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Social Movement, State and Political Violence in the Hariharpara Block of Murshidabad District, 1992

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Abstract:

The category of state violence in its crude form may sometimes conflate into a more nuanced one that emerged from a different and conditional category of political working deep within the realm of a particular society. The incident of violence in Hariharpara, a block in the district of Murshidabad, resembled with such a kind of political violence quarter century ago, in 1992, acquiring its political nature from the category of 'party society'. This article, however, attempts to understand the background, course and causes of that unprecedented incident of political violence in a democratic state of independent India through the testimony of an eye-witness of the violence before the 'Inquiry Commission' who himself was both an indirect victim and an 'accused' of the same.

Keywords: *Political violence, party-society, testimony, eye-witness, Hariharpara, HNKP.*

I. Introduction:

The state, being the most powerful institution among the social ones and having the monopoly over the legitimate use of force, is at odds with the society. This contradiction which has its roots in the very nature of state's authority to use force in face of social disorder sometimes causes it to be exalted to the surface in the form of political violence. It also brings with it a difference – a different perspective, so to say – in viewing the same event of violence which has been prompted by the state in order to cope with the problems of social disorder but eventually fail to do so by placing violence above it, for the state does not intend to maintain order *per se* but to impose it upon the society. An incident of violence by the state, i.e. district police and administration, in Hariharpara, a block of Murshidabad district, in which seven persons, viz. 1. *Abdur Rezzak Khan* (32), 2. *Shankar Dutta* (30), 3. *Sachhidananda Paul* (45), 4. *Altaf Hussain* alias *Bapi* (21), 5. *Ansar Khan* (26), 6. *Biswanath Saha* (26) and 7. *Anarul Islam* alias *Pintu* (21) **(RDCI, pp.17-18),** both the Hindu and Muslim volunteers, were killed in a police firing in front of the BDO's (Block Development Officer) office on 2 November, 1992 while observing a mass civil movement, a 'law violation programmme' as labeled by the state, is caught into this logic of perspective: being the perpetrator, the state's as self-defense and being victims, the people's allegation against state's incompetency and vile intention as regard to the incident of violence.

It, however, becomes evident in the depositions presented before an inquiry commission viz., the 'Das Commission of Inquiry' (DCI), under the chairpersonship of a retired Judge of the High Court of Calcutta (Kolkata), Haridas Das that was formed in order to investigate into the case by the Government of West Bengal. To pursue the terms of reference that: a. 'to inquire into the background, cause, course and nature of the incidents', b. to 'ascertain whether such incidents were pre-planned pre-meditated or was an instant outburst of mob fury', c. to 'consider whether any organized group or groups of people or individuals was/were behind the disturbances', d. to 'examine whether the firing by the police was justified', and e. to 'examine whether regulations as laid down in the Police Regulations, Bengal regarding use of the arms and minimum force were observed', the DCI had to examine '160 documents, some in series' and eighty nine witnesses in all including twenty seven persons, being witness nos. 63 to 89, on behalf of the District Administration and the District Police, i.e. the state. This article would, however, limit itself in dealing only with the first term of reference, i.e. background, course and causes of the incident for lack of space.

II. Eye-Witness:

The victims' perspective of the incident of Hariharpara is most rigorously expressed in the testimony of one of the prime eye-witnesses of the incident, i.e. Madan Sarkar. The testimony of Madan Sarkar, as perceiving and deposing witness, is important not only because his occupation was 'politics and social works' **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.1)**, or he was eye-witness ' no. 01' of the incident; neither for he is one of the chief organizer of the movement, nor for his crucial role in formation of the 'Hariharpara Nagarik Kalyan Parishad' (HNKP) as a challenging organization which had been active both against the state's i.e. police and administration, inaction on the one hand and in raising voice against the social turmoil in Hariharpara on the other. Rather, his testimony matters for his throughout involvement with the entire process before and after the occurring of the incident; because his testimony provides with an overview of the pre-history of the incident, dynamics of socio- political factors and heinous consequence of it in a democratic political system. What makes the testimony remarkable is Sarkar's sense of contumacy. In this way, he was able to present powerful depositions that represented the voices of doubly oppressed people of Hariharpara – by the social peace - breakers and by the legal - peacekeepers alike, and was eventually able to attain justice .

