

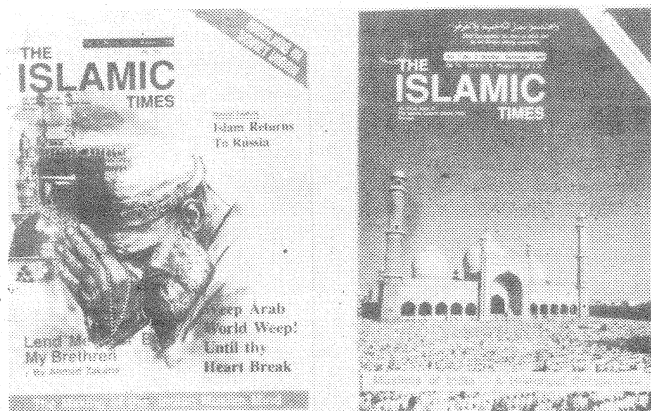
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Not a Holy War But a Game of Geopolitics

Suddenly Saddam Husain of Iraq has become a folk-hero from the Atlantic to the Pacific. There is a Saddam Wave in India.

Muslim India is in the throes of a pro-Saddam frenzy.

The mass upsurge has taken the national leadership, the official establishment, the mass media, by surprise. Political parties which had lost all hopes of cutting into Muslim votes are rushing in to cash on the Saddam Wave and find their way back into Muslim favour. The religious fundamentalist and the leftist are vying with each other in adoring Saddam Husain. The anti-American and the anti-Russian have found a common cause in defending Saddam Husain.

Saddam Husain is seen as the Mujahid par excellence, as the emergent leader of the Third World, as the hero of anti-imperialist resistance, as the Unifier of the Arabs, as the Liberator of Palestine, as the symbol of Iraqi Nationalism.

David vs Goliath

When a David is pitted against a Goliath, people instinctively cheer David. The Afro-Asian world is still basically anti-imperialist, anti-West and anti-American. The Muslim World is still licking its wounds, frustrated, disunited and waiting for the restoration of the unity of the Umma. Unity demands power, a cause, a personality and a mystique. The Arab World is looking for a Salahuddin Ayyubi. And Muslim Indians, beleaguered, deprived, oppressed, besieged by chauvinist forces, are only seeking vicarious satisfaction in the heroism of a co-religionist called Saddam Husain! Pathetic, indeed so symptomatic of the depth of their frustration.

Holy War?

The war raging in the Gulf is not a Holy War. It is not a war between Christianity and Islam; it is not a war for promoting Islam or for defending the Muslims. It is a war between Iraq and Kuwait, in which Iraq stands condemned by the International community and isolated and in which Kuwait has been able to muster the support of the USA and its allies. Everyone admits that Iraq has committed unjustifiable act of aggression against Kuwait; that Kuwait's cause, the cause of sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, is just, that Iraq must vacate Kuwait. Every one knows that unless Iraq vacates Kuwait, or at least declares its intention to do so to disgorge what it has been able to digest, there cannot be a ceasefire. Every one understands that Saddam Husain is ultimately responsible for the death and destruction in the Gulf; that Saddam Husain is sacrificing his people and all the progress Iraq has made on the altar of his ego, not for the glory of Islam or even of Arabism. Yet the while the Muslim Indians shed tears for the victims of war, they do not ask Saddam Husain to quit Kuwait!

Does Islam sanction aggression and plunder and that too of a small state by a big neighbour? Does not Islam stand for 'Adl' and for 'Amn' and not for 'FITNA' and 'FASAD'? And not long ago Saddam Husain the Mujahid, destroyed Islamic movement in Iraq, waged a war against Iran in which a million lives were lost and poured chemical gas over the Kurds and the Iranians.

Liberation of Palestine

Muslim Indians support the indisputable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, to a state of their own. They oppose Israel's occupation of the Arab occupied territories. They identify themselves with the spirit of Intifada. They demand resolute action by the UN to secure for the people of Palestine their long suppressed rights. They realise that for its own strategic reasons, USA has adopted a policy of supporting and arming Israel and that for this reason the Arab states have not been able to dislodge Israel, for less to destroy it. In their sympathy for the Palestinian cause, they are taken in by Saddam Husain's attack on Israel — which has not even dented the Israeli war machine — and by his demand for linking Iraqi vacation of Kuwait with Israeli vacation of the occupied territories. One may see the linkage as a clever though transparent game plan but what is important is that this was never a part of Saddam Husain's original war plan; it is an afterthought, to mislead the Palestinians, the Arabs and the Muslims and the Third World, in general. One has only to look at Iraq's role since 1947 and Saddam's own track record that they have made precious little contribution to the Arab action against Israel. And why should Kuwait and the people who were living there pay for Saddam Husain's sudden love for the long-suffering people of Palestine? Why should liberation of Palestine mean the occupation and destruction of Kuwait? No, his objective was Kuwait, not Israel.

Iraq's missile attack on Israel is nothing more than a political play to enlarge the theatre of war and to create a divide among the allies. But Israel has refused to oblige Saddam Husain.

The war and the Sanctity of the Holy Land

Muslim Indians love and revere the Holy Land and they are distressed by the threat to its security and sanctity as they are under the impression that the West has a military presence in the Hedjaz where the Holy Cities are situated. Hedjaz is totally untouched by war. Secondly, non-Muslims are only barred from entering the Holy Cities and not Hedjaz. Thirdly, any state has the right to seek the assistance of co-operation of other friendly states when under threat. On the other hand, let us ask Saddam Husain whether his military adventure against Israel has not jeopardised the security of the Holy Cities. Tomorrow

row Israel may decide to retaliate and adopting Saddam Husain's logic, rain missiles and bombs on the Holy Cities.

West's Motives

Indubitably the West's moral indignation and military response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait is not due to any love for freedom or for the Arabs or even for Kuwait or its ruling family. It is primarily meant to maintain easy access to the oil resources of the Gulf. If Iraq takes over Kuwait, can the conquest of Bahrain, Qatar and Arab Emirates be far behind? Iraq may not be able to occupy Iran or Saudi Arabia but they have to play second fiddle when Iraq controls the Gulf. Iraq shall then dictate terms, set the world price, control the supply at its sweet will. With the revenues so generated, Iraq may build a yet more gigantic war machine to threaten its bigger neighbours, emerge as a regional power, control the sea lanes. So the West has its reasons to oppose Saddam Husain.

But when the oil price shoots up, the West, whose goods, technology and services Iraq needs, shall to some extent be able to absorb the shock. Can the Third World, can the sub-continent, absorb the shock? So, the real fodder for Saddam Husain's guns shall be the hungry masses of the Third World, not the pleasure seeking Sheikhs or Amirs or the affluent people of the West. The future of the Third World is at stake, not that of the West.

Pan-Islamism and Muslim Minorities.

Since the decay of the Khilafat in the 13th Century, the Muslim world, in general, and since the disintegration of the Moghul empire, Muslim Indians, in particular, have been waiting for angels and looking for heroes. At various times, Anwar, Mustafa Kamal or Ismet from Turkey, Mahdi from Sudan, Sennusi from Libya, Afghani or Amanullah from Afghanistan or later Nasser, Faisal, Khomeini, Qaddafi or Zia-ul-Haque, the heroes of the day, captured the imagination of some of them and were acclaimed as the saviours of Islam. Today it is Saddam; tomorrow it shall be someone else. Not that any foreign hero had anything positive to offer or could do anything solid for them. Their approach was always emotional rather than intellectual. And, therefore, when the heroes, they adored, fell or were disowned by their own people, they were left high and dry; they received a shock, they felt stunned. Can mirage quench a thirst? Can hollow pride fill up bellies? Can sentiments solve problems? Can curses and abuses change the power patterns?

Let us be frank. Some Muslims continue to live in dream of an die for a world-view that is no longer valid, in the modern world of nation-states. A political minority in a nation state has the democratic right to stand against a national decision, howsoever vital, but a religious or ethnic minority in a nation-state cannot do so, without being misunderstood, accused of extra-territorial loyalty and even treason. Today the Muslims in the USA and UK are facing an anti Islamic resurgence because they have

lined up with Saddam Husain without a second thought for their host state, without pausing to consider national interests and questioning Saddam Husain's credentials. Had India taken a decision to join the military action against Saddam Husain, how would the majority react to the Muslim hysteria? There is no Gandhi today to understand our sentimental attachment to the Khilafat and divert our energies for the cause of freedom.

Baghdad can never become the capital of the Muslim world, not even the Arab world, primarily because of its geographical location which creates a religious fact. Iraq is at the periphery of the Arab World and Shia Iran, just next to Iraq, divides the Arabs from the non-Arabs in the Muslim world which is largely Sunni. Calling Saddam Husain Amir-ul-Momineen does not revive the Khilafat. Nor can the Khilafat today be a practical proposition for Muslim states or a panacea for the Muslim minorities. Every Muslim community, whether a majority or a minority within the territorial limits of a state, has to come to terms with its political environment on its own strength because no modern state, with the exception of Israel, is prepared to open its doors or to share its resources or opportunities with the foreigners, even if they profess the same faith.

Rule of Law : Need of the Weak

In the world of power politics, the rule of law alone can protect small states and the minority groups within nation-state. Iraq's occupation of Kuwait is a clear negation of the rule of law in every sense of the term. Historical claims cannot justify violation of existing agreements. Conflict of economic interest must be sorted out peacefully, without recourse to aggression.

There are not doubt historic states and artificial states created and maintained by foreign powers in their interest. Some states are no doubt run like private estates. Yet, international boundaries are sacrosanct and cannot be changed by use of force. Similarly, the people of a state alone have the right to change the form of government. Objectively speaking, there is no difference between a dictatorship based on a small coterie and a monarchy based on a family. No foreign support can save an oligarchy against the people. But if a people choose to live under Tyranny, it is their business, not anyone else's?

Impact on Indian Economy

India is one of the Third World countries which has paid the price of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and which shall pay a still heavier price, if Kuwait indeed became the 19th province of Iraq.

- * Instant unemployment for hundreds of thousands of Indian nationals.
- * Transformation of professionals and workers into destitute refugees.
- * Loss of savings, not to speak of moveable and immoveable properties.
- * Loss of support for the dependants at home and of the

BJP : Report of Working Group on Political Strategy

...We shall neither appease any body nor allow any injustice to be done to anyone. Let them stand up as men with a capital M, be true to their faith as Muslims and true to the country and the culture that is common to us all as Indians. And they will have no problem. Let them work shoulder to shoulder with everybody else to rebuild the country."

..."Some of our professional detractors have been all along inciting our Muslim brethren against the BJP. These gentlemen's only interest in Muslims is their votes. And their only gift to the Muslims is some stunts. If the Muslims are happy with this situation they are welcome to it. If not, let them sit up and think a fresh. The BJP would advise them to free themselves from fear. We shall neither appease anybody nor allow any injustice to be done to anyone."

..."More recently job reservation has been promised to the Other Backward Classes. The BJP has favoured job reservation with economic criterion — that is, for the poor among the backwards. However, the BJP is convinced that job reservation is not enough. Bright children of poor families must be helped to come up and get jobs on merit.

"Nor need we stop there. Only 10%

people are employed in private, public and Government service. The remaining 90% are selfemployed as farmers, artisans, etc. The BJP should think in terms of re-training these people in their respective craft or occupation so that they can improve their economic condition. The State should also give them interest-free loans to modernize their equipment and implements."

...Today every party — the Congress(I), the Janata Dals, the Left parties and the BJP — more or less stand on a par with each other. The traditional weightage that the Congress (I) used to enjoy at the battle of the hustings (the solid minority vote) has disappeared."

....."So far, Governments in India have been run only by Congressmen or ex-Congressmen. Today all these people stand thoroughly discredited. The whole country is looking towards the BJP with hope and expectation. The party today occupies centre stage in the national polity. We have to start working now to emerge as the first party in the land." "This could happen if the party was able to secure 20% of the popular votes polled.

With suicide of the V.P. Singh Government and the stillborn new Government of Mr. Chandra Shek-

har which is really yet another Congress Government — we have today in India what can only be described as a caricature of a government. It is a situation in which the Centre is not able to hold and things are falling apart. The BJP as the party of National Unity, National Integration and National Honour has to come forward and fill this power vacuum.

The BJP has been tested and tried and found good and strong... All this has made the BJP a formidable force in India politics today.

The resounding success of the Ram Rath Yatra was the eloquent evidence of accretion of this new strength of the BJP. However, the stronger the party grows the louder and shriller grow the calumnies of our calumniators. The BJP shall not be diverted by its detractors. It shall implement its election manifesto in full and give effect to the long-neglected Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution in letter and in spirit. And it shall give the country unity and integrity, law and order, peace and progress. It shall not stop at building Ram Janambhoomi Mandir. It shall go ahead and strive to establish Ram Rajya — that is, a just and moral order in social, economic and political spheres of life....

foreign exchange for the country.

- * Strangulation of oil supply with consequent shortage and rise in the price of petroleum and petroleum-products with inflationary pressure affecting all articles of mass consumption.
- * Loss of foreign trade.
- * Environmental pollution.

Impact of Iraq's Defeat on Muslim Indians

While Saddam Husain may go down in Iraq's history as a national hero, Iraq will lose the war, sooner than later. Muslim Indians will be left with nothing but deep frustration and unbounded demoralisation, face to face with chauvinist assertion at home and economic denial abroad. Why should the other Gulf states welcome them back?

Internationally, their frenzy is arming their adversar-

ies, the Hindu chauvinists. It is providing Hindu communalism with a stick to beat them with, with an argument that the Muslim Indian has extra-territorial loyalties, that physically he lies in India but mentally he inhabits the World of Islam. The RSS the VHP and the BJP are indeed so happy that they cannot hide their glee at this windfall, at this tremendous opportunity, the Muslim Indians are themselves providing, to drive the wedge further between the Muslim and Hindu Indians, to widen the gulf of intolerance and suspicion.

Are we determined to be losers at home and abroad, today and tomorrow?

New Delhi
1 March, 1991

BJP : Views of President Murli Manohar Joshi

...Advani has tried to create an awareness that we share a common legacy. He has successfully explained the dangers of pseudosecularism, the policy of appeasement of minorities and has succeeded in garnering support from all sections. Thousands of Muslims joined the kar sewa...

...That the VHP-sponsored Kar sewa and the rath yatra led to bloody communal riots and deepened the divide between communities... is a most absurd statement...

Uma Bharati has nothing to do with these riots, not a single place visited by Uma Bharati and Advani had riots...

Hindu rashtra need not be a formal structure. It is the basic culture of this country. I say that **all Indian Muslims are Mohammadiya Hindus; all Indian Christians are Christi Hindus. They are Hindus who have adopted Christianity and Islam as their religion.** So long as we call this country India, so long the majority believe they are Hindus, India will never go theocratic. It is my guarantee that India would remain secular as long as it remains a Hindu majority country...

No political capital will be made out of Ram. But we say pseudo-secularism is dangerous. India gets its identity from Ram, not Babar. Similarly, the issue is not of mandir versus masjid, it is between a temple and a non-mosque.

Aren't there other issues which are far more important? There are (other issues) but the question of nation's identity is very significant... For holding the nation together the Ram-janmabhoomi issue is important. Corruption, poverty, illiteracy, etc., are important issues but are interlinked. The question is whether you want... India... represented by the ethos of Ram or.. India humiliated by Babar.

...It is not religious fervour. It is national fervour. When Gandhi talked of Ram Rajya it was not reli-

gion. When in 1857, you took bread and lotus as the symbols of revolution, it was not religion. It is culture. And Hindu culture is the main theme of India's nationalism...

People called even Gandhi and... Patel communal. Communalism has been the handicraft of Nehruvian model to beat your opponent. Nehru called... Tandon communal... Hindu ethos... was dubbed communal because it was a danger for pseudo-secular politics.

(Source: The Sunday Observer, 13 January, 1991)

The people are fed up with the double dealers and hypocrites. They are tired of those indulging in "double talk". They have no use for those who say in private "Arre bhai Masjid hai hi kahan" and publicly denounce the attempt to rebuild the temple.

Minorities too are realising that pseudo-secularists have been treating them as vote-banks and that they will feel more secure and safe in a country run by the BJP. They know the BJP does not treat minorities as expendables and would not sacrifice them for its office.

I want to reassure the minorities that the country will be riot-free under the BJP as the BJP run states have been free of communal violence. We have no vested interest in riots. We are committed to peace and communal harmony.

Some of the major issues we would project are nationalism versus secessionism, positive secularism-versus-pseudo-secularism... and identity of India as a nation.

The issue is what constitutes Indian nationalism. Its fundamentals are sharing of a common culture which in essence is Hindu culture. Call it by whatever name you like, 90 per cent texture of Indian culture is Hindu. "Hindutava" is not a communal concept as alleged by pseudo-secularists. It is a geo-political concept spread from Afghanistan to

BJP LEADER ADVANI ON SECULARISM

...I do not blame the Muslims of this country who for four decades have been victims of a campaign of disinformation against the BJP and Jan Sangh, by political adversaries... The charge that some people were hurling against the BJP (that it wanted annihilation or assimilation of Muslim) (are) the same.... that Muslim League did against the Congress before partition...

..Unfortunately, in India it is nothing objectionable if people talk as Muslims, Christians, etc. Only talking as Hindus is a taboo. This is strange...

I object... to the talk of Hindu interest. It is not Hindu interest... but national interest but no national interest, can be different from Hindu interest....

...At no stage have (I) said that the Masjid should be demolished. Sentiments of Hindus are related to the plot; of the Muslims, to the structure. (This is an erroneous view — Editor). If all parties can agree to relocate the structure and construction of the temple at the spot the problem can be solved....

(Source: The Hindustan Times, New Delhi 16 January, 1991)

Indonesia.

There are no basic differences in the party over the Janmabhoomi issue...

Ours is a democratic party. There will always be differences in perceptions and emphasis...

(Sources: The Organiser, New Delhi, 3 Feb., 1991)

* People with broken hearts can hardly do anything for the country's progress.

—Chandra Shekhar, P.M.

* Secularism has come to mean a premium on belonging to a minority and, sometimes, in the case of some perverse politicians, a euphemism for Hindu-baiting.

—L.K. Advani BJP Leader

BJP Leader L.K. Advani's Views on Muslim Concerns

...Issues pertaining to national unity, problems of secularism have become sharply highlighted since 1985. The government's decision to amend the Criminal Procedure Code and undo the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano Case. I regard this as a watershed in recent political events in so far as they have a bearing on the communal problem.

This happened in 1985. Our immediate reaction, strong reaction came at a meeting of the party national executive at Chandigarh when Vajpayee was the President. In 1986, followed the formation of the Babari mosque action committee.... and that committee threatened to boycott Republic Day celebrations...

Since 1951, the BJP, earlier it was the Jan Sangh—has been accused by the Congress and all other political parties of being communal, fascist and anti-minority. Right upto this day all the issues we have taken up—common civil code, duty of the State to protect the cow and its progeny (as stated in the Constitution), (the demand for) a human rights commission instead of a minority commission — are supposed to be communal.

How are these issues communal? Why should Kashmir have a special status. All those who think it should have a special status think so because it is a Muslim majority State. I regard that approach as communal. Why should the civil laws be separate for Hindus and Muslims? When I ask for a uniform civil code I am not asking for the Hindu law to be applied to all. I am asking for fair and equitable law that takes into its fold all the modern progressive ingredients of the various laws. Why should it not be done? Because the other parties feel Muslims will react adversely to it. Now is that communal or is my approach communal?.....

...I cannot understand the charge and the pejorative attitude and the

high pedestal on which everyone stands. And four decades have been spent by all political parties to ostracise us on these very grounds...

...As recent as October 20, 1990 when the V.P. Singh government issued that ordinance (on Ram Janmabhoomi) I publicly endorsed it. I said it is in the right direction....

....The kind of pseudo-secularism practised by other political parties is hurting national unity, even democratic commitments and it is certainly hurting the interests of the so-called minorities.

Look at the deafening silence of all civil liberties organisations about Ayodhya. Why? Because it is an issue pertaining to Hindu religion. If it related to Muslim religion, their response would have been different. But pseudo-secularism comes into play. All political parties which think that it is their duty to defend the mosque, not one of them has spoken a word of criticism about the 55 temples broken in Kashmir. Five temples were gutted last year. No one talks about it. Why these double standards? I attribute it to pseudo-secularism. I believe that if India is to be a really united country, pseudo-secularism has to be defeated....

In retrospect I have no regrets about the rathyatra... The consequence of the approach of other political parties is that the Muslims all these 40 years have continued to remain backward. Their lot has not been improved. So... these political parties are not interested in the welfare of the Muslims. And Nehru's concept of secularism only provides the philosophical facade for them.

Nehru's concept of secularism was that there is no such thing as minority communalism. He said that when he wanted to enter into an alliance with the Muslim league in Kerala....

...If there are riots anywhere, see that they are firmly dealt with. Whether he is a Hindu or a Muslim, a

rioter is a shame and a disgrace for the country. I would like to see in our states that no one complains that he has been unfairly dealt with because of his religion. We have been in office in Delhi for a long time, also during the Janata days and in the SVD governments. Our track record has been clean.

...I had made temple issue an issue of secularism, of national unity. I am also trying to convert it into an issue pertaining to the welfare of so-called minorities....

And these political parties have done a singular disservice even to the reputation of the country by propagating that the Hindus.... want to pull down a 500 year old mosque and build a temple in its place. If the facts were to be presented, the impression would be totally different. Hindus have not become fundamentalists.... It is a remarkable though happy aspect that there are 35 mosques in Ayodhya apart from the controversial one. **Not one of them was touched during these four months of turmoil**, Lakhs of people visited the place, All of them extremely devout and passionate. Not one of them was touched. Why is it no Muslims were killed in Ayodhya? No riots took place in Ayodhya....

...Bending backwards, self-flagellation and making secularism a euphemism for Hindu-baiting is not objectivity.

...The BJP is not the political wing of the RSS. Nor is the RSS the volunteer force of the BJP. But the fact that we have been connected with the RSS since our childhood... We have learnt our elementary lessons in patriotism, in public service, from the RSS makes us proud of our association with the RSS. And broadly speaking, ideologically we belong to the same group. But so far as VHP is concerned, its relations are with the RSS.

...It is our responsibility to see that

BJP : National Conference, Jaipur, 1991— A Review

The fifth plenary session of Bharatiya Janata Party, which just concluded at Jaipur, underscored the party's new-found exuberance, propelling it to peg its goal to hitherto unscaled electoral heights. The political thrust of the three-day deliberations was, primarily, to evolve a strategy to project the party as a viable national alternative at the next Lok Sabha elections.

Exuding confidence, the BJP leadership let its game-plan be known to the party cadre — to launch a political offensive against the Congress and the Communists, whom the party regards its main electoral adversaries and detractors, during the period preceding the next poll.

The Jaipur conclave distinctly indicated the party leadership's realisation that it would be rather indiscreet to put all its electoral eggs in the Ayodhya basket. On the opening day of the session itself, while the outgoing President, Mr. L.K. Advani, reaffirmed party's support to the Shri Ram temple issue, he asserted that Kashmir would be an equally emotive plank on the party's political agenda. To bring home this focal point, he made the significant announcement that the party would organise a massive march to Srinagar

to unfurl the national flag on June 23, the martyrdom day of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, to reassert Kashmir's integration with the rest of the country.

Curiously enough, the party stalwart Atal Behari Vajpayee chose the venue of party's plenary session to make a candid admission that he did have reservations with regard to Mr. Advani launching his Rath yatra in September last as he wondered how far a political party could go on the Ayodhya issue.

Known for his candour and liberal perceptions, Mr. Vajpayee significantly added that the dilemma facing the party—as how far it should identify with cultural and religious issues — still continued.

The BJP leadership appeared conscious that in order to achieve the party's objective to emerge as a viable national alternative, it must cast its electoral net wide enough to encompass all major socio-economic issues as well as allay the fear of the minorities. When a section of audience shouted "Jo Hindu Hit Ki Bat Karega, Voh Desh Peh Raj Karega" (those who will safeguard the interests of the Hindus, will rule the country), Mr. Advani admonished them and stressed that the party has not to

take care of only the interests of 82 per cent Hindus but 100 per cent of the country's population. Thereafter, the slogan was amended by replacing Hindu with Rashtra (nation).

While making it abundantly clear that there would be no dilution in the party's support to the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya, it was repeatedly emphasised during the deliberations that the campaign was not directed against any community and it would be patently wrong to project it as a Hindu versus Muslim issue...

The burden of the political resolution, adopted by the plenary session, was to assert the party's determination to provide the country with "an alternative political culture" as distinct from the Congress culture....

