Punjab Problem

Janata Party Appraisal

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No other constitution in the world is based upon nobler ideals than those enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Indeed, the principles of political freedom, economic justice and social equality have so beautifully been interwoven into the basic law of our secular polity that it profoundly inspired the renowned British political scientist Sir Ernest Barker to dedicate, in 1950, his major work 'Principles of Social and Political Theory' to the Preamble of our Constitution.

Had, therefore, the successive rulers of our country, particularly those in recent years, truly imbibed and honestly implemented the basic objectives of our Constitution, India would certainly have been in the front line of the most dynamic and vibrant nations of the world. Unfortunately, however, indiscriminate subservience to sordid electoral politics, in criminal disregard of the generally agreed national goals and elementary rules of public morality, have gravely impaired our emotional unity and the collective will to march ahead with singleness of purpose and firmness of determination.

The situation in Punjab has been progressively deteriorating, mainly due to the expediency—motivated, opportunistic and sinister electoral calculations of the ruling party, its ad-hoc and piecemeal approach, its lack of sense of history and, above all, its total loss of credibility in the eyes of the aggrieved Punjabis.

The ruling party's latest act of dismissing the Punjab Ministry on the eve of Haryana Assembly elections and that too, only a month after eulogising Mr. S. S. Barnala as a great national hero, leading the nation's battle for unity and secularism—is another glaring example of its wholly unethical, ad-hoc and irresponsible handling of a grave national catastrophe.

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The Janata Party, led by its president, Shri Chandershekhar, has consistently formulated and pursued an independent, positive and a liberal—secular approach on the Punjab crisis by completely sacrificing short-term electoral gains to the exclusive furtherance of the long range, objectives of national welfare, inter-communal amity and mutual goodwill.

Shri Chandershekhar is the architect of the Punjab policy of the Janata Party.

Ever since the 'Operation Blue Star' and the November 1984 carnage, political leaders of all hues have generally been talking of providing a healing touch to the people of Punjab. But, instead, most of them started vying with each other in joining the Congress (I) inspired campaign of vilifying and slandering the patriotic Sikh Community and maliciously distorting and ridiculing their ideals, their institutions, their traditions, and even that dominant segment of their leadership known for its struggle against the massacre of democracy during the Emergency and an unwavering commitment to Indian unity and integrity, human rights, secular democracy and non-violence. Reproduced in verbatim in this small booklet are the latest statements of Shri Chandershekhar as published in the 'Janata Bulletin' of March, 1987 and 'The Telegraph' (of Calcutta) of April 10, 1987. As these statements constitute the latest and the most authentic elucidation of the Janata policy on Punjab, consistent with the party's resolutions adopted in recent years, it has been deemed worthwhile to present them to the general public in the form of this short brochure.

Apart from making concrete proposals for paving the way to a durable solution of the Punjab problem, Shri Chandershekhar's approach endeavours to prevent further alienation of the patriotic and enterprising Sikhs (known for their sacrifices in the freedom struggle and later in the defence, preservation and consolidation of that freedom) from the national main-stream and provide them with a healing touch which is genuine and spontaneous—coming
as it does from a statesman endowed with a rare breadth of vision, humanism and farsight.

Also included in the appendices at the end are the latest statements on the Punjab situation issued by Shri Yashwant Sinha, the General Secretary of the Janata Party, a well-conceived article on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution written by the veteran leader of the democratic socialist movement in this country, Shri Surinder Mohan, Ex. M.P. and an extract from the 'State of Nation' Resolution recently adopted by the National Council at its Bangalore Session on the occasion of the Decenary Celebration of the Janata Party. At the end are given my own observations while introducing an amendment to the 'State of Nation' Resolution as moved by Shri Madhu Dandvate M.P.

May, 30, 1987
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VOICE OF NATIONAL UNITY
AND
SECULAR DEMOCRACY
Shri Chandra Shekhar

President, Janata Party
The Punjab Problem

On March 19, 1987 Shri Chandra Shekhar, President, Janata Party wrote his monthly letter to all members of the National Council in which he called upon the people to understand the Punjab problem in its perspective. He pleads that a solution of the Punjab problem will have to be found through discussion, and through reconciliation. A proper atmosphere will have to be created by removing the hurt to Sikh psyche. Full text of his letter is given below:

"On account of my extremely busy schedule during the last couple of months I have not been able to write to you, but the recent developments in Punjab demand that I share my thoughts with you on the present situation there.

Wrong diagnosis
The recent developments in Punjab are a cause for serious concern, not for the reasons put forth by the Government of India, but for the manner in which it has responded to the situation. The knee-jerk response is a link in the long chain of such responses which has brought the situation in Punjab to its present pass. It is unfortunate that the Punjab problem has never been really understood in its correct perspective by the people in authority in Delhi. If the diagnosis is wrong, the treatment is bound to be faulty and in certain circumstances may even aggravate the situation.

No rule of law
For the past six years, Punjab has been bleeding. Unabated violence has caused immense suffering and deep agony. Innocent lives have been lost. Women and children are languishing in prisons for years without charge. The rule of law has lost all its meaning. Jallianwala Bagh is a mute witness to the plethora of draconian laws which are worse than the Rowlatt Act.