Sarkar's testimony was denied to be valid by the prosecution defending the State. They had reasons. At the last phase of the civil disobedience movement called by the HNKP on 2 November, 1992 Sarkar was, by chance, at a safe position from the spot of violence. In answering a question (no. 571) before the DCI he confessed:

…before such lathi charge was made by police, my security guard, Mansur Ali, held me by hand and took me away from the road, entered into the compound of BDO's office and then pushed me inside the police van. **(Sarkar, 15.02.1995, p.147)**

Having been dragged 'very quickly and speedily' away by Mansur Ali, an EFR (Eastern Frontier Rifles) Constable deployed as his bodyguard some months ago before the incident and pushed him inside a big black police van stationed within the compound of the BDO's office, the state prosecution had allegedly claimed, precluded him from seeing firing resorted to by the police and EFRs (Eastern Frontier Rifles) he claimed to be a witness of. Therefore the validity of his claim was tried to refute critically in a cross-examination dated 15.03.1995 by saying that *'sitting in the police prison van, it was absolutely not possible for you to see any firing by the EFR or by the police'.* **(Sarkar, 15.06.1995, p. 183)** The victims sought justice identified thirteen spots where persons either killed or injured by the bullets fired by the EFRs and/or police. Being inside a police prison van it could not be possible for him to see the backside or the zones outside the walls of BDO's office. He could but see the forefront and the both sides of the site of incident for it 'was a covered van, the sides of which were netted' (Answer to Question no. 586) in a manner similar to

the opening in front. Madan Sarkar did witness the firing resorted to by the different groups comprised of EFRs and police personnel from different positions they took to make fire on the day of incident.

One version of the incident of violence on November 2, 1992 was of the state's, that is, of the perpetrator's that gave violence its characteristic - a certain category to designate it as 'state violence'. It was the police and district administration that resorted to violence at a certain point of time to the people's movement in Hariharpara that indicates that the moments of state violence were the culmination of a long and ongoing series of moments that had been existed beyond the short temporal ambit of that violence resorted to by power of discretion of the state authority against the interest of people without taking the entire process of movement, its ins and outs, into account. The official interpretations could merely record and reveal those aspects of the incident to which it got access in that time and place. Certainly it had to leave many crucial issues outside the domain of its selective and so-called objective legal documents – the chunks of feelings, opinions and understandings – in order to construct its bureaucratic shield of self-defense before the law's piercing weapons. This is the reason why the state's version of the incident on November 2, 1992 before the BDO's office, plot no. 859 of Hariharpara *mouza*, was partial, bare of its actual contextual course of development. The police and administrative personnels' testimonies thus had limitations *ab intra*: for theirs being parts of a system of legitimate monopoly of force itself in general and for its short-sightedness of the movement's course and causes in particular. Moreover, their testimonies, indented to serve as materials for and instruments of self-defense mechanism, were supposed to defend as well as justify the acts of violence on state's part in an obvious way. These testimonies being mere 'formal' ones would desperately cut themselves off from the historical context of the incident by taking safe refuge to the citadel of 'bureaucratic' knowledge of the incident moving far away from 'real' ground-level knowledge at once. Hence, it is useful to venture into the testimony of someone like Madan Sarkar who was left with no other choice but to state the real course of events.

III. Background of the Incident:

In his first deposition before the DCI dated 26 April, 1994, seventeen months later of the incident in Hariharpara, a block about twenty five kilometers away from the *sadar* town of Berhampore towards east, with an area of 252.8 square kilo meters and ten Gram Panchaytas, Madan Sarkar's testimony, through a method of questions-and-answers, was concerned chiefly with two issues: (a) the social condition that served as a breeding ground of the criminal activities, and (b) the origin and development of HNKP against former one. Activities of anti-socials started to increase, said Madan Sarkar, in the first half of 1980s, especially in the years between 1983 and 1985: 'The Anti-socials began to extort money from the villagers, businessmen, etc. Anti-socials belonging to one group sometimes committed to murder of the members of another group of anti-socials. Such anti-socials also used to do *salis* in disputes between the parties or villagers and impose fines according to their will.' **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.02)** In the months of June and July 1985 four or five very serious incidents of crime took place in Hariharpara. A dacoity was committed in the house of Abdul Kader Khondkar, a former *Gram Panchayat Pradhan* of one of the GPs in the block, viz. Choa; in another incident of same kind a ration dealer Dabiruddin Sheikh of Raipur Saharbasa village was killed by the miscreants; a young boy named Bablu Roy and a *rickshawala* (Riksaw driver) were murdered in the same period of time. All these incidents, obviously, affected the law and order situation in Hariharpara. To confront it, an official meeting was convened and 'Peace Committee' was formed with the initiative of Barun Das, the then BDO of Hariharpara. Although, the terms and expressions such as *'criminals', 'anti-socials', 'maskers', 'socket bombs'* etc. become known and familiar to and were commonly used by the so-far- ignorant people of Hariharpara P.S. during the period from 1983 to 1984: the ghastly signifiers had acquired real life meanings through everyday popular experiences.

