

Gandhi – Sikh Relationship

Commentary # 4

Meeting the Sikhs

Part 3

As pointed out in Commentary # 3, M.K. Gandhi was honored in the Golden Temple (Darbar Sahib) on November 4, 1919, with huge crowds attending along with being bestowed with *Saropa*.

Who were those Sikhs who masterminded this unthoughtful event? We have exhausted more than eight months looking into various records and to date we have failed to unearth those Sikh names. Given this situation we are going to move forward while recognizing that in case we find those Sikh leaders' names in future, we shall update this file.

Now we move to December 1919. On December 28 to 31, 1919, Indian National Congress or Congress Party (The Thirty-Fourth Congress) held its annual meeting in Amritsar. According to *The Times of India* (December 29, 1919), more than 14,000 people attended the meeting; out of which 8,000 was the strength of the delegates. All well-known Congress Party personalities descended upon Amritsar—the Party was meeting under the presidency of Motilal Nehru (1861-1931).

Given the bloody events of Gandhi's first nationwide Satyagraha, horrible massacre at Jallianwala Bagh in April 1919, and mindboggling Gandhi's honor at Darbar Sahib on Nov. 4, 1919, we are now witnessing a huge gathering on Congress Party's rank-and-file delegates in Amritsar. It's reasonable to expect at least some Sikh leaders to be attending this session. Why would you not?

Again, we have been delving deep into the records and thus far we have failed to isolate the Sikh names. Remember the meeting was being held in Amritsar where just a month earlier, M.K. Gandhi was honored at Darbar Sahib. Were Sikh leaders attending this meeting

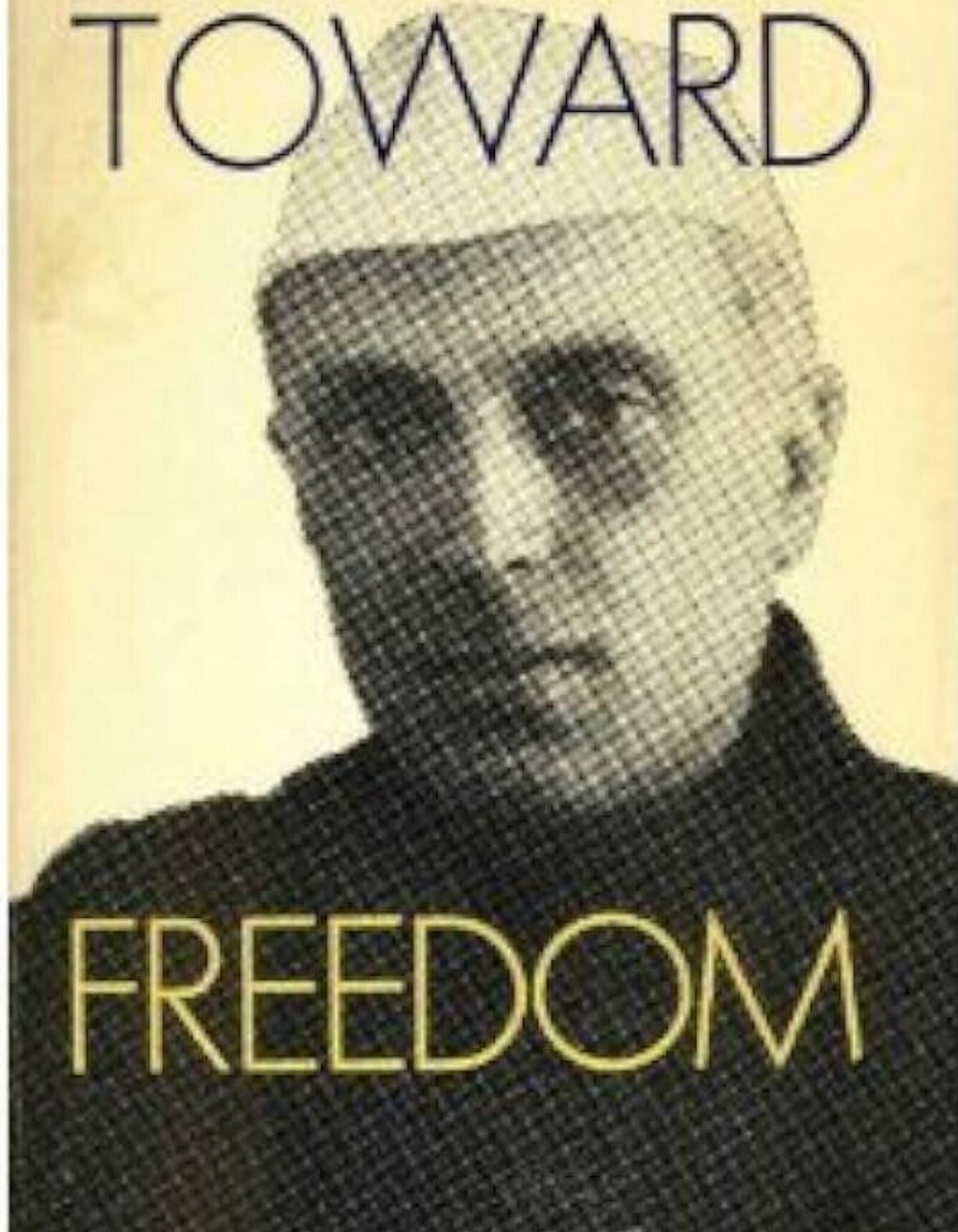
given their budding relationship with Gandhi just a month earlier?

