

Presidential Speeches
DR. MM JOSHI

National Executive

Calcutta

10 April, 1993

The National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party is meeting at Calcutta after about an interval of three years. The political scenario has undergone a qualitative change during this period. The BJP has emerged as a dominant pole in Indian politics and our adversaries are unable to digest our growth. That they are in the grip of a fear psychosis is evident from the manner in which the Constitution was violated in dismissing the BJP Governments, democratic norms thrown to winds while stopping and disrupting the BJP rallies by brute force, the RSS and VHP have been banned, BJP MPs have been arrested, their residence ransacked without any rhyme or reason.

Need for Healthy Centre-State Relationship

The landmark judgement of the MP High Court has raised a very vital issue regarding centre-state relationship. The Colourable exercise of power under Article 356 (1) by the Centre against the States is a direct onslaught on the federal structure which is a basic feature of our Constitution. It is high time that the expressions like breakdown of the “Constitutional machinery” and “breakdown of law and order” were clearly defined and steps taken to prevent the misuse of Article 356. It is strange that opposition parties like CPI (M), who were earlier demanding even the scrapping of this Article instead of supporting the demand to honour the court verdict, are asking the Central Government to go in to appeal against this historic judgment. In fact, in the wake of this judgment, the Congress-I government at the centre has no moral right to continue in office.

The National Executive has to deliberate on this very vital issue and evolve an effective strategy for the restoration of the elected governments and preserving the federal polity. In the opinion of the BJP, an all parties meeting be convened to decide the issue once for all. In the meantime, recommendations of Sarkaria Commission in this regard be implemented. There is also a strong case of the devolution of more financial powers to the states in order to keep the Centre-State relations healthy.

The party has to consider the ways and means for getting the ban on RSS and VHP lifted and also for the construction of the Ram Temple by the existing Ram Janambhoomi Nayas.

CPI (M) Misrule in W. Bengal

In West Bengal the misrule of the CPI (M) Government headed by Shri Jyoti Basu has been a downhill journey for a state which was very progressive at the dawn of the independence. Today the law and order is totally collapsed, administration has been completely politicised and the Bowbazar bomb blast has clearly exposed the nexus between the top rung of the CPI (M) leaders and the criminals indulging in terrorism. The economy of the state is completely shattered, government draws loans from private parties to foot the salary bills, investments are not forthcoming and with a total of 51 lakh registered unemployed, the state of West Bengal is perhaps the most glaring example of the CPI (M) misrule. In order to continue anyhow in office, the CPI (M) is supporting the misrule of the Congress-I Government at the Centre despite all ideological contradictions.

India's Economy in Shambles

The country's economy is in shambles. The economic programme pursued by the Narasimha Rao Government has not been able to pull the country from the economic morasse. Exports are not picking up and agriculture continues to remain stagnant. Foreign debt goes on mounting and prices are skyrocketing.

Pakistan Interference in India's Internal Affairs

There is open interference, indeed intervention, in India's internal affairs by Pakistan and lately by Bangladesh. For years

Pakistan has aided and abetted terrorism in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. The recent bomb blasts in Bombay and elsewhere show that it has extended its activities in many parts of our country. The illegal migration from Bangladesh continues unchecked and has created serious political, economic and social problems in various states.

India today faces multiple challenges to its security, unity and integrity. The Narasimha Rao government has only responded to these vital issues by holding meetings after meetings without achieving any concrete results. Serious efforts must be made to get Pakistan declared a terrorist state.

Violation of Human Rights in Bangladesh

The continuing violation of human rights and cultural rights in Bangladesh is a matter of serious concern. The spree of oppression and repression on the Hindus in recent months, desecration and destruction of a large number of temples, has forced them to leave their homes and hearths and flee in large numbers. Diplomatic initiative and educating the international opinion on this issue should be undertaken by the Government of India and the Bangladesh government should be asked to take immediate steps for their rehabilitation.

Social Creed of the BJP

On the ideological front too the BJP has been successful in raising a national debate about mainstream nationalism and pseudo-secularism, *Hindutva* and communalism. Even the CPI (M) leadership is now saying that they are ready to discuss the real tenets of Hinduism. The BJP accepts this challenge. The BJP firmly rejects the concept of theocratic state and reiterates its belief in justice to all and appeasement of none and in India being one country, one people, one culture and one nation. The party should go to the people and explain the social creed of the BJP which believes in a society free from exploitation and with no discrimination between its members on the basis of caste, creed, language or birth. The party is fully committed to the upliftment of the weaker sections.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Sarnath (Varanasi)

13 March, 1992

The National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party is meeting at Varanasi at a juncture when a number of developments have taken place which have a vital bearing on the economic and political situation of our country. India today has not only to find solutions to its internal challenges but has also to suitably respond to the fast changing world scenario. We cannot remain in isolation or in a state of frozen inertia. The country has to move forward and march with the times. We have also to bear in mind that we are now living in a post cold-war world which has its own lessons for a country like ours having 1/7th of humanity as its population and barely 4% of the world resources to sustain it.

Having realised that the post-independence developmental model has failed the country, the nation is now debating what should be the new economic structure of the country, which is confronted with mounting inflation, fast growing unemployment and spiralling price rise. Is consumerism, or the free market route, the only alternative left for us, or can we evolve some other paradigm which takes into account our aspirations and urges as well as our ethos and cultural values? This is a task before the National Executive and I believe it should be possible to suggest an integral humanistic developmental model which enables us to manage our domestic economy and also to promote suitable global linkages. This approach should also emphasise a fuller utilisation of the nation's natural and human resources and revive the spirit of *Swadeshi*.

In responding to the emerging global scenario we must take care on the one hand that a non-exploitative international economic order comes into being and on the other, we must

guard ourselves from the consequences which can follow from the grouping of certain nations on the basis of religion. The political resolution adopted by the Organisation of Islamic Countries against India is a point to be considered along with the emerging economic grouping of Pakistan, Iran and Turkey supported by the Central Asian Republics. The hostile attitude of Pakistan towards India and its declared support to the subversive elements in India, assumes a serious dimension in this context.

The National Executive has also to take stock of the internal political situation. The threat to our national unity and intergrity continues. The Kashmir situation, the recent happenings in Punjab and the LTTE activities, infiltration going on from Bangladesh, have all to be curbed and controlled. Immediate effective steps are needed to stop the Pakistani activities on the Rajasthan and Gujarat borders. In Bihar the mass murders and caste-wars have resulted in complete chaos. There appears to be a total collapse of the Janata Dal Government.

At this juncture when the country is facing a multidimensional crisis, the people expect mature behaviour and clarity of thought from the political leadership. People are witnessing the conduct of various political parties and they will judge them on merits and not on hallow populist slogans.

The BJP today has a set of leaders on the national and regional levels who are well known for their acumen and sincerity of purpose. Foreign visits of Shri LK Advani, and Shri Vajpayee have been very fruitful and the participation in international seminars on Kashmir by Shri Sikander Bakht and Shri Arun Jaitley have been well received. The States where BJP Governments are serving the people, are islands of peace and communal and social harmony. The unprecedented rally in Bhopal to mark the second anniversary of the BJP Government and the massive participation of all sections of society in it is proof positive that BJP Governments believe in justice for all but appeasement of none. The recent UP Budget, which did not levy taxes, also indicates the BJP's concern for common man and demonstrates the party's ability to manage the economy of the State.

Vande Matram!



National Executive

Gandhinagar

1-3 May, 1992

**Chairperson of the Reception Committee, fellow Delegates,
Brothers and Sisters,**

Land of Lord Som Nath

This Meeting of the National Council of the BJP is being held at Gandhi Nagar in Gujarat at a time when our country is in the grip of multidimensional crisis. This land of Lord Som Nath Which has since time immemorial been contributing to the advancement of our culture and preservation of our national heritage has also played a pioneering role in our freedom struggle. When we come to Gujarat we respectfully bow in homage to the memories of Narsi Mehta, Swami Dayananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Patel, Dr. K.M. Munshi and several other luminaries from this part of our country, who sacrificed their lives in the service of the motherland. At a time when country's unity and integrity are being threatened both from within and without, the nation needs a stalwart like Sardar Patel who very assiduously integrated more than five hundred princely states as unalienable components of Indian Republic. Had Sardar Patel remained on the political scene for a few years, I am sure, the integration of Kashmir with India would have been completed long back and the demon of separatism would not have been allowed to raise its ugly head in our country. In Sardar Patel we find a rare blend of nationalism, positive secularism, idealism and a clear vision of our history.

Election and thereafter

It may be recalled that the Parsi community, as a result of religious persecution in their own homeland, had come to India and settled first in Gujarat where the Hindu rulers offered them fullest support for preservation of their cultural tradition and religion. The Nation is proud of the Parsi community who without demanding any special privilege or status are second to none in contributing to the advancement of India in all walks of life, be it science, technology, industry or services. Gujarat has thus shown how the pursuit of positive secularism leads to national integration. This was also the ideology of Sardar Patel and perhaps because of this positive secularism Gujarat gave massive support to the BJP in the last general elections to the Lok Sabha. It is also very significant that on the shoulders of Shri L. K. Advani, MP from Gandhi Nagar and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, lies the responsibility to function as the sentinel of national unity and integrity and to promote the ideals of positive secularism. As events are unfolding the day is not too far, when the people would entrust to the BJP the onerous task of protecting and rebuilding the nation.

BJP makes Big Strides

It may be recalled that soon after our plenary session concluded in February 1991 general elections were held for the Lok Sabha and several State Assemblies. The circumstances necessitating these elections are too well known. The BJP entered the electoral arena with the slogan of "Ram Roti and Insaf" and contested about 400 Lok Sabha seats on its own. The outcome of these elections should be analysed in the back drop of the brutal assassination of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi which immediately after the first phase of the polling gave a 10 percent tilt of votes in favour of Congress (I) in subsequent phases, enabling it to become the single largest party in the Lok Sabha though losing heavily in Gujarat, UP and Bihar. As for the Janata Dal, although due to its division and communal politics it was rejected all over the country but it managed to win a large number of seats from Bihar through rigging. The results clearly indicated that the BJP was the only party to register substantial gains in these elections. In Lok Sabha it is second to Congress and is the recognised opposition; it has

been voted to power in UP, the most populous state of India; it polled 51 per cent votes in Gujarat and captured 20 seats; its poll percentage in Karnataka went up to 31 per cent from 2.6 per cent; it won 10 assembly and two Parliament seats from Assam; and in West Bengal it polled 12.4 per cent votes never before polled by the party. The performance of the BJP was summed up by the poll analysts as “the party which came second was in fact the winner”. Perhaps this is the most apt description of BJP’s poll performance. I once again take this opportunity to thank the people of our country for their massive support to the party and in particular the electorate of Gujarat for their overwhelming love and affection for the BJP and I repeat with all humility and responsibility that the State Governments where BJP is in office would continue to discharge their obligations with utmost sincerity and to the best of their capabilities.

BJP only Beacon of Hope

It has now been well recognised by India watchers that the most significant outcome of the 1991 elections is the emergence of the BJP as a single powerful pole in national politics. At a time when the Janata Dal is rife with internal dissensions and is in the grip of crisis of existence; when after the dismemberment of the USSR and collapse of socialist order the two communist parties are suffering from a serious ideological crisis, when the CPI has been openly charged for receiving foreign funds from the Soviet Union and the entire left front has remained confined as a regional phenomenon; and when the Congress (I) is in deep trouble facing crisis of leadership and is in utter confusion and drift due to failure of Nehruvian model and faced with cut-throat internal rivalries, the BJP is the only beacon of hope.

Attempts to Block BJP’s Progress

The phenomenal rise of Bharatiya Janata Party as a nationalist party, with a well knit cadre based organisation, sound ideology, sincere and dedicated leadership, honest and performing governments in four states and with a clear vision of the future would indeed offer to the people a credible alternative. This then is the real worry of the Left Front, the Janata Dal and its allies.

These parties are not the least worried about the dangers to the country, the serious situation in Kashmir, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Assam. They are not worried about the serious economic crisis, mounting unemployment, galloping prices and inflation, fast growing population and other demographic distortions due to infiltration from across the border. Their only anxiety is how to prevent the BJP from coming to power.

BJP Baiting

The sole determinant of the response of these political parties to various issues is not merit but their blind opposition to the BJP. Being unable to reconcile with the growth of the BJP they have come to a tacit understanding about the strategy for forging a united opposition against the BJP. For instance, while we were demanding a meeting of the National Integration Council (NIC) to discuss the Kashmir issue and the grave threat to the unity and integrity of India, the NIC was convened to discuss Ayodhya on the insistence of the Communists and the JD with the sole purpose of maligning the BJP government in UP. Take the case of *Ekta Yatra*. When I sent a letter to the Prime Minister to join us on the culmination of the Yatra for unfurling the national flag on the Republic Day at Lal Chowk, Srinagar, an all party meeting was convened with a view to preventing the Yatra. All along the Yatra the communists and the JD were opposing it and the Home Minister was issuing all sorts of statements supporting them.

Targetting BJP Government in UP

The way the Ayodhya issue is being raked up in and outside the Parliament and the UP legislature clearly shows that Congress (I) is working in tandem with its invisible friends. Even when the UP government was functioning well within its constitutional rights and successfully maintaining law and order and communal harmony all over the state and had not violated any law or judicial pronouncements, a false propaganda was launched against it and the Home Minister issued threats of taking action under Art. 356 against it and took an unprecedented and unconstitutional stand for sending a team of Parliament Members to Ayodhya with the sole aim of discrediting the UP government in the public eye. But

the same Home Minister adopts a studied silence about the gory carnages in the villages of Bihar. He does not contemplate sending a team of the House to find facts in Kashmir Valley.

Congress Trying to Hide its communal Links

The speech of the Congress (I) President, Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao and the political resolution adopted at the Tirupati session of the AICC assume special significance in this context. At Tirupati a frontal attack was launched against the BJP dubbing it a communal party propagating the “Communalism of the majority”. By making a ridiculous claim that the Congress (I) has never aligned with the communal parties in the past nor shall it do so in the future, the AICC wanted the countrymen to believe in its secular credentials. The need to forge some sort of a unity amongst secular democratic forces was also emphasised at Tirupati. It may be recalled that a similar idiom was also used during the conventions of both the communist parties and in the utterances of several JD leaders. This implies that Congress (I) and other parties consider the BJP as their principal adversary and also believe that they should combine to prevent the growth of the BJP. The earlier they combine the better it will be for the future polity of the country.

Congress Onslaught on Democracy

What objection can we have if the other parties want to combine against us? I for one, would welcome it any day. The whole world knows that the BJP is never shy to face any free and fair electoral challenge. But what disturbs me most is the devious manner in which the Congress(I) President Shri PV Narasimha Rao has tried to raise the issue of secular and non-secular parties with a view to assaulting the basic freedom of the political parties to contest elections. Since he is also the Prime Minister of the country his remarks have a very serious implications for the future of our democracy. The essence of the arguments of Shri Rao is that since the Preamble to the Indian Constitutions says that India is a secular Republic, therefore, in a secular democracy only secular political parties should be allowed to contest the elections. This is reviving the same old issue raised earlier by Shri Arjun Singh in

the “Symbol” case which was repelled by the Election Commission. The Constitution does not define secularism, nor is any definition suggested by Shri Rao. Under such circumstances the statement, “It would be entirely reasonable to say that a political party that participates in the secular democratic process must present a secular face, and a secular choice to the electorate” only implies that the Prime Minister wants to bring some sort of a legislation which would curtail democracy and lead to authoritarianism. With this thinking fascism in India will not be too far. Congress (I) and other pseudo-secularist parties must not be allowed to tinker with the democratic process in the country and I call upon the people of India to resist with all their might this onslaught on democracy.

National Debate

The BJP has since long been demanding a full and thorough debate on electronic media about communalism, secularism, nationalism and national mainstream, but no other political party comes forward. I demand that a national debate be held on the following questions:

- Is it communal to be a Hindu in India?
- Is to chant ‘Vande Mataram’ communal?
- Whether the demand for the formation of Human Rights Commission instead of a Minorities Commission is secular or communal?
- Is it communal to demand the enactment of a uniform civil code?
- Is India a nation in the making or an ancient nation?
- What is the meaning of national mainstream?
- Are Vivekanand, Lokmanya Tilak, Maharishi Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Dayanand parts of national mainstream or not?
- Whether Gandhiji was communal when he propagated the concept of Ram Rajya?

The Prime Minister has said that in a secular democracy parties must have a secular face and a secular choice. The BJP believes in having a secular spirit and a secular mind. It is our firm belief that India is secular because India is Hindu. We reject the pseudo-secularism lock, stock and barrel and also the concept of minoritism.

Majoritism and Minoritism

The debate on secularism and communalism will remain inconclusive so long as the term religious minorities remains undefined. Another question which has to be answered is how far the concept of religious minorities and majorities is compatible with the secular democracy in a country like ours where theocracy is not only unknown but repugnant to the Hindu ethos? Justice Hidayatullah had once remarked "Word 'minority' has not been defined in these Articles or elsewhere in the Constitution..... the framers of the Constitution were aware that a comprehensive definition of 'minorities' was difficult to frame." It is noteworthy that Dr. Ambedkar while replying to the debate for adopting Art. 29 (i) dealt with some of the amendments and pointed out that.... since the word "minority" was capable of a narrow interpretation and the intention was to provide protection in the matter of culture language and script in a wider sense, the Drafting Committee (of the Constituent Assembly) had dropped the word 'minority' and used instead the phrase "any section of the citizens."

It may well be remembered that rights are only safe if the social conscience is such that it is prepared to recognise the rights which the law chooses to enact. If the fundamental rights are opposed by the community, no law, no Parliament, no judiciary can guarantee them in the real sense of the word. And if there is a feeling that minority rights are impinging upon public affairs they become unsustainable.

One Nation One Culture

Shri MC Chagla as far back as 1962, had tried to emphasise that no 'minority' as a minority had a future in India. He had said, "Would there have been a Catholic President in the White House if the Catholics in the United States, in and out of season, had drawn attention to the fact that they were a religious minority?" Dr. Ambedkar had said on 4 November, 1948 in Constituent Assembly: "It is wrong for the majority to deny the existence of the minorities. It is equally wrong for the minorities to perpetuate themselves. A solution must be found which will serve a double purpose. It must recognise the existence of the minorities to start with. It must also be such that it will enable majorities and

minorities to merge some day into one.” Dr. Ambedkar was thus clearly opposed to the concept of minoritism and perpetuating the concept of the permanent minorities in India. I charge the Congress (I) and their allies with their criminal neglect of the sane advice of Dr. Ambedkar. Instead of bringing different religious communities into the refreshing flow of national mainstream, these parties, in order to serve their narrow political interests pursued pseudo-secularism and pushed these communities in the segregated ghettos transforming them into vote banks. I would like to ask the Prime Minister whether he agrees with Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. Chagla? Whether to strive, as the BJP is striving, for the blending of all communities as components of one nation based on one culture is “communalism”?

Hands off UP

The Bharatiya Janata Party believes that the restoration of Ram Janma Bhoomi temple in Ayodhya will go a long way towards national integration and to bring about a grand national reconciliation. The BJP government in UP is committed to remove all impediments in the way of the reconstruction of the temple and has taken many positive steps in this direction including the leasing out of a plot of about 42 acres of Ram Janma Bhoomi Nyas for the development of the Ram Katha Park. But the attitude of the Congress (I) government at the Centre is one of hostility and confrontation. Let the Congress (I) government at the Centre realise that the people of India are becoming impatient and would not tolerate any action under Art. 356 or otherwise against the government of UP which comes in the way of the speedy restoration of the temple.

Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh

The situation in Kashmir continues to pose a serious threat to the unity and integrity of our country, but the Government of India has no policy to meet the combined challenges of secessionism, terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism aided and abetted by Pakistan. In the opinion of the BJP it is imperative to scrap Art. 370 of Indian Constitution which not only creates a psychological divide between Kashmir and the rest of India but also does not

serve the common man in Kashmir. The wealth tax, the gift tax and the Urban Ceiling Act, which the State of J & K remains exempt from due to this Article, do not help the poor. Because of this Article about 15,000 families who had come to Jammu and Kashmir during the partition of India in 1947 have been denied admission to engineering, medical and agricultural colleges and cannot receive any loan under the 20 Point Programme. More than three lakh nationalist Kashmiris have been rendered refugees in their own home land and are languishing in subhuman conditions but the Govt. of India continues to remain insensitive to their sufferings.

The people of Jammu and Ladakh have long been complaining against discrimination and are now worried about the continuing infiltration of terrorists in these regions. In the opinion of the BJP:

- Separate Regional Development Councils of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir Valley should be formed without delay.
- Guerilla units should be raised to match Pakistani trained Mujahideens.
- Effective steps should be taken to counter Pakistani propaganda.
- International opinion should be mobilised for declaring Pakistan a terrorist nation.
- Prime Minister should visit the camps where Kashmiri migrants are living.
- A message loud and clear should be repeatedly sent to the secessionists in the valley that come what may Kashmir is unalienable part of India.

Bleeding Punjab

The BJP holds Congress(I) wholly responsible for the mess it has created in Punjab which continues to bleed. Had the Congress government not toppled the duly elected governments in Punjab, not once twice, but three times, there would have been no Bhandranwale, no “Blue Star” and “Black thunder”. It was the loot and murder of thousands of innocent Sikhs in Delhi and elsewhere in 1984, that has hurt and angered the Sikhs, given a handle to Pakistan, and not all the provocations of their terrorist agents, has soured Hindu-Sikh relations, is a positive proof that the heart of Punjab is sound. However, the recent elections in Punjab instead

of strengthening the unity of hearts have caused further alienation.

In the opinion of the BJP the Punjab problem is political and the responsibility to find a solution to it lies squarely with the Congress (I) and people are not prepared to accept any alibi for the delay. The Congress (I) should take initiative and bring about a solution by evolving a consensus amongst all concerned. Once the consensus is reached the proposals should be implemented in one stretch with a simultaneous firm resolve to root out terrorism. The BJP does not support Khalistan and is thoroughly opposed to the idea of giving special status to any State. The party demands that those responsible for the riots of 1984 should be punished.

The Truth about Bofors

Bofors is regarded as a symbol of corruption at high places. When the allegations were first made the Rajiv Government had reacted very furiously and tried frantically to suppress the scandal. The nation is grateful to the then Controller and Auditor General of India Shri TN Chaturvedi and General Sunderji of exposing the Government. However, attempts to cover up the scandal continued and the truth about the murky deal has not been allowed to come to surface. The Solanki episode once again confirmed that powerful forces are working to scuttle the investigation. The issue took a serious turn when reports appeared linking Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's name with the efforts to stall the Bofors investigation. What is intriguing is that when the issue was raised in the Parliament no member of ruling party came forward to defend the Prime Minister for full five hours. Some of the questions which have to be answered unambiguously are: whether on 25 March Shri Narasimha Rao knew that his name was being linked with the Solanki memorandum; and whether the Prime Minister himself approved the various replies sent by CBI to Mr. Mare Bonnant and Swiss authorities on 26 March. The truth and the whole truth about Bofors scandal must be brought to light. The BJP believes that corruption at high places is eating the vitals of our polity and economy and cleansing process must be initiated. The institution of Lokpal having a jurisdiction over all Ministers including the Prime Minister can serve as the watchdog for the financial depravity of the ministers. It is high time that such an institution was created.

Economic Scenario

Indian economy today is on the brink of a precipice. After about four decades of planning the country finds itself almost on the threshold of bankruptcy. People are convinced that the post-independent economic development model based on Nehru Mahalanobis approach is mainly responsible for this disaster. A national debate is going on as to how we should restructure our economy particularly at a time when the socialist order has collapsed in Soviet Russia. The BJP believes that before we embark on the new path it is necessary to examine certain vital aspects of the current Indian economic scene.

India represents 1/7 of humanity; but it has only 1.25 or 4 per cent of world's resources. In contrast, the USA has only 4 per cent of the world's population and 40 per cent of world's resources.

Power Performance Small Independence

India's share of world manufactured goods in 1830 was 19 per cent against 9 per cent of UK. Today India's share is only 1.3 per cent. India's exports in 1950 were \$1454 millions and Japan's \$500 millions. At the start of our political freedom we were ahead of Japan. In 1965? China was 34 percent ahead of us. Today China is ahead by 78 percent.

Today our external debt has reached a staggering figure of around Rs 200,000 crore and our debt management is reduced to arranging for loans to repay the earlier ones. The recent tranche of the IMF loan was given to us to meet our exceptional Financial needs and the projections of the World Bank indicate that this need will persist at least till the completion of the eighth plan. The World Bank has also estimated that India's repayment of principal alone will amount to Rs. 7800 crore (\$3 billions) in 1992 and will rise to Rs 18,200 crore (\$7 billions) in the later half of the nineties.

Let us also have a look at how the gap between the High Income Countries and the Low Income Countries has increased over the past 25 years. In 1965 the LICs with per capita income of \$580 accounted for 52 per cent of the world's population and only 8 per cent of the GDP while the HICs with 18 per cent of the world's

population accounted for 71 per cent of the world GDP. But in 1989 the LICs accounted for 57 per cent of the world population and 5 per cent of the world GDP, whereas the HICs with only 15 per cent of world population had 74 percent of the world GDP. The inequities thus sharpened during this period. The international economic order has remained unfavourable to the LICs. In fact this order has been highly exploitative.

India must Restructure its Economy

So it is in this backdrop that India has to restructure its economy. We must recognise that the development followed during the past four decades in ultimate analysis separates development from employment treating human beings just as fodder in the developmental process. Under Indian conditions it is only through gainful and productive employment that rapid development is possible.

Swadeshi & Swaraj

India must keep her eyes open and mind receptive. We must liberalise, industrialise and modernise but it has to be done in the Indian way. We have to evolve our own model and that is the meaning of SWADESHI. For us *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj* are indivisible. Our *Swadeshi* is not an inward looking static concept but *Swadeshi* of a self-confident, dynamic, hard working and modern nation that can deal with an aggressive and complex world outside on terms of equality. By *Swadeshi* we mean that the impetus for growth in India has to come from its own human and material resources. The role of foreign capital and technology is not denied for certain sectors and specified national objectives.

Integral Humanism

Much of the economic inequalities in the present world arise from the belief that it is possible to have unlimited growth on a planet with limited resources and environment. India has long back recognised the inherent weakness of this approach. Our experience tells us that a balanced growth model is far less exploitative. By balanced growth we understand a system in which human activities always try to maintain the balance between individual and society on the one hand and man and his eco-system on the other. This is the vision of Integral Humanism propounded by Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay. The BJP therefore has been

advocating a humanistic approach to the economic development. I call upon you, my fellow delegates, to give a serious thought to this idea while discussing the draft economic policy statement.

Pakistan and Our Nuclear Option

In the light of Pakistan emerging as a nuclear-weapon state, while the BJP has been asking that India exercise its nuclear option to restore the strategic balance in South Asia, there is evidence that the Government of India has agreed or is about to agree to give up the option. Early this year the Prime Minister bade farewell to the ambiguity maintained by his predecessors on this score and said, "We are firm in our resolve not to manufacture nuclear weapons ourselves." Then came the visit of the Foreign Secretary to Washington where most of the discussion was concentrated on nuclear non-proliferation in South Asia. It was agreed to continue the dialogue and the US insisted that further talks be held within eight weeks in New Delhi. Now the impression in knowledgeable quarters is that it is only a matter of time before we formally sign away our nuclear option.

India's Security Interests must not be Betrayed

What the US and others desire is that India and Pakistan agree to cap their nuclear programmes and to accept the application of full-scope safeguards on their nuclear establishments and activities. In today's situation this implies that Pakistan would cap its nuclear programmes as a nuclear-weapon state and India as a non-nuclear-weapon state!

Simultaneously, pressures are coming on India to abandon the testing of the 'Agni' missile which is the basis of our intermediate range ballistic missile programme (IRBM) and which is designed to potential nuclear war-heads to the territory of other enemies.

Taken together, the above two restrictions will lead to a betrayal of India's security interests.

Security and Territorial Integrity

The BJP has been known and respected for its no-nonsense approach to the preservation of India's unity and territorial integrity which means inter alia security from external threats. I hope no one has any doubt that Pakistan is doing everything in its power to break-up India. Kashmir and Punjab apart, Pakistan is also engaged in subversive activities in Assam and Kutch region of Gujarat.

Recently the Prime Minister wrote to Nawaz Sharief giving evidence of the involvement of the Inter Service Intelligence of Pakistan with ULFA. And the Home Minister alluded to the large scale infiltration into Kutch from Pakistan. Given this undeniable truth of Pakistani designs the BJP would strongly oppose this surrender of nuclear option. We must continue with the testing of the Agni missile and should unhesitatingly give our defence forces nuclear teeth. We want a nuclear free world but when country's security faces danger we have to respond and in the given circumstances we should have a nuclear deterrent of our own.

Spread the Message of Integral Humanism

Fellow delegates, this is a bird's eye view of some of the problems facing the country and the approach of BJP towards them. We are meeting at Gandhi Nagar on May Day. The message is loud and clear. The two most important components of a new socio-economic order should be dignity of labour and respect for human personality. In this industrial age in which environmental degradation, depletion of ozone and spread of AIDS are posing a very real threat to the very existence of mankind, it is only through a new paradigm that we can save this planet. Problems confronting mankind cannot be solved in parts, only a holistic or integral approach can provide the real answer. This is the philosophy of Pt Deendayal Upadhyay. I call upon you to take his message of Integral Humanism to the teeming millions in the farms and the fields.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Bhopal

22 August, 1992

Government not Successful in Tackling Pakistan-backed Terrorism

We have gathered in Bhopal at a time when the secretary level talks between India and Pakistan have ended and the monsoon session of the Parliament too has just ended. No one had expected that the problems between India and Pakistan will be solved after the talks, but there was a definite hope that the Government of India would adopt a strong posture on the issue of Kashmir and ask Pakistan not to promote and help terrorist and secessionist activities in India. The Indian side was a complete failure in getting clear assurance on this important issue.

Government Policy on Kashmir, a cause of Worry

The response expressed by spokesperson of Foreign Ministry on the proposals of James Claide, a fellow of Carnegie Endowment on Kashmir Affairs, has caused us worry on the policy on Kashmir of the Congress (I) government.

You might be aware, a senior fellow of "Carnegie Foundation for International Peace", Mr. James Claide had come to Delhi this year. He held talks with the senior officers related to Kashmir Affairs. On the basis of his talks, he presumed that the Government of India (1) is prepared to divide Kashmir along the present line of control, and (2) is prepared to offer some more area to Pakistan so that China and Pakistan may feel secure about the Highway connecting the two nations.

BJP will not give any Concessions on Kashmir Issue

Mr. Claide also said that the Government of India has begun to give permission to the foreign experts to inspect those sensitive military and space installations which were earlier closed to them. While the Foreign Ministry spokesman, clarifying the statement of Mr. Claide said that the statement of Mr. Claide does not reflect the thinking of the Government of India, nor is any aspect of the government policy revealed. But it is clear that senior Indian officials have held talks on these lines because of which the position of India on Kashmir is seriously affected. It appears that the spokesman is concerned about why India did not get such an offer from Pakistan. It is also strange that the spokesman has not countered the clear statement of Mr. Claide that India has opened its military and space installations for foreign inspection.

I am not surprised that the Government of India discusses a very sensitive political and military issue causing harm to the pride and honour of India. After all, for more than a year every aspect of the Indian economy is open to the foreign investigation and is affected.

I want to caution the people of India that the discussions on dividing Jammu and Kashmir are going on amongst foreigners—officials and non-officials—both. BJP will not allow any part of Kashmir to be given to Pakistan. India can only discuss the issue of the 1947-48 Pak occupied Kashmir to be returned to India, in any discussion on Kashmir with Pakistan.

Anti-defection Law, Not Effective

The National Executive must consider the situation arising out of defections in the political parties and the issues highlighted by the Lok Sabha Speaker on the internal situation resulting out of events within the Janata Dal Parliamentary Party. In this context, it becomes necessary to consider the sub-clauses of the tenth schedule of our Constitution and on the question—whether it has become necessary to reconsider anti-defection law under the prevailing circumstances. The main question is, whether the sub-clauses of the law can be interpreted to mean or actually mean such that the activities of defection are justified or does this meaning on interpretation stop the activities of defection? The conspiracy of defections having monetary role has highlighted a very ugly character of the Indian politicians

and there is a need to make a serious effort to curb the malicious role of black money in the Indian political system.

Role of BJP in the National Unity

Today the BJP has got an opportunity to turn into a powerful instrument to change socio-economic features, while the other parties are breaking apart. The BJP has stood as a strong and united organisation based on people's mandate. I will request the National Executive to prepare a programme for organisational election and to make people aware of the good deeds done by the party in the states in which it has its governments. The National Executive must prepare public relations programme to create public awakening on the danger to the national unity and indivisibility due to continuous infiltration and rearing of head by the bigot communal elements.

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National Executive

New Delhi

23 December, 1992

We are assembling here in Orissa, the ancient land which occupies a unique position in our history. It was here in Kalinga that Chanda Ashoka was transformed into Ashoka Priyadarshi. It is here in Orissa that the great edicts enunciating some of the loftiest principles of governance in ancient India, are preserved. It is a land not only rich in national wealth and beauty but also is a repository of our glorious cultural heritage. It is really unfortunate that these great centres in Orissa which have promoted and strengthened the fundamental unity of our country, have been thoroughly neglected by the pseudo-secularist rulers of our country. The temple at Puri needs immediate attention and speedy repair. The great Sun-temple at Konark also requires special measures to be adopted for preserving its wonderful art and architecture. The Central and State Governments should pay immediate attention to this matter and come forward with the necessary funds and expertise. A special authority should be created for the protection, renovation and management of Lord Jagannath's Temple at Puri.

Disillusionment with Rao Government

The National Executive is meeting at a time when the political scenario is changing rapidly. In less than two years people have been disillusioned with the Narasimha Rao Government at the Centre which has failed both on political and economic fronts. The Ayodhya issue remains unresolved, and the Narasimha Rao Government has failed to come out with any tangible solution. The situation in Kashmir continues to deteriorate, corruption has

become the order of the day and, with rising prices and mounting foreign debt, the economy is fast moving downhill. It is in this context that the National Executive has to analyse the impact of the recent Bharat Bandh organised by the party.

Some of our neighbours have become very daring in their interference in our internal affairs.

Resolution in Pak National Assembly

The Pakistan National Assembly has passed two resolutions in the last two months on matters which are solely within the domestic competence of India. One of these related to the construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and the other to the treatment of Indian citizens in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir. On Kashmir, the Pakistan National Assembly seeks to involve once again the United Nations and the international community to put pressure on India to hold a plebiscite and to stop India's efforts to re-establish law and order in the State. At the same time Pakistan continues to aid, abet and guide the terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.

Shocking Report about Siachen

Recently two agents of the infamous ISI of Pakistan were shot dead in Punjab while they were engaged in guiding the terrorists in that state. Under these circumstances, press reports indicating that Government is preparing to withdraw from Siachen, are shocking. It may be remembered that it was at Siachen that so many of our brave soldiers had sacrificed their lives to defend the honour of our country. The whole of Jammu and Kashmir, including the Pakistan occupied Kashmir, is Indian territory. How can Indian troops be withdrawn from Indian territory in response to Pakistani pressure? This is beyond comprehension. Indeed, it is Pakistan which must withdraw from the whole of Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

Bankruptcy of Kashmir Policy

The Union Home Minister has convened a meeting tomorrow of the ex-MLAs of J & K Assembly belonging to various parties, to take stock of the prevailing situation in the State. It is indeed surprising that no representative of the Kashmir migrants has been invited to this meeting. That shows the bankruptcy of the Kashmir policy of

this Government. Any talk of restoring the pre-1953 conditions in J & K or of granting further autonomy, is against national interest and the BJP is opposed to it.

Demographic Invasion

The illegal migration of 15 million Bangladeshis to India is a grave threat to the economy of India and peace and amity in the Indian society. But the Government of India is unable to persuade the Government of Bangladesh to talk about this grave matter, let alone take back illegal migrants. This demographic invasion has got to be stopped, but we see no sign of the Government of India acting in a determined manner to do it.

The international scene is also undergoing qualitative change. We have to take into account the change in the United States and the recent statements of Russian leaders and to analyse the performance of the foreign policy of the Narashimha Rao Government.

Progress in BJP ruled States

The people have given an opportunity to the BJP to serve them in four States and they are keenly watching the performance of our Governments. Their performance has evoked confidence in the people that these Governments do believe in Justice for all and appeasement of none. They have handled the law and order situation remarkably well and have succeeded in maintaining communal harmony. Despite severe resource crunch the pace of development has been accelerated although there is room for more improvement. I am confident that the four BJP Governments would prove that BJP is a party with a difference and the people of India can depend upon us.

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National Executive

Jaipur

1-3 February, 1991

BJP is no Longer a Peripheral Party

Today is the last meeting of this National Executive. Tomorrow, a distinguished colleague of ours, Dr. MM Joshi will be assuming the stewardship of the BJP as Party President. Soon thereafter, a new Executive would be constituted.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all of you, and more particularly, Rajmataji, Vajpayeeji, Bhandariji, Sikander Bakhtji, the party's four General Secretaries and other office-bearers, for the unstinted support and cooperation you have given me during my tenure as Party President.

I look back today on my five year tenure with considerable satisfaction. I remember an article written by a political commentator some years back in which the writer paid fulsome compliments to the BJP, its leadership as well as its cadres, but went on to observe that BJP's position in Indian politics would never be more than that of a brilliant character-actor of Indian films – namely, that he would have admirers aplenty, but he could never be the hero. An ideological party like the BJP – that was the burden of that article – can never hope to form the Government at New Delhi.

The biggest single achievement of our party these days is that we have completely changed this widely accepted perception. BJP admirers and detractors alike no longer regard the party as a peripheral party. It has very much come to occupy small-stage in national politics. Our supporters hope that the "saffron sunshine" will dawn over New Delhi very soon while our detractors keep

expressing fears that the “saffron spectre” may engulf the country before long!

BJP Now Occupies Centre-stage

Till some years ago, Indian politics was a single-party dominant set up. Just two and a half years back, the party-wise configuration of India’s political map was broadly as follows:

The Congress Party was dominating the Centre with a thumping majority in Parliament, and besides, was ruling more than 15 States. The Marxist parties were in control of three States – West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. The Janata Dal was in the saddle in two States – Haryana and Karnataka. Regional parties, like the TDP, the AGP, the DMK, and the National Conference were ruling one State each.

From among the main parties, thus, the BJP was the only one which could not boast of even a single Chief Minister. Its only claim to Governmental office was as a junior partner in the Haryana Government

Today, a sea-change has come about in the above situation. There is no party which can be deemed a dominant party, or even the principal party. The Congress Party is not in control of the Central Government. If it still has four Chief Ministers, the BJP also has now come to command in three States. The Marxists and the JD have two Chief Ministers each.

Our Party is now setting the agenda

The BJP’s second achievement which also is widely recognised is that the party is no longer just reacting to issues raised by the ruling party. Today, the BJP is in fact setting the agenda of political debate. All non-BJP parties are today in the dock having to explain their pseudo-secularism and minoritism.

The present government in New Delhi lacks legitimacy, lacks popular support, and sheerly because of the miniscule size of the ruling party, is woefully devoid of talent. It just does not possess the capacity to tackle the serious problems the country is beset with. A knocking sense of uncertainty as to how long this government would last and Government’s continuing strains with the Congress Party add to this incapacity.

Congress Party Afraid to Face the Electorate

The country's interests warrant a fresh poll. But a poll decision rests now mainly with the Congress Party. And the Congress Party's standing with the people has plummeted so steeply that the party is absolutely scared of facing the electorate. In fact, the principal factor affecting the Congress Party's decisions these days is its obsessive anxiety to avert elections.

Our party workers must, therefore, be mentally prepared for both eventualities – an early election, say, within this year itself, or then, a longish interlude before an election battle is actually joined.

If there is an election this year, the BJP should be all-set to put its best foot forward. We must get down in right earnest to the task of framing our manifesto, drawing up our list of candidates, and mobilising resources.

If, on the other hand, there are no early elections, the interlude available must be fully utilised to widen our support base, and consciously reach out to states and regions outside our traditional spheres of influence.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Jaipur

1 February, 1991

**Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, fellow-delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Please permit me to begin by expressing my deep sense of gratitude towards those countless workers of Bharatiya Janata Party who have honoured an ordinary fellow-worker like me by entrusting to him the onerous responsibility of presidentship of the Party. Bharatiya Janata Party is the only party that has been regularly reorganising its structure at various levels every two years in keeping with its constitution since its inception. The leadership has endeavoured to see that internal democracy continues to be naturally active within the Party.

Atalji's Leadership

When Bharatiya Janata Party was formed in 1980 the towering Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the natural choice as our first President. It was without doubt due to his vast political experience, his international reputation as India's most successful Foreign Minister, his mature nationalistic thinking, his inimitable oratory and his dedication to the downtrodden that the Party could emerge as a new and bright star on the political firmament of India. Shri Vajpayee has firmly held that continuance of a particular individual in a particular office without change is detrimental to the growth of a healthy democratic process. Consequently in spite of the urgings of party workers, he resolutely declined a third term as President. This was setting a unique convention for political parties in this country.

Advani Ji takes the Party to New Heights

Shri Lal Krishna Advani was a worthy successor of Shri Vajpayee as leader of the Party. His able guidance, ceaseless endeavour, purity of character and political acumen took the party to new heights. He is indeed a rare blend of idealism and practical politics. The credit for the party's unprecedented success in the last elections to the Lok Sabha and to the various legislatures must surely go to his guidance and to the dedicated efforts of party workers. Naturally, everyone wished that in these times of great difficulties but limitless possibilities he should continue as our President for a third term. Again, like Shri Vajpayee, Shri Advani declined it. The top leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party thus again lived up to its principles. It is a matter of surprise for many that all senior and successful leaders of the party should unanimously and unhesitatingly entrust this responsibility to a worker like me. I am myself in the dark about the reason for this change. Perhaps the party wants to prove that in the political culture we follow, a worker works not on the strength of office or personality but collective decision and dedication to principles. I pray to the Almighty that I may prove worthy of the love and confidence with which you have entrusted to me the responsibility of presidentship of the party. I am aware of my limitations as well as of the capabilities of the party, and I also know that whatever success I may achieve in living up to your expectations would solely be due to the advice of experienced senior associates like Shri Vajpayee, Shri Advani, Shrimati Rajmata Vijaya Rajeji, Shri Sunder Singh Bhandari and Shri Sikandar Bakht, and the love and trust of party workers. I also believe that the dedicated lives of Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherji, Acharya Raghuvira and Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay would continue to activate our idealism and vitality.

The Inspiring Land of Glory

Ladies and gentlemen, we come together in this sacred land of Rajasthan when the country is beset with calamities. History stands testimony to the fact that this land has produced heroes who never flinched before adversity and who readily sacrificed everything for their country, their culture, the sacred heritage of their ancestors and for the freedom and integrity of their motherland. Padmini's

self-immolation, the battle of Haldi Ghati, Jhala's martyrdom, Bhama Shah's generosity, Chetak's loyalty, the protection of Rana Pratap's family by the Bhils—all sacrifices from Bappa Raval's to the martyrdom of Jetharam, Mahendra Arora and the Kothari brothers for the reconstruction of Rama Mandir remind us of the glorious tradition of Rajasthan.

Fresh Elections are Inevitable

The history of Rajasthan is not only a saga of bravery but it also has golden epochs of cultural confluence and the patronage of art and science, artistry and architecture. Along with the vast ancient lore of this land, Rajasthan is also a unique treasure-house of important Jain philosophical manuscripts. In the field of astronomy, Jaipur's contribution to the scientific tradition of India amazes Western astronomers to this day. King Jai Singh, founder of the city of Jaipur, was an astronomer in his own right. He not only wrote astronomical works but designed excellent astronomical instruments. To him goes the credit of constructing the five world-famous observatories of Kashi, Mathura, Delhi, Jaipur and Ujjain. He designed the instruments of the Jantar Mantar of Delhi and the Man Mandir of Kashi. It needs to be noted that the calculations of the planetary motions made by the Jaipur observatory in the eighteenth century were far more accurate than those made in Europe, and its instruments considered the best in the world. I believe this historic land of Rajasthan will inspire us not only to preserve the unity and integrity of our country but also to put it in the front rank of modern nations in respect of scientific and technological advance as well as economic progress.

The First convention of Bharatiya Janata Party was held in Mumbai in 1980 and the second and third in Delhi in 1983 and 1986. The fourth convention was held in Agra in 1988. The fifth convention is being held in Jaipur at a time when the country is passing through a multi-dimensional crisis. This crisis has covered all aspects of our life—political, economic, social, cultural as well as moral—and has put a question mark on our very existence as a nation. The country is groping for means to meet this deepening crisis. A convention held at such a critical juncture assumes special significance, because our fellow-countrymen look up to Bharatiya

Janata Party to save the situation. It is also important because the mandate given by the last Lok Sabha elections has now become meaningless and a new mandate has become inevitable in the present circumstances. The political parties responsible for the present crisis may well feel afraid of facing the people and may well abandon long professed principles and generally accepted values for sticking to power, but the way the situation is developing seems to underline the distinct possibility that in spite of all trickery a new mandate cannot be avoided much longer. The common man knows that there is only an apology of a government at the Centre. Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar has only a lifeless structure of a government; its life is mortgaged to Rajiv Gandhi.

Distorted Political Scene

This unparalleled crisis has not come about all of a sudden. As a matter of fact, the scene prevailing before the last general elections reveals its basic causes. What else could result from the policies pursued since Independence and especially since Mrs. Gandhi's return to power in the beginning of the eighties? After the British quit, the Congress continued the same old 'divide and rule' policy for its political ends. It always continued in power on the strength of vote banks that were built up by setting up caste against caste, sect against sect and class against class, and then by appeasing them for their votes. Mrs. Gandhi excelled in this art. Her policies gave rise to terrorism and secessionism in the Kashmir valley and in Punjab, and they were also responsible for the frightening aggravation of the Assam problem. She was also the mother of economic corruption in politics and she gave legal protection to corrupt electoral practices. After her dastardly assassination in 1984, her son Rajiv Gandhi rode an unprecedented wave of public sympathy and achieved a success that even Pt Nehru had never had. Naturally, the unity and integrity of the country was the main plank in these elections of promises of a Government that works and a clean administration.

Widespread Corruption and Failure of Govt.

But the Rajiv Government could neither eradicate secessionist and terrorist elements nor could it give a clean administration. Revelation of the truth about the long chain of scandals from Fairfax to Bofors brought the Prime Minister himself to the dock, and the more he tried to whitewash the deeper he sank in the mire. The people were furious to learn that foreign exchange worth thousands of crores of rupees was stashed away in secret foreign accounts but a government swearing by a clean administration was dragging its feet in bringing it back. So far as the unity and integrity of the country are concerned, the Rajiv Government brought the country to the very brink of disaster. During his tenure, the situation in Punjab went from bad to worse with every passing day. Terrorists killed innocent citizens at will, and the Government could not put a stop to arms and subversive elements coming in from Pakistan. In Kashmir, anti-Indian pro-Pakistani fundamentalists kept spreading hatred for India, demolishing temples and insulting the National Flag but in Delhi the Government sat mute. The Rajiv Government paid no attention to implementing the Assam accord. Neither did it identify and drive out infiltrators, nor did it stop their unending flow nor fence the Assam-Bangladesh border. No attention at all was paid to correcting voters' lists or to the economic development of Assam.

Appeasement of Communal Forces

On the other hand, the accord into which the Rajiv Gandhi Government entered with the rebels in Mizoram assured all rebels, terrorists and secessionists, that the Government listened only to the language of the bullet. In the Shah Bano case, Rajiv surrendered before the Muslim league and other communal elements and changed the provisions of the Law to completely nullify the Supreme Court verdict. That Mohammed Arif Khan was forced to resign from Ministership on the ground that he considered the Muslim Women's Protection Bill retrograde was an instance of abject surrender to communalism. The most shameless example of Rajiv Gandhi's appeasement of communal forces was the Congress (I) manifesto for the Mizoram Assembly elections, which stated that if returned to power the party would base the school curriculum on

the Bible and even that Congress socialism was based on the Bible.

Deepening Despair, Mounting Anger

When Vishwanath Pratap Singh initiated inquiries into some cases of corruption, his portfolio was changed. This finally resulted in some people leaving the Congress and forming the Jan Morcha, and people were convinced that the Rajiv Gandhi Government did not have clean hands. At the same time, the Rajiv Government's economic impolicies led to an unchecked growth in unemployment and foreign debt which, coupled with the economic burden of a budget deficit, put the people under tremendous strain. In the international field too India's image was eroded. All this filled the public mind with so much despair and anger that people yearned to rid themselves of the corrupt and incapable government.

Rajiv Gandhi's biggest misdeed has been the complication of the issue of temple construction at *Ramajanmabhoomi* in Ayodhya for the sake of a vote bank. On the one hand, some top leaders of his party and government kept assuring saints and *dharmacharyas* that they were in favour of constructing the temple, while on the other, they sent signals to the Muslims through the Babri Action Committee and other Muslim bodies that it was only due to Rajiv that the Babri mosque structure was intact. The Congress heresy was exposed when just a day before the *shilanyas* of the Rama Mandir, the government declared it a disputed land, deployed the police and para-military forces to prevent the *shilanyas*, tried to persuade the saints not to go ahead with it, but changed its stand on the day of the *shilanyas* in the face of overwhelming public opinion and declared that it was not a disputed land. The *shilanyas* was performed, but the Rajiv Government prevented temple construction – this was another phase of the same heresy. History will never forgive the Rajiv regime for the comprehensive growth of terrorism, secessionism and communalism and for seeking to combat them with appeasement and 'accordism'.

Bharatiya Janata Party was the only party to clearly state its position on this issue in its Palampur resolution. Our party has always held that the temple should be constructed at the *Ramajanmabhoomi*. It wishes this had followed the restoration of the Somnath temple as a matter of course. The party resolution

also suggested that either the issue could be settled by mutual discussion or the Government could make a law to hand over the site to the *Ramajanmabhoomi Mukti Nyas*. Litigation is no answer to such a problem. The party had also appealed to Muslim brethren to give up their claim of the Babri Masjid having stood on the site and extend willing co-operation in the construction of the temple. I charge that the Congress, the National Front and the Communist parties incited our Muslim brothers instead of acquainting them with the truth. I also charge that these parties deliberately made it a Hindu-Muslim issue while it is the issue of a foreign aggressor demolishing a place of reverence for us and building a monument to our defeat at the site. Bharatiya Janata Party did not make it an election issue, but when false charges began to be levelled against it the Party did not hesitate to state its stand in the clearest terms.

BJP's Successful Strategy

This was the general background against which the general elections were to be fought. Many politicians felt it was desirable to resolve the situation by setting up an equation of vote banks. Bharatiya Janata Party considered it proper to meet the challenge on the basis of politics that was the growth of the soil. So the party decided to fight the elections on its separate identity, with an independent manifesto under its own banner and its own symbol. The party's strategy was clear – to remove the Congress government from office and to achieve a presence in Parliament that would be sizeable enough to give direction to future politics in the country. It is accepted on all hands that this party did not compromise its professed principles to win a couple of seats more, nor did it agree to any unprincipled behind-the-scene understanding, although the National Front kept pressing for it in some states. It was also seen by one and all that BJP leaders did not lose their balance in spite of the boorish behaviour publicly indulged in by leaders of the allied parties towards the BJP. The party's credibility has made a significant contribution to the public support it received. This is one element that is conspicuous by its absence in current politics. I appeal to party workers to maintain their credibility as political activists at all levels.

National Front Ignored BJP's Point of View

In the last general elections, no party got a clear majority in Parliament. The National Front staked its claim to form the government and asked BJP and the Left Front for support. The Left Front gave them unconditional support, but we made it clear that there was considerable difference in our points of view on issues like Kashmir, Punjab, Article 370, a Common Civil Code, the Minorities Commission, *Ramajanmabhoomi*, etc. Still, in deference to the people's mandate against the Congress, we would generally support the National Front government without surrendering the right to oppose its wrong policies. I regret to say that right from the beginning, Vishwanath Pratap Singh began to take decisions without bearing this fact in mind.

In Haryana, Bharatiya Janata Party had joined the government under the chief ministership of Chaudhary Devi Lal. As soon as Devi Lal became Deputy Prime Minister, his son Om Prakash Chautala was made Chief Minister. Immediately, Bharatiya Janata Party dissociated itself from the Haryana Government. Once more, the party proved that our workers prefer value-based politics to hunger for office. Later events, and especially the Meham affair, have proved our decision right.

Surrender before Terrorist Forces

The Rubiya affair stunned the whole country. The kidnapping of the Home Minister's daughter was in itself a matter of shame for the administration, but freeing terrorists from jail in payment of her release was many times more shameful. Possibly no other event strengthened terrorism so much not only in the Kashmir Valley but all over the country. The VP Government was in no way behind the Rajiv Government in surrendering to communal terrorist forces. By removing Jag Mohan from the governorship of Jammu-Kashmir under pressure from a few fundamentalists, Vishwanath Pratap Singh sent the same signals as Rajiv Gandhi did in the Shah Bano affair. In Uttar Pradesh, a judge's promotion to the High Court was stopped simply because his verdict was not to the liking of the Babri Action Committee.

Hindus Forced to Leave Kashmir Valley

This appeasement and minoritism have resulted in two and a half lakh Hindus of the Kashmir Valley becoming refugees in their own country. It is a matter of severe condemnation that neither Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh nor Shri Chandra Shekhar has to date gone to see the pitiable plight of these fellow-countrymen. Perhaps they have not done so because these refugees consider Kashmir an integral part of India and going to them would smell of communalism. Nowhere else in the world would one see such an insensitive Prime Minister, nor such a distorted meaning of secularism as in our country. It was an unmitigated sin on the part of Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh to remain a mute spectator of Hindus fleeing the Kashmir Valley. I am also surprised that none of those Communist leaders who swear by secularism day and night cared to so much as look at these families, nor did the intellectuals of the Jawaharlal Nehru University who advocate retention of Article 370 go there. I am very happy to say that our senior leader Shri Kedar Nath Sahni very ably performed the task of extending aid to these families with the help of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and other associated organisations. I appeal to my countrymen to give generous assistance to these patriots driven out of the Kashmir Valley.

Differences over Economic and Industrial Policies

In respect of Punjab too, the Front government could not take any effective steps. On the contrary, by initiating talks with Simranjit Singh Mann it boosted the morale of the terrorists. Bharatiya Janata Party has always urged the Government to accept the fact that terrorism in Punjab is in a way a low-budget guerrilla war being waged on Indian soil with Pakistani aid. But the VP government paid no attention and the slaughter in Punjab continues unchecked.

In respect of economic and industrial policies too, we had differences with the National Front government. We had publicly informed them of the deficiencies in the budget and told them that balancing the budget was impossible without cutting down unproductive government expenditure and making the public sector profitable. They were also made aware of the party's viewpoint on a haphazard industrial policy. Despite all these failings, the people

were prepared to give them a chance on condition that they worked like an organised government, but the credibility of the Front fight with the Janata Dal ministers levelling charges against each other, Chaudhary Devi Lal's removal and secret understandings, Chandra Shekhar repeatedly saying that Vishwanath Pratap Singh may well be the Prime Minister but he was not his (Chandra Shekhar's) leader, and Vishwanath Pratap Singh repeatedly saying that he was always prepared to sit in the Opposition. As a result people were disillusioned faster than expected.

Ramajanmabhoomi Issue Complicated

On the *Ramajanmabhoomi* issue an opportunity had come the VP Singh government's way to solve it. At his request Vishwa Hindu Parishad decided to defer for four months the programme it was going to launch in February 1990. This was enough time for any government serious about the issue, but no member of the Ministers' Committee that the Front Government set up for a solution of the problem had the time for it. Vishwa Hindu Parishad made it clear that the decisions taken in the *Sant Sammelan* at Hardwar in June 1990 would brook no delay. Still Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh did nothing. The saints decided to commence *kar seva* at the site of the *shilanyas* from 30 October. This gave four months more, but even this interval was not well-utilised. In the meanwhile, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh continued making provocative speeches and misleading the Muslims. Mulayam Singh's speeches are squarely responsible for the riots in Gonda, Aligarh, Badaun, Bijnor, Lucknow, Agra, etc. The most regrettable thing was that Mulayam Singh and Vishwanath Pratap Singh did not trust each other. Mulayam Singh repeatedly charged that he was not consulted while setting up the Central Government's Committee on the Ayodhya controversy or while changing its composition. He has also charged that the Central Government did not consult him before issuing a directive in this regard, nor before revoking it suddenly.

