

"Slaughter Sikhs!" —

Congress (I) Tribute to Indira Gandhi



The following excerpts illustrate that, far from spontaneous anti-Sikh riots, the vicious pogroms that occurred in the wake of Gandhi's death were highly organised undertakings of the Congress (I) Party itself. The excerpts are taken from the November 1984 issue of Mass Line, newspaper of the Central Reorganising Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist).

Inspired and led by the Congress Party (Indira), riots broke out in the late afternoon of October 31. The starting point was the premises of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in which the Congress (I) leadership, the local councillors and Ministers of Parliament were able to meet. The official announcement of Mrs. Gandhi's death was consciously delayed (till Rajiv's succession was ensured), during which time plans and arrangements for the ensuing lynching were made. Thus no sooner was the announcement made than attacks were mounted on every Sikh in sight, their vehicles and shops burned and smashed.... The Congress (I) was awarded three field days, starting 1 November (later proved by further evidence) and they systematically went around burning gurudwaras, shops and houses; Sikhs were lynched. Sikh drivers were

burnt alive along with their vehicles.... Taxis carrying Sikhs were overturned and put to the torch, with the Sikhs inside... In front of on-looking partisan police hundreds of people were roasted alive. Sikh passengers were pulled out from trains and brutally murdered. In some cases weeping children were thrown into roasting fires and burned alive.... Throughout the Hindi belt this is the general picture of the events staged. Rumours, all against Sikhs, were deliberately spread, keeping alive the tempo of aggression--this up to 3rd November when Mrs. Gandhi's body was torched. This is how the Congress (I) paid its rich tribute to Mrs. Gandhi, the giant killer--a sacrifice of two thousand lives in Delhi alone.

Behind the brutal massacre and massive looting no foreign hand was at work. It was an open assault organised by the communal government and the ruling party on a people....

Opposition parties and the press argued that the riots should and could have been put down. As an example, they pointed out how during Janata rule the Congress (I) riots (triggered by the arrest of Mrs. Gandhi) were checked. But they had missed the point: for now with

Congress (I) and the government itself jointly stagemanaging the "holocaust," who was supposed to contain it? Out of the many names of Congress (I) functionaries in Delhi cited by those attacked, those of Sajjan Kumar, Kamal Nath, HKL Bhagat (Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting) and Dharam Dass Shastri stand out. At AIIMS the local councillor and his followers had given the lead to start the attack. In Connaught Place and Rikabganj, Kamal Nath led the "loot-mar" march, while HKL Bhagat, with his numerous cohorts, could rampage the trans-Yamuna colonies. In terms of the number of killings, Bhagat ranks first among the Congress (I) leaders. The massacre conducted at Trilokpuri was the ghastliest and among all the killings that occurred throughout the country the one in block 32 of this colony is the biggest. One thousand people were finished off in Trilokpuri. The chief men behind this gory undertaking: Rampal Saroj Dulichand, Sadar and Abdul Khan, a DTC bus conductor. These goons led Gujjars, poor people from the nearby village Chilla and municipality workers residing in a nearby block. Like in any other reset-
(continued to page 88)

(continued from page 17)

tlement colony in Delhi, people here too are the forced slaves of Congress (I); everything from ration cards to the legal sanction for their jhuggies are provided by the Congress (I). This dependence turns them into the vote and rally banks of the ruling party, for whom mobilising such a stratum for arsoning and rioting was the easiest thing to do....

In the dead of the night, following the Trilokpuri carnage, women, young girls and children were left to themselves with the dead and charred remains of what were a few hours earlier their husbands, fathers,

brothers. Gangs of hoodlums barged into the area, and with the help of flashlights chose their pick. Some women were raped then and there, some others were abducted—never to return....

The assault in Kalyanpuri was led by one Dr. Ashok, Congress (I) leader. In Shakarpur the local councillor and one Gupta, a local ration shoe owner, held the reins.

The real reason why the killings went up from 2nd November on is (that) people saw that they had the political backing to do this. Several police officers are said to have told the mobs that Rajiv has given them "three days to do whatever you

want." And Rajiv did make his position clear in his first public appearance after the assassination. On November 19, addressing the Boat Club rally, he noted that the violence following Mrs. Gandhi's death is a natural reflection of the anger and anguish of the people and that the "disturbances" were just like tremours that the fall of a giant tree creates; on the whole he felt happy.... The fact of the matter is that for the Congress (I) leadership the violence was really a sign of tribute to Mrs. Gandhi. The Congress (I) organised the gruesome killings and projected them as a sign of people's love for Mrs. Gandhi! ■