

COMMENT

State Terrorism

THE DISCLOSURE OF THE NEWS of the murder of three persons in cold blood by the Gujarat police and the arrest of three IPS officers have hit the headlines because the Narendra Modi Government of Gujarat has been forced to admit its guilt. Three persons killed were Sohrabuddin, his wife Kausar and one Tulsiram Prajapati. The murder of Kausar and Prajapati has recently been admitted, and it has also transpired that they were killed in order to destroy evidence. The former was killed in a fake encounter. One IPS officer, DG Banjara has become famous as a notorious murderer and it is likely that the case of the murder of a college girl in 2004 is going to be opened against him. It goes about saying that in the eyes of all those who have some sense of civilized behaviour, the culprits deserve exemplary punishment.

Now some memories may be recalled to show how guilty policemen who do care the least for human lives get away with impunity. On 19 May 1993, a Sikh couple was murdered in cold blood by a team of Punjab police in the Tiljala area of Kolkata. The Punjab Police did not have any right even to arrest, let alone kill anybody on the soil of West Bengal. Besides, the lady had no complaints against her in the records of the Punjab Police. The Punjab Government hypocritically pleaded innocence of the matter. But the filing of a case at the Supreme Court forced a CBI enquiry and the Alipore Sessions Court declared five persons guilty. The guilty persons were on interim bail, pending the decision of the High Court regarding an appeal made by them. But the Punjab Government made a request to the West Bengal Government suggesting that these policemen had committed these cold-blooded murders in the 'interests of the country.' The Central Government, then headed by the BJP also made a request for amnesty. The West Bengal Government behaved in an obliging manner for its own murky reasons.

It goes without saying that the feeling of mutual hatred among religious communities is strong in Gujarat, Narendra Modi will attempt to further communal polarization in response to the furore raised over the issue. Again, he is pursuing his own brand of 'industrialization', which, has a remarkable similarity with that paraded by Marxist Buddhadeb Bhattacharya of West Bengal. What is agonizing is the spread of state terrorism, and when the state terrorism is defended in this fashion, and police officers are allowed to get away with murder, what should the civil society do? Should it only raise the voices of protest? In a situation where the state does not care much for the voice of the civil society and a considerable section of the *bhadralok*, duped by the state propaganda, stands in support of such killings under various pretexts, the options before the civil society get narrower and narrower.