The Government in New Delhi has, during these years, attempted all kinds of manipulations and manoeuvres. The change of Government, replacement of officials, mounting police action—all have proved dismal failures. Even the military operations of
1984 failed to bring peace and subsequently proved to be misconceived.

Expediency-accord

An accord was signed. But the attempt was to divide the people and not to unite them. The clandestine manner in which the accord was negotiated had excluded all others from participating in the political process, even those who were directly affected and concerned. It was a pact between New Delhi and a faction within the Akali Dal. It was also badly drafted. Both Shri Barnala and Shri Gandhi are conscious of its infirmities and blame each other for its non-implementation only for public consumption. No wonders the accord is a shambles.

New action plan

Now a new action plan has been launched by making the Chief Minister Shri Surjit Singh Barnala as a front shop to condemn the high priests as fundamentalists and obscurantists and for interfering in political matters. Shri Barnala is being projected as a champion of secularism, as a man with courage and conviction who can fight the religious dominance over the Sikh psyche through rallies and meetings. The Prime Minister has sought and received the support of virtually all political parties in this venture. To my mind, it is a sad development and a self-defeating exercise which is bound to further complicate the problem of Punjab.

Religious character of Akali Dal

The Shiromani Akali Dal is a product of not only the religious movement of the Sikh community launched in early 20's but it is even today a religious party according to its constitution. Shri Surjit Singh Barnala is presiding over a faction of it. Shri Barnala himself has never said that his was a secular party nor has he said that it was not a religious party. He has never challenged the authority of the Akal Takht nor does he challenge the authority of the high priests to interfere and direct the affairs of the Akali Dal. He had accepted the punishment given to him...
after the police action in Golden Temple in April 1986 and carried out the Karseva of polishing shoes at different Gurudwaras for eight days. His letter offering his services for the Panthic cause was the appeal of a devout Sikh to the High Priest of Akal Takht and not of a Chief Minister of a secular State. In their zeal to create an impression that they were fighting the fundamentalist and secessionist forces, the people in authority in Delhi condemn the high priest Prof. Darshan Singh Ragi for his Hukumnama asking the different factions of the Akali Dal to unite.

In the same breath the Union Home Minister is shedding tears for the high priests who had declared the President Giani Zail Singh and Shri Buta Singh himself as Tankhaiya. The surprising thing is that those who condemn the Hukumnama of Professor Darshan Singh Ragi as interference of religion in politics are quoting the opinions of two other priests. The priests of the Takht Shri Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib of Nanded were not only present at the rally of the ruling Akali Dal held at Longowal village on February 20, 1987 but they were even prominently shown in the government owned media. To counter the influence of the high priests, the ruling Akali Dal has decided to launch Amrit Prachars which is a purely religious ceremony. All the weapons that Shri Barnala is using to fight the great secular battle are purely religious and yet the projection is that he is fighting for secularism against religious fundamentalism.

The religious character of the Akali Dal is a historical fact. Akalis’ role

It is also a historical fact that all parties including the Indian National Congress have at one time or another joined hands with the Akali Dal to form Government in Punjab. The success of the religious movement of Sikhs for reform of their Gurudwaras was hailed by even Mahatma Gandhi as the first victory in India’s freedom struggle.

During the Emergency, Jathas of the Sikhs launched every day without fail from the Golden Temple and courted arrest. Most of the parties which condemn the high priests today had
hailed this as an act of great courage on the part of Sikhs. They had not bothered to find out what had inspired them nor wherefrom these Jathas had originated each day for twenty-one months.

Barnala and secularism

Shri Barnala is today being presented as the great Sikh champion of the unity and integrity of the nation. Yet only three years ago, he was imprisoned and kept in confinement on the gravest charges of sedition. He was released only when he agreed to sign the accord. Shri Darshan Singh Ragi, Shri Parkash Singh Badal, Shri Amrinder Singh and scores of others have been shouting every day that they stand for the unity and integrity of the nation and were totally opposed to Khalistan. Yet their's is a cry in the wilderness. Each day they have to prove their patriotism because they have dared to differ with the rulers in Delhi. The rulers in Delhi are not prepared to accept that there could be honest difference of opinion, that perceptions of a situation may vary. The rulers have taken an attitude that either you must be with the government or else you are anti-national. It may be recalled that even I and several others were branded as anti-national by the present Prime Minister during the 1984 Lok Sabha election campaign because of our plea that a conciliatory and not confrontationist approach should be adopted. The Anandpur Sahib resolution was used as the stick to beat the entire opposition with. That resolution was drafted by none else than by Shri Surjit Singh Barnala and he still claims to swear by it. Shri Rajiv Gandhi himself agreed to refer the resolution to the Sarkaria Commission for consideration and it was praised as an act of supreme statesmanship.

