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Who are the Guilty ?

Report of a joint inquiry into the causes and impact of the riots in Delhi from 31 October to 10 November 1984

PUCL - PUDR

INTRODUCTION

A fact-finding team jointly organised by one People's Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR) and people's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) in the course of investigations from November 1 to November 10, has come to the conclusion that the attacks on members of the Sikh Community in Delhi and its suburbs during the period, far from being a spontaneous expression of "madness" and of popular "grief and anger" at Mrs. Gandhi's assassination as made out to be by the authorities, were the outcome of a well organised plan marked by acts of both deliberate commissions and omissions by important politicians of the Congress (I) at the top and by authorities in the administration. Although there was the handiwork of a determined group which was inspired by different sentiments altogether.

Experience of individual members of the team as well as their extensive interviews with the (i) victims of the riots (ii) police officers who were expected to suppress the riots, (iii) neighbours of the victims who tried to protect them, (iv) army personnel and v) political leaders, suggest that the attacks on the Sikhs followed a common pattern, whether they took place in Munirka in the South, or Mangolpuri in the West, or Trilokpuri in the east. The uniformity in the sequences of events at every spot in such far-flung places proves beyond doubt that the attack were master minded by some powerful organised groups. As a senior army officer deployed in Delhi during the recent riots said : "This arson is the work of an

expert". Newspaper reports suggest that this pattern is similar in all Congress (I) ruled states.

There was also a definite pattern discernible in the choice of the victims made by the assailants. According to the 1971 census figure Sikh males in the age group of 20-50 number approximately , 1,00,000. The Sikhs who were killed in the recent riots largely belonged to this age group. The official estimate of only 325 killed (including 46 Hindus) till November 7 (HINDUSTAN TIMES,) November 11) sounds ridiculously low compared to the magnitude of arson, lynching and burning alive of people in the resettlement colonies alone. On the bases of information gathered from various sources, including eyewitnesses, survivors and relatives of the dead, the team estimates that the number of those killed is more than a thousand.

From our talks with the victims and their neighbours in almost every riot hit spot, we could reconstruct the sequence of events, which followed a stereotyped pattern everywhere. The first phase was marked by the floating of a set of rumours on the evening of October 31, following the announcement of Mrs. Gandhi's Death. The rumours were three. First, Sikhs were distributing sweets and lighting lamps to celebrate Mrs. Gandhi's death. (Later during our investigation when we asked the residents of the affected localities whether anyone from among them had actually seen such things, almost everyone admitted that they had not personally witnessed it, but had heard from someone else. We did however come across a few people who while expressing revulsion at the incidents of assaults on the Sikhs, added that they had seen in some places some Sikhs expressing their glee at Mrs. Gandhi's death by demonstrative gestures. We have reports that some isolated groups of non Sikhs also exhibited similar behaviour. From the information that we have gathered from various sources, our impression is that such cases were few and isolated). The Second rumour was that train-loads of hundreds of Hindu dead bodies had arrived at Old Delhi Station from Punjab. Third, water was poisoned by the Sikhs, As for the two latter rumors, we came across evidence of

policemen in van touring certain localities and announcing through loudspeakers the arrival of the train and the poisoning of water. In certain areas, we heard that police officials had rung up residents advising them not to drink water. These rumours(the last two were officially repudiated later) contributed to the shaping of a public mind that acquiesced in the attack and murders that took place soon after.

The second phase began with the arrival of groups of armed young people in tempo vans, scooters, motor cycles or trucks from the night of October 31 and morning of November 1 at various places like Munirka, Saket, South Extension, Lajpat Nagar, Bhogal, Jangpura and Ashram in the south and south-east the Connaught Circus shopping area in the centre and later the trans Jamuna colonies and resettlement colonies in other areas in the north. With cans of petrol they went round the localities and systematically set fire to Sikh houses, shops and gurudwaras. We were told by the local eye witnesses in all the area we visited, that well know Congress (I) leaders and workers (their names are to be found in Annexure-I) led and directed the arsonists and that local cadres of the Congress (I) identified the Sikh houses and shops. A senior police official who for understandable reasons does not want to be named. Pointed out : "The shop signs are either in Hindi or English. How do you expect the illiterate arsonists to know whether these shops belonged to Hindus or Sikhs. unless they were identified to them by some one .who is either educated or a local person ? " In some areas, like Trilokpuri, Mangolpuri and the trans-Jamuna colonies, the arsonists consisted of Gujjar or Jat farmers from neighbouring villages, and were accompanied by local residents, some of whom again were congress (I) activists. In these areas, we were told, Congress (I) followers of the Bhangi caste (belonging to the scheduled caste community) took part in the looting. In South Delhi, buses of the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) were used by the miscreants to move from place to place in their murderous journey. How could the DTC allow the buses to be used by criminals ?

The attacks in the resettlement colonies (e.g. Trilokpuri in the trans-jamuna area and Mangalpuri in the west, where the maximum number of murders took place, again displayed the same pattern. The targets were primarily young Sikhs. They were dragged out, beaten up and then burnt alive. While old men, women and children were generally allowed to escape, their houses were set on fire after looting of valuables. Documents pertaining to their legal possession of the houses were also burnt. In some area of Mangalpuri we heard from the survivors that even children were not spared. We also came across reports of gang rape of women. The orgy of destruction embraced a variety of property ranging from shops, factories, houses to gurudwaras and schools belonging to the Sikhs. In all the affected spots, a calculated assailants to burn alive the Sikhs on public roads. Even five days after the incidents, on November , in the courses of one of our regular visits to Mangalpuri we found that although the ashes had been cleared, the pavement in front of the Congress (I) office was still blotched with burnt patches, which the local people had earlier pointed out to us as spots where four Sikhs were burnt alive.

II. SOCIO-ECONOMIC COMPOSITION OF THE ASSAILANTS

The team members on the basis of extensive interview in different parts of the city were able to piece together the characteristics of the mobs that were responsible for the looting, arson and killings.

In some cases the mobs were brought from outside the locality (where they were set loose by local political leaders) and Jats and Gujjars from neighbouring villages. They were transported in vehicles. A large number of Scheduled Castes people were also a part of the mob.

More important ; in the area which were most affected, such as Trilokpuri, Mangalpuri and Sultanpuri, the mobs were led by local Congress (I) politicians and hoodlums of that locality. These areas, it will be recalled , were setup in the urban

resettlement drive initiated by the Congress (I), and have since been active support bases of the Congress (I). These areas have also in the recent past provided the Congress (I) rallies in the city substantial numerical support. In other words, there exists in such areas an established organisational network through which masses are mobilised for demonstration of Congress (I)'s ostensible popular support. A veteran politician based in Delhi put in very crisply when he said that these resettlement colonies "are the kept (rakhel) of the Congress (I)".

The participations of the Jats and Gujjars from the so-called "urban villages" of Delhi played a very strong role in adding to the numbers of rioters and in aiding to the numbers of rioters and in aiding the riots, murders and looting. They were particularly dominant in West and South Delhi. Most of these villagers who once owned land in Ber Serai, Munirka and Mohammadpur, for instance made a tidy sum of money after their land was taken away for the urban expansion of New Delhi. The land owned by these villagers was generally of a very poor quality with no irrigational facilities. For this reason the villagers in these areas had to augment their resources through non-agricultural means, not least of them being brigandage. After their lands were acquired by the government they suddenly became prosperous and began to exert themselves politically as well. It is a known fact that if one is to make any headway in an election the Gujjars and Jats of these areas have to be one's side. Unfortunately, much of the police force which is stationed in this area and around is drawn from these communities. For this reason, on various occasions there had been a noticeable complicity in these areas between the criminals and the police. This truth was brought home starkly during the recent riots.

As for the Scheduled Caste communities who were displaced due to the acquisition of land for urban expansion those from the valmiki community utilised the benefits of the reservation policy and came into the city where they found jobs in the policies, UPSC etc. The Bhangis went into the Corporation, while the third-major group, the Dhanaks, considered the

lowest caste, are engaged in a variety of odd jobs. Among the Scheduled Caste communities living in the resettlement colonies, the Valmikis are pre-dominantly supporters of Jagjivan Ram, while the Bhangis are solid supporters of Congress (I), Information gathered by us from the trouble areas suggests that the Bhangis many of them working as a corporation - comprised the bulk of the local miscreants the sikhs.

A few words on the composition of Delhi's population may be relevant at this point. Hindus comprise 83 percent of Delhi's population. The present Sikh population is around 7.5 percent (an estimated 500,000 people) . A majority of them settled in Delhi after the partition, before which their population was only 1.2 percent of the total population of the city.

III. ROLE OF POLICE

All throught the period from October 31 to November 4 - the heights of the riots the police all over the city uniformly betrayed a common behavioural pattern marked by (I) total absence from the scene; or (ii) a role of passive spectators or (iii) direct participation or abetment in the orgy of violence against the Sikhs. On November 1, when we toured the Lajpat Nagar area we found the police conspicuous by their absence while Sikh's shop were being set on fire and looted. Young people armed with swords, daggers, spears, steel trishuls and iron rods were ruling the roads. The only sign of police presence was a police jeep, which obstructed a peace procession brought out a few concerned citizens (who later organised themselves into the Nagarik Ekta manch) on the evening of November 1, When the procession was on its way to the Lajpat Nagar main market, a police inspector from the van stopped the procession, warned it not to proceed reminding its members that the city was under curfew and Section 144. When leaders of the procession wanted to know from the police inspector why the arsonists and rioters were not being dispersed if curfew was on, he gave no reply and warned instead that theprocessionists could go to the Lajpat Nagar market at their own risk. At the Lajpat Nagar market,

leaders of the procession sought to pacify the mob by pointing out that innocent Sikhs were not responsible for Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and should be protected from the attacks. They raised the slogan : " Hindu-Sikh bhai bhai " As the crowd began to listen to the speeches made by the procession leaders, organised attempts were made by certain groups from among them to shout down the speakers, by raising the slogans :- "Indira Gandhi Zindabad" "Hindi Hindi bhai bhai". It is significant that wherever we went, we did not find any sign of mourning or grief on the faces of those who were participating in the looting and burning. Attempts of pacify them by the peace marchers were met with derisive laughter. Listening to their gleeful faces, one would have thought it was a festival, but for the arson and loot that was going on.

In the resettlement colonies, the police came out from their passive role and directly participated in the violence against the Sikhs. We were told by survivors that at the first signs of tension those who felt threatened personally went to the nearby police stations to seek their intervention. But the police did not respond. In Trilokpuri, the police reportedly accompanied the arsonists and provided them with diesel from their jeeps. The Station House Officer (SHO) of Kalyanpuri police station under which Trilokpuri falls, withdrew the constables who were on duty there when action against the SHO and his two colleagues by suspending and arresting them for a criminal negligence of duties. In Sultanpuri, the SHO, one Bhatti, is alleged to have killed two Sikhs and helped the mob in disarming those Sikhs who tried to resist the mob.

Several residents of Loni Road in the trans-Jamuna area, who were camping at Shakarpur when we interviewed them on November 7, told us that the police announced on loudspeakers two or three times at night on November 1 that they would not be responsible for the safety of the Sikhs and that the latter must look after themselves. One woman from the same area said she had seen a police jeep full of men and that the stoning of Sikh shops was conducted from the

jeep. Another resident from the same road said that the police had incited the looting of a watch shop before it was burnt.

In Kotla Mubarkpur, a domestic worker told our team members that the police had encouraged the looting. Later they were reported to have said to the looters; " We gave you 36 hours. Had we given the Sikhs that amount of time, they would have killed every Hindu"/

In the Kingsway Camp, residents claimed that seventy percent of the loot was to be found in the police lines, suggesting that the police took a leading role in the plundering.

When after this destruction and murders, people went to complain and file FIR's the police in many areas refused to record their complaints, according to information gathered from the Hindu neighbours of the victims. A respected Sikh professional whose house was burned on 1st November was not able to register an F.I.R. despite all efforts. In Mangolpuri we were told, a police officer asked the Hindu complaintants why they were protecting Sikhs and advised them to look after safety of Hindus. Typical was the experience of Dharam Raj Pawar and Rajvir Pawar - two residents of Ber Sarai - who on November 1, went to the sector IV R.K. Puram Police station to ask for protection of Sikh family (which till then was being sheltered by Hindu neighbours from impending attack by a mob led by a Congres-I man, Jagdish Tokas) The officer in charge of the police station reportedly told them that he could not offer any help. Two constables later said to them, " You being Jats should have killed those Sikhs. What are you doing here ? Don't you know a train has arrived from punjab carrying bodies of Massacred Hindus ?"

