


Extremist Damdami Taksal?
Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale – heroic or ????



Next 6 Slides
from lecture of...

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Terrorism definition

Global distribution of Terrorism

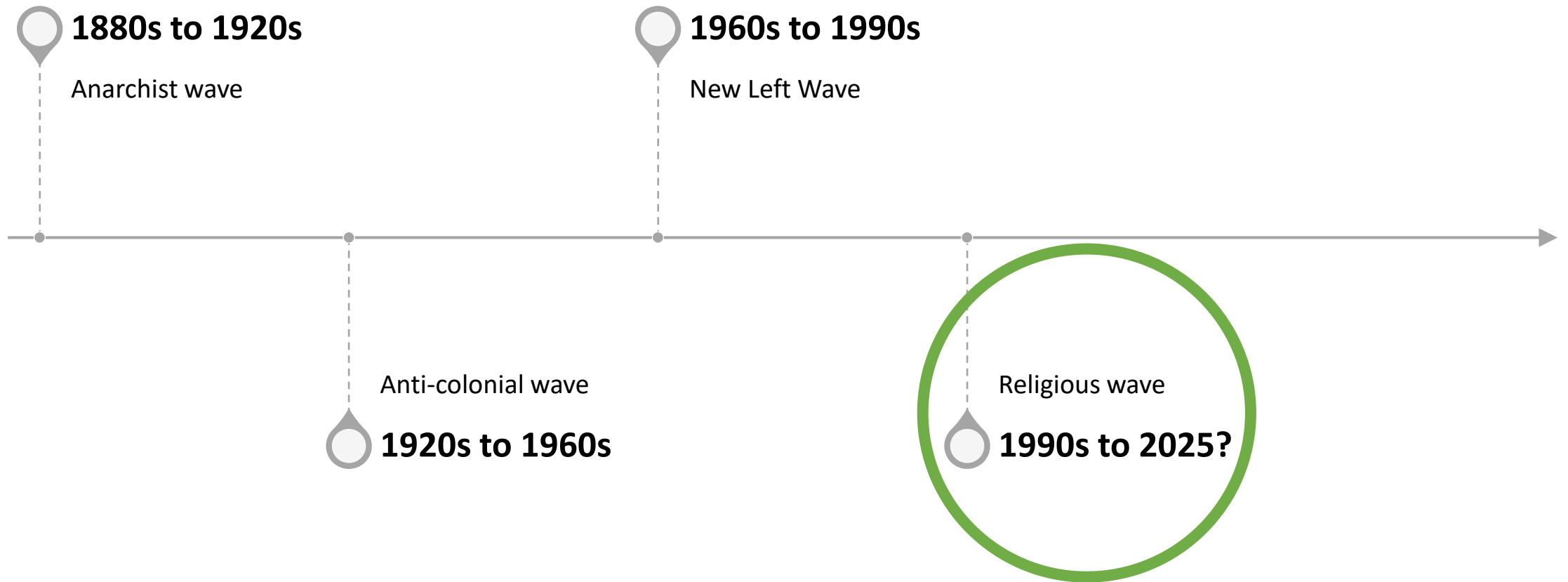
Terrorism is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims.” We quickly see that this definition is unspecific and subjective. The issue of subjectivity in this case means that there is no internationally recognised legal definition of terrorism. Despite considerable discussion, the formation of a comprehensive convention against international terrorism by the United Nations has always been impeded by the lack of consensus on a definition.

Globally, over 26,000 people died in terrorist attacks in 2017. Where in the world did terrorists kill most people

Killing innocent people –
bombings, violence
against civilians to
achieve a political aim,
fulfilment of an ideology

Create terror

you are here





the religious wave

Left: Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, leader of Sikh extremist movement Damdami Taksal

Right: Shoko Asahara, founder of the Japanese doomsday-cult Aum Shinrikyo.



