disputes without formal recognition, they failed to retain this control because they could not solve long-term issues and the mass of individual complaints, and many of their leaders were victimized and sent to jail. Even the Badlis were forced to go to the Majur Mahajan to get redress of grievances.⁶ Thus membership of the MGMMU declined after 1965 and they lost credibility with the workers. The dilemma facing a small, rival, agitational union trying to oppose a dominant representative union can be seen in the duplicate or dual membership of both the Majur Mahajan and the MGMMU at the time of the d.a. issue.⁷ The workers in their own self-interest could not totally sever their ties with the Majur Mahajan, although they felt critical or hostile towards it. The millowners and managers were also hostile to the SKSS and its union.

Not only did the Majur Mahajan have a virtually unchallengeable complaints machinery for dealing with day-to-day industrial grievances, as well as the sole right to negotiate in long-term questions affecting the textile labour force, it also had a widespread and effective locality organisation and social welfare activities, based on its relatively great financial strength and effective organisation.⁸ The areas of labour

6. Interviews with Mr. BB, Mr. AA and Mr. JJ in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

7. The TIA Annual Report of 1963-64 remarked, "It is a sad thing that labourers pay their subscription to the Labour Association as well as to other unions.... The labourers who try to take advantage from both the unions are dangerous to labour organisation."

8. See TIA Annual Report (1966 and 1967).

residence have been divided into 13 wards where Ward Inspectors devote themselves to the problems of workers' housing and general living conditions and improvement. They appoint chawl leaders or chaliagvan to help carry out the social welfare programme. There is also a Volunteer Corps (Seva Dal) of approximately 500 workers to help educate and improve the lot of the workers. The Majur Mahajan, from its inception, has been actively engaged in workers' education, but, since the municipality took over this responsibility generally, it has confined itself to running five educational centres: including a school, i.e. kindergarten, for children in Khokera Memdabad area, a Girls' Hostel for Backward Class girls in Ellisbridge and two study centres in Asarva and Saraspur for boys belonging to Backward and Scheduled Castes, such as Vagris Vanzaras and Thakardas, where they can live and concentrate on their studies unimpeded by the disturbances in their single-room tenement homes. In 1967, the Majur Mahajan provided Rs.10,000 for 1246 applicants for High School scholarships. There are twenty-three ward readings rooms, libraries, and information centres, which work on the principle that if the workers contribute a small amount the Majur Mahajan will give four or five times as much to buy newspapers and books every month. There are also eight gymnasiums operated by the Majur Mahajan in different labour localities, and also several sewing-classes and spinning centres where workers can learn activities for supplementing their income. The Majur Mahajan also runs two Maternity Homes and an Allopathic Dispensary, and, since 1950, a Department for Rural Relief dealing with land questions and agricultural problems, which is especially useful for migrant workers who still have material ties with their village. The Majur Mahajan also has a special section devoted to the uplift of the Backward Classes, such as the Harijans, Vagris, Thakores, Ravalias, Vanzaras and Bhils, helping them to be admitted to schools, working through caste organizations such as the Raval Sudharak Mandal, and organizing Bhajan sessions and festivities among them⁹

Another major activity of the Majur Mahajan is the extension of the cooperative movement among the workers. The Labour Cooperative Bank was started in 1947 with the aim of freeing workers from the heavy burden of interest on their debts and to loan them money at reasonable interest rates. In twenty years, it doubled its capital from Rs.10 lakhs to Rs.20 lakhs, and its membership rose from 8,000 to 38,000. It runs a scheme for providing worker members with a sewing machine on easy installments of payment, and is concerned with giving loans for productive purposes such as education and housing. 120 cooperative societies, such as cooperative credit societies and cooperative housing societies for the workers, are affiliated to it. It also runs a Khadi Shop, which, in 1967, sold khadi to the value of Rs.635,000, and other handmade household articles to the value of Rs.433,804.¹⁰

Thus through the framing of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act, heavily weighted in favour of the dominant union, by the Ahmedabad TLA leader, Gulzarilal Nanda, and by its enormous social welfare activities, the Majur Mahajan had an organisational hold on the industrial and social lives of the workers, which the SKSS and its union found it very difficult to match when dealing with routine aspects of trade unionism as against popular agitational issues. In addition, the Majur Mahajan had enormous power and influence with the State and Central Governments, of which the Bombay Industrial Relations Act is a symbol, through its association and involvement with the Congress party since the 1920s, which gave it a very strong edge over the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union. (See Chapter V).

The Majur Mahajan tried to undercut the appeal of the SKSS agitation on the d.a. issue by claiming the credit for getting an Expert Committee of Inquiry on the d.a. question in Gujarat

10. See TLA Annual Report (1966 and 1967).

appointed by the Government of Gujarat, which on the basis of the Government of India's Family Budget Inquiry of 1958-59 made a small upward revision in the old Gujarat State cost of living index series and linked this with the new cost of living index, which would have resulted in a steep rise in the dearness allowance of textile workers. When the millowners would not accept the linking of the old revised index to the new index and took the matter up before the Gujarat Industrial Court, and, failing that, the Supreme Court, the Majur Mahajan carefully prepared its brief and won the case, thus claiming credit for finally resolving the issue by using peaceful, constitutional, legal methods. The millowners tried to argue before the Supreme Court that the reference of the dispute to the Court was invalid because notice of such intention had not been given to the representative of the employers by the representative of the employees as Section 42 of the BIRA provides. In addition, they maintained that the new Family Living Survey of industrial workers in Ahmedabad in 1958-59, initiated by the Labour Bureau at Simla, was inaccurate because of the inadequacy of the sample size compared to the earlier Survey of 1926-27, and the impropriety of the method of interview adopted by the investigators. They also declared that the linking factor of 3.17 was improper and unscientific, claiming that the scientific way to deal with the problem presented by the new consumer price index recently adopted by the Government of Gujarat would be to devise a scheme of d.a. afresh, taking the present basic salary (total amount paid to the lowest-paid employee after consolidating 75% of the d.a. in the basic wage) as a base, and relating it to the changing price pattern from month to month with the base year 1960 = 100. They also argued that the additional burden the new rate of d.a. would impose was beyond the financial capacity of the industry to bear.

This was successfully counteracted by the following Majur Mahajan arguments. Majur Mahajan lawyers successfully argued that Section 42

was inapplicable to cases where the State Government itself wanted to make a reference of the dispute to the arbitration of the Courts, as in the present case. They declared that from the Report of the Family Living Survey among Industrial Workers at Ahmedabad, 1958-59, it appeared that the Survey and fieldwork was the result of the cooperation of several expert institutions and was based on accepted principles and methods. The size of the sample was determined in the light of the permissible margin of error and was selected by the application of scientific sampling techniques and according to the principle that it is the quality of the survey that is more important rather than the size of the sample. Regarding the interview method, they argued that, taking into account the fact that a majority of the working class population in India is illiterate, the method of interview was the only one which could be adopted. The millowners had not placed before the Court any material to justify their contention that, for determining the linking factor, the behaviour of prices for two to three years should have been studied. Further, they successfully maintained the Industrial Court contention that to work out an entirely new scale of basic wages founded not on the pre-war level of 1939 but on the cost of living of 1960 as the base year and to award d.a. thereafter would create a large number of new problems, disturb industrial peace and be outside the terms of reference. Thus it was right to approve the other course of linking the State series with the new series to maintain continuity. The Majur Mahajan lawyers demonstrated that the additional burden of increased d.a. was not beyond the capacity of the industry to pay, since the productivity of the industry was increasing and demand for textile products would never decrease. They argued that while it was true that the textile industry at Ahmedabad has been relying very heavily on borrowings, this was a peculiar feature of the Ahmedabad textile industry and helped its development, and, therefore, could not be

utilized to show that the financial position of the industry was unsatisfactory. The clinching argument was that the harmonious relations which have traditionally existed between employers and employees must be maintained to help the Ahmedabad textile industry's prospects for speedy economic growth.¹¹

The SKSS and its union approached the State Government with a claim that it had a membership superior to that of the TIA and should be given the status of representative union.¹² However, the State Government did not verify this claim, at which the MGMMU demanded, unsuccessfully, that the representative character of a union should be established by voting in a secret ballot by the workers for the union of their choice and not by verification of membership figures by the State Government. All the SKSS and the MGMMU could do was to advocate abolition of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act and the framing of a new set of rules concerning trade unions.

The SKSS and the MGMMU also failed to sustain their impetus due to internal dissensions and weaknesses. After the dying down of the popular movement for revision of the d.a., Indulal Yagnik, President of the SKSS and the MGMMU became quiescent. He had no real organisational flair and was ideologically wavering, turning temporarily to the Sarvodaya movement and talking of renouncing politics. He failed to exercise strong leadership to prevent factionalism in the SKSS and the MGMMU and ideological and personality clashes between its constituent elements which eventually resulted in its disintegration. The middle-class, nonpartisan element, represented by Ratilal C. Shah, Vasudev Tripathi, Somabhai C. Desai and Manubhai Palkiwala principally (See Chapter VI, Table 6, for the composition of the MGMMU executive), and

11. Indian Supreme Court Reports, Ahmedabad Millowners' Association vs. the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association. (1966).

12. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

the CPI refused to work with the CPM and broke away, leaving the CPM to return to try to revive the fortunes of its own discarded Mill Kamdar Union, which had been merged into the MGMMU at the time of its inception.¹³ Allegations against Ratilal C. Shah, treasurer of the SKSS, that he misused union funds discredited it,¹⁴ because the Ahmedabad textile worker was used to the meticulous financial accountability of the TIA, where the account books are open for inspection.

Thus the SKSS also failed because it was primarily symptomatic of an agitational movement, not of a sustained, penetrating organizational thrust. It made good political capital out of anti-Majur Mahajan propaganda and played up the role of corruption in the Majur Mahajan, but it could not really buildup a convincing grass-roots organization and a cadre of good secondary-level leadership. It was not so much a rival militant class union, providing a real alternative to the Majur Mahajan, but more a popular front against vested interests, containing people of differing ideologies which broke up under the weight of its own internal dissensions as soon as the people were no longer angry.

13. Interviews with Mr. A, BB, JJ and AA in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

14. Congress anti-Janta Parishad propaganda used in the 1969 Ahmedabad municipal elections.

2. Difficulties of party maintenance and the resulting political paralysis of the Janta Parishad, illustrated by the case of the Ahmedabad Urban Community Development Project.

The Janta Parishad was composed of heterogeneous elements of differing ideologies, including some personalistic factions. The main groups were the CPI, CPM and Independent Radical middle class elements, which contained the Somabhai C. Desai and Manubhai Palkiwala factions.

These constituent elements began to quarrel among themselves almost from the accession of the Janta Parishad to power in the Corporation in April, 1965. The greatest source of dissension centred on the allocation of posts or positions of power in the Municipal Corporation, especially on the allocation of the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and the Chairmanships of influential committees, such as the Transport Committee, the Standing Committee, the Public Works Committee and the Housing and Improvement Committee.

The most serious conflicts took place over the position of Mayor. There was tacit agreement on the principle that the Mayorship should rotate annually between the four principal groups in the Janta Parishad: the CPI, CPM, the Manubhai Palkiwala faction, and the Somabhai C. Desai faction. Thus it was implicitly understood that a leading member from each of these groups in turn would be voted Mayor by the municipal Janta Parishad party.¹ In the first year, 1965-66, the backing of the party's charismatic father-figure, Indulal Yagnik, secured the election of Somabhai C. Desai, a medical practitioner, as Mayor - he was almost the first non-millowner to become

1. Interview with Janta Parishad leaders, including Somabhai Desai, Vasudev Tripathi and Manubhai Palkiwala, in Ahmedabad, in March 1971.

the symbolic leader of Ahmedabad City.²

In the second year, conflicts over the post of Mayor intensified. Dinkar Mehta, the Marxist Communist leader, was proposed as the party's candidate for Mayor in 1966-67. At first, almost all groups within the Janta Parishad, excluding the CPM, were against this. Indulal Yagnik and the Somabhai C. Desai group were against Dinkar Mehta because they thought that, if a Marxist Communist were to become Mayor of Ahmedabad City, this might prejudice the chances of the Janta Parishad party doing well at the polls in Ahmedabad City and else where in the forthcoming General Elections of February, 1967. Thus they wanted a repeat of Somabhai C. Desai as Mayor. Relations between Manubhai Palkiwala and his group and the Marxist Communists, especially Dinkar Mehta, had never been good. The CPI group, headed by Gordhanbhai Patel, was also hardly anxious to have a rival Communist leader in power. Thus the Somabhai C. Desai faction, the Manubhai Palkiwala faction and the CPI tried to combine against Dinkar Mehta as the party's mayoral candidate.

However, they could not agree among themselves on who should be the next Mayor from among their leaders. Manubhai H. Palkiwala, a popular, ruthlessly ambitious young lawyer, was keen to secure the coveted position for himself, and thus was at loggerheads with the Somabhai C. Desai faction and the CPI over this. Thwarted in his desire, Manubhai Palkiwala became interested in cooperating with Dinkar Mehta, and with Palkiwala's support, Dinkar Mehta was voted party candidate for Mayor. At this, the now isolated Somabhai C. Desai faction threatened to leave the party. Indulal Yagnik realised

2. Interview with Indulal Yagnik in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

the gravity of the situation, and the possible repercussions in the forthcoming General Elections of 1967, if the Janta Parishad broke up, so he smoothed down the ruffled feathers of the Somabhai C. Desai faction and allowed the majority decision to have Dinkar Mehta as the party's candidate for Mayor to remain.³

Despite this internal fracas, party discipline held sufficiently well for Dinkar Mehta to be, in fact, elected Mayor by the Corporation. However, an ominous sign for the future was the revolt against party discipline by a few more conservative, petit-bourgeois and strongly anti-Communist individuals in the party, like Jayantilal Raval, who actually voted against the party candidate. One of these, Praladbhai Patel, actually went as far as to stand against Dinkar Mehta as an Independent candidate, supported by the Congress party and the PSP.⁴ Praladbhai Patel, Jayantilal K. Raval and a few like-minded individuals subsequently left the Janta Parishad in 1968 and joined the Congress party on the issue of the granting by the Janta Parishad of the dearness allowance to municipal employees on a par with that of Central Government employees.

Despite these conflicts and particularly disruptive behaviour by Manubhai Palkiwala, whose group threatened to leave the Janta Parishad municipal party, if certain members who had not voted for the group's nominees for municipal committee positions, were not removed by the 23rd June 1966, the Janta Parishad held together to fight the General Elections of 1967. Manubhai Palkiwala, keeping in mind the advantages of fighting for election as an MLA under the label of the Maharashtra Janta Parishad, did not carry out his ultimatum.⁵

3. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

4. Interview with Mr. CC in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

5. Press statement made by the President of the Ahmedabad City Janta Parishad, Dinkar Mehta, on the 21 May, 1967.

In the 1967 General Elections, Indulal Yagnik won a great victory in the contest for the Lok Sabha seat from Ahmedabad City constituency against the veteran TLA and INTUC leader, Shyamprasad R. Vasavda. Manubhai H. Palkiwala and Somabhai C. Desai were also elected, on the MGJP ticket, MLAs from Kalupur and Shahpur consituencies respectively with handsome majorities. The two Communist leaders, Dinkar Mehta and Gordhanbhai L. Patel were defeated, although gaining second place, from Dariapur-Kazipur and Asarva constituencies respectively.

However, after the General Elections of 1967, the Janta Parishad gradually began openly to disintegrate and actual defections began to occur. Indulal Yagnik, instead of maintaining party discipline and standing above the party's factions, wavered between one faction and another,⁶ trying to placate each and play one off against the other. In May 1967 he favoured Gokuldas S. Patel, a member of Manubhai Palkiwala's faction, as the party's candidate for the key position of Chairman of the Standing Committee against the decision by the party's sub-committee of five to have Jaimal Thakore, a clever and astute advocate, as the party's candidate. Yagnik eventually acquiesced in Jaimal Thakore's successful election as Chairman but his actions had increased the rifts in the party and lessened the force of party discipline.⁷ In general, however, Indulal Yagnik supported the Somabhai C. Desai faction.⁸

After the 1967 General Elections and the disintegration of the SKSS and the MGMMU consequent on the resolution of the dearness allowance issue, there was no longer any great political or economic movement or contest of mass concern, so Indulal Yagnik fell into a

6. Interview with Mr. BB and Mr. AA in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

7. Dinkar Mehta's press statement, 21 May, 1967.

8. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

state of complete demoralisation and inactivity. It has been said of him that he was "the instrument of a movement, never the leader of a party".⁹ He reached such a low ebb and state of ideological confusion that he even seriously toyed with the idea of renouncing party politics altogether and becoming a Gandhian and joining Vinoba Bhave's Sarvodaya movement. He told press representatives that he would like to propagate a new creed of partyless government and to follow in the footsteps of Gandhiji and Acharya Vinoba Bhave in taking to self-restraint and to the constructive service of the common man. He also told them he would launch a Shanti Seva Dal manned by part-time volunteers. He corresponded with Acharya Bhave, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, and Mr. Narayan Desai, secretary of the Gujarat Sarvodaya Mandal, and attended the Sarvodaya workers' conference at Mount Abu on June 6th, 1967.¹⁰ A little later, Indulal Yagnik announced his decision to remain in active politics. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and Mr. Shanker Rao Deo had advised him to retain his individuality, but cooperate with Sarvodaya for constructive work. Thus he did not join the Sarvodaya movement, but expressed his intention to work for the Shanti Seva Dal and the Tarun Seva Dal in collaboration with the Sarvodaya organisation in Gujarat and with the help of the Swadeshi Sabha recently formed in Ahmedabad.¹¹ Thus, as rifts in the Ahmedabad Janta Parishad deepened and his own thoughts were transferred to a higher plane, Indulal Yagnik even ceased to come to party meetings, and, finally, he did not take any part in the municipal elections of 1969 in Ahmedabad.¹²

9. Neeru Desai, correspondent for the Gujarat Samachar .

10. Times of India , 4 June , 1967.

11. Times of India , 12 June , 1967.

12. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971. '

The greatest internal blow to the Janta Parishad came in July 1967, with the defection of Manubhai Palkiwala and his entire group of ten: Ashok C. Mehta, Gokuldas S. Patel, Popatlal Patel, Parshotam M. Parmar, Bhimjibhai K. Mistry, Gunwantbhai Patel, Gulammustafa A. Sheikh, Kantilal Patel, Ratilal Shah and Sakalchand C. Modi. The defection of Manubhai Palkiwala's group to the SSP virtually meant the founding of the SSP in Ahmedabad, which had been practically non-existent before. The major cause of his defection was his being denied the coveted position of Mayor in April, 1967, in favour of Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi, and the party's refusal to meet his excessive demands for key positions for members of his faction on important Municipal Corporation committees.¹³

Despite the lack of support of the Rightist Communists, who had formed an alliance with Manubhai Palkiwala's faction for sometime,¹⁴ Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi, a popular medical practitioner from Shahpur not overtly identified with any group within the Janta Parishad, became the party's candidate for the position of Mayor in April, 1967, with the support of Dinkar Mehta and the CPM and Indulal Yagnik and the Somabhai C. Desai faction.¹⁵ Manubhai Palkiwala was at loggerheads with the Somabhai C. Desai faction, and had always had difficulties with the CPM and Dinkar Mehta, of whom he said: --"I could never work with Dinkar Mehta. He is a professor type, a good orator, but he cannot get the pulse of the people. He is a sectarian." -----¹⁶

13. Interview with Mr. CC in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

14. Dinkar Mehta's press statement, 21 May, 1967.

15. Interview with Dinkar Mehta in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

16. Interview with Manubhai Palkiwala in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

As a consolation, Manubhai Palkiwala was elected Deputy Mayor on May 4th, 1967, but he remained highly dissatisfied and continued his disruptive and high-handed behaviour. In the meeting of the Janta Parishad municipal party of the 7th May, 1967, at which the resolution giving all authority to the party's leader, Dr. Vasudev Tripathi, in the matter of the formation of new committees was put forward by the Rightist Communist, Chintaman Pajankar, Manubhai Palkiwala's group remained absent, and Manubhai himself only came for a few minutes. The resolution was passed unanimously, and Dr. Vasudev Tripathi attempted to apply the principle of giving each of the major groups in the Janta Parishad equal representation, when he appointed party members to the new Municipal Corporation committees.¹⁷

Manubhai Palkiwala began to make excessive demands that members of his group should gain powerful positions on Municipal Corporation committees. In particular, he demanded that the majority of members and the Chairmanship of the Transport Committee should go to his group, despite the fact that, in 1965-66, Dr. Ashok C. Mehta of his group had been Transport Committee Chairman, and, in 1966-67 also, the Chairman was originally a member of his group. In addition, Manubhai himself had secured the powerful position of Chairman of the Standing Committee in 1965-66, and a member of his group, Natvarlal Patel, had been Chairman of the Public Works Committee. By comparison, the Marxist Communists complained that their members had hardly been chairmen of any committees, not to speak of the more influential ones. This time Manubhai Palkiwala was not permitted by the party to have such preponderant influence in important Committees,

17. Dinkar Mehta's press statement 21 May, 1967.

particularly the Transport Committee, and he finally walked out of the party with his group of ten. The CPI, however, who had been closely associated with Manubhai Palkiwala's group for some time, decided not to follow his example, making the following statement shortly before his defection:

--"If Manubhai Palkiwala resigns from the Janta Parishad municipal party, we will not go along with him, and even if he establishes a separate group in the Municipal Corporation, we cannot support him" --¹⁸

The defection of Manubhai Palkiwala's group was a major blow to the Janta Parishad because it meant that it lost its majority in the Corporation. It was reduced in strength from 42 members, out of a total of 78 Municipal Corporators, to 31. Over the following months, its strength fell even further with the defection of conservative, anti-Communist elements, like Jayantilal K. Raval and Praladbhai Patel in 1968, and the Independent middle class Radical, Dr. Vasudev Tripathi, in January 1969. During the last years of its term of office in the Municipal Corporation, the Janta Parishad nominees for important positions on Municipal Corporation committees were often defeated. In its last two years, the Janta Parishad lost its majority, and, therefore, its control of the Transport Committee, as shown by the following table:

18. Quoted in Dinkar Mehta's press statement, 21 May, 1967.

TABLE 1.¹⁹ Members of the Transport Committee of Ahmedabad MC, 1965-69

<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>	<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>
1965-66	1. Dr. Ashok C. Mehta	JP	1966-67	1. Hiralal M. Parikh	JP
	2. Manubhai H. Palkiwala	JP		2. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP
	3. Ismail M. Mansuri	Cong.		3. Chimanlal N. Patel	Cong.
	4. K.T. Desai	Cong.		4. Shamsuddin G. Munshi	JP
	5. Bhanuprasad M. Raval	Cong.		5. Bhanuprasad M. Raval	Cong.
	6. Jivanlal G. Shah	JP		6. Jivanlal G. Shah	JP
	7. Keshavlal M. Bhatt	JP		7. Keshavlal M. Bhatt	JP
	8. Jaswantlal B. Sutaria	JP		8. Jaswantlal B. Sutaria	JP
	9. Sakharam D. Rathod	JP		9. Sakharam D. Rathod	JP

19. Compiled from information supplied by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

TABLE 1. Members of the Transport Committee of Ahmedabad MC
1965-69 ctd.

<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>	<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS:</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>
1967-68	1. Keshavlal M. Bhatt	JP	1968-69	1. Dr. Vasudev Tripathi	JP
	2. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP		2. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP
	3. Hiralal M. Parikh	JP		3. Narayanbhai I. Solanki	JP
	4. Chimanbhai N. Patel	Cong.		4. Kumudchandra M. Patel	PSP
	5. Shamsuddin G. Munshi	JP		5. Smt. Sudhaben T. Boda	SSP
	6. Jivanlal M. Jhaveri	PSP		6. Kashavlal M. Bhatt	JP
	7. Arvind J. Saheba	PSP		7. Arvind J. Saheba	PSP
	8. Ramanlal S. Shah	Ind.		8. Ramanlal S. Shah	Ind.
	9. Ramanlal D. Patel	Cong.		9. Ramanlal D. Patel	Cong.

A Janta Parishad majority on the Transport Committee was reduced from 6 in 1965-66, and 7 in 1966-67, to a minority of 4 in both 1967-68 and 1968-69.

In the key Standing Committee also, except for the year 1965-66, the Janta Parishad barely held 50% of the membership. In 1967-68, they in fact were reduced to a minority of five on the Standing Committee. (see Table 2).

TABLE 2.²⁰ Members of the Standing Committee of Ahmedabad MC, 1965-69

<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>	<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>MEMBERS</u>	<u>PARTY:</u>
1965-66	1. Manubhai H. Palkiwala	JP	1966-67	1. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP
	2. Natusin I. Rathod	JP		2. Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi	JP
	3. Somchand J. Makwana	Rep.		3. Somchand J. Makwana	Rep.
	4. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP		4. Harilal M. Parikh	JP
	5. Hiralal M. Parikh	JP		5. Nasiruddin P. Sheikh	JP
	6. Nasiruddin P. Sheikh	JP		6. Manubhai T. Patel	JP
	7. Manubhai T. Patel	JP		7. Natverlal C. Patel	JP
	8. Natverlal C. Patel	JP		8. Bachubhai Kapadia	Ind.
	9. Bachubhai C. Kapadia	Ind.		9. Dahyabhai K. Patel	Cong.
	10. Dahyabhai K. Patel	Cong.		10. Maheshchandra J. Shah	Cong.
	11. Maheshchandra J. Shah	Cong.		11. Narsibhai K. Makwana	PSP
	12. Narsibhai K. Makwana	PSP		12. Ajitbhai P. Patel	PSP
1967-68	1. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP	1968-69	1. Jaimal J. Thakore	JP
	2. Gokuldas S. Patel	SSP		2. Abdulrehman Tabassukhan	JP
	3. Somchand J. Makwana	Rep.		3. Natverlal C. Patel	JP
	4. Smt. Naliniben D. Mehta	JP		4. Naliniben D. Mehta	JP
	5. Abdulrehman Tabassukhan	JP		5. Lalbhai S. Vakil	JP
	6. Baluram G. Gupta	JP		6. Baluram G. Gupta	JP
	7. Lalbhai S. Vakil	JP		7. Gokuldas S. Patel	SSP
	8. Bachubhai Kapadia	Ind.		8. Bachubhai C. Kapadia	Ind.
	9. Dahyabhai K. Patel	Cong.		9. Chimanlal N. Shah	Cong.
	10. Chimanlal N. Shah	Cong.		10. Dahyabhai K. Patel	Cong.
	11. Martandray G. Shastri	PSP		11. Narsibhai K. Makwana	PSP
	12. Jasubhai J. Parikh	Ind.		12. Ajitbhai P. Patel	PSP

20. Compiled from information supplied by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

In the Public Works Committee, the Janta Parishad had only a steady 50% of the membership, except for the year 1966-67, when its membership rose to 8 out of a total of 12. In the Housing and Improvement Committee, Janta Parishad membership fluctuated between 6 to 7 out of a total of 12. On the Municipal School Board, the Janta Parishad soon lost its majority.²¹

Thus, during its last two years in power, the Janta Parishad found it increasingly difficult to conduct municipal affairs and retain effective control of municipal committees. Even when its own members were in a majority on a particular committee, they were often paralysed by internal group rivalries. This is sharply illustrated by the case of the Urban Community Development Project, for the Janta Parishad failed to utilise the political potential of the UCDP to its own advantage due to the loss of party discipline, bitter internal relations among its constituent groups, and the loss of its majority within the Corporation by mid 1967.

The Urban Community Development Project²²

Aims, Organisation and Programme Content of the UCDP

A pilot Urban Community Development Project was set up in Ahmedabad in 1963 with the financial assistance of the Ford Foundation and with the Municipal Corporation as the administrative agency for implementing the Project. The Ford Foundation agreed to pay the initial costs of setting up the Project, if the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation would pay 50% of the recurring cost of running the Project.²³

21. Janta Parishad election manifesto for the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections.

22. The Urban Community Development Project was formally inaugurated on the 28th February 1963, by the Mayor of Ahmedabad, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas. The first Citizens' Development Council, or Vikas Mandal, was formally inaugurated on the 1st April, 1963.

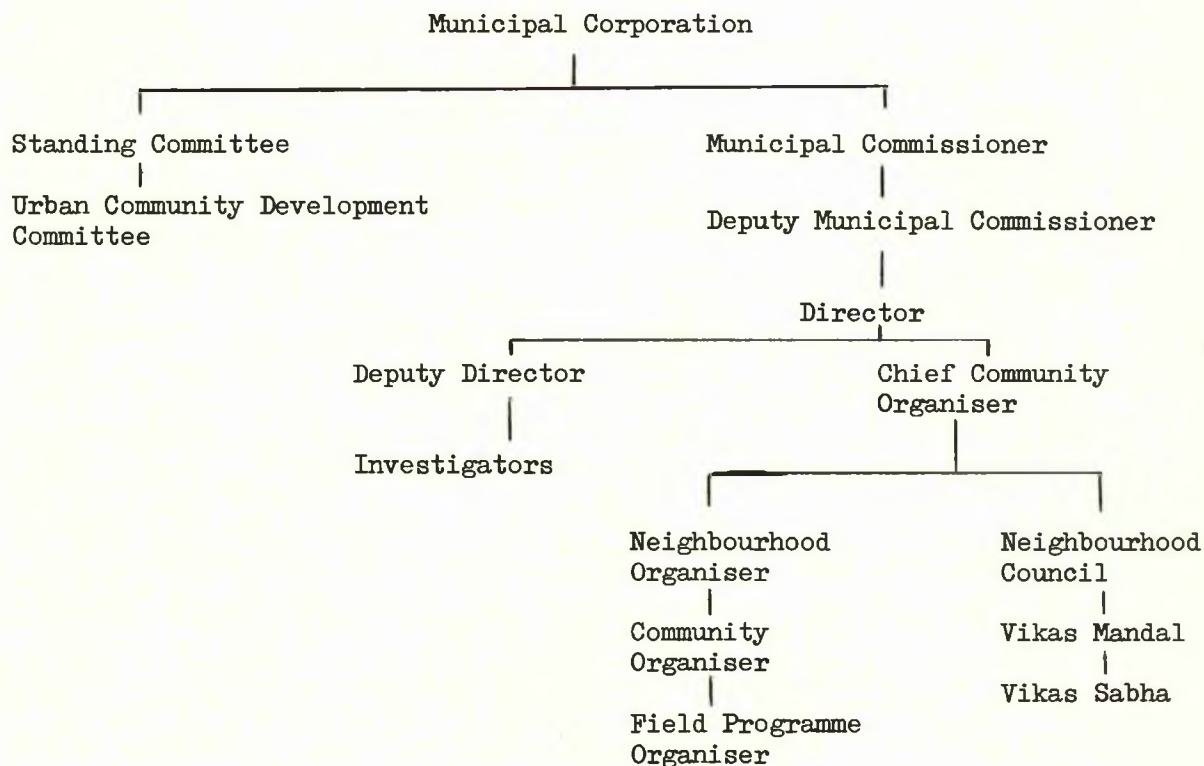
23. Ahmedabad Urban Community Development Project, 1962-65, a booklet produced by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

Its aims were primarily to raise levels of participation among local urban residents, and to mobilise local resources, leadership, and initiative with a view to involving the citizens in the wider process of development of their own areas and of the city at large. It was hoped to involve the local urban residents in solving some of their urgent socioeconomic problems through the principle of self-help within a democratic framework through the establishment of democratically elected Citizens' Development Councils or Vikas Mandals at the level of mohallas and groups of mohallas. The ultimate aim was to evoke the cooperative efforts of the people and prepare the ground for the eventual democratic decentralisation of municipal services. It was also hoped that, by strengthening community life and creating a sense of belonging among the residents of local areas, migrants to urban areas would be helped to adjust to city life without too much disorientation and emotional strain.

Another objective was to ensure fuller utilisation of technical and welfare services by helping the community, especially the relatively disadvantaged sections, to locate what assistance was available from the municipality, higher governmental levels and voluntary organisations so that they could obtain maximum benefits from facilities provided, and from various Government and municipal development programmes. It is important to notice that the financial outlay for the Project was intended to go largely towards procuring high quality highly paid staff and towards research and evaluation of the Project. Actual local development programmes were ideally conceived of as financed entirely by local fund-raising efforts with initially for some years the promise of a 50% matching contribution to the cost of local schemes from the Urban Community Development Department.²⁴

The organisational structure of the UCDP can be seen from the following chart:

24. Ibid

TABLE 3. Organisational Chart of the UCDP.²⁵

In theory, areas for the operation of the UCDP were selected in different election wards from among the following groups:

1. areas with predominantly industrial labour population, who are residents of privately-owned chawls.
2. socially and economically backward areas with a homogeneous Hindu population.
3. housing colonies for the municipal Harijan Health Staff workers.
4. a government housing colony comprising clerical staff.
5. old village sites which have come under the municipal limits as a result of city expansion.

25. From Evaluation Study of the Formation and Working of the Vikas Mandals, produced by the Urban Community Development Department of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

6. slum areas selected under the Slum Clearance programme of the city.
7. areas with predominantly Muslim population.

Two Community Organisers, one male and one female, were assigned to each area, which covered on the average two to three Vikas Mandals, which each contained on the average 500 to 1000 families. They were supervised and guided by the Neighbourhood Organiser, and above him by the Chief Community Organiser. The Community Organisers, before they started functioning in an area, were acquainted with the necessary information and knowledge during the period of inservice training. They also had access to the social profiles which had been prepared on the areas. They began their work by establishing personal contacts with the families in the selected area and explaining to them the objectives and contents of the programme. These initial contacts helped to familiarise them with the problems of the area, the leadership pattern, group relations and channels of communication. After the initial face-to-face personal contacts were over, the Organisers met the residents of the particular mohalla or chawl - which became known as a Vikas Sabha or sub-block Council and was coextensive with a chawl or mohalla with an approximate population of between 50 to 100 families - in a group, in which the problems of the chawl or mohalla were discussed and representatives of the mohalla were elected to the Vikas Mandal Executive.²⁶ One Vikas Mandal usually contained between four and eight Vikas Sabhas. After the election of Vikas Sabha representatives, the Community Organisers contacted them individually and in groups, and a meeting or two of all the Vikas Sabha representatives was held to finalise the list of the office-bearers of the Vikas Mandal Executive.

26. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation booklet on the UCDP.

Generally, formal elections of office-bearers were avoided, and they were selected by discussion and consensus, thus generating an atmosphere of mutual trust.²⁷

The whole process took about two to three months, giving the Community Organisers an excellent opportunity during this period to study local problems and the reactions of the various communities to the programme. This process continued till Vikas Mandals were formed to cover the entire areas assigned to the team of workers placed in a particular Neighbourhood. The Community Organisers were responsible for stimulating and guiding the Vikas Mandal leaders to formulate and implement programmes, always keeping them in the picture and giving them full credit for the work.²⁸

There were no prescribed targets or set pattern of activities for the Vikas Mandals in the UCDP. The theory was that the programmes should be open-ended and rooted in the real needs of the people. However, an Evaluation Study of the formation and working of the first ten Vikas Mandals after a year's operation, conducted by the Urban Community Development Department, revealed that physical improvement, health and recreational activities accounted for 60.8% of all Vikas Mandal activities.²⁹ Physical improvement programmes included the whitewashing of chawls, and the repair and maintenance of lanes and by-lanes, urinals, lavatories and bathrooms. Health programmes included the organisation of cleanliness competitions linked with the celebration of festivals such as Gandhi Jayanti, Diwali etc, in which the residents of various Vikhas Sabhas participated; family planning propaganda; teaching about nutrition, prenatal and postnatal care of

27. Evaluation Study

28. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation booklet on the UCDP.

29. Evaluation Study

women, child care; the setting up of Balmandirs or children's playgroups; and an immunization programme. Educational activities included school admission campaigns, setting up rotating libraries and a book distribution project, organising an elocution competition on a city-wide level and organising a Mock Municipal Corporation programme for students of the Tenth and Eleventh Standards of 85 High Schools. Recreational and cultural activities included the organisation of Bhajans, Garbhas, Fancy Dress Competitions, baby shows, film and puppet shows, dramas, a Civic Pledge to beautify the city programme etc. and the celebration of festivals.³⁰

The most ambitious programmes were those concerned with bringing electricity, water and drainage connections to the chawls. Difficult landlord-tenant relationships, in which the landlord felt that the rents were too low to justify his undertaking improvements, and the tenant felt that it was the landlord's responsibility to carry out improvements and that the Municipal Corporation should see to this, resulted in a continued neglect of civic amenities in chawl areas. The Municipal Corporation could do little owing to legal difficulties in compelling the landlord to carry out improvements. This situation, for example, had prevailed in Manekpura Chawl in Kankaria Neighbourhood. However, estimates were now made that expenditure of Rs.350 per family would be involved in bringing electricity connections. A Community Organiser, at a Vikas Mandal meeting, suggested that if a sizable number of families were to apply jointly for electricity, expenditure per family would be reduced, and that families wanting electricity should save Rs.10 a month to meet the required expenditure. This was achieved by the 22nd January, 1965, when electricity connections were brought to 29 families at an aggregate cost of Rs.4000. In view of the large number of connections taken, the Ahmedabad Electricity Company had

30. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation booklet on the UCDP.

laid the main cable free of cost.³¹

ii) Political implications of the UCDP and the discontinuation of the Project from October, 1966.

After the accession to power of the Janta Parishad in April 1965, the UCDP was discontinued from October, 1966, after the Corporation, which had a majority of Janta Parishad members at that time, failed to sanction the budget proposal for paying 50% of the recurring cost of the UCDP.³² There were various deep-rooted political motivations for this move on the part of the Janta Parishad-dominated Municipal Corporation:

A. Majur Mahajan influence over many of the existing Vikas Mandals

The UCDP had only partial coverage of the city's election wards, and, therefore, aroused political conflicts between the Janta Parishad and the Congress, with the Janta Parishad asserting that the scheme did not cover many areas of Janta Parishad influence and support, and was, almost wholly, confined to Congress, and especially Majur Mahajan-dominated areas. The Janta Parishad declared that Majur Mahajan workers had become entrenched in many of the Vikas Mandal Executives.

The Majur Mahajan had, indeed, been the first to bring the UCDP into Ahmedabad. They felt that with their widespread and effective organisation, coupled with Ford Foundation finance, they could better accomplish their task of social welfare in the labour areas of Ahmedabad City. Before the scheme was undertaken, Dr. Marshall B. Clinard, Ford Foundation Consultant for Urban Community Development, and Mr. B. Chatterjee, Director of the Urban Community Development Department in

31. Report of the Seminar on UCD, sponsored by the UCD Dept. of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and held in Ahmedabad from the 20th - 22nd December, 1965.