A few individual police officials who did try to intervene and stop the riots found their efforts frustrated primarily through lack of co-operation from the top. One senior officer told us that when on October 31 and November 1 he received reports about some 3000 to 3000 people moving around the city in scooters and motorcycles without helmets, he contacted the

CID seeking information from them regarding the identity of these people. Till November 7, when we met him, he had not received any report from the CID.

While analysing the role of the police during the crucial period we can not afford to ignore the responsibility of those in position of authority at the top, namely the Home Ministry. The Home Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao who was inducted in the new Cabinet by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi soon after Mrs. Gandhi's death, was empowered in his capacity as a Home Minister to deploy the para-military forces (if the Delhi Police force was found to be inadequate or inefficient) to quell the violence that erupted following the announcement of Mrs. Gandhi's death. Mr Rao is not a new incumbent who is unaware of the procedural technicalities. We are left with the question : why did Mr. Rao, with his past experience as a Home Minister in the previous cabinet, fail to take the necessary steps and summon the forces available to him to nip in the bud the communal elements that organised the riots ?

IV. ROLE OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Men at the top in the administration and the ruling party displayed repeatedly a curious lack of concern often bordering on deliberate negligence of duty and responsibility throughout the period of October 31 to November 4. From our talks with various Opposition Party leaders and prominent citizens we found that many among them had got in touch with senior Ministers as well as people in the Delhi Administration on October 31 itself, warning of impending troubles following the announcement of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. The newly sworn in Home Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was said to have assured the BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpayee on October 31 evening that "everything would be brought under control within a couple of hours" (The statement, November 10, 1984). Yet at the same time on the same day, Cautam Kaul, Additional Commissioner of Police in front of the All India Medical Institute, referring to the disturbances which were just breaking out, said: " We cannot

deal with the situation of this nature". (INDIAN EXPRESS, November 1, 1984) Strangely enough, even after this, Mr. Kaul has been made Additional Commissioner, Security. In spite of such warnings given well in advance, those in positions of authority did not seem to bother to take any firm step. (See Annexure 3).

Soon after the assassination (October 31), we heard from a reliable source, a meeting was held at 1 Safdarjung Road, the Prime Minister's official residence where the then Lt. Governor P.G. Gaval, a Congress (I) leader M.L. Fotedar and the Police Commissioner among others, met. A senior police officer present at the meeting expressed the view that the army should be called as otherwise there would be a holocaust. No attention was paid to the view.

On November 1, when almost all of Delhi was aflame, an opposition MP rang up Mr. Shiv Shankar, a Minister in Rajiv Gandhi's new cabinet, and the Home Minister, Narasimha Rao, to inform them about the situation in the city and the need for army action. The Ministers were reported to have assured him that the army was about to be called and curfew would be imposed. (Several citizens including some senior government officials went to the President of India on the afternoon of November 1, and they told that the Government was still considering whether to call out the army.)

But our experience on November 1 tells a different story. As already mentioned earlier, till late night there were no signs of either curfew or army, while miscreants were on the rampage in front of the police. In the hearts of the city - Connaught Circus - Sikh owned shops were being set on fire right under the nose of heavy para-military and police pickets. We later heard that the DC of Faridabad has asked for army on November 1, but troops arrived only on November 3.

On November 2, although the newspaper that day announced three official measures (i) clamping of an indefinite curfew; (ii) shoot at sight orders; and (iii) deployment of army since 2 p.m. the previous day. When we went around South Delhi in

the afternoon of November 2, we found that the miscreants were not only at large, but had swelled in numbers and had become more defiant.

In the Lajpat Nagar market, while police pickets sat by idly, hundered of young men, armed with swords, trishuls and iron rods, blocked the main raod. Around 3 p.m. an army convey passed through the road. The miscreants did not scamper or panic. They merely made way for the convey to pass by temperarly retreating to the by lanes, and regrouped themselves as soon as the convey left and began intimidating a peace march that had arrived on the spot.

On the morning of November 3, 8.30 a.m. onwards two opposition M.P.'s repeatedly requested both Mr. Narsimha Rao and Shiv Shankar to provide army protection to trains carrying Sikh passangers arriving from punjab. No troops were sent, with the result that every train was left at the mercy of gangstars who dragged out Sikhs from the incoming train compartments lynched them, their bodies on the platforms or the railway tracks and many were set on fire. Newspaper report that 43 persons were killed. This was denied by Doordarshan in the evening. Visiting the Tughlakabad station around 3.30 p.m., the STATEMAN reporters saw "two bodies still smouldering on the platforms across the tracks". (November 3, 1984). The troops had either arrived after the incident, or the incident took place in front of the troops who did not intervene.

While analysing the role of the administration, we cannot remain content to blame the Delhi administration and the bureaucrats only. The Lt. Governor Mr. Gaval, who was incharge of administration of Delhi during the period under review and who has been replaced now, could not have acted on his own - whether they were acts of commission or omission. Both the Delhi administration and the Union Cabinet Ministers, including the Home Minister, were well-informed of the sequence of events beginning from the evening of October 31, (as evident from the report of communications between the opposition leaders and the

Cabinet Ministers are recorded earlier in this report). We are left wondering whether the Union Ministers direct and the Lt. Governor refuse to abide by their directives ? in some case, should not the Union Ministry punish the Lt. Governor ? But we were merely told on November 4 that Mr. Gaval had "Proceeded on leave" and that Mr. M.M.K. Wali had taken over.

What intrigues us further is the appointment of Mr. Wali as the Lt. Governor. Mr. Wali was the Home Secretary before his new appointment.

The record of what happened in Delhi from October 31 to November 3 (the eve of Mr. Wali's appointment) is sufficient to prove the failure of the Home Ministry administrative machinery in suppressing riots. We wonder why the former Home Secretary, in spite of the proved failure of an administration of which he was a leading component, has been appointed the Lt. Governor. As evident from our review of official relief operations, (Chapter III), Mr. Wali's administration seem to continue the same policy of callousness and inefficiency towards the refugees as was demonstrated in the recent past towards the Sikh victims during the riots in Delhi.

V. ROLE OF ARMY

Our enquires made at various quarters ranging from the affected localities to army sources led us to two questions. First, why was there a delay in calling out the troops ? Second, even when the army was called in, why were they not effective in imposing a curfew and curbing the violence ?

The authorities at the top, including the four Ministers and senior officials of the Delhi Administration were repeatedly informed about the exact situation in the city and its outskirts from the evening of October 31st. prominent citizens, VIP's and members of the Opposition parties and people from affected localities both phoned and personally went and informed these authorities. Yet during seven valuable hours,

between the time of the assassination and the time of the news of the death was made public, no security measures were taken.

As a senior government servant put it there are standing instructions on dealing with such situations. The SP and DC's have powers under the Criminal Procedure Code (Section 130-131) to call in the armed forces in aid to civil power. Further, the para-military troops, including the Delhi Armed Force CRPF are always available for such a situation. According to our information one brigade was available at Delhi which could have been requisitioned immediately.

WHO CAN CALL IN THE ARMY ?

Section 130. Use of armed forces to disperse assembly.

(1) If any such assembly cannot be otherwise dispersed, and if it is necessary for the public security that it should be dispersed, the Executive Magistrate of the highest rank who is present may cause it to be dispersed by the armed forces.

(2) Such Magistrate may require any officer in command of any group of persons belonging to the armed forces to disperse the assembly with the help of the armed forces under his command, and to arrest and confine such persons forming part of it as the Magistrate may direct, or as it may be necessary to arrest and confine in order to disperse the assembly or to have them punished according to law.

(3) Every such officer of the armed forces shall obey such requisition in such manner as he thinks fit, but in so doing he shall use as little force, and do as little injury to person and property, as may be consistent with dispersing the assembly and arresting and detaining such persons.

Section 131. Power of certain armed forces officers to disperse assembly. When the public security is manifestly

endangered by any such assembly and no Executive Magistrate can be communicated with, any commissioned or gazetted officer of the armed forces under his command, and many arrest and confine any person forming part of it, in order to disperse such assembly or that they may be punished according to law; but if, while he is acting under this section, it becomes practicable for him to communicate with an Executive Magistrate, he shall do so, and shall thenceforward obey the instructions of the Magistrate, as to whether he shall or shall not continue such action.

--The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973

The troops were alerted on the afternoon of the 31st. This means that within a few hours brigades from Meerut and Agra could have arrived at Delhi by the night of the 31st. As senior army officers put it, it is not the numerical strength of troops that is the crucial factor for imposing curfew. The crucial factor is clarity of intent and firm and clear instructions.

Despite announcements in the papers, AIR and Doordarshan about shoot at sight orders and imposition of curfew the troops were left without specific information from the police on the exact locations of the riots. No joint control from was set up.

In contrast, only a few days later, the authorities did not find any difficulty in moving a full brigade of the Indian Army consisting of 3000 men and another 1000 personnel from the Navy and the Air Force to line up the route of Mrs. Gandhi's funeral. The procedure to call in troops is simple. The Lt. Governor has to inform the Home Minister (Mr. Narasimha Rao) of the law and order situation and the later informs the Defence Minister (the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was holding this portfolio) who gets in touch with the Army to call in the troops.

An essential ingredient for successful joint army - civilian administration operation is the setting up of a joint control

room. During 1947 riots, when Lord Mountbatten was requested by Jawaharlal Nehru to control the communal situation, the former set up a joint control room at Rashtrapati Bhavan in order to coordinate the efforts of the civil administration and the armed forces. This precedent was quoted to Narasimha Rao - by an elderly resident of Delhi, who is well-versed in army operations.

Yet from October 31 to November 4 (the peak period of the riots which according to old timers were reminiscent of the 1947 riots in Delhi) no effort was made to set up a joint control room. The Commissioner of Police was operating from his office at ITO Police headquarters. The Army area commander was at the Dhaula Kuan cantonment, and the Lt. Governor was at Raj Nivas. As a result, even after the deployment of troops, army people constantly complained about lack of information and cooperation from the police regarding the areas of tension. Even with the imposition of curfew, there were no authorities to implement it. An army major complained to a Delhi news reporter on November 4 that his men were not only getting no cooperation from the Shakarpur police station, but were often being deliberately misled by the police. The same reporter during a tour of the city of November 2, came across army personnel ranging from JCOs to majors, roaming around pathetically, after having lost touch either with headquarters or with their formations.

Army officers complained that they were not provided with scouts by the police to lead them to the trouble spots. In one instance a major who was asking for directions was carrying a map dated 1974, where the resettlement colonies (where the violence reached its peak during the period under survey) did not figure.

One army source told our team members that the deployment of troops followed a strange pattern. They were deployed by the civil authorities in stages, and in almost every case they were deployed after houses in the trouble spots had been burnt to cinders and the massacre was over. This explains the

limited number of army figures (12) and casualties from army firings (2 deaths and 4 injured) during the entire period. (re: Major Gen. J.S. Jamwal's statement of November 7, Indian Express November 8) The deployment reached full strength only after the 3,000 troops and vehicles reserved for the funeral were made available to curb the violence.

The entire nature of using the army as revealed from the above sequence of events compels us to suspect whether or not a deliberate design to keep the army ineffective even after it was called in - and that too following a long interval during which the arson, looting and massacre were allowed to continue sometimes with the direct connivance of the local police Force.

Whatever might have been the motive for such a curious manner of utilising the army and whoever might have been responsible for reducing it to an important observer, the effects of such a policy have been quite disastrous for the morale of the army. Every army person we talked to expressed angu over the way that the army's authority was being undermined. The 6th report of the National Police Commission has stated: "We note with concern the growing tendency on the part of the district authorities to seek instructions from higher quarters where none are necessary." It appears that the civilian administrators in Delhi although armed adequately with powers under the law to use the army to suppress disturbances, did not care to use those powers. The omission stands out in sharp contrast with their use of the army in coping with Hindu-Muslim riots or insurgency in the north-east.

