

# **PRINT MEDIA AND THE SIKH POLITICS (1900-1947)**

**A Case Study of The Tribune**

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## INTRODUCTION

The realisation of Sikh identity following recurring consolidations and dilutions during the period under study (1900-1947) has indeed been a significant activity. An effort has been made in this work to co-relate this activity with the concomitant growth of the print media, with particular reference to The Tribune, in Punjab.

Many researchers, historians and authors have dealt with various aspects, including the Sikh politics, of Sikhism separately and in totality. And almost all of them have taken the aid of newspapers and journals to analyse, substantiate and authenticate their theses in this regard. Such a 'journalistic use', however, is sporadic in their works as none of them has noted and thought of exploiting it as a sole agency, a powerful one, on that, to underlining the strong cause-effect relationship between these three components - the Sikh politics, the print media and The Tribune- so far.

The Sikh politics was on its way of establishing its identity during the pre-independence era, facing strong challenges from the two other major communities - the Hindus and the Muslims - in the Province. The strengthening and weakening factors played their due roles in the evolutionary process of Sikh politics, which catalysed the ultimate culmination of a distinct community superstructure, having

its infrastructural basis in the Sikh faith.

The Punjab Press, especially the vernacular Press has always held the spotlight in determining the politics of regional faiths. Its growth has had been throwing light, rather constituting a major source to know the critical history of a politics in all its perspectives. Moreover, the interdependence factor between the print media and the regional politics has conspicuously been drawn out during the entire course of their respective histories.

During my stay with The Tribune from 1978 to 1983, I sometimes used to collate the old and new files of the Paper at its Chandigarh library during free time in an effort to make an critical study of its historical development. The essay proved a real case. The by and large 'dispassionately subjective' stance, with which the Paper had reported and editorialised the facts about the communal and religious activities in Punjab came ready to my mind when I thought of choosing the present topic for my doctorate.

I have been among the newspapers all these years when I found to my satisfaction that The Tribune happens to be the only English newspaper of Punjab which has an almost non-chequered history, and whose circulation and credibility has followed a continuously upward trend with minor fluctuations. Moreover, it was the only Punjab Paper, vis-a-vis its other contemporaries, which has by and large remained committed to secularism.

The whole concept then was clear and the stage was set for me to research deep into establishing a link between the three co-eval entities - the Sikh politics, the print media and The Tribune.

My basic source material is print media, especially The Tribune, which I have used to authenticate the references on Sikh politics. I have 'clipped' the pre-independence period for my study as the people, who feel concerned about journalism and Sikh politics have almost all issues fresh in their memories for the post-independence period. My endeavour thus amounts to make a few additions to the existing information and knowledge on these aspects in a combined, consolidated and concrete form.

I have taken print media in the sense and context of newspapers, with extra stress on Punjabi newspapers as they were very closely associated, rather involved, with the Sikh political activities during the period.

To systematically analyse the topic, I have divided the work into six chapters. Chapter I tends to provide a conceptual framework of the politics of the Sikh community. Chapter II furnishes details about the origination and chronological development of the print media in Punjab covering four languages, namely, English, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi. Chapter III intends to serve the purpose of establishing a co-relationship between the print media and the Sikh politics of the period. Chapter IV gives a glimpse

of the historical development and significance of The Tribune and Chapter V is devoted to examining the probable relationship between The Tribune and the Sikh politics. The last Chapter, of course, sums up compendiously and cogently the whole discussion on the basis of facts attended to in the previous Chapters.

I have made all out efforts to consult and examine the newspapers, journals, books, official reports, documents, files, proceedings, memoranda and other types of record stacked in the libraries and archives. Besides this, I have also included photocopies of more than 70 English, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi newspapers to make the work look lively and powerful. A map has also been used to authenticate my thesis that Simla (now Shimla) and Gurgaon formed the part of the undivided Punjab, as has been referred to on Page 119 of this study.

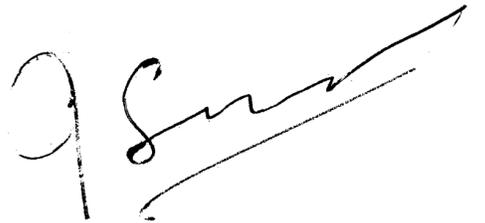
I was fortunate enough to have come in contact with some of the seasoned historians, journalists and the Sikh stalwarts, whom I could interview to have the first hand information. These included Dr Ganda Singh, Dr S.S. Bal, Mr G.R. Sethi, Mr Janna Das Akhtar and Mr Sher Singh Gupta.

In a study of this kind, the use of some Punjabi, Urdu and Hindi words, which may sound foreign to a few readers, is unavoidable in view of the fact that their exact equivalent in English is not available. I have, however,

taken the help of glossary to clear the meanings of these words. I also faced problems in spelling some of those words which have been used differently by different authors. As many spellings as I could found available of such words or names during the course of my study have also been dealt with in the glossary part of this project. I have avoided to the maximum extent committing any breach of style, pattern, case (upper or lower) or form, used by different authors. Besides this, I have used the letter 'P' as capital for the word 'Paper', short for newspaper, so as to distinguish it from the other 'paper', which means a piece of sheet, used for writing, painting or drawing etc.

Some other difficulties which I came across during my study include the non-availability of the relevant 'materials' at one or two places; ignoring of the significant Sikh activities by most of the national newspapers; and the biased coverage of news and views about the communal, religious and political activities by the vernaculars.

Though it is very difficult to achieve perfection or finality in such pursuits, even then I have spared no effort to analyse the available facts objectively and critically to my capacity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. S. Singh', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At the very outset, I recall with deep gratitude the able and scholarly guidance of my supervisor Dr S.P. Singh, Reader, School of Punjabi Studies, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. His unstinted help, coupled with ever-encouraging remarks gave me ample strength to defeat all difficulties en-route to this pioneer accomplishment.

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I extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Harjinder Walia, whose valuable comments enabled me to fill the needful gaps in my work. Dr. Gurnam Singh's help in every respect is too deep for words.

I cannot dare overlook the ever-forthcoming assistance of my colleagues, especially of Mr Sushil Goyal, Mr Mr Kulwant Singh Pattarkar, Darshan Singh, Tarlochan Singh Dhandli, / Mr Balbir Singh and Bansil Lal also

rendered all what was needful for me.

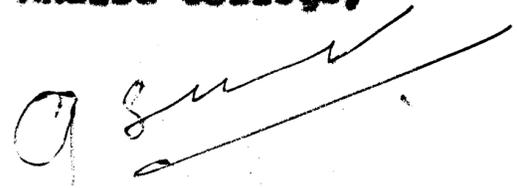
And then who can forget the typist- friend, Mr Harmail Singh, who smilingly greeted all my complaints and removed them consequently to my satisfaction.

I am all praise for my wife, Mrs Nirmaljot, who held the citadel single handed all these years, and nicely on that. And then how can I forget my four year old daughter, Lado, who had to 'bear it with me' at the expense of her childhood pleasures.

I also feel indebted to my father, Mr Surjit Singh Maan, mother, Mrs Parkash Kaur and father-in-law, Mr Dalip Singh Wasan, who continued to await for the completion of my task.

In the end, I hold in deep respect the support extended to me by the administration and staff of the following libraries:

1. The National Archives of India, New Delhi.
2. The Punjab State Archives, Patiala.
3. The Punjabi University Main Library.
4. The Libraries of the Departments of History and Correspondence Courses, Punjabi University, Patiala.
5. Dr Ganda Singh's Library, Patiala.
6. The Tribune Library, Chandigarh.
7. The Sikh Reference Library, Amritsar.
8. The Sikh History Research Centre, Khalsa College, Amritsar.



**CHAPTER I**

**THE SIKH POLITICS - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

## CHAPTER I

### THE SIKH POLITICS - A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

The Sikh politics is just about 500, as is the Sikh religion. These two aspects of Sikhism have co-originated, co-developed, co-climaxed, co-established and have jointly faced, jointly encountered and jointly confronted the co-existent factors of identity crisis and communal consciousness with respect to each other. Such mutually-linked and mutually-spontaneous has had been the phenomenon that the Sikh politics cannot be taken in an isolated form or simply as an offshoot or a branch of Sikh religion or Sikh style of living, thinking and performing at any stage of reference and consideration. And then the Sikh social order and religious theory may not be considered just a replica of the Sikh political system, the Sikh faith or the Sikh belief. There is neither any contradiction between the sociological and political patterns of Sikhism nor similarity thereof. While Sikhism is "an all inclusive way of life and system of values", the Sikh politics constitutes "a system of policies and plans for making arrangements for practical realisation of the noble values, preached by the religion."<sup>1</sup> Religion in Sikhism acts as a source of inspiration and as a guiding factor to the politician and the ruler. A perusal of the theological patterns of Sikhism would draw one near to the conclusion that the secular, non-sectarian and social philosophy of the Sikh Gurus have had become the foundational structure of the

Sikh polity or Sikh political values and system, envisaging an ideal Sikh state.<sup>2</sup>

The course which the Sikh politics has subjected itself to, reveals that it is a unique type of evolution having initiation in self-perception, following different stages of identification, consciousness and separation, ultimately leading to the formation of a faith, having recognisable and identifiable characteristics and components. Sikhs today are a separate and distinct community, possessing a deep-rooted sense of identity evolving from segregation of a sort of communal consciousness in the last quarter of the 19th century and the heralding and just following years of the next century, which were, as a matter of fact, years of social and religious reforms not only among the Sikhs but among the Hindus too.

The 19th century, in fact, adopted the measures of a sort of socio-political catastrophe for the Sikhs as they were in the grip of a 'lost phase of glory'. The situation was further worsened due to the proselytising activities of the spreading Hinduism, spearheaded by Dayananda's 'bedrock faith in the Vedas' and his way of treating Guru Granth Sahib as 'a work of secondary importance' and just a 'compilation of stolen, translated pieces from the Vedas'. However, the more the Hindu fanatic leaders essayed to label Sikhism as an offspring of Hinduism, the more the Sikhs became redoubtable to dissociate themselves from its umbrella as a separate communal and cultural entity.<sup>3</sup> The Sikhs joined hands with the Muslims to get the 'Hindu Bible' of the Arya Samajists,

the Satyarath Prakash banned for its containing insinuating and contemptuous material for all faiths.

Sikhism to begin with was a religious order but with the passage of time it soon developed into a religio-political movement. While Christianity treats "obedience to civil authority as a religious obligation", Koran orders for "obeying those with authority amongst you." The Sikh Gurus, however, were of the view that "the Sikh State is to be obeyed not because of religious duty but as a political necessity."<sup>4</sup>

The history of the Sikh politics reverberates with echoes constituting various stages of crisis and realisation of the Sikh identity, institutionalised by Guru Gobind Singh, under his commandment in Sarab Loh Granth as:

My Divine, Sovereign Power would remain  
vested in the Khalsa so long as it retains  
its uniqueness, its identity. 5

He attributed his people, created through baptism of Pahul the nomenclature of Khalsa — the peoplehood which had not only the external bearings of the five Kakkars, but also internal doctrinal identity, separate from the common manhood. Both the external as well as internal identity and conceptual values started degenerating soon after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the annexation of the Punjab by the British. The Sikh ethos and thoughts suffered a lot by the vedanticization of its doctrine, unleashed by the Arya Samajists. "Feudalisation of the Sikh movement, Brahmanisation of the Sikh society and vedanticisation of the Sikh doctrine, besides

Marxisation of Sikh philosophy" contributed much towards the eclipsing process of the Sikh identity.<sup>6</sup>

The origin of Sikh politics can also be attributed to the sentimentality treasured behind the voice of Sikh fundamentalistic principle of realisation of human identity in a confused fabric of Muslim fanaticism. Guru Nanak, first of ten Sikh Gurus, and founder of the faith, known as Sikhism, has been seen as a revolutionary who stood out to raise a rebellious voice against the tyrannical order of the Muslim ruler, Babar. He even goes on to file his protest against the Almighty in the words:<sup>7</sup>

Etī mār paī kurlane taī kī daradu nā āiā

(that such intense is our sufferings,  
O Lord and Thou Feelest not compassion?)

as he described Babar's 'Fauj' (army), who carried out this mār (beating) on the hapless as 'Paap.kijanjh' (a procession of criminals).

This vivid intervention in the activities of the contemporary State polity by someone certainly amounts itself to politics. This defiance of the royal order by Guru Nanak perhaps sowed the seeds of tension and rivalry which continued to reflect itself in the Sikh-Muslim relationship during times to come, at least till independence with added vigour and sting.

With Sikhs becoming the rulers during the regime of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Muslims the ruled made the former further conscious about their position, status and identity.

Such an awareness has had been continuing as an unending process. The disgruntled notions among the Muslims against the Sikhs thus became graver and the two communities continued their endeavour to establish and impress their claims of superiority over each other.

The 'warrior' in Guru Nanak, which manifested itself vividly in his tenth 'rup' (appearance), Guru Gobind Singh, through the sixth, Guru Hargobind, was clearly evident in his call to his disciples:

Jau tau prem khelan kã cau  
Siru dhari tali gali meri au

(If thou art zealous of playing (the game) of Love,  
then enter upon my path with thy head on thy palm).

He strongly condemned the cowardliness and lauded the traits of self-respect and manliness.

Sikhism remained a lively connection promoting the cause of Medieval Bhakti movement. That the concept is still growing and developing as compared to other contemporaneous movements is explainable by three factors:

- i) establishment of suitable institutions;
- ii) firm social commitment of the Sikh movement that prevented it from developing into a mere order of mystics; and
- iii) the powerful social backing it received from the business and agricultural class of the then society.<sup>9</sup>

The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, while laying down the fundamentals of the religion stated God to be "Supreme

Being who was Universal, all-Embracing, all-Powerful, all-Knowing, all-Merciful and ever-Kind." He also preached that worship without purity of mind and sincerity of purpose was of mechanical and formalistic nature and was ultimately non-yielding. He also stressed on integrity of character, imbibing of moral and ethical values such as truthfulness, honesty, love, humility, forgiveness, charity, courage, contentment, self-restraint and control over vices. <sup>10</sup> Guru Granth Sahib, a living evidence of Sikh doctrines and Sikh precepts, reserves the place of living Guru, who guides the Gurmukh (Guru-oriented person) by way of Gurbani (the holy compositions).

The period from 1539 to 1606, ranging from the second Guru, Guru Angad Dev through Guru Amardas and Guru Ramdas to Guru Arjun Dev constitutes the first phase of development of Sikhism. Guru Arjun Dev, the fifth Guru performed the splendid task of compiling all the compositions of his predecessors in the form of Guru Granth Sahib in Gurmukhi, distinct from Urdu, Persian or Devnagri. The crystallisation of Sikhs into a distinct community has been made possible through deep regard by the Sikhs for the embodiment of the same spirit, Guru Nanak. <sup>11</sup>

The growing popularity of Sikhism among the Muslims (appreciation of Sikh values, ethos and principles by none other than King Akbar himself) and the Hindus alarmed the Muslim and Hindu orthodoxy which made them further hostile to Sikhism. It also gave birth to several revivalist movements

among them. Akbar's successor, Jehangir was provoked to order the execution of Guru Arjun Dev. The execution followed by the illegal confinement of Guru Hargobind, further strengthened the base of Sikh political values as the Sikhs now engaged themselves in activities of great protestive nature and started feeling the need to arrange for self-defence. Guru Hargobind structured a policy of militarising the Sikh community so as to face the tyrannical acts of the Mughals. His adoring the two swords of 'miri' and 'piri' came to be recognised as an "innovative development of momentous importance, pregnant with great future possibilities. As the subsequent events were to show, this fact constituted the basis of Sikh polity, that came into being during the 18th and the 19th centuries. Even today, it is fundamental to the understanding of the Sikh politics."<sup>12</sup>

Guru Har Rai, successor to Guru Hargobind, was a man of 'pacifist and retiring nature'. His biggest contribution to Sikhism (political), however, lied in swelling the ranks of conversions among landed families of Malwa, ancestors of royal families of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, which set the stage for a speedy spread of the Sikh belief.<sup>13</sup>

Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution "undoubtedly strengthened the resistance against the religious policy of Emperor Aurangzeb and at the same time prepared the way for the final stage in the evolution of Sikhism."<sup>14</sup> The son and successor of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Gobind Singh was a great organiser and had the vision, imagination and magnetism of a great

leader. He embarked upon his difficult task of reorganising and rejuvenating his people to face any eventualities as he <sup>15</sup> said:

"I came to the world charged with the duty to uphold the right in every place and to destroy the wicked and the evil. O ye holy men, know it well in your hearts that the only reason I took birth was to see that the righteousness may flourish; that the good may live and tyrants be torn out by their roots."

He also advocated the policy that

Cheon kār az hamā heelte dar guzashē  
Halāl ast burdan-b shamsheer dast.

(All modes of redressing, a wrong having failed, raising of sword is pious and just).

"The creation of Khalsa was the crowning event of Guru Gobind Singh's life from the standpoint of both organisation and ideology", which aimed at a "balanced combination of the ideals of Bhakti and Shakti, of moral and spiritual excellence and militant valour or heroism of the highest order." <sup>16</sup> This innovation worked as a psychological booster intended to revolutionalise the psyche of the Sikhs, as ultimately this helped in "frustrating the centrifugal forces that were in operation in the ranks of the Sikh community." <sup>17</sup> "The period of Guru Gobind Singh was not merely a period of culmination. It was also a period of beginnings. By his reforms, and under the impact of his dynamic and magnetic leadership, the Sikh

community was not only strengthened but also converted into a great vehicle of revolution."<sup>18</sup>

"The last apostle of the Sikhs effectually roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty though fitful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy, the proper adjuncts of that purity of worship which had been preached by Nanak."<sup>19</sup>

"Though he did not break the shackles that bound his nation, he had set their souls free and filled their hearts with a lofty longing for freedom and ascendancy. He had broken the charm of sanctity attached to the Lord of Delhi and destroyed the awe and terror inspired by the Muslim tyranny."

As a result of powerful beginnings made by Guru Gobind Singh, the first independent Khalsa State was created within two years of Guru Gobind Singh's death. Though the success proved shortlived...the Khalsa ultimately came out triumphant over Mughals and later, over their successors, the Afghans, positioning them to establish their sovereign rule in Punjab in the beginning of the sixties of the eighteenth century."<sup>20</sup>

The Sikh politics has been conceived, engineered, caused and maintained throughout by the crisis of Sikh identity. The other factors have just contributed as superstructures to this infrastructural component.