I charge that instead of solving the issue of temple construction at the *Ramajanmabhoomi* the then Prime Minister Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh used it to denigrate each other in the power struggle within the Janata Dal. I also charge that instead of seeking a solution to the

problem, both of them competed with each other in monopolizing the Muslim vote bank under cover of the controversy. Each tried to outdo the other in projecting himself as the saviour of Muslims, thus plunging the country into the fires of communal hatred. These two did not hesitate to cruelly massacre peaceful, unarmed kar sevaks for their petty political ends, nor to trample upon the constitutional and human rights of the citizens of the country, openly transgress the court's directives, arrest reporters and editors without valid orders, lock up printing presses, stop rail and bus services, and commit inhuman atrocities on forcibly jailed citizens. Mrs. Gandhi's atrocities during the Emergency pale into insignificance before those of the Mulayam Singh government. The maximum responsibility of the killings and other inhuman atrocities in Ayodhya on 30 October and 2 November lies with Mulayam Singh. His government must be dismissed and an open inquiry by a Supreme Court judge must be conducted into the Ayodhya events, and leaders and officials found guilty punished.

The Greatest Misdeed

The greatest misdeed of the Congress, the Communist parties and the National Front is projecting the Ramajanmabhoomi — Babri Masjid controversy as a Hindu-Muslim or Mandir-Masjid issue. The constant propaganda carried on by the electronic media and some pseudo-intellectuals made it appear as if the Hindus want to build a temple by demolishing a mosque built by Babur, because of which secularism is in danger. There can be no bigger lie. Bharatiya Janata Party considers this a matter of national self-respect. Rama is worshipped by crores of people as *Maryada Purushottam*, the ideal manifestation of this country's values of life. His birth-place is a symbol of national glory. Babur was a foreign aggressor, on whose orders the temple standing at the birth-place was destroyed and replaced by a mosque structure, which was a monument to our defeat and Babur's victory. It was from this point of view that we suggested the reconstruction of the temple and the respectful shifting of the structure standing there to another site, but we began to be dubbed communalists and many false charges began to be levelled against us.

Historic Importance of Rath-yatra

In view of the delicacy of the problem and the feelings of the people, Shri Advani decided to undertake a Yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya to take the Party's viewpoint to the people and to explain to them the real meaning of secularism. I look upon it as the second historic yatra, after Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March, that was rooted in the soil and its tradition. It clearly showed that even today Rama remains the symbol of India's social unity. The purpose of this yatra was to bring home to Indians the realisation that they were heir to a great tradition, to explain that it is Rama who stands for India, not the foreigner Babur, and also to explain that Indian Muslims should have nothing to do with the misdeeds of Babur or any other foreign aggressor but should strengthen national unity with love and amity. During the yatra he also stressed the fact that the Hindu mind has always been secular and this was so even after the partition. The Indian Constitution became secular.

Advani's Arrest

Shri Advani's yatra received support and love beyond expectation. After listening to him thousands of Muslims too participated in *Karseva* and were arrested. All over the country there was unprecedented enthusiasm for construction of the Rama temple. The Government felt that if Advani reached Ayodhya it would be impossible to stop the *karseva*, and if the temple construction began, what would happen to Muslim votes? When, in such circumstances, the Central Government made a plan to stop the yatra on the way or arrest him, Bharatiya Janata Party warned it through a resolution that in either eventuality the party would withdraw its support. This did make the government have second thoughts, but it was always mindful of its Muslim vote bank. So an ordinance was hastily promulgated but was recalled the very next day on the Babri Action Committee objecting to it. In the meanwhile, Shri Advani's yatra began to receive unprecedented support in Bihar, which the Janata Dal considered its citadel, and in sheer panic he was arrested. As soon as he was arrested, Bhartiya Janata Party withdrew its support and finally the Vishwanath Pratap Singh government had to quit in its early days. It was ironic that people were far happier at the fall of this government than they were at its formation.

Most Insensitive Government

Among all governments to date Vishwanath Pratap Singh's government would go down as the most insensitive, be it the problem of displaced Kashmiri Pandits, atrocities on karsevaks, or students' self-immolation. In the course of the power struggle between Chaudhary Devi Lal and Vishwanath Pratap Singh within the Janata Dal, Devi Lal announced a kisan rally on 9 August to show his clout; so, to foil this ploy a frightened Vishwanath Pratap Singh declared the reservation policy on 7 August, 1990. This was a very sensitive issue and its implementation not only called for consultations with associated parties but also the building up of a common consensus. But such thinking could be expected only of one for whom the good of the country was dearer than personal or party ends.

Special Concessions for the Oppressed

Bharatiya Janata Party has always advocated special concessions for backward and oppressed classes. But we do not look upon them as a vote bank. We look upon them as a part of a big family and we also believe that the country cannot be emancipated unless these groups are brought up to the level of the national average. We also hold that the constitutional provision of reservations is meant for the progress of these backward and weak groups, for developing their genius, creation of social unity and for equality of opportunity, and it is also our belief that the prosperous and developed sections of society should voluntarily come forward for this.

In my opinion, the problem of reservations should be considered without partiality or prejudice and the reservation policy should be based on the following:

1. Reservation for scheduled castes and tribes should continue as before.
2. By and large, other backward classes should be granted reservation on the basis of the Mandal Commission Report, but among them the poor should be given priority.
3. As poverty is an important reason of backwardness, reservation should be arranged for other castes too on an

economic basis.

4. Women as a class are economically and socially backward, so there should be provision of reservation for them as well.
5. In order to ensure that reservations benefit the maximum number of poor people, the implementation of the reservation policy should be reviewed every ten years. Total reservations should not exceed fifty per cent.

It would be proper to have a consensus on the formulation of a national reservation policy. It is an extremely sensitive issue and the purpose of its implementation should be social goodwill. I regret to say that the National Front Government misused it for aggravating social tensions and setting up a vote bank.

Dependent Government

It would have been proper if in the wake of the withdrawal of our support Shri Vishwanath Pratap Singh had immediately advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and hold fresh elections, but he did not do so. Instead, he asked for time to prove his majority in the Lok Sabha and the President acceded to the request. In my opinion, there was no need to grant such time. It was difficult to think of a majority in the House after the withdrawal of BJP's support and the declaration of the Congress that it would not support the government led by Vishwanath Pratap Singh. The truth of the matter is that because of the angry nationwide reaction to Shri Advani's arrest and the guilty conscience caused by supporting the barbaric atrocities in Ayodhya, the Congress is now afraid of facing the people. Those who were trying to isolate the BJP on the strength of propaganda and falsehood have themselves fallen in public esteem because of their devious designs. It was necessary to set up a puppet government to give the Congress a breather. Shri Chandra Shekhar's government is only a stop-gap arrangement and it is a travesty of the Constitution that the Prime Minister cannot even fulfil quorum requirements on the strength of his numbers. Every day and for every little thing he has to depend upon the Congress. A leader who could not form even an Opposition party has been made Prime Minister. The sanction to a puppet government that has no mandate has forced a political crisis on the country. My

party holds that the only way out is a new mandate.

Challenge of Separatism

The current Indian political scene is full of complexities. In different parts of the country secessionism is posing an armed challenge to India's unity. Such elements are active in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam and now secessionism is also raising its head in Tamil Nadu. Formerly it was thought that such elements in various places had local origins, but now Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar has himself revealed that training centres for members of the banned ULFA organisation of Assam are located in Tamil Nadu. As a matter of fact the methods of work of all these secessionist elements are similar in many respects. Every one of these dubs the Government of India a colonial power and raises the slogan of liberation from it. In Kashmir the National Flag is burnt, in Assam ULFA prevents its being unfurled and in Tamil Nadu it is torn up and poems ridiculing it are openly recited in public gatherings. None of these secessionists considers India one nation and they all charge the Government of India with exploitation. They are all equipped with modern arms and have secret training camps. It is often stated that this secessionism is growing due to imbalance in economic development. It would be natural for extreme economic imbalance to promote dissatisfaction to some extent, but it would be simplistic to say that this imbalance is the main origin of secessionism. Had it been so why is there no secessionism in Ladakh? Why have such elements not prospered in the tribal areas of Bihar and in the Bastar region of Madhya Pradesh? Why has secessionism not raised its head in the hills of Uttar Pradesh and in Kutch? And why is there a devil dance of secessionism in prosperous Punjab and in the Kashmir valley, into which crores of rupees have been poured as grants? I demand that the Government made an in-depth study of the inter-relationship between all these secessionist elements, and in this connection keep a close watch on the Christian conference of Asia. This organisation has been banned in some countries for indulging in such conspiracies. Subversive organisations masquerading as foreign-oriented Christian organizations are clearly playing an anti-national role in the separatist streams of Purvanchal. The tragedy is that the compulsions of vote bank politics prevent any

action against them despite proof being available. This situation must be corrected and no organisation, whatever its religious or social cover, must be allowed to play with nationalism. Strict action must be taken against it.

Deal Firmly with Terrorists in Kashmir

In Kashmir, pro-Pakistan Muslim terrorists must be firmly dealt with and patriotic citizens given full security of life and property and a clean and loyal administration. This would be the first step towards normalising the situation. So far, the government has failed on these fronts. BJP demands a white paper on the situation in Jammu-Kashmir and urges that any decision about the Valley keeps in mind the sentiments of the citizens of Jammu and Ladakh and takes them into confidence. Farookh Abdullah and his associates should not be looked upon as men of destiny in Jammu-Kashmir. The Government should announce a time-bound programme of rehabilitating Hindus displaced from the Valley.

Assam Situation must be Addressed Urgently

There are two reasons why the ULFA problem in Assam has assumed frightening proportions. One is that the AGP Government was directly or indirectly colluding with the ULFA terrorists, and the other is that the Central Government's total apathy towards the issue kept providing encouragement to ULFA. BJP has been long demanding stern action against ULFA. It is regrettable that the Government dragged its feet inordinately in listening to BJP, and when steps were finally taken, they did not produce the expected results. BJP demands that stern action against secessionist elements be kept up to consolidate peace and order in Assam. The task of identifying and removing infiltrators in Assam and West Bengal should be taken up in right earnest, the India-Bangladesh border should be fenced and a special Plan prepared for the economic development of Assam and the whole of North-East region.

No Talks with Terrorists in Punjab

The process of talks with terrorist elements in Punjab could send wrong signals. In particular, they could have an adverse impact on the morale of the security forces which have laid down

their lives to protect the citizens. BJP demands that details of the Government's talks with Shri Simranjit Singh Mann and the basis on which they were held be made public. Complete sealing of the border with Pakistan and creating an atmosphere of safety are matters of the first priority for normalising the situation in Punjab. Before talking to any group it must be ensured that it is committed to India's unity in accordance with the Constitution of the country and has left the path of violence. The Prime Minister should clarify what he means by constitutional amendment in relation to Punjab.

One Country, one People and one Nation

The main reason for the growth of secessionism is a weakening of the national spirit. Bharatiya Janata Party looks upon India as one country, one people and one nation based on one culture. India is not a state made up of various nationalities. It is one nation, in which the existence and shape of various states is based on administrative, geographical, linguistic, economic and other historical factors. The concept of Indian nationalism is based on the philosophy of unity in diversity. Only through consolidating this feeling of unity can secessionism be fought on the emotional level. The Constitution of India and various social organisations should become effective instruments of strengthening nationalism.

The Indian Psyche and Secularism

India was never a theocratic state. The Indian mind never accepted the theocratic form of state. The truth of the matter is that Hindu culture is synonymous with the co-existence of various spiritual and intellectual experiences. Consequently, Indian polity has treated all modes of worship with equal respect. Hence secularism is a fundamental feature of the Indian Constitution. The state can follow genuine secularism only so long as it follows the principle of 'justice for all, appeasement of none'. Unfortunately, during the last forty-five years, secularism has come to mean appeasement of 'minorities'. This has led to 'Minoritism' that is splitting the country into a number of minority groups. A distorted concept of secularism has reduced the Hindus to a sect, and being a good Hindu has come to be considered communal. In my opinion an, open debate should be held on Doordarshan among all political

parties on the following points related to national integration:

1. Is being a Hindu communal?
2. What is the definition of communalism? What is secularism?
3. Has the way in which the policy of secularism has been pursued since independence proved beneficial for the country?
4. What is meant by the national mainstream?

Rethinking on prevailing political system required

We should deeply ponder whether our present political system and constitutional organs are in keeping with the genius, tradition and aspirations of our nation and are capable of solving our problems. I do think the time has come for all political parties to give a serious and unprejudiced thought to the following important suggestions relating to the Constitution for the sake of removing political weaknesses of the country:

- A Review of the Constitution has become necessary for checking fissiparous tendencies; Article 370 should go.
- The presidential system would be more effective than the present cabinet system in checking secessionist tendencies.
- The creation of small states or *janapads* would be more useful for decentralisation of power, administrative convenience and rapid economic development. So the presidential system and the *janapad* arrangement would together prove more conducive to the unity and prosperity of the country.

It is necessary to set up a commission to review various personal laws prevalent in the country, such as Hindu Law, Muslim Law, Christian Law, Civil Law, etc., and to identify the common factors in them, as also a common civil code.

- A national population policy should be decided upon and a law required for its implementation made.
- Replacing the Minorities Commission with a Human Rights Commission would be more conducive to national integration.
- Nepali should be included in the Eighth Schedule.

At present, the Government has to depend upon other parties even for day-to-day parliamentary business. It can neither make

far-reaching changes nor take hard decisions. Recently Hindi broadcasts were stopped in Punjab due to the fear of terrorists. A proposal to buy peace from terrorists by amending the Constitution was also discussed. A minuscule minority Government may perhaps find all this necessary in order to continue in power, but what fight had the Rajiv Gandhi Government with its overwhelming majority given to terrorism? Perhaps it is a built-in-flaw of the cabinet system that acquisition and then retention of power requires many compromises to be made. If such compromises are made with fissiparous tendencies and terrorism, it is better not to comment on the outcome.

The way the Speaker of the Lok Sabha was recently threatened shows how far ministers of a minority government can go in denigrating the Constitution for continuing in office and to what extent the Government can go in submitting an affidavit against the Speaker's directive. Such blows at Constitutional institutions are a grave threat to democracy. I am happy that Shri Chandar Shekhar has recalled the affidavit submitted by the Law Minister in this matter, but the damage done cannot be undone.

The Problem of Social Justice

Social tensions also weaken the feeling of national integration. Outdated customs based on distinction of caste and creed, high and low have crated social strata with a deep gulf between them. For a long time untouchability has been eating into the vitals of our country and eroding our social structure. A system afflicted by a piecemeal attitude is a big impediment in the way of effective national integration. If we do not speedily bring about a social system free from exploitation and imbued with equality, it would not be possible to prevent the break-up of the nation. It is a misfortune for the country that in the form of the scheduled castes and tribes a big section of society is overcome by an inferiority complex and disabilities. We must remember that this class has given a lot to society but has remained content with only a little in return, and brought prosperity to society. It has lived in squalor to keep the society clean. It is unfortunate that even after 43 years of Independence there has been no lessening in the oppression of these brothers. Scheduled castes have suffered the most in the

recent communal riots in Hyderabad, Aligarh, Agra and Jaipur.

I appeal to the workers of Bharatiya Janata Party to continuously struggle for the rights of the scheduled castes and tribes and remain in the forefront in uprooting untouchability and distinctions of caste and creed, high and low.

Following Steps must be taken Urgently

In my opinion, very few steps have been taken to raise these groups above the line of poverty and whatever has been done was done half-heartedly. The following should be done immediately:-

1. A financial agency with at least 2000 crore rupees should be set up for the development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes on the lines of NABARD.
2. The special component plan should be completed in the eighth five-year plan.
3. The eighth five-year plan should be dedicated to Dr. Ambedkar and its objective should be to lead the poor and especially the Scheduled Castes and Tribes to economic self-reliance.
4. Physically fit and educationally qualified members of Scheduled Castes should have opportunities to enter the armed forces.
5. Maharshi Valmiki Jayanti and Sant Ravidas Jayanti should be declared national holidays.
6. Girls from Scheduled Castes and Tribes should be encouraged to acquire education.
7. The forest preservation regulation of 1980 should be amended and a new forest policy prepared, which would be based on partnership between forest-dwelling tribes and Government agencies. If the tribes are displaced due to development projects, they should be offered alternate forest areas or land.
8. All forest villages should be made revenue villages. Forest produce has been an important means of livelihood for the tribals and their right to it must not be affected.
9. A sub-plan should be prepared for the economic development of scheduled tribes.
10. The custom of carrying nightsoil as a headload must be

stopped.

Women's Problems

Women play an important role in strengthening national integration. They are the most effective school where future generations learn patriotism. But, in our country their co-operation is not being sought in this all-important task. An educated, economical-ly independent woman is a big asset for the country. I feel, there is an absence of healthy organisations for the development of women in our country. The West has made the mistake of looking upon man and woman as rivals; on the other hand, in India, today the woman is subjected to great oppression and social discrimination. My party firmly believes that systematic efforts need to be made to bring women forward not only in India's social life but also in the field of politics. Many distortions in this field can be removed if women enter it. In order to end sexual discrimination, it is necessary to put a legal ban on sex determination during pregnancy and equal right to the property and income of their husbands. Rural women make a valuable labour, but they lead a very hard life. They could get substantial relief if at least smokeless *choolhas* and clean drinking-water are made available to them. Education and medicine are two fields offering great scope to women where their talents can be fully utilised. I urge all party units to work for the solution of women's problems and to make them equal partners in the political, social and economic fields.

Let the Youth come Forward

If we do not instil the spirit of nationalism in future generations, it could be extremely difficult to end secessionism. History stands testimony to the fact that India's youth have made glorious sacrifices for the unity and integrity of the nation. Adi Shankaracharya and Swami Vivekananda gave a clarion call for a new national awakening when they were quite young. Guru Govind Singh's four sons attained martyrdom when they were mere boys. Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sardar Bhagat Singh, Ashfaq – Ullah Khan, Khudiram Bose, Prafulla Chaki became martyrs for the country in the prime of youth. Not only during the freedom struggle but also in the struggle against the Emergency in 1975 for the restoration of democracy the contribution of youth marks a golden epoch of

our history. They also made an unparalleled contribution to the Rama Mandir movement. Bharatiya Janata Party calls upon the youth to join the great endeavor of national reconstruction and fight social evils like untouchability, dowry, superstition and casteism. I appeal to them to continuously struggle against social injustice. It is imperative that the youth be made partners in decision-making and implementation of development programmes.

Creaking System

The country's economy was never worse off. We now stand at the brink of insolvency. This is a living example of economic mismanagement at the national level. In December 1990, the rate of inflation had reached 11 per cent, which was fully expected to reach 14 to 15 per cent by March before the Gulf war. Now that the war is on, it is expected to go as high as 18 to 20 per cent. Even apart from the Gulf war, this rate of inflation is beyond comprehension.

Budget deficit and an imbalance in payments have also greatly added to our economic difficulties. While presenting the budget for 1990, plaudits were sought by tampering with figures by claiming that the deficit would be only to the tune of 7206 crore rupees. At that time I had expressed the apprehension that it would not be less than 14000 crore. I was proved right. There has been great imbalance in imports and exports last year and foreign trade losses have mounted from 3794 crore in 1989 to 5334 crore in April-October 1990. What else can result from thoughtless sanctions for imports? Foreign reserves have fallen alarmingly. By November 1990, they had come down to only 3045 crore. Our losses are also mounting because of the continuous devaluation of the Indian rupee in the international market. We must here remember that we have to pay the instalments on our foreign debts and the interest on them in foreign exchange.

Rural-urban divide

The gulf between the village and the town is widening. Ten years ago the ratio of economic disparity between the two was 1:3, which has now crossed 1:4 and it would not be long before it reaches 1:5. The number of unemployed has crossed five crore and industrial production and the scope for the industrial field is shrinking. This

has caused a steep fall in employment opportunities. On the one hand, the purchasing power of half the population of the country is diminishing due to the increase in poverty, unemployment and rise in prices of necessities, while on the other hand, the demand for cars, scooters, television sets, refrigerators and a variety of electronic implements is on the increase. A neo-rich class is emerging. It is estimated that about 70 per cent of durable consumer goods are purchased by 35 per cent of the population. Two societies are taking shape in one country – the haves and have-nots. India was not always like this.

Gross Economic Mismanagement

Today, India is in grave economic straits. The dream of prosperity after Independence has proved a mirage. We have run through seven five-year plans but the bane of poverty persists. Big plants have been set up and the industrial production index, taken as 100 in 1980, has gone up to 200 in 1990, food production has risen from 50 million tones in 1951 to 171 million tonnes in 1990, and India has joined the Space Club. And despite all these, the common man's lot is as hard as ever. Even today, 50 per cent population lives in dire poverty. It is a tragedy that poverty passes from generation to generation as an inheritance and the poor are hopeless, entangled in it. Ninety per cent of those below the poverty line have inherited it. This is the result of India's economic mismanagement. Every Indian has become a foreign debtor for Rs. 1500, as the country carries a burden of a foreign debt of Rs. 1,25,000 crore – the interest on which alone has reached to 30 per cent of our total exports. There is the additional per capita burden of Rs 2900 due to the Government's domestic borrowings. After Mexico and Brazil, India is the world's worst debt-ridden country. We have borrowed from 24 countries of the world, including Ireland and Belgium.

India was solvent at the time of Independence. The British had left gold deposits worth Rs 1810 crore with the Reserve Bank. There was also a Pound Sterling balance worth 1733 crore. There were amounts of Rs 725 crore and \$150 million in the pool for war-time loan repayments. In all, we had foreign exchange worth 3452 crore. By 1950-51, our economic managers ran through the entire amount

and added a debt of Rs 32 crore. From then onward, our economic policies have been inexorably pushing us into economic slavery. If our debts keep mounting at this rate, the day is not far off when we would be free in name but our economy would be in chains.

The Economy and Emerging Problems

The dire straits of the Indian economy raise quite a few questions, and I feel they need to be as publicly discussed as some questions raised on the political scene. A sharper debate is called for in this field, because in the absence of a healthy and progressive economy the main basis of our freedom would be destroyed. The questions that emerge are:

1. Is the Nehru model of India's economic development still relevant? If not, what is the alternative?
2. Is the science and technology policy adopted by India for industrial development useful in the context of our country's needs?
3. Should we not review our economic policies in view of the changes taking place in other countries?

Another important fact we have to take into consideration is that we would have to take some hard decisions. Can the present government prepare the country for them? I feel it is very important to save the country from a consumer culture. Simplicity and frugality, proper use of natural resources, curtailment in government expenditure – all such means would fail unless we have a stable and idealistic government. For want of a public mandate, the present government can go in for none of these.

Aping the Western Industrial Model

After the advent of Independence and under the leadership of Pt. Nehru, efforts were made to mould the Indian economy and especially the country's industrialisation on Western models. The fact was completely ignored that India has had its own valuable tradition in these fields. It was thought that however high the spiritual tradition of India, science and technology were gifts of the West. Those who underwent Macaulay's educational system were completely ignorant of India's genius, talent and achievements. They did not know that cheap, simple and employment-oriented

technology has prospered for long in this country. So they accepted whatever model was placed before them. The reports of the National Planning Committee of the Congress and its sub-committees completely ignored India's domestic technological capabilities and the ordinary artisan's excellent technological grasp. Even at the time the British arrived on the scene, India was counted among the top-ranking countries of the world in fields like iron, steel, textiles, chemicals, agriculture, medicine, banking, etc. The total result of ignorance of this fact, amazement at the West's fresh material prosperity, a defeatist mentality caused by foreign rule and Pt. Nehru's sympathy for the Russian revolution was that our economy and industry began to ape the West, and socialism and priority for heavy industry became the corner-stones of our development. Agriculture and rural development were completely ignored. Small artisans and private entrepreneurs with a small capital were left without resources. *Swadeshi* and self-reliance became empty slogans.

Nehru's Admission

Pt. Nehru had himself realised the shortcomings of this method, but by that time it was too late. Commenting upon the use of modern machinery in the Indian context he had said in the Lok Sabha on 11 December, 1963. "...but taking things as they are in India, however rapidly we advance in modern age the fact remains that a large number of our people will not be touched by it for a considerable time. Some other method has to be evolved so that they become partners in production...." After this we should have looked for an alternative economic and industrial system. But we did not do so. One reason why this did not happen was that our leaders who had accepted socialism as the basis of economic development knew only one alternative to it – Capitalism, which was difficult for them to accept. They could not even imagine a third alternative.

Distortion of Socialist Economy

During recent years, the devaluation of socialism in Russia, the exposure of the hollowness of the Soviet economy and the Chinese movement to free the economy from Government's stranglehold

have put a number of question-marks on the relevance of the Marxist philosophy. Writing about the distortions in the Soviet socialist economy in his famous book 'Perestroika', Mikhail Gorbachev says, "An absurd situation was developing in the Soviet Union. The world's biggest producer of steel, raw materials, fuel and energy, has shortfalls in them due to wasteful or inefficient use. One of the biggest producers of foodgrain, it has nevertheless to buy millions of tons of grain a year for fodder. We have the largest number of doctors and hospital beds per thousand of the population and, at the same time, there are glaring shortcomings in our health services. Our rockets can find Halley's comet and fly to Venus with amazing accuracy, but side by side with these scientific and technological triumphs is an obvious lack of efficiency in 'using scientific achievements for economic needs, and many soviet household appliances are of poor quality." Further, "a gradual erosion of the ideological and moral values began." He has even admitted that "decay began in public morals..., alcoholism, drug addiction and crime were growing, and the penetration of the stereotypes of the mass culture alien to us, which bred vulgarity and low tastes and brought about ideological barrenness, increased." (Perestroika... Mikhail Gorbochov, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1987, pp. 22-23.)

And now, Russia has economically become badly dependent upon the Western world. The entire Soviet sphere of influence has scattered, and the Communist structure that was being built up till a few years ago as a super power and as the harbinger of a new international order has come tumbling down like a house of cards. But does this mean that capitalism has the capacity to ameliorate the lot of the hungry, the naked, the uneducated and the sick? It would not be the right thinking either.

The Menace of Capitalism

The basis of the economic and industrial system that developed in capitalist countries is energy-based and capital intensive mechanism. With this system they have achieved astonishing prosperity and technological advance, but to keep it going they developed an exploitative international economic system that has acquired a stranglehold on many countries of the world. It is these capitalist countries that have been using up the energy sources and

raw materials of the so-called third world countries. When Iraq attacked Kuwait, US President George Bush made the significant statement that it was an aggression on the American way of life. It means the right of America and its allies to the use of Kuwaiti oil must remain unaffected. The situation today is that out of the 120 so-called non-aligned countries 100 have to incur new debts every six months to pay installments on their old debts. They are not free to take their own economic decisions. Every time international finance agencies tighten the screws.

The bad effects of excess prosperity should not also be ignored. The speed with which insomnia, lunacy, heart disease, drug addiction and sexual offences are growing in the West with a disoriented human being standing alone in the midst of luxuries and yearning for love and affection, is an index of the evil effects of money. The green earth has become a garbage dump. The principle of unlimited economic development in a limited environment has created a race that has shaken the entire morality and values of life.

Thus it is clear that the Nehru model of economic development has failed to deliver. It is also clear that those who had introduced this technological and industrial system have accepted that it is faulty. So if we do not bring about changes in keeping with the changing conditions in the world the country would find itself more and more enmeshed in difficulties. The question is, what could be the alternative?

Integral Humanism of Deendayal Upadhyay

The late Pt Deendayal Upadhyay had realised the shortcomings of both Capitalism and Marxism. He had also deeply analysed India's philosophical achievements and the native genius of the nation. On the basis of his studies he presented the philosophy of Integral Humanism as the answer to India's problems. According to this philosophy, the individual, the human society and Nature are interdependent and receive sustenance from each other. Hence this system has scope for the utilisation of Nature but not for its exploitation. So also neither should the individual be exploited nor should the individual exploit the society. In this system individual industriousness has limitless scope but there has to be restraint on consumption. Hence this philosophy provides for full development

of productive forces but justice in distribution. A system based on this thought would be free from the defects arising from an excess or an absence of money. The present economic plight of India can be corrected only with this system. The individual would be the focal point of the system but the society would be its goal. The principal aim of this activity would be the happiness of the least privileged.

Need for Removal of Constraints on Economy

I would wish that the economy of the country is freed from those constraints that kill industriousness, promote corruption, make industrialisation more expensive and decrease production. Only the restraint required for social justice is justifiable. Excellence in trade and commerce should be publicly honoured and Indian industrialists encouraged to come forward as first-rate manufactures at the international level. Steps should be taken to make India a major partner in world trade. The farmer should be given his just rights, and agriculture and rural development made the focal points of planning. The present planning process should be replaced by a holistic approach. Efforts to eradicate unemployment should be undertaken on a war footing, including the spreading of a network of rural industries as a major means in this direction.

Preserving Indian Economic Independence

We would have to build up a healthy and independent economy to take India to the front ranks of modern nations of the world. We shall borrow from the world whatever would help us on the way to economic self-reliance and success, but nothing that would restrict our economic independence. We shall neither make any country our market, nor become a market for anybody. We shall work for a new international economic system that is based on mutual cooperation and free from exploitation. Come, let us pledge ourselves to the preservation of India's economic independence.

By the grace of the people, Bharatiya Janata Party has been given the opportunity to run the government in three states. All major political parties of the country have received the opportunity of running the government in various states. The Congress, the BJP, the Janata Dal (S) and the Communist parties are in power in some place or another. The people have thus an opportunity to

evaluate every party on the basis of the performance of various state governments. Consequently, the chief ministers of the three governments run by Bharatiya Janata Party bear a big responsibility on their shoulders. Let all the three state administrations run on the principle of 'justice for all, appeasement of none'. Let there be no discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, language, or sex. Let these states become models of positive secularism and provide object lessons in how to eradicate communal hatred and violence.

Commendable work in BJP Ruled States

I am very happy to say that all these states have done commendable work in waiving farmers' loans. Concrete steps have been taken for the development of Harijan and Adivasi brothers. Corruption in public life and administrative services has been effectively checked. Long-range improvements have been made in the sales tax system. Government expenditure has been drastically cut and additional resources mobilised. I urge all these governments to mould the education system and curriculum in accordance with the Indian mode of life, strive to make education an effective means of promoting national integration and generating national pride, and establish a record of ceaseless effort to solve the problems of women, the youth and the weaker sections of society.

International Political Scene

Global changes during the recent years have brought about a sea-change in international politics. The downfall of Soviet Russia as a super-power has upset the balance of power. German unification, emergence of the European community and now the Gulf war have created a new scene in world politics, which cannot but affect India. The Gulf war will have a worldwide impact. The biggest of questions it has raised is, who will control oil? This is the latest example of the struggle for control over sources of energy. In the new international politics economic diplomacy will acquire as much importance as political and strategic diplomacy. India must pay serious attention to its economic interests. It is the opinion of Bharatiya Janata Party that along with good relations with neighbouring countries protection of the country's economic interests should form an integral part of our foreign policy.

We have to learn from the Gulf war that from now on sites of reserves of replaceable energy would become areas of tension. This will not only affect our economy but also the political and social atmosphere. This aspect of the problem must not be lost sight of. All in all, it has become imperative to protect all three types of our interests – economic, political and social.

India has not only to keep up cordial relations with its neighbours but has to make positive efforts in the direction of friendship. We have not only to really reassure our neighbours but expedite the process of friendship. Mutual co-operation is on the increase in various parts of the world and the concept of a European family is taking a concrete form. So I feel it is time for all countries from Afghanistan to Indonesia to realise that they should strengthen the bonds of brotherhood for the common good and take steps to set up a confederation.

For the sake of lasting peace in West Asia it is necessary to seek a solution to all long-standing disputes in the area. Calling an international conference for the purpose would not be possible so long as Iraq does not vacate Kuwait, so that the international community may focus attention on solving the Palestine problem.

The latest information on Pakistan's atomic programme is a matter of grave concern. The warnings given by our party in this regard are coming true. In the light of this situation mere statements would serve no purpose. An Indian atomic bomb is the need of the hour.

Challenges and Our Resolve

Today what India needs is an idealistic and value-based polity and a healthy administration dedicated to the nation. The ship of Indian politics cannot be left to break up in the storm of calamities. The Indian nation has the will and the capacity to conquer nemesis, and it has to play a befitting role on the stage of the world in the 21st century. From this point of view Bharatiya Janata Party accepts the challenge of instilling a vigorous national spirit in the people of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, the country today stands at the crossroads of History. Opportunity is knocking at our door. Are we

going to let it slip out of our hands? The time has come for us to awaken the people's power, and harness it to wage a relentless war against the evils of ignorance, hunger, poverty and privation. I call upon all my fellow-countrymen to gird up their loins for the unity and integrity of the Indian nation and for the protection of our political, economic and cultural independence. Let us then reach this cry of "Glory be" raised in the historic city of Jaipur to the remotest corners of Bharat.

May God grant us success!

Bharat Mata Ki Jai!!
Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

16 March, 1991

Indian Unity Endangered by Secessionists

Today, the meeting of the National Executive is taking place on the occasion when Lok Sabha election is going to be held. From one perspective, it is quite an important and decisive moment in the political history of independent India when the general election to the Parliament is being held for the second time in less than 18 months and the political scenario is changing fast. The nation has witnessed three Prime Ministers in the last 18 months, out of which the last two could stay in power for only a few months. As a result the divisive forces have pushed the nation towards unprecedented political and economic instability and in the absence of a powerful and stable government at the centre, the unity and indivisibility of the nation is constantly being threatened. Secessionist elements are even more active in several regions. Kashmir and Punjab continue to burn today as before. The ULFA terrorists of Assam have established their relationship with LTTE terrorists of Tamil Nadu and it appears almost impossible to rein them. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in Bihar and the Naxalite elements in Andhra Pradesh have been killing innocent people.

India – One People, One Nation

It is incumbent upon us in such circumstances to assert that India is one people and one nation having a distinct culture about whom the pseudo secularists and the so called westernised modern people are creating a dangerous propaganda that India is a multinational state and the people of India are divided into many races, sub-races,

communities and sub-communities. The fundamental thought that India is one, is one nation, is the motherland or the mother India of all Indians, is unified by a cultural heritage, is being challenged today due to the narrow political ends. Within the nation, a heated principled debate is going on and the aim of the Bharatiya Janata Party is to ensure this debate to its logical conclusion. The Bharatiya Janata Party will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the nationalist forces overpower the pseudo secularist forces to safeguard the unity and indivisibility of the nation. Our aim is to maintain the distinct identity of the nation as also to work for its highest development.

Severe Economic Crisis Faced by India

Whenever the nation is gripped by political instability, the economic system gets derailed. The nation has faced a severe economic crisis in the last one year manifested in the double digit inflation and crisis in the industrial sector. A severe crisis exists in the balance of payment situation and the nation is entangled in the web of debts. The situation is likely to deteriorate further due to the recent activities. It is expected that despite bumper harvest in the country. By mid-February of 1991, the average annual inflation had touched the figure of 13 per cent. But the price index of edible items has exceeded 32 per cent. The labour segment especially the unorganised labour force has been affected the worst due to inflation. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the retail price index has been around 8 per cent in Bhopal and Jaipur, while the All-India Average Price Index during April-December 1990, has crossed the figure of 12 per cent.

No Foreign Interference in Indian Economy

There has been some improvement in the payment position after getting a credit of \$1.8m from IMF, although it is barely enough to take care of the import needs for a month. The nation is soon likely to begin talks for the second tranche of the IMF loan. It is expected that the nation will have to accept three major conditions to get the loan. These conditions will be – pruning of the public expenditure, stopping the subsidies in food and fertiliser, and reduction in over all development plans by six and a half per cent. Some steps have already been taken even before the interim budget to satisfy the

International Monetary Fund. The measures taken to reduce the fiscal deficit are praiseworthy. But the fundamental question is whether foreign nations will govern our economy or we shall ourselves govern our economy keeping in mind our domestic, social and economic needs. It is the right time when the plan of foreign investment in the nation on a large scale by the non-resident Indians can be initiated.

There is another worrisome feature that India is included in the watchlist of super 301 Law of America, which wants us to import raw material from the foreign nations alongwith the permission of foreign investment. Foreign insurance companies be allowed to openly operate in our country and we are to accordingly amend our patent laws. These conditions are not acceptable to us, but there is no government in the nation today which can strongly represent its interests in these matters.

Political Stability Necessary for Economic well being

The permanent crisis before our nation, whether related to inflation or to balance of payment cannot be tackled through ad hoc 'crisis management system'. It is necessary to come out with a long term measure. We need to consider the utility of the present system and create an alternative model. The time has come for the nation to recognise the truth that economic prosperity cannot come without political stability and will-power. And in the absence of economic freedom, the sovereignty of the nation will be endangered.

The national executive must consider all these issues sincerely and we must accept the challenge posed by this situation with the solemnity it deserves. To defend the freedom of India at every cost, we have to prepare a meaningful and fruitful strategy. Let us come together to imbibe this spirit and carry the message of "Ram and Roti" to different corners.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

25 May, 1991

Democratic System in Danger

The meeting of the National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party is taking place at a juncture when the nation is under the grips of an all-round crisis which has been further deepened by the sad murder of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. About 100 murders during the election campaign point towards those dangers which are being faced by the nation today. The nation as well as the political parties need to seriously introspect over the question of how democracy can be safeguarded in India. The BJP firmly believes that the policy of assassination must be clearly negated. In fact the method of solving political disputes through violence negates the great ancient cultural tradition and values of our nation. The time has come to ponder whether India will enter the 21st century as a progressive and vibrant nation or sink in the barbaric darkness. Over the last few years, the increasing terrorist and secessionist activities and the secessionist and disruptive elements have not only endangered the democracy but also the unity and indivisibility of the nation.

Severe Economic Crisis

The nation is also facing a severe economic crisis. Our external trade deficit in 1990-91 is Rs 10,654 crore which was never so huge before. Constantly increasing foreign loans, inflation and unemployment have lead to deep crisis.

Unity of the Nationalist Forces

Never before in the history of independent India was the

need of a strong and stable government at the centre promoted by the determined nationalist forces felt so urgently. The sudden absence of Shri Rajiv Gandhi from the political stage has led to the qualitative transformation in the election scenario. The Congress party is severely handicapped in meeting the challenge. Even before the sad demise of Shri Gandhi, the Congress party was not in any way capable to provide means to stability. Its high command used to insult the senior leaders and remove its own chief ministers.

Leaderless Congress

And now after Shri Gandhi has departed, the Congress (I) leadership is so terrified that it finds itself incapable to deal with the harsh realities and to elect the new leader of the party. The small-time leaders who had taken over the internal control of the Congress are still active and the senior leaders are unable to free themselves from their hold. The Congress (I) is in such a directionless state today that it is finding itself incapable of putting its own house in order. Apart from proposing the family leadership, it has no means to solve the difficult problems faced by the nation.

Ruptures in the National Front

Ruptures are visible in the National Front-Left Front combine due to internal contradictions. People have realised that the National Front has neither the leadership, nor the basic organisation nor any philosophy. Their total resource is the equation of vote bank and gratification of those elements which are in the hands of Imam Bukhari. Left Front is restricted to a very small area and also a victim of serious ideological misconceptions. At the same time, it has been quite interested in forging an alignment with the Congress (I) and the chances of its thinking on the same lines as the Congress (I) at the expense of dropping the National Front cannot be denied.

BJP Capable of Providing Leadership & Stability

In this background, the nation is looking forward to the Bharatiya Janata Party for providing stability, for keeping the unity and indivisibility of the nation intact and for deliverance from the present economic maladies. On the strength of completely dedicated, mature and proven, collective leadership towards nationalist

democracy and positive secularism and the nationwide disciplined work force, the Bharatiya Janata Party has to undertake the great responsibility during the present time of the national crisis. Come on, let us make together our party a great instrument of great coordination for protection of unity and indivisibility of the nation, for economic reconstruction, and first of all for putting an end to severe violence.

It is noteworthy that all the three BJP-ruled states are moving ahead with pride. They have maintained the law and order, have provided safety and security to all the citizens and won laurels for conducting peaceful, free and fair election. The nation must rest assured that in the event of the BJP government coming to power in the Centre, it will have three torch bearing ideals in administration – Ram, Roti and Justice and it will keep the pride of nation and life of citizens secure.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Thiruvananthapuram

28 September, 1991

The Emerging New World Order

After the recent general election, this is the first meeting of the BJP National Executive in Kerala. We are meeting here at Thiruvananthapuram at a time when not only India but many other countries in Europe and Russia are facing multidimensional challenges. The emerging new world order is still hazy. Some feel that the emergence of a unipolar world is on the cards but others say that, what is needed is a multipolar world. Thus old ideas and attitudes underlying the international relations have disappeared and new ideas and new institutions are shaping the new world order. Military means are no longer the main instruments of settling the international disputes. Economic developments, economic relations or co-operation would form the dominant issues in international affairs. India would have to respond to these fast and complex changes going on in the world. It is an irony that the Communists in India have not learnt any thing from the Soviet experience. It is high time that they reform themselves without waiting for any Gorbachev to arrive. While the Soviet Centre in Kerala has disposed of the Marxist literature as waste paper, the CPI (M) leaders are clinging to Marxism.

Safeguarding Economic Sovereignty

India has to take a serious view of its internal economy if it has to safeguard its economic sovereignty. The balance of payment is worsening and external debt is mounting and has reached a staggering \$70.2 billion (approx. Rs. 1,75,000 crore). The BJP has

always been cautioning the country of the disastrous consequences of an economy dependent on foreign debts. We should take a lesson from countries like Philippines, Argentina and Chile who had taken recourse to IMF and World Bank loans and also restructured their economy in accordance with the IMF conditionalities. They could not pay back their debts and as a consequence, Multinationals have taken control of their steel mills, telephone system and air communication. In case of Phillipines, its entire timber and paddy are exported, its youth is forced to work as labour in the Gulf countries. The BJP believes that India has enough resources, enough talent, enough man power and enough entrepreneurship to develop a first class economy but the wrong policies and mismanagement of the economy have plunged the country in this economic chaos. The BJP demands that a White Paper be issued by the Central Government on the state of economy and that the country should take a firm resolve that this would be the last dose of IMF loans.

Development Projects for Southern States

The price rise is phenomenal and the annual rate of inflation has now reached 16% as compared to 10% just before the budget. The Party Executive would chart out a programme of nation-wide protest against price rise and would educate the people of the grave dangers ahead. India's economic independence is to be protected at all costs. The Southern states have many problems which need urgent attention and solutions at the highest levels. The acute water problem can be solved to a great extent by forming a South Zone water-grid and the energy crisis can be minimised by laying a pipe line for the supply of the natural gas from the Bombay High which otherwise is being wasted. Marine resources need to be speedily developed and there is an urgent need to have international facilities on various airports. Many of the developmental projects for the Southern states are pending clearance with the Central Government. The BJP demands their speedy implementation.

Encouraging Record of BJP Ruled States

The BJP today has been given a chance to run the administration in four States. The record of these State Governments is highly encouraging. The law and order situation in these States is far

better than in any other State. In UP for instance several mafia dons have been booked and for the first time in the last decade festivals were observed peacefully. Muharram and Chehallum all went on without any trouble. The States of MP, HP and Rajasthan have launched several welfare schemes without enhancing any tax.

Grand Reconciliation in UP

The party is committed to speedily remove all impediments in the restoration of Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The BJP Chief Minister has been following a policy of applying a healing balm on the fractured society in UP by striking a Grand Reconciliation. The party desires to involve all sections of society in building the Ram Temple but failing which it will have no option but to go for the Legislative and Administrative measures.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Thiruvananthapuram

29 September, 1991

Threat to National Integrity

We are meeting here in Thiruvananthapuram when the minority government at the Centre has just completed one hundred days. The BJP had warned the nation even in June 1991 about the inefficacy of this ad-hoc arrangement and our apprehensions have come true. The Cong(I) government at the Centre has not been able to handle any one of the problems confronting the nation. The situation in J&K which has been of an externally assisted insurgency and despite incontrovertible evidence on this count, the Cong(I) government has failed to take any diplomatic initiative to expose the Pakistani designs and put a stop to their interference. In J & K., Punjab and Assam the government policies have been of unpardonable inactivity. The National Executive should also take a serious view of the LTTE connections with ULFA and PWG. In Bihar, under Janata Dal government, about 9,000 murders have been reported during the past sixteen months. All this poses a grave threat to nation's unity and integrity.

Pertunctory Attitude to International Affairs

The Cong(I) government, has also failed to appreciate the fast changing international scene. Its responses to the happenings in Eastern Europe and Russia have demonstrated the perfunctory attitude to international affairs. There is an urgent need to redefine India's foreign policy particularly when the arms race and cold war politics have lost their relevance. The recent cut in nuclear weapons is a welcome step but the BJP would like to have a fresh

assessment of its security environment. Relations with neighbours should be constantly reviewed with a view to settling outstanding disputes. It is high time that the party should demand for full diplomatic relations with Israel. In the new emerging international scene it would be the strength of a country's economy which would determine its place in the comity of nations, and, therefore, it is imperative to take urgent measures for strengthening the economy of our country. The country expects the BJP to give a clear lead in this direction. While deliberating on the economic issues, the question of price rise, unemployment and mounting international debt has to be given a serious thought. India must protect its economic sovereignty at all costs and should not succumb to the mounting pressures for changing its patents and copy right laws.

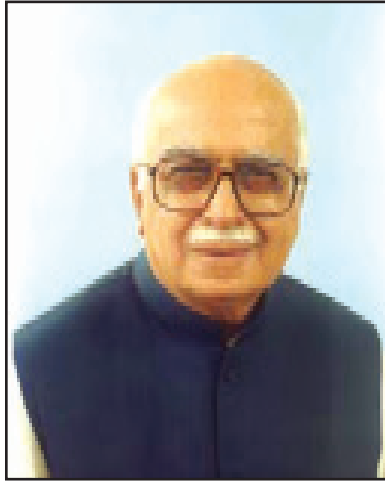
Centre's Partisan Attitude towards States

The Southern States have some very special problems, they have acute shortage of energy and suffer from frequent water famines. Many of their developmental projects are pending with the Central Government. The BJP should give special attention to such problems which need to be solved at the national level.

The four State Governments of HP, Rajasthan, MP, and UP have done a commendable job in keeping the law and order situation well under control. On the successful implementation of their developmental schemes depends the welfare of the poor and the downtrodden. It is satisfying that they are taking pains to undertake various projects despite the Centre's unhelpful and even partisan attitude. The question of Centre-State relations thus assumes very special dimension. The party has always demanded more financial powers to the States.

Vande Matram!





Presidential Speeches
SHRI LK ADVANI

National Executive

Calcutta

6 April, 1990

Party with a Difference

The Bharatiya Janata Party is today ten years old. Exactly ten years back, at a Conference held at the Ferozeshah Kotla Grounds of New Delhi, the BJP had been launched. Looking back I can well remember the mood of the participants in that inaugural conference. There was enthusiasm; there was a sense of determination. But there was also a mood of sadness, not unmixed with relief. We felt sad that a party founded and inspired by Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan with high hopes had been wrecked on the rocks of petty ambition. However, we also felt relieved that circumstances had emancipated us from the constraints of a debilitating political culture, and that BJP would now be free to map out its course in conformity with its own evaluation of Indian politics and in accordance with its own value system.

It may be in place to recall the first two paragraphs of the policy statement issued on the occasion of the BJP inaugural. The statement said:

“Bharatiya Janata Party has been born under stunning circumstances over which it had no control, circumstances which were both tragic and grotesque: tragic because they marked the shattering of JP’s dream of building a party which was to be a national alternative to the Congress and was meant to safeguard the interests of the poor; grotesque because a set of dubious politicians without a political base but with unlimited and unprincipled ambition succeeded in destroying a mass party. The gibbering

hideous mask they wore over their faces has now been torn.

Despite the fact that BJP had no control over the aforementioned circumstances, it is determined to have a complete control over its destiny because it is a party which rests on the strength of lakhs of selfless workers, has a popular national base and represents the aspiration of patriotic elements. The party is determined to fulfil a national historic role with full sense of responsibility and urgency. Those who have formed the BJP believe in the politics of moral renewal. Humility and service are as important as the struggle for power.”

We decided that day in order to discharge the “historic role”, we would have no more experiments with mergers, that we would maintain our separate identity and that by our policies and conduct we will keep sharpening the party’s distinctiveness in a manner as to make the people acknowledge that here truly is a “party with a difference”.

At the end of this one decade, we have reason to feel satisfied that the course we chose for ourselves that day and which we have steadfastly stuck to in these past years has proved the right path. The BJP has earned respect and credibility as the voice of unalloyed patriotism. It has simultaneously acquired strength in the country’s politics broadly commensurate with its support in the masses.

Burgeoning Strength in Legislatures

At the commencement of the nineties, the BJP has achieved a significant position in Parliament (more than one hundred MPs), in the State Legislatures (more than six hundred MLAs and MLCs), in State Government (three State Governments headed by BJP Chief Ministers and a position of near-parity in a coalition Government in a fourth State) and also at the Centre (a crucial supporting role). This achievement makes our friends feel proud, and our foes feel jittery. Supporters and critics alike have described the BJP as the “real winner” in the two rounds of elections just over. The task ahead is to use the position we have acquired to translate into reality the vision of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji and of Deendayal Upadhyay, of a modern resurgent nation drawing strength and sustenance from the country’s ancient culture and values, and

capable of guaranteeing to everyone of its citizens justice – social, political and economic.

Phase of Multi-party Politics

The year 1990 is a significant milestone in Indian political history. This year is similar to 1977 in one respect, namely, that both mark the ouster of the Congress from New Delhi, and the installation of a non-Congress Government at the Centre. But there is a marked difference also. While 1977 aroused hopes that the Indian polity was perhaps moving towards bi-polarity, 1990 has only confirmed that in India, a neat two-party system is not feasible, and that we are in for a prolonged phase of multi-party politics.

At the national level today, the people have before them four political options – the Janata Dal, the Congress Party, the BJP and the Communist parties. The Janata Dal is governing New Delhi, with the support of the BJP and the Communists. It is controlling besides five State Governments, one of these in coalition with the BJP. The Congress is ruling four States. The BJP has Chief Ministers in three States, and shares power with the JD in a fourth. The Marxists too are ruling two States. There are, besides two regional parties, the AGP and DMK, controlling their respective States.

Let the coming years be of a healthy competition among these divergent political parties as to who can serve the people best and who can, on the basis of policies and performance, command the confidence of the people the most – both as a ruling party and as an Opposition. Let political Cassandras, who have always viewed multi-partyism as a synonym for instability and uncertainty, be proved wrong. This new phase of multi-party politics can turn out to be highly invigorating and health-giving for Indian democracy. The BJP on its part is determined to strive for this.

In these first four months of its tenure the NF Government at the Centre has been moving warily. It has been consulting not only the supporting parties like BJP and the Marxists, but on most important issues involving the Congress as well. This is the right thing to do. But the politics of consensus has limitations, which must be understood. On no account must this approach be allowed to become an alibi for inaction or an apology for drift – either in Kashmir, or in Punjab or in Assam. These are three issues, which are

going to provide the people with an acid test for judging Government's failure or success. I am sure this meeting of the National Executive will be discussing threadbare the grave situation that has developed in these three States.

Four-Pronged Approach

In the coming years, the BJP must adopt the following four-pronged approach:

- (i) BJP Governments in Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan and BJP Ministers in Gujarat must function in a manner and accomplish the development of these States so as to enhance the party's reputation all over the country.
- (ii) At the Centre, the BJP must continue to extend critical support to the N.F. Government; it must acquit itself in this role with maturity and dignity, but with firmness in so far as its own commitments to the people are concerned.
- (iii) In other States, the BJP must play the role of a vigilant watchdog of people's interests, and be unsparing in its criticism of the failures of the State Governments even where they happen to be in the control of a friendly party like the Janata Dal.
- (iv) Grass-root activity by party units aimed at expanding the party's base geographically and socially must continue unabated; a conscious effort must be made to move eastwards and southwards.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Madras

21 July, 1990

Expanding the Party base Southwards

This is the first time since the formation of the BJP in 1980 that the Party's National Executive is meeting in Tamil Nadu, the land of Thiruvalluvar and Subramanya Bharathi, of Ramanujam and C.V. Raman.

I recall that the Jana Sangh National Executive did have a session here in Madras way back in October 1971. That was a sort of a routine meeting. This one, however, is an index of a conscious resolve on the part of the Party to expand its base southwards.

It would be gratifying for the Executive Members to know that only last week, in elections to the Legislative Council of Karnataka, the BJP has bagged three out of the four seats.

In Karnataka, Andhra and Kerala, the Party has already been able to make its presence felt. In Tamil Nadu, however, politics has become polarised between two regional parties, DMK and AIADMK to such an extent that even the Congress party which till two decades back was the dominating party in the state, has now to ride piggyback on either one or the other to achieve anything. BJP activists, by sustained hard work, have succeeded in penetrating the highly polarised politics of Kerala and West Bengal. We hope that very soon in Tamil Nadu also, the BJP will be able to acquire a presence which no one can ignore.

The Janmabhumi Issue Travails of the Janata Dal Government

The T.V. Serial on Mahabharat ended on Sunday, 8 July. But the political Mahabharat of the Janata Dal spilt over to the

subsequent Sunday, 15 July. And this *Yuddha* had not just a national audience; it had the entire world watching how this Government, formed eight months back, was going to fare.

The Chautala episode has gravely impaired the credibility of the National Front Government. It has heightened the sense of uncertainty about its future. The Haryana developments have deepened the doubts of the people about this Government's capacity to last its full term.

The support given to this Government by the BJP and the Marxists, and their firm stand that Chautala must quit became a major factor that influenced the course of events. In fact, it was their stand which proved an effective deterrent against dissidents in the Janata Dal becoming splitters.

But remaking one piece despite dissidence cannot be an end in itself. What really matters is the ability of this Government to deliver goods, and to be able to solve the host of serious problems which presently confront the country – problems of terrorism, secessionism, communalism, inflation, unemployment etc.

There is little doubt that a Government which finds itself recurring in the throes of crisis situations like the one just averted would gradually lose its efficacy in dealing with such problems. Its grip on the bureaucracy would weaken. Its standing in the comity of nations also may decline. Its principal concern becomes survival. This is not at all a happy situation. It is imperative that the ruling party take steps to remedy this state of affairs.

It would be unwise on the part of the Janata Dal leadership to minimise the damage caused by the Chautala affair. It is surely an exercise in self-delusion to claim that the crisis has strengthened the ruling party and the Government. Indeed, the general perception is that the last word in respect of this murky episode is still to be said.

At Calcutta, a study group headed by Shri S.S. Bhandari, had been set up to draw up for the party, a perspective plan for the next five years. This group has been at work for some time and shall be presenting an interim Report to this meeting of the Executive.

When the group was constituted, the assumption was that the political configurations yielded by the 1989 Lok Sabha and 1990 Assembly elections are likely to last five years. On its part, the BJP would like this Government to last its full term of five

years. Scepticism about this government's durability has generally stemmed from the fact that it is sustained by two divergent political camps – the BJP and the Marxists. These last eight months have shown that the dangers to the JD Government's stability arise neither from the BJP nor from the Marxists but from within its own ranks.

When the Study Group presents its final report, it would do well, I think, if it took note of these recurring crisis situations faced by the Central Government, and drew up contingency plans for a mid-term poll.

BJP's Role in the Current Political Scenario

During the past few months, off and on, there has been talk also of realignment of political forces. The present political equations are not to the liking of three sections:

- (a) the Congress Party,
- (b) the elements in the ruling party, unhappy with its present leadership, and
- (c) the elements in various political camps, unhappy with the BJP's present standing in Indian politics.

All these three sections are keen to destabilise the present equations.

So far as the BJP is concerned, our standing owes to the electorate and not to the present alignments. Even so, the BJP will continue to exert against these efforts at destabilising the situation.

But if any realignment does take place which makes the BJP an opposition party in national politics, that need not bother us at all. Our present role is an extremely difficult one. The role of an opposition party would be far simpler, and for the party's future prospects, much more advantageous.

The Study Group, if it feels so inclined, could also think of the alternative scenarios that can emerge from such realignments and how the BJP could possibly respond to such situations.