The question that needs to be probed into is: why did the civil administration betray a set pattern of acts of omission, marked by a consistent failure to take steps against erring policemen and a stubborn refusal to deploy the army properly? Further an analysis of the role of the army during the period under survey leaves us with a few questions that need to be answered by the people in positions of authority. According to the procedure laid down under the law, the Lt. Governor can request the Home Minister who in turn can ask

the Defence Minister for army deployment. On October 31, the new cabinet had already been sworn in with Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi himself in charge of Defence and Narasimha Rao, as the Home Minister. We want to know whether, with the growing deterioration in the law and order situation in Delhi, when by November 1 the local police machinery had proved its failure to control the situation - either through negligence or connivance with the rioters - the Lt. Governor requested the Home Ministry for army aid. Even if he did not was it not his responsibility to deploy the army as soon as he realised that the police had failed (which was quite evident by November 1)? By removing a few civilian administrators (like Mr. Gavai) or police officers (like the Delhi Police Commissioner, Mr. Subhash Tandon) how can the government at the centre absolve itself if the blame of neglecting its obligations to the citizens and its responsibility to maintain law and order - and this, in spite of several warnings to the effect that a Hindu-Sikh riot bound to take place?

The experience of our team members gives rise to the suspicion that both the administration and the Cabinet might have abdicated their responsibility and that extra-administrative forces were steering the deployment and operation of troops. On November 3, a group of concerned citizens visited Trilokpuri where they were requested by panic-stricken survivors of a widespread holocaust (described later) to intervene on their behalf and seek army protection. They tried to get in touch with various people both in the administration and the Cabinet to convey to them the request of the Trilokpuri victims. No one was available, either in their offices or homes.

Hoping that Opposition MPs might have a better access to the authorities the group approached Mr. Biju Patnaik, Mr. George Fernandes, Mr. Chandra Shekhar and Mr. Madhu Dandavate among others - all of whom told them that their repeated attempts to contact Ministers and officials have yielded no results. In a final desperate move accompanied by Mr. Dandavate, they went to 1, Safdarjung Road, the Prime

Minister's official residence, and managed to meet a Congress (I) MP - Mr. Arun Nehru. When the group conveyed to him the request of the Trilokpuri residents, he said that he would send a "wireless message" for army deployment. Only after this, were troops sent to Trilokpuri - but that also again merely for patrolling.

VI. ROLE OF CONGRESS (I)

Our surmise that during the period under survey the legitimate authorities were superseded and decision-making powers were assumed by a few individual Congress (I) leaders, is confirmed not only by the above mentioned incident, but also the experience of residents in the riot hit areas. We were told both by Hindus and Sikhs - many among the latter Congress (I) supporters - that certain Congress (I) leaders played a decisive role in organising the riots. Residents of Mangolpuri told us they saw Mr. Ishwar Singh, a Congress (I) Corporator among many others (their names are given in Annexure - 4) actively participating in the orgy of violence. All these people were described by the local residents as lieutenants of the Congress (I) MP from the area - Sajjan Kumar. Similarly in Anand Parbat, Congress (I) councillors like Bhairava, Mahendra and Mangat Ram, considered to be loyal followers of the Congress (I) MP Mr. Dharamdas Shastri, were named as the main culprits. In Prakash Nagar, Congress (I) people were found carrying voter's lists to identify Sikh households. In the Gandhinagar area again, a local Congress (I) councillor Sukhanlal was identified by the victims as the main leader of the assailants. Escapees from the area who we met at the Shakarpur relief camp on November 6 blamed the Congress (I) MP from the area Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat for having masterminded the riots. On November 1, Satbir Singh (Jat) a Youth Congress (I) leader brought buses filled with people from Ber Sarai to the Sri Guru Harikishan Public School at Munirka and burnt the school building and buses and continued looting and assaults on Sikhs the whole night. Another group of Miscreants led by Jagdish Tokas, a Congress (I) corporator joined the above group on looting and assaults. In the Safdarjung - Kidwai

Nagar area of South Delhi, eye witness accounts by those who stood in front of All India Medical Institute from where Mrs. Gandhi's body was taken out in procession in the evening of October 31, confirmed the presence of the Congress (I) Councillor of the area, Arjan Dass at the time when attacks on Sikh pedestrians, bus drivers and conductors began (Annexure 2).

The allegations against these individuals repeatedly voiced by the residents of the respective localities which we visited, cannot be dismissed as politically motivated propaganda, since many among the Sikhs who accused them of complicity in the riots, had been traditionally Congress (I) voters. Sufferers from Trilokpuri and Mangolpuri resettlement colonies whom we met looked dazed and uncomprehending when they said to us: "We were allotted these houses here by Indiraji. We have always voted for her party. Why were we attacked ?"

Additional indications of the involvement of the above mentioned Congress (I) leaders in the riots was provided later when we heard that the Congress (I) MPs from the respective areas were putting pressure on the local police station to release the culprits who had been rounded up on 3/4 November. On November 5, Mr. Dharmadas Shastri went to the Karol Bagh police station to protest against police "misbehaviour" with those who were found in possession of looted property. (INDIAN EXPRESS, November 6, 1984). Mr. Shastri however dismissed the report as false. At about the same time H.K.L. Bhagat, another Congress (I) MP was reported to be trying to secure the release of several criminal who had been arrested by the Gandhinagar police station. Describing the dilemma before the police, a senior police official said to our team members: "Sher pinjre se nikal diya: phir kahte hain pakad ke le ao!" (First the tigers are let loose from their cages and then we are ordered to round them up). When asked who was releasing them, he gave a knowing smile.

The same official told us that when some Congress (I) leaders came to a police station seeking the release of their followers, they were asked to accompany a police party in a raid on some houses for recovery of looted property. But these leaders refused when they were told that they would have to be witnesses.

We also heard of cases where even Sikhs close to the Congress (I) leaders were not spared. In Sajjan Kumar's house at Paschimpuri on November 6, we were introduced to an elderly Sikh gentleman who claimed to be an old Congressman whose shop was burnt by miscreants. He said that he knew who the culprits were. When our team members asked him why he did not file a complaint with the police, he said he would do it at the right time. Mr. Sajjan Kumar's secretary drew us aside and dropped a hint that the RSS workers had been behind the arson. He however could not name any particular RSS leader or activist. Mr. Charanjit Singh, a Sikh Congress (I) MP from Delhi suffered a loss of Rs. 10 crores when his Pure Drinks factories were burnt down. Narrating his experience Mr. Singh said: "I telephoned the Lt. Governor and the Police several times, telling them that mobs were burning our factories. I was told that the force would be arriving but that never happened". He added that he had been a "failure" to his constituents, since all assistance "was denied to him". (STATESMAN November 10, 1984).

The administration appears to have been persuaded by the decision makers at the top to treat the alleged criminals with kid gloves. Inquiries at some of the police stations in the affected areas as revealed that the police had announced that those in possession of looted property should submit them within a stipulated time period and would be let off if they did so. A senior Police Officer simply described this to us as a "Voluntary disclosure Scheme". We feel that this is a strange way of dispensing justice. Restoration of the booty by the looters is no substitute for their punishment. In the absence of any convincing explanation on the part of the authorities for this extraordinarily queer way of dealing with criminals, we

are left with the suspicion that there is a calculated design by some influential forces to protect them.

The Congress (I) High Command's reluctance to probe into the allegations against their own councillors and other leaders further ends credence to the suspicious voiced above. Even Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi seems to dismiss the serious charges being levelled against his party men. On November 6, when Charan Singh who accompanied a team of Opposition leaders in a deputation to Mr. Gandhi, drew his attention to the reports of Congress (I) men pressurising the police to get their followers released, which appeared in the INDIAN EXPRESS some days ago, Mr. Gandhi said that he had heard about it and then reported that the INDIAN EXPRESS is the opposition's paper just as the National Herald is Congress I's. The next day the AICC-I headquarters came out with a statement saying that the allegations were utterly malicious. On November 8 however, Mr. Gandhi asked his senior party colleagues to probe into every allegation of Congress-I worker's involvement in the violent incidents. But till today no one knows what will be the nature of the "probe".

In fact Mr. G.K. Mooppanar, who is in charge of the organisation in the AICC(I) told newsmen on November 9 that he had not received any intimation for any such inquiry so far.

It is difficult to believe that Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, was unaware of the activities of important and well known members of his party for full five days (from October 31 to November 5). Mr. Gandhi had been the General Secretary of AICC(I) since 1982 and in charge of reorganising his party. He had been presiding over training camps for Congress (I) workers at various places. We wonder how after all these training programmes the cadres of Mrs. Gandhi's party could go on such a murderous rampage.

VII. ROLE OF MEDIA AND OPPOSITION

Although we do not intend at this stage to go into the role of the media during the riots, a few words in this connection may not be out of place. The first day's evening bulletins (October 31) brought out by different newspaper establishments stated that there were "two Sikhs and one clean shaven Sikh" among the assailants. The reporters did not clarify whether the news was from official or unofficial sources. Nor was it clear how a "clean shaven Sikh" could be identified as a Sikh. In later reports the next day and the following days, we were told that only two assailants - both Sikhs were involved. What happened to the earlier reported third one ? No newspaper has yet followed up the discrepancy.

But what is of immediate relevance is the question: should the media have described the assailants immediately as Sikhs ? Given the background of the Punjab situation, such mentioning of a community by name was bound to excite communal passions and inflame communal hatred. It may be worthwhile in this context to refer to a recommendation made at a seminar on communal writings held in New Delhi in November 1970 under the joint auspices of the Press Institute of India and the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India. It was suggested that certain facts which may aggravate the situation if published straight away should be printed after a stipulated period.

We were also intrigued to find Doordarshan allowing the broadcast of highly provocative slogans like 'khoon ka badla khoon' (blood for blood) by some members from the mourning crowd at Teen Murti.

There was a tendency among many reporters to concentrate on the names of important politicians instead of on earnest efforts made by a group of concerned citizens in South Delhi on November 2, which was joined by the Janata leader Mr. Chandrasekhar and some of his followers, some newspapers the next day described it as a Janata Party march. This created temporary misunderstanding and hampered the efforts of the non-party group to bring together all citizens, many of whom did not want to identify themselves with any

particular political party. The need to keep party politics out of ventures like peace marches to put down riots, is yet to be recognised by our media people who seem to remain obsessed with names of political personalities.

This brings us to the role of Opposition political leaders. We regret to say that by and large, they failed to rise to the occasion during the crucial days of October 31 to November 5. Although news of arson and carnage was pouring into the offices of the political parties every hour, they hardly made any effort to rush to the spot with their cadres, stop the violence and organise peace committees in the localities, and remained content with issuing a joint statement with the Prime Minister on November 1 pleading for peace and amity.

On November 3, when following the carnage at Trilokpuri, the group of concerned citizens went to the Opposition party leaders (referred to earlier), some among the former appealed to the Janata Party leader Chandrasekhar to lead them in a deputation to Teen Murti and appeal to the Prime Minister. Mr. Chandrasekhar rose, folded his hands and pleaded: "I cannot do it. I don't want to be accused of ruining the late Prime Minister funeral".

VIII. ROLE OF THE PUBLIC

While the disturbances that shook Delhi from October 31 to November 5 could be described as an 'organised disorder' with signs of meticulous planning by certain groups in some areas, deliberate laxity on the part of the administration in other areas and wilful relinquishment of responsibility of senior Ministers as well as opposition parties on a wider scale, we cannot at the same time rule out the existence of hostility and suspicion among large sections of the Hindu population against the Sikhs because of the happenings in Punjab during the last two years.

By not solving the outstanding economic and political issues in Punjab, by allowing Sikh extremism and Hindu communalism to feed on each other leading to the army raid

in the Golden Temple and antagonising thereby large sections of the Sikh community, the ruling party at the centre had sown the seeds of communal division between Hindus and Sikhs.

As a result, when from October 31, organised assaults on the Sikhs began (as distinct from a spontaneous mass upsurge against Sikhs which some observers are trying to make it out to be), the Hindu public by and large appeared to be in a mood that sanctioned such assaults. Comments by responsible Hindu citizens in Delhi indicate to some extent the popular psyche. An officer belonging to the IPS was heard to comment that the government was not preventing the violence so that people could let off steam and the Sikhs in Punjab would be 'taught a lesson'. An Indian who works for the UNO in Geneva who flew to Delhi for Mrs. Gandhi's funeral, told a member of our team that the orgy of violence had been allowed to 'teach the Sikhs a lesson'. When asked about the suffering that this was causing the common people, he said: 'Who is suffering?'. The long record of uninterrupted depredations by the Sikh extremists in Punjab had possibly created a desire for retaliation that blinded even those who are regarded as responsible people among the Hindus.

