

**SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND POLITICAL POWER**

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION  
AND  
POLITICAL POWER;  
A STUDY OF  
PARTY FACTIONALISM IN HARYANA

by  
ROBERT GEORGE SCHWAB

A thesis submitted to the Department of Political Science  
in conformity with the requirements for  
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

McGill University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada  
Spring, 1973

SOCIAL STRATIFICATION AND POLITICAL POWER:  
A STUDY OF PARTY FACTIONALISM IN HARYANA

Robert George Schwab

Department of Political  
Science

Ph.D.  
Spring, 1973

ABSTRACT

In a close-up focus on two years of politics in Haryana state, India, this study zeros in on the dynamics of intra-party factionalism during a period of political instability and undertakes to demonstrate that assessments of factors which motivate the actions of faction leaders must go beyond estimates of personal gain and factional interest to include a consideration of the larger socio-economic community of their constituent supporters. It concludes that political stability is unlikely to be achieved in a situation characterized by pervasive party factionalism if the political elites are unwilling to recognize the existing socio-economic power structure.

## PREFACE

This thesis attempts to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of party factionalism in a nation undergoing political change. In a close-up focus on two years of politics in Haryana state, India, the study zeroes in on the dynamics of intra-party factionalism during a period of political instability and undertakes to demonstrate that assessments of factors which motivate the actions of faction leaders must go beyond estimates of personal gain and factional interest to include a consideration of the larger socio-economic community of their constituent supporters. From this study, we conclude that political stability is unlikely to be achieved in a situation characterized by pervasive party factionalism if the political elites are unwilling to recognize the existing socio-economic power structure.

This study is the product of two years of field study in India. While the analytical approach employed is behavioral, allowing motivations to be inferred from actual behaviour, the psychological dimension has not been totally ignored. Much of the field research consisted of interviewing, and indeed living with, a wide range of Haryanvis from chief ministers and faction leaders to citizens in remote village areas. The many hours of informal discussion and interaction helped me to come to some understanding of their political



attitudes and goals. While many events are documented with newspaper sources, it should not be overlooked that they were selected on the basis of a personal knowledge of the events in most instances.

Readers of this study may be left with the impression that politics, at least in Haryana, is a sordid business in which the object is to "humiliate" or destroy one's political rivals. While this may not be inaccurate, the emphasis should be on the fact that political conflict is being pursued here in a cultural climate where such actions are understood and indeed expected. In the "all-or-nothing" environment of a politics of scarcity, rumour, slander, back-stabbing and deceit are all part of the game. For example, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, the leader of a non-agriculturist grouping in this study, was painted by his political opponents as an ogre who was attempting to use political power to injure rural interests in Haryana. In fact, there is no evidence to suggest that he would not have given the state a good and balanced administration if he had been able to continue as its chief minister. His rivals, however, felt constrained to use their factional strength to gain "status" positions in the Haryana Government. They were compelled to do so, not only because their personal political careers were in immediate jeopardy, but because they shrewdly realized that the agriculturist community would find it unacceptable that its representatives not have a preponderance of state power consonant with its dominant position in society. By attempting to convince the Haryana agriculturist community that Bhagwat Dayal was against their interests and by

ultimately hounding him out of the ruling party, they were fighting to ensure their own political survival in the state. To North American political observers, the openness and intensity of Indian political conflict often comes as a distinct shock. Yet, we should remember, despite the sordid politics of rampant party factionalism, India has been able to operate an open and democratic political system since independence.

This thesis is the result of field work in India during 1967-69 under an Indian Commonwealth Fellowship which permitted me to enroll as a casual student for the Ph.D. in the Political Science Department, University of Delhi. I am grateful to the Ministry of Education, Government of India, for granting this award and I hope the following study in some way demonstrates that their confidence in me was not misplaced. I would also like to thank the Centre for Developing-Area Studies, McGill University, and the Department of Political Science, McGill University, for the financial assistance which they made available to me in the years 1966-67 and 1969-70. At the personal level, I offer special thanks to Professors Harnam Singh (Delhi), Khalid Sayeed (Queen's), Frank Thakurdas (Delhi), Irving Brecher (McGill), Frank Kunz (McGill), Thomas Bruneau (McGill) and Walter Kontak (St. Francis Xavier).

The warmest expression of my gratitude is reserved for Professor Baldev Raj Nayar. Besides being a patient advisor

and an inspiring guide, he somehow managed to help me overcome the inevitable moments of despair in my efforts to "order the chaos" of Haryana politics. His contribution to the completion of this work is immense. However, all responsibility for errors and omissions remain mine. Finally, I cannot forget the generous help and assistance offered to me by so many individual Haryanvis, both politicians and citizens. With great patience and tolerance, they allowed me the privilege of living and studying amongst them. Their willingness to openly discuss their political goals and objectives made this thesis possible.

A note of appreciation is also due to the following: the faculty and students in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, for their assistance to me in overcoming field research problems; the Public Relations Department, Government of Haryana, for the use of its clipping files; the Elections office in Chandigarh for the use of its facilities in following the 1968 elections; the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, for the use of its library facilities; the library of Punjab University, Chandigarh; the library of the Secretariat, Government of Haryana, for the use of historical documents on pre-independence Punjab; and the library of Delhi School of Economics and Social Work. Finally, thanks to Elisabeth Dickinson for her devoted typing of this manuscript

# CONTENTS

Preface	i
List of Tables	vi
List of Maps	ix
List of Figures	xii
I. Party Factionalism and the Search for Political Power	1
II. Haryana: The Socio-Economic Setting of Factional Politics	35
III. Historical Perspective: Regional Factionalism and Punjab Party Politics, 1900-1966	75
IV. The Struggle for Political Power: A Non-Agriculturist Attempt to Dominate Haryana Politics	141
V. The Search for a Political Alternative: The Defection of the Dissident Congress Factions	195
VI. Dissidence Within the Dal: Rampant Defectionism and Governmental Instability	268
VII. The Congress High Command Intervention and the Response of the Challengers	316
VIII. A Comparative Analysis of the Fourth General Elections and the Mid-Term Elections in Haryana	362
IX. The Renewal of Defectionist Politics in Haryana	442
X. Party Factionalism and Political Development	502
Bibliography	520

LIST OF TABLES

2.1	Haryana: Area and Population, 1961	41
2.2	Percentage of Population for the Major Castes in Haryana by District, 1881	44
2.3	Percentage of Population for the Major Castes in Haryana by District, 1931	45
2.4	Haryana: Urban-Rural Composition, 1961	60
2.5	Haryana: Registered Factories, 1964	63
3.1	Average Annual Number of Registered Sales and Mortgages of Immovable Property in Punjab	80
3.2	Average Annual Percentage of total Land Area Sold, Mortgaged, and Under Mortgage in Punjab	81
3.3	Congress Representation from Five Haryana Districts	132
4.1	Haryana: District Representation of the Congress Party as Elected in 1967	162
4.2	Haryana: Constituency Breakdown of the Congress Party as Elected in 1967	164
4.3	Haryana: Caste Representation of the Congress Party as Elected in 1967	166
5.1	Haryana: The United Front Council of Ministers as Constituted on March 24, 1967	223
5.2	Haryana: The United Front Council of Ministers as Expanded on June 20, 1967	226
5.3	Haryana: District Representation of the Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967	233
5.4	Haryana: Constituency Breakdown and Percentage Distribution of the Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967	234

5.5	Haryana: Caste Representation of the Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967	236
5.6	Haryana: District Representation of the Congress Defectors in March 1967	238
5.7	Haryana: Caste Representation of the Congress Defectors in March 1967	241
5.8	Haryana: Constituency Breakdown of the Congress Defectors in March 1967	243
5.9	Haryana: District Representation of the Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967	246
5.10	Haryana: Constituency Breakdown of the Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967	249
5.11	Haryana: Caste Representation of the Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967	250
5.12	Haryana: District Representation of the First, Second, Third and Third as Expanded Ministries	258
5.13	Haryana: Constituency Breakdown in the First, Second, Third and Third as Expanded Ministries	261
5.14	Haryana: Caste Breakdown in the First, Second, Third and Third as Expanded Ministries	262
6.1	Haryana: The Fourth Council of Ministers as Constituted on July 22, 1967	282
8.1	Haryana: Percentage of Votes, Number of Seats and Percentage of Seats by Party, 1962, 1967 and 1968	363
8.2	Haryana: Electoral Data, 1967 and 1968	377
8.3	Haryana: Number of Votes, Candidates and Seats by Party, 1967 and 1968	379
8.4	Haryana: Percentage of Votes by Party in Haryana and Districts, 1967 and 1968, and Change in Percentage Standing	380

8.5	Haryana: Position of Candidates by Party, 1967 and 1968	383
8.6	Haryana: Percentage of Votes and Seats Won by Party, 1967 and 1968	393
8.7	Haryana: Percentage of Votes Polled by Candidates, by Party, 1967 and 1968	394
8.8	Haryana: Margin of Votes to Nearest Rival Candidate by Party, 1967 and 1968	396
8.9	Haryana: Constituency Representation by Party, 1967 and 1968	398
8.10	Haryana: Caste Distribution of Vidhan Sabha Membership, 1967 and 1968	400
8.11	Haryana: Representation Gained and Lost by the Congress Party, 1968	402
8.12	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Congress Defectors, 1967-1968	408
8.13	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Congress Non-Defectors, 1967-68	409
8.14	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Non-Congress Defectors, 1967-68	411
8.15	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Non-Congress Non-Defectors, 1967-68	412
8.16	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Total Defectors, 1967-68	414
8.17	Haryana: Caste Distribution and Constituency Representation of Total Non-Defectors, 1967-68	415
9.1	Haryana: Fifth Council of Ministers as Constituted on June 6, 1968	452
9.2	Haryana Assembly: Caste Representation and Constituency Distribution, 1968	491

LIST OF MAPS

2.1	Haryana	37
2.2	Constituency Representation	65
4.1	Congress Party as Elected in 1967	161
4.2	Congress Party as Elected in 1967: Constituency Breakdown	163
4.3	Congress Party as Elected in 1967: Caste Breakdown	165
4.4	Second Haryana Ministry	172
4.5	Second Haryana Ministry: Caste Breakdown	173
5.1	Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967	229
5.2	Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967: Constituency Breakdown	230
5.3	Opposition Parties as Elected in 1967: Caste Breakdown	232
5.4	Congress Defectors in March 1967: Caste Breakdown	240
5.5	Congress Defectors in March 1967: Constituency Breakdown	242
5.6	Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967: Party Breakdown	245
5.7	Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967: Constituency Breakdown	248
5.8	Samyukta Dal as Constituted on March 22, 1967: Caste Breakdown	251
5.9	Third Haryana Ministry: Party Breakdown	257
5.10	Third Haryana Ministry: Constituency Breakdown	260
5.11	Third Haryana Ministry: Caste Breakdown	263



6.1	Haryana Congress (Devi Lal Group)	278
6.2	Fourth Haryana Ministry: Party Breakdown	281
6.3	Proposed Vishal Haryana State	284
6.4	The Vishal Haryana Party Representation	289
6.5	Defections in October, 1967	305
6.6	Defections in November, 1967	306
8.1	Congress Positions in 1967	419
8.2	Congress Positions in 1968	420
8.3	Jan Sangh Positions in 1967	421
8.4	Jan Sangh Positions in 1968	422
8.5	Swatantra Positions in 1967	423
8.6	Swatantra Positions in 1968	424
8.7	Republican Positions in 1967	425
8.8	Republican Positions in 1968	426
8.9	PSP Positions in 1967	427
8.10	PSP Positions in 1968	428
8.11	SSP Positions in 1967	429
8.12	SSP Positions in 1968	430
8.13	CPI Positions in 1967	431
8.14	CPI Positions in 1968	432
8.15	CPM Positions in 1967	433
8.16	CPM Positions in 1968	434
8.17	VHP Positions in 1968	435
8.18	BKD Positions in 1968	436

8.19 Independent Positions in 1967	437
8.20 Independent Positions in 1968	438
8.21 Constituencies Gained by the Congress in 1968	439
8.22 Constituencies Lost by the Congress in 1968	440
8.23 Constituencies not Held by the Congress in 1967 or in 1968	441
9.1 Fifth Haryana Ministry	454
9.2 Sharma Faction: Constituency Breakdown	482
9.3 Sharma Faction: Caste Breakdown	483
9.4 Re-Defectors to Congress from Sharma Faction: Caste Breakdown	486
9.5 Non-Congress Supporters of the Fifth Haryana Ministry: Constituency Breakdown	487
9.6 Non-Congress Supporters of the Fifth Haryana Ministry: Caste Breakdown	488

LIST OF FIGURES

3.1	Cross-Cutting Social and Economic Cleavages in Post-Independence Punjab	119
4.1	The Factional Configuration, March, 1967	168
5.1	The Factional Configuration, June, 1967	253
9.1	The Factional Configuration, June, 1968	463

## CHAPTER I

### PARTY FACTIONALISM AND THE SEARCH FOR POLITICAL POWER

#### Introduction

The general pervasiveness of intra-party factionalism within the Indian National Congress has received considerable notice and analysis on the part of political scientists undertaking to describe the evolution of India's political system since independence. Most of these studies, however, were written at a time when the Congress' hegemony both at the center and in the states had not yet been seriously threatened. As a result, these analyses were usually undertaken to explain why intra-party rivalries had not interfered with nor undermined the potential of a parliamentary system to function effectively in India. Indeed, several authors hypothesised that the very success of the Congress Party in maintaining its dominant position in a multi-party system for two decades was dependent upon its organisational capacity to integrate factional sub-structures into the party.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>These authors would include: Paul R. Brass, Rasheeduddin Khan, Rajni Kothari, Adrian C. Mayer, W.H. Morris-Jones and Myron Weiner. Specific references to their contributions are made in the latter part of this chapter.

But are there not circumstances in which such intra-party divisions within a ruling party might prove dysfunctional for political stability and national development in a developing country? What would be the impact of factions should the ruling party begin to lose its dominant hold on political power, or should a faction within the party attempt to deny another faction a voice in the decision-making process? These speculative questions lead us to others concerning the nature of factions and party cohesion. Do the various factions embrace the party's ideology and programme, or do they only remain within the party as a means of attaining a share of the party's distributive powers within the political system? Do factional leaders create and build up their following because of a personal desire for the power and prestige of political office, or do they also regard themselves as the articulators of particular socio-economic interests? At a time of crisis for the party, where do the loyalties of these factions lie? Do they remain with the party when it is unable to provide tangible rewards, or do their loyalties lie with their constituents who expect their interests and demands to be articulated and satisfied within the political system?

Answers to such questions about the intrinsic nature of intra-party factionalism and its implications for political stability can most fruitfully be found only through case studies of periods of crisis for a ruling party. In India, such a period existed for the Indian National Congress between the

onset of an economic recession in 1966 and the eve of the ultimate electoral victory for the Congress party (Requisitionist) in February, 1971. During this period, it appeared that the party's hitherto virtual monopoly of political power in that country was finally disintegrating. While the present case study focuses on the nature and behavior of factional groupings within the Congress in a single state during this period, the conclusions drawn from this study may have more general application both for Indian politics and the politics of other developing countries.

#### The Impact of India's Fourth General Elections

India's Fourth General Elections, held in February, 1967, shattered the Congress' monopoly on political power throughout the country. The party lost its absolute majority in some eight state assemblies.<sup>2</sup> Its margin of seats, moreover, was considerably reduced in most of the remaining states and at the centre. But of even greater interest to this study is the fact that the Congress was removed from power very soon after these elections in three states where it had attempted to form a government -- Uttar Pradesh,

---

<sup>2</sup>These were: Bihar, Kerala, Madras (Tamil Nadu), Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan (where a Congress Ministry was restored after a short period of President's Rule), Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

(where the Congress undertook to form a minority government), Haryana and Madhya Pradesh - to be replaced in each case by a coalition United Front Government.

This post-election collapse of three Congress ministries marked the beginning of a chaotic period of large-scale shifts in party affiliations in a number of the state legislatures. The defections, in turn, were responsible for the overthrow of some sixteen state governments in as many months. In statistical terms, the first twelve months after the Fourth General Elections saw nearly 500 of some 3,500 legislators in the state and union territory legislative assemblies defect at least once. This figure is even more significant when one considers only those states and union territories where such floor-crossings were responsible for the removal of a government or made such an event an imminent possibility.<sup>3</sup> In these states, almost a quarter of the legislators defected at least once. While defections have not been unknown in India since independence, the rate of floor-crossings in this period was clearly unprecedented. A study undertaken by the Policy Planning and Research Division of the Home Ministry found that there were some 438 defections during the first twelve months after the Fourth General Elections compared with an

---

<sup>3</sup>Specifically these were: Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, West Bengal, and the Union Territories of Manipur and Pondicherry.

estimated 542 defections during the preceding ten years.<sup>4</sup>

This situation, with day-to-day floor-crossing and the subsequent instability and collapse of some state governments, led to considerable concern both within and without India for the prospects of a parliamentary system of government being able to continue under such conditions. If the party in power could not be assured of the disciplined support of its back-benchers, the resulting governmental instability was likely to create a greater sense of frustration with the parliamentary process and to cause the Indian people to consider experimenting with alternative political regimes. The leadership of the Indian National Congress also had reason to be concerned during this period. While the party had once gained from changes in party allegiance on the part of legislators, after the 1967 elections it began to lose more legislators than it was able to win over to its fold.<sup>5</sup> But, whether the concern was for the very survival of parliamentary democracy in India or for the on-going capacity of the Congress Party to remain internally cohesive, there was no doubt that the

---

<sup>4</sup>Subhash Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), p.5.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp 8-9. Between 1957 and 1967, the Congress gained 419 supporters through defections while losing 98. In 1967-68, it lost 175 while gaining 139.



problem was a serious one for India's political development.

It is difficult to establish an overall coherent pattern of factors operative in the large-scale defections of the post-1967 election period. It would appear, however, that three motivational characteristics can be immediately isolated as having particular relevance. Some defections were directed towards a furthering of factional interests. The tendency of defectors to flow away massively from the Congress in this period was in great part a result of the unexpected successes of the various opposition parties at the polls which permitted them to form, alone or in combination, alternative governments to the Congress in a number of states. When a party is no longer in a position to offer the spoils of office to its factional supporters, it might be expected that marginal or dissident groups within that party would be prepared to switch their allegiance to those parties which could now offer the material benefits of political office.

A second motivational factor behind defections was the prospect of a personal appointment to a political office or a share in some aspect of political power for the individual politician. Clearly, the leaders of minority dissident factions in the Congress did manage to reap some substantial political benefits for themselves in the short-run by leading mass defections to the opposition benches. Indeed, they became the top personnel in a number of non-Congress alliances. In Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, West Bengal and

Bihar, the position of Chief Minister was given to a former Congress Cabinet Minister who had defected. For others, the accession to ministerial office appears to have motivated defections. Of the 438 defectors mentioned above, 115 were rewarded with a ministership for their pains.<sup>6</sup>

The factional or personal motivations for defections, cited above, have usually been used to explain or justify inter-party movements. It is possible, however, to argue that these explanations are merely looking at the epiphenomenon, and that it is necessary to examine defecting factional groups and individuals within their societal context. By taking a society-polity linkage viewpoint, it could be asked whether defections are motivated by larger community demands or interests which must be placed above party loyalty at certain times? It is our thesis that neither factional interest nor personal gain are in themselves sufficient to explain the total pattern of floor-crossings in the 1966-1969 period and that, to account more fully for the breakdown in party cohesion in Indian politics, a re-examination of the motivational factors behind inter-party factional and individual defections is necessary. An inquiry must be made into the particular pressures which factional leaders and individual legislators must respond to for political survival arising from the larger socio-

---

<sup>6</sup>Kashyap, p. 36.

economic community of their constituents.

In undertaking a case study to investigate the determinants of intra-party factional behaviour and inter-party defections, we will concentrate on the political events in this period within a single Indian state -- that of Haryana. This state is especially suited for such in-depth investigation as it was the first state in the Indian Union in which a Congress Ministry, supported by a majority of the Assembly, was removed from power by an organised large-scale defection of dissident Congressmen, and also the first state in which a dissident Congress factional leader was made the Chief Minister of a United Front Ministry. Haryana was further the first state in this chaotic period to suffer the penalty of having its non-Congress Ministry dismissed and the Legislative Assembly dissolved by the President. A mid-term election was held in 1968 in which the Congress Party managed to find a new majority. However, it was not long before a dissident factional leader again attempted to overthrow the Government by leading his followers across the floor to the opposition benches.

A number of questions are raised by these events which merit serious investigation: what motivated a substantial number of legislators to abandon the then ruling party of the state? Why was the central party organisation unable to effect a compromise between the dominant factional grouping and the dissidents? Why did the center use the President's

discretionary powers to remove the United Front Government before it was demonstrated in the Assembly that it had lost the effective support of a majority of the legislators? Finally, why was there a new spate of factional dissidence within a few months of the election of a new Congress majority? Answers to the above questions may help provide insights for the more theoretical questions about intra-party factionalism posed in the introduction of this chapter and may also help develop an understanding of the nature of the problem of effectively maintaining intra-party cohesion in a modernizing society.

#### The Role of Political Parties in Development

The political leadership of the emergent nations of the Third World must seek to find the means to realize rapid economic growth and social transformation for their newly independent states. This nationalistic aspiration for a degree of modernity reflects a desire both for national security and a way to provide their people with a share of the better life which appears to be produced by the technological and scientific advances which have already revolutionized life in the developed industrial societies of Europe and North America. While modernity holds out the potential for greater economic gains, it is not without human or social cost. The process invariably involves a shift from a predominantly rural and parochial society to

an increasing urban and industrial society characterized by greater occupational differentiation and the growth of a market economy. This transition, which involves the breakdown of traditional patterns of local group and individual self-sufficiency, is a disruptive one for the traditional society and culture, and if the result is to be "development" rather than "decay", the political process within the emerging nation must develop an "increased capacity to effectively sustain new types of goals and demands and the creation of new types of organizations."<sup>7</sup>

The nationalistic elites in the developing countries realize that development involves the capacity to change and that they must be instrumental in developing political institutions which are capable not only of directing the social and economic changes desired, but which can also respond to and integrate into the modernizing process those social groups which hitherto had not been participant in the nation. If these capacities can be developed and institutionalized, the nation's political process will be legitimized and strengthened. If, on the other hand, the development of responsive political institutions lags behind social and economic change, the frustrated desire for increased participation is likely to result in political

---

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Diamant, "The Nature of Political Development" in Jason L. Finkle and Richard W. Gable (eds.), Political Development and Social Change (New York: Wiley, 1966), p.92.

instability.

As political development requires increasing institutionalization in response to expanding participation, the role of political parties in this process is a crucial variable. The political party is the most likely social organization available for the aggregation of social and economic demands on government on the one hand, and the policy allocation of goods and services on the other. In a developmental context, a further decisive role for political parties is the "adaptation of modern institutions of responsible government to traditional societies"<sup>8</sup>, in that political parties have the potential capacity to form an indispensable link between society and the institutions of government.

Political parties often must undertake to perform the above tasks while simultaneously transforming themselves from nationalist movements into institutionalized and effective party organizations. This additional requirement places considerable strain on a political party which must overcome an almost inevitable process of disintegration once the primary objective of national independence has been achieved:

---

<sup>8</sup> Paul R. Brass, Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), p.1.

Ideological and communal differences which were submerged in the movement for independence develop into internal conflicts, leading to defections and splits. New conflicts develop over the distribution of power and status in the new government. The ruling party is faced with opposition from outside and conflict within the organisation.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, when the movement for national independence evolves into the ruling party of a developing country, the socio-economic interests which were represented in the movement are likely, in the post-independence period, to transform that movement into a party which might be characterized as a "conflict system" in which sub-coalitions emerge to vie amongst themselves for control of governmental positions through the instrumentalities of the party.<sup>10</sup>

For umbrella-type parties, the ability to play their requisite role in a country's political development is dependent, to a great extent, upon the nature of the various relations between the various sub-coalitions within the party. If rigid, uncompromising positions are adopted, and fruitful dialogue does not take place between these rival groups, the factional cleavages are further strengthened at the ultimate cost of the party's continuing capacity to cope with developmental tasks.<sup>11</sup> On the other

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ramashray Roy, "Factionalism and 'Stratarchy': The experience of the Congress Party", Asian Survey, IX (December, 1969), p.899.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp.907-8.

hand, if the party leadership attempts to reconcile all of the demands being articulated by the minority groups within the party, it may be unable to effect the meaningful changes which are necessary for development.

Given the crucial role for political parties in the overall political development of societies undergoing the transition from tradition to modernity, what are the implications for the development of those countries where the major political parties are themselves conflict systems within which various factions and interests strive for control? Do rival factions within parties turn for support to the newly mobilized groups in the society and thereby recruit and socialize these elements into the political process; or do they, by their rivalries, undermine the political institutions which are essential for their country's development? Are the scarce resources available for economic progress dissipated in internecine feuds, thereby producing a general frustration with the existing political process and a desire for a more authoritative system; or do the dynamics of intra-party conflict assist in the development of the system's ability to adapt to changes which are taking place in the socio-economic environment? It is questions such as these, probing into the means whereby parties may develop the capacity to play their strategic role in the developmental process, which provide the basic rationale for exploring the implications of factional structures



within political parties in a setting of social, economic and political change.

### The Nature of Party Factionalism

In objective political usage, the term faction is usually used to designate a constituent sub-group of a larger group which works for the interests of particular persons or policies.<sup>12</sup> Such sub-groups are characterised as having: (a) an identifiable leadership (although the outside boundaries of membership or affiliation may be blurred); (b) a minimal structure; (c) a common objective or objectives (however limited); (d) an awareness, both internally and externally, of some sort of identity; and, (e) competition in the form of a rival faction or factions.<sup>13</sup> In the developing countries, social mobilization is likely to increase the possibility of party factionalism in that it produces rapid and marked changes in the various political expectations of societal groups represented within parties, resulting in new calculations of each group's political interests. Where the party system is itself in a state of transition, factionalism usually refers to the struggle

---

<sup>12</sup>Harold D. Lasswell, "Faction", Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences (New York: MacMillan, 1931), pp. 49-51.

<sup>13</sup>Leslie Lipson, "Faction", A Dictionary of the Social Sciences (London: Tavistock Publications, 1964), p.255.

for power and position arising out of conflicting group, caste, regional and communal demands. In this situation, intra-party factional divisions are not usually regarded as permanent phenomena. However, should particular lines of cleavage become identified with ideological differences, it is usual to substitute the word 'party' to designate the division.<sup>14</sup>

The term 'faction' is also used in a pejorative sense to imply that the formation of factions is harmful in that they sacrifice the common good to partial interests.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the eleventh edition of The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines 'faction' as:

A term, used especially with an opprobrious meaning, for a body of partisans who put their party aims and interests above those of the state or public, and employ unscrupulous means: it is thus a common term of reciprocal abuse between parties.<sup>16</sup>

This meaning of faction is commonly employed in developing countries, both by participants within the political system and by critics of it in the larger social community. However, the more objective definition of the term 'faction' given earlier is to be preferred in this discussion.

---

<sup>14</sup>Lasswell, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup>Lipson, p. 255.

<sup>16</sup>The Encyclopaedia Britannica, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), Vol. X, p.121.

The Party Faction as Link Between Traditional Society and Modern Polity

A fundamental role for political parties in a developmental setting is to effectively integrate into the modernizing political process those groups being mobilized from the traditional society. The capacity of party factions to assist or hinder this integration merits careful analysis. The ascription of such an important role to factions emerges forcefully in the context of the traditional political culture of the developing countries, whose major characteristic is the strength of parochial ties focused around rigid social cleavages, which are in turn based on narrow particularistic group interests within the local community. An important aspect of the traditional political culture is a pervasive social distrust and isolation.<sup>17</sup> The prevalence of distrust between social groups in parochial societies limits personal loyalties to groups which are intimate and familiar, even on the part of those who have become conscious of the larger national polity outside of their communities. Unless modified, parochial loyalties become, in the context of social mobilization, an obstacle to the formation of broad political

---

<sup>17</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp.4-5.

institutions such as parties. While part of the adjustment must be made by the individual, it is likely to be more successful if political organisations, such as parties, can be internally structured in the transitional period to reflect in some way what is familiar to him in the traditional setting.

Party factions in the developing countries may indeed perform some of the functions once performed by the traditional joint family, caste system and village organization.

Like groups in the traditional order, the faction is virtually 'closed' to outsiders ... The party members will talk to the faction head about personal problems in much the same way that he might, in the old days, have gone to his father or older brother ... Even when personal problems are not discussed, strong bonds of affection develop between the party member and his leader.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, because the skills required to make such party factions effective are based to a large extent on the style of political leadership found in the local village communities, the very existence of intra-party factions may provide an opportunity for influential persons in the local setting to function in the larger political arena of state and national politics. This process, by which local leaders may extend their traditional functions and

---

<sup>18</sup> Myron Weiner, Party politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 238-9.

act as middle-men between national and local politics, is a distinct evolution from the norms of the traditional political culture in which the national political system functioned without continuous organic links with the village communities.

Having recognized that they can add to their traditional status and prestige by becoming involved in those modern political structures being developed at the state and national level, the village leaders have also proved to be singularly adept at exploiting cleavages and rivalries within their communities for the purpose of adding to the political influence of their groups.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, with many of the traditional power and status symbols being undermined because of the impact of the modernization process, there has been an increasing rush for those positions of power and influence now being made available through the new institutions of the national and state governments. While the existence of factional cleavages within parties may have helped recruit rural leaders into the political system, these parties, in turn, are becoming more and more infused by men "who emphasize factional and ethnic loyalties, are sensitive to status considerations

---

<sup>19</sup>S.C. Dube, "Crisis in Leadership", Seminar 107, (July 1968), p.35.

and look upon the government and the party as something to be used".<sup>20</sup>

In the broader perspective of social mobilization and political modernization, party factions may be seen as having a potentially functional role to play. As long as the ruling party does not undertake to attempt to bring about a rapid and total transformation of the values of the traditional society, party factions may help the party to establish firm roots within the traditional setting. This presupposes that the party, on its part, is prepared to adjust to and interact with the traditional political culture rather than attempt only to transform it. This is not to suggest that such a party is not playing a modernizing function within that society. Rather, it might be viewed as a two-way interacting process; the party performs its modernizing role through a traditional form of social organization, the faction, which in turn adapts itself to the needs of modern political institutions. In such a process, both the party and the traditional society simultaneously undergo change.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Myron Weiner, "India: Two Political Cultures", in Lucian Pye and Sidney Verba (eds.), Political Culture and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p.212.

<sup>21</sup> Brass, p.3.

### Caste Divisions and Party Factionalism in India

The traditional social structure in India has usually been seen as revolving around caste cleavages. It is important, therefore, to investigate the extent to which caste serves as the basis of intra-party factionalism at the state level. Caste has traditionally provided a means of communication between individuals and kinship groups within its sub-culture and it also has a well-defined tradition of local political leadership. Caste, therefore, might offer a means whereby some individuals could be mobilized into the modern political process. Naturally, the effectiveness of any particular caste's impact on state politics would be dependent upon such variables as: its number and geographic distribution, its degree of mobilization, the effectiveness of available leadership, the level of ritual status, and the degree of economic independence from other caste groups.<sup>22</sup>

It is to be expected that caste groups would tend to avail themselves of opportunities made available by the new political institutions to improve their position in the society. In India, however, no single caste has the numerical strength to form a caste party capable of assuming political power on its own. As a result, castes seeking to influence the state's decision-making process must seek to

---

<sup>22</sup>Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p.85.

be accommodated within the larger coalition of the political party where they can bargain for benefits for their community in return for group support.<sup>23</sup>

Such caste participation within parties is likely to have a certain impact upon the internal composition of those organizations. But, given the diversity of interests involved in the politics of modernization, it is unlikely that caste alone can determine the makeup of all factional structures within parties. While caste clearly has the potential to serve as an agent in the recruitment and maintenance of factional followings within political parties, it is only one of several factors which may influence the creation of a particular factional sub-structure in a party. This would suggest that, while factions may contain certain caste components, factional alliances may develop across caste lines.<sup>24</sup>

To be sure, certain of the castes which have exercised a high degree of political dominance in the traditional society, because of their ritual social status or their control over economic resources, are likely to be able to translate their socio-economic position into greater political influence in state politics and be in

---

<sup>23</sup>W.H. Morris-Jones, The Government and Politics of India (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967), pp.151-2.

<sup>24</sup>Harold A. Gould, "The Adaptive Function of Caste in Contemporary Indian Society", Asian Survey, III, 9, (September 1963), p.432.



a position to provide the leadership for most of the factional groupings within parties. In the more impersonal setting of modernizing political institutions, however, such higher-caste politicians are likely to ignore caste in their need to build maximum political support within the parties and, as a result, be more prepared than they would be at the local level to accommodate the representatives of other interests who are not members of their particular caste grouping.<sup>25</sup> Thus, while caste may provide a convenient rallying point for certain political purposes such as winning electoral support at the local level, individual leaders seeking power within political parties may well place their immediate political objectives above any exclusive preference for caste associates or above using the political process to benefit only their particular sub-group within the society.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, it frequently happens that personal rivalries between factional leaders within the same political party are contests for political influence between representatives of the same dominant caste grouping in the local society. In such cases, the actual recruitment of factional support within a party is more likely to be based on intra-caste rivalries and, as a result, party factions often represent

---

<sup>25</sup>Rudolph, pp.80-81.

<sup>26</sup>Dube, p.35.

alliances between conflicting elements of more than one caste. These struggles for personal power within the party organization suggest that in the recruitment and maintenance of intra-party factions: "We are dealing at least as much with factions within castes and alliances between caste leaders, which are made for political and economic as well as caste reasons, as with purely caste factors".<sup>27</sup>

#### Party Factionalism in a Developmental Setting

It is difficult to generalize about intra-party factions as each particular faction is likely to have its own immediate determinants and distinctive features. Each faction is likely to vary in its stability and internal cohesiveness, in its dependence upon external social pressures, and in its influence upon party cohesion and governmental stability and performance. However, this "initial view of ant-hill chaos, without rhyme and without system",<sup>28</sup> may become modified as we examine the larger factors which determine how factionalism is likely to become manifest in a developing polity.

---

<sup>27</sup> Adrian C. Mayer, "Caste and Local Politics in India", in P. Mason (ed.) India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp.133-4.

<sup>28</sup> W.H. Morris-Jones, "The Indian Congress Party: A Dilemma of Dominance", Modern Asian Studies, I, 1 (1967), p.111.

As a party faction serves to provide a link between modernizing political institutions and the traditional political culture, intra-party factions might be conceived of as the transitional political counterpart of the social diversities caught between tradition and modernity. By reflecting the basic sociological compositeness of a nation undergoing varying degrees of social mobilization, the factional system performs an important function in the politics of transition.<sup>29</sup>

Yet, there is nothing traditional about the demands which factional leaders are likely to place upon the political system. These usually pertain to such modern things as roads, wells, fertilizers and jobs for their followers. Even though factional leaders may still retain some claim for electoral support on the basis of traditional affiliations such as caste, community, religion, tribe or kinship, they must still justify themselves to their constituents in terms of "services" provided.<sup>30</sup> In other words, the factional leader finds his source of political support in the fusion of traditional criteria for leadership at the village level and effectiveness in providing

---

<sup>29</sup> Rasheeduddin Khan, "The Indian Political Landscape". India Quarterly, XXIV, 4, (Oct-Dec, 1968), p.306.

<sup>30</sup> Weiner, "India", p.214.

goods and services demanded by their constituents from the modernizing political system.<sup>31</sup>

When a political party is prepared to tolerate a certain degree of internal competition over the allocation of patronage, factions can serve to mobilize groups, which were hitherto non-participant, into the political system. Since the number of supporters is an important determinant of factional strength within a party, factional leaders may recruit aspiring minority groups for the party.<sup>32</sup> In turn, the integration of a large number of such groups into the internal factional system of a party may prevent a particular social group or community from dominating the political system.<sup>33</sup> This reduces the threat of a polarization of conflict within a party on the basis of fundamental social rivalries in the traditional society.<sup>34</sup>

Party factionalism, however, may also have the potential of creating situations in which divergent social units or

---

<sup>31</sup> Joseph R. Gusfield, "Political Community and Group Interests in Modern India", Pacific Affairs, XXXVIII, 2, (Summer 1965), p.141.

<sup>32</sup> Myron Weiner, Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p.470.

<sup>33</sup> Rajni Kothari and Rushikesh Maru, "Caste and Secularism in India", Journal of Asian Studies, XXV, 1, (Nov. 1965) p.34.

<sup>34</sup> Brass, p.241.

groups attempt to seize power to pursue particularistic interests at the expense of their social rivals. Since participation in a modern political system provides opportunities for a group or community to acquire excessive wealth and power without the accompanying controls and restraints operative in a traditional society, the struggle for political office and patronage often assumes an intense "life-or-death" character in the politics of developing countries.<sup>35</sup> Such conflict between traditional rival social groups for the domination of new sources of power in a modernizing country is compounded by the fact that it is being carried out in an environment of scarcity, making the threat of deprivation felt even more acutely.

A variety of factors may affect the intensity of factional conflict in political parties. In situations where a single party successfully dominates over all other opposition forces to the extent that it feels no serious external threat to its continued hold on political power, little or no restraint may be placed upon internal factional conflict. The presence of an internal consensus on basic ideological issues within a party may permit factional leaders to concern themselves with the more pragmatic question of how to get things done for followers and constituents

---

<sup>35</sup>Theodore Geiger, The Conflicted Relationship: The West and the Transformation of Asia, Africa and Latin America (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1967), pp.73-74.

while increasing their own power and prestige within the party.

The absence of an authoritative leadership based on personal charisma and moral authority may also make for greater factional conflict. Party politics in the hands of men less skilled in the art of political management and more concerned with the consolidation of personal power for particularistic aims may result in a hardening of factional lines within the party.<sup>36</sup>

The personalization of party politics which factionalism represents suggests that factions may best be mobilized and made effective through the particular relationship which is developed between the leader and his followers.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the very strength and cohesion of a faction is likely to depend upon the ability of the leader to effectively distribute benefits to his followers. To do this, the factional leader must either have personal resources upon which to build and maintain political support, or he must have necessary contacts with interested backers such as landowners, or industrialists to provide them.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Brass, pp.232-3

<sup>37</sup> Raymond Firth, "Factions in India and Overseas Indian Societies", British Journal of Sociology, VIII, 4, (October, 1957), p.292.

<sup>38</sup> Brass, pp.235-6.

As the relationship between leader and supporter is dependent upon the degree to which it proves to be mutually satisfactory, factions may be characterized by various degrees of loyalty, commitment and support. In some cases, should the leader not be able to meet his followers' expectations of benefit, they may feel no qualms about transferring their support to another leader within the party or even to a factional grouping in another party.<sup>39</sup> Yet, as the data in this study will show, an inner core of followers within a faction may remain loyal to their leader even after he has been out-manoeuvred by his factional opponents and has been, as a result, isolated from any share of political patronage.

As a middleman in the political system, the factional leader needs to develop great skill in the manipulation of existing rivalries in the social environment for his own political advantage. This in turn requires the patience to develop an intimate knowledge of the local situation, to recruit support through alliances with village leaders, and to be in frequent and amiable contact with officials and higher party politicians who are in a position to distribute patronage.<sup>40</sup> To maintain his position as a factional leader,

---

<sup>39</sup>Roy, p.899.

<sup>40</sup>Adrian C. Mayer, "Rural Leaders and the Indian General Elections", Asian Survey, I, 8, (October, 1961) p.24.

he must also develop a conciliatory capacity to arbitrate the intra-factional disputes which are likely to arise between his followers.<sup>41</sup>

However, those same characteristics, which are needed if a factional leader is to be recognized as effective by his followers and to be successful in acquiring a measure of political power and influence, may inversely be detrimental to the needs of a society going through the painful transition to modernity. In contrast to some of the more selfless nationalist leaders who forged their parties as independence movements and endeavoured to contain or rise above factional considerations, the rise of factional groupings under the leadership of men of lesser political stature would appear to represent a falling away of the fervour needed to forge secular modernizing institutions in the society. Some factional leaders appear to have taken to politics as a vocation, not to bring status and prestige to office, but rather to seek status and prestige through office.<sup>42</sup>

Since "membership" in any particular faction is voluntary and not always explicit and because the alliances between factional leaders may change at any time, the resulting political situation within a party may be one of perpetual

---

<sup>41</sup>Brass, pp.55-6.

<sup>42</sup>Shashishekhhar Jha, "Factionalism" Seminar 107 (July 1968), p.38.



flux.<sup>43</sup> This lack of internal cohesion and stability, in turn, may manifest itself externally in inter-party defections if there is any major shift in relative party positions as a result of an election verdict, because local leaders must remain close to those capable of distributing the spoils of office. As a consequence, factions cannot be characterized as permanent groups within a single political party, but must be treated as alliances relative to particular circumstances, even though, in the case of a dominant ruling party, there may be an illusion of permanence for a considerable period of time.<sup>44</sup>

An additional threat, both to overall political stability and to the internal cohesion of the party, may also develop as a result of the very intensity of the feuds which exist between these factional alliances. Should a follower of a particular faction be awarded the party ticket to fight an election, the leaders of the dissident factional grouping within the party may not hesitate to support, privately and even openly if necessary, an opposition candidate in an effort to defeat their own party's candidate. This political tactic is often adopted when a dominant factional alliance uses its control over the party's electoral machinery to

---

<sup>43</sup>George O. Totten and T. Kamakami, "The Functions of Factionalism in Japanese Politics", Pacific Affairs, XXXCIII, 2, (Summer 1965), p.110.

<sup>44</sup>Firth, pp.296 & 300.

push aside candidates who are affiliated to rival factions.<sup>45</sup>  
To combat this, the minority dissident factions may also choose to enter their candidate as an independent in an effort to defeat the official party candidate who would, if elected, strengthen the relative position of their factional rivals within the party.<sup>46</sup>

Such manoeuvres can, over time, undermine the electoral machinery of any party completely, making it necessary for each candidate or faction to create an ad hoc electoral apparatus outside of the party organization. This, in turn, reduces the candidate's dependence upon the party for either the ticket or the machinery with which to win the election, thereby further reducing any sense of party loyalty. The existence of such a situation may provide the elected representatives with a justification for shifting their support through defections to which-ever party seems likely to provide those benefits needed to successfully reward their supporters and ensure their re-election in the future. When this point is reached, the nature of factional rivalries is likely to change from an intra-party phenomenon into an inter-party problem in which factions use the threat of massive defections to force party leaders to concede their

---

<sup>45</sup>Myron Weiner, "India's Third General Elections", Asian Survey, II, 3, (May 1962) p.10.

<sup>46</sup>Hugh Gray, "The 1962 General Elections in a Rural District of Andhra", Asian Survey, II, 7, (September, 1962), p.29.

demands. The continuation of such a situation is likely to undermine effective parliamentary government and create a loose multi-party system in which the so-called parties are in essence individual factions.<sup>47</sup>

From even this brief and general description of some of the more outstanding characteristics and potentialities of intra-party factionalism in developing countries, it is obvious that factions are a complex phenomenon with a wide range of possible implications for effective political development. On the one hand, it would be difficult to condemn such intra-party sub-structures insofar as they may be seen as performing a functional role which may help promote an effective transition from a traditional to a modern polity. On the other hand, it is necessary to recognize that certain of their aspects may be dysfunctional for political development in that they may further the disintegration of modernizing political institutions, such as cohesive political parties, and thereby develop situations of political stalemate and decay. Complex and often contradictory factors such as these must be taken into account when undertaking a critical evaluation of the impact of intra-party factionalism and inter-party defection upon political development both in Haryana State and elsewhere in India.

---

<sup>47</sup>Huntington, pp.413-14.

### Organization of Case Study

To order the available information on this subject and to attempt to deduce from it an appraisal of the causes of factionalism and its impact in a developmental setting, this case study will first examine Haryana's social and economic setting, and the nature of conflict in the traditional village society which may be seen as having ramifications for the pattern of politics in the state. The historical development of factional party politics in the pre-independence and post-independence periods up until the establishment of Haryana State in 1966 will then be analysed.

Later, for the contemporary political setting, an analysis will be undertaken for three distinct periods of political instability arising out of the existence of competing factional groupings in the Congress Party of that state. First, a study of the effort on the part of the hitherto dominant non-agriculturist factional grouping within the ruling party to retain power after boundary reorganisation established the new state. Second, an in-depth examination of the attempt on the part of the dissident agriculturist factions to achieve a greater share of political power through organized floor-crossings and their subsequent difficulties. Finally, a study of the role and problems of the central Congress leadership in its attempt to stabilize party politics in Haryana. From this analysis, an evaluation will be undertaken to relate this state's experience with intra-party factional rivalries for political power to India's

( prospects for political development when such conflicts threaten to disrupt the nation's political process.

## CHAPTER II

### HARYANA: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING OF FACTIONAL POLITICS

#### Introduction

Haryana emerged as a separate state in the Indian Federal Union on November 1st, 1966, as a result of a central government decision to reorganize the Punjab on linguistic grounds. For the moment, Haryana's official offices are situated in the Union Territory of Chandigarh which is jointly shared with Punjab as a capital area. In time, this situation is likely to change. A recent Union Cabinet decision would appear to have ceded the entire city of Chandigarh to Punjab state while transferring an area in the south-west corner of Punjab known as Fazilka to Haryana. The national government proposes to allot Haryana about twenty-seven million dollars (20 crore Rps.)-- half as a grant and half as a loan -- for the construction of a new state capital. In the meanwhile, until 1975, Chandigarh will remain a union territory to be shared by both states.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The New York Times, January 30th, 1970.

Haryana is a relatively small state by Indian standards. Its population today is estimated to be around ten million (9,970,937 by the provisional Census of India, 1971), living in an area of 16,945 square miles.<sup>2</sup> Situated in the north-central part of India, the state is bounded by Uttar Pradesh to the east beyond the Jumna River, by Himachal Pradesh to the north-east, by the reorganized state of Punjab to the north and by Rajasthan state to the south-west. The Union Territory of Delhi, which includes the national capital, New Delhi, also lies on its borders in the south-east.<sup>3</sup>

Physically, Haryana falls into two broad natural divisions. The north-eastern region of the state is a part of the Sub-Himalayan plain while the south-western area is a part of the Indo-Gangetic alluvial plain which lies between the Himalayas to the north and the Rajputana desert to the south-west. As a whole, Haryana is extremely flat, the average height of the topography ranging between 700 and 900 feet above sea level. The soil throughout is sandy and light in texture, particularly in the arid areas of the west and south-west.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>Government of Haryana, Statistical Abstract, (Chandigarh: 1967), Tables 1.1 and 1.3.

<sup>3</sup>See Map 2.1.

<sup>4</sup>Haryana Development Committee, Final Report, (Chandigarh: Government of the Punjab, 1966), p.4.

0 8 16

- \* District Capital
- x State Capital
- National Capital





The climate is of a continental character with a very hot summer having an average high of 115 degrees F. in May and June and a markedly cold winter in which the temperature may drop to 30 degrees F. at night in January. The rainfall level is comparatively low and erratic and is usually confined to two seasons: (1) the period from late June to September, on which the autumn crops depend, and (2) the winter rains which may occur from December to February, although these are usually not of any significant quantity.<sup>5</sup> In the drier western part of the state (Hissar and Mahendragarh districts) an annual rainfall of fifteen inches might be considered average while Ambala district might receive thirty-five inches.<sup>6</sup>

### History

The history of the Haryana region may be dated back to the later Vedic period. Archaeological remains show that the area was once the centre of an Aryan civilization based in Thanesar and the sacred land of Kurukshetra which is said to have been the site of the epic battle of the Mahabharata.<sup>7</sup> In the more modern historical period, with

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.4.

<sup>6</sup>Statistical Abstract, Table 2.1.

<sup>7</sup>The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.XX, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908), p.259.

the rise of the Mughal Empire, the Haryana region was incorporated within Delhi Suba which also included the area which is today western Uttar Pradesh. The decline of Mughal power towards the end of the eighteenth century left Haryana a veritable no-man's land as it frequently served as the battlefield for wars between the three contending powers, Sikh, Afghan and Maratha. After passing through a number of hands, including those of a white adventurer, George Thomas, the region was brought under British rule in 1803, although effective administrative control was not established until 1810.<sup>8</sup>

During the First War of Independence in 1857 (the Indian Mutiny), Haryana as a whole joined the revolt against the British. When the British forces were finally able to re-establish control over the region, it was decided to divide it into a number of parts and to attach these to those neighbouring states and provinces which had remained loyal to the British. As a result, the territory now forming the bulk of Haryana state was detached from the province of Agra and Delhi, of which it had hitherto been an integral part, and was formally incorporated into the province of the Punjab in February, 1858. The present districts of Jind and Mahendragarh were parcelled out as rewards to various princely rulers who had chosen to remain

---

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, Vol. XIII, pp.53-4.

loyal to the British throughout the 1857 conflict.<sup>9</sup> From that date until November 1966 when the Punjab was reorganized, Haryana remained a backward and somewhat neglected part of Punjab state.

### Social Profile

The area and population figures for Haryana state reveal that this region remains highly rural with some 82.8 per cent of the total population designated as non-urban.<sup>10</sup> This agricultural sector inhabits some 6,670 villages, the majority of these having a population of less than 1,000 persons. The remaining population (17.2 per cent) lives in some 61 towns and cities. Of these towns, however, only eight have a population above 50,000 and the majority of the remaining have less than 10,000.<sup>11</sup>

While the percentage of non-rural inhabitants is almost identical to that for all of India (17.97 per cent), Haryana's urban sector does not have a large-scale industrial component and might, with the exception of Ambala City and its Cantonment and the area of Gurgaon district bordering on the Delhi territory, best be described as that sector of Haryana society which provides

---

<sup>9</sup>Punjab, Report of the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1882-83, (Lahore: 1884), p.34.

<sup>10</sup>See Table 2.1.

<sup>11</sup>Statistical Abstract, pp.8-9, 16-18.

TABLE 2.1

## HARYANA: AREA AND POPULATION, 1961

DISTRICT	Area in Square Miles <sup>b</sup>	Population in 1951 <sup>a</sup>	Population in 1961 <sup>a</sup>	51-61 %age <sup>a</sup> incr.	Persons per Sq. Mi. 61 <sup>b</sup>	Rural Population 1961 a	%age of Total Popul. <sup>b</sup>	Urban Population 1961 a
Ambala	1,328	662,050	885,785	33.8	619	584,832	66.9	300,953
Karnal	3,075	1,077,381	1,490,430	38.3	485	1,234,838	82.9	255,592
Jind	1,045	339,629	464,378	36.9	445	407,855	87.8	57,081
Rohtak	2,332	1,122,046	1,420,391	26.6	609	1,225,884	86.3	194,507
Gurgaon	2,350	967,664	1,240,706	28.2	528	1,035,105	82.9	205,601
Mahend.	1,342	443,074	547,850	23.7	408	494,878	90.3	52,972
Hissar	5,363	1,045,645	1,540,508	47.3	287	1,299,471	84.4	241,073
Total	16,835	5,657,489	7,590,543	34.7	447	6,282,863	82.8	1,307,680
Punjab*	18,032	9,134,351	11,135,069	21.9	574	7,795,000	75.3	2,556,000

\*Included for comparison.

Source: <sup>a</sup>Government of Haryana, Statistical Abstract, (Chandigarh: 1967), pp. 3-5.

<sup>b</sup>Haryana Development Committee, Final Report, (Chandigarh: Government of the Punjab, 1966), Annexure I.

the essential services needed to support the state's agricultural economy. The main focus of a social profile for Haryana, therefore, might best be developed in terms of the constituent parts of the rural community. Since this aspect of the Haryana society has remained highly traditional and socially conservative, this examination may be broadly based on the traditional social cleavages designated by caste affiliations.

There is, however, a statistical problem when undertaking a study of the social relationships between the major caste groupings in Haryana. Any attempt to designate the major castes in the state by district must be based on pre-independence census data as officially such statistics are no longer compiled in India. Accordingly, Tables 2.2, and 2.3 offer percentage figures for the major castes and caste groupings based on census data collected in 1881 and 1931 (the last occasion when such caste figures were published).<sup>12</sup> Such a limitation, however, need not be interpreted

---

<sup>12</sup>Besides the usefulness of a general comparison between two sets of data collected some fifty years apart, the census figures for 1881 have also been included because: (1) the compilation for 1931 did not offer a separate figure for the Ror community which makes up at least one eighth of the agriculturist grouping in Karnal district, and (2) there is a distinct difference between the overall figures given for agriculturist tribes between 1881 and 1931. In the latter case, it is plausible that the 1881 figures are a better reflection of reality in that they were compiled before the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, made it advantageous to claim membership in an agriculturist community. The statistical techniques employed in 1881 make it impossible to offer an overall total percentage distribution for the Haryana area.

to mean that we have no clear idea of the present-day caste configuration in Haryana. Modern non-official estimates suggest that the overall pattern has not changed to any marked degree and that the figures offered here, while statistically not up to date, may still be safely used to broadly reflect the overall social pattern.<sup>13</sup> For example, today the Jats are thought to represent some 23 per cent of the total population, the Gujars 8 per cent and the Rajputs 5 per cent. Other major castes would include Brahmins at 12 per cent, Baniyas at 8 per cent, and the scheduled castes, as a group at 18 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

A major upheaval occurred in this region during the partition of India when most of the Muslim residents in Haryana, with the exception of the Meos in Gurgaon district, migrated to Pakistan. In turn, displaced persons from West Pakistan settled in Haryana and may constitute up to 10 per cent of the state's population today. Since this group has tended to concentrate itself in the larger towns and cities, it probably has not changed the social configuration in the rural communities. Further, it is not possible to provide a social breakdown in percentages for

---

<sup>13</sup> This solution was suggested by Mr. K.C. Gupta, Economic and Statistical Advisor to the Haryana Government.

<sup>14</sup> D.P. Kumar, "The State of Haryana", The Statesman, December 24, 1966.

Table 2.2

Percentage of Population for the Major Castes in Haryana  
by District, 1881.

Caste	Hissar	Rohtak	Gurgaon	Karnal	Ambala
<u>Upper Castes</u>					
Brahmin	5.3	10.5	8.2	8.9	6.1
Bania	6.6	7.5	5.7	6.5	3.8
Other	2.1	2.3	3.2	3.3	3.6
Subtotal	14.0	20.3	17.1	18.7	13.5
<u>Agricultural Tribes</u>					
Jat	26.1	33.0	10.0	15.3	16.0
Rajput	14.1	5.4	4.1	8.5	8.6
Gujar	1.5	.5	3.3	3.5	4.8
Ahir	1.4	2.9	10.1	.2	.1
Meo	.1	-	16.1	.1	.1
Ror	-	-	-	5.5	.4
Other	5.1	4.3	5.0	7.2	13.0
Subtotal	48.3	46.1	48.6	40.3	43.0
<u>Service Castes</u>					
Kumhar	4.5	2.2	2.2	2.4	1.5
Nai	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.7	1.4
Tarkhan	2.5	2.0	1.6	2.2	2.4
Teli	1.4	1.1	.7	1.6	1.6
Other	7.7	8.6	8.5	13.0	11.6
Subtotal	17.8	15.8	14.9	20.9	18.5
<u>Scheduled Castes</u>					
Chamar	9.2	9.0	11.1	8.7	13.1
Chuhra	3.4	3.6	2.8	5.0	3.9
Julaha	.5	.2	.4	1.5	2.3
Other	4.3	3.9	2.0	1.6	.8
Subtotal	17.4	16.7	16.3	16.8	20.1
<u>TOTAL</u>	97.5	98.9	96.9	96.7	95.1

Source: Denzil Ibbetson, Punjab Castes, (Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1916). These statistics were drawn from Abstracts 65, 74, 83, 85, 87, 88, 90, 91, 94, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, and 105.

Table 2.3

Percentage of Population for the Major Castes in Haryana  
by District, 1931.

Caste	Hissar	Rohtak	Gurgaon	Karnal	Ambala	Total Haryana
<u>Upper Castes</u>						
Brahmin	5.6	9.7	7.2	8.6	5.6	7.4
Bania	7.5	6.0	4.0	6.3	2.4	5.3
Other	2.1	1.7	3.6	2.9	4.2	2.9
Subtotal	15.2	17.4	14.8	17.8	12.2	15.6
<u>Agricultural Tribes</u>						
Jat	28.5	36.8	10.4	15.2	16.3	21.9
Rajput	16.8	7.1	5.7	13.2	10.6	11.0
Gujar	1.6	1.1	5.4	4.3	7.4	3.9
Ahir	1.4	2.7	11.6	.3	.3	3.2
Meo	.1	-	17.8	.1	-	3.5
Other	4.7	6.6	5.2	10.0	16.6	8.5
Subtotal	53.1	54.3	56.1	43.1	51.2	52.0
<u>Service Castes</u>						
Kumhar	4.5	1.8	1.8	2.1	1.1	2.4
Nai	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.8
Tarkhan	2.5	2.2	1.8	2.2	1.1	2.0
Teli	1.9	1.3	.8	2.2	1.6	1.6
Other	4.3	4.3	3.9	9.6	6.5	6.0
Subtotal	15.0	11.5	10.3	17.8	11.6	13.8
<u>Scheduled Castes</u>						
Chamar	9.5	9.1	11.6	9.0	11.5	10.2
Chuhra	3.0	4.4	3.0	6.0	4.1	4.1
Julaha	.4	.4	.1	1.6	2.5	1.0
Other	2.9	1.2	2.5	1.7	6.1	2.9
Subtotal	15.8	15.1	17.2	18.3	24.2	18.2
<u>TOTAL</u>	99.1	98.3	98.4	97.0	99.2	99.6

Source: Census of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab, Part II (Tables), (Lahore, 1933), Table XVII, Race, Tribe, Caste. p. 282-302.



two districts, Jind and Mahendragarh, as these were created after independence from a number of princely holdings. As a rough guide, Jind would appear to have a caste breakdown similar to that of Hissar while Mahendragarh would appear to be similar to the tract of western Gurgaon where the Ahirs are the dominant land-holding agriculturist tribe.

(a) The Agriculturist Tribes

In a rural society, as one might expect, those elements in the villages which own or control the available agricultural land are likely to be the dominant social groupings. In the case of Haryana, it is relatively easy to identify these groups as, by tradition, most of the village lands have been controlled by a small number of agriculturist tribes. Even today, the agriculturist communities noted in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 are said to own or control some 80 per cent of the total available agricultural land.<sup>15</sup> Of these, there are six tribes which are worthy of special mention: Jats, Rajputs, Gujars, Ahirs, Rors, and Meos.

In Haryana, it is common to hear of these dominant agriculturist tribes referred to as "Ajgars" (the "a" standing for Ahir, the "j" for Jat, the "g" for Gujar, and the "r" for Rajput or Ror) which means python in Hindi, and suggests the way in which these castes may be viewed

---

<sup>15</sup>Interview with Mr. K.C. Gupta, op.cit.

as twisting their coils in or around the state's social, economic and political life. Indeed, because of their predominant position in the villages, almost everything which has to be said about the socio-economic background to Haryana politics must be expressed in terms of an action by, or a reaction to, these agriculturist tribes. In Haryana, it is also usual to hear the term "Jat" politics being used as a synonym for "agriculturist" politics and to suggest the degree to which these agriculturist tribes dominate the political life of the state.

It is usual to refer to the Haryana agriculturist castes, with the exception of the Rajputs, as tribes. The explanation for this lies in the gradual historical transformation of the original tribal units into ritually recognized castes which, at the same time, have retained their original names and many of their characteristic tribal customs. In this process, however, such tribal units have usually modified their animistic characteristics in the direction of orthodox Hinduism, and now order their social life in the community in accordance with that model.<sup>16</sup> Anthropologists see this process as having taken place in the transformation of the Haryana agriculturist tribes into the dominant castes of that area.

---

<sup>16</sup>Gazeteer, op.cit., Vol. 1, p.315.

The life-style and personality of the Haryana agriculturists has been shaped by a singular fear of famine. The generally adverse agro-climatic conditions found in the state over the centuries, particularly in Hissar, Jind, Mahendragarh and western Gurgaon, helps to explain this phenomenon. While some improvements such as minimal irrigation have helped to ease this situation, the farmers of the area are still haunted by the possibility that the rains may completely fail and that even if their lives are spared, they may lose their cattle and possibly even their land. This continuing struggle for basic survival in conditions which may vary from bumper crops to famine conditions has produced a group of agriculturist castes who are unflagging in their industry and tough in their endurance. From the time he is old enough to wear a string around his waist and drive the cattle until he is too old to do little more than sit in the sunshine and weave a hemp rope, the Haryana agriculturist's life is one of unceasing toil, borne patiently and without complaint.<sup>17</sup> Unlike most other agriculturist tribes in India, the Haryanvi women are expected, when needed, to work along with their menfolk in the fields. The hard conditions of life in Haryana make these people among the finest farmers in India, "unremitting

---

<sup>17</sup>Malcolm Darling, The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt, (Bombay, Oxford University Press, 1947), p.84.

in toil, thrifty to the verge of parsimony, self-reliant in adversity, and enterprising in prosperity."<sup>18</sup>

(1) The Jats

The Jat tribes of Haryana constitute the largest single social grouping. They are an ancient ethnic group believed to be of Indo-Scythian origin and to have entered India around the beginning of the Christian era. The Haryana area might, with some justification, be considered a part of the basic "homeland" of all Hindu Jats in India. While no Jat "state" survived in the Haryana area after 1803, the tribes did have a period of relative independence and power when the Mughal Empire began to decline. Indeed, the Hindu Jats of this tract, in alliance with the Jat states of Bharatpur and Dholpur to the south, were amongst the first communities to rebel against Aurangzeb's religious persecutions and through this resistance developed a reputation as plunderers and looters throughout Delhi Suba. With the collapse of Mughal power, the Jats spread their control from the rough marginal areas where they had been living to the more fertile lands on both sides of the Jumna river, and have remained there ever since.<sup>19</sup>

Today in Haryana, the Jat remains essentially a zamindar (landholder), and when asked his caste, will

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Oscar Lewis, Village Life in Northern India, (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1958), pp.4-5.

usually reply "Jat zamindar" even if he actually does not own any land. From the economic point of view, the Haryana Jat is a husbandman and peasant par excellence. He is independent and self-willed, peaceably inclined and appears to want little more than to be left alone. Centuries of oppression appear to have taught the Jat that survival may depend on the ability to be self-effacing, but this is combined with dignity, charm, shrewdness and much cunning.<sup>20</sup>

Like many of the other agriculturist castes in the Haryana locale, the Jats still retain many features of a tribal organization. Among the Jat gots (tribes) there survive the old geographical panchayats of neighbouring villages. On important matters, these villages will call in their neighbours for consultation. A measure of the importance of any issue may be found in the distance to which invitations are sent.<sup>21</sup>

## (2) Other Important Agriculturist Castes

It is often suggested that the Haryana Rajputs originated from the same ethnological grouping as the Jats and represent the royal families of that stock. While they share the Jat reputation for bravery, they are not known as good husbandmen and look upon agricultural labour such

<sup>20</sup> Denzil Ibbetson, Punjab Castes (Lahore, Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1916), p.102.

<sup>21</sup> Gazeteer, op.cit., Vol. XXI, p.134.

as following a plough as degrading. Unlike the Jats, their women are more or less strictly secluded and are not expected to work in the fields. On the whole, it would appear that their tribal feeling has remained strong and that the heads of villages and local groups continue to have a great influence within their communities.<sup>22</sup>

The Gujars are stalwart agriculturists much like the Jats. Indeed, they are considered to be of the same social standing as the Jats and the two tribes may eat and drink together without scruple. However, they are usually held to be inferior in both personal character and repute to the Jats in that they are lazy to a degree and are poorer cultivators. It is also suggested that their fondness for good cattle may extend to those of other people's.<sup>23</sup>

The Rors are regionally centered near Thanesar in Karnal district and would appear to be the same physical and social type as the Jats. By reputation they are considered to be almost the equal of the Jats as agriculturists and their women also work in the fields.<sup>24</sup> Their traditional caste organization is one of the strongest amongst

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibbetson, pp.132-5.

<sup>23</sup>H.A. Rose, A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier (Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1911), Vol. II, p.308.

<sup>24</sup>Ibbetson, p.178.

the agriculturist tribes and their panchayat structure based on a cluster of eighty-four villages is still very powerful in rural Karnal.

The Ahirs are similarly concentrated in the western tract of Gurgaon district and throughout Mahendragarh and form a considerable proportion of the population in this area. This caste claims to be the direct descendants of Yadavs who are regarded as the children and kin of Sri Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu. By origin the Ahirs were a pastoral tribe but are now almost exclusively agricultural. Socially, the Ahirs would seem to be at an equivalent level with the Jats, Rors and Gujars. In character they are industrious, patient and orderly, and succeed in arousing the jealousy of the Jats for being even better cultivators even though their tract is one of the most marginal farming areas of Haryana.<sup>25</sup>

The Meos are perhaps the most unique agriculturist tribe in this region. Located almost entirely in the south-eastern part of Gurgaon district, these people have given their name to Mewat (the hill country of Alwar, Gurgaon and Bharatpur). Although this tribe nominally adopted Islam to protect themselves from the wrath of powerful Muslim rulers, their religion was a very impure type in that they retained village deities similar to

---

<sup>25</sup>Darling, p.90-91.

those of the other Hindu agriculturist tribes and continued to observe such Hindu religious festivals as Holi.

In this way, they were able to maintain their dominant land-holding position in the Hindu caste structure. In recent years, however, because partition has stiffened the attitude of Hindus towards them, they have virtually been forced into greater Islamization in order to better integrate themselves with the other Muslim groups which did not migrate.<sup>26</sup> Divided into some fifty-two clans, the Meos are perhaps the most fraught with factionalism of all the dominant agriculturist castes. As farmers, the Meos are usually regarded as inferior to their Hindu neighbours even though their women are not confined to the household, but do help with the fieldwork.<sup>27</sup>

#### (b) Other Important Caste Groupings

In commerce, it is the Bania caste of Haryana which predominates. While the commercial enterprise and intelligence of this group is great, the mass of these, living in the villages, might still be regarded as poor shop-keepers. There is, however, a great deal of social acrimony between

---

<sup>26</sup>Partap C. Aggarwal, "A Muslim Sub-Caste of North India: Problems of Cultural Integration", Economic and Political Weekly, September 10, 1966, pp.159-161.

<sup>27</sup>Darling, pp.90-91.



this caste and the agriculturist tribes, as the latter group fears that they are money-grubbers who are out to get control of their debtor's lands at any cost. Historically, the Bania appears to have played a useful social role in Haryana as a trader and money-lender. The introduction of individual property rights under the British administration, however, along with cash crops amongst the agriculturist classes, brought these groups into economic and political conflict. In the pre-British period, the individual did not usually have ownership rights over the land he worked as the village community was regarded as the collective proprietary unit. It was difficult, therefore, for a money-lender to alienate land from a cultivator without the consent of the whole community. Since there was no legal sanction which would enable the money-lender to seize his debtor's land, the cultivator was at liberty to wait to pay back his creditor during a period of surplus. In those times, the money-lender had to rely on his personal and moral authority within the community for the recovery of debts.

The introduction of British civil law changed the bond of debt into a legal contract and allowed the money-lender to begin to dominate at the village level. Strengthened by the British legal system, the Bania was now at liberty to lend large sums of money at higher rates of interest against land, as this property could be alienated through the courts

if the cultivator was unable to meet the repayment schedule.<sup>28</sup> While the worst aspects of this practice were to be alleviated in time through legislation, the major harm had already been done. The social antagonism which thus built up between the agriculturist classes and the richer Banias continues to be a lingering economic and political problem throughout Haryana.

The Brahmins, although forming a sizable minority of the state's population, have not had the traditional social impact in this area which they ordinarily have had in other parts of India. This phenomenon arises from the fact that the Brahmin community was originally settled on the tract by the Jats and the other agriculturist tribes, when they founded their villages, to perform the required religious rituals. As a result, the Brahmin is still dependent, on the whole, on the dominant landholding tribes for support. The gradual erosion of the village society, moreover, has seriously undermined the Brahmin group's overall prosperity. While at one time the agriculturists regarded the services of the Brahmin to be indispensable, today that relationship is changing because of the reformist impact of the Arya Samaj programme which encourages the

---

<sup>28</sup> Satya M. Rai, Partition of the Punjab: A Study of its Effects on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab (I) 1947-56 (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), pp. 22-23.

non-priestly castes to abandon, or perform themselves many of the religious rituals which formally required the service of a Brahmin. This practice has had an adverse economic impact on the Brahmins and has resulted in greater social tension in the villages. Through political parties, the Brahmins in recent years have tried to revenge themselves by inciting, helping and often leading the lower castes and untouchables in their struggle against Jat or agriculturist dominance.

The great majority of the remaining castes living in Haryana's rural areas can be economically classed as landless labourers who provide those essential services which the agriculturist tribes require to work their fields. While some of these castes are ritually clean and therefore are not regarded as socially untouchable, there is very little difference between the ritually clean service castes and the unclean scheduled castes in economic terms vis-à-vis the landed classes. All such castes would appear to have a marginal standard of living and are completely dependent upon the goodwill of their land-holding employers. The lack of widespread literacy amongst these lower castes, and the fact that they have traditionally been placed in a hierarchical relationship to each other, also precludes any efforts at self-improvement even though they constitute a majority in a large number of the village communities. Isolated in the individual villages, they have remained essentially at the mercy of the dominant castes who use

them to support their own intra-caste factional disputes with the threat that a withholding of such support would affect their economic livelihood.

### Economic Profile

Haryana is presently in the midst of an economic development programme which promises to place the state at the forefront of the "green" revolution. The agriculturists in Haryana today are enjoying a period of unprecedented prosperity because of a government programme which is turning the chronically drought-affected regions of the state into high crop-yield areas. Much of this effort has centered around the provision of irrigation facilities where they are most needed, such as in the Mahendragarh district, and an unprecedented project (now completed) to provide electricity for tube-well irrigation in every village in the state. The pay-off for the state's economy has been astonishing. The state income has risen from 39 million Rupees in 1965-66 to 59 million in 1968-69 while per capita income for the same period has risen from 447 Rupees to 613. As a result of this programme of irrigation, combined with improved cropping methods and a progressive mechanization of agriculture, Haryana's production of food-grains has risen from 2.6 million tons in 1966-67 to 4.8 million tons in 1970-71.<sup>29</sup> Recently, the Government of Haryana

<sup>29</sup>Bansi Lal, "Haryana: Focus on Fast Growth", Indian and Foreign Review, Vol.9, No.1, (October 15, 1971), pp.9-10.

has announced that it had set itself a new task as the second stage of its rural development programme: to connect every village by a paved road in time for Republic Day, January 26, 1973. Indeed, in doing this, the state Government is proposing to accomplish what the central Government has given the other states until 1981 to do.<sup>30</sup>

While the current economic picture in Haryana would appear to be of a state making rapid developmental strides, the situation was not always so. Indeed, the bulk of the political events studied in this thesis (1966-68) occurred at a time when Haryana was considered to be a backward and stagnating area which would require a long period of intensive development work before the state's economy could even begin to approach the figures cited above. Accordingly, this economic profile is more concerned with the conditions prevalent at the time of the state's organization in 1966 than with the improvements which have resulted since the political situation was stabilized in 1969.

#### (1) Urban-Rural Composition

The great preponderance of rural population in Haryana has often been cited as a measure of the region's lack of economic growth especially during the fifties and early sixties when most development plans in India were directed towards building up the nation's industrial sector. While

---

<sup>30</sup>The Overseas Hindustan Times (Weekly), October 2, 1971, p.3.

the recent governmental concern for self-sufficiency in food-grains has shifted attention to the agricultural sector, thereby helping Haryana's economic development, the figures on Table 2.4 leave no doubt that Haryana's economy is indeed an agricultural one. It should also be noted that the rural population in ten of the state's twenty-seven tehsils is over 90 per cent. A comparison with statistics from the neighbouring state of Punjab indicates that the percentage of urban population in Haryana is roughly two-thirds that of Punjab. The percentage figures for the working population also point up the degree to which Haryana's economy is dependent upon the agricultural sector. Roughly two-thirds of the working force is employed as cultivators in Haryana, in contrast to the Punjab where less than half the labour force is so employed.

## (2) Agricultural Sector

One of the grounds for demanding a reorganization of Punjab state before November 1966 on the part of Haryanvi agriculturists was that their region was deliberately being kept backward vis-à-vis the larger Punjabi-speaking area. In an attempt to substantiate these claims, a sub-committee of the Punjab Legislative Assembly examined the economic differences between the two regions in some depth.<sup>31</sup> The report presented by

---

<sup>31</sup>See Haryana Development Committee, op.cit.

TABLE 2.4

## HARYANA: URBAN-RURAL COMPOSITION, 1961.

Description	Haryana	Punjab*
1. Rural Population as Percentage of Total Population.	82.8	75.3
2. Urban Population as Percentage of Total Population.	17.2	24.7
3. Working Population as Percentage of Total Population.	37.7	31.5
(a) Cultivators	24.2	14.1
(b) Agricultural Labour	2.9	3.5
(c) Household Industry	2.6	2.6
(d) Manufacturing	1.4	2.2
(e) Construction	.5	.7
(f) Trade	1.6	2.2
(g) Transport	.6	.8
(h) Other Services	3.9	5.1

\* Included for comparison.

Source: Haryana Development Committee, Final Report,  
(Chandigarh: Government of the Punjab, 1966),  
pp. 191-193.

the committee carefully detailed the comparison between the agricultural economies of Punjab and Haryana areas at that time.

It claimed that Haryana was suffering from a serious shortage of such things as irrigation facilities, fertilizers, electrification and seed facilities. Because of these alleged shortages, Haryana had not been able to keep pace with Punjab in the production of cash crops. The report pointed out that the area under wheat production in Punjab was double that of Haryana, that of maize (corn) three times, and the area under rice some 36 per cent higher. On the other hand, it claimed that the area under less valuable crops was higher in Haryana. Because a large area of Haryana was tied down in low-yielding crops before 1966, the per capita income in Haryana was 339 rupees in 1961 in comparison with 401 rupees in Punjab.

A great part of the problem in the agricultural sector in Haryana before 1966 was a result of the fact that only 30 per cent of the gross total area was irrigated in contrast to 63 per cent in Punjab. This situation has today improved in Haryana because of the rural development programmes which started in 1969. Now every village in Haryana is electrified thereby making power available for tubewell irrigation. It is hard to believe that in 1964 only 18 per cent of the villages had electricity.



Haryana, now a food-surplus state, can look forward to a period of economic prosperity as a supplier of food-grains to other areas of India. Although her agricultural sector had been ignored in the past, Haryana agriculturists are now reaping the benefits of the national government's policy of encouraging food production as an aspect of development planning. This influx of new wealth will probably help to uplift and modernize the entire rural society in Haryana, although for the moment there is the danger that it will only increase the economic inequalities between those castes which hold land and those who do not.

### (3) Industrial Sector

On the whole, Haryana has not developed a heavy or medium-scale industrial base. To date, most industrial enterprises are concentrated in the fields of sugar processing, textiles, leather, oil pressing and rice milling. Table 2.5 indicates that in 1964, the Haryana area had only 14.9 registered factories for each 100,000 of population. This is only 41 per cent of the overall Punjab figure. The district distribution of these factories also indicates that there is considerable regional variation within Haryana, with only Ambala and Gurgaon districts having reasonable levels of industrialization. The Mahendragarh figure of 1.3 factories per 100,000 of population is particularly depressing.

TABLE 2.5

## HARYANA: REGISTERED FACTORIES, 1964

Description	Haryana	Punjab*
Number of Registered Factories for each 100,000 of Population.	14.9	36.5
Number of Registered Factories for each 100,000 of Population by District in Haryana.		
Hissar	9.9	
Rohtak	10.3	
Gurgaon	22.6	
Karnal	13.2	
Mahendragarh	1.3	
Ambala	39.4	
Jind	3.9	

\* Included for comparison.

Source: Haryana Development Committee, Final Report,  
(Chandigarh: Government of the Punjab, 1966),  
pp. 88-91.

Since state reorganization in 1966, little progress appears to have been made in developing the Haryana industrial sector. The only significant new development would appear to be the establishment of milk-processing plants in Jind, Bhiwani and Pehowa.<sup>32</sup> These projects would suggest that the Government is concentrating attention on those industrial developments designed to reinforce its commitment to rural uplift.

#### Factional Politics in a Rural Society





The socio-economic profile of Haryana outlined above indicates that the state's rural society is dominated by a group of land-owning agriculturist tribes, that the bulk of the state's economy is centered on agricultural production and that its only industrial component is essentially based on the processing of farm products. This would suggest that Haryana's political system is likely to be dominated by agriculturist interests. The extent to which the rural element may impinge upon state politics can be measured by the constituency characteristics illustrated on Map 2.2. Of the 81 state assembly constituencies, 62 might be said to be rural constituencies (47 general plus 15 reserved) in that none of these constituencies incorporate a town of more than 10,000 persons.

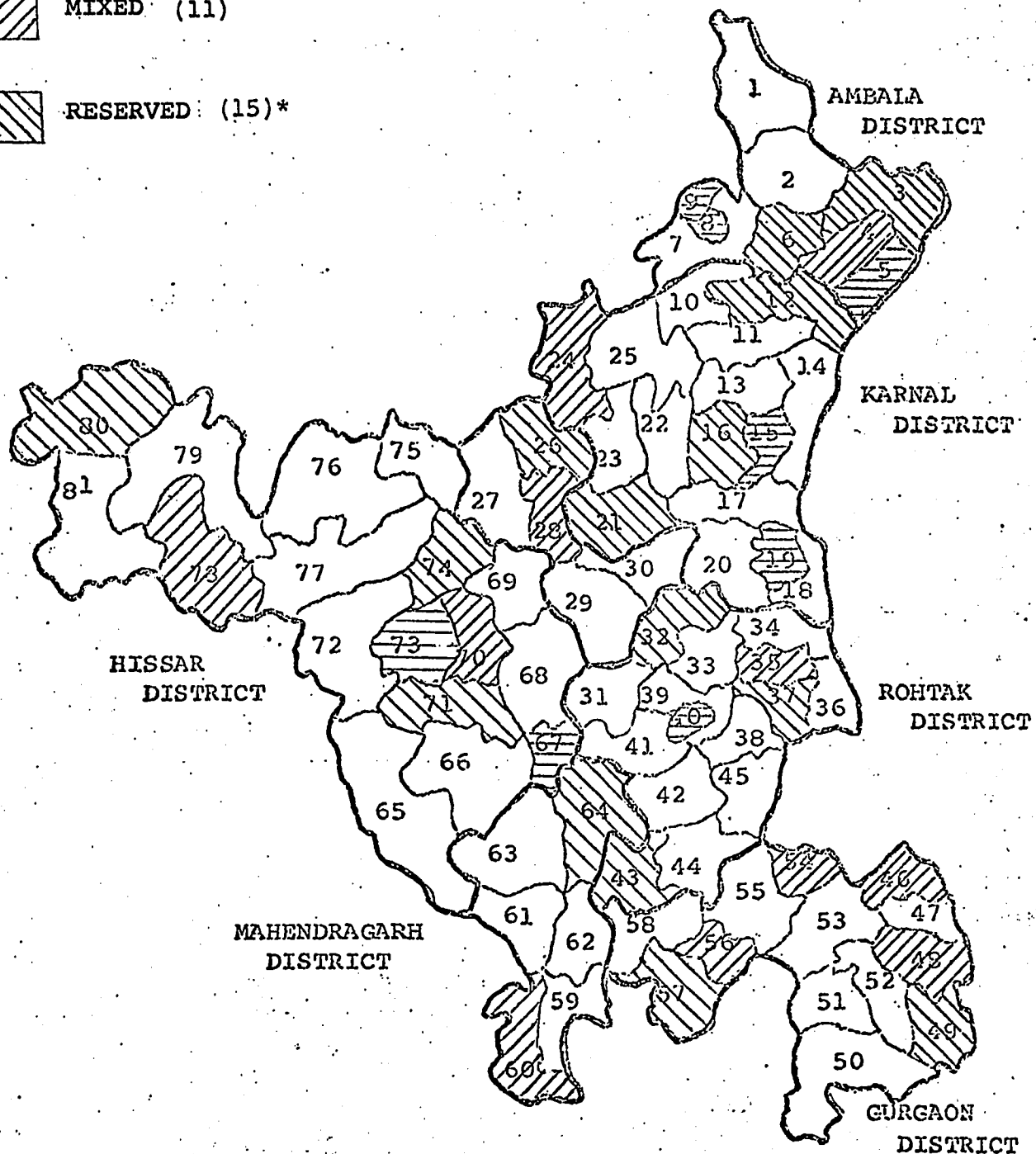
---

<sup>32</sup>Bansi Lal, p.10.

0 8 16 Miles

## CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION

-  RURAL (47)
-  URBAN (8)
-  MIXED (11)
-  RESERVED (15)\*



\* All Reserved Constituencies in Haryana are Rural.

Another 11 constituencies incorporate a town of more than 10,000 in population and are so designated as mixed constituencies, but a majority in these constituencies live in village communities. Less than one-tenth of the total number of constituencies is designated as urban on the basis that a majority of the voters are domiciled within an urban area. To better understand how socio-economic relationships at the village level are likely to affect the politics of an agricultural state, the following is a general discussion of factional political relationships within rural communities in Haryana.

Village society in India has often been idealized as a rural community structure in which the members share strong feelings of belonging together in a single unit and in which the individual is socialized to act in concert with the total community for its common well-being. In many such descriptions, the traditional social ordering of caste and kinship and the economic relationship institutionalized within the jajmani system of hereditary duties are represented as being effective means of establishing continuing social and economic roles, which in turn produce a harmony of interests between the individual and the local community.<sup>33</sup> On closer examination, however,

---

<sup>33</sup>Baljit Singh, Next Step in Village India. (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961), p.1.

the reality of village society is somewhat less ideal and might better be characterized as having an atmosphere of pervasive bitterness, discontent, violence and insecurity. This lack of harmony in the rural areas springs from a number of economic and social conflicts centered around individual and group demands for greater social status, wealth, land and water. The existence of social tensions amongst the villagers results in political leadership conflicts based on the prevailing factional splits in the community.

In Haryana, where almost every village is likely to be under the domination of a single land-holding caste such as the Jats, factional splits are usually focused upon rivalries between members of the dominant caste. Because each village community usually has limited resources and a great scarcity of agricultural land, social relationships between individuals and kinship groupings may be affected and determined by feelings of basic insecurity. As a result, divisions may occur and factions may develop within the dominant caste over quarrels which arise out of such matters as the inheritance of land, house sites, or irrigation rights.<sup>34</sup> The resultant conflict, however, is usually not limited to the dominant village caste. Rather dominant

---

<sup>34</sup>Lewis, p.148.

castes appear to use such issues to involve not only their immediate kinship and friendship groups within their own caste, but also to draw into the dispute the households of those service castes which are dependent upon them within the village economy. In other words, intra-caste feuds on the part of the dominant village strata may be used to encourage parallel divisions within the lower castes in an effort to create further local support for what is in essence the promotion of private vested interests within the village community.<sup>35</sup>

Interneecine feuding of this type is pervasive at the local level in Haryana and it is difficult to offer any evidence that such intra-caste factionalism has a functional or constructive role to play within a village community. Castes at the local level, in theory, should be socially self-contained and economically interdependent. However, the prevalent pattern of intra-caste factionalism in Haryana appears to place still further limitations upon the already narrow scope for social intercourse both within the caste groupings and between them.<sup>36</sup>

Haryana villages are also characterized by a certain degree of tension between the dominant castes and the lower castes which must serve them in a patron-client

---

<sup>35</sup>Singh, pp.10-11.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

relationship. As the rural communities are slowly being drawn out of their former isolation, this inherent conflict is likely to manifest itself in increased inter-caste factionalism. Although the lower castes have not yet integrated themselves to the point where they can challenge the political control of the dominant castes at the local level, the existence of a secular democratic state in India is likely, in time, to effect some change in this situation. The influence of the dominant castes over the service castes will be challenged when the lower castes begin to develop a political consciousness and begin to press for the satisfaction of their own socio-economic demands. Inter-caste tensions of this type, however, are likely to become politically relevant only when the lower castes succeed in finding or creating a political leadership capable of challenging the dominant castes. Such leadership cadres must either come from within their own communities or the lower castes must enter into a political alliance with the ritually higher caste groupings in Haryana which are involved in their own socio-economic conflicts with the dominant castes.

For the moment, however, most social and economic rivalries found at the village level in Haryana are based on conflicting demands for the allocations of scarce resources, such as land or water, within the dominant castes. Faced with the necessity of resolving these disputes, it might be expected that village factional groupings will



seek to use whatever political processes are available to press for an authoritative settlement. These attempts to pressure the political system to their advantage are what gives the village faction a political role, even if the factional leaders themselves do not see this as their primary function.<sup>37</sup>

When factional divisions within a dominant caste are translated into political conflict, they are likely to vertically divide the local community because the factional leaders in a dispute need to mobilize local support. The lower castes, however, are unlikely to benefit significantly from any alliance with a dominant caste in such a political conflict. Because of their economic dependence upon their agriculturist patrons, these service castes must give their support for quite marginal rewards, even though the dominant castes today rely upon their votes and support for political power.<sup>38</sup>

In the villages, the individual usually votes in accordance with the decision of the person whom his group has acknowledged to be their local leader. Factors

which might influence an individual's formal participation in the electoral process include: the personality

---

<sup>37</sup>Lewis, pp.148-9.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid, p.114.

of a local factional leader, the awareness of economic or social sanctions likely to be felt immediately and personally if the individual or group refuses to support the position of a dominant caste leader, and particular personal loyalties which may be owed to a particular candidate. In such a situation, campaigns based on ideological appeals are often ineffective.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, the local political cadres, particularly those of the dominant castes, have been quite responsive to the benefits offered to them through the various governmental development programmes instituted in the local areas and have come to recognize that these benefits are likely to be received in direct ratio to the amount of local political support which they can place behind a successful candidate for the state Assembly. Moreover, as regional development officers are themselves under considerable political pressure to show results for the large sums of money which they have been allocated for rural uplift, they also actively seek the cooperation of the influential dominant caste leaders in the villages. As a result, the policy of political decentralization has, in the short run, given more power and favours

---

<sup>39</sup>Phyllis J. Rolnick, "Political Ideology: Reality and Myth in India", Asian Survey, II, 9, (November 1962), pp.24-5

to the dominant castes. The dominant castes, in turn, have not usually seen fit to use some of these benefits to improve the conditions of the lower or scheduled castes in their villages as these communities represent their most important source of cheap labour. They realize that should these exploited classes become educated and more aware of their rights, they would, by virtue of their numbers, become a distinct threat to the position of the dominant agriculturist castes.<sup>40</sup>

In attempting to pressure the state political process, the village leaders have also begun to extend themselves beyond their home villages in the search for greater local bargaining power. To accomplish this, they often align themselves with similar factional leaders in neighbouring villages and thereby create the nucleus of a regional power bloc. Not only have these regional alignments attained an effective influence over many local and block council elections, but they have also begun to bargain with state assembly candidates as they can offer block support in return for political favours.<sup>41</sup> The impact of these regional political alignments is increasingly evident in Haryana state politics where, to be successful, a party

---

<sup>40</sup> M.N. Srinivas, Caste in Modern India and Other Essays (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), p.91.

<sup>41</sup> R.S. Khare, "Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village", Human Organisation, XXI, 3, (Fall, 1962), pp.212-3.

candidate must find the support of a dominant caste bloc which can guarantee the votes of their economically dependent lower castes. These local elite-caste dominated regional power alignments will probably continue to influence if not control state party politics as long as the dominant castes can retain a large degree of their economic and social control over the lower castes in the village communities. For the moment, these regional alignments in Haryana are the effective political bargaining units as few candidates are likely to win in the rural areas unless they can successfully ally themselves with local dominant caste factional leaders. In return for their support, these local factional leaders usually demand the outside financial and political benefits which they require to continue or strengthen their political hold within the villages.<sup>42</sup>

The candidate for state office in a rural constituency is aware that his political future depends upon the retention of support from the dominant caste factions in his constituency, and that this support is not based upon the ideology of the party which he represents but upon the more pragmatic consideration of providing political favours to the leaders of the village factional groupings which gave their support to him. To win spoils for his local

---

<sup>42</sup>Myron Weiner, "India: Two Political Cultures," in Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba (eds.), Political Culture and Political Development, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p.212.

factional supporters he, in turn, must align himself with a state factional leader who has patronage to distribute. When this need for political patronage comes in conflict with the needs of the political party under which he campaigned for election, the assembly member may follow the lead of his factional leader even if this should involve breaking party discipline and crossing the floor as a defector. Should he fail to place consideration of his local community above those of party loyalty, his chance of re-election, even if he retained the party ticket, would be minimal at best. In Haryana politics, therefore, as long as an assembly member is dependent upon the support of local intra-caste factional leaders and their followers, he is likely to place their demands above any moral considerations such as the myth that his first duty is to his political party. Although Mrs. Indira Gandhi, as leader of the Congress Party at the national level, has had considerable success in directing an electoral appeal to the Indian masses on the basis of a socialistic program, the non-ideological pragmatic attitude on the part of Haryanvi politicians is likely to remain a feature of the politics of Haryana as long as the dominant castes retain an effective control over the social and economic bases of rural political power.

### CHAPTER III

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: REGIONAL FACTIONALISM AND PUNJAB PARTY POLITICS, 1900-1966.

##### Introduction

As Haryana only recently became a separate state, the historical background to the state's factional party politics must be found within the political system of Punjab state both before partition in 1947 and before reorganisation in November 1966. Of special interest in this section is the political conflict which emerged between the representatives of the agriculturist and non-agriculturist communities. Political rivalries between party factions in Haryana today are a product of this earlier period of struggle for political dominance between the rural and urban interests.

##### The Creation of an Agriculturist Interest

Before the British took over administrative control in the Punjab and the Haryana area, there was little actual sale or transfer of agricultural land. For all practical purposes, private or individual ownership of land did not exist. Instead, the village lands were usually held in common by groups of individuals either as a family or as a

village community.<sup>1</sup> In the Haryana area, the dominant Hindu landowning tribe of the village jointly controlled the farmland and the caste panchayat closely guarded the sale of these lands to persons outside of the tribal community.<sup>2</sup>

When the British conquered this area, there still remained a well preserved system of joint village communities dominated by peasant proprietors. Although the British administrators recognized the political advantages of maintaining the existing social framework and of keeping the peasant proprietors in possession of their lands,<sup>3</sup> they did introduce regulations which had a direct impact on the landed classes. While they reduced the land revenue demand to about half what it was before annexation,<sup>4</sup> they now demanded payment in cash rather than kind, thus forcing the peasant to seek a market for a proportion of his produce. Similarly, the Punjab Code of Civil Procedure,

---

<sup>1</sup>India, Note on Land Transfer and Agricultural Indebtedness in India, (Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publication Branch, 1895), p.4.

<sup>2</sup>Norman G. Barrier, The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill of 1900, (Duke University, Commonwealth-Studies Centre, Monograph Number Two, 1965), pp.1-2.

<sup>3</sup>Azim Husain, Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography, (Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1946), pp.72-73.

<sup>4</sup>Baldev Raj Nayar, Contemporary Political Leadership in the Punjab, (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, unpublished, 1963), pp.24-26.

1862, and the Punjab Land Act, 1872 recognized private ownership of land and thereby removed certain checks upon the sale of land to non-agriculturists or outsiders. This led to a sharp increase in land transfers as it provided an opportunity for the manipulation of illiterate peasants by lawyers who were prepared to cooperate with non-agriculturist business interests anxious to alienate the peasant proprietor from his land.<sup>5</sup>

The reduced revenue demand, which now gave the peasant the hope of a small profit beyond his living expenses, and the extension of a network of roads and railways which helped to create a larger market for farm produce, also increased the value of land as a commercial enterprise. For the first time, wealthy trading interests were now interested in acquiring land as an investment from which they could expect to receive a profit, either through rents or resale. To attain such property, the urban money-lenders increasingly demanded agricultural property as collateral on loans and used the new civil courts as a means of confiscating the peasant's fields the moment he failed to make a contracted payment on schedule. By making land an object of desirability in the eyes of the business interests, the British policies created a new source of rural unrest.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Barrier, pp.3, 7 6-8.

