

not respect our Constitution. We do not believe in the rule of law. We shall do what we like and we shall not abide by the court's decision."

Sir, I will use this forum to appeal to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, to the RSS and to the BJP to respect the rule of law, because without rule of law, the country shall not remain what it is, country shall be divided. I would like the Government to warn the Vishwa Hindu Parishad about the consequences of defiance of law. I would like to appeal to the Government to take every possible measure to protect the dignity of the mosque and prevent its demolition. I would request the Government to see the essence of this campaign. It is not a religious campaign, Mr. Home Minister and Mr. Prime Minister. It is nothing but a political campaign. Their target is not the Babri Masjid. Their target is the secular order of the country. Their aim is not the construction of a new temple. Their aim is to construct a Hindu Rashtra.

"Yeh Siyasat ki ada hai, Santha koi nahin,  
Sabke moonh mein hai zaban, bolta koi nahin."

Sir, let the elections be close at hand. But elections come and go. Governments come and go. Power is transient. Nobody is born to rule for ever. But country must exist and country must survive. Therefore, through you Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, I appeal to the Government to take every possible measure in truthful obedience to the dictates of the Constitution, in consonance with the dictates of the moral law, in consonance with the duty of the custodians of the law and order of the State and the destiny the people of India. Stop this flood before it is too late. Stop this fire before it consumes everything that is valuable and precious in our heritage, in our history and in our life.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI RAJIV GANDHI): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, a secular India alone is an India that can survive.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Let me also speak.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is only intervening. The Home Minister will give the final reply. You can speak tomorrow.

[Translation]

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: Alright, I will speak in Telugu.

[English]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI: Sir, a secular India alone is an India that can survive. Perhaps an India that is not secular does not deserve to survive. Sir, India and secularism must remain synonymous to assure the glory of our civilisation and the future of our country.

In every village of India, in every *basti*, and in every *mohalla*, there are people of different faiths, of different languages, of different cultures who live together as neighbours. Secularism is a condition of our existence. It is the essence of our tradition. Secularism and our nationhood are inseparable.

We are a multi-religious society, we are a multi-lingual society, we are a multi-cultural society, but we are not a multi-national society. We are one people, we are one nation, we are one country and we have one common citizenship.

Sir, most civilizations posit nationhood and diversity as antithetical. The single greatest contribution of India to world civilization is to demonstrate that there is nothing antithetical between diversity and nationhood. Through 5000 years of living experience, we have demonstrated to the world that our unity in diversity is a vibrant reality.

Sir, today's world is in desperate need

[Sh. Rajiv Gandhi]

of learning from India's experience. Peace and survival in the modern age depend on non-violence, on tolerance, on compassion and understanding; on peaceful co-existence between diverse philosophies and diverse ways of life. Through technological development the world is becoming smaller and is growing into a global village. The world is equally in need of unity and diversity.

India's secularism is a global need because global secularism is inseparable from human survival; it is inseparable from global inter-dependence; it is inseparable from global co-operation.

Sir, the history of humanity is blood splattered with the consequences of narrow-minded nationalisms, equating community with nation, religion with nation, language with nation, ethnicity with nation. To escape history's trap of turbulence and tragedy, many countries and regional groupings are now seeking to escape the exclusivisms of past. They are reaching towards multi-cultural societies, where diverse faiths, languages and cultures can live together in harmony, equality and confidence, in the confidence, that they can conserve their heritage and their culture, with the self-confidence to exchange ideas and experiences, to live together without the cross-fertilisation of ideas, leading to cultural genocide.

Sir, in this world-wide effort, the world is learning from India's unity in diversity. No other civilization has as long a record as ours in evolving a composite culture. No other country has as long a record as ours of a polity based on secularism.

Sir, notwithstanding thousands of years of secularism, the forces of communalism have not been vanquished. The history of India is a kind of dialectic between the forces of secularism, tolerance and compassion versus the forces of communalism, fundamentalism and fanaticism. In the long run, secularism will always triumph. But the never ceasing running battle with the opposing forces of communalism continues which we

must fight.

Sir, it is also important to understand how India sees secularism. How do we understand secularism? First and foremost, our secularism is not anti-religious or irreligious. We have a deep and abiding appreciation of the rich vein of spirituality that runs through our culture, that runs through every religion of India. It runs through our history, it runs through every person who is an Indian. That rich vein of spirituality is the source of our moral values, of our ideals and our standards, of our goals and of our objectives. We venerate this spiritual tradition. We cherish its moral values. We respect all the different forms in which this spirituality manifests itself. The cardinal principle of our secularism is equal respect for all religions: *sarva dharma samabhaav*.

