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A PUBLICATION OF MUSLIM INDIA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL TRUST

Defeat Chauvinism & Promote Social Justice in General Election, 1991

Once again the election season is on. Once again the people of India have the opportunity to choose their rulers. Once again the political leaders and political parties shall cast their net far and wide and use all possible means, legal, illegal and in between, to secure the support of the electorate.

The electoral system has inbuilt defects and limitations. The Government of the day hardly ever represents the majority of the people. Its electoral base is generally limited to 25-30% of the people. In this scheme of things the vocal minority of the organised and entrenched groups have a larger-than-life role. This minority gets the people's ears, sets the stage and colours the electoral environment. The silent majority, the unorganised or the deprived groups, are ignored or taken for granted. Thus it is that the high castes, the Brahmins, the Rajputs and the Vaishyas, together constituting 15% of the national electorate, dominate the system. Thus it is that among the Shudras, the Ahirs, the Koeris and the Kurmis rule the roost. Thus it is that among the Achhuts, relatively speaking, the Chamars and the Dusadhs take the lion's share. Thus it is that among the Muslims, the so-called Ashraf—the Syeds, the Shaikhs and the Pathans—enjoy the monopoly of holding the flag of Islam! Thus it is among the tribals that, say in Bihar, the Oraons and the Mundas have the upper hand.

Thus, exploitation in Indian society is not limited to the exploitation of one social group by another, political or otherwise. Within each social group, one sub-group exploits another and deprives it of its due share of goods, services and resources. In-group exploitation is as unjust, as enequitable, as dehumanising, as inter-group exploitation. The message of Social Justice and Social Equality must therefore resonate through the entire system to secure for each group, each sub-group and each sub-subgroup, each state, each region, each district, each block and each Panchayat, each religion, and each sect, each language and each dialect, each caste and each sub-caste, each race and each sub-race, its due share of the national cake, its place in the sun.

Justice precondition for Unity

In the ideal society, the entire people, all social groups and sub-groups, shall—individual variations apart—have the same educational and economic characteristics: same literacy level, same number of graduates and professionals per thousand of population, same per capita income, some representation in public or private employment, same representation in the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, same standard of housing, even same vulnerability to environmental diseases! Random sampling will display no variation based on race or religion or caste or language or domicile, just as there are no variations in intelligence and in learning capacity or in blood chemistry. Once man-made variations disappear and every individual realises his God-given potential, uniformity will make for equality and protection shall become redundant. Unity and solidarity shall reign supreme and there shall be no communal or caste or racial or regional tension. Fragmentation shall lead to reintegration; fission shall be replaced by fusion; sharing and participation shall lead to unity and solidarity.

But do we have the wisdom to manage a controlled fission so that the process of fission does not get out of control and cause explosion and disintegration?

In fission there is a concept of critical mass. In the race to establish an identity, somewhere a line has to be drawn. In a democratic set up the thrust is on sharing power, on representation in the legislature and in public employment. Even a miniscule group, howsoever identified, can demand protection, but a quota of less than 1% is not feasible purely on grounds of practicability. Mini-groups which form less than 1% of the total population at any operational level can group together or with any larger group or sub-group according to their choice. But the claim of each group or sub-group which forms at least 1% of the total population at any operational level must be conceded.

Let us take the general election. Roughly each Lok Sabha seat represents nearly 1.5 million people. Thus any identifiable group which has at least 1.5 million members, even if dispersed throughout the length and breadth of India, has a right not only to at least one seat in the Lok Sabha but to a seat of its choice where it has a good candidate and a reasonable chance of winning, with the help of other groups which support the same political formation. The problem becomes easier as one goes on to larger and larger groups. Take the Muslim Indians-a major group and one of the few Pan-Indian communities. If they form 12% of the population, they are entitled to 65 seats in the Lok Sabha. So far they have never got their due. Even when nominated, the quality of the candidate and the choice of constituency leave much to be desired.

Indeed if all national parties which claim to represent the Muslim Indians and, therefore, demand their support, put up capable Muslim candidates in the 65 Constituencies with the highest Muslim percentage in the electorate (excluding those which happen to be reserved), not only will it reassure the Muslim community but give them a clear ideological choice among parties taken together with the candidates but also give the non-Muslim voters an opportunity to opt for the more acceptable Muslim candidate in each Constituency. Thus a perfect balance will be reached when a Muslim will win a Muslim concentration constituency with the support of non-Muslim voters. **The centrist politics will expand at the cost of fringe politics.**

Similarly a Yadav more accepable to non-Yadavs should be nominated from a Yadav-dominated constituency or a Brahmin, more acceptable to non-Brahmins, from a Brahmin dominated constituency. This will elimi-

nate the politics of extremism and confrontation and pave the way for the politics of cooperation and collaboration.

No party can claim to be a national party in the true sense of the term. Every party has a well-demarcated social constituency consisting of several identifiable social groups or sub-groups. It should distribute its tickets in a manner that at least every supporting and target group feels satisfied with regard to number and quality of candidates as well of choice the constituencies. And the parties can adopt the convention to give the highest priority to the smallest and the weakest group and progressively move to the larger and the stronger groups.

Vote Banks at Constituency Level

How should a deprived group like the Muslim Indian behave? It should **not** bind itself forever or everywhere to the apron strings of any party in a multi-party system. It should always have a range of choice so that it is not taken for granted nor treated as an adversary. The Muslim Indian should look both at the profession of the Party and the record of the candidate. But whomsoever it chooses to support in a given constituency, it must vote massively and unitedly as a block, so as to make its weight felt. Its watchward should be : **No nationai vote bank for any party but constituency vote banks for the optimum combination of candidate and party.** Vote-bank politics of any dominated social group has a legitimacy of its own but it is beneficial only if it is not a mechanism to channelise all the credit towards a monopoly entrepreneur through its commission agents and brokers. The group must have the political sophistication and maturity to function as a vote-bank on a constituency by constituency basis. In any case, the constituency-wise choice is likely to be influenced by the overall current perception about various political parties.

It is a different matter that some groups have the institutional mechanism at the constituency level to make a rational and considered choice; some do not. But a working mechanism based on consultations is not difficult to establish.

Social Justice-Key Issue

In the coming election, social justice which implies intergroup justice is the key issue. Operationally it means the secular order, the rule of law, federalism, administrative and financial decentralisation (right down to the Panchayat level), Sarvodaya or universal social welfare, cultural unity in diversity, reservation in public employment, development benefits and education, uniform protection of rights of the minorities at every level (irrespective of religion, caste, language, race and domicile).

Janata Dal, of all political parties, is on the right track. It has set the national agenda; its message of social justice is resonant throughout the land; it has catalysed an inexorable process of change. It is uniting the deprived groups. It has accepted that national unity lies in justice and equality. It rejects chauvinism; it is not prepared to compromise with the dominant groups; it is anti-establishment and anti-status quo in a fundamental sense.

Janata Dal: Conscious Agent of Change

Muslims Indians should support Janata Dal not as an emotional response to the political choice made by V.P. Singh in November 1990 ('renunciation of power for the sake of a Masjid') but because V.P. Singh and Janata Dal have become conscious agents of history for the restructuring of the Indian society and are taking the country forward in the right direction.

In the coming election, the coming contest is likely to be largely triangular between the NF-LF (including JD), the Congress(I) and the BJP. The major objective of the Muslim community should be to contain and defeat the rising wave of Hindu chauvinism symbolised by the BJP. This could be easily achieved if the secular parties held together. Unfortunately, the secular forces are divided and have their own candidates. Apart from them, 'Muslim' parties are likely to field candidates in Muslim concentration constituencies. The BJP is bound to benefit from this fragmentation, splitting or scattering.

Muslim Indians in a given constituency should support the winning candidate with a secular record of a secular party which, given its non-Muslim social base and the Muslim support, is in a position to defeat the BJP candidate. They should not waste their votes on 'Muslim candidates' or the candidates of Muslim parties or small parties who can never win. The Muslim Indians should NOT vote for the BJP and generally they should vote for the NF-LF candidates. In the few seats where the NF-LF (including JD) does not figure in the fight and the contest is between Congress(I) and BJP, they should vote for the Congress (I) only to ensure BJP's defeat.

Distribution of Tickets & Manifesto

The Janata Dal should not take the support of any group or subgroup for granted but by adopting a rational and equitable approach in the distribution of tickets should not only be just to, but be seen as just by, all of them in terms of quality and quantity as well as the constituency. In formulating its Manifesto and Programme of Action, it should boldy proclaim its concern for safeguarding their legitimate interests and realising their just aspirations.

The Janata Dal, which is indeed riding high on the wave created by the support of the Shudras, the Dalits, the Adivasis and the Muslims should use this historic moment, which comes but in a generation, lay the foundation of the future, of a new polity which equitably protects the interests of all deprived social groups and binds them together for the common struggle which lies ahead and which has to be relentlessly waged until binal victory.



New Delhi
1 April, 1991

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

Fariduddin Khan Sher Shah (1489?-1545)

Soldier, Administrator, Ruler and Builder, Emperor of India

Eldest son of Hasan Khan, an Afghan noble of the Sur tribe Farid Khan was born around 1489. Hasan Khan's father Ibrahim Khan, a horse-dealer according to Abul Fazl, was among the soldiers recruited by Sultan Bahlul Lodi from Roh, the highlands of the Sulaiman range, and had held assignment for the maintenance of his followers, first in the Punjab but afterwards in the Pargana of Narnaul (Hissar) under the Afghan chief Jamal Khan. Hasan Khan succeeded him. When Jamal Khan was transferred by Sultan Sikander Lodi to Jaunpur, he took the Suris with him and Hasan Khan received the Parganas of Sasaram, Hajipur and Khavasspur Tanda for the maintenance of 500 horses.

Due to domestic conflict arising out of the jealousy of his step-mother, Farid left Sasaram for Jaunpur to pursue his studies and to serve under Jamal Khan. His father called him back and placed him in charge of the two other Parganas, when he had his first experience in administration. He mastered the revenue system and the customary law and suppressed bribery, extortion, brigandage and disaffection. Influenced by his step-mother, Hasan divested him in favour of his step-brother Sulaiman. Farid went to Agra and sought service with Daulat Khan, a Commander of 12,000 horses, under Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. He helped Farid obtain a royal grant in succession to his father. Farid took charge and his step-brother sought refuge with Mohammed Khan Sur of Chainpur.

Meanwhile Babur invaded India and defeated and killed Ibrahim Lodi. Bihar Khan Lohani, the Governor of Bihar, declared independence and assumed the title of Sultan Muhammed. Farid joined him and soon rose to high rank. **One day while hunting with him, he slew a tiger and received the title of Sher Khan.** Sultan Muhammad appointed him tutor to his son Jalal Khan. However, Muhammad Khan Sur, with the Sultan's authority, again sought to play his brother against Sher Khan who took the help of Junaid, the governor of Kara and Manikpur. Sher Khan not only recovered his assignment but expelled Mohammed Sur from Chainpur into Rohtas Hills. This attracted Afghan soldiers to his banner. With characteristic statesmanship, he now sought reconciliation with Mohammed Sur and restored him to chainpur.

Sher Khan then visited Junaid at Agra and was presented to Babur. He entered Babur's service with the object of studying his system in order to plan his expulsion from India and accompanied him on his expedition to Chanderi but soon he aroused Babur's anger and suspicion and left for Sasaram. **From now onwards Farid tried to unite the Afghans against the Mughals.** He rejoined Sultan Muhammad. On his death, Jalal Khan being still a minor, his mother, who became the regent, appointed Sher Khan as her agent. **Sher Khan thus became the de-facto ruler of Bihar.**

Sher Khan now desired to unite Bengal and Bihar but Sultan Mahmud of Bengal invaded Bihar and was defeated by Sher Khan. But Jalal Khan and the majority of the Lohanis began plotting against him and he was ordered to return to Sasaram. When another attack came, Jalal Khan accepted the Sultan of Bengal as his severeign. Sher Khan took advantage of this, raised the banner of revolt, and routed the royal army. **Sher Khan became the sovereign of Bihar.**

Sher Khan then took Chunar fortress. But he was summoned by Mahmud Lodi, the brother of Ibrahim, who had settled in Patna and assumed royal estate. Sher Khan agreed to help Lodi conquer Oudh and helped him take Jaunpur and Lucknow. Humayun rushed down from Agra and compelled Mahmud to retire into Bihar and demanded surrender of Chunar from Sher Khan in token of allegiance. Sher Khan refused but on call from Gujrat Humayun changed course and set out for Gujarat taking his son Qutb Khan as hostage.

Sher Khan then consolidated his power in Bihar and Bengal and defeated Sultan Mahmud of Bengal who took refuge with Humayun. Sher Khan took Rohtas from Raja Churaman. He took Benares, Jaunpur, Sambhal and Bahraich and threatened to march on Agra. **At the battle of Chausa on 26 June, 1539 Humayun was defeated and fled to Agra. Sher Khan assumed the royal title of Fariduddin Sher Shah, struck coin and caused the Khutba to be recited in his name.** He followed Humayun towards Agra, occupied Kanauj and Kalpi and sought alliance with the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat. **His next & final encounter with Humayun was on 17 May, 1540. Humayun sustained a crushing defeat.** Sher Shah pursued Humayun to Agra, to Lahoure and into Sind. **Sher Shah had become the Emperor of Hindustan.**

In 1541, Sher Shah crushed a rebellion in Bengal and reorganised the administration. In 1542, he annexed Malwa. On his way back, he took Ranthambhor. In 1543, Sher Shah marched to Raisen to punish Raja Puran Mal who had taken Chanderi and put its inhabitants to the sword. Puran Mal's forces were massacred by Sher Shah, the deed which has left the deepest blot on his memory. In 1543, Sher Shah defeated Maldeo Rathor of Marwar and then took Chittor and laid siege on Kalanjir. There he suffered burns

when ammunition caught fire. **He died on 22 May, 1545. He was buried in Sasaram in a mausoleum which still stands.**

The greatest of the Muslim rulers of India and entirely free from, and active in the correction of, the faults usually associated with his race, in his youth, he acquired learning and studied the arts of Government, and put his knowledge into practice in administering his ancestral jagirs. He devoted himself wholly to the affairs of the State, allowed himself no leisure and was personally acquainted with all **'details of civil administration as no other Indian ruler, before or since, has been.'**

Sher Shah reorganised the land revenue system to ensure due collection as well as to prevent oppression of cultivators.

Sher Shah's army administration was nighly efficient. He reintroduced branding of horses.

Sher Shah built roads and highways from Sonargaon to the Indus, from Agra to Mandu, from Agra to Chittor and from Lahor to Multan, lined them with trees and with caravansarais and places of worship at regular intervals. He introduced the system of horse-post. He extended the city of Delhi and built two forts there as well as the famous fortress of Rohtas on the Jhelum.

Sher Shah's greatest achievement was to forge the Afghan tribes into a ruling elite and transforma tribal confederacy into a State. For the only time in history, an Afghan established and ruled an Afghan kingdom in which none was for a party and all were for the state.

From a petty assigence, Sher Shah rose to become an emperor who left a deep impression on the country he ruled for only 5 years.

Under his rule, crime was suppressed, there was peace in the country and law and order was maintained; justice was promptly administered.

A pious and orthodox Muslim, he was liberal and tolerant, and adopted, as his state policy, the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of religion. He was indeed the forerunner of the modern secular state. **(Source : Cambridge History of India)**

President's Address to Parliament

21 February, 1991 (Relevant Extracts)

..5. In Jammu and Kashmir, secessionists and certain fundamentalist elements, aided and abetted from across the border, have been carrying out terrorist and subversive activities for quite some time. Government feels that if extraneous assistance to the extremists is eliminated a great deal of subversive activities in Jammu and Kashmir will abate. Government hopes that the dialogues with our neighbouring country will bring about a change in the situation and lead to a restoration of normal life in the State.

9. Communal harmony in the country has been vitiated mainly due to the Ram Janambhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy. The Government has taken a fresh initiative to resolve the issue through discussions with religious leaders and others so that a mutually acceptable solution can be evolved. It is the firm resolve of the Government to ensure absolute equality of treatment to the people belonging to all religions without discrimination and to promote communal harmony in the whole country....

38. We look forward to working closely with the democratically elected Government of Bangladesh for resolving outstanding issues through dialogue and further strengthening our bilateral cooperation.

41. Notwithstanding Pakistan's support to terrorist and secessionist activities in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir, we have continued our endeavour to reduce tension with Pakistan and have agreed to resume discussions over a wide range of bilateral issues. We have impressed on the Government of Pakistan the need to abide fully by the Simla Agreement. We hope that the Government of Pakistan will be guided by the longer term interests of the two countries and both our peoples...

43. Our traditional friendship with Afghanistan was further strengthened with the visit of President Najibullah to New Delhi in August, 1990. We hope that bloodshed and violence in Afghanistan will cease. The need of the hour is a political solution, arrived at by the Afghans themselves, that would ensure Afghanistan's status as a sovereign, independent and Non-aligned country. ...

49. We are deeply concerned at the outbreak of hostilities in the Gulf inspite of all efforts, including our own, to avert this tragic turn of events. The conflict is fraught with grave consequences for international peace and security and for the world economy. The economies of the developing nations in particular will be seriously affected. We hope that hostilities will cease. We are continuing our efforts, in consultation with the Chairman and Members of the Non-aligned Movement for an immediate ceasefire and simultaneous announcement by Iraq of the withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions. At our initiative a meeting of a group of Non-aligned Foreign Ministers was held in Belgrade. We have also been in touch with the Members of the Security Council and other nations to evolve a consensus for cessation of hostilities and a peaceful resolution of the Palestinian question. This problem has been allowed to prolong far too long and must be addressed with full seriousness and urgency. We will continue to press for the urgent convening of an international conference with the participation of all concerned, to find a peaceful and durable solution....

Proceedings of the Parliament
12 February — 13 March, 1991

I—RAJYA SABHA

President's Address
21 February : President addresses Joint Session

Motion of Thanks to President :
26 February — 5 March : Among participants Sikander Bakht & S.S. Razi.

Obituary
21 February : A.A. Razak, S. Shahedullah.

Resignation of Government
6 March : Leader of the House informs House about resignation of Government.

Discussion on Gulf Situation
22-23 Feb: Among participants A.B. Vajpayee, Shabbir A. Salaria, Mohd. Afzal, Abrar Ahmad and Prime Minister. Adopts Resolution.

Special Mention
26 Feb : On dismissal of Governor of Bihar by S.D. Sharma (JD).
: On development of handloom industry by R.N. Yadav (Cong-I).
: On Bodo Movement by Ram Awadhesh Singh (LD).
17 Feb : On invasion of Iraq by Allied Forces by V. Narayanaswamy.
5 March : On restoration of democratic process in J & K by S.A. Salaria (NC).
: On Grants to State Minorities Finance Corporation by M.K. Rahman (TD).

Private Member's Bill
27 Feb : Bill on Reservation in Public Employment and Education introduced by S.S. Ahluwalia (Cong-I).

II — LOK SABHA

President's Address
21 Feb : President Addresses Joint Session.

Motion of Thanks
27 Feb : Moved by Kapil Dev Shastri. Among participants Banatwalla (IUML).

Obituary
21 Feb : E.S.M. Pakeer Mohammed.

Adjournment Motion
22 Feb : Moved by A.K. Roy. Paritic-ipants include M.J. Akbar (Cong-I), I.K. Gujral (JD), Jaswant Singh (BJ), Indrajit Gupta (CPI), E.S. Sait (IUML), S. Soz (NC), P.V. Narsimha Rao (Cong-I) & P.M. Motion negatived.
25 Feb : On atrocities against SC/STs introduced by S.K. Gangwar—negatived.

Gulf Situation
22 Feb : Resolution adopted.

Matter Under Rule 377
25 Feb : On declaration of Jammu as Winter Capital of J & K by J.R. Gupta (Cong-I).
27 Feb : On promotion of Ayurveda by B. Paranjape
: On police excesses in Punjab by Kripal Singh.

Papers Laid
6 Mar : Annual Report of Handloom Export Promotion Council for 1989-91.
: Annual Report of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts for 1989-90.
: Annual Report of Carpet Export Promotion Council for 1989-90.
: Annual Report of Delhi Urban Arts Commission for 1989-90.

Resignation of Government
6 Mar : P.M. informs House of intention to resign.

Dessolution of Parliament
13 Mar : President dissolves Lok Sabha.

*** I would like the words Hindu. Bharatiya and Indian to be synonymous.**
—L.K. Advani.

*** The Hindu card has turned out to be a joker without any other cards to support it, it is certainly not an ace.**
—Kamal Nath.

BANATWALLA'S PRIVATE BILL ON STATUS OF RELIGIOUS PLACES (18 of 1991)

2. After article 26 of the Constitution, the following article shall be inserted, namely:-

"26A(1) the status of and title to any place of religious significance as it existed on the fifteenth day of August, 1947, shall be protected.

(2) In this article, "place of religious significance" shall include any piece of land, with or without superstructure thereon, set apart for worship or for performance of funeral rites or as depository for the remains of the dead, including the site of temple, mosque, church, gurudwara, synagogue, idgah, imambara, ashoorkhana, grave, tomb, sepulchse, graveyard, cemetry, marghat, tower of silence, and the like and the appurtenant thereto as well as the means of access to the same.

(3) No suit shall lie challenging the status of and title to any place of religious significance as it existed on the fifteenth day of August, 1947, and no court shall try any suit or issue in which the matter involves such a challenge or a contrary claim.

(4) All orders, decisions or decrees made by any Court prior to the commencement of the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1991, which are contrary to the provisions of this article shall cease to operate on and from such commencement."

Statement of Objects and Reasons

Claims to title and status of places of religious significance raise serious controversy and create deep discord. Such claims are prejudicial to communal harmony and stability of the country. To prevent such ugly situations, the Bill seeks to provide that the status of and title to any place of religious significance as it existed on August 15, 1947 shall be protected. It is laid down that no suit shall lie challenging such status of and title to places of religious significance.

The Truth from Mr. Sathe

Editorial, The Statesman, 23 December, 1990

...Mr. Sathe has admitted ...that the Supreme Court verdict in the Shah Bano case was overturned by the Congress(I) to "make every Muslim happy" and then "we allowed shilanyas, we allowed opening of the lock of the temple" to make the Hindus happy....

...Mr. Sathe... has carried these disclosures to their logical conclusion by urging the Muslims to forsake their claims on the Babari Masjid. This virtual endorsement of the BJP's provocative stand... merely prescribed a procedure which is the logical culmination of steps like opening the lock and holding the 'shilanyas' ceremony. It may not make the Muslims happy, but that is why he wants them to give up their rights on their own and in a gracious manner.

Nor is the suggestion all that out of tune with the Congress (I)'s latest stand, for the Rajiv Gandhi formula, too, has carefully avoided any firm opposition to the destruction of the mosque (which is the stand of all secular parties) and has kept the road open for implementing the BJP's demolition plan if it can be proved that a temple was indeed pulled down to build the mosque. Already, various groups have started advancing such 'proofs' and it is clear that once a retreat is ordered on this score, there will be no way to save the structure... Such an abject surrender to the Hindu revivalists willnot help the Congress(I) in the least, but only boost the BJP's prospects.

A statement on communalism issued by four Congress MPs last Monday provides an ominous pointer to the discontent in the ranks of their party....

...The debate raging in the (Congress) Party on the most effective strategy to combat the Hindutva forces unleashed by ...Advani has come to a boil. One section, convinced that the Muslims will not vote for the Congress en masse, has sought to dilute the Nehruvian brand of secularism and clamoured for a pro-Hindu tilt in the Ayodhya controversy. Another section has argued just as forcefully that any such tilt would in fact mean jettisoning the time-tested concept of secularism which the party has defined in terms of the responsibility of the State to uphold the rights of all citizens irrespective of their religious beliefs. Caught in the cross-fire Mr. Gandhi has been unable or unwilling to take sides and it is this procrastination which has driven his supporters to air their grievance in public. Their statement, however, appears not to take into sufficient account the complex dilemma Mr. Gandhi faces. He cannot be pushed into choosing between 'soft Hinduism' and 'hard secularism'. For, if the former is a milder varient of a poisonous potion the latter.. is no longer perceived to be an elixir. To impart topical relevance to secularism the Congress would need to draw on the eclectic, humanist and egalitarian traditions of all faiths practised in the country the better to emphasise that it is responsive to the ethical and spiritual concerns of our people...