Another highlight of the plenary session was the report submitted by the high-profile Working Group, suggesting ways and means to consolidate the electoral gains of 1989 and extending the party's influence to more regions, particularly to southern and north-eastern states.

Virtually ruling out any electoral alliance at the national level in the next Lok Sabha elections, the Working Group, with party vice-president Mr. Sunder Singh Bhandari as its convenor, suggested that the party might go in for local and regional adjustments if it helped to improve its overall performance at the hustings. Significantly, it recommended that the party should contest nearly 500 seats in the next Lok Sabha elections so as to emerge as "the first party of the land".

The visibly upbeat mood pervading the plenary session was summed up by the party stalwart's A.B. Vajpayee in the valedictory address calling upon partymen to ensure that "the current wind blowing in favour of BJP turns into a hurricane" by the time next Lok Sabha elections are held.

misgivings which had been created by our adversaries deliberately are removed. But at the same time the efforts to remove these misgivings should not tend to make us apologetic and defensive...

...My understanding of secularism simply is that India is not an irreligious state but India rejects theocracy. In the western context, it did mean that the organised church shall not control the state. Here we have no organised church. Where there is one, there I am very particular. The Chief Minister of Punjab cannot be dictated by the SGPC. Separation of politics from religion means that.

The State shall not have any official religion. No theocracy, no class one citizens and class two citizens and no control of the State by the organised church. But the...reactions ... from certain people — why this lighting of lamps at an official function....

...A ship is launched.... we break a coconut. There are people who object. "Yeh coconut to Hindu hai".

These I regard as distortions and perversities... I do not accept this view that secularism means nothing to do with Hindu. India today is secular because it is predominantly Hindu.... (The Indian Express, 4 Feb, 1991)

S. NIHAL SINGH ON THE RISE OF THE BJP

...Two trends are likely to dominate Indian politics in the next decade. They are a continuing decentralisation of power... the states enjoying a greater measure of freedom in the political and economic fields. Second, the Hindu school of thought as represented by the Bharatiya Janata Party, in association with allied organisations, will take its place in the mainstream of Indian politics.

...The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid issue has been cleverly exploited by the BJP to embolden it to project its concept of the Hindu state. As it happened, the immensely popular television serials on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata laid the ground reviving many Hindus's religiosity. What started as a religious movement for building a Rama temple at Ayodhya was quickly hijacked by the BJP for its political purposes, ending in L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra.

On the theoretical plane, the BJP had been projecting its view of polity for the past few years—of how Nehru's secular concept was "minorityism", of how an institution such as the Minorities Commission should be replaced by a human rights commission of the need to dispense with Article 370 in relation to Kashmir. These arguments were traditionally rounded up with the rhetorical and evocative question: is it a crime to be a Hindu?

Thanks to the over reaction of the V.P. Singh regime and UP Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, the BJP obtained its martyrs, the Kar sevaks who were killed in Ayodhya on October 30 and November 2. As the people in the countryside in north India were being prodded to emphasise their Hinduness, a new programme has been chalked out to try to win over the intellectuals.

Judging by the devotion and care with which the BJP is propagating its line, it has already gone a considera-

Thoughts on BJP : Malkani's Reply to Sardesai

...The BJP has... declared Hindu Rashtra based on Hindutva as its aim"...

...Would Sardesai tell us the page number of the BJP Constitution or Election Manifesto or any other party document, carrying such a reference?

...Sardesai (says) that the BJP is only a "Brahmin bania party" (these b's are small in the original!), that it does not represent the majority and that it is hostile to the minorities...

Now the fact is that the BJP is opposed to minorityism—and not to minorities. The BJP does not think in terms of caste and community. However, for the information of Sardesai, the BJP has two prominent Muslims and one Christian on its National Executive. It could get Arif Beg elected to the Lok Sabha from Betul constituency which has only seven per cent Muslim vote. And it could get a Sikh—Sartaj Singh—elected to the Lok Sabha from Hoshangabad, which does not have even one per cent Sikhs!

The BJP also has four Scheduled Caste and one Scheduled Tribe member on its National Executive. It has three Scheduled Tribe and eight Scheduled Caste members in the Lok Sabha and two Scheduled caste

ble way to making the Hindu state intellectually respectable. It seems to be only a matter of time before the BJP achieves what it has thus far failed to accomplish: losing its status as a pariah party....

Only the BJP has an ideology. It is the ideology of building a Hindu state and an assault on the Indian polity as it has evolved since Independence.

...It is now on the road to success on its own terms. The danger, of course, is that the BJP might become so drunk with its success that it might go too far, endangering the unity and integrity of the country...

members in the Rajya Sabha. In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP holds 36 of the 44 SC seats and 58 of the 75 ST seats. In Himachal Pradesh, the BJP holds two of the three ST seats and 14 of the 15 SC seats. Is this the profile of a Brahmin-Bania party?

In India everybody belongs to a caste or community. But the interesting thing about the BJP is that its Brahmins are not "Brahmin leaders", nor its Banias, "Bania leaders", or Thakurs, "Thakur leaders"; they are all general, national leaders.

Sardesai blames the "upper castes" for driving Dr. Ambedkar out of the Hindu fold into the Buddhist fold... Why should Sardesai mind Dr. Ambedkar becoming a Buddhist?... After all, Buddhism is only an Indian/Hindu school of religious thought. And we Hindus have always had freedom of religion! In any case, Indian Hindus are more Buddhist than the Buddhists of Burma or Lanka, Japan or China!

Sardesai thinks that the BJP's striving for Hindu Rashtra will develop into a "frightful civil war". For one thing, the BJP is not striving for a Hindu Rashtra. (From another point of view, India, with its 85 per cent Hindu population—and a Muslim population that is very much more Hindu than Persian or Arabian—is already a Hindu country). For another, the BJP is the party of unity and integrity, law and order. It is not a party of "caste war", "community war" or "class war"... For the BJP credo is: "Justice for all and appeasement of none". And every reasonable person appreciates that.

(Source: Mainstream, 21 July, 1990)

* I hold the Nehruvian perspective responsible for the fact that even after partition that Muslims have not been integrated into the national mainstream.

—Mr. L.K. Advani.

Amulya Ganguli on BJP's Future

Ironically, the BJP's boastful claim about becoming the "first party in the land" coincided with an electoral drubbing in Kerala....

...By demonstrating that nothing much has changed in electoral terms in the last few months, the results gave an indication of how difficult it is to become a "first party" and may have made some of the BJP leaders wonder whether, just as the Kerala verdict is not strictly relevant to the BJP's current status at the national level, the euphoria in the cow belt may not also give the correct picture.

...The Kerala result... has at least shown that the BJP has been unable to expand its base despite the manner in which it struts about the political stage at the moment.

...The Left Democratic Front's setback in 1989 was entirely in keeping with the normal trend of election results...

What could have happened between November 1989 and January 1991 to persuade voters to turn to it all over again?.... If anything, it was the fall of Mr. V.P. Singh's Government as a result of the complications created by Mr. L.K. Advani's Rathayatra that was the most important event of those 14 months. And.... voters in Kerala were clearly not impressed....

...The Leftists are among the most committed of the BJP's adversaries, having realised that polarization.... that has taken place leaves no scope for any tentative alliance as in the past....

...Even the man who rode into the medieval age with such fanfare in his chariot is conscious of the damage this may have inflicted on the organization....

...Mr. Advani (has said) that the Muslim view of the BJP continues to disturb him and that he has, therefore, called upon the three State governments under his party to be alive to their responsibilities so far as

communal riots are concerned. This must be the first time that a political party has had to reassure a section of Indians that they have nothing to fear from it.... More damaging... is its lack of credibility.... caused by the constant switches in its stand.

The most glaring of these examples is its insistence that the Babari Masjid would not be demolished, but merely shifted, although it must know that the ancient structure cannot but be damaged... The reason, however, why the BJP is denying any intention of breaking down the mosque is patent enough.... The party must have known all along that its crude championing of the Hindu causes is bound to repel sensitive people... But the element of prevarication is obvious... as it is in Mr. Advani's advice... in Jaipur that the more offensive slogans should be left to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad...

The BJP's ambiguity about the fate of the mosque is only a small part of its campaign of disinformation. The most bare-faced of all it the claim that the Rathayatra, or the speeches by its two well-known Amazons, did not provoke communal riots. Instead, the party suggested without a shred of evidence that Pakistani agents were involved... It

will take much more than Mr. Advani's sage advice to the BJP led State Governments to make the minorities feel safe.

There have been other instances, of course, of the party's two faced stand, such as the insistence that the temple issue had now become a matter of belief and sentiment which could not be affected by legal or archaeological opinions. While placing itself above the law of the land, the BJP has also called upon the police to revolt in Ayodhya and showered praise on the Provincial Armed Constabulary....

The value of the Kerala outcome may lie in making the BJP act with a greater sense of responsibility, although its endless play with words and concepts will continue...

To be the "first party", the BJP will have to dispense with this kind of double talk, which is an evident outcome of... confusion... The BJP will probably like to be... free of ideological doubts and of the constraints involved in having to win Hindu votes while reassuring the Muslims about safety, but so far it has spread more darkness than light by trying to ride too many horses at the same time....

(Source : The Statesman, New Delhi, 15 February, 1991)

OPINION

Muslims are a strange lot. They seek remedy from those who have caused the disease; they go on talking to those who are in occupation of the Masjid and go on announcing their intention to demolish it and to construct a temple in its place. Babari Masjid has long been converted into a temple. Now the temple is located in an old structure & they want to build a new structure. Then what is to be done by the Muslims! They only want the Muslims to say: we admit that Babar had constructed the mosque after demolishing a Mandir.

Now you go ahead and build a temple after demolishing the Masjid, we have no objection and only to get the Muslims to say these few words, they are giving such a good beating that corpses have been piled on corpses and human habitats have been turned into wilderness.. Instead of judicial process, they are forcing the demand on the Muslims through violence and terror. This is not the language of Dharma but of power!

—Ahmad Said Malihabadi Editorial Azad Hind Daily, Calcutta, 16 January, 1991

National Press on BJP's National Convention

**Editorial,
The Times of India
8th January 1991**

...Notwithstanding Mr. Joshi's undoubted contribution to the Party and the RSS, it is unlikely that he can match Mr. Advani's public image. This problem may be circumvented if the BJP decides to allow Mr. Joshi to concentrate on organisational and strategic matters while leaving the leader of the opposition to get on with the job of wooing the electorate. Such a demarcation of responsibilities should pose no real problem... Mr. Joshi can make a meaningful contribution to his party if, building on the Advani legacy, he is able to cast the BJP as a viable national alternative with a coherent and comprehensive agenda...

**Editorial,
The Statesman,
28 January, 1991**

Mr. L.K. Advani may look back on his term as president of the BJP with "satisfaction"... for the party seemed to fare much better under him... But only time will tell whether his success in giving it "direction" has really helped the BJP; and on that will depend whether it is capable of taking "a big leap forward" in electoral terms...

...The party's confused attitude towards the minorities and the nature of its relationship with the VHP.... are among the most disturbing legacies that Mr. Advani has bequeathed to his successor. The BJP's directive to the State Government's under its control to ensure that Muslims do not feel insecure is obviously aimed at removing any misgivings among liberal-minded Hindus, for the party surely does not expect to win Muslim votes. But any steps it may take to safeguard the interests of the minorities cannot but alienate the party's main group of supporters as well as the VHP. It is difficult to see

how the BJP will resolve this dilemma, and walk the tightrope between its hardline policies and possible "appeasement" of the minorities on pragmatic considerations. But what is clear is that the "direction" imparted to it by Mr. Advani will not be of much help in this respect.

(Source: The Statesman, New Delhi, 28 January, 1991)

**Editorial,
The Indian Express,
6 February, 1991**

...The BJP... is having agonising choices of its own to make. The most important of such decisions is how to articulate a political identity founded on a much wider political constituency than the "Hindu vote bank"...

From the longer term point of view also, it is necessary for the BJP to articulate its concept of "secularism" in ways that do not make it easy for its opponents to identify it facilely with militant Hindutva... There is irresistible logic in the demand that the Nehruvian concept of secularism needs re-examination. But such a reappraisal has to be done not by opposing one stereotype to another but in terms of redefining a cultural identity that is rooted in history that goes much farther back than the advent of Islam in this country...

But the debate on this redefinition can go on and be politically articulated without resorting to aggressive Hindu militancy. If there is a tendency in some quarters to reduce Nehruvian secularism to the parodistic level — as a wag once put it — of a philosophy of "let us be nice" to the Muslims, there is an equal propensity on the part of some BJP militants to reduce their brand of secularism to "let us be nasty to the Muslims..."

...The BJP's right response to those who are trying to encircle it with a pincer whose two arms are the Muslim and the OBC vote banks is not to identify, itself exclusively with the Hindu vote bank, if it exists,

which is doubtful.

...If the BJP is to make any significant inroads South of the Vindhyas, it has to, as the recent District Council elections in Kerala proved, shed its current image even among the Hindus in those parts... In the North... a "siege mentality" of Sri Rama in need of rescue prevails at certain levels of the Hindu psyche.

The BJP has, after a series of trial and error, opted to go it alone electorally. This was an inevitable development...

(Source: The Indian Express, New Delhi, 6 Feb., 1991)

**Editorial,
The Times of India,
5 February, 1991**

The dilemma in which the BJP finds itself was only too apparent at its fifth plenary session in Jaipur... It must try to convert enough voters to the militantly "nationalistic" point of view... Or it must dilute that aggressive, exclusivist "Nationalism" to be able to cast its electoral net sufficiently wide.

...Having whipped up a "nationalist" hysteria on Ayodhya by throwing its weight behind the VHP, it is now making out that it is distancing itself from the latter. Having heightened the insecurity of Muslims for so long, it is trying to reassure them by saying they have nothing to fear from it... At the same time, the party wants to make the repeal of Article 370 as emotively "nationalist" an issue as Ayodhya. Nor is it really changing its stance on the latter... The BJP, as always, does not really know what it is or what it wants to be. The Jaipur convention has only deepened its ideological confusion.

(Source: The Times of India, New Delhi, 5 Feb., 1991)

BMMCC's Call for Breaking Negotiations wit VHP & Holding Token Dharna on 1 February, 1991

"The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) held a meeting on 11 January, 1991 to consider the impact of the on-going negotiations between the VHP and the AIBMAC under the auspices of the Committee of Chief Ministers appointed by the Central Government. The Meeting was attended by Maulana Shafi Moonis, Maulana Syed Ahmad Hashmi, Maulana Ahmad Ali Qasmi, Mr. Saifuddin Soz, MP, Mr. Qamar Kazmi, Mr. Mohd. Jafar (in representation of Mr. Sirajul Hasan) and Mr. S. Shahabuddin, Convener.

The BMMCC noted that the procedure adopted was taking the negotiations far beyond identification of an area of agreement between the parties and leading towards a political award by the Executive bypassing the judicial process and, in the meantime, providing a propaganda advantage to the VHP and an excuse to the Government to abdicate its responsibility to defend the status-quo, in the event of another attack by the VHP.

The Committee decided to caution the Government against a political award, as long desired by the VHP, which may compromise the integrity and sanctity of the Babari Masjid and addressed a letter to the Prime Minister (Text attached) in this connection, to demand immediate acceleration of the judicial process, firm declaration by the Government to defend the Babari Masjid and to enforce the judicial verdict and central legislation to maintain the status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947. No reply has been received so far.

As expected, the VHP has now decided to launch a mass mobilisation campaign throughout the country from 1 February, 1991 and to 'gherao' the Parliament on 4 April and the UP Assembly on an earlier date. The Bajrang Dal has also been

asked to update the list of mosques to be seized. The VHP has already rejected the evidence submitted by the AIBMAC.

In the circumstances, the BMMCC appeals to the AIBMAC to break off negotiations with the VHP, to reject the idea of a political award and demands: 1) a judicial verdict; 2) Legislation to protect the status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947; 3) ban on the VHP and Bajrang Dal; and 4) a public reiteration of the State's resolve to protect the status quo in Ayodhya as ordained by the High Court and to enforce the final judicial verdict at all cost 5) Exten-

sive use of electronic media to educate the people.

The BMMCC invites the AIBMAC to join hands with it to cosponsor an All India Conference on Babari Masjid at an early date to decide common line of action for the future to meet the RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal threat.

The BMMCC also appeals to the Muslim community to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the unlocking of the Babari Masjid on **1 February, 1991 with a token Dharna by the activists of the Movement at the district, state and national level.**"
18 January, 1991

BMMCC Condemns Talks with VHP & Chandraswami as Conspiracy against Babari Masjid

"The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) has taken note, with regret and concern, of the decision of the All India Babari Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC) to continue negotiation with the VHP, despite the rejection by the VHP of the evidence submitted by the Aibmac as well as its decision to commence a new phase of mass agitation from 1 February, 1991. The AIBMAC is of the considered view that the formation of the Committee of Experts constitutes an erosion of the judicial process and that the course of negotiation has been so designed as to pave the way for a political award by the Government based on the opinion of the handpicked experts and the pressure of the mass media..

Thw BMMCC has also taken note of the contacts between the leadership of the AIBMAC and Shri Chandra Swamy whose Sammelan at Allahabad received a message from the Prime Minister with a Minister as the emissary. His stand hardly differs from that of the VHP. In fact, Shri Chandra Swamy has announced a date in February, 1991 for commencing the construction of

the proposed Temple, on the site of the Babari Masjid. Like the VHP, he has also no respect for the rule of law. He is not prepared to wait for the final judicial verdict on the question of title, or even for the judicial opinion on the historic question of fact whether a standing Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir was demolished to construct the Babari Masjid in its place. He is also threatening the Muslims with violence unless they give up the Masjid.

The BMMCC unequivocally rejects the claim of VHP and Chandra Swamy on the Babari Masjid, condemns the tactics adopted by them and demands that the Centre and State Governments reiterate their commitment to the rule of law and the defense of the Babari Masjid at all cost, until and unless there is a judicial verdict against the Muslim community or an agreement, in accordance with the consensus of the Ulema, which protects the sanctity and integrity of the Masjid.

The BMMCC warns the Government that no agreement in violation of the consensus of the Ulema as outlined by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board on 4.12.1990, shall

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BABARI MASJID

ALL INDIA SHIA CONFERENCE: RAM JANAM BHOOMI-BABARI MASJID SOLUTION CONFERENCE, NEW DELHI
12 JANUARY, 1991

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution I...

...It is hereby unanimously Resolved at the All India Ram Janam bhoomi Babari Masjid Solution Conference of intellectuals of India... to request the Government of India to get the vital question 'Whether Babari Masjid was constructed on the Ram Janam Bhoomi Mandir site after demolishing the Mandir' investigated and adjudicated most expeditiously... by the Hon'ble Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court, which is presently seized of the matter.

And it is further Resolved that if it is held... that the said alleged demolition of Ram Janam Bhoomi Mandir at the Babari Masjid site had really taken place, then the Babari Masjid... site may be handed over to a Committee of the local Mahants of Ayodhya.... for reconstruction of Ram Janam Bhoomi Mandir, but if the allegations of demolishing any Mandir at the site where Babari Masjid was constructed is found.... to be untrue then the Babari Masjid may be made over to... the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Wakf Board...

Resolution II

...Hereby Resolves to recommend and request the Prime Minister of India to get and enactment passed in the Parliament without any further delay to give statutory and full protection to all places of worship.... (No cut off date is mentioned —Editor

be acceptable to the Muslim community.

The BMMCC cautions the Muslim community that some leading members of the AIBMAC are prepared to give away the Babari Masjid, or a part thereof and demands that the AIBMAC stop further negotiations with the VHP and Shri Chandra Swamy and take the com-

BMMCC : Token Dharna in New Delhi to Mark Unlocking of Babari Masjid

As announced, the Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) organised a token Dharna in Gole Methi Chowk, New Delhi, to mark the 5th anniversary of the Unlocking of the Babari Masjid. The participants included Mr. S. Shahabuddin, Convener BMMCC, and President Insaf Party, Mr. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait M.P. President Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), Maulana Shafi Moonis, Naib Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind, Maulana S. Ahmed Hashmi, General Secretary, Milli Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind, Prof, Saifuddin Soz, MP, Leader J & K National Conference Parliamentary Group, Maulana Ahmed Ali Qasmi, General Secretary, All India Muslim Majlise-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM), all Members of the BMMCC. Apart from Mr. Khaliq Ahmed, General Secretary, All India Muslim Majlis, in representation of his President Islami Hind, in representation of his Amir Maulana Sirajul Hasan, Mr. S. Hamid Husain Khizr, General Secretary, Delhi State Muslim League, in representation of Mr. G.M. Banatwallah, General Secretary, IUML and Mr. Zakawat Husain Imtiaz, in representation of Mr. Qamar Kazimi, President UP Muslim Majlis.

Among others who participated were Prof. H. Abidi, Gen. Secretary A.I. Shia Conference, Mr. S. Yusuf, Secretary, JIH and Mr. I. Karimullah Gen. Secretary, Students Islamic Organisation of India.

munity into confidence on the proposals under consideration.

The BMMCC considers that while the observance of bandh on 1 February, **which is a Friday**, has no meaning, in the emotionally charged atmosphere the bandh may lead to confrontation and violence. The BMMCC, therefore, appeals to the Muslim community to avoid confro-

In the absence of the Prime Minister, the BMMCC delegation called on Mr. K.R. Morarka, Minister of State for Prime Minister's office and presented a Memorandum outlining the following demands of the BMMCC:—

1. Central Legislation to maintain the religious status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947;
2. Expeditious disposal of the title suit now pending before the Special Bench of the High Court;
3. Prohibition of all forms of agitation on the Ayodhya dispute;
4. Declaration by the Central and State Governments to protect the Babari Masjid at all cost and to enforce the judicial verdict;
5. Ban on all militant organisations and also those which defy the Constitution and challenge the rule of law;
6. Strict enforcement of law in respect of all communal, inflammatory and provocative propaganda which disturbs the social environment;
7. Full use of electronic media to inform and educate the people about the facts of the Ayodhya dispute.

While reiterating its commitment to accept the final judicial verdict, the BMMCC has rejected any 'political award' or private opinion of hand-picked experts.

Similar token Dharnas have been held in several State capitals and district headquarters.

1 February, 1991

nation at any cost and limit the observance of the 5th anniversary of the Unlocking of the Babari Masjid to the token dharna, peaceful and silent, by responsible activists in New Delhi, State Capitals and district headquarters."

23 January, 1991

BMMCC : Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India

New Delhi, 1 February, 1991

Today, over 41 years after idals were surreptitiously and unlawfully placed in the Babari Masjid and exactly 5 years after it was unlocked and regular pooja was instituted, the Muslim Indians not only continue to be denied justice but vilified, humiliated and attacked all over the country for demanding justice.

The Title Suit, now pending before a Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court is being blocked at every step and the relevance of the judicial process is being questioned.

The writ petition against the order of the District Judge of Faizabad filed on 3 February, 1986 is yet to be heard while, going far beyond the status quo in January, 1950, the Masjid has been converted into a defacto Mandir and thus even without the title suit being decided, without the attachment being released, without a decree in their hands the claimants are enjoying all the rights of ownership and possession except the right to demolish and reconstruct the structure. This is indeed an unprecedented case in our judicial history.

Since 1986, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad is mobilising the Hindu masses and pressurising the Government to create a political environment in which, by sheer force of numbers, it can overawe the administrative and the law and order machinery so that it can demolish the Masjid and build a temple on its site. It has organised Yatras after Yatras to this end and vitiated the social environment to the point of countrywide conflagration.

On 7 November 1989, it performed the Shilanyas of the proposed temple on the disputed premises, in violation of the status quo order of the High Court but with the connivance of and under the protections of the Government.

On 30 October, 1990, in the name of Kar Seva, it organised a massive

siege of the Babari Masjid, penetrated its defence, planted its flag over its domes and began Operation Demolition. They were pushed out. But they tried again on 2 November when they were repulsed with some losses.

Between 6 December, 1990 and 14 January, 1991, the VHP again tried to pressurise the authorities by offering its so-called Satyagraha.

Now in phase III, the VHP threatens to bring down the government by gheraoing the parliament on 4 April, 1991.

In the meantime, through a systematic mass campaign in which, apart from the Ram Rath Yatra of the BJP President L.K. Advani, inflammatory and provocative audio and video cassettes, printed literature, speeches and Yatras and slogans play a convergent role, the VHP and its militant arm the Bajrang Dal, with the close support of the RSS and the BJP are continuously engaged in rousing religious passions, projecting the Muslim as the target of hatred and revenge.

The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) places it on record that the responsibility for the fall-out and the consequence is as much of the Government and the administration which appear to have surrendered to the VHP which enjoys the freedom to do what it likes, where it likes and when it likes.

Toady, not only Babari Masjid has been occupied and desecrated, the Constitution lies tattered; the rule of law has lost its majesty; the Government, its authority; the secular order, its meaning.

