

Surya
INDIA

POLITICS OF BLOODY REVENGE

**The Lapse In Security That Led To Mrs. Gandhi's
Death Was Shocking.**

**Even More Shocking Was The Ineptitude Shown By
Her Guards And Confidants.**

**For, At The Time Of Her Assassination She Was
Surrounded By A Ring Of Five People.**

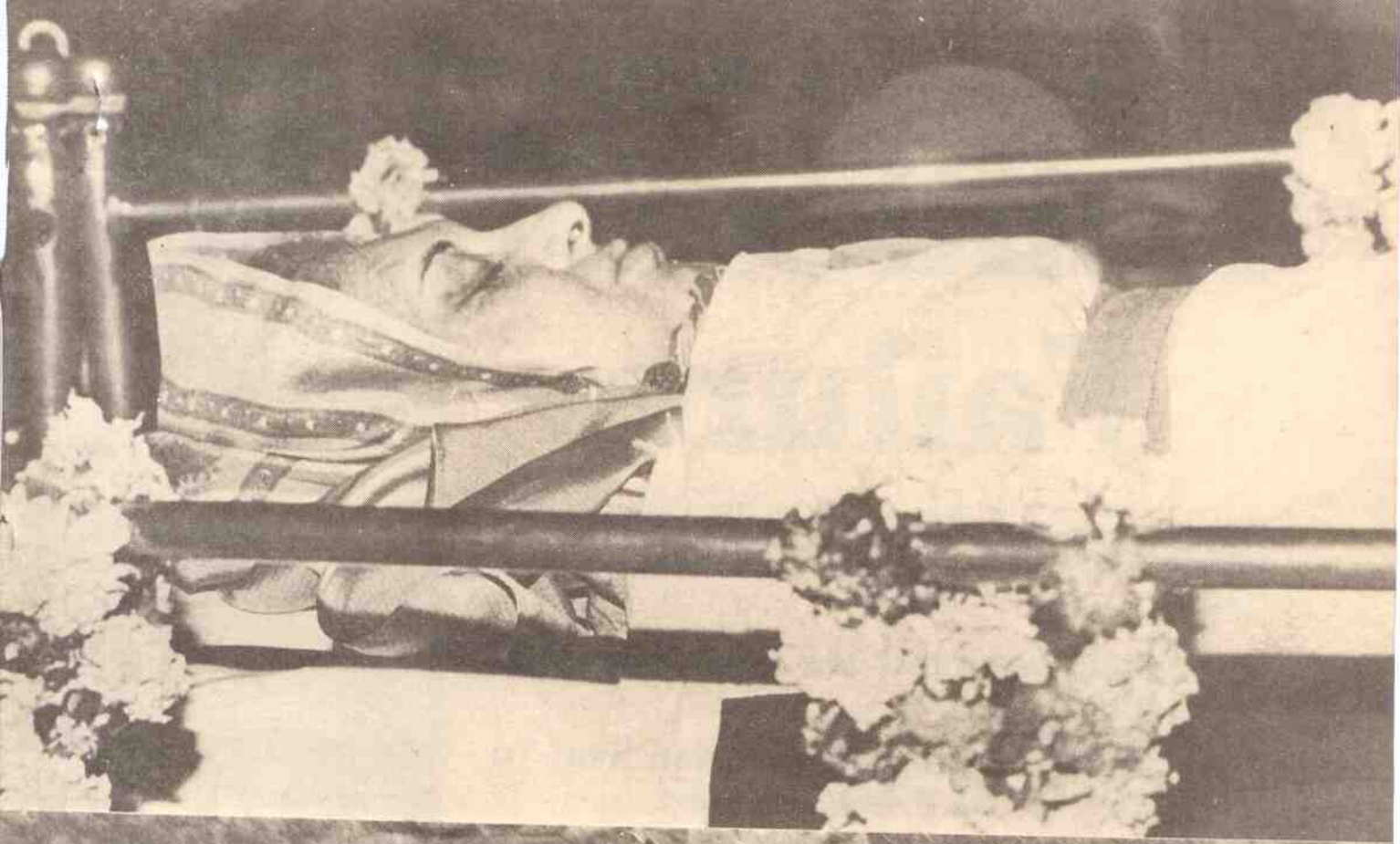
None Of These People Even Tried To Save Her.