In the latter half of 1980s, to be specific, in 1987 anti-social activities resumed and 'the unlawful activities of the anti-socials went on increasing' to an unbearable limit. Large numbers of robberies, murders were committed, 'Women were raped', and 'tortures of other kinds' were being perpetrated by the miscreants. 'The people of Hariharpara from time to time approached the police and administrative authorities and made representations to the Officer-in-Charge of the police station and other higher authorities' **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.04)** but yielded no result. The people of Hariharpara had to suffer it from both ways: by 'omission' for this time the police and local administration tried to avoid their responsibilities despite several and repeated appeals made by the people to them to take action against the criminals. In an answer to a question Sarkar had explained it thus: 'Sometimes the police refused to accept written complaints and FIRs. Sometimes the police used to record complaints according to their will and ant in the manner as reported by the complainants. Proper investigations of the cases not made. Proper actions were not taken against the anti-socials.' **(Sarkar, 06.04.1994, p.04)** The officials assigned to do their duties to the government's literacy programmes could not be able to access their venues of duty because of anti-socials' prohibition and disturbances - clearly indicates the abject state of law and order in Hariharpara in this period.

In these abnormal circumstances, 'all the respectable and law abiding people of Hariharpara felt that some effective steps must be taken to curb the activities of the anti-socials.' **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p. 05)** The gathered to hold an informal meeting on February 14, 1992 in the premise of a club, Probhat Sangha, in Hariharpara. Also, leaders of various local associations and students' front attended the meeting. In the meeting, some decisions were taken and a body was formed. The body was authorized in a convention held on November 22, 1992 in the presence of 'about five hundred persons'. In an answer to a question in a later deposition before DCE dated on 28 April, 1994 about the nature of the formed body, i.e. the newly constituted organization, Sarkar asserted that: 'It is a non-political organization of the people of Hariharpara. It is, however, true that some of the members of the Parishad are members of or are associated with different political parties, but, at the same time, it is also true some members are not attached to any political party.' **(Sarkar, 28.04.1994, P.20)** The organization was named as 'Hariharpara Nagarik Kalyan Parishad'.

Thus a 'new-felt need' coming out of feelings of dissatisfaction and deprivation with the existing *dis-order* helped two aspects to emerge as possible responses to the crises in Hariharpara – a *collective consciousness,* a spatial one so to say, among the common populace was built and a group as an *organization,* HNKP, based on it was formed. What all it suggests is patent in the testimony so far: a social movement was incipient, for a movement is directed against something which it hopes to combat and eliminate, and motivations behind the collective effort were the modifications of existing social arrangements. The nature of goals of social movement in Hariharpara was no less symbolic in a sense that it was basically geared towards a redefinition of values of human existence with rights and dignity preserved by the state for its citizens; also instrumental in a sense that as its engine the HNKP was formed 'to resist and curb s the activities of the anti-socials and to save the people of Hariharpara' and to communicate their demands to the police and administration, that is, to pressurize the state authorities to positive direction.

