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INDIA AT THE CROSSROADS
BY :- ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE
Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, Brother and Sister Delegates and Friends.

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 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 Presidency 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 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
to these problems have no time for it. They are busy manipulating

dimensions of this crisis.
The explosive situation in the north-east—these are some of the
oppression of Harijans, tribes, women and other weaker sections,
communal incidents, aggravation of social tensions and violence,
of essential commodities, increase in the number and intensity of
Mounting irritation, deteriorating law and order situation, scarcity

Today our country is facing a multi-dimensional crisis.

**Value-Based Politics**

His uplifting task. The Bharatiya Janata Party is pledged to pursuing

have inherited. The Bharatiya Janata Party is pledged to pursuing
to certain basic values are part of an invaluable legacy that we
can build on, his struggles and his uplifting commitment

dreams, his labours, his struggles and his uplifting commitment.
His
dreams, his labours, his struggles and his uplifting commitment.
His

India is still with us. We shall not allow it to be obliterated. His

Nawak Jyotikesh has disintegrated. But his vision of a glorious

The Janata Party formed because of the inspiration of Lok

that the party has for future growth.

and think that by saying so they can curb the immense potential

the party has in all parts of the country and all sections of society.

Jana Sangh. They feel disturbed over the growing popularity of

the former Jana Sangh. Nevertheless, some of our opponents,

Today the Bharatiya Janata Party has a membership of over 25

ample justification for our decision to launch a separate party.

Party throughout the country during the past 9 months is in itself

The enthusiastic support received by the Bharatiya Janata

founder members of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

bogy raised for ulterior ends. Many of these are among the
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.

In its last phase this degeneration of public life can be traced to the year 1969 when the Prime Minister herself after filing 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.

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
Building a society of this kind free from exploitation and

WORK.

January regime gave birth to schemes like Antyodaya and Food for

approach. It was acceptance of this approach which during the

 addressed. Gandhiji, Jai Prakash and Uphaadaya had all stressed this

 weakest individual as the focal point of our developmental end.

 the basis for progress, and regard the individual, particularly the

 corrected. We can do this if we accept Indian cultural values as

 prosperity achieved. Inequalities have grown. The chasm between

 large sections of the population have not been beneficaries of the

 development. The nation has progressed on that account, but

 Pandit Nehru emphasised the use of science and technology for

 basis. Of course, the modern context has to be kept in view.

 let us strengthen these values and build a new society on that

 tolerance, commitment, simple living, hard work and thrift.

 region, an average Indian character deep respect for values like

 place in public life. To identify these values we do not have to

 foremost condition is that moral values must be restored. Their

 capacity to face difficulties.

 nation this suffers an erosion of moral strength and loses its

 is exhibited by its Self-seeking becomes the order of the day. The

 bureaucracy, the industry and the trade, even the common man
strength from the success he achieved in mobilising these sections.

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 Upanishad 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’ (‘सब भूमि गोपाल की’) also reflects the same spirit. Every aahuti (offering) at the yajna is followed by the chant idannamam (This is not mine). Here too, it is the same non-accumulative idea that is stressed.

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
Gandhian socialism is over violence. All communist revolutions and Marxist socialism and another basic difference between.

Discovered.

Integrated way of looking at reality that human values can be of both the material and the spiritual, and it is only through this reality of the mind, Gandhian socialism emphasizes the reality of the inner self or his quest for understanding spiritual reality of the human being, his respect for his fellow man for his scientific methods cannot be applied to the search of man for his truth. And what is science? It is not a quest for truth? But truth. Gandhiji's whole life was nothing but a grand search for truth. Gandhiji's search for truth was more than. This is an inherent tendency of describe Gandhiji as anti-science. This is an inherent tendency of Marxism and many other so-called scientific socialists often values.

One of the tyrannical, dictatorial and destructive of human social system is to be structured as well as tested. Social system is to be structured as well as tested. Only through any value neutral and so-called scientific social system, it can be, that is to be ended if cannot be ended within any social system, Gandhian socialism insists that if economic exploitation is the result of loss of values during some phase of the progress of the social evolution and progress in human values, it is instead the result of the exploitation of man by man has not come on account of the exploitation of man by man is a violation of human values.

by man is a violation of human values. basic premise of Gandhiji's philosophy is that exploitation of man us why it wants to do so unless it gets out of itself. Whereas the exploitation of man by man. But Marxism's claim to end production, both Gandhism as well as Marxism claim to end
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 resolution of class conflict would ultimately be self-defeating.

