

The following pages present some source material from the Appendix of the book:

*The Politics of Prejudice; The Use and Abuse of Power To Suppress the Ananda Marga Movement*

Vimala Schneider (Ed.)  
Ananda Marga Publications USA, 1983.



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## PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi,  
August 10, 1975

At the time the letter at right was written, the trials for the Mishra and Ray cases had not yet begun.

While Mrs. Gandhi penned her guilty verdict, Ananda Marga monks were being tortured and ordered to "confess".

Dear Mrs. Eklof,

I have received your card and was amazed to read it. You have obviously been misled by the Western Press which has been giving a highly fanciful version of events in India.

Neither Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan nor Mr. Sarkar has any claim to spirituality. During our independence movement, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan was not a follower of Mahatma Gandhi and was bitterly against him. Now he wanted 'total revolution' in the country and was openly inciting industrial workers, police and the army to revolt, besides spreading alarm and despondency amongst the people at a time when we need to be alert against external dangers and economic difficulties which were partly due to the international financial crisis and the steep rise in the price of oil. Mr. Sarkar is on trial for murders and other crimes. Some months ago, his organisation assassinated our Railway Minister and more recently made an attempt on the life of our Chief Justice. They had drawn up a list of other intended victims—people prominent in public life, including myself.

The declaration of Emergency and the people's spontaneous response to it by showing new discipline and efficiency has been widely welcomed in India and by people in other parts of the world who have knowledge of India and our problems, for they realize that I have acted not only to save democracy in India but our very existence as a free nation. If this costs me my life, I shall give it cheerfully.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. C. Eklof,  
Stallg. C.B. VI,  
194 00 Upplands Vasby.  
Sweden.

  
(Indira Gandhi)

This article appeared in the *Economist*, June 16, 1979.

## A Murdered Minister, A Smoking Gun

In January, 1975, five months before Mrs Gandhi declared her "emergency", India's railway minister, Mr L.N. Mishra, was murdered. His death removed from the cabinet — and from the Congress party treasurer'ship — a man who had become a political liability to the prime minister because of a scandal involving bribery and Congress Party funds. Ten months later the Central Bureau of Investigation charged three members of the fanatical Anand Marg sect with the crime. But doubts persisted, surfacing only after the emergency had been ended and Mrs Gandhi voted out.

Now one of India's leading lawyers, Mr V.M. Tarkunde, has produced a report concluding that the evidence against the three Anand Margis, who remain untried, was wholly fabricated and that a valid initial inquiry was "deliberately abandoned, indeed sabotaged, probably at the instance of Mrs Indira Gandhi". His findings, and his call for a new investigation, are on the prime minister's desk.

The case looked distinctly curious from the start. Why were 10 hours spent moving Mr Mishra from the Bihar railway station where he was attacked, through a major city, to an operating table in a small town 100 miles away? He died of cardiac arrest 3½ hours later. In March, 1975, a local man confessed to throwing the fatal grenade. His testimony and that of a confessed fellow-conspirator were corroborated by material evidence and a number of eyewitnesses. The problem was that their accounts pointed to a "Boss Jha" as the organizer of the job. Mr Jha was the man who managed Mr Mishra's roundabout route to the hospital. He was also a close associate of Mrs Gandhi's private secretary, Yashpal Kapoor. Mr Kapoor is now revealed to have been in the area a few days before the murder.

At this point the chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation flew into Bihar, removed the taped confession and terminated this stage of the inquiry. He then met Mrs Gandhi and briefed her. A few days later she complained to the Bihar chief minister about favours allegedly given to the small-town jailer who had obtained the taped confession. Mr Tarkunde comments in his report that it is hardly usual for a prime minister to show such interest in an ordinary jailer.

The story of how the Central Bureau of Investigation procured its replacement suspects is a sordid one, complete with faked identities, coached "confessions", bribery and torture. Two of the three key witnesses have since retracted their evidence, claiming it was extracted under torture. The third is under guard by the bureau and incommunicado. One alleged witness claimed that he was subjected to electric shocks, hung upside down and threatened with being thrown under a train unless he repeated a memorized statement. The chief secretary of Bihar, who interviewed him, told an investigating reporter from the Indian Express that he was 100% sure that the jailed suspects were innocent.

Apart from inconsistent and contradictory evidence, a major flaw in the case against the Anand Margis is the absence of a motive. Mr Mishra was actually trying to persuade Mrs Gandhi to take a softer line towards the sect just before he was killed. There is no such gap in the case against Boss Jha and his friends. That it has not been reopened is the result of persistent blocking tactics by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The friend of Mr Jha who dropped in from Delhi only days before the Mishra killing is a man not unknown to the police. He is the very same Mr Kapoor whose work in Mrs Gandhi's election campaign was cited in her conviction for election fraud in June, 1975.

