

From New Delhi by Susan Maitra

Sikh terrorism hits London

And once again, the British authorities are doing everything in their power to do nothing.

The terror rampage which killed 17 people this January in Punjab, is now threatening the 300,000-person community of Sikh immigrants in London. Three moderate Sikh leaders have been shot in London in the past three months, with one killed and two grievously injured.

On Jan. 27, the "Sikh Liberation Front" sent a letter to the London *Daily Mail* claiming credit for the murder of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and releasing a hit list, leading with "a senior diplomat in the Indian High Commission in London, a member of the Indian Cabinet, President Zail Singh, and 35 spindly legged Hindu politicians. After that, a nice sophisticated bomb will finish Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister." The group also threatened the Taj Mahal, the Tarapur nuclear plant, and the Bhakra Nangal Dam.

At stake in London is the power base of "Khalistan President" Jagjit Singh Chauhan, the man who, under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's protection, took political credit for the murder of Mrs. Gandhi.

Also at stake is the control of the Sikh temples in London. Some 30 have already been taken over by extremists of the Sikh Liberation Army, the Dal Khalsa, Babar Khalsa, and Khalistan Liberation Army. In November, Soham Singh Lidder, 47, a leader of the Indian Overseas Congress, was shot in the face after he opposed the donation of temple collections to extremists. As much as £100,000 per week is being sent to Punjab from the temples.

Control over one of the biggest temples, in Southall, is being contested. Extremists forced moderates out two years ago. Moderates are complaining that the police are reluctant to take action, ostensibly because they cannot interfere in "religious disputes." But the police also refused to interfere when a "death list" was pinned to the notice board of the Southall temple after the Gandhi murder.

London is a financial headquarters of the world dope trade, and the extremists are almost certainly setting up drug-trading centers at the temples they take over. When U.S. police raided a Sikh temple in Woodside, Queens in 1985, they found heroin and other drugs.

British authorities, from Mrs. Thatcher on down, have done more than "not interfere"—they have protected the terrorists. On Dec. 6, the British Home Office granted citizenship to Gurmej Singh Gill, who calls himself the "prime minister of Khalistan," on the grounds that he had been resident in Britain since 1973. A Home Office spokesman declared on Dec. 9, "Any allegations of illegal acts are not a matter for us, but for other agencies—the police or the courts." In Delhi, Rajiv Gandhi called this "a step backwards."

The Indian government renewed pressure on the British after the Jan. 23 murder of Tarsen Singh Toor. The death is being investigated by C13, Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist branch, but, according to the *Hindustan Times* on Jan. 29, Detective Superintendent

Guy Mills stated: "It might have been dope, smuggling, or a robbery that went wrong. We are keeping an open mind."

This provoked protests to the point that Indian High Commissioner P. C. Alexander met with British Home Secretary Douglas Hurd and junior foreign office minister Baroness Young, after which Hurd agreed that this was a "political murder." Toor, 54, had received a death threat the night before the assassination. He was general secretary of the Overseas Indian Congress, a long-standing friend of the Gandhi family, general secretary of the Southall Indian Workers' Association, and an outspoken critic of Khalistan extremists. Mr. Gandhi paid tribute to Mr. Toor.

Just 48 hours after the murder, the London *Daily Mail* reported (Jan. 28) that "an assassin hired by Sikh extremists" came to another house with a shotgun, looking for Toor's nephew, but was driven off. A week earlier, Sanghtar Singh Sadhu, 50, a leader of the moderate Akali Dal, lost one eye in a shooting in Cranford, close to Southall.

Jagjit Singh Chauhan himself has denied any involvement in the Toor murder. Whatever his role, the language of the Sikh Liberation Front's hit list is at variance with the usual statements of the Khalistan groups he leads, according to one source.

The British government's sheltering of the extremists was featured in a United News of India wire, datelined London, and published Jan. 31 in the *Hindustan Times*, the *Patriot*, and *Jan Satta*, under the headline "British Hand Alleged in Indira Slaying." The article presents the findings of *EIR's* book *Derivative Assassination—Who Killed Indira Gandhi?*

Mary McCourt contributed this column from London.