32. Interview with Mr. N.M. Desai, Secretary of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

New Delhi, had discussions with Majur Mahajan leaders, such as Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, Manharlal Shukla, Arvind Buch and the veteran Shankerlal Banker.³³ Majur Mahajan leaders took Dr. Clinard and Mr. Chatterjee on a tour of the slum areas of the city, and showed them the kind of activities that the Majur Mahajan itself was engaged in, in the working class chawls.³⁴ They tried to persuade Dr. Clinard that their own work was similar in nature to that envisaged by the UCDP, and that, therefore, they ought to be given the responsibility for running the UCDP in Ahmedabad. They also argued that they ought to be given the financial aid and necessary training of the UCDP, rather than the government, because government projects were never efficient since government administrators were not conversant with the daily lives and behaviour of the people, like Majur Mahajan workers, who were in constant touch with the workers.³⁵

The Ford Foundation had originally thought the atmosphere in Ahmedabad was right for the initiation of the UCDP there because of the TLA's constructive work in the city, and there was a stage when the Ford Foundation was convinced by Majur Mahajan arguments into assigning responsibility for the UCDP to the TLA. However, it finally decided against this, because there were legal difficulties about giving a grant of this nature to a non-governmental body, because the TLA had a definite political bias, and because it felt that, with the Majur Mahajan as the administrative agency for the UCDP, it would be difficult for it to operate in middle and upper middle class areas of the city. The Project was finally assigned to the Municipal Corporation, which had all the city wards under its jurisdiction and could help to coordinate the work of the UCD Department with that of other Municipal Corporation

33. Interview with Mr. Vitalbhai H. Patel, ex-Chief Community Organiser UCDP, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

34. Interview with Mr. I.D. Patel, ex-Community Organiser, UCDP, in Ahmedabad, in March 1971.

35. Interview with Mr. H in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Departments.³⁶

The Majur Mahajan acquiesced in this, and, because its members dominated the Municipal Corporation after its massive electoral victory in 1961, it felt it could secure a certain amount of control over the UCDP and its development funds. The TLA promised the Ford Foundation full cooperation from its men in the Municipal Corporation for the UCDP.³⁷

In particular, the Majur Mahajan secured control over the choice of areas where the UCDP was to be initiated, since, due to lack of resources and the desirability of concentrating efforts for the slow process of nurturing Vikas Mandals, the Project only covered a limited number of areas in some of the election wards. The policy regarding the selection of areas was decided unofficially by Congress party leaders, of whom Manharlal T. Shukla was very influential in securing agreement on the selection of mainly Congress areas, and areas where the Majur Mahajan had some influence.³⁸ They then briefed Dr. Jyotsna Shah, the Director of the UCDP, who put the proposals before the Municipal Commissioner, who had the formal powers of decision. Afterwards the powers of selection were vested in the Urban Community Development Committee, which came into existence a year later, and which was dominated by a majority of Congressmen, including influential Majur Mahajan leaders, up to March, 1965.³⁹

Thus the two original areas selected; Kankaria Neighbourhood and Rajpur-Hirpur Neighbourhood were areas of deep Majur Mahajan institutional penetration. The subsequent areas, taken up for the Project, were also areas of Majur Mahajan influence i.e. Asarva Neighbourhood and

36. Interview with Mr. I.D. Patel, ex-Community Organiser, UCDP, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

37. Interview with M.T. Shukla in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

38. Interview with Mr. K in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

39. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Bapunagar Neighbourhood. In Bapunagar, for example, quarters were provided by the Gujarat Government Housing Board at a very reasonable rent in 5000 tenements, allotted only to textile and factory workers. Here Majur Mahajan influence was very strong. The Housing Board itself had allotted quarters in this area for the Majur Mahajan to run its activities, such as the amba charkas activity whereby the Charka Samiti gave the Majur Mahajan spinning wheels on loan, which it, in turn, loaned out to women of Bapunagar, who could thus earn Rs.2 a day by selling their produce to the Majur Mahajan cooperative, the Khadihat, which, in turn, sold it to the Khadi Gramodyog Board at the State level.⁴⁰

In these areas, there was naturally a close interaction between Majur Mahajan institutions and personnel and the Vikas Mandals of the UCDP. 60% of Vikas Mandal Executives had representatives of the Majur Mahajan on them.⁴¹ Majur Mahajan representation was especially strong on Vikas Mandal Executives in the Kankaria, Rajpur-Hirpur, Asarva and Bapunagar Neighbourhoods, e.g. in the Rajpur-Hirpur area, a Vikas Mandal President was Pitamber Parmar, a very active Majur Mahajan worker, and in Bapunagar Neighbourhood, another active Majur Mahajan worker was President of a Vikas Mandal, Kantibhai Barot.⁴² The 65% of the Vikas Mandal Executives who had had previous leadership experience, as revealed by the UCD Department's Evaluation Study,⁴³ seems to tally fairly closely with the % who were Majur Mahajan workers, because very often the Majur Mahajan was the only organisation operating in many of the chawls before the initiation of the UCDP. Many social profiles of UCDP areas revealed this, for example the one on the Rajpur-Hirpur area declared:

40. Ibid

41. Interview with Mr. H in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

42. Interview with Mr. Vitalbhai H. Patel in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

43. See Evaluation Study.

--"In this area, no other social, political or economic institution is working other than the Majur Mahajan. If the UCD Department will work in this area, it can be sure of the help, cooperation and support of the Majur Mahajan." --44

The philosophy behind the UCDP, that the cooperation of voluntary agencies in the area should be obtained, and that the Project should supplement rather than compete against their activities, helped the Majur Mahajan to become so powerful in these Vikas Mandals.⁴⁵ The UCDP, indeed, supported Majur Mahajan institutions, if they existed in any UCDP area e.g. family planning activities would be taught from a Majur Mahajan-run Mahila Mandal, if it existed in the area, or if there was a gymnasium, run by the Majur Mahajan, the UCDP did not set up a rival body. In the areas of Kankaria, Rajpur-Hirpur, Asarva and Bapunagar, the Municipal Corporators were also largely drawn from Majur Mahajan workers, and thus, in these areas, the Majur Mahajan personnel and its institutions gave full cooperation to the UCDP. Kankaria Neighbourhood led all others in the accomplishment of programmes under the UCDP.⁴⁶

- B. Janta Parishad Municipal Corporators viewed the establishment of largely Congress and PSP-dominated Vikas Mandals as a threat, and criticized the part played by the Vikas Mandals in the 1965 Municipal Corporation elections.

As the Vikas Mandals began to get underway, Congress Corporators from city areas and areas west of the Sabarmati felt that the Vikas Mandals could well play an important role in deciding their future political careers and provide an important platform for them to express

44. Social Profile on Rajpur-Hirpur, prepared for the UCD Dept. by Pannalal M. Inamdar and Chandrika R. Shah.

45. See Scheme for Pilot Projects in Urban Community Development, prepared following recommendations made in the Third Plan.

46. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

their views, since Corporators were ex-officio members of Vikas Mandal Executives and could attend all Vikas Mandal meetings. Congress Corporators from these areas on the UCD Committee of the Municipal Corporation alleged that Ford Foundation funds were being spent in a few areas of the city only, and demanded an extension of the UCDP to their areas. Thus Vikas Mandals were begun in Kochrab-Paldi, a slum pocket in Ellisbridge area, and in the west bank Sabarmati area, and in the Congress-dominated Muslim pockets in Jamalpur city area. PSP Corporators, such as Martandray Shastri, Ajitbhai Patel, Dr. Sureshbhai M. Shah and Jayendra T. Vaidya in Khadia, were generally ready to cooperate with the Congress over the UCDP, and wanted Vikas Mandals set up in wards where they were influential, such as Khadia Ward No. 1 and No. 2, and in parts of Kalupur 1.⁴⁷

However, Janta Parishad Corporators, who realised that the Vikas Mandals could form a new rival political leadership in many areas, viewed their establishment as a threat. Vikas Mandal leaders took advantage of their right of direct access to local government bodies and their right to see any officer of the Corporation on behalf of the Vikas Mandal, and undertook work formerly done only by Majur Mahajan workers, and succeeded in getting things redressed. Thus they built up their image as the new leaders. Vikas Mandals in city areas, where the Janta Parishad was powerful, were largely situated in Congress areas, and Janta Parishad Corporators, especially Manubhai Palkiwala and his followers in Dariapur, remained highly suspicious of them and of their Presidents. Manubhai Palkiwala alleged that even the Community Organiser in Dariapur area, Popatlal Patel, was associated with the Majur Mahajan.⁴⁸

47. Interview with Mr. K in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

48. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Even in Shahpur area, which had four out of five Municipal Corporators from the Janta Parishad, Vikas Mandals were established in slum pockets with Congress and even Majur Mahajan influence, as in Shahpur-Vagrivas-Nagoriwad area.⁴⁹ See Appendix 1, which shows the main political influences in the various Vikas Mandals, established up till the 26th August, 1965.

The Janta Parishad also criticized the part played by the Vikas Mandals in the 1965 Municipal Corporation elections. In the elections, the Neighbourhood Organiser would often be consulted as to who should be given tickets.⁵⁰ Tickets were sometimes given to Vikas Mandal leaders e.g. Narsibhai Makwana, who worked in the Laxmipura-Nanpura Vikas Mandal in Kankaria, got the PSP ticket and was successfully elected.⁵¹ Vikas Mandal Executives often took part in electioneering, and, as they were largely dominated by Congress, Majur Mahajan and PSP sympathisers, this was naturally resented by the Janta Parishad. The UCD Department even had to close down during the election period because of all the political campaigns going on in the Vikas Mandals.⁵²

49. Social Profile of the Shahpur-Vagrivas-Nagorivad Project, prepared for the UCD Department, which declared that there was no other influence apart from that of the INC in the area.

50. Interview with Mr. K in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

51. Interview with Mr. U in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

52. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

C. Difficulties between the Urban Community Development Department and other Municipal Corporation Departments, and differences in the concept of a social worker.

Tensions and jealousies developed between the employees of other Municipal Corporation Departments, and the staff of the UCDP. Municipal employees wanted their own relatives and friends to find employment in the UCDP, but they were prevented from doing this by the tough selection procedures. Dr. Jyotsna Shah, the first Director of the UCDP, appointed a selection committee, consisting of the Deputy Municipal Commissioner, Mr. N.H. Thakore, Dr. Clinard, the Director of the Gujarat University Postgraduate School of Philosophy, the Director of the Social Science School in Baroda, and herself. This committee selected the first outstanding batch of thirteen to work in the UCDP. However, subsequent selections were made by the Municipal Commissioner in the same way as the selection of other Corporation staff, and the calibre of workers dropped.⁵³

In addition, the UCD Department did not obtain smooth cooperation from other Municipal Corporation Departments because the salaries of UCD staff were very much higher than the salaries of other municipal employees, who felt highly dissatisfied at this. These high salaries had been fixed by Dr. Clinard, and the Ford Foundation, in general, had insisted that a major part of their funds should be used to procure staff of the highest quality by offering good salaries. Thus the UCD staff did not get good cooperation from other Municipal Corporation Departments e.g. during the UCDP's campaign for school admissions, school admission forms were brought to the houses of families to be filled in and a discussion between educationalists was to be organised. However, the

53. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Municipal Commissioner declared that the School Board was already doing work of this kind and the rule that parents must go to the schools to fill up admission forms could not be circumvented. Headmasters also did not cooperate in checking the regular attendance of school children.

The Janta Parishad members, especially Indulal Yagnik with his Gandhian sympathies, and the Communists, also objected to the type of social worker recruited into the UCD Department, although for very different reasons from the jealous municipal employees. They objected to the recruitment of highly educated middle class youths, whom they felt were not really suited to social service. Janta Parishad members felt that graduates were not necessarily required since very often they could not really identify with or communicate with the common people. They also felt that it was inappropriate to pay such large salaries to the UCD staff, and adhered to the Gandhian ideal that the social worker should be a simple man, who could teach the people by example and perform necessary heavy tasks with them instead of merely counselling them.⁵⁵

D. Janta Parishad criticism of American influence in the UCDP and of the trivial nature of the work done.

Some Janta Parishad members, including Indulal Yagnik and particularly extremist Communists like Manubhai T. Patel, criticized the UCDP as a CIA plot to instill American cultural ideas into the working class of Ahmedabad city.⁵⁶ Janta Parishad members, in particular, pointed out the limitations of the ideology of self-help, which underlay much of the UCD philosophy.

The prerequisite of having matching contributions from the people for all projects and programmes undertaken by the community severely

55. Interview with Mr. Dinkar Mehta in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

56. Ibid.

restricted the scope of what could be achieved and, consequently, fairly small activities only could be organised e.g. dustbins costing Rs.1 each were given out to the people and, for this, 8 annas was collected from each family.⁵⁷ Larger projects meant a greater financial outlay from the people and a longer gestation period, therefore, the people would easily become frustrated and lose interest. The 50% matching contribution clause meant that the important schemes of securing electricity and water connections were only undertaken after the second or third year of the Project, because they were extremely expensive and required long periods of saving e.g. in Laxmipura-Nanpura Vikas Mandal, sixty families had to contribute Rs.50 each in cash before the main pipeline for water connections to their chawl could be laid, and, after this, individual families in a tenement had to find Rs.200-400 to get water connections for their tenements.⁵⁸ More expensive projects, like new housing, were out of the question due to the impossibility of securing a 50% matching contribution from slum dwellers.

The Ford Foundation had stipulated that not more than 10% of its funds (Rs.8 lakhs over three years in all) was to be spent by way of direct financial aid for individual programmes, as the bulk of the funds should be spent on starting the pilot project, paying high salaries for good staff and studying the results. The Ford Foundation envisaged a gradual rise in the contributions from the people i.e. ratios of 60% contribution: 40% aid, 70% contribution: 30% aid until eventually the Vikas Mandals would be self-supporting, and financial aid to them could be totally stopped. This was a very different ideology and structure from the rural scheme of democratic decentralisation, Panchayati Raj.

57. Interview with Mr. I.D. Patel in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

58. Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation booklet on the UCDP.

However, due to the matching contributions provision not even this sum of 10% was spent on direct financial aid for projects by the time the UCDP was discontinued in October 1966, and most of the money was only spent during the later years of the Project.⁵⁹

As a result of the ideology of self-help and the lack of sufficient powers and resources, given to the UCDP, to effect significant changes and thereby raise levels of participation and legitimacy of the urban political system in the same way as Panchayati Raj in the rural areas, the UCDP was open to the charge of the Janta Parishad against the triviality of the work achieved as measured against the outstanding problems of the people. Indulal Yagnik coined the biting phrase describing the UCDP as "a puppet-show for the people" i.e. concerned with the trivia of organising Bhajan sessions and mehndi and hair style competitions and producing amateur dramatics rather than with the pressing economic and employment needs of the people.⁶⁰

Even the Government of India Scheme for pilot projects in UCD, drawn up after the directives of the Third Plan, desired greater attention to be paid to the initiation of economic programmes like the establishment of consumer cooperatives, industrial cooperatives, small-scale and cottage industries' units to help tackle the unemployment problems of the cities.⁶¹ However, this aspect was played down by the Ahmedabad, UCDP, with the Evaluation Report on the formation and working of the first ten Vikas Mandals making the following rationalisation for this:

59. Interview with Mr. Vitalbhai H. Patel in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

60. Interview with Mr. Indulal Yagnik in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

61. See Scheme for Pilot Projects in Urban Community Development .

--" 1. In the Rural Community Development, emphasis is laid on economic improvement, especially development of agricultural and small industries. In Urban Community Development, improvement in living conditions receives greater attention.

2. Rural Community Development as it has developed in India is primarily "programme -oriented" whereas urban programmes should be "process" or "people-oriented". This means that the activities undertaken under the Urban Community Development programme subserve the more important objectives of creating consciousness in the community and developing its capacity to deal with its problems." --- 62

The Janta Parishad aimed close to the mark when it questioned the relevance of many of the UCDP's activities to the more urgent economic and employment problems of the people. The UCDP had neither the finances nor the powers to effect significant changes of this kind, and the efficacy of raising consciousness of their needs in the people without providing adequate means for satisfying those needs could well be questioned.

Thus, despite the Ford Foundation's apparent willingness to extend the UCDP agreement even after the accession to power in the Municipal Corporation of a Communist-dominated Janta Parishad,⁶³ the UCDP was discontinued from October 1966 by a vote of the Janta Parishad-dominated Municipal Corporation.

62. See Evaluation Study

63. On August 29th, 1966, Mr. Samuel E. Bunker, Assistant Representative of the Ford Foundation wrote a letter to Mr. H.K.L. Capoor, the Ahmedabad Municipal Commissioner, in which he praised the good work of the UCDP and conveyed the Ford Foundation's decision to continue to support the project for another year until July 22, 1967, without any conditions attached to this extension.

- iii) Failure of attempts by Janta Parishad leaders to restart the UCDP and make it operate to the benefit of the Janta Parishad party due to intraparty indiscipline and lack of resources.

Certain members of the Janta Parishad, especially Dinkar Mehta, who became Mayor on coming out of jail in April 1966, and including Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi, Jaimal Thakore, Chairman of the Standing Committee and Nandubhai Raval, Chairman of the Recreational and Cultural Committee, felt that, as the Janta Parishad was in power in the Municipal Corporation, they should attempt to remodel the UCDP and make it operate in favour of Janta Parishad interests. They also felt that the UCDP, once it was operating to their advantage, would help to secure for the Janta Parishad the active support and loyalty of the people, especially in labour and inner city areas. Thus they wanted to restart the UCDP, after making some structural and personnel changes.⁶⁴

Their major recommendations for remodelling the UCDP included the following demands: they wanted a lowering of salary scales for all UCDP Departmental staff from the Director down to the peon. They desired an inclusion in the UCDP of additional areas where the Janta Parishad had a support-base - Manubhai Palkiwala was particularly anxious to have his political base area in Dariapur included in the Project. They demanded that the Director should not merely be concerned with doing office-work in the UCD Department, but should also work actively in the Neighbourhoods. There were tentative proposals to change some of the Community Organisers and put in their place more Gandhian-style social workers, probably with Janta Parishad leanings. Many of the recently victorious Janta Parishad Corporators, after the

64. Interview with Dinkar Mehta and Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

1965 Municipal Corporation elections, wanted the leadership of the Vikas Mandals to be changed to accommodate their representatives and supporters.⁶⁵

Dr. Lilaben Shah, the then current UCDP Director, and many of the UCD staff were perfectly willing to accept large changes as long as the UCDP was not abandoned. The Director and the staff agreed to a lowering of their salary scales, knowing that they could not fall below that of other Municipal Corporation employees. The Director openly told Janta Parishad leaders that the power of selection of areas for the UCDP lay with the Corporation, not with the Director, so the Janta Parishad should go ahead and include their own areas in the UCDP. The Community Organisers agreed to the device, to enable the extension of UCDP areas, of the engagement of part-time workers, paid only Rs.75 per month as salary, who would act as physical education instructors, sewing teachers for the ladies etc., thus leaving the Community Organiser to act merely as a coordinating factor in particular Vikas Mandals. Indeed the staff and UCDP Director were almost willing to give Janta Parishad leaders a blank cheque so long as the Project could be restarted- with the Director going so far as to declare that she was ready to continue the Project even if the funds for it were to be supplied from Communist China.⁶⁶

However, the Project could not be restarted because of the limitation in resources for the UCDP, which meant that UCDP areas could not be rapidly expanded. Although Janta Parishad leaders discussed with the Chairmen and Secretaries of the Vikas Mandals that there should be a change in the Community Organisers and in the workings of the UCD Department, the Vikas Mandal leaders did not appear to want changes. It had proved almost impossible to dislodge old-established Vikas Mandal

65. Interview with Mr. R. in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

66. Interview with Mr. K in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

leadership at the Vikas Mandal elections by the representatives of newly-elected Janta Parishad Corporators, because these Corporators were often new to politics and had not consolidated an effective network of influence. Moreover, the Majur Mahajan, after its massive electoral defeat in the 1965 Municipal Corporation elections, doubled its efforts to create good relations with the people; therefore, despite their wishes, new Janta Parishad Corporators had not succeeded in changing Vikas Mandal leadership.⁶⁷

The major reason, however, for the failure to restart the UCDP on new lines, advantageous to the Janta Parishad, was the deterioration in intraparty discipline by mid 1967. Dinkar Mehta and Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi could not convince their own colleagues to accept a new UCDP scheme due to intensive group rivalry within the Janta Parishad. In the early years, there had been a general prejudice in the Janta Parishad against the so-called American influence in the UCDP, which resulted in the discontinuation of the UCDP in October 1966. However, efforts to restart it on different lines failed due to worsening inter-group relations in the Janta Parishad and conflicts between the groups as to who would run the UCDP, who would become the Chairman of the UCD Committee etc. The more conservative, anti-Communist elements in the Janta Parishad were afraid that UCD activities, which had been taking place largely in working class chawls, would work to the benefit of the Communists.⁶⁸ Indulal Yagnik and the Somabhai C. Desai group opposed the UCDP, guided by the counsels of Maneklal Thakore of the Janta Parishad executive, who had produced an unfavourable report for the

67. Interview with Mr. R in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

68. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

party on the UCDP.⁶⁹ Manubhai Palkiwala personally was in favour of the UCDP, but his group opposed it. The Communists, particularly extreme left-wing Communists such as Manubhai T. Patel and Baluram Gupta, were almost united against the UCDP.⁷⁰ Dinkar Mehta, Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi and some other Independent middle class Radicals found it almost an impossible task to secure a consensus on restarting the UCDP. A subcommittee of all parties in the Municipal Corporation was appointed on the 27th July, 1967, to study the UCDP and the possibilities of restarting it. It was composed of Shrimati Naliniben Mehta, wife of Dinkar Mehta, as Chairman, Gokuldas Patel, Baluram Gupta, Jaimal Thakore, D.K. Patel of the Congress, Martandray Shastri of the PSP, and Bachubhai Kapadia. The committee sat in conflict for several months, and by the time it finally agreed on restarting the UCDP in the Janta Parishad's last year of rule in the Corporation, the Janta Parishad itself had disintegrated and the possibility of securing a successful majority in favour of restarting the UCDP in the Municipal Corporation seemed remote.⁷¹

After Manubhai Palkiwala's defection in the summer of 1967, the Janta Parishad lost its majority in the Corporation, and it was so riven by inter-group conflicts that the Janta Parishad leaders, in favour of restarting the UCDP, were forced to seek the concurrence of one or other of the main opposition parties - either the Congress or the PSP - if the Project was to be revived. However, neither the Congress nor the PSP would cooperate with the Janta Parishad over the restarting of the UCDP. They suspected that the Janta Parishad would try to take advantage of the various Vikas Mandals in the working class chawls. In time, also, the UCDP became an electoral issue in the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections, with both the Congress and the PSP decrying the closing of the UCDP by the Janta

69. Interview with Mr. K in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

70. Interviews with Mr. AA and Mr. D in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

71. Interview with Mr. BB in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Parishad, and unwilling to help the Janta Parishad to restart the Project for fear that the prestige attached to the UCDP would go to the Janta Parishad.⁷²

72. Ibid.

APPENDIX 1. Political influences in the UCDP Vikas Mandals.

Name of the Vikas Mandal:	Neighbourhood:	Population of the VM:	Date of Formation:	Pop. of the Neighbourhood:	Main political influence:
1. Kankaria	Kankaria	3000	10.5.63		Majur Mahajan and some
2. Laxmipura-Nanpura	Kankaria	1600	19.5.63		PSP influence
3. Gita	Kankaria	3000	19.5.63	18600	
4. Raghunathpura	Kankaria	3000	5.1.64		
5. Gitamandir	Kankaria	4000	5.1.64		
6. Shramjivi Sahkari	Kankaria	4000	2.10.64		
7. Rajpur	Rajpur-Hirpur	5000	20.7.63		Majur Mahajan
8. Shreyas	Rajpur-Hirpur	4000	20.7.63	22500	
9. Vallabh	Rajpur-Hirpur	4000	5.8.63		
10. Sarvodaya	Rajpur-Hirpur	1500	26.7.63		
11. Shanker	Rajpur-Hirpur	3000	5.8.63		
12. Amraivadi	Rajpur-Hirpur	5000	14.11.65		
13. Sardar	Raikhad	1500	4.7.63	3100	Congress
14. Mahajan Vando	Raikhad	1600	28.11.65		
15. Aryodaya	Asarva	2200	20.7.63		Majur Mahajan
16. Nilkanth	Asarva	3500	16.2.64		
17. Jehangirpura	Asarva	5000	16.2.64		
18. Gajanand	Asarva	5000	16.2.64	20400	
19. Laxmi	Asarva	4000	19.3.64		
20. Chamunda	Asarva	700	9.12.64		
21. Kochrab	Kochrab-Paldi	6000	16.2.64	10000	Congress
22. Paldi	Kochrab-Paldi	4000	15.2.64		
23. Vaghriwas	Shahpur	6000	4.12.63		
24. Bhoivade	Shahpur	2000	5.1.64	11625	Congress, some JP influence
25. Sabarmati	Shahpur	985	22.10.64		
26. Shahpur Munic. Quarters	Shahpur	2640	16.1.64		
27. Nutan	Bapunagar	3920	2.10.64		
28. Navchetan	Bapunagar	4280	2.10.64		
29. Jaginti	Bapunagar	5880	11.10.64	24760	
30. Nava Bapunagar	Bapunagar	6720	14.2.65		

Name of the Vikas Mandal:	Neighbourhood:	Population of the VM:	Date of Formation:	Pop. of the Neighbourhood:	Main political influence:
31. Bharat	Bapunagar	3960	1.3.65		
32. Dariapur No. 1	Dariapur	2750	27.9.64		Congress
33. Dariapur No. 2	Dariapur	2325	27.9.64	15475	
34. Dariapur No. 3	Dariapur	2050	14.2.65		
35. Charvat	Dariapur	2350	7.3.65		
36. Panchsheel	Dariapur	6000	26.9.65		
37. Kanpur No. 1	Khadia 1	2525	2.10.64		Congress and PSP
38. Pragati	Khadia 1	2890	5.1.65		
39. Kanpur No. 2	Khadia 1	2450	15.2.65	12060	
40. Shahpur Mill Compound	Khadia 1	4250	11.3.65		
41. Daulatkhana	Khadia 2	2000	2.10.64		PSP
42. Sakhar Pragati	Khadia 2	2000	25.4.65	7500	
43. Raipur	Khadia 2	3500	15.8.65		
44. Dariakan Colony	Sabarmati	2400	30.10.64		Congress
45. Kabir Chauk	Sabarmati	3150	30.1.65		
46. Ekata	Sabarmati	2500	12.7.65		
47. Sahakar	Sabarmati	3000	12.7.65	14550	
48. Jawakar	Sabarmati	3500	22.9.65		
49. Adarsh	Jamalpur	2250	24.1.65		Congress
50. Jainind	Jamalpur	3600	4.12.65	5850	
51. Kalupur Darwaja	Kalupur	4500	17.12.65	8500	Congress, some PSP influence.
52. Kalupur No. 1	Kalupur	4000	26.8.65		

3.A. Difficulties of goal attainment: difficulties in achieving the economic goals of the Janta Parishad in the Corporation due to the hostility of the business community over Special Property taxation, which crippled the finances of the Municipal Corporation and resulted in extensive litigation up to the level of the Supreme Court, and due to the limited powers of the Corporation vis-à-vis the State Government, which proved uncooperative to the Janta Parishad-dominated Corporation.

As proclaimed in their election manifesto of 1965, and reiterated by Dinkar Mehta, while he was Mayor of Ahmedabad in November, 1966, at a debate on the financial condition of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation organized by the Ahmedabad Junior Chamber, the Janta Parishad's political philosophy was summed up in the phrase: "the Municipal Corporation's administration should not be run in the interests of any one class, but in the interests of all the people".¹

Dinkar Mehta, at the Junior Chamber debate, went on to state more fully the aspirations of the Janta Parishad now it had obtained power in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, commenting disparagingly in passing on Congress efforts to beautify the city at the expense of providing many areas with even primary facilities:

--"In the history of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, a new era has started. Previously the capitalist class had a stronghold in the Corporation, and it was administered for their benefit. Taxation was also levied looking to their interests. It is necessary to change this entirely, and the Janta Parishad has started these changes.....

It is necessary to provide the citizens with entertainment facilities and also to beautify the city by the provision of parks, swimming-pools, a stadium etc., but it is a general belief that more attention should be paid to providing the primary needs of the people such as water,

1. Dinkar Mehta, Speech on the Financial Condition of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Given at a debate on this topic organized by the Ahmedabad Junior Chamber at the Town Hall on Nov. 20, 1966.
(Cyclostyled manuscript translated from the Gujarati.)

lighting, sewage-disposal, roads, housing and health facilities

The socialist principles adopted by the Congress to create a socialist society were not followed by it, and instead of the city's general development, only the rich areas of Ellisbridge and Shahibag were developed at the expense of lakhs of rupees to make them like Paris, and this was done at the sacrifice of the development of middle class suburbs and labour areas. Moreover, there was a great deal of inequality in the taxation frame-work. The socialist society can be established only by taxing the rich and the industries which can bear it, and by aiding the poor and middle class people. The Congress Party failed in this because of the vested interests of the capitalists, and that is why its fall came in the Municipal Corporation. We have started towards the goal of establishing the socialistic society with the cooperation of the public, slowly but surely" ²

Thus the Janta Parishad aimed at removing the inequalities in the development of different areas of the city, and at creating a balanced development in the interests of all the classes not just the capitalist class. However, in this aim, they came across many difficulties, not least of which were the limited powers of the Corporation vis-à-vis the State Government under the BMC Act of 1949, and the uncooperative attitude of the Congress-dominated State Government. They also had to face the hostility of the business community over Special Property taxation which crippled the finances of the Corporation. The following section analyses these difficulties of the Janta Parishad-dominated Corporation, and outlines the minor achievements they were finally able to make.

2. Ibid.

- A. Financial Crisis for the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation caused by the refusal of the Textile Magnates to accept the assessments on Special Property Taxation during the later 1960s.

During the 1950s and 1960s the expenditure of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation rose at a faster rate than the receipts. The overall income of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation which was Rs.2.47 crores in 1950-51 rose to Rs.11.86 crores in 1967-68, thus registering an overall rise of 380.1%. Over the period 1951 to 1970 the total receipts rose at the annual average rate of 31%. The total expenditure, which was Rs.1.81 crores in 1950-51, rose to Rs.14.19 crores in 1967-68, showing an overall rise of 683.9%. Over the period 1951 to 1970 the total expenditure rose at the annual average rate of 51%. This trend became far more pronounced during the 1960s due to increasing developmental expenditure. Up to 1963-64, the overall budgetary position showed surplus for most of the years. It is only after 1963-64 that there were continuous budget deficits year after year except for the year 1966-67.³

Against this background, the dispute between the millowners and the Municipal Corporation over the taxation of Special Property in the mid 60s caused a situation of financial crisis during the Janta Parishad tenure of power in the Corporation, reducing its ability to carry out a vigorous programme of city development.

The origin of the dispute goes back beyond the accession of the Janta Parishad to power in 1965, and was, in a sense, an endemic problem of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. However, it was certainly aggravated by the Janta Parishad's ideological rigidity and inability to provide a bridge between the millowners and the Municipal Corporation, as the Congress party was later able to do successfully after it

3. Mahesh Bhatt and M.S. Trivedi, Finances of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. (University School of Social Sciences, Gujarat University: 1968). Mahesh Bhatt and M.S. Trivedi are respectively Reader in Economics and Lecturer in Economics at the University School of Social Sciences, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad 9.

came to power in the Corporation in 1969.⁴ The situation was further aggravated by a tendency to psychological over-reaction and insecurity exhibited by the whole body of millowners due to their loss of control over the Corporation on the Janta Parishad accession to power in 1965.

Although the assessment and levy of the property taxes is strictly speaking the sole concern of the Municipal Commissioner and his executive officers (the Standing Committee of the Corporation having only the right of determining the rate or % of tax), in practice the nature of the political régime in power in the Corporation does have a marked influence over the assessment officers.⁵ The ascendancy of the Janta Parishad to power in 1965 provided a general political climate of radicalism and more particular pressurization of assessment officers, resulting in a strong drive for recovery of arrears and better collection of property taxes, greater insistence on taxing plant and machinery and an increase in rateable values on applying the contractors' test method of assessment and after the quadrennial revision of property taxes which came into effect from the 1st April 1967.⁶ The Municipal Commissioner stated in the Budget Estimate for 1966-67:

-- "(b) Income from taxes

The increase of Rs.29.96 lakhs on this account is traceable to the drive already undertaken for the recovery of the past years' arrears.

Further, the recovery of current demand will be effected to the maximum limit, leaving the minimum arrears for collection in future"-- In particular, the assessment of Special Properties, mainly mills and factories, tripled. Uncertainty regarding income from special property

4. Interview with Mr. Z in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

5. Interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

6. AMC, Budget Estimate, 1966-67.

taxation, which formed about 40% of total revenue income,* due to litigation by millowners, made it more difficult for the Janta Parishad to carry out its programme of social and developmental measures.⁷

The financial tug-of-war between the textile magnates and the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation over Special Property taxation went back to the very beginning of the Corporation's history. In 1951, the Ahmedabad Municipality became the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation under the BPMC Act of 1949. Under the Municipal Boroughs Act the basis of assessment of all properties had been a certain percentage of the capital value, but after 1951 this method of assessment was no longer available. After 1951 the basis for assessment of all properties within the city became the annual rent i.e. what a hypothetical tenant would pay if the property was let out from year to year. In the early 1950s there was an upward revision of the annual rent and therefore taxes went up. Unhappy at this prospect, the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association approached the Municipal Corporation, requesting both sides to find a mutually-acceptable solution to this problem by negotiation to avoid conflict and the expense and bitterness of litigation. The Congress party, containing a very influential segment of businessmen, provided a bridge between the parties during these negotiations. Through the arbitration of Kasturbhai Lalbhai, perhaps the leading textile magnate, and Bogilal Lala, an influential Congressman in the Corporation, with H.V. Divetia, a Judge of the Gujarat High Court, as umpire, a settlement was reached in 1951 which proved highly concessional to the Ahmedabad millowners, reflecting their political preponderance during this period. According to this settlement, the floor area method of assessment, applying a certain rate per every 100sq. ft. of the property, was agreed upon. The rate fixed was highly concessional to the millowners, and, due to the ad hoc nature of the agreement, the usual four-yearly revisions were dispensed with.

7. AMC, Budget Estimate, 1971-72.

* from Property taxes

This agreement lasted unchanged till 1958-59. From 1959 onwards, the Municipal Corporation suggested to the millowners that, though the period of the agreement had expired, the same formula should continue with slight modifications in the rate per 100 sq. ft. to allow for higher prices and consequently higher costs to be borne by the Municipal Corporation. Negotiations were carried on with Kasturbhai Lalbhai, the leading spokesman for the millowners. Though they broke down at one stage, eventually a slightly higher rate was agreed to, though this was not to the extent the Municipal Corporation had wanted. A few mills remained outside the agreement and began a process of litigation that was to go on for many years.⁸

This second agreement lasted till 1964-65, when some of the textile mills (approximately 10-20) challenged the floor area method of assessment, not the quantum in the High Court, thus turning back on their own suggestions in 1951. In order to appreciate this some what suprising volte face, it is necessary to understand the background of deteriorating economic conditions for the cotton textile industry during the mid 60s period, and the fact that the millowners at this time were divided in their approach to the problem of municipal valuation of mills: generally speaking, it was the economically weaker, less productive mills, badly hit by deteriorating economic conditions and therefore unable to pay municipal taxes, who sought a way out through litigation and were advised (or rather misadvised, as it turned out later) by their lawyers to get the floor area method declared illegal in the Courts and the assessments struck down.

During the mid 1960s, economic conditions over the whole country, and particularly for the cotton textile industry began to deteriorate. Due to the successive failure of the monsoon and bad harvests, including a poor yield for the indigenous cotton crop, there was an economic recession throughout the country, resulting in cost inflation and generally low consumer purchasing power. The cost of factors in the cost of

8. Interview with Mr. Panchal, Dy. Municipal Commissioner for Ahmedabad in March 1971.

production of the cotton textile industry rose significantly. There was an acute shortage of cotton during these years, and market prices ruled at about Rs.100 per candy above the ceiling price for raw cotton.⁹ While the output of cotton remained stagnant around 55 lakh bales, after scaling a peak of 64 lakh bales in 1963-64, the spindleage had gone up from 14.11 million at the beginning of 1963 to 16.61 million by the end of November 1966, and the needs of the industry (at a fully utilised capacity) exceeded 72 lakh bales by 1967.¹⁰

Another important reason for the mills' difficulties over the availability of cotton was the mal distribution of stocks among the various units. Another problem was posed by the fact that the holding power of the cotton farmer had been greatly increased by the penetration of the cooperative system of marketing (80% of Gujarat's cotton was now routed through these cooperatives) with the result that the slump in cotton prices that had in the past marked the harvest was rapidly disappearing. By virtue of their great holding power, the cooperatives retained their stocks and pierced the price ceilings by large margins. The mills were reluctant to pay prices beyond the ceilings as in previous years, because devaluation of the rupee had pushed up their maintenance and expansion costs and the price of imported cotton.¹¹

Another cost of production, the wage bill, had gone up considerably during these years, particularly regarding the payment of dearness allowance. The following table shows the increase in monthly d.a. of Ahmedabad textile workers between 1963 and 1966:

9. Times of India, (Bombay), 5 April, 1967.

10. Times of India, (Bombay), 13 April, 1967.

11. Times of India, (Bombay), 15 November : speech by the Commerce Minister, Manubhai Shah, in the Lok Sabha.

TABLE 2. Rise in Ahmedabad Textile Workers' d.a., 1963-66.¹²

<u>YEAR:</u>	<u>D.A. Per Month of 26 working days in Rs.</u>
1963	87 - 8 - 3
1964	118 -13 -10
1965	128 -13 -10
1966	143 - 3 - 1

The Ahmedabad Millowners' Association, in desperation, in October 1966 went as far as to seek to terminate the d.a. award and obtain neutralisation at a level lower than the 100% granted by the existing award to mill workers in view of the unprecedented rise in the consumer price index nos. and the steady deterioration of the financial position of the industry.¹³

The millowners also complained that controlled prices of cloth (about 40% of the cloth output of the mills was under statutory control) did not take into account the tremendous current cost inflation,¹⁴ and constantly demanded an increase in the controlled prices to the extent of 20-30% and were dissatisfied with the grant of an increase of 4.5% by the Central Government in April 1967.¹⁵ Their ultimate demand was for decontrol of cotton and cloth prices.¹⁶ They also complained of heavy taxation by the Central and State government.¹⁷

Thus Ahmedabad millowners maintained that the overall cost of production had risen by as much as 51% between 1960 and 1965, and that the year 1965 alone saw a rise of 14%, see the following table.¹⁸

12. Report of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association (1967).

13. Times of India (Bombay), 4 October, 1966.

14. MOA Report (1967).

15. Times of India (Bombay), 5 April, 1967.

16. Times of India (Bombay), 4 November, 1966.

17. MOA Report (1967).

18. Ibid, Appendices, p.200

TABLE 3. Rise in Cost of Production of Ahmedabad mills, 1960-65 in Rs. lakhs.

Elements of Cost of Manufacture	1960	1964	1964 % Rise over 1960	1965	1965 % Rise over 1960.
1. Raw Materials	4450	5871	32%	6428	44%
2. Stores	1835	2596	41%	2883	57%
3. Wage Bill	3241	4210	30%	4688	48%
4. Fuel and Power	623	1056	70%	1123	80%
5. Interest charges	191	407	113%	545	185%
6. Miscellaneous	998	1365	37%	1492	49%
TOTAL	11338	15505	37%	17159	51%

Under the cumulative effect of the above difficulties, while profits before tax of Ahmedabad mills was Rs.9.51 crores in 1960, it fell to Rs.3.54 crores in 1965 - a reduction of 63%. In 1960, only one mill made a loss; this figure rose to 13 in 1962, 18 in 1963 and 26 in 1965. In 1965, out of 57 mills in Ahmedabad, 31 made a profit of Rs.5.81 crores but ^{the} remaining 26 incurred a loss of Rs.2.27 crores, leaving a surplus balance of only Rs.3.53 crores.¹⁹

As a result of the above adverse economic conditions, several Ahmedabad mills were threatened with closure during the mid 60s period. The Indian Cotton Mills' Federation, the apex body of Indian cotton textile mills, (whose president in both 1967 and 1968 was the Ahmedabad textile magnate, Madanmohan Mangaldas) threatened a block closure of all mills for a fortnight from December 19, 1966, and sealing of 6% of spindles due to the acute shortage of cotton.²⁰ This proposal would have

19. MOA Report (1968).

20. Times of India (Bombay), 1 December, 1966.

rendered about 700,000 textile workers idle, with a loss in wages of about Rs. 7 crores (though half of this might be paid in the form of lay-off compensation), and a loss in production of about Rs. 32 crores worth. This was narrowly averted by a Central Government Ordinance in December 1966, providing extraordinary powers to deal with the cotton textile crisis and including a scheme of compulsory closure of mills for one day in a week from December 12th until conditions improved with normal lay-off compensation paid to the 700,000 workers who would be rendered idle.²¹

Thus, due to the generally deteriorating economic position of the cotton textile industry in the mid 60s, about ten mills, out of a total of about 60, were not in a position to pay any municipal tax because they were verging on bankruptcy. Many of these weaker, less productive mills had accumulated tax arrears, and in order to forestall the Corporation from issuing warrants for the attachment of their properties, they were advised by their lawyers to go to Court.²² The New Manekchowk Spinning and Weaving Mills Co. Ltd. was the most tenacious of these mills in pursuing litigation through the Gujarat High Court to the Supreme Court, and became the symbol and leader of this group of mills, ultimately winning the famous Supreme Court case of February 21st 1967, known as "New Manekchowk Spinning and Weaving Mills Co. Ltd. and Others vs. the Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad". The New Manekchowk Spg. and Wvg. Mills Co. Ltd. was later

21. Times of India (Bombay), 4 December, 1966.

22. Interview with Mr. K.K. in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

among the list of those closed mills, for whose unemployed workers the TIA requested the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association to give priority in recruitment on December 7th 1968; and on 21st February 1969 it was declared a relief undertaking by the Government of Gujarat under the Bombay Relief Undertakings (Special Provisions) Act of 1958, thus suspending all its rights, privileges, obligations and liabilities.²³

It was these weaker mills who were advised by their lawyers (it turned out that the lawyers did not understand the real interests of their clients because later the floor area method of assessment, which was largely concessional to millowners, was declared illegal, and replaced by the contractors' test method by which assessments rose phenomenally) to challenge the validity of the floor area method of assessment, and to submit that the imposition of property tax on plant and machinery was beyond the legislative competence of the State²⁴ and therefore the Corporation whose taxing powers derived from those of the State. It was felt that the floor area method, which imposed a flat rate and did not take into account factors like age, location, quality etc. of the factories, was discriminating against the weaker mills under Article 14 of the Constitution. Thus there was a division of interests and the lack of a unified approach to the problem of municipal valuation of mill property on the part of the millowners.

After a fairly long legal battle, the writ petitions on behalf of the New Manekchowk Spg. and Wvg. Mills Co. Ltd., and other mills, which had been dismissed by the Gujarat High Court on other grounds, finally succeeded in the Supreme Court Judgement of February 21st, 1967. The Supreme Court held that the imposition of property taxes on the basis of a flat rate per so many sq.ft. of the floor area of the factories was discriminatory under Article 14 of the Constitution since the method

23. MOA Report (1968).

24. Interview with Mr. Z in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

did not take into account such factors as the locality where the building was situated, the age, quality and nature of the building etc., and accordingly there was no classification of the factories on a rational basis. It declared that a mechanical formula without taking into account the conditions of each building is not to be a valid method of arriving at the valuation. On a more conservative note, although both the Local Finance Enquiry Committee of 1949 and the Committee of Ministers of 1963 felt that the rateable value of plant and machinery should be taken into account in determining the rateable value of a factory building, as in England, because by "excluding machinery and plant the industries in India are not contributing adequately to the cost of services which are generally provided by a local body", the Supreme Court in this Judgement declared that the levying of a property tax on plant and machinery was beyond the legislative competence of the State, since there is no legislative entry in the Constitution to give power to the State legislature to tax plant and machinery, as this does not come under entry 49 of list II of the 7th Schedule which reads "Taxes on land and buildings". In addition, the Supreme Court declared sub-rule 3 of Rule 7 of the Taxation Rules in Schedule A of the BPMC Act of 1949, which reads:

--"A statement setting out clearly the classes of plant and machinery specified from time to time by the Commissioner under sub-rule 2 and describing in detail what plant and machinery falls within each such class (liable to tax) shall be prepared by the Commissioner under the directions of the Standing Committee" --

as invalid on account of excessive delegation of power by the legislature to the Municipal Commissioner.²⁵

25. Supreme Court Reports, "New Manekchowk Spinning and Weaving Mills Co. Ltd. and Others vs. the Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad." (July, 1967).