<sup>6</sup>India, Note...., p.5.



Many peasants were rendered landless through decisions of the courts in favour of the money-lenders, and the former peasant proprietors were slowly being transformed into mere tenants of urban landlords.<sup>7</sup> Not only was the best land falling into the hands of non-agriculturists, but these absentee businessmen were taking all they could out of the villages in rents and profits. Often the new owners were prepared to retain the ex-proprietor as a tenant, not on humanitarian grounds, but because, being intensely attached to his former lands, he was usually prepared to pay an exploitative rent rather than be ejected.<sup>8</sup>

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 indicate the sharp rise in land alienations which occurred in Punjab before 1900. When it is considered how foreign such land transfers were to the rural tradition, it is not surprising that the involuntary transfers ordered by the civil courts to satisfy the claims of creditors threatened to create a volatile political situation unless something could be done to ameliorate the worst aspects of this new form of exploitation of the peasant proprietors.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, some British district officers foresaw that, if the government failed to effectively

---

<sup>7</sup>Nayar, pp.24-26.

<sup>8</sup>India, Note...., p.83

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.6.

intervene, the paternal image of British rule would be tarnished and the agriculturists would begin to transfer their hostility from the money-lenders to the colonial regime.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, it took the Punjab government some thirty years of debate and discussion before it formally acknowledged that land transfers had reached dangerous proportions.<sup>11</sup>

In seeking a means of remedying the situation, the Government of India decided that the essential evil lay in the inflation of the peasant owner's credit and that the solution lay in lessening his powers to borrow by imposing legal restrictions on the sale and mortgage of land which would prevent agricultural land from passing prematurely out of the hands of the old agriculturist classes in the Punjab.<sup>12</sup>

This proposed Land Alienation Bill caused a furore in nationalist circles. The Congress session of 1899 in Lucknow denounced the proposal at the instigation of Congressmen from the Punjab. The Congress was unable to maintain this firm stand, however, as the bill was seen as protecting Muslim cultivators in western Punjab from

---

<sup>10</sup> Norman G. Barrier, "The Formulation and Enactment of the Punjab Alienation of Land Bill", Indian Economic and Social History Review, II, 2, (April, 1965), pp.145 & 147.

<sup>11</sup> Barrier, The Punjab ...., pp.26-27, & 36.

<sup>12</sup> Shadi Lal, Commentaries on the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, (Lahore: Univ. Book Agency, 5th edition, 1939), pp.5-6.

TABLE 3.1  
 AVERAGE ANNUAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED  
 SALES AND MORTGAGES OF IMMOVABLE  
 PROPERTY IN PUNJAB.

Description	1878-83	1883-88	1888-93
Compulsory Sales	13,661	15,071	20,156
Optional Sales	5,069	3,413	4,112
Compulsory Mortgages	26,405	30,060	43,196
Optional Mortgages	10,242	7,120	10,127

Source: India, Note on Land Transfer and Agricultural Indebtedness in India, (Calcutta, Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1895), p. 35.

TABLE 3.2

AVERAGE ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL  
LAND AREA SOLD, MORTGAGED, AND  
UNDER MORTGAGE IN PUNJAB.

Description	1866-74	1874-78	1878-83	1883-88	1888-93
Percentage of Total Area Sold	1.3	.7	1.4	2.8	3.1
Percentage of Total Area Mortgaged	2.1	1.5	2.7	5.4	5.0
Percentage of Total Area Under Mortgage	n.a.	1.2	3.2	6.7	9.0
Percentage of Total Revenue Sold	2.1	1.2	2.0	3.1	3.2
Percentage of Total Revenue Mortgaged	5.0	3.3	4.8	8.1	8.5

Source: India, Note on Land Transfer and Agricultural  
Indebtedness in India, (Calcutta, Government  
of India Central Publication Branch, 1895), p. 47.

the Hindu money-lenders. The Congress leadership saw that if it pressed the 1899 resolution, the organization would be in danger of being labeled a Hindu or communal rather than a nationalist movement. In the Punjab, however, the Punjabi Hindus within the provincial Congress, who mainly represented the moneyed classes and lawyers, continued to fight the legislation through their control of the province's vernacular press. Because of its refusal to oppose the alienation of land proposals, the Congress, which had never been strong in Punjab before 1900, lost considerable urban Hindu support and, as a result, did not develop as rapidly in that province as it was able to do in others.<sup>13</sup>

The British government ignored the vocal protests of the urban classes and brought the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, into effect in June, 1901. This legislation limited the free transfer of landed property by persons declared to be members of agriculturist tribes. Transfers of land by such individuals to others not specified under the act as belonging to an agriculturist tribe of each district required the consent of the district commissioner.<sup>14</sup> To further improve the position of the peasant vis-a-vis the money-lender, the British later passed

---

<sup>13</sup>Barrier, The Punjab ..., pp.66-7 & 89-90, and Barrier, "The Formulation ...", pp.157 & 159.

<sup>14</sup>Punjab, Report on the Administration of the Punjab for 1901-02, (Lahore: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1902), p.37.

other measures, such as the Punjab Limitation Act, 1904 and the Transfer of Property Act, 1905. Under these laws, the cultivators could no longer be evicted by a civil court without the intervention of the revenue authorities. By measures such as these, the British attempted to give a degree of relief to the peasant and to strengthen his economic position in general.<sup>15</sup>

The land alienation legislation was well received by the concerned cultivators who appeared to regard it as a panacea for all of their difficulties with their money-lenders. At first, the money-lenders attempted to stop all credit in the hope that agitations on the part of agriculturists would occur and thereby force the act to be cancelled.<sup>16</sup> But the cultivators soon found an alternate source of ready credit. As the provisions of the act became better understood, it was found that the mortgage value of land actually increased. This occurred because the legislation permitted the alienation of land to other agriculturists and thereby improved the position of the richer zamindars in their quest to acquire more land. Indeed, the indebted cultivator soon found that these new agriculturist money-lenders were just as rapacious as the Banias, for their object

---

<sup>15</sup> Satya M. Rai, Partition of the Punjab: A Study of Its Effect on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab (I) 1947-56, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.28.

<sup>16</sup> Punjab, Annual Report of the Working of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act XIII of 1900, (Lahore: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1903), pp.10 & 15.

was also land and to obtain it they were prepared to press their clients until they were compelled to sell.<sup>17</sup>

For the traditional money-lenders, the ultimate impact of the act was to force them gradually into the larger towns where they could invest their capital in new business enterprises. This created an even greater division in the province between the rural and urban interests. The agriculturist population, especially the richer element, as beneficiaries of the land alienation legislation, were now more willing to support the colonial regime for additional protection and services. The urban group, on the other hand, were frustrated with the British favouritism towards the cultivators and became more involved in protest politics, such as the nationalist movement.<sup>18</sup> The ultimate effect of the act was that it became the cornerstone of a political and administrative policy used first by the British and later by a regional political movement led by the agriculturist gentry. Both exploited the inchoate loyalty of the peasantry for the British administration as a basis for political power in opposition to the rising nationalist forces led by an urban intelligentsia and supported by commercial interests.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Lal, p.12.

<sup>18</sup>Rai, pp.28-29.

<sup>19</sup>Nayar, pp.46-47.

### The Beginnings of Party Politics

No great interest in political parties or movements was manifest in the Punjab before the turn of the century and what little existed was primarily restricted to the urban areas.<sup>20</sup> Even here, it was not the Punjabis, but outsiders such as Surendra Nath Banerjee, a Bengali, who first attempted to organize a political movement. In 1877, he organized the Lahore Indian Association which tried to persuade the people to oppose the overwhelming predominance of the British administration. He found, however, that it was difficult to interest the Punjabis.<sup>21</sup> Not only were the peasant proprietors and landed gentry disinclined to attempt to play a role in provincial politics, but even in the cities little interest was taken in the nationalist movement except in response to activities taking place in other parts of India.<sup>22</sup> A branch of the Indian National Congress was founded in Lahore in 1885, but, for the first twenty years, its activities did not amount to anything more than annual meetings of the few citizens who took an intellectual interest in the nationalist movement.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, pp.46-47.

<sup>21</sup> Husain, p.77.

<sup>22</sup> Nayar, pp.46-47.

<sup>23</sup> Husain, p.77.



The agriculturists were not interested in the Congress, at this time, because it was dominated by a group of Arya Samajists who did much to reinforce the movement's image in the Punjab as a communal organization.<sup>24</sup> The founding of the Punjab Muslim League in 1906 by Fazl-i-Husain which was devoted to wresting greater benefits for the Muslim community from the government, encouraged many of the urban Hindus, especially the Arya Samajists, to quit the National Congress and to counter the Muslim League by forming the Hindu Mahasabha in 1907. Not only were both these organizations communal in nature, but they also helped widen the rift between the urban and rural interests.<sup>25</sup> As a result, the secular nationalist movements lost their appeal and Punjab politics came to be dominated by parties more concerned with regional and communal considerations.

The nationalist cause was also damaged by the suspension of the non-cooperative movement in 1922. Many of the Punjab Congress' finest leaders, shocked by the violent course which the agitation had taken under the leadership of the radicals, withdrew from the party. Other moderates, such as Fazl-i-Husain, Harkishan Lal, Ganipat Rai and Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, were forced to leave the movement because

---

<sup>24</sup>Norman G. Barrier, "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab", Journal of Asian Studies, XXVI, 3, (May, 1967), pp.363-8.

<sup>25</sup>Husain, pp.90-92.

they refused to accept the view of Dr. Kitchlew, Duni Chand and Dr. Satyapal that the Congress should boycott the proposed Montagu-Chelmsford reforms scheme.<sup>26</sup> Weakened by these internal disputes, the Punjab Congress virtually withdrew from provincial politics. The moderate Congressmen, on the other hand, seized upon the opportunity offered by the proposed reforms of the Legislative Council to develop regional political parties in the hope of influencing the governmental decision-making process in the Punjab.

#### The Emergence of the Punjab National Unionist Party

The Montagu-Chelmsford (Montford) Report which proposed partial responsible government for the provinces and resulted in the Government of India Act, 1919, led to a triangular struggle for power between the Muslims who formed a narrow majority of the total population, and the Hindus who were more urbanized and better educated and who hitherto had enjoyed a considerable economic advantage over the Muslims. The third group, the Sikhs, tended to support many of the Hindu positions.<sup>27</sup> As constituted in 1921, the reformed council was composed of 35 Muslims, 15 Sikhs, 21 Hindus and 35 nominated officials. In view of the council's composition, Fazl-i-Husain saw that the large number of rural Muslims, who had been elected because of the residence

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p.124.

<sup>27</sup>Rai, p.13.

requirement, could control the house with the assistance of the official bloc. He also recognized that these Muslim legislators could not, by themselves, dominate the council vis-à-vis the government unless he could find a means of creating a non-communal party in the House.<sup>28</sup>

The basis which he found for creating such a non-communal bloc lay with the economic cleavage which separated the urban and rural interests. Although the overwhelming majority of the trading and money-lending classes were Hindus, the agriculturists of all three communities were dependent upon the former group for credit. Thus, an economic cleavage cut across the communal one. While any attempt to control the government on the basis of religious community would create a deadlock, the large agriculturist bloc -- composed of Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs -- could unite on a minimal political programme based on their economic interests.<sup>29</sup>

Taking the approach that Punjab parties would have to be organized in terms of the "have got's" and the "have not's", Fazl-i-Husain formed his ruralist bloc in the council from most of the Muslim representatives and some of the land-holding Hindus and Sikhs. In doing this, he claimed that these were the communities which had hitherto been excluded

---

<sup>28</sup>Husain, pp.150-1.

<sup>29</sup>Nayar, pp.45-6.

from a reasonable share of political goods. The basic platform of the bloc was a commitment to assist and encourage backward classes and communities. This programme was to include legislative protection for the peasantry, particularly against the hated Hindu money-lender, and the extension of more governmental services to hitherto neglected rural areas.<sup>30</sup>

By the second reform council in 1923, organized party politics had come into its own in the province. The rural bloc was now the Punjab National Unionist Party and as such had contested the elections. In the meanwhile, the opposition to the rural bloc had also formed itself into a political unit called the Swaraj Party. Despite claims of its leaders that it was Congressite, it was more urban and pro-Hindu than nationalist and was composed of a combination of legal and trading interests opposed to the agriculturists. While the Unionists won 39 seats (32 Muslim plus seven rural Hindu and Sikh), the opposition group claimed 32 seats (12 Swarajists, 3 Khilafatists and 17 independent Sikhs and Hindus).<sup>31</sup>

On the principle that the Unionist Party was the majority party in the Legislative Council, the Governor

---

<sup>30</sup>Husain, pp.151-2.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid, p.153.

appointed both Fazl-i-Husain and Lal Chand, a Jat agriculturist and Unionist from Rohtak (Haryana), as ministers. The urban Hindu bloc, however, disturbed that one of their representatives had not been appointed as a minister, brought an election petition against Lal Chand and won, forcing him to resign. The Governor, however, upheld the constitutional principle of responsible government and appointed Chhotu Ram, another Hindu Jat from Rohtak and a co-founder of the Unionist Party, as minister.<sup>32</sup>

Like Fazl-i-Husain, Chhotu Ram had once been an active member of the Punjab Congress. Similarly he had been unable to continue to work within that organisation because of his community's great distrust of the urban Hindu leaders and his desire to use the political process to assist the peasantry of the Haryana area. Together, Fazl-i-Husain and Chhotu Ram evolved a political movement which aimed to safeguard the interests of the rural areas. The linchpin of their programme was the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900. Using this as their foundation, they intended to build on it a number of measures in the educational and welfare fields which would especially benefit the poorer rural classes. The Unionist Party, however, never lived up to its co-founders' expectations as it failed to develop into a true mass party. Instead, it remained essentially

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p.156.

a pressure lobby for the landed gentry and the larger landlords.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the shortcomings of the Unionist alignment, the leadership of Chhotu Ram did serve to teach the Haryana Jat agriculturists that they could use the political process to protect their interests. Because of the limited franchise in effect before independence, the Jats and other similar land-holding tribes had a majority in the rural areas. If united, they could use this strength in cooperation with other agriculturists of the Muslim and Sikh communities to fight the urban money-lenders and to receive a larger share of governmental services. The rural leaders felt that the All-India Congress Committee was indirectly under the control of the business and trading interests and were unwilling to associate themselves with the nationalist movement in case this would undermine their ability to pressure for their particular demands. On the other hand, they always insisted that they were at heart Congressite and that even though they had withdrawn from the party, they were using their provincial party to bring in legislation which the Congress leadership supported in principle, but which was opposed by those then controlling the Punjab Congress Party.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, the apparent

---

<sup>33</sup>Nayar, pp.54-57.

<sup>34</sup>Sri Chand, ex-MLA, Rohtak, (interview files of Baldev Raj Nayar, 1961).

pro-British, anti-Congress, communal and regional biases of the Unionist Party succeeded in alienating the sympathies of many nationalists throughout India who came to regard it as little more than a plot on the part of a few landlords, without mass support, to collaborate with the colonial power so as to receive more political patronage.

Even if the nationalists were correct in suspecting the motivations of those leading the Unionist party, the party's strategy had limited results. The British began to question the wisdom of permitting a single party, representing a particular economic policy and dominated, on the whole, by a single community, to control politics in Punjab. Husain also suggests that the British feared that the continuation of a strong and stable ministry would detract from their power. As a result, they began to remove the cooperation of the official bloc from the Unionists in the council. They vetoed the Registration of Money-Lenders Bill and obstructed the passage of the Land Revenue (Amendment) Bill, both of which were considered essential by the rural bloc. In 1926, the Governor out-manoeuvred Fazl-i-Husain by appointing him Revenue Minister as this placed the latter on the British nominated benches and detracted from his claim to be a popular leader in the council. To guarantee that the official bloc would now hold the balance of power, the Governor withdrew his support from the majority party and encouraged the Hindu Mahasabha by

appointing one of their number as a popular minister. These actions threw overboard the principle of responsible government and helped to divide the council into communal blocs.<sup>35</sup>

The absence of a popular Muslim minister decreased the cohesion of the Unionist Party. Even the later appointment of Feroze Khan Noon did little to improve the situation as now the Unionist Party was neither in power nor out of it. The Governor, Sir Malcolm Hailey, attempted to justify his position on the grounds that there were as yet no party structures in Punjab and that:

I believed that in the present state of things when the Punjab was still feeling its way to a definite party system it would be a real advantage to have as early as possible all the main elements represented in the Government.<sup>36</sup>

This, of course, would appear to be a rationale for a new policy of divide and rule. Unfortunately, the tactic was successful and retarded the growth of responsible government until provincial autonomy was finally instituted in 1937.

Because of this British manoeuvre, the Unionist Party found itself in the unenviable position of being both a participant in the ministry and an opposition party at the same time.<sup>37</sup> And yet, despite the British reluctance to

---

<sup>35</sup>Husain, pp.158-61.

<sup>36</sup>As quoted in H.N. Mitra, Ed., The Indian Quarterly Register, Vol. I (January-June, 1927), p.362.

<sup>37</sup>Interview with Sri Chand, op.cit.



support any party grouping in the council, the dominant feature of Punjab politics continued to be cooperation with the colonial administration. This was necessary because of the complex and strained relationships which existed between the various communities and interests. Concessions for communal or economic interests could only be obtained through collaboration with the British. The deep distrust between the various communities and interests made each prefer British control if this prevented the domination of one group by another.<sup>38</sup>

Under circumstances such as these, the Punjab National Unionist Party probably did the best that it could. Seizing upon the fact that British administrative policies had made the agriculturist a special object of protection, Fazl-i-Husain and Chhotu Ram attempted to exchange loyalty and cooperation with the British for a governmental programme of rural improvement not unlike that advocated by the Congress itself. The natural outcome of this British protectionist attitude towards the agriculturists was the formation of regional political parties based upon the defense of sub-national interests, such as the Unionist Party and its urban opponents, the Swaraj Party and the Hindu Mahasabha.<sup>39</sup> To its credit, the Unionist Party

---

<sup>38</sup>Nayar, pp.50-2.

<sup>39</sup>Barrier, The Punjab . . ., pp.101-2.

was able to create a nebulous consciousness of a regional culture tenuously cutting across religious lines because of its economic programme of rural uplift which could appeal to elements in all three communities. It was also able to use this regional consciousness to hold at bay, for a considerable period in the Punjab, the forces both of nationalism and communalism.<sup>40</sup>

### Congress Factionalism and Punjabi Politics

Because of the deep social and economic cleavages dividing the Punjabi people, every political grouping in the pre-independence period had great difficulty in creating a unified leadership behind a common platform which could win a large measure of popular support. The Congress Party, for one, was particularly troubled by factional divisions within its leadership. Fragmented by the non-cooperation question, the nationalist remnant which remained outside of the reformed councils in Punjab was overwhelmed by group struggles for control of the provincial Congress organisation. At first, the issue appeared to be ideological. One group insisted that the party should concentrate on provincial issues (represented by Hindu Mahasabha elements) while the other was more concerned with the problem of achieving national independence and therefore backed the Swaraj Party.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup>Nayar, p.21.

<sup>41</sup>J.C. Anand, "Punjab Politics: A Summary (1947-65)", in Iqbal Narain, (ed.), State Politics in India, (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1966), pp.247-8.

In time, the more regionally minded Hindu urban interests came to dominate the provincial Congress. By becoming more and more pro-Hindu and less and less nationalist, the gulf between the Congress and the general body of Muslim opinion in the province steadily widened. Many educated "nationalist" Muslims were forced to quit the party. The urban Hindu leadership in the Punjab, moreover, could not bring itself to support the official Congress economic position on help to the rural areas. Because of this, the Congress organisation in Punjab did not give the nationalist movement the measure of support which it received in other parts of India. Instead, when it was in their interests, they acted independently of the national Congress, asserting that the national leaders did not understand the problems of the Hindus in Punjab.<sup>42</sup>

Within the Punjab Congress, there was a continuing struggle between groups led by two urban Hindus, Dr. Gopi Chand Bhargava and Dr. Satyapal. Each of these men had his own "party" within the Congress and much of the movement's energies were expended in the continuing see-saw battle that went on for control of the party machinery. There appeared to be little which ideologically divided these two men. Rather, their struggles were essentially personal rivalries. Because of the mutual bitterness and

---

<sup>42</sup>Nayar, p.54.

animosity between these groups, the Punjab Congress Committee rarely commanded the respect or the esteem of the general body of dedicated Congress workers in Punjab before independence. Principles and policies were secondary to the factional struggles and the Punjab Congress degenerated into an arena for personal quarrels and rivalries. Because of this, the Congress made little impact on Punjab politics other than to give the impression that its leadership was "devoid of virtue" and that it was a "bed of intrigue, sordid practices, and undignified manoeuvring".<sup>43</sup> In the end, neither the civil disobedience movement of the thirties nor the Quit India Movement of 1942 could engender much support among the Punjabi masses.<sup>44</sup>

#### Communal Tensions and the National Unionist Party

The Unionist Party, which from 1923 to 1926 had shown a high degree of internal discipline, also began to suffer from a lack of internal cohesion. During the third reform council, 1926-30, groups within the party began to disregard the whip and occasionally divided to vote along communal lines. It was only the tenacity of Sir Chhotu Ram, who had succeeded Fazl-i-Husain as council leader, which prevented the crippled party from splitting on a communal basis.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>Duni Chand, "Events of 1937 to 1946", Congress Service Series, (Monograph No.I, n.d.), pp.18 & 29.

<sup>44</sup>Nayar, pp.49-50.

<sup>45</sup>Husain, p.162.

The leaders found that it was almost impossible to maintain party discipline in the council once the Governor had refused to constitute the ministry from the majority party. Not only was the party weakened by this strategy, but the Governor's actions also contributed to the arousing of communal tensions in the province. Party solidarity, in turn, was strained by the communal conflict as the sympathies of council representatives tended to divide along religious lines in times of crisis.<sup>46</sup>

In the last general elections to be held under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms scheme, in 1930, the Unionist Party suffered for its ineffectiveness in the non-party ministry of 1926-30. Its elected representation fell to 36 out of which only 3 were non-Muslim, thereby undermining its claim to be a non-communal party representing the backward rural classes of the province. The National Progressive Party, under the leadership of Raja Narendra Nath, on the other hand, was returned with some 20 representatives.<sup>47</sup> Because of the relative equality on either side and because the council was likely to divide evenly on communal issues, the Government was able to retain a large measure of freedom of action through a judicious use of its official bloc which held the balance of power.

---

<sup>46</sup>Nayar, p.59.

<sup>47</sup>Husain, p.163.

As a result, the Unionist Party, after its strong beginnings, became little more than "glorified tahsildars" who did the bidding of the Governor.<sup>48</sup>

Throughout the period from 1930 to 1935, it was often charged that the Unionist Party had become a communal party and that its rural stance was a mere camouflage. The party leadership denied these charges maintaining that it remained a secular organisation and that anyone, regardless of religion, caste, sector or occupation, could join provided they adhered to the party's principles. While they conceded that Muslims provided the majority of the party's membership, they insisted that nowhere did the programme preclude a non-Muslim majority. In the party's favour, it must be conceded that while it may have weakened nationalism in the Punjab, it also prevented Hindu-Muslim communalism from getting out of hand. For nearly a quarter of a century, it prevented the Muslim League from gaining any real strength in Punjab.<sup>49</sup>

#### The Impact of Provincial Autonomy

While the British administration tried to argue that the deep communal cleavages in the Punjab justified the retention of an official bloc to arbitrate between the Muslims on the one side, and the Hindus and Sikhs on the

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.274.

<sup>49</sup> Nayar, pp.57-60.

other, and that the granting of responsible government should be delayed, the Unionist leaders argued that they had already demonstrated in their party that the various communities could work together for a common objective.<sup>50</sup> On the question of the official bloc, the Unionist Party countered, stating:

We ... feel that the presence of the official bloc with a solid phalanx of votes has ... been responsible for keeping the communal issue alive in the legislature.<sup>51</sup>

The Indian Statutory Commission (Simon Commission) accepted the principle of the latter argument, decided that provincial dyarchy should be abolished, and this recommendation was incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1935. This decision was seen by the Unionists as a new opportunity to prove that their economic programme could provide the basis for a truly united and disciplined inter-communal party. With this objective in mind, the party was re-organized in 1935 with a view to winning power in the autonomous provincial legislature which was to come into being in 1937.

The Congress High Command also decided to permit its provincial wings to contest for seats in these new legislative assemblies. In the Punjab, however, the party's

---

<sup>50</sup> India, Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1930), Vol.I, p.208.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, Vol.III, p.426.

inherent internal weaknesses mitigated against its election to power. Indeed, because its urban Hindu bias kept both Muslim and Hindu rural masses outside of its fold, it had virtually no base in the western and south-eastern (Haryana) regions of the province.<sup>52</sup> As a result, after the 1937 elections, the few Congress representatives elected had to sit in the opposition, from where they could criticize the new Unionist Government as being anti-nationalist for its willingness to cooperate with the British and for its suppression of civil liberties and the jailing of fellow-countrymen who had joined the Quit-India agitation in 1942.<sup>53</sup>

Factional differences continued to be a major weakness of the Congress during this period. The main battle was still being fought between the groups led by Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Bhargava.<sup>54</sup> At first, it appeared that Dr. Satyapal had a firm control over the provincial party machinery. However, he was somewhat of a rebel and, in time, lost favour with the Congress central leadership.<sup>55</sup> Dr. Bhargava, on the other hand, was more careful to cultivate both the national leadership and the other groups in Punjab which

---

<sup>52</sup>Rai, p.39.

<sup>53</sup>Nayar, p.61.

<sup>54</sup>Although Dr. Bhargava came from the Haryana area (Rohtak), he was not regarded as a Haryanvi politician because of his long residence in Lahore.

<sup>55</sup>Harbans Rai Dogra, Ludhiana, (interview files of Baldev Raj Nayar, 1962).



could help his faction. His greatest coup was in 1938 when he convinced the Akali leadership to integrate their party into the Congress. He also recruited a Muslim leader, Mian Iftikhar-ud-din of Lahore, to be the President of the Punjab Congress. On the basis of these actions, he convinced Gandhi and Patel that his group would make the Punjab Congress a more effective and representative body. After an inquiry, the Congress High Command dissolved the Provincial Congress Committee and created an ad hoc committee under Bhargava's leadership.<sup>56</sup>

Once in control, however, the Bhargava group tended to favour only those Congressmen belonging to their faction and thereby caused the provincial Congress to be still further weakened by partisan feuds. One nationalist lamented:

A good many Congressmen in almost every district ... are forming themselves into cliques and factions without any regard for moral considerations as affecting their conduct. They are trying, by all means fair or foul, to gain the patronage of those who count in the Punjab Provincial Executive. A lot of such groups of individuals are entering into pacts and alliances with those who have no love or respect for Congress and who had always been taking the official side against it.<sup>57</sup>

After 1937, Jinnah's Muslim League began to be a greater challenge to the Unionist Party in Punjab because of its separatist appeal among Muslims in India. In their search

---

<sup>56</sup> Duni Chand Ambalvi, Rasti aur Rastibaazi hi Congress ko phir ek Bari Taqut Bana Sukti Hai, (n.d., 1950?) [Urdu] p.25.

<sup>57</sup> Chand, "Events ...", p.32.

for new allies to meet this challenge in the non-Muslim communities, the Unionist leadership divided on whether or not it should cooperate with the Congress Party which, at least on the national level, supported its economic policies. Opponents to this move demanded that the party align itself with the more communal Punjabi Hindu and Sikh parties which shared the Unionist anti-nationalist bias. The Unionists decided not to cooperate with the Congress at this time, and thereby may have lost an opportunity to bridge the communal differences which were rapidly dividing the Punjab.<sup>58</sup>

The leadership question also became important for the Unionist Party at this time because of the untimely death of Fazl-i-Husain who had returned to lead the party under provincial autonomy. His mantle fell, not on Chhotu Ram, who had led the party from 1926 to 1935, but on Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. For some of the Unionists, his leadership was seen as a failure to uphold the basic principles of the party. In an effort to avert communal criticism, he entered into a coalition with Raja Narendra Nath and his National Progressive (read Mahasabha) Party. This was done even though his party had 101 seats in a house of 175 and included nearly all the Muslim members, some two-fifths of the Hindu and more than half of the Sikh seats. This coalition

---

<sup>58</sup>Husain, pp.311 & 388.

weakened the ideological position of the party as the Mahasabhite group was traditionally opposed to the principles of the Unionist economic policies.

The party was further weakened ideologically when Sikander gave into Muslim League pressure and reached an understanding with Jinnah that the Muslim representatives in the party would be at liberty to join the Muslim League at the national level.<sup>59</sup> These alliances were contrary to the entire Unionist philosophy and revealed the extent to which the party had been unsuccessful in creating a cohesive non-communal body based on a secular economic policy. In reality, it was now little more than a loose coalition of groups or factions willing to minimally cooperate together for the sake of holding power. Basically it was now composed of three factions, the Sikander group (Muslim agriculturists), the Majithia group (a Panthic Sikh group under Sunder Singh Majithia) and the Chhotu Ram group (Haryana Hindu agriculturists), who with the National Progressives held power in opposition to the Congress, the Akali Dal (which joined the Congress in 1938) and some independent Muslims and Hindus.<sup>60</sup>

The Unionist Party, in this pre-independence period, had been able to fend off most Muslim League overtures

---

<sup>59</sup>Husain, p.xi.

<sup>60</sup>S. Kapur Singh, (interview files of Baldev Raj Nayar, 1961).

because the Punjabi Muslims, being the majority community, did not feel any threat of Hindu assimilation. At the same time, they could not afford to ignore the substantial minorities represented by the Hindu and Sikh communities and so welcomed opportunities to cooperate with some sections of these communities on economic issues. When the Muslim League adopted its demand for Pakistan in 1940, however, the Unionist leaders began to rue their decision to let their Muslim membership join the League. The fact that most of the Muslim members of the Unionist Party were now also members of a communal Muslim party demanding the division of India led to disaffection and suspicion amongst the non-Muslim supporters.<sup>61</sup>

#### The Impact of Independence and Partition

As the prospect of independence became a greater reality after World War II, the Congress High Command began to realize that it would have to "clean the Augean Stables of the Punjab and to root out corruption and demoralization from Congress life".<sup>62</sup> As the date for independence approached however, "the entire population of India ... attempted to convert itself into the Congress camp",<sup>63</sup> and the Punjab Congress, itself no exception, was swamped by persons

---

<sup>61</sup>Nayar, Contemporary ..., pp.62 & 65.

<sup>62</sup>Chand, "Events of ... ", p.7.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

anxious to achieve a share of political power through the party. These individuals proved very willing to join the personal factions of those who had already built up a power base within the organisation and thereby frustrated any attempt on the part of the Congress High Command to destroy the groups and cliques which were using the Punjab Congress for their own purposes. This situation only intensified as the 1946 elections approached. Because it appeared that the Congress would likely be able to form or participate in the next government, there was a scramble for that party's tickets. Some 500 candidates offered themselves to the party for the 42 general Hindu seats available, particularly in the case of urban constituencies where there was no question that a Congress ticket would mean an electoral victory.<sup>64</sup>

The general election of 1946 was fought on all-India issues in the Punjab and resulted in a considerable change in party positions. The Muslim League captured 79 of the 86 Muslim seats, the Congress 51, the Panthic Akali Sikhs 22, and the Unionists and independents 10 each. The Congress and Akalis were able to form a working coalition and together entered into negotiations with the Muslim League on the formation of a governing coalition. However, they put up certain conditions which were unacceptable to the

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p.24.

latter. Eventually, a coalition ministry consisting of the Congress, Akali and Unionist parties was formed. This was completely unacceptable to the Muslim League, which now looked for another means of establishing Muslim rule in Punjab.<sup>65</sup>

Despite earlier successes in other provinces, it was not until the 1946 elections that the Congress was finally able to emerge as a major political force in the Punjab. It was able to achieve this, however, only on the basis of overwhelming support from the Hindu community which now feared that the entire Punjab might be conceded to Pakistan should India be partitioned. Although the Congress now received some support from the Hindu agriculturists because of their fears of the larger implications of Muslim communalism, it was a somewhat reluctant support.<sup>66</sup>

Although the Muslim League firmly convinced the Muslim community in the 1946 elections in Punjab that the national question was now more important than the Unionist Party's regional economic policies, thereby polarizing the political situation along communal lines, it must be conceded that the leadership of the Unionist Party remained faithful to its principles to the end. Throughout the partition debate,

---

<sup>65</sup>Rai, pp.40-41.

<sup>66</sup>Baldev Raj Nayar, "Punjab", in Myron Weiner, (ed.), State Politics in India, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p.441.

the Muslim leaders in the Unionist Party maintained that Punjab was a regional entity which could not be divided on communal lines. A measure of their sincere belief that secularism was the only answer to Punjab's unique communal problem lay in their decision to enter into a coalition with the Congress and the Akalis rather than the Muslim League in 1946.<sup>67</sup> Their secular solution, however, was rejected and the Punjab was divided between Pakistan and India. The non-Muslim agriculturist remnants of the Unionist Party from the Haryana region had no alternative but to seek an accommodation within the Indian National Congress which they had so long opposed because of its domination by urban interests and which was now in a position to take power in eastern Punjab.

#### The Post-Independence Setting of Haryana Politics

The partition of the province along Muslim-non-Muslim community lines between Pakistan and India created a number of fundamental changes in Punjab. The tears in the former Punjabi fabric -- such as the ultimate migration of virtually the entire Muslim population from the Indian territory of the Punjab to Pakistan, the concurrent creation of a major Hindu-Sikh refugee problem, the economic disruptions caused by the placing of an international border through the province -- in turn, resulted in new

---

<sup>67</sup>Nayar, Contemporary ..., p.61.

social conflicts which would have to be resolved by the political system.

For political leaders in the Haryana area, the immediate post-independence period was a time when they were forced to adjust to a completely changed set of political circumstances. In the past, as long as the Unionist alliance had been successful in maintaining its rural Muslim base in western Punjab, the Haryana agriculturist castes could offer meaningful political support to the system in return for a legislative programme designed to favour the rural sector. The defeat of the unique non-communal alliance in 1946 because of a successful appeal on the part of both the Muslim League and the Congress to the loyalties of the Muslim and Hindu communities, left the Haryana leaders in a dilemma which was further compounded by the death, in this crucial period, of their political leader, Sir Chhotu Ram.

After partition, the Congress emerged in East Punjab as the only on-going political grouping capable of filling the political vacuum created by the collapse of the Unionist alliance. While this new primacy was in large part based on the fact that the party, at the national level, had successfully led the struggle for independence, it was also in part due to the fact that it was now the only party in Punjab which, despite its earlier and continued domination by urban interests, had an existing state-wide organisation and an internal structure and ideology flexible enough to



permit the entry and absorption of other heterogeneous elements. The leadership of the Punjab Congress, moreover, responded well to the political demands placed on them by partition and attempted to relate in some meaningful way to all elements of Punjabi society still remaining in India.

The very existence of a factional sub-structure within the now-ruling Congress Party in Punjab may have helped the Jat and other agriculturist castes from the Haryana area integrate themselves into the new political system. Because these intra-Congress factions were competitive, each was prepared to welcome any new group support which would strengthen it against its factional rivals. Moreover, there was probably no real political alternative for the Haryana agriculturists at this time. The Unionist Party, after the death of Sir Chhotu Ram, had virtually disappeared and the agriculturists apparently recognized that to re-group as a regional political party would probably have condemned them to a perpetual occupancy of the opposition benches, thereby isolating them from the sources of political power in the new political order. The only other alternative was to join the Hindu Mahasabha, but this was unacceptable in that it had an urban based leadership which was ideologically unsympathetic to rural interests.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Paul Wallace, The Political Party System of Punjab State, India: A Study of Factionalism, (Berkeley: University of California, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, 1966), p.176.

The landholding groups in the Haryana area also had to contend with another new political reality in post-independence India: universal suffrage. This meant that they were no longer in an electoral majority and would therefore have to compete for power not only with groups outside of the Haryana area and who had a larger population base, but they would also have to confront a new local political opposition from the lower and scheduled castes who were opposed to their continued social and economic domination of rural life in Haryana.

#### The Social and Political Configuration in Post-Independence Punjab

In studying the problems of the political leadership from the Haryana region in its efforts to adjust to the post-independence political situation, it is necessary to investigate the social and political configurations which would seem to have encouraged or discouraged the successful integration of Haryana into post-independence Punjab.

##### (1) Language and Culture

Before states reorganisation in 1966, the Punjab was a bilingual state consisting of a Hindi-speaking region and a Punjabi-speaking region. While the latter was a compact area consisting essentially of the central districts, the former was divided into two unconnected areas: the hill districts of Kangra, Kulu, Lahaul and Spiti, and Simla, which formed a part of the Himalayan tract, and the south-

eastern districts historically known as Haryana.<sup>69</sup> According to the 1961 census figures, the population of the Haryana area contained 37.1 per cent of the total Punjab population. The Punjabi-speaking area had 50.9 per cent while the hill districts had 12.0 per cent.<sup>70</sup>

The existence of language divisions is often, in itself, enough to create regional identities and loyalties which can serve to place obstacles in the way of political integration of a minority area into a majority one. In the case of Haryana, however, the language cleavage was further reinforced by certain historical and cultural divisions between it and the rest of Punjab. Historically, the area had close ties with regions which are today parts of western Uttar Pradesh and north-eastern Rajasthan. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that Haryana had been an administrative unit of Punjab for more than one hundred years. Haryanvi leaders often used the argument that continued integration with Punjab would ultimately undermine and destroy the historical and cultural traditions of the Haryana region. As a result, the

---

<sup>69</sup> At this time, the Haryana area consisted of the districts of Ambala (except Rupar and Kharar tehsils), Gurgaon, Hissar, Karnal, Mahendragarh, and Rohtak, and Jind and Narwana tehsils of Sangrur district.

<sup>70</sup> Punjab, Haryana Development Committee Final Report, (Chandigarh: Government of Punjab, 1966), p.191.

existence of a linguistic division, reinforced by an emphasis on non-Punjabi historical and cultural traditions, provided the Haryanvis with a continuing sense of regional separateness. In time, this regional loyalty provided the rationale for articulating a political demand for states reorganisation on the part of Haryana political leaders who were dissatisfied with their roles in the Punjab political system.

## (2) Community

The regional identity provided by language and culture was further strengthened by the fact that while the Hindi-speaking area had a Hindu majority population of some 88.1 per cent, the Punjabi-speaking region had a Sikh majority population of 52.8 per cent.<sup>71</sup> Although communal differences in the Punjab before partition were usually based upon Muslim-non-Muslim conflicts in which the Sikhs usually sided with the Hindus, the post-independence period saw communal cleavages between Hindus and Sikhs deepen because of an articulation on the part of a segment of the Sikh community for a Punjabi Suba in which Sikhs would form the majority. This demand aroused opposition amongst the minority Hindu population in the Punjabi-speaking region

---

<sup>71</sup> Baldev Raj Nayar, Minority Politics in the Punjab, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), Table I-A, pp.18-19.

which feared for its cultural identity in a Sikh theocratic state.<sup>72</sup>

The historical coincidence that the Sikh majority area was outside of the Haryana region and coincided with the historical linguistic and cultural cleavages described above gave dissatisfied Haryana political leaders an opportunity to cross religious ties and to offer political support to the Sikh groups, who were demanding a statesreorganisation on linguistic lines, in opposition to their fellow Hindus in the Punjabi-speaking region. Hence, the existence of a communal division in post-independence Punjab provided a further reinforcement for demands to divide Punjab into two distinct states.

### (3) Urban-Rural Cleavage

Although there have always been urban-rural social and economic cleavages in Punjab, they were probably intensified during the British administration. The result is a distrust on both sides in the political sphere. While the urban minorities fear the potential of social and economic domination on the part of the more backward agricultural communities, the latter groups resent the political capabilities of money-lenders, lawyers and traders, who, they fear, have no sympathy for their particular needs.

---

<sup>72</sup>Ibid, pp.44-50, Professor Nayar notes that the Hindus of the Punjabi-speaking region were particularly opposed to the Sikh demand that they be required to learn Punjabi in Gurmukhi script, which they considered to be the religious script of the Sikhs only.

After partition, when the Congress party was in power for the first time in Punjab, certain factors -- such as, the nature of the party leadership at that time, the existence of a major refugee problem, and the overall socio-economic development plans of the central government -- caused the state administration to direct considerably more attention towards a programme of urban development and industrialization. Some agriculturists, particularly in the more backward and neglected Haryana region, viewed these policies as a direct threat to their interests. As rural dissidents within the Congress, they helped to form a factional alliance of rural delegates from both linguistic regions and from both communities. In time, this alliance permitted the Haryana rural representatives to support the replacement of an urban Hindu, Bhim Sen Sachar, by a Sikh Jat, Partap Singh Kairon, as Chief Minister. Later, however, these Haryana dissidents withdrew their support from Kairon on the basis that his policies appeared to favour only the Punjabi-speaking rural areas. It was the realization that they could not re-gain a regionally dominant position, as long as the Punjab government was dominated by a ruralist or an urbanist faction from the Punjabi-speaking area, which finally drove the Haryana dissident leaders in frustration to support the communal demands of the Akali Sikhs in 1965. In much the same way, the Haryana urban Hindu classes also tended to seek

closer ties with their urban co-religionists in the Punjabi-speaking area to protect themselves from the political demands emanating from the rural leaders.

(4) Caste

While traditional caste stratifications have been relatively less oppressive in Punjab, nonetheless this social cleavage has, especially with the advent of universal suffrage after independence, contributed yet another basis for political conflict in the rural areas between the dominant landholding tribes and the scheduled castes and other backward classes. The service and scheduled castes traditionally were dependent upon the agriculturists in a jajmani relationship under which a landowning patron receives the services of a number of specialized caste clients in return for a suitable payment either in cash or kind. Resentment against social and economic injustices which often flow out of relationships of this kind have led some of the client castes to attempt to use their newly received franchise as a means of limiting the power of their higher caste patrons.

The existence of this cleavage within the rural society created the possibility of a new political equation in which urban interests could appeal to rural lower castes to accept their political leadership in return for a programme of legislative action designed to restrict agriculturist domination in the rural areas. While this possibility

exists and many political leaders in Punjab and Haryana have tried to exploit it, it has never resulted in an ongoing political alliance between the urban groups and the backward rural classes because the latter groups are still too dependent upon the goodwill of their rural patrons. On the other hand, the Haryana Harijan caste federations consistently opposed the agriculturists' demand for states reorganisation out of fear that it would mean the re-imposition of a "Jat-raj" in which there would be little or no opportunity for them to finally break their dependency upon the economic patronage of the dominant tribes.

#### (5) Summary

The basic divisions in Punjab society discussed above in terms of language, culture, community, urban-rural cleavage and caste produced a variety of political cleavages which at times reinforced and at other times cut across state-wide loyalties. These "cross-cutting cleavages" are diagrammed in Figure 3.1. Horizontal cleavages which might have served to provide a basis for a state-wide political party included: (1) a Hindu population in an overall majority, (2) an urban-rural cleavage in both linguistic areas, (3) the rural areas in both regions dominated by agriculturist tribes, (4) an exploited lower caste in both areas, and (5) a sizable refugee group in both areas. Vertical cleavages which could be used as the bases for regionally based political movements



included: (1) a linguistic division of the state into Hindi and Punjabi speaking areas, (2) a regionally concentrated Sikh majority, and (3) the agriculturist tribes were drawn from two religious communities.

Although the Congress Party, after independence, did attempt to aggregate and represent enough of the horizontal cleavages to win and hold a workable majority, the incorporation into the party of groups oriented towards a perpetuation of the vertical cleavages created a series of ongoing internal problems which were reflected in the intra-party factions which developed.

#### Haryana Factions in Post-Independence Punjab Party Politics

(1) The Search for a Political Role (From August 15, 1947, to April 4, 1952)

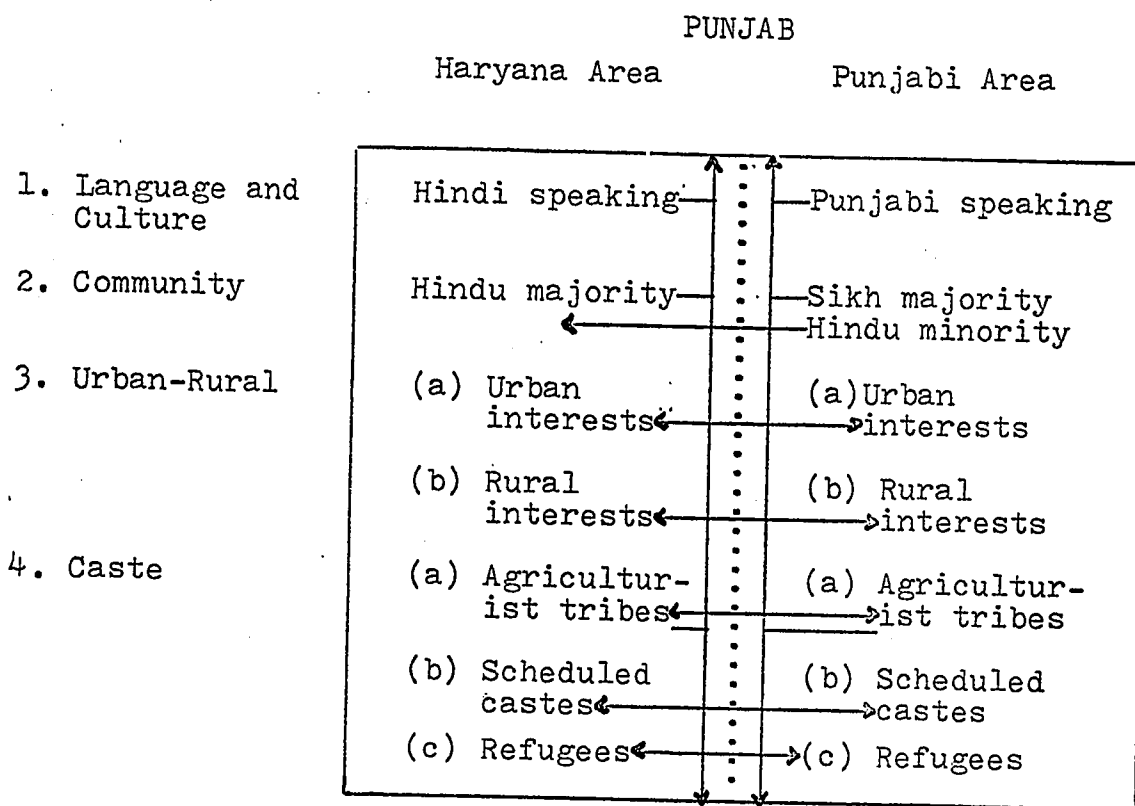
So complete was the Congress take-over of the re-constituted East Punjab Assembly that by March 1948 all the members of the Akali Party and the remaining three Unionist representatives from the Haryana area had defected to the Congress Legislature Party. As a result, not a single member of the assembly was left on the opposition benches.<sup>73</sup> But even with this overwhelming dominance in the assembly, the Congress leadership did not find the task of governing particularly easy. Within the party, there were a number

---

<sup>73</sup>J.C. Anand, "Punjab Politics: A Survey (1947-65)", in Iqbal Narain, State Politics in India, (Meerut, Meenakshi Prakashan, 1966), p.227.

FIGURE 3.1

CROSS-CUTTING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC  
CLEAVAGES IN POST-INDEPENDENCE PUNJAB



of factional alignments which continued to manoeuvre against each other. These factional divisions were related to a new communal problem which was building because of demands being voiced by the Akali Sikhs led by Master Tara Singh for a separate Sikh-majority state.<sup>74</sup> The result was a Congress no longer divided into two relatively stable factional formations, but one split into four factions centered around particular personalities: the two pre-partition factions led by Dr. Bhargava (now Premier) and Bhim Sen Sachar, and two rival Sikh factions headed by Kartar Singh and Jathedar Udham Singh Nagoke.<sup>75</sup> Each of these four core factions, moreover, had a number of allied sub-groups which occasionally re-aligned themselves with opposing factions in the manoeuvres for greater political power and patronage which were happening at that time.

As a direct result of these manoeuvrings, the Bhargava ministry collapsed and Sachar was brought back by the central Congress leadership as the head of a composite ministry designed to represent a relatively even balance of the factional groupings. Working harmony, however, was not achieved and Sachar, needing the support of all of the major

---

<sup>74</sup>Wallace, pp.188-9.

<sup>75</sup>Anand, p.227.

groups to stay in power, negotiated what is usually called the "Sachar formula". This document, signed by all four of the factional leaders mentioned above, was to be a political compromise between the Hindu and Sikh points of view on the touchy question of the medium of education in the schools for each of the linguistic regions.

Although this compromise affected the Hindi-speaking region just as much as the Punjabi-speaking area, no political leaders from the Haryana area were consulted before it was signed. The Haryanvi representatives in the assembly were particularly disturbed by a provision which required the teaching of Punjabi as a second language in the Haryana schools. At this time, however, their strength was divided amongst several factions and they were not able to stop this provision from being put into effect. Their reaction did, however, help them to realize that in future they would have to place their support behind a factional leader who was willing to consider the particular needs of the Haryana region.

Despite his concessions to the Akalis, Sachar's ministry also collapsed only six months after it was sworn in. The return of a Bhargava ministry did little to alleviate the uncontrolled factional conflict which was now concentrated between the organisational and ministerial wings. The feud intensified after the Congress High Command intervened in August 1950 to ensure the election of Partap Singh Kairon

as President of the Pradesh Congress Committee. Once in office, Kairon aligned himself with the dissidents against Bhargava in the ministerial wing, especially with the Sachar-Satyapal-Sri Ram Sharma<sup>76</sup> faction.

In his attempt to consolidate his power in the Punjab Congress, Kairon also worked to attract the support of Haryana agriculturist factional leaders, such as Professor Sher Singh,<sup>77</sup> who were unhappy with Bhargava's unwillingness to remove the compulsory language feature from the Sachar formula. In the end, Kairon convinced the Haryanvi agriculturists that he, more than any other factional leader, was prepared to work in the interest of the rural areas.<sup>78</sup> It was Partap Singh Kairon, therefore, a non-Hindu and a non-Haryanvi, who finally convinced the Haryana Hindu agriculturist elements that they would benefit if they united and placed their political support behind a single faction in the struggle for control of the Congress Party.

Kairon's strategy of seeking support from the dissident factions which were dissatisfied with Bhargava's leadership

---

<sup>76</sup> Sri Ram Sharma, a Rohtak Brahmin, led the old Congress urban grouping from the Haryana area.

<sup>77</sup> Sher Singh, a Rohtak Jat, attempted to continue the Unionist tradition in the Haryana area.

<sup>78</sup> Professor Sher Singh, (interview files of Baldev Raj Nayar, April, 1962).

paid off in the first General Elections, 1952. These elections not only gave the Congress 77.7 per cent of the seats (96 out of 125) and 37 per cent of the popular vote, but also gave the Haryana region a strong presence in the Legislature Party (44 seats). Of these, a large number were agriculturist delegates including: 12 Jats, 3 Ahirs, 1 Gujar, 3 Rajputs and 3 Meos.<sup>79</sup> These representatives, on the whole, entered the assembly committed to support a rural alliance.

(2) Kairon and the Rural Bloc (From April 17, 1952 to June 14, 1964)

The 1952 elections saw the return of a Congress Legislature Party in which the Kairon group clearly had a dominant position. An estimate published by the Tribune,<sup>80</sup> suggested that while Kairon had the personal support of some fifty members, the remaining 49 Congress representatives<sup>81</sup> divided their loyalties amongst: Bhim Sen Sachar 11, Udham Singh Nagoke 6, Ranjit Singh 7,<sup>82</sup> Dr. Satyapal 5, Ram Kishan 5, Sri Ram Sharma 6, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan 3,<sup>83</sup> and "fluid" 5. While most observers thought that this would

---

<sup>79</sup>Wallace, p.209.

<sup>80</sup>March 16, 1952, as noted by Wallace, p.216.

<sup>81</sup>Includes the addition of three independents who joined the Congress after the elections.

<sup>82</sup>Rohtak Jat leader.

<sup>83</sup>Muslim Rajput from Ambala who received support from Gurgaon Meos.

give the "gaddi" to Partap Singh Kairon, the Congress High Command intervened to give the leadership to Bhim Sen Sachar once again. As Sachar clearly could not provide an effective administration without Kairon's support, the latter was made Deputy Leader of the Legislature Party and was brought into the Cabinet as Development Minister.

While these developments would appear to have left the bi-factional internal structure of the Congress fundamentally undisturbed, it was also another case of political deadlock in that Kairon could not make any overt move to gain absolute control over the ministerial group as long as the High Command was determined to support Sachar.<sup>84</sup> Kairon's strategy, in response to this situation, appears to have been to get more deeply involved in the personal rivalries which were already beginning to affect shifts in the factional alignments of core-groups from the Haryana area. Although there had been some minor defections from the ministerial group to the Satyapal-Sri Ram Sharma faction which was also manoeuvring to take the party leadership away from Sachar, the real crisis came when Sachar ousted Sri Ram Sharma from the Cabinet in July 1953 as an indirect means of curbing the growing influence of Dr. Satyapal.<sup>85</sup> In reaction, Sri Ram Sharma

---

<sup>84</sup>Wallace, p.217.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid, p.218.

resigned from the party along with his group of Haryana dissidents to form the Gandhi Janta Party. This action meant, for Kairon, the end of a possible challenge in the future from Satyapal for the party leadership. The departure of the largest Haryana urban group from the Congress also meant that Kairon was now free to align himself more closely with the Haryana agriculturists led by Professor Sher Singh. By the middle of 1955, Kairon managed to completely realign his base in the Punjabi-speaking region to give it an even greater rural emphasis. This, of course, pleased the Haryana agriculturists and helped deepen their growing support for him.

Having completed these intra-party manoeuvres, Kairon now tried to find High Command support for a major change in the makeup of the Congress ministry. The issue which gave him this support arose out of the renewed agitation on the part of the Akali Sikhs for a Punjabi Suba in reaction to the refusal of the States Reorganisation Commission to recommend this step in its report. Sensing that the High Command did not want to completely alienate the entire Sikh community, Kairon accused Sachar and Jagat Narain of being Hindu communalists because they refused to make any concessions to Sikh opinion and were toying with the idea of a Maha (larger) Punjab which would include Himachal Pradesh, thereby reducing Sikh influence still further. By placing his group in a compromise position



which rejected both the extremist demands for a Punjabi Suba and the notion of including yet another Hindu majority area into the Punjab, Kairon also received new support from the Haryanvis who were afraid for their regional identity in a Maha Punjab. By presenting himself as a Sikh who had a considerable following in both communities, Kairon succeeded in isolating Sachar. On January 14, 1956, Sachar resigned and the High Command, anxious to maintain peace in the Punjab, arranged for Kairon to be unanimously elected as the party leader.

Kairon's election ushered in a new era in Punjab party politics. For the first time, the intra-party factional structures of the Congress were under the control of a single dominant leader who could use his remarkable, if not ruthless, political skills to control both the organisational and legislative wings. For the next eight and a half years, the entire political system in the Punjab was to be controlled by a single person who would rely on a majority of the factional groupings for their support, as they were dependent upon his patronage for their political survival.

Once in office, Kairon further consolidated his political base by submitting a new plan to the state legislature: the Regional Formula. This plan was negotiated between Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Akali Dal and provided for a new scheme of regional legislative committees for both the Punjabi-speaking and Hindi-speaking

regions. Although the two regions were demarcated on the basis of language, the Regional Formula, in effect, was related to Hindu-Sikh relations in that it implicitly recognized the right of each community to dominate the politics of their respective majority areas. Although some urban elements in Haryana, led by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Jan Sangh, opposed the Regional Formula on the grounds that it discriminated against Hindu minority rights in the Punjabi-speaking region and joined the "Save-Hindi" agitation of 1957, the Formula was on the whole acceptable to the Haryana factional leaders who saw it as an opportunity to increase their political influence in the Hindi-speaking region.<sup>86</sup>

Having developed a dominant position in Punjab politics through the building of a factional alliance which attempted to accommodate and represent the major social and economic orientations of the state, Kairon formed his first Cabinet in 1956 to balance both regional and communal claims while ignoring the leaders of factions which had opposed him in the past. For Haryana, this meant that two out of the six ministers were selected from that region: Professor

---

<sup>86</sup> An exception might be Sri Ram Sharma who, although having dissolved his Janta Party in 1956 to rejoin the Congress and supported the Regional Formula concept, was expelled from the Congress in 1957 for supporting the Hindi agitation. After this, he returned to the opposition where he formed a Haryana Front to protect that area's interests in the assembly. Interview with Sri Sharma, op.cit.

Sher Singh, to represent the Hindu agriculturists, and Mool Chand Jain of Karnal district, to represent the urban interests. When Kairon later expanded his Cabinet with four Deputy Ministers, a further two were added from the Haryana area: Devi Lal, a Jat from Hisar district and his perennial rival from the same area, Balwant Rai Tayal.<sup>87</sup>

Although Professor Sher Singh and his followers were now well represented in the Cabinet, they were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the Regional Formula as it had not removed the requirement of Punjabi as a compulsory second language in the schools of the Hindi-speaking area. Kairon, on the other hand, could not change this as it would create political difficulties with the Akali Sikhs who had accepted Hindi as a second language in Punjabi schools. This meant that Kairon could now expect some difficulty in retaining the support of some 35 legislators led by Sher Singh. For this reason he began to work to undermine Sher Singh's position within the party. Twelve of his supporters were denied tickets for the 1957 general elections and Sher Singh was not re-appointed Deputy leader after the elections. This drove Sher Singh to resign from the Congress along with three other Haryana representatives who joined him on the opposition benches. Sher Singh's departure, however, did not turn out to be a major loss of factional support for

---

<sup>87</sup>Wallace, pp.238-40.

Kairon. Rather, it enabled Kairon to absorb a substantial part of the Haryana group into his personal faction. This placed them, as a result, in a position where they were now directly dependent upon Kairon for their political survival.

Although the 1957 general elections were another impressive triumph for the congress in that it won 120 of the 154 seats, the open conflict between Sher Singh and Kairon caused the Hindu Jat representation to drop from 12 to 10. In Rohtak district, Sher Singh's political home base, the Congress representation dropped from 9 out of 11 in 1952 to 5 out of 11, including the seat held by Sher Singh.<sup>88</sup> Not wanting to become completely dependent upon the Akali leaders within the party who were known to shift their factional allegiance for community gains in the past, Kairon began elevating some of the lesser regional leaders. In the Haryana area, this strategy resulted in the appointment of two full ministers: Rao Birender Singh, an agriculturist and Ahir leader from Gurgaon district, and Suraj Mal, a Jat leader from Hissar district. To counter-balance these appointments, two non-agriculturists from Haryana were appointed deputy ministers: Dalbir Singh, a Harijan from Hissar, and Banarsi Dass, from Karnal.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup>Ibid, p.246.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid, p.259.

Kairon's efforts to divest himself of a reliance upon intermediate regional leaders and to build groups directly dependent upon his patronage in each district, culminated in a reaction on the part of the remaining factional sub-leaders in the alliance who were now afraid for their own political survival. In February 1958, a full-scale attempt was made by these leaders to overthrow Kairon through a direct appeal to the Congress High Command. Among the supporters of this attempt was Balwant Rai Tayal who had provided Kairon with much of his Haryana urban support. To counteract this attempt, Kairon had to rely upon the support of Tayal's two agriculturist rivals in the Hissar area, Devi Lal and Suraj Mal. When, however, Kairon tried to reward Devi Lal for his loyalty by having him elected as the new Pradesh Congress Committee President, his action did not please the High Command as they were trying to pressure Kairon into accepting a compromise candidate who would appease the dissidents. By pressing the issue that Devi Lal had been refused a Congress ticket in 1957 because of party indiscipline, Kairon's factional opponents forced Devi Lal to submit his resignation. Although Kairon himself survived this crisis, the High Command was never to be so unanimous in its support for him thereafter and were now more prepared to give the dissidents protection from Kairon's method of purging both political opponents and supporters who had retained some sort of autonomous base within the party.

Despite the disapproval which was beginning to emanate from New Delhi over his methods of consolidating power, Kairon undertook a new purge in 1960 against, amongst others, three dissidents from the Haryana area: Balwant Rai Tayal, Mani Ram Bishnoi and Abdul Ghani Dhar. These men were all opponents of the new factional leaders such as Devi Lal and Rao Birender Singh whom Kairon had built up to challenge them in their regional strongholds. In time, however, Kairon began to move also against the Hindu agriculturists from Haryana whom he had patronized in the past. In August 1961, he relieved Rao Birender Singh of his Cabinet post and broke with Devi Lal over the distribution of tickets for the 1962 elections. Refused a ticket from his home riding in Hissar district, Devi Lal resigned from the Congress to run as an independent. Rao Birender Singh, on the other hand, continued on in the Congress but as a dissident with a very small faction because of the assignment of tickets to many of his local opponents. In this way, Kairon, who had used the assistance of an almost solid Haryana bloc in his struggles with Bhargava and Sachar, exploited the personal rivalries among Haryana factional leaders to eliminate the influence of potentially dangerous regional bosses. One political scientist comments:

Groups continued to exist within the Congress Party of each district, but the normal pattern became one of contending groups each of which

was aligned to Kairon with weakened regional and state articulation.<sup>90</sup>

In the 1962 elections, although the Congress was returned to power, its majority was reduced to 90 out of 154 seats. In the five key districts in the Haryana area, Kairon's manoeuvres against core-group leaders was producing a pattern of continuing decline in Congress representation from that area. (See Table 3.3).

TABLE 3.3  
CONGRESS REPRESENTATION  
FROM FIVE HARYANA DISTRICTS

Year	Total No. of Seats	No. of Congress Seats	Percentage of Congress Seats
1952	41	37	90
1957	48	32	67
1962	48	26	54

Source: Wallace, p.278.

<sup>90</sup>Wallace, p.274. Devi Lal, in an interview with Baldev Raj Nayar, suggested that Partap Singh Kairon had encouraged the following rivalries in Haryana for his own ends.  
Sri Ram Sharma vs. Sher Singh (Rohtak district)  
Balwant Rai Tayal vs. Devi Lal (Hissar)  
Sarup Singh vs. Suraj Mal (Hissar)  
Suraj Mal vs. Dalbir Singh (Hissar)  
Bhagwat Dayal Sharma vs. Amar Nath (Rohtak)  
Dasondha Singh vs. D.D.Puri (Ambala)  
Jawaharlal Kapur vs. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Ambala)  
Devikinandan vs. Ram Saran Chand Mittal (Mahendragarh)  
Rao Gajraj Singh vs. Rao Birender Singh (Gurgaon)  
(Interview files of Baldev Raj Nayar, 1961).

To satisfy the political aspirations of the men whom Kairon had built up as client leaders in the various districts, and to prevent defections, a large ministry was formed in 1962. The Haryana area was given a total of seven positions. Two full ministerships were given to: Ram Saran Chand Mittal, the urban opponent of Rao Birender Singh in the Ahir area of Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts, and Ranbir Singh. Positions as Minister of State were given to: Chand Ram, a Harijan leader from Rohtak area, and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin trade union leader from Rohtak. Finally, deputy ministerships were given to Banarsi Dass, a non-agriculturist from Karnal; Om Prabha Jain, a Bania also from Karnal area; and Tayyab Hussain, a Meo from Gurgaon.<sup>91</sup> The pattern of these appointments would suggest that Kairon, having lost the support of a majority of the Jat agriculturists, was seeking an alternative political base in Haryana.

As the result of a power struggle with the then Pradesh Congress President, Darbara Singh, Kairon manoeuvred to have Bhagwat Dayal Sharma elected as the new president. This now placed the Punjab Congress Party organisation in the hands of a non-agriculturist Haryanvi, much to the dismay of the Haryana agriculturists who were increasingly opposed to the direction which Punjab politics were taking.

---

<sup>91</sup>Wallace, p.284.



Although Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's presidentship would probably have had little significance for Haryana politics had Kairon carried on in office, it took on new implications when Kairon was forced to resign shortly thereafter because of personal charges brought against him by his political opponents, including several dissidents from the Haryana area.

Despite the ignominy of Kairon's fate, it must be recognized that, while in office, he succeeded in creating a new model of factional politics in the Punjab. During his years as Chief Minister, a single state-wide faction, buttressed by some external support at the national level, achieved a complete domination over both the ministerial and organisational wings of the Punjab Congress. Before this time, every Congress Party leader had been involved in a more-or-less open conflict with a sizable dissident faction within either the organisational wing or the legislature party, or both. This inevitably had produced unstable ministries in which the Chief Minister was unduly dependent upon a group or groups which had independent power bases for their political survival. Kairon, despite his ruthless treatment of political opponents and dissidents, did succeed in secularizing Punjabi politics in that he was able to recruit political support from all sections of the society including both agriculturists and urban elements, Hindus and Sikhs, from both linguistic regions of Punjab. The problem with this model, however, is that an alliance system based on

the political skills of an individual leader rather than on an ideology or programme may not guarantee that the arrangement can outlive the political life of its creator.

(3) Intra-Party Factionalism after Kairon (From June 14, 1964, to November 1, 1966)

Kairon's resignation did not, in itself, alter the pattern of political forces in Punjab. He was still the dominant political figure as he commanded the loyalties of a majority in both wings of the party. Even his assassination in February 1965 did not completely destroy his political influence. Many of the key personnel in his alliance continued to pursue his policies and to imitate his political style within the Congress. Indeed, the High Command, after his removal, experienced some difficulty in their efforts to re-make the Punjab ministry in such a way as to satisfy the vocal dissidents without alienating the Kairon group in the Legislature Party. In an effort to avoid an open conflict, they settled upon Ram Kishan, a veteran Congressman who had never been particularly conspicuous in the intra-party factional feuds.

As leader, however, Ram Kishan was never able to win any measure of support from the core-Kairon group and therefore had to devote much of his energies attempting to keep the Legislature Party under control. At the same time, he had to face increasing criticism for his policies from the organizational wing which was still under the control of the

Kairon group, led by Kairon's protege, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. Hence, politics in Punjab returned once again to a condition such as was found between 1949 and 1951, when two wings of the Congress were dominated by opposing groups. Without the permission of the High Command, which had once again taken on the role of a political supervisor in Punjab, it was virtually impossible for the Kairon group to oust the Chief Minister or for him to establish his own supporters as a majority in the Pradesh Congress Committee.

Ram Kishan's ministry, which completely excluded the Kairon group, contained only one Haryanvi: Rizak Ram, a Jat from Rohtak district. A later expansion, however, gave Haryana a more equitable representation with the addition of Ranbir Singh, Chand Ram, and Smt. Om Prabha Jain as full ministers and Smt. Chandravati, as a deputy minister.<sup>92</sup>

The re-division of the Congress into non-cooperating factions, also had the effect of encouraging the Akali Dal to once again press for the creation of a Punjabi Suba. The Haryana agriculturists, who had united to some extent behind the effort to oust Kairon, were not satisfied with their position in the Ram Kishan ministry. In reaction, they seized upon the Akali demand and formed an all-party Haryana Action Committee under the leadership of Professor Sher Singh to argue in favour of states reorganisation along

---

<sup>92</sup>Wallace, pp.296 & 301.

linguistic lines so as to permit the creation of Haryana as a separate state in the Indian Union.

While it is difficult to evaluate why the Congress High Command suddenly reversed its earlier stand on Punjab reorganisation, certain factors may have influenced their decision. Not only was the Akali Dal now being supported by 15 dissident Congress Sikh MLAs in Punjab, it was also supported by a majority of the Congress MLAs from the Haryana area. Accordingly, the High Command may have sensed that a solution to the problem would have to be found if the Congress was to survive in either the Sikh-majority area or in the Haryana area. Also, peace and stability was essential in the Punjabi-speaking area for national security as it bordered on Pakistan. Whatever the reason, the Congress Working Committee finally decided that the central government would permit the Punjab to be reorganized.

As might be expected, the decision to divide the Punjab was not well received by all parties and groups in the controversy. The Jan Sangh, seeing the reorganisation as a threat both to national security and its own power base amongst the Punjabi refugees in both regions of Punjab, organized a variety of direct actions which resulted in a number of public disturbances in Punjab and New Delhi itself. Before these had completely settled down, the clashes between supporters and opponents of the reorganisation

decision resulted in at least five deaths, the injury of hundreds and the arrest of leaders on both sides.<sup>93</sup> In Haryana, the supporters of reorganisation were dismayed when the central government decided to ignore the recommendation of the Punjab Boundary Commission that Chandigarh be given to Haryana,<sup>94</sup> and to make the Chandigarh Capital Project area into a Union Territory which could be used by both states as a joint capital.<sup>95</sup> They felt that this would deny Haryana a major modern urban center with extensive educational facilities, and would leave the area even more backward than it had been before.<sup>96</sup>

#### Summary and Conclusions

In the pre-independence era, the Hindu landholding agriculturist tribes of the Haryana area, under a limited franchise system and the outstanding leadership of Sir Chhotu Ram, were able to achieve a significant role in Punjabi politics in alliance with agriculturists from the other two religious communities. With independence, partition, the death of Sir Chhotu Ram and the introduction of universal suffrage, the Haryana agriculturist group found itself in a situation where it would have to compete

---

<sup>93</sup>The Hindu, March 15, 1966.

<sup>94</sup>India, Report of the Punjab Boundary Commission, (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1966), p.2.

<sup>95</sup>Punjab Reorganisation Act, No.31, 1966.

<sup>96</sup>The Times of India, May 23, 1966.

with other groups traditionally opposed to its rural hegemony for political power and patronage. The result was a breakdown of the earlier agriculturist cohesion and the integration of local competing factions into a state-wide intra-Congress party factional structure. This structure was usually divided into a bi-factional configuration within which the participation of the Haryanvi group leaders was of some significance but was rarely of crucial importance.

The rise of Partap Singh Kairon to a position of factional dominance in Punjabi politics further undermined the autonomy of Haryana factional leaders and created a situation in which much of their political energies were dissipated on local feuds with rivals who were, in fact, also clients of Kairon's patronage system. Political survival throughout this period was related to a factional leader's capacity to satisfy the support needs of the dominant party leader rather than to his effectiveness in articulating the political needs and interests of his local supporters.

For Haryana, states reorganisation in 1966 represented a new opportunity for these intra-party factional leaders to create an effective political system for their area. In their favour, they would no longer have to struggle to overcome the barriers to political integration represented by the vertical cleavages of language and community as

Haryana would now be unilingual and overwhelmingly Hindu. On the other hand, the horizontal cleavages which had always divided the region in terms of agriculturist and non-agriculturist interests remained. For some of the agriculturist leaders, reorganisation was viewed as an opportunity for Haryana to return to the political model of the Chhotu Ram era when the landholding tribes were able to translate their social and economic hegemony in the villages into real political power. For others, opposed to the notion of "Jat-raj", the Kairon years provided an alternative model through which a skillful politician might be able to combine a number of local factional groupings into a patron-client alliance capable of dominating the political process at all levels within the state. No one, however, probably considered that the third model, that of a bi-factional configuration in which no factional alignment would be capable of dominating both wings of the ruling party, might be the one to evolve in the new state.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STRUGGLE FOR POLITICAL POWER:

#### A NON-AGRICULTURIST ATTEMPT TO DOMINATE HARYANA POLITICS.

#### Introduction

The dissident agriculturist leaders in Haryana, both within and without the Congress, who had placed their support behind the Akali demand for a reorganisation of Punjab state, had, in great part, been motivated by the calculation that they would be the most important bloc within the new Hindi-speaking state unit, and that, as a result, they could expect to lead and dominate any government which would be formed in the new state. In pressing their support for a separate Haryana state, however, they seriously under-estimated the potential support and power which remained with the non-agriculturist groups who, at this time, dominated the Haryana wing of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee.

The agriculturist leaders may have tended to ignore this alliance of high caste, Harijan, urban and Punjabi refugee interests because it had consistently opposed the demand for states reorganisation and therefore appeared to have been defeated when the central government decided to accept the reorganisation recommendation. They did not



appreciate the fact that this non-agriculturist group, relying on its control of the Congress organisation throughout Haryana, was intent on continuing to hold political power. The strategy adopted by the recognized leader of the non-agriculturist group, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, was modeled upon the tactic which had worked for his former patron, Partap Singh Kairon: to isolate the different dissident agriculturist leaders and to thereby prevent them from re-grouping within the Congress as the dominant factional alliance.

At first, the strategy mentioned above appeared to represent a success for the non-agriculturist interests in the state. In rapid succession, their leader, B.D. Sharma, was elected President of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee, elected leader of the Haryana Congress Legislature Party, and sworn in as Chief Minister of Haryana. Once in firm control of both wings of the party, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma further consolidated his position through a careful assignment of party tickets for the fourth general elections which were held only three months after the state's creation. Although the party did not sweep the polls in this election, it was returned with a workable majority. Within the new Congress Legislature Party, the B.D. Sharma group was in a majority and there seemed to be no reason to suspect that it would not be able to keep the party under its control from that point on. And yet, the situation

changed overnight. The mass defection of some 15 dissidents to the opposition overthrew the Congress government and permitted a United Front to come to power. On the opposition benches, the Congress Legislature Party leader, B.D. Sharma, attempted a number of manoeuvres designed to bring the Congress back to power, either as the Government or even as the chief supporter of a non-Congress government. These efforts, however, proved futile and in time the Congress High Command was forced to intervene in an attempt to find a Congress leader for Haryana who could win the support of enough factional groups to guarantee the state political stability.

This chapter undertakes to analyze the following aspects of the attempt on the part of the non-agriculturist elements to dominate Haryana politics: first, the effort to maintain control of both wings of the Haryana Congress, based on the Kairon model. Second, the strategy employed by Bhagwat Dayal Sharma in the fourth general elections and its outcome. Third, the failure of the non-agriculturist group to retain power in the face of a defection threat on the part of some dissident agriculturist factions. Finally, the political instability which resulted from the non-agriculturist group's attempt to topple the United Front government.

#### The Kairon Model and the Haryana Congress

##### (1) The Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee

Control of the Congress Party organisational machinery

might be seen as crucial in any attempt to attain or maintain dominance over a Congress legislature party. Although a party leader in a state assembly might survive for a time without the cooperation and support of those in charge of the party organisation, he and his supporters would probably find themselves in considerable difficulty at election time, especially if their intra-party opponents were in complete or even partial control of the ticket assignment procedures of the party.<sup>1</sup> Kairon's success was based, in part, on the fact that he never relinquished control over the Pradesh Congress Committee even after he resigned the Presidentship to become a Minister and later Chief Minister. The first task, therefore, for the non-agriculturist grouping within the Haryana wing of the Punjab Pradesh Congress was to ensure that their candidates were elected as the office bearers in the new Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee.

In the initial stages of this contest, it appeared that the then President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress

---

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of the advantages of controlling a P.C.C. in a succession struggle, see Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India", in Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Occasional Papers: Number One, Party System and Election Studies (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967).

Committee, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma,<sup>2</sup> might be prepared to avoid an early confrontation with his chief agriculturist opponent for the leadership of the Congress Legislature Party in Haryana, Ranbir Singh,<sup>3</sup> by agreeing to back a compromise candidate for the Presidentship of the Pradesh Congress. At one point, he hinted that he would be prepared to support Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan<sup>4</sup> as such a compromise choice if his election could be made unanimous.<sup>5</sup> Shortly after this, however, Bhagwat Dayal probably came to realize

---

<sup>2</sup>B.D. Sharma is a Punjabi-refugee Brahmin who began his political career in Haryana as an INTUC organizer. He was brought into state politics in 1962 by Kairon to oppose and defeat Sher Singh, a dissident agriculturist leader. In 1963 he was selected by Kairon to lead the Pradesh Congress as a counter-balance to the agriculturist elements which were becoming increasingly disenchanted with Kairon's neglect of the Haryana area. As P.P.C.C. President, Bhagwat Dayal attempted to carry on Kairon's policies even after his resignation and assassination. He and his supporters vigorously opposed the Punjab reorganisation demand.

<sup>3</sup>Ranbir Singh, the Minister of Public Works in erstwhile Punjab, is a prominent Jat leader from Rohtak district and was probably the most influential Haryana agriculturist remaining within the Punjab Congress Legislature Party at that time.

<sup>4</sup>Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan is an old Congress worker from Ambala district. He is noted for his refusal to become embroiled in the factional politics of the Punjab and was accepted as neutral by both parties because of the fact that there is virtually no Muslim community (except for the Meos of Gurgaon district) left in the Haryana area.

<sup>5</sup>Tribune, July 20, 1966.

that the dissident agriculturist leaders had failed to recognize the significance of the party organisational wing in any struggle to dominate state politics. Accordingly, he withdrew support from the compromise candidate so that his own name could be placed in candidacy for the Presidentship.<sup>6</sup> The agriculturist leaders, seeing that their non-agriculturist rival now wanted the Presidentship, attempted to rally behind one of their own, Rao Birender Singh,<sup>7</sup> in an attempt to thwart B.D. Sharma. Mr. Singh, however, declined to be a candidate as he was intending, at that time, to contest for the leadership of the legislature party.<sup>8</sup> He admitted later that he would not have withdrawn if he had realized that Bhagwat Dayal was intending to use his election as President of the state party organisation as a stepping-stone to the Chief Ministership. He thought, at that time, that Bhagwat Dayal was contesting the Presidentship because he recognized that the Chief Ministership of Haryana would have to go to

---

<sup>6</sup>Statesman, July 23, 1966.

<sup>7</sup>Rao Birender Singh is a prominent Ahir leader from the western Gurgaon and Mahendragarh area who had once been a Kairon protege and Minister of Transport in Punjab before they had a falling out. After this, he placed his factional support behind the dissidents from Haryana who were working within and without the Congress for Punjab reorganisation.

<sup>8</sup>Indian Express, August 1, 1966.

an agriculturist if there was to be political stability.<sup>9</sup>

In the ensuing election, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma succeeded in defeating his only opponent, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan by a slim margin of votes (25 to 22).<sup>10</sup> An indication of how well the public understood the nature of the struggle which was now developing within the Haryana Congress Party might be found in the daily press. While a number of newspapers congratulated the Congress High Command for having allowed complete freedom of choice in the Haryana wing of the party,<sup>11</sup> and for having restored a positive image to the state Congress,<sup>12</sup> others were more perceptive and noted that an "unfortunate feature of the elections was the division of votes on the basis of Jats and non-Jats",<sup>13</sup> and that the election had eliminated all supporters of states reorganisation from the key posts of the party.<sup>14</sup> The true nature of the situation, however, was best summarized in an editorial in The Hindustan Times:

---

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Rao Birender Singh, December 1967.

<sup>10</sup>Tribune, August 5, 1966.

<sup>11</sup>Indian Express, August 8, 1966.

<sup>12</sup>Tribune, August 8, 1966.

<sup>13</sup>Times of India, August 5, 1966.

<sup>14</sup>Patriot, August 6, 1966.

The election of Mr. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma as leader of the Congress in Haryana was an episode packed with personal prejudices, calculations of immediate gain and future prospects, and perpetuations of local feuds. The decisive result has hardly eased the situation in the conflict-torn Congress. The contest has perpetuated the distinct feud between Mr. Bhagwat Dayal and the Jats in Rohtak. The atmosphere is thus full of bitterness and rancour.<sup>15</sup>

(2) The Haryana Congress Legislature Party

Even before the presidential election issue within the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee had been resolved in favour of a non-agriculturist candidate, the organisational group and the agriculturist dissident factions had begun their struggle to win the leadership contest within the Congress Legislature Party. Whosoever won this "gaddi" would not only be in a position to reward and strengthen his factual following with ministerial offices and local patronage, but would also be able to determine the legislative policy of the Haryana government. An indication of how keenly each of the rival factional alliances desired the party leadership may be found in the fact that even before the Punjab Boundary Commission had had an opportunity to present its recommendations to the central government, Mr. Kamaraj, the then President of the A.I.C.C., had to publicly state his "unhappiness at the unseemly tussle

---

<sup>15</sup>Hindustan Times, August 10, 1966.

which had already started for the leadership in the two new states".<sup>16</sup> At this time, the contest appeared to be limited to three candidates, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, representing the non-agriculturist interests, and Rizak Ram and Ranbir Singh, both of whom claimed to represent Haryana agriculturists on the basis of their political prominence in Rohtak Jat circles.<sup>17</sup>

In their campaign to build up the greatest number of supporters for the leadership contest within the legislature party, all three of the above candidates solicited the local factional leaders with promises of future ministerial positions.<sup>18</sup> Nor did they overlook the fact that the Congress High Command was not likely to remain aloof in a campaign to decide who should be given the opportunity to form Haryana's first Congress ministry. Accordingly, all three potential leaders also lobbied and petitioned Mr. Kamaraj with their claims that each was in the best position to form a stable Congress government capable of winning the support of the Haryana electorate in the forthcoming general elections.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup>Times of India, May 12, 1966.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., May 25th, 1966.

<sup>18</sup>Hindustan Times, May 29, 1966.

<sup>19</sup>Times of India, June 6, 1966.



It was this need to decisively demonstrate to the Congress High Command that he had or could win the support of the Haryana Congress Legislature Party which persuaded Bhagwat Dayal to attempt a somewhat devious manoeuvre. He also hoped that it might serve to convince the Haryanvis that he was a leader who had Haryana's interests at heart, despite his earlier unwillingness to support the reorganization demand. Accordingly, when the central government announced that the former Punjab capital, Chandigarh, would not be given to Haryana but would be made into a Union Territory to serve as a joint capital for both Haryana and Punjab, Mr. Sharma called for the resignation of all of the Haryana Congress legislators as a means of protesting the decision.<sup>20</sup> The agriculturist factions, however, were not taken in as they recognized the leadership implications should Mr. Sharma have succeeded in winning unanimous support for this move. Indeed, his leading agriculturist rival for the leadership, Ranbir Singh, denounced the ploy as "agitational" and appealed to the Haryana Congress legislators to desist.<sup>21</sup>

Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, however, was determined to carry

---

<sup>20</sup>The Hindu, June 10, 1966.

<sup>21</sup>Tribune, June 13 & 14, 1966.

on with this scheme. In an effort to overcome the dissident agriculturists' reluctance to give their letters of resignation to a non-Jat, he called upon one of his Jat factional supporters, Hardwari Lal,<sup>22</sup> to convene an action committee which was to organize the resignation move.<sup>23</sup> The protests of the agriculturist dissident leaders at this manoeuvre eventually came to the attention of the Congress High Command and they intervened to force Bhagwat Dayal to publicly announce that the Haryana Congress legislators had decided not to resign over the Chandigarh issue.<sup>24</sup> The net effect of this en masse resignation tactic was to demonstrate that the Congress legislature party was hopelessly divided between the agriculturists and non-agriculturists on the leadership question. It also may have helped

---

<sup>22</sup>The fact that the non-agriculturist alliance contained a handful of members from the agriculturist communities should not be surprising, nor should the obverse, that the agriculturist factions also had some non-agriculturist supporters. Factional support is usually based on considerations of benefits received. In the case of Hardwari Lal, this was a man whose interests were certainly not that of a cultivator-peasant. In 1961, he resigned as Vice-Chancellor of Kurukshetra University, on the advice of his patron, Partap Singh Kairon, to enter state politics. From that time to the period under consideration, he remained a staunch supporter of the Kairon element in the Punjab Congress.

<sup>23</sup>Tribune, June 17, 1966.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid, June 27, 1966.

to alienate whatever agriculturist support Mr. Sharma may have had. Indeed, his Jat lieutenant, Hardwari Lal, who had already collected some twenty signed resignations, denounced his leader as a "double-crosser" for having been forced to scuttle the resignation ploy.<sup>25</sup>

Still anxious to demonstrate his leadership potential in the Haryana assembly, Mr. Sharma set out to persuade the Congress legislators to sign a memorandum requesting him to stand for the leadership and appealing to the other legislators to make the election a unanimous one for the sake of party unity. Mr. Sharma claimed that he had recruited some 21 signatures for this document.<sup>26</sup> This number, which, if accurate, represented roughly half of the Congress supporters in the assembly, served to finally convince the agriculturist element that their only chance to stop Bhagwat Dayal now would be by uniting together in an alliance which would put up a joint candidate acceptable to all of the dissident groups.<sup>27</sup>

Their compromise choice, Rao Birender Singh, who at one point in the campaign claimed to have the committed support of between 25 and 30 Congress legislators,<sup>28</sup> however,

---

<sup>25</sup>Statesman, June 29, 1966.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, August 23, 1966.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, August 29, 1966.

<sup>28</sup>Indian Express, September 19, 1966.

was disallowed from contesting by Mr. Kamaraj on the grounds that the choice should be limited to those who were then members of the Congress Legislature Party in the Haryana Legislative Assembly.<sup>29</sup> As the A.I.C.C. President's decision came very late in the campaign, the agriculturists had little time in which to find a suitable alternative candidate.

Although the Birender Singh-Rizak Ram groups were determined to continue the dissident alliance, none of the proposed names proved to be acceptable to all five of the dissident agriculturist factions.<sup>30</sup> Each group appeared to be demanding that the leader or a representative of their particular group be given the alliance's support. Unable to find an acceptable alternative, the dissidents reluctantly resigned themselves to the unanimous election of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. Each group, however, privately hoped that this would prove to be an interim arrangement and that the results of the forthcoming general elections would tilt the balance in favour of their particular factional grouping in the February leadership race.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup>Tribune, October 10, 1966. Mr. Birender Singh, in an interview, claimed that this "treacherous" intervention on the part of Mr. Kamaraj, who had opposed his leadership because of his role in the reorganisation demand, persuaded him that there was little hope that either he or Haryana would ever receive "justice" from New Delhi.

<sup>30</sup>Indian Express, October 18, 1966. The leaders of these would appear to be: Ranbir Singh, Rao Birender Singh, Rizak Ram, Hardwari Lal and Ram Sarup Mittal (representing the Devi Lal group which had recently been re-admitted to the Congress).

<sup>31</sup>Interview with Rao Birender Singh, December, 1967.

Mr. Sharma, however, was already preparing to see that this did not happen. Immediately after his election as party leader and Chief Minister designate of Haryana, he had the Pradesh Congress Committee vote that there would not be another Presidential race within the H.P.C.C. until after the general elections and that, in the interim, he should be permitted to retain the leadership of both wings of the Haryana Congress.<sup>32</sup>

Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, despite the fact that his intra-Congress victories over his opponents were clearly narrow ones, was now securely in command of both wings of the Congress in Haryana and the dissident agriculturist alliance was in shambles. He was now in a position to emulate his patron Partap Singh Kairon by using his new offices to further strengthen his group's position vis-a-vis the dissidents and to ensure that there should be no future threat to his leadership within the Congress party. The pupil appeared to have learned his lessons well and his position in Haryana politics now looked unassailable.

#### The Consolidation of Factional Dominance

As the leader of both wings of the Haryana Congress, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma attempted to further consolidate his position by rewarding his supporters and ignoring most of his opponents, especially those dissident agriculturists who had expected so much from the reorganisation decision.

---

<sup>32</sup>Tribune, October 27, 1966.

To the great annoyance of his factional rivals, he chose Chand Ram, a Harijan leader, as Deputy Leader of the legislature party and Ram Dhari Gaur, a Brahmin member of the Bhagwat Dayal faction, as the General-Secretary.<sup>33</sup> He also denied his opponents the ministerial offices which they had aspired to. His first ministerial slate included only one dissident agriculturist, Ranbir Singh, and was otherwise composed of some 14 of Mr. Sharma's most loyal factional supporters. When the dissident factions did not rally together as a result of these appointments, Mr. Sharma next decided ~~not~~ to wait, as he had been authorized to do, but to push through the election of his own candidate for President of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee. His choice was Ram Kishan Gupta, who, though a Jat, had consistently supported Mr. Sharma's bid for the party leadership. Mr. Gupta, moreover, was more involved in politics at the central level and was not, therefore, viewed by Bhagwat Dayal as a potential threat to his leadership at the state level. Finally, Mr. Sharma had the H.P.C.C. authorize Mr. Gupta and himself to nominate the Haryana Pradesh Election Committee; the body which would be empowered to select candidates for the party from amongst the applicants for official tickets.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>Tribune, November 4, 1966.

<sup>34</sup>Hindustan Times, November 19, 1966.

Recognizing that the Chief Minister was rapidly building up a personal machine which would probably be capable of dominating the party after the general elections, the dissident leaders gathered together at a meeting in Rohtak, convened by Sri Ram Sharma, to consider their future strategy.<sup>35</sup> Some suggested that they and their supporters should resign from the party en masse so as to permit them to run their factional followers as independents against the official candidates who were being selected by the Sharma controlled Election Committee. They were ultimately dissuaded from this drastic step, however, by representatives of the Congress High Command who beseeched them to maintain party unity for the purposes of the elections. They were, however, assured that their grievances with the existing state leadership would be adjusted to their satisfaction once the party was re-elected.<sup>36</sup>

Having been persuaded to abandon the resignation manoeuvre with these assurances, the dissidents were somewhat dismayed to discover that the Haryana Pradesh Election Committee's list did not give party tickets to many of the candidates nominated by the dissident factional leaders. If this list were allowed to stand, any chance which they might have had to emerge from the elections to challenge

---

<sup>35</sup>Statesman, December 16, 1966.

<sup>36</sup>Confirmed in interviews with Rao Birender Singh and Hardwari Lal, December, 1967.

the dominant non-agriculturist group was now eliminated. By this time, however, it was too late to organize a mass resignation and to fight a state-wide campaign in opposition to the official Congress candidates. Indeed, there was little which could be done except to appeal to the Congress Central Election Committee to re-open the list and "set up a screening committee to draw up a list of Congressmen of integrity".<sup>37</sup> Although the dissidents had some influence in the Congress Working Committee, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was not without his own supporters there, including Kamaraj and Morarji Desai. In the end, the central leadership refused to take any drastic steps and limited their intervention to a few minor adjustments, particularly in the case of the recently re-admitted Devi Lal group.

While most of the dissident factional leaders chose to swallow their pride and remain with the Congress for at least the time being, this nominal acceptance of party discipline did not seem to prevent them from undertaking to run many of their factional supporters against the official Congress candidates. A measure of the extent of this practice may be found in the fact that some 65 persons were expelled from the Congress in the course of the election campaign because they had chosen to seek election as independents, after having earlier applied to be official Congress

---

<sup>37</sup>Tribune, December, 26, 1966.



candidates.<sup>38</sup> The worst individual offender in this regard was Rao Birender Singh, who, when his group was only allocated three tickets (including his own), chose to run his own nominees in some eight constituencies in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh.<sup>39</sup>

Today the election in Gurgaon is not being fought on any ideological grounds but between Congressmen with tickets and Congressmen without tickets.<sup>40</sup>

In Rohtak district, the Bhagwat Dayal group attempted to overcome the Jat's traditional distrust of any political party or faction dominated by non-Jats and to blunt opposition attacks by making the election an almost all Jat contest in the rural areas. In using this strategy, Mr. Sharma hoped to push the agriculturist leaders into internecine feuds which would permit the Congress candidate to pick up a share of the agriculturist vote along with

---

<sup>38</sup>Statesman, December 26, 1966.

<sup>39</sup>In an interview, Rao Birender Singh attempted to justify this manoeuvre on the grounds that Bhagwat Dayal was so determined to destroy him politically that he not only denied him the support of the Congress organisation in his own constituency, but also came into the area himself to speak in support of an independent candidate to whom Mr. Sharma had committed his factional support. On the other hand, Mr. Sharma told reporters in the same area that the rumours that he was trying to defeat certain Congress candidates were slander "invented by some people to cover up their own weaknesses." Tribune, February 17, 1967.