Chandra Swami on Communalism

...Hindu means one who keeps away from violence, one who is generous. Everyone who lives on the soil of Hindustan is a Hindu, therefore, I have said that the minorities should not became communal. When the minorities become communal and turn violent, the majority community has no option but to retaliate. The result of such a clash is disastrous. The consequences are borne by the minorities. That is why my appeal to the minorities to give up communalism and not to drive the majority community up the wall. Once that happens, there will be violence.

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF JANATA DAL (SOCIALIST), BALLIA,

Political Resolution

The country is at the crossroads... While India is a multi lingual, multi-religion and a multi-ethnic society and our Constitution makers envisaged unity in diversity while drafting the historical document, it is unfortunate that after 43 years of independence the very unity of the country is in danger. There are conflicts which threaten to tear the social fabric of the nation itself.

The Janata Dal (S) is conscious of this situation and pledges to face this challenge....

The JD(S) is committed to the welfare of the socially weaker sections of the society.....

...The JD(S) will endeavour to resolve all disputes between communities in a peaceful manner. Violence has no place in our country. The JD(S) is firmly committed not to allow any group or community to use force and disturb the status quo of any place of worship. It will be ensured that rule of law prevails and that a negotiated solution is arrived at by methods known to democratic societies e.g. arbitration, quasi-judicial or judicial process....

In Kashmir there is a problem of insurgency. JD(S) stands by the commitment given to the people of the state and gives them solemn assurance that nothing will be allowed to disturb the present status of Kashmir as an integral part of the country. Any outside intergerence will not be tolerated and the people will soon be able to live with peace in their homes and before.....

(Source : Young India, 19 February, 1991)

* There are no minorities here. We are all Hindus. In India there are only two clases of people. One section was Hindu, the other group is Hindu.

—Swami Chinmayananda.

A.G. Noorani
On Indira Gandhi's Policy Towards Muslim Indians

Indira Gandhi's policy towards Indian Muslims was nothing but a cynical exploitation spread over a decade and half. Its element were promises galore coupled with administrative cosmetics. Both were designed to attract and also cover up unredressed grievances and unresolved problems. The record bears a documented recall....

Hinduisation of Congress Culture.

....Her Party's general secretary C.M. Stephen could freely declare in 1983 that the wavelength of Hindu culture and Congress culture is the same... Indira Gandhi did not contradict Stephen. She acted to prove him right.

On November 11, 1983 she addressed a public meeting at Kurukshetra beside Sanhit Sarova. That on this occasion she should have thought of reminding the minorities of their duties towards the country of their birth reveals the transformation that had come over her. Referring to Kashmir, she said that attempts were being made to create a situation for another 'Dharma Yudh'...

A few days earlier, on November 3, she had participated in an Arya Samaj function. Seema Mustafa's report in The Telegraph graphically described her performance, "She agreed with Mr. Bhoodhoo that 'our religion and traditions' were under attack. She did not use the word 'Hindu' but the reference to the earlier speaker left the audience in no doubt that the prime minister was speaking as a Hindu leader."

...Nehru said on January, 5, 1961, "When the minority communities are communal, you can see that and understand it. But the communalism of a majority community is apt to be taken for nationalism.... He told the AICC once (May 11, 1958), the "communalism of the majority is far more dangerous than the communalism of the minority."... On May 31, 1984, she assured the majority community that striving to give minorities their privileges did not mean that the government was careless or negligent towards the rights and privileges of the majority. This was surely uncalled for. It suggested a conflict where none existed. But what she added was even more revealing: "If there is injustice to them (majority) or if they did not get their rights, then it would be more dangerous to the integrity of the country."

Indira Gandhi had by then moved far away from Nehru's credo. She had begun injecting a sense of insecurity in the minds of the majority community and forged an electoral strategy on that basis. The dastardly crime which removed her from our midst enabled Rajiv Gandhi to pursue that strategy more effectively. As the votes were being counted in 1984, Jagjivan Ram cried: "It is a vote for Hindu India...on the basis of the constant mention of the Anandpur Sahib resolution and the deliberate omission of Muslims from his (Rajiv Gandhi's) speeches. Of course, Muslims voted for the Congress(I). But what for? They have to vote for the Congress(I) because they have to live in this country..."

The politics which Indira Gandhi followed towards the Muslims did little to ameliorate their situation and a lot to add to their situation and a lot to add to their frustration. They fostered a false image of pampering. In reality, the processes of redress were not even begun in earnest.

...The image of 'protector' of Muslim interests lingered long after the Muslims had become no more than a vote bank on which to draw freely while resenting intensely their asserting their rights independently of her or supporting any party but hers. The plight of the Muslims did not improve one bit by 15 years of Indira Gandhi's 'championship' of their rights. On the contrary, the community stagnated in its political stupor.

Communal Violence

Consider first the basic issue of sheer physical survival against communal violence. Indira Gandhi's record of checking riots was an abysmal one. Some of the worst riots in UP took place in 1972 when she herself held the home portfolio. They were not exactly communal riots. As a responsible correspondent reported on March 15, 1973, "investigations have revealed that the atrocities on Muslims in most of the recent riots in UP were committed not by members belonging to the majority community but the police. They were triggered off by her violation of a solemn electoral pledge on the restoration of the Aligarh Muslim University's status as an educational institution established by a minority.... For the first time since independence the demoralised Muslim minority plucked courage to protest against a wrong by demonstrating in the streets. Police repression greeted them. This is how the Aligarh riots begun on June 5, 1972.

Statewise protests were called for on June, 16, 1972, a Friday. Riots erupted in Ferozabad and Varanasi. On July 27, 1972 when the state assembly discussed the disturbances, Charan Singh referred to the loss of life and property suffered by Muslims in the two towns and said that there were no communal riots because Hindus had neither been killed nor suffered loss of property. The affair was between the government and the Muslim community. He rightly pointed out that in a democracy religious communities had a right to protest against particular government actions affecting them. The Congress government's attitude was that the Muslims were impertinent and importunate. Cha-

ran Singh maintained that at Ferozabad all Muslim houses burnt were around the Kotwali and the Muslims had told him that they had no complaints against Hindus but every complaint against the Provincial Armed Constabulary. A correspondent in the Hindustan Times (August 15, 1972) was more explicit about the source. "A single PAC (Provincial Armed Constabulary) man, it is reported, had made as much as Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 6,000 from the loot. Socialism, indeed!"

N.G. Goray, MP wrote to Indira Gandhi on August 28, pointing out that as many as 66 people had been killed in Ferozabad. "The Muslim community in that town seems to have been the target of every conceivable form of cruelty: looting, stabbing, shooting, burning, molesting, raping. The most shameful thing is that all this was freely indulged in by the forces of law and order in collusion with local goondas." Indira Gandhi brushed him off. "The Commissioner and the Inspector-general of Police did not find any substance in the allegation that the police in General had run amuck."

Unchecked, the riots spread. In Dadri on September 21, 35 Muslim homes were burnt. In Nonari 72 Muslim houses were razed to the ground on November, 15. In Sajni, on December 12, about 100 Muslim houses were looted and 43 burnt. Riots followed in Ranimau (December 29), Durgajot (January 23), Gond (February 14) and Basti. In May 1973 there were communal riots in Delhi itself in Sadar Bazar.

Ample evidence emerged later to show that Indira Gandhi was fully aware of the outrages perpetrated during the emergency and condoned them. On April 27, 1976, Subhadra Joshi wrote to Indira Gandhi: "It is difficult to describe what happened in Jama Masjid and Turkman Gate... You have entrusted Delhi and the Musalmans of Delhi, whose houses we guarded and who had been assured by you, to a few officers and few others whose intention and sanity you yourself would start doubting if you knew the whole thing." Shortly after her return to power came the Moradabad riots in 1980. As G.K. Reddy was moved to remark, "For the first time after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, as many as 130 people have died in a single incident in Moradabad" on August 13, 1980, the day of Ramzan Id. A UP cabinet minister, A.R. Nashter, said on August 16 that police excesses on the Muslims in Moradabad simply had no parallel.

But on August 28, 1980 Indira Gandhi characterised the incidents in Moradabad as part of a major conspiracy "to undermine the stability of the government." The Congress(I) Working Committee said the next day that they showed "a degree of preparedness to provoke confrontation with governmental authority." As in 1972, the PAC was defended and its victims condemned...

Moradabad was followed by riots in Aligarh, Allahabad, Godhra, Biharsharif, Nalanda, Hyderabad, Baroda, Pune, Phulwarisharif, Delhi, Meerut and worst of all, in Assam in 1983. Even after Meerut, where the PAC's atrocities have earned the censure of Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, Indira Gandhi deprecated in parliament, on February, 24, 1983, what she called sweeping condemnation of the PAC in Meerut.

On may 15, 1983 at Hardwar she asserted that there were no communal riots when the Congress(I) was strong and Janata rule was responsible for them. The figures tell a different and grisly tale...

Public Employment

Next only to the right to life comes the right to a livelihood. Equality of opportunity in state employment sets an example for the rest. Its denial there, likewise, affects the entire society. Indira Gandhi's 1971 election manifesto contained an admission of wrong coupled with a promise of redress. It pledged the removal of "present discrimination(sic) against minorities in the matter of recruitment in services."

The promise remained unfulfilled. Even today the state of Muslim representation in the public services is pitiable. As on January 1, 1981 there were just 116 Muslim IAS officers out of a total of 3,883 and 50 IPS officers out of 1,753—roughly 3 per cent. In Class I/Executive cadre, Muslims formed 1.61 per cent of the total number of central government employees, 3.30 per cent of state government employees and 3.19 per cent of public corporations.

In 1973 it was decided not to compile statistics on minority representation in the services. But it has come out that Muslims constituted 2.2 per cent of the officers and 4.2 per cent of the CRP. As on November 15, 1983 there were exactly five Muslims in the entire central secretariat of the rank of joint secretary and above out of a total of over 300 in these ranks. Even nominations to the boards of public sector corporations and nationalised banks, where there are no hurdles to overcome, show a total indifference to Muslims. They constitute above 2 per cent of the total number. Who has been keeping the Muslims out of the national mainstream here?

TABLE

Year	Incidents	Killed	Injured
1977	188	36	1,122
1978	219	108	1,801
1979	304	261	2,397
1980	427	375	2,838
1981	319	196	2,613
1982	474	238	3,025
1983	404	202	3,478

(Source : Union Home Ministry)

Urdu

The 1971 manifesto contained a similar admission of lapse and promise of redress in regard to Urdu. "Urdu shall be given its due place which has been denied(sic) to it so far." If anything the position of Urdu has deteriorated, since. Indira Gandhi's government set up the Gujral Committee on May 5, 1972 but sup-

pressed its report submitted on May 8, 1975. It was published by the Janata government in 1979.

Congress(I) MLAs prevented 10 MLAs in UP from taking their oath in Urdu. Indira Gandhi herself prevented chief minister V.P. Singh from promulgating an ordinance declaring Urdu as the second official language. It was even signed by the governor on December 29, 1981 but withdrawn on January 14, 1982 before it was gazetted. Nor did she pull up the excise minister Vasudeo Singh who, on March 22, 1984, opposed the very introduction of an official bill to enact as law an anaemic ordinance which had been made.

In all of Uttar Pradesh, the home of Urdu, there was during this period not a single Urdu-medium school at the secondary level as the high school and intermediate board decided not to grant permission for teaching through the medium of Urdu beyond class VIII in 1952. To make matters worse, in 1984, a new syllabus was introduced which made it impossible for a student to offer Urdu unless he is backward or unambitious. The constitutional guarantees for education in the mother tongue (was) reduced to a farce. The centre's enormous power to enforce the guarantees remained unused.

Minorities Commission

..Indira Gandhi's manifesto for 1980 promised to "strengthen and give statutory status to the Minorities Commission". The Minorities Commission was not given statutory status. Worst of all, its independence and integrity were subverted by appointing as chairman M.H. Beg....

Gopal Singh Panel

The Manifesto also promised appointment of a High Power panel... to consider whether these groups receive the benefits of the government's fiscal policies. The Panel, headed by Gopal Singh, submitted its report (on Minorities) as far back as June 14, 1983. It was published by the National Front government in August, 1990....

General Approach

After Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980 there was a steep deterioration in the communal climate with the growth of Virat Hindu sammelan and the like. She did nothing to check it. In ways more than one, she actively contributed to it. During her visit to the US in August 1982 she told James Reston of New York Times, "Enormous amounts of Arab money are coming. And they have made a conscious effort to convert the very poor, mostly Harijans .... Hindu communal forces have grown because of this". After H.N. Bahuguna mentioned this interview in parliament on August 16, 1982 came the usual denial... Yet 'the foreign connection' was freely used to influence Muslims at home even as Muslim states were cultivated for domestic purposes. Witness: the famous dinner with ambassadors of Muslim states on the eve of the 1980 election.

....Opening the All India Muslim Educational Conference on March 30, 1984 She also told her large Muslim audience that as chairperson of the non-aligned movement she was constantly in touch with Iran and Iraq in an effort to bring about a peaceful solution between them. Likewise, she made pointed references to friendship with pakistan during her election campaign in Kashmir on May 31, 1983. This is how she tried to 'integrate' Kashmir with the rest of the country.

In Indira Gandhi's scheme of things independent assertion was not permitted to Muslims. They had to accept whatever she granted, support her blindly and exclusively and shun the opposition completely.

On August 17, 1973 a delegation of Muslim leaders led by Sheikh Abdullah called on Indira Gandhi. It was treated to a revealing exposition of her outlook. The delegation revealed soon after: "She pointed out that the Muslim community had sought the support of the opposition without appreciating what the ideals and policies of these parties were... The prime minister, while acknowledging that in the past the Muslim community had supported her in the elections and enabled it to secure a majority, the leaders of the community had not extended their support to her in the same manner." She reproached them for adopting "an agitational approach" on Aligarh and warned that she did not, temperamentally, yield to pressures.

A decade later, the late General Shah Nawaz Khan, a member of her own party, was given the same treatment. It was in July 1979 that the pro-Congress(I) Jamiat-ul-Ulema had decided to launch a 'Mulk-o-Millat Bachao Tehrik' (Save the country and the community Movement) against the Janata government to arouse the nation "against the injustices perpetrated against the Muslims" especially during the riots. It launched two satyagrahas in July and October 1979 with Indira Gandhi's full support.

On January 21, 1983, the general wrote to her as leader of the movement and reminded her of her electoral pledges. "In case no satisfactory response is received before February 21, 1983, we shall be constrained to launch the civil disobedience movement in collaboration with other like-minded secular forces", he warned. Indira Gandhi replied on January 21, 1983: 'Confrontation and the spreading of an atmosphere of desperation is likely to be more damaging to the minorities themselves by arousing reaction in other communities". His explanations drew another letter (February 10) in which she said "any satyagraha of the kind you have in mind, and however peaceful you may think it will be, will be regarded as a direct hit at the Congress". The "chauvinistic Hindu organisations which have cropped up recently" were a "reaction to real or imagined threat from Muslim communal organisations. We can fight them only if we have the support of the minorities... We must remember

that no minority can survive if their neighbours of the majority are irritated." On the eve of the satyagraha Indira Gandhi set up yet another committee on February 20, 1983 to go into the grievances of Muslims and "to take effective steps to redres them." It consisted of four central ministers — P.C. Sethi (chairman), N.D. Tiwari, Buta Singh and Jaffer Sheriff — and Begun Abida Ahmad, MP. The announcement provided the Congress(I) ally, the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Hind, the desperately sought pretext to call off the civil disobedience movement it had so unconvincingly threatened to launch the next day.

Indira Gandhi even issued a directive on New Year's Day 1983 to Muslim legislators belonging to Congress(I) not to associate with other parties for the common issues pertaining to the Muslims. It may be recalled that, on November 5, 1982, 44 Muslim MPs, including Congress(I) MPs, had submitted a memorandum to the P.M. on Muslim grievances. A few of them wrote to her on November 8 requesting an appointment a fortnight later to ascertain... action taken by her. They drew a blank whereupon the memorandum was published a month later. Hence, her ire...

Protected Mosques

The Muslim leaders threatened to say the prayers, all the same, of Friday March 2, 1984 in the Safdarjung Mosque and court arrests. They had been driven to it. But on March 1, they were summoned to meet as many as four central ministers. "Who intends to fly in the face of the law?" P.V. Narasimha Rao, the foreign minister assured them. March 2 passed away peacefully but the minister's visitors had cause for disquiet. They learnt that the UNI had been asked to withdraw the story concerning the March 1 meeting that very day. On March 12 Rajiv Gandhi not only poured cold water on the accord — "They were opened only for a day"... The episode reeks of bad faith so reminiscent of the Aligarh episode over a decade ago.

It was the Muslims' support which helped Indira Gandhi to defeat the grand alliance in the decisive 1971 elections to the Lok Sabha.. In his study of the 1980 election, Myron Weiner estimated that in constituencies with substantial Muslim populations the Congress vote increased from 29 per cent in 1977 to 38 per cent in 1980... Yet, while Indira Gandhi profited handsomely by the deals ... with Muslim leaders for the 1971 and 1980 elections, the Muslims emerged as the losers. ...

(Source : The Economic and Political Weekly, 3 November, 90)

National Press on Janata Dal

Editorial,
The Times of India,
12 February 1991

...It is not that a scheme for the reservation of 60 per cent of party posts to a rainbow coalition comprising scheduled castes and tribes, backward castes, minorities and women is automatically suspect. In the context of a recognised need to make democracy and political participation more broad-based, few are likely to object to affirmative action per se...

The problem, however, rises with the assumptions behind the... "equity politics".... This appeal to primordialism is not accidental. With the "nationalist" platform already appropriated by the Congress and, via Hindutva, by the BJP, Mr. Singh, it would seem, has consciously opted to project a vision of India where narrow and fragmented self-identities—backwards, Muslims etc. — rather than a common citizenship are at the centre of politics... That this strategy of divisiveness masquerading as social radicalism will enhance the Janata Dal's distinctiveness is undeniable. But... the casualty will not be merely the Congress or the BJP.... It is a blue print for the emotional balkanisation of Indian society.

Editorial,
The Hindustan Times.

...The Janata Dal National convention in Puri reflected the anxieties of the party on holding together and the need to exploit the emotive platforms of Mandal and Masjid for electoral dividends... The party's resolve to continue the struggle for social justice and secularism was reiterated... Mr. V.P. Singh's attempts to corner the limelight by elevating Mandal as the new cornerstone of equity in all spheres of public life seem to have caught the leadership off guard... With some radical amendments to the party constitution, reserving 60 percent posts in the organisation for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, backward classes, minorities and women. By suggesting that eligibility for three of the top four party posts thus earmarked for "submerged segments of society" be decided on the basis of an income ceiling and a minimum two-year tenure for the office-bearers, Mr. Singh has... sought to put himself on a pedestal...

...The Janata Dal has sought to reaffirm its commitment to secularism by identifying the BJP as the greatest threat to the country's unity and integrity. The attempt to consolidate its Muslim constituency further is evident from the... criticism of the refuelling of American planes.. The party's resolve to mobilise people for joint mass action on issues like Mandal only underlines Mr. Singh's determination to continue with his patently divisive policy as an article of faith, that in his view admits of no rethinking...

* Nandan (the theatre complex) and Chandan (Mr. Jyoti Basu's son) are the only two achievements of the Left Front Government.

—Jatin Chakraborty.

BJP LEADER L.K. ADVANI ON BJP'S ELECTORAL STRATEGY

...The main issue is going to revert back to... mainly how... the unity of this country (can) be preserved. What is nationalism? How do you ensure social harmony and communal harmony? And in that context what is secularism? These issues have been there all along but have been very sharply focussed as a result of Ayodhya... At the level of the common man, the common voter, it will continue to by Ayodhya... This I believe is going to be the principal issue in this election.

...Only by our adding roti to Ram, the focus would continue to be on Ram... Ayodhya events, the events of October-November 1990, are not so close to the elections. But (for) every voter ... one of the principal considerations in his mind and which is going to affect his verdict is which party is in favour of Ram temple being built at the birthplace of Ram and which party has been courting this very natural desire of the majority in this country. And to that extent Ayodhya is going to influence this polls in a very large measure.

...In the whole country... the mood seem(s) to be BJP and non-BJP and **so the more the number of candidates in the non-BJP camp, the greater the advantage to the BJP.**

(Source : The Times of India, New Delhi, 10 March, 1991)

OPINION

A Letter in the Sunday Observer
3 February 1991

...Except for its role in the Shah Bano case, all the other issues taken up by the BJP are as empty as they are impracticable... The BJP is not Bharatiya Janata Party but "Bharatiya Jhagada Party" and the RSS is "Rashtra Samaj Shatru". Such communal parties need to be banned in the national interest.

The Editorial,
The Hindustan Times,
6 February, 1991.

The Bharatiya Janata Party exudes ample self-confidence when it claims it can provide the country with "an alternative political culture" as distinct from Congress-I culture. The BJP has certainly its distinctive qualities and in the political spectrum, it stands apart from other parties. But to emerge as a national alternative....it requires not only greater strength and dynamism but also greater adaptability and flexibility... What the BJP has to offer to the nation will ultimately decide whether it can be accepted by the people.

The BJP's dismal performance in the district council elections in Kerala is a clear indication that the mandir issue alone cannot fetch votes for the party.... Evidently, the BJP is out of tune with the times. Its criticism of what it labels as pseudo-secularism has become a recurring theme and is beginning to look like a worn-out and over-used slogan. The party is reluctant to recognise that Indian culture is a composite one, requiring a more liberal outlook that goes beyond the current rhetoric. What keeps India as one country is its unity in diversity.

No evidence has come from its Jaipur session that the BJP is fully conscious of this fact or that it is prepared to provide leadership to the entire people and not just to the majority community. Even liberal voices, like that of Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, are being drowned out by the party which mentally is still riding the Rath... Somewhere along the line the BJP is giving the impression that it continues to look backwards and is unable to adjust itself to the needs of an India and the world that are caught in the process of change.

Editorial,
The Statesman, New Delhi,
February, 91

...According to Mr. Kanshi Ram barring the BJP, all political parties, but especially the Congress(I), have sought electoral adjustments with his party.... It may well be asked whether the rise of... small parties would be at all desirable, and whether it would not make for even greater political confusion. The need is for a clear polarisation, not for further fracturing of the polity, which is what small parties like the BSP are effecting. Mr. Kanshi Ram has, of course, announced that his prime objective is to deny a majority to any party or group... If only the large parties refrain from courting groups like the BSP for electoral alliances and, in the process, endowing them with an importance that they do not deserve, the latter would be cut to their true size, with considerable reduction in their potential for confusion.

Editorial,
The Statesman
12 March, 1991

....The BJP has... been playing several games at the same time... Currently operating at different levels, using the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to maintain the tempo of the demolish-the-mosque campaign, and keeping the Bajrang Dal waiting in the wings for use as a storm-trooping force if the need arises, while the party itself had adopted a relatively low-key posture, adding 'roti' to Ram... With elections in the offing, the BJP can be expected to follow this dual strategy with even greater determination... If only to deceive the Election Commission which takes a dim view of those who spread communally.

The Times of India Report on the Demise of V.P. Singh's Government

In the end, no one was surprised and no one grieved....

Even the knowledge of its imminent demise did not stem the feeling of anger, disgust, revulsion among people.... There was not a wisp of sympathy for the fallen government, not an iota of consideration for the virtually intractable problems it faced.

Perhaps it has something to do with the enormous faith and hope people had reposed in V.P. Singh.....

Even Singh's gambit of going to Parliament after an obvious loss of majority in a bid to reinforce his secular credentials does not appear to have washed with people. Says Mirza Ahmed, head of the department of social work in Lucknow: "This government is neither secular nor principled. It simply acted on the vote principle". It probably is a cruel indictment of a man who has risked losing the elite, middle-class and the fundamentalist Hindu votes to wear the backward and secular crowns, but no one is shedding a tear for him now. Not the backwards nor the Muslims.

...Opinion is divided on what issue — Mandal or Mandir—Masjid— precipitated the collapse... But one thing is certain: just as corruption was the major issue in the last election, Mandal and Mandir-Masjid will be crucial issues if an election is held now along with prices and stability.

...To the upwardly mobile sections, the Mandal issue is more important than the Mandir-Masjid...