***Rajeev K. Bajaj, Surya's Special Correspondent,*
Discusses The Manner In Which The Government
Failed Completely During The Assassination And Its
Even More Tragic Aftermath.**

***Dr. J.K. Jain, Editor (Surya) Analyses The Post-Mortem
Reports Of The Dead Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale
And Maj. Gen. Shubeg Singh, And Says That The Dead
Terrorist Leaders Might Have Been Murdered.***

***Khushwant Singh, Consulting Editor (Surya), Talks
About The Phenomenon Of The Politics Of Murder
That Seems To Have Invaded The Indian Political Arena.***

***Ram Jethmalani Member of Parliament, Reports On The
'Riots' In The Capital After The Assassination, And
Whether Or Not These Were Incited
By The Congress(I).***



Politics Of Failure

Rajeev K. Bajaj, Reports On The Manner In Which The Government Failed On All Counts.

- It Failed To Protect The Life Of Its Chief Executive.
- It Failed To Gather Information Vital To The Life Of The Prime Minister.
- It Failed To Provide Adequate Medical Care To The Shot Prime Minister.
- It Failed To Manage Information Pertaining To The Assassination.
- It Failed To Provide Adequate Protection To Its Citizens.
- It Failed To Control Members Of The Ruling Party Who Were Allegedly Inciting Violence.

Guns For The Government : The Army Was Able To Control The Situation, But Only After Thousands Had Died.

MRS GANDHI's life was under constant threat. Everyone knew it. *Surya* had written about it, as early as July, 1984. In an item entitled "The man who came to kill Mrs Gandhi", we had written about an alleged plan to assassinate the Indian Prime Minister. Again, in the very next issue (*Surya India*, August, 1984), we had talked of the security measures being taken to protect the Prime Minister's life. But we had still raised the question of whether or not that security was fool-proof. Ours has always been a voice of dissent. Did the

Government ignore it, only because of that reason?

At the time of the assassination, Mrs. Gandhi was walking towards the office within the compound of her house, where Peter Ustinov waited to film an interview with her. Dinesh Bhatt, her personal security officer had been sent to the office building to see if everything was all right with the filming set-up. Normally, the personal security officer is not supposed to leave the Prime Minister's side even for a second. But on October 31 this was not done. But then R.K. Dhawan was walking beside her to her left side. Nathu Ram her personal attendant for so many years was behind





Dhawan. To the right on the other side of that narrow path walked Narayan Singh, the Prime Minister's armed security attendant. Behind Dhawan and the Prime Minister, slightly to the right of Nathu Ram was Asstt. Sub-Inspector Rameshwar Dayal. Behind Dayal was the Prime Minister's Information Secretary H.Y. Sharda Prasad. Besides these, there was the usual contingent of ITBP (Indo Tibetan Border Police) personnel and Delhi Police guards. Included in the guards were of course ASI Beant Singh and Constable Satwant Singh, the killer guards.

Beant Singh who had been on duty on the other side of the small

gate separating adjoining compound of Akbar and Safdar Jang Road buildings, opened the gate, pistol in hand, in full view of everyone, took aim and shot the Prime Minister, Dhawan at that time was busy whispering something in the PM's ear. Even as the first shot slammed into the Prime Minister's person, not one in that ring of five around her even tried to lunge at Beant Singh or otherwise hamper him in anyway. The Prime Minister fell down. Beant shouted at Satwant Singh to use his sten gun. Even then the men around her did not move. Dinesh Bhatt at that time was some distance away from the killers, in fact behind them. Personal

Security Officer as he was, he stood rooted to the spot, like all the rest of them, and watched as Satwant Singh sprayed the Prime Minister with practically the whole magazine clip of his sten gun. Dhawan was there, Nathu Ram was there, Narayan Singh was there, Dinesh Bhatt was there, Rameshwar Dayal was there and so was Sharda Prasad . . . and so was the much vaunted Security Cell of the Prime Minister; yet all of them watched as the Prime Minister was mercilessly done to death. Indeed the only other person said to have received any injury in the whole incident was ASI Rameshwar Dayal that too only in legs and this despite the fact that practically everyone around the Prime Minister was in the direct line of fire. One does not quite know if everyone else instead of trying to save the Prime Minister's life took evasive action to save his own skin.