<sup>40</sup>Tribune, February 8, 1967.

the votes of those communities, such as the higher castes and Harijans, traditionally opposed to Jat dominance at the local level.<sup>41</sup>

The general elections were held on the 19th of February, 1967, in Haryana. In the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly) contest, the Congress Party succeeded in winning 48 out of the 81 available seats to give it a small but clear majority. In comparison to earlier elections in the area, however, it appeared to have lost considerable ground to the opposition, particularly to the Jan Sangh which returned 12 members, mainly from the urban areas where the bulk of the Punjabi refugees had settled. Besides gaining the support of these displaced persons, who had been unhappy with the Congress decision to reorganize the Punjab, the Jan Sangh also appeared to benefit from the anti-Congress sentiment amongst the Jats in Karnal and Rohtak districts. Other opposition parties to win representation were: the Swatantra with three seats, and the Republican Party with two. The real upset of the election, however, was the general success of the independent candidates discussed above. They appeared to benefit from the internal divisions in the Congress to poll some 32.9 per

---

<sup>41</sup>Hindustan Times, February 9, 1967

cent of the popular vote and to win some 16 seats.<sup>42</sup>

The Congress representation elected to the Haryana Legislative Assembly in 1967 appears to have been regionally concentrated to some extent.<sup>43</sup> While the party made its best showing in Hissar where it won 82.4 per cent of the seats, it failed to win a majority of the seats in either Mahendragarh (33.3 per cent) or Gurgaon (38.5 per cent).<sup>44</sup> In terms of the rural-urban breakdown, the party clearly did better in the rural areas where it won 66.6 per cent of the reserved seats and 61.7 per cent of the rural seats while it was only returned in 37.5 per cent of the urban seats.<sup>45</sup> Caste representation, on the other hand, shows that the non-agriculturist communities were now in a majority within the Congress.<sup>46</sup> The Bania, Brahmin, Harijan, and Jat communities were generally well represented while the Ahirs, Gujars, Meos and Punjabi refugees appear to have withheld support.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>A more complete breakdown of the 1967 election results is given in Chapter VIII which contrasts this election with the mid-term elections held in May 1968.

<sup>43</sup>See Map 4.1.

<sup>44</sup>See Table 4.1.

<sup>45</sup>See Map 4.2 and Table 4.2.

<sup>46</sup>See Map 4.3.

<sup>47</sup>See Table 4.3.

0 8 16 Miles

CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967



CONGRESS (48)

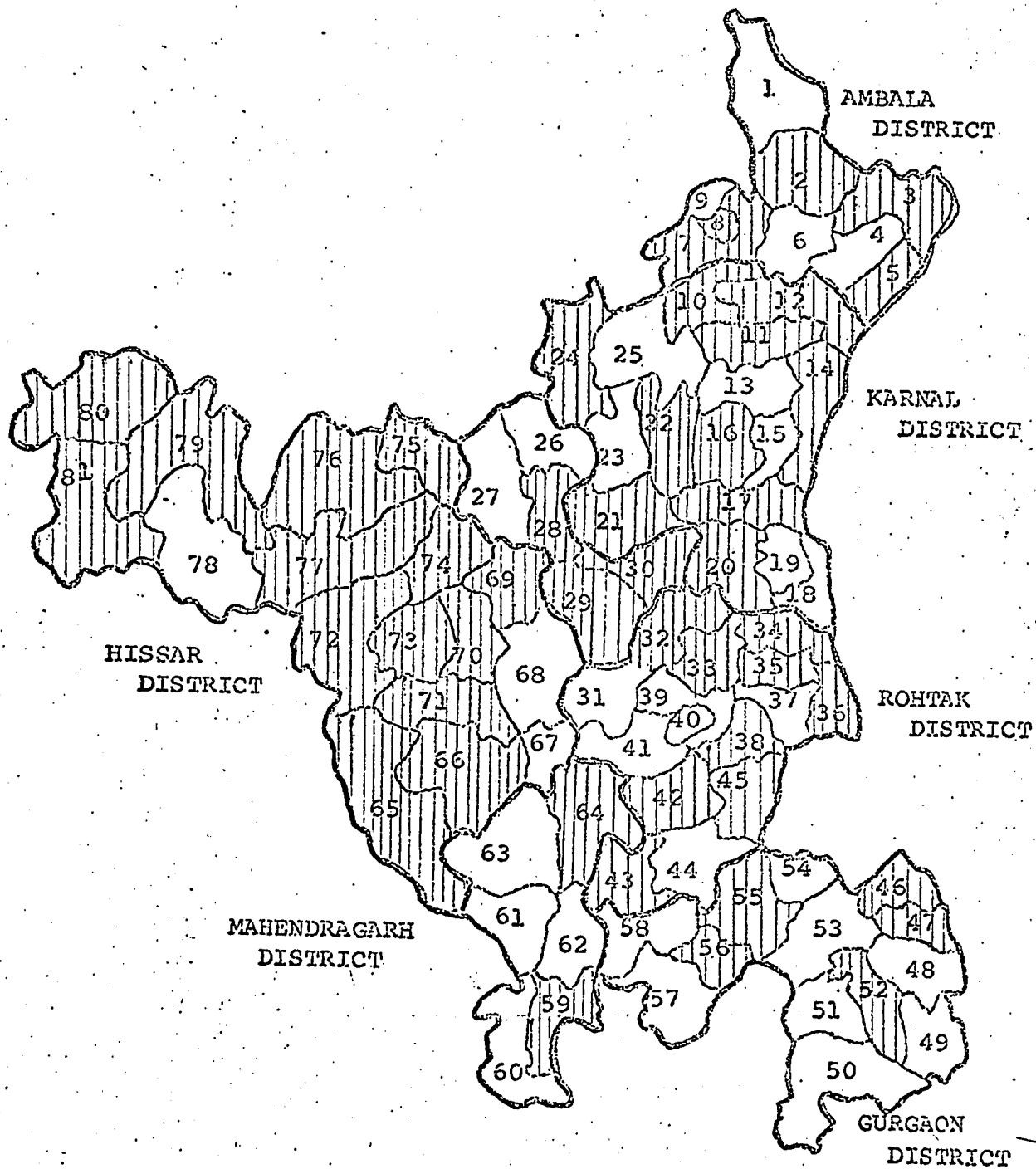


TABLE 4.1





HARYANA: DISTRICT REPRESENTATION  
OF THE CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967

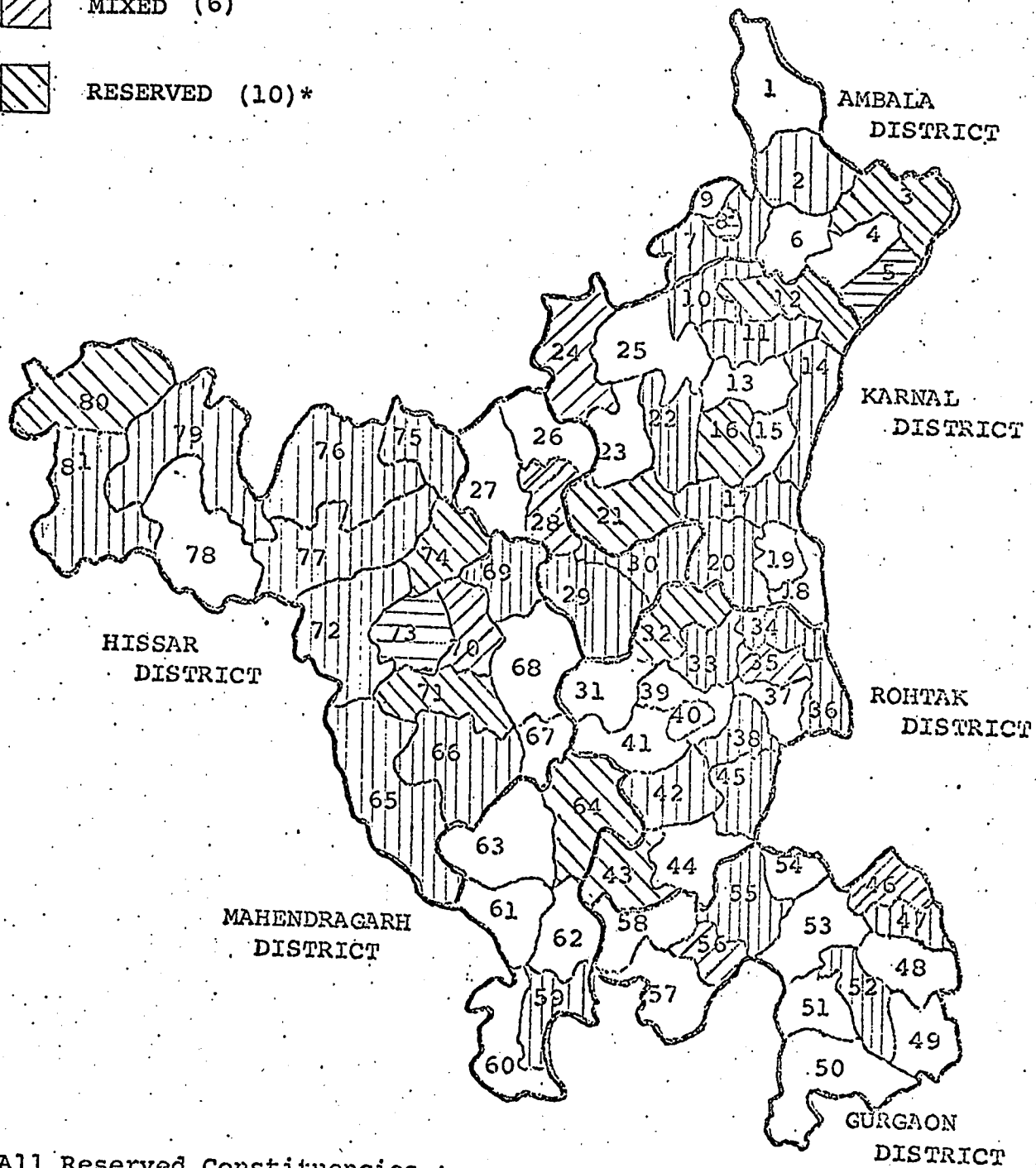
District	Total No. of Seats	Congress Seats	Percentage
Ambala	9	5	55.6
Karnal	16	10	62.5
Jind	5	3	60.0
Rohtak	15	9	60.0
Gurgaon	13	5	38.5
Mahendragarh	6	2	33.3
Hissar	17	14	82.4
Total	81	48	59.4

Source: India, Report on the Fourth General Elections in India, (Delhi: Manager of Publications, Government of India, 1967), Volume II, pp. 253-66.

0 8 16 Miles

## CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

-  RURAL (29)
-  URBAN (3)
-  MIXED (6)
-  RESERVED (10)\*



\* All Reserved Constituencies in Haryana are Rural

TABLE 4.2

HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN  
OF THE CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967

Description	Total No. of Seats	Congress Seats	Percentage
Rural	47	29	61.7
Urban	8	3	37.5
Mixed	11	6	54.5
Reserved	15	10	66.6
Total	81	48	59.4

0 8 16 Miles

## CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967: CASTE BREAKDOWN

JAT (15)

AHIR (3)

ROR (1)

RAJPUT (2)

BRAHMIN (6)

BANIA (5)

SCHEDULED CASTE (10)

PUNJABI REFUGEE (4)

OTHER (2)

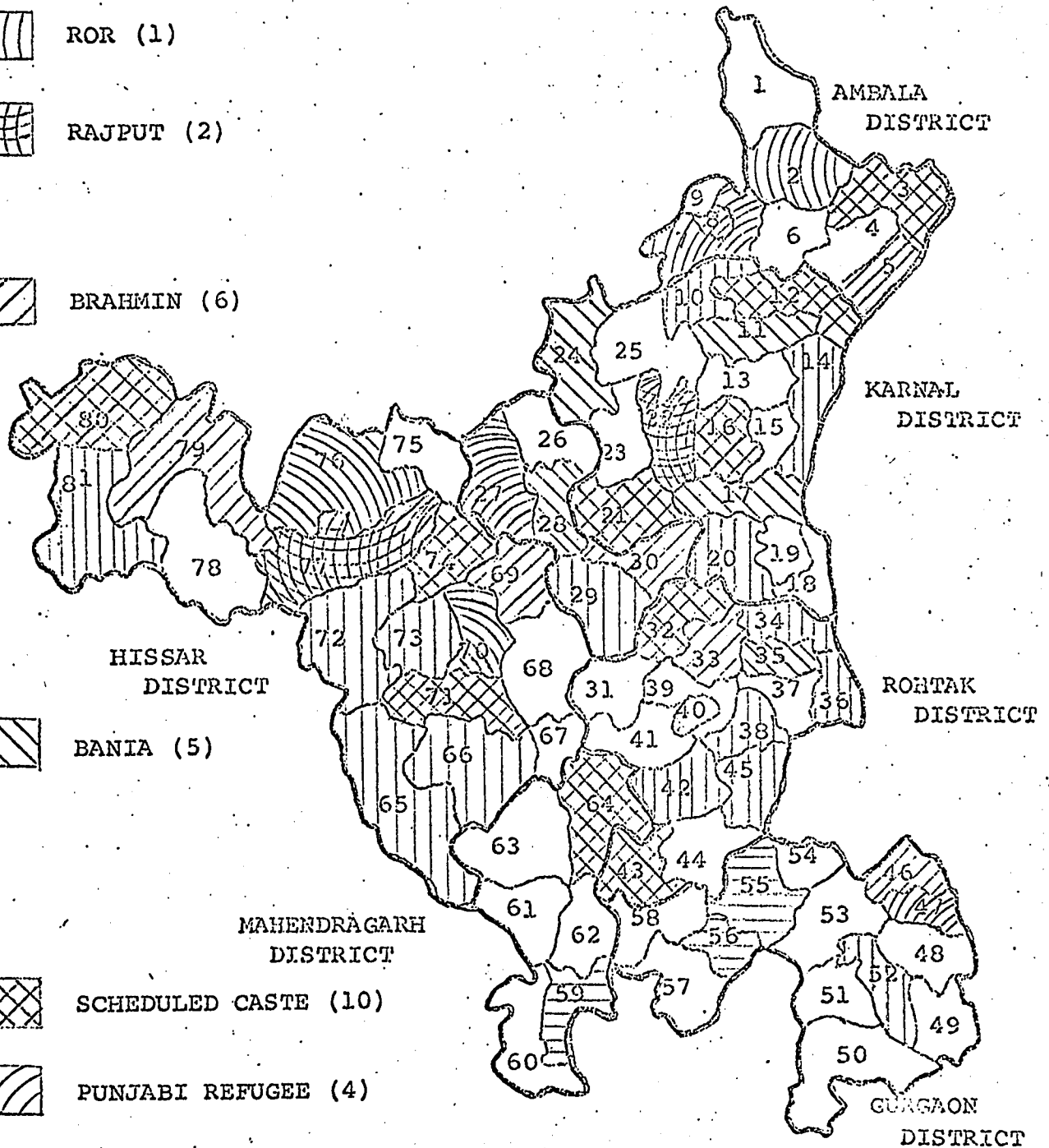




TABLE 4.3

HARYANA: CASTE REPRESENTATION  
OF THE CONGRESS PARTY AS ELECTED IN 1967

Caste	Total No. of Seats	Congress Seats	Percentage
Jat	24	15	62.5
Ahir	7	3	42.9
Ror	2	1	50.0
Gujar	1	-	0.0
Meo	2	-	0.0
Rajput	3	2	66.7
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	21	53.9
Brahmin	9	6	66.7
Bania	6	5	83.3
Sch. Caste	16	10	62.5
Punjabi Ref.	9	4	44.4
Other	2	2	100.0
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	27	64.3
Total	81	48	59.4

### The Factional Configuration and the Second Sharma Ministry

Within the Congress Legislature Party which was returned in 1967, there were some eight discernible factional groupings.<sup>48</sup> While the Bhagwat Dayal group was by far the largest (26) and, indeed, represented a slim majority of the total representation, it was strongly opposed by four factional groups: Rao Birender Singh's (2), Chand Ram's (2), Devi Lal's (6) and Rizak Ram's (4). Collectively these dissident groups represented the difference between a majority and a minority for the Congress Party in the assembly. In such a situation, one might expect that Mr. Sharma would have recognized that he would need to accommodate at least some of the leaders of these groups in the interests of a stable government. The following is an analysis of how he chose, in fact, to deal with this problem.

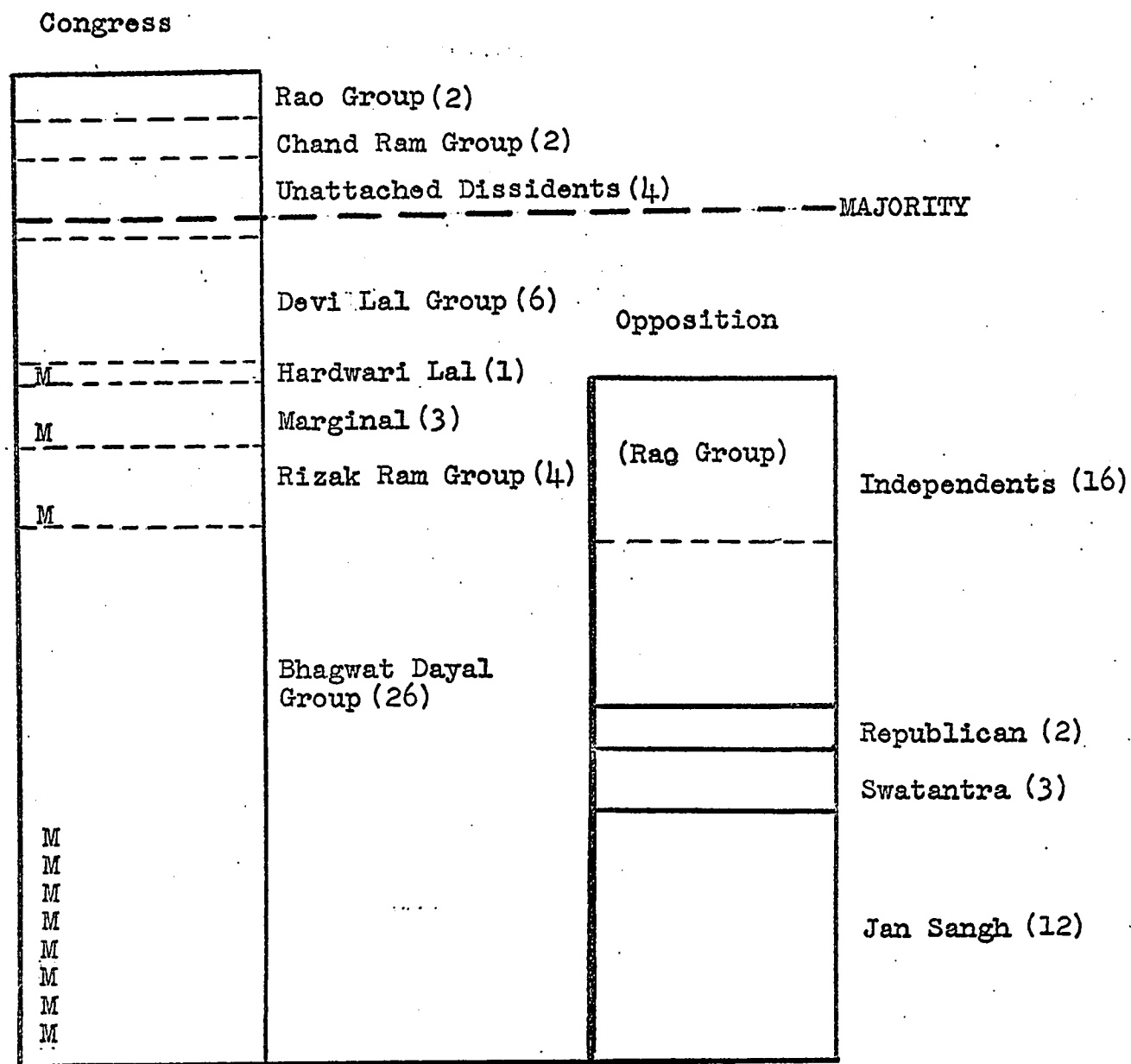
Bhagwat Dayal's first task after the election was to ensure his own re-election as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party. The dissident factional leaders discussed above were steeling themselves to give a strong challenge because of their bitter resentment of his earlier efforts to neutralize their power bases through a judicious use of the ticket assigning machinery. While most of the

---

<sup>48</sup>See Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1

## THE FACTIONAL CONFIGURATION, MARCH, 1967.



M- signifies ministerial position.

prominent factional leaders had themselves been re-elected,<sup>49</sup> their factional strength within the legislature party had been considerably reduced. On the other hand, 16 of their supporters (eight in the case of Rao Birender Singh) had been elected as independents and, in two instances, as Jan Sangh ticket holders. While it was conceivable that the Congress Party would permit some independents to return to the party after a reasonable period of time to strengthen a government, it was clear that Mr. Sharma was not prepared to do this if it were to place the dissidents in an absolute majority within the legislature party.<sup>50</sup> Certainly it was not possible for the dissident factional leaders to include their supporters in the opposition in their calculations of group strength in the forthcoming leadership contest.

Aware that Mr. Sharma was already beginning to negotiate with their more marginal supporters for their votes in return for pledges of political patronage and that he was attempting to "railroad" his way back into office, the dissidents appealed once again to the Congress

---

<sup>49</sup>The Hissar Jat leader, Devi Lal, did not seek the party ticket, but his son, Partap Singh, was elected as a Congress candidate. The Rohtak Jat leader, Ranbir Singh, had been defeated, possibly with the contrivance of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma.

<sup>50</sup>If the dissidents were re-admitted, it would also place the agriculturists in an absolute majority within the Congress Legislature Party.

High Command to arbitrate their differences with the dominant faction. The response was the appointment of the former Home Minister, G.L. Nanda, as mediator.<sup>51</sup> Mr. Nanda negotiated a settlement whereby in return for an explicit guarantee from Mr. Sharma that all groups within the Haryana Congress would be given representation within a small Cabinet, the dissidents agreed to permit Bhagwat Dayal to be unanimously re-elected as the party leader.<sup>52</sup>

Once back in office, however, the Chief Minister chose to ignore these commitments to the dissidents. He named an eleven-man ministry which included nine of his closest factional supporters and only one recognized dissident leader, Rizak Ram.<sup>53</sup> Figure 4.1 helps to illustrate the extent to which B.D. Sharma probably alienated the chief dissident leaders by this policy. Even though his supporters represented only 54.2 per cent of the legislature party, they were awarded with 72.7 per cent of the ministerships. On the other hand, Bhagwat Dayal did try to some extent to reflect both the urban-

---

<sup>51</sup>In 1967 Mr. Nanda abandoned his former constituency in Gujarat and was elected to the Lok Sabha from Kaithal in Haryana.

<sup>52</sup>Tribune, March 3, 1967.

<sup>53</sup>Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp.83-84. The most notable omissions were Rao Birender Singh and Chand Ram, both of whom had been named as acceptable leadership candidates by the dissident groups.

rural and community cleavages in his appointments. Of the eleven, only two were from urban seats while seven represented rural ridings.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, there were five from the agriculturist communities as against seven from the non-agriculturist ones.<sup>55</sup>

In failing to accommodate the main dissident factional leaders in his Cabinet, the Chief Minister was preparing the basis for the defectionist revolt which followed. While he had shown great ability as a factional leader by building up and maintaining the largest and most cohesive group following within the Haryana Congress, he did not show the same leadership ability in the office of party leader. Once in power, he appeared to have failed to appreciate that the dissident factions would not nor could not support his ministry if he insisted on using his position as leader of the party to deny them a say in the political affairs of the state, or if they suspected that he intended to use the party majority to pursue legislative policies which were against rural socio-economic interests. His failure to empathize with their situation and to use more discretion in his dealings with them was to cost him not only his office but ultimately his very legitimacy as a group leader within the Congress and was to create a period





---

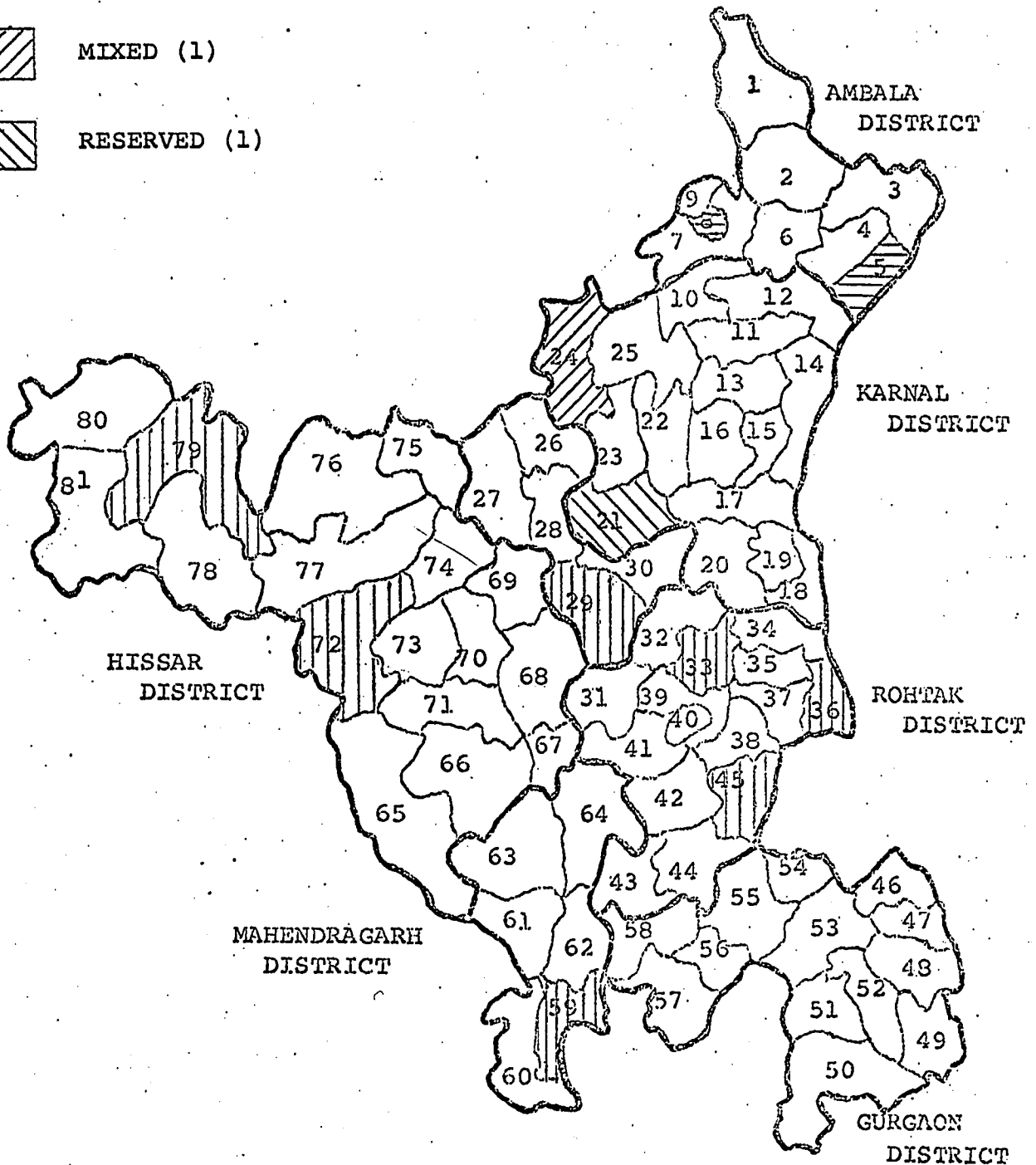
<sup>54</sup> See Map 4.4.

<sup>55</sup> See Map 4.5.

0 8 16 Miles

SECOND HARYANA MINISTRY (CHIEF MINISTER: Bhagwat Dayal Sharma)

-  RURAL (7)
-  URBAN (2)
-  MIXED (1)
-  RESERVED (1)



0 8 16 Miles

## SECOND HARYANA MINISTRY: CASTE BREAKDOWN



JAT (4)



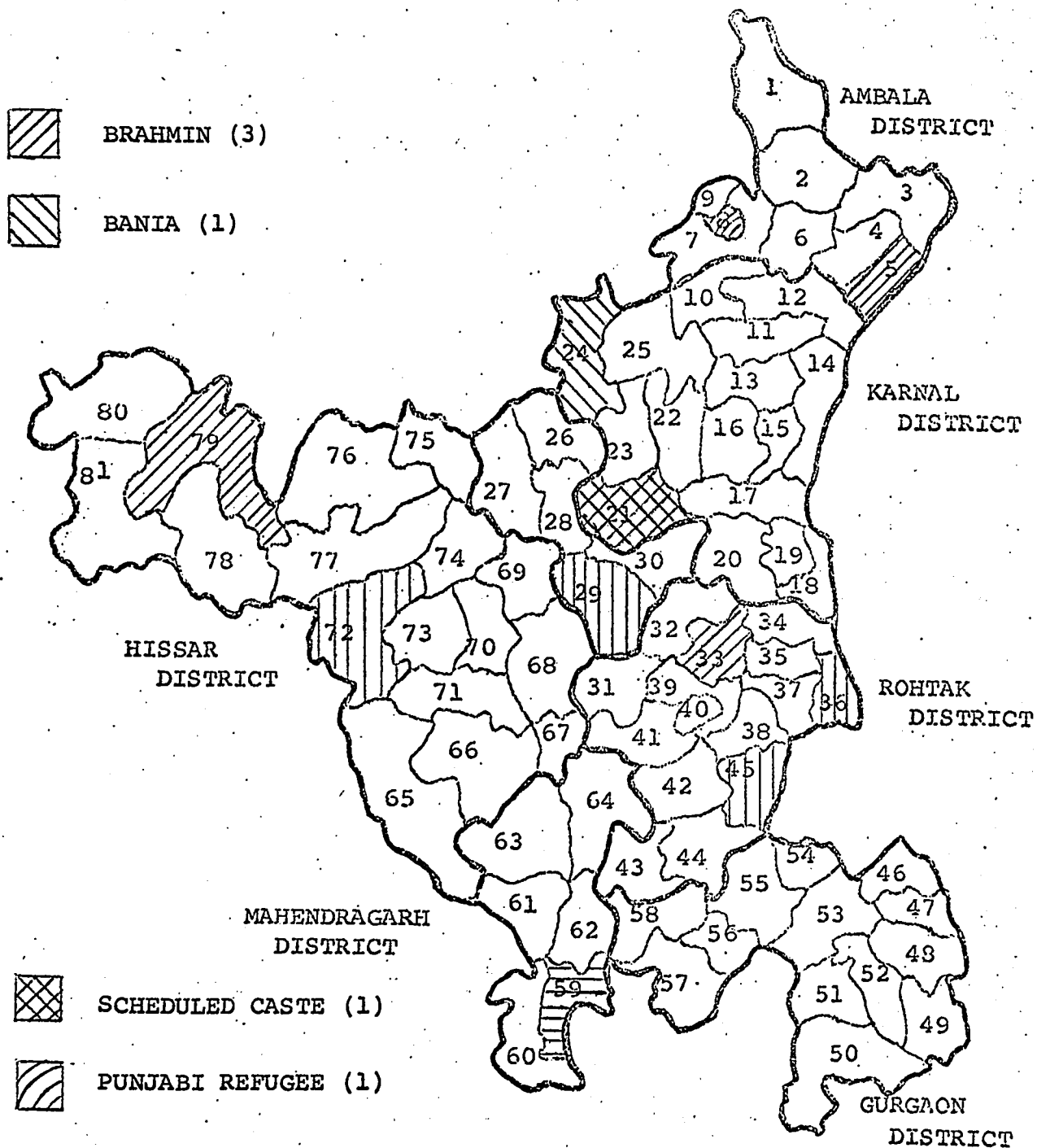
AHIR (1)



BRAHMIN (3)



BANIA (1)





of political instability for Haryana. A more skilled party leader would have been able to find enough support from amongst the several dissident factions to have stayed in power.

#### The Toppling of the Congress Ministry

Confident that he and his ministerial group had complete control over the legislature party, the Chief Minister selected yet another of his factional supporters, Daya Krishan, an advocate from Jind, as the official Congress candidate for the speakership of the Haryana Legislative Assembly. As this election is usually considered a virtual certainty for the nominee of the majority party, it came as a considerable blow to the ruling group when their candidate lost to a dissident Congressman, Rao Birender Singh. The latter candidate was nominated from the floor by two other dissidents, Mool Chand Jain and Partap Singh Daulta. To win, Rao Birender Singh received not only the unanimous support of the opposition, which had declined their right to nominate their own candidate, but also 12 votes from the government benches. This organized dissident revolt was the product of a secret meeting held the night before the vote with leaders of the opposition parties and groups.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>56</sup>Hindustan Times, March 18, 1967.

By acting in concert with the opposition on the election of the speaker, the dissidents were not necessarily planning to abandon the Congress party. Indeed, Rao Birender Singh, in thanking the assembly on his election, implied that he intended to carry on as a loyal member of the Congress.<sup>57</sup> On the other hand, the dissidents openly admitted that their continued support for the party was dependent upon the rectification of certain injustices. Charging that B.D. Sharma had lost the confidence of a sizeable section of the Congress because of his partisan behavior and his refusal to abide by previously made commitments, the dissident leaders demanded a re-opening of the leadership question.<sup>58</sup>

In response to this challenge, the Chief Minister refused to accept the defeat of his nominee as a genuine vote in want of confidence in his leadership as a Congressman had been elected as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. Instead, he attempted to dismiss it as a well-planned conspiracy between the dissidents and the opposition to merely embarrass him in the assembly.<sup>59</sup> Behind the scenes, however, he was working desperately to save his ministry. He adopted the strategy of trying to over-whelm his

---

<sup>57</sup>Tribune, March 18, 1967.

<sup>58</sup>Interviews with Partap Singh Daulta and Chand Ram, May 1968.

<sup>59</sup>Statesman, March 18, 1967.

opponents with the size of his support group without considering that they had already proven to their satisfaction that they could find a majority in the legislature outside of the Congress Party. In an emergency meeting of the Congress Legislature Party convened at Mr. Sharma's request, this tactic only succeeded in forcing the dissident spokesmen to withdraw, but only after they had reiterated their demand for the Chief Minister's resignation. After their departure, the Sharma supporters re-affirmed their confidence in their leader and "abhorred" the indiscipline of the dissidents.<sup>60</sup>

The Congress High Command made no secret of the fact that they felt that Mr. Sharma was to blame for the debacle on the election of the Speaker as the "defeat could have been avoided if its advice had been taken".<sup>61</sup> At the same time, however, it was at a loss as to how the situation could be rectified in that Mr. Sharma was still claiming the support of three-quarters of the Legislature Party and had made it quite clear that he would not give up his office without a fight. Although the central leadership arranged an immediate meeting of the Central Parliamentary Board to review the situation and invited spokesmen from both sides to appear, the dissidents were afraid that the High Command

---

<sup>60</sup>Tribune, March 18, 1967.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

would once again give in to Mr. Sharma. As a result, they decided to pressure the Congress leadership with an ultimatum instead of waiting to hear what it had to propose. Accordingly, the dissidents submitted their formal letters of resignation to the center even before the convening of the meeting along with a declaration that these would only be withdrawn if the Board agreed to remove the Chief Minister. In their verbal presentation, the spokesmen for the dissident groups denounced Mr. Sharma for his efforts to defeat "inconvenient nominees" and for his perpetuation in Haryana of the worst type of "Jat-non-Jat" casteism.<sup>62</sup> The dissidents further castigated the High Command for its failure "to protect the minority in the Haryana Congress which had abided by its advice and had let the present Chief Minister be elected unanimously."<sup>63</sup>

In his summary of the situation, the High Command spokesman, Y.B. Chavan, the Union Home Minister, stated that they recognized the legitimacy of some of the dissident complaints and were prepared to guarantee the dissidents a "substantial say in the affairs of the Government and the Party". On the other hand, he also announced that the High Command was unwilling to upset the existing leadership on the grounds that "yielding to such

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., March 20, 1967.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

pressures in Haryana would set a dangerous precedent for other states where the dissidents can topple the government".<sup>64</sup> This verdict was not acceptable to the dissidents who announced that their resignations should now be considered as binding.

Having failed in its search to find an acceptable compromise, the Congress High Command was forced to instruct Bhagwat Dayal Sharma to submit his Government's resignation to the State Governor. In the meanwhile, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and her Jat cabinet associate, Professor Sher Singh,<sup>65</sup> made one last attempt to reconcile the feuding factional leaders.<sup>66</sup> The only tangible result of their last minute intervention appears to have been a sudden decision on the part of Rizak Ram and his group that they were still in the Congress and that they would

---

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Sher Singh left the Congress party with Devi Lal in 1962 to found the Haryana Lok Samiti and to fight the elections on the Punjab reorganisation question. He rejoined the Congress after the Union Government decided to accept the reorganisation demand and was elected as a member of Parliament in 1967 from Rohtak on the Congress ticket. He joined Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet as Minister of State for Education. It was of course embarrassing for him to find one of his own factional colleagues, Devi Lal, associated with the attempt to topple the Congress government in Haryana.

<sup>66</sup>Tribune, March 22, 1967.

continue to remain its "loyal soldiers".<sup>67</sup> The loss of this dissident faction's support, on which the rebel Congressmen had counted in calculating their strength, was the first indication that they would have difficulty in creating a stable alternative to the Congress out of their own factional support and that of an opposition united only by its desire to see the Congress removed from power in yet another state.

Although the dissidents were not prepared to give the Congress High Command an opportunity to prove that it could control Mr. Sharma's attempts to totally dominate Haryana politics, it is ironic that the dissidents were able to hoist the Chief Minister with his own petard -- factionalism.<sup>68</sup> By insisting on advancing the interests of his own caste-ridden faction and not those of the Congress party, Bhagwat Dayal created the spirit of "job-hunting" which was pervading Haryana politics. His attempt

---

<sup>67</sup>Patriot, March 22, 1967. Rizak Ram may have been motivated by the consideration that should the Congress High Command conclude, in future, that only a Jat leader could provide Haryana with political stability, his loyalty at this time would serve him well. On the other hand, in later interviews, a number of dissidents explained that it had been to their advantage to have had one of their own numbers remain within the Congress ranks so as to undermine Mr. Sharma's leadership from within and to indirectly support their non-Congress government as long as B.D. Sharma remained the leader of the Congress party in opposition to them.

<sup>68</sup>Statesman, (Editorial), March 23, 1967.

to emulate his former patron, Partap Singh Kairon, failed because he did not appreciate the true subtleties of party leadership in a situation of pervasive intra-party factionalism. Dissidents within a ruling party must be given some reason for remaining subject to the party whip. Also, the Chief Minister should have taken into consideration the change in Congress fortunes in other states after the 1967 elections.<sup>69</sup> Congress state governments were no longer the rule in Indian politics: a united front of non-Congress parties in power now appeared to be a plausible alternative model.

#### The Congress in Opposition

Although Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was forced to submit his ministry's resignation and thereby lost his office of Chief Minister to Rao Birender Singh, he continued to lead the Congress Legislature Party which now consisted of his own non-Jat faction, the small dissident agriculturist faction led by Rizak Ram and a few unattached individuals who appeared to have decided to remain within the party for the moment until it was clear that the dissidents were in fact capable of creating a stable alternative to Congress rule. At no point in this period, however, did Mr. Sharma suggest that he would be prepared to step down from the party leadership in the hope that another leader would be able to

---

<sup>69</sup>See Chapter I for details.

find a workable compromise with the dissidents. He recognized that without the patronage of this office, his factional support would disintegrate in the scramble for ministerial positions under a new leader and that, therefore, his only option was to hang on to the Congress leadership at all costs and to hope that the dissidents would fail to maintain a stable government based on non-Congress party support.

When it became obvious that the United Front, while not providing the most effective government, could hold power in the assembly without Congress support, Mr. Sharma, knowing that his own faction would disintegrate as marginal supporters began to cross the floor, undertook a number of desperate measures in an effort to regain power or even a share of it. These manoeuvres, which were to give the Samyukta Dal leaders no peace in office, failed in their basic objective of restoring a Congress or Congress-backed government. On the other hand, they, more than anything else, eventually created the atmosphere of chronic political instability which was to be the justification used by the Central government in removing the United Front administration.

Relying on his firm control over the majority of the remaining Congress members and the likelihood that the High Command would not interfere with his efforts to oust the new ministry, Bhagwat Dayal thought that he could



foresee a situation in which he would have the opportunity to take advantage of internal differences within the United Front to offer his disciplined group support to any factions prepared to break away from the Samyukta Dal and to rejoin the Congress, or to accept the support of his party for a non-Congress government which would exclude both his main factional rivals and other political parties, especially the Jan Sangh. Bhagwat Dayal's calculations appeared to be based on a good general appreciation of the problems of trying to maintain a stable government based on a divisive collection of factional interests and opposition parties. Indeed, within two months, the Samyukta Dal was already demonstrating that it was incapable of retaining an image of internal cohesion and a number of intra-Front rifts based upon personal and ideological differences were already public knowledge.<sup>70</sup>

Bhagwat Dayal, however, was wrong in his expectation that he would be permitted to topple the ministry in such a way so as to guarantee his own return to power either directly or indirectly. Not only did his opponents recognize that it had been his partisan behavior as leader which had inspired the dissidents to rebel, the Congress High Command was also making it quite clear that they regarded his leadership as an impediment to the restoration of a

---

<sup>70</sup> Indian Express, June 7, 1967.

stable Congress government in Haryana. The centre, and Y.B. Chavan in particular, began to place great pressure on him to resign the leadership so that the Congress would be in a better position to invite back those dissidents who were manifestly dissatisfied with certain elements in the Samyukta Dal, especially the necessity of relying on Jan Sangh support, and to permit them to participate in the formation of a new Congress government.<sup>71</sup> Mr. Sharma, however, realized that his factional following would disintegrate under these circumstances and steadfastly rejected any proposal which would reduce his power within the state Congress. This left Mr. Chavan, as the High Command spokesman, expressing "complete frustration" with Mr. Sharma's intransigence as the centre realized that it could not force him to resign without running the risk of a public scandal and perhaps another massive defection which would completely cripple the Congress organisation in Haryana.

Given this situation, the High Command proved very responsive to a scheme proposed by Professor Sher Singh. In effect, this plan envisioned that the Haryana Congress should enter into an agreement with his protege, Devi Lal, stating that the Congress would support his faction and

---

<sup>71</sup>Statesman, June 17, 1967.

whatever dissidents would follow him back across the floor as a non-Congress government and would, in this way, provide Haryana with a government which did not have to rely on Jan Sangh support. The agreement also stipulated that this Congress-supported ministry would accept Mrs. Gandhi's arbitration on the Chandigarh question which, by this time, because of pressure from Punjab, was becoming a serious problem for the central government.<sup>72</sup> Struggling to maintain his grip on the Haryana Congress Party, Bhagwat Dayal reluctantly accepted this arrangement, although it was neither to his interest nor to the interest of his Jat supporter, Rizak Ram, that Devi Lal should be given the opportunity of becoming the dominant agriculturist leader in Haryana.

Much to the surprise of the central leadership, Rao Birender Singh proved capable of dealing with this Congress-backed attempt to topple his Samyukta Dal government. Through a series of manoeuvres which included a sudden expansion of his ministry, he succeeded in isolating Devi Lal and his core-faction and excluded them from his government while still retaining a slim majority. It would seem, that the dissidents, despite their dissatisfaction with having to rely on Jan Sangh support, were not enthused about entering into a similar arrangement with

---

<sup>72</sup>Tribune, June 23, 1967.

the Sharma-dominated Congress. In the end, Devi Lal, despite his formidable standing within the Jat community, found himself left with the loyal backing of only five legislators.<sup>73</sup> The "Haryana accord", instead of being Devi Lal's ticket to power, became the instrument of his surrender,<sup>74</sup> leaving Bhagwat Dayal free to inform the central Congress leadership that "an agreement with Mr. Devi Lal, a member of the High Command of the ruling Samyukta Dal, has ended."<sup>75</sup>

Once Devi Lal's manoeuvre had failed, and it was now clear that his group would not be able to form the dominant faction in any Congress-supported ministry, the Sharma faction (24 members of the remaining 32 Congress legislators) reversed its previous position and announced that it would be prepared "to support any non-Congress ministry in the state which topples the Rao Birender Singh ministry and which follows the Congress ideology and has no connections with any communal party" (i.e. the Jan Sangh).<sup>76</sup> This ploy was immediately denounced by the remaining Jat faction

---

<sup>73</sup>Statesman, June 22, 1967. This incident is discussed in more detail in Chapter VI.

<sup>74</sup>Tribune, June 22, 1967.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., July 17, 1967.

within the Congress led by Rizak Ram. They accused Mr. Sharma of corrupting the state Congress and of trying to play the "fool" with Devi Lal.<sup>77</sup> In making their charge, they also re-affirmed that there would be no hope of reviving Congress rule in Haryana as long as B.D. Sharma remained as leader,<sup>78</sup> and implied that they were prepared, if necessary, to defect in support of the Samyukta Dal in an effort to block his return to power.

Bhagwat Dayal was also afraid that Rao Birender Singh might succeed in making a deal with the High Command behind his back.<sup>79</sup> Because of this, renewed efforts were made to persuade individual legislators to defect to the opposition in return for pledges of political rewards once the Samyukta Dal was finally overthrown. While the number of individual defections and even re-defections increased during this period, the Birender Singh government always managed to win over enough supporters (mainly through the device of immediate Cabinet appointment) to retain a tenuous hold on power. Mystified by their failure to topple the Samyukta Dal government, the Sharma group accused Rizak Ram of being in league with Rao Birender Singh to foil their

---

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., July 21, 1967.

<sup>78</sup>Statesman, July 25, 1967.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., September 2, 1967.

attempts.<sup>80</sup>

In the meanwhile, Devi Lal was also appealing to the High Command to intervene to force Mr. Sharma to live up to their earlier agreement.<sup>81</sup> From his complaints it would appear that Bhagwat Dayal was trying to ensure that, in defiance of central directives, Devi Lal would not be given the opportunity of forming a new government on his own and that he would ultimately be forced to support the former Chief Minister's bid to return to office as the only means of ousting the Dal ministry. Mr. Sharma, on the other hand, argued that he had been justified in terminating the pact with Devi Lal as he had failed to complete his commitment to win over 15 members of the Front in three months.<sup>82</sup>

Having clearly lost his bid to come to power with the assistance of the Congress, Devi Lal was now in a dilemma. Both sides needed his support if they were to form a stable ministry. Each, in turn, urged him to swallow his pride and to either work for the return of Bhagwat Dayal to power

---

<sup>80</sup>In interviews, a number of the dissidents including Rao Birender Singh claimed that this was essentially true and that Mr. Rizak Ram had sent over members of his own faction from time to time to counter-balance Congress sponsored defections while campaigning to have Mr. Sharma removed from the Congress leadership.

<sup>81</sup>Hindustan Times, October 5, 1967.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., October 10, 1967.

by rejoining the Congress or to accept the overtures of the Samyukta Dal and rejoin them to ensure that a non-agriculturist would not return to power in Haryana.<sup>83</sup> Naturally, both sides were prepared to offer firm guarantees that he, and his group, would be given "an honourable position in any future ministry".<sup>84</sup> Devi Lal, however, was not yet prepared to trust either of the leaders and, after rejecting the Samyukta Dal's proposals outright, continued to press the High Command for an assurance that B.D. Sharma would be removed from the party leadership before the next elections. He felt that he needed such a guarantee before rejoining the Congress because he feared that if he went against prevailing Jat feelings and supported a non-agriculturist leader, he would lose whatever right he had to claim to be a Jat spokesman in Haryana.

The Rizak Ram group was not prepared to permit any High Command settlement which would permit the party's non-agriculturist leader to be replaced by a rival Jat factional leader and once again threatened to defect en masse if Devi Lal were given any assurances about either the leadership or placing him in a position to be the behind-the-scenes power-broker of the party. It was this lack of cohesion within the Congress which perhaps best

---

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., October 11, 1967.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., October 27, 1967.

explains the survival for a number of months of Rao Birender Singh's crippled ministry after the loss of a major constituent group and the uncertainty as to whether, on a day-to-day basis, it actually represented a majority in the assembly.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, these struggles both for personal power and for the domination of one group over another on both sides of the house, caused observers to wonder whether either side was capable, under the circumstances, of forming a stable ministry.<sup>86</sup>

By November, 1967, it was clear to all concerned that the Haryana political situation had reached a state of absolute stalemate,<sup>87</sup> and even the Chief Minister was himself considering requesting the Governor to call a mid-term poll on the grounds that the uncertainty could not continue.<sup>88</sup> Elements within the Congress, however, were worried that if the party was drawn into an election under the existing leadership, there was every likelihood that the non-Congress forces could win a new majority on the issue of keeping a non-agriculturist out of office. Because

---

<sup>85</sup>The Chief Minister's difficulties in maintaining even a semblance of a majority will be discussed in Chapters VI and VII.

<sup>86</sup>Statesman, October 29, 1967.

<sup>87</sup>Hindustan Times, November 1, 1967.

<sup>88</sup>Tribune, October 31, 1967.



of this fear, the High Command renewed its pressure on Devi Lal to merge his group into the state Congress so that a broader-based party could be organized for the election.<sup>89</sup> On November 17, 1967, Devi Lal announced that he had had "satisfactory talks" with the High Command and that he was therefore going to return with his four remaining legislative followers to the Congress fold.<sup>90</sup>

Mr. Devi Lal's return, however, was overshadowed by the forwarding of a report, the next day, prepared by the Governor of Haryana, B.N. Chakravarty, to the President of India which recommended that action be taken under Article 356 of the Constitution, permitting the immediate dissolution of the assembly and the assumption of all the functions of the government of Haryana by the President.<sup>91</sup> In part, his report read:

As I see the position, the Congress Legislature Party may, perhaps, be able to topple the present Samyukta Dal Government, with the help of the Devi Lal group, but it is not in a position to form an alternative stable government, mainly because of the reluctance of many Jat members of the legislature to accept Pt. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin, as the Chief Minister. While Shri Devi Lal and Pt. Bhagwat Dayal have repeatedly claimed that they have the majority to topple over the present Government, it is significant that no serious claim has yet been made of their willingness or capacity to

---

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1967.

<sup>90</sup>Indian Express, November 18, 1967.

<sup>91</sup>Kashyap, pp. 100-101 and Appendices, p.15.

form an alternative stable government. Even if the opposition were to be able to form a government, it will be no more stable than the present one. The process of defections will start again when the members who are now being given all kinds of promises for their support, find that the ruling party cannot redeem those promises.<sup>92</sup>

While the implications of the central government's decision to accept the Governor's recommendations will be discussed elsewhere, it is clear that the central Congress leadership, in deciding to intervene so decisively into Haryana politics, was determined to try and rationalize the intra-party factional conflict in such a way as to give the Congress an opportunity of overcoming the distrust which had been created about the organisation amongst the agriculturist communities. For Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, this intervention suggested that not only would his leadership of the Legislature Party be challenged, but also the right of the non-agriculturist grouping in the state to attempt to dominate Haryana politics. The High Command now recognized that the attempt to create a Congress government for Haryana which favoured the non-Jat interests had been a failure. The Jats, they learned from this experiment, were not prepared to cooperate with any government which did not implicitly recognize that the agriculturist tribes, despite their overall minority in the general population, were still the

---

<sup>92</sup>Excerpt from the text of the report from the Governor of Haryana to the President of India, dated November 17, 1967, as quoted by Kashyap, Appendices, p.14.

dominant political force in a predominantly agricultural state.

### Summary and Conclusions

When attempting to evaluate the extent to which factional rivalries are based on a desire for increased personal power and prestige, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's behavior in his struggle to dominate Haryana politics might suggest that this is an important consideration. At no point during the period examined did Mr. Sharma accept a compromise which would have given the party leadership to another leader, not even to one of the agriculturists who had remained loyal to him. As an astute factional leader, Mr. Sharma must have recognized that whoever was the party leader in Haryana would inevitably attempt to create a personal factional following capable of dominating the party.

The Haryana situation also presents evidence to suggest that factional struggles within a ruling party are perpetuated by a desire, on the part of the group leaders, to increase the political influence of certain community elements. In the case of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, there is considerable justification for the claim that his group mainly spoke for the interests of the Brahmin and other urban groups opposed to states reorganisation and for, at least before the 1967 elections, the landless lower castes and Harijans who feared that the agriculturist groups

desired to re-create a "Jat-raj" in Haryana. This concern on the part of both the politically articulate higher caste groups and those in the rural society still under the domination of the agriculturists may have helped inculcate an "all-or-nothing" political mentality within the anti-Jat group. In such a situation, the struggle to maintain a control in the political sphere may have reflected a real concern on the part of the non-agriculturist interests for their future economic and social survival in the state. Their strategy of seizing absolute political dominance, however, was bound to antagonize the agriculturist leaders who, while not always able to work together in a cohesive alliance, were individually aware that their communities still had enough social and economic power to dominate all aspects of life in the rural areas. Their response, therefore, was to refuse to cooperate with a government which attempted to make their interests secondary in the state.

While the initial impression might be that Devi Lal was searching for personal power, his case may in fact help confirm the community-group hypothesis. It may be more reasonable to attempt to account for his group's reluctance to re-merge with the Congress until a firm guarantee was given by the centre that the state leadership would be changed, not because of their personal ambitions, but rather in light of the fact that they could not appear to accept the leadership of a non-Jat and still retain the

support of those societal elements which they claimed to represent.

The reluctance of the High Command to intervene in the earlier stages of this conflict to ensure that all elements were reasonably represented in the government may reflect not only the centre's concern of not appearing to favour the indiscipline of the dissidents, but also the disunity within the central Congress. Both the dominant group and the dissidents had "friends" in New Delhi. The lack of a neutral central party organisation capable of effectively arbitrating state disputes may have forced the minority factions to seek a more favourable alliance with those opposition parties eager to seize any opportunity to further destroy the Congress hegemony in India.

B.D. Sharma's attempt to use his group's dominant position within the state Congress organisation to pursue the particularistic interests of his supporters had the unfortunate result of perpetuating and possibly enlarging the cleavage which has traditionally existed between the urban and rural communities. In an environment of long-standing societal distrust, this attempt to use the state political process to benefit particular interests would appear to represent an example of how factionalism may inhibit the growth of a modern democratic polity. The minority dissidents, when they thought that they were being denied their rightful share of political power, broke party discipline and caused a subsequent collapse of the parliamentary process.

## CHAPTER V

### THE SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE: THE DEFECTION OF THE DISSIDENT CONGRESS FACTIONS

#### Introduction

In his analysis of the Indian political party system, Rajni Kothari suggests that the leadership of the single dominant party, in order to maintain political power, must remain responsive to demands both from within and without the party.<sup>1</sup> This need for reconciliation within the Congress party, in turn, implies that the leadership must be prepared, from time to time, to absorb into their organisation those groups and movements, which articulate demands that have developed a measure of popular support outside of the party, if they are to prevent opposition parties from increasing their potential electoral support.

In Haryana, therefore, it had appeared to be a good strategy for the Congress leadership to welcome back those dissidents who had left the party at an earlier date to pressure the political system for a separate Hindi-speaking

---

<sup>1</sup>Rajni Kothari, "The Congress 'System' in India", in Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Occasional Papers, Number One, Party System and Electoral Studies (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967), pp.2-3.

state. For their part, these Congress dissidents also had compelling reasons for seeking such an accommodation. Foremost, there still remained within the Congress a sizable number of legislators and party workers who had shared their desire for states reorganisation and who would likely support a government pledged to aiding the agriculturist interests.

The previous chapter dealt with the attempt on the part of those who had earlier controlled the Congress organisation to oppose both the returned dissidents, and their factional colleagues who had remained within the party, in their bid to seize control of the state's political apparatus and to retain their dominant faction status within the party. This present section examines the attempt on the part of the dissidents to wrest power away from the dominant faction. It also analyses their subsequent attempt to shift the balance of political power away from the Congress, through the device of a massive floor-crossing, and to provide Haryana with an alternative government in the form of a non-Congress United Front consisting of Congress defectors and the diverse opposition parties and independent groups in the assembly.

The analysis of this search for a political alternative on the part of the Congress dissidents is presented in the following order: first, a survey of the events leading up to the massive dissident defection which unseated the Bhagwat Dayal ministry. This is discussed in terms of: the return

of the dissident elements to the Congress in 1966, the failure of the anti-Sharma forces in the pre-election leadership contests, the performance of the dissident factions in the fourth General Elections, the defeat of the "official" Congress nominee for the speakership of the assembly, and the breakdown of negotiations with the High Command. Second, the creation of the Samyukta Dal and the formation of a United Front ministry. Third, an examination of the opposition parties and groups as they existed in the Haryana assembly before the massive defection of the dissidents from the Congress. Fourth, a profile of the Congress defectors in March, 1967. Fifth, a breakdown of the entire Samyukta Dal as constituted on March 22, 1967. Sixth, the factional configuration in the Haryana Assembly in April, 1967. Finally, profiles of the United Front Council of Ministers as sworn in on March 24, 1967 and as expanded on June 20, 1967.

#### The Return of the Dissidents

"One party dominance" may be characterized as being a single party of consensus plus a number of parties of pressure. Meaningful political pressure may here be seen as coming both from the competing factions within the dominant party and from without in the form of a number of diverse parties and groups including dissident factions which have broken away from the ruling party. Before the fourth General Elections saw the Congress hegemony undermined in a number



of states, it was usual to view those parties and groups outside of the dominant party not as political alternatives but rather as interests intent on influencing the Government through pressure, criticism and censure.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned above, to remain in a position of continuing dominance, the leadership of the ruling party usually attempted to remain responsive to demands from within and without. As the leaders of a reconciliation party, they recognized the need to absorb, from time to time, those groups and movements outside of the party when their demands or programmes were seen to have struck a responsive chord amongst the electorate.

An example of the above may be seen in the return of the Haryana Lok Samiti to the Congress fold. This was an opposition pressure party composed, on the whole, of dissident agriculturist Congressmen from the Haryana area who had withdrawn from the party before the 1962 general elections in order to pressure the Government for the creation of a separate Haryana state unit. Once the Congress High Command and subsequently the central government had accepted the recommendation to divide Punjab along linguistic lines, the Samiti decided to dissolve its organisation and to seek re-admission to the Congress. While the ministerialist group in the Punjab assembly welcomed their plea for accommodation as a means of strengthening their factional

---

<sup>2</sup>Kothari, pp.2-3.

forces vis-à-vis the Kairon-ites who still dominated the organisational wing,<sup>3</sup> the dominant faction in the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee, under the leadership of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, argued that this matter should be delayed until a leader was elected for the Congress Legislature Party in Haryana.<sup>4</sup> The executive of the A.I.C.C., however, recognized that the Samiti's leaders, Professor Sher Singh and Devi Lal, had considerable influence and support in the agricultural communities of Haryana. Accordingly, they decided that there was no reason to delay their re-entry and in June 1966, the entire membership of the Haryana Lok Samiti, numbering some 20,000 supporters and a legislative representation of three MPs (led by Professor Sher Singh) and seven MLAs (led by Devi Lal) were given permission to re-join the Congress en bloc.<sup>5</sup>

The re-entry of this opposition pressure party into the Congress was expected to cause a radical re-alignment of forces within the party at the state level.<sup>6</sup> It was recognized at the time that if Devi Lal could make up his past

---

<sup>3</sup>As early as April, 1966, elements within the ministerialist grouping were pressuring the Congress President to agree to this re-entry without conditions. Tribune, April 4, 1966.

<sup>4</sup>Patriot, May 13, 1966.

<sup>5</sup>Tribune, July 1, 1966 and Indian Express, July 2, 1966. One MLA, Ram Sarup, from Rohtak district, and a number of members opposed the decision to dissolve the organisation on the grounds that it was opportunistic and hasty. Tribune, July 11, 1966.

<sup>6</sup>Patriot, July 2, 1966.

differences with the other agriculturist leaders, such as Ranbir Singh of Rohtak district, the agriculturists as a group would be in an excellent position to present a common front against Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, who was attempting to rally the non-agriculturists around him in an effort to prevent the agriculturists from re-gaining political dominance over the Haryana area.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Devi Lal, however, implying that he was sensitive to the charge that his group's re-entry into the Congress before the fourth General Elections was an opportunistic move, announced that his followers would remain neutral in the forthcoming contests for both the presidency of the organisation and the leadership of the assembly party.<sup>8</sup> This meant that; for the moment, the re-admission of the dissidents would not upset the existing balance within the party which still favoured, especially in the organisational wing, those elements representing the urban and lower caste interests.

While it is difficult to readily assess why a factional leader such as Devi Lal, who clearly saw himself as a major spokesman for agriculturist interests in Haryana, would undertake to remain neutral in these contests, certain considerations probably influenced his decision. First, at this juncture, neither he nor any of his factional

---

<sup>7</sup>The Statesman, July 4, 1967.

<sup>8</sup>Indian Express, July 13, 1967.

supporters could be considered for the leadership, implying that he would have to give his support to another agriculturist, such as Ranbir Singh, who would be difficult to oust once in office. Second, as a strong regional leader, he may have had reason to believe that he would emerge out of the fourth General Elections with a larger and more cohesive faction and would, therefore, be in a better position to contest the leadership for the post-election Congress Legislature Party. Third, by remaining neutral and thereby retaining the favour of influential persons within the Congress High Command, he may have hoped to be viewed later as an acceptable compromise choice should the agriculturists en bloc refuse to support a non-agriculturist leader after the elections. Finally, the current leadership struggle between a non-agriculturist, who had considerable influence within the organisational wing, and the various agriculturist factional leaders had the potential of eliminating or weakening candidates who otherwise might represent a serious challenge to Devi Lal's claim of being the most important agriculturist spokesman in a future leadership race.

#### The Failure of the Dissidents in the Leadership Contests

The successes of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and his non-Jat alliance in winning control first of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee and second of the Haryana Congress Legislature Party have been discussed earlier. The nature of the agriculturist failure, however, merits further discussion.

At one level, the struggle for political dominance in Haryana may be viewed as an aspect of a long-standing rivalry between the urban higher-caste elements which had dominated the Punjab Congress movement in the pre-independence period and the agriculturist tribes such as the Jats who were post-independence late-comers into the Congress. At another level, the struggle may also be viewed as a personal contest between the hitherto top Congressman in the area, Devi Lal - who with Sher Singh had helped Partap Singh Kairon come to power - and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a Brahmin who had been later elevated into a regional leadership position by Kairon when he was trying to counteract the Haryana Jat influence in Punjabi politics. The leadership contests at the time of Haryana's creation, therefore, may be viewed in two ways. First, they could be seen as a desire on the part of the urban interests to continue to politically dominate the area and an aversion on the part of the rural agriculturist interests to such a continuation. Second, they could be viewed as the culmination of a long-standing feud between Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, who now claimed to lead the Haryana wing of the Kairon faction, and Devi Lal, who had led the Jats in their demand for a separate Haryana state and who now deemed it to be his right to play a major role in the shaping of the new state's political destiny.

Once Devi Lal announced that he and his faction would

remain neutral in the immediate leadership contests, the task of confronting the non-agriculturist challenge was left up to those agriculturist dissident leaders who had chosen to remain within the Congress despite Kairon's purges of their factional support. These included: Ranbir Singh, Rizak Ram and Rao Birender Singh. These leaders, however, perhaps forgetting the route to political power developed by Partap Singh Kairon, tended to concentrate their attention on the leadership contest for the Haryana Congress Legislature Party. Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's narrow victory, 25 to 22, over Abdul Ghaffar Khan, an elderly Congress worker who was obviously only to be regarded as an interim leader,<sup>9</sup> suggests that they could have won the Presidentship of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee if they had only rallied behind a more dynamic candidate. It also implied that they either had to unite together to elect one of their own as leader of the Legislature Party or they would have to accept Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's fait accompli that the non-agriculturists should determine Congress policies and dominate the assembly during the first crucial years of Haryana's existence as a separate state unit.

While the non-agriculturists had only one potential candidate, B.D. Sharma, for the leadership of the assembly party, the agriculturists, reflecting the factional rivalries which existed among them, were pressing forward the names

---

<sup>9</sup>For details, see Chapter IV.

of a number of regional leaders including Ranbir Singh, Rizak Ram, and Rao Birender Singh. Their inability to settle upon a common candidate and to work together for his election pointed the way to their common opponent's eventual election. By September 1966, when it was clear that the struggle on the part of each of these three candidates to win enough pledged support in the legislature party was running against them, the agriculturists did finally agree to appeal as a unit to the High Command and to ask it to nominate one of the agriculturist leaders as the unanimous choice for the party leadership. Mr. Kamaraj, the A.I.C.C. President, however, ruled this out and insisted that a free election be held. Seeking a way out of this dilemma, several of the agriculturist factions attempted to unite behind the candidature of Rao Birender Singh.<sup>10</sup> It was hoped that he, as an agriculturist leader but a non-Jat, would be in the best position to overcome Jat personal rivalries and also to recruit certain non-Jat elements, including the lower castes who were not willing to pledge themselves to a Rohtak Jat such as Ranbir Singh or Rizak Ram. With the pledged support of the Rizak Ram group plus the Devi Lal faction which refused to support a rival Jat leader as the candidate,<sup>11</sup> Rao Birender Singh began to appear

---

<sup>10</sup>The Indian Express, September 17, 1966.

<sup>11</sup>Tribune, September 29, 1966.

as a very serious challenger. The hopes of the agriculturist elements which had united behind this candidate, however, were dashed by two events. First, Ranbir Singh split with the agriculturist alliance to make a separate arrangement with B.D. Sharma.<sup>12</sup> Second, Mr. Kamaraj, almost at the last moment, disallowed Rao Birender Singh from contesting the election on the grounds that he was not then a member of the Haryana Legislative Assembly.<sup>13</sup>

These events left the dissidents in complete disarray and even though a valiant attempt was made to find an alternative candidate, including Ranbir Singh, Rizak Ram, Ram Sarup Mittal, and Hardwari Lal, none of these individuals proved capable of solidifying a workable alliance amongst the agriculturist groups capable of challenging Bhagwat Dayal Sharma.<sup>14</sup> In the end, the agriculturists decided that the only reasonable tactic under the circumstances was to accept and to even support the unanimous election of B.D. Sharma,<sup>15</sup> with the intention of challenging his leadership again after the fourth General Elections. Rizak Ram and Mrs. Chandravati, both Jat opponents of Bhagwat Dayal, however, pointedly

---

<sup>12</sup>Patriot, October 7, 1966.

<sup>13</sup>Tribune, October 12, 1966.

<sup>14</sup>Tribune, October 14, 1966, Patriot, October 18, 1966 and Indian Express, October 20, 1966.

<sup>15</sup>Times of India, October 22, 1966.



absented themselves from the meeting of the Legislature Party convened to formalize Mr. Sharma's election.

Faced by the strong non-agriculturist challenge presented by Bhagwat Dayal and his factional supporters within the Congress organisation, the agriculturist dissidents failed in these crucial leadership contests because they appeared not to appreciate the full importance of the office of the President of a Pradesh Congress Committee in a struggle to control or dominate a legislature party. They also failed because they were unable, amongst themselves, to unite wholeheartedly behind a single agriculturist leader who could then use their unwavering support to recruit the necessary additional backing which he might need from amongst those unattached legislators who were hesitating as to which candidate to support. For those legislators not attached to any of the major factions, the fact that the agriculturists were not able to put up a common candidate made the candidature of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma more attractive than it would have otherwise been. He, at least, had a firm grip on the party organisational machinery and would therefore be able to give his supporters substantial assistance during the forthcoming general elections. Outmanoeuvred within the party, the dissidents were now looking forward towards these elections as an opportunity to reinforce their regional factional strength within the Congress with the hope of challenging not only

the non-agriculturist alliance and B.D. Sharma, but also their agriculturist rivals for the leadership of the new Legislative Assembly.

#### The Dissidents and the Fourth General Elections

Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, as noted in the previous chapter, used the period immediately following his election to the two top positions in Haryana politics to consolidate his factional power base against the agriculturists. Of greatest concern to the dissidents, however, was the ease with which Mr. Sharma managed to gain absolute control over the Haryana Pradesh Election Committee - the body empowered to select Congress candidates for the forthcoming elections.<sup>16</sup> At one point, the dissidents toyed with the notion of resigning en masse from the Congress party before the elections,<sup>17</sup> but were dissuaded by the Congress High Command which promised that their grievances about the party leadership would be adjusted to their satisfaction after the elections.<sup>18</sup> Despite this central intervention, Bhagwat Dayal refused to make any concessions to the dissidents on ticket assignments, thereby eliminating almost any chance that the dissidents might have had of winning a majority

---

<sup>16</sup>Hindustan Times, November 19, 1966.

<sup>17</sup>Statesman, December 16, 1966.

<sup>18</sup>From interview data.

of the seats within the next Congress Legislature Party. An appeal, on the part of the dissidents, to the Congress Central Election Committee to reopen the Haryana list<sup>19</sup> was refused and only a few minor adjustments in the case of the Devi Lal group were made on central orders. The agriculturists, as a group, were dissatisfied with Bhagwat Dayal's ticket allocation on the grounds that only 38 of the 81 seats were allotted to the Jats, Ahirs, Gujars, Meos, and Rajputs who constituted at least 35 per cent of the total population, while the Banias and the Jains, for example, who only constituted about four per cent of the population, were awarded thirteen tickets. Similarly, they felt that the Brahmins with nine tickets were also over-represented.<sup>20</sup>

Although no important factional leader within the previous assembly chose to defect from the Congress during the election campaign, a considerable number of independents were run with the backing of the dissident leaders.<sup>21</sup> On the whole, however, only Rao Birender Singh was able to substantially increase his factional support through this technique. In Gurgaon and Mahendragarh, he successfully

---

<sup>19</sup>Tribune, December 26, 1966.

<sup>20</sup>Link, February 26, 1967.

<sup>21</sup>Statesman, February 6, 1967.

backed eight non-Congress candidates who had earlier been refused a Congress ticket. In Hissar, central intervention satisfied the Devi Lal group to some extent by making three adjustments. A ticket was given to Devi Lal's son, Partap Singh, on the understanding that his father would seek election from that seat in a future by-election should a ministerial position be made available to him. In Rohtak, however, the district's most prominent agriculturist leader, Ranbir Singh, was defeated by an independent candidate, Mahant Sheryo Nath.<sup>22</sup> The Mahant was strongly supported throughout the campaign by Bhagwat Dayal Sharma who saw this as a convenient means of eliminating his most serious rival for the party leadership after the elections.<sup>23</sup> The loss of Ranbir Singh meant that many of the Jats elected from Rohtak area would be leaderless in the new assembly.

On the whole, therefore, it would appear that the dissident agriculturists did not fare particularly well in the 1967 elections, not because they had no electoral appeal, but because they had little to say in the allocation of official party tickets. Their factional opponent, B.D. Sharma, had skilfully used his dominance in the party

---

<sup>22</sup>Sheryo Nath is the Mahant (head) of the oldest, largest and possibly the most affluent Math (religious centre) in Haryana. Amongst some of the Jats in the Rohtak area, he is regarded as a major religious figure and even as a miracle-working saint.

<sup>23</sup>Link, February 19, 1967.

organisation to ensure that none of his factional rivals would be returned with a bloc of supporters capable of challenging his non-agriculturist alliance within the Congress Legislature Party. This tactic, of course, denied the Congress a number of seats it could have won had nominees of the regional factional leaders been given the party ticket.

#### Dissident Strategy in the Post-Election Period

Although the Congress party, as a unit, was returned with seven more members than were needed to form a bare majority in the assembly, neither the agriculturists nor the Bhagwat Dayal faction could regard the results as a clear-cut victory. While Bhagwat Dayal Sharma was still the leader of the largest grouping in the Congress Legislature Party, his group, in itself, did not represent a majority in the assembly. Moreover, at least fifteen of the sixteen independents returned had been elected as opponents of official candidates who had been backed by the Sharma group. This meant that while the party leader could not expect to expand his factional backing in the assembly through defections, his rivals, the agriculturist dissidents, could look for additional support in future from the opposition benches.

Despite Mr. Sharma's claim to the support of a majority in the assembly party, the dissidents were determined to try and oust him from the leadership. When direct negotiations

failed, the dissidents appealed to the High Command for arbitration on the leadership question on the basis of the pre-election promises. The selected arbitrator, Mr. Gulzari Lal Nanda, in turn appealed to all the groups to set aside their narrow considerations in the name of party unity.<sup>24</sup> The dissidents, recognizing that they could not challenge Bhagwat Dayal in a straight contest at this time, agreed to accept Mr. Sharma as the leader of the Congress on two conditions: first, that the Cabinet would be small, and second, that all of the dissident groups would be represented in the ministry.<sup>25</sup> If Mr. Sharma would abide by his promises to Mr. Nanda, the dissidents hoped that they would be in a majority in the Cabinet and that they would there be able to persuade the Chief Minister to accept rural-based development programmes for the state.

The announcement of the proposed Cabinet list, a few days later, came as a direct shock to the dissident groups. Neither pledge had been kept. Not only was a list of eleven submitted to the Governor, but there was a statement by

---

<sup>24</sup>Tribune, March 1, 1967.

<sup>25</sup>There was now a non-agriculturist included amongst the dissidents. Chand Ram, a Harijan and former deputy leader of the assembly party, was now opposed to B.D. Sharma's leadership as he had attempted to undermine Mr. Ram's position amongst the scheduled caste voters during the general elections.

the Chief Minister that as "Haryana is a developing state, more hands will be needed".<sup>26</sup> This implied that he was prepared to offer ministerial positions to any legislators who were prepared to abandon their factional leaders and to pledge themselves to his group. As for the second commitment, that all of the dissident groups would be represented within his ministry, only one person, Rizak Ram, who could be counted amongst the dissident leadership, was included.<sup>27</sup> Thus, for the dissidents, the post-election attempt to reach a compromise arrangement with the leader of the dominant group within the Congress had proved futile. It was clear to them now that they were doomed to complete political isolation within the Congress unless they could somehow unseat the present Chief Minister and reduce the overwhelming dominance of his factional support within the Legislature Party. They were also convinced that Bhagwat Dayal intended to pursue an anti-Jat programme and that if he succeeded, their position in the rural areas would be undermined.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>Tribune, March 3, 1967.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., March 14, 1967.

<sup>28</sup>Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp.83-4. This theme was reiterated in practically every interview conducted with dissident leaders and their supporters.

In their desire to demonstrate that the Chief Minister did not have the support of a sizable portion of his party's legislative representation, the dissidents decided to nominate one of their own number, Rao Birender Singh, for the speakership of the assembly, in opposition to the official candidate, and to solicit the support of the opposition parties and independents for their candidate. This tactic probably resulted from the Chief Minister's somewhat arrogant decision to nominate yet another of his non-agriculturist factional supporter, Daya Krishan,<sup>29</sup> instead of offering it to one of the disappointed dissident leaders as has often been done in Indian politics both to ameliorate an earlier defeat in the leadership race and to effectively neutralize a possible source of dissident unrest within the party. Although the dissidents had only twenty-four hours to prepare, their nomination of an alternate candidate for the speakership was effective because the opposition, forewarned, declined to nominate one of their own for the position, as was usual, and placed their unanimous support

---

<sup>29</sup>Tribune, March 17, 1967.



behind the dissidents' nominee.<sup>30</sup>

Having succeeded in their immediate objective of demonstrating to the Chief Minister that he was dependent upon their support and good-will to maintain a stable government, the dissidents expected that Mr. Sharma would now be prepared to negotiate with them. The Chief Minister, however, hoping that the dissidents' revolt could be crushed through a demonstration that he still retained the support of three-quarters of the Congress legislators, hastily summoned a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party to chastize the rebels, for having defied the party whip, and especially Chand Ram and Mool Chand Jain for having used the occasion to demand the Chief Minister's resignation from the floor of the house.<sup>31</sup> After the dissident spokesmen had withdrawn from this meeting, Hardwari Lal proposed a resolution, which

---

<sup>30</sup> Besides the opposition votes consisting of the 12 Jan Sangh, three Swatantra, two Republican and 16 independents (who had already constituted themselves into the Navin Haryana Party), 12 dissidents, representing four factional groupings, defied the party whip. These were Rao Birender Singh's Ahir group consisting of his sister, Sumitra Devi, and himself; Devi Lal's Hissar district group consisting of his son, Partap Singh, Jagan Nath, Hira Nand Arya and Mani Ram Godara; Chand Ram's scheduled caste group consisting of Phool Chand Singh and himself; and the Rohtak-Karnal district dissidents consisting of Sri Chand (a nephew of Sir Chhotu Ram), Partap Singh Daulta, Mool Chand Jain and Multan Singh. Although the latter group were without a strong leader, they appear to have accepted Devi Lal as an interim or marginal leader at this time.

<sup>31</sup> Tribune, March 18, 1967.

carried, authorizing Bhagwat Dayal to take whatever action he deemed fit against the party rebels.<sup>32</sup>

Faced with this response from the dominant faction, the dissidents were now on the horns of a dilemma. To knuckle under to the demands of the majority within the party and to continue to tacitly support Bhagwat Dayal as party leader would mean that not only had their revolt been futile, but that there would be little likelihood of their being able to retain their regional factional support once they had been so thoroughly isolated from any share of political power. To continue their revolt in the face of opposition from a majority within the party could only mean that they would ultimately be forced to withdraw from the party and cross the floor to the opposition benches. The latter option, however, could only be attractive as an alternative strategy if the dissidents could have some assurance that the entire opposition was prepared to back them in the formation of a non-Congress government.

In the meanwhile, the opposition parties and groups were trying to re-assure the dissidents that there was indeed an alternative to remaining in the Congress. Some thirty of the opposition members attended a meeting chaired by Mahant Sheryo Nath and decided to set up a five-member

---

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. Hardwari Lal had settled his pre-election differences with B.D. Sharma and was now Minister of Education for Haryana.

policy-making committee which would draw up a common programme and which would also take steps "to win over dissident Congressmen into the opposition fold or into forming a coalition".<sup>33</sup>

The Breakdown of Negotiations with the High Command

The dissidents, although not yet ready to take up the opposition offer, were now convinced that there was an alternative route to power in Haryana should the High Command or Bhagwat Dayal refuse to accord them major concessions. Accordingly, they now made B.D. Sharma's resignation a pre-condition for discussions on any future Congress government in Haryana. Although the dissidents did pledge at this time that they would not commit themselves to joining the opposition until the center had had an opportunity to tackle the problem,<sup>34</sup> they did present formal letters of resignation to the Central Parliamentary Board with the declaration that these would not be withdrawn unless that body agreed to remove Bhagwat Dayal Sharma from office.<sup>35</sup>

This ultimatum strategy placed the central leadership in a difficult position. Although they readily conceded that they disapproved of Mr. Sharma's strong-armed tactics

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Indian Express, March 20, 1967.

<sup>35</sup>Tribune, March 20, 1967.

towards his factional opponents and that the Haryana crisis would not have happened if the Chief Minister had lived up to his commitments at the time of his selection, they felt that they had no alternative but to refuse to accept the principal demand made by the dissidents, that Mr. Sharma be forced to resign, on the grounds that this would set too dangerous a precedent for the other states where dissidents were similarly in a position to topple the government.<sup>36</sup> The dissidents, on the other hand, deemed as inadequate the new assurances on the part of the High Command that the minority factions in the Legislature Party would be protected and even given a substantial say in the affairs of both the party and the government.<sup>37</sup>

The failure of the Congress High Command to salvage the party's ministry in Haryana, at this juncture, is hardly surprising. The central leaders had received ample warning that the dissidents in the Haryana unit of the Congress were at the end of their tether. As for the negotiations themselves, they clearly did not offer the dissidents anything tangible on which to justify remaining within the party. Indeed, as a Tribune editorial aptly observed, the result was an embarrassing spectacle in which "rebels were beseeched on bended knees to return, and the exercise only served to expose the High Command, the Praetorian guards and

---

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., March 21, 1967.

the prancy pro-consuls as nothing more or less than paper tigers".<sup>38</sup>

The Creation of the Samyukta Dal and the Formation of a United Front Ministry

On March 20, 1967, the dissidents formally rejected the proposals of the Central Parliamentary Board and announced that their resignations from the Congress party were now in effect.<sup>39</sup> The same day, Dr. Mangal Sein, leader of the Jan Sangh Legislature Party in Haryana, announced that a Samyukta Dal (United Front) had been formed consisting of forty-three pledged supporters.<sup>40</sup> A thirteen member policy-making committee was chosen to coordinate the new front.<sup>41</sup> On the 21st of March, the Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Government submitted its resignation and the dissidents approached the Governor for the right to form a new government.<sup>42</sup> The Governor, Mr. Dharam Vira, however,

---

<sup>38</sup>"Seven Days' Wonder", Tribune (Editorial), March 23, 1967.

<sup>39</sup>Statesman, March 21, 1967.

<sup>40</sup>Indian Express, March 21, 1967.

<sup>41</sup>This committee, which was to represent all of the constituent groups within the Front, consisted of: four ex-Congress members, Devi Lal, Chand Ram, Mool Chand Jain, and Partap Singh Daulta; three Jan Sangh members, Mukhtiar Singh Malik, Mangal Sein and Bhagwan Dev Probhakar; four Navin Haryana Party members (independents), Sheryo Nath, Mahabir Singh, Amir Singh and Lachhman Singh; one Republican Party member, Ram Parshad; and one Swatantra Party member, Inder Singh Shakir. Tribune, March 21, 1967.

<sup>42</sup>Indian Express, March 22, 1967.

informed them that the United Front must have a duly chosen leader of its legislative representation before it could be considered. The next day, the Samyukta Dal selected Rao Birender Singh to be its legislative leader and he was invited the same day by the Governor to form a new government.<sup>43</sup>

The same meeting of the Samyukta Dal Co-ordinating Committee which selected Rao Birender Singh to lead the Front in the assembly also approved a list of five names for the new Council of Ministers. Besides Rao Birender Singh, the Dal approved the names of Chand Ram, Mool Chand Jain, Mangal Sein and Rizak Ram.<sup>44</sup> Mr. Rizak Ram, however, had been convinced by Sher Singh that there were advantages in his remaining within the Congress Party at this time and he declined to accept this invitation to throw in his lot with the dissidents,<sup>45</sup> despite the fact that he, along with Partap Singh Daulta, had served as spokesmen for the rebel group in the recent negotiations with the Congress High

---

<sup>43</sup>Tribune, March 23, 1967. At this time, the Front also had its first defection and re-defection. Partap Singh Daulta quit the Dal to return to the Congress because he thought that the centre had instructed B.D. Sharma to resign as party leader. When he discovered that this was not the case, he re-joined the Samyukta Dal.

<sup>44</sup>Indian Express, March 23, 1967.

<sup>45</sup>Patriot, March 23, 1967.

Command.<sup>46</sup> This refusal seriously upset the plans of the dissidents as they had calculated on his support while making their defection plans.<sup>47</sup>

The loss of the Rizak Ram faction's support, however, was in part made up when the Dal managed to pick up three additional supporters from the Congress bench. Among these three was Hardwari Lal, the former Education Minister, who hitherto had been Bhagwat Dayal's strongest agriculturist supporter in the assembly.<sup>48</sup> Mr. Lal's defection to the Dal came as somewhat of a surprise as he had served as a spokesman for the ministerialist group in the negotiations with the High Command,<sup>49</sup> and had, at that time, lashed out at the dissidents as a "motley group of self-seekers" who were demanding a price for their support of the government.<sup>50</sup> In a later effort to justify his defection, Harwari Lal explained in a letter to his former leader, B.D. Sharma, that he had done so "out of loyalty to a trusted and respected comrade (Rao Birender Singh) and also out of a sense of

---

<sup>46</sup>Hindustan Times, March 22, 1967.

<sup>47</sup>Patriot, March 23, 1967

<sup>48</sup>Kashyap, p.84.

<sup>49</sup>Hindustan Times, March 22, 1967.

<sup>50</sup>Tribune, March 21, 1967.

duty to our infant state".<sup>51</sup> This explanation, however, did not satisfy his critics. In an effort to vindicate his actions and to also provide a symbolic gesture that the dissidents had the support of the Haryanvi people, Hardwari Lal decided to resign his seat and to seek a new mandate from his constituents in a by-election. In this contest, he not only succeeded in defeating his Congress opponent, Hari Singh Rathee (a prominent local Jat), but also increased his margin of votes slightly.<sup>52</sup>

This by-election may have served to inform the High Command that the Congress party was unlikely to recover its former dominant position in Haryana unless it changed both its leader and its image to meet the challenge of this new Jat-Ahir combination represented by the dissidents.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Statesman, March 27, 1967. In a later interview, Rao Birender Singh claimed that Hardwari Lal had approached him while the Dal was organizing its Council of Ministers and had stated that he would be prepared to defect if the Dal would agree to three conditions: first, he would retain his education portfolio; second, he would be permitted to continue residing in the same residence; and third, he would keep the same government car which had been assigned to him earlier.

<sup>52</sup> From 13,011 in February 1967 to 13,771 in May 1967. In the general elections his closest opponent had also been Hari Singh Rathee who at that time had run as an independent with the backing of the dissidents.

<sup>53</sup> Link, May 28, 1967.



On the other hand, the Sharma faction tried to argue that Hardwari Lal's victory was solely due to the fact that he had faced the electorate without resigning from the ministry and that he had used his office as a means of impressing his constituents.<sup>54</sup>

On March 24, 1967, a 15 member United Front Council of Ministers was sworn in as Haryana's third ministry in five months. While nine of the 15 were rebel Congressmen who had crossed the floor as defectors,<sup>55</sup> all of the United Front ministers, with one exception, Shamsher Singh, might be considered as defectors in the sense that all of the independents included in the ministry, as well as Ram Parshad of the Republican party, had been members of the Congress before the 1967 elections and had only left the organisation when they had not been awarded party tickets. Indeed, Rao Birender Singh, at one point, described his ministry in the following terms:

It is still virtually a Congress government.  
... The Congress should be happy because it is the party's former members who are at the helm of affairs and the Jan Sangh and other parties are cooperating with us simply because we have given up the Congress party's old methods of administering, its fads and fancies and its hypocrisy.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup>Patriot, April 3, 1967.

<sup>55</sup>See Table 5.1.

<sup>56</sup>As quoted by Kashyap, p.88.

TABLE 5.1

HARYANA: THE UNITED FRONT COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 24, 1967.

Name	Party Affiliation	Caste	District
<u>Cabinet Ministers</u>			
1. Rao Birender Singh	Haryana Congress	Ahir	Gurgaon
2. Chand Ram	"	Harijan	Karnal
3. Mool Chand Jain	"	Bania	"
4. Hardwari Lal	"	Jat	Rohtak
5. Partap Singh Daulta	"	"	"
6. Mahant Sheryo Nath	Independent	"	"
7. Mani Ram Godara	Haryana Congress	Rajput	Hissar
8. Lachhman Singh	Independent	Jat (Sikh)	Ambala
9. Harpal Singh	Haryana Congress	Punjabi Refugee	Hissar
<u>Ministers of State</u>			
10. Multan Singh	"	Jat	Karnal
11. Phool Chand	"	Harijan	Rohtak
12. Amir Singh	Independent	Jat	Mahendra.
13. Shamsher Singh	Republican	Jat	Jind
<u>Deputy Ministers</u>			
14. Jaswant Singh	Independent	Ahir	Gurgaon
15. Ram Parshad	Republican	Harijan	Ambala

Source: Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp. 86-7.

Throughout the period of the Samyukta Dal's formation, it had been understood that all of the constituent parties and groups within the Front would be represented within the ministry. Indeed, the proposed Council of Ministers list released on March 23rd included the names of a Jan Sangh legislator and another from the Swatantra party who was to be a Minister of State. The respective High Commands of these opposition parties, however, instructed their delegates at the last moment to stay out of office, but to continue giving full support to the ministry in the assembly and to remain on the Dal's Co-ordinating Committee.<sup>57</sup>

It is ironic that the United Front should have proposed a 15 member Cabinet when one of the chief dissident complaints against B.D. Sharma had been that his eleven man ministry was an unnecessary extravagance for such a small state. Indeed, the size of the first United Front ministry was a reflection of the need to trade positions for support. At the time of the Cabinet's formation, Rao Birender Singh commented that "considering the 'circumstances', this is probably the best we could make in view of the stability of the ministry",<sup>58</sup> implying that even he was uncertain about the support which he was likely to receive in the future from his shaky coalition of anti-Congress elements.

---

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p.85.

<sup>58</sup>Tribune, March 25, 1967.

The Rao's fears for the stability of his ministry were indeed justified. Even this oversized Cabinet was to require further expansion in the next few months. Shortly after its creation, Jagan Nath, a Harijan supporter of the Devi Lal faction, was appointed Chief Parliamentary Secretary.<sup>59</sup> On June 7th, 1967, Chand Ram was named Deputy Chief Minister by Rao Birender Singh in an effort to stop criticism within the Samyukta Dal that he was attempting to monopolize power. Finally, on June 20th, 1967, in response to the increasing dissidence of the Devi Lal faction, which will be discussed in the next chapter, the Chief Minister expanded his ministry further, bringing the total to twenty-one members, not counting the Chief Parliamentary Secretary. At this time, he appointed two new Ministers of State, Jagjeet Singh Pohloo and Ram Pal Singh, and four new Deputy Ministers, Mohan Lal Thakur, Brahm Singh, Maha Singh and Rahim Khan.<sup>60</sup> Of these appointments, Ram Pal Singh and Mohan Lal Thakur represented recent defections to the Samyukta Dal from the Congress.<sup>61</sup> The communal and regional distribution of these appointments is also interesting.<sup>62</sup> Three of the six were

---

<sup>59</sup>Kashyap, p.88

<sup>60</sup>Hindustan Times, June 21, 1967.

<sup>61</sup>Kashyap, p.89.

<sup>62</sup>See Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2

HARYANA: THE UNITED FRONT COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS AS EXPANDED ON JUNE 20, 1967.

Name	Party Affiliation	Caste	District
<u>Ministers of State</u>			
16. Jagjeet Singh Pohloo	Independent	Punjabi Refugee	Jind
17. Ram Pal Singh	Haryana Congress	Rajput	Karnal
<u>Deputy Ministers</u>			
18. Mohan Lal Thakur	Haryana Congress	Bania	Rohtak
19. Brahm Singh	Independent	Harijan	"
20. Maha Singh	"	Jat	"
21. Rahim Khan	"	Meo	Gurgaon

Source: Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp. 90-2.

drawn from non-agriculturist communities, and all were regionally concentrated in the eastern region of the state, especially Rohtak district where three of the new appointees had their constituencies. This district now had seven ministerships. On the other hand, no new appointments were made from the western part of the state, particularly from Hissar district, the heartland of the Devi Lal group which was now becoming dissatisfied with Rao Birender Singh's leadership.

Although this immediate need to expand an already large ministry with marginal legislative supporters would appear to be an indication that Rao Birender Singh would have difficulty in maintaining the internal cohesion of the Samyukta Dal, the full significance of the dissidents' accomplishment should not be overlooked. Their large-scale defection from the ruling party resulted in the first overthrow of a Congress state ministry. It appeared, at the time, that their experiment in establishing a non-Congress government for Haryana from dissident Congress elements supported by opposition parties and groups pointed the way for the future ordering of Indian politics. Indeed, if the Congress party had not succeeded in re-vitalizing itself under Mrs Indira Gandhi's leadership, what was to be an inter regnum for Haryana could very well have become the prevailing pattern not only for state politics in India, but for the centre as well.

### The Opposition in Post-Election Haryana

The opposition parties and independent candidates made a substantial showing during the 1967 elections as they collectively won 33 out of the 81 seats in the Haryana Legislative Assembly. The following analysis will show however, that they were, within themselves, highly diversified. In overall distribution, they were divided: 12 Jan Sangh, three Swatantra, two Republican and 16 independents.<sup>62</sup> This breakdown, combined with other internal differences discussed below, was to have a bearing on the success of the Samyukta Dal experiment in Haryana.