Mujahideen leader Ahmad Shah Massoud



Iranian Revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini

Political turning points



Left to right: 1993 World Trade Centre attack, 2001 World Trade Centre attack, 1998 twin US embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, 1998

targets and tactics of
the religious wave

- Continued assassinations and hostage taking
- New feature: suicide bombing
- More attacks focused on the US



Al Qaeda

- Religiously driven aims
- Unique recruitment style
- Unsuccessful...?


Brunel's Statement to Sikh complaints

(summary) Full statement on
<https://tinyurl.com/BrunelSikh>

- Brunel's attention has recently been drawn to a slide in a lecture *on this module featuring an image of Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhindranwale, who is venerated by members of the Sikh religion. The slide is intended to encourage academic consideration of religious beliefs and motivations for action. In particular, the context in which this slide and others is discussed seeks to consider whether religion is a connection that creates a shared identity and allows political or societal goals to be addressed. Students are asked to consider whether "extremism" is sometimes used to bring to the fore the idea of 'costly signalling', where people utilise violence over peaceful protest to further their aims...*
- The term "extremist" could be applied to opposing sides in any dispute or disagreement where violence is used by **sub-state actors** to further a cause.
- **The images used throughout this lecture are intended to highlight, objectively,** the causes that have driven movements throughout history and to encourage students to recognise and define underlying common identities (such as religion) as distinct from motivations for action (for example, a feeling of being marginalised)...
- While Brunel understands that the content of this module and the concepts it seeks to question and explore are challenging and controversial, this must be balanced against the **University's legal obligations to uphold the fundamental freedoms of free speech and academic freedoms for all its staff and students.** Brunel's Royal Charter contains the following statement:

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Brunel Statement continued

- ***...Neither the content of, nor the images used in lectures reflect personal viewpoints or positions of an academic or, indeed, of the University. The information that is relayed comes from research: scholarly books, peer-reviewed academic sources, and relevant databases.***
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- A yellow dashed line in the bottom right corner, consisting of several short, curved segments.

Accusations & Slander

- Sant Jarnail Singh a gun totting terrorist
- Punjab lawlessness
- Led by reformation of Sant Jee
- Peaceful protests of asking for more rights need to be put down (much like the Kissan morcha more recently)
- He fought the army, obviously a terrorist? Took shelter in Darbar Sahib complex etc etc



MP Subramanian Swamy in orange head covering

What is the Damdami Taksal?

- The Damdami Taksal is a Sikh seminary or school – that was founded by the tenth Sikh Guru, Sri Guru Gobind Singh Jee. It was set up to impart the spiritual and profound teachings of Gurbani (Sikh Scriptures) and it has now become a travelling university that imparts many faculties of teaching of Sikhi (the Sikh faith). (www.damdemitaksal.com)
- 1706 CE founded, continued to the present day
- Estimated 26 million Sikhs across the globe
- Tutors of the Damdami Taksal hold esteemed seats of appointment as leaders of the Akaal Takhat Sahib & head Granthis at many significant Gurdwaras (Takhts & Harmandir Sahib).
- ***Millions of Sikhs would have had some sort of learning from students of Damdami Taksal***
- In the UK their tutors teach in more than 30 Gurdwaras & have a span of thousands of current students





Tyrant Indira Gandhi

- State of emergency 1975 – 19 months stop corruption enquiry, found guilty election fraud
- 50,000 Sikhs courted arrest protesting
- 1000's Indian citizens forcibly sterilised
- Cabinet dismissed
- All opposition leaders arrested

Narendra
Modi
disguised
himself as a
Sikh to avoid
arrest



Sikhs fight for Indian freedom, civil liberties

- 12th Leader of Damdami Taksal - Sant Kartar Singh Bhindranvale many protests against Emergency
- Protests by Shromani Akali Dal
- Sikh Leaders took refuge at Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar to avoid arrest
- **Sikhs hailed as the last bastion of democracy** (Kumar & Sieber, 1990:250, *The Sikh Struggle: Origin, Evolution and Present Phase*)
- *Extremist Damdami Taksal? Fighting for civilian freedoms whilst opposition leaders were arrested or on the run. 37* Processions held in defiance of the state of emergency
- Damdami Taksal defiant of Indira Gandhi in emergency & in Sikh spaces, when she attended 300 years commemorations of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Jee's Shaheedi





Who was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale?

