

NOTE

## **POLICE AND PEOPLE**

**Asghar Ali Engineer writes:**

The police as such is unfriendly, even antagonistic to people and much more so when it comes to minorities, dalits and downtrodden. The Police Act was drafted by Britishers and its main purpose at the time was to suppress people and to enforce British rule. Thus the Police Act was meant to suppress people and make them obedient to the British rulers. It was understandable that any foreign rulers would do that.

However, what is most surprising is that even sixty years after independence from British rule India's brown Sahibs have not made any change in the Police Act. Not only that the rulers are not even prepared to implement recommendations of 5th Police Commission for some reforms and that too despite the Supreme Court directive to do so. The reason is obvious. The ruling parties want to use police for their political end. They do not want police to be people friendly. If police becomes people friendly politicians cannot use them for their personal end.

If police is anti-people in general, it is much more so anti-minorities, particularly anti-Muslim and anti-Christian in recent years. In riot after riot police behaves partially and does not hesitate to kill Muslims in firing. Latest example is of Hyderabad Mecca Masjid bomb explosion. The police fired ruthlessly on the protesting mob and killed six persons. It fired even on injured persons who were being taken to hospitals after bomb explosion. And what is worse they fired to kill and that is why six lives were lost.

The tragedy of Hashimpura of May 23, 1987 may be an eye-opener Hashimpura is near Meerut, which was rocked by communal violence in May 1987. The police as usual thought that Muslims are mainly responsible for communal disturbances in Meerut and decided to teach Muslims a lesson. The PAC (Police Armed Constabulary) went to Hashimpura and pulled out some 50 persons mostly young and some elderly. Most of them were poor. In riots and police-firing generally the poor of both communities die.

They were loaded on trucks, taken outside city premises and shot dead and then their bodies were thrown into a nearby canal. Some two or three persons somehow survived, (the police had taken them to be dead), hid themselves in shrubs and escaped and told the whole story. It is twenty years since this terrible tragedy happened no action has been taken against the murderous policemen. They are roaming free. Some activists worked hard to bring these policemen to justice but nothing happened.

Mulayam Singh Yadav who always claimed that he is sympathetic to Muslims and had an eye on their votes, did not do anything at all. Even today matter is pending and relatives of those killed are running from pillar to post for justice. The reason is obvious: those killed were poor and also Muslims. Thus they were doubly disadvantaged. Recently on 23rd May on completion of twenty years of the massacre in Hashimpura, mothers, sisters and fathers of those killed demonstrated in Delhi holding photographs of their loved ones. One does not know whether the authorities took any notice of this grim tragedy or not.

The Gujarat police is of course notorious in this matter and they seem to get away with anything under the patronage of Narendra Modi. Sohrabuddin and his wife and

another witness of the crime of fake encounter Koli were eliminated. All papers were faked under instructions allegedly from Chief Minister's Office of which *Tehelka* in its issue of 19th May, 2007 has given gory details. DIG police Vanjara called these fake encounters as 'Desh Bhakti'. Apart from Sohrabuddin and his wife Kausarbi, another Muslim youth Samir Khan was also eliminated in 2003. Ishrat Jahan and her colleague were also eliminated describing them as members of Lashkar-i-Tayyiba. □□□