The Jan Sangh proved to be a particularly strong opponent for the Congress party in those urban areas which had a high percentage of Punjabi refugees. This is usually explained because of this community's unhappiness with the central Congress's decision to reorganize Haryana into a separate state unit. Their reaction, as reflected in the electoral returns, hurt Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's potential group strength as he was trying to present himself as the champion of non-agriculturist interests in Haryana. With twelve seats in the new assembly, the Jan Sangh held five out of the eight urban seats and four of the eleven mixed seats.<sup>63</sup> In caste distribution, nine of the Jan Sangh representatives





---

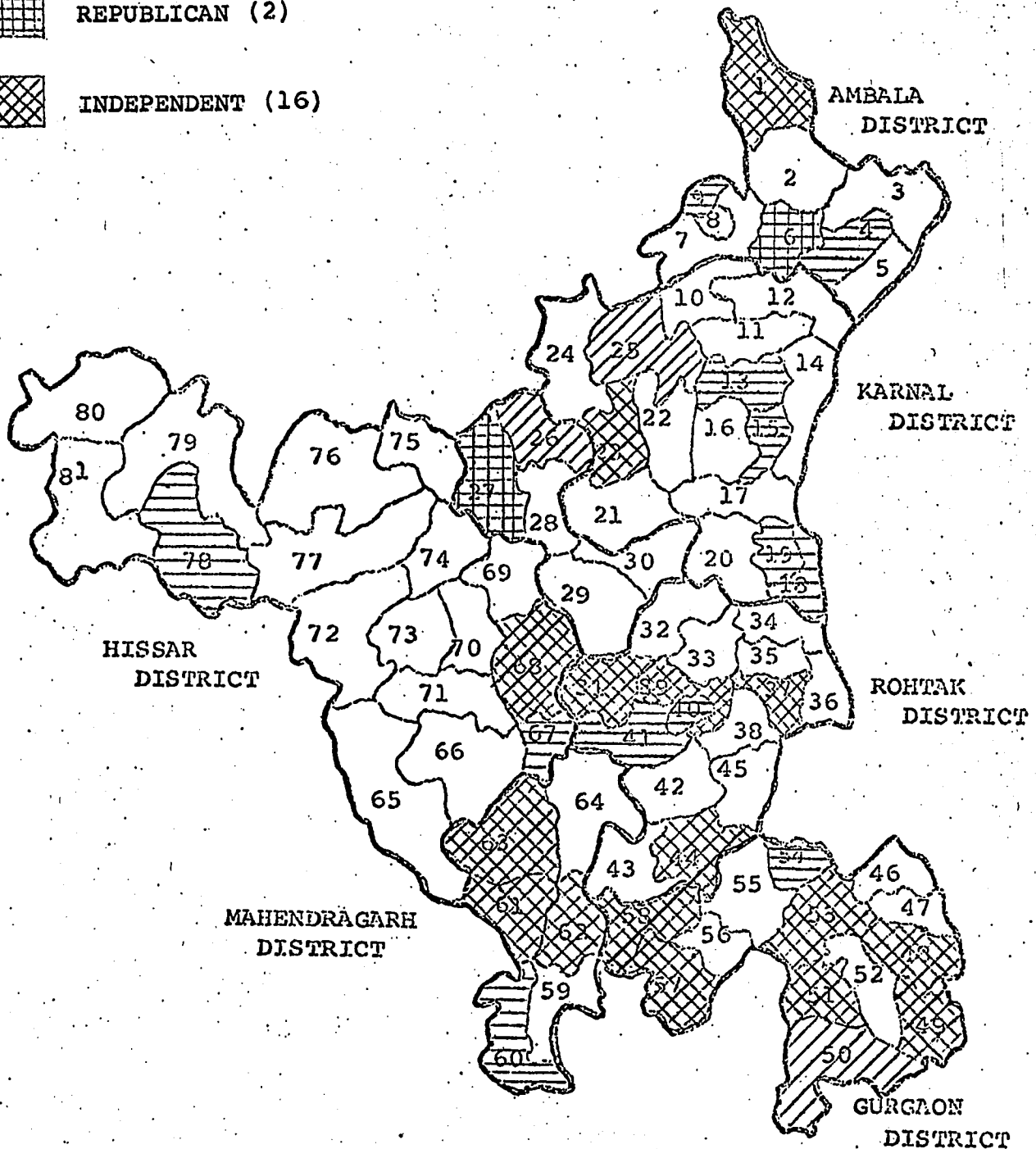
<sup>62</sup>See Map 5.1.

<sup>63</sup>See Map 5.2

0 8 16 Miles

## OPPOSITION PARTIES AS ELECTED IN 1967.





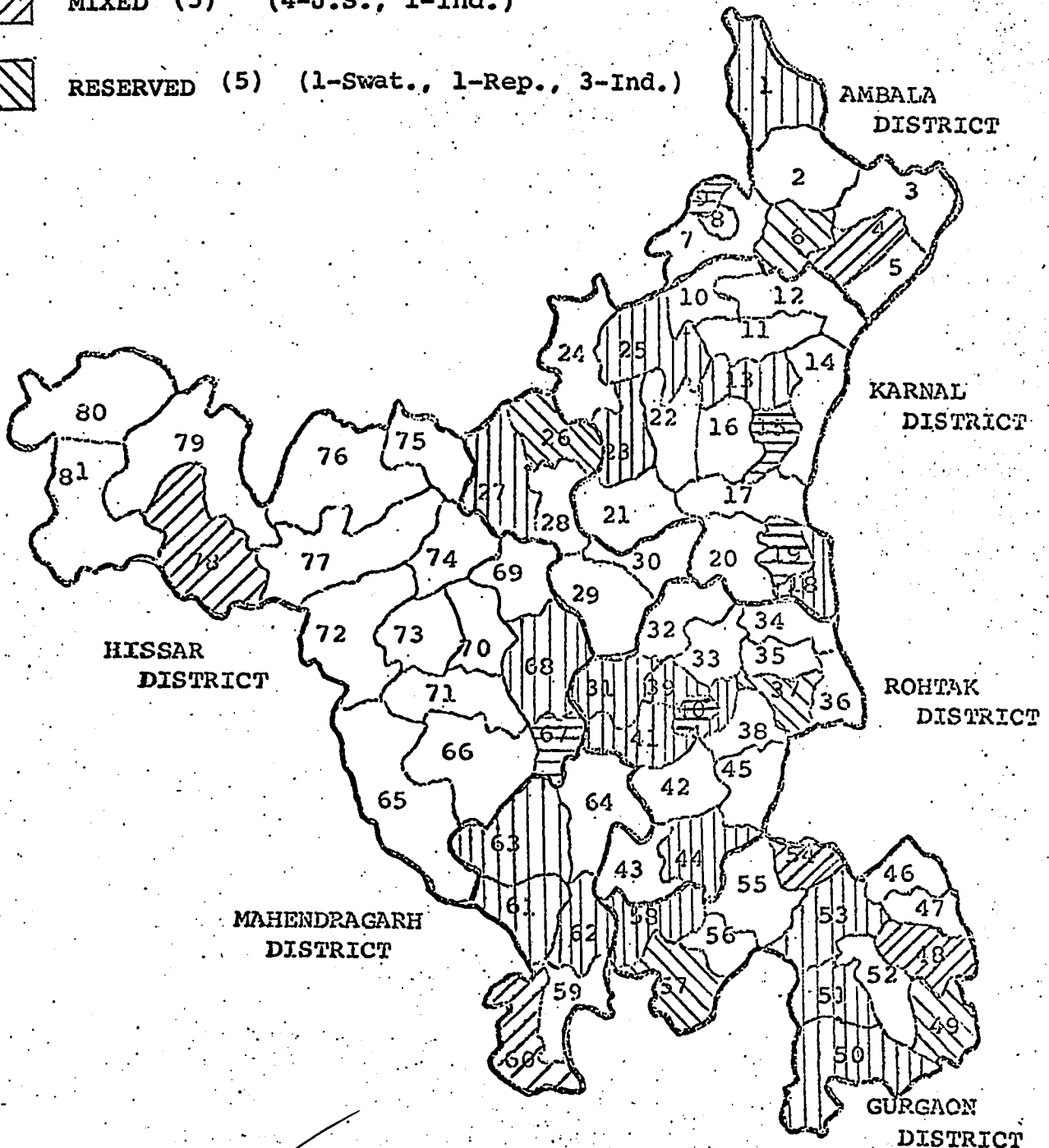
-  JAN SANGH (12)
-  SWATANTRA (3)
-  REPUBLICAN (2)
-  INDEPENDENT (16)





0 8 16 Miles

## OPPOSITION PARTIES AS ELECTED IN 1967: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

 RURAL (18) (3-J.S., 2-Swat., 1-Rep., 12-Ind.) URBAN (5) (5-J.S.) MIXED (5) (4-J.S., 1-Ind.) RESERVED (5) (1-Swat., 1-Rep., 3-Ind.)

were from non-agriculturist communities: one Bania, two Brahmins, one Scheduled Caste (returned from a non-reserved mixed constituency in Mahendragarh district) and four Punjabi refugees.<sup>64</sup> Regionally, the Jan Sangh won representation in every district except Jind.<sup>65</sup> The centre of its strength, however, would appear to have been in the north-eastern and central districts of the state.<sup>66</sup> In overall assessment, therefore, it would be fair to describe the Jan Sangh in Haryana as an urban-based, non-agriculturist party. This would suggest that its main electoral opponent was not the group of agriculturist dissidents within the Congress, but rather Bhagwat Dayal's non-Jat alliance. The main motivation, therefore, that this party would have had in supporting a dissident agriculturist government was to keep a non-agriculturist-oriented Congress administration out of power.

The remaining opposition seats were, in contrast to the Jan Sangh, almost completely won in the rural areas.<sup>67</sup> With the exception of one independent returned from a mixed

---

<sup>64</sup>See Map 5.3

<sup>65</sup>See Table 5.3.

<sup>66</sup>See Map 5.1.

<sup>67</sup>See Map 5.2 and Table 5.4.

0 8 16 Miles

OPPOSITION PARTIES AS ELECTED IN 1967: CASTE BREAKDOWN

JAT (9) (1-J.S., 1-Rep., 7-Ind.)

AHIR (4) (4-Ind.)

ROR (1) (1-J.S.)

GUJAR (1) (1-J.S.)

MEO (2) (1-Swat., 1-Ind.)

RAJPUT (1) (1-J.S.)

BRAHMIN (3)  
(2-J.S.,  
1-Swat.)

BANIA (1) (1-J.S.)

SCH. CASTE (6) (1-J.S., 1-Swat.,  
1-Rep., 3-Ind.)

PUNJABI REFUGEE (5) (4-J.S., 1-Ind.)

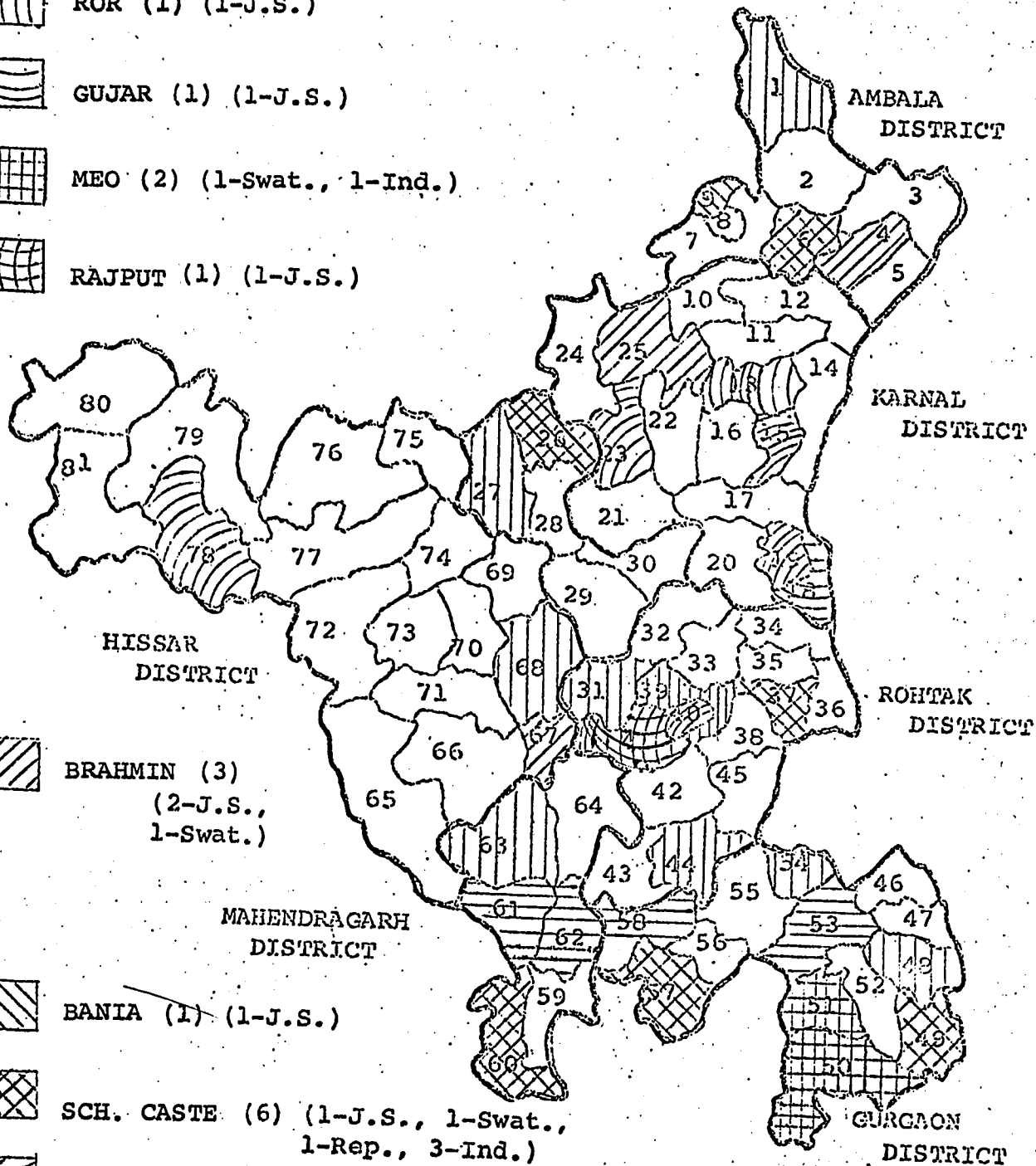


TABLE 5.3

HARYANA: DISTRICT REPRESENTATION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES  
AS ELECTED IN 1967.

District	Total No. of Seats	Jan Sangh Seats	Swat. Seats	Rep. Seats	Ind. Seats	Total Oppos. Seats	Percentage
Ambala	9	2	-	1	1	4	44.4
Karnal	16	4	1	-	1	6	37.4
Jind	5	-	1	1	-	2	40.0
Rohtak	15	2	-	-	4	6	40.0
Gurgaon	13	1	1	-	6	8	61.5
Mahendra.	6	1	-	-	3	4	66.7
Hissar	17	2	-	-	1	3	17.6
Total	81	12	3	2	16	33	40.7

TABLE 5.4

HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION  
OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AS ELECTED IN 1967.

Party	Rural		Reserved		Urban		Mixed	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Jan Sangh	3	25.0	-	-	5	41.7	4	33.3
Swatantra	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-	-	-
Republican	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-	-	-
Independent	12	75.0	3	18.7	-	-	1	6.3
Total	18	54.5	5	15.2	5	15.2	5	15.2

constituency, all of the remaining seats were to be found in either rural or reserved constituencies. This rural orientation of the remainder of the opposition was also reflected in the caste breakdown.<sup>68</sup> The Swantantra, Republican and independent legislators were returned from twenty-one constituencies. Of these, fourteen were representatives of agriculturist tribes. This suggests that the support base for the non-Jan Sangh representatives in the opposition was predominantly rural in its orientation and that these legislators would have more sympathy with the aims and policies of the dissident groups within the Congress. This, of course, is explained by the fact that almost all of the non-Jan Sangh representation in the opposition was elected with dissident support.

Taken as a collective group, the opposition tended to have a high concentration of independents from Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts, reflecting the factional influence of Rao Birender Singh, with the Jan Sangh strength centered in Ambala, Karnal and Rohtak districts. In general, the opposition was well represented in the urban areas and under-represented in comparison with the Congress in the rural areas. On the other hand, in a caste breakdown, the opposition had a higher percentage of agriculturist tribe representation than the assembly average and here these

---

<sup>68</sup> See Map 5.3 and Table 5.5.

TABLE 5.5

HARYANA: CASTE REPRESENTATION OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES  
AS ELECTED IN 1967.

Caste	Total No. of Seats	Jan Sangh Seats	Swat. Seats	Rep. Seats	Ind. Seats	Total Oppos. Seats	Percentage
Jat	24	1	-	1	7	9	37.5
Ahir	7	-	-	-	4	4	57.1
Ror	2	1	-	-	-	1	50.0
Gujar	1	1	-	-	-	1	100.0
Meo	2	-	1	-	1	2	100.0
Rajput	3	1	-	-	-	1	33.3
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	4	1	1	12	18	46.2
Brahmin	9	2	1	-	-	3	33.3
Bania	6	1	-	-	-	1	16.7
Sch. Caste	16	1	1	1	3	6	37.5
Punjabi Ref.	9	4	-	-	1	5	55.6
Other	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	8	2	1	4	15	35.7
<u>Total</u>	81	12	3	2	16	33	40.7

communities were in a slight overall majority. The agriculturist representation was highly concentrated in Rohtak, Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts while the non-agriculturist castes were concentrated in Ambala, Karnal and Hissar districts. Only in Hissar district, however, was this latter representation above the overall assembly average for the non-agriculturist castes.

In summary, it would appear that it is virtually impossible to discern a common pattern of regional, urban-rural or caste representation for the opposition as elected in 1967 unless it is first sub-divided into the Jan Sangh and non-Jan Sangh elements. The motivations for supporting a dissident non-Congress government, therefore, differed. While the independents, and even the Swatantra and Republican representatives, may have supported the Samyukta Dal as a means of securing their socio-economic interests in the assembly, the Jan Sangh group's strategy was more likely to be based on a desire to keep the Congress out of office in one more state and to undermine the support base of a particular Congress factional leader, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma.

#### The Congress Defectors in March 1967: A Profile

The first fifteen defectors to abandon the Congress party in March 1967 would appear to have been regionally concentrated in the northwest (Hissar) and the southeast (Rohtak and Gurgaon).<sup>69</sup> This pattern may be explained by

---

<sup>69</sup>See Table 5.6.



TABLE 5.6

HARYANA: DISTRICT REPRESENTATION OF THE  
CONGRESS DEFECTORS IN MARCH 1967.

District	Congress Seats as Elected	Defector Seats	Percentage of Congress Defected	Percentage of Total Defectors
Ambala	5	-	-	-
Karnal	10	3	30.0	20.0
Jind	3	-	-	-
Rohtak	9	4	44.4	26.7
Gurgaon	5	2	40.0	13.3
Mahendra.	2	-	-	-
Hissar	13	6	46.0	40.0
Total	48	15	31.0	100.0

the regional power bases of the two most prominent dissident factional leaders, Devi Lal and Rao Birender Singh. In terms of caste representation, however, they cannot be completely characterized as an agriculturist grouping. Six of their number did not come from the traditional agriculturist tribes of the Haryana area as they included one Bania, three Scheduled Caste, one Punjabi refugee and one "other".<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, 43 per cent of the agriculturist grouping in the Congress defected at this time as against 22 per cent of the non-agriculturists, indicating that the overall pattern was still agriculturist-oriented.<sup>71</sup>

An examination of the constituency breakdown on the basis of the urban-rural cleavage demonstrates the true extent of the rural bias of these defectors. All of the dissidents, with one exception, came from rural or reserved constituencies (which are in fact rural in Haryana).<sup>72</sup> The one exception cited, Sumitra Devi, who is Rao Birender Singh's sister, was elected from a mixed constituency and is, herself, an Ahir. The fact that 93 per cent of the defectors represented rural constituencies<sup>73</sup> would seem to be considerable evidence for labelling the dissident grouping as a

---

<sup>70</sup>See Map 5.4.

<sup>71</sup>See Table 5.7.

<sup>72</sup>See Map 5.5.

<sup>73</sup>See Table 5.8.

0 8 16 Miles

## CONGRESS DEFECTORS IN MARCH 1967: CASTE BREAKDOWN

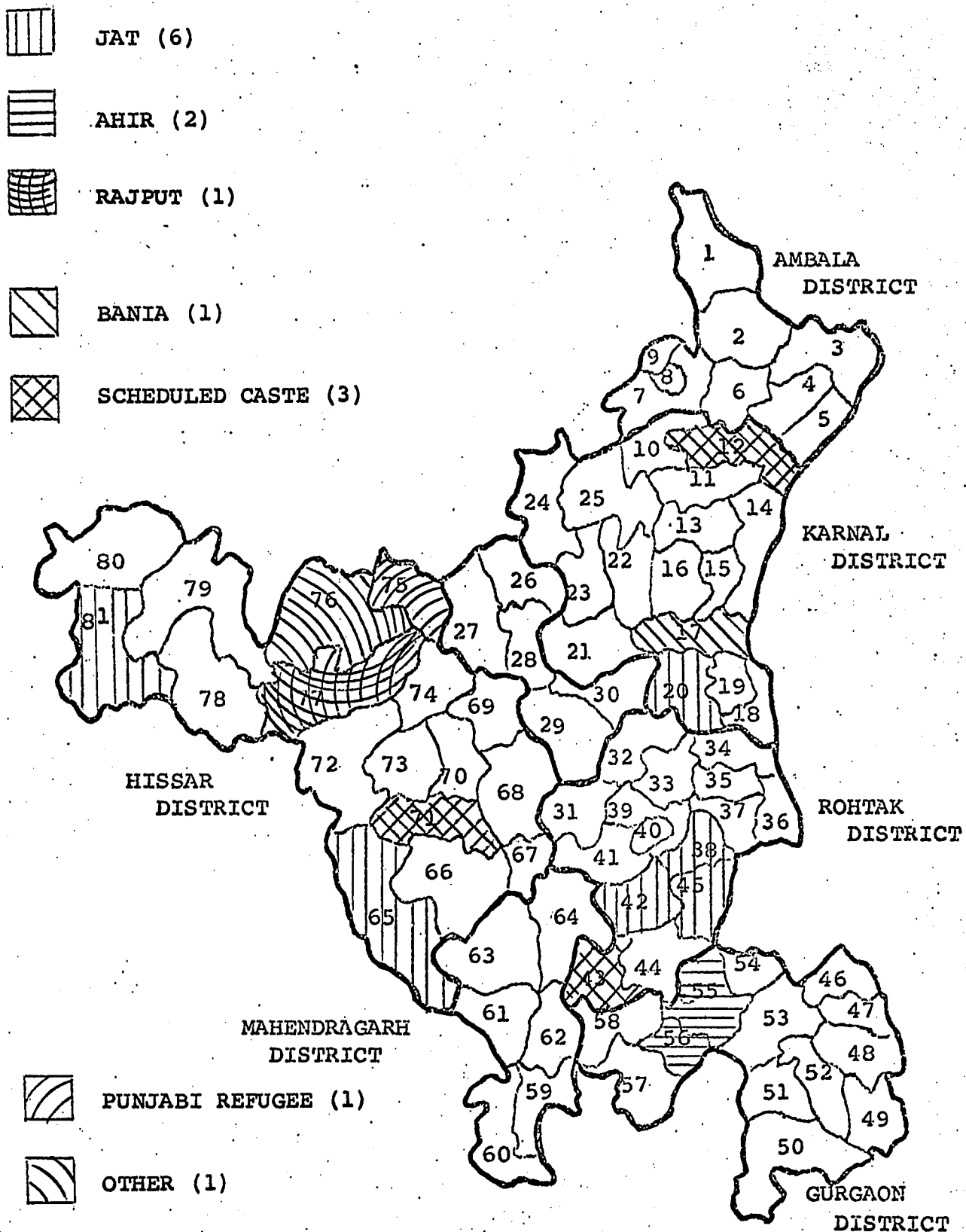


TABLE 5.7

HARYANA: CASTE REPRESENTATION OF THE  
CONGRESS DEFECTORS IN MARCH 1967.

Caste	Congress Seats as Elected	Defector Seats	Percentage of Congress Defected	Percentage of Total Defectors
Jat	15	6	40.0	40.0
Ahir	3	2	66.7	13.3
Ror	1	-	-	-
Gujar	-	-	-	-
Meo	-	-	-	-
Rajput	2	1	50.0	6.6
<u>Subtotal</u>	21	9	42.9	60.0
Brahmin	6	-	-	-
Bania	5	1	20.0	6.6
Sch. Caste	10	3	30.0	20.0
Punjabi Ref.	4	1	25.0	6.6
Other	2	1	50.0	6.6
<u>Subtotal</u>	27	6	22.2	40.0
Total	48	15	31.0	100.0

0 8 16 Miles

## CONGRESS DEFECTORS IN MARCH 1967: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN



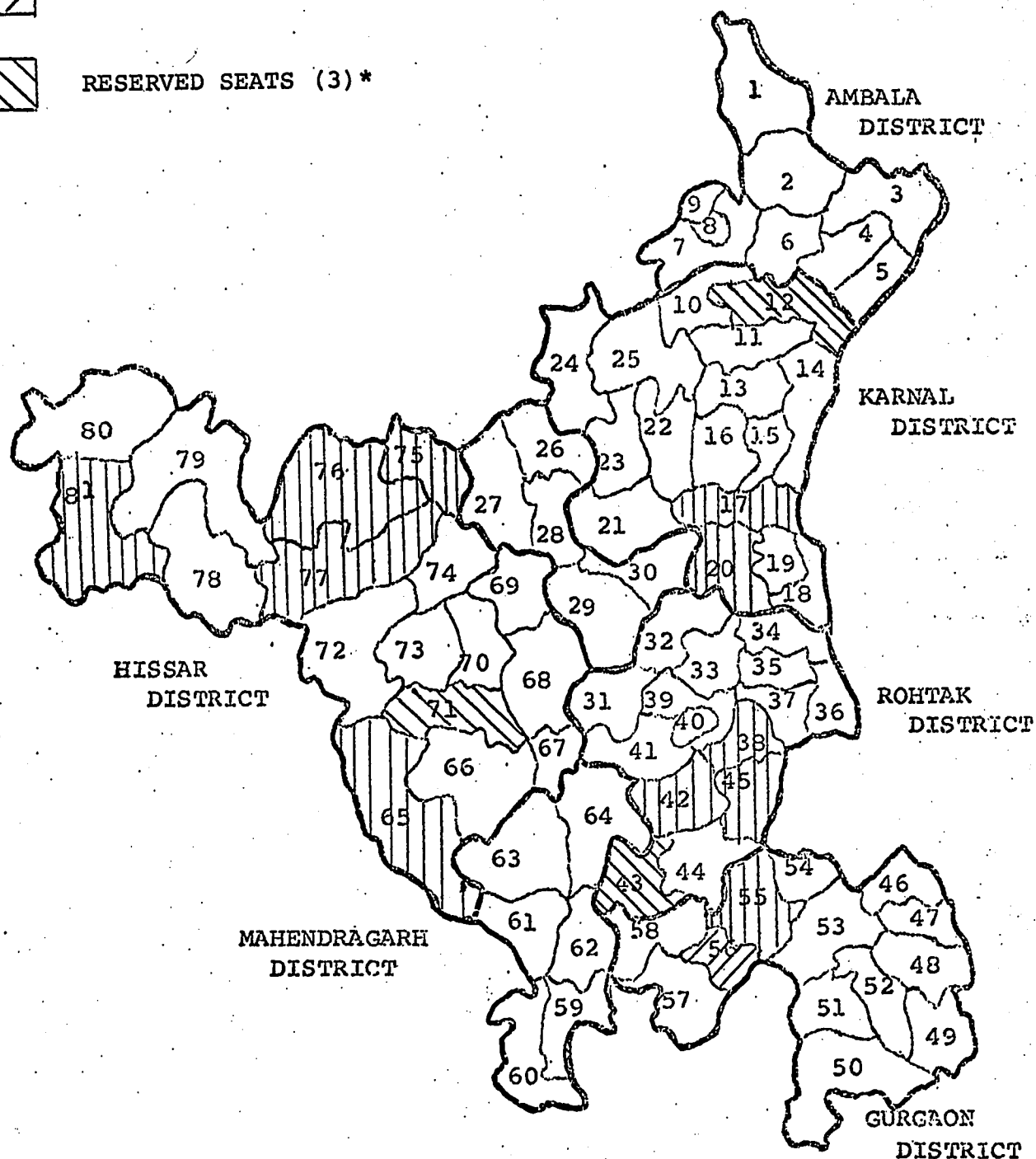
RURAL SEATS (11)



MIXED SEATS (1)



RESERVED SEATS (3)\*



\* All Reserved Constituencies in Haryana are Rural

TABLE 5.8

HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN OF THE  
CONGRESS DEFECTORS IN MARCH 1967.

Party	Rural		Reserved		Urban		Mixed	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Congress Defectors	11	73.3	3	20.0	-	-	1	6.7

rural coalition which had sought to re-orient the Congress in Haryana into a party responsive to the agricultural sector of the state's economy. The Congress in the immediate past and as it appeared to be continuing under Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's leadership had placed greater emphasis on the urban, trading and manufacturing interests. The rural areas of Haryana were backward, at this time, and the dissidents representing these areas were determined, one way or another, to come to power so as to use the political process for their constituents' benefit.

The Samyukta Dal, March 1967

When the Samyukta Dal was created on March 22, 1967, it consisted of 48 legislators sub-divided into 15 defectors ("Haryana Congress"), 12 Jan Sangh, three Swatantra, two Republican and 16 independents.<sup>73</sup> In terms of regional concentration, half of its voting strength was to be found in the south-eastern region of the state (Rohtak, Gurgaon and Mahendragarh) even though the highest concentration of defectors (six) came from Hissar district. This latter district was also the only one in the Samyukta Dal where defectors out-numbered non-defectors.<sup>74</sup> When this distribution pattern is contrasted to the Congress situation before the mass defections of the dissidents,<sup>75</sup> it may be

---

<sup>73</sup>See Map 5.6.

<sup>74</sup>See Table 5.9.

<sup>75</sup>Refer to Table 4.1 and Map 4.1.

0 6 16 Miles

SAMYUKTA DAL AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967: PARTY BREAKDOWN





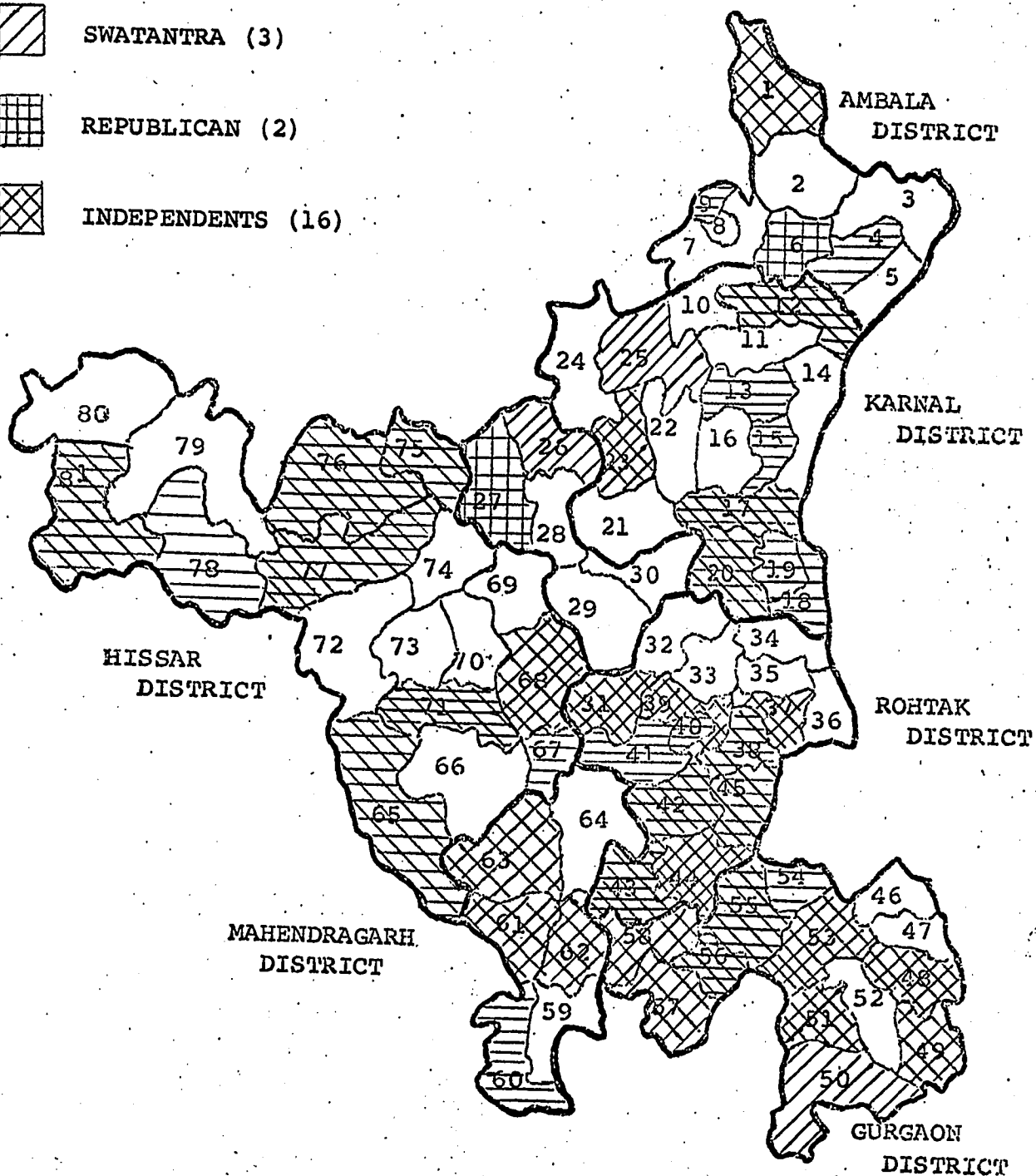
 HARYANA CONGRESS (15) JAN SANGH (12) SWATANTRA (3) REPUBLICAN (2) INDEPENDENTS (16)



TABLE 5.9

HARYANA: DISTRICT REPRESENTATION OF THE SAMYUKTA DAL  
AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967.

District	Total No. of Seats	Hary. Cong. Seats	Jan Sangh Seats	Swat. Seats	Rep. Seats	Ind. Seats	Total Dal Seats	Percentage
Ambala	9	-	2	-	1	1	4	44.4
Karnal	16	3	4	1	-	1	9	56.0
Jind	5	-	-	1	1	-	2	40.0
Rohtak	15	4	2	-	-	4	10	66.7
Gurgaon	13	2	1	1	-	6	10	77.0
Mahendra.	6	-	1	-	-	3	4	66.7
Hissar	17	6	2	-	-	1	9	52.0
Total	81	15	12	3	2	16	48	59.0

noted that the area of concentrated support for the government had shifted from the north central area (Hissar and Karnal) to the southern region.

Taken as a whole, the urban-rural distribution of the Samyukta Dal, on a percentage basis, is very close to the percentage breakdown for these constituencies in the entire state. This suggests that the United Front represented a good cross-section of the urban-rural cleavage in the state.<sup>76</sup> Caste representation within the Dal, however, tended, in contrast to the Congress legislature group, to favour the agriculturist tribes.<sup>77</sup> The agriculturists now had an absolute majority on the government benches (27 seats to 21).<sup>78</sup> The agriculturist strength in the Samyukta Dal was highly concentrated in the southeastern region (Rohtak, Gurgaon and Mahendragarh) and the non-agriculturist supporters of the Dal were still in a majority in the northern districts of Ambala, Karnal and Hissar.<sup>79</sup> It is also note-worthy that only two communities, Brahmin and Bania, failed to give at least 50 per cent of their elected representative support to the Samyukta Dal.

---

<sup>76</sup>See Map 5.7 and Table 5.10.





<sup>77</sup>Refer to Table 4.3.

<sup>78</sup>See Table 5.11.

<sup>79</sup>See Map 5.8.

0 8 16 Miles

SAMYUKTA DAL AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

-  RURAL (29)
-  URBAN (5)
-  MIXED (6)
-  RESERVED (8)

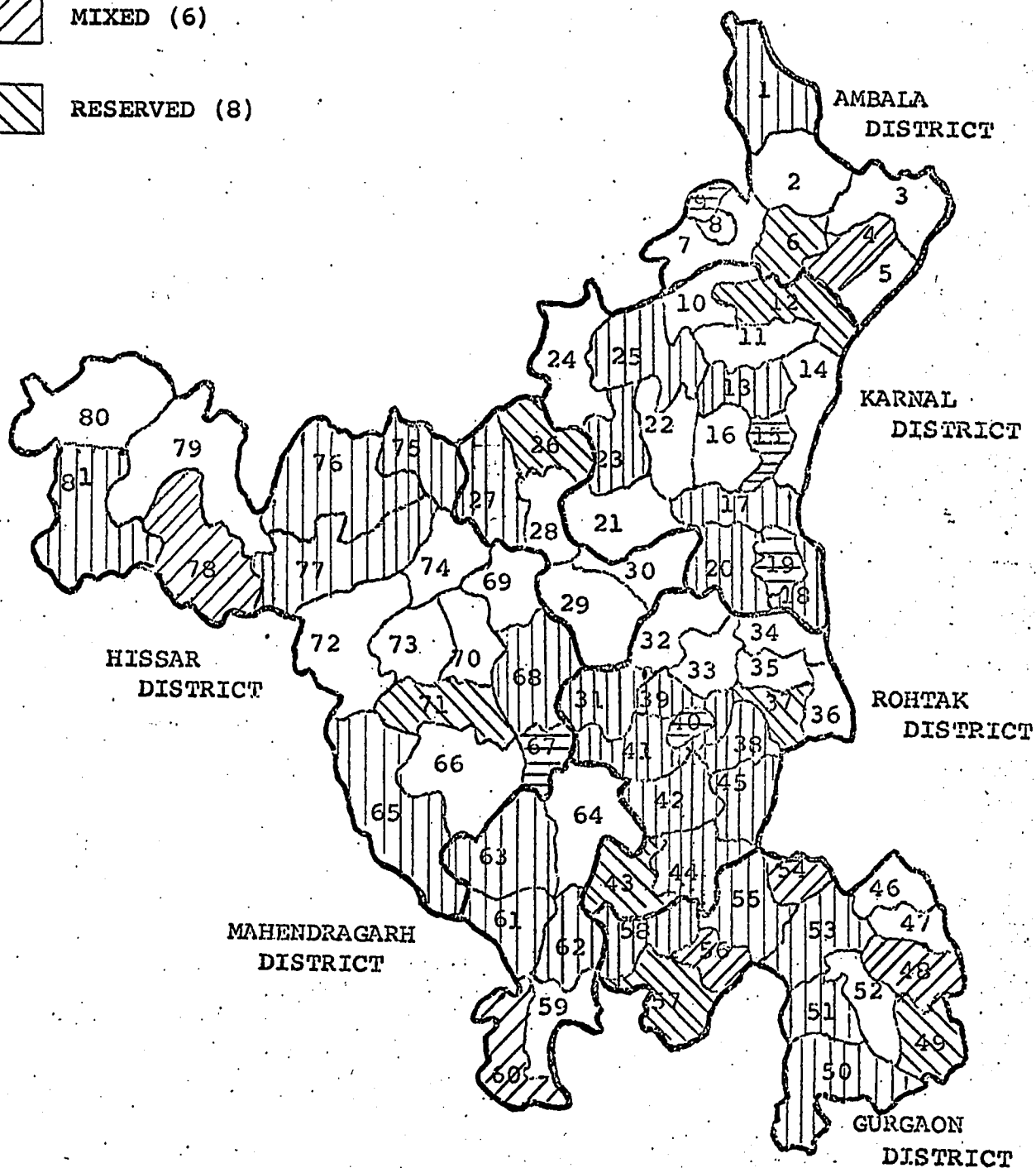


TABLE 5.10

HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN OF THE SAMYUKTA DAL  
AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967.

Party	Rural		Reserved		Urban		Mixed	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Hary. Congress	11	73.3	3	20.0	-	-	1	6.7
Jan Sangh	3	25.0	-	-	5	41.7	4	33.3
Swatantra	2	66.7	1	33.3	-	-	-	-
Republican	1	50.0	1	50.0	-	-	-	-
Independent	12	75.0	3	18.7	-	-	1	6.3
Total	29	60.4	8	16.7	5	10.4	6	12.5
State Total	47	58.0	15	19.8	8	9.9	11	13.6

TABLE 5.11

## HARYANA: CASTE REPRESENTATION OF THE SAMYUKTA DAL

AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967.

Caste	Total No. of Seats	Hary. Cong. Seats	Jan Sangh Seats	Swat. Seats	Rep. Seats	Ind. Seats	Total Dal Seats	%age Caste Seats	%age Dal Seats
Jat	24	6	1	-	1	7	15	62.5	31.3
Ahir	7	2	-	-	-	4	6	85.7	12.5
Ror	2	-	1	-	-	-	1	50.0	2.1
Gujar	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	100.0	2.1
Meo	2	-	-	1	-	1	2	100.0	4.2
Rajput	3	1	1	-	-	-	2	66.7	4.2
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	9	4	1	1	12	27	69.2	56.3
Brahmin	9	-	2	1	-	-	3	33.3	6.3
Bania	6	1	1	-	-	-	2	33.3	4.2
Sch. Caste	16	3	1	1	1	3	9	56.3	18.8
Punjabi Ref.	9	1	4	-	-	1	6	66.7	12.5
Other	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	50.0	2.1
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	6	8	2	1	4	21	50.0	43.7
<u>Total</u>	81	15	12	3	2	16	48	59.3	100.0

0 8 16 Miles

SAMYUKTA DAL AS CONSTITUTED ON MARCH 22, 1967: CASTE BREAKDOWN

JAT (15)

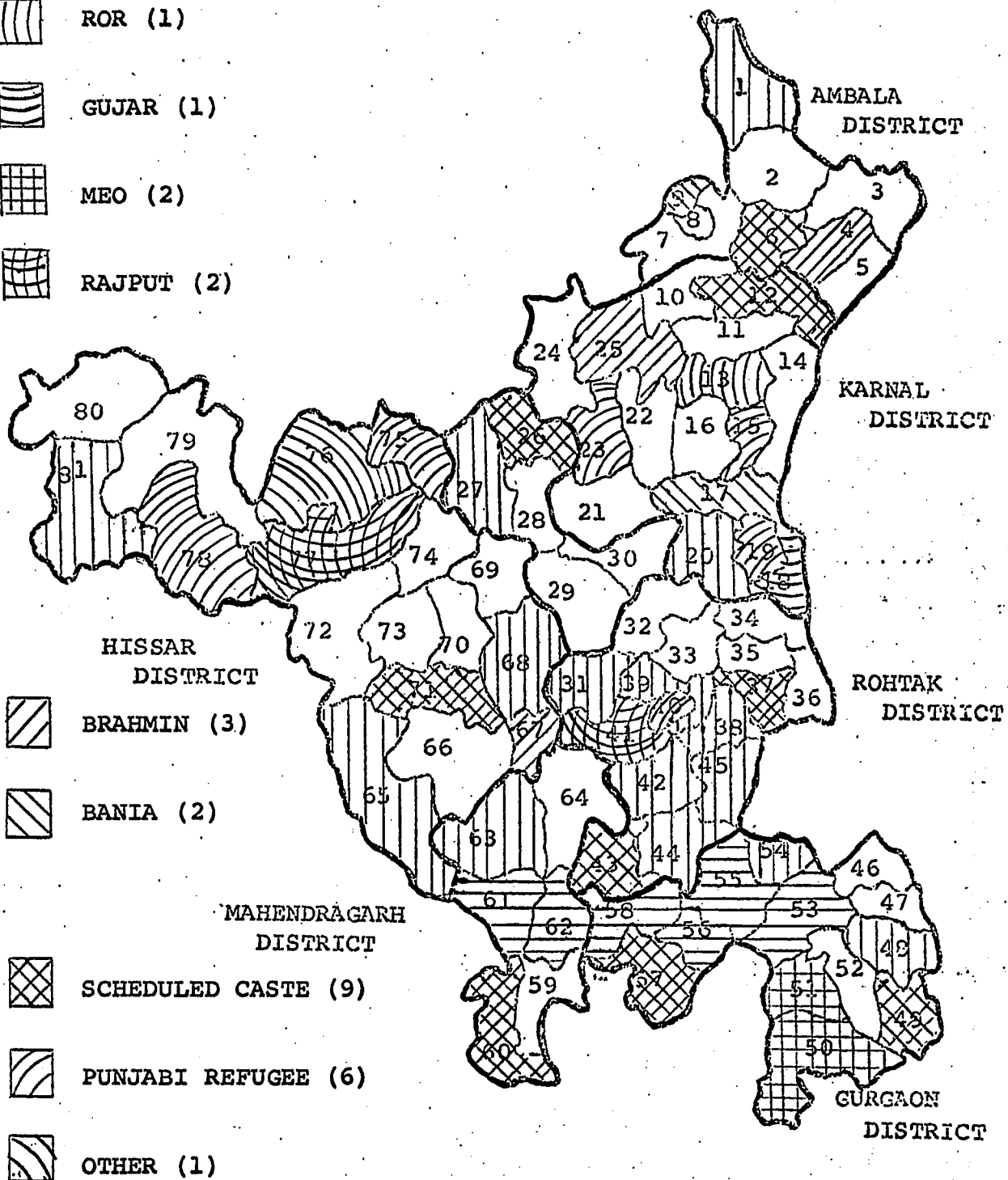
AHIR (6)

ROR (1)

GUJAR (1)

MEO (2)

RAJPUT (2)



This profile of the entire United Front demonstrates that although the Dal could claim to be representative of the state's urban-rural division, it was highly concentrated in a particular region of the state and the communities which were most in sympathy with the Dal's policies were also concentrated in the same area. These factors will be shown to have a bearing on the ultimate stability of the Samyukta Dal government.

#### The Factional Configuration and the Samyukta Dal Experiment

Figure 5.1 illustrates the factional divisions within the Haryana Vidhan Sabha immediately after the 15 Congress dissidents had crossed the floor to attempt to form a government with the aid of the opposition parties and independent members. The size of Rao Birender Singh's ministry and the distribution of offices amongst the various factions is indicative of the problems which the Chief Minister anticipated in maintaining internal cohesion. In his first attempt at ministry-building, Rao Birender Singh had to reward the unattached dissidents who had followed him and Devi Lal across the floor to ensure their support. As a result, all four of the unattached dissidents from Rohtak and Karnal had to be given ministerial positions as was Hardwari Lal and both members of the Chand Ram group. Indeed, of the 15 defectors, ten had to be given ministerial positions, leaving only four members of the Devi Lal group and Rao Birender Singh's sister without ministries. From the remaining legislative support for the Samyukta Dal,

FIGURE 5.1

## THE FACTIONAL CONFIGURATION, APRIL, 1967.

		Sanyukta Dal	
MAJORITY		M	Devi Lal Group (6)
		M	
		M	
		M	Chand Ram Gr. (2)
		M	
		M	Unattached Dissidents (4)
		M	
		M	Hardwari Lal (1)
		M	Rao Group (2)
		M	
Congress	M-2		
	M-2		
	Marginal (3)		
	Rizak Ram Group (4)		
	Bhagwat Dayal Group (26)		
		</	



three ministerships were given to the 16 independents, including two to members of the Rao Birender Singh sponsored group.<sup>80</sup> As neither the Jan Sangh nor the Swatantra were authorized by their respective central High Commands to accept ministerial positions, although they were instructed to support Haryana's non-Congress Government, Rao Birender Singh had to recruit his Cabinet from amongst the remaining 33 legislators supporting the Samyukta Dal. That he should have had to make 15 (45.5 per cent) of them ministers at the outset is a good indication of the extent to which the leader of the United Front coalition had to buy support from individual members not tied to a party whip.

In an effort to thwart Devi Lal's bid to set up a non-Congress government with the support of B.D. Sharma, Rao Birender Singh was forced to expand his ministry in June 1967. In this case, he was forced to add four unattached independents and two new defectors from the Congress to his Cabinet. While this manoeuvre succeeded in undermining the base from which Devi Lal had hoped to recruit support and aborted this new attempt to overthrow a Haryana government, it did mean that the Cabinet now consisted of some 21 of the 35 legislators (60.0 per cent) then eligible to accept ministerial positions.

---

<sup>80</sup> In a later interview, the Rao conceded that these appointments were made because he could not count on their loyalty without the immediate reward of office. December, 1967.

The Rao Birender Singh-Devi Lal attempt to provide Haryana with an alternative government in which their factional interests would be better represented failed for much the same reason as B.D. Sharma's attempt to form a Congress government without their support. Like Bhagwat Dayal, they were good factional leaders concerned with maintaining their factional support and providing the supporting interests in the society with some tangible rewards from the political system. However, they could not provide Haryana with effective political leadership because they had not developed the statesman-like skill needed to maintain a working coalition. On the other hand, they succumbed too easily to the temptation of attempting to buy the support which they needed through the liberal distribution of rewards such as ministerial positions. This behaviour was ultimately to place such a premium on floor-crossings at a time when the ministry was in a precarious position that it virtually permitted the government to be held up to blackmail by every legislator who was discontented with his lot. As the Haryana Governor was to point out, even if the United Front leaders had good intentions, the situation which they had created ruled out the possibility that they could provide a stable and effective administration.

The United Front Ministry as Constituted and Expanded

Haryana's third Council of Ministers was sworn in on March 22, 1967 and was expanded on June 20, 1967. The

following analysis will examine this ministry as constituted and will also note the impact of the expansionist manoeuvre. The party breakdown map indicates that while defectors were the prominent group in the Cabinet as it was originally constituted, the expansion tended to favour the independents, none of whom were aligned to a particular factional leader.<sup>81</sup> This suggests that the expansion was entirely based on the need to ensure support from marginal Dal members who, without the disciplinary influence of a prominent regional leader capable of controlling their political careers, were pricing their backing of the United Front in terms of direct personal gain.

The district representation on the various Haryana ministries varied considerably.<sup>82</sup> While Ambala was particularly favoured by Bhagwat Dayal Sharma in his two ministries, Rohtak was heavily represented not only in Bhagwat Dayal's second ministry, but also in the third and particularly the third as expanded. Hissar district, on the other hand, was under-represented in all three Cabinets, but especially in the third as expanded. Gurgaon was proportionately represented in the first, third and third as expanded, but it had no representation in the second ministry which may help to explain the strong support for the Samyukta Dal in this area.

---

<sup>81</sup>See Map 5.9.

<sup>82</sup>See Table 5.12.

0 8 16 Miles

THIRD HARYANA MINISTRY (CHIEF MINISTER: Rao Birender Singh):  
PARTY BREAKDOWN



HARYANA CONGRESS (9)



REPUBLICAN PARTY (2)



NAVIN HARYANA PARTY (Independents) (4)



HARYANA CONGRESS (2) (added on June 20, 1967)



NAVIN HARYANA PARTY (4) (added on June 20, 1967)

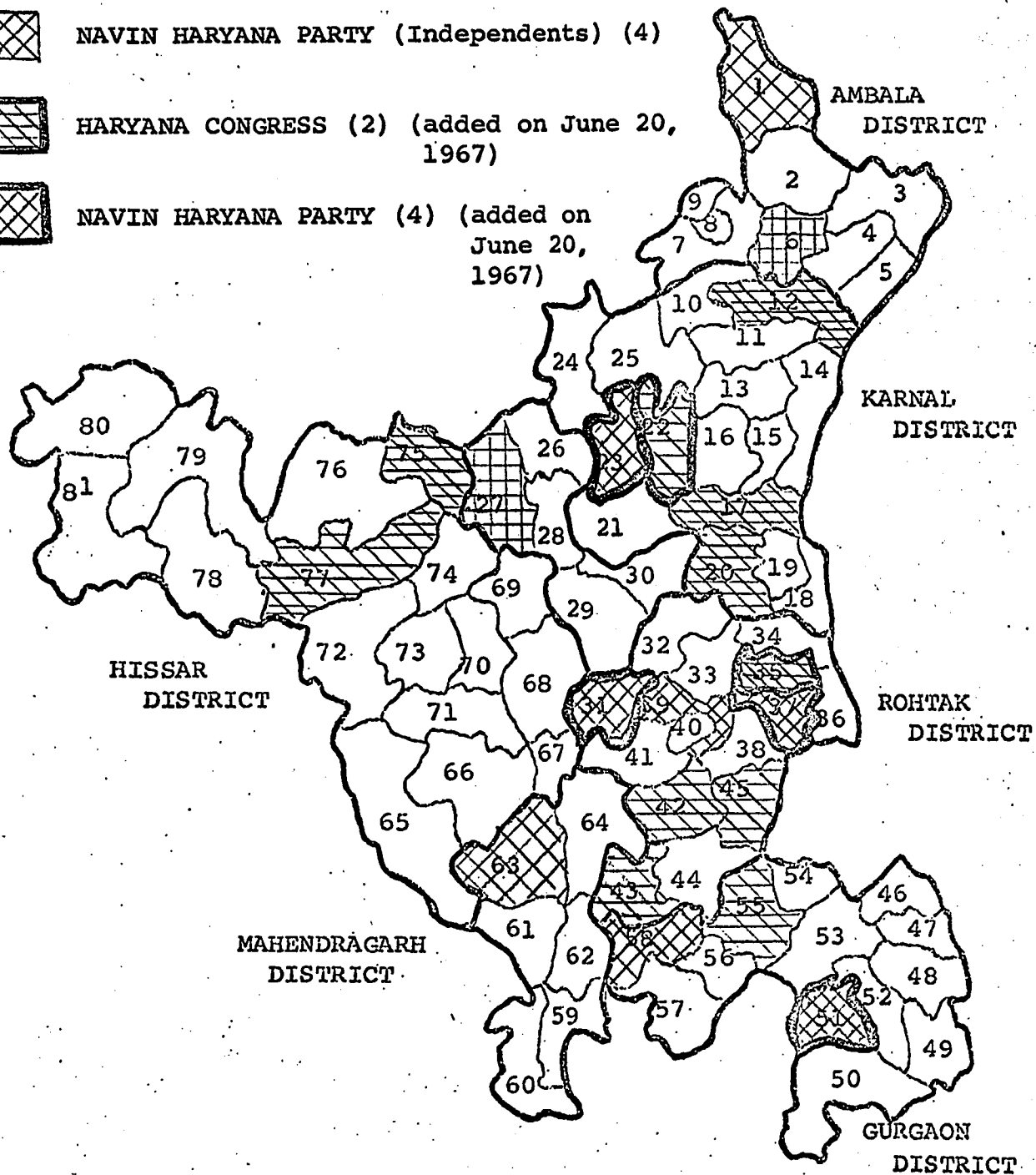


TABLE 5.12

HARYANA: DISTRICT REPRESENTATION IN THE FIRST, SECOND  
THIRD AND THIRD AS EXPANDED MINISTRIES.

District	Total Seats		First Ministry		Second Ministry		Third Ministry		Third Ministry Expanded	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Ambala	9	11.1	3	18.8	2	18.2	2	13.3	2	9.5
Karnal	16	19.8	3	18.8	2	18.2	3	20.0	5	23.8
Jind	5	6.2	1	6.3	1	9.1	1	6.7	1	4.8
Rohtak	15	18.5	3	18.8	3	27.3	4	26.7	7	33.3
Gurgaon	13	16.4	3	18.8	-	-	2	13.3	3	14.3
Mahendragarh	6	7.4	1	6.3	1	9.1	1	6.7	1	4.8
Hissar	17	21.0	2	12.5	2	18.2	2	13.3	2	9.5
Total	81	100.0	16	100.0	11	100.0	15	100.0	21	100.0

The constituency breakdown confirms that even after the expansion, the Cabinet was primarily formed of representatives from the rural areas, although one non-agriculturist from a mixed constituency in Rohtak had been added.<sup>83</sup> A comparison with the first and second ministries shows that while the third and third as expanded heavily favoured the rural constituencies, the urban constituencies were overrepresented in the first two.<sup>84</sup> Under the Samyukta Dal, indeed, the latter sector was given no representation whatsoever. It is also interesting to note that the Scheduled Castes were better represented in the United Front ministries than they ever were during the Congress administration, even though Bhagwat Dayal, on occasion, tried to present himself as a protector of their interests against those of their rural agriculturist patrons.

While the third and third as expanded ministries were not solely composed of members of the traditional agriculturist tribes, there is no question that their proportionate representation increased as a result of the dissident defection from the Congress.<sup>85</sup> In the third ministry, they had two-thirds of the positions in contrast to the first and second where they had 50 and 46 per cent respectively. In

---

<sup>83</sup>See Map 5.10.

<sup>84</sup>See Table 5.13.

<sup>85</sup>See Table 5.14 and Map 5.11.

0 8 1.6 Miles

## CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN

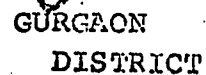


TABLE 5.13

HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN IN THE FIRST, SECOND  
THIRD AND THIRD AS EXPANDED MINISTRIES.

Description	Total Seats		First Ministry		Second Ministry		Third Ministry		Third Ministry Expanded	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Rural	47	58.0	7	43.8	7	63.5	12	80.0	16	76.2
Reserved	15	19.8	2	12.5	1	9.1	3	20.0	4	19.0
Urban	8	9.9	3	18.8	2	18.2	-	-	-	-
Mixed	11	13.6	4	25.0	1	9.1	-	-	1	4.8
Total	81	100.0	16	100.0	11	100.0	15	100.0	21	100.0



TABLE 5.14

HARYANA: CASTE BREAKDOWN IN THE FIRST, SECOND  
THIRD AND THIRD AS EXPANDED MINISTRIES.

Caste	Total Seats		First Ministry		Second Ministry		Third Ministry		Third Ministry Expanded	
	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age	No.	%age
Jat	24	29.5	3	18.9	4	36.4	7	46.7	8	38.1
Ahir	7	8.6	2	12.5	1	9.1	2	13.3	2	9.5
Ror	2	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gujar	1	1.2	1	6.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Meo	2	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	4.8
Rajput	3	3.7	2	12.5	-	-	1	6.7	2	9.5
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	48.1	8	50.0	5	45.5	10	66.7	13	61.9
Brahmin	9	11.1	2	12.5	3	27.3	-	-	-	-
Bania	6	7.5	3	18.9	1	9.1	1	6.7	2	9.5
Sch. Caste	16	19.6	2	12.5	1	9.1	3	20.0	4	19.0
Punjabi Ref.	9	11.1	1	6.3	1	9.1	1	6.7	2	9.5
Other	2	2.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	51.9	8	50.0	6	54.5	5	33.3	8	38.1
<u>Total</u>	81	100.0	16	100.0	11	100.0	15	100.0	21	100.0

0 8 16 Miles

THIRD HARYANA MINISTRY (as Expanded on June 20, 1967):  
CASTE BREAKDOWN



JAT (8)



AHIR (2)



MEO (1)



RAJPUT (2)



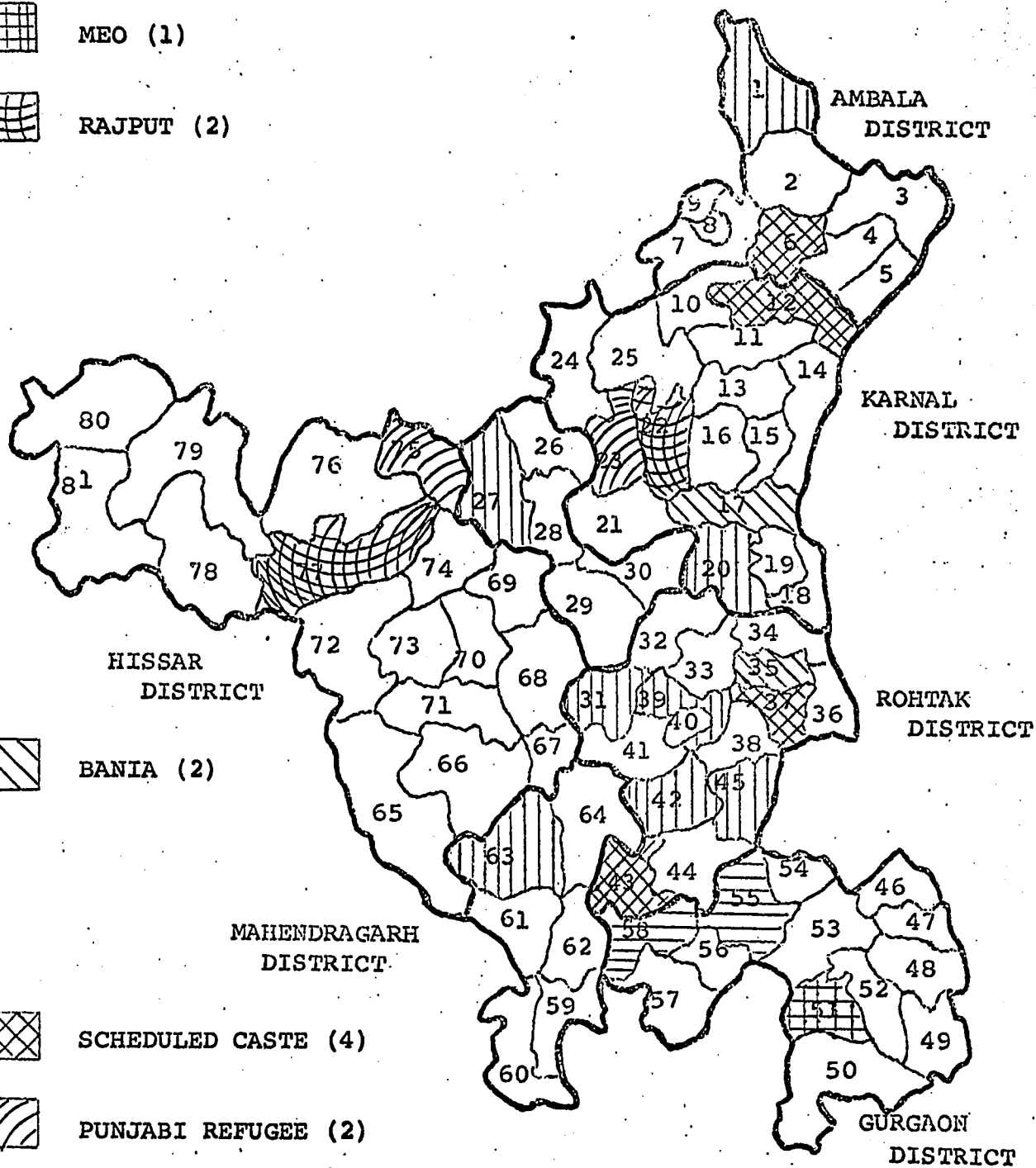
BANIA (2)



SCHEDULED CASTE (4)



PUNJABI REFUGEE (2)



all fairness to Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, however, it should be noted that his caste distribution of ministerial positions was far closer to the proportionate strengths of these communities in the assembly. In the expanded ministry, the agriculturist representation dropped slightly, from 68 to 62 per cent, suggesting that although the United Front set out to be representative of the rural interests, it was forced, in the face of increased internal instability, to seek more support from individuals who traditionally were not regarded as allies of the agriculturist tribes. The Jats were best represented in the third ministry when they held 47 per cent of the ministerial positions, while the Brahmins appeared to have suffered the most by the ouster of the Congress as they were not represented in the United Front ministries.

The pattern is clear. The defectionist revolt of the Congress dissidents served to give the agriculturist communities and the rural interests a dominant position in the Haryana administration. Even if the dissident experiment in non-Congress government did not ultimately prove successful, it did demonstrate that the agriculturists had not accepted a secondary position under a non-agriculturist party leader and that they would place their community interests above those of their party in the effort to have primacy over the state political process.

### Summary and Conclusions

It would appear that the Congress dissidents were motivated to take the drastic step of withdrawing their support from the Congress party in the assembly for a number of reasons. First, the dissidents, on the whole, represented rural interests in general and locally dominant agriculturist tribes in particular and as such deemed it to be their right to have a major say in the political system of a state, which had predominantly an agricultural economy and which virtually came into being as a result of their demand for a states reorganisation, which would remove the Haryana region from the political, social and particularly the economic hegemony of Punjab. When the leadership of the Congress party in Haryana, however, was placed in the hands of a factional grouping which had always been inimical to the rural sector and which had particularly opposed the reorganisation demand, these dissident factional groupings became increasingly frustrated with the way in which their alliance with the Congress was working.

Second, personality factors themselves cannot be ignored in attempting to assess the nature of this revolt. The grouping which emerged as the largest and the most cohesive within the Haryana Congress Legislature Party was led by a spokesman for the urban interests, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. Mr. Sharma was particularly distrusted by the agriculturist factional leaders because of the fact

that he had built up his own political career by taking advantage of the differences between the agriculturists in the Haryana region and Partap Singh Kairon, the Punjab Chief Minister whom the agriculturists had originally supported. This feeling of distrust deepened when Bhagwat Dayal used his dominant position within the Haryana Congress to attempt to undermine the regional support structures of those factional leaders who had opposed his election as party president and leader. The Congress High Command, in the past, had usually remained sensitive to the grievances of minority factions and had, on occasion, intervened in the affairs of state Congress organisations to protect these elements. At this time, however, Bhagwat Dayal was able to take advantage of internal divisions at the centre to pursue his own policies vis-à-vis the dissident Congressmen in Haryana. Personal rivalries amongst the leaders of the dissident agriculturist factions also helped to prevent them from rallying, at the outset, behind one of their own for the party leadership. If the agriculturists had succeeded in creating a strong rural bloc within the state Congress at the time of its creation, it is unlikely that B.D. Sharma would have been able to capture the leadership of the Legislature Party, although he might have been able to retain the leadership of the Pradesh Congress Committee.

Finally, it cannot be forgotten that the dissidents were also motivated to defect for "jobs". Both the Chief

Ministership and the various ministerial positions carry with them enormous patronage powers which could be used to develop and solidify regional political power bases. When Bhagwat Dayal deprived the dissidents of these positions in the state's first two ministries, he seriously threatened their continuing capacity to recruit and hold factional support. Under these circumstances, either the agriculturists had to accept the fact that they had been outmanoeuvred within the ruling party and were henceforth only of marginal importance within the state's political system, or they had to search for an alternative outside of the Congress which would permit them a share in political power. As was seen, they chose the latter course and successfully organized a floor-crossing within the assembly large enough to carry the balance of power over to the opposition benches.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISSIDENCE WITHIN THE DAL: RAMPANT DEFECTIONISM AND GOVERNMENTAL INSTABILITY

The Samyukta Dal appeared to begin its period in power with a reasonable degree of consensus and internal unity. All parties in the United Front had agreed on a seven-point minimum programme which provided for: clean and efficient administration, eradication of all forms of corruption, lower consumer prices, uplift of Harijans and backward classes, tax relief, maximum economy in administration, and speedy progress in agricultural and industrial development.<sup>1</sup> Another indication of the Front's intention to provide Haryana with good government might be noted in the fact that it was approached, shortly after its formation, by a further seven Congress MLAs for admission on the condition that three of their number be given ministerial positions. The Dal informed these potential defectors that while they were welcome to join if they accepted the above programme, they would not be given offices in return.<sup>2</sup> The very nature of the coalition between the Congress dissident factions and

---

<sup>1</sup>Kashyap, p.88-89.

<sup>2</sup>Indian Express, May 17, 1967.

the opposition parties, however, made it inevitable that, in time, a group within the Front would become dissatisfied with the way in which the spoils of office had been divided amongst the constituent parts and would thereby produce a new dissident group formation within the governing alliance not unlike the dissident factional configuration which existed in the Congress before the dissidents defected. This was indeed what happened to Haryana's United Front within a matter of weeks of its inception and produced the re-defection of a dissident Congress faction across the floor and a chaotic period of governmental instability.

In analyzing the gradual disintegration of the Samyukta Dal as an effective alternative to the Congress in Haryana, the following will be examined: first, the revolt of the Devi Lal faction. Second, the reorganisation of the Cabinet as Haryana's fourth ministry. Third, the formation of the Vishal Haryana party. Fourth, the gradual increase in internal dissidence resulting in individual defections and ministerial instability. Finally, the central intervention through the imposition of President's rule.

#### The Re-defection of the Devi Lal Group

The difficulties for the Samyukta Dal experiment began when Devi Lal made public his grievances about the way that the United Front he had helped to create was functioning. Specifically, he was dissatisfied with the small representation given to his factional supporters in the ministry,



the degree to which the Dal was dependent upon the support of the Jan Sangh and was thereby being thwarted in its efforts to implement some of its agricultural policies, and the extent to which Rao Birender Singh had succeeded in establishing himself as the Front's dominant leader.<sup>3</sup> The timing of this outbreak of new dissidence within the Dal suggests that there may be another explanation for Devi Lal's dissatisfaction. Indeed, it would appear to date from the moment when Rao Birender Singh accepted, over Devi Lal's objections, Hardwari Lal's offer to defect from the Congress and to carry on as the Front's Minister of Education. This meant that a rival Jat, of some stature, had been given a prominent position within the ruling alliance and could, in time, challenge Devi Lal's right to speak for the Jat constituents of the Dal. Hardwari Lal, moreover, was a Rohtak Jat and could use his position in the ministry to build up a substantial regional base.

The first manifestation of Devi Lal's discomfiture with Hardwari Lal came immediately after his successful by-election campaign which had been used as a prestige issue by the Front. Unhappy with the implications of this electoral victory, Devi Lal insisted that the Samyukta Dal investigate the election expenses incurred during the by-election and the nature of the election fund built up by

---

<sup>3</sup>Kashyap, p.89. Rao Birender Singh ascribed Devi Lal's dissidence to the fact that he had not been invited to become a minister by the Dal.

Hardwari Lal.<sup>4</sup> When the Dal proved reluctant to expel Hardwari Lal, Devi Lal and Chand Ram let it be known that they would break with the Chief Minister over the question of Hardwari Lal's continuance in the Front and the growing influence of the Jan Sangh over its policies.<sup>5</sup> Most were aware, at this time, that Devi Lal had begun negotiations with the Congress High Command to leave the Samyukta Dal and that the fate of the Rao Birender Singh ministry would depend on the "horse-trading behind the curtains".<sup>6</sup>

In an effort to silence the criticism that he was monopolizing power within the Front and also, hopefully, to divide the group which was now conspiring against his leadership, Rao Birender Singh appointed Chand Ram as Deputy Chief Minister.<sup>7</sup> The Samyukta Dal also began to consider a proposal that the Haryana ministry be reconstructed so as to include both Devi Lal and Mr. Mangal Sein, leader of the Jan Sangh group.<sup>8</sup> None of these expedients, however, appeared to mollify the dissidents and on June 18, 1967, Devi Lal announced that there would be a showdown in the assembly on June 21st after which, he claimed, he would

---

<sup>4</sup>Indian Express, June 1, 1967 and Tribune, June 2, 1967.

<sup>5</sup>Statesman, June 5, 1967.

<sup>6</sup>Indian Express, June 7, 1967.

<sup>7</sup>Tribune, June 8, 1967.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., June 14, 1967.

form a minority government with the support of the Congress party which would not join the ministry.<sup>9</sup> Devi Lal probably announced his planned coup before the event in an effort to win over as many potential defectors as was possible from amongst the non-Jan Sangh constituents of the Front. As the Congress would not be joining the ministry, Devi Lal could safely offer a ministerial position to every legislator who pledged himself to join the revolt. The agreement reached between Devi Lal and the Congress had stipulated that the Congress would only be obliged to support this non-Congress government if Devi Lal could recruit fifteen defectors from the Samyukta Dal.

The extent of the crisis facing Rao Birender Singh may be measured by the fact that at least seven of his 15 man Cabinet had already signed a pledge that they "would abide by the decision of their leader, Devi Lal, about their next move".<sup>10</sup> While admitting that a rift existed in his ministry, Rao Birender Singh questioned the right of the two rebel leaders to be "presumptive enough to think they hold Haryana in their fist",<sup>11</sup> and announced that he would ride out the storm. At this stage, however, only thirty-three of the forty-eight Front supporters were prepared

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., June 19, 1967.

<sup>10</sup>Patriot, June 20, 1967.

<sup>11</sup>Indian Express, June 20, 1967.

to sign a petition in support of the Chief Minister.<sup>12</sup> On the day on which Devi Lal was supposed to oust the United Front ministry with the assistance of his old political rival Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, Rao Birender Singh succeeded in saving his ministry by adding six new members to his cabinet from amongst the group which Devi Lal had hoped to recruit for his toppling bid.<sup>13</sup> Mool Chand Jain and Lachhman Singh also announced that they were switching their factional allegiance from Devi Lal to Rao Birender Singh. As a result of this sudden and unexpected Cabinet expansion, Devi Lal was unable to gather the minimum number of supporters which he required to topple the ministry. On the appointed day, not a single member of the Cabinet came forward to submit his resignation.<sup>14</sup> Instead, the Finance Minister and former supporter of Devi Lal, Mool Chand Jain, used the occasion of a speech in the Vidhan Sabha to expose the Congress "plot" to enter into an "unholy alliance" with some rebels of the Front.<sup>15</sup>

Although Birender Singh's manoeuvre appeared to have saved the ministry from immediate collapse, the question of how to handle the continued dissidence within the Front still

---

<sup>12</sup>Tribune, June 20, 1967.

<sup>13</sup>Statesman, June 21, 1967.

<sup>14</sup>Times of India, June 22, 1967.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

remained. At this juncture, the Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha, Sri Chand, appointed a three-man neutral committee and entrusted them with the task of resolving the differences between Rao Birender Singh and Devi Lal.<sup>16</sup> Twenty-four hours later, this committee announced that an accord had been reached. In discussing this settlement, Devi Lal claimed that he had been assured that the Samyukta Dal would reduce the size of the ministry in accord with his wishes.<sup>17</sup> The general feeling at the time, however, was that this was not as much an agreement as it was an instrument of Devi Lal's surrender. Indeed, the next day, the Chief Minister made it clear that he was "in no mood even to recognize the compromise formula evolved by the committee."<sup>18</sup> Devi Lal's factional opponents also seized upon his "defeat" for their own purposes.

While Devi Lal is licking his wounds in a remote corner of Haryana, his powerful opponents, led by the Education Minister, Mr. Hardwari Lal, are busy in propagating against his 'treacherous' role with a view to minimizing his hold among the rural population of the state.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Abdul Ghani Dhar, Jagat Narain, M.P. and Mukhtiar Singh, M.P., Tribune, June 21, 1967.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., June 22, 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Statesman, June 23, 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Indian Express, June 28, 1967.

Recognizing that his position within the Front was now untenable, Devi Lal decided to bring the matter to a head by demanding an immediate reduction in the size of the ministry in accord with the assurances of the reconciliation committee.<sup>20</sup> When this was rejected by the Chief Minister, Devi Lal announced that he was withdrawing his followers' support for the ministry on the grounds that Rao Birender Singh was "sheltering" his colleague, Hardwari Lal.<sup>21</sup> Assured that he now had enough support in the assembly, Birender Singh "welcomed" this move and had the Samyukta Dal expel Devi Lal from its membership on the basis of his "disruptionist" activities.<sup>22</sup> This action took Devi Lal somewhat by surprise as not only had he created the original basis for the Dal, but "it was also at his insistence that the Dal had accepted Rao Birender Singh as Chief Minister."<sup>23</sup>

The expulsion of Devi Lal now left his factional supporters, especially the marginal ones, in a dilemma. Should they follow Devi Lal back across the floor into the opposition where the Congress party was ardently wooing

---

<sup>20</sup>Hindustan Times, July 12, 1967.

<sup>21</sup>Indian Express, July 14, 1967.

<sup>22</sup>Kashyap, p.89.

<sup>23</sup>Patriot, July 14, 1967.

them with promises of support for a Congress backed ministry, but whose leader they did not trust, or should they remain within the Samyukta Dal which was still, for the moment, in a position to dispense the largesse of office? Within twenty-four hours of Devi Lal's expulsion, it was clear that most of his supporters had opted for the latter course, especially those from outside of his home district of Hissar. Mool Chand Jain, Sheryo Nath, Lachhman Singh and Shamsher Singh all disowned him as their leader despite the fact that they had earlier signed the document in support of his position.<sup>24</sup> Even Chand Ram, rationalising that Devi Lal should have first placed his grievances before the Samyukta Dal, refused to resign as Deputy Chief Minister and stated that he wanted to work for a rapprochement.<sup>25</sup> Rao Birender Singh, however, was not prepared to harbour any of Devi Lal's supporters and had his Cabinet issue a statement inviting all Ministers who "do not owe their full loyalty to Mr. Birender Singh, Chief Minister, to submit their resignations."<sup>26</sup>

When Devi Lal's supporters stubbornly refused to take this hint, the Chief Minister decided to remove them himself.

---

<sup>24</sup>Hindustan Times, July 15, 1967.

<sup>25</sup>Statesman, July 15, 1967.

<sup>26</sup>Tribune, July 15, 1967.

On July 15, 1967, in a sudden and surprise move, he submitted the resignation of his ministry. Although Devi Lal promptly submitted a list of fifty-one legislators to the Governor who, he claimed, were opposed to Rao Birender Singh's leadership, the Governor rejected Devi Lal's claim on the grounds that his list did not bear the signatures of his supporters while the Chief Minister had already submitted a list of forty-two signatures along with his resignation. Accordingly, the Governor invited Rao Birender Singh to re-form the ministry. This was done the same day, excluding Chand Ram and Mani Ram Godara from office. Although Jagan Nath, the Chief Parliamentary Secretary, also resigned in protest the next day, there was no general protest over the Chief Minister's methods within the Samyukta Dal.<sup>27</sup> When the dust finally settled, the Devi Lal group, which now joined the opposition as the "Haryana Congress", had been reduced to five members consisting of Partap Singh, Jagan Nath, Mani Ram Godara and Hira Lal Arya from Hissar district and Chand Ram from Karnal district.<sup>28</sup>

Although the United Front government, under Rao Birender Singh's leadership, was able to weather this defection crisis, albeit with a loss of valuable voting

---

<sup>27</sup>Kashyap, p.90.

<sup>28</sup>See Map 6.1.



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 6.1

278

0 8 16 Miles

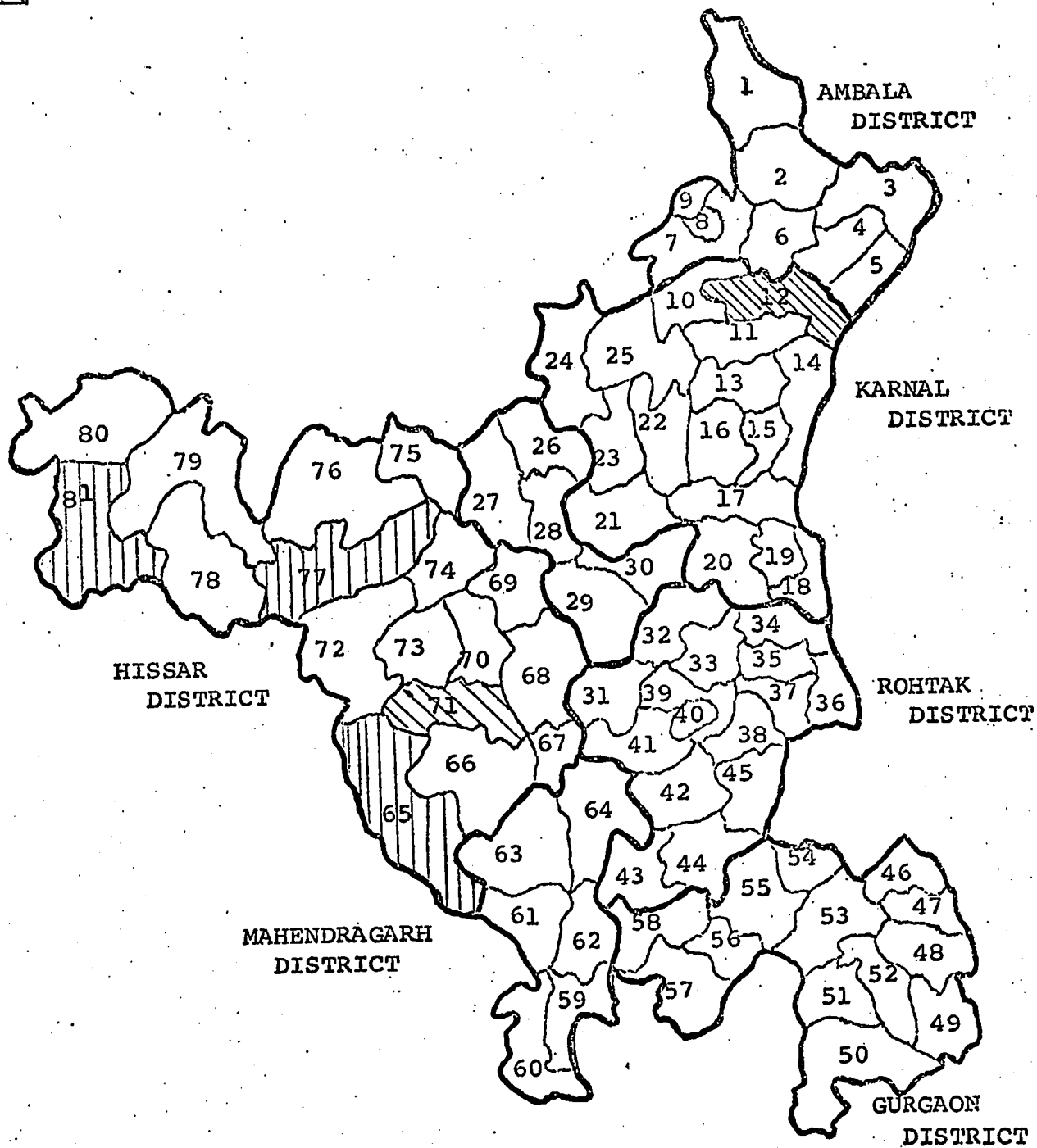
HARYANA CONGRESS (Devi Lal Group)



RURAL (3)



RESERVED (2)



support, this period represents a fundamental shift in attitudes on the part of the Dal constituents. While many Front supporters had once been highly idealistic about their experiment in non-Congress rule and had genuinely hoped that they would be able to legislate policies which would help the more backward agriculturist areas to develop, they now saw that they were engaged in a struggle to survive politically in the face of a strong opposition. In discussing this basic shift in attitudes within the Dal, one of its members, Partap Singh Daulta, lamented the fact that while "the peasant-proprietors had once felt that the Dal was their front as the Unionist Government of Sir Chhotu Ram once was", the Front was now without a guiding ideology and as such "we are just individuals anxious to stay in power by adjusting personal ambitions."<sup>29</sup>

The Fourth Haryana Ministry.

The reconstituted United Front Council of Ministers sworn in on July 15, 1967, consisted of 19 of the former members of the third ministry with no major adjustments in ministerial positions. The Chief Minister took over the portfolios of the two dropped ministers, creating speculation that there would be an early expansion of the state Cabinet.<sup>30</sup> This expectation was partly fulfilled when

---

<sup>29</sup>Tribune, June 28, 1967.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, July 18, 1967.

Rao Birender Singh persuaded a Jat MLA from Hissar district, Hari Singh Dabra, to defect from the Congress one week after the Cabinet crisis. The same day, he was sworn in as Minister of Irrigation and Power.<sup>31</sup> Despite this addition from Devi Lal's home district, Rohtak remained heavily over-represented in the ministry with seven of the twenty seats. Indeed, Karnal and Rohtak districts together now had 55 percent of the total Cabinet membership. As there were no major factional leaders in the Front from either of these districts, this pattern suggests that every marginal supporter of the Government now had to be given a ministerial position so as to guarantee his loyalty. After the loss of the Devi Lal group, Hissar (the largest district) was reduced to only one individual representative in the ministry. The addition of Hari Singh Dabra on July 21, 1967, still left this area of Haryana under-represented.<sup>32</sup>

Further analysis of Haryana's fourth ministry reveals that for the first time defectors from the Congress were not in a majority but now represented only 50 per cent of the total membership.<sup>33</sup> In terms of caste representation, the percentage ratios were restored to figures very close to those of the third ministry before it was expanded.<sup>34</sup> The

---

<sup>31</sup>Indian Express, July 22, 1967.

<sup>32</sup>See Map 6.2.

<sup>33</sup>See Table 6.1.

<sup>34</sup>Refer to Table 5.14.

0 8 16 Miles

FOURTH HARYANA MINISTRY (as Constituted on July 15, 1967 and  
Expanded on July 21, 1967):

## PARTY BREAKDOWN



HARYANA CONGRESS (9) (July 15, 1967)



INDEPENDENTS (8)



REPUBLICAN (2)

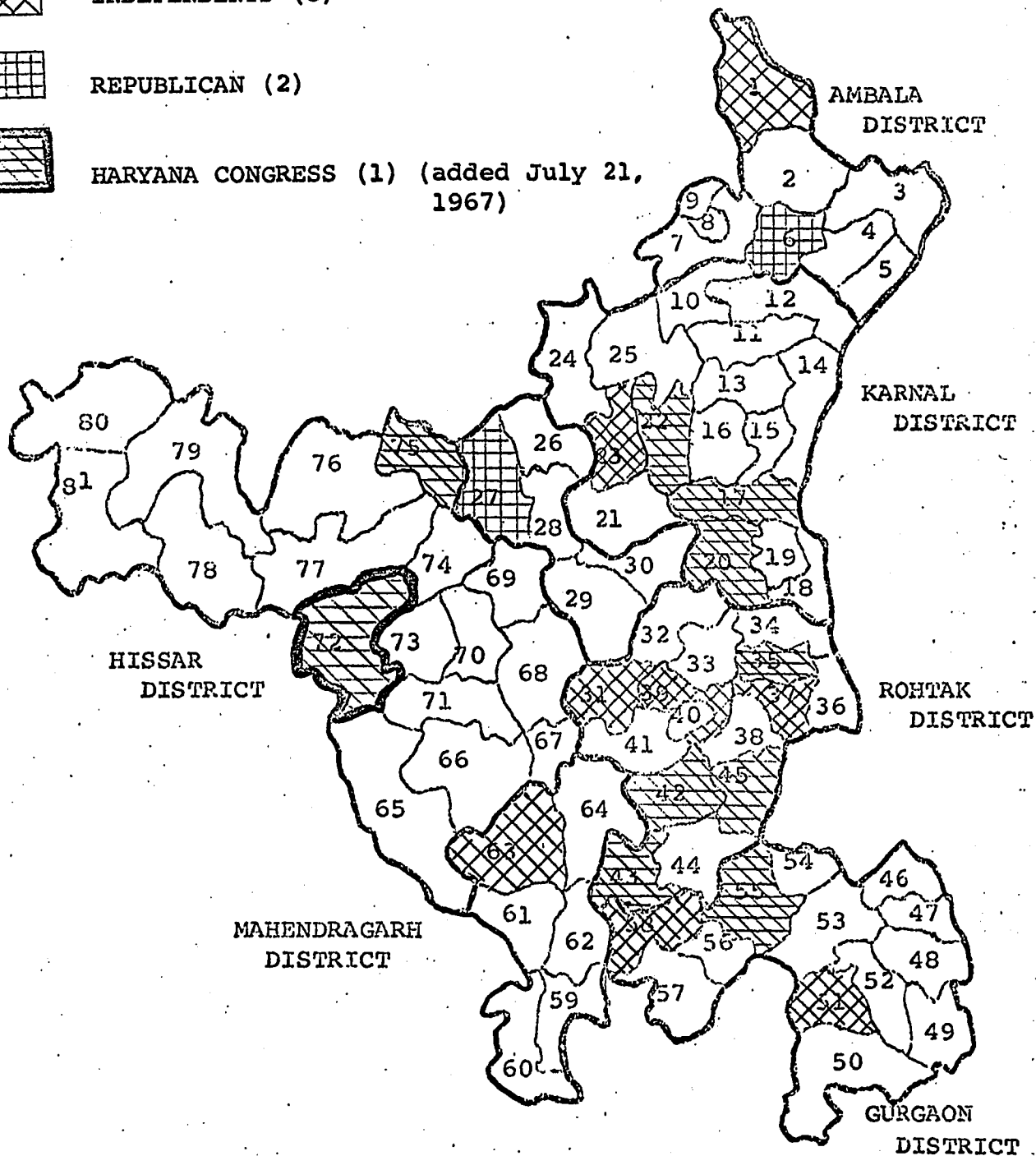
HARYANA CONGRESS (1) (added July 21,  
1967)

TABLE 6.1

HARYANA: THE FOURTH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS  
AS CONSTITUTED ON JULY 22, 1967.

Name	Party Affiliation	Caste	District
<u>Cabinet Ministers</u>			
1. Rao Birender Singh	Haryana Congress	Ahir	Gurgaon
2. Mool Chand Jain	"	Bania	Karnal
3. Hardwari Lal	"	Jat	Rohtak
4. Partap Singh Daulta	"	"	"
5. Mahant Sheryo Nath	Independent	"	"
6. Harpal Singh	Haryana Congress	Punjabi Refugee	Hissar
7. Lachhman Singh	"	Jat (Sikh)	Ambala
8. Hari Singh Dabra	"	Jat	Hissar
<u>Ministers of State</u>			
9. Multan Singh	"	"	Karnal
10. Phool Chand	"	Scheduled Caste	Rohtak
11. Amir Singh	Independent	Jat	Mahendra.
12. Shamsher Singh	Republican	"	Jind
13. Jagjit Singh Pohlloo	Independent	Punjabi Refugee	Jind
14. Ram Pal Singh	Haryana Congress	Rajput	Karnal
<u>Deputy Ministers</u>			
15. Jaswant Singh	Independent	Ahir	Gurgaon
16. Ram Parshad	Republican	Scheduled Caste	Ambala
17. Mohan Lal Thakur	Haryana Congress	Bania	Rohtak
18. Brahm Singh	Independent	Scheduled Caste	"
19. Maha Singh	"	Jat	"
20. Rahim Khan	"	Meo	Gurgaon

Source: Subhash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp. 90-2.

agriculturist tribes now had 13 seats (65 per cent) divided amongst nine Jats, two Ahirs, one Meo and one Rajput. The non-agriculturist castes had seven (35 per cent) including two Baniyas, three Scheduled Caste and two Punjabi refugees.

#### The Formation of the Vishal Haryana Party

In an effort to provide the Samyukta Dal constituents with a political goal and to consolidate the non-Jan Sangh groups under his leadership, Rao Birender Singh formed a new political party on September 11, 1967.<sup>35</sup> Its legislative membership consisted of the 12 remaining Congress defectors, the 16 independents and one former member of the Republican party, Shamsher Singh. This party, of which Rao Birender Singh was designated the Founder-President, called itself the Vishal (Greater) Haryana Party, and set as its political objective the creation of a larger Haryana state unit consisting of the existing Haryana tract plus those contiguous areas of neighbouring states<sup>36</sup> which were deemed through historical association or cultural affinity to form a part

---

<sup>35</sup>Times of India, September 12, 1967.

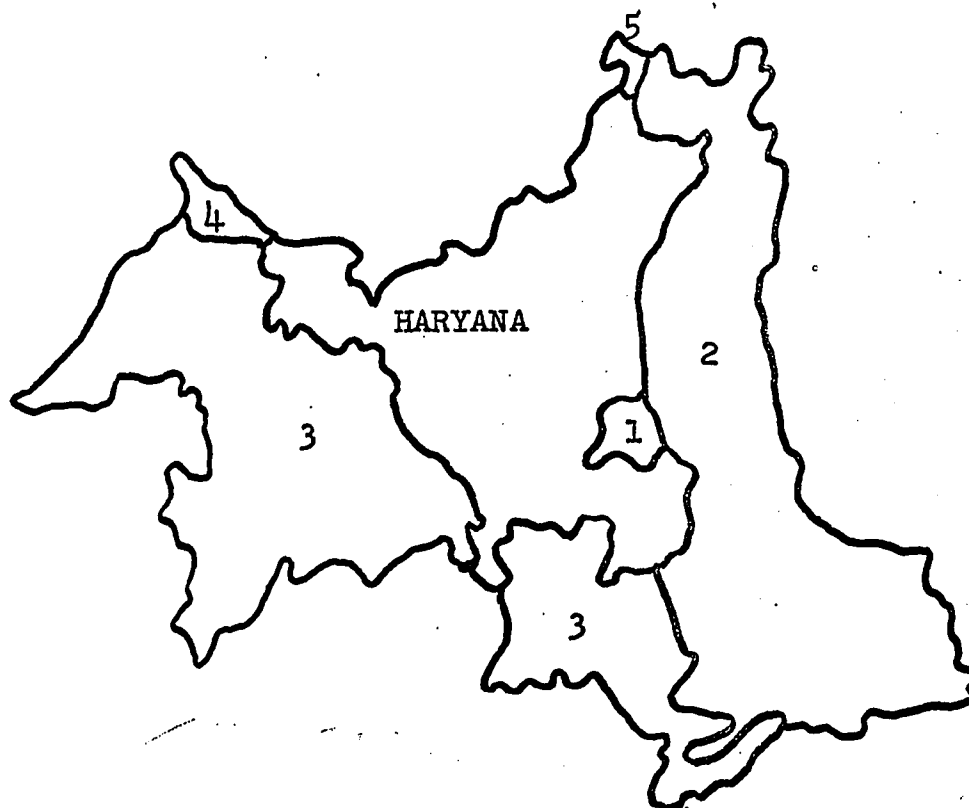
<sup>36</sup>See Map 6.3.