SECRET/MOST IMMEDIATE

No. PC/2/76-PAT.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Brajbansi Sadan, Budh Marg,  
PATNA-1, January 29, 1976

From -

K.C. Rakesh,  
State Censor, Bihar,  
PATNA.

To

All Editors/News Agencies in Bihar,

Sub: - Pre-Censorship.

Sir,

1. A formal Order imposing MANDATORY pre-censorship with immediate effect on all newspapers and agencies in regard to news, comments (including editorial comments), rumour or other reports relating to Court proceedings against Shri P.R. Sarkar alias Anandamurtiji and all other Anandamargies is enclosed herewith.
2. Items originating from and pre-censored in Delhi are however, exempt from pre-censorship here.

Yours faithfully,

(K.C.Rakesh)

Copy to: -

1. Home Secretary, Government of Bihar, Patna with a request that all District Magistrate/SDM may kindly be informed accordingly.
2. Shri V.N. Ohja, Director of Information & Public Relations, Government of Bihar, Patna.
3. Shri J.N. Tripathi, Dy. Secretary, Home Department (Special Section), Government of Bihar, Patna.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

No. PC/2/76-PAT.

OFFICE OF THE STATE CENSOR, BIHAR.  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

PATNA, January 29, 1976.

Notwithstanding anything contained in Chief Censor, GOI letter No. 1/3/75-CC dated August 19, 1975/addressed to all accredited correspondents representing Indian news organisations and letter No. 2/4(iii)/75-CC dated August 5, 1975, addressed to all Editors in Delhi and other parts of India and any undertakings by foreign correspondents to observe the guidelines in return for exemption of pre-censorship, the attention of accredited correspondents (including the foreign) and editors is drawn to Statutory Order 275(E) dated 26th. June, 1975 and as amended on 12th. August, 1975 made under Rule 48 (1) of the Defence of Internal Security of India Rules and to state that all news, comments (including editorial comments), rumour or other reports relating to the Court proceedings against Sri P.R. Sarkar alias Anandamurti and all other Anandamurties falling within the provisions of the said Statutory order 275 (E) shall be submitted for scrutiny and shall not be published without permission in writing.

(K.C. Rakesh) 29.1.76  
State Censor

To

All accredited correspondents representing Indian News Organisations and Foreign agencies/newspapers/TV/Radio.

*The following article appeared in a Swiss paper, the "Schaffhauser AZ" on Thursday, 15 August, 1974.*

## WHY I FLED MY COUNTRY

*(Editor's foreword:) On the 30th of July, the BT published an account by Guardian correspondent Daryl De-monte on "The Other Face of India", regarding the extent of police-state methods applied by the Indian government to get rid of disagreeable political opponents. A few days later an Indian TV journalist now living in Baden came to the office. He had experienced some of these methods personally and confirmed the truth of our report. At last the journalist, Mr. S.M. Lal, saw no other alternative than to flee his country. For Mr. Lal, a successful cameraman for CBS, this came as a bitter realization: that he must remain in his home at the risk of jail or possibly murder, or take flight. To get re-employed by the TV companies Lal needed a fixed residence, so he has requested political asylum in Switzerland where he has many friends. No action has been taken yet on his petition, but his claims fit the criteria for the politically-persecuted people from the eastern countries; his right to political asylum should be recognized. The BT article of 30th July is illustrated by this personal account of Mr. Lal's:*

The story began when I received a telegram from the CBS corporation (one of the three large American TV-corporations) asking me to report about the self-immolation of a member of Ananda Marga (a religious sect) in Patna. The self-immolation was to be a protest against the Indian government

which has been keeping the leader of the sect in prison for two years. The government is regarding the sect as a politically suspect one. I arrived in Patna too late to film the self-immolation but I took pictures of the burned body.

About two weeks later, on the 23rd of April, the Ananda Marga followers held a demonstration in Delhi and announced to the foreign reporters that another follower will burn himself. But this did not happen that day.

### Poured over with gasoline and ignited

Then the CBS asked me to report on the drought catastrophe in Maharashtra. After I had booked my seats for the night flight to Bombay I went back to my office in Delhi and received a notice from an Ananda Marga follower in which I was asked to come to a certain address in Delhi, and I should bring with me my colleagues from the UPI. At the UPI office I did not find the man-in-charge, so instead a young Indian reporter accompanied me.

