

Salt in the wounds

Communalism and the State in Bombay



A REPORT

by

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana

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Front cover: A sign outside a Bombay
cinema tells us who really runs the city

Front cover photo : Santhosh Bane

Back cover photo : Sam Pareth

ABOUT LOKSHAHI HAKK SANGHATANA

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana is a democratic rights organisation which has been working in Maharashtra for the last 12 years. It has investigated and carried out propaganda on issues such as attacks on tribals, deaths in police custody, slum conditions and demolitions, firings on workers and slum dwellers, repression of the textile strike and the policemen's agitation, conditions of contract labour, banning of political organisations, and the causes of recurring drought.

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana has been particularly concerned at the growth of communal forces in the country, which it has attempted to counter with various means — leaflets, posters, stickers, public meetings, and the like. Since December 6, 1992, communalism has taken a qualitative leap countrywide, and even more than before requires consistent countering by democratic forces. Along with CPDR, Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana had brought out a detailed report on the Bombay riots of December 1992 and January 1993. This report has been brought out as a follow-up of the earlier report.

Lokshahi Hakk Sanghatana is a member of the All India Federation of Organisations For Democratic Rights (AIFOFDR). Other organisations in AIFOFDR include: Association For Democratic Rights (AFDR), Punjab; Ganatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (GASS), Orissa; Janatantrik Adhikar Suraksha Sangathan (JASS), Rajasthan; Organisation for the Protection of Democratic Rights (OPDR), Andhra Pradesh.



Husseinbi, a victim of police torture

This report surveys developments in Bombay since the communal riots of December and January and the bomb blasts of March. It finds that there is a convergence between the activities of Hindutva forces and those of the State machinery. As a result, many Muslims experience police persecution while Hindu communal leaders responsible for rioting and goondaism not only go scot-free, but extend their control to various new spheres. The resulting deep communal alienation will have profound consequences for all of us.

It is seven months since Mehboob Aslam was arrested. On December 12, 1992 the police had raided Chikhalwadi, a slum in Deonar, broken open doors, beat several residents and arrested all the menfolk they could lay their hands on. More than 25 labourers with no previous criminal record were arrested. They were among 45 arrested in connection with the murder of two policemen of Deonar police station on December 7. (These indiscriminate arrests were only a small part of the retribution the police extracted from innocent people for those two deaths. In all, during three days of December, the Deonar police killed at least 43 Muslims of Deonar.)

Mehboob and eight other daily labourers were kept for one month at the Deonar police chowky, where they were interrogated, after which they were sent to Arthur Rd Jail. While nearly all those arrested along with him have since been released, Mehboob has been kept behind bars.

Mehboob's wife and six children live in extreme poverty. The roof of her hut badly needs repairs and plastic sheets to protect it from the fury of the rains; but the breadwinner of the family still languishes in jail.

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It is three months since the Mahim police released Husseinbi, a woman in her sixties, from their illegal custody. They had picked her up on Friday, April 2, from her home in Bandra Naupada. They had come in search of her son, whom they wanted in connection with the March 12 bomb blasts case.

At Mahim Police Station, she was beaten very badly for five days. She was beaten on the ears by policemen wearing large rings on their fingers, demanding to know where her son was. She pleaded she did not know, and wept with pain. "What, old woman, are you trying to fake it?", they said, and beat her some more. They also beat her on her fingernails, so hard that the second and last fingernails of her right hand got removed. Fed with meals of just two pieces of bread and weak dal, cramped together in a room with a large number of other women in the same predicament, Husseinbi began to pass blood in her stools.

She was released, after five days of beating, on April 7. Since then she has been continuously ill, suffering constant fevers and weakness, confined to bed, her voice a whisper. When we saw her, she appeared only half-alive.

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It is now seven months since the demolition of the Babri Masjid, followed by nationwide rioting; almost six months since the January riots throughout

Bombay; four months since the bomb blasts at 12 places in the city. Yet the city has not returned to 'normalcy'. On the contrary, the process of communal alienation is continuing; in this a central role is being played by the State machinery.

Failure to rehabilitate

The great outpouring of private relief effort for the victims of the riot was, no doubt, significant evidence of the secular feelings of a large number of citizens. During December and January, these sections of people lacked an organised force which could lead them in intervening to stop the riots; but as soon as they could, they sprang into action, either donating relief, or themselves setting up camps to reach it to the affected. Relief became for thousands a form of expressing their anguish and anger at what had been done. If this as yet inarticulate and unorganised section of people could be organised, they could go well beyond giving relief, and form a part of a movement to prevent future riots.

However, in relation to relief, the Government's role was reprehensible. First it was the responsibility of the **Government**, not private organisations and agencies, to set up relief camps and deliver relief. The Government entirely avoided this responsibility. It merely announced compensation. Even the delivery of that compensation was not shouldered by Government officials. Rather, it became the responsibility of the riot-affected to approach the Government and prove that they in fact had suffered — a process which was often arduous.

The reason for the Government's failure to set up relief camps was not only that it wished to save itself the expense and headache of setting them up. It was also that, if it ran the camps itself, it would not be able to simply close them down later. It would be obliged to **rehabilitate** the riot-affected. And most importantly, there would be pressure on the State to rehabilitate them **at the place from which they were uprooted**. In many cases, this would involve conflict with the local communal organisations that did the uprooting, as well as the gangs who have an eye on the abandoned land.

The Government washed its hands of this task, and left it to various organisations providing relief. It is to the credit of several such organisations that, in difficult conditions, in areas such as Goregaon, Jogeshwari, Bandra-Mahim, Ghatkopar, Dharavi, Mahalaxmi, and so on, they helped some of the riot-affected to return to their areas and rebuild their homes. Organisations such as Majlis in Mahim and Nivara Hakk Suraksha Samiti

'Compensation'

Even when received, compensation was often inadequate, especially for those looted or injured. If houses were looted without burning, no compensation was given. Such was generally the case wherever Muslims' homes were surrounded by Hindus' homes, for the looters knew that the fire would have spread to Hindus' homes too.

For injuries, the amounts given were paltry compared to the scale of damage, or even the immediate medical expenditures.

Take the case of Chamanara Mohammed Shabbir, 25 years old, Plot no 19, Rm 3, Shivaji Nagar, Govandi. On December 7, as the Deonar police went on a rampage at 11 a.m., she was standing in front of her house, which is in a narrow lane. Two bullets came from a distance and struck the left side of her head. After the operation at Sion Hospital, she remained there for 20 days. The wound is described as follows:

- "(i) 2 x 1/2 cm skull defect — brain matter can be seen.
- (ii) 2 x 1 cm bone deep. X-ray skull — 2 bullets."