Shri Barnala has failed to discharge his basic duty to give a sense of security to the people of his State. He has neither the will nor the capacity to deal with the situation nor does he have the independence, the instruments or the following to deal with the delicate and sensitive situation in Punjab. Even the Prime Minister had in his last press conference, accused some cabinet
colleagues of Shri Barnala as being in league with the terrorists and the Congress Party in Punjab has been stridently demanding his dismissal. But now the whole country is called upon to support Shri Barnala.

Congress (I)'s 'secular' politics

And what about the secular credentials of the Congress(I) itself? If it is so ardently committed to secularism in Punjab how does it justify its continued alliance with the Indian Union Muslim League? How does it justify the support it has received from Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq who is described as the supreme religious leader of the Muslims in Kashmir Valley. How does it explain the wooing of the Christian priests in Kerala by the Prime Minister? Or is that the Congress (I) is so pure that when it joins hands with communal forces it purifies them also? Or is it that secularism is only a convenient cloak to be put on if it suits the Congress (I) politically to do so? I am sorry to say that all this only exposes the immature and opportunistic character of the present Prime Minister who has been using this grave catastrophe as a convenient instrument to play upon the sentiments of our people for petty political gains.

Much has been made of the convention which was organised by the ruling Akali Dal at Longowal village on 20th February 1987. It has been taken as a fresh mandate for Shri Barnala. If a bigger crowd is collected by the opponents of Shri Barnala, will that be a signal for him to leave? No one can deny that after the split in the Akali Dal the Barnala government has been reduced to a minority in the State Assembly and its continuance in office is dependent entirely on the support of the Congress (I). The moment the Congress (I) support is withdrawn, the Barnala Government will collapse like a house of cards. The Congress (I), therefore, is in the enviable position where it can call the shots without sharing the responsibility. Dependent as Shri Barnala is on the Congress (I) support, he cannot but function as the puppet of the Delhi regime. This provides an excuse for the Centre to conceal its inefficiency and incompetence in dealing with the situation in Punjab.
Mishra Commission Report

The Ranganath Misra Commission Report has only added insult to injury. Its reluctance to uncover the truth which is not only well known but well established by incontrovertible evidence is a sad example of abdication of the responsibility given to it. The Government’s record in rehabilitation and resettlement of the riot victims and in punishing the guilty of the three day carnage in November 1984 not only shows the height of irresponsibility but is also an abiding shame.

Sinister game

Shri Barnala’s game is simple. He wants to continue as Chief Minister at any cost and is therefore dancing to Delhi’s tune. But Shri Rajiv Gandhi’s game in Punjab is sinister. Like his mother he is interested in keeping the problem alive so that he could manipulate it from time to time to exploit people’s emotions for narrow partisan ends. This game must be exposed. The people of India must know that Shri Rajiv Gandhi is neither interested in nor capable of solving the problem of Punjab.

Pre-requisites for solution

Punjab is no more a problem of a few demands of religious nature, of water or territory being transferred from the administrative control of one state to another. It has become a human problem, a psychological problem of a whole community because of the mishandling of the situation for the last six years.

Every response of Delhi to developments in Punjab has only helped to aggravate the feelings of hurt. Mindless violence has made deep scars on human mind on both sides of the divide.

I feel that the problem of Punjab can still be solved. But a solution will have to be found through discussion, through persuasion and through reconciliation. It would not be an easy task nor it can be achieved in a short span of time. However, a proper atmosphere will need to be created. Only then mutual trust and confidence will return and discussions will lead to a better understanding of each other’s views.
In this connection I would like to refer to the consensus which had emerged in the People's Round Table Conference in Punjab held on 18th and 19th January 1987 at Chandigarh. Representatives of a number of political parties and voluntary organisations and eminent individuals had participated in this conference. The conference had unanimously resolved.

1. That all those who are responsible for the carnage of November 1984 should be identified and punished forthwith.

2. That all those detained in jails in Jodhpur and elsewhere should either be immediately brought to trial under the ordinary laws of the land or released forthwith.

3. That the army deserters must be expeditiously rehabilitated in the Army or elsewhere.

4. That use of draconian laws in utter disregard to human rights further alienates the people in Punjab and creates a feeling of insecurity and injures their dignity and self-respect. This feeling of despair and frustration should be dispelled and immediate steps must be taken to establish the rule of law.

The Conference also recommended that a dialogue with all concerned i.e. all groups of Sikhs, Hindus, the representatives of opposition political parties and the Government of India was essential to find a just solution to his problem.

So instead of lecturing to captive audience from bullet-proof boxes, let us start this dialogue without any further loss of time.”
"THE JANATA PARTY CANNOT ENDORSE WHAT MR. RAJIV GANDHI AND MR. BARNALA ARE DOING"

(SHRI CHANDER SHEKHAR)

Janata president Chandra Shekhar spoke to Tushar Bhatt in New Delhi (Courtesy: *The Telegraph* Calcutta, April 10, 1987)

Q: What is your view of the situation in Punjab today, as compared to three or six months ago?

