

# Massacre of Sikhs: 1984: 25th Anniversary Observed

*A REPORT BY R.S. CHHATWAL\**

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ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> REMEMBRANCE DAY for the victims of of Nov'84 massacre the Sikh Carnage Sikh Forum, People's Relief Committee, People's Union for Civil Liberties, "Manushi", PUDR, Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council, *Lokayan*, and 'Aman Biradri', organized a joint Memorial Day at the Constitution Club, New Delhi on 7th Nov. 2009. Dr. Jaswant Singh Neki Presided. At the outset the distinguished audience observed silence in homage to victims of the carnage. Shri George Fernandes, in spite of his ill health graced the meeting with his presence.

Eminent speakers deplored the fact that, even after 25 years, justice has not been given to the victims. The known gmen have not been punished; and State is becoming insensitive to the suffering of the people. It was suggested that a suitable Memorial be constructed for all those innocent victims.

Speaking on the occasion **Ms Jaya Jaitly** (representing People's Relief Committee) said :

By not punishing the guilty (and by making them ministers or appointing them in responsible positions, and nominating them for Parliament, the 'party in power' is brazenly flouting basic moral norms. She suggested that a Memorial be set up for the innocent citizens in Delhi. People's Relief Committee has some 6 to 8 Lakhs in its account, and more funds could be collected.

**SHRI PUSHKAR RAJ** - on behalf of PUCL said some people in India, are becoming barbaric. It is unfortunate that the guilty were made ministers. It is disgraceful that we are not able to give a definite figure as to how many persons were killed. The PUCL had brought out the book: 'Who are the Guilty' in 1984.

**Mr. MAXWELL PEREIRA – Joint Commissioner of Police (Retd.)**, Posed the question: Is it necessary for Police to wait for orders to do right things that he is supposed to do? In 1984 he was Additional DCP (Kotwali) under which falls Gurudwara Sis Ganj – when the mob moved to attack the historic shrine, he warned the mob to disburse, or he would order police to open fire. The mob did not listen, and moved forward, he ordered 'Fire'; one person from mob was killed. The mob then fled and never came back. When he informed this to the "Control Room" they declined to accept his message.

**SR. H. S. PHOOLKA (Sr. Advocate)** – Action taken by Maxwell Pareira was known only in 2002 when Kusum Lata Mittal Report came to light, as one of the many documents which were given out by the Nanavati Commission. Copies of these documents have been kept secret so far. He narrated the case of policeman Kewal Singh and Gurmail Singh - and how they were removed from duty, when they arrested 90 rioters in their area. Later, the rioters had been released. Indeed DCP Amod Kanth was 'decorated with a medal' for arresting the Sikhs (including 11 women and children).

**SR. HARBHAJAN SINGH OF NISHKAM COUNCIL** said he was against violence of any kind. Politicians had become insensitive. If there is no justice to the victims, even after 25 years, then how can any one be proud of our democracy?

**SR. TARLOCHAN SINGH – Member Parliament** – What happened during Nov'84 needs to be pondered, just as the Jews are carrying out investigation to trace those who carried out killings of Jews. Such persons are being located, tried and punished. Our 25th remembrance day should stir some to trace the guilty persons. Our Parliament has not yet passed a Condolence resolution on the killing. Let the people of India be aware.

**S. JARNAIL SINGH** – Journalist & author of book "I Accuse" (on Nov '84), regretted that CBI gave a clean chit to Jagdish Tytler and Home Minister had remarked: "I am happy that my friend has been exonerated". I was disturbed by this. I felt that government has become insensitive to the feelings and sentiments of victims. My action of throwing shoe at Home Minister was a symbolic action. I lost my job within 2½ months of this incident, but culprits of Nov'84 are roaming around free for 25 years. I had not challenged my dismissal because my action, though symbolic, was ethically not acceptable from a Journalist.

**DR. J. S. NEKI** – In his concluding remarks said. Those who had power, we instigated them. Indira Gandhi became frustrated. We have not looked after our children. We should learn from Jews how they brought up their progeny. They ensure that each child knows his language (Hebrew), his roots and history, and excels in knowledge in whichever field he is. We have to do introspection "Why this happened to us?"