Since the injury Chamanara has lost her mental balance. Her speech is impaired, she sleeps most of the time, and gets periodic fits. She has three schoolgoing children, and one two year old.

Chamanara's husband cannot afford all the medicines prescribed by Sion Hospital, one of which costs Rs 375/- for seven capsules. She is only taking one medicine, which is absolutely necessary, and which will have to be taken for two years. Her husband is trying hard to mobilise money for the C.T.scan, which is necessary. His occupation of embroidery has been affected, and his earnings reduced.

He has refused to accept the paltry Rs 5000 offered as 'compensation' for the police bullet which reduced Chamanara to this state.

in Goregaon had even to encounter demolition and repression from a combine of the local municipal officials, police and the Shiv Sena.

Yet for large numbers of those uprooted during the December- January riots, without the support of any organisation, there was no way to return to their homes or revive their businesses set in the midst of areas dominated by the 'other' community. In fact, even those who escaped direct attacks are selling their homes/shops at cut rates to move to areas of their own community. In its refusal to take on the responsibility of rehabilitation, the Government has lent its tacit consent to the further ghettoisation of the city.

The need to punish the guilty

Two points emerged strikingly from the riots of December and January. The first was the open involvement of various political parties: in particular, the Shiv Sena, whose leaders openly took 'credit' for the riots. The second was the blatant communal bias of the police — in some places, they were actively engaged in rioting; in January, they pursued a policy of deliberate inaction as Shiv Sainik mobs ran amok.

In order to prevent the even further communalisation of the city, it was absolutely essential that (i) punishment be swiftly awarded to the guilty political leaders (especially Bal Thackeray), their goons, and guilty policemen; (ii) compensation and rehabilitation be ensured to the riot-affected; (iii) any further communal incitement be thoroughly prevented.

What has actually happened? In the immediate post-riot period, and particularly after the heinous bomb blasts of March 12, various wings of the State machinery have pursued a contrary policy: one by which the harassment and alienation of the Muslim community is intensified, and the sway of Hindutva communal fascists over society at large is lent support.

Shifting the blame

It is striking that, while Shiv Sena leaders have openly claimed responsibility for 'massively retaliating' during the January riots, and while the Sena role has been confirmed by innumerable press reports as well as reports of fact-finding teams, the state government and police have been anxious to absolve the Sena of responsibility. For example, the note prepared by the (then) Chief Minister Sudhakarrao Naik for MPs from the state ascribes the January riots to three incidents of January 6-8. In all the three incidents, it is Muslims who are the alleged attackers. The (then) Police Commissioner

S.K.Bapat lent his weight to this thesis (Times of India 22/1/93), which exactly matches the claims of the Shiv Sena; however, neither the Chief Minister's note nor Bapat's statement even mentions the role of the Sena. In our earlier report on the riots (Bombay Riots: The Myths and the Realities) we have demonstrated how this theory is in fact false:

- (1) The riots were in fact carefully orchestrated (principally by the Sena) long before the incidents of January 6-8 as evidenced in the deliberate build-up of incitement through Saamna;
- (2) The 'maha-arati' ritual was manufactured in December itself for the purpose of inciting riots, and between December 26 and January 6 no less than 35 maha-aratis were provocatively staged at various points in the city (including, on January 2, in the Muslim-majority area of Null Bazaar);
- (3) Rioting had begun in earnest on January 2 itself at Dharavi; and
- (4) The precise targeting of Muslims and their property during the riots displayed great advance planning by the Shiv Sena.

While no doubt Muslim gangsters and communalists also played an important role in the riots, the attempt to pin the principal responsibility on them is an attempt to take the focus off the Shiv Sena and its political patrons in the Congress.

On March 12, 1993, 12 powerful bombs exploded in various pockets of Bombay, killing at least 317 persons, and injuring over a thousand. Though the motives behind this ghastly communal crime are still mysterious, it appears clear now that the execution of it was carried out by the smuggler Tiger Memon, and that most of his accomplices were Muslim. For this reason, it became in fact a handy weapon for Hindu communalists to erase the memory of their crimes.

Since the bomb blasts, it appears that the very question of the December-January riots, and those responsible for them, has been obliterated. Those guilty of engineering the bomb blasts were also, it is argued, responsible for the earlier riots.

On March 24, Police Commissioner A.S.Samra advanced the completely unsubstantiated claim that "The brain behind the March 12 serial bomb blasts in the city...was instrumental in triggering the unprecedented riots in December and January in the metropolis....Samra said it appeared that the first spell of riots in Bombay was not a spontaneous reaction to the December 6 developments at Ayodhya. While the disturbances elsewhere were a direct result of the Ayodhya events, the violence in the country's

commercial capital seemed to have been masterminded by some forces to capitalise on the surcharged atmosphere to create chaos, thereby distracting the police from maintaining a vigil on smuggling of arms and explosives into Maharashtra".

On April 22, Chief Minister Sharad Pawar told the legislative assembly that the Government was "reasonably convinced that the January riots in Bombay were engineered by the Pakistan government. I have asked for a detailed investigation into the series of stabbing incidents in which more than 40 persons died during the first few days, killing of mathadi workers and setting on fire of the Radhabai chawl at Jogeshwari (E)". By deliberately ignoring the most obvious culprits (the Shiv Sena), and focussing instead on Pakistan ('Pakistan' is now commonly used by Hindu communalists to denote Muslims), the police and the Government are attempting to rewrite history in a communal fashion. At this rate, it would not be surprising if the Government soon declared that Pakistan was also responsible for demolishing the Babri Masjid.

Striking contrast

The communal policy of the Government is illustrated by the contrast between their action on certain issues and their inaction on others. The December-January riots killed around 1000 people, of whom the majority were Muslim. The bomb blasts of March 12 killed over 317 people. The perpetrators of both the riots and the bomb blasts equally deserved the severest punishment. Instead, what is striking is the inequality of treatment.

The riots were carried out in an open fashion; the Shiv Sena leaders owned responsibility for them; and documentary evidence of Shiv Sena complicity is available in the writings of the Shiv Sena daily Saamna. The bomb blast culprits were, by contrast, much harder to track down. No Bombay-based organisation claimed responsibility for the crime, and the act was carried out conspiratorially. Yet, within 38 days of the blasts, the police had formally arrested 130 persons in Bombay and Raigad in connection with the crime (hundreds more were picked up without formal charges, merely on suspicion or for the crime of being related to those accused in the bomb blasts case). By contrast, only two important leaders of the Shiv Sena were detained in February — Madhukar Sarpotdar (Bandra) and Anand Dighe (Thane). Conveniently, both were under the National Security Act, which facilitates the detention of a person without eventually pressing formal charges. Both leaders were released in April.

