

ANANDMURTI

# The Mystery Man

**S**INGING and dancing to the tune of Baba Naam Kevalam groups of saffron-clad sanyasis marched through the streets of Patna on July 4, realizing that they are back on the road of bliss. Millions of Anand Margis the world over, at the same time, were celebrating the day as the "Victory of Dharma". Their Guru Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar alias Anandmurti the "God-incarnate" was no longer a troubled or haunted man, no longer a "criminal".

The Patna High Court has acquitted him of all charges of criminal conspiracy and killing of six Anand Marg defectors, the charge that had brought him down from the lotus-shaped podium to a dark cell in Patna Central Jail. Acquitted with him were four of his trusted followers Acharya Sarveshwaranand Awadhoot, the former general secretary of Marg, Acharya Satyanand Awadhoot, the senior-most monk (Awadhoot), Baran Kumar Mukherji and Pavitra Kumar Roy.

The verdict of the court, setting at liberty the Anandmurti after he had spent seven years in jail, has come exactly on the day when the entire organization with all its front-organizations was outlawed by the Government in 1975. The court was satisfied that the prosecution (CBI) has failed to prove the charges against Anandmurti and others.

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar alias Anand-



Anandmurti—more char...

INDIA TODAY, AUGUST 1975



Margis celebrating acquittal of their guru—back on the road to bliss

urti 57, the Spiritual head of Anand Marg—the eternal path of bliss—has always been a controversial figure. While his millions of followers throughout the globe regard him as a "God-incarnate", his critics have been describing him as an "ambitious megalomaniac" allegedly exhorting his disciples to grab political power through physical violence.

An ex-employee of the Jamalpur railway workshop, Anandmurti, has been a mystery ever since he founded his socio-spiritual organization. While his critics maintain that Anand Marg is nothing but a "pseudo-spiritual organization" his followers claim that it is a system with twin objectives of Atma Jyoti (liberation of self) and Jagat Laya (service to humanity). To attain the "ultimate" the "founder-preceptor" promulgated a scientific spiritual ideology of "Tantra Yoga". And to achieve the ideals of spiritualization Anandmurti innovated and taught a psychological cult comprising a new system the Astanga path (eightfold path). "The temple makes the person elevate himself in physical consciousness to spiritual bliss. Hence it is named Anand Marg," says an ardent follower. After the organization was founded in 1954-55 it widened its horizons and now it has its followers in 96 countries all over the world.

Anandmurti along with his organization, however, came under a cloud when CBI filed a case against him on the charge of murdering six Marg deserters in July-August 1970 and finally arrested him along with four of his followers on December 29, 1971 from the Marg quarters at Patliputra colony in Patna after one of his disciples named an approver in the case. Since then he is in jail. He was convicted by the Sessions

Court of Patna with his four disciples on November 26, 1976 on the charge of criminal conspiracy and killing but was acquitted of all charges by the Patna High Court on July 4, 1978.

However, Anandmurti's agony is yet not over as he is still to secure bail in one of the four other murder cases at Ranchi. The bail petition was however rejected by the Judicial Commissioner of Ranchi on July 14 and now his lawyers are planning to move the High Court for grant of bail on the plea that when the court has already rejected the statement of the approver in the main case, all other cases based on approver's statement, should be dropped.

INDIA TODAY correspondent relentlessly pursued Anandmurti for an interview but his continued detention made it impossible. Ultimately, Anandmurti's private assistant Acharya Ramanand who is a regular visitor to the jail agreed to present a set of questions to Anandmurti. Ramanand reported back: "Baba never agrees for interview but in your case, your questionnaire though most critical was unusually welcomed by him." The following is Anandmurti's reply to our questionnaire.

**Q. How do you feel about the verdict of the High Court? While millions of your followers the world over celebrated the day as "Victory of Dharma" you did not express any reaction and one of your followers explained that since you are Nirbhikar (passionless) you received this news coolly. Is it a fact you never react to anything and if so why?**

**A.** Victory of Dharma is a natural phenomenon. Everything natural should be accepted with normal coolness.

**Q. Your followers allege that you and**

**your organization have been a victim of a calculated malicious propaganda by a certain agency aimed at destroying your organization. Much damage has been caused to your organization during the past seven years during which you were in jail. Now, if you are acquitted of all charges, how do you plan to remove misunderstanding from public mind to re-establish your organization?**

**A.** We will be doing our humanitarian duties with subjective approach and objective adjustment.

**Q. Much confusion was created in the past because of lack of communication between you and the general public. Do you now think it is proper to have public contacts so that the confusion does not persist? Why have you lived a secluded life in the past?**

**A.** There is no necessity of my coming in public contact because actual social service is rendered by the workers of the organization. I simply assist the workers.

**Q. The speed with which Anand Marg has spread in the west and attracted a large number of people, has created misgivings that it is being supported or sponsored by some foreign agencies. Moreover, your attacks on KGB and CBI in the past without mentioning the name of CIA has added to the confusion. What have you to say this allegation?**

**A.** I do not know if CIA did any harm to Anand Marg. If the same is brought to my notice with sufficient proof, I will certainly condemn them. I have got no weakness for any organization. Good people should always be supported and bad condemned in unambiguous language.

**Q. It was alleged that you wanted to capture political power and establish Sadvipra Raj in the world. No doubt this was refuted in the court but at the same time the books referred to in the court during trial confirmed this view in which you have said, "Violence is the essence of life." How do you explain the fact?**

**A.** What I said in the court is final. The word I use is "Sadvipra Samaj and not Sadvipra Raj". "Raj" is a microscopic fraction of Samaja. My view regarding violence has already been clarified by me. It is not always Himsa. My interpretation of violence can co-exist with Ahimsa.

**Q. Do you have any political ambitions? Do you feel that unless corruption was removed, the society would not be of your liking? And how do you want to establish that kind of society? Unless you take active part in politics, is it possible?**

**A.** I have got no political ambition. I have propounded the theory of Prout for the welfare of human society. This theory will be materialized by those who love it.

**Q. What is your opinion about democracy?**

**A.** Democracy can be successful only where the following essential factors are present at least amongst 51 per cent of the voters—morality, literacy and socio-economic-political consciousness. Otherwise it is an instrument to befool the public.