A: The situation is deteriorating fast, everyday. I think the more efforts are being made to solve the Punjab problem, the more complicated it gets because of the wrong perspective from which (the Centre) is trying to understand and deal with it. If you take it as a law and order problem, you are bound to reach a wrong conclusion. Rightly or wrongly—I am not justifying it, just saying it—there is certain tradition of the Sikh religion. If that tradition is attacked, people's feelings are hurt and I think the feelings (of the Sikh community) have been hurt. We should try to assuage that feeling.

I cannot say about the hardcore terrorists—who may be few—but the general Sikh masses are sore about the whole thing. If you do not understand this basic reality of the situation and go on holding jamborees, it is not going to make any impact on the people nor is it going to make any significant dent on the terrorist problem.

Q: Why has the Janata Party dissociated itself from the all-party campaign in Punjab?

A: The Janata Party has not dissociated itself, I do not know how such an impression has been created. I was of the view that this type of campaign is not going to be of any consequence or bring about the desired results. But an invitation was given to the Janata Parliamentary Party which decided to join this campaign. When Mr. Madhu Dandavate asked me I said you should join the campaign although I had my serious doubts
that it would be of any help. But any effort should be supported if it takes us nearer the solution.

Mr. Surendra Mohan was asked to go to the first meeting in Chandigarh. The whole tenor of the speeches made there was that Mr. Barnala was the only saviour of Punjab. What was agreed to in the joint meeting of the Opposition with the Prime Minister was that they will only confine themselves to attacking terrorism and violence and not go into the merits of the problem in Punjab. Because on many issues many of the Opposition parties did not see eye to eye with Mr. Barnala or with Mr. Rajiv Gandhi.

*There is a new tendency (in this country); Whatever we do not like becomes anti-national. This tendency is alienating people more and more. We should not try to judge everybody’s patriotism according to our own understanding. Everybody is a patriot unless and until it is proved otherwise. If some people are on the wrong path, my attitude is that we should try to persuade them to come to the correct path.*

The other factor was that in spite of the fact Mr. Surendra Mohan was there, the local Janata Party was not invited by the state government. Subsequently, Mr. Surendra Mohan submitted a note saying that this type of effort was not going to have any impact on the problem and that the local unit was not being consulted.

Thereafter, when Mr. Dandavate was contacted by Mr. Buta Singh, he said our state party president would attend the meeting and he should be invited. They did not send him the invitation and so it was not possible for him to go. Nobody from Delhi could go. Other parties were there with local representatives, they did not raise any objection. But that the Janata should be associated at the national level only and the state level leadership should not be invited, was not a proper thing for them to do. In these circumstances, nobody from the party went.

The other thing is that the Janata Party cannot endorse Mr. Rajiv Gandhi’s Punjab policy. He has made a mess of the
whole thing from the very beginning. The Janata Party will have to preserve this right for itself while trying to cooperate in every step that is against violence, against terrorism, against oppression, against tyranny. On these questions we can join hands with anybody. But he (Mr. Gandhi) cannot get a clearance from the Janata Party for what he has done.

Mr. Gandhi said in Parliament that the Opposition has nothing to say about Punjab because all of them have accepted the government’s policy and cooperated. It is the ruling party which has gone back on the understanding that was made with the Opposition. The Janata Party never boycotted the all-party campaign. The Janata Party cannot endorse what Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Barnala are doing.

Q: This gives an impression that you seem to think that Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is a worse problem than terrorism in Punjab. Would you comment?

A: I do not say that he is a worse problem because Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is not a problem for me. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is a problem for the future of this country. It is very difficult to compare between two vices. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is a person who soon after becoming Prime Minister of the country silently, and without having any pricking of conscience, allowed the murder and assassination of 3,500 people in Delhi. Whatever others might be saying. I am convinced (about this) because I was at that time in Delhi. I was very much involved in trying to pacify people at that time.

Later, Mr. Gandhi made a statement that if a big tree falls something like this happens. A person who can be so ruthless and heartless, who has no compassion and sympathy for innocent human lives, cannot be expected to deliver the goods for a country like India. So in my opinion; Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is a calamity for this country. I do not want to compare him with terrorists because terrorists at least risk their lives. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi does not even do that.

Q: The all-party rallies have been attracting large crowds. How do you look at this phenomenon?
A : I know about crowds and let us not talk about it. Even if it is one lakh, two lakhs, (I know) how they are managed by the government. I have seen in the pre-Emergency days and even after the Emergency. I have also seen many big crowds where people have not been supporting the Janata Party. So crowds can be managed by a ruling party, with a little expense.

The Punjab problem is not going to be decided by crowds, but by a sympathetic, compassionate understanding of the psyche of the people, which is injured. If you want to create mob frenzy you are playing into the hands of terrorists. You are not trying to solve the problem.

Q : You have been advocating that a rapport should be created with the people in order to heal the wounded Sikh psyche. Now how do we do it, if not by these rallies?

A : You should understand that at no stage were the general masses of Sikhs involved in these activities. It is a determined hard-core that takes to violence and it is not influenced by these rallies. They (terrorists) do not come to these rallies, nor have they any faith in the leaders who deliver sermons there. No sermon is going to make any impact on them.