Such has been the Government's reluctance to act against the Shiv

Sena leadership that two private citizens, J.B.D'Souza and Dilip Thakore, were compelled to file a writ petition in Bombay High Court seeking to direct the state government to initiate proceedings against Bal Thackeray and Mr Sanjay Raut (editor and executive editor, respectively, of Saamna).

The affidavit in response by Mr Subhash Avate, DCP Special Branch, CID, is revealing. He states that the police had gone through all the inflammatory Saamna editorials (dated December 2, 5,8,9, and 15,1992, and January 1,5,8,and 9, 1993) cited in the writ petition, but had not found them worthy of action. However, the police had instead found objectionable several news items in the issues of Saamna dated January 10,11,12, and 21 of 1993. These items attack the performance of certain Muslim police officers.

There are two implications to this stand of the police's.

First, a case based on the editorials would much more clearly fix the responsibility on Thackeray. By not basing their case on the editorials, the police appear to be deliberately weakening their case.

Secondly, whereas the dates cited by the petitioners indicated that the editorials played an important role in inciting the riots, the dates chosen by the police are after the riots started — indicating that the police do not want in any way to attribute the actual incitement of the riots to Thackeray.

No punishment for police brutality

In the riots of December 1992, there was widespread police brutality. On the one hand, at many places where Muslim youth were agitating on the streets, police resorted freely to firing, and shot to kill. Further, in certain cases, such as the Deonar slums Bainganwadi, Shivajinagar, and Lotus Colony, the police killed at least 43 Muslims. Our investigations revealed that those who were killed were innocents, largely those picked up in 'combing operations' from areas where there was no rioting (see: **Bombay Riots: The Myths and the Realities**).

In the January riots, there were a large number of reports of police inaction as Shiv Sena-led mobs rioted.

For both these reasons — police brutality as well as police inaction — cases should have been filed by the Government itself against the guilty officers. In particular, several officers of the Deonar police station ought to be charged with murder.

However, to no one's surprise the Government has not filed cases against the guilty police officers. Senior police officials argue that no action need

be taken against police officers against whom complaints had been made until the official Srikrishna Commission submits its report. This argument is specious. The Commission is merely an inquiry. There is nothing to prevent the Government from moving on cases of brutality even before the Commission's report is in. Correspondingly, even if the Commission indicts particular officers, there is no compulsion for the Government to prosecute them. As a result of this inaction by the Government, family members of victims have been forced to file habeas corpus petitions regarding those 'missing' (presumably dead).

On February 17, the Maharashtra Director General of Police said that a judicial inquiry into police firings would send the "wrong signals". And, far from acting against the guilty, the Chief Minister announced on March 10 a special reward scheme for the best police station, best assistant commissioner of police, and best deputy commissioner of police, "to revive the flagging morale of the force". (The morale of the public, it seems, is not on the agenda.) Mr Pawar was reported to have "admitted that the reputation of the force had suffered during the riots", but "with regard to action against the policemen against whom complaints had been filed during and after the riots...they would have to wait for the report of the judicial commission" (Times of India 11/3/93).

Terrorising the families of bomb blast suspects

"The power minister, Mr N.K.P. Salve, today refuted charges that Muslims were being harassed by the Sharad Pawar government in Maharashtra in the wake of investigations into the Bombay bomb blasts. Mr Salve said the Bombay police had acted well during the course of investigations and only criminals against whom serious charges were pending were being detained for investigations. It was incorrect to say that any member of the minority community was being harassed" . — April 27, 1993.

When the Government allows guilty police officers to go scot-free (on grounds of preserving their "morale"), it sends a clear signal that these officers' actions are not reprehensible. An already communalised force feels even freer to violate the law in dealing with Muslims. This was clearly evidenced in the way in which police behaved with families of bomb blast suspects.

On March 18, the Chief Minister told the legislative assembly that the Government would "destroy every person connected with the series of bomb blasts in the metropolis". The choice of language was revealing: by contrast,

when the Chief Minister mildly criticised Thackeray during the same speech, he did not even use the words 'Thackeray' or 'Shiv Sena'.

At 6 a.m. on April 2, eight to 10 policemen broke into the house of Mumtaz (the names of certain persons have been changed in the following paragraphs, at their request), a teenaged girl in Bandra Naupada. They were hunting for her brother Aslam. The brother was not there. The policemen immediately began beating Aslam's friends who were sleeping there, asking for Aslam. The police then illegally detained the family members (two brothers, his mother, and Mumtaz) at Mahim Police Station. While interrogating the mother and Mumtaz, the police knocked their heads together, and hit them repeatedly, demanding to know where Aslam was.

Later, the police picked up Aslam. Mumtaz was brought before her brother twice. Aslam was in a bad state. His limbs were swollen with beating. He had just underwear on, and policemen were standing on his arms. The policemen told Aslam, "Talk, or we'll strip your sister". (They also used more filthy threats, which Mumtaz was not willing to repeat.)

Mumtaz remembers that there were over 30 other women and girls kept in Mahim police station together at that time. There was neither proper food, nor proper toilet arrangements, nor could they perform their prayers. "DCP Maria told us, once your brother talks, we'll let you go", she said. After six days, they were released. They had never been produced in court, and no formal charges had been pressed against them.

The same story was repeated in many other interviews we carried out. Abdul Rehman is a low-level functionary of a political party. He was picked up at 11.45 p.m. at Govandi for questioning, and kept at Deonar chowki overnight. The next morning he was taken to Mahim, where 10 to 12 policemen interrogated him, beating him with their fists and a belt. They also threatened him with a revolver. This went on for four days. Another torture to which he was subjected (mentioned to us by several other interviewees) was to forcibly spread the legs apart, till they formed a straight line. Finally Abdul Rehman found blood in his urine. The police took him to Shree Nursing Home, opposite Shiv Sena Bhavan, and treated him privately. Abdul Rehman was released on April 7.

Torturing an epilepsy patient

Nizam's brother is an accused in the bomb blasts case. Nizam was diagnosed as an epileptic 23 years ago, as a boy of six. Since then he has been under treatment, at J.J.Hospital, and is taking Epsolin and Tegretol

The need to oppose torture

It is a sign of how deep the communal rift is today that the plight of those tortured in connection with the bomb blasts case finds little sympathy outside the Muslim community. There is a widespread feeling that such torture is 'justified' in order to obtain information or confessions. Major political parties have tacitly accepted this by remaining mum about these tortures.

We categorically oppose torture. Torture is, quite simply, a violation of democratic rights and an offence, no matter who the victim be. One offence in no way justifies another in response. To justify it would be in fact to justify the logic of the perpetrators of the bomb blasts that they were 'replying' to the terror of December-January. Such an argument is barbaric. It is even more so when applied to those whose only crime is being related to the accused.

