

had powers to relieve them had not done so and that was why they had not been able to join the assigned job. In spite of that, it was withheld. When the labour unions wanted to explain all these things in person and approached the authorities in the month of August, they were not given an audience by the Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer who is responsible for the administration. When they were not given an audience for one-and-a-half days, whether they were willing or not, the workers had been forced to reluctantly express their agony and displeasure in a very peaceful manner. I can say that it was done in a cordial way. In spite of that, what has happened is this. Adding insult to injury, the administration had decided to deduct one-and-a-half days' salary of the 800 workers. They had deducted it. They were so adamant that they did not want to retreat from the position that they had taken. Therefore, there is an agitation now and any time it may explode and take a different turn.

Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I want to inform the Government, through you, that there is a burning situation. It has been created unnecessarily. It is not the fault of the people who are actually punished. I wrote a letter to the General Manager, Southern Railway, on 27th November regarding this issue expressing my fear that it may explode at any time. But till date I was not able to get even an acknowledgement from the officials concerned. Therefore, there is no other way except raising this issue in this august House. I am not accusing any individual. I am raising this issue with good faith. The Department concerned should inform the officials concerned, particularly the Senior Electrical Engineer, to revoke the orders issued earlier deducting the salary of the workers and to see that peace is restored in the Electrical Multiple Unit and Loco Work-shop at Tambaram near Chennai. If they fail to act, it will create labour unrest. I hope this will be conveyed to the Department concerned and they will see to it that peace is prevailed. Thank you.

SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I associate myself with the issue raised by Shri Viduthalai Virumbi.

### **Protest Day being observed by Christians Against Atrocities Committed on them**

SHRI CO. POULOSE (KERALA) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the recent events of attacks on Christians, Churches and Christian institutions have caused deep concern to the Christian community about their security.

I would like to bring to the notice of this august House certain incidents of recent period as an example of what is going on in the country.

1. Exhumation of a recently buried body of a Christian from the cemetery by the VHP people who dumped it in front of a Church in Kapadvanj Taluk of Kheda district in Gujarat in the second week of July.

2. A attack on a Penta coastal group on the 5th March in Vadodara by a group of VHP people who destroyed the dias, smashed microphones and amplifiers and assaulted the people who were doing prayer.

3. A Catholic Church which was under construction, was demolished in Narora near Ahmedabad and sacred images were desecrated and the Church was looted and vandalized.

4. St. Mary's School, Narora was vandalized on the pretext that Sanskrit was not taught there. A copy of the Bible was burnt in the LP. Mission School in Rajkot. The Shantiniketan High School was stoned and broken.

5. On 23rd September, four south Indian nuns were raped and their institution was looted in Navapara in Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh. Some of us visited that place and tried to get the first hand information about the incident. It was a most heinous crime.

6. Two nuns were excommunicated from the village by the VHP people in a Haryana village which is just 50 kilometres away from Delhi. Even an F.I.R. was not filed.

There are reports of attacks on Christian nuns in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. This was stated on the floor of this House in answer to a question. In reply to an Unstarred Question it was stated yesterday in the House that there were 560 incidents of attacks on minority communities between the 1st January, 1998 and 15th October, 1998. In Uttar Pradesh, 108 incidents were reported. In Maharashtra, 67 incidents were reported. In

Gujarat, there were 65 incidents. In Bihar, 84 incidents were reported. In Madhya Pradesh 30 and in Tamil Nadu 42 incidents were reported.

There were cases of attacks on minority communities in the past also. But what is new is that the intensity has increased recently, especially after the present Government took over office. This is my main contention.

Public order and police are State subjects as per our Constitution. Registration, investigation, detection of crime and also prevention of crime are primarily the responsibility of the State Government. I can understand that. But, at the same time, it is the duty of the Central Government to see that communal harmony is not allowed to be disturbed. Many people of the ruling party and its frontal organisations are abusing the Christian community. For example, the leaders

The Vice-Chairman (Shri T.N. Chaturvedi) : You have made your point. Please conclude.