We have reached a conclusion: Gandhi's ongoing budding relationship with Sikh leaders must have reached a mature point where the Sikh leaders were invited, and they heartily attended the Congress session. How many were they? And their identities remain a mystery to date.

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THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

TOWARD



FREEDOM

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) had first met Gandhi (1869-1948) during the Christmas season of 1916 at the time of the Lucknow Congress meeting. Now three years later, Nehru while at Amritsar met Gandhi.

In his autobiography "*Toward Freedom*," Nehru wrote on page 51:

"The Amritsar Congress was the first Gandhi Congress. Lokamanya Tilak was also present and took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt about it that the majority of the delegates, and even more so the great crowds outside, looked to Gandhi for leadership. The slogan *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* began to dominate the Indian political horizon...."

You would think that the crowds gathered in Amritsar outside the site might have included at least some Sikhs.

Among the important delegates that were present, currently we are focusing only on two of them: M.K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. During the pivotal course of this 34th Session, as few as 42 Resolutions were adopted. Resolution #1 is of importance here. Here it is:

“RESOLVED—This Congress tenders its respectful thanks to His Majesty the King-Emperor for His gracious Proclamation dated the 23rd of December 1919, and welcomes the announcement that His Royal Highness, The PRINCE OF WALES, will visit India next winter and assures him of a warm reception by the people of the country.”

**Question: Did the Congress party adhere to its adopted resolution of warm reception to the Prince of Wales?
Hell NO. Nehru describes it better on page 78:**

“Nothing that we could have done fitted in so well with our program of boycotting the Prince’s visit. Wherever he was taken he was met with *hartals* and deserted streets. Allahabad, when he came, seemed to be a city of the dead; Calcutta, a few days later, suddenly put a temporary stop to all the activities of a great city. It was hard on the Prince of Wales; he was not to blame, and there was no feeling against him whatever. But the Government of India had tried to exploit his personality to prop up their decaying prestige.”

Nehru had conveniently missed mentioning about the bloodshed that accompanied with the Prince’s visit that

were fully incited by the Congress Party leaders—
willfully violating the above mentioned Resolution.

Any Lesson Learned? Had the Sikh leaders paid any attention to the Resolution #1 and its follow up by the Congress Party leaders, they would have been alerted not to trust any words coming from the mouth of Congress Party leaders. We can say with high degree of certainty that our Sikh leaders functioned in mental darkness and blissfully refused to pay attention to the unfolding of events surrounding them. Here was the first opportunity to be alerted of the wild workings of Congress Party leaders. But Alas, Sikh leaders were duped heavily and slept through. More than a hundred years later it hasn't changed, it has only gotten worse.

Attached: Please read the sworn deposition of Annette Helen Doherty which throws more light on the Prince's visit.

County of Los Angeles

ANNETTE H. DOHERTY, being first duly sworn on oath, deposes and says:

My deceased husband, William Francis Doherty, an American citizen, was a mechanical and electrical engineer and, at the time of his death, was managing engineer and business associate of Mr. Richard J. Brenchley, engaged in sand extraction at Mumbra, adjacent to Bombay, India.

On November 19th, 1921, as he was quietly proceeding to the Bombay Improvement Trust work-shops, he was set upon, his eyes were gouged out and eventually he was beaten to death by a group of rioters in a public street of Byculla, a suburb of Bombay.

This was during the visit of the Prince of Wales to India, when Gandhi was at the height of his popularity as saint and political leader, and had, through his violent speeches against the British, worked his followers into a frenzy of race hatred. My husband was probably mistaken for a Britisher when he was murdered by Gandhi's followers.

Within three days following this killing of my husband, word was brought me from Gandhi that he greatly desired an interview with me, begging me to set a time when I would receive him. I was then stopping with an American family in Bombay. Gandhi's emissary was Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian poetess and politician.

Mrs. Naidu was greatly agitated, and made many statements to me that I feel she would now like to unsay. Her chief concern, however, was that the American public should never be allowed to hear of this outrage committed upon my husband; and she very frankly asked me my price for refraining from ever discussing or advertising the affair in America and from myself returning to America. Under no condition, said Mrs. Naidu, would they be willing that the American public should learn that they were killing people so promiscuously that even a white face cost a man's life.

As to Gandhi's request for an interview with me:

At that time he was going about so unclothed that Mrs. Naidu suggested I call upon him rather than that he come to the American home where I was stopping--inasmuch as this latter might prove embarrassing. It was

therefore determined that I should see him at his own headquarters in Bombay, which I did, a motor car having been sent by him to fetch me.

Upon this occasion of my visit with Gandhi he repeated to me in substance what Mrs. Naidu had said, but even more emphatically stressed the point that Americans, because they were so much in sympathy with him in his political views, must on no account learn the details of the murder of my husband lest it hurt the success of his movement in America and prejudice our people against him.

ANNETTE HELEN DOHERTY.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 4th day of January, 1929.

W.J. SCHISEL

Notary Public in and

for the County of Los

Angeles, State of

California. My

commission expires Jan.

18, 1931.

Sikh Heritage Education