

**" Every Sikh heart bleeds,
To think of your heinous deeds.**

**It is time you die of shame,
And give up all your claim.**

**To be a champion of minority,
Hindu nation is your top priority.**

**Do you search your conscience,
When you preach non-violence?**

**You are a terrorist of the worst kind,
Blind to the values of mankind.**

**Nastiest tyrant of the present time,
Minister prime of war and crime.**

**You clamour for Nobel Peace prize,
When your own country is cut to size.**

**just another bred of Your kind,
Can spell disaster for mankind.**

**This is the cry of every Sikh soul,
You can fool the world no more."**

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

The Sikh faith emanated from the word of God. The Divine Hymns of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the sacred sword of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji, a Sikh is a born saint-soldier. A Saint, for he intensely worships the One God day and night, respects every religion, loves all human beings, honours peaceful co-existence and prays for the well being of the whole creation. He is a soldier, a defender of the weak, the protector of the oppressed and guard of the feeble.

What is the relevance of 1984 to Sikhs today?

This year commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the attack on the most holiest of Sikh shrines Sri Darbar Sahib (The Golden Temple) Amritsar and the Delhi massacres, which left thousands dead, wounded, destroyed and homeless. As these events fade from public memory, it is the victims that continue to grieve with their hopes of securing justice from the state, and loved ones returning, rapidly eroding. Many of our youth know little of the motivation behind the attack and the persecution of the Sikhs by the Indian Government, some Sikhs still regard themselves as Indian. This booklet attempts to give the reader an insight into the plight of Sikhs in India, using contemporary and historical accounts. Our most recent history shows that after two decades of indiscriminate killings and atrocities against the Sikhs, the Sikh nation remains oppressed, exploited and continues to suffer.

The struggle for a separate identity for Sikhs, that is, they are not part of Hinduism, took a tragic and bloody turn in 1984. Since its very inception, Sikhism has resisted attempts to undermining and destroy it. The tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji ordained that the Khalsa should remain nyara (pure and distinct) and not follow the ways of the Bramanical tradition of idol worship and superstition if Sikhi was to survive. The cruel irony is that the Sikhs have sacrificed countless members of their faith, for the protection of India and the Hindu religion

1849: The Sikh Raj

Shere Panjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh was the ruler of a powerful State extending from Tibet to Sindh and from the Khyber Pass to the Sutlej. Kingdoms and empires have almost invariably been founded and maintained on the strength of arms. However, it goes to Ranjit Singh's credit that while fulfilling his ambitions, he used minimum force.

Barron Charles Hugel records: *"Never perhaps was so large an empire founded by one man with so little criminality."*

Unequaled for the daring and originality of his many-sided genius, Ranjit Singh gave to Punjab four decades of peace, prosperity and progress. Benefits of this were enjoyed equally by all communities — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs.

Ranjit Singh's rule was characterised by scrupulous observance of rare norms of public conduct and social ethics. The Khalsa army adhered to strict instructions to observe restraint in keeping with the Sikh tradition, not to damage any Mosque or Mandhir, not to insult any woman and not to destroy any crops. This was despite the fact that the Khalsa suffered Genocides, murder and rape by the Moguls and soon in the near future would suffer the same fate at the hands of the Hindustan government.

He tried his best to follow the Guru's injunction: *"Exercise forbearance in the midst of power, be humble in the midst of honour"*.

In 1849, Panjab (Sikh Homeland) was annexed by the British.



*Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji
The eternal Guru of the Sikhs*



Shere Panjab Maharaja Ranjit Singh



*The Throne of Maharaja Ranjit Singh
At V&A Museum (U.K)*

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

1947: Whose independence? The real facts

The Sikhs played a pioneering role in India's struggle for independence from the British. They made sacrifices wholly out of proportion to their demographic strength (the Sikhs make up less than 2% of the Indian population).

Out of 2125 Indians killed in atrocities by the British, 1550 (73%) were Sikhs.

Out of 2646 Indians deported for life to the Andaman Islands (where the British exiled political and hardened criminals) 2147 (80%) were Sikhs.

Out of 127 Indians sent to gallows, 92 (80%) were Sikhs.

At Jallianwala Bagh out of 1302 men women and children slaughtered 799 (61%) were Sikh.

In the Indian Liberation Army, out of 20,000 ranks and officers 12,000 (60%) were Sikhs.

Out of 121 persons executed during the freedom struggle 73 (60%) were Sikh.

Figures provided by Maulana Abul Azad, president of the Congress Party at the time of Independence

The Sikhs, who had thrown themselves heart and soul into the Indian independence struggle, were the third party with whom the British negotiated for the transfer of power. However, due to inadequacy of Sikh leadership, misplaced trust and the false promises made by Gandhi and Nehru, the Sikhs lost their claim to power.

In 1929, following a huge peaceful Independence rally was held by Sikhs in Lahore; in the words of The Times, the 500,000 strong procession "put the Congress show into shame and shadow," Gandhi and Nehru met with Sikh leaders and put forward the notion of Sikh-Hindu unity, a unified India where all Sikh sentiments (social, economical and religious) would be catered for.