18.00 hrs.

Our second great principle is that we respect all religions equally. No religious community is singled out for favours by the State, no religious community is subjected to any disability or disadvantage by the State. The State has no religion. The State is above religion. For the State, religion is a private and personal matter for the individual. Whatever religion an Indian professes, whatever faith an Indian propagates, for the State it is a personal matter. The State is concerned only with full protection for all, with equal opportunity for all, with equitable benefits for all. For the State, all Indians are equal in the eyes of the State.

The third principle, which flows from the first and second, is that since religion has high value, it must remain in the sphere of private and personal life. It has no role to play in the politics of the country.

Sir, injecting religion into politics is the poisoning of our body politic. Mixing religion with politics is against the traditions of our civilization, the canons of our Constitution and the survival of our State.

Sir, we have not forgotten, and we will never forget, the terrible consequences to

the Freedom Movement, of the mixing of religion with politics. From the War of Independence that started in 1857 to 1940, Indians of all communities, except communalists, were together in the battle to free India, to make India independent for all Indians irrespective of their creed or caste, living together as one nation was axiomatic, respecting and celebrating our glorious diversity, united in the belief that India belongs equally to all Indians.

Soon after the Lahore Resolution was passed by the Muslim League, Sir, because of the Quit India Movement the secular leaders of all communities and religions at that time were mostly in jail or had gone underground. Sir, it gave an opportunity for the communalists to make inroads into the mainstream. Within less than a decade of the Lahore Resolution, India was partitioned.

We shall never let another partition of India happen again. We shall never again let the forces of communalism triumph over secularism.

A patriotic Indian is a secular Indian. A nationalist Indian is a secular Indian. A dedicated Indian is a secular Indian. A disciplined Indian is a secular Indian.

Sir, through forty years of Independence we have shown that we are one nation. We have faced external aggression as a united nation. We have stood firm as one nation against the internal forces of fundamentalism and fanaticism. It is illustrated most dramatically by what has happened in Punjab. The protagonists of secession found common cause with religious fanatics. Together, they roped in terrorists, murderers, hired assassins, gun-runners, smugglers and common criminals, mixing politics with religion, mixing religion with criminality. Gurdwaras were turned into criminal dens till Operation Black Thunder, proving that terrorism was not for religion, not for religious purposes, but for ulterior motives. The people were disgusted at the defilement of the shrines and the misuse of religion. They were disgusted with the intimidation of the

Granthis and the oppression of the sevadars.

The people of Punjab have not given in. The tolerance of our people has triumphed. The brotherhood of centuries has triumphed. The innate secularism of our people has triumphed. Sir, the forces of communalism have not accepted defeat. They are always on the prowl, always looking for an opportunity to make mischief, always trying to insinuate themselves into the political life of the country working from behind the scene or using others as a front. If the secular forces stand together, communalism can be contained. The danger arises when political parties, for opportunistic reasons, lend the weight of their support to narrow causes.

There are political parties represented even in this House that have become tools wittingly or unwittingly of fundamentalism and fanaticism masquerading as religion. Some political parties live on stoking the fears of religious minorities. Other political parties live on stoking the religious passions of the majority communities. And then there are those who convert petty arguments and minor disputes into communal conflagrations. There are those that create disputes where none exist. There are those that incite passions only to pose as protectors of the faith. The Congress is pledged to have nothing to do under any circumstances with such forces.

As a Government our foremost duty is to safeguard secularism. We invite the cooperation of every section of this House to join us in this great national endeavour. I welcome the suggestion that has been made by Shri Indrajit Gupta. I have already requested the Home Minister to call all the secular parties, all the nationalist 1st parties, and to talk with them and work with them to see how we can build a composite culture.

Our secular traditions began with the Vedas and the epics. The concept of the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, further developed by the Buddha and Mahavira, was the basis for the development of Indian civilization and of our society. We welcomed Judaism in

[Sh. Rajiv Gandhi]

Kerala; we welcomed St. Thomas and Christianity; we welcomed Zoroastrianism and today we have the largest Parsi community in the world; we welcomed the great Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh. We synthesized Islam and the great Sufi tradition of Amir Khusro and Kabir and Baba Farid and Shah, Abdul Latif. Our religious festivals are festivals not of one community but of all Indians and all communities. We celebrate them together.