One has seen such an argument being employed in recent years in Punjab. When Khalistani terrorists kidnapped and killed/held hostage police officials' families, the police in turn held hostage the families of the terrorists. In this fashion the State machinery in effect accepted the status of a terrorist.

There are grave implications for society, no doubt, when an organisation adopts the tactic of terrorism. But there are especially grave implications when the State, with its greater armed might and established authority, turns to similar terrorism. Today the State is establishing the *de facto* right to torture the families of those accused in the bomb blasts case, on the ground of obtaining vital information; in future it can as well use the same powers on any other political opponents it conveniently labels 'anti-nationals'. (It has, after all, been a tradition for the Indian rulers to ascribe domestic political opposition to foreign powers.) By turning a blind eye to police torture in connection with the bomb blasts case, then, we would be laying the groundwork for one day being at the receiving end of these very powers usurped in the name of quelling terrorism. The Terrorist Act was brought into existence on the excuse of the situation in Punjab; today, over 25,000 are charged under this Act throughout the country, including unionists, peasant leaders, innocent tribals, journalists, and the like.

The torture of family members of the bomb blasts accused, and of a large number of rounded-up youth, have also further deepened the sense of alienation of the Muslim community. There is a clear parallel with the manner in which widespread police torture of youth in Punjab merely wound up adding fresh recruits for the Khalistani cause. In Bombay, too, repression of Muslim youth is likely to find its communal echo. Unless all democratically minded persons raise their voice in protest against such tortures from a secular standpoint, these tortures will form the basis for further communalisation.

at present. His case papers on March 19, 1993 state: "Avoid stressful conditions. Shouldn't drive. Should be careful to avoid injury".

When Nizam was picked up by police hunting for his brother on March 21, he told the police of his condition. But it appears to have had the contrary effect. Every alternate day, for ten days, the police beat him four or five times. They dragged him by the hair and beat him with a **danda**. For a week he was denied medication. About 130 youth were kept in a 10 by 12 foot room, which also contained two cupboards. There was not place to lie down. There were, of course, no formal charges: merely being related to the accused was enough. "You will die here", the police told him, "and we'll bury you here". Nizam was released more than a month after his arrest, on April 23.

Nizam's mother is about 55-60 years old. The family owns some looms in Bhiwandi, and they live in Mahim. During the December-January riots, Nizam's brother Sohail became very agitated on seeing the events around the city. After the riots Sohail stayed day and night in the relief camps, and stopped returning to the house. One member of the family told us: With what happened in the riots, our young men have lost their heads. It was Sohail the police were hunting for in March.

They did not get Sohail, but they got his mother, his brother Nizam, and one other brother, Ashraf. In the lock-up, the mother remembers, there were several other elderly women like her. As they beat her, they asked, "Where is Sohail?" "Where are his friends?" The mother said, "How am I to know? If he has done anything wrong, punish him. why do you punish us, why do you punish his innocent brothers?" The police beat this old woman systematically, pulling her by the hair, beating her with their fists, kicking her. They beat the soles of her feet with **dandas**, stopped, allowed her to rest, and saw if she could walk; if she could walk, they would beat her again. She was also kicked on the palms, and beaten on the forearms. The marks on the forearms are still visible. Ironically, women constables were kept present during the beating, as if to lend it some legal legitimacy. The police told her, "We'll arrest your other relatives, we'll torture them too. This is not a fight between Hindus and Muslims. This is between the police and Muslims".

Ashraf was tortured particularly badly, till he became unconscious. When he became unconscious, he was rushed to Bhabha Hospital, and given treatment. Thereafter, he was shifted to Cooper, but when the family returned to collect the case papers from Bhabha, they were told there was no record of his ever having been admitted.

A crime to be named Memon?

Not only was it dangerous being related to a bomb blast suspect: even having the name Memon was dangerous. Even having transacted business with a person named Memon was dangerous. 30-year-old Mohammed Rawoof Qureishi has lived in a Gulf state for seven years, and works in a pharmacy there. One of his sons was born there. It was during the Iraq-Kuwait conflict that the family returned.

Qureishi made the mistake of buying a house from a person named Memon. The unfortunately named person was himself unconnected to the bomb blasts case. The police arrested this Memon, Qureishi, and even the estate agent involved. DCP Rakesh Maria himself beat Qureishi in an effort to extract information. The three of them were thus illegally detained till 11 a.m., whereupon Memon and the estate agent were released. Qureishi was kept a little longer, for in all 12 days. Thereafter he was released, with no charges against him. Nevertheless, he was forced to mark attendance at the police station every day — first at Mahim, later at the Crime Branch, Crawford Market.

Torturing a whole family

Salim (23) has been missing since March. His father Mohammed Hayat (45) is a tailor. His mother is 38, his three sisters are aged 21, 17, and 11, and his brother 14. All of Salim's innocent family members were picked up on March 31, at one a.m., and herded to Mahim police station, despite the parents' entreaties that two children had exams the next day. The next day, April 1, at 12.30 p.m., the police took Mohammed Hayat to a separate room. There they asked him where Salim was. He said he did not know, whereupon they beat him. They used as instruments a lathi, the belt of a flour mill (*chakki ke patte*), and their boots. The palms and soles of the feet got swollen and torn with the beating. The boot injuries on his leg took 20 to 25 days to heal, and one can still see the marks. Mohammed Hayat was beaten under the suspension of Inspector Kolhekar, who did not soil his own hands. All of his pleas that he did not know Salim's whereabouts were in vain. The entire family was brought in to see the father being stripped and beaten with the belt.

His wife, Khairunissa, was also beaten four times in 10 days. Each time she was beaten by a new set of people. The officers supervising the interrogation were DCP Rakesh Maria and Inspectors Kolhekar and Shastri.

Khairunissa was hit so hard on the ears that her hearing is permanently impaired, and she has pain in one ear. She was also beaten with a ruler on her hands till they became black and blue.

The three girls and the boy were also beaten on April 1. Even the 11-year-old girl, studying in the 7th standard, was thrashed on her hands with the flour-mill belt. "Where is your brother?", she was asked. As painful as the beating were the insults, which the victims were embarrassed to speak of. The girls' dupattas were snatched away by the officer, who threatened to strip them if they did not reveal Salim's whereabouts. The mother was told, "Tera beta kidhar hai? Agar nahi bataogi to yeh mota danda ghusedh doonga".

