

In the late 1990s, many Sikhs often demanded a complete and independent investigation into the causes of what government of India loves to call terrorism in Punjab. At one stage, Prakash Singh Badal not only promised a probe by a judicial commission to look into the causes of the militancy in Punjab but also ensured that the Akali Dal included it in the Manifesto. Badal never had the intention to keep his word, and did not. Men like Ram Narayan Kumar pushed for a Commission along the lines of Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa, and actually became the prime forces behind a People's Commission headed by Justice Kuldip Singh who had just retired from India's Supreme Court. That panel soon had to stop working as pressure increased and public hearings became impossible. But imagine if Badal had indeed set up a Commission! It would have today come close to unsettling the record number of extensions that the Liberhan panel clocked, and Sukhbir Singh Badal would have found it so convenient to say that the Sirsa fraudster case is also being handed over to the same Commission to avoid duplication of effort.

Gian Inder Singh

It is surprising to see how fast the issue of M S Liberhan Commission's report has fallen off the front page of the newspapers and out of the public domain. With this, the actual and not-so-secret purpose of the Commission has been achieved. And once again the minorities have learnt a tough lesson. As long as brahmanical power levers will call the shots, the minorities will be short changed, irrespective of the heinousness of the crime.

Operation Bluestar, massacre of the Sikhs in Delhi, Babri mosque demolition, Hazratbal, Gujarat riots, Kandhmal violence, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Nandigram, Singur, violence against tribals in Lalgarh and elsewhere, and continuous repression of the Dalits, all show a convergence of interests among the rulers.

The Liberhan panel was no exception. It is the shamelessness of it that makes it worth a comment. Otherwise, with 17 years of delay, it was in any case impossible to feel elated by the work of the Commission. That the Commission has even had a thought coming that the traumatic events, the deliberate vandalism wrought upon a centuries-old monument like the Babri Masjid can pass by without it recommending exemplary punishment for all those involved in the frenzied attack and in the conspiracy that preceded it is a measure of the way Indian nation state treats its own people.

The exertions of the rather extraordinarily languorous Commission have not been in vain. It was meant to simply allow the time to pass, and it has succeeded in delivering. Its brief was to deliver failure, and it has fulfilled the mission. Don't worry, judge. You can even claim Godspeed since the criminal trial of policemen indicted for the 1987 massacre of innocent Muslims in Malliana and Hashimpura is still on 22 years later!

And the Central Government is still to even think of setting up a Commission to probe who and which factors were responsible for undertaking a foolishness called Operation Bluestar on a day when thousands of innocents were guaranteed to die? And the guilty of 1984 anti-Sikh pogroms roam free.

The Liberhan Commission, and the fate of the earlier Commissions like the 1984 pogrom commissions as well as the Srikrishna Commission of Inquiry into the Bombay riots of 1992-93, has proved that the pervasive cynicism about the capacity of India's institutional system to deliver justice is well placed.

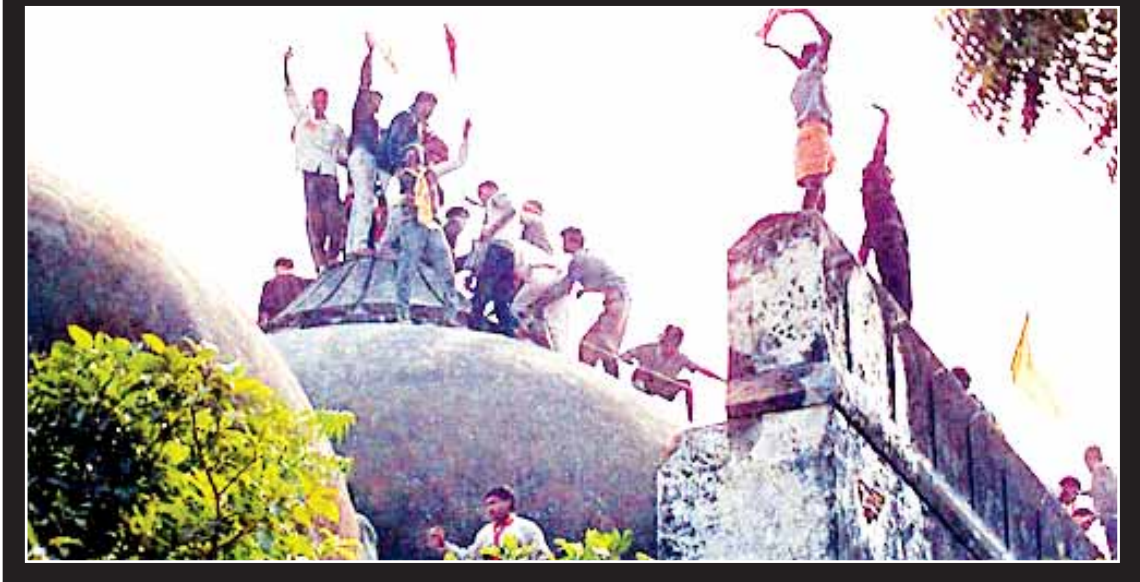
Delhi 1984, Ayodhya 1992 and Gujarat 2002 are blots of shame on the face of India. Wonder is India's immense capacity to strut the world stage with such shame writ large.