To what extent the Ayodhya imbroglio has affected the people is difficult to fathom, but it has definitely surfaced as a major issue of the day—possibly to the detriment of the Janata Dal and the delight of the BJP. In Uttar Pradesh particularly, where the BJP has always played second fiddle to the Janata, the Hindu heart beats faster at the mention of the dispute....

Evidently, the BJP has won new sympathisers with its Rath Yatra gimmic and the hype it whipped up....

With no other political party having a nationwide grasp, the longing for stability naturally manifests itself with the public's renewed acceptance of the Congress..

About the only perceptible gain extracted by V.P. Singh from the current mess is his refurbished stature among the Muslims, following his strong stand on the Ayodhya issue despite attempts by his political rivals to dilute it. But even this gain has been partly forfeited by the parting of ways between him and Mulayam Singh Yadav last week. While the Muslims' fidelity to the Janata Dal is in little doubt, the developments could well split the vote...

So the face-off on the Ayodhya issue will fetch both Singh and the BJP support from their constituents old and new. But will the issue surpass the longing for a stable government?...

(Source: The Times of India, New Delhi 11 November, 1990)

Coming Election-A Trend setter?

D.P. Kumar, The Statesman, 18 March, 1991

...In the classical style in which the Congress (I) has fought the elections and won them has been its total dependence on the Muslim and Harijan votes, to put it rather bluntly.

It has always won with around 42% of popular votes, of which the bulk has been contributed by the Muslim and Harijan voters. It is noteworthy that whenever Muslim voters have been uncertain in their mind, such as in 1977 and 1989 — the first time because of the excesses of the Emergency and the second on the ambivalent Congress(I) attitude on the Ramjanambhoomi - Babari Masjid issue — the party has been defeated at the husting.

This, then, is the basic point, and in any analysis of the party's electoral prospects this factor looms large on the horizon. Has the Congress (I) been able to recapture its hold on the Muslim mind which will see it through a victory?

Clearly, Muslim votes have come to be divided in course of the years. They are no longer voting solidly in favour of one party. The Congress (I), presumably, retains a hold over a section, mainly of those traditionally attached to the party, but younger voters have probably travelled out of its orbit. In 1977, Muslims had quit in anger, but in 1989 most of them chose deliberately to be on the side of the Janata Dal, and gave it a big boost. The Congress(I) was still the larger party, but its citadel was cracking... The question now is which way will the Muslim votes, or the bulk of them go in the May elections?

...The National Front (of which Janata Dal led by ... V.P. Singh, is a part) .... has forged a formidable combination of the backward castes and the Muslims.

It has turned out to be a "dreadful" combination in the eyes of its opponents. V.P. Singh is probably getting into the consolidation of the Bahujan Samaj Party as well. The BSP leader, Mr. Kanshi Ram, had fought against him in the Allahabad by-election in 1988, and had secured a thumping 70,000 votes. The BSP has grown in strength ever since and if ...V.P. Singh is able to put together these potent political forces, theoretically at least he will have made a mark, and score significantly in the mid-term poll....

There is also little doubt that the BJP is bound to take advantage of the "Mandir" issue, and the clarion call of 'Hindutva' that it has sounded

KERALA DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1991

Party	Contested	Won
U.D.F	474	322
of which		
CPI(M)	246	193
CPI	91	62
J.D.	57	24
Others	80	43
L.D.F.	465	148
of which		
Cong(I)	295	77+1*
IUML	96	45
Others	64	25
BJP	447	2
Total		472**

*rebel **2 seats in dispute

(NOTE : LDF secured less than 50% seats only in Malappuram (12 out of 40) when IUML took 22 seats).

KERALA RESULTS
Editorial ,
The Hindustan Times,
4 Feb. 1991

Widely regarded as a curtain-raiser to next years' Assembly contest, the outcome of Tuesday's District Council elections in Kerala has a deeper significance, which should make the spectacular victory of the Left Democratic Front doubly heartening for the CPI-M and the Janata Dal. For one thing, this was the first major contest between the two parties, which have come together as "natural allies" at the national level, on the one hand, and the Congress-I, on the other, after the fall of the V.P. Singh government and the new equations it has set in motion. Secondly, spite Congress(I), attempts to turn it as a verdict on the four-year record of the E.K. Nayanar government, local issues had been overshadowed by such national ones as Mandal, Masjid, import of which was only over the length and breadth of India, are especially in north India....

Only election time will, however, show whether the BJP.... will push up its strength from 90 in the outgoing Lok Sabha to something beyond... accentuated by the presence in the fray of the BJP in a big way.... without the support of a substantial proportion of the backward castes and Muslims, who account for 60 percent of the State's population, the LDF could not have trounced the Congress-I. ...

... Marginal factors... cannot obscure the national-level significance of the impressive dividends that the advocacy of castebased reservation and secularism has yielded.

(Source : The Hindustan Times, 4 Feb. 91)

National Press on IUML's Separation from Congress(I)

Editorial,
Indian Express
18 Feb. 1991

Reactions to the Muslim League's decision to snap the party's long relationship with the Congress-I-led United Democratic Front in Kerala have been along predictable lines... With the League's exit, the Congress-I loses the main, and perhaps the most dependable, prop it has had for the past two decades... Admittedly, relations between the leadersps of the Muslim League and Congress(I) have been under strain for some time and were further exacerbated by the Masjid-Mandir controversy and the Congress-I high command's perceived bivalent stance on it. Even so, the final break would still have been delayed but for the severe setback suffered by the UDF in general and the Muslim League in particular in the recently held District Council polls, particularly in pockets long considered to be their citadels....

That the Muslim League's exit from the UDF will significantly alter the political alignments in the State is obvious.... Joining the LDF bandwagon is only a very distant possibility not merely because of the tough pre-conditions put forward by the LDF leadership but the inevitable opposition from within... If ... the party also decides to withdraw support to the Chandra Shekhar Government at the Centre, it will take it several steps closer to the Janata Dal and hence the LDF.

Editorial
The Statesman
25 Feb. 1991

The Muslim League's decision to leave the Congress(I)-led United Democratic Front in Kerala, after nearly 21 years of unbroken association with it, was not unexpected after the reverses that the UDF and hence the League too—suffered in the State's first ever-district council elections...

It remains to be seen whether there will be any further fall out from the February elections. For instance, the political parties of the Nair and Ezhava communities, as well as the Kerala Congress led by Mr. K.M. Mani, which is generally regarded as speaking for Christians, all have major differences with the Congress(I), especially over the Mandal report, but are still in the UDF. It is a moot point whether they will also follow the League's example. If that happens, even partially, Keraia's electoral arithmetic... is bound to undergo a sea-change... It is possible that even the League may not move over to the LDF, mainly because many of the Marxist cadres are staunchly against the LDF taking in "non-secular" parties. Will the League, then, remain an independent entity or will it, perhaps, return to the UDF fold?...

* They may be offering Ram, Rahim, rozi, roti, but whom will they give raj? The real issue is of power. Whom will they give power?

—V.P. Singh

NOT PROTECTION OF STRUCTURE ALONE BUT RESTORATION OF MASJID BMMCC REPLIES TO VAJPAYEE AND BHARATI

"The Babari Masjid Movement Coordination Committee (BMMCC) has noted the statement by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, MP, and then by Kum. Uma Bharati, MP that they (or the BJP or any Hindu organization, including the VHP, the Bajrang Dal and the RSS) do not contemplate demolition of the disputed structure in Ayodhya. This is welcome as far as it goes but Atalji wants to shift it and Umaji perhaps wishes to keep it as a Mandir!

However, the BMMCC is yet to hear even a word of condemnation, by either of them or by the BJP or by any Hindu organisation, of the Kar Sevaks who stormed the Masjid planted their flag on it and in a fit of hysterical rage tried to pull it down.

Secondly the VHP is yet to revise its site-plan of the proposed Ram Janambhoomi Mandir which incorporates the site of the Masjid as well as the site of 2 or 3 existing temples. Are those temples also proposed to be 'shifted'?

Thirdly, according to the Consensus of the Ulema and the Muftis of India dated 4 December, 1990, a mosque-site is sacrosanct and, therefore, a mosque cannot be shifted to another site.

Fourthly, the shifting is only an euphemism for demolition as the Masjid, which is largely constructed of brick, stone and mortar, cannot be dismantled, transported to another site and re-assembled, even if there was no theological constraint.

Fifthly, since 23 December, 1949, when the idols of Ram Lalla were unlawfully and surreptitiously installed in the Masjid, **Muslims have been peacefully struggling for the restoration of the Masjid and not just for the protection of the structure.**

If the BJP and its front bodies are indeed sincere about 'not hurting the sentiments of the Muslim community', as Umaji claims, they should persuade those who are in unlawful possession of the Masjid to vacate it and restore it to the Muslim community as well as call upon the VHP to revise the site-plan.

The BMMCC assures them that the Muslim community would respond generously and cooperate with them in constructing the proposed Ram Janambhoomi Mandir on an adjacent site, after the site-plan is suitably revised."

12 March, 1991

THE TIMES OF INDIA READER SURVEY, 1991

The Ayodhya dispute	Percentage
1.1 The mosque should be demolished/removed to build the temple	27.75
1.2 The whole complex should be handed over to the Archaeological Survey of India for Preservation as a national monument	38.36
1.3 The temple should be built near the mosque without demolishing the latter	33.89

On the face of it, the overwhelming verdict (72.2 percent) against any scheme to demolish or relocate the disputed shrine in Ayodhya suggests an abiding commitment to tolerance and the coexistence of different faiths. However, this categorical assertion is qualified by a number of factors:

* 38.4 per cent view the Babari Masjid as only a historical monument.
* Some 61.5 per cent of the respondents appear to be committed to the construction of a temple in Ayodhya, though there are major differences over location.
* That some 27.8 per cent of largely middle class respondents endorse the Vishwa Hindu Parishad position would indicate that the pro-mandir agitation has struck a chord in this section of the population.

The results also point to the fact that the hardline position on the Ayodhya controversy enjoys relatively greater support among readers of the Delhi and Lucknow editions of The Times of India (36.2 per cent and 35.7 per cent respectively) and the Gujarati edition of the paper published from Ahmedabad (31.2 per cent). The support is far less in Patna (22.06), Bombay (20.1 per cent) and Bangalore (20.1%).

Not surprisingly, there is a pronounced correlation between the pro-demolition-relocation camp and support for the BJP. Equally significant is the fact that of the six per cent who have expressed a preference for a Congress-BJP alliance, two-fifths subscribe to the VHP position on the Ayodhya controversy. Moreover, 10.4 per cent of Congress supporters endorse this position.... It is the Congress that is the major beneficiary of the secular position....

However, the Congress position is not bereft of complications—41.4 per cent of those who support the Congress also endorse the suggestion for a temple that does not disturb the present shrine, suggesting the need to strike a fine balance...

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON INDIA'S FUTURE AS JUNCTION OF HINDUISM AND ISLAM

Practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus... If ever any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone... I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind... For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanata brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.

8TH WORLD DAWOODI BOHRA CONFERANCE,

Bombay, 22-24 February, 1991,Resolution on Babari Masjid Dispute

Since the Ram Janambhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy came to the fore, communalism and communal violence has assumed unprecedented proportions and has pushed the country to the precipice of disintegration. Communal violence has been frequently breaking out in different parts of India on the flimsiest pretext and claiming hundreds of human lives. Communal violence has now been penetrating rural areas too and what is more shocking now even women and children are not spared... There also have been instances of entire families burnt alive or female children being stabbed. This total brutalisation bodes ill for our country which swears by peace and non-violence.

What is most worrisome for us as a nation is that some politicians, in order to grab votes, have openly and flagrantly used religion for political ends and communalised our political processes. The law enforcing and administrative machinery too, on the order hand, has been communalised. There have been innumerable instances in which the police has openly helped the frenzied mobs indulging in arson, pillage and murder during curfew hours. The PAC, the BMP etc. are ofcourse known for their anti-minority bias. If all this is allowed to go unchecked our very existence as a nation would be endangered. We have to hang our heads in shame that such brutalities are being committed, such religious fanaticism (is) openly promoted and the government looks on helplessly and takes no step to prevent such a blatant use of religion for political ends and participation of law enforcing machinery...

The Reformist Bohras have always stood by secular and democratic values and urge upon the Government as well as all political parties to.... ensure safety and security of all citizens. We also appeal to all secular and peace loving forces to come forward and fight religious fanaticism, sectarianism and communal bigotry.

Silent Testimony of Sikh Gurus

Note by Sher Singh, Calcutta

If one man in India had the moral courage to call Babur "a Jabir' i.e. an oppressor, in front of him, he was the first Sikh Guru, Guru Nanak... (1469-1539).... an eye-witness to Babur's (invasion) of India in 1520, 1524 and 1526. (He) has spared no expletive to roundly condemn Babur's cruelty and treatment of innocent citizens.... His description of the rape of Lahore... will make even a hardcore criminal weep...

..Guru Nanak also visited Ayodhya around 1528-29 (The Sikh Review, April 1988) **and stayed at Brahmghat, only 200 m.. (west of) Baburi Masjid... The historical Sikh gurdwara still exist(s) there to commemorate his visit. It has been mentioned nowhere by Guru Nanak that Babur destroyed or desecrated any Hindu temple. Guru Nanak does not accuse Babur of any iconoclastic zeal, nor ... of anti-Hindu crusade.**

Guru Tegh Bahadur, the 9th.. Guru, also visited Ayodhya in 1671. He also stayed at Gurdwara Brahmghat, (Tawarikh Guru Khalsa - Bhai Gian Singh, Vol.I).... He has not mentioned anywhere in his writings that Baburi Masjid was built after demolishing Janamsthan temple or that Aurangzeb had demolished any terrace in the compound of Baburi Masjid, (alleged done in 1664).

Guru Gobind Singh (then known as Gobind Das) had also visited Ayodhya in... 1672... when he was only 6 years old... He halted at (the same) Sikh Gurdwara previously... ...The details of his visit are also recorded in Gurpartap Suraj. **"He visited Hanuman Garhi, Ram Chandra Asthan, places connected with Sita and met many sadhus."** (Tawarikh Guru Khalsa, Bhai Gian Singl Vol. I p.3.)... Ram Chandra Asthan ... is now known as Janmasthan-Sita Rasoi and.. stand(s)... north of Baburi Masjid... separated by (a) metalled road..... He was stated nowhere in his writings that Baburi Masjid was built after demolishing Janmasthan Temple.

NO DEMOLITION OF 300 MOSQUES IN PAKISTAN

Official Statement by Pakistan High Commission

In Mainstream (November 24, 1991) Mr. K.R. Malkani wrongly stated that **300 mosques had been levelled in Panno Agil in Pakistan for the purpose of building a cantonment. We have ascertained the facts which falsify Mr. Malkani's assumption. No village or mosque was demolished at Panno Agil for building a cantonment.**

(Source : The Mainstream, New Delhi, 9 February, 1991)

MOOSAVI'S MESSAGE

The (Babari Masjid) issue is most important and crucial and it should be solved as soon as possible...

...The issue.. should be solved through mutual negotiation through the religious heads of both the communities.

....In a civilised country there is no way except mutual negotiation or finally the verdict of court.

The Supreme Council of Ulema and Khutaba (India).... has made it clear that Islam's rule and regulations do not allow shifting of any Masjid....

(Source : H.I. S.M. Moosavi's Letter of 14 Feb. 1991, to S. Shahabuddin)

Neena Vyas on VHP Trupped Evidence

In the Ayodhya controversy, there seems to be no real issue that is debatable in any serious way except that the compulsions of vote bank politics and the mass hysteria aroused in the name of religion have been virtually holding the country to ransom, threatening to tear apart its already tattered social fabric. It needs to be said at the very outset that a civilisation rightly proud of dating back to 5000 years is today engaged in a preposterous debate on whether or not a page from its own history should be thrown into the dustbin.

Has the lust for power made our political parties so blind as to wish to destory a monument more than 450 years old? The point that needs to be forcefully made is that the Babari monument must be preserved... because of its antiquity. It needs to be preserved not because it was a mosque, but even if it had been a stable.

...Let us examine... the so-called documentary evidence presented by the two sides to the Government over the three rounds of talks that have been held since December last year between the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the 'other' arm of the BJP representing the so-called Hindu view, and the All India Babari Masjid Action Committee....

...While submitting its 'documentary evidence' to the Government on December 23 last year, the VHP very clearly framed what it considers as the 'relevant question'. To quote from its covering note to the documents: "The relevant question is : is there proof that an old and persistent tradition among Ram devotees has considered the site (of the Babari Masjid) as the sacred Ram Janambhoomi (Birthsite of Ram), and that Ram worship took place in a temple, before and until the Babari Masjid was built?" It can be seen from this question that archaeologically the VHP would like to prove that a temple devoted to Ram worship existed at the site immediately before the Babari Masjid was built in 1528 AD. It claims that it has presented evidence which "will prove that the question has to be answered in the affirmative."

Caught in the trap of its own "relevant question" and realising this soon after posing it, the VHP has been quick to change its stand. It was 'advised' by some that even if it could be proved that a temple existed at the site, the VHP would be hard put to it to prove that "Ram worship took place", and one of its most vocal experts, Dr. S.P. Gupta, former Director of the Allahabad Museum, has now been saying that the VHP would not give up its claim even if it was proved that a Saivite temple existed at the site. However, even after this modification of its stand, the VHP may find itself floundering against the hard evidence of history and archaeology.

Take the mosque itself. The builder, Mir Baqi, proudly proclaims in an inscription in stone that the construction of the mosque was at the bidding of Emperor Babur, but nowhere does the inscription mention the destruction of a temple. If this was done by an idol-breaker for whom it was an act of religious merit, why does he not proclaim it?

In 'Ain-i-Akbari', Abul Fazl, Akbar's Minister writing within 70 years of the supposed destruction of the temple, mentions Ayodhya as a pilgrimage centre but says nothing about the exact site of Ram's birth.

Finally, could Tulsidas, the great Ram devotee, writing his Ramacharitmanas in Akbar's reign within a few decades of the construction of Babari Masjid, forget to mention that a temple at the very spot of Ram's birth had been desecrated and that the shrine had been denied to Ram's devotees? In fact the VHP has not been able to produce a single shred of historical evidence from the primary sources till almost the close of the 17th century to suggest that any temple, let alone a Ram temple, was destroyed at the site of the Babari Masjid.

From the late 17th-early 18th century, the VHP's key evidence is a passage which it attributes to "Aurangzeb's grand-daughter' where it is claimed that she refers to the destruction of several major Hindu temples to show the "strength of Islam" and among these is the Ram temple at Ayodhya... This particular piece of evidence appears to be fabricated material. The passage is attributed to 'Sahifa-i-Chahal Nasaih Bahadur Shahi' suspposedly written by the daughter of Bahadur Shah Alamgir".

First of all... there was no Emperor 'Bahadur Shah Alamgir'. Aurangzeb Alamgir ruled from 1659 to 1707 and his son, Bahadur Shah from 1707 to 1712. The later author, Mirza Jan, writing in 1856, who quotes this passage does not even know the name of the authress so that she simply cannot be traced. And the author who quotes the passage was ignorant enough to confuse the names of Aurangzeb and his son, Bahadur Shah.

Besides, the historian, Mr. R.S. Sharma, former chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research, points out that the Chinese traveller, Huan Tsang visited Ayodhya in the seventh century and he noticed the place for its Buddhist domination, mentioning 100 Buddhist monasteries and only about 10 non-Buddhist temples. Ayodhya of that time was not the cradle of the Brahmanical tradition. Mr. Sharma has also very forcefully argued that the motifs of 'Yaksha', 'dwarpala' and 'Purnaghattas' found on the black stone pillars of the Babari Masjid do not prove that even the pillars

belonged to a Hindu temple. Some of these motifs have become part of the Indo-Islamic architectural tradition, appearing in the Jama Masjid and the Asafi Imambara pillars in Lucknow, and later even in the residency building of the Birtish times.

Ironically, the most forceful 'evidence' against the VHP's claim comes from the excavations around Ayodhya carried out from 1975 to 1980 by Prof. B.B. Lal, then Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. While the VHP is claiming that this evidence has clinched the issue for them, the truth seems to point differently... But... his authentic report on the excavations which was published in the Indian Archaeology Review before the Ayodhya controversy started in 1986, has not a word to say about any find that establishes or even points to the destruction of any temple at the site. He very definitely says that the site was not inhabited before the seventh century (B.C.-ed.) that Islamic glazed ware belonging to the period from the 13th to the 15th century were found (pointing to Muslim occupation of the site?) and that the earliest figurine found was a Jaina figurine belonging to the seventh century.

... In fact another historian, Dr. J. Prasad Jain has argued in "Ayodhya Aditirath", that the black pillars in the Babari Mosque were taken from earlier Jain temples...

Ironically, Prof. Lal's excavations have revealed nothing that would stengthen a Hindu claim on the site....

The VHP is trying to make out its case on the basis of some burnt brick pillars found in one of the trenches dug under Prof. Lal's supervision just south of the Babari Masjid... It claims that these formed the bases of the 14 black stone pillars used in the mosque and were part of the Hindu temple structure that existed at the site before it was demolished. Mr. Suraj Bhan, Professor of Archaeology at Kurukshetra University, contests this. He points out that the excavated pit reveals three floor levels. the lowest is dated at the 11th century, the second between the 13th and the 15 centuries, at which level Islamic glazed were has been found, and the third is the level of the Babari Masjid, that is the 16th century. No pottery or utensil or other artefacts used in Hindu worship have been found: no figurine or any objects associated with the worship of Ram or Vishnu have been found.

Mr. Suraj Bhan also says that the pillar 'bases' have no sockets and could not have supported the stone pillars,and no broken bits of the stone pillars have been found stratigraphically associated with the burnt brick pillars. No tell-tale marks of the use of tools have been found which could suggest the demolition of an older structure at the place. Prof. Bhan also points out that even if it were to be granted, for the sake of argument, that the area of the south trench and the present Babari Masjid area were indeed part of an older temple complex, the garbh griha of the older temple could not have been at the point inside the Babari complex. For that would mean that the entrance of the older temple would be facing south, which is against all Hindu practice. The south belongs to the god of death, Yama, and no temple is ever built facing the south.

... Leaving aside these debates, the BJP itself has not denied that its own campaign for the temple is political. Mr. Advani has often stated that his campaign is directed mainly against the "pseudo-secularists"....

* Our politicians should tell the Muslim leaders that the time has come for them to respect Hindu sentiments. The Hindus are in no mood to compromise.

— Ashok Singhal, VHP Leader

VIEWS OF YUNUS SALEEM

I was taking keen interest in resolving the (Babari Masjid) issue along with my friend, Mr. Krishna Kant, who is the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, even before we became Governors.

We were making an effort since July 1989. We were holding discussions. We were meeting religious heads of both the sides. I went to Madras and Kanjeevaram also. I approached the religious heads of Muslim community also....

...When we became Governors, we had to take the Prime Minister's and the Rashtrapati into confidence...

The Rashtrapati and the Prime Minister both gave us their blessings... We did make an attempt... It was jeopardised by Subodh Kant Sahay.

...He gave it to the Press... Our view was that if it is leaked then people.... the interested persons in the controversy... would like to prevent some peaceful solution be discovered.

...He gave it to the TV and he started talking... he went himself to Kanjeevaram and said that "we understand Yunus Saleem and Krishna Kant had come. What talks had taken place?" Ascertained it from them and then gave it to the press. Then it came in the press and TV and the controversy started.

...If it was not deliberate, it was foolishness. We strongly protested to the Prime Minister...

...We invited all the Muslim religious heads.... It was for the first time in the history of this controversy that on one table the Muslim and Hindu religious leaders sat together to discuss the problem.

But this person (Sahay) was not interested in solving any problem. Therefore, he did not allow us to proceed.

...When the Government changed... Nobody asked us to take interest and we were not interested then, because as Governors, we had our limitations...

(Source: The Indian Express, 25 Feb, 1991)

Harbans Mukhia on Ayodhya Dispute-Historical Evidence

For the discipline of history three kinds of evidence are of vital significance : archaeology, written texts and inscriptions, and popular tradition. It should therefore be fair to examine the status of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid dispute in terms of the historical evidence derived from these sources.