The Supreme Court Judgement of February 21st, 1967, however, proved to be a Pyrrhic victory for the millowners. Since the highly concessional floor area method had been declared illegal, the Municipal Corporation had no alternative but to turn to the only other method available and known to law, which could be applicable in the case of Special Properties - the contractor's test method. According to the contractor's test method, the rateable value was worked out by calculating the present-day cost of reconstruction of the property involved i.e. the present capital value of the property taking into account depreciation. Since it was the present market value, and not the original investment, which was taken into account in calculating the rateable value, the prices involved were much higher e.g. in the industrial area of Naroda Road, between 1934 and 1970, the cost of construction had risen four times, and land prices had risen from Rs.2 per square yard to Rs.40 per sq. yard.²⁶ This, together with the quadrennial revision of property taxes which was to come into effect from the 1st April, 1967; the more radical political climate favouring even higher assessments of millowners; and the Janta Parishad's pressurization of assessment officers meant that assessments for property taxes increased very sharply.

The Budget Estimates of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation for the year 1967-68 envisaged a rise in the rateable value of residential properties and Special Properties to the extent of Rs.223 lakhs and Rs.354 lakhs respectively. In the Assessment Book, textile mills and other industrial units were assessed at a fantastically high ratio - three to five times that of the previous year's average. The gross annual letting value of Ahmedabad mills, which was Rs.119.15 lakhs in 1966-67, rose to the figure of Rs.502.16 lakhs in 1967-68. The proposed assessment of taxation of textile mills was Rs.166.99 lakhs in 1967-68 as compared to Rs.58.31 lakhs

26. Interview with Mr. N.R. Desai of the Town Planning Department of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in March 1971.

in the previous year i.e. almost three times as high.²⁷ To the astonished millowners, who had expected that the effect of the Supreme Court Judgment of February 21st, 1967, in excluding plant and machinery from the assessment of properties would result in a reduction of rateable values and tax by about 20%, the proposed rise in taxation was staggering.

The millowners, previously divided and disunited on this issue, came together almost to a man, under the guidance of the Millowners' Association, to oppose these new assessments by the Municipal Corporation. Their anger was compounded by their psychological insecurity in losing their ability to control Municipal Corporation affairs since the accession to power of the Janta Parishad in 1965, and consequent over-reaction on the issue of municipal taxation of Special Properties. To make matters worse, the Janta Parishad, whose current Mayor was a Marxist Communist, Dinkar Mehta, could not provide a bridge for negotiations and constructive discussions between the millowners and the Municipal Corporation. On appeal by the millowners, the Deputy Municipal Commissioner for Law and Revenue reduced the municipal tax on mill properties from almost three times the 1966-67 figure to double it, i.e. from Rs.166.99 lakhs to Rs.120 lakhs.²⁸ However, it was still more profitable for the millowners to go to the Courts than to pay the tax. Thus the Janta Parishad-influenced Municipal Corporation failed to abide by an important canon of municipal administration: increase taxes gradually and in such a way that it does not become more profitable for the millowners to litigate rather than pay tax, thus defeating the purposes of increased taxation.²⁹

27. MOA Report (1967).

28. Interview with Mr. Panchal, Dy. Municipal Commissioner of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, in March 1971.

29. Interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

The financial intransigence of the millowners was heightened by a background of continuing deterioration in the economic conditions of the cotton textile industry, resulting in increases in the cost of production and a steady fall in profitability. During 1966 and 1967, there were continued shortages of agricultural raw materials, due to adverse climatic conditions, and, consequently, the demand for industrial and non-industrial goods fell severely. In 1967, there was a sharp increase in agricultural prices: the index no. of whole-sale prices of all commodities reached 221.0 in October, 1967, as against 194.4 in December 1966. Throughout the year the monthly index of industrial production remained well below 199.2 - the December 1966 level. Increase in industrial production was of the order of 1.7%, as against the Plan target of 5%. For the third successive year, the cotton textile industry had to face serious difficulties. For the third year, the output of cotton was far short of the Third Plan target of 70 lakh bales set for the year 1965-66, and imports fell far short of requirements and were often delayed. Although the Central Government raised the price ceilings of Indian cotton by 5% from December 1966, prices continued to rule over the ceilings, sometimes exceeding the ceiling by 50%. The wage bill rose significantly because of the very high rate of d.a., and the prices of coal, chemicals and other stores also rose. Shortage of cotton compelled mills to cut production by observing extra holidays. The cloth production in 1967 was only 4,100 million metres as against 4,654 million metres in 1964, and yarn production, which had reached the record of 965 million kilograms in 1964, fell to 896 million kilograms in 1967. Lower production, reduced export performance and uneconomic returns on cloth output resulted in severe shortage of finances for many mills, and some units were forced to close down. A comparison of the financial ratios of Ahmedabad mills between 1964 and 1967 revealed that gross profits as a % of sales fell from 9.5 in 1964 to 6.7 in 1967, and, as a % of total capital employed,

they fell from 13.8 in 1964 to 8.8 in 1967. Profits after tax as a % of net worth fell from 5.8 in 1964 to 1.0 in 1967. The following seven textile mills were forced to close down in Ahmedabad in 1967 and 1968:

1. Ananta Mills Ltd.
2. Himabhai Mfg. Co. Ltd.
3. Manekchowk & Ahd. Mfg. Co. Ltd.
4. New Commercial Mills Co. Ltd., No. 1
5. New Commercial Mills Co. Ltd., No. 2
6. Ahmedabad New Textile Mills Co. Ltd.
7. New Manekchowk Spg. & Wvg. Mills Co. Ltd.

At the end of 1968, more than thirteen mills had closed down in Gujarat and six more were on the verge of closure.³⁰

An anxious deputation was sent by the MOA to the Gujarat Chief Minister on the 1st November, 1966; an urgent memo on the deteriorating situation of the cotton textile industry was sent to Morarji Desai, the Deputy Prime Minister, soon after, by the Managing Committee of the Millowners' Association. Morarji Desai met MOA members on 24th December, 1967. Another memo was submitted by the MOA to the Chief Minister, Hitendra Desai, urging the State Government to move the Central Government to take effective steps to assist the industry. Another deputation led by the MOA President, Balkrishna Harivallabhdas, met the Chief Minister on 13th February, 1968. In general, the committee of the Indian Cotton Mills' Federation, whose President in 1967 and 1968 was the Ahmedabad textile magnate, Madanmohan Mangaldas, forcefully represented the industry's case to the Government of India.³¹

The demands of the industry at this period were voiced by the Gujarat Textile Reorganisation Committee, appointed on 21st December, 1967, under the chairmanship of the Union Commerce Minister, Manubhai Shah,

30. MOA Reports (1967 and 1968)

31. Ibid.

in its Report of August, 1968. The committee was largely dominated by textile magnates, including the President of the MOA, Madanmohan Mangaldas, Gautam Sarabhai, Jaikrishna Harivallabhdas, his brother Balkrishna Harivallabhdas and the President of the Gujarat Mills and Industries' Federation with only one trade unionist, Shyamprasad Vasavda, and two government members. The Report, voicing the views of the more aggressive textile industrialists, demanded scrapping of the weakest mills or their take-over by more efficient and profitable concerns; immediate financial relief to marginal mills facing closure due to shortage of working capital with State-guaranteed bank loans of reduced margins; removal of partial controls on prices and production of cloth; reclassification of the cotton textile industry as a Priority industry to enable it to get the benefit of a higher development rebate of 35%; granting relief in excise duty to the extent of 10% to cover one-tenth of the actual certified total capital expenditure on modernization; and the launching of a "crash" programme of modernization with the help of Central and State Modernization Commissioners.³²

It is against this background of severe economic difficulties for the cotton textile industry that the Ahmedabad millowners, united under the guidance of the Millowners' Association, resolved to challenge the Municipal Corporation's greatly increased taxation assessments for Special Properties for the year 1967-68. The Millowners' Association circulated to member mills a draft of the complaint to be filed against the rateable value entered in the Assessment Book. The Association also advised member mills to file supplementary objection application on the 30th October, 1967, in which it was stated that in case the Municipal Commissioner did not accede to the demand of the mills in paragraph 36 i.e. to withdraw the whole of the assessment of special property section

32. Report of the Textile Reorganisation Committee,
(Government of Gujarat; August 1968).

for the year 1967-68 within seven days and prepare a fresh, valid and legal assessment book for assessing special properties on a correct basis after excluding plant and machinery, the mills would apply for a writ in the Supreme Court for quashing the whole assessment book. The managing committee of the Millowners' Association considered the problem periodically and carried out a campaign in the local English and Gujarati dailies in the middle of November, 1967, to place before the general public the views of the industry on the issue.³³

When the Municipal Corporation refused to change the basis of the assessments or the assessments themselves, the millowners challenged this in the Court of Small Causes, Ahmedabad, in the Gujarat High Court and in the Supreme Court of India, bringing all the ingenuity of law to bear on the task of destroying the legal basis of the contractor's test method and getting the assessments for 1967-68 struck down. The following were the major grounds of challenge by the millowners against the Municipal Corporation's valuation of Special Properties for the year 1967-68:³⁴

1. The contractor's method of finding out the annual rental value involves a fallacious belief that rent of a building is determined by its cost. Moreover, cost would not reflect value ^{the} in/case of old buildings by reason of the vast rise in building cost. There may have been times when cost was a dominant determinant of rent and, therefore, at such times, contractor's test method may have been a useful guide in getting a rough idea of rental value though even then the method only yielded some evidence and represented at best only the maximum rent. But owing to the phenomenal rise in the cost of construction after the Second World War, cost has ceased to be a major determinant of the rental value.

33. MOA Report, (1967).

34. Judgement dated 27th October, 1969, of the Gujarat High Court concerning Municipal Valuation.

2. The contractor's method in the form in which it is recognised in England is not applicable in India in those areas where the Rent Restriction Legislation (the Bombay Rents, Hotel and Lodging House Rates Control Act, 1947) is in force. In those areas the restriction of standard rent must necessarily enter in the hypothesis of the definition of "annual letting value". When the Court fixes the standard rent, it would not take the new cost as the basis of fixing the standard rent for to do so would be to defeat the object of the Rent Act which is to deprive the landlord of the unearned increment in the value of the building. The rent obtained by the contractor's method would include the component of unearned increment in the building value which component is excluded from standard rent, which is the only rent the landlord can lawfully recover from his tenant.

3. The power to investigate and dispose of complaints was entrusted under rule 18 to the Municipal Commissioner, and this power, being a quasi-judicial power, could not be deputed by the Municipal Commissioner to the Deputy Municipal Commissioner under section 49 sub-section (1). The purported deputation of this power under the office order dated 21st April, 1966, was therefore beyond the power of the Municipal Commissioner and was ineffective and the Deputy Municipal Commissioner had no jurisdiction or authority to investigate and dispose of complaints made by the millowners.

The Supreme Court on the 13th December, 1967, made the following Stay Order in the case of the Arvind group of mills, who had filed writ petitions challenging the mill valuation for 1967-68:

"Proceedings may go on but no bill will be presented or demand of money made against the petitioners till the disposal of the writ petitions" -- Other mills were advised by the Millowners' Association, to secure similar stay orders.³⁵ Thus the Municipal Corporation's revenues from Special Properties dried up and there was a severe ways and means difficulty.

35. MOA Report (1967).

On the 30th April, 1968, the Supreme Court declared that the writ petitions of the millowners should be kept pending till the appeals filed in the Court of Small Causes, Ahmedabad, and the Gujarat High Court were disposed of, and that the Municipal Corporation would be entitled to recover tax at the valuation of 1966-67 minus the charge made in that valuation on plant and machinery. However, despite this order of 30th April 1968, and the subsequent similar order of 30th December 1968, there was a great shortfall in property taxes for the year 1967-68, especially regarding Special Properties. During 1967-68 income from property taxes had been estimated at Rs.405 lakhs, but against this net income of Rs.228.06 lakhs was received, leaving a deficit of Rs.176 lakhs.³⁶ The following table reveals the steep decline in property taxes for the year 1967-68.

TABLE 4. INCOME FROM PROPERTY TAXES, 1964-1968, AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORP.³⁷

Income from property taxes for following years:	Rs. in Lakhs:
1964-65	323.27
1965-66	317.60
1966-67	325.35
1967-68	229.25

This great shortfall was due in part to procedural difficulties on recovery of property taxes, including the fact that it was not necessary for the tax-payer to deposit an amount of tax before filing a suit under section 406 of the BMC Act of 1949 and a proposal to modify this section was not entertained by the Corporation until much later. As a result, despite the relaxation of the stay order by the Supreme Court, no tax was deposited by factories and mills including many tax-payers who had also appealed to the Courts.³⁸

36. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1969-70.

37. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1970-71.

38. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1969-70.

Thus from 1967 onwards for the next two to three years, the Municipal Corporation experienced an unprecedented financial crisis due in large part to the dispute with the millowners over assessment of Special Properties. The opening plus balance in the year 1965-66, which was about Rs. 2 crores, was not only reduced but became a minus balance of Rs.136 lakhs in the year 1967-68.³⁹ In view, largely, of procedural difficulties regarding recovery of property taxes, 1968-69 was the first year in the Corporation's history to open with a minus balance.⁴⁰ The Budget Estimate for 1969-70 reported, "In spite of drastic cut in expenditure to the extent of Rs.56 lakhs, there still remains an estimated minus closing balance of Rs.161.21 lakhs at the close of the year 1968-69". The dispute with the millowners coincided with a trend throughout the later 1960s for revenue expenditure to exceed revenue income to produce an unprecedented financial crisis for the Corporation. The Corporation was forced to take an overdraft from the banks to the extent of Rs.113 lakhs in 1967-68 and Rs.87 lakhs in 1968-69.⁴¹ Thus uncertainty with regard to income from Special Property taxation, which formed 40% of the Corporation's total revenue income, made the achievement of the Janta Parishad programme of social reforms and developmental measures very much more difficult.⁴²

Although the Janta Parishad did not itself create or precipitate the financial dispute with the millowners, and, although the dispute cannot be represented in the starkly crude stereotypes of the capitalists attempting to sabotage the finances of a leftist-dominated Corporation, which provided a convenient electoral issue for the Janta Parishad in the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections, the fact remains that the Janta Parishad naturally relished the situation,

39. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1971-72.

40. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1968-69.

41. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1971-72.

42. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1971-72.

and succeeded in aggravating it in various ways. Their radical attitudes and pressurization of the assessment officers made the assessments rise particularly steeply on the application of the contractor's test method of assessment. If there had been a continuous gradual rise in the assessment of Special Properties rather than a sudden steeply upward discontinuity, perhaps not so much opposition would have been aroused. In addition, the Janta Parishad made the situation more difficult psychologically: they could not play a successful mediating role in bringing the two sides of the dispute together in constructive negotiation. To the millowners, their opposition was not just a question of material loss, but was compounded by a psychological complex of those accustomed to controlling directly or indirectly the Municipal Corporation's affairs, that the Municipal Corporation must exercise a certain deference with regard to the textile magnates, who contributed so much to the city's life. They resented the loosening of their grip over Municipal Corporation affairs with the accession to power of the Janta Parishad.⁴³

The legal battle dragged on throughout 1968 and 1969 in the Courts with the Judgement of 27th October, 1969, of the Gujarat High Court concerning municipal valuation resulting largely in favour of the millowners. The writ petitions of the millowners were upheld, and the Municipal Corporation's assessments of 1967-68 under the contractor's test method were quashed mainly on the grounds that the deputation of the power to dispose of complaints against the assessments by the Municipal Commissioner to the Deputy Municipal Commissioner for Law and Revenue was ultra vires and void, since the

43. Interview with Mr. Z in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

words in section 49 of the BPMC Act of 1949 deputing power to the Deputy Municipal Commissioner "subject to the orders of the Municipal Commissioner" are appropriate only in relation to the deputation of administrative not quasi-judicial or judicial functions. The Gujarat High Court declared that the complaints against the contractors' test method of assessment would be left to be decided by the Chief Judge of the Court of Small Causes, Ahmedabad, who alone had the power retrospectively to apply a method of valuation should the appeals be upheld, as the official year of tax had expired, and thus the Corporation would not lose the tax altogether.⁴⁴

The dragging on of the legal battle, the continuation of crisis conditions for the Municipal Corporation's finances with the additional burden of expenditure of legal fees to add to continuing budget deficits, and the victory by the Congress party in the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections predisposed the parties to negotiate an ad hoc settlement with the Congress Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Standing Committee successfully serving as intermediaries and swinging over the rest of the Corporation Congress party in favour of an ad hoc settlement. Slowly improving economic conditions for the cotton textile industry from late 1968 through 1969 with Government take-over of the sick mills through the National and State Textile Corporations, fairly generous Government financial assistance and a rising trend of exports aided by a Government export subsidy;⁴⁵ the threat from the Corporation to increase the rates of property tax and octroi and to levy new taxes,⁴⁶ and the change of régime predisposed the majority of the millowners to come to an ad hoc settlement, although fifteen mills still refused to compromise.

44. Judgement dated 27th October 1969 of the Gujarat High Court concerning Municipal Valuation.

45. MOA Report (1968).

46. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1970-71.

However, the large, more progressive millowners, such as the Sarabhais, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas and the Kasturbhai group, came to a settlement in early 1970. These mills agreed to pay 25% more Special Property taxation than the Rs.58 lakhs they were paying on the old basis i.e. Rs.74 lakhs from 1967 onwards. This valuation was also agreed on for the following four years. i.e. 1970-71 to 1973-74 inclusive, thus ensuring the financial stability of the Congress-dominated Corporation until the next municipal elections were due in April 1973.⁴⁷ Thus the Corporation recovered Rs.2 crores out of the backlog of Rs.3 crores and was enabled to suspend overdrafts and carry through important public works. In return, in the Budget Estimates for 1971-72, there was no proposal either to increase present taxes, especially octroi, or to levy new taxes.⁴⁸

47. Interview with Mr. D.K. Patel, Deputy Mayor Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, in March 1971.

48. AMC, Budget Estimates, 1971-72.

3.B. DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE JANTA PARISHAD IN ACHIEVING ITS ECONOMIC PROGRAMME DUE TO THE LIMITED POWERS OF THE CORPORATION VIS-A-VIS THE STATE GOVERNMENT, WHICH PROVED UNCOOPERATIVE TO THE JANTA PARISHAD-DOMINATED CORPORATION.

The hostility of the textile magnates to the Janta Parishad-dominated Corporation, with whom they had a seemingly intractable dispute over Special Property taxation, was matched by a lack of cooperation and assistance by the Congress State Government to the Corporation during the Janta Parishad period of power between 1965 and 1969.

The symbolic and material proof of this lay in the dismantling in November 1965, of the City Coordination Council, set up in July 1961, which had proved so fruitful a means for the Congress Corporation of getting State-level cooperation and financial assistance for city projects during the Mayorship of the textile magnate, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.¹ Without the ready access to State-level patronage and decision-making authority provided by the City Coordination Council, the Janta Parishad leaders were bound to feel circumscribed and hemmed in by the legal restrictions on their power in the Corporation imposed by the BMC Act of 1949. Dinkar Mehta expressed this frustration in the Junior Chamber debate in the following words:² --"Municipal laws and rules have become antiquated and need to be changed according to democratic ways. There is no power in the hands of the Mayor or the elected representatives of the Corporation, and the Government has put power in the hands of a few appointed officers." --

During the period of Janta Parishad power in the Corporation, the relations between the State Government and the Janta Parishad were

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1. Information on the City Coordination Council provided by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, Mayor of Ahmedabad between 1961 and 1965, and some city executives.
 2. Dinkar Mehta, Speech on the Financial Condition of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Given at a debate on this topic organized by the Ahmedabad Junior Chamber at the Town Hall on Nov. 20, 1966. (Cyclostyled manuscript trans. from Gujarati.) Henceforth to be known as Dinkar Mehta Junior Chamber debate.

very difficult. The Municipal Corporation applied several times to the State Government for aid during the financial crisis, caused by a bunching of expenditure with a fairly stationary income, due to the maturing of previous loans, expenditure on the completion of unproductive projects initiated by the former ruling Congress party, such as the Tagore Memorial Theatre and the Sardar Stadium,³ rising developmental expenditure and uncertainty about income from Special Properties.

However, the State Government gave no direct loans of its own.

Several times the State Government caused a loss to the Municipal Corporation by its delay in sanctioning particular proposals e.g. the State Government's delay in giving assent to the revision of the octroi schedule, which the Corporation had hoped would come into effect from April 1st, 1966, or earlier, and which finally came into effect from July 1st, 1966, caused the Municipal Corporation a loss of income of Rs.25 lakhs. The Municipal Commissioner had given a clear warning of this in the Budget Estimates for 1966-67, stating:

--"It may be clearly stated that this year notwithstanding drastic cut in expenditure on all heads of account including such essential ones as those on hospitals and dispensaries, maintenance and repair of roads and buildings etc. it is not possible to balance the budget unless the revised octroi schedule is sanctioned by the Government so as to come into effect from 1st April, 1966 or an earlier date." --

The State Government's delay in sanctioning the removal of bus substages, which were proving uneconomic, also caused a loss of lakhs of rupees. Its delay in sanctioning Rs.74 lakhs for chawl improvement in 1966-67 meant that work had to be postponed for a considerable time. ⁴

3. See Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Budget Estimates, 1968-69, henceforth to be known as AMC, B.E. 1968-69.

4. See AMC, B.E. 1966-67.

The State Government also interfered in the smooth running of the executive by changing the Municipal Commissioner within a year, and in a period of one and a half years there were three successive Municipal Commissioners, whereas in the normal way a Municipal Commissioner was appointed for at least three years.⁵

In addition, the Corporation's demand for more tax-sharing with the State Government e.g. regarding the motor vehicle tax, the entertainment duty tax, the tax on open land and surcharge on the stamp duty on the transfer of properties, and its demand for a general purpose grant and a per capita general purpose grant went unheeded by the State Government.⁶

Local bodies are dependent to an increasing extent upon the financial assistance of the State Government, but, in comparison with the assistance given by State Governments to many other Corporations all over India, that given to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation during the period was very low. State grants as a percentage share in the total revenue receipts of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation had fallen from 12.68% in 1950-51 to 6.26% in 1967-68.⁷

According to the Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee, under the chairmanship of Balwantrai Mehta, which came out in 1966: --"The percentage of grants (to total revenue receipts) is high in Delhi (33.4%), Agra and Bangalore (22%), Kanpur and Bombay (21%) and Madras (19%). The percentage of grants varies between as low as 6.1% in Ahmedabad to a maximum of 33.4% in Delhi." --

5. See Indulal Yagnik's pamphlet, Successful Work of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. (1969).

6. See AMC, B.E. 1966-67.

7. Mahesh Bhatt (Reader in Economics) and M.S Trivedi (Lecturer in Economics, University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad), Finances of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. (1968), p.16-19 henceforth to be known as Finances.

This declining trend continued during the Janta Parishad period of power, and the share of grants in the total revenue receipts of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation was estimated at 4.33% in 1968-69. Thus the amount of net resources transferred by the State Government to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation was very low and declining during this period.⁸

In addition, there was the problem that there were no clear-cut principles for allocating grants to local bodies, thus receipts of the grants created uncertainty and many times there was a discrepancy in expenditure flow and receipts of these grants, which created unnecessary financial strains for the Corporation. This uncertainty about State financial assistance was illustrated by a Corporation resolution dated March 11, 1968, which claimed that because of the major changes made by the State Government through the reservation of large areas for housing and improvement of traffic junctions in the Development Plan, a great financial burden was placed on the Corporation, which should be borne by the State Government. The State Government retorted that under Section 10 of the Bombay Town Planning Act of 1954, the State Government is empowered to modify the proposals of the Development Plan, and there is no provision in law for it to pay additional finances to the local bodies for such changes.⁹

There was a marked fall in the percentage of grant-in-aid received by the School Board: on account of the rise in inadmissible expenditure the percentage of grant-in-aid for primary education went down to 17.72% in 1967-68 as against 43.64% in 1959-60. By 1969, the State Government

8. Ibid.

9. See N.H. Thakkor and N.R. Desai, Metropolitan Planning of the City of Ahmedabad with reference to Finance, a background paper to the Seminar on Ahmedabad Metropolitan Planning, organised by the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the 9 and 10 January, 1971.

had still not approved the expenditure incurred in relation to the abolition of shifts in standards I and II, revision of the pay-scale on the basis of the I.G. Thakore Award, the introduction of English teaching in standards V, VI and VII, the introduction of ad hoc pay of Rs. 5 from May 1st, 1965 and permanency of staff in pre-primary classes.¹⁰

The State Government also rejected a Janta Parishad proposal to give honorary salaries to Municipal Corporators - a suggestion which it later accepted during the following Congress administration consequent on Congress's winning of the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections.¹¹

Thus due largely to lack of State-level cooperation and the limited powers of the Corporation vis-à-vis the State Government under the BPMC Act of 1949 (as well as to internal factionalism discussed in the previous chapter), the Janta Parishad was able to achieve comparatively few of its lofty aims during its period in power in the Corporation.

The Janta Parishad, on accession to power in 1965, aimed at remodelling the taxation system through radical budgets which would be to the advantage of the common man. The taxation system of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation was riddled with inequalities and anomalies, and was indeed, in need of rationalisation.

Property tax and octroi were the two main sources of tax revenue for the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. According to the 1969-70 Budget Estimates, the total tax revenue was estimated at Rs.8.10 crores, out of which Rs.4.03 crores was income from property tax and Rs. 3.80 crores from octroi, which together accounted for 96.6% of the total tax revenue.

10. See AMC, B.E. 1969-70.

11. From Dinkar Mehta Junior Chamber debate, and interview with Mr. W in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

There was great scope for raising additional revenue through increasing property taxes by reassessing the rateable values of properties and revising the rates upward. There were also various reforms which needed carrying out regarding property taxes on the grounds of equity and administrative efficiency.¹²

From the early fifties to the later sixties, there was hardly any change in the per capita property tax revenue in money terms, in spite of the tremendous growth of building activities due in large part to the ready availability of finance for cooperative housing societies. In absolute terms, the yield from property tax rose from Rs.157.50 lakhs in 1952-53 to Rs.457.46 lakhs in 1968-69. As population also rose from 8.62 lakhs to 20.50 lakhs during this period due to natural growth and the extension of the area of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1960, the per capita property tax revenue rose only from Rs.18.27 to Rs.22.32 between 1952-53 and 1968-69.

However, the per capita real burden of property tax showed a steep fall during the same period in view of the inflationary price rises. By using consumer price indices of Ahmedabad for deflation, the real per capita burden showed a fall from Rs.18.3 to Rs.11.4. In the absence of per capita income figures for Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, assuming that the rate of increase in per capita income for Ahmedabad has not been less than that calculated for all India, it seems reasonable to say that revenue from property tax as a percentage of income has also decreased.

12. See Dr. Shibshankar P. Gupta (Deputy Director, Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, Ahmedabad), The Size, Function and Financing of Ahmedabad Metropolitan Authority, a background paper to the Seminar on Ahmedabad Metropolitan Planning, held on the 9 and 10 January, 1971.

For most properties, particularly for the older properties whose rateable values were estimated a long time ago, the existing rateable value, which is supposed to be 90% of the annual letting value or annual rent that a building or land or premises might reasonably be expected to fetch, is a gross underestimation of the "true" rateable value. The present practice also discriminates against the new properties, whose rateable values are assessed currently, because the property values and annual rents today are much higher than those which existed in the past for similar properties. As a result of the virtual freezing of many rateable values, the increases in property values and imputed rents are not reflected in the yield from the property tax. The rateable values of all properties need to be reassessed on the basis of annual imputed letting value or rent which a hypothetical tenant might be expected to pay. In order to keep the determination of the tax base free from local politics, the task of assessing rateable values should, perhaps, be entrusted to an independent valuation machinery set up by the State, for without proper assessment of rateable values no major reformation in property tax is possible.¹³

The present system also discriminates by imposing a much heavier burden on the tenant than on the owner occupier of similar houses. The tax advantages to the owner occupier are twofold. In the first instance, the assessed rateable value of the owner occupied house is much less than what it would have been had the house been let. For a newly constructed house, if the house is owner-occupied, the rateable value would be 30-40% of the rateable value, had the house been let. Since the assessed rateable value is less for an owner occupier, the tax paid by him is less than that paid by a tenant of a recently constructed house (although the tax is usually collected from the landlord,

13. Ibid.

the tenant usually pays it because of shifting of the tax). Secondly, because of the progressive rate structure, and since the rateable value is assessed low for the owner-occupier, he pays even lower taxes percentage-wise. The ratio of tax liability of an owner-occupier to that of a tenant paying market rent could be as low as 1:3.

A concrete illustration will be given to make clear the different tax situations applying to the tenant and the owner occupier. Let us suppose a house has been newly-constructed and has a floor-area equal to 900 square feet, which can be considered to be the "average" floor area of newly-constructed two-bedroom houses within Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. If the house is rented, the expected rent for such a house could reasonably be assumed to be around Rs.300 per month or Rs.3,600 per annum. Therefore the rateable value, which is 90% of the annual rent, would be Rs.3,240. By applying the graduated rates of property tax on the rateable value, total property taxes (including water and conservancy taxes) on such a tenant-occupied house would be Rs.840 p.a. If the same house is owner-occupied, however, the rateable value is assessed at present at the rate of Rs.8-14 per 100 square ft. depending upon the locality. This is a highly arbitrary formula, not based even on the standard rent principle, and applied without change since 1951. The assessment within the range Rs.8-14 per 100 sq. ft. is left to the discretion of the valuation officer. If the rateable value is assessed at Rs. 10 per 100 sq. ft. of floor area, then the total property tax liability on such an owner-occupied house would be only about Rs.201 p.a.

This discrimination between owner-occupier and tenant has given rise to several methods of tax evasion such as not disclosing that the house or a few rooms in the house occupied by the owner are actually let, manipulation of rent books (or receipts for rent) showing much smaller rent than what is actually paid by the tenant etc.

The present system of using different standards for owner-occupier and tenant is largely the result of the notion that when no actual rent is paid by the owner-occupier, the Standard Rent, fixed under the Rent Control Act by the Rent-Controller, should be deemed to be the reasonable rent for purposes of assessment of rateable value. In the case of an owner occupied house, the rateable value must be based on the reasonable rent which a hypothetical tenant may be expected to pay rather than the Standard Rent fixed under the Rent Control Act, which has ceased to be standard under the present circumstances of rising property and rental values, and which denies the Corporation a legitimate share in rising property values.¹⁴

Not only should the tax burden be equalised between the owner-occupier and the tenant, it should also be equalised between the tenant paying market rent and the tenant paying very much less than the market rent, another glaring anomaly in the tax system. In some properties, particularly the older ones, the actual rent, due to the Rent Control Act or because the rent has been frozen for a long time, is usually much lower than the rent at which property can be reasonably expected to be let today, and much lower than the market rent which is being paid in other properties.

It has been calculated that, if these various measures and reforms were carried out, the revenue from property tax would rise substantially by almost 100%, even without revising the present rates upward. The property tax liability of an owner occupier on average is about a quarter that of a tenant occupying a similar property at market rent. Equalisation of the tax burden of owner occupiers with that now imposed on tenants would increase revenue from property tax by 300% from the 45% of total floor area occupied by the owner occupiers. Equalisation

14. Ibid.

of the tax burden between tenants paying market rent and those paying very much less than the market rent would bring about a further increase in revenue of about 40% for the 55% of the total floor area occupied by tenants. Thus total revenue from property tax would rise from Rs.4.03 crores to about Rs.7.98 crores, or almost double in quantity, if a radical reform of property tax was carried out making it a tax based largely on land values or land value increments. Ahmedabad has, therefore, far from reached its full taxable capacity.¹⁵

The Janta Parishad, however, due largely to the circumscribing of the powers of the Municipal Corporation under the BMC Act of 1949 and lack of cooperation from the State Government, was not in a position to make a radical reform along the lines indicated above. It only succeeded in making essentially marginal, though rational and in some senses significant, changes to the tax structure during its tenure of power in the Corporation.

Despite the brave words of Dinkar Mehta:¹⁶

--"Till now the Corporation incurred a loss in general taxes because of the influence of vested interests, who saw to it that the valuation of large properties was to their benefit. This system has been changed since the last one and a half years, and 'taxes according to ability to pay' policy has been adopted, thereby the rateable values below Rs.1000 have been given tax relief of 1-2%, while rateable values over Rs.1000 have been given tax increment of 1-2%. The tax system till now was capitalist, and, because of that, Corporation income was reduced by lakhs of rupees. Because of the influence of the rich, valuation on their properties was less compared to their ability to pay, therefore Corporation income was not enough to carry on public works. Now changes

15. Ibid.

16. See Dinkar Mehta, Junior Chamber debate.

have been made and relief has been given to lower-income groups." --

The Janta Parishad, in the budget of 1966-67 made really quite marginal revisions in the rates of general property tax, raising the rates on higher valuation properties. The Janta Parishad cut the level of taxation on 150,000 properties from 14% to 12%, the minimum level prescribed by the BPMC Act, and increased the level of taxation on higher valuation properties with effect from the 1st April, 1966.

In view of the inequalities between owner occupiers and tenants outlined above, the cut in the rates of lower rateable value groups might well have benefited a lot of fairly well-off owner occupiers, as well as more needy lower middle class tenants and hutment and chawl dwellers. The changes in the rates made by the Janta Parishad are set out in the following table.¹⁷

TABLE 1. Rates of General Tax on Properties before and after April 1st 1966, in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

<u>Rateable Value Groups in Rs.</u>	<u>Rate before 1.4.66.</u>	<u>Rate after 1.4.66</u>
1 - 100	14%	12%
101-200	14%	12%
201-500	15½%	12%
501-1000	16%	15%
1001-2000	21%	22%
2001-3000	21%	23%
3001-5000	23%	28%
above 5000	25%	30%

The rates of Special Property taxation were also raised from 27% to 30%.

The State Government, however, alarmed by the probability that the Janta Parishad would raise yet further the rate of general tax on high valuation properties, passed an amendment to the Corporation Act in 1968, prescribing a maximum ceiling for general property tax of 30%, although it did not accede to the demand by the millowners that the

17. See Indulal Yagnik's pamphlet, Successful Work of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, (1969).

maximum limit for the levy of general tax in Ahmedabad should be fixed at the same level as in Bombay (i.e. 26%) or in any case not higher than 27%, the previous rate in Ahmedabad for Special Property taxation.¹⁸

The millowners, however, succeeded in getting the conservancy tax/^{increase} on large premises i.e. special properties, which had been raised from 7¹/₂% to 9% at the Corporation meeting of the 31st January, 1968, declared illegal by the Gujarat High Court. The discriminatory rates of conservancy tax on large premises were declared illegal by its Judgement of 27th October, 1969, concerning municipal valuation, on the grounds that, once the rental value is arrived at, the differences based on factors such as size of the property, its use, its location etc. would be found reflected in the rental value and, thereafter, could not again be made the basis of differential treatment in the matter of rates, unless there is a clear provision to that effect in the statute, such as the provision for determining the general tax on a graduated scale and the provision empowering the Corporation to fix a higher rate of general tax in respect of Special Properties.

The Janta Parishad also wanted to abolish the indirect tax of octroi, whose incidence falls largely on the necessities of life of the common man, as the following table shows:¹⁹

18. Ahmedabad Millowners' Association memo to the Minister for Education and Municipalities, Government of Gujarat, in the MOA Annual Report (1968), p.161-3.

19. Finances, Table 15.

TABLE 2. Share of different commodity groups in octroi income of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

Year:	Essential Commodities:	Luxurious Commodities:	Building Materials:	Miscellaneous*	Total:
1956-57	31.5	8.2	9.4	50.9	100
1957-58	31.1	9.5	9.2	50.2	100
1958-59	35.3	7.5	8.9	48.3	100
1959-60	37.4	12.0	9.2	41.4	100
1960-61	34.9	6.7	9.1	49.3	100
1961-62	34.2	7.2	8.3	50.3	100
1962-63	33.8	8.3	8.5	49.4	100
1963-64	33.5	8.2	9.7	48.6	100
1964-65	31.3	8.3	9.4	51.0	100

*including industrial raw materials etc., and in the inflationary situation in the country it was quite legitimate to assume that the incidence of octroi on industrial raw materials would also be ultimately shifted to the consumer.

Most committees on Local Finance ²⁰ have referred to the evils inherent in the octroi system of taxation, such as difficulty of administration, as numerous barriers have to be erected for collecting the tax at the points of entry and a very complicated procedure of refunds has also to be followed; the giving of wide discretionary powers to low-paid staff which leads to corrupt practices; the fact that it is expensive to collect; and that the incidence of octroi is regressive as it falls mainly on the necessities of life.²¹ The Janta Parishad sent a deputation on this issue to the State Government, which alone has the power to change the octroi system of tax, requesting the State Government to abolish octroi tax, according to the recommendations of many committees on local finance, and convert it into a surcharge on the sales tax to be collected by the State Government and distributed to the various municipalities. Octroi is payable on goods such as food-stuffs, whereas no sales tax is payable on them, making the incidence of the latter tax less regressive. However, the State Government was not willing to consider this seriously. There were certain practical problems in the way: at present sales tax is not levied on certain goods such as cotton textiles, tobacco etc. There are a few other commodities also, mainly industrial raw materials, on which the intra-State sales taxes cannot be raised beyond a level of 3% under the Central Sales Tax Act. Since most of them are presently taxed at this maximum level, no further increase in State sales tax is possible in this case. However, at this stage, the State Government did not vigorously explore alternatives to octroi tax, such as the possibility of a turnover tax.²²

20. See, for example, Zakaria Committee Report (Nov. 1963).

21. Finances, p.21-25

22. Interview with Mr. F in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

The Janta Parishad then decided they would change the incidence of octroi from one section of the community to the other, i.e. from the common man to the industrialist, by their proposal to abolish octroi on foodgrains, promised in their election manifesto of 1965, thus making octroi more progressive, and by increasing the levy on certain industrial items such as cotton, iron and steel, dyes, chemicals, coal, machinery etc.²³

The latter proposal came into effect from the 7th July, 1967. However, due to representations made by the industrialists to the State Government on this issue, urging that the industry i.e. cotton textile industry, so important in the city's economy, should not be so adversely affected that it could not compete and the cost of production would rise, the proposed rates were considerably reduced by the State Government. The representatives of the Millowners' Association met the Minister for Education and Municipalities, Government of Gujarat, on the 24th May, 1967, and expressed grave concern over the increasing burden of octroi duty on the mill industry. They impressed upon him the need to reduce the burden, particularly in regard to octroi on cotton and coal. A copy of the memo on this issue, submitted by the MOA to the Municipal Commissioner, was sent to the Secretary to the Government of Gujarat's Department of Education and Municipalities on the 10th March 1967. This expressed the view that the Corporation had singled out the city's mill industry for collecting more and more revenue by way of enhanced octroi rates and taxes. When the rates were revised in 1964, out of the total additional revenue of Rs.12 lakhs, the mills were required to contribute Rs.3.36 lakhs i.e. 28%. Again, in 1966, the total additional octroi duty levied on mills amounted to Rs.25 lakhs out of the total additional octroi revenue collected of

23. Ibid.

Rs. 42 lakhs, thereby the mills alone contributed 60%. Under the revision now proposed, mills would be taxed to the extent of Rs.43 lakhs out of the total estimated increase of Rs.59 lakhs. The State Government considerably lowered the rates, particularly on cotton and coal, following the industry's plea that the proposed increase in the rate for cotton would make the industry uncompetitive compared to the Bombay industry, where the rates on Indian cotton would be $2\frac{1}{4}$ times less and the rates on foreign cotton would be $3\frac{1}{2}$ times less; and their plea that the proposed rate of Rs.2 per Metric Tonne of coal was $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the rate in Bombay.²⁴ However, even the rise that did take place in the octroi levy on industrial raw materials was bound to be attributed to the cost of production, and thus passed on to the consumer.²⁵

The former proposal to abolish octroi on foodgrains was ultimately dropped due to the overwhelming need for more revenue, and the reasoning by some Janta Parishad leaders that, although the Janta Parishad wanted to increase the resources of the Corporation without affecting the position of the common man, octroi on foodgrains was insignificant in the whole price of the commodity, thus the common man would hardly feel the benefit.²⁶

One very important and progressive step taken by the Janta Parishad was to place the octroi levy on the basis of price, i.e. ad valorem, instead of on the basis of weight as it had formerly been. The calculation of octroi on the basis of weight was highly concessional to the millowners, since the volume of goods required did not increase over time as rapidly as did their price. According to the Budget

24. MOA Annual Report (1967), p.460-8.

25. Interview with Mr. Z in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

26. Interview with Mr. F in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

Estimates of the Corporation, this proposed change, which came into effect from the 1st April, 1966, would yield an increase in income from octroi taxes to the extent of Rs.52 lakhs annually.²⁷ This contrasts very favourably, for example, with Jaipur Municipality, where the decision to revise octroi schedule on an ad valorem basis, taken on December 22nd, 1967, was reversed after only twenty-two days, due to strong opposition by the business class and representations to the State Government.²⁸

Thus, ironically, the tax structure of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation became more, not less, regressive, with a larger octroi component, during the Janta Parishad period of power. This was due largely to the difficulties over the recovery of property taxes, especially Special Property taxation, owing to litigation, and the need to raise more revenue for developmental expenditure, against the background of a slowly rising trend of greater revenue expenditure over revenue receipts from the mid 60s, resulting in a great increase in octroi taxation, as the following figures show:²⁹

TABLE 3. Rise in Net Income from Octroi Duty, 1964-65 to 1968-69 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

<u>Year:</u>	<u>Amount of net income in lakhs of Rs:</u>
1964-65	187.66
1965-66	204.59
1966-67	270.40
1967-68	354.33
1968-69	371.00

27. See AMC, B.E. 1969-70

28. See C.P. Bhambhri, Municipalities and their Finances: An Empirical Study of the Municipalities of Rajasthan.(1969).

29. See AMC, B.E. 1970-71

Although there has been an increase in the absolute amount of the yield from property tax i.e. from Rs.85.12 lakhs in 1950-51 to Rs.206.23 lakhs in 1967-68, its % share in total tax revenue has fallen from 67% in 1950-51 to 35.35% in 1967-68, whereas the revenue from octroi has risen tremendously from Rs.25.52 lakhs in 1950-51 to Rs.354.33 lakhs in 1967-68 and its % share has risen from 23.6% in 1952-53 to 43.4% in 1968-69.³⁰

Thus the Janta Parishad did little to radically remodel the tax-structure of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. The financial crisis of these years, precipitated by the dispute with the millowners over Special Property taxation and a growing imbalance between income and expenditure, was exacerbated by other expenditures, some of which resulted from expensive incomplete capital projects, a legacy of the previous Congress administration. Among the incomplete capital projects, started by the Congress administration, whose financial burden fell during the Janta Parishad period of power were the following: the Tagore Theatre, the Sardar Stadium, the Subhas Chandra Bose Bridge, the Municipal Medical College and a huge Sewage Disposal Project. In many of the projects, rising prices had played havoc with the original estimates. The Tagore Theatre, for example, was originally estimated to cost Rs.12½ lakhs. This figure had grown to Rs.25.26 lakhs by the end of 1966. Unexpected tax refunds had had to be made by the Corporation for the Open Land Tax, which the Supreme Court had declared illegal, and to the Ahmedabad Electricity Company Ltd., which had been in dispute with the Corporation since 1951 and which had

30. See Finances, p.20-24.

finally succeeded in getting the tax dispute resolved in its favour.