IV. The Course of Popular Agitation:

Between 22.2.1992 and 21.10.1992, the HNKP kept on taking steps in democratic manner. The HNKP used to organize, support and take care of people's demonstrations, deputations, sit-in-protests, circulate hand-bills and leaflets, arrange public meetings, sent letters, representations and submit several memoranda to the fitting authorities of police and administration as well as to the political and non-political organizations of the district from time to time. Such examples were ample in Madan Sarkar's testimony. Some of them are taken from the deposition he made on 27 April, 1994, before the DCI as relevant here as follows in chronological sequence except the last one in the list:

1. A memorandum containing 15 items of demand were submitted to Officer-in-Charge, Hariharpara Police Station; **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.08)**

2. 24.02.1992 a representation was submitted to the SP (Superintendent of Police) with a copy of memoranda filed before the OC Hariharpara; **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.08)**

3. 24.02.1992 a memorandum was submitted to the BDO, Hariharpara, seeking his help in maintaining law and order; **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.08)**

4. On 03.04.1992 another memorandum was submitted to the BDO by HNKP in the presence of the SDO (Subdivitional Officer); **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p.09)**

5. A public meeting was called and held in the football ground of Choa High School on 17.04.1992; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.11)**

6. On 12.8.1992 a representation was sent to different political parties and authorities; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.13)**

7. On 5.9.1992 a sit-in-demonstration was held by HNKP at Hariharpara More (crossing) from 10am to 5 pm. Ahsis Roy Chowdhury, Secretary of district committee of Revolutionary Socialist Party (India), Achintya Sinha, a Trade Union Leader, Debesh Adhikary, Vice-President of District Committee of Bharatiya Janata Party, Kartik Sahana, Member of the district committee RSP of Murshidabad were present in it and they addressed the gathering; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.14)**

8. On 11.9.1992 about 1000 women assembled at Hariharpara More and resorted a sit-in-demonstration on the road. The members of People's Union for Civil Liberties, Jangipur Bar Association submitted memoranda to the Kalidas Bose, Deputy Superintendent of Police; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.14)**

9. On 1.10.92 a representation was presented before the BDO on behalf of the students and teachers of Hariharpara stating that they would take part in the civil disobedience movement if the police and administration did not take proper action; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.17)**

10. On 14.10.92 a similar memorandum was submitted by the business community before the BDO; **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.17)**

11. On 16.10.1992 a memorandum was submitted by some elected members and Prodhans of some Gram Panchayats before BDO making the same prayer and 'Some ladies and women of Hariharpara submitted a similar representation before the BDO on 20.10.92.' **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.17)**

12. On 28.10.92, some of the office bearers of HNKP came to visit the District Magistrate, M.L. Mina, but he was absent. They, then, 'sent, by courier service, three more representations, similar to the one submitted to the District Magistrate on 28.2.92, to the Chief Secretary, Govt. of west Bengal, Home Secretary, Govt. of West Bengal and to the Director General of Police.' **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.17-18)**

13. HNKP circulated hand bills before the never-to-be anticipated final incident of violence on 2.11.1992 in which the people were appealed to 'participate in the mass civil disobedience movement'. **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.18)**

These series of appeals to the police and administrative authorities had two temporal phases within the movement under leadership of HNKP: first, from the point of the formation of HNKP to the fourth week of June, 1992, and second, the coming months before the incident. The second phase, a much more volatile one, had parted from its continuation by increasing 'numbers of crimes committed in Hariharpara'. Especially

murders of Abdul Latif Mondal, Rafiq Sk and Julfiqar Sk. on 21.08.1992 made 'the people of Hariharpara became agitated'.

The attitude of the police and administration even after these incidents remained unchanged even in the midst of the social movement in Hariharpara. In the face of the debacle of the appropriate authorities HNKP submitted a memorandum to the B.D.O of Hariharpara on 25.09.1992. HNKP made a request in it that

It was further indicated in the memorandum that in the event the authorities failed to take action to root out the anti-socials and to curb their activities by 30.10.92 on war footing, the people of Hariharpara would take resort to resort to a mass civil disobedience movement in the office of the BDO on 2.11.1992 for the purpose of establishing the rule of law in Hariharpara. **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.16)**

The memorandum, seen and treated an ultimatum from both of the sides, before the incident of state violence in Hariharpara caused to draw the movement into its final phase - closer to its daunting point of culmination. What made this phase different from the other ones in the life cycle of the movement was a degree of greater activities on both sides: the people of Hariharpara and the leaders of HNKP now wanted to blow a whistle both on the anti-socials as their primary target and on the police and administration as the secondary target with an eye to restore the everyday normalcy to the people of Hariharpara before long, and the local administration, for the first time, by starting to prepare itself for the event of the civil disobedience movement declared by the HNKP. Sarkar himself**,** as representative of HNKP, was called, on October 30th, to meet Saibal Burman, B.D.O., Hariharpara (on behalf of the state authority) and they had a discussion regarding to the ways and means of the said programme. In the discussion between them some vital points were agreed upon, such as:

(i) The civil disobedience movement must be completed by five o'clock in the afternoon as it was winter season and a period of dark fortnight, i.e. '*Krishna Paksha'*.