In such situations, you should have mutual discussions and dialogue. What I am suggesting is not new. It has been done with Laldenga. It has been done with (the) dacoits of Bhind and Morena. It has been done in many other situations in this country and elsewhere in the world.

The other thing is that there is a new tendency: Whatever we do not like becomes anti-national. This tendency is alienating people more and more. We should not try to judge everybody’s patriotism according to our own understanding. Everybody is a patriot unless and until it is proved otherwise. If some people are on the wrong path, my attitude is that we should try to persuade them to come on the correct path.

Q : Who would you invite to participate in this dialogue?
A : Anybody and everybody who can help.
Q : Specifically who ?
A : That I cannot answer. This answer is to be provided by the government because it has been saying that there are only a few hundred, or two thousand terrorists. I am not in a position to give details.

Q : But, broadly, would you think of inviting, say, Mr. Darshan Singh Raagi ?
A : Yes. of course. Why not? Raagi, Badal. I do not take them to be anti-national or unpatriotic. They are as patriotic as we people are.

Q : Then, the representatives of the All India Sikh Students Federation...
A : I do not know what is their set up. But if they have a set-up and if can be approached, they should be invited. You see Damdami Taksal, or Sikh Commandos, these are entities which are known to us only through the government or the newspapers which are fed information by the government. I do not know their real existence, their strength, their real nature of organisation. So I cannot say whether they are in a position to send representatives or not.

But why not Raagi? Why not Badal? Why not Tohra? Why not the people who can be identified and who are in a position to send their representatives? But we cannot invite them for talks and also go on branding them anti-national. There should be some pause, some respite. I shall appeal to those who are engaged in violence that they should also provide such an opportunity.

The Prime Minister has a responsibility and duty to the nation also: to tell people about the Jodhpur detainees. I was not the person who made the promise for their release to Longowal. I don't say they should be released forthwith, although in my opinion there are many among them who are innocent and there is no reason to keep people in detention without trial. If the Prime Minister has valid reasons, is it not his duty to take the nation into confidence? Or, at least take
Mr. Barnala into confidence? It is not only the terrorists who are demanding their release. Mr. Barnala is demanding it everyday.

You know, how things get worse. We know about the character of the Akali Dal. It was formed in 1920. Its Constitution says only the Sikhs can be members of this organisation. They were in the independence struggle. For 18 months, they sent satyagraha jathas against the Emergency. The Janata had a coalition government with them at the Centre and the State. On one occasion or the other, the Congress has also taken their cooperation. With the same Akali Dal president, Mr. Longowal, with the same constitution, Mr. Gandhi signed an accord. For the first time the Prime Minister signed an accord with a private citizen.

I hope at that time he knew the character of the Akali Dal. In every situation, we knew it, we knew its set-up. We tried to accommodate it, we tried to cooperate. Then all of a sudden there is a hukumnama against Mr. Barnala and they become a communal force. Those not in favour of Mr. Barnala become communal, those in favour of Mr. Barnala and Mr. Gandhi are secular. This type of discrimination will further alienate people.

Within Punjab, the people understand this game. This game is bound to be exposed. The nation will have to pay very heavy price for this.

Q: You have spoken of the dialogue with dacoits in Bhind and Morena. This requires a contact to be made. There was JP at the time.

A: Somebody in whom they (the government) have faith, or someone like Baba Amte, who is not a politician, should be given the right to contact the terrorists, that in this particular area the police will not go as long as Amte is trying to contact the terrorists. When JP tried to contact dacoits in Morena or the rebels in Nagaland it became possible only with the clear consent and total cooperation of the government of India. Today how
can you contact terrorists if they are always apprehensive that they can be killed or arrested? Somebody, some person of peace, like mother Teresa, should be allowed (to make overtures).

Annadurai had said in Parliament, 'We want a separate nation.' Nobody branded him anti-national. We tried to persuade him, discuss with him, tried to tell him it would not do anybody any good. That persuasion has succeeded and today nobody talks of secession in Tamil Nadu. This has happened in this country. We forget so easily about things that have been done in the country.

Q: You think it is impossible to eliminate terrorism from Punjab by force?
A: I think so, because terrorism in general has been very difficult to eliminate all over the world and terrorism which is based on religious fanaticism is more dangerous and powerful. This is my assessment.

Q: Would you say that the terrorists should drop the demand for Khalistan?
A: I think that anybody demanding Khalistan should not be given any quarter. I think that terrorists must not talk about it, they should give up this demand of Khalistan. I do not know how many of them demand Khalistan, but those who do should understand that they are serving neither the cause of the nation nor their own.

Q: Then those who demand Khalistan should not be included in the dialogue?
A: Even if they are demanding, they should be asked to say that Khalistan is a wrong thing. But I will tell you something. Only today we are so touchy. Some years ago there was a demand in Tamil Nadu for a sovereign state and a respected leader, Annadurai, had said it in Parliament 'We want a separate nation.' Nobody branded him antinational. We tried to
persuade him, discuss with him, tried to tell him it would not do anybody any good. That persuasion has succeeded and today nobody talks of secession in Tamil Nadu.