The nineteenth century played witness to a number of social and religious reformist movements in the Punjab. The Shuddhi movement of the Arya Samajists and the Sikh Reforms Movement, which was started as a concern of the Singh Sabhaites, shared a common concern of rejuvenating their faith under strong apprehensions at the growing Christian missionary influence. Initially, this common concern was reflected in the active cooperation between the Sikh reformers and the Arya Samajists.<sup>21</sup> The common aspects of the Singh Sabha and the Arya Samaj movements related to their propagation of ideas to 'revitalise their faith and safeguard it from the other religious influences'. They shared a common belief in one omnipresent God, in the equality of humanity, extolling of remarriage, child marriage, condemnation of worshipping of idols and the caste system. Dayanand's thesis of "iconoclastic monotheism and egalitarianism coincided with the likeness of Sikhs."<sup>22</sup>

A Shuddhi Sabha was established in Lahore in the 1890s with joint efforts of both the Sikhs and the Arya Samajist Hindus. But the 'overlapping identities' between the two communities portended that this cooperation was short-lived. The Lahore Shuddhi Sabha precipitated matters in August 1896 by 'reclaiming to Hinduism a group of more than 200 outcaste Sikhs'. For the Sikh reformers, the Arya Samaj now 'posed a direct and serious threat'. The challenge of renascent Hinduism later, which called for 'back to Vedas', emerged as a setback to the Sikh associates with the Shuddhi

movement. A bitter debate between the Sikhs and the Hindus over the 'demarcation of communal boundaries only added fuel to the passion with which the Sikh reformers advocated the distinctiveness of Sikh identity'.<sup>23</sup>

The situation was further aggravated by a pronouncement from Dayanand which shook the complete balance of the Sikhs. Dayanand stated the 'Granth Sahib as a book of secondary importance'; and Guru Nanak as a 'dhambi' (hypocrite) in addition to his abhorrence of Sikh theologians because of their 'ignorance of Sanskrit'. Describing Vedas as 'infallible and the sole source of legitimate teaching, he described other scriptures as 'false texts' which had introduced 'decadence into the Hindu society'.<sup>24</sup> His adjudication of Guru Nanak in the Aryan Samachar as:<sup>25</sup>

Nānak sāh fakīr ne nayā calāyā pañth  
Idhar udhar se jor ke likh marā ik granth,  
pahle cēle kar liye piche badlā bhes,  
Sir par safā bāndh ke, rakh line sab kes.

(Nanak, the king of fakirs, founded a new community. He collected an assortment of writings and put them in a volume. He gathered a few disciples and then changed his garb; He wound turban round his head and grew his hair long).

shattered all frameworks of tolerance for the Sikhs.

Prof. Guru Dutt's remarks at the 11th anniversary of the Punjab branch of the Arya Samaj in November 1898 that "Guru Gobind Singh was not even one-hundredth part of our Swami Dayanand Saraswati ji...and that...the Sikhs may have some religion in them but their Gurus had no learning whatsoever,"<sup>26</sup> did rest of the job.

Such remarks not only resulted in breaking away of those Sikhs who admired Dayanand as a great philosopher, scholar and saint, but also sent a wave of annoyance and anger among those who recognised him as 'just another man involved in bringing about some reforms'. This also generated the element of militancy among the Sikh youth, which got strengthened and strengthened and which impelled them to start their campaign of separate Sikh identity. With the result, the Tat Khalsa, or true Khalsa, as the youth came to be called, had become the dominant group among the active Singh Sabhaites. <sup>27</sup>

The Sikhs turned their backs on Dayanand. Instead, they joined the Muslims and Christians in demanding the suppression of <sup>28</sup> Satyarath Prakash (1874) which had maligned the prophets of their faiths. Later, an aggressive Arya proselytism was instituted through a revival of Shuddhi. To add to it, the influence cast by the Bengali intellectuals, notably by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and the Brahma Samaj and turning of Dyal Singh Majithia, founder of The Tribune, as a notable convert, further weakened the Sikh wave of reformation and separation from the Hindu stronghold. Then came the Theosophists, who forwarded the thesis that 'direct knowledge of God is possible only by means of spiritual ecstasy and contemplation'. Another blow in store for the Sikhs was the 'inaccurate, dull and prosy translation' of Guru Granth Sahib by Ernest Trumpp. The 'opuscule caused violent reaction' and added to the disappointment for the intellectual Sikhs at a moment when they were busy in finding the components that constituted tradition and orthodoxy. <sup>29</sup>

These circumstances forced the militant group of Tat Khalsa reformers to draw clearcut communal boundaries between the Sikhs and the Hindus. This set forth certain accepted norms of Sikh orthodoxy which 'recognised only that Sikh to be the true Sikh who was a member of the Khalsa'. They asserted that the "Sikhs who do not observe the symbols of the Khalsa, though they might well revere the Sikh Gurus and worship at the Sikh shrines, were seen as apostates or as Hindus."<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, the Tat Khalsa reformers were able to strengthen internal solidarity and awareness.

Swamy Dayanand, in an effort to 'purify Hinduism of its post-Vedic accretions' and liberate the 'Hindu society from the non-Hindu domination' occasionally criticised Islam and Christianity, besides Sikhism. The domination of the Indian National Congress by the Arya Samajists gave the freedom movement an aspect of Hindu resurgence and was chiefly responsible for the aloofness of the Muslims and the Sikhs.<sup>31</sup>

The twentieth century brought the 'devolution of power' to Indians by the British. The 'race for political patronage and office' unleashed a sort of 'communal political competition'. Taken as a small chunk of vast Hindu community, the Sikhs used to be appreciated as of little political consequence. Apprehending their safe existence as a distinct political minority the demand for 'separatism from Hindus became an issue in practical politics and they demanded recognition of the Sikhs as an independent political entity'. But the fact that as a separate community the Sikhs constituted

only 13 per cent of the Punjab population made them realise that "for them to be in a position to safeguard meaningfully the interests of their community, they would have to have political representation way out of proportion to the numbers." The Hindu political leaders on the contrary straightway rejected the Sikh assertions of a separate political representation on the ground that "they (the Sikhs) were none but a part of a larger Hindu society, fearing that the acknowledgement of the Sikh demand would shrink the Hindu political representation in the province." The failure of the moderate Sikh politicians who had been 'loyal or tacit supporters' of the colonial authorities gave birth to younger generation of educated Sikhs, who started supporting nationalist politicians in their anti-Government agitation for greater Indian participation in the administration. While these Sikhs collaborated with the Hindu nationalist politicians in the Punjab, their participation in the nationalist campaign stemmed from a desire to promote their separate existence in what they saw as a 'hostile world'. This process of politicisation among the Sikhs saw the dawn of Sikh political organisations such as Singh Sabha, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Khalsa National Party, and Central Sikh League etc.

Under the Sikh rule in the Punjab (1801-1849), 'the revenue derived from the Sikh ecclesiastical property grew enormously'. But with the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849, unleashed a spate of misfortunes for the Sikhs in the field of politics.

The situation went on to follow a downhill journey which was further aggravated by the discriminatory stance of the British rulers towards them. It also brought the "compilation of elaborate land settlement records and in many cases the Sikh religious property was registered in the name of the manager in charge." Some of these managers, safe in the belief that the civil law would safeguard their right to possession of the property they managed, misappropriated religious funds and abused their trust." The misuse of the Sikh religious property became a substance of major concern for the Sikhs. Civil suits and petitions filed to seek redress proved to be of no avail as under the British law possession constituted the deciding factor. The growth of Sikh communal consciousness and separatism introduced another element in the shape of demand for reforming of Gurdwaras. The non-Khalsa Sikh managers of the Sikh shrines did little to enforce strict Khalsa tenets, and the militant Tat Khalsa reformers saw the presence of what they considered to be Hindu and non-Sikh practices in Sikh worship as another instance of 'depravation of these managers'. Besides, the purging of Hindu practices from Sikh worship was seen as an essential pre-requisite for the development of a separate Sikh communal solidarity. By 1920, the militant reformers had taken matters into their own hands and begun the forcible take-over of Sikh shrines. When the Government attempted to enforce the law, a mass conflict between the Sikh agitators and the authorities ensued. This conflict raged sporadically until 1925 and during this period, 30,000 Sikhs were arrested while 400 lost their lives and 2,000 were wounded.

The Sikh agitation is believed to have been of crucial importance to the Sikh community. The agitation culminated in 1925 with the adoption of legislation relating to the management and control of Sikh shrines in the form of Sikh Gurdwaras Act. The Act provided an institutional framework for the Sikh communal consciousness and separatism from the Hindus which continues to be valid till today. The agitation also saw the genesis of two Sikh organisations, Central Committee for the Management of Sikh Shrines and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, and its political and agitational wing, the Akali Dal, which continues to govern Sikh politics and Sikh agitations till today.<sup>32</sup>

The militant Khalsa family structured by Guru Gobind Singh ascribed some symbols which made them readily recognisable physically from the other communities, and replaced flexibility and haziness by rigidity and integrity which had so far clad Sikh orthodoxy. Though the phenomenon of relapsing and counter-relapsing from Sikhism to Hinduism and vice-versa was not unfrequent, the strength and vigour of the building-up religion eclipsed a large amount of weaknesses hampering the progress and development of Sikh ethos. The growing Sikh spirit got a severe blow in Punjab with the existence of near similar contemporary reformist movements like, Arya Samaj and the Christian Missionary movements, which occasionally attacked the tenets and preachings of each other. The weakness of the Sikh body politic was attacked by Christian missionaries, whose activities engulfed the Malwa and Majha belts and had their prominent convert in Maharaja Dalip Singh

in 1853, besides Prince Harnam Singh of Kapurthala, and Kesar Singh, a Sikh Granthi of Sultanwind. This was followed by a spate of conversions to Christianity from among the low castes. It was the process of conversions gaining ground among the educated and rich families which caused a sort of alarming situation for the Sikh reformist movements.<sup>33</sup>

The Hindus and the Muslims who have turned Sikhs started the reverse journey of returning to their own religions. A census report on Punjab states that "the loss of political power thus led to the decline in the number of Sikhs from a position of domination to one of subserviance not only to the British but also the Muslims and Hindus, who considerably outnumbered them."<sup>34</sup> Frustrated and demoralised, the Sikhs re-entered the same sphere of social evils from which they were extricated by the Sikh Gurus.

The Khalsa (Lahore), in one of its issues wrote that the "baptism and five symbols became a mere anomaly. The Sikh ethics and doctrines also started getting influenced by the Hindu ideology. The situation took such a grave turn that the idols also found their way into the Sikh temples, even in Harmandir Sahib." The situation attained threatening posture with Ahmediyas endeavouring to bereft the Sikhs of their Gurus describing 'Guru Nanak as a Muslim'. The Christians also set up one of their preaching centres in a Bunga, standing in the very preccints of Darbar Sahib. Seeing no signs of opposition from the Sikh political leadership, they once even had resolved to convert Darbar Sahib into a Church.<sup>35</sup>

The whole concept of Sikhism was in doldrums when such platforms as Namdhari, Radha Soami and Nirankari movements emerged which could be considered as springboards to the Singh Sabha and Gurdwara Reform Movement. Overwhelmingly socio-religious in character in relation to the realisation and awakening components of any movement, these movements acted as catalysts to <sup>the</sup> mechanism of reformation of the Sikh identity by setting certain norms for the Sikh orthodoxy.

About the role and significance of these movements, Khushwant Singh has opined that the "Nirankari, Radha Soami and Namdhari movements made small impact on Sikh masses. The first was confined to the urban community in the North-West; the second was largely concerned with theistic problems; while the third was temporarily blasted out of the existence on the parade ground of Malerkotla. All these developed into schismatic coteries, owing allegiance to its particular guru and practising its own esoteric rituals. The evils they had set out to abolish, continued unabated. Sikhs of lower castes continued to be discriminated against; the rich continued to indulge in drink and debauchery. Brahmanical Hinduism, with its pantheon of gods and goddesses, mumbling of Sanskrit Mantras, belief in soothsayers, astrologers and casters of horoscopes continued as before. Even those Sikhs who criticised these sects for worshipping gurus other than the recognised ten were not averse to prostrating themselves before the Bedi and Sodhi descendants of Nanak and Gobind or paying homage to some saint or the other exactly as if he were a guru."<sup>36</sup> Even then, these movements had set the stage, consciously or

unconsciously, for the following socio-political movements of the Sikhs. At least, these had made the Sikhs aware of that something which belonged to them and which was necessary to be retrieved.

The poor Sikh community belonging to low castes got lured towards Christianity as a consequence of their ambition to seek economic emancipation. The graver growing situation proved a shot in the arm of some of the leading Sikh families, who in a bid to put a halt to it established Singh Sabha with the aim of "restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity, editing and publishing religious books; propagate current knowledge; using Punjabi as the medium and starting magazines and newspapers in Punjabi; reforming and bringing back into the Sikh fold apostates; and ensuring association of highly placed Englishmen with educational programmes of the Sikhs."<sup>37</sup>

Another institution, the Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha came into being for propagating the tenets of Sikhism. The Singh Sabha and the Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha<sup>38</sup> joined hands to authenticate the religious literature of the Sikhs by publishing Panth Prakash, Tawrikh-e-Guru Khalsa, Guru Granth Kosh and Tirath Sanghrah.

The Sikh reformist class supported the Lahore Singh Sabha as they were fed up with the over-bearing ways of Baba Khem Singh Bedi who added his name to the hierarchy of Sikh Gurus. The Nirankari sect raised by Baba Dyal Singh, stressed on the Nirankar (formless) status of the Almighty, strongly opposing idol worship, extravagant birth, marriage and death

traditions and rituals. The impact of this movement, however, could not cross the urban boundaries. The Namdhari or the Kuka sect, founded by Baba Balak Nath then took up the cudgels from the Nirankaris for reforming the prevalent exhaustive traditions and ceremonies and strictly denounced the 'reverential claims' by the descendants of Guru Nanak. The impact of these reformist movements, nevertheless, on the "broad mass of the Sikh faith was more through the participation of some of their members in a later attempt at the reform of Sikhism." Such attempts of the Namdharis or/and the Nirankaris heralded the age of Singh Sabha Movement at a time when identity of Sikhs was assailed by mighty powers like Hinduism and Christianity.

The first Singh Sabha at Amritsar was established in 1873, four years after the setting up of Arya Samaj and one year after the execution of 68 Kukas at Malerkotla. Some of the prominent Singh Sabhaites including, Bikram Singh Ahluwalia, Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia and Giani Gyan Singh took a strong exception to the unabated attacks by Swami Dayanand on the Sikh Gurus which precipitated the need for an organised and well-planned reformation of the Sikh faith to tackle the growing anti-Sikh influence at the hands of Christian missionaries, theosophists and Arya Samajists. As a consequence of large number of meetings, the Sabha delineated its principles and objectives as follows:

1. The purpose of the Singh Sabha is to arouse love of religion among the Sikhs.

2. The Sabha will propagate the true Sikh religion everywhere.
3. The Sabha will print books on the greatness and truth of the Sikh religion.
4. The Sabha will propagate the words of the Gurus.
5. The Sabha will publish periodicals to further the cause of Punjabi language and Sikh education.
6. Individuals who oppose Sikhism who have been excluded from Sikh holy spots or who have associated with other religions and broken Sikh laws, cannot join the Sabha. If they repent and pay a fine, they can become members.
7. English officers interested in Sikh education and the well-being of Sikhism can associate themselves with the Sabha.
8. The Sabha will not speak against other religions.
9. The Sabha will not discuss matters relating to the Government.
10. The Sabha will respect well-wishers of the community, those who love Sikhism, and those who support truth and education in Punjabi.

A second branch of the Singh Sabha was founded at Lahore six years hence with similar aims as to spread the reformist ideology among the ruralites. The unfortunate aspect of the whole situation was that though the aim of these two major Singh Sabhas were similar, they started acting differently. Amritsar conservatives sided with priests who favoured entry

to untouchables only at specific hours without the offering right. While the Lahore Singh Sabha clung to the orthodox legacy of 'no Guru save the Granth', the Amritsar wing acknowledged the acceptance of institution of Gurudom accepting obeisance. While the Amritsar Singh Sabha was dominated by rich landlords and aristocrats and their activities were 'tainted by their essential conservatism', the Lahore Singh Sabha had the support of low-caste radical Sikhs as Bhai Dit Singh who did not tolerate the reverential claims by the descendants of Guru Nanak. This led to a sort of bitterness and acrimony among the two factions which finally created a breach between the two.

Compelled by the circumstances, the two Singh Sabhas joined hands to fight out the anti-Sikh forces and ultimately started a College of their own at Amritsar at the instance of challenging remarks of Jawahar Singh Kapur who said that "while Hindus and Muslims have their educational institutions, to teach Sanskrit and Vedas and Koran respectively, the Sikhs are without any such institution to teach Gurmukhi and the Granth." <sup>41</sup> This was the first step of the Singh Sabhas towards educationalisation of Sikh masses so as to make them understand the hidden implicacies and enable them to compete with the Hindus and Muslims in the matter of services. A regular feature to convene a Sikh Educational Conference every year 'to take stock of the progress of literacy in the community and collect money to build more schools' was also started. The teachings of Gurmukhi and the Sikh scriptures was made

compulsory in the Khalsa schools. This effort also resulted in the publication of many books, magazines, tracts, and newspapers.

The Anjuman-i-Punjab (founded in 1865) was responsible for translating many important English books into Punjabi. In 1877, Punjabi was introduced as a subject in Oriental College at Lahore; in 1882 the Singh Sabha organised a Punjabi Pracharini Sabha to popularise the use of Punjabi.

The first Educational Conference, held at Gujranwala (1908) observed that the Sikhs getting education in the Hindu, Muslim and Christian institutions had a tendency to find fault in Sikhism and become apostates. Several Sikh schools were thus established as a challenge to the Hindu and Muslim schools. Many newspapers were also launched by the Singh Sabha, thanks to the efforts of the Khalsa Tract Society, Amritsar, the Sikh Tract Society, Lahore and the Sikh Book Club, Peshawar. This invited strong reaction from amongst the Hindu community. So much so that Pandit Jai Chand was prompted to write a book Khalsa Hindu Aur Murti Pujak Hain, which was very timely and appropriately countered by Bhai Kahan Singh's work entitled, Hum Hindu Nahin.

The Singh Sabhas not only promoted the cause of education for Sikhs but also checked the 'relapse of Sikhs into Hinduism and proselytising activities into Hindu camp'. As a result of this, a large number of Hindus of Northern and Western Punjab and Sind became Sehajdhari Sikhs and the Sehajdharis were baptised to become the Khalsa as is evident

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from the following table:

Year	Actual number	Variation percentage in Sikh popul- ation	Total popul- ation
1881	1,706,165	-	-
1891	1,849,371	+ 8.4	+ 10.1
1901	2,102,896	+13.7	+ 6.3
1911	2,883,729	+37.1	- 2.2
1921	3,110,060	+ 7.8	+ 5.7

The Singh Sabhas invited the Sikh intelligentsia to come forward for upholding the cause of separate Sikh identity. The latter responded by forming Gurmat Granth Pracharak Sabha and Gurmat Granth Sudharak Committee at Amritsar and Lahore respectively, which sponsored the publishing of scholars' works of researching into Sikh history and Sikh ethos.