Yet another point of difference between Marxist views and Gandhian views is on 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.

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 one another. 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
have started experimenting with it. This idea of action whereas some other countries such as U.K.
It is a pity that we in India never seriously tried to translate organised people's power. can be understood only in the context of institutional changes and on the good sense of those who are in power. It's real importance Gandhi's concept of trustship does not depend simply into the terrible crisis we are having in 1947 India had decided to pursue the Gandhian path when there is no other alternative except trustship. ownership of property and labour, joining in a common endeavor, is to harmonise the interests of consumers, producers, the state, township and community while reflecting their real points. It society
summarized and alienated. Gandhi's idea of trustship points a humanism, violence, selfishness, greed, alienated com-
the work. It can imitate good points of both capital-
both communal democracy and an enlightened consumer. Both communal democracy and an enlightened consumer democracy have generated a new kind of humanism. In order to prevent concentration of economic power communist regimes utterly repressive and anti-"capitalist concentration of economic power while in communist countries socialism has be-

sufferance of the State Government.

be guaranteed by the Constitution and should not be at the
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.

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 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 commit-
suffer

Efficiency in the performance of their duties they might have to suffer humiliated and demoralised, and feels appetising lest for being written too might be shown the boot like Kamalpreet Tripathi. The Bureau.

No one is willing to own responsibility. Ministers wear a, a paralysed look for nervousness, always fearful of being taken, seem struck by paralysis as if were. No decisions are being taken.

In New Delhi today, there is a Government. but there is no administration. There is a Prime Minister; but one who has lost the group. The Secretariat is there as always: but the services have now transgressed all bounds of decency. The role of radio and television, abuse of governmental media such as radio and television.

Abuse of governmental media, such as radio and television, has been used to denigrate the press. Against press barons fix the newspapers. The press in line, New Delhi is always willing to use its arm-twist. If bizarre happenings such as these are not sufficient to keep alive an ominous significance, which cannot be missed.

However, the newspaper world is griped by an unnatural enterprise and boldness to expose these misdeeds.

Entirely the path of progress. Quite a few vacancies on the Bench remain, quite a few vacancies on the Bench remain, The Supreme Court is being depicted as a roadblock on the ped.
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.

During the last 12 months the immoral process of defections prompted 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 tarnished. More distressing still, the party system itself has been seriously undermined.

When the Assam Assembly was placed under ‘suspended amination’ 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.

A large section of the people in Moradabad feel convinced that they can receive no protection from the P.A.C. 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 Beghpat 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 distintegration of our institutional framework. Some political analysts have described the situation as “a civilisational crisis”.
Congress (i) was able to get 350 seats. Then again in 1980, with
whereas in 1977 with almost the same voting percentage the
party has been able to secure the support of a majority of the
1972 there has been not a single election in which the winning
able to secure an overwhelming majority of seats. Right since
under this system, on the basis of minority votes a party is
Indeed, it is one of the major quirks of our election system
in terms of votes the Congress (i) got only 42.5% of the votes cast.
Saba elections the Congress (i) secured 351 seats out of 525, but
of elections has succeeded in capturing power. In the last look
once again a party that failed to secure the support of the majority
An analysis of the 1980 election results would show that

Electoral Reform

All the conspiracies must be exposed and frustrated before it can materialise. After all, India would cease to be a republic. This
crises succeed, India would cease to be a republic. This
depends on the present rulers with the help of negative votes. If these
crises which aims at perpetuating the hold on the State are deep.
are not the functions of an individual. The are indices of a deep
Talks about a President for life and an "elective judiciary" "

This topic which would fit.