MAP 6.3

## PROPOSED VISHAL HARYANA STATE

## AREAS CLAIMED:

- 1 Delhi Territory (excluding New Delhi, the national capital)
- 2 From Uttar Pradesh (Agra and Meerut Divisions)
- 3 From Rajasthan (Districts of Alwar, Dholpur, Kurauli, Ganganagar and Jhunjhnu)
- 4 From Punjab (Fazilka)
- 5 From Himachal Pradesh (Simla)



Sources: Adapted from "Vishal Hariyana Kyon?" (Why Vishal Haryana?), a pamphlet published by the Vishal Haryana Party, Rampura Village, Rewari, in Hindi, (1969) and Devi Shankar Prabhakar, Hariyana: Ek Sanskritik Adhyayan, (Haryana: A Cultural Study), in Hindi, (Delhi: Umaesh Prakshan, 1967), front piece.

of the true Haryana territory.<sup>37</sup>

While there would be little justification in calling for yet another states reorganisation on the basis of a provincial administrative structure devised by the Emperor Akbar and perpetuated in one form or another up until 1858 in the Delhi area, there were some grounds for this demand on the basis of a common culture and language. This was particularly true of the agriculturist tribes which have historically dominated the rural areas throughout the Haryana Prant as it was envisioned by Rao Birender Singh. Economically and administratively, the demand also had some merit in that a larger state unit might have helped the Haryanvis to overcome some of the backward conditions which remained in much of their rural areas. Indeed, Rao Birender Singh frequently reiterated that only through a Vishal Haryana could a panacea be found for the problems handicapping Haryana in terms of food grains, floods, irrigation,

---

<sup>37</sup>"The Vishal Haryana Prant shall comprise of the present Haryana Pradesh and Hindi-speaking areas contiguous with it but not included in it; Agra and Meerut Divisions of Uttar Pradesh; Alwar, Dholpur, Kurauli, Ganganagar and Jhunjhnu areas of Rajasthan. Other areas can also be included in it in accordance with the demands and wishes of the people in general of those areas." Constitution of the Vishal Haryana Party, Article I: Object, paragraph two. "Other areas" has come to include substantial parts of Punjab, parts of Himachal Pradesh including Simla and the Bhakra-Nangal project, and the Delhi Union Territory with the exception of New Delhi itself which would be left as a federal capital area.



drainage and electricity.<sup>38</sup>

No matter what grounds were used to justify the founding of a new political party in Haryana, it is clear that Rao Birender Singh was seizing upon a popular demand, which had been advocated in one form or another since the territories of Delhi Suba had been divided by the British in 1858 for a very immediate political purpose. With the loss of the Devi Lal group, which was continuing to call itself the Haryana Congress, and the creation of an alliance between Bhagwat Dayal Sharma's group and the Haryana Congress for the purposes of overthrowing the Samyukta Dal ministry, Birender Singh needed a political organization which would be capable of disciplining its membership on party lines. It was clear, by now, that the loosely coordinated Samyukta Dal could not control the outbreak of internal dissidence. The creation of a new political party, moreover, had the advantage of producing a large organized component capable of dominating the Front. The largest organized component of the Dal, hitherto, had been the Jan Sangh and this fact had made it difficult for the Chief Minister to recruit new support, especially agriculturist, from across the floor. The Jan Sangh was naturally unhappy with the creation of the

---

<sup>38</sup>Tribune, September 29, 1967.

VHP.<sup>39</sup> Two weeks after the party's formation, the Jan Sangh assembly leader, Dr. Mangal Sein, quit his position as secretary of the Dal's coordinating committee on instructions from his party's High Command.<sup>40</sup>

On the whole, the press, at the time, were aware of the Chief Minister's motivations in founding this new party. The Indian Express, in an editorial, directly linked the party's creation to the tussle going on within the Samyukta Dal over the Jan Sangh's interference in the day-to-day administration of the state.<sup>41</sup> While most newspapers suggested that the new party was no answer to the problems then confronting Haryana, the Patriot, in its editorial on the subject, did note the following:

In Haryana's caste-ridden politics, the formation of the Vishal Haryana Party ... may prove to be a healthy development ... The party may provide a platform for those people of Haryana who are opposed to the Congress but find nothing in common with the Jan Sangh. Its objective of a 'classless society' may not mean much, but if it helps to give a secular tone to the state's politics it will be a distinct contribution. The Jan Sangh element in the Dal has been cut to size and becomes a 'junior partner'.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>Indian Express, September 12, 1967.

<sup>40</sup>Statesman, September 26, 1967.

<sup>41</sup>"Vishal Haryana Party" (Editorial), Indian Express, September 15, 1967.

<sup>42</sup>"Haryana Party" (Editorial), Patriot, September 14, 1967.

In terms of regional distribution, the Vishal Haryana party would appear to be concentrated in the southern region of the state.<sup>43</sup> Rohtak, Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts contributed 19 of the 29 legislative representatives, with the highest density of support lying in the Ahir belt of Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts. This would suggest that the party was an extension of Rao Birender Singh's regional factional influence in Haryana politics and that it could not, therefore, be viewed as a state-wide organization.

#### Individual Defections and Ministerial Instability

The formation of the Vishal Haryana party did not succeed in restraining the increased sense of frustration on the part of the individual supporters of the Dal over both the way in which the United Front government was functioning and, especially, the role being played by the Jan Sangh constituents of the Dal. Complaints were made that the Jan Sangh representatives were supporting the United Front government in the assembly while criticizing it outside. Partap Singh Daulta, at one point, appealed to the Congress High Command for support for the Birender Singh ministry so as to enable men such as himself to get rid of the Jan Sangh and to provide the state with stable

---

<sup>43</sup>See Map 6.4.

0 8 16 Miles

## THE VISHAL HARYANA PARTY (September 11, 1967) REPRESENTATION

## MEMBERS OF THE VISHAL HARYANA PARTY (29)



HARYANA CONGRESS (12)



REPUBLICAN PARTY (1)



NAVIN HARYANA PARTY (16)

## OTHER SUPPORTERS OF THE SAMYUKTA DAL (16)



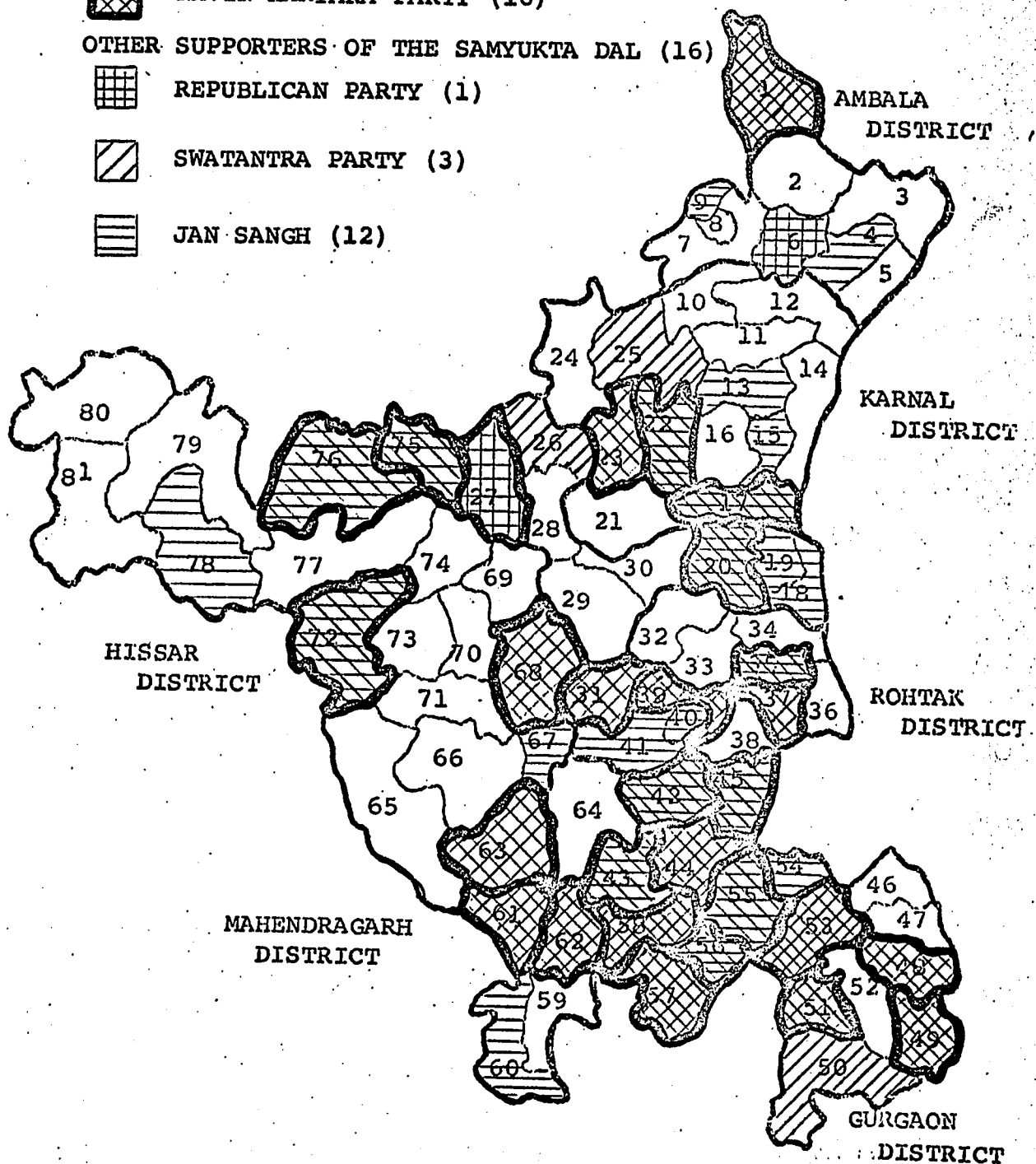
REPUBLICAN PARTY (1)



SWATANTRA PARTY (3)



JAN SANGH (12)



government.<sup>44</sup> Without the support of the Congress to end "our helpless dependence on the Jan Sangh", he saw no solution for the situation existing then other than for the Samyukta Dal to hold fresh elections and to seek a fresh mandate from the people.<sup>45</sup> Rao Birender Singh denied that he sought to retain power with Congress support and declared that his Minister of Development was acting without the approval of the Samyukta Dal. But he, himself, approached Dinesh Singh, the Union Foreign Minister, to the effect that his ministry would welcome Congress support in its efforts to cut itself off from the dominance of the Jan Sangh.<sup>46</sup> These advances, however, proved futile because of the Chief Minister's reluctance to place himself and his factional support under Congress discipline without the leadership question being resolved first.

Meanwhile, internal division continued to haunt the Samyukta Dal. Multan Singh resigned from the Vishal Haryana Party on the grounds that there was no cohesion within the party and that ministers were pitched against one another.<sup>47</sup> Although he retained his Cabinet position

---

<sup>44</sup>Patriot, August 28, 1967.

<sup>45</sup>Statesman, August 31, 1967.

<sup>46</sup>Indian Express, September 2, 1967.

<sup>47</sup>Statesman, October 1, 1967.

and requested the Speaker to be seated as an independent, he made it clear that he would be prepared to defect to the Devi Lal faction in future if it were given the opportunity to form a new government. On October 3, 1967, however, the Chief Minister was able to neutralize the impact of Multan Singh's resignation by obtaining the defection of Tuhi Ram from the Congress Party. He was appointed a parliamentary secretary the same day.<sup>48</sup> On October 4, 1967, Multan Singh withdrew his resignation from the Vishal Haryana party after talks with Rao Birender Singh who assured him that his grievances against certain ministers would be looked into.<sup>49</sup>

In time, differences also arose over more substantive policy matters. A new crisis developed which was to seriously threaten the ministry's stability on October 16. Under heavy pressure from the trading interests and the Jan Sangh, the Samyukta Dal decided to unilaterally permit inter-state trading in coarse grains over the objections of the central government which was trying to hold the states to commitments that they would not export such grains without central permission. There was also a hint of political scandal in this manoeuvre as it was alleged that certain elements within the Dal were issuing such permits in return

---

<sup>48</sup>Hindustan Times, October 4, 1967.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., October 5, 1967.

for contributions to the Front's election fund. When the central government used its authority over transportation to stop this inter-state movement of foodgrains, there was a crash in cereal prices within the state which caused the grain traders to lose thousands of rupees.<sup>50</sup>

The crash in grain prices caused the Jan Sangh, which had earlier pressed the government to issue such export permits for its supporters in the trading sector, to do an about face and to threaten a withdrawal of its support from the Samyukta Dal because of its "anti-people" policies.<sup>51</sup> Although the Jan Sangh was forced to retreat from this stand and to admit that it had been taken to "assuage the feelings of traders, its main supporters", the Sangh was now internally divided over the issue. Four dissidents within its legislature party were now threatening to defect unless the Jan Sangh broke with the Samyukta Dal. They claimed that they had been "thinking for sometime of joining the Congress as they could not toe the RSS line", but that they had been awaiting the decision of the Devi Lal group before making this move. The leadership of the Haryana Jan Sangh was determined that these "rebels" should be asked to leave the party if they could not behave in a disciplined manner.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup>Tribune, October 17, 1967.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid, October 18, 1967.

<sup>52</sup>Hindustan Times, October 20, 1967.

In response to this, three Jan Sangh legislators, Om Parkash, Banwari Lal Chakkar and Lachman Das, defected to the Congress party.<sup>53</sup> This increased the strength of the opposition to 39 against 40 remaining with the Samyukta Dal. The next day they were joined by Randhir Singh pushing the United Front into a minority position in the assembly for the first time.<sup>54</sup> In their joint statement, the four Jan Sangh defectors said:

We have seen the Jan Sangh from within. It is an organisation tied up with traders, hoarders, smugglers and money-bags. Its leaders have been party to acts of public betrayal. The removal of control on coarse grains ... has given an unbridled licence to traders to make crores of rupees.<sup>55</sup>

Although the Chief Minister claimed that he still enjoyed majority support which would be proven when the assembly was re-convened,<sup>56</sup> he immediately began negotiations with the Devi Lal group to ascertain whether a common ground could be found upon which they would be prepared to back the Samyukta Dal.<sup>57</sup> Devi Lal, however, announced that

---

<sup>53</sup>It was suggested that these four defectors had close personal contacts with B.D. Sharma and that he had materially helped them during the general elections when he was trying to eliminate supporters of rival factions. Link, October 29, 1967.

<sup>54</sup>Hindustan Times, October 23, 1967.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Tribune, October 25, 1967.

<sup>57</sup>Indian Express, October 25, 1967.



he was still determined to oust the government "which has done more harm than good to the state".<sup>58</sup>

A new political controversy was set off in Haryana shortly thereafter when conflicting statements were made by Rao Birender Singh and his Development Minister, Partap Singh Daulta. Mr. Daulta claimed that all of the ministers had submitted their resignations to the Chief Minister following differences over Rao Birender Singh's desire to expand the ministry once again to "accommodate new entrants".<sup>59</sup> The Chief Minister denied the allegation "as there is no need at present to find room for any newcomer to the United Front or to expand the ministry in view of our stable position and solid support".<sup>60</sup> In response, Mr. Daulta said that talks between marginal supporters of the Samyukta Dal, such as himself, and members of Devi Lal's group had reached a consensus that Bhagwat Dayal Sharma must be kept out of power. He did not, however, rule out the possibility that he and others would rejoin the Congress if Mr. Sharma stepped aside and left the leadership to a representative of the peasantry such as Devi Lal or Rao Birender Singh.<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>58</sup>Tribune, October 26, 1967.

<sup>59</sup>Statesman, October 29, 1967.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Tribune, October 29, 1967.

The Governor, meanwhile, in reply to demands by both Devi Lal and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma that they be given an opportunity to attempt to form a government, said that as Rao Birender Singh "still leads the largest party in the Vidhan Sabha" and as there was as yet no evidence that the opposition had "joined hands in a coalition", there was as yet no need for the Chief Minister to resign.<sup>62</sup> The Governor further stated that as "defections seem to have taken the form of almost an epidemic and no one knows where they are going to stop", he thought that a margin of one or two MLAs one way or the other was not enough to determine whether the government had the support of the assembly or not. The proper time for the Governor to act, he suggested, would be if the Samyukta Dal were voted out of power in the ensuing session of the assembly, or if the Chief Minister should decide to resign.

The same day that the Governor declared that the fate of the government could only be determined in the assembly, the Samyukta Dal was reduced to 38 supporters in a house of 79. Gaya Lal defected first to the Devi Lal group and later the same day to the Congress.<sup>63</sup> The next day, he created an even greater stir by re-defecting to the Samyukta Dal, where

---

<sup>62</sup>Ibid, October 31, 1967.

<sup>63</sup>Hindustan Times, October 31, 1967.

he was appointed a parliamentary secretary for his trouble.<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, however, the fluid situation within the Dal continued unabated. On November 1, 1967, the Health Minister, Mahant Sheryo Nath, tendered his resignation from the Cabinet because his factional nominee had not been selected by the Dal as its candidate for a forthcoming by-election. The Chief Minister, however, was able to balance this loss by persuading Randhir Singh to re-defect to the Dal and to re-join the Jan Sangh. The "baffling pace of the chameleon-like changes in the party colours of some MLAs", caused some individual members of the Samyukta Dal including Multan Singh, Partap Singh Daulta and some of the Jan Sangh leaders, to suggest that a suspension of the state assembly and mid-term elections were the only means of ending the current phase of defections.<sup>65</sup>

In his search for new defectors to strengthen his shaky government, Rao Birender Singh was able to exploit the conflict which existed between Devi Lal and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. Realizing that the anti-Bhagwat Dayal feeling had

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., November 1, 1967, and Kashyap, p.95. When Rao Birender Singh announced that Gaya Lal had returned, he stated that Gaya Lal was now Aya Lal. This usage was later popularized by the Union Home Minister, Y.B. Chavan, who described the comings and goings of the defectors as "Aya and Gaya Ram" (literally: here comes Ram and there goes Ram). As a result, defectors in India are frequently referred to in the press as the "Aya and Gaya Rams" of Indian politics.

<sup>65</sup> Statesman, November 2, 1967 and Hindustan Times, November 4, 1967.

not subsided amongst the agriculturists, the Chief Minister continued to represent Bhagwat Dayal as the symbol of anti-Jat consolidation in the state. Even if the Jat opinion leaders were uncomfortable in having a government which had to rely upon the support of the Jan Sangh and were unhappy with some aspects of Rao Birender Singh's "authoritarian" methods, they were still not prepared to abandon the Samyukta Dal if this would be instrumental in bringing Bhagwat Dayal back into power.<sup>66</sup>

Rao Birender Singh finally regained a pledged majority for the Samyukta Dal on November 6, 1967, by securing the defection of Hira Lal Arya from the Devi Lal group. This floor-crossing came as a blow to the opposition leaders, who were still appealing to the Governor to dismiss the United Front government, especially as Mr. Arya had always been regarded as one of Devi Lal's closest associates. In explaining his defection and subsequent appointment as a Cabinet minister, Hira Lal said that although he had "full confidence" in Devi Lal, he was returning to the Dal to prevent B.D. Sharma from becoming Chief Minister as he had let down the Devi Lal group.<sup>67</sup> The same day, Tuhi Ram was promoted to become a Minister of State, bringing the total ministry to 22 members. Despite the size of his Cabinet,

---

<sup>66</sup>Link, November 5, 1967.

<sup>67</sup>Hindustan Times, November 7, 1967.

the Chief Minister asserted that: "We still have some positions vacant".<sup>68</sup> In the same press conference, Rao Birender Singh also charged that the opposition was buying defectors.

Our opponents have a lot of money. We have no capitalists or industrialists with us. Legislators leave the ruling party only when they can get bigger allurements. We can only give positions, never money.

Two days later, yet another Congress MLA, Rajindra Singh, defected to the Samyukta Dal and was sworn in as a Cabinet minister. This raised the membership of the ministry to twenty-three and gave the Samyukta Dal 41 supporters in an effective house of 79. In explaining his defection, Rajindra Singh claimed that he had always been an open supporter of the United Front government even while he was sitting with the Congress. As Mr. Singh was the chief factional lieutenant in Rizak Ram's group, his defection may be taken as a further indication of the extent to which this group was prepared to go in preventing B.D. Sharma from returning to power. Both Bhagwat Dayal and Devi Lal responded to this defection by pleading with the Governor to intervene "in the interests of the state and its people".<sup>69</sup> In the words of one observer:

---

<sup>68</sup>Tribune, November 7, 1967. Mr. Birender Singh, however, did admit, in a later interview, that a Haryana sugar magnate, D.D. Puri, usually associated with the B.D. Sharma faction, had provided the Dal with funds to buy a defector at a point when it was in a minority position.

<sup>69</sup>Hindustan Times and Tribune, November 9, 1967.

Vishal Haryana remains a dream, but the Vishal Cabinet has come to stay. ... While the open cynicism of all this Cabinet expansion may be deplored, the perfect aplomb with which he [Rao Birender Singh] meets and foils the Congress tricks every time makes him a class apart. To reward instant defections with instant minister-ships, it is said, is immoral. But it is the only thing practical.<sup>70</sup>

After only six days in the ministry, Hira Lal Arya gave Haryana politics a "curious turn" when he resigned from office to return to Devi Lal's group. In explaining his departure, he said that he had always belonged to the Devi Lal group and that he had gone into the Cabinet only to expose "the hollowness of Mr. Birender Singh".<sup>71</sup> The Chief Minister, in commenting on this latest re-defection, asserted that his government had the right to stay in office for six months and that the Governor could not dismiss the ministry before a trial of strength in the Vidhan Sabha. In analyzing the ministry's difficulties, he said that the whole problem arose when "traitors" in the guise of "my own men", having got ministries and strength from the Dal, raised their "price" and defected.<sup>72</sup> He continued:

The political situation in Haryana could be dismissed as a repetitive farce, if it did not threaten to undermine the very survival of democracy.

---

---

<sup>70</sup>"Gyges in Haryana" (editorial), Tribune, November 10, 1967.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., November 12, 1967.

<sup>72</sup>Hindustan Times, November 13, 1967.

It is outrageous that the ruling party in Haryana should be allowed so shamelessly to commit public funds for purchasing political support through the provision of new ministerial offices for which there can be no administrative justification.<sup>73</sup>

The expression of the Union Government's view that the state Governors have the discretionary powers to dismiss their Council of Ministers if duly satisfied that their Chief Minister has lost his support in the assembly, meanwhile, caused a flutter of speculation in Haryana political circles. The Congress opposition attempted to use it to create a psychological breakthrough to win over some marginal Samyukta Dal supporters, while the United Front leadership warned that this interpretation could only lead to greater instability as it would encourage defections.<sup>74</sup> Speculation that some form of intervention into Haryana's political situation was pending was heightened when the Governor admitted in public that "he was unhappy with the present developments".<sup>75</sup>

In a final bid to save his ministry, Rao Birender Singh sought and obtained an interview with the Prime Minister. In the course of this meeting, he pleaded that the centre should not heed the Congress party's call for President's rule or a dismissal of the ministry. While it was known in

---

<sup>73</sup>"The Haryana Farce" (editorial), Hindustan Times, November 13, 1967.

<sup>74</sup>Hindustan Times, November 19, 1967.

<sup>75</sup>Tribune, November 15, 1967.

Haryana that Rao Birender Singh was willing to return to the Congress if he, or even a fellow agriculturist, were elected leader of the legislature party, discussions between the Congress High Command and the state Congress leaders on this proposal concluded on the note that such a leadership election would put a further premium on defections and indiscipline. The High Command maintained its previous position that all the defectors could return to the party if they were prepared to do this without first imposing any conditions.<sup>76</sup>

The Chief Minister, having failed in his last minute appeal for help from the Congress High Command, called upon the Governor and advised him that the state's political situation could only be rectified through a mid-term election which he suggested should be called before the assembly was due to meet in December. The Governor, however, having already decided in consultations with New Delhi that the political situation had reached a point where a suspension of the normal constitutional <sup>machinery</sup> was necessary, refused to accept the advice of his Chief Minister on this matter.<sup>77</sup> The President of India, Mr. Zakir Husain, meanwhile, referred a communication from the Governor of Haryana to the Prime

---

<sup>76</sup>Hindustan Times, November 18, 1967.

<sup>77</sup>Tribune, November 20, 1967.



Minister and her Cabinet for their consideration.<sup>78</sup> Although Rao Birender Singh attempted to dismiss this letter as "just a routine fortnightly report",<sup>79</sup> it was clear to all that the central government had finally decided to intervene directly in the Haryana situation and that the Samyukta Dal experiment in providing a non-Congress alternative for Haryana politics was about to be ended.

#### The Defection Record

Haryana's final defection during this period took place on November 20, 1967, when Randhir Singh again defected away from the United Front and the Jan Sangh to rejoin the Congress party. This brought the strength of the Front and the opposition to 39 supporters each. A general review of the defections in Haryana for this period reveals that some 31 members defected in one way or the other out of a total membership of 81. Of these, the champion was Hira Lal Arya who defected from the Congress to help the dissidents oust the Sharma ministry. He later left the Samyukta Dal with the Devi Lal group, but defected back into the Dal in November for a seat in the Cabinet. Six days later, he re-defected to Devi Lal's group and six days after this, he returned with others in the group to the Congress fold, for a total of five defections. Other outstanding defectors

---

<sup>78</sup>Hindustan Times, November 21, 1967.

<sup>79</sup>Tribune, November 21, 1967.

included Mohan Lal Thakur who also defected to the United Front in March only to return to the Congress a few days later. He re-defected to the Samyukta Dal to become a deputy minister in August only to re-defect to the Congress in October for a total of four defections. Gaya Lal, elected as an independent, left the Samyukta Dal to join Devi Lal's Haryana Congress. A day later he returned to the Samyukta Dal as a Parliamentary Secretary, but only after he had announced that he had joined the Congress Party, giving him a possible three defections. Randhir Singh, elected as a Jan Sangh MLA, also made the trip across the floor three times by leaving the Jan Sangh for the Congress only to return to the Jan Sangh. His final defection took him back to the Congress. Other multiple defectors included Chand Ram, Mani Ram Godara, Jagan Nath and Partap Singh of the Devi Lal group who defected from the Congress in March only to abandon the Samyukta Dal in July. All of these legislators had rejoined the Congress party before President's rule was finally imposed. Of the remaining 23 defectors who crossed the floor only once, 16 ended up with the United Front and fully 13 of them were in the ministry when the central government intervened. Six ended up on the opposition benches. Sri Chand, a defector from the Congress who became Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha, died in July 1967.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> This summary was based on a "Score Board" published by the Hindustan Times, November 11, 1967, and Kashyap, pp.84-101.

The defection pattern in Haryana began as mass floor-crossings on the part of dissident groups in the hope of ousting a government then in power. The first of these, led by Devi Lal and Rao Birender Singh, was successful in that it toppled a Congress government which had been returned with a workable majority in the Haryana Vidhan Sabha. The defections of the Devi Lal group to the opposition benches in July and of a dissident segment of the Jan Sangh to the Congress in October created periods of governmental instability but did not succeed in toppling the government then in power. The remainder of the defections cited were individual ones motivated by personal desire for tangible rewards from the political system. On the Samyukta Dal's part, these rewards were usually ministerial positions while the Congress in opposition appeared to employ cash bribes and promises of future rewards once the party was returned to power. These defections, usually coming at a time when the government was teetering,<sup>81</sup> proved expensive not only for the factional leaders who purchased their support, but also for the political process in Haryana.

The Governor's Report and the Imposition of President's Rule

The Governor's letter to the President was indeed more than a "routine" report. Written on the 17th of November, 1967, the day on which the Devi Lal group finally agreed to

---

<sup>81</sup>See Maps 6.5 and 6.6.

0 8 16 Miles

# DEFLECTIONS IN OCTOBER, 1967, AFFECTING THE BALANCE OF POWER



CONG. → V.H.P. (Oct. 3, 1967) U.F. = 44/80



J.S. → CONG. (Oct. 22, 1967) U.F. = 40/80



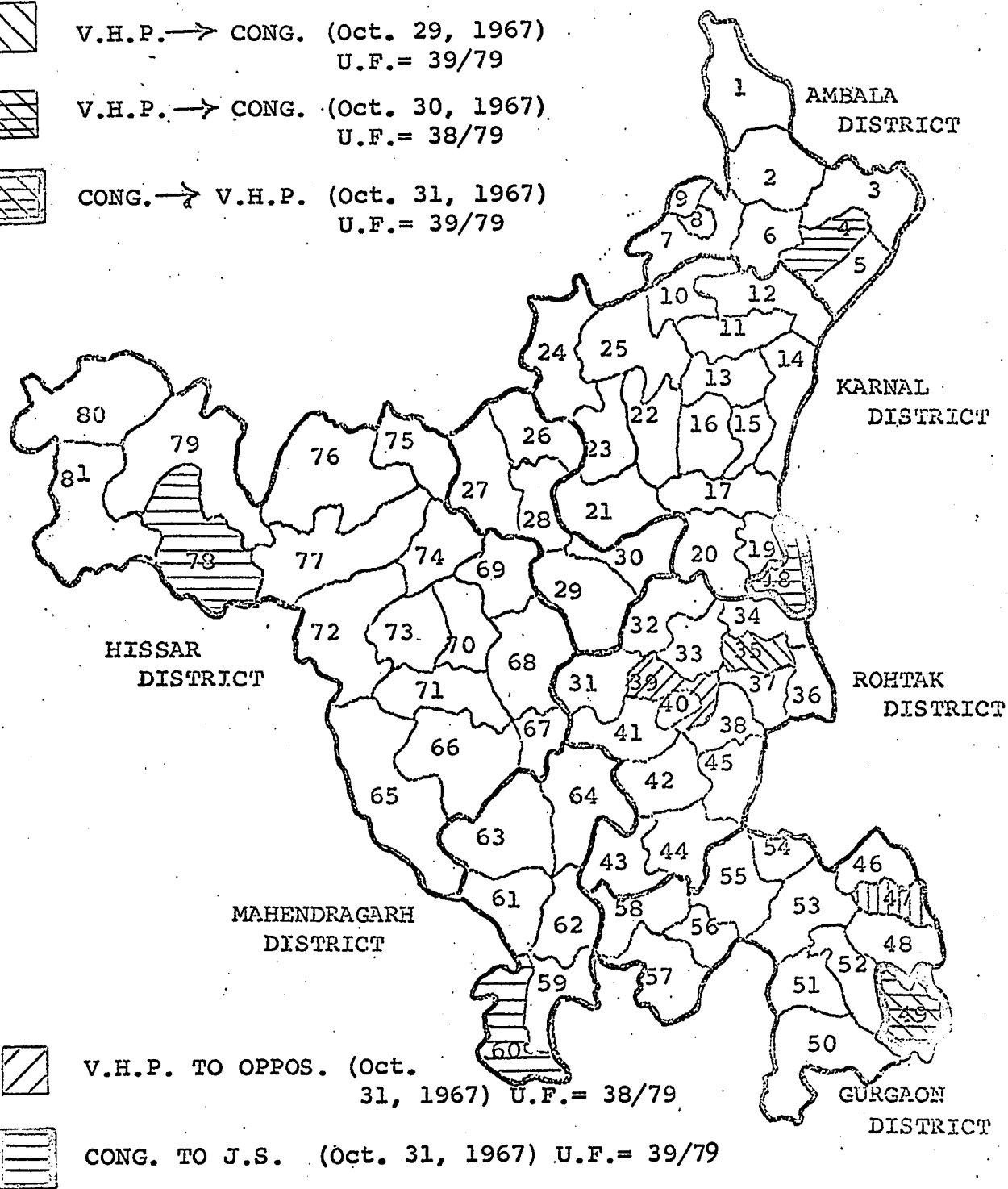
V.H.P. → CONG. (Oct. 29, 1967)  
U.F. = 39/79



V.H.P. → CONG. (Oct. 30, 1967)  
U.F. = 38/79



CONG. → V.H.P. (Oct. 31, 1967)  
U.F. = 39/79



0 8 16 Miles

## DEFECTIONS IN NOVEMBER, 1967, AFFECTING THE BALANCE OF POWER



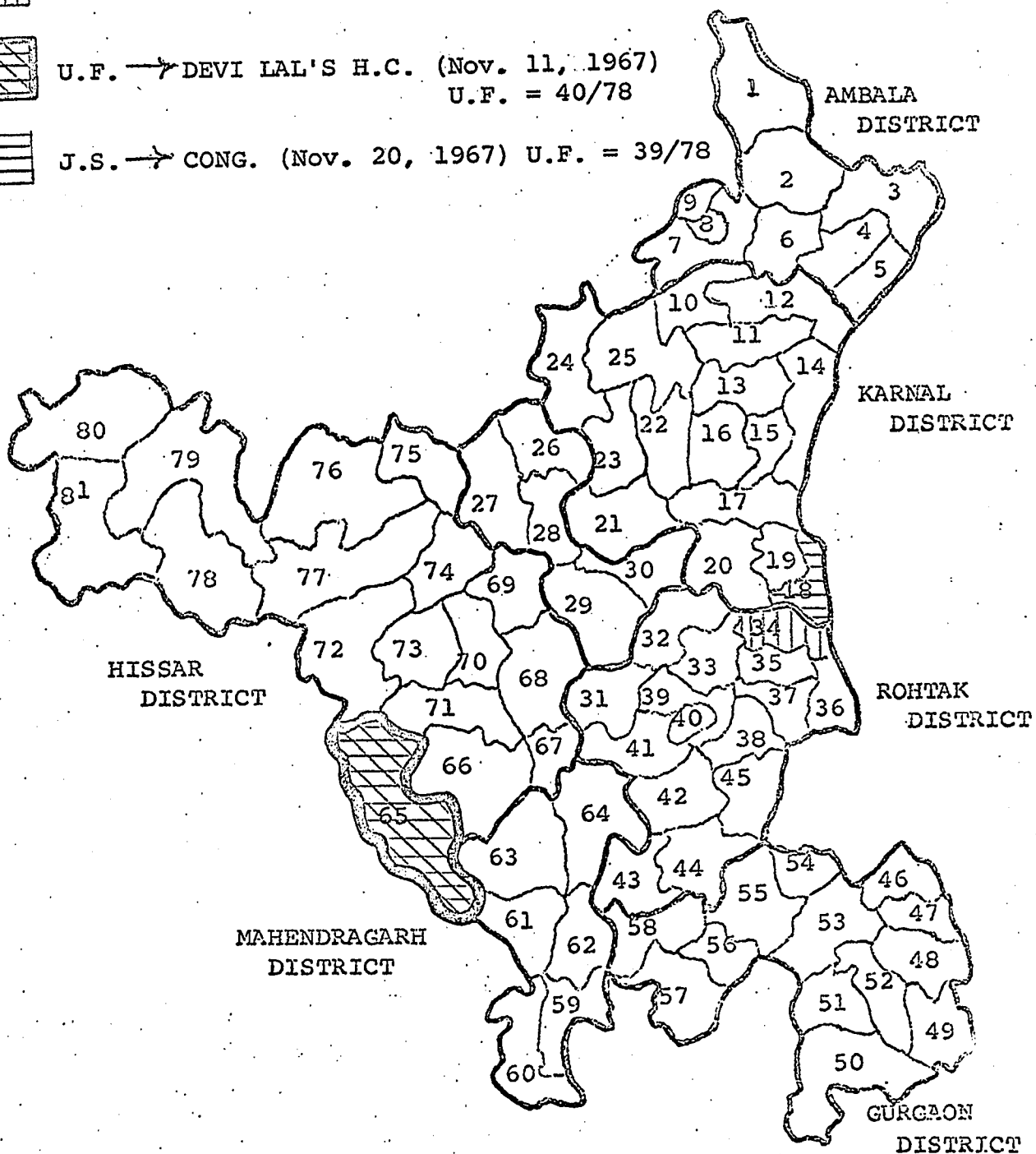
DEVI LAL'S H.C. → U.F. (Nov. 6, 1967) U.F. = 40/79



CONG. → V.H.P. (Nov. 8, 1967) U.F. = 41/79

U.F. → DEVI LAL'S H.C. (Nov. 11, 1967)  
U.F. = 40/78

J.S. → CONG. (Nov. 20, 1967) U.F. = 39/78



return to the Congress party unconditionally, it proved, on publication, to be a powerful indictment of the politics of defection as practised in Haryana by the Samyukta Dal and the Congress.<sup>82</sup> The Governor, in view of the increasing instability and near-paralysis of the administration, recommended that the President of India take action under Article 356 of the Constitution, thereby dissolving the state assembly and assuming to himself all of the functions of the government of the state.<sup>83</sup> In describing the Haryana political situation to the President, Governor Chakravarty, in part, wrote:

The defections have become very frequent. The Opposition could never reconcile itself to its position as a responsible opposition. It must bear some responsibility for not having given the Government any peace or a chance to settle down to constructive work. The Government has also sought to maintain itself precariously in power by creating too many Ministers which is an abuse of its constitutional powers. ... With all its good intentions, the Government cannot do much for the people because it is being kept preoccupied at the time with the problem of its very survival. Administration is paralysed. With such a thin majority, individual MLAs are able to make extravagant demands. Every one seems to want to be a Minister or a Parliamentary Secretary. It is bad enough that political support is being sought by offering Ministerial offices at the cost of the tax-payer, but what is worse is that individual members of the legislature

---

<sup>82</sup>Kashyap, p.100.

<sup>83</sup>Text of the Report from the Governor of Haryana to the President dated November 17, 1967, Kashyap, Appendix 5, p.15.

have realized their own importance. They can interfere in administration with impunity and make demands which, even if they are unreasonable, can hardly be resisted by the Chief Minister. With the best will in the world, the Chief Minister cannot refuse to oblige his party-men because of the constant threat of defections.

\*\*\*

Now that so many members of the Legislature have tasted power and have seen that by threatening to defect they can get what they want, it seems to me that no alternative stable Ministry can be formed so long as there are such large numbers of members whose loyalties are so flexible.

\*\*\*

It is hoped that in a mid-term election, so many opportunist legislators would not be re-elected. That is the only way to ensure a stable Ministry, make democracy work and enable the Government of the State to be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.<sup>84</sup>

The Union Government, on receipt of the above report, decided to act upon its recommendation forthwith. On November 20, 1967, it announced that the President of India would take over the Government of Haryana the next day. The Proclamation was signed by the President on November 21, and later the same day a copy was placed on the Table of the two Houses of Parliament.<sup>85</sup> By this Proclamation, the United Front ministry was dismissed, the Haryana assembly was dissolved and President's rule was imposed. All functions

---

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp.12, 14-5.

<sup>85</sup>Tribune, November 21, 1967 and Kashyap, p.102.

of the Government of the State were assumed by the President through the state Governor while the powers of the Legislature were to be exercisable by the federal parliament.<sup>86</sup>

This proclamation, promulgated by the President under his discretionary powers in the Constitution, finally aborted the attempt on the part of the Congress dissidents to create an alternative to the urban-dominated Congress in power in Haryana. For Rao Birender Singh, the decision to intervene appeared to come as a complete surprise. As he pointed out to the press, no "show cause" motion had been issued to him at any time and the Governor had never differed with him on any administrative matter, had never asked him to resign, and had never treated the question of defections "as a serious issue" in the past.<sup>87</sup> The former Chief Minister added that while he felt like a man whose dream house had been razed by a fire, "I have the satisfaction that the rats who infested the house have been burnt down too".<sup>88</sup> By this remark, Birender Singh later explained that he was referring specifically to the opposition leaders who had been hoping that the Union Government's intervention, which they had been pleading for, would take the form of a mere suspension of the

---

<sup>86</sup>Text of the Presidential Proclamation made thereunder in regard to Haryana, dated November 21, 1967, Kashyap, Appendix 6, pp.16-19.

<sup>87</sup>Hindustan Times, November 22, 1967.

<sup>88</sup>Times of India, November 22, 1967.



assembly so that they could be given an opportunity to muster a majority in a re-convened assembly. The decision to call a mid-term election meant that both sides would now have to defend their actions before the people.<sup>89</sup>

Editorial reactions to the imposition of President's rule in Haryana were mixed. The Hindustan Times at first felt that the intervention was justified.<sup>90</sup> It subsequently amended its position, however, in view of the centre's "opportunistic" attempts to use the Governor's powers to bring in Congress-backed governments in Punjab and West Bengal. While conceding that the actions in each case were constitutionally proper, the second editorial admitted that these interventions raised the question of the centre's claim of impartiality and suggested that the Governors were functioning as pliant tools in the hands of the High Command.<sup>91</sup> The Tribune also questioned this use of the President's powers and noted that in most of the previous instances (six out of seven) such a promulgation of President's rule followed either the defeat of a ministry or the inability of any one party or coalition of parties to form a government. While conceding that Rao Birender Singh's government had been guilty

---

<sup>89</sup> Later interview with Rao Birender Singh.

<sup>90</sup> "Haryana and West Bengal" (editorial), Hindustan Times, November 22, 1967.

<sup>91</sup> "The Question of Credibility" (editorial), Ibid., November 27, 1967.

of many acts of omission and commission ("which ministry has not?"), it charged that by no stretch of the imagination could the Haryana situation be found comparable to the earlier instances when President's rule was found justifiable. The editorial also questioned the personal actions of the Governor, noting that only twenty days earlier he had claimed that it was not necessary for him to act unless or until Mr. Singh was voted out of power in the assembly, and suggested that the Governor wrote his report at the direction of the centre which wanted to intervene in the Haryana situation for its own political purposes.<sup>92</sup>

It can never be emphasised too strongly or repeated too often that however unctuously the Haryana Governor may mourn floor-crossings, the remedy does not lie with him or the like of him. It is a mistake to think that all the state needs is a shot in the arm and all would be well again. The body politic does not respond that way. ... As Mr. Rajagopalachari says: "... The party system cannot be converted into law."

\*\*\*

But the worst of it is that the worst has yet to come, and the Congress (by this interpretation of the Constitution) can stage coup after coup in the name of the Constitution until it has recaptured all the non-Congress states.<sup>93</sup>

#### Summary and Conclusions

India's first non-Congress state government formed

<sup>92</sup>While this charge would be difficult to prove, Governor Chakravarty did confer secretly with the central government a week before he submitted his report. Confidential source.

<sup>93</sup>"Rape of the Constitution" (editorial), Tribune, November 22, 1967.

through the mass defection of dissident factions to the opposition ended in a chaotic period of individual defections and re-defections. These frequent floor-crossings, in turn, produced ministerial instability and a partial paralysis of the state's administrative system. After a mere eight months of the Samyukta Dal in office, the centre deemed the situation in Haryana to be serious enough to justify the invocation of the President's discretionary powers under the Constitution and thereby temporarily suspended the state's constitution and placed the state government under the supervision of the Governor.

From the forgoing, it would appear that the Congress dissident defectors proved incapable of providing Haryana with a stable government which could undertake a major developmental programme in the rural sector. In assessing why they failed after having so effectively seized power, the following factors would appear to have some relevance. First, the nature of the initial "revolt" would appear to indicate that the dissidents had hoped that the election of a non-official candidate for the speakership of the assembly would produce an effective intervention on the part of the Congress High Command which would satisfy most of their major demands, especially on the party leadership question. When this failed, they had no alternative but to carry out their threat and cross over to the opposition. The trauma of leaving the political organisation within which these leaders had built up their careers and their followings must

have been unsettling in itself.

Second, the nature of the support which these dissidents received from the non-Congress elements within the assembly also affected the United Front's chances of providing the state with a stable on-going government capable of undertaking a major developmental programme. While a sizable number of both the defectors and the independents were united behind and loyal to their regional factional leaders, others were "free" or "unattached" and as such could make ever-increasing demands for positions and patronage in return for their support. The Samyukta Dal also had to rely on the voting strength of the Jan Sangh to stay in power. This party was even more representative of the urban interests than was the Bhagwat Dayal group and as such served as a brake on the United Front government's oft expressed desire to bring in a legislative programme designed to favour the rural interests over the urban comparable to that once pressed for by the Unionist party in Punjab before independence. The Jan Sangh, for its part, appeared willing to support this "rebel" government only as a means of keeping the official Congress party out of power in one more state and to thereby further undermine that party's hegemony throughout India.

Third, personal rivalries within the Samyukta Dal did little to help the experiment prosper. Although the major factional leaders were regionally powerful, none of them were truly state-wide political figures. Because of this,

their loyalties were too often oriented to local needs and the necessity of using their political power to reward their local factional supporters. In such a situation, it was almost inevitable that personal clashes would occur and threaten to destroy the Dal's unity. The rivalry which developed between Devi Lal and Hardwari Lal would appear to be one example of this.

Finally, as the Governor of Haryana pointed out in his report, a degree of blame for the Samyukta Dal's failure to provide a stable alternative government must be placed on the Congress party itself. In opposition, the Congress never reconciled itself to this loss of power through defections and continually manoeuvred to regain control of the assembly by encouraging another mass floor-crossing. This strategy undermined the prospects for a stable ministry as it provided a possible alternative for both dissident factional leaders and unattached individuals who had become dissatisfied with their share of power within the United Front. Once it had been demonstrated that a few members could affect the balance of power by changing their party loyalty, the Samyukta Dal could be and indeed was continually "black-mailed" by dissidents within its own ranks with the support of the Congress in opposition. Because of the lack of internal cohesion behind a single leader or group of leaders, because of the nature of its political support, because of its lack of an ideology, because of the "irresponsible" behavior

of the opposition, the Samyukta Dal experiment was doomed, perhaps from the outset, to failure. Even Rao Birender Singh's attempt to overcome most of these difficulties through the creation of a new political party under his leadership failed to stop the Front's gradual decline and collapse.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CONGRESS HIGH COMMAND INTERVENTION AND THE RESPONSE OF THE CHALLENGERS

#### Introduction

The imposition of President's rule in Haryana did not by itself end the state's political difficulties. In the six-month period between the proclamation of a central take-over of the state administration and the holding of a mid-term election for a new Vidhan Sabha, the High Command of the Congress party was faced with the task of reorganizing the state party, finding an acceptable means of reconciling the more important dissident factional leaders who were still not prepared to accept Bhagwat Dayal Sharma as the state party leader, and developing an electoral strategy which would bring Haryana back inside the Congress fold. The non-Congress parties had similar electoral problems to resolve. Should they cooperate together in an electoral alliance similar to the Samyukta Dal to challenge the Congress or should they each run separate election campaigns? Having been removed from office for having thrown the state into a period of chaotic political instability, what electoral strategy should they adopt which would justify their defectionist activities to the electorate?

This chapter undertakes to analyze the political events between the proclamation of President's rule in November 1967 and the mid-term election of May 12th and 14th, 1968, in terms of the Congress High Command's intervention into the state party's electoral campaign and the attempts on the part of the non-Congress parties and groups to respond to this challenge. It will also specifically examine the impact of factional conflict on the campaign, the political calculations and electoral strategies of the three major contesting parties, the Congress, the United Front and the right-wing alliance, the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various parties, state-centre relations and the overall implications of party factionalism for political development.

#### The Congress Campaign

At the time of the imposition of President's rule, it was recognized that there were three distinct factional groupings or alliances within the Congress party in Haryana. The first factional group was led by the former Chief Minister, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. It was essentially a coalition of non-rural interests and was dominated by members of the non-agriculturist communities, especially Brahmins, Banias, Punjabi Refugees and Scheduled Castes, although it did have some individual supporters from amongst the traditional agriculturist tribes. From the very beginning of this period of President's Rule, B.D. Sharma made it quite clear that he intended to insist on the right to lead the Congress party into the mid-term



election. In announcing this intention, Bhagwat Dayal also attempted to justify his activities as leader of the Congress, when it was on the opposition benches, which had been criticized by the Governor as having substantially contributed to the state's political instability in that they denied the United Front government a moment's peace while in office. In part, he stated:

... they were the main defectors who betrayed the party which had elected them. How could they be left to enjoy the fruits of defection?<sup>1</sup>

The second grouping was led by the Jat leader, Devi Lal, along with Chand Ram, a prominent Harijan leader. To these men, the very idea of Bhagwat Dayal being permitted once again to become Chief Minister was anathema. By their public statements throughout this period, they made it clear that, unless B.D. Sharma was asked by the High Command to quit in favour of a Jat politician, it would be unlikely that the Congress would be returned to power.<sup>2</sup> Remarks such as these were interpreted by many to imply that they would once again remove their factional support from the Congress if the leadership question were not resolved to their liking. As earlier defectors from the Congress, however, Devi Lal and

---

<sup>1</sup>Tribune, November 27, 1967.

<sup>2</sup>Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), p.105.

Chand Ram were under a cloud. If the Pradesh Congress Election Committee decided that they and many of their supporters could not be allocated party tickets because of their earlier indiscipline, they would have little chance of creating a dominant agriculturist grouping within a future Congress government in Haryana.<sup>3</sup>

The third competing group was also an agriculturist alliance led by Ram Kishen Gupta, M.P. and President of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee, and the Rohtak Jat dissident leader, Rizak Ram. Although R.K. Gupta had originally been B.D. Sharma's nominee for this organisational position, he had fallen out with his Legislature Party leader soon after the fourth general elections when Bhagwat Dayal had attempted to form a non-agriculturist ministry from amongst his own legislative supporters. Determined to oust Bhagwat Dayal from the leadership of the Legislature Party, Ram Kishen attempted to use his P.C.C. office against the former Chief Minister. Soon after President's rule was imposed, Gupta appointed a three-member sub-committee of the Pradesh Congress to inquire into the causes of the defections from the state Congress.<sup>4</sup> In explaining the nature of the committee's

---

<sup>3</sup>Tribune, January 6, 1968.

<sup>4</sup>The sub-committee consisted of Kali Ram, Vice-President of the H.P.C.C., Devi Singh Tewatia, former General Secretary of the Haryana Congress Legislature Party, and H.S. Chathab, member of the H.P.C.C. Tribune, January 28, 1968.

investigation, the P.C.C. President made it clear that the Haryana Congress legislative leader's activities in the past would also be examined:

I shall also try to find out the persons who took a leading role in defeating official Congress candidates in the last general elections.<sup>5</sup>

The appointment of this investigating committee appears to have been the first public manifestation of what was to become an especially dirty battle for control of the H.P.C.C. and its electoral machinery. The election of delegates to the Pradesh Committee was fiercely contested throughout the state and the individual results were often appealed against both to Congress President Nijalingappa and the civil courts. These tactics succeeded in delaying the calling together of the H.P.C.C. to elect a new President as was required by the party constitution.

Meanwhile, the three-man investigating committee completed its report and forwarded its findings to Nijalingappa. It recommended, in part, that the A.I.C.C. expel Bhagwat Dayal Sharma from the Congress on the grounds that his activities during the last general elections were "unbecoming" of a party leader and were ultimately responsible for the ouster of the Congress ministry. The committee reported that at least 25 non-Congress candidates had been helped by Bhagwat

---

<sup>5</sup>Hindustan Times, January 17, 1968.

Dayal against official Congress ticket holders. It also noted that B.D. Sharma had been elected leader of the Legislature Party after the general elections only after he had given assurances to G.L. Nanda, the High Command arbitrator, of his willingness to set up a small ministry representing all factional groupings within the party. Nanda, the committee claimed, had later stated that B.D. Sharma had not honoured these assurances.<sup>6</sup>

While the Haryana Congress politicians continued to quarrel and manoeuvre amongst themselves with little regard for the party's public image, the Congress central leadership realized that Haryana's mid-term election would have a national impact. Y.B. Chavan, the Union Home Minister, stated at the time:

Haryana has the opportunity to reverse the trend of instability set in by the last general election. It was in Haryana that the phenomenon of large-scale defections first occurred. That was copied by many elsewhere. A Congress victory in Haryana would mean the beginning of stability everywhere.<sup>7</sup>

It was clear, therefore, that if the Congress High Command wanted to salvage the situation in Haryana and to use a mid-term election victory in this state as a precedent for a subsequent reassertion of its political hegemony in other

---

<sup>6</sup>Tribune, January 28, 1968.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, February 2, 1968.

states, it would have to intervene directly into the situation and force the various feuding factions to work together under central supervision. To effect this, the Congress Working Committee made a number of ad hoc decisions concerning the party organisation in Haryana. The first of these was a decision to postpone the election of office bearers of the H.P.C.C. indefinitely so as to stop the unseemly struggle then going on between the B.D. Sharma group and the Gupta-Rizak Ram group for these positions. The second was to set up an ad hoc Pradesh Election Committee which would virtually take over the functions of the H.P.C.C. until after the mid-term election so as to prevent group rivalries from weakening the state party organisation further.<sup>8</sup> This decision was seen as a set-back for both warring groups, as neither of the rival leaders would now be able to have a carte blanche in ticket assignments, but there was still considerable speculation as to which factional grouping would be given the largest share of the positions.

When the membership of this ad hoc committee was finally made public, it took most political observers by surprise in that it appeared to be heavily weighted in favour of Bhagwat Dayal's political rivals. Its makeup also seemed to imply that the Congress Working Committee had decided to take a lenient view of defectors who had returned to the

---

<sup>8</sup>Hindustan Times, January 29, 1968.

Congress fold before President's rule was imposed. Indeed, an observer noted that this "all-inclusive front of Congress leadership in Haryana" was a "strange combination of the dropped, the denied, the defeated and the defected mixed up with the dissidents".<sup>9</sup> This assessment had been made on the basis that Mrs. Shanno Devi had been dropped from the party's candidate list in the general elections, Devi Lal had been denied a ticket because of an old disqualification, Abdul Chaffar Khan had been defeated at the polls while B.D. Sharma had been defeated in the assembly and Ram Kishan Gupta and Devi Singh Tewatia were known to be party dissidents. Devi Lal and Chand Ram, of course, were also known as perhaps the most notorious of the Congress defectors as they claimed responsibility for the setting up of Haryana's United Front. To ensure that this committee would function as the High Command desired, Nijalingappa appointed M.V. Rama Rao, General Secretary of the A.I.C.C., an outsider to Haryana politics, as the committee's convenor.

According to the Congress Working Committee's directive, the main functions of the seven-man Haryana advisory committee would be to organize the party's election campaign and to prepare a list of candidates which would be submitted to the Congress Parliamentary Board for approval. If Nijalingappa had any notion that the creation of this "team" would end the

---

<sup>9</sup>Tribune, February 10, 1968.

internecine feuding among the factional leaders in Haryana, he was obviously very disappointed. Charges and counter-charges continued to be hurled between B.D. Sharma and his political opponents within the state party. In the end, the committee submitted not one but four separate candidate lists to the Parliamentary Board based on some four hundred applicants for the available tickets. R.K. Gupta, Shanno Devi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Devi Singh Tewatia were able to reach agreement on a single list. Devi Lal, Chand Ram and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, however, each filed separate lists. The first group took the position that all defectors, irrespective of their contribution in the overthrow of the Samyukta Dal government, should be kept off the list, including Devi Lal and Chand Ram. On the basis of the H.P.C.C. report cited above, they also excluded B.D. Sharma and two of his close supporters, Gulab Singh and Dev Raj Anand.<sup>10</sup>

In an effort to salvage this situation and have a complete list of potential candidates for the Congress Parliamentary Board, Nijalingappa was now forced to create a "Haryana Candidates' Selection Committee" composed of three outsiders, H.N. Bahuguna, General Secretary of the U.P.C.C., Ram Niwas Mirdha, M.P. (Rajasthan), and R.M. Hajarnavis, M.P. (Maharashtra).<sup>11</sup> While the seven-man advisory committee

---

<sup>10</sup>Tribune, March 4, 1968.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, March 27, 1968.

seemed to reflect a Working Committee decision to be lenient on defectors who had returned to the Congress, the makeup of this special scrutiny committee suggested that the High Command had now decided to take a hard line on defectors.<sup>12</sup> It was also believed that this latter committee would be more partial to B.D. Sharma's ~~group~~ than had the former committee which had been dominated by the Gupta-Rizak Ram group.

At this point, the electoral prospects for the Congress in Haryana were beginning to look somewhat bleak. Newspapers were editorializing to the effect that the Pradesh Congress appeared even more internally divided than it had been on the eve of the last general elections and that supporters of the Devi Lal group might be right in predicting that the Congress would not receive more than thirty-five seats.<sup>13</sup> The Patriot, noting that caste and communal considerations would play a decisive role, predicted that the Congress now had no chance of emerging even as the largest single party unless it could succeed in breaking the anti-Congress block votes (urban interests and Ahirs) and win over the unreserved support of the influential Jat leaders at the local level.<sup>14</sup> While the Congress High Command continued to be publicly

---

<sup>12</sup>Statesman, April 3, 1968.

<sup>13</sup>Times of India, March 23, 1968.

<sup>14</sup>Patriot, March 25, 1968.



optimistic on the basis that the Haryana people must have had enough of the political "high-jinks" of the defectors, observers were still concerned that deep dissensions - personal and factional - which had led to the Congress government's downfall, had not yet diminished. The consensus appeared to be that the central Congress leadership would have to find a means of easing Bhagwat Dayal Sharma out of the state party leadership, because of his alleged anti-Jat sentiments, and co-opt a Jat if it was to find a solution to its present difficulties.<sup>15</sup>

After two days of deliberations over the three-man scrutiny committee's proposed list and frequent consultations with the state Congress leaders, the Congress Parliamentary Board finally released its list of approved candidates for the Congress ticket in the mid-term elections. In doing so, it announced that the list had been finalized on the basis of several principles which the Board hoped that the party would abide by in the future. First, no party ticket was to be given to persons who had defected. This ruled out the candidature of certain influential Haryana leaders such as Devi Lal and Chand Ram. Second, preference would be given to sitting members for re-nomination. This would help B.D. Sharma maintain a strong factional presence in the Haryana Legislature. Finally, there would be no bar to offering the nomination

---

<sup>15</sup>Statesman, April 1, 1968.

to persons who had not applied for a Congress ticket.<sup>16</sup> When these policies were announced, it was assumed that they meant that Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and his group had been more or less vindicated by the Board and that Bhagwat Dayal would probably dominate any Legislature Party elected. It came as somewhat of a surprise, therefore, when the Congress Parliamentary Board announced, two days later, that neither of the two most influential factional leaders in the previous Congress Legislature Party, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and Rizak Ram, would be given party tickets. Although this was done on the ground that they had not applied, it was well known that both had expected to be drafted by the party.<sup>17</sup>

As might be expected, none of the factional leaders were pleased with these decisions. Devi Lal appeared to be on the verge of leading his group back out of the party once again to seek an accommodation with Rao Birender Singh.<sup>18</sup> He was somewhat mollified, however, by a number of small adjustments which were later made to accommodate four more of his factional supporters in Hissar, including another of his sons and the brother of his closest factional associate. Chand Ram was angered by his own "humiliation" and the

---

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., April 3, 1968.

<sup>17</sup>Patriot, April 5, 1968.

<sup>18</sup>Rao Birender Singh claimed that he had been approached by Devi Lal and that he had told him that he had made his decision and now he had best live with it. Interview data.

exclusion of two of his supporters, Mehr Singh Rathi and Raghbir Singh, as well as a number of other recommendations which he had made for ticket assignments for the state's reserved constituencies. Ram Kishen Gupta offered to resign as P.C.C. President because a large number of his group's nominees had not been selected.<sup>19</sup> B.D. Sharma was peeved at the exclusion of two of his associates, R.C. Sharma and Jagdish Chandra. On the other hand, he was not totally dissatisfied with the outcome as a large number of his supporters received tickets on the basis of the Board's policy decision to give the ticket to all Congress non-defectors who had applied.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Bhagwat Dayal appeared to have emerged with the largest factional grouping for the electoral campaign. Twenty-four tickets were given to his supporters as against 20 for the Gupta-Rizak Ram group and about ten for the Devi Lal-Chand Ram group. The remaining 27 tickets were allocated to individuals and smaller regional factions which were not as yet directly associated with any of the three larger factional alliances.<sup>21</sup>

The expressed disappointment on the part of all of the factional leaders resulted in a number of rumours about their

---

<sup>19</sup>This resignation was withdrawn two days later at the request of the President of the A.I.C.C.

<sup>20</sup>Statesman, April 5, 1968.

<sup>21</sup>Patriot, April 9, 1968.

future plans. Devi Lal was said to be in consultation with the leader of the Vishal Haryana Party while Rizak Ram and Chand Ram were supposed to have entered into discussions with Hardwari Lal, the new leader of the Swatantra Party in Haryana. When the air finally cleared, only one influential leader opted to remove his group from the Congress to run it and himself as independents - Chand Ram, the Harijan leader.<sup>22</sup> Despite the complaints of the factional leaders over this ticket allotment and the Congress High Command's assertion that it was keeping defectors, factional leaders and local bosses out of the official Congress list, there can be little doubt that the final list carefully accommodated many of the group leaders' closest associates. In some instances, close relatives of factional leaders and defectors were given the party nomination so that, through them, they could still continue to have some influence within the Legislature Party.

Noting the feelings of disgruntlement and the rumours of plotted defections on the part of some of the factional leaders, the Congress Working Committee at the centre decided to send its own observers to each district to prevent possible sabotage by the disaffected leaders through the sponsorship of independent candidates against the official Congress nominees. It also instructed these observers to ensure that all election funds were routed through controlled channels

---

<sup>22</sup>Times of India, April 10, 1968.

to prevent such monies from being used to support non-Congress candidates as had been done in the past.<sup>23</sup> Despite measures such as these, the High Command could not prevent the intra-party factional rivals from publicly stating that they would settle the score "at the proper time".<sup>24</sup> Indeed, complaints continued to arrive in New Delhi throughout the campaign. For example, the anti-Sharma factions charged that Bhagwat Dayal's supporters had launched a campaign against Congress candidates not belonging to his faction. One constituency which appeared to receive special attention in this strategy was Yamunanagar where Bhagwat Dayal had been elected in 1967 and where the Congress ticket was now held by one of his most out-spoken opponents, Shanno Devi, a former Speaker of the state legislative assembly.<sup>25</sup>

Unable to still the intra-party factional squabbings which were attracting considerable attention in the press, Mrs. Gandhi appealed to the members of the Congress Parliamentary Party to come to the assistance of the Haryana party by touring those constituencies where they might have some influence.<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Gandhi herself spent several days campaigning in Haryana, especially in those constituencies which were

---

<sup>23</sup>Statesman, April 6, 1968.

<sup>24</sup>Indian Express, April 10, 1968.

<sup>25</sup>Patriot, April 15, 1968.

<sup>26</sup>Tribune, April 20, 1968.

considered marginal, pressing the point to the electorate that a vote for the Congress was both a vote for stability and a means of keeping the defectors away. Other central Congress leaders were more selective in their assistance. The Deputy Prime Minister, Morarji Desai, appeared to support B.D. Sharma's candidates while Y.B. Chavan and Sher Singh concentrated their assistance on Devi Lal's group. G.L. Nanda tended to canvass the ridings within his parliamentary constituency which had nominees of the Gupta-Rizak Ram group.<sup>27</sup>

This selective support to the nominees of particular factions on the part of some of the central leaders drew attention to the fact that the Congress was fighting the Haryana election without a designated state leader and that the three strongest contenders for the party leadership, B.D. Sharma, Devi Lal and Rizak Ram, had all been denied tickets by the Parliamentary Board. There were fears in many constituencies that the uncertainty produced by this situation for voters, who would have no idea whom they would be getting as Chief Minister if they chose to support the Congress, would adversely affect the party campaign.<sup>28</sup> The backing of particular factional groupings by members of the

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., May 20, 1968.

<sup>28</sup>Based on interviews with Congress workers in fifteen constituencies during the election campaign, April-May, 1968.

Congress High Command was interpreted by some as yet another aspect of the power struggle which was already developing within the party at the centre. Men such as Morarji Desai and Y.B. Chavan may have felt that their influence within the central party organisation would increase if a nominee of the factional grouping which they had supported in the mid-term elections was made the next Chief Minister of Haryana.

The final decision taken at the centre which affected the Haryana elections was taken on the eve of the polling days. In an effort to show the Haryana electorate that the party had meant what it had said about defectors, the A.I.C.C. announced that it had expelled twenty-four Haryana Congressmen for six years for serious breach of party discipline. In each case, these individuals had applied for a Congress ticket and had chosen to stand against an official Congress candidate when their request had been denied. Seven of them had accepted tickets from non-Congress parties - Swatantra four, S.S.P. one, Vishal Haryana Party two - while the remaining seventeen were contesting as independents.<sup>29</sup>

In summary, the Congress High Command's intervention into the affairs of the Haryana state Congress would appear to have had six distinct stages. In the first instance, the Congress Working Committee appeared to be under the impression

---

<sup>29</sup>Tribune, May 11, 1968.

that, given the new opportunity for the Congress to be returned to power in the mid-term elections, the three major factional alliances - the non-agriculturist group led by B.D. Sharma, the dissident agriculturist faction led by R.K. Gupta and Rizak Ram and the returned defectionist agriculturist grouping led by Devi Lal and Chand Ram - would be prepared to cooperate together for an electoral victory. When it became clear that this would not happen, Congress President Nijalingappa, first, ordered the H.P.C.C. elections postponed until after the mid-term elections and, second created an ad hoc election committee designed to give representation to all of the Congress factional groupings in the state.

This committee, however, failed to achieve the purposes for which it was created and the Congress High Command was forced, as a third step, to set up a three-man Candidate's Scrutiny Committee of outsiders to arbitrate between the disputants and to create a compromise list for the Congress Parliamentary Board. This committee, in its report, adopted a "hard-line" on returned defectors as the only cure for the state's earlier period of political instability.

The fourth stage in the centre's intervention was the decision of the Congress Parliamentary Board to modify the candidate list enough to take at least some of the sting out of Devi Lal's "humiliation". Indeed, the finalized list was an interesting example of a compromise designed to ensure that all of the state's factional elements received a reasonable level of ticket representation while preserving the



illusion of respectability by accepting the principle that both the returned defectionists and the intra-party factional leaders such as B.D. Sharma and Rizak Ram should be denied tickets because of their role in encouraging defections after the fourth general elections. The only Haryana leader to reject this arrangement was Chand Ram, who withdrew once again from the party.

The fifth intervention decision was the involvement of a number of the prominent parliamentary leaders in the election campaign. This activity was led by the Prime Minister who concentrated on a number of marginal constituencies. The pattern of support given by some of the other central Congress leaders, however, suggests that they were essentially working for the electoral success of personal favourites amongst the factional leaders and that much of their assistance was directed to ultimately strengthening their own position within the national party. Finally, the A.I.C.C. used its expulsion procedures to make a public example of some twenty-five Haryana Congressmen who had broken party discipline during the campaign.

As a result of these interventions, no individual factional leader could be said to dominate the Haryana Congress party during the mid-term elections. While all of the major factions were represented in the areas and regions where they might be expected to have support, the final decision as to whether the Congress had finally gotten its house in order and should be given an opportunity to form a

new government in Haryana lay with the electorate. Electoral support would also determine whether the Congress would have an agriculturist or a non-agriculturist leader after the elections. The central leadership, by its interventions, had taken a calculated risk that while, on the one hand, the electorate was fed up with defections and political instability, they would, on the other, only support a party which could ensure that particular interests were given a reasonable share of political power in any future state government. In the individual constituencies, the Congress philosophy or ideology was rarely mentioned. The emphasis of the party campaign was to reassure the electorate that the defectionist phase in Haryana politics was over and that the Congress could now provide the state with a stable administration.<sup>30</sup>

#### The United Front Challenge

The non-Congress constituents of the Samyukta Dal had been somewhat taken aback when the central government, at the invitation of the state Governor, decided to remove their ministry from office. Although their legislature leader, Rao Birender Singh, had stated on a number of occasions that he would recommend mid-term elections if the Dal could not find a comfortable majority in the existing assembly, he and his colleagues hardly expected to be ousted from office

---

<sup>30</sup> Based on a two-week tour of constituencies in every district during the mid-term elections, April-May 1968. The relative success of the Congress electoral strategy will be discussed in the next Chapter.

before the assembly met in mid-December. They were now left in a fundamental dilemma. What strategy could they adopt to win a new mandate from the electorate once they had been removed from power and had thus been denied access to the patronage which accompanies this position? What sort of an election campaign could explain away the Congress contention that the defectors had destroyed the state's political stability? How could they present the Dal to the electorate as a meaningful alternative to the Congress? Should they attempt to face the Haryana voter as a united group or should they make their appeal through their separate party units?

The immediate reaction to the imposition of President's rule within the Samyukta Dal was nothing short of panic. The Jan Sangh suddenly became very self-righteous about the defectionist manoeuvres which had been necessary to keep the Dal in power and announced that they would have no further association with defectors such as Rao Birender Singh. When questioned on this, the Haryana Jan Sangh leaders insisted that they had only supported the United Front ministry to keep the Congress from regaining power and that once it had been removed from office there was no further need for them to be associated with it. A further explanation of this attitude may lie in the fact that the Jan Sangh was determined to keep Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, a non-agriculturist with a strong urban base, out of power. Once it appeared that the Congress would attempt to become more representative

of the rural sector, the Jan Sangh apparently decided that it might be in a better position electorally outside of a non-Congress coalition led by dissident agriculturists.

Another break in the United Front facade came when Hardwari Lal announced that he was quitting the Vishal Haryana Party, of which he was the Vice-President, to lead his factional supporters into the Swatantra party. In explaining this new defection, he privately stated that the only hope that the non-Congress agriculturist elements had to regain power in Haryana would be through an alignment with a national party which was capable of giving them substantial assistance in the form of election funds.<sup>31</sup> Others, however, suggested that his real motive was the desire to create and lead the largest non-Congress agriculturist faction in the new assembly and thus supplant Rao Birender Singh as the leader of the non-Congress forces.<sup>32</sup>

Seeing major components of the Dal withdraw from his side once it was removed from power, as though they were trying to avoid even guilt by association, Rao Birender Singh

---

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Hardwari Lal in Rohtak the day the Swatantra announced its first slate of candidates for the Haryana mid-term elections, January 25, 1968.

<sup>32</sup> A later attempt on the part of the Jan Sangh and Swatantra to form a minimal electoral adjustment will be discussed in the next sub-section of this chapter.

began what was to become a desperate search for a means of creating a new non-Congress alignment capable of having a state-wide appeal. With the loss of support from the two right-wing parties and with the Congress party apparently steering a middle course, the Rao thought that he might find some support by taking a leftist stance. Recognizing that his Vishal Haryana Party's electoral base lay in the Ahir belt of Gurgaon and Mahendragarh, and that he would have to align himself with parties and groups which had some support in the remaining districts, he turned his attention to the two socialist and the two communist parties as they, at least, had ongoing organisations in the state. Considering that hitherto the Vishal Haryana Party had been viewed as the political arm of a rurally dominant proprietor-cultivator community, it seemed somewhat hypocritical when Rao Birender Singh announced that his party was "committed to the ideology of classless society" and that "it would have no truck in contesting the mid-term election with political parties opposed to socialism".<sup>33</sup>

Despite this gesture in his search to find a common ground with the Left, the Rao recognized that the Congress challenge could not be met through a leftist alignment alone and he continued to encourage the rightist parties to cooperate with him in the effort to keep the Congress from power. In early January 1968, he issued an invitation to all

---

<sup>33</sup>Tribune, December 23, 1967.

of the non-Congress parties to forget their past differences, to agree to electoral adjustments and a common programme, and to evolve a code of conduct which would show the electorate that the non-Congress parties were capable of dealing with the defection problem effectively.<sup>34</sup> It appeared for a time that Rao Birender's appeal might prove successful. At a specially called convention on January 20, 1968, ten parties agreed to work together under his chairmanship in a new Haryana United Front. Besides the Vishal Haryana Party, the Front was to include the Swatantra party, the Samyukta Socialist party, the Praja Socialist party, the Haryana Janta Party, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, the Akali Dal (Sant Group), the Republican party, the Communist Party of India and the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Although the Jan Sangh was not represented at this founding meeting, the state party leaders sent a written communication that they were only awaiting the approval of their central leadership before officially joining the Front.<sup>35</sup> While there was a high degree of unanimity amongst the delegates to this convention, it was clear that the ten groups represented had little in common other than a desire to keep the Congress out of office. Most of the parties were also too small and did not have any real support amongst the electorate, but

---

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., January 8, 1968.

<sup>35</sup>Hindustan Times, January 21, 1968.

were already indicating that they each expected a sizable number of constituencies to be distributed amongst them.<sup>36</sup>

Within twenty-four hours it was apparent that the Rao's new electoral alliance was already in serious difficulty. The Swatantra group, under the leadership of Hardwar Lal, expressed dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the proposed common programme.<sup>37</sup> It was rumoured, however, that the real problem lay in the fact that Rao Birender Singh had emerged as the strongman. There were also indications that the Jan Sangh High Command was reluctant to allow the state party to enter into an alignment which would include the leftist parties and the defectionist groups.<sup>38</sup> After some time, the High Commands of both the Swatantra and Jan Sangh parties announced that their state organisations had been instructed to remain outside of the Haryana Front. This decision was held to despite Rao Birender Singh's frequent appeals to them to join him with a view to giving a "tough fight" to the Congress.<sup>39</sup>

The Rao and his assortment of nine small parties and groups, meanwhile, still tried to present themselves as a

---

<sup>36</sup>The author was present throughout this convention.

<sup>37</sup>Tribune, January 22, 1968.

<sup>38</sup>Hindustan Times, January 22, 1968.

<sup>39</sup>Tribune, February 3, 1968.

meaningful alternative to the Congress. Besides attempting to win electoral support on the promise that their envisioned Vishal Haryana would solve all of Haryana's economic ills, the Front also began to campaign on such planks as a higher procurement price for foodgrains, the abolition of the single state food zone, the creation of new industries in Haryana, and the early switchover to Hindi at all levels of administration within the state. Finally, the Front continued to assert that it had been the Congress and not themselves which had initiated defections and therefore deserved to be repudiated by the Haryanvi people once and for all.

Of the various campaign issues pushed by the United Front, the foodgrain prices controversy best reflects the basic socio-economic conflict in Haryana. The Front was attempting to centre its election campaign around the fact that procurement prices were higher in Haryana when the Samyukta Dal was in power. This policy worked to the benefit of the cultivator-proprietor class, but was against the interests of the rural landless and the urban consumers who then had to pay a higher price for basic foodstuffs.<sup>40</sup> It would appear that although the United Front had adopted "socialist" slogans, their campaign was primarily directed to the agriculturist communities. When pressed to explain how a higher procurement price would improve the life of the

---

<sup>40</sup>Tribune, February 3, 1968.



landless communities in the state, Rao Birender Singh replied that these groups would be indirectly uplifted if their patrons were helped to prosper.<sup>41</sup> The Front also hoped that their promise of more liberal export permits for foodgrains would allow the urban trading interests to continue to prosper despite the higher prices which would have to be paid to the cultivators.

As a party of consensus seeking support from both the agriculturists and the non-agriculturists, the Congress avoided the foodgrain prices issue throughout the campaign. The agriculturists, however, remained somewhat suspicious of the Congress, especially as it had recently been under the control of a non-agriculturist faction which claimed to represent the rural poor and urban interests. In reality, the agriculturist communities probably had little to fear. Sharma's alliance was dominated by the higher ritual status castes such as the Brahmins and Banias who were not really determined to use political power to effect any meaningful change in social or economic relationships. Indeed, the Congress leaders repeatedly told the electorate that change should only be brought about through a slow and painless process. The rightist parties, on the other hand, also attempted to appeal to both the cultivator-proprietor and urban interests on a promise of a maintenance of the status

---

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Rao Birender Singh, Rewari, April 1968.

quo. In other words, all three contenders for political power in Haryana recognized that the agriculturist communities still held a dominant socio-economic position in the rural areas and attempted to attract their support. Even the leftist parties managed to interpret their socialism to suggest that there would be greater prosperity for the landed classes.

Despite the Swatantra High Command's instruction to Hardwari Lal not to associate the state party with the United Front during the mid-term elections, he continued his efforts to effect an electoral adjustment with both the Vishal Haryana party and the Jan Sangh with the view that these three parties could, in cooperation, meet the Congress challenge in both the rural and urban areas.<sup>42</sup> Rao Birender Singh, however, was reluctant to disband his "progressive" alliance for this purpose as it would make his party the junior partner in an alignment dominated by the two right-wing national parties. Instead, he reiterated his invitation for these parties to join him in an all-embracing non-Congress alliance. The High Commands of the Jan Sangh and Swatantra, however, remained adamant that their parties would not join any Front which called for the creation of a "socialist" society.

---

<sup>42</sup>Statesman, March 14, 1968.

Rao Birender Singh may have wished that he had taken this opportunity to disband his Front as it was already beginning to develop its predicted internal difficulties. On March 22, 1968, the Republican party withdrew its support from the Front and announced that it would not be bound by any electoral adjustments with any of the constituent units of the Front. This action was taken after the United Front leaders backed out of an earlier commitment that all reserved seats in the state would be allocated to Republican party nominees.<sup>43</sup> The party also resented the prominent role which was being given in the United Front campaign to the Maharajas of Bikaner, Bharatpur and Udaipur as this suggested that the "socialist programme of the Front was a facade and that it was only working in the interests of the landed communities in the state. Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was also contemplating a withdrawal from the Front for similar reasons.<sup>44</sup> Even the peripheral groups were beginning to slip away in this period. The Haryana Ex-Servicemen's League announced that it was severing its connection with the Vishal Haryana Party to join the projected Kisan Mazdoor Sangh (Farmer-Worker Party) which was to be headed by Mahant Sheryo Nath, the former Health Minister in Rao Birender Singh's ministry.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup>Tribune, March 23, 1968.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Tribune, March 26, 1968.

Rumours were abroad that even the S.S.P. and the C.P.I. would also quit the Haryana Front. If this happened, it would have left the Vishal Haryana Party as virtually the only constituent unit with any hope of electoral success. As a result, new speculation developed that the Rao was intending to arrange an effective electoral adjustment with the right-wing parties. Indeed, the Maharaja of Bharatpur was reported at one time to be the go-between for such an alignment.<sup>46</sup> Once again, however, this much sought after adjustment was defeated by the Swatantra High Command's demand that alignments should only be made with "like-thinking" parties. In contrast to the more pragmatic intervention of the Congress High Command, the national leaderships of the right-wing parties never seemed to be able to accommodate themselves to the realities of factional politics in Haryana.<sup>47</sup>

For a brief moment the fluctuating electoral prospects of the United Front seemed to take an upward turn when the Congress Parliamentary Board decided to deny tickets to Devi Lal and his five supporters who had re-defected to the Congress. Rao Birender Singh jubilantly announced to the

---

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> The personal secretary to the Swatantra President, in an interview, said that Hardwari Lal had to be reminded from time to time that the central party would remove both its recognition of his state organisation and all material aid if he persisted in pursuing accommodations of this type.

press that this decision confirmed his belief that the Congress had only used Devi Lal for the purpose of toppling his ministry and now wanted no part of him.<sup>48</sup> It was rumoured that Devi Lal and Chand Ram would resign from the Congress to form a new political party which would align itself with the Front. In the end, however, Devi Lal kept his dissatisfaction with the Board's decision under control. Chand Ram, on the other hand, led his followers out of the Congress.<sup>49</sup> While this new defection may have cost the Congress some support amongst the Haryana Harijans, it did little to help Rao Birender Singh who would have benefited far more if Devi Lal's Jat faction in Hissar had re-defected at this juncture. In the end, Chand Ram decided not to align his group with the agriculturist United Front but opted to cooperate in the formation of the Kisan-Mazdoor Sangh mentioned above.<sup>50</sup>

The attempt to form a Haryana United Front during the mid-term elections, and its limited success, reflects the dilemma which the non-Congress parties and groups found themselves in after the Samyukta Dal government was removed from power. While there was a general recognition amongst the state leaders that the Congress could only be challenged effectively if there was a satisfactory adjustment for every

---

<sup>48</sup>Indian Express, April 4, 1968,

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., April 9, 1968.

<sup>50</sup>Tribune, April 19, 1968.

constituency, this goal proved impossible to realize because of the inherent cleavages between the parties and political groups which would have had to cooperate together within such an electoral alliance. To have been successful, the Front would have had to encompass both rightist and leftist parties, as well as particular groups which had electoral support from particular regional interests such as agriculturist castes, Harijans and urban classes. What common programme could such an alliance have had except the negative slogan "Congress hatao" (Remove Congress)? How could the constituent units reach an agreement on the leadership question especially as most of the potential leaders were limited to regional bases? Could the Harijans and urban groups accept an agriculturist as leader? Could the agriculturists accept a representative of the rural landless such as Chand Ram?

To compete with the Congress, which as an umbrella party contained representatives of all elements from the various social and economic groupings found in Haryana, the opposition parties would have had to unite in a parallel organisation steering a middle-of-the-road course. Of course, the electoral prospects of a Haryana United Front would have been different if the Congress High Command had not intervened to remove B.D. Sharma's faction from its dominant position within the state party and to reduce it to being just one more constituent unit within the organisation. If

there had been no intervention, the Congress could have been more clearly identified with non-agriculturist interests such as urban consumers and traders and rural landless communities. This would have left the agriculturist dissidents in a better position to appeal to the cultivator-proprietor class for electoral support in their struggle to keep a non-agriculturist out of the Chief Minister's office.

It is obvious that the non-Congress parties did not succeed in overcoming their differences during the mid-term elections. Rao Birender Singh's attempt to form an all-embracing United Front was a limited endeavour. In the end, it was little more than a loose coalition between a single agriculturist faction with appeal mainly amongst the Ahir community and a number of "progressive" parties which had no history of electoral appeal in the Haryana area. The national parties of the right never joined, and the Republican party, which had some appeal amongst the Harijans, withdrew when the true agriculturist bias of the United Front became obvious. Yet, as the election results were to show, a cohesive non-Congress coalition might well have succeeded in its main purpose of keeping the Congress from regaining power in Haryana.

#### The Right-Wing Alternative

The Jan Sangh state party had found itself in an awkward position immediately after the downfall of the Samyukta Dal ministry which it had been supporting in the assembly. In a sense, it had been voting to support a government which

was against the group interests of the urban classes, especially the Punjabi refugee traders, who had traditionally backed the Jan Sangh in Haryana. Municipal elections, moreover, were to be held in Haryana shortly and the party leaders were certain that their party would suffer in these if it continued to be associated with the agriculturist dissidents. Finally, there was the problem of the left-wing parties which would have to be accommodated in a non-Congress United Front campaign.<sup>51</sup>

In the meanwhile, the Swatantra party's High Command thought that it saw an opportunity to gain additional strength in Haryana by undertaking to fill "the vacuum created by the absence of a peasant-proprietor political organisation, represented by the late Mr. Chhotu Ram's Zamindara Party in pre-Independence days".<sup>52</sup> To accomplish this, the national leaders of the Swatantra began to hold talks in Chandigarh with Haryana ex-MLAs including some former Samyukta Dal ministers. Their offer to provide assistance during the election campaign was particularly attractive to certain of the agriculturist defectors from the Congress, especially as the Election Commission had decided not to recognize the Vishal Haryana Party or to grant it a separate election symbol. This decision meant the V.H.P. candidates would be

---

<sup>51</sup>Times of India, December 1, 1968.

<sup>52</sup>Tribune, December 18, 1968.



forced to run officially as independents and many felt that this would adversely affect their chance of being re-elected.

The results of these negotiations proved to be a serious blow to Rao Birender Singh. The first announcement of those joining the Swatantra included seven senior members of the V.H.P., including five former ministers and the former acting Speaker of the assembly. As all of these new defectors were from agriculturist communities under the leadership of a Rohtak Jat, Hardwari Lal, this shift was interpreted as a desire on the part of the non-Congress Jats to dominate in their own party and not to be under the leadership of a non-Jat such as Rao Birender Singh. In explaining his most recent defection, Hardwari Lal said that a local party such as the Vishal Haryana Party would not be able to help the peasants of their rural state and that there was a need for an All-India party to fill the power vacuum in the state.<sup>53</sup>

The sheer cynicism of Hardwari Lal's "sell-out" and Swatantra President Dandekar's attempt to "gate-crash" Haryana politics did not sit well with many political observers in Haryana. Commentators drew attention to the fact that the national Swatantra party was currently engaged in finding out means to stop defections and asked how the party could then turn around and create a new state unit through defections? Their most serious questions, however, related to

---

<sup>53</sup>Hindustan Times, December 19, 1967.

the party's potential appeal in the Haryana area. As The Tribune noted:

The party's sporadic efforts in past years to make headway in United Punjab failed largely because its ideology and programme have little appeal for the peasant-proprietor or the urban dweller in the region. ... The peculiar Jat politics of Haryana does not provide an appropriate setting for Swatantra. Since the party had no roots in the soil, it cannot make a fetish of 'a pro-peasant bias'.<sup>54</sup>

As the newly appointed Chairman of the Haryana Swatantra Ad Hoc Committee, Hardwari Lal devoted much of his attention to recruiting ex-MLAs from the former Samyukta Dal as candidates for his party.<sup>55</sup> In these efforts, he had a fair degree of success. Almost every week throughout January 1968, there was an announcement to the effect that several more non-Congress agriculturists had agreed to join the Swatantra. When Rao Birender Singh first invited the Swatantra to join him in the creation of a non-Congress United Front, the state unit leaders appeared to welcome their former leader's initiative. Hardwari Lal announced that his party would attend the founding convention with an open mind. He did, however, add a rider to Swatantra participation by warning that Rao Birender Singh was not to aim at making political gains for himself out of the meeting.<sup>56</sup> This suggests that Hardwari Lal now felt strong enough to hint

---

<sup>54</sup>"Swatantra Hopes" (editorial), Tribune, December 20, 1967.

<sup>55</sup>Tribune, January 5, 1968.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid, January 9, 1968.

that his cooperation within a United Front would follow only if he, and not Rao Birender Singh, were made the chairman or convenor.

The state Jan Sangh leaders, meanwhile, were in a quandary as to how to relate to the proposed election Front. While they saw the need for such an alignment, they were unhappy about the fact that the Communist parties had been invited, and therefore awaited direction from their national leaders on this aspect of the non-Congress campaign.<sup>57</sup> In the end, they were directed to independently seek electoral adjustments with "like-minded" parties but to stay out of any Front with a common programme which embraced the Communists or called for a socialist society.<sup>58</sup> The Swatantra High Command may have taken its cue from this decision as, a few days later, they directed the Haryana Swatantra to withdraw from the United Front. In making this announcement, Hardwari Lal added: "If any other political party in the state can come round and subscribe at least in substance with what we stand for, we shall be willing to collaborate with them".<sup>59</sup> His High Command, however, later amplified its position to emphasize that while it welcomed "electoral understandings" with other parties, except communists, it was really only encouraging the state unit to cooperate with

---

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., January 16, 1968.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., January 17, 1968.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., January 25, 1968.

the Jan Sangh and possibly the Vishal Haryana Party itself.<sup>60</sup>

The desire on the part of the right-wing parties to recruit the support of Rao Birender Singh but not that of his Haryana United Front was confirmed by the Jan Sangh in early March 1968 when it announced that it was prepared to negotiate adjustments with both the Swatantra and the Vishal Haryana party. At the same time, the Swatantra announced that it had decided to initiate a direct dialogue with Rao Birender Singh.<sup>61</sup> As mentioned in the previous section, these attempts to recruit Rao Birender Singh, without his Front, to be a junior partner in a right-wing alignment all ended in failure and the two rightist parties were forced to recognize that they would have to "swim or sink" together.

It was not until the middle of April, however, less than a month before the mid-term polling days, that the Jan Sangh Parliamentary Board finally put its official seal of approval on an electoral alliance between the Jan Sangh and Swatantra state parties.<sup>62</sup> Because this decision was reached when it was too late to withdraw candidates where there was a conflict, the alignment was a partial one only. Under the arrangement, the Jan Sangh was to run in thirty-six seats unopposed by a Swatantra candidate while the Swatantra was unopposed in a further nineteen. In the case

---

<sup>60</sup>Statesman, February 6, 1968.

<sup>61</sup>Tribune, March 10, 1968.

<sup>62</sup>Patriot, March 17, 1968.

of these 55 seats, each party promised to support the other in the campaign. There still remained, however, a further 15 seats which would have both a Jan Sangh and a Swatantra candidate.<sup>63</sup>

Although the Jan Sangh leaders remained optimistic about their chances of an electoral success in Haryana and were already speaking of the coalition which they would be able to create with the Swatantra party and other "like-minded" parties after the election,<sup>64</sup> objective observers noted that the Jan Sangh was running into election difficulties even in their traditional strongholds of Haryana. The main reason for the Sangh's new unpopularity seemed to be the result of its association with the Rao ministry, whose food grain policy had made for higher food prices in the towns and a subsequent decline in the intra-state grain trade. This policy had alienated many of the Sangh's strongest supporters among the urban classes, especially the Punjabi refugee trading interests.<sup>65</sup>

The belated and somewhat half-hearted attempt to effect an alignment between the right-wing parties of Haryana during the mid-term elections demonstrates once again the

---

<sup>63</sup>Times of India, April 17, 1968.

<sup>64</sup>Interviews with Jan Sangh workers in the constituencies, April-May, 1968.

<sup>65</sup>Hindustan Times, May 6, 1968.

dilemma of the non-Congress parties in Haryana. If the central leaders of these two parties had been more pragmatic in their directives and had recognized the real nature of Haryana factional politics, the non-Congress leaders as a group might have been able to reach the necessary compromise. An all-party front, created on the basis of running candidates who had a reasonable expectation of finding electoral support from a group or interest in their constituency which was disaffected with the Congress, might well have won the election. Unfortunately, the constituent units in both the Right and Left alignments were more concerned with running as many candidates as possible under their banner for prestige reasons. The division of the non-Congress forces into two opposing camps, each running far more candidates than their resources justified, almost guaranteed that the Congress would have the advantage of three-way fights in most of the constituencies.

#### Summary and Conclusions

When using party titles to discuss Haryana politics, it is sometimes forgotten that most of the contesting parties in the mid-term elections were either loose coalitions of factions, or locally-based factions labelled as parties. The Congress at this time was essentially divided into three major factional groupings under the leadership of B.D. Sharma, R.K. Gupta and Rizak Ram, and Devi Lal. The Vishal Haryana party was simply another name for the Rao Birender Singh

group, while the new Swatantra unit was an extension of the Hardwari Lal faction. Of all of the contesting parties, the Jan Sangh was possibly the only one organized along ideological lines and even here there were personal rivalries between two state leaders, Dr. Mangal Sein, a Punjabi refugee, and Mukhtiar Singh, a Rohtak Jat. As a result, the election campaign was as much a struggle between regional factional leaders for the maximum group representation in the new assembly than as a state-wide contest for political power on the part of the three party groupings, Jan Sangh-Swatantra to the Right, Congress in the centre, and Haryana United Front to the Left. The local candidate was far more dependent upon the support of a recognized regional leader than he was upon the party ticket. The unaligned candidate had little chance in this contest, even if he had a large election fund. The impact of factional conflict on the mid-term elections was total in that it held the key to electoral success or defeat.

Each of the three major contesting groups did make some attempt to evolve a state-wide electoral strategy over and above their basic political calculations of relative factional strengths in the various districts, but with no great success. The Congress placed its emphasis on an assurance that its victory would bring political stability and an end to defectionist politics. On the state-wide level, the party studiously avoided making policy statements on social or

economic issues although local candidates often expressed their own ideas for programmes which would appeal to their constituents. Both the right-wing parties argued that they would protect the status quo. While the Jan Sangh directed much of its attention to urban issues, the Swatantra emphasized that it was the only party led by Jats and as such would ensure that state politics in future would serve the interests of this community. Rao Birender Singh's Vishal Haryana party continued to press for a larger Haryana state unit as a means of solving the problems in the agricultural sector, especially those then being experienced by the cultivator-proprietor class. The other constituents of the United Front alliance gave lip-service to this programme, but on the whole continued to base their campaigns on whatever issues or programmes appealed to their local supporters. Overall, it was a highly disorganized state campaign fought essentially at the local or regional level with no major state leaders capable of articulating a comprehensive party programme which had universal appeal.