Khairunissa was released only on April 10, 1993. In order to secure Mohammed Hayat's release, his 21-year-old daughter had to file a habeas corpus writ in Bombay High Court. They filed the petition despite the Mahim police's threats that if they approached any court, their father's life would be in danger. After the petition was filed, the police came to the house at 10.30 p.m. on May 7, to take Khairunissa to the Mahim Police Station. They threatened that if she refused, 10 to 12 policewomen would come to drag her there by the hair. At the police station one Mr Kumar of the Crime Branch, C.I.D., threatened her that if she did not withdraw her case by 1.00 p.m. on May 8, her husband would be detained for the rest of his life.

On May 8, before the petition came up, the police released Mohammed Hayat, and claimed that he had never been detained. But on June 15, when the petition came up again, the police did not attempt to deny that they had in fact detained the entire family for interrogation.

Large numbers of illegal detentions

The detainees not only told us of their own condition, but spoke up for others as well. Mohammed Hayat told us of how several other innocent detainees had been languishing there for 15 to 20 days, held hostage for their family members wanted in connection with the bomb blasts case. His wife also recalled how, in the room where she and her daughters were kept, there were 25 other women in a pathetic state. One woman named Chhaya (married to a Muslim) had a three-month-old baby with her, another a three-year-old. A pregnant woman known as "Bashir ki wife" had been beaten by the police, and was bleeding. She had been in custody for 10 days. A Christian named Nancy, married to a Muslim, said she had been beaten by a lady constable.

The cases we have quoted above are just a handful. We conducted several other interviews of persons who have been rounded up and beaten. One Konkani Muslim family that lived in Kherwadi (Bandra East), a Shiv Sena stronghold, was forced to shift from the house in which they had stayed for decades during the December riots. Their 22-year-old son disappeared after the January riots, and after the bomb blasts police came hunting for him at Bandra Naupada. The police beat and terrorised all the family members present. They also picked up the wanted youth's sister-in-law, threatening her with dire consequences if she did not reveal where her brother-in-law was hiding. 28-year-old Syed Iqbal, a window frame maker from Bandra Naupada, was picked up by the police on April 13. (His older brother too had earlier been picked up, beaten, but released shortly thereafter. Syed was kept at Worli Police Station for 10 days, along with about 15 youth. On the night of April 13 itself the police tortured him to extract information about his friends by forcing his legs apart to the point where they formed a straight line. Evidently they do not consider him to be involved in the case, as he was released after 10 days.

In most cases, the persons illegally detained in this fashion were forced to mark attendance every day at the Crime Branch office in Crawford Market. Their attendance was recorded in small diaries. This illegal practice further disrupted the daily life and work of persons against whom no charges had been placed, and whose only crime was to have been related to accused persons. This practice continued for a month, until activists of CPDR publicised it and put a stop to it.

The most notorious case of persecution, of course, was the 'spindles' case. On April 13, with much fanfare, the Maharashtra police revealed that they had recovered 26 'projectiles' from a riverbed near Shrivardhan in Raigad district. The 65-year-old Iqbal Ismail Haspatel and his son, Mobin Haspatel, of Walvati village, Raigad, were arrested for possession of one of these projectiles. Iqbal Haspatel's wife was also taken into custody. A large number of their relatives, too, were rounded up for questioning, and threatened with dire consequences. The Shrivardhan deputy superintendent of police, Mr C.J.Daithankar, claimed that army experts had identified the suspicious objects as 'Afghan missiles'. Finally, however, the truth was brought to light by Mr Abul Nasir Jalal, the son-in-law of Mr Haspatel, who, being in the textile spare parts business, recognised the devices as spindles, or 'bobbins', on which thread is wound during weaving of cloth. The police were taken for a tour of textile factories in Mahad before they could be convinced. (Times of India, 24/4/93)

Although the facts were brought to light on April 17, the Chief Minister

included the Haspatel's names in the list of accused placed before the legislature on April 19. And even though the entire debacle was reported in the press on April 24, the Haspatels were kept in custody till April 28. Medical examination of the 65-year-old father revealed that he had been beaten with a "hard and blunt" instrument on at least five areas of his body, and Mobin had received 17 wounds with a similar instrument. And while the Terrorist Act charge was lifted, the father and son were charged under the Arms Act with possession of "dangerous knives". These are apparently only kitchen knives. Their neighbour, Abdul Rashid Ahmed Bondare, a professional cook, was also arrested for possessing a number of knives, which he uses in the course of his profession. (He is included in the Chief Minister's list as having possessed "three choppers".)

Given this record, we have reason to doubt the nature of many more arrests which have been made in this case. Although we possess no evidence regarding the following names, we feel the reasons given in their cases for arrest seem suspect. In most cases the information given is simply that the arrested person possessed "one country-made pistol", or some cartridges (in some cases, empty ones), or even knives. The case of the "walkie-talkie" is, reportedly, a cordless telephone. If these persons were involved in the smuggling of sophisticated weapons and explosives, it seems strange that they themselves are armed with only country-made pistols, or even just knives. (In Bombay, during the December and January riots, police arrested many Muslim butchers for the mere possession of knives — for which they even possessed licenses. In all likelihood the same story has been repeated in Raigad.)

Raigad: 3. Khalil Sayyad Ahmed Sayyad — cartridges recovered;

5. Sikander Isaq Hajwani — empty cartridges recovered; 6. Hanif Abbas Mia Dafedar — one country-made pistol; 7. Sayyad Jain Sayyad Ibrahim Majir — 26 empty cartridges; 8. Abdul Salam Abdul Karim Chogle — gun ammunition 225 gm; 9. Dagdu Babu Waghre — Caught with a country-made pistol and 450 pellets; 10. Hakim Mohd A. Rahman Kazi — one country-made pistol and four cartridges; 11. Abdul Hamid A. Rahman Kazi — one country-made pistol; 12. Abdul alias Baba Ismail Kadri — one country-made pistol; 13. Ahmedmia Daudin Rahatwilkar — one country-made pistol; 14. Mohd. Shafi Hasan Kazi — one country-made pistol; 15. Zavir Alimia Pal — one country-made pistol; 16. Abdul Munir Abdul Munis — two country-made pistols and 37 cartridges; 17. Ataulah Mustapha Nazira — a country-made pistol and cartridge; 18. Liladhar Yeshwant Pendse — a country-made pistol; 19. Ahmed Hasan Isaq Shah — one country-made pistol, one revolver

and four cartridges; 20. Sakhruddin Kamruddin Parkar — a country-made pistol and nine cartridges; 21. Sayyad Yunus Sayyad Hasanrifai — a country-made pistol and six cartridges; 22. Hasan Khan Ismail Khan Mukadam — possessed a walkie-talkie; 32. Indrajit Janardan Hawre — two cartridges; 37. Abdul Aziz Mohd. Isaq Dhanse — 12 country bombs and three swords; 53. Abdul Ali Sonde — three choppers and an assortment of 17 knives; 54. Rashid Ahmed Bodare — three choppers; 55. Hamid Hasan Raut — five choppers; 56. Iqbal Ismail Haspatel — 26 projectiles; 57. Momin Iqbal Haspatel.

