

Dance Of Terror

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Followed by the kill-ing of Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati and 4 of his disciples, Sangha Parivar (RSS, VHP, Bajrang Dal, BJP, ABVP) began their dance of terror throughout Orissa. A PTI report from Bhubaneswar dated 25th August'08 just narrates the gravity of the problem :

“Two persons, including a woman, were burnt to death, a pastor critically injured and at least a dozen churches were torched during a 12-hour bandh called today (August 25) in Orissa by the saffron brigade in protest against the killing of VHP leader Laxmanananda Saraswati. The woman was burnt to death when unidentified persons torched an orphanage run by a Christian organisation at Phutpali in Bargarh district, official sources said.

Twenty children, who were at the orphanage, managed to escape but a pastor suffered serious burn injuries in the attack, the sources said.

Another person, identified as Rasananda Pradhan, was burnt to death when his house was set ablaze at Rupa village in Kandhamal district where the VHP leader was gunned down along with four others on Saturday night.

Churches were attacked in Khurda, Bargarh, Sundergarh, Sambalpur, Koraput, Boudh, Mayurbhanj, Jagatsinghpur and Kandhamal districts as also in the state capital, police sources said, adding 40 houses were set ablaze in Phulbani town.

As the body of Saraswati reached Chakapada in Kandhamal district for the last rites, nine shops and two vehicles were torched at Raikia while two jeeps were burnt by miscreants at Udaygiri.

Home Secretary Tarunkanti Mishra told reporters that he had information about the two casualties...”

It is a matter of regret and condemnation that Swami Laxmana-nanda Saraswati and 4 of his disciples were killed on 23rd night while celebrating Janmastami festival at his Ashram at Jalespata in Tumudi-bandha block of Kandhamal District. It still remains inconclusive on 'Who killed' and 'why did they do so'. While the Police DG Mr Gopal Nanda, Govt. of Orissa prefers to hold the Maoists as responsible for the killings, the Sangha Parivar prefer to hold the Christians for it. At the same time some other people doubt the fascist Sangha Parivar designing a plot to outweigh BJD and others in the coming election. Let it be left to the government-investigating machinery to enquire to establish the truth.

But, the role played by the police and administration before, during and after the killings is a matter of great concern for the people who believe in 'Democracy' and 'Peace' – particularly for the happenings on 24th and 25th August.

Few questions prick the conscience of common people about the response/attitude of the BJP-BJD led government in dealing with the communal terrorists.

Swami Laxmanananda Saraswati was provided with special security by the Home Department. Again he had filed an FIR before 48 hours of the attack and sought adequate security arrangements viewing a letter from an unknown person threatening to his life. How could the miscreants entered into his Ashram and killed five persons including the Swami without harming the 4

PSOs ? And also how come Madhab baba alias Madhu baba could survive just by climbing a tree?

There are many instances when the Police and Administration had not permitted funeral processions viewing untoward happenings i.e. Kalinga Nagar. How could the already agitated and armed Sangha Parivar people be allowed to take the procession from Jalespata to Chakapada (about 130 km) passing through communally sensitive places like Tumudibandh, Baliguda, Nuagan etc?

On the 23rd August night the RSS, VHP supported by BJP had announced that there would be statewide bandh on 25th August. The government was expected to take all the measures to prevent communal violence during the bandh as because everybody knows about the culture/behaviour of Sangha Parivar in Gujarat in February 2002 and Kandhamal bandh on Dec 25th 2007. How could the hooligans under the direct command of BJP and RSS leaders do whatever/however they felt to do? Without any slightest resistance they could burnt down shops, houses of Christians, ransacked and looted several Churches, burnt down some NGO offices, lynched a girl student of a *Kanyashram* and a Father at Baragarh, killed 3 persons in Kandhamal and everything was happening in the presence of Police forces. Why could not the police stop them or take any action? Why did not the government ask/mobilize adequate number of police forces? Are not these intentional?

Immediately after the murder of the Ashramites, the Sangha Parivar announced the bandh call for 25th. The just before a day of Bandh the government ordered the suspension of the Kandhamal Police Superintendent Mr Nikhil Kumar Kanodia along with the local Police Inspector without posting any substitute to him and that too knowing well what would happen on the next day. The same SP and his Team prevented a communal riot on July 22, 2008 following the tension centring round the RSS's opposition to beef eating by scheduled castes and tribes of Malipada village and RSS/VHP leaders had demanded his transfer. To mention here, the same BJP-BJD government did not act with the same vein in case of Kalinga Nagar massacre committed by the Police firing under direct instruction of the District Collector and SP. What forced the 'bureaucrat loving' Navin Patnaik Government to be so rude to the officer?

The well-known professional communal riot-monger Mr Pravin Togadia, who had been disallowed by different state governments to enter into their states for his roles during Gujarat riot 2002, was allowed by the Orissa Government during a very sensitive period to land on 25th and escorted to travel a 300 km long distance on road from Bhubaneswar to Jalespata and lead the procession, while several passengers were suffering a lot being struck in the airport because of the bandh. What makes the government to behave in such an insensitive manner? Or was the Govt. confident enough to tackle the situation even if such people lead the procession of already agitated mob?

Under the leadership of Mr Pravin Togadia and in the presence of BJP Ministers and leaders accompanying the funeral procession, the attacks on minority community people was going on. Has the administration filed any FIR against such leaders and their followers?

It looked as if there was no administration, no law, no government on 25th August. The rioters were given a freehand to do/undo whatever they like—it reminded of the Gujarat pogrom. Fortunately, the common people are not

communally divided unlike Gujarat and except the Sangha Parivar leaders, their Ministers, their employees and hired hooligans; nobody else participated in the 25th's devils' dances. □□□