What were the relative strengths and weaknesses of the major contesting parties in the Haryana mid-term elections? For the Congress, its greatest strength lay in the fact that it was the only single party which had enough candidates in the field to form a majority government after the election. If the Haryana people were convinced by recent political events in the state that a non-Congress coalition was not



a viable alternative, it would be reflected in the Congress electoral returns. On the other hand, no party was as internally disunited as the Congress at this time. There was no recognized state leader. Three factional groupings were working to elect their supporters where they were the official party candidates, but were refusing to cooperate in the election of Congress nominees who were not supporters of their particular factional leaders. Indeed, despite central scrutiny of election funds and of the actions of prominent factional leaders, many cases of "sabotage" of official party candidates by opposing factions were revealed. In many ways, the only political leader to make an uncompromising appeal for a state-wide Congress victory without reference to factional groups was the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi.

As the election results would show, the Jan Sangh was in serious difficulty. The electorate, especially in the urban areas, saw through the party's hypocrisy in supporting the Samyukta Dal, and the trading interests, who had suffered greatly from this association, denied the party the election funds which it needed. At first sight, Hardwari Lal's new Swatantra state unit appeared to be a plausible alternative to the Congress for Jat voters who were still embittered by the failure of the Congress to elevate one of their own to the leadership of the party. The stigma of opportunism, however, stayed with this group of defectors from the Samyukta Dal throughout the campaign and they were therefore

unable to win the confidence of the electorate. Rao Birender Singh remained a hero within his Ahir community, thereby guaranteeing that he would return to the assembly with a sizable bloc of supporters. Outside of Gurgaon and Mahendragarh, however, he had very little electoral appeal, and the handful of Vishal Haryana party nominees elected in the remaining five districts won because of local circumstances and not because of any great desire on the part of the electorate to see Rao Birender Singh returned to power. The remaining parties within the United Front were too small and too diverse to make a great impact on the elections. Indeed, their presence proved a disadvantage to the United Front as they were too optimistic about the electoral chances of their nominees and therefore over-extended themselves by running too many candidates.

The Haryana mid-term elections were also significant as an indicator of the extent to which the Indian political system had failed so far to establish a genuine party system. It is almost justified to say there were no ongoing political parties in Haryana. Every party, including the Congress, was the product of immediate circumstances and depended on its ability to recruit prominent local or regional factional leaders for its electoral support. Personalities not programmes, determined party successes at the polls. There were no substantial issues in their campaign other than the vague promises of future political stability. The shifts

in electoral support, which can be paralleled to inter-party factional movements, is a further indication that the Indian voter had yet to distinguish between the candidate and what his party stood for.

The circumstances of Haryana's mid-term elections must have placed the Haryana voter in somewhat of a quandary. No party really offered him a clear-cut choice. The Congress was so openly divided amongst the competing intra-party factions that the only way that it could be kept under reasonable control was through a heavy-handed intervention on the part of its High Command. Even with this intervention, the voter who decided to give the Congress another chance had no clear idea of what kind of government would result. The party was still leaderless at the state level and all indications pointed to another bout of internal conflict after the elections over the leadership of the legislature party. Would Haryana's next Congress leader be an agriculturist or a non-agriculturist?

If the voter decided he could not support the Congress, he was not offered a clear-cut alternative. His choice was limited to a partial United Front which was none too stable internally, or a right-wing electoral adjustment which was a last-minute creation and showed no sign that the parties involved would in fact cooperate together in the post-election period, especially as the two constituent parties were each appealing to interests which were traditionally opposed to each other in the state.

Given this choice, it is not surprising that the Haryana electorate reluctantly decided to give the Congress yet another chance at forming the state government, but with exactly the same small majority which it had received during the general elections of the previous year. As a noted Indian humourist expressed it: "When you've tried two brands of the same bitter medicine, you just can't help but settle for the one that has the least offensive taste!"<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup>Chandu, "Hobson's Choice", Hindustan Times, May 17, 1968.

## CHAPTER VIII

### A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FOURTH GENERAL ELECTIONS AND THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS IN HARYANA

#### Introduction

In undertaking an electoral analysis for Haryana state, it is noteworthy to mention, at the outset, that this area provided the Indian National Congress with a somewhat unique electoral record in the latter part of the nineteen-sixties. While the party suffered a number of electoral reverses in other state elections and a general loss of popular support throughout India in the Fourth General Elections, 1967, it was able to make consistent gains over its 1962 performance in two elections, 1967 and 1968, in this area.<sup>1</sup> In examining this electoral record, an inquiry must be made as to whether it was the particular party and its electoral programme which attracted this support or whether the election returns were directly dependent upon the factional alignments in existence at the time. In Haryana, are elections won by parties, individuals or factions?

#### (1) Electoral Performance, 1962

In erstwhile Pubjab's last general election (1962), the

---

<sup>1</sup>See Table 8.1.

TABLE 8.1

HARYANA: PERCENTAGE OF VOTES, NUMBER OF SEATS AND PERCENTAGE  
OF SEATS BY PARTY, 1962, 1967 AND 1968

Party	1962 <sup>1</sup>			1967			1968		
	%age Votes	No. of Seats	%age Seats	%age Votes	No. of Seats	%age Seats	%age Votes	No. of Seats	%age Seats
Cong.	40.4	31	57.4	41.5	48	59.4	44.2	48	59.4
J.S.	13.8	4	7.5	14.4	12	14.8	10.6	7	8.6
Swat.	6.9	3	5.6	3.2	3	3.7	8.3	2	2.5
Rep.	1.1	-	-	2.9	2	2.5	.9	1	1.3
P.S.P.	4.7	4	7.5	.2	-	-	.07	-	-
S.S.P.				3.6	-	-	1.0	-	-
C.P.I.	2.5	-	-	.9	-	-	.3	-	-
C.P.M.				.6	-	-	.2	-	-
H.L.S.	5.2	3	5.6						
V.H.P.							13.9	13	16.0
B.K.D.							1.5	1	1.3
Ind.	24.9	9	16.6	32.9	16	19.8	19.2	9	11.1
Total	100.0	54	100.0	100.0	81	100.0	100.0	81	100.0

Source: 1 R.K. Sharma, "Congress Gains from a Divided Opposition in Haryana",  
Economic and Political Weekly, July 1, 1967, p. 1185.

Congress won a clear majority of the seats from the Haryana tract: thirty-one of fifty-four. The opposition representation returned was divided amongst: Jan Sangh, four; Socialists, four; Swatantra, three; Haryana Lok Samiti, three; and nine independents. The Congress majority was further enhanced in the period between 1962 and the formation of a separate Haryana state in 1966 by a number of defections to it. Eleven members of the opposition, including four independents, three Swatantra, two Haryana Lok Samiti, one Socialist and one Jan Sangh, abandoned their respective parties in this period to join the Congress party. In the same time period, one Congressman, two Socialists, and one Haryana Lok Samiti member, left their parties to sit as independents. As a result of these inter-party movements, the Congress party's legislative representation in the Vidhan Sabha at the point of Haryana's creation in 1966 consisted of forty-one seats (76 per cent), while the opposition representation was reduced to thirteen seats: Jan Sangh, three; Samyukta Socialist Party, one; and nine independents.<sup>2</sup>

## (2) Electoral Performance, 1967

The Congress entered the 1967 campaign in a highly ambiguous position in regard to its electoral expectations in Haryana. On the one hand, there were several factors which

---

<sup>2</sup>This data was drawn from R.K. Sharma, "Congress Gains from a Divided Opposition in Haryana", Economic and Political Weekly, July 1, 1967, p.1183.

pointed to possible electoral gains. In the first place, the non-Congress parties and groups had not been able to create a formal electoral alliance covering the entire state, although the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra had been able to reach an informal understanding at the local level in a few constituencies. Second, the locally dominant communities in the rural sector of the state, such as the Jats and Ahirs, regarded the creation of Haryana as the fulfillment of a long-cherished dream and appeared to be grateful to the Congress leaders, at least at the national level, for having conceded their demand. The decision to reorganize the Punjab territory on the basis of language, moreover, led to the return of a number of prominent dissident Congressmen and their factional supporters to the party, thereby increasing the party's electoral expectations. Finally, the Jan Sangh, which hitherto had been regarded as the main rival for the Congress in this area, appeared to be suffering in popularity because of its bitter opposition to the division of Punjab and the creation of a separate Haryana. Given these potential advantages, why then did the Congress only receive a marginal gain of 1.1 per cent in the popular vote and a slim working majority of seven seats in the assembly in the 1967 elections?

The marginal Congress gains and ultimate electoral victory in Haryana, rather, could be regarded as a remarkable achievement especially as it ran contrary to the all-India



trends in the Fourth General Elections. There were, moreover, as discussed in earlier chapters, intra-party factional conflicts which prevented the Congress from taking full advantage of the conditions described above. The Congress entered into the 1967 campaign internally divided as the result of a struggle amongst its factional leaders for control of the party machinery. The Bhagwat Dayal Sharma group, which emerged from these intra-party contests as the dominant faction, probably cost the party a considerable loss of potential support from amongst the agriculturist communities. Not only was this faction supported by Punjabi refugees settled in the state, local non-agriculturist communities such as Brahmins and Baniyas, INTUC, and the district cadres of the party organisation, but it was also well known that its leader, B.D. Sharma, had actively worked to prevent states reorganisation when he was the President of the Punjab PCC. Although Bhagwat Dayal had succeeded in winning the election for party leadership, mainly because the agriculturist factional leaders had been unable to settle their own differences and to decide upon a common candidate for the leadership, the resentment against his victory ran deep in many rural communities. When popular individuals in the local areas, who were recognized supporters of non-Sharma dissident factions, were denied party tickets, many chose to leave the party to run as independents with the backing of their factional leaders who hoped to remove Bhagwat Dayal

as legislative leader once the assembly was constituted after the 1967 elections. The running of these dissidents outside of the party cut deeply into the Congress' overall potential support at the polls.

Apart from factionalism, the Congress may have also suffered because of its failure to take a strong stand on the Chandigarh issue. Sharma's agreement to accept Mrs. Gandhi's arbitration, as a means of ending Sant Fateh Singh's fast and proposed self-immolation, was regarded by many as a sell-out of Haryana's claim to Chandigarh, which had been recommended by the Punjab Boundary Commission Report of 1966. The Jan Sangh, in an effort to improve its image, took this issue as its major electoral plank in the 1967 elections. This party also benefited from the disenchantment with the Congress amongst the Punjabi refugees concentrated in Haryana's urban constituencies as they had been especially opposed to any further division of the Punjab. There was also considerable dissatisfaction in the state with the Congress due to inflation, especially in food prices, which had resulted from the economic crisis created by the famine conditions prevalent in many parts of India from 1965 to 1967.

The most notable setback for the party in the 1967 elections was the defeat of seven of the 15 ministers in B.D. Sharma's first Cabinet. This somewhat high attrition rate for cabinet ministers may, in part, be explained by the nature of Haryana's factional rivalries. For example, in

the case of Ranbir Singh, a Rohtak Jat, B.D. Sharma threw his factional support behind Mahant Sheryo Nath, an independent candidate, to ensure that his strongest rival in the post-election leadership contest would not have a seat in the Vidhan Sabha. Of the remaining six, four were members of agriculturist tribes - a Jat, an Ahir, a Gujar and a Rajput. Each of them perhaps suffered at the polls from the stigma of having supported a Brahmin, B.D. Sharma, for the party leadership.

Of the factors which worked in support of the Congress winning a majority in 1967, the fact that the opposition parties had failed to organize a united front may have been the most significant. The Congress failed to poll 50 per cent of the votes in twenty-eight of the forty-eight constituencies where a party supporter was returned and polled less than 40 per cent in thirteen of these twenty-eight seats.<sup>3</sup> This pattern might have given the opposition parties an advantage if they had found an inter-party compromise. A combined opposition front, if it could have won even eight of these thirteen marginal seats, would have placed the Congress in a minority in the new assembly. With hindsight, it is possible to suggest that B.D. Sharma might have been able to have survived as the Chief Minister after the elections if he had paid closer attention to the true nature of

---

<sup>3</sup>Sharma, p.1185.

his party's success - victory by default. He chose to interpret the results as a mandate to reconstitute his ministry almost completely from amongst his own factional supporters when he should have considered the alternative available to his intra-party opponents as a result of this election.

The left group of opposition parties -- SSP, PSP, CPI and CPM-- fared badly in the 1967 elections in Haryana. Although they contested a larger number of seats than in 1962, their percentage share of the popular vote dropped and they failed to return any representatives. This was especially surprising in the case of the SSP as it had won four seats in 1962 and was believed to have a sizable base in Hissar district. Taken as a group, these left-wing parties polled 5.3 per cent of the 1967 vote as compared with 7.2 per cent in 1962. The Republican party, on the other hand, was able to improve its standing over 1962 when it contested nine seats without winning representation. In 1967, it contested twenty-three seats and succeeded in electing two while raising its overall electoral support from 1.1 per cent to 2.9 per cent.

Of the parties on the right, the Swatantra appeared to have lost considerable popular support in that its share of electoral support fell from 6.9 per cent in 1962 to 3.2, per cent in 1967. In fact, the party was still recovering from the situation which had been brought about by the defection of all three of its representatives elected in 1962. As a

result, it was not able to place candidates in any of the constituencies from which it had previously been elected and was forced to seek new candidates and new constituencies. Even though it was able to place only twelve candidates, as against twenty in 1962, it was still able to elect three members, the representation it had had in 1962.

It was the Jan Sangh, however, which proved to be the principal rival for the Congress in 1967. While its share of the vote increased marginally from 13.8 per cent to 14.4, it succeeded in raising its representation in the assembly from four to twelve. This relative success, however, was limited by the fact that seven of the twelve seats returned were from non-rural areas. This suggests that the Jan Sangh had still not succeeded in finding the rural base which was needed to achieve power in Haryana.

The other real challenge to Congress hegemony in Haryana came as a result of the relative success of independent candidates in 1967, in that they received 32.9 per cent of the popular vote in contrast with 24.9 per cent in 1962. This support succeeded in electing 16 candidates from amongst the 295 who contested as independents. Of greatest significance here is the fact that all independents elected in 1967 were dissident Congressmen who chose to run without official party backing after they had been refused tickets by the Pradesh Congress Election Committee which was then dominated by Bhagwat Dayal Sharma. If the Congress had had a less

partisan leader at this time or if the Congress Parliamentary Board could have effectively arbitrated the ticket assignment disputes, the party might have returned 64 representatives rather than 48 in 1967.

In summary, the Congress was returned in 1967 with a workable majority because the opposition parties were unable to mount a united campaign and because the central Congress, at least, still had some favour in the eyes of the electorate. It failed, however, to take full advantage of its potentially favourable position in this state because intra-party factional considerations were placed above party interests and because the locally dominant agriculturist communities did not trust the state party leader. As a result, the party's electoral success was a limited one, leaving an unresolved intra-party cleavage which would shortly divide the party, topple the Congress government and produce a period of political instability for Haryana.

### (3) Electoral Performance, 1968.

In the mid-term elections of 1968, the Congress party appeared to have some reasonable grounds for optimism. First, the Congress High Command had directly intervened and had taken steps to ensure that the various dissident factions which were prepared to cooperate with the Congress were given adequate representation in the ticket distribution. It was also indicated by the central Congress leadership that a state party leader would be found after the elections

who would be acceptable to all of the factions. This was interpreted by the Haryana electorate to mean that the 'gaddi' was to be given to a member of an agriculturist community, probably a Jat.

Second, as Haryana's mid-term elections were to be the first for the Congress after the 1967 debacle, the High Command was also prepared to pour in manpower, vehicles and, most important, speakers of national eminence, such as the Prime Minister, to ensure that every voter was reached in the appeal for a new mandate. This was to be a prestige election for the Congress and every effort was to be made to ensure that there would be a satisfactory result. Third, the record of the Samyukta Dal in office, with its internal feuds, defections and counter-defections, open bribery of elected representatives in the Vidhan Sabha, unwarranted expansion of the state ministry, and a grain trade scandal, had left a sense of bitterness and betrayal with many of the Haryanvi voters.

Finally, the non-Congress parties had once again failed to create a formal electoral alliance capable of presenting a genuine alternative to the Congress for the electorate. Rao Birender Singh's attempts to create such a front failed when the two national parties with some prospects of electoral support, the Jan Sangh and Swatantra, were instructed by their respective High Commands to avoid associating with the leaders of the discredited Samyukta Dal. These two

parties, however, did arrive at a working agreement for an electoral adjustment in most of the seats. As a result, most of the constituencies had three-way contests in which the Congress had the definite advantage.

There were, however, some factors which may have placed limitations on the Congress' chances for an upset victory in 1968. First, the party had to go into the election with many of its regional factional leaders so discredited that they could not be allocated party tickets. This left the whole state party leadership question open and the electorate at doubt as to who, in fact, they would be getting as their next Chief Minister if they gave the Congress their support. Second, the Chandigarh issue was still unsettled, thus giving the non-Congress parties an automatic campaign issue. Here the Samyukta Dal record was much better and many United Front candidates argued convincingly to the electorate that they had been removed from power by the centre simply because they had consistently refused to cooperate in the giving away of Haryana's rightful claims on the capital project and the Bhakra power complex.

Third, while discredited by the defection label and the corruption which had been required to stay in office, the non-Congress parties could still argue that these measures had been required to keep B.D. Sharma and his anti-rural clique out of power. While candidly admitting to the electorate on occasion that they had not been perfect during



their eight months in office, they attempted to persuade the voters that the Samyukta Dal had at least provided the state with a ministry dominated by agriculturists in contrast to Bhagwat Dayal's second ministry which favoured the non-agriculturist castes and urban interests. Finally, the non-Congress candidates could argue that time was on their side as the Congress, after the debacle of the Fourth General Elections, was now clearly on a path of irreversible decline throughout India.

Despite the possible factors working against a Congress victory in Haryana, the party succeeded in once again raising its share of the popular vote from 41.5 per cent in 1967 to 44.2 per cent in 1968. It was returned, however, with exactly the same number of seats which it had had in 1967 - forty-eight. The leftist parties were almost completely obliterated, winning only 2.2 per cent of the vote and no seats. The Republican party also suffered in this election. Its percentage share of the vote dropped from 2.9 to .9 and its representation was reduced from two to one member. The Jan Sangh lost 3.8 percentage share of the vote and its representation dropped from twelve seats to seven. The Swatantra, on the other hand, substantially increased its percentage share of the vote by winning 8.3 per cent in contrast to 3.2 per cent in the previous election. This vote, however, was broadly scattered in a large number of constituencies, 31 in contrast to twelve, and the resultant representation for this party was reduced from three to

two. The independent vote was also reduced from 32.9 per cent to 19.9 per cent, thereby reducing the number of such representatives from 16 to nine. The significant shift in opposition representation came as a result of the relative success of Rao Birender Singh's new Vishal Haryana party which won thirteen seats and collected 13.9 per cent of the vote. This made the V.H.P. the largest single opposition party in the new assembly, thereby ousting the Jan Sangh which had hitherto held this position. Another new party for the Haryana area, the Bharatiya Kranti Dal (B.K.D.), succeeded in electing a single candidate.

The implications of the electoral results of the 1967 general elections and the 1968 mid-term elections in Haryana will be examined in greater depth through the use of electoral statistics, tables and maps in the remainder of this chapter. There are several questions of interest. Did the Congress have a stable support base in the Haryana area, or did it depend upon caste and factional calculations for its electoral victories? Did the electorate "punish" the defectors, or did it have another perspective on the recent political events in Haryana? Finally, did the opposition parties suffer at the polls as a result of having failed to organize an electoral adjustment amongst themselves, or did they fail because they were in essence independents and dissident Congressmen who, the electorate recognized, could not provide the state with an alternative to the Congress?

## Comparison of the 1967 and 1968 Elections

### (1) Electoral Data.

Although an additional 152,990 eligible voters were added to the electoral rolls in Haryana between the 1967 and 1968 elections, the overall turnout of voters dropped about 20 per cent.<sup>4</sup> While some observers chose to interpret this figure as a reflection of a lack of interest or a genuine feeling of dissatisfaction with the state's defection politics of the previous year, others tried to find more specific reasons such as the fact that the election dates of May 12 and 14th came at the height of the harvest season and that the Haryanvi peasants had little time therefore for other activities.<sup>5</sup> A hectic marriage season was also suggested as a further interference with some voters' chances to exercise their franchise.<sup>6</sup> The impression, gathered in an election tour, was that many Haryana voters were simply uncertain as to how they should vote as they still distrusted the Congress but saw that the non-Congress candidates were probably incapable of providing the state with political stability. Abstaining was another means of expressing their dissatisfaction with the entire political process. A curious aspect of the 1968 elections was the fact that women voters in the rural areas appeared to predominate over men.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>See Table 8.2.

<sup>5</sup>Statesman, May 13, 1968.

<sup>6</sup>Times of India, May 13, 1968.

<sup>7</sup>Hindustan Times, May 14, 1968.

TABLE 8.2

## HARYANA: ELECTORAL DATA, 1967 AND 1968

Description	1967	1968	Change in 1968 over 1967
(1) Electors	4,387,907	4,540,897	+152,990
(2) Voters	3,184,992	2,603,823	-581,169
(3) Percentage Voted	72.59	57.34	78.08
(4) Valid Votes	3,033,945	2,513,069	-520,876
(5) Rejected Votes	151,047	90,754	-60,293
(6) Candidates	470	398	-72

## (2) Party Standings

In the 1968 elections, the total number of candidates dropped to 398 from 470 the previous year, even though two new parties had entered the election fray. A great part of this difference resulted from the fact that the number of independents contesting dropped from 260 to 179.<sup>8</sup>

While the Congress party won 59.4 per cent of the seats which it contested in both elections, the other parties had a much lower ratio of successes to defeats. The Jan Sangh won 16.3 per cent of the seats which it contested (25 per cent in 1967); the Republican party, 10 per cent (8.7 in 1967); the Vishal Haryana party, 38.1 per cent; and the B.K.D., 14.3 per cent. As the PSP, the SSP, the CPI and the CPM did not succeed in electing a single candidate in either 1967 or 1968, their percentage of successes to seats contested remained at zero.

In terms of the percentage of votes by party, there were considerable changes in the regional pattern of voting between 1967 and 1968.<sup>9</sup> Although the Congress gained 2.7 percentage points at the state level in the mid-term elections, it dropped one per cent in Jind and Hissar and failed to improve its weak position in Mahendragarh. On the other hand, the party's share of the vote jumped significantly

---

<sup>8</sup>See Table 8.3.

<sup>9</sup>See Table 8.4.

TABLE 8.3

HARYANA: NUMBER OF VOTES, CANDIDATES AND  
SEATS BY PARTY, 1967 AND 1968

Party	1967			1968		
	Votes	Candidates	Seats	Votes	Candidates	Seats
Cong.	1,257,407	81	48	1,111,353	81	48
J.S.	435,959	48	12	265,162	43	7
Swat.	96,410	12	3	207,861	31	2
Rep.	87,385	23	2	22,216	10	1
PSP	6,477	3	-	1,801	2	-
SSP	108,068	23	-	23,936	7	-
CPI	27,338	12	-	8,210	3	-
CPM	16,886	8	-	3,632	1	-
VHP				348,273	34	13
BKD				37,005	7	1
Ind.	998,115	260	16	483,620	179	9
Total	3,033,945	470	81	2,513,069	398	81

TABLE 8.4

HARYANA: PERCENTAGE OF VOTES BY PARTY IN HARYANA AND DISTRICTS,  
1967 AND 1968, AND CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE STANDING

Party	Haryana			Ambala			Karnal			Jind		
	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change
Cong.	41.5	44.2	2.7	41.3	49.3	8.0	39.4	41.5	2.1	50.5	49.5	-1.0
J.S.	14.4	10.6	-3.8	23.8	17.9	-5.9	18.5	20.5	2.0	7.1	.6	-6.5
Swat.	3.2	8.3	5.1	2.8	1.4	-1.4	8.4	6.4	-2.0	8.0	22.7	14.7
Rep.	2.9	.9	-2.0	7.5	4.3	-3.2	3.6	3.5	-.1	10.6		-10.6
PSP	.2	.07	-.13	1.3	.2	-1.1						
SSP	3.6	1.0	-2.6				.07		-.07		3.2	3.2
CPI	.9	.3	-.6	1.1		-1.1	1.6	.7	-.9	1.9		-1.9
CPM	.6	.2	-.4				1.2	.7	-.5	.2		-.2
VHP		13.9	13.9		5.9	5.9		7.9	7.9		10.0	10.0
BKD		1.5	1.5		.1	.1		1.9	1.9			
Ind.	32.9	19.2	-13.7	22.2	20.4	-1.8	27.4	16.9	-10.5	21.7	13.9	-7.8

Party	Rohtak			Gurgaon			Mahendragarh			Hissar		
	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change	1967	1968	Change
Cong.	40.9	48.3	7.4	39.3	42.2	2.9	34.3	34.6	.3	45.2	44.1	-1.1
J.S.	15.4	10.9	-4.5	14.7	7.0	-7.7	8.1	2.9	-5.2	9.0	5.7	-3.3
Swat.		10.1	10.1	4.0	10.0	6.0		1.1	1.1	.3	8.5	8.2
Rep.	1.0		-1.0	1.5	.4	-1.1	1.8		-1.8	.7	.5	-.2
PSP										.4	.3	-.1
SSP	2.6		-2.6				8.9	3.9	-5.0	11.6	2.3	-9.3
CPI	.5		-.5	1.0	.7	-.3				.5	.3	-.2
CPM	.6		-.6				2.4		-2.4	.2		-.2
VHP		9.6	9.6		29.5	29.5		43.4	43.4		7.6	7.6
BKD		.08	.08								5.0	5.0
Ind.	39.1	21.0	-18.1	39.5	10.1	-29.4	44.4	14.1	-30.3	32.3	25.6	-6.7

in Ambala (8.0 per cent) and Rohtak (7.4 per cent). While later data will help clarify this picture, it is already apparent here that although the overall results for the Congress in 1967 and 1968 would at first glance indicate a solid and stable support base in the population, this stability is in reality illusory as there were large regional shifts in party support between the two elections.

As for the opposition parties, the Jan Sangh consistently lost support throughout the state, except in Karnal district where it increased its percentage share of the vote slightly. The Swatantra fielded nearly three times as many candidates in 1968 as compared to 1967. Because of this, it increased its support in the state by some 5 percentage points. This gain, however, was somewhat regional as the party found much of its new support in the Jat-dominated area of Jind (a gain of 14.7 percentage points), Rohtak (10.1), Gurgaon (6.0) and Hissar (8.2). The Republican party and the older left-wing parties consistently lost support throughout the state in 1968, except for the SSP which did succeed in picking up 3.2 per cent of the vote in Jind district. Although the Vishal Haryana party succeeded in winning some 13.9 per cent of the popular vote in the state, making it the best supported non-Congress party in the 1968 elections, its most significant showing was in the south-western area of the state, especially in Mahendragarh where it received 8.8 more percentage points than



did the Congress party. The independent vote declined some 13.7 percentage points at the state level and this decline was reflected in every district, especially in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh where they were effectively absorbed by the Vishal Haryana party. Indeed, in several districts, including Ambala, Gurgaon and Hissar, it would appear that this party's candidates received the percentage points lost by the independents. This data is perhaps evidence of the extent to which the V.H.P. was in fact a banding together of individuals who formerly had to run without the benefit of a party ticket.

### (3) Party Candidate Position

The relative position of each candidate in the various constituencies by party shows that the Congress party was able to maintain a dominant position in both elections.<sup>10</sup> In 1968, 29 of the 33 defeated Congress candidates held second position while the remaining four ran third. This represents a slight improvement over the 1967 figures when 28 Congress candidates came second and a further five placed third. Above all else, these figures indicate that there was indeed a popular base for the Congress throughout the state which could be exploited by the party. On the other hand, it is possible, even here, to speculate that an assured minimal base such as this would not bring the party back into

---

<sup>10</sup>See Table 8.5.

TABLE 8.5

HARYANA: POSITION OF CANDIDATES BY  
PARTY, 1967 AND 1968

Party	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
1967												
Cong.	48	28	5									
J.S.	12	13	10	8	2	2	1					
Swat.	3	2	2	5								
Rep.	2	1	4	5	7	3	1					
PSP			2	1								
SSP		5	7	7	2	1				11		
CPI			5	4	2	1						
CPM			1	2	1		3				1	
Ind.	16	32	44	41	31	20	17	9	5	2	2	2
1968												
Cong.	48	29	4									
J.S.	7	10	11	9	4			1	1			
Swat.	2	11	11	4	1	1	1					
Rep.	1		1	5	2	1						
PSP				2								
SSP		2	4		1							
CPI			1	1		1						
CPM				1								
VHP	13	11	5	3	2							
BKD	1	1	2	2				1				
Ind.	9	19	36	36	31	22	13	9	3	1		

power if it failed to take other factors, such as caste and local factional leadership, into consideration. The regional shifts in party support are already evidence that the base is not a stable or secure one in any part of the state.

In contrast, the Jan Sangh demonstrated a relative decline in popularity in the positions of its candidates. In 1967, when it won twelve seats, it placed second in a further 13. In 1968, it could only win seven and took second place in ten. Two of its candidates in 1968, moreover, were able to find only eighth and ninth positions in their respective constituencies. Although the Swatantra was able to win only two seats in 1968, as against three in 1967, its relative position improved somewhat in that it was able to place 11 candidates in second place and a further 11 in third. The decline of the Republican party in 1968 is further revealed in these positional standings. Winning only one seat in 1968, it had no candidate in second position and only one in third. The left-wing debacle becomes clearer when it is noted that only the SSP found second place positions in either of these elections. Even here, the SSP declined from five potential victories in 1967 to only two in 1968.

On the other hand, these positional figures help us in a better assessment of the relative success of the Vishal Haryana party at the polls in 1968. Not only did this new party win 13 seats, but it also provided a strong challenge to the Congress in a further 11 constituencies. No

Vishal Haryana party candidate was lower than fifth in the 1968 electoral returns. The overall decline in the impact of independent candidates in Haryana is also illustrated by these figures. Independent candidates secured second position in some 32 constituencies in 1967. If 25 of these had been won by them, Independents alone would have held the majority in the assembly. In 1968, however, they were able to secure only 19 second-place slots.

When the statistics on candidate positions by party are illustrated on state constituency maps, a further relationship may be seen between the relative position of the political parties in each riding and the regional strength of these parties.<sup>11</sup> The Congress positional maps for 1967 and 1968 reveal that there was considerable regional variation between the results of the general elections and those of the mid-term elections.<sup>12</sup> While the party made its strongest showing in Hissar district in 1967 by winning 82.4 per cent of the seats, its strongest showing in the 1968 contest was in Ambala district where it won 77.8 per cent of the seats. In the other districts, it declined from 62.5 per cent to 56.3 per cent of the Karnal representation and rose from 38.5 per cent of the Gurgaon seats to 53.9 per cent. It retained the same percentage of seats in Jind,

---

<sup>11</sup>For the reader's convenience, these maps have been added as an appendix to this chapter.

<sup>12</sup>See Maps 8.1 and 8.2.

Rohtak and Mahendragarh with 60.0 per cent, 60.0 per cent and 33.3 per cent respectively. In terms of third place positions, in 1967 four out of the five were to be found in the southern region of the state, while in 1968, three out of four were in the north. The heavy concentration of second-place positions in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh helps delineate the impact of the defection of Rao Birender Singh's faction on the Congress party's support base in the southern part of the state.

The overall state pattern of Congress support would seem to indicate that the Congress party organisation had failed to institutionalize a specific electoral base amongst particular communities such as the Jats and that it was still dependent upon candidate selection for much of its electoral return. An election victory for a Congress candidate still required that the individual running be of the appropriate community with the additional support of a strong regional leader.

In contrast, the Jan Sangh found support in a number of pockets throughout Haryana in 1967, but it was flung back upon its north-eastern Punjabi-refugee urban base in 1968 -- Rohtak, Karnal and Ambala -- both in terms of victories and second-place positions.<sup>13</sup> Only in Rohtak district was the party able to raise its percentage share of the seats from

---

<sup>13</sup>See Maps 8.3 and 8.4.

13.3 to 20.0. In Ambala, it managed to retain 22.2 per cent of the available seats, while in Karnal, it dropped from 25.0 per cent in 1967 to 12.5 per cent in 1968 even though the party won an additional 2.1 percentage points in the popular vote. In Gurgaon, Mahendragarh and Hissar districts, the Jan Sangh failed to return any candidates, thereby losing 7.7 per cent, 16.7 per cent and 11.7 per cent of the seats respectively in these districts. Only in Karnal district did the party appear to remain a strong challenge to the Congress by winning 37.5 per cent of the second place positions in 1968. The decline of the Jan Sangh in 1968 supports the contention that the Jan Sangh's institutionalized electoral base was limited to the urban non-agriculturist interests in Haryana and that while it might, as it did in 1967, pick up additional support from marginal constituencies, it could not rely upon this vote to continue from one election to the next.

The Swatantra party, under the leadership of a Rohtak Jat in 1968, Hardwari Lal, attempted to find a new support base in the central rural constituencies of Haryana.<sup>14</sup> This is in contrast to its efforts in 1967 when it concentrated its campaign in the northern part of the state. The strategy adopted for the mid-term elections appeared to meet with some success. Indeed, as the candidate position map for 1968

---

<sup>14</sup> See Maps 8.5 and 8.6.

indicates, the Swatantra may be able to make marked electoral gains amongst the agriculturist communities in Haryana in the future. Although the party only won two adjoining constituencies on the border between Jind and Hissar districts, it showed a distinct pattern of second and third place finishes in the surrounding constituencies which may indicate an appropriate base to be developed.

Because of defections on the floor of the assembly, the Republican party decided not to contest in the two constituencies from which it won representation in 1967.<sup>15</sup> Of the remaining seats which it contested in 1967, the party chose to contest in two out of the 21 in 1968 and to place eight candidates in constituencies where it had not run before. This indicates that the party was attempting to find a new base of support in Haryana. Unfortunately for the party, this wholesale transfer to constituencies not previously contested was none too successful. Only one seat was claimed by the Republicans in 1968 and this was one where the party had placed second in the 1967 contest. The next highest position for a party candidate was third, and half of the party ticket holders came in fourth.

The failure once again of the left-wing parties to make any significant impact on the Haryana elections is clearly illustrated on the positional maps.<sup>16</sup> Only the SSP in the

---

<sup>15</sup>See Maps 8.7 and 8.8.

<sup>16</sup>See Maps 8.9 through 8.16.

1967 election appeared to be a serious contender in the western and central regions of the state. In 1968, however, this party was unable to make any electoral gains over the base which it had won in 1967, even though it chose to concentrate its campaign in eight selected ridings rather than to disperse its energies in twenty-two constituencies as it had in 1967.<sup>17</sup>

The southern base of the Vishal Haryana party under the leadership of Rao Birender Singh is highlighted when charted on a map.<sup>18</sup> Although the party undertook to contest a number of seats in the central and northern regions of the state, it was only in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh districts that it was able to pose a real challenge to the Congress party. Indeed, this map is of special interest because it clearly illustrates the regional influence of a former Congress factional leader who was able to withdraw the backing of his supporters from the dominant party when he defected. It vividly underlines the proposition that the constituencies in the region under his personal influence vote in accordance with their local leader's dictates and cannot easily be swayed by party appeals. A "party of consensus" such as the Congress must win the support of regional leaders such as Rao Birender Singh to achieve

---

<sup>17</sup>See Maps 8.11 and 8.12.

<sup>18</sup>See Map 8.17.



state-wide representation. Too many dissident factional leaders with strong local support bases would reduce the party to a minority position.

The somewhat limited attempt of the Bharatiya Kranti Dal to gain a foothold in Haryana state politics in 1968 is illustrated on its position map.<sup>19</sup> The independent vote position, which may be interpreted in part as an expression of voter dissatisfaction with the existing political parties and their candidates, shows an almost complete reversal in each district between 1967 and 1968.<sup>20</sup> Ambala district elected one independent in 1967 and gave second place to two others. In 1968, no independent was elected from this district, but six constituencies gave their second place support to such candidates. In Karnal district, independents fared badly in 1967 with only one elected and three in second place, but in 1968, the district returned some four independents. In Rohtak district in 1967, four independents were elected and a further seven claimed a second place slot; in 1968, the independents were repudiated, only one being elected and five finding second place positions. Gurgaon district in the general elections returned six independents and a further four were in second place; in 1968, only one independent was elected with another claiming a second-place

---

<sup>19</sup>See Map 8.18.

<sup>20</sup>See Maps 8.19 and 8.20.

rank. Mahendragarh, in 1967, elected three independents, but none were returned the following year. Hissar's pattern of independent positions also varied between the two elections. In 1967, only one non-party candidate was elected but ten more were given second places; in 1968, three candidates were elected, but only four independents found second place standings. Jind district did not elect an independent in either election.

These changes in the fortunes of independent candidates are linked directly to the adjustments reached between the Congress and the regional factional leaders. When the independents, whom Rao Birender Singh had backed against the official party candidates in Gurgaon and Mahendragarh in the general elections, were absorbed into his new Vishal Haryana party the independent candidates ceased to have an impact in these districts. Similarly, the defection of Chand Ram from the Congress affected the increase in independent seats in Karnal district.

#### (4) Percentage Support by Party and Candidate

In overall percentage figures, the percentage change in the voting pattern between 1967 and 1968 indicates that real electoral gains were made by the Vishal Haryana party (13.86 percentage points), the Swatantra (5.09), and the Congress (2.78), while substantial losses were recorded by independents (13.66 percentage points), the Jan Sangh (3.82),

the SSP (2.61), and the Republican party (2.00).<sup>21</sup> When the percentage support by party is converted into seats, only the Vishal Haryana party appears to have made significant gains over the other parties by claiming 13 of the available seats. The Congress was unable to improve its position in the assembly despite its increase in the popular vote. Swatantra representation, on the other hand, was reduced by one seat even though the party's popular vote increased by more than five percentage points. Independent representation was reduced by 7 seats while the Jan Sangh lost 5 constituencies. Popular support spread too thin, as in the case of the Swatantra, obviously does not lead to electoral victories.

When the percentage of votes polled by candidates of the different parties is considered, it is seen that some 42 candidates standing on the Congress ticket in 1967 (52 per cent) received forty per cent of the popular vote or better in their constituencies.<sup>22</sup> In 1968, this figure increased to 51 Congress candidates (63 per cent). This suggests that successful Congress candidates received a higher percentage of the popular vote in 1968 over 1967 and helps to explain how the party's overall percentage share of the vote could have increased without a proportionate increase in its assembly representation.

---

<sup>21</sup>See Table 8.6.

<sup>22</sup>See Table 8.7.

TABLE 8.6

HARYANA: PERCENTAGE OF VOTES AND SEATS WON  
BY PARTY, 1967 AND 1968

Party	1967		1968		Change in Percentage of Votes	Change in Percentage of Seats
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats		
Congress	41.44	59.26	44.22	59.26	2.78	0
Jan Sangh	14.37	14.82	10.55	8.64	-3.82	-6.18
Swatantra	3.18	3.70	8.27	2.47	5.09	-1.23
Republican	2.88	2.47	.88	1.24	-2.00	-1.23
PSP	.21	-	.07	-	-.14	-
SSP	3.56	-	.95	-	-2.61	-
CPI	.90	-	.33	-	-.57	-
CPM	.56	-	.15	-	-.41	-
VHP			13.86	16.05	13.86	16.05
BKD			1.47	1.24	1.47	1.24
Indep.	32.90	19.75	19.25	11.11	-13.66	-8.64

TABLE 8.7

HARYANA: PERCENTAGE OF VOTES POLLED BY CANDIDATES  
BY PARTY, 1967 AND 1968

Party	Below 9.9%	10- 19.9	20- 29.9	30- 39.9	40- 49.9	50- 59.9	60- 69.9	Over 70%
<b>1967</b>								
Congress			13	26	22	18	1	1
Jan Sangh	12	12	2	12	5	6		
Swatantra	5	2	1	1	2	1		
Republican	18	2		1	1	1		
PSP	3							
SSP	11	8		4				
CPI	11	1						
CPM	7	1						
Independent	179	28	26	14	11	2		
<b>1968</b>								
Congress		1	11	18	21	24	4	2
Jan Sangh	16	8	7	4	6	2		
Swatantra	7	8	5	8	2	1		
Republican	9					1		
PSP	2							
SSP	4	1	1	1				
CPI	2	1						
CPM		1						
VHP	6	4	3	5	11	4	1	
BKD	4	1		1	1			
Independent	134	16	11	7	9	2		

For the non-Congress parties, these percentage figures would appear to be more marginal. While the Jan Sangh had ten candidates receiving 40 per cent or better in 1967 (20.8 per cent of the ticket holders), only eight candidates were in this position in 1968 (18.6 per cent). The Swatantra party managed to hold three of their candidates above this margin in both elections, but while this represented 25 per cent of the party candidates in 1967, it was only 9.7 per cent in 1968. The Republican party and the independents were able to slightly improve their percentage standing of candidates over the 40 per cent line in 1968, even though both groups had less candidates in this position in absolute terms. While the Republicans had two candidates over 40 per cent in 1967 (8.7 per cent), they had one in 1968 but this represented ten per cent of their total running strength. Similarly, the independents in 1967 had 13 candidates (5 per cent) above this figure while in 1968 there were 11 (6 per cent). Of all of the parties discussed in this comparison, only the Vishal Haryana party came close to matching the Congress party's percentage of candidates over this 40 per cent line by placing some 16 candidates (47 per cent) in this position in 1968.

Assuming that a reasonable margin of votes to the nearest rival in an Indian state election is 2,000 or better, it is evident that the successful Congress candidates slightly improved their support positions in 1968.<sup>23</sup> More

---

<sup>23</sup>See Table 8.8.

TABLE 8.8

HARYANA: MARGIN OF VOTES TO NEAREST RIVAL CANDIDATE  
BY PARTY, 1967 AND 1968

Party	1 to 999	1000 to 1999	2000 to 2999	3000 to 3999	4000 to 4999	5000 to 5999	6000 to 6999	7000 to 7999	8000 to 8999	9000 to 9999	Over 10,000
1967											
Cong.	10	6	3	6		6	5	1	1	2	8
J.S.	2	2	2		2	2	1		1		
Swat./	1	2									
Repub.		1			1						
Indep.	6	4	1	1		3			1		
1968											
Cong.	4	10	5	1	8	4	4	2	2	3	5
J.S.	2	2	1	1		1					
Swat.		1					1				
Repub.				1							
VHP.	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	1	2		
BKD		1									
Indep.	2	2	2		1	1	1				

candidates for the Congress achieved this margin in the mid-term elections (34 out of 48) than in 1967 (32 out of 48). This would indicate that there were slightly fewer close contests in 1968 for the Congress and further that the electors in a large number of constituencies were in agreement as to which party should be supported in 1968. In both elections, only Congress candidates achieved the distinction of winning by the substantial margin of 10,000 votes or more, although the number of Congressmen achieving this margin fell to five in 1968 from eight in 1967. While the Jan Sangh had 66.6 per cent of its candidates elected with a margin of 2,000 votes in 1967, only 42.8 per cent achieved this margin in 1968. The Vishal Haryana party in 1968 would appear to have done fairly well in this area as nine out of the thirteen successful candidates (69 per cent) achieved more than the 2,000 vote margin.

#### (5) Urban-Rural Distribution

In terms of the urban-rural distribution of seats, the Congress party retained much the same ratio between the 1967 and 1968 elections.<sup>24</sup> While in 1967, 60.4 per cent of its representatives were from rural constituencies, 20.8 per cent reserved (which are also rural in Haryana), 6.3 per cent urban and 12.5 per cent mixed constituencies, the figures for the mid-term elections were 58.3 per cent rural,

---

<sup>24</sup>See Table 8.9.



TABLE 8.9  
**HARYANA: CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION**  
**BY PARTY, 1967 AND 1968**

Party	Rural		Reserved*		Urban		Mixed	
	1967	1968	1967	1968	1967	1968	1967	1968
Cong.	29	28	10	9	3	2	6	9
J.S.	3	2			5	4	4	1
Swat.	2	2	1					
Repub.	1		1	1				
VHP		9		3				1
BKD						1		
Indep.	12	6	3	2		1	1	

\* All Haryana reserved constituencies are situated in rural areas.

18.7 per cent reserved, 4.2 per cent urban and 18.7 per cent mixed. The Jan Sangh, on the other hand, lost 75 percent of its mixed constituency representation in 1968 and emerged from that election as a distinctly urban party (57.2 per cent). The Vishal Haryana party's returns in 1968 would indicate that, in contrast, this party had a distinct rural base. The urban-rural distribution for the V.H.P. was 69.2 per cent rural, 23.1 per cent reserved and 7.7 per cent mixed. These figures would appear to confirm that the Congress remained the only party in Haryana with electoral support representative of both rural and urban interests.

#### (6) Caste Distribution

Caste distribution figures within the Congress party show a significant shift between the two elections.<sup>25</sup> The Congress party, under the leadership of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, in 1967, was returned with more members of non-agriculturist communities than agriculturists (27 to 21). In 1968, there was a reversal in this situation with the agriculturists predominating (25 to 23). The opposition collectively retained exactly the same ratio in both elections (18 agriculturists and 15 non-agriculturists). The shift in the Congress party's caste distribution of seats not only gave the agriculturists a majority within the ruling party, but also made them a majority within the assembly. This

---

<sup>25</sup>See Table 8.10.

TABLE 8.10

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION OF VIDHAN SABHA  
MEMBERSHIP, 1967 AND 1968

Caste	1967						1968					
	Congress		Opposition		Total		Congress		Opposition		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Jat	15	18.5	9	11.1	24	29.6	16	19.8	8	9.9	24	29.6
Ahir	3	3.7	4	4.9	7	8.6	1	1.2	6	7.4	7	8.6
Ror	1	1.2	1	1.2	2	2.5	1	1.2	2	2.5	3	3.7
Gujar			1	1.2	1	1.2	2	2.5			2	2.5
Meo			2	2.5	2	2.5	1	1.2	1	1.2	2	2.5
Rajput	2	2.5	1	1.2	3	3.7	4	4.9	1	1.2	5	6.2
<u>Subtotal</u>	21	25.9	18	22.2	39	48.2	25	30.9	18	22.2	43	53.1
Brahmin	6	7.4	3	3.7	9	11.1	5	6.2	2	2.5	7	8.6
Bania	5	6.2	1	1.2	6	7.4	4	4.9	2	2.5	6	7.4
Sch. Caste	10	12.4	6	7.4	16	19.8	9	11.1	6	7.4	15	18.5
Refugee	4	4.9	5	6.2	9	11.1	4	4.9	5	6.2	9	11.1
Other	2	2.5			2	2.5	1	1.2			1	1.2
<u>Subtotal</u>	27	33.3	15	18.5	42	51.8	23	28.4	15	18.5	38	46.9
<u>Total</u>	48	59.3	33	40.7	81	100.0	48	59.3	33	40.7	81	100.0

reversal may help to explain why the floor-crossing manoeuvre of the dissident Congress factions succeeded in 1967 but would fail in 1968. As long as the Congress was led by a non-agriculturist who used the party's electoral machinery to give non-agriculturists the prominent positions within both the organisational and legislative wings, the temptation to abandon the Congress was strong for the dissident agriculturist factional leaders who needed a share of political power to distribute goods and services to their constituents. When the central leadership intervened to reverse this trend, the non-agriculturist faction was now the one to resort to a defection manoeuvre in an attempt to win more political influence with the opposition parties and factions which needed this dissident support to oust the Congress government and to re-establish a United Front administration.

#### (7) Party Losses and Gains

In terms of losses and gains as between parties, the Congress party managed to keep an even balance sheet between the two elections by winning 48 seats each time.<sup>26</sup> Some 44 seats, however, did change hands in the 1968 elections (54.3 per cent). The Congress gained three seats from the Jan Sangh, one from the Republican party, and four from independents. On the other hand, it lost seven to the Vishal

---

<sup>26</sup>See Table 8.11.

TABLE 8.11

HARYANA: REPRESENTATION GAINED AND LOST  
BY THE CONGRESS PARTY, 1968

Party	Lost to	Gained from	Net Change
Jan Sangh	4	7	3
Swatantra	2	2	0
Republican	1	2	1
VHP	7		-7
BKD	1		-1
Independent	7	11	4
Total	22	22	0

Haryana party and one to the Bharatiya Kranti Dal. When this data is illustrated on electoral maps of Haryana, it may be seen that the Congress losses to other parties varied considerably from district to district.<sup>27</sup> Its principal losses in the northern region of the state were to independents and the Jan Sangh, while in the southern districts it was to the Vishal Haryana party that the Congress was forced to concede a number of seats.

In the gains column, it is interesting to note, the Congress tended to pick up seats from the Jan Sangh throughout the state, but appeared to win back independent seats mainly in Rohtak district and the eastern part of Gurgaon district, the areas of the state where there were no strong regional leaders in the 1967 election. Lastly, there were eleven constituencies throughout the state which the Congress did not succeed in winning in either election. Of these, only three stayed with the same party, in every case the Jan Sangh, for both elections. In the north, two Jan Sangh seats were lost to independents in 1968, while in the south, the Vishal Haryana party absorbed four independent seats and one other from the Swatantra party. The fact that some 44 constituencies out of the 81 in the state switched for or against the Congress in 1968 suggests that the party's support base in Haryana was far from stable and

---

<sup>27</sup> See Maps 8.21 through 8.23.

that immediate political events, leadership questions and caste considerations had a marked impact on the party's overall electoral popularity.

(8) Summary

From this state-wide comparative analysis of the fourth general elections in 1967 and the mid-term elections in Haryana in 1968, it would appear that there were a number of significant changes in the state's overall electoral pattern in this short time span. First, there was a considerable drop in the voter turnout at the polls in 1968, especially in terms of male voters, suggesting that many Haryanvis may have become dissatisfied with the political process. Second, the number of contesting candidates decreased even though two new parties contested the mid-term election. Third, the right-wing parties had their representation reduced even though they fielded more candidates in 1967 while the older left-wing parties continued to have no significant impact on Haryana elections.

Fourth, while three parties made significant electoral gains in the 1968 election in terms of popular vote, only one, the Vishal Haryana party, was able to translate this support at the polls into a sizable percentage of the assembly seats. Fifth, contests in 1968 were not as closely fought as those in 1967. Sixth, in terms of the urban-rural division of seats, the Congress continued to be the only single Haryana party which could claim to be representative of all

interests -- rural, scheduled caste and urban. Its two closest rivals in the 1968 election were more clearly oriented towards particular interests. In the case of the Jan Sangh, its base lay in the north-eastern urban areas, while the Vishal Haryana party found most of its support in the southern rural constituencies. Finally, the most significant shift between the 1967 and 1968 elections was in the area of caste representation: in the 1968 campaign, the agriculturist communities were returned in a slight majority of the seats in the Vidhan Sabha and also within the winning Congress Party. This was a complete reversal of the 1967 result.

#### The Defectionist Record in 1968

Since this study of Haryana factional politics is particularly concerned with the implications of floor-crossings for political development in India, it would be appropriate to complete this comparative analysis of Haryana's elections with a specific examination of how defectors fared at the polls in 1968. This aspect of the mid-term election also merits particular attention because the Congress national leadership appealed to the Haryana voters to reject those MLAs who had created the political crisis in the state by their "self-seeking" manoeuvres in the assembly. Were the defectors as a group vindicated or repudiated in the mid-term election?

In his analysis of political defections in India,



Kashyap claims that some 44 of the 81 members of the Vidhan Sabha elected in 1967 in Haryana defected at least once before President's rule was imposed in November 1967.<sup>28</sup>

This figure, however, was arrived at by including independents and other non-Congress party members who joined the Vishal Haryana party on its creation. As this new party was made up of supporters of the Samyukta Dal, which was then in power, most of them did not have to cross the floor of the house in this change of party label. It is questionable, therefore, that these individuals should be counted amongst those defectors who created the political instability in Haryana. Hence, for the purpose of this analysis, we shall treat only those members who crossed the floor of the Assembly at least once. Here we find that there were 26 MLAs who might be classified as true defectors, including 20 Congressmen who crossed the floor of the assembly at one point or another to support the United Front government and six non-Congressmen who joined the Congress on the opposition benches.<sup>29</sup>

8 In regard to those twenty Congress legislators who defected in 1967, we find that twelve of them were from

---

<sup>28</sup>Subash Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), p.111.

<sup>29</sup>See Tables 8.12 and 8.14.

agriculturist tribes (58 per cent of the total Congress agriculturist representation) and eight were non-agriculturists (30 per cent of the total non-agriculturist representation).<sup>30</sup> It would appear, therefore, that more than half of the agriculturists elected on the Congress ticket in 1967 were motivated to defect from the party. The proposition that defections from the Congress were a rural phenomenon is further substantiated by the urban-rural distribution of the defectors. Over half of the Congress representation from rural constituencies defected while none of those elected in urban ridings did so. Approximately one-third of the Congress MLAs returned from mixed or reserved constituencies also defected.

Of the twenty Congressmen who defected in 1967, eleven chose to seek re-election in 1968. Of these, 54.5 per cent were returned to the assembly. While this is not as good a ratio of successful contestants as was held by Congress non-defectors (66.7 per cent),<sup>31</sup> the ratio of electoral victories for Congress agriculturist defectors was in exactly the same proportion as that for Congress non-defectors and indeed was better than the electoral record achieved by Congress agriculturist non-defectors.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup>See Table 8.12.

<sup>31</sup>See Table 8.13.

<sup>32</sup>Compare Tables 8.12 and 8.13.

TABLE 8.12

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF CONGRESS DEFECTORS, 1967-68

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Defectors 1967	%age Defected 1967	Defectors Ran 1968	Defectors Elected 1968	%age Elected 1968
Jat	15	8	54.4	3	1	33.3
Ahir	3	2	66.7	3	3	100.0
Ror	1	0	0			
Gujar						
Meo						
Rajput	2	2	100.0	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	21	12	58.2	6	4	66.7
Brahmin	6	0	0			
Bania	5	2	33.3	1	0	0
Sch. Caste	10	3	30.0	3	1	33.3
Refugee	4	2	50.0	1	1	100.0
Other	2	1	50.0	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	27	8	29.7	5	2	40.0
<u>Total</u>	48	20	41.7	11	6	54.5
Rural	29	15	51.7	7	4	57.1
Reserved	10	3	30.0	3	1	33.3
Urban	3	0	0			
Mixed	6	2	33.3	1	1	100.0
<u>Total</u>	48	20	41.7	11	6	54.5

TABLE 8.13

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF CONGRESS NON-DEFECTORS, 1967-68

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Non- Defectors 1967	%age Non- Defected 1967	Non- Defectors Ran 1968	Non- Defectors Elected	%age Elected 1968
Jat	15	7	46.6	5	3	60.0
Ahir	3	1	33.3	1	0	0
Ror	1	1	100.0	1	1	100.0
Gujar						
Meo						
Rajput	2	0	0		4	57.1
<u>Subtotal</u>	21	9	42.8	7	3	75.0
Brahmin	6	6	100.0	4	3	100.0
Bania	5	3	66.7	3	4	57.1
Sch. Caste	10	7	70.0	7	1	50.0
Refugee	4	2	50.0	2	1	100.0
Other	2	1	50.0	1	1	100.0
<u>Subtotal</u>	27	19	70.3	17	12	70.6
<u>Total</u>	48	28	58.3	24	16	66.7
Rural	29	14	48.3	11	7	63.6
Reserved	10	7	70.0	7	4	57.1
Urban	3	3	100.0	2	1	50.0
Mixed	6	4	66.7	4	4	100.0
<u>Total</u>	48	28	58.3	24	16	66.7

These figures suggest that the Haryana voter, far from repudiating all defectors, tended to reject many of those agriculturists in the Congress who declined to defect from the party to the agriculturist-led United Front government in support of community interests. On the other hand, the non-agriculturist Congress defectors did badly in the mid-term election (40.0 per cent were re-elected), suggesting that their constituents regarded their defections as self-seeking in that they placed their personal interests, such as a ministerial office, above the community interests of the non-agriculturist sector.

This pattern of defector repudiation suggests that the Haryana electorate was rational in its voting behaviour as the different communities closely calculated the political advantages and disadvantages which would accrue to themselves as a result of the nature of the political elite in power. On the other hand, the voters were not mature enough politically to assess the implications for political stability and development which would follow if they did not punish the defectors as such.

This hypothesis about the voter reaction to defectors in Haryana would seem to be supported by the somewhat small sample of non-Congress defectors available for analysis.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup>See Tables 8.14 and 8.15.

TABLE 8.14

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF NON-CONGRESS DEFECTORS, 1967-68

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Defectors 1967	%age Defected 1967	Defectors Ran 1968	Defectors Elected 1968	%age Elected 1968
Jat	9	1	11.1	1	0	0
Ahir	4	0	0			
Ror	1	0	0			
Gujar	1	1	100.0	0		
Meo	2	0	0			
Rajput	1	0	0			
<u>Subtotal</u>	18	2	11.1	1	0	0
Brahmin	3	1	33.3	1	0	0
Bania	1	0	0			
Sch. Caste	6	2	33.3	1	0	0
Refugee	5	1	20.0	1	0	0
Other						
<u>Subtotal</u>	15	4	26.7	3	0	0
<u>Total</u>	33	6	18.2	4	0	0
Rural	18	2	11.1	2	0	0
Reserved	5	1	20.0	0		
Urban	5	0	0			
Mixed	5	3	60.0	2	0	0
<u>Total</u>	33	6	18.2	4	0	0

TABLE 8.15

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF NON-CONGRESS NON-DEFECTORS, 1967-68

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Non- Defectors 1967	%age Non- Defected 1967	Non- Defectors Ran 1968	Non- Defectors Elected	%age Elected 1968
Jat	9	8	88.9	7	1	14.3
Ahir	4	4	100.0	3	3	100.0
Ror	1	1	100.0	0		
Gujar	1	0	0			
Meo	2	2	100.0	1	0	0
Rajput	1	1	100.0	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	18	16	88.9	11	4	36.4
Brahmin	3	2	66.7	0		
Bania	1	1	100.0	0		
Sch. Caste	6	4	66.7	1	0	0
Refugee	5	4	80.0	1	0	0
<u>Subtotal</u>	15	11	73.3	2	0	0
<u>Total</u>	33	27	81.8	13	4	30.8
Rural	18	16	88.9	10	3	30.0
Reserved	5	4	80.0	1	0	0
Urban	5	5	100.0	0		
Mixed	5	2	40.0	2	1	50.0
<u>Total</u>	33	27	81.8	13	4	30.8

Only two agriculturists chose to defect towards the Congress party (11.1 per cent of the non-Congress agriculturists) while four non-agriculturists did so (20 per cent of the non-Congress non-agriculturists). Three non-agriculturists and one agriculturist in this group contested the 1968 elections, and all four were repudiated at the polls. This indicates that their electorate was not in agreement with their decision to abandon the United Front government. As this was the highest attrition rate for any group in the 1968 election, it implies that the Haryana electorate was sophisticated or conscious enough to recognize that the real creators of political instability in the state were not so much the large-scale movements of dissident factions seeking an accommodation whereby the community interests which they represented would receive a measure of political influence and power, but were rather those individuals who defected in an effort to personally profit from the precarious balance of power which existed in the assembly.

Finally, taking the total number of defectors as a group and comparing them to the non-defectors,<sup>34</sup> it is apparent that, as a whole, while non-defectors who chose to contest fared better than defectors (54.1 per cent to 40.0 per cent), the agriculturist defectors fared better

---

<sup>34</sup>See Tables 8.16 and 8.17.



TABLE 8.16

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF TOTAL DEFECTORS, 1967-8

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Defectors 1967	%age Defected 1967	Defectors Ran 1968	Defectors Elected 1968	%age Elected 1968
Jat	24	9	37.5	4	1	25.0
Ahir	7	2	28.6	3	3	100.0
Ror	2	0	0			
Gujar	1	1	100.0	0		
Meo	2	0	0			
Rajput	3	2	66.7	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	14	35.9	7	4	59.1
Brahmin	9	1	11.1	1	0	0
Bania	6	2	33.3	1	0	0
Sch. Caste	16	5	31.3	4	1	25.0
Refugee	9	3	33.3	2	1	50.0
Other	2	1	50.0	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	12	28.6	8	2	25.0
<u>Total</u>	81	26	32.1	15	6	40.0
Rural	47	17	36.2	9	4	44.4
Reserved	15	4	26.7	3	1	33.3
Urban	8	0	0			
Mixed	11	5	45.5	3	1	33.3
<u>Total</u>	81	26	32.1	15	6	40.0

TABLE 8.17

HARYANA: CASTE DISTRIBUTION AND CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATION  
OF TOTAL NON-DEFECTORS, 1967-68

Description	Total No. 1967	No. Non- Defectors 1967	%age Non- Defected 1967	Non- Defectors 1968	Non- Defectors Elected	%age Elected 1968
Jat	24	15	62.5	12	4	33.3
Ahir	7	5	71.4	4	3	75.0
Ror	2	2	100.0	1	1	100.0
Gujar	1	0	0			
Meo	2	2	100.0	1	0	0
Rajput	3	1	33.3	0		
<u>Subtotal</u>	39	25	64.1	18	8	44.4
Brahmin	9	8	89.9	4	3	75.0
Bania	6	4	66.7	3	3	100.0
Sch. Caste	16	11	68.7	8	4	50.0
Refugee	9	6	66.7	3	1	33.3
Other	2	1	50.0	1	1	100.0
<u>Subtotal</u>	42	30	71.4	19	12	63.4
<u>Total</u>	81	55	67.9	37	20	54.1
Rural	47	30	63.8	21	10	47.6
Reserved	15	11	73.3	8	4	50.0
Urban	8	8	100.0	2	1	50.0
Mixed	11	6	54.5	6	5	83.3
<u>Total</u>	81	55	67.9	37	20	54.1

at the polls than did the agriculturist non-defectors (59.1 per cent to 44.4 per cent). From these figures, it would appear erroneous to state blankly, as some editorial commentators on the Haryana mid-term elections were prepared to do,<sup>35</sup> that the Congress victory in 1968 was a repudiation of defectors and of the political instability which is produced when legislators change their party affiliations by crossing the floor of the house. While the 26 defectors analyzed in this section did not make any startling gains at the polls, those coming from agriculturist communities and representing rural constituencies more than held their own in the electoral contests.

This fact would suggest that a more reasonable explanation for the Congress victory in 1968 lies with the corrective steps taken within the party organisation at the direction of the party's High Command to bring the Congress in line with the structure of community interests in the state as reflected in the political factions. The measures taken to satisfy the dissident Congress agriculturist factional leaders, however, were soon to produce a new minority dissident group within the state party consisting of ex-Chief Minister Sharma and his non-agriculturist factional alliance. As a result, Haryana was to face yet another

---

<sup>35</sup>Inderjit, "Ailing Nation Requires Drastic Action", Tribune, May 21, 1968.

spate of floor-crossings which would threaten to throw the state into a further period of political instability.

### Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter, we asked whether the Congress electoral victories in Haryana were dependent upon the party and its platform or whether they were more dependent upon the nature of the factional alignments within the party. The results discussed in this analysis would appear to support the latter hypothesis. The Congress succeeded in winning in Haryana in 1968 because it had made its peace with the regional agriculturist factional leaders such as Devi Lal and Rizak Ram while by-passing a confrontation with the Bhagwat Dayal Sharma group. The only major factional leader left outside the Congress umbrella in the 1968 campaign was Rao Birender Singh and because of this omission, the Congress party was virtually decimated throughout the Ahir belt in the southern region of the state. It is our conclusion that the Haryana electorate did not vote for the Congress because it was offering the most attractive policies or because they truly were convinced that only the Congress could give the state a stable government, but rather because, on the whole, the Congress was able to offer a slate of candidates who were carefully chosen for their caste affiliations and the backing which they could expect from the regional factional bosses. These were the individuals who determined the outcome of the 1968 election, not the party label, platform or issues.

Our second question asked whether the Haryana electorate "punished" all defectors or whether it was more selective in its voting. The conclusion we draw from the data is that defectors as such were not repudiated but that the voters made a more careful calculation in each individual case. In some instances, where the defection was seen to serve the socio-economic interests of a particular community or locality the defector might be returned. In other instances, where the individual was seen to have defected for personal gain, he was less likely to be re-elected. The morality of defections does not seem to have been a serious question with the Haryanvi electorate. Their assessment was rather a pragmatic one.

Finally, we asked whether the opposition parties suffered at the polls because they could not create an electoral adjustment which would avoid three-way contests or because the electorate recognized that political stability could not be achieved through a non-Congress government, especially as it would have to be a coalition such as was experimented with under the Samyukta Dal. Here the data is inconclusive, but there is little doubt that the Congress benefited from the disunited opposition campaign. While the voters did not offer the Congress overwhelming support, they appeared to recognize that there was little alternative to a Congress government at this time.

0 8 16 Miles

CONGRESS POSITION IN 1967



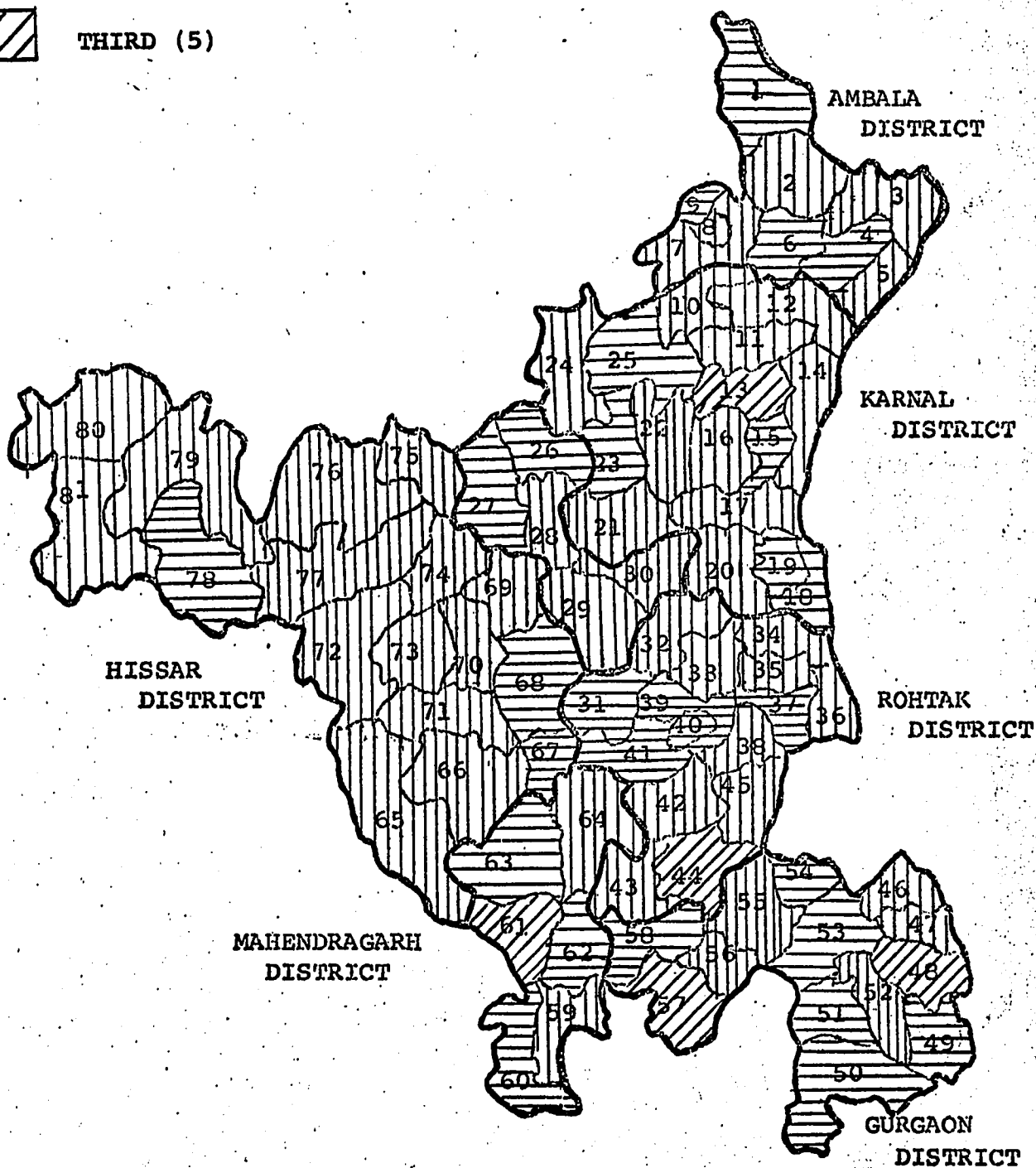
FIRST (48)



SECOND (28)



THIRD (5)




# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.2

420

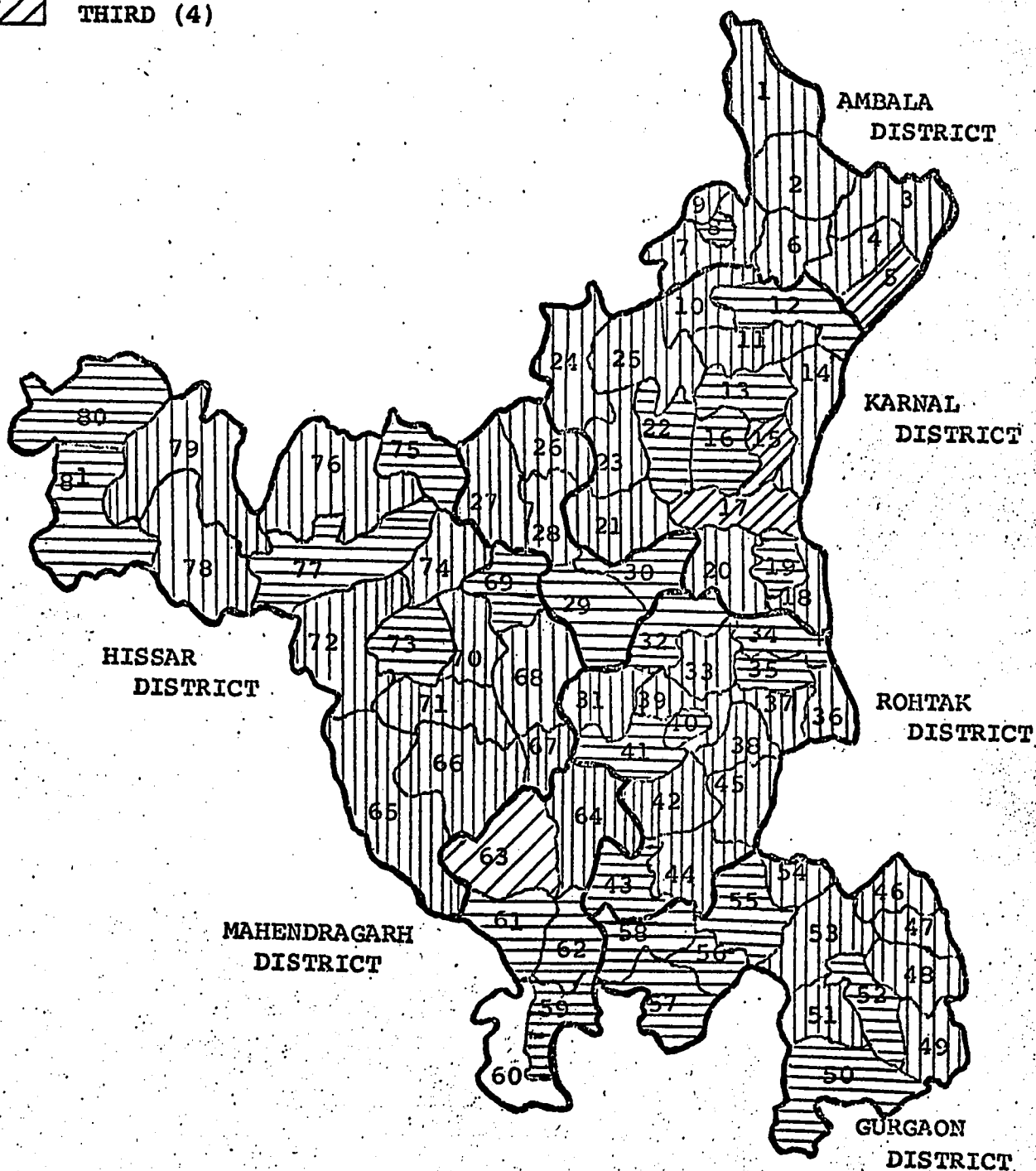
0 8 16 Miles

## CONGRESS POSITIONS IN 1968

 FIRST (48)

 SECOND (29)

 THIRD (4)



0 8 16 Miles

JAN SANGH POSITIONS IN 1967



FIRST (12)



SECOND (13)



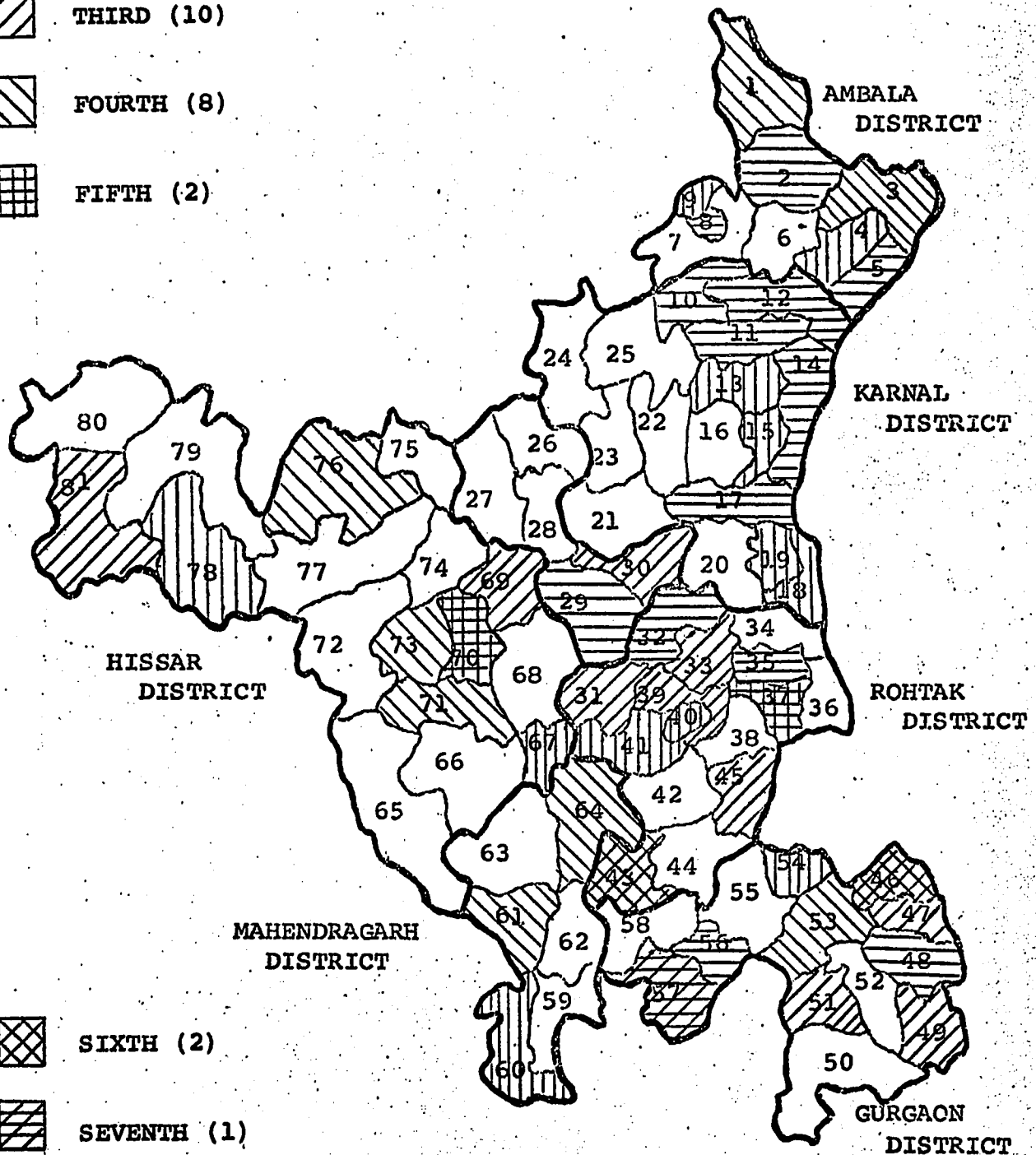
THIRD (10)



FOURTH (8)



FIFTH (2)



SIXTH (2)



SEVENTH (1)



0 8 16 Miles

JAN SANGH POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (7)



SECOND (10)



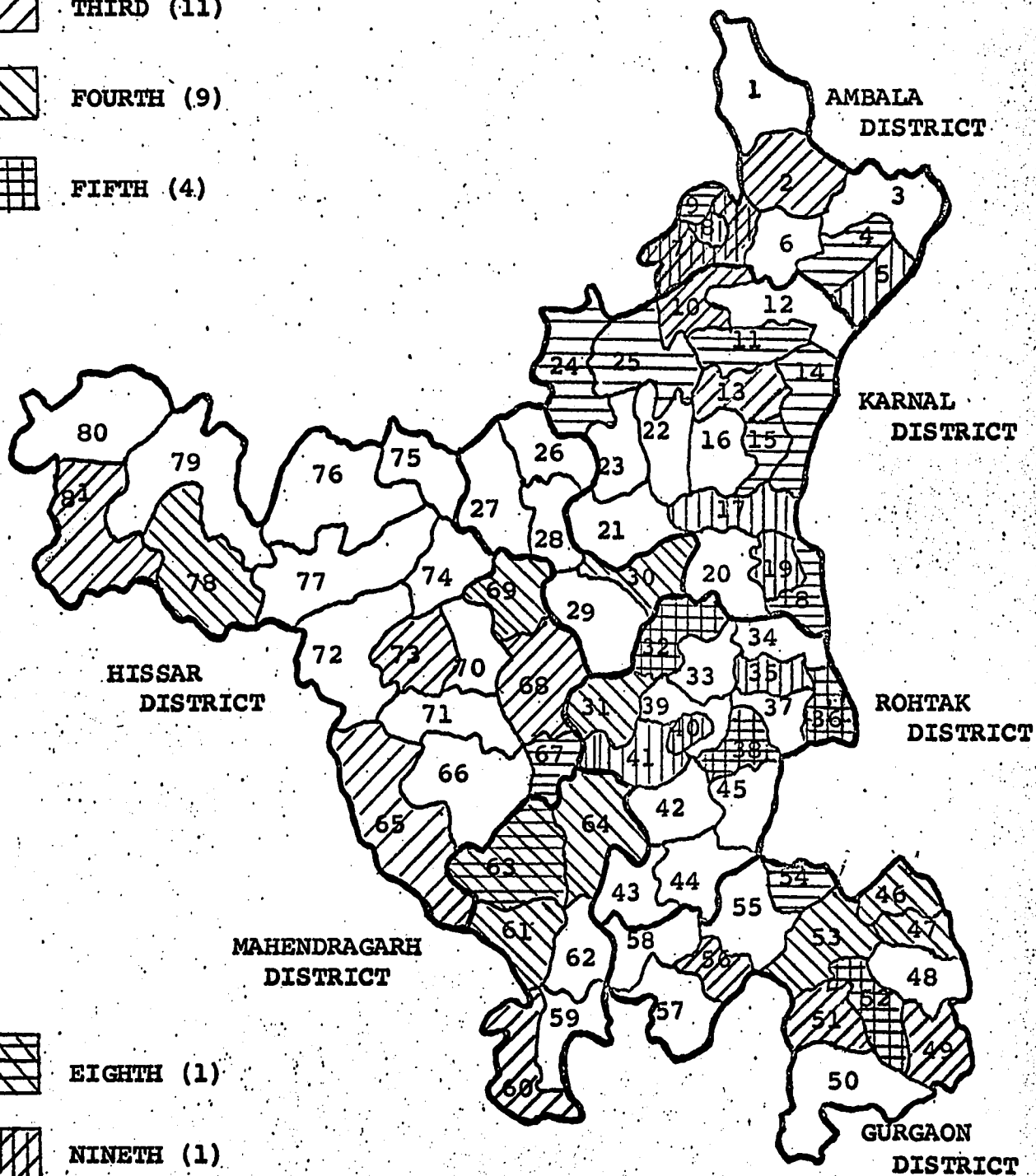
THIRD (11)



FOURTH (9)



FIFTH (4)



EIGHTH (1)



NINETH (1)

# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.5

423

0 8 16 Miles

SWATANTRA POSITIONS IN 1967.