This has happend in this country. We forget so easily about things that have been done in the country. So I say that even if they demand Kalistan, if we can approach them we should tell them it is ruinous for them and disastrous for the country. What have Laldenga and the rebels in Nagaland been doing? We have talked with them,

Q: So this should not be a precondition? They can be talked out of making secessionist demands?
A: Yes, that is right.

Q: Would you volunteer to establish contact, given all the facilities?
A: No, I shall not volunteer because neither have I any faith in the intentions of Mr. Gandhi nor Mr. Gandhi has any faith in me. So it is impossible for me to volunteer for this task. I want to be very frank with you. I think the government does not want to solve the problem. I may be wrong, but it would not be fair or proper for me to volunteer.

Q: Will the situation worsen?
A: It has reached a point where anything may happen. How soon, how long it will take (for matters to come to a head), I cannot say. But the situation will not improve with this attitude of the government.

Q: But if it does not worsen it may be all right with the ruler.
A: Maybe, if they remain rulers for a long time. For every ruler, as long as there is power it is okay. But the tragedy of power is that the rulers think power is just under their thumb, while it slips aways, and in a very tragic manner. I do not want that to happen here.
Appendix I

PRESIDENT'S RULE IN PUNJAB

by SHRI YASHWANT SINHA

(Shri Yashwant Sinha, General Secretary, Janata Party, issued the following statement on May 11, 1987)

"From all accounts it appears that the Central Government is about to dismiss the Barnala Government in Punjab. The statement of the Punjab Congress (I) MPs seeking its dismissal and inspired leaks in a section of the press leave little doubt about the imminence of this step. It is time, therefore, to once again expose the hollowness of the policies of the Central Government towards Punjab. There is little doubt that this step is being taken less with a view to curbing terrorism in Punjab and more with an eye on the forthcoming Haryana elections. It was well-known in political circles for quite some time that the Barnala Government was being kept in power by the Central Government to be dismissed when its impact for Congress (I)'s electoral gains would be considered the maximum. Shri Barnala has truly proved to be the sacrificial goat.

"The Janata Party would also like to remind the people that it was the Congress (I) and the Central government which had bent over backwards during the last three months to project Shri Barnala as a champion of secularism, as a man with iron determination, as the embodiment of efficiency, as a crusader against terrorism and the last hope of Punjab. A series of all party meetings were organised with captive audiences throughout Punjab to project this image of Shri Barnala. When the Janata Party decided not to join this band wagon to sing the praises of Shri Barnala, it was promptly dubbed as anti-national and described as being in league with terrorists and foreign powers out to destabilise the country. The volte face of the Rajiv Gandhi government in Punjab is yet another example of its total immaturity, its lack of direction, its machinations in dealing with complicated problems and its desire to use national tragedies for petty electoral gains."
"The Janata Party would like to caution the people against this new conspiracy of the government and especially the people of Haryana not to be taken in by it. The new initiative of the Rajiv Gandhi Gandhi Government should be treated with the contempt it deserves,

"From the very beginning the Janata Party has been of the view that a solution to the Punjab problem does not lie in political gimmicks. The Party has been suggesting that a negotiated settlement in Punjab could be the only solution to this problem and all parties should be involved in the negotiations and not merely those who are prepared to toe the Congress (I) Line”.

Appendix II
MIXING RELIGION WITH POLITICS

by SHRI YASHWANT SINHA

(Shri Yashwant Sinha, General Secretary, Janata Party, issued the following statement on March 5, 1987).

"The Prime Minister would like us to believe that he and his party have launched a war on mixing religion with politics, on religious fundamentalism and on communalism. This war has been launched especially in Punjab where the Prime Minister’s police, military and political initiatives have come to a nought. But should the war be confined only to Punjab where such a mix does not suit the Congress (I) politically? And should the Congress (I) be allowed to merrily mix religion and politics elsewhere, because it suits it politically to do so. The alliance of the Congress (I) with the Indian Union Muslim League in Kerala is an old story. The fierceness of the battle which Shri Gandhi is waging in Punjab has not been allowed to dim his ardour for the Indian Union Muslim League. But the manner in which the Congress(I)—National Conference (F) alliance in Jammu and Kashmir has enlisted the support of Mir Waiz Maulvi Mohd. Farooq of Kashmir makes a total mockery of the high-sounding pronouncements of the Prime Minister. The Mir Waiz who is the supreme religious leader of the Muslims in Kashmir valley has openly extended his support to the Congress (I)—National Conference (F) alliance. Two candidates of the Awami Action
Committee which the Mir Waiz heads would be contesting the forthcoming Assembly elections in J & K on behalf of the alliance. And yet the Prime Minister lectures the country on secular politics day in and day out.

"The Prime Minister has been fooling the people of this country for over two years but he is getting increasingly exposed every day. Both in Kerala and Kashmir his party has thrown to the winds all pretence of being a secular party. Secularism cannot wear different garbs in different States. What is true of Punjab is also true of Punjab is also true of Kerala and Kashmir. The sooner the Prime Minister gives up this duplicity the better it will be for the politics of this country”.