The following solemn assurances were made:

"Let God be the witness of the bond that binds me and the Congress to you. Our Sikh friends have no reason to fear that it would betray them. For, the moment it does so, the Congress would not only thereby seal its own doom but that of the country too. Moreover, the Sikhs are a brave people. They know how to safeguard their rights, by the exercise of arms, with perfect justification before God and man, if it should ever come to that." [*Young India 19th March 1931*]

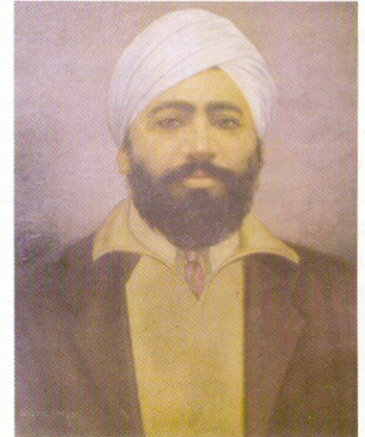
"No Constitution would be acceptable to the Congress which did not satisfy the Sikhs." (*Collected works of M K Gandhi Vol. 58. p. 192*)

"The brave Sikhs of Punjab are entitled to special consideration. I see nothing wrong in an area and a set up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom." (*J Nehru Congress meeting, Calcutta - July, 1944*)

The Sikh Homeland Panjab was divided and the Sikhs suffered great loss. Sikh shrines and the Sikh capital city of Lahore was given to Pakistan, over 70% of the most fertile land owned by Sikhs was taken by Pakistan and over 500,000 men, women and children lost their lives during the partition.



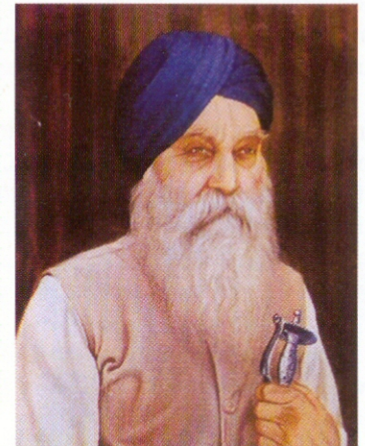
Shaheed Bhagat Singh



Shaheed Udham Singh



Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha



**Master Tara Singh
Sikh Leader during Independence**

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

1950: The Broken Promises

In 1950, despite protests by Sikhs, the Indian constitution was adopted, which failed to even recognise the Sikhs as a separate religion or "kowm," instead Sikhs were categorised as Hindus, and remain defined as such under Article 25 of the Constitution. The British recognised Sikh marriages under the Anand Karaj Act 1909, however this was replaced by the Hindu Marriage Act 1951. Sikh marriages are no longer recognised. To get a marriage license in "secular India", Sikhs have to sign a form entitled "The Hindu Marriage Act of 1951"

Panjab was a state utterly broken and totally ruined both economically and socially by the Partition with Pakistan. Instead of Government help, the Sikhs began facing economical, social and religious discrimination.

Farmers in Panjab paid higher prices for their agricultural inputs, but were offered lower prices for their produce in comparison with neighbouring states. The Central Government assumed sole control over prices and farmers were not allowed to cross state boundaries to get higher prices for their labours in the next state.

Electricity generated by the Hydroelectric Dam Bhakra on the Panjab border was more costly and provided in smaller amounts in Panjab than in its neighbouring states.

75% of the water available to Panjab was being diverted to other states.

70% of the revenue raised by Panjabis, for development of Panjab was sent to other states.

The Central governments investment in Panjab was less than 1%, the lowest amongst all the states, however Panjab was the most highly taxed state in India.

Restrictions on the recruitment and promotion of Sikhs in the armed forces were applied. This was a grave insult as Sikhs being 2% of India's population counted for the majority of sacrifices in the freedom struggle against the British.

After Independence Sikhs began facing racial slurs from leaders and the media. When Nehru was reminded about the promises he and Gandhi had made to the Sikhs before Independence and all the broken promises since, he stated simply, "the circumstances have now changed."

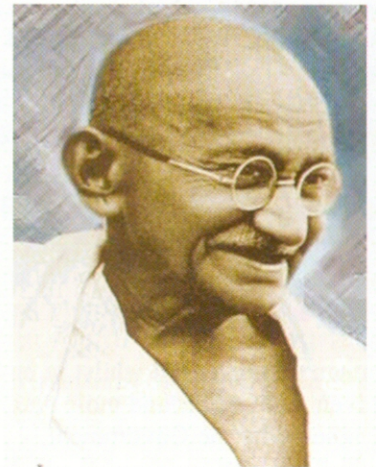
"Kya main taqat dushman (the enemy -the Sikhs) ke haath main de dun (How can I entrust power into the hands of the enemies)." (Jawaharlal Nehru, 1961)