The Ram Janambhoomi Movement is a political movement; its objective is to demolish the Secular State and to construct the Hindu Rashtra. The Government owes it to the State and to the Constitution to

declare the Ram Janambhoomi agitation an unlawful and anti-national agitation.

The BMMCC has always been prepared for meaningful negotiations. But repeated spells of negotiations have not revealed any common ground for an amicable settlement because of the intransigent and inflexible approach of the VHP that the site, the siteplan and the date (as last announced by the VHP) are not negotiable. On the other hand, the VHP does not commit itself to accept a judicial verdict or even the finding of a Commission of Inquiry or the opinion of the Supreme Court on the question of a historic fact whether the Babari Masjid site is the birthsite of Shri Ram Chanderji or whether a standing Ram Janambhoomi Mandir was demolished to construct the Babari Masjid on its site, as claimed by it. The inference is obvious: it has no legally acceptable evidence to support this imaginary claims.

In December 1990, the BMMCC refused to enter into negotiation with the VHP because the VHP was not prepared to suspend its agitation. The purpose of the negotiation, in which unfortunately the All India Babari Masjid Action committee (AIBMAC) participated, was only to erode the relevance of the judicial process, to placate public opinion which was beginning to react against communal violence, to create a false impression about its case with the help of some handpicked 'experts' and an obliging mass media and, finally, to force the government to pronounce a 'political award'.

The BMMCC rejects the idea of a political award while it reiterates its commitment to accept the final judicial verdict on the question of title to the disputed premises.

The BMMCC was also prepared to forego the legal right of limitation and accept, as a gesture for commu-

BABARI MASJID

nal harmony, the finding of a duly constituted Commission of Inquiry or the opinion of a Special Bench of the Supreme Court on the historic questions of fact, provided:

- a) A law is first enacted to protect the status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947, except those cases which are sub-judice on an agreed date;
- b) The VHP commits itself to accept the finding or the opinion; and
- c) Agrees to suspend agitation in all forms. But so far there has been no response from the Government or the VHP.

The BMMCC takes this opportunity to draw the attention of the Government to the Consensus of the Ulema dated 4 December, 1990, that a mosque cannot be demolished or shifted or alienated wholly or in part and that an individual or a group of Muslims has no authority to sign away a mosque.

The BMMCC also takes this opportunity to remind the Government, as by law established and sworn to defend the Constitution, of its sacred duty to protect the Babari Masjid, its integrity and sanctity against any attempt to demolish or deface it, whatever the cost.

The BMMCC reiterates its firm commitment to peaceful, nonviolent and democratic methods for the restoration of the Babari Masjid to the Muslim community, with the support and assistance of all secular and law-abiding forces in the country.

In the name of the Constitution and the Rule of Law, the BMMCC submits the following demands for due consideration:-

1. Since the talks have so far failed to identify any common ground and since the VHP has already announced a fresh round of agitation, further negotiation should be stopped.
2. The Government should immediately enact the proposed law on which there is a national consensus to protect the status of all

places of worship as on 15 August, 1947.

3. The Government should reiterate its commitment to the judicial process and extend all possible assistance to the Special Bench to expedite the hearing of the title suit.
4. The Government should ask all concerned to suspend all agitations and publicly commit themselves to accept the final judicial verdict.
5. Organisations concerned which refuse to make such a public commitment or which make preparation to violate the status quo, as by law established, should be banned, along with other similar and all militant organisations.
6. The Government should strictly apply the law in the case of offensive Yatras, processions, speeches, slogans, publications, including audio & video cassettes on this question which inflame passions, promote hatred and revenge and incite violence.
7. The Government should reiterate its resolve to protect the Babari Masjid at all possible means.
8. The Government should make intensive and extensive use of the electronic media to inform and educate the people about the problem and to expose the exploitation of religious sentiments for political purposes by anti-secular, anti-democratic and anti-national forces.

The BMMCC is convinced that the question of Babari Masjid is a test case for the rule of law and the secular order and that the demolition of the Masjid shall threaten not only our territorial and social harmony but also adversely affect our prestige and reputation in the international community and in the civilised world.

Hamid H. Khizr, IUML
Khalique Ahmed, AIMM

BMMCC TO ORGANISE CONVENTION ON BABARI MASJID ON 17 FEBRUARY, 1991

"The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Coommittee (BMMCC) has decided to organise a National Convention on Babari Masjid on 17 February, 1991 in Ghalib Institute, New Delhi-110002.

The purpose of the Convention is to review the progress towards the restoration of the Babari Masjid, to remove the confusion, created by the officially sponsored 'negotiation' between the AIBMAC and the VHP and Shri Chandra Swami and to chalk out the future course of action to expedite a solution of the dispute.

Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, the foremost Islamic Scholar of the country, has been invited to inaugurate the Convention. Swami Akshay Brahmachari, the eminent Gandhian Savant, has kindly agreed to preside over the convention.

Apart from the activists of the Movement at the national, state and district levels, the national office-bearers of all supporting organisations are expected to participate in the Convention.

Invitation has also been extended to the leaders of various political parties and non-political organisations and eminent individuals who have, over the last 5 years, taken interest in the cause of the restoration of the Babari Masjid.

A 7 Member Organising Committee has been formed with Mr. S. Shahabuddin, as Chairman

S. Shahabuddin, Convener
E. Sulaiman Sait, Member
Syed Ahmed Hashmi, Member
Saifuddin Soz, Member
Shafi Moonis, Member
Ahmed Ali Qasmi, Member
S.H. Abidi, AISC
Mohd. Jafar, JIH
Syed Yusuf, JIH
Z. H. Imtiyazi, AIMM

BMMCC : Convener's Report for December, 1986-February, 1991

The Babari Masjid Movement is a spontaneous response to the unlocking of the Babari Masjid on 1 February, 1986 and its de-facto conversion into a temple, going much beyond the Injunction of 1950. The blatant illegality executed with the knowledge and approval of the State shocked the Muslim leadership and the masses alike. VHP's threat against thousands of historic Masjids in the country became an ominous reality. With the approval of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat formed a Central Action Committee for the Restoration of the Babari Masjid which accorded recognition to the Babari Masjid Action Committee UP and organised similar Action Committees in several other States.

During 1986 various memoranda and discussions had no impact on the Central Government which continued to maintain that the Ayodhya dispute was a local dispute and at best, a matter for the State Government to deal with, ignoring its national dimension and far reaching implication for the secular order.

Faced with this ostrich-like attitude, the Babari Masjid Movement organised an All India Conference in December, 1986 to place the case before the nation and to organise a programme of peaceful and democratic agitation to force the Government to expedite the judicial process and to enact legislation to protect other places of worship. The BMMCC was born at this Conference.

During 1987, there was a massive response to the call for the boycott of the official observance of the Republic Day. However, it was withdrawn at the last minute, after the President of the Republic as well as eminent national leaders like Chandra Shekhar and the Late H.N. Bahuguna stepped in and offered their good

offices. The historic Rally in New Delhi on 30 March, 1987 also made an impact on the national consciousness and the Babari Masjid dispute became a matter of national concern. The Central Government formed a Cabinet Committee and assured the Lok Sabha of its using its good offices to resolve the problem through negotiations.

The BMMCC placed the Ayodhya dispute before the political parties, the parliament and the Government and the intelligentsia in the context of the threat to the secular order, the surging wave of Hindu chauvinism, the demands of the rule of law and the overriding concern for national unity and national integration. There was a rising appreciation of the Muslim case and first Janata Party and subsequently Lok Dal and the Left Parties broadly began supporting the basic demands of the BMMCC. But the Government continued to evade its responsibility. Neither the legal cases relating to the title to the disputed premises pending since 1950 made any progress nor even the BMMCC's offer of reference to a Commission of Eminent Personalities was accepted by the Government. Nor did the Government agree to hold a discussion in the Parliament or outside with political parties. Thus the BMMCC was forced to announce the Ayodhya March in May, 1988 and enter the electoral battle of Allahabad on the side of Shri V.P. Singh and helped him defeat the Congress(I). Then the Central Government first agreed in principle to hold negotiations for exploring the possibility of a settlement and then offered to do so within a specific time. **This was the first victory of the Movement.**

The Ayodhya March was first postponed and then the call was withdrawn after receiving the clear commitment of the Government that in case the negotiation did not suc-

ceed by end October, 1988, the Government would take steps to expedite the judicial process. **This was the second victory of the Movement.** Eventually the Special bench was constituted and began the hearing of the consolidated cases while the VHP challenged the jurisdiction of the Court. Unfortunately, in November, 1988 on the question of the withdrawal of the Ayodhya March, the AIBMAC was born with 5 members seceding from the BMMCC. The emerging political scenario also played a role. However, the BMMCC decided to avoid confrontation or conflict with the AIBMAC, in the hope of eventual reconciliation and in the interest of the unity and consolidation of the Movement. In any case, on the legal front they have been working together. The Convention should give a clarion call for unity, rising above personal differences.

1989 saw considerable progress on the legal front but the focus was on Shila Yatra organised by the VHP with the intention of performing Shilanyas and commencing the Construction of the proposed Temple on 9 November, 1990. While allowing the Shila Yatra, the Government gave a public commitment not to allow Shilanyas. Yet the Central Government, the State Government and the VHP reached a secret understanding on the performance of the shilanyas and so it was performed under official patronage, on the specious plea that the Shilanyas site was undisputed. The site-plan of the temple which included the entire disputed premises by itself sufficed to make the Shilanyas unlawful. This was done with an eye on the Hindu votes. There is no doubt that the Shilanyas played a decisive role in the defeat of the Congress (I) in the General Election, 1989 as the Congress lost the votes of the Muslims, without gaining the Hindu votes.

BABARI MASJID

The Janata Dal Government, with its survival depending on the goodwill of the BJP, could not act resolutely to stop the VHP agitation and finally could not muster courage to stop Advani's Ramrath Yatra which led to unprecedented communal polarisation and violence reminiscent of the days of the Partition. Neither was any serious or sustained negotiations. The case pending before the Special bench was also held up by technical objections from the other side. To placate the VHP, the Government promulgated an Ordinance, with prior clearance from the BJP, but the Ordinance evoked strong reaction from the Babari Masjid Movement and had to be withdrawn. An enraged BJP withdrew its support from V.P. Singh Government and he became a martyr to the cause of the Babari Masjid. The Babari Masjid was assaulted and damaged by the VHP mobs on 30 October, 1990 — an event which, like Shilanyas, was hailed by the chauvinist forces as a historic milestone, as the beginning of a new era.

The Chandra Shekhar Government tried to bring down the temperature and buy time, first by negotiating with the VHP and then arranging direct negotiations between the VHP and the AIBMAC. The BMMCC refused to enter into negotiation under duress while the VHP was committed to Kar Seva Phase II beginning on 6 December, 1990. However with official approval Kar Seva Phase II was converted into 'Satyagraha' which lasted until 14 January, 1991. Immediately thereafter, the VHP has announced a new campaign for mobilisation w.e.f. 1.2.91. As foreseen by the BMMCC, the negotiation between the AIBMAC and the VHP failed to produce any constructive results, though it tried to substitute the judicial process, give propaganda advantage to the VHP and prepare the ground for a political award.

Today we must assess what we have gained or lost during the last 5

years of democratic, peaceful and non-violent struggle.

The **first** fact is that the Babari Masjid still stands though its status as a mosque remains to be restored and for all practical process it remains converted into a temple.

The **second** fact is that despite high pressure mobilisation and exploitation of religious passions, vast segments of the Hindu community continue to reject the very idea of the demolition of the Babari Masjid to build a temple in its place.

The **third** fact is that repeated threats apart, the VHP has not been able to march towards other Masjids and widen the battle front.

The **fourth** fact is that all political parties, with the sole exception of BJP, broadly support the demand of the BMMCC for the settlement of the dispute through the judicial process and for the enactment of a law to protect the status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947.

The **fifth** fact is that the Special Bench of three judges has made considerable progress; identified the issues, surveyed the disputed premises and set the stage for examining the witnesses.

The **sixth** fact is that the Muslim community has been forced to pay a heavy price by deliberate accentuation of communal violence and by the application of terrorism on a massive scale by Trishul dharis, giving them the choice of surrender or perish. But this has also exposed the real face of the Ram Janambhoomi Andolan — a political movement using fascist methods to demolish the secular state and to erect the Hindu Rashtra, in its place. There is a growing appreciation of the fascist threat to the Indian society, in India and abroad. The result is that increasingly the intelligentsia has taken up the defence of the cause of the Babari Masjid, particularly the jurists, the academicians and the journalists. It is no longer seen as a Muslim problem but as a national problem.

The **seventh** fact is that despite

volumes of 'irrefutable' evidence, the VHP has not been able to provide an iota of legally acceptable evidence to support either of its two basic assumptions that the Babari Masjid site is the exact birth-site of Shri Ram Chandrajai or that a Ram Janambhoomi Temple was destroyed to construct the Babari Masjid on its site. In fact now VHP has shifted its position; the Ram Janambhoomi Temple was not constructed by Vikramaditya in 50 B.C. but by an anonymous Raja in the 11th century AD; it does not assert that there was a miraculous divine manifestation of the idols of Ram lala within the Masjid on 22-23 December, 1949; unable to produce any primary record to support the existence of the Ram Janambhoomi temple on the Babari Masjid site, it speaks of a religious structure which stood on the same site, not necessarily in 1528. It now demands evidence from the Muslim community that the Masjid was constructed on vacant land, as it has no evidence to support the existence of a temple within 200 years of the construction of the Babari Masjid on either side i.e. from the 14th to the 17th century. The so-called archaeological 'evidence' consisting essentially of 14 pillars and 6 pillar-bases has been challenged by experts and has brought into question the identification of Ram with Ayodhya, there being no evidence of human habitation before circa 7th century B.C.

Hence the VHP has no Constitutional case, no legal case, no historical case, no archaeological case, no moral case, no religious case; its only argument is the argument of revenge, its only passion is hatred; its only method is coercion, its only objective is disintegration.

As for the future, since the negotiation at various levels, political and religious, have failed to provide any common ground for a settlement, the law must take its course; the rule of law must prevail; agitation must cease; the judicial proceeding must

(Contd. on page 114)

BMMCC : Statement of National Convention

New Delhi, 17 February, 1991

The National Convention:

Recalling the Declaration of Delhi adopted by the All India Babari Masjid Conference held in New Delhi on 23-34 December, 1986 and expressing its deep appreciation for the peaceful and democratic struggle of the Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) in cooperation with the secular forces in the country, for the restoration of the sanctity of Babari Masjid.

Gratified to note that the struggle has not only stopped the march of the VHP towards other places of worship and contained the Operation Demolition, but built up a secular consensus in favour of the restoration of Babari Masjid and the protection by the state of all places of worship.

Expressing its anguish at the unlawful Shilanyas on 9 November, 1989 on the disputed premises, under the protection and with the assistance of the government, in violation of the status quo order of the High Court and at the failure of the government to protect the Babari Masjid fully from the unlawful assault of the Kar Sevaks on 30 October, 1990.

Also expressing its indignation at the acts of violence organised and committed by the chauvinist forces to terrorise the Muslim community and the secular forces into silence and acquiescence and its deep sorrow at the loss of innocent life and valuable property. The Convention offers its sincere condolence to the victims of the senseless violence and,

Adopts the following Statement :

Over 40 years after the unlawful and surreptitious introduction of idols and 5 years after its conversion into a defacto temple, the Babari Masjid has become a test case for the secular order and the rule of law, while the Muslim community continues to be deprived of the rightful

use of its place of worship and wait patiently for the restoration of the Masjid.

The Babari Masjid has become the symbolic target of the chauvinist and revanchist forces which are determined to demolish the secular state and construct the edifice of the Hindu Rashtra in its site.

The Babari Masjid is not a memorial to Babar or to his invasion of India or to his conquest of Oudh. It is nothing more and nothing less than a Masjid. No one in his senses can compare Ram and Babar, but the question in issue is the equality of all places of worship in the eyes of the law. The principles of religious equality and freedom enshrined in the Constitution demand that the sanctity and integrity of every place of worship be respected.

The National Convention recalls the Consensus of the Ulema formulated by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board on 4 December, 1990 and reiterates that in Islam, the site of a Masjid and not its structure are sacred, that while the structure can be rebuilt, the site cannot be changed and therefore the site of the Babari Masjid is not negotiable.

The National Convention is convinced that the RSS-VHP-BJP nexus seeks to exploit the Babari Masjid dispute for purely political purposes and that the Ram Janmabhoomi Movement is not a religious movement but a political movement and that it is an act of disrespect to Shri Ram Chandrajai to forcibly occupy a Masjid in his name and to demolish it to construct a Mandir.

The National Convention notes that the VHP has not yet provided a iota of evidence to establish that the site of the Babari Masjid is the exact birth-site of Ram Chandrajai or that a Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir ever stood on the site and was demolished in 1528 to build the Babari Masjid in

its place.

The Convention regrets that initiatives taken by the Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) during the last 5 years as well as negotiations at various levels have not yielded any common ground or resolved the dispute, primarily because the VHP has adopted rigid and inflexible stand, encouraged by the RSS, the BJP and the softness of the State.

The National Convention also notes that the VHP does not dare to put in 'irrefutable' evidence to the judicial test on the specious plea that question of faith are outside the purview of the judiciary. The Convention states that religious disputes, interreligious as well as inter-denominational, have been resolved by the Courts and that the questions in issue in this dispute are questions of facts and of law and not of faith.

The existence, the historicity and the divinity of Ram Chandrajai are questions of faith and are not in issue. Even his identification with Ayodhya is not directly in issue. But the location of his exact birth-site as well as the introduction of idols in the Masjid on 22-23 December, 1949 are pure questions of facts,

The Convention, in this context, notes the growing pressure of the RSS-VHP-BJP for a political award and sees the government sponsored negotiations between the VHP and the AIBMAC between November, 90 and February, 91 as deliberately substitutive of the judicial process and as the prelude to a political award. The National Convention emphatically warns the Government that any political award which deprives the Muslim community of any legal right shall not be acceptable and shall not carry any moral force.

The National Convention is of the definite view that the dispute can be resolved only by recourse to law for

determining the legal rights of the parties concerned and for this the ongoing hearing of the title suit by the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court at Lucknow which has reached a critical stage and which the VHP is trying to delay or derail by all means must be expedited. The National Convention also demands that the Government make a categorical declaration to the effect that since negotiations have not resolved the dispute, nor even identified any common ground, the Government shall extend all assistance to the Special Bench to dispose off the pending cases and to expedite the hearing of the title suit that it shall enforce the final judicial verdict when available and, in the meantime, it shall protect the disputed premises against any attempt to change the status quo as by law established, whatever the cost and that it use all available means to protect it.

The National Convention also demands that in accordance with the national consensus, and in order to prevent proliferation of similar disputes all over the country, as threatened by the VHP, the Central Government should immediately enact a law to maintain the religious status of all places of worship as on 15 August, 1947, which is the date of transfer of power to the people of India, with the exception of cases which are subjudice on the date of notification of the Act.

The National Convention also demands that the government:

(a) Undertake immediately the repair and maintenance of the Babari Masjid and remove all additions and alterations in the disputed premises, since the date of attachment and of the original order of status quo i.e. 16 January, 1950;

(b) Use extensively the electronic media to educate and inform the people about the fact of the dispute and the basic issues of principle policy it has raised;

(c) Ban forthwith all agitations on the dispute in view of the judicial

proceeding as well as in the interest of communal harmony and national unity;

(d) Prescribe all militant organisations as well as such organisations which challenge the rule of law and rouse religious passions and propagate ill-will and hatred towards any community and threaten to use force.

The National Convention makes a fervent appeal to the AIBMAC, to rise above tactical differences, and thus consolidate the Babari Masjid Movement for the restoration of the Babari Masjid as well as to restructure it so as to make it as broad-based and as effective as possible.

In the meantime, the National Convention authorises the BMMCC to make such change in its composition, as it deems fit, to take such legal steps as may be necessary, to finalise a programme of action as the situation demands and to implement it in order to achieve the objective of the Movement.

The National Convention appeals to all secular political parties to give high priority to the question of Babari Masjid in their programme of action for the defence of secularism, fundamental rights and the rule of law and to extend their support to the Movement.

The National Convention appreciates the support of the secular forces in the country to the cause of the Babari Masjid and appeals to them to maintain their vigil and use all the resources at their command to inform and educate the people about the problem and thus to counteract the chauvinist and communal propaganda by the VHP.

The National Convention counsels patience to the Muslim community in the face of provocation and fearlessness in the face of violence and appeals to them not to deviate from a peaceful and democratic method in the struggle.

The National Convention knows that the RSS or the VHP or the BJP are not the sole representative of the Hindu community and that a vast

majority of the Hindus are opposed to the demolition of the Babari Masjid and, therefore, the Convention appeals to the secular majority to assert themselves in the interest of national unity and communal harmony and defeat the forces of chauvinism which are pushing the country towards fascism in the name of Hindutva.

Contd. from page 112)

be expedited with state assistance, both communities must agree to abide by the final judicial verdict; all political parties, must agree not to exploit the dispute for political purposes.

The State must assert its authority, ban the militant Senas and organisations which challenge the Constitution and the rule of law, take strict notice of communal and inflammatory propaganda and make a firm declaration that pending final judicial verdict the state shall protect the disputed premises which are in the custody of the Court as an attached property against any unilateral change and that, after the final political verdict, the state shall enforce it, whatever the cost.

If the Hindu religious authorities, but not the VHP, wish to build another magnificent temple in honour of Ram Chandraji on undisputed land within the Janambhoomi, the State should, in my view, extend all possible assistance.

To the Muslim Indians as a community and to the secular Indians of all religious persuasions, the Babari Masjid has become a symbol of the confrontation between secularism and chauvinism, of the struggle between democracy and fascism, of the conflict between the rule of law and mob rule, of the dichotomy between the vision of plurality and the pressure of assimilation. The Babari Masjid dispute is a part of the unfinished agenda of the nation and a test of our secular and democratic commitments, individually and col-

(Contd. on page 126)

Views of Chandra Swami

...The temple will be constructed. No one can stop that. It is the demand of the masses; it affects the sentiment of the Hindus. If the birthplace of Ram is not in India and Ayodhya then where will it be? A temple must be constructed at the birthplace of Ram (as if there are no peoples in Ayodhya —Editor).

...The Ayodhya dispute has two aspects and if the religious heads sit together and discuss the matter in detail, it can be proved that there was in the past a temple there. That will end all claims about a mosque. Nowhere Islam or the Koran advocates the construction of a religious place after demolishing another. That is why they will not be able to stake a claim for the mosque. Once the religious heads get together then the minorities will be convinced that they are not being pressurised politically. They themselves will respect the sentiment and voice of the majority and offer a solution. This will end the dispute and the temple will also be constructed. (but the existence & demolish of a people in 1528 is yet to be proved— Editor)

...But if the political leaders or parties continue to interfere, the controversy will certainly deepen....

...I am for the construction and within two months the construction will start. Work there will start on February 7.

...I advocate peace, non-violence and respect for the Muslim point of view. It is within these parameters that I am looking for a solution. If you have heard the cassettes of the VHP and the BJP, you will realise the extent of damage caused by them and you will agree that it is because of their fiery, provocative speeches that the country has been rocked with violence. I am not doing that because I do not believe in violence. I am advocating the cause of the temple while keeping the nation's unity in mind and also trying to restore an atmos-

phere of peace and non-violence.

...If you examine the site in Ayodhya you will find evidence of a temple. There is nothing regarding the mosque except the dome. **Bharat ka Islam Hindu dharam se mishrit hai. Isse to Muslim sampradayik netaon ne masjid ke naam par mahaz zid bana rakha hai.** (The Indian Islam is mixed with Hinduism. It has been given a communal colour by the Muslim leaders who in the name of the mosque are being bstinate)...

I am not in favour of demolition of any religious place or structure. But, this dispute has assumed grave proportions and violence has ensued. It can only be resolved by constructing the temple. On the issue of demolition, it is imperatives for the leaders and religious heads of both the communities to sit together and seek an assurance from the Government that such situation would not recur in future.

...(It) is not possible (to) let the mosuq remain because the present dispute has taken a communal and political stance (at the same time, he is not in favour of demolition!— Editor)

...The BJP says one thing and does another. On the one hand they talk of constructing the temple and on the other they talk of fighting the election on the issue of secularism. I have not understood their stance.

The incidence of terrorism in the otherwise non-violent Hinduism is due to the BJP... The rath yatra added fuel to the fire.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 13 January, 1991)

The minorities have the right to be accepted, not merely tolerated.

—Margaret Alva, Congress Leader

* Today's riots are worse than the 1947 violence. Then, a Muslims knew he could always go back to Pakistan. Today he has nowhere to go.