Some Sikh youth feeling dissatisfied with the mild-reformative ways of the Singh Sabha, united to forge the Sikh cause ahead with added vigour. This new wing - the Tat Khalsa - felt an urgent need of using mass media for propagating their faith.

The Khalsa Akhbar carried a letter from a Sikh reader which explained that: "near the Dukhbhanjani beri tree (in the Golden Temple precincts) there is a room on the front wall of which is painted a picture. The picture depicts a goddess and Guru Gobind Singh. The goddess stands on golden

sandals and she has many hands - ten or perhaps twenty. One of the hands is stretched out and in this she holds a Khanda. Guru Gobind Singh stands barefoot in front of it, with his hands folded." 45

Besides Khalsa Akhbar, some other newspapers also sprouted up during the first decades of this century which had, by now, come to be recognised as 'a potential and vital force for promoting the Sikh influence and arousing indignation at Christian and Hindu ideologies'. A Khalsa Tract Society too was formed in 1894 for dissemination of Sikh principles by producing cheap volumes on Sikh theology, ethos and values. To support the invaluable task taken up by the Khalsa Tract Society, emerged the Sikh Book Club, the Panch Khalsa Agency and the Khalsa Handbill Society, which concentrated their activities mainly in rural areas. 46

The results of these efforts were vibrant and forthcoming as a large number of Hindus and Sehajdhari Sikhs took to Pahul in a 'surge of emotionalism and intellectual excitement', and the outcastes, low castes and untouchables in the Hindu hierarchy such as Mazhabis, Masallis and Chuhras took considerable pride in their new-found Khalsa identity. The variation strength of these communities showed a favourable flux in case of Sikhs as +33,549 in contrast to Hindus(-81,229) and Muslims (-18,773) for the period ranging from 1911 to 1921. 47

As rose literacy among Sikhs after the setting up of Khalsa schools and Khalsa colleges, the Sikhs started finding favour with the rulers in recruitment to army and other Government services, totally out of proportion to their population. It was because of the fact that the British rulers were already convinced of their bravery, valour and discipline. Characteristics such as industry, diligence, sincerity and courage provided a boost to the evolving Sikh identity. The number of Sikhs increased from 1,705,165 in 1881 to 3,110,060 in 1921 which shows a much favourable variation (+67) in contrast to total population (+19.9). More significant is the fact that the Sikh population increased by higher percentage than the increase in total population in each decade.<sup>48</sup>

The trend was reverse in case of other communities, specifically Hindus. Another point to<sup>be</sup> noticed is that the percentage of positive variation was much higher in areas where Singh Sabhaites, particularly its Tat Khalsa wing, were more active. With a large amount of conversions from Hindus to Sikhs, the Singh Sabhaites found themselves busy in delineating the parameters of the Sikh identity. The Sikhs to them were those who were members of the Khalsa and not the Sehajdhari ones. The latter were lured or attracted to take Patul and became a member of the Khalsa, thanks to the untiring and sincere efforts of the Singh Sabhaites. The other fact to be underlined is that by 1921, the Sehajdhari Sikhs constituted only about 15 per cent of Sikhs. They were either adopting Khalsa tenets or chose to be regarded as pure Hindus.<sup>49</sup>

The Singh Sabhaites, with memories of the Malerkotla assassination still fresh in their minds, and hoping that their movement cannot come to a successful conclusion without Government's patronage, pledged to 'cultivate loyalty to the Crown'. Government's response was forthcoming but was politic with Sir Robert Egerton, Lt Governor of Punjab agreeing to be the patron of Lahore Singh Sabha and Viceroy, Lord Landsowne stating "with this movement the Government of India is in hearty sympathy. We appreciate the many admirable qualities of the Sikh nation, and it is a pleasure to know that while in days goneby one recognised in them a gallant and formidable foe, we are today able to give them a foremost place amongst the true and loyal subjects of Her Majesty the Queen Empress." 50

Further, party politics, an element usually absent in small communities, found an expression in Sikh politics mainly due to their idiosyncratically vigorous temperament and sound economic situation. This resulted into the creation of a large number of political groups which vied with each other to win the title of being the chief spokesman of the community.

The issue of management of Sikh Gurdwaras rose for the first time after the second Anglo-Sikh War in pursuance of a sympathetic policy of the British towards the Sikhs and in the wake of a dispute regarding payments to attendants at the Golden Temple. The Government appointed a sub-committee of Sikhs to deal with the management of the Gurdwaras "at a time when the manager, who was responsible to the Deputy Commissioner used to be an official nominee and the Government used him to

motivate Sikh opinion with an explicit objective in mind." <sup>51</sup>

The Golden Temple management on numerous occasions issued flattering statements to please the Government. One such statement in shape of a farewell <sup>message</sup> to Lord Ripon, the Viceroy stated that "Our bodies are the exclusive possession of the British. Moreover, that we are solemnly and religious<sup>-ly</sup> bound to serve Her Majesty, that in discharging this duty we act according to the wishes of our Great Guru, the ever-living God and that whenever and wherever need be felt for us, we wish to be the foremost of all Her Majesty's subjects, to move and uphold the honour of the Crown, that we reckon ourselves as the favourite sons of our Empress-Mother, although living far distant from her Majesty's feet and that we regard the people of England as our kindred brethren." <sup>52</sup>

This relationship of mutual 'sympathies and reverence' between the Government and the Sikh leadership was received as an irritant by the Tat Khalsa leaders, who started challenging the 'hagemony of the loyalist landed gentry'. The focus then started shifting from just educational reforms to the management of Gurdwaras which were the nuclei of Sikh activities. The management, since the start of the 18th century had remained in the hands of Udasi sect, known for its asceticism and constituted by Sehajdhari Sikhs, the followers of Baba Sri Chand, the eldest son of Guru Nanak. They used to admit disciples of their choice, ignoring their characters and conduct and appoint successors. With the revenue increasing year after year, the Mahants controlling the Gurdwaras started

portraying themselves as the sole proprietors of the Gurdwara income and property.

The Gurdwaras became centres of licentious living, debauchery and rape and the incidents and instances of keeping concubines, gambling, drinking and sacrilege became the order of the day.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, the Mahants had acquired enough powers with the help of the Government and the other anti-social elements. With the result, an attempt by the Tat Khalsa youth to steer the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara clear from these Mahants proved too expensive for them. The methods to seek redressal through the court of law too proved complicated, expensive and exhaustive. The court verdicts, to add to it, frequently went in favour of these Mahants, thanks to the Government's soft corner towards them.

The Tat Khalsa considered the Hinduization of their creed at the hands of these Mahants as abusive as they paid obeisance to Hindu idols and cared little for the Khalsa tenets. The Khalsa concern with abolition of cast distinctions among Sikhs brought another point of conflict with the custodians of Sikh Gurdwaras. The low-caste Sikhs condemned discrimination against them and the Sikh outcastes in respect of entry to Gurdwaras. As a fallout of such practices, Khalsa Biradari (1907) came into being against these discriminatory tendencies, with moral support of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The Khalsa Biradari and the Arya Samajists then ran into a sort of competition to admit low-caste Sikhs to their faith, advocating inter-caste marriages in an effort to increase their numerical

strength.<sup>54</sup>

The flagrant abuse of caste taboos by the reformers and their challenge of established norms restricting the entrance of low-caste men into Sikh shrines, precipitated a conflict with the custodians of Sikh religious institutions. The controversy further precipitated with some Sehajdhari Sikhs, spearheaded by Baba Gurbaksh Singh, a lineal descent of Guru Nanak, admitting "Sikhism as a vigorous offshoot of Hinduism and Sikh scriptures embodied the cardinal principal of Hindu Dharam." The Tat Khalsa reformers took a strong exception to such remarks of Baba Gurbaksh Singh whom they did not consider any authority on Sikhism and that he was perverting the Sikh scriptures and playing into the hands of the anti-Sikh Hindu party. The controversy kept on consolidating for the next over a decade, increasing bitterness with battle lines now clearly drawn.

The polite and passionate requests of Singh Sabhaites to hand over the control of the Golden Temple to a Sikh representative committee was ignored by the Government under the pretext <sup>that</sup> the 'Government control of the Gurdwaras was a political necessity'. A British administrator in 1881 had suggested the Viceroy, Lord Ripon that "I think it would be politically dangerous to allow the management of Sikh temples to fall into <sup>55</sup> the hands of a committee emancipated from Government control."

The Government proposed an amendment to the 1893 Punjab Colonisation of Land Act which greatly affected ruralities with its provisions 'retroactive and contrary to the original

conditions of grants'. The Government's step to enhance the water rate on the Bari Doab canal came as a final blow to an already disenchanted local Sikh Jat peasantry. Urban politicians and organisations came at the support of Jat peasantry accusing the Government of treachery. A local newspaper coined the slogan Pagri Sambhal Jatta (Oh Jati! guard your turban!) which epitomized a campaign of emotional appeals to an enraged and fiercely proud peasantry. Militarisation of the Khalsa was deemed necessary to achieve the desirable. The people were called to retrieve their lost honour at the hands of the Firangis in the words: "Oh! Brave soldiers of the Khalsa, you are lost to all sense of national honour. Give up the British service and permit the Feranghees (foreigners) no more to disgrace you." <sup>56</sup> We have murdered our own brethren to please the English but what we have got in return except displeasing our Guru. Let us join hands to salvage the lost pride and honour of our forefathers.

Contrary to the expectations of the Government, the Sikh Jat peasantry hitherto known as loyal to the Government, now got politicised and launched anti-Government campaigns. The growing militant self-assuredness brought into field influential personalities and in the process, the indifferent political leadership lost its credibility in the eyes of Sikh peasantry. The Golden Temple management as usual, sided with the Government and condemned the revolutionaries. Newspapers prominent in the agitational campaign were sued for sedition; Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported to

Burma. Despite severe repression, the agitation continued unabated. There were indications of disaffection spreading to the army and rumours of an imminent revolt. The Government was forced to yield. The Governor-General, Lord Minto, vetoed<sup>57</sup> the Colonization Bill and the water rate was reduced.

The Anglo-Sikh relations once again got deteriorated with the Government introducing some amendments in the constitution of the Khalsa College imposing its complete control over its management and executive councils. Thus, the aspirations of the Tat Khalsa "ensuring that the Sikh youth should receive such moral and religious instruction as would mould them into true Sikhs, were completely thrashed." Accusations were made that the Government has "robbed the Sikhs of their college, just as they had by gross breach of faith previously swallowed up the Punjab, and that the college now has become<sup>58</sup> a college of flatterers."

Another dimension added to the Sikh frustration was shabby treatment being meted out to their immigrants and migrating brethren in Canada and North America.<sup>59</sup> The Canadian Government imposed strict restrictions on intending Sikh immigrants in 1910. Besides this, racial attacks were mounted on the Asians, particularly Sikhs. They were humiliated publically as the "British Columbia cannot allow any more of the dark meat of the world to come to this province."

To meet such crisis, the Khalsa Diwan Society (1907)<sup>60</sup> which had so far concerned itself mainly with the educational,

philanthropic and socio-religious issues confronting the society, diverted its attention to the issue of biased immigration laws. Such attacks on Sikh community evoked considerable amount of violent reaction in Punjab among the Tat Khalsa militants.<sup>61</sup> They regarded the British Government as 'impotent' which can not safeguard the interests of Indians abroad. They took the task themselves by arousing Sikh opinion against white oppression. The California based Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan and another revolutionary organisation, the Hindustani Workers of the Pacific Coast, alongwith the United India League in Vancouver, came to the rescue of the Sikh immigrants in Canada and America. Led by Lala Hardayal, a revolutionary intellectual, the organisation launched a weekly Ghadr advocating the Sikh cause in India. The party came to be known as Ghadr party. The paper inspired the people to fight unitedly to overthrow the British tyrannical regime.<sup>62</sup>

To add fuel to the fire, occurred the shady Komagata Maru incident. Ghadr played<sup>an</sup> instrumental role in highlighting the grievances of the voyagers of the naval vessel, who were deported to India after the Canadian Government did not allow them to land in their country. Of the 346 prospective Sikh immigrants, 18 were massacred, more than 25 were injured and 200 interned in Punjab. Press was warned against publishing any material on the incident. The Golden Temple management again reaffirmed its loyalty to the Crown.<sup>63</sup>

The various Sikh socio-political organisations with all their weaknesses, infightings and differences on various issues, kept up their efforts to secure maximum gains for the Sikh community with stances of their own. They came close, broke away, joined hands on certain issues concerning Sikhs. A brief account of such forums would further clear our concept on Sikh political activities.

### The Chief Khalsa Diwan<sup>63A</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan, was in fact, a shift from the religious outlook of the Singh Sabhas to politics though its stand too remained as that of loyalist to the British Government. It came to be known as an elitist body as it enjoyed the patronage of princes and landed aristocracy. Their modus operandi to attain identification for Sikhs remained that of passing resolutions, leading deputations, and making representations on Sikh problems. The Diwan was the outcome of the acrimonious relations between the Lahore and Amritsar Singh Sabhas. Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia and Arjan Singh Bagrian thought of constituting a common body to unite the two factions and ultimately succeeded in forming the Khalsa Diwan Establishment Committee. The constitution of the new body was drafted at a meeting at Gurdwara Malvai Bunga, Amritsar, on October 30, 1902 which was later named as the  
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Chief Khalsa Diwan.

The first major achievement, that is, the restoration of religious right of Sikhs to bear Kirpan as an exemption under the Arms Act won instant support for the Chief Khalsa

Diwan from different sections of the Sikh society. As a result, over 100 Singh Sabhas, scattered in different parts of the country were affiliated to it by 1925.<sup>65</sup> Soon it became 'a centre of communication among educated Sikhs and served as their spokesman on social, theological and political issues.

Mr. D. Petric, Assistant Director, Criminal Intelligence, Government of India, had remarked that "the Chief Khalsa Diwan became a sort of central controlling agency for the management of the numerous Singh Sabhas which existed all over the country wherever there was a large body of Sikhs. It became the self-constituted leader and spokesman of the Sikhs in all social and political matters."<sup>66</sup>

The book, Rules and Regulations of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, enunciated the aims and objectives of the Diwan as follows:<sup>67</sup>

- i) to promote the spiritual, intellectual, moral, social, educational and economic welfare of the Khalsa Panth;
- ii) to propagate the teachings as embodied in Sri Guru Granth Sahib;
- iii) to propagate teachings of Gurbani and to spread knowledge of Sikh history and other authentic writings;
- iv) a) to safeguard the political rights of the Sikhs;  
 b) to represent their interests to the Government; and  
 c) to make constitutional efforts for their attainment according to the times and conditions.

The Diwan, however, emphasised on promoting the political objectives of Sikhism. Its polite and 'dependable-upon-Government' attitude was emphasised over and again. Its stance was clearly demonstrated in a letter written by Sir Jogendra Singh to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Sir Geoffrey Montmorency, which stated that "The Diwan represents the moderate opinion of the Sikh community, has been in existence for over a quarter of a century; has always been acting on constitutional lines and on more than many occasions has provided assistance to the Government. Since the birth of the S.G.P.C., the Diwan did not take part in the Gurdwara Reform Movement as while it was sensitively alive to the necessity of reform therein, it could not work on the lines of the S.G.P.C. as these were agitational and non-cooperative." 68

The Lucknow Pact perpetuated injustice on Sikhs. The Chief Khalsa Diwan demanded adequate and effective representation of Sikhs in the legislatures and in appointments, 69 keeping in mind the position and significance of the community. The pleadings of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, made through a deputation to England to remove discrimination in the Government of India Act, 1919, allowing just 15 of 83 seats to the Sikhs in the Punjab Legislative Council vis-a-vis proportion granted to Muslims in the provinces, where they were in minority, proved of no use. Its demand to either shelve the Communal Award scheme or grant one-third representation for Sikhs in the Council, again met with failure.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan then again made an attempt to get anomalies removed in the Nehru Report which has 'given nothing to the Sikhs but just a word of praise'. The Diwan cooperated with the Government during the First World War, during the First Round Table Conference and preferred to keep silent, rather support the Jalianwala Bagh massacre and Komagata Maru incidents. It denounced Ghadrites as 'renegades' and went on to honour the chief culprit of the massacre, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He was described as a 'hero', 'a very efficient administrator', 'a friend and a benefactor of the Sikhs' and the Jalianwala Bagh massacre as a 'minor incident'. Sir Dwyer was appreciated for having "nipped the evil in the bud". 70

The Diwan's attitude towards the 1907 Agrarian Movement, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Gurdwara Reform Movement was full of caution and reticent. The Gurdwara Reform Movement was described to have gone off the track due to its militant and uncompromising stance. The S.G.P.C's resolution of non-cooperation and resistance was described as posing dangers to the Sikh community as a whole at the hands of His Majesty's Government. All out attempts were made by the Diwan to get this resolution cancelled. It denounced not only the present resolution but also the S.G.P.C. It sought Government's support in "getting the S.G.P.C. reconstituted to involve 'proper and suitable men', regretting the unfavourable and unfriendly attitude of the present S.G.P.C. which was responsible in the main for the disaffected feelings of the general community in the Punjab and outside."

Getting fearful and apprehensive of the increasing strength of 'wrong leadership' of the Sikhs, Sardar S.S. Majithia wrote to Governor's Executive Council: <sup>71</sup> "I am strongly of the opinion that we must meet the legitimate demands of the Sikhs and save them from the disastrous results of the wrong lead that is being given to them. This community has stood with the Government through thick and thin in the past, to meet the demands of the community and to eradicate abuses in their Gurdwaras and shrines. The movement of reform in the community is very very strong and the dissatisfaction also appears to be spreading fast in the army. It would affect the loyalty of the Sikh rank and file. It would be unstatesmanlike and extremely unwise to allow this feeling of disappointment and resentment to grow any more and let the loyal devotion of a community to be alienated and captured by others, who will not hesitate to use it effectively."

All addresses to the Government were used to begin with glorifying the actions of friendship of the Government and favours done by it to the Sikh community and ending with humble prayers for more concessions in high-flown adjectives like "His Excellency the Right Honourable", "The Vice-Regent of our Beloved Sovereign". <sup>72</sup> Many of the Sikh political and socio-political organisations had thought it wise to adopt a 'loyalist and constitutional stance' as a strategy to accrue benefits to this minority community.

In fact, the British had made conscious and strong efforts to win the loyalty of the Sikh community. Besides this,

"pattern of leadership, their socio-economic background and the consequent interests, alongwith the leaderships' consciousness of the minority status of the community" also contributed to the sycophant stance of the Diwan towards the Government. Knowing that Sikhs were both anti-Hindu and anti-Muslim, Punjab's administrator, John Lawrence highlighted the Sikh community in his words as: "The Sikhs are the bravest and the most chivalrous race in India and they now seemed disposed to submit with manly self-restraint to our superior power, if only we used it with equity and toleration."<sup>73</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders were of the opinion that no social or political movement particularly of a minority community, can achieve its target without the active support of the Government. To keep a "begging attitude" was thus considered to be the safest route to achieve the objective. As activists of the Gurdwara Reform Movement had different points of view than held by the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the latter opined that the monopoly enjoyed by it was quite 'a risky game'.

