

The Faces of Terror in India



a report by the
Sikh Information Centre

June 2011

The Faces of Terror in India

a report by
the Sikh Information Centre
a nonprofit organization

researched and written by
Bhajan Singh Bhinder & Patrick J. Nevers

www.sikhinformationcentre.org

Published 2011 by Sovereign Star Publishing, Inc.

Copyright © 2011 by the Sikh Information Centre. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, digital, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise or conveyed via the internet or a web site without prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Inquiries should be addressed to:

Sovereign Star Publishing, Inc
PO Box 392 Lathrop, CA 95330
United States of America

www.sovstar.com

ISBN 978-0-9814992-5-3; 0-9814992-5-2

Contents

~

Introduction	1
1. Derailing the Peace Train for Social Disruption	5
2. Smuggling Weapons to Frame Sikhs	13
3. Planting Severed Cow Heads	15
4. Staging the Chittisinghpura Massacre	23
Conclusion	27
Glossary	33
Citations	37

Introduction

For the third year in a row, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has placed India on its “Watch List” of countries whose governments regularly tolerate or engage in extreme violations of religious liberties. Yet based on India’s widely perceived image as the world’s largest democracy, the USCIRF’s 2011 report noted: “Since 2004, Washington and New Delhi have pursued a strategic relationship based on common concerns regarding the growing threat of terrorism, energy security, and global warming, as well as on the shared values of democracy and the rule of law.”¹

In its pursuit of ever closer ties with India, the United States government has termed that country a “strategic” and “natural” partner in its international war against terrorism. However, the central government of India has proven itself totally incapable of even punishing those who are clearly responsible for inciting large-scale communal violence against unarmed civilians, let alone instigators of more traditional terrorist acts such as bombings and smaller scale massacres. This is documented by the USCIRF, which states in its 2011 report:

Justice for the victims of large-scale communal violence in Orissa in 2007-2008, in Gujarat in 2002, and against Sikhs in 1984 remains slow and often ineffective. In some regions of India, law enforcement and judicial officials have proven unwilling or unable to seek redress consistently for victims of religiously-motivated violence or to challenge cultures of impunity in areas with a history of communal tensions, which in some cases has fostered a climate of impunity. During the reporting period, small-scale attacks on and harassment of Christians and Muslims and their places of worship continued.²

In every one of these incidents and many more which have received less international attention, Indian police officers and military members failed to intervene to stop the violence. In fact, they often passively stood by and allowed it to happen, literally watching as murder, rape and other atrocities were perpetrated before their very eyes. Rather than making the slightest effort to restrain bloodthirsty mobs, the authorities typically encourage and sometimes even join in deadly communalist riots against Indian minority communities. When the police force itself is consumed with such hatred for minorities, it is inevitable that such incidents will always be met with impunity.

The reason for this hatred generally lies in the spread of a Hindu supremacist ideology known as *Hindutva*. Most especially egregious acts of religious violence in the past decade have occurred at the behest of fanatical Hindu nationalist organizations such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), groups that the USCIRF’s 2009 report said advocate an “ideology of *Hindutva*, which holds non-Hindus as foreign to India.” One of the most powerful political parties in India, the BJP controlled that country from 1998 to 2004 and provides the primary opposition to the ruling Congress Party. Yet even when the Congress, ostensibly a party of secular moderates, is in power, those guilty of communalist attacks continue to be met with impunity. For instance, the 2009 report also stated:

The failure to provide justice to religious minorities targeted in violent riots in India is not a new development, and has helped foster a climate of impunity. In 1984, anti-Sikh riots erupted in Delhi following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguard. Over 4 days, nearly 3,000 Sikhs were killed, allegedly with the support of Congress Party officials. Few perpetrators were ever held accountable,

2 • Faces of Terror in India

and only years after the fact.³

Several sitting members of parliament from the Congress Party participated in the ethnic cleansing of Sikhs in 1984. Countless eyewitnesses testified that these MPs distributed weapons and locations of Sikh homes, issued orders to kill and offered cash bounties to the killers. Nevertheless, most of the the accused politicians remain heavily involved at high levels of the central government to the present day, including current Indian Cabinet Minister Kamal Nath. It is minority communities such as the Sikhs and Muslims, however, who are inexplicably treated as an anti-national threat disruptive to a peaceful India.

One of the few differences between the approach of the BJP and that of Congress is that the latter party often acts against minorities in a more nefarious, subtle fashion (the Delhi pogroms aside) which permits it retain its veneer of secularism. Attacks on non-Hindu communities in India continue unabated no matter which party is in power. Peeling away the mask to expose the real face behind Indian terrorism makes it clear that agents acting for and from within the Indian central government are frequently the actual culprits. In fact, the Indian state's commitment to covertly sponsoring acts of terror for which it then frames minority communities runs so deep that it even impacts those who flee from oppression in India.

Jasbir Singh was a student living in Toronto on June 5, 1984, when he learned from radio reports that the Indian Army was conducting an unprovoked invasion of the Sikh Golden Temple in northwestern India. Dubbed "Operation Bluestar," the attack coincided with a festival commemorating the martyrdom of Guru Arjan, the temple's founder. He was infuriated and frustrated by news that tanks, helicopters and artillery were used to assault the Harmandir Sahib (the temple's Punjabi name means "Abode of God") on the busiest of Sikh holidays and heard radio reports "spelling out news of an all-out massacre of the pilgrims." Confused and unsure how to react, Jasbir headed for the Indian consulate in downtown Toronto.

Walking past the security guards straight into the consulate's lobby, Jasbir stopped before a picture of Indira Gandhi, the Indian prime minister who ordered Operation Bluestar. Grabbing a wooden chair, he smashed it against the framed photo "again and again." His rage spent, Jasbir ran from the consulate as guards tried to grab him. T. Sher Singh, a Canadian attorney and former police commissioner who recorded the incident, explains how Consul General Surinder Malik, a Punjabi Hindu, seized immediate advantage of Jasbir's outrage, writing:

Surinder Malik was thorough and efficient.

He began with Mrs. Gandhi's portrait, and went at it until the frame disintegrated and the damaged face fell to the floor.

Then he went for the old man Gandhi's picture, and did the same with it. Legs had fallen off the chair in his hands. He crashed it heavily on the coffee table, and picked up another chair. And then went around the room - well, like a wild bull in a china shop, if I may be forgiven the cliché.

He tackled the tourism poster, the reception desk, the metal almirahs, the coffee table again, and then the bare walls. He yelled out at his staff and chided them for merely looking on. When they joined in the mayhem, he screamed: *Jaldi, jaldi!* Hurry, hurry! Before the *saala* [a Hindi expletive] media arrive!

They picked up the other chairs and threw them around until they were all broken. He stood back, and surveyed the scene. Kicked at the magazines and newspapers until they lay scattered around the floor. Dusted his hands. Walked over to the telephone. Called 911 and, in a frantic voice, demanded police help: "We've been attacked", he spat into the receiver, feigning distress and terror.⁴

Surinder Malik's deception illustrates the typical pattern of the Indian central government's attempt to intentionally create and fuel a vicious cycle of violence. When minorities protest against discrimination and abuse, agents of the state covertly orchestrate terrorist incidents to blame on the discontented communities. The spectre of terrorism provides a justification for the more blatant use of violence to crack down on nonconforming minorities and simultaneously tarnishes peaceful protesters who raise legitimate grievances by inextricably linking their cause to terrorist actions. Sometimes this approach merely results in the destruction of office chairs in a consulate lobby, but

other times it results in the massacre of thousands of unarmed civilians.

The Toronto police force quickly apprehended and interrogated Jasbir Singh Saini, who had no qualms in confessing his responsibility, as Singh recounts:

Not surprisingly, it didn't take them long to track down the young man. When they turned up at his door, he readily accepted his guilt. And explained, without hesitation, what he had done, and why he had done it. He confessed to having smashed Mrs. Gandhi's picture. That's it. No more, no less.⁵

The deftly created puzzle which Indian central government representatives present to sustain their claims sometimes contains pieces that simply do not fit. Sometimes these discrepancies are more glaring than others. In this case, the Canadian police had very little difficulty seeing through Surinder Malik's fraudulent explanation:

To begin with, the officers were convinced of Jasbir Singh's sincerity. He had been forthright in all of his answers and had held back on nothing. But one other thing intrigued them even more: Jasbir Singh had only one arm. The other was not only completely missing, but its absence was routinely hidden by him in an empty shirt-sleeve. The guards at the Consulate offices had failed to notice this fact. And neither Mr. Malik nor his staff were aware of this.

The officers went back to the scene of the crime and it didn't take them long to determine that it was impossible for a young man, slight in stature and with an arm missing, to cause the damage Mr. Malik claimed Jasbir Singh had caused, within the timeframe each witness had reported.

They dug deeper. And here's what they obtained:

A sworn statement from one of the security guards - who was employed by a private security company and merely contracted out to the Indian Consulate - declaring that she had personally witnessed Indian Consul General Surinder Malik destroying the portraits and damaging the furniture.⁶

Dana Lewis, then a radio reporter and now a Toronto-based TV news correspondent, confirmed Malik's story as a lie. According to Canadian journalists Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian McAndrew, the authors of *Soft Target*, the security guard's "testimony was corroborated by a radio reporter, Dana Lewis, who picked up the emergency call on his police monitor. He arrived at the consulate in time to witness Malik finishing what the one-armed student had started."⁷

Malik escaped all legal consequences by pleading diplomatic immunity as consul general, although "considerable encouragement from Canada's Foreign Affairs and the Policing community" inspired his replacement. This helped to avert international news coverage anyways since "after a short and convenient lapse of time" the guilty Malik was "quietly pulled back to Mother India." The pattern of terror revealed by Malik, however, continues to be enthusiastically employed by India's central government to oppress non-Hindus.

Hindutva is a pan-Hindu worldview which preaches a goal of regional supremacy. This supremacist ideology was woven into the Indian Constitution through Article 25, which reads, in part: "...the reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion." This definition of "Hindu" is viewed by Indian minorities as an attempt to forcibly convert Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists with the stroke of a pen. Modern India has consequently seen proponents of *Hindutva* win countless bloody victories over non-Hindus who object to the state-assisted absorption of their distinct religious and cultural traditions.

Although Indian politicians, especially those from the ostensibly secular Congress party, often subtly conceal their adherence to *Hindutva*, many of the country's police and military forces align themselves openly with supremacism. Some of them even publicly admit as much. For instance, M. K. Dhar, a former joint director of India's Intelligence Bureau (IB), confessed: "I had acquired a passion for hating the Muslims and I had chose the RSS and the Jan Sangh as my ideological vehicle to avenge the civilizational vermin."⁸ S. M. Mushrif, a former inspector general of police, explained in his book *Who Killed Karkare* how Hindu supremacism has influenced the IB, writing:

The IB does not stop at spreading baseless rumours about the activities of so-called terrorists. In order to

4 • Faces of Terror in India

give credence to its rumour-mongering, it occasionally engineers “terror attacks” and manipulates “encounters” in which, more often than not, all the “terrorists” are killed, who are later declared “Muslims” belonging to some known or unknown terrorist outfits.... In such attacks and/or encounters, automatic weapons and explosives are shown on the persons of the slain “terrorists” in order to give the incident a real-life touch. But this fact, by itself, is not a proof that the persons killed were real terrorists, as the IB and RAW have easy access to such weapons and explosives.⁹

There is an undeniable connection between agents of the Indian state and the underlying cause of many acts of terror within India. Whether such acts are sponsored from deep within the government or by rogue agents, the end result is that perpetrators are always met with impunity. Innocent people are arrested, tortured or killed, dissenters are silenced through bloodshed and so millions languish as virtual captives within a deeply repressive legal and social environment, the creators of which never suffer the slightest consequence. India’s central government maintains its iron-gripped monopoly on political power while refusing to fully or openly prosecute and punish any of those responsible for the ongoing use of state-sponsored terrorism. Meanwhile, these acts are expertly blended with anti-minority propaganda that besmirches non-Hindus as violent people who hate the government without reason, consequently forcing non-Hindu Indian communities to adopt permanent defensive postures within India.

Many Indian minorities believe that there is no longer any room for them in a country ruled by supremacists whose first resort is violence and those supremacists are thrilled to have conveyed such a message. The suppression of staged terrorism has proven highly beneficial for obtaining Hindu votes, places the Indian state on a higher pedestal than ever and sanctions the worst kind of bullying. It should go without saying that this bullying behavior gravely distracts from genuine problems of terrorism which persist in Southeast Asia and directly works against legitimate efforts to curb the use of terror tactics.

A new book titled “By The Way of Our Fathers: “ suggests that one lesson to be learned from “experiments on India’s minorities” is that Hindu supremacism has flourished. In the process of being printed by Sovereign Star Publishing, this book also accuses the Indian state of having covertly sponsored terrorism for decades and suggests political gain as one primary root cause. Drawing from research published in that book, this report will examine several particularly notable incidents that the central Indian government has attempted to blame on proverbial one-armed perpetrators. These include the 2007 Samjhauta Express bombing and 2008 Malegaon bombing, the smuggling of weapons into Punjab in 1988, the 1982 severed cow heads incident and the Chittisinghpura massacre in 2000. The reader is especially asked to consider how the world might feel if it were known that extremist factions within the Indian government brought the country to the brink of nuclear war with Pakistan through the intentional derailment of the Samjhauta Express.

1. Derailing the Peace Train for Social Disruption

It was nearly midnight on February 18, 2007 when explosive charges tore through two carriages of the Samjhauta Express as it passed near Panipat, a city in the Indian state of Haryana, while journeying from India into Pakistan. The targeted train line, named “*Samjhauta*” after the Hindi term for “compromise,” was founded as a peace train for linking the antagonistic countries and was notable as the first rail service to connect India and Pakistan. Yet no compromise was offered in the violent explosion as two bombs set the two railcars ablaze, as the *Washington Post* reported:

The fire engulfed two cars of the Samjhauta Express, one of two train links between India and Pakistan. As on most Indian trains, the windows of many cars are barred. In addition, investigators say at least one of the doors of the two burning carriages was fused shut by the heat of the flames, trapping some passengers inside.

“From the less damaged coach, some people were seen jumping out with their bodies on fire,” Bharti Arora, superintendent of the Haryana state railway police, told reporters.