Pre-emptive harassment

Apart from arrests in connection with the bomb blasts case, police have also been harassing Muslims in other ways. In Govandi, we found that police have continued to make periodic arrests of innocents ever since December-January. The arrested persons did not have any criminal background. These persons were picked up from their homes at night from Chikhawadi, Shantinagar, Padmanagar, and Plot no. 38. The same persons were repeatedly arrested, for 2 to 3 days every 10 days or so. As a result, several lost their employment, or their earnings were badly affected. Their children faced humiliation at school, when they could not answer the question — *Why was your father arrested?*

The arrests increased after the bomb blasts, and police interrogated them to find out if they had any connection to the blasts. However, all of these persons were unorganised workers, who do not have any criminal background.

On May 3, employees of a local social work organisation, Apnalaya, met the police officer in charge of Deonar Police Station, Suresh Jadhav, and protested against the repeated arrests of innocents. Since then, the police have switched to making round-ups of the same persons during the day for two to three hours at a time. This still disrupts their livelihood and daily life. Several persons have left their occupations and returned to their villages to escape such constant harassment.

Given the widespread atrocities for which they were responsible in December, it is likely that the Deonar police are using such arrests as a tactic to keep their victims in a state of fear, and to forestall the filing of private complaints against the police.

Exercising domination

Even more disturbing than such widespread police harassment is another

process under way in the city: the remoulding of the culture and civic life in tune with the ideology of Hindutva. Whether the purported issue is of the activities of film stars, or of illegal construction, or of various newspaper/magazine articles, the real issue is elsewhere: the aggressive assertion that this is already a Hindu State.

Recently, the Bombay Municipal Corporation, at the initiative of Deputy Municipal Commissioner Khairnar, has undertaken a campaign of demolition of buildings constructed by the underworld chieftain Dawood Ibrahim, M.K.Builders, and 'Tiger' Memon. These constructions were targeted after the bomb blasts, as all three figures have been linked to the blasts. Each demolition was carried out with much fanfare and press publicity by Khairnar, who portrayed his actions as a crusade against corruption. He also claimed that his life was under threat. However, certain questions remain unresolved. First, if demolition of unauthorised construction as such is the object, why have only buildings constructed by Dawood, Memon, and M.K.Builders been targeted? Clearly, the intention is to obtain 'retribution' for the alleged role of these figures in the bomb blasts. This ought not to be the criterion for demolition of a building: the criteria should be the law and the public interest. In cases where the constructions have already been sold and persons have moved in, it is the innocent occupant who suffers, not the builder.

Nor has any action been reported against those BMC officials who allowed such large-scale illegal construction under their noses (according to the BMC's estimates, 50 such constructions in Bandra Naupada alone, a similar number in Versova, and a large number in central Bombay.) Surely such large-scale illegal construction could not have been carried out without patronage at the highest levels of the state government itself. The same Sharad Pawar who inducted Dawood-affiliated gangsters such as Hitendra Thakur and Pappu Kalani into the Congress now presides over the anti-Dawood campaign.

Even if one were to accept the strange logic of exercising 'retribution' against those residing in buildings constructed by persons accused in bomb blast cases, the same logic would demand that illegal constructions by the Shiv Sena and by Sena-linked gangsters (eg Amar Naik) be similarly targeted for their involvement in the December-January riots. But no such demolitions took place. So glaring was the contrast that even the police made noises demanding "that the civic authorities adopt an even-handed approach and demolish an adequate number of Hindu-owned structures to balance the drive against illegal buildings built by the Dawood and Memon gangs" (Times of India 8/5/93).

Given this background, the demolition drive actually heightened communal

tensions during this period. The Marathi press lent its weight by portraying Khaimar as a fearless Maharashtraian demi-god out to do battle with Muslim gangsters. Khaimar himself picked up demolition tools to pose for numerous photographs. A Pune-based organisation raised a volunteer squad to protect Khaimar from attacks.

Manufactured Issues

Meanwhile the Shiv Sena and the BJP strengthened their grip over two other institutions — the film world and the press. The purported reasons were the alleged attendance of some film personalities at a Pakistan Day celebration at the Pakistani consulate in Bombay; the fact that several of them had attended one of Dawood Ibrahim's parties in Dubai, and others were reported to have close links with him; and that the film star Sanjay Dutt had purchased automatic rifles from two video company owners who were accused in the bomb blasts case.

On closer examination, these issues were clearly non-issues. The Shiv Sena's poll partner, the BJP, raised the Pakistan Day celebration issue in the Maharashtra legislature; but as it turned out the BJP president M.M. Joshi had attended a similar function hosted by the Pakistani ambassador in Delhi. Yet the Shiv Sena announced no boycott of Joshi, on the feeble ground that he was not an actor.

Contrary to Bal Thackeray's accusation, neither Shabana Azmi nor Dilip Kumar had attended the Pakistan Day celebrations at the consulate. A.K. Hangal, on the other hand, had not only attended the function, but courageously defended his action. He pointed out that "We are not at war with Pakistan, even if we have our differences and disputes. Why should anyone upbraid me or doubt my patriotism for attending a function hosted by the Pakistan consul-general?" He remarked that, having participated in the freedom struggle, he found it "farical that persons without firsthand experience of the sacrifices and hardships of that movement are now hurling allegations at him".

On April 3 a mob of 100 Shiv Sainiks stormed Minerva theatre, and disrupted the screening of *Sholay*, in which Hangal appears in a character role. The theatre management informed the film's producer, G.P.Sippy, who in turn talked to Bal Thackeray. Thackeray demanded the deletion of sequences with Hangal. Thereupon the print was rushed to a nearby laboratory, the Hangal sequences deleted, and the censored print was allowed to run. Spineless as Sippy's response was, Hangal refused to buckle. Yet, in a mysterious turn-around, on April 23, Bal Thackeray announced that though

Hangal had "committed a faux pas...I appeal to the public to forgive Mr Hangal". The boycott was withdrawn.

The film-stopping episodes continued, however, with others. On April 17 Shiv Sena activists stopped the screening of a film starring Sanjay Dutt and Dilip Kumar at Nashik; on April 16 the Pune-based Hindu communal organisation Patit Pawan Sanghatana forced the cancellation of shows in six theatres of films starring Sanjay Dutt, and a 'ban' was placed on all his films in Pune; on April 18, a mob of women led by Treasa Killekar of the Shiv Sena's women's wing, the Sena Mahila Aghadi, forced the management of Hindmata cinema, in Lower Parel, Bombay, to stop screening of a film starring Shabana Azmi; on May 18 Shiv Sainiks disrupted a show of a film starring Mandakini also at Hindmata.