That Ram was a mythological, rather than a historical figure is hardly a matter of dispute; it is possible, however, that some, or many of the characters portrayed in the Ramayana did actually exist and some of the events described there did actually take place though their scale and historical significance may have differed from the one mythology came to attach to them at some stage. For argument we shall assume Ram to be a historical figure.

The first epic woven around the story of Ram is of course the Ramayana of Valmiki. According to this text, Ram the King of Ayodhya, was born in the Treta Yuga, that is several thousand years before the Kali Yuga which began in 3102 BC. However, the archaeological excavations, undertaken by the former Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Prof. B.B. Lal, have established that there was no evidence of any kind of habitation in modern day Ayodhya before the eighth century BC when the first signs of settlement of a rudimentary nature appear. This is in sharp contrast to the highly sophisticated urban setting against which the events described in the Ramayana are supposed to have taken place. Clearly then Valmiki could not have had this Ayodhya in mind where Rama was born.

Indeed, it is not even clear where the Ayodhya of Ram is located, for several texts place it at the banks of the river Ganga rather than Saryu where the present one stands. Against this extremely uncertain background the claim of absolute certainty of the exact place of Ram's birth appears more than little suspect.

It is possible of course that popular tradition has for long stablished the particular spot where Babar is said to have built his mosque as Ram's birth place and where a temple is supposed to have been erected, (though when and by whom this was done is entirely unkown)

Meanwhile let us look at the evidence about the construction of the mosque at the site of the temple. The structure known from the Persian verses inscribed on the inner as well as the outer faces of the mosques... The verses, however, merely state that Mir. Baqi had built the mosque but do not refer to the destruction of any temple nor to any sanctity attached to the site by any group of people. Babar himself... makes no mention of building the mosque, much less to the destruction of any temple.

Abul Fazl, the courtier of Akbar and author of the great work, Ain-i-Akbari, refers to Ayodhya as the city where Ram was born, but does not locate any site of his birth; nor does he record the destruction of a temple to make way for the mosque. Indeed no historical or any other work written in medieval India, often by fundamentalist Muslim authors, mentions the construction of this mosque at the site of a temple; and no imperial descendant of emperor Babur, not even.. Aurangzeb — himself responsible for the destruction of several Hindu temples and construction of mosques at their site-makes any reference to it.

If this is surprising, even more surprising is the absence of any mention of it in the works of Goswami Tulsi Das, author of the second great epic of the theme of Ram's life, the Ramcharitamanas. Tulsi Das was an inhabitant of Ayodhya and wrote the epic in his native Awadhi dialect. A life long devotion to Ram had given him a rare boldness, such that he curtly turned down an invitation by emperor Akbar himself to visit the imperial court. If the temple built to commemorate Ram's own birthplace at Ayodhya had indeed been demolished just 60 or 70 years before he was composing his epic, the memory of it would surely have driven him hopping mad. And yet, all we have from him is dead silence! Nor do we get any reference to it in any of the medieval historical or literary works, whether the author was Hindu or Muslim, orthodox or liberal.

It is only in the nineteenth century that the legend of the demolition of the temple and construction of the mosque begins to get into the records... During the nineteenth century there is a spurt in disputes over the issue and tradition seems to have grown that the mosque had displaced the temple. The story then gets into the records like P. Carnegy's Historical Sketch of Faizabad (1870), H.R. Nevill's Faizabad District Gazetteer, and as a footnote of Mrs. A.S. Beveridge's English translation of Babur's Memoirs (1922).

Clearly, therefore, the belief or tradition, which is today the basis of the VHP-BJP claim that a particular spot (is) the exact place of Ram's birth so many thousand years ago cannot be pushed beyond the eighteenth century at the most, after leaving a margin for the origin of the tradition and its incorportion into recorded history. The BJP is aware of this weakness and therefore, refuses to summon history to its defence and would not abide even by the Supreme Court's judgement;

Incidentally there are at least a dozen temples at Ayodhya each claiming to be the birth-place of Ram and each adducing popular tradition

(Contd. on page 171)

No Final Solution Except in Accordance with Rule of Law,

Editorial, The Times of India, 6 December, 1990.

...Mr. Chandra Shekhar, in his sincere eagerness to settle the bitter controversy in a spirit of consensus, may well cause irreparable damage to the fabric of the Indian state. The stakes in the dispute must not be lost sight of. These relate, first and foremost, to the state's constitutional duty to uphold the law. There is no indication so far that the VHP has budged an inch from its stated position on this score: it has gone on record again and again to argue that the dispute cannot be settled by any court since this is a matter which concerns faith and belief and not the due process of law.

To accept this position would be to undermine the very basis of our secular democracy. For, once the argument that in the public domain "faith" has a higher claim to acceptance than the Constitution and the laws of the land is deemed to be valid, its natural corollary is to admit that those who do not share that "faith" will for all times be relegated to the rank of second-grade citizens. This plain fact appears to have escaped the attention of those currently trying to resolve the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babari Masjid dispute. Indeed, instead of speeding up the judical process to determine the proprietary rights in the disputed area, the Chandra Shekhar government has let it be known that it will accept any decision reached in common by the contending parties. However, it should know that **any solution arrived at outside the courts and the democratic institutions would be bereft of legitimacy.** Indeed, the government has further compounded the problem by asking the two sides to adduce archaeological and historical evidence to buttress their case...

...Any attempt to give critical importance to archaeological evidence to settle contentious issues of "faith" would swiftly expose the country to the risk of relentless strife. It is in this light that the VHP's eagerness to "prove" that a Ram temple once stood in the place of the Babari Masjid can be understood all too readily. In large parts of the country one does not have to dig deep to discover "proof" of vandalism, greed and destruction. No state built on secular foundations can afford to tread this path. As it is the VHP has drawn up a list of some 3,000 mosques which it claims were built on the ruins of Hindu temples. It has left no one in doubt that its campaign in Ayodhya is but a first step to "recover" these sites. In its eyes no court, parliament and indeed no democracy can adjudicate in the matter. It will not allow any institution, rule or procedure which draws its sustenance from the secular Constitution stand in its way.

This is why the mass movement unleashed by the VHP and the BJP... needs to be understood for what it is: a deliberate and determined effort to whip up religious sentiments to ensure in the short term electoral gain for parties wedded to Hindutva and, in the long term, the establishment of a Hindu rashtra. What is to be done? The current efforts to arrive at a consensus can continue provided it is clearly understood that there can be no legitimate solution unless the courts pronounce the verdict on the original dispute. The issue also needs to be debated at length in Parliament if only to compel political parties to take a principled stand. And should all this fail the basic question whether or not matter of "faith" should be settled within the parameters of the country's secular Constitution and laws should be raised and settled in the final analysis in the elections. It is for the electorate to say whether it favours a "hard" or "soft" Hinduism, "majoritarianism" or "minorityism", an India consumed by atavistic passion or an India where the state defends citizens' fundamental rights regardless of their creed.

View of Historian S.A.I. Tirmizi

...The archaeological excavations have hitherto not provided incontrovertible evidence to prove that a Ram temple existed precisely at the disputed site and even if that is proved, there is no contemporary document or epigraphical evidence to prove that the said temple, was demolished by Babar...

...Ram's janmasthan... is commonly believed to be in Ayodhya. This belief continued to prevail in Akbar's time (1556-1605 AD). Abul Fazal tells us that Ayodhya (longitude 118.6' and latitude 27, 22) was in his days one of the largest cities in India. In ancient times it covered 148 kms in length and 38 kms in breadth. He adds that it was considered one of the holiest places of antiquity, believed to be the birthplce of Ram, who in the Treta age combined in his own person both the spiritual supremacy and the office of the king.

Abul Fazal further informs us that on the ninth of the light half in the month of Chaitra (March-April) a great religious festival was held at Ayodhya as the birth anniversary of Ram. This festival of Ramnavmi must have been celebrated in a temple which could not have been indentical with the disputed mosque. It was celebrated in Ram's temple, which obviously did co-exist with the disputed mosque in Ayodhya. this was in consonance with Akbar's policy of 'sulhikul' or universal peace.

It is in this historical context... that we should amicably resolve the Ayodhya dispute. This can best be achieved by constructing Ram's temple neither in front of nor about the mosque, but behind it, in such a way that the garbhagriha of the temple is adjacent to the mehrab of the mosque.

Eminent Historian R.S. Sharma Rebuts VHP Experts

...The VHP and its experts, particularly S.P. Gupta, have been trying to prove the presence of their imagined Rama temple at Ayodhya.

...When these people were encountered with incontrovertible evidence of the non-existence of such a 'Rama' temple, even the staunchest ideologues of the VHP shifted their stand. Now they argue for a comparably more general Vaishnav temple.

The VHP through manipulation of historical research, in pursuance of its claims, actually converts facts into propaganda.

When Prof. B.B. Lal conducted long and detailed excavations at Ayodhya, specifically to examine the Rama legend, his site notebooks failed to record the discovery (if any) of an 11th century temple.

No antiquities pointing to such a temple were listed with the register of antiquities which is maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India. This hypothetical temple was not mentioned in any published or unpublished archaeological report for the last decade and a half. What was the need for such a silence?

In any case... Buddhist monasteries far outnumbered the brah manical structures in Ayodhya during the seventh century.

...The VHP has pointed to the "vandalisation' of 125 images carved on the so-called Hindu pillars of the Babari Masjid.

The experts of the VHP have deliberately underplayed that **none of these images are directly related to Rama or even Vishnu.**

Sixty four of the images are yakshas and 48 are purnaghatas. The yakshas were attendants of Kubera who was attached to Mahadeva. Yaksha images are, therefore, associated with the Jains and Buddhists, not with the Vaishnava faith.

Purnaghatas (pitchers full of water) are a common motif found in the sculpture of the various brahmanical sects and eventually became a part of Indo-Islamic architecture. Thus, they appear in the Jama Masjid and Asafi Imambara pillars of Lucknow.

Again, the 'experts' of the VHP fail to draw our attention to the absence of motifs which are always elementary to the image of Vishnu. Any good Vaishnavite, or even a knowledgeable historian will inform them about the importance of the shankha (conch-shell), the chakra (wheel), the gada(mace) and the padma(lotus).

These are the very emblems of Vishnu. The presence of a vanamala on one pillar does not help the VHP' case because this garland is also the characteristic of Durga.

Garuda, the well-known vahana of Vishnu, does not appear anywhere on the pillars of the Babari Masjid...

...Why do the experts of the VHP not talk of the fact that no idol of Vishnu or any other brahmanical deity has been found in the Ayodhya explorations and excavations? Such idols definitely existed elsewhere in early medieval times.

...What does strike any lay person is the presence inside the Babari mosque of pillars carrying non-Islamic motifs. But this is no reason to conclude that **the pillars belonged to a structure which existed earlier on the same site.**

...In all probability, most of these pillars belonged to some Jain or Shaivite temple and were brought from various places to decorate the Babari Masjid.

Jain historians have gone on record to state that the black pillars used in the Babari Masjid seem to have been taken from the ruins of Jain temples.

Indeed, there are many instances of transportation of building material from one place to another even in pre-industrial India....

....This longstanding Indian practice .... and the complete absence of the evidence regarding the existence of any Rama temple at Ayodhya falsify the claim that the Babari Masjid replaced any pre-existing religious structure.

VIEWS OF ARIF MD. KHAN

I was kept totally in the dark about the government's efforts to solve the vexed problem. It was only when things reached a flashpoint that I was taken into confidence about the negotiations the government had hold with the leaders of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Babari Masjid Action Committee (BMAC). Later I came to know that the Prime Minister was afraid that if I am associated with the negotiations in any capacity then some of the leaders of the BMAC on whom the Prime Minister was relying for a solution would not take it kindly. I had a feeling right from the beginning that the communal leaders were not interested in solving the problem, for it gave them a lever to influence the political leadership and the government.

By associating the VHP and BMAC leaders in the negotiations, the government gave them a chance to interfere in politics, ask for some seats in the Rajya Sabha, or tickets for assemblies or the Lok Sabha. The gameplan of these communal leaders was to make the political leadership more and more dependent on them

Mr. Javed Habib (the spokesman of the BMAC)... negotiated nomination to the Minority Commission as its member in lieu of a proposal acceptable to both the parties.

I have been of the view that a dispute of this nature can be solved by constitutional provisions. Our constitution is a very comprehensive document... The supremacy of the judiciary cannot be negotiated...

(Source : The Times of India, New Delhi, 25 February, 1991)

Supreme Court on Rights of Domiciliary Beedi Workers

Rajangam, Secretary Distt. Beedi Workers Union, Petitioner v. State of Tamil Nadu and others, Respondents.

Factories Act (1948), Section 2(m) — Benefit of social legislations to bidi rollers — 95% of bidis actually rolled outside real factory — Benefits available under Act are available to those who do rolling of bidis in their own residence — Written schemes invited from Union and State Government for suggesting remedial measures to be taken to meet evils.

Ranganath Misra, C.J. and M.H. Kanta, J.

ORDER :

On the basis of a letter addressed to the Court Writ Petition No. 1262 of 1987 was registered as an application under Article 32 of the Constitution. Thereafter, the other petitions have been registered. The main grievance raised in the writ petitions is that while the bulk of the manufacturing process of bidis is carried outside the factories by women and children in their respective residence, with the raw materials supplied by the factory owners and the manufactured bidis are collected by them, the actual rollers are not being paid their legitimate dues and have been deprived of sharing the several benefits provided by beneficial statutes and employment contrary to law is being tolerated and no attention is being devoted in enforcing the statutory provisions...

...The defects which have been summarised... are mainly the following :—

1. The prevailing practice is that the passbook is opened in the name of the head of the family and the names of actual persons engaged in the manufacturing process are not recorded.
2. The Provident Funds Act is not at all implemented.
3. The wages paid are below the minimum rate of wages.
4. Children are employed which is against the spirit of the Constitution and is contrary to provisions of the Bidis and Cigars Act.
5. The wages earned by the rollers/manufacturers of bidis are shared between those involved in the process and the contractors.
6. There is no implementation of the payment of Bonus Act.
7. Maternity benefit is not extended.
8. Inadequate material is supplied but when there is shortfall the liability is saddled on the rollers.
9. There is improper maintenance of registers etc.
10. The denial of family pension.
11. The reduction of the production is arbitrarily done.

...The Acts which are relied upon or referred to are Central Acts intended to benefit the workers. It is not in dispute that about 95% of the bidis is actually rolled outside the real factory. This Court as early as 1958 in "Chintaman Rao v. State of Madhya Pradesh... (AIR 1958 SC 388) indicated that the law relating to factory has to be extended to the place where manufacturing process, outside the factory, is carried on. The net effect of that position is that the benefit available under the Factories Act are available to those who are concerned with the manufacturing process even in their own residences for rolling of bidis.

The Commission has found that those who are engaged in the manufacturing process are exposed to health hazards.

There can be no doubt that both the Central and the State Governments have failed to effectively implement the laws and regulations so as to provide benefits to the actual manufacturers. We have discussed the matter with counsel in Court and we are adjourning the matter for eight weeks to enable the Union of India, the State Government, Counsel for the employers and the petitioners to place before us written schemes, keeping in view the defects indicated and summarised above, for suggesting remedial measures to be taken to meet these evils...

(Source : AIR 1991 Supreme Court 216)

SUPREME COURT ON LIABILITY OF GIFT FOR ESTATE DUTY

Jameela Begum, Appellant v. The Controller of Estate Duty, Madras, Respondent.

Estate Duty—Gift by a Mohamedan — Condition of Payment of Income to him during his lifetime and thereafter to his wife during her lifetime—On her death corresponding benefit created to beneficiary—Interest of beneficiary amounted to property and it must be deemed to have passed on him for purpose of Estate Duty.

K.N. Saikia and M. Fathima Beevi JJ.

Mohamedan Law makes a distinction between the corpus of a gift (Ayn) and the usufruct (manafi). A reservation of rights in manafi so long as the ayn is transferred does not render the gift bad.

Stipulations in the settlement by a Mohamedan in the instant case revealed that the settlement conferred absolute right, title and interest in the property on the beneficiary subject to the only obligation of payment of the income from the property to the settler during his lifetime and after his death to his wife, mother of the beneficiary during her lifetime. The settlement and the condition being thus valid and wife of settler having had a change on the property for realisation of the income only she should be taken to have had interest in the property which ceased on her death, and cor-

M.P. HIGH COURT ON DELIVERY OF GIFT

Dr. Y.S. Chen, Appellant v. Batulbai, Respondent.

...Muslim Law — Gift — Question of delivery of possession of subject to donee — Gift of suit house made in favour of plaintiff by her mother — Tenant paying rent to plaintiff and recognised her as landlady — Tenant, being a stranger cannot challenge validity of gift on question of possession.

According to Mohammedan Law the question whether possession of subject of gift has been delivered by the donor to the donee is relevant only when an issue is raised between the donor or those claiming under him on one side, and the donee or those claiming under him on the other. As stranger cannot invoke the rule that gift is bad because there has been delivery of possession. Thus, where suit house was gifted to plaintiff by her mother and defendant/-tenant had been paying rent to the plaintiff and recognised the plaintiff as his landlady, objection as to validity of gift could not be raised by tenant on question of possession. ...'

(Source : AIR 1991 Madhya Pradesh 90)

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responding benefit created to the accountable person i.e. the beneficiary. The interest of the beneficiary amounted to property as defined in the Estate Duty Act and it must be deemed to have passed under Section 6 of the Act on her death.

(Source : AIR 1991 Supreme Court 414)

THUS SAID AMBEDKAR

...Every Hindu and every Mahomedan is born in a certain caste or a community... We are brought up and bred up in a communal environment. We share the aspirations and the ambitions of that community; we feel the disabilities of that community and consequently... every member in this House as well as outside is bound to look at every question consciously or unconsciously from a communal point of view.

GUWAHATI HIGH COURT ON PORPOSE WAKFS

Fazal Sheikh and others, Appellants v. Abdul Rahman Mea and others, Respondents.

...Wakf Act (1954), Section 3(1) — Wakf — Validity — Income of Wakf to be used for welfare work 'permitted by shariat' — Wakf not void for vagueness of object...

DR. B.P. SARAF, J.

What is necessary for a valid wakf is that the purpose of the Wakf must be one recognised by Mahomedan law as 'religious, pious and charitable'. A person who dedicates his property by way of Wakf, may, instead of enumerating the objects for which the income of Wakf may be used, provide that it may be used for any welfare works permitted by the Shariat, that is, the Mohamedan law. Such provision, is absolutely clear and there is not vagueness or uncertainty in it.... If the object would have been described as 'welfare works' without the rider 'permitted by Shariat', it could have been contended that 'welfare works' as commonly understood might even include the works which are prohibited by Islam and in that event the object could have been challenged as vague...'

...Mutawalli — Person who manages wakf property....

A Mutawalli is like a manager rather than a trustee. So far as the wakf property is concerned, he has to see that the beneficiaries get the advantage of the usufruct. The position of a Mutawalli is more analogous to that of a manager or a receiver. His position is distinguishable from that of a trustee. The wakf property itself never gets transferred to the Mutawalli. He has control over the usufruct alone and has to see that it is used for the objects of the wakf in accordance with the desire of the wakif. A person who manages the wakf property is to be treated as a Mutawalli....

...Mutawalli — Appointment of — Mutawalli can be appointed by a committee. **(Source : AIR 1991 Gauhati 17)**

HINDU CUSTOM OVER-RIDES COMMUN CIVIL LODE IN THE SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT, 1954

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

(b) "degrees of prohibited relationship" — a man and any of the persons mentioned in Part I of the First Schedule and a woman and any of the persons mentioned in Part II of the said Schedule are within the degrees of prohibited relationship.

Explanation I —Relationship includes—

(a) relationship by half or uterine blood as well as by full blood;

(b) illegitimate blood relationship as well as legitimate;

(c) relationship by adoption as well as by blood;

and all terms of relationship in this Act shall be construed accordingly.

Explanation II— "Full blood" and "half blood" — two persons are said to be related to each other by full blood when they are descended from a common ancestor by the same wife and by half blood when they are descended from a common ancestor but by different wives.

Explanation III— "Uterine blood" —two persons are said to be related to each other by uterine blood when they are descended from a common ancestress but by different husbands.

4. Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force relating to the solemnization of marriages, a marriage between any two persons may be solemnized under this Act, if at the time of the marriage the following conditions are fulfilled, namely:-

(d) the parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship:

Provided that where custom governing at least one of the parties permits of a marriage between them, such marriage may be solemnized, notwithstanding that they are within the degrees of prohibited relationship.... (emphasis added)

Whenever Ruling Classes take up Arms against Liberty Foreign Rule is Evil; to Destroy Evil is My Religious Duty; To Oppose Violence with Violence Accords with Law of

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's Historic Statement Before the Court

"This is a place in which there is for[1] us no hope, no demand, and no grievance of any sort. This is a turn, without passing through which, we cannot reach our goal.

"Non-Cooperation[3] is essentially the result of absolute desperation at existing circumstances.... I want to make it quite distinct that the term Non-Cooperation applies only to the Government, its administrative system and its executive and political principles and not to any persons or individuals.

"History bears ample testimony to the fact that whenever a ruling authority has taken up arms against liberty and truth, courts of justice have lent themselves admirably to purposes of a most facile and unfailing weapon for the practice of such inequity. The authority of the law courts is a power which can be used equally to do justice and to perpetuate injustice. In the hands of an equitable Government no weapon is deadlier than these for purposes of revenge and inequity. No pure-minded and truth-loving section of humanity can be found, including even the inventors and savants of science, which has not some time or other stood in the dock before a court of law...

"The inequities of courts of law constitute an endless list and history has not yet finished singing the elegy of such miscarriages of justice. In that list we observe a holy personage like Jesus who had to stand in his time before a foreign court, convicted even as the worst of criminals. We see also in the same list Socrates who was sentenced to be poisoned for no other crime than that of being the most truthful person of his age. We meet also the name of the great Florentine martyr to truth, the inventor Galileo, who refused to belie his observations and researches merely because their avowal was a crime in the eyes of constituted authority... When I ponder on the great and significant history of the convicts' dock and find that the honour of standing in that place belongs to me to-day, my soul becomes steeped in thankfulness and praise of God[4]..

"In the natural course of things such dominant authority cannot possibly countenance any nationalistic awakening or agitations for progress, reform or justice. And as such agitation would spell the inevitable downfall of its dominant power, it seeks to kill all agitation by declaring it a crime against constituted authority. No power would tamely submit to movements likely to bring about its own decline, however much such decline might be in the ultimate interests of justice. This posture of affairs is merely a struggle for existence in which both sides fight desperately for their principles. An awakened nation aspires to attain what it considers its birthright and the dominant authority would fain not budge an inch from its position of unquestioned sway. The contention might almost be advanced that the latter party even like its opponents is not open to any blame in as much as it is merely putting up a fight for its own survival and it is quite an incidental matter that its existence happens to be inimical to perpetuation of justice. We cannot deny facts of human nature and its inseparable characteristics. Like good, evil also desires to live in this world and struggle for its own existence.

"Most certainly, therefore, nothing can be a higher crime against the domination of Government, as at present established, than the agitation which seeks to terminate its unlimited authority in the name of liberty and justice.

"The history of politics teaches us that foolishness and recklessness of consequences are always the companions of a decadent power.... Repression when practised against national awakening is no fatal thing for a nation but instead breathes new life into it.

"According to my belief it is my duty to speak out at the present moment and I cannot fall short of the full performance of my duty, just because it might be construed into a crime... Most certainly I have stated that the present Government is oppressive. If I do not say this, what else am I to say? I fail to understand why it should be expected of me that I should call things by any but their right names. I refuse absolutely to call black white... I have certainly been asserting that only two paths are open to us in this matter of our duty. The Government has to refrain from all this inequity and deprivation of liberty; or if it cannot bring itself to do so, it has to be wiped off... I believe in the evil of the present Government most assuredly.

"Now what is the reason that such is the firm belief of myself... this faith of mine exists because I am an Indian, because I am a Muslim and, first and last, because I am a man.