At our destination we met an Ananda Marga follower with a photographer from "Studio India". He told us that at 5 pm a self-immolation would take place. When I asked for the place he said that he would guide us. Then the photographer, the Ananda Marga follower, the UPI-reporter, my sound technician Miss Patricia de Laugagnet, a driver, and myself went to "India Gate". From there the Ananda Marga follower directed us to the old fort,

"Purana Kila". Arriving there I had not even time enough to arrange my sound camera.

With a silent movie camera I ran to the place where I saw the monk sitting on the pavement in the act of pouring gasoline over himself. I began filming and the rest I saw only through the viewfinder of my camera. The monk set fire to himself with a match. In death agony he was consumed by the flames, after having first cried out the name of his guru (religious teacher). The whole film was only 44 feet long, i.e., it lasted only 1 minute and 12 seconds.

### Mishaps

When I turned around I saw the Ananda Marga follower, the photographer, and the UPI reporter running back to the waiting car. I followed them and on the way back I took the film out of the camera and gave it to my sound technician (a French woman) with instructions to mail it by Air France and meet me afterwards in our office.

After a lot of delays and breakdowns we finally succeeded in getting the plane to Bombay. During the flight I asked my sound technician if she had mailed the film. She said no, she had given it to the manager of Air France who had taken an early flight to Bombay. Our CBS agent at Bombay would receive the film and then forward it. After arriving at Bombay I was busy for half an hour with the organizing of our report of the drought.

### Arrested

Before we could leave the airport we were arrested by the airport police and we were flown back to Delhi the next day. The film was still in the hands of the Air France manager who—when he read about our arrest in the newspapers—handed over the film to the French Embassy in Delhi, who, in turn, handed it over to the Indian Government. During the next four

days we were in the custody of the police, and we were tortured not physically but mentally. We were not allowed to sleep more than one hour a day. Six people were interrogating me day and night. The temperature in Delhi in April is about 45 degrees Centigrade. During the entire four days of interrogation we were brought to trial, and CBS employed lawyers who succeeded in our transfer from the police arrest to a regular prison. There we stayed for two months, and for the first time in my life I experienced what a hell Indian prisons are for those imprisoned. Some prisoners have been suffering there for two years without charges, much less being brought to trial. Most of them were arrested under the emergency laws of "Defence of India Rule" (DIR)—a law that came into effect in 1971 and has not been abolished since. This law is to give the government extraordinary authority in "times of war".

### Accident

Now the court changed the charges against us from "Accessory of murder" to "Accessory of suicide" and we were released on bail. But our lawyers were alarmed and warned us that this was a political case, and that our lives were in danger.

On the 8th of August I had dinner with my son and Miss de Laugagnet at the press club and we left the place at 11:30 pm. As soon as I came out from the parking lot, about to turn onto the main street, we were hit with full force by an oncoming minibus. By this Miss de Laugagnet was killed, and I was severely wounded and had to spend several months in the hospital. As it turned out the minibus was a Government vehicle. Although the circumstances of the accident were quite clear, it was not the driver of the minibus that was charged; it was me. But the government postponed the proceedings against me again and again. Also, the Indian government did not

renew my press credentials, without which I could not work any longer as a TV cameraman. Moreover, the publicity which my case had made in the Indian press—nourished by “police sources”—prevented my working impartially for CBS or other news agencies.

#### “Investigations”

When the Near-East October War broke out CBS wanted to send me to Egypt. I requested the court to hand out my passport. The court granted this—but far too late. When I received my passport the war was over. After this I requested the court the renewal of my press card. The court accepted my request but did not fix a date for the proceedings. The “investigations” lasted for months and months but without any starting of the hearings before the court, and for more than one year I was not allowed to work. I was living in the constant fear of suffering a violent or mysterious death like my sound technician, or being imprisoned again by the use of the DIR laws. The police did not keep the film as a proof but my camera.

#### “Fear-inspiring example”

In this way the Government does away with unwanted journalists, isolating them and using them as a fear-inspiring example to prevent other journalists from infringing upon, and throwing doubt upon, the official Government doctrine. From a certain time on it became impossible to earn a living through honest work. My case is typical for how the Government may stamp someone as a criminal, for a political purpose, but never bring him to trial. And how, like this, they demonstrate to other journalists how they are able to exert control over journalists’ “opinions” of political events of the country. Gradually India is becoming a police state in order to keep the present government in power. Political prisoners must expect all kinds of tortures.

When I could not get a CBS job contract for Germany in March this year, because the government confiscated my passport—due to this CBS did not renew their contract with me—I understood there were only three possibilities left: either to be “eradicated” in India, or to pass the rest of my life in prison, or to leave my country, perhaps without the prospect of ever returning.

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