The explosion and fire struck just before the train reached the station in the village of Dewana, about 50 miles north of New Delhi. In a stretch of nearly empty countryside, there was almost no one around to help. But townspeople and villagers soon flocked to the scene with buckets to try to put out the fire.¹⁰

The blast occurred just one day before then Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri was scheduled to visit Delhi for peace talks regarding Jammu and Kashmir and was clearly designed to prevent a positive outcome.¹¹ Speaking to reporters, India’s own Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav concluded: “This is an act of sabotage. This is an attempt to derail the improving relationship between India and Pakistan.” Pakistan’s Foreign Minister’s visit was consequently delayed until February 21, when dialogues remained overshadowed by still fresh memories of the terrorist attack.¹²

Sixty-eight innocents died in the attack. Although no militant group claimed responsibility, by the next day India was already blaming the attack on extremist Muslim organizations such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI).¹³ However, Pakistani Railway Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed noted that although Pakistani militants were accused of the bombing, 553 of the train’s 757 passengers had been Pakistanis.¹⁴ A full 42 of the victims were Pakistani, leading SIMI leader Safdar Nagori to flatly deny all involvement by asking: “Why would we kill our own Muslim brothers?”¹⁵ Considering such factors, the presupposed responsibility of Muslim extremists certainly seems improbable.

Hindu supremacist factions in the Indian government immediately used the attack to try and drum up support for harsher anti-terrorism laws. Roundly criticizing the United Progressive Alliance government, former BJP national president L. K. Advani said: “The bomb blasts in the train from Delhi to Attari go to show that terrorists are still operating and are in command. The UPA government’s approach lacks a concerted policy to tackle terrorists.” He insisted, on behalf of his entire party, that a “zero tolerance policy” ought to be adopted. Rajnath Singh, who was then heading the BJP, began pushing for new measures to combat terrorism, saying: “The government should

6 • Faces of Terror in India

introduce a more stringent bill (than POTA) to tackle the scourge. We will give it our full support.”¹⁶ POTA was the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act; passed in 2002, it granted police a broad range of powers, as detailed by Indian journalist George Iype:

It allowed the detention of a suspect for up to 180 days without the filing of charges in court. It also allowed law enforcement agencies to withhold the identities of witnesses and treats a confession made to the police as an admission of guilt. Under regular Indian law, a person can deny such confessions in court, but not under POTA.¹⁷

A related terrorist attack occurred the following year. On September 29, 2008, a bomb was detonated in Malegaon, a city in the state of Maharashtra, as reported by *The Hindustan Times*: “The blast took place near a hotel in Bhikku Chowk around 2145 hrs on Monday night and the bomb was reportedly planted in a silver coloured Hero Honda Passion motorcycle, which was found near the site.”¹⁸ Seven people died in the explosion, which occurred on the eve of Navratri, a major Hindu festival celebrating the goddess Shakti, who represents primordial force. It was especially convenient for the purpose of assigning blame that, according to *Times of India* reporters Mateen Hafeez and Yogesh Naik: “The location where the blasts took place also happens to be outside the building where the banned SIMI had its office.”¹⁹

Mumbai’s Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS), headed by Hemant Karkare, was invited to take the case. Under Karkare’s leadership, the investigation soon developed some unusual suspects, as related by S. M. Mushrif, a former colleague of the now deceased Karkare: “The involvement of a Hindutva (Brahminist) terror group called Abhinav Bharat and some army officers and religious leaders was revealed. It has been suspected that the same group is responsible for bomb blast on Samjhauta Express, Ajmer Dargah and some other places.”²⁰

In early November, the ATS began arresting these suspects, taking into custody both Lieutenant Colonel Shrikant Prasad Purohit, an actively serving military intelligence officer in the Indian Army and Pragya Thakur, a devout Hindu in whose name the Hero Honda motorcycle was registered. The daughter of a long-time member of the RSS, Thakur maintained her own strong *Hindutva* ties, having formerly belonged to the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the BJP, and also to the Durga Vahini, the women’s wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.²¹ Major Ramesh Upadhyaya, a retired Indian Army officer who “once headed the RSS’s Mumbai unit of the Ex-Serviceman’s Cell,” was also arrested on suspicion of supplying RDX, a high explosive, for use in the terrorist attack.²²

Purohit had founded an organization called Abhinav Bharat, intending it as a front for “propagating a Hindu *Rashtra*” — otherwise known as a Hindu government.²³ Towards the furtherance of that goal, Purohit purloined 60 kilograms of RDX while deployed in Jammu and Kashmir, explosives which the ATS investigators linked to both the Malegaon and Samjhauta bombings. This was reported by *The Hindu*, which stated: “[Special Prosecutor for Maharashtra ATS Ajay] Misar said: “When Purohit was stationed at the Deolali army camp, he had gone to Jammu and Kashmir on official work and is believed to have got 60 kg of RDX and a part of it was given to this link ‘Bhagwan’, who used it in the Samjhauta train blast. The ATS is probing his involvement.” Claims that Purohit passed RDX to Bhagwan were corroborated by then Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik, who publicly concluded that the army officer likely commissioned the bombing by hiring Islamic militants as stooges for performing the actual attack.²⁴

Evidence gathered by the ATS included, according to *The Telegraph* (Calcutta), “telephone conversations of up to 400 minutes between Pragya and her co-accused after the blast.”²⁵ Concerning evidence against Purohit, former police official S. M. Mushrif explains: “He had come on the ATS radar because of some SMSs [text messages] sent by him to his Abhinav Bharat colleague, retired major Ramesh Upadhyaya (*The Times of India*, Pune, 7 November 2008).”²⁶ Piecing together the connections between these various accused individuals, an article from Indian television network NDTV stated:

Lt Col Purohit was earlier in the Maratha regiment. Because of ill health, he was put in a lower medical category while in Jammu and Kashmir, which affects promotions and was later shifted to military intelligence.

He came into contact with Abhinav Bharat or Major Upadhyaya, another armyman, during his postings with MI in Nashik and Pune, sometime in 2004-05.

Purohit was found in Pachmarhi, learning Arabic. Call records between him and Upadhyaya around the time of the Malegaon blasts and after that is seen as incriminating.

But the Colonel's exact role is not clear. He is being investigated not just for training, but for playing a wider role in the blasts.

Purohit is suspected to have helped bomb blast accused Sadhvi Pragya Thakur, Retired Army Major Ramesh Upadhyaya and his associate Sharad Kulkarni in getting RDX that was used in the September 29 Malegaon blasts.²⁷

Mushrif said the Indian IB was aware that Purohit had founded the violent Abhinav Bharat organization, having “covered some of its meetings,” even knew the goals of this group were supremacist in nature. Yet although Indian authorities were fully aware of the officer's *Hindutva* views, Purohit was permitted unrestricted access to a number of high-profile military educational institutions, even being “invited as a guest lecturer to train the officers of the ATS Maharashtra in the detection and handling of explosives.”²⁸

However, the tables were turned when ATS Maharashtra chief Karkare began investigating Purohit, who he learned was closely associated with retired Army Colonel S. S. Raikar, the commandant of Nashik's Bhonsala Military School. He was “interrogated for allegedly attending a meeting of the accused involved in the case 15 days prior to the Malegaon blast,” upon which police discovered his involvement ran even deeper.²⁹ Not only had Raikar apparently “helped procure arms for Abhinav Bharat,³⁰ but his entire school appeared to be thoroughly infected by the poisonous *Hindutva* ideology. For instance, Mushrif records that former commandant Major Prabhakar Kulkarni was accused of “allegedly training Malegaon blast accused in the use of RDX on the school premises in 2001 (*The Times of India*, Pune, 29 October 2008).”³¹

The extent of Abhinav Bharat's terrorist agenda began to emerge as the investigation continued unfolding, as Mushrif wrote:

Some highly explosive facts came to light. Members of the Abhinav Bharat terror group were preparing for a nationwide bombing campaign as early as 2002. In December 2002, the M.P. Police had discovered an improvised explosive device at Bhopal's railway station. A second IED was found exactly a year later in Bhopal's Lamba Khera neighborhood. Both bombs were intended to attack delegates arriving in the city for the annual convention of the Tablighi Jamaat, an event that attracts 5 lakh Muslims. Madhya Pradesh Police, the sources said, soon developed information linking the attempted bombing to local *Hindutva* activists, Ramnarayan Kalsangram and Sunil Joshi. Both men, now alleged by the Maharashtra ATS to have occupied commanding posts in Abhinav Bharat, were questioned along with several other suspects linked to the Bajrang Dal activities (*Hindu*, Delhi, 20 November 2008).³²

It is worth noting that the arrest of these accused individuals put a stop to the spate of terrorist attacks which had then been occurring in India. Mushrif wryly remarked upon this fact, writing: “Whereas hundreds of Muslim boys were being arrested after every bomb blast in the country, the blasts had not stopped but after the arrest of the real terrorists in Malegaon blast case of 2008, they have almost completely stopped.”³³ Without exception, however, the Sangh Parivar (an umbrella term for *Hindutva* groups) immediately denounced the Mumbai ATS for daring to accuse Hindus of any crime, let alone one so foul, and hired multiple attorneys for the defendants.³⁴ The BJP, RSS, VHP and Shiv Sena all “vilified” then ATS Chief Hemant Karkare, accusing him of “being on a witch-hunt.”³⁵ According to Indian writer Arundhati Roy, BJP politician L. K. Advani “made rabble rousing speeches to huge gatherings in which he denounced the ATS for daring to cast aspersions on holy men and women.”³⁶ On November 3, the first day of trial, pro-*Hindutva* activists gathered outside the courthouse to shower Purohit and other defendants with rose petals.³⁷

As social organizations, the VHP and RSS have long found their political outlet in the BJP, and the various ideological groups often share an overlapping membership. Yet the RSS and Hindu organizations like it are disconcertingly militant in the eyes of most secularists. Formed in the early 1920s for the dual purpose of fighting British colonialism and opposing Muslim calls for distinct representation, the RSS has a long history of militancy. The organi-

8 • Faces of Terror in India

zation continues to thrive even in the supposedly progressive, technologically advanced environment of modern India.

Throughout India, the RSS maintains *shakhas* (Hindi for “branch”), each well-supplied by a stock of loyal recruits who have typically been involved in their local *shakha* since early youth. These branches are grassroots paramilitary institutions which maintain large memberships of Hindu men of all ages, most of whom were recruited in their early teenage years. Regarding the size of the nationalist group, Mushrif wrote:

Today, it has about 44,000 branches (*shakhas*), operating across 30,000 cities and towns. The exact number of its volunteers is not known. It could be in the range of seven to eight million. The renowned writer Arundhati Roy in her article “9 is not 11 and November isn’t September” in *Outlook* magazine (22 December 2008) says, “The RSS has 45,000 branches, its own range of charities and seven million volunteers preaching its doctrine of hatred across India.”³⁸

When participating in regular activities at their local *shakha*, RSS members wear tan uniforms, march on parade grounds and learn how to fight with lathes. They chant militant hymns which lament the historical oppression of Hindus, whether by the Muslim rulers of India or the colonial British government, and pursue a belief in the idea of “India for the Hindus.”

One of the key tenets which unites the RSS with the VHP, BJP and other outlets of *Hindutva* fervor is that non-Hindus should be relegated to second-class citizenship, as proclaimed by K. S. Sudarshan, who was *sarsangbhalak* —that is, the appointed leader — of the RSS from 1998 to 2009. In an interview filmed for “Nuclear Nationalism,” a documentary by Journeyman Pictures, Sudarshan confidently proclaimed that all Muslims and Christians living within India are Hindus. Elaborating upon his ideology, he stated: “This country is one, this culture is one, the people are one. So in order to inculcate this idea, and an all India perspective, and also a dedication to the country and discipline ... the RSS was started for this very purpose. To unite the Hindu society, to make them patriotic and disciplined.”

The methods the RSS uses to unite Hindu society are inescapably violent. As documented by Mushrif, this violence has found its outlet over the past decade in a large number of RSS-affiliated training camps. For instance, he records the occurrence of at least 7 major training camps between 2000 and 2003 alone, during which participants were instructed the use of explosives and often supplied with their own stash. In 2001, one of these camps took place at Bhonsala Military School. Founded by Dr. B. S. Moonje in 1937, this school boasts the following description on its website: “The aim of the school is to inculcate military virtues in the Bhartiya [Hindu] Youth.” Since Nashik, the Maharashtra city in which the school is located, is considered a holy Hindu city with links to the Hindu god Rama, the school’s website states “the founder named the campus of the school as *Rambhoomi* and the students are called ‘*Ramdandees*’- followers of Lord Rama.” Regarding the terrorist training camp hosted on the school grounds, Mushrif wrote (emphasis added):

2001: 40-days training camp of RSS-Bajrang Dal activists was organised on the premises of the Bhonsala Military School, Nagpur. A total of 115 activists from all over the country, including 54 from Maharashtra, attended the camp. The trainees were imparted training in handling of weapons, making of bombs and exploding the same. *Retired and serving army officers and retired senior IB officers were among the trainers* (as disclosed in the investigation of Nanded blast case of 2006 and Malegaon blast case of 2008).³⁹

Considering India’s own IB is actually training these *Hindutva* extremists in the use of terror tactics, there is certainly no doubt that they are aware of the issue. When the authorities are themselves involved in supremacist causes, is also consequently not at all surprising that they have totally failed to restrain RSS-affiliated perpetrators of violence and instead choose to blame virtually all terrorism in India on Muslim or other non-Hindu sources. If the central government allowed real transparency and encouraged serious, impartial investigations, the world might soon discover that the truly guilty parties reside within the ranks of India’s police and military forces and even its political offices.

A selection of other Sangh Parivar related training camps and terrorist incidents recorded by Mushrif illustrates just how extensive is the *Hindutva* involvement in these illicit activities:

March 2000: Bajrang Dal organised a training camp at Pune to train its activists, among other things, in the use of gelatin sticks. About 40 to 50 state-level activists attended the camp. Himanshu Panse of Nanded (who later died while preparing a bomb in April 2006) was the group leader. The camp was organised by Milind Parande, the head of Bajrang Dal's All India Physical Education wing.⁴⁰

2003: At a training camp organised at Akanksha Resort on Sinhgad Road near Pune, activists were given training in preparing and detonating bombs. About 50 youths attended the training. A man identified as 'Mithun Chakravorthy' was the main person who not only imparted training in the use of explosives but also handed over large quantities of explosives to the trainees on the concluding day.⁴¹

6 April 2006: Explosion occurred in Nanded in which two activists of RSS-VHP-Bajrang Dal were killed and three injured while making bombs.⁴²

12 December 2006: Nas[h]ik Police seized 50 detonators, 11 boxes containing gelatin sticks, and five tins of ammonium nitrate from an unidentified vehicle near Nas[h]ik. They are suspected to have link with Bajrang Dal.⁴³

4 June 2008: A bomb exploded in the Gadkari Rangayatan theatre in Thane, where a Marathi play "Amhi Pachpute" was due to be staged. Seven persons were injured. Police found that Brahminist organisations such as Guru Kripa Pratishthan, Sanatan Sanstha and Hindu Janajagruti Samiti were behind the blast at Gadkari Rangayatan and for planting bombs in Vashi and Panvel. (*The Indian Express* investigation shows that the linkages to these groups of Maharashtra and Goa go all the way to Australia and U.S., as reported in *Communalism Combat*, July-August 2008.) During their investigation, police recovered massive stocks of explosive items at Penn and Satara at the instance of the arrested accused.⁴⁴

July-August 2008: One Pramod Mutalik of Rashtriya Hindu Sena (RHS), an outfit of RSS, has formed an Anti-Terrorist Squad at Bangalore, with 700 people from all over the state and 150 from Bangalore. Mutalik claimed that he has set up the team to weed out terrorism from the state (*Pune Mirror*, 23 August 2008).