—Harkishan Singh Surjeet, CPI(M)

VHP: PROGRAMME OF ACTION 1 FEBRAURY-4 APRIL 1991

...As per the decision taken at the Central Marg Darshak Mandal which met at Allahabad on January 15 and 16, we have decided seven types of programmes for the next three months. These are as follows:—

- (1) Mass contact and public meetings by religious heads from villages to bloc levels in UP from February 1.
- (2) Mass demonstrations in each districts in the country especially in UP on a single date (date to be decided). Thereafter on March 12 a mass demonstration at Lucknow (venue to be decided).
- (3) Hoisting of Bhagwa Flag on the house-tops of each Hindu house on March 17 i.e. Varsh Pratipada day, all over India.
- (4) After February 15 a regular 10 days' workshop course for the Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini will be conducted at Ayodhya.
- (5) Celebrating Sri Ram (Janma) Navami Utsav through the Hindudom.
- (6) Bajrang Dal to prepare an exhaustive list of all Hindu shrines desecrated or demolished by the foreign aggressors, rulers and organised groups. They will submit their report by March 31 next.

In case the demand for the reconstruction of the Sri Ram Janambhoomi Temple in Ayodhya and demands of shrine on Mathura and Varanasi are not met we shall demand the handing over of all these temples and shrines to the Hindus.

- (7) Mass demonstration before Parliament on April 4.

...A resolution has already been passed... authorising the Ram Janambhoomi Trust to construct Ram Temple at Ayodhya...

(Source : Shri G. Kishor, J.S.G. VHP in the Organiser, New Delhi, 3 February, 1991)

**NO POLITICAL AWARD
BMMCC'S STATEMENT
NEW DELHI, 9 FEB., 1991**

"At the conclusion of the 4th and perhaps the last round of talks between the All India Babari Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC) and the VHP, sponsored by and held in the presence of the Central Government representatives, the Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri S.K. Sahay is reported to have informed the press that 'the Government would study the rival documents and verify their authenticity... and would also study the summary statements to be submitted by both sides.'

The Central Government have not clarified the exact purpose of these talks or the role of the Government there in. Even today it is not clear whether the Government is an observer or a mediator or an arbitrator. It is also not clear as to what the next step of the Government would be, after it has authenticated the documents, studied the summary statements and held further discussions.

The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) has also taken note of the VHP, General Secretary Ashok Singhal's statement in Kanpur on 5.2.91 that the Prime Minister had shown 7 alternative site plans to Mahant Avidyanath, MP, that they had all been rejected by them and that they wanted nothing short of the entire property in dispute.

The BMMCC demands that the Government immediately clarify its object and purpose and spell out the next step. The methodology of the talks and Shri Singhal's disclosure have given rise to speculation about the possibility of the Government making a political award, as long desired by the RSS, the VHP and the BJP. The BMMCC once again cautions the Government that a political award which divests the Muslim community of any right under the rule of law shall not be acceptable.

The BMMCC also reiterates its view that because the VHP has

**No Foreign Fatwa
BMMCC's Statement on Role of Khashoggi**

"The Babari Masjid Movement Co-ordination Committee (BMMCC) is fully aware of the continuing exhortation by some important people to obtain 'Fatwas' from foreign Ulema in favour of a demolition on shift of the Babari Masjid. In this context, considerable concern has been caused in the Muslim community by Mr. Adnan Khashoggi, during his recent visit (between 26 and 30 January, 1991) to Delhi, meeting Shri Vishnu Hari Dalmia, the Working President of the VHP and Mr. Ahmad Bukhari, Vice-President of the All India Babari Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC), Mr. Nanaji Deshmukh and J.K. Jain of the BJP, apart from his guru Shri Chandraswami. Shri Chandraswami, it may be recalled, has launched a campaign for the construction of a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya at the very site of the Babari Masjid and earlier had several meetings with Mr. S.S. Owaisi, the President of the AIBMAC. According to Mr. K.N. Agarwal, the associate of Shri Chandraswami, Mr. Khashoggi told the Prime Minister that he would use his 'West Asian Connection' to solve the Ayodhya issue and the Prime Minister having assured him in reply that he may, if need be, officially call him and solicit his assistance. Mr. Agarwal also referred to fruitful talks with AIBMAC (Indian Express, 1, February, 1991).

Mr. Khashoggi's role, if any, in adopted an inflexible stand on the site and the site-plan of the proposed Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir in Ayodhya, the final judicial verdict and nothing but a judicial verdict shall have the moral and constitutional authority to serve as a final solution of the Ayodhya dispute. The BMMCC, therefore, calls upon the Government to expedite the judicial process which has reached a critical stage.

Shri Chandraswami's project is a matter of conjecture but he is closely associated with eminent personalities and commands much influence in high places in Saudi Arabia.

The BMMCC, therefore, calls upon the AIBMAC to place before the people the purpose of its contacts with Shri Chandraswami and Mr. Khashoggi and details of proposals under consideration.

The BMMCC also demands that the Government clarify whether the visit of Mr. Khashoggi had anything to do with the Babari Masjid dispute or whether his good offices are to be sought in any manner at any stage for resolving the dispute.

The BMMCC would like to inform the Government and the people that no foreign Fatwa can overrule the Consensus of the Indian Ulema, as embodied in the Resolution of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board adopted in New Delhi on 4 December, 1991, that a mosque can neither be demolished nor shifted from its site."

**2 February, 1991
STATEMENT,
EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIAN,
NEW DELHI, 6 FEBRUARY 1991**

With much concern and anxiety I followed the reports about the possible role of Mr. Adnan Khashoggi in the Babari Masjid issue and what was claimed about his mediation on this issue. The Embassy of Saudi Arabia, categorically, denies any relation or role of the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or anyone of its religious ulama in this issue. The Kingdom and its ulama strongly condemn dragging their name in these rumours. It firmly believes that the wise Indian people are capable of solving their problems by themselves and the able eminent Muslim ulama of India are competent to shoulder their religious and national responsibilities without any mediation from

(Contd. on page 118)

VHP Offers No Primary Evidence on Ayodhya Dispute

Less than 200 year old 'Belief' against over 450 year old Masjid

Comment by People's Democracy. 3 February, 1991

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has been playing a double game on the Ayodhya dispute. On the one hand, it has been asserting that the question of the disputed site being the supposed birthplace of Ram, is... an article of faith which cannot be subject to judicial or any other... scrutiny, and that they are not going to rest content till they demolish the Babari Masjid and construct a temple in its place. On the other hand, they have also been claiming that they have provided to the AIBMAC and the Government sufficient archaeological and documentary evidence which conclusively establish... that the mosque at the disputed site was built after demolishing a temple at the same spot...

The main contention of the VHP is based on three arguments:

1. Sacredness of the site of Ayodhya.
2. Persistent faith in Ram as documented in classical Sanskrit literature, and
3. Spot evidence at Ayodhya in the form of archaeological remains such as burnt-brick pillar-bases, (pillars) covered with black stone casings having a large number of images of gods and goddesses, such as the yakshas, devakanyas, dvarapalas and ganas, and sacred motifs such as the purnaghata, lotus hansa, all of which belong to the "Hindu iconography".

Of these, the first two are totally irrelevant to the main issue. It is not denied that Brahmanical tradition, embodied in classical Sanskrit writings, mentions Ayodhya and Ram. However, **not all the texts cited can be regarded as pre-15th century.. Also ... there are many works dealing with Brahmanical pilgrimage centres and written between 10th and 16th century, which do not mention Ayodhya as a pilgrimage centre of**

any distinction.... The existence of a temple dedicated to Ram at the spot where the Babari Masjid stands today...

It is...intriguing that the VHP... is conspicuously silent on the crucial question. **No historical sources have been given to substantiate the claim of the aforesaid five Vishnu temples at Ayodhya.**

As for the alleged archaeological testimony, there cannot be a more definite contradiction of the existence of the temple than is available in the authoritative report of Shri B.B. Lal. His assessment is published in **An Encyclopaedia of Indian Archaeology ... Vol. III....** (Indian Council of Historical Research, 1989).

The contention about brick pillars, black stone pillars, etc. is questionable. **When the pillar bases are not mentioned in any archaeological report, how are they postulated now?**

The alleged "Hindu" motifs on black stone pillars also do not bear the test of critical scrutiny. A great majority of these motifs are connected either with Shaiva, Jain or other non-Vaishnavite sects. **There is no specific evidence to connect them exclusively with the tradition of Ram worship or even with the Vishnu.**

..Was the site recognised as the exact site of birth of Lord Ram when the mosque was built in Babar's time? If there was no shrine of Lord Ram here, it could not just have been so recognised.

Primary Evidence

The VHP has spoken of the relevance only of primary evidence and not of later inferences or beliefs, however great the men who held them, including Jawaharlal Nehru. And yet... **the VHP is not able to give a single piece of evidence most remotely assignable to the period of full two hundred years of the con-**

struction of the mosque in any language — Sanskrit, Hindi or Persian.

The primary evidence is, on the other hand, of a totally contradictory import.

...The inscription of Mir Baqi, which gives the date of the construction of the mosque (AH 935/AD1528-29), and the second inscription outside the mosque both... show that it was a case of simple construction of the mosque, and not the destruction of any previous idol-temple or any building. If the mosque had really been built to humiliate Hindus and desecrate a shrine of Lord Ram, is it believable that Mir Baqi would not have claimed that this had been done, or that an idol temple had been destroyed? **Why should the builder of the mosque have hidden the real purpose for which he is supposed to have built the mosque, more so since the VHP believes that the builder was an idol-breaker by belief and ambition?** If desecration of a Hindu shrine was seen as an act of merit, it should have surely been proclaimed. That this was not done, is surely the strongest proof that **the builder destroyed no temple and neither performed nor claimed the merit of destruction.**

Abul Fazl, Akbar's great minister, his Ain-i-Akbari, written seventy years of the construction of the mosque, while mentioning Ayodhya as a pilgrimage centre, **nowhere mentions that an exact site of Ram's birth here existed, let alone that a mosque existed here.** This is admitted by VHP itself. Even more curious is this omission when Abul Fazl... mentions the graves of Prophets Ayyub and Shis in Ayodhya in the very Persian extract given by the VHP itself.

..Tulsidas's Ramcharitmanas... (was written) in Akbar's reign. Could he.. have let it pass without even one expression of regret that the very

spot of Lord Ram's birth had been desecrated, and the shrine denied to the devotees by an act committed within a few decades before he was writing? Two imagine this is to put an unacceptable strain on one's credulity.

The whole 17th century passes without the VHP being able to produce a single testimony of any sort about its case... The learned scholar-historians of the VHP should have looked up **Sujan Rai Bhandari's** description of Ayodhya in his *Khulasatut Tawarikh* (Persian text, edited by Zafar Hasan, p.43; English translation by Sir Jadunath Sarkar in *India of Aurangzeb*, p.31), a work written in 1795. This author carefully mentions Hindu places of worship, and mentions in its account of the Suba of Awadh, that Ayodhya was the seat of Lord Ram... and that Ayodhya was a great religious centre of the Hindus. Yet he too gives not the slightest hint of any shrine on the exact site of Lord Ram's birth that had earlier existed and had been then destroyed. Thus till the close of the 17th century, till two hundred years of the erection of the mosque had passed, no belief existed that the Babari Masjid or any other mosque had been built on Rama's birth-site.

We may now consider the VHP's "key" evidence — passage attributed to "Sahifa-e-Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi, written by the (sic) daughter of Bahadur Shah Alamgir (sic) during the late 17th — early 18th century."

...There has been no emperor "Bahadur Shah Alamgir" in Indian history. Aurangzeb Alamgir ruled from 1659 to 1707 and his son Bahadur Shah from 1707 to 1712. Thus the text could not possibly have belonged to Aurangzeb's reign and so to the 17th century, but only to a latter time. The authoress, if she was "a" (not "the") daughter of Bahadur Shah, could have written anytime within a life span after 1712, the last year when she could have been born. **The VHP is unable even to furnish**

the name of this erudite princess, so that she cannot simply be traced! The extract from her so-called work *Sahifa-Chihal Nasaih - i- Bahadur Shahi* is said to have been copied by the author of a much later Urdu work only in.... 1817. The Nasaih is an obviously late fabrication, since the name of the authoress is not given and the fabricator was ignorant enough to confuse Bahadur Shah with "Alamgir"! It is well-known that such "counsels" were frequently fabricated in the names of kings and saints. No such work as *Sahifa-i-Chihal Nasaih-e-Bahadur Shahi*, or with any possible variable forms of the title, or any work of a similar nature by any Mughal princess, appears in D.N. Marshall standard and comprehensive bibliography, *Mughals in India — A Bibliography Survey*, Bombay, 1967, nor in any volume of C.A. Storey's *Persian Literature — Bibliographical Survey....*

The European priest Fr. Joseph Thieffenthaler, who describes Ayodhya in 1785, was of course still later and cites no source.

To conclude, there is absolutely no evidence from within two hundred years and more of the construction of the Babari Masjid that it was constructed on the site of any temple, let alone on the desecrated remains of the shrine of Lord Ram's birth-site. Later legends about such a site and shrine are no substitute for historical evidence... Even if the matter rests on faith... such faith is no more than two hundreds years old at the extreme limit, while the mosque was built more than 450 years ago. The proposal for its destruction is an act of barbarity absolutely unworthy of the great Indian civilisation.

Contd. from page 116)

any side or any 'Fatwa' from abroad specially in regard to issues on which there is unanimity and consensus among the Muslim ulama, as also this is not a monopoly of anyone or confined to any particular country. →

HISTORIANS : JOINT APPEAL OF 43 HISTORIANS

We, the undersigned historians, are of the view that there is no conclusive evidence to prove that there was a temple dedicated to Ram at the site of the present-day Babari Masjid, which temple was destroyed and replaced by the Masjid. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that the Babari Masjid should neither be demolished nor shifted. Such an act would be a return to the politics of medieval times and futile attempt to change historical events. We are of the firm view that the mosque should be preserved as a national monument which is more than four and a half centuries old.

Let us not repeat the barbarity of medieval ages under the guise of establishing a new identity, whether traditional or modern.

R.S. Sharma	P.V. Ranade
D.N. Jha	Amalendu Guha
Gyanendra Pandey	N.P. Verma
Rifaqat Ali Khan	S.R. Singh
Romila Thapar	Irfan Habib
Mrs. Suvira	K.M. Shrivastava
Jaiswal	Suraj Bhan
V. Ramakrishna	Pratima Asthana
Ms. Indu Banga	P.S. Gupta
O.P. Jaiswal	H.C. Verma
H.C. Satyarthi	Bipan Chandra
C.P.N. Sinha	Mushirul Hasan
M. Athar Ali	Ms. R. Champak
Asghar Ali	Lakshmi
Engineer	Arjun Dev
Satya Prakash	J.S. Grewal
Gupta	Anirudha Ray
Sunit Sarkar	R.P. Singh
Barun De	Anis Syed
R.K. Shukla	A.P. Sharma
S.N. Sinha	Ms. Shireen
Azhar Ansari	Moosvi
B.D. Chattopadhyaya	A.O. Rafiqui
K.N. Panikkar	Satish Chandra

The Saudi Ambassador appealed all those concerned to this issue not to believe any such rumours and treat whatever was said about the alleged role or proposal of Mr. Khoshoggi or anyone else as his personal and purely individual move, having no relation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or anyone of its ulama.

Madhu Limaye's Counsel of Despair

....There is no doubt that the Ayodhya issue is the most explosive issue today. Rajiv Gandhi's letter to Chandra Shekhar and the formula he has expounded has not been seriously examined by our political analysts. I, therefore, propose to analyse his proposal. Rajiv Gandhi wrote:

The Ram Janambhoomi-Babari Masjid dispute has become a festering sore that is infecting the whole of our body politic. The unity of our nation is imperilled, the emotional integration of our people jeopardised, the future of our secular society put at stake. This acrimonious dispute must, therefore, be brought to an end with all deliberate speed.... The fundamental policy framework laid down by my government for a resolution of this dispute—namely an amicable settlement, failing which the Court verdict must be respected—has evolved into a broad national consensus, acceptable to all segments to nationalist secular opinion in the country.....

Rajiv goes on to propose that a panel of five Supreme Court judges, either under the Commission of Inquiry Act or a law to be framed under Article 138, be set up to inquire into the "fact as to whether at the site in dispute a Ram Mandir was in fact destroyed to build a masjid in its place.

I wonder whether Rajiv has pondered over the implications of his suggestion. Once we start an inquiry into the destruction of temples where will it end? History books and archaeological surveys are full of descriptions of the destruction of temples and the building of mosques on temple sites....

...Once the principle of archaeological inquiry is introduced to do 'historical justice' there will be no end to new claims and new disputes. Of course Rajiv has suggested that

"government give urgent consideration to enacting, as part of the overall settlement of this issue, legislation that would prohibit any change of status of places of public worship from the day our Constitution came into force."

But what practical force will such a law have when a precedent has been set up of an inquiry into archaeological evidence and settlement of a dispute on the basis of the results of such an inquiry?

Matters of faith cannot be arbitrated by Courts.... The question of Ram's birth cannot be decided by the courts. Nor is it possible to decide, beyond a shadow of doubt, that there was no previous Mandir on the site on which Meer Baki's mosque stands. Nor can the VHP show conclusively that there was a pre-existing Mandir dedicated to Ram there and that it was destroyed by Babar's representative.

There is no profit in settling historical accounts after a lapse of several centuries. The present day Indian Muslims are not invaders. **They are converts.** Their ancestors were non-Muslim Indians. It is a matter of shame that the ancestors of both the present day Muslims and Hindus were so utterly incompetent that they were unable to beat back the Arab (eighth century), the Turks (eleventh and twelfth century) Central Asian Timur (fourteenth and fifteenth century), his descendant Babar (sixteenth century), and Iranian Nadir-Shah (eighteenth century), not to go back further into the misty past. Why wreak vengeance on the Muslims for the misdeeds of these invaders?

Nothing would be gained by starting historical and archaeological inquiries into the destruction of temples and erection of mosques whether at Ayodhya or elsewhere. It is quite wrong to involve the courts into this. That way lies disaster. I am, therefore, totally opposed to the proposal

made by Rajiv Gandhi in his letter to Chandra Shekhar.

What I suggest therefore is an ad-hoc settlement of the Ayodhya dispute on the basis of the existing realities.

Now what are these realities? **In December 1949 idols were placed under the Central Dome—some say with the connivance of the then District Magistrate, and some say that they "appeared". For the last 40 years pooja is being performed there without interruption and the local Muslims have also ceased to offer Namaz.**

Wisdom decrees that we build on the basis of the following principles, taking into account the existing realities:—

- (a) That the existing structure should not be demolished; it should be strengthened, restored and expanded both Eastwards and Westwards;
- (b) That the Central dome which the Vishwa Hindu Parishad claims is the sanctum sanctorum be made a part of the temple to be constructed in the direction of the Shilanyas site;
- (c) That inside the new Ram Mandir there should be small shrines dedicated to Shiva, Krishna, Mahaveer and Buddha;
- (d) That the mosque be expanded Westwards, that a new courtyard be created on the adjoining land to be made available by the Government and three domes be erected towards the Western end of the courtyard to enable Muslims to resume their Namaz.
- (e) The entire complex should be developed as a place of amity, with a pillar of harmony at the new entrance to the twin shrines.

I have been discussing this issue with a representative of the VHP
(Contd. on page 121)

Anti-Muslim Forces have Armed themselves, Evolved Vote Politics, Administrative Complicity, Police Muslim Indians Regard themselves as Equal Partners and shall Address of Asad Madni, MP, President, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind

Our country is currently passing through the most critical period of its history. Communalist forces have come together. Elements standing for disruption are united on one platform. Anti-Muslim forces have armed themselves, in every sense of the word.

In pursuance of a joint strategy and well-designed scheme, such forces have accelerated their aggressive activities.

It is a matter of deep concern that communal aggressive tendencies against Muslims have not merely affected the minds of the people, (but) seem to percolate deeper and deeper in the spheres of Government. For that reason all persons in the country, who desire to see a bright future for secularism and democracy, who wish to see India as ever fresh... of various creeds, cultures and languages ... should come forward, without delay to check the rising storm of communalism.

The country is in flames ignited by communal hatred. Wherever you look the rising flames of communal intolerance have... darkened the atmosphere. In particular, Muslims are being fed as fodder for consumption by the fire of communal hatred and prejudice.

There is no need of going back further, a review of past three months, from October to December 1990, would show that there is a large-scale and organised (campaign) for death and destruction of the largest minority of the Secular State. ...

The incidents indicate that communal riots do not flare up all of a sudden, due to some misunderstanding or provocation; they have in their background a deep-laid conspiracy

and well-engineered strategy for vitiating the atmosphere and inflaming feelings... in the name of religion; sometimes seeds of disunity are planted in the name of caste and sub-caste. Also, sometimes temple—mosque (Mandir-Masjid) disputes are exploited for fanning up communal frenzy among the mass.

The most regrettable fact is that discrimination is practised in the implementation of laws. The Officials in the administration and police force ignore the disruptive activities of communal forces. They have been found directly patronising such activities. Even if they are fully aware of deadly intrigues, conspiracies, strategies and their disastrous consequence, they refrain from taking recourse of legal action in such cases. They do nothing to nullify communal intrigues.

Due to the criminal inaction, on the part of administration the racist elements get emboldened. They plan mischief and destruction on the largest possible scale.

The recent storm of communal disturbances, mentioned earlier was the outcome of such intrigues and conspiracies. For making success of such intrigues and conspiracies, fascist aggressive organisations like Bharatiya Janata Party, Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad, carry out countrywide provocative and inflammatory movements designated as 'Shila niyas', 'Rath Yatra' or 'Kar Seva'. They have fully succeeded in the accomplishment of their inglorious aims.

No normalcy, peace, law and order in the whole country have been reduced to ashes in flames of hatred and prejudice. In spite of having the

power of reasoning they have gone ahead of wolves and lions in executing barbarious acts.

The wolf and lion have the distinction that they do not prey upon their own kith and kin. But, those blinded by communal frenzy and prejudice have killed the weak and the infirm of their own race. They have quenched their thirst for blood by killing (the aged, the women and) children....

The loss of life and property is not a temporary feature. The process of inhuman oppression and brutalities has been going on for nearly half a century. There is no hope of justice or redress for them.

... The Muslim victims of riots are arrested and jailed. They are packed in most inhuman conditions not even fit for animals. They are subject to most severe brutalities. There have been cases when their torture has been assigned to RSS elements. After subjecting them to inhuman and barbarous treatment, cases are fabricated against them.

If a Muslim who has been a victim of the riot, gathers sufficient courage and goes to the Kotwali or police station for lodging FIR's naming culprits he is threatened with dire consequence and driven. So he is denied the opportunity lodging FIR's.

In recent communal riots, the newspapers, particularly Jagran, Aaj, Ujala and many other local newspapers added fuel to fire by publishing unlawful reports far removed from reality which were pure fabrications in order to inflame communal feelings...

However, it is surprising that instead of prosecuting the newspapers concerned for the mischief, they

Joint Strategy and Accelerated Aggressive Activities. Partisanship, Media Irresponsibility Result in Atrocities NOT Surrender Constitutional Rights, Faith or Identity to A.I. Anti- Communal Convention, New Delhi, 27 January, 1991.

were provided with all possible facilities and government officials took prominent part in promoting their circulation and distribution.

It is a shameful aspect of communal riots that generally the men in police force and administration are in complicity with the rioters. They incite the unruly elements for murder and plunder. This is a development which negates our tall claims of secularism and democracy. The names of PAC, BMP, RAC, SRP and other state security units have become symbols of rioting killing, arson and looting.

The posting of above mentioned security forces is an invitation to the destruction of Muslims of that locality.

The role of PAC, particularly has been extremely brutal and barbarous...

At present all sections of masses are united in the condemnation of the cruel and brutal character of PAC... From Moradabad till all recent communal riots the PAC has fully demonstrated its communalist mentality....

A survey of conditions prevailing today indicates that in the lust for retaining power at all costs the national governments have taken recourse to vote-bank politics. For that reason instead of fulfilling democratic aspirations for strengthening secularism, they foster communalism. In pursuance of this objective... Babari Mosque was (unlocked) and permission was granted for performance of pooja there on February 1, 1986.

It is a fact which cannot be ignored that it has become difficult to live with a sense of security in our own

country. It is difficult for us to travel peacefully without fear in our own country. The doors of commerce and employment are closed for us. Economically and financially intrigues are under way to reduce us to destitution, Dark clouds have cast their shadow on all sacred places of worship... Secret and open stratagems are being employed to efface our distinct identity.

The Government is a culprit if it does not act against the officials in police and administration who (are) parties and partners in crime, hand in glove with the rioters.