The Government grant to municipal employees earning up to Rs.100 a month was stopped in 1965-66. Establishment expenses were high, since unnecessary unplanned increases had been made in the municipal staff, and there had been a proliferation of different grades, and a lot of fairly generous wage settlements had been made. Expenditures relating to the Municipal Dairy, the Transport Service, municipal-run hospitals and the School Board were also high, and a lot of Corporation loans had begun to mature in this period.³¹

However, despite the ever-present financial crisis, the Janta Parishad was able to effect some improvements during its years in power. There was a steady rise in developmental expenditure during these years, despite the deficit budgets, especially as regards medical and educational services and chawl improvement schemes. The following table shows the steadily-rising trend in developmental expenditure, maintained during the Janta Parishad years in power:³²

31. See Dinkar Mehta, Junior Chamber debate.

32. Finances, Table 16.

TABLE 4. Developmental and Non-Developmental Expenditure of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, 1956-57 to 1969-70 in crores of rupees:

Year:	Developmental Expenditure:*	Non-Developmental Expenditure:*	Total Expenditure:
<u>Second Plan:</u>			
1956-57	2.01	0.74	2.75
1957-58	2.16	0.89	3.05
1958-59	2.55	1.11	3.66
1959-60	2.58	1.15	3.73
1960-61	3.11	1.33	4.44
<u>Third Plan:</u>			
1961-62	3.88	1.49	5.37
1962-63	4.03	1.67	5.70
1963-64	4.33	2.03	6.36
1964-65	5.26	2.22	7.48
1965-66	6.89	2.64	9.53
<u>Annual Plans:</u>			
1966-67	7.01	2.77	9.78
1967-68	8.26	3.05	11.31
1968-69	10.02	3.54	13.56
1969-70	10.28	3.47	13.75

*Division along the lines suggested by the Reserve Bank of India.

Per capita developmental expenditure, which was Rs.13.40 in 1950-51 had risen to Rs.48.80 in 1968-69, while the per capita non-developmental expenditure rose from Rs.5.84 to Rs.17.28 over the same period. There was a gradual rise in per capita developmental expenditure, especially on medical and educational services, during the Janta Parishad period of power except for the difficult year of 1966-67, as the following table shows:³³

TABLE 5. Per Capita developmental expenditure of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, 1965-66 to 1968-69 in rupees.

	<u>1965-66</u>	<u>1966-67</u>	<u>1967-68</u>	<u>1968-69</u>
Total Development Expenditure	46.01	41.25	46.75	48.69
Expenditure on medical help	6.60	6.38	6.56	6.83
Expenditure on public education	8.92	9.30	9.62	9.56

In the year 1968-69, in the per capita expenditure on various items, the highest expenditure (Rs.13.19) was on the milk scheme, followed by education (Rs.9.56) and medical help (Rs.6.83).

As regards medical services and expenditure, by 1969, there were 600 beds in the Vadilal Sarabhai Hospital, run by the Corporation at an annual expenditure of approximately Rs.50 lakhs; beds had also been substantially increased in the Lallubhai Gordhandas Hospital and Shardaben Chimanlal Saraspur Hospital. The Municipal Corporation was also running an Infectious Diseases Hospital, a T.B. Clinic, an Eye Hospital, and was building a Children's Hospital. The Corporation was also running 18 maternity homes and 35 dispensaries, and a Medical College with 300 students at an approximate annual expenditure of Rs.12 lakhs.³⁴ The

33. Finances, Table.17

34. See Indulal Yagnik, Successful Work of the Maha Gujarat Janta Parishad in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, (1969). To be known as Indulal Yagnik, Successful Work (1969).

Corporation was also providing free medical services to all those with a monthly income of Rs.150 and less, and heavily subsidized medical services for all those between the monthly income levels of Rs.150-500.³⁵ It was also providing free milk to school children, and milk to pregnant women at subsidized rates.³⁶ The following table shows the relatively high expenditure on medical services of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation compared to other municipalities in 1969-70:³⁷

TABLE 6. Comparative expenditure on medical aid of some Indian municipalities, 1969-70

City:	Total Revenue, 1969-70:	Expenditure on Medical Aid:	% of Expenditure on Medical Aid to Total Revenue:
Ahmedabad	1023.08	135.94	13.3
Bombay	4356.65	548.93	12.6
Delhi	2512.28	236.92	9.4
Baroda	315.43	3.11	1.00
Surat	179.40	11.26	6.3
Hyderabad	441.28	10.09	2.3

The percentage of expenditure on primary education to total expenditure was 13.48% in 1964-65, and it rose to 18.06% in 1968-69, due largely to the rising number of schools and teachers, with their increases of pay and dearness allowance, the introduction of the teaching of English in primary standards V, VI and VII, the abolition of the shift system in primary standards I and II, and the employment of full-time teachers in pre-primary classes.³⁸ The Janta Parishad-dominated Municipal Corporation also started a chawls improvement programme,

35. See AMC, B.E. 1968-69.

36. Ibid.

37. See AMC, B.E. 1971-72

38. See AMC, B.E. 1970-71.

whereby facilities such as drainage lines, water taps, lighting etc. were to be provided to these slum areas with the Municipal Corporation and the chawl owners each bearing 50% of the cost.³⁹ By 1970, out of the 1,140 chawls in Ahmedabad City, drainage facilities had been provided to 889 chawls.⁴⁰

The Janta Parishad also raised the conditions of service and pay of municipal employees, thus contrasting favourably with many municipalities where mediocre and inefficient personnel were the result of highly inadequate service conditions and incentives for municipal employees.

The Shri I.G. Thakor pay award of the Industrial Tribunal, which came into force from the 1st October, 1963, had in practice to be given effect to in later years. This entailed a sum of Rs.29.85 lakhs annually for municipal staff and Rs.11.60 lakhs for Municipal School Board and V.S. Hospital staff.⁴¹ Pay-scales of grade IV employees were revised from the 1st May, 1965, and an ad hoc pay rise of Rs.8 per month was given to Grade IV employees.⁴² The Janta Parishad made the striking innovation of giving dearness allowance to municipal employees on the basis of the rates for Central government employees with effect from the 1st April, 1966, whereby the annual income of the 22,000 municipal employees rose by Rs.60 lakhs. Ahmedabad was the first Municipal Corporation in the country to take this bold step of placing d.a. for municipal employees on a par with that for Central Government employees.⁴³ There was also a further increase in d.a. when Central

39. See Indulal Yagnik, Successful Work (1969).

40. See N.H. Thakkar and N.R. Desai, Metropolitan Planning of the City of Ahmedabad with reference to Finance, a background paper in a Seminar on Ahmedabad Metropolitan Planning, held on 9 and 10 January 1971 in Ahmedabad.

41. See AMC, B.E. 1968-69

42. See Indulal Yagnik, Successful Work (1969).

43. Ibid.

Government rates were revised on the basis of the report of the Gajendragadkar Commission with effect from the 1st February, 1967, and the 1st June, 1967. This entailed an extra amount of Rs.35 lakhs for 1967-68 and 1968-69.⁴⁴

As regards the various Town Planning Schemes, some of them took an inordinately long time to be completed, enabling vested interests to take advantage of the impending improvements and soaring land prices. Between 1950 and 1965, only five Town Planning Schemes were finalised, while after 1965 and the change of régime, within the short period of one and a half years, seven more Town Planning Schemes were finalised.⁴⁵

CONCLUSION

Thus discrepancies between parties in power at various levels of the political system, and hostility between the Janta Parishad and the millowners, was not conducive to a strong impetus towards modernisation, although there was a definite rise in the developmental expenditure of the Municipal Corporation during the Janta Parishad period of power, and a certain amount was achieved.

When the Congress party was returned to power in the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections, the working partnership of the Major Mahajan and the business elements in the Corporation, with their emphasis on negotiation, compromise and gradual progress, was restored, and better relations prevailed with the State Government. Thus financially and structurally the Corporation was shaping better than in the Janta Parishad period.⁴⁶ The finances had been given stability by the ad hoc agreement negotiated between the Municipal Corporation and the millowners by Congress party leaders, and gradual

44. See AMC, B.E. 1968-69

45. See Dinkar Mehta, Junior Chamber debate.

46. Interview with Mr. E in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

progress was made towards social welfare.

However, the Janta Parishad period of power shook the hold of the millowners over Municipal Corporation affairs; it changed to some extent the political climate, and gave more bargaining power to the Majur Mahajan element in the Congress party. In 1969, the Majur Mahajan for the first time obtained one of the three most influential posts in the Corporation, the Chairmanship of the Standing Committee. As the Janta Parishad 1969 election manifesto declared:

--"The Janta Parishad ran the administration of the Municipal Corporation, not looking to the interests of the millowners and the occupants of the rich buildings of the Shahibag-Ellisbridge area, but keeping in mind the interests of the workers living in the mill chawls, and of all the citizens."--

4. Analysis of the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election

Although the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election took place in an economically difficult period with mill closures and high unemployment (the closure of eight Ahmedabad textile mills had resulted in the unemployment of about 18,000 textile workers¹), with textile mills losing profits and, therefore, not being able to give much bonus, left-wing political groups were not able to make much political capital out of this in 1969 as they had over the dearness allowance agitation and the issue of rising prices in the 1965 municipal elections. With the resolution of the dearness allowance issue and the disintegration of the Sangram Samiti for reasons outlined earlier, no strong left-wing trade union challenge to the Majur Mahajan remained. Left-wing trade union strength had dwindled from about 50,000 in 1965 to barely 5,000 in 1969.² In addition, the Majur Mahajan, learning from its earlier mistakes over the dearness allowance issue, had reacted fairly promptly to the difficult situation in the textile industry by negotiating the setting-up of the National Textile Corporation and the Gujarat State Textile Corporation to take over the running of the sick mills. The Majur Mahajan was well aware of its crucial importance to the Congress party in the labour wards at this period and even before the election demanded one of the three chief posts in the Corporation, either the Mayorship, the Deputy Mayorship, or the Chairmanship of the Standing Committee, for one of its nominees.³

1. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 3 March, 1969.

2. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 4 March, 1969.

3. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 9 February, 1969.

In 1965 the Janta Parishad had succeeded in building an alliance between the working class on the dearness allowance issue, and the middle and upper middle class on the English language issue and the issue of rising prices, in opposition to the Congress party. In 1965, many Ahmedabad businessmen and textile magnates had thrown in their weight against the Congress on the English language issue. In 1969, however, Ahmedabad businessmen and industrialists reverted to their normal pro-Congress stance. Electoral strategy in 1969 was decided at a meeting of Morarji Desai, the State Congress boss, with Congress leaders at State and City level, including Vajubhai Shah, GPCC President, Brahm Kumar Bhatt, GPCC Secretary, Tribhovandas Patel and Thakorebhai Desai, ex-GPCC Presidents, Jammashankar Pandya, City DCC President, and Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, Majur Mahajan leader; leading industrialists including Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth, Arvind Narottam, Jayantilal Bhikkabhai, Atmaran Sutaria and Madanmohan Mangaldas; and other leading citizens including advocates, Mr. Ranjan Nanavati and Mr. C.C. Gandhi.⁴ Congress leaders were confident of winning the election with the support of leading industrialists who agreed to provide funds and support party candidates.⁵ Although it was felt that other parties might try to exploit the textile crisis in the city, Congress could counteract this by fielding Majur-Mahajan backed candidates in the labour areas.⁶

4. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 4 February, 1969.

5. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 9 February, 1969.

6. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 4 February, 1969.

Despite factionalism within the Ahmedabad City DCC between supporters of Jammashankar Pandya, City DCC President, and Trikamlal Patel, ex-President of the City DCC,⁷ Congress courted popularity by infusing fresh blood into the party by adopting many new candidates and dropping fifteen of the twenty-two sitting Corporators to ensure a clean record of the party in the Corporation.⁸ The City Congress organization also gained popularity by undertaking a number of welfare activities under the leadership of Jammashankar Pandya during the election year, which was a year of long drought, a 'flu epidemic and a generally bleak winter. The Congress organization saw to it that those who were forced to make their homes on the river-bed were looked after; pavement-dwellers were given rugs and clothing during the winter months; and thousands of cattle were saved during the period of famine. The Majur Mahajan acted fairly efficiently to alleviate the distress of unemployed millworkers.⁹

The Janta Parishad decided to fight the 1969 municipal election as part of a United Front of anti-Congress parties, consisting of the PSP, SSP, CPI, CPM and one faction of the Republican party. The Janta Parishad Mayor, Dr. Somabhai Desai, declared that the United Front stood for socialism in the civic administration and the tax structure. He pointed to Janta Parishad achievements in spite of severe financial difficulties. The Congress had raised loans amounting to Rs. 19 crores from 1950-65.

7. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 10 February, 1969; Times of India (Ahmedabad), 12 April, 1969; see also Chapter V.

8. Western Times (Ahmedabad), 10 March, 1969.

9. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 2 April, 1969.

The repayment instalment of Rs. 1 crore annually fell due when the Parishad took office. For this and other reasons, the Janta Parishad had had to find new financial resources by revising octroi rates and property tax assessment, thereby raising the Corporation's income by Rs. 332 lakhs.¹⁰ It claimed to have whittled down the incidence of direct taxes on weaker sections of the population and levied more taxes on the rich; it had also tried to reduce the disparity in taxes paid on owner-occupied houses and dwellings taken on rent, even though the party's programme had been hindered at every turn by the Congress State Government and its nominee, the Municipal Commissioner.¹¹ However, no further tax increases were thought necessary, and it had been found possible to decrease the price of milk supplied by the Corporation's dairy.¹²

The Mayor, Somabhai Desai, went on to outline the Janta Parishad's main achievements: it had completed capital works worth Rs. 10 crores, constructed 4,100 tenements under slum clearance programmes, buildings for eleven primary schools, and several miles of drainage, water pipe-lines and roads. 22,000 Class IV municipal employees were given dearness allowance on a par with the Central Government staff. The Janta Parishad promised further extension of all civic amenities to labour areas and chawls.¹³

However, the Congress were quick to point out the disarray of the Janta Parishad in the Municipal Corporation and the steady

10. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 4 April, 1969.

11. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 2 April, 1969.

12. Gujarat Samachar (Ahmedabad), 17 February, 1969.

13. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 10 March, 1969.

erosion of its strength there by successive defections; and the financial crisis it had allegedly plunged the Corporation into and perpetuated by mismanagement, in a document called "Hold up a Mirror to Thyself".¹⁴ In this document the Congress printed quotes from United Front leaders themselves criticizing each other's parties, e.g. Manubhai Palkiwala was quoted as declaring that the Janta Parishad was rotten through and through, while Rajjabhai Mansuri, a Janta Parishad Corporator, declared his party bankrupt.¹⁵

Cracks and fissures had soon begun to appear in the United Front. Indulal Yagnik decided to keep aloof from the Janta Parishad and the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections as he professed himself tired of constant internal party bickering and lack of cohesion.¹⁶ Constituent elements of the United Front, notably the SSP, were dissatisfied by the allocation of seats.¹⁷ The United Front could not agree on a common minimum programme and a division of seats in all the 91 constituencies largely because of the SSP, which demanded more seats than had been allocated to it by the coordinating committee, comprising representatives of the PSP, SSP, CPI, CPM, JP and one faction of the Republican party. The PSP also had clearly separatist ambitions. Finally the constituent elements of the United Front were forced to fight the election on their own programmes, manifestoes and party symbols.¹⁸ Electoral

14. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 2 April, 1969.

15. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 5 December, 1968.

16. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 15 December, 1968.

17. Western Times (Ahmedabad), 17 March, 1969.

18. Western Times (Ahmedabad), 3 April, 1969; Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 4 April, 1969.

disagreements persisted with the SSP and PSP fielding candidates against each other in Rakhial, Shahpur and Behrampura. Sanat Mehta, PSP leader, was aggrieved that although the PSP had accommodated Kokila Vyas of the SSP in Maninagar, Kamindu Acharya, SSP leader, refused to accept the claims of the PSP candidates in Behrampura Kankaria. Thus the PSP and SSP found themselves pitted against each other in Behrampura, as well as in Shahpur and Rakhial wards.¹⁹ With the demise of the Sangram Samiti, the Communists were able to do little to exploit the distress among millworkers caused by unemployment and the textile crisis.²⁰

Thus the Janta Parishad's difficulties of sustained mobilization, party maintenance and goal attainment in the face of a hostile State and local power structure, outlined earlier in this chapter, paved the way for its massive electoral defeat in 1969.

Voting Analysis

Table 1. Comparison of the Overall Results of the 1965 and 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

<u>Party:</u>	<u>Seats:</u>	
	<u>1965</u> <u>(out of 78 seats):</u>	<u>1969</u> <u>(out of 91 seats):</u>
1. Congress	13	65
2. Janta Parishad	42	4
3. Republican Party	5	1
4. PSP	9	10
5. SSP	0	3
6. Jan Sangh	0	3
7. Swatantra	0	0
8. Other Parties	0	3 (CPM)
9. Independents	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	78	91

19. Jansatta (Ahmedabad), 5 April, 1969.

20. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 2 April, 1969.

The 1969 election showed the United Front and the Janta Parishad fragmented and in disarray. The Congress scored spectacular victories over the leading Janta Parishad figures in the Corporation: the then Mayor, Dr. Somabhai C. Desai, was defeated in Khanpur constituency (this owed a great deal to the hostile influence of Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi, former Janta Parishad Mayor, who had recently defected to the Congress taking with him many influential party workers in Shahpur and Khanpur); the Deputy Mayor, Mr. N.P. Shaikh, was also defeated as was the Chairman of the Standing Committee, Mr. Jaimal Thakore.²¹ Another prominent United Front candidate, Dr. Hirabhai Parekh, the Corporation's Health Committee chairman was also defeated.

The PSP maintained its position in its traditional stronghold of Khadia, capturing four out of the six Khadia seats, the other two seats going to Dr. K.K. Shah of the Janta Parishad and the well known Congress candidate, Dr. Occhavlal Talati. Kalupur saw a United Front débâcle with three seats going to Congress, one to an Independent and only one to a PSP candidate. The United Front failed to get even one of the two seats in Dariapur which both went to the Jan Sangh. Manubhai Palkiwala barely retained his seat in Vadigam, and his two panel members were defeated by the Congress. Congress **swept** Khanpur and Paldi and Rakhial. Congress considerably increased its strength in the city wards with the PSP emerging as its main rival.

The Majur Mahajan experienced a widespread revival of strength in the labour areas. In Saraspur the Secretary of the City Communist Party (Rightist), Gordhanbhai Patel, lost to the

21. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 9 April, 1969; 10 April, 1969.

Majur Mahajan's Chandubhai Patel. Dinkar Mehta, leader of the City CPM, saw his majority fall from 2,500 in 1965 to 241 in 1969. Nathusingh Indrasingh, another prominent Left Communist labour leader, was trounced by the Congress in the mill area of Chamanpura. Another Marxist trade union leader and prominent Sangram Samiti figure, Abdulrazak Sheikh, a sitting Corporator and Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Recreation Committee, was badly defeated. In its stronghold of Khokera-Mehmedabad, the CPI (Rightist) was relegated to third position by the Congress and the Jan Sangh.²² Only three CPM candidates, and no CPI (Rightist) candidates at all were returned to power in 1969. The SSP trade union leader and Secretary of the Gujarat unit of the party, Kamindu Acharya, lost his deposit in Behrampura.²³ All leftist forces, except the PSP which retained its strength of ten, suffered badly in this election. Janta Parishad strength was slashed from 29 in 1965 to 4 in 1969, CPM strength from 8 to 3, CPI (Rightist) from 5 to nil; and Republican party strength from 5 to 1. Congress won 33 seats in the mill areas as against 32 in the city areas.

The massive support the Janta Parishad had gained in the labour wards of Ahmedabad City in 1965 had been whittled away. In 1965, the Janta Parishad had 23 of its total 42 seats in labour areas and high voting percentages in these wards. But in 1969, it had one seat in the traditional middle class stronghold of Khadia-2; one seat in Gandhigram constituency west of the Sabarmati in a fairly prosperous suburb (part of the old Ellis Bridge constituency);

22. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 12 April, 1969.

23. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 14 April, 1969.

and only two seats in unmistakably labour class wards: one in Dudheshvar and one in Amraivadi. (The CPM which had been part of the Janta Parishad in 1965 only managed to retain three labour seats in 1969). In contrast, in 1969, the Congress was again strongly entrenched in the labour wards, thanks to the revival of Majur Mahajan influence.

24
Table 2. A Comparison of the Wardwise % of Votes and Seats secured by the Congress and the Janta Parishad in the 1965 and 1969 Ahmedabad municipal elections.

1965 election:						1969 election:					
Ward:	Congress:		Janta Parishad:		Ward:	Congress:		Janta Parishad:			
	o/o of Votes	No.of Seats	o/o of Votes	No.of Seats		o/o of Votes	No.of Seats	o/o of Votes	No.of Seats		
1. Khadia 1	25.13	1	23.46	-	1. Khadia 1	36.36	1	-	-		
2. Khadia 2	19.08	-	33.58	1	2. Khadia 2	26.96	-	19.25	1		
3. Kalupur 1	16.62	-	27.50	3	3. S.Kalupur	44.35	2	-	-		
4. Kalupur 2	32.69	-	50.40	5	4. N.Kalupur	32.37	1	15.72	-		
5. Dariapur	34.54	-	55.90	5	5. Gheekanta	41.81	1	-	-		
6. Shahpur	26.19	1	38.97	3	6. Dariapur	24.65	-	12.07	-		
7. Jamalpur	30.81	-	19.85	1	7. Vadigam	45.51	2	-	-		
8. Raikhad	36.99	1	24.31	1	8. Shahpur	45.82	2	-	-		
9. S.Ellis-bridge	44.19	2	-	-	9. Khanpur	33.33	3	11.46	-		
10. N.Ellis-bridge	41.28	2	-	-	10. Manek chowk	34.60	1	-	-		
11. Sabarmati	55.82	3	18.93	-	11. Jamalpur	41.81	2	-	-		
12. Shahibag	25.79	-	38.48	3	12. Raikhad	52.49	3	14.15	-		
13. Asarva	36.57	-	43.83	5	13. Paldi	48.06	3	24.38	-		
14. Saraspur	34.52	-	45.52	5	14. Gandhi-gram	47.97	2	12.85	1		

24. Electoral data obtained from Gujarat University School of Social Sciences in March 1971. Direct comparisons between 1965 and 1969 municipal wards are rendered difficult by the almost doubling of wards in 1969 over 1965. Correspondingly multi-member

<u>Ward:</u>	<u>1965 election:</u>				<u>Ward:</u>	<u>1969 election:</u>			
	<u>Congress:</u>		<u>Janta Parishad:</u>			<u>Congress:</u>		<u>Janta Parishad:</u>	
	<u>o/o of Votes:</u>	<u>No.of Seats</u>	<u>o/o of Votes</u>	<u>No.of Seats</u>		<u>o/o of Votes</u>	<u>No.of Seats</u>	<u>o/o of Votes</u>	<u>No.of Seats</u>
15.Rakhial	38.43	-	37.02	3	15.Vadaj	50.74	3	11.06	-
16.Gomtipur	35.15	-	47.18	4	16.Sabarmati	58.53	3	-	-
17.Khokhera-Mehmedabad	35.18	1	55.93	3	17.Dudheshwar	37.42	1	18.56	1
18.Maninagar-Behrampura	33.80	2	13.56	-	18.Madhupura	47.51	3	30.37	-
Total	32.87	13.	35.72	42	19.Girdhar-nagar	48.75	3	6.09	-
					20.Asarva	42.30	1	11.65	-
					21.Chaman-pura	34.67	2	-	-
					22.Naroda	33.20	1	-	-
					23.Saraspur	51.28	2	10.41	-
					24.Potalia	48.30	3	5.29	-
					25.Bapunagar	40.06	2	9.80	-
					26.Rakhial	42.17	3	-	-
					27.Gomtipur	54.56	3	-	-
					28.Rajpur	41.48	3	-	-
					29.Amravadi	41.00	1	24.56	1
					30.Khokhera-Mehmedabad	63.36	3	-	-
					31.Maninagar	36.06	2	-	-
					32.Kankaria	39.52	1	-	-
					33.Behrampura	41.09	2	-	-
					Total	43.10	65	7.31	4

constituencies which had previously comprised as many as five and six members were reduced in 1969 to a limit of two and three-member constituencies, although this did not go as far as the CPM proposal to have single-member constituencies.

In 1969 the Janta Parishad had indeed lost its broad-based support among the electorate which had rested on the foundations of an alliance of the middle and upper middle class on the issue of the teaching of English in schools, and of the working class on the d.a. issue. Its total voting percentage had fallen from 35.72⁰/o in 1965 to a mere 7.31⁰/o in 1969. In 1965, it had achieved voting percentages of 37.02 to 55.93 in six out of seven principally labour wards. In 1969, its voting percentages ranged between 5.29⁰/o and 30.37⁰/o in the labour wards. In contrast, Congress voting percentages ranged from 33.2⁰/o to 63.36⁰/o in the predominantly labour wards in 1969. Congress voting percentages in 1969 were highest in the labour wards and in the fairly prosperous suburban areas west of the Sabarmati, and lowest in the inner-city wards. Its lowest voting percentage was 24.65 in the inner-city ward of Dariapur.

In 1965, voting was polarized between two main parties, the Congress and the Janta Parishad, with 32.87 and 35.72 per cent respectively of the total votes. But, in 1969, there was a reversion to the traditional pattern of a dominant Congress party with 43.10⁰/o of total votes and a highly fragmented opposition. The remaining 56.2⁰/o of the total votes was divided between nine opposition parties and numerous Independents, with the highest individual voting percentage of any opposition party not rising beyond the Jan Sangh's 11.28⁰/o. The Jan Sangh's capturing of 11.28⁰/o of the total vote as compared to only 1.62⁰/o in 1965 was one of the astonishing outcomes of this election, pointing to the increasing significance of the communal issue in municipal politics (see following chapter).

In 1969, the percentage of wardwise invalid votes was considerably higher than in 1961, especially in the labour wards, but

it did not reach the peaks attained in many labour class wards in 1965, indicating a less marked degree of working class participation, although still considerable. Whereas in 1965 the percentage of invalid votes cast had reached as high as 5.98 in Asarva constituency, in 1969, the highest percentage of invalid votes was 4.26 in Amraivadi.

Table 3.²⁵ Wardwise Comparison of the Percentage of Invalid Votes in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections of 1965 and 1969.

1965 Election:		1969 Election:	
<u>Wards:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>	<u>Wards:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>
1. Khadia -1	1.92	1. Khadia-1	2.06
2. Khadia -2	1.99	2. Khadia-2	1.99
3. Kalupur -1	2.75	3. S.Kalupur	2.03
4. Kalupur	4.92	4. N.Kalupur	2.73
5. Dariapur	4.86	5. Gheekanta	3.66
6. Shahpur	5.07	6. Dariapur	2.29
7. Jamalpur	4.12	7. Vadigam	2.77
8. Raikhad	4.17	8. Shahpur	2.95
9. S.Ellisbridge	3.01	9. Khanpur	2.46
10. N.Ellisbridge	3.00	10. Manekchowk	2.46
11. Sabarmati	2.72	11. Jamalpur	3.04
12. Shahibag	4.77	12. Raikhad	3.12
13. Asarva	5.98	13. Paldi	1.31
14. Saraspur	5.67	14. Gandhigram	1.84
15. Rakhial	4.55	15. Vadaaj	1.96
16. Gomtipur-Rajpur	3.94	16. Sabarmati	2.95
17. Khoke ra-Mehmedabad	3.61	17. Dudheshwar	3.64
18. Maninagar-Behrampura	4.98	18. Madhupura	3.30

25. Electoral data obtained from the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences in March 1971.

1965 Election:

1969 Election:

<u>Wards:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>	<u>Wards:</u>	<u>% of Invalid Votes:</u>
		19. Girdharnagar	3.12
		20. Asarva	2.31
		21. Chamanpura	2.97
		22. Naroda	3.52
		23. Saraspur	2.99
		24. Potalia	2.86
		25. Bapunagar	3.46
		26. Rakhial	3.68
		27. Gomtipur	3.25
		28. Rajpur	3.05
		29. Amraivadi	4.26
		30. Khokera-Mehmedabad	2.15
		31. Maninagar	2.26
		32. Kankaria	2.77
		33. Behrampura	3.70

In 1969, the traditional Congress advantage in multi-cornered contests and in the multiple-member constituency system was operative again, whereas in 1965 the special conditions of political polarization had operated in favour of the Janta Parishad. For example, in 1969, in Khanpur, the Congress with 33.33% of the total votes secured all the three seats; whereas in 1965, the Congress with 38.43% of the total votes in Rakhial constituency failed to secure a single seat.

The solidity of the Congress victory in 1969 can be seen in

the fact that 11 of its 65 seats were won on over 50⁰/o of the total votes and 24 Congress candidates gained second place. In terms of deposits lost, the Swatantra party fared worst with 75⁰/o of its candidates losing their deposits, followed by the Independents and one faction of the Republican party with 62⁰/o. The Jan Sangh percentage of deposits lost had fallen from 44.44⁰/o in 1965 to 26⁰/o in 1969.

Table 4.²⁶ A Comparison of the Deposits lost by Various Parties in the 1965 and 1969 Ahmedabad municipal elections.

<u>Party:</u>	<u>% of Candidates losing their Deposits:</u>	
	1965:	1969:
1. Congress	1.28	-
2. PSP	8.00	-
3. Janta Parishad	-	5.00
4. SSP	-	19.00
5. Swatantra	54.55	75.00
6. Republican	46.15	62.00
7. Jan Sangh	44.44	26.00
8. Independents	52.31	62.00

In 1969 the Major Mahajan element in the Congress Corporation party increased its number of seats to 33 compared to 29 in 1961, although as a percentage of total Congress Corporators the Major Mahajan element fell somewhat from 57⁰/o in 1961 to 50.8⁰/o in 1969. It had completely made up the ground lost in 1965 when not a single Major Mahajan candidate had been elected. The business component of the Congress Corporation party fell somewhat in 1969

26. Electoral data obtained from the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences in March 1971.

compared to 1961 (it is more reasonable to compare the 1969 election with the 1961 election rather than the 1965 election since this was an atypical disaster for the municipal Congress party which only secured 13 seats without any Majur Mahajan Corporators at all as a result of that election), and the big business element fell even more sharply, whereas the professional and white-collar elements rose to some degree.

Table 5.²⁷ A Comparison of the Socioeconomic Composition of Congress Municipal Corporators in Ahmedabad in 1961-65, and 1969-74.

<u>Socioeconomic Category</u>	1961		1969	
	<u>No. of Congress Corporators:</u>	<u>% of Congress Corporators:</u>	<u>No. of Congress Corporators:</u>	<u>% of Congress Corporators:</u>
Majur Mahajan Candidates:				
Millworkers/trade unionists	20	39)	26	40)
Businessmen/social workers	9) 57 18)	7) 50.8 10.8)
Big businessmen	8	15.7)	3	4.6)
Other medium and small business men	6) 27.5 11.8)	13) 24.6 20)
Professional men	7	13.5	12	18.5
White-collar workers	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>6.2</u>
Total	51	100	65	100

In 1961, big businessmen were eight in number and constituted 15.7% of total Congress Corporators. However, in 1969, there were only three big businessmen in the Corporation, none textile magnates, constituting only 4.6% of total Congress Corporators.

27. Socioeconomic data provided by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

The percentage of millworker/full-time trade unionist Corporators nominated by the Majur Mahajan remained constant at about 40% between 1961 and 1969, although the percentage of Majur Mahajan-sponsored business/social worker Corporators fell somewhat from 18% in 1961 to 10.8% in 1969. The percentage of medium and small-scale businessmen among Congress Corporators rose from 11.8% in 1961 to 20% in 1969. The percentage of white-collar workers and professional men among Congress Corporators also experienced an increase from 2% in 1961 to 6.2% in 1969, and from 13.5% in 1961 to 18.5% in 1969 respectively.

If one examines the leading posts in the Corporation and the composition of the most influential Municipal Corporation committees in 1969, one can see an increase in Majur Mahajan representation over that of 1961-65. In 1969 the Majur Mahajan demanded and got for one of their leaders one of the three top posts in the Corporation, that of Chairman of the Standing Committee for Navinchandra Barot. In the Transport Committee, the Majur Mahajan increased their representation from one in 1960-61 and 1961-62 and nil between 1962 and 1965 to two in 1969-70 and 1970-71. In the Public Works Committee, Majur Mahajan membership had been three between 1961 and 1964, rising to four in 1964-65. It remained at four in 1969-70, and rose to five in 1970-71. In the Housing and Improvement Committee, Majur Mahajan representation had been two in 1964-65. It rose to five in 1969-70 and four in 1970-71.

Table 6. 28

Socioeconomic Composition of Four Influential Municipal Corporation Committees, showing, in particular, Major Mahajan representatives

<u>Name of Committee:</u>	<u>Managerial/ C.A.</u>	<u>Doctor:</u>	<u>Lawyer:</u>	<u>Teacher:</u>	<u>Social Worker:</u>	<u>Big Businessmen:</u>	<u>Medium-scale Businessmen:</u>	<u>Other and small-scale Businessmen:</u>	<u>Millworker/ trade unionist:</u>	<u>White-collar worker:</u>
Standing Committee										
1961-62	-	1	2	-	-	4	-	2	3MM	-
1962-63	-	1	2	-	-	3	-	3	3MM	-
1963-64	-	1	1	-	1	3	1	1	3MM	1
1964-65	-	1	3	-	1	3	-	1	3MM	-
1965-66	1	1	2	-	1	1	1	3	2	-
1966-67	1	3	1	-	1	1	1	3	1	-
1967-68	1	-	2	1	-	1	1	3	3	-
1968-69	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2	-
1969-70	-	3	1	-	-	1	3	1	3MM	-
1970-71	-	2	1	-	1	1	3	1	3MM	-
Transport Committee										
1961-62	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	2	1MM	1
1962-63	1	-	3	1	-	2	-	1	-	1
1963-64	-	1	1	1	-	2	-	3	-	1
1964-65	-	2	1	1	-	1	1	2	-	1
1965-66	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	5	1	-
1966-67	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	4	1	-
1967-68	1	1	2	-	-	-	1	3	-	1
1968-69	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	3	1	1
1969-70	1	1	2	-	1	-	-	3	2MM+1	1
1970-71	1	1	2	2	-	-	1	-	2MM	1
Public Works Committee										
1961-62	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	4	3MM	1
1962-63	-	-	1	-	-	1	3	3	3MM	1
1963-64	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	4	3MM	-
1964-65	-	1	-	-	-	2	1	2	4MM+1	1
1965-66	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	5	3	3
1966-67	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	1

28. Socioeconomic data provided by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabdas.

<u>Name of Committee:</u>	<u>Managerial/ C.A.</u>	<u>Doctor:</u>	<u>Lawyer:</u>	<u>Teacher:</u>	<u>Social Worker:</u>	<u>Big Businessmen:</u>	<u>Medium-scale Businessmen:</u>	<u>Other and small-scale Businessmen:</u>	<u>Millworker/ trade unionist:</u>	<u>White-collar worker:</u>
Public Works Committee										
1967-68	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	4	4	1
1968-69	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	5	1
1969-70	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	2	4MM+1	-
1970-71	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	2	5MM+1	1
Housing and Improvement Committee										
1964-65	-	-	3	-	-	3	1	3	2MM	-
1965-66	-	1	2	-	-	-	-	3	6	-
1966-67	-	1	1	-	1	-	1	3	5	-
1967-68	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	7	1
1968-69	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	8	-
1969-70	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	2	5MM	2
1970-71	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	4MM+1	1

Key: MM = Majur Mahajan.

*C.A. = Chartered Accountant

The Mayor in 1969, Narottambhai Zhaveri, was for the first time in many years not a textile magnate, although he had links with the textile magnate elite, being a director of many Ahmedabad mills, particularly the cotton textile mills of the Kasturbhai Lalbhai group.

Thus, in 1969, the internal balance of power in the Congress Corporation party had moved from the big business element to the Majur Mahajan element and the medium and small business elements.

Chapter VIII

AN ANALYSIS OF THE GROWING PLURALISM IN
AHMEDABAD, AND INCREASING SOCIAL GROUP CONFLICT
EVIDENT IN THE AGITATIONAL MOVEMENTS OF
THE 1960S AND IN THE COMMUNAL RIOTS OF 1969.

By the 1960s, Ahmedabad had become, in socioeconomic terms, in many ways a more plural society with an increasingly large migrant element, of which a significant proportion was non-Gujarati. By 1961, 584,423 persons or 50.82% of the total population were migrants, i.e. were not born in Ahmedabad City. Of these, 71,742 or 12.28% were born elsewhere in Ahmedabad district, while 321,642 or 55.04% were born in other districts of Gujarat. As many as 170,313 or 29.14% of total migrants were born in other States of India, and 20,654 or 3.53% were born outside India. Thus, by 1961, about one-third of the migrant population had come to the city from areas outside Gujarat.¹ The main States of India accounting for this large non-Gujarati migration were the neighbouring States of Rajasthan, U.P. and Maharashtra. In 1961, Rajasthan accounted for 57,743 migrants or 9.88% of total migrants. U.P. accounted for 47,371 migrants or 8.11% of all migrants, while Ma-
of
harashtra accounted for 33,924 migrants or 5.80%/total migrants. These three States together accounted for 23.79% or almost a quarter of all migrants to the City, or approximately 83% of the total number of migrants from other States of India.² Out of the remaining States of India, relatively large proportions of migrants had come from the following States: Madhya Pradesh accounted for

1. Census Special Report I, pp. 127-8.

2. Census Special Report III, pp. 6-7.

11,062 migrants or 2⁰/o of total migrants to the City; Madras accounted for 4,301 migrants or 0.7⁰/o of total migrants; Punjab accounted for 4,288 migrants or 0.7⁰/o of total migrants; Kerala accounted for 2,756 migrants or 0.5⁰/o of total migrants, and West Bengal accounted for 1,187 migrants or 0.2⁰/o of total migrants.³

The growing diversity of Ahmedabad City, and the lack of integration of non-Gujarati groups in the City with the dominant Gujarati culture can be seen in the extent of linguistic diversity in the City, and the proportion of those having a non-Gujarati mother-tongue, who are bilingual with respect to Gujarati. The following table shows the linguistic diversity of Ahmedabad City in 1961:

Table 1. Distribution of Major Mother Tongues, Ahmedabad City, 1961.⁴

<u>Mother-tongue:</u>	<u>No. of Speakers:</u>
All Mother-tongues	1,149,918 (100.00 ⁰ /o)
1. Gujarati	805,126 (70.02 ⁰ /o)
2. Urdu	148,515 (12.91 ⁰ /o)
3. Hindi	91,522 (7.96 ⁰ /o)
4. Marathi	38,578 (3.35 ⁰ /o)
5. Marwari	19,516 (1.70 ⁰ /o)
6. Sindhi	16,792 (1.46 ⁰ /o)
7. Others	29,869 (2.60 ⁰ /o)

Among the other mother-tongues the most important are Tamil with 6,534 speakers, Punjabi with 5,585 speakers, Telugu with 4,133 speakers, Malayalam with 2,726 speakers, Rajasthani with 2,667 speakers

3. Census Special Report II, pp. 368-373.

4. Census Special Report I, p.198.

and Bengali with 928 speakers. Bilingualism can be taken as a crude indicator of adjustment to and integration with the dominant Gujarati culture by non-Gujarati groups in the City. Therefore it is very significant that there seems to be a fairly low proportion of bilingualism with respect to Gujarati among important minority linguistic groups in the City: out of 148,515 Urdu speakers in the City only 32,500 or 21.88^o/o speak Gujarati; out of 91,522 Hindi-speakers, only 11,358 or 12.41^o/o speak Gujarati; out of 38,578 Marathi-speakers only 8,384 or 21.73^o/o speak Gujarati; out of 19,516 Marwari-speakers only 3,626 or 18.58^o/o speak Gujarati; and out of 16,792 Sindhi-speakers, only 1,931 or 11.50^o/o speak Gujarati.