Under the onslaught, many buckled. On April 17, the All-India Film Distributors' Council directed distributors not to purchase rights of old or new films of Sanjay Dutt. Meanwhile 15 prints of *Kshatriya*, starring Sanjay Dutt, were withdrawn from six towns around Maharashtra. On April 22 Mithun Chakraborty, Govinda and Anil Kapoor visited Bal Thackeray and pleaded with him not to impose bans on their films on the grounds of their having attended Dawood Ibrahim's parties. The following day Thackeray issued a statement to the effect that "The fact that Sanjay Dutt has been arrested under TADA does not make all film personalities criminals and anti-nationals". Remarking that the Hindi film industry contributed about Rs 800 crore a year in taxes, Thackeray claimed that there was a conspiracy to malign film stars (!) and weaken this business.

Following a series of meetings with the Film Makers' Combine culminating on April 28, the Shiv Sena, the BJP, and the VHP assured the FMC that they would not object to the sale of video rights of Hindi films to Magnum cassettes, owned by two persons currently under arrest in connection with the bomb blasts case.

Thackeray's most remarkable turnabout was regarding Sanjay Dutt, who met him privately on May 20 for the third time since release from custody. Neither Thackeray nor the actor was willing to divulge the contents of the discussion, but Thackeray told Saamna the following day that Dutt was an "ugavata surya" (a rising sun).

One star who had neither attended the Pakistan Day function, nor had any links with Dawood Ibrahim, was Shabana Azmi; yet it was against her that the Sena kept up its boycott call, on the 'ground' that she had been very active in relief and rehabilitation after the communal riots in December and January, but had done "nothing" after the March bomb blasts.

Bal Thackeray demanded she tender an "apology" for what he called her "suspicious role" in the communal riots.

Clearly no sense can be made of the various statements and somersaults of Thackeray on the 'film stars' issue, if one takes each at its face value. The real significance of these dramas, however, is different. First, it is well-known that underworld figures had invested in, and exercised influence in, much of Bombay's film industry. The Shiv Sena's representative, a small-time producer of Marathi films named Gajanan Shirke, was relatively unimportant in the industry. On the basis of its added clout after the December-January riots, the Shiv Sena is using various manufactured controversies as an excuse to muscle into this field. Given the meek submission of major producers and stars to the Sena's forays, it is likely that in future the Sena and its related underworld figures will replace the earlier set of underworld chieftains in deploying funds, calling the shots, and exacting commissions from this major industry.

The second object of these manufactured dramas is to extend and strengthen the hold of Hindu communalists over culture and civil society as a whole. The agreement between the Film Makers' Combine and the Hindu communal organisations stipulates (according to press reports) the following: The FMC will boycott all film personalities either charged or arrested in connection with the March 12 blasts (this is presumably revised by Bal Thackeray's later description of Sanjay Dutt as a "rising sun"). The FMC will ban all actors who allegedly have links with Dawood Ibrahim, or whose nationalist credentials are under question (this presumably excludes those who met Thackeray and obtained forgiveness). The FMC will ban actors/actresses whose nude or semi-nude photographs have appeared in periodicals and magazines. This last attempt to pose as the guardians of 'morality' is particularly ridiculous when it comes from those avowedly responsible for carrying out massive communal riots.

Most significantly, the FMC reportedly agreed that members of the film industry who were not connected to political parties would be prohibited from expressing critical opinions on various national events. The FMC denied that it had agreed to such a stipulation, but the denial came almost a month after the agreement was concluded and released by the BJP to the press.

In other words, the FMC had agreed to implement the ideological dictates of the Hindutva communalists, and repress the civil liberties and democratic rights of those who oppose communal fascists. The FMC agreement extends and consolidates the hold of these fascistic forces over wider and wider areas of social life.

Throughout this drama, the police and the State machinery as a whole have remained mute spectators. While registering cases against a few ABVP activists for disrupting a film show, they have completely ignored the open threats issued by Thackeray and the BJP. The parallel administration run by these forces is reflected in the board put up by one cinema owner to the effect that the film *Kshatriya* was being screened with the "kind permission" of the Shiv Sena and the BJP. G.P.Sippy of the FMC said that they had sought protection from political parties instead of Government authorities when the 'bans' were announced, since they were told by the police that they could do nothing in the matter. "What is wrong if we go to political parties for help", asked Mr K.D.Shorey, honorary secretary, FMC, "Since the BJP and the Shiv Sainiks were reportedly halting screenings of certain films, the parties' leaderships were approached in those instances".

Attack on press freedom

Far from opposing these assaults by Hindutva parties, the Congress appears to be competing at the same game. It was a Congress member who raised in the legislature the issue of an article "Myth and Supermyth" by Nancy Adajania, published in the *Illustrated Weekly*. While praising Shivaji, the Rani of Jhansi, and other historical figures, the article also (on the basis of accepted historical works) points out features of these personalities which are not discussed, and opposes the attempt to deify them. To date the critics of this article have not attempted to refute the facts given in the article.

As if to confirm the thesis of the article, chauvinists treated the article as an attack on national integrity. Significantly, at the time the issue was raised in the legislature, the BJP and Shiv Sena were boycotting the house for other reasons: it was the Congress and the Progressive Democratic Front members who competed with one another to condemn the article, demand the arrest of the author, the editor and publisher (under the Terrorist Act, no less), and raise the slogan "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai". The Chief Minister went to the extent of declaring that the article could "cause cracks in society and harm the unity and integrity of the country".

The issue of the *Weekly* was banned. Despite an abject apology by the *Weekly* editor, the Government registered cases under Sec. 153A (relating to promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth or residence, and doing acts prejudicial to the maintenance of harmony) against the editor, publisher, printer and author. The

Government's action in this case was in striking contrast to its failure to register such a case against Thackeray for his venomous writings in Saamna.) In the words of Justice Saldanha of the Bombay High Court, before whom the accused filed an application for anticipatory bail, "On a consideration of the material before me I found it difficult to fathom how the article could qualify for action under any of the ingredients of this section (153A)". The judge described the action contemplated by the state government as "distressing, misguided and misdirected", and opined that it violated the freedom of expression.

So aggressive is Hindu chauvinism that it gives license not only to censor, but even to ensure the insertion of what the chauvinists wish. On April 27, the leader of the opposition moved a resolution seeking to censure the **Maharashtra Times** for failing to report the Shiv Jayanti celebrations in its issue of April 24. He demanded that the Marathi daily also compensate for the "mistake" committed by its sister publication, the **Illustrated Weekly**. Although the resolution was rejected by the legislative council chairman, members of the BJP, SS, RPI (Gava), and PWP spoke in its support.