The Party Paper, The Khalsa Advocate had commented that some Akalis were exploiting the Diwan for their personal ends. The Party was also not in favour of launching the "Jaito-ka-Morcha". Its leaders deplored the indulgence of Sikh leaders in agitations and launching of protests against the Government when the latter recognised the community, comprising smallest number of separate representation by His Gracious Majesty, the King Emperor. The Diwan described those Sikhs who were bent upon condemning even the most benevolent and generous

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and advocated joint electorates <sup>with</sup> proper safeguards for the minorities.<sup>79</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan, however, could not serve the commitments it had envisaged. The Sikhs were not given their dues under the Communal Award package, and the Gurdwara Rikab Ganj Movement did not find any favour with the Government. The Lucknow Pact too ignored the interests of the Sikhs as a separate community, both by the Congress and the Muslim League. To add to it, the Sikhs were made to tolerate the Jalianwala Bagh massacre and atrocities of the Rowlatt Act. They were not even granted control over the Sikh Gurdwaras and shrines. On the contrary<sup>80</sup>, the Mahants who acted as Government agents, found abetment of the Government at their back to deny the true Sikhs their worth. All such issues and the failure of the Chief Khalsa Diwan to procure any reverence for the Sikhs from the Government led to the structuring of the Central Sikh League.

### The Central Sikh League

The body came into being as a result of a congregation of Sikhs belonging to almost all groups in the community at the Lahore's Bradlaugh Hall on December 8, 1919. The act was necessitated as the existing political organisation of the Sikhs, the Chief Khalsa Diwan was failing consistently in its efforts to find favour with the British regime. The first session, held 19 days after the constitution of the League,<sup>81</sup> was heavily attended by leaders from the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The League took upon itself the task of securing proper

representation for the Sikhs in the political set-up of the province vis-a-vis new reforms. It was also to guide the political opinion of the community.<sup>82</sup>

As the President (Gajan Singh) and vice-president (Gopal Singh Bhagowal) of the Central Sikh League hailed from the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the policies of the former did not differ much from the latter. As a result, the League too started losing its status, prestige and credibility among the Sikhs.<sup>83</sup> Despite all this, the second session, of the League proved a grand success. It was attended among others, by Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Mohammad Ali and Maulana Shaukat Ali. The success of <sup>the</sup> session, however, did not signal the popularity of the League as it passed the non-cooperation resolution despite a strong opposition by some of its top-rank leaders. Another setback was in store for the League as its third session adopted certain objectives including attainment of Swaraj by all legitimate, peaceful and constitutional means; patriotism and public spirit among Sikhs, and development and organization of their political, social and economic resources, which were not acceptable to it.<sup>84</sup> The new constitution provided for a broad-based Council of 101, excluding ex-officio members. Eighty members were to be selected according to a scheme prepared by the Executive Council and 21 were to be nominated by the elected members.<sup>85</sup>

The next annual session<sup>86</sup> of the League saw confirming support to non-cooperation plan of the Congress.

Ten centres of the League were opened at district headquarters. The broad-based policies of the League, however, attracted commonality and aroused political awareness among Sikhs.

The League backed nationalistic forces, advocated abolition of communal electorates and did not approve the Nehru Report due to its decision of accepting Dominion status instead of complete freedom. Despite opposition from the Central Akali Dal, the League shared its cooperation with Lahore's Congress session of 1929.<sup>87</sup> But its abortive attempts to win Congress in favour of Sikhs reflected on its status of being the chief spokesman of the Sikhs.<sup>88</sup>

The Central Sikh League took a strong exception to the Communal Award Scheme. At an All Sikh Parties Conference at Lahore on July 24, 1932, it constituted a Council of Action to fight against the Award, while during one of its Conferences at Lahore on September 25, 1932, it set up a new body under the name of Khalsa Darbar to lead an agitation against the Award. Later on, the League was merged with the Darbar which ultimately sealed its fate.<sup>89</sup>

#### The Shiromani Akali Dal

The Shiromani Akali Dal<sup>90</sup> was formed mainly to provide physical and political support to the S.G.P.C. in its efforts directed at retrieving the control of Gurdwaras from the Mahants. It comprised radical and militant elements among the Sikhs - a group of volunteers ever-ready to form and send Jathas for occupying Gurdwaras.

The Akali Dal was instrumental in getting the Gurdwara Act passed in the process of its playing a stellar role in the Gurdwara Reform Movement. However, a tussle over the issue of 'giving undertaking to work for the Gurdwara Act' among its leaders caused the birth of the Central Akali Dal.<sup>91</sup> The Akali Dal came out stronger in the elections to the Central Board under the Gurdwara Act and the Party came to be regarded as the chief religio-political representative of the Sikhs.<sup>92</sup> Its status was changed from religious to political as it made itself a party in boycotting the Simon Commission, the First Round Table Conference, opposing creation of Pakistan and supporting the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Party, however, resolved to support the Civil Disobedience Movement on the condition that it would do so independent of <sup>the</sup> Congress.<sup>93</sup>

However, in the 1940 Civil Disobedience Movement and the 1942 Quit India Movement, the Akali Party did not adopt any avowed stand. The constitutional terms of the Party were thus enlarged from just lending support to the S.G.P.C.<sup>94</sup> to encompass other types of issues too that were facing the Sikh community. The parties like Congress, Praja Mandal, Kirti Kisan and the Khalsa Darbar became associated with the Shiromani Akali Dal as it lent support to the nationalist and secular forces keeping the interest of the Panth foremost,<sup>95</sup> nevertheless.

Despite all its sincere efforts, the Party like its predecessors failed to protect the Sikh interests vis-a-vis communal Award,<sup>96</sup> which reflected on its prestige and honour

and it imperceptibly yielded leadership to the Khalsa Darbar on September 25, 1932. The Party differed in its stand from the Congress in case of Sikhs' recruitment in the Army though it continued the process of permitting its members to take part in the Civil Disobedience and the Non-cooperation Movements. The Party also assailed the detention of Congress leaders.<sup>97</sup>

Due to their authoritative attitude, some aristocrat Sikhs broke away to launch another party under the banner of the Khalsa National Party. The Party, in fact, was the brain-child of Sunder Singh Majithia and Joginder Singh and the target before them was the Shiromani Akali Dal. This move of the two aristocrats invited strong criticism from Master Tara Singh as he thought it to be an attempt to divide the Panthic forces.<sup>98</sup> Despite strong opposition from its adversaries, the Party emerged as the chief spokesman of the Sikh community. It strongly backed schemes such as creation of Azad Punjab, Azad Sikh State and Khalistan. It condemned on the other hand, the C.R. Formula and the Cabinet Delegation Plan.<sup>99</sup>

#### The Central Akali Dal

As pointed out earlier, the Central Akali Dal came into being as a result of factionalism in the Sikh ranks on the issue of Gurdwara Act. The cleavage used to effect the proceedings of various meetings of the S.G.P.C. The Chief Khalsa Diwan in the meantime, had preferred to dissociate itself from all such petty issues. Differences went on to

increase with the passage of time, thanks to the untiring efforts of the Maharaja of Patiala,<sup>100</sup> to whom the formation of the Central Akali Dal came as a blessing in shape of a platform to please the British Government and more so at a time when the Shiromani Akali Dal was bent upon condemning the anti-Sikh policies of the Maharaja. The Akali Dal, besides pioneering the cause of the Praja Mandal and the Gurdwara Reform movements, strengthened the non-violence, non-cooperation, and other nationalistic and secular forces. The Maharaja of Patiala wanted to insulate his State from the Akali 'raids', and simultaneously please the Government to draw maximum advantages. He was able to win some of the Akali Dal stalwarts such as Kartar Singh Jhabbar and Sardar Mangal Singh by <sup>101</sup> showing them the glare of money which he had in plenty.

The funny thing about the Central Akali Dal was that it had no programme or policies of its own. It used to either condemn or support the issues raised by the Shiromani Akali Dal. It thus supported the Civil Disobedience Movement, boycotted Simon Commission and the Round Table Conferences, opposed Azad Punjab Scheme, condemned Communal Award, rejected <sup>102</sup> Cripps Proposals, and opposed Pakistan Scheme. Unlike Akali Dal, it, however, maintained that 'if Pakistan was to come then the Punjab must go to Sikhs'.

The Central Akali Dal representative, Gyani Sher Singh was most vocal of all his partymen. He, at the behest of Maharaja of Patiala, who had bestowed him with many awards, used to lambast at the Shiromani Akali Dal leaders quite

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 oftenly. The other unique but bizarre feature of the Central Akali Dal was that it had more leaders than followers in the party, who have had separated themselves from the premier Shiromani Akali Dal out of frustration or lust for money, status and power. The year 1941, nevertheless, saw the Central Akali Dal leaders, staging a comeback with Gyani Sher Singh and Master Tara Singh issuing a joint press note on November 17, 1941.<sup>104</sup> It, however, was not to be dissolved due to active interest of Baba Kharak Singh, Sardar Harbans Singh Siestani and Sant Singh.

#### The Khalsa Darbar

The Khalsa Darbar, created on August 20, 1932, was an outcome of the All-India Sikh Parties Conference (July 24, 1932) and a Council of Action, set-up by the Conference to tackle the issue of Communal Award. The leaders, after a space of just few months, found themselves pitted against each other on the issue of proportion to be granted to different communities, based on the decision of Unity Conference at Allahabad.

The Darbar showed disagreement with joint efforts of Sir Jogendra Singh and Mr Fasal-i-Hussain in connection with the Communal Award issue. It maintained that no decision will be acceptable to it unless it was endorsed by the Darbar. The Executive Committee meeting of the Darbar further revealed factionalism when pamphlets were issued condemning the opposite camps headed by Master Tara Singh and Gyani Sher Singh.<sup>105</sup> The next meeting held on September 20, 1933, saw Gyani Sher Singh

coming in the open and criticising Master Tara Singh for exploiting the Darbar platform for his personal ends in the words that the "Khalsa Darbar was established on non-party basis but the Master was using it as an instrument to strengthen his influence among the Sikhs". In fact, Gyani's outrage was the result of frustration as the Master group was enjoying popularity and greater mass appeal. Seeing no reduction in the craze among the Sikhs for the Master group, the Gyani let lost his patience and went to the extent of describing the Darbar as an "obstacle in the way of Panthic unity." Gyani's confusion was further confounded as the day was fixed for holding a joint meeting of the Darbar and the Central Sikh League (September 20, 1933) which ultimately elected Master Tara Singh as President for the forthcoming elections to the Congress Sikh Party. A merger was then proposed by members of the both the parties in view of different characters of the two bodies.

The Darbar became defunct due to the departure of and Gyani Sher Singh/party, increasing influence of extremist Akalis, antagonistic attitude of the Government and the Maharaja of Patiala and the ultimate separation of Central Akali Dal and the Central Sikh League.<sup>106</sup>

#### The Congress Sikh Party

The Congress Sikh Party was formed by the Congress-minded Sikh leaders, including Sardar Mangal Singh (President of the Khalsa Darbar), Sant Singh, Sardul Singh Caveeshar,

Gyani Sher Singh, Kharak Singh, Master Tara Singh, Gyani Kartar Singh, Udham Singh Nagoke, Master Mota Singh, Master Kabul Singh, Sohan Singh Josh, Gopal Singh Gaumi, and K.S. Mann in August 1936.<sup>108</sup>

The creation of the Congress Sikh Party hit the might of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the latter was consequently forced to side with the Congress. The former approved the C.R. Formula, disapproved the Azad Sikh State move, and supported the Congress idea on the issue of Pakistan, unmindful of its effects on the Sikh interests. It, however, had the support of just a splinter group of the Sikh politicians, who enjoyed no power in the large Congress set-up. The Shiromani Akali Dal again emerged as the pioneer Sikh body in the face of Pakistan challenge.

#### The Khalsa National Party

The position of the Shiromani Akali Dal was quite strong at the time of birth of <sup>the</sup> Khalsa National Party (July 13, 1936) and both the Central Akali Dal and the Chief Khalsa Diwan were just running. The efforts of Sunder Singh Majithia to bring the Sikhs on a common platform to fight the Congress and Communist parties got aborted as the talks between the Diwan and the Shiromani Akali Dal flopped on the issue of adjustment of seats. Majithia who was then representing the Chief Khalsa Diwan got the cooperation of Sir Jogendra Singh and Gyani Sher Singh to contest <sup>a</sup> elections under the banner of Khalsa National Party. It became <sup>a</sup> rallying point for the pro-Government forces and anti-Shiromani Akali Dal parties. Finance was no issue

with the Khalsa National Party as it had the support of Maharaja of Patiala, the Government and other big landed gentry. The major demand in its manifesto was Swarajya. Besides other things, the Party took to safeguard the interests of the Sikhs in the matter of selection on Government jobs and the cause of Punjabi language in Gurmukhi script. The Party, due to its sound financial position, shifting loyalties and pro-Congress stand of the Shiromani Akali Dal established its hold in the Gurdwara elections of 1937. However, this harmed the cause of Panthic unity and Master Tara Singh had to plead with his followers to launch a counter-offensive against the Khalsa National Party to stay in the game.

The Khalsa National Party had its first shock in the death of Sardar Majithia in 1941, followed by the Sikandar-Baldev Singh Pact. Earlier, it had not bothered to look after the interests of its followers outside the Assembly. With the replacement of Dasaundha Singh, a Unionist Party leader by Sardar Baldev Singh in the Punjab Assembly, the fate of the Khalsa National Party, was almost sealed.

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The moderate Sikh leaders who in the initial stages controlled the Central Sikh League got sidelined as a result of growing necessities of the time. This coerced the Government to release some relaxations to the Sikhs in shape of offering them one-third share in the Punjab Legislative Assembly seats and acquitting of some Ghadrites. The Sikhs by the time had realised the meaning of such defrauding tricks of the Government and thus were not to be taken in by such

momentous tactics aimed at winning a specific group of Sikhs. At this juncture, the Sikhs deemed it necessary to form a plan, vigorous and effervescent in nature which may prove stringent and effective than just remaining <sup>clung</sup> to a resolution-passing body which the Chief Khalsa Diwan was. The effort engineered the culmination of the Akali Movement in April, 1920 which found its supporters in ruralites and some educated lot from cities and towns. The "non-violent and passive resistance by the Akalis in the Morchas of Nanakana Sahib, Guru-ka-Bagh and Jaito were amazing feats. Over a thousand Akalis laid down their lives and over 50,000 incurred the Government's wrath in the form of undergoing jail terms." <sup>111</sup>

Harbans Singh quotes that "sums to the tune of 16 lacs of rupees were paid by way of fines and forfeitures and about 700 Sikh Government functionaries in villages were deprived of their positions." <sup>112</sup> The magnitude of the Akali movement made the Government realise that "it was some way even bigger than the Congress Civil Disobedience Movement." <sup>113</sup> The result was that the Government had to accept all their demands pertaining to the control and management of the Sikh religious places. To add to the worries of the Government was established the S.G.P.C. on November 16, 1920 and the Shiromani Akali Dal on December 24, 1920 for the management of the Gurdwaras, to extend physical power to the S.G.P.C and control and direct Jathas for taking possession of Gurdwaras. A major success came to the way of the Akalis when the Government was compelled to release the prisoners of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. <sup>114</sup> With all these successes and

accompanying occasional failures, 'the Panth emerged from the struggle victorious but divided against itself.'

The Ghadrites saw the period of escalating tension between England and Germany as an opportunity to avenge their humiliation. The revolutionaries exploited the disaffection among the immigrants to foment revolution and sent invitations to the 'politicised immigrants and emigrants' to corner the culprits of the Komagata Maru incident and Budge-Budge riots. Responding to the invitation, about 10,000 Indian immigrants to the U.S.A., Canada and Far-East had returned to India by 1917. Initially the Government took the event casually. Nevertheless, it revoked the Ingress into India Ordinance and the Defence of India Act (1915) to check such entries in the name of public safety and succeeded in intervening and restricting the exodus. The Government had, as usually, the Sikh landed gentry and the Golden Temple management at their back to carry out prejudicial measures.

The aim of the joint meeting between the representatives of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress (Lucknow Pact, 1916) was to formulate a scheme which should act as a model for the authority to appoint a provincial legislature council to administer the internal affairs of provinces, four-fifth of whose members chosen on 'as broad a franchise as possible'<sup>basis</sup> and suggest that sufficient representation may be granted to the significant minority communities in the provincial legislatures. The Pact asked to ensure adequate representation to the numerically bigger, yet

educationally backward Muslim community,<sup>116</sup> half of the elected seats in the Legislative Council. As Sikhs had stayed away from the Lucknow Conference, they were not considered at par with the Muslims which made the Sikhs apprehensive as a political society. They were not allowed separate representative like Muslims in provinces where they were in minority.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan fastened its step in support of demands acceptable to Sikhs in a memorandum to Punjab Government. The Sikhs found the environment created by the Congress-Muslim League alliance as unfavourable and hostile one. The Congress denied the right of separate Sikh identity while <sup>the</sup> Muslims remained entirely indifferent to the Sikh concerns.

Earlier in 1909, Viceroy Lord Minto and the Secretary of State, Lord Morley drafted a scheme (Minto-Morley Scheme, 1909) under the constitutional reforms which had granted separate electorates and extra weightage to the Muslims to upset Hindu preponderance in the electorate process introduced for <sup>the</sup> first time. No such concession, however, was conceded to the Sikhs, despite a strong demand by the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The Sikhs showed no ditherings in criticising the Congress leaders of denying independence to their thoughts of self-perception and consciousness. The 'poor show' put up by the Sikhs in the elections further weakened their position.<sup>117</sup>

The passion for growing as separate political identity overwhelmed the psyche of Tat Khalsa with the growth of communal consciousness among the Sikhs. The Congress-Muslim League joint threw the Sikhs in a state where they felt themselves completely isolated. This impulse forced the Chief Khalsa Diwan to realise that 'in order that such representation may be adequate and consistent with their position and importance, the Sikhs' claim that a one-third share in all seats and appointments in the Punjab is a just share and should be secured to them as an absolute minimum.'