FIRST (3)



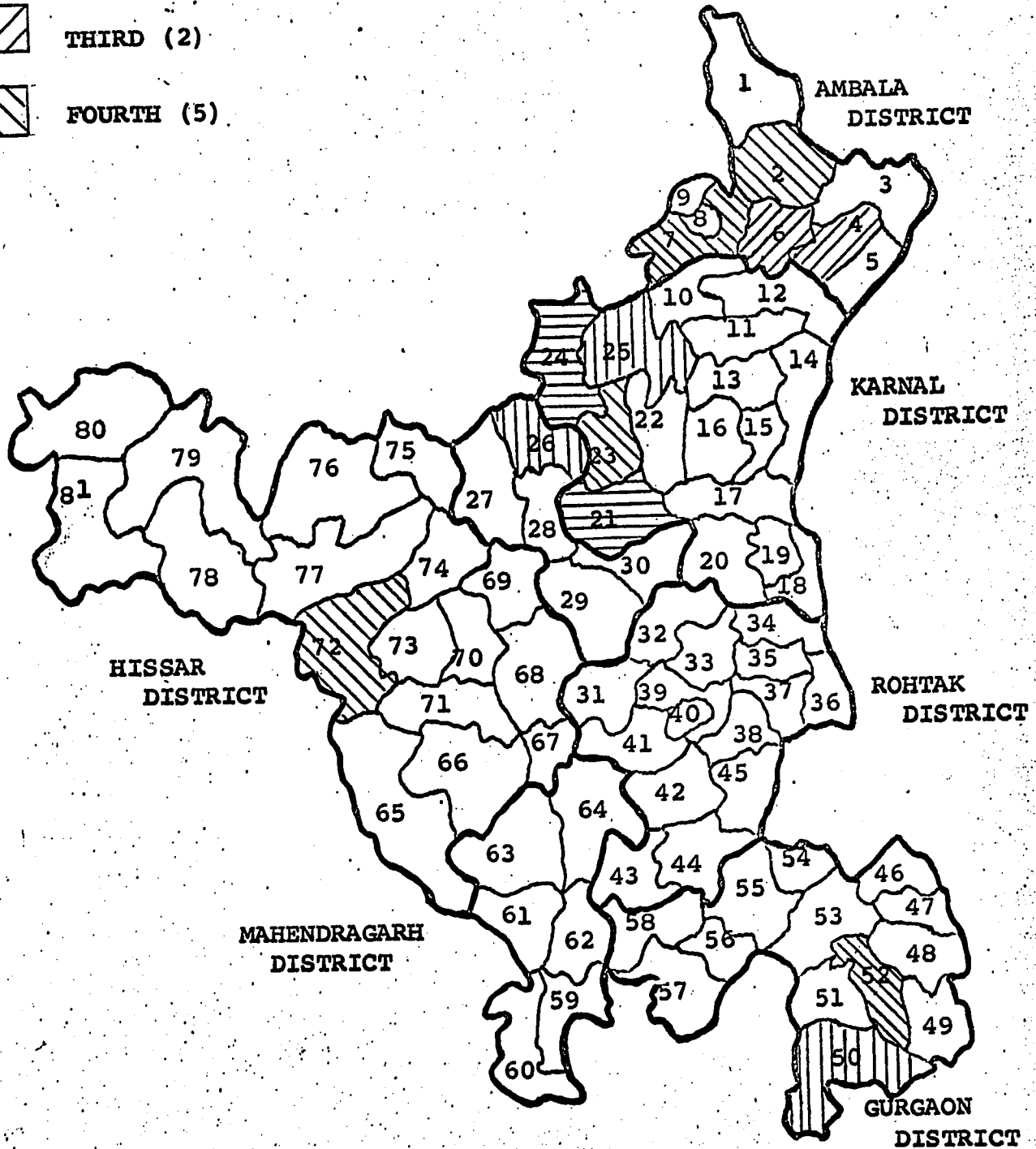
SECOND (2)



THIRD (2)



FOURTH (5)



0 8 16 Miles

## SWATANTRA POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (2)



SECOND (11)



THIRD (11)



FOURTH (4)



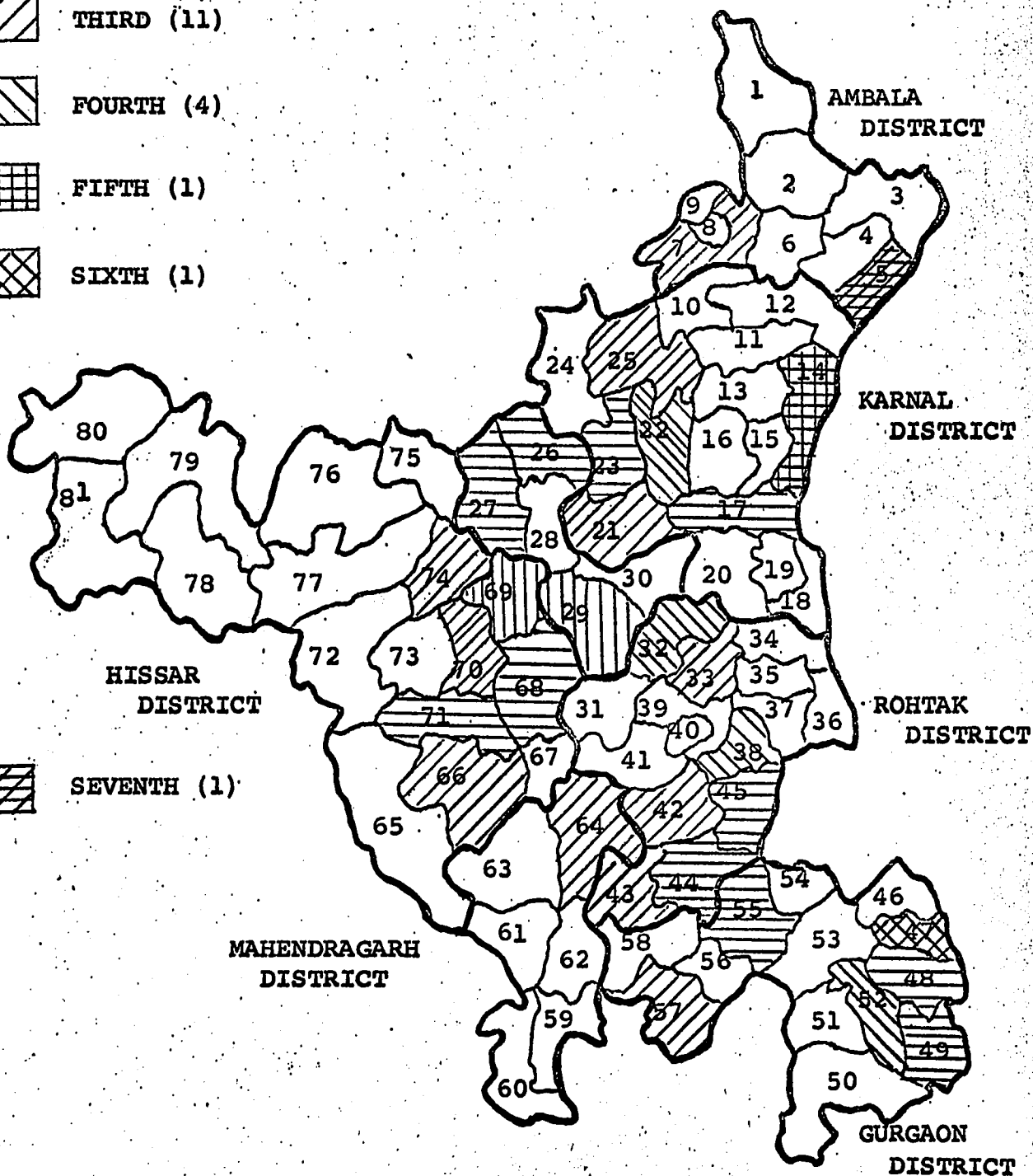
FIFTH (1)



SIXTH (1)



SEVENTH (1)



0 8 16 Miles

## REPUBLICAN POSITIONS IN 1967



FIRST (2)



SECOND (1)



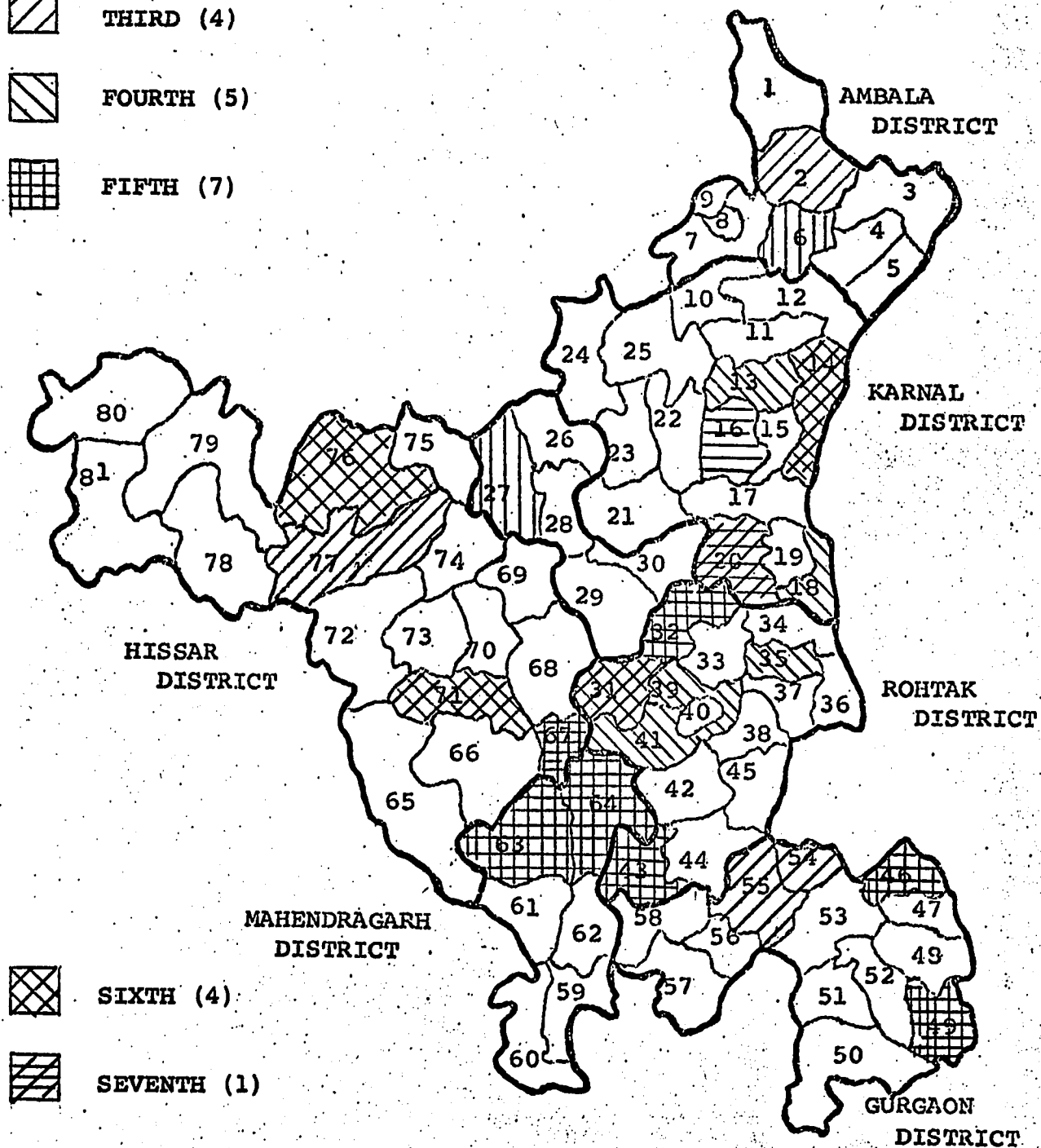
THIRD (4)



FOURTH (5)



FIFTH (7)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.8

426

0 8 16 Miles

## REPUBLICAN POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (1)



THIRD (1)



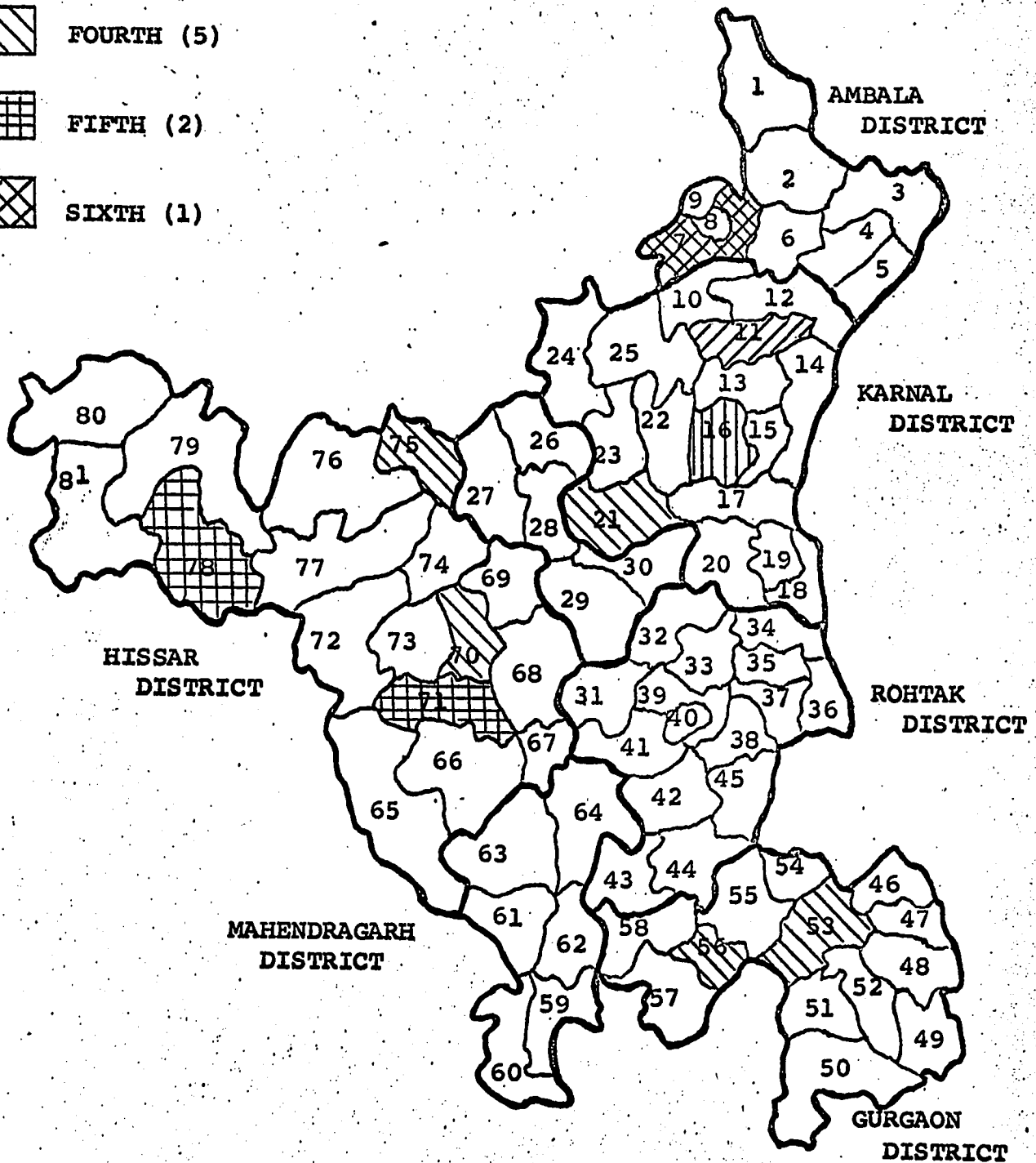
FOURTH (5)



FIFTH (2)



SIXTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.9

427

0 8 16 Miles

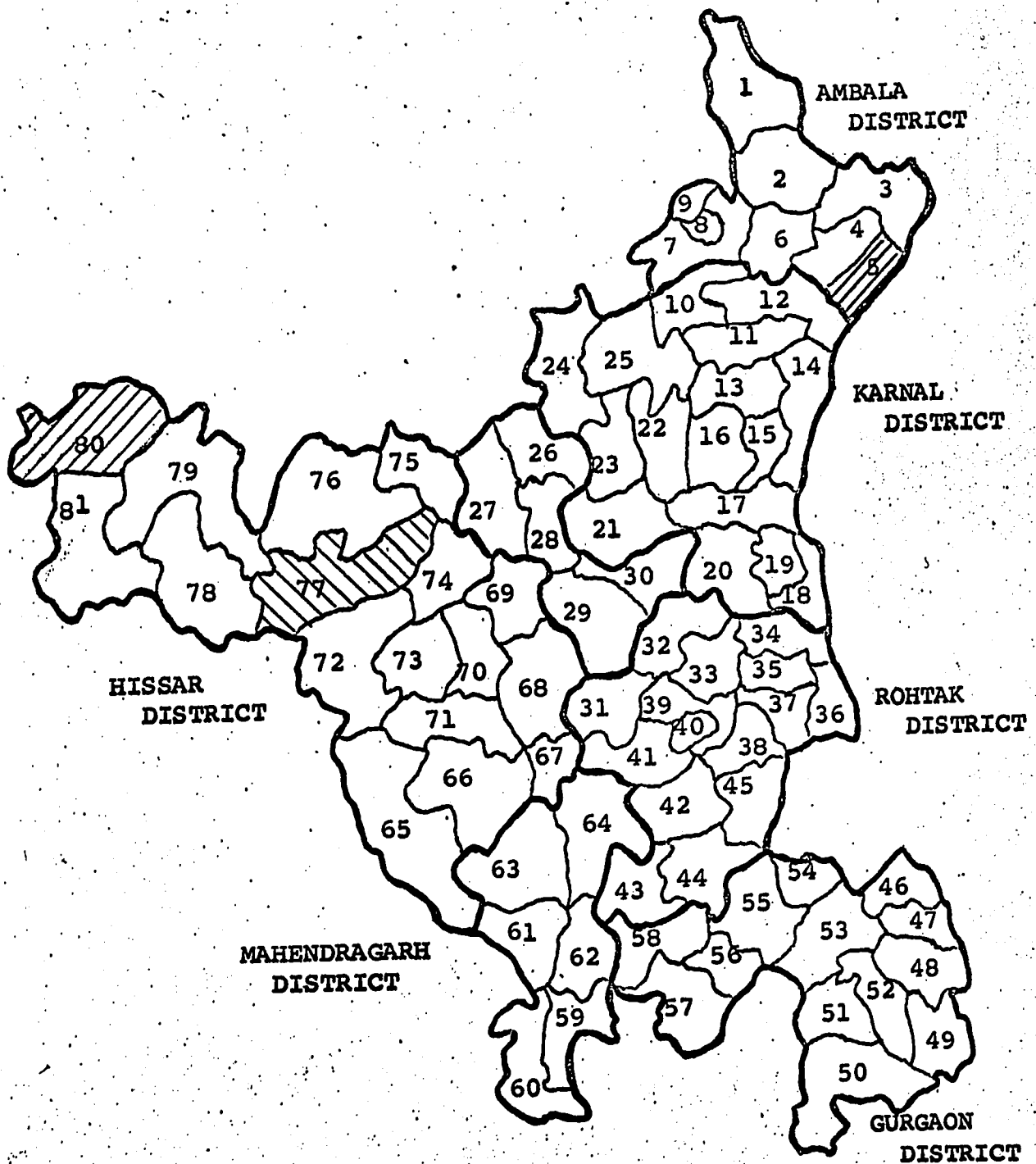
PSP POSITIONS IN 1967



THIRD (2)



FOURTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.10

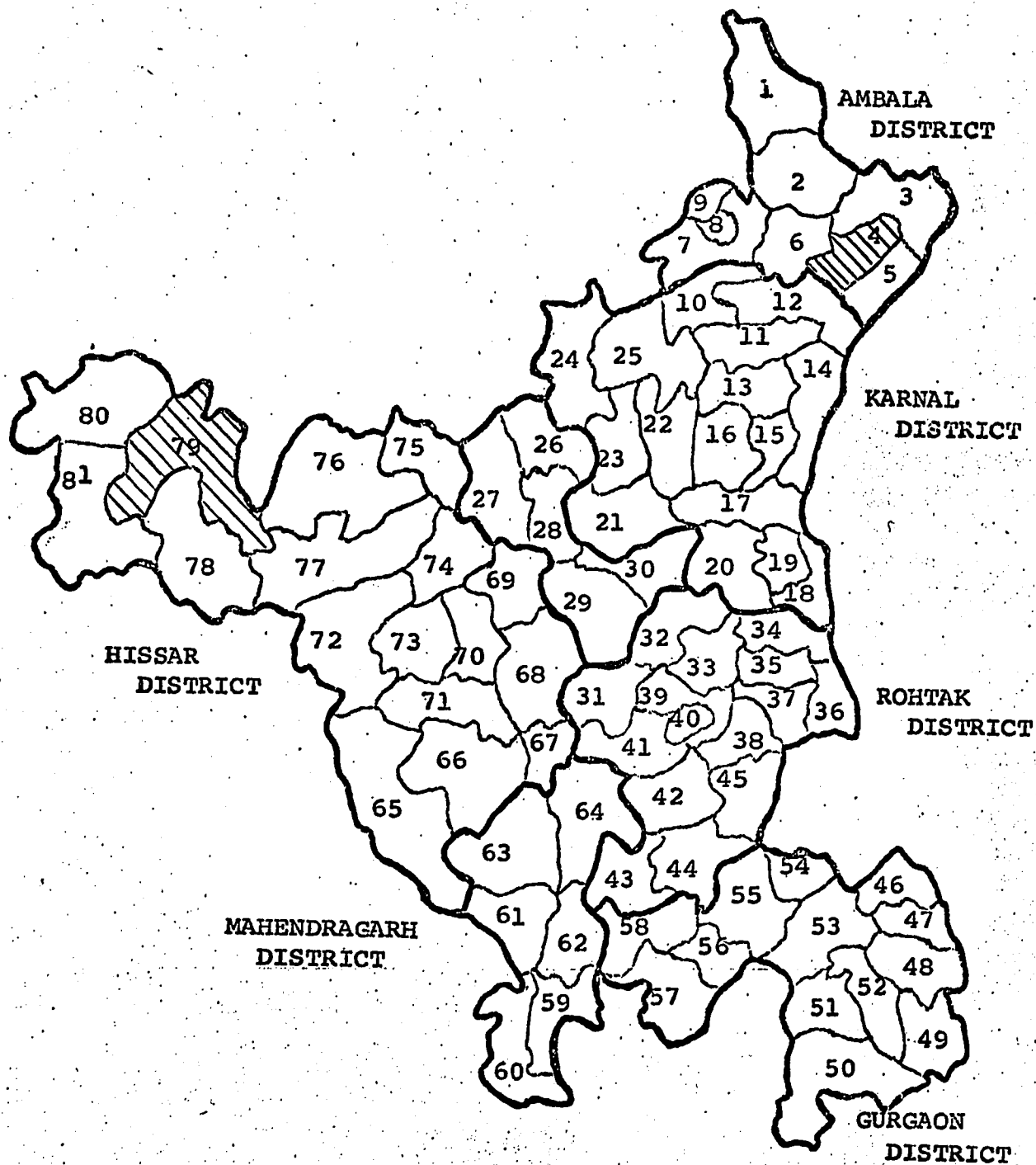
428

0 8 16 Miles

PSP POSITIONS IN 1968



FOURTH (2)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.11

429

0 8 16 Miles

SSP POSITIONS IN 1967



SECOND (5)



THIRD (7)



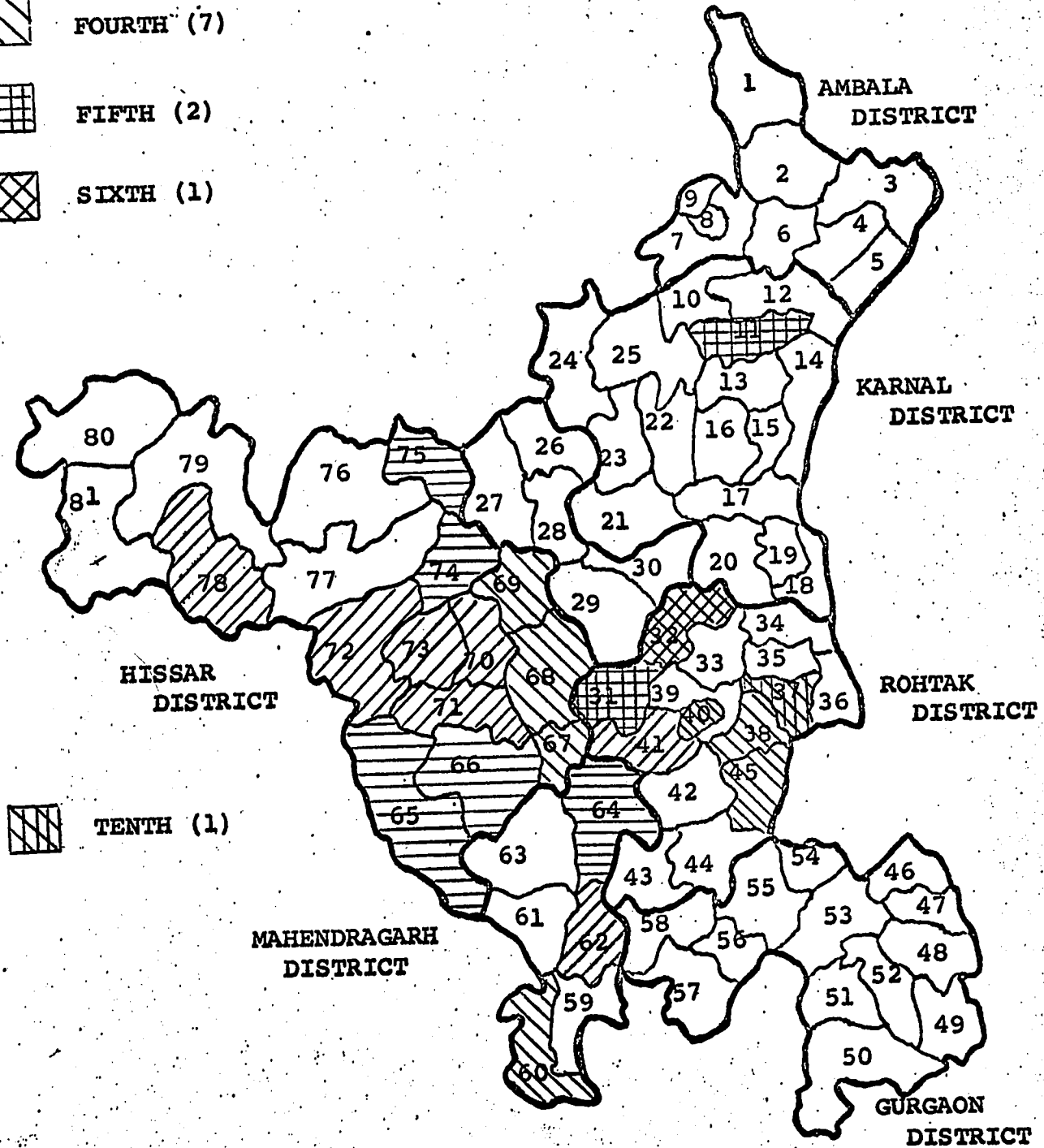
FOURTH (7)



FIFTH (2)



SIXTH (1)





# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.12

430

0 8 16 Miles

SSP POSITIONS IN 1968



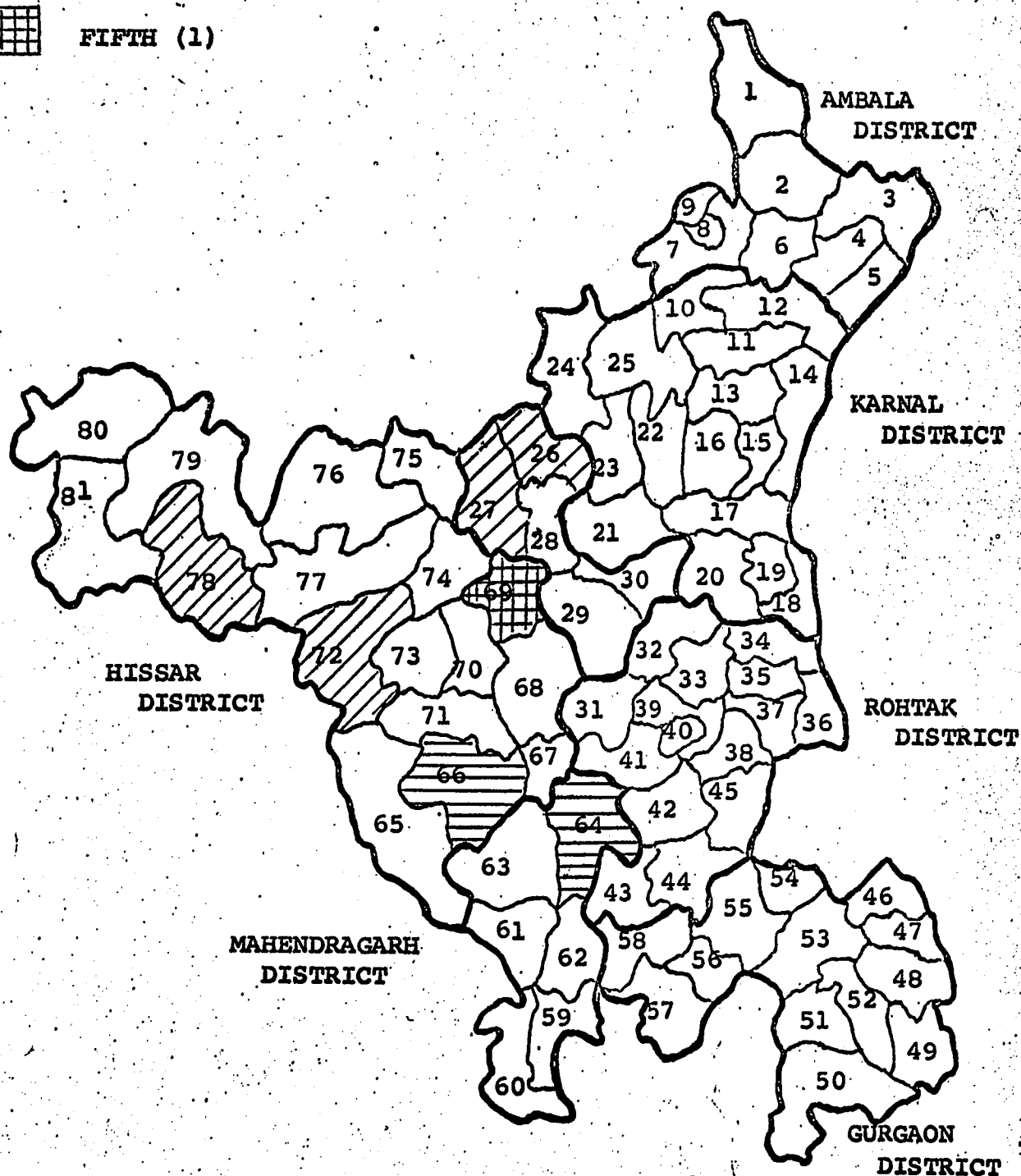
SECOND (2)



THIRD (4)



FIFTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.13

431

0 8 16 Miles

CPI POSITIONS IN 1967



THIRD (5)



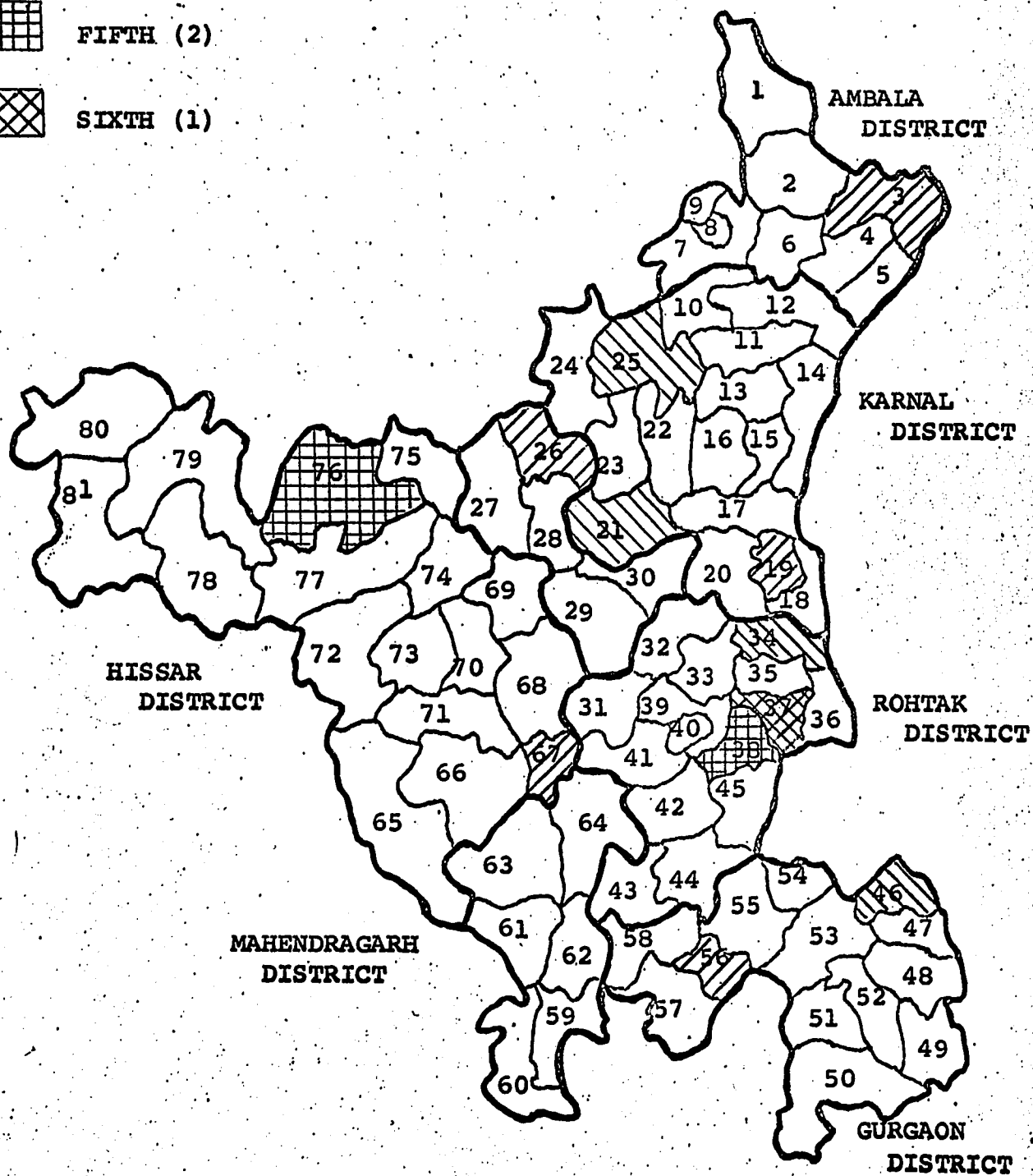
FOURTH (4)



FIFTH (2)



SIXTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.14

432

0 8 16 Miles

CPI POSITIONS IN 1968



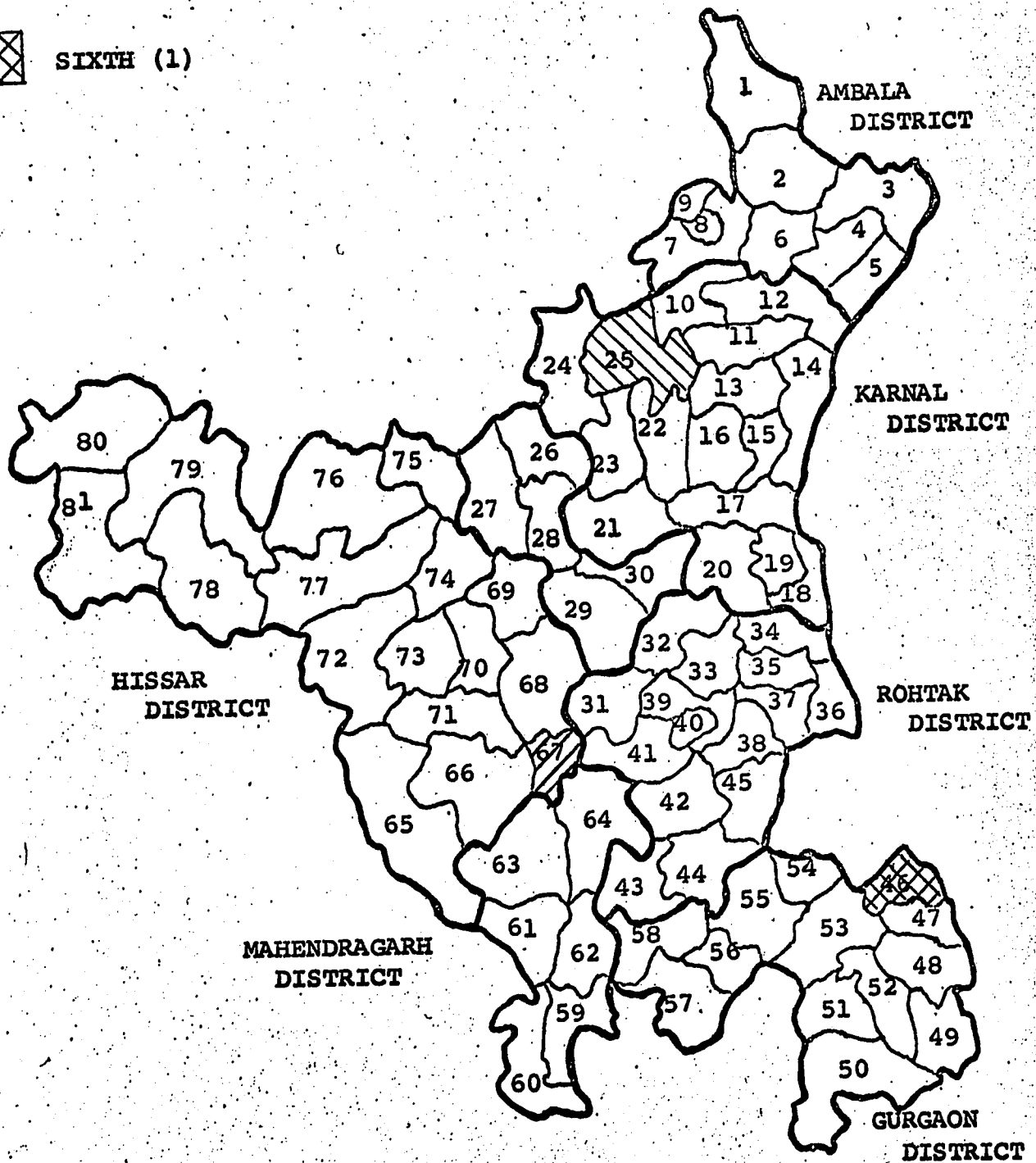
THIRD (1)



FOURTH (1)



SIXTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.15

433

0 8 16 Miles

CPM POSITIONS IN 1967



THIRD (1)



FOURTH (2)



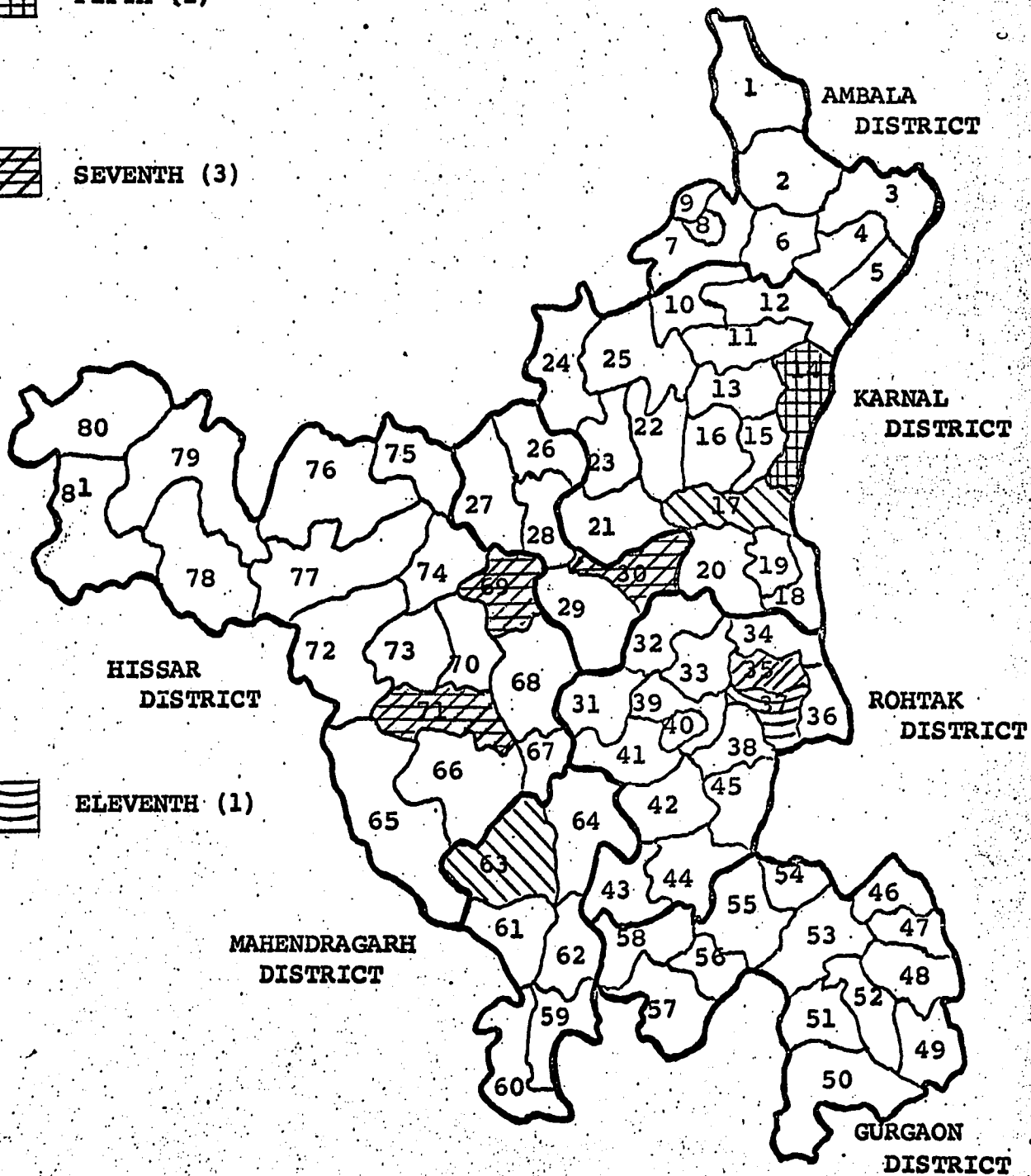
FIFTH (1)



SEVENTH (3)



ELEVENTH (1)



HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.16

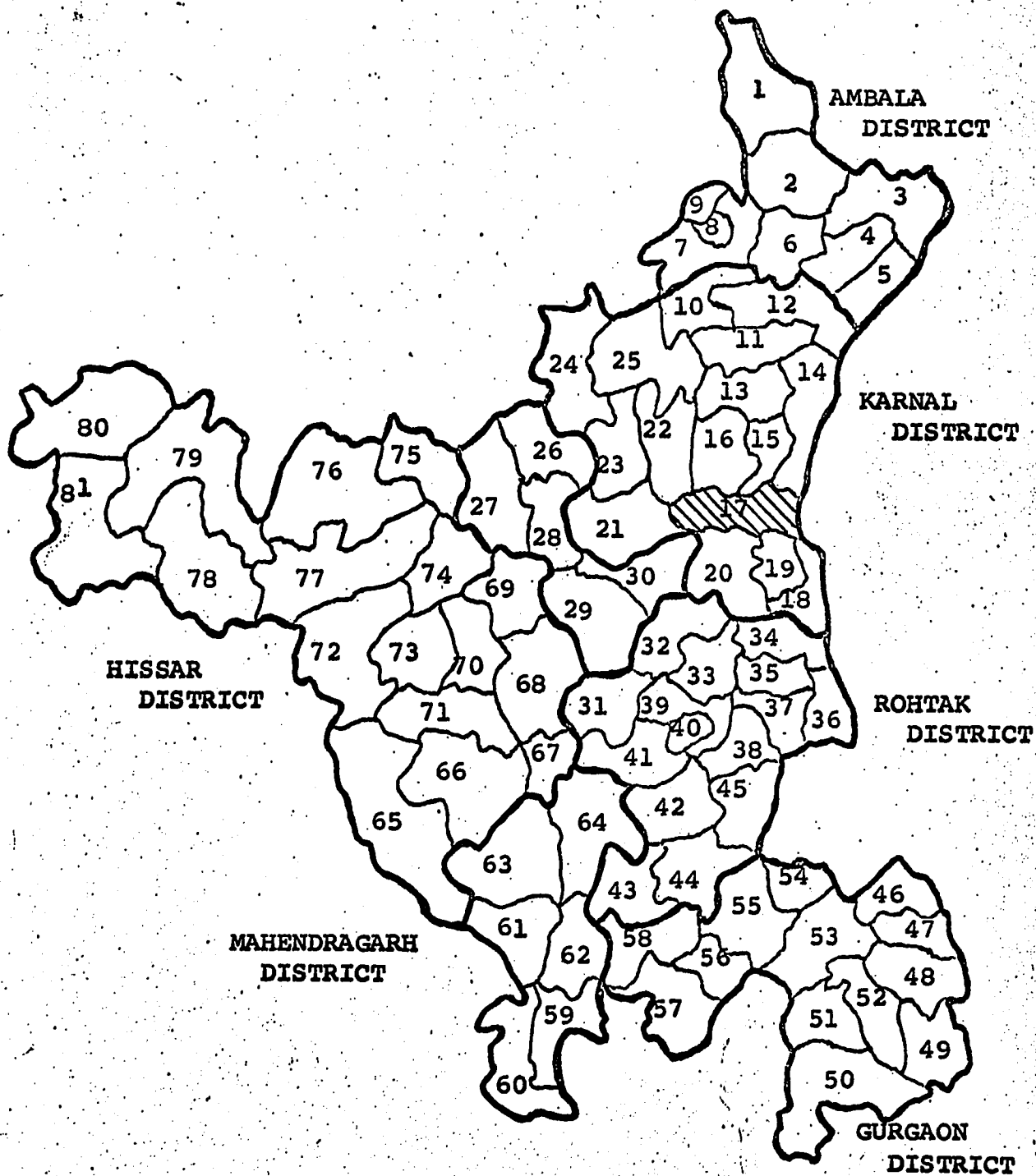
434

0 8 16 Miles

CPM POSITIONS IN 1968



FOURTH (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.17

435

0 8 16 Miles

VHP POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (13)



SECOND (11)



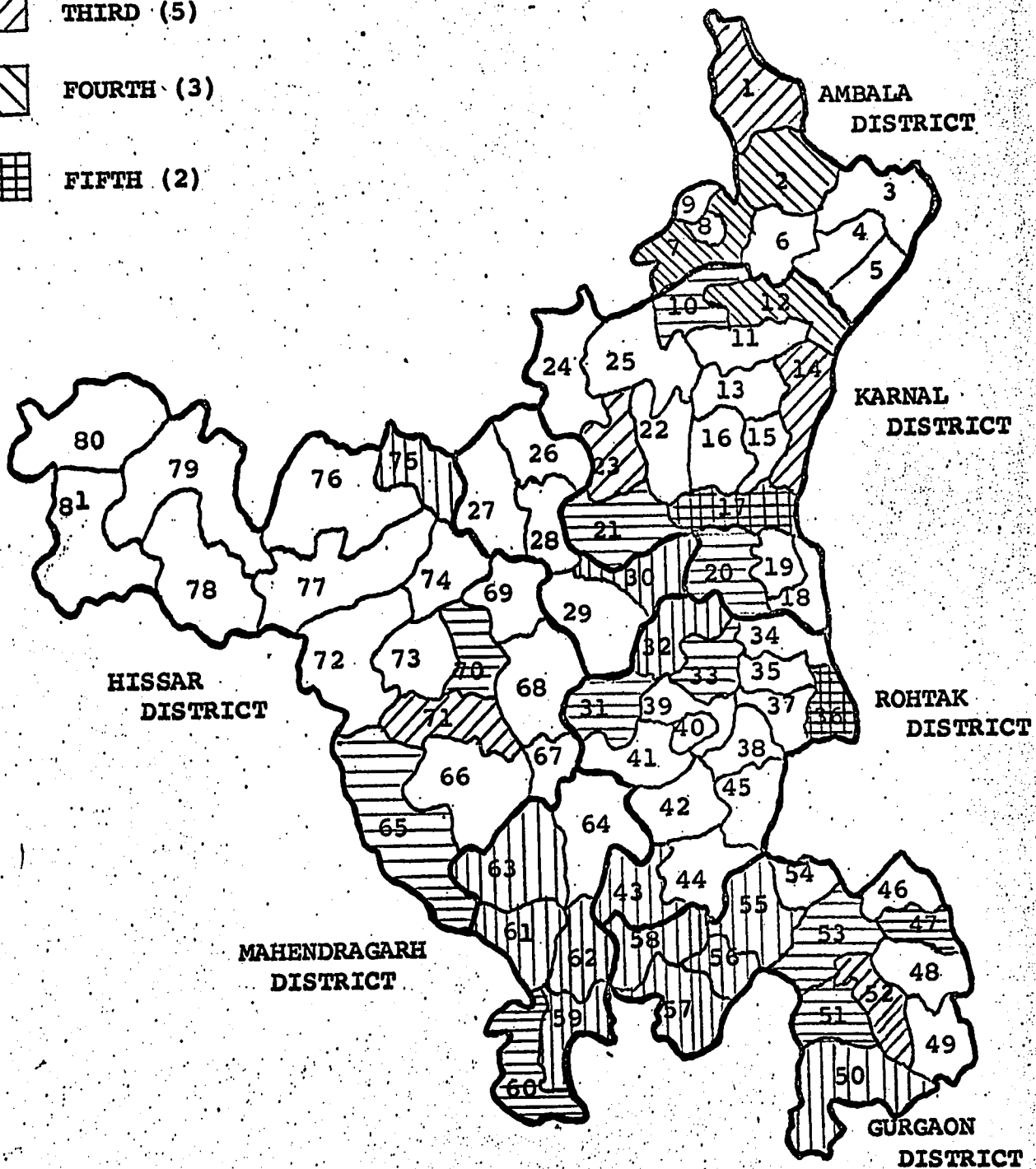
THIRD (5)



FOURTH (3)



FIFTH (2)



0 8 16 Miles

BKD POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (1)



SECOND (1)



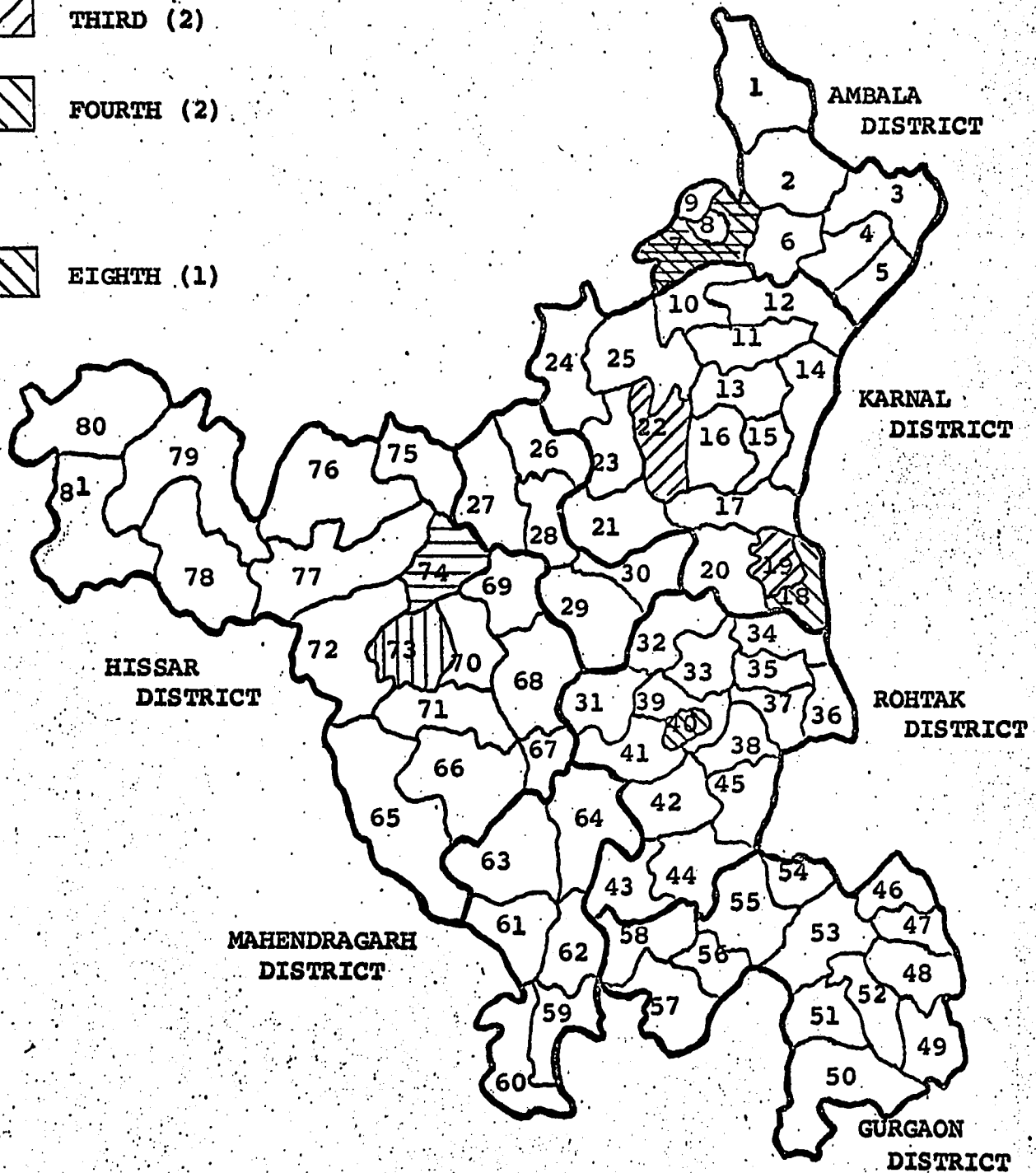
THIRD (2)



FOURTH (2)



EIGHTH (1)



0 8 16 Miles

## INDEPENDENT POSITIONS IN 1967



FIRST (16)



SECOND (29)\*



THIRD (23)\*



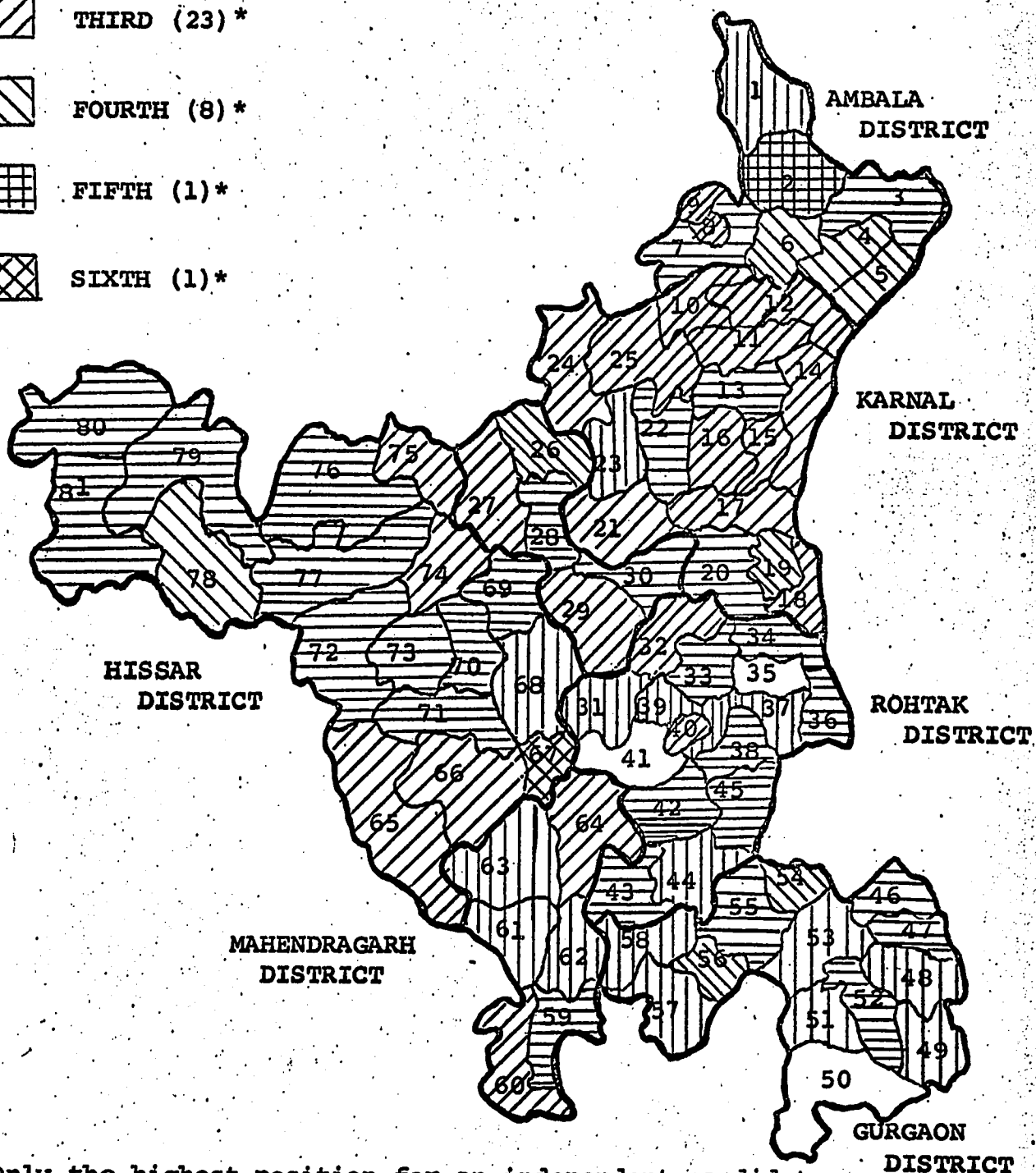
FOURTH (8)\*



FIFTH (1)\*



SIXTH (1)\*



\*Only the highest position for an independent candidate is shown for each constituency.



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.20

438

0 8 16 Miles

## INDEPENDENT POSITIONS IN 1968



FIRST (9)



SECOND (19)



THIRD (25)\*



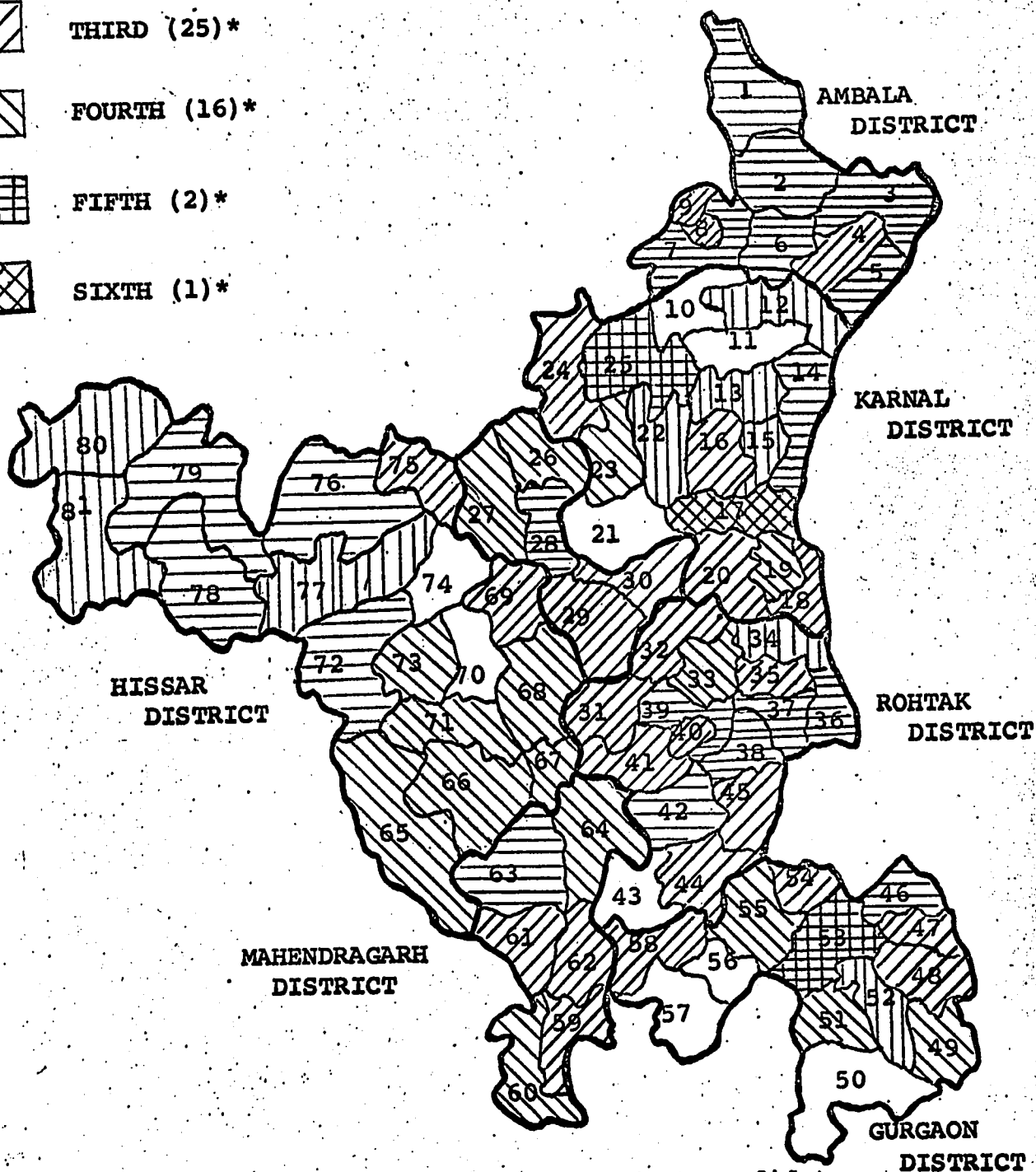
FOURTH (16)\*



FIFTH (2)\*



SIXTH (1)\*



\*Only the highest position for an independent candidate is shown for each constituency.

0 8 16 Miles

## CONSTITUENCIES GAINED BY THE CONGRESS IN 1968



JAN SANGH → CONGRESS (7)



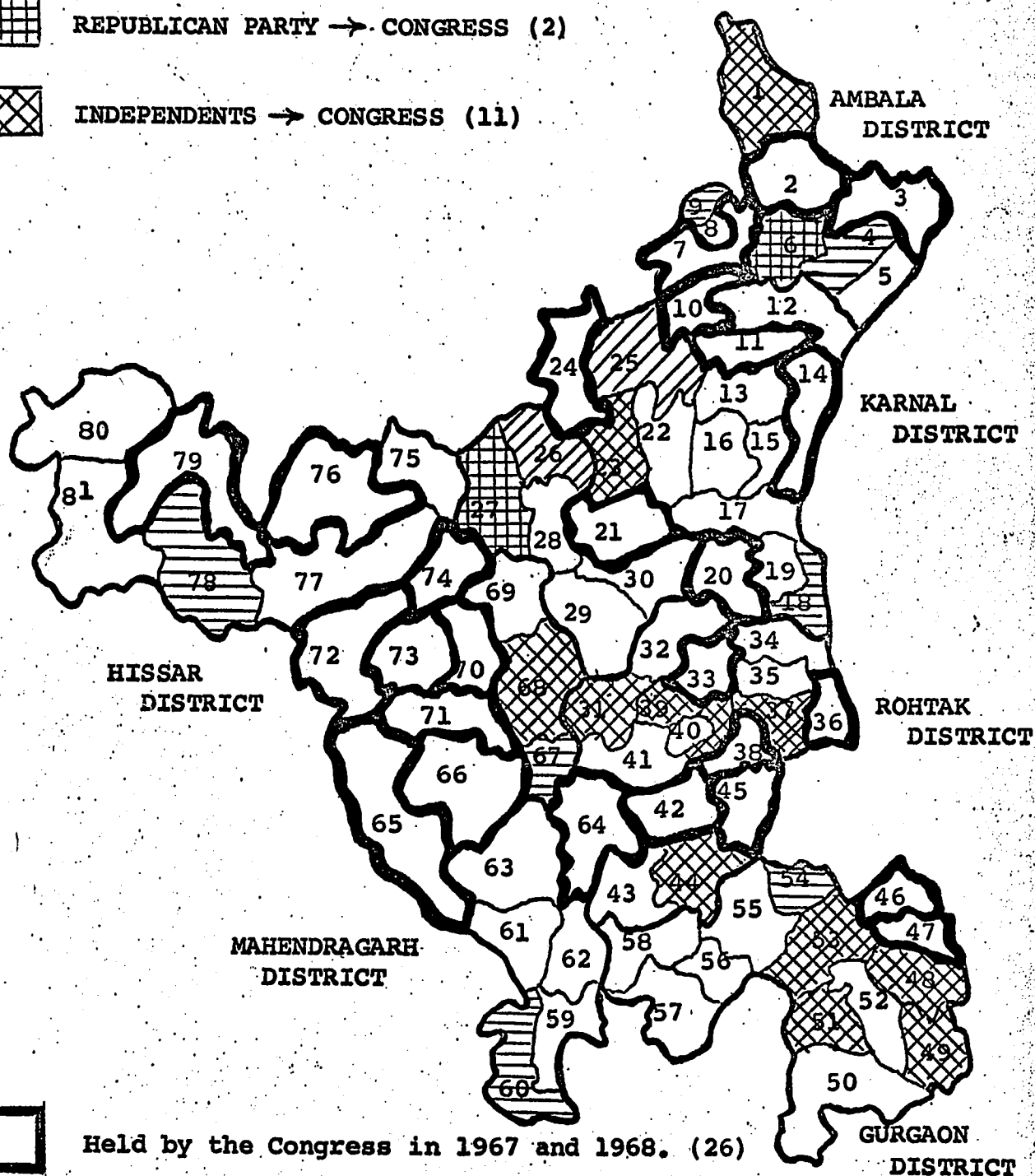
SWATANTRA → CONGRESS (2)



REPUBLICAN PARTY → CONGRESS (2)



INDEPENDENTS → CONGRESS (11)



0 8 16 Miles

## CONSTITUENCIES LOST BY THE CONGRESS IN 1968



CONGRESS → JAN SANGH (4)



CONGRESS → SWATANTRA (2)



CONGRESS → REPUBLICAN PARTY (1)



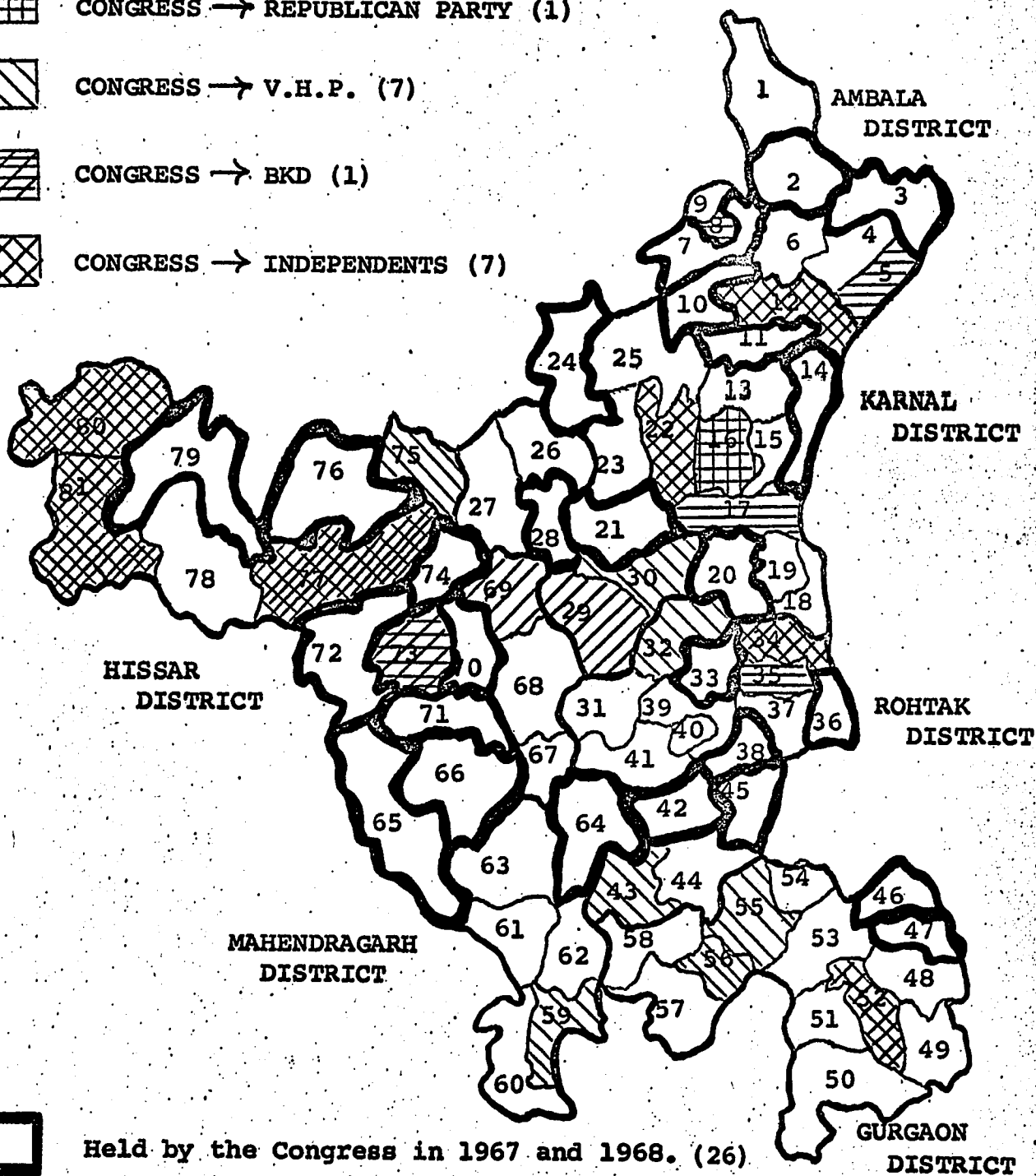
CONGRESS → V.H.P. (7)



CONGRESS → BKD (1)



CONGRESS → INDEPENDENTS (7)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

MAP 8.23

441

0 8 16 Miles

CONSTITUENCIES NOT HELD BY THE CONGRESS IN 1967 OR IN 1968



JAN SANGH → INDEPENDENTS IN 1968 (2)



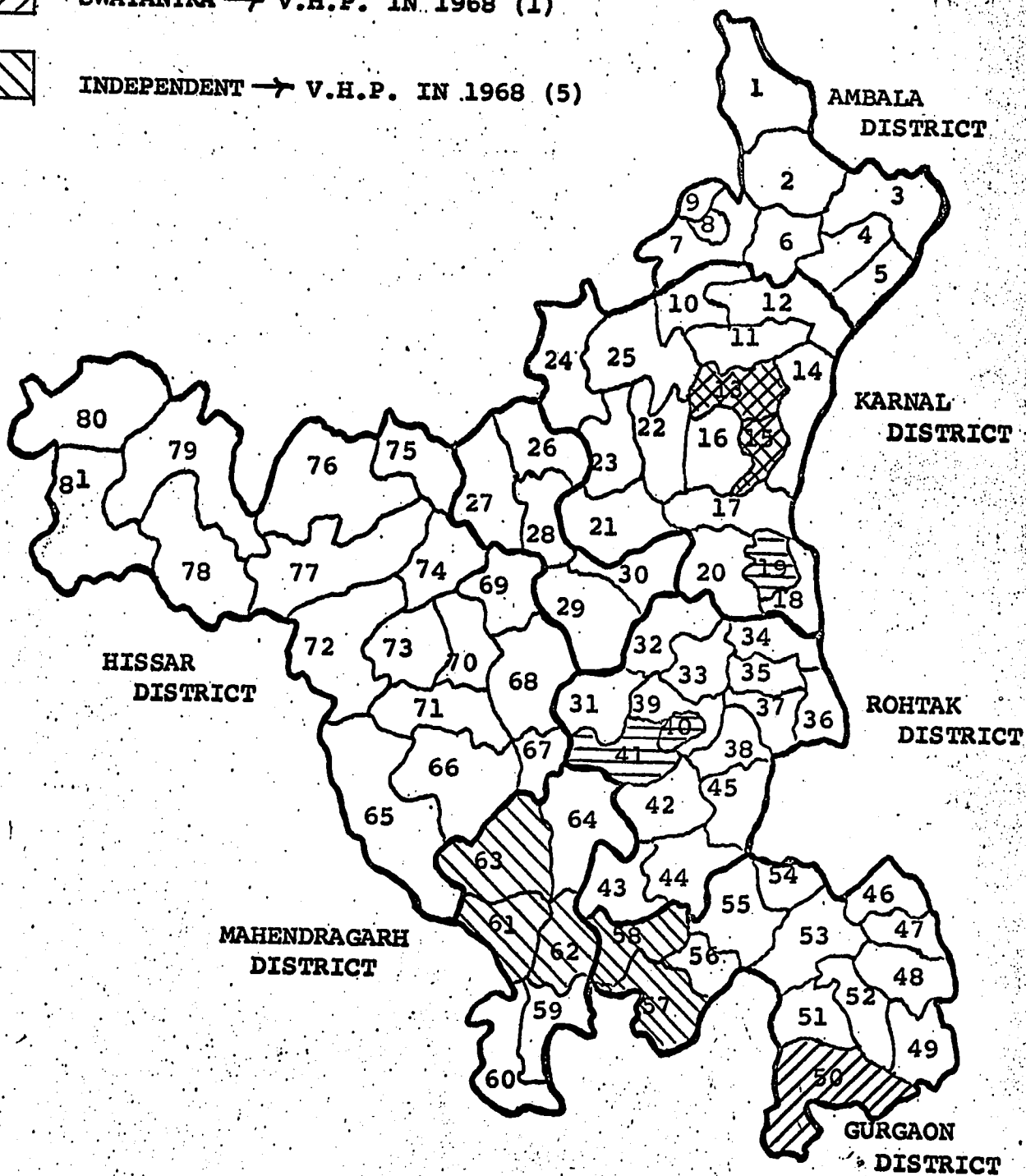
JAN SANGH, 1967 AND 1968 (3)



SWATANTRA → V.H.P. IN 1968 (1)



INDEPENDENT → V.H.P. IN 1968 (5)



## CHAPTER IX

### THE RENEWAL OF DEFECTIONIST POLITICS IN HARYANA

#### Introduction

Although most commentators on the Haryana mid-term election congratulated the Congress High Command on the consummate skill with which it played its hand, all of them also cautioned that the danger of political instability for the state might not yet be over. Recalling that the Congress had captured a similar majority in the general elections of 1967, they noted that: "An absolute majority did not ensure its capacity to govern the state. Its internal disunity and disobedience of leadership were its undoing."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, all warned that: "There is no evidence that the party's chief affliction — group rivalries — has disappeared and that the spirit of service has returned",<sup>2</sup> and that, "There is ... a danger of the opportunity that is now the Congress's being frittered away through a faulty choice of leadership".<sup>3</sup> The Congress High Command was also cautioned

---

<sup>1</sup>"Heartening Verdict", Hindustan Times, May 17, 1968.

<sup>2</sup>"Haryana's Verdict", Indian Express, May 17, 1968.

<sup>3</sup>"Repeat Performance", Tribune, May 17, 1968.

about the all-India implications of a failure to consolidate their victory in Haryana:

More than the stability of future governments in Haryana, the fate of the Congress in U.P., West Bengal and wherever else mid-term polls may follow will depend upon whether the Congress can consolidate its ranks in Haryana. It is possible to hope that some recognition of this will penetrate through the layers of bad habit which still surround the thinking and behaviour of many Congressmen.... The psychological advantage gained in Haryana will extend to other states in coming months if the government to be formed by the Congress in Haryana sets a good and continuing example.<sup>4</sup>

It would appear, therefore, that the Congress High Command had a high stake in Haryana's future political stability. If, however, the state party was to become a cohesive unit capable of providing a stable backing for a Congress government, great care would have to be taken in the selection of the legislative leader and the personnel of his ministry. There was also the question of the leadership of the party's organisational wing to be resolved. Could these ends be accomplished without creating a new dissident factional configuration within the state Congress? Would dissatisfied Congress factional elements once again resort to defections as a means of accomplishing their political objectives? Could the High Command prevent the overthrow of yet another Congress government in Haryana, or would the state political system enter once again into a

---

<sup>4</sup>"So Far So Good", Statesman, May 17, 1968.

period of chaotic instability? What kind of political leadership was required in Haryana to achieve the political harmony which was needed if socio-economic conditions were to be improved?

The above questions are investigated in the following sections: First, the factional nature of the Congress Legislature Party leadership contest and the compromise solution which was found with the aid of the Congress High Command. Second, the composition of Haryana's fifth Council of Ministers with special attention to the factional, regional and caste distribution of its members. Third, the composition of the new Vidhan Sabha in terms of opposition strategies and governmental responses. Fourth, the evolution of a dissident factional grouping within the Congress. Fifth, the factional configuration within the Haryana assembly. Sixth, the first governmental crisis caused by the resignation of a majority of the ministry and the nature of the High Command response. Seventh, the reasons for the failure of the attempt on the part of the Sharma faction to oust the Bansilal ministry through a massive defection to the opposition benches. Finally, the consolidation of a stable ruling party in Haryana.

#### The Congress Legislature Party Leadership Contest

Once the election returns made it clear that the Congress would be returned with a workable majority in Haryana, the party leadership became the question of greatest concern.

There were a number of possible contenders amongst the re-elected MLAs such as Ranbir Singh, Mrs. Om Prabha Jain and Brigadier Ran Singh.

Other names mentioned were B.D. Sharma, Devi Lal, P.C.C. President R.K. Gupta, Professor Sher Singh and even former Union Home Minister G.L. Nanda. Whether the choice would be made from the former list or the latter one would depend upon whether the Congress Parliamentary Board decided that the leader would have to be found within the legislature party or not.

Before the Board could give its decision on this question, B.D. Sharma attempted to demonstrate that he was the only possible choice for leader by releasing a memorandum signed by 36 of the 48 newly-elected Congress legislators to the effect that they would support Mr. Sharma for the leadership.<sup>5</sup> This figure was in excess of any projection of Sharma's true factional support, especially as it was known that 17 of his most vocal followers had been defeated at the polls.<sup>6</sup> Later interviews with several signatories to this document revealed that B.D. Sharma had obtained these names before the election in return for support at the polls. One signer claimed that Sharma had threatened to throw his support behind a rival non-Congress candidate in

---

<sup>5</sup>Tribune, May 17, 1968.

<sup>6</sup>Indian Express, May 17, 1968.



that constituency if he refused. On the other hand, the document did serve to make it clear that whosoever was ultimately selected would have to be acceptable to Bhagwat Dayal as well as the prominent Jat factional leaders if there was to be intra-party stability in Haryana.

At first, Ranbir Singh, Mrs. Om Prabha Jain and Ran Singh seemed to stand out amongst the elected members as the most plausible candidates. It appeared that Ram Kishen Gupta's faction (an estimated ten nominees elected) and Devi Lal's group (seven) would support Ran Singh (a Rohtak Jat) while B.D. Sharma might back either Mrs. Jain (a Bania from Karnal district) or Ranbir Singh (another Rohtak Jat) since Sharma's closest lieutenants, Dev Raj Anand and Dal Singh, had been defeated in the mid-term elections.<sup>7</sup> When the Congress Parliamentary Board revealed that it would not permit an "outsider" to be elected to the leadership, it also announced that the choice would be left up to the Haryana legislature party. It hoped that this decision would permit a process of discussion, lobbying and pressure politics to proceed, which would crystallise in the shape of a single individual acceptable to all, thereby avoiding the imposed "consensus" approach which had failed in Haryana after the 1967 elections when Sharma's guarantees to the dissident factions were not honoured.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), p.121.

Depite the fact that the Board had denied B.D. Sharma the right to compete for the leadership, the decision to permit an election was seen as a concession to his faction as it would then have a veto over any candidate which was not acceptable to it.<sup>9</sup> In an effort to ensure that the candidate chosen was totally dependent upon his group's support in the formal vote, Bhagwat Dayal convened a meeting of his faction in caucus to decide in advance whom it would support. Although it had been expected that Sharma would ask his followers to vote for Ranbir Singh, he was instead able to persuade them that, at the formal meeting, they should support a relatively unknown Jat candidate, Bansi Lal.<sup>10</sup> Bhagwat Dayal probably switched his support away from Ranbir Singh because apparently he had been secretly campaigning for himself amongst Sharma's rivals before the Parliamentary Board had officially decided that Bhagwat Dayal could not be a candidate. When Sharma first heard of this "deceit", he offered to support Brigadier Ran Singh. The Brigadier, however, told Sharma that he would not be anybody's "man" and that he did not wish to be sponsored for the Chief Minister-ship.<sup>11</sup> Unwilling to support one Jat leader, and rebuffed by the other, Sharma apparently decided to create his own Jat candidate and also to show that he still controlled intra-

---

<sup>9</sup>Statesman, May 19, 1968.

<sup>10</sup>Kashyap, p.121.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

party Congress politics in Haryana. Another apparent reason for nominating Bansilal was that discreet enquiries had shown that he would be acceptable to the agriculturists while Om Prabhakar Jain would not be.

The next day, Congress President Nijalingappa went through the formality of chairing a meeting of the Haryana Congress Legislature Party in New Delhi. Although he made an appeal for unanimity, Ranbir Singh and his supporters made it clear that they were unhappy with Sharma's efforts to "subvert" the leadership election.<sup>12</sup> Unanimity was achieved only when Nijalingappa agreed to withdraw for half an hour so that the members could consult amongst themselves. In the end, Ran Singh proposed Bansilal's name and, although Mrs. Jain's name was also proposed, she withdrew, leaving the way clear for Bansilal to be declared the unanimous choice.<sup>13</sup>

Since no one could really believe that a 41 year old unknown Jat politician could suddenly become the Chief Minister of a state, rumours about the "real" situation were plentiful. One suggested that Bansilal had only been elected as a "stop-gap" to facilitate B.D. Sharma's election.

---

<sup>12</sup>According to Kashyap, Ranbir Singh's humiliation was also a defeat for Mrs. Gandhi within the High Command structure as she was said to have supported his candidature. It was understood that the election of a nominee of B.D. Sharma was a further success for her syndicate opponents, especially for Morarji Desai who had supported the Sharma group.

<sup>13</sup>Patriot, May 20, 1968.

at a later date. Another hinted that Bansilal had signed an elaborate agreement which would guarantee Bhagwat Dayal's right to run the Haryana Congress from outside.<sup>14</sup> But, whatever the truth, there can be no question that B.D. Sharma had once again played the crucial role in Haryana politics and that he was still a force to be reckoned with. Indeed, G.L. Nanda warned all concerned against conducting a vilification campaign against Sharma on the grounds that "without his cooperation it would not have been possible to come to a unanimous choice" and that "his cooperation would be needed in the future too."<sup>15</sup>

#### Haryana's Fifth Council of Ministers

Once elected as the ruling party leader, Bansilal was faced with the task of assembling a Council of Ministers which would satisfy the various groups within the Haryana Congress. At the outset, he stated that he favoured a small cohesive cabinet which would make for a "bearable equality of disadvantage for most members of the ruling party".<sup>16</sup> In awaiting the announcement of invitees to join the cabinet, however, many opined that the list would indicate whether or

---

<sup>14</sup>The element of rumour cannot be ignored in Indian politics. Many leaks to the press are published as "rumours". Politicians also use rumour as a means of testing public opinion before committing themselves to a particular course of action.

<sup>15</sup>Tribune, May 20, 1968.

<sup>16</sup>Hindustan Times, May 21, 1968.

not Bansi Lal was in fact Bhagwat Dayal's "dummy" in power. It was noted that he had been one of the 36 signatories of the memorandum requesting the High Command to permit Sharma to run for the office he now held. A measure of the weight which Sharma was likely to exercise within the party, some observers said, would be measured on the basis of whether Ranbir Singh was included on the ministerial list. The omission of this name was to be seen as a prestige victory for Bhagwat Dayal and evidence that he was still the real power in the Haryana Congress.<sup>17</sup> In the meanwhile, much attention was given to the fact that Bansi Lal, in his first public speech as leader, had said that he was a "true disciple" of Gulzari Lal Nanda and Bhagwat Dayal Sharma and that as Chief Minister he would serve "the poor, the cow and the Brahmins" as desired by Sharma.<sup>18</sup>

Bansi Lal was sworn in as Chief Minister on May 21, 1968 without a Cabinet list because the central government did not want to extend President's rule in Haryana beyond the designated six months. At this ceremony, which gave Haryana an effective executive of one, he pledged that he would create a small cabinet. This was interpreted to mean that it would include minimal representation for the different group interests, regional and caste as well as factional,<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Indian Express, May 24, 1968.

<sup>18</sup>Tribune, May 27, 1968.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, May 22, 1968.

even though the new Chief Minister went to great pains to explain that there were no longer any factions within the Haryana Congress and that he would not countenance anything in the future which would encourage casteism and factionalism in the state's politics.<sup>20</sup>

Bansi Lal did not submit his final list of ministers for approval to the Congress High Command until June 5, 1968. A specially called meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Board advised the Chief Minister to reconsider his recommendations on the basis that they did not appear to be representative of the non-Sharma factions within the Haryana Congress. The Chief Minister, however, argued that he needed a homogenous Cabinet. The High Command finally accepted his seven-man list, although there was considerable feeling that he should have at least included Ranbir Singh.<sup>21</sup>

An examination of the makeup of this new Haryana Congress ministry would suggest, despite Bansi Lal's earlier claim that his cabinet selection would not be based on caste or factional considerations, that these factors were crucial to the final selection. In the first place, the seven designated ministers were of the seven largest caste communities in Haryana. This gave the rural areas a majority and

---

<sup>20</sup>Patriot, May 23, 1967.

<sup>21</sup>Kashyap, p.123. See Table 9.1 for the names, castes, districts and constituency representation of the ministry.

TABLE 9.1

## HARYANA: FIFTH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

AS CONSTITUTED ON JUNE 6, 1968

Name	Constituency	Caste	District
Bansi Lal	Rural	Jat	Hissar
Om Prabha Jain	Mixed	Bania	Karnal
Ran Singh	Reserved	Harijan	Karnal
Ram Dhari Gaur	Rural	Brahmin	Rohtak
K.L. Poswal	Rural	Gujar	Gurgaon
Khurshed Ahmed	Rural	Meo	Gurgaon
Rao Mahabir Singh	Mixed	Ahir	Gurgaon

the agriculturist castes a bare majority in the Cabinet. Regionally, however, three of the seven were from Gurgaon district, suggesting that Bansilal was determined to undermine the great influence which the former Congress factional leader Rao Birender Singh still held over the southern region of the state.<sup>22</sup> In terms of factional representation, all those chosen were considered at the time to be faithful supporters of Bhagwat Dayal. Indeed, four of the seven men had previously served as ministers in Sharma's cabinet. The denial of even nominal representation to a non-Sharma factional leader such as Ranbir Singh seemed to indicate, at least at this stage, that the new Chief Minister was taking directions from B.D. Sharma alone. This new denial of representation to the non-Sharma elements in Haryana politics made many wonder whether the state was indeed in for yet another round of dissident defections because of frustrated political ambitions.

#### The Haryana Vidhan Sabha

While the Pradesh Congress supporters were devoting their attention to who would get what in the new Haryana government, Rao Birender Singh had been far from idle within the opposition camp. As soon as the election results revealed that his Vishal Haryana party had won the largest bloc of non-Congress seats in the new assembly, he began to organize





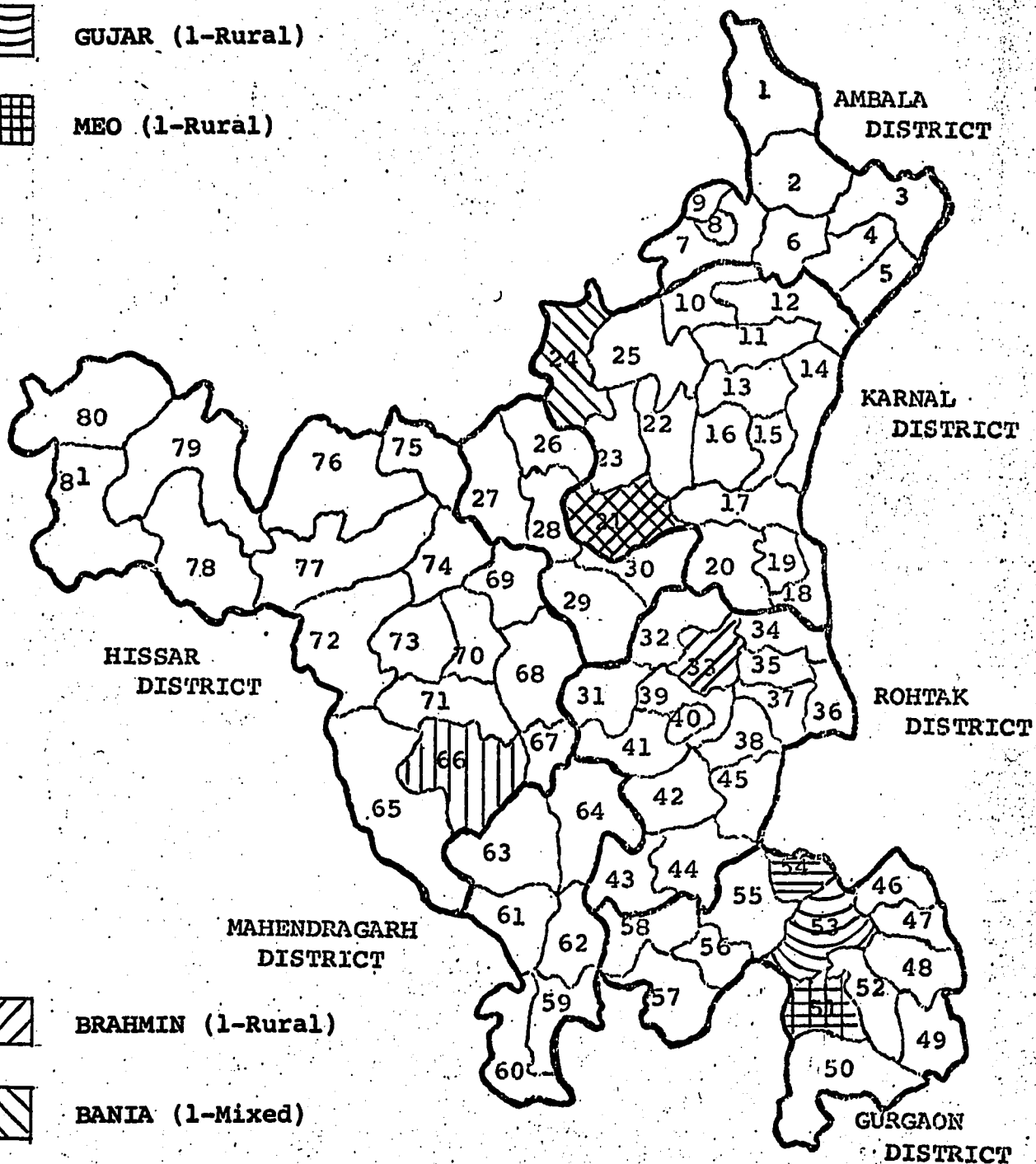

---

<sup>22</sup>See Map 9.1.



0 8 16 Miles

FIFTH HARYANA MINISTRY AS CONSTITUTED ON JUNE 6, 1968.

 JAT (1-Rural) AHIR (1-Mixed) GUJAR (1-Rural) MEO (1-Rural) BRAHMIN (1-Rural) BANIA (1-Mixed) SCHEDULED CASTE (1-Reserved)

a new United Front Legislature Party. Within a day of the announcement of the final results, the Rao had persuaded some 24 of the 33 non-Congress representatives to support a United Opposition Front. Besides the Vishal Haryana party, which had been joined by three independents, immediately after the results had been announced, to bring its total strength to 16 seats, the United Front was joined by two Swatantra, one B.K.D. and one Sant Akali Dal (elected as an independent) representatives and three independents. This left only the Jan Sangh, with seven seats, and two independents outside of the new opposition grouping in the assembly.<sup>23</sup>

Asserting that his grouping would play the role of a responsible and constructive opposition, Rao Birender Singh said: "We shall not encourage defections unless the Congress starts the game".<sup>24</sup> On the eve of the first meeting of the Vidhan Sabha, however, he conditioned the above pledge further by stating that he would not encourage Congress dissidents to defect unless he was assured of full support from all opposition groups in the assembly. The Rao, at this point, was bitter because the Jan Sangh and two independents were still spurning his offer of cooperation. Indeed, the two independents had made it clear that they

---

<sup>23</sup>National Herald, May 18, 1968.

<sup>24</sup>Patriot, May 19, 1968.

would welcome an opportunity to return to the Congress. The Rao commented:

What is the use of persuading some honest Congressmen to leave the party in the interest of the state when some independent MLAs are already talking of their support to the Congress in the assembly?<sup>25</sup>

The first trial of strength for the Bansi Lal ministry in the assembly was to be the election of a Speaker on the opening day. This event caused considerable speculation and tension as it was over this question that a large-scale defection of dissidents from the Congress had taken place the year before when the then Chief Minister, B.D. Sharma, had refused to nominate a dissident leader for the position and had announced that the official candidate would be one of his own factional supporters. Advance notice of the nominee on the previous occasion had given the "rebels" an opportunity to pre-arrange their strategy with the opposition parties. Consequently, this time, the Chief Minister refused to divulge whom he had selected, with the permission of the High Command, as the official Congress nominee. It was clear that behind the scenes, a new power struggle was beginning within the Haryana Congress. B.D. Sharma was rumoured to be determined that his nominee, Ram Saran Chand Mittal (a Bania from Mahendragarh district), be selected, while the Rohtak Jats were known to be dissatisfied since,

---

<sup>25</sup>Rao Birender Singh as quoted by Tribune, July 9, 1968.

despite their considerable strength in the ruling party (14 out of 48), they had no representation in the Cabinet. As the Chief Minister had already announced that he would not expand his Council of Ministers, they were adamant that one of their own number be nominated for the speakership.<sup>26</sup> In the end, Bansi Lal decided to resist B.D. Sharma's pressure on this issue and had Brigadier Ran Singh nominated.<sup>27</sup>

This election of a Rohtak Jat helped to still fears that a new period of defectionist politics would remove the Congress from power once again in Haryana. However, the fact that three opposition members (all independents) had chosen to support the ruling party nominee rather than the opposition candidate was viewed with some concern by the non-Congress group. Mukhtiar Singh Malik, the Jan Sangh Legislature Party leader, saw in this the "seeds of defection" and pointed out that the three had been elected by constituencies which had chosen to repudiate a Congress candidate. He then went on to warn the Congress that while all desired political stability in Haryana, "Mr. Bansi Lal ... is starting the game again and his party and the state will have to face the consequences of what he is doing."<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>26</sup>Statesman, July 15, 1968.

<sup>27</sup>Kashyap, p.127.

<sup>28</sup>Statesman, July 15, 1968.

New Dissidence Within the Haryana Congress

In the meanwhile, a crisis appeared to be developing within the Pradesh Congress organisation where Sharma's old political rival, Ram Kishen Gupta, was still President. The Bhagwat Dayal group, remembering that control of the organisational wing of the party is essential in any attempt to dominate a state party, began a campaign to wrest control away from the rival faction. At the outset, they announced that they would support the candidature of Ram Chander Sharma, M.P., for the President's office. Certain that he still enjoyed the confidence of a majority in the general body of the Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee, Bhagwat Dayal began to press the Congress President, Nijalingappa, to order an immediate election for party office-bearers, while his opponents, Ram Kishen Gupta, Mrs. Shanno Devi and Ranbir Singh, sought a delay until charges of anti-party activities against Sharma during the mid-term elections could be investigated.<sup>29</sup>

Although Bansi Lal was still dependent upon the Sharma group for support in the assembly, it was clear that he had become distinctly unhappy with his role as "front-man" in Bhagwat Dayal's attempt to control both the ruling party and the state's politics from outside of the legislature. Indeed, the opposition was now making no secret of the fact that it

---

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., May 28, 1968.

hoped to return to power as a result of the conflict which was developing between the Chief Minister and his "sponsor". In his speeches in the Vidhan Sabha, the leader of the opposition, Rao Birender Singh, kept trying to make the point that the Congress leader was not a free agent. In one such speech, he suggested that the Chief Minister must have been selected because of his name:

Everyone knows that a bansi [a flute] will always be played by another. It has no voice of its own and you are not the piper.<sup>30</sup>

The Rao was also hinting, at this time, that he was in touch with anti-Sharma dissidents and that he would topple the Congress government within the month.<sup>31</sup>

Determined to find a suitable means of easing Sharma out of day-to-day Haryana politics, Bansilal persuaded the High Command to permit Sharma to enter Parliament. By nominating Bhagwat Dayal for a seat in the Rajya Sabha, the Chief Minister hoped to ward off a split, which was developing within the state party, while ridding himself of a rival who was still being held up as a potential Chief Minister.<sup>32</sup> This election was accomplished without great difficulty and, as the opposition failed to unite on a single candidate, the

---

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., July 16, 1968.

<sup>31</sup>Indian Express, July 23, 1968.

<sup>32</sup>Pratap, July 16, 1968.

Chief Minister also managed to have Rizak Ram elected too, thereby removing from Haryana politics yet another potential rival for the Chief Ministership.<sup>33</sup>

As rumours abounded to the effect that Sharma was unhappy with Bansilal's independent streak, the first overt act of dissidence within the legislature party on the part of the Bhagwat Dayal group took place in early August, 1968, when a delegation led by Roop Lal Mehta, MLA (a right-hand man to Sharma) approached G.L. Nanda with a number of complaints about the way in which Bansilal was treating the party MLAs and a demand that the High Command authorize a change in the party leadership.<sup>34</sup> The real complaint, however, was seen to be the fact that the Chief Minister was no longer seeking Sharma's advice on official matters.<sup>35</sup> The Sharma group was also disturbed by indications that Bansilal was attempting to create his own "ruling" or "ministerial" group within the legislature party to reduce his dependence on the Sharma faction.<sup>36</sup>

In response, the Chief Minister decided to adopt a hard line. He wrote Roop Lal Mahta asking him "to explain within fifteen days why disciplinary action should not be taken against him" on the grounds that he had violated party

---

<sup>33</sup>Patriot, July 31, 1968.

<sup>34</sup>Tribune, August 2 and August 13, 1968.

<sup>35</sup>Hind Samachar, August 2, 1968.

<sup>36</sup>Tribune, August 13, 1968.

decorum and had attempted to discredit the party in the eyes of the public.<sup>37</sup>

In the meanwhile, the focus of the impending struggle between Bansilal and Bhagwat Dayal shifted to the upcoming H.P.C.C. elections. Devi Lal, who hitherto had remained neutral towards Bansilal as he appeared to be subordinate to Sharma, stepped forward to offer his support to the Chief Minister.<sup>38</sup> The Sharma faction now began dictating the terms which Bansilal would have to accept if there was to be a rapprochement within the Haryana Congress. In essence, they said that if Bansilal wanted to continue as Chief Minister, he would have to agree to the unanimous election of Sharma as President of the H.P.C.C.<sup>39</sup> Bansilal however, persuaded Nijalingappa to accept a further delay in the holding of the presidential elections.<sup>40</sup>

Bansilal's delaying tactics were beginning to make the Sharma forces in the legislature party restive and there was talk that there would have to be a showdown before power could shift decisively in favour of the Chief Minister. The Sharma group was particularly disturbed by the fact that all of the anti-Bhagwat Dayal forces, which had hitherto been divided

---

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., August 20, 1968.

<sup>38</sup>Hind Samachar, August 28, 1968.

<sup>39</sup>Tribune, September 3, 1968

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., September 5, 1968.



amongst themselves, were rallying around the Chief Minister and that even some of Sharma's marginal supporters were considering changing camps.<sup>41</sup> As the lines of battle began to take shape, Haryanvis were left to wonder whether Congressmen had learned anything from their previous defeat and decline in the state.<sup>42</sup> One real ray of hope for the Chief Minister in the face of this impending crisis within his own party was the fact that the opposition was itself disunited and was therefore unlikely to be able to form an alternative government if there were only a few defectors from the Congress. Six non-Congress MLAs, moreover, including one member of the Vishal Haryana party and another from the Swatantra, publicly pledged themselves to support the existing Congress ministry in the assembly.<sup>43</sup>

#### The Factional Configuration

Before examining the events surrounding the second attempt to oust a Congress government in Haryana through a floor-crossing of a dissident faction, it is useful to investigate the factional distribution in the Vidhan Sabha, after the mid-term elections.<sup>44</sup> On the Congress side of the

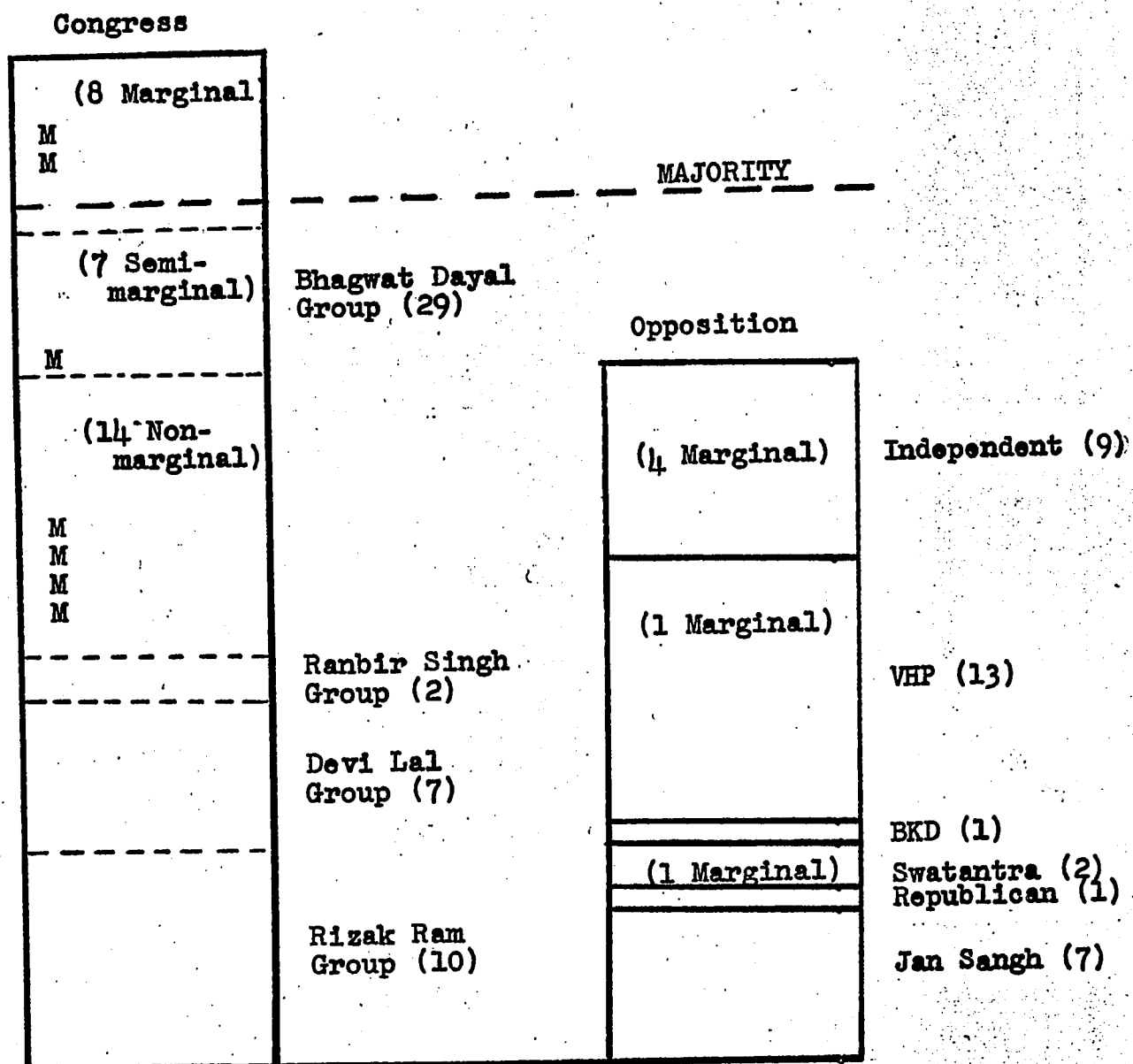
---

<sup>41</sup>Patriot, September 5, 1968.