Actually, communalism has grown under state patronage. Had the government not extended its patronage, the disastrous Yatra would not have been started from Gomnath which culminated in 'Kar Seva' which caused damage to the Babari Mosque. That has tarnished the image of India in the whole world.

..A terribly suffocating atmosphere has been created in the country by projecting the Ram Mandir issue.

The engineering of communal riots by the exploitation of religious feelings is not aimed at merely loss of life and property. The real object is to build a power structure founded on the dead bodies of human beings. The riots are planned for forcing Muslims to give up their identity, faith and culture.

They desire that Muslims should be Muslims only for namesake. They want Muslims as slaves of their Nazi-type set up.

Those who shed crocodile tears on the pathetic situation of Muslim! and advise (us) to arrive at some compromise with fascist forces are

our hidden enemies, although they carry the halo of ...well wishers... India is our country. We are equal partners in the thousand year old history of the country. No decision relating to the country can be taken, without our acceptance and approval. Therefore, the question of surrender of ~~our~~ **our** faith and identity does not arise at all.

(Source: The Radiance View Weekly, New 10-16 February, 1991)

Contd. from page 119)

AIBMAC. The VHP representative (let him remain unnamed) agreed that if their point about the sanctum sanctorum is conceded they would forego the claims to Kashi and Mathura mosques. Privately the Muslim leaders also agree that this would be a feasible solution. But they are not ready to commit themselves publicly. Let, therefore, the Government give the above solution as an award and, with the cooperation of the disputants—without sidelining anyone—create the new Amity Complex. This will satisfy the reasonable Hindus and reasonable Muslims and remove the scourge of strife and save numberless innocent lives. (Mr. Limaye did not discuss it with the BMMCC-Editor)

* let anyone, any party, give us the temple and take the Hindu vote.

V.H. DALMIA, VHP president

* The danger to India, mark you, is not communism. It is Hindu Right-wing Communalism.

—Jawaharlal Nehru in Outside the Archives by Y.G. Gundeia.

Gandhiji on Desecration of a Place of Worship

Wanton Desecration

If the communique of the District Magistrate of Moradabad is to be relied upon, the news contained in it is serious and disquieting. Two temples are reported to have been desecrated and the Hindus assembled seriously assaulted. No cause for this wanton desecration has been assigned. A similar incident is reported to have taken place at Amethi in the Lucknow district. Here the Hindus are supposed to have blown conches in defiance, it is said, of a magisterial order. If they did, it was for the magistrate to punish the offenders, not for the Mussalmans to enter the temple in a large body and commit assaults and desecrate temples. There is no doubt that these cases have an organisation at their back. It represents a deliberate attempt to create dissensions and prevent Hindu-Muslim unity. What the organisation can hope to gain by such acts is difficult to understand. It cannot enhance the dignity of Islam, it cannot popularize it. If it is material gain that is sought, it is not possible to achieve it. And if the organisers seek to gain Government favour by these methods, they will find themselves undeceived.

(Young India, 21.8.1924)

Gulbarga Gone Mad

I hinted last week that there was evidently an organisation at the back of the mania for desecrating Hindu temples. Gulbarga is the latest instance in point. Whatever the Hindu provocation, if there was any, the Mussalman outburst has an ominous look about it. The desecration of temples cannot be justified in any circumstances whatsoever. Maulana Shakat Ali when he heard of Shambhar and Amethi desecrations exclaimed in a fit of temper that the Mussalmans should not be surprised if the Hindus retaliate and some day find that their mosques have been desecrated. The Hindus may feel flat-

tered or pleased over the Maulana's indignant exclamation. But I do not and I advise the Hindus not to be. Let them understand that I feel, perhaps more keenly than most of them, every fanatic outburst on the part of Mussalmans. I am fully aware of my responsibility in the matter. I know that many Hindus feel that I am responsible for many of these outbursts. For, they argue, I contributed the largest share to the awakening of the Mussalman masses. I appreciate the charge. Though I do not repent of my contribution, I feel the force of the objection. Therefore, if for no other reason for this at least of greater responsibility, I must feel, more keenly than most Hindus can, these desecrations. I am both an idolater and an iconoclast in what I conceive to be the true sense of the terms. I value the spirit behind idol worship. It plays a most important part in the uplift of the human race. And I would like to possess the ability to defend with my life the thousands of holy temples which sanctify this land of ours. My alliance with the Mussalmans presupposes their perfect tolerance for my idols and my temples. I am an iconoclast in the sense that I break down the subtle form of idolatry in the shape of fanaticism that refuses to see any virtue in any other form of worshipping the Deity save one's own. This form of idolatry is more deadly for being more fine and evasive than the tangible and gross form of worship that identifies the Deity with a little bit of a stone or a golden image.

True Hindu Muslim unity requires Mussalmans to tolerate not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as part of their religion, the religion of others so long as they, the latter, believe it to be true. Even so it is expected of Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of others, no matter how repugnant they may

appear to their, the Hindus, sense of religion. **The Hindus must, therefore, reject the idea of retaliation.** The law of retaliation we have been trying since the day of Adam and we know from experience that it has hopelessly failed. We are groaning under its poisonous effect. Above all the Hindus may not break mosques against temples. That way lies slavery and worse. **Even though a thousand temples may be reduced to bits, I would not touch a single mosque and expect thus to prove the superiority of my faith to the so-called faith of fanatics.** I would love to hear of priests dying at their posts in defence of their temples and their idols. Let them learn to suffer and to die in the defence of their temples even as God allows Himself to be insulted and broken up in the insult and damage done to the idols in which being omnipresent He undoubtedly resides. Hindus will not defend their religion or their temples by seeking to destroy mosques and thus proving themselves as fanatical as the fanatics who have been desecrating temples.

To the unknown Mussalmans who are undoubtedly behind these desecrations I submit:

Remember that Islam is being judged by your conduct. I have not found a single Mussalman defending these outbursts not even under provocation. There seems to me to have been little if any provocation offered by the Hindus. But let us assume that it was otherwise, that Hindus played music near mosques to exasperate Mussalmans, that they even removed a stone from a minaret. yet I venture to say that Mussalmans ought not to have desecrated Hindu temples. Even retaliation has its limits. Hindus prize their temples above their lives. It is possible to contemplate with some degree of equanimity injury to life but not to temples. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to

every man even if it stands low in the scales of philosophic comparison. But presumption is against such Hindu provocation. The desecration of Multan was an unprovoked act. I have been trying to find proof for the allegations about Hindu desecration in the places referred to in my article on Hindu-Muslim tension. I have failed to receive any proof in support of them. You will not enhance the reputation of Islam by the acts reported about Amethi, Shambhar and Gulbarga. If you will permit me to say so, I feel about the honour of Islam as much as I feel about my own religion. This I do because I desire to live in perfect, open and hearty friendship with Mussalmans. I cannot help saying that these desecrations are cutting a deep wound in my heart....

At An All-Religion Prayer Meeting In Patna on 12 March, 1947

"If a misdirected individual took into his head to desecrate a temple or break idols, should a Hindu in return desecrate a mosque on that account? Does it in anyway help to protect the temple or to save the cause of Hinduism?"

At a Prayer Meeting in Patna on 28 March, 1947

"If this reported desecration (of the mosque) on the Holi day is a fact, it is a bad omen for the Hindus, for Bihar and for the whole country."

Speech, Prayer Meeting, 21 November, 1947

I cannot help mentioning the fact that according to the information received by me 137 mosques have been destroyed in Delhi during the riots. Some of them have been converted into temples. There is one such mosque near Connaught Place which can never remain unnoticed by anyone. Today there is a tri-colour flying over it. Desecrating the mosques in this manner is a blot on Hinduism and Sikhism. It is gross **adharam** in my view. The blot which I have mentioned cannot be wiped out by saying that even the Muslims in Pakistan have desecrated the

Hindu temples or changed them into mosques. In my view, any such act can only destroy religion, whether it is Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam.

Speech, Prayer Meeting, 30 November, 1947

The Sardar (that is, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel) has made some arrangements and he is going to protect all the mosques... You must have read the notice sent by him in the newspapers that the occupied premises of the mosques should be vacated in a week's time, otherwise they will be vacated with the help of the police.... If some Hindus have installed an idol in some mosque.... so long as it has not been sanctified and not worshipped by pure hands, in my view it is not an idol but a mere piece of stone... Such idols have been installed in the mosque at the corner of the Connaught Place. In my view, there is no Hanuman in those Idols. To me it is mere piece of stone which has been shaped like Hanuman and to which some sindoor has also been applied. It can be worshipped only if it is legitimately installed and sanctified. But all this has not been done. Hence it is the duty of those who have installed the idols to remove them from there at daybreak and then keep them wherever they choose. By thus installing idols in the mosques they are desecrating the mosques and also insulting the idols... Why should the Sardar send the police..? Those who are Hindus among you should become watchmen and remove the idols so installed. We should offer to repair the mosques which have been damaged. But the Sardar says that the government should bear the expenses of the repairs of those mosques. Why should the government do it? Is it not because we are not doing it ourselves?...

"An idol has no value unless it is duly installed in a consecrated place by duly qualified devotees. Forcible possession of a mosque disgraces Hinduism and Sikhism. It is the duty of the Hindus to remove the idols from the mosques and repair the

damage...

Conditions for Breaking Last Fast, 13-18 January, 1948 for Vacation of Muslim Shrines Occupied in Delhi.

- (1) Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki's tomb at Mehrauli should be repaired. Muslims should have full freedom to visit it and there should be no interference of any kind in this.
- (2) All non-Muslims should voluntarily withdraw from those mosques in the city that are being used for residential purposes of have been converted into temples.
- (3) Muslims should have the freedom to live in those areas where they had been living before riots broke out.
- (4) Muslims should have full freedom to travel by trains.
- (5) Economic boycott of Muslims should end.
- (6) Muslims should have full freedom to invite non-Muslims to live in their areas.
- (7) Those Muslims who want to migrate from Pakistan (to India) should have the freedom to do so.
- (8) Pakistan should be given Rs. 25 crores as promised.

At Dargah Qutub Sahab Mehrauli, Delhi, 18 January, 1948

I am also distressed to see the costly marble trellis damaged. It is no answer to say that similar or worse things have happened in Pakistan. Have we fallen so low as to stoop to such acts of vandalism? Granting that such incidents have occurred on a large-scale in Pakistan, it will be improper to institute comparisons in evil doing. Even if the whole world did wrong, should we do likewise? If today I take to evil courses, will it not distress you? For me it will be worse than death. Similarly, we have reason to feel ashamed at the damage done to the Dargah..."

SUPREME COURT ON IDENTIFICATION INDIVIDUALS IN MOBS

Dilavar Husain S/O Mohammadbhai Laliwala etc., Appellants v. State of Gujarat and another, Respondents.

B.C. RAY, S.R. PANDIAN AND S.M. SAHAI, JJ.

Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention Act (1985), Section 3(2)(1) — Penal Code (1860), Sections 3000, 34, 149 — Communal outburst — Unlawful assembly — Accused setting house on fire resulting in death of inmates — Witnesses from any of the houses situated nearby not examined — Identification of accused from out of mob highly doubtful — Failure to lodge complaint to police—Evidence establishing possibility/probability of witnesses seeing the occurrence not brought on record — Accused entitled to acquittal.

(Source: AIR 1991 Supreme Court 56)

SUPREME COURT ON ADMINISTRATIVE DISCRETION

Delhi Transport Corporation, Appellant v. D.T.C. Mazdoor Congress and others, Respondents.

Sabyasachi Mukharji, C.J. B.C. Ray, Lalit Mohan Sharma, P.B. Sawant and K. Ramaswamy, JJ

...Constitution of India, Articles 14, 226—Administrative Action—Discretion conferred on executive authorities—Rule of law envisages that it must be confined within its first essential of rule of law...

K. Ramaswamy, K.J. The absence of arbitrary power is the first essential of the rule of law upon which our whole constitutional system is based. In a system governed by rule of law, discretion, when conferred upon executive authorities must be confined within defined limits. The rule of law from this point of view means that decisions should be made by the application of known principles and rules and, in general, such decisions should be predictable and the citizen should know where he is. If a deci-

GAUHATI HIGH COURT ON GIFT PRESUMPTION IN MUSLIM LAW

Smt. Alimon Nessa and others, Appellants v. Sudhir Chandra Dey and others, Respondents.

Muslim Law — Gift of immovable property — Evidence on record showing that donee got possession of suit property in pursuance of gift deed—Gift, held, conferred title of gifted property on donee...

Right of pre-emption — When available — No evidence of declaration by adjacent owner about his intention to assert right of pre-emption — Right not available...

(Source: AIR 1991 Gauhati 13)

J&K HC ON SISTER'S RESIDUARY /INTEREST

Maqsooda Begum and others, Appellants v. Shahnawaz Khan and others, Respondents.

DR. A.S. ANAND, C.J.

..Muslim Law—Sunni Muslim — Sister has residuary interest in estate even in presence of wife and children — Can represent estate of deceased brother in legal suit.

..6. On the death of a Sunni Muslim, after the payment of his funeral expenses, debts and legacies, his property is divided amongst various relatives belonging to the class of sharers and the residue, if any, then goes to the relative shown in the class of residuaries. In the absence of the sharers, the property goes direct to the residuaries while in the absence of both the sharers and the residuaries, the property inherited by the distant kindred except in one case where the sharer is the wife or husband of the deceased, then the distant kindred does not inherit in presence of any sharer or residuaries...

(Source: AIR 1991 Jammu and Kashmir, 8)

sion is taken without any principle or without any rule it is unpredictable and such a decision is the antithesis of a decision taken in accordance with the rule of law.

(Source: AIR 1991 Supreme Court 101)

CALCUTTA HIGH COURT ON INALIENABILITY OF WAKF PROPERTY

Commissioner of Wakfs, Appellant v. Golam Ahmed and others, Respondents.

Bengal Wakf Act (1934). Section 72(1) — Recovery of Wakf property—Wakf property partitioned on footing of being secular property—Suit by Commissioner of Wakf to get decree of partition null and void under Section 72 (1) —Maintainable.

Where in a partition suit compromise decree was passed on the footing that the properties were secular and not wakf properties and the said decree if allowed to stand would deprive the suit properties of their legal character as wakf, the suit by the Commissioner of Wakf under Section 72(1) seeking to get the decree declared null and void could be treated as one for recovery of wakf properties from motivated mundanisatation by interested person and for discharge of encumbrance or obligation on the wakf and should be allowed.

Literal or Grammatical approach is now being steadily discarded in favour of purposive approach. The expression "encumbrance" or "obligation" in Section 72 should be given liberal meaning and not the technical meaning ascribed to it by the Laws relating Land or property. Where a wakf property has been sought to be denuded or divested of its religious character by any instrument, whether inter partes or curial, a suit to set aside the instrument or to have it declared null and void is very much a suit for recovery of the wakf property within the meaning of the Section 72 and any transaction or instrument which seeks to secularise and thus impede the administration of properties as wakf creates some encumbrance or legal obligation on the wakf property and suit to have the same annulled is a suit to have any wakf property discharged of such encumbrance. AIR 1991 Calcutta 24)

Ramamurti Committee's Final Report on National Policy on Education 1990-I

Text of Part 4.2.12 Relating to Minorities

Minorities

National Policy on Education (NPE) calls for attention being paid to the minority groups which are educationally deprived or backward. It also mentions about attention being paid to the constitutional guarantees given to minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

The implications of constitutional guarantees for the minorities to establish and administer educational institutions have been elaborately gone into and brought out in rulings of several courts of law over the years. These rulings clearly establish that it would be within the powers of the respective States to bring into force regulations that would ensure the quality of education through measures such as prescription of proper qualifications for the teaching staff, fair and reasonable remuneration for them, conditions of service based on principles of natural justice etc. The Government of India formulated policy norms and principles for recognition of minority managed educational institutions in the light of these rulings and circulated them to the various State Government, finding that not all of them had issued necessary guidelines and that the guidelines that had been issued by some States were varying in nature. Based on the policy norms circulated by the Government of India the State Governments have been requested to issue detailed guidelines, so that side by side with protection of constitutional guarantees to the minorities the standard in their educational institutions would also be uniformly maintained. With reference to inquiries from the Government of India regarding the issue of detailed guidelines, responses from the State Governments have been quite inadequate.

Recommendation—

Government of India should establish a standing machinery to closely monitor issue of detailed guidelines by the States for the purpose of granting recognition to minority managed educational institutions; to review the pace of disposal of applications for recognition of these institutions; and thereby to secure quality of education in institutions so recognised.

The POA has identified forty-one districts as being of minority concentration. This should be a sound base for implementing education programmes on compact area approach.

Recommendation:

All the educational programmes that are now under-implementation should be concurrently implemented, to the extent feasible, in these districts on a priority basis after conduct of bench mark surveys as envisaged in POA. (There is no evidence of implementation of education programmes in these districts based on initial bench mark surveys to assess the status of literacy therein and to build programmes thereon for further improvements.)

Community Polytechnics, as brought out elsewhere, is an innovative programme which helps in the use of the existing infrastructure of polytechnics for the purpose of imparting technical skills amongst the rural people. Already twenty community polytechnics have been established in areas of minority concentration but they do not cover all the forty-one districts of minority concentration identified in the POA and only sixteen districts have been covered.

Recommendation:

The 25 districts which have not yet been covered under the community polytechnics should also be brought under their coverage

before the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan.

The NCERT has been organising orientation and training programme for Principals/ Managers and teachers of minority managed educational institutions. The objective of these programmes is to provide appropriate career guidance for these professionals. They are also meant for training of teachers in teaching of English, science, mathematics etc. NCERT having started these programmes in 1987, it has so far been able to train only 467 Principals/-Managers and 947 teachers. This is a very small number and this size of NCERT programmes is inadequate to meet the training needs of vast numbers of Managers, Principals and teachers.

Recommendation :

The orientation programmes for the Principals/ Managers and teachers of minority managed educational institutions should be organised on a decentralised basis through SCERTS, CTEs and IASEs at the sub-State levels.

The UGC has been organising special coaching courses for minorities in order to enhance their capabilities for successfully competing in recruitment for public services. In this programme, twenty universities and twenty-eight colleges participated. The progress achieved under this scheme having been found to be inadequate, the UGC itself received the scheme and came out with recommendations for modifications in implementation. These modifications included opening of more resource centres and additional coaching centres regular interaction between Advisory Committees of coaching centres with UGC, improved monitoring system etc. Nonetheless not much progress is in evidence in terms of number of those

Communal Harmony: Biggest Achievement of Left Government

A.S. Malihabadi in Parlane, January, 1991

The biggest achievement of the Left Front government, in the past thirteen years, has been its success in maintaining communal peace and harmony in West Bengal. This is especially remarkable at a time, when the whole country has been overtaken by communal frenzy... The Left Front has been able to infuse the Muslims in West Bengal... with a sense of security. The credit for this should go equally to... the glorious secular traditions of the people of Bengal.

...Whenever there is even a small incident of communal violence even in the remotest area of the state, not merely the state, not merely the state administration and the police force, but also the cadres and volunteers of the Left political parties come out into the street to confront the communal menace. Nowhere else do political parties confront communalism in this manner. The Muslim community might have its grievances... lack of economic progress,... lack of proportionate (share on) the fruits of development, inadequate employment opportunities but... at least their lives are not in jeopardy. This sense of security...

There have of course been allegations against the government of perpetrating 'cadre raj' and causing violence — as on the August 16 Bandh and Municipal elections. There have

given special coaching.

Recommendations:

- i) Special coaching should be organised through reputed and progressive voluntary organisations, particularly those operating for the benefit and welfare of the minority communities.
- ii) Open universities including the IGNOU should establish distance education programmes for imparting special coaching.

also been instances of journalists being beaten up. But I don't believe that these were calculated move by the Left Front to gag the press. In a highly charged and explosive atmosphere such incidents do take place, though of course they are condemnable. In fact this is the result of an atmosphere of political tension in the state. It is imperative that this be dispelled, because if the political situation is explosive and surcharged with tension, it has the potential of being diverted to communal clashes. While the maintenance of peace and communal harmony is a very positive achievement of the Left Front, in the field of economic development, it must admit its failure. While the Left Front accuses the Centre of a discriminatory policy, the Centre alleges that the developmental funds that it has allotted to the state have been misutilized or under-utilized. But adequate efforts seem, really to be lacking on the part of the state government. If its allegations of the Centre's discrimination are true, it is entitled to take the Union Government to the Supreme Court on the issue and seek redressal. But the fact remains that even in areas which are exclusively within the purview of the state government civic amenities, maintenance of power generating sets, maintenance of urban areas — the state government has miserably failed.

In the rural sector, of course, the Left Front deserves credit for implementing land reforms and overhauling the Panchayati Raj system. This is perhaps why it has been able to stay in power for so long, because the electorate is drawn mainly from the rural areas. There might, of course, be some cases of electoral malpractices. But, I do not think it is right to say that the Left Front has perpetrated any sort of terror in the villages.

WEST BENGAL JOINT MEMORANDUM OF 20 MLA'S TO CHIEF MINISTER, 11 OCTOBER, 1990

1. ...Immediate steps must be taken to prevent inflammatory, communal propaganda and activities of some reactionary chauvinistic forces directed against the minorities and intended to malign and disrupt communal harmony in the State and also to protect lives and limbs of the minorities...
2. ...It has become imperative to form State... Minorities Commission and State Minorities Financial Development Corporation in West Bengal without any further delay of time.
3. ...Necessary steps be taken for immediate and full implementation of the Prime Minister's 15 Point Programmes, both in letter and spirit.
4. ...Immediate steps must be taken for... providing reservation for... Muslims and other Minorities in (accordance) with the provisions of Article 16(4) of the Constitution.
5. The Minority Cell (in the Government of West Bengal) should be properly activated...
6. Muslims Girl's Hostel... should be set up in all the districts...

Contd. from page 114)

lectively. The Babari Masjid Movement, must reaffirm its commitment to the restoration of the Masjid, not just the protection of the structure, and to legal, peaceful and democratic means to attain these goals. The Movement must also consolidate itself and establish links of understanding and cooperation with all secular forces.

To battle for the Babari Masjid is, therefore, to battle for the vision of India which inspired the Freedom Movement and which promises freedom and equality, justice and dignity to all its communities, to all its people.

JUH: Anti-Communal Convention,

NEW DELHI, 27 JANUARY, 1991

This Convention notes with deep anxiety that communal violence has assumed menacing proportions.

The barbarity witnessed in recent communal riots has crossed all limits and brought the country on the brink of anarchy and disintegration.

...It is all the more distressing that there should be incidents of murder, loot and arson during curfew hours which indicates complicity and connivance of administration....

Destruction of the shrines... and... murder of women and infants have become common occurrence.... If this fury of communalism and terrorism is allowed to continue unchecked, it may lead to a chain reaction plunging the country into civil war.

Indian journalism... is today deteriorating into an instrument of hatred and incitement....

All this has led to a sense of insecurity and despair in the minorities and weaker sections, particularly among Muslims which can make them vulnerable to separatism and desperate action, dreadfully dangerous for the unity and progress of the nation.....

The.. Convention calls upon the government in the Centre and States to take necessary steps to stem the rot. It demands that : —

1. All communal para-military organisations should be banned. No communal party should be permitted to form such organisation or take out such parades and processions.
2. Strict action be taken against communal propaganda and activities of various groups and organisations under section 153-A of the Cr. P.C.
3. State armed forces like the PAC and BMP should be reorganised and reoriented in terms of composition and training so that they act without any bias and prejudice...

4. A composite force should be constituted with appropriate representation to Muslims, members of backward, scheduled castes and tribes....

5. Officers of police and administration, who fail to perform their duties in accordance with their constitutional commitment, should be given exemplary punishment and those who show courage and commitment... should be duly rewarded.

6. The victims of riots should be compensated on the following lines:

- i). for each dead in riots the heirs/ dependents be given Rs. 1,00,000/-
- ii). The wounded be given at least Rs. 25,000/- each.
- iii). Employment of at least one family member of the person killed in riot;
- iv). Full compensation for the loss of property; and
- v). Maintenance allowance of Rs. 1,000/- per month till such time as full compensation is paid.

7. Newspaper reports should be carefully examined and action taken even against... false and prejudiced reports.

8. Those who help and protect members of another community should be rewarded

9. School text books and teaching materials should be thoroughly examined and proper changes conducive to communal harmony and national integration should be effected.

This Convention appeals to secular, political parties, sociocultural and religious organisation, intellectuals and people at large to stand up against these inhuman and barbarous forces and protect the glorious values of Indian and human civilisation. (Source : Radiance 16 Feb., 91)

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY BIENNIAL CONFERENCE, Resolution on Growing Menace of Fascism, 22-24 December, 1990

This All India Conference of the CFD is of the view that the growth of fascism by fomenting passions against minorities, particularly Muslims, in the majority community and by giving birth to the concept of a theocratic state is at present the greatest menace to Indian Democracy.