"It is my belief that liberty is the natural and God-given right of man.

and Truth, Courts of Justice Turn into Engines of Iniquity I Demand Freedom as an Indian, as a Muslim and as a Man. Nature but India shall Liberate itself through Non-Violence

of the Metropolitan Magistrate, Calcutta, February 1922

No man and no bureaucracy consisting of men has got the right to make the servants of God its own slaves. However attractive be the euphemism invented for 'subjugation' and 'slavery', still slavery is slavery and it is opposed to the will and to the canons of God. I therefore do not consider the bureaucracy of india to be a legitimate sovereign and I consider it a bounded duty to liberate country from its yoke. The notorious fallacies of 'Reform' and 'gradual transfer of power' can produce no illusions and pitfalls in my unequivocal and definite faith. Liberty being the primary right of man, it is nobody's personal privilege to prescribe limits or apportion shares in the distribution of it. To say that a nation should get its liberty in graduated stages is the same as saying that an owner should by right receive his property only in bits and a creditor his dues by instalments.... Whatever philanthrophic acts might be performed by a man who has usurped our property, his usurpation would still continue to be utterly illegal.

"Evil cannot be classified into good and bad. All that is in fairness possible is to fix its gradations with respect to quality. We can say very heinous robbery and less heinous robbery, but who can speak of good robbery and bad robbery?

"Such is my duty as a man and as an Indian and religious injunctions have also taught me the same lesson. In fact in my view the greatest proof of the truth of **my religion is that it is another name for the teaching of the rights of man. I am a Muslim and by virtue of being a Muslim this has become my religious duty. Islam never accepts as valid a sovereignty which is personal or is constituted of a bureaucracy of a handful of paid executive. Islam constitutes a perfected system of freedom and democracy. It has been sent down to get back for the human race the liberty which has been snatched away from it.** Monarchs, foreign domination, selfish religious pontiffs and powerful sections had alike misappropriated ths liberty of man. They had been fondly nursing the belief that power and possession spell the highest right. Might is not might but right itself. No one except God has got the right. The moment Islam appeared it proclaimed that the highest right is not might but right itself. No one except God has got the right to make serfs and slaves of God's creatures. All men are equal and their fundamental rights are on a par. He only is greater than others, whose deeds are the most righteous of all....

"The sovereignty of the Prophet of Islam and of the Khalif was a perfected conception of democratic equality and it only could take shape with whole nation's free will, unity, suffrage and election. This is the reason why the sovereign or president of a republic is like a designated Khalif; Khilafat literally means nothing more nor less than a representation; so that all the authority a Khalif possesses consists in his representative character and he possesses no domination beyond this representative authority.

"If then Islam defines it as a duty of Muslims to refuse to acknowledge the moral justification even of an Islamic Government, if full play is not granted in it to the will and franchise of the nation, it is perfectly superfluous to add what under Islam would be the ruling given about a foreign burcaucracy. **If to-day there was to be established in India an Islamic Government but if the system of that government was based upon personal monarchy or upon bureaucratic oligarchy, then to protest against the existence of such a Government would still be my primary duty as a Muslim.** I would still call the Government oppressive and demand its replacement.

"I frankly confess that this original conception of Islamic sovereignty could not be uniformly maintained in its primal purity on account of the selfishness and personal domineering of the later Muslim sovereigns.

No period of the dynastic sovereignties of Islam has however failed to produce some true Muslim martyrs who have made public declarations of the tyrannies and transgressions of such monarchies and had joyfuly and triumphantly suffered all miseries and hardships which inevitably confronted them in the thorny paths of duty.

"The holy prophet of Islam has preached the following doctrine to the Muslims: 'The man is blessed with the best of deaths who proclaims the truth in the face of a tyrannical administration and is slaughtered in punishment of this deed.' Scripture of Islam, the Holy Quran, defines the greatest attribute of the true Muslims to be 'that they fear not any being except God and whatever they consider to be the truth, they reck not any authority in the public proclamation of such truth.' The Quran further defines the

national characteristics of the Muslim as follows: 'They are the witnesses to truth on God's earth.' As long therefore, as they continue to be Muslims they can not desist from giving this public evidence. In fact it has designated Muslims as witnesses i.e. givers of the evidence of truth. When the Prophet of Islam extracted a promise of righteousness from any person, one of the clauses of such a bond used to be. **'I will always proclaim the truth in whatever condition and wherever I may happen to be.'...**

"I know there is still living in India many a Muslim who through his weakness pays homage to this very tyranny. But the failure of man to act up to the spirit of certain tenets can not belie the intrinsic truth of those principles.

"The tenets of Islam are preserved in its scriptures. These under no circumstances make it permissible for Muslims to enjoy life at the expense of liberty. A true Muslim has either to immolae himself or to retain his liberty; no other course is open for him under his religion.

To-day the Muslims have come to a firm decision that in freeing their country from its slavery they will take their fullest share along with their Hindu, Sikh, Parsi and Christian brethren... It is now their belief that to expect any justice from the British Government would be nothing but pure self-deception so that if they really aspire to obtain justice there is only one single avenue leading to it which is the attainment of Swaraj--meaning the Government of India for India and by the Indians themselves. [4] In short on these points my admissions have ever been absolutely clear and unequivocal.

"The present Government is a most illegitimate form of bureaucracy. It is openly spurning the wishes and aspirations of millions of humanity. It has always given the preference over justice to prestige... Does tyranny acquire a right to be given a different name simply because it happens to be powerful.

"In this war of liberty and justice, I have adopted the path of non-violent non-cooperation. Opposed to us stands an authority armed with the complete equipment for oppression, excess and bloodshed. But we place our reliance and trust, next to God, only on our own limitless power of sacrifice and unshakeable fortitude.

"Unlike Mahatma Gandhi, my belief is not that armed force should never be opposed by armed force. It is my belief that such opposing of violence with violence is fully harmony with the natural laws of God in those circumstances under which Islam permits the use of such violence[1]. But at the same time for purpose of liberation of India at the present agitation. I entirely agree with all the arguments of Mahatma Gandhi. It is my definite conviction that India cannot attain success by means of arms nor is it advisable for it to adopt that course. India can only triumph through non-violent agitation and India's triumph will be a memorable example of the victory of moral force.

Power is not normally prone to admit facts just because they are logical and proved. As a matter of fact it waits for the emergence of a counter-strength and when this does present itself, it bows its head down before the most improper demand.

(Source : Trranslation of Urdu Text 'Qaul-e-Faisal' from Selected Works of Motilal Nehru, Vol. 3, Appendix XIII)

NANAJI DESHMUKH ON THEAYODHYA DISPUTE & SEULARISM

...Religion should not be brought into politics.

The Ram Janmabhoomi (Babari Masjid) issue, in my opinion, is altogether different. It's not a religious issue. Babar was not a religious man. He was an invader. So, the Babari Masjid is nothing but the symbol of an aggressor's victory and the humiliation of national forces.... The Babari Masjid has nothing to do with religion... since long namaz has not been offered there

...Moreover, Ram was never a religious person. He was not rishi or a guru. He was practically a hero of thenation; he stood for the unity of the nation... Ram was a unifying force. No only that. He had an ideal. And what ideal was it? He preferred to go to the jungles for 14 years instead of getting enthroned as the king... In fighting all the rakshasas Ram never requested Bharat to send the army. He mobilised people to fight them out.

When he defeated Bali, he did not acquire the kingdom for himself. He gave it to Sugriv. Similarly, upon conquering Ravana's rich kingdom, he handed it over to Vibhishan... This political approach (epitomised by Ram) is mot relevant to the present day world.

...His temple cannot be called a religious temple because his whole life was that of a hero, a politician.

...Ram was not only a Hindu... Hinduism is a cultural and a geographical phenomenon... Its not a way of worship...

...Only Hinduism is secular... The whole problem is that the Muslims are not ready to tolerate any other religion. That's the creed of the Muslims: **We shall have to change.** It cannot be done by politicians having secular ideas which led to the division of India on the basis of religion....

In Kashmir, 62 temples have been damaged in the last five years without a voice being raised against it by any secularist. But all of them are quite agitated over the Babari Masjid. Similarly, the names of more than 1000 polaces (in Kashmir) have been changed into Muslim names and that has been gazetted by these people. (Still) they say that they are secularists. In my opinion, they are not at all secular...

(Source : The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 10 March, 1991)

Polygamy in India and its Effect on Rate of Growth

Malika B. Mistry, Pune

....(This article) examines Hindu-Muslim differentials in polygamy... (and) also.... whether practice of polygamy can really lead to a higher growth of a community by way of higher fertility.

Polygamy actually means having more than one wife or one husband at a time. Having more than one wife is called polygamy where as having more than one husband is called polyandry.... There is no evidence of practice of polyandry either among Indian Muslims or Muslim communities in other countries.

Polygamy exists among both Hindus and Muslims. Among Hindus it has no legal sanction but has social sanction. In the past a few studies were conducted to know the extent of polygamy among different communities. According to the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1975, pp. 66-67), during the decades 1931-41, 1941-51 and 1951-61, the percentage of polygynous marriages among Hindus was 6.79, 7.15 and 5.06. The corresponding percentage for Muslims was 7.29, 7.06 and 4.31 and among Tribals 9.53, 17.53 and 17.98. **Thus polygamy was the highest among tribals and for the later two decades, it was lower for Muslims than for Hindus.** Also the incidence of polygynous marriages has been declining among both communities. Another survey conducted by the Census authorities in 1961 reveals that the incidence of polygynous marriages was found to be highest among the tribal communities (15-25 percent), Buddhists 7.97 per cent, Jains 6.72 per cent, Hindus' 5.8 per cent and Muslims 5.7 per cent. Thus incidence of polygynous marriages was about the same for both communities....

What have demographers to say about the effect of polygamy of fertility? K.C. Seal and P.P. Talwar in their article "Impact of Polygynous Marriages on Fertility in India" in the book Studies on Population and Family Planning in India (1974, pp. 111-114) argue that in polygynous marriages fertility rates are expected to be **lower** as compared to monogamous marriages for the following reasons: The number of coiti which a man can have remain almost unchanged whether he has one wife or more than one; If the coiti are randomly distributed over the menstrual cycle of a woman, a fixed number of coiti per man is likely to lead to higher chance of fertilizing a woman in case of one wife compared to the case of more than one wife, depending on their ovulatory cycles; Death of a man in a polygynous marriage prevents reproduction among more than one woman for a period... From a study of fertility of polygynous marriages in urban India, Kanti Pakrasi in his article "Marriage System and Its Impact on Family Formation and Family Planning" in the report Recent Population Trends in South Asia, Proceedings of the Conference, New Delhi, 1983, (pp. 357-369), observed that the polygynous couples in general had lower rate of live births than what is shown by the total couples surveyed in urban India. From the point of view of fertility differentials polygyny is not important because the proportion of women marrying into polygynous marriages is minute. Caldwell in the journal Population and Development Review (June, p. 201) states: "In polygynous societies in Eurasia, the proportion of marriages with multiple wives is usually no more than three to four per cent, evidencing either the husband's unusual wealth or position or the infecundity of the first wife"..

Pakrasi observed that "in the selection of second wives, the Muslims depend more on relatively aged women and this should have its due effect on reproductive achievements of their second wives. On the other hand, Hindu polygynists are noted to prefer very young wives below 15 years in age in both first and second marriages relatively more strongly than the Muslims. In comparison to the Hindu polygynists the Muslim males with first wives only maintained the highest average of children born alive, but with second wives, they yielded the lower average. The Hindu polygynists produced through their second wives distinctly more live births on the average than their Muslim counterparts. Polygynous form of mating does not appear to be an essential prerequisite to invest the distinction of superior 'fertility' with Muslims of India.

Thus it is very clear that the extent of polygyny among Muslims is either same or less than among Hindus and secondly **due to polygyny the Muslim population growth cannot be higher than the Hindu population growth.**

(Contd from page 163)

for legitimising the claim!

Anyway, since the nineteenth century, despite occasional disputes, Hindus and Muslims had been say- and the adjacent mosque respectively. It was on December 22, 1949 at midnight that, according to an FIR lodged by Police Sub-Inspector Ram Dube of the Ayodhya Police Station, a group of 50 or 60 persons entered the Babari mosque and 'established there in an idol of Shri Bhagwan and painted "Sita Ram" on the walls. The (doors) to the... mosque were then locked by the administration. Rajive Gandhi had the locks opened in 1986.

... What actually is happening, however, is parrot-like reiteration of slogans that carry no conviction in any dispassionate quarters. BJP has latched itself on the issue which had remained a non-issue ever since its origin at the most two centuries ago.

Jayaprakash Narayan on Kashmir Problem

The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, 20 April, 1964

The story of Kashmir is an account of confused aims, unsure methods, insincere ideals. From the beginning, Kashmir has been the Prime Minister's concern....

After 11 years of dilly dallying the Sheikh was at last released. But again there seems to be no well-thought-out policy behind that belated decision. Surprise and pain have been expressed at Sheikh Saheb's statements.... Sheikh Abdullah has said nothing that was not expected from him...

What, after all, is the substance of Sheikh Abdullah's statements? This, that the future of Kashmir has to be decided by the people of Kashmir, and that it has to be done in a manner that the dispute about it between India and Pakistan is amicably ended. // What actually is happening, however, is parrot-like reiteration of slogans that carry no conviction in any dispassionate quarters.

One of these slogans is that the accession of Kashmir to India is final and irrevocable. The Sheikh has questioned that, and it is for impartial lawyers to decide the issue. But the vital point to keep in mind is that it is not by legal advocacy that a human problem like that of Kashmir can ever be settled. Indeed, it was such realisation that had prompted promised of the Prime Minister to ascertain the wishes of the people.

At this point, two further slogans are raised: (a) the people of Kashmir has already expressed their will at three general elections; (b) if the people of Kashmir are allowed to express their will, it will be the beginning of the end of the Indian nation.

Both, to my mind, are baseless slogans. The elections in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest were neither fair nor free...

I may be lacking in patriotism or other virtues, but it has always seemed to me to be a lie to say that the people of Kashmir had already decided to integrate themselves with India. They might do so, but have not done so yet. Apart from the quality of the elections, the future of the state of Jammu and Kashmir was never made an electoral issue at any of them...

Lastly, if we are so sure of the verdict of the people, why are we so opposed to giving them another opportunity to reiterate it? The answer given is that this would start the process of disintegration of the country. Few things have been said in the course of this controversy more silly than this one. the assumption behind the argument is that the states of India are held together by force and not by the sentiment of a common nationality. **It is an assumption that makes a mockery of the Indian nation and a tyrant of the Indian state.**

Threats have been held out that should Sheikh Abdullah misbehave, the law would take its course. The law had taken its course. The law had taken its course for eleven years and the issue remained unsettled. It is not likely to achieve more in the future. It is remarkable how the freedom-fighters of yesterday begin so easily to imitate the language of the imperialists.

The last and final slogan raised in the ballyhoo is that there is no Kashmir question at all, and that if there was one at any time, it has now been settled once for all. Kashmir is a part of India and that is a fact of history, they say. That, I think, is the worst form of auto-suggestion.

The slogan-raisers forget that less than half of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is under the occupation of Pakistan. Has that been accepted as settled fact? If so, when and where? If not, how is the issue of Kashmir settled, except in the private thoughts of those who believe that "we shall keep what we have." and "they shall keep what they have."

Secondly, the issue is still pending before the Security Council and U.N. observers are still posted in Kashmir.

Thirdly, here is a leader of the stature of Sheikh Abdullah who clearly states that the issue has yet to be settled.

Therefore, as a humble servant of this country, I plead earnestly that instead of trying to take shelter in a fool's paradise of our own making, let us have the courage to face facts and deal with them on the basis of the ideals and fundamental principles that guided our freedom movement... Sheikh Abdullah has not said anything that shuts the door to a reasoned and amicable settlement.... He has indicated that a plebiscite need not be the only way of ascertaining the people's wishes and has mentioned free and fair elections an one method. That is not a stand that does not provide a meeting ground for India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

...Neither India nor Pakistan can live and grow unless there is friendship and cooperation between them. The lack of such relationship between them has, among other things, upset the power balance in South and South East Asia, **depriving the sub-continent of the role that history and geography had destined it to play. The result was the tilting of the balance in favour of China—a most unhealthy state of affairs.**

The Kashmir question has to be viewed in this broad perspective.

The question whether settlement of the Kashmir problem would establish friendship between India and Pakistan may be debated, but it cannot be denied that it will go a long way towards that goal, as also create international conditions that will necessarily promote that friendship.

Ramamurti Committee's Report on National Policy of Education — Relating to Urdu

Article 350-A : Instruction in the Mother Tongue — Problem of the Urdu Speaking People and Development of Urdu.

Urdu occupies the sixth position among the languages of India in terms of the number of those who speak this language. According to 1981 census, the number of Urdu-speakers is 35 million constituting 5.34% of the total population of India.

Urdu is an indigenous language and is widely spoken by all sections of Indian people belonging to all faiths, castes and creeds. It belongs to the whole country and has an inter-state character. It is not the concern of any one State or community. The responsibility for its development already stands shared by the responsibility for its development already stands shared by the Central Government.

The Government of India appointed a Committee in 1972 under the chairmanship of Shri I.K. Gujral, the then Minister of State for Works and Housing for the promotion of Urdu. The Committee sub mitted its report in 1975. Over the years, there has been persistent public demand to implement the recommendations of the Gujral Committee particularly giving Urdu its due place in education. Early in 1990, the Government appointed a Committee of Experts under the Chairmanship of of Shri Ali Sardar Jagri, to examine implementation of Gujral Committee recommendations. (This NPE Review Committee has had interaction with the Jafri Committee). One of the major recommendations of Gujral Committee which has been accepted by the Jafri Committee, is the provision for adequate safeguards for the Urdu linguistic minority at the primary and secondary levels of education.

Keeping in view the need for imparting instruction in the mother tongue at the primary level to all the linguistic minorities and in the light of interactions with the Ali Sardar Jafri Committee, it is recommended that arrangements for the purpose of teaching in the mother tongue of the minorities should be as follows:—

Primary level

(A) The Education Department of the State Governments, Union Territories and the Local Authorities should, in the light of Article 350-A of the Constitution, make necessary arrangements for teaching in minority language at the primary stage for the benefit of those who claim it as their mother tongue. A Committee to monitor the implementation of these constitutional commitments may be sent up in the concerned States with the Chief Ministers as Chairmen.

(B) In substitution of * 10 : 40 formula :

a) where in an area speakers of minority language constitute 10% or more of the total population, one or more minority language medium primary schools should be set up according to need. Such schools need not be exclusively of one medium. Efforts should be made to keep all students at the same school to avoid segregation irrespective of their mother-tongue.

b) in an area where minority language speaking people constitute less than 10% of the total population, a minority language teacher should be provided in such schools as are likely to get a minimum of 10 minority language speaking students:

c) for immediate purposes, bilingual teachers may be appointed in schools mentioned in (b) above. The existing teachers in such schools may also be given incentives to learn minority languages additionally.

Secondary Level

In substitution of ** 15-60 Formula:

a) it should be presumed that two third of the students leaving primary schools would be desirous of moving on to the next state of eduction. Minority language medium sections in the existing secondary schools should be provided on this basis and minority language knowing teachers should be appointed in anticipation of students offering minority language as medium. The emphasis should be on students studying through different media in the same schools;

b) in the case of higher secondary schools in cities having concentration of minority language speakers, one minority language medium higher secondary school should be opened for every group of 8 to 10 primary schools;

c) the State Government should help in raising the standard of teaching in such minority medium higher secondary schools as are run by linguistic minorities themselves;

d) the pre-conditions, if any, for permitting the setting up of minority language medium higher secondary schools and sections privately should be relaxed in

favour of the concerned linguistic minority setting up such schools or sections, and the procedure so simplified that the required permission would be granted within two months of the date of application;

e) the facility of minority language medium secondary schools should, as proposed in the case of primary education, be provided wherever the minority language speaking population of an area constitutes 10% of the popultion. **The Jafri Committee has also recommended that the status of the Bureau for Promotion of Urdu should be changed from that of a subordinate office to an autonomous organisation in order to arm it with functional freedom and enhanced financial powers. This Committee supports this recommendation as well, consistent with its approach that academic bodies should be independent of the rigidities of the subordinate offices of the Government of India.**

* The 10:40 Formula envisages provision of facilities for teaching in the medium of the mother tongue at the primary stage where there is a minimum of 10 students in a class or 40 in a school as a whole.

** The 15:60 Formula seeks to provide facilities for teaching through the medium of the mother tongue, at the secondary stage where there is a minimum of 15 students in a class or 60 in a school as a whole.

47 FREEDOM FIGHTERS' APPEAL,
19 Dec. 1991

47 freedom fighters on the occasion of the anniversary of martyrdom of Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Roshan Singh and Rajen Lahiry.

"We, the undersigned freedom fighters, express our deep concern over the ever expanding flame of communal violence. Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar witness of triumph of communal forces very often masquerading as a national party. The diabolic and sinister conspiracy to spread the communal fire manifests itself in organising rapid and wide circulation of highly explosive video cassettes to inflame public emotion with the only purpose of motivating aggressive action, threatening the life and property of a particular community in the name of religion.

We earnestly draw the attention of the leaders of political parties both at the Centre and the States to take the necessary drastic legal and political action to stem the tide of the massive advance of the destabilising forces to be followed up by corresponding mass action.

Santimoy Rai	Bijan Banerjee	Bangeshwar Roy
Sitanshu Datta Ray	S.R. Ghatak	Mohan Chattopadhyay
Pramatha Gupta	Prabodh R. Sen	Gokul Goswami
Adhir Banerjee	Santosh Ganguly	Lala Jan Khan
Phulrenu Guha	Prafulla Gupta	K.P. Ghosh

and 32 others.

STATISTICS,
GANJ DUNDWARA, ETAH, UP
December 1990

No. of lives lost	: 39
of whom Muslims	: 30
No. of Houses & Shops burnt	: 122
of whom Muslims	: Nearly all
No. of families receiving ex-gratia payment of Rs. 1 lakh each	: 8
of whom Muslims	: 3

(Source: Report of Jamaat-e-Islami-Hind, UP Circle)

VIEWS OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION

The US Administration finds the extent of communal violence in recent months in India deeply troubling...

...The democratic tradition was well-established in the country and there was no need for concern over the future of India's democracy.

However, in a deeper sense, a lot of basic premises were under stress. **The events in Ayodhya formed the first stress point in discussing the issue of secularism versus religious input in public afairs. In the past, the courts had been the accepted way to resolve such questions, but there was now a disposition in some quarters not to pay any attention to that process...**

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

BIJNOR,
October-Novermber 1990

No. of Muslims killed	77
No. of Muslim Houses looted	466
No. of Muslim Houses burnt	55
No. of Muslim Shops looted	388
No. of which burnt	102
No. of Kiosks etc looted	100
No. of which burnt	49
Estimated value of Property	Rs. 270 million

(Tress and Crops looted).

(Source ; Imarat-e-Sharia Bihar Report Courtesy: Naquib Weekly, Phulwari Sharief, 11 February, 1991)

KHURJA,
15 Dec. 1990 and 29 Jan.-5 Feb. '91

No. of Persons killed*	:	96
of whom Muslims	:	80
No. of Persons injured	:	50
of whom Muslims	:	49
No. of Places of worship damaged:		12
of whom Muslims	:	12
No. of Houses damaged	:	270
of whom Muslims	:	30
No. of shops damaged	:	226
of whom Muslims	:	225
No. of Pottery units damaged	:	30
of whom Muslims	:	30

* Not counting railway/bus passengers.

(Source : Mr. S.N. Khan, 66, Morcha Street, Khurja)

Communal Violence : The Hindu View

P.S. Yog in the Organiser, New Delhi, 13 January, 1991

Like many other dangers to the Indian State as established by its constitution, communal riots have also a political background which has not been properly comprehended and tackled...

...Scholars do not view increased tendency of offence against Hindus in riots **as a segregated phenomenon but as a part of an overall plan. What is that plan?**

Putting it bluntly, the plan is to convert India into an Islamic Sharia (State). The idea, and if we can say, so the ambition is not new. Its roots go deep into Islamic theology. Abdul Kalam Azad expressed it very concisely :—

"A country like India which has once been under the Muslim Rule must be conquered back to Islam."

Azad is not alone in this idea of religious obligation to convert India into Darul-Islam. The same idea has been voiced in different words from dozens of platforms and by dozens of Muslim leaders like Maududi, Madni.... Ajmal Khan,... Mohd. Ali and....Kichlu, etc. Every Muslim is bound by the tenets of his faith to exert his utmost in that effort.

Communal riots are an effort in that direction....

There can be no denial that in almost every case of Hindu/Muslim riot the first shots are fired by the Muslim rioters and the method of attack itself proves that they are carefully planned well in advance.