- 13th leader of the Damdami Taksal (1977 – 1984)
- Charismatic, intelligent – led youth back to their roots of Sikhi. Preached openly across India between 1977 – 1982
- Message:
 - Give up drugs, drink
 - Read scriptures
 - Take Amrit
 - Become Sikhs
 - Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims - be true to their faiths
 - Stop corruption (in all guises), earn a honest living

Inaccurate,
hyperbole &
outright lies

- 1981 courted arrest voluntarily in enquiries of assassination of Lala Jagat Narain – an editor/proprietor of Hind Samachar newspapers
- Released without charge
- Peaceful protests as part of 'Dharam Yudh Morcha' 1982 – 1984, 250,000 court arrest for realisation of more civil liberties in Punjab/India & a true federal system, most demands are economic
- Accusations of law & order problem in Punjab – but comparative analysis of violent crimes in other states shows Punjab rates were average (DGP Punjab 1984, Kirpal Dhillon, 2006, *Identity and Survival: Sikh Militancy in India 1978-1993*).

Memoirs
President of
India,
Zail Singh

Memoirs of
GIANI
ZAIL SINGH

*The Seventh
President of India*



Myth of Separatism

- Quotes from President of India, Zail Sinh:
- Anandpur Sahib Resolution,
 - *'... was basically a document asking for greater autonomy for the states within a federal framework...'* p. 164
- Separatism –
 - *'... yet it had ramblings of separatism, because it envisaged a special status for Sikhs (Khalsa Ji Ka Bol-bala) in the region.'* p.164

Peaceful Protests Not Armed Insurgency

- Dharam Yudh Morcha,
 - *‘Taking out processions, holding rallies, staging demonstrations ... however unpalatable, were allowed as legitimate methods of protest, to the Opposition ... There was no justification in silencing the dissent by bullets.’ p.168*
 - *“But now the Punjab government had resorted to the arm-twisting measures, and instead of tact, were using unnecessary force. The agitators blocking the Sangrur-Ludhiana road were mowed down by bullets. The police was reported to have set fire to two jeeps & a police station to give an impression that the agitators had become violent & it had become expedient to open fire.” p.170*

Discrimination - Asian Games 1982

- New Delhi – Akali's threatened protests, so all Sikhs entering Delhi & Haryana, searched & humiliated (beard & turban targetted).
 - *"Some members of the intelligentsia in the Sikh community including lawyers, judges & even members of the Armed forces were subjected to humiliation & were singled out from hordes of passengers for discriminatory treatment. This created bitterness among the Sikhs."* p.175
- P.175 this grew support for those agitating by all Sikhs
- Paradox = 5 'Sikhs' inaugurate the opening ceremony, Zail, Butta Sinh etc = Rajiv Gandhi calls them 'Panj Pyare'

1984

3 Events define 1984

ATTACK – on Sri Harmander Sahib, attack faith, nation
& universal shrine (Op Blue Star)

PERSECUTE – Amritdharis (Op Woodrose)

ELIMINATE – Anti Sikh Pogroms, genocide

Constructing a Threat

Vilify

- Create an artificial threat = justify excessive force. Eg WMD's Iraq none – in reality in 1984 No threat to Indian National Security

Revenge

- Emergency 1975 – 1977 (21 months).
- Campaign to save democracy (SAD), Sant Kartar Singh – 37 processions
- 40,000 Sikhs court arrest. Nationally 140,000 Indians court arrest
- Indira loses election, back in 1981

Implementing Attack

The Punjab Agitation White Paper 1984 – lawlessness – yet no charge sheets or arrest warrants

Gen Sinha – advised how to conduct attack on Amritsar, ignored

DC Gurdev Singh refused to sanction army to enter – relieved of duties 2nd June 1984