But are either tools or enemies. In most cases, it is the latter des-
place of our present parliamentary democracy as a panacea for these
People who advocate adoption of the presidential system in

in no position to surmount this crisis.

dissensions and the brittle prestige of government are certainly
the influence of a party cracking up with
is no doubt that this crisis is unprecedented. The trailing christmas
Whenever the epithet used to describe this crisis, there
The Mixed System for State elections. Perhaps we adopt the List System for Lok Sabha elections and what is known as the Mixed System for the List System and has evolved both the majority system and the List system and has evolved recently. West Germany has tried to combine the plus points of their actual support in the people. No doubt, the majority system Parliament and the State Legislatures largely in proportion to gambles they presently are. Parties would be represented in thinking of the average voter. Above all, the List System will influence or caste and community that presently dominates the programme and thus minimise, if nothing eliminate, the vitriolic electorate, make them think in terms of party policies and the electorate make them think in terms of party policies and biggest advantage of the List System is that it would political has been worked successfully by most European democracies. Thus we should adopt some variation of the List System a system that in place of the present majority system of elections that we have, it is imperative that electoral reform is undertaken urgently.

Missing. It is highly that majority sanction behind these changes is real.

hauled by majority sanction behind these changes. The constitution is radically over-legislatures, laws are changed, the constitution is radically over-amount of their legislative majority, momentous decisions are taken in representation only a minority of the population. Nonetheless, by virtue about by winning parties is generally illusory. These parties fairly reflected in the legislatures. The masssive mandate, bagged is not evident that under this system the people's will is not big gamble.

system in Britain have said that this system makes elections a 42.56% votes the Congress (I) managed to get 66.86% seats whereas in 1977 with a higher poll percentage of 43.06%
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 to 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.

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:—

(i) 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.

(ii) The expenditure incurred by a party on any candidate’s election should be added to the candidate’s own expenses.

(iii) There should be a ceiling on the expenditure which political parties can legitimately incur.
three decades. consensus that had developed on foreign policy during the last the present government has seriously undermined the national By making foreign policy a plaything in the game of politics.

FOREIGN POLICY

compulsory.

elections, emphasised the need for continuity in foreign policy.

In 1977 the Janata Party had fought the Lok Sabha elections

their right of franchise. This means that more than 15 crore voters

issues. But out of 35.40 crore voters only 20.13 crore exercised

11. the 1977 elections, were contested on some very crucial

10. elections to elections is still illegal. The 1980 Lok Sabha election,

electors who have never voted or who have been generally indi-

We have had 7 General Elections till now but the number of such

If there is a case for compulsory voting in India, I

election broadcasts, should be drawn up.

Facility given. A scheme of political broadcasts also, apart from

during the elections. There is need of further extension of the

ing all recognised political parties the use of radio and television

The Janata government had taken the historic step of allowing

Age must be reduced from 21 to 18 years.

Commission should be a multi-member body, and voting

(v) As recommended by the Parkunde Committee. the Election

Statutory audit.

(v) The accounts of political parties should be subject to

Audit reports, letters, etc.

(v) There should be a limit also to the external props of

(v) Publicity used by a party such as newspaper advertise-
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.

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 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.

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 relations.

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 28 months of the Janata rule and that it will take time to put it back on the rails. The next six months are being passed with the alibi that the Opposi
The Kisan Struggle

KISAN STRUGGLE

The present wave of mass agitation in various parts of the country is in fact a spontaneous phenomenon. The Assam agitators committed a mistake when they should not have agitated against the government, but the government has forgotten the incident. The opposition to the government is never a mistake. They have been able to have a meeting at Moradabad. Today, she is never present at the killing of hundreds at Moradabad. She is never present at the issue of Naxalite but she refused to accept the resignation of her own Chief Minister. She dismissed the UP government on the pretext of being in a helicopter whereas she went riding on an elephant to Delhi. She dismissed the UP government on the pretext of being in a helicopter whereas she went riding on an elephant to Delhi. But the Prime Minister did not care. The incidents of Pira and Parsabigha in Bihar were no less.

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The movements being run by the Kisans in Karnataka.

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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.

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.

The figures of rural indebtedness are startling. Only a few years ago, the overdue debts amounted to Rs. 750 crores. Now they have risen to 6000 crores. Moreover, 85 percent of the agriculturists are in debt.

The Bharatiya Janata Party considers the farmer’s 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.

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 dispose it off at Rs.
ASSAM MOVEMENT

Problem. But the Government failed to realize the seriousness of the effective remedial steps were taken to prevent such infiltration. It warned that the situation would take an explosive turn if no action was taken after being elected to the Lok Sabha for the first time. I had then having drawn the Government's attention to this matter in 1957 citizens. This process has been going on for decades. I recall for the last one year. The people of Assam are becoming strung there Assam is burning. A confrontation has been raging there.