In both the **Illustrated Weekly** and **Maharashtra Times** cases, there may have also been other, behind-the-scenes considerations for politicians to raise these issues. But the net effect was to send a signal to all those who might dare to oppose chauvinism.

Deepening alienation

In the face of police harassment, failure to punish the rioters of December and January, and ascendancy of Hindutva fascistic forces in political and social life, the alienation of the city's Muslim community is deepening. In protest against indiscriminate arrests of Muslims in the bomb blasts cases, a bandh was observed on April 23 in Dongri, Pydhonie, Nagpada and Mahim. On May 1, 500 demonstrators halted traffic in Pydhonie against the arrests of six persons in connection with the December-January riots, whom they claimed to be innocent. On May 13 hundreds staged a demonstration at Mastan Talao on the persecution of innocents in bomb blasts cases. And on May 19 traffic was blocked again at Byculla on six arrests made the earlier night.

Yet the state legislature, which had all the time in the world to discuss the **Illustrated Weekly** and the **Maharashtra Times** issues, blithely ignored these protests, as if they were of no significance. And when the question was raised in the Lok Sabha, N.K.P.Salve issued a bland denial.

A false notion of 'nationalism' is being constructed whereby all Muslims

must prove their 'loyalty' each time there is an incident such as the bomb blasts. By contrast, the phrase 'anti-national' is rarely, if ever, used in relation to the rioting. the 'nation' has been identified with the Hindu community.

This alienation recalls that of the Delhi Sikhs since 1984. The 1984 massacre of Sikhs in Delhi no doubt fuelled Khalistani propoganda the world over; but even more, such propoganda was fuelled by the failure to bring the guilty political leaders and policemen to justice for murder. The R.N.Mishra Commission, the Jain-Banerjee Panel, the Kapoor-Mittal Committee, the Poti-Rosha Panel, the Jain-Aggarwal Panel — there was no shortage of official inquiries into the Delhi massacre, only a shortage of political will: 2,733 innocent Sikhs killed, 2,341 persons accused of rioting, 128 acquitted and just 12 convicted of murder — of which all 12 are apparently out on parole, and none of whom are policemen or important leaders.

A similar failure in Bombay can have similarly profound and disastrous consequences. Several of those recruited to carry out the bomb blasts appear to have earlier been shaken deeply by the attacks on the Muslim community during the December-January riots. And minority communalism surely finds fertile ground among those who see no avenues to obtaining justice or even protection from attack.

To understand the process of alienation underway, take the example of a Maharashtrian Muslim family, living in an area considered to be a Shiv Sena stronghold. The family's source of income is a knife-sharpening wheel. During the riots they were saved by a Maharashtrian Hindu family, and later fled to their village. After a long gap, two members of the family returned to their room, while the rest remain in the village. Except for the family that had saved them, no one else in the locality maintains any relation at all with them; they do not even deign to speak to them. Fortunately, their regular customers are not in the immediate vicinity, but are butchers working in another locality. When they walk about outside, certain local residents converse loudly, so that they can overhear snatches of the conversation: "...must be taught a lesson..." "...can go to Pakistan..." etc. Significantly, the son of the family now feels that "At least the bomb blasts put fear into Thackeray. See how quiet the Shiv Sena became in the weeks after the blasts."

Whatever the immediate reaction of the Shiv Sena, in the long run the bomb blasts have in fact served to strengthen the communal hatreds on which the Shiv Sena and BJP base themselves. Communal terror inevitably breeds, in return, communal terror.

If the grievous wrongs done to citizens of Bombay are to be righted,

and the growing communal alienation in routine social life to be repaired, it is clear that the State machinery is not going to play any role. There is little sign of shame on the part of the Government for its abject failure. On the contrary, the Chief Minister told us on March 8 that "one of the positive fall- outs of the riots has been the coming together of various voluntary groups working for communal harmony...People are insecure and they realise that they cannot just rely on the Government to solve their problems" (Times of India, 9/3/93)

The Government has washed its hands of relief, rehabilitation, prosecution of those responsible for the riots, and prevention of further communal propaganda. It is ordinary citizens of Bombay, and their democratic organisations, which have mobilised relief, carried out rehabilitation, even filed a writ for the prosecution of Thackeray, and stood up to the Hindutva combine's attempt to censor/control the media. It is these forces, small as they are, that will have to shoulder many more responsibilities in the days to come.

Mr. Thackeray

at secretly

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According to Mr Thackeray's personal aide, the Sena chief and his wife, Ms Meenatai Thackeray, left Bombay this morning for an "undisclosed destination". "He will return tomorrow afternoon," said the aide. Though Mr Thackeray's second visit to Karla is ostensibly to greet Dr Tambe on the eve of his birthday, sources close to the leader said he is scheduled to hold "indepth talks" with Mr Pawar who is undergoing treatment at the centre for back ailment and to master meditation technique.

TUESDAY, JUNE 29, 1993

Watch ring

many persons
the courtroom that the
for the state of Maharash-
tra, Mr Shyamrao Samant, was on
the warpath both with Mr Justice
Srikrishna and other lawyers ap-
pearing before the commission
which is inquiring into the recent
riots that rocked Bombay.

1 arose during the
ion of Mr J.B.
vir Samant. In the
of the commission, the state
counsel was asking irrelevant ques-
tions. "That you are bent upon
something is clear. What the
purpose behind it is not clear," the
judge said.

Since Mr Samant kept on asking
Mr D'Souza questions regarding
the Shiv Sena, the judge inquired
whether counsel was cross-examin-
ing the witness on behalf of the
state or the Shiv Sena.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, BOMBAY, FRIDAY, JULY 9, 1993

RUBBING SALT IN THE WOUNDS

Tata Services study's rough estimate of losses incurred by the public as a result of the Bombay riots (including a reported 10, 000 houses destroyed, 70 to 300 bakeries damaged or destroyed, over 70 per cent of timber godowns burnt, 500 trucks and 150 taxis burnt/damaged)

— Rs 4, 000 crore

Loan applications made by riot-affected businessmen	2,099
Applications cleared as of June 1993	413
Amount of loans sought by riot-affected businessmen	Rs 44 cr.
Amount disbursed as of June 1993	Rs 2 cr.
Number killed in January riots*	629
Number of bereaved families who received compensation (as of June)	463
Amount disbursed to them	Rs 6.5 cr.

* Police figures, likely to be underestimates. The police also stated in June that 304 persons are listed as "missing"