The sociostructural pattern, which was beginning to emerge in Ahmedabad in the 1960s, of a closely-knit, indigenous, homogeneous and highly legitimized upper class, consisting of the dominant textile elite and its middle class appendage, on the one hand, and a very fragmented, heterogeneous, increasingly migrant and non-Gujarati labour force on the other hand, with an increasing lack of communication between the two, has contributed considerably to the retarding of social and economic mobility in the City, particularly of non-Gujarati groups. Migrants form a crucially important part of the total labour force of Ahmedabad: they constitute 255,042 workers or 71.36^o/o of the total labour force of the City.⁵ The largest concentrations of migrant workers are to be found in manufacturing industries other than household, where 133,904 migrants,

5. Census Special Report I. p.155.

or 55⁰/o of the total migrant labour force, are employed, constituting 74.07⁰/o of the total labour force in this category. Migrants constitute 92,672 i.e. 35.8⁰/o or one-third of the total migrant labour force, or 77⁰/o of all spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers in the textile industries.⁶ This is followed by the other services group, where 56,680 migrants or 22⁰/o of the total migrant labour force are employed, constituting 72.74⁰/o of the total labour force in this category. Non-Gujarati migrant workers make their largest contribution to the total migrant labour force mainly in working-class occupations. Although they constitute only 35⁰/o of the total migrant labour force in all occupational divisions, they form 39⁰/o of the total migrant labour force working in transport and communications; 41⁰/o of all migrant craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, and as much as 46⁰/o of the total number of spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers in the textile industries. In the higher status, white-collar middle-class and upper middle-class occupations, they constitute far less of the total migrant labour force: they form 18⁰/o of migrant professional, technical and related workers; 22⁰/o of administrative, executive and managerial workers. In lower middle-class occupations, they constitute only 20⁰/o of migrant clerical workers, but a larger proportion - 27⁰/o - of migrant sales workers. UP has the largest concentration of its migrant work force in the category of craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified, i.e. 23,074 or 76⁰/o. 18,078 of these, or 60⁰/o of its total migrant

6. Census Special Report II, p.302.

labour force, work as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers in the textile industries. Migrant workers from Maharashtra, Rajasthan and other States of India also have very large proportions engaged in working as craftsmen, production process workers and labourers not elsewhere classified - 8,415 or 63⁰/o, 19,294 or 59⁰/o, and 9,643 or 64⁰/o respectively. The respective figures for their workers engaged as spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers are: 5,628 or 43⁰/o, 12,210 or 38⁰/o, and 6,768 or 45⁰/o.⁷

The relatively disadvantaged position of migrants can be seen in a preliminary survey of the socioeconomic conditions of slum-dwellers in Ahmedabad City carried out by a research team of Gujarat University.⁸ This survey of slum families revealed that, whereas non-Gujarati migrants constituted only about 14.2⁰/o of the total population, they constituted as much as 43⁰/o of slum dwellers.

In communal terms, the character of Ahmedabad City was changing significantly due to the patterns of migration. The proportion of Jains, a small but highly significant group from the point of view of Ahmedabad's cultural ethos, within the City's population fell steadily between 1901-61, from 8.31⁰/o in 1901 to 5.60⁰/o in 1961. The proportion of Muslims in the City fell too from 20.53⁰/o of the total population in 1901 to 15.51⁰/o in 1961. The upheavals of Partition, coupled with the nature of migration to the city, which was predominantly Hindu, have largely contributed to

7. Census Special Report II, pp. 90-99, 296-305, and III, pp. 60-165.

8. See Mahesh Bhatt and V.K. Chawda, A Preliminary Report of the Study of the Socioeconomic Conditions of the Slum-dwellers in Ahmedabad City. (University School of Social Sciences, Gujarat University: 1971).

making Ahmedabad City more Hindu in composition and character over the last few decades. Whereas Hindus constitute 884,756 persons or 76.94⁰/o of the City's total population in 1961, and Muslims 178,398 persons or 15.5⁰/o; in the migrant population in 1961, Hindus numbered 479,522 persons or 82.05⁰/o of total migrants, and Muslims numbered 63,098 persons or only 10.8⁰/o of total migrants. Thus migration was having a stronger impact on the Hindu community, while its impact on the Muslim community was lesser, although still significant: Hindu migrants constituted 54.2⁰/o of the total Hindu population of the City, whereas Muslim migrants constituted 35.37⁰/o of the total Muslim population in the City.⁹ However, although the City had become by 1961 communally more uniformly Hindu and although communal diversity was thus reduced, paradoxically, communal divisions in the City were exacerbated, as Hindu migrants, particularly the refugee element from Pakistan and the Hindu migrants from other States of India, particularly UP, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, who were socially and linguistically dislocated and concentrated in low-status, working-class occupations, mainly in the textile industries, became fertile ground for Jan Sangh anti-Muslim propaganda in the '60s.

There were important differences in the character of the Hindu and Muslim migrants to Ahmedabad City. Muslim migrants tended to be more urbanized than their Hindu counterparts. Out of the total number of Hindu migrants to Ahmedabad City in 1961, only 121,256 or 24⁰/o came from urban areas. In contrast, out of the total of Muslim migrants in 1961 as many as 28,730 or 46⁰/o came from urban

9. See Statement VII.8. Numerical strength of major religious communities in Ahmedabad City, 1901 to 1961, in Census Special Report I, p.202, reproduced as Table 8 in Chapter II,2. See also Census Special Report III, p. 6-7.

areas - this was almost double the proportion of Hindu migrants coming from urban areas.

Muslim migrants also tended to be more non-Gujarati in character than Hindu migrants to Ahmedabad City in 1961. 337,944 Hindu migrants or 70⁰/o of the total number of Hindu migrants came from Ahmedabad district and other districts of Gujarat State. In contrast, 37,000 Muslim migrants or 58⁰/o of all Muslim migrants to the City came from outside Gujarat. Thus almost double the proportion of Muslim migrants in comparison with Hindu migrants came from States outside Gujarat.¹⁰ U.P. contributes 26⁰/o of all Muslim migrants to Ahmedabad City; Rajasthan 14⁰/o; Maharashtra 7⁰/o; and the other States of India together 12⁰/o.

It is also interesting to note that migrants tended to be, on the whole, better educated than the indigenous population. 322,615 migrants or 55.20⁰/o of total migrants are literate as against 52.74⁰/o literacy in the general population of the City. In the various educational levels, the proportionate share of migrants is comparatively greater than among the general City population. 60.17⁰/o of those literate without educational level are migrants, although only 48.23⁰/o of those with only primary or junior basic education are migrants. 60.58⁰/o of those with matriculation or higher secondary standard of education are migrants. 55.12⁰/o and 58.76⁰/o respectively of those holding technical diplomas not equal to degrees and non-technical diplomas not equal to degrees are migrants. 64.87⁰/o of those with University degrees or postgraduate degrees

10. Census Special Report III, pp. 6-7.

other than technical degrees are migrants. Among holders of technical degrees or diplomas equal to a degree or postgraduate degree, although migrants constitute only 41.38% of degrees in agriculture, 47.88% of degrees in technology and 50% of degrees in veterinary and dairying studies, they constitute 59.46% of holders of teaching degrees, 68.66% of holders of medical degrees and 69.73% of holders of degrees in engineering. This generally greater degree of educational attainment of the migrant, as compared to the general population of Ahmedabad City, gave migrants a greater potential for active participation and, even leadership, in politics.

This growing pluralism, expressed in an increasingly fragmented lower class with very significant proportions of migrants and non-Gujaratis, who experienced difficulties in social and economic mobility, and the changing communal balance had profound consequences for Ahmedabad City politics. In the leadership structure the Majur Mahajan of the Congress party and/migrants from other parts of Gujarat tended to dominate. Among Congress leaders, Trikamlal Patel, President of the Ahmedabad City DCC after 1965, Narottam Zhaveri, Deputy Mayor between 1961-65 and Mayor of Ahmedabad from 1969 to early 1972, D.K. Patel, who was Deputy Mayor between 1969-72, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, Mayor from 1961-65, and all the other millowners in local politics were all born in Ahmedabad. The Majur Mahajan had a significant number of leaders who were migrants from other parts of Gujarat: the powerful Shyamprasad R. Vasavda himself, General-Secretary of the TLA, was from Saurashtra; another influential Majur Mahajan leader, who was elected MLA in 1967, M.T. Shukla, was born in Wadhvan City, while Shantilal Shah, who became a Majur Mahajan-nominated State Labour Minister from 1967-72, was

born in Nadiad in Kaira district.¹¹

The leadership structure of the Janta Parishad was also dominated, especially in the early 60s, by those from Ahmedabad and migrants from other parts of Gujarat State: Manubhai Palkiwala, Somabhai Desai and Ashok Mehta were all born in Ahmedabad City, while Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi was born at Kalol in Mehsana district, Dinkar Mehta and Jaimal Thakor were both born in Surat, and Indulal Yagnik himself was born in Nadiad in Kaira district.

However, although non-Gujarati migrants and Muslim migrants were not generally prominent in the leadership structure of the Congress and the Majur Mahajan,¹² they were given prominent positions in the trade union and party leadership of the Communist party, e.g. the second most powerful man in the CPM after Dinkar Mehta was Abdulrazak Shaikhiban Shaikh, a Muslim migrant, who came to Ahmedabad in 1936, and became a millhand, and subsequently joined the Communist Party in 1956.¹³ Muslim migrants, largely from Rajasthan and UP, are more urbanized than Hindu migrants, and the nature of Islam makes them more equalitarian and a more monolithic group, therefore more susceptible to Communist ideas. Gujarati Muslims, on the other hand, are not so drawn to the Communist movement. In the mid- 60s, more non-Gujarati migrants and Muslim migrants became politicized by the Janta Parishad with the increasing influence

11. Information obtained from a series of interviews with leading politicians and Corporators in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

12. With the exception of the Jamalpur area, which had a Muslim majority, and where the Congress party customarily put up Muslim candidates. The Majur Mahajan did have one prominent Muslim in its leadership, Nurmahomed Shaikh.

13. Interview with Dinkar Mehta, Ahmedabad March 1971.

within the Janta Parishad of the Communist party, particularly the CPM, and through the Janta Parishad-led economic agitational movement of the mid- 60s, centred on the dearness allowance issue. Non-Gujarati migrants and Muslims were given important leadership roles in the Sangram Samiti movement, as the following analysis of the composition of the executive committee of the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union, formed as a result of the dearness allowance agitation, revealed: (Table 2.) The proportion of non-Gujaratis and Muslims on the Executive Committee of the MGMMU was the remarkably high figure of 42.5%.

In the 1965 Municipal elections in Ahmedabad, the Janta Parishad sponsored a fair number of non-Gujrati migrants, some of whom were successfully elected, and formed for the first time a small non-Gujarati element within the Municipal Corporation.¹⁵

Table 3.¹⁶ Non-Gujarati Corporators in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, 1965-69.

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Party:</u>	<u>Caste and Community:</u>	<u>Occupation:</u>
1. Baluram Gupta	Janta Parisad	Bengali Bania	Businessman
2. Hanumansing Bajrangsing	Janta Parisad	Rajput (Punjab)	Social worker
3. Pitambar V. Patil	Janta Parishad	Maharashtrian	Millworker

This non-Gujarati element constituted approximately 7.3% of Janta Parishad Municipal Corporators between 1965 and 1969. For the first time, during the Janta Parishad period of power in the

15. After the 1961 Municipal elections, the Congress had one non-Gujarati candidate elected, Madarsing Kalusing, who had been nominated by the Majur Mahajan.

16. Data provided by the Municipal Corporation of Ahmedabad.

Table 2, ¹⁴ Composition of the Executive Committee of the Maha Gujarat Mill Mazdur Union in 1964, showing the proportion of Muslim and Non-Gujarati members.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Name:</u>	<u>Position:</u>	<u>Name:</u>	<u>Position:</u>	<u>Name:</u>
President	1. Indulal Yagnik	Exec.Com.Member	16. Vadilal Sakalchand	Exec.Com.Member	31. Vagjibhai Valjibhai
Vice "	2. Dinkar Mehta	" "	17. Purshotom Jiwansing	" "	32. Jaswantsinh Bahadur
Gen.Secretary	3. Ratilal C.Shah	" "	18* Abdulvahid A.	" "	33* Narayan Sirpurkar
Secretary	4* Sohrabali Murtuja	" "	19. Bhagwanbhai Gopalbhai	" "	34* Javid Ansari
"	5* Hanumansing Bajwansing	" "	20. Vasantlal Tulsiidas	" "	35* Purbhai Mansuri
"	6* V.G.Bhole	" "	21* Mahemud Chedi	" "	36* A. Raheman Alihasan
"	7. Natusing Indrasing	" "	22. Dhanjibhai Bhuldas	" "	37* Babubhai Yasinbhai
Treasurer	8. Somabhai C. Desai	" "	23* Abdulmajid A. Shakur	" "	38. Chimanlal Ambaram
Exec.Com.Member	9. Sarjuprasad Jokanlal	" "	24* Abdulmajid Azaz Beg	" "	39. Chintaman J. Pajankar
"	10* Keshavlal Maheshrimil	" "	25. Aglitkumar Dantali	" "	40. Ranchodlal Harilal
"	11* Ganpat Ramratan	" "	26* Abdulrazak Shaikbhai	" "	41. Ranchodlal Rajeshri
"	12. Amarsing Gyansing	" "	27* Ramu Shivram Kotekar	" "	42* Ganpat Shripat
"	13* Nurmahomed Shaikh	" "	28* Mahmudumar Ansari	" "	43. Purnottam Parmar
"	14. Premsinh Kishansinh	" "	29. Mohanlal Acharya	" "	44. Vasantlal Chauhan
"	15. Trikamsing Morising	" "	30. Bachubhai Abesing	" "	45. Naliniben Mehta

* Non-Gujaratis and Muslims.

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Non-Gujaratis took part in some of the more influential committees of the Corporation: Balaram Gupta was a member of the Standing Committee from 1967-69, Pitambar V. Patil was a member of the Housing and Improvement Committee from 1965-67. With the electoral eclipse of the Janta Parishad in the 1969 municipal elections, the representation of non-Gujrati migrants in the Municipal Corporation also ceased.

Muslims too gravitated towards the Janta Parishad in the mid- 60s. Muslims formed 15.2^o/o of Janta Parishad candidates in the 1965 Municipal Corporation election, compared to 7.5^o/o in the 1961 Municipal Corporation election. Although the percentage of Muslim candidates within the Congress also rose between 1961 and 1965 from 8.5^o/o to 14.1^o/o, in terms of elected Corporators, the ~~percentage~~ ^{Muslim} of Janta Parishad/Corporators out of the total number of Janta Parishad Corporators rose from 11.1^o/o in 1961 to 14.3^o/o in 1965, while that of Congress Muslim Corporators fell from 9.8^o/o of the total number of Congress Corporators in 1961 to 7.4^o/o in 1965.¹⁷

In the 1969 Municipal Corporation election, the Janta Parishad suffered a disastrous defeat, and its strength within the Corporation was reduced from 42 in 1965 to a mere 4 in 1969.¹⁸ However, if we analyze the socioeconomic background of candidates from the various parties in the 1969 municipal election, we can clearly see the importance of the non-Gujarati and Muslim element in the

United Front of the Janta Parishad, CPI, CPM, SSP, PSP and Republican

17. Percentages calculated from municipal election data made available by the University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad.

18. The United Front in the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election, consisting of the CPI, CPM, PSP, SSP and Republican party, secured 21 seats - the largest number of which, 11, went to the PSP.

party, compared with the Congress party.

Table 4.¹⁹

Socioeconomic Analysis of the Non-Gujarati
and Muslim candidates of the United Front
parties and the Congress party in the 1969
Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation election.

<u>Candidates:</u>	<u>Party:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Caste and Community</u>	<u>Occupation:</u>
1. Rajubhai C. Mansuri	United Front	N.Kalupur	Muslim	Businessman*
2. Nasiruddin P. Shaikh	"	Dariapur	"	Lawyer
3. Mohmudin A. Quereshi	"	Khanpur	"	"
4. Mohamed Sharif A. Kucheravala	"	Manekchowk	"	ex- Corporation employee
5. Gulamali J. Contractor	"	Jamalpur	"	-
6. Mohamedshafi A. Shaikh	"	"	"	-
7. Abdulrahim T. Kundivala	"	"	"	Owns a screen- printing business.
8. Anvar Husein Momin	"	Raikhad	"	Lawyer
9. Dr. A.A. Carvelo	"	Gandhigram	Christian	Doctor
10. Sohrabali Murtuja	"	Madhupura	Muslim	Millworker
11. Baluram G. Gupta	"	"	Bengali Bania	Businessman
12. Ramswami G. Naidu	"	Naroda	South Indian	Millworker
13. Ambalal R. Vora	"	Potalia	Muslim	Businessman
14. Pitambar V. Patil	"	Bapunagar	Maharash- trian	Millworker
15. Abdulrehman Tabassum	"	Rakhial	Muslim	"
16. Nizamudin Mustafa	"	Gomtipur	"	Trade unionist
17. Abdulrazak Shaikhiban	"	Rajpur	"	"
18. Pyarelal T. Bhaiyya	"	Amraivadi	U.P.	-

19. See Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Election, 1969: Our Candidates, a
booklet published by the Ahmedabad Corporation.

<u>Candidates:</u>	<u>Party:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Caste and Community</u>	<u>Occupation:</u>
19. Mahomedali Chedialikhah	United Front	Khokera-Mehmedabad	Muslim	Millworker
20. Mavaji J. Marvadi	"	Behrampura	Marvari	"
21. Mahemudmiya A. Contractor	Congress	N.Kalupur	Muslim	Businessman (medium scale)
22. Ibrahim N. Shaikh	"	Vadigam	"	Social Worker
23. Tamizben A. Quereshi	"	Khanpur	"	"
24. Nurmahomed G. Gulivala	"	Manekchowk	"	Factory-owner
25. Abdulkarim G. Shaikh	"	Jamalpur	"	"
26. Rafiudin A. Shaikh	"	Raikhad	"	Businessman
27. Ibrahim M. Maniar	"	Gomtipur	"	Trade unionist
28. Alabaksh Nurbhai Shaikh	"	Behrampura	"	Bleaching contractor*

* member of the Gujarat Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

It is interesting to note that whereas the Congress party nominated only 8 Muslim candidates and no Non-Gujarati candidates, the United Front had 14 Muslim candidates and 6 Non-Gujarati candidates. In addition, a very much larger proportion of United Front Non-Gujarati and Muslim candidates, particularly those of the CPM, were either millworkers or trade unionists.

The effect of Non-Gujarati migration and the changing communal balance was to increase insecurities and tensions within the City.

Not only did the increasing migration affect the indigenous population

of the City, but jealousies and conflicts between Hindu and Muslim migrants to the City themselves proved even more intense, and were to erupt into violence in the Communal Riots of September, 1969. The Bhaiyyas from UP, the largely Sindhi refugees from Pakistan, the Marwaris from Rajasthan, as well as the Hindu migrants from other parts of Gujarat found a scapegoat in their Muslim co-migrants for their frustrations in being uprooted into a deteriorating urban environment. The fact that Muslim migrants tended to be more urbanized and more often Non-Gujarati than Hindu migrants exacerbated these tensions, particularly among Hindu migrants from other parts of Gujarat. The more urbanized and more frequently Non-Gujarati Muslim migrants played an important part in the politics of the CPM and the Janta Parishad in Ahmedabad City, while the Jan Sangh found a particularly sympathetic hearing among the Hindu migrants, particularly the refugees from Pakistan and those from North Indian States, such as the UP where the Jan Sangh had already established a stronghold.

The background to deteriorating communal relations in the mid and late 60s also lay in increasingly difficult economic circumstances, particularly for the textile industry during these years. Failure of the monsoon and bad harvests in the mid 60s resulted in a shortfall in the amount of raw cotton available. This shortage, plus decontrol of cotton prices due to the efforts of the farm lobby, resulted in soaring raw material prices for the textile manufacturers. Wages had also risen sharply during the mid 60s due largely to increased dearness allowance.²⁰ As the following table

20. Report of the Gujarat Textile Reorganisation Committee.
(Government of Gujarat : Aug. 1968), p.17.

shows, by 1967 Ahmedabad was paying the highest dearness allowance of any textile centre in India:

Table 5. A Comparison of Dearness Allowance payments of the Major Textile Centres in India, 1964-67.

<u>Textile Centres:</u>	<u>Minimum basic wage per month:</u>	<u>Average D.A. for 26 working days in Rs.</u>			
		<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>	<u>1967</u>
Bombay	40	115	128	149	168
Ahmedabad	38	104	129	139	173
Nagpur	32	82	98	N.A.	N.A.
Madras	36	96	113	125	140
Kanpur	38	85	88	107	135
West Bengal	36	55	58	70	82

N.A. = Not Available.

Devaluation of the rupee in 1966 aggravated the situation, causing a countrywide recession and curtailment on the outlay for the Five Year Plan. Devaluation had an adverse effect on the textile industry, reducing the purchasing power of domestic consumers, and making it more difficult to obtain imports of raw material and machinery from abroad.²¹ Thus the manufacturing costs of the textile mills rose steeply, and markets were reduced.²² The Report of the Government of Gujarat's Textile Reorganisation Committee, headed by Manubhai Shah, which was appointed to look into the problems of the cotton textile industry in Gujarat, came out in August, 1968, and showed up the unsoundness of the textile industry

21. Discussions with Dr. Dholakia, lecturer in Economics, University of Gujarat, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

22. See the Ahmedabad MOA Report (1967). The MOA sent deputations to Morarji Desai, then Deputy Prime Minister, on 24 December 1967, and to the Chief Minister of Gujarat on 17 February 1968, urging measures to be taken to relieve the critical conditions affecting the textile industry.

and the need for greater rationalization and modernization. Some mills, it was found, had followed a more liberal dividend policy than justifiable at the cost of providing adequately for modernization and maintenance of their units. Profits, both before and after tax, reached an all time high in 1961, but fell far below this in the mid 60s.

Table 6.²³ Showing Profit Before and After Tax in the Cotton Textile Industry in Ahmedabad, 1951-66 (In crores of rupees).

<u>Years:</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1956</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>1966</u>
Profit before tax	6.65	7.29	10.76	3.53	7.81
Profit after tax	3.53	3.89	6.07	0.83	3.19

The Report discovered that the smaller units in terms of number of looms installed (i.e. 500 or below), and those units which spent considerably less than other units in Block per loom per year during the period 1950-66 tended to be more uneconomic. During the mid 60s, the cotton textile mills of Ahmedabad were squeezed between rising costs and lower margins: in 1966, out of 57 mills in Ahmedabad, 31 made a profit of Rs. 5.81 crores, whereas the remaining 26 made a loss of Rs. 2.27 crores, leaving a surplus balance of only Rs. 3.53 crores. Thus, due largely to obsolete machinery, financial difficulties and mismanagement, five mills were forced to close down, and some others faced the threat of closure.

23. Report of the Gujarat Textile Reorganisation Committee, p.21.

Table 7.²⁴ List of closed Cotton Textile Mills
in Ahmedabad up to mid 1968.

<u>Name of the Mill:</u>	<u>Date of Closure:</u>	<u>No. of Workers affected</u>
1. North Gujarat Cotton Mills Co. Ltd.	21. 2.1965	900
2. Hathising Mfg. Co.Ltd.	8. 6.1965	470
3. Ananta Mills Ltd.	1.10.1966	1385
4. Himabhai Mfg. Co. Ltd.	9. 1.1968	1188
5. Maneckchowk and Ahmedabad Manufacturing Co. Ltd.	1. 4.1968	<u>2200</u>
Total		6143

This growing textile crisis in the mid and late 1960s, marked by mill closures and rising unemployment, had a differential effect on Hindu and Muslim workers, and played an important part in exacerbating the communal tensions which led to the 1969 Communal Riots. The textile labour force in Ahmedabad is very much influenced by the traditional social structure, and the working class is still dominated by caste and communal antagonisms. The presence of a large Non-Gujrati element, including both Muslims and Hindus, has exacerbated these antagonisms, adding linguistic and regional divisions. This is largely a reflection of the nature of recruitment into the textile industry, and the nature of the unionization which arose subsequently. Workers for over a century, since the very beginning of the textile industry in Ahmedabad, tended to be recruited into the various departments and sections

24. Report of the Gujarat Textile Reorganisation Committee, p.76.

of departments in the mills on the basis of caste and community.

The Ahmedabad MOA, in its reply to the Questionnaire of the National Labour Commission in 1967, described this form of recruitment as follows:²⁵

"... with the gradual evolution of the Textile Mill Industry in this centre over a period of more than a century, there has arisen a certain type of monopolistic tendency among workers, with the result that certain departments and/or sections of departments in the mills have been manned more or less wholly by workers belonging to a particular caste or community. Such a development took place because of the fact that when the industry was first started in this centre, the recruits at the initial stage were naturally drawn from the caste and community who were already working in similar occupations viz. hand spinning, hand winding and hand weaving from yarn both hand spun as well as machine spun ... e.g. the spinners were recruited from Harijans, inhabitants of North Gujarat who were hereditary handloom weavers, while the winders and weavers were mostly drawn from the local Muslim Community of handloom weavers. Gradually this process took the form of a rigid monopoly - Ring Spinning Section for the Harijans and weaving for the Muslims - and continued thereafter, though at a later stage weaving has been taken up as an occupation by non-Muslim communities and in a number of cases there is a preponderance of non-Muslim weavers over the Muslim Weavers. Today there is no bar to any worker to secure employment in any department of a mill but there is always reluctance on the part of, say a Harijan, to join as a Weaver when offered such a job..."

In the 1960s, many of the Muslims who dominated the weaving sections were Non-Gujaratis, and Harijans still tended to dominate the Ring Spinning and Throstle Departments.²⁶ In dyeing and printing, the Muslims still dominated.²⁷ The occupational structure in the mills is still predominantly castewise. A retired mill manager is reported to have said that workers of different castes refuse to

25. MOA Report (1967), Appendix 1, pp. 6-7.

26. Interview with M.T. Shukla, Secretary of the Majur Mahajan, and Neeru Desai, intellectual and senior journalist in the Gujarat Samachar, in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

27. See B.K. Roy Burman, "Social Profile of Ahmedabad", Seminar No. 25 (January, 1970), pp. 33-38.

sit with one another for lunch and dinner in dining sheds or halls of the mills, i.e. following the caste taboo on interdining.²⁸

The Major Mahajan was organized departmentally as a federation of craft unions in deference to the pattern of caste and communal divisions which had grown up in the industry. Thus it preferred to uphold the status quo and work within this structure of caste and communal divisions within the cotton textile industry in Ahmedabad, rather than to challenge it, and try and forge a united working class based on working-class consciousness. It conducted social welfare programmes among the Harijans and other castes, particularly the backward castes, and tried to alleviate their lot socially and economically, but it did little to educate the workers, politically, to fight caste divisions and religious bigotry. It even pandered to religious feelings, organizing kirtans and bhajan-singing among the Harijans without adequately gauging the effect on Muslims in a mixed locality. There was little concerted effort to instil a secular ideology among the workers as was attempted by the Communist unions.

In these circumstances, the crisis in the textile industry and specific economic difficulties were bound to have differential effects on communal groups of workers, providing an underlying economic motivation for the Communal Riots of 1969. Weavers, who were largely Muslims and some upper caste Hindus, were highly skilled workers and, therefore, in short supply compared to workers of other departments, and, consequently, enjoyed relative job security

28. See Dr. Paresh Majumdar's unpublished Ph.D. thesis on the Major Mahajan. (University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad: 1970).

and high wages. Redundancies were not likely to be as severe on this section of workers. Since those Harijans, who did manage to become weavers, were mostly confined to coarse weaving, the overall trend of the Ahmedabad textile industry in switching, particularly since the Second World War, from coarse and medium varieties to fine and superfine varieties of cloth has meant a greater degree of insecurity for Harijan workers than for Muslim workers - this insecurity was compounded by the textile crisis of the mid and late 60s. The process of rationalization and change-over to complicated, high-speed automatic machinery also adversely affected the less skilled.²⁹

Communal tension has also been generated through the gradual adoption of the Decasualization Scheme, initiated in 1949, to ensure a more rational, efficient and just recruitment of labour, which has affected the traditional vested interests of the jobbers, who are prone to react by stirring up communal tensions.³⁰

Another source of grievance and conflicting interests among the textile workers, which expressed itself in terms of caste and communal antagonisms, was the problem of wage differentials. Wage differentials in the cotton textile industry in Ahmedabad are still on an unscientific basis, with resulting anomalies and injustices. The problem is a long and deep-rooted one. As early as 1948, when the occupational wages of different categories of employees in the Ahmedabad cotton textile mills were being standardized

29. See MOA Report (1967), also B.K.Roy Burman, "Social Profile of Ahmedabad", Seminar No. 25 (January, 1970), pp. 33-38.

30. See MOA Report (1967).

by the Industrial Court in Bombay, the MOA submitted an Experts' Report on scientific wages, urging that wage-rates should be placed on a scientific basis through a proper assessment of work-loads and job analysis based on various factors like skill, physical strain, degree of danger, fatigue etc. However, the Court was unable to take this into account due partly to the restricted nature of its terms of reference and more importantly because of the strong opposition of the TLA, with the result that the Assessor appointed by the Court recommended wage-scales for different occupations by increasing existing wage-rates on an ad hoc, not a scientific basis. Over the years, wage-rates and differentials continued to be revised on an ad hoc basis, despite continuing efforts by employers to alter this. As late as 1967, the employers' scheme to put wages and wage differentials on a scientific basis was still rejected due to the continuing hostility of the labour unions.³¹ The MOA expressed its exasperation to the National Commission on Labour in the following terms.³²

"The Labour Union is in the habit of talking about the need of fixing wages in relation to work-load assessment scientifically, but in practice, they are never prepared to come to brass tacks, and claim adjustment in wages on ad hoc basis in no way related to work-load..."

One of the major underlying reasons for the TLA's refusal to seriously reconsider and re-assess wage differentials among different occupations in the cotton textile industry (bearing in mind that the TLA itself is organized in terms of the different departments which are

31. See Annual Report of the Gujarat Chambers of Commerce and Industry (1967).

32. See MOA Report (1967), Appendix 1, p .44.

divided to a large extent by caste and community) was that this would disturb the existing status quo among the different castes and communities, predominating in these various occupations. Thus those groups, who would stand to benefit from a more scientific reappraisal of wage differentials and whose demands were not championed by the sole representative union in the cotton textile industry, would have very little chance of redressing their grievances by negotiation. The TLA, which is dominated by strongly paternal, bureaucratic, largely "outsider" leaders, full of Gandhian rhetoric, did not provide an adequate forum for confrontation, where conflicts between different sections of workers could be openly thrashed out by democratic means, and, therefore, very often these conflicts and rivalries were forced to go underground.

Thus these economic grievances and conflicts, which took on a caste and communal character, set against a background of growing crisis for the cotton textile industry, coupled with a gradually deteriorating communal climate politically, provided much of the motivation and raw material underlying the apparently fortuitous circumstances leading to the Communal Riots of 1969. The economic complexion of the Riots can be seen in the fact that, unlike all the previous Communal Riots in the City, including the Riots at the time of Partition in the mid-40s, which had all taken place primarily within the walled area of the City where the long-established Gujarati Muslim community dwelt, the 1969 Riots, for the first time, spread to the working-class, industrial areas outside the old fort wall with their large migrant populations, where they assumed a greater intensity and violence.

Politically and socially the communal climate in Ahmedabad deteriorated during the 1960s. According to the Report of the Inquiry into the Communal Disturbances in Ahmedabad on and after the 18th September 1969, this deterioration began soon after the Chinese invasion of India in 1962, "and certainly after the Pakistan invasion in 1965 when communal organizations and political parties began to make their impact upon communal harmony".³³

Specific incidents and activities, which contributed to the slow building up of communal tension in the months preceding the Communal Riots of September 1969, can be traced back to the Jamiat-Ul-Ulema-e-Hind³⁴ conference in Ahmedabad in June, 1968, and the RSS Rally, held in Ahmedabad from the 27th to the 29th December, 1968. Although neither was, on balance, directly inciting, both showed that communal organizations were actively making their presence felt on the Ahmedabad scene, and increasing the tempo of their activities. At the Jamiat Conference, 1,000 copies, priced at 0.50 paise each, of a booklet, called "The Communal Riots and the harm they have done to the country and the Hindu religion", by Maulana Aklaq Hussain Hashimi, President of the Delhi Jamiat-Ul-Ulema, were distributed to Muslims. The booklet described the alleged atrocities by Hindus on Muslims, and a speech, made at the Conference, by Maulana Asad Madni contained claims that the Muslims were a superior community; referred to the RSS theory that Brahmin Peshwas of Maharashtra had the right to rule; recounted

33. Report of the Inquiry into the Communal Disturbances at Ahmedabad and Other Places in Gujarat On and After 18th September 1969, p.212. The Inquiry was instituted by the Government of Gujarat on 13 October 1969, and chaired by Mr. Justice P.Jaganmohan Reddy, Judge of the Supreme Court of India. The two members of the Committee of Inquiry were Justice Nusserwanji K.Vakil, Judge of the Gujarat High Court, and Justice Akbar S.Sarela, also a Judge of the Gujarat High Court. This Report will be referred to henceforth as the Reddy Report.

34. The Jamiat-Ul-Ulema-e-Hind established itself in Ahmedabad

the sufferings of the Muslims at the hands of Hindu rioters; and accused the administration of bias against Muslims. However, this was counter-balanced by other references in Maulana Asad Madni's speech when he exhorted his co-religionists with the words that Islam will not prosper if Muslims commit oppression, and urged them not to talk of revenge but to exercise restraint, not to become communalists but to work for the progress of the country as in that lay the prosperity of Muslims.³⁵

The RSS Rally, held at Ahmedabad on the 27th, 28th and 29th of December, 1968, on open ground at Vivekanand High School in Maninagar, and attended by Shri Golwalkar, marked a high-point in the activities of the RSS in Ahmedabad and the Jan Sangh with whom it was closely related, for many all-India Jan Sanghi leaders had paid increasingly frequent visits to Ahmedabad in the later 60s. Golwalkar's utterances, while not directly inciting, were bound to stir up communal feelings. As reported in the Shibir, he criticized atrocities committed by Muslims on Hindus in Pakistan during the partition period, and criticized the Communists and the violent tactics adopted by students and textile labourers to solve their problems. In a press interview Shri Golwalkar gave the local Jan Satta, he alleged that Hindus were being neglected, whereas special laws were enacted to protect the minority community in India. He declared that he was not an enemy of the Muslims, but wanted them to be Indian nationals, and to be loyal to the nation.³⁶

in 1945 with its office at Khas Bazaar. Maulana Mohmedmiya Surti was the President, and Ahmedmiya M. Peerzada was the General-Secretary. Its official membership in 1969 was 5,575.

35. Reddy Report, pp. 47-51.

36. Reddy Report, pp. 51-52.

An incident, which played a major part in straining communal relations in Ahmedabad, and had far-reaching consequences, was the so-called Quran Incident, which occurred on the 10th of March, 1969. It illustrated how communal passions could flare up out of a seemingly trivial incident. The Times of India described the Quran Incident as follows:

"Yesterday nearly 25 persons including 10 policemen were injured in a violent clash between a 3000 strong mob and armed policemen near Kalupur tower in Ahmedabad in the evening. The trouble began when a police vehicle dashed against a hand-cart carrying religious scriptures of a minority community (the Quran). A small crowd nearby demanded apology from the policemen for the alleged 'sacrilege'. Tempers were frayed as the policemen refused to oblige the mob which soon swelled to 1000s."37

Finally, under the directions of Shri Renison, the then Commissioner of Police, a police apology was broadcast on a loudspeaker to the effect that if the sentiments of any Muslims had been hurt, they were sorry for it. The police alleged that anti-national slogans, such as "Is se to Pakistan Achha hai. Agar Hindu kamandir jala diya to kya hota. Police ko maro, Quran sharif ka upman hua" (Pakistan is better than this. What would happen if you set fire to a Hindu temple? The Quran has been insulted, strike the police) were shouted by the Muslims in the crowd, but this was denied by Muslim leaders.

This incident had serious repercussions on communal relations in Ahmedabad. Muslim leaders demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident and the death of an eighteen-year-old boy, Mohammed Ghani,

37. See the Times of India (Bombay), 11 March , 1969.

in the clash between the police and the crowd. A judicial inquiry was also demanded by Dr. Somabhai Desai, the Janta Parishad Mayor of Ahmedabad, and the Deputy Mayor, Mr. N.P. Shaikh. Questions regarding the incident were asked in the Gujarat State Assembly. Both the Gujarati and English press gave very wide coverage to the incident. Despite widespread demands for a judicial inquiry, the Deputy Home Minister, Mr. Jairambhai Patel, said in the Gujarat Assembly that a judicial inquiry was not necessary as the Government had asked the Police Commissioner to fully investigate the incident.³⁸ This left many, particularly in the Muslim community, dissatisfied. The police testified that the reaction of Hindu leaders to the incident was that the Government was soft-peddalling and appeasing Muslims by asking high-ranking police officers to apologize. The incident was bitterly recalled by Hindus in the following months as a prime example of the Government's appeasement policy towards the Muslims.³⁹

The Quran incident, coming in the sensitive pre-election period just before the 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections of early April, undoubtedly played an important part in the Jan Sangh's first-ever electoral success in Ahmedabad, when it won three seats in the 1969 municipal elections. Its candidates, Pramod Chandra C. Patel, a small businessman and a prominent figure in the Atrocities Removal Committee (largely concerned with helping the Hindu refugees from Pakistan), and Ramchandra G. Panchal, a

38. See the Times of India (Bombay), 14 March, 1969.

39. Reddy Report, pp. 52-54.

factory-owner, won both the seats in the inner-city ward of Dariapur. Another Jan Sangh candidate, Kishorchandra H. Dikshit, a Brahmin lawyer, who was active in white-collar unionism as Secretary, Vice-President and honorary member of the Gujarat Life Insurance Employees' Society, and as President of the Gujarat branch of the General Insurance Employees' Society, was successfully elected from the middle-class enclave of Maninagar, which is surrounded by the predominantly working-class suburbs of Khokera-Mehmedabad and Baherampura.