Appendix III

P.M. AND THE PUNJAB CRISIS

by SHRI YASHWANT SINHA

(Extract from the statement of Shri Yashwant Sinha, General Secretary Janata Party issued on January 13, 1987)

"The daily massacres by terrorists in Punjab, the deepening crisis over the Babri Masjid-Ramjanam Bhoomi controversy, the killings in Bihar in the name of caste, the increasing insurgency in the North East and the general breakdown of law and order in various parts of the country are all indications of a polity in disarray. The continued inaction of the Central Government is a matter of deep concern to the Janata Party. The Prime Minister seems to be taking shelter repeatedly behind the pretext that these are concerns of the State governments. He is not even technically correct in this opinion. It is well known that in Punjab the weak and ineffective government of Shri Barnala is surviving only on the support of the Congress (I). The moment this crutch is withdrawn he will collapse. It is not open to the Prime Minister, therefore, to put the blame on Shri Barnala on the one hand and extend support to him on the other. Both politically and constitutionally, the Prime Minister alone is responsible for the crisis in Punjab.
Appendix III-A
ALL PARTY RALLIES IN PUNJAB
by SHRI YASHWANT SINHA

(Shri Yashwant Sinha, General Secretary, Janata Party, issued the following statement on April 4, 1987.)

I am surprised at the tirade the Home Minister Shri Buta Singh launched in Parliament against the Janata Party while replying to the discussions on the demands for Grants for his Ministry. His outburst is not only uncalled for, it is unjustified. The Home Minister asserted that Shri Chandra Shekhar wrote to the Punjab Chief Minister Mr. Barnala asking him not to hold the all Party rallies. I am appalled that the Home Minister of the country is so ill-informed. Shri Chandra Shekhar has never written such a letter to the Punjab Chief Minister. One wonders where Buta Singh picked up the information from. I hope it was not supplied by Fairfax.

"The fact of the matter is that the Janata Party had initially agreed to join the all party rallies in Punjab on the express understanding that the rallies would be used to condemn terrorism, strengthen the unity and integrity of the country and secularism. The Government, however, in its wisdom decided to use these rallies for political purpose of supporting Shri Barnala and endorsing the disastrous policies it had followed so far in Punjab. When we realised that the purpose of these rallies was not patriotic but purely political and that the Government, as usual has gone back on its solemn assurances we opted out of these rallies. I would like to assure Shri Buta Singh that we had neither lost our sense then nor have we lost it now. It is the Government which seems to have lost all the sense and is resorting to lies and subterfuge in all its actions,"
Appendix IV

WHY ANANDPUR RESOLUTION ONLY

by SHRI SURENDER MOHAN*

Obviously, the Congress (I) did not wish to be reminded of the promise made by it in 1980. Nor would it have liked that a comparison was made between the price stability achieved by the Janata Government in 1977-79 and the 66% increase in wholesale price index during the last five years. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has therefore sought to put the opposition on the defensive by making the acceptance or rejection of the Anandpur Saheb resolution of the Akali Dal as the sole issue. However neither he nor anyone else is willing to discuss the resolution or to investigate whether it really implies secession. The Akalis could have once again amplified on it; but their main leaders have been prevented from doing so by the walls of the prison houses.

Except for the expression 'Qaum' which has been translated as 'nation' by the adversaries and 'community' by the Akalis, there is hardly anything which could be interpreted as secessionist. The Akalis have explained the use of the term as used in successive census operations conducted in 1931 and 41. After recording the names etc., the respondents were asked about their qaum whether Brahmin or Sayyad or Vaish or Jat or Pathan. On the other hand, during the struggle for freedom, the concept of nation was interpreted as quam in Urdu or Rashtra in Hindi, just as it was translated as Bati in Malayalam or Kannada.

Apart from this one word, the resolution says in its political section as points 2 and 4:

2. To keep all portfolios with the new State of Punjab except defence, foreign affairs, currency and general communication with the Centre.

4. To remake Indian constitution on real federal lines with equal representation for all States at the Centre.

It makes no other reference at all; and these could not even remotely be suspected as separatist or secessionist. If anything, the resolution commits itself to the federal unity of India in an unambiguous manner. Moreover, subsequent to the appointment of the Sarkaria Commission, the Akali Dal welcomed this step and promised to cooperate with it. But such is the political illiteracy or the motivated propaganda of the Congress (I) and its leaders that the truth has become falsehood. The whole effort however is to sow suspicion against a particular community.

If the interpretation given by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi to the resolution is to be accepted, then Government is clearly accusing the Akali Dal led by Longowal, Badal, Tohra, Barnala and Balwant Singh of being secessionist, at least from 1973 when it adopted the resolution. However, whether in 1973-77 or 1980-84, the party was not outlawed. Moreover, according to the White Paper issued by it, secret talks have been held with the Akalis 27 times from 1982 to 1984. Tripartite talks have also been conducted with them. That is, for three years in continuation before elections, talks were continued and at election time, they are being stigmatised as secessionists. Even in an election campaign such blatant hypocrisy by a Prime Minister would be a rare event.