Pramod Mutalik also heads Sri Ram Sene. He claimed that a total of 1,132 Hindu suicide bombers have become members of his suicide squad. Sri Ram Sene has also set up secret training camps in Mangalore, Belgaum and Shimoga in order to provide training to these suicide bombers (*The Milli Gazette*, 1-15 November 2008).⁴⁵

On November 24, news broke that Pravin Togadia, the VHP's General Secretary, had been implicated in connection with the Malegaon bombing. He had apparently secretly funded Purohit's terrorist *Hindutva* organization with a contribution of two hundred thousand rupees.⁴⁶ Curiously, the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks began the very next day, claiming the life of Hemant Karkare, who died in an ambush on his Toyota Qualis during the attack.⁴⁷ A new chief who was conveniently a close acquaintance of Purohit was hurriedly sworn in as Karkare's replacement as ATS chief. The strangely opportune timing of his death is made even more suspicious by the Sangh Parivar's vehement opposition to an investigation of the ATS chief's murder, as reported by Mushrif:

Demands were being made for a thorough and independent enquiry into the death of Hemant Karkare, the Brahminists in BJP and in other such Brahminist organisations were highly perturbed. They opposed any such demand tooth and nail and condemned those making such demands. When Union Minister, A. R. Antulay, made such a demand, the MPs of BJP and Shiv Sena raised hue and cry for his resignation in both the houses of Parliament. In Maharashtra State Assembly, there was a pandemonium with BJP, Shiv Sena members calling Antulay an "agent of Pakistan" and asking for his blood. Some over-enthusiastic workers of BJP burnt his effigy in Mumbai.⁴⁸

Whatever the actual cause of Karkare's elimination, his death effectively stalled the previously aggressive ATS investigation of the Sangh Parivar's terror links. Nevertheless, some additional information connecting the accused

to a broader anti-minority terror wave has since come to light. For instance, after Pragya Thakur was again “arrested for planning anti-Muslim attacks in 2008,” she reportedly implicated Purohit as the mastermind of the 2007-08 killings of Christians in the states of Orissa and Karnataka. A report by Spero News regarding Thakur’s claim stated: “Thakur’s statement to the NIA [National Investigation Agency] came soon after a Directorate of Military Intelligence report said that Purohit had confessed to killing at least two Christians in Kandhamal and playing a role in violence in Karnataka and other states.”⁴⁹

Tensions in Orissa first reached a head on Christmas Eve of 2007 when Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati, the top Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader in that state, began agitating against Christians. A *Times of India* report stated that “ever since the December 2007 riots in Kandhamal, a predominantly tribal area, Laxmanananda and VHP secretary general Pravin Togadia portrayed Christians as Maoists and attempted to defeat the revolutionary movement.” Communalist rumblings instigated by Laxmanananda soon took the life of at least one Indian Christian, whose murder was accompanied by a short but ferocious spate of rioting that destroyed 105 churches, 730 Christmas homes and dozens of Christian-owned businesses.

Over the next several months, the VHP continued stirring up hysteria against Indian Christians. On August 16, 2008, the savage murder of Father Thomas Pandippallyil, a Christian priest from Andhra Pradesh, a state just to the south of Orissa, portended the catastrophic violence which would soon overwhelm Orissan Christians. Killed by a mob of extremists for his reported involvement in peaceful, non-coercive advocacy of his religion, Father Pandippallyil’s mangled body was left lying by the roadside. He had obviously been tortured severely prior to his death, as the corpse showed “wounds to the face while the hands and legs had been crushed and the eyes gouged out.”⁵⁰

Such a vicious assassination, however, was only the ominous prelude to the real trouble, which began in Orissa on August 23 with the murder of Swami Laxmanananda. Although Maoist rebels claimed responsibility just a few days later, the BJP-controlled state government nevertheless blamed “Christian militants” for the crime. Members of Bajrang Dal and the VHP consequently began a hate-filled campaign of malicious violence. Demonstrating a level of organization reminiscent of the Delhi pogrom, extremist thugs beat, raped, murdered and burned their way across Orissa, in some cases even trying to forcibly reconvert Christians to Hinduism.

On August 25, “a mob of up to 50 men armed with sticks, axes, spades, crowbars, iron rods and sickles” attacked Sister Meena Lalita Barwa at a prayer hall, dragging the Roman Catholic nun out into the streets. While the mob chanted Hindu slogans and poured kerosene on a priest who was also present, Sister Meena was raped and then paraded half-naked past a group of 12 police officers, who “ignored her and talked in a ‘very friendly’ manner to her attackers.”⁵¹ That same day, in another area of Orissa, supremacists torched a Christian orphanage, burning alive at least one woman who worked there.⁵²

With the state government doing little to nothing to quell the violence — police were, after all, casually chatting with gang rapists as they flaunted their handiwork — the attacks continued unabated for nearly a month. By late September, the situation had only barely returned to normal as the killings stopped but tens of thousand remained displaced and apprehensive. As usual, the attackers had resorted to the most brutal tactics imaginable, torturing and raping even many of those who managed to escape with their lives. Recounting the final damage, AICC reported that the violence left “640 Christian houses burnt, 54,000 Christians homeless, 70 deaths and another 50 people missing and presumed dead (of these, 6 Protestant pastors and one Catholic priest killed), 18,000 Christians injured, 2 women (including a nun) gang-raped, at least 149 churches destroyed, and 13 Christian schools and colleges damaged.”⁵³

Hindu supremacists continued to threaten violence throughout the rest of the year. In November, an AICC spokesperson described how supremacist groups were even offering cash bounties for killing Christian pastors, also stating:

People are being offered rewards to kill, and to destroy churches and Christian properties. They are being offered foreign liquor, chicken, mutton and weapons. They are given petrol and kerosene.⁵⁴

The mention of cash bounties for murdering non-Hindus rekindles memories of the Delhi pogrom. From October 31 to November 3 in 1984, a four-day ethnic cleansing of Sikhs was perpetrated in New Delhi in response to the death of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Members of parliament furnished the killers with similar cash rewards for their crimes, resulting in at least 3,000 Sikhs dying before the government called a halt to the violence right before Indira’s funeral was scheduled to take place.

Politicians who condone such extremism have done quite well for themselves, quickly realizing that fostering communal violence is a wildly successful political strategy. Such politicians are consistently reelected, picked for senior positions by India's top leaders and lauded within the mainstream Hindu diaspora. The obvious consequence is that *Hindutva* politicians and their policies are entrenched, to an apparently irrevocable extent, within all levels of the Indian political system. As mentioned in the introduction, even Indian members of parliament who were directly involved in committing atrocities during the ethnic cleansing of Sikhs in 1984 remain highly influential in the politics of India's ruling Congress party.

For instance, Jagdish Tytler, Kamal Nath and Sajjan Kumar. Tytler were all members of Lok Sabha, India's lower house of parliament, who were witnessed inciting mob violence. Tytler was charged by several eyewitness with the assault on one gurdwara which resulted in the deaths of 36 people. Nath was seen controlling a mob of over 4,000 within his own district as they attacked Gurdwara Rakab Ganj and burned several Sikhs alive. Perhaps the worst offender of all was Kumar, who one survivor said was "directing the mob to attack us with more and more force and kill us."⁵⁵ In fact, he was instrumental in initiating the first acts of violence, as Jaskaran Kaur explains:

During the night of October 31 and early morning of November 1, Congress (I) party leaders met with their local supporters to implement their plan to massacre Sikhs and distribute weapons and money. Congress (I) Member of Parliament (MP) Sajjan Kumar and Congress (I) Trade Union Leader and Metropolitan Councilor Lalit Maken paid 100 Rupees and distributed a bottle of liquor to each assailant. Jagjit Singh of Kiran Garden witnessed a meeting near his house around 8 a.m. where Sajjan Kumar distributed iron rods from a parked truck to about 120 people. The MP instructed the mob to attack Sikhs, kill them, and loot and burn their properties.⁵⁶

Sajjan Kumar certainly played an immediate role, at times even "participating in the brutal murders" himself.⁵⁷ In one incident, Kumar kicked aside a woman pleading for the lives of her family moments before rioters killed her husband son, while in another he actually killed the two sons of another Sikh mother. While speaking to an armed gang in Mangolpuri, a neighborhood of Delhi, he also offered cash bounties for each Sikh killed. A survivor who overheard Kumar from the rooftop of his house testified that the politician said:

Whoever kills the sons of the snakes, I will reward them. Whoever kills Roshan Singh [son of Moti Singh] and Bagh Singh will get 5000 rupees each and 1000 rupees each for killing any other Sikhs. You can collect these prizes on November 3 from my personal assistant Jai Chand Jamadar.⁵⁸

The brunt of the attacks occurred in Delhi, where the final death count reached 2,733, but organized violence in other sections of the country, which followed the exact same pattern as the Delhi attacks, took the lives of several hundred more Sikhs. Tens of thousands were displaced, while 50,000 of Delhi's nearly 400,000 strong Sikh population fled the city permanently.⁵⁹

Sajjan Kumar and Jagdish Tytler served in Lok Sabha until mid-2009, when the Indian National Congress (INC) was compelled by intense public pressure to deny them both reelection tickets. Kumar, however, remains a senior leader in the party, while Tytler's career prior to 2009 was nothing but sensational. First elected in 1980, he has filled several cabinet-level positions, with his last appointment to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs coming from none other than Manmohan Singh, India's first Sikh Prime Minister.

Singh, who as a Sikh managed to obtain the office of prime minister only through appointment and not through election, offers a perfect illustration of how the INC tries to whitewash its communalist tendencies by using carefully selected token minorities as figureheads, the Congress-affiliated prime minister saluted Tytler, the man colloquially known as the "butcher of Delhi," as "a valued colleague."⁶⁰ Yet he has also narrowly escaped the fury of state-sanctioned Hindu mobs in the past. During the Sikh pogrom in 1984, Manmohan Singh was Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. He narrowly escaped death when a Hindu mob attempted to set ablaze the Delhi apartment complex from which he had very recently moved.⁶¹

Kamal Nath is still in office, where he currently serves as Union Cabinet Minister of Road Transport and Highways. He has, in fact, filled three additional cabinet-level positions since 1991. Several Western nations have denied entry on various occasions to some Indian politicians guilty of human rights crimes, such as Tytler and Narendra Modi, the current Chief Minister of Gujarat. However, as a result of orienting his political career around

12 • Faces of Terror in India

boosting foreign trade and investment in India, Nath has been allowed to enter the United States and Canada on multiple occasions. Despite having openly incited thousands of extremists to commit acts of murderous violence on the streets of Delhi during the 1984 pogrom, Nath has met with warm welcome and an easy crossing at the border upon arrival in both countries.

2. Smuggling Weapons to Frame Sikhs

On April 24, 1988, Indian investigative journalist Dhiren Bhagat wrote a breaking news story for London's *The Sunday Observer*, which he began with a shocking revelation: "Caches of arms, including rockets, are being smuggled into India from Pakistan - not by terrorists but by the Indian secret services."⁶²

The background of the story is simple. On November 19, 1987, 23 crates were shipped from Kabul, Afghanistan into the Indira Gandhi airport in New Delhi. Canadian journalist Bryan Johnston, whose newspaper the *Globe and Mail* was one of the few to feature Bhagat's scoop, reported: "The crates drew sudden attention last November when bullets dropped out of them and rolled across the tarmac. The boxes were immediately X-rayed by airport security, and rocket launchers were spotted among the weapons."⁶³ Offering additional explanation in his book *Reduced to Ashes*, human rights activist Ram Narayan Kumar wrote: "The boxes, addressed to the 'director general of communications' at New Delhi, contained sophisticated arms, including rocket launchers and their ammunition."⁶⁴

R.K. Neogi, New Delhi's Deputy Commissioner of Police, took charge of the case. He believed a major haul of terrorist contraband had just been uncovered with the discovery of the crates, yet they were inexplicably addressed to India's Ministry of Communications. Before the police had the chance to inventory the crates, however, a man identifying himself to Neogi as a RAW agent appeared to confiscate the crates, as Johnston reported:

Police and customs men were beginning to argue over credit for the haul, when a man in plain clothes arrived and identified himself as an officer of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW, India's CIA). He claimed the crates were government property, and reportedly whisked them away before they could be opened.⁶⁵

At the time, the central government of India had been recently begun accusing Pakistan of supplying Sikh separatists with weapons, alleging that these included shoulder-fired rockets. Doubt as to the validity of that claim flourishes, however, upon further examining the details of the smuggling case. For instance, Kumar wrote:

Dhiren Bhagat found out that there was no post of "director general" in the Indian ministry of communications. Bhagat contacted the cabinet secretary to the Government of India, formally in charge of the RAW, for an explanation. But the civil servant did not know anything about it. Sometime later, a Delhi newspaper carried a story claiming that the militants in Punjab were now armed with rocket launchers. According to Dhiren Bhagat, the story had been planted by the intelligence organization.⁶⁶

Why should the central government need to secretly import such weapons into India? That there cannot possibly be an innocent answer to that question was made obvious by the outright refusal of every major paper in India to cover the story. For instance, Bhagat said he was told by a friend at one Hindi daily: "My editor has ruled against it. He says it is not in the national interest." Reporting on other refusals, Bhagat wrote:

The editor at another leading newspaper was even more blunt. "Dhiren," he told the reporter, "I am not disputing your facts... I will not carry it because it interferes with my plans for Punjab."⁶⁷

However, Bhagat's *Sunday Observer* article created a miniature firestorm in Delhi's political circles. During a debate in Parliament about extending "President's Rule" in Punjab, then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee demanded an explanation of the arms import at the New Delhi airport. In reply, Minister of State for Internal Security P. Chidambaram "admitted that RAW had brought the consignment."⁶⁸ Yet *The Hindu* was the only Indian newspaper to give any prominence to this admission, placing it on the front page of the May 6, 1988 issue. Every leading Indian newspaper, including the *Times of India* and the *Indian Express*, completely ignored what should have been a major news story.