While communalism is rooted in certain sociological factors there is little doubt that it is deliberately encouraged by some political forces for electoral gains. To oppose these political forces and to assure that they do not succeed in their evil design to come to power must be the immediate short-term programme of all those who keenly desire that India should remain a democratic and secular country.

What is required for a long term solution of the communal problem is to disseminate among the people the democratic and humanist value of the dignity of the individual irrespective of his or her religious affiliations. Universal brotherhood and mutual tolerance for divergent opinions being the positive traits of Indian culture, it would not be difficult to combat and eliminate communalism in our country by spreading the values of democracy and secularism.

The Citizens For Democracy will heartily co-operate with all democratic and secular forces to ensure that the menace is completely eliminated from the country.

* Whether you like it or not, Bharatiya Janata Party talks of the Hindu rashtra... and the Janata Dal talks about the uplift of the backwards... What are we doing? We are not saying anything.

—Mr. Dinesh Singh.

Wanted Reaffirmation of Tolerance, Fraternity and Accommodation

A.M. Khusro on the Threat to Nationhood

...For the first time new tremors—this time engulfing large segments of the country and cutting across many or all States — have been registered in the shape of the Mandir—Masjid dispute and the Mandal issue. These movements constitute a national shock distinct from the regional shocks to Indian democracy.

Any attempt to resolve... the controversy over reservations and the Mandir-Masjid issue requires a historical as well as a social understanding of the problems involved. A national consensus for their resolution will require a process of historical reminders and mass education.

...The early leadership developed pacifying norms and values, religions and philosophies, cultures and attitudes, which aimed at toleration and accommodation of the other groups. The peaks of Indian history all preached the doctrine of tolerance... as democracy it self is the brainchild of tolerance and accommodation.

This teaching and preaching of tolerance and accommodation has gone into the grain of the sub-continent, witness the fact that in all the general elections, no bigoted, intolerant or even a religious political party has got even 10 per cent of the popular vote...

But now the country seems to be taking a historic U-turn moving on from tolerance to bigotry and from friendship to hostility. Nothing short of massive education of the people about the historical imperative and far sighted statesmanship by the political and social leaders can put the... nation back on the path of integration.

To strengthen Indian nationhood, understanding and tolerance are urgently called for, or else quarrels and enmity, hostilities and bloodshed, will engulf the country in an inextinguishable fire...

..People always have multiple

loyalties — to their nation, region, religion, caste, language, culture. In the early stages of political, economic and social development, they feel very strongly about these primordial loyalties and can easily get into conflict with the adherents of other loyalties. The leadership which wants to integrate the people into one strong nation has to ask itself some key questions; (i) which amongst all these are the legitimate loyalties and which are illegitimate or undesirable? (ii) Which amongst the legitimate loyalties is the primary loyalty which has to be adhered to in the case of a conflict of loyalties so that a strong nationhood can emerge? (iii) Are there ways and methods of avoiding a conflict of loyalties so the nation is steady and unhampered?

..A citizen's primary loyalty... has to be to the nation, and the basis of nationhood is the homeland... in recent times when some people in this country have started insisting on claiming their religious rights unilaterally and are unwilling to settle matters either in the court, as per the Constitution, or outside, in sensible dialogue, they are virtually and unknowingly... emphasising religion before the homeland.

There is universal agreement that loyalty to a race or a caste—often an aspect of race—is not a loyalty to be supported and encouraged as it creates more problems than it solves...

As for the other loyalties—to a region, religion, language and culture—the stamp of legitimacy exists in the modern world. No one can sensibly argue that to be a Maharashtrian or a Tamilian or to profess the Hindu, Sikh, Christian or Muslim religion, or to love one's language and culture, has any illegitimacy or negativity about it. All these are legitimate loyalties and cannot possibly be downgraded.

Those of us who lament the resurgence of regionalism, communalism and linguistic bigotry are actually thinking of regional, religious and linguistic chauvinism... To be a Hindu, Muslim, Christian or Sikh is not to be a chauvinist bigot. Chauvinism is distinct from a legitimate loyalty and is marked by a strong tendency to run down and denigrate the other persons's region, religion and language while elevating one's own categories are quite sustainable and have to be upheld.

...How does one avoid conflicts among these legitimate loyalties, including the national loyalty, so that such a conflict does not get in the way of the primacy of loyalty to a nation based on the concept of homeland? The thoughtful and discerning leadership which led this country to Independence and a democratic and secular nationhood faced these issues squarely... Realising that people have a basic sympathy with their geographical region or State, they constructed a federal structure.. in which the regional loyalty could be freely practised in terms of a State electorate, legislation... executive and judiciary...

Thus, an aperture was opened for the practice of legitimate regional loyalties and this prevented a possible conflict with the national set-up. Also, realising the people have strong linguistic sympathies, they opened yet another aperture.. in terms of linguistic States so that the people's love for their language... did not conflict with the growing love for the nation

Similarly, realising... that people do and will continue to have loyalties to their religion, the Indian leadership opted for a secular rather than a theocratic State and built into the Constitution a continuation of personal laws of different religions so that yet another aperture was opened

(Contd. on page 131)

Rajni Kothari on Threats to National Integrity Chauvinism, Elitism and Insecurity of Minorities

... The communal virus is no longer limited to a fundamentalist fringe; it is now sapping the very unity and integrity of the Indian nation. It had a limited appeal for long—we always had communal parties but their electoral base was miniscule and localised—but two dramatic developments transformed communalism from being a fringe phenomenon to taking over the mainstream political process. The first was the decision of Indira Gandhi, following the erosion of her normal electoral coalition, to use the problem of Punjab as a catalyst for castigating the minorities and dissenting groups as anti-national, in the process injecting a deep anxiety in the middle class Hindu and about the 'nation in danger'.

The second was the emergence of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad which combined with the RSS, the Shiv Sena and the Bajrang Dal to transform an anti-minorities stance into a majority chauvinism of the Hindus whom they undertook to 'unify' under the banner. While events from the invasion of the Golden Temple to the assassination of Indira Gandhi and its horrible aftermath produced the great divide between communities, the Ram Janmabhoomi call surcharged the same with a highly emotional appeal. But for the dominated party (the Congress) itself adopting a communal stance and legitimising anti-minority feelings; the VHP-BJP appeal would never have made it.

The combination of the Congress-I brand of political communalism and the VHP-BJP stamp of a deep-seated Hindu identity succeeded in drawing large sections of the middle-class (in many places joined by the lower classes who were also emotionally drawn by communal appeals) towards a pseudo-religious symbolism of Hindutva. With this, the two streams of the 'nation in

danger' and Hindu Rashtra joined into one common theme of a Hindu hegemonical state which the other communities should accept and abide by. And with it the whole ideology of a pluralist democracy which had been built around the essentially plural tradition of Hindu civilisation itself, has come under shadow and the unique brand of secularism as the ideological basis for the Indian state has been jeopardised.

Inevitably, the alienation of the minorities (and regions where the minorities are in large numbers) had bred minority communalism, often taking to extremist and 'terrorist' escape routes, in the process gravely affecting neighbourly relations, militarising the subcontinent and rendering each national economy highly vulnerable to outside influences. There is a deep interface between the communal divide within the country and the international divide across the borders to which very little systematic attention has been given beyond accusations of terrorists receiving aid from across the border. However, the basic reality of a simultaneous attack on the integrity of the state from within and without cannot be ignored. It sets the stage for the growing culture of violence and the free market in dangerous armaments....

There is need to probe this growing interface between external and internal vulnerabilities. ...

The answer surely lies in the sharp erosion of the state's role in bringing about social transformation at home in which the people at large were to be involved, and in which self-reliance and national autonomy vis-a-vis the external world in realising social democratic mobilisation at home was to have been the principal spur. ...

... In the meanwhile, the print

media and the professional middle classes fell victim to national chauvinist appeals on the one hand and narrow interpretations of self-interest on the other (as found in the virulent reaction to the SCs, STs and the OBCs). ...

To be sure, it is from within the same middle class and by working in the same media that a whole lot of idealists committed to social transformation, secular values and the environment have emerged. A large array of organisations, intellectual articulation and newspaper columns devoted to the human rights of the oppressed and victimised people—the women, the children, the dalits, the displaced and the homeless—have sprung up from among these rebels against the system. But so powerful has been the simultaneously recessive and aggressive strain of Hindu culture and its flirtation with modern nationalism of the Western vintage that, despite many efforts at charting new paths towards a truly indigenous, pluralist, sensitive and just social order, these have failed to make a dent in the mainstream social process.

To an extent, both the social agenda with which the Janata Dal/-National Front formation started and the two issues (social amelioration and defence of the minorities) to which it chose to give priority, represented an attempt to provide a new deal for a polity that had been taken for a ride by the elite classes. ...

The end of the National Front experiment came as a result of the Janata Dal's failure to build a party and a grassroots base that could have countered the VHP offensive on the basis of the real interests of the people. ... With its end has ended any hope of a democratic resurgence from within the mainstream political institutions, the planning mecha-

(Contd. on page 141)

B. George Verghese on the Communal Upsurge

The communal situation took a new turn in India during the 1980s with alarm over mass conversions in Meenakshipuram in Tamil Nadu, the inflow of Gulf remittances, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Iran and elsewhere, the passage of the Muslim Women's Act in the wake of the Shah Bano judgement and, latterly, developments in Punjab and Kashmir. There was a re-surfacing of fears that Muslim might in course of time demographically outstrip Hindus because of the former's unwillingness to practice family planning and Muslim males being entitled to marry four wives! ... L.K. Advani put the issue in sharper focus during his rath yatra which he launched on the issues of what he called pseudo-secularism, Muslim appeasement and minority-ism, with matters like Article 370, cow protection and a uniform civil code being mentioned illustratively. These points need to be answered.

Some, like the demographic issue, are red herrings. Illiteracy, poverty, a high infant mortality rate and similar social factors have more to do with high birth rates than religious considerations. Indeed, some of the highest fertility rates in the country are to be found in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, among Hindus and Muslims alike, on account of inhibiting social factors. A recent Andhra Pradesh study disproves the thesis that Muslims are unwilling to accept family planning as did an earlier Meerut study and others. The 1986-87 Family Welfare Year Book published by the Government shows that as of 1985 the birth rate in J & K was lower than in Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan or Uttar Pradesh, especially in the rural areas.

Likewise, cow slaughter has long been banned in Kashmir while Hindu dairying families in Gujarat as elsewhere openly accept the need to cull their herds. In any case, legislation

and Court rulings prohibit the slaughter of milch cows in practically all States. This is no more a real issue.

Mass conversions are certainly undesirable and politically sensitive and should be avoided. Having said that, there is no escaping the fact that the scheduled castes who converted to Islam en masse in Tirunelveli district did so to flee from the caste oppression and indignities they suffered. This really points to the unfinished task of Hindu social reform which must be pressed forward vigorously. To cite Gulf money or Christian missionary blandishments begs the question. Conversion by force or lure of material considerations is in any case an offence under the law.

Fundamentalism, connoting and arrogant exclusiveness and intolerance... is objectionable. Theocracy is, however, not an adequate basis for the modern state and it is for this reason that India's founding fathers consciously chose a plural and democratic society committed to equality for all, fraternity and, by derivation, secularism.

Examine "Muslim appeasement". How and where? To say that Muslims constitute a single, indivisible vote bank is untrue. Certainly. Muslim votes are wooed by political parties but no more than the votes of scheduled castes and tribes, Yadavs, Kurmis, Jats Lingayats, Ezhavas, Marathas and similar groups.

The case against Article 370 is quite misplaced. It fulfils a solemn treaty contract embodied in the Instrument of Accession and today regulates Centre-State relations in respect of J & K. Otherwise, J & K's accession is complete and the State is no less part of India constitutionally than Madhya Pradesh or Gujarat. Other forms of special constitutional arrangements as between Centre and State or within states is to be found in the fifth and Sixth Schedules and

under a series of provisions under Article 371. If "outsiders" cannot buy land in J & K, they cannot do so either in Himachal or Meghalaya.

The Muslim Women's Act was not a sound measure. But it is not a whit different from the earlier amendment providing that Hindu couples marrying under the Special Marriage Act, a uniform civil code, shall be restored the right to be governed by the Hindu succession Act for purposes of inheritance... They way successive attempts to legislate a sensible adoption law have been scuttled is saddening. There is no reason why an optional civil code should not be enacted. It harms nobody and, like the Special Marriage Act, will be applicable only to those who opt for it....

The notion that Hindus enjoy no privilege in personal law is mistaken. The concept of the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) in taxation law confers substantial financial benefits from the exchequer on those claiming HUF categorisation.

...To cavil at a sum of Rs. 30 lakhs or whatever being provided for the repair of the Jama Masjid in Delhi, a notified archaeological monument, is petty. Hundreds of monuments, Hindu temples among them, are similarly cared for as they should be, as national treasures. At another level, article 290A uniquely provides for sums of Rs. 46.5 lakhs and Rs. 13.5 lakhs to be charged respectively to the Kerala and Tamil Nadu budgets annually for the maintenance of Hindu temples and shrines under Devaswoms in those two States as part of the constitutional settlement. Why should anyone object. It is a small price, if at all, for building India.

The charge of Muslim appeasement therefore is off the mark. In the ultimate analysis one has only to look at the current economic status of Muslims in Indian life, in the civil

services, armed forces, academia, the professions, business and industry, to discover that they are almost at the bottom of the heap, exceptions apart. The Muslims simply have not got their share of the national cake, partly because they were insecure and politically under seige for long. And as they emerged to compete and improve their lot and show upward mobility in a situation of economic shortages and inadequate job opportunity this has been viewed as a threat by some and communal rioting has been used as a tool to cripple this competition. Muslims must be far more self-confident and the rest of Indian society far more accommodative as it can do the country no good to be held back by a large depressed community.

The foregoing should set at rest much of the myth about minorityism. The Constitution postulates equality of and equal protection for all religions (Articles 15 and 16) and.. special protection for religious and linguistic minorities both in relation to language as well as script (Article 29 and 30). Linguistic minorities have no religious connotation... Religious minorities have been recognised at the national as well as the State level, depending on whether it is national or State legislation that affects their interests.

Whereas all minorities, religious or linguistic, have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, it is not axiomatic that an institution established by a minority must be regarded as a minority institution. That recognition follows only if the institution so established serves the interests of the minority to which it claims to belong. In short the only preference minorities receive is a measure of autonomy in the administration and staffing of educational institutions. The right to administer does not however condone maladministration and all minority institutions are subject to the same standards, regulations and other academic norms as any other

institutions.

...For the rest, any private institution not seeking aid enjoys autonomy while a majority charitable institution is eligible for the same concessions and special consideration as any other institution.

Taken as a whole, the indictment of "minorityism" is feeble. The argument that the establishment of a Minorities Commission is recouping minorityism is specious. The Minorities Commission and the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities are there to monitor the minority rights guaranteed by the Constitution, no more, just as the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes oversees the provisions pertaining to these categories... The Minorities Commission needs to be given statutory powers and better staffing and taken more seriously by the government which has consistently defaulted in presenting its reports to Parliament.

Much damage has been done by harping on a more imagined than real minorityism to the extent that it has instilled in sections of the majority an inferiority complex as epitomised in the slogan that Hindus are "second class citizens". This is pure nonsense, but has provided grist to propagandist mills.

There is... a grain of truth in Mr. Advani's charge about pseudo-secularism... The popularly accepted Indian concept of secularism posits *sarva dharma sambhava* or equal respect for all religions, and separation of church from state. This definition is good as far as it goes but is clearly inadequate. It fails to distinguish religion from culture. Both are crudely lumped together by some: ergo, Urdu is "Muslim" while the "Ramayana"... is 'Hindu'. Indeed, both are Indian.

Furthermore, Indian secularism... ignores its modernising role. Hence revivalism coexists cheerfully with secularism and is even being promoted in defence of secularism. Worse, all governments since Inde-

pendence without exception have ignored the reforming, modernising role of secularism and have lent respectability to every brand of orthodoxy and religious conservatism in the name of "equal respect". Ultimately therefore, secularism has sometimes actively come to mean equal respect for everybody's communalism!...

We need to think about all these problems — openly, honestly, together. Mr. Advani and his friends in saffron may be mistaken, but they must be persuaded. Some matters do call for correction. In others, misperceptions need to be removed. This has to be done through patient dialogue and understanding. There is no need for threats or coercion for we are all Indians, bound in unity through diversity.

(Courage The Indian Express New Delhi)

Contd. from page 128)

for the people to pursue their legitimate loyalties, thus avoiding a conflict with the greater national identity.

It was the existence of these apertures and the freedom to practise the regional, linguistic and religious identities that saved the nation from a collapse and kept on strengthening the national loyalty... If Maharashtrians were told to be only Indian and not Maharashtrians, and if the Sikhs, Muslims, Christians or Hindus were disallowed their freedom to practice their personal laws, India would have ceased to be a nation — so damaging and destructive would the conflicts have become by now...

This torch of liberalism and large-hearted tolerance and accommodation has still to be carried long distance by the Indian people and the way to build and strengthen the nation further, until it becomes a reality, is to observe and follow the trend of Indian history, and to pursue uncompromisingly a culture of co-existence, accommodation and brotherhood.

(Source: The Indian Express, New Delhi 14 January, 1991)

P.C. Alexander on Combating Communalism

Various reasons have been given for the widespread flare-up of communal violence... Many believe that the politicisation of religion or the exploitation of religious causes for political ends is the single largest factor for the revival of communalism in its aggressive form....The BJP's involvement in the Ayodhya temples issue is seen by most people as the immediate cause for communal tensions.

Some maintain that the causes... are more economic than political or religious....

Some believe that religious fundamentalism triggered by the Khomeini revolution in Iran has had its effects in India.... Some are of the view that the Muslims who have been nursing a sense of alienation and grievance because of what they believe is deliberate denial of rights and opportunities to them have developed a ghetto complex....

Some others are of the view that there is a direct correlation between political instability and communal disturbances....

Each of these factors has contributed to the aggravation of the communal problem. But... communal harmony is not merely a matter of politics, economics or religion; it is basically a problem of the heart. If the people have the will for harmony deep in their hearts no political, economic or religious force can really prevent it.

The sad fact is, in spite of four decades of experience of living together under a democratic system without the presence of a third party to exploit differences, we have failed to develop unity on the emotional plane. Many factors have contributed to this. Among them, one is our penchant for wrong interpretation of the facts of history. Another is the mental block in overcoming the trauma of partition.

An unfortunate fact about India's

medieval history is that it had not been presented or understood in its proper perspective. Most of the distortions in understanding relate to the doings of the Muslim invaders

Probably there was more cruelty than tolerance in this period in India, but it will also be fair to remember that it was an age of intolerance in most parts of the world, an age when ideas of liberty, equality and rights were unknown to most people. It was the age of the Crusades, of slave trade, and an age in which burning on the stakes of so-called heretics was considered an act of piety....

....Intolerance and cruelty... should not be judged by the standards of the modern age. Unfortunately there have been persistent attempts to use the facts of medieval history to serve the interests of modern politics and it is this which has created the main road blocks for harmony and emotional integration. The trauma of partition is still haunting the minds of several people and unfortunately some... political parties and religious groups are now (for) the pernicious doctrine of... majority communalism....

Promoting emotional integration becomes a very difficult task so long as some political parties have a vested interest in communal separa-

STATUS OF GURUDWARA SHAHID GANJ, LAHORE

Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj remains a gurdwara, as any of the hundreds of yatrees who visit Lahore every year will tell you. Judge Goel was injudicious in making the baseless allegation (Organiser, 30th December) that the Government of Pakistan had 'declared it to be a Masjid'.

(Source: Pakistan High Commission's letter No. 3(10)/91-INF dated 23 January, 1991 to the Organiser Weekly, New Delhi) AIR 1991 Gauhati 13)

tism, but some other factors are making the task more difficult. They are mainly the lapses on the part of the governments of the states where communal riots have become chronic to take corrective and preventive action. Every time a communal riot takes place, an inquiry is promptly ordered... but very little happens after that...

....No corrective action is taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents... and even the officers found guilty of gross dereliction of duty often escape unpunished..

An equally regrettable lapse on the part of the governments has been their reluctance to take action even when clear evidence about the complicity of some sections of the police forces in the riots is brought to their notice. In some of the northern states, the conduct of the Provincial Armed Constabulary had consistently come in for sharp criticism, but the state governments have always chosen to play them down on the spurious plea that action against the police forces will affect their morale. What they seem to forget is that there can be nothing worse than the people losing confidence in the very instruments which are supposed to protect them.

(Source : The Week, January 20, 1991)

VHP'S HISTORY OF BABARI MASJID

As per certain historians and local traditions, 76 attempts have been made in 460 years to retake Ramajannabhoomi since Babar, costing over a lakh of lives. These Hindu attempts to get back the holy site include 4 in Babar's time, 10 in Humayun's time, 20 in Akbar's time, 30 in Aurangzeb's time, 5 in Nawab Saadat Ali's time, 3 in Nasiruddin Hyder's time, 2 in Wajid Ali's time and 2 in British time. And now yet another in modern Jai Chand and pseudo-Mughal Mulayam's time...

(Source : The Organiser, New Delhi)

Religious Understanding and Mutual Respect is the Way Out

A.A. Engineer in the Viewpoint, Lahore, 24 January, 1991

India is witnessing an unprecedented communal bloodbath today, perhaps the worst after 1947, Practically the whole of the country is in the grip of communal violence.... In fact... it has gradually increased in its intensity....

...Fanatics have put even barbarians to shame in inflicting brutalities on innocent people. The communal frenzy has acquired such dimensions that all previous theories are proving wrong. Earlier we theorised that communal violence is an urban phenomenon.. But... communal violence spread in the rural areas with the same virulence as in the urban areas.

We theorised that the former princely states... Were free of communal animosity and violence. We were again proved wrong... (They) recently witnessed an unprecedented degree of communal orgy...

We used to say that generally children and women are spared by the fanatics... But they have left even this sense of shame far behind... Also, we used to say that women were, by and large, free of communal malice. However, now talk to any woman and she would speak with venom against the members of the other community. The communal parties and groups are giving special attention in organising the women of their respective communities. They can be the best vehicle of communal propaganda in the family as it is they who rear up children and shape their outlook.,,

The most important question is : where would this frenzy lead us? No one can break our country faster than those who engineer communal violence and spit venom against this or that community.... Those who spread communal violence are strengthening the hands of extremists and separatists....

...Our greatest strength lay in democracy and secularism. And... in

a religiously pluralist country, democracy cannot be sustained without secularism...

The BJP-VHP propaganda that the State is indulging in what they prefer to call "minority" is hardly borne out by facts. Since the early eighties, the State, on the contrary, was playing the 'majoritarian' card.... Democratic politics is essentially competitive politics and primordial identities are manipulated by the politicians...

...The BJP, in order to win over the support of the upper-caste Hindus, and also in its desperate attempts to unite all Hindus, has been propagating some myths about the Muslims in India. These arouse a strong sense of resentment among the common Hindus who then look upon the Muslims as unpatriotic, if not anti-Indian. This is... a very dangerous political game in as much as it seriously weakens the country's unity. Firstly, it is not correct to maintain that the Muslims are not of the Indian mainstream; they are. The Indian mainstream cannot be monopolised by the upper-caste Hindus alone in a multi-religious society... One must distinguish in such a society between religious identity and national identity. It is not necessary that separate religious identity implies separate national identity. The Jews in America have strong sense of separate identity, so do the Hindus and the Muslims there; but no one ever suggests ever indirectly that they are anti-national.

...The masses of Hindus and Muslims, specially in small towns and rural areas, are much more integrated and are part of the same socio-cultural milieu. They hardly have any sharply defined sense of separate identity. It is these masses of people who constitute the overwhelming, albeit silent, majority in India. In fact, it is the urban elite from both the

communities who stand in need of sharply defined separate identities, more for political than religious reasons...

..Communal views are being articulated by the educated elite from all religious communities as they compete with each other, both for political power and economic resources. For the masses it is not a felt need as it is for the elite. The masses are undoubtedly getting communalised but not for their own reasons. It is the elite of their community who urge upon them to fall in line. The educated elite is creating a communal ethos to win their battles in the political and economic arena.

The Ram-Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy is the consequence, rather than the cause, of all this... Even if the Babari Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi controversy is resolved satisfactorily, the ultimate problem that of political and economic competitiveness, would not be solved... If India is facing caste and communal conflict... that does not however, mean that we have to surrender meekly... Such fatality would spell great disaster...