(ii) '…important citizens and personalities, numbering not more than 300, would court arrest.'**(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.18)**

(iii) participants arrested 'would be kept on the open space at the backside of the Hariharpara Gram Panchayat Office.' **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.18)**

(iv) it was also decided that 'arrested persons would hold discussions with the senior Govt. officials and the decisions arrived at would be announced over mike.' **(Sarkar, 27.04.1994, p.19)**

What takes a reader aback of this testimony are the points identified by Sarkar in answering a very important question before the DCI that: 'what preparatory steps, as far as you are aware of, taken by the administration in the context of the proposed civil disobedience movement on 2nd November, 1992 ?' **(Sarkar, 07.06.1994, p.25)** The testifier alluded to, based on the observations he and his fellows made during those days, only two positive steps among the sixteen – the rest of the arrangements, points made from c) to m), were either doubtfully unnecessary or negative in terms of the programme of civil disobedience as they were taken with in order to cut the tempo of the people's movement short out of some ulterior motives. Points 'a) salaries of the staff of the B.D.O. were paid on 30-10-92 on the basis of a special order' and 'b) On 1-11-92 the B.D.O. engaged two labourers, namely Bhola Mahato and Palash Ghosh of Hariharpara for collecting brickbats which lay scattered in the compound of BDO's office and in surrounding areas and stored such brickbats in the godown' fall into the positive box. Point 'd) Mr Sudhamoy Sarkar was Officer-in-charge of Hariharpara P.S. But, a few days before the date of civil disobedience movement, Mr. Sudhamoy Sarkar was absent from the Police – Stn. and, instead, Mr. B. K. Saha was deputed as Officer-in-charge of Hariharpara Police Station. Mr. B.K. Saha was present on the date of civil disobedience movement. But a few days after the

civil disobedience movement civil disobedience movement Mr. B.K. Saha left Hariharpara P.S.' or, 'g) two Medical Officers of Primary Health Centre, namely, Dr. Sibaji Dutta and Dr. Arabinda Das were brought to the BDO's office before the commencement of the programme of civil disobedience movement' are two examples of the doubtful unnecessary steps. Negative steps taken by the police and administration are several such as point 'f) EFRs which are brought to Hariharpara to deal with anti-socials were deployed on that date… to deal with the participants of the civil disobedience movement', or 'h) From the side of the administration or from the side of Police, no arrangement for vehicles was made for carrying the participants of the programme of civil disobedience movement in the event of their arrest.' And, 'm) We noticed that Public Bus stopped playing after 2-30P.M. and we do not know why playing bus was stopped.' However, one point, that is, k) mentioned by Sarkar was off the mark for it was about the anti-socials instead of police and administration. Sarkar's depositions signaled out that the state took some inimical measures on the eve of the movement which were clearly no other than breaching of the agreement on arrangements, exhibitionism of police power and serious contradictions within the realm of state's workings. And this, therefore, was indicative of, as it loomed to the future victims of violence, the implied intentions of state's animosity towards the movement and its organizers and leaders, as *'challenging group'* acting against the state.

V. Why Violence?

The HNKP 'was formed', Madan Sarkar had affirmed, 'with the object of making a common front consisting of Police, administration and people' of Hariharpara. It was only in the final phase of the movement that the state turned active and wakeful, but unexpectedly, against the 'common front' which it was supposed to be a part of and 'its objectives'. The district police and administration so now fell to doing some 'direct action'. On November, 2, 1992, the proposed procession of civil disobedience movement, comprised of common people, old and young men and women, and, students, formed in two rows, moved forward along with its scheduled route. As per the decided schedule, 'there was to remain a police barricade on the road', but 'people of procession proceed further towards north towards BDO's office' for there was no such barricade. Also the road was not cordoned by the police. Police personnel were posted at the entrance point of the BDO's office complex. EFR personnel were deployed. The procession with the leaders in the forefront giving slogans 'was interacted a little before we could reach up to the entrance of the BDO's office'. Suddenly police charged the leaders with *lathis*. 'But a few minutes thereafter EFRs resorted to firing and almost simultaneously the police burst tear gas shells and also opened fire.' The state-claimed cause of incident was: 'attack on police by members of the procession'. 'Government Notification' approaching the Commission mentioned that the demonstrators numbering about 3500 were 'armed with *lathies, tangies, bows and arrows, firearms, pipe guns, muskets*, etc' became violent and 'disturbances of serious nature took place'.**(RDCI, p.01)**