What was the purpose of RAW illicitly importing weapons into Punjab from Afghanistan? There was never an investigation into the matter and there is no official report of where the arms ended up. Certainly the Indian military was not intended to use them, as any weapons destined for such use would presumably be obtained legitimately. Bhagat speculates that the arms were destined for Punjab, writing: "After all there is no other part of India where rockets have gone off or been found since November when the said cache came in." In his *Sunday Observer* article, he wrote that "the first rockets went off in Punjab" on March 21, 1988, months after RAW was caught smuggling.⁶⁹ The following day, the Lok Sabha passed the 59th amendment to India's constitution, allowing the central government to impose a state of emergency on Punjab. Johnston's elaboration on the purpose of these weapons suggests they may have been used as "drop-weapons" to frame Sikhs or simply to display as evidence of a dangerous militancy, as he wrote:

Such rockets have been found in only one place since November: Punjab. Two were fired, ostensibly by terrorists, but caused just minor damage. Dozens more have been dug up from "militant caches" — with much attendant publicity about their import from Pakistan.⁷⁰

Mere days after the debate in Parliament, the Indian Army began Operation Black Thunder II, invading the Golden Temple yet again. One of the primary justifications offered for the invasion was the supposed possession of rocket launchers by Sikh militants. Were these rocket launchers the same as those brought into the country by Indian intelligence a few months previously? If so, is it possible the central government was using the arms imports as a way to foment violence, whether staged or actual, so as to justify extreme measures in Punjab? Or perhaps the weapons were intended for planting upon hapless non-Hindu victims.

Whatever the case, as Bryan Johnston concluded, "Mr. Bhagat, Delhi correspondent of London's *The Observer*, has blasted a great hole in the theory that Sikh extremists are getting sophisticated Soviet-made rockets from Pakistan."⁷¹ Unfortunately, the world will only remember the first headlines of papers such *India Abroad*, which declared that "Punjab Militants Said to Get 'Stingers'"⁷² or *The New York Times*, which blared: "American-made Stinger missiles were in the hands of Sikh extremists."⁷³

3. Planting Severed Cow Heads

On the morning of April 26, 1982, Hindus in the Punjabi city of Amritsar awoke to a horror scene. While the city slept through the previous night, someone had placed severed cow heads outside two local Hindu temples dedicated to the god Shiva.⁷⁴ The gory scene was deeply traumatic to Hindus, who award the cow a very special status, considering it a “*mata*” or “mother” from which springs forth life.

The regard in which Hindus hold the cow is best summarized by influential Hindu leader Mohandas Gandhi, who stated:

The central fact of Hinduism however is cow-protection. Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow...

Hindus will be judged not by their *tilaks*, not by the correct chanting of *mantras*, not by their pilgrimages, not by their most punctilious observance of caste rules but by their ability to protect the cow.⁷⁵

To Hindus, this crime obviously represented nothing less than a full-scale assault on the very essence of Hinduism. A handwritten poster, in which the apparent perpetrators took credit for the incident, accompanied the cow heads. The psychological damage inflicted by the crime was compounded by the ominous warning of the poster, which clearly threatened “a cow slaughter campaign with grave potential for aggravating communal tension.”⁷⁶ Written in crude Gurmukhi (the script of Punjabi), the poster read: “This step has been taken by the Dal Khalsa to protest against the resistance of the Hindus to accept Amritsar as a holy city.” Furthermore, it warned that this was “the first of a series of steps which will be taken if the sentiments of the Sikhs are not respected and smoking is not stopped.”

Included with the poster were the insignia of a sword, a spear and a gun and the slogan “*Khalistan Zindabad*” (or “Khalistan Forever”).⁷⁷ The symbol and slogan signified support for “Khalistan,” a theoretical sovereign Sikh country sought by a negligible portion of the Sikh population. Conveniently, the poster provided the Hindu community with a culprit, whose insult they could respond to by fashioning their pain into fury. Indeed, the apparent claim of responsibility by Dal Khalsa, a sociopolitical Sikh organization supportive of Khalistan, seemed to practically negate the need for even a rudimentary investigation. The discovery of the poster at the scene of the crime neatly tied up every loose string of the case, giving the police both motive and suspects.

This incident is considered a major turning point in Hindu-Sikh relations in Punjab, a large state in northwestern India which has historically been the Sikh homeland. Just a little over two years later, in June 1984, the Indian mili-

tary would invade Harmandir Sahib, the Sikh shrine commonly known as the Golden Temple. The attack, dubbed Operation Bluestar, was analyzed in a government report called the *White Paper*, which cited the cow head incident within a “Calendar of Main Incidents of Violence.” Accusing the Dal Khalsa of openly inciting “communal passions,” the *White Paper* stated that the organization “claimed responsibility for serious acts of sacrilege against Hindu temples and declared its intention of repeating them.”⁷⁸

Back to April 26, 1982, when Hindus and Sikhs clashed throughout Amritsar, engaging in “pitched battle” outside the gates of Harmandir Sahib. As Lok Sabha, the directly elected lower house of India’s parliament, argued in Delhi over how to respond to the crime, Amritsar tore itself apart until a 24-hour curfew was imposed that evening. Long considered the “city that never sleeps,” Amritsar became “dead” as shops closed, streets were deserted and Hindus and Sikhs alike locked themselves inside their houses in fear.⁷⁹

A direct result of the crime was that all Sikh demands of the Indian government from that point forward, particularly the request for “holy city” status for Amritsar, were inextricably linked to communalism. The issue of Khalistan, which had *never* been raised before by any prominent Sikh leader, was brought to the forefront of the public discourse. Punjabi Hindu now had a reason to view themselves as victims, while the Indo-Sikh people were cast as a threat to India’s social and territorial unity. Finally, the emergence of this supposed threat provided justification for then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to commence Operation Bluestar, an action which most would accept as a necessary defense of the country.

The incident sparked a major debate in Lok Sabha, with the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) opposition demanding that Indira respond authoritatively. On April 29, Lok Sabha passed a unanimous resolution condemning the incident, reaffirming the supposed connection to Khalistan by attributing the crime to “anti-national persons.” The resolution read:

Resolved that this House expresses its deep anguish and concern over the situation recently created in the Punjab and strongly condemns certain calculated acts of sacrilege committed by some miscreants and fanatical elements in Amritsar, aimed at creating disharmony, disorder and misunderstanding among the patriotic and peace loving people of the State. The House reaffirms its commitment to the national policy of secularism, tolerance, and amity among all sections of the Indian citizens, and trusts that the people of Punjab will not allow themselves to be swayed by any mischievous and irresponsible actions of a few misguided and anti-national persons. This House reiterates that the law shall take its course to bring the culprits to book speedily and trusts that all communities and every section of public opinion in Punjab will strive to maintain the traditional communal harmony, goodwill and peace, and continue to work together for the greater good of the State and our country.⁸⁰

The next day, the Political Affairs Committee of the Union Cabinet of India met to discuss the issue. They reportedly toyed with the idea of removing from office both Giani Zail Singh, then Union Home Minister, and Darbara Singh, then Punjab’s Chief Minister. Instead, upon Indira’s urging, these two politicians were kept in power, allowing the situation to deteriorate even further over the next two years. (Later, Indira would remove Darbara Singh by imposing President’s Rule in Punjab and incapacitate Zail Singh by promoting him to the ceremonial position of President of India.) Eventually, the committee responded with a ban on Dal Khalsa, denouncing it as “secessionist and rabidly communal.”⁸¹ Enacted on May 1, the ban also included Jagjit Singh Chauhan’s fringe group, the National Council of Khalistan.⁸² That evening, the media broadcast news of the ban on the two organizations, further linking Sikhs to anti-Hindu hatred in the minds of the general public.

Police quickly moved to control the situation, arresting and charging several Dal Khalsa activists with the crime. Based on a confession allegedly given by Sukhjinder Singh Kahnuwan, police charged Jaswant Singh Thekedar with masterminding the crime and Rajinder Singh Mehta and Manmohan Singh with involvement. The police even claimed to have recovered iron boxes from the perimeter of Harmandir Sahib which were used to transport the severed cow heads. Between the claim of responsibility, the hard evidence found at the temple and the confession from Kahnuwan, the police appeared to have conclusively solved the case. All suspects were in police custody by May 15.⁸³

The farthest reaching repercussion of the crime was that it became a major justification for the invasion of Harmandir Sahib. To explain the attack, the *White Paper* cited “a complex web of violence and terror” within Punjab, blaming it on “a stridently communal and extremist movement” which sanctioned “the most heinous crimes.”⁸⁴

Sikh organizations were accused of employing tactics “to create bitterness and hatred between Sikhs and Hindus.” If that was truly the goal, then the cow head incident certainly succeeded as demonstrated by the riots in Punjab and rancorous debates in Lok Sabha. After charging Sikhs with these subversive tactics, however, the *White Paper* took its conclusions one step further. Referring to the so-called Sikh “extremists,” the authors wrote:

All this they did by lodging themselves within the holy precincts of the Golden Temple and other gurdwaras throughout Punjab and elsewhere. Government’s reluctance to send police forces into gurdwaras out of deference to the religious sentiments of the Sikh community full exploited. These elements misused sacred places of worship to direct and commit acts of murder, sabotage, arson and loot.⁸⁵

With the cow head incident now negatively linked to both the Khalistan issue and the Golden Temple, the stage was set to justify invading the latter to root out secessionists. But was the case truly so conclusively solved?

One aspect of the incident which gives particular pause is that the 1982 slaughter of cows would mark the first time in recorded history when any Sikhs were involved in such an incident. While Sikhs do not worship the cow, they have always treated it as “no less than a sacred animal” out of respect for Hindu beliefs. In fact, the authors of *Hindu-Sikh Conflict in Punjab* write: “Maharaja Ranjit went on record for having banned cow slaughter not only in Punjab but even ordered its ban in the Islamic land of Afghanistan.” Additionally, in the late 1800s, “many Sikhs lost their lives in opposing the British reintroduction of cow slaughter in Amritsar.”⁸⁶ Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the influential Sikh preacher who was killed during Operation Blue Star, noted that “the Sikhs have often supported Hindu religious causes, like the banning of cow slaughter.”⁸⁷ Considering their history, what could possibly have prompted such a drastic reversal in the Sikh treatment of the cow?

All other factors aside, there can be no argument that the government response to the incident was highly prejudiced and reflective of a severe double-standard. Bhindranwale remarked on this in February 1983, pointing out that when a Hindu was caught by Sikhs while desecrating Harmandir Sahib with tobacco, he was turned over to the police, who immediately released him. However, when the decapitated heads of cows were left in a Hindu temple, rewards of Rs. 50,000 for Thekedar and Rs. 25,000 for Mehta were immediately announced by the authorities. Bhindranwale protested this, pointing out that it was done merely on suspicion without any corroborating witnesses, saying: “Neither any Hindu nor any Sikh witnessed any Sikh boy doing it.”⁸⁸

The truth about the incident first began to emerge on March 6, 1983, over a year after the crime occurred. This is documented by Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, author of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee’s (SGPC) rebuttal of the *White Paper*. Dhillon explains that 30 Indian National Congress (INC) members of Punjab’s state legislature drafted a memorandum to Indira in which they charged Punjab’s Chief Minister, Darbara Singh, with orchestrating the cow head incident. According to Dhillon, the memorandum “furnished complete details of the people, places, time, and manner in which the entire sacrilegious operation was conducted.” It read in part:

The Chief Minister himself managed the first act of sacrilege of Hindu Temple at Amritsar.... He arranged to send heads of two calves from Mohali in a trunk by bus and got the same thrown stealthily in or near the Hindu Temple at Amritsar. Thus the first communal fire lit at the instance of the Chief Minister later resulted in a number of similar acts of sacrileges of Hindu Temples and Sikh Gurdwaras at Patiala, Ludhiana, Moga, Sangrur, etc. This created a rift between Sikhs and Hindus.⁸⁹

When this information surfaced, cracks began to appear in the supposedly airtight case which the government claimed to have developed against Dal Khalsa. That same day, in a meeting of Punjab’s INC party legislators, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) Surinder Kapoor “accused the then Punjab Government of hatching a conspiracy at Mohali of cutting a few heads of dead cows and of actually conveying them to Amritsar for being stealthily thrown in some Hindu temple there.” Claiming that “no Sikhs are in favor” of the incident, MLA Kapoor said that the government stage-managed the crime in order to light “the first communal fire in the state.”⁹⁰

Is there any truth to Kapoor’s accusation? Was the central government of India actually involved in the cow head incident? Within the past few years, startling information has surfaced to shed a new light on the entire incident. This information is contained within *The Searching Eye*, a book published in 2006 by Gurdev Grewal, who served 30 years as an officer in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). He worked as a Joint Secretary in the Union Ministry for Home Affairs in the 1980s, while deep-seated unrest was rippling through Punjab.

In his book, Grewal relates how in 1987 he lunched with Manmohan Singh, a fellow IAS officer who had previously worked in Punjab. According to Grewal, the conversation “veered towards the inevitable subject of anarchy in Punjab and the 1984 anti-Sikh pogrom in Amritsar and Delhi.” When the Punjab topic arose, Manmohan Singh volunteered a startling confession:

Do you remember that cow-head incident in Amritsar? I was then secretary to Chief Minister Darbara Singh. The Dal Khalsa did not place those severed heads of cows in the temples in Amritsar. We had arranged it.”⁹¹

Manmohan Singh’s disturbing confession is strengthened by the documented behavior of India’s intelligence services, which have often worked against Indian citizens. M. K. Dhar, a former joint director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) who worked very closely with Indira on campaign related activities, is a perfect example of how central government departments are constantly employed in partisan tasks. Inevitably, such tasks involve silencing or suppressing anyone who disagrees with the status quo of the ruling party.

In his memoirs, Dhar details how, upon being appointed Director of the Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau in Delhi, he was instructed by the Prime Minister’s office to expect to “carry out some of the ‘dirty jobs’ of the power centre.”⁹² He then explains: “There is no way out but to oblige the department and government even if the job is dirty and unlawful.”⁹³ Perhaps the cow incident was just such a sort of “dirty job.” His duties in Delhi included doing anything deemed necessary to ensure Indira’s grasp on power during election cycles. Regarding the obligation for the IB to be involved in these “dirty jobs,” Dhar wrote:

I was all the while aware that I was doing something, which I should not do as a believer in constitutional democracy. One does not enjoy the rape of his body and conscience. Certain circumstances compel the sufferer to live with it, when there is no remedy available that can take the sufferer out of the dark tunnel of compulsion. An involved officer in any intelligence and investigation agency almost becomes a member of the organized mafia. He can afford to get out only at the cost of inviting a few fatal bullets or an accidental hit by a running truck at a lonely intersection. He is like a ‘prostitute’ who enjoys the human rights of being raped, simply for the keep.⁹⁴

The INC leadership was clearly obsessed with stage-managing many different situations in order to achieve its partisan goals. The ruling party’s constant political machinations were, of course, intended to keep Congress party members in power everywhere. Thus one strategy pursued by the INC was to deliberately “engineer splits in [the] Akali Dal,” a political party founded during India’s independence period as an avenue of political representation for Sikhs. Although the Akalis had long enjoyed the strong democratic support of their community, the party’s unity began to splinter as Congress pursued “dual [policies] of supporting Sikh religious fundamentalists on one hand and Sikh deviationists (like Nirankaris) on the other.” As Indian professors Sucha Singh Gill and K. C. Singhal explain, the INC wanted to “strike at the strength of moderate Akali leaders who pose[d] a threat in the parliamentary politics.”

Aside from playing the various factions against one another, Congress also “took a tough public posture towards the Akalis.” According to Grewal, the powerful ruling party’s stubborn opposition to the relatively tiny political body of the Sikh community was intended to win the favor of supremacist Hindu elements. Denying the Akalis “any political advantage” therefore furthered the INC’s goal of “cornering the Hindu vote.”⁹⁵ Furthermore, communal riots often proved a “magic wand” for winning elections. This is what Mushrif remarked in reference to the Sangh Parivar stirring up communalism in Maharashtra, writing:

Even the propounders of this game plan might not have imagined in the dream of their dreams that in future it would also pay handsome political dividends to the Brahminists forces and would work as a magic wand for winning elections. In fomenting communal riots, the Sangh Parivar has not only discovered a potent remedy against reformist anti-Brahminists movements, but has also found a magic wand for winning elections. Even if a reformist movement has progressed up to 80 percent in a particular area, the Sangh Parivar can bring it back to square one by engineering a communal riot, as once a communal riot starts common Hindu youths forget everything else and rally round Brahminists forces which masquerade as

“Hindu” organisations. This fact was very intelligently exploited by the RSS for political gains.⁹⁶

Attempts by the supposedly secular ruling Congress party (which can generally be equated to the central government of India itself) to exploit religious differences among the diverse Sikh community had the desired result. Despite having once united in the political arena beneath a broad cultural banner, Sikh political representation segmented into multiple factions. Much of the responsibility for this break-up lies with the Congress. Describing how the party pursued its meddlesome policies for years, Gill and Singhal wrote:

From 1967 onwards, this has been the policy of Congress in Punjab. Earlier it did so through Lachhman Singh Gill and brought down the Akali led coalition in Punjab. After 1971 it got Gurnam Singh groups separated from [the] Akali Dal and also caused [a] split in [the] Akali Dal in 1980.⁹⁷

Considering this history, the probability of direct involvement of the country’s ruling party in intentionally instigating, encouraging and perpetrating violence in Punjab appears far more likely. As renowned Indian journalist Dhiren Bhagat noted in 1990: “Political parties in India win votes by creating anxieties in the minds of the minorities, the untouchables, and the Muslims.”⁹⁸ By all appearances, this egregious crime is exactly one of the ways in which the ruling political party chose to create such anxieties, while framing the Sikhs served other partisan interests. Specifically, Indira’s compulsion to maintain power at all costs and thirst for revenge will be identified as major factors in the drama.

All of this leads to our most shocking speculation, which is that Congress appears to have actually staged some communal incidents, including placing the severed cow heads at Hindu temples, as part of a broad plan to deny Sikhs “any political advantage”? It does indeed appear that the cow head incident should be understood as a construct of the ruling party. One question which then arises is, if so, what might Congress gain from doing so?

By orchestrating the cow head incident, the ruling party positioned itself to appear as the savior of India, at least in the eyes of the Hindu population. Casting the average Sikh as radically anti-Hindu simply for backing secular political reforms helped to create a deep rift between Sikhs and Hindus. Now that Hindus feared the supported Sikh goals were communalist, they would eagerly welcome suppressive measures to restrain such supposedly dangerous people. The vast Hindu majority in the electorate ensured that whatever party took those measures would be richly rewarded at the voting booth, as long as Hindus had been frightened badly enough by concocted communalism.

Through the poster left at the scene of the crime, the culprit also introduced Khalistan into the national debate. Although this topic had never been raised by any significant leaders of the Sikh community, mainstream Sikh proposals were now irredeemably tainted by an unnecessary association with a conceptual Sikh nation. With this single incident, the reasonable demands of legitimate representatives of the Sikhs were falsely tied to terrorism and therefore dismissed by mainstream India as communal. The slightest hint of reformist sentiment was viciously condemned as equivalent to advocating rule by gurdwara.

Yet in the search for desperately needed political and social reform, both within Punjab’s state government and in the central government’s handling of the state, the Akalis, Bhindranwale and other Sikh leaders jointly initiated a campaign of nonviolent disobedience. In 1982, their agitations had begun to capture the imaginations of Sikhs from every walk of life and earn support from many non-Hindus in southern India and other states outside the cow belt. In the face of false arrest, beatings, shootings, rape, torture and other abuses, Sikhs *en masse* firmly yet peacefully demanded recognition of the needs of Punjab.

Planting hard evidence at the Golden Temple — the iron boxes in which the cow heads were ostensibly stored — additionally allowed the ruling party to implicate the temple as a source of terrorist activity. This excused an iron response by the government against the most moderate elements of Sikh society and laid the groundwork for justifying the 1984 invasion of the temple. Once the Hindu public turned against the Sikhs over the desecration of their temples, the nation was nearly primed to accept Operation Bluestar. Because the spotlight shone most brightly upon Bhindranwale and the Akalis, partly since they were so outspoken about the abuses of the government, it was these Sikh leaders against which the ire of the Hindu public chose to align.

Perhaps worst of all, the incident successfully turned Sikhs into political pariahs virtually overnight. Until that point, opposition politicians had often questioned Indira’s policies, whether they came in the form of dictates or suggestions. Yet now that the legitimate issues of the Sikhs were inextricably bound to the demonized action of se-

cession — also termed “self-determination” by those of a different perspective — no politician dared to even be seen with even the most mainstream of Sikhs, be they politicians, community leaders or common folk. Since all Indian political parties are utterly dependent on the votes of the Hindu supermajority, many of whose social leaders are devoted to supremacist politics, such fraternization became politically deadly. Consequently, dissent of any sort was stifled. Opposition parties quit speaking in favor of any Sikh demands, instead determinedly throwing their unquestioning support behind the ruling Congress party and its agenda for Punjab.

Exposing the cow incident as a set-up rocks the foundations of Indira Gandhi’s justification for targeting the Sikh community. Additionally, clearly understanding that the government deliberately framed the Sikhs for this particular crime casts doubt upon the official conclusion reached for every other related crime ostensibly committed by Sikhs. The truth behind this incident should—indeed, must—color the way the world perceives the Sikh liberty movement of the 1970s through 1990s.

Probably the first query which should therefore spring to mind is whether other inflammatory crimes committed during that chaotic period may have also been set-ups, staged by the government for the purpose of derailing Sikh demands. If the answer is “yes,” then can those in power in the Indian government be trusted not to again carry out similar “false flag” incidents? In truth, history reveals that the clandestine placement of figurative “cow heads” is actually the central government’s common *modus operandi*.

Perhaps no community within the large Sikh diaspora knows this better than those who made their home in Canada, where agents of the Indian intelligence services such as M. K. Dhar have long continued interfering with Sikh affairs. This is noted Canadian journalists Zuhair Kashmeri and Brian McAndrew, the authors of *Soft Target*, who write:

Our purpose in writing this book is to make people aware of the grave injustice suffered by a group of new Canadians — the Sikhs. For several years, India has been engaged in a devious and ruthless operation to manipulate and destabilize Canada’s Sikh population. The operation has been orchestrated by India’s intelligence service and has left the Sikh community estranged from Canadian society.⁹⁹

Another severed cow head was secretly placed and blamed on the Sikhs with the bombing of Air India Flight 182 in 1985. The meddling of India’s intelligence services in the lives of Indo-Canadians came to a head with this tragedy, which dragged Western powers into the conflict. The circumstances may have been different, but this crime seems to have been orchestrated by the same players as those behind the cow head incident. A curious fact to consider is that M. K. Dhar, who admits to carrying out “dirty jobs” for a government demonstrably involved in staging false-flag incidents, was at that time stationed with the Indian High Commission in Canada.

Much has been written about the horrific attack, which claimed the lives of 329 civilians and was immediately blamed on pro-Khalistan Sikh separatists. The short-term political outcome was very predictable. As with the cow head incident, this bombing very conveniently resulted in the total alienation of Sikhs from mainstream society. In this case, the effect crossed international borders, damaging the community’s image on a global scale. Kashmeri and McAndrew explain:

In one stroke, the Sikh separatist movement was dead. The United Nations had dropped the issue, the Sikh lobby was not welcome among political circles in Ottawa, and only hard-core right-wingers such as Jesse Helms raised the Sikh issue in the U.S. Senate. Across the Atlantic, European governments, including the U.K., looked warily upon the Sikhs. Globally, the Sikh community had moved to the number-one spot on the terrorism chart. Essentially, it was game over for Khalistan.¹⁰⁰

As to whether or not the Indian government can actually be identified as the culprit in the Air India bombing, we shall leave for future scholars to address. That this was actually a false flag incident is a well-reasoned and evidenced position firmly held by many respected academics in both Canada and India, including Kashmeri and McAndrew. In relating the details of a meeting of high-level Canadian Security Intelligence Service agents, those two journalist write:

The topic of Sikh unrest would be raised at a regular meeting of Security Service strategists. The meetings were gatherings of various section heads responsible for counter-subversion, counter-espionage, counter-

intelligence and counter-terrorism. In addition to reviewing the work of each section, they discussed future projects. Among the men present at these meetings was Pat Olson, a seasoned Security Service agent.

Olson recalled that at one meeting in 1983 a senior officer raised the issue of the Punjab situation. The officer had been reading about ways the Indian government instigated violence between the majority Hindus and the minorities, especially the Sikhs. He outlined his research into the strategy used by the Indian government to destabilize minority populations, provoke them into violence and then crack down on them. Given that Canada had a sizable number of these Indian minorities and a sizable number of Hindus, he asked, would it not be logical to assume that there was a potential for conflict between the groups in Canada over political issues in India?

The question to contemplate after considering all of these unsettling and outrageous claims is similar to one posed by the authors of another bold work about Canada. *A Nest of Spies* is a startling account of how 21st-century Canada has become one of the world's foremost hot-beds of espionage activity written by Fabrice de Pierrebourg, a journalist, and Michel Juneau-Katsuya, a former agent of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. Among many other issues, the two authors touch upon the subject of Indian intelligence activity on Canadian soil, which leads them to raise the topic of Air India Flight 182.

Referring to the bombing, the two pose an outrageous and yet tragically plausible question. With no delicate way to phrase their inquiry, the two bluntly ask: "How would Canadians feel if it were known that India's agents provocateurs had pulled just one tiny thread in making this disaster come about, or at best had known that it was going to happen and chosen to stand aside?"¹⁰¹

When dealing with issues as sober as these — bombings, riots, communal tension, political corruption — it seems best to drop all pretense and adopt as forthright an approach as possible. With that in mind, in like manner to the Air India tragedy, one should consider exactly how the people of the country of India might feel if they knew, for a cold, hard fact, that the most sacred creature of Hinduism had been butchered by agents of their government for use as a political tool to discredit the Sikhs.

4. Staging the Chittisinghpura Massacre

When he arrived in New Delhi on March 20, 2000, Bill Clinton became the first United States President in over 20 years to visit the so-called “world’s largest democracy.” With less than a year left of his second term, Clinton was still dealing with the global ramifications of the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In this post-Cold War world, previously underdeveloped countries like China and India arose to fill the power vacuum, consequently attracting far greater international attention to ethnic, religious and territorial conflicts about which the Western world had historically remained mostly ignorant. These conflicts were often accompanied by new challenges, including the risk of terrorism and nuclear proliferation. The purpose of Clinton’s trip was to encourage both Pakistan and India to relax their hostile attitudes towards one another and commit to a policy of nuclear non-proliferation. However, a terrorist plot brewing farther north of India’s bustling capital soon overshadowed the president’s arrival.

On the evening of Clinton’s arrival in India, 17 armed commandos dressed in Indian Army combat fatigues entered a small Kashmiri village called Chittisinghpura. They ordered all the Sikh men in the immediate area to exit their homes and line up in front of the village *gurdwara* with their identification cards. Kashmir is considered a flashpoint for Indo-Pakistani conflict, and military patrols routinely intrude upon village life there to search and interrogate civilians without pretext, so the Sikhs cooperated. However, as soon as they finished checking ID cards, the soldiers raised their rifles and, without warning, opened fire. When the Sikhs crumpled to the ground, the soldiers made sure of their kills by firing into each body at point blank range. After this, they repeated the same pattern across the entire village, ruthlessly killing a total of 35 innocent, unarmed Sikh men. Only one man, Nanak Singh, survived to narrate the horror.

The Indian government swiftly, as it customarily does with similar attacks, blamed the crime on Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba, Pakistan-based militant movements which support Kashmir’s independence from India. Strangely, despite being “normally very eager to claim credit for any spectacular act of violence,” both groups denied any involvement in the Chittisinghpura massacre.¹⁰² Then Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, who was present on the South Asia trip, captured Clinton’s reaction to the incident, writing:

From the moment he got off the plane, Clinton spoke about “sharing the outrage” of the Indian people and expressing the “heartbreak” he and others around the world felt about the latest atrocity. He did not endorse the accusation that Pakistan was behind the violence since the United States had no independent confirmation but he used every occasion to express sorrow for the victims of the attacks and their families.¹⁰³

Pankaj Mishra, an American journalist originally from northern India, was in Kashmir at the time of the massacre. On March 21, the day after the incident, he visited the small, mostly Sikh village, where he quickly discovered there were no real answers, despite the Indian government’s willingness to assign blame. If this act of terrorism had been committed by Lashkar-e-Toiba, one would expect there to be some strategic benefit for the group in committing the crime. The lack of any such benefit was puzzling, leading Mishra to muse: “The question of why the guerrillas would kill Sikhs, who had never previously been targeted, and then invite international censure kept troubling me.” In fact, Mishra noted that the media speculated hopefully that Clinton, who was scheduled to visit Islamabad

after leaving New Delhi, would condemn Pakistan as a “terrorist state” in response to the massacre.¹⁰⁴ Although that did not happen, it is interesting that the only party which stood to benefit from such an outcome was the Indian government.

Among the handful of Muslim residents of the village was a peasant named Sonallah Wagay. The first supposed break in the case came that morning, when Indian security forces arrived at Wagay’s house, demanding to see his son, Yaqub. Upon finding the younger Wagay, the military told him he had to come in for questioning. As he was whisked out of the village, Yaqub was “very frightened” and with very good reason.¹⁰⁵ Typically, young Kashmiri Muslims taken in for questioning by the Indian military are “returned if not as corpses, then badly mutilated, the torture marks still visible in places where hot iron rods had been applied.”¹⁰⁶

Such treatment fosters a similar wariness towards Indian security forces among Muslims as that felt by many Sikhs. Barely two percent of India’s population, the Sikh people have endured persecution similar to that seen at Chittisinghpura since well before June 1984. The only major difference between the 1980s and 1999 was that, instead of being gunned down on the spot, detainees were simply disappeared, never to return again. In an October 15, 1984 article for the *Christian Science Monitor*, journalist Mary Ann Weaver explained one way in which the Indian Army organized these disappearances, writing:

The pattern in each village appears to be the same. The Army moves in during the early evening, cordons a village, and announces over loudspeakers that everyone must come out. All males between the ages of 15 and 35 are trussed and blindfold, then taken away. Thousands have disappeared in the Punjab since the Army operation began. The Government has provided no lists of names; families don’t know if sons and husbands are arrested, underground, or dead.¹⁰⁷

A senior Indian government official later admitted to Mishra, off the record, that the young Muslim, who had been “brutally interrogated,” was innocent. Nevertheless, on March 23, India’s home secretary appeared on TV to announce that Yaqub had given interrogators actionable information about those behind the massacre.¹⁰⁸

Around that same time, armed men kidnapped several Muslims from the villages surrounding Chittisinghpura. Five men were abducted in total by what appeared to be plain-clothed soldiers. Endeavors by relatives of the victims to get help from the local police proved fruitless, as all officers gave the same response: “We can’t do anything about your problem because we have no orders to help you.” On March 25, for instance, the uncle of Ahmad Dalal, who had gone missing the previous day, enquired at the local police headquarters, where he was told that “if the Indian Army had kidnapped his nephew, there was nothing anyone could do.”¹⁰⁹

Finally, news was released on March 26 that Indian security forces had been involved in a deadly firefight with Muslim guerrillas in Panchalthan, another small village in Kashmir. Five men, allegedly “foreign mercenaries” working for Pakistan, were killed in the battle. Blaming these men for the Chittisinghpura massacre, Indian authorities released photos showing several of them clad in combat fatigues similar to those worn in the March 20 attack. There was no other evidence besides the military attire presented by the government as proof that the dead men had ever even been to Chittisinghpura.

Meanwhile, the families of the kidnapped Muslim men had continued searching for their loved ones. Their search reached a tragic end when relatives of Ahmad Dalal visited Panchalthan, where a local who had helped bury the bodies of the “foreign mercenaries” confirmed that Ahmad had been among the dead. Furthermore, when the police and military exited the village, they left behind “a pit full of fast-burning clothes and shoe.” Extinguishing the fire, villagers recovered several items, including the clothing Dalal was wearing the last day he was seen alive and an identification card belonging to another of the five missing Muslim men.¹¹⁰

All appearances indicate that agents of the Indian government kidnapped five innocent Muslims, then staged a “false encounter” in which they killed the men and posthumously blamed them for the attack in Chittisinghpura. The reason for doing this was, presumably, so the case could be considered solved, with no further investigation necessary. Yet why would Indian authorities go to such great lengths to avoid scrutiny of the incident?

Fearful of retaliation for their thoughts, villagers in Chittisinghpura have been loath to openly speculate about the answer to this question. However, other Kashmiri Sikhs have been more candid in their firm belief that the massacre was “organized by Indian intelligence agencies to influence Clinton, and the Western journalists covering his visit, into taking a tougher line toward Pakistan.”¹¹¹ Bill Clinton himself offered a similar conclusion in his introduction to *The Mighty and the Almighty*, the memoirs of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, where he wrote:

During my visit to India in 2000, some Hindu militants decided to vent their outrage by murdering 38 Sikhs in cold blood. If I hadn't made the trip, the victims would probably still be alive. If I hadn't made the trip because I feared what religious extremists might do, I couldn't have done my job as president of the United States.¹¹²

Ironically, the publisher, HarperCollins, removed this remark from subsequent editions of the book. The *Hindutva* ideologists move swiftly to pressure the publisher through a passionate letter-writing campaign in ethnic newspapers in which Clinton was lambasted for daring to suggest anyone other than Pakistani Muslims as the real culprits.

According to a *Times of India* article claiming that "Clinton goofs up on J&K killings," Clinton's accusation of Hindu militant involvement was excused by both the publisher and Albright's office as "a failure in the fact-checking process."¹¹³ However, Clinton himself never retracted the comment, a fact which harmonizes with Talbott's description of the former president's reluctance to accept India's hysterical claims of Pakistani culpability.

Conclusion

The real tragedy about the hidden face of terror in India is that, ever since achieving independence from the British Empire, the country's rulers have managed to cloak their treacheries beneath a deceptive mask of democracy. By cultivating the myth that India is a shining example of a successful democratic government and a leading proponent of nonviolent solutions, these rulers have secured positions of trust for which they are celebrated as guardians of justice and morality. Beguiling the world into seeing only an artificial veneer of contentment, India's central government desperately tries to sweep away evidence of its staged and unprovoked acts of violence.

The manner in which these authorities so blithely engage in terrorism makes a mockery of the very institution of government. Humanity is being treated as the butt of a very foul joke while the modern world is engulfed by a new form of slavery in which governments control and brutalize their citizens through chicanery. The use of planted evidence, manufactured violence and staged killings to make out minorities such as the Sikhs to be terrorists is one example of the raging battle between the powerless and those who are intoxicated by power.

Certain aspects of humanity will never change despite the great progresses of this modern era; among those is that in the pursuit of their own self-gain, humans in positions of authority will inevitably seek greater power. Time and time again, the rulers of India have demonstrated that because they will never be satisfied no matter how unlimited the powers are the powers they wield. Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh faith, warned against these kinds of predatory rulers and denounced their treasons, saying:

The kings are tigers, and their officials are dogs; they go out and awaken the sleeping people to harass them. The public servants inflict wounds with their nails. The dogs lick up the blood that is spilled. But there, in the Court of the Lord, all beings will be judged. Those who have violated the people's trust will be disgraced.¹¹⁴

Lord John Dalberg-Acton was a classical liberal British statesman who staunchly promoted decentralization as the premier method for restraining an intrusive government. Because he understood the grave threat posed by placing too much power in the hands of too few and allowing them to sanctify themselves, he was inspired to famously remark:

Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority, still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it.¹¹⁵

Power is granted to the Indian central government in spades by the country's constitution, which Dr. G. B. Singh, a scholar of Indian history, says can "safely be characterized as the most complicated of all modern political documents available." Compare it to the U.S. Constitution, which is 4,440 words long. With 7 articles and 27 amendments, it is the oldest and shortest written constitution of any government in the world, whereas the Indian Constitution is the longest written constitution of any government at 444 articles, 12 schedules, and 83 amendments. Concerning the outrageous levels of power and immunity from prosecution ascribed to the central government in the constitution, Singh wrote:

Things get even more complicated when you encounter Articles 352 through 360 of the Indian Constitution, which essentially deliver the emergency provisions. Since numerous geographical areas of India frequently fall under these emergency provisions, the reality of the fundamental rights supposedly guaranteed under Article 19 and others is revealed, as citizens are forced to live under the enacted draconian laws. What makes the fundamental rights problem even more tedious is that according to the 40th Amendment, the draconian laws may not be challenged before any court on the ground of violation of fundamental rights. If one or more groups of people have suffered terribly from the repressive hands of the State, the 41st Amendment nails you right back in your proper place. This amendment has provided that the President, Prime Minister and State Governors are immune from criminal prosecution for life and from civil prosecution during their term of office. What about the Press in India? The exuberant Indian Press exercises its freedom of speech freely, as the apologists will always remind you. But the facts are otherwise. The Indian journalists have learned too well how to kowtow to the ruling Indian leader¹¹⁶

The central government in India has only ever acted to suppress non-Hindus as harshly as possible. Seeking to ratchet up the pressure on minorities to conform and assimilate by escalating violence against them and for which they can be blamed, the state provokes its victims into lashing out. In desperate need of some way to end the government's oppression of their communities, some do actually pick up arms and proclaim their right to self-determination. After all, when the central government has collaborated for so long with the Sangh Parivar as it preaches that non-Hindus are foreign to India, it can only be expected that minorities have finally gotten the message. Their response, on some occasions, is quite reasonably that if India does not want them then they will not protest being kicked out as long as they are allowed to create their own home.

One of those who was aroused into a response by the cruel tyrannies of the Indian state is Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar. In September 1993, Davinderpal was accused of bombing the All-India Youth Congress office. He says he did not do it and if there were any evidence proving he had one would expect it to have been presented at some point during his six-year trial. None was, yet he was sentenced to be executed and currently sits on death row in India.

Based solely on the proof of his coerced confession and no other evidence, Davinderpal has languished in an Indian prison cell since 1995. He currently awaits his imminent hanging, although he has stated he was "made to sign on blank pieces of paper, which were later filled by a statement written and typed in by the police, under threat that if he did not sign he would be terminated by the Punjab Police in a false encounter, which is a very real threat."¹¹⁷

The use of torture, execution and illegal disposal of the dead are all tactics which the Indian police unquestionably employ. In December 2010, for instance, cables obtained by Wikileaks revealed that the U.S. embassy in Delhi has concluded in recent years that India "condones torture." The determination was reached after the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) advised U.S. officials that Indian authorities commonly employ electrocution, beatings and sexual humiliation to torture detainees. Noting that all branches of India's security forces engage in such misconduct, one ICRC cable stated: "The abuse always takes place in the presence of officers and ... detainees were rarely militants (they are routinely killed)."¹¹⁸

Not only has Davinderpal claimed he was tortured and consequently completely retracted his confession, but not a single one of the 133 witnesses produced by the prosecution identified him as guilty of anything. According to the Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG):

The case against him is based on an unsubstantiated confession allegedly obtained under torture and threat of death. Despite this the two judges who upheld the death sentence have found this confession admissible. The presiding judge of the three-judge bench however acquitted the accused, finding that he was not guilty of participating in the 1993 car bomb attack in New Delhi targeting the then Youth Congress leader M S Bitta and too much doubt remained on the authenticity of the alleged 'confession' to the police. However, in stark contrast, the other two judges convicted him arguing, extraordinarily that proof "beyond reasonable doubt" should be a "guideline, not a fetish." And that procedure is only "a handmaiden and not the mistress of law."¹¹⁹

Like hundreds of thousands of others who have fled from state-sponsored persecution in India, Davinderpal sought asylum in the West upon being wrongfully accused. However, he was arrested and illegally extradited from Germany to India in 1995, where he was then sentenced to be hung. A German court later ruled that the extradition violated German law, according to *The Times of India*, which reported:

There was an official court ruling by the administrative court of Frankfurt on October 6, 1997 that the deportation order of 1995 was unlawful, because Bhullar was indeed facing the threat of torture and death penalty in India.

Under German law, no person can be deported if he faces torture or death penalty in the receiving country, no matter what the charges are, earlier media reports had said.¹²⁰

Furthermore, in a 2003 release, Amnesty International agreed that the Bhullar case involved egregious violations of the due process of law. Corroborating allegations of a coerced confession, the release stated:

There are serious concerns that Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar may not have been given a fair trial. He was arrested under the now-lapsed Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, which has no provision for appeals to the High Court. He was found guilty solely on the strength of an unsubstantiated confession he made in police custody, allegedly under intense police pressure, which he later retracted. A second defendant in the case was acquitted because the only evidence against him was Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar's confession.¹²¹

Whether or not Davinderpal Bhullar was involved in militant efforts, it's clear that there is nowhere close to the "beyond a reasonable doubt" level of evidence necessary to justify ending his life. Yet because the Indian establishment does not want to rock the boat, they neglect to ask any uncomfortable questions such as what might possibly motivate an educated man like Bhullar to join a militancy anyways?

In 1989, Bhullar earned his mechanical engineering degree from Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College in Ludhiana and soon began teaching as a professor at GNE Diploma College. In fact, Davinderpal's entire family came from a highly educated background. His father was employed as a section officer in the Chandigarh Audit Department, where he was known as an extremely honest person. His mother, Opkar Kaur, was born in Hong Kong in 1936 and received her degree from Punjabi University, Patiala. So what could possibly have inspired him to consider opposing the central government, violently or otherwise?

In a private interview with the authors of this report, Bhullar's brother Tejinder confirmed that police in the city of Chandigarh came to their house looking for Davinderpal in December 1991. When they did not find him there, the police instead arrested their father, S. Balwant Singh and their mother's sister's husband, Manjit Singh Sohi. After Chandigarh police quietly snatched them from the family home, the two Sikhs were never seen again and their family has since learned that they were murdered in custody by the police. Ram Narayan Kumar helped Jaswant Singh Khalra, who was himself secretly kidnapped and killed by police, document thousands of cases where other Sikhs were disappeared forever in a similar fashion. It is incidents like these that might motivate educated people like Bhullar to consider seeking revolutionary solutions.

As general secretary for the human rights wing of Shiromani Akali Dal, the major Sikh political party, Khalra personally documented thousands of incidents throughout the 1980s and 1990s of Indian police officers secretly kidnapping and killing innocent Sikhs. He linked police to the disappearances of over 3000 Sikhs in the city of Amritsar alone between 1984 and 1994 and approximately 10 times that number throughout the entire state of Punjab. The police claimed these deaths occurred during armed encounters, then marked the bodies as "unidentified" and disposed of them through illegal cremations.

On January 16, 1995, Khalra made his evidence public. In addition to the crematoria records proving Punjabi police were secretly cremating of thousands of "unidentified" bodies, his claims were corroborated by eyewitness testimony from crematoria workers and the accounts of bereaved relatives who had surprised police in the midst of illegal cremations. He also filed a writ petition with the Punjab and Haryana High Court demanding an investigation into the issue based on the evidence. The court, however, quickly dismissed the petition "on grounds that it was 'vague' and that the petitioner organisation lacked the *locus standi* (that is, proof of a complaint based upon person-

ally suffered harm) for filing such a petition.”¹²²

On the morning of September 6, 1995, witnesses saw uniformed police officers abduct Khalra, who had already received many death threats from police. Although police denied they held him in custody, multiple witnesses have confirmed seeing him in jail. For seven weeks, he was tortured by police, who finally shot him and left his body in a canal. His widow, Paramjit Kaur, who has been pursuing justice for her murdered husband, said: “In court we have to fight and there is so much harassment.... This won’t finish in our lifetime.” Echoing her mother’s sentiments, Khalra’s daughter Navkiran Kaur, who is studying her master’s of electronic engineering degree in California, spoke about the wives left behind S. Balwant Singh and Manjit Singh Sohi, saying: “I understand the plight of the two widows, who will never get any answer of justice. I have met so many like them in Punjab.”

Meanwhile, the publicity Khalra generated for the issue of illegal cremations before his own death compelled the Indian government to eventually take some form of action. So in December 1996, the Supreme Court ordered the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to look into the issue. This is exactly what the government investigators staffing the commission did — no more and no less. For the next six years, they sedately examined the sickening allegations, wasting time in abortive back and forth discussions with Punjab’s state government. At one point, the state did pay compensation to a scant 18 families who had filed claims against the government on behalf of their missing loved ones, but this was done expressly “without admitting liability and without going in to the merits of the claims.”¹²³ The last major action on the case occurred in February 2003, when a new chairperson replaced outgoing one. Nothing has come of the investigation, which has not resulted in a single arrest, let alone sentence, for the guilty parties, and has also failed to produce an assurance that such atrocities will not occur again.

This sort of absolute impunity is a typical outcome. Whether the perpetrators of atrocities hail from the the police, military or civilian government, the consequence of their crimes is invariably promotion, materiel rewards or some other type of congratulatory treatment. Of course, this does nothing to discourage further occurrences of the same crimes, but instead serves as a warning to other minorities who might dare disagree with the Hindu state. As we have seen, Sikhs and Muslims in Chittisinghpura continue to endure brutality. According to Amnesty International: “Torture and custodial violence continue to be regularly reported in Punjab, despite the end of the militancy period in the state in the mid-1990s.” Furthermore, in its report on Punjab, the human rights organization revealed:

Virtually none of the police officers responsible for a range of human rights violations - including torture, deaths in custody, extra-judicial executions and ‘disappearances’ during the militancy period - were brought to justice, creating an atmosphere in which state officials appear to believe that they can violate people’s fundamental rights with impunity even today.¹²⁴

Davinderpal Singh Bhullar is a victim of the oppressive environment created by the tyrannical Indian state. His own father was senselessly slaughtered in the grand scheme to deny non-Hindus social equality and now he himself will soon be on the noose. The world has been deceived into thinking men such as him are terrorists who threaten India and yet the complete opposite is true. Those who are perceived as global pillars of justice and ought to provide the world with the highest of examples are instead fomenting terror, hatred and supremacism throughout their own land. How did minorities become subject to the dictates of this power-hungry ruling elite?

A global effort to free the Indian subcontinent from the shackles of the British Empire was undertaken by all the diverse peoples of that region in the early 20th century. In 1912, Sikh immigrants to California made huge personal and financial sacrifices to secure freedom for future generations of South Asians, establishing Stockton Gurdwara Sahib of Grant Street as a hub of activity for all South Asians concerned with independence. From here, they sponsored the Ghadar Party in 1914, one of the earliest armed movements to resist imperial British rule, which was joined by many Muslims, Dalits and other minorities of India who dedicated their lives to pursuing liberty.

Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the foremost leader of the Indian Muslim community, was compelled to opt for a Muslim state when India’s founding fathers, Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, took a hardline by carving out their own Hindu state. Jinnah is just one example of how minority leaders who demanded universal civil rights within India were sidelined by its supremacist founders. They firmly implanted their ideology of *Hindutva* in the Indian political system by enshrining it in the country’s new constitution, beginning it by declaring India’s official name to be “Bharat,” a Hindu mythological term.

This nonsensical constitution does not protect any of the human rights which must be considered inalienable in a free society. For instance, the rights to freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and right to

keep and bear arms are not guaranteed. Furthermore, despite its absurd length, none of the other rudimentary human rights preserved by the American Bill of Rights are even mentioned in the Indian Constitution. Expounding upon this failure to codify the peoples' rights, Dr. G. B. Singh wrote:

Other amendments of the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution guarantee the American people numerous other fundamental rights. These include protection against government officials who might invade their homes and seize property without legal permission (Amendment IV); protection against being “a witness against himself” in any criminal case or being “deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” (Amendment V); the right of a person accused of a crime “to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury” (Amendment VI); and protection against “cruel and unusual punishments” (Amendment VIII).¹²⁵

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar is commonly credited as the author of the 1949 constitution. Born into the Dalit community — historically called “Untouchables” and treating as outcastes — Ambedkar spent his entire life warring against the Hindu caste ideology. Despite being relegated to the lowest rung of society by his caste status, Ambedkar managed to rise above the circumstances through education and determination and so devoted his life to uplifting oppressed peoples in India by helping them throw off the shackles of the caste system.

To ascribe authorship of the *Hindutva*-flavored constitution to such a man seems bizarre. Yet it so happens that India's founders appear to have taken advantage of Ambedkar, as Gandhi and Nehru overrode his vision of creating a secular state for safeguarding the rights of minorities with their own vision of a Hindu state. That would certainly explain why Ambedkar so vehemently disowned the final version of the Indian constitution, stating:

People always keep on saying to me, “Oh, you are the maker of the Constitution.” My answer is I was a hack. What I was asked to do, I did much against my will.... My friends tell me that I made the Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it out. I do not want it. It does not suit anybody.¹²⁶

The Sikhs were another minority community which flatly rejected the Indian Constitution. On behalf of their entire community, Sikh representatives Bhopinder Mann and Hukam Singh formally withdrew their consent from the newly drafted Indian Constitution. Speaking on November 21, 1949, Hukam Singh stated:

Naturally, under these circumstances, as I have stated, the Sikhs feel utterly disappointed and frustrated. They feel that they have been discriminated against. Let it not be misunderstood that the Sikh community has agreed to this constitution. I wish to record an emphatic protest here. My community cannot subscribe its assent to this historic document.¹²⁷

It seems the only winners in India's history to date have been the nationalist Hindus. Everyone else is left holding the check as they are forced to accept broken promises, devastating persecution, sectarian strife, looming environmental disasters produced by central economic planning and out of control drug infestations. Non-Hindu dominated areas which historically thrived, such as the fertile and resource-rich regions of Kashmir and Punjab, have been crippled by these government orchestrated problems. When so many people who have dedicated their lives to bettering India haven fallen out so badly with New Delhi, perhaps it's time contemplate that the problem may lie with New Delhi itself.

The United Nations and other self-appointed international authorities are swift to condemn injustices that occur at the hands of weaker rulers from smaller countries, but superpowers like India always escape censure. Although designing terror has become a new trend amongst many countries which cherish strength instead of morality, this travesty of justice can be terminated by the power of the individual. Changes in Indian society, just as anywhere else in the world, will only be brought about through the direct involvement of individuals in challenging the wrongs of the state. In the words of the great economist and philosopher Ludwig von Mises:

The great social discussion cannot proceed otherwise than by means of the thought, will, and action of individuals. Society lives and acts only in individuals; it is nothing more than a certain attitude on their part. Everyone carries a part of society on his shoulders; no one is relieved of his share of responsibility by oth-

32 • Faces of Terror in India

ers. And no one can find a safe way out for himself if society is sweeping towards destruction. Therefore everyone, in his own interests, must thrust himself vigorously into the intellectual battle. None can stand aside with unconcern; the interests of everyone hang on the result.¹²⁸

Ultimately, seeking government answers to problems created exclusively by the government hardly seem like a reasonable solution. Instead, the onus of responsibility for bringing about an end to the evils of India's central government must lie with the individuals who learn about those evils in this report and accept their moral obligation to become ambassadors for the truth in their own distinct and manifold walks of life.

Glossary

~

Abhinav Bharat: A terrorist cell founded by Indian Army officer Shrikant Prasad Purohit to fight for a Hindu government.

Advani, L. K.: An influential BJP politician who is the former president of that party (1986-1981), former Deputy Prime Minister of India (2002-2004) and who began his political life in 1947 as Secretary of the RSS (Karachi).

Ajmer Dargah: A Sufi shrine located in Ajmer, Rajasthan that was damaged by a bomb blast on October 11, 2007.

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad: The ABVP is an RSS-affiliated student organization founded in 1948 to push *Hindutva* views.

All-India Youth Congress: A youth wing of the INC intended for those between 18 and 35 years of age.

Ambedkar, Bhimrao Ramji: Dalit civil rights worker and politician who lived from 1891-1956 and is credited with authoring India's constitution.

Amritsar: A large city in northwestern Punjab that was founded in 1574 by Guru Ram Das and is home to the Sikh Golden Temple.

Antulay, A. R.: The Chief Minister of Maharashtra from 1980-1982, Antulay has served as the Union Minister of several cabinets.

ATS: Anti-Terrorist Squad, based in Mumbai, Maharashtra

Article 25: The twenty-fifth article in the Indian Constitution, which classifies Buddhist, Jains and Sikhs as Hindus.

Bajrang Dal: The militant youth wing of the VHP.

Bharat: A term derived from the Hindu phrase "Bharat Mata," or "Mother India," which has historically been used as the national personification of India as a Hindu goddess.

Bhindranwale, Jarnail Singh: A Sikh preacher who inspired a return to orthodox Sikh traditions, opposed policies of Indira Gandhi he believed were harming his community and was killed in 1984 in Operation Bluestar.

Bhonsala Military School: A residential school with strong RSS-ties that was founded in 1937 to impart military training to Hindu youth.

Bhullar, Davinderpal Singh: A Sikh currently on death row in India based on his coerced confession.

BJP: Bharatiya Janata Party, which was founded in 1980 and controlled India from 1998-2004, is the biggest political party promoting *Hindutva*.

Brahminist: One who promotes Brahmanism or is a member of the dominant Brahmin caste.

Brahmanism: An ideology of strict adherence to the Hindu caste system that is generally promoted by Brahmins, who are the highest caste.

Chandigarh: A large city established in northwestern Punjab in 1953 and which serves as a "Union Territory" capital city for both the state of Punjab and that of Haryana.

Chauhan, Jagjit Singh: A proponent of Khalistan who lacked a significant Sikh backing.

Chidambaram, P.: The current Minister of Home Affairs in India, Chidambaram has also served as Minister of Finance and in the Home Affairs cabinet as Minister of State for Internal Security.

34 • Faces of Terror in India

Chief Minister: The elected head of an Indian state.

Chittisinghpura: A small village located in Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress: An interchangeable term for the INC.

Dalit: The self-designated term for the people traditionally considered outcastes and treated as “Untouchables.”

Dal Khalsa: Originally a term for the Sikh army of the 17th and 18th centuries, it is today used by groups such as Dal Khalsa International, a sociopolitical organization that supports Khalistan.

Delhi pogrom: An ethnic cleansing of Sikhs from October 31 to November 3, 1984, primarily in New Delhi, that was sponsored and encouraged by the INC.

Deolali: A small town near Nasik in Maharashtra.

Dhar, M. K.: A former joint director of India’s Intelligence Bureau (IB)

Durga Vahini: The militant women’s wing of the VHP, meaning “Army of Durga.”

Durga: A Hindu goddess of feminine power and destructive force who is depicted as having eight arms, riding a lion or a tiger and carrying weapons.

Gandhi, Indira: The daughter of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira was the Congress Prime Minister of India from 1966 to 1977 and 1980 to 1984.

Gandhi, Mohandas: The Hindu religious leader credited as a founding father of India.

Ghadar Party: An organization founded in 1914 by California-based Punjabi Indians for the purpose of seeking India’s independence from the British Empire.

Golden Temple: The common nickname for Harmandir Sahib, the gold-plated temple in Amritsar.

Gujarat: A state in western India known, among other things, for being Mohandas Gandhi’s home state.

Gurdwara: A Sikh place of worship.

Guru Arjan: The fifth guru of the Sikhs, who founded Harmandir Sahib.

Guru Nanak: The first and founding guru of the Sikhs.

Guru Ram Das: The fourth guru of the Sikhs, who founded the city of Amritsar.

Haryana: A state in northern India, established in 1966 to divide Haryana from Punjab and create the former as a Hindi-speaking state.

Harmandir Sahib: The holiest temple of the Sikhs, whose name means “God’s Abode.”

Hindutva: An ideology of Hindu supremacism which holds non-Hindus as foreign to India.

Hizbul Mujahideen: A Kashmiri militant group founded in 1989.

IAS: The Indian Administrative Service, a bureaucracy staffed by civil servants who implement government policies and encourage a national point of view.

IB: The central Intelligence Bureau, equivalent to an Indian FBI.

INC: The Indian National Congress, founded in 1885, which has usually controlled India since its independence in 1947 and was the party of Nehru and Gandhi.

Indian High Commission: The name given to India’s diplomatic missions to other Commonwealth countries, including Canada.

Jain: An adherent of Jainism, a nontheistic religion founded in the 6th century in opposition to Brahmanism and its caste system.

Jammu and Kashmir: The northernmost state of India, control of the Muslim-majority territory has been disputed since 1947 and has been the cause of three wars between India and Pakistan.

Jinnah, Muhammad Ali: A moderate Muslim statesman who worked for India’s independence from the British Empire, espoused Hindu-Muslim unity and was later pressured into supporting the 1947 Partition of India into separate Hindu and Muslim countries and served as Pakistan.

Karkare, Hemant: A Joint Commissioner of Police who, as head of Mumbai’s ATS, led the investigation of the Samjhauta Express bombing and other incidents.

Karnataka: A state in southwestern India.

Khalistan: A theoretical sovereign Sikh country sought by a portion of the Indo-Sikh population.

Khalistan Zindabad: A slogan in support of Khalistan which means “Khalistan forever.”

Khalra, Jaswant Singh: A human rights activist who was disappeared by police in retaliation for investigating the illegal killing and cremation of some 3,000 Sikhs by police in Amritsar.

Kumar, Sajjan: A Congress politician who served in Lok Sabha from Outer Delhi, formerly one of the largest constituencies in India, and offered rewards to the killers during the Delhi pogrom.

Lashkar-e-Toiba: A Pakistan-based Muslim militant group concerned with Kashmiri independence.

Lok Sabha: The lower house of the Indian parliament.

Ludhiana: The largest city in Punjab.

Maharashtra: A state in central India.

Malegaon: One of the largest cities in Maharashtra.

Mann, Bhopinder: An elected member of the Constituent Assembly, the first parliament of India which was tasked with creating a constitution, and one of the two Sikh representatives who then rejected that constitution.

Mata: The Hindi term for “Mother” as in “Mother India” or “Mother Cow.”

MLA: Member of the Legislative Assembly, the state-level legislature.

Modi, Narendra:

Moga: A city centrally located in Punjab.

Mother India: The personification of India as a Hindu goddess who is usually depicted as a woman clad in a saffron sari holding a flag and accompanied by a lion.

MP: Member of Parliament

Nanded: A large city in central Maharashtra.

Nashik: A city in the northwestern region of Maharashtra.

National Council of Khalistan: A pseudo-government founded by Jagjit Singh Chauhan in 1980.

Nath, Kamal: A Congress politician who has been Union Minister of several cabinets and was witnessed leading rioters in an assault on a gurdwara during the Delhi pogrom.

Navrati: A Hindu festival, whose name means “Nine Nights,” which celebrates Shakti.

Nehru, Jawaharlal: A founding father of independent India and its first and longest-serving Prime Minister, Nehru was in office from 1947 until his death in 1964.

Nirankari: A member of a Sikh sect funded and befriended by Indira Gandhi and the INC.

Operation Bluestar: The name given by the Indian Army to the unprovoked invasion of Harmandir Sahib in June 1984, which was performed under orders from Indira Gandhi and led to the deaths of several thousand Sikhs, including Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Orissa: A state located in eastern India.

Pachmarhi: A town located in central Madhya Pradesh.

Panipat: A city in eastern Haryana.

Patiala: A large city in southeastern Punjab.

POTA: Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act, a draconian law allowing detention without trial and other civil rights violations.

Pune: The second largest city in Maharashtra.

Punjab: A state in northwestern India.

Purohit, Shrikant Prasad: An Indian Army Colonel who founded Abhinav Bharat and is believed to have orchestrated several *Hindutva*-motivated acts of terror.

Rajasthan: The largest state in India.

RAW: Research and Analysis Wing, equivalent to an Indian CIA.

RDX: A high explosive in use since World War II.

Roy, Arundhati: A renowned Indian novelist and social commentator.

RSS: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, the most prominent of the Sangh Parivar social organizations which promote *Hindutva*.

Samjhauta Express: A peace train connecting India and Pakistan.

Sangh Parivar: An umbrella term for organizations that promote *Hindutva*, including the RSS, VHP, BJP and others.

Sangrur: A city in the southern region of Punjab.

Saraswati, Laxmanananda: A swami and member of the VHP who backed violence against Christians in Orissa.

Shakti: A Hindu goddess who represents unleashed, primordial power.

Shiromani Akali Dal

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhk Committee

Shiv Sena: A violent political party founded to promote *Hindutva* and based in Maharashtra.

Sikhi: The fifth largest religion in the world which was founded by Guru Nanak in 1499.

Sikh nation: A term often used interchangeably for Sikhs and the Sikh people.

Sikhs: Adherents of Sikhi and members of a socioreligious people group primarily based in Punjab.

SIMI: Students Islamic Movement of India, a student organization founded in 1977 to pursue a Muslim society.

Singh: A surname adopted by all Sikh males which means "lion."

Singh, Darbara: The Chief Minister of Punjab from 1980-1983.

Singh, Giani Zail: A Congress politician who was President of India from 1928-1987.

Singh, Hukam: An elected member of the Constituent Assembly and one of the two Sikh representatives who then rejected that constitution.

Singh, Manmohan: A Congress politician who began his political career at India's central bank and who is currently India's Prime Minister, the first non-Hindu to fill that office.

Stockton Gurdwara Sahib: The first Sikh place of worship built in the United States.

Sudarshan, K. S.: The former *sarsangbhalak* (appointed leader) of the RSS, a position that is filled through a nomination by the previous *sarsangbhalak*.

Swami: An ascetic who has been initiated into a religious order of Brahmins.

Talbott, Strobe: An American foreign policy expert and former Deputy Secretary of State (1994-2001) under Bill Clinton.

Tilak: A mark used by Hindus to denote caste status.

Thane: A large city on the western coast of Maharashtra.

Tytlar, Jagdish: A Congress politician who has been a Union Minister of several cabinets and led rioters in an attack on a gurdwara during the Delhi pogrom.

Untouchable: Someone of such low ranking in the Hindu caste system that upper-castes considered touching them to be a pollutive act.

USCIRF: The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, composed of a body of independent, non-partisan commissioners.

Vajpayee, Atal Behari: A BJP politician who was Prime Minister of India from 1998-2004.

VHP: Vhishva Hindu Parishad, a militant, international social organization promoting *Hindutva* and which is particularly well-known for leading the destruction of the Babri Mosque in 1992.

White Paper: The Indian central government's official report about Operation Bluestar.

Citations

~

-
- ¹ USCIRF. “United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2011,” May 2011, p. 253.
- ² Ibid., p. 12
- ³ USCIRF. “India Chapter - Addition to the 2009 Annual Report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom,” August 2009, pp. 2-3.
- ⁴ T. Sher Singh. “1984 & I: The Indian Diplomat.” *World Sikh News*, March 3, 2009, p. 10.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Kashmeri, Zuhair and Brian McAndrew. *Soft Target: India's Intelligence Service and Its Role In The Air India Disaster* (Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1989), p. 42.
- ⁸ Dhar, Maloy Krishna. *Open Secrets: India's Intelligence Unveiled* (New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2005), p. 438.
- ⁹ Mushrif, S. M. *Who Killed Karkare: The Real Face of Terrorism in India* (New Delhi: Pharos Media, 2009), pp. 43-44.
- ¹⁰ Naqvi, Muneeza. “66 Die in India-Pakistan Train Attack.” *Washington Post*. February 19, 2007.
- ¹¹ Plumber, Mustafa and Anubhuti Vishnoi. “Purohit supplied RDX for Samjhauta bomb.” *The Indian Express*. November 15, 2008.
- ¹² Naqvi, Muneeza. February 19, 2007.
- ¹³ BBC News. “Leaders condemn India Train blast.” February 19, 2007.
- ¹⁴ Naqvi, Muneeza. February 19, 2007.
- ¹⁵ Vinayak, Ramesh. “Samjhauta Express bomb was assembled in Indore.” *India Today*. November 12, 2008.
- ¹⁶ “BJP seeks anti-terror bill in budget session.” *Times of India*. February 19, 2007.
- ¹⁷ George Iype. “It is goodbye to POTA.” Rediff News. September 18, 2004.

38 • Faces of Terror in India

- ¹⁸ “Situation remains tense in Malegaon.” Press Trust of India. September 30, 2008.
- ¹⁹ Hafeez, Mateen and Yogesh Naik. “Blasts in Maharashtra, Gujarat; 8 killed.” *Times of India*. September 30, 2008.
- ²⁰ Mushrif, pp. 54-55.
- ²¹ “My daughter Sadhvi Pragya.” Rediff News. November 4, 2008.
- ²² Mushrif, p. 178.
- ²³ Katakam, Anupama. “Terrorist face.” *Frontline*, Vol. 27, Issue 16, August 2010.
- ²⁴ “Purohit hired militants to execute Samjhauta attack: Malik.” Rediff News. January 24, 2010.
- ²⁵ “Terror net scoops up fiery sadhvi.” *The Telegraph* (Calcutta). October 25, 2008.
- ²⁶ Mushrif, p. 176.
- ²⁷ “Colonel’s arrest has upset Army: Dy chief.” NDTV. November 6, 2008.
- ²⁸ Mushrif, p. 295.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 178.
- ³⁰ Ibid., p. 176.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 178.
- ³² Ibid., pp. 54-55.
- ³³ Ibid., p. 16.
- ³⁴ Jha, Suman K. “Malegaon blasts: BJP, Sena line up lawyers for Sadhvi.” *The Indian Express*. November 3, 2008.
- ³⁵ Rajesh, Y. P. “Karkare’s response to a death threat: A ‘smiley’?” *The Indian Express*. November 27, 2008.
- ³⁶ Roy, Arundhati. “The monster in the mirror.” *The Guardian*. December 13, 2008.
- ³⁷ Swami, Praveen. “Hindutva terror probe haunts Pune investigation.” *The Hindu*. February 19, 2010.
- ³⁸ Mushrif, p. 31.
- ³⁹ Ibid., p. 47.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid., p. 49.
- ⁴³ Ibid., p. 50.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 51.

- ⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 52-53.
- ⁴⁶ Gupta, Shishir. "Togadia funded Abhinav Bharat, Sadhvi said 'my people' set off Malegaon bomb: Purohit to CBI." *The Indian Express*. November 24, 2008.
- ⁴⁷ "Witness account of Karkare, Kamte and Salaskar's death." *The Indian Express*. November 29, 2008.
- ⁴⁸ Mushrif, p. 257.
- ⁴⁹ "India: 2008 Orissa massacres: Christians fast for justice." Spero News. May 6, 2011.
- ⁵⁰ Carvalho, Nirmala. "More martyrs: a Carmelite priest is massacred in Andhra Pradesh." AsiaNews.it. August 18, 2008.
- ⁵¹ Page, Jeremy and Rhys Blakely. "Nun Meena Lalita Barwa tells of brutal rape by Hindu mob in India." *The Times* (London). October 25, 2008.
- ⁵² "VHP Vandh Turns Violent in Orissa, Churches Attacked." All India Christian Council. August 25, 2008.
- ⁵³ "Orissa Anti-Christian attacks 2008." All India Christian Council. August 27, 2008.
- ⁵⁴ Blakely, Rhys. "Hindu extremists' reward to kill Christians, as Britain refuses to bar members." *The Times* (London). November 20, 2008.
- ⁵⁵ Kaur, Jaskaran. "Twenty Years of Impunity." ENSAAF. October 2006, p. 24.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 27.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 63.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 27.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 138.
- ⁶¹ "Mrs. Prime Minister," Khushwant Singh, Feb. 16, 2009, *Outlook*
- ⁶² Bhagat, Dhiren. *The Contemporary Conservative: Selected Writings*, ed. Salman Khurshid (New Delhi, India: Viking, 1990), pp. 37-38.
- ⁶³ Johnston, Bryan. "Servile press spikes scoop." *Globe and Mail*. May 3, 1988.
- ⁶⁴ Kumar, Ram Narayan, Amrik Singh, Ashok Agrwaal, and Jaskaran Kaur. *Reduced to Ashes: the Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab: Final Report* (Kathmandu, Nepal: South Asia Forum for Human Rights, 2003), p. 103.
- ⁶⁵ Johnston, Bryan. May 3, 1988.
- ⁶⁶ Kumar, p. 103.
- ⁶⁷ Bhagat, Dhiren, pp. 37-38.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 45.

40 • Faces of Terror in India

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁷⁰ Johnston, Bryan. May 3, 1988.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Gautam, Akhil. "Punjab Militants Said to Get 'Stingers.'" *India Abroad*. April 15, 1988.

⁷³ Weisman, Steven. "India Sees Hope in New Sikh Leaders." *The New York Times*. April 10, 1988.

⁷⁴ Government of India, *White Paper on the Punjab Agitation* (New Delhi: Govt. of India Press, 1984), p. 25.

⁷⁵ M. K. Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958-1984), Vol. 24, pp. 373-374.

⁷⁶ Government of India, p. 24.

⁷⁷ Gurdev Grewal, *The Searching Eye: An Insider Looks at the Punjab Crisis* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), p. 116.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 115-116.

⁸⁰ Government of India, p. 165.

⁸¹ Grewal, p. 125.

⁸² Government of India, p. 24.

⁸³ Grewal, pp. 123-125.

⁸⁴ Government of India, p. 1.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁶ S.M. Sathananthan, ed., *Hindu-Sikh Conflict in Punjab: Causes & Cure* (London: Transatlantic India Times, 1983), p. 3.

⁸⁷ Sathananthan, p. 7.

⁸⁸ Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, *Struggle for Justice: Speeches and Conversations of Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale*, tr. Ranbir Singh Sandhu (South Asia Books, 2000), p. 31.

⁸⁹ Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon, *Truth About Punjab: SGPC White Paper* (South Asia Books, 1996), pp. 177-178.

⁹⁰ Bhindranwale, p. 29.

⁹¹ Grewal, pp. 122-123.

⁹² Dhar, p. 249.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 267.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

- ⁹⁵ Grewal, p. 176.
- ⁹⁶ Mushrif, p. 33.
- ⁹⁷ Dr. Abida Samiuddin, ed., *The Punjab Crisis: Challenge and Response* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1985), p. 48.
- ⁹⁸ Bhagat, p. 58.
- ⁹⁹ Kashmeri and McAndrew, p. xxiv.
- ¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xxi.
- ¹⁰¹ De Pierrebouurg, Fabrice and Michel Juneau-Katsuya. *Nest of Spies* (New York City: HarperCollins, 2010), p. 236.
- ¹⁰² Mishra, Pankaj. *Temptations of the West: How to Be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet, and Beyond* (New York City: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), p. 157.
- ¹⁰³ Talbott, Strobe. *Engaging India: Diplomacy, Democracy, and the Bomb* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), pp. 193-194.
- ¹⁰⁴ Mishra, p. 156.
- ¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 154-157.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 156.
- ¹⁰⁷ Bhindranwale, p. xxx.
- ¹⁰⁸ Mishra, p. 166.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.
- ¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 159-162.
- ¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 166.
- ¹¹² Albright, Madeleine. *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York City: HarperCollins, 2006), p. xi.
- ¹¹³ Rajghatta, Chidanand. "Clinton goofs up on J&K killings." *The Times of India*. May 19, 2006.
- ¹¹⁴ The Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1288.
- ¹¹⁵ "Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton, April 5, 1887" published in *Historical Essays and Studies*, ed. J. N. Figgis and R. V. Laurence (London: Macmillan, 1907).
- ¹¹⁶ Singh, G. B. "Bill of Rights' in the Constitution of India." *New English Review*. August 2009.
- ¹¹⁷ "Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar: Sentenced to Death By The Supreme Court of India." Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG).
- ¹¹⁸ Burke, Jason. "India accused of systematic use of torture in Kashmir." *The Hindu*. December 17, 2010.

¹¹⁹ “Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhullar: Sentenced to Death By The Supreme Court of India.” Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG).

¹²⁰ Sharma, Sanjay. “Germany held Bhullar deportation ‘illegal.’” *The Times of India*. June 3, 2011.

¹²¹ Amnesty International Release. “UA 21/03 Imminent Execution/Unfair trial: India Davinder Pal Singh Bhuller.” January 21, 2003.

¹²² Kumar, p. ix.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

¹²⁴ Amnesty International. “India: Break the cycle of impunity and torture in Punjab.” January 20, 2003.

¹²⁵ Singh, G. B. August 2009.

¹²⁶ Bazaz, Prem Nath. *The Role of Bhagavad Gita in Indian History* (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd; New Delhi, 1975), p. 619.

¹²⁷ Singh, Gurmit. *History of Sikh Struggles* (New Delhi: South Asia Books, 1989), pp. 110-111.

¹²⁸ Mises, Ludwig Von. *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951), pp. 514-515.

This report was made possible by the generous donations of

**Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society
Gurdwara Sahib Stockton, CA USA**

“What are we having this liberty for? We are having this liberty in order to reform our social system, which is full of inequality, discrimination and other things, which conflict with our fundamental rights.”

— Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

“The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over that by the good people.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“A wise and frugal Government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned. This is the sum of good government.”

— Thomas Jefferson