The Janmabhumi Issue

At its Palampur meeting (Himachal Pradesh) a year back, the BJP had urged the Rajiv Government to recognise the intense feelings of the vast majority of the country's population in respect of Ayodhya, to emulate what the Nehru Government did in the matter of Somnath, and to let a Rama temple be built at the Janmasthan site.

The Rajiv Government played petty politics with the Janmabhoomi issue, and paid a heavy penalty for it.

The BJP is committed to secularism, to communal harmony and to peaceful solutions of all problems. But it rejects an approach which in the name of secularism, keeps pandering to minority communalism, and has no qualms about flaunting contempt for the Hindu sentiment.

The present Government sought time from the leadership of the Rama Janmasthan movement. The VHP leadership responded positively. It is a matter of regret that New Delhi has, as yet, made no meaningful move in the matter.

A casual approach in the matter can prove costly. I urge the Central Government to respect popular sentiment and do the needful.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

9 November, 1990

BJP Suggests a Fresh Poll

The 8th General Elections to the Lok Sabha held in November 1989 marked the commencement of the new chapter in the political history of Free India. With the fall of the National Front Government two days back, this chapter has come to a close.

We have been associated with this Government for the last 11 months as a supporting party. The fall of this Government, therefore, cannot be a matter of any elation for us. It is true that the performance of this Government has been so dismal, both in the political field as well as in the economic field, that continued association with this Government was proving costly for the BJP's own public reputation. Therefore, even though we may not feel happy that this Government is out, we do feel relieved. Thereafter our reputation in public life will be based entirely by our own record and we shall not have to bear the burden of anyone else's failings.

The 1989 election verdict was a mandate for change. It was a mandate against the Congress. It is our considered view that the only way out of the political impasse created by the exit of the National Front Government is a fresh poll. Today, though privately everyone seems to agree with this view, publicly all other political parties except the BJP are opposing a mid-term poll. The outcome of this is likely to be the formation of a government supported by the Congress and thus a government which lacks any popular mandate.

The BJP's role in such a situation is very clear, viz., to function as a vigilant opposition party, zealously safeguarding the interests of the common man.

In all elections till now, anti-Congressism has been an important factor. The verdict thus has invariably been influenced by a negative vote. In the forthcoming elections it is very likely that the positive attributes and policies of the competing parties rather than any pure negativism may influence the electorate more. If this happens, it would be a distinct gain for the health of the political system.

Even though our advice for an immediate poll may not be accepted, it can be safely assumed that the new Government which is going to emerge may not last very long. There is going to be only a replay of 1979. All BJP Units must keep this in mind and gear themselves up for the impending trial of strength whenever it comes.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

New Delhi

31 January, 1991

Today, it is the last sitting of the National Executive. Tomorrow, our renowned associate Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi would be taking over as President of Bharatiya Janata Party. A new Executive would be constituted immediately after that. I would like to thank you all on this occasion, especially Rajmataji, Vajpayeeji, Bhandariji, Sikandar Bakhtji, all the four general secretaries of the party and all central office bearers for their wholehearted support and co-operation given to me during my tenure as President of the party.

BJP: An Extraordinary Party

I look back at my tenure of five years with satisfaction. I recollect, a few years ago a political commentator wrote an article in which he profusely praised the leadership of Bharatiya Janata Party and its workers. But in his analysis, he evaluated the position of Bharatiya Janata Party in Indian politics as no more than a brilliant actor of Indian cinema – who may have many admirers, but could never emerge as a hero. A principled party like Bharatiya Janata Party gets the message from this article that it could never form its government in New Delhi.

Our greatest achievement during the recent days has been that we have completely transformed this image of virtual reality. Both, the supporters as well as opponents, no longer consider our party as an ordinary party. We have now occupied an important position in national politics. Our supporters hope that soon enough the saffron flag will fly in Delhi and our critics too express the apprehension that

the day is not far when the saffron flag will spread across the nation.

Till a few years ago, only one party dominated the Indian politics. The following scenario has emerged in the Indian political map only in the last two and a half years:

Dominance of the other Parties

Congress party was the main party in the Centre and in Parliament with a majority. At the same time, it was the ruling party in 15 states. Marxist parties had been ruling in three states, that is, West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura. Janata Dal ruled in two states – Haryana and Karnataka. The regional parties like Telugu Desam, Asom Gana Parishad, DMK and the National Conference ruled in one state each.

Change in Scenario today

In this way, amongst the major parties, only Bharatiya Janata Party had no Chief Minister of its own. Only in the state of Haryana could it stake its claim to be in government by virtue of being a junior partner.

Today, the situation is completely different. No party can today claim itself as the chief party or the most influential party. Congress party is no longer ruling at the centre. If it has four chief ministers, the Bharatiya Janata party too is ruling in three states. Marxists and the Janata Dal have two chief ministers each.

The second achievement of the Bharatiya Janata Party is that now it is being extensively recognised that this party is no longer a party merely expressing its dissent over the issues raised by the ruling party. Today, the Bharatiya Janata Party actually prepares the agenda for political debate. Today, all the parties other than the Bharatiya Janata Party are sitting across the fence justifying secularism and minoritism.

Incapable Congress Government

The present government in New Delhi lacks merit due to statutory inadequacy, lack of popular mandate and being small in size. It is incapable to deal with the issues confronting the nation. An atmosphere of uncertainty prevails regarding how long it will remain with the Congress party which has been promoting its

incompetence.

It would be in the interest of the nation to hold an early election. But the decision to hold an election depends mainly on the Congress party now. The Congress was badly mauled at the hustings and today it fears facing the electorate. Actually, the Congress party is especially keen to postpone the election these days.

A call to the Workers

Therefore, the workers of our party should be mentally prepared for both the situations. That is, an early election which could be held within this year or a long period of waiting before the struggle of election could actually begin.

If the election is held this year, the Bharatiya Janata Party should be fully prepared to take the step. We should begin our home work, like preparation of manifesto, listing of the candidates and mobilisation of resources, from now on itself.

And, if the election is not to be held soon, then we should use the period of interregnum for enhancing our support base and extending our influence to the states and regions where we do not enjoy influential position right now.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Udaipur

3 March, 1989

BJP Establishes Credibility

It was in April 1988 that we met at Agra for our Plenary Session and decided our broad plan of action for the coming elections.

Our decision was: Let other Opposition Parties carry on their summit exercises for Opposition unity; but let BJP units concentrate all their energy and attention on grass-roots activity. We emphasized at Agra that far more important than Opposition unity is Opposition credibility.

Accordingly, BJP units have been busy throughout the year mobilising the peasantry on the basis of our Vijayawada Charter of Rights, organising youth in support of employment guarantee schemes, waging battles on behalf of Harijans and tribals, campaigning against lopsided regional development and more specifically for Uttaranchal in UP and Vananchal in Bihar, etc.

It is now acknowledged by all that the unseemly wranglings which have accompanied the unity exercises have greatly damaged the Opposition, and have helped the Congress. Our approach on the other hand has yielded rich dividends. The BJP can rightly claim a measure of credibility and positive support from the people which no other party enjoys. This is a matter of immense satisfaction for us.

Remarkable Success in UP Civic Elections

The Party's remarkable success in the recent UP civic elections is the direct outcome of this approach. Only this week, elections were held for four pending seats of the Varanasi Corporation, two seats of the Meerut Corporation and two seats of the Kanpur

Corporation. The BJP bagged three seats in Varanasi, both seats in Meerut and one seat in Kanpur. Also this week, a by-election was held in Maharashtra for the Legislative Council from a Graduates Constituency. BJP candidate Nitin Gadkari trounced the Congress by a huge margin securing 9300 votes as against Congress's 3500.

Congress Party's Predicament

The boycott episode which rocked Parliament earlier this week following the Prime Minister's slanderous outburst against Opposition parties highlights three facets of the Congress Party's present mood and assessment, namely –

- (a) The Prime Minister has become conscious that the ground is fast slipping from beneath his feet; panic-stricken, his response to criticism is becoming increasingly irresponsible and desperate.
- (b) The Prime Minister suffers from the delusion that he can play the Punjab card once again, as he did in 1984.
- (c) The Prime Minister is keen to keep the leftist parties on the right side, hoping to win them over at least after the elections, if not before.

That the Prime Minister's hopes about leftist parties are not entirely groundless is borne out by Marxist leader Namboodiripad's latest statement from Calcutta. He has lashed out at the National Front and Janata Dal for contemplating electoral adjustments with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Marginalisation of the Communists

Shri EMS Namboodiripad has an obsession about the BJP. He is worried about the growing strength of the BJP and is conscious of his own party's limitations. There was a time when his party was a force to reckon with even in the Hindi States, and in the States like Maharashtra and Gujarat. The party had an impressive presence not only in the State Assemblies but had representatives from these States even in the Lok Sabha. So, even while EMS keeps talking about marginalising the BJP, the country's electorate has actually marginalised his own party geographically and confined it to two pockets, one in the East and another in the South.

In more than 425 Lok Sabha seats of this country the Communist

Parties just do not matter. It is surprising that nevertheless they keep trying to dictate to other parties what they should do or not do. It is high time the Communist bluff was called off.

I may recall that EMS had tried these very tactics with J.P. And Jaya Prakash Narain had given him a fitting rebuff. The result, of course, was that in the people's historic struggle against the Emergency, the Communists were either active supporters of dictatorship, or passive spectators thereof. I would like to caution other Opposition parties to beware of this potential Trojan Horse in the Opposition Camp. No one can forget how only two years back, at the time of the Presidential election crisis, they rushed to the rescue of Rajiv Gandhi.

Some Immediate tasks before the Party

Since the last National Executive meeting at Ahmedabad a number of important developments have taken place which the Executive would have to consider.

Two major electoral verdicts – Tamil Nadu and UP – and two major judicial verdicts – Churahat Lottery Case and Bhopal Gas Case – have to be taken into account.

Besides, the 1989-90 Budget will have to be analysed. The sharply deteriorating situation in the border States, more particularly in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab, will have to be considered.

This is the Election Year. This is the last year of Rajiv's rule, and this may well become the last year of Congress rule. We have already completed one round surveying all Lok Sabha seats in the country and identifying those seats where we have the capacity to defeat the Congress. Our party Secretariat proposes to undertake a second round soon so that our election plans in respect of constituencies, candidates as well as election machinery can be given final shape. I am sure that when we meet for our National Council Session around September 1989, we shall be all set for the ensuing battle.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Palampur

9 June, 1989

Evaluating the Pre-Election Scene

Assuming that the General Elections to the Lok Sabha will be held as scheduled in December 1989, this meeting of ours at Palampur may be the National Executive's last but one meeting before the Elections. We shall have one more meeting at Bombay in September along with the National Council Session. It would be appropriate for the Executive, therefore, to devote some time to evaluating the pre-election scene, and assessing the BJP's own preparations for the battle, both on an overall basis, as well as State-wise.

From the BJP's perspective, the pre-election scene has **four principal facets:**

- (i) **People Longing for a Change:** The conviction is widespread that the Rajiv Government has failed on all fronts. Both in terms of competence as well as in terms of integrity, it is the worst government the country has seen since Independence. The people, therefore, are longing for a change.
- (ii) **Congress Trying to Divert Attention:** Conscious of this anti-Congress mood, the ruling party has been desperately trying to shift the focus of public debate during this election year from issues like corruption, inflation, unemployment, Punjab, Sri Lanka etc. to issues like Panchayati Raj. The record of Congress Governments, Central and State, in the area of local self-government is so dismal that it is hollow and hypocritical for the Congress to be talking of *'power*

to the people.'

- (iii) **Opposition Squabbles Help Congress:** Continuing squabbles inside the newly-formed Janata Dal in general, and the fall of the Karnataka Government in particular, have helped bolster up the sagging morale of Congressmen.
- (iv) **People Looking up to BJP:** The BJP, by concentrating on grass-roots activity, and particularly by its debt-relief campaign among farmers and right-to-work campaign among youth, has built up considerable credibility for itself. It has done very good work among Harijans and Tribals also. The Party's forthright denunciation of the pseudo-secularism practised by the Congress and other parties for the sake of bloc minority votes, and its unequivocal stand on issues like Art. 370, Minorities Commission, Rama Janma Bhoomi etc. have earned it the respect of millions in the country.

BJP's Electoral Strategy

The electoral strategy drawn up by the BJP following our deliberations last year at Agra and Jamshedpur, and this year at Udaipur, committed itself to the following approach:

- (a) The BJP will maintain its distinct identity.
- (b) The BJP will fight the elections on the basis of its own manifesto, and on its own symbol.
- (c) The BJP will have no truck with the two Communist Parties and with the Muslim League. It can have seat adjustments with other Opposition parties on the basis of reciprocity.

In pursuance of this approach, some talks have taken place last month with the Janata Dal with regard to seat adjustments. At the first meeting held at Rajmataji's residence, besides Rajmataji, Shri Vajpayee and I participated. The Janata Dal was represented by Shri VP Singh and Shri Devi Lal. At the two rounds of talks subsequently held, our party was represented by Shri Vajpayee and the Janata Dal by Shri Devi Lal. Shri Vajpayee will be reporting to the Executive in respect of these talks.

Congressmen are Jittery

This much is indisputable that the fate of the Congress in the next elections will depend principally on what happens in Northern, Western and Central India. Parties which really matter in this region are the BJP and the JD. No wonder, the mere fact that a formal dialogue has begun between the two parties has made Congress circles jittery. The development has also seriously upset the Communist and Muslim League lobbies. These reactions, by themselves, indicate that we are moving in the right direction.

Our objective is two-fold

We would however have to understand that the Janata Dal is not a single, homogeneous party. It is a condominium of diverse factions. Some of them appreciate the BJP's role in Indian Politics, and are keen to co-operate with us. So, in the matter of these adjustments, we have to move ahead with cautious optimism.

Within the strategy parameters already laid down, our objective for the coming Lok Sabha polls should be two-fold:

- (a) To oust the Rajiv Government.
- (b) To acquire a sizeable presence for the BJP in the 1990 Lok Sabha, so that whether in power or outside, the Party can play the role of a stabilising nucleus in Indian politics.

Let us resolve to achieve these objectives – if other Opposition friends cooperate – with them; if they do not, without them; and if they oppose, in spite of them.

Vande Mataram!

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National Executive

Bombay

23 September, 1989

The last meeting of the Party's National Executive was held at Palampur, in Himachal Pradesh. All of us, I am sure, will always remember Palampur not only because of the excellent arrangements the State unit had made for our stay there in that quiet hill resort, and because of the massive 50,000 strong rally hosted by that small town of 6,000 population, but because of the very fruitful deliberations which the Executive held there.

Palampur's was a memorable meeting indeed, and a significant milestone in the Party's journey forward. The meeting will be remembered particularly for the in-depth discussions we had on the approach the Party should adopt in respect of the coming Lok Sabha elections.

N.E. Approves Electoral Arrangements

The Maharashtra unit's proposal for an electoral arrangement with the Shiv Sena, the Janata Dal, the P.W.P. and the R.P.I., aimed at ensuring a throwout of Congress in Maharashtra was discussed threadbare, and approved by National Executive.

Rama Janma Bhoomi

A comprehensive resolution was adopted in respect of Ram Janma Bhoomi in which it was cogently established that had the Rajiv Government not capitulated in 1985 to the Muslim League lobby on the Shah Bano issue, the Faizabad District Court's judgement of 1986, ordering the opening of the Ram Janma Bhoomi gates would have provoked no reaction.

In that resolution the BJP recalled how the first Government of Free India had decided to rebuild the Somnath Temple at Prabhas Patan in Gujarat. The resolution urged Government to have the same positive approach towards Ram Janma Bhoomi that the Nehru Government showed towards Somnath and to undo the vandalism of history at Ayodhya.

BJP-Shiv Sena Understanding

In Maharashtra, the Janata Dal has been reluctant to associate itself with the Shiv Sena so much so that when the BJP-Shiv Sena called for a Bandh to protest against the Moga massacre, the JD not only refused to co-operate, their Maharashtra President publicly opposed the bandh. The BJP and the Shiv Sena have nevertheless been forging ahead jointly in pursuance of their Lok Sabha poll plans, and the people's response has been tremendous. There are reports that lately, the Janata Dal has been inclined to revise its stand. Even now, the BJP would be happy to implement the decision taken at Palampur, a decision which embraced all the five different parties. Such an arrangement would eliminate the possibility of a triangular fight anywhere in the State. But I would like to stress that BJP is not agreeable to any clandestine arrangements. Whatever seat adjustments are made have to be made openly and publicly.

Charge of Hindu Communalism

Our stand on Rama Janma Bhoomi, on Article 370, on the need to replace the Minorities Commission with a Human Rights Commission, often invites critical comments from the Congress, the Communists and other parties that we are playing a communal Hindu card. Let not such accusations ever put us on the defensive. The charge of Hindu communalism has been levelled in the past against such outstanding nationalists like Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Sardar Patel, Shri Purushottamdas Tandon, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Dr. Sampurnanda and, of course, against Dr. Hedgewar, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerji and Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. As targets for such accusations, thus, we are in very distinguished company. Every single position that the BJP has taken is actuated by purely patriotic considerations. Indeed, it is

these critics who in their anxiety to grab bloc minority votes are trying to play a communal card.

Rajiv Govt. becoming Unpopular

The prestige and popularity of the Rajiv Government continues to hurtle downhill at a dizzy pace. The CAG Report, followed by **en masse** resignations of Opposition Members of Lok Sabha, followed in succession by General Sundarji's stunning revelations, have practically sealed the fate of this Government. Earlier, when the Karnataka government fell, Congressmen seemed to be riding a high horse. New Delhi felt confident that Congress can win an early victory if Assembly elections were held prior to the Lok Sabha polls, and that Assembly victory in Karnataka would help it greatly in the Lok Sabha polls. Now, obviously their calculations have changed. So, they have decided, without any ostensible justification, to extend the term of President's Rule in the State.

I am sure that in the coming elections our party will play a major role in ensuring that in the year 1990, dynastic rule in Delhi comes to an end.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Bombay

25 September, 1989

Brother and sister delegates,

We are meeting in Bombay today for the 11th session of the BJP's National Council. I may recall that it was here in Bombay itself that the National Council had held its first session in 1980. That session was part of the Bharatiya Janata Party's first plenary. This year's session of course has a very special importance in as much as, in all likelihood, it will be the party's last national-level conclave immediately prior to the ensuing general elections.

Poll Postponement Unlikely

I have qualified my preceding observation with the phrase 'in all likelihood' because in some quarters it is being affirmed that Government is planning to defer the general elections. I am, however, disinclined to agree with this assessment because I hold that postponement of polls will prove extremely costly for the ruling party. Today, even the common man is acutely conscious that the Congress is in a bad shape, and that its reputation is hurtling downwards. Putting off the scheduled elections on any pretext would mean sending out a clear signal to the people that this party is on the run; and giving such a signal would mean inviting a sure electoral disaster.

It may be recalled that in 1987, instead of holding the Haryana Assembly elections along with the West Bengal and Tripura elections in February, they had been put off to June. Chief Minister Bansi Lal had assured the Congress(I) High Command that those extra four months would prove to be of decisive advantage to the party.

The results completely belied this calculation. In June the Congress was thoroughly routed. Any tampering now with the schedule for Lok Sabha elections, I caution the Government, would have a similar result.

First Euphoric Year

Rajiv Gandhi's first year in office was a year of euphoria. There was enthusiasm and hope all round. His own speeches that year raised popular expectations skyhigh. No one can forget his 'power-brokers' speech at the Congress Centenary Session at Bombay, and the tongue-lashing he gave to his own partymen when he declared:

"Our Congress workers, who faced the bullets of British imperialism, run for shelter at the slightest manifestation of caste and communal tension. Is this the path that Gandhiji, Panditji and Indiraji showed to a secular, democratic India? We talk of the high principles and lofty ideals needed to build a strong, prosperous India. But we obey no discipline, no rule, follow no principle of public morality, display no sense of social awareness, show no concern for the public weal. Corruption is not only tolerated but even regarded as the hall-mark of leadership... . The war on corruption will go on without let or hindrance. The country needs a clean social and political environment and the Congress is determined to give it."

A Welter of Water Gates

It is Rajiv's misfortune that the country took such pronouncements seriously, and did not view them as a politician's routine rhetoric, or just the linguistic craftsmanship of the Prime Minister's image-makers. And it is precisely because the people believed in what he said that they are feeling outraged by the string of stinking scandals which have surfaced during the last three years of his rule. One single Watergate had spelt doom for the US President, Richard Nixon. In Rajiv's case, there has been a welter of Watergates starting with Fairfax with its Amitabh-Ajitabh connection, and going on to HDW, Bofors, Westland and Sumitomo.

Bofors is only a Symbol

For obvious reasons Bofors has become a symbol of the present Government's financial depravity and the present Prime Minister's inseverable entanglement with a coterie of friends and relations whose financial record is murky. For over 2½ years, Government has been exerting frantically to suppress the stench emitted by this scandal. When the allegations were first made by the Swedish Radio and the Press, Government reacted furiously saying that the charges about pay-offs and remissions made to Swiss Bank accounts were malicious, and were part of an international conspiracy to destabilise the Rajiv Government. Later, when the Swedish Audit Bureau confirmed that such payments had actually been made, the Prime Minister and other Government spokesmen resorted to an elaborate exercise in mendacity and misrepresentation, and went to the length of having a Parliamentary Committee to draw up a white-wash and cover-up report.

Direct Nexus between PM and Bofors Cover-up

The nation owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Comptroller and Auditor General of India who has painstakingly exposed both Government as well as the Parliamentary Committee and squarely indicted the Government. While the C & AG Report established wrong-doing on the part of Government, it is General Sundarji's explosive interview to *INDIA TODAY* a fortnight back which has established a direct nexus between the Prime Minister and Bofors cover-up. How sad that the knight in shining armour who began his term as Mr. Clean should be ending it as Mr. Bofors!

Lokpal Bill Withdrawn

Shortly after the Rajiv Government assumed office, it introduced the Lokpal Bill in Parliament with great fanfare. We in the Opposition found the Bill extremely anaemic. We pointed out to Government that the Lokpal Bill as drawn up by the Janata Government in 1978 and which lapsed because of the Government's fall, gave the Lokpal jurisdiction over all Ministers, including the Prime Minister. The 1985 Bill, on the

other hand, excluded the Prime Minister from the Lokpal's purview. When this Bill was referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament, it was hoped that this Bill would be given teeth, that its shortcomings would be removed and that the Rajiv Government elected on the mandate of clean politics would be able to give the country an institutional watchdog for ministerial probity. The Parliamentary Committee went round the country for three years taking evidence and receiving memoranda. At the end of it all, however, Government abruptly announced that they had decided to withdraw the Bill. I think this decision was a formal declaration that the Rajiv Government had decided to make peace with corruption, and that it had no qualms about admitting it publicly.

Corruption A Key Poll Issue

I am sure that in the coming elections, corruption will be a crucial issue. In the first two years of his tenure Rajiv Gandhi succeeded remarkably in convincing the classes and masses alike that he was different from the general run of politicians, and that he was indeed "*Mr. Clean*". There has been till now wide-spread cynicism about all political declarations of honesty and integrity. So probity in public life has never become a real electoral issue. If this time this issue promises to be a live one, credit should be given to Rajivji himself.

Implement Sarkaria Commission Recommendations

Rajiv Government's overall legislative record has been dark and dismal. Recapitulating its performance on the legislative front, I would like to recall three major sins of omission and three major sins of commission of its. I have already mentioned Government's failure to enact the Lokpal Bill. Its second sin of omission is its failure to implement the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations on interstate relations. The Commission had not made any radical suggestions; its Report has been by and large cautious and conservative. Even so, it has made a number of wholesome recommendations particularly in the matter of setting up an Inter-State Council, giving the States a share in corporate taxes, guidelines with regard to appointment of Governors, curbing

the use of Article 356, preventing arbitrary encroachments into the domain of States, etc. which, if implemented, would go a long way in reducing Centre-State tensions. The Report, however, continues to gather dust in the shelves of the Home Ministry. I demand that the key demands listed above be implemented.

Dismal Legislative Record

Early in 1985 Rajiv Government had presented to Parliament a comprehensive study on the generation of black money and measures to curb it. One of the key recommendations of this study was that election expenditure should be publicly funded. Last year, when Government brought forth its proposal to reduce voting age from 21 years to 18 years, opposition parties strongly pleaded that this particular recommendation which was vital for electoral reform in the country also be implemented. But Government, which has developed a vested interest in making elections more and more costly and more and more corrupt, refused to do so. This, I hold, is its third major sin of omission.

59th Amendment

Let me now list Government's three major sins of commission on the legislative front. The worst of its crimes has been the 59th Constitution Amendment. In 1978, by a unanimous decision, Parliament amended the Constitution so as to provide that even during an emergency, while other fundamental rights may be suspended, Article 21 which guarantees to the Indian citizen his Right to Life and Liberty would remain inviolate. This decision was Parliament's way of undoing the implications of the Supreme Court's verdict in the Habeas Corpus case. It will remain an inefaceable stigma for the Rajiv Government that by enacting the 59th Amendment, it has obliterated the 1978 decision, and provided that an Emergency in Punjab would mean suspension even of the Right to Life. If this enactment was a grievous assault on the Constitution, the Commission of Inquiry (Amendment) Act which empowered the Executive to withhold any Inquiry Commission Report from Parliament on grounds of 'public interest' was a serious assault on Parliament itself.

Muslim Women's Act

Yet another black spot on the Rajiv Government's legislative record has been the Muslim Women (Protection) Act. It was quite a shock for his admirers to find that the Rajiv Government, far from moving in the direction of a uniform civil code, subverted the existing uniformity of the Criminal Law. Capitulating to the pressure of the Muslim League lobby in the country, the Rajiv Government initiated a thoroughly retrograde Bill which made some provisions of criminal law applied differently to women of different communities. I hold that it was this ignominious surrender made to forces of communalism which whetted their appetite, emboldened them to set up the Babari Masjid Action Committee and launch a campaign against the Faizabad district court's decision about Ram Janma Bhoomi.

Subversion of Institutions

I have referred above to two legislative wounds inflicted by this Government, one on the Constitution and the other on Parliament. Indeed, one principal reason why the BJP feels that this present Government must go is the systematic manner in which it has been trying during its tenure to undermine various constitutional and democratic institutions. It is imperative that this process be halted.

Presidency

The presidency has been devalued, and the President has been reduced to an absolute figure-head. This Government has formally taken the position that the executive which does everything in the name of the President is under no obligation even to disclose official documents to the President.

Parliament

The strength of Parliament is derived as much from constitutional provisions and the rules of procedure as it is from hallowed conventions and practices repeatedly over the positive years. The Rajiv Government has shown contempt for all these conventions and practices. It has not hesitated to bully and bamboozle Presiding Officers so as to make even rules of procedure subserve the requirements of executive expediency.

The institution of Presiding Officers has been gravely undermined in the process.

Judiciary

The judiciary has ceased to command the respect which it once had. Even the Emergency period did not cause as much damage to this great institution as has befallen it during recent years.

C.A.G.

Everyone was really shocked when following the publication of the CAG Report, Government threw all scruples to the winds, and both within Parliament and outside, unleashed a vicious tirade against the CAG, a constitutional authority whose denigration is prohibited both by the Constitution as well as by parliamentary procedure.

The Press under Pressure

For the Indian Press, the Emergency of 1975-77 was an extremely agonising period. However, the blows inflicted upon it during that period had a constitutional legitimacy of sorts. But lovers of democracy cannot but feel perturbed that even without a formal Emergency, the Press is being subjected to tremendous pressures in recent years.

Lately, there has been a lot of public debate on the Jammu and Kashmir Press Bill. The resistance put up by pressmen within the State as well as outside has made the Chief Minister declare that the Bill would be kept in abeyance and that the opinion of the Press Council sought before it is converted into law. It would be unwise, however, to view this Bill in isolation, or as Dr. Farooq's personal brainwave.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir today is no doubt abnormal. Even as I am writing this address, I have received the shocking news that BJP's state Vice-President, Shri Tikka Lal Taploo, a pillar of strength for the party in the Valley, has fallen victim to terrorist bullets. Because of Government's gross mishandling of the situation, terrorists and secessionists are having a field day in the State. But this is only an excuse for the Press Bill. I hold that the Rajiv Government harbours an innate allergy to Press freedom. I

am sure the Kashmir Bill would not have been mooted had it not had the approval of New Delhi. Let it not be forgotten that New Delhi did not need any pretext of a terrorist threat to embark on its Defamation Bill move. Let it also be remembered that at a Press Conference in New Delhi in 1985, when asked as to why his Government was opposed to giving autonomy to Akashvani and Doordarshan, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's significant reply was: *"I do not want these media to become as irresponsible as the Press"!*

Make Press Freedom a Fundamental Right

Today, the Indian Constitution does not confer any special rights on the Press except in the matter of coverage of parliamentary and assembly proceedings. By the 44th Amendment, the Janata Government in 1978 incorporated in the Constitution a new Article, 361A, which gave constitutional sanction to what was till then only a legal right under the Feroze Gandhi Act, a law scrapped by Mrs. Gandhi during the emergency.

By virtue of various Supreme Court judgements, however, Article 19 which guarantees freedom of expression to all citizens has been interpreted as guaranteeing press freedom also. When the Indian Constitution was being framed, Shri Jai Prakash Narayan who was not a Member of the Constituent Assembly had pleaded for inclusion of a specific provision guaranteeing freedom of the Press. Shri B.N. Rau, speaking on behalf of the Drafting Committee, said that freedom of the press was a part of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19. I feel time has now come to make press freedom not just a derivative right but a formal fundamental right enshrined in the Indian Constitution, as it is in the Constitution of other several democratic countries like the US. Also, a Freedom of Information law must be enacted to give citizens statutory access to all official documents except those whose secrecy is warranted by requirements of national security, etc.

Media Abuse and Election Commission

With the induction of Shri K.K. Tewari into the Information & Broadcasting Ministry, abuse of radio and television for party propaganda and for promotion of a family cult has touched an all time low. Political parties have been protesting against this. I

feel, however, that the Election Commission cannot remain an idle spectator in this regard.

The Constitution charges it with ensuring that elections are free and fair. As the situation stands today, radio and television have become the biggest single threat to the fairness of elections.

I demand that the Election Commission set up a media monitoring cell and direct Government to send it copies of all radio, television news bulletins and political programme transcripts. Let the Election Commission test these transcripts on the touchstone of the guidelines drawn up by Government itself, one of which says: *"In reporting on political controversies, the broadcasting media should be guided by objectivity and fairplay. Due representation of differing views should be the aim."* A public admonition by the Election Commission on infringements of these guidelines would have a sobering and restraining influence.

This, of course, is just an interim suggestion. Only conversion of these media into an autonomous corporation can prove an effective remedy. The BJP is committed to reviving the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Bill which lapsed in 1979 because of the fall of the Janata Government and which if enacted would give to AIR and Doordarshan greater autonomy than even the BBC.

Weakening of Law and order Machinery

When the Rajiv Government assumed office in 1985, the country had on hand a serious law and order problem in Punjab. As this government's five-year term draws to a close, the Punjab situation has worsened manifold; and the fires of disorder and anarchy have spread to many other parts of the country, more particularly to adjoining Jammu and Kashmir State, and to Assam. In J & K State, hitherto, violence has been erupting frequently in the Valley and occasionally in the Jammu region. Lately, even quiet, peaceful Ladakh is in terrible agony. In Assam, of course, the Bodo movement, encouraged and assisted by some members of the Central Government, has been taking a heavy toll of lives.

Adverse Import on Weaker Sections of Society

Whenever law & order machinery weakens, the worst affected are the weaker sections of society, the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. It is not surprising, therefore, that the latest Report (28th) of the Commissioner of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has noted that there has been a steady increase in the number of murders, rapes etc. of SCs and STs in recent years. The Report adds “...atrocities on SCs & STs have acquired a new economic dimension. The issues concerning equity, therefore, have become much more intricate. With the consolidation of vested interests and differential growth, the task of ensuring an equitable deal to the underprivileged is much more difficult than it was in the beginning.”

Sugar has become Bitter

The acute economic crisis to which I referred in my Agra speech last year has since worsened despite the picture of plenty which the Government projects on its captive TV screens. India must be one of those few countries where the ordinary laws of demand and supply do not seem to apply. When production goes up as in the case of sugar, prices also go up often faster than production, and when production goes down as in the case of pulses then too prices go up. Prices of all essential commodities have shot up phenomenally in recent months. At twelve to fourteen rupees a kilo, sugar today has really become bitter. The nexus between the greedy and the corrupt politician of the ruling party on the one side and equally corrupt and avaricious businessman and middle man on the other is so well established under the Rajiv administration that the common man is left with little but left-overs, and for which also he has to pay through his nose.

Increasing Debt Burden

For the last three years, the government has been leading a hand-to-mouth existence and is, for all practical purposes, bankrupt. If it is living on borrowed time, politically speaking, it is subsisting on borrowed money, financially speaking. It has been borrowing money right and left, not only at home, but even more so abroad, so much so that the country has acquired the dubious distinction of being among the top five countries with the highest debt in the

world, in company with countries usually described as banana republics.

It was Mrs. Gandhi who started the rot, for in her very first year in 1980 the foreign debt went up by Rs. 2400 crore. Last year, it increased by ten times that amount, by Rs. 25,000 crore, which is more than our entire foreign earnings through exports during the year. The net result is the appalling depths to which the rupee has sunk. A currency that was once worth its weight in silver is now worth no more than the scrap of paper on which it is printed.

Impose Ceiling on Foreign Borrowings

The heavy debt thus acquired has been used in a fashion so elitist that it has divided rather than strengthened society in whose name it has been acquired. The country now invests more in colour TV sets than in handlooms, in buying jumbo planes than on city buses. The divisive policies loaded in favour of the new elite have led to the fragmentation of a society already groaning under economic inequalities of all kinds. It is high time a statutory ceiling was put on foreign borrowings. Even affluent countries like USA have resorted to restrictions of this kind.

India's Future depends on the *Kisan*

Thirty years ago, urban incomes were one and a half times the rural incomes. Ten years ago, they were three times. Today, they are four and a half times, and at the rate the disparity is growing, they will be six to seven times in another few years, leading to the steady pauperisation of two-thirds of the nation in the guise of progress and modernisation.

India cannot be prosperous if Indian farmers are not prosperous. And the Indian farmer is less self-reliant and less prosperous today than he has been at any time in the last hundred years. BJP is totally opposed to this Stalinist doctrine of modernisation which led to the elimination of Russian farmers by the million in the 1930s. We want a thriving farming community with living standards that are as high as those of its counterpart in towns and cities, as forward-looking and progressive as any in the world. The so-called rural unrest is a manifestation of a deep malaise growing at the very heart of what is still a predominantly agricultural nation. And it cannot

be tackled, let alone cured, through elitist or Stalinist methods.

I suggest that a Commission on Farmers be set up on a permanent basis. This commission should concern itself with the proper development of our agricultural economy and with the elimination of growing disparities in urban and rural incomes.

Total Ad-hocism in Foreign Policy: Sri Lanka Misadventure

The conduct of foreign policy during the past five years has been marked by total ad-hocism. The consequences have been very damaging. It was wrong and irresponsible for Government to have encouraged and assisted militancy in Sri Lanka. The country today is having to pay a heavy price for the misadventure. This Government's ill-thought and half-baked actions have brought national humiliation upon us all. It has placed our IPKF in a position of grave jeopardy. Government's gross mishandling of Indo-Sri Lankan relations has harmed the country's national interests not just in the short term, but in the foreseeable future as well.

Nepal Neglected

The casualness with which the Prime Minister dismissed the difficulties which have arisen in the Indo-Nepalese context by saying ...*"There are no problems with Nepal"* ...is yet another illustration of the amateurishness which characterises the conduct of our foreign policy. There is an urgent need to re-establish with Nepal, a relationship of interdependent growth, trust and development.

False Assumptions Abate Pakistani Threat

It is distressing to see the lackadaisical manner in which Government has been dealing with crucial issues of national security, particularly in the context of our relations with Pakistan. For the first time in three decades, an Indian Prime Minister has visited Pakistan.

How has the nation benefited? There are no gains that the country can see. Empty announcements of a *"new climate of trust"*, based on false assumptions of personalised diplomacy, have come to nothing. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has spoken of the *"holy talks"* of defending every inch of Pakistan's soil during her visit to the Siachen battlefield area. Begum Nusrat Bhutto, leading

the Pakistani delegation to the recently concluded Non-Aligned Conference in Belgrade, thought it fit to resurrect the Kashmir question. Where, therefore, I am constrained to ask, has this “*new climate of trust*” with Pakistan gone ?

It is a matter of deep concern that Pakistan continues to aid and supply arms to anti-national elements in Jammu and Kashmir, and to terrorists in the Punjab. I charge this government with failure to take up this issue with Pakistan convincingly. It has thus proved remiss in its duty of protecting national interests.

Needless Hype about China visit

The Prime Minister’s media-hailed visit to the People’s Republic of China also has turned out to be nothing more than so much verbiage. This barren China trip also illustrates the perils of personalised diplomacy. I demand that Government enlighten the country about what is currently happening in the Sino-Indian parleys.

Defence Preparedness

Of utmost concern to the country, in the context of the nation’s defence preparedness, is the deliberate denigration of the Armed Forces, that the Government and the Prime Minister are indulging in. I refer to the office of the Chief of Army Staff, by criticising which this Government stands charged with compromising the integrity, reputation and morale of the Armed Forces. It is a matter of particular distress that precisely when the Indian Armed Forces have been asked to fulfil near impossible missions, both in Siachen and Sri Lanka, which duties they are carrying out with their traditionally impeccable dedication and competence, Rajiv Gandhi should choose, only for partisan purposes, to criticise the very moral fabric of our Armed Forces.

Recent revelations by the former Chief of Army Staff and the Defence Ministry’s response to it have highlighted a critically vital lacuna. There appears to be no system for evaluating threats to the country; there is reason now to believe that the level of trust and cooperation that should exist between a Government and the Armed Forces, is just not there. This is all too disturbingly reminiscent of the period 1960-62. The Ministry of Defence and the

decision-making processes in it have come to a virtual standstill for the last two years. Such a situation imperils the nation. Either the situation must change, or the Government must be changed.

Election Scenario

Since 1971, the country has been witnessing a kind of wave phenomenon in Lok Sabha elections. They who thought that the 1969 split in the Congress had crippled the party, and so calculated that its 1971 performance would be poorer than that of 1967 were taken aback by the results. No doubt, *Garibi Hatao* was nothing more than a slogan. But the slogan, combined with some clever tactical moves by Mrs. Gandhi, did touch off a wave against the Opposition who in the eyes of the people became apologists of the *status quo*. The Congress scored a remarkable victory in 1971.

In 1977 a powerful anti-Emergency wave literally pulverised the Indira Congress in the greater part of the country, and brought a singular triumph to the Janata Party.

In 1980, a sense of disgust with Janata's infighting totally reversed the picture, and brought Mrs. Gandhi back to the saddle.

In all these elections the verdict was the outcome essentially of a negative vote. The 1984 vote was not a negative vote but it was not a positive one either. It was, as is generally described, a highly emotive, sympathy vote. But the wave phenomenon was there in a more powerful manner than ever before.

Disenchantment with Rajiv Govt.

Today, there is an intense disillusionment and despair with the Rajiv Government, but that is particularly so because of the high hopes he had aroused when he had come in. This disenchantment started setting in late 1986 when it became obvious that he was messing up the Punjab issue. Soon after came the Scandal Serial. If Opposition parties had done nothing else except act in concert and concentrate on educating the people about the utter ineptness and rottenness of this leadership, now there would have been in the country an anti-Rajiv wave as powerful as the anti-Indira wave of 1977. Unfortunately, some Opposition friends embarked on a unification exercise which in turn has occasioned senseless squabbling. It must be admitted that it is this unending acrimony

which has provided much-needed oxygen to the ruling party which at several points of time in the last two years has seemed to be virtually gasping for breath.

Worst Government Since Independence

A strong negative vote is, nevertheless, sure to operate against the Government. Congress's dismal failure on the Punjab front and the corruption issue are together sufficient to sustain the present anti-Congress mood of the people. After all, solving the Punjab problem and giving the country a clean Government were the two principal ingredients of Rajiv Government's 1984 mandate. On both counts he has failed. Democratic accountability warrants that this Government, which, even otherwise, can be rated as the worst Government New Delhi has seen since Independence, must be thrown out.

BJP's Stock is Rising

But the BJP must exert consciously to see that the verdict this time is not purely negative, and that it has a positive dimension as well. In terms of physical progress, BJP's own journey from Bombay (1980) to Bombay (1989) has been full of ups and downs. But in terms of credibility, as a party with a difference, and a party committed to certain principles, policies and values, which it is not willing to sacrifice at the altar of electoral expediency, the BJP's stock has been consistently rising.

BJP Committed to value Politics

The post (Mrs. Gandhi's) assassination riots in Delhi and in other parts of the country had put the party's beliefs to a severe test. Some well-wishers of the party expressed unhappiness that the BJP had not merely condemned the riots, it had actively provided protection and succour to the Sikh victims. Against the background of terrorist violence in Punjab, they cautioned us, this attitude would cost the party dearly. Cost us it did, but BJP's bold response to that crisis did underscore the principled character of the party, and we are proud of it. More recently, the Moga massacre has provided another example in the same category. More than fifty of our party colleagues in Punjab, including State President, Shri

Hit Abhilashi, and State Yuva Morcha President, Sardar Tarsem Singh Bahar, have been gunned down by the terrorists. But even this has not made us waver in our commitment.

Minoritism will Hurt Minorities

For the BJP, national unity is an article of faith, and not just a slogan to be converted into slick spots for the TV. Our Constitution seeks to strengthen this unity by rejecting theocracy and by guaranteeing equality to all citizens, irrespective of their religion. These are the two principal facets of secularism as our Constitution makers conceived them. For most politicians in the country, however, secularism has become just a device for garnering bloc minority votes.

A desire to appease minorities often makes Indian politicians flaunt their allergy to Hindustan and everything associated with the word Hindu. Privately, many of them share our respect for the RSS, and our views on Article 370, on the need to replace the Minorities Commission with the Human Rights Commission, on Ram Janma Bhoomi and even on the desirability of having an honourable electoral arrangement with the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra. But publicly they keep criticising us on these issues because they think that that is an easy way of proving their secular credentials, and gaining the support of the minorities. I think that thereby they are doing a disservice to the country, and ill-serving the minorities as well.

Positive Secularism

I wish the country's political leadership, irrespective of party affiliation, could realise that the utterances and activities of some elements among the minorities are becoming increasingly aggressive and are ominously reminiscent of the pre-1947 years. These elements must be isolated, not propitiated. If these elements are allowed to grow, the consequences can be extremely dangerous for national integrity. Appeasement failed to avert partition. Appeasement is no way of combating the present threats to national unity. These threats have to be met head on, and squarely spiked.

The BJP believes in Positive Secularism; the Congress and

most other parties subscribe only to Vote Secularism. Positive Secularism means: justice for all, but appeasement of none. In the ensuing elections, let this become the BJP's distinctive message to the nation.

Today is the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay who was a living embodiment of the concept of value-based politics. Those of us who have seen him and worked with him know that Deendayalji was not only a great thinker and ideologue, he was an ideal political activist, par excellence, indeed a model for all of us to emulate.

For our ideological school of thought, the Seventh General Election of 1984 marked the lowers point in our progress graph. Let the deliberations and decisions of this Bombay session of ours fire us with a determination to make the Eighth General Election the peak point in our onward journey.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

1 December, 1989

When the BJP's National Council met at Bombay on 25 September, 1989, I concluded my address to the session with this observation:

"For our ideological school of thought, the VII General Election of 1984 marked the lowest point in our progress graph. Let the deliberations and decisions of this Bombay Session of ours fire us with a determination to make the VIII General Election the peak point in our onward journey."

BJP Marches Ahead

It is heartening to see that our cadres and units have succeeded remarkably in achieving the goal set out. The 1989 elections to the Lok Sabha have indeed become the peak point in the BJP's ascent upwards, both in terms of popular support as well as the number of seats won in the Lok Sabha.

This 1989 Lok Sabha result is no doubt a verdict against the Rajiv Government's corruption and incompetence. All Opposition parties, including the BJP, have been beneficiaries of the negative vote generated. But in case of the BJP, its victory has a substantial positive content as well. Three factors have contributed to the positive vote secured by the party, the first ideological, the second organisational and the third behavioural.

Positive Secularism

Over the years, the BJP has succeeded in projecting itself as a distinct political personality, committed to certain principles and policies which it was not willing to sacrifice at the altar of electoral

expediency. At our Bombay session I had referred to the national debate on secularism and communalism and had said:

“The BJP believes in Positive Secularism, the Congress and most other parties subscribe only to Vote Secularism. Positive Secularism means: Justice for all, but appeasement of none. In the ensuing elections let this become the BJP’s distinctive message to the nation.”

This approach, I hold, has made no mean contribution to our success.

Grass-roots Activity

The second factor which has earned for the BJP a positive vote is the sustained and systematic grass-roots activity carried on by our units among farmers, youth, women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, traders, professionals etc. in recent years.

A Cadre-based Party

The third factor, which I have earlier referred to as the behavioural factor is that over the years the BJP has acquired the reputation of being a cadre-based party relatively free from infighting, indiscipline, power lust, defection etc., maladies which afflict most other political parties in the country.

In these elections, our principal adversary was of course the Congress. And in several states, the BJP and JD fought the Congress as close allies. But in several others, like Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra, we had an intense political competition with the Janata Dal. The positive support base we had succeeded in building up enabled us to triumph in this competition.

These election results have cast on us a tremendous responsibility. We have to evaluate the situation in all its aspects and take decision at this Executive meeting which can enable us to measure up to the expectations of the people.

On behalf of the BJP, I thank the Indian electorate for the immense support they have given to the Party. I compliment the Party cadres and the Party units for the success they have achieved in mobilising this support.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Ernakulam

1 January, 1988

A year of Scandal and Shame

In the first week of 1987, our Party's National Executive met at Vijayawada, on the east coast of South India. At that very time, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was having a gala pleasure trip on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, along with friends and relations.

Today is the first day of 1988. We are again meeting in the South, this time at Ernakulam on the West coast. By a curious coincidence the Prime Minister too is holidaying these days at the Lakshadweep Islands, off the west coast, again with the same style and splendour.

For BJP, the one year long journey from Vijayawada to Ernakulam has been a story of steady success (Gujarat Municipal elections and Haryana polls, for instance) and principled politics (stand on Presidential poll, for example). For Rajiv, his government and his party, on the other hand, the year between Andamans and Lakshadweep has been a year of scandal and shame.

For the people of India, the year 1987 has been a year of shocking realisation that the Emperor is without clothes, that the 21st century wonder-apparel he had been talking about was a sham and a hoax, and that the nation had been taken for a ride.

Doubts about PM's Integrity and honesty

At the end of three years of Rajiv's rule, there is a general conviction in the people that the present Prime Minister not only lacks the ability and sagacity needed to discharge the onerous

responsibility which the people have entrusted to him, but that his integrity and honesty also are in doubt.

The accords which this Government has signed—from the Punjab Accord to the Sri Lanka accord—have ended up in greater discord. And after Bofors and Fairfax and HDW submarines, the description “Mr. Clean” is no longer used as a compliment; it is a sarcastic jibe. No wonder, not even Congressmen utter this word any longer.

For some months past, speculation has been rife in political circles that Rajiv may go in for an early Lok Sabha poll. Some of his counsellors, acutely conscious of the fact that Rajiv’s popularity graph has been rapidly hurtling downwards, hold that if the election prospects today are bad for the Congress, tomorrow they may be still worse. It is also being emphasised that the 1987 drought would have grave consequences for the economy in 1988. So, these counsellors have been advising an early poll.

One wishes this advice is accepted. An early poll would be in the country’s best interests. It is, therefore, that we have been demanding it, and will continue to press for it.

Rajiv Gandhi’s Credibility Completely Shattered

Taking into account Rajiv Gandhi’s impulsive style of decision making and his ad-hocism, one cannot entirely rule out the possibility of his going in for an election gamble. But on a comprehensive overview, an early poll is highly improbable. Mr. Gandhi, it appears, intends to hold on to office, even with shattered credibility, and defer his day of reckoning as long as he can. Postponement of the Delhi polls is a pointer which clearly indicates that he is aware of the powerful anti-Congress mood prevailing in the country. The qualitative change that has come about in Tamil Nadu’s politics during the last ten days is yet another factor to dampen the inclination for a mid-term poll.

Communist Violence against BJP and Sangh Pariwar not Acceptable

We are meeting in Kerala where nine months back a Marxist led Front was elected to power. It is deplorable that the return of Marxists has also meant the return of violence. It seems the Nayanar

Government has learnt no lessons from its experience of 1982 when the people of Kerala punished it for its politics of violence, and brought its tenure to a premature end. Communists and fascists may abhor each other but they share a common characteristic – an intense intolerance towards political opponents which readily erupts in the shape of murder and violence. In Kerala, the principal targets of Marxist violence during the last six months have been the BJP, the RSS, the BMS and the ABVP.

A week back I released to the press detailed statistics about the incidents of murder and vandalism that had taken place since the Marxists had resumed power. My statement provoked an angry reaction from CPI (M) leader Shri EMS Namboodiripad. But the statement made was significant. It carried the usual vituperation and abuses about BJP being communal etc. but failed to refute even a single charge of violence that I had made. His silence on this score was more eloquent than words. Indeed, EMS's statement is a public admission of BJP's grave charge.

In this meeting, we have to take stock of all the developments of 1987 and map out our plan of action for the future.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

8 April, 1988

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother & Sister Delegates,

I am extremely grateful to the National Council of the BJP for electing me to this high office for a second term. This is a great honour, and an onerous responsibility. I shall endeavour my utmost to prove worthy of the confidence reposed in me.

Great Country Ruled by Small Men

The party's last plenary session was held at Delhi in May 1986. The Rajiv regime was then just nineteen months old. In my formal address to that session I had noted that at the popular level the initial euphoria and the mood of unquestioning adulation had yielded place to cynicism and doubts about the competence of the Government, and that cynics had been describing it as a '*baba-log Government.*'

Lacking Commitment to the Country

Today the mood is no longer just of cynicism; it is of disgust and anger, not unmixed with sorrow. The people feel sad that by an accident of history, this great country should have come to be saddled with a coterie of small men who are not only incompetent and corrupt, but who lack a sense of commitment to the country, and its cultural traditions and its democratic institutions.

I remember that when towards the end of 1986 the BJP drew up a charge-sheet against the Rajiv Government listing as many as fifty sins of commission and omission of its, one ran into sceptics

who conceded that in the matter of ability this Prime Minister was totally unequal to the job which a tragedy had foisted on him, who also admitted that he had failed to curb corruption, but who affirmed at the same time that his personal integrity was not in question.

No more Mr. Clean

The year 1987 has shaken public faith in Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's personal probity. A series of scandals have surfaced during this year – Bofors scandal, the Fairfax scandal, the HDW Submarine scandal, the Westland Helicopter scandal – which have smashed to smithereens the image of Mr. Clean which Mr. Gandhi's image-makers had assiduously built up for him. This sobriquet is no more used as compliment; it is a sarcastic jibe.

Denigration of Institutions

Government's incompetence and corruption worries us. But of greater concern still is its attitude of callous unconcern, if not of positive contempt for the health of our institutions. Every institution that sustains democracy – Parliament, Judiciary, Press and Opposition – is being systematically denigrated and devalued.

No Respect for Rajya Sabha Chairman

The other day, the ruling party created a situation in the Rajya Sabha which made the Chairman, that is, the country's Vice-President, throw up his hands in disgust and offer to resign. Leading the ugly uproar were senior members of the Council of Ministers. And all this happened in the presence of the Prime Minister and for observers, not privy to the actual confabulations that went on between the leader and his flock, seemingly at the instance of the Prime Minister. There was universal condemnation of the ruling party's conduct. There was a demand from many quarters that the Prime Minister should apologise. But the ruling party was not just unrepentant, a spokesman of the party blamed the Chairman and the Press for that day's happenings, and called for a revision of rules to clip the powers of presiding officers.

Decline of Parliament

I do not regard this as an isolated instance of misbehaviour. I think it is only illustrative of the overall attitude of Government towards Parliament as an institution. There is a conscious effort to debilitate it, to disregard it and derail it.

Finance Act Amended by Ordinance

The duration of Parliament sessions has been progressively reduced. There is increasing resort to ordinance-making, a practice which the first Speaker of the Lok Sabha Shri G. V. Mavalankar characterised as "*inherently undemocratic.*" Under Rajiv Gandhi, last year for the first time in forty years, the Finance Act, 1987 was amended by Ordinance.

It is a time-honoured parliamentary convention that while Parliament is in session, no Minister goes abroad. The Prime Minister himself has been violating this convention with impunity and so it is futile to expect any Minister to adhere to it.

Yet another practice initiated in recent years which undermines Parliament's authority is that of announcing whopping administrative price-hikes and alterations in excise levies on the eve of the budget. Admonitions from the Chair in these matters are unabashedly disregarded.

During the 1975-77 emergency, the Constitution and the law were amended to curtail the rights of citizens, and the powers of the Press. But formally, at least the powers of Parliament were left unabridged. Under Rajiv rule we have had the Commission of Inquiry Act formally amended to empower the Executive to deny even to Parliament reports of Inquiry Commissions.

Judiciary's Independence Whittled

Way back in 1974, Shri Kumaramangalam as a Minister of Mrs. Gandhi's Government, propounded his thesis of a committed judiciary. The commitment was supposed to be not to the Constitution but to the political philosophy of the ruling party. During the last three years, an effort is on to have the judiciary committed not to any philosophy, but to the person of the Prime Minister. How else can one explain two eminent judges of the Supreme Court holding that destabilisation of the Prime Minister

meant destabilisation of the country ? The Thakkar-Natrajan Commission's Report on Fairfax has gravely impaired public confidence in the uprightness of the judiciary.

Allergy to Press Freedom

Routine pronouncements about his belief in the freedom of the press notwithstanding, the present Prime Minister has never been able to conceal his innate animus towards the Press.

Once at a Press Conference, a correspondent persisted with his question regarding broadcast autonomy and was keen to know why precisely Government was not willing to concede autonomy to radio and television. The PM blurted out in reply: *"I do not want the media to become as irresponsible as the press"*! At Shantiniketan the other day the Prime Minister advised the alumni to stop reading newspapers, as they often dished out *"blatant lies."* At a Nagpur function some time back, Shri Gandhi berated the role of the Indian Press during India's freedom struggle. Last month his speech writers tried to have him make amends for his Nagpur misstatement by preparing a speech for his INS function in which he warmly lauded the role of the Press in the freedom struggle.

Raids on the Indian Express

This innate distrust of a free press found its worst manifestation last year in the Indian Express episode. This one was a vicious bid on the part of the Government to force the paper to wind up its Delhi Edition. Not only opposition parties but even the statutory Press Council severely condemned Government's strong-arm methods to gag this paper which has been carrying on a relentless crusade against corruption in high places.

The Press Council of India described the nationwide raids on the Indian Express as *"vindictive acts adopted by the Government as a measure of reprisal to the very critical writings in the newspaper against the Central Government."*

59th Amendment: A Retrograde Step

I regard the 59th Constitution Amendment rushed through Parliament last month as a grave assault on Press freedom. Learning

from the experience of the 1975-77 emergency, all political parties, including the Congress, had agreed that Article 358 should be so amended as to provide for suspension of Article 19 (relating to Freedom of Expression) only in case of war or external aggression and not in case of “armed rebellion,” the phrase that had been brought in place of “internal disturbance.” The 59th Amendment now provides for suspension of Article 19 in all cases – war, external aggression, armed rebellion and even ‘internal disturbance,’ this last phrase being the principal source of the 1975 emergency.

Intolerance towards Opposition

When the Rajiv Government assumed office, it started with an extraordinary exhibition of solicitude and concern for opposition views. During his first two years in office, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had perhaps more formal meetings with the opposition than Mrs. Gandhi had during her entire tenure. The meetings were seldom very purposeful. Gradually the feeling was growing among opposition parties that these Government-opposition get-togethers were essentially a PR exercise to boost the PM’s image. Now, however, even the formality has been given up.

Aggravating Centre State Relation

How intolerant this Government is towards the opposition comes out very sharply in its dealings with non-Congress Governments. Prior to Shri Gandhi, Prime Ministers and all Central Ministers used to be very circumspect in their public utterances about State Chief Ministers and Ministers, and particularly those in non-Congress States lest any one accuse them of partisanship. Since the arrival of Shri Gandhi, all constraints have been shed. If we have had Vengal Raos and Buta Singhs making intemperate tirades against non-Congress CMs it is because the tone is set by the PM himself. Not very long ago, he actually threatened to dismiss any State Government which the Home Minister certifies as ‘anti-national.’ Irresponsible statements of this kind have made no mean contribution to aggravating Centre-State tensions.