"The Sikhs are a lawless people and a menace to the law abiding Hindus...The Government should take strict measures against them." (Jawaharlal Nehru)

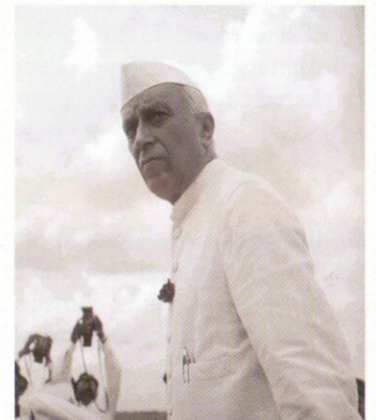
In a circular sent to all Deputy Commissioners in Panjab by the Home Minister V.B Patel, there were instructions that Sikhs should be treated like a "criminal tribe." They were urged to be severe so that the Sikhs should wake up to the political realities and recognise "who are the masters and who are the slaves."

1956: Language discrimination - Panjabi or Hindi

All states in India were recognised on linguistic a cultural grounds basis, however Panjab was the only state in India left out of this. In addition huge anti-Sikh propaganda compelled virtually all Panjabi speaking Hindus to deny Panjabi as their language and claim allegiance to Hindi, however, their knowledge of Hindi was non-existent.



Mahatma K Gandhi



Jawaharlal Nehru



Vallabhi Patel Congress Party

Furthermore, Sikhs felt the wrath of Hindu nationalism nurtured by M K Gandhi. After his death fundamentalist cults and organisations such as RSS and Ayra Smaaj began anti-Sikh propaganda, which continues today in many forms including through Bollywood movies and Indian T.V. shows. Sikhs were humiliated throughout national media and literature. Ayra Smaaj and other fundamentalist Hindu organisations published literature, held events and conferences which degraded and insulted the Sikh Gurus. A great effort was made to dissolve Sikhism into Hinduism.

1966: The Panjabi Suba and peaceful protests

During peaceful agitations throughout the 50s and 60s over 250,000 Sikhs demonstrated peacefully and courted arrest to get their linguistic rights (this is 5 times the number of Indians arrested by the British in the whole "Quit India Movement"). Darshan Singh Peruman was martyred whilst in hunger strike in prison. He demanded that Sikhs should be given more rights and more autonomy for Panjab. His martyrdom and noble sacrifice was ignored by the Government.

Two majority Panjabi-speaking districts were left out of the 1961 census. The now already shrunken Panjab was further halved to form a Hindi speaking state Haryana in 1966. Furthermore, the small remnant of Panjab was still denied the status of a Panjabi speaking state. Some of the prosperous Panjabi speaking areas including the capital Chandigarh were left out and given to Haryana. This was in direct violation of the Indian Constitution and pre-independence promises. Panjab remains the only state in India to have a shared capital and no control over its natural resources, water and electricity.

1973: The Anandpur Sahib Resolution

The Sikhs under the leadership of the Akali Dal (political party) put forward a 'Charter of Rights' to the Central Government. These rights would be for the benefit of the whole of Panjab, not just Sikhs. However the Government propaganda machine once again began to label the Sikhs as extremists who wish to destroy unified India.

The Charter of Rights was known as the Anandpur Sahib Resolution and is summarised below.

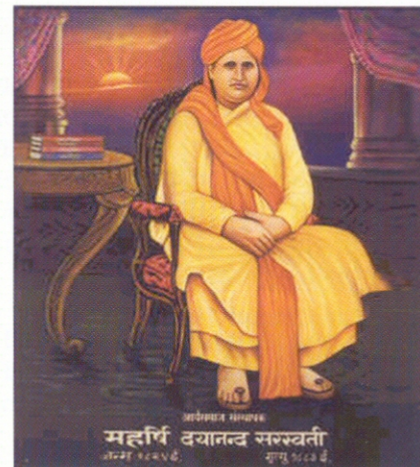
a) Redrawing the boundaries of Panjab on linguistic and cultural principles including the return of Chandigarh to Panjab. (This was consistent with Congress resolutions made before independence)

"It is better to have linguistic states as to bring one kind of people speaking one language and generally having similar customs into one provincial area." (*Nehru: Glimpses of World History, p.22*)

As Panjab lost its historic capital Lahore in the partition with Pakistan, Chandigarh was built to be the new state capital. However, after the second unwarranted partition of Panjab to form Haryana (when several thousand Panjab villages were unjustly taken), Panjab again lost its capital city. Sikhs strongly feel that Chandigarh being a Panjabi area should be returned to Panjab.

(b) The Judicious determination of river water and electricity disputes.

Panjab provides India with 70% of its grain despite its small size. However, it depends heavily on irrigation for its agricultural success. The farmers of Panjab were alarmed when they discovered that the Central Government had made plans to divert even more of Panjab's river waters to other states without consultation. Mrs. Gandhi's Government prevented the Supreme Court to settle the dispute. Panjab is the only state whose rivers are exclusively controlled by the Indian Government, in other states all rivers are controlled by their respective state Governments. The Sikhs also see their state victimised on the question of electric power.



