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Toronto's Sikh factions apparently have mended their fences and banded together to demonstrate yesterday in front of Indian consulate.

Toronto Sikhs scream for Gandhi's blood

By ZUHAIR KASHMERI

More than 700 Sikhs, screaming for Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's blood, converged at that country's consulate in Toronto yesterday in a rare show of unity.

They were protesting against the Indian army's assault on Sikhdom's holiest shrine, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, capital of Punjab, and the killing of their fundamentalist leader within, Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

Meanwhile, according to spokesmen from four Ontario temples, emotionally agitated Sikhs were calling and volunteering to be sent to India as one-man assassination squads to kill Mrs. Gandhi.

"I have received 90 names so far," said one Sikh leader who did not wish to be

identified. "Whether any of them go over is another matter."

The steps of the office tower at 2 Bloor St. E., where the consulate is situated in downtown Toronto, were used as a stage by local Sikh leaders to scream: "Blood will be revenged with blood," to burn the Indian flag and throw shoes at a caricature of Mrs. Gandhi.

On the steps shouting the slogans were Gurdeep Singh Nagra, vice-president of the Guru Singh Sabha temple on Old Weston Road, and Pritam Singh Sian, president of the Shromani Singh Sabha temple on Pape Avenue. The demonstrators were watched closely by Metro Toronto Police, both uniformed and in plain clothes, who blocked the entrance to the building.

Both the Sikh leaders spoke in support

of the creation of a Sikh country, Khalistan, carved out of India's northwest.

Ironically, a year and a half ago, members of the same two temples clashed at the same location over the same issue. The clash ended in gunfire, seriously injuring a Metro police constable.

At the time, members of the Old Weston Road temple supported the creation of Khalistan, while those from the other temple shouted slogans supporting Mrs. Gandhi.

A power struggle between the same two temples also led to the March, 1982, shooting at Osgoode Hall in which a lawyer and a Sikh were killed and another Sikh was crippled for life.

Yesterday, for both leaders and their followers, it was: "Nothing less than

Khalistan," and, "Death to Indira Gandhi." They accused her of attempting to turn India into a Hindu state to the detriment of minorities such as Sikhs.

Mrs. Gandhi's action in sending the army to quell the Sikh agitation has resulted in another strange alliance in Canada, between Sikhs and Moslems.

The two communities fought bitterly after the British carved out a portion of Punjab, the Sikh state in India, to create Pakistan, a country for the subcontinent's Moslems. Millions of men, women and children died in that rioting.

Asaf Shuja, general secretary of the National Federation of Pakistani Canadians, was one of the demonstrators yesterday.

He said several Moslems will join another, bigger, Sikh demonstration planned outside the Toronto consulate on Sunday, while Sikhs will join a Moslem demonstration the following Sunday.

The Moslems are accusing Mrs. Gandhi's Congress Party Government of deliberately allowing Hindu-Moslem riots to occur, in which the Moslem minority usually suffers greater casualties. The most recent riots in Bombay and nearby Bhiwandi left 200 dead, according to official Government figures.

A Metro police officer familiar with the Sikh situation in Toronto said that Mrs. Gandhi's action may have sent Punjab up in flames, but it has done "wonders for the law and order situation in Toronto."

"Previously, we did not support Khalistan, now we are supporting it openly," said Shamsher Singh Grewal, a member of the Pape Avenue temple, who is consid-

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ered one of the behind-the-scenes guiding forces of that temple.

The unity created in Toronto is undoubtedly a direct result of the Indian Government's actions in Punjab. For almost a year, Punjabi weeklies in Toronto such as *Pardesi Panjab*, published by Surdip Singh Chauhan, and *Sanjh Savera*, published by Gurmeh Singh Brar, have carried reports on the Punjab situation on the front page.

"The quarrels in Toronto were like a domestic quarrel," Mr. Brar said. "These are being put aside because the situation back home is higher up on the agenda."

"How would you feel if your brother or another relative at home was killed?" asked Mr. Chauhan, the other editor. "How would you feel if your family home had been burned down? Isn't that an emotional issue? Enough to bring the community together?"

Where less than two years ago, rival factions in Toronto were telephoning death threats to each other and even hatching some assassination plots, the target now is Mrs. Gandhi.

Whereas Metro police are discounting reports of any assassination squads being sent from North America, it is generally accepted that the Sikh agitation in Punjab is being bankrolled by North American Sikhs who number nearly 250,-

000, with about 150,000 of them in Canada.

The Khalistan movement originated in North America and its organizers have printed thousands of Khalistani dollar bills, stamps and even passports in preparation for independence. Three years ago, *The Globe and Mail* reported that as much as \$1.2-million a year was being sent to Punjab from North America.

Yesterday, Darshan Singh Saini, one of the organizers who holds a ministerial rank in a Khalistani government-in-exile, said money is pouring in as a result of the Indian Government's action.

He said the Khalistan movement will direct its energies to promoting "full-scale revolution" in Punjab

and will settle for nothing less than a separate country. This is just the beginning, he said.

Another prominent Sikh, who did not wish to be identified, said that arrangements have been made at every Sikh temple in Canada to receive funds for Punjab and transfer the money to a secret fund, to be used mainly to help the families of the "martyrs" and to give material support to the Sikh militants in Punjab.

He did not want to comment on Indian Government reports that money from North America was also being used to buy arms for the militants, except to say that the next time around, the militants will be even better armed.