There was neither free fighting, nor pitched battle, rather it were 'apprehension of destruction of Govt. properties and records' and 'apprehension of attack on the Govt. officials' that prompted the EFRs and police to use 'legitimate force'. The result was a shuddering spectacle and a torment memory – an unforgettable experience caused to put a companion in the making of a determined 'witness':

I (Madan Sarkar) myself saw Abdur Razzak Khan and Shankar Dutta fall down outside the south-east corner of plot No. 859 on being hit by bullets… Zillur Rahaman to fall down just outside the north east corner... **(Sarkar, 27.07.1994, p.66)**

The facts that there was no promulgation of section 144 Cr. P.C., no warning, not any prohibitory order; no damage of government vehicle, the fencing of the BDO's office, the plants of forest departments (even the bamboo fencing on the eastern border of plot no.859 'remained intact'); not using of no modern alternative

methods like water canon or rubber bullets; and bullets injuries in the upper parts of the bodies of the victims, however, evidently incline to confute a theory of *'outburst of mob fury'* expounded by the state and leads rather to reveal another facet of the 'use of legitimate violence', as the witness argued before the DCI: 'pre-planned' violence.

This stern allegation made by the eye-witness concurs with the changeover of position and outlook from the side of the 'social peacekeepers' - as they were too in the 'common front' formed with the initiative of the HNKP in the beginning - on an forthcoming democratic programme of social demand and protest. Sarkar's testimony, however, bears qualm regarding the incident of violence, for instance, how a police personnel would know '*there would be firing'* without being an astrologer. And it searches out meaning of the contradiction by focusing on the other side of the same coin, a connecting factor between the two different but most significant kinds of 'political categories' of party-society in the politics of West Bengal since 1980s - the reciprocal relationship between the 'state' and the 'political party'. Like the state, the most forceful political adversities had come from a political party which had been a seeming sympathizer of the movement in Hariharpara led by HNKP – the ruling political party, the CPI (M), the prevailing power 'in all 12 political parties, both big and small in Hariharpara.' The political history of Hariharpara, according to Sarkar's deposed account shows that the Indian National Congress candidates won all of the general assembly elections till 1982 except only one, held in 1971; from 1977 to 1987 Sk. Immajuddin 'a candidate set up by the Congress (I)' was elected as M.L.A. of the Hariharpara Assembly Constituency. But table was turned in the second half of the 1980s: the CPI (M) had achieved victory in the general assembly election of 1987 and in the GP election of 1988 in Hariharpara. In 1987, 'Sk. Mozammel Haque of CPI (M) won the seat'.

The meeting in which HNKP was formed 'a question arose that some of the political parties were giving protection to some of the anti-socials and that, therefore, to check the activities of the anti-socials, political parties should give an undertaken or should make a promise that no one of them render any help or give any protection to any anti-socials committing unlawful acts even if such anti-social was a member of that political party.' **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p. 06)** Consequently, the representatives of all political parties complying with the proposal 'signed the appeal', except CPI (M) for 'no representative of CPI (M) was present in the meeting'. The cause, at first sight, seems reasonable. No meeting, even of such social and political nature and importance, can guarantee a hundred per cent presence of the persons concerned or expected to be in the meeting. Sarkar's testimony hints at silent presence of politics in the centre stage of the play at this point. An innocent conviction apparently devoid of malaises is turned out to be perfidious armed with a political intent as it goes on to suggest: the same appeal was once again placed in a convention held on 22.02.1992, a few days later, for approval and Mozammel Haque who himself addressed the meeting 'did not sign the appeal in spite of request.'[31] **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, p. 07)** Moreover, HNKP's another attempt for taking CPI(M) into its confidence in the larger interest of the movement failed when a 'letter was sent to the CPI(M)'s office at Hariharpara for signing the appeal but no reply was received' in turn. MLA Mozammel Haque's not signing the appeal personally and no response from CPI (M)'s local level office organizationally, it appears by reason of Sarkar's comprehension expressed in the testimony, comes to link the ends of a thread - denials on the part of the ruling political party to be a part of a civil movement approved of a suspicion of having vested interest as fact. The non-cooperation, so to say, earned both the MLA and the CPI (M) a reputation of potential foes by taking off the pretended veil comradeship – as violators of social solidarity with the sharp edge of political parochialism. This was thus political power mediated by a dominant political organization that overheard the voices of society with a view to keep the latter in its thrall - a strategy, cliché yet effective, usually followed by those in power. The point is further substantiated through a post-incident statement filled by the MLA himself alleging that HNKP ensured that 'none of the police personnel could go back unharmed on that date'. **(Sarkar, 23.08.1994, p. 77)**