If we compare the number of votes, percentage of votes and seats won in municipal constituencies in Ahmedabad in the 1961, 1965 and 1969 municipal elections, and the number and percentage of deposits lost, and the spread of constituencies contested, we can see that the Jan Sangh had made a fairly deep inroad into the electorate largely in the years following the 1965 election, and that by 1969 its appeal was fairly widespread, extending to the City areas, the middle class suburbs and the working-class areas too. (Table 8). The striking expansion in the mass-base of the Jan Sangh between 1965 and 1969 can be seen in the steep rise in the number and percentage of votes in the 1969 election as compared to the 1961 and 1965 elections: in 1961, the Jan Sangh secured 24,677 votes or 2^o/o of total votes. These figures actually declined in 1965, when it secured 24,406 votes and only 1.62^o/o of total votes. However, in 1969, its total votes went up more than five times to 130,640 or 11.28^o/o of the total votes of all parties and Independents. The percentage of candidates who lost their deposits fell steadily from 61.54^o/o in 1961 to 44.4^o/o in 1965, to 25.86^o/o in 1969. With the exception of Khokera-

Table 8.⁴⁰

A Comparison of the number and percentage of votes secured and the number of seats won in municipal wards in the 1961, 1965 and 1969 Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation elections.

by Jan Sangh candidates

1961 election

Total no. of Jan Sangh Candidates: 13

1969 election

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9

Total no. of Jan Sangh Candidates: 13

Ward:	Vote:	%	Seats:	Ward:	Vote:	%	Seats:	Ward:	Vote:	%	Seats:
1. Khadia 1	2965	8.8	-	1. Khadia 1	-	-	-	1. Khadia 1	9257	23.36	-
2. Khadia 2	-	-	-	2. Khadia 2	-	-	-	2. Khadia 2	5968	12.89	-
3. Kalupur 1	-	-	-	3. Kalupur 1	-	-	-	3. S. Kalupur	-	-	-
4. Kalupur 2	-	-	-	4. Kalupur 2	-	-	-	4. N. Kalupur	-	-	-
5. Dariapur	-	-	-	5. Dariapur	5533	5.14	-	5. Gheekanta	-	-	-
6. Shahpur	-	-	-	6. Shahpur	-	-	-	6. Dariapur	8611	42.24	2
7. Jamalpur	-	-	-	7. Jamalpur	-	-	-	7. Vadigam	-	-	-
8. Raikhad	2868	6.6	-	8. Raikhad	2805	5.85	-	8. Shahpur	-	-	-
9. Ellisbridge	4603	4.8	-	9. S. Ellisbridge	-	-	-	9. Kharpur	6074	14.65	-
10. Shahibag	-	-	-	10. N. Ellisbridge	4217	6.55	-	10. Manekchowk	-	-	-
11. Asarva	-	-	-	11. Sabarmati	-	-	-	11. Jamalpur	-	-	-
12. Saraspur	2582	2.0	-	12. Shahibag	856	1.42	-	12. Raikhad	-	-	-
13. Gomtipur	4141	2.9	-	13. Asarva	-	-	-	13. Paldi	6164	12.81	-
14. Khokera-	-	-	-	14. Saraspur	4668	2.61	-	14. Gandhigam	6080	14.82	-
15. Mehmedabad	7518	12.9	-	15. Rakhial	1649	2.80	-	15. Vadaaj	7585	13.80	-
16. Maninagar-	-	-	-	16. Gomtipur	2688	3.19	-	16. Sabarmati	-	-	-
17. Baherampura	-	-	-	17. Khokera-	1990	2.06	-	17. Dudheshwar	3001	14.85	-
				Mehmedabad	-	-	-	18. Madhupura	5368	15.86	-
				18. Maninagar-	-	-	-	19. Girdhanagar	-	-	-
				Baherampura	-	-	-	20. Asarva	4940	23.21	-
								21. Chamanpura	4176	10.81	-
								22. Naroda	8331	21.73	-
								23. Saraspur	2267	11.00	-
								24. Potalia	9647	19.49	-
								25. Bapunagar	2445	11.54	-
								26. Rakhial	4225	8.94	-
								27. Gomtipur	-	-	-
								28. Rajpur	8178	19.04	-
								29. Amraivadi	958	5.47	-
								30. Khokera-	6822	17.57	-
								Mehmedabad			

40. Electoral statistics made available by the School of

40. Electoral statistics made available by the School of Social Sciences, University of Gujarat, Ahmedabad.

<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Vote:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Seats:</u>	<u>Ward:</u>	<u>Vote:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Seats:</u>
Total:	24,677	2.0	-		24,406	1.62	-
				31. Maninagar	11,206	28.34	1
				32. Kancharia	5,022	13.59	-
				33. Baherampura	5,045	14.24	-
					130,640	11.28	3

Mehmedabad in 1961, where the Jan Sangh secured 12.9⁰/o of the total votes in the ward, the Jan Sangh's main pockets of strength in 1961 were in the inner-city wards of Khadia (8.8⁰/o of total votes) and Raikhad (6.6⁰/o of total votes) and the affluent suburb of Ellisbridge (4.8⁰/o of total votes). It secured a very small proportion of the votes in the other labour areas which it contested, i.e. Saraspur (2⁰/o of total votes) and Gomtipur (2.9⁰/o of total votes). In 1965, its pockets of strength were once again in the inner-city wards and middle-class suburbs of Dariapur (5.14⁰/o of total votes), Raikhad (5.85⁰/o of total votes) and North Ellisbridge (6.55⁰/o). In the labour wards, which it contested, its voting percentage was very low, and in Khokera-Mehmedabad, where it had done comparatively well in 1961 in terms of percentage of votes, securing 12.9⁰/o, its voting percentage in 1965 fell to 2.06⁰/o. In contrast, in 1969, while the Jan Sangh won its three seats from the inner-city ward of Dariapur and the middle-class suburb of Maninagar, its coverage and support in labour areas increased significantly, particularly in Asarva, where it secured 23.21⁰/o or almost a quarter of the total votes, and in Naroda, where it secured 21.73⁰/o of the total votes. In 1969, for the first time, the Jan Sangh secured more than 15⁰/o of the total votes in six labour wards, and more than 10⁰/o of the total votes in twelve labour wards. Thus, by 1969, it had gained considerable support from among the Hindu migrants, particularly those from non-Gujarat states where the Jan Sangh was already well-established, and from Hindu refugees from Pakistan living in the labour areas of Ahmedabad City, which were to be the scene of the greatest violence and destruction in the Communal Riots

of September, 1969. In the 1969 municipal election, Jan Sangh candidates got second place in eleven seats.

Although the Jan Sangh as an all-India and State-level party seems to have had no part in the Communal Riots of September 1969 individual Jan Sangh leaders and workers in Ahmedabad City were found by the Reddy Report to be closely involved in incidents which inflamed the communal situation in Ahmedabad in the period immediately preceding the Riots, and in the actual Riots themselves.

The Al Aqsa Procession of August 31st, 1969, in which a huge Muslim crowd marched in protest against the alleged desecration of the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, served to harden Hindu attitudes against the Muslims in Ahmedabad. The police alleged that anti-national slogans were shouted and carried on placards by Muslim demonstrators. The general resentment felt by Hindus against this display of extra-territorial loyalty by the Muslims of Ahmedabad was echoed in newspaper articles critical of the extra-territorial nature of the agitation. An article by Shri Vasudev Mehta, which appeared in the Gujarat Samachar on September 7th, 1969, under the title, "Al Aqsa Episode and Muslims of India", contained the following critical references:

"Muslims of India, while sharing the anguish with other Muslims, made their frenzy more dreadful than Muslims of Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia - they should understand the limitations as citizens of a secular State like India ... Whenever it suits, cunning politicians discover religious ties, even though their policies - of the same religious States - are divergent and selfish. While different Indian citizens - Muslims, communists have international loyalties - Hindus have none. Hence their citizenship is superior. Serious blunder was committed by Mahatmaji, who mixed Khilafat with Independence."⁴¹

41. Reddy Report, pp. 54-56.

The depth of Hindu resentment can be gauged by the fact that soon after the occurrence of the Jagannath Temple incident, which precipitated the communal riots of 1969, many Hindus, including Swami Harshadasji of the Jagannath Temple, angrily recalled this incident to their minds. Shri Peerzada, prominent Muslim leader and witness before the Reddy Commission of Inquiry, testified that Swami Harshadasji had bitterly recalled the Al Aqsa incident, while speaking to the Peace Committee on September 19th, 1969, the day following the Jagannath Temple incident, in the following words:

"When the Muslims can take out a procession of lakhs when their masjid (the Al Aqsa Masjid) is burnt, why the Hindus are sitting silent when Vishwa Temple was attacked?"

A communal organization, called the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti (Committee to Defend the Hindu Religion), which played a sinister and inciting role in the Communal Riots of September, 1969, was established by Jan Sangh and RSS leaders in Ahmedabad City to agitate against the Government and police handling of the Ramayana incident of September 4th, 1969 - the most serious incident to disrupt communal peace in the period prior to the Riots.⁴²

The version of the Ramayana incident most widely believed in the weeks preceding the Riots, and reported in numerous newspapers and quoted by Shri K.G.Motwani, Superintendent of the Special Branch at Ahmedabad, in his daily reports was as follows: on the 4th September, 1969, "Janmashtami Day", Pandit Balkrishna was conducting a "Ramlila" programme and side by side reciting the Ramayana at

42. Reddy Report, pp. 56-67.

Narayandas Chawl, Baherampura, when the subordinate police staff of Baherampura Chowkey (Kagdapith Police Station) prevented him from doing so on the grounds that he had not obtained permission for playing music. Soon after, Police Superintendent Shaikh, a Muslim, of Baherampura Chowkey came personally and humiliated Pandit Balkrishna, dispersed the people in the Ramlila by force, and threw down the Ramayana and kicked it. The next day, Pandit Balkrishna and the residents of Narayandas Chawl sent a protest against the conduct of P.S.I. Shaikh to the police and requested that action should be taken against him by higher authorities.

However, according to a Special Government Report made by the police over one month after the Riots, the Deputy Commissioner of Police declared that P.S.I. Shaikh had acted indiscreetly and failed to appreciate the sentiments of the people, for which suitable action should be taken against him, but that the main allegation against him that he had kicked the Ramayana was not true. The Special Government Report goes on to establish beyond dispute the involvement of local Jan Sangh and RSS leaders and workers in the formation of the HDRS to agitate on the Ramayana incident for strong action against P.S.I. Shaikh:

"Thereafter on the night of September 9th, 1969, Shri Balkrishna approached the local Bharatiya Jan Sangh workers and through them contacted one Shri Harishchandra S. Panchal (an old RSS worker) and it was decided that instead of openly supporting them in the name of Bharatiya Jan Sangh the same may be started in the name of Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti. Accordingly, the 'Samiti' was formed with Shri Panchal as its convenor. It was further decided that one Shri Sevakram Thakkar, a Sindhi, who is running a hotel near the Municipal Office would join Shri Balkrishna and resort to an indefinite hunger strike outside Kagdapith Police Station in order to protest against the action of PSI Shri Shaikh

and demand his removal from the force."⁴³

The Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti widely distributed three pamphlets. One urged the Government to respect the feelings of the Hindu Janta, which had been grievously hurt by the kicking of the Ramayana by P.S.I. Shaikh on Janmashtami Day, and to dismiss the insolent Shri Shaikh immediately. The second pamphlet earnestly requested the Hindu Janta to give cooperation with body, mind, and money to the brethren who have gone on fast from 11th September 1969, opposite Kagdapith PS. It announced that an all-party public meeting was arranged at the square near Raipur Darwaja on 15th September, and a procession would be taken out on 14th September to disapprove the insult to the Ramayana. The third pamphlet declared that P.S.I. Shaikh had uttered obscene words about the Ramayana, and that thousands of citizens and leaders were visiting the hunger-strikers and giving them support and honouring them by garlands, slogans and Bhajans.

Newspaper reports also contributed to the growing communal excitement. The Gujarat Samachar of 9th September reported that the citizens of Behrampura have clamoured for help before the Chief Minister and City Congress President, Jamnashankar Pandya, and have demanded action against the police officer who kicked the Ramayana, the holy scriptures of the Hindu religion: "In a memorandum submitted with the signatures of citizens it has been warned that citizens would take stern action against the said non-Hindu Police Officer on Government's failure in that regard." In a report

43. Reddy Report, p.65.

in the Jai Hind of September 17th under the caption "Indefinite fast against insult to the Ramayana", the following was written:

"A deputation under the leadership of Shri Harish-chandra Panchal, convenor of the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti, met Inspector Parmar of the Kag-dapith Police Station, and presented a memo addressed to the Police Commissioner. It has been stated in that memo that, due to such irresponsible, communal and anti-Hindu behaviour of Shri Shaikh the feelings of the Hindu community have been offended. Shri Shaikh has intentionally gravely insulted the Hindu religion. It has been demanded in that memo to relieve Shri Shaikh immediately from his post. If this demand is not accepted, the offended feelings of the Hindu community will result in agitation and the Government alone will be responsible for its consequences. In a meeting, all the members of the Sindhi Cloth Market Association expressed their grief for communal and anti-Hindu acts of Shri Shaikh. They have lodged strong protest against this."⁴⁴

Unfavourable comparisons were made between the Government's attitude to P.S.I. Shaikh in the Ramayana incident and their appeasement policy towards the Muslims in the Quran incident. The Sangharsh Samiti consisting of representatives of opposition parties demanded a high-level inquiry into the Ramayana incident. Even after P.S.I. Shaikh was suspended on September 14th and the fast was given up, the feelings of resentment and bitterness among Hindus persisted.⁴⁵

At this highly sensitive period, from the point of view of communal relations in Ahmedabad, Balraj Madhok, Ex-President of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh of India, came to Ahmedabad and delivered two speeches on the 14th and 16th September: in Khanpur for the Ahmedabad Military and Rifle Training Association in the Captain Modek Memorial Lecture Series on the subject "Pakistani Threat";

44. Reddy Report, p.62.

45. Reddy Report, p.63.

and in the Dinesh Hall under the auspices of the Ahmedabad Junior Chamber on the subject, "India on the Cross-Roads". Although these speeches were delivered before the intelligentsia and so could not be said to have fomented mass communal tensions, they did contain communally disturbing statements. In his first speech, he said: "What have we done these twenty years to Indianize the Muslims? We have on the contrary kindled the feeling of separatism in them. We gave them the right to marry four wives. To talk about secularism and then bring in religion is wrong." In his second speech, he remarked that Indian Muslims staged massive demonstrations on the issue of the burning of Al Aqsa Mosque in Israel, while they did not take any action against the Pakistan aggression in 1965. In India, 95% of Muslims were pro-Pakistani, and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was the only party which had a national ideology and would bring the country forward.⁴⁶

The Reddy Report came to the conclusion that all these incidents, i.e. the Quran incident, the Al Aqsa Procession, the Ramayana incident, Madhok's speeches, taken in isolation did not have a direct effect in disrupting communal harmony, yet taken together they did create a tense communal atmosphere. They wrote: "The fuel, in our view, had been gathered, which required only a match to set it on fire and a fan to fan the city ablaze."⁴⁷

That match proved to be the Jagannath Temple incident, which precipitated the Communal Riots of September, 1969. During the celebration of Pir Bukhari Saheb's Urs at his Durgah, known as Bukhari Saheb's Chilla, situated near the Jagannath Temple outside

46. Reddy Report, pp. 67-81.

47. Reddy Report, p.212.

Jamalpur Gate, by the Muslims of Ahmedabad, a batch of Temple cows guided by sadhus passed safely through the crowd of Muslims as the organizers of the celebration had announced that the cows were coming, and the police had cleared the road. However, the crowd was not aware that a second batch was coming, and when cows in this second batch shied and began to run about frightening women and children and toppling over vendors' handcarts, the crowd was plainly annoyed, and anti-social elements took advantage of this situation. The sadhus were set upon with sticks and stones and pieces of broken glass and chased into the Temple. During the course of this chase, the glass frame of the pictures of Shri Narsinhdasji, a revered Swami of the Temple, and Shri Krishna with a cow, in front of the main gate, was shattered. This damage to the holy picture-frames was construed as an attack on the Temple, although the Reddy Report concludes: "The evidence, in our view, does not disclose that the incident was an attack on the Temple as such for damage to the actual Jagannath Temple was negligible."⁴⁸

Muslim leaders, including Shri Peerzada, made strenuous efforts to express regret and apologies to the Mahant of the Temple, but, although police officers went into the Temple to prepare the ground for their apology, they were never called. Police efforts to bring the Muslim leaders and the Mahant, and sadhus together were frustrated by one of the sadhus, Ram Harshadasji, who was in line to inherit the gadi after the present Mahant. Harshadasji suddenly interfered with a bitter speech, saying that Swami Sevadasji did not desire that any person should take pardon from him, and that Swami Sevadasji

48. Reddy Report, pp. 82-90.

had done his duty by asking the sadhus not to retaliate which is why the Muslims had escaped uninjured after seriously attacking the Temple and disrespecting the late Mahant Narsinhdasji and pelting stones on the figure of Lord Krishna. He went on, saying that he now left it to the Hindu Janta to decide what course they should take to relieve the sentiments of the sadhus who had suffered in the name of the "Dharma".⁴⁹

That night several incidents took place at Raipur and Khadia. A laundry and other shops belonging to Muslims were burnt and Muslim religious places were attacked and damaged. The next morning, the press flashed the news about the attack on the Jagannath Temple in broad headlines in a sensational manner.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the Commissioner of Police, Shri E.F. Deboo, and the Inspector-General of Police, Shri K.S. Pavri, called a peace conference on the morning of the 19th which went to the Jagannath Temple to enable Muslim leaders to make a second attempt to apologize to the Mahant. This was again sabotaged by Shri Harshadasji. When Jamnashankar Pandya, President of the Ahmedabad City DCC, made a speech asking the sadhus to forget and forgive, Shri Harshadasji inflamed Hindu feelings by bursting out that the sadhus would not accept any apology, the incident in the Temple must be avenged, and that, when the Muslims could take out a procession in lakhs when their masjid was burnt, why were the Hindus sitting silent when Vishva Temple was attacked.⁵⁰

Soon after their mid-day prayers, another large Muslim crowd gathered in an angry mood on hearing news that a durgah situated opposite the Jagannath Temple was alleged to have been damaged by

49. Reddy Report, p.96.

50. Reddy Report, p.93.

the sadhus. Ultimately the police persuaded them to disperse after a complaint had been filed about this. However, this gave rise to the rumour that there had been another attack on the Jagannath Temple, and the course of the Riots was set, for from then on incidents of violence and destruction intensified.

Sensational newspaper reporting, incendiary pamphlets and wild rumours fanned the flames of the Riots. The Jai Hind of September 19th bore the headline "Fanatical attack on the Jagannathji Temple". The Jan Satta had an anti-Government slant in its reporting of the meeting held under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti on the evening of the 19th, which the police had ordered to be cancelled. Under the caption of "Meeting held in defiance of ban", it reported:

"A big meeting was held today (19th) at seven o'clock in the evening outside Raipur Gate under the auspices of the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti to express feelings on yesterday's incident at the Jagannath Temple. In spite of the announcement that the meeting was cancelled, crowds had started assembling there. Shri Shambhu Maharaj informed the people that the Chief Minister, Shri Hitendra Desai, paid a visit to the Jagdish Temple, when we informed him, 'If steps are not taken to our satisfaction in the matter of the Jagdish temple, we would start a big agitation.'... In the meeting Shri Shambhu Maharaj said, 'I have defied section 144. If police desire to take my head off for this offence, they may do so.'"

The most outrageous piece of reporting was of an incident of the rape of Hindu women and girls in Rakhial, which was found to be false. Despite the issue later on of a special handout by the Director of Information contradicting the alleged incident, the damage had been done. The Sevak, the afternoon edition of Sandesh, reported on September 20th:

"An inhuman and shocking incident has occurred in the Gandhi Park Society situated in Rakhial near Lal Mill today in the early hours. ... The persons resident in the surrounding areas of the Park not only made an attack with scythes, hockey sticks and kabba etc., but also stripped unmarried and married women naked and outraged their modesty in early morning. ... The deplorable aspect of this incident as reported is that the police were present when this took place. This incident has occurred because the Park is surrounded by the population of the other community."

Messages on the Dariapur Futi Masjid and Dariapur Kadia Naka blackboards gave highly exaggerated versions of the Jagannath Temple incident, and called upon Hindus to take the law in their own hands. Vitriolic, anti-Muslim pamphlets were circulated on the 19th: the authorship of one, called "Hindus Beware", was anonymous, another called "Jagdishaya Namal, Public Appeal," was issued under the name of the Jagdish Temple. Another pamphlet called "A public meeting condemning the heinous attack on the holy Jagannath Temple of Hindus" was written under the name of Ratanlal Gupta, Ward Convener of the HDRS. Another pamphlet, called "Total strike" in protest against the attack by communal Muslims on the Jagannath Temple" was openly attributed to the HDRS. Inciting rumours were also widely current. Among the most damaging were the rumours that a sadhu, who had been injured in the Jagannath Temple incident, had died in hospital; the Mahant had died; and the Municipal dairy milk had been poisoned. This last rumour was actually broadcast on all-India radio in a news item warning people not to drink municipal milk. It was only after the milk had actually been tested that people were informed that the rumour was false.⁵¹

51. Reddy Report, pp. 102-113.

Although the Riots began in the walled city area, when a 400-strong Hindu mob broke open the Notabene Washing Company, owned by a Muslim, and set its articles on fire at about 23.50 hours on the 18th at Raipur Chakla near Chhabila Hanuman under the Gaekwad Police Station, they soon spread to the suburban industrial areas where they gained in intensity and violence. The worst incidents of destruction of Muslim property and murder of Muslims were not in the city areas with their comparatively large Muslim populations or in the affluent Western suburbs of Ellisbridge and Navrangpura with their tiny proportion of Muslims, but in the industrial suburbs east of the Sabarmati with their sizeable number of Muslims, mostly migrants, residing in mixed localities of Muslim and Hindu workers. The following table gives a picture of the distribution of Hindus and Muslims in the various Police Stations both in the walled city and suburban areas.

Table 9.⁵² The Distribution of Hindus and Muslims by Police Station in the Walled City and Suburban areas of Ahmedabad.

<u>Name of Police Station:</u>	<u>No. of</u>	<u>No. of</u>	<u>No. of</u>
<u>Walled City Area:</u>	<u>Hindus:</u>	<u>Muslims:</u>	<u>Others:</u>
1. Gaekwad Haveli	89,000	66,000	3,000
2. Karanj	165,900	82,000	2,100
3. Kalupur	185,000	100,000	-
<u>Suburban Area:</u>			
4. Ellisbridge	138,825	2,000	-
5. Navrangpura	143,000	2,000	-
6. Madhupura	120,421	16,000	4,000
7. Sherkotda	114,100	11,300	-
8. Sardarnagar	98,000	2,000	-

52. Figures compiled from information contained in the Reddy Report, pp. 23-30.

<u>Name of Police Station:</u> <u>Suburban Area:</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Hindus:</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Muslims:</u>	<u>No. of</u> <u>Others:</u>
9. Kagdapith	113,900	24,000	2,100
10. Gomitpur	158,015	60,000	7,630
11. Maninagar	101,835	3,315	-

The Police Station areas where Muslims were most at risk were mainly those where they constituted over 10 and under 40% of the population, and those with extensive mills and factories where Muslim and Hindu workers, largely migrant, lived side by side in chawls and tenements. These areas came under the following Police Stations: Madhupura, Sherkotda, Sardarnagar, Kagdapith and Gomitpur.

Very few killings took place in the Walled City Area. However, when the Riots spread to the suburban industrial areas, large-scale killings, particularly in the Gomitpur area, became a feature of the Riots. The most appalling murder was that of 100 Muslims together in Khokhra Housing Block No. 86-92 at Amraiwadi by a crowd of 1,000 Hindus. This was a Housing Block built by the Gujarat Housing Society and occupied mostly by millhands. It was alleged that some Bhayyas from UP were injured causing the Hindus to get excited and set fire to Muslim houses and kill their inhabitants. It was the Amraiwadi murders of the 20th that appear to have first caused the authorities to think of calling in the army. The following table, which gives a picture of the extent of damage to property and injury and loss of life in the various Police Stations, brings out clearly the greater violence and destruction in the Police Stations of Madhupura, Sherkotda, Sardarnagar, Kagdapith and Gomitpur with their large industrial labour and

migrant populations and numerous areas of mixed Hindu and Muslim chawls and tenements:

Table 10.⁵³ The Extent of damage to property, injury and loss of life during the Communal Riots in Ahmedabad in September, 1969, by Police Station area.

<u>Police Station:</u>	<u>No. of Incidents:</u>	<u>No. of houses, huts and shops affected:</u>	<u>No. of religious places affected:</u>	<u>No. of persons injured:</u>	<u>No. of persons killed:</u>
1. Gaekwad Haveli	61	190	6	4	1
2. Karanj	82	355	12	19	9
3. Kalupur	107	480	8	2	5
4. Ellisbridge	11	23	5	2	-
5. Navrangpura	88	414	7	21	48
6. Madhupura	57	415	3	31	78
7. Sherkotda	35	660	3	34	28
8. Sardarnagar	28	392	2	60	22
9. Kagdapith	102	1,307	14	25	18
10. Gontipur	88	1,995	5	176	296
11. Maninagar	100	222	-	6	22

The Ahmedabad edition of the Times of India also reported on September 20th, 1969, that it was largely people of the working-class and lower-middle class who were hardest hit by the Riots:

"Three people were killed in day-long violent clashes... Reports pouring in from various hospitals said many were injured in violent clashes at Jamalpur, Khadia, Khanpur and Dariapur ... armed arsonists went berserk, setting fire to shops and houses belonging to the minority community... The people of low and middle income groups suffered most in the riots as most of the shops

53. Figures compiled from Tables 'A' to 'H' contained in the Reddy Report, pp. 145-163.

looted, pulled down or burnt belonged to small traders. Hooligans made a bonfire of shop furniture and articles on main roads and the scene was reminiscent of the Holi-fire."

On September 21st, the Ahmedabad edition of the Times of India reported:

"... the main attack of arsoners was on laundry, bakeries and small trade establishments. The minority community has almost a monopoly in this trade."⁵⁴

It was widely claimed that the Riots showed definite signs of planning and organization. Ajit Bhattacharjea, Editor of the Hindustan Times wrote in his paper on October 5th, 1969:

"Eye-witnesses told of fleets of cars shuttling up and down carrying rioters and petrol tins."

Shri Prabhu, Secretary of the Congress party, who had gone round the affected areas during the riots, said, "Perhaps it was not intended for this day, but it must be admitted that preparations were there." Even the Governor of Gujarat, Shriman Narayan, said in Ahmedabad on September 28th that he was convinced that behind the recent riots in Gujarat were groups which must be exposed and crushed.⁵⁵ The Government Commission of Inquiry into the Riots too found unmistakable evidence of organization of the Riots, although it criticized the Special Branch for not making greater efforts to trace the groups organizing the Riots. However, the Reddy Report accepted the evidence that Jan Sangh leaders and workers of Ahmedabad were closely involved with the Hindu Dharma Raksha Samiti and took part in

54. See Ahmedabad Riots X-rayed by a Research Worker in Ahmedabad.

55. See the Times of India (Ahmedabad), 29 Sept. , 1969.

organizing the Riots. Government Witness No. 17, Mahamadali Sherali, stated that on the 19th one Ratanlal Gupta of the Jan Sangh (Jan Sangh candidate in the 1969 Ahmedabad municipal elections) had distributed inciting pamphlets in the Saraspur area, and, on the 20th, he and two others were leading a crowd with a list of Muslim houses in their hands, and Ratanlal Gupta was directing the crowd which was shouting "Jai Jagannath, Maharaj-ni-Jai". The Report stated:

"...It appears from this evidence that crowds were being directed by persons who were leading them and they had lists of Muslim houses in their hands ... the evidence as a whole indicates that the police had reason to believe that some local Jan Sangh leaders and workers were actively participating in the riots But we have nothing to indicate that Bharatiya Jan Sangh party and for that matter Hindu Mahasabha party or RSS Organisation as such, as an all-India party or organization, had taken part or was involved. The evidence relating to participation of some of the workers of these parties or organizations is not by itself sufficient to justify the inference of the participation of the aforesaid parties as all India parties or organizations."⁵⁶

There was considerable evidence that lorries containing weapons had been moved about. In a few cases, police officers themselves admitted this (although the police as a whole took the stand that the Riots were not organized). Shri Deboo admitted that there was information that two lorries were moved with weapons. Shri A.J.M. Shaikh and Shri I.A.Shaikh even admitted they had apprehended a lorry with Hindus in it and with weapons. Many other witnesses testified that there were lorries carrying rioters on from one place to the other. Brigadier Sukhwant Singh, Army Commander, gave further evidence that the crowds were directed by describing diversionary tactics used to

56. Reddy Report, pp. 215-218.

draw out and overawe defenders. There was further evidence that a large number of workers were involved in the Riots, many with technical skills which were used in the destruction of buildings, etc. Thus the Reddy Report concluded that although the Jagannath Temple incident itself was spontaneous,

"the action of Hindu crowds was massive and became organized as the course of the riots continued."⁵⁷

The role of the police during the Riots was heavily criticized by the Reddy Report. The conduct of the police showed hesitancy, indecision and lack of firmness throughout. There was an unreasonable delay in imposing a curfew, and even then, at 10 p.m. on the 19th, it was only imposed on the walled city areas, although it was becoming increasingly obvious that the greatest violence and destruction was in the suburban areas. The Inspector General of Police was anxious to seek Government approval before imposing the curfew, although the Report points out:

"... it is an elementary proposition that all persons, charged with the responsibility of law and order, are empowered, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, to proclaim orders, including curfew, under Section 144, and they and they alone are responsible for such a declaration, without the need to consult anybody."

57. Reddy Report, pp. 215-218.

The Report concluded that the IGP's statement that he had insufficient force to impose the curfew in the suburban areas earlier was inaccurate. More than 4,000 men of the regular police force including the SRP were available at 7.00 hours on the 20th. Thereafter only 390 men were added between 6.30 hours and 18.00 hours on the 20th except for about 300 BSF who were not utilized. The curfew in the suburban areas was only imposed at 22.00 hours on the 20th. The implementation of the curfew was found wanting: curfew passes were issued in vast numbers. Few people were arrested for breach of curfew. There was ineffective patrolling by foot and not by mobiles. The Report states:

"Shoot at sight orders issued simultaneously with the curfew orders postulated the issue of the necessary firearms, but there was an economy in this issue which is not easy to understand particularly when the situation was deteriorating so fast. At no time during the peak days was the entire stock of muskets exhausted and the stock of rifles remained almost untouched."

The number of arrests made during the Riots was ridiculously small, and surprisingly enough more Muslims than Hindus were arrested!

The Report stated:

"... during many appalling incidents, very near Police Stations, no arrests were made . . . e.g. in respect of the Kamar Hostel and Shahebwaní mosque and durgah in particular, we are left with the impression that the rioting crowds were allowed, notwithstanding the intimation to the police, to proceed unhindered in the systematic destruction of the hostel and mosque and durgah."

The inadequacy of the Special Branch in getting advance intelligence was pointed out by the Report, as also the failure to round-up and arrest miscreants, trouble-makers and certain political workers and communal-minded persons who were creating trouble and spreading rumours. The Report criticized the ineffective way in which rumours

were counteracted, and the failure to appreciate the need for calling in the army earlier:

"... the IGP was reluctant to advise the calling of the army on a misappreciation of the ability of the police forces to deal with the situation and probably because he may have thought that the prestige of the police might be affected if the army is called."

Even after the army arrived, they were asked to do a flag-march only in certain specified areas, and it was only when the situation had further deteriorated that the flag-march was cancelled, and the army was asked to take charge of certain localities. Even then they were not given full charge of the entire city until the afternoon of the 22nd. The Report also maintained that there was communal feeling on the part of individual policemen, although not in the force as a whole. It recommended that an inquiry should be held into the communal partiality of the police and into the fact that more Muslims than Hindus were arrested at the time of the Riots.⁵⁸

The Government's handling of the Riots, particularly that of the Chief Minister, who was also the Home Minister, also came in for criticism by the Reddy Report. The tardy decision to call in the army was criticized:

"That the Government was not able to assess the situation on its own so as to realise its seriousness and overrule the advice of the IGP (against calling in the army) shows that there was breakdown in the information services and the absence of sufficient awareness of the developing situation because ultimately it was for the Government to decide whether to call the army or not... the information which was being passed on by the control room about incidents hour by hour and a large number of political and religious leaders who were seeing the Chief Minister and the other Ministers, and appraising them of the situation, ought to have given them an appreciation of the seriousness of the situation."

58. Reddy Report, p.214.

However, wilder allegations against the Government of complicity in the Riots were unfounded. So also was the observation, owing much to hindsight, that the Congress(O) Government, since the Congress(O) was moving closer to the Jan Sangh at the national level, turned a blind eye to the communal activities of the Jan Sangh in Gujarat. Regarding relief to the victims of the Riots and the thousands of Muslim refugees gathered in Government camps, the Report concluded that, although there was no "intentional callousness or unwillingness on the part of the Government to provide relief for Riot victims, the measures taken were inadequate".⁵⁹

In conclusion, the Communal Riots of September, 1969, in Ahmedabad epitomize the growing pluralism of Ahmedabad society and its resultant tensions, aggravated by a situation of economic difficulty where economic grievances were likely to have a differential effect on different communities, and where the trade union structure did little to counteract caste and communal feelings and rivalries. This is underlined by the fact that the Riots were most intense in the suburban areas of the City where industrial labourers and migrant workers including Bhayyas of UP, Sindhis and refugees from Pakistan live uneasily side by side with Muslims, who are often non-Gujarati migrants. The displacement of widespread frustrations regarding economic hardship and substandard living conditions on outgroups as scapegoats lies at the root of much of the violence in Ahmedabad City which culminated in the Riots of 1969.⁶⁰ It was the tensions arising out of the growing pluralism of Ahmedabad society and poor

59. Reddy Report, pp. 218-222.

60. See Ali Ashraf (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur), Study of Urban Politics in India: A Note. (1971).

living conditions, particularly among migrant groups, which provided much of the impetus behind the politics of agitation and violence in the City, which continually interplays with Ahmedabad's traditional political ethos, articulated by Gandhi and characterized by stable sociopolitical relations, pragmatism and a willingness to negotiate and compromise. This "seamier" side of the political face of Ahmedabad City rose to the surface during the 1960s, reaching a climax in the 1969 Communal Riots.

CHAPTER IX

STATE-LOCAL LINKAGES AND REALIGNMENT OF STATE AND CITY FACTIONS AFTER THE CONGRESS SPLIT OF 1969

The Congress split in November, 1969, posed a difficult dilemma for the GPCC. Its first instinct was to remain aloof from both wings of the Congress and function as an independent State unit. However, due to the persuasive efforts of Morarji Desai, this decision was reversed and the GPCC plumped for Congress (O).¹ The split in the Congress party created a new and effective opposition force in Ahmedabad and Gujarat politics, one that was nationally-based, operated at all political levels with considerable Central Government resources, and could genuinely challenge the Organisation Congress in Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Many of the political forces that had been in opposition to the Hitendra Desai Ministry throughout the 60s found a unique opportunity to challenge that Ministry under the aegis of the Congress(R).

The disintegration of the Janta Parishad during the last years of its rule in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and its rout in the 1969 Municipal Corporation elections threw leftist political forces in Ahmedabad into disarray, and many of these eagerly seized the opportunity presented by the Congress (R) challenge to the Congress (O) in Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Many prominent former Janta Parishad leaders, such as Dr. Vasudev Tripathi and Dr. Somabhai Desai, both former Mayors of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, and Manubhai Palkiwala, gravitated towards Mrs. Gandhi's party in the months following the split. They strengthened the leftist Forum for Socialist Action group within the Congress(R).² Even the CPM leader, Dinkar Mehta, although maintaining

1. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March, 1971.

2. Interview with Janta Parishad leaders in Ahmedabad in March 1971; see also Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 4 October, 1971 and 3 December, 1971.

a separate political identity, decided to cooperate with the newly-formed Congress(R)union, the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdur union, set up by a dissident section of Majur Mahajan workers. On the bonus issue in 1971, the CPM formed a joint strike committee with the Congress (R) rebel union and organised joint protest meetings and processions.³

Saurashtra leaders, after long years in the political wilderness, seized the opportunity presented by the Congress (R) to re-enter the political fray in Gujarat. The old guard Saurashtraleaders, Jivraj Mehta, Rasiklal Parikh and Ratubhai Adani, built up a Congress (R) organisation in Saurashtra. Control over panchayati raj institutions proved a crucial factor in ^{the} mid-term elections of 1971, and in many Saurashtradistricts the Congress (R) managed to secure control over these institutions. In Rajkot, several district Congress (O) leaders were alienated by the Central Congress (O) leaders' demand that Minoo Masani, the national Swatantra leader, should be allowed to seek re-election from Rajkot Lok Sabha constituency under the Grand Alliance plan. The president of the Rajkot district panchayat, Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, a firm opponent of the Alliance plan, left Congress (O) on the eve of the election to work for the Congress (R) candidate. In Amreli constituency, Dr. Jivraj Mehta himself had been persuaded to stand for election in the mid-term Parliamentary elections of 1971 by the Central leadership of the Congress (R). He was held in such high esteem in the district that several prominent Congress (O) leaders, including Mr. Dwarkadas Patel, president of the district panchayat, had refused to canvas against him.⁴ In Surendranagar Rasiklal Parikh was able to carry almost the entire Congress organisation in the district with him following the split.

3. Interview with Dinkar Mehta in Ahmedabad in March 1971; see also Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 30 Oct. , 1971.

4. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March , 1971.

In Jamnagar, the Congress (R) candidate was the president of the district panchayat. In Junagadh too, the president of the district panchayat and other senior Congress (O) workers were openly working for the Congress (R) candidate.⁵ The Central Congress (R) party lent its full support to regionally disgruntled and dissident groups in Gujarat State, realising that the main strength of the Congress (O) government lay in mainland Gujarat.⁶

North Gujarat also had long nursed grievances of regional neglect by the Hitendra Desai Ministry. The spokesman of North Gujarat in the Gujarat Assembly was Gangaram Raval, and he and his dissident group were highly discontented about the location of an agricultural university in North Gujarat, and had identified themselves with the Young Turks in the Congress Parliamentary party.⁷ Gangaram Raval and Mrs. Shantaben Patel, Mehsana district leaders, led the campaign for an agricultural university in North Gujarat, and demanded a thermal power station for the North Gujarat region in the pre-split days. The Hitendra Desai Ministry ultimately conceded these demands. On April 10, 1970, the Gujarat government modified an earlier decision to install a 480 megawatt thermal power plant in South Gujarat, and proposed instead to install two 240 megawatt plants, one in South Gujarat, the other in the north. The demand for an agricultural university for North Gujarat was also conceded.⁸ However, North Gujarat

5. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 12 March , 1971.

6. Howard Spodek , "The Case of Injustice to Saurashtra," Asian Survey, vol. 2, no. 5 (May, 1972), pp. 416-428.

7. Times of India (Bombay), 11 April , 1969.

8. Spodek loc.cit.

leaders continued to feel that had they not protested so vigorously their demands would never have been met. Thus Gangaram Raval, Mrs. Shantaben Patel and other North Gujarat leaders were among the first to defect to Mrs. Gandhi's party after the Congress split.⁹ Many leaders in Kutch also had grievances of regional neglect by the Hitendra Ministry. To strengthen its hand, the Congress (O) was forced to accept the entry of the former Swatantra leader, Jaideepsinhji of Baria, and his group into its ranks on October 3, 1970.

Not only did leaders of these discontented peripheral regions of Gujarat express political hostility to the Hitendra Desai Ministry by supporting the Congress (R) in many instances, they also united in a demand for economic justice. On June 5, 1970, leaders from all the major political parties and several organisations including the Presidents of the Rajkot Chamber of Commerce, the Small Industries Association and the Rajkot Engineering Association, met to form the Saurashtra-Kutch Welfare Association, whose aim was to provide strong representation of regional economic grievances. Although this was initially dominated by Rajkot leaders, the Association made attempts to broaden its membership base both in other parts of Saurashtra and in other peripheral regions of Kutch and North Gujarat.¹⁰

During this difficult period of political crisis, the Congress (O) Ministry did try to make regional concessions, particularly on the economic front, and it even appointed a committee to examine the patterns and potentials of regional development in the State, chaired by the highly-respected Saurashtrian leader, Jaisukhlal Hathi, who had served for several years as a minister in the national government. This succeeded to some extent in reducing economic tensions, but not in quelling the growing

9. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 28 Feb. , 1971.

10. Gujarat Samachar , 6 June , 1970.

Congress (R) political support in the peripheral regions of Gujarat.¹¹

Many Congress (O) leaders made their final decision to split with the Congress (O) and join the Congress (R) on the issue of the Grand Alliance, which was put forward at the Lucknow session of the AICC (O). There was bitter opposition from the GPCC to the plan of a Grand Alliance with the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra parties in the coming 1971 mid-term election.¹² It seemed a complete reversal of principle to ally with the very Swatantra party which had provided the strongest opposition force to the Hitendra Desai Ministry after 1967, and which had allied with other opposition parties to topple the Chief Minister from power. Both Hitendra Desai and Vajubhai Shah, the GPCC President, objected, but Morarji Desai, who was regarded as the custodian of Gujarat's interests in the national arena, managed to persuade the bulk of the Gujarat Congress (O) to go along with the Grand Alliance resolution. However, many Congress (O) leaders made their final break with the Congress (O) on this issue. Three senior Ministers, Mr. Jashvant Mehta, Mr. Gordhandas Chokawala and Mr. Chimanlal Patel, defected to the Congress (R) on this issue, as did Mr. Ghanshyambhai Oza of Saurashtra who was Chairman of the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation.¹³

The Grand Alliance proved a very mixed blessing to the Congress (O) in Gujarat. In many constituencies, just before the 1971 mid-term elections, many of the Grand Alliance partners were at loggerheads.

11. Spodek, loc. cit.

12. Interview with Mr. L in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

13. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 8 and 11 March, 1971.

Mehsana was one of the six constituencies in Gujarat where the Grand Alliance partners were fighting against each other: here Mr. Natvarlal Patel, the Congress (O) candidate was engaged in a fight against Mr. Shankalchand Patel, the Congress (R) candidate, but the situation was complicated by the Jan Sangh's decision to put its own candidate, Mr. Navnitlal Shah, into the field too.¹⁴ In Dhandhuka constituency, the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra were contesting against each other. Vadilal L. Mehta was contesting on behalf of Congress (R) against Mr. H.M. Patel of the Swatantra party and Shambhu Maharaj of the Jan Sangh. A dissident Swatantrite, Mr. R.K. Amin, contesting as an Independent, further complicated the situation. In Junagadh too, Mr. VirendraShah, a Swatantrite fighting curiously on the Congress (O) symbol, was the Grand Alliance candidate against Mr. Nagjibhai Vekhararia of the Congress (R). However, he also had to contend with Mr. Hemendra Radiya, the Jan Sangh candidate.¹⁵ In Rajkot, Minoo Masani of the Swatantra claimed to have been sabotaged both by angry Congress (O) workers and by Jan Sangh workers, who were busy in the neighbouring constituency of Junagadh canvassing for their party's candidate there.¹⁶ In Jamnagar constituency, the Jan Sangh was pitted against its Grand Alliance partner, the Swatantra party, and in Bulsar against its Congress (O) partner.¹⁷

Thus the 1971 mid-term elections reveal an interesting regional alignment in Gujarat with peripheral regions leaning towards the Congress (R) and the Congress (O) deriving its main support from the Central and Southern regions of the Gujarat mainland. This regional configuration was very marked in the election results.

14. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 28 Feb. , 1971.

15. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 3 March , 1971.

16. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March , 1971.

17. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 4 Feb. , 1971.

