

The Genocidal Pogrom in Gujarat: Anatomy of Indian Fascism

CARNAGE IN GUJARAT: Citizens' Initiative for Justice & Peace
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Gujarat govt's Operation Cover-up

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Dear Friends,

The Government of Gujarat has requested the ISP association of Gujarat to circulate the statement written in **BOLD** to all ISP customers on e-mail under the heading "Effective Steps taken by GoG to deal with the Situation arising from the Godhra Incident & its aftermath". It is shocking that the ISP Association agreed to be a part of this insidious charade. As there is nothing further away from the truth we have listed below a glimpse into reality.

FICTION:

*** As soon as the Government knew the seriousness of the Godhra incident, the Chief Minister himself rushed to the spot and directed the administration to deal with the situation effectively and firmly. Curfew was clamped in Godhra without loss of time and the RAF was deployed in Godhra on the same day.**

FACT:

- The visit to Godhra must have had such a calming effect in surrounding area that it immediately led to carnage that is being compared to the worst genocide ever committed on earth.
- What was needed was a statement to the people of Gujarat through the most effective mass media – Radio, Television, Press – referring to the delicacy of the situation and the firmness with which the matter would be dealt with if "ANYBODY" took Law into their own hands. Instead, the Chief Minister himself made inflammatory statements such as
 - "Har kriya ki pratikriya hoti hai." ("Every action produces a reaction").
 - "The five crore people of Gujarat have shown remarkable restraint under grave provocation."
 - The media is guilty of secular aggression and it has unleashed non-violent secular violence in the country.
 - "These elements (media) make a mountain out of a molehill... to damage the state.
- Some things that the Government did NOT do
 - 40 Policemen were on "sports duty" taken away from police stations and not recalled.
 - No preventive arrests on the bandh eve.
 - No attempts to gather intelligence about preparations for violence.
 - No confidence building measures or peace initiatives like inviting representatives of the two communities.
 - No newspaper advertisements in the local newspapers for people to maintain peace and harmony.
 - The city had 18 companies of SRP on the day of the bandh, but not all forces were in position.
 - Half of the 700 strong traffic police not deployed on February 28. The other half did not note down even one vehicle registration number of the looters who were making merry on the streets.

FICTION:

- **Another alert message was issued the same day to all concerned officers to take adequate preventive action for maintaining law and order situation.**

FACT:

- It has been reported that a Minister in the State Cabinet (may be in response to the above “alert message”, or otherwise) was seen provoking members of the majority community in areas like Paldi. He offered to send bangles to those “Hindus” who did not participate in the “ethnic cleansing” drive. It was a clear instruction to the arsonist, looters and all the people of Gujarat that 6 p.m. was the deadline time until when the Chief Minister could keep the Army away and “you were free to do whatever you wanted”.
- It has also been stated that some elements from a particular community were almost stuffed with alcohol right through the night before the *bandh* and were set loose on the streets the following morning, initiating and instigating violence against a specific minority community.

FICTION:

*** As reports of violence started coming in by 28th February afternoon, the State Government immediately decided to call Army and requested the Army authorities in this regard. The Chief Minister announced the same decision in the Press Conference held on 28th February itself.**

FACT:

- Instead of stating the truth the Chief Minister continued to state that the situation was under control and Army was on stand-by. It is clear that the strategy was to allow the paid mercenaries to spread mayhem and break the economic backbone of the minority community “BEFORE” the army came.
- Though 12 columns of the Army (approx 600 troops) had reached Ahmedabad and other sensitive areas on March 1, they were kept on standby. Military Intelligence puts the blame on the State Government. Reports submitted say the initial delay was due to the absence of clear instructions from the Gujarat Government. (TOI, Ahmedabad, 11th March, Pg 7)

FICTION:

*** The Government of India immediately acceded to the demand of the State Government and issued orders for shifting of two full army brigades to Gujarat. The Chief Minister himself spoke to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister to expedite the process.**

FACT:

- It is not clear whether the Chief Minister and his colleagues actually wanted the violence to be stopped. If they did want the violence to be stopped and the minority community saved, the Chief Minister himself could have come on to the streets like Mr George Fernandes and confronted the arsonists.
- Even Mr George Fernandes was reportedly “unhappy with the way the situation was handled by the Narendra Modi ministry and felt that the state government was not cooperating with the Army”! He felt that the army should have been called out earlier.