ASSAM

expander in this respect. This potential should be fully utilized. long time. However, India has the capacity to become a leading cotton. The world is likely to suffer from food shortage for a chalk out a time-bound programme to double the foodgrain pro-

The Government should take the farmers into confidence and

landless labours. The creative role in the movement in the countryside will also benefit the
care and the urban consumer will not succeed. The awakening

country self-sufficient in foodgrains and saving foreign exchange.

The farmer has now risen from centuries of sloth and igno-

of living of the Kisans and their needs. of the prices of industrial goods as well as the soaring cost
determine the cost of agricultural produce by taking into consider-

It should be disbanded and a new body set up in its place to

The Agricultural Prices Commission has failed in its purpose.

other crops as well. This situation holds good at other places and for

75 per quintal for lack of proper purchase arrangements by govern-
The magnitude of the foreigner's 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 of the order of 28 lakh new voters.

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 or via media in relation to the identification and deletion of the names
really years of the galloping horse | stood still. In contrast, the Janata Government’s two years were
the small. Nothing moved during the year. It was as if time had
Gandhi’s first year in office would be remembered as the year of
the Lion, and so on. If we were to emulate their practice, let’s,
the year is called the year of the Moon, another the year of
years. One is called the year of the Government. In China, they have a habit of naming their
present Government. In China, they have a habit of naming their
country lies squarely on the policies, or absence of policies, of the
The responsibility for the present economic crisis in the

ECONOMIC SITUATION—1977 and 1980

It is complete destruction. Leaderships by its short-sightedness, should not commit the sin of
leadership, by its short-sightedness, should not commit the sin of
wounds. The rest of India, by its indifference and the central
encouraging it. The soul of Assam is already beset with many
encouraging it. The soul of Assam is already beset with many
united a blind eye to foreign infiltration, but were also guilty of
on those political leaders who, out of selfish motives, not only
The responsibility for the present situation in Assam rests

is not the path of peace.

by linked, as a purely law and order issue. The path of repression
which almost every Assamese man, woman and child is emotional-
which almost every Assamese man, woman and child is emotional-
bullies or arrests. It is suicidal to deal with a movement with
be dismissed immediately.

moral propriety or expediency in continuing it. Hence, it should
a constitutional obligation, but there is no constitutional and
The present government in Assam has been formed to fulfill

The present government in Assam should be left to the new government
or settled in other States should be allowed to live in Assam
question whether such people should be allowed to live in Assam
of those who entered the state between 1961 and 1971. The
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 percent. He has now admitted that it may be no more than 4 percent. As usual, he is wrong. In fact, industrial production may be just 2 percent more than last year.

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 percent, 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.

A good economy almost always results in good foreign exchange reserves. During the Janata years, the reserves went up by Rs. 2350 crores and when we left the Government the reserves stood at Rs. 5200 crores. Since then they have been coming down by as much as Rs. 600 crores 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
Those who keep thinking of devising ways to destroy our 660 million people for equality and freedom from exploita-

The soul of Indian democracy dwells in the intense desire of

from confrontation, if the situation so demands. But at the same time we would never shy away face these twin dangers. The BJP does not favour the politics perceive the dangers of anarchy. We have to prepare the people to clearly the threat of authoritarianism: on the other we can also standing at the cross-roads of destiny. On one side, we can see Friends, the situation is grave. The country is once again

able to build a new future for itself?

challenges successfully on the basis of its value-system and be pertinent question really is: will India be able to face the present racist Government will come and Governments will go. The question whether this Government will fail or survive. In a demo-

However, one need not be overmuch concerned about the

AT THE CROSSROADS

to fall. This Government stopped pedalling long ago, and is about
economy is like a man on a bicycle: if you stop pedalling, you fall small countries like South Korea have left us far behind. A nation's free The world is moving ahead much faster than we are, and
country like India be among the top ten, and not among the top the top ten industrial countries of the world. Why should a big

Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that India is among

that a paper doll.

can never be condoned, is that the Plan itself will be scrapped, be-

which plan prepared by the Janata and present it as a new plan. That is
debilitate democracy can do so only at the risk of being swept away by the fury of the people.

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:

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.

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