Assistant Commissioners alternate with Inspectors at SHO level. The ACPs/SHOs have 100 Sub-inspectors at their command, this force coupled with 100 ASIs and 50 Head Constables, under whose direct supervision are 350 constables, constitute the Prime Minister's special Security Force. And despite this 500 strong force with its in-built check and balances, not one single person made even an attempt to save her. Kao had only planned the Prime Minister's security, it was up to others to implement it. The Government failed to do so.

Of the 500 odd security personnel recruited from the Delhi Police, only about 2 percent were Sikhs. Of these few, two only happened to have been influenced to commit murder. Their movements were known to all. The people they were meeting was an open secret. In fact Beant Singh is even reported to have



Policing For Their Lives : Policemen Were Still On The Roads Before Noon, Later The Sikhs Among Them Had To Run For Their Lives.

And this was despite the presence of a Police contingent, almost 500 strong. Indeed when one looks at the organization of the Delhi Police in the PM's security, it is amazing how after having fired the first bullet, Beant Singh was not shot at, was not disturbed by anyone in anyway—in fact nobody even lunged at him when he started to fire. But what is even more amazing is that Beant Singh was actually able to tell Satwant Singh to open fire and Satwant was able to point his gun at the Prime Minister's person almost as though he was on parade, and yet no one stopped him, and what is even more amazing, no one even tried to stop him. Not one person in that force of specially trained commandos. The PM's security consists of an Additional Commissioner of Police at the top, under him is a Deputy Commissioner of Police under whose overall supervision work three Assistant Commissioners of Police. These

reported for duty in a taxi, as also Satwant Singh. Yet the Intelligence Agencies did not sit up. The Government failed to gather information which it should have been gathering even in the normal course of things. The people who shot her were not strangers. They were her own security guards.

INDEED even more amazing is the manner in which, not only the security, not only the intelligence but even the Emergency medical facilities got ready for any such contingency, failed to show any results. *Surya* had carried an item last year, talking about the wastage of scores of bottles of blood, of the rare O-negative type (Mrs. Gandhi's Blood Group) being indulged in by the Red Cross Blood Banks. After that we were informed that the blood was being kept ready to deal with any emergency arising out of an attack on the Prime Minister's person. We were satisfied with

the explanation. However unfortunately, all those preparations came to nought when the specially equipped ambulance, especially procured for just such an emergency was not used at all. It is surprising that the members of the Prime Minister's household thought it fit to take Mrs. Gandhi to the All India Institute in an Ambassador car, when the ambulance was parked in the Prime Minister's house. And it was not as though the car was taken straight to the AIIMS. The initial thought was to take the Prime Minister to the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital. However, mid-way through the journey somebody in that Ambassador car changed his/her mind, and the car sped towards the AIIMS. The patient should have been put on an intra-venous drip and blood transfusions, then and there only, especially when the things were available. Vital minutes crucial to the life of the Prime Minister were

Time was lost even in organizing a trolley and a stretcher. She was attended by the resident doctors in the casualty. Dr. Guleria, Professor of Medicine, was the first Senior Doctor to examine and found her dead. It was then that Dr. Safaya (Medical Superintendent, AIIMS) ordered the shifting of the Prime Minister's body to the Operation Room on the 8th floor of the building. Here Venu Gopal (Professor of Cardio-thoracic Surgery) and Dr. M.M. Kapoor (Professor of Surgery) and a number of other surgeons were pressed into service, apparently to try and perform a miracle on the body of the Prime Minister. Eighty-six bottles of blood were pumped into her.