Swami Dayananda Saraswati
of the Hindu Cult - Ayra Smaaj



Takhat Sri Keshgarh Sahib
Sri Anandpur Sahib



The Capital City Of Chandigarh

(c) Greater Autonomy for the States

Panjab has experienced a great deal of interference from Delhi in its internal affairs. The plan of the Panjab Government to build the Thien Dam on the river Ravi, to cater for the increasing demand for more power and water in the State, has been frustrated by the Central Government withholding clearance for the scheme for the last 18 years. Even development projects which are funded wholly by the state itself are often refused permission by Delhi.

The Sikhs feel that individual states should have much more control over state issues and that Delhi should only have control over national issues. Neither is this demand only applicable to Panjab, and nor is it in any way radical: In addition to Nehru's own declaration that the states would be "autonomous units", the British "Transfer of Power Act 1947" also provided that:

"The Indian Government will be a federal, loose-centre Government exercising power on only three subjects, namely communication, defence and foreign affairs."

(d) The religious demands

Sikhs had been wrongly categorised as Hindus in the Indian Constitution. Sikhs demanded to be recognised as a separate nation or "kowm".

Permission to be given for the broadcast of Kirtan (Hymns) from the Golden Temple to Sikhs living abroad, particularly in Europe and North America. The Sikhs were committed to fund the venture and were willing to leave the controlling of the broadcasting in the hands of the government.

Giving "Sacred City" status to Amritsar, Hindu holy cities like Benares and Kurukshetra already have this status.

Throughout the 70s the Damdami Taksal (a religious institution started by Guru Gobind Singh Ji) began a remarkable campaign with other Sikh organisations to educate the masses of anti Sikh elements promoted by the Government. This was spearheaded by Sant Baba Kartar Singh Ji Bhindranwale.

Sant Kartar Singh Ji organised 37 Nagar Kirtans where millions of Sikhs demonstrated throughout Panjab and Delhi, at a time where Indira Gandhi outlawed public gatherings in her "emergency rule".

Under the slogan of "Sir jave ta jave mera Sikhi sidhak na jave" (meaning: - if I die then so be it, but may my faith in Sikhi remain firm) Sant Kartar Singh caused a revolution in Panjab. The Sikh spirit was rejuvenated and hundreds of thousands of men, women and children baptised into the Khalsa. Sikhs vowed to live honourable lives, stop the use of alcohol, tobacco and intoxicants and fight oppression, tyranny and discrimination.

This sent a clear message to Delhi, that Sikhs were not prepared to live as slaves, Sikhs were free and would die for the freedom of themselves and their fellow Panjabis.

1975: State of Emergency & Indira's Dictatorship

In 1975 the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi was found guilty of election fraud by the Indian courts. To stay in power she suspended the constitution and declared a state of emergency under article 352 allowing her total control over India.

In keeping with tradition, Sikhs were once again spear-heading non-violent protests carried out against dictatorship in favour of democracy. Over 50,000 Sikhs went to jail as a result, which was unmatched by their Hindu and Muslim countrymen who accounted for over 98% of the Indian population.



Sri Harmandir Sahib - Golden Temple



Sant Kartar Singh Ji Khalsa
Damdami Taksal



Indira Gandhi
responsible for Operation Blue Star

1978: The Bloody Vaisakhi and rise of anti- Sikh groups

The Congress Government headed by Indira Gandhi began a campaign to divide, disrupt and destroy Sikhism. Cults began forming with the appearance of Sikhs but their agenda and beliefs ridiculed basic concepts of Sikhi. Cults such as Nirankaris, Radhasoamis, Darshan Dass and many more self proclaimed "Satgurus" began to flourish, it is common knowledge that these cults are funded by the government.

On the Vaisakhi of 1978 when over a million Sikhs gathered at Amritsar, the Nirankari cult supported by the Indian Government held a procession and a conference. The head of the cult claimed himself to be the incarnation of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Amongst his supporters a para-military platoon armed with lethal weapons, guns, revolvers, acid-filled bottles and mechanical propellants for shooting poison-tipped arrows were present.

During the conference the speakers made venomous attacks on Sikhism, Sikh Gurus and Sikh scriptures. Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhinderanwale and Sant Baba Thakur Singh of Damdami Taksal instructed a jatha (group) of Singhs to peacefully protest against the actions of the Nirankari cult.

Over 150 Sikhs with the prominent Bhai Fauja Singh, marched peacefully against the Nirankari procession in which Gurbachana (cult leader) had seated himself on a higher position than that of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

As the Sikhs approached the meeting place, the police stopped the Sikh protesters under the guise of granting them official and safe passage. During this time an ambush was set in motion, the police on duty hurled tear gas bombs against the unarmed Gursikhs. The armed units of Nirankaris briskly advanced forward and sprayed bullets indiscriminately with machine guns.

This incident resulted in the death of 13 devout Gursikhs and hundreds injured. Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhinderanwale now at the forefront of Sikh leadership, laid out a peaceful road map to seek justice.

