

1984 Martyrs Remembered

The Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi was, ironically, the venue of the public meeting on Nov. 6 2002 to pay homage to 1984 martyrs. Justice R.S. Narula presided.

Shri Kuldip Nayyar, M.P. Justice Rajinder Sachar, S. H.S. Phoolka, Sr. Advocate, S. Bhagwant Singh Dalawari, Dr. Maheep Singh & Dr. A.S. Narang addressed the meeting. Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora, ex-M.P. was present, too!.

Dr. A.S. Narang welcomed the members who had responded to The Sikh Forum's invitation to attend a public meeting. He remarked in his address, "Happenings in the first week of Nov. '84 was not an event but a phenomenal tragedy. The massacre of innocents cannot be forgotten, for thousands were butchered in broad daylight, in the presence of police, throughout the length and breadth of the country. The Sikh Forum every year holds a public meeting in the first week of November; to pay homage to those who sacrificed their life as Sikhs; and to remind the govt. that we will not rest till justice is done, as also to remind our countrymen that it can happen to anyone - not necessarily to a minority, to anyone who dissents with those in power. We have to fight collectively for maintaining basic freedom, democracy and human rights."

Dr. Maheep Singh: Riots occurred in India before and also after independence. But marked changed occurred in Nov. '84. The brutish mob, would catch a person, beat him, put a tyre around his neck, sprinkle kerosene oil, and ignite it, and then dance in devilish glee. Sikh property was looted and burnt. People had become barbaric. Killers of Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Gen. Vaidya have been tried, sentenced and hanged. But not one person has been hanged for murder of more than 5,000 innocent Sikhs in Delhi alone. Even one person who was convicted, and awarded death sentence, and his conviction was confirmed by High Court, Hon'ble Supreme Court set aside his death sentence later! If justice is not given, the faith of people will get shaken in judiciary, as it has happened with political system, administration and police - he asked whether a writ petition can be filed before Supreme Court to review the commutation of death sentence to Kishori who was convicted and awarded death sentence in 6 cases. It is a matter of regret that our Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha has not yet passed even a condolence resolution on the killing of 5000 persons for past 18 years.

Sh. Kuldip Nayyar recalled that formation of 2nd commission to investigate Nov. '84 killing was outcome of his question in Rajya Sabha, and thus, Nanavati Commission was appointed. But after Nanavati has been named to also investigate recent Gujarat riots - there is not much hope, that his report will do justice. At the most, Nanavati may write a few words to embarrass the other party. He agreed with Dr. Maheep Singh that Kishori should have been punished, but what about those who planned and organised these killings? Earlier, he had moved a resolution in Rajya Sabha for happenings in Golden Temple, Amritsar, but some political leader called it anti-national. Government in power during those days had a strange aim, it had a different objective. He cautioned that we should remember that India is greater than government in power and political parties. He assured that he will again try to move a condolence resolution in Rajya Sabha for happenings of Nov. '84 carnage. He said that we, our sons, our grandsons will keep on demanding punishment of the guilty. **Our fight is for democratic and human rights! Justice not for one community or caste but for all.**

In 1998 as India's High Commissioner in London, he was shocked to see that any Sikh with turban on head and beard on face was not permitted to enter High Commission Office from the main door as it was for everyone else; Sikhs could enter High Commission after a detail check up, from the rear door only. Then, when he wanted to visit a gurdwara to seek blessings of Guru, even Scotland Yard Police advised him against it. This was the limit of disinformation regarding Sikhs which was spread by our government in foreign countries, what to say within India where every Sikh was labelled as terrorist?

Sardar Bhagwant Singh Dalawari: During Nov. '84, he was at Amravati. When he heard reports of the type of atrocities committed during Nov. '84, his mind just could not believe that our countrymen could stoop so low and become so barbaric. He appealed that we have to awaken the human soul to meet this challenge. Both Houses of Parliament should be ashamed that they have not passed condolence resolutions for last 18 years. He appealed that we should establish a Memorial in memory of those killed in Nov. '84.

Sardar H.S. Phoolka, Sr. Advocate: He gave details of progress of Nanavati Commission. He informed that 200 witnesses have deposed before this Commission, which includes important personalities, like Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora, Sh. Kuldip Nayyar, Sh. I.K. Gujral, Sh. Ram Bilas Paswan, Sardar Patwant Singh, Smt. Jaya Jaitly, Sh. Madan Lal Khurana and others. We have submitted our arguments, now govt. reply is awaited. Question is often asked, how far we have achieved our objective:

- i) We have been able to keep this issue alive for 18 years.
- ii) We have been able to keep the sword hanging on the head of culprits of Nov. '84, so that such events do not happen again, and
- iii) We have still to achieve punishment for the guilty. We hope to achieve this through Nanavati Commission report.

The Commission is yet to issue notices to persons, who it considers likely to be blamed for happenings on Nov. '84. He informed that a CD has been prepared on Nov. '84 and further all material concerning Nov '84 is now available on website: *carnage'84.com*.

Justice Rajinder Sachar: During Clinton's Presidentship - USA apologised to Japan for their act during the World War II against American citizens of Japanese origin. Also, Japan has accepted their guilt for acts of their soldiers in Korea during World War II, but it is most disgraceful that our govt. and Parliament has not yet passed a condolence resolution. The happenings of Nov. '84 were murder of the human soul.

Prof. Jaswant Singh Phull: Gave credit to the Sikh Forum, which has been regularly organising public meetings to draw attention of our countrymen to the disgraceful happenings of Nov. '84. He further appealed that Sikh Forum should develop some teeth to tackle the representatives of our community who head SGPC and DSGMC and consider these bodies as their fiefdom.

Justice R.S. Narula: Only those nations live who continue to remember their martyrs. We will never forget the sacrifices of those who were killed in Nov. '84. He moved the following resolutions:

"This public meeting held to pay homage to martyrs of Nov. '84 -

‘(a) Resolves and appeals to members of Parliament (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha)to pass condolence resolution in memory of 5000 innocents Sikhs who were killed in Nov. '84.

‘(b) Appeals to Central Govt. to appoint courts to try persons charged with offences during Nov. '84.

‘(c) Resolves and appeals to Central Govt. that 72 police persons who were identified by Kusum Lata Committee for dereliction of duties during Nov. '84 be tried through court/special courts."

All resolutions were passed unanimously.

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