We have to do everything possible to resist the emerging communal fascism. The communalists have pushed India to the brink of a precipice. We have to pull it back... There are exceptions to this among the politicians. We must strengthen the hands of such politically healthy elements.

To fight communalism, secular and democratic elements in both the communities will have to assert themselves and give up their complacency or sense of despondency... While the Hindus should strive to remove the sense of insecurity and fear of loss of identity from the minds of the Muslims, the Muslims should also appreciate certain religious sensibilities of the Hindu mind....

The Hindus should understand

that separatism is not an integral part of the Islamic teachings, nor is Islam an aggressive religion, whatever the behaviour of some Muslim rulers in the past... The political history of the Muslims is not the same thing as the religious history of Islam.... The great Sufi saints like ... Farid, Chishti, Nizamuddin Awliya and others... fully assimilate the Indian culture and Indianised Islam much before any such demand arose in contemporary India for political reasons. Some of them even considered Ram and Krishna as prophets since Allah has sent prophets to all the countries and in their own languages according to the Quran. Many who did not consider them as prophets respected them as highly revered religious leaders.

Muslims should also appreciate the undoubted achievements of the Hindu thought... The Holy Prophet in his treaty with the Zoroastrians of Bahrain, recognised them as ahl-al-Kitab (people of the book) though they are not mentioned in the Quran as such. No wonder then that some Sufi saints like Jan-i-Jahan considered the Hindus too as people of the book. It is mutual respect for each other's religion that will bring about resolution of the communal conflict to some extent and under-cut the base of the communalists. Violence will breed more violence, hatred will breed more hatred, and both (communities) will suffer grievously alongwith the unity of the country....

THE SWORD OF TIPU SULTAN: PRE-TELECAST ANNOUNCEMENT

'..No claim is made for the accuracy or authenticity of any episode or events depicted in the serial. This serial is a fiction and has nothing to do either with the life or the rule of Tipu Sultan. The serial is a dramatised presentation of Bhagwan Godwani's novel.'

Mahesh Jethmalani on Meaning of Appeasement and Secularism. in BJP's Dictionary

...The BJP has decided to advance the national cause by giving us its own home-spun redefinition of the words "appeasement" and "secularism". If you are intellectually opposed to the activities of the Mosque Demolition Squad of the VHP in particular, the BJP suggests that you are a "pseudo-secularist" prone to un-Hindu activities like "appeasement of minorities".

Being instinctively and intellectually opposed to the demolition of the mosque and stung by the consequent applicability of the BJP's invectives, I scurried for the dictionary. I discovered to my relief that the word "secularism" was defined as "the belief that the state, morals, education, etc. should be independent of religion". I also discovered — again to my relief that "appeasement" meant "the act of placating by concessions". I then surmised — rightly, I hope — that the entire mandir-masjid controversy in effect boiled down to two questions:

- (a) Was the BJP's most conspicuous platform of constructing a temple at Ayodhya, even if it meant demolishing a mosque, a secular activity? And.
- (b) If someone were to say that the Muslims were entitled to have the Babari Mosque standing intact, would he be guilty of placating the Muslim minority by offering them a concession?

If the answer to both these questions is in the negative, as indeed it must be, if we are to adhere to the dictionary meaning of the words then, it is time to recognise that the BJP is not using language to enlighten the mind, but as an instrument of studied inane. The BJP might feel somewhat hamstrung by the fact that our Constitution proclaims itself to be a secular one, and that their present platform is somewhat out of tune with such a Constitution. But this is

hardly a reason for doing violence to language and distorting traditional concepts. The BJP has already made it known that it believes that the national interest can only be promoted by furthering Hindu interests. Instead of trying to fit its present political platform within existing constitutional doctrines, it ought to campaign in all honesty for a constitutional doctrine that fits with its ideological proclivities.

In other words, it is time for the BJP to proclaim its allegiance to a Hindu theocratic state as opposed to the existing secular constitutional one. The electorate can then decide which model is more appropriate for the integrity and governance of this country. In its present state of ambivalence, the BJP is both unfair to itself and the people of this country. To itself, because, its semantic distortions cannot but lead to the impression that it is unsure of the efficacy of its own platform. To the people, because, it serves its new wine in old bottles and hence, does not let them exercise their choice freely.

Meanwhile, those who swear by secularism and the Constitution, need not lose heart. The temple-building (and mosque-demolition activity of the BJP) and the VHP is not a secular activity. Similarly, to say that the mosque ought not to be demolished, is not an attempt at minority appeasement. The offer of sanctity to Muslim places of worship is not a concession granted by the Hindu secularists; it is a guarantee given to the Muslims by the Constitution of India and the laws of the land which recognise that tyranny can also be exercised by a majority. Until that Constitution and those laws change, there can be no question of appeasement. There is no cause, therefore, for "pseudo-secularists" to flinch under the weight of that epithet. **The Sunday, 3-8 February, 1991)**

Anatomy of Communal Carnage

India Today's Report, 15 January, 1991

The intensity of the communal hatred that erupted across the country was a brutal throwback to the days of Partition, of friends stabbing each other because they suddenly discovered they belonged to different communities, of blood flowing down gutters in congested gullies, of carcasses strewn across streets. Fifteen districts in Uttar Pradesh and the Muslim-dominated old city of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh looked like battle fields...

The Genesis of the killings: Mandir — Masjid Fall-out

There is no denying that the flames of communal hatred which scorched the towns of Uttar Pradesh and Hyderabad were the consequence of state impotence in responding to the message of revenge and hatred that echoed with every frenzied call for a Ram mandir at Ayodhya.

The blood that flowed down the narrow gullies in these towns stained the conscience of the country like never before. In most districts of Uttar Pradesh... it was a virtual civil war and 15 districts of the state got caught in the bloody sweep of violence...

As usual the vernacular press like Aaj, Jagran and Amar Ujala played the pivotal role in inflaming Hindu passions. Aware of the intensity of the communal passions aroused, the state government buckled and sent orders to the district magistrates and police officers throughout the state to allow Kalash yatra — the processions carrying the ashes of kar sewaks who were killed in Ayodhya. Muslims listened with fear and then outrage at the vituperative slogans and the incredible propaganda of hate which were part of these processions... "It was like slow poison going drip drip into the city for weeks."

The poison unleashed the devil in men. A rumour here, a minor street squabble there and battle cries rose

from somewhere in the labyrinthine lanes that make up most of these towns... And so it came, one spark after another in a bizarre continuum.

If in Uttar Pradesh it was a frenzied outbreak of mass violence in Hyderabad it was mostly stabbings...

The happenings in Ayodhya had a direct link with the gory events that unfolded in old Hyderabad. A former BJP MLA of the city Narendra and other kar sewaks who returned from Ayodhya were allowed to take out a procession... The poison had been sprayed very effectively.

The Arsenal of War: Gunbattles and Stabbings

In the long period during which passions simmered both sides were arming themselves... (when) firearms were absent... knives, daggers and collapsible spears were used.

The Police : Partisan and Controversial :

The PAC did not have much of a reputation for neutrality anyway and it is no wonder that this major police force of Uttar Pradesh could not do anything to salvage the situation. The Muslims see the PAC as a Hindu tool of destruction. And Hindu fundamentalists have begun actively wooing the PAC raising slogans of "veer jawans"...

Muslims provide vivid though somewhat exaggerated versions of ruthless firing by PAC jawans who they claim take roof-top positions only on the houses of Hindus whether it is Agra, Kanpur or Aligarh... Aligarh, where reports of PAC violence abound, saw pitched battles allegedly between the Hindus and the PAC on the one side and Muslims on the other in several localities. There were unconfirmed reports of PAC men entering houses and killing cowering Muslims... "There has been a traditional tirade against the PAC as a communal

force. There could be some isolated cases of high handedness. Otherwise the PAC worked without any prejudices whatsoever," defended the Home Secretary Aditya Kumar Rastogi.

Senior officials... claim this Muslim dislike for the PAC has led them to attack the policemen at the slightest provocation. The policemen retaliate by firing... Indiscriminate firing often kills innocent bystanders like women and children. While the PAC has been removed from many Muslim localities, elsewhere officials try to take advantage of the ill-reputation... for the simple reason that they generate fear and could thus perhaps dissuade people from starting a riot. Often this strategy boomerangs.

Administrative Action : Too Little, Too Late

In some places an inept administration, in others an inadequate police force meant that matters went completely out of control as riot-hit cities burned for hours before any action was taken...

Almost everywhere inexplicable and abrupt changes within the law enforcement leadership broke morale and complicated an already difficult task. Where pre-emptive action could have been taken it was not...

Elsewhere... a tiny local police force simply could not cope with the intensity of the rioting...

...Decision to transfer DMs or SSPs or even lower ranking officials in the midst of rioting... added to more administrative confusion...

The Criminal Connection : Use of Thugs

Professional thugs come in where devils already tread... They went around stoking fires.

Muslims and Hindus throughout the disturbed areas... talk of white

(Contd. on page 142)

Ashok Row Kavi on Battle of Succession in RSS

...Balasaheb Deoras, the third Sarsanghchhalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, is sinking...

...The old warhorse is dying!

This is the nerve-centre of the largest private para-military organisation in the world, the bogeyman of the communists and the mortal enemy of the secularists. But there is none of the tumult here.

Here in Nagpur it all started in 1925 when Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a member of the Reception Committee of the 1920 Congress session held at Nagpur, broke away because he discovered that they were drifting apart from the ideals of the freedom movement.

...In a letter written by him to the Gandhian industrialist Jamnalal Bajaj, Hedgewar also read out a hand-written constitution of the Sangh to Bajaj saying that the "RSS will never oppose any genuine freedom movement like the Congress party".

The second inkling of what the RSS was upto came in a chance meeting between Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and Dr. Hedgewar at Sewagram in Wardha district, on December 24, 1934. Gandhi reminded Hedgewar that he was an excellent organiser for the 1920 Nagpur session and even remembered his speech: "It is the duty of the Congress to redeem all the colonial countries from the clutches of British colonialism and imperialism."

The motive is given only in parables to Gandhi: "If the Congress is India's head, we hope to be the heart that beats constantly to keep the circulation going in the whole body". Soon after, Hedgewar was elected by the constitution written by him.

However, here lies the rub. Hedgewar's concept of the constitution was along the lines of an extended Hindu joint family with the Bhagwa Dwaj (saffron flag) as the karta (head of the family). The human represen-

tation of this karta would be the Sarsanghchhalak, a Sanskrit word meaning the one person who heads the group.

According to this original constitution, the Sarsanghchhalak was elected by all registered members of the Sangh... There seem to be doubts whether this is... being followed now. The reason is the way the RSS functions now: the Sarsanghchhalak is obviously nominated in the guru-parampara tradition of the Vedic brahminical schools and guilds.

This is what Sardar Patel objected to when he banned the RSS in 1949. There was definite evidence to show that Patel and the topechelons of the Sangh had a series of talks during the ban period...

The papers lying with the Sangh at Nagpur show Patel pleading with Golwalkar and others to modify the RSS Constitution on "the pattern of the Congress..."

...In 1949, it did adopt a democratic constitution, only it superimposed it on the older Hedgewar one in such a way that the Sarsanghchhalak remained nominated.

...On July 10, 1949, the RSS indeed did give an undertaking that its constitution was based "broadly on the Congress constitution. Next day, on February 11, 1949, Sardar Patel passed the order lifting the ban on the RSS.

The preamble to this 1949 constitution was published in The Hitwada issue dated May 13, 1949. In that, the RSS seems to have either pulled the wool over Sardar Patel's eyes or turned a neat judo trick to outwit the government.

The preamble states that the Bhagwa Dwaj was not regarded as the Guru and that the Sarsanghchhalak would be elected through a process not unlike the Congress Party's procedure...

In the last effort to try and control the RSS, Mrs. Gandhi started

income-tax proceedings against it. Deoras stopped her in her tracks with a simple writ petition saying that as the RSS was "an educational institution and hence fell under the term charitable institution"; hence its gurudakshina was not taxable.

However, when it was asked to register as a charitable institution, the RSS filed a statement with the Deputy Charity Commissioner in Nagpur that it was not a charitable institution. The statement on oath filed reads as follows:

"According to the submission of Mr. Balasaheb Deoras, the RSS' activities are not solely secular in education and hence it cannot be called a charity".

This was on May 22, 1974. It was reading this that Mrs. Gandhi banned the organisation as "not secular" and then quickly amended the preamble to the Constitution to include the word secular along with socialist...

...When the case went up to Joint Charity Commissioner Vaidya he called it "a great blunder" and demanded a fresh enquiry. Vaidya put it legally as "matter remanded a fresh enquiry. The RSS though was quicker: it filed an appeal before the district judge in Nagpur and obtained a stay against Vaidya's order.

In other words, the RSS is clear about the fact that it is not "solely secular". Of course, meanwhile there is fresh talk that a new constitution had been drawn up on March 23, 1972 and another one in August, 1972. The difference between the two was that the former had 25 articles while the latter had only 21.

The fundamental change is alleged to be that every shaka would now be considered totally independent and completely self-sufficient. This way, the huge monolithic organisation has practically decentralised its activities. Its rapid mutations have

stumped the government.

The point in explaining the super-structure of the Sangh is because of the depths of its activities.... The RSS thrust is one of mass mobilisation. The VHP campaign in Ayodhya is a grim reminder that in sheer organisation they have already beaten the Indian state in mobilisation.

But the future seems to have more challenges in store. The new tussle within the RSS is for the collective souls of 5.45 lakhs workers who can be mustered in a 24-hour call-up...

...Three names are being mentioned in the reckonings for the Sarsanghchalak.

...Mr. M.G. Vaidya... the formidable Akhil Bharatiya Bouddhik Pramukh (All-India Ideological Chief) is a former school teacher who specialised in Sanskrit and lives on a small-farm in Vidarbha. Though a respected intellectual as the former editor of 'Tarun Bharat', the Sangh's mouthpiece, Vaidya is known to be "too simple" and "not street-smart"...

The other two in the race are both South Indians. They are H.V. Sheshadri, the Akhil Bharatiya Sankaryavaha, or general-secretary, and K.C. Sudarshan, the Akhil Bharatiya Up-Karyavaha or joint general-secretary.

...It is put in very historical terms. The last time, Hinduism needed the South was when Buddhism had to be checked. It was Shankara alone who could stop the decay in the North. Again the time has come."...

...If one of the two South Indians takes over, then one can surely expect a call to arms for the cause of Hinduism.

In short, the death of Deoras will mean the era when the consolidation will stop and the forward thrust will start.

(Source: The Sunday Mail, New Delhi, 2 December, 1990)

Prem Shankar Jha on Hindu Rashtra as Supreme Challenge to the Nation

...A collective flight from responsibility.... is taking place throughout the country today.... No leader of the Hindu Samaj answers the questions: Where will the 110 million Muslims of India go if they cannot continue to live in peace in India? How will they hold India together if Sikhs, Kashmiri Muslims, Nagas, the Mizos and Muslims of the core areas decide that they do not want to be part of a theocratic authoritarian state in which they are second class citizens? And what will happen to the 1.5 million Indians living in the Gulf countries? What other reason can there be for responsible Muslim leaders not asking themselves what kind of future they are laying in store for their children, even if they win the battle for the Babari Masjid, if a large part of the Hindu population among whom they must live are severely alienated from them?

This article is a plea for sanity and restraint. Above all it is a plea not to lose our courage and our faith in our destiny, when a better future is almost within our grasp. We are in the hour before dawn, when the night is darkest. But daylight is not far away...

...The country is being pulled apart remorselessly by Mandir and Mandal. Caste and communal passions have been stirred as never before...

...The BJP.... had gone through a quarter century of secularisation, having dropped the call to undo the partition of India as long ago as 1966...

...But the Mandir-Masjid dispute offered a swift, totally different opportunity to build a vote-bank, riding on the back of Hindu chauvinism.... V.P. Singh chose to raise the job reservation issue, offering an alternative base for political mobilisation... The polarisation of Indian politics has become seemingly irreversible...

In... final stages of the struggle for survival, the Congress ... went back on the Rajiv-Longowal Accord in a vain bid to boost State unit of the party, and in Kashmir it forced Farooq Abdullah into a shotgun marriage with the State Congress. These actions destroyed the moderate opposition to the centre in both States, and opened the way for the militants... The polarisation of opinion that has now set in, is not free from risk...

As the Janata Dal and the Left come together, Right in Indian politics will automatically get more sharply defined. Essentially it will consist of the upper castes, the upwardly mobile backward castes, and the urban dwellers. Today this constituency is being wooed assiduously by the BJP, but the Congress too has been boxed into the same quadrant of politics by V.P. Singh's aggressive campaigning and his absolute refusal to compromise on the Mandir Masjid issue.

Only an election, possibly more than one, will decide whether the Congress or the BJP will eventually dominate the Right...

...Given the diversity of the Indian electorate, any party that hopes to capture power must accommodate a large number of not wholly compatible interest groups. Compromises will, therefore remain essential... All parties are forced to woo the uncommitted middle of the political spectrum. This makes them moderate their stands and minimise their differences with their rivals.

That is the future towards which India is moving. But to get there the electorate must first defeat the attempt to create an authoritarian Hindu State. That is the supreme threat and the supreme challenge before us today.

Jyoti Punwani on a Religion of Hatred

Mr. Advani, You have Made us Ashamed of being Hindu

To L.K. Advani must go the credit of having made a number of Hindus feel ashamed of being Hindus. The front page pictures of the 'conquest' of the Babari Masjid made one think: is this what Hinduism is all about? Those who never tire of abusing Aurangzeb and Muslim 'invaders' for razing temples in the medieval period, have proved that even in the 20th century, their religion teaches them to demolish places where others worship. The rulers then may have had political reasons for their demolition of temples, but those who set about the domes of the Babari Masjid with flags and hammers were consumed with nothing but 'Ram bhakti'. A religion of hatred — that is what Advani and his associates have turned Hinduism into. 'Ram bhakts' trying to hoist their flag atop an old historic mosque, waving to the cheering crowd below is that the kind of 'national pride' that Advani wanted to restore through his 'vijay yatra'?

...Will Advani... denounce the vandalism of his followers? If he doesn't the only conclusion would be that he endorses their action, that they fulfilled what he had set out to do—to vent Hindu fury on the Babari Masjid. That means that the 'Karseva' was supposed to be an act of destruction, not construction. Muslims will be justified today in abusing Hindus as a community of destroyers.

When Advani was arrested, an old, illiterate Muslim asked: "Isn't it adharma to destroy another's place of worship? Is that what your dharma teaches you?"....

October 30 had another lesson for Hindus: that India is, after all, a Hindu state. Only 11 dead when tens of thousands broke the law throughout the days? 11 persons died within half an-hour in February 1989 when barely 1,500 Muslims took out a morcha in Bombay aimed at

denouncing a foreigner and praising the government. Between 60 to 200 died in Srinagar when 20,00 Muslims, including women, defined curfew to protest against indiscriminate raids and house-to-house searches. It was the same CRPF which shot them. What if the thousands storming Ayodhya had been Muslims or Sikhs. "Islam Mangta hai?" is what the jawans asked the Muslims before firing on them, said one survivor left for dead. 'Amrit chakhna hai?' police — and army — officers would ask Sikh youngsters in Punjab and force them to drink their urine.

But to stop Ram Bhakts from storming a Masjid proved too much for our security forces. They watched dumbstruck, says a report, as the activists climbed on top of the domes. Could a Muslim have dared to scale a temple and hoist a green flag?

Stopping the thousands in Ayodhya may have meant killing hundreds, a massacre which nobody would have wanted. The situation did call for tact; the word used by Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed on Doordarshan on Tuesday night. But what happens to the need for tact when it comes to the Golden Temple? Thousands of Sikhs trapped in the Golden Temple on June 6 were devotees come to observe Guru Parb, the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, just the same as those who come to Ayodhya on Tuesday to participate in the panch kausi parikrama. And what happens to tact when it comes to dealing with mourners at the funeral of a maulvi in Srinagar? Or Ramzan Id worshippers praying at an Idgah in Moradabad... Churches have been desecrated and teenage girls raped by our army men in Nagaland in the name of controlling insurgency. When Harijans in Arwal, Bihar, tried to demolish a wall built by a Rajput family on public land in

April 1986, the Bihar police killed 23 of them in one afternoon.

Nor is any tact in evidence when masses of people or students come out to protest against corruption. An unknown number died when security forces used machine guns on 2 lakh persons trying to storm the Bihar Vidhan Sabha on November 4, 1974, during the JP movement. But the entire might of the Indian state could not stop determined Hindus from climbing up a Masjid.

It is not a comforting thought. It means acknowledging something some of us have tried to deny for years — that a Muslim or a Sikh cannot take his or her security for granted in India, even under the most well-meaning government. First it was the bullet-ridden Akal Takht which graced our front pages now it is the Babari Masjid with 'Ram Bhakts' dancing on its domes.

So where do they go? Khalistan? Pakistan? Australia or Canada? Or just withdraw into themselves and thank God and Mulayam Singh Yadav that at least the Masjid was not allowed to be demolished; or comfort themselves with the thought that God's fury has never spared such vandals, or simply hope that one day all this will pass? And how do Hindus face them? Apologise saying 'we are not all like that' and hope they believe you?

(Source : The Anti-Corruption, Republic Day Issue, of 1991)

* The riots are the result of provocative speeches of leaders like Mulayam Singh Yadav, V.P. Singh and Left leaders like E.M. S. Namboodiripad and Harkishan Singh Surjit.

—Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi.

Kanchan Gupta on the Year of the Saffron

As the year draws to a close, one can only look back with sorrow at the Hindutva brigade's concerted attempt to demolish the cherished values of secularism which have been the basis of post-Independence India's polity and set our country apart from many other Asian nations, including our neighbours... We will be ringing out 1990 with blood on our hands — the blood of innocent Muslims and Hindus, men, women and children, pregnant mothers and suckling babies, killed in the riots that have swept through the heartland and spread to far away places. ...The communal virus has indeed spread far and wide, the fire of hatred rages on, fanned by the ambition of men like Lal Krishna Advani and Ashok Singhal.

The Hindutva movement, which gathered momentum with the laying of the foundation for the proposed Ram temple in Ayodhya during (1989)... reached its crescendo during... Advani's Somnath to Ayodhya Rathayatra this year...

And what followed? The fiasco in Ayodhya on October 30 when determined members of the Hindutva brigade made nonsense of the State's promise to uphold the law of the land, the firing of November 2 which enabled the VHP to create martyrs... and the communal holocaust that today threatens to alienate more than 12 per cent of the country's population from the national mainstream; violence which has shaken the people's faith in the state's ability to protect its citizens from... a marauding army of fanatics whose jaundiced vision sees only saffron.

When did all this begin? Who sowed the seeds of this bitter harvest? Last October the bloodshed which drenched the fields of Bhagalpur was an advance warning of the troubled times ahead... Then came the controversial shilanyas ceremony of November 9 which clearly had the

tacit approval of the Congress (I) which was then struggling to clutch at any electoral straw...

Hence Rajiv Gandhi's decision to launch the Congress (I) election campaign from Faizabad with a promise to usher in Ram rajya if voted to power. There was also pressure from a section of influential Congressmen who, had been influenced by Deoraha Baba, that the temple should indeed be built at the disputed site.

Today, of course the Congress (I) pretends all this never happened. The same Congressmen who had acted in collusion with the VHP then do not tire pointing out that "there was no violence". Nothing can be closer to the truth... on that fateful November day was sown the seeds whose bitter harvest we are reaping today...

Since then, the VHP and the BJP have come a long way. The BJP managed to put 86 representatives in the Lok Sabha and thereby tried to force the National Front Government into playing its game. The VHP emerged stronger, ensuring that mahants and sants were the new policy makers of the BJP. We saw the rise to prominence of small time pracharaks like Uma Bharati and the eclipse of saner elements like Jaswant Singh and Atal Behari Vajpayee.

From being content as an ally of the ruling party, today the BJP is poised to make the big leap forward. It wants to become the ruling party. But not of India as we know it. The India of their dreams is a country where theocracy will reign supreme, where revivalism will negate the gains of a secular democracy...

And the battle cry is, simple, stirring.. Hindutva equals nationalism. Being a Hindu means being a patriot. The goal for all Hindus is a Hindurashtra.

Yet...there is too much untruth hidden in it for Hindutva to succeed.

To begin with, Hindutva is not

equal to nationalism, nor is the nationalism equal to collective determination to create a Hindu rashtra...

It was Gandhi, a "man who tried to carry out the precept of Hinduism to the letter "(in his own words) whose gospel of tolerance and love has survived over the past four decades. It was this gospel that overshadowed the gospel of violence preached by the revivalists...

It is ironical that... the BJP-VHP-RSS combine is trying to perpetuate the myth of communal divide as perpetuated by the country's colonial masters. The British had tried to foist the idea that the bulk of the nation's population was unwilling to live in communal harmony....