Sarkar's testimony, based on his focalization, tries to explain the mutual relationships between the triad resting upon respective vested interest, the most egregious yet explicit political phenomenon in the party society of the district of Murshidabad since the first half of the 1980s, when he said that the activities of anti-socials in Hariharpara 'increased considerably by reason of protection which the anti-socials got from the ruling party…and also form the police'. **(Sarkar, 26.04.1994, pp. 3-4)** A relevant observation that - 'Rural West Bengal has never seen the Weberian ideal where the state holds a monopoly over legitimate violence. Rather the political mediators in local conflicts have always used violence, or threat of violence, as a strategic resource to be deployed in the task of building consensus' **(Chatterjee, 2009, p.45)** - if taken to be true, further underpins the fact existing in the better part of rural West Bengal. In Hariharpara, 1992, as the testimony indicates, the ruling political mediators used violence via police and administration by using them as a means of politics for the management of illegalities within public domain; and it holds a common exemplary measure in it - to punish the acts of resistance, and also to wipe out the potential for another future resistance in advance with a threat of same kind of violence. Thus violence of 2nd November seems to come full circle, in terms of its second perpetrator's existence, to be designated by another discrete category of 'political'.

VI. Conclusion:

Madan Sarkar's testimony as to the background, course and causes of the incident of Hariharpara stands in opposition to the claims made by the Murshidabad district police and administration. It asserts that the incident was neither 'an instant outburst of mob fury' nor certain organized group and individuals were responsible for it. And the depositions he made go a step further that the police breached the government regulations in using force and 'firing by the police' was not justified. In doing so, distinguishing between the 'bureaucratic' and the 'real' forms of knowledge, to use Karl Marx's terms, it tends to portray a curved path of politics from a Hariharpara, the 'Chambal of Murshidabad' as it was known in the mid-1980s to a Hariharpara, the 'Jallianwala Bagh of Murshidabad', afterwards November 2, 1992 that had multiple shifts: first supposed association of HNKP, CPI(M) and administration against the anti-socials, then latter turning against HNKP which gave the anti-socials relatively free hand. The state eventually replaced the anti-social activities as the active force as the CPI (M) broke with the people's aspirations. The ruling party and the state came to treat HNKP and its movement as more dangerous and threatening than the anti-socials owing not only to their distance from the former and proximity to the latter but also for their anxiety about former's ability to act according to democratic ideals that could defy their dominance in the practical political domain. The state and the ruling party became more concerned with HNKP and its agenda of mass mobilization than the activities of anti-socials. What is important is that the testimony in its own way reflects the nature and tendencies of party- society to a notable extent which worked as breeding-ground of differences between civil consciousness and political craving after power marked by a struggle for survival. The state was, in a way, it may be deduced from the overview of Sarkar's testimony, inset to speak of party's outlook as ventriloquist's doll. The state could but use violence as it was much keener on protecting the interest of the ruling political party which mastered over it in the game against the force of social movement.

Abbreviations

BDO	:	Block Development Officer
DCI	:	Das Commission of Inquiry
CPI (M)	:	Communist Party of India (Marxist)

Cr, P.C.	:	Code of Criminal Procedure
EFR	:	Eastern Frontier Rifles
GP	:	Gram Panchayat
HNKP	:	Hariharpara Nagarik Kalyan Parishad
MLA	:	Member of Legislative Assembly

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