...The Government always fights shy of displeasing a particular section of Muslim leaders, remains complacent and some times even issues statements absolving the suspects even before enquiry.

The events that follow such riots are also always typically the same. The Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) comes in for strong criticism by the very people who had engineered the riots in the first instance. Demand is made generally by the minority community for its withdrawal. **The majority community who considers its safety entirely dependent upon the PAC, protests.**

Search for illegal arms and culprits named in FIRs is resisted very often by Burqa-clad women who also testify to all sorts of PAC atrocities...

With an eye on Muslim votes, the cry is taken up by the so called secular parties to embarrass the authorities. MPs and leaders of these parties visit areas where "innocent Muslims" vere supposed to have been massacred by the PAC. They overlook all requests of the majority community to visit localities where these "innocents" had played havoc to start with.

The Government, not to be outmanoeuvred, removes or replaces the PAC. The District Administration, first made impotent by political interference, is made the scapegoat and harassed...

Apart from the damage to the morale of PAC, and the administration, there is another more serious fall-out. The noise made by the opposition parties, the leaders of the rioters and the reaction of the Government make credible the propaganad launched by the communal Muslim organisations regarding atrocities, on 'innocent Muslims', particularly in the Muslim countries and others out to malign India. As a result these organisations and the people responsible for such riots are able to win international sympathy resulting in liberal, moral and iscal help.

The PAC have their own justified grievances. They say that they act only on magisterial orders. How is it that they are accused and not the officer ordering firing? .... In case of rioting they are ordered to fire on armed mobs bent on murder and arson. Hence, casualties must be from a particular community indulging in such acts... They are called upon to deal with rioting students, labourers and so many others. In these cases they are not accused of atrocities. How is it that while dealing with communal riots they suddenly became atrocious, barbarous and fiends...? The fact is that it is the very people, who were actively engaged in rioting, become their accusers. Being a Government force, they have no way to defend themselves from such unwarranted criticism.

A remedy worse than the disease is being suggested by the Muslim leadership, to which looking at the trend, the Government is likely to succumb. It is being suggested that a special riot force be created, with 50% of it being constituted of minority and scheduled and other backward classes.

Firstly, the proposal starts from the dangerous presumption that justice to a particular class of citizens can be expected only from that class of people...

Secondly, before a general decision in the matter is reached, it should be carefully established as to who are the people needing protection in case of a planned communal flare-up...Obviously if the aggression has mostly been started by, say community x, then it is the community attacked, say, y which needs protection.

...The other factor which will be relevant will be the number of casualties and wounded in each community excluding the victims of police firing. If a larger number belongs to x, then obviously it was the x community that needs protection and vice versa.

And last but not the least important shall be the statistics of arms recovered. The community found with a larger number of illegal arms would be the one presumed to have

(Contd. on page 190)

Ashwini Ray on Communal Violence and Communal Politics

Communal violence in India has been widely attributed to the general level of communal politics. Consequently, political prescriptions to fight such violence have centred around the need to propagate the virtues of secularism in a pluralistic society. This was to be reinforced by substantial intellectual inputs to underscore our secular history; the revision of textbooks on secular lines; and the encouragement of greater representation of the relatively under-represented communities in the public services through affirmative action.

But the effect of this package in the last four decades appears to be woefully inadequate and, arguably, counter-productive... Hence the need for possible alternative explanations.

The direct casual nexus between communal political and communal violence—both often associated with secessionist proclivities in India—appears to be a historical generalisation rooted more specifically in the politics of partition; the unresolved Kashmir dispute.... reinforced... by political trends in Punjab and Kashmir in more recent times...

But empirically, in the post-partition era, there is a case for sharp distinction to be made between communal politics and communal violence, as also that between the two phenomena and secessionist politics per se, both conceptually and operationally.

....Evidence suggests that the stereotyped generalisation based on the casual nexs between communal politics and/or communal violence with secessionist politics could be a case of over-determination from limited and selective evidence...

At the macro-level, post-partition Indian politics till the mid-1960s, present two different trends: in the former phase, communal politics was not accompanied by any significant level of communal violence, while in the latter phase, both tend to dialectically reinforce each other....

Studies in Indian politics also indicate a sharp increase in the general level of social and political violence in the country from about the mid-1960s, along with an increasing accretion in the strength of the coercive machinery of the state—like the police, para-military agencies, intelligence outfits and repressive legislation—indicating the increasing weakness in the democratic instruments of conflict-resolution. The emergency, in the mid-1970s, has further reinforced the vicious circle of repression, violence, and the atrophy of the democratic institutions irreversibly in many ways. In other words, empirically, the general level of violence in the polity—both at the societal as well as at the state plane—has been the critical variable determining the level of communal violence.

..Then measures against communal violence should be more pointedly directed at reducing the level of violence in the polity. Such measures involve a greater concern for the autonomy of democratic institutions, and public services, against political subversion, even when motivated by secular goals. It means ensuring the professional efficiency of these institutions, even at the cost of social equity. It requires a closer scrutiny of the use, and misuse, of the massive coercive apparatus of the state and a deescalation in the language and idiom of secular discourse...

This policy-package will not transform the communal individuals. But it is aimed at the next best option — to contain their propensity for violence.

(Source : The Sunday Observer, New Delhi)

RAJIV K. BAJAJ ON PARTY OF ALLAH IN INDIA

...(According to) IB sources... the Party of Allah based in Iran... has over eighty branches all over the country... They were active for a long time in Aligarh... However, we cannot rule out the possibility of a bigger communal conflagration in case the VHP and others connected with it launch the next phase of their proposed plan to liberate Hindu shrines from the Muslims.

...The IB is also believed to be investigating the manner in which the the Party of Allah from Iran has been able to get a sizeable following in the country. This is in spite of the fact that it is in effect a basically Shia party, and Shias in the country are a minority...

On June 10, 1986 Tehran approved allocations amounting to some $ 30 million for emergency aid to revolutionary groups coordinated by the Party of Allah abroad. More than 10 per cent of this aid was earmarked for Islamic revolutionary groups co-ordinated by Pakistanis mostly in the United Kingdom. Pakistani militants are also believed to be playing a key role in the Party of Allah's activities in other countries like Canada, USA and Australia, besides India.

The majority of Indian Muslims remain... unsympathetic to the party's message of bloody revolution and terror against the infidel.

However since 1986, according to intelligence sources, the atmosphere has changed. These sources reveal that affter the VHP and the BJP became strident in their demands... the Party of Allah won adherents and supporters...

(Souce : The Sunday Mail, 10 March 1990)

Praful Bidwai on the Surge of Hindu Fundamentalism & New Razakars

Remember the Razakars, those violent fanatics who composed the powerful militia raised by the Nizam of Hyderabad to prevent the state's accession to the Union of India?...

Today, 42 years after the Hyderabad policy action which vanquished them, the Razakars have reappeared all over the country-this time in a saffron garb. The BJP-RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal represents the Razakar's new avatar, the most potent challenge to the secular order since Independence. ...

As the frightening rash of communal riots in the wake of the Ram Janambhoomi campaign shows, the BJP and its cohorts have already inflicted serious damage upon India's secular fibre. They are now doing their damnest to hack away at the foundations of the secular-democratic-constitutional State. Simply put, their method is to terrorise not just the minorities but the majority which is not with them, and to seek to suborn the State.

So successful has this method been that the political establishment has been shaken to its very bones. Party after party has started looking for "compromise", however unprincipled. Leaders have sought "solutions", however dishonourable, so as to "defuse" the situation, that is, to concede the VHP's demand for building a temple where the mosque stands today.

Appeasement has emerged as a policy option. And principled stand against the VHP... can now be labelled "extreme", as distinct from the middle or "reasonable" position. Meanwhile, there is no sign that the VHP has either changed its basic stand on the issue or that it intends to make even a minor concession. ...

... Having earlier successfully suborned sections of the police at Ayodhya... on October 30 the Razakars have now managed to instil such fear among the public that even the CRPF, the BSF and the army can no longer be trusted to play a neutral, restraining and fair role in communally charged situations.

... Give an inch to the religious-extremist groups and they grab a yard. They grow on appeasement. Their growth further strengthens appeasement's logic. The liberal State becomes weaker and weaker and yields not yards but miles in appeasement - in the false hope that it will satisfy the extremist who always comes back for more.

The religious extremists' slogans are identical... the Hindus are in danger of being reduced to insignificance... the Hindus must be made to feel proud of being Hindus.... anti-Muslim violence is... legitimate... the mandir must be built if Hindu self-respect is to be restored.

Unpleasant as it may sound, this is the inexorable, anti-national logic of... Khalistan, Hindu Rashtra, nationhood based on religion or religious culture, and the ideas of community, unity, closed groups (that punish disloyalty and reward total obedience) these all form a continuum. Recall the obsessive stress on... 'unity', organisation and discipline, recall.... campaign for purity. ...

... Khalistani terrorists and modern-day Hindu Razakars... share some basic premises:

* The fundamental task is to break the hold of secular ideas over society, and to reestablish a powerful, unbreakable nexus between politics and religion.

* Religious faith and adherence to religious sects are prior to all else; therefore religion must prevail over the law of the land. (Hence the BJP's confirmed view that the question of settling the mandir is not adjudicative at all). In any conflict between the two, there can be no mediator.

* Membership of a religious order is a precondition for, and coterminous with, membership... of the state. ...

Four conclusions follow.. First, the temple dispute has gone miles beyond the contention over a particular site; indeed it now has only a token connection with disputes over some 3,000 mosques cited by the VHP.

Secondly, in the larger view, the VHP campaign is calculated to negate the very nature of Indian society as a multi-ethnic, pluralistic, multi-religious, variegated, heterogeneus entity. This society has always resisted homogenisation, regimented discipline, uniform codes and undifferentiated practices. Centralisation, over concentration of authority and narrow pyramidical structures of power are not values to be cherished. But the Razakars want precisely this kind of regimentation and militarised homogeneity.

Thirdly, those who seek to impose this... sectarian and claustrophobic version of "Hinduism" upon the Hindus, are themselves the most impoverished and perverse of ideologues. They represent the current of counter-reformism, which stands for all that is putrid, iniquitous and disgraceful in society - from bride-burning to sati and from untouchability to bonded labour.

And, fourthly, the Hindu communalist's claim to being patriotic... is wholly suspect. The RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha have a shameful history of collaboration with the British, especially in 1942... It came from utterly despicable, crass and base motives. ...

... What sort of vision of society do they stand for?... (To) quote V.D. Savarkar, who has always been thought of as a "thinker" an enlightened and sophisticated protagonist of the Hindu rashtra, a leader who, it was said, was even a rationalist. In an important commentary on the "per-

(Contd. on page 180)

Sachidananda Murthy on Fanatic Frenzy as Secular India Bleeds

The volcano has erupted, spewing death and devastation, plunging into infernal fire the eternal troublespots on the country's communal map—Hyderabad, Aligarh, Meerut, Kanpur and Ahmedabad. As these cities burnt, and as the flames threatened to leap up in many others with a fanatical force and maniacal momentum, the infirm minority government in Delhi was at its wit's end; how to stop the... frenzy?

The bitter taste of ashes was in the nation's mouth once Ayodhya had become the hot-spot, when many towns and villages in Uttar Pradesh quaked in communal convulsions. But everyone had hoped that the freakout of fanaticism would, at least for a while come to an end as the Chandra Shekhar government persuaded the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to convert its kar seva into a peaceful satyagraha. Tragically, the hope was in vain.

The easing of tension in Ayodhya somehow did not make much of a positive impact on the nation's psyche. May be, it was because of the awareness that the government had merely bought some time for itself. Or maybe, the collective mind had become septic beyond cure... Paranoid Hindus and Muslims in many towns and villages across the country were arming themselves to the teeth. The country was on the edge, with the communal divide as sharp as a blood-thirsty blade.

The demonic death dance of the marauding mobs of Hyderabad and the viciousness of the police in Aligarh showed the extent of intolerance that has been feeding the frenzy and poisoning the atmosphere...

...With the intensity of sectarian violence shooting up every day, scything innocent people with callous unconcern, the fear now is of a holocaust of the brutality of the partition madness...

Who has devised this frightening pattern? The Intelligence Bureau... has heaped the blame at the door of the VHP and the BJP for the communalisation of the country. Its secret dossiers speak of a game plan by them to whip up sentiments. The IB notes that L.K. Advani's rath yatra has had an effect that was beyond the BJP's own expectations...

...The situation that was crying out for major political initiatives was far too serious to be handled at the administrative level...

The killers have their various sources of evil inspiration. Now in lakhs of homes, audio cassettes spew forth hatred... Adding to the thirst for blood are the vivid video cassettes of the happenings in Ayodhya on October 30 and November 2... The impact of the propaganda blitz has been similar to what the cassettes of Bhindranwale's speeches had in Punjab. There is no easy way to deprogramme a mind which is fed on such poison... The lumpenisation of the society, with easy availability of sophisticated weapons and speedy vehicles, has spawned a dangerous culture.

...There has been large-scale migration from areas where one community is dominant... Such disturbance in the habitat pattern would become more pronounced...

The home ministry is worried about another aspect, too: the foreign hand...

Whether by domestic or foreign hands, the country has become a vast battlefield from where law has taken a leave of absence.

(Source: The Week, Calcutta, 23 Dec., 1990)

RSS Judicially Condemned

The RSS and its political front, the Jana Sangh, were judicially censured in:

1. Justice P. Jaganmoham Reddy Commission's Report on the Ahmedabad riots of 1969;
2. Justice D.P. Madan Commission's Report on the Bhiwandi riots of 1970;
3. Justice Vithayathel's Report on the Tellicherry riots of 1971;
4. Justice Jitendra Narain's Report on the Jamshedpur riots of 1979;
5. Justice P. Venugopal's Report on the riots between Hindus and Christians in Kanyakumari in 1982.

The following extracts from the Venugopal Commission's Report are very relevant to our present situation:

The RSS adopts a militant and aggressive attitude and sets itself as the champion of what it considers to be the rights of Hindus against minorities. It has taken upon itself the task to teach the minority their place and, if they are not willing to learn their place, teach them a lesson. The RSS has given respectability to communalism and communal riots and demoralise administration (sic). The RSS methodology for provoking communal violence is:

a) rousing communal feelings in the majority community by the propaganda that Christians are not loyal citizens of this country:
b) deepening the fear in the majority community by a clever propaganda that the population of the minorities is increasing and that of Hindus decreasing;
c) infiltrating into the administration and inducing the members of the civil and police services by adopting and developing communal attitudes;
d) training young people of the majority community in the use of weapons like dagger, sword and spear;
e) spreading rumours to widen the communal cleavage and deepen communal feelings by giving a communal colour to

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A.A. Engineer

On Inter-Dependence of Pluralism and Secularism in India

....India is a multi-religious society and it has been so all through its known history. Pluralism.... has been strength of Indian society rather than its weakness. It is also a fact that Hinduism has been a non-doctrinaire, non-formalistic, umbrella religion....

...Islam was non-native religion which originated in Arabia. Secondly, as far as north India was concerned, it came along with the Muslim conquerors though the Sufi saints also accompanied them. So it was seen as a religion of aggressors. Thirdly, and this is also important, Islam was highly doctrinaire in nature unlike Hinduism....

...Muslim elites wanted to buy peace with the British rulers so that they could concentrate on education and thus consolidate their position.... The masses, led by the 'Ulama (theologians), were impatient with the British rulers and wanted to throw them out, if necessary, by joining hands with the Hindus...

...The 'Ulama'... always stood by Indian National Congress and Indian nationalism while the Muslim elite led by Jinnah and others developed separatist trend in Indian politics which culminated in formation of Pakistan. Hindu and Muslim elite could not agree on division of power among themselves and thus decided to separate. The 'Ulama' had rightly argued that partition is neither in the interests of Islam, nor of Muslims. It was not in the interest of Islam as Islam in the sub-continent will be weakened by division and not in the interest of Muslims as those Muslims who would remain behind would not only suffer but remain weak. And this is precisely what happened...

The Ulama also felt that there was nothing in Islam which went against composite nationalism....

The...Ulama also argued that the Indian National Congress had assured Muslims that they would be free to practise Islam in free India and that no change would be made in any Islamic law unless the Muslims themselves consented to it....

However, the real fight was not about religion but about the share in power between the Hindu and Muslim elites and no satisfactory formula to either side could be found and ultimately India was divided leaving its own bitter legacy behind....

Muslims constitute a significant section of Indian society... The Indian National Congress adopted secularism as a sheet anchor of its political policy.... For Jawaharlal Nehru... secularism was a matter of creed. He was.... passionately committed to the concept of secular polity. Nehru... was of the opinion that 'it was the prime responsibility of the Hindus to make the large number of Muslims in India feel at home and not see themselves as second-class citizens existing on sufferance.' He also evolved a criterion for success of secularism. The test of success, Nehru felt, was not what the majority community thinks but how the minority community feels.

....Even during Nehru's Indian state, could not strictly enforce (the) notion (of a secular state).

The Indian way of life is less individualistic and more communitarian. It is this communitarian way of life which creates serious problems for Indian secularism and religious pluralism. Every Indian citizen, though she or he enjoys constitutional rights as an individual, but behave as a member of some caste or community socially as well as politically. No major social or political decision can be taken by individuals as individuals but only as members of some caste, community or collectivity. No wonder then politicians aspiring for votes have to make appeals on the basis of these castes and communities. It is very difficult for any politician, however committed to the concept of secularism, to ignore this elementary fact of Indian life. Each political party has, therefore, to evolve its own strategy in this regard.

...Political parties... have to appeal to the Muslims as a community in as much as they also have to appeal to certain Hindu castes, specially the scheduled castes and tribes commonly known as Dalits.... The Hindu communal parties who aspire to get the Hindu vote ... denounce such appeals to Muslims as their appeasement.... Every ruling party extends assurances to Muslims that the Shari'ah law which is considered divine in origin will not be interfered with.

The Hindu communalists resent this non-interference in Muslim Personal law and demand the scrapping of it and replacing it with a common civil code...

Muslims argue that Shari'ah law is part of their religion and religious identity and hence cannot be allowed to be tampered with.... The secularists and rationalists... too argue, though from a different point of view, that there should be no place for different personal laws in a secular and democratic India... What is of interest to us here is that Muslims refuse to agree to any change and would wote collectively against any government which interferes in or tampers with, the Muslim personal law...

...The democratic polity is essentially a competitive polity and in a backward pluralist society this competition takes place often on religious lines. With the deepening of the democratic processes every religious community has become quite conscious of its voting power and its importance to the political system and tries to use it to the maximum advantage. Needless to say both the communities compete with each other in asserting its importance which naturally leads to competitive

aggressivenes. This competitive aggressiveness is displayed through religious symbols like the Shah Bano issue or the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babari Masjid controversy.. The symbols by themselves are not as important as the pent-up feelings on more secular issues behind them.

The Muslim aggressiveness on the Shah Bano issue was quite understandable. They had greatly suffered in many major communal riots which began with Moradabad in 1980 as if in a new phase of communal violence... In these riots it is Muslims who mainly suffered due to partial behaviour of the police. Also, due to aggressive propaganda by the Hindu communal elements who felt their identity was threatened and that they must assert it equally aggressively to pressurise the government. Also, on the whole their economic situation was far from enviable.

There is no denying, says Mushirul Hasan, that they (Muslims) have been at the lowest rung of the ladder in terms of the basic categories of socio-economic indicators of development...

Thus economic situation of Muslims is quite dismal on the whole. Wherever they have made some progress locally.... they face constant threat of communal violence....

Thus Muslims have been feeling suffocated for number of years and occasionally their frustrations come out through some aggressive religious movements on issues like the Shah Bano.... or the Babari Masjid.... These movements thus should not be seen in isolation from the total Muslim situation in India.

However, it does not mean that religious assertion is solely due to the material situation of Muslims in the country. There are a number of other factors as well. Political assertion of Islam in Iran and rise of Islamic movements in other parts of Islamic world, what is generally referred to as Islamic fundamentalism... A section of Muslim leadership in India has acquired vested interest in the aggressive assertion of Islam and Islamic identity. Also, Muslim society had been divided along caste lines... In the past and now lower castes like Ansaris and Qureshis are acquiring a measure of economic affluence in middle-sized cities and towns and they need in greater measure their Islamic identity and religious assertion for social legitimation vis-a-vis Muslims of traditionally high status. Also, a large percentage of Muslim artisan class as such is generally more formally religious than other classes. Also, their oppressive and exploitative conditions, on one hand, and their increasing anonymity in big growing cities, on the other, make them even more religiously oriented. This religiosity of the lower middle class Muslims is exploited by the political leadership.

...Upper caste Hindus have taken maximum benefit of modernisation and economic change in the country... (There) is an attempt on their part to use religious militancy to subdue other minorities especially the Muslims and low caste Hindus. Thus a situation of outright confrontation between Hindus and Muslims has developed and often results in outburst of communal violence.

Hindu militancy has found its expression in Ramjanmabhoomi issue...

...This confrontational posture resulted in a series of communal riots in UP, Bihar and other states in October-November, 1989 when throughout north, central and western India consecrated-brick processions were taken out by the VHP in collaboration with the BJP and the RSS...

The BJP exploited this issue to the maximum and increased its strength in the Lok Sabha in November 1989 elections from two to 85. In a pluralist society in a backward country, religious confrontation between the two communities can assume very dangerous proportions. Democractic competition, in a socially and economically backward society can often degenerate, as the Indian case shows, to competitive communal militancy resulting in man-slaughter...

In a religiously pluralist society, peace and harmony can be ensured only within the framework of democratic secularism... Successive Indian government have, in their eagerness to win or retain political power, tampered with this secular spirit of the Indian Constitution. Whatever the political compulsions, such tampering with secular values will weaken unity of the people... and unity of the country. Secularism must be strengthened to preserve Indian pluralism and pluralism must be strengthened to consolidate secularism.

(Source : Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay, 3 November, 1990)

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version of (Indian or Hindu) virtues", Savarkar severely rebukes Shivaji for having been decent towards Muslim women, in keeping with the ideas of religious tolerance, respect for "other (men's) women" and the protection of women belonging to the enemy.

Thus, he chides Shivaji for having turned a deaf ear to the cries of Hindu women captured and molested by Muslim war riors, and then reprimands him for having failed to order the molestation and rape of Muslim women, both as a deterrent and as a punishment. 'Had such terror been inflicted upon the (community of) Muslim women in the first two or three centuries of Muslim conquest, then lakhs of Hindu mothers, sisters and daughters would not have had to suffer the humiliation that became their lot for hundreds of years.' Besides says Savarkar, this would have helped limit the 'enemy' Muslim population

If this is the kind of morality advocated by the most enlightened of Hindu rashtravadis, then the nature of the Hindu rashtra can only be imagined. Further comment is unnecessary.

(Source : The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, 22-23, December, 1990)

B. George Verghese on the Lost Road to Ayodhya

A few days ago, as most of India awoke to 1991, the BJP-VHP-RSS moved back from 1528 to 1526, with some leading units having stormed into the 5th century and others more intrepid claiming to have pierced the mists of even earlier centuries. Hurrah! While the world marches towards the 21st century... India's saffron brigade is in glorious retreat. Should one laugh or cry at the irrelevance of it all-the crass revivalism, the absurdity of trying to rewrite history, the militant divisiveness and the extraordinary expenditure of time and energy on non-issues?.....

...The asthi kalash processions press on....with the aim of visiting 100,000 places by January 14 while highly provocative cassettes and tapes, some of them unauthorised, continue to vitiate the atmosphere. Surcharged emotions have spilled into the streets in the most widespread and cruellest riots since 1947-50, barring the 1984 carnage... The VHP continues to insist that... the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir will be built precisely where it wants it, and that similar restoration or restitution must follow in Mathura and Varanasi. The larger objective now openly proclaimed by the VHP-RSS-BJP is the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. The goal is far from religious. It is electoral and political.... Integral humanism, Gandhian socialism and secularism have been moth-balled in favour of what is increasingly turning out to be.... chauvinism.

The ultimate argument is that the Ayodhya issue is a matter of faith which transcends evidence or judicial process. Faith is a legitimate basis for action but can never be above the law where it infringes the rights of others. Nor is faith the exclusive prerogative of any one group or sect. And where was faith earlier when the faithful were in office or held positions of power?.... Others, far more knowledgeable than I, strongly assert that there is no scriptural sanction in any shastra for sanctifying the exact birthsite of Ram, even if this was not a matter of conjecture and considerable controversy.