FICTION:

*** The process of airlifting the army continued throughout the night and the army had landed in Ahmedabad the very next day morning. The army was pressed into service within 16 hours. It is pertinent to note that the army formation in Ahmedabad was not available, as they were deployed on the international borders.**

FACT:

- It is so strange that the Government of Gujarat wants us living in Ahmedabad and in India who have access to media such as STAR NEWS and the voices of brave journalists like Rajdeep Sardesai, who repeatedly demonstrated live the “ABSENCE” of army on the streets and the continued attacks in different parts of the cities and the villages by trained murderers. All reporters were saying that the

Government was at least 24 hours too late in deploying the army and even after that the Govt procrastinated in giving the Army the control.

FICTION:

*** Major disturbances in Ahmedabad and in the State were brought under complete control within 72 hours.**

FACT:

- One way in which this statement can be read is, *“Maximum Damage was done within 72 hours and trying to push it further would have been suicidal for the VHP, Bajrang Dal and its allies as the Army was here and it could not be mollified into silence like the Local Police”.*

The extent of planning for this heinous deed is slowly coming to light with indications that the activists from the “Sangh Parivar” disguised as Census Numerators” were identifying the families, assets and shops of Muslim communities all across the state as early as January 2002. The attacks were scheduled to erupt close to the elections that were a complete disaster for the BJP. So that the BJP could gain lost ground by appealing to the most basic instinct of Hindus, that of survival against a seemingly ruthless enemy – the Muslim. Articles describing “the Hindu victimization” were being planted in national news portals and these had their impact with average Middle Class Hindus feeling that maybe this attack went too far, BUT it had to be done!!!

FICTION:

*** The State Transport buses are back on the road and the educational institutions have started functioning regularly.**

FACT:

- A picture in today’s newspaper (March 18, 2002) says it all. Only three passengers are utilizing the prompt resumption of services stated above on one of the busiest routes.
- The timing of the attack could not have been more disastrous for the lives of hundreds of children of the minority community who were scheduled to appear for the 10th and the 12th std exams in March. With no clothes, no food, no water, no sanitation, and, more importantly, no security of their life, the last thing on their mind would be studies. Yes, some of the schools are functioning normally, but without ANY Muslim child. If that is NORMAL, it gives an indication of what normalcy is being strived for by this government.

FICTION:

*** Shops and Establishments have returned to normalcy.**

FACT:

- Almost all Muslim owned economic activities have been razed or burnt to the ground, be it a Hotel, a Laundry Shop, a *Pangallah*, or even a *larri gallah*. Each of the establishments had been identified well in advance, targeted and brought down with the help of LPG cylinders and petrol and kerosene contributions extorted at sword point from the majority community by the local hooligans.
- The logistics of arranging mobs, firepower, leadership and motivation to conduct this “Operation Blackdeath” can be a case-study in itself. What VHP leaders are commonly stating is that the people who were involved were common Hindus and it was their anger that found its way on the streets. Even for a moment if we try to believe this yarn spun by the Sangh Parivar, it indicates that we are living in prehistoric times where to kill or be killed is more important than other seemingly unimportant things such as Education, Health, Standard of living, Security and aspirations for a better lifestyle. Maybe the Sangh Parivar is right, we Hindus will rather have a temple in Ayodhya than have better education for our children, better medical facilities for our ailing parents, better economic opportunities for all of us. So who was in front of the mobs goading them and pulling Hindu bystanders to stain their souls? Politicians who

stood to gain from this? Hooligans who stood to gain from the arson? Religious fanatics whose economic needs had been taken care of? Well, the answer is there if we care to see it

- Even today police officers are mute witness to the attacks on convoys of Muslims wanting to get back to a semblance of normalcy.
 - Some Facts
 - Loss to Hotel Industry – Rs 200 crore (700 Hotels looted and set ablaze) *Source: Ahmedabad Hotel Owners Association*
 - More than 900 Dawoodi Bohra shops and houses “looted at leisure” in an organized manner. *Source: Ahd Newsline March 12, Page 1*
 - Diamond Sector suffered a production loss of Rs 200 crore due to the riots.
 - Textile and Garment Industry – Rs 300 crore across 18 textile mills and 200 process houses and power loom units.
 - Chemexcil – Rs 50 crore per day across Pharma, Chemicals and Cosmetics Units in Ahmedabad alone
- (Source TOI, March 10 Page 7)

FICTION:

*** To curb the violence police has fired over 5,000 rounds to dispel the crowds and protected the life and property of the people.**

FACT:

- The statement made above has no meaning, unless the Government of Gujarat had a target of killing ALL the Muslims living in the state. Yes, lives were saved but not because of the intervention of the State machinery. It was due to the efforts of some of the “HUMAN BEINGS” who felt that their brothers and sisters belonging to another religion should be saved from the fiendish state-sponsored mobs.
- It is also not clear who have been the targets of these 5,000 rounds. If first hand accounts of bleeding survivors in the form of women and children is to be believed, it was the local constabulary that dipped their hands in the flowing blood and soaked themselves in anti-Muslim hate waves being transmitted from the top. It would be a worthwhile exercise to find out how many people who were in the mobs died of bullet wounds?
- Some Facts
 - 57% (23 out of 40) of the people killed in Police Firing in Ahmedabad were from the minority community.
 - 41 Hindus killed in about 5,500 rounds of firing. 1% accuracy is a very discouraging statistic if this happened with a REAL enemy challenging the police forces.

FICTION:

*** In a massive preventive action, police has arrested over 5,000 people.**

FACT:

- Why are police officers being transferred from police stations where these arrests have taken place? Why are police officers with records of “Criminal Negligence” handed over charge – to ensure that no more “correct” arrests are made? It is so easy to hide behind statistics but the truth still patrols the streets, scaring the common Muslims, forcing them back behind the *Lakshman rekha* of the relief camp. Pray, what is being done about that?
- Another fact that is slowly emerging is the arrest of Muslim youth from the age group of 18 to 30 sometimes right from the hospital bed, under POTO. Has there been any attempt to disclose to the public the “precautionary arrests” being made?

FICTION:

*** The Government has made repeated appeals for peace and communal harmony through print and electronic media.**

FACT:

It is important to ask “WHEN” these appeals were made. After the destruction was complete, as much as could have been done it 72 hours?

- Full page ads in local Gujarati dailies condemning the carnage and banning the Bandh called by a private organization like VHP, could have helped save the situation. Instead, what was seen on the streets were pamphlets circulated by VHP calling for an economic ban of the shops and products of the Muslim community. Was there any statement made by the Government condemning such inflammatory publications?

FICTION:

*** The government has announced compensation for those bereaved in the Godhra incident. Financial assistance is being given to the affected persons for death and injury.**

FACT:

- There has been a nation-wide outburst against the discrimination in compensation so it will not be repeated here. But the intentions of the Gujarat Government is suspect here – this compensation and financial assistance charade may just be another opportunity for an “Assessment --- Compensation” nexus. One wonders whether a physically battered Muslim will want to challenge a ridiculously low assessment of the state machinery and would want to engage with the people who he saw attacking him a fortnight ago?

FICTION:

*** The relief camps have been opened and all necessary facilities have been extended to them by the local administration.**

- One look at the food material being supplied to the relief camps and it makes clear the intentions of the suppliers. Dal infested with insects and wheat flour that is inedible clearly indicates the alacrity of the Government machinery to feed the refugees with food that is unsuitable for human consumption.
- If all necessary facilities include sanitation facilities one wonders why there are repeated outbreaks of gastro-enteritis and why there is only 1 toilet per 500 persons!

This response does not even attempt to touch at the heinousness of the attacks and the attempt by the VHP to make statements such as, “It had to be done” and their attempt to state that the planning for the attacks was done on the morning of the bandh (Feb 28th) and not months before as other reports suggest.

The people in the camps are getting frustrated and want also to resume to their lives as best as might be possible in the circumstances. But they are in the dark as to whether it is safe to go back to the areas where only ash remains as a mute testimony of the death of innocents. Unfortunately, they are being chased away like cattle if and when they are mustering the courage to venture close to their erstwhile homes.

The answer to this does not lie with the Government. It lies with you and me. It is up to us to understand and realize the extent to which Power can corrupt and come face to face with the truth that today the Law Makers broke the law to “PUNISH” a community for crimes committed 600 years ago. But tomorrow it might “PUNISH” you if you are caught asking them why the money trusted to them is not being spent on burning issues such as Education, Health, Sanitation, Water, Livelihood, Safety, Environment. Because at the basic level the people in power “DO NOT CARE” for the common man. Today the segmentation variable is religion but tomorrow it can be just about anything.

PS: Part of the Fascist Ideology is, “Tell a lie a hundred times and it becomes the truth.” (Joseph Goebbels, 1939 – The Mastermind of the Third Reich). Sadly, every sentence written by the Government reeks of falsehood and untruth.

(Courtesy: www.sabrang.com)