While All India Radio and Doordarshan were keeping up the fiction of the Prime Minister still being alive, the hospital staff members were telling everyone that Mrs. Gandhi had been dead



The Congress(I)'s Revenge: Long After The Very Echoes Of Gunfire That Killed Indira Gandhi Had Died, The Fires Of Genocide Were Still Smoldering In All Major Cities.

lost when the decision was taken not to use the ambulance. And what to speak of minutes almost a quarter of an hour was lost in imparting life-saving treatment to the Prime Minister when the course of the car was changed. The members of the Prime Minister's household could not but have known that her own personal physician Dr. K.P. Mathur, was the Medical Superintendent of the Ram Manohar Lohia hospital. As such, it was more advisable to take the Prime Minister there, Ram Manohar Lohia being nearer to 1, Safdar Jang Road than the AIIMS.

The whole sordid tale assumes almost sinister connotations when one looks at the fact that the doctors at the AIIMS had no prior information of the Prime Minister's condition when the Ambassador car arrived at the doors of the AIIMS. No body had telephoned them from P.M. house that she was being brought there.

on arrival. Indeed, but the failure of the Government to smoothly co-ordinate management of information was appalling. Rumour mongers were having a field day all over the city, but especially outside the AIIMS. One of the main reasons for the tragic aftermath of the assassination was the utterly un-coordinated, almost mischievous manner, in which media coverage was given to the dire event. The implications are clear. The government had failed, or it had been deliberately allowed to fail—on all counts.

FOR long after the very echoes of gunfire that killed Indira Gandhi had died down, the fires of genocide were still smoldering in all major cities of the country. Official figures stated that the death toll was 1,000 for the whole country. Unofficially, the same figure was being quoted for one area of Delhi alone.

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COVER STORY

It was a pogrom, unequalled in the annals of the bloody history of a country ravaged by thousands of massacres. "The partition was nothing as compared to this," said Jaswant Singh Bedi, a local Congress(I) Pradhan (Mongolpuri Area of New Delhi). "At least at that time we had somewhere to run to. Where do we go now?"

Bedi a Congress worker for three decades, said that he was ashamed of being a Congressman. He went to the extent of actually naming local Congress(I) leaders, and charged that they had actually incited violence. Indeed, that was a constant refrain of people who had survived the holocaust.

"The government did it," wailed Ranjit Kaur. Her husband, a three-wheeler driver had been burnt alive in front of her very eyes.

Living as they were in their squalid one room house in the Y-Block of Mongolpuri, Balwant was dragged out of his house, doused in kerosene and set alight. He ran, screaming for mercy and water. What he got were jeers and insults. "They prodded him with rods. They beat him with sticks. When he asked for water they told him he had killed Indira Gandhi," his widow wailed. Balwant Singh took a long time to die.

There were hundreds of Balwant Singhs made, after October 31.

At the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, the crowds had come. They had come to see for themselves whether or not what they had heard was true. There were Hindus, Sikhs, Mussulmans, Christians—everyone was there. There were wails of women and slogan shouting of the usual Congress kind. But as the wails grew



louder, the slogans grew more sinister. Arjun Das, Congress(I) Councillor from the Laxmibai Nagar area had come. So had the Congress(I) MP from outer Delhi, Sajjan Kumar. And it wasn't long before 'Indira Gandhi Amar Rahe' (Long live Indira Gandhi) became *Khoon Ka Badla Khoon Se Lenge* (We will take blood for blood).

By 6 p.m. all hell had broken loose. You wore a turban and you signed your own death warrant. Groups of men, with scores of teenagers in rags in tow, systematically started picking out Sikhs and smashing them up.

In the meanwhile an irate mob gathered around the gurdwara at Laxmibai Nagar, in Arjun Das's constituency. The leaders of the mob alleged that the Sikhs inside the gurdwara had been distributing sweets to celebrate Mrs. Gandhi's assassination.

Even as sticks and stones began to fly, the crowd stopped three-wheel auto-rickshaws driven by Sikhs and started smashing them up. They then turned on the drivers.

Satpal Singh was caught and dragged out of his auto—by a crowd of 20 to 25 teenaged boys. Apparently, they were from the re-settlement colonies in outer Delhi. Abusing Satpal in the foulest terms, a 15-year-old hammered in his right cheek with a brick. Sheer panic seized Satpal—with a super human strength he did not know he possessed, he broke through that murderous cordon and ran. Nobody ran after him. There were Sikhs in plenty around the gurdwara.