It is unfortunate that the opposition leaders have withdrawn into defensive shells and have failed to call a spade a spade. They are afraid of antagonising the sympathies of non-Sikh votes in the Hindi heart-land. Some of them have tried to compete with Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in denouncing the Anandpur Sahib resolution. They are thereby only abetting in allowing the most harmful prejudices to gain strength. Barely six weeks ago the Congress (I) workers had unleashed unheard of violence in Delhi and had put to shame the notorious Ku Klux Klan’s record of burning alive of the blacks
in USA. They succeeded in getting away with it only on account of the prevalence of deep suspicions and mistrust energised by the persistent campaign of the organisers of Ekatmata Yajna, Virat Hindu Samaj and Viswa Hindu Parishad. Secular minded Indians could have combated those activities in time, but they failed.

There would be at least two reasons why the Anandpur Sahib resolution cannot be supported. Ignorance of about the resolution however cannot be one of them. Nor a total misreading of it. It has been said rightly that it proposes a much too drastic reduction of the powers of the centre. Even the sweeping territorial claims made on neighbouring states cannot be accepted. But, then, several parties in India have asked for a revision of the scheme of the distribution of powers between the Centre and the States as provided in the Constitution. Territorial claims on neighbouring states too are not a peculiarity of the Anandpur Sahib resolution. In any case, however, one might criticise these and possibly some other provisions of the resolution, one cannot call it secessionist as Mr. Rajiv Gandhi does and the BJP leader Mr. L.K. Advani chimes in.

Mr. Gandhi has not told us why all the other issues have been thrown into the background. It is possible that he is following his mother in her campaign style of stressing one particular angle like Garibi Hatao or the Government that performs. Or the Janata’s campaign of 1977 when restoration of democratic rights was the theme. In all these cases, however, the issue selected was a comprehensive one which could encompass several aspects of our socio-economic and political reality. By his style however, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi has only exposed his lack of political sophistication. It cannot be determined as to whether his political advisers are responsible for it or the advertisers and their foreign collaborators.
Appendix V

PUNJAB PROBLEM

(Extract from the 'State of the Nation' resolution adopted by the National Council at Bangalore on April 30, 1987. The paragraph on Ranganath Mishra Commission Report was inserted as a result of an amendment moved by Prof. Jaswant Singh, General Secretary of Delhi Pradesh Janata Party and readily accepted by Shri Madhu Dandvate, the mover of the resolution.)

The government’s approach to Punjab problem has always been adhoc and piecemeal. The Punjab accord was hastily drafted and inadequately implemented. The terms of reference for commissions provided in the accord were formulated without any farsightedness and the time frame for the implementation of various parts of the accord was fixed in an unrealistic manner. As a result the implementation of the accord was delayed and it led to further deepening of discontent and strengthening of the appeal of extremists in Punjab.

While the Akali Dal and others had demanded restructuring of Centre-State relations, in effect the Union Government by striving to make the Barnala Government an appendage of the Centre further antagonised the Akalis and their supporters in Punjab. To make the confusion worst confounded the detenues at Jodhpur camp were not released despite the fact that charges against them could not be established. The net result has been that the government has neither solved the Punjab problem nor has it restored peace and normalcy to the State.

The deplorable failure of the Ranganath Mishra Commission to identify the real perpetrators of crime against the innocent Sikhs following the assassination of Smt. Indira Gandhi and the refusal of the government to punish the guilty have further hurt the Sikh psyche and created new hurdles in the settlement of the Punjab problem.

Unless these distortions in the policy of the government are corrected there will be no lasting solution of the Punjab problem.
Appendix VI

MISHRA COMMISSION REPORT

(Text of the statement read by Prof. Jaswant Singh, General Secretary of the Delhi Pradesh Janata Party while moving an amendment to the 'State of Nation' Resolution at the National Council Meeting held at Bangalore on April 29 - 30, 1987. The amendment was suitably incorporated in the Resolution.)

No graver hurt could be inflicted up on the Sikh psyche than by the report of Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission, appointed by the Govt. of India to probe into the Nov '84 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, Kanpur, Bokaro, Rourkela and other parts of the country. The facts, that the commission was belatedly constituted, after a lapse of six months of the unfortunate incidents involving the deaths of thousands of innocent Sikhs, and that too with ill-conceived, faulty, and motivated terms of reference laid down by the Union Govt—have substantially contributed to its totally unacceptable and perverse conclusions. The Commission adapted a highly questionable procedure inspite of serious objections raised in this respect by the Citizens Justice Committee headed by Shri S. M. Sikri, a former Chief Justice of India. It is indeed shocking as well as tragic that while the Commission have chosen not to identify those responsible for the Nov. '84 carnage, the government has not punished even a single perpetrator of the crime out of numerous names identified by independent and voluntary civil rights bodies headed by eminent Indians.

By adopting such a calculated and callous attitude towards communal killings, the ruling party at the Centre continues to accentuate the further alienation of the patriotic and enterprising Sikhs who have made significant contribution not only in the freedom struggle but also in its post-independence economic development and defence.