Operation Bluestar

Massacre of 1978

- Nirankari Cult Leader Gurbachan was provided with a DIPLOMATIC PASSPORT, to spread his anti-sikh message. Gurbachan openly declared that he would put his foot on the Guru Granth Sahib, claimed that the 11th Guru was just a bundle of papers and that he was the real Guru.

- Vaisakhi 1978, Nirankaris held a procession shouting filthy slogans against the Satguru and shouting insults at the Sikh religion.

- About 125 GurSikhs decided to hold a peaceful protest against the procession of Nirankaris.

- The GurSikhs asked the Police to try and stop the Nirankaris. In Return - Nirankaris along with police armed with Machine Guns, Spears, hand-made Bombs, Axes & Acid bottles attacked the unarmed GurSikhs. 13 GurSikhs were killed.

- SGPC issued a resolution banning Nirankaris and urging every Sikh to stop them.

- Nirankari Leader, Gurbachan escaped to UK, then Canada. Later he was arrested and given a trial and then acquitted even after 10 witnesses went against him. He was Gunned down on April 24, 1980.

India Backdrop

- From 1977 to 1983, Bhindrenwale led his agitation against Arya Samajis and other fanatic Hindu organizations who were working against Sikhs and trying to blend Sikhism within Hinduism.

- Many of Bhindrenwale’s followers were young rural Sikhs, who had been disappointed with state and central government due to unemployment, poverty and other problems.

- With a view to win over Hindu majority of North India and Punjab, Indira Gandhi mischievously exploited the anti-Nirankari movement in Punjab to create communal antagonism between Sikhs and Hindus in 1980.

- State terrorism against devout Amritdhari Sikhs was started in Punjab through her stooge Chief Minister of Punjab, Darbara Singh, during 1982.

- As a reaction to the Police terrorism on Sikhs, the devout Sikhs started taking revenge on Police and officials who ordered persecution of Sikhs in 1982-83.

- In October 1983, the Government imposed President's Rule Punjab.

- From October 1983 to June 1984, is a story of political manipulations and mischievous designs on the part of Indira Gandhi to destroy the Sikh faith and exterminate the Sikh people with a view to win over Hindu votes in India.

Operation Blue Star

"I don't give a damn if the Golden Temple and whole of Amritsar are destroyed, I want Bhindranwale dead." - Indira Gandhi, Indian PM, communicating with Gen. Vaidya during "Operation Blue Star".

- May 25th 1984 - 100,000 troops surrounded several Gurdwaras in Punjab

- June 1st 1984 - 1000s of pilgrims gathered to celebrate the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev ji.
  - Police Fires on the Langar hall leaving 11 dead and 25 injured.

- June 3, 1984, the Martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev: that was the day the Army chose to surround Guru Arjun's temple. The onslaught started two days later on the night of June 5 around 7 p.m. The total number of people killed during Operation Blue Star at Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, Punjab and other Gurdwaras as well as the marching villagers and Army deserters is more than 12,000 in numbers.
• June 3rd 1984 - Communications cut off from Punjab. Phone lines are cut throughout Punjab isolating it from the world. Journalists are expelled. Road blocks were placed. 10,000 people were trapped in Golden Temple.

• June 4th 1984 - Firefight lasts 5 hrs. 100 people die on both sides.

• June 5th 1984 - Invasion begins. Troops enter and are turned back due to gunfire. Commandoes enter and forced to retreat.

• June 6th 1984 - 13 Tanks enter the complex and attack Akal Takhat with highly explosive squash head shells. 80 shells were fired at Akal Takhat. 2500 copies of Guru Granth Sahib jee were set on fire in the Golden Temple library by the Indian army.

"We have broken the back of the Sikhs and we will get them elsewhere." - M. M. K. Wali, Indian Foreign Secretary, June 7, 1984, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Radio 740, As It Happens).

Witnesses

"On the way back to the hotel (afternoon of June 6th) I witnessed a scene at the Kotwali which is blood curdling. This is where some soldiers were kicking some of the 11 suspected terrorists as they knelt on their bare knees and crawled on the hot road surface." - (Subhash Kirpekar, Journalist)

“The people were taken out of their houses. Men’s hands were tied with their turbans. Women’s necks were sought to be asphyxiated with their plaits. Then they were shot in the chests. No quarter was shown to women, aged or children; in the eyes of the troops every Sikh was a terrorist. Those who survived died of thirst. Their houses were ransacked, and then put on fire. The area surrounding Darbar Sahib was full of debris. What happened is beyond description of sight, hearing or words.” - (Giani Chet Singh)

"I saw about 35 or 36 Sikhs lined up with their hands raised above their heads. And the major was about to order them to be shot. When I asked him for medical help, he got into a rage, tore my turban off my head, and ordered his men to shoot me. I turned back and fled, jumping over the bodies of the dead and injured, and saving my life crawling along the walls. - (Bhan Singh)

"Early on the sixth morning the army came into the Guru Ram Das Serai and ordered all of those in the rooms to come out. We were taken into the courtyard. The men were separated from the women. We were also divided into old and young women and I was separated from the children, but I managed to get back to the old women. When we were sitting there the army released 150 people from the basement. They were asked why they had not come out earlier. They said the door had been locked from the outside. They were asked to hold up their hands and then they were shot after 15 minutes. Other young men were told to untie their turbans. They were used to tie their hands behind their backs. The army hit them on the head with the butts of their rifles." - (Ranbir Kaur, School Teacher)