How did the Sikh victims view this attitude of their Hindu neighbours ? Victims in Gurgaon said : "People stood on their rooftops watching our houses burning, just, as they do when observing the Republic Day Parade".

It was this mood again that allowed the Hindu public to believe all sorts of rumours ranging from the story of poisoning drinking water to that of armed Sikhs prowling the streets to attack Hindus. The next step from such belief in rumours is acquiescence in the rampage that had started from the evening of October 31 and even active participation by the younger and more aggressive Hindus in some cases.

The anti-Sikh communal partisan feelings had penetrated the lower ranks of the administration also, a evident from the behaviour of the police force, who were given the reins for three or four days by their superior officers.

Given this mood of vicarious exultation at the plight of the Sikhs among the public, it was easy for an organised group enjoying the patronage of the ruling party to carry out the plan of systematic destruction and killings.

The anti-Sikh sentiments in some areas were also stoked by some isolated expressions of happiness at Mrs. Gandhi's death among some Sikhs, and of bravado and attempts at resistance could have been taken as a challenge by the marauding hordes who were sure of getting police protection at every step. We came across reports, corroborated by some responsible residents of a few neighbourhoods, of Sikhs dancing the 'bhangra' on the night of October 31. Such incidents reinforced the simmering hostility against the Sikhs.

But these stray incidents were marginal and do not explain the wide scale explosion of indiscriminate violence against all Sikhs throughout India on the same date and the same time, which could be the result of only a well designed strategy.

The only signs of courage and initiative in an otherwise ominous landscape were demonstrated by those Hindu and Muslim neighbours who helped Sikh families in the affected areas. We came across a large number of Sikh inmates in the relief Camps who told us repeatedly that but for these neighbours they would have been butchered.

In a makeshift camp opposite the Kalyanpuri police station on November 3, we met a Hindu family, whose house was burnt down by the miscreants because he had given shelter to his Sikh neighbours.

A postal employee living in Bhopal told us how his house was damaged and partly burnt because he helped two Sikhs. With army assistance he moved the Sikhs to his village in Faridabad.

Members of a voluntary organisation traced two Sikh families who were given shelter by Hindus in Khichripur on November 3. Defying a belligerent mob that stood at the entrance of the

lanes, a local Hindu youth led the members to the house and rescued the families who were being sheltered by a poor Hindu family. The next day, the volunteers following a request by a mother in a relief camp went to trace her daughter in Trilokpuri who was being looked after by a Hindu family. The latter restored the daughter to the volunteers, kept with them two other Sikh children whose parents were still traced. "It is our responsibility to look after them", they said.

Near Azadpur, a Hindu factory owner hid a Sikh inside the factory premises. When the Hindus surrounded the factory demanding that the Sikh be handed over to them, the factory owner persuaded the Sikh to shave his hair and beard have him a cycle which helped him to pass through the crowd and escape.

On the GT-Karnal Road, Hindus saved a Gurudwara and a Sikh doctor's clinic from being burnt down. In the same area, from November 1 to 5, Delhi University teachers and students kept vigil around the entry point to lanes where Sikhs lived.

Hindus from Munirka village and residing in Munirka colony provided protection in their own homes to ten Sikh families.

Thirty Sikh families residing in Mayur Vihar were guarded all through the period by young Hindi neighbours who resisted attempts by outsiders to raid the compound.

According to a rough estimate based on information gathered from different sources, at least 600 Sikhs were saved by Hindus of Trilokpuri. According to an army officer posted in Shahadara, of the Sikh families he rescued from different parts of the area, at least 70% were sheltered by Hindus.

It is these acts of courage, however, few they may be, which reassure us that sanity still prevails in our country.

IX. CASE STUDIES

1. SULTANPURI

The resettlement colony of Sultanpuri has a mixed population of Hindus and Sikhs employed in various occupations. Many of the Hindus belong to the lower castes and are employed in various bodies as safai karamcharis. Among the Sikhs are Sikligars (who specialise in preparing metal gratings for building construction), charpoy weavers from Alwar, scooter rickshaw owners, TV mechanics, electricians, and shop keepers. Some also work as scooter rickshaw drivers, rickshaw pullers, vendors and labourers.

It is significant that the members of the two communities lived in perfect harmony prior to the riots. This was testified to by the Sikhs in the various relief camps. On no occasion in the past had there been any evidence of tensions between them.

The Sikh residents of the colony were taken by surprise when in the late hours of Thursday (November 1) they were suddenly attacked by violent mobs. According to eye witnesses the mob consisted of local people and of outsiders believed to be Jats of neighbouring villages (Mundka is one such village). The attacks were directed at the men folk and a large number of Sikh males were killed. Some of the survivors were able to identify those who played a leading role in the attack. The leaders include local politicians, the police and some local people.

In trying to identify and understand the assailants and arsonists it seems indubitable that sweeper urchins, beggars, mechanics, drivers, vegetable sellers, etc. from the local areas were involved. But it was not entirely on their own initiative. Most of the killers in Sultanpuri were led by Pradhans, who were at the base of the political hierarchy. It was they who incited the mobs against the Sikhs and helped to identify Sikh houses and establishments. The Pradhans were in turn linked to the local Congress M. P. Some of the Pradhans who were repeatedly held responsible by the survivors for acts of incitement and for aiding and abetting the rioters were Mr. Chauhan, Mr. Bagri and Mr. Gupta, The M. P.

who was most common held responsible for the attacks was Mr. Sajjan Kumar of the Congress (I).

Police connivance with the rioters in Sultanpuri is indicated by the fact that the SHO by the name of Mr. Bhatti reportedly not only killed a couple of Sikhs, but also helped the mob to disarm the Sikhs. The police involvement may be summed up in words of one survivor "Khud Mara Hai, Miley Huey the", (they themselves killed : they were in complicity).

Almost every refugee we spoke to gave an identical version. Also involved in the Carnage in Sultanpuri were kerosene suppliers Brahmanand Gupta, Verenand, Master and Ved Prakash who provided the fuel for the Sikh funeral as also a Jat doctor Changa.

Others actively participating were the owner of the Hanuman ration shop, Gajanand, godown owner, Gulab Singh and an auto rickshaw driver Omi. All these criminals supervised the Carnage.

The attacks which began on the Sikh residents on Thursday night went on relentlessly till Friday afternoon (November 1-2). Among the directions heard being shouted to the mob were "kill men, rape women". The mobs were equipped with lathis, iron rods and other weapons and carried kerosene with them.

Many Hindu neighbours had sheltered Sikh families and locked them up in different houses. Unfortunately this did not save them from the looting, arson, lynching, and killing that followed. Houses were being identified, set on fire, and Sikh males killed, women were seen acen carrying away loot from the houses of better off Sikhs : gold jewellery , TV sets and other things were carried off. A lot of property including means of livelihood such has handcarts and rickshaws were systematically destroyed.

The killings were brutal, One Sikh was pushed into a car, which was then set a blaze. Others were hit, thrown on the

ground, doused with kerosene and set on fire.

A pregnant woman was stabbed by the rioters and some women are reported to have been raped. A graphic account is available with certain members of our team who visited the relief camp at Shakurpur (Pant Bagh).

In a large hall of Shakurpur Camp housing the Sultanpuri victims of the carriage sit a row of women and children huddled together with shock and grief inscribed on every part of their beings. There is not a single boy of over ten years in the group and boys are rare. Each group consists of a woman of the older generation, three or four young widows, a few adolescent girls and the rest are children, ranging from ten years to nursing infants. One such household consists of 18 people rendered absolutely destitute with not a single earning member left; all four adult males have been murdered. Two of the younger women have new born babies, one six days old (it was born day before the killings) and another 10 days old. They stared blankly into space holding the babies in their arms too dazed to speak or even mourn. But the older woman who had lost her husband and three sons gave vent to her grief bitterly "ab to sabse accha yeh hoga ki aap ham sab ko jahar dila dain; ab ham ji nahin sakte ; kaise jiyenge, kis ke liye jiyenge ?" (It would be best to give us all poison, how will we live and for whom?).

She was voicing the sentiment of many of the women present, all of whom had watched their men folk being attacked and cut down, then doused with kerosene and set ablaze. Not one of these were willing to consider returning to their original homes after the brutal massacre they had lived through. How can they even think of it unless the guilty are identified and punished ?.

The blocks most badly affected were A4 (65 killed, 15 missing), P1, 2 and 3 (31 killed and 5 missing) and C3 and C4. From an enumeration done in Camp II (housing about 2000-survivors mainly from Sultanpuri) the figures are 157 dead, 25 injured and 52 missing from this group alone. This

means that on an average every second family suffered at least at least one family member dead. According to an expert it is curious that the number of injured is so few compared to the number of dead. In cases of looting and killing due to mob frenzy, the number injured is usually much higher. This implies that the attackers were not disorderly.

Matters did not end with the events of November 1 and 2. During the next two days, Saturday and Sunday (November 3 and 4) the SHO is reported to have got a barber brought to a hall where the Sikhs were herded together (prior to evacuation) and made to pay Rs. 21 each to get themselves shaved. They were threatened that they would get shot if they did not comply. It was reported that the barber made Rs. 500.

Around 5000 Sikhs were herded together till the army evacuated them three days later. Some 800 are still in Sultanpuri under Army protection. Attempts at adequate arrangements for their food were still being made by the army on Thursday, November 8, a whole week after the terror started.

The survivors at Camp II with a few exceptions do not want to go back. Reportedly only 100 from the 2000 in this camp went back. But 20 had returned by November 9th. Even within the camp they are feeling insecure.

The same sweepers who only a few days ago looted their houses and killed their husbands and sons have managed to sneak into the camps for the ostensible purpose of doing the sanitation work. These people are regularly keeping watch on them and spying on their movements.

2. MANGOLPURI

The centre of the holocaust was the jhuggi and jhopri colony (JJ colony) at Mangolpuri in West Delhi where a large number of Sikhs are concentrated in certain blocks.

The disturbances started on November 1 evening after a police van had come to the G Block and announced that

water had been poisoned. The other two rumours- that Sikhs were celebrating Mrs. Gandhi's death by distributing sweets and that Hindu corpses had arrived in trains from Punjab were also soon making the rounds.

Apprehending trouble, several Sikhs from different blocks approached the police for help. One woman survivor whom we met later at the Shakurpur relief camp on November 5 told us that when she went to the police station for protection, the police said "We cannot do anything- you are now on your own". Later, during the riots, the miscreants were seen using diesel from police vans to set fire to the houses of the Sikhs. One group of survivors from Block X told us that the police took them out from their houses on the plea of rescuing them and then turned them over to the mob waiting outside.

According to information gathered from the survivors, the assailants were from the nearby Jat villages and were accompanied by local Schedule Caste people- the same composition of the mob which we found in Trilokpuri. Hovering around the arsonists were local Congress (I) leaders and followers in jeeps and other vehicles. The survivors identified Mala Ram, a local Congress (I) leader, who came with about 300 people and personally supervised the arson, looting and murders. Ishwar Singh, Salim Querishi and Shaukeen (Congress (I) workers belonging to the Waqf Club). Rajinder Singh all well known Congress (I) activists were found going around instructing the mob, providing kerosene and providing out Sikh homes.

One single name which cropped up wherever we went interviewing the residents of Mangolpuri was that of Sajjan Kumar, the Congress (I) MP of the area. Almost in one voice, they alleged that Sajjan Kumar had masterminded the violence. Some people accused him of having paid Rs. 100 and a bottle of liquor to each person taking part in the mayhem. The extent of hatred towards him among the Sikh survivors of Mangolpuri was evident when Sajjan Kumar visited the Mangolpuri police station on November 4 where the survivors were waiting to be transported to a refugee

camp. Members of our team were witness to a scene where the Sikhs abused him openly and held him responsible for the carnage. The Congress (I) MP tried to pacify them by pleading his innocence. "Why should my party kill you who are Congress (I) supporters?" he said, and laid the blame on the Lt. Governor who had been replaced the previous day by a new successor. A little later when the team visited the Punjabi Bagh camp where some among the Mangolpuri refugees had arrived, the team was told that the hungry refugees had refused to touch the foodstuff brought earlier by sajjan Kumar.