Unduly, though not surprisingly, the Hindus refuted special communal representation to Sikhs as 'it would endanger their position in the province.' They continued to regard Sikhs as a part of a larger Hindu community. Even Mian Fasil-i-Hussain, Education Minister, was of the view that Muslim representation be based on the Lucknow Pact scheme. Sardar Gajjan Singh suggested for <sup>the</sup> just claim of Sikhs which was opposed both by the Hindus and the Muslims. Sikhs' claim of one-third seats in the Provincial Legislature was again thwarted by the two communities.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms, 1918 regarded Congress-League scheme as premature and suggested instead an interim scheme of administration to acclimatize India to a responsible Government by devoluting the authority to provincial Governments and the introduction of partial responsible Governments in the provinces based on the dyarchy principle. The Report further stated that the

Sikhs in the Punjab are a distinct and important people, they supply a gallant and valuable element to the Indian Army, but they are everywhere in minority, and experience has shown that they go virtually unrepresented. To Sikhs, therefore, and to them alone, we propose to extend the system already adopted in case of Mohammadians.<sup>119</sup>

The Congress regarded the Report as disappointing and unsatisfactory. On the other hand, this was taken as a significant political victory by the Sikh politicians as they thought that the Report has recognised them as an independent political identity. However, under pressure from the Hindu and the Muslim legislatures, the Government constituted the Southborough Committee to formulate the details of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

The Southborough Committee Report (1919) recommended 15 per cent seats for the Sikhs in view of their constituting a small block in a Legislative Council, dominated by the Muslim and the Hindu members. It further stated that there was some difficulty in defining with accuracy the distinction between some classes of Sikhs and Hindus. In the light of this fact, the Committee suggested that 'the statement of a person to the effect that whether he is a Sikh or a Hindu be accepted by the electoral officer'.

The Tat Khalsta made a spontaneous statement to the effect that Lord Southborough's statement that both Keshhari and Sehajdhari Sikhs qualified to vote in the special Sikh constituencies amounted to undermining the very basis of their demand for special representation. This was taken as a severe blow to <sup>the</sup> Sikh political society. The Chief Khalsa Diwan also expressed feelings of grave and serious apprehension at the Southborough committee's recommendations.<sup>120</sup>

Then came the much awful Rowlatt Act. A Committee was constituted under Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt (1917) to 'investigate revolutionary violence in India and suggest measures necessary to combat it'. The Rowlatt bills became a highly volatile political issue which caused vigorous reaction among all political parties including the Muslim League, the Indian National Congress and the Sikh organisations. The most significant aspect relating to the Rowlatt Act was 'unification between Hindu, Muslim and Sikh bodies and as a result it gave a good amount of boost to the cause of Indian Nationalism'.

The scale of cooperation between different communities can be imagined from the fact that the Central Sikh League organised its inaugural session at Amritsar on December 30, 1919 to coincide it with the annual session of the Congress and the Muslim League. The failure of monsoons, affecting the rabi crops to a great extent and Government's callous attitude in this regard further motivated Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims to launch a united attack on the Government. This united attack

forced Jawaharlal Nehru to say that: "This nationalism was itself a composite force and behind it could be distinguished a Hindu nationalism, a Muslim nationalism, party looking beyond the frontiers of India."<sup>121</sup>

The Sikh grievances against a continuous disregard of their honour and identity by the Government coerced them to form a sort of alliance with the nationalist campaign to participate in the anti-Government agitation. Besides providing moral support to the Khilafat agitation,<sup>the</sup> Central Sikh League charged the Hunter Committee Report on General Dyer's conduct, in relation to Jallianwala Bagh massacre, as 'an attempt to whitewash the officials of the Indian and the Punjab Governments connected with the introduction, continuation and administration of Martial Law in the Punjab, even against the weight of published evidence.' It regretted that no adequate punishment has yet been meted out to several officers, who were guilty of unpardonable excesses and gross abuse of power.<sup>122</sup>

The idea of the British to transfer power to Indians steadily accentuated community-based politics especially among the minorities. They started having doubts about their bleak future in relation to share of power. Like other minorities, the Sikhs in Punjab, in an effort to make themselves an effective force in provincial politics, sped up their political activities. Consequently, during an All Parties Conference in 1927, the Central Sikh League voiced Sikh demands in a more emphatic way in context of communal representation. It also demanded complete abolition of representation in the national interest.

Earlier, the Sikh claims for a justifiable representation in the Assembly, based on their special position in the province, and opposition to statutory majority to Muslims to the tune of 50 per cent in the Provincial Council, were ignored in the Minto-Morley Scheme (1909) and Congress-Muslim League Lucknow Pact (1916). A small respite was granted to them in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1919) where they were granted 19% seats in the Provincial Council. The first setback caused to Sikhs due to the statutory majority of Muslims came in the form of a Gurdwara Act of 1923, ignoring strong opposition by the whole Sikh community. Previously, Hindus considered Sikhs as a part of their community, but when they saw Sikhs adamant on recognising themselves as a separate community, they proposed to recognise the Sikhs not only as a separate community <sup>but</sup> also backed their demand of adequate representation <sup>the</sup> in Provincial Council in view of the introduction of dyarchy with a statutory majority to Muslims. The latter continued to consider Sikhs as a 'sub-section of Hindus' and thought that the Sikh demand was a 'Hindu Mahasabha fiction'. 123

The situation in Punjab was very complex in view of a triangular fight for representation in Legislative Council with population covering 55.9%, 33% and 11.1% and seats allotted 50%, 30.9% and 19.1% for Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs respectively. Obviously, Muslims favoured representation on the basis of numerical majority while this yardstick was not conducive to either Hindus or Sikhs. The Hindus, as also the Sikhs wanted same pattern to be followed for

allotment of seats in provinces where Muslims were in minority. Seeing no solution in the offing, Motilal Nehru once remarked that he wished to 'efface the Punjab from the map of India'.<sup>123</sup>

The evolution of Sikh communal consciousness led to the politicalisation of communal aspirations and grievances of the Sikhs which resulted into the birth of Khalsa nationalism with the adoption of Khalsa symbols denoting solidarity and militancy emerging out of religious faith. The Khalsa nationalists, who were known to be a militant order of ascetics, were called Nihangs, who ascribed their origin to the martial guru, Guru Gobind Singh and recognised themselves as self-appointed guardians of the faith.

The Khalsa nationalists were feared and respected as the Government took this new community of Sikhs indicative of the new spirit permeating the Khalsa. This new outlook showed its presence in the form of a militant action in connection with Gurdwara Rikabganj agitation of 1912. The peaceful mode of agitation by the Chief Khalsa Diwan took a militant turn at the Tarn Taran meeting of the Central Sikh League (July, 1920) where an appeal was made to form a Shahidi Dal to rebuild the demolished wall of the Rikabganj Gurdwara. The appeal was heavily responded to and a Shahidi Dal under Sardar Teja Singh Samundri was constituted for the purpose. Seeing the militant mood of the agitation, the Government initiated an effort to forestall the action by reaching an agreement. This was described as the first concrete victory by all political leaders

against the alien rulers. The second major win came the Sikhs' way in the shape of ejection of the Mahant of Gurdwara Babe-di-Bir and handing over the administration of the Gurdwara to a committee of local Sikhs. <sup>124</sup>

The Government of India Act, 1920 was a severe blow to the Sikhs in respect of inadequate political representation accorded to them. Further, the proceedings of the Reforms Advisory Committee of the Punjab Government (1920) caused much anxiety to the Sikhs as the former invited Gurbaksh Singh and Arur Singh to discuss the matter of defining the term 'Sikh' for the sake of elections to the Legislative Council. The testimony of these two persons, who were known touts of the Government caused much concern to the Khalsa nationalists. <sup>125</sup> Both Arur Singh and Gurbaksh Singh had endorsed the viewpoint of the Southborough Committee to regard a person as a 'Sikh' on the basis of a faithful declaration made by him during the process of compilation of electoral rolls. The Tat Khalsa heavily condemned the proposal and underlined that only ~~Ke~~Sadhari Sikhs could justifiably be considered as true Sikhs. It was because already the Sahajdhari Sikhs had registered themselves as Hindus regarding Sikhs as part of the Hindu faith. <sup>126</sup>

Unlike the first session of the Central Sikh League, its second session at Lahore was dominant with feelings of Khalsa nationalism. The League remarked that the Sikhs had been treated with gross injustice in the matter of political representation and the Government continued to regard other

legitimate Sikh demands with gross insensitivity. The League also passed a resolution initiating a programme of non-violent non-cooperation with the Government. The Sikhs had joined the Non-Cooperation Movement as the Congress had conceded their demand to include their grievances in the list of national demands.

The annual session of the League at Amritsar, on October, 1920, initiated the process of baptising low-caste people to the Khalsa fold, on the pattern of Shuddhi Movement of the Arya Samajists, with an assurance to them that every sort of discrimination to them would be terminated henceforth. <sup>127</sup> A theological dispute between the Khalsa Biradari marchers to the Golden Temple and its management ended in occupation of the Akal Takht by the former and appointment of a provisional committee to manage the shrine. Later, however, fearing that Government's indifference towards Akali activities may not imply its 'surrender to the advocates of ultra-Sikhism' it announced the constitution of a provisional advisory committee to 'propose rules regarding Golden Temple's management. The militants responded by appointing a 175-member committee comprising members from Singh Sabhas and other Sikh institutions which disapproved the 'official provisional committee as it was constituted without consulting the Sikh community. The Government again did not interfere in the affairs of the new committee as it had proceeded on 'constitutional lines'.

The Akali Jathas remained engaged in gaining control of Gurdwaras, and emerged as 'mushroom growths and did

not contain any element of stability, re-christened the committee as the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee in the last month of 1920 with a resolve to reform the mismanaged Gurdwaras and throw corrupt Mahants out of them.<sup>128</sup>

And this was regarded as the third victory for the Sikhs which enthused them to capture Gurdwara after Gurdwara, compelling the Mahants to relieve the charge and appointing committees of local Khalsa Sikhs to manage the Gurdwaras. The escalating tendencies of forcible seizure of Gurdwaras among Khalsa fanatics unleashed a spell of worries for the Government. The latter, however, did not want to go strict afraid of consolidation of alliance between the extremist Sikh reformers and the nationalists. It, thus, followed a policy of neutrality towards increasingly volatile issue of Gurdwara management and preferred to wait till the newly constituted Provincial Legislature adopts a concrete resolution to this effect.<sup>129</sup>

Further, to avoid anything which might drive the Sikhs into opposition to the Government, the latter made it clear to the Mahants and Pujaris of the Sikh Gurdwaras that it could not help them anymore and they could approach the civil courts or police for protection. Feeling to have been left in isolation by the Government, the Mahants and Pujaris held their second consecutive conference during the last month of 1920 and resolved to form an organisation under the banner of Udasi Mahamandal to safeguard their interests.<sup>130</sup>



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Hanging on to the razzle of capturing the Sikh shrines, the S.G.P.C. resolved to hold a Diwan at Nankana Sahib to terminate the rule of corrupt management. More than 150 members of the Akali Jatha, who had marched to establish their control over the Gurdwara, were gunned down by some mercenaries hired by the Mahant of the Gurdwara. The sacrifice, however, got the Akalis temporary charge of the shrine management which reinforced their confidence and zeal for the Gurdwara reform. Though for a while this act of the Government served as a balm on the feverish excitement, generated by the massacre rumours that the Government was cognisant of the designs of the Mahant created an environment full of suspicions against it. The suspicion was further compounded by the Government's act of contradicting such allegations on its fact-finding body.

Another significant aspect of the Nankana Sahib tragedy was that it activated nationalist leaders to cash on the anti-Government sentiments among the Sikhs which resulted in the holding of a Shahidi Diwan at Nankana Sahib. Mahatma Gandhi exhorted the Sikhs at the Diwan to cooperate with him in the Non-cooperation Movement and urged them to boycott the official investigation into the massacre. Though this appeal by Gandhi and other nationalist politicians aggravated the intensity of anti-Government feelings among the Sikhs, their main task remained that of ending of the practice of irreligious management, and real politic or practical politics always remained an aftermath for them. Periodic attacks on

any type of legacy in the form of Mahants' authority over the Sikh Gurdwaras sent the Mahants in a state of quandry. However, increasing lawlessness and campaigns of intimidation invited the Government's wrath in the shape of instructions to Deputy Commissioners to identify and prosecute the culprits under the Arms Act. This, in turn, invited Sikhs' accusations of Government breaking the agreement with them and forging militancy in the ranks of the S.G.P.C.

In the meantime, the Education Minister, Fazi-i-Mussain made the Government realise the intricacies and ineffectiveness of the judicial process regarding management of the Sikh religious institutions and urged the Government to issue an ordinance establishing a special commission to deal with the dispute over management of Gurdwaras. The Akalis, however, remained committed to their stand that the Sikh Gurdwaras were the sole property of the Sikh Panth and no Mahant had thus any claim to ownership of the shrine's property. They underlined the point that the British viewpoint on ownership of property has been wrongly applied to the Sikh religious institutions. This ambiguity was the main bone of contention. The Sahajdhari Sikhs, represented by Hardit Singh Bedi, suggested that a corrupt Mahant should be replaced by an appointment from the same Sikh sect. Ganpat Rai emphasised the point that Sikhism was represented by a total of five sects and as such the commission to be appointed must have representation from each of the sects.

Though the ordinance for establishing a special Commission did not see the light of the day, the Punjab Government drafted the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act of 1921 with the help of Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council which envisaged the appointment of a temporary Board of Commissioners with two-third of its members to be the non-official Sikhs. The Bill, however, again failed to define the term 'Sikh', though it directed the Board to conduct an enquiry into the 'origin, nature and object of the foundation of the shrine, the value, title, conditions, management of all its estates and property, the law or custom regulating the succession to any office connected with shrine, the nature and character of any religious or charitable duty, ceremony or observance connected therewith'. The motive of the Bill was stated to serve as a basis for a subsequent permanent legislation suggesting the future control of the Sikh Gurdwaras.

The Sehajdhari Sikhs, the Hindus and Akharas or Panchaiti societies of Hardwar, which represented the ascetic orders of Nirmalas and Udasis and 'exercised supervision and control over Mahants', presented a memorandum to the Government criticising the Act. Another Sehajdhari Sikh, Raja Narendra Nath stated that it lent State support to religious reform and was thus in contradiction of British policy of non-interference in religious affairs. The Tat Khalsa Sikhs, on the other hand, also raised their voice against the proposed legislation. They treated the legislation as an intervention by the Government in the management of

administration of Gurdwaras and as an encroachment on the religious liberty of the Sikhs. The S.G.P.C., on the other hand, put forward the condition to constitute the Board with all its members as Khalsa Sikhs and two-third of these must be appointed by the S.G.P.C. to make the Bill acceptable to the

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Sikhs. The Khalsa Sikhs asserted that Sikhs were not prepared to admit that Sadhus (ascetics) belonging to the Nirmala or Udasi sects possess a right of interfering in our religious affairs since they on their own admission were 'Hindus and regarded Sikh Gurus as Hindu religious reformers'.

The draft Gurdwara Bill was passed though rapidly keeping in mind the interests of Khalsa Sikhs. The definition of the term Sikh and of Gurdwara again witnessed a sharp disagreement between different members of the Legislative Council and the two main parties in the fray, who remained dissatisfied with the provisions in the Bill. The Government, thus, had to postpone the legislation for the time being. Meanwhile, a meeting of the S.G.P.C held at Amritsar, discussed plans for future structurisation of the legislation and resolved to go ahead with a policy of non-cooperation against the Government, resort to passive resistance, and boycott of British goods on the issue of Government's failure to adopt a

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legislation conducive to the Sikh identity.

In an effort to galvanise its activities, the S.G.P.C. held fresh elections in August, 1921. This new committee had a majority of militants which endorsed the resolutions of non-cooperation and passive resistance against

the Government. It also directed its efforts to further strengthen the Akali Dal with setting up of district Gurdwara committees representing a substantial Khalsa opinion to deal with the routine problems of the Gurdwara management. The Central Akali Dal was also reorganised with auxiliary Akali Jathas to expand the S.G.P.C. activities rapidly. A Publicity Bureau was also set-up to issue press releases on behalf of the S.G.P.C. alongwith the launching of a newspaper campaign and religious tracts, which published extracts from the holy Sikh scriptures appealing to Sikh religious fervour alongwith a call for support in its crusade for the Gurdwara reform. <sup>138</sup>

The enormous, spontaneous and constant success achieved by the S.G.P.C. in marshalling its forces through a vigorous campaign of recruitment for the Akali Dal happened to be the cause of anxiety and alarm to the Government. The Government felt convinced of Akalis as its out and out enemies, and was planning to declare the forum as illegal on account of escalation of their essays in the direction of capturing Sikh shrines. But ultimately the Punjab Government thought it to be impolitic to involve itself in any confrontation with Akalis for the while. <sup>139</sup>

The recurring S.G.P.C-Government conflict progressively strengthened the position of the former and the Government extended adequate concessions to gratify the religious sentiments of the Tat Khalsa amounting to recognition and institutionalisation of a distinct and separate Sikh identity. The new S.G.P.C. constituted in July, 1923 emerged as

far more extremist in character than its predecessor. It aroused to typhoon of agitation till the abducted Maharaja of Nabha was released. The Gangesar Gurdwara Diwan at Jaito (August 25, 1923) alleged conspiracy and treachery on the part of the Government, as the S.G.P.C. called upon the Sikhs to 'turn out the British dacoits', who have seized the State and forcibly expelled the Maharaja. Following such allegations, the Government arrested some Akali leaders and disrupted the Akhandpath which only formented their (Sikhs') determination to fight out the oppression besides providing the S.G.P.C. with an opportunity to give religious colour to the political campaign. A state had thus reached where a Tat Khalsa-Government clash seemed imminent and the Government felt apprehended at the increasing resurgency of the Akali militancy. It, however, again preferred to keep a restraint, fearing the alienation of Sikh sympathy. But the patience of the Government was to end at one time. It now decided to curb the Akali activity. As the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal, in the opinion of the Government, were becoming dangerous for the public peace, these were declared unlawful bodies and many of its members were charged with conspiracy to wage war against the King. <sup>140</sup>

Then came the provincial elections which saw the S.G.P.C. candidates scoring stunning victories and thereby securing exclusive control over Sikh membership in the Legislative Council. Enthused by this splendid win, the S.G.P.C. intensified its Jaito agitation. The Government, after having

failed to stop Akali Jathas' march to the Nabha State, opened fire killing 14 Akalis and wounding 34 others on the occasion of anniversary of the Mankana massacre on February 20, 1924.<sup>141</sup> It further precipitated the Akali activities as this action of the Government proved an asset for the militants to convince the moderates of the cunning and dubious policies of the Government. But the harvesting season again brought forth the problem of new recruitments which forced the S.G.P.C. to at least temporarily extricate itself from the Morcha, provided it could do so in a manner compatible with its dignity. And this prompted the Government to reopen negotiations with the S.G.P.C. over the drafting of a suitable Gurdwara legislation. The Akalis, responding to <sup>the</sup> Government initiative, asked it to cancel <sup>the</sup> notification declaring the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal as unlawful association, release all the Sikh prisoners, allow performing of 101 Akhandpaths at Jaito as pre-condition for dropping the Nabha agitation pending the passage of an acceptable Gurdwara legislation. The Government, on the other hand, insisted that the Akali demands would be met only after successful negotiations, which caused the failure of the proposed negotiations.<sup>142</sup>

Failure after failure again compelled the Government to initiate a more insidious policy to counter and undermine the S.G.P.C.'s influence. It got success in securing the help of some Sikh landlords for the formation of anti-Akali associations called, Sewak or Sudhar committees. These committees launched a campaign through newspapers to defame the Akalis

in an effort to isolate them and pressurise them to adopt a more reasonable attitude. A Jatha of the Sudhar committee was able to conduct uninterrupted Akhandpath at Jaito with the connivance of the Government. This move of the Government worked and effectively undermined the basis of the Akali agitation.<sup>143</sup> This came as a great shock to Akali leaders as it had removed much of the sting off the S.G.P.C. allegations and considerably weakened the political platform of the Akalis. However, these Sewak committees could never offer as a viable alternative to the S.G.P.C. Such a stage was considered ripe to restart negotiations for drafting a permanent Gurdwara legislation. The S.G.P.C. again promptly responded to the Government initiative in this direction. The outcome of these negotiations was the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1925 which was based on the principle enunciated by the Tat Khalsa reformers over the past two decades which stated that "the responsibility for the management and control of all Sikh religious institutions was to be with the Sikh community, and establishment of a Central Board of Management for all Sikh religious institutions and shrines."<sup>144</sup>

One major aspect of the Bill was that the term 'Sikh shrine', 'Sikh Gurdwara' and 'Sikh' were defined which, in fact, had remained the main cause of all troubles between the Khalsa Sikhs, Sehajdhari Sikhs and the Government. The Bill served as an 'equitable solution to the controversy over Gurdwara management'. The Government, however, stated that this concession to Sikhs does not mean that the Akalis would automatically gain control of all Sikh religious institutions.