Against all expectations, the Congress (R) in Gujarat won 11 out of the 24 Lok Sabha seats, the Congress (O) won an equal number and the Swatantra party's Lok Sabha strength fell heavily from 12 in the 1967 General elections to 2 in 1971. The Congress (R) had only 3 seats in the dissolved Lok Sabha. It gave a crushing defeat to the two national figures, the Swatantra President, Minoo Masani, in Rajkot constituency and Mr. S.K. Patil, the Congress (O) leader in Banaskantha constituency. The Congress (R) won the following seats: Rajkot, Junagadh, Banaskantha, Amreli, Jamnagar, Broach, Surendranagar, Dabhoi, Mandvi, Kutch and Ahmedabad. Congress (O) won the seats of Bhavnagar, Baroda, Kaira, Anand, Mehsana, Patan, Surat, Bulsar, Dohad and Gandhinagar; and Swatantra won only the two seats of Godhra and Dhandhuka. Thus, except for Bhavnagar, where the Congress (R) candidate, Jasvant Mehta, was seriously handicapped by not having shown sufficient militancy over the issue of the location of Saurashtra University, Congress (R) made a clean sweep of the seats in the Saurashtra and Kutch regions; whereas on the mainland, Congress (O) captured 10 seats to Congress (R)'s 5. The Congress (O) was particularly strong in the Southern and Central Gujarat constituencies of Surat, Bulsar, Broach, Baroda, Kaira, Anand and Gandhinagar.¹⁸

Ahmedabad politics were profoundly influenced by these far-reaching changes in Central and State politics. Congress (O) forces managed to retain control of the Ahmedabad City DCC and the Municipal Corporation; Jamnashankar Pandya defected to the Congress (R) but he was not able to take any city wards or committee members with him, and up to the mid-term elections, only six Municipal Corporators had defected to the Congress (R).¹⁹ The Majur Mahajan too took the fateful

18. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March, 1971.

19. Information supplied by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

decision to stand by the Old Congress, even to the point of accepting a textile millowner, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, former Mayor of Ahmedabad, as the Congress (O) candidate for the Lok Sabha seat from Ahmedabad. It was pointed out that Vasavda had lost twice, and that, due to a lack of party funds, the chosen candidate had to have ample means and be largely self-financing; since the Lok Sabha elections were for the first time delinked from the State Assembly elections, it was more difficult to raise resources, for it was no longer possible to pool the resources of all the State Assembly candidates too. Thus the Majur Mahajan was persuaded to accept Jaikrishnabhai as the Lok Sabha candidate from Ahmedabad City, and they campaigned vigorously on his behalf especially in the labour areas of the city.²⁰ However, although on the surface the fabric of Ahmedabad politics seemed little changed, below the surface events at the national and state levels were exerting an enormous influence on the political situation.

All leftist opposition elements were supporting Indulal Yagnik, who fought for the Ahmedabad Lok Sabha seat as an Independent, though on the Congress (R) symbol and with "men, money and munitions" supplied by the Congress (R).²¹ An Indicate union, the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdoor Union, whose President was Krishnakant Vekharla, had sprung up with the help of a dissident section of Majur Mahajan workers. Indira Gandhi's charisma, communicated through speeches and tours in Ahmedabad in the pre-election days, had a powerful effect. The Muslim vote was mobilised in favour of the Congress (R) because of Muslim alienation against the Congress (O) government in power during the September 1969 Communal Riots in Ahmedabad, which had resulted in widespread destruction of Muslim life and property; and because of Indira Gandhi's national alliance with the Muslim league. Harijans too were mobilised in favour

20. Interview with Dinesh Shah and Majur Mahajan leaders in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

21. Interview with Indulal Yagnik in Ahmedabad in March 1971.

of Indulal Yagnik by the active campaigning of Jagjivan Ram, the Central Congress (R) party boss. Political loyalties in Ahmedabad were polarised between the two candidates, one a millionaire textile magnate and the other the champion of the poor. The issue projected by Indulal Yagnik was "Socialism for progress"; Jaikrishnabhai had rather negative issues to play with: vilification of Indira Gandhi as a dictator usurping the constitutional rights of the people and as a stooge of the Russians, and the desire to thwart the Communists who were in alliance with Indira Gandhi. As the "Times of India" graphically described it:

--"In the costliest campaign ever seen in the city, Mr. Harivallabhdas had literally plastered the city with hoardings, posters, slogans, handbills all of which loudly proclaimed that he alone would save the country from lawlessness, dictatorship and prevent another Bengal in Gujarat" --²²

The Congress (O) alliance with the Jan Sangh further alienated the Muslims, and a vast army of Jan Sangh workers were deployed in the Ahmedabad election to the dubious advantage of Jaikrishnabhai.

Thus, despite the "Madison Avenue method"²³ of Jaikrishnabhai and the unstinting support of the Majur Mahajan, Indulal Yagnik scored an impressive electoral victory over him. The more affluent Ellis Bridge areas, on whose enthusiastic support and high voting turnout Jaikrishnabhai was relying, failed to give him a significant lead over Indulal Yagnik. Khadia gave Jaikrishnabhai a slender lead of 3,198 votes due to Jan Sangh penetration in this area, but all other Assembly segments of the Ahmedabad Lok Sabha constituency went for Indulal Yagnik, as the following table shows:

22. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March, 1971.

23. Ibid.

TABLE 1.²⁴ Voting Pattern in the Ahmedabad Parliamentary Constituency in the Mid-Term Election of 1971:

Name of the Candidate and Party:	Ellis Bridge	Dariapur-Kazipur	Asarva	Khadia	Kalupur	Shahpur	Jamalpur	Total
Indulal Yagnik (Congress R)	26,419	31,741	32,083	18,483	27,092	28,288	29,027	193,834
Jaikrishna Harivallabhdas (Congress O)	35,338	14,934	13,063	22,861	22,670	16,050	11,887	137,374
Jaisukhlal T. Parmar (Ind.)	69	69	63	30	57	41	35	364
P.H. Parmar (Ind.)	151	108	96	104	120	-	90	802
B.K. Pandya (Ind.)	93	116	117	55	103	131	88	703
V.B. Raju (Ind.)	180	82	75	86	89	109	83	708
V.T. Parmar (R.P.I.)	178	426	692	83	355	406	232	2,372
REJECTED:	1,054	945	756	580	783	889	647	5,657
TOTAL:	63,482	48,421	46,945	42,282	51,272	46,047	42,089	340,538

24. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 24 March, 1971.

The Muslim-dominated constituency of Jamalpur gave Jaikrishnabhai the least number of votes, and three times as many to Indulal Yagnik. Kalupur, an inner-city ward, gave a lead of 4,422 votes to Indulal Yagnik, but two other assembly segments, Dariapur and Shahpur, with a sizable working class population, gave enormous majorities to Indulal Yagnik. Perhaps the most worrying feature of the whole election for the Majur Mahajan was its total failure to galvanise the industrial worker for Jaikrishnabhai in the wholly industrial labour assembly segment of Asarva which gave only 13,063 votes to Jaikrishnabhai compared to 32,083 votes to Indulal Yagnik. The PSP Chairman, Mr. Natvarlal Shah, said on hearing the election results that the victory of Mr. Yagnik and the defeat of the Congress nominee was a rout for the Majur Mahajan, which had made an all-out bid to get labour votes for Jaikrishnabhai.²⁵

By aligning itself with the Congress (O), the Majur Mahajan effectively cut itself off from proximity to Central and State power structures, which had been the key to so much of its strength and power in the past, for the Congress (O) suffered national defeat in the 1971 mid-term election, being reduced from a national party to a party with a few pockets of regional strength. Even its regional power-base in Gujarat crumbled soon after the 1971 elections, when the Hitendra Desai Ministry fell from power barely one month after the 1971 elections, to be replaced by a period of President's rule until the 1972 State Assembly elections. The Congress (O) party organisation in many Gujarat districts became very shaky after the 1971 elections. Even in the former Congress (O) stronghold of South Gujarat, party

25. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March, 1971.

observers predicted major changes in the district panchayats of Surat, Baroda and Broach in the near future. In Kaira and Panchmahals too, "disenchantment" with the Congress (O) was apparent.²⁶

Faced by growing defections from Congress (O) legislators consequent on the stunning victory of Mrs. Gandhi's party in the mid-term elections, the survival of the Hitendra Desai Ministry hinged on the support of the 22-strong Swatantra party, which had been reduced to a rump after the defection of the group led by Jaideepsinhji of Baria the year before. However, the Swatantra party was on the verge of splitting again on the issue of the Grand Alliance. Most Swatantra legislators were in no mood to continue to support the Hitendra Ministry unconditionally, for, according to them, the party had forfeited the peoples' confidence by giving up the role of an Opposition in the Assembly and taking part in the Grand Alliance. Strong views were expressed at a meeting of Swatantra MLAs, presided over by Mr. Liladhar Patel, leader of the party in the Assembly, at which Mr. H.M. Patel, Chairman of the State Swatantra party, was also present. The meeting was specifically called to discuss the stand the party should adopt towards the Hitendra Desai Government in view of the failure of the alliance.²⁷ Swatantra party MLAs felt that they were supporting the Congress (O) Ministry without even having the satisfaction of sharing the spoils of office with the Congress (O). They felt that the present situation, brought about by the party's President, M.R. Masani, should only be allowed to continue if the Chief Minister agreed to form a coalition Ministry with the Swatantra party in the State. Swatantra MLAs said the party would die a slow death if the present state of affairs was allowed to continue, and that, if a whip was issued asking members to support the present Ministry, the party would split. It was alleged that by wooing Jaideep-

26. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 16 March, 1971.

27. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 16 March, 1971.

sinhji's group, Hitendra Desai himself was responsible for reducing the party's strength from 66 in 1967 to its present 22. Mr. H.M. Patel and Mr. Liladhar Patel tried to counteract this by advising that nothing should be done to mar the prospects of the Alliance partners in the next Assembly poll. The Secretary of the Jan Sangh, Mr. Vasant Gajendragadkar also declared that the Grand Alliance was a mistake: "We would have won many more seats but for it."²⁸ Thus the Grand Alliance was verging on collapse after its crushing defeat in the 1971 elections.

Hitendra Desai sought to ward off a full-fledged revolt by Congress (O) legislators by stressing, at an emergency meeting of the legislative Congress (O) party in Gandhinagar on March 18th, 1971, the importance of a "collective decision" at such a crucial period, and the strategy of waiting till the current budget session of the Gujarat Assembly was over on March 31st.²⁹ Defections continued apace. On March 21st, two Congress (O) MLAs from Rajkot and Jamnagar districts joined Congress (R), reducing the strength of the ruling party to 96 in a House of 164, and raising that of Congress (R) to 35.³⁰ Facing the possibility of further MLA defections, the Chief Minister tried to negotiate an understanding with the Swatantra group in the House. Mr. Liladhar Patel, the Swatantra leader in the House, insisted that any support to the ruling party would be given only on certain conditions, and they discussed a proposal for the inclusion of some Swatantra members in the Cabinet.³¹ However, rank and file Swatantra legislators declared they would bring a no-confidence motion against the leadership if it

28. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 March, 1971.

29. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 17 March, 1971.

30. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 22 March, 1971.

31. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 24 March, 1971.

insisted on helping Hitendra Desai to remain in power, for if the party was to survive it would have to function as an effective Opposition. On March 26th, at a meeting of the Legislative Swatantra party, it was decided to vote with the rest of the Opposition even if that brought about the fall of the Ministry. Mr. H.M. Patel conveyed to the legislators that the State unit had now been given full freedom in this regard by the Central leadership for the Grand Alliance no longer existed.³² On March 29th, with the defection of 17 Congress (O) MLAs to the Congress (R), the Hitendra Desai Ministry lost its majority in the Gujarat Assembly. The defections began with the resignation of the Minister for Cooperation, Mr. Madhavlal Shah and by the afternoon the strength of the Congress (O) Legislature Party was reduced to 78 in a 164-member House (4 seats were vacant), while the main Opposition party, the Congress (R), raised its strength to 53.³³ Thus the survival of the only Congress (O) Ministry in the country hinged on the support of the Swatantra group, as most of the remaining Opposition members (3PSP, 1 Jan Sangh, and 8 Independents) were likely to vote against the Government. On March 30th, in a surprising development, three Cabinet colleagues of Hitendra Desai: Mr. Premjibhai Thakkar, the Revenue Minister, Mr. Babubhai J. Patel, the Finance Minister and Mr. Jairambhai Patel, Home Minister, came out with a plea for unity with the Congress (R), thus further demoralising Congress (O) ranks, which had lost two more members to Congress (R) earlier in the day. In spite of the Chief Minister's acceptance of the Swatantra Party's demand for the abolition of land revenue on smallholdings, a majority of Swatantra members would not support the Government. Thus, with the certainty of a no-confidence motion being passed against him, Hitendra Desai at last resigned from the Chief Ministership.³⁴

32. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 27 March, 1971.

33. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 30 March, 1971.

34. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 31 March, 1971.

Thus the Majur Mahajan, which remained loyal to the Congress (O) (following the Congress split, Mr. Gulzarilal Nanda had tried to win over the Majur Mahajan for the New Congress, but failed and was ousted from Gujarat³⁵), found itself isolated from both Central and State power structures, the former basis of much of its political and administrative power. When, in addition, it took the fateful step of severing its relations with the INTUC, its isolation and loss of influence seemed complete.

Joint action, particularly on the issue of higher bonus, was launched by leftist trade unions of the CPI, CPM, the Republican party and rebel Congress (R) group in an attempt to undercut Majur Mahajan support among the workers. On October 11, a strike call by the four party trade union "action committee", demanding an increase in bonus to 8.33%, was answered by four Ahmedabad mills: the Saraspur Mills, the Ashok Mills, the Swadeshi and New Cotton Mills. However, the effectiveness of the strike was limited to mills where there was a disparity in the payment of bonus to units in the same group; and the Majur Mahajan's ability to negotiate effectively with the Ahmedabad millowners still gave it considerable local authority.³⁶

However, as the INTUC at the Central level and in other States moved closer to the Congress (R), the Majur Mahajan grew more and more restive. On October 10, 1971, a meeting of the "labour cell" of the AICC disclosed a proposal to set up a coordination committee at all levels between the Congress (R) and the INTUC to settle disputes that might arise from time to time. The coordination committee would consist of representatives of the AICC and the INTUC.³⁷

35. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 30 October, 1971.

36. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 11, 12 and 13 October, 1971.

37. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 11 October, 1971.

With these developments, the Majur Mahajan had gradually begun to dissociate itself from the INTUC. Soon after the 1971 elections, the Majur Mahajan's contingent on the INTUC committees ceased to participate in INTUC meetings. The Majur Mahajan's disillusionment with the INTUC stemmed from its differences in approach to labour problems. Mr. Vasavda charged the INTUC leadership with deviating from Gandhian principles of trade unionism.³⁸ The national body, he alleged, was sliding towards leftism and communism. On October 19, 1971, announcing his decision to abstain from the coming Nagpur session of the INTUC, the Majur Mahajan leader said the INTUC leaders were leading the workers to the path of agitation by "offering them wrong temptation", instead of trying to secure justice through Gandhian methods. He also said that the representatives of the Majur Mahajan workers would meet within a fortnight to ratify the leadership's decision to completely break away from the INTUC. He also hinted that the Majur Mahajan would undertake to start an independent workers' political party, distinct from both the Congress R and the Congress (O). Mr. Vasavda said he would advise Majur Mahajan followers to dissociate themselves from party affiliations and independently contest the forthcoming State Assembly elections. He felt that no party was in a position to help the working class whom he advised to help itself, saying, "The time has come for workers to play their part in politics".

The Majur Mahajan break with the INTUC was officially announced on October 29, 1971. In support of their complaints that the New Congress was trying to bring former communists forward into the labour front, the Majur Mahajan leaders pointed out that traditionally two INTUC representatives were chosen for the International Labour Conference, whereas this year the Union Labour Ministry chose a Communist as one of the two representatives.³⁹ This decision of Majur Mahajan

38. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 10 October, 1971.

39. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 30 October, 1971.

leaders was endorsed by the joint representatives' council of the Major Mahajan on November 4, 1971, which also resolved to organise itself as an independent political party and field its candidates independently in the forthcoming State Assembly elections. On November 5, the Gujarat branch of the INTUC also formalised its break with the national organisation.⁴⁰

The GPCC (R) determined to storm the INTUC fortress in Ahmedabad, Baroda and other industrial areas in an organised bid to woo the sizable labour vote in the coming Assembly elections, and its labour cell prepared a five-point programme to woo the working class on bonus, wages, prices, employees' State insurance facilities and workers' participation in the management of public-sector undertakings in Gujarat.⁴¹ The Congress (R)-led Ahmedabad Mill Mazdur union demanded the deletion of Section 127 of the Bombay Industrial Relations Act which gave a monopoly to a recognised union to make sole legal representation of the workers' case. A deputation of the union, led by the GPCC (R) President, Mr. Ratubhai Adani, the Union President, Mr. Krishnakant Vekharla, and its Vice-President, Mr. Maganbhai Barot, met the Governor, Mr. Shriman Narayan, in Ahmedabad to voice this demand.⁴² The labour wing of the Congress (R) was further strengthened by the defection of Mr. Natvarlal Shah, former chairman of the State PSP and well known labour leader, to the Congress (R) in early November, 1971.⁴³

On November 18, 1971, the Working Committee of the INTUC at its Nagpur Session felt it should support the Congress (R) in the forthcoming elections to various State Assemblies as a "logical step arising out of the unity of purpose, plans and programmes". While emphasising its ideological affinity with the Congress (R), the Working Committee wanted the INTUC to retain its independent character organisationally so that

40. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 5 and 6 November, 1971.

41. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 20 October, 1971.

42. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 20 October, 1971.

43. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 November, 1971.

it could function as a vanguard movement of the working class for the early realisation of socialistic aims.⁴⁴ On the 19th, the INTUC Working Committee disaffiliated the Ahmedabad TIA for making "baseless allegations", with political considerations, of pro-Communist leanings. The Working Committee felt that instead of bringing these allegations before the proper forum the TIA and its leaders chose unilateral action. The Working Committee also decided to set up a political committee at the Centre and at State-level as a step towards institutionalising the relations between the Congress (R) and the INTUC.⁴⁵

Thus, by late 1971, with the labour wing of the Congress (R) at both Local, State and Central levels growing in strength continually, the Majur Mahajan embarked on the rather risky venture of trying to set up a new labour party, the National Labour Party, independent of both Congress parties. An ad hoc committee was formed in early December 1971 under the convenorship of Navinchandra Barot, an important Majur Mahajan leader, to mobilise all Gandhian labour unions to establish a new labour party to be confined to Gujarat to contest the coming State Assembly elections independently.⁴⁶ However, its attempts to dissociate itself from the Congress (O) were hardly convincing: it had an electoral understanding with the Congress (O) not to contest the same constituencies, and it maintained its support for the Congress (O) in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, which was still a Congress (O) stronghold, although a somewhat shaky one. In fact, the Majur Mahajan contingent was the mainstay of the Old Congress in the Corporation.

As the Congress (O) majority in the Corporation came under the increasing pressure of defections, the Majur Mahajan remained the hard

44. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 19 November, 1971.

45. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 20 November, 1971.

46. Express News Service (Ahmedabad), 1 December, 1971.

core of its strength. On November 5, 1971,⁴⁷ about 200 PSP workers from Gujarat, including the Gujarat PSP chairman, Mr. Natvarlal Shah, announced their decision to join the Congress (R). Three PSP Municipal Corporators, Dr. Ajit Patel, Mr. Mahomedsharif A. Kucherawala and Mr. Vinod Dakwala, were also among the defectors. This raised the Congress (R) strength in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation to 16 as against 60 Congress (O) Corporators, 4 CPM Corporators, 3 Socialist Party Corporators, 2 Jan Sangh Corporators, 1 Janta Parishad Corporator, 1 Republican Party Corporator and 4 Independent Corporators. On the municipal School Board, the Congress (R) strength rose to 6, and the Congress (O)'s strength was 8.⁴⁸ Another Old Congress Corporator, Mr. Bhudarbhai Motibhai Prajapati from Shahibag Ward 18, defected from the Congress (O) a little later. For the present, he decided to sit as an Independent.⁴⁹ The most severe blow to Old Congress strength in the Corporation came towards the end of December 1971,⁵⁰ when 12 leading Corporators of the Congress (O), including the Mayor, defected to the Congress (R). This coupled with the defections of 12 Congress (O) Corporators on December 24th reduced the Old Congress to a minority of only 36 members. In contrast, by this time Congress (R) strength had risen to 40. Majur Mahajan Corporators, led by Navinchandra Barot, Chairman of the Standing Committee, had remained loyal to the Congress (O), but were forced by events to offer their resignations from their posts in the civic body when their party was reduced to a minority in the Corporation. With the resignation of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the Corporation had to elect new office-bearers to conduct its meetings, and these elections for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of the various committees were scheduled for the General Board meetings on January 8 and 11, 1972. Although the Congress (R) did not have an

47. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 6 November, 1971.

48. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 November, 1971.

49. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 20 November, 1971.

50. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 31 December, 1971.

absolute majority in a House of 91, it was the largest single party, and it hoped to be in a position to elect its members as office-bearers with the support of some of the other Opposition members. However, factionalism within the Congress (R) between a group of Congress (R) Corporators led by Narsinh Makwana and the 12 recent Congress (O) defectors, led by the ex-Mayor, coupled with the willingness of the 15 councillors belonging to the CPM (4), Socialist party (3), Janta Parishad (2), Jan Sangh (2) and Independents (4) to prop up the Old Congress enabled the Congress (O) to unexpectedly regain control of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation with Krishnavadan Joshi as the new Mayor, and the Majur Mahajan leader, Navinchandra Barot, resuming his powerful position as Chairman of the Standing Committee.⁵¹ However, the Congress (O) was under heavy attack throughout the following Corporation session by the Congress (R) Corporators, who alleged mismanagement of the Municipal Dairy and corruption in the Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Service. The Congress (O) experienced great difficulty in getting through its budgets for the School Board, AMTS etc.⁵²

Thus, despite attempts to stress independence of the Congress (O), the Majur Mahajan's newly-sponsored National Labour Party leaders, particularly in Ahmedabad, could be seen to be working closely with the Congress (O) in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. This proved a distinct disadvantage to them in the 1972 State Assembly elections.

State-level factions had an important bearing on the 1972 State Assembly elections in Ahmedabad City. After the mid-term elections, there was an increasing volume of defections from Congress (O) ranks to the Congress (R), including many Gujarat mainland politicians. Thus the virtual monopoly of the Congress (R) organisation enjoyed by the old

51. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 14 January, 2 February and 5 March, 1972.

52. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 3 and 11 February, 1972.

Saurashtrian leaders, Jivraj Mehta, Ratubhai Adani and Rasiklal Parikh, came to an end, and the Congress (R) became a broad-based party, no longer predominantly Saurashtrian in composition. The Central Congress (R) leadership no longer felt the need to support peripheral regions and dissident groups within Gujarat State and adopted a policy of neutrality towards them. Cross-cutting political ties developed between Saurashtrian groups and mainland politicians. In order to undercut the influence of the old guard Saurashtrian leaders within the Congress (R), mainland leaders sought to ally themselves with another powerful Saurashtrian group, the farm bloc, led by Vallabhbhai Patel. The Saurashtrian farm bloc, whose grievances against the oil levy had been met in 1970, decided there would be more to gain in an alliance with mainland leaders in terms of economic advantages than with the older Saurashtrian leaders, who were more responsive to urban groups, who had formed their support-base in the early 1950s, than to the rural interests, which had grown rapidly in significance in the 1960s. The relations between Ratubhai Adani, the old guard Saurashtrian leader who had become State Congress (R) President, and Vallabhbhai Patel became so strained in September 1971 that Mrs. Gandhi herself was forced to mediate between them.⁵³ Thus, divided among themselves, Saurashtrian leaders lost their predominant political leverage within the Congress (R). Rivalry between Rajkot and Bhavnagar leaders was an endemic feature of Saurashtra politics.⁵⁴

In the State factional pattern that developed within the Congress (R) preceding the 1972 State Assembly elections, there were cross-cutting political alignments between Saurashtra and mainland Gujarat leaders and an important ideological element. The three major factions,

53. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 8 September, 1971.

54. Spodek loc. cit.; see also D.N. Pathak, "State Politics in India: Some Determinants," In Iqbal Narain (ed.) State Politics in India. (1968).

which emerged, were the leftist, rather militant, Congress Forum for Socialist Action, led by Himatsinhji of Mansa; a faction led by the GPCC(R) Vice-President, Chimanbhai Patel of Baroda; and a faction led by the old guard Saurashtraleader and GPCC(R) President, Ratubhai Adani, supported by Kantilal Ghia, another GPCC (R) Vice-President and a key Ahmedabad District leader. The major points of dispute between the three factions revolved around the problem of the reconstitution of District Congress (R) committees, and the policy to be adopted towards Congress (O) and other defectors to the Congress (R), both of which could radically alter the sensitive balance of power between the three ~~factional~~ groups. Perhaps the bitterest source of conflict was the struggle for the Chief Ministership of the new State Assembly.

While certain DCCs of the Congress(R) had been recognised, others, particularly Baroda and Rajkot DCCs, still had to be reconstituted, causing serious disputes between the faction leaders who struggled for control over the selection of the DCC members.⁵⁵ A particularly sensitive question was the reconstitution of the Baroda Congress (R) DCC, for Baroda was the home power-base of Chimanlal Patel. He managed to secure the Presidentship of the Baroda DCC (R) for his ally, Mr Pradhyuman Bhatt, but this was bitterly opposed by the pro-Adani group in Baroda which included the former Mayor of Baroda, Mr. Nanalal Choksi, Mr. Prabhudas Patel MP, Mr. Sanat Mehta, the powerful former PSP labour leader, and Mr. Laxmidas Patel, former President of the ad hoc City unit.⁵⁶ The Forum for Socialist Action also felt aggrieved over the issue of DCC(R) reconstitution: it complained that

55. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 27 and 29 September, 1971.

56. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 14 November, 1971.

Mr. Adani was trying to keep out Forum supporters from district committees and was stocking these units with defectors from the Old Congress and the Swatantra.⁵⁷

The Forum was particularly anxious to refuse Congress (O) defectors admittance to the party, and to exclude those that were admitted from gaining party posts and being given tickets in the ensuing State Assembly elections, for it felt that many Congress (O) defectors would help strengthen the more conservative Adani-Ghia faction with whom they were more ideologically attuned, and would weaken the forces of socialism within the Congress (R). The district Forum circles in Rajkot protested against the admission into the Congress (R) of the Princes of Vankaner and Rajkot, who had stood on Swatantra tickets in the 1967 General Elections backed by the Jan Sangh, declaring that they had all along opposed the progressive policies of Mrs. Gandhi and, therefore, had no place in the Congress (R).⁵⁸ Forum leaders also opposed the Congress (R) High Command's decision to admit Jaideepsinhji of Baria, the arch defector, into the Congress (R). Jaideepsinhji had dealt the most grievous blow ^{to} the Old Congress when he organised a mass exodus from it in June 1971. They also opposed the acceptance into the party of Premjibhai Thakkar, former Revenue Minister in the Hitendra Desai Ministry and a leading Kutch politician, and Brahm Kumar Bhatt, the powerful GPCC(O) Secretary.⁵⁹ However, the Forum welcomed an influx of 200 PSP workers from Gujarat, including the Gujarat PSP Chairman and Vice-President of the All-India Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Natvarlal Shah, on November 5th, 1971, as an addition of strength to socialist forces within the Congress (R). It felt that if a general condition were imposed forbidding admission to those who

57. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 1 December, 1971.

58. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 November, 1971.

59. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 16 November, 1971; and Times of India (Ahmedabad), 11 November and 1 December, 1971.

had "criticised the Prime Minister in the past", this would work to the benefit of the anti-Adani factions.⁶⁰

In view of the intransigence of factionalism between the three contending groups, whom Mrs. Gandhi had urged unsuccessfully to "mend your ways" while on a visit to Gujarat for the party's first State political conference,⁶¹ the CEC made it a rule that where there was no unanimity in the PEC about the Congress (R) candidates to be selected in a particular constituency, the PEC would have to send a panel of names to the CEC, and the DCCs would be directed to send a list of three candidates for each constituency.⁶² Thus final powers of selection rested squarely with the Congress (R) High Command, which would be able to weight the selection in favour of whichever faction it chose.⁶³ In the event, the CEC selection favoured the old guard, conservative Congressmen of the Adani-Ghia faction, and included a mere half a dozen representatives of the Forum. Naturally, the Forum, which had felt itself to be ideologically the closest to Mrs. Gandhi, regarded this as a stab in the back. The Forum had been promoted by Indira Gandhi after the Congress split in 1969 in an attempt to build up her power in the Congress (R). Its leader, Himatsinhji of Mansa, a political nonentity till then, was made a GPCC(R) Vice-President. So widespread was the view that only the "leftist elements" in the party would enjoy Mrs. Gandhi's backing that Chimanlal Patel, a shrewd opportunist politician, was persuaded to link his faction for a time

60. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 6 November, 1971.

61. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 22 November, 1971.

62. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 30 November, 1971.

63. See "Gujarat: A Free Hand for the Prime Minister", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 2 (8 January, 1972), p. 59.

with the Forum on the calculation that the latter had the Prime Minister's direct backing and would be favoured in the selection of candidates. The Adani-Ghia faction was similarly taken in, otherwise it would not have been so much on the defensive in the struggle for the GPCC leadership and yielded significant ground to the Forum.⁶⁴

The impact of these State-level factional conflicts on Ahmedabad City was considerable. The main factional conflict was between the Congress Forum for Socialist Action faction, which had strong support in Ahmedabad City, and the Adani-Ghia faction which was particularly powerful in Ahmedabad district and was gaining ground in Ahmedabad City too. With the influx of many former Janta Parishad members at an early stage into the Congress (R) in Ahmedabad City, the Socialist Forum element was strongly represented in the Ahmedabad City DCC (R) whose President, Dr. Vasudev Tripathi, former Janta Parishad Mayor of Ahmedabad, was a staunch Forum leader. The executive convenor of the Gujarat Congress Forum for Socialist Action was Mr. Manubhai Palkiwala, a former Janta Parishad and SSP leader, and now a prominent member of the Ahmedabad City DCC(R).

However, Kantilal Ghia was also extending his support from Ahmedabad district into the city, and he sought to contest the elections himself from the Ahmedabad industrial labour constituency of Rakhial. The Forum made a bid in early December, 1971, to preempt the selection of Congress (R) candidates from Ahmedabad City and to corner all Congress (R) nominations from Ahmedabad City. However, the Forum itself was split by factional strife. A list of nominees of the Forum's choice was drawn up at a closed door meeting at the residence of Mr. Himatsinhji of Mansa, chairman of the Gujarat unit of the Forum, in Ahmedabad by one Forum faction, led in the City by Dr. Vasudev

64. "The Cards are on the Table", Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 7, no. 8 (19 February, 1972), pp. 451-2.

Tripathi, President of the City DCC(R). Dr. Tripathi issued a statement soon after, advising ward committees not to recommend any names of candidates. A rival Forum leader, Mr. Vidyut Thakkar Secretary of the Ahmedabad City DCC(R), and his group of former PSP men, immediately condemned the way the list was finalised, accusing the other faction of using "sly methods" and ignoring ward committees. They were quick to come out with a rival list of candidates. Congress (R) party circles in Ahmedabad were amazed at the omission in the first list of prominent party leaders, such as Mr. Kantilal Ghia, the GPCC (R) Vice-President, Mr. Prabodh Raval, GPCC(R) Secretary, Mr. Narsinh Makwana, leader of the Congress (R) in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Dr. Ajit Patel, prominent city former PSP leader, and Mr. Natvarlal Shah, former Gujarat PSP chairman, although the Forum claimed to have approached the latter offering him a nomination which he refused. Party circles were also opposed to the inclusion of Mr. Himatsinhji of Mansa's name in the list, since he had no base in the city at all. The Congress (R) labour wing in Ahmedabad City, led by Maganbhai Barot, senior Vice-President of the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdur Union, was shocked at the complete neglect of labour representation, pointing out that, although there were three industrial labour constituencies in the city, none of the labour leaders' names had been mentioned in the Forum list.⁶⁵

Intense rivalry between prospective MLA candidates for Ahmedabad City constituencies followed. However, the final list handed down by the CEC(R) tried to form a compromise and represent as many important elements on the Ahmedabad scene as possible: Kantilal Ghia was to stand for the Congress (R) from the industrial labour constituency of Rakhial, and Prabodh Raval from Kalupur constituency. The Congress (R) labour leader, Mr. Maganbhai Barot, stood from Asarva constituency. Former PSP City leader, Dr. Ajit Patel, stood from Khadia constituency;

65. Indian Express (Ahmedabad), 3 December, 1971.

Narsinh Makwana, the Congress (R) leader in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, was accommodated from Kankaria (SC) constituency; and Socialist Forum leaders, Dr. Vasudev Tripathi and Mr. Manubhai Palkiwala, were accommodated from Shahpur and Dariapur-Kazipur constituencies respectively. A Muslim, Lalbhai Kundiwala, who had criticised the Hitendra Desai Ministry's handling of the Ahmedabad Communal Riots of 1969, stood from the Muslim-dominated Jamalpur constituency, and a relative newcomer to politics, Mrs. Kokilaben Hariprasad Vyas, a College teacher, stood from Ellis Bridge.

However divisions within the Congress (R) ranks did not end here: Dr. Somabhai Desai, an active Forum member and former Janta Parishad colleague of Dr. Vasudev Tripathi and now his rival for selection as candidate of the Congress (R) for the Shahpur seat, resigned when the seat was not allocated to him. He resigned with 18 other Congress (R) workers, including 5 office-bearers of the Shahpur ward committee, who declared that the CEC(R) had acted undemocratically in rejecting Dr. Desai's name which was recommended by the district unit.⁶⁶ Dr. Desai later decided to contest the seat as an Independent.⁶⁷ He was soon after expelled from the Congress (R), after a GPCC(R) decision to expel for 6 years all those who contested or worked against official candidates in the forthcoming elections.⁶⁸ Two other dissident Congress (R) members, Mr. Kashinath Dalal, president of the Amraiwadi taluka ward committee, and Mr. Amrutlal Barot, a lawyer, were also expelled for filing nomination papers against the official Congress (R) candidate, Kantilal Ghia, in the Rakhial constituency. The CPI in Ahmedabad City, despite the national level alliance between the Congress (R) and the

66. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 4 February, 1972.

67. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 7 February, 1972.

68. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 8 February, 1972.

national CPI, decided to support Mr. Amrutlal Barot, the dissident Congress (R) candidate against Mr. Ghia, although not to support Dr. Somabhai Desai.⁶⁹

However, despite considerable faction infighting in the Congress (R) in Ahmedabad, and also on the State level, where Jaideepsinhji had decided to contest the elections as an Independent on being denied a Congress (R) ticket and many districts had rebel Congress (R) candidates standing against official Congress (R) nominees, Mrs. Gandhi's shrewd handling of the Bangladesh refugee situation and victory in the war with Pakistan virtually assured a massive victory to the Congress (R) at the polls, and at both the local level in Ahmedabad City and the State level the Congress (R) secured a landslide victory in 1972. The Congress (R) in Gujarat had strengthened its hand by taking over many district panchayat organisations and cooperative institutions. It captured 139 of the 167 State Assembly seats in a House which would have no recognised opposition, since the Congress (O) won only 16 seats. The Swatantra party was annihilated, winning no seats at all. The CPM also drew a blank, although the CPI scored its maiden victory winning one seat, while the Jan Sangh won 3 seats, 2 more than in 1967. Most of the Congress (R) rebels who had sought election as Independents, with the exception of Jaideepsinhji and his group who scored impressive victories, were routed. There were 8 Independent MLAs in the New House. In regional terms, the Congress (R) asserted its dominance in all the major regional areas: it won 26 of the 28 seats in South Gujarat, 32 of the 41 seats in Central Gujarat, 37 of the 46 seats in North Gujarat, and 44 of the 52 seats in Saurashtra and Kutch. Thus it had conquered the Central and South Gujarat strongholds of the Congress (O), and was no longer a party of the peripheral regions of Gujarat. Thus regional conflicts would once again be internalised within the dominant

69. Times of India (Ahmedabad),

9 and 11 February, 1972.

Congress (R) party.⁷⁰

In Ahmedabad,⁷¹ the Congress (R) captured all nine of the City's State Assembly seats with massive margins of victory. The Majur Mahajan, which had cut itself off from Central and State power structures and had not been able to dissociate itself effectively from the Congress (O), found its electoral support in Ahmedabad labour constituencies annihilated. In its prestige contest in the Rakhial constituency, where the National Labour Party leader, Mr. Navinchandra Barot, was pitted against the GPCC (R) Vice-President, Kantilal Ghia, it was decisively rejected and Ghia won by an overwhelming margin of 23,855 votes over Navinchandra Barot, who came second.

TABLE 2. Voting pattern in Rakhial constituency in the 1972 State Assembly Elections.

Total Electorate: 101,937 Votes Polled: 77,680 Invalid Votes: 5,649

<u>Candidates:</u>	<u>Party:</u>	<u>No. of Votes polled:</u>
Kantilal F. Ghia	Congress (R)	42,049
Navinchandra Barot	NLP	18,194
Dr. Balwantray G. Dave	Jan Sangh	3,296
L.P. Chauhan	Socialist party	390
Bhogilal H. Dave	Ind.	124
N.N. Desai	Ind.	132
Amrutlal M. Barot	Ind.	881
Ikramali Sayed	Ind.	865

The National Labour Party had suffered serious setbacks in the few months preceding the elections in Rakhial: its prominent leader from Rakhial constituency, Mr. Maganlal Rajguru, and 50 Majur Mahajan workers defected to the Congress (R) on March 3,⁷² and Trikam Lal Patel, who was

70. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 12 and 13 March, 1972.

71. Ibid.

72. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 4 March, 1972.

denied a ticket by the Congress (O), actively campaigned against Navinchandra Barot in Rakhial, defying the tacit electoral understanding between the Congress (O) and the NLP.⁷³

In Dariapur-Kazipur constituency, the NLP candidate Mr. Bachubhai M. Shukla suffered an even more crushing defeat at the hands of the Congress (R) candidate, Manubhai Palkiwala. Bachubhai M. Shukla scored only 8,752 votes compared to Palkiwala's 32,260 votes. The CPM leader, Dinkar Mehta, who had been so close to winning this seat in 1967, lost his deposit.

In Asarva constituency, the veteran Majur Mahajan leader, a Secretary of the TIA and former MLA, Manharlal T. Shukla was ignominiously defeated by the Congress (R) labour leader, Maganlal R. Barot, to the extent of losing his deposit. Manharlal Shukla secured only 6,632 votes compared to 28,740 votes secured by Maganlal R. Barot, Vice-President of the Congress (R) union, the Ahmedabad Mill Mazdur Union. Maganbhai Barot, a youthful lawyer, established himself as a factor in labour politics after his relentless and successful agitation to get the Jupiter Mills reopened under the National Textile Corporation. He also successfully organised the semi-clerks of the textile mills and the employees of the Provident Fund Commissioner's office. He played a major part in building up the labour wing of the new Congress.⁷⁴

In Kankaria (SC) constituency, which Jesingbhai G. Parmar the Majur Mahajan leader and NLP candidate, had held through three successive General Elections, he was decisively beaten by the Congress (R) candidate and leader of the Congress (R) in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, Mr. Narsinh Makwana. Jesingbhai only polled 6,621 votes compared to Mr. Narsinh Makwana's 12,475 votes.

73. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 21 February, 1972.

74. Times Of India (Ahmedabad), 2 March, 1972.

In the other Ahmedabad City Assembly constituencies, the popular Muslim former MLA, Lalbhai Kundiwala of the Congress (R), had an easy victory over the little-known Congress (O) Hindu candidate, Dr. Kantilal G. Mehta, in Jamalpur constituency, securing 28,922 votes compared to Dr. Mehta's 16,347 votes. In Ellis Bridge, the Congress (O) fielded a fairly strong candidate, Miss Charumati Yoddha, a popular Gandhian social worker, but even she was beaten by a Congress (R) relative newcomer, Mrs. Kokilaben Vyas, by 30,580 votes to 19,186. In Shahpur constituency, the Ahmedabad City DCC(R) chief and Forum leader, Dr. Vasudev Tripathi scored a convincing victory over his rivals, including the rebel Congress (R) candidate, Dr. Somabhai Desai, who stood as an Independent, and Jayantilal P. Shah of the Congress (O). Dr. Tripathi won 17,423 votes to Dr. Desai's 9,628. In Khadia constituency, a traditional PSP stronghold for more than a decade, Dr. Ajit Patel, the former PSP leader, now standing from the Congress (R), defeated his nearest Socialist Party rival, Dr. Jayendra Pandit, by 15,401 votes to 11,321. Chandrakant M. Patel, the Congress (O) candidate, secured a mere 3,823 votes. In Kalupur constituency, Prabodh Raval, Congress (R) GPCC Secretary, discovered his main rival to be not the Congress (O) candidate, Jayant K. Raval, who only secured 2,868 votes but Pramodchandra C. Patel, the Jan Sangh candidate, who secured 17,245 votes compared to his own 26,164 votes.

Thus in the years following the Congress split, a radical realignment of forces at the Central and State level had a profound repercussion on city politics, particularly for the Majur Mahajan, whose tremendous influence at the State and Central levels, built up over many years, was effectively curtailed.