SHRI CO. POULOSE: Sir, I will conclude within a minute. The leaders of Delhi administration took an initiative to deny the status of religious places to churches on the pretext that wine is used for holy Mass.

The Christian missionaries are doing valuable social services in remote areas of the country. The society fully appreciates their services. But a certain section of the people is intensifying atrocities against these people.

The ideological propaganda carried on by the protagonists of Hindutva is creating an atmosphere of distrust and hatred. The Christian community all over the India is observing today, December 4, as a day of protest. I request that the Government should be responsive to the seriousness of the situation. The Christians of our country have every right to life in dignity and honour.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it pains us that a very small minority community in this country has assembled today in Delhi from different parts and they are organising a Protest Day. Sir, it has been one of the glorious aspects of our freedom struggle that when the Republic was

established, we refused to be provoked by what was happening across the border, that we did not create a theocratic State, but we created a secular State because we thought that that was the key to democracy. And in such a country where we have different religions, where we have different ethnicities, different linguistic groups and castes, the key question was whether secularism, federalism and social justice could be maintained or not. But what we are really sorry to see is the systematic attempt by certain organisations of the Sangh Parivar, which is also a part and parcel and the umbilical cord of the BJP. After the assumption of power of this Government, those organisations, especially the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, are systematically unleashing a campaign against all minority communities including the small Christian minority community, which in the history of independent India, had not come under such an attack in any part of the country so much so as during these last eight months. Sir, what we would like to draw the attention of the House to is that there is an all-pervasive atmosphere of intolerance. And whenever these questions are raised, those who are raising these questions are being charged to be un-Indian, to be not adequately national. Now, what is nationalism? What is Indianness? What we have seen through the history of India is that this great civilisation is one of tolerance, one of accommodation, one of peace, one of brotherhood. Those protagonists of Hindutva, who are preaching the most aggressive, the most militant, the most extremist authority of the so-called Hindutva, are becoming a major threat to all institutions including socialism and to the very existence of different linguistic, religious and other ethnic minorities...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Please be brief.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Since the Christian community is a small community, I think the House, as a whole, should agree to it that the Government should be responsive to the kind of charges which are coming up. The HRD Minister is here. I think the Government has to come out with some kind of a white paper. Already the Minority Commission visited Gujarat and they prepared a report. Different political parties had sent their

independent delegations. So, drawing from all the information that is available with the Government, the Government cannot redeem the pledge that they had taken while taking the oath. The Government must come out with a white paper off the kind of atrocities that are being perpetrated against the minority community in general and the Christian community in particular.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Shri H. Hanumanthappa. Not present. Shri Prafull Goradia.

SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA (Gujarat): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I would not be able to talk on an ideological plane as the hon. Member Shri Basu has spoken. I have more Christian friends than, perhaps, Hindu friends and, to that extent, if I sound a little pro-Christian, then, Mr. Vice-Chairman, please forgive me. I owe most of my education to Anglo-Indian teachers and I think we would all like the Christian community to live in peace and goodwill. I think the Members of the Christian community also desire the same thing. But I think we must learn to make a distinction between the Christians and the missionaries. But the problem seems to arise, where there is resistance to missionary activities to convert more people to the Christian faith. The hon. Member, Mr. Poulouse, I think, said something about Kapadvanj.

In Kapadvanj, there is a church and besides the church, there is a community of Vagris who have settled there. The church alleges that they are squatters. They feel that the land is theirs. The Vagris are people who move about and exchange clothes for utensils. Now, these Vagris had settled there and the *padri* felt that it is really a land belonging to the church. He had not been able to convert any of the Vagris to Christianity and he was probably angry or frustrated. So, when somebody died...

MISS MABEL REBELLO (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, this is an allegation. This is nothing else but an allegation. He is imputing motives.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): Please let him finish. So many people have to speak. You will get your chance.