As a step in this direction, the Government strategically made smaller constituencies for elections of Gurdwara committee members to obstruct the exclusive control of Akalis over the Gurdwaras.<sup>145</sup>

The Bill engineered a cascade of protests from the Sahajdhari Sikhs. Some Akali leaders also opposed the Government strongly to limit the control over Sikh shrines. They also demanded release of Akali prisoners and a settlement on Jaito issue. The S.G.P.C. general house, nevertheless, voted in favour of cooperation with the Government on the issue of the passing of the Bill. As a consequence of this, the Sikh Gurdwara Bill was passed on July 8, 1925 by the Punjab Legislative Council. The Gurdwara Act of 1925 was regarded of great significance to the Sikhs as it marked a turning point in the movement towards the reformulation of Sikh identity and the development of a distinct Sikh communal consciousness.<sup>146</sup>

The Act also characterised the new S.G.P.C. as a 'unique organisation of authority and influence within the Sikh community'. It gave the committee 'power of direction of, and general superintendence over the numerous local Gurdwara committees' and scheduled and unscheduled Sikh Gurdwaras and shrines, besides providing a 'platform from where to reach the community and spread its ideology'.<sup>147</sup>

With such powers at its command, the S.G.P.C. became both a "forum and a power base for Sikh political action...a sort of parliament of Sikhs...a Government within the Government."<sup>148</sup> Active in Sikh political activity, the Akali

Dal with its control over S.G.P.C. made it a 'formidable force in Sikh politics'. Earlier, the Akali Dal's endeavour to acquire "a position of political leverage for the Sikhs as an entity was manifest both in its relations with the Indian National Congress and its political demands."<sup>149</sup> However, the Dal always remained watchful of maintaining its independent political identity while participating in the Congress campaigns, more or less, as a pressure group.

The Akalis vehemently opposed the Nehru Report (1928)<sup>150</sup> as it did not recommend special minority representation for the Sikhs. The Central Sikh League also declared the Report as unacceptable to the Sikhs.<sup>151</sup> A year later, nevertheless, the Congress under pressure from Akalis assured the Sikhs that "no constitutional proposal would be acceptable to the Congress which does not give full satisfaction to the Sikh demands."<sup>152</sup>

The S.G.P.C. again introduced the 'inclusion of Sikh colour in the National flag' as pre-condition for Sikhs' participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement. As the proposal was not accepted, the Akali Dal decided to participate in the Movement but under its own flag.<sup>153</sup> The Akalis again rejected the Congress move and constituted the Khalsa Defence League to encourage Sikhs' recruitment in the British-India Army during the Second World War.<sup>154</sup>

The Akalis never relented from demanding 'provincial political representation for the Sikhs far in excess of their population'. They used to feel that anything less than one-

third representation would be 'ineffectual in maintaining or promoting the Sikhs' separate political existence'. They have by now earned the view that the Hindus would never admit Sikhs as a separate communal entity and they were 'deeply mistrustful of Muslim intentions'. "A position of political leverage became an Akali demand...and their inability to achieve a position of political authority for the Sikh community drove them further towards political extremism."<sup>155</sup>

As the Akalis sided with the Congress in boycotting the Simon Commission, the Muslims argued that "the distinction between Sikhs and Hindus was artificial, and since they, in fact, belonged to the same community, which together constituted about 45 per cent of the population, they did not merit special political safeguards."<sup>156</sup> To this, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia responded with the statement that "Sikhs have been a distinct community. Since the Gurus, they have been a distinct community and I cannot accept the statement from a rival community... Religiously and socially we are a distinct community and as such our interests are not identical with those of any other community at all."<sup>157</sup>

The episode of three sessions of the Round Table Conferences, designed to discuss the Indian Statutory Commission proposal of a "federal constitution for India with greater provincial autonomy and Indian self-Government at the provincial level," having ended inconclusively, the Government embodied the upshot of the deliberations in a "new set of constitutional reforms in the form of the Government of India Act of 1935."

The British Government chose to stick to the decision of separate electorates with reservation of seats for minority communities. As a result, the Sikhs were granted 19 per cent seats in the Punjab Legislative Council against their 14 per cent entitlement. The Akalis, however, were adamant on having not less than one-third seats as it "voiced its grim determination not to allow the successful working of any constitution which does not provide full protection to the Sikhs by guaranteeing an effective balance of power to each of the three principal communities in the Punjab." 158

The Cripps Mission (1942) headed by Sir Stafford Cripps, also met with failure due to a 'deadlock between the colonial authorities and the nationalists'. The Mission gave the impression that the Muslim League's demand of a separate nation was an 'impending reality'. The Sikhs opposed the Pakistan Resolution as it was bound 'to split the Sikh population into two in Punjab.' Consequently, the Akali Dal forwarded a scheme of "territorial adjustment suggesting a new territorial unit of Azad Punjab through a demarcation of the boundaries of Punjab...and detaching of Muslim majority area from Punjab to constitute a new province in which no religious community had a majority." It further stated that "in the Azad Punjab, the boundaries shall be fixed after taking into consideration the population, property, land revenue and historical traditions of each of the communities." 159

The population pattern in Azad Punjab, according to Akali Dal, would be 40, 40 and 20 in favour of Hindus, Muslims

and Sikhs, leaving scope for the Sikhs to take sides considering 'maximizing of political advantage'.<sup>160</sup> The scheme, however, was not to be taken seriously by the remaining Indian political leadership. The Sikhs at a conference in 1944 then asked for setting up of a committee to explore the possibility of establishing an independent Sikh State as the "Sikhs too were a nation and that they would not be made slaves of Pakistan or Hindustan."<sup>161</sup>

Before the Cabinet Mission (1946), the Akali Dal submitted for a United India as the creation of Pakistan would divide the Sikh community. But, if Pakistan was to come then the Sikhs would like to have a 'separate Sikh State with the right to federate with either India or Pakistan.'<sup>162</sup> The Akali Dal then officially adopted the resolution of a separate Sikh State of Sikhistan or Khalistan in March, 1946, which stated:<sup>163</sup>

"whereas the Sikhs being attached to the Punjab by intimate bonds of holy shrines, property, language, traditions, and history claim it as their homeland and holy land and which the British took as a 'trust' from the last Sikh ruler during his minority and whereas the entity of the Sikhs is being threatened on the account of persistent demand of Pakistan by the Muslims on the one hand and of danger of absorption by the Hindus on the other, and Executive Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal demands, for the preservation and protection of the religious, cultural and economic rights of the Sikh nation, the creation of a Sikh State."

## CONCLUSION

Sikh politics, as many other things, has grown out of necessities of time of a particular era. It resisted and weathered certain centrifugal and centripetal pressures to reach its maturity. First, there were pressures from without— from the Hindu and the Muslim orthodoxy and growing Christianary influence. Then, the more the Hindus labelled Sikhism as a section of a vast Hindu community, out of perhaps their fear psychosis at this fast growing and increasingly attractive faith, the more it catalysed the development of Sikhism.

The two publications — Dayanand's Satyarath Parkash and Pandit Jai Chand's Sikh Hindu Aur Marti Pajak Hain — coupled with Government's effort in promoting Hindu orthodoxy, Sehajdharis, Nirmalas, Udasis, Mahants, Pujaris etc. to vedanticize and Brahmanise the Sikh ethos and philosophy, proved a shot in the arm for the Sikh community as a whole. The Sikh leadership then felt to have been left with no alternative other than to face the challenges boldly and zealously, with religious might at its back. And under such challenges and pressures, the Sikhism developed from a purely religious movement to a religio-political movement.

The Sikh Gurus were of the view that obeying Sikh State was a political necessity. However, the adoring of two swords of 'Miri' and 'Piri' by Guru Hargobind has been recognised as an innovative development which subsequently constituted the basis of Sikh polity and which finally became fundamental to the understanding of Sikh politics.

The Sikh politics has primarily been an effect of the Sikh identity crisis. Its target for sometime was to draw clear-cut boundaries for Sikhism from Hinduism as both the Muslims and the colonial rulers never took Sikhs seriously till at a juncture when the Government was forced to recommend that the magnitude of the Akali movement was even bigger than the Civil Disobedience Movement. And it was then that the Government thought of appointing a Board of Commissioners to clearly define the terms 'Sikh', 'Sikh Gurdwaras' and 'Sikh shrines' before finally enacting the Sikh Gurdwaras Bill of 1925.

The Singh Sabha Movement had to shift its area of activity from education to management of Sikh Gurdwaras as the Mahants, patronised by the Government, had converted them into centres of debauchery, gambling and other vices.

The Lucknow Pact, the Nehru Report, the Indian Statutory Commission, the Round Table Conferences, the Cripps Mission, and the Cabinet Mission preferred to ignore the Sikh interests forcing them ultimately to opt for a separate State of Khalistan, in case Pakistan was an impending reality.

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74. Majithia Papers, File No.57.
75. Harbans Singh, Sikh Political Parties.
76. It passed a resolution to help the British during the Second World War in response to an appeal made by the Maharaja. (Majithia Papers, File No.151 and Khalsa Samachar, September 14, 1939.
77. The Milap, Lahore, April 7, 1942.
78. The Khalsa, August 20, 1944.
79. Chief Khalsa Diwan, File No.343.54.
80. The Mahants went on to support the Komagata Maru event and the cruel Act of Gen. Dyer. The Mahants-Government alliance led to intractable judicial trials for Sikhs.
81. The Tribune, December 28, 1919.
82. Ibid., December 31, 1919.
83. The second session of the League was held at Lahore from October 18 to 20, 1920.
84. The Tribune, July 23, 1921.
85. Ibid., October 21, 1930 and July 23, 1921.
86. The fourth session of the League was held at Lyallpur on October 12, 1921.
87. The Mitra Register, 1928, Vol.I.
88. Akali-te-Pardesi, December 31, 1928.
89. The Tribune, October 24, 1928.
90. Jathedar Sarmakh Singh was the first President of the Shiromani Akali Dal.
91. It was also known as the Sardar Bahadur Party.
92. The Tribune, June 12, 1926.
93. Excerpts from minutes of the All Parties Conference as quoted by The Tribune, April 14, 1938.
94. The SGPC came into being as a result of a proclamation made from the Akal Takht on November 15, 1920. This 175-member body came to be known as the Parliament of Sikhs. Sunder Singh Majithia became its founder President and Bhai Jodh Singh, the founder Secretary.

95. Akali te Pardesi, January 18, 22 and 31, 1928; Harbans Singh, Sikh Political Parties, PGR, September 30, 1978, Govt. of India Political File No. 18/12-32; Azad Punjab (Urdu), Amritsar, April 12, 1929.
96. It opposed Communal Award and advocated achieving of complete independence, launching struggle for release of all political prisoners, relief for rural indebtedness, land revenue on income tax basis and Indianisation of the Army etc. Akali Patrika, June 16, 1936.
97. Linlithgow Collections, MSS, EUR, IOR 125/89, Do No. 210, January 28, 1940 from Governor, Punjab to the Governor-General; The Phulwari, Lahore, Sept. 23, 1941; The Akali, August 29, 1942; The Sikh Duniya, Amritsar, January 4, 1947; and PGR, April 30, 1942, Govt. of India, Home, Political, File No. 18/9-42.
98. The Tribune, August 12, 1936.
99. Azad Punjab, Mitra Reg., 1944, Vol. II; The Khalsa, August 13, 1944.
100. The relations between the two Dals became less acrimonious after the death of Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh in 1937.
101. PSR (PSA) File Nos. 178, 546, 548, 550; Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Sikh Studies, Lahore, 1937.
102. The Mauji, August 11, 1930; The Akali-te-Pardesi, January 31, 1938; Panj Darya, November 18, 1941; The Tribune, April 3, 1942.
103. PGR, September 30, 1932; Govt. of India, Home, Political, File No. 18-12/32; The Khalsa te Khalsa Advocate, Amritsar, August 12, 1933; PGR, September 30, 1933; GOI, Home, Pol., File No. 18/10-1933; Majithia Papers File No. 91; The Fatah, Lahore, Annual Number of 1938.
104. The Tribune, November 18, 1941.
105. Ibid., August 7, 1933.
106. The League was a political body, pro-Congress and militant in character.
107. PGR, November 15, 1932, GOI, Home, Pol. File No. 18/14-32, November 30, 1932, File No. 18/9-33, August 31 and September 30, 1933, File No. 18/10-1933; The Akali, May 8, 1933, August 8, 1933; Khalsa te Khalsa Advocate, August 12, 1933; Akali te Pardesi, September 23, 1933; Akali Patrika, June 16, 1936; The Tribune, October 28, 1933; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, The Akali Patrika, August 18, 1936, and April 27, 1973; June 18, 1937; Jang-e-Azadi, Lahore, September 18, 1944; Proceedings of the All Sikh Parties Conference, Amritsar, August 20, 1944; The Phulwari, February 1, 1932.

108. The Congress Sikh Party was formed despite the best efforts of the All-Sikh Parties Conference contrary to to it. August 3, 1936, Lahore.
109. Chief Khalsa Diwan, File No. 342.54, PGR fortnightly ending October 31, 1936, February 15, 1937; GOI Home, Political File No. 18/2-37, Akali Patrika Lahore, July 16, 1936; Majithia Papers, File No. 110, KNP Manifesto and File No. 129 and 103; Harcharan Singh Bajwa: "Fifty years of Punjab Politics"; The Rayasat, Delhi, March 15, 1937.
110. Sardar Bahadur Gajjan Singh, Gopal Singh Bhagowalia, Ujjal Singh, Rai Sahib Wasakha Singh, Sant Singh, Gurbakhshish Singh, Amar Singh Loyal Gazette and Bhai Jodh Singh.
111. "Gurdwara Reform Movement and the Sikh Awakening" by Teja Singh.
112. Harbans Singh in "Sikh Political Parties".
113. M.S. Sahni, Sikh Policies (1927-1947).
114. The Government released all prisoners of the Gurdwara Reform Movement on September 27, 1926.
115. The Tribune, August 14, 1915 and July 17, 1917.
116. The Akali to Paradesi, October 19, 1916.
117. In the 1909 elections, all the three open seats went to Muslims; the six seats in the 1912 elections had a proportion of four, one and one for Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs respectively. The 1916 elections saw Hindus and Muslims sharing five seats each with Sikhs drawing a blank.
118. The Khalsa Advocate, February 27, 1912.
119. Extracts from the Montagu-Chelmsford Report as enunciated by The Tribune in its issue of September 19, 1918.
120. Khalsa Advocate, November 17, 1917.
121. Jawaharlal Nehru, An Autobiography, London, 1936, p. 75; Punjab Administrative Report, 1920-21, Lahore, 1922, pp. 5-6.
122. The Tribune, July 22, 1920.
123. Ibid., June 6, 1932.
124. Ibid., July 12, 1931.

125. The Tribune, July 16 and July 30, 1920.
126. Sikh, July 4, 1920; Punjab Government Selections, Vol.33, No.28.
127. The Tribune, July 7, 1920.
128. Another aspect of the session which needs a mentioning was the replacing of Gajjan Singh by Kharak Singh. Gajjan Singh had supported the raising of funds for honouring Lt Gen Michael O'Dwyer.
129. The Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C.
130. Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., p.105.
131. The Tribune, February 20, 1921.
132. The Sikh, February 27, 1921; Also GOI, Home (Political) proceedings, Nos. 282-315, May, 1920.
133. The Tribune, March 6, 1921.
134. Punjab Government Press Communique, The Tribune, March 16, 1921.
135. Statements of Baba Hardit Singh and Ganpat Rai in PLC Debates, Vol. I, No. 8.
136. Sikh Gurdwara and Shrines Act of 1921, GOI, Home (Political) proceedings, Nos. 276-281, May, 1921.
137. The Tribune, March 26, 1921.
138. Ibid, June 9 and June 11, 1921.
139. Ruchi Ram Sahni, History of My Own Times and special volumes on Akali Movement, Unpublished private papers.
140. The Akali Dal and the S.G.P.C.
141. Punjab Government Press Communique, The Tribune, October 30, 1923.
142. GOI, Home (Political), proceedings, No. 25, February, 1924.
143. Confidential papers of the Akali Movement, Amritsar, 1965, pp. 69-71 (Ed. Ganda Singh).
144. GOI, Home (Political) proceedings, No. 25, August, 1924.
145. Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill, 1925, Clauses 43, 44, Schedule IV, clauses 49-100, Punjab Gazette, June 26, 1925.
146. Ibid., clause 11.