Over the last 40 years we have augmented our capacity to tackle communalism. It is reflected in the declining trend in communal incidents. It is reflected in the containment in the numbers of persons losing their lives and suffering injury in communal clashes. But the task has not ended. It will not end till there are no more communal incidents, till there is no more loss of life or limb or property. Indeed, not even then as the highest vigilance will be required to keep communalism at bay. We will have to fight communalism till it is defeated and ended and completely vanquished.

Law and order is a State subject. The Centre can at best consider the national perspective, issue guidelines and assist State Governments, but the primary responsibility lies squarely with the State Governments. The State Governments have been assisted time and again by the courts, and I would specially like to congratulate the Bombay High Court and Justice Barucha for their historic decision.

Sir, we have commended to the Chief Ministers the far-reaching recommendations of the National Integration Council's subgroup headed by Shri P.N. Haksar. There has been some effect, although the overall action has not been to our satisfaction. The overall communal situation has become better than in the past. But there is no room for complacency. The communal monster must be laid low.

Indiraji fell martyr to the bullets of com-

munalism. She was the author of the 15-Point Programme which was to be implemented by all the State Governments. I have chaired a number of reviews of that programme and although we have made much progress, I am not happy with the progress that has been made. Much more needs to be done and we will be seeing to it that the follow up is up to the mark. With each session that we have had the follow up has worked better and the results are showing. The curve is on the upswings. But it is too slow. It must be accelerated. We urge the protection of the minorities. We must work for multi-religious police forces. We must give special assistance for the education and economic advancement of the minorities.

The challenge to secularism is not from one quarter, but from fanatics of all faiths stirring trouble in various ways. There are those who ignore our composite culture and project to followers, a distorted and motivated picture of India's history creating grievances where there are none, making political capital out of distressed religious sentiments. It is for the State Governments to be alive to such attempts, to set up an intelligence system for advance information about trouble makers and trouble spots. It is for State Governments to take preventive action and quick, corrective measures.

No State Government, Congress or non-Congress, can claim an unblemished record. All State Governments, Congress and non-Congress, have attempted to tackle the problem. No State Government has ever been refused a full assistance of the Centre in preventing or tackling the problems in a particular situation. This is not an issue between the Centre and the States. It is not an issue between the Congress and other parties. It is a national issue and it is an issue that demands a national response.

The elements of a response, formulated through a general consensus and the consent of the country, is what is needed. The secular injunctions of the Constitution must be carried out in good faith and with deep dedication. Religion must not be mixed with

politics. No one doing so can run for elections today after our recent amendments. But still there are some political parties who have not amended their constitutions. These political parties must amend their constitution and bring them into conformity with the nation's Constitution.

The minorities needing educational and economic help must be assisted to avail of equality of opportunity as guaranteed by the law. Genuine grievances must be tackled quickly. Imaginary grievances must be quickly exposed. The machinery of law and order must be insulated from all religious prejudice, from all communal overtones. The people of India must be involved in giving practical expression to their innate secularism.

This year we are celebrating the birth centenary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He was one of our greatest secular leaders, perhaps one of the greatest secular leaders of all time.

When Gandhiji was felled by religious fanatics, the national responsibility of carrying forward secularism fell on Panditji's shoulders.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru staunchly the bloodletting of partition, reassured the minorities, reformed the obsolete and oppressive mores of the majority community. He gave Indians of all faiths the confidence that the State is above all prejudice, above all discrimination, above all narrowness. He assured every Indian of honour and opportunity.

Sir, we would soon like to call a meeting of the National Integration Council to discuss the issue of communalism, and we would like that to be followed up after the Home Minister has his initial meetings with leaders and members of the opposition parties.

Sir, in a few days, we will be commemorating the 25th anniversary of the passing away of Panditji. There can be no more significant manner of honouring Panditji's memory than in fulfilling his ideals, in rededicating ourselves, in rededicating India and every Indian to the principles of secularism which Jawaharlal Nehru espoused and the unflinching application of the principles to the political and social life of our country.

Thank you, Sir.

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18.15 1/2 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

[English]

Seventy-first Report

SHRI H.K.L. BHAGAT (East Delhi): I beg to present the Seventy-first Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

18.16 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, May 4, 1989/  
Vaisakha 14, 1911 (Saka)*