MISS MABEL REBELLO: No, that does not mean that he can say anything.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): I will take care of that.

SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: So he wanted the dead body to be buried in this *basti* which is a Vagri settlement. A temple also happens to be there. So, naturally, when an attempt was made to bury the body in this *basti*, there was resistance. The body was never actually buried, but it is true that for two days, it could not be buried because the *padri* insisted that it should be buried in that *basti* and the *basti* people said that it cannot be buried in their neighbourhood. This is just to put the facts right. I think it is very important that whatever views we have, whatever opinions we form, we are welcome to form, but the facts must be clearly understood.

Going back to the issue which we have discussed here before, the Rajkot and the so-called burning of the Bible, no Bible was burnt in Rajkot, although three copies of the Bible were damaged in the scuffle that took place. The problem there was like this. I have got the photographs of the children who were attempted to be converted. Now, how were they converted? A book called, "New Contracts" was distributed by gideons along with the copy of the Bible. I have got the copy of the so-called "New Contracts" or "Navo Karar" in Gujarati, which clearly says that a girl or a child has to say that "I have sinned". That is what the child is supposed to sign. It is attached to the last page of the book. It says, "I have sinned. Lord Jesus sacrificed himself due to my sins. He came back to life after three days to save me. I, therefore, accept him as my sole saviour". It is with name and date. Now, this is clearly an attempt to convert or persuade innocent children. What I mean by 'innocent' can be seen from this picture. (*Interruptions*) I will stick to facts only. I have no opinion on this subject.

Then, the most recent incident that took place in Baroda....

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: If somebody makes a mistake they cannot take law into their own hands. (*Interruptions*)

THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it is highly regrettable that the hon. Member is using such a solemn occasion to tacitly justify all the atrocities which are being committed on the Christians in the country. We will not allow this.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): I think he is giving his version. One version was given. He is given another version. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: he is justifying all that.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Yes, it is a justification.

(*Interruptions*)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): We will take up Private Members' Business. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: No. no. This is very important.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): This will continue after the Private Members' Business is over. (*Interruptions*) This discussion will be resumed after the Private Members' Business is over. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: No, no.

... (*Interruptions*)...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): No. I am afraid this is not ...(*Interruptions*) No. I am sorry. If you insist like this, I will have to ask for expunction ...(*Interruptions*) It will be taken up only after the Private Members' Business is over. Nothing regarding this particular matter will go on record till this is over. (*Interruptions*)

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तर प्रदेश): ढाई बजे से पांच बजे तक प्राईवेट बिओल, इसके बाद इसे लेंगे । ....(व्यवधान).....

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री टी. एन. चतुर्वेदी) : आप बैठीए । मैं बता दूंगा । ....(व्यवधान)...

I think Dr. Manmohan Singh wants to say something.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Mr. Vice-

Chairman, Sir, I would like our party to be fully associated with the sentiments that have been expressed by Mr. Poulouse, We would request the Home Minister to investigate this matter seriously. There is a report of the Minorities Commission. After investigation, he should comeback to the house to tell us what the truth is.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI): We will take up Private Members' Legislative Business now.

Shrimati Veena Verma, please.

#### **PRIVATE MEMBER'S LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS**

##### **The Children Born of Unmarried Mothers**

##### **(Determination of Paternity Through DNA Test) Bill, 1998**

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the compulsory determination of paternity of a child of an unmarried mother through DNA test so as to give legitimacy to such an offspring and to resolve the menace of growing population of illegitimate children in the county and for matters connected therewith.

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

#### **THE INDIGENT WRITERS AND ARTISTS (PROTECTION AND WELFARE) BILL, 1998**

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduced a Bill to provide for protection against exploitation and for the welfare of indigent writers and artists and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

श्री बालकवि बैरागी (मध्य प्रदेश): सर, पाइंट आफ आर्डर ।