"The young men and some other pilgrims were staying in Room Number 61. The army searched all the rooms of the Serai. Nothing objectionable was found from their room. Nor did the army find anything objectionable on their persons. The army locked up 60 pilgrims in that room and shut not only the door but the window also. Electric supply was disconnected. The night between June 5th and June 6th was extremely hot. The locked-in young men felt very thirsty after some time, and loudly knocked on the door from inside to ask the army men on duty for water. They got abuses in return, but no water. The door was not opened. Feeling suffocated and extremely thirsty, the men inside began to faint and otherwise suffer untold misery. The door of the room was opened at 8 am on June 6th. By this time 55 out of the 60 had died. The remaining 5 were also semi-dead." - (Sujjan Singh Margindpuri)

Brahm Chellany, the only foreign correspondent who managed to remain in Amritsar after the government had ordered them out, reported the statements of doctors and police officials that many of the Sikhs killed in the attack had been shot at point-blank range with their hands behind their backs, Execution Style. Some of these bodies with hands tied behind the back were photographed.

This is also borne out by the testimonies of survivors. While the Darbar Sahib was under attack, other Army units were battling their way into 74 other Gurdwaras in Punjab.
"The Army which had suffered a heavy toll in three days of battle went berserk and killed every Sikh who could be found inside the temple complex. They were hauled out of the rooms, brought to corridors on the circumference of the temple and with their hands tied behind their back, were shot in cold blood. Among the victims were many old men women and children." - The Sikh Struggle by Ramnarain Kumar & Georg Sieberer

"No prayers stir the silence under golden dome of the Golden Temple. There are no priests left to intone them. They are all dead or missing. The musical instruments which at all times drummed out the tones and rhythms of worship are quiet for the first time in centuries. There are no visitors, only soldiers. The Sikhs Holy Bible is closed, covered by a blue cloth. There is no one to read its scriptures. It is like the Vatican without a Pope. At the other end of the causeway that links the Temple to the Akhal Takhat, the second most sacred shrine in Sikhdom, the quiet is more permanent." Ross Benson - Daily Express - June 19 1984

"... a team of doctors... examined 400 corpses, including 100 women and 15 to 20 children, all under five and including a two-month-old baby." - Associated Press, 13th June 1984

"On Saturday, medical workers in Amritsar said soldiers had threatened to shoot them if they gave food or water to Sikh pilgrims wounded in the attack and lying in the hospital." - Christian Science Monitor, 8/6/84

"Karnail Kaur, a young mother of three children... said, 'When people begged for water some jawans [soldiers] told them to drink the mixture of blood and urine on the ground." Mark Tully – Amritsar: Mrs. Gandhi’s Last Battle, 1985

"For all I know, he [Bhindranwale] is completely innocent and is genuinely and exclusively dedicated to the teaching of the Guru." Arjun Shoune, Indian Express, 13th May 1982

‘The army went into Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) not to eliminate a political figure or a political movement but to suppress the culture of a people, to attack their heart, to strike a blow at their spirit and self-confidence.’ - JOYCE J.M. PETTIGREW

“In the Akal Takhat built by Guru Hargobind and the supreme seat of the Sikhs, the Stench of death still lingered. It seemed inconceivable that this was the holiest shrine of a major religion – the equivalent to the Sikhs of the Vatican and Canterbury Cathedral.” David Graves - The Telegraph

“Eye-witness accounts to the Amritsar massacre talk of women and children being shot in cold blood, and the Sikh prisoners being tied with their own turbans and then shot in the head.” The Guardian 18/06/1984

Ram Narayan Kumar (Hindu Human Rights Activist): “The Operation Bluestar was not only envisioned and rehearsed in advance, meticulously and in total secrecy, it also aimed at obtaining maximum number of Sikh victims, largely devout pilgrims unconnected with the political agitation. The facts should speak for themselves.” Ram Narayan Kumar, The Sikh Struggle and The Sikh Unrest & The Indian State

SK Sinha (Retired Indian Army General): “The Army Action was not the ‘last resort’ as Prime Minister Indira Gandhi would have us to believe... It had been in her mind for more than 18 months... Shortly after the Akali agitation of 1982, the Army began rehearsals of a commando raid near Chakrata Cantonment in the Doon Valley, where a complete replica of the Golden Temple complex had been built... Another training involving Aviation Research Centre Commandos was given in the Sarsawa area and Yamuna bed in helicopters converted into gunships.” Lt. Gen. SK Sinha, Spokesman, 16th July 1984

C.K.C. Reddy (Hindu writer): “Operation Bluestar will down in history as one of the biggest massacre of unarmed civilians by the organized military force of a nation... the word unarmed is used deliberately as the disparity in arms on the two sides was so great that those resisting army invasion of the temple could hardly be termed armed.” GKC Reddy, Army Action in Panjab, Prelude and Aftermatch 1984, p. 49

Subramaniam Swami (Hindu Indian Politician): “Government of India master-minded disinformation campaign to create legitimacy for its actions. Its goal was to ‘make out that the Golden Temple was the haven of criminals, a store of armoury and a citadel of the nation’s dismemberment conspiracy.” Imprint, July 1984, “Creating a Martyr”, by Subramaniam Swami, pp. 7-8.

“41,000 police officers have received rewards for killing Sikhs. 200,000 Sikhs have been killed over past 2 decades. Thousands more raped, tortured, and imprisoned.” UN human rights commission