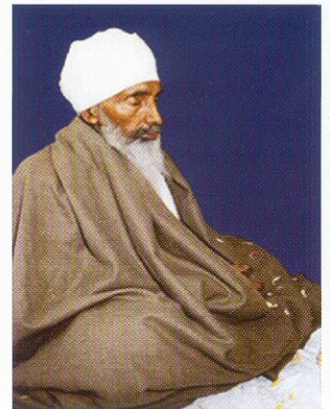
On the 30th September, 1978, the Sikhs of Delhi organised a protest march and presented a memorandum to the Government of India to ban Nirankari 'Smagams' (congregations). On 4th November, 1978, the Nirankaris took out a procession in Delhi in connection with their annual conference. The Sikhs retaliated with a counter protest march that culminated in violence. The President of the Delhi Akali Dal, Avtar Singh Kohli, was hit on the head by a police tear gas shell and was killed. Besides him, Bhai Darshan Singh and a 13-year old Sikh boy Maninder Singh were also killed. Nine Sikhs were also injured.

The Delhi police and the High Court bailed out all the Nirankaris involved and never charged them. This denial of justice and the failure to deal with the guilty led to resentment amongst the Sikhs. This Amritsar massacre became the starting point of the new phase of the struggle of the Sikh Nation.

1982: Dharam Yudh Morcha

Sant Bhindranale was accused of terrorism and various other crimes by the Government and the national media. On the 20th of September 1981 Sant Ji offered himself for arrest. Sant Ji was released after the Central Home Minister, declared in Parliament on 14 October 1981 that there was no evidence against him.

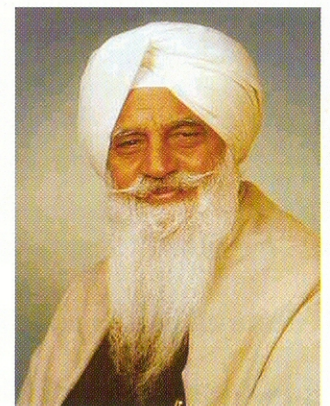
In 1982 Sant Jarnail Singh launched the "Dharam Yudh Morcha". These were peaceful protests to support the implementation of The Anandpur Sahib Resolution. During these "Morchay" thousands of Sikhs courted arrest. Despite the governments attempts to malign Sant Ji, he stirred a consciousness amongst the Sikh to shun intoxicants and adhere to the teachings of the Gurus. He reminded the Sikhs of the noble teachings of the Guru that neither must Sikhs oppress and neither should they live under oppression.



*Sant Baba Thakur Singh
Damdami Taksal*



*Shaheed Bhai Fauja Singh
shot numerous times in the
Vaisakhi of '78*



*Charan Singh, A self proclaimed
'Satguru' of the Radhasoami cult
out to attack Sikhi, despite the
Sikh appearance*

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

“ ...For the Sikh faith I am ready to sacrifice everything I have...For the safeguard and protection of the Sikh religion we must all be united...I can die but cannot see the desecration of my religion “

20th October 1981 Place: Chowk Mehta

Due to the rise of Congress, State sponsored terrorism against the Sikhs commenced. Hundreds of Sikhs were killed in fake encounters by the Indian security forces. The Sikhs feeling helpless turned to the message of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, endorsed by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale – “when all other means fail, it is right and just to raise the sword”.

Indira Gandhi undertook a campaign to undermine the Sikh faith and persecute the Sikh people with a view to win over Hindu vote in India. The Hindu psyche was poisoned against the Sikhs by manipulative use of state media and mischievous use of political fiscal resources. This resulted in the Indian masses wanting the Delhi government to deal more forcefully with the Sikh civil rights campaign.

June 1984: Operation Blue Star; Genocide

In 1984 Indira Gandhi responded and launched a full-scale army attack on the Golden Temple and 40 other historical Gurdwaras. This senseless act resulted in thousands of innocent Sikhs – men, women and children being killed, with many of the dead never accounted for. A total news blackout was enforced and 500,000 army personnel invaded Panjab.

The Facts

- 1) The attack was timed to coincide with the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev to maximise casualties. More than 3,000 unarmed men, women and children including priest and pilgrims blocked the Army's path to the Golden temple. The army mercilessly wiped them out.
- 2) The attack was illegal. Neither was it sanctioned by parliament nor were warrants issued to arrest so-called wanted persons in the Golden Temple.
- 3) In total the Army killed more than 10,000 people across Panjab to gain control of 38 Guruwaras in the state. Over 100,000 Sikhs across India were arrested to crush any uprising.
- 4) The building of the Akal Takht, Sikh Library, structures of Guru Ram Dass Inn and Guru Nanak Niwas, Langar hall were destroyed or damaged.
- 5) Rare manuscripts and handwritten Guru Granth Sahibs and priceless artefacts of the Sikh Guru's were plundered by the Indian Army. These have never been returned.
- 6) The burning of the Sikh Library was a vile attempt to destroy the very history and essence of Sikhi itself, and was burned by the army after the attack itself.
- 7) For the first time in History the continuous recitation of Paath (prayer) in Darbar Sahib was stopped by the Army invasion. Many of the Granthi Sikhs were killed or imprisoned, in fact a Granthi Singh was killed whilst reading the Guru Granth sahib.
- 8) About 2,000 Sikh Soldiers left their barracks, were killed or arrested and court marshalled.