The BJP is resolved to continue playing a watchdog role in defence of all these institutions.

Implement Sarkaria Report

The Sarkaria Commission which has recently submitted a voluminous two-part report on the entire gamut of Centre-State relations has very rightly noted that the tensions between Centre and States do not stem from any basic flaw in the Constitution. The problems arise from the manner in which the Constitution is being worked. The Commission's report strongly deprecates "*the general tendency towards centralisation*" and has observed:

"..... undue centralisation leads to blood pressure at the Centre, and anemia at the periphery. The inevitable result is morbidity and inefficiency."

The Commission's recommendations, in the main, seek to curb this tendency towards centralisation.

In our Memorandum to the Commission, our party had strongly pleaded that in order to enable States to discharge their developmental responsibilities satisfactorily, their revenue-base requires to be substantially enlarged. We had specifically emphasised the need to bring Corporation Tax and Surcharge on Income-tax within the divisible pool.

Several other parties also made the same plea.

The Commission has conceded the logic of this approach. It has recommended several steps to enlarge the tax-base of States, including bringing Corporation Tax within the divisible pool. In case of income-tax surcharge it has opined that Surcharge on Income tax should not be levied at all "*except for a specified purpose and for a strictly limited purpose.*" The BJP demands that the Commission's recommendations in this respect be fully and expeditiously implemented.

Yet another important recommendation of the Commission which merits immediate acceptance and implementation is creation of an Inter-State Council (designated Inter-Governmental Council) under Article 263.

One Country One People: India is a Union and not a Federation of States

Our Memorandum to the Commission had stated that though the Indian Constitution was federal in form, it was unitary in

content. We believe that India is one country and Indians are one people. The Indian Constitution also has been structured on the same premise. The Constituent Assembly preferred to describe India as a “*Union of States*” and rejected an amendment wanting it to be a “*Federation of States.*”

Dr. Ambedkar said that India is a Union “*because it is indestructible.*” He added: “*Though the country and the people may be divided into different States for convenience of administration, the country is one integral whole, its people a single people living under a single imperium derived from a single source.* The Americans had to wage a civil war to establish that the States have no right to secession and that their federation was indestructible. The drafting committee thought that it was better to make it clear at the outset than to leave it to speculation or to disputes.”

Going through the Memoranda submitted to the Sarkaria Commission by various parties, I find that two important parties have questioned this fundamental premise. These are the Marxists and the Akalis. Both these parties regard India as a multi-national State. The Akali Government of Punjab has said that after the linguistic reorganisation of the Country, States have ceased to be just administrative units. “*They are now deliberately reorganised homelands of different linguistic groups.*” The Marxists have gone further and have questioned the bonafides of the Constitution-makers in these words:

“The Constitution that was framed after independence reflected the needs of the capitalist path of development which required a unified, single homogenous market. It reflected the needs of the big capitalists allied with landlords who considered the demand of democracy, state autonomy or equality of languages, as obstacles to their economic domination and political power.”

True, under the Constitution as originally conceived in 1946, the Centre’s powers were quite limited, and the provinces had considerable autonomy. That Constitution was intended to avert partition. However, once partition became a reality, the constitution-makers made major departures from the draft constitution, all intended to strengthen the concept of one-nationhood. It was a very patriotic and noble concern that actuated the Constituent Assembly to impart a unitary bias to the Constitution. It is perverse

and slanderous on the part of Marxists to allege, as they have, that the framers of the Constitution wanted to promote the interests of the big landlords and capitalists!

Devious Marxist Role

The BJP is opposed to the Marxist theory that India is a multi-national State. This country did not accept Jinnah's two-nation theory; how can it reconcile with the multination thesis? The two-nation theory resulted in partition; any compromise with the multi-nation thesis would lead to disintegration.

Communists Committed to their Foreign Masters

Throughout the year 1987, the Rajiv Government has been in the dock because of various scandalous deals involving huge kick-backs and pay-offs. At one stage the debate on corruption became so animated, and so hot, that many thought that Rajiv may like to abandon the scene. Within Congress circles, one even heard alternative names being discussed for Prime Ministership. It was at this point that the Marxists, after secret parlours with Dobrynin, rushed to the scene determined to bale out Rajiv. They adopted a diversionary tactic. Rajiv Gandhi has to be fought no doubt, they told other opposition parties, but BJP has to be fought first. Corruption, of course, is an important issue, but communalism is even more important, they said. Let us have a debate, therefore, on secularism! The tactic recalled to mind what they had done in 1942 to rationalise their treacherous pro-British role. They had said then: freedom is important no doubt, but the fight against fascism is more important.

BJP and Secularism

The Marxist role right from the time of the Presidential election till the recent so-called Bharat Bandh has made the entire non-Communist opposition intensely conscious of their undependable, slippery character.

When Marxists called for a debate on secularism they did so only to draw a red-herring across the trail. But whatever be their motives the BJP would like to make its own position unambiguously clear on this issue.

Secular State does not mean an Irreligious State

The BJP rejects the concept of a theocratic State. By tradition and history, the State in India has always been a civil institution, which respects all religions equally (*Sarva dharma sama bhava*). So, even though in 1947, India was partitioned on the basis of religion, and even though Pakistan declared itself an Islamic State, our Constituent Assembly gave to the people a secular Constitution. Under this Constitution, all citizens are equal, irrespective of creed. There are no Class One citizens and Class Two citizens. There is no state religion.

However, if one goes through the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly, one would easily see that our Constitution makers never intended a secular state to mean either an irreligious state, or a state that would disown the nation's ancient cultural heritage only because it was Hindu.

Hindu Ethos is the very Essence of Indian Culture

The culture of any ancient country is bound to be composite. But in our country, emphasis on the composite character of Indian culture is generally an attempt to disown its essentially Hindu spirit and content. Donald Eugene Smith has authored one of the most comprehensive studies of Indian secularism, *India as a Secular State*. In this book, he observes perceptively: “... despite the composite nature of Indian culture, Hinduism remains by far the most powerful and pervasive element in that culture. Those who lay great stress on the composite nature of Indian culture frequently minimise this basic fact. Hinduism has indeed provided the essential genius of Indian culture.”

Minoritism must be Shunned

For many politicians, secularism is only a euphemism for minority appeasement, a device to collect minority bloc votes. The Congress has been the worst culprit on this count. The Rajiv Government's surrender to the communalist campaign against the Supreme Court, because of its Shah Bano verdict, has greatly encouraged communal militancy. It is this surrender which emboldened the leaders of the anti-Supreme Court campaign to give a call last year for boycott of Republic Day celebrations. These developments have had a reaction among the Hindus, a section

among whom has been arguing that minorities in India should be treated exactly as minorities are treated in Pakistan or in the Gulf countries, as second class citizens.

My party repudiates this approach because we regard it contrary to our tradition and political values. But there is need also to reject the cult of minoritism which the pseudo-secularists in the country are aggressively promoting. Let us all remember Sardar Patel's concluding words in the Constituent Assembly when the question of minorities was being discussed. He said: *"In the long run, it would be in the interest of all to forget that there is anything like a majority or a minority in this country, and that in India there is only one community."*

Scrap the Minorities Commission

In this context, the BJP demands that the present Minorities Commission be scrapped, and replaced instead by a Civil Rights Commission which should be statutorily charged with redressing all problems arising out of discrimination against any section of society. It is significant that the present Minorities Commission itself has shown awareness of the unhealthy consequences arising out of minoritism. In a recommendation made to the National Integration Council, the Minorities Commission has observed that "naming commissions as being meant for minority communities, or scheduled castes, etc. is by itself misleading, and *encourages divisiveness.*" The Commission itself has then suggested the setting up of a *"National Integration-cum-Human Rights Commission for the promotion of secular traditions and national integration."* It would be in the interest of all if this recommendation is implemented.

As it is, those influenced by the Marxist ideology tend to equate the secular state with an irreligious state, and thus question the legitimacy of even Ramayana being telecast by the official medium, while those who subordinate all these questions to considerations of electoral gains or losses are blind to the damage they do to secularism when they compromise on issues like Shah Bano or advocate proportional representation for minorities in the police. Both these approaches have weakened secularism, and have contributed to accentuating communal tensions.

Vested Interest in Poll Distortions

We feel proud of the fact that we are the largest democracy in the world and that during these forty years of independence, except for that emergency aberration of 1976 when the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies gave themselves an extended one year term, elections to parliament and State Legislatures have been held every five years. Following the postponement of the Delhi poll and following enactment of the 59th Constitution Amendment Act and talk of clamping an emergency in Punjab, the apprehension has become strong and widespread that if in December 1989, when Lok Sabha elections are normally due, it appears to the ruling party that they are likely to lose, they may put off election by invoking Article 83 of the Constitution.

The BJP calls upon all democrats to ensure that an emergency in Punjab is not used as devious device to perpetuate Rajiv Rule.

Urgent Need for Poll Reforms

Generally speaking, Indian elections can be regarded free. Of course, there are areas in the country where the evil of booth-capture is so endemic and so pervasive that elections cannot be regarded even as free. But even where elections are free, they are hardly fair. Money power and abuse of official machinery and official media by the ruling party are two evils which totally vitiate the poll process. Immediately after assuming power, the Rajiv Government had promised early poll reforms. During the last three and a half years, scores of questions posed and half a dozen debates raised in Parliament on this issue have yielded the invariable reply: The matter is under consideration. A fortnight back the Election Commission also reminded Government about the urgent need to undertake poll reforms.

I charge this Government with having developed a vested interest in perpetuating the lacunae in the present laws and procedures. It is obviously to the advantage of the ruling party that the process should continue to be as costly, as corrupt, as unfair and as unequal as it is.

The Jan Sangh earlier and the BJP now have been carrying on a relentless campaign for electoral reform. We shall continue to pursue this task with determination. Specifically speaking we

demand:

1. Public funding of elections.
2. Making violation of the Election Commission's Code of Conduct a corrupt practice; enlarging the legal meaning of electoral corruption to include what the Supreme Court had described as 'evil practice.'
3. Reducing voting age from 21 years to 18 years.
4. Using electronic voting machines.
5. Providing photo-affixed identity cards to all voters.
6. Autonomy for Radio and TV; until this is done, monitoring of election coverage by these media by the Election Commission.
7. Simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and Assemblies.
8. Conversion of Election Commission into a multi-member body, and such other steps to insulate Commission from executive pressure.
9. Restoration of ban on company donations.
10. Fresh and rational delimitation of constituencies.

Accord Politics has Failed

Rajiv Gandhi's accords have, by and large, ended up in greater discord. The Punjab accord is dead; the Assam accord has failed to take off; and the Sri Lanka accord has landed the country in an unenviable mess. The Mizo accord has brought seeming respite to Mizoram, but it has contributed directly to the aggravation of the situation in Punjab and in Darjeeling. Mizoram has convinced the militants in these areas that the Rajiv Government responds readily to the language of violence, and so has made them pursue their path even more viciously.

Punjab continues to go from bad to worse not because Government lacks the necessary powers to deal with the situation. Parliament has armed the executive with enormous powers. What is lacking is perspective; what is absent is policy.

Four Ingredients of a Sound Punjab Policy

After all, what kind of policy is it that consciously tries to make the political leadership irrelevant, and seeks to confer

legitimacy on a shadowy panthic leadership whom only yesterday Government had incarcerated on charges of collusion with terrorism and secessionism.

One has just to compile the statements made by the Prime Minister and Home Minister on Punjab from time to time and read them seriatim. It would need extraordinary talent indeed to read in them a coherent policy. The BJP holds that a sound Punjab policy must have as its objectives:

- (a) Preserving and promoting communal harmony;
- (b) Creating in the people of Punjab a sense of security on the one hand and a guarantee of justice and fairplay on the other;
- (c) Isolating terrorists from the rest of society, and effectively suppressing them; and
- (d) Insulating Punjab's politics from foreign interference.

Seven Point Approach to Punjab

For the achievement of the above objectives the BJP commends the following seven-point approach:

- (i) All political parties, and all social, cultural, educational institutions must concertedly exert to create a sense of revulsion in society against those who kill innocent men, women and children. Pressure of public opinion must be brought to bear on the Akali leaders also to join in this campaign of isolating the terrorists.
- (ii) There should be no more delay in creating a security belt all along the western border with Pakistan.
- (iii) To mobilise world opinion against foreign interference in our internal affairs, a White Paper on Pakistan's role in Punjab must be brought out without delay.
- (iv) The intelligence apparatus must be strengthened; Government must shed inhibitions in the matter of deploying the army to assist the civil administration in the border districts.
- (v) The cases of remaining prisoners in Jodhpur Jail should be processed without any further delay – the innocent released and the guilty punished.
- (vi) The cases of army deserters not involved in any violence

should be dealt with leniently.

- (vii) Persons, high and low, responsible for the killings of innocents in Delhi and other parts of the country after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination must be identified and given due punishment.

Security Interests in Jeopardy

The total mishandling of our security arrangements by Rajiv Gandhi's government has now taken on scandalous proportions. Our principal and immediate anxiety is in respect of the strategic imbalancing of our armed forces, particularly the Army. Some five infantry divisions, with other supporting arms and specialised forces, are now deployed in Sri Lanka. This commitment of troops is at the cost of reserves in the east and elsewhere. The army has been deployed in Sri Lanka in a role that does not permit early extrication. This has resulted in a critical loss of flexibility of response. It must be noted that all this is the face of an accretion of strength of the Pak forces by the return of their Saudi Arabian contingents, an imminent lessening of their Afghanistan commitments, and in the context of a 4.2 billion dollars arms assistance programme from the United States of America. The BJP considers it its national duty to highlight this gross irresponsibility.

India must have a Nuclear Deterrent

While the People's Republic of China continues to have territorial disputes with us and is an established nuclear power, our Government has responded to the mounting evidence of Pakistan's nuclear weapon's programme with lackadaisical ambivalence. The BJP reiterates its known position of many years standing that it is criminal folly to persist with ambiguous policies in this field of critical national interest. India must have its own nuclear deterrent. The choice is not between two equal and contending options. When the nation's security is at stake, an uncertain nuclear weapon's policy is no policy.

Defence Budget Needs Attention

The BJP would like to highlight yet another aspect of Rajiv Gandhi's irresponsible approach to national security. The current

defence budget at Rs. 13,000 crore, in real terms, after discounting for inflation, is actually lower than last year's. Had this been the result of fiscal discipline and more efficient management of systems it would be gratifying. The reality is alarming. Defence capital expenditure for 1987-88 has actually been cut down by almost Rs. 1,000 crore, whereas defence revenue expenses have gone up, against budget estimates, by almost Rs. 700 crores. In other words, we have spent more on the peripherals at the cost of modernisation, upgradation and the future combat effectiveness of our armed forces.

Whither Foreign Policy?

A principal plank to Rajiv Gandhi's early pronouncements on foreign policy was the establishment of a more stable relationship with our neighbouring countries. Now, three years into his unhappy premiership, one finds that never since independence have our relations with our neighbours been as strained, and as sour, as they are today. Starting from a personalised foreign policy of foreign jaunts in which, in the first 28 months of his premiership, Rajiv Gandhi engaged in '*Vishwa Darshan*' by jetting, at enormous expense, to 35 countries, our country has by now been reduced to a status of almost regional inconsequence.

Humiliating Rebuff

Our bilateral relations are currently strained with Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The Socialist Republic of Burma has rejected our amateurish attempts at inviting them into the non-aligned fold. Face to face with prospects of Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, we search on telephone for an Afghanisatan policy, and by an ill-thought-out initiative with President Zia. Never since the days of the Islamic Summit of Rabbat, in the sixties, has the nation suffered as humiliating a diplomatic rebuff as this juvenile telephone diplomacy of Rajiv Gandhi.

Ad-hocism in Foreign Policy

This Government sadly lacks a proper conceptual framework of foreign policy. What is more worrisome is that it totally fails on the front of execution of policy as well. Our foreign policy

has become episodic and ad hoc. We combat apartheid by flamboyant ministerial statements in Parliament, while on the ground, the obscenity of racial discrimination proliferates. We play tennis with Israel one day, and do not on another, and call it policy, while China occupies our soil we talk only of improving relations, but not of freeing our territory of foreign occupation. While president Ershad announces his decision to convert Bangladesh into an Islamic Republic we sit silently unconcerned about the fate of 15 million Hindus there; our only response is to cancel a cricket tour. In the context of the West Asian imbroglio and persecution of Palestinians Rajiv Gandhi demonstrates irrelevance; in the face of the Gulf war and Indian Casualties, their incompetence; in South East Asia, particularly Kampuchea, inconsequence.

As if to cover up all these monumental failures, recourse is then taken to festivals, in the USA, UK, Sweden, France, USSR and now in Japan, all in the name of cultural diplomacy!

Economy in Crisis

The Indian economy is presently going through an acute crisis. Last year's drought, bad though it was, is being flaunted just as an alibi to explain away mismanagement and failures. Actually, our economy has been stagnating for the last eight years, more so since 1985. We produce less rice and wheat, staple diet of the nation, than we did three or four years ago. We produce more colour TV sets, but not enough steel, more computers but not enough power, more fancy cars of Japanese design but not enough buses, more synthetic fabrics but not enough cotton dhoties and saris, more mushrooms but not enough groundnuts. The result of this lopsided elitist sense of priorities, combined with corruption and profligacy, is that today there are more people looking for jobs than even before, more landless farmers than ever before, more illiterates than ever before. The consumer is groaning under the burden of back-breaking prices. There is more sorrow than happiness, more poverty than wealth, more of everything that is bad and corrupt and less of everything that is good and clean.

Unpardonable Neglect of Agriculture

A couple of months back, this part of the country witnessed a farmers' movement whose intensity and size seemed baffling to many. Last month the Maharashtra BJP staged a mammoth peasant morcha in Bombay whose dimensions too made political observers raise their eyebrows in surprise. Of course, credit for that massive turnout in the city of Bombay does go to our party cadres and units who have been assiduously exerting for the past few years to give voice to peasant problems and mobilise them for mass action. But the fact is that these efforts have evoked such response because today the farmer is seething with anger. Over the years thousands of crores worth of rupees have been transferred from the pockets of the village poor to the city rich, thanks to wrong policies. Even today our rulers fail to appreciate that our biggest industry is not steel or electronics; it is agriculture. Agriculture sustains two-thirds of our people. Yet the ruling party has deliberately neglected this sector in pursuit of mythical modernisation.

The Angry Farmer

Forty years ago, the disparity between the farmer and his counterpart in other sectors was not very large. Today, it is one to three; soon, it will be one to four. There is not a single country in the world, not even America or Britain, where there is so large a disparity in farm and non-farm incomes as there is in India. In Japan farmers earn more than factory workers. A country that treats its farmers with contempt is bound to remain mired in poverty, as India is. This year we shall be again resorting to imports of foodgrains after so many years, which in itself is a tell-tale commentary on the mess that has been made on the farm front, in fact, in respect of the entire economy.

While the government asks the people to observe austerity, the squandering of public funds and ostentatious display goes on unabated. The Prime Minister uses hired Boeings costing crores of rupees to pay flying visits to starving men and women in Kalahandi in Orissa where hundreds have died of starvation. In Andhra Pradesh, scores of farmers and their families have committed suicide by jumping into wells because of the failure of crops.

After 40 years of independence, the average Indian is one of

the poorest men in the world, a man for whom survival from day to day is the only aim in life. Why should such a man be asked to pay for the Boeings and the helicopters, for fancy holidays, in far-flung places and jamborees in Moscow and Paris, and all at the cost of the taxpayer? What use are these festivals in foreign countries when millions have little to eat and at times nothing to wear ?

Spectre of Emergency

BJP believes in economic development, social and economic equality and individual freedom, all of which, and not just one or the other, are indivisible elements of our political philosophy. Without economic development there can be no social equality – let alone economic equality – and individual freedom would be meaningless. Without social equality, neither economic development nor individual freedom would have any worthwhile meaning. And without individual freedom, the very foundation of democracy, neither economic development or equality, social or economic, would be possible. Nations that have progressed the most are those that have been able to nurture and sustain all the three, not just one or two. And if India has not been able to do as much as it could have done, it is because all the three are under siege, mainly from a morally bankrupt government that is itself under siege from within.

And the threats are increasing, not receding. The latest Emergency law is evidence enough that the government has learnt nothing from its past blunders, and, like the Bourbons, forgotten nothing. The government cannot think except in terms of emergency because it is itself a product of the psychology of emergency.

The country stands today at the cross-roads of history. If India is still in one piece it is not because of the ruling party and its leaders but in spite of them. India is in one piece and is determined to be in one piece because the citizens of this ancient land will not allow it to be destroyed. Yet this is also true that never before in these forty years has national unity been as gravely imperilled as it is today. Never before has the clique in power treated the judiciary and the Parliament with such contempt, and betrayed such intolerance and bitterness against the opposition and the press. Never before has a

government had such a dismal record of failure in the maintenance of law and order, whether in the besieged capital where thousands have perished in its bloodied streets or in the far-flung outposts of Punjab in the West Bengal and Tripura in the east, where innocent citizens are murdered in broad daylight every day.

Government has brought Country to the Verge of Disaster

This government has set friend against friend, kith against kin, brother against brother, Punjabi against Punjabi, Tamil against Tamil, Indian against Indian. And it has the cheek to talk about national integrity as if it came out of the barrel of a gun. Nothing is safe under this government – and under the ruling party – neither our freedom nor our lives, neither our integrity nor our frontiers, for everything is grist to the mills of this corrupt clique that has looted the country and brought it to the verge of disaster.

What's the Alternative

Rajiv's first year in office was for the people a year of euphoria; his second year was one of disenchantment; his third has been of mounting anger. Join any informal group of discussion on current affairs these days and you will find wide agreement on the verdict that Rajiv has failed – and failed miserably. But this pronouncement is invariably followed by the poser: What is the alternative ?

Government must seek a Fresh Mandate

I regard this question as a fallacious one. It proceeds from the premise that Rajiv Gandhi is one credible alternative. Well, is it ? I hold that the premise itself is erroneous. Under any other leader, whether from within the Congress or from outside the party, the country, I am sure, would have done better. As it is, under the present captain, the ship of state is dangerously adrift, totally without direction. A change of captain would be in the best interests of the nation. Therefore, all opposition parties are unanimous in their demand that this government must resign and seek a fresh mandate.

The replacement of Mrs. Gandhi's government by the Janata government in 1977 has given birth to the mistaken notion that an alternative can be forged by aggregating all opposition parties.

The fact is overlooked that the 1977 development was the upshot of several years of working together under JP and then 19 months of collective incarceration under Mrs. Gandhi.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Jamshedpur

1 July, 1988

Messages from the Electorate

We last met at Agra in April 1988. During the three months' interlude since then, the most important political event has been the series of by-elections for the Lok Sabha and various Assemblies. The results of these elections do convey certain messages from the electorate to various political parties. As I read them, the messages are as follows :

1. The people are disillusioned with the Congress.
2. They are convinced that the Rajiv Government is corrupt, and wish to see a change of government at New Delhi.
3. To this end, they want Opposition parties to act in concert. What they are really particular about is not unification of Opposition parties : they insist on united action.
4. Outside their traditional bases like West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala, Communists are practically irrelevant ; in a greater part of the country, their support or opposition to any candidate does not affect the outcome of elections even a wee bit.

Congress (I) has lost all the three bye-elections in UP Immediately thereafter Chief Minister Bir Bahadur Singh has been replaced. The Congress is deluding itself if it thinks that the Congress debacle in UP is a verdict against Bir Bahadur.

VP's Landmark Victory in Allahabad

It must be acknowledged by all that VP's victory in Allahabad is an important landmark in India's recent political

history. VP was a number Two in Rajiv's Cabinet. He had quit the Cabinet on the issue of corruption, and has been carrying on a crusade against Rajiv's corruption. So, in this election corruption became the principal issue, and Congress candidate Sunil Shastri was only a proxy for Rajiv Gandhi.

A clear Verdict against Rajiv Gandhi

The Allahabad election outcome thus is a clear verdict against Rajiv Gandhi, and against corruption. Some Opposition leaders have made statements which seek to minimise the significance of VP's victory. These statements are viewed by the people as evidence of a continuing ego-clash among Opposition leaders. This is singularly unfortunate, and strengthens popular suspicions that Opposition strategy may flounder again on the leadership issue.

The BJP is of the view that far more important than agreement on leadership is agreement on issues and policies. More important still is an agreed resolve not to succumb to political expediency of the kind betrayed by some Opposition parties in the recent elections.

It is shameful that the Rajasthan units of the Lok Dal (B) and Janata made Sati an issue in the Pali and Khetri elections and tried to use it to incite casteist passions against the BJP and its leader Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat who had taken a bold, principled stand against the Deorala episode, last year.

Politics of Principles and Values

At Bombay, VP has publicly admitted that it was wrong on his part to have kept Arif Mohammed Khan out of his Allahabad campaign. This is a welcome admission. But this entire episode involving names like those of Shahi Imam and Shahabuddin and Haji Mastan hardly fits in with the politics of principles and values which VP is expected to promote.

The Opposition would be misjudging the popular mood if it thinks that the electorate can be mobilised against the sins of the present regime only through the mediacy of traditional caste and community leaders.

Punjab

At this meeting, the Executive would also have to consider the Punjab situation which continues to go from bad to worse. In recent weeks terrorists have widened their area of operation and inflicted ghastly tragedies on Haryana and Delhi also.

Reorganisation of States

The Executive is grateful to the Bihar unit, the Chhota Nagpur unit and the Jamshedpur unit for inviting us here and making such excellent arrangements for our stay. The BJP has been of the view that there is a case for reorganising some of the larger states of the country into smaller units so that the development needs of all parts of these states are fairly attended to. The case of Chhota Nagpur Santhal Parganas is one that fully justifies our approach. The BJP unit here must identify itself with the problems of this backward and neglected region and work for its welfare.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Ahmedabad

7 October, 1988

Defamation Bill: Vindictive Response to Press Reports on Scandals

The Party's National Executive had last met at Jamshedpur early in July. During the three months' interlude since then, there have been two significant developments on the political front—firstly, the storm precipitated by the Defamation Bill, and Government's subsequent retreat; and secondly, the unseemly goings-on in the Opposition camp in the name of Opposition unity.

When during the closing days of Parliament's Monsoon Session, Government introduced the Defamation Bill in the Lok Sabha, it claimed that the Bill was the outcome of the Law Commission's recommendations and the Press Commission's proposals.

Government's plea, it is now clear, was palpably false. The Law Commission's report (1971) in this regard is seventeen years old. The Press Commission's report also (1982) on which the Bill is supposed to be based was submitted to Government six years back. This Bill, I hold, has been conceived much later.

The Defamation Bill, without doubt, is Government's vindictive response to the series of press reports published in 1987 exposing a number of corrupt deals, and alleging that the Prime Minister and his friends were involved in them.

Indeed, documentary evidence is now available indicating that there is a clear nexus between Bofors, the Bachchan brothers and this Bill.

Bachchan Blames the Press

The Bofors scandal came to the surface in April 1987. At a meeting of the I and B Consultative Committee held on 5 May, 1987, Amitabh Bachchan, who was at that time still a Member of Parliament, burst out angrily, against the Press, accused it of indulging in irresponsible and defamatory writings and called for summary trials.

Giving the synopsis of each Member's speech at the Consultative Committee meeting, the official minutes of the meeting have recorded as follows:

“Shri Amitabh Bachchan

He also referred to the lack of protection that the citizens have against defamatory writings by the Press. He said that the Press indulges in such writings by using expressions ‘it is alleged’ perhaps to escape legal consequences. He felt that there should be a way of seeking speedy redressal by the aggrieved party in such cases.”

No less significant than Shri Bachchan's contribution to this debate was the then I and B Minister, Shri Ajit Panja's ready response to Shri Bachchan's demand. Shri Panja was presiding over the meeting. According to the official minutes —

“Winding up the discussions the Chairman observed that the existing laws did not seem to be sufficient to tackle the tendentious and defamatory reporting. There is need apparently to have a fresh look at the matter...”

BJP Opposes Restriction on the Press

At this meeting of the I and B Consultative Committee meeting, BJP Member Shri Pramod Mahajan strongly opposed the move and said that he “did not favour any restriction on the Press.”

Against this background Government's announcement that it had decided not to convert the Bill into law must be understood only as a tactical retreat. The Prime Minister still keeps on affirming that the Bill was a step in the right direction. Here is a Government which swears by democracy and Press freedom, but yet thinks that the Postal Bill, the 59th Constitutional Amendment and the

Defamation Bill are steps in the right direction. It is this dangerous mentality which is a perpetual threat to democracy and about which all democrats in the country must remain vigilant.

BJP must Concentrate on Organisational Activity

While the Rajiv Government's reputation has thus been hurtling downwards at dizzy pace, Opposition parties have been holding parleys avowedly to forge unity. The BJP regrets to note that these so-called unity exercises have occasioned so much of wrangling, mutual mudslinging and bitter back-biting that some of Mr. Gandhi's advisers have been advising him to go in for an early snap poll. BJP units must remain alert in respect of such a possibility.

The Bharatiya Janata Party has always been of the view that mere aggregation of desperate groups, without a coherent set of policies and programmes to hold them together, cannot inspire confidence in the people, and that therefore far more important than Opposition unity is Opposition credibility. The BJP, therefore, must continue to concentrate, as it has been doing till now, on organisational activity at the grassroots, and on issue-oriented agitations aimed at mobilising the farmers, the consumers, the youth, women and the Harijans and Girijans.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Vijayawada

2-4 January, 1987

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates,

Eight months back the National Council had met at new Delhi, and had reviewed the events since the assumption of office by Shri Rajiv Gandhi. It had taken note of the people's growing disenchantment with the Rajiv Government.

Since then, the state of the nation has deteriorated even further. Punjab particularly continues to be a cause for very grave concern.

Punjab in Peril

Some time back, in the course of a parliamentary discussion some members cited statistics about terrorist violence in Punjab and affirmed that even now the number of murders being committed in Bihar is higher than those in Punjab. The suggestion was that we need not become over-exercised about the happenings in Punjab.

This argument, of course, does highlight the anarchical conditions prevalent in Bihar; but it does not make the nation's acute anxiety about Punjab any the less justified. Let it be clearly understood that in Punjab today the country is facing not just a law and order problem, it is up against a real threat to national unity – indeed, the greatest threat India has faced since Independence.

Punjab in peril means Jammu and Kashmir also in peril – nay, it means the entire country's security in jeopardy.

It is generally said that the problem in Punjab is political; that the Punjab agreement provides a framework for the settlement of

political issues; that the situation in Punjab keeps worsening day by day because the Punjab agreement has not been implemented; and that if only the accord is implemented, Punjab will start moving towards normalcy.

The BJP does not agree with this facile and simplistic analysis.

Till a few years back, Government's attitude of deliberate drift in respect of the territorial, and river-waters disputes, did give strength to extremist activity. If these disputes had been settled, say, on the basis of the broad consensus that emerged from the tripartite conference in 1983 between Government, Akalis and the Opposition, the political settlement would have automatically led towards normalcy on the law and order front also.

No Dialogue with those Demanding Khalistan

Since 1984, the nexus between these political issues and extremist activity has been snapped. Extremist activity has acquired a dynamism of its own. Terrorists who are these days killing innocent citizens day in and day out are not at all concerned with the question of Chandigarh or river waters. If there is a political goal that motivates them, it is Khalistan. So let it be realised that when any one in government expresses readiness to hold talks with the extremists as the Prime Minister did in a public speech at Aizawl. (Mizoram), or as Governor Ray did at Chandigarh last month, he is indicating a willingness to discuss Khalistan! Nothing can be more irresponsible, therefore, than statements of this kind.

Barnala A Shock-absorber

The Barnala Government of Punjab has outlived any utility it ever had. It is a minority government which has lost the confidence of both the principal sections of the State's population. If it is surviving nevertheless, it is simply by courtesy of the Congress Party. The Congress(I) state unit keeps clamouring for Barnala's dismissal, but the party High Command finds Barnala a very convenient shockabsorber, and a buffer between the people's anger and the Central Government.

Punjab is presently in intense turmoil. The people are passing through a nightmare, reminding older generations of the pre-

independence years when flamboyant declarations were being made against partition and yet Congress' responses to the Muslim League's machinations were so confused, puerile and weak-kneed that the country was inexorably dragged over the brink into partition and into a terrible bloodbath.

Communal Harmony Maintained

There is, however, a silver lining to the situation. While elsewhere, in situations of strain, a minor altercation between citizens belonging to different communities easily sparks off a communal conflagration, in Punjab despite all the murder and mayhem that has been going on, there have been no communal riots, no group clashes. The BJP in Punjab has been assiduously exerting to maintain communal harmony. But real credit for this happy aspect of the situation goes to our centuries-long history that just cannot accept Sikhs being separated from Hindus. Tradition and culture and families and even religion all are interlinked and intertwined inextricably.

Six-point Approach

Even so when one thinks of solution to the current problem, it becomes obvious that there are no soft options left. And there are no instant remedies either. We have to move firmly and carefully in the right direction. Apeasement did not pay with Jinnah, it is certainly not going to work with the Jindas. The BJP favours the following six-point approach to the Punjab imbroglio:

1. **President's Rule** must be imposed on Punjab. New Delhi must be made directly accountable for whatever happens in this crisis State.
2. **A security zone** must be created without delay all along the north-western border – from Jammu-Kashmir through Punjab and Rajasthan to Kutch in Gujarat – as conceived by the Rajya Sabha when it invoked Art. 249 in August last.
3. **The army** must be called in to assist the civil authorities wherever necessary.
4. Pakistan's nefarious role must be exposed by publishing a **White Paper** on foreign involvement in Punjab terrorism.

5. All State Governments must take **adequate administrative precautions against counter-violence** and guarantee full protection to their citizens; outside Punjab, the common man must be made conscious and vigilant about terrorist designs to provoke counter-violence, so that a communal exchange of population takes place; this sinister design must be defeated.
6. **Murderers of innocents must be punished in Punjab** and also in the rest of the country. Government's adamant refusal to set up an inquiry into the post-Mrs. Gandhi assassination riots was wrong. It needed a big public campaign to have the inquiry instituted. After the report was submitted, government refused to make it public. Now after yet another campaign government has agreed to make it public. What is even more necessary is Government's resolve to punish the guilty.

The Gurudwara Act

These days when people talk about the Punjab accord they generally have only those of its provisions in mind which relate to territorial and river water disputes. It is often overlooked that the accord also contains Government's promise to enact an All India Gurudwara Act, and yet another provision which gives legitimacy to the separatist Anandpur Saheb Resolution. It is amazing that the Rajiv Government had no qualms about agreeing to these provisions.

The Gurudwara Act makes the SGPC virtually a parallel government, and gives its leaders enormous financial resources which are unabashedly used for political ends. After all the havoc that the Gurudwara Act has done to Punjab, how can the country agree to extend it to the whole country? So far as the Anandpur Saheb Resolution is concerned, has the Prime Minister forgotten his own poll speeches on the issue? The political goal enunciated by this resolution is "*the pre-eminence of the Khalsa*", the Sikhs are to be given "special rights as a nation", and the new Punjab State conceived is to be an "*administrative unit where the interests of Sikhs and Sikhis are specifically protected*". The BJP is totally opposed to both these provisions.

One Country, One People

Rajiv Gandhi's *volte face* on the Anandpur Saheb resolution, his agreement with Laldenga on Mizoram and his statements on Gorkhaland lend strength to that school of opinion which regards India not as a nation of many States, but as a State of many nations. For them, the Sikhs, the Gorkhas, the Mizos are separate nations, and so are the various linguistic and ethnic groups in the country.

Not many may be aware that in the first public speech Mr. Laldenga made after signing his accord with the Government of India, he said:

“We have become known to the world because we are Mizos. It is because of men who tried to build the Mizo nation that the Mizo nation is known to the world. It is not due to men who struggled for creation of the Chinese nation, nor those who fought to build the Indian nation, but due to men who fought to build the Mizo nation that we have become known to the world.

We do not need a member of another nation to lead our nation. God has given us a Mizo to lead the Mizo nation. Hence let the leader of the nation always be a Mizo.”

India is not a Multi-national State

The BJP rejects this thesis of a multi-national state. India is multi-lingual, it is multi-religious; but it is still one nation. Indians are one people. The Indian Constitution also is based on this acceptance. It is, therefore, that our Constitution-makers made the Indian Republic federal in form but essentially unitary in content. No Parliament of any real federation would be conceded the right to alter boundaries of any state, and even amalgamate two or more States into one. Article 3 empowers the Indian Parliament to do this, and that too, just by a simple majority! Constitutional Pundits have, therefore, described India as “*an indissoluble Union of dissoluble states*”. Protagonists of the multi-nation-state theory (most advocates of ‘true federalism’ belong to this category) would very much like to see this appellation inverted.

Unity before Diversity

India is rightly proud of the fact that our nationhood is an example of unity in diversity. But this is also an unfortunate fact

that while all through the freedom struggle, and in the early years of independence, this dictum “*unity in diversity*” always had unity boldly underlined, these days everyone keeps emphasising ‘*diversity*’. I wonder if our basic laws, or their implementation, has anything to do with this development.

Commission on Constitution

One 15 August this year India would be observing the 40th Anniversary of its independence. It would be a worthwhile exercise if a comprehensive review of the working of the Constitution is undertaken. I suggest that a Commission on the Constitution be set up to examine, *inter alia* the following:

1. The suitability of the **Presidential System** as a device to contain centrifugal tendencies.
2. The political consequences of **the first-past-the-post system** of elections which we have accepted; and the impact the adoption of Proportional Representation or a Mixed system would have on making India a real participatory democracy.
3. The need to **redraw the political map of India** with needs of development and administration as the principal consideration; the ad hoc responses to agitations have resulted in having states varying in size from half a million to one hundred million. Some of the larger states are stagnating principally because of their unwieldy size.
4. What would contribute more to the strengthening of our nation-state; **a centralised federal polity as we have at present, or a decentralised unitary set-up**, with power decentralised not merely to 20 odd states but to some 60 or so janapadas, or provinces.
5. Need to take democracy to the grass roots by providing **constitutional recognition to local bodies**.
6. **Need to overhaul radically the judicial system**, which according to the ex-Chief Justice of India, Shri Bhagwati, is “*on the verge of collapse.*”

India is One Country and One Culture – J.L. Nehru

What are the factors that contribute to India’s unity? In October 1961, addressing an AICC meeting at Madurai, Pandit

Nehru tried to identify one factor thus:

“India has for ages past, been a country of pilgrimages. All over the country you find these ancient places, from Badrinath, Kedarnath and Amarnath high up in the snowy Himalyas down to Kanyakumari in the South.”

“This conception of Bharat as one great land which the people considered a holy land has come down the ages and has joined us together, even though we have had different political kingdoms and even though we may speak different languages. This silken bond still keeps us together in many ways.”

Nehruji did not use the word Hindu. But he clearly spelt out the Hindus’ age-old identification with this country and its ancient culture as the substratum for national unity. Anything that weakens this substratum weakens national unity.

Unfortunately, a perverse interpretation of secularism, and consideration of electoral expediency, have made the country’s leadership ignore this ‘silken bond’ of one country and one culture, which Pandit Nehru spoke about.

Reject Pseudo-secularism

Inclusion of stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata in our text books make our pseudo-secularists fret and fume in rage. I have known politicians opposing the recitation of Mira Bhajans and Rama Charit Manas from the radio on the ground that they create a Hindu ethos. At the National Integration Council meeting in September 1986, objections were raised to lighting of lamps while inaugurating government functions and breaking of coconuts to mark the launching of a new ship. The objectors would rather have us imitating the western practice of cutting a tape, and smashing a champagne bottle. Truth is that for many politicians and intellectuals, secularism is only a euphemism to cloak their allergy to Hinduism.

India’s Nexus with Hinduism

It would be in place to recall what Dr. Annie Besant said way back in the 1920s about India’s nexus with Hinduism. Dr. Besant, mind you, was speaking about undivided India. In ringing words she observed:

“Many are the religions and many are the races which are flourishing in India, but none of them stretches into the far dawn of the past, nor is necessary for her endurance as a nation. Every one might pass away as they came, and India would still remain. But let Hinduism go—Hinduism that was India’s cradle, and in that passing would be India’s grave. India would remain then as a subject for the antiquarian, the archaeologist, a corpse for dissection, but no longer an object of patriotism, no longer a nation.”

Theocracy is Alien to Hindu Polity

It is a historical fact that the basis of the country’s partition in 1947 was religion. This also must be appreciated that Pakistan declared itself an Islamic State because it was Muslim, and India gave to itself a secular constitution because it was Hindu. Theocracy is alien to traditional Hindu polity. There is no state religion, and the Indian State will not allow any classification of its citizens on grounds of religion.

Indifference to India’s common culture on the one hand, and a conscious pampering and promotion of a minority complex in the minorities on the other, has led to dangerous strains in society. Minorities harbour a persecution complex and the majority in turn has begun to feel neglected and taken for granted.

Dangers of Minoritism

It is the duty of the State to guarantee justice and security to all minorities—religious, linguistic, ethnic. But it is also imperative for national integration that minorities do not develop a minority complex. Dr. Gopal Singh, presently Lt. Governor of Goa, and at one time Chairman of the high powered commission on Minorities, Government of India (1980-84) describes this complex as ‘*minoritism*’ and observes very pertinently:

“All history is witness to the fact that both Minoritism and Communalism are the deadliest enemies of those who practise them. One would hate to live and participate in a society where one is condemned to the status of a permanent, statutory minority for reasons only of birth, and all that goes with it—religion, sex, caste, colour or place of birth—within the same national home! It is a primitive, medieval society that codones or encourages such

a concept. Secularism and democracy should, therefore, be the vested interest particularly of the minorities.

“If the minorities start thinking and acting in communal terms, the majority, of necessity, will also begin to think and act likewise. And the minorities in such a context will suffer the most, not the majority. Let us, therefore, pause and ponder, here and now, for there is no time to lose.”

India, My India
Published in 1986

I wish Dr. Gopal Singh’s warning is heeded. Politicians who are promoting this minority complex among the minorities are serving neither national interest, nor even minority interest.

PM Indulges in an ‘Evil’ Practice

In 1968, a Haryana Minister was accused of having disbursed money from Government’s discretionary funds on the eve of elections, and on that ground being guilty of electoral corruption. The matter went to the Supreme Court. Delivering judgement, Chief Justice Hidayatullah observed:

“An election is something which must be conducted fairly. To arrange to spend money on the eve of election in different constituencies, although for general public good, is when all is said and done, an evil practice, even if it may not be a corrupt practice....Payment from discretionary grants on the eve of elections should be avoided.”

(GHASI RAM V. DAL SINGH AND OTHER A.I.R.
1968, S.C. 1191)

Since then the Election Commission has been pressing Government to amend the law so as to bring such *evil* practices also within the mischief of “*corrupt practices*”, as defined by law.

Instead of implementing the Election Commission’s recommendation, Prime Minister Mr. Gandhi has himself been indulging in this *evil* practice with gay abandon. He has lately made a series of announcements of financial grants to West Bengal, to Haryana, and to Jammu and Kashmir State with the condescending airs of a feudal lord distributing largesse to supplicants. All these are States where elections are due shortly.

It is noteworthy that some of the Prime Minister's earlier announcements about financial grants have turned out to be phoney. At the Congress Centenary Celebrations last year, he announced a gift of Rs. 100 crore for the city of Bombay. Later, new Delhi has declared it a Rs. 100 crore loan!

Vested Interest Abuse of Electronic Media

In January 1985, in its formal policy statement, namely, President's address to Parliament, this Government had promised electoral reforms. Two years have gone by and yet Government has moved not an inch in that direction. In fact, elections, held during Rajiv's tenure have been far more corrupt and far costlier than ever before. The abuse of electronic media to promote the ruling party's electoral ends crossed all bounds in the 1984-85 elections. Projection of the Prime Minister's personality cult now seems established Doordarshan Policy. In the first half of December 1986, I noticed the Prime Minister got first lead on 10 out of 15 days on Doordarshan, on one of these days 3 leads out of 6 pertained to Mr. Rajiv Gandhi!

No wonder, the Congress has developed a vested interest in ensuring that the electoral process remains as costly, as corrupt, as unfair and as unequal as it is.

The BJP will continue to campaign for the following key electoral reforms:

1. Public funding of elections.
2. Making violation of the Election Commission's Code of Conduct a corrupt practice; enlarging the legal meaning of electoral corruption to include what the Supreme Court had described as '*evil practice*.'
3. Reducing voting age from 21 years to 18 years.
4. Using electronic voting machines.
5. Providing photo affixed identify cards to all voters.
6. Autonomy for Radio and TV; until this is done, monitoring of election coverage by these media by the Election Commission.
7. Simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and Assemblies.
8. Conversion of Election Commission into a multi-member body; and such other steps to insulate the Commission

from executive pressure.

9. Restoration of ban on Company donations.

The Rajiv Government's attitude to the question of electoral reforms is the real touchstone of its earnestness with regard to cleansing of the polity.

What a Culture!

Congress propagandists have been trying to project Sharad Pawar's entry into the party as evidence of its growing appeal. Truth is quite the contrary. After all, Mr. Pawar is known to have been knocking at the doors of the ruling party for quite some time. An appropriate occasion for his "home-coming" would have been the Centenary Celebrations last year. But at that time Mr. Gandhi was riding high. He had no need of any Pawars. It is the slump in his stocks since then and his loosening grip on his party that have made him woo the Congress (S). It is an index of weakness, not of strength.

Politics of Opportunism

Again, it is the same decline in popularity and anxiety about the dwindling fortunes of the party, that have made Mr. Gandhi go in for a starkly opportunist alliance with the National Conference in Jammu and Kashmir. Not very long ago his party had been hurling the vilest of abuses at Dr. Farooq and the NC. Right up to the time this deal was struck with Dr. Farooq, negotiations were simultaneously going on with G.M. Shah's men. Verily, opportunism has become the principal hall-mark of Congress' political culture.

Indeed, Mr. Pawar is quite right when he explains his conduct in terms of "*Congress Culture.*" Congress Culture, before independence, meant politics of principles, of service and sacrifice. Congress Culture, after independence, particularly after 1969, has come to mean politics of opportunism, of power and pelf. Mr. Pawar was elected to the Maharashtra State Assembly as a prospective Non-Congress Chief Minister. Without doubt, his decision is tantamount to betrayal of the people's mandate.

Declining Growth Rate, Rising Prices

The economy continues to go downhill. It is significant that in his speech in the last session of Parliament, the finance minister was less than enthusiastic about the performance of the economy and less still about the next annual plan. It is evident that Rajiv Gandhi's second year is going to be worse than his first year. All the indicators are pointing downwards, all but one, namely prices. The growth rate of national income will be 4 per cent as against 5 per cent last year; industrial growth rate 6 per cent as against 6.5 per cent last year; and agricultural growth rate 1.5 per cent as against 1 per cent last year.

For three years in succession there has been no increase in foodgrain production. Rajiv Gandhi had made two promises when he took over: he would curb inflation and narrow the trade gap. On both fronts, his management of the economy has been disastrous. The wholesale price index has doubled from 3.8 per cent last year to nearly 8 per cent while consumer prices have increased by 50 per cent from 6.2 to 9.2 per cent. On the trade gap front, the yawning gap has gone up by nearly two-thirds from Rs 5318 crore in 1984-85 to Rs. 8625 crore in 1985-86. It may be slightly smaller this year, but not much.

The net result of all this is the mounting foreign debt which is now estimated at nearly Rs. 30,000 crore. The debt service ratio this year will touch 30 per cent, against 15.4 per cent when the present administration took over. On the plea, totally groundless, that there are not enough resources at home, the government has been on a merry borrowing spree round the world and has mortgaged the wealth of this country and its people—for several future generations. Of every rupee earned through exports thirty paise will go towards the repayments of the huge debts accumulated by the new spendthrift government.

Tamasha Extravagance

There are enough resources in this country of hardworking but poor people, including enough foreign exchange. But the resources are being wasted on extravaganza. Nearly Rs. 50 crore were spent on the SAARC meeting in Bangalore and half as much on the so-called *Apna Utsav* in Delhi. Secondly, the resources being generated are going into the parallel economy

which operates under the patronage of the ruling party's corrupt politicians. According to one estimate, black money generation now amounts to between Rs. 50,000 crore and Rs. 70,000 crore a year. As against this, additional tax revenues claimed to have been collected by the finance ministry amount to a paltry figure of Rs. 800 crore, that is less than 2 per cent of the black money estimate.

Funds Stashed Abroad

As regards foreign exchange, it has now been estimated by an expert of the International Monetary Fund which had also earlier made estimates about black money – that every year about Rs. 400 crore are banked into secret Swiss accounts in Switzerland, and further that this sum is only the tip of the ice-berg. Reliable estimates, including some by knowledgeable persons in the IMF, place total foreign exchange holdings by Indians outside India at the colossal figure of Rs. 30,000 crore. Significantly, the government had made no attempt to make further enquiries in the matter, though it is more than likely that a big slice of the holdings can be traced to politicians and political families in power.

Need for an Enquiry into Funds Hidden Abroad

We demand a full-scale inquiry into the sources of these hidden funds abroad including an approach to the Swiss government which has recently liberalised its laws relating to such accounts. In the case of the hoardings of the Marcos family of the Philippines and the Duvalier family of Haiti, the Swiss government was most cooperative and promptly froze the accounts even before an approach was made to it.

Dependence on Foreign Loans or Damage to Indian Economy

This month marks the fifth anniversary of the signing of the loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund in 1981. At that time, BJP had warned the government and the people against the loan and predicted that the loan would mean more taxes, higher prices, worse foreign exchange position and a further drop in the value of the rupee. We regret to say that our worst fears have proved

the now. Taxes have increased, prices have shot up 33 per cent, the foreign exchange position is worse than ever – so bad in fact that there is talk of another loan from the same organisation which is only too happy to lend money. The value of the rupee has fallen by as much as 50 per cent in the last five years. Despite government denials, the rupee continues to fall in the foreign money markets. We hold the government responsible for the degradation of the rupee and the consequent damage that such devaluation inflicts on the Indian people.

BJP regrets to note that the government has not learnt its lessons from the disastrous failure of the IMF loan and is bent on pursuing the same elitist road to a chimerical paradise. There are enough resources in this country; in the ultimate analysis it is the people who are the country's biggest and most priceless resource. By discarding the ethos of austerity and self-reliance, and by reliance on external resources instead of our own, the government is taking the road which has in the recent past been taken by countries like Brazil and Mexico with predictably disastrous results.

Invasion by Multinationals or Real Development comes from within

BJP views with alarm the continuing invasion of our national economy by multinationals. Nearly all the big contracts have been signed away to multinational companies, particularly those from Italy which has become, for obvious reasons, a big favourite with New Delhi. In the process, some of our own national units like Sindri Fertilizers and its consultancy agency are being jettisoned. The Government has also virtually dismantled the indigenous automobile industry and handed it on a platter to multinational companies in Japan and elsewhere. Plans are being made to similarly hand over our telecommunication units to foreign interests. This continuing and deliberate sell-out of Indian industry to foreign interests bodes ill for the nation, for a country like India can never progress if it has to walk in the footsteps of others. BJP demands immediate reversal of such suicidal policies which are being resorted to in the name of mythical modernisation and growth. Real development, we believe, comes from within, and cannot be

borrowed or imposed from outside.

BJP reaffirms that the best policy for India is one which employs the maximum number of people working with different technologies and machines and at different levels of modernisation consistent with resources. The proportion of the jobless has been increasing, rather than decreasing, which is a sign that the country is following wrong policies, based on wrong advice from interested foreign sources. We call for reversal of such policies, for in the ultimate analysis, the solution to our economic problems does not lie in credits or technology from abroad but in giving a boost to domestic production and exports based on total mobilisation of national resources, including as many of our able-bodied workers and farmers, men and women, as can be mobilised for an all out national effort.

Remunerative Prices

Government announced last month that the procurement price of wheat for the year 1986-87 has been increased by Rs. 4 per quintal (from Rs. 162 to Rs. 166 per quintal). Considering the fact that the cost of agricultural inputs has risen by over 75%, this 2.5% hike in the price of wheat is a cruel joke, and only underscores the anti-Kisan attitude of this government. The decision to provide larger incentives for the production of oil-seeds etc. is legitimate, but that does not justify such niggardliness in the matter of cereals.

The BJP demands that the Indian farmers' plea for remunerative prices for this produce be accepted as the cornerstone of our agricultural policy.

At its Jammu meeting in October last, the party's National Executive drew up a **Charter of Farmer's Rights** in which apart from this principal right of his to get a remunerative price for his produce the following other nine rights were identified as his basic rights:

1. Abundant and regular supply of water and energy.
2. Protection from the vagaries of nature.
3. Security of crops from wild animals and theft.
4. Traditional rights on village forests and Nistar Land.
5. Minimum civic facilities like drinking water, roads

and other means of communication, public health and hygiene.

6. Market value compensation in one instalment in case of land acquisition.
7. Rehabilitation of those uprooted due to land acquisition.
8. Adequate wages to the farm labour.
9. Just and responsible administration at the door-steps of the farmer.

This National Council session would have to consider this Charter, give final shape to it, and then undertake a nationwide campaign to make the farmer conscious of these rights and determined to affirm them.

Pak Mischief in Punjab

On the external affairs front, our relations with our neighbours have continued to worsen, more particularly with Pakistan and Sri Lanka. South Block has been trying to portray the latest round of talks at Islamabad between our officials and their Pakistani counterparts as a great success for India in so far as Pakistan's role in Punjab is concerned. The relevant paragraph in the Joint Statement reads:

"On an issue raised by Mr. Somiah (Home Secretary, Government of India), Mr. Mahmud (Interior Secretary, Government of Pakistan) affirmed that his Government is opposed to all forms of terrorism in Punjab and elsewhere. In this context the Pakistan Government reiterated that it did not and will not provide any support to terrorist activities directed against India. Mr. Somiah also gave similar assurances in this context."

We would be indulging in self-delusion if we interpret the above paragraph as an assurance of good conduct by Pakistan. This is essentially a denial of the charge we have been making.

The BJP has been of the view that the Punjab problem was not created by Pakistan. Pakistan is only taking advantage of the situation that has come about because of our own bunglings. Today, of course, Pakistan's mischief is making the problem more and more intractable. But this is not going to be solved by goody-goody talks across the table, talks to which there is no specific follow-up on the ground.

Thus, if Pakistan is earnest about its formal stand against

terrorism let it be made to hand over the pro-Khalistani extremists who have taken asylum in Pakistan.

Stalemate in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka also there has been no headway towards a political solution in spite of repeated visits by Govt. of India leaders to Sri Lanka, the last such visit being that of Shri Chidambaram and Shri Natwar Singh in the third week of December 1986. The Ministers deny it, but the visit has virtually proved barren. Repression of the Tamils by the Sri Lankan Army continues as before, even while internecine clashes among the Tamil groups have been escalating.

Soviet Leader's Visit

A major development in recent months has been the State visit to India of the new Soviet Leader Mr. Mikhail Gorbachov. This visit by the CPSU General Secretary is a reaffirmation of our traditional friendship with the Soviet Union. But it would be simplistic to regard it as security guarantee against China, or even against Pakistan.

During his New Delhi visit Mr. Gorbachov categorically affirmed that his country's overtures to China would not be at the cost of its friendship with India. But he was conspicuously equivocal on the validity of India's claims over territory which China has forcibly occupied.

So far as our security needs are concerned we must realise that in the ultimate analysis India would have to sort out its problems on its own strength.

Nuclear Deterrent is a must

The security environment around the country has considerably deteriorated. The Government's response to that deterioration does not inspire confidence. Ambiguity in nuclear policy is the worst policy, earning for us the ills of all possible options. India favours disarmament, but when dangers face the country, our response cannot be half-hearted and unconvincing.

Prominent American newspapers like the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* have in recent weeks quoted classified

documents to say that Pakistan has detonated two high explosive devices during the past few months, and would very soon be in possession of an “*unsophisticated but effective*” nuclear device.

I would like to repeat that considering fully the pros and cons of the issue the BJP is of the view that India must go in for a nuclear deterrent of its own.