Patriots and nationalists who subscribed to Nehru's vision of a modern India free from the shackles of religious bigotry, rejected this theory outright. For them, only an insignificant section of the population was opposed to the idea of a multi-religious, heterogenous society. The majority was in favour of a secular society...

...When the VHP raises the slogan "Garv se kaho hum Hindu Hain", it does greater disservice to a religion known for its tolerance rather than militancy... They have subverted the essence of Dharma and what was originally the struggle of good over evil... Dharmayudh has become today a war of attrition, an excuse to kill and plunder.

Faced with all these arguments, the BJP-VHP-RSS combine takes recourse to an easy way out. All opponents of its fascism, of its fascist ideology and demogogy, are branded as pseudo-secularists... Liberal attitude is being equated with anti-majorityism. Words which were considered out of place... even a year ago have gained respectability. It is no longer unfashionable to indulge in

(Contd. on page 142)

Press : Combatant or Witness in Communal Warfare?

Anjali Puri on Press Council's Study of Ayodhya Event, October-November, 1990

- * Gorakhnath mandir captured; terror among Sadhus; opponents 'flag hoisted on the main gate' was the headline given to a double-column story on page one of Gorakhpur's Swatantra Chetana on November 1. The story was denied by the temple authorities themselves.
- * "Pakistani flag hoisted on the Jama Masjid in Badayun" said an Aaj report on November 4, in the midst of the communal frenzy sparked off by the Ayodhya issue. The story was untrue.
- * "The Ram Mandir has been demolished in Ayodhya" said a story published in Aaj's Ranchi edition on October 26. What had actually happened was that a tin canopy over the Shilanyas pit at Ayodhya, was removed. The story said that a Ram idol was also removed from the site by the administration, a fact contradicted by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad itself.
- * "115 killed in firing," said a banner headline in Swatantra Chetana on November 2. The body of the report did not say so. It was found that in the main heading the editor had later inserted a '1' before the "15".
- * On November 2, the Varanasi and Agra editions of a single paper, Aaj, said 100 had died in Ayodhya, the Kanpur edition said 200 had died in an incident that "dwarfed Jalianwala Bagh", the Ranchi edition said 400-500 had perished and the Bareilly edition announced that Ayodhya had been bathed in blood on the day of Kartik Purnima with "at least 500 dead". As against this, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar declared in Parliament that no more than 16 had died in Ayodhya.

It is no secret that sections of the media are today vicious combatants in communal warfare, and not mere

witnesses. But the Press Council of India's recently released reports on how the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy was covered by the leading newspapers of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar brings home this fact with shocking clarity.

The Council's investigations confine themselves to the period during late-October and early November last year, when the Ayodhya dispute reached a flashpoint. What has emerged from them is an exhaustive case study of media communalism, based on about 250 press clippings and interviews with 152 people, including newspaper editors, reporters, politicians and officials of the state administration. At a time when the role of the media, print and electronic, is being questioned in riot after riot, this makes very relevant reading.

The on-the-spot investigation ordered by the Council on Ayodhya has yielded two separate reports... However, these differences do not relate to the excesses committed by the press, on which the two reports largely agree, but to the State government's handling of the press..

Of the two reports, the minority report prepared by two press Council members, Mr. K. Vikram Rao and Mr. P. Raman, has a better organised and better analysed account of the role that newspapers played in whipping up communal frenzy over Ayodhya. It makes two important points. One is that stories of the kind highlighted above cannot just be seen as lapses in journalistic ethics. They were, in fact, agents of death and destruction, leading directly and indirectly, to a series of communal riots in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar after the storming of Ayodhya.

The report cites a typical example in the havoc that Aaj's report on the 'demolition' of the Ram Mandir (with a photograph of the Babari

Masjid carried alongside) wrought in Ranchi. As a direct consequence of this story, angry mobs attacked Muslim areas, set fire to shops, targetted places of worship and killed at least two people (four, according to the minority community). Subsequent riots.... have only underscored the damage that such stories can do. In Aligarh, later, it was a baseless report in a Hindi paper that Hindu patients had been killed in the Aligarh Muslim University's hospital that set off an orgy of bloodletting.

The second vital point.... is that it was a combination of "competitive sensationalism" and "editorial activism" that led these prominent Hindi papers in Uttar Pradesh to take on the role they did. Such were the material rewards of media communalism that the Ranchi edition of the UP-based Aaj recorded a phenomenal increase in circulation, because it had sensationalised Ayodhya, while other Bihar dailies had played it down. More importantly though, false propagandist and one-sided stories were written because editors and reporters became fervent defenders of the Hindu faith.

Says the report, "They obliterated the borderline between their personal affiliations and the right to know of society as a whole. Representatives of several social and cultural organisations in the course of their evidence pointed out that the editors of some dailies had deliberately tried to paint a picture (in which) every Indian is a Hindu and every Hindu a Rambhakt."

The testimony given by some witnesses to the committee seems to suggest that they did so not merely through their writings but physical acts of collabortion. Press passes are alleged to have been misused to help kar sevaks, editors were arrested for making inflammatory speeches at Vishwa Hindu Parishad meetings,

and reporters were said to have acted as messengers for the VHP. While the report has left it open whether the charges were true or not, if they were, they are pointers to the dangerous direction that "campaign journalism" can take in an increasingly polarised society.

Both reports indict four major regional newspapers of Uttar Pradesh for their stellar role in this communal offensive, and these papers have subsequently been censured by the Council... It would have been interesting to know, as a matter of comparison, how the national Hindi papers, the Urdu press and the English press all of which have reflected communal biases in varying degrees on Ayodhya and other issues, came off under the Council's scrutiny. But the subtler shades of communal reporting are clearly outside the ambit of this particular investigation, which confines itself to the worst offenders.

However, the minority report has tried to classify the various methods adopted by this propaganda machine to achieve its ends. It categorises some stories as "pure untruths and gross exaggerations", like the Gorakhnath mandir story, the headline, "demolishing" the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, the inflated casualty figures... A second category, it says, consisted of partisan and one-sided propaganda items, and judging by the examples cited, most seem to have either been aimed at glorifying and making martyrs of the "kar sevaks" or vilifying the UP chief minister, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. One story actually reports, without the slightest suggestion of satire, that the people of Uttar Pradesh had been forced to chant "Mulayam naam satya hai" instead of "Ram naam satya hai".

Thirdly, there were stories that seemed to have been specifically directed at creating disaffection among the security forces, with reports that magistrates had refused to work in Ayodhya, that "Ramb-

haks" had beaten up a DIG, that the district magistrate had "run away" on leave, that police and army personnel were leaving their jobs to join the "Rambhaks", that the Chief Minister had pressurised the head of the army's central command to fire on "Rambhaks", but he had refused.

Where both reports do agree is that there were serious lapses by the state administration in disseminating information to journalists in Ayodhya or providing access to the events themselves, and these finally rebounded on the government by giving rumour and speculation free rein. The minority report stresses a point... that journalists cannot take refuge under the canopy of freedom of the Press when they become active agents of communal disaffection, and the law must take its course against them.

However, the most crucial difference... is this: the majority report penned by Dr. N.K. Trikha, Mr. Satish Khurana and Mr. N.R. Chandran believes that the administration wilfully withheld facts from journalists to prevent coverage... and district authorities resorted to methods "not even adopted during the Emergency" in pre-censoring or preventing the distribution of newspapers. The minority report (otherwise) these dissonances indicate that the question of what constitutes "legitimate" administrative action against the press in a communal war in which sections of the media are themselves combatants, has no easy, legalistic answers...

Contd. from page 129)

nisms and the representative bodies at local and state levels. It will now have to be once again based on the long-term struggles of the masses, waged against all the backlash that has been let loose from three diverse yet converging strands: lower middle class jingoism, upper middle class elitism, and the aggressive insecurity of the minorities and the aggrieved nationalities.

Each of these three strands exude a lot of power. ... Together, they can unleash a lot of trouble and not a little terror. Against them all are pitched the poor and the deprived and the dispossessed of all classes and communities and regions. Against them is pitched the future of the Indian republic.

... The result of all these pathologies will not be catastrophic... There will be no Big Bang. Only a series of bangs, spread over many spaces, deadly where they take place but diffused in their total impact, on the whole slow in affecting the metropolises... Violence will spurt forth and even spread, its technology become somewhat widely available, it will generate a sense of insecurity, including among the well-protected elites.

... But it is precisely in this that the problem lies. The more diffused the malady, the less the motivation to put things right. The more dispersed the splintering, the less determined the resolve to protect the integrity of the whole. The slower and intermittent the collapse of institutions, the less the felt compulsion to restore them. The more spread out the incidence of state repression, the more fragmented the movement for democratic rights, righteous and indignant at particular moments, but not building up into a powerful counterforce against a political order that is increasingly relying on police and para-military forces and army standbys to stay in power.

... There is need to arrest the cancerous growth of the disease that is eating away at the vitals of this republic of ours. ...

It is imperative that the conscious citizenry that is still moved by the values and vision that prompted our journey into independent nationhood comes forward and intervenes in defence of those very values and vision. ...

(Source : The Mainstream, New Delhi, 19 January, 1991)

Contd. from page 135)

Marutis driven by known criminals moving through their localities fitted with loudspeakers blaring out blood-curdling cries or sound recordings of firing. Tension and fear then escalate in the area...

Politics and Politicians : Harvesting Hatred

Once the BJP and the VHP succeeded in whipping up Hindu passions, the party leaders were pushed to the background and the more militant elements of the Bajrang Dal took over Uttar Pradesh. Almost all police officials... admit that the BJP leadership has become irrelevant...

Muslim politicians too have been charged for fermenting violence...

In Hyderabad, the MIM and the BJP have been shamelessly working to sharpen the communal divide by pressurising each community to move into their own respective strongholds in the old city.

Many politicians obviously see such tense situations as the right occasion to make a few speeches, garner a bit of local support and send them out to war and in the process emerge as heroes in their localities.

The irony of it all is that apart from these occasional bursts of blood-curdling cries, Hindus and Muslims in most of these areas work together. Says Ferozabad's SP.. Bhatnagar, a town known for its glass industry: If riots break out here both sides know that it will cause huge financial losses for the Hindu traders and deprive Muslims of a steady job. So riots have not broken out here...

Nonetheless in Etah and Agra which do not have a history of violence since Independence, a deep wedge has appeared between the communities that will take a long time to cement...

There has been an exodus of Hindus from the old city of Hyderabad and Muslims from the new city... Each spasm of rioting creates more wounds within. The yearning for revenge grows. And they all wait for the next upheaval.

(Contd. from page 139)

Muslim-baiting of the worst, morbid kind.

History repeats itself. Gandhi had to pay the price for what the RSS then considered "politics of appeasement". Violence was used to silence the voice of sanity, to try and disrupt a vision of modern India. The same pattern is being repeated today. Those who are willing to speak out against the BJP - VHP - RSS combine's tactics, are being labelled anti-national...

What is of greater concern is the respectability which is being accorded to this combine... Overnight, many commentators have discovered the virtues of BJP's fascism, the VHP's ability "to forge unity among a fragmented Hindu society..."

Let us not pretend that the issue at stake is a temple or a mosque. The target is something else. It is the subversion of Indian society the dream of creating a Sanskritized society where RSS ideology will be the stuff school text books will be made of, where... Golwalkar and... Savarkar's perverted vision of a homogenous society will be implemented.

Is there any hope for the survival of Indian secularism? Yes. Because history teaches us that fascism comes in waves, as does religious bigotry, only to die a quick death. The very texts by which the BJP-VHP-RSS combine swears teaches us that dharma triumphs at the end, that there is no substitute for tolerance... A nation state built on the basis of communal identity can never last.

We would do well to remember that ours is a country born of communal strife. We suffered the violence of 1947 because we had a dream. A part of the dream has come true. Should we let usurpers and powerbrokers shatter the unfulfilled part of that dream?

(Source : The Statesman, 29 December, 1990)

AMBEDKAR ON MAJORITY-MINORITY DYNAMICS

"Speaking for myself, I have no doubt that the constituent Assembly has done wisely in providing such safeguards for minorities as it has done. In this country both the minorities and the majorities have followed a wrong path. It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of minorities. **It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves.** A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognise the existence of the minorities to start with. It must also be such that **it will enable majorities and minorities to merge some day into one.** The solution proposed by the Constituent Assembly is to be welcomed because it is a solution which serves this two-fold purpose.

"To diehards who have developed a kind of fanaticism against minority protection I would like to say two things. One is that minorities are an explosive force which, if it erupts, can blow up the whole fabric of the State. The History of Europe bears ample and appalling testimony to this fact. The other is that the minorities in India have agreed to place their existence in the hands of the majority. In the history of negotiations of preventing the partition of Ireland, Redmond said to Carson, "Ask for any safeguard you like for the Protestant minority but let us have a United Ireland." Carson's reply was: 'Damn your safeguards, we don't want to be ruled by you. **No minority in India has taken this stand. They have loyally accepted the rule of the majority which is basically a communal majority and not a political majority.** It is for the majority to realise its duty not to discriminate against minorities. **Whether the minorities will continue or will vanish must depend upon this habit of the majority. The moment the majority loses the habit of discriminating against the minority, the minorities can have no ground to exist. The will vanish.**"

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CHRONOLOGY OF THE MONTH

(16 January - 14 February, 1991)

National Politics

- 18 Jan. : BJP proposes contingency plan for snap poll.
: BSP leader Kanshi Ram decides not to have any alliance; hopes to secure 70 seats.
- 20 Jan. : BJP exudes confidence, decides to contest 500 seats and ride Hindu wave.
- 27 Jan. : BJP leader Vajpayee advocates national government.
- 30 Jan. : Vajpayee reiterates demand for national government. Vijayeraje Scindia opposes it.
- 31 Jan. : BJP National Convention opens in Jaipur.
- 1 Feb. : BJP President M.M. Joshi advocates presidential form of government, praises Advani's Rath Yatra.
- 3 Feb. : Janata Dal (S) bans non-secular elements from entry.
: BJP projects itself as alternative government, decides to concentrate on Kashmir and Babari Masjid, adopts Ram & Roti as slogan.
- 4 Feb. : Joshi demands uniform civil code.
: Dalit leaders from Samta Andolan to consolidate SC & ST power.
- 5 Feb. : Dy. P.M. calls for realignment of all secular forces.
- 6 Feb. : Joshi asks Muslims to 'share Ram as national hero'.
- 7 Feb. : Akali Dal leader S.S. Mann offers Sikh volunteers to USA in Gulf War.
- 8 Feb. : V.P. Singh rules out national government.
: P.M. advocates coalition of consensus to meet national situation.
- 10 Feb. : Janata Dal holds first plenary session in Puri.
: V.P. Singh pleads for minorities.
- 13 Feb. : V.P. Singh calls for united struggle by secular parties against BJP.
- 14 Feb. : IUML quits Cong (I) led UDF in Kerala.
: Cong (I) Leader Karunakaran regrets IUML decision.
: Cong (I) Leaders organise prayer meeting for Iraq's victory.
- Communal Violence**
UP — Lucknow, City : 15 - 19 Jan. 5 killed
Ghaziabad, City : 26 Jan - 3 Feb 9 killed
Bulandshahr, Khurja 1 Feb- 9 killed
Maharashtra-Bombay 27 Jan - 6 Feb 6 killed
- 16 Jan. : UP C.M. announces decision to constitute Shanti Suraksha Bal to deal with communal riots and terrorism and to raise 7 battalions.
: Shahabuddin visits Kanpur, sees Kanpur disturbances as police action against Muslims.
- 20 Jan. : Anti-PAC Forum breaks relay hunger strike.
- 22 Jan. : 2 convicted for anti-Sikh riots in Bokaro.
: MOS, HA reiterates Government's commitment to protect minorities.
- 27 Jan. : J.D. leader V.P. Singh accuses BJP for promoting communal hatred and asks Government to protect life and property.
- 29 Jan. : UP Suspends 12 policemen for killing 3 Harijan villagers in false counters.
: Concert for Harmony organised in Faizabad.

- 30 Jan. : Campaign against Communalism observes Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary in memory of victims of communal violence.
- 1 Feb. : People's Rights Organisation indicts BJP for Jaipur Riots in October, 1990.
- 8 Feb. : A.P. establish one-man Commission of Inquiry for October-December, 90 riots.
- 9 Feb. : Sampradayakta Virodhi Andolan demands probe in growth of communal violence.

BABARI MASJID DISPUTE

- 16 Jan. : Kendriya Marg Darshak Mandal of VHP decides to force Government to hand over Babari Masjid or to dislodge it from power; decides to mobilise public opinion from 1 February and gherao Parliament on 4 April and UP Assembly on an earlier date; instructs Bajrang Dal to update list of temples converted into mosques.
: VHP submits list of 9 experts for negotiation with AIBMAC.
- 17 Jan. : Special Bench rejects Buddhist claim.
- 18 Jan. : UP C.M. M.S. Yadav announces 3-member Commission of Inquiry for October-December, 1990 disturbances.
: Shahabuddin calls negotiations a futile exercise and demands acceleration of judicial proceedings.
- 20 Jan. : BMMCC rejects idea of political award, negotiation with VHP during agitation and invites AIBMAC to cosponsor All India Conference.
: AIBMAC holds emergency meeting and decides to continue negotiation with VHP despite opposition by Ahmad Bukhari, decides to observe Black Day on 1 February.
- 19 Jan. : Advani demands permission for temple construction.
: VHP considers historicity of Ram and identity of Ayodhya as not negotiable rejects official status for experts and rejects AIBMAC documents on these aspects.
: VHP refuses to accept UP Commission of Inquiry and its terms of reference.
- 21 Jan. : Re-survey of disputed premises completed.
: District Judge Faizabad K.M. Pandey promoted as High Court Judge.
- 22 Jan. : VHP decides not to continue negotiations after 5 February or to change site or site-plan.
- 23 Jan. : AIBMAC changes experts.
: BMMCC expresses concern at continued negotiation with VHP, erosion of judicial process and possibility of political award and cautions Muslims against conspiracy against Masjid.
- 25 Jan. : AIBMAC withdraws from experts meeting when VHP refuses 6 weeks time and insists on not taking into account material questioning historicity of Rama and identity of Ayodhya.
- 26 Jan. : Adnan Khashoggi visits India with offer to line up Saudi Arabain 'fatwa' for demolition or shift of Masjid.
- 27 Jan. : VHP decides of intensify agitation from 6 February.

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CHRONOLOGY

- 30 Jan. : VHP claims historical and archaeological evidence to confirm existence of Ram Temple in Ayodhya.
- 31 Jan. : AIBMAC leaders dilute Black Day programme.
- 1 Feb. : AIBMAC call flops; BMMCC holds token Dharna in Delhi, some State capitals and district headquarters.
- 1 Feb. : Delhi Police bans Kar Seva cassettes.
- 1 Feb. : Abdullah Bukhari links supply of oil by Iran to preservation of Babari Masjid and asks VHP to prove that Babari Masjid was built after demolishing Ram Temple.
- 2 Feb. : BMMCC rejects foreign fatwa; reiterates commitment to consensus of Indian Ulema.
- 4 Feb. : UP C.M. calls upon parties to accept court verdict if negotiations fail; reiterates resolve to defend rule of law.
- 5 Feb. : VHP rejects AIBMAC's request for 6 weeks, reiterates site and site-plan, rejects 'division' of Babari Masjid.
- 6 Feb. : AIBMAC and VHP fail to reach consensus; Government decides to study, documents and statements to be submitted by parties and hold further discussion with them separately.
- 6 Feb. : Saudi Arabian Ambassador denies role of Saudi Arabian Ulema or mediation.
- 6 Feb. : BJP leader Vajpayee speaks against demolition of Masjid but wants it to be shifted.
- 7 Feb. : Javed Habib resigns from AIBMAC.
- 8 Feb. : VHP decides against further talk with AIBMAC.
- 9 Feb. : BMMCC demands clarification of government role and objective in studying rival documents. Warns against political award, bypassing legal right of Muslims.
- 10 Feb. : Advani considers Ram Temple project central to unity and integrity of nation.
- 10 Feb. : B.B. Lal proposes further excavation under and near Babari Masjid to decide rival claims.
- 12 Feb. : VHP rejects the idea of Special Bench for resolving the historic question.
- 13 Feb. : VHP decides to discontinue talks with AIBMAC; rejects idea of dividing the mosque.
- 13 Feb. : Special Bench at Lucknow receives re-survey report; government moves application for repair of Masjid.
- 14 Feb. : National Conference of ABVP supports VHP
- Kashmir Situation**
- 16 Jan.- : Militant operations intensified with frequent
- 14 Feb. : exchange of fire, rocket and grenade attacks on public buildings and mining of highways. Atrocities on by security forces in reprisals, crackdowns and arrests. Life in Valley paralysed due to curfew and bandhs. Some surrenders reported. Government reported to have finalised Action-Plan for reviving political process.
- 16 Jan. : 3 CRPF Jawans killed in grenade attack in Lal Chowk, Srinagar.
- 19 Jan. : CRPF kills 17 and injures 20 in Magermal Bagh.
- 20 Jan. : 2 CRPF Jawans suspended and inquiry ordered.
- 21 Jan. : Bandh to commemorate Gowkadal massacre on 21 Jan 1990 called by militants paralyses life in Valley. Curfew imposed and procession checked.
- 21 Jan. : Farooq Abdullah and S. Soz meet P.M. to protest against atrocities and to advise against holding elections.
- 22 Jan. : Militants attack house of P.L. Handoo, MP.
- 25 Jan. : Ex-Pakistan P.M. Benazir Bhutto calls for UN intervention.
- 29 Jan. : Curfew reimposed in Srinagar after grenade attack kills 3 jawans.
- 31 Jan. : JD leader V.P. Singh visits Jammu.
- 1 Feb. : JKLF Yasin Malik, now in Tihar Jail, reported to have rejected PM's offer of talks within framework of Constitution.
- 2 Feb. : 18 hours strike against excesses of security forces in Valley.
- 4 Feb. : Farooq Abdullah visits Jammu, apologises to National Conference cadre for being away from State.
- 5 Feb. : Rocket attack on J & K Assembly Building.
- 5 Feb. : General strike in Valley in support of Pakistan PM's call.
- 5 Feb. : Pakistan observes nation-wide bandh.
- 5 Feb. : Farooq Abdullah returns to Delhi, blames V.P. Singh, praises PM's efforts, mentions package of proposals under consideration.
- 7 Feb. : House of Addl. Solicitor General Altaf Ahmad gutted.
- 10 Feb. : USA rejects Pakistan's linkage of Gulf crisis with Kashmir issue.
- 12 Feb. : Farooq Abdullah leaves for UK.
- 13 Feb. : Massive demonstration in Srinagar in protest against excesses of the security forces.
- 14 Feb. : RSS students from ABVP National Conference focuses on Kashmir issue.
- 14 Feb. : Ladakh Cong (I) leaders reject restoration of pre-1953 position.
- Muslim Organisations**
- 21 Jan. : Milli Jamiatul Ulema-Hind organises National Convention for National Integration. Decides to form Hind Shanti Mission.
- 27 Jan. : Jamiatul-Ulema-Hind organises A.I. Anti-Communalism Convention addressed by Dy. P.M. MOS HA & Buta Singh.
- 8 Feb. : Jamiatul Ulema Delegation calls on P.M.
- 13 Feb. : AIMMM Markazi Council holds meeting.
- 14 Feb. : JIH condemns bombing by Allies on civilians in Iraq and appeals for withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait and ceasefire.
- Miscellaneous**
- 21 Jan. : VHP demonstrates against AIR/Doordarshan for blacking out immersion of ashes of Kar Sevaks.
- 22 Jan. : Maulana Taqi Amini passes away.
- 23 Jan. : Urdu poet Anand Narain Mulla, 90, awarded Iqbal Samman by M.P. Government.
- 23 Jan. : Urs begins in Ajmer.
- 24 Jan. : Sultan Shahin, ex-editor of One Nation Chronicle alleges being sacked because he has Hindu wife.
- 27 Jan. : Kuldeep Nayar pleads for including Video cassettes in the jurisdiction of Press Council to be renamed Media Council.
- 28 Jan. : Mr. E. Fakir Mohammed, MP, passes away.
- 31 Jan. : Eminent Urdu writer Zoe Ansari, 65 passes away.
- 3 Feb. : US State Department Report on Human Rights 1990 criticises India & Pakistan.
- 3 Feb. : VHP claims conversion of 45 Muslims
- 7 Feb. : Press Council censures 4 Hindi dailies of UP and Bihar for irresponsible coverage of Ayodhya events.
- 14 Feb. : National Union of Journalists welcome Press Council decision

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