The violence indulged in by the mob was marked by the most brutal atrocities. Women survivors told us how their children were ripped apart, their husbands and sons made to cut off their hair, beaten up with iron rods and then burnt alive. Almost all the Sikh houses in the 26 blocks of Mangolpuri were attacked and destroyed and the main targets of murderous assault were the young male members of the households. Official attempts to underestimate the extent of killings by giving out the Delhi State Committee of the CPI (M) which from a house-to-house survey in a few blocks alone found at least 51 killed.

When we visited Mangolpuri on November 5 we were shown spots where the bodies were burnt and we were taken to a 'nallah' between Mangolpuri and Sultanpuri where we were told several hundred bodies were dumped.

It was only on the evening of November 3 that the army arrived at Mangolpuri. Narrating the event, one Sikh whom we met at the Shakurpur relief camp where he was staying with other refugees, told us that they were taken out by the mob, made to stand in a park and when they were about to be set on fire, the troops arrived and saved them.

Before the arrival of troops, the few sources of protection available to the sufferers of Mongolpuri were the Hindu and Muslim neighbours who at tremendous risk to their lives gave shelter to the Sikhs. They hid them in their homes and shops

and resisted attempts by the mob to trace them out. A Muslim young man in Nangloi told us how his family saved a number of Sikh men, women and children and secretly transported them to the relief. The experience of a Hindu, C. Lal of Mangolpuri is revealing. He passed through the days of the 1947 partition, when he crossed over from Sialkot to India. He relived the same days during the first week of November when his brother's shop was looted and burnt, because he gave shelter to several Sikh families and formed a peace committee in his locality to protect the Sikhs.

3. TRILOKPURI

The happenings in Trilokpuri, a trans-Jamuna resettlement colony in the east of Delhi, between October 31 and November 2 were a gruesome picture of the intensity of the butchery. Within just 48 hours, at least 400 Sikhs, mainly young men were burnt alive, with the connivance of the local police machinery and active participation of an organised group of miscreants led by a Congress (I) Councillor.

As in other areas, here also the carnage was preceded by the usual floating of the familiar rumour that Sikhs had distributed sweets to 'celebrate' Mrs. Gandhi's assassination on October 31. The other version which we heard when we visited Trilokpuri three days later was that a Hindu mob had come to attack the Gurudwara on October 31, and the Sikhs resisted by waving their swords, when the mob attacked the 'Gurudwara' stones were hurled from the top of the temple, and the rampage began. In the course of our investigation however we could not find any single person who could claim that he had personally seen the Sikhs distributing sweets. Some people however corroborated the report about the Sikhs waving swords from the Gurudwara when the Hindu mob came to attack it.

From accounts related to us by the survivors, by the Hindu neighbours and by some reporters who visited the spot soon the incident on November 2, we could reconstruct the grisly sequence of events.

The beginning of the tragedy could be traced to the night of October 31 when reportedly the Congress (I) Councillor Ashok Kumar, a doctor who runs a clinic in Kalyanpuri, one kilometre from Trilokpuri, held a meeting at the latter place. The violence that broke out immediately following the meeting reached its climax the next morning, when Gujar farmers from the neighbouring village of Chilla landed at Trilokpuri, and accompanied by a group of local inhabitants (described by the residents as scheduled Caste people) raided Blocks 28, 32, 33 and 34 and systematically attacked the Sikh houses, dragged out the young men, killed and burnt them and set the houses on fire. In some cases, the assailants hit the victims with iron rods on their heads before pouring kerosene on them.

Between Blocks 32 and 31 there are large open spaces where over 50 Sikh families were living in jhuggies and jhopries. These hutments were burnt down and the menfolk were killed.

A Study of the list of those who were alleged to have taken part in the loot and killings reveals that a large number of them were notorious anti-social elements well known in the area. One of them, Somnath of House 90, Block 32, was responsible for the murder of several Sikhs including Hoshiyar Singh, son of Milap Singh and three other young men he locked up in a house and later killed them with the help of others.

(A detailed list of the alleged criminals and the nature of their crimes of Trilokpuri during the period under survey is given in Annexure 1).

Some of the participants were keepers who supplied kerosene to the arsonists. Some other among the neighbours of the victims were petty traders like milkmen, mechanics or dealers in cement. The majority of the victims were poor Sikhs-mechanics, artisans and daily wage labourers.

The role of the police was on the same lines as found elsewhere in Delhi during the period. The sanctioned strength of the police in the Kalyanpuri police station, under which Trilokpuri falls is 113, including one inspector (who is the Station House Officer) and around 2.30 p. m. on November 1 when the plunder and killings were taking place. The first the spot, allowing the criminals to escape whatever little detection there was possible. It was a continuous spree of arson, rape and murders after that, Later enquiries conducted by a senior police official revealed that at least four women, their ages ranging from 14 to 50 were gang raped. Later seven cases of rape from Trilokpuri were officially reported by the J. P. Narayan Hospital, Delhi.

During the height of the killings however, there was little effort on the part of the police either to stop the orgy or to check the figures of casualties. On November 2, at around 5.30 p. m. Nikhil Kumar, ACP of the police received information that 'Block 32 mei mar kat ho rahi hai' (Murders are taking place in Block 32). The police control room curiously enough recorded that only three people entire rows of houses in several blocks of Trilokpuri were burning and their inmates killed.

A reporter of a Delhi based newspaper who reached Trilokpuri at about 2 p.m. on November 2 was greeted by a belligerent mob in Block 28 which threatened him and stoned his car. When he went back to the Kalyanpuri police station, the SHO Survir Singh told him that 'total peace' was reigning in the area. He however spotted a truck outside the station with four bodies inside, one of them still alive. When the reporter, out of despair, turned back to contact the police headquarters, on his ways he came across about 70 Sikh women and children walking along the road under Nizamuddin bridge. They told him that all their menfolk had been killed in Trilokpuri, and that they were fleeing for their lives. The reporters attempts to seek help from several army personnel on the road elicited little response, since most of the latter had been either lost touch with their respective headquarters, or had no specific orders.

Finally, reaching the police headquarters at ITO, he met the ACP, Nikhil Kumar, who told him that he could not do anything and could only pass his message to the control room. He described his role as that of a 'guest artist'.

The reporter revisited Trilokpuri in the evening of the same day and found the remains of the carnage-burnt house, dead bodies and the SHO with two constables walking around. The SHO told him that he did not have any knowledge of what had happened. When later in the evening the reporter visited the police headquarters, he was told by another ACP that according to the latter's information there was 'peace' in Trilokpuri. The reporter pointed out that at least 300 people had been burnt and that the police were only counting dead bodies that were still recognizable ignoring those which had been reduced to cinders.

It was only around 7 p.m. on November 2 that senior police officials reached Trilokpuri. Personnel of the Central Reserve police force were deployed there, and the survivors were rescued from the affected blocks.

When members of our team reached Trilokpuri at about 7 a.m. on November 3 we found the survivors-old men, women and children, some of them with severe burns, huddling together in the open in the main road. Weeping women narrated to the how their menfolk were slaughtered and alleged that in some cases the police directed the attacks. Many among the survivors told us that Dr. Ashok Kumar the local Congress (I) Councillor had instigated the mob. The entire Sikh community in the area, they said, was left at the mercy of the mob for two full days till arrival of the CRP.

As soon as we entered Block 32, we were greeted by a strong stench of burnt bodies which were still rotting inside some of the houses. The entire lane was littered with burnt pieces of furniture, papers, scooters and piles of ash in the shape of human bodies the unmistakable signs of burnt human beings. Dogs were on the prowl. Rats were nibbling at the still recognizable remains of a few bodies.

As we watched the scene, we remembered what we had just read in the morning newspapers that day. Describing the situation in Delhi on the previous day-November 2, when the carnage was continuing at Trilokpuri the Lt. Governor Mr. Gavai had said that the situation in the capital was 'under control' . From what we witnessed at Trilokpuri, it was evident that the situation there on November 2 was indeed 'under control', but the 'control' was wielded by a powerful group of influential persons who could mobilise the local police to help them in the may-hem and immobilise the entire administration for more than 48 hours to enable them to carry out meticulously their plans of murder and destruction.

The first relief to be given to the Trilokpuri victims was not by the authorities but by a voluntary group of over two dozen who brought them food, medical care and concern. Even though a woman had given birth to a child among the victims, the authorities had not even arranged for medical care for her or the other persons seriously injured more than a day earlier. Members of this voluntary team rescued Sikh families who were hiding in Hindu homes as late as 7.30 in the evening. These rescues were made in the presence of the District Commissioner who had to be cajoled into helping. The authorities assured the victims that they will be given all help and things like blankets though they had none on hand. In fact the authorities have been using the Farash Bazaar Camp (where Trilokpuri victims were sent) to show their efficiency whereas a great deal of the work there has been done by voluntary agencies.

X. RELIEF AND REHABILITATION

Taking into consideration the extent of violence and arson in the night of the 31st October it would be reasonable to expect that the Delhi Administration would have anticipated the need to set up relief camps. Neither the Government nor the Administration seemed to be concerned with the problem and their attitude of deliberate inaction seems to be a continuation of their stance during the carnage.

The authorities have refused to make realistic estimates of the number of people killed, the injured, the number of widows and orphans, or the extent of damage to property. Further, the Administration to date refuses to recognise most of the people who have taken refuge in the Gurudwaras as displaced persons entitled to relief and compensation. The Administration recognises only ten camps whereas a voluntary organisation, Nagrik-Ekta Manch has identified at least 18 others within Delhi and several on the outskirts. The list of these camps is given in Annexure V. According to the Government there are about 20,000 displaced persons. In fact there are at least 50,000.

The Administration has tried to manipulate figures and thus gloss over the enormity of the problem. For instance the former Police Commissioner, Shri Subhash Tandon, at a Press Conference on November 2nd said that the number of dead was between 15 and 20. To this the then Lt. Governor Gavai added "things are under control" (Indian Express November 3, 1984). The official death toll is now 613 when eye witness accounts speak of hundreds of bodies lying at Trilokpuri alone.

There was no attempt to do any relief work till November 2nd. On that day for the first time the Administration with the help of the Army evacuated people to the police thana or to school buildings. After that there was no sign of the Administration despite various pious announcements in the media, by the new Lt. Governor Mr. Wali about giving blankets and mattresses to the refugees for comfort.

Thousands went hungry and had to urinate and defecate in the corridors of the school building. The injured lay in the rooms without any medical treatment. There was no one to share the horror or the anguish of widows, to say a word to them. The first initiative for relief came from local communities, mostly Hindus and from Gurudwaras who brought the first meal and organised langars. For instance at Farash Bazaar the people from Jhilmil colony brought their

own utensils and organised a langar in the face of threats from the mobs.

The local initiative was followed by the efforts of the voluntary groups and individuals. Hundreds of students, housewives, teachers, doctors and many prominent citizens organised relief camps and collected supplies. The Administration was nowhere to be seen.

The Delhi Administration appointed a Relief Commissioner to deal with the crisis on November 4, 1984. On November 6, the Delhi Administration announced a scheme for rehabilitation and Joint Secretaries from various Ministries were put in charge of various camps in which a compensation of Rs. 10,000 was to be given to the next of kin for each dead. Five thousand was to be given to each seriously injured and a thousand for those who sustained minor injuries. The same amounts were to be given to those who had suffered damage to their property. On November 7 the Prime Minister announced that he was releasing a sum of Rs. 40 lakhs for relief work for the Union Territory of Delhi from the Prime Minister's Relief fund.

The question that arises is where did the money go, for it has not reached the people at the camps. There is no scheme made for the implementation of the relief scheme and no agency has been created for this purpose. The joint control room at Raj Nivas for relief does not seem to have even got information about the number of camps in the city.

When the government did move in, they were met with hostility from the people and atleast on one occasion the people refused to accept the food brought by a M.P. because the people felt that he was involved in the carnage. In fact the arrival of the VIPs was often a hinderance to the relief work being carried out.

The plight of the displaced persons was pathetic. The army had clear instructions not to allow anyone to photograph the camps. A member of our team was roughed up by the army

and his film snatched away at the Shakurpur camp when he took a photograph of the people in the camp.