To limit Ram, Maryada Purushottam, an avatar of Vishnu, to the narrow confines of some national coordinates is surely to diminish the majesty and grandeur of the boundless and timeless godhead which is omnipresent...

The objective of Hindu Rashtra is unexpectionable if it is based on the original definition of the term Hindu, which means one who lives in Hind. There can be no quarrel with Hindu Rashtra as a cultural expression either. Who would deny the greatness, even the centrality of the very vibrant Hindu culture. But admitting and accepting this is not to deny the place in and contribution of other streams—the Islamic, Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Christian and Parsee among others—to India's cultural heritage. One has only to look around to see evidence of synthesis and harmony .... The genius of Hinduism has been and remains its catholicity and eclecticism, its tolerance and ability to accommodate. This has.... only added to its richness. To depart from this essential tradition is itself a denigration of something precious and vital.

Some ideologues of the VHP-RSS-BJP have sought to project the theory that while every society is anchored in a dominant civilisation, the logical and legitimate driving force of Hindu civilisational battle before the triumph of Hindu civilisation has in India been challenged by Islam and, thereafter, the British — Marxist-modern-secular-Nehruvian model. The current social upheaval ... represents the final stage of this epic civilisation. Hence Hindu Rashtra... The narrowing definition of 'Hindu' and the politicisation of the term by rejecting whole chunks of Indian history and culture can only result in drift to theocracy. This would impose a self-defined majoritarian norm on the country, in variance with the established Indian constitutional consensus around a plural, democratic society with fraternity as one of its principal pillars. Denying diversity in favour of a unitarian concept can only divide the country with some more equal than others.

Consider the rhetoric and look at the doctrines being take out of the closet or being interpreted anew. The RSS has long distinguished between indigenous and foreign religions. This is a narrowly geographical or real estate view of nationhood but meaningless otherwise... Christianity and Islam are the so-called foreign religions but they came to India round 56A.D. with St. Thomas and in the 8th.... respectively. And predating or alongside Hinduism there have been even older and parallel faiths. What then does 'indigenous' mean? When does history begin? This is entirely specious reasoning.

The analogy of the Japanese administration recently apologising to the Chinese and Korean people for the pre-War sins of Imperial Japan is wrongly cited to demand that Muslim Indians, described as Babar's progeny, should similarly atone for the alleged wrongs committed by their religious forebears hundreds of years ago. Who is to apologise to whom and for what? Here is a monstrous new two nation or master race theory being resurrected on behalf of some self-selected, chosen people. What better justification for Khalistan or Muslim Kashmir as claimed by Pakistan? Likewise, the strange suggestion that Muslims and Christians, after all, have some other "homeland" in which to seek refuge if need be; but where else can Hindus go? Each of these propositons is

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Romila Thapar on Religion, Culture and Nation

National culture and democracy are among the ideals of the nation-state... Democracy can at one level be a mechanism for representing those that make up the nation-state, but it can also descend to becoming a numbers game in which politics is conditioned by a mechanical calculation of the number of votes... The definition of the majority, usually takes the form of the assertion of a particular identity which can be religious or ethnic or linguistic and where the larger identity covers over and tries to erase the variations within the group...

Mobilisation takes place through an assertion of this identity. It is claimed that were this identity to come into being as the sole identity of the nation, there would be a true democracy based on equal rights for all. Democracy then becomes a manipulation of votes in which not only are vote banks central but even changes... are due less to concerns.... and more to arithmetical calculations linked to voting patterns. Sentiments of various kinds are invoked and rathyatras become vote-banks.

In such situations the concept of a national culture takes on dimensions much larger than before. The creation of a national culture in the colonial past was anti-colonial in its political message, but in its more narrowly cultural message it was inevitably defined in accordance with views of the middle class. This led to its construction being influenced by both upper-caste culture and the 'discoveries' and interpretations of Orientalist research. The self-perception of the middle class was in terms of its own social origin, those of landowners, brahmans, scribal castes and those from families of well-established mercantile castes... The transfer of power was in a sense from colonial rule to upper castes...

The problem of identity in the nation-state had by then assumed importance with the two-nation theory cutting across nationalist ideals. There was perhaps a sub-conscious concern that there might be a need to accommodate a variety of cultures, lest they each begin to demand independent state. The liberal values of the nationalist struggle required the inclusion of the culture of the lower castes, but this was never given serious thought and was more often than not included in the nebulous category of 'folk culture'...

The need for a national culture was underlined and this remained essentially a middle class culture and largely 'Hindu'. The insistence on a single culture breeds its own opposition and groups fissioning off are characteristic of the ferment within the smooth exterior of the nation.

The fact of the plurality of Indian cultural expression whether of caste, language, religion or class, whether of popular or elite and its implications were not worked out. Plurality was seen as the co-existence of cultures rather than their intermeshing. Since the Hindu religion was not a clearly defined entity as were the Semitic religions, there was a greater mixing in the area of religion and culture. Themes which had played the role of cultural idioms were slowly confined to a narrowly defined religious expression, a process which was intensified after independence...

The most obvious example of this is the narrative of Rama, which has been treated in a variety of divergent ways by various social groups in the sub-continent in the past but which is now virtually seen only as a single religious concept.... So convinced are we that the numerical majority of Hindus and particularly those of the Hindi heartland, can be the only arbiters of national culture...

This has a bearing on how we see the notion of tradition today...

To be seeped in tradition is frequently to be seeped in what one believes or would like to believe, is the tradition. The appropriation of tradition also becomes a matter of political importance...

Seen in this context the BJP-VHP-RSS-Bajrang Dal politics with its claim to speaking in the tongues of religion and culture becomes a major political and cultural crisis for the Indian nation-state. The VHP has invented a tradition in focussing on one issue, that of the Babari Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute. It originally claimed the historicity of Rama and his birthplace and when this was questioned it argued on the basis of faith and disallowed history. Today it has shifted its ground and is trying to use archaeology to prove the existence of a temple dedicated to Rama, destroyed and replaced by the Babari Masjid...

Even if such a temple existed, that is not the point at issue. To insist on the destruction of the mosque and its replacement by a temple is merely to return to the politics of the medieval period as well as an attempt to maintain that history can be unravelled and reknit. Earlier periods of history in many parts of the world witnessed the quick-change act of churches and mosques and temples, being converted and reconverted from one to the other—the most impressive... In other cases the destruction of the monument was an act of politics. Similarly the issue at Ayodhya is also a political issue and the demand for the destruction of the mosque is a return to the politics of an earlier period of history, which period cannot be brought to life and changed, nor can the acts of the time be avenged, for such vengeance can only spell disaster for the present. Such a stand is essentially a mobilisation for political representation along the lines of religious affiliation. Such mobilisation further forecloses the need to consider the plurality of cul-

tures in India, for, should the VHP succeed, our national culture will be defined by one group alone. In its search for a national identity, pluralities come under attack.

The concept of a Hindu rashtra is projected as the national aim. It seeks to bind everyone by discarding those cultural elements which are not in conformity with its definition of what constitutes a nation and national culture...

The urge towards political domination is strengthened by taking an extreme position and then insisting that others should comply with the demands of the BJP and VHP. It is the practice of brinkmanship where the issue is forced to a critical point and even a compromise at this point is a bigger gain than from a campaign which is conducted along democratic lines. This further requires a hysterical momentum which is achieved by mounting deadlines, threats and an all-out effort to draw in large numbers.

Such an effort has no qualms in propagating lies... The repitition of the lie makes it into a truth for their followers. The rathyatra carried overtones of a dig-vijaya and it only remained for Advani to have ridden a white horse and posed as Kalki, the avatara yet to come.

In a curiously inverted kind of way, the BJP-VHP movement has a 'minority' character and is reminiscent in form and spirit of separatist movements... It uses the symbols of separatism... Perhaps the BJP-VHP see themselves as a minority within the large mass of what is labelled as the 'majority community'. The confrontation has therefore to be seen at two levels: one is with the non-Hindu religious communities and the other is within the Hindu community, a label which includes the whole hierarchy of 'Hindu' castes. Its militancy and aggressiveness comes not only from the nature of the political backing which it commands but also from the fervour of the young armed with weapons.

Rusty swords and trishulas should not be underestimated nor the possible switch to more lethal arms should the movement be thwarted. Looting and killing in the name of Rama does not seem to strike a discordant note... Those that die in police firing become martyrs. Where aggressiveness fails, the movement becomes coercive. The militant hysteria is fanned now by the playing of cassette tapes exhorting Hindus to violence and the showing of video-films... That these are having the desired effect is clear from the increase in communal rioting. This hysterial is necessary to militancy...

The focus is on a demand — the destruction of a mosque and its replacement by a temple — a demand which is basically a test of political strength although it is couched in religious and cultural terms. In fact it involves power, status and territory. This is merely the initial demand and it is a foregone conclusion that more will follow. There is a deliberate use of symbols, such as the name of the Bajrang Dal, and the enforced use of the greeting of Jai Siya Ram which has become almost a pass-word... A lucrative souvenir business has sprung up....

Such activities would come as a surprise to the genuine Ramabhakt.. There is little of the devotion to a deity or the sharing of divine grace which was associated with bhakti, for the ethos of bhakti has given way to the ethos of danda—coercive authority. The mechanism of coercion has drawn in even the media, and is accompanied by an advertising skill... The hidden separatism... is not for the setting up of a separate nation-state, but for the setting up of a separate state of mind.

Separatism requires an enemy against which it can define itself and the enemy is generally within the nation and constituted of other groups. The enemy is basically those who identify or are said to identify in parallel forms, namely, the religious 'minorities' who go under the label of Muslim, Sikh and Christian.... The attack is directed towards the largest of the 'minorities' so that the reduction... of this group will have a salutary effect on the rest.

Also the largest is the most visible. The strength sought by minorities through communalising their identity plays into the hands of majority communalism. As long as such 'minorities' also insist on seeing themselves identified only as religious communities, their weakness in the face of the larger religious community will remain. If the minorities were to emphasise other identities, other than religion, such a change would weaken the 'majority' communalism...

This not to suggest that the confrontation to communalism should not also come from within the community.... It would require the kind of social change which reduces dependence on communal fantasies and the manipulation of such fantasies by political parties.

The enemy within includes others such as the dalits and those refered to as 'tribals'. The latter are, for the moment, viewed as too distanced culturally, and are therefore better handled by being acculturated to middle class Hinduism: hence the active missionary efforts among the 'tribals'. The dalits and the lower castes are sought to be incorporated but only at the level of token association... In effect, militant Hinduism has little use for the dalit except, literally, for providing a vote.

Lower castes similarly have to maintain an uneasy balance. The leadership of the BJP-VHP and much of its support comes from the Rajputs, the trading castes and other middle level castes... They will not accept a sharing of the cake. There is among them little sensitivity to the views and perceptions of the lower castes, the dalits and the tribals in the construction of Hindutva...

...The present dissonance in the fragments of India society is likely to continue.

(Source : The Seminar, January, 1991)

Girilal Jain on the Crisis of Secularism

A spectre haunts dominant sections of India's political and intellectual elite — the spectre of a growing Hindu self-awareness and self-assertion. ...This elite had used the bogey of Hindu 'communalism' and revivalism as a convenient device to keep themselves in power and to 'legitimize' their slavish imitation of the West... The ghost has now materialised.

Millions of Hindus have stood up. It will not be easy to trick them back into acquiescing in an order which has been characterised not so much by its "appeasement of Muslims" as by its alienness, rootlessness and contempt for the land's unique cultural past. Secularism is a euphemism for irreligion and repudiation of the Hindu ethos; a euphemism for denigration and humiliation of the business community to the benefit of ever expanding and rapacious bureaucracy and politocracy, have been major planks of this order. Both have lost much of their old glitter and... capacity of dazzle and mislead.

By the same token, re-Hinduisation of the country's political domain has begun. On a surface view, it may be a sheer 'accident that the battle between aroused Hindus and the.... Indian State.... has been joined on the question of the Ram Janambhoomi temple in Rama's city of Ayodhya... But historic significance of this 'accident' should be evident...

...In historic terms, therefore, the proposed temple can be the first step towards that goal...

The concept of nation itself is, in fact, alien to the Hindu temperament and genius...

...Hindus are not a community; they are not meant to be a community; and they cannot become a community. This fact has less to do with the caste system... than with the essential spirit of Hinduism which is inclusivist and not exclusivist by definition.... Hindus cannot sustain an anti-Muslim feeling except temporarily and that too under provocation.. The provocation may not come directly from Muslims...

Hindus have been compelled to recognise boundaries as towards the end of the tenth century when East Afghanistan fell to Muslim Arabs... They are obliged to recognise frontiers now even within the subcontinent which has been the heartland of their civilisation. But that limitation cannot make them into a nation.

Hindus are not a nation in being or becoming. They cannot be.... because of ... the deep and profound truth that they have been and are meant to be a civilisation. A civilisation must, by definition, seek to be universal....

... As such I find it painful that even well-meaning Hindus should make a distinction between Hindu culture-civilisation and Hindu religion, little realising that Hinduism is not a religion, and say that Rama was both a cultural hero and a religious figure as if he can be so split. No, he epitomises our civilisation in its totality...

The Hindu fight is not at all with Muslims; the fight is between Hindus anxious to renew themselves in the spirit of their civilisation, and the state, Indian in name and not in spirit and the political and intellectual class... The proponents of the Western ideology are using Muslims as auxiliaries and it is a pity Muslim 'leaders' are allowing themselves to be so used...

In the past up to the sixteenth century, great temples have been built in our country by rulers to mark the rise of a new dynasty and/ or to mark a triumph... In the present case, the proposal ... has also to help produce an "army" which can in the first instance achieve the victory the construction can proclaim.

The raising of such an 'army' in our democracy... involves not only a body of disciplined cadres, which is available in the ... RSS, a political organisation.... in the Bharatiya Janata Party, but also an aroused citizenry. That had so far been missing. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and its allies have fulfilled this need....

So long as this task of mobilising support continues, delay in the actual construction.,... need not be a cause of concern. That can well await the arrival of a Hindu government in New Delhi. Indeed it would be in order to build the temple then (to) herald the dawn of a new order...

The BJP-VHP-RSS leaders have rendered the country another great service. They have brought Hindu interests, if not the Hindu ethos, into the public domain where they legitimately belong But .... they have not fully grasped the implications of their action.... The fight is not against what they call pseudo-secularism; it is against secularism in its proper definition...

It is time they recognise that defensiveness can cripple them, as it did ... when they sought respectability in claims of adherence to Gandhian socialism....

(Source : Sunday Mail, New Delhi, 9 December, 1990)

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utterly fanciful, and abhorrent products of a sick mind. The Crusades and Inquisition with their intolerant cruelties characterise unfortunate chapters of the past and can be no guide to a better future. To seek vicarious revenge for history is to return to the depths of medieval barbarism. All communalisms are bad. Minority communalism can lead to isolationism and separatism... Majority communalism spells fascism.

KHUSHWANT SINGH ON BRAHMIN POWER

...Whatever be the sphere of...literary, scientific, bureaucratic or whatever, the Brahmin remains the top dog. It may be ethnic; or it may be the result of several generations of learning of which they held the monopoly till the last century, or both combined...Brahmins form no more than 3.5 per cent of the population of our country.

...Brother Stanny, of St. Anne's Church, Dhule, Maharashtra has compiled figures of different castes in government employment during British rule in 1935 and as they were 35 years after Independence in 1982. During British rule, the largest proportion of government jobs (40 per cent) were held by Kayasthas. Today their figure has dropped to 7 per cent. Next came the Muslims who were given special privileges by the British. They had 35 per cent jobs in 1935; in free India their representation has dropped to 3.5 per cent. Christians likewise favoured by the English had 15 per cent; their figure has dropped to 1 per cent.

Scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes, who had hardly any government jobs, have achieved a representation of 9 per cent. But the most striking contrast is in the employment of Brahmins. Under the British they had 3 per cent — fractionally less than the proportion of their population; today they hold as much as 70 per cent of government jobs— I presume the figure refers only to gazetted posts. In the senior echelons of the civil service from the rank of deputy secretaries upwards, out of 500 there are 310 Brahmins, i.e. 63 per cent; of the 26 state chief secretaries, 19 are Brahmins; of the 27 Governors and Lt. Governors, 13 are Brahmins; of the 16 Supreme Court judges, 9 are Brahmins; of the 330 judges of the High Courts, 166 are Brahmins; of 140 ambassadors, 58 are Brahmins; of 98 vice-chancellors 50 are Brahmins; of 438 district magistrates, 250 are Brahmins; of the total of 3,300 IAS officers, 2,376 are Brahmins. They do equally well in electoral posts; of the 530 Lok Sabha members, 190 are Brahmins; of 244 in the Rajya Sabha, 89 are Brahmins. **These statistics clearly prove that this 3.5 per cent of Brahmin community of India holds between 36 per cent of 63 per cent of all the plum jobs available in the country... I can scarcely believe that it is entirely due to the Brahmins' higher I.Q.**

(Source: The Sunday, 23 December, 1990)

Zakir Hussain on a Good Muslim

There are courageous persons who follow the urge of their hearts and minds and ultimately convince society that they are in the right; there are dominating personalities which compel society to accept and follow them. There are persons, seen but very rarely, who return society's frown with a cheerful, disarming smile and who radiate sincerity, goodwill and confidence. They have the gift of making friends into an inspiring and creative force. They do not desire power; they are loath to exercise authority even if they possess it. Their aim and ideal are to make men more humane, more just, more co-operative, to rouse and activate sentiments of natural piety innate in most human beings, to reform society by inducing the most sensitive individuals to assert the best in them so as to achieve happiness and peace for all.

It is difficult and sometimes unfair to put men into fixed categories... I would have been happy and content to describe Yusuf Meherally as an Indian, but I am afraid, very few, if any, would understand what I meant. I cannot say that he was a Hindu, because he was born in a Muslim family. I cannot call him a Muslim, because he himself refused to recognise religious distinctions, and it would be unfair to impose them on him. But tradition and culture have drawn the picture of the good Muslim which comes to life as soon as one sees a good Muslim.

"According to an old definition, a good Muslim possesses a generosity like the generosity of the river, a benevolence like the benevolence of the sun, a hospitality like the hospitality of the earth. He answers the calls of those in distress, he fulfills the needs of the helpless, his sorrows and endeavours are derived from the sorrows and endeavours of the people.

The good Muslim cultivates friendship that the true relationship between man and God is revealed, and to be a good friend he cultivates those social qualities which are most pleasing to his fellow men, charm of manner, ability to converse, argue, convince, participation in the enjoyment of literature and art, and in those observances which reveal deep interest in his fellow men, reverence for the divine. The practice of equality is for him not an injunction to be obeyed but an instinct, as second nature that cannot bear to be repressed. The good Muslim loves God only but in such a way that those among whom he lies are made to feel that he loves them only....

(Source : The Illustrated Weekly of India, Bombay, February 2-3, 1991)

(Contd from page 178)

any trivial incident.

The RSS shakhas include in their programmes training in lathis, swords, javelin throw. Drills, exercises, parades and other activities are organised in playgrounds and other public places. All these activities are organised in the name of physical training. The aim behind these activities appear to be to inculcate an attitude of militancy and training for any kind of civil strife. They often cause apprehension, fear and a sense of insecurity among the minorities. It prejudicially affects maintenance of public tranquility.

The Sharqi Kingdom of Jaunpur (A.D. 1394-1495) : A Political and Cultural History, Research by Laxmi Chander, University of Delhi.

Methodology

...An attempt has been made to reconcile various conflicting dates and details of events and to assign approximate dates to them which have been assigned no date by other historians... Likewise an attempt has been made to draw a detailed picture of various cultural pursuits, such as education and learning, painting, and music to bring home the point that the kingdom had attained great heights in cultural sphere. The contribution of Bhakti saints like Ramanand and Kabir and the activities of the sufis of various orders to enrich the cultural life of the people and attempt a reformation of the social and religious outlook of the masses has been assessed.

Findings

The distintegration of the Delhi Sultanate after the death of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq in A.D. 1388 encouraged various chiefs to rebel against his week successors. Among those who disregarded central authority at Delhi was Malik Sarwar Khwaja-i-Jahan who, being highly ambitious and powerful, informally established himself at Jaunpur as a de factor ruler in A.D. 1394. He was succeeded by Mubarak Qaranful with the royal title of Sultan Mubarak Shah Sharqi in A.D. 1400. His reign was too brief but his younger brother Sultan Ibrahim Shah, who ruled the kingdom from A.D. 1401 to A.D. 1440, proved himself to be a great ruler of the period. Being well versed in military art he not only safeguarded the kingdom from external dangers but also provided it with efficient administrative set up which created peaceful conditions at home. Though he was militarily superior to Delhi and other neighbouring principalities, he failed to occupy Delhi due to various reasons beyond his control. The rulers of Delhi on their part were never reconciled to the emergence of the independent kindgom of the Sharqis and always remained in wait for an opportunity to strike a fatal blow to it. This desire of the rulers of Delhi and Jaunpur to grab each other's territories became the root cause of enmity between them. Sultan Ibrahim succeeded in making Tirhut a tributary of Jaunpur and reducing Kalpi to vassalage. He championed the cause of Bengali Muslims at the behest of Sheikh Ashraf Jahangir Simmani. His policy with weaker states was to keep them as tributary and loyal to Jaunpur and not their annexation.

This policy was followed by his son and successor Sultan Mahmud who too ruled the kingdom efficiently for about two decades. His raid into Orissa, however, was only predatory in character. In his attempt to seize Delhi and oust Bahlul Lodi in A.D. 1452 he failed. Henceforth the relations between Jaunpur and Delhi continued to grow bitter and bitter as time rolled on. The next ruler Sultan Muhammad ruled for too brief a period to make any contribution to the Sharqi kingdom. The next and the last Sharqi rular Sultan Hussain Shah successfully followed the policy of his grandfather Ibrahim in regard to relation with less powerful states but his extraordinary zeal to snatch Delhi out of Bahul's hands proved disastrous to him as well as to the kingdom itself as in his attempts to conquer Delhi he lost his own kingdom. Bahlul Lodi dismembered greatly the Sharqi Kingdom in A.D. 1485 while Sikandar Lodi wiped it out completely.

The peaceful conditions inside the kingdom encouraged men of letters, art and religion to pour into the kingdom from all parts of Hindustan. The natural result of it was the emergence of Jaunpur as a great centre of education and learning and other cultural pursuits. Music, painting and architecture flourished greatly giving full opportunity to local Hindu elements to bring about a synthesis with Islamic ideas. In architecture there emerged a distinct style at Jaunpur which has its own peculiar charm and beauty. The cultivation of music produced a great master-misician of the age, namely, Sultan Hussain himself, who greatly contributed to the development of music by making inventions of new ragas and raginis etc. The broad minded outlook of the Sharqis in matters of religion and their partronage of the mashaikh and the ulama contributed greatly to the Sufi as well as to the spread of Bhakti ideology throughout the kingdom. In this way the Sharqi kingdom became a breeding ground of various cultural aspects and it soon excelled Delhi in the field of culture.

(Source: India Dissertation Abstract, April-June, 1989)

CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY : ADVISORY COMMIEETT ON MINORITIES, FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ETC. MUSLIM MEMBERS

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khar
Khan Abdul Samad Khan
A. K. Azad
S.M. Saadullah
S. Jaffar Imam
Hifzur Rahman
(Mrs) Aizaz Rasul
Hussainbhoy Laljee
Tajammul Husain
Syed Ali Zaheer

(The Committee submitted 2 Reports on Minority rights on 8.8.47 and 11.5.49 — Editor)

SECOND PRESS COMMISSION ON REPORTING COMMUNAL TENSIONS

"We generally endorse the guidelines formulated by the Press Council in November 1968 for avoidance of 'objectionable communal writings'. We are of the view that, on the outbreak of a communal disturbance, newspapers should refrain from sensational presentation of the news and from giving community-wise figures of those killed and injured. However, when the situation gets stabilised, there should be no hesitation in investigating the causes of the rioting and its consequences, with identification of the communities concerned.

Communal tensions have economic, social and political causes. There have even been allegations of foreign money at work. These causes should be investigated and exposed. We are of the view that suppression of truth would worsen rather than improve the atmosphere. However, it is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules, and a newspaper should, so to say play it by the ear, in accordance with the circumstances of each case and with due sense of responsibility.