Commissions & Closure

Following a CBI investigation, a trial court in Rae Bareilly is still hearing cases pertaining to the demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. In parallel, the Allahabad High Court is hearing a case related to ownership of the contentious 2.77 acres in the temple town. How then can any Commission's report bring about a 'closure', as understood by human rights domain? At a time when countries like South Africa have proven the potential of commissions with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, efforts like MS Liberhan's are merely embarrassments to civilized society.

Liberhan's Languorous Ways (Strutting With Shame Writ Large)



Sundar Singh Sabrang

Do you know what kind of work goes on in Commissions of Inquiry appointed by the Government of India?

Hilarious, and useless. If only the tasks set before these Commissions was not so grave, you would even have a hearty laugh at the kind of stuff these guys do with your money. Forget legally tenable evidence; they don't even bother whether a ten-year-old will not consider them senile!

Justice M.C. Jain Commission was set up to find the killers of Rajiv Gandhi. Here is an excerpt from its report:

"Rajiv Gandhi was facing extremely grave threats from Sri Lanka Tamil militants and their Indian sympathizers, fanatic Sinhala elements of Sri Lanka, Sikh terrorists operating from Punjab as well as foreign countries, Kashmiri militant groups operating from India as well as foreign countries, Afghan mujahideen, Islamic fundamentalists from Pakistan, certain groups within the government of Pakistan, some groups connected with the royal family of Nepal, terrorist elements operating from North-eastern India, notably Ulfa, and aggrieved individual elements. There were also hints of certain outside powers involving themselves with some of these hostile forces...Rajiv Gandhi was very much interested in seeing that all non-aligned countries remained together and that is why superpower or powers were interested in seeing that such a force should not be allowed to continue...Finally, (there was) a prophetic threat perception (as) Yasser Arafat had received intelligence reports from his sources in Israel and his European sources one month before the assassination that hostile powers from outside India may also attempt the assassination of Shri Rajiv Gandhi."

Commissioning Nonsense



Justice Mukherjee needed to frame and hang this rather than waste his time, and ours.

What the hell is this? Justice Jain only seemed to have missed adding that Rajiv Gandhi also faced a threat during road shows from a stray donkey who could kick him in the And he spent seven years studying all this.

The Jain Commission was awash with public money to tell us all this!

He seemed to have serious competition in crackpot work. Ashok Malik has underlined the kind of stuff that Justice Manoj Mukherjee Commission, set up in 1999 to ascertain the fate of Netaji Subhas Bose, was peddling. Among the bizarre concoctions it said in its report that it heard was from the author of a Bengali book on the subject who said Bose had actually been killed on August 15, 1945, in a secret chamber in Delhi's Red Fort. Clearly, the Commission was not satisfied with such nut cases, and heard, actually heard, and even recorded, a theory that will send you convulsing with laughter. Here is an excerpt from its report: "One of the persons who responded to the notification issued by the Commission was Shri

Jagannath Prosad Gupta, a resident of village Nagda in the district of Sheopurkalan (Madhya Pradesh). He asserted that during the days of struggle for freedom of India a plane crash-landed in the neighbouring village of Pandola and the three persons who survived the crash were a sadhu, Colonel Habibur Rahman and Hitler. The sadhu was none other than Netaji." Thank you very much. But these men of judiciary were doing all this with public money! Hitler and Subhash Bose jointly surviving an air crash in rural Madhya Pradesh! And a judge-headed Commission actually calling the man to hear him out!! And then taking down the minutes and narrating the entire tale in its final report!!! Nonsense in India does not come cheap, but government does not pay for it. I can only recall the ever sparkling Om Prakash Aditya who recently died in a road accident: Jidhar Dekhta Hun, Gadhe Hee Gadhe Hain!

(Sunder Singh Sabrang is a man of many colors, and will be frequently splashing some on the pages of WSN.

His pen is light, but penetrates deep. For feedback: worldsikhnews@gmail.com)