Year of Shattered Hopes

The year just gone by has been a year of shattered hopes. The Rajiv Government which has entered its third year has frittered away the excellent opportunities given it by the people when it had arrived on the scene, literally with a bang. In October last, the BJP listed its numerous sins of commission and omission in the shape of a charge-sheet. As a result of all these failures, not only have the country’s frontiers been imperilled, the entire social fabric of the nation seems to be coming apart at the seams!

Leadership has lost Grip on the Situation

Even in states like Karnataka, generally free from communal discord, publication of a short story by a newspaper has touched off a major conflagration, and that too after the editor of the paper had publicly apologised. In Ahmedabad, Baroda and several places in Gujarat, communal riots have become a recurring feature. In Goa, a place not known for any violent political upheavals, the demand that Konkani be made the State’s official language has led to a prolonged and bloody turmoil. From Tripura also, the country keeps getting reports of ethnic violence. The country’s present leadership seems to have lost grip over the situation.

Two Monumental Blunders

I hold that during the year 1986, the Rajiv Government has committed two monumental blunders which directly or indirectly have contributed to these eruptions. These are: first, its capitulation to the Muslim League’s communal campaign against the Shah Bano judgement; and secondly, its decision to have a pact with Sri Laldenga, and make him Chief Minister of Mizoram, a full fledged state with special rights.

Government willing to buy Peace at any Price

These two decisions have sent out a message, loud and clear, to all concerned that the present Government in New Delhi can go to any length, make any compromise, to buy peace. The extremists in Punjab have read the message; the pro-Pakistan elements in Jammu and Kashmir also have heard it; the GNLF in Darjeeling also have felt encouraged by it; and so have a number of groups and communities throughout the country. The unrest that is seen erupting all over can be traced directly to these ill-conceived, myopic decisions which really put a premium on a group's capacity to disturb the peace.

Challenge to Patriotic Forces

The situation is a challenge to all patriots and patriotic forces. One response often advocated is that all opposition parties must get together and seek to oust the ruling party which is responsible for the current mess. The ruling party, no doubt, is the principal culprit, but what is not adequately appreciated is that the mess is the result of a wrong perspective and wrong policies. And on matters relating to national unity, quite a few among the opposition parties do not disagree with the ruling party's approach. Also, on the practical plane, the limits of the politics of aggregation must be understood. It is, therefore, that during the last two years the BJP has been devoting all attention towards strengthening and widening its organisational base, and towards intensifying its own political appeal.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Rohtak

17 April, 1987

The National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party last met at Vijayawada in early January. Since then, a series of events have taken place in national politics with breathtaking succession which has been rapidly changing the political scenario.

Public loses Faith in Rajiv Government

These events have gravely undermined public faith not only in the competence of the Rajiv Government but also in its integrity.

This chain of events started with the summary removal of an able and upright officer, Shri Venkateswaran, from the post of Foreign Secretary, and it has climaxed with the removal of a senior Minister from Government Shri VP Singh, who over the last two years had built up a remarkable image of honesty and straightforwardness.

The echoes of the Fairfax scandal, and the Submarine scandal, which led to Shri VP Singh's ouster, are still reverberating all over the country, when one more scandal has exploded in the face of the Rajiv Government.

Bofors Kick-Backs

The Swedish State Radio broadcast yesterday a startling report about an under-cover operation carried out by an arms firm Bofors, whereby 16 million dollars (about Rs. 20 crore) are to be paid to "*members of Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I)*" in connection with an Indian order for a complete field artillery system. Four instalments of the pay-off totalling 5 million dollars

are alleged to have already been paid during the last two months of 1986 into secret accounts at the Swiss Bank Corporation.

The Government of India has denied the allegation. But against the backdrop of the murky happenings of the past few months, a bald denial is not going to convince anyone.

If the allegation is false, then the Swedish Government itself is guilty of slander, and this calls for a vigorous, forthright response. But, if there is even an iota of truth in what has been said, the Prime Minister must immediately order a suitable probe whose impartiality is accepted by all, and while the probe is on, Mr. Gandhi should step down from office and let his party elect a new leader.

Disillusionment with the Congress Party

Results of the recent elections have sharply reflected the rapidly growing disillusionment of the people with Rajiv's Congress. Normally, a negative vote operates against the ruling party. But, curiously, in the West Bengal, even though the ruling front's performance on the field has been dismal, it is negative vote against Rajiv Gandhi, more particularly against his confusing postures on Gorkhaland, and also against the factional feuding of the state Congress, that enabled the Left Front to retain power.

In Kerala, of course, the people reacted violently to the blatantly communal politics of the Congress (I), and in particular its alliance with the Muslim League. The Kerala BJP has not been able to secure representation in the Assembly, but by securing over 8 lakh votes, it has succeeded in creating a stable support base for the third force it seeks to create in the State.

The National Executive will hear reports from all the states where elections have been held. It will have also to plan its broad strategy for the forthcoming Haryana Elections, which are due shortly.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

24 July, 1987

Incompetent and Corrupt Prime Minister

A pall of uncertainty and bewilderment has descended on the country. Whether it is Punjab, Meerut and Gorkhaland, or corruption, inflation, and unemployment, every problem confronting the country has been becoming more and more complicated and increasingly insoluble under this government. Continuation of this government for yet another two and a half years may inflict irreparable damage to the country's body-politic.

There is unanimity of opinion that Shri Rajiv Gandhi has proved unequal to the task which the people entrusted to him two and a half years back. The feeling has taken firm roots in the common man's mind that he is not only incompetent, he is corrupt as well.

Act of Treason

A very significant and angry reaction has come this morning from the Federation of Indian Ex-Servicemen, which has observed that *"buying defective weapons and taking huge amounts as kick-backs must be treated not merely as a case of corruption, but as an act of treason against the nation."*

About this also, there is general agreement that with Shri Rajiv Gandhi at the helm of affairs, it is impossible for Government to retrieve its credibility. In fact, in the present situation, the greatest service Rajiv Gandhi can do to the country is to resign and let the people elect a new Government.

Fascist Response

Unfortunately, the ruling party's response to the crisis it faces is a typical fascist response. All the criticism from the people is attributed to a foreign conspiracy to destabilise the country. Concerted efforts are on to gag the Opposition, and the press, and to attempt to silence the critics physically. The brutal assault on Shri VP Singh's entourage yesterday, is only an example. The BJP strongly condemns this attack on Shri Singh.

Happenings of the past few weeks should serve as an ominous warning to all democrats that this government would have no qualms about repeating 1975, and clamping a second emergency on the country. A new President is taking over tomorrow. The nation will certainly expect him to act as a custodian of the Constitution. He should refuse to acquiesce in any such subversion of the Constitution.

Time for a Fresh Mandate

The National Executive meeting would have to consider the current political crisis in depth, and draw up a plan of action in which the BJP can play an effective role in instilling a sense of confidence in the people, and dispelling the present climate of gloom and cynicism. A focal point in this plan of action should be intensification of the BJP's demand first made some months back, and now endorsed by the opposition parties, that the Congress should seek a fresh mandate from the people.

Electorate will throw up an Alternative

Also, the decade since 1977, should make us recognise the limits of the politics of mere aggregation. Of course, opposition parties must learn to work together, but it must be accepted that from the people's perspective, far more important than opposition unity is opposition credibility. This credibility can be built not just by summit exercises, but by sustained activity for people's causes at the grassroots. It will then be for the electorate to identify and throw up an alternative.

In Kerala and West Bengal we have seen alliances in government run by the Congress or by the Marxists. In Haryana lately we see a Lok Dal – BJP alliance in the offing. There is no obsession among

the allies for one unified party or even for a common symbol. But there is a common programme, and a common discipline for these alliance partners. And, above all, these alliances do demonstrate an ability to work together, which is the main factor contributing to credibility. I feel it would be in the best interest of opposition parties to strive to evolve a similar model at the national level also.

Concentrate on Grass-roots Activity

Much of media coverage of opposition activity these days relates to these summit exercises. The BJP as a party would continue to be in touch with these goings on, and would respond suitably to them. But let our units and cadres understand that in the ultimate analysis it is strength at the grass roots that will determine a party's place in public life, and its efficacy as an instrument of political change. Let us therefore concentrate attention on grass-roots activity, and make BJP a powerful instrument of stability, peace and progress.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Jodhpur

9 October, 1987

Rajiv Govt. has failed Miserably

When early this year, the BJP staged a mammoth demonstration in front of Parliament House, and submitted a memorandum to the President affirming that the Rajiv Government had forfeited its mandate, and that the President should therefore advise him to resign, critics were not wanting who felt we were overstating our case.

Today, it is very widely accepted that this Government has failed. Most of its attention and energy is being spent not on solving the problems of the people, but on sorting out its own internal problems—of administration, as well as of party.

Fresh Elections only Option

Indeed, a government with its credibility as badly battered as this one's is just cannot cope with the gigantic problems of drought, of terrorism and secessionism, of inflation and unemployment, as we face today. No wonder, all Opposition parties have come round to the position we have been pressing for months, namely, that this government must quit, and a fresh poll must be held.

The party in power has been understandably reluctant to concede this demand. But I would like to mention that a view is being actively canvassed in official circles that if today is not favourable for the ruling party, tomorrow may be worse, and the day after perhaps disastrous; so, why not concede the demand and take a chance.

Devious Machinations of Communist Parties

All BJP units, I feel, must be alerted to this possibility.

Conversion of a democratic state into a Communist set-up generally occasions a bloody turmoil among the masses. Czechoslovakia provides a classic example where a healthy, full-blooded democracy was subverted, and supplanted by a totalitarian set-up, but without much blood-letting through what is described in Communist parlance as a “revolution from the top”.

During the late sixties, Communists in India sought to implement what is known as the Kumaramangalam thesis, by infiltration into the Congress, and the CPI formally aligning itself with the Congress. The strategy failed. The CPI could not use Mrs. Gandhi; instead, Mrs. Gandhi used the CPI, and later, dumped them into the dustbin. The CPI did irreparable damage to itself in the process.

The CPI (M), however, tried similar tactics with Ajoy Mukherji in West Bengal, and succeeded. Ajoy Mukherji was a Congress dissident who broke away from the Congress and formed the Bangla Congress. With Communist support he became Chief Minister of the State. The Marxists used him to entrench themselves firmly in the body-politic of the State, and later discarded him.

VP Singh will be the front Man

Communists today think that VP Singh can serve the same purpose for them in New Delhi that Ajoy Mukherji did in Calcutta. Like Ajoy Mukherji, VP is a Congress dissident. Like Ajoy Mukherji, VP has an image, but no popular base or political infrastructure. The Marxists feel that VP's political naivete, his confused utterances, his ambivalence on vital issues, make him a very suitable tool for the implementation of this strategy.

Every single utterance and decision of the party during the past few months is part of this strategy. They want to make an Ajoy Mukherji of VP, and in the process, worm their way into the Central Government. The BJP feels that letting them succeed in this game would mean exposing the system itself to the risk of subversion. The strident anti-BJP positions that they have taken lately also stem from the same approach. They know that when it

comes to the defence of democracy. Communists openly ridicule it as “bourgeois democracy” – The BJP will be uncompromising.

Democrats must be Vigilant about Communist Intentions

The Marxists have all along had a strong base in West Bengal. They, therefore, succeeded in that State. They have a base in some other eastern states also, and in Kerala. But in the rest of the country, which means over 430 Lok Sabha seats, their position is insignificant. So I see no possibility of Communist pipe-dreams coming true. But even so, I would urge all democrats in the country to be wary about Communist intentions, and ambitions.

I compliment Chaudhary Devi Lal, Chief Minister of Haryana, for his initiative in organising a meeting of Opposition parties at Suraj Kund to consider how a joint movement can be mobilised against the numerous sins of commission and omission of the Rajiv Government. The decisions taken at this meeting must be effectively followed up.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

New Delhi

9 May, 1986

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, brother and sister delegates, and friends,

Shri Vajpayee's Leadership

At the outset, let me express my deep gratitude to the party for the great honour it has done me by electing me as President. May God grant me strength to measure up to your expectations. Since its launching in 1980, the Bharatiya Janata Party has been singularly fortunate in having a leader like Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee to guide the party. He combines in himself a statesman's liberal vision with a pragmatist's hard-headed realism. A deep and abiding concern for the underdog sharply characterises all his thinking and actions. In his personality, the people find a rare blend of capability and charisma. According to a public opinion survey conducted last month, it is in him that people see a clear alternative to the present Congress leadership.

Many of us wanted Shri Vajpayee to continue as the party's President for yet another term. But he insisted on a change. Let there be no permanent fixtures for any post, he said. And thus, a change has taken place. Shri Vajpayee's example may well have a healthy catalytic effect on other parties also, some of whom have come to have permanent life-time Presidents.

Shattered Hopes

October 1984 marked the commencement of a new chapter in independent India's political history. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi was assassinated, and her son Rajiv Gandhi took over. The election

battle two months later, waged against the backdrop of this grim tragedy, became a highly emotive one. The new party leader indulged in the tactic of the Big Lie, and with the aid of Radio and TV worked up a kind of hysteria over the Punjab issue. The whole P.R. exercise brought to the Congress Party a victory that was as unprecedented as it was unrealistic. The verdict, projected over the media as a sort of personal triumph for Rajiv Gandhi, touched off a wave of euphoria and cascading high hopes.

Nineteen months later, these hopes lie in shambles all around. A senior political commentator of the capital has derisively described the Rajiv Government as “*a baba-log government*”, adding by way of explanation that it is “*the ayah’s expression for the molly-coddled kids of the upper classes.*” The Congress (I)’s own Working President has rushed off an epistle to the Prime Minister-cum-Party Chief expressing deep anguish over the present state of affairs, more particularly in the party, where an incipient revolt has been sought to be crushed by taking pre-emptive action against four senior leaders. At the mass level, the mood of unquestioning adulation has rapidly yielded place to cynicism and censure.

The turn of events is not very dissimilar to what happened in the early seventies in the case of Mrs. Gandhi. When Mrs. Gandhi won the 1971 elections, she too was viewed by the masses as a sort of messiah arrived to **hatao garibi**, and lead the people into a haven of prosperity. Within two years, the illusion was shattered. By 1973, many parts of the country, notably Gujarat and Bihar, were seething with turmoil and unrest because of the people’s discontent against corruption and maladministration. In the case of the Rajiv Government, disillusionment has set in within a still shorter time-span.

Difference only in Style

Much of the enthusiasm which Rajiv Gandhi aroused in his earlier months had its roots in the belief that his politics would be different from his mother’s – that he would be more democratic and less cynical; that he would be less influenced by considerations of sordid electoral gains; and that the Congress Party, under Rajiv, would display a different political culture. The fanfare with which the anti-defection law was enacted within weeks of his assumption

of office strengthened this belief.

The last one year has shown that while there is some difference in style, there is little difference in substance.

Mrs. Gandhi was aloof and abrasive. The new Prime Minister, on the other hand, is soft-spoken and amiable. Mrs. Gandhi's relations with the Opposition were extremely strained. With the arrival of Rajiv Gandhi there has been a perceptible thaw. Perhaps, never before have there been so many formal Government-Opposition get-togethers as during these last nineteen months.

But all this is a difference only of style, not of substance. In fact, little has changed. In the context of these much publicised parleys with the Opposition also, I recall at least three important issues on which the near unanimous opinion of the Opposition was disregarded by the Prime Minister; first, that Punjab elections should not be held, secondly, that the ban on company donations should not be lifted and, lastly, that the Shah Bano verdict should not be tampered with. In all three cases, the Opposition was confronted with a **fait accompli**, and the consultations (in the second case, there was not even a discussion) were just a farcical ritual.

Corruption Unlimited

Flamboyant declarations about clean politics notwithstanding, corruption is as rampant as ever. The two major elections held during the last seventeen months have been the costliest ever. The ruling party's bills for newspaper advertisements alone would far exceed the amounts that were being spent earlier for entire campaigns. Bhajan Lal continues to thrive as merrily as before. If occasionally, a Gul Shah or Nilangekar has fallen, it is not because of New Delhi, but in spite of it.

A Division Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court has recently castigated Arjun Singh, the PM's principal lieutenant in the party today, in terms rarely used in judicial pronouncements, but Arjun Singh is none the worse for it. "*The truth of corruption*", said Justice B.M. Lal, "*is peeping out from the record*". Expressing his horror at "*the foul odour of corruption*", and the "*obnoxious smell of malafide intention*" he found throughout the case, Justice Lal said that those responsible for this corruption by virtue of their high office must be severely dealt with as they were the "*devils*" of society!

But the PM refuses to act.

Family Cult

The roots of Mrs. Gandhi's political excesses lay in her tendency to equate herself and her family with the country. Use of state power for promotion of the family cult was not only deemed legitimate, it was regarded as being in national interest. Unfortunately, the new Prime Minister also seems to subscribe to the same view, and as fervently. No wonder, he has stoutly defended and supported the Emergency, first in his off-the cuff remarks at a press conference (these could have been overlooked) and later, in his formal presidential address at his party's Bombay conclave.

The manner in which crores were spent from the state exchequer, first for Mrs. Gandhi's death anniversary function at Delhi, and later for the centenary extravaganza at Bombay, the manner in which the electronic media are used to promote a family cult – these are disturbing manifestations of this unfortunate reality.

A Tale of two Somersaults

However, more disturbing than all this is the adhocism, lack of direction and amateurishness that have often characterised government's decisions during Mr. Gandhi's tenure. Indeed, the pace at which people have been shuffled around in high offices has been breathtaking. In this brief span of nineteen months, there have been major and minor changes in the central ministry on as many as 13 occasions. An important portfolio like Commerce has had six ministers. In a state as sensitive as Punjab, Governors have been changed four times.

Anandpur Saheb Resolution

During the Lok Sabha election campaign, though the Akali Dal had decided not to contest, the Prime Minister made the Anandpur Saheb resolution the principal plank of his election campaign. This Akali resolution is a threat to national unity, and yet opposition parties, including the BJP, were supporting it – this was the burden of his campaign song. So far as the BJP is concerned, this was a big lie. As early as in 1981, our leader Shri Vajpayee had described the resolution as a "*Charter of Disintegration*". After he had won the

election the Prime Minister had no hesitation in giving the resolution legitimacy by incorporating it in the official Punjab accord.

The Shah Bano Case

Government's somersault on the Shah Bano verdict has been even more distressing. From all accounts, Government's initial reaction to the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case was positive. The Prime Minister personally encouraged Arif Mohammad Khan, then a Minister of State in the Union Government, to defend the judgement and speak up in Parliament against Banatwala's private Bill seeking to undo the effect of the judgement. Two months later, the PM did an about-turn which left the country flabbergasted. He first permitted Minister Ansari to denounce not only the judgement, but also the learned judges of the Supreme Court who had delivered this judgement. When the press severely admonished the Minister, the PM publicly rushed to his defence. Some time later he formally capitulated to the vicious campaign, unleashed the Muslim League and Jamaat-i-Islami against the judgement and introduced a Bill in Parliament seeking to wipe out the impact of the Supreme Court judgement.

Unforgivable Assault on Constitution

Today in the field of criminal law there is a uniform code. Article 44 of the Constitution enjoins upon the State to endeavour towards uniformity in the field of civil law as well. The Muslim Women Bill runs counter to this Directive Principle, violates Articles 14 and 15 of the Constitution, and, besides, disrupts the existing uniformity in the field of criminal law.

History will never forgive this government for the fact that when a debate ensued within the Indian Muslim community in regard to the rights of women, and a sizable – and very enlightened – section of the community risked opprobrium at the hands of the obscurantists in the community to espouse the cause of social reform and a fair deal for women, this government sided with the fanatics! How ironic that between an Arif and an Ansari, the "21st century" Prime Minister has chosen to lock arms with the Ansari who is still in the Middle Ages! A wholesome by-product of this years long debate on the Shah Bano judgement has been the acute awareness

it has created in the country about Article 44 of the Constitution and among enlightened sections of the Muslim community about the urgent need of reform in the Muslim personal law.

A Uniform Civil Code

The BJP favours a uniform civil code for the country. Our Constitution charges the state with the duty to move towards such a code. It is unfortunate that until now there has not even been a proper debate on what this code should be like.

I suggest that the Law Commission should undertake a special exercise in this regard. Part of the civil law – laws relating to contracts, transfer of property, etc. – is already uniform. The diversity that exists is in respect of marriage, divorce, maintenance, adoption, etc. The Law Commission should examine the various personal laws in vogue in the country – Hindu Law, Muslim Law, Christian Law, Parsi Law, Civil Law, etc., identify the fair and equitable ingredients in these laws, prepare a draft uniform code on that basis, and throw it open for national debate.

Another Forgotten Commitment

Yet another forgotten Directive Principle of the Constitution is the one that enjoins upon the State to protect the cow. Our Constitutionmakers included cow-protection among the principles they wanted to be “*fundamental in the governance of the country*”. They made this one of the Directive Principles not only because of religious and traditional considerations, but also because of their understanding that the cow is “*the spinal chord of India’s rural economy.*” Gandhiji had described it as more important than *Swarajya* itself.

Cow Protection

Over seventy million animals are used in farming operations in India, specially ploughing. With the discovery of methane gas in dung, cattle has become additionally a valuable source of energy.

In spite of the increasing use of motor transport, India still depends on the bullock for about ninety per cent of its rural transport requirement. In her keynote address to the U.N. Conference on Energy held at Nairobi in 1981, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi took

due note of this and observed:

“In this jet age people refer to bullock carts as symbols of the past. However, in India animals provide more power than all our power houses, whose installed capacity is 29,000 megawatts. Replacing them would entail a further investment of 25 to 40 billion dollars in electricity, over and above the loss to the farm economy of manure and cheap fuel.”

Against the background of these facts, it is tragic that 3 million cows are allowed to be slaughtered every year, half of them for export, mostly to West Asia. Unless this mass slaughter is firmly checked, irreparable damage would be caused to India’s national economy in various crucial sectors.

Following Acharya Vinoba Bhave’s fast in 1976, some routine communications have been going from New Delhi to the states urging the Chief Ministers to ensure that ban on the slaughter of cows and their progeny is observed more strictly. What is really needed, however, is an appreciation of how important and urgent this matter is, and, of course, the will to abide by this Directive Principle.

Nation First Party’

At the head of BJP’s tally of basic commitments stand nationalism and National Unity. Like an individual, a party’s personality and identity also has multiple facets. But if any one were to ask me which is the most distinctive trait of BJP’s personality, I would say that BJP is the choice of unalloyed nationalism. Ours is a “Nation-First” Party. It aspires to be the heartbeat of patriotic India.

Our freedom struggle against the foreign yoke saw the flowering of the Mother India cult. **Vande Mataram** and **Bharat Mata Ki Jai** were slogans that reverberated throughout the length and breadth of the country. We believe that even after Independence strengthening of this feeling of *Bharatiyata* (Indianness) and a conscious nurturing of the spirit of patriotism in the people is the most effective remedy for many of the ills that beset the country – political, social and economic. It is the only engine that can propel this country forward.

The BJP holds that India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, is one country, and that all Indians, irrespective of creed, caste or language, are one people.

Theocracy is alien to Indian political history. In Indian tradition, since times immemorial, the State has always been a civil institution, which respects all religions equally (**Sarva dharma samabhav**) and which makes no distinction between one citizen and another on grounds of religion. It is this positive concept of secularism to which BJP subscribes.

Minority Communalism

Unfortunately, for many politicians and political parties, secularism has become only a euphemism for appeasement of minority sections which tend to vote **en bloc**. These politicians unabashedly propound the thesis that there is no such thing as minority communalism. When two months back more than 45 Hindu temples were destroyed in the Kashmir Valley, and large scale destruction of property took place, not a single party in the country, except the BJP, raised its voice of protest. It is this that gives the world 'secularism' a bad odour.

The BJP totally rejects this approach, and would never allow electoral expediency to dilute its twin commitments. Communalism is bad, whether of the majority or of the minority. Indeed, I am convinced that if only the Congress (I) Government had dealt with the Punjab, Kashmir and Assam situations purely in national interest, unconcerned with how it would affect the party's electoral prospects, things would never have gone out of hand.

The BJP has maintained an uncompromising, principled stand on all these issues. Right through the early eighties when ruling party spokesmen were issuing religious-leader certificates to Bhindranwale, the arch-priest of the terrorist cult, the BJP was in the vanguard of the campaign against the cult. Several of our party colleagues paid for this with their lives. Following Mrs. Gandhi's murder in October 1984, anti-Sikh violence broke out in the capital and some other parts of the country. The BJP strongly condemned the killing of innocent Sikhs, and our units actively exerted to give them shelter and relief. In purely electoral terms, this cost us dearly. But we have no regrets on this score.

Punjab Situation is Grave

The situation in Punjab today is worse than what it was before Operation Bluestar. Perverse, partisan handling of the situation by the Central Government between 1980 and 1984, (promotion of Bhindranwale is a characteristic example), and hasty, half-baked decisions in 1985 (removal of ban on AISSF, and drawing up of Punjab accord without agreement of Haryana and Rajasthan, for instance) have so messed up the situation there that there are just no easy solutions now. The problem has to be tackled with determination and in a sustained manner.

Until 1984-85, terrorist violence was directed against specific individual targets – both Sikh and non-Sikh. The objective was to silence those who spoke or acted against Bhindranwale's band of terrorists or against Khalistan.

Provoking Communal Clashes

The latest phase of violence has a more sinister objective – to provoke communal clashes so that panic stricken Hindus start migrating from the State, and the reaction created outside Punjab makes Sikhs flee from the rest of the country to Punjab. This, they think, would be a major demographic step towards the creation of Khalistan.

In order to foil this conspiracy, two things must be done.

At the administrative level, terrorists have to be severely dealt with. After months of masterly inactivity, in recent weeks, the law and order machinery has somewhat bestirred itself. Chief Minister Barnala has personally added a few notches to his own height by risking a revolt in his own camp and ordering a police action to flush out militants who had been in control of the Golden Temple for the last three months. It is, however, an unpardonable failure of the Central as well as the State governments that the five members of the so-called Panthic Committee which made the Khalistan declaration have been able to make a clean escape. Three of these were proclaimed offenders wanted in connection with grave crimes, including murder.

Collusion with Extremists

It is obvious that there are elements both in Government as well as in the ruling party who are colluding with the extremists.

These must be ruthlessly weeded out. The intelligence set up must be made really effective. The manner in which terrorists have been going about their killing sprees in recent months has shaken the confidence of the people in the Akali Government, some of whose ministers have never concealed their sympathies for the extremists. If a couple of them have recently quit in protest against the action at the Temple, it should be deemed good riddance.

The man in the street has already started clamouring for army rule. My party feels that President's Rule and/or army rule should only be a last resort. It would be in the best interests of the country, as well as of Punjab, if the Barnala Government itself tackles the terrorist menace firmly. The Baranala Government must function as the Government of Punjab, and not as a Panthic Government. The primary duty of the State Government is to make every citizen in Punjab feel safe and secure.

On the people's plane, the BJP, in collaboration with other parties, will exert to see that communal harmony is maintained. Sikhs all over the country must be made to feel absolutely secure. Memories of the November 1984 disturbances are no doubt painful. But even in that context, it must be appreciated that Hindus, as a community, gave protection to their Sikh neighbours.

So far as the Central Government is concerned it must take all steps necessary to see that the border is effectively sealed and Pakistan's potential for mischief is curbed.

Art. 370 must go

The other day when the BJP urged abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution which confers on Jammu and Kashmir state a Special Status and a separate constitution, former Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah reacted sharply and criticised the BJP for making the demand. I am happy, however, that even while criticising us for making this demand he conceded that this Article was "*a barrier*" between J&K State and the rest of the country. But he affirmed that it would erode automatically with the passage of time.

The country has been hearing this '*automatic erosion*' language for a quarter century now. It was Pandit Nehru who used the phrase first of all. He kept repeating it whenever the Kashmir issue was discussed. In February 1964, Mr. M.C. Chagla, who was Education

Minister in Pandit Nehru's Government at that time, and who represented India in many a Security Council debate on Kashmir, said in the Rajya Sabha in a tone of exasperation.

"The Prime Minister the other day spoke of the gradual erosion of Article 370 of the constitution. I only hope that the erosion is accelerated and I also hope that very soon that article will disappear from the Constitution of India. After all, it is transitional and temporary. I think the transitional period has been long enough."

Vested Interests

There are elements in Jammu and Kashmir who have developed a vested interest in the continuance of this Article. If Jinnah believed in the two-nation theory, these elements propagate a three-nation theory, this third "Nation" being the Kashmiries. Continuance of Article 370 helps keep alive this dangerous myth, and promotes psychological separatism. Besides, this provision is serving as a bad example. Demands for a similar special status are being heard in some other parts of the country also, particularly in Punjab.

The BJP demands that Article 370 be repealed. There is no legal or constitutional difficulty. If the Parliament decides it by a two-thirds majority, all that is needed to remove the temporary provision from the Constitution is endorsement by the J & K Governor.

Today, Jammu and Kashmir State is under Governor's Rule. If there had been a breakdown of constitutional machinery in any other state and the State Assembly had been dissolved, the legislative powers of the Assembly would have become vested in Parliament. In the performance of his executive functions, the Governor would be answerable to Parliament, of course, through the Home Minister.

But, thanks to Article 370 and the separate constitution of Jammu and Kashmir, Governor Jag Mohan of Jammu and Kashmir is Chief Minister and State Assembly rolled in one, and is answerable to no one, not even to Parliament. He makes laws, and even approves the Budget.

This anomalous situation must not last long. The fact that the Assembly has been kept under animated suspension raises suspicions about New Delhi's intentions. The Assembly should

be dissolved, and elections held at the earliest.

Infiltration in Assam

In Assam there is calm at the moment. But the problem of foreign nationals, and of continuing infiltration from across the borders continues. The Assam Chief Minister has claimed that while all that was required of the state government towards implementation of the Assam Accord has been done, amendments in the Central laws as warranted by the Accord are still to be made. I urge the Central government to initiate necessary legislation in this regard without delay.

Threat to National Security

The people of Assam of course have waged a prolonged struggle to force government's hands in regard to the problem of illegal immigrants. The problem, however, is not confined to Assam. It afflicts all border states including West Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. It seriously jeopardises national security. But the government does not seem worried about it.

The BJP demands that all citizens of border states be required by law to carry photo-affixed identity cards. In Assam, where no census could be held in 1981 along with the rest of the country, a special census should be ordered. A National Register of Citizens also should be prepared.

Law and Order Problems

From the point of view of law and order, the last few years have perhaps been the worst in living memory. Punjab, of course, is in the throes of terrorist violence. And in Jammu and Kashmir State, anti-national elements have been having a field day for several months. Violence and vandalism have taken a heavy toll. But the criminals have gone scot free.

In Gujarat there have been recurring outbursts of riots, sometimes communal, sometimes casteist. In parts of UP, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the conditions have been of near anarchy. In such a situation the worst affected are generally the Harijans and other weaker sections.

Poll Reform is Imperative

The first major policy pronouncement of the Rajiv Government President's Address to the Joint Session of Parliament in January 1985 promised the nation "*a clean public life*". In specific terms, the President promised two things – first, an anti-defection law, and second, electoral reforms. With regard to poll reforms, the President told Parliament that Government would "*initiate wide-ranging discussions ... with political parties.*"

Government lost absolutely no time in bringing forth the anti-defection Bill. The Bill was passed in January itself. All Opposition Parties supported the Bill. It is significant that Congress (I) was the only national party whose election manifesto did not deplore defection, or talk of legislating against it. Obviously, after securing a massive majority, the Congress (I) was anxious to keep its flock intact. The Bill was essentially a self-protective, self-preservative device. Indeed, had it not been for this law, the current crisis in the ruling party would have caused major convulsions.

So far as electoral reforms are concerned, the promise remains unfulfilled. Though fifteen months have elapsed since then, even the process of discussions has not started.

The BJP has been carrying on a sustained campaign for electoral reforms. We hold that unless the election process is cleansed, public life cannot be clean. The roots of administrative corruption lie in political corruption, which in turn stems from electoral corruption. Four major evils pollute the electoral process. These are Money-power, Ministerial-power, Media-power and Muscle-power. The BJP commends the following nine-point plan for electoral reform:

Nine-point Plan

1. **Public Funding of Elections:** Way back in 1973, the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Amendments to Election Law had opined that the problem of money-power in election could be effectively tackled "*only if it is accepted in principle that all election expenses should be a legitimate charge on the public fund.*" The Committee recommended that "*a process should be initiated whereby the burden of legitimate election expenses at present borne by the candidate or the political party*

is progressively shifted to the State."

It is high time this general recommendation was translated into specific legislation, and a scheme of election grants worked out.

This government's decision to remove the ban on company donations was taken in order to enable the corporate sector to "*play a legitimate role*" in public affairs. This decision is retrograde and will only make elections more costly and more corrupt. The decision must be scrapped and the ban restored.

Incidentally, banning company donations was the only recommendation of the Santhanam Committee which was accepted. The Committee had been asked to suggest ways and means to stamp out corruption.

2. **Electronic Voting Machines:** The law should be immediately amended to legalise the use of electronic voting machines.
3. **Voter Identity Cards:** All voters should be provided with Identity Cards carrying their photographs. A beginning should be made in urban areas where the evil of impersonation and bogus voting is at its worst.
4. **Annulling elections in case of Booth-Capture:** The Election Commission must be armed with adequate powers including power to annul the entire election if it is satisfied that booth capturing has taken place. Under the law today a repoll is ordered only in those booths for which a valid complaint is received.
5. **Voting Age:** Voting age must be reduced from 21 years to 18 years.
6. **Code of Conduct must be given teeth:** Violation of the Code of Conduct drawn up by the Election Commission must be made a corrupt practice. There must be a legal ban on use of government vehicles, aircraft, etc., for election purposes. If any exception is to be made for the Prime Minister, the same facilities in respect of aircraft, etc., must be extended to leaders of recognised opposition parties on the same conditions.
7. **Election Commission must be insulated from executive**

pressure: The Election Commission should be a multi-member body and should be provided with an independent infrastructure. At least the Chief Electoral Officers and Deputy Chief Electoral Officers in the states should be directly under the Election Commission and not under the State Governments. Members of the Election Commission must not hold any office after retirement.

8. **Simultaneous elections for Lok Sabha and Assembly:** The earlier synchrony between Lok Sabha and Assembly elections must be restored. Now, in the case of a majority of State Assemblies and the present Lok Sabha, the gap is only of two months. There should be no difficulty in holding these elections together in 1989-90.
9. **Media-monitoring:** The most effective remedy against media abuse would be grant of autonomy to radio and television. But until such time that this happens, the Election Commission must be empowered to monitor all political and election coverage by AIR and Doordarshan and ensure that these media are not abused.

The nine-point plan does not envisage any radical overhaul of the electoral system. I am of the view that there should be a change of system also. The Mixed System (Combination of the present Majority System with the List System) which is in vogue in West Germany would be best suited to India. The Tarkunde Committee as well as former Chief Election Commissioner Shri SL Shakhder had also supported this. I concede, however, that this matter calls for much greater debate than has taken place as yet.

Jettisoning of Self-reliance

Mrs. Gandhi tried to hypnotise the masses by using **Garibi Hatao** as a sort of a **mantra**. Rajiv Gandhi's **mantra** is modernisation. **We need Development more than Growth**

India must indeed be a modern nation; but it cannot be a slavish imitator of alien models of modernisation which divide and split societies into haves and have-nots. It is necessary in this context to make a distinction between growth and development. Development comes from within and is co-terminous with social justice and self-reliance. Growth comes from outside and is often

dependent on borrowed models and borrowed technology. The advanced countries are indeed only too anxious to lend their money, technology and experts of growth. Indeed, agencies like the World Bank have a vested interest in promoting such unnatural and forced growth. Development, on the other hand, has to rely primarily on its own resources of capital, technology and expertise, blending the three in such a way that the society modernises itself at its own pace and in tune with its own genius.

Brazil, Nigeria and the Philippines of Ferdinand Marcos are prominent examples of forced growth. It is not an accident that they used to be enthusiastic favourites of the World Bank. It is also not an accident that all are, or were, “*banana republics*” of one hue or another. Japan, in contrast, is an excellent example of development, of a country that has grown under its own steam, which has borrowed nothing it has not changed or adapted to its own requirements, and which thus continues to be a model of self-reliance.

Soaring Debt

The growth-model we have adopted is playing havoc with our avowed objective of self-reliance. The total public debt has soared from Rs. 42,000 crore in 1980-81 to about Rs. 90,000 crore in the current year. In these last five years it has more than doubled! And it keeps mounting at the rate of Rs. 13,000 crore per year! The Government seems to subscribe very enthusiastically to Charvaka’s philosophy of Borrowing Freely and Living Happily – **Rinam kritva, ghritam pibet** (Raise loans, consume ghee). It has been borrowing heavily both at home and abroad, and the finance minister is on record poohpoohing the faint-hearted who are afraid to borrow.

The external public debt now stands at nearly Rs. 20,000 crore. This has to be paid back in hard currencies, through exports, which are, however, stagnating. The net result of such a staggering foreign debt is the continuing devaluation of the rupee, which is now one of the weakest currencies in the world.

Pressures for Devaluation

The government is under severe pressure now both from the International Monetary Fund as well as the multinationals,

whose interests are safeguarded by the IMF, for a steep and formal devaluation of the rupee which has lost around 50 per cent of its value in terms of leading foreign currencies during the last four years. The BJP warns the government against taking such a disastrous step.

Family Budgets Upset

The centre's finances are in such a mess that it is forced to rely on borrowings and deficit financing to meet even its current expenditure. The net result is inflation, and the consequent degradation of the rupee. Prices have gone up by over 50 per cent in the last six years, an unprecedented increase that has played havoc with family budgets up and down the country. Prices of food-grains, which account for over two-thirds of the expenditure of the average Indian family, are among the highest in the world, so completely out of proportion with the declining purchasing power of the rupee that at least 2 out of 5 families starve while 'surplus' stocks rot in the godowns. These stocks should be used to bring down and stabilise food prices on a long-term basis, by subsidising them if necessary, and at the same time providing remunerative prices to our hard-working farmers.

Cut down Expenditure

But inflation will not be held at bay unless the government curbs its spendthrift habits and returns to a more austere lifestyle in keeping with Gandhian ethos. Government expenditure has risen, is rising and must be curbed, and so must its tendency to make money by back-door increases in administered prices of service and commodities before every budget. A government that cannot live within its means has no business to ask the common man to tighten his belt in the name of development.

Employment Oriented Industrial Policy

Today, government formulates its industrial policy in terms of production targets, not in terms of jobs. There needs to be a radical change in this approach. Time has now come to take jobs to the people, not bring people to the jobs as is being done now. There are jobs only in or near cities and towns and none at all in

the villages where four out of five Indians live.

Provide Jobs in the Villages

Let Industrial policy, therefore, be reoriented so as to promote labour-intensive industries in the countryside in a big way. Liberal incentives, including total remission of taxes for a period of up to 10 years and an employment subsidy based on the number of jobs created, would encourage entrepreneurs to take on the maximum number of workers compatible with the type of technology they use and the type of products they manufacture. It is much more economical to pay people to stay where they are, find them jobs near their places of habitat than to force them to migrate to big towns and cities and force them into slums, which, in turn, are choking the cities.

Let us take technology to the people, let us take progress and modernisation to the people, instead of the other way round. In the name of progress and growth, the people have been neglected. We must now move in the other direction, towards the people, and not the new god called '*Computer*' should be the main focus of our attention. By reversing the flow of resources, we shall humanise the process of development. For, of what use is the whole effort of development, if it will not serve man ?

Economic Policy: Four Principles

There are four essential principles which condition the BJP's economic thinking:

1. **Self-reliance:** The party's economic policy would be strongly nationalistic in approach and content. We believe that the interest of multinationals – maximisation of profits – is in conflict with our national interests – maximisation of jobs and welfare. The party, therefore, would like to keep multinationals at bay, at least, out of the field of consumer industries. The party regards self-reliance as an over-riding component in our external economic relations, including the import of technology and capital.
2. **Decentralisation:** The party stands for political as well as economic democracy, so that the benefits of economic development go to the smallest man. The party believes

that for this decentralisation of economic power presently concentrated in the hands of the state or of big business is necessary. Primacy for agriculture, swadeshi, and importance to the small-scale sector in industry are commitments that flow from this.

3. **Modernisation:** BJP will harness new technologies to the changing requirements of the country, and build the nation as a modern and progressive nation. But it will not allow technology to degrade man as just another input in Gross National Product. Man will be the main focus of our developmental policies.
4. *Daridra Narayan:* Consistent with the above three elements, the party will aim at securing to every Indian citizen minimum conditions of material welfare in terms of food, raiment, shelter, health and education.

Primacy to Agriculture

Our Economic Policy will continue to remain lop-sided until and unless agriculture gets its due primacy in our overall strategy.

Although agriculture is India's biggest industry, its share in gross domestic production (GDP) has declined from 59.0 per cent in 1951-56 to 38.2 per cent in 1980-84. Despite this fall in its share of national income, this sector still employs 70 per cent of the country's working population which means a fall of just about 5 per cent over the past three decades.

Specially speaking, the farmer must be assured remunerative prices for his produce, covering the full costs of his production, computed after taking into consideration all the relevant parameters like cost of inputs, living index, etc. Government purchase operations should be efficient enough to guarantee that farmers, and particularly small farmers, do in fact get the guaranteed prices and are not compelled to make distress sales.

Ecological Threat

The interaction of industrial expansion, population growth, unrestrained use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers and neglect of problems of environmental pollution has brought the country face to face with a grave ecological threat. The threat we face covers

our land, air, water, forests, habitat, life-resources, health – indeed, the total well-being of our people.

Even by official statistics, between a third and one-half of the country's arable land has degenerated into wasteland. Fertile crop lands are being turned into arid zones. Grazing lands are either being finished, or are being over-grazed. As a result, salinity, erosion and water-logging occur in large areas of the country.

Disappearing Forest Cover

The ecologically required forest cover is 33 per cent of the land surface. The official claim of forest cover is 23 per cent, but actually it is barely 11 per cent. Of this, near-about half is degraded forest. On top of this, about 1.3 million hectares of forest is lost annually to indiscriminate falling. In some states like Himachal Pradesh politicians of the ruling party are the worst criminals in this regard.

The direct victims of all this are the people. Deforestation, land erosion, water pollution, etc., impose hardships primarily on women, children, tribals, nomads and the poor of our country, who have to struggle harder for sheer survival. Ecological neglect is further marginalising the marginal citizen.

Of course, the statute book can claim an array of laws intended to deal with ecological problems. But little attention is paid to their implementation. If government had been alive to this menace, and had not been negligent, the country may have been spared the Bhopal disaster.

Old industries should be given the necessary incentive to instal anti-pollution equipment.

Need for Social Awakening

What is most vital is the creation of social awakening in respect of the issues involved. The BJP commits itself to taking the message of ecological preservation to every state of the Union, to every town and village, indeed to every classroom of the country. In the final analysis the real preservers of our environment are our own people.

In this context, while we welcome the cleansing of the Ganga, we must not forget the Yamuna and the Narmada, the Krishna and the Kaveri, which are even more polluted than the Ganga.

Ad-hocism in Foreign Policy

If the biggest achievement of the Janata Government in the field of foreign affairs was in the matter of relations with neighbours, it is in this very arena that the present Government's performance has been particularly dismal. The principal reason is that the policy-makers in South Block are not at all clear in their minds about what precisely they want to achieve. Even on the overall plane **ad hocism** has badly marred both the conceptualisation of policy as well as its execution.

The media blitz that invariably accompanies the PM's trips abroad has consciously tried to create an illusion of spectacular success. But when one sits down to compute in tangible terms the gains and losses of our foreign policy, the balance sheet is extremely depressing.

In Mrs. Gandhiji's days, India's friendship with the USSR was always viewed with suspicion by the Western blocks. Our declarations of non-alignment were distrusted. The Janata Government during its brief tenure tried to dispel this distrust. And it succeeded remarkably. While our warm and close ties with the Soviet Union continued as ever, a very good rapport was built up also with the West. India's non-alignment acquired credibility. Unfortunately, in recent months while in the Western block the earlier distrust has returned, particularly with the Libyan incident, there is some cooling off even in the Soviet blocks. When recently Secretary General Gorbachov presented his report to the CPSU, he conspicuously omitted even a reference to India. This is a pointer, whose significance cannot be missed.

Failure of Neighbourhood Policy

The most critical failure is in the field of neighbourhood policy. We have been accusing Pakistan of fomenting terrorist violence in Punjab. It is strange that even while doing so, our government concluded with the Government of Pakistan on 17 December, 1985, an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations. This is a singularly ill-conceived diplomatic act. It confers on Pakistan not just immunity in its military and nuclear programmes, it concedes to Pakistan, for the first time, a nuclear status equal to ours.

With Sri Lanka our relations are worse than ever before. If deterioration of relations were the price we had to pay in order to be able to protect the interests of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, it could

have been understood. The tragedy is that we have failed to do anything for the Tamils in Sri Lanka who are today in a terrible plight.

With Bangladesh, we have failed to resolve the issue of barbed wire fencing. The recent firing across the Tripura border only highlights how fragile the situation is.

On the foreign economic front we face a particularly difficult situation. IDA lending to us has fallen from a share of 40 per cent to about 22 per cent. IMF conditionalities are becoming more stringent; there is monetary and financial instability. Despite a fall in international oil prices, industrially advanced countries have been increasingly creating protectionist trade barriers, resulting in reverse transfer of resources to them.

Problems of Security

During the first official visit of the Prime Minister to the United States, no speech of his omitted to refer to problems created for India's development programmes because of the massive arms aid given by the US to Pakistan.

For US Pakistan is a "Military Access Country"

The PM's friendship offensive on that occasion seemed aimed primarily at restraining the US from doing this. It must be admitted that all his efforts in this direction have failed. We have not been able to prevent, or even modify, US approach to the question of arms assistance to Pakistan. In fact, US Secretary of State, Shultz has gone to the extent of calling Pakistan not just a '*frontline State*', but a '*military access country*.' In case of the next instalment of US military assistance to Pakistan, now virtually in the pipeline, there is not even a pretence that it is directed against Afghanistan.

India's defence budget now covers a third of the non-plan expenditure of the nation. There is a need to examine whether the money drawn from the exchequer for defence is being utilised in an optimum cost-effective manner.

The most important element in the Armed Forces is the man behind the gun. The BJP is of the view that the morale of the Armed Forces is of the highest importance. Their pay, emoluments, service

conditions, etc., need to be constantly kept under review. Today's serving soldiers, sailors and airmen are tomorrow's ex-servicemen. It is our bounden duty to ensure that the difficulties of ex-servicemen also are ameliorated at the earliest.

Grass Roots Politics

From 1947 to 1977, India has had at the national level a single dominant party set-up. In the opposition, there were a number of parties, some of them splinters of the Congress Party. In 1977, thanks to the Emergency, the Janata Party emerged. That was the closest we came to a two-party system, a consummation devoutly wished by all political thinkers since Independence.

This phase did not last long. Within three years, the Janata Party disintegrated, and Indian politics reverted to the pre-1977 pattern, with one dominant ruling party, and a host of Opposition parties, some national, others regional, some stable and enduring, others unstable and ephemeral.

Multi-polarity in Indian System Unstable

The 1977 development was the outcome of an extraordinary combination of circumstances unlikely to repeat themselves. The climate created during the 1977 poll campaign, and immediately thereafter, was the most congenial that can ever be generated to make a two-party system stabilise. If, nevertheless, the 1977 configuration could not last even for one term, that only shows that in the Indian context, it is multi-polarity which should be accepted as the rule, and that bipolarity can only be a rare exception. A ceaseless hankering after such an exceptional situation cannot be considered healthy.

For us in the BJP, a political party does not mean merely an electoral platform. Nor does political action mean simply a strategy for aggregation of vote banks. Parliamentary democracy can work best if parties display at least programmatic, if not ideological, commitment. It must also be appreciated that in a large and developing democracy like ours, political activity at the grassroots is more important than legislative activity. A proper organisation has to be forged, and chiselled into an effective instrument for socio-political change, and for the redressal of people's grievances. In the

forthcoming years, let us concentrate on this grass-roots activity.

BJP Willing to work in Concert with other Parties

The BJP, however, does not believe in political untouchability. Even while maintaining its own separate identity, building up its own cadres, widening its popular base and sharpening its distinct appeal, it has always been willing to act in concert with other opposition parties, both inside the legislature and outside, on specific issues, such as, electoral reform, eradication of corruption, etc.

The BJP is today in the Opposition. The principal role of an opposition party is to act as a watch-dog of government's performance on behalf of the people. At the same time, BJP is conscious of its responsibility to present to the people alternative policies and programmes and model norms and standards of political conduct. The BJP is resolved to pursue this two-fold task with vigour and dedication.

Party with a Difference

There has been a precipitate slump in the prestige of the ruling party during the past few months. A political vacuum is fast developing. Some in the opposition may regard it as an opportunity and turn to the politics of aggregation. Let us in the BJP accept the situation as a challenge and concentrate even more intensely on grassroots politics, a broad action plan for which we have already drawn up at Gandhinagar.

For nearly two decades now, Indian politics has been oscillating between hope and despair. This kind of recurring ebb and tide of popular expectations is creating cynicism about all politicians and political parties – nay, about the system itself. Let the BJP exert to dispel this cynicism and by dint of conduct and performance, service and sacrifice, prove to the people that this party inspired by Gandhi and Jaya Prakash, by Mookherji and Upadhyay is really a party with a difference. It may not have yet a nationwide political set-up to offer as alternative to the ruling party, but it certainly has an alternative political culture to offer.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Gwalior

18 July, 1986

I welcome you all to this meeting of the Party's newly constituted National Executive.

A Series of Distressing Developments in Punjab

It is a little over two months since we last met at New Delhi for our plenary conference. During the interlude since then a series of extremely distressing developments have taken place.

Extremists in Punjab have succeeded in establishing a reign of terror in the border districts of the State, and as a result, thousands of families have deserted their hearths and homes and sought refuge either in neighbouring states, or in the bigger cities of the State.

Mizo rebel leader Laldenga has succeeded in striking a deal with New Delhi which can have seriously adverse consequences for National unity.

Chinese Encroachment

The Chinese have succeeded in encroaching upon Indian territory in Arunachal Pradesh, and according to facts now revealed have been staying put there for over a month. India's protests in this regard have been rejected outright. These intrusions are not casual. They should be seen against the background of China's repeated assertions that Arunachal is not a part of India.

Violence in Several States

Apart from all this, violence has badly rocked Ahmedabad, Allahabad, and several other places in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. In Bihar and parts of Uttar Pradesh, law & order situation has totally collapsed and there have been disturbing outbursts of casteist violence.

Government's handling of all these happenings has been totally inept and ham-handed. It betrays myopia, and a lack of national perspective.

Gloom and Cynicism

The net result is that a Government that was once being showered with kudos as one led by “*a young and dynamic*” leadership is today universally derided as “*raw and immature*”. Ad-hocism and lack of direction continue to be the bane of government policies and decision making. Last year’s mood of euphoria about Rajiv Gandhi’s leadership has now given way to a climate of gloom and cynicism.

During these two months, the Bharatiya Janata Party has been actively discharging its duty as an alert and vigorous opposition party.

The BJP has been the first to voice its reservations about the hurriedly concluded Mizo Accord. It is significant that in his Mizoram tour the Prime Minister himself has expressed misgivings about Laldenga’s utterances. It seems that this Government has developed a habit of signing agreements in haste and later repenting at leisure.

Satyagraha by BJP Workers

The massive Satyagraha organised in Delhi to urge upon the Government to deploy the army in three districts of Punjab has earned for the party encomiums all over the country, and more particularly in Punjab. The gravity of the problem has been highlighted, and the Government’s policy of dangerous drift exposed. More than 40,000 BJP workers from Punjab and neighbouring States participated in this Satyagraha.

Commencing with 23 June, the martyrdom anniversary of Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee and ending with 6 July, the birth anniversary of Dr. Mukherjee, this fortnight was observed by Bharatiya Janata Party Units all over the country as National Integration Fortnight. Through rallies, symposia etc. the National

Integrational Charter drawn up by the Party at its Plenary Session was explained to the country.

It is during these two months again that biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha have taken place in several States. Our strategy of making adjustments with other opposition parties on a basis of reciprocity has yielded good results. We have returned four members to the Rajya Sabha this time. We have reason to be satisfied with the results.

The National Executive of the BJP, in the course of its deliberations at Gwalior, has to take due note of all these developments, and spell out its own remedies and proposals with regard to the problems that face the country.

As this is the Executive's first meeting, it will have to elect the Parliamentary Board and the Central Election Committee of the Party. Also, office bearers and members of the Executive will have to undertake specific tasks so as to ensure that the five year Action Plan we have drawn up is effectively implemented.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Jammu

17 October, 1986

It was a few months before the Emergency that the National Executive of the Jana Sangh had held a session here in Jammu. As Bharatiya Janata Party, we are meeting in this State for the first time.

Integration of J&K with the Rest of India

Our Party's associations with this State are laced with warm and tender emotions. Four decades back, tens of thousands of our workers had come here from all over the country chanting the *mantram* given us by late lamented Dr. SP Mookherjee and Pandit Premnath Dogra "*EK Desh Men Do Vidhan, Do Pradhan, Do Nishan, Nahni Challenge*" (In one country, we cannot have two Constitutions, two Presidents, two Flags). Dr. Mookherjee sacrificed his life in that movement. As a result of that martyrdom and the valiant struggle continued thereafter by Pandit Dogra, two-thirds of the objective encapsulated in that *mantram* has been achieved. There is today only one President, and one Flag. Two Constitutions, however, still continue. The BJP will not rest until this one-third also is achieved and until, by repeal of Article 370, a separate Constitution for J & K State also is scrapped.

Framing a Chargesheet against Rajiv Gandhi

Three months back the National Executive met at Gwalior. During the interlude since then the Party's Central office-bearers had a two-day session at New Delhi. An important decision taken at this meeting was that in October when the Rajiv Government completes two years of its tenure, the BJP should draw up a charge-sheet highlighting the Government's major failures and undertake a political education campaign on the basis of this charge-sheet. This then will be the principal task before this Executive meet – framing this charge-sheet.

Two quirks of destiny have landed the country in the present situation. The arrival of Rajiv Gandhi on the Indian political scene was the result of an accident – Sanjay Gandhi's air crash. His ascendancy to Prime Ministership was the result of another accident – Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. But this is also true that when Mr. Gandhi did become Prime Minister, high hopes were aroused. There were commentators who said that Rajiv's government would

prove the best Independent India has had. Today the disillusionment is as intense as the hopes were high. This Government has failed miserably on all fronts.

Farmers' Rights

Yet another task the National Executive would have to address itself to is to take stock of the numerous problems the Indian farmer is facing today, and to draw up a Charter of Rights for farmers. Excellent groundwork in this regard has already been done by our Gujarat, UP and Madhya Pradesh units. Let us frame this Charter and plan an action plan for the country.

Plans for the Mini-general Elections

A third task this Executive has to attend to is to draw up plans for next year's mini General Elections. It is a matter of regret that the new Chief Election Commissioner has not cared even to consult opposition parties in this regard. I hold that he has erred grievously in announcing the Tosham by-election. There were four vacancies in Haryana. The Election Commission cannot pick and choose and declare that elections will be held only in one, because the Chief Minister wants to contest from there. The limitations imposed by Article 164 of the Constitution that a non-MLA cannot be a minister for more than six months is a constraint which the Executive must bear in mind when deciding its political problems of leadership. The Election Commission cannot draw up its schedules on that basis.

The Executive will have to consider the reports of West Bengal, Tripura, Kerala, Haryana as also J & K State with regard to preparations for forthcoming Assembly polls in these States. The possibility of an early election in the Union Territory of Delhi also must be borne in mind.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Vijayawada

31 December, 1986

Integral Humanism

This Andhra City of Vijayawada situated on the banks of the Krishna has a special significance for our Party. It was here that in January 1965, twenty-two years back, the Bharatiya Jana Sangh had held a plenary session, at which the concept of Integral Humanism propounded by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay was formally adopted.

Today, Integral Humanism has been accepted by the BJP as its basic philosophy.

Holistic Approach to Human Problems

Upadhyayji held that both communism as well as capitalism tended to cater, each in its own way, only to the material needs of man. The solutions of problems conceived were generally piecemeal.

What is really needed is an integrated or holistic approach to human problems. This approach did not view man only as economic man, or political man, but as a spiritual entity as well.

The emphasis laid by our ancients on the need to fulfil all the four *purusharthas* – *Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksha* – reflected this integrated view of life.