<sup>42</sup>Hind Samachar, September 10, 1968.

<sup>43</sup>Tribune, September 10, 1968. These were: Harpal Singh, V.H.P.; Narain Singh, Swatantra; and Chanda Singh, Ishwar Singh, Rajinder Singh and Hem Raj, independents.

<sup>44</sup>See Figure 9.1.

FIGURE 9.1**THE FACTIONAL CONFIGURATION, JUNE, 1968.**

M- signifies ministerial position.

house, the returned legislators essentially divided themselves into four factional groupings. When the legislature convened, the Bhagwat Dayal group claimed 29 supporters, while Rizak Ram had ten, Devi Lal seven, and Randhir Singh two.

As pointed out above, all seven ministers were drawn from the Sharma faction. This latter grouping, however, proved to be not as unified as it had first appeared to be. When a confrontation developed between its leader, B.D. Sharma, and his protege, Bansi Lal, it divided into three basic sub-groups. First, there were 14 Congress MLAs who were to remain loyal to the party and the Chief Minister in the defectionist crisis. These we have designated to be the non-marginal sub-group. Second, there was a group of seven Congress legislators who agreed to defect on Bhagwat Dayal's advice but who were later convinced that they owed their first loyalty to the Congress. These we have designated as semi-marginal. Third, there was a hard-core group of eight, including two ministers, who defected to the opposition on the instructions of their leader and who rejected any appeals from the party leadership to return to the Congress fold. These might be called marginal Congress supporters in that they placed factional loyalty above that to the party.

The remaining factional groupings within the Congress started out as dissidents to the dominant Sharma group in the new Vidhan Sabha. Despite the fact that the Chief Minister and all of his cabinet colleagues were drawn from the

dominant faction, they did not attempt another defectionist revolt. Indeed, within a matter of months, they became the principal supporters of the Bansilal government. This shift from dissident factions to government supporters only came when it became obvious that Bansilal was not prepared to remain a "front" for his patron, Bhagwat Dayal, and that he would be willing to cooperate with the agriculturist factional leaders to achieve this independence.

The disunity of the opposition becomes obvious when it is noted that there were six marginal supporters, not only in the independent group where they might be expected, but also within two of the organized parties. It was these marginal opposition legislators who saved the day for the Congress in the midst of the 1968 defectionist crisis, when they took advantage of the situation to enter the ruling party as full members. Without their floor-crossings, the Bansilal government might have collapsed, but the ambivalence of the defecting Bhagwat Dayal group would have probably undermined any chance for a stable alternative government to be created amongst the non-Congress legislators.

#### The First Crisis: Ministerial Resignations

On September 16, 1968, the Bhagwat Dayal faction finally took a direct action designed to demonstrate to the Congress High Command that a majority of the Haryana Council of Ministers and a majority of the Legislature were dissatisfied with Bansilal's leadership. Mahabir Singh, the Development

Minister, revealed that B.D. Sharma had delivered a letter to Congress President Nijalingappa from four of the seven Haryana ministers seeking his permission to resign as they were no longer willing to serve under the present Chief Minister.<sup>45</sup> It was also rumoured that Sharma had collected the signatures of 27 Congress MLAs who wanted a change in the leadership of the legislature party. Bhagwat Dayal was reported to have assured these legislators that he was not interested in becoming the Chief Minister himself. As a measure of his sincerity, he was reported to be prepared even to support Ranbir Singh, if the High Command still insisted on a Jat Chief Minister.<sup>46</sup>

Much to Bhagwat Dayal's surprise, the High Command acted quickly to back Bansi Lal in the crisis which was threatening his leadership. Nijalingappa advised the Chief Minister to accept the resignations of three ministers -- Mahabir Singh, Ran Singh and Ram Dhari Gaur. Khurshed Ahmed was given permission to withdraw his resignation at the last moment.<sup>47</sup> Nijalingappa took exception to the manner in which a copy of their joint letter had been released by B.D. Sharma

---

<sup>45</sup>Tribune, September 17, 1968.

<sup>46</sup>Pradeep, September 17, 1968.

<sup>47</sup>The Sharma faction later accused Khurshed Ahmed of being a spy for Bansi Lal and that he had actually encouraged them to attempt the resignation manoeuvre as a means of eliminating the Sharma group from the ministry.

before he had seen it and declared this to be a breach of party discipline. The High Command, however, was still keen to keep Sharma within the Congress party and announced that they were still prepared to permit him to contest the H.P.C.C. leadership election.<sup>48</sup> This did nothing to ease the split which was developing within the legislature party. A measure of the extent of the break may be seen in the fact that 20 of the Congress MLAs met and congratulated the resigning ministers. They also pledged themselves to topple the Bansi Lal ministry and swore loyalty to their leader, B.D. Sharma.<sup>49</sup>

In an effort to avoid any dissidence over who should be given the vacated ministerial positions and also to have a measure of patronage to reward defectors from the Sharma group, Bansi Lal announced that he was in no hurry to expand his ministry and re-allocated the 15 vacated portfolios amongst the remaining four members of his cabinet for the moment.<sup>50</sup> In the meanwhile, the High Command instructed Nijalingappa to personally intervene to end the rift in the Haryana party, even if it meant accommodating Sharma with the presidency of the H.P.C.C.<sup>51</sup> Bansi Lal, on the other hand, feeling that he had the upper hand for the moment,

---

<sup>48</sup>Hindustan Times, September 18, 1968.

<sup>49</sup>Tribune, September 18, 1968.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid, September 20, 1968.

<sup>51</sup>Statesman, September 21, 1968.

was determined to keep Bhagwat Dayal from this office and demanded a free and early election while he still had the promise of ministerial offices to offer supporters.

At this crucial juncture in the crisis, G.L. Nanda suddenly abandoned his former neutral role and announced that he considered Bansilal's opposition to the candidature of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma to be "wholly wrong and indefensible". Nanda confirmed, moreover, that Bansilal had been made the leader of the Congress Legislature Party only after he had agreed to support B.D. Sharma's candidature for both the Rajya Sabha and the P.C.C. presidentship and that the deal had been made in his presence.<sup>52</sup> The exposure of this commitment may have helped convince the High Command that there was some justification in Sharma's complaints, for specific instructions were now sent out to Bansilal that he was not to come in the way of Sharma's election.<sup>53</sup>

While Nijalingappa was working on a formula which would have Sharma unanimously elected President of the H.P.C.C. and which would instruct Bansilal to expand his ministry so as to make it "broad-based", the Sharma group began to assert that it would not agree to anything less than the removal of Bansilal.<sup>54</sup> Rumours were also abroad that Sharma

---

<sup>52</sup>Tribune, September 22, 1968.

<sup>53</sup>Hindustan Times, September 23, 1968.

<sup>54</sup>Tribune, September 24, 1968.

had reached a pact with Rao Birender Singh to topple the ministry.<sup>55</sup> Despite warnings from Nijalingappa that he would not tolerate any attempt to remove Bansi Lal from power as this would have an adverse effect on the Congress party's chances in the mid-term election campaigns, then in progress in U.P., Bihar and West Bengal, the Sharma group remained adamant that no compromise would satisfy them if Bansi Lal was left in office.<sup>56</sup>

If Nijalingappa desired a rapprochement between the two Haryana antagonists, Bansi Lal did not; he demonstrated this by denying that he had ever been party to a pact to support the candidature of B.D. Sharma or anyone else for the organisational wing leadership post.<sup>57</sup> In making this denial, the Chief Minister may have gained confidence from the fact that a "show of strength" meeting called by the Sharma group had turned out to be a rather poor show. Only 14 Congress legislators had been present even though Bhagwat Dayal had asked all of his supporters to come in an effort to mobilize his faction's strength and to demonstrate it to the High Command.<sup>58</sup>

The Chief Minister's strategy of standing firm, despite

---

<sup>55</sup>Statesman, September 25, 1968.

<sup>56</sup>Times of India, September 25, 1968.

<sup>57</sup>Tribune, September 26, 1968.

<sup>58</sup>Statesman, September 27, 1968.



the High Command's urgings for him to adopt a conciliatory approach, began to pay off in time. At the end of September 1968, Roop Lal Mehta, the Sharma factional supporter who had raised the banner of revolt against Bansi Lal two months earlier, announced that he had joined the ministerial group. This was seen as a major setback for B.D. Sharma in his attempt to regain control of the Congress.<sup>59</sup> It was also rumoured that the Chief Minister had won over two more members of the Sharma group and that all three -- Roop Lal Mehta, Maru Singh and Kanwar Singh -- would be offered ministerial positions in the near future.<sup>60</sup>

The next action was taken by H.P.C.C. President R.K. Gupta who was still determined that Sharma should not inherit his office. He issued a "show cause" notice for disciplinary proceedings against Sharma and the three ministers who had resigned. He further suspended two men from the party, including one sitting MLA, Ganpat Rai, for having organized the "dissidents" meeting mentioned above.<sup>61</sup> Sources close to Gupta claimed that Sharma's anti-party utterances had been tape-recorded and that the P.C.C. President had, on the basis of these, obtained permission from Nijalingappa to

---

<sup>59</sup>Tribune, September 30, 1968.

<sup>60</sup>Hind Samachar, September 30, 1968.

<sup>61</sup>Indian Express, September 30, 1968.

initiate disciplinary action.<sup>62</sup> Mr. Gupta was proceeding here with considerably more caution than he had at an earlier date when he had tried to suspend Sharma from the party. In response, the Sharma group claimed that 60 out of the 85 members of the H.P.C.C. had submitted a memorandum to the A.I.C.C. demanding Ram Kishen Gupta's immediate removal from office.<sup>63</sup>

The High Command ordered the rival groups in Haryana to exercise restraint and to stop mutual recriminations. Bhagwat Dayal, however, was singled out and told to desist from any move aimed at disturbing the present equilibrium and creating instability as this would affect Congress prospects in the forthcoming mid-term elections in several north Indian states, particularly Punjab.<sup>64</sup> In the meanwhile, the existence of the memorandum signed by 60 delegates to the H.P.C.C. was officially denied and there was growing evidence that the Sharma faction was now in a minority in both the legislative and organisational wings of the party.<sup>65</sup> This, however, is not to suggest that the Bansi Lal government was out of danger. A defection of as few as eight Congress MLAs in the assembly could topple the ministry.

---

<sup>62</sup>Times of India, September 30, 1968.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Statesman, October 2, 1968.

<sup>65</sup>Prabhat, October 3, 1968.

Although the Congress High Command clearly wanted to keep Bansi Lal in office for political reasons at the national level, B.D. Sharma was not without friends at the centre. Mr. G.L. Nanda, for instance, was reported to have said that he would ask the Prime Minister to force Bansi Lal to compromise or have him replaced.<sup>66</sup>

But it was soon obvious that this would not occur. On October 8, 1968, the Congress Working Committee endorsed the view that Bansi Lal should continue as Chief Minister. The request of the dissidents to move a vote of want of confidence in the leader of the legislature party was denied on the grounds that it was not practical to permit any change in the government so soon after it had been formed.<sup>67</sup> The next day, the Congress Parliamentary Board decided that yet another effort should be made to patch up differences between the Chief Minister and the dissidents. The job of persuading Sharma to give up his efforts to oust Bansi Lal was entrusted to the Deputy Prime Minister, Morarji Desai. The Board hoped that a compromise formula could be evolved under which Bansi Lal would continue as Chief Minister and Sharma or his nominee would be unanimously elected H.P.C.C. President.<sup>68</sup> Despite the conciliatory nature of this

---

<sup>66</sup>Hind Samachar, October 3, 1968.

<sup>67</sup>Tribune, October 9, 1968.

<sup>68</sup>Times of India, October 10, 1968.

decision and the fact that Desai was known to be sympathetic to Bhagwat Dayal, it was evident that Sharma's alienation from the Congress High Command was now as complete as his breach with Bansilal.

Each side in this dispute took the position that they were in a life or death struggle for political survival and that their opponents would have to be crushed if they were to avoid oblivion and extinction themselves. This attitude made any attempt at a compromise formula difficult. At one point, the Congress High Command through Morarji Desai proposed the name of D.D. Puri for the P.C.C. presidency. It was hoped that Bansilal would not object as Puri, despite his previous association with Sharma, had remained neutral in the current controversy and had not worked for the defeat of any party candidate in the mid-term elections.<sup>69</sup> The Sharma group, however, rejected this proposal on the basis that it had had enough of nominees such as R.K. Gupta and Bansilal and stated that it would continue to press for Sharma's election.<sup>70</sup> While the Sharma faction of 18 MLAs said that they would welcome a rapprochement with the Chief Minister, provided he would accept Sharma as the leader of the organisational wing, the ministerialists and their supporters said that this was now impossible because the

---

<sup>69</sup>Tribune, October 11, 1968.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid, October 12, 1968.

Sharma faction had made it clear that their ultimate objective was the power and office now held by Bansi Lal.<sup>71</sup>

However, the antagonists seemed to refrain from going to the brink at the High Command's insistence. On October 17, 1968, after discussions with both factional leaders, Nijalingappa announced that both had pledged themselves to accept the unity formula Morarji Desai was working on and also agreed not to criticise one another in public.<sup>72</sup>

Although the two principals in the dispute abided by this for a number of days, their supporters did not. Two days after the above commitment had been made, a deputation of 50 out of the 85 members of the H.P.C.C. made an en masse "pilgrimage" to New Delhi and called upon various members of the High Command to plead for a free and fair election of their next president. This action was taken in an effort to show the central Congress leadership that Sharma could not win the P.C.C. election in a straight contest and to thwart Morarji Desai's plan to press for the appointment of an ad hoc Pradesh Committee to be convened by B.D. Sharma.

Such a compromise formula was deemed attractive by the High Command as it would place Bhagwat Dayal under the supervision of the Congress President who would retain the power to dissolve the Committee at any time. This, however, was not

---

<sup>71</sup>Times of India, October 12, 1968.

<sup>72</sup>Tribune, October 18, 1968.

acceptable to either the Bansilal supporters or the existing leadership of the H.P.C.C.<sup>73</sup>

Soon the Sharma group attempted to publicly embarrass the Chief Minister. On October 25, 1968, seventeen Congress legislators petitioned the secretary of the legislature party for a meeting of the party "to discuss the administration's handling of a chain hunger-strike by the Haryana Subordinate Services Federation."<sup>74</sup> The Chief Minister begged the legislators not to precipitate matters by pressing for such a meeting at this stage. Meanwhile, the opposition parties were meeting together in an attempt to develop a "working arrangement on the basis of a minimum programme" which would provide an alternative to the Congress. Many of the non-Congress MLAs, however, stated that they were unwilling to join hands with any defecting Congress legislators because of the "bitter experience" which they had had the year before. They were especially opposed to assisting Sharma stage a come-back in Haryana politics.<sup>75</sup> This inability on the part of the non-Congress forces in the assembly to present a

---

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., October 21, 1968.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., October 26, 1968. B.D. Sharma may have used his influence in the Haryana trade union movement to encourage this strike as a means of embarrassing the Chief Minister. Evidence in support of this may be found in the fact that the strikers conducted their fast outside the residence of Khurshed Ahmed, the minister whom the Sharma group had labelled a "traitor".

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., October 27, 1968.

semblance of public unity at this crucial time helped the Chief Minister considerably in his struggle to break up the hard core of the Sharma faction. Indeed, the day after the non-Congress conference failed to reach a consensus, three more MLAs from the Dayal group announced that they would now support Bansi Lal.<sup>76</sup>

The Bhagwat Dayal faction was now engaged in a struggle for even a minimal political survival for himself and his group in Haryana. This was confirmed when the Central Parliamentary Board announced that the H.P.C.C. would be granted a free hand in electing its new President.<sup>77</sup> This obvious concession to the ministerialist group caused a frustrated and bitter hard core element within the Sharma group to press Bhagwat Dayal to lead his remaining loyal supporters out of the Congress before the mid-term elections in Punjab so as both to topple the Bansi Lal ministry and to embarrass the Congress High Command.<sup>78</sup>

By the beginning of December, 1968, it was clear that a showdown was finally close by. Some 19 legislators had declared verbally that they were prepared to resign from the Congress.<sup>79</sup> Opposition leaders, moreover, in rallies for a by-election which had been called to fill a seat

---

<sup>76</sup>Hind Samachar, October 28, 1968.

<sup>77</sup>Hindustan Times, November 25, 1968.

<sup>78</sup>Hind Samachar, November 25, 1968.

<sup>79</sup>Tej, December 2, 1968.

resigned by Rao Birender Singh, who had been returned by two constituencies in the mid-term elections, were telling voters that the entire opposition would soon be uniting with the dissidents to topple the Congress government once again.<sup>80</sup> When questioned by reporters, B.D Sharma admitted that several of his supporters wanted to walk out of the Congress to "ensure its defeat not only in Haryana but elsewhere too". He said, however, that he was still trying to hold them back.<sup>81</sup>

The Second Crisis: The Sharma Faction's Toppling Attempt

The long awaited attempt on the part of the Sharma dissident group to remove the Haryana Congress ministry from power through a massive defection to the opposition took place on December 7, 1968 in much the same way as the Sharma ministry was overthrown in 1967. Bhagwat Dayal delivered a 24-hour ultimatum to the Congress High Command demanding that concessions be made on two points, or else he along with his supporters would leave the party. His demands at this point were: first, the fixation of a date for a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party with permission for the dissident group to move a vote of no-confidence against Bansilal, and second, the immediate dismissal of Khurshed Ahmed from the ministry. Claiming the committed support of

---

<sup>80</sup> Tribune, December 2, 1968.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., December 5, 1968.



19 legislators, Sharma said that his colleagues had taken their decision under "very powerful and humiliating circumstances".<sup>82</sup>

Bansi Lal maintained publicly that the crisis would soon blow over, the High Command stated that it was still confident that the dissidents could be accommodated. On the other hand, the leader of the opposition, Rao Birender Singh, was jubilant. Conveniently forgetting that he had once been B.D. Sharma's political opponent, the Rao embraced Bhagwat Dayal with the words: "Panditji, I am your disciple".<sup>83</sup> At a news conference, he said that the decision was "long overdue" and that the dissidents had responded to the call of their conscience. Birender Singh also announced that he was stepping down as the leader of the non-Congress United Front to permit Sharma to accept the Governor's expected invitation to form the next government in Haryana. "With a clear majority", he said, "we will now be able to form a good and stable government."<sup>84</sup>

Although Nijalingappa was angered by the 24-hour

---

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., December 8, 1968.

<sup>83</sup>Times of India, December 8, 1968.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid. Although Rao Birender Singh may have been sincere at the time, he set forth a different version during an interview in March 1969 after the overthrow attempt had clearly failed. "I once told you that I would destroy Bhagwat Dayal once and for all. I have kept my promise. Who is Pandit Sharma today? A nothing! A nobody!"

ultimatum given by the Sharma dissidents, he promised that if Bhagwat Dayal would initiate talks and represent his case to the High Command, he would receive sympathetic consideration.<sup>85</sup> The Congress High Command was divided on how to respond to this crisis. While there was considerable feeling that Bansi Lal had not kept the centre adequately informed of the situation and that his assessment of Bhagwat Dayal's following had proved wrong, it was not felt to be advisable to concede all of Sharma's demands. Union Home Minister, Y.B. Chavan, on the other hand, demanded that the party take a firm stand and if the Congress should lose power as a result, call for yet another mid-term poll.<sup>86</sup>

In the end, the central leadership adopted a compromise strategy designed to isolate Bhagwat Dayal from his group within the Congress. Accordingly, the Congress Parliamentary Board rejected the ultimatum from the dissidents and suspended Sharma from the party. It withheld action, however, "pending details", against the 19 Congress MLAs who had lined up behind Bhagwat Dayal in his bid to oust the Bansi Lal government. The Congress President then appealed to the dissident Congress MLAs to retrace their steps and not to take any precipitate action.<sup>87</sup> Although the Board

---

<sup>85</sup>Statesman, December 9, 1968.

<sup>86</sup>Tribune, December 9, 1968.

<sup>87</sup>National Herald, December 10, 1968.

had earlier stated that it would not permit Bansilal to stay in office with the aid of defectors to the Congress,<sup>88</sup> it now announced that he had been given full authority to admit members into the legislature party and to expand his Cabinet.<sup>89</sup>

In response to the suspension, B.D. Sharma immediately withdrew his remaining supporters from the Congress Legislature Party and led them over to the newly formed Samyukta Vidhayak Dal which he hoped to lead to power.<sup>90</sup> The same day, Rao Birender Singh and Bhagwat Dayal led 41 MLAs to the Raj Bhavan in Chandigarh to show the Governor, B.N. Chakravarty, that the Bansilal ministry was now in a minority. The Governor promised the assembled group that he would study all of the constitutional aspects of the situation and would use his good offices to ensure the maintenance of a constitutional government, but he refused to commit himself to anything until he had an opportunity to discuss the new developments with the Chief Minister.<sup>91</sup> In the meanwhile, the ministerial group continued to deny that

<sup>88</sup>Tribune, December 9, 1968.

<sup>89</sup>Indian Express, December 10, 1968.

<sup>90</sup>Only 15 of the 19 Sharma supporters decided to leave the Congress. These were: Ram Dhari Gaur, Ran Singh, Mahabir Singh, Jai Singh Rathi, Om Parkash Garg, Jagdish Chander, Maru Singh, Mahant Ganga Sagar, Kanwar Singh Dahiya, Jaswant Singh Chauhan, Bhagat Ram, Neki Ram, Kamal Dev Kapil, Roop Lal Mehta and Daya Kishan. Daya Kishan later denied that he had ever left the Congress.

<sup>91</sup>Hindustan Times, December 10, 1968.

there was any threat to the government on the basis that a number of the Congress legislators presented to the Governor as defectors had been taken there under duress.<sup>92</sup>

The accompanying constituency and caste distribution maps for these defectors illustrate some unexpected data.<sup>93</sup> Although Bhagwat Dayal Sharma had always been portrayed as an anti-Jat and a pro-urban sympathiser within the Haryana political system, the 15 dissident Congress legislators who followed him out of the ruling party appear to have been representative of a broad range of interests. More than half of this group (eight out of 15) were returned from rural constituencies and seven were members of agriculturist tribes. While it is difficult to offer an adequate explanation for this phenomenon, it must be remembered that Bhagwat Dayal had been a powerful factional leader within the Congress organisation for many years and also had extensive sources of campaign funds outside of the party to draw on for his factional supporters. The pro-Sharma defectors also expected to receive ministerial positions and patronage powers from the United Front government which their factional leader hoped to establish. The factional loyalty of these defectors was to be further tested when it became apparent that the Congress government was not going to be overthrown this time.

---

<sup>92</sup>Tribune, December 10, 1968.

<sup>93</sup>See Maps 9.2 and 9.3.

0 8 16 Miles

## SHARMA FACTION (December 10, 1968): CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN



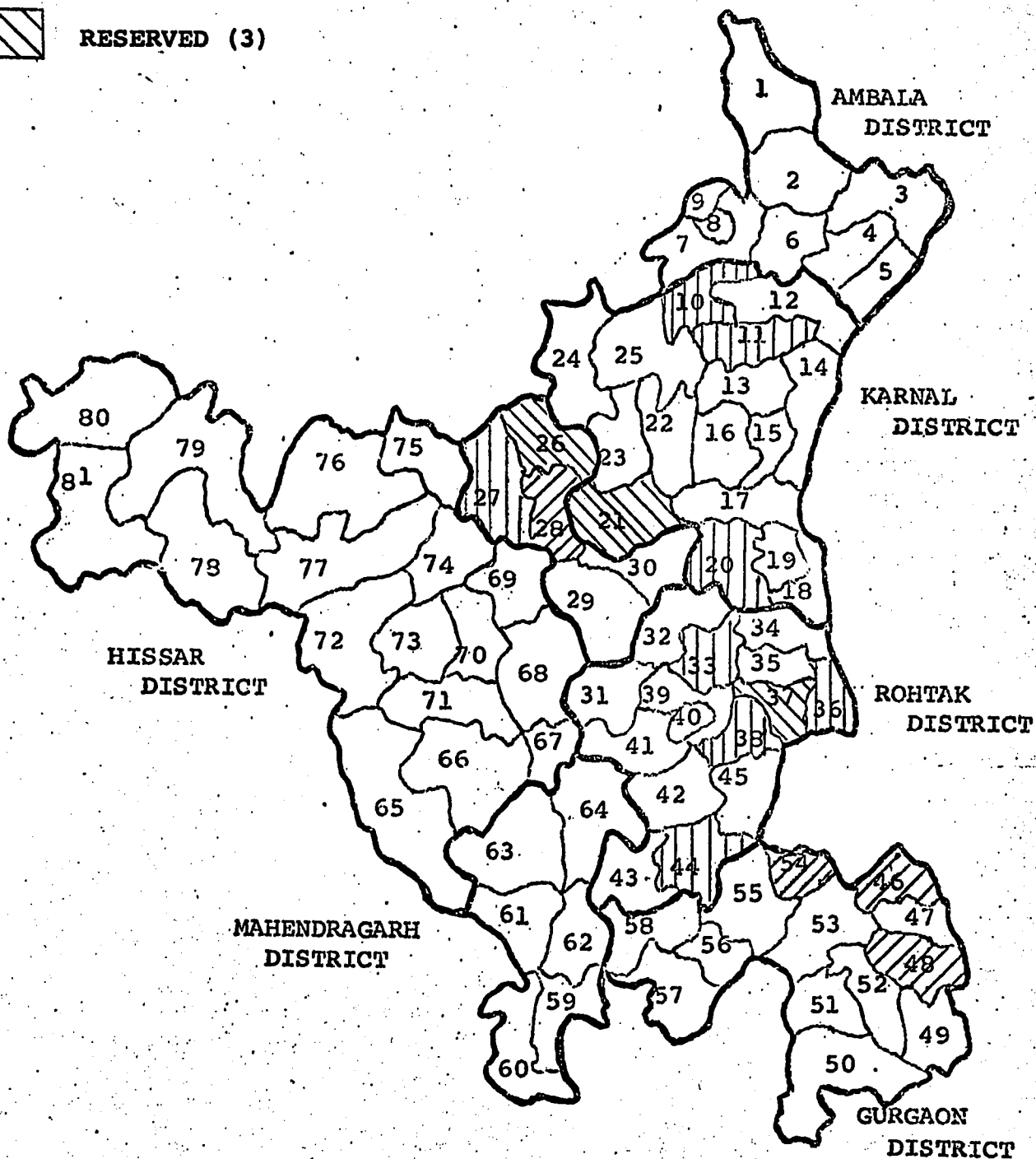
RURAL (8)



MIXED (4)



RESERVED (3)



0 8 16 Miles

## SHARMA FACTION (December 10, 1968): CASTE BREAKDOWN



JAT (5)



AHIR (1)



RAJPUT (1)



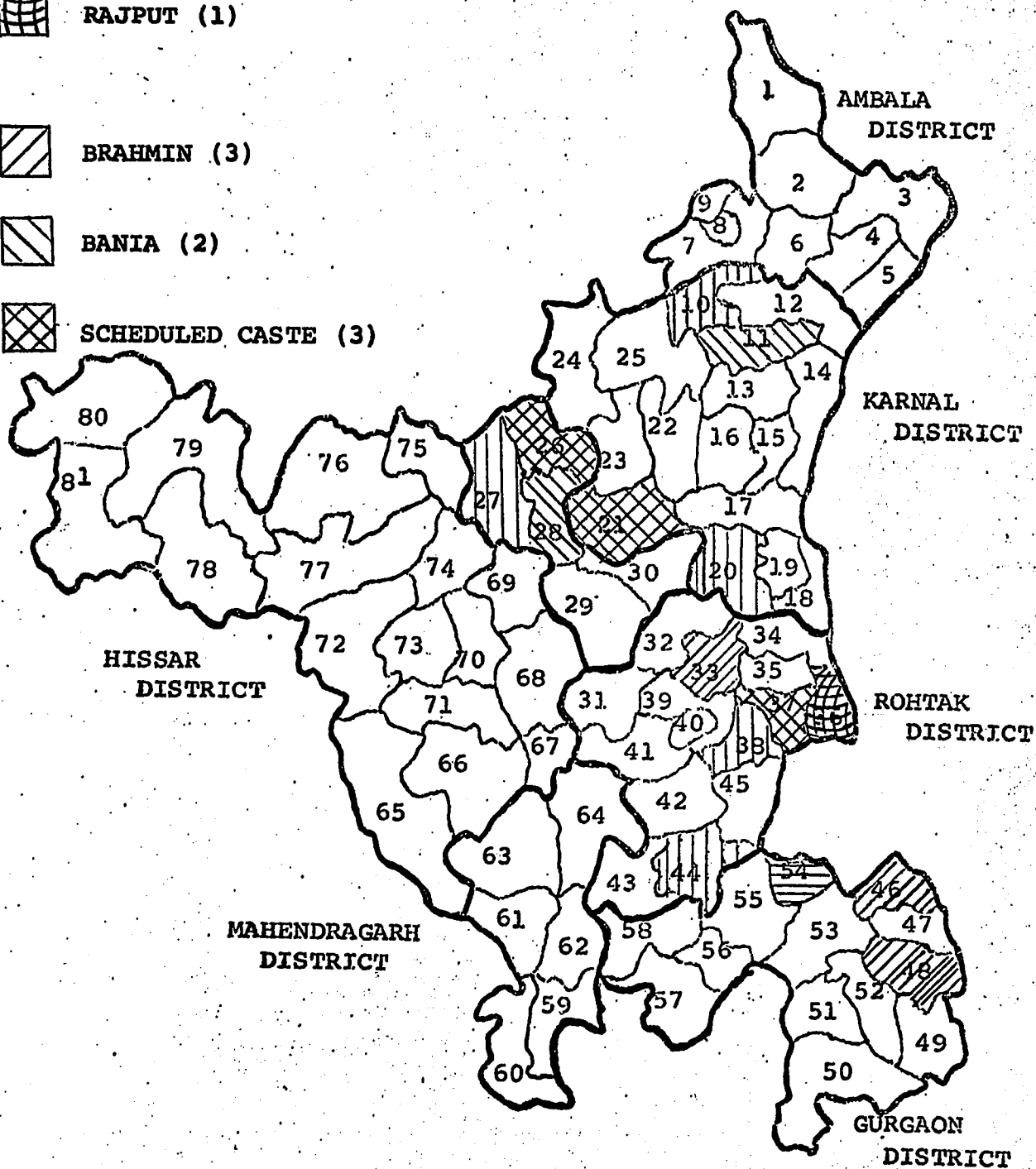
BRAHMIN (3)



BANIA (2)



SCHEDULED CASTE (3)



Despite the Congress Parliamentary Board's misgivings about keeping a state Congress government in power through political manoeuvring at a time when the party was fighting four mid-term state elections on the platform that only the Congress could provide political stability, the Congress High Command decided to resist either turning power over to the non-Congress Front or re-imposing President's rule in preparation for yet another mid-term election. Accordingly, Bansi Lal was instructed to maintain the public fiction that his government still had the support of a majority in the assembly, to deny that any Congress legislator had indicated to him a desire to leave the legislature party, to state that the Haryana assembly would not be convened before it was due in January 1969, and finally, to indicate that he was prepared to expand his four-man cabinet immediately to accommodate the returned dissidents. As the Chief Minister had not had much experience in tactics such as these, two prominent Punjab Congress leaders, Brish Bhan and Darbara Singh, were imported to assist Bansi Lal in convincing the dissidents that they were making a mistake in planning to leave the Congress.<sup>94</sup> Devi Lal also came to the Chief Minister's assistance and began organizing a counter-defection for the Congress.<sup>95</sup> Within 24 hours, the strategy,

---

<sup>94</sup>Indian Express, December 11, 1968.

<sup>95</sup>Patriot, December 11, 1968.

described as "horse-trading", began to pay off for the ministerialist group. By December 11, 1968, five of the 15 defectors had re-defected to the Congress. The next day, the figure was up to seven.<sup>96</sup> The safety of the government was further ensured when four independents, one member of the V.H.P. and one member of the Swatantra announced that they had pledged their unconditional support to the Congress ministry.<sup>97</sup> As these defections and re-defections were only accomplished through offers of future ministerships and other tangible rewards, the practices indulged in by the leadership of the Congress in Haryana, with the tacit approval of the High Command, appeared to make a mockery of the recommendations of the Chavan Committee on Defections and the Congress mid-term election platform that it was the only political party which could provide an "honest, clean and efficient administration".<sup>98</sup>

The role of the State Governor in this crisis was also open to question. On the basis of some "facts" which the Chief Minister had placed before him the day after he had met with a majority of the members of the assembly who claimed that they did not support the Government, he announced that in his view the political situation in Haryana had

---

<sup>96</sup>Jagdish Chander, Om Parkash Garg, Ran Singh, Neki Ram, Daya Kishan, Jaswant Singh and Maru Singh. See Map 9.4.

<sup>97</sup>Chanda Singh, Ishwar Singh, Rajinder Singh, Hem Raj, Harpal Singh (V.H.P.) and Narain Singh (Swatantra); see Maps 9.5, and 9.6.

<sup>98</sup>Kashyap, p.418.



RE-DEFECTORS TO CONGRESS FROM SHARMA FACTION (December 13, 1968):  
CASTE BREAKDOWN



JAT (3)



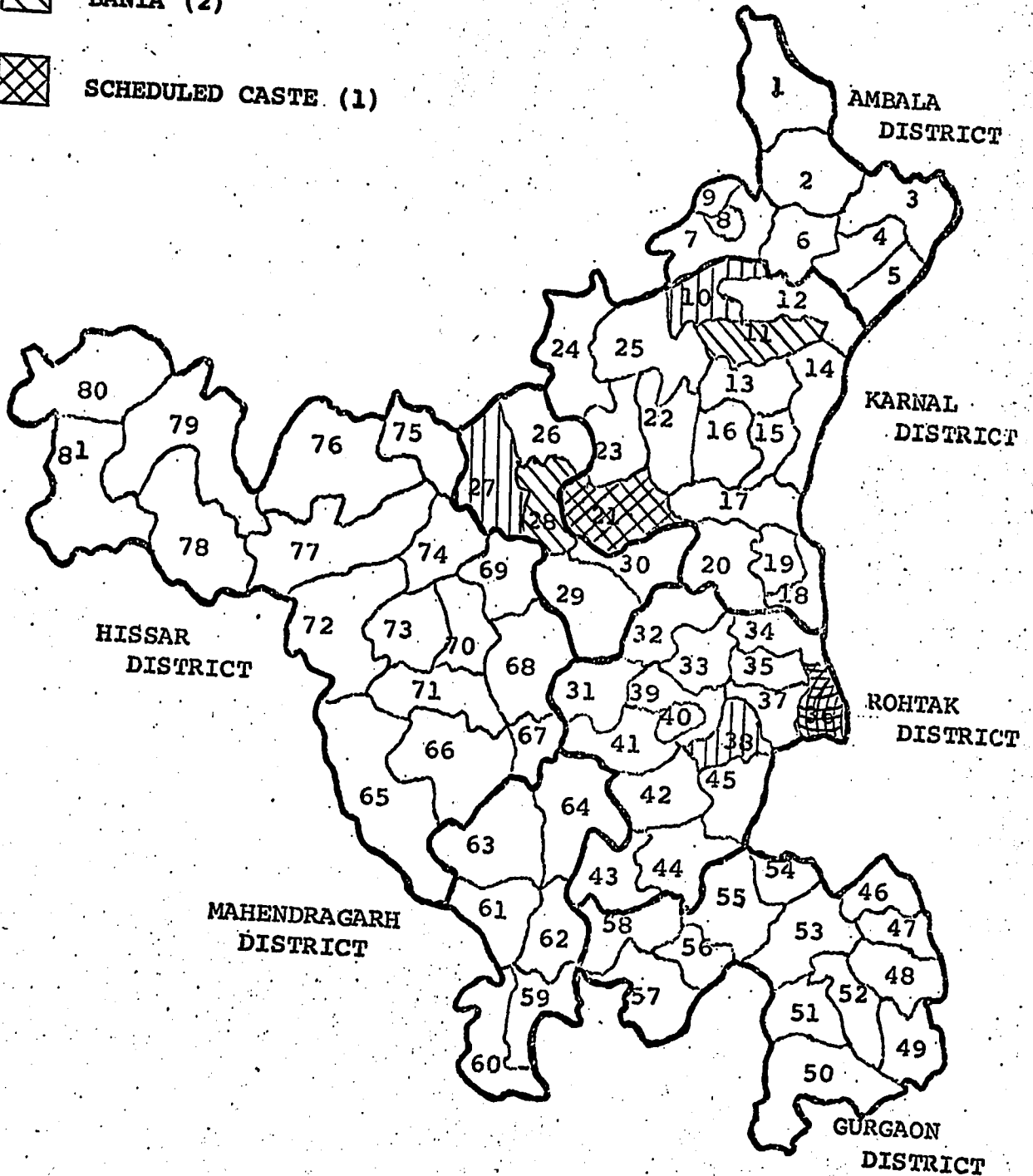
RAJPUT (1)



BANIA (2)



SCHEDULED CASTE (1)



# HARYANA ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

0 8 16 Miles

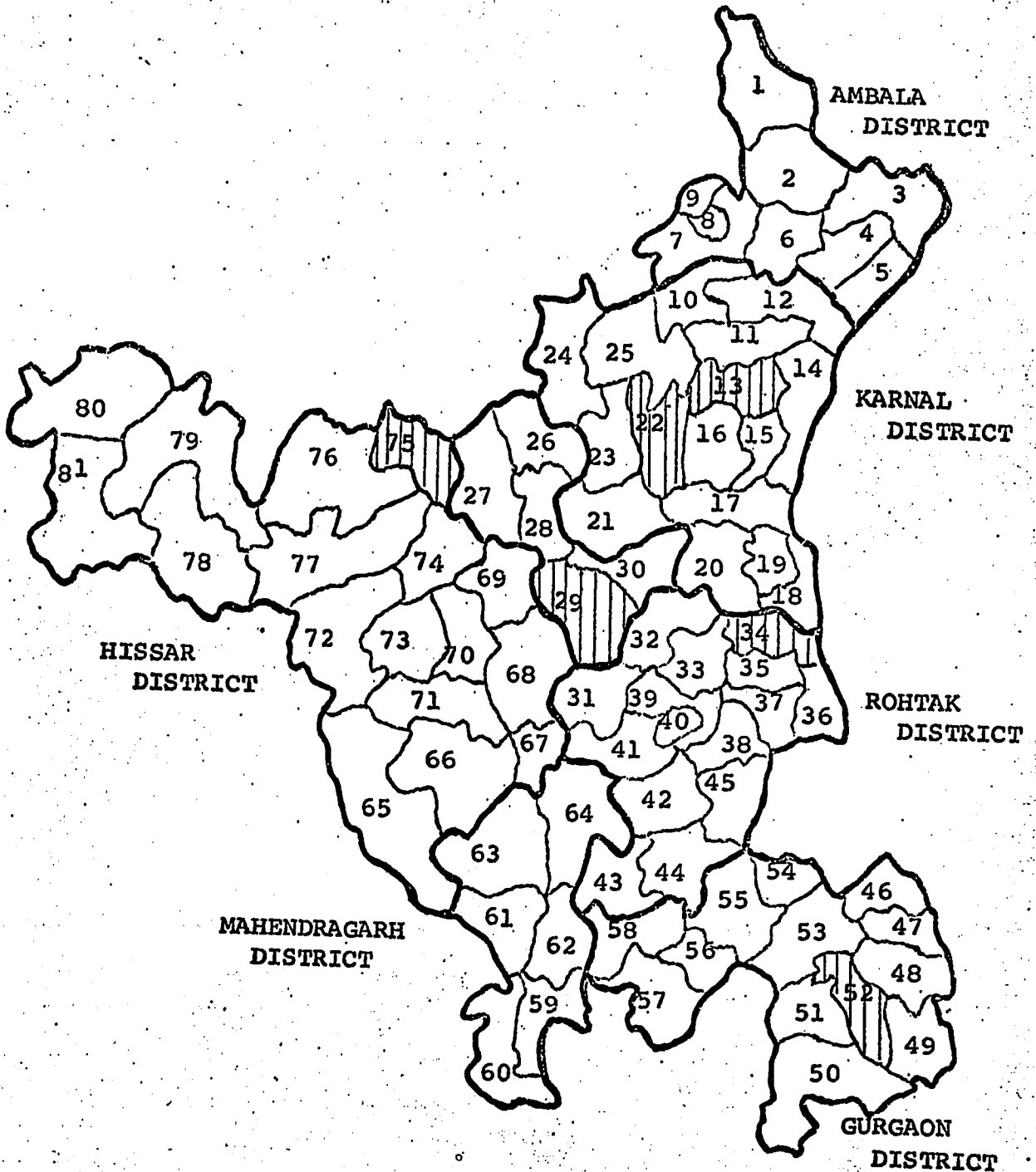
MAP 9.5

487

NON-CONGRESS SUPPORTERS OF THE FIFTH HARYANA MINISTRY (December 13, 1969):  
CONSTITUENCY BREAKDOWN






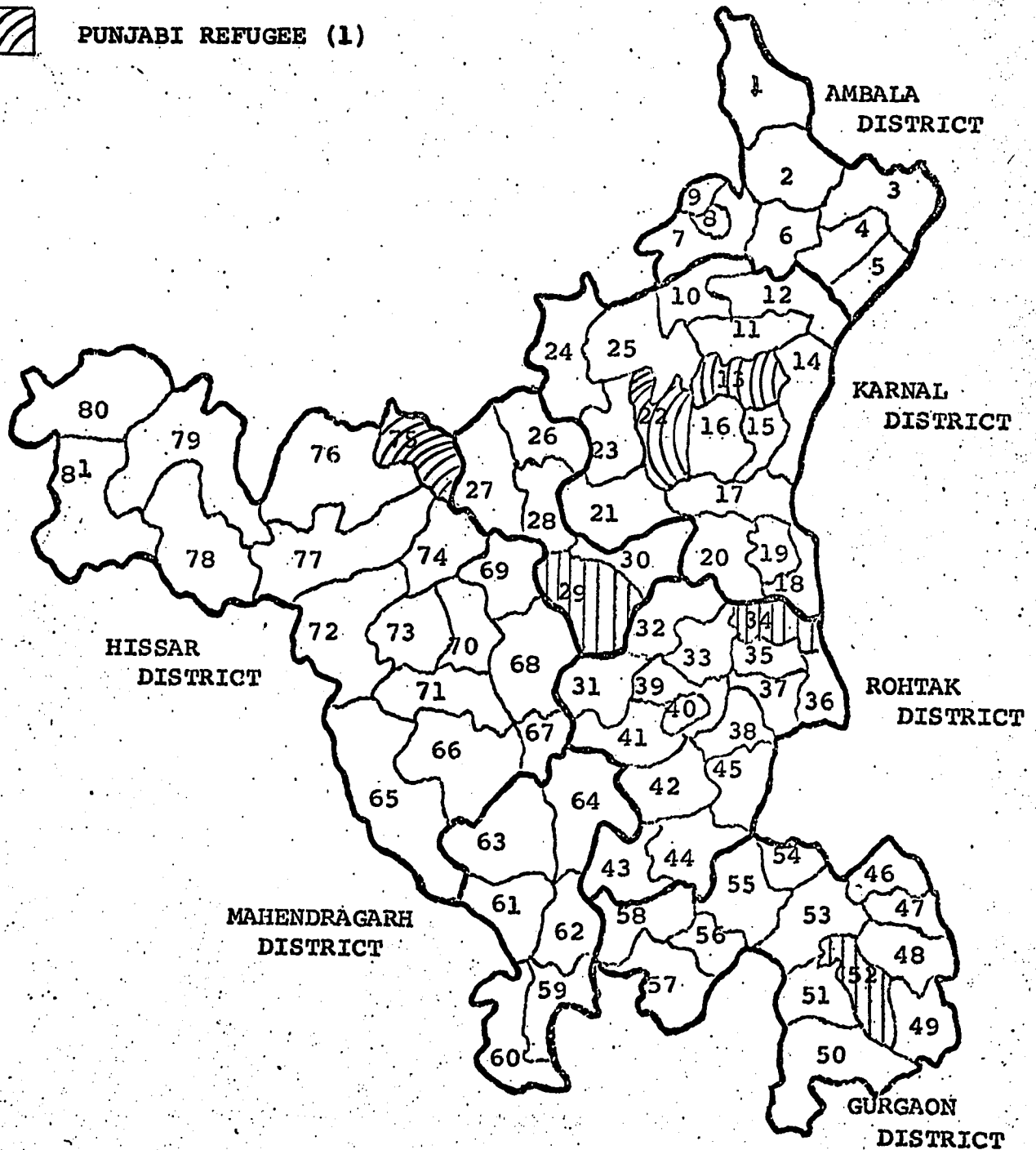
RURAL (6)



0 8 16 Miles

NON-CONGRESS SUPPORTERS OF THE FIFTH HARYANA MINISTRY (December  
13, 1969);  
CASTE BREAKDOWN

-  JAT (3)
-  ROR (2)
-  PUNJABI REFUGEE (1)



"materially changed" and that he felt that he had no role to play in the new circumstances.<sup>99</sup> This meant, in effect, that the Governor gave the ministerialist group time to manoeuvre without the threat of having to prove their majority in the assembly. The opposition forces, poised to take power, were dismayed at this turn of events.

Bhagwat Dayal placed the blame on Nijalingappa for having given Bansi Lal a "free hand" to use patronage and horse-trading to secure enough support, and denounced the "high-handedness" of the central government for helping a minority government to stay on in power in Haryana.<sup>100</sup> Even the Lok Sabha speaker, Sanjiva Raddy, admitted that he was shocked at these tactics and came out in support of the opposition view that the Haryana assembly should have been convened at once to determine which side had a majority in conformity with a recent decision of the All-India Speakers' Conference. This decision held that the question of whether a Chief Minister had lost his majority should at all times be decided in the assembly.<sup>101</sup> The official view in New Delhi, however, was that the Chief Minister's advice was binding on a Governor and that he could therefore advise the Governor not to convene the assembly until it was

---

<sup>99</sup>Tribune, December 12, 1968.

<sup>100</sup>Statesman, December 12, 1968.

<sup>101</sup>Tribune, December 12, 1968.

constitutionally mandatory.<sup>102</sup>

The Impact of the Sharma Group Defection

The defections and re-defections in December 1968 produced some changes in the caste and constituency representation distribution pattern among the different political parties and groups within the assembly.<sup>103</sup> The floor-crossing on the part of the Sharma group not only gave the non-Congress forces exactly the number of seats which the Congress had won at the mid-term poll but it also resulted in a non-Congress agriculturist and non-agriculturist distribution which was exactly the same as that of the Congress before the defections occurred. The manoeuvres used by the ministerialist group, however, to maintain power tended to reinforce the agriculturist representation within the Congress. While the agriculturists represented 52.1 per cent of the legislature party after the mid-term elections, the ministry was now supported by a party which was 58.7 per cent agriculturist. Constituency representation figures confirm this trend in that while the Congress had 58.7 per cent of the rural seats before the crisis, it now had 67.4 per cent. The opposition, on the other hand, now had a majority of non-agriculturist supporters (54.3 per cent) coming from non-rural constituencies (54.3 per

---

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>See Table 9.2.

TABLE 9.2

HARYANA ASSEMBLY: CASTE REPRESENTATION AND CONSTITUENCY  
DISTRIBUTION, 1968.

Description	Total	May 17, 1968		Dec. 9, 1968		Dec. 13, 1968	
		Cong.	Oppo.	Cong.	Oppo.	Cong.	Oppo.
Jat	24	16	8	11	13	17	7
Ahir	7	1	6	0	7	0	7
Ror	3	1	2	1	2	3	0
Gujar	2	2	0	2	0	2	0
Meo	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rajput	5	4	1	3	2	4	1
<u>Subtotal</u>	43	25	18	18	25	27	16
Brahmin	7	5	2	2	5	2	5
Bania	6	4	2	2	4	4	2
Sch. Caste	15	9	6	6	9	7	8
Punjabi Ref.	9	4	5	4	5	5	4
Other	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
<u>Subtotal</u>	38	23	15	15	23	19	19
<u>Total</u>	81	48	33	33	48	46	35
Rural	47	28	19	20	27	31	16
Reserved	15	9	6	6	9	7	8
Urban	8	2	6	2	6	2	6
Mixed	11	9	2	5	6	6	5
<u>Total</u>	81	48	33	33	48	46	35

cent). As a result, the Haryana assembly was divided for the first time in a clear pattern. A majority of the peasant-proprietor representatives were on the government benches while a majority of their socio-economic rivals were in the opposition. Political stability in Haryana was now a possibility if the Congress leadership proved capable of appearing to satisfy the demands of the agriculturist communities, especially the Jats, for rural development. The only agriculturist community now clearly alienated from the Congress was the Ahir, as all seven of its representatives were now in the opposition along with their leader, Rao Birender Singh.

The Congress in Haryana survived a repetition of the earlier defectionist crisis for a number of reasons. First, dissatisfaction against the Chief Minister was not a general sentiment of a sizable community, such as the agriculturists, but was limited to a single frustrated factional leader, B.D. Sharma, who was unwilling to accept any role in Haryana politics for his group and himself other than the predominant one. Second, Bhagwat Dayal, in encouraging his group to defect from the ruling party, failed to recognize that the floor crossing was not welcomed by the entire opposition and that the possibility of a counter-defection move was also there. Third, a factional leader can only retain the loyalty of his supporters through his capacity to provide them with desired benefits. Once it was obvious

that Sharma had been isolated and that he was not going to lead Haryana's next government, all of his marginal support melted away. Third, the anti-Sharma agriculturist forces in the Congress were united in their support of the new Chief Minister, Bansi Lal, even though he had once been the protege of their political rival. Finally, the Congress High Command, sensing that public opinion was on their side during this crisis, did not hesitate to use questionable tactics to defeat this overthrow attempt. While many may debate the ethics of using questionable means to achieve a desired end in politics, the result, as it was to provide Haryana with a stable government and a dynamic administration, may have been a proper justification in this case.

#### The Consolidation of Congress Rule in Haryana

The opposition, in the meanwhile, had succeeded in winning the prestige Jatusana by-election. It was forced to concede, however, that, as a result of the political manoeuvres used to save the Bansi Lal ministry, it was no longer in a position to claim a clear majority in the Haryana assembly. The Congress ministerialists, free for the moment from the threat of internal dissidence over the H.P.C.C. elections, obtained permission from the High Command to move the date of the elections forward. On January 2, 1969, Ram Saran Chand Mittal, a non-agriculturist and a former Sharma supporter but now the nominee of the ministerialist group, was unanimously elected President.<sup>104</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup>Kashyap, p.418.



Although the Congress was sure that it had the support of a majority in the assembly, it did not want to face the house as a minority party which would have to rely on the support of non-Congress sympathisers, especially as Rao Birender Singh and B.D. Sharma were reported to have chalked out a strategy for launching a new attack on the Bansilal ministry in the assembly. Indeed, one of the S.V.D. leaders had been sent off on a fund-collecting mission to Bombay in order to buy back some of the governmental supporters.<sup>105</sup> To counter this anticipated attack, the H.P.C.C. authorized the Haryana Congress President to reduce the period of expulsion for former Congressmen who had campaigned against official Congress candidates so as to facilitate the return to the party of four of the six non-Congress legislators then supporting the government.<sup>106</sup> It was also made clear that the official party position still was that the A.I.C.C. had suspended only B.D. Sharma and that, as a result, the H.P.C.C. would continue to treat all members of the Sharma faction as non-defectors eligible for future ministerial positions and all other privileges.<sup>107</sup>

Despite these measures, when the winter session of the Vidhan Sabha finally convened on January 28, 1969, the Congress was in a bare majority of 40 (excluding the Speaker)

---

<sup>105</sup>National Herald, January 3, 1969.

<sup>106</sup>Statesman, January 3, 1969.

<sup>107</sup>National Herald, January 10, 1969.

in an effective house of 79 voting representatives. The result was a chaotic session marked by defections, walkouts and adjournments. The opposition S.V.D. -- consisting of Rao Birender Singh's Vishal Haryana party; B.D. Sharma's faction which now called itself the Kisan Mazdoor Congress; Chand Ram's group; and the Jan Sangh -- did everything possible to launch a new offensive against the Bansi Lal Government. Particular targets of this campaign included three non-Congress MLAs, who had pledged support to the ministry but were not yet admitted to the ruling party, and fence-sitters within the Congress who had expressed public dissatisfaction with their share of political power, patronage and offices under Bansi Lal.

Having survived the winter session of the Vidhan Sabha, even though the government had only avoided defeat in the house by a narrow margin, the Congress once again turned its attention to B.D. Sharma and his group. On February 13, 1969, the Congress Working Committee finally expelled Sharma, over the objections of Morarji Desai, for his role in the December 1968 revolt to overthrow the Bansi Lal ministry.<sup>108</sup> Those of his followers, who were still supporting the opposition, were given one more chance. When they refused to return to the Congress fold, they were suspended 24 hours later and were asked to show cause why

---

<sup>108</sup> Tribune, February 14, 1969.

they should not be expelled for "anti-Congress" activities.<sup>109</sup>

By the middle of February, 1969, it was clear that Bansi Lal had consolidated his position in both the Congress Legislature Party and in the Pradesh Congress Committee, and that his party would not be easily removed from power in future in Haryana through manoeuvres on the part of the opposition. In less than a year, the Chief Minister had emerged from a position where he had no personal or group support of his own within the legislature party and was dependent, therefore, on the backing of the former Chief Minister and leader of the largest faction, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, to a position where he was the strongest single political figure in the state. Although he would later have difficulties with some of the other Jat factional leaders, such as Rizak Ram and Ranbir Singh, his position as the leader of the dominant grouping in both wings has not been seriously challenged.

The subsequent conflict within the central Congress organisation between the Prime Minister and the Syndicate helped the Chief Minister to reinforce his position in Haryana. While the Bhagwat Dayal group along with Rao Birender Singh's Vishal Haryana party supported the official Congress candidate, Sanjiva Reddy, in the Presidential election, Bansi Lal was able to place most of the Congress

---

<sup>109</sup>Kashyap, p.421.

Legislature party vote behind the Prime Minister's choice, V.V. Giri. Ultimately, a majority of the Haryana delegates to the A.I.C.C. signed the requisitionists' letter and several members of the opposition, including the Harijan leader, Chand Ram, announced that they were prepared to join the Chief Minister in supporting the Prime Minister's socialist programme. Even the dissatisfaction in some quarters in Haryana at the loss of Chandigarh to Punjab was not able to unsettle the Chief Minister's dominant position. Today, Haryana is regarded as a model of political stability in Indian politics and has become a showcase for the progress which can be achieved through a dynamic policy for rural development in India.

#### Summary and Conclusions

The role of the Congress High Command in undertaking to intervene in the Haryana situation was very much that of a teacher or instructor to the Haryana Congress. More than anything else, it had to demonstrate to the Haryana factional leaders that they would have to cooperate with each other for the purpose of achieving a minimal level of intra-party harmony and overall political stability.

The first such lesson was the taking over of the state Congress electoral machinery to ensure that no factional grouping could be accused by rival factions of having used the organisation for its own particular advantage. The Congress High Command tried to show the Haryana Congressmen

that party tickets should be assigned amongst those who were in the best potential position to win in particular constituencies irrespective of their factional loyalties while bearing in mind that individual candidates needed some assistance from regional party leaders to win. Adjustment and accommodation to the realities of factional strengths within the party rather than attempts to control the party machinery to eliminate intra-party factional rivals was the first lesson which had to be taught or demonstrated.

Having helped ease the Haryana Congress back into a majority position in the state assembly, the High Command leadership found that it could not then abandon its tutelage role in Haryana. The Bhagwat Dayal Sharma group, still the largest factional grouping within the legislature party, was unrelenting in its determination to continue to use its position for its own benefit to the cost of the rival factions. Even though this group had been forced to sponsor an agriculturist as the legislature party leader, it hoped to retain effective control over his actions from behind the scenes. With hindsight, it is possible to suggest that the Congress High Command should have acted sooner to prevent the Sharma faction from even attempting to totally dominate the state Congress once again. Certainly it should have expressed more than mere dissatisfaction when Bansilal was forced to recruit his ministry entirely from his patron's faction. If the central Congress leadership had used their

authority at the time to force the Chief Minister to accommodate representatives from the Devi Lal and Rizak Ram factions into his cabinet, his position vis-a-vis his sponsor might have been made stronger and more stable.

When the Chief Minister, Bansilal, came to find the situation of having to take direction from B.D. Sharma on all official matters intolerable, the relationship broke down and resulted in a new crisis for Haryana political stability. Once again the state was threatened with an intra-party struggle between rival groupings for control of the ruling party. This time, however, the Congress High Command decided that it would act to prevent any overthrow of the state government. To re-establish political stability in Haryana, they had to decide between supporting either Bansilal or B.D. Sharma. While Sharma had a sizable following within the state Congress, he had already demonstrated that he did not have the leadership capabilities which were required to keep the legislature party united behind him. Moreover, he had already shown that he was prepared to sacrifice the interests of his party to further his faction's particular interests. Bansilal, on the other hand, was more acceptable to the agriculturist factions and there was already evidence that at least some of Sharma's faction would not defect to the opposition on his advice. Bansilal was also more amenable in accepting central direction on how to reconcile the various factional forces within

the state Congress.

Once the central leadership arrived at a consensus that they would have to support the Chief Minister in his struggle with Bhagwat Dayal for control of the Haryana Congress, it proved to be possible for him to find a workable majority within the Vidhan Sabha. Not only did he receive the backing of the three dissident agriculturist groupings, led by Rizak Ram, Devi Lal and Ranbir Singh, but he was also able to recruit a personal support base within the Sharma group of some 14 legislators who were not prepared to defect from the party at the call of their former leader. The Chief Minister also received valuable support from six members of the opposition who refused to cooperate in the Sharma-Birender Singh overthrow attempt. Finally, he was able to entice back a semi-marginal group of seven from the Bhagwat Dayal group even after they had followed their leader into the opposition.

Having survived this defectionist crisis with the support of the central Congress leadership, Bansi Lal has continued to lead the ruling party in Haryana without any more serious intra-party threats to his leadership. To accomplish this, he has had to ensure that no single group within the party, including his own supporters, could be seen as having a complete dominance over the state Congress and that the various factional groupings within the legislature party have had a role to play in the state government.

His success at maintaining the support of the hitherto dissident factions is evidence that his policies have been succeeding. Bansi Lal's success, however, should not be seen as a new or radical approach to intra-party harmony. His handling of this problem follows the guidelines of the traditional Congress approach to consensus or reconciliation politics. Indeed, Haryana's crises of political stability from 1966 to 1968 should be regarded as a short intervening period in which there was a failure or collapse of the traditional Congress technique. Bansi Lal, in effect, restored a true Congress administration in Haryana.



## CHAPTER X

### PARTY FACTIONALISM AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Introduction

Politics in the Haryana tract of India is often referred to as "Jat politics". This term is not used to imply that all Haryanvi politicians are members of a Jat tribe or that only Jats have a major influence on the state political system. Rather it is a reference to the fact that the land-holding and cultivating agriculturist communities of Haryana, such as the Jats, who retain a hegemony over the socio-economic life of the rural areas of the state, actively seek a substantial voice in the political affairs of that region so as to protect and further the particular interests of their communities. The phrase "Jat politics" is also used in reference to the style of politics prevalent in Haryana. The inability of the agriculturist leaders and spokesmen to cooperate with non-agriculturist politicians or even to get along with each other results in a political party system characterized by rigid intra-party factions. As a result, politics in Haryana must be seen as a struggle for political power both between agriculturist interests and their socio-economic rivals, the non-rural trading and consumer interests, and between jealous agriculturist faction leaders. In the post-independence period, the political conflict intensified

because the non-rural communities were able to recruit additional political support from the lower caste and Harijan communities in the rural areas and because no Haryana agriculturist leader emerged in this period to fill the political leadership role played by Sir Chhotu Ram in the Unionist period.

In this study, we undertook to examine the political impact of the socio-economic cleavage between agriculturists and non-agriculturists and the inability of agriculturist faction leaders to cooperate together on intra-party politics in Haryana, both in terms of the factional structures which evolved within the ruling Congress party and the political instability which followed when the agriculturist faction leaders resisted what appeared to them to be an attempt on the part of a non-Jat to obtain an absolute control over both its organisational and legislative wings.

Although intra-party factionalism in a developing country has been considered by some to have a long-term benefit for political development to the extent that it aids the recruitment of hitherto non-participant groups into the political decision-making process,<sup>1</sup> our study shows that it may become highly dysfunctional for a political system by undermining political stability. Political instability may occur when intra-party factional structures representing

---

<sup>1</sup>See references to the works of: Paul R. Brass, Rasheeduddin Khan, Rajni Kothari, Adrian C. Mayer, W.H. Morris-Jones and Myron Weiner, in Chapter I.

particular socio-economic interests attempt to attain a predominant position within a ruling party primarily for the benefit of their constituents alone in the society. The Haryana situation shows that when a factional group succeeds or appears in the eyes of its opponents to have gained such a control over a ruling party, the dissident factional groups, in their frustration, may feel justified in attempting to remove the dominant group from power by any means, even at the cost of political stability and developmental setbacks for the entire society, especially where the dissident leaders share a political-cultural attitude that only a member of their community should have political power. This study also suggests that political stability in a setting of intra-party factionalism is dependent upon the ability of the party leadership to ensure that no group within the party is driven to such dissidence that it can see no alternative for political survival other than to initiate a group defection to the opposition benches. Such leadership is especially needed when the basic intra-party factional structures reflect competing socio-economic interests in the society. Because this leadership quality was lacking within the Congress in Haryana, the state went through a two-year period of political instability during which time no legislative programme could be initiated to overcome the area's backwardness.

### The Historical Perspective

The intra-party factional rivalries in Haryana had their historical base in the area's political mobilization and integration process. In pre-independence Punjab, political competition between the agriculturist and non-agriculturist interests gradually evolved in step with the concessions towards self-government in the provinces granted by the British colonial administration from time to time during the first half of this century. Before this period began, the only group which might be called politicized in the Punjab was the better educated urban class which was the first to perceive that the political decision-making process could affect their socio-economic position in the province. The agriculturist tribes, on the other hand, were at first the passive beneficiaries of a colonial policy of protection for the peasant-proprietors of the province as a means of ensuring a stable socio-economic base for the British administration.

The introduction of partial provincial self-government ("dyarchy") in 1919 made it essential, for the first time, that the agriculturists should find a political voice of their own to protect their interests. The result was the gradual evolution of a competitive party system. On the one side, there was the rural bloc. This developed into the Punjab National Unionist Party, a unique coalition of Muslim, Hindu and Sikh landlords under the leadership of Fazl-i-Husain.

This non-communal regional party was prepared to work in close cooperation with the British colonial administration on a programme designed to uplift and protect the economic interests of the agriculturist tribes in the province. On the other side, their traditional economic rivals, the urban trading interests, placed their support behind the more nationalistic or Hindu-communal parties.

The agriculturists from the Haryana area found themselves in a new and more complex political situation after independence. Partition destroyed the Punjab National Unionist Party. Their regional leader within the Unionist coalition, Sir Chhotu Ram, died in this period. The introduction of universal suffrage in an independent India now placed them in a minority and undermined the guarantee of a pro-agriculturist rural bloc in the legislature. Unable to continue to maintain themselves as a separate political party based on their particular socio-economic needs, the agriculturist politicians were forced to seek a political accommodation under the umbrella of the Indian National Congress which had emerged from the independence struggle as the prominent political force in India. Within this party organisation, however, they failed to remain united within a single cohesive factional grouping, but were fragmented into a number of locally-based personal factions which had to compete with other such factions, representing urban and lower caste interests that were determined to use the

political process to reduce the traditional socio-economic hegemony of the agriculturists in the rural areas of the state. The needs of the Haryana agriculturists were also relegated to second place because the state party leadership was usually too concerned with maintaining a reasonable degree of Hindu-Sikh harmony in post-independence Punjab.

Frustrated with their reduced political role within the ruling Congress in Punjab, the agriculturist factional leaders from the Haryana area eventually threw their political support behind a demand for a reorganisation of Punjab state on linguistic lines which was then being articulated on behalf of the Sikh community in the Punjabi-speaking area. The creation of a separate Haryana state, they hoped, would give the land-holding castes an opportunity to once again translate their socio-economic hegemony in the rural areas into real political power on a state-wide basis.

Once the reorganisation demand was conceded by the central government and Haryana became a separate entity, the then existing intra-party factional structure of the Congress suggested three possible configurations. First, through a historical accident, the Punjab Pradesh Congress was then under the leadership of a non-agriculturist who, after Partap Singh Kairon's removal from power, had built up a sizable faction which was opposed to the reorganisation demand. If this non-agriculturist faction grouping could keep the regionally-based agriculturist factions divided amongst

themselves, it could attempt to maintain control over both wings of the Haryana Congress in cooperation with particular agriculturist factional leaders at the expense of other agriculturist factions. Second, if the agriculturist factional leaders could unite amongst themselves, they could attempt to dominate the state political system without support from the non-agriculturist elements. Third, the central Congress leadership could intervene in an attempt to create a grand coalition of the major factional forces within the state party so that, while no socio-economic interest dominated, all interests would be represented.

As events were to turn out, all three of these alternatives were attempted in Haryana after reorganisation. In the first instance, the predominantly non-agriculturist group under the leadership of Bhagwat Dayal Sharma attempted to use their strong position within the organisational wing of the new state party to attain a dominant control over the legislative wing. This attempt, while very successful at first, eventually collapsed when most of the agriculturist factional leaders within the state Congress reached a minimal consensus that their interests were not sufficiently represented within the state government, and that they would lose legitimacy as factional leaders amongst their own supporters in their communities if they could not effect a change. Unable to unseat Chief Minister Sharma from within the party, some of them led their factional supporters

across the floor of the assembly so as to overthrow the Congress ministry through defections.

In the second instance, the defected dissident agriculturist factional leaders attempted to set up an alternative government for Haryana under their own leadership. This, however, could only be done with the support of the opposition parties and groups, whose sole motive in supporting this government at the time was to keep the Congress from maintaining power in yet another state. This experiment failed because of two factors. First, the agriculturist leaders within the non-Congress Front were never totally united amongst themselves. Second, there were non-agriculturist elements within the United Front, such as the Jan Sangh, which were not in sympathy with the agriculturist bias of the legislative leaders and used their "balance of power" position to press for policies which were not in the best interests of the agriculturists. The result was a period of political instability marked by day-to-day floor-crossings in which neither the Congress nor the non-Congress benches in the assembly could find the secure majority which was required to restore political stability.

The third pattern was accomplished only after the Congress High Command undertook to rectify the Haryana situation through direct intervention. The electoral machinery of the state Congress was taken over to ensure that no factional leader could use it for his group's advantage and to



guarantee that tickets for the mid-term election were fairly distributed amongst those candidates who had the potential for local support. Even after the Congress was returned with a working majority and a legislative leader was found who was deemed to be acceptable to all groups, however, the central Congress leadership was still required to intervene to ensure that a new period of political instability did not result because of an attempt on the part of one element within the party, the Bhagwat Dayal faction, to attain once again the dominant position in both wings of the Haryana Congress. The ultimate elimination of this faction's leader and his closest supporters from the ruling party seems to have convinced the remaining regional factional leaders within the Congress to cooperate with the Chief Minister, Bansi Lal, in a dynamic state government which has already accomplished much for all Haryanvis, agriculturist and non-agriculturist.

#### Intra-Party Factionalism and Political Development

The very legitimacy of the Indian National Congress, with its stated commitment to development for all levels of Indian society within its organisation, was on trial during the Haryana crisis. When a factional grouping within the Congress under the leadership of a non-agriculturist attempted to gain the dominant control over Haryana's political decision-making process and was suspected by the agriculturist faction leaders of desiring to use that power to satisfy

only the socio-economic demands of the non-agriculturist communities and interests, the Congress party, in the eyes of many Haryanvis, became identified as the party of a particular interest. The dissident agriculturist factions within the Congress which represented the competing interest in the society felt justified, as a result, in defecting from the party in search of an accommodation which would once again give them the voice which they desired in the state's decision-making process. The non-agriculturists in Haryana, however, may also be justified in their assertion that the Jat is never satisfied unless he is "king" or until he sees a state political order which appears to reflect the power structure of the village society in Haryana where the agriculturist tribes continue to have a measure of socio-economic control over the other communities.

Opponents of Congress one-party hegemony in India have argued that the defection of dissident factions from the ruling party was a forward step in India's political development as it pointed the way to a two-party competitive system. The initial impact, however, was a sustained period of political instability which, if the central Congress intervention had failed, could have been a serious setback for the state's overall social and economic development. In a developmental context, no interest or community can afford to be kept outside of the political decision-making process for an extended period of time. Only in the more affluent

nations can political parties identified with particular interests or societal groupings afford to wait for a new election period to once again present their programme to the electorate as an alternative to that administered by the party then in power. A socio-economic interest in a developing country which is denied adequate representation in the political decision-making process will feel that it is being deprived of its share of the goods and services available for distribution through the political system. Indeed, it fears that it will be kept perpetually backward vis-à-vis the rival grouping which it suspects has attained complete control over the powers of government. The consequences of such feelings of deprivation on the part of a politicized socio-economic grouping is likely to be an effort to overthrow the government from within the political system, as happened in Haryana, or societal unrest such as riots, demonstrations and revolts against the government then in power.

To avoid a breakdown of internal ruling party cohesion because of conflict between intra-party factional groupings identified with competing socio-economic interests, the leaders of a reconciliation-type mass party in a developing country, such as the Indian National Congress, must maintain certain attitudes toward the factional sub-structures which will inevitably develop within such a party. First, since spokesmen for competing interests in the society have usually

joined a ruling party to have a voice in the political decision-making process and to lobby in favour of their constituents, the party leadership must appreciate that accommodation of such groups can have long-term benefits for a political organisation which seeks a broad support base in the society. Indeed, these spokesmen, as factional leaders within a ruling party, are likely to recruit additional support for the party as a means of increasing their own group's strength within the ruling structure. In a developing country, such recruitment activities on the part of intra-party factional leaders will help political integration by drawing mobilized but hitherto non-participant groups into the political process. In India, the success of the Congress in maintaining a dominant party position throughout the nation is closely related to its on-going ability to attract the support of individuals who have the political skills needed to build up a factional following within the party. In Haryana, the success of the Congress High Command's intervention into the affairs of the state party in the preparation for and the actual mid-term election campaign of 1968 was conditioned by their ability to reconcile such dissident factional leaders as Devi Lal and Rizak Ram without completely alienating the Bhagwat Dayal group. The loss of Chand Ram and Rao Birender Singh definitely caused the party to lose electoral support in particular regions of the state. This conclusion from the Haryana data supports

the analyses developed by Norman D. Palmer, Stanley A. Kochanek, Ramashray Roy, W.H. Morris-Jones and Myron Weiner.<sup>2</sup>

Second, while being tolerant of the existence of factional divisions within the ruling party, the party leadership of a mass-based political movement must also develop and maintain the organisational skills capable of reconciling the various interests represented by these factions and of arbitrating disputes which may arise between them. Above all else, the party leadership must ensure that the smaller factions do not become alienated from the organisation because they have come to feel that they have been denied a voice in the political decision-making process. This would suggest that they must undertake to protect the interests of the minority factions whenever a particular faction or factional grouping representing a rival socio-economic interest attempts to attain a dominant control over the party organisation. In the Haryana case, the national Congress leadership failed to control the effort on the part of the Bhagwat Dayal group to attain such a dominance, and dissidence was created in the Haryana Congress because B.D. Sharma, as President of the H.P.C.C., used the state party's electoral machinery to deny party tickets to applicants who supported rival factions led by agriculturists, and, as leader of the legislative wing of the party, to deny these factional groupings adequate representation in the

---

<sup>2</sup>See Chapter I.

state ministry. This pattern was not confined to Haryana in the fourth general elections.<sup>3</sup>

Third, Haryana provides adequate evidence that factional leaders are realistic politicians who seek alignments with a ruling party for the sake of the political rewards which will accrue from that association not only for themselves and their factions, but also importantly for their constituents. As a result, their first loyalty must be to their factional followers and to the particular societal group which gave the faction electoral support. If their relationship within a ruling party proves unsatisfactory and nothing is done by the party leadership to adjust or rectify the situation, they may be expected to explore the possibilities of finding more acceptable accommodation elsewhere. When the number of such dissident factional supporters comes to represent the difference between a majority and the lack of such a majority for a ruling party in the legislature, the possibility of seeking an alternative association on the opposite side of the house may become an attractive proposition. In situations where the balance between the governing party and the opposition is close, therefore, party leaders must exercise special care in their handling of factional groupings which are likely to prove dissident.

---

<sup>3</sup>Norman D. Palmer, "India's Fourth General Elections", Asian Survey, VII 5 (May, 1967), p.289.

In Haryana, Bhagwat Dayal Sharma should have perceived that he needed his rival factional leaders' support to maintain the Congress majority in the assembly. To have chosen this moment to use his control over the organisational wing and his majority within the legislature party to further "humiliate" the dissident factional leaders, who were fighting for their political survival as spokesmen for the agriculturist interests in the state, was a serious error in judgement. His mistake also demonstrates that a good factional leader does not necessarily make a good party leader. The failure of the Congress High Command to perceive the true nature of Bhagwat Dayal's leadership in Haryana before it was too late resulted in an unnecessary period of floor-crossings and political instability.

### Conclusion

The political events analysed in this study of intra-party factionalism were researched at a time when there was overwhelming discontent with Congress government policies and leadership, and even loyal Congress supporters were prepared to concede that the party had "failed to provide strong leadership".<sup>4</sup> While political scientists had described India's political system from 1947 to 1967 as one-party dominance because it had enjoyed political hegemony

---

<sup>4</sup>Samuel J. Eldersveld, "The 1967 Indian Election: Patterns of Party Regularity and Defection", Asian Survey, X, 11, (November 1970), p.1028.

throughout India, the decline of the Congress, in the fourth general elections of 1967, and its eventual split in November 1969, caused many to begin to assess the extent to which the Indian political system was now in a process of decay.<sup>5</sup> It was suggested that the absence of an ideological orientation among most Congressmen and the absence of national integration had led to the predominance of caste, communal, parochial and personality pulls within the organisation and that bossism, factionalism and cliquism had reached almost unmanageable proportions in the post-1967 political environment. This situation was compounded by the lack of a towering personality at the centre and a serious split in the central leadership of the ruling party which enabled state party leaders to consolidate their position at the expense of the minority factions.<sup>6</sup> When the Congress finally split into two parties in November, 1969, many assumed that the period of one-party dominance in India had finally ended and that there would be an ideological polarization and re-alignment of forces thereby creating a two or three-party

---

<sup>5</sup>L.P. Singh, "Political Development or Political Decay in India", Pacific Affairs, XLIV 1, (Spring 1971) p.66.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p.72.



system,<sup>7</sup> but there was considerable uncertainty as to whether this would evolve into a viable "equilibrium" system or whether it would produce multi-party instability, immobilisme and political decay. For a time, it appeared possible that the Haryana interlude from 1967 to 1969 of floor-crossings and political instability would be duplicated at the national level. Mrs. Indira Gandhi's landslide victory as leader of the New Congress in the March 1971 elections, however, has shown that a reconciliation party such as the Congress, with the right leadership and the right policies, can re-establish one-party dominance and restrain the process towards political fragmentation and instability. Both India, and Haryana, have come through a period of political crisis which threatened to undermine the viability of the political system. Both, for the moment, appear to have overcome the problem, but the present one-party dominance system can only be sustained if care is taken on the part of the party leadership, especially at the centre, to keep intra-party factional dissidence under control.

---

<sup>7</sup>Authors taking this approach included: W.H. Morris-Jones, "The Indian Congress Party: A Dilemma of Dominance", Modern Asian Studies, I 2, (1967), p.132; Subash C. Kashyap, The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India, (Delhi: National Publishing House, 1969), pp.394-396; Iqbal Narain, "Democratic Politics and Political Development in India", Asian Survey, X 2, (February 1970), pp.88-99.

The evidence of this Haryana political case study would suggest that, while it cannot be denied that intra-party factions may have a functional role to play in the recruitment of political support for political parties in developing countries, the existence of such intra-party cleavages may be dysfunctional for political stability when the leadership of a ruling party fails to maintain the capacity to reconcile the conglomeration of factions representing different conflicting interests in the state. When large-scale defections from a party in power are the result, the situation may lead to a complete breakdown of the political system's ability to provide stable government. This, in turn, may lead to a pervasive feeling of frustration with the democratic approach to politics in the general society and result in a willingness amongst the populace to accept a radical remedy for the problem. The political elite of a developing country, therefore, must recognize that political stability in a state rests on a recognition of the existing power structure of **society**. While political stability may not result even with this recognition, the chief lesson of Haryana is that it certainly cannot come in denying it.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Government Publications

- Great Britain. Indian Statutory Commission. Report of the Indian Statutory Commission. London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1930. Vol. I and Vol. III.
- Haryana. The Economic and Statistical Advisor to Government. Statistical Abstract of Haryana 1967. Chandigarh: Government of Haryana, 1968.
- India. Census of India. 1931, Vol. XVII, Part 2 (Punjab). Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1933.
- India. Election Commission. Report on the Fourth General Elections in India 1967. Vol. II (Statistical). Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1967.
- India. Note on Land Transfer and Agricultural Indebtedness in India. Calcutta: Government of India, Central Publication Branch, 1895.
- India. Punjab Reorganisation Act. No. 31. New Delhi: 1966.
- India. Report of the Punjab Boundary Commission. New Delhi: Government of India; Publications Division, 1966.
- Punjab. Annual Report of the Working of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act XIII of 1900. Lahore: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1903.
- Punjab. Haryana Development Committee. Final Report. Chandigarh: Controller, Printing and Stationery, 1965.

Punjab. Report on the Administration of the Punjab and its Dependencies for 1882-83. Lahore: 1884.

Punjab. Report on the Administration of the Punjab for 1901-02. Lahore: Superintendent of Government Printing, 1902.

### Books

Ahmed, Syed Nur. Mian Fazl-i-Husain: A Review of His Life and Work. Lahore: Punjab Educational Press, [1936].

Barrier, Norman G. The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill of 1900. Duke University: Commonwealth Studies Centre, Monograph Number Two, 1965.

Brass, Paul R. Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965.

Darling, Malcolm. The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt. Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1947.

Darling, Malcolm. Rusticus Loquitor or the Old and the New in the Punjab Village. London: Oxford University Press, 1930.

Geiger, Theodore. The Conflicted Relationship: The West and the Transformation of Asia, Africa and Latin America. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1967.

Huntington, Samuel P. Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Husain, Azim. Fazl-i-Husain: A Political Biography. Bombay: Longmans, Green, 1946.

Ibbetson, Denzil. Punjab Castes. Lahore: Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1916.

The Imperial Gazetteer of India. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1908. Vol. XX.

Kamal, K.L. Spotlight on Rajasthan Politics. Alwar-Jaipur: Prakash Publishers, 1967.

Kashyap, Subhash C. The Politics of Defection: A Study of State Politics in India. Delhi: National Publishing House, 1964.

Key, V.O., Jr. Politics, Parties and Pressure Groups. 3rd ed. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1952.

Kochanek, Stanley A., The Congress Party of India: The Dynamics of One-Party Democracy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Lal, Shadi. Commentaries on the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900. 5th ed. Lahore: University Book Agency, 1939.

Lewis, Oscar. Village Life in Northern India. New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1958.

Morris-Jones, W.H. The Government and Politics of India. London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967.

Nayar, Baldev Raj. Minority Politics in the Punjab.  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Prabhakar, Devi Shankar. Hariyana: Ek Sanskritik Adhyayan.  
(Haryana: A Cultural Study) in Hindi. Delhi:  
Umaesh Prakshan, 1967.

Pradhan, M.C. The Political System of the Jats of Northern India. Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Rai, Satya M. Partition of the Punjab: A Study of Its Effects on the Politics and Administration of the Punjab (I) 1947-56.  
Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965.

Rose, H.A. A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North-West Frontier. Lahore: Civil and Military Gazette Press, 1911, Vol. II.

Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber. The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India.  
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Scalapino, Robert A., and Masumi, Junnosuke. Parties and Politics in Contemporary Japan. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962.

Singh, Baljit. Next Step in Village India. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1961.

Srinivas, M.N. Caste in Modern India and Other Essays.  
London: Asia Publishing House, 1962.

Tripathi, R.P. Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire. Allahabad: Central Book Depot, 1956.

Wallace, Paul. The Political Party System of Punjab State: A Study of Factionalism. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. Berkeley: University of California, 1966.

Weiner, Myron. Party Building in a New Nation: The Indian National Congress. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Weiner, Myron. Party Politics in India: The Development of a Multi-Party System. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

#### Pamphlets

Chand, Duni. Congress Service Series: Events of 1937 to 1946. Indore: Bhargava Fine Art Printing Works, 1946.

Chand, Duni. Rasti aur Rastibaazi hi Congress ko phir ek Baritaqut Bana Sukti Hai. n.d. (1950?) [Urdu].

Constitution of the Vishal Haryana Party. Chandigarh: 1967 (Mimeographed.)

Vishal Hariyana Kyon? (Why Vishal Haryana?) Rampura Village, Rewari: Vishal Haryana Party, 1969.

Singh, Sher. The Case of Haryana and Hindi Region of the Punjab. Rohtak: Haryana Lok Smiti, 1962.

### Articles and Periodicals

Aggarwal, Partap C. "A Muslim Sub-Caste of Northern India: Problems of Cultural Integration." Economic and Political Weekly, September 10, 1966, pp.159-161.

Ahmed, Bashiruddin. "Caste in Electoral Politics." Asian Survey, X, 11, (November, 1970), 979-992.

Anand, J.C. "Punjab Politics: A Summary (1947-65)." State Politics in India. Edited by Iqbal Narain. Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1966.

Anant, Santokh Singh. "Caste Hindu Attitudes: The Harijans' Perceptions." Asian Survey, XI, 3, (March, 1971), 271-278.

Barrier, Norman G. "The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab." Journal of Asian Studies, XXVI, 3, (May, 1967), 363-379.

Barrier, Norman G. "The Formulation and Enactment of the Punjab Alienation of Land Bill." Indian Economic and Social History Review, II, 2 (April, 1965), 145-165.

Beteille, Andre. "The Problem." Seminar 107, (July, 1968), 10-12.

Blitz. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Bose, A.B., and Malhotra, S.P. "Factionalism in a Desert Village." Man in India, XLIV, 4 (October-December, 1964), 311-328.



Burki, Shahid Javed. "Social and Economic Determinants of Political Violence: A Case Study of the Punjab." The Middle East Journal, XXV, 4 (Autumn, 1971), 465-480.

Deutsch, Karl W. "Social Mobilization and Political Development." American Political Science Review, LV (1961), 493-514.

Diamant, Alfred. "The Nature of Political Development." Political Development and Social Change. Edited by Jason L. Finkle and Richard W. Gable. New York: Wiley, 1966.

Dube, S.C. "Crisis in Leadership." Seminar 107, (July, 1968), 32-35.

Eldesveld, Samuel J. "The 1967 Indian Election: Patterns of Party Regularity and Defection." Asian Survey, X, 11 (November, 1970), 1015-1030.

"Faction." Encyclopaedia Britannica. 11th ed., Vol. X.

Firth, Raymond. "Factions in India and Overseas Indian Societies." British Journal of Sociology, VIII, 4 (October, 1957), 295-306.

Gould, Harold A. "The Adaptive Function of Caste in Contemporary Indian Society." Asian Survey, III, 9 (September, 1963), 427-438.

Goyal, O.P., and Wallace, Paul. "The Congress Party - A Conceptual Study." India Quarterly, XX, 2 (April-June, 1964), 180-201.

Gray, Hugh. "The 1962 General Elections in a Rural District of Andhra." Asian Survey, II, 7 (September, 1962), 25-35.

Gusfield, Joseph R. "Political Community and Group Interests in Modern India." Pacific Affairs, XXXVIII, 2, (Summer, 1965), 123-141.

Hind Samachar. 1968-1969.

The Hindu. (Madras), March 15, June 10, 1966.

Hindustan Times. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Indian Express. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

The Indian Quarterly Register. 1927-35.

Jain, S.P. "Leadership Pattern in a North Indian Community." Sociology and Social Research, IV (June, 1971), 170-180.

Jha, Shashishekhar. "Factionalism" Seminar 107, (July, 1968), 36-38.

Kapur, Narinder S. "Congress Party Politics in Haryana." The Indian Political Science Review, I, 3 & 4 (April-October, 1967), 145-156.

Kashyap, Subhash. "Politics of Defection: The Changing Contours of the Political Power Structure in State Politics in India." Asian Studies, X, 3 (March, 1970), 195-208.

Khan, Rasheeduddin. "The Indian Political Landscape." India Quarterly, XXIV, 4 (October-December, 1968), 301-310.

Khare, R.S. "Encompassing and Ecompassed: A Deductive Theory of Caste System." The Journal of Asian Studies, XXX, 4 (August, 1971), 859-868.

Khare, R.S. "Group Dynamics in a North Indian Village." Human Organisation, XXI, 3 (Fall, 1962), 201-213.

Kochanek, Stanley A. "Political Recruitment in the Indian National Congress: The Fourth General Elections." Asian Survey, VII, 5 (May, 1967), 292-304.

Kothari, Rajni. "Congress and Consensus." Seminar 94, (June, 1967), 23-30.

Kothari, Rajni. "The Congress 'System' in India." Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Occasional Papers: Number One. Party System and Election Studies. Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1967.

Kothari, Rajni. "Continuity and Change in India's Party System." Asian Survey, X, 11 (November, 1970), 937-948.

Kothari, Rajni, and Maru, Rushikesh. "Caste and Secularism in India." Journal of Asian Studies, XXV, 1 (November, 1965), 33-50.

Kumar, D.P. "The State of Haryana." The Statesman, December 24, 1966.

Lal, Bansi. "Haryana: Focus on Fast Growth." Indian and Foreign Review, IX, 1 (October 15, 1971), 9-10.

Lasswell, Harold D. "Faction." Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences. New York: MacMillan, 1931. Vol. V.

Link. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Lipson, Leslie. "Faction," A Dictionary of the Social Sciences. London: Tavistock Publications, 1964.

McDonough, Peter. "Electoral Competition and Participation in India: A Test of Huntington's Hypothesis." Comparative Politics, IV, 1 (October, 1971), 77-88.

Madsen, Douglas. "Solid Congress Support in 1967: A Statistical Inquiry." Asian Survey, X, 11 (November, 1970), 1004-1014.

Marvick, Dwaine. "Party Cadres and Receptive Partisan Voters in the 1967 Indian National Election." Asian Survey, X, 11 (November, 1970), 949-967.

Mayer, Adrian C. "Caste and Local Politics in India." India and Ceylon: Unity and Diversity. Edited by Philip Mason. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.

Mayer, Adrian C. "Rural Leaders and the Indian General Elections." Asian Survey, I, 8 (October, 1961), 23-29.

Miller, D.F. "Factions in Indian Village Politics." Pacific Affairs, XXXVIII, 1 (Spring, 1965), 17-31.

Morris-Jones, W.H. "The Indian Congress Party: A Dilemma of Dominance." Modern Asian Studies, I, 1 (1967) 109-132.

Morris-Jones, W.H. "India's Political Idioms." Politics and Society in India. Edited by C.H. Philips, New York: Praeger, 1962.

Nandy, Ashis. "The Culture of Indian Politics." The Journal of Asian Studies, XXX, 1 (November, 1970), 57-81.

Narain, Iqbal. "Democratic Politics and Political Development in India." Journal of Asian Studies, XXX, 1 (November, 1970), 88-99.

Narain, Iqbal. "Ideology and Political Development: Battle for Issues in Indian Politics." Asian Survey, XI, 2 (February, 1971), 185-196.

National Herald. 1968-69.

Nayar, Baldev Raj. "Punjab". State Politics in India. Edited by Myron Weiner. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968.

Needler, Martin C. "The Political Development of Mexico." American Political Science Review, LV (1961), 308-12.

The New York Times. January 30, 1970.

The Overseas Hindustan Times. (Weekly), October 2, 1971.

Padgett, L. Vincent. "Mexico's One-Party System: A Re-evaluation." American Political Science Review, LV (1957), 995-1008.

Palmer, Norman D. "India's Fourth General Elections." Asian Survey, VII, 5 (May, 1967), 275-291.

Parry, J.P. "Trusteeship and Power." Seminar 107, (July, 1968), 22-25.

Patriot. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Prabhat. 1968-69.

Pradeep. 1968-69.

Pratap. 1968-69.

Schachter, Ruth. "Single Party Systems in West Africa" American Political Science Review, LV (1961), 294-307.

Sharma, R.K. "Congress Gains from a Divided Opposition in Haryana." Economic and Political Weekly, July 1, 1967, 1183-1186.

Siegal, Bernard J., and Beals, Allan R. "Pervasive Factionalism." American Anthropologist, LXII, 3 (1960) 394-417.

Singh, L.P. "Political Development or Political Decay in India?" Pacific Affairs, XLIV, 1 (Spring, 1971), 65-80.

Sisson, Richard. "Peasant Movements and Political Mobilization: the Jats of Rajasthan." Asian Survey, IX, 11 (November, 1969), 946-1002.

Statesman. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Stockwin, J.A.A. "A Comparison of Political Factionalism in Japan and India." The Australian Journal of Politics and History, XVI, 3 (December, 1970), 361-374.

Retzlaff, Ralph J. "India: A Year of Stability and Change." Asian Survey, III, 2 (February, 1963), 96-106.

Rolnick, Phyllis J. "Political Ideology: Reality and Myth in India." Asian Survey, II, 9 (November, 1962), 19-32.

Roy, Ramashray. "Factionalism and 'Stratarchy': The experience of the Congress Party." Asian Survey, VII, 12 (December, 1967), 896-908.

Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber. "The Political Role of India's Caste Associations." Pacific Affairs, XXXIII, 1 (March, 1960), 5-22.

Tej. 1968-69.

Times of India. (New Delhi), 1966-69.

Totten, George O., and Kamakami, Tamio. "The Functions of Factionalism in Japanese Politics." Pacific Affairs, XXXCIII, 2 (Summer, 1965), 109-122.

Tribune. (Ambala), 1966-69.

Weiner, Myron. "India: Two Political Cultures." Political Culture and Political Development. Edited by Lucian W. Pye and Sidney Verba. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965.

Weiner, Myron. "India's Third General Elections." Asian Survey, II, 3 (May, 1962), 3-18.

Wallace, Paul. "India: The Dispersion of Political Power." Asian Survey, VIII, 2 (February, 1968), 87-96.

Unpublished Material.

Nayar, Baldev Raj. Contemporary Political Leadership in the Punjab. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1963.

Nayar, Baldev Raj. Interview Files, 1961. (Typewritten).

Wallace, Paul. The Political Party System of Punjab State, India: A Study of Factionalism. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Berkeley: University of California, 1966.