EPILOGUE

1. After the Congress (R) landslide electoral victory of 1972, the contest for the Gujarat Chief Ministership became intense. For the first time, Ahmedabad had a major contender in the race: Kantilal Ghia, although he faced fierce competition from Ratubhai Adani and Chimanlal Patel. The factional impasse was so great that eventually the senior party leaders, including Ratubhai Adani and his four Vice- Presidents , gave an undertaking to the Prime Minister in writing to abide by her decision as to the Chief Ministership.⁷⁵ Indira Gandhi deputed Uma Shankar Dixit to gauge the situation. He sounded opinion, but failed to bring about a consensus; thus a formula was worked out during high-level talks between Mrs. Gandhi, the Congress President, D. Sanjivayya, and other senior party leaders that Dixit would advise the party to elect Ghanshyambhai Oza, Union Minister of State for Industrial Development, as its new leader. Oza, it was felt, would be an acceptable candidate to all since he had not been actively involved in the regional and factional power struggles of the State unit, as the Times of India put it , "Mr. Oza's non-involvement in group politics has won him the plum of Chief Ministership". On March 15, 1972, he was unanimously elected leader of the State Legislature Congress (R) party.⁷⁶

The new Cabinet ministers were carefully chosen in consultation with the Prime Minister. The Chief Minister kept the portfolios of Home, General Administration and Planning. Adani had the portfolios of Agriculture, Forests, Parliamentary Affairs and Cooperation. Ghia was made Finance Minister; Chimanbhai Patel Industries and Power Minister; Jashvant Mehta Minister for Public Works; Chokawala Minister

75. Times of India , (Ahmedabad), 10 March , 1972.

76. Times of India , (Ahmedabad), 15 and 16 March, 1972.

for Education; Vasudev Tripathi Minister for Health, Family Planning and Municipalities, including Town Planning; and Sanat Mehta Minister for Labour, Civil Supplies and Housing. Thus, after more than a decade since the creation of Gujarat State, the Labour Ministry went to a non Majur Mahajan candidate, Sanat Mehta, a former PSP labour leader, and the Majur Mahajan's monopoly on the Labour Ministry came to an end. However, Ahmedabad's representation in the Ministry increased with two full-fledged Ministers, Ghia and Vasudev Tripathi, representing Ahmedabad in the Cabinet.⁷⁷

The 1972 State Assembly elections showed the Congress (R) to be predominant in both the labour and city areas of Ahmedabad. However, on achieving dominance, it also reverted to the pattern of factional infighting of a dominant party, which permitted an Independent candidate of slender financial means, Mr. Purushottam Mavlankar, an Indian academic, to capture the Lok Sabha seat from Ahmedabad City in the by-election, occasioned by the sudden death of Indulal Yagnik in mid 1972, by an impressive margin of 25,447 votes over the Congress (R) candidate and Forum leader, Manubhai Palkiwala. The GPCC (R) President, Mr. Jinabhai Darji, and the Chief Minister, Mr. Oza, had actually favoured fielding Mr. Umashankar Joshi, Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University, as the Congress (R) candidate in the by-election, or alternatively Mr. Natvarlal Shah, PCC(R) Secretary and leader of the powerful Hind Mazdur Sabha. However, the High Command, in a bid to secure a compromise candidate between right and left, chose Mr. Palkiwala, a Socialist Forum leader, who was also acceptable to the rightists, Ghia and Chimanlal Patel. Oza-Darji and Ghia-Patel rivalries, combined with tactical errors like the Gujarat Government's request to millowners to close the mills on voting day to help secure a large labour vote for Palkiwala and, on their refusal, the Industries Minister,

77. Times of India (Ahmedabad), 8 March, 1972.

Chimanlal Patel's demand that the Ahmedabad Electricity Company should stop electricity supply to the mills which also caused disruption of supply to workers' chawls, thus proving counterproductive in securing a large labour vote for Palkiwala, so effectively sabotaged Palkiwala's candidacy that he even lost in assembly segments which had for years been considered his strongholds i.e. Dariapur and Shahpur.⁷⁸ In addition Manubhai Palkiwala was President of the Ahmedabad Postal Trade Union, which was on strike for higher wages. When Palkiwala advised the postal workers to withdraw from strike action, the postal employees went against him.⁷⁹ This by-election too high-lighted the complex interrelationship between local, State and Central politics - a crucial factor in the analysis of the politics of Ahmedabad City.

78. See A.R. Vyas, "The lesson of Ahmedabad", The White Star, (December, 1972).

79. Interview with Jaisukhlal Hathi, Deputy Leader of the Congress (R) and leading Gujarati politician from Saurashtra in London in June 1973.

The death of Shyamprasad R. Vasavda in early 1973⁸⁰ marked the end of an era in Ahmedabad City politics. By that time the Majur Mahajan had ceased to have much power at the State level, although numerically it still commanded the support of most of Ahmedabad's textile workers and relations with the employers continued to be good. In 1972, the convention, established many years before, that the State Cabinet Minister for Labour would be nominated by Shyamprasad Vasavda from among the Majur Mahajan's leadership, thus ensuring that State-level policy on labour, housing and social welfare was basically the policy of the Majur Mahajan, came to an abrupt end with the appointment by Indira Gandhi's chosen Congress (R) Chief Minister, Ghanshyambhai Oza, of Sanat Mehta, former PSP labour leader from Baroda, as the new State Labour Minister. With the radical Sanat Mehta as Labour Minister, the Majur Mahajan faced many difficulties in solving problems with the State Government. The problems of Congress (R) trade unions, with whom the PSP had merged, were listened to more sympathetically than those of the Majur Mahajan, which no longer had ready access to State-level cooperation, patronage and decision-making authority.

The Chairmanship of the Gujarat State Housing Board which had been held by a Majur Mahajan nominee, Nurmahomed H. Shaikh, from the first of September 1967, to the end of 1969, was given to a Government official, Shri Kantilal M. Kantawala, Chief Engineer in the Gujarat State administration. Another Congress (R) labour

80. On the death of Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, power was transferred relatively smoothly to Arvind Buch, who had been a leading Majur Mahajan figure for more than twenty-five years, and who now succeeded as General-Secretary of the Ahmedabad TLA.

leader, former PSP trade unionist, Natvarlal Shah, was rewarded in 1972 with the Chairmanship of the Gujarat State Road Transport Committee.⁸¹

However, in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, the Majur Mahajan, the main element in the Congress (O), managed to preserve its leadership but only by the rather incongruous support of its former political enemies, the CPI, CPM, Jan Sangh and SSP, in fact all opposition parties except the Congress (R). Krishnavadan Joshi of the Congress (O), a social worker and far cry from the textile magnate Mayors of the past, was made Mayor on the defection to the Congress (R) of Narottambhai Zhaveri and his followers. Navinchandra Barot had still managed to retain control of the Chairmanship of the Standing Committee. The Congress (R) and Congress (O) were fairly evenly balanced in the Corporation with about 30-32 members and 36 members respectively. Due to the failure of the Congress (R) to wrest political power totally from the Congress (O) in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, although the ostensible reason was because of the famine conditions in Gujarat, the State Government extended the sitting Corporation's tenure, postponing the municipal elections/^{due in April 1973}to give the Congress (R) time to inflict a coup de grâce to the Congress (O) element in the Corporation.

Direct business influence over city politics declined with the defeat of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas in the mid-term elections of 1971. Linkages between Ahmedabad business leaders and the State Government have also become tenuous, and there has been a marked

81. Interviews with Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas and Jaisukhlalbhai Hathi, leading Gujarat State politician and Deputy leader of the Congress (R) party, in July and June 1973 respectively.

change in the pattern of selection of Chairmen of important State-level Corporations. Ahmedabad textile magnates no longer play so prominent a role as Chairmen of State Corporations as they did in the early 60s. (See Table 3).

Jayantilal Bhikabhai's appointment as Chairman of the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation was terminated in December 1972. The Chairmanship of the Gujarat State Finance Corporation, which had been in the hands of prominent Ahmedabad industrialists, Amrutlal Hargovandas, Navnitlal Sakarlal Sodhan and Balkrishna Harivallabhdas till the end of 1970, in recent years has gone to a political leader from Jamnagar, Kantilal P. Shah, and then to Shri Lalitbhai R. Dalal, ICS officer and Chief Secretary to the Government of Gujarat. The Chairmanship of the Gujarat Industrial Investment Corporation has passed to another ex-ICS officer, Shri Bhogibhai P. Patel. The Chairmanship of the Gujarat Small Industries Corporation was in the hands of an Ahmedabad industrialist, Chinubhai Manibhai, for more than ten years, but was transferred to a technocrat, Shri Lalit B. Bhagwati in December 1972. In the Gujarat State Fertilizers Corporation, although it is still chaired by Ahmedabad textile magnate, Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, the Congress (R) State Government, soon after coming to power in 1972, asked for the resignation of Arvind Mafatlal, Rohit Chinubhai and other prominent Ahmedabad industrialists who were on the management committee, and put their own nominees in their place.⁸²

82. Discussions with Professor Howard Erdman at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA, in October 1972. Professor Erdman was engaged on a study of the political relations of the GSFC.

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Table 3. Composition of Important Gujarat State-level Corporations, 1960-72.

<u>Name of Corporation:</u>	<u>Name of Chairman:</u>	<u>Date of Establishment:</u>	<u>Duration of Chairmanship:</u>	<u>Chairman's local Occupation:</u>
1. Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation, Ahmedabad	1. Shri Chinubhai Chimanlal, Ahmedabad 2. Shri Manubhai Shah, Jamnagar 3. Shri Ghanshyambhai Oza, Rajkot 4. Shri Jayantilal Bhikhabhai Ahmedabad	4.8.1962	4. 8.1962 to 31.11.67 1.12.1967 to 31. 3.1970 1. 4.70 to 31.11.70 1.12.70 to 31.12.72	Textile industrialist Political leader Textile industrialist
2. Gujarat State Financial Corporation, Ahmedabad	1. Shri Amrutlal Hargovandas, Ahmedabad 2. Shri Navnitlal Sakarlal Sodhan, Ahmedabad 3. Shri Balkrishna Harivallabhdas, Ahmedabad 4. Shri Kantilal P. Shah, Jamnagar 5. Shri Lalitbhai R. Dalal, Chief Sec. to the Government of Gujarat	1.5.1960	1. 5.60 to Dec. 64 Dec. 64 to Dec. 68 Dec. 68 to Dec. 70 Dec. 70 to Dec. 72 Dec. 72 onwards	Textile industrialist Textile industrialist Textile industrialist Political leader ICS Officer, Govt. nominee
3. Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation, Ahmedabad	1. Shri Vadilal Lalubhai Mehta, Ahmedabad	1.5.1960	1. 5.60 to 3. 6.66	Textile industrialist

83. Data provided by Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.

<u>Name of Corporation:</u>	<u>Name of Chairman:</u>	<u>Date of Establishment:</u>	<u>Duration of Chairmanship:</u>	<u>Chairman's local Occupation:</u>
	2. Shri Kantilal P. Shah Jamnagar		3. 6.66 to 3. 6.69	Political leader
	3. Shri Bhalalalbai Contractor Baroda		4. 6.69 to 21. 6.72	Political leader/ social worker
	4. Shri Natvarlal Shah, Ahmedabad		21. 6.72 onwards	Labour leader/ political leader
4. Gujarat Industrial Investment Corporation, Ahmedabad	1. Shri Manubhai Shah, Jamnagar	12.8.68	12. 8.68 to 11. 4.69	Political leader
	2. Shri Vithalbai C. Patel, Bombay		12. 4.69 to 11. 5.70	Ex-Custodian Central Bank of India
	3. Shri Chimanbhai Chalubhai, Bombay		12. 5.70 to 19.12.72	Solicitor/social worker
	4. Shri Bhogibhai P. Patel		20.12.72 onwards	ICS (retired)
5. Gujarat Small Industries Corporation, Ahmedabad	1. Shri Chinubhai Manibhai, Ahmedabad	1.5.1962	1. 5.62 to 19.10.72	Industrialist
	2. Shri Lalit N. Bhagwati, Ahmedabad		20.10.72 onwards	Technocrat
6. Gujarat Housing Board (Corporation), Ahmedabad	1. Shri Madanmohan Mangaldas, Ahmedabad	1.5.1960	1. 5.60 to 31. 8.67	Textile industrialist
	2. Shri Nurmahomed N. Shaikh, Ahmedabad		1. 9.67 to 31.12.69	Majur Mahajan labour leader
	3. Shri Kantilal M. Kantawala,		1. 1.70	Chief Engineer,

2. Recent Developments in Gujarat and Ahmedabad Politics

Since the 1972 State elections, the High Command steadily lost the initiative in controlling factional conflicts in Gujarat State politics. Ghanshyambhai Oza, who was originally chosen as Chief Minister by the High Command because he was above the factional conflicts in the State Congress party, ultimately fell from power because, lacking any political base of his own, he became too closely identified with one of the major factional groups - the Ratubhai Adani-Jinabhai Darji group - thus antagonizing the other major faction - the Kantilal Ghia-Chimanbhai Patel group.

Oza, at the behest of the Adani-Darji group, tried to undermine the strength of the Ghia-Patel faction both in the government and in the party organisation. Oza took away the Industries portfolio from Chimanbhai Patel, making him Minister of Planning instead, a less powerful position. Adani, who held the portfolio of cooperation and Panchayati Raj, set about dislodging many of Ghia's and Patel's supporters from Panchayati Raj institutions and cooperatives.⁸⁴

In the 1972 GPCC Presidential election, Jinabhai Darji of the Adani faction had defeated the nominee of the Ghia-Chimanbhai Patel group, Krishnakant Vekharla, a Congress (R) labour leader from Ahmedabad City, and was elected President. With Darji as President, the Adani group was able to keep the supporters of Ghia and Chimanbhai Patel out of important positions in the party

⁸⁴ "Gujarat letter: A Second Sardar Patel?" - Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 8, no. 29 (July 21, 1973), pp. 1273-1274.

organization.

In retaliation Chimanbhai put up Kantilal Ghia as a candidate for the Presidency of the GPCC against Jinabhai Darji in early 1973. However, Darji outwitted him by striking off the rolls many of Chimanbhai's supporters in Baroda and elsewhere who had not completed twelve months as Congress party members and therefore were ineligible to vote in the organizational elections. Many of Chimanbhai's local lieutenants, including Thakorebhai Patel of Baroda, lost supporters because they were struck off the rolls, becoming ineligible to vote. There was also a damaging allegation against Ghia current at that time that he had accepted large sums of money for his campaign from industrialists, notably wealthy industrialists from Ahmedabad. In the event Ghia lost the election.⁸⁵

Ahmedabad City and District were controlled at this time by the Ghia-Patel group - Ghia controlled the Zilla Parishad and many cooperative institutions within the city and district, and Chimanbhai Patel had considerable influence among the University professors and students of Ahmedabad. City politics were strongly affected by this State-level factionalism: the Oza-dominated Ministry, particularly the Labour Minister, Sanat Mehta, the former PSP leader, who now led the PSP element in the Congress (R) which was allied to the Adani-Darji-Oza faction, created difficulties for the Majur Mahajan within the city. The problems of Congress (R) unions, which were largely based on

85. Interview with Mr. FF in June 1974.

former PSP unions, were listened to more sympathetically than those of the Majur Mahajan. Sanat Mehta sought to pass fairly radical legislation, which would have altered the existing pattern of Majur Mahajan-business relations in the textile industry, giving workers a greater share in management. Previously, on questions of rationalization and welfare measures in the well-managed units of certain mills, there had been committees with labour representation, but the extension of this principle to management committees and the Boards of Directors was a novel and radical departure. The Oza-dominated Ministry also postponed indefinitely the municipal elections which were due to take place in Ahmedabad in April 1973, ostensibly because of famine conditions in Gujarat, but actually because the Congress (O) and the NLP were still in control of the Ahmedabad City Municipal Corporation, and the Ghia-Patel faction controlled the Ahmedabad City DCC.

Chimanbhai Patel, having failed to make Ghia President of the GPCC, turned his attention to ousting Oza. Although many in the Government (where only two deputy ministers originally supported him), twelve MPs from the State as well as a majority in the PCC opposed him, he set about gathering support to topple Oza. He had Ghia's support but Ghia's effective influence was limited to Ahmedabad district and city. He also gained the backing of industrialists from Ahmedabad and Bombay, and controlled the Baroda region, and in Saurashtra, through his lieutenants, he controlled certain areas in Jamnagar, Junagadh, Gondal, Rajkot and Amreli. Before the Congress split he had been head of the Seva Dal and the Gujarat Youth Congress and a popular Professor

in Ahmedabad, and so had the support of many students and professors there. However his main strategy was to build a Patel-Kshatriya dominated coalition against the mainly Brahmin-Bania dominated Adani-Oza group. Most of the Patidar MLAs in the Legislature supported Chimanbhai. He gained the support of former Swatantra party members led by the Kshatriya leader, Narendrasinh Jhala, whereas the supporters of the Adani group came mostly from the Congress (O).

The economic control the Banias and traders exercised over the villages, since they were moneylenders and purchased the products of the farmers and which meant they could usually count on the support of a section of the Patels and Kshatriyas, was slowly being undermined by the increasing prosperity of the farmers who could now obtain credit and other facilities through Government-sponsored cooperative institutions and were beginning to become traders and to process agricultural products themselves. Chimanbhai secured the support of the more prosperous farmers in Saurashtra, the Leuva Patels who had become oil millers as well as groundnut farmers. The somewhat less prosperous Kadwa subcaste of the Patels was still largely with the Adani group, who by and large also had the support of the disadvantaged Advanis and Harijans.⁸⁶

By building up this coalition of support, Chimanbhai was able to topple Ghanshyambhai Oza. Emboldened by this, he nurtured ambitions to become Chief Minister himself. The High Command was dismayed by this turn of events and sent mediators to the scene,

⁸⁶ Ibid.

notably Jaisukhlalbai Hathi, senior Gujarat politician and Deputy Leader of the Congress (R), to try to reach some sort of settlement or compromise between the two major factions over who should succeed as Chief Minister. Ratubhai Adani was the second man in the Cabinet after Oza, but Chimanbhai was not prepared to accept him as Chief Minister, so the High Command mediators persuaded Ratubhai to agree not to contest for the Chief Ministership. These mediators offered the Chief Ministership to Ghia, leader of the Ghia - Patel faction,⁸⁷ as a means of bringing the two groups together. Ghia made the mistake of consulting Chimanbhai on this. Chimanbhai, himself anxious to become Chief Minister, realising that Ghia had very little personal support in the faction, insisted that the question should be decided by putting it to the vote of their faction supporters. Ghia, sensing that he had no chance of a majority vote, defected to Ratubhai's group, and was put forward as a rival candidate for the Chief Ministership against Chimanbhai Patel in place of Ratubhai Adani since Adani's men believed, mistakenly, that he would bring with him his supporters from the dissident faction. (As it turned out, he could carry no one with him from the dissident group and all the 62 votes he secured in the subsequent elections for Chief Ministership were those of the Adani group.)

Even at this stage the External Affairs Minister, Swaran Singh, and the AICC General Secretary, M. Chandrasekhar, came to

⁸⁷ Up till then Ghia was recognised as the nominal head of the faction, even by Chimanbhai Patel, since Ghia had been the first Congress (O) senior leader to defect to the Congress (R), and build up the new organization in Gujarat. Ghia had established himself on excellent terms with Indira Gandhi and was for some time consulted by her on all matters affecting Gujarat.

Gujarat as the High Command's observers and tried to work out a consensus in the Congress Legislature party. Singh called both the prospective candidates for Chief Ministership, Ghia and Chimanbhai, and asked them to suggest a compromise candidate acceptable to both, but they could come to no agreement. Ghia told Singh that he was prepared to leave the choice of Chief Minister to the Prime Minister, but Chimanbhai forced the High Command to permit the leadership question to be settled through an election, insisting on the democratic right of the Legislative Assembly members to elect their leader. A last minute attempt by the High Command to work out a compromise or leave the decision to the Prime Minister in Delhi, where the ballot box had been taken for the counting of votes, was foiled by Chimanbhai, who threatened to go to a court of law if the votes were not counted. In the event, Chimanbhai was elected Chief Minister by a margin of only ten votes.⁸⁸

Chimanbhai soon tempted Ghia back by offering him the Number 2 position in the new government, the Finance portfolio, but he was well aware that Ghia had no support in the Congress (R) Legislature party (he had only six followers in the Legislative Assembly) and could be no threat to him.

Thus by mid-1973 it was clear that the Majur Mahajan had no State-level power base and had lost its direct representation in State factional conflicts. Neither of the State-level factions - the Adani-Darji faction nor the Ghia-Patel faction - had any sympathy for the Majur Mahajan. Ahmedabad business

⁸⁸ "Gujarat letter: A Second Sardar Patel?" Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 8, no. 29 (July 21, 1973), pp. 1273-1274.

elements remained important sources of party finance, but had little direct influence on political outcomes. With the split in the Congress, opposition Janta Parishad leaders had tended to join the Socialist Forum wing of the Congress (R), and opposition became internalized in Congress party factional conflicts with the Socialist Forum largely in opposition to the Ghia-Patel faction, which mainly controlled Ahmedabad city and district politics at this time.

Opposition in Ahmedabad city politics had become internalized in Congress party factions with the Congress (O), NLP and Jan Sangh still significant political actors; but it was soon to take to the streets in an agitational outburst.

Urban Unrest and the Downfall of Chimanbhai Patel

The mainspring of the movement to overthrow the Chief Minister, Chimanbhai Patel, was the deteriorating economic situation in Gujarat, and growing disparities in living standards. The most vocal outcry against food shortages and spiralling living costs was in the major cities of Gujarat, especially in Ahmedabad. During January and February 1974 more than 75% of the total urban population of Gujarat was at one time or the other under either a 'bandh' or a curfew, and there were orders prohibiting the assembly of four or more persons in other places. Repeated rioting took place in almost all the Corporation and near-Corporation size cities, and in a large number of towns with populations up to 10,000. A universal feature of the riots was that grainshops and godowns were the targets of attack on an unprecedented scale. The rural areas that were affected were almost invariably in the hinterland of large cities and towns.

The Government's failure to deal effectively and rationally with the critical economic situation laid it open to attack for failing to protect the common people, or provide them with food, or keep down prices. The Government arrived at an agreement (Samjuti) with the oil millers to reduce the prices of groundnut oil, but instead the price went on increasing and free trade in oil was allowed to continue. Nationalization of the wholesale trade in wheat was found impossible to enforce. A levy was imposed on paddy, and, despite the fact that farmers in only three talukas of Surat out of the whole of Gujarat refused to comply, the Government arrested the leaders of the farmers on January 2, thereby incensing the kheduts who threatened that, if their leaders were not released, Gujarat would be in flames. The irrationality of the Government's move was underlined by the fact that the farmers' organisation, the Khedut Samaj, actually promised to give more paddy than required under the government order, provided the levy was abolished and it was made voluntary. They wanted a 'Samjuti', which was how the Government had dealt with the oil millers.⁸⁹

All this laid the Government wide open to allegations of corruption. People came to attribute food scarcity and rising prices to corruption in the Ministry. Chimanbhai Patel bore the brunt of the anti-corruption feelings. It was alleged that he collected about 25 lakhs of rupees from the oil merchants by allowing them to retain 60% of oil for local distribution where they could make enormous profits in the scarcity conditions. It was also alleged that Chimanbhai, for a large consideration, exempted many farmers from complying with the levy on millet on

⁸⁹"Gujarat: Beyond the Ken of Organized Politics," Economic and Political Weekly, vol. 9, no. 5 (Feb. 2, 1974), pp. 129-132.

on the false grounds that their produce was dangerous for human consumption. Another allegation current at the time was that despite the ban on the sale or transfer of vacant plots of land without the permission of the Government, Chimanbhai granted such permission to owners of vacant plots in return for bribes. Too late, after much of the damage had been done, Chimanbhai sought to appoint a Vigilance Commissioner to look into cases of corruption and to bring a law against corruption, but by this time he could not muster enough support to carry this.⁹⁰

University and student politics was also a major factor in the urban riots and unrest. Chimanbhai controlled over 70 colleges all over the State. He also had a large following in Gujarat University and its colleges. The governing body of Gujarat University, the Senate, is very powerful politically and distributes educational resources. Chimanbhai succeeded in packing the University Senate with his followers. Most importantly he had the longstanding Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University, Uma Shankar Joshi, replaced by one of his followers, Ishwarbhai Patel. When the students, starting in a college at Morvi in Saurashtra and spreading to Ahmedabad and many other educational centres all over Gujarat, complained against the rising cost of their mess bill, eventually widening their complaint to rising prices in general, Uma Shankar Joshi and other displaced Professors sympathized and some actively participated in the student movement of protest.

90. Interview with Mr. FF in June 1974.

The militant students formed a committee to organize agitation against high prices and food shortages and ministerial corruption - the Nav Nirman Samiti (the New Purity Committee) - led by Manishi Jani and Umakant Mankad, and some University Professors also joined the Nav Nirman Samiti. The students organized bandhs and processions to compel merchants to sell commodities at cheaper rates. Their main targets were the rich groundnut farmers and oil millers of Saurashtra and big businessmen and industrialists who, they felt, were in league with a corrupt Government to exploit the common people. Many of the bandhs took a violent turn - many shops were burnt and looted and about 70 lives were lost largely due to police repression. Student grievances also came to the fore - students agitated for promotion without examinations. Students started disrupting and walking out of examinations. Rather late in the day, Chimanbhai unsuccessfully attempted to set up a commission to look into the educational system and student grievances.⁹¹

Middle-class white-collar unions, such as bank workers' unions - the Ahmedabad branches of the All-India Banking Federation and the National Banking Workers' Federation - and the union of government employees - the Gujarat Sarkar Karmachari Sangh - led by Mr. Devyakand Untani, a government servant from Rajkot now based in Ahmedabad, and Mr. Vacharajani, supported the student protest movement. Doctors sympathized with the agitation and lawyers protested by not going to the courts. Unorganized labour,

⁹¹ Ibid.

for example construction labourers, household industry workers, domestic servants and artisans of all kinds, was also involved in the rioting and disturbances.

Factionalism within the Congress and the disruptive activities of opposition parties further intensified the political crisis. When Chimanbhai became Chief Minister, the High Command insisted he should accommodate three of Ratubhai Adani's group in the Ministry. Ratubhai himself was offered a place in the Cabinet but he would not agree to work under Chimanbhai's leadership. Ultimately, the three from Adani's group were: Amul Desai, former PSP leader, who was made Minister of Finance, Dwivekanand Nanavati, who was made Law Minister, and Amarsey Chaudhary, an Adivasi engineer, who was made Minister for Social Welfare. Chimanbhai tried unsuccessfully to dislodge these three from Adani's group. He tried to create a rift between them and between each of them and Adani by carrying misleading tales about one to the other so as to create suspicion in each other's minds and in Ratubhai's mind. For example, he spread a story in the press that Amul Desai had said that the Nav Nirman Samiti was being financed by Ratubhai. He had press statements made by the Cabinet against Ratubhai printed in the press without the qualification that Amul Desai, Nanavati and Chaudhary dissociated themselves from them. When the political unrest in Gujarat started these three openly revolted against Chimanbhai, and when the High Command sent Mr. K. C. Pant, the Irrigation Minister, to assess the situation in Gujarat they gave him a written statement against Chimanbhai, denouncing him for corruption. This disrupted the Cabinet, and paved the way for the Chimanbhai Patel Ministry's

downfall. Chimanbhai was never on good terms with Jinabhai Darji, the Gujarat GPCC President, and there was a clearly visible split at this time between the organizational wing and the ministerial wing which hampered the working of Government. Jinabhai criticised the Government in the party and alienated the members of the party from the Chief Minister. Chimanbhai, who had the power of patronage, retaliated by seeking to allocate the chairmanships of various corporations judiciously to win over party men.

The opposition parties also capitalized on the situation. The major opposition parties at this time were the Jan Sangh and the Congress (O) - the Communist and Socialist parties were too weak to be significant. The Congress (R) had adopted a leftist stance, stealing the thunder from the Communists and Socialists, and the only viable opposition parties were the parties of the right - the Jan Sangh and the Congress (O). In a by-election, shortly before the agitation, for the Lok Sabha seat in Sabarkantha, the Congress (O) candidate, Maniben Patel, daughter of Sardar Patel, was elected with a sizable majority. Congress (R) had also fared badly in recent Panchayati Raj elections, especially in Bhavnagar and other places. The Congress (O) in contrast with the Jan Sangh seemed content to issue statements against Congress (R) attacking it on policy issues rather than calling for bandhs as the Jan Sangh did.

The Jan Sangh was particularly active in opposition. The Jan Sangh had penetrated deep into the student world by establishing bodies like the Vidyarthi Parishad, which became influential among University students. Young students and professors were attracted to the Jan Sangh by its stress on a vigorous cultural

nationalism, physical fitness and social discipline. Jan Sangh and RSS literature is full of terms like 'courage', 'virility', 'order' and 'discipline', and emphasizes the need to re-establish the social coherence and discipline of an idealized mythical past. Some members of the Jan Sangh student body, the Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, were members of the Nav Nirman Samiti. The Jan Sangh helped the students in organizing meetings and bandhs: it organized the largest number of bandhs in different parts of the State and in organizational efficiency surpassed both the Congress (O) and the Congress (R). All the Jan Sangh ward units in Ahmedabad City were involved in organizing agitation. The Jan Sangh and the Congress (O) accused the Congress (R) not only of failing to cope with food shortages and rising prices, but also of failing to solve the Narmada dispute in Gujarat's favour, of nationalizing trade, especially the wheat trade, and damaging production by its land legislation. These parties also tried to raise the Naxalite bogey in Gujarat.

Eventually the Ministry fell on March 15, 1974, and Chimbhai Patel was expelled from the Congress (R), although he still had a core of MLA followers in the Gujarat Legislative Assembly, and President's Rule was declared.⁹²

Although the students continued agitating to bring down oil prices and the prices of all essential commodities - on May 26, 1974, about a hundred students led by Manishi Jani, President of the Nav Nirman Samiti, vowed before the life-size statue of the Mahatma near the income-tax office in Ahmedabad that they would

⁹² Gujarat: Beyond the Ken of Organized Politics", op.cit.

continue their struggle against spiralling prices and rampant corruption, and Mr. Jani wrote a letter to the Prime Minister demanding the fixation of the price of oil at Rs. 5.50 a kilogram and its distribution through an edible oil corporation at the rate of one kilo per head per month, and sharply criticized the Congress (R) for not bringing the hoarders, profiteers and smugglers to book⁹³ - the student movement was itself riddled with factionalism. Some student leaders favoured non-violent agitation; others, notably Umakant Mankad, preached violence. Nav Nirman Samitis mushroomed all over Gujarat and began to behave as they liked. More militant rival student bodies arose, such as the Mongvari Hataon Samiti (Committee to stop Increases in the Cost of Living), led by Ashwin Vaidya. Mavlankar, an Ahmedabad Professor and MP from Ahmedabad City, who had been President of the Nav Nirman Samiti, resigned in opposition to violent methods being employed by students. Student leaders were also divided on the issue of whether to appear for examinations or not, and some student leaders resented the influence the Jan Sangh was gaining in the student agitation. Manishi Jani, student leader, who had been elected President of the Nav Nirman Samiti after Mavlankar, resigned from the presidency and the primary membership of the Nav Nirman Samiti, along with Shailesh Shah, secretary of the Samiti, and about thirty office-bearers of the Maninagar and Behrampura units of the Nav Nirman Samiti. Jani described the Samiti as strife-ridden following the infiltration of vested interests and said he would try to organize

⁹³ Times of India (Ahmedabad), 21 May, 1974.

a new forum.⁹⁴ Umakant Mankad, general secretary of the Samiti and opponent of Jani, said he was about to be removed any way, as he along with thirty other members of the executive committee had signed a memo demanding his 'dismissal'. Mr. Mankad said sharp differences existed between him and Mr. Jani who he alleged strove to toe the Congress line. He said the rift began when Mr. Jani's name appeared along with leaders of several political parties who were to go on a hunger-strike in support of the striking railway employees. Mr. Mankad said the railwaymen's strike was politically motivated and as such the Samiti could not become a party to it. Mr. Jani, he alleged, disagreed and started a campaign of vilification against him.⁹⁵

Thus the student protest movement of the winter of 1973-74 disintegrated in internecine strife.

⁹⁴Times of India (Ahmedabad), 31 May , 1974.

⁹⁵Times of India (Ahmedabad), 1 June , 1974.

Chapter X

CONCLUSION

Ahmedabad politics is characterized by the interplay of agitational and institutional political modes.¹ The political and socioeconomic reality which underlies this interplay consists of the gradual breaking-down of the old stable political and socioeconomic system, which depended on an indigenous, homogeneous and strongly legitimized elite and a mass population sharing elite cultural values and norms. This system was based on economic expansion and prosperity, particularly in the textile industry, and its political expression lay in the political alliance and co-operation between the textile magnates and the business element, on the one hand, and the dominant labour union, the Majur Majur or Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, on the other hand, within the Congress party.

Textile magnates headed the Corporation from its very inception in 1950: Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth, a member of the highly influential millowning family of Lalbhai Dalpatbhai, had been Chairman of the Standing Committee in Ahmedabad Municipality from 1942-46 and President of the Municipality from 1946 to 1950. when he became the Mayor on the conversion of the Municipality into a Municipal Corporation in 1950, a position which he held uninterruptedly till 1961, when another textile magnate, Jaikrishna-bhai Harivallabhdas, succeeded him. Their power was based on the control of the business element in the Corporation and alliance with the important Majur Mahajan element in the Corporation. Majur Mahajan leaders in the Corporation: Vasavda, Shukla and Buch worked hand-in-glove with the textile magnates. Through great prestige

1. For a general discussion of agitational versus institutional forms of political action, see David H. Bayley, "Public Protest and the Political Process in India", Pacific Affairs, vol. 42, no. 1 (Spring, 1969), pp. 5-16.

within the city and strong linkages with higher political levels external to the city yet with great influence over city affairs, particularly the State level, they were able to achieve an impressive record of civic projects and schemes, aimed largely at satisfying the interests of their clientele, the middle class, particularly those in the private sector, and the labour aristocracy of textile industrial workers.² Despite the formally restricted statutory powers of the Municipal Corporation, the existence of a powerful alliance with the Majur Mahajan, strong State-level linkages and financial expertise enabled the textile magnate Mayors, Chinubhai and Jaikrishnabhai, to accomplish extensive projects of city beautification and Town Planning. The internal balance between the Majur Mahajan and the textile magnates changed in favour of the former through the 1960s.

This stable political and socioeconomic system, unique in many ways to Ahmedabad, which had evolved as a logical projection of its cultural, historical and economic traditions, was experiencing a series of disruptive challenges and threats particularly during the 1960s, due to far-reaching changes in the underlying socioeconomic reality

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2. During the heyday of this political alliance in the 1950s, the major discussion of municipal matters was not on the floor of the Corporation, but in Congress party meetings where municipal problems were discussed freely and a solution thrashed out. No Congress Corporator was permitted to speak on the floor of the house unless he was sponsoring or supporting a resolution already decided on at the party meeting. At that time the opposition parties were extremely weak, and Corporation work went on incredibly smoothly. Even if there were 200 resolutions on the agenda they were passed within 45 minutes or one hour. The big business-Majur Mahajan dominated Corporation Congress party earned the nickname of 'Manjur Mail' ('Agreement Express'), because Corporation business was resolved so quickly. At this time the Municipal Commissioner~~to~~ was subservient to the powerful leader of the Congress party, discussing any problems directly with Chinubhai, who would then put the matter before the party at the next party meeting. From an interview with Chinubhai Chimanlal Sheth in July 1974.

of the City.

The previously culturally and socially homogeneous and unified society of Ahmedabad was becoming ever more plural in character (plural in the sense of having an increasing proportion of migrants, many of whom came from other districts of Gujarat, and a significant number from other States of India) due to the pressures of rapid urbanization and large-scale migration, resulting in increasing elite/mass alienation, and diverging cultural and political perspectives. The communal character of the City too was changing to some degree: in communal terms, the City was, interestingly enough, growing less diverse and more uniform. It was a paradoxical situation, however, for Ahmedabad was becoming less diverse communally, but more divisive in terms of Hindu-Muslim conflict. The economic base of this growing alienation and group conflict lay in the strains imposed on the City's economy by rapid urbanization and large-scale migration, and the increasingly difficult and urgent problems facing the textile industry during the mid and late '60s due to chronic raw material shortages, caused by monsoon failures and bad harvests, and failure by many mills to plough back profits into modernization of plant and machinery, and subsequent shortage of finances for modernization. Rapid inflation, especially during the '60s and '70s was another cause of political agitation.

Ahmedabad has been the nerve-centre of agitational movements in Gujarat politics, which have largely been confined to urban areas. The linguistic agitation of the 1950s, the dearness allowance agitation of the early '60s, and the recent student riots in early 1974 have all centred on Ahmedabad and on other large urban

areas and their hinterlands. The most volatile element in the Ahmedabad urban scene has been the middle class, particularly of students and white-collar workers on fixed salaries mainly in the public sector, such as clerks, teachers, government employees, bank employees etc., who have suffered most from the effects of inflation. Unlike textile industrial workers who are protected to some extent from inflationary effects because their dearness allowance is linked directly with increases in the cost of living index, white-collar employees do not get this protection and their dearness allowance is not linked directly with increases in the cost of living index. Although the textile industrial workers of Ahmedabad agitated in the early 60s against the outdated and anomalous cost of living index series on which their dearness allowance was then calculated, the textile workers led by the Majur Mahajan were conspicuous by their absence in the linguistic agitation of the 1950s and the recent riots in Ahmedabad in early 1974. The TLA publicly declared that they would remain outside the agitational movement of early 1974. Their leader, Arvind Buch, declared that, following the true Gandhian spirit, the Majur Mahajan never joined any bandhs and went on to say that the only remedy to bring down prices was greater production. Most textile workers followed the TLA lead.³ Unorganized labour, however, is also a volatile element in city politics, especially the household industry workers, artisans, i.e. furniture-makers, leather workers, carpenters, blacksmiths etc., and all self-employed persons.

3. Interview with Jaisukhlalbai Hathi in June 1974.

The salaried middle class, unorganized labour, and small-scale self-employed persons were the force behind the linguistic agitation, the main support of the opposition Janta Parishad party (which also managed to mobilize a section of the textile labour force and the badli workers on the dearness allowance issue, as well as the urban periphery of the unemployed and underemployed and radical migrant groups) and the force behind the 1974 riots.

Thus the Majur Mahajan-textile magnate alliance within the Congress party provided a stabilizing, conservative force in the City's political life, interacting with periodic agitational movements, in a frame-work in which State-local linkages were crucially important for City politics. The strong support of the Gujarat Congress boss, Morarji Desai, was crucial for the textile magnate Mayors of the City, Chinubhai and Jaikrishnabhai, just as State-level linkages with Khandubhai Desai, senior State-level Congress leader and Majur Mahajan leader, and the ability of Vasavda, who was both a local and State-level leader, to appoint a Labour Minister at the State level from the Majur Mahajan leadership were vitally important for the political effectiveness of the Majur Mahajan. The agitation-based Janta Parishad, when in power in the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in the mid 60s, suffered from difficulties of sustained mobilization of support for its trade union wing, the Sangram Samiti; difficulties of party maintenance arising from its being a coalition of heterogeneous elements rather than a disciplined unified party; and difficulties of goal attainment, all due in large part to lack of access to State-level patronage and decision-making authority.

As Rajni Kothari indicated,⁴ urban centres have become the crisis points in the Indian political system. The relative stability which distinguished the Ahmedabad political system, dominated for so long by the unique business-Majur Mahajan alliance within the Congress party, is now coming into line with a broader all-India trend of growing urban political instability.

4. See Rajni Kothari, Politics in India, (Little Brown Country Series; 1970).

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Mr. V. K. Chawda, of the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences.

Mr. Dave, Secretary of the Ahmedabad Millowners' Association.

Jaimanben Dave, Congress (O) Corporator from Maninagar.

Dr. Kirtidev Desai, Lecturer in Politics, Gujarat University School of Social Sciences.

Mr. Neeru Desai, journalist on the Gujarat Samachar.

Mr. N. M. Desai, Secretary of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

Mr. N. R. Desai, of the Town Planning Department of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation.

Dr. Somabhai C. Desai, Janta Parishad Corporator and Mayor of Ahmedabad, 1965-66 and again from 1968-69, later joined Congress (R).

Professor Jitendra Dholakia, Reader in Economics at Gujarat University School of Social Sciences, member of M.B. Desai Committee to investigate textile workers' dearness allowance, appointed in September, 1963.

Mr. Doctor, Census Officer, Ahmedabad.

Mr. Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas, leading textile magnate and Mayor of Ahmedabad, 1961-65.

Mr. Jaisukhlal Hathi, Deputy Leader of the Congress (R) in the Rajya Sabha, and negotiator for the High Command in Gujarat State politics.

Mr. Narottambhai K. Jaweri, Congress (O) Mayor of Ahmedabad, 1969-72.

Dr. Paresh Majumdar, of the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences.

Dr. Ashok C. Mehta, Janta Parishad Corporator, 1961-67, then SSP Corporator, one of the Manubhai Palkiwala group.

Mr. Dinkar Mehta, leader of the Ahmedabad City CP (M), and Secretary of the Gujarat State CP (M).

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- Mr. Panchal, Deputy Municipal Commissioner for Law and Revenue.
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- Mr. D. K. Patel, Congress Corporator, Deputy Mayor from 1969-72.
- Mr. G. Y. Patel, journalist on the Times of India.
- Mr. I. D. Patel, Community Organizer for the Urban Community Development Project.
- Taraben Patel, Lecturer in Sociology at the Gujarat University School of Social Sciences.
- Mr. Trikamlal J. Patel, President of the Ahmedabad City DCC during the mid - 50s, and again between 1965-67.
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- Mr. Manharlal Shukla, Secretary of the Majur Mahajan and MLA.
- Mr. Anandibhai S. Thakkor, political agent of Jaikrishnabhai Harivallabhdas.
- Mr. Jaimal Thakkor, Janta Parishad Corporator, 1965-69, and Chairman of the Standing Committee, 1966-69.
- Mr. N. H. Thakkor, Deputy Municipal Commissioner.
- Dr. Vasudev N. Tripathi, Janta Parishad Corporator and Mayor of Ahmedabad, 1967-68. He defected to Congress in 1969, and subsequently joined Congress (R).
- Mr. Dhinubhai Trivedi, Secretary of the Majur Mahajan Office.

Mr. Shyamprasad R. Vasavda, General Secretary of the Majur Mahajan.

Mr. Indulal Yagnik, leader of the Janta Parishad.

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