No attempt has been made to take a census of the people at the camps and estimate the number of men, women and children. None of these people have been given identify cards on which basis they could claim the compensation and now they will get entangled in red tapes and possible litigation.

According to Press reports more than two crores of looted property has been recovered but no attempt has been made to arrest the looters who if arrested are released on the intervention of the local leaders.

Further there is no system worked out by which the recovered property will be returned to us rightful owners. Already VCRs are finding their way to the market at a ridiculous price.

Within a week the Administration started to forcibly evacuate the displaced persons and sending them back to what used to be their homes, which are now cinders and ashes. Their houses destroyed, their property looted, and the murderers and looters wandering free the people are terrified of returning to the areas which are full of memories of murder and arson. Officially there have been 2,960 arrests but hundreds of these people have been released either on intervention of local politicians or are on ball.

The Government and the Administration have in a ruthless manner got DTC buses to pack off the people, given them Rs. 50 per family and some times a bundle of bedding and sent them back without making appropriate arrangements for their security. No attempt has been made to create an atmosphere of trust and security. Despite the presence of the army it was reported to us that stray incidents of looting and murder continue.

The Government did not mobilise all the resources at its command (e.g. the army) to provide medical care and sanitation, nor did it print enough forms for compensation

claims. A voluntary agency had to have thousands of forms printed for the camps in their care. The government's callousness towards the problem of relief and rehabilitation is in consonance with its earlier policy of calculated inaction during the carnage. How could the government not have anticipated the need for an effective machine for relief and rehabilitation ? Further, how was it that just at the time the government was announcing the setting up of a Relief Commissioner the forcible evacuations of the people started without any assurance to them of their future security ?

X. CONCLUSION

The social and political consequences of the Government's stance during the carnage, its deliberate inaction and its callousness towards relief and rehabilitation are far reaching. It is indeed a matter of grave concern that the government has made no serious inquiries into the entire tragic episode which seems to be so well planned and designed.

It is curious that for the seven hours that the government had between the time of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and official announcement of her death, no security arrangements were made for the victims.

The dubious role of the politicians belonging to the ruling party has been highlighted in various press reports. The government of Junior Officers.

It is important that we do not fall for this ploy, for our investigation reveals that these are only scapegoats.

The riots were well organised and were of unprecedented brutality. Several very disturbing questions arise that must be answered:

1. What was the government and the administration doing for seven hours between the time of the assassination and the announcement of Mrs. Gandhi's death ?

2. Why did the government refuse to take cognisance of the reports of the looting and murders and call in the troops even after alerting them ?
3. Why have a few Individual Congress (I) leaders close to the Prime Minister been allowed to arrogate to themselves powers belonging to ministers and officials ?
4. Why was there no joint control room set up and who was responsible for not giving clear and specific instructions to the army on curbing violence and imposing curfew ?
5. Who was responsible for the planned and deliberate police inaction and often active role in inciting the murder and loot ?
6. Who was responsible for the planned and directed arson ?
7. Why were highly provocative slogans (Khun ka badla khun-blood for blood) allowed to be broadcast by Doordarshan during the recording of the mourning crowd at Teen Murti ?
8. Why has the Congress (I) not set up an inquiry into the role of its members in the arson and looting ?

DEMANDS

1. A public high level inquiry into the role of government and the ruling party in planning, instigating and executing the riots between October 31 and November first week, and immediate publication of the report of inquiry.
2. Exemplary punishment of those found guilty by the inquiry committee, according to the law.
3. A well formulated and clear cut policy on relief and rehabilitation and effective machinery for its immediate implementation.

XII. ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE-I CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

OCTOBER 31

09.40 Mrs. Indira Gandhi assassinated
10.0 All senior defence officers informed and apprehension of trouble.
10.30 Meeting at PM's house where security discussed and suggestion for calling out the army given. Among those present: Commissioner Police, Lt. Governor of Delhi and M.L Fotedar.
11.00 AIR announces attempt on PM's life
12.00 AIR announces PM in hospital
13.30 Radio Australia announces Mrs. Gandhi dead
14.0 Spotnews in front of newspaper offices announces Mrs. Gandhi dead Special one page editions of dailies announce Mrs. Gandhi's assailants as two Sikhs and one clean shaven Sikh.
16.0 Violence starts outside AIIMS. Unarmed persons beat up Sikhs and burn their turbans in the presence of a large number of armed forces.
18.0 AIR announces Mrs. Gandhi dead, and soon after swearing in of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi as MP along with three cabinet ministers.
22.00 Violence and burning in many parts of Delhi.
23.00 Senior MP phones Home Minister and informs him of situation in Delhi. Home Minister reportedly said that everything was under control Sometime A top level review of law and order situation by PM's Secretariat and late at Home Ministry.
night

In the day Army alerted (around 14.00)

NOVEMBER 1

Violence, burning, killing and looting in all parts of Delhi all day and night. Mourners visit Teen Murti all day.

Morning Mr. Shiv Shankar, Mr. Narsimha Rao and Lt. Governor and President contacted by many MPs and prominent citizens including those with armed forces background report on the situation in Delhi and the need to call out the army. Home Minister informed that army will need clear cut instructions and need for joint centre of operation to coordinate army and civilian authorities. Killing starts in places like Trilokpuri.

14.00 army called out

14.30 Shiv Shankar in contact with Gavai; Gavai informs that curfew being considered.

16.00 Charan Singh meets President to brief him about events and need for army protection.

18.00 Indefinite curfew imposed

18.30 An M.P contacts Home Minister to inform of the situation in Delhi and that troops were not around

20.00 PM informs leaders of opposition that there are not enough troops in Delhi

Night Large scale killing of Sikhs. Not one round fired by the army and no flag marches

Rumour that water supply poisoned all over Delhi and rumour supported by many police station.

NOVEMBER 2

The body of PM lies in state. Curfew and shoot at sight orders all day. Looting and killing continues all day. All Delhi bound trains cancelled. Mourners visit Teen Murti House all day.

8.30 A senior MP phones Home Minister regarding the danger to incoming trains

10.15 A M. P contacts Shiv Shankar and asks that protection be given to trains

Note: No army protection given and 43 trains passengers reported killed in Delhi (Times of India November 3, 1984)

13.30 A M.P contacts Shri Shiv Shankar and informs him about the situation in the city. Mr. Shiv Shankar tries to contact the Home Minister, Lt. Governor, Krishanaswamy Rao Saheb and Wali but none available.

After- Killing continue in areas like Sultanpuri, Mangolpuri.

Noon Few peace marches in the city. Gangs roaming certain areas with iron rods and trishuls in presence of armed forces.
Evening PM makes appeals for peace and states that he cannot and will not allow violence
Night Killing and violence continue in some parts of the city.
Some victims collect at police thanas. Army did not fire a single round or conduct flag marches all day.

NOVEMBER 3

Curfew relaxed from 09.00 to 20.00. Sporadic violence around city all day.

Morn- Oppositions parties and Congress (I) MPs contacted by many citizens inq about the extent of the problem and killings in Delhi.

12.30 Funeral procession starts from Teen Murti

After- Terror stricken victims of violence collect in thanas and noon Gurudwaras

16.00 Funeral pyre lit at Shanti Van

23.30 Lt. Governor P. G. Gavai proceeds on leave/

Mr. M. M. K. Wali appointed Lt. Governor

NOVEMBER 4

Curfew continues in city

Super Bazaar in West Patel Nagar looted. Stabbing incidence in Shandara , Badarpur and Anand Prabat.

Cabinet expanded

Approximately 50, 000 Sikhs in relief camps

Most of the relief organised by voluntary agencies.

NOVEMBER 5

Curfew relaxed from 05.00 to 21.00

Exchange of fire in Chuna Mandi

Two persons burnt alive in Nathu Chowk

Conditions in most relief camps still chaotic

NOVEMBER 6

Curfew relaxed from 05.00 to 21.00

Joint Secretaries put incharge of camps. Civil Administration takes

over from the army the charge of running camps.
Relief Schemes announced (but enough forms not available
with
government on November 11, forms printed privately by
voluntary agencies)

ANNEXURE-II

EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS

Dev Dutt, Journalist

By 4.30 p.m. on 31st October, a crowd of about 3,000 to 4,000 had gathered around the AIIMS in front of the main entrance gate of that institution. There were slogans mostly in praise of Mrs. Gandhi, and a few slogans threatening revenge. But there was no tension. There were a number of Sikhs in the crowd. Their faces showed no fear or apprehension, although everyone knew that a Sikh had assassinated the P.M. We talked to some of them in order to gauge their state of mind. The Sikhs seemed to be supremely confident about the goodwill of their Hindu brethren. It seems they nursed no suspicions against the Hindus. They did not show any traces of nervousness of any kind. The non Sikhs in the crowd did not seem even to notice the presence of Sikhs and took their presence as normal.

While this crowd waited patiently for the dead body of the PM to be brought out, the flow of traffic and business in the kiosks around along the wall of the Safdarjung Hospital went on as usual.

I was standing near the crossing in front of the AIIMS when 30-40 young men emerged out of the crowd and formed a neat column three or four men deep and ran towards the crossing near the traffic island. Then the group moved towards INA market. They caught hold of a scooter and set it on fire. There was a traffic jam near the petrol pump adjoining the INA market. The group turned back and moved towards Safdarjung Hospital on Ring Road and moved towards

Sarojini Nagar. They began to pull Sikhs out of buses and remove their turbans and maltreat them. I saw five turbans burning in a row on the Ring Road.

There was no police in the area. The group had a free hand. After some time say 20 minutes or so, a group of khaki clad men arrived and began to chase away the miscreants.

It is difficult to explain the sudden eruption of violence in the AIIMS area on the evening of October 31, 1984. Perhaps the unusual normalcy in that area provoked a section of the people assembled there who were deeply moved by the assassination of Mrs. Gandhi. But the question is: Who were these people who came out of the crowd and went on a rampage ?

Dipankar Gupta, Assistant Professor, JNU:

On November 1 at 11.00 a.m. I was coming by the Vasant Vihar Gurudwara (Priya Cinema) where I saw a group of young men (about 60) attacking the Gurudwara. There were four policemen with guns slung on their shoulders who at that point turned away from the Gurudwara and began walking towards the Cinema complex.

On the same day at 9.20 a.m. I was at the JNU (New Campus) gate, where I found that a number of young men were energetically spreading the rumour that a band of Sikhs shoot down Hindus and that there were three bodies lying between the old and the new camps of JNU. When some students and teachers offered to go down with him to verify his allegation, he disappeared.

Between 9.20 and 10.30 p.m. on November 1, a Haryana Pradesh Congress Committee (I) car kept making the rounds of the campus. I do not know if the occupants of the car included JNU students, but on two occasions I noticed that the occupants of the car conversed at length with those who were spreading the rumour that Sikhs with sten guns were out to kill Hindus. At 10.40 a green Ambassador car with a West

Bengal number plate stopped at the gate and three well-to-do-people got off. They were in the age group of 40-45. One of them went up to the students and teachers manning the gate and said, "I must warn you that Sikhs with nothing in their heads and with sten guns in hand are indiscriminately killing Hindus. You should all go home or you might get hurt.

Prof. Ashwini Ray, Head of Department of Political Science, JNU

November 1, 1984 at 10 a.m. onwards: There was a police vehicle with about four policemen in Bhogal market. I came out of the house and was smoke billowing out. Heard the sound of a big type burst and suddenly saw the police vehicle come out of the Bhogal market, part at Mathura Road, to make way for a truck put on fire and being driven by one of the arsonists himself. The arsonist jumped out, and the truck bumped into a railing within 15 metres of the police car on the opposite side of the road. Policemen were reading newspapers and drinking tea inside the car while the arson was going on all around. I went to the police car to ask why they were not stopping the arson and was told to mind my own business. Already 70-80 trucks were burning in Bhogal and the smoke billowing out.

A short while later, I saw a Texla TV Service Centre on fire, radio sets and TVs being carried off right in front of the parked police vehicle. Some policemen in the vehicle asked the people to hurry with the loot.

By the time I found an armed mob and a group of Sikhs confronting each other close to my house. I rushed home to ring up the police but simply could not get through to the Control Room (100).

Within half an hour of this I saw the ghastly sight of about 80 Sikhs of all ages - from toddlers to 80 year olds, including women and children, crowded on the back verandah of the second floor of a corner house, some of whom were attempting to jump out. I found to my horror that many of the houses in this row had been set on fire, with the mob waiting

in front with sticks and weapons for the occupants to emerge out of the houses. Some citizens managed to help the besieged Sikhs and give them shelter.

The citizens organised a defence committee. In all this only once at night, around 10 p.m. a CRPF patrol marched into the locality and disappeared after giving instructions to keep within doors and keep the lights off. Though it had been agreed by the citizens vigilance committee that some lights should be kept on, the whole locality obeyed the CRPF which never visited the area again.

Swapan Lahiri, Engineer

On November 1, at around 1.30 p.m. I followed from a distance a group of 50 to 60 people, wielding sticks and iron rods from Parliament Street to Raisina Road. There, they tried to get into the house of the BJP MP Atal B. Vajpayee, which was protected by the police and some other men. The mob abused Vajpayee, and moved towards the Press Club taxi stand, where some DLY car and taxis were burnt. When some foreign TV cameramen tried to take pictures, they were prevented.

The mob then moved to the Congress (I) office on Raisina Road, where they regrouped themselves. A part of the mob moved out from the office premises towards Janpath crossing. There they entered the CPI office and began breaking doors and windows with iron rods.

I saw a taxi coming. The mob stopped it and broke its windscreen. The driver pleaded that he was a Hindu, but the mob did not stop. Soon a jeep with a Congress (I) flag came and a man got down. He gave some instructions to the mob and left the scene. The mob then began moving in another direction, and I left.

During all these incidents, I saw the police standing and watching without intervening at any stage.

Sudip Mazumdar, Journalist

The police Commissioner, S.C. Tandon was briefing the press (about 10 Indian reporters and five foreign journalists) in his office on November 6, 5 p.m. A reporter asked him to comment on the large number of complaints about local Congress MPs and light weights trying to pressure the police to get their men released. The police commissioner totally denied the allegation and when questioned further the categorically stated that he has never received any calls or visits by any Congress for that matter, any political leader trying to influence him or his force. Just as he finished uttering these words, Jagdish Tytler, Congress MP from Sadar Constituency, barged of into the PC's office along with three other followers and on the top of his voice demanded from the PC "What is this Mr. Tandon? You still have not done what I asked you to do? "

The reporters were amused, the Police Commissioner embarassed. Tytler kept on shouting and a reporter asked the PC to ask that 'shouting man' to wait outside since a press conference was on. Tytler shouted at the reporter : 'this is more important'. However the reporter told the PC that if Tytler wanted to sit in the office he would be welcome, but a lot of questions regarding his involvement would also be asked and he was welcome to hear them. Tytler was fuming. Perhaps realising the faux pas he sat down and said: 'By holding my men you are hampering relief work'. Then he boasted to some foreign reporters that 'There is not a single refugee in any camp in my constituency. I have made sure that they are given protection and sent back home'. However the incident left the PC speechless and the reporters convinced about the Congress (I) interference in police work.

Rahul Kuldip Bedi
C/o Indian Express
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg
New Delhi -110 002.

5 November 1984
The Lt. Governor

Delhi.

Dear Sir,

I am enclosing a complaint against three senior Delhi Police Officers where through sheer apathy and dereliction of duty became accessories to one of the most gruesome massacres in post independent India.

I sincerely hope that you will take necessary action.

Yours truly,-

RAHUL KULDIP SINGH

cc: Union Minister (Home)

Home Secretary, Govt . of India

Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat

Chief Security Advisor, Cabinet Secretariat

UNI

P.T.I.

Statesman/ Times of India/ Hindustan Times/ Janasatta/

Patriot/ Dainik Samachar/ Navbharat Times / Telegraph / free

Press/ Hindu / All major newspaper and magazines.

C/o Indian Express

Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg

New Delhi -110 002.

November 5, 1984.

To : The Police Commissioner

Delhi Police

Delhi.

Dear Sir,

Following our meeting in your room at the Police Headquarters on Sunday, November 4, I wish to register a complaint of criminal negligence against Mr. H. C. Jatav, IPS, Additional Commissioner of Police, Delhi, Mr. Nikhil Kumar, IPS, Additional Commissioner of Police, Delhi and Mr. Seva

Das IPS, Deputy Commissioner of Police, East District, for being responsible through their apathy and severe dereliction of duty for the massacre in Trilokpuri where over 350 persons were slaughtered in a carnage lasting over 30 hours, ending on the evening of November 2. You agreed to look into the matter.

The official figure of the number dead is 95 in Trilokpuri. The following are the details of the negligence:

1. On learning of the massacre on November 2 morning, I along with Mr. Joseph Maliakan, reporters, Indian Express newspaper, rushed to Trilokpuri at 2 p.m. Around 500 metres away from Block 32 we met a police rider and a constable coming from the block where the killing were still taking place.

Stopping the rider and asking him as to what was going on inside the block, he told us that the situation was quiet. Only two people had been killed, he said.

2. On going further, our car was blocked by angry mob stoned us and told us to leave or face the consequences. Block 32, they said was out of bounds.

3. We went to the local Kalyanpuri Police Station, looking after Trilokpuri and asked the Sub Inspector on duty for help in getting into the beleaguered block around 3.30 p.m. The Police Officer said that all was quiet to Trilokpuri as his rider had reported the same to him. Besides, he said, he was a short of men.

4. After seeking army patrols in vain, we arrived at the Police Headquarters at 5 p.m. Mr. Nikhil Kumar, manning the telephones in your room, was told of the situation. He called the central control room, two floors above: Mr. Nikhil Kumar did nothing to ensure that a force had been sent other than make the telephone call to the control room. He asked the control room to inform the captain on duty inside the control room.

5. On reaching Trilokpuri at 06.05 p.m. we found the Kalyanpuri Station House Officer (SHO) Mr. S. V. Singh accompanied by two constables arriving in a Matador van; Mr. S. V. Singh said that he had radioed his senior officers, specially his DCP, Seva Das. The DCP was nowhere in sight till after 7 p.m.

6. On returning to the police headquarters, we were told by Mr. Nikhil Kumar that he had done his job by informing the control room.

Meanwhile Mr. Jatav, returning from a tour of the trans Jamuna areas, including Klayanpuri police station area (which includes Trilokpuri) arrived in your room and declared that 'calm' prevailed in his area. His DCP, Seva Das, he said, confirmed this.

7. When we stressed the urgency of the situation Mr. Jatav inquired from Mr. Nikhil Kumar as to why he had not been told of the emergency as he was in his office a floor above at 5 p.m., when the latter had merely called the control room, Mr. Nikhil Kumar, had no answer, other than parroting the fact that he had led the control room.

8. Mr. Jatav arrived at the spot around 7.45 p.m. over 30 hours after the killing began on November 1 around 10 a.m.

I hope suitable action is taken against these police office who through dereliction on duty became assesses to the butchering.

Sd/- Sd/-

Joseph Maliakan Rahul Kuldip Bedi

Copy received by Subhash Tandon on 5.11.1984

7. Ms. Kamini Jaiswal, Advocate, Supreme Court of India

On our visit to Pandunagar Gurudwara on November 3, we saw Mr. Padam Sharma who identified himself as the DPCC(I) President. He tried to send us, back saying 'nothing is wrong'. 'Everything is alright here'. But since we had been

to the Gurudwara a day earlier and wanted to see the people who were hiding in the place, we insisted on going to the Gurudwara. When reached the Gurudwara, there were a large number of people some of relatives were stranded in the colony across the road in South Ganesh Nagar, and they were anxious that these people should be rescued. We volunteered to rescue these people should be rescued. We volunteered to rescue these people from South Ganesh Nagar. But on our return the same crowd that had earlier guided us to the Gurudwara turned violent and attacked the car with stones and rods. They said that we were trying to fortify the Gurudwara and disturb the balance; this was not going to be tolerated. This group was led by Mr. Padam Sharma. Later a person from the crowd told us that Mr. Padam Sharma was organising everything there as this was his constituency and that he did not like any interference in his area.

ANNEXURE - III

OFFICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS REPORTS ON THE EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, 31ST OCTOBER '84

Official Pronouncements

Orders were issued late on Wednesday evening for heavy police patrolling all over the city. Section 144 extended to the entire Union Territory...

Three companies of the Delhi Armed Police have been sent to each of the six police districts for round the clock patrolling.

According to the notification issued by the police these arrangements will be in force till further orders.

-Staff Reporter, The Statesmen November 1, 1984.

The Government late on Wednesday night alerted the army and called out the
Report on Events

Five department personnel, like the citizens, received no assistance from the police who were not in evidence in any of the trouble spots in the city. Distress calls to emergency numbers (100) were either not answered or callers were given the stock reply that no help could be proffered.

Express News Service, Indian Express
November 2, 1984

Even the "deployment" of paramilitary forces of the Central Reserve Police Border Security Force as the local police failed to control the widespread rioting and arson in different parts of the capital following the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

A top-level review of the law and order situation, involving the Prime Minister's Secretariat and Home Ministry continued till late Wednesday night to decide on steps to arrest the spread of sporadic Force (CRPF) and the Border Security Force (BSF), announced by the Government on Wednesday evening, was no where to be seen. "I have called CRPF and BSF control rooms every ten minutes" said a deputy officer at the Nizamuddin Police Station, "but each time I am told that there is nothing that can be done".
-Express News Service, Indian Express, November 2, 1984.

violence in the wake of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

-Times of India, news service

November 1, 1984.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1984

The Army was called out, indefinite curfew clamped in the city except in the New Delhi Police district and shoot-at-sight orders were issued on Thursday evening after 60 people were killed and 1000 injured in

communal violence following the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

-Express News Service, Indian Express
November 2, 1984.

Higher direction of the law enforcement machinery was clearly lacking and the police was a mute spectator to the mass violence....

The Lt. Governor did not call out the Army on Wednesday even though the situation showed every sign of going out of control. He took full 24 hours before doing so and clamping curfew in some areas.

When the decision to call the Army was taken on Thursday, the force made available was only adequate for a token presence. Reinforcement were brought in on Friday and Saturday.

Meanwhile, looting and arson continued.

-Devsagar Singh, Indian Express
November 4, 1984.

Mr. P.P. Srivastav, the Delhi Municipal Corporation Commissioner said on Thursday that tap water in the capital "is absolutely safe for consumption".

-PTI, Indian Express
November 2, 1984.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 2, 1984.
Official Pronouncements

Fiddling with figures while the city burnt, the Police Commissioner, Mr. Subhash Tandon said at the end of the day that "Fifteen may be 20 people have died in violence during the day "To this Lt. Governor (Gavai) added "Things are under control".

-Express News Service,
Indian Express,

November 3, 1984.

Local leaders in several areas went around on Thursday night warning people over loud speakers, not to drink water from municipal taps.

-The Statesman
November 3, 1984.

Report on Events

Murders led to massacres in the capital on Friday, one of the bloodiest days in the history of Delhi. Hundreds were killed. There was no count.

The population of whole colonies was wiped out. At least 500 persons were killed in East Delhi alone, the bloodiest place on the day of senseless slaughter.

About 200 bodies were lying in the police mortuary at Tis Hazari.

Reporters saw at least 350 bodies on one street in Trilokpuri.

There were occasional signs of important Army officers without any sanction to check the violence all around them. The Army have no authority to open fire.

-Express News Service Indian Express
November 3, 1984.

Policemen criticised the role of politicians too. Several councillors the alleged, interceded on behalf of violent mobs when policemen tried to stop arson. Officers wondered what Mr. Kamal Nath was doing at Rakabganj.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1984
Official Pronouncements

The curfew imposed in five of the six districts of Delhi on November 1 night was relaxed from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. today

-The Times of India
November 4, 1984.

Besides non-imposition of curfew, there was criticism of the of the lack of crisp commands from the top. "Senior officers only asked what was wrong over the wireless without once suggesting what could be done", one officer said.

-The Statesman
November 3, 1984.

Report on Events

A visit to Mangolpuri on Saturday afternoon showed armed groups of people moving about ... Statesman reporters saw people carrying away the corpse of a child in the area. On the main street in the Colony, a corpse could be seen burning on the footpath...