147. The Tribune, May 6, 12, 16 and 27, 1925.
148. Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., pp. 194-195.
149. Balbir Singh Mann, The Punjabi Suba Morcha: A Plea for Sympathy, Patiala, p. 11; Kailash Chander Gulati, The Akalis Past and Present, New Delhi, 1974, pp. 162, 168-169; Khushwant Singh, op.cit., pp. 214-215; Baldev Raj Nayar, Minority Politics, pp. 177-180.
150. Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., p. 200.
151. The Nehru Report besides other things recommended the abolition of separate communal representation as being detrimental to the interests of a United India and urged the introduction of mixed or joint electorates for all communities. However, it agreed to make an exception in the case of Muslims in view of their relative economic and educational backwardness which would otherwise adversely affect their representation in the legislatures. Muslim representation... was to be ensured through separate communal electorates and the reservation of seats for them in legislatures in proportion to their population in the province. Quoted by Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., p. 231, footnotes 17, 18.
152. Indian National Congress resolution at its annual session at Lahore in December, 1929.
153. K.C. Gulati, Akalis, pp. 55-56.
154. Ibid., p. 80; Khushwant Singh, op.cit., p. 240.
155. Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., p. 202.
156. Selections, Memoranda and Evidence, Pt. 1, p. 125.
157. Ibid., p. 138.
158. K.C. Gulati, The Akalis Past and Present, pp. 62-63.
159. N.N. Mitre, Indian Annual Register, 1943, Calcutta, 1944, Vol. I, p. 298, Quoted by Rajiv A. Kapur, op.cit., pp. 205-206.
160. B.R. Nayar, Minority Politics, p. 84.
161. N.N. Mitre, op.cit., 1944, Calcutta, 1945, Vol. 2, pp. 212-213.
162. Khushwant Singh, op.cit., p. 258.
163. Harbans Singh, The Heritage of the Sikhs, Bombay, 1964, p. 302.

**CHAPTER II**

**EMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF REGIONAL  
PRINT MEDIA IN PUNJAB**

CHAPTER IXEMERGENCE AND GROWTH OF REGIONAL  
PRINT MEDIA IN PUNJAB

Privileges for newspapers has certainly been a later development. Previously, it was all pressures and restraints, if any, unleashed on newspapers from different quarters. The tendency was developed which then went on to increase with newspapers emerging out of certain pressures and then growing and developing (under the shadow of these pressures'.

The British Government was bound to feel worried at the birth of this 'new force', more so as the cause of emergence of this force in India was the result of discontent and outrage towards the acts of omission and commission and atrocities perpetrated by the Government on its people. The founder of this 'new force', none other than Mr James Augustus Hicky, described the reason of embarking upon his newest venture as "I have no particular passion for printing of newspapers; I have no propensities; I was not bred to a slavish life of hard work, yet I take pleasure in enslaving my body in order to purchase freedom for my mind and soul."

The first newspaper to be published in India thus made its maiden appearance on January 29, 1780... called Bengal Gazette (also the Calcutta General Advertiser). The man behind it was an Englishman, James Augustus Hicky, who called himself a 'free-born British citizen'. Hicky described

his two-sheet weekly as a "political and commercial Paper open to all parties but influenced by none...It proved a trail blazer...And over the years, the Indian Press has grown both in numbers and quality."<sup>2</sup>

Earlier, William Bolts having resigned from the Company's service 'under compulsion', had made the first attempt to start a Paper in 1776. He is stated to have "in manuscript many things to communicate which most intimately concerned every individual." He, however, could not succeed in his venture as he was deported to Europe. One thing, nevertheless, is clear from the above facts and that is that the pioneers of the Press in India were those 'who had grievances against the Company'.<sup>3</sup> Though Bolts could not succeed and Hicky could not pull his Paper 'to a greater distance', their efforts showed 'their generation' the glare accompanying the 'new force', which ultimately took the form of an 'unending' process growing and prospering, sustaining and salvaging the outer and inner 'evil forces'.

Such were the circumstances under which the Press in India got its birth. And then Punjab was not going to be an exception. Leaving out a few, the Punjab newspapers remained predominantly critics of the British wrongdoings, in the process promoting and consolidating their interests for which they were established and at the expense of others on that in the race. The Government, on the other hand, regarded the Punjab Press as its main adversary and a popular means of generating defiance of its authority through vicious propaganda.

Punjab was one of the storm centres of political development...Most of the newspapers reflected the growing public resentment against the British rulers for the failure to fulfil the assurances given to the people of India. The Punjab Press...played a prominent role in arousing national consciousness. The underground Papers, including the proscribed cyclostyled news-sheets, also made a significant impact on the Indian public opinion despite their small size and limited number ...the vernacular dailies, in particular, served as popular media of mass communication.

Contrary to the role of Press in other parts of the country, the Press in Punjab 'excelled in virulence, obscenity and deliberate formentation of hatred'<sup>4</sup>. Though the English newspapers usually exercised self-restraint, yet on occasions they also entangled themselves in petty strife and unethical propaganda battles. The vernacular Press, however, always took sides and their fight continued on many a front simultaneously.

As one crosses the third decade of the twentieth century, one finds that the tone of the Press began to play a direct role in formenting agitation between different communities. Now even the Indian-owned English newspapers began to adopt frankly a communal tone, which further undercut<sup>5</sup> the efforts of bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity.

The newspapers of the period can be categorised into those published in English and those published in the vernaculars. While the former can be sub-divided into those

owned by the European interests and those controlled by the Indians, the latter can be broken down into those owned by different communities. The influence of the vernaculars was more extensive and perhaps more important for the less educated, who read and particularly the illiterates, who hear them read. That way the actual circulation of the vernaculars was much higher than those of English newspapers, which had its readership among the English and educated elites, who contributed towards 'paid circulation' of the English journals.<sup>6</sup>

The North West Provinces, which covered largely the present Uttar Pradesh was known as the place...of two great communities, Hindus and Muslims...two great religions, Hinduism and Islam, and two great languages, Hindi and Urdu. This confluence is reflected in the development of the Press...too... which was loyalist and dull.<sup>7</sup> While the English and the Urdu journalism got underway in Bengal, the Punjabi and Hindi journalism got off to a start in Punjab.

### ENGLISH JOURNALISM

As pointed out earlier in this chapter, journalism in India began its journey with Hicky's Bengal Gazette in 1780. India Gazette by Messink and Reed, which unlike Bengal Gazette had promised 'loyalty and subordination to the Government to accrue benefits', was also put on its way in 1780.

The year 1784 saw the emergence of Calcutta Gazette under the direct patronage of the Government. Madras Courier

(1785) was also officially recognised. The Oriental Magazine of Calcutta Amusement and the Bengal Journal (both 1785) did not last long. Bombay Herald (1789) was merged with Bombay Gazette in 1792. Madras Gazette (1795), after Hickey's Gazette was perhaps the first journal to have raised a voice of protest against the Government over the withdrawal of postal facilities to the newspapers. As a result, the Government ordered the Madras Gazette to submit all its machinery and material for scrutiny. Humphreys took a chance to publish his Indian Herald (1795) 'without authority' but ultimately had to escape to England.<sup>8</sup>

The Bengal Gazette (other than that of Hickey's) of 1814 was the first Indian newspaper to have started by an Indian, Gangadhar Bhattacharya.<sup>9</sup> It lasted for one year. The Guardian (1818) by John Burton and James Mackenzie was allowed by the Government to appear on Sundays on the condition that the proprietors would make it convenient to finish their work by the preceding Saturdays for scrutiny.<sup>10</sup>

The Friend of India was started as a monthly in 1818 and was followed by a quarterly of the same name two years later. Its Editor, Henry Mead justified 100 years of British rule by asserting that India's previous rulers were 'objectionable on various grounds'. When the Government objected to this 'satirical piece in provocative style' and took an exception to this, Mead wrote another article, headlined, "The First Warning" stating that "Lord Canning has done us the honour to select the Friend of India as the subject of his first experience under the

Gagging Act." The Government was about to revoke its license when its proprietor stepped in to give an assurance to the effect that it won't antagonize the Government any more. <sup>11</sup>

The Calcutta Journal, started by James Silk Buckingham in 1827, aimed at "admonishing Governors of their duties, to warn them furiously of their faults and to tell disagreeable truths." By opening its columns to public grievances, it set a new trend in Calcutta journalism and was described as a journal 'best in content and presentation'. It smashed the Asiatic Mirror out of existence over a controversy. Within three years of its start, it was made a daily from an eight-paged thrice-a-week publication. John Bull in the East was started as an answer to Calcutta Journal but could not fulfil the motive.

Buckingham was deported to Europe as the Paper published a piece from "Sketch of the History and Influence of the Press in British India." But the Editor, Mr Sandys could not be deported due to his Indian origin. The license of the Paper was, however, revoked. The Government was angry with the Paper to such an extent that even Dr Muston, a son-in-law of a member of the Governor-General-in-Council, was not allowed to revive it after having been appointed its Editor and even under a changed name. He was instead given the license to publish the Scotsman in the East by using the type and premises belonging to Buckingham without giving any profit to him. <sup>12</sup>

The Times of India was started in 1838 and in 1861, the Bombay Times, the Courier, the Standard and the Telegraph

were merged into it to make the newspaper one of mightiest forces of the era.

The Hindu Patriot, financed by the British India Association, was founded in 1853 by Girish Chandra Ghosh. Soon it came to be rated as an 'outstanding newspaper in Bengal' under Harishchandra Mukherjee, who was known as a 'terror to the bureaucracy, as well as to the white colonist and planters in Bengal'. The Paper, led by the poet-journalist, Manmohan Ghosh, who later started the Indian Mirror, started an agitation over 'indigo cultivation', resulting into the appointment of  
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Indigo Commission.

The Pioneer (1865) rose to success with the vigorous writings of F.W. Wilson. He 'put life into it and made its policy fully acceptable despite being provocative for the bureaucracy'. The management terminated Wilson, holding him responsible for putting the Paper in all kinds of troubles. The Paper declined and was sold off. Desmond Young, its new Editor, shifted the newspaper's headquarter from Allahabad to  
14  
Lucknow. The Paper later covered its lost ground.

The Amrit Bazar Patrika has an outstanding history. It made a humble beginning as a Bengali weekly in 1868. Shishir Kumar Ghosh and his seven brothers, after having launched it from their native village, Amrit Bazar in Jessore district, worked tirelessly to make it a success. It started publishing columns in English in 1869 and was shifted to Calcutta in 1871. After a year's closure, it restarted in 1872 as a bi-lingual

weekly.

S.K. Ghosh stated that the Paper was started to "awaken the people to their slavish condition and infuse in them the spirit of nationalism" as they were presently, "more dead than alive, and need to be roused from their slumber". The Paper has been regarded as 'the outstanding newspaper of the period for the battles it fought'. The Patrika started its Bengali publication, the Yugantar in 1937.<sup>15</sup>

The Bengalee was started in 1868 by G.C. Ghosh as a weekly. It followed the style of the Hindu Patriot in the matter of writing boldly on socio-religious issues. The Paper was purchased by Bacharam Chatterjee, who could not run it properly due to lack of financial stability. Ultimately, it was purchased by Surendernath Banerjee, who described the deal as the result of "unspoken blessings of many amid which the Bengalee newspaper came under my charge." It took its own independent stance and style, much different from its contemporaries.<sup>16</sup>

The Statesman was founded in 1875 by Robert Knight with ample financial resources on his side. He purchased the Friend of India for Rs. 30,000 from the Baptist missionaries. Both the Statesman and the Friend of India continued publication till 1877 with the former as a daily and the latter 'incorporated with the weekly Statesman, an overseas edition. The daily Statesman was published as The Statesman and Friend of India for many years.<sup>17</sup>

The Hindu started publication on September 20, 1878 as the other Madras newspapers, the Native Public Opinion and the Madrassee had failed to arouse any public response. It shifted to the Scottish press from the Mint Street, where it continued publication till 1883 when it was again shifted to Mylapore and made a tri-weekly. In December 1883, the Hindu shifted to its own premises on the Mount Road from where it is still published. It became the 'centre of political activity' during the third session of the Indian National Congress in 1887. It was made a daily in 1889.

The Hindu faced tough competition from the Indian Patriot (1905) and the Madras Standard. It, nevertheless, continued to progress steadily and established its credibility as a 'sober newspaper'.  
18

The Mahratta was started by V.K. Chiplonkar in 1861 to be taken over later by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, known as 'the first great figure of nationalist awakening' to 'combat the evils of British administration'. Tilak and his colleague, Agarkar were sentenced to four months' imprisonment following a defamation suit. The incident won the Paper much sympathy. Tilak, popular for his clarity of thought was all for political emancipation which he regarded as a "pressing need for the people of India and all else not directly connected with it must take a second 19 place....A subject nation does not prepare itself...for liberty."

The Indian Social Reformer (1890) moved by K. Natrajan from Madras to Bombay, who edited it for 50 years till 1941 and

'vindicated his independence of official and public opinion'. It was 'more a public service than a journalistic enterprise'. It soon became popular for its thought-provoking and candid views. It supported the cause of special representation for minorities and was for adopting constitutional means to achieve political reforms.

Mahatma Gandhi, known as a 'one-man medium of mass communication for about first part of the twentieth century' chose the platform of print media, newspapers, to 'propagate his views, sustain the struggle for freedom from the British and freedom of the Press'. Endowed with the gifts of expression, he was described as the "most fearless, independent of the Government, independent of the business and independent of the party." His association with five newspapers of the time - the Indian Opinion, the Young India, the Harijan, the Satyagrah, and the Navjivan - was enough to frustrate some of the British designs concerning Press in India.

The Indian Opinion was published as a weekly in four languages - English, Tamil, Gujarati and Hindi - under the Editorship of Mansukhlal Nazar (1904). However, financial difficulties led to the closure of its Hindi and Tamil versions. As described by Gandhi, the objective to launch the Indian Opinion was to "bring the European and the Indian subjects of King Edward closer together; to educate public opinion; to remove causes of misunderstanding; to put before the Indians their own blemishes; and to show them the path of duty while

they insisted on securing their rights." The Paper soon became popular among not only the people but among the Government officials too.<sup>21</sup>

The Leader was founded in 1909 by the proprietors of the Indian People (1903) and the Phoenix. The Indian People was later merged into it. With C.Y. Chintamani, the Leader became an 'authentic voice of the Congress moderates and of the Liberal Party'. Motilal Nehru, who was one of the directors of the Paper, found its mild and timid style as non-conducive to the situation and resigned to start the Independent with the able help of Horniman. The Independent made a rapid progress but lacked sustained good management.<sup>22</sup>

The Hindu of Sind, started by Maharaj Lokram and Maharaj Vishnu Sharma in 1912 created a flutter as its 'three Editors - Jairendas Deuliat Ram, Dr Gidwani and Hiranand Karamchand were arrested for provocative writings'. The Press was closed but the Paper continued publication from different places and under different names. Once the entire staff and the management was arrested in 1913. It, however, resisted all pressures till 1942 when it shelved publication on a call from Mahatama Gandhi. It resumed publication the next year but had to be closed down at the time of partition.<sup>23</sup>

The Bombay Chronicle was founded by Pheros Shah Mehta in 1913 with Benjamin Horniman as its Editor. Unlike other Indian-owned, Indian-edited Papers, it forged ahead resisting competition from the Times of India. It was priced at one anna

against the usual price of four annas of other contemporary newspapers. It strongly supported the Quit India Movement and condemned the Jallianwala Bagh massacre as a result of which Horniman was deported to England.

The Madras Standard (1914) started publishing under its new name, the New India soon after its start. Mrs Besant used to edit it along with the Commonweal.  
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The Young India, established on October 8, 1919 concerned itself mainly to "Hindu-Muslim unity, improvements in the spinning wheel, use of Indian languages, labour welfare and the use of Khadi and Swadeshi materials. It also shared the vicissitudes of the nationalist struggle." The Paper was shelved due to Gandhi's imprisonment in 1922 but was resumed after his release two years later. Its circulation, however, had dropped to 3,000 from 21,000 in the meantime. It again picked up, thanks to the powerful write-ups of Gandhi.

The Satyagrah,<sup>was</sup> started during April, 1919 as an unregistered weekly to provide the Satyagrahis a medium to freely express their views and thoughts as 'a weapon of civil disobedience'.  
25

The Ananda Bazar Patrika was started by Prafulla Sarkar, Suresh Chander Majumdar and Mrinal Kanti Ghosh in 1922. It soon established itself and started the Hindustan Standard (English) in 1937 from Calcutta.

The Forward (1923) reappeared as Liberty. The latter was 'liquidated' soon and the proprietors started the Paper under its original name, the Forward. The Liberator took the place of Justice which started in 1917<sup>and</sup> ceased publication after a few years.<sup>26</sup>

The Hindustan Times was started in 1924 as a Sikh Paper to confront the anti-Sikh designs of the Government. The latter was using the Pioneer of Allahabad, the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore and Statesman of Calcutta to weaken the Sikh agitation for the Gurdwara Reforms. The Arya Samajists were exploiting the platforms of the Punjabee, the Arya Gazette, the Punjab Patriot etc., to dilute the might of Sikh reformists. The Sikhs then thought of launching an English newspaper which could be an answer to these forces. And the result was the Hindustan Times which after passing into many hands was ultimately purchased by Birlas, who are still running it from Delhi.

The Harijan weekly appeared on February 11, 1933 from Poona, founded by the Untouchables Society. Gandhi's main objective of starting this weekly was to make Harijans know about themselves and their country. The journal mainly dealt with the 'cause of outcastes and village reconstruction by keeping politics away from the weekly. The Harijan was suspended in 1940 following the "anti-war Satyagrah of Vinobha Bhave as Gandhi did not want it to become an organ of civil resistance."<sup>27</sup>

The Indian Express was started in 1931 to fight sustained battles against the prevalent bad conditions, harmful

to the society. It also had a sustained growth and development as now it has established itself as a 'chain newspaper' having many other publications too. Today, it has the largest combined net circulation in India, published from 12 centres.

The National Herald was started in 1938 from Lucknow with Jawaharlal Nehru as the Chairman of its Board of Directors. It followed the Congress policy and soon came to be identified with Nehru and Gandhi. It "served as a test-case of freedom of the Press, under Defence of India Rules, and in relations between the Government and the AINEC." It had a chequered career for some time owing to financial difficulties. When asked by the Government to submit all headlines relating to the war news, it started publishing 'news without headlines, using pictures and the first sentence in bold face'. It had to discontinue its publication of leading articles and editorials thrice till 1941 under orders from the Government prohibiting publication of any matter formulating opposition to the prosecution of war as it thought it 'better not to publish newspapers than to publish them under restrictions'. Frequent raids, security deposits etc., 'told upon the health of the newspaper' to a great extent.

#### The Punjab Factor

The English journalism crossed the border into Punjab during the 46th year of the nineteenth century with Lahore Chronicle.<sup>29</sup> It, however, could not move alone for long and was merged with the Indian Public Opinion in 1867 and with the

Civil and Military Gazette in 1877. This, in fact, was the result of essays made by Mohammed Asim, who later made the launching of a tri-lingual (English, Persian and Gurmukhi) The Punjabee a success in 1865.<sup>30</sup> The Punjabee was later converted into Urdu and continued publication till 1890.