Clandestine preparations both sides, Mark Tully says government purposely allowed arms into complex

70,000 Army enter Punjab

15,000 used in attack



- *Since independence, it was for the first time that the Indian Army had been employed to fight a pitched battle against a section of its own people. The assault on the Golden Temple on 5-6 June 1984 turned a shrine of great sanctity into a battlefield ... The immediate question that arises is: was the army action really necessary? Was it the only solution? My view is that it was not.*
- Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Arora, 1984

1 June 1984

President of India is supreme commander of armed forces – not informed of attack (see *Memoirs of Giani Zail Singh*)

CRPF indiscriminate firing upon Darbar Sahib – no warning given 12.40pm – 8pm, Zail Singh confirms in his memoirs,

“Later, I became to know that no such warning had been issued by the authorities and the operation had been suddenly launched.”
(1997:178, *Memoirs of Giani Zail Singh*)

No response to fire from inside

White Paper silent on 1st June, rather starts on 2nd June (AI Radio said firing from within)

2nd June 1984

2 June 1984 – fire back

“Since long the Indian Government was planning to destroy the cultural identity of the Sikhs – Darbar Sahib, Sri Harimander Sahib. To execute this sinister plan, the C.R.P.F. has attacked the sacred shrine on June 1, 1984 with artillery fire. The unprovoked artillery attack in which a dozen Sikh pilgrims were killed and the sacred shrine of Golden Temple received bullet injuries, was the last murderous attack on the cultural and religious identity of the Sikhs. All the organizations of the Sikhs, present within the Golden Temple complex remained united and set a living example of steadfast confidence and rising spirit (*chardi kala*) of the Khalsa. ***Keeping in view the unprovoked attack on the Golden Temple, we appeal to all the organizations of the Khalsa Panth to defeat the sinister designs of the demoniac forces and repulse the attacks of the C.R.P.F. and B.S.F. to uphold the sanctity of Sri Darbar Sahib, Golden Temple.***”

Sd. Kirpal Singh

Jathedar,

Sri Akal Takhat Sahib,

Sri Amritsar.

Sd. Sahib Singh

Head Granthi,

Sri Harimandir Sahib,

Sri Amritsar.


Dated, June 2, 1984.

Reproduced from, “Giani Kirpal Singh’s Eye Witness Account of Operation Blue Star” (1999) 2-3, B. Chattar Singh Jiwan Singh, Amritsar

3rd June 1984

- Foreign journalists banned from Punjab by law
- The pilgrims “... ***had been given no inkling or warning either of the sudden curfew or the imminent army attack. It was to be a black-hole type of tragedy, not out of forgetfulness but out of deliberate planning and design.***” Furthermore, “... ***innocent people were slaughtered like rats, first letting them enter the complex and then declaring the curfew which prevented them from going out, thousands were caught unawares, finally when the survivors were asked to surrender they were shot in cold blood...***” Amiya Rao et al, (1985:58) *Oppression in Punjab*, Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat Publication by Citizens for Democracy

5th June

- Female student near Akaal Takhat – army asked for people to surrender. Desperate for water many went out, in morning she saw their dead bodies on parkarma
 - 42 other Gurdwaras where alleged ‘terrorists’ taken haven also attacked – White Paper – thus terrorists in Gurdwaras across Punjab, if no surrender = flushed out
 - No charge sheets/arrest warrants for these ‘terrorists’ in white paper
- 



Smoking Gun

- No FIR – first information report on Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale
- No arrest warrants in Indian government White Paper for anyone taking sanctuary in the 42 Gurdwaras simultaneously attacked by the Indian army between 2-6 June 1984
- Damdami Taksal extremist? So then are thousands of Sikhs in the UK and globally – as they take inspiration and education off Damdami Taksal tutors, preachers etc
- Greatest Sikh of 20th century awarded at Akaal Takhat to Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale



Thanks for listening

Any questions?