A reconstruction of what happened in Mangolpuri would suggest that police, despite being present at a checkpost on one end of the colony and in the lines of the 9th battalions of the Delhi Armed Police on the other, could not summon up the nerve to go inside the colony... When Statesman reporters visited the Bhogal area (South Delhi) on Saturday afternoon, smoke could be seen being looted a few yards ahead.

Here (Bhogal) and elsewhere, people of all communities agreed that there had been amity between all through and that organised gangs of criminals from neighbouring colonies and elsewhere had indulged in violence... in Bhogal, two

The Army had moved into most parts of Delhi by last evening; but the deployment reached full strength only after the 3,000 troops and the vehicles reserved for the funeral were made available for controlling the communal violence.

-The Telegraph, Seema Mustafa,
November 4, 1984.

The Executive Magistrates have been empowered to order shooting if necessary

-The Economic Times, Staff Reporter
November 4, 1984.

The Police Commissioner, S.C. Tandon claimed that there was an improvement in the overall situation

-The Economic Times, Staff Reporter
November 4, 1984

The Police Commissioner, Mr. S.C. Tandon, today ordered an enquiry into reports of large number of deaths in Mangolpuri in mob violence since yesterday. The enquiry will be conducted by an officer of the rank of a deputy commissioner said that efforts were being made to verify the claims of the residents that the violence in these areas was 'organised and followed a setpattern".

sub-ordinate police officers were said to have instigated rioters.

-The Statesman, Staff Reporter
November 4, 1984

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 4, 1984
Official Pronouncements

In a swift s and sudden move following large-scale violence in the capital, the Union Government last night announced Mr. Wali's appointment in place of Mr. P.G. Gavai, who has proceeded on leave

-PTI, the Economic Times
November 5, 1984.

MONDAY NOVEMBER 5 1984

The Lt. Governor Mr. M.M.K. Wali, in his first meeting with the pressmen after assuming charge earlier in the day said "no measure will be harsh enough" to prevent fresh trouble.

...Mr. Wali said that 1,809 people had been arrested on charges of arson, rioting and some for breach of the prohibitory orders.

-The Economic Times
November 5, 1984.

Mr. Wali said; about 20,000 people had been given shelters in five relief camps and the administration was providing free cooked food and medical aid.

-The Economic Times
November 5, 1984.

Report on Events

Over 300 people suspected to have looted property have been rounded up by the Central districts police. The Congress-I leaders including the local M.P., Mr. Dharam Das Shastri, came to the Karo Bagh Police Station to protest against the police action.

Mr. Dharam Das Shastri just said "Let them take away recovered property, but there is no need to arrest. These people are not criminals".

-Express News Service, Indian Express
November 6, 1984.

Seven trans-Jamuna refugee camps overflowed with around 25,000 Sikhs from East Delhi on Monday.

The Administration which has not opened even one relief camp in the worst affected area in the city was moving ponderously, providing minimal aid. Voluntary agencies were, however, operating in full swing.

Arrangements to provide cooked food to the people in the relief camps and rescue homes have been made. They would also be provided blankets and mattresses to spend the night in some comfort. Medical relief was also being provided to people living in the relief and rescue camps.

-The Times of India, Staff Reporter
November 5, 1984.

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 6, 1984

A total of 2,517 arrests had been made. He (Wali) was unable to give the number of people who had since been released on; bail but pointed out that bail was a right of every citizen in particular cases.

The police "had denied" that political pressure was being brought upon them as far as making recoveries was concerned, he added.

-The Statesman, Staff Reporter
November 7, 1984.

Talking to newsmen on Tuesday, the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Mr. Madan Mohan Kishan Wali said that a scheme has been drawn up for relief and rehabilitation... Mr. Wali said the compensation was only a token but most of the houses destroyed or damaged were in resettlement colonies and outlying areas and this amount would at least enable the people to put up liveable structures.

-Express News Service, Indian Express
November 7, 1984

-Express News Service, Indian Express
November 6, 1984

Many police officials complained that this drive was not moving into top gear because of political pressure. When the Commissioner of Police was talking to the Press, a local MP barged in and started shouting something about his "instructions being ignored"

-The Statesman, Staff Reporter
November 7, 1984.

Until Tuesday night, there was no sign of the Government's presence at the Tilak Nagar Gurudwara which is sheltering over 1,000 people from Uttam Nagar, Nangloi, Najafgarh, Govindpuri, and Mangolpuri....

The Gurudwara, however, is unable to cope with this sudden influx of people and as in most other such camps, the sanitation is particularly inadequate.

-Express News Service, Indian Express
November 7, 1984
ANNEXURE IV

LIST OF PEOPLE IDENTIFIED BY SURVIVORS

L POLITICIANS

The following is the list of those alleged to have instigated violence and/or protected alleged criminals.

1. Mr. H.K.L. Bhagat, Minister of state (Information and Broadcasting). On November 5, reported to have intervened to get miscreants released who were held in Shahdara Thana.

2. Babu Ram Sharma, Member, Municipal Corporation (Ward No. 58) reported to be the right-hand man of H. K. L. Bhagat. Reportedly responsible for loot, arson and murder in trance-Yamuna areas-Babarpur, Chajupur Colony, Maujpur, Gonda. Allegedly led people on motor cycle with megaphone.
3. Sajjan Kumar, Cong. (I) M.P. from Mangolpuri. Reported to have paid Rs. 100 and a bottle of liquor to each person involved in the killing.
4. Lalit Makan, Cong. (I) Trade Union Leader and Metropolitan Councillor. Reportedly paid to mob Rs. 100 each plus a bottle of liquor. A white ambassador car reportedly belonging to him came 4 times to the G.T. Road area near Azadpur. Instructions to mobs indulging in arson were given from inside the car.
5. Dharam Das Shastri, Cong. (I) M. P. from Karol Bagh. Reported to be carrying voters list with him at Prakash Nagar for identification of Sikhs. On November 5, according to newspaper reports, he along with other Congress-I leaders tried to pressurize the SHO of Karol Bagh Police Station to release the persons who arrested during the police raids to recover looted property.
6. Jagdish Tytler, Cong.(I) M. P. from Sadar Constituency. On 6th November 5 p.m. he barged into a press conference that the Police Commissioner S. C. Tandon was holding. A journalist reports that he told the Police Commissioner that "by holding my men you are hampering the relief work".
7. Mahendra, Metropolitan Councillor. Reported to have accompanied Dharam Das Shastri with voters lists at Prakash Nagar.
8. Mangat Ram Singal, Member of Municipal Corporation (Ward No. 32) was reportedly with Dharam Das Shastri and Mahendra at Prakash Nagar.

9. Dr. Ashok Kumar, Member of Municipal Corporation, Kalyanpuri. Reportedly held a meeting in Kalyanpuri, following which violence broke out immediately. According to many eye witnesses he led mobs which indulged in loot, murder, arson and rape.
10. Sukhan Lal Sood, Metropolitan Councillor. According to eye witnesses was seen leading mobs, which indulged in loot, murder, arson and rape. He had come with petrol and serial lists and addresses of Sikhs in the locality. The women refugees, recognized him and drove him out.
11. Jagdish Chander Tokas, Member of Municipal Corporation Munirka (Ward No. 14) reportedly led a mob to R.K. Puram Sector IV and V.
12. Ishwar Singh, Member, Municipal Corporation, Mangolpuri (Ward No. 37). Allegedly led the mobs that indulged in looting, burning, rape and murder in Mangolpuri area.
13. Balwant Khokhar, Youth Congress-I Leader, Delhi, Identified as one of the persons responsible for instigating looting and arson in Palam Colony area.
14. Faiz Mohammad, Youth Congress-I Leader, Delhi, named by refugees in Shakurpur camp and in Mangolpuri for being a part of the mob indulging in looting, arson and murder.
15. Ratan, Youth Congress-I Leader, Delhi, named as having taken part in violence and looting in Palam Colony area.
16. Satbir Singh, Youth Congress-I. He allegedly brought bus loads of people from Ber Sarai to Sri Guru Harkrishan Public School (Munirka). They burnt school buses and parts of the school building. He was reportedly involved in looting and beating of Sikhs which carried on throughout the night on November 1.

II. POLICE

The following is the list of police officials allegedly responsible for negligence of duty and more abetment of /participation in violence :

1. Malhotra, ACP, East Districts at Shakarpur (under Shakarpur P. S.) Reported to have invited mobs. Heard to say "You should have blown up the Gurudwaras in addition to killing Bhatia (Congress-I worker, Trilochan Singh Bhatia) of M. Block, Shakarpur. Mob was accompanied by Malhotra, who moved with one jeep, station-wagon, two men with sten-guns and revolvers, petrol-cans and stones. He supplied weapons to the mob, according to eve-witness accounts. Reportedly incited mobs at Laxmi Nagar, Gurunangal Nagar (under Shahdara P. S.)
2. Jai Singh, S.H.O., Allegedly told mobs in troubled area that they could do what they wanted for three days.
3. Rao Ram Mehar, S.H.O. at Shakarpur reportedly pointed out Shik shops and houses to the mob.
4. Hari Ram Bhatti, S.H.O. Sultanpuri P. S. reported to have helped the mob by disarming the Sikhs. On November 1 and 2 it is alleged that he himself killed them. On 3 and 4 reported to have had the Sikhs shaven at gun point.
5. Ravtas Singh, S.H.O. Sadar Thana. Reportedly broke into houses and indulged in arson.
6. Survir Singh, S.H.O. Kalyanpuri, P. S. He reported reached Trilokpuri (under Kalyanpuri P. S.) at 2.30 p.m. On November 1, when plunder and killing were going on. He immediately removed head constable and another constable from the spot, thereby giving the mob full licence to indulge in arson, rape and killing.
7. R. D. Singh, S.I. Information from refugees at Durgapuri Gurudwara, Loni Road that he abetted mobs and personally beat up and killed people.

8. S.H.O. and Constables. R. K. Puram Sector IV P. S.
According to eye witness account when appealed to by two residents of Ber Sarai to project a Sikh family being attacked by a mob in Sector IV they categorically refused. Further, they are reported to have declared that Sikhs should be killed.

The following are the names of other police officials reported to have abetted / participated in violence in the mentioned areas :

9. Tyagi, S.H.O. in Trilokpuri.
10. Rana, Inspector-in-Trilokpuri.
11. Moolchand, S. I. In Shakarpur.
12. Bakshi, A.S.I. in Trilokpuri.
13. Rajvir Singh, Head Constable, Kalyanpuri, P. S. in Trilokpuri.

III OTHERS INVOLVED

The following is the list of persons allegedly involved in looting, arson and other criminal activities:

TRILOKPURI:

BLOCK -5

1. Papita, one of the ring leaders allegedly involved in murder.

BLOCK-12 :

2. Brahmani (Misrani) Shastri.

BLOCK-14 :

3. Baleshwar Bhargi alias Bhalu.
4. Bal Kishan

BLOCK-21 :

5. Bihari Dhobi.

BLOCK-25

6. B. D. Sharma.

BLOCK-27 :

7. Israi Ali (alias Chunnu).
8. Salim, Well known goonda, allegedly involved in murder.
9. Massa, opium dealer.

BLOCK-28 :

10. Dr. Yahya Siddiqi, Clinic at Main Road, Block -27, reportedly led the mob.\
11. Manu Singh, shop-keeper.
12. Soni, Railway Worker.
13. Mukesh, reportedly involved in loot and murder.

BLOCK-29 :

14. Mukri Master, Tailor, allegedly involved in murder.

BLOCK-30 :

15. Om Prakash (Omi), Mason, allegedly involved in murder.
16. Ved Prakash (Brother of Om Prakash), Handpump Mistri, allegedly involved in murder and rape.
17. Nur Jahan, reported to have incited Muslims by spreading the rumours that mosques have been burnt by Sikhs.
18. Keramat, Dealer in Cement.
19. Shabnam, TV shop owner.
20. Damesh
21. Punju
22. Salim allegedly involved in murder.
23. Abbas Son-in-law (see Abbas in Block 32).
24. Mukri, Video shop owner.
25. Hasin.

BLOCK-31 :

26. Kamaruddin, Atta-Chakki shop owner, and Furniture dealer.
27. Niyamat Ali.
28. Ninav, Tea shop owner.

29. Dr. V. P. Singh.
30. Duli Chand, Local Leader.

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