Today is the last day of the year. This year has been a year of shattered hopes. This year has seen the rise of separatist and centrifugal forces in a very dangerous manner.

A weak Govt.

The feeling has gone round that the Rajiv Government is a weak government which can be pushed and pummelled into conceding anything.

An Anti-national move

The call given by the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat to boycott Republic Day celebrations in protest against the Babri Masjid issue is a case in point. The move is anti-national, it is

inflammatory, it is irresponsible. I strongly condemn this move and urge all patriotic forces to condemn it with one voice.

This move is spearheaded by Syed Shahabuddin, a prominent leader of the Janata Party, and the main champion of the move is the Muslim League, the Congress(I)'s principal ally in Kerala.

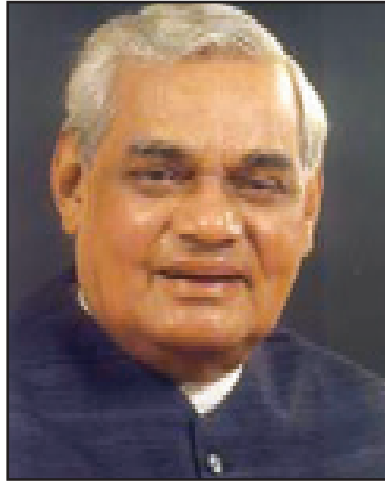
The nation will be watching how the Janata Party and the Congress Party react to this move of their leader, and ally, respectively.

Vande Mataram!



Presidential Speeches

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE



National Executive

Chandigarh

3-5 January, 1986

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Congress Party Penalized by the People

The resounding defeat of the Congress (I), first in Punjab and now in Assam, is proof of the fact that even while Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi may be receiving compliments for the Punjab and Assam Accords from the rest of the country, the people of these two states hold the Congress Party squarely responsible for the tragic developments in these States during the past few years, and so deemed it their duty to penalise the party for its doings.

Deep Disillusionment

Not only in the Punjab and Assam elections, but in most of the Lok Sabha and Assembly by-elections also, the Congress (I) has been badly mauled. These results only confirm that the extraordinary success scored by the Congress (I) in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections was the outcome of the extraordinary situation which was precipitated by

Hollowness of the Congress Party

It is noteworthy that out of 22 states in the country, the Congress (I) is in power only in 13. Poll results during 1985 indicate that in these 13 states also, the Congress (I) is fast losing ground. Governmental media are being grossly abused to project the Prime Minister's image. But this image cannot deceive the people with regard to the reality that the Congress organisation is today an empty shell. The multi-crore Party extravaganza held in Bombay last week at government expenses served only to highlight the hollowness of the party. Loud-mouthed declarations about moving into the 21st century cannot conceal the fact that regionalism is on the rise, disparities are growing, and communal intolerance is ruling the roost.

Integral Humanism is BJP's Basic Philosophy

At its Gandhinagar conclave three months back, the Bharatiya Janata Party accepted Integral Humanism as its basic philosophy, and reiterated its commitment to five principles including Gandhian Socialism. The decisions taken then satisfactorily answered all the questions raised about the Party's ideology, and the Bharatiya Janata Party is today all set to face the challenges of the future.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

4 January, 1985

Atmosphere Surcharged with Emotion

Eighth Lok Sabha elections have been unusual in many ways. Never before was a General Election held in an atmosphere so much surcharged with emotion resulting from Operation Blue Star, the ghastly assassination of Mrs. Gandhi and the bloody riots following the assassination.

Congress Fully Explored the Situation

The ruling party made a clever use of this situation in its election campaign and succeeded in diverting people's attention from problems like rising prices, deteriorating law and order situation, all pervasive corruption, even the mishandling by it of the Punjab problem. With the help of unlimited resources at its disposal, gross misuse of Government media and a no-holds barred relentless propaganda, the ruling party projected national unity as the only election issue and itself as the only saviour of this unity. Electoral malpractices were on a scale larger than ever before. A divided opposition losing credibility with the people particularly because of prolonged and intermittent talks about merger, alliance, adjustment of seats and so on, also helped the ruling party.

BJP gets only two Seats

As a result, the Congress (I) secured an unprecedented majority of seats, winning with a huge margin in many areas. All the national opposition parties fared very badly and the Bharatiya Janata Party secured only two seats.

BJP continues to Enjoy wide Public Support

But all this should not lead to despair, though it does call for self-analysis and learning lessons for the future from a careful study of all the factors that led to the debacle. From the figures available so far, it will be found that in as many as 101 constituencies Bharatiya Janata Party candidates were next to the winners. This shows that the Party continues to enjoy considerable public support.

We shall do better in Forthcoming Assembly Elections

The forthcoming Assembly elections will soon give us another opportunity to go to the people and regain and augment their confidence in us. The main issue in the Assembly elections will be the performance of the respective State governments. There will be other local issues. We have to gear up the party machinery for contesting the Assembly elections, particularly in the light of the new style of aggressive campaigning by the Congress (I).

Our party workers did a splendid job in the Lok Sabha elections inspite of serious limitations of resources and partisan attitude of the Administration. I am sure they will prove equal to the task in the Assembly elections.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

Calcutta

15-17 March, 1985

Cong (I) Suffers Heavy Losses in Assembly Elections

In the Assembly elections, Congress (I) has lost Andhra, Karnataka, and Sikkim, and in Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar its performance is considerably below the mark it had reached in 1980.

This has confirmed our conclusion that in the Lok Sabha elections in December 1984 the massive electoral support to the Congress (I) was the result of the brutal murder of Smt. Indira Gandhi which generated a wave of sympathy and also a fear of what might happen in the future.

This support cannot be considered as a support for the policies of the Congress (I) Government and its performance.

Discriminating Indian Voter

The fact that within 67 days there was such a great change in the attitude of the people, is a proof that the ordinary voter who exercises his or her franchise is intelligent and can make a distinction between All-India elections and State elections, and between the issues involved in the two. The imbalance that had developed in the Indian Democracy, has been removed to a considerable extent by the electorate by using its franchise in the right way.

Rejection of One Party and One Person Rule

The electorate has rejected the designs of the ruling party to impose one party and one person's rule on the country and has reiterated its faith in multi-party democracy. The electorate has also rejected the pernicious doctrine that for development in the States, it is necessary that there too should be Governments of the same party which is in power at the Centre.

Had there been adjustment of seats between opposition parties, as it was done in Maharashtra and Rajasthan, the election results would have been more favourable for the opposition.

In Himachal Pradesh, the BJP was in a position to field its candidates on all seats, but in order to ensure success, we took the

initiative in having adjustment of seats with the Janata Party and the DMKP. In spite of this, the Himachal election results have been completely against our expectations; the causes of this should be looked into separately.

Encouraging Sign for BJP

After receiving a drubbing in the Lok Sabha elections, for the BJP to have a representation for the first time in Orissa and improving its strength in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha, should be considered encouraging.

Gujarat

We have been able to more or less maintain our position of 1980 in Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. This in itself cannot be considered as a big achievement. Nor can we rejoice at it. But taking into account the wave after the Lok Sabha elections, the morale of our State level workers and lack of resources, it appeared difficult even to maintain our earlier strength. It is the result of the courage and hard work of our workers in general that in spite of so many adverse circumstances, they succeeded in maintaining their position. If more care had been taken in choosing the candidates, our Party could have got some more seats in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

For our failure in Karnataka, both the ungratefulness of Janata Party and our inability to estimate correctly our own strength are responsible. We had asked for 32 seats from the Janata Party—18 of our sitting MLAs and 14 those in which our candidates were at the second place. The Janata Party very reluctantly and arbitrarily proposed to give us 28 seats which we could not accept. It is clear from the election results that our friends from Karnataka made a

mistake in assessing the 'mood' of the people there. We have now to start afresh in Karnataka. In Andhra Pradesh, the result of contesting elections on the basis of adjustment to Telugu Desam, has been good for BJP. We have doubled our strength.

Future of BJP

As the President of the Party, I take full moral responsibility on myself for the failure of our party in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections, and I shall be gladly willing to undergo any punishment that the Party decides.

But I would like that the party should make up its mind fully on two fundamental questions.

First, is the party's defeat because of our decisions to merge Jana Sangh with Janata Party in 1977 and to withdraw from the Janata Party in 1980?

Secondly, should the BJP go back and revive the Bharatiya Jana Sangh?

The Middle Path

The BJP has chosen the middle path between the two extremes of merger and going alone. We have adopted the course of cooperation with democratic and nationalist parties while maintaining our separate identity. Has the policy been proved to be wrong and is it necessary to change it?

We should also decide whether there is a contradiction between continuing to widen the base of the party and making the party organization stronger, more disciplined and dynamic.

Need to make a thorough Reappraisal

In the BJP session held in 1980 at Bombay, it was felt that the BJP should be developed as an alternative to the Congress (I). But, today after five years, we find ourselves miles away from that objective. From the point of view of Parliament, our party has reached its 1952 position. In respect of the Assemblies, our position is not much better than that of 1980. Even if it is accepted that the elections in 1984-85 were held in extra-ordinary circumstances which were beyond any one's control, this does not explain all the causes of our defeat. It is true that as compared to other opposition parties, our party does not

have a base in any particular caste, religion or region. Our base is the entire country and the Indian society. When the Congress (I) made national unity and integrity the only issue of the election, naturally we were the greatest losers. But even then we should make an indepth study of the causes of our failure and should adopt effective ways of removing our shortcomings and drawbacks.

A working group to be set up

I am thinking to set up a working group which may prepare a report after a detailed study and widespread mass contact, on the party organization, its programmes, its strategy etc. for the next five years.

Be Prepared to Face the Battle

The present situation is a challenge to us. Let us face this challenge with courage and determination. Time moves on, with renewed self-confidence we have to overcome all obstacles. In the words of Arjuna, our motto should be:

“No feeling of helplessness, no running away from the battlefield.”

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Indore

6-8 January, 1984

**Madam Chairperson of the Reception Committee, Delegates,
Brothers and Sisters,**

Formation of the National Democratic Alliance

We met nine months ago in Delhi where we had our last National Council meeting. These have been eventful nine months, even productive nine months. In Delhi I gave you an appraisal. I also offered you a concept. In my appraisal, I painted a dark picture of the country's drift and of the wrong direction in which the Government was heading. In my concept, I saw immediate hope of meeting this challenge through the formation of a national democratic alliance. I shared with you the vision of a new and strong India based on five unities—between city and village, between labour and capital, between citizen and administration, between centre and states, and between all the castes and communities of the nation.

Events during the last nine months have fully vindicated my appraisal and even gone beyond its worst fears about this Government's perversity. However, at the same time, our efforts during the last nine months have also resulted in the formation of the National Democratic Alliance. This has redoubled our resolve to preserve the unity of our nation and the integrity of its democratic system.

Government on a Suicidal Course

The conduct of this Government eludes comprehension. It defies logic. The Government seems to be haunted by a death-wish. It has lost its will, or capacity, to govern. It continues to lurch from one crisis to another, and persists on a suicidal course. The tragedy is that it threatens to drag the rest of the society along with it.

Grim Reality

These examples merely provide live evidence of the dry statistics of the Sixth Five Year Plan which affirm that still there are

35 crore people in India who live on less than Rs. 2.30 per day, that one-third villages in the country lack clean drinking water, that fifty per cent of the housing in rural India is unfit for human habitation. These are the official figures. It is in this grim and fearful context that the Government concerns itself with extravagant jamborees like the Commonwealth Conference.

Economic Management goes Haywire

During the last four years, the cumulative increase in wholesale prices of articles consumed by the common man has been approximately 51 per cent. Our foreign exchange reserves have dipped to an alarming 1554 crore from the 5430 crore that this Government inherited in 1980.

And the spectre of the IMF loan repayment to the tune of 5000 crore requiring an additional 3000 crore as interest is haunting the country like a nemesis. I cannot recall a single instance of such criminal waste during the tenure of the previous Janata Government. The nation's resolve to achieve self-reliance has been destroyed by this Government.

Black Record-Scandals Galore

And while the economy reaches a flashpoint, the ship of State seems to have been abandoned by the Government, left to the tender mercies of the winds of fortune. Mrs. Gandhi's Government is rudderless. Never in the history of our Republic has a government's reputation been tarnished by so many scandals. Every time we meet, we are confronted by the visage of the Government blackened by new blots, even while the stains of previous scandals have not been wiped clean. This Government has reached a new height in scandals. Just consider the record. The Antulay affair, the Bhagalpur blindings,

the Harijan massacres in Deoli, Sadhupur and elsewhere, Jagannath's corruption cases, Bhajan Lal's engineered defections, the unsolved death of the police guard in the house of a Congress(I) minister, the police rape of Maya Tyagi, the bearer bonds scheme to protect black money, the scandals of the Thal Vasishist, Hindustan Monark, Kuo Oil and the Feranti deals – one can go on and on. It seems as if the crimes and scandals of a century have been compressed within three years.

We have to forget these scandals. The Government leaves us with no choice. Each time the Government creates such sensational new scandals, we are compelled to forget the previous scandals. Since we met last, the Government has been exceptionally creative. It has created three new scandals which are exceptionally colourful and sensational.

1. The Latest Scandal: The Tallow Scandal

First, there was the tallow scandal. Something heinous has been done. For the sake of profit, businessmen, colluding with the Government, deceived millions of people who were made to violate their most sacred religious beliefs, unknowingly. But this is only one aspect of the scandal. There is another aspect which is more shameful. Instead of swift action to stop the rot and punish the guilty, the Government first tried to deny the allegations. It did everything to soften the punishment of the guilty. When the denials did not succeed, the present Government tried to twist facts and involve the previous Janata Government for crimes which were being committed under the former's nose. Ministers spoke in contradiction to each other. The Prime Minister tried to minimise the whole affair. Why should the Government have behaved thus? The dark suspicion naturally arises that the Government has something to hide.

Govt.'s Collusion

Tallow was being imported since 1964 for the manufacture of soap and grease. During the Janta Government's tenure, the price of tallow was so much higher than that of vanspati that the question of adulteration did not arise. It was only after Mrs. Gandhi assumed office that this unholy crime

against the religious sentiments of the people began. Any normal administration would have reacted swiftly in such an event. But this Government is not normal. The Government itself is the culprit in most crimes being committed in the country. The Government is refusing to hold an inquiry into the matter. It is for the people to reflect on how debased our society has become when even the most sacred religious beliefs are violated for the lure of profit in collusion with the Government itself.

2. The Tainted Tapes–Moily was Merely Carrying out orders from the Centre

The Government is unmoved by scandals and exposures. It is unconcerned with disorder and violence. It is obsessed with a single point. It seeks to occupy every chair of office. The Government has arrogated to itself the divine right to topple every other government by fair means or foul. One general secretary of the ruling party proudly announced this. He stated this in response to the second sensational exposure within these past few months. I refer to the Moily tapes in Karnataka. This scandal is reminiscent of the Watergate scandal. Once again, the trail of guilt leads back to New Delhi. The bank notes amounting to Rupees two lakh which the Karnataka Congress(I) leader offered as a bribe to obtain the defection of another MLA, carried the mark of a Delhi bank. This is a new dimension in scandals. The tape recording and the banknotes are there for the world to see. Mr. Bhajan Lal, let it be said to his credit, never allowed himself to be tape-recorded by anyone while transacting his business. However, the Government at the centre has not expressed shock or regret over the incident. It has not disowned the guilty Karnataka leader. How can it, when that leader was merely carrying out orders?

3. The Gun-Running Brahmachari Government–National Security Risk

And thirdly, of course, we had to witness the juicy episode involving the colourful Dhirendra Brahmachari. It was an extraordinary exposure. This gentleman, who for years has had access to the Prime Minister,

is accused of smuggling guns into this country under a bogus licence. Where are the guns sold? Does the Government have any record? Do they reach extremists in the sensitive border states? The Government remains tongue-tied. It is extraordinary that the Government fails to perceive this as a grave national security risk, under the Prime Minister's own nose, as it were. Nor though foreign guns are being smuggled into the country, it does not suit the Government to highlight this scandal. If these scandals reflect the character of the Government, the mounting disorder and terrorism reflect the condition of the country. The rot in Assam after spreading all over the region has crossed our borders to strain our relations with Bangladesh. The Government remains silent and helpless. But even Assam is getting rapidly overshadowed by the crisis in the Punjab.

A Bhasmasura in Punjab' PM openly Defends Bhindrawale

Punjab has fully exposed this Government's collusion with a section of the extremists, and its desire to fan hatred between different communities in order to reap electoral advantage. Now it seems that matters have got out of control. The Government has discovered that it has been nursing the Frankenstein. The Government did not hesitate to send in the police into the Sisganj Gurudwara in order to help one section of Sikhs against another. But the Government looks the other way when a self-styled saint from within a gurudwara calls for the blood of Hindus. In an extraordinary statement to a Bombay weekly, the Prime Minister openly defended Bhindranwale. She said he is not alone in committing or encouraging violence. She went on to describe the violence in Punjab as resulting from 'individual terrorism'. Now the Prime Minister, it seems, does not even bother to hide her party's collusion with Bhindranwale's extremism. The Punjab is now being administered directly by the centre. Yet it is helpless when Hindus are selectively killed by the extremists. Some cynics have suggested that when the Government finally will enter the Golden Temple to effect an arrest, that will be the signal which will herald the general election. So low is the Government's credibility that each move by it is viewed only in the

context of electoral gain, regardless of the fact that the country is going towards ruin.

Search for Scapegoats–Election gains only Consideration

But in all these matters, the Government has its own answer; it blames the Opposition. When that charge is received with disbelief, the Government finds another answer. It blames the foreign hand. Which foreign hand is it? Is it Pakistan? The Governor of Punjab, Shri B.D. Pandey, has categorically denied that there is any evidence of Pakistani interference in Punjab. But the Prime Minister persists in speaking differently. The Prime Minister is credited with the remark that it is very difficult to find evidence without sophisticated equipment. Perhaps the Prime Minister should seek the help of Karnataka Chief Minister. The Karnataka Government managed to find concrete evidence of a hand attempting defections and seeking destabilisation. But that was not a foreign hand, it was only the Congress(I) hand that was discovered in Karnataka.

Policy of ‘Foreign Hand’

The Prime Minister’s constant reference to a foreign hand is doing enormous damage to the country’s morale. This damage should not be missed. The Prime Minister repeatedly says that there is a foreign hand trying to destroy the unity of the country. About whom does she repeatedly say this? The public should see through this Government’s diabolical game. The Government itself has a vested interest in creating a crisis atmosphere, in generating a sense of insecurity, in order to emerge before the people as their saviour and protector. No foreign hand is breaking up our country. It is only the Prime Minister herself who by her reckless policies and actions is endangering the unity and harmony of our nation.

International Scene of Cold War

Nobody can deny the fact that the national security environment has deteriorated. Detente has been replaced by cold war. The dialogue between the USSR and the USA for arms limitation has been deadlocked. The arms race between the superpowers has assumed dangerous dimensions due to the installation of Cruise Missiles and Pershing-II in Western Europe by the USA.

Alarming Situation in the Sub-continent

Nearer home, in our own sub-continent also, the situation has become alarming. The concentration of Soviet troops near the Khyber pass and the supply of American weapons to Pakistan have produced a qualitative change in the security perspective of this region. The mounting superpower rivalry in the Indian Ocean region is a matter of concern to all the littoral nations.

Failure of Indian Diplomacy

It is regrettable that Indian diplomacy has failed to play any effective role in reducing international tensions. The chairing of the NAM and hosting of the CHOGM had offered opportunities, which the Government of India failed to utilise for taking initiative towards deceleration of the mad arms race or curbing superpowers' arbitrariness. Afghanistan and Grenada are in fact two Acts of the same tragic drama. How long would smaller nations continue to be unfortunate victims of the expansionist designs of their neighbours? How long would weaker countries continue to face foreign pressures, foreign interference, foreign aggression and, finally, foreign occupation?

One expected from Mrs. Gandhi that she would take up the chairpersonship of NAM as a serious responsibility and would step forward for creating a better understanding in international affairs. Neither was the Indian Government able to make any purposeful move for the cessation of Iran-Iraq war and for resolving the mutual conflict between Palestinians, nor could it obtain universal endorsement for the proposal of holding an International Conference on declaring Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace.

Mistrust among Neighbours

India had succeeded in establishing far more stronger ties with her neighbours during Janata regime. During those days, a new climate of mutual confidence and co-operation was pervading all through this sub-continent. But during the past years, mutual trust has been replaced by mistrust and co-operation by confrontation. The Tamil problem in Sri Lanka remains unresolved. Even the appropriate Indian decision to fence her borders with barbed wires

has been considered as an unfriendly act by Bangladesh. Instead of strengthening the special ties with India, Nepal is equating us with other countries. A close neighbour like Bhutan is slowly drifting away from us due to the style of functioning in New Delhi.

Promoting Image of an Individual

The aims and objectives of our foreign policy should not be to promote the image of an individual but to preserve and to protect the interest of the nation. Nobody denies the usefulness and relevance of the non-alignment policy, but we do differ in the manner of its implementation.

Do not Adopt Double Standards

Questions of foreign invasion and interference are deeply related with world peace and international security. If, instead of pursuing a uniform policy with regard to these issues, India adopts double standards, it will neither enhance its prestige, nor would it be able to serve the cause of peace, disarmament and new international economic order.

The foreign pressures are bound to increase if we fail to keep our house in order. First things first, and therefore, it is imperative to do so. The present Government has miserably failed in discharging this primary obligation. The international conferences organised in New Delhi do offer us an opportunity to show how hospitable we are, but they are no solutions to our problems. For that, we will have to struggle on our own.

National Coalition—People looking for Alternative

But the question arises: How are we to meet the challenge created by the Congress(I) misrule and steer the country and its system back to health? I have stated this before, and I repeat it today. There seems to be no escape from a national coalition government after the next general election. The Congress(I) has been weakened in the South, in Bengal and the North-East, in Punjab and Kashmir. The real battle, therefore, is for the heartland of India. I believe that the nationalist democratic forces can provide a challenge to the Congress(I) in the heartland of India. In the recent by-elections, despite triangular contests, the Congress(I) lost the Lok Sabha

seat and 3 out of 5 assembly seats in UP. Clearly, the people are disenchanted with the present Government. They seek an alternative.

Let's Consolidate National Democratic Alliance with Lok Dal

In Delhi I sought and obtained your consent to attempt forging a national democratic alliance. Since then we have not remained idle. We communicated with all the like-minded opposition parties. The response from the Lok Dal was positive. From some parties it was lukewarm. From others it was positively cold. We had agreed in Delhi that a national democratic alliance was a historical necessity at this juncture of our nation's affairs. And we believe that history waits for nobody. Therefore, we decided to go ahead. Along with the Lok Dal we formed the National Democratic Alliance. We believe that it is a step in the right direction. We would like the consolidation of all the nationalist and democratic forces in the country. The Lok Dal and the Bharatiya Janata Party are working like a team. We will continue to strengthen our bonds and work like a team. We believe that ultimate victory will be ours, because we best represent the needs and aspirations of India today.

Our opponents ask us: *Who will be your Prime Minister?* I can assure them that we will have no problem on that score.

But I ask our opponents: What will be your programme? They cannot even recall the twenty points of that ill-fated programme hastily scribbled by their leader during the Emergency in an effort to lend respectability to her dictatorial steps.

Strong Centre But with Strong States- Governor's Role Must be Defined

We ourselves are clear about what must be done to unite and integrate our nation. We want a strong Centre helped by strong States. The Government is committed to maintaining the status quo. We believe that Centre-States relations require political, financial and administrative reforms. The Inter-States Council must be set up. The Governor's role must be defined. The Centre's power to dismiss a state government should be restrained and subjected to proper norms. A greater share of plan expenditure and revenue must be given to the states. We want real harmony between the Centre and the States.

Justice for Rural India

We want revised priorities permitting much greater investment for rural development and welfare. To obtain justice for rural India we want price parity between industrially manufactured goods and agricultural produce on the basis of cost inputs. To help the small and cottage sectors of industry we want the spheres of production between them to be clearly demarcated by law.

GrassRoot Democracy—Character of Police Force must Change

We want to make it a statutory obligation for the Government to hold civic and Panchayat elections periodically all over the country. Certain financial powers must also be given to these local bodies. We also believe that it is desirable and feasible to make the police, at the lower level, accountable to these elected local bodies. If this system can work well in Britain, there is no reason why it should not work as well in our country. As a colonial power, the British created a police force which acted like an occupation army. That system has been allowed to continue. We are determined to bring the police into the mainstream of the community in which it has to operate.

Need for Genuine Industrial Democracy

To rejuvenate industry and establish sound relations between management and labour, we want a thorough implementation of labour laws. We also favour a workers' Sector of industry in the large corporate sector in which workers will have a share in the ownership, management and profits of industry. The Government was put on the defensive by our demand made in the National Executive in Lucknow that workers should be given a share of the management, profit and ownership of the textile mills nationalised in Bombay. The Government has announced that the workers will get a share in the management in some of these mills. We are unimpressed by such half-measures and gimmicks. We want genuine industrial democracy to revolutionise and modernise our industrial sector. If private textile mills are mismanaged, the state of the public sector National Textiles Corporation is no better. Clearly, there is need to think afresh and chart a new course for industry to streamline management, reduce strikes and increase production.

A Sense of Indianness must be Created

We want to truly integrate the nation. A proper education policy for the nation must be formulated in conformity with employment need. A sense of oneness, a sense of Indianness requires to be created among our youth to halt the mad rush towards an imported five star video culture.

We believe that through dedication and perseverance we will realise national unity and create a new India of our dreams. In Delhi, I gave you a slogan: Unite and win. Today we are achieving unity. Tomorrow we will achieve victory.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Pune

12-14 October, 1984

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends,

Our Hour of Trial is Approaching

We are meeting at a very critical time in the affairs of our nation. Barring any unforeseen development, this will be the last meeting of our National Council before the next general election. Over four years have passed since we came together to form the Bharatiya Janata Party. It is almost five years since Mrs. Gandhi's Government assumed office. These have been the worst five consecutive years since our country attained independence. In the coming elections, the Government will face its moment of truth. We will face our hour of trial. All the ideals, efforts, courage and integrity to which we had committed ourselves during these past four years will be tested as never before. The time for words has passed. The time for deeds has come. Therefore, I will be brief, and to the point.

Danger to Democracy: This Govt. Must go

The issue in the next election is not as to which party can govern the nation best. The issue is whether the nation's democratic polity will survive. The last five black years of Indira Gandhi's Government have seen the most relentless and ruthless assault against the existence of our Republic. No effort has been spared to destroy a democracy in order to perpetuate a dynasty. In the pursuit of this goal the Government has not hesitated to twist the law, demoralise the judiciary, paralyse the bureaucracy, bully the press, divide the people, topple the non-Congress(I) governments, destabilise the States, instigate riots, inflame communal passions, and subvert the Republic. The Government today is like an elephant run amuck. The damage it has inflicted is incalculable. This Government must be thrown out of office.

Govt.'s Collusion with Extremists

In its insatiable lust for power, one single family has jeopardised the unity of an entire nation. Punjab, which provides the backbone of our nation's defence and a granary for its people, has had to pay the heaviest price for the vicious treatment by this Government. In the search for electoral gains, the Government did not hesitate to collude with extremism and violence, to frustrate efforts for a reasonable settlement and to deliberately separate one community from another. It has brought the State to the brink of a total disaster. It has endangered the future security of our country.

Punjab – Neither Peace nor Settlement

More than four months have elapsed since the Army Action in Punjab, but as yet all the facts connected with it have not been made public.

The country has a right to know the total number of people who were killed during the Army Action in Punjab. Among those who were killed, how many were jawans, how many were terrorists and how many were innocent persons who had come to the Gurudwaras on the occasion of Shri Guru Arjun Devji's Martyrdom Day?

A general secretary of the ruling Congress Party has given the figure of the jawans killed in the Golden Temple Complex as 700. This is six times more than the figure given in the White Paper published by the Government. Are the figures given in the White Paper incorrect? We know that many pleasant facts have not been mentioned in the White Paper. For instance, the White Paper is completely silent on the relations of the ruling Party with the terrorists. Nothing has been said in the White Paper about the secret meetings that were held between the Government and the Akali leaders. But has there been deliberate mis-statement of facts

also in the White Paper?

A satisfactory solution of the Punjab problem does not appear to be in sight. Army is deployed in the whole of Punjab. It being a '*disturbed area*' even ordinary police officers there have got extra-ordinary powers. Special Courts have been set up and they can have their proceedings in camera. Press censorship continues. Section 144 is promulgated in the entire State. Akali leaders are under detention. Some workers of the BJP have also been imprisoned without trial.

Govt. Failure to Check Terrorism

But even then peace is not there in Punjab. Terrorists have again stepped up their activities. Innocent people are being killed. The way in which only members of a certain community travelling by a State bus were picked out and killed on 12 September, 1984 in Sekhwan village of Gurdaspur district has refreshed the memory of the brutal killing near Dhilwan village in Kapurthala district on 5 October, 1983. However, the difference is that on the very next day of that massacre, the Chief Minister had tendered resignation of his Government, but this time neither the Prime Minister nor the Home Minister thought it necessary even to express regret at the failure of their Government.

Instead of resuming the process of exchange of views with all the concerned parties in order to find a lasting and effective solution, the ruling party is getting impatient to grab power in Punjab again. The Government has neither the capacity to put an end to terrorism, nor does it have the will to find a political solution by bringing about an adjustment of conflicting interests. It is evident that no effective steps can be taken to bring normalcy in Punjab by this Government.

Assam: Lull before Storm

If in recent times, due to the events in Punjab, the rest of the country has forgotten Assam, the people of that unfortunate State are not so lucky. They cannot forget the problems created by the Central Government which continues to crush them. The blood of the innocent five thousand people who lost their lives in the riots sparked off by the farcical election continues to mingle with the tears of millions denied of their basic constitutional right to preserve the

identity of their culture and save their State from an influx of foreign nationals. Here again, in its search for votes, the Government has not hesitated to trample upon the constitutional rights of the people, to jeopardise the security of the nation and to foster hatred between one section of the people and another. A terrible crisis in Assam can erupt again. No solution is in sight for that tragic State unless the present Central Government is thrown out of office.

Exploitation of the Exploited Continues

In spite of the high sounding proclamations and attractive plans of the Government on paper, there has been no improvement in the condition of the people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Most of those who have been forced into the condition of moving from pillar to post because of lack of will to implement land reforms with firmness and because of the continuous dying out of small handicrafts and cottage industries, are Harijans and Girijans. Of late, incidents of firing on agricultural labourers – most of whom are Harijans – even for demanding the minimum wages as determined by law, are increasing. In many States, feudal elements, with the force of their lathis and guns, have reduced the laws against forced labour to nothing. And these elements enjoy the patronage of the Congress Governments there. So long as the present rotten system is not changed and we do not move forward towards a new social system based on equality and a new economic system based on labour, the condition of Harijans and Girijans will continue to deteriorate.

Communal Riots on the Increase, State Police Blamed for Inaction or Partiality

During the last four years, the number, frequency and intensity of communal riots as also the number of people killed in these riots, have been continuously on the increase. In 1981, in the entire country there were 162 communal riots. In 1982 this figure went up to 474. In 1983, the number of the people killed in communal riots was 202. In 1984, in the riots of Bhiwandi, Thane and Bombay alone, 263 people lost their lives. Now these riots have been spreading to new areas, and almost at all places, the State police is blamed for inaction or partiality in their behaviour.

If the increase in communal riots is to be checked, the present set-up, which is the root-cause of politicalization of police and criminals' influence in politics, will have to be changed. Strengthening the feeling of Indian nationalism in order to defeat communalism, will also be possible only then.

Growing Atrocities on Women

Women in India continue to be the victims of exploitation and cruelty which no civilised society should tolerate. It is ironical that though the Government is headed by a woman, the atrocities against women have not been checked but continue to mount. In the capital of India itself in one year, on an average, one bride is burnt to death or commits suicide for reasons connected with dowry. In our manifesto we will propose concrete measures by which the dignity and self-respect of Indian womanhood may be maintained. If women are to be given a new deal and liberated from the shackles of social tyranny, this Government must be thrown out of office.

Labour in Bondage

Sometime back, there was an outcry against the practice of bonded labour in our country. The Government assured Parliament that steps would be taken speedily to end this evil. There are laws in the land to prevent the exploitation of bonded labour. The Government of Indira Gandhi does not have the will to implement those laws. Not only are private contractors exploiting bonded labour, the Government itself, in the very capital of India, encouraged and permitted this pernicious practice in public sector works under its own authority during work for the Asiad. Everywhere, the Government itself colludes with private contractors to exploit unorganised and bonded labour. Despite the Government's brave claims, this year between April and July, only 13.7 per cent of the target was achieved in rehabilitating bonded labour. If bonded labour is to be wiped out from our country, this Government must be thrown out of office.

Neglect of Man Power

The ranks of the millions below the poverty line continue to swell as prices continue to soar. Never has the gulf between the

rich and the poor been so dangerously wide as it is today. The Government does not have the courage or the character to face this problem honestly. So it has resorted to the cheap device of playing with statistics in an effort to prove that fewer people exist below the poverty line than the actual number. But the poor masses do not want statistics. They want food, shelter and clothing. They want clean water to drink. They want education and a future for their children. The greatest wealth of our nation is being neglected and destroyed by this Government. That wealth is the people of our nation. Given the chance to live, a chance to contribute their might to the nation's welfare, the people of India can make our country really great.

What can the people do when their very survival is at stake, posing a challenge to their wits and their will to live? In the first four years of this Government's tenure, the consumer price index in the Capital itself shot up from 396 points to 560 points. This represents an increase of 164 points, an annual increase of 41 points! And while prices soar, the rupee shrinks. Today the rupee in real value is worth only 17.89 Paise.

Growing Disparity: Relief to the Affluent People

In such impossible times the Government has thought it fit to offer relief to the affluent sector using cars, colour televisions, refrigerators and electrical appliances by reducing excise to the tune of 200 crore. But the Government made no effort to check the rise in price of milk, cement, tea, coal and rationed articles.

Discrimination against Farmers

Nor did the Government make efforts to reverse the trend to exploit the agricultural sector on which 70 per cent of our population depends for its existence. The farmers continue to be deprived of a remunerative price for their produce, while similar products imported from America, Canada and Australia are gladly purchased by the Government at prices 30 per cent higher. The continuous rise in prices of farm inputs makes them out of reach for the vast majority of small farmers.

No wonder disparity continues to grow even within the rural sector. No wonder unemployment in the country has grown to five crore jobless people. All the employment generation schemes of the

Government prepared in the sixth five year plan have been ruined by the Government's inefficiency and corruption. If a real beginning is to be made to end poverty in our country, this Government must be thrown out of office.

Our Dismal Performance at the Olympics

While 70 per cent of our population continues to be crushed under an intolerable economic burden, the Government wounds the feelings of the nation by the most conspicuous and vulgar display of wasteful expenditure witnessed in free India. CHOGM, NAM and ASIAD were all signposts of unbelievable waste and extravagance in this Government's drunken, lurching journey over the past four years. The dismal performance of our team in the recent World Olympics shows to what effect the Government invested 2000 crore in the Asiad! The Government seems to be intoxicated with power, blinded by greed and fattened to the point to paralysis by corruption. How does the Government manage to ruin the economy of the country's millions and at the same time wallow in luxury itself? By a simple device.

Increasing Foreign Debt

The Government has created for our country a foreign debt of over 22,000 crore by adding 10,000 crore in less than five years. These include 5,000 crore of commercial loans from abroad at higher interest rates. During the last five years, the exchange rate of the rupee has shrunk from 7.94 for a dollar to 12 for a dollar. The internal debt is even more staggering. In March 1978, it stood at Rs. 19,025 crore. Today it is over Rs. 50,000 crore.

How does the Government hope to resolve these problems? By printing new currency notes at home, and by mortgaging the freedom of future generations abroad? If we are to end the highest disparity, if we are to avoid losing our economic independence, this Government must be thrown out of office.

India's Image Suffers

Never has the credibility of our nation been so low as it is today among the World's comity of nations. The Prime Minister is the Chairperson of the Non-aligned Movement. When this title was conferred, it was an honour for the country, and an opportunity

for our Government. But what did the Government achieve? What initiative did we take to exploit this opportunity? On the other hand our relations with almost all our neighbouring countries are so strained today as they have never been earlier. I put this down to the incompetence of our Government, to the lack of perception of a clear direction in the Prime Minister herself. If we are to resume a constructive and creative role in world affairs, if we are to repair our relations with our neighbouring countries, this Government must be thrown out of office.

No Initiative on the Foodgrain Front

If the Prime Minister, instead of getting personal praise for herself by organising one Summit meeting after another of the Non-aligned countries, had taken initiative for setting up a World Foodgrain Bank, then a concrete programme of the much talked of North-South cooperation would have come up and there would have been hope of a new life for the millions of people of poor countries who are on the brink of death due to starvation. Today, while on the one hand, in prosperous countries, lakhs of tonnes of foodgrain is either being burnt or dumped into the sea, on the other hand, about two crores of people in the world die of starvation every year. Two-thirds of these are children. One third of those who die for want of foodgrain or lack of nutritive elements, are in India. Many African countries of the Commonwealth are these days in the grip of a terrible famine. Neither the Governments of those countries nor any international organizations are taking any concrete steps to save the affected people from the jaws of death. India should work for the development of a foodgrain system in the world in which neither there is destruction of foodgrains nor does any one die for want of foodgrains. But this is not possible so long as a complete change is not brought about in the ways of a diplomacy which revolves round one person and which is busy collecting testimonials praising that person from all over the world.

Preparing for a New Adventure?

The Government is fully aware that it is incapable of resolving any of the vast problems it has created. The Government knows that it is in the grip of the worst corruption and maladministration witnessed in India in a hundred years. I do not want to repeat all

the scandals of this Government which have erupted in the last five years. I had described them at some length in an earlier meeting of the National Council. I draw attention to them now only to offer a possible explanation of why the Government is so desperate as to venture into adventurist policies in Sikkim, Kashmir and Andhra, where without regard to constitutional provisions it toppled State governments. Was the Government experimenting, testing people's reactions, while planning for a bigger adventure at the national level?

Is that why the Prime Minister recently acknowledged what was first denied, that Mr. Vasant Sathe had advocated a basic change in the constitution with her consent?

Presidential System: Sharing Power With The Army

It is astonishing that the Prime Minister should glibly tell the world that there is no harm in having a national debate on the desirability of a Presidential system. But the Government has never bothered to actually spell out its proposals with regard to a change in system. One wonders if the Prime Minister has any clear concept apart from perpetuating her family in power? It seems that this question erupts only when the polls are imminent, or when the burden of running a government under a democratic system seems to be beyond the Prime Minister's capacity. Sometime back a confidant of the Prime Minister proposed a kind of presidential system that would best be described as weird and not even remotely connected to democracy. If this irresponsible talk is to end, if confidence in the system and the constitution is to be restored, this Government must be thrown out of office.

Politicising the Army

What the Government is doing to subvert the system in Punjab is even more sinister. It is politicising the army. It is sharing power with the army. There is no martial law declared in Punjab. Yet senior army officers, without relinquishing their commands in the army, are appointed security advisors to the Governor holding power and responsibility equal to that of ministers. If an army officer is deputed for such whole-time work, why should he continue to hold his original command in the army? Is a precedent being created? Can we have in the future army commanders appointed advisors

to the Government at the Centre, holding ministerial responsibility even as they continue with their commands in the army? The Prime Minister is playing a dangerous game by politicising the army in this fashion. She is inviting trouble by sharing political power with senior army officers holding command. One does not know what dark designs are inspiring the decisions of a Government which never ceases to publicly speculate about the desirability of changing the present parliamentary system. I say this so that the nation should remain on guard. The malafide intentions of this Government were exposed mercilessly by the recent events in Andhra. All pretence to truth, decency and law was discarded by the Government in its insane attempt to grab power by fair means or foul. If the nation is to be spared the annihilation of democracy and the subversion of the system, this Government must be thrown out of office.

The Way Out

The question is: *How is this to be accomplished?*

In the immediate future I see no alternative to the formation of a Coalition Government at the Centre after the next election. We must go through that phase, and at the same time we must preserve the identity and character of a proper political party. Today, the most urgent need in the country is not that of a single party. It is that of a single programme to save the nation and its system, to rescue it from economic and political chaos. That can be done if all the right-thinking groups and individuals in the country pool their efforts for this common cause.

That is how democracy triumphed in Andhra. Shri NT Ramarao was betrayed by some of his own partymen, even though his party appeared to be in an invincibly strong position. But he was helped by other Opposition parties. He was saved by the people of Andhra who responded in lakhs to the call for concerted action to save democracy.

Hour of Trial

That should be the pattern for the whole country. Andhra has shown the way. As in Andhra, democracy in India will be saved by the joint and concerted action of all the Opposition parties. We must be ready for coalition based on a common programme. That is the immediate task for our party. I am confident that all of us will measure up to the challenge of saving our country and its system.

History will judge our efforts.

Vande Mataram!



National Executive

New Delhi

14 November, 1984

Lok Sabha Election

When we met at Pune last month, we thought that there may be no need for the National Executive to meet again before the general elections. But tragic events intervened which made this meeting imperative. Just on the eve of this meeting, the schedule for the Lok Sabha elections has been formally announced. This invests our meeting with special importance.

Mrs. Gandhi's Assassination

Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi is no more. The cruel hand of the assassin has removed her from the scene. As Prime Minister and as leader of her party she had to move about the whole country. She visited the Golden Temple at a time when there was intense tension. But this tragedy has occurred in her own house, and at the hands of those who were charged with her protection. Evidently, despite all the claims being made about foolproof security, there is something rotten with the set up. Indeed, what an indictment it is of Government, that it could not protect even its Prime Minister!

The Cult of Violence

During the past few years, the country has been watching with anguish the rise of intolerance, fanaticism and violence. Punjab has been the worst victim. Last year, there was a holocaust in Assam. But the country had reason to be satisfied that barring a few stray incidents in Haryana, the violence in Punjab provoked no reaction in the rest of the country. It is singularly unfortunate, therefore, that in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, a kind of communal frenzy should have been let loose in Delhi and several other parts of the country. I am convinced that much of this violence has been engineered violence. If the law and order machinery had not remained as paralysed and supine as it was, and if at some level in the ruling party this feeling had not been there that the community to which the killers belonged should be taught a lesson, these recent disturbances would not have assumed the dimensions they did.

Blatant Misuse of Media

Mrs. Gandhi's death has been a shock for all. But it is a matter of regret that this occasion of national sorrow also is being sought to be turned to partisan advantage. I would particularly like to mention the blatantly partisan manner in which TV has been functioning throughout this fortnight. I have been receiving calls and letters asking whether the opposition parties had decided to boycott Mrs. Gandhi's funeral. The fact is that many prominent opposition leaders including my colleague, Shri LK Advani, Janata President, Shri Chandra Shekhar, Shri Madhu Dandavate and others were there at the funeral, but the TV completely blacked out this fact.

Partisan Politics

It seems that the new leadership of the ruling party has not learnt anything from the past and has resolved to pursue the path of confrontationist, divisive and partisan politics which has become the hallmark of the Congress rule during the past years.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

New Delhi

15-17 April, 1983

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Delegate Brothers and Sisters,

Twenty eight months ago, we met at Bombay. Today we are in Delhi. For a moment I could not suppress my feeling that we should have been in this national capital in another sense as well. But that was a momentary thought. I take heart from the fact that our Party knows how to make the stumbling block on the path into a stepping stone to success.

Second term as President

Today, I commence my second term as President of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I had made it clear that I would not serve as President of our Party for more than one term. My resolve was based on good reason.

I believe that by staying beyond a length of time in the same office an individual's creativity gets spent. Very often, the individual himself remains unaware that he has become a victim of stale thought and tired reflex, unable to offer his best to the Party. Thus, the seeds of stagnation are sown in an organisation.

We must forever guard against this. Normally, I would not have relented on this. But my colleagues insisted. They argued that our country was passing through most abnormal times. They said that the party should not have a change of leadership at this particular juncture. The argument given by me that there is no dearth of good men in our party capable of providing leadership at all levels was turned against me when it was pointed out that I should accept the advice of persons whom I consider good and capable. I am conscious of the great honour and affection that you have bestowed on me. In fact, I feel overwhelmed. I express my heartfelt gratitude to you.

Creeping Rot

My colleagues were not wrong in describing the situation in the country as abnormal. Our nation has weathered many crises. But the crisis that grips us today is unique. Never has the nation been

threatened by an enemy more dangerous. The enemy does not sit across our borders. The enemy is within our very hearts and minds. It is the cancer of doubt and despair which is overtaking our people. It is the loss of faith in our system, in the very future of our beloved motherland. This creeping rot must end. I am sure that very soon, by the grace of God and the inherent good sense of the Indian people, it will end. But that calls for a great national effort.

Deep and Tragic Wounds on the System

Why are the Indian people going through such agony of doubt and despair? If their faith in the system is shaken, there is good reason for it. We all know the old saying: *"As the ruler, so the ruled."* If the Government does not have faith in the system, how can we expect the people to continue having faith? The last three years of Congress (I) misrule have inflicted deep and tragic wounds on the system. This was done in two ways: by the Government's loud thoughts, and by the Government's silent actions. The first led to a confusion of purpose, the second to the collapse of institutions. I cannot recall a precedent in history where a government enjoying such an overwhelming majority deliberately set out to wreck a working system from within. This is an attempt by a government to destroy the nation.

Profession and Practice

People are baffled. In the name of democracy, this Government imposes an election on Assam electing 109 MLAs and killing 50 persons for every MLA elected. In the name of stability, this Government encourages defection — in Kerala, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland and now in Meghalaya. In the name of secularism, they enter into a coalition with the Muslim League. They talk of ecology but their Chief Ministers smuggle out forest wealth. They talk

about housing for the poor but their Chief Ministers sell cement at a premium, called donations to trusts. The twenty-point programme speaks against smuggling but sons of their Chief Ministers are caught selling smuggled goods.

But the most inhuman heartlessness is shown when this Government and the ruling party talk about drinking water. In Rajasthan, in the name of providing drinking water, unworkable pumps have been installed. This is not just corruption, it is a crime against humanity. It is not the amount of money involved, by no means a small sum, but the way it was siphoned off that makes this crime unparalleled. To add insult to injury, our Prime Minister has the temerity to tell the thirsty people of Tamil Nadu that "*water is a State subject*". We have a Government which cannot give even water to the people.

A little after being returned to office, a little after having taken oath in Parliament to uphold the Constitution, the Prime Minister and her minions openly questioned the sanctity of the Constitution. They talked about a change of system. They toyed with versions of a Presidential system. A former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, now fallen on less fortunate days, took the initiative in this exercise with the active encouragement of the Prime Minister. Temporarily at least, that phase of adventurism seems to be over. We do not know what precise concept the main votary of a new system had in mind. But, we do not know that his mental exertions were cut short by the discovery of a new trail in corruption that he was blazing. I wonder what the Prime Minister now thinks of her most trust-worthy man. He still has the trusts though he may not be worthy of trust.

Assault on Institutions

Though the ruling party's opposition to the system has quietened the murmur, it has not ended. Those who are too incompetent to rule, still seek a new system which might even provide them with the right to determine their successors for generations to come.

While the Government's thinking has been dangerous, its actions have been destructive. There has been a systematic effort to weaken and destroy each institution which acts as a pillar of democracy. Judiciary is brow-beaten. Judges are not confirmed, those confirmed are transferred. The Bihar Press Bill was to be the rehearsal

for a nation-wide strangulation of a free and fearless press. Honest officers face punishments – as Chatterjee of Bihar, Appu of Mussorie, or Jaspal Singh of Baroda would testify. Even Parliament, our most august institution, I regret to say, does not receive the respect that it deserves from the Government. Does anyone honestly believe today that the debates in Parliament exert their influence on policy-making as they should? When even a breach of parliamentary privilege fails to attract censure, we can understand how deep the decay is.

Fortunately, the Government has not succeeded in its designs to the degree that it hoped. This is largely due to those valiant members of the judiciary and the press who have fearlessly refused to compromise. We salute them.

Nexus with Criminals

Beyond the judiciary, beyond the press and Parliament, the rot has spread to the entire administration. The pressure by corrupt politicians is proving irresistible. Worst of all, the Government's open liaison with criminal elements, and the ruling party's induction of such elements into politics and positions of power has delivered an almost fatal blow to the credibility of the system. How can people continue to have faith in the system and the administration when Government openly shields crime and corruption?

I am referring to the well-known cases of Antulay, Jagannath Mishra, Gundu Rao or Ram Lal. I am referring to the mini-Antulays and mini-Lals that abound in the country. Gone are the days when the criminal sought the protection of the rulers. The Congress has evolved a culture where the rulers are at the mercy of the criminals. Legislators face criminal charges and ministers are convicted by courts. Women are found dead at the houses of Members of Parliament and guards killed at the residences of Ministers.

Govt. has become a Prisoner of Criminals

I do not want to get lost in details. What is noteworthy is not the extent of crime or corruption but the Government's attitude towards it. Is it any wonder then that the administration in vast tracts of the countryside has virtually disappeared? Is it any wonder then that a trail of death and destruction continues to stretch through the Harijan settlements of Parasbigha, Pipra, Sarhupur, Deoli, Induveli

and beyond, since the present Government took office? Is it any wonder then that communal killings continue to stain Meerut, Baroda, Hyderabad and other places? Today, people have become prisoners of the Government's misrule. And the Government has become a prisoner of criminals and anti-social elements.

Cancer of Corruption

This Government is helpless because it is corrupt. This system has become so vicious and powerful that it even determines our policies and distorts our planning. Huge Government contracts, even in defence and other sensitive areas, are entered into not by merit but by the lure of a commission. Almost always there is a scandal in our midst. Right now there is the case of Ferranti deal, involving sensitive electronic equipment. Then, there is the case of that mysterious company that gave us Kuo Oil and now promises to supply shells for our guns. Even today, this company is growing wheat where they are supposed to forge the shells.

Nation's Security Jeopardised

The nation is not only being robbed. Its security is being jeopardised. A mockery is being made of all our plans and projections. One may or may not agree with the decision to accept a huge IMF loan. We ourselves have criticised it. But the IMF loan has a logic of its own. It provides one model of development. Even the limited advantages that we might have derived from that model are destroyed by the reckless corruption prevailing in the Government.

Just look at the Government's approach to Asiad. While the Janata Government had planned for less than fifty crore, the expenditure on it rose to over 1,500 crore. We have spent more on five star hotels than on stadia. Was this being done for sport? No, this was being done for contracts and commissions. We want sports to thrive in our country. But gold medals in sports do not sprout in five star hotels. They are earned by athletes. Athletes are created out of the large masses of the people, even those poor people who live in villages. When they are denied nutrition and the most rudimentary facilities for sport, how can champion athletes develop? From where will they come? Not merely from the few affluent areas of big cities? India performed more poorly in this Asiad than it did in the First

Asian Games hosted by our country in 1951. At that time, China had not even entered the world of sport. Today it is champion of Asia. It has laid claim to become champion of the world by 1992. And please remember, China has never hosted an Asiad.

I urge the intelligentsia and the country's elite to reflect on this.

How Corruption Hits the Poor

The Prime Minister may claim that corruption is a global phenomenon. She might have gained this insight after her Government's dealings with Hong Kong (Kuo Oil), Italy (Thal Vaishist) and last, but not the least, Israel (via Hindustan Monark). We do not know.

But what we do know is that corruption in this country hits the poor. Corruption in a rich country may affect only the rich, but in India it squeezes the poorest.

Every Indian — man, woman or child — has as much as Rs. 2,000 invested in the Plan in the last 30 years. This colossal amount — 1,40,000 crore — is what we have invested in development. What is the return? Half the population in the country is below the poverty line. In fact, the number of these destitutes has gone up from 177 million in 1957 to 311 million in 1983.

We have spent thousands of crores in irrigation. On paper the money spent is enough to irrigate 30 million hectares. But in actual practice, it is less than half. **Result: We still have to import food grains.**

Corruption Eats away Half the Amount

All this leads to one conclusion: Whether it is drinking water or water for irrigation, industry or agriculture, corruption eats away half the amount the nation spends. Any wonder, poverty is increasing?

Worse, the value of the rupee today has come down. It has still 100 paise. But compared to 1960, those 100 are worth just 20.

Yet the Government says per capita income has increased. Strange logic!

Lies About Assam

Inevitably, the threat to the system has snowballed into a threat to national integrity. New Delhi sits in a vacuum. The ruling party

at the Centre has not won a majority on its own in any Assembly elections after June 1980—except in Assam and the Union Territory of Delhi. In its mad lust for power, this Government in New Delhi has staked the unity of the country in Assam and also in Punjab.

Wrong Time to Hold Elections

I do not want to enter into the history of the Assam problem. That is a long story by itself. But there were clear indications that a national consensus was emerging. The differences with the Assam agitation leaders were narrowing. It was at this promising and delicate juncture that the Government insisted on holding elections.

The democratic opposition parties offered the Government every cooperation for postponing the elections. When the Government denies this, it shamelessly lies. The Government's lies have already been exposed. But the questions arises: Why did the Government insist on an election when alternative options were open?

Govt. Alienates Assam

Results are there for all to see. Not all the waters of Brahmaputra can wash off the stains of blood of Assam from the open palm of the Congress (I). The Government has fractured and alienated Assam, which remains our only gateway to the six other states of our sensitive north-east. Does the Government realise that it is playing with the destiny of our nation?

Punjab Situation: Congress Interested only in Electoral Advantage

If Assam is burning on one strategic front, Punjab is simmering on another. The seeds of the Khalistan movement, and of the violence indulged in by certain Dal Khalsa elements, were sown by the Congress (I) when it was in the opposition. At that time the Congress (I) was determined to destabilise the Government even if in the process the country got dismembered. We are reaping the bitter fruit of that folly. In Punjab too, as in the case of Assam, the Government seems to be itching for a battle on the streets. Negotiations were showing happy signs when suddenly the Government has backed out. The Congress Party is interested only in dividing the people and reaping electoral advantage. The Government was quick to meet all the

Akali religious demands. It refuses to entertain more serious issues of Centre-State relations, the river water dispute and the future of Chandigarh. These are issues which affect the future of several States.

Govt. Indulges in Gimmicks

However, when it suited the Government, after the southern Chief Ministers had conferred, it suddenly announced the appointment of the Sarakaria Commission to look into Centre-State relations. The decision to appoint the Commission was taken first, its terms of reference will be decided later! Rulers in Delhi should realise that the days of gimmicks are over. If you are serious about corruption, why not get rid of the known criminals among you? If you are serious about democracy, why not honestly go in for electoral reforms? If you are serious about cooperation from the Opposition, why not stop the efforts to topple Non-Congress Governments? If you are serious about the good of common man, why not stop putting up five star hotels and buying aircrafts for Chief Ministers, and instead provide drinking water to every citizen?

No, the situation in India is far from normal. The crisis we face is unique. The system is under assault, national unity is under threat, the administration everywhere is crumbling and a panic-stricken ruling class in Delhi can think of only yet another gimmick solution – a mid-term poll.

But I have to warn the nation against an inherent danger in this last gamble of the ruling party. Rulers of New Delhi believe that fanning passions in linguistic, caste and religious fields will help them win the polls. They have done it before.

Policy: Using the Motto of Divide and Rule

The British imperialists had a motto: Divide and rule. It is unfortunate that our current rulers follow the same creed. Unscrupulous politicians for whom the end justifies the means have divided this country in more ways than one. They have set the village against the town, labour against the management, citizen against the administration, Hindu against Muslim, the Bengali against the Assamese.

We should not forget that the diversities are necessary and complementary forces – villages are needed as much as towns, labour is no inferior to management and a citizen should not find the administration his enemy.

This nation has a history of different languages and different religions constituting its cultural ethos. They do not compete with each other; they complement one another.

BJP Stands for Unity of the People

Our Party's aims and efforts have always been to unite the people and not divide them. This is true during elections and also when there are no elections.

Wanted: A National Democratic Front

Power-hungry politicians have created a chasm in the society. The Congress believes in 'divide and rule'. We believe in another creed: 'unite and win'. Our effort should be to bridge the gap.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the city and the village.

We are committed to bridge the gap between capital and the labour.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the citizen and the administration.

We are committed to bridge the gap between the Centre and the States.

We are committed to bridge the gap between linguistic, religious and caste groups.