We recommend that there should be stricter enforcement of the provision in the Indian Penal Code with regard to communal incitement.

There should be dialogue between the civil administration and local newspapers on norms and procedures for information flow, verification and correction, during periods of tension and crisis. Professional bodies of journalists should arrange for the exchange of experience in this regard in various parts of the country.

We are of the view that the positive role of the Press—of bringing together the diverse elements in the nation's life by emphasising those aspects which tend towards unifying the communities — is as important as avoidance of objectionable communal or casteist wriring. This calls for a sustained campaign to promote the concept of human brotherhood

Press Council : Guidelines against Communal Writing

The Press Council has issued a set of 12 guidelines for the press as well as the government to be followed to check communal writings in the newspapers. These are:-

1. The State Governments should take upon themselves the responsibility of keeping a close watch on the communal writings that might spark of tension, destruction and death, and bring them to the notice of the Council.
2. The government may have occasion to take action against erring papers or editors. But it must do so within the bounds of law. If newsmen are arrested or search and seizure operations become necessary, it would be a healthy convention if such development could be reported to the Press Council within 24 to 48 hours followed by a detailed note within a week.
3. Under no circumstances must the authorities resort to vindictive measures like cut in advertisements, cancellation of accreditation, cut in newsprint quota and other facilities.
4. Provocative and sensational headlines should be avoided.
5. Headings must reflect and justify the matter printed under them
6. Figures and casualties given in headlines should preferably be on the lower side in case of doubt about their exactness and where numbers reported by various sources differ widely.
7. Headings containing allegations made in statements should either identify the person/body making the allegation or, at least, should carry quotation marks.
8. News reports should be devoid of comments and value judgements.
9. Presentation of news should not be motivated or guided by partisan feelings nor should it appear to be so.
10. Language employed in writing the news should be temperate and such as may foster feelings of amity among communities and groups.
11. Corrections should be promptly published with due proximity and regrets expressed in serious cases.
12. It will help a great deal if inservice training is given to journalists for inculcation of all these principles.

taught and examplified by the founders and the saints of all religios.

Superstitious beliefs which are unrelated to the essence of religions and are inimical to physical and social health must be relentlessly exposed and fought.

(Source : Press Commission's Report)

URDU PRESS ON THE GULF WAR

A Review by Suneet Vir Singh

"Brave and mighty Iraq battles to cleanse the Hejaz from the unholy presence of the troops of todays' Yazid". The enthusiastic headline in Siasat Jadeed (Kanpur) is proof of Saddam Hussein's spectacular victory over the Urdu press in this country. Iraq's Scud missiles may have failed to impress Israel, but they served to crown Saddam Hussein as the bravest Mujahid (Akhbar-e-Nau: Delhi) the Champion of Islam (Nadeem, Bhopal) the only one (to) challenge the powerful Zionist Satan, George Bush (Rehnuma-e-Deccan, Hyderabad)

Now that the Gulf war is over, the Urdu press continues to eulogise the Iraqi President and suspect the motives of President Bush. Nai Duniya (New Delhi) is deeply con-

Religious Programme in Electronic Media

...It would be useful to examine what the role of radio has been in India, and whether it has played a constructive part in furthering the secular ideal... As the following recapitulation of the history of broadcasting before and after Independence will show... radio's contribution has been largely negative, and that by yielding to pressures exerted by interested groups it has over the years, accentuated religious differences, more than helped effectively in the spread of values of communal amity and tolerance.

...Giving time freely and almost without restriction to all religions and creeds is not genuine secularism. True secularism would have been propagated better by following the principle that religion was the personal affair of each citizen, and that the State .... System should not be expected to give more than minimal coverage to selected religious events of importance.

During the days when broadcasting was run by a private concern (from 1927 until it was taken over by the Government) there were no religious programmes from its two stations at Bombay and Calcutta, except Christmas service relay, and some 'bhajans' and qawwalis on other festivals. When AIR came into being A.S. Bokhari, the Deputy Controller, was in favour of religious broadcasts on grounds of popular public appeal, but Lionel Fielden, the Controller, was against these.

.."However, regular weekly recitations from Delhi were started from the Koran on Friday, and Hindu scriptures on Tuesdays. Expectedly Bokhari, by then the Controller, had to write to the Delhi station in 1940 to ensure that the whole of Friday should not gradually become a Muslim Day, and the whole of Tuesday regarded as Hindu Day.

To keep matters under check, a chart of religious festivals to be observed was drawn up in 1942 setting out which station was to observe which, and for how many minutes. This led to "demands" by other pressure groups, each trying to secure attention for its community. After Independence, committees were set up in 1948, 49, 50 54 and later, but the effectof each was to add to the festivals and give more time to them. Still, the pressures have continued unabated, and the position now is quite chaotic. Any concession..... becomes a.... commitment, Despite specific orders to the contrary on paper, several stations continue to have fixed days set apart for different religions, and many regular 'live' relays direct from places of worship have been permitted under duress. The least that Prasar Bharati could do.... to set up a National Advisory committee for Religious Programmes, to stem the growing rot.

EUPHORIA IN HINDI PRESS
BY SUNEET VIR SINGH

Jai Sia Ram, Kar Seva shuru, Mandir wahin banaynge... Diwali again in Jaipur... Bhopal drenched in Ram's devotion... People's will prevails...

The frenzied jubilation in the Hindi press at the "historic' entry of kar sevaks into the disputed shrine in Ayodhya is unbelievable. It must have been like this when freedom came at midnight. Rajasthan Patrika, Dainik Jagran, Aj, Nav Bharat, Ranchi Express, the Hindi belt's leading dailies carry ecstatic headlines reporting the kar sevak's defiance of Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav's strong arm tactics. And if there was bloodshed it was all the fault of the "stubborn" chief minister and "weak" Prime Minister who set out to defy the will of the people.

For weeks the press in Uttar Pradesh had been waiting with breathless excitement for D-day in Ayodhya. There were innumerable news reports on how Ram's Ayodhya had been converted into a fortress. To unmask the tyranny of the Yadav regime, Dainik Jagran's front page carried a colour photograph of a Sadhu wounded by the police while trying to get to the holy city. He lay on a hospital bed shackled in thick chains. Far more disturbing than the glorifiction of Ram bhakts under arrest, was the unabashed attempt to incite the police to lay down arms and join the kar sewa. On the eve of the storming of Ayodhya, Aj openly warned Mr. V.P. Singh and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav that the "enforced calm at the point of bayonets could lead to bagawat."

Beyond the Hindi belt, there is no emotional involvement with the disputed shrine and hardly any mention of Mr. Yadav's atrocities against the Ram bhakts.

(Source : The Times of India, New Delhi)

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cerned at the presence of "imperialist forces" in the region...

Has the Congress's loud condemnation of allowing the refuelling of US military planes and Mr. Gandhi's "mission of peace" to the Gulf helped the party win back the Muslim vote? ... initial reaction indicates that now the minority press would find it difficult to write off Mr. Gandhi and his party as anti-Muslim. Faisal Jadeed (Delhi, reports that the Congress high command is delighting at the "tremendous impact of its pro-Iraq stance" on the Indian Muslim community... Qaumi Awaz (Delhi) Lucknow) carried the same report.... Significantly, Dainik Jagran (Uttar Pradesh).... carried the same report on its front page...

Akhbar-e-Nau (Delhi) edited by Janata Dal MP, Mr. M. Afzal, is wary of "Brother Rajiv's say of winning Muslim votes". (and) ... denounces... the double-faced policy of the Congress president and the party's pro-Saddam meetings are only vote catching gimmicks....

(Source : The Times of India, 3 March, 1991)

Minorities Support Crucial for Baltic Independence

Anatol Lieven in the Times, London

The key issue to the long-term future and stability of the Baltic republics as independent States lies not in resolving the predictable, hostile response from the Soviet hardliners, but in bridging lasting relations between the indigenous Baltic populations and the local Russian and Polish residents.

...(In) Latvia and Estonia. With 48 per cent and 39 per cent Russian-speaking populations respectively... stability in the future will become quite impossible.

Even in Lithuania, where Russians and Poles make up only about 20 per cent of the population, the ethnic question is crucial. The Poles and Russians are concentrated in the South of the republic, and around the capital, Vilnius. Poles, Russians and Belorussians make up almost half of the population of the city.

...As in Latvia and Estonia, the great bulk of the Russians and Poles in Lithuania are from the poorer sections of the labour force, and resent the nationalist movements....

However, educated Poles take their lead from Warsaw, which is supportive of the drive from Lithuanian independence, and back the campaign. All that they hope for it that (Lithuania) will understand their particular concerns.

(...But) the response of the Polish and Russian workers to increasing prices supports the fear of many Baltic analysts that the worsening economic situation will harden ethnic opposition to independence.... In the long run, economic collapse in Russia will probably provide the best chance that Russian workers in the Baltic will come around to accepting independence,

...Despite their declaration of solidarity with the Lithuanian Government, there has been still no serious response from the Government to various Polish demands. These include a strengthening of Polish educational facilities and the creation of one administrative region covering all the Polish-dominated areas of Lithuania....

...If Polish demands were not met, (one) feared a negative result in Polish areas in the referendum on independance next month being organized by the Lithuanian Government. He said that "the Poles are at a point where there must be some steps from the Lithuanian side, or the population could swing over to Lithuania's enemies...

If the Poles and Lithuanians are totally alienated, the Poles, who form 7.5 per cent of the population of Lithuania, face the question of with whom their areas should be linked. Many Russians and Belorussians have declared that the Vilnius region should join Societ Belorussia. Poles, however, know full well that they are treated even worse in Belorussia than in Lithuania.

...The lot of the ill-educated, ill-fed Polish workers is not a happy one, making them tools to be manipulated by the enemines of Baltic independence.

Shahabuddin Condems Atrocities and Special Laws

The Insaf Party has noted with concern and anguish the sharp rise in the incidence of atrocities against the people of the Valley in J & K since mid-January, 1991, although immediately after Shri Chandra Shekhar assumed the office of the Prime Minister the incidence had fallen.

Since mid-January, 1991, the following major cases of atrocities against the people have been reported.

	Cosunty	Agencies
19.1.91 Magarmal Bagh/Ram Bagh	16 including women & children	CRPF
29.1.91 Dayalgam, Anantnag	1 J & K Policeman killed 3 citizens beheaded	Army
30.1.91 1) Kocher-nag, Anantang	5 services complex blasted	Army
	3 firemen killed	Army
2) Palapora, Anantnag	3 houses & cow-slaughter blasted. 5 shot dead (18-70 years) 20 injured with Kukris.	
1.2.91		
1) Adigam, Anantnag	3 killed	Army
2) Bringi Nullah, A/Nag	2 killed	Army
3) Khanyar, Sri-	1 killed	CRPF

The Insaf Party is convinced that State terrorism cannot win hearts, that senseless repression is counter-productive, that state terrorism against unarmed civil population is reprehensible inhuman and unworthy of a civilised state, that arbitrary powers vested in the lower ranks of the security forces under the J & K Disturbed Areas Act and the Armed Forces (J&K) Special Powers Act is being grossly misused and that such atrocities constitute a pattern of persistent violation of human rights which has assumed a genocidal dimension.

The Insaf Party demands that these draconian laws be withdrawn immediately and the security operations in the Valley be directed against the militants and the insurgents and not against the people in general.

The Insaf Party cautions the Government that such atrocities will ultimately close all doors for reviving the political process or negotiating an acceptable solution of the Kashmir situation.

Authorised for Publication

New Delhi
15 February, 1991

Malaysia : Memorandum of Joint Action Committee to Defend Plight of Muslims in India

...The Action Committee to Defend the Plight of the Muslims in India express(es) our concern regarding the plight of our fellow Muslims in India. We demand the mosque and the right of the Muslims to perform their rites be safeguarded.

We strongly feel:

...To guarantee world peace and Hindu-Muslim relations, the Babari Mosque built 400 years ago by the Muslims in India....and all the mosques in India and the lives and the properties of the Muslims in India should be protected and respected by the Hindus.

...The World Hindu Council (VHP) should, therefore, avoid the Muslims from retaliating against the Hindus (in) their countries which will worsen the situation.

Today's modern world requires collective responsibility towards strengthening positive human relations between races and religions. Exploitation of religious feelings (of) the Hindu and denying... basic Muslim rights for the purpose of popularity of a certain political party is against humanitarian values.

Therefore the Committee:

a) Strongly condemns the extremist actions that violate the basic rights of the Muslims in India. The actions of the militant Hindus are against the teachings of the Hindu religion itself and that they have to be regarded as truly uncivilised.

b) Demands the Government of India to take positive actions to secure peace and to safeguard the rights of the Muslims in India. We put full responsibility to the Government of the India leadership of Chandra Shekhar so that the Hindu fanatics' group would stop all suppression (of)... the Muslims and (violation of) their places of worship....

c) Call all the Governments of Muslim countries, the OIC... World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), International Islamic Federation of Students Organisation (IIFSO), World Islamic Call Council (WICC), World Islamic People Leadership (WIPL) and Rabitat al-Alam al-Islami to meet and discuss this issue and take immediate action (and demand that) violent actions of this militant group should be immediately stopped.

d) Call all the Hindu Organisations in Malaysia to play their role in advising the Hindu militant groups in India to stop the tyranny against the Muslims in order to secure peaceful relationship between the followers of both religions.

e) Demands the United Nations, especially the Security Council and Organisations which work (for) the preservation (of) the basic human rights including Amnesty International to take effective action in order to protect... human rights (of) the Muslims and their places of worship.

Therefore, we... categorically state that we are not willing to see our fellow Muslims continually...suppressed. We are also constantly aware and following closely all the suppression... (of) our Muslim brothers in India and will continue to fight to maintain truth and justice.

11 November 1990.

THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA : STATEMENT

8 NOVEMBER, 1990

It is with deep sadness and profound shock that Muslims in North America and the world, view the.... violation of their places of worship in India...and the Hindu-siege of the ancient Babari Mosque.

* Let it be clear to all that for...one billion Muslims of the world, the status of the Babari Mosque and all Muslim places of worship in India is non-negotiable...
* The violent assault on Muslims and their places of worship is not an issue of concern for Indian Muslims alone, but a major affront to the global Muslim community.
* Clearly, it is the responsibility of the Indian government to safeguard the life, property and the places of worship of all its citizens.

Therefore, in representation of Muslims across North America, the Islamic Society of North America appeals to the Government of India to stop the ongoing cycle of violence, discrimination and brutality against Muslims and their institutions, particularly the vital Babari Mosque.

(Contd from page 175)

been planned for a riot.

Compensation or aid should be given only to those killed by rioters and not to those killed by the armed forces unless it is proved that they were killed accidently and were not involved personally in rioting.

It is wrong to keep confidential the Reports of Enquiry about riots. These should be promptly held, quickly concluded and made available to the public. There is no justification for hiding the truth. The guilty must be exposed.

Another fact that must be remembered is... M.J. Akbar's warning in his 'India : the Siege Within' : "If India's unity is destroyed once again, it will be for the same reason as the last—because the leadership of a minority managed in the midst of deliberately provoked violence, to seel the thesis that — a Hindu Majority would either subjugate them or swallow them."

...Those interested in National integration are doing the greatest disservice to the Nation by appeasing the minorities and denying to the majority what is available to the minority. **The Organiser, 13 January, 1991)**

Chronology of the Month
15 February—15 March, 1991

Political Situation

18 Feb : CPM G.S. denies electoral understanding or alliance with IUML.
: CPM and GNLF differ on inclusion of Nepali in Schedule 8.
: JD M.P. Ram Jethmalani defends RSS and concept of Hindu Rashtra.
20 Feb : Central Government denies possibility of caste in 1991.
28 Mar : JD leader V.P. Singh underlines new Social alignments and the demand for social justice and equity.
3 Mar : JD addresses Muslim rally in Nagina, UP.
4 Mar : CPI(ML) and 6 other organisations hold National Convention against communalism.
9 Mar : RSS calls for experts' panel on reservation.
10 Mar : RSS offers exclusive support to BJP.
12 Mar : P.M. Chandra Shekhar performs Johar Sthal puja in Chittargarh and addresses public meeting organised by Johar Sansthan.
: VHP vows to agitate against any government which opposes Ram Janambhoomi Mandir project.
13 Mar : Lok Sabha dissolved; elections to be held in May, 91.
: IUML decides against electoral alliance or adjustment with communal parties.
: Advani confirms Ayodhya dispute as prominent poll issue; BJP to contest 450 seats.
: RSS decides to support BJP.
: Rajiv Gandhi alleges tie-up between JD(S) and BJP; rules out electoral adjustment or alliance with JD (S).
14 Mar : VHP announces support to BJP in election; confirms programme of mass rally on 4 April.
15 Mar : RSS foresees BJP forming govt. demands clear stand by all parties in Ayodhya.
: VHP foresees end to minorityism with BJP's victory Bharat Sadhu Samaj demands total ban on cow slaughter & aytonomy for temples, maths & ashrams & restoration of centres of pilgrimage.

Babari Masjid

17 Feb : BMMCC holds National Convention on Babari Masjid with Swami Akshay Brahmachari in Chair; inaugurated by Swami Agnivesh and addressed by Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, B.N. Pandey, Ram Vilas Paswan, Subramanian Swamy, Choudhury Brahm Prakash, Syed Mir Qasim, R.K. Garg, apart from members; adopts Statement; calls for unity.
: BMMCC reiterates demands for early judicial verdict and central legislation to protect 15 August, 1947 status.
18 Feb : RSS leader Rajendra Singh admits differences in BJP on Ayodhya issue.
: Irfan Habib, eminent historian replies VHP's claim on birthsite/existence of temple.
: Ashok Singhal demands legislation to hand over all disputed sites to the Hindus.
20 Feb : VHP releases list of 59 allegedly killed in Ayodhya on 30 Oct-2 November, 1990 against 15 accepted by UP Government.
21 Feb : VHP rules out further negotiations with AIBMAC.
22 Feb : Buta Singh reiterates Shilanyas site as undisputed but accuses VHP of going back on its word.
23 Feb : VHP criticises reference of Ayodhya documents to ICHR for verification.
: VHP accuses Chandra Shekhar government of appeasing Muslims and causes of violence if mass mobilisation obstructed; criticises Press Council for strictness against Hindi press and Government of UP for terms of reference of inquiry in UP disturbances.
24 Feb : VHP rejects Rajiv Gandhi formula as legally 'unfeasible'.
25 Feb : VHP criticises President for ascribing communal situation to Ram Janambhoomi Movement.
27 Feb : Shankaracharya Swaroopananda threatens pad-yatra to Ayodhya if the disputed site not handed over in 3 months.
3 Mar : BJP M.P. Uma Bharati denies plan to demolish Masjid.
5 Mar : UP C.M. M.S. Yadav reiterates resolves not to permit demolition of Masjid without agreement or judicial verdict.
9-10 Mar : AIBMAC's A.I. Conference held in Lucknow, presided over by S.S. Owaisi and addressed by UP C.M. boycotted by Abdullah Bukhari; appeals for resistance by secular forces.
10 Mar : Prof. R.S. Sharma and Prof. Suraj Bhan demand access to excavation records, and deny existence of temple on Babari Masjid site.
12 Mar : BMMCC calls upon BJP to restore the Babari Masjid to Muslims, if it claims to respect Muslim sentiments and does not favour demolition.
13 Mar : Bharat Sadhu Samaj Convention asks Muslims to hand over Masjids in Ayodhya, Varanasi and Mathura demands ordinance.
Mar : VHP claims decicive rol for Ayodhya dispute.

Kashmir Situation

General :

Clases between the militant groups and the security forces continued during the month, though in a relatively low key. No specific instances of atrocities came to light during the period.

18 Feb : Governor G. Saxena claims insurgency to be on the wane and losing popular sympathy but no political progress.
19 Feb : Jamaat-e-Islami, J & K, agrees to negotiations, subject to conditions.
20 Feb : Hizb-ul-Mujahideen rejects talks.
23 Feb : Abortive rocket attack on UNMOG office in Srinagar.
: Mass rape reported from Kupwara.

25 Feb : J&LF rejects talks.
: Army called out in Srinagar.
27 Feb : Mrs. Naheed Imtiaz, mother of 4 year old son and pregnant, daughter of Prof. Saifuddin Soz, MP, kidnapped by JKSLF in Srinagar.
: Lok Sabha approves extenstion of President's rule for 6 months.
28 Feb : AIMMM, Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Insaf Party appeal for release.
2 Mar : JKLF appeals to JKSLF to extend deadline; Jamaat-e-Islami and Dukhtaran-e-Millat appeal for release.
2-3- Mar : Seminar on Kashmir Problem in New Delhi organised by Coordination Committee on Kashmir; A.G. Noorani, V.M. Tarkunde, Balraj Puri, Rajinder Sachar, S. Shahabuddin participate. Seminar adopts Statement.
3 Mar : Farooq Abdullah condemns kidnapping and accuses State Government of failure to protect nationalist forces.
6 Mar : Army moves into Sopore; curfew imposed.
8 Mar : Naheed Imtiaz released in exchange for one hard-core militant and 4 others.
9 Mar : RSS demands abrogation of Article 370.
10 Mar : Army called into Baramulla.
11 Mar : Army called out in parts of Srinagar.
14 Mar : Demonstration in Srinagar; clashes with security forces.
: Mss rape in Kupwara denied by authorities.
15 Mar : Army moves into Sopore.

Communal and State Violence

19 Feb : Police and municipal authorities attack Muslim locality in Indore under curfew, bulldozed and loot of houses and shops and assault and detain scores of persons including women and children.
2 Mar : Communal violence in Swai Madhopur; 1 killed, over 50 injured.
3 Mar : Communal violence in Jargaon village, Buland Shahr; 2 killed.
5 Mar : Minister of Home Affairs admits 700 killed in communal violence during 1990, with Hyderabad (130) and Aligarh (112). (The figure is roughly 1/3 of the actual-Editor)
: IB documents 71 in December' 90 riots in Khurja against 6 admitted by State Government.
6 Mar : Madras High Court orders release of Palani Baba detained under NSA.
6-10 Mar : Communal clash in Jamshedpur; 7 killed; injured.
12 Mar : Communal clash in Bhilwara, Gujarat; 2 killed.
: Communal violence in Nadia; 7 killed.
: M.P. C.M. Patwa denies atrocities in Indore on 19 February.

Foreign Reaction

20 Feb : 29 US Congressmen introduce anti-India bill on question of human rights.
22 Feb : US Congressmen Burton introduces resolution for plebiscite in J & K.

Miscellaneous

18 Feb : Bombay Police bans entry of Maulana S.M. Hashmi of Kachhauchha.
21 Feb : VHP demonstrates against service of beef in hotels.
22 Feb : 33rd death anniversary of Abul Kalam Azad officially observed in Delhi.
: Government accords approval to teleprinter service in Urdu by UNI.
23 Feb : President stresses importance of Sanskrit as fountain head of Indian culture.
24 Feb : Noted Urdu Poet Hasan Nayeem, 62, passes away in Bombay.
28 Feb : West Bengal Cong (I) leader Abdus Sattar, 67, passes away in Calcutta.
10 Mar : 37th Shankar-shad Mushaira in Delhi.
11 Mar : Ram Swaroop's 'Understanding Islam through Hadis' banned by Delhi Administration.
: 14th death anniversary of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed officially observed.
: Seminar on Communalism in Newspapers held in New Delhi.
14 Mar : Shahabuddin asks P.M. to open Protected Mosques for Taravih and Friday prayers during Ramazan.
15 Mar : Exhibition on 'Saga of Shahjahanabad' inaugurated in Delhi.

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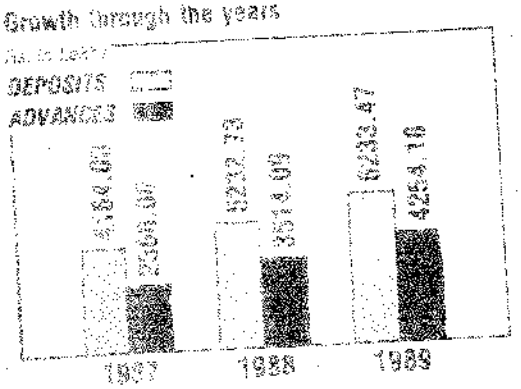
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