The Delhi Gazette also started its Lahore edition during this period. The 1846-56 decade witnessed the running of three English newspapers. The Civil and Military Gazette, The Tribune, The Punjabee (English), and The Punjab Patriot ran side-by-side, strongly commented on each other's policies and figured prominently in the public life.

The Civil and the Military Gazette (the CMG) was initially launched from Shimla as a weekly in 1872. It was later merged with Mofussilite, an Agra newspaper, founded in 1845. The CMG was shifted to Lahore in 1876 and was made a daily. The Pioneer of Allahabad and the CMG were both serving the British with true loyalty and were ultimately brought under a common ownership. While the former used to highlight civil matters, the latter covered army activities. The CMG like the Pioneer and the Statesman, had 'direct access to the highest official source of news'.

The Gazette, alongwith the Pioneer, was known for projecting and reporting the official viewpoint. It, in the process, completely ignored the native interests and the enlightened nationalist opinion in the Province.

The Tribune used to describe the Gazette as its

'rabid contemporary', a 'scurrilous English Paper at Lahore', the '(un)Civil and Military Gazette' and occasionally blamed it for its unmistakably 'anti-Indian and pro-Muslim bias' and that "it writes in partisan spirit whenever any quarrel or misunderstanding breaks out between Hindus and Muslims." Its writings also provoked the Anglo-Indians to commit crimes on Indians, thereby generating bitterness among the people.

The get-up of the Civil and the Military Gazette was better than its many contemporaries, including the Tribune. The latter was compelled to follow the pattern of the Gazette to have five-column pages. The Gazette used to give as much space to the international news as to the national items. The Government advertisements also used to occupy abundant space in it. The Tribune, surprisingly, for a long time continued to 'bodily lift foreign news from the columns of the Civil and Military Gazette'.

The Punjab Patriot was started in 1891 as a weekly from Lahore. It, like the Punjabee proved a strong adversary of The Tribune. The origin of the Punjab Patriot is stated to be out of growing annoyance and uneasiness of 'some white officials against the persistent criticism of their acts and actions and policies' at the hand of The Tribune. The Punjab Patriot was thus "a Government subsidised Anglo-Indian venture and The Tribune had no difficulty in exposing the real motive of the enterprise."

The Government used to purchase a large number of copies of the Patriot and release almost all the advertisements to it in preference to other newspapers in the country. When this fact became known, "questions about Government's policy in the matter were put in the North-West Provinces Council, the Imperial Legislative Council and...in the House of Commons. As a result...the Government aid was withdrawn from the Punjab Patriot which consequently ceased publication." <sup>32</sup>

The Khalsa, brought out in 1899, was the first Sikh newspaper in English. It was published from the Guru Gobind Singh Press, Lahore, and was edited by Bhagat Laxman Singh. The Paper continuously challenged the Arya Samajists in its columns and successfully debated on the Sikh religio-political aspects. It promoted the policy of 'Ham Hindu Nahin'.

The Khalsa Advocate was started as a monthly in 1903 from The Tribune Press, Lahore. It was merged with Khalsa in 1923 and then continued publication as Khalsa te Khalsa Advocate in Punjabi. The Paper started the tradition of special supplements. Run by the Sikh community under the editorship of Bhai Jodh Singh, the Paper was warned many times. <sup>33</sup>

The Sikhs and Sikhism was started in the same year (1903) as an organ of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. It was published as a weekly from the Mercantile Press, Lahore. Sohan Singh was its first Editor. <sup>34</sup>

The Punjabee was started from Lahore in October, 1904 as a challenge to The Tribune, the latter having betrayed the faith of students of the Government College, Lahore, who had written a letter to the Editor of The Tribune against the orders of the Principal of the College asking them to "wear blazers made of English cloth while in college." The Editor of The Tribune, ignoring journalistic ethics, showed that letter to an emissary of the Principal. This exercise of the Editor 'called them upon' to raise funds for starting another English newspaper in shape of a bi-weekly, the Punjabee.

According to yet another version, the 'Arya Group of Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Hans Raj had a tiff with Lala Harkishan Lal over the issue of management of the Punjab National Bank and an Insurance Company, and they started the Punjabee with the motive of 'self help at any cost'".

The Punjabee soon established a reputation for 'radical independence' against the 'moderate tone of The Tribune'. It, for the time being, came to be known as a 'champion of the masses'. The Paper had to face rough weather due to its objectionable write-ups. This, however, added to the popular image of the newspaper. The Punjabee played a tremendous role in propagating the Shuddhi campaign of the Arya Samaj, directed at 'reconversion of Harijans and certain tribes in Punjab', who had turned Muslims and Christians. It remained an arch-rival of The Tribune. The 'snatching' of Kali Nath Ray from it by The Tribune added to the hatred in the minds of controllers of the Punjabee towards The Tribune.

The Punjabee had resolute partners in the Arya Gazette, the Arya Patrika, the Arya Samachar, the Vedic Magazine and others who held themselves responsible for promoting the Arya Samaj movement. The Brahmo Samaj - Arya Samaj tussle became acute with The Tribune gaining strength with the passage of time. A fundamentalist to the core, the Punjabee and other organs of the Arya Samaj fomented communal passions to the extent that  
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'the Editors started to be murdered'.

The other English newspapers which deserve a mentioning are: Bombay Courier, Bombay Gazette, Harkaru, the Indian World, the Bengal Harkaru, the Calcutta Review, the Examiner, the Bombay Times, the Indian Mirror, the Mail, the Sunday Mirror, the U.S.I. Journal, the Brahmanical Magazine, the Weekly Gleaner, the Columbian Press Gazette, the Quarterly Oriental Magazine, the Kaleidoscope, the Calcutta Gazette and Commercial Advertiser, the Gospel Investigator, the Englishman, the Bombay Darpan, the Bihar Herald, the Indian Chronicle, the Bihar Times, the Advocate, the Bihar Guardian, the Searchlight, the Indian People, the Indian Patriot, the Karamyogin, the Arya, the Comrade, the Servant of India, the Sind Observer, the Indian Nation, and the Daily News.

#### URDU JOURNALISM

The foundation of Urdu journalism was laid by Jam-i-Jahan-Numa (1823), started by Govind Chander Gour as a Persian-Urdu bi-lingual after Ram Mohan Roy had ceased the publication of Mirst-ul-Akhbar, under protest against the Adam's

Press Ordinance of 1823. While the Government had stopped aiding the Indian language newspapers and even when most of these had abolished publication during 1826-27, Jan-i-Jahan-Numa continued to publish with the patronage of some Englishmen, who rated it as 'the best Indian newspaper though its contents were limited to a few articles from the English Papers'.

Sayyad-ul-Akhbar (1837) started with many difficulties surrounding its birth. Its first Editor, Syed Mohammad Khan died just after its start. His younger brother, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University, took up the charge but could not keep it going for long. To the Sooraj-ul-Akhbar, the Sayyad-ul-Akhbar, the Delhi Urdu Akhbar, the Zoobdut-ul-Akhbar, the Sudder-ul-Akhbar and the Mushurool-Haq were added four weeklies between 1844 and 1849. These were: Qiran-oor-Sadayan, the Shayk-ul-Akhbar, the Fawayudool Shayugeen, and the Zia-ul-Akhbar. The Mushur-ool-Haq was the organ of the Shia sect, while the Sayyad-ul-Akhbar was the representative of the Sunni sect.

The Sudder-ul-Akhbar (1846) was started by the Agra college and usually covered educational and scientific matters. It remained a bi-weekly for many years. It excelled its contemporaries in other languages in the matter of circulation.

Qomudut-ul-Akhbar was brought out by the management of the Bareilly School in 1847. The students and the staff of the school enthusiastically assisted the Editor, Moulvi Abdul Rahman, who was later succeeded by Lachhman Prasad.

Jan-i-Jamshed was brought out in 1847. Soodhakar Akhbar, Benaras Gazette and Benaras Akhbar though in Urdu, were lithographed in Nagri.

The year 1849 was inauspicious for the Urdu Press. Many of the language Papers including, Sayyad-ul-Akhbar, Toohfat-ul-Hadayug, Muzhur-ul-Haq and Fawayud-ul-Shayugeen closed publication. Instances of declining circulation, scurrility of contents, based on communal interests were many. According to a survey, "in 1850 there were 28 newspapers of which only 15 were extant in 1853. But the 1853 list had 35 newspapers including 15 carried over from the 1850 list. The 1858 list showed 12 existing newspapers of which only six were survivors of the list of 35 of 1853-54, and one of the 12 alone had a Muslim as its Editor. The 1851-52 Press did not necessarily reflect the trend of the public opinion as the Press was not equal to the prevalent social needs. <sup>36</sup>

Koh-i-noor's place of birth was Lahore and date of birth January 14, 1850. Another Paper, Khursheed-i-alam was started in the same year. A year later was launched Noor-Alah-noor from Jalandhar which continued to publish till 1925. Some historians and researchers treat The Punjabee, published in 1865, as the first Urdu newspaper, while others consider Sudder-ul Akhbar, started by Fink at Agra in 1846 whose name was later changed to Akhbar-ool-Hagayug to be the inaugural Urdu Paper. Another class of scholars is of the view that Urdu Akhbar of 1836 was the premier newspaper, while some opine that Sayyad-ul-Akhbar, published first in 1837 was the trail blazer.

An official report has noted the over-cautious character of the Editors over political issues and regretted that "this barrier to all communication of wants and wishes should exist in the native character and that a legitimate outlet for the expression of public opinion should be thus guardedly closed."<sup>37</sup>

Oudh Akhbar was started by Munshi Nawal Kishore in 1858 from Lucknow. It was among the first newspapers to publish cartoons.

Some Urdu newspapers with both Hindi and Urdu names published in parallel columns news in two scripts; among such newspapers were the Sarvopkari/Mufid-ul-Khaliq (1861) and Bharat Khandanrit/Ali-i-Hayat-i-Hind (1864). Soon they were published as separate newspapers under their separate scripts. The Khair-i-Khawah-Hind of 1865 continued as a bi-lingual newspaper.<sup>38</sup>

The Paisa Akhbar, started in 1887, was the first daily Urdu Evening. Priced at one paisa, it was among the 'extremist community Papers'. It invited Hindu retaliation on many occasions due to its much harsh tone. For instance, it once remarked that "We the Muslims could live with a dagger or a lion but not with Hindus."<sup>39</sup>

In 1887, there were only three daily Urdu newspapers in the field, namely, Oudh Akhbar, Rozand Akhbar and Paisa Akhbar. However, the Urdu Akhbar gained maximum circulation at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to a survey,

Urdu Akhbar used to publish 13,000 copies against, 1700 by  
40  
The Tribune.

Some other Urdu newspapers of the nineteenth century which have contributed towards the growth and furtherance of Press in Punjab include, Zafar Iqbal and Tehsib-ul-Ikhlaq (both 1857); Scientific Society Magazine, Urdu Akhbar and Rozana Akhbar (all 1858); Nanak Parkash Kapurthala (1887); Lyall Khalsa Gazette  
41  
(1891); Sri Gurnat Parkashak (1893); Singh Sahaye (1897); and Hamdard-i-Khalsa (1899).

The Nanak Parkashak Kapurthala, Lyall Khalsa Gazette, Sri Gurnat Parkashak, Singh Sahaye and Hamdard-i-Khalsa were all Sikh newspapers. The Lyall Khalsa Gazette, in Urdu and Punjabi, was launched as a weekly from Sialkot. It was published from Guru Gobind Singh Press, Sialkot. It was reformative in character. Its circulation could not exceed the 150 mark and was ultimately closed down in 1894.

About 70 Urdu newspapers were being published from various centres at the beginning of the present century. The Urdu Papers outnumbered Hindi journals during the nineteenth century but the Hindi newspapers grew rapidly in number during the twentieth century to turn the tables upon their Urdu counterparts. According to an estimate, the Hindi Papers had almost grown double in number as compared to Urdu newspapers which were 100 at the start of the third decade of the twentieth century. According to another estimate, the number of Hindi Papers was 175 against 151 in Urdu at this juncture.

The Noor-ul-Afaat, Noor-ul-Anwar,<sup>and</sup> the Khalsa Magazine

marked the beginning of the twentieth century for the Urdu Press. The Khalsa Magazine was started from Lahore by Nasoor Singh as a monthly. It firmly advocated the Sikh cause. Rehnuma-i-Khalsa, South-e-Kul were started in 1902.

Al Hilal was started as a weekly by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in 1912. "It struck a new line in journalism by including pictorial illustrations as a permanent feature in its columns... The adoption of Turkish type was regarded as a welcome departure from the obsolete methods." It also had columns on 'literary and scientific discussions and Muslim educational affairs.'<sup>42</sup>

Al Hilal's circulation touched 11,000 within six months of its publication. A measure of its popularity can be had from the fact that "study circles were formed where scores of people<sup>43</sup> assembled together to hear the Paper read out to them." Besides political, it wrote fearlessly against social evils and religious misconceptions. The quality and standard that the Paper had maintained convinced 'even its bitterest critics of the wisdom of line taken up by the Maulana'.

Anyhow, Pratap is considered to be the founder of real Urdu journalism in Punjab. It was launched by Mahasha Krishan on March 30, 1919. After having ceased publication with the arrest of the Mahasha on April 18, 1919, it was reestrated on February 1, 1920, only to face great ordeals, as prosecutions and imprisonments.

The Zamindar, launched by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan in 1920 was even more aggressive than the Muslim Outlook. It was one of

the most inflammatory and the most widely circulated Muslim daily. It was occasionally warned for its scurrilous and mischievous writings flaring up the prevalent communal tensions. One of its dummy Editors, Mr Zafir Ali had to face 'over a dozen prosecutions, while the real Editor and the proprietor of the Paper had been untouched'. The law of proscription against such newspapers had almost 'become a farce' and of 'very little use at all'.<sup>44</sup>

The Siasat and the Inqilab, which appeared during the years 1923 and 1926 respectively, were the Papers of comparatively serious nature.

Another Urdu newspaper which needs a special mentioning is Milap, started by Mahasha Khushal Chand, a staunch Arya Samajist, on April 13, 1923. Himself having edited previously the Arya Gasette, the Mahasha appointed Gouri Shankar as Editor of Milap, who was frequently arrested due to his writings, dipped in patriotic fervour. In his absence, Mahasha Khushal himself used to edit the Paper.

Another Urdu newspaper, which appeared in Lahore was Vir Bharat. It was launched by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya in 1928. A protagonist of Sanatam Dharam, it too joined hands with Milap and Pratap to further the cause of nationalism and patriotism.<sup>45</sup>

The Riasti Duniya was a supporter of the Praja Mandal Movement in Punjab. It was launched in 1928 at the time when M.A. Jinnah had dissociated himself from the Congress to become

a Muslim League leader. The Tehzib-ul-Ikhlaq of Aligarh covered a variety of subjects. It was one of the most influential Papers and used to tackle the reactionary newspapers, representing conservatism and orthodoxy.

The Ajit, started in 1910 from Lahore and the Punjabi Koil in 1930 from Sheikhpura were spokesmen of the Sikh community. <sup>46</sup>  
The Punjabi Koil used Urdu script but its language was Punjabi. The Urdu newspapers suffered a lot during partition. Having lost their base in Lahore, they had to fight it out to rehabilitate themselves afresh at other new places.

Prabhat also had its origin in Lahore in 1942. It primarily espoused the interests of Hinduism besides participating in the struggle for freedom. Like Milap, Partap and other Urdu newspapers, which were started from Lahore, Parbhat was also shifted to Jalandhar after partition. Parbhat was later bought by Master Tara Singh who turned it to be an Akali Paper. Later, it passed into the hands of Sardar Karam Singh, Sardar Gurnam Singh and Sardar Surjit Singh Sekhi, under the changed name of Parbhav before it finally breathed its last. <sup>47</sup>

The Muslim Outlook remained sensationally critical of the Hindu philosophy, particularly of the Arya Samaj. It did its best to 'drift further and further apart the Hindu and Muslim communities in Punjab'. It also opposed the Sikh claim about dismantling of the separate electorate system as a step in the direction of resolving communal tensions in Punjab. It once wrote that "In our relations with the Hindus we do not see in the

history of past riots there is any hope for reconciliation with a community which on account of its caste, selfishness and arrogance is always aggressive, which attacks us physically, economically, as well as religiously and politically. We can not therefore cooperate with the Hindu Congress and every Muslim worthy of name should leave the ranks of the Congress today. We call our leaders to stand by the Muslim masses instead of frittering away their energies in the so-called 'national' enterprise. Their first obligation is to discharge their communal duties." <sup>48</sup>

The other newspapers which carried along the Muslim spirit include: Madina, and Hamdam (1912); Haqiqat (1919); Al Balagh (1913); Bande Matram (1920); Taj (1923); Sarfraz, and Al Jamiat (all 1925); The Khatun, the Musawir, the Sarosh, the Tanvir, and the Subah-i-Ummid (from 1931 to 1937); Shama (1939); and Quomi Awaz, as a sister publication of the National Herald (1945).

#### HINDI JOURNALISM

The Baptist missionaries chose Serampore, a few kilometres from Calcutta, to launch the first Hindi newspaper, Digdarshan, a monthly, in April, 1818. John Clerk Marshman was appointed its Editor. It was published in English and Bengali, besides Hindi. Jagdish Prasad Chaturvedi has preferred to call Digdarshan a book-cum-newspaper as its title pages gives the appearance of a newspaper while the inside look is that of a book. <sup>49</sup>

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Udant Martand, was the first weekly newspaper, launched by a clerk-turned-lawyer-turned journalist, Pandit Yugul Kishore on May 30, 1826 from Calcutta. It ended publication on December 11, 1928 when Yugul Kishore replaced it by Sandant Martand.

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Udant Martand (12" x 8") was high priced at eight annas per copy, and which was one of the reasons of its 'pre-mature' closure, besides other factors, such as lack of Government's support which was used to be extended to its contemporaries, Jan-i-Jahan-Numa and Samachar Darpan. Pandit Yugul Kishore had described 'promotion of public welfare' as the chief motive of Udant Martand. Bangdoot (1829); Martand (1846); Malwa Akhbar (1848); Jagdeep Bhaskar, and Benaras Akhbar (1849); Sudhakar, and Sandant Martand (1950); Buddhi Parkash (1852); and Sarvhitkarak (1854) added to the 'fraternity' of Hindi before daily Samachar Sudhevarshan.

53

Calcutta again earned the distinction of becoming the birth place of the first daily Hindi newspaper titled, the Samachar Sudhevarshan. It was started by Shyam Sunder Sen in 1854. It was a bi-lingual and published two pages each in Hindi and Bengali daily except on Sundays. The Hindi pages carried the market and shipping reports, while the rest of the pages were published in Bengali. The Paper was priced at Rupee one. Pyame Asadi was started in 1857 by Azimullah Khan from Delhi. It was a revolutionary Paper, initially published in Hindi and Urdu but later made a complete Hindi Paper.

Several other newspapers were started within a space of a decade