Let us make National Consensus a Reality

We believe that a national consensus for these five unities is the need of the hour. We believe that a national democratic front committed to preserve national unity has become a historical necessity. The Bharatiya Janata Party will strive to make such a national consensus a reality. The Bharatiya Janata Party appeals to all the nationalist democratic forces in the country to heed the call of the hour. On behalf of all of us gathered here today, I appeal to them to accept our hand of friendship extended for the pursuit of a

united national effort.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

New Delhi

17 April, 1983

Both Lost

The State Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were followed by elections to the Metropolitan Council and Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Congress (I) had thought it was strong in those two southern States. It lost in both. We had thought we were strong in Delhi. We lost here.

Complacency led to Party's Defeat in Delhi

At the time itself the Party discussed at length the factors which led to BJP's defeat in Delhi polls. I am of the definite view that the principal reason for this defeat was the attitude of complacency which overtook us after the Congress (I)'s debacle in the south. We just assumed that Congress (I) had at last fallen on evil days and that a party which had lost in such strongholds as Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka could hardly look forward to victory in Delhi. An election can well be compared to a battle field where eternal vigilance is the price one must pay for victory. We contested the Delhi elections in a spirit of complacency, not alertness. We did not put in the hard work this occasion called for.

Leadership to Blame

It will not be fair to throw the blame for this defeat on the party workers. BJP workers are known for their devotion to duty. Their application, when at work, is phenomenal. Once a clear goal has been set, even the most adverse circumstances imaginable cannot deter them from marching resolutely to achieve it. These qualities of our workers are the pride and glory of our Party. If the election machinery of the BJP remained complacent at the time of Delhi polls, it was not the workers who were at fault; it was all those of us who are at this moment sitting on this dais.

We should have realised that the defeat of Congress (I) in the south can have an adverse effect on us in the sense of lowering our guards. We should also have realised that after that defeat, the outcome of the elections in Delhi became tremendously

important for Congress (I) which would, consequently, go all out to win in these polls. A defeat in Delhi in the wake of the defeat in the south would have led to a situation in which Mrs. Gandhi's hold on her own party would have suffered a setback. It would also have an adverse effect on her image and standing in and outside the country. The prestigious Non-Aligned Summit was due to meet in Delhi only a month after the elections. The two main contenders in Delhi election—Congress (I) and BJP—thus approached the contest in two wholly different frames of mind. That being so, it was rather natural that the BJP should lose; its being victorious would really have been a matter of surprise. But it must also be borne in mind that, all this notwithstanding, BJP not only won many seats in the Metropolitan Council and the Municipal Corporation but of the seats which we lost, the defeat was quite marginal in many cases. The only conclusion which can be drawn from this is that the people of Delhi continue to have a soft corner for BJP. Had we not become complacent, we would have won this election instead of losing it. There is no doubt about it.

Appropriate Lessons Should be Drawn

As with individuals, so with parties: success and failure are all in the game. No success, just as no failure, is ever the last word. One may suffer a reverse, but if the causes of it are analysed and remedial action taken, it can be turned into victory at the next trial of strength. But nobody has any right to aspire to success if, having failed, his attitude continues to be one of complacency and he does not draw lessons from that reverse and does not make necessary changes in his style of functioning.

Submission of Resignation

You know that as soon as the results of Delhi polls became known, I submitted my resignation from the office of the Presidentship of BJP. I would not have done so if our defeat had sprung from any cause other than our attitude of complacency. I held, and even at this moment hold, that as President it was my responsibility to see to it that the Party organisation did not fall prey to complacency or sloth, and that it was launched on a programme and set on a course which kept it active and fit and ready at all times to take on any challenges. Had this been done, the image of the party in the eyes of the people would have become brighter with each passing day and when the moment of decision came, BJP would have had an edge over parties with a lot more monetary resources than itself. All this was not done or else the party would not have lost in Delhi. I consider, and consider myself mainly responsible for this lapse. That was why I resigned.

Action Programme

It is true that at the meeting of the National Executive of the Party at Jaipur, I allowed myself to be persuaded to withdraw my resignation. It is also true that, in deference to your wishes, I have agreed to continue as President for the second term. But, at the very moment, at which I decided to bow to your wishes, I also decided that at this meeting of the National Council, I would place before you a concrete action programme for the Party and urge you to give it your most serious consideration. The programme is unfolded in this paper. If you feel that it is a good and useful programme, the Party should duly adopt it, create the necessary organisational structure for it and the implementation of the programme should start.

A Warning to the Party

The National Council is the highest policy-making body of the Party. Our defeat in the Delhi polls is trying to convey a message or warning to us. It is my plea to you that we should listen to and heed that message and reorganise our functioning so that the party may hereafter move on steadily towards the achievement of its cherished goal.

Poverty and Misery in Rural Areas

You know that 80% of the people of this country live in the villages. A majority of the rural population lives below the poverty line. For them, there is no such thing as two square meals a day; indeed, for many even one square meal a day is a luxury. Often bare-backed except for some tattered clothes, having no money for medical help in the event of sickness, having no means to educate their children and thus equip them to make a break from this vicious circle of misery and want, reduced by poverty and ignorance to a state in which the will or the courage to protest against exploitation or injustice stands sapped, the bulk of the rural masses in India is leading a sub-standard life, its gloom unrelieved by any cheer or any ray of hope even three and a half decades after Independence. There is nobody within their reach, in their necessarily limited world, who can understand what ails them, stand up for them and get them their due. Political parties customarily appear on the scene only at the election time with their plethora of promises. Their next visit to the place comes only when the next election is round the corner.

Integrated Rural Development Programme

You know also that quite a few programmes have been under implementation for the past many years for enabling the rural poor to improve their lot. The most important single scheme in this lot is the integrated rural development programme, IRDP for short. Under this programme, the small and marginal farmers, the landless labourers and rural artisans are given financial assistance in the form of loans at low rates of interest by the nationalised banks. This is supplemented by grants from Central and State governments. Side by side with this, the administration at the block level has been given the responsibility of providing the IRDP beneficiaries with the necessary inputs and technical know-how for utilising the above resources for increasing their productivity, improving their earnings and thus rising above the poverty line. There are 5,011 development blocks in the country. IRDP is under implementation in all of them. One block on an average consists of a hundred villages. Six hundred of the poorest families have to be selected every year by the block level administration from these 100 villages for receiving the IRDP benefits.

***Antyodaya* and the Congress Attitude to Rural Development**

The Janata Government in its day had launched an anti-poverty scheme known as *Antyodaya*. Its implementation, notably in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, received worldwide acclaim at that time. The Congress Government, which replaced the Janata in 1980, somehow did not like that word and changed the name of the scheme from *Antyodaya* to IRDP. I have not been able to understand even to this day why the Congress should have felt offended by the word *Antyodaya*. After all, literally translated, it only means 'upliftment of the poorest of the poor'. Any way, the name was changed but that was not the only change that came. No sooner was the Janata out of power, than the trim and the efficiency characterising the implementation of this scheme was also gone. Its place was taken by incredible laxity and corruption—laxity in higher echelons of administration in the Central and State Governments, corruption among bank employees and government officials at the block level. The facts and figures given below speak for themselves.

The sixth five-year plan provides that during the plan period, namely between 1 April, 1980, and 31 March, 1985, Central and State Governments together would make available a sum of Rs. 1500 crore for being given as grants to IRDP beneficiaries. The expenditure is to be shared by the Central and State Governments on a 50: 50 basis.

Funds Allocated only Partially

The sixth plan is now in its fourth year. In three years that have already passed, three-fifths of this amount of Rs. 1500 crore, that is to say, Rs. 900 crore, should already have reached the beneficiaries. The amount that has actually reached them is a mere Rs. 597.82 crore. This means that the allotment of the grant money has lagged behind to the extent of about 33%.

In a like manner, this plan provides that the banks would advance Rs. 3,000 crore as loans in five years for the IRDP. In the past three years, Rs. 1800 crore, should thus have reached the target groups. Actually, only Rs. 538.5 crore have been advanced as IRDP loan in these three years. Loan advancement has, thus, lagged behind to the extent of about 70%.

Laxity in Implementation

The total of grants and loans advanced under IRDP in three years after Mrs. Gandhi's coming to power should have been Rs. 2,700 crore. The actual amount is Rs. 597.82 crore + Rs. 538.5 crore = Rs. 1,136.32 crore. What other conclusion can one draw from this except what I have said above, that is, the implementation of this scheme now is marked by laxity of the worst kind? Misleading the unknowing or unsuspecting people through slogans like the 20-point or the new 20-point programme is a different thing altogether.

Corruption

This kind of laxity at the higher level in administration is matched only by a combination of laxity and corruption at the block administrative level. Of the six hundred poorest families which have to be selected for IRDP benefit every year, hardly 150 to 200 are selected in the first 10 or 11 months of the year. When the end of the financial year draws close, the remaining number is hastily selected so as to complete the quota. As a result, many families find a place in the IRDP list of beneficiaries which are relatively well off and should not have figured in the list at all. A bribe of 10%, at some places higher, has now become a common practice for getting loans from the banks. Those not willing to fall in line are harassed in many ways, they are made to run to the bank again and again or their applications are declared grossly defective.

Collusion and Misappropriation

Collusion between bank employees, block development officials and the firms dealing in equipments or inputs by IRDP beneficiaries has many a time resulted in the situation that while a small portion of the grant or the loan money is given to the families concerned, the rest of the money is misappropriated. Full facts come to light only when the time for repayment comes and the concerned families have to face hardships and action on that account. On paper, the IRDP beneficiary is shown as having been given an irrigation pump of a good brand; actually he has been given an inferior pump which means more headache than relief to him. On paper, the beneficiary may have got a high yielding crossbred cow; the cow actually supplied is an old, local one with low milk yield.

Allotted 100 kgs, Received only two

Instances of such corruption can be listed ad nauseam. What is true of IRDP is also true of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the special component plan, the tribal sub-plan, in sum, of practically every single development programme being implemented in the rural area. Only the other day, Mr. Paranjpe of our own Party said in the Lok Sabha that after a 25 year old tribal woman of Mandla district in Madhya Pradesh had died of starvation, her mother-in-law got two kgs of rice from the government. Intrigued, he probed deep into the matter and found that the government had allotted 100 kgs for that woman, but she got only two.

Helplessness of the Rural Poor vis-à-vis Corrupt Officials

Some months back, a marginal farmer of Bihar met me in Delhi and told me his tale of woe about his exploitation by persons connected with the administration of IRDP. I have to admit with the deepest regret that I could do nothing to extricate that man from the mess in which he had been landed by a corrupt officialdom. Let us not make the mistake of looking upon that person as an individual. His case merely illustrates how helpless the rural poor are when they fall into the clutches of the corrupt officials who are having a field day in the rural area in the name of development programmes.

BJP Should go to the Villages

The fact that this man came all the way from Bihar to Delhi to put his problem before me only goes to show that there is a great craving among the people in rural areas that somebody should stand up for them. This being the situation, it is hardly necessary to spell out the impact the BJP will make on the hearts and minds of the rural people if BJP goes to the villages and declares that now that we are here, we would like to see which corrupt officials dare to exploit these helpless people or harass them if they do not pay the demanded bribe. Any party, which takes up such a programme and honestly implements it, will surely win the goodwill and trust of the rural masses and they will identify themselves with it. It will not then be easy for any other party to win elections by appearing on the scene only at the election time and spending tonnes of money. From the point of view of the society, such a programme is bound to bring many direct and indirect benefits in its wake. It will mark

the beginning of a new phase for the first time since Independence, in which the political parties go to the doorstep of the people and make them aware of their rights.

Competition is a Serious Threat to our Society

The attitude of accepting and tolerating corruption as a way of life, which is now on the increase and which poses a serious threat to the health and well being of the society, will receive a check. The development programmes will be properly implemented, leading to increased production and prosperity.

It certainly is not my contention that all bank employees or all officials at the block or any other level are corrupt. Even in such notorious departments as police and the PWD, I have come across individuals whose stark honesty as public servants fills one's heart with faith in the future of our society. But it is true that, as of now, it is the corrupt elements which are having the upper hand everywhere. Good workers are feeling discouraged and despondent. I think it is relevant to point out at this stage that a party, having set out to protect the beneficiaries of IRDP from exploitation by corrupt officials, will have to take good care that irresponsible elements among such beneficiaries do not get any protection from it. In other words, it should be a pre-condition of such a party that the beneficiaries should show the same promptness in repaying the bank loan as the party showed in saving them from exploitation.

The Proposed Programme

This is the situation and this is the context in which I wish to place before you the following programme:

Special BJP cells at different levels for Rural Work

The programme is that BJP should activate its organisational network in every development block. The responsibility for doing the work in the villages should be entrusted to workers who have an aptitude for working amongst the villagers. In the beginning, only a few villages in a block should be selected and contact should be established with the families which have been identified for IRDP benefits. If the employees of the banks or the block officials have acted in relation to them in any manner which is not above board, full and

correct facts should be found out. The matter should then be taken up with the block development officer. If he is indifferent to the demand for rectifying the irregularity, the Party should hold meetings and demonstrations at the block level. MLAs, MLCs and MPs of the Party should bring these complaints to light at the respective forum. If at any place IRDP is not under implementation, the above line of action should be taken in regard to the implementation of the special component plans for scheduled castes or tribal sub-plans for the scheduled tribes or the National Rural Employment Programme and the like. There should be special cells at the Mandal, District and State levels for effective implementation and supervision of this programme. This should be the whole job of these cells. It is necessary to provide for a system of fixing personal responsibility for the success or failure of the programme at successive levels. At the central level, I will like to keep myself apprised of the progress of this programme and I will make the necessary organisational arrangement to that end.

Constant Monitoring

Every body connected with the implementation of this programme will have to conduct himself in such a manner as to win the trust of the rural people and, what is more, show that the trust is well placed. The implementation of the programme will have to be so organised that there is constant monitoring and it is possible at any time to know without any special effort whether or not the work is progressing satisfactorily at any given place.

I suggest that this programme be started on a modest scale. We can extend it to more areas as our awareness of the different facets of the problem grows and the strength of rural workers of BJP increases. It would be counter-productive if the work is started on a large scale all at once but has to be slowed down later. Hence, the emphasis on starting modestly but ensuring that whatever is done, is done well. It is clear that this programme is for the rural areas only and we should for the time being focus our attention on this programme in these areas. In the urban areas, a number of programmes including slums improvement and *jhuggi-jhopri* welfare promotion have already been taken in hand in different states. Those programmes should be pursued with added vigour.

Crusade against Corruption should now be carried to the Villages

You know that the BJP has always raised its voice against corruption at the level of ministers and in administration. There is no doubt that it has made an impact. But corruption has now spread and reached the lowest rungs of the ladder. It is necessary, therefore, that we carry our crusade against corruption to the ultimate unit, the village. May be, we did not succeed to the desired extent in combating corruption at the top level. However, in the great and glorious task of effectively protecting the rural people against harassment and exploitation by corrupt officials, we can, with our organisational strength, and through a programme of this kind, show a hundred per cent result.

A New Era of Hope for the Rural People

At the Bombay session of the Party, we gave to ourselves a guideline symbolised by the slogan of Organisation, Struggle and Constructive Activity. In my view, these three aspects of the guidelines merge, coalesce and conciliate in this programme more beautifully and harmoniously than in any other programme I can think of. In the rural areas, where 80% of the people of India live, this programme will be the messenger of a new consciousness. For hundreds of millions of people, it will be the harbinger of a new era of hope. It will help BJP to be established and accepted as the exploited and poor people's own party. I commend this programme to the National Council and I urge that the Council adopt it as the Party's new programme.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Surat

4-6 June, 1982

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, brother and sister delegates, and friends,

I am happy that after our National Council's session at Cochin last April, we are meeting for this three-day session here at this historic city of Surat.

When it was announced that the venue of this session would be Surat, some political commentators reacted: "*Surat? Surat is remembered in Indian politics for the split in the Congress!*"

Indeed, it was in Surat 75 years ago, in the year 1907 that the Indian National Congress at its 25th session broke up into two. The so-called Moderates had thrown out the so-called Nationalists.

So far as the Bharatiya Janata Party is concerned, we have come here not to repeat history, but to change history. Our most precious treasure is our resolve to work together. We have to reinvigorate this resolve, and impart it a new meaning, a new dimension.

Curse of Indian Politics – Incapacity to work together

The greatest curse not merely of Indian politics, but of national life as a whole, is the general incapacity to work together. Let's learn to unite instead of dividing, to create harmony where disharmony exists, and to keep our self-interest and ego in leash. If only we can subordinate our narrow loyalties to our larger commitments and instead of stressing minor differences, if we let our agreement on fundamentals inspire us to march forward in step, nothing can halt India's progress as a nation, or for that matter, the Bharatiya Janata Party's as a party.

Today, when most political parties in the country are passing through a phase of serious internal strains and crises, it would not be out of place to look back on the reasons behind the Congress split at Surat.

It is known that even before the Surat Congress, differences between the '*Moderates*' and the '*Nationalists*' had come to the

surface. In fact, the venue for the session was shifted from Nagpur to Surat because it was felt that at Surat the moderates would be stronger and the nationalists would not be able to dominate. But notwithstanding all this, it appears in retrospect, that if at the Surat Congress Lokmanya Tilak's voice had not been stifled and he had been allowed to speak, the split may have been averted.

Honest Differences between Moderates and Nationalists

When one compares the 1907 happenings at Surat with the 1979-80 developments in the Janata, one would easily see how very different the nature of the two splits was. Between the '*moderates*' and the '*nationalists*' there were deep but honest differences with regard to the approach that the Congress should have towards the British. But within the Janata Party, not once during those three years of its existence did we witness any serious debate on a principle or a policy issue. The fact is that those regarded as stalwarts of the Janata Party became so immersed in power-lust and in their self-centred cocoons that they failed to realise that in breaking up the Janata Party not only were they betraying the people's confidence, but they were committing political harakiri as well.

Clean Politics is our Aim

Brother and sister delegates, in this hallowed, age-worn city situated on the banks of Tapti let us reaffirm our commitment to value-based politics and vow to conduct ourselves accordingly. Clean politics is our aim. Power is a golden urn containing the nectar of public service; but those who seek to hold this urn must use it as an instrument of service, or otherwise politics would become a weapon of oppression.

Power at any cost

The Assembly elections and Lok Sabha by-elections held last month, the poll-campaign, the results of these elections and the aftermath—all this is important from many angles. The first point that emerges clearly is that to win power, the Congress (I) entertains no qualms of any kind and has no hesitation in subverting the democratic process and institutions connected with it. The stratagems devised to delay elections in Garhwal for two years, the legal wrangles precipitated in order to scuttle elections in West Bengal, the disrespect shown to the judiciary, the Prime Minister herself expressing doubts with regard to the fairness of elections, thus casting indirect aspersions on the Election Commission itself—all these provide clear evidence of this mentality.

PM's Threats

During the election campaign, the Prime Minister said at several places that as her party was in office at the Centre, the States also should return the same party to power. Anyone could perceive in the PM's statement an implied threat to the non-Congress (I) Governments and an allurements extended to the people of States who voted Congress (I).

Centre-State Relations are not *Saas-Bahu* Relations

I would like to put a straight question to the Prime Minister. Does she regard Centre-State relationship as a *saas-bahu* relationship where the mother-in-law may shower affection on the daughter-in-law when it pleases her, and if it doesn't, peremptorily turn her out of the house? The Prime Minister is surely aware that under our federal Constitution the jurisdiction and powers of the Centre and States are clearly delineated. The Central Government as well as the State Governments are elected by the people and derive power from them. It is only by their mutual cooperation that the federal set up functions successfully.

Violating the Spirit of the Constitution

In a large, federal country, it is quite possible that there may be one party in office at the Centre, another party in office in a State, and yet another party in a second State. This should in no way affect

the relations between the Centre and the States. If this difference in political complexion does affect relations, it can only mean that there is some serious flaw in the working of the Constitution and that this calls for rectification. By these statements the Prime Minister has lowered the dignity of her office, violated the spirit of the Constitution and insulted the political intelligence of the people.

The post-election events too, particularly in Haryana, are a matter of concern. They have caused great damage to the democratic system. There is no doubt that the Congress (I) and the Governor of Haryana are primarily to blame for this. But the behaviour of the opposition party MLAs and independents has been no less reprehensible.

People have Asserted themselves

This election has once again shown that democracy has struck deep roots in the minds of the Indian people. Notwithstanding all the legal hurdles raised by the Congress (I) and despite the above referred to speeches of the Prime Minister, the people went to the polls in large numbers, and exercised their votes fearlessly. In Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, the people gave vent to their anger against the Congress (I). In Kerala, the people have registered their protest against the politics of violence indulged in by the Marxists. The much talked of charisma of Mrs. Gandhi proved ineffective against the dynamics of democracy.

In its choice of means to attain power, the Congress (I) has been inhibited by no scruples of any kind, either before the polls or during the campaign, or after the polls. But despite this, not even in a single state has it been able to get a majority by itself. Of the seven Lok Sabha by-elections, it has lost four. A few clear conclusions can be drawn from these results.

First, Mrs. Gandhi's ability to ensure the victory of any candidate, deserving or undeserving, sheerly on the strength of her personal image is now seriously in doubt.

Congress Organisation is in Shambles

Secondly, the foci of power are now shifting from Mrs. Gandhi to persons like Bhajan Lal for whom politics is a pure commercial game of buying and selling.

The third conclusion that emerges is that the Congress (I) as

an organisation is in shambles. In this party today, there is no such thing as commitment. Never before has the Congress (I) thrown up such a large number of candidates contesting as rebels. It was after much fumbling and faltering that action was taken against them. Again, never before have so many rebels won. The fact that immediately after their victory the party High Command has turned to them and actually rewarded them with Ministerial posts is sure to promote indiscipline. When a party names as Ministers persons whom it regarded unfit to be made candidates, it is only preparing the ground for its own destruction.

The disruption and disarray in the Congress (I) has a lesson for opposition parties also. A party that wilfully encourages this retrace for power cannot hope to survive for long. They who compromise so readily with indiscipline can never be expected to create a sturdy organisation.

The setback received by the Congress (I) in these elections can well cause a sense of nervousness and panic in Mrs. Gandhi's mind. This in turn can lead to a repetition of the events of 1969 or 1975!

Conspiracy to Initiate Dictatorship

In the course of this election campaign, Mrs. Gandhi has once again referred to the merits of the Presidential system as compared to the Parliamentary system. In today's situation, a Presidential system for India would mean autocratic rule by one person. I appeal to all democratic parties and elements to act concertedly in order to defeat this conspiracy aimed at the conversion of Indian democracy into a dictatorship and that too a dynastic dictatorship.

Some Conclusions for the Opposition

From the point of view of opposition parties also, the recent elections point to some important conclusions: There were three kinds of contests in these elections:

1. Congress (I) alliance versus Left alliance;
2. Congress (I) versus Lok Dal-BJP alliance;
3. Congress (I) versus divided Opposition.

In Kerala and West Bengal, it was a trial of strength of the first category. In West Bengal, the Marxist front succeeded in strengthening its hold, but in Kerala it failed to do so. Of course,

Congress (I)'s claim that it has improved its position does not hold good. Never before in Kerala has a winning alliance had such a slender majority. So far as the Congress (I) itself is concerned, it has just 20 seats out of 140.

In Haryana, the Lok Dal-BJP alliance could score only partial success, to the extent that it secured more seats than the Congress (I), and that it prevented the Congress (I) from getting a majority. Shortcomings with regard to cooperation and joint campaigning, deprived the alliance of clear victory.

In Himachal Pradesh and in almost all the Lok Sabha by-elections, the Opposition was completely divided. But what do the results indicate? In spite of the conflict of the Opposition parties *inter se* in Himachal, the BJP was able not only to give battle to the Congress (I) as an equal adversary, but scored matching victories as well. In Jabalpur and Thane, it triumphed decisively. The votes it secured in Udaipur and Lohardaga also make it evident that if any one could defeat the Congress (I) in these constituencies it was BJP.

Divided Opposition not a Handicap for BJP

A lesson to be learnt from all these contests is that the unity of democratic opposition parties is no panacea for the situation, and that a divided opposition is not necessarily a handicap. In the Lok Sabha by-elections a fair apportioning of seats may well have ensured Congress (I) defeat in all the seats.

BJP's failure to secure even a single seat in Kerala and West Bengal must have certainly caused sore disappointment to our cadres. But it must be realised that it is not easy to effect a break through in a situation where political power keeps oscillating pendulum-like between two powerful fronts. We should be satisfied that face to face with a Devil-and the Deep Sea dilemma, the BJP managed to steer clear of both fronts and did not compromise its principled opposition to the two for expedient considerations of short-term gains.

In the context of these elections I would like to address a word to opposition parties. The attitude of some of them seemed to suggest that they were fighting not against the Congress (I), but against the BJP. Let them review their attitude in the light of the election results if for no other reason, for the sake of their own party interests.

Kudos for Chief Election Commissioner

The mini-General Elections have been held at a time when the country is passing through a multi-dimensional crisis. These elections have once again shown that people's thinking is essentially sound and that their faith in democracy unflinching.

On this occasion, I would like to congratulate the Election Commission, and particularly the Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Shaktidher, who has discharged with distinction his constitutional duties of conducting free and fair polls in very trying circumstances. Amidst pressures and counter-pressures from the ruling party and the opposition, maintaining an impartial and objective role calls for great moral strength. It is imperative that the person who succeeds Shri Shaktidher also should be one who can play this difficult role of poll arbiter without fear or favour. In the appointment of the new Chief Election Commissioner, Government must adopt a procedure in which the opinion of Opposition parties finds a fair reflection, and a really worthy person is selected.

Presidential Election should be Unanimous

President Dr. Sanjiva Reddy is due to retire shortly. His tenure has witnessed many controversies. He has had to face at one stage trenchant criticism from the Janata Party. Today, he finds himself facing angry brickbats from the Congress (I). It is obvious that the office of President is not ornamental; it is a crown of thorns. The President has been charged with protection of the Constitution, but the Constitution itself obligates him to act in accordance with the advice of the Council of Ministers. This obligation is in conformity with the requirements of a parliamentary polity. But the issue that arises is as to how the President in a federal structure can hold the scales even between the Centre and the States, particularly in a situation where the ruling party at the Centre is determined to transgress the limits imposed on its powers, and deny its opponents their legitimate right.

The search for a new incumbent of this office is on. We are of the opinion that, as in 1997, this election should be unanimous. This can only happen on the basis of a national consensus. The ruling party ought to take an initiative in the matter. The opposition is willing

to play its role.

Internal Situation: Warning bells for the Nation

During the one year between Cochin and Surat, the internal situation in the country has rapidly deteriorated. Some of the problems that have surfaced during the period are so grave that without fear of exaggeration they can be described as warning bells for the nation.

Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Tripura in the Eastern Zone had been even earlier engulfed in the politics of violence and murder. Lately, the border state of Punjab also has been in flames because of the disruptive activities of extremist elements. The situation there is a matter of deep concern for all patriots.

The disturbances that broke out between Hindus and Christians in Kanya Kumari, the sharp increase in incidents of atrocities on Harijans, the growing discontent in Jammu and Kashmir which has been erupting violently in sensitive areas like Ladakh and Kishtwar—all these are pointers to the rapidly worsening internal situation, pointers that we can ignore only at the peril of national unity.

Need to Strengthen National Unity

National unity can be preserved only if the ruling party scrupulously abandons its divide-and-rule approach, an approach that it has inherited from the foreign rulers. Opposition parties, on the other hand, will have to resist the temptation of compromising with religious and communal fanaticism, compromises entered into simply to get power. Only to the extent that we are able to insulate administration, politics and elections from the corrosive influence of caste, community and creed, shall we be able to strengthen national unity. The BJP, in its enunciation of five commitments, has given top place to national unity. For the sake of the country's oneness, no sacrifice is too great for us.

Punjab: Congress Party's Apprehension of Communal Elements

A national level convention of any political party cannot but be concerned about the happenings in Punjab. Religion-based politics

resulted in the partition of this country and led to brutal carnage and destruction. It is unfortunate that even after the formation of the Indian Republic, and declaration of India as a secular State, religion-based politics continues to thrive. Elections held on the basis of adult franchise have given a new shape to this politics. For the sake of votes and political power there has been a readiness to appease communal elements, particularly the religious minorities, and to forge alliances with their organisation. The prime responsibility of giving Indian politics this turn rests with the Congress Party.

Two Aspects of Religion based Politics

The serious, nay, separatist, shape religion-based politics has taken in Punjab needs to be viewed from two aspects. The first aspect is administrative; the lack of courage and determination to deal with criminals as criminals has made the administration a laughing stock for all. The culprits feel secure by taking refuge in places of worship and the police is able to do nothing. No religion can permit its holy institutions to be used as asylums to harbour criminals and murderers. To prevent crime and to punish criminals is the first and foremost duty of the State. A Government that fails in the discharge of this duty forfeits its right to continue. No words can be too strong to condemn such a Government whatsoever be the reason of its failure – whether it is lack of courage, or fear of alienating votes, or feuds among ruling party leaders.

Govt. must deal Firmly with Criminals

We also are a political party. For a political party, votes naturally matter. But we do not want such votes for which we have to compromise with the fundamental interest and ideals of our nation. The ruling party also must try and draw a line somewhere. They must not allow the so-called religious considerations to deflect it from its primary duties in the matter of law and order.

Separatist Tendencies must be Curbed

The second aspect of the matter is the mentality which lies at the root of religion-based politics, and the separatist tendencies. This mentality cannot be combated only at the level of government. Powerful public opinion has to be built up against

this mentality so that the misleading propaganda of these anti-national and separatist elements can be countered. The masses must be made conscious of the fact that in this vast country if any one casteist or religious group seeks a separate abode on the basis of his caste or religion, where is it all going to lead to?

Places of Worship must not be Misused

It is a matter of satisfaction that the anti-national demand for Khalistan does not have the support of the Sikh masses. The Sikhs have tasted the bitter fruits of one partition. They would not allow themselves to be entrapped into yet another such holocaust. I appeal to the intellectuals and the intelligentsia of the Sikh community to help build up a strong public opinion against those who are sowing the seeds of discord in the minds of the common man. Let the religious leaders also come forward and declare publicly that they will not allow any misuse of the places of worship.

The Assam Problem: Congress (I)'s Vote Politics

The problem of Assam also is the result of Congress (I)'s vote politics. It was for the sake of the votes of foreign nationals that the Assam rulers were willing to turn a blind eye to their illegal influx and enrolment in the electoral rolls. In fact, for the sake of votes they have been actually encouraging this process. Therefore, the responsibility of solving this problem of foreign nationals in Assam lies mainly on the Congress ruling party. In Assam, the Assembly has been dissolved. Soon elections will have to be held. The problem of foreign nationals, therefore, has to be settled without delay. If it is not solved before the elections, the situation can become complicated and difficult. Government must immediately resume its negotiations with the leaders of the movement.

Implementation must be checked

Government should have no difficulty in implementing matters agreed upon in the talks that have taken place in New Delhi between the Government, movement leaders and the Opposition. All the three are agreed that the border should be sealed and that foreign nationals who have come after 1971

should be evicted. Government must take firm steps in pursuance of these decisions. This will help create a favourable atmosphere for the next round of negotiations and, besides, allay suspicions that have arisen in the masses about Government's intentions. Apart from Assam, large scale infiltration has been going on in Bihar and West Bengal also. Official sources also have confirmed this. If stern steps are not taken to stop this illegal influx, we would have as difficult a problem on our hands in Bihar and West Bengal as we have in Assam.

Economic Crises-Self-Reliance Concept Abandoned

For centuries, Surat has been an important centre of commerce and trade. Standing here, when I survey the economic scene, my mind is filled with grave apprehensions for the future. All our economic policies and five-year plans till now have been aimed at making the country self-reliant. But the policies adopted of late suggest that Government has bidden good-bye to this concept of self-reliance. The economic future of the country is being mortgaged to foreign creditors. Under pressure of the International Monetary Fund, policy changes are being effected in the industrial sphere, and in the field of exports-imports, as can only augment centralisation of economic power, and enable the monopoly houses to grow at the cost of small and medium scale units.

Multi-nationals in Sensitive Areas

Furthermore, multi-nationals are now being permitted to enter areas which till now had been regarded very sensitive, and so were reserved for development with the help of indigenous enterprise. Day in and day out, the ruling party had been talking about securing for the public sector "*commanding heights*" of the economy but even the public sector is now being opened up not only to Indian monopoly, but also for foreign companies.

The BJP itself has had misgivings about the functioning of the public sector. We have been favouring long-range changes in its scope and structure. But changes in economic approach and strategy should be with a view to increasing production and curbing disparities, and not at the bidding of foreign creditors.

How bad this situation has become can be gauged from the

fact that several Indian companies belonging to both the public and private sectors have complained to the Government of India that foreign entrepreneurs are being invited to India for projects which abroad are being carried out by Indian companies!

Dependence on other Countries in the field of National Security

Even in the field of national security our dependence on other countries is assuming a disturbing shape. It is now two decades that we had decided to go in for the manufacture of advanced aeronautical engines. What has happened to the proposal? Why has our decision to produce an anti-tank missile been put in cold storage? What has become of our programme to produce the main battle tank as a successor to Vijayanta? What about our continued dependence on foreign sources for missiles, strategic metals and defence electronics?

It seems that both in the economic as well as in the defence fields there are some powerful interest who do not wish to see India become self-reliant in the real sense of the word. These elements need to be identified and exposed. Our set up which is becoming more and more dependent on foreign powers has to be emancipated from the influence of these interests.

Hypocrisy must end

If the Congress Government honestly feels that the path of economic development, which the country has been pursuing till now, is wrong and that there is no option before India except to adopt the capitalist approach, let it say so frankly and clearly. To keep talking about self-reliance as it is the *mantram* to be chanted, and at the same time, to open wider our doors to foreign capital, foreign loans, foreign goods and foreign technology – this kind of hypocrisy must end.

Dangerous Influence of Foreign Interest

The BJP is entirely in favour of importing foreign technology in fields where Indian capability is not quite developed. But it cannot approve of foreign companies being inducted into the sphere of consumer goods.

As a result of the policies pursued during these two years, while prices have risen, unemployment has grown, disparities have

widened, and the rate of black money generation has accelerated. Because of inflation and scarcity of essential goods, the condition of the common man has worsened. Capitalist countries advocating a free economy, have, however, heaved a sigh of relief. In a report published in May 1982, commenting on economic trends in India, the US Embassy in New Delhi has observed:

“Most heartening in this context is a slowly changing attitude towards business within the government; more officials now are seeking ways to reduce bureaucratic road blocks, are increasingly receptive to foreign business proposals, and are now more alert to the needs to the private sector. All of these measures are enhancing business confidence and opening the door to American product a bit wider.”

The above excerpt clearly indicates how in the formulation of our economic policy we are being influenced by foreign interests. This is a dangerous situation which must not be allowed to go out of hand. The Indian economy must be brought back to *Swadeshi* and self-reliance.

Removing Poverty must be main objective

During the last two years, Government has been giving various concessions and facilities, sometimes in the name of increasing productivity, sometimes in the name of promoting exports or on the plea of liberalising licensing or import policy. Even if productivity increases on this account, unless the purchasing power of the common man increases, all declarations about removing poverty would be meaningless.

The economic strategy that we adopt must lead to rapid development, but it must also ensure an equitable distribution of the fruits of development.

Government has declared 1982 as Productivity Year but there are hurdles in the way of increasing production. At some places, labour is being forced to go on strike, at others, employers have been arbitrarily declaring lockouts. Despite official claims of 11 per cent increase in power production, in at least 10 States, industrial and agricultural production is stagnating because of power crisis.

Chaotic Conditions in Coal Industry

In the matter of production, transport, and distribution of coal, conditions are chaotic at all levels. Whatever the Railway Ministry may claim, precious diesel is being spent to transport coal to other places. In fact, if trucks were not used to transport coal, industry in States like Punjab and Haryana would be in serious trouble. The UP Government itself has engaged a private transport concern to fetch coal to the State. The hands of many senior politicians in Government are soiled in the matter of coal smuggling. The coal industry today is badly in need of expansion and modernisation, as it is a sick industry, seriously afflicted with problems of mismanagement, political and bureaucratic interference, and exploitation by a labour Mafia. In order to cover up the losses suffered because of its own incompetence, Government has raised the price of coal once again and thus made the common man's kitchen costlier than ever. The atomic power plants are in a still worse shape.

Gross Mismanagement

The Government raises slogans of increased production, but the decisions it takes relate to increasing imports. This is what is happening in the field of basic goods like cement, steel, fertilisers etc. Our import bill, therefore, keeps mounting. Our balance of payments position keeps worsening. No doubt, there are compulsions, but these compulsions should not become an alibi for gross mismanagement.

The Centre and State governments spend between themselves a total of 10% of the Gross National Product on non-Plan items. These items of expenditure have become ends in themselves. The result is shortfalls in production targets. The emphasis in the plan should be on achievement of actual production targets rather than on the quantum of money spent. But the administrative machinery aims only at utilising the budgeted amounts and gets busy in preparing the next Budget without bothering to go into the results of the earlier spendings.

Increasing Tax Burden

As is usual with the Congress (I), there was a good deal of tomtomming about reliefs in this year's Budget also. It was conveniently concealed, however, that a burden of Rs. 600 crore had

been cast on the people through higher railway rates even before the General Budget. The Post and Telegraph Department added another burden of Rs. 135 crore. The Finance Minister imposed taxes totalling Rs. 590 crore. The total relief compared to this overall load of Rs. 1,300 crore was a mere Rs. 13.77 crore. The additional taxes were just a hundred times more than the relief given. The consequences are there for anyone to see. Post and Telegraph, railway travel and other essential services are becoming increasingly more costly. There is substantial increase in retail prices. That the Central Government employees had become entitled to another instalment of DA is a proof of this fact.

All Round Increase in Prices

Inflation has made life a veritable ordeal for people with fixed incomes and those below the poverty line. The fact is that Government is directly responsible for increasing prices of essential goods and services. Inflation is also the direct consequence of the collusion between big industrialists and traders on the one hand, and the people in power on the other. For a long time, Government used oil prices as an excuse for the rising price level, but this can by no means be stretched to explain the all round increase in prices. A part of the rise is because of Government's own actions. Part is the result of political corruption, and only in part is it caused by blackmarketeers.

This burden can be borne by only 5% of the population whose annual income is above Rs. 50,000. The 5% population in the next lower income slab of Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 50,000 per annum is also hard hit by the lash of rising prices. The 50% of the people with an annual income of less than Rs. 3,500 are hardly able to make both ends meet.

Eight per cent of our workers today are unemployed and 20% are semi-employed. Government has only lip sympathy for them. All schemes run in the name of rural employment and employment generation add up to a little more than a drop in a bucket. The policies of the Janata Government were a significant beginning in the proper direction for tackling this huge problem. But the present government discontinued such employment-oriented programmes as '*Food for Work.*' The new liberalism towards big industries in place of small and medium

industries is regressive from the point of view of employment generation. I wish to warn Government that if this trend continues, unemployment will give rise to social and political problems which will have extremely dangerous consequences.

The increasing disparity between the village and the city, and rural unemployment, have added to the rush from rural to urban areas. In the villages 55% farmers have less than one acre of land. Poverty is gradually making them sell off their land and join the ranks of landless labourers. Handicraft also is becoming an un-economic proposition. These products are unable to compete with urban products. The total benefit of governmental schemes is pocketed by a handful of politically influential people.

Development of Villages BJP's top Priority

Rural people have all along been losers because of the unequal race between the price of agricultural produce and that of industrial goods. Government's agricultural price fixation policy is basically anti-rural. Official schemes have been parroting terms like 'landless labourers' and 'small farmers and artisans', but in the situation prevalent hitherto, the rural poor have had little to do with schemes supposed to be for the rural poor. This is the large area of poverty which economic development has failed even to touch. Without full employment centres and *antyodaya* schemes, the malady of the village will remain absolutely unrelieved. The BJP wants the plan to give highest priority to time-bound and phase-bound development of villages by application of Gandhian techniques. The industrial and agricultural labourer is today a victim of low wages and wage freeze. The government has failed to act as a model employer in public sector undertakings. Even as the administrative or third party, it has not evinced a sympathetic attitude of providing minimum facilities. The people in power have linked themselves up with the employers.

Prolonged Strike: Workers in a Tight Squeeze

There is a prolonged strike in the textile mills of Bombay. National output and the interests of workers are both suffering heavily. The government, managements and the trade unions have all made it a question of prestige. The poor workers are the worst sufferers. Last year, in the case of the Bangalore strike, Government

adopted a policy of making the workers yield by tiring them out. On the one hand, Government has let inflation go on a runaway course and, on the other, Government has imposed on the workers what is in effect a wage freeze. The worker is being crushed between these two millstones. The new philosophy of industrial peace evolved by the Government has two facets: wage freeze is one, and Essential Services (Maintenance) Act or National Security Act is the other. The BJP has opposed these black laws tooth and nail.

I wish to appeal to Government, textile mill owners and labour leaders to take into account the tremendous sufferings of the workers and not make this issue a question of prestige. Let them sit round the negotiating table and sort out the problem with sympathetic concern for the welfare of workers so that there is no further loss of production and the interests of workers are not adversely affected.

Minimum Wage must be Enhanced

Landless labour comprises the weakest section of society. They do not get even the minimum legal wage fixed in many States. Disputes over wages have recently increased in several States. So has the repression of labour. I demand that State Governments discharge their responsibility in the matter of enabling agricultural workers to get a legal minimum wage, and that they end all repression. The minimum wage also needs to be enhanced corresponding to rising prices.

The current Plan was framed on the basis of 1980 prices. Since then prices of many raw materials and services—iron, cement, coal and energy, railway freight, postal freight, wage cost etc. have increased substantially. On the one hand, mobilisation of resources is becoming difficult and, on the other, Plan targets are being brought down because of the reduced value in real terms of resources mobilised. The trend threatens to continue. In view of this, there is an apprehension that there will be a serious gulf between Plan targets and achievements. I demand that Government appoint an independent committee of economists to evaluate the revised, actual and realisable targets, resources and the progress made till date. The country has a right to have a mid-term appraisal made of Plan achievements and its shortfalls.

Increasing Atrocities on Harijans

In January last, I undertook a *padayatra* from Deoli to Sadhupur in UP. The accounts of the Harijan carnage at these places that we heard were really heart-rending. Any sensitive person would feel shaken; so did I.

According to official statistics, every year more than 10,000 cases of anti-Harijan incidents are recorded at police stations. Many, many more remain unrecorded, but leave their scars behind.

After Sadhupur and Deoli, there has been the massacre of Harijans at Khastara in Madhya Pradesh. The blood of Harijans was shed again at Bellabeera in Bihar. Those responsible for these dark deeds continue to roam about freely. They enjoy the patronage and protection of the rulers. For centuries, this oppression and repression of our Harijan brothers and sisters has been going on. How much longer is the society going to allow it? – that is the question.

Efface Untouchability

We should realise that the practice of untouchability is worse than apartheid. The colour of our skin is one, our blood is one, our ancestry is one, our religion is one and our culture is one. How then can one person be a touchable and another an untouchable, one high and another low? Until we are able to efface untouchability from our country, our voice against apartheid in world forums cannot be very effective.

Resolve Problems through Amity and Goodwill

During my trek through the Deoli-Sadhupur region, I had occasion to talk to both the sections – Harijans and the so-called *savarnas*. These discussions convinced me that all is not lost. There is still in society the strength to rise above inter-caste conflicts and violence and recreate a new social order. In the rural areas there still subsists in various castes a vast reservoir of amity and goodwill. This needs to be tapped so that society can be changed without having to pass through any traumatic upheaval. In the countryside, it is the duty of *savarnas*, and those who are better off, to create the necessary climate, and discharge their duty with courage.

I appeal to my Dalit brethren, particularly the youth among them, to continue their struggle for justice. But, at the same time,

let not the delay in removing a centuries old curse provoke them into taking any step which would create problems worse than the malady itself. The attempts at mass conversions that have taken place in various parts of the country have deeply hurt the Hindu mind. If only this sense of hurt can be transformed into a resolve to change society, decades long journey can be completed in months. I call upon the country's youth to set out into the villages holding aloft the banner of social equality. For the BJP youth wing this is a big challenge.

BJP Workers should Promote Social Equality

I am aware that during the last one and a half years, conscious efforts have been made to associate the downtrodden sections with the BJP. We have had some measure of success in this. Even so, we as a Party are not as vigilant about this issue as we ought to be. We do not need a Deoli or a Sadhupur to goad us into activity in such matters. Every worker of the BJP should be constantly alert and function as a sentinel of social equality. Let us chalk out a programme in this regard keeping in mind local conditions and problems, and not worry about the political losses and gains that may result because of this activity.

Sorry Condition of Tribals

During the first two years of Congress rule, the number of excesses committed on tribals also increased. Their economic exploitation continues unchecked. They are *vanavasis* – forest dwellers – but they have been deprived of their right to the grass in the forest. Corrupt politicians, dishonest contractors and selfish bureaucrats have conspired to push tribal men into living as bonded serfs and hapless tribal women into a life of dishonour and shame. In the course of my tours of tribal Madhya Pradesh, I was surprised to hear that government officials first resist their posting in these tribal belts, but once they come here are reluctant to leave. The simple but sorry explanation is that avenues for extra-legal income in these areas are immense.

Government has drawn up several costly schemes for the welfare of these tribals but hardly a fraction of the funds allocated reaches the ground.

I urge upon BJP workers to undertake two-fold activity for the welfare of the tribals. On the one hand, let us engage in constructive activity for the amelioration of their lot and, on the other, let us mobilise them to struggle for their rights.

Women – Dishonoured and Exploited

Notwithstanding high-sounding principles propounded, old time superstitions and perverse modernism have combined to put today's women in a much more difficult situation than she was in yesterday. Many kinds of shackles chain their minds. Circumstances reduce them to the level of second grade human beings. Instances of dowry deaths, rape, kidnapping, economic discrimination, mental torture, suicides etc. are on the increase.

Education will make lots of difference

Education can make a major contribution towards redeeming women from this lot. But even today, as compared to men, female literacy is just half. In the first decade after Independence, the number of literate women grew by 52%. During the period 1961-71, the rate of female literacy came down to 46%. In 1971-81, it fell still further to 32%. The result is that today as compared to 46.7% literacy among men, literacy among women is 24.9%. This country cannot progress unless women are assured an equal place in society. Without social equality there can be no economic equality, nor can women contribute fully to national reconstruction or human progress. Let us not forget that injustice, exploitation, discrimination, poverty, ignorance, insecurity, unemployment – all these affect women more deeply than men. All such concepts, rules, practices, traditions etc. that promote exploitation and knowingly or unknowingly accentuate injustice to women must be vigorously opposed.

Comprehensive Scheme for Improvement of Women's Conditions

A liberal and comprehensive scheme needs to be drawn up which can assure women equal opportunities of employment and education, emancipation from exploitation, injustice and discrimination, and equal civil, economic and social rights.

To draw up such a scheme, the BJP will set up a committee which would consult thinkers, women organisations, jurists, economists, social scientists etc. and submit its report by the end of December.

India Unable to Pursue an Independent Foreign Policy

India's growing dependence on the two super powers has distorted our economy and paralysed our diplomacy. Today, our country depends on the West for economic loans and on the East for its defence requirements. In such a situation, is it possible for us to stay aloof from the growing rivalry of the super-powers and pursue an independent policy?

Whether it is the question of the Iran-Iraq war or withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and of Vietnamese forces from Kampuchia, India has been unable to take a diplomatic initiative in matters where the process of detente has suffered a setback. The same indecisiveness has been the reason why India has failed to come out clearly with Argentina on the issue of Falkland Islands. Even while disagreeing with Argentina's decision to use force, India should have clearly opposed Britain's decision to invade Falkland.

In fact, the manner in which foreign and domestic policies have been formulated and executed during the last two years have landed India in a very unenviable position. Today, the Government of India is unable to muster courage to deplore the wrong acts either of the USSR or of the US. Even in the matter of external relations the Prime Minister vents her fury invariably on the Janata Party.

Relations with Neighbours made an Election Issue

It is a matter of regret that the Prime Minister has dragged foreign policy also, particularly the question of India's relations with our neighbours, into the election arena. This issue had nothing to do with Assembly elections. If the Janata's agreement with Bangladesh on Farakka was not correct, what has prevented the present Government from negotiating a more favourable deal with them?

Late Mr. Zia-ul-Rahman, who had been elected President of Bangladesh by a democratic process, used to be treated with

indifference by the present Government. Zia was ousted by General Ershad in a military coup. For India's Foreign Minister to visit Dacca with a message of support and goodwill from India for this military ruler is in itself a sad comment on the conduct of India's foreign policy. According to General Ershad, India was among the countries which had been given prior intimation of the impending coup in Bangladesh. It would be interesting to know about New Delhi's reaction to this revelation about advance intimation.

India and Pakistan are both agreeable to a no-war pact. The longer the delay in resuming talks on this matter the deeper the suspicions and misgivings that have developed during the last three decades between the two countries.

Mrs. Gandhi lost an Opportunity to Resolve the J & K Issue

It would be wrong to think that the only hurdle in the way of normalisation of relations between the two countries is the question of Jammu and Kashmir.

If at Simla in 1972, Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi had withstood foreign pressures and, besides, resisted the temptation of being hailed as a peace-maker, the question of Jammu and Kashmir could have been resolved once and for all.

As it is, under the Simla Agreement, India has committed itself to resolving the issue through bilateral talks. It should not allow the impression to go round that it is avoiding a discussion. There is no reason why the mere mention of Kashmir by Pakistan should upset us.

Gilgit, Kargil, Hunza etc. are regions of strategic importance and till 1947 were part and parcel of Jammu and Kashmir. By amalgamating these with Pakistan, the Government of Pakistan has once again challenged India's sovereignty. It is surprising that for quite some time Government remained unaware of this. Even when it did come to know about the development, it did not care to apprise the Indian Parliament of it.

Government's callous indifference in the matter and its keeping Parliament and the people in the dark is reminiscent of 1962 when Government tried to cover up Chinese aggression in Ladakh. The country has a right to know why Government has failed in this matter which relates to national integrity and India's claim to the whole of

Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Indian army is fully capable of meeting any foreign aggression . The people of India would spare no sacrifice in the defence of their priceless freedom and the country's territorial integrity. But if only with a view to diverting public attention from the manifold problems people are having to face because of its own impolicies and failures, the Government keeps talking day in and day out about the threat of foreign aggression, it would be doing great injustice to the people.

India's Image Abroad Suffers a Setback

I would urge upon the Prime Minister first and foremost to set her own house in order, attend to the disintegration that has set in within the Congress Party, shake up the administration from its present state of paralysis and, instead of tampering with the present system, try to utilise it to give national affairs a definite direction. If at home the situation continues to worsen, as is happening, not all the tomtomming about the success of her foreign trips can help redeem India's image in the international field, which has been sinking lower and lower.

A Call

Friends, instead of dealing at length with all the national problems, I have touched upon the more outstanding ones. I hope that at this three-day session, we shall be able to discuss some of these in depth.

Congress Failure Creates a Vacuum

The ruling party's conduct over the last two years, the gulf between profession and practice and its abysmal failure in dealing with the situation have proved clearly that the Congress (I) is incapable of giving to the people a clear and firm leadership. The party's organisation is disintegrating and a vacuum is fast growing in the political field.

Can the Bharatiya Janata Party measure up to the situation and surmount the serious challenges that face us?

BJP should fill that Vacuum

In our journey from Bombay to Surat via Cochin and Vrindaban, we have left behind many milestones. During this period, death has snatched away from us very close and valuable colleagues like Prof. Haripada Bharati and Shri Rambhau Mhalgi. The Party's credibility with the people has been rapidly growing and millions in the country see in our Party a bright ray of hope.

With a sense of dedication to the country and the people, a determination to triumph against all odds, and dynamism in our approach, let us build ourselves up in a manner and measure as to be able to fill the developing vacuum. May God give us strength to fulfil the people's expectations from our Party!

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Cochin

25-27 April, 1981

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends,

The majestic palm trees of Kerala have beckoned to travellers since times immemorial. It is always refreshing to visit this beautiful part of our country. Kerala's life provides an exquisite specimen of unity in diversity, of cultural synthesis, of religious harmony and, above all, of intellectual excellence.

Kerala – The Land of Great Souls

Time and again this land has given birth to inspired souls who have strengthened and enriched national life in a multitude of ways.

Shankaracharya

It was in Kerala here that twelve centuries back the great Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya lit the torch of a cultural renaissance. Today, when the country is in the grip of a crisis of moral degeneration and drift, are we not justified in praying for a modern Shankaracharya?

Kunjali Maricars

Again, when the foreigners who came as traders turned into raiders and wished to stay on as rulers, Kunjali Maricars had the foresight to resist them – a vision which unfortunately the then rulers did not possess. Today, when as a result of super-power rivalries and strains, the peace and security of this sub-continent has been gravely imperilled, how we yearn for another Kunjali!

Shri Narayana

Nearer to our own times, Kerala produced a saint who achieved remarkable success in solving a problem which vexes the nation today. In Shri Narayana Guru this land gave birth to one of the rare social reformers who raised the status of the social outcasts by creating a spirit of self-confidence in them. He showed that the untouchables could achieve economic, educational and social status by self-help. If the teachings of Shri Narayana Guru had been

accepted by the rest of the country, and implemented, the country may have been spared the recent shameful manifestations of this problem which we have failed to solve even after three decades of independence.

Mannath Padmanabhan

With selfishness and greed pervading our community leadership, it is but natural that we recall Mannath Padmanabhan and remember with admiration how his selfless efforts served to stop the rot in the community.

Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma

Five years ago, when our country was passing through the dark night of Emergency, there was a religious leader who boldly protested against the attack on human rights and civil liberties. It is with great feeling and reverence that I recall the name of His Grace Rev. Dr. Juhanon Mar Thoma, the late Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

The entire country, specially Kerala, has today become saturated with intolerance. When a differing ideology is sought to be suppressed by physical violence, when innocent young men are murdered only because of their belief, it is certainly a blot on the tradition of tolerance and harmony that has prevailed in this land for centuries.

Recalling Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay

Here I cannot but refer to the foul murder of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

It was here in Kerala that Upadhyayji had presided over the fourteenth annual session of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Only a few days after returning from Kerala, on 11 February, 1968, his mutilated

body was discovered in the railway yard of Mughal Sarai.

His murderers destroyed his mortal body, but they could not destroy his ideals and his thoughts.

Taking inspiration from Upadhyay's dedicated life and supreme martyrdom, thousands of young men are forging ahead day and night on the path of selfless service and would continue to do so in future.

Deliberate Design to Create Terror

What is happening in Kerala is not merely the outcome of instant passion; it seems to me a deliberate design to create terror. It is happening at the connivance, if not collusion, of the powers that be in the administration. Those who are behind this ought to understand that no ideology can ever be suppressed by violence. Also let them not forget that it is those who cannot convince the souls who start attacking the bodies.

I have mentioned some of the great sons of Kerala. The problems which they sought to solve confront the country even today, though in a much more magnified and disturbing manner.

Frankenstein of Casteism

The nation is passing through a multi-dimensional crisis. The Frankenstein of casteism nurtured by power-hungry politicians to promote their own selfish ends is threatening to destroy the basic fabric of our national life.

Though emergency has not yet been declared, harassment of judges has started, arbitrary arrests are being made, honest officers are being punished and the press is being subjected to various pressures.

Economic Situation

Since July 1979, this country has had a Government either installed by the Congress (I) or manned by it. Therefore, for 22 months now, all developments in the country are directly or indirectly due to the Congress (I). The present ruling party cannot be absolved of responsibility in that regard.

Rising Parties

On the day we left Government, the price index stood at 211. Today it is over 270. When Mrs. Gandhi assumed office, the price index was 223. During the 16 months that this “*Government which works*” has been in the saddle, the price index has shot up by 47 points!

When we left the Government, our food stocks held over 18 million tonnes of grain. Today the holding is less than 10 million.

Our Government had chalked out and implemented a plan where foodgrains were distributed as part of wages in different areas. Now this programme has been scrapped.

Downsizing Plan Targets

We had prepared a Plan. It was called the Rolling Plan. The Congress (I) leaders made fun of it. They promised the country a bigger plan and they have now come out with such a ‘big’ Plan. But the Plan is big only in expenditure. It is small in results. In other words, the Congress (I) has promised the countrymen to tax more, to spend more, but to achieve less.

Our Plan had envisaged 49 million man years of additional employment. The ‘bigger’ Plan puts at 34 million man years.

We wanted to irrigate 17 million additional hectares. The new plan target is 13 million.

A modest aim of our Plan was to take electricity to 50% of villages which are unelectrified. The present Plan is only for 40%.

We had proposed to give housing sites to 8 million. The present Plan brings down this figure to 6.8 million. You may well ask: Is there anything for which we aimed at less and the present planners have looked higher? Well, yes, there is one aspect. The present Plan has earmarked a sizable sum of money for motor cars, presumably Maruti.

Bankruptcy of Economic Thinking

The spiralling prices, the scaling down of Plan targets, and the lopsidedness of priorities – this is not the only distressing feature of our economy. An even more disquieting fact is the total bankruptcy of any fresh thinking about economic problems. In a country where 50% of the population subsists below the poverty line, GNP cannot be the sole measuring rod for adjudging progress. In fact, in our

country only that economic strategy can be regarded sound which is able to improve conditions of the poorest of the poor, and lift them from their present morass.

For the common man, no explanation is needed to describe the state of the economy. He has only to compare what he used to pay 22 months back to what he pays today. What is the price of wheat? Or rice? Or sugar? Or cloth? What are the bus fares today? What are the train fares?

Hike in Corruption

There is no point blaming the petroleum price hike for all this burden. There is another hike which is really responsible, the hike in corruption, and the hike in inefficiency.

Today, there is a very wide gulf between what the agricultural producer gets and what the consumer pays. On the one hand the producer does not get a remunerative price for his produce and, on the other hand, the consumer is unable to get goods at a fair price.

Three months back, I had asked the Government to answer two of my questions. First: What is the minimum price a farmer should get? and, secondly: What is the maximum price the consumer should pay? Till now there has been no answer.

Today's inflation has not been caused because of the price being paid to the farmer for his produce. At the root of this inflation is corruption in which the ruling politicians and the big industrialists and businessmen are partners.

Exploitation of the Farmers

Some months back, the sugar industry had conveyed to the Government that they were willing to sell sugar in the open market for Rs. 4.50 per kilo. But for reasons unknown, the Government did not accept the offer. What is the price of sugar today? It is quite likely that during Diwali this year, the price of sugar may touch Rs. 15 a kilo. The producer of sugarcane hardly gets Rs. 2 for every kilo of sugar that is sold in the market.

This loot must end. We have to arouse public opinion and mobilise it against this kind of exploitation and injustice.

The BJP National Council has to draw up an effective programme for the coming months so that Government can be

compelled to stop this profiteering and to ensure that while the producer gets a remunerative price for his produce, the consumer is able to secure necessary goods at a reasonable price.

An amusing claim being made by the Central Government is that in this year's Budget no taxes have been imposed on the people. The claim is hollow. It should not deceive any one. In the last two Central Budgets, the people have been subjected to an additional tax burden of nearly Rs. 4,000 crore.

Encouragement to Black Money

The most cruel form of economic mismanagement is the open encouragement given to black money. Indeed, ours is the first country in the world where a Budget is sought to be balanced with black money. Black money is sought to be unearthed not through the police, not through any enforcement agency, not through courts of law, but with gilt invitation. The black money hoarder who has amassed wealth by dodging the law and exploiting the people is not only given immunity but even anonymity.

This year's Budget is for the Black Money, of the Black Money and (I would not like to say, by the Black Money) certainly by friends of Black Money. Let us not forget that at this rate this Government of the people, by the people, cannot get along with the people.

So bad is the situation and so unsure is the leadership that they have to hire crowds and herd them together at a cost of many, many crores only to reassure themselves. All this may have been all right except for the fact that even this huge amount has to be paid for by the people, and so adds to the economic rot.

If the ruling party were to pay half the attention to the economy of the country as it does to the organisation of such rallies the economy would profit immensely.

Internal Situation

Sixteen months ago, Mrs. Gandhi was swept back to power with a huge parliamentary majority. In the Assembly elections held six months later, the same pattern was repeated except in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

What followed, however, can be regarded as unprecedented. Never before has such a small span of time produced more negative

results.

First and foremost, there is a crisis in leadership.

Leadership Crisis

The Congress (I) leadership has proved its incapacity not only to administer the country but even to control its own party.

Group Rivalries

Group rivalries in the party have reached such a stage that at several places police had to be called to stop intra-party rioting. Even in West Bengal, where the ruling party is sought to be toppled by any means, fair or foul, many such physical clashes have been taking place resulting in the death of some Congressmen.

During these 16 months of Congress (I) rule, two Central Ministers have been sacked. For quite some time, the post of Chief Minister of Andhra, and later on, the entire Cabinet remained virtually in animated suspension. In Gujarat, the bitter feuding between the Chief Minister and a Union Minister has created serious complications for the State. In Assam, there seems to be a perpetual ministerial crisis warranting a continuing shuttling between New Delhi and Guwahati. An increasing campaign is on against the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar and no one knows how long these Chief Ministers can hold on. All these facts clearly point out that the ruling party today is a badly divided house.

Power Lust

Of course, no tears need to be shed over the discomfiture being experienced by the Congress (I). Perhaps, this is a historical inevitability. But Congress (I) leaders should not forget that they have been elected to administer and not to fight for the fishes and loaves of office. What is more, the internal fight has an adverse bearing on the health of the nation also. The Janata men revelled in this kind of fighting and the entire party paid for it. The people punished the Janata by dislodging it. But looking at the scene today it would not be wrong to say that the country itself is having to pay for the infighting of the Janata Party. As a result of Congress (I)'s power-lust and its neglect of public welfare, some problems have become particularly

acute. Assam and Gujarat are only two glaring examples.

Assam

The Assam problem is a legacy of Congress politics of three decades. The desire to stick to office somehow has only aggravated this problem. The last elections to the Assam Assembly were held in 1977. The Congress (I) got 8 seats. With defections they have now 48. They have been defeated in the house yet they want to continue.

The Assam agitation is aimed at ensuring that foreigners, not Indians from other states, but the non-Indians from other countries, go out or atleast they do not vote.

Agitation against Infiltrations of Foreigners

Everyone admits that there are foreigners in Assam. It is also conceded that the influx of foreigners is continuing. There is no difference even on the point that foreigners should go and that they should not be allowed to vote.

Notwithstanding all this, there is no satisfactory solution to the problem.

Policy of Repression

If the Government thinks that its present policy of repression and terror has succeeded in stamping out the movement, it is deluding itself. Spontaneous movements of this dimension and intensity, with which sentiments of millions are linked up, can never be crushed by brute force.

National Interest Ignored

Assam is a test for the Congress (I). Is the party concerned with national interest, or is it concerned only with party interest? Is it worried only about retaining power, or is it anxious to preserve the unity and integrity of the nation? It is self-evident that unless the present Government, which has been actively promoting the influx of foreigners and which has been trying to malign the Assam movement by engineering incidents of sabotage, is removed, a suitable climate for resolution of the Assam tangle through negotiations cannot be created.

Indeed, it is amazing that though the leaders of the movement

have repeatedly affirmed their readiness to negotiate without any conditions, and though almost all opposition parties have favoured early holding of tripartite talks on Assam, the Government continues to dilly-dally. The longer is the delay in holding discussions, the more complicated will the problem become.

Is Congress Interested in Checking Influx

At long last, the Government has decided to invite the leaders of the Assam agitation to open talks again. The agitators have always been ready to solve the foreigners' issue through discussions. The question is whether the Government sincerely wants to check the still-continuing influx of foreigners into Assam and take legal steps against those foreigners who were already there, or, whether this new step is but a tactic of Government to keep the whole problem hanging. I would like to warn the Government that this may be the last opportunity to solve the Assam problem through discussions.

Reservation Policies need National Consensus

Now that the anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat has been withdrawn, it is necessary that there should be a dispassionate consideration of the anomalies and shortcomings in the implementation of the reservation policy which have come to light in so far as educational institutions and services are concerned. An attempt should be made to evolve a national consensus.

Some months back Parliament had unanimously extended for a period of another ten years reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Parliament and in the State Legislatures. There is already a provision in the Constitution for reservations in education and services for socially and educationally backward sections. All political parties support this policy. The Lok Sabha has unanimously reiterated recently its commitment to this national resolve.

Widespread Differences

However, it cannot be denied that the agitation in Gujarat with respect to reservations and connected issues has precipitated differences of opinion in political parties, in trade unions, in student organisations and practically in all organised groups.

Politics based on caste has created a vested interest in backwardness, and, on the other hand, has provoked the upper castes to try to grab as much as possible for themselves.

Gujarat Govt's Failure

Though a sustained effort has been going on to blame opposition parties, particularly the BJP, for the agitation in Gujarat, it is now a well-known fact that on both sides of the agitation, among the reservationists as well as the anti-reservationists, it was Congressmen who were the most active. If the Gujarat Government had shown tact in its handling of the movement right at the outset, it would not have assumed the dimensions that it did and the immense loss of life and property may have been avoided.

PM should take the Initiative

The Prime Minister ought to take the initiative in trying to find a solution to the problems raised by the Gujarat agitation. It is a question not merely of some jobs, or some seats in medical colleges. The issue is far more fundamental. This is a problem of national integrity and of social harmony. The resolution adopted by the Lok Sabha on this issue needs to be followed up. The responsibility in this regard rests with the Prime Minister.

Shortcomings in Merit Have to be Accepted

To say that justice should be done to the weaker sections and then that merit should not be ignored does not lead us anywhere. The rationale of reservation is that sections that have been neglected and exploited for centuries must be treated in a manner so as to raise them to the level of the rest of the society, and, therefore, that for some time, and to some extent, shortcomings in respect of merit have to be overlooked. It would be a pity if the abatement of the agitation in Gujarat makes us indifferent to this very grave problem. Instead of rushing to dig a well only when a fire actually breaks out, let us apply ourselves to evolving a long term plan with respect to this question of national importance.

National Commission for Women

While talking about social discrimination and exploitation, we cannot forget that the largest section of sufferers in this context is that of women. Physically, economically and socially, women have, for centuries, had to suffer indignity, exploitation and dishonour. And they have suffered all this meekly and quietly. They are not only daughters, or wives, or mothers, they are responsible citizens of this democracy. Their potential in contributing towards the greatness of this nation has never been properly realised, nor has it been given an opportunity for full expression. There is need to create a constitutional Commission on the lines of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission and the Minority Commission. This body should constantly study and monitor problems relating to this neglected section of our society, and make recommendations aimed at conferring on them equality of status so that they can contribute effectively to the nation's progress.

Law and order

Before I conclude my observations about the internal situation, I would like to say something about the law and order situation in the country. Today, life has become absolutely insecure. Trains are being looted. Bus passengers are being attacked. Daylight dacoities have been taking place. At places, the police is supine and inert. At others, we are aghast to see them gouging out the eyes of under-trial prisoners and pouring acid into them. In both kinds of cases, political interference has been playing a part.

Congressmen and Marxists Involved in Violence

In Delhi, the other day, we had rioters enter a college and molest girl students. In Bhubaneshwar, there was the incident of girls being molested and dishonoured at a tourist spot by Congress (I) men. Policemen have been killing people. In Baghpat and Dhabwali, women have been dishonoured. The ruling party has been openly inciting violence. The Marxist party also has been making its own contribution to this orgy of violence. It appears that both the Congress (I) as well as the CPI(M) believe

that whatever the ruling party does is the law, and it is only what the others do that constitutes lawlessness.

In the international field, there have been three major developments during the past 15 months.

Russian Intervention in Afghanistan

First, Russian guns are now on the Khyber Pass – the traditional route to the Indian sub-continent for the Central Asian invader. This development has come as a handy excuse to the United States to arm Pakistan.

Deterioration of Relations with Neighbours

Secondly, there has been a conspicuous deterioration in India's relations with its immediate neighbours – not only with China and Pakistan, but also with Bangladesh, Shri Lanka, Nepal and even Bhutan. The warmth that had developed with these neighbours when the Janata was in office is nor longer there.

India's Non-aligned Status Questioned

Thirdly, India has lost its position in the non-aligned world. We are reckoned as a '*natural ally*' of a super-power.

Our ambivalence about the Soviet presence in Afghanistan is neither morally correct, nor practically paying. Besides, it is against public opinion in our country. The military intervention in Afghanistan and its occupation ought to have been condemned unequivocally. No country, however big and powerful, has the right to attack and devour another. Russia has to get out of Afghanistan. Let the Afghans decide who should rule them.

Soviet presence in Afghanistan has a direct bearing on Indo-Pak relations. Pakistan should realise that an arsenal of sophisticated arms cannot keep the danger away. Islamabad must understand that the threat to its existence comes from some other direction and not from India. Countries of this Sub-continent can meet these dangers by mutual cooperation and not by accumulating arms against one another.

Only Expansionists Stand to gain from an Indo-Pak Conflict

In India also we should realise that only the expansionists, whether of the old variety or of the new, stand to gain from an Indo-Pakistan conflict. For too many times and for too long we have been victims of such foreign intervention. We do not want a war with any one, much less with Pakistan. How much armaments does Pakistan legitimately need for its defence is a matter than can be sorted out by mutual consultation between our two countries. Threats to our security should not be exaggerated nor should they be underplayed. We should be realistic in our assessments and always on the alert.

India and Pakistan, in fact the entire region, needs peace. Russian troops on the Khyber Pass and American warships in the India Ocean, both imperil this peace. The real clash of interests is between this region and the super powers, and not among nations of this region.

Forging Ahead

This is the second meeting of the BJP National Council. The first was held at Bombay. The Bombay session was a memorable one from all points of view – in terms of delegate turnout, of public support, and of the level of deliberations. The decisions taken at Bombay provoked keen political debate throughout the country. Indeed, the Bombay Convention gave a new turn to Indian politics.

Farmers attracted toward BJP

During the last four months since Bombay, there has been a very satisfactory growth in the party's strength and influence. We have been able to make good headway in the southern States. In the north, as a result of the conscious attention party units have been paying to the countryside, the peasantry has been drawn towards the BJP in a big way. Earlier this month, a massive Kisan rally was organised by our UP unit at Lucknow. All observers agreed that for the State the rally was unprecedented. In Madhya Pradesh, a mass petition signed by 12 lakh farmers was presented to the Assembly Speaker. I have had occasion to participate in tribal conferences organised by our Maharashtra and MP branches and I was delighted to note the excellent rapport the BJP had been able to establish with the tribal population in many

regions. In my tours of Bihar, Haryana and Punjab, I could easily discern how hopefully the people have been looking up to the BJP. Our Delhi unit, as expected, is doing exceedingly well.

Donation from a Large Number of People

The response to the fund-collection drives undertaken by our units at various places has generally surpassed expectations. A special feature of these drives has been the involvement of a large number of cadres to collect small donations from a maximum number of people. The success achieved in this regard is in itself a measure of the increasing public support which the party has been drawing.

For us, politics is an instrument of national transformation and social service, and not just a means for attaining office. This makes our task somewhat more difficult than ordinary political work as understood in our country.

It is testimony to the growing strength of our Party that while on the one hand hectic efforts are on to isolate us, on the other overtures are also being made to seek our co-operation.

BJP believes in open Politics

I would like to declare very emphatically that our Party does not believe in any clandestine deals. We believe in open politics.

On specific issues pertaining to defence of democracy or promotion of public interest, we are willing to co-operate with all parties.

Very often a question is posed to us: Who is our main enemy – Congress (I) or CPI (M)? My answer is that neither is an enemy.

A Principled Approach

Both are opponents with whom we have genuine and strong differences. And we do not believe that whatever our opponents do is wrong. So our attitude towards them is determined by the merit of the issue, or our assessment of a situation at a given time.

If the Congress (I) Government at the centre encroaches into the autonomy of State governments and tries to topple non-Congress (I) governments, we shall oppose it. But at the same time if the CPI (M) interprets its electoral success in a State as license to liquidate its opponents we shall resist this effort with as much determination.

Ours is a principled approach. Public interest is the supreme consideration.

Our Resolve

Brothers and sisters, circumstances have cast upon us a historical responsibility. Those who are in government have frittered away the faith that had brought them to power. No explanations are any more needed to prove their utter incompetence. What the people really need is a confidence that the BJP has the capacity to deliver goods.

People have High Expectations of BJP

What we have seen, heard and experienced during our countrywise tours has convinced me and my colleagues that the people have very high expectations of us. They recognise our sincerity, our idealism and our sense of discipline. Our role in JP's movement for a Total Revolution, our contribution to the glorious struggle against the Emergency and our dispassionate and constructive endeavours to maintain the unity of the Janata Party are widely appreciated. With great humility, but with pardonable pride, we can also claim that when the people bestowed responsibility on us, and put us in Government, our performance was second to that of none. We have shown how to wield power for public good.

It is up to us to so equip ourselves and strengthen ourselves so as to be able to measure up to the high expectations of the people.

BJP must be Ready for the Struggle ahead

We must gird up our loins for a peaceful struggle against injustice, exploitation and backwardness. In this struggle, we have to involve all sections of the population. Successful mobilisation of the people and an ability to utilise their collective strength is necessary for the success of any peaceful movement. In this struggle, we have to be ready to make all kinds of sacrifices.

We do not believe in a class war or in a caste war. A democratic social system cannot be based on class or caste confrontation. The success of democracy lies in harmonising the interests of various groups and sections. It is on the foundations of such harmony and synthesis that a Gandhian society can be firmly established. The basis of this harmony must be justice.

No doubt, this is an onerous task. But our objectives are clear. I am sure God is with us. Our cause is just. The future is bright.

Vande Mataram!



National Council

Bombay

28-30 December, 1980

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends,

An Opportunity and a Challenge

We are meeting here today for the first National Convention of the Bharatiya Janata Party. I feel extremely grateful to you for the affection and confidence you have bestowed on me by electing me President of the Party. I am conscious of how onerous a burden this is. In fact, in this hour of crisis, it is no easy matter to undertake the leadership of any political party. So far as the Presidentship of the Bharatiya Janata Party is concerned, this is certainly not an ornamental decoration. It is really not a post; it is a responsibility. No doubt, it is an honour; but even more than that, it is a test. It is at once an opportunity and a challenge. May God give me strength and understanding to measure up to this trust.

Why a New Party

I do not propose to go into the details of the circumstances in which the Bharatiya Janata Party was launched. But I would like to assert that it was not with any happiness that we parted company with the Janata Party. From beginning to end, we kept exerting in order to preserve the unity of the Party. We were conscious of the pledge we had taken at Rajghat in the presence of Lok Nayak Jaiprakash to maintain the unity of the Party. But by converting the non-issue of dual membership into an issue, a situation was created in which it became impossible for us to continue in the party with any honour and self-respect.

There is no point in trying to unravel the intentions of those who created such a situation. But it is noteworthy that even among those who had nothing to do with the RSS, there were quite a few who regarded this dual membership issue as a bogey raised for ulterior ends. Many of these are among the founder members of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Growing Popularity of the Party

The enthusiastic support received by the Bharatiya Janata Party throughout the country during the past 9 months is in itself ample justification for our decision to launch a separate party. Today the Bharatiya Janata Party has a membership of over 25 lakh. A large section of these entrants were not connected with the former Jana Sangh. Nevertheless, some of our opponents, prominent among them being our Prime Minister, keep repeating that the Bharatiya Janata Party is only a new name for the former Jana Sangh. They feel disturbed over the growing popularity of the Party in all parts of the country and all sections of society, and think that by saying so they can curb the immense potential that the Party has for future growth.

Pursuing the Unfinished Task

The Janata Party, formed because of the inspiration of Lok Nayak Jaiprakash, has disintegrated. But his vision of a glorious India is still with us. We shall not allow it to be obliterated. His dreams, his labours, his struggles and his unflinching commitment to certain basic values are part of an invaluable legacy that we have inherited. The Bharatiya Janata Party is pledged to pursuing his unfinished task.

Multi-Dimensional Crisis

Today, our country is facing a multi-dimensional crisis. Mounting inflation, deteriorating law and order situation, scarcity of essential commodities, increase in the number and intensity of communal incidents, aggravation of social tensions and violence, oppression of Harijans, tribals, women and other weaker sections, the explosive situation in the north-east—these are some of the

dimensions of this crisis.

A Moral Crisis

Those charged with the responsibility of finding a solution to these problems have no time for it. They are busy manipulating their pawns and planning their moves on the chessboard of politics. I believe that the country's crisis is essentially a moral crisis. The biggest curse of our public life is that moral values have given way to self-seeking and power-lust, and politics has become a pure power game.

Degeneration of Public Life

In its last phase, this degeneration of public life can be traced to the year 1969 when the Prime Minister herself after filling the nomination papers of her party candidate, conspired to have him defeated by resorting to all kinds of unethical means. In the years that have followed, this disregard of ethics and norms has only grown more acute. The emergency declared in 1975 had no relation to any threat to national security, internal or external; it was an unvarnished attempt to cling on to power. The disturbances created in courts during the Janata regime, encouragement given to such serious crimes as hijacking, the constant recourse to intimidation and coercion, the plot to promote defections on a mass scale – all these are facets of the same process. The present ruling party's naked collusion with anti-social elements during the 1980 election and its shameless incitement of communal, casteist and regional feelings in order to pander to vote banks also should be understood in the same light.

Double Standards

Yet another evidence of this process of degeneration is the double standards of morality maintained by Government. There is one standard for those who are their proteges or their relations and another standard for the rest. When, prior to the Janata regime, allegations were made against relatives of the Prime Minister, she dismissed them in utter disregard of the Santhanam Committee's recommendations. In contrast, Prime Minister Shri Desai referred the allegations against his son to judicial scrutiny. It is only during

the 28 months of the Janata rule that some efforts were made to stem this rot of moral decay.

It is not only the rulers or the political parties who are corroded by this decay. It really affects the entire society, the bureaucracy, the industry and the trade. Even the common man is afflicted by it. Self-seeking becomes the order of the day. The nation thus suffers an erosion of moral strength and loses its capacity to face difficulties.

Restoration of Moral Values

If we want to overcome the present crisis, the first and foremost condition is that moral values must be restored to their place in public life. To identify these values we do not have to look outside the country. Irrespective of caste, creed, language and region, an average Indian cherishes deep respect for values like tolerance, contentment, simple living, hard work and brotherhood. Let us strengthen these values and build a new society on that basis. Of course, the modern context has to be kept in view. Pandit Nehru emphasised the use of science and technology for development. The nation has progressed on that account, but large sections of the population have not been the beneficiaries of the prosperity achieved. Inequalities have grown. The chasm between the rich and the poor has widened. These distortions have to be corrected. We can do this if we accept Indian cultural values as the basis for progress, and regard the individual, particularly the weakest individual, as the focal point of our developmental endeavours. Gandhiji, Jaiprakash and Upadhyay had all stressed this approach. It was acceptance of this approach which during the Janata regime gave birth to schemes like *Antyodaya* and Food for Work.

Building a society of this kind, free from exploitation and discrimination and based on certain values, is a challenging task. Merely invoking Gandhiji's name or making pompous declarations is not going to help. An arduous struggle is called for. We have to consciously organise the poor peasantry, workers, the Harijans, the tribals and other exploited sections of the population to this end. It is the organised strength of these sections that can really bring about this new society. Mahatma Gandhi's struggle against the foreign government derived considerable strength from the

success he achieved in mobilising these sections.

Party with a Difference

We can organise the people only if we are able to establish our credibility in their minds. The people must feel convinced that here is a party different from the crowd of self-seekers who swamp the political stage, that its aim is not somehow to sneak into office and that its politics is based on certain values and principles.

Gandhian Socialism

The Bharatiya Janata Party has accepted the concept of Gandhian Socialism after due deliberation. Gandhiji did not propound any 'ism' as such. But his views revealed an integrated approach to life and even to modern problems.

Gandhiji did not regard man only as an economic being. Like all our ancient seers, Gandhiji wanted man to strive for the fulfilment of not only his material but also his spiritual needs. Earlier, we had Swami Vivekananda speak in terms of a spiritual socialism. The Bhagwad Gita refers to *Samya Yoga*. When the *Ishavasya Upanished* remonstrates against casting covetous eyes on another's wealth, it is only commending a society based on *aparigraha* (non-accumulation). The adage, 'All land belongs to Gopal' (lCS Hkwfe xksiky dh) also reflects the same spirit. Every *aahuti* (offering) at the *yajna* is followed by the chant *idannamama* (This is not mine). Here too, it is the same non-accumulative idea that is stressed.

Emphasis on Human Values

There is a basic difference between Gandhian Socialism and Marxist Socialism. Gandhian Socialism starts with human values as historically evolved and tested and then attempts to reconstruct the economic and social systems on the basis of these values. In Marxist ideology, on the other hand, human values are made subject to social relations, material conditions and conditions of production. Both Gandhism as well as Marxism claim to end exploitation of man by man. But Marxist Socialism cannot tell us why it wants to do so unless it gets out of itself, whereas the basic premise of Gandhi's philosophy is that exploitation of man by man is a violation of human values.

Exploitation is due to Loss of Values

The exploitation of man by man has not come on account of evolution and progress in human values. It is, instead, the result of loss of values during some phase of the progress of the socio-economic systems and the material forces operating in that system. Gandhian socialism insists that if economic exploitation of man by man is to be ended it cannot be ended within any value-neutral and so-called scientific social system; it can be stopped only through a value system on which the changes in the social system are to be structured as well as tested.

Marxists are unable to tell us as to what will happen when Capitalism is abolished, except that they will establish a classless society. In practice, however, something far worse has been happening where they have succeeded as their system has turned out to be tyrannical, dictatorial and destructive of human values.

Integrated way of looking at Reality

Marxists and many other so-called scientific socialists often describe Gandhiji as anti-science. This is an utter travesty of truth. Gandhiji's whole life was nothing but a grand search for truth. And what is science if it is not a search for truth? But scientific methods cannot be applied to the search of man for his inner self or his quest for understanding spiritual reality or the reality of the mind. Gandhian socialism emphasises the reality of both the material and the spiritual, and it is only through this integrated way of looking at reality that human values can be discovered.

Violence is Self-defeating

Another basic difference between Marxist socialism and Gandhian socialism is over violence. All communist revolutions have come through violence and, tragically, they have survived by still greater use of violence against their own people. A Marxist revolution eats its own children. Gandhiji did not rule out the use of violence in certain situations, but he had warned Indian politicians that to rely on violence as an instrument of social and political change or for the resolution of class conflict would ultimately be self-defeating.

Distribution of Power

Yet another point of difference between Marxist views and Gandhian views is regarding the question of distribution of power, to which the problem of violence is related. Marxist socialism does not possess an independent theory of the state or of distribution of political power. That is why Marxists do not believe in democracy. Although Gandhiji, like Marx, believed in the ultimate withering away of the State, he warned against the danger of the immense concentration of power in the hands of the State without any countervailing checks. There is difference between Marxism and Gandhism also with regard to the path and process of this withering away. In communist countries, the state has acquired more and more power and is now using it against its own working class and the proletariat in whose name it rules. Recent happenings in Poland provide a glaring example.

Decentralisation

Gandhian socialism regards decentralisation as the basis of its political system. In this there are two streams of political institutions and processes, both running parallel to each other. On the one hand, there will be institutions of **representative democracy** and, on the other, there will be institutions of **participatory democracy**. Today in India there is no democratic participation below the level of Parliament and State legislatures. All powers vest in the bureaucracy. Under this system, therefore, it is not possible to involve people in the efforts for national reconstruction and to make them feel responsible for shaping their own destinies. Panchayats and District Boards should be given real powers and adequate financial resources. Their autonomy should be guaranteed by the Constitution and should not be on the sufferance of the State Government.

These and other local bodies can be of service not only to their own members but also to one another and can be linked with the higher bodies. These institutions which Gandhiji used to describe as local republics can play a valuable role in curbing authoritarian tendencies and trends.

Decentralised Economy

Gandhian socialism is totally against state monopoly of economic power, while in communist countries, socialism has become synonymous with such state monopoly. Concentration of political and economic power in the hands of the State have made communist regimes utterly repressive and antithetical to socialist humanism. In order to prevent the concentration of economic power either in the hands of the State or in the hands of a few individuals, we have to accept a decentralised economy. Both communism and capitalism have generated a new kind of inequality, inhumanity, violence, selfishness, greed, unrestrained consumerism and alienation. Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship points a third way to the world. It can imbibe good points of both capitalism and communism while rejecting their bad points. If society is to harmonise the interests of consumers, producers, the state, owners of property and labour, joining in a common endeavour, then there is no other alternative except trusteeship.

Gandhiji's concept of trusteeship does not depend simply on the good sense of those who are in power. Its real importance can be understood only in the context of institutional changes and organised people's power.

It is a pity that we in India never seriously tried to translate this idea into action whereas some other countries, such as the UK have started experimenting with it.

If in 1947 India had decided to pursue the Gandhian path we might perhaps have been spared the terrible crisis we are having to confront at the moment. Even after 33 years of development and planning, poverty continues to grow, inequalities have become sharper, and the unemployment problem has become explosive. If we had evolved an indigenous pattern of development in conformity with our genius and requirements and having regard to our human and material resources, we would not have been in our present plight. As it is, today we are having to suffer the worst features of both western capitalism and Soviet planning.

A third Alternative

The fact is that capitalism and communism are twin-brothers. One denies equality, the other freedom; and both deny fraternity. In spite of their spectacular achievements, both capitalism and communism are showing signs of decay. Communist countries are developing greater and greater inequalities. In capitalist countries, on the other hand, attempts are on to abridge freedom. There is a ferment in the world in search of a third alternative. Protagonists of both capitalism as well as communism find themselves face to face with problems which cannot be answered within their own systems.

Outside the national frontiers also, there does not seem to be any great difference between capitalist and Marxist attitudes. Marxist powers have proved no less expansionist than the capitalist countries.

The Bharatiya Janata Party will mobilise a national campaign to have Gandhian socialism accepted as a Third Alternative.

Positive Secularism

Since ancient times, the State in India has always been regarded as secular. The concept of theocratic State is alien to Indian traditions and Indian political thought. *"Truth is one but wise men describe it in different ways"* is a belief fundamental to our thinking. The State has never discriminated between followers of different faiths. A very natural outcome of our commitment to the concept of *"Sarva Dharma Samabhava"* was that in 1947, when we became independent, we resolved to set up a political system in which followers of all religions would have the same place. There would be no Class I citizens and Class II citizens. The fanaticism, the tensions that prevailed at that time did not deter us from this resolve, because doing anything else would have been repugnant to our traditions and culture.

Commitment to Democracy

Democracy and secularism are inseparable. A state that discriminates between one citizen and another on grounds of their faith, which does not treat them equally, cannot claim to be truly democratic because one of the cardinal principles on which

democracy is based is equality of all citizens. Our commitment to Secularism, therefore, is as fundamental as our commitment to Democracy.

Among those assembled at this convention, there are thousands who in 1975-76 put up a valiant fight in defence of democracy. They underwent all kinds of sufferings. Several colleagues of ours became martyrs in that struggle. Today, we can only offer them our respectful homage.

Distorted Secularism

It is a matter of regret that over the years, Congress policies have distorted the concept of Secularism. It has come to be identified simply with the protection of interests of religious minorities. Indeed, very often Secularism becomes only a respectable garb for the appeasement of narrow communal or sectional interests.

True Secularism is Positive Concept

No doubt, protection of minority interests is an important aspect of secularism. But in its totality, secularism is a much wider and a more positive concept. As indicated earlier, it constitutes the bedrock of democracy. It is also a guarantee of nationalism and national integration.

It is this broad and positive concept of secularism that the BJP subscribes to. In the Indian background, we can claim to have established a truly secular State only if we are able to instil in every citizen, irrespective of his religion, caste, region or language, a sense of Indianness, which I believe exists in all our countrymen and which needs to be assiduously nurtured and strengthened. This Indianness is based on a value system developed out of a synthesis of divergent experiences of various sections of the population over the centuries. This process of synthesis and harmonisation must continue, and all religions in the country can contribute towards making our citizens better Indian's and all Indians better human beings.

Twelve months of Failure

Twelve months have gone by. But in Delhi, the Government that works is still nowhere in sight.

There is a Parliament, of course. Its winter session has just ended. By putting its seal of approval to 10 Ordinances in 24 days, it has set up a new record. The Houses have been kept sitting till past mid-night in order to pass black Bills like the National Security Bill.

On 14 August, 1947, Pandit Nehru had said in the Constituent Assembly; *“At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.”*

New Chains of Slavery

On 22 December, 1980, when the Rajya Sabha, deliberating till 1.00 AM passed the National Security Bill, someone could well have observed: *“While all India is asleep, the elected representatives of the people, instead of devising ways to guarantee them two square meals, are engaged in forging new chains to enslave them.”*

The Supreme Court also is there in its place. In the Minerva Mills case, it once again reaffirmed that there are in our Constitution some basic features which may not be tinkered with by Parliament. But Government is all set to have this verdict scrapped. The Supreme Court is being depicted as a roadblock on the path of progress. Quite a few vacancies on the Bench remain unfilled.

The Press generally is alive to its responsibilities. The demoniac blinding of undertrials in Bhagalpur may not have come to light if *The Indian Express* and *Sunday* had not shown the enterprise and boldness to expose these misdeeds.

Gagging of the Press

However, the newspaper world is gripped by an unarticulated fear—the fear of consequences that can follow non-conformist writing. The gherao of newspaper offices in Bangalore, and the mass rape, and murder of Chhabirani, wife of journalist Mahapatra of Orissa, convey an ominous significance that cannot be missed. If bizarre happenings such as these are not sufficient to keep the press in line, New Delhi is always willing to use its arm-twisting skills against press barons to fix the newspapers.

Abuse of official Media

Abuse of governmental media such as radio and television, has now transgressed all bounds of decency. The role of radio and television during the years has made utter nonsense of government's pretensions about democracy. Our shortsighted rulers do not seem to realise that once these media lose credibility with the people, they cannot be effective even as drum-beaters of the ruling party, a task they have shamelessly undertaken.

Administrative Paralysis

In New Delhi today, there is a Government, but there is no administration. There is a Prime Minister, but one who has lost her grip. The secretariat is there as always, but the services seem struck by paralysis as it were. No decisions are being taken. No one is willing to own responsibility. Ministers wear a permanent look of nervousness, always fearful of the hour when they too might be shown the boot like Kamalapati Tripathi. The bureaucracy is demoralised, and feels apprehensive lest, for being upright in the performance of their duties, they should have to suffer humiliation or even imprisonment as DIG, CBI Shri N.K. Singh had to suffer.

Loyalists Rewarded

The rewarding of Ministers and officers who had debased and discredited themselves during the emergency has had a very unhealthy effect on the entire administration. Victory in elections, which naturally depends on many factors and circumstances, cannot wash away the categorically proved conclusions of the Shah Commission, nor convert the stinking scandal of Maruti into a monument of good conduct.

Defections Encouraged

During the last 12 months, the immoral process of defections promoted by selfishness and lust for power has continued unabated. Instead of trying to halt this, the ruling party has been unabashedly engaged in trying to seduce and corrupt potential floor-crossers. As a result, the already soiled reputation of politicians has been further trashed. More distressing still, the party system itself has been seriously undermined.

When the Assam Assembly was placed under '*suspended animation*', the Cong (I) had only 8 legislators. Now the party has 56. It may be noted that this accretion of strength has taken place during a period when the youth of Assam were immersed in a life and death struggle to save their State from foreign infiltration. Their struggle continues even today but the Centre is unable to provide any solution.

Police Atrocities

A large section of the people in Moradabad feel convinced that they can receive no protection from PAC. The Bhagalpur police also seems to believe that by blinding undertrial prisoners, they have only effectively discharged their duty of curbing crime. The stripping of a woman in Baghpat by the police and parading her naked in the streets was shameful, but even more disturbing is the fact that hundreds of people watched this outrage in mute helplessness. All these happenings are pointers not merely of administrative failure or of a decline in social consciousness; they indicate a virtual distinegration of our institutional framework. Some political analysts have described the situation as "*a civilisational crisis*".

Whatever be the epithet used to describe this crisis, there is no doubt that this crisis is unaprecedented. The fading charisma of one individual, the influence of a party cracking up with dissensions and the battered prestige of government are certainly in no position to surmount this crisis.

Sinister moves to install a "President for Life"

People who advocate adoption of the presidential system in place of our present parliamentary democracy as a panacea for these ills are either fools or knaves. In most cases, it is the latter description which would fit.

Talks about a "*President for life*" and an "*elected judiciary*" are not the fancies of an individual. They are indices of a deep conspiracy which aims at perpetuating the hold on the State acquired by the present rulers with the help of negative votes. If these designs succeed, India would cease to be a republic. This conspiracy must be exposed and frustrated before it can materialise.

Electoral Reform

An analysis of the 1980 election results would show that once again a party that failed to secure the support of the majority of electors has succeeded in capturing power. In the last Lok Sabha elections, the Cong. (I) secured 351 seats out of 525, but in terms of votes the Cong (I) got only 42.56% of the votes cast.

Indeed, it is one of the major quirks of our election system that under this system, on the basis of minority votes a party is able to secure an overwhelming majority of seats. Right since 1952, there has been not a single election in which the winning party has been able to secure the support of a majority of the electorate. Even the Janata Party, when it won the elections in 1977, got only 43.06% votes.

Election a Big Gamble

This system yields odd results. In 1977, the Janata Party secured 43.06% votes but on that basis got only 298 seats, whereas in 1971, with almost the same voting percentage, the Cong (I) was able to get 350 seats. Then again in 1980, with 42.56% votes, the Cong (I) managed to get 66.86% seats whereas in 1977, with a higher poll percentage of 43.06%, the Janata could get only 56.80% seats in Parliament. Critics of this system in Britain have said that this system makes elections a big gamble.

Majority with Minority of Votes

It is evident that under this system, the people's will is not fairly reflected in the legislatures. The '*massive mandate*' bragged about by winning parties is generally illusory. These parties represent only a minority of the populace. Nonetheless, by virtue of their legislative majority, momentous decisions are taken in legislatures, laws are changed, the Constitution is radically overhauled, but the majority sanction behind these changes is really missing.

Need to Adopt a Different System

It is imperative that electoral reform is undertaken urgently. In place of the present majority system of elections that we have, we should adopt some variation of the List System, a system that has been worked successfully by most European democracies.

The biggest advantage of the List System is that it would politicise the electorate, make them think in terms of party policies and programmes and thus minimise, if not eliminate, the vitiating influence of caste and community that presently dominates the thinking of the average voter. Above all, the List System will stabilise the party system which under the present system remains in a state of perpetual flux. It will not make elections the kind of gamble they presently are. Parties would be represented in Parliament and the State Legislatures broadly in proportion to their actual support in the people. No doubt, the Majority system has some advantages. One person representing one constituency can better attend to the developmental needs of that constituency. West Germany has tried to combine the plus points of both the Majority system and the List system and has evolved what is known as the Mixed System. It would be of advantage perhaps if we adopt the List System for Lok Sabha elections and the Mixed System for State elections.

A Joint Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms constituted in 1973 had recommended that an experts body should be appointed to examine the feasibility of adopting the List system in India. It is a matter of regret that there has been no follow up on this recommendation yet. In this respect, the Janata Government also cannot be absolved of blame. The Janata Government did, however, approve of several other far reaching electoral reforms, such as public financing of elections, and had decided to discuss its proposals with Opposition Parties before initiating necessary legislation in that regard. I demand that the Experts Committee suggested by the Parliamentary Committee earlier should be set up without delay, and that the proposals drawn up during the Janata regime be implemented.

Influence of Money Power must be contained

The growing influence of money power in elections has always been a matter of concern, but lately this problem has acquired dangerous dimensions. Money not only from indigenous sources but from foreign sources as well is reported to be playing havoc with our elections. In order to contain the corroding influence of money power at the polls the following measures should be seriously considered:

1. Election expenses should be regarded as a legitimate charge on the public exchequer. Political parties should be given grants on the basis of votes secured by them in the preceding elections. Candidates who are able to save their security deposit should be entitled to reimbursement by the State up to the maximum limit of expenditure permitted.
2. The expenditure incurred by a party on any candidate's election should be added to the candidate's own expenses.
3. There should be a ceiling on the expenditure which political parties can legitimately incur.
4. There should be a limit also to the external props of publicity used by a party such as newspaper advertisements, posters, leaflets, etc.
5. The accounts of political parties should be subject to statutory audit.
6. As recommended by the Tarkunde Committee, the Election Commission should be a multi-member body, and voting age must be reduced from 21 to 18 years.

The Janata Government had taken the historic step of allowing all recognised political parties the use of radio and television during the elections. There is need of further extension of the facility given. A scheme of political broadcasts also, apart from election broadcasts, should be drawn up.

Compulsory Voting

I feel that there is a case for compulsory voting in India. We have had 7 General Elections till now, but the number of such electors who have never voted or who have been generally indifferent to elections is still legions. The 1980 Lok Sabha elections, like the 1977 elections, were contested on some very crucial issues. But out of 35.40 crore voters only 20.13 crore exercised their right of franchise. This means that more than 15 crore voters did not go to the polling booth. In several democracies voting is compulsory.

Foreign Policy

By making foreign policy a plaything in the game of politics, the present government has seriously undermined the national

consensus that had developed on foreign policy during the last three decades.

In 1977, the Janata Party had fought the Lok Sabha elections almost entirely on domestic issues, and so, after winning the elections, emphasised the need for continuity in foreign policy. In 1980, however, the Congress (I) dragged foreign policy into the election arena and made it a major plank in these elections.

If India's relations with its immediate neighbours have suddenly turned sour, the roots of this development have to be traced to speeches delivered during the election campaign in which it was said, *'Even small neighbours of ours are behaving arrogantly with us.'*

Big Brother Attitude would not serve our Interests

By pursuing a policy of good neighbourliness and mutually beneficial bilateralism, the Janata Government had for the first time in 30 years succeeded in creating a climate of trust and confidence in this region.

But now by reverting to the earlier Big Brother attitude towards these neighbouring countries, the new government has in twelve months wiped off all the gains of the earlier period. The charge is baseless, even malicious, that the Janata Government, in order to win the goodwill of neighbouring countries, has sacrificed vital national interests. The Salal Agreement with Pakistan was entered into on exactly the same terms as our predecessor government wanted to secure, but could not. On the question of the division of Ganga waters, while in 1975 our treaty with Bangladesh gave India only 11000 to 16000 cusecs of water, the treaty finalised by the Janata Government ensured augmentation of water supply to 20500 cusecs.

Failure to stand up to Soviet Intervention in Afghanistan

By acquiescing in USSR's military intervention in Afghanistan, which now has become virtual occupation of Afghanistan by Soviet Russia, the Government of India has tarnished the country's image the world over, and has isolated India completely from the neighbouring countries, the non-aligned nations and the Islamic world.

Freedom-loving Afghans, who have always been our friends, are never going to forgive us for our failure to stand up

unequivocally against the Soviet intervention.

The joint statement issued at the end of Soviet President Mr. Brezhnev's recent visit to India says not a word about Afghanistan. India's silence in this regard is even more eloquent than its earlier equivocation.

No Justification for our Kampuchea Policy

Government's decision to recognise the Kampuchean regime propped up by the Vietnamese army is without any principled justification. This decision also has created serious misgivings about the independence of India's foreign policy, particularly in the eyes of the South-East Asian countries.

It would not be out of place to mention here that even while continuing efforts to normalise relations with China, the Janata Government never hesitated to condemn Chinese aggression on Vietnam. Aggression is aggression, irrespective of whether the victim is Kampuchea or Vietnam. India cannot afford to have double standards in such matters.

No Indo-Soviet Alignment

Independent observers cannot be blamed if they infer that Indo-Soviet friendship is getting transformed into Indo-Soviet alignment. The entire Indian people, all political parties in the country, appreciate the value of Moscow's friendship and would like to see it strengthened. During the Janata regime, despite misgivings in certain quarters, these ties of friendship did become deeper and maturer. But making Indo-Soviet ties meaningful and fruitful is one thing and allowing the impression to grow that in respect of world events, India has no strategic perception distinct from that of the USSR, is quite another.

Soviet Russia's armed intervention in Afghanistan and the reaction to this of America and its allies has precipitated in this part of the world a situation which would have prompted both India and Pakistan to forget the past and try to open a new chapter in Indo-Pakistan relations. It is a matter of regret that the leadership in both these countries has allowed a historic opportunity to slip by.

Pakistan ought to understand that the threat to its security posed by the presence of Soviet troops just beyond the Khyber

Pass cannot be met simply by trying to grab arms and armaments from wherever it can.

A Strong and Stable Pakistan would serve Indian Interests

India too must realise that it is in India's own interest that there should be a strong and stable Pakistan between India and USSR as a buffer. Any temptation to take advantage of Pakistan's present difficulties can in the long run prove very costly to India herself.

The Government of India should take an initiative to overcome the setback in our relations with Pakistan. When BJP Vice-president **Shri Jethmalani** visited Pakistan a few months back in connection with the problems of Afghan refugees, **President General Zia** told him in the presence of the Indian Ambassador to Pakistan that Pakistan is agreeable to having a no-war pact with India. We should have pursued this matter from this point onwards. We should also take steps to resume talks with Peking at high level.

India must assist Moral Strength

In the fast deteriorating international situation, India can play a meaningful role only if it expressed itself clearly and unhesitatingly against any encroachment upon the freedom of nations, any violation of frontiers and any interference in the internal affairs of other peoples. India should show some moral strength even in international realtions.

In search of Excuses

To cover up its dismal failure on all fronts, the Government is resorting to ever new excuses. The first six months were whiled away with the refrain that the train of administration had been derailed and ploughed into earth during the 28 months of the Janata rule and that it would take time to put it back on the rails. The next six months are being passed with the alibi that the Opposition with its disruptionist tactics, is not allowing the Government to function.

Those who raised a hue and cry at some stray incidents of chain-snatching in Delhi during the Janata days are now indulging in legal hair splitting to prove daylight dacoities as mere robberies. Those who hurled stones at me as a protest against delay in the arrest of Billa and Ranga, are now mum over the failure of the police

to trace the murderers of Jaisinghani, uncover the mystery of Mrs. Purnima Singh's death and haul up all the criminals responsible for the murder of the Nirankari Baba.

The incidents of Pipra and Parasbigha in Bihar were no less painful than that of Belchi. But the Prime Minister did not care to go there even in a helicopter whereas she went riding on an elephant to Belchi. She dismissed the UP Government on the issue of Naraipur but she refused to accept the resignation of her own Chief Minister whose Government had failed to prevent the killing of hundreds at Moradabad. Today, she is never tired of blaming the opposition for making political capital out of every incident. But she seems to have conveniently forgotten what she had herself said at Naraipur that, if the Government commits a mistake, why shouldn't the opposition exploit it.

Kisan Struggle

The present wave of mass agitations in various parts of the country is in fact a spontaneous phenomenon. The Assam agitation against infiltration of foreigners, which is more than a year old now, has surpassed even the independence struggle in point of its sweep and the mass support and cooperation that it enjoys. It is a national endeavour expressive of the determination of the youth force to protect the territorial integrity of India and the identity of Assam. It has nothing to do with political parties or partisan politics.

The movements being run by the *Kisans* in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh etc. to get their demands accepted, are also not inspired by political parties. *Kisans* belonging to all parties, including the ruling party, are participating in this fight.

Soaring Prices

In fact, the economic condition of the peasantry has deteriorated over the years. The costs of inputs like fertilizers, irrigation, electricity, diesel, seeds, etc. have gone up, but the income from the produce has not increased proportionately. The soaring prices of non-agricultural goods have also hit them badly because they are consumers also.

Rural Indebtedness

The figures of rural indebtedness are startling. Only a few years ago, the overdue debts amounted to Rs. 750 crore. Now they have risen to 6000 crore. Moreover, 85 percent of the agriculturists are in debt.

The Bharatiya Janata Party considers the farmers' demand of remunerative prices for agricultural commodities as completely justified and supports it fully.

As long as a proper ratio is not established between the prices of sugarcane and sugar, cotton and cotton textiles, groundnut and vanaspati oil, jute and jute manufactures, etc., the exploitation of producers of raw materials will continue and the manufacturers of industrial goods will go on making exorbitant profits.

Fall in Cotton Prices

The price of cotton cloth has trebled in the last few years, but the price of cotton has gone down. The famous '*Varlakshmi*' cotton of Andhra which fetched Rs. 1200-1500 per quintal, has now slumped to Rs. 500. The cost of jute production is Rs. 192 per tonne whereas the officially fixed price is only Rs. 150 per tonne.

The Andhra Government had fixed the paddy support price at Rs. 105 per quintal but the farmers had to sell it off at Rs. 75 per quintal for lack of proper purchase arrangements by government agencies. This situation holds good at other places and for other crops as well.

Cost of Agricultural Produce

The Agricultural Prices Commission has failed in its purpose. It should be disbanded and a new body set up in its place to determine the cost of agricultural produce by taking into consideration the prices of industrial goods as well as the soaring cost of living of the Kisans and their needs.

Awakening Among Farmers

The farmer has now risen from centuries of sloth and ignorance to claim his due. He should be given credit for making the country

self-sufficient in foodgrains and saving foreign exchange worth billions. The attempt to create a rift in the Kisan movement on the basis of big and small farmers or between the rural producer and the urban consumer will not succeed. The awakening created by the movement in the countryside will also benefit the landless labourers.

Increase Foodgrain Production

The Government should take the farmers into confidence and chalk out a timebound programme to double the foodgrain production. The world is likely to suffer from food shortage for a long time. However, India has the capacity to become a leading exporter in this respect. This potential should be fully utilised.

Assam Movement

Assam is burning. A conflagration has been raging there for the last one year. The people of Assam are becoming strangers in their own State because of large scale infiltration of foreign citizens. This process has been going on for decades. I recall having drawn the Government's attention to this matter in 1957 after being elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time. I had then warned that the situation would take an explosive turn if no effective remedial steps were taken to prevent such infiltration. But the Government failed to realise the seriousness of the problem.

The magnitude of the foreigners' problem is not small, as the powers-that-be try to depict it. In 1978, during the Janata rule, in Mangaldoi Lok Sabha constituency alone, 47,600 names of foreigners were detected in the voters' list. Between 1957 and 1970, there has been an increase of 12 lakh names in the voters' list of Assam, but between 1970 and 1979, the increase has been to the order of 28 lakh new voters.

Future of Foreigners

Due to the attitude of the Central Government during the last twelve months, the Assam problem has become more complicated. Sometimes the Government tries to give it the colour of Assamese versus non-Assamese and sometimes it resorts to the policy of

bringing about a confrontation between the Assamese and the Bengalis. Yet again, it tries to make it a Hindu-Muslim question. But it always refuses to see the foreigners' problem in the state in its real form.

Assam is a frontier province. It has its geographical importance and from the military point of view it is the gateway of India. Full of scenic charm, it is rich in oil, minerals, vegetation, water and springs. It has a rich cultural heritage. But today's Assam is poor, disregarded, exploited and cursed. Assamese people blame the Centre for their backwardness. They also complain of callous attitude towards their language and heritage.

As a result of several rounds of talks between the Central Government and leaders of the movement, differences have already narrowed and now the deadlock centres round the future of foreigners coming between 1961 and 1971. The Government is not ready to settle them outside the State, whereas the agitation leaders do not consider it feasible and desirable to put the entire burden on their State.

Both sides should soften their stiff stand and adopt a via media in relation to the identification and deletion of the names of those who entered the state between 1961 and 1971. The question whether such people should be allowed to live in Assam or settled in other States should be left to the new Government elected on the basis of a new voters' list.

Discuss Present Government

The present government in Assam has been formed to fulfil a constitutional obligation. But there is no constitutional and moral propriety of expediency in continuing it. Hence, it should be dismissed immediately.

Repression won't do

The mass movement of Assam cannot be suppressed with bullets or arrests. It is suicidal to deal with a movement, with which almost every Assamese man, woman and child is emotionally linked, as a purely law and order issue. The path of repression is not the path of peace.

Politicians Encouraging Infiltration

The responsibility for the present situation in Assam rests on those political leaders who, out of selfish motive, not only turned a blind eye to foreign infiltration, but were also guilty of encouraging it. The soul of Assam is already beset with many wounds. The rest of India, by its indifference and the central leadership, by its short-sightedness, should not commit the sin of its complete destruction.

Economic Situation – 1977 and 1980

The responsibility for the present economic crisis in the country lies squarely on the policies, or absence of policies, of the present Government. In China, they have a habit of naming their years. One is called the Year of the Moon, another the Year of the Lion, and so on. If we were to emulate their practice, Smt. Gandhi's first year in office would be remembered as the Year of the Snail. Nothing moved during the year. It was as if time had stood still. In contrast, the Janata Government's two years were really years of the Galloping Horse!

Slow pace of Development

The worst aspect of this economic stagnancy is that the Government did not even know that things had stopped moving. Finance Minister Venkataraman kept on changing his figures. He began by saying while presenting his disastrous budget – that industrial production would go up by 8 to 10 per cent. He has now admitted that it may be no more than 4 per cent. As usual, he is wrong. In fact, industrial production may be just 2 per cent more than last year.

Soaring Inflation

One of the major election planks of this Government was: Curbing inflation. But the only two things that have gone up during the Congress regime are prices, and the share market. Everything else has been going down and down. During the Janata regime, national income went up by 6.2 per cent. This year the increase may not be more than 3 per cent. Industrial production during the Janata regime was 5.5 per cent a year. This year, it will be less than two per cent. Again during the Janata regime, prices were stabilised;

the increase was only nominal. This year, they have gone up by 20 per cent, and are still going up.

The Prime Minister says she had handed to the Janata Government a sound economy but that the Janata made a mess of it. She forgets that there was a drought in 1976-77, a year before Janata came to power. Then, there was a drought last year. Even then we did very well and the economy expanded. Now it is the other way round.

Falling Foreign Exchange Reserves

A good economy almost always results in good foreign exchange reserves. During the Janata years, the reserves went up by Rs. 2350 crore and when we left the Government, the reserves stood at Rs. 5200 crore. Since then they have been coming down by as much as Rs. 600 crore per year. The nation's wealth is being squandered.

We hear a great deal these days about the Sixth Plan. The Planning Commission boasts of having drawn up the Plan in a jiffy. Actually, all they have done is to chop and change the old Plan prepared by the Janata and present it as a new Plan. That is of course excusable. But what is going to happen now, and which can never be condoned, is that the Plan itself will be scrapped, because the way the prices are going up the Plan will be no more than a paper doll.

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that India is among the top ten industrial countries of the world. Why should a big country like India be among the top ten, and not among the top five? The world is moving ahead much faster than we are. Even small countries like South Korea have left us far behind. A nation's economy is like a man on a bicycle: if you stop pedalling, you fall down. This Government stopped pedalling long ago, and is about to fall.

At the Crossroads

However, one need not be much concerned about the question whether this Government will fall or survive. In a democracy, Governments will come and Governments will go. The pertinent question really is: Will India be able to face the present challenges

successfully on the basis of its value-system and be able to build a new future for itself?

Friends, the situation is grave. The country is once again standing at the cross-roads of destiny. On one side, we can see clearly the threat of authoritarianism; on the other, we can also perceive the dangers of anarchy. We have to prepare the people to face these twin dangers. The BJP does not favour the politics of confrontation, but at the same time we would never shy away from confrontation, if the situation so demands.

Democracy Must be Defended

The soul of Indian democracy dwells in the intense desire of our 650 million people for equality and for freedom from exploitation. Those who keep thinking of devising ways to destroy or debilitate democracy can do so only at the risk of being swept away by the fury of the people.

Change the Status Quo

In our struggle for the restoration of moral values and in defence of democracy, let us involve the farmers, the workers, the rural poor, the artisans, the youth, the students and the women and create in them the realisation that their conditions would improve only if they exert in a corporate manner to change the status quo.

A Call for Relentless Struggle for Democracy and Social Justice

The BJP is resolved to devote itself to politics rooted in the soil. Only by that course can we restore the confidence of the people in politics, political parties and political leaders. The days of summit politics are over. Manipulative politics also has no future. There is no place in BJP for people madly in pursuit of post, position and pelf. Those who lack courage or self-respect may go and prostrate themselves at the Delhi Durbar. So far as we are concerned, we are determined to wage a relentless struggle against the dangers I have indicated. With the Constitution of India in one hand and the banner of equality in the other, let us get set for the struggle. Let us take inspiration from the life and struggle of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Let Mahatma Phule be

our guide in our crusade for social justice.

The Lotus shall Bloom

**Standing on the shores of this ocean beneath the Western ghats,
I can say this with confidence about the future: Darkness will be
dispelled, the Sun will rise and the Lotus shall bloom!**

Vande Mataram!

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