REACTIONS

Almost all Hindu and Indian organisations applauded the terrible attack:

The Government's actions were described as a “unavoidable and belated step”. Most of the Party members applauded the anti-Sikh action. It is worth noting that in 2002, senior BJP and RSS leaders were responsible for the widespread killings of Gujarati Muslims in government-orchestrated riots. This sinister episode shows that throughout modern Indian history minorities continue to suffer brutal repression at the hand of Hindu fanaticism. (The BJP - Right Wing Hindu nationalist Government currently in power in India)



Two Indian Soldiers pose in front of the demolished Akal Takhat Sahib



State Sponsored Terrorism which followed Operation Blue Star

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

"This Government's decision to send the army into the Golden Temple complex was a right decision and was also taken at the right moment of time. The operation was neat and meticulously planned and executed. I congratulate the army on accomplishing the task assigned to it by Mrs Gandhi." (*Bajan Lal - Chief Minister of Haryana and staunch enemy of the Sikhs*)

The View of the international Community was one of shock and revulsion:

Pope John Paul II said "...the sad fact is that the place where so many people met a tragic death is a temple where men gather in prayer"

"... the attack by Mrs Gandhi's troops on the Golden Temple, The Shrine of the Sikh religion has shocked and appalled us all. We need to say loud and clear that the business of Government is not to crush religion." (*Michael Ward, Chairman Industry and Employment of the Greater London Council*)

"The army action was not 'last resort' as Prime Minister Mrs Gandhi would have us believe. It had been in her mind for more than 18 months." (*Sant Bhinderanwale did nothing wrong by defending the Golden Temple, Rtd Lt-Gen S.K Sinha, Spokesman, June 1984, p.28-29*)

"For five days the Punjab has been cut off from the rest of the world. There is a 24-hour curfew. All telephone and telex lines are cut. No foreigners are permitted...all journalists were expelled. There are no newspapers, no trains, no busses...Orders to shoot on site, were widely carried out. The whole of Punjab with its 5,000 villages and 50 major cities, was turned into a concentration camp." (*Christian Science Monitor, 8th June 1984*)

Operation Blue Star was an attack "not on a political figure or movement but to suppress a religion, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence. The army which had suffered heavy toll in the 3 days of battle went berserk and killed every Sikh man, women and child who could be found inside the temple complex. They were hauled out of the rooms, brought to corridors on the circumference of the temple with their hands tied behind their backs, were shot in cold blood" (*Sikhs of Punjab, Joyce Pettigrew, p.8*)

"Thousands of people have disappeared from the Punjab since the siege of the Sikh's Golden Temple here seven weeks ago. In some villages men between 15-35 have been bound, blindfolded and taken away. Their fate is unknown." (*Sunday Times 22nd June 1984*)

"Then came the army occupation of Punjab with frequent humiliations, arrests and killings of Sikhs by soldiers." (*Amrit Wilson, New Statesman, 16th November 1984*)

November 1984: The Delhi Massacres

On October 31st 1984, the Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Gandhi was assassinated by her two Sikh bodyguards, in retaliation for Operation Blue Star. Thousands of Sikhs were massacred in the most barbaric method of burning. Encouraged by central Government Ministers and MPs with the connivance of the police, mobs were assembled to carry out a four-day orgy of killing and plunder to avenge the death of "mother" Indira Gandhi.

"Let us teach these bastards (the Sikhs) a lesson." - On hearing of the death of his mother (*Rajiv Gandhi President of India, October 31, 1984*)

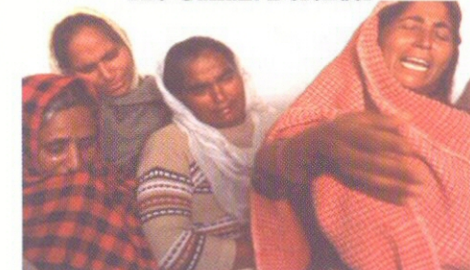
Televised and radio broadcasts vilified Sikhs and encouraged provocative slogans - "Khoon da badla khoon" (blood for blood). Rumours were spread through the media to incite violence such as - the Sikhs have poisoned the city water supply, a train from Panjab has arrived with dead Hindus and many more, none of which were true.



The aftermath of Operation Blue Star



*Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale
'The Gallant Defender'*



Victims of The Delhi Massacres

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

Congress leaders participated and helped organise mobs armed with iron rods, knives, clubs and combustible material, including kerosene. Mobs were also supplied with lists of houses and business establishments belonging to Sikhs. The mobs went on a rampage killing, molesting and raping Sikh men, women and children. Over a period of 4 days thousands of Sikhs were massacred.

“The report mentions the names of 16 important Congress politicians, 13 police officers and 198 others, accused by survivors and eye witnesses” (*Who are the Guilty? 1984, People’s Union for Democratic Rights*)

“The bodies beside the track were all Sikh, some had burned alive others burnt to death. The Sikhs were pulled out from trains by a Hindu mob outside New Delhi to face a slow death” (*Brian James & Stephen Lynas, Daily Mail 3rd November 1984*)

“Victims speak of mobs led by notoriously unruly youth congress activists armed with voters lists from which Sikh homes and businesses could be identified. How did kerosene materialise so effectively? Why did the police declare open season on Sikh shops.” (*Sunday Telegraph, 11th November 1984*)

“Hardly any soldiers were to be seen in the streets of the Capital”-to restore law and order. (*Guardian, 3rd November 1984*)

“Days of violence and loot and murder left the national capital dazed – an unprecedented holocaust. Criminally led hoodlum killed Sikhs, looted or burnt homes and properties while the police twiddled their thumbs” (*India Today 15th November 1984*)

“Many people complained that, in some cases, the police were not merely hanging back, but giving active support” (*The Times, 5th November 1984*)

1984 - 2004: The Future of Sikhs in India

The massacres of June and November 1984 changed everything. The culmination of decades of resistance and struggle gave the Sikhs a painful and bitter lesson: Sikhs are not Indians and will never be safe in India. They will remain vulnerable to oppression by the majority Hindu rule. The Sikhs still face oppression and injustice at the hand of the Indian state. In the decades that followed Operation Blue star tens of thousands of Sikh youths were killed by Indian paramilitary forces (Amnesty International) as well as further notorious operations such as “Woodrose” and “Black Thunder”. Many more were imprisoned, tortured and executed under draconian laws of TADA (the Terrorists and Disruptive Act) at unlawful detention centres throughout India. Many Sikh women were raped and abused.

In thousands of cases across Punjab the anguish felt is the same: “we have no desire to live. About 100 Army men suddenly raid our house in the night, pounce upon our sleeping sisters and ladies and small children. We are not even allowed to harvest. Death is better than this life.”

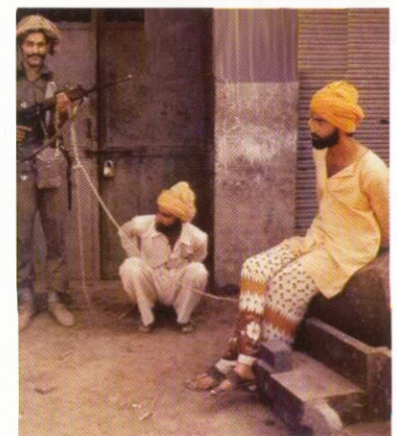
For the past two decades Sikhs were labelled terrorists and murderers, the instruction given to the Army were as follows:

“Any knowledge of the ‘Amritdari’ who are dangerous people and pledge to commit murders, arson and acts of terrorism should immediately be brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from the outside but they are basically committed to terrorism. In the interests of all of us, their identity and whereabouts must always be disclosed.” (*Official Indian Army Magazine - Batchit Circular No. 153*)

Justice Kuldip Singh of the Indian Supreme Court described the killings as “worse than genocide.” Human Rights activists such as Jaswant Singh Khalra, who uncovered mass cremation grounds where Sikhs had been killed in fake police encounters or had simply ‘disappeared’.



Victims of Delhi Massacres



Victims of Indian State Terrorism
1984-1994

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

When Khalra exposed police officers in the Indian killing machine, he himself was killed, by the Police. Few, if any, have been prosecuted for their roles in this genocide. In 2003 the case against Sajaan Kumar, one of the Congress politicians accused of orchestrating the Delhi massacres, collapsed, despite the fact that there were hundreds of witnesses who testified to his involvement. The widows of those who died in the Delhi massacres still seek compensation and justice for their loved ones, often the only breadwinners in their families. Last year they threatened to set themselves on fire as an act of desperation at being denied justice for so many years. Sikhs still languish in Indian prisons denied fair trials as victims of gross miscarriages of justice, whilst those police officers responsible for the cold blooded murder of innocent Sikhs roam free, decorated with medals from the Indian state. The Sikhs continue to be denied Justice.

In 1999 Sikhs were brutally gunned down in Chattisinghpura in Kashmir. Whilst the Indians blamed Kashmiri militants there was evidence to suggest that Indian paramilitaries were in fact responsible for the massacre. Mysteriously all of those allegedly responsible were shot and killed by the Indian army. There has never been any enquiry as to who was responsible, there are suggestions it was a government cover up. Last year Professor Davinderpal Singh Bhuller was sentenced to death for a crime he did not commit, his trial and appeal were universally condemned by the international community. Professor Bhuller remains on death row.

Right wing Hindu fanatics such as the RSS have openly pursued a campaign of trying to turn India into a Hindu state under the policy of "Hinduvta" which includes trying to assimilate the Sikhs into Hinduism and distorting Sikh history. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution is still telling Sikhs they are a Hindu sect, whilst the Government sponsors cults in Panjab such as Radoswamis, Ashutoshi and Noormelais and followers of self proclaimed Babas such as Baniara have openly attacked the teachings of Sikhi and the Gurus, and proclaim themselves to be the true Guru. Last year there were incidents of Sahib Sri Guru Granth Sahib being desecrated and burned by followers of some of these groups. Again no one has been brought to Justice.

Whilst India refuses to recognise Sikhs as a separate Kowm, the British House of Lords in the case of *Mandla v Lee* 1982, stated -

"...Sikhs are a distinctive and self consiouse community. They have a history going back to the 15th Century. They have a written language which a small proportion of Sikhs can read but which can be read by a much higher proportion of Sikhs than of Hindus. They were at one time politically supreme in the Punjab...the Sikhs qualify as a group defined by ethnic origins because they constitute a separate and distinct community derived from racial characteristics."

The suicide rate amongst Panjabi farmers soars due to economic discrimination and mismanagement. Panjab has been flooded with narcotics in an attempt to neutralise and destroy the young generation of Sikhs from demanding their basic rights. The existence of Sikh oppression is as worse now as it has ever been. In 1986, for the first time in over one hundred years, the Sikh panth (community) gathered at the destroyed Akal Takht. A unanimous resolution was passed that the Sikhs should decide their own future and that Sikhs should have an independent state, so that never again would such a holocaust be allowed to happen. Many of those who struggled for this freedom were imprisoned, tortured, and killed or executed.

The world needs to know how the Sikhs have suffered and continue to suffer. More importantly, it is hoped that a whole new generation of Sikhs will discover the truth of the decades of brutal repression and cruelty we have suffered and conclude that it is better to be a free Sikh than an oppressed Indian.



Mass funerals of innocent Sikhs



Victims of Kashmir killings



A mother grieves the death of her son



An elderly Amritdhari Sikh seen as a threat to India under TADA

STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

“...we believe in one God and Guru Granth Sahib is our Guruwe have lived like lions and we will die like lions....until the last one lives we will not allow the military to violate the sanctity of our beloved shrines. We are made of steel....we will never surrender...if we die in the defence of the Golden Temple we will find salvation in the house of God”

Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale's last interview with the foreign press at the Akal Takht before the attack; 28th May 1984.

*In loving memory of the great Sikhs
who sacrificed their lives but not
their Sikhí...*



Sant Jarnail Singh Ji Khalsa Bhindranwale, declared 'The Sikh of the 20th century', by the Khalsa Panth



**She cried for help to her neighbours,
But they were either dead or a part of the mobs.**

**She cried out for the police,
But they were supplying kerosene to the mobs.**

**She cried for the help of the politicians,
But they were the instigators of the tragedy.**

**She cried out to the international press,
They muttered but soon forgot.**

**She cried out to the world,
But you didn't want to know.**

**She lay in silence, raped and tortured,
With her husband killed and her children burnt alive.**

**With her total faith in Waheguru,
She gave up her today for your tomorrow.**



Further Reading

Fighting For Faith And Freedom (1997), Cynthia K Mahmood

The Sikhs of Punjab (1995), Joyce J.M. Pettigrew

Reduced to Ashes (2003), Ram Narayan Kumar

The Gallant Defender (1999), A.S Darshi

Struggle for Justice: Speeches and conversations with Sant Jarnail Singh Ji Khalsa Bhindranwale (1999), Ranbir Singh Sandhu

India Commits Suicide (1993), GS Dhillon

The Politic of Genocide (1999), Inderjet Singh Jaijee

Government Organised Carnage (1998), Gurcharan Singh Babbar

Ethnic conflict in India : A Case Study of Punjab (2000), Gurharpal Singh

Lives Under Threat: A Study of Sikhs Coming to the UK from Punjab (1999), Medical Foundation

Web Sites

www.carnage84.com

www.saintsoldiers.net

www.burningpunjab.org

www.shrg.net

www.punjabjustice.org

www.gursikhjeevan.com

www.gurmatveechar.com

“It’s a pity that Sikhs have to agitate, struggle and sacrifice lives for their constitutional demands, the kind of which are usually granted automatically to other states and communities. While most linguistic states in India were carved out in the 1950s, Panjabi state was agreed upon 1966, only after a decade of great peaceful stayagrahas (protests) and sacrifices by the Sikhs. While no other state was deprived of its capital, today 25 years later, Sikhs still continue to struggle and sacrifice lives.” (*The Language and Culture of the Punjabis*, Asha Bhatnagar)

Sikh National Anthem

Grant me this boon O God, from thy greatness,

May I never refrain from righteous acts,

May I Fight without fear all foes in life's battle,

With confident and courage claiming the victory.

May my highest ambition be singing thy praises,

And may thy glory be grained in my mind.

When this mortal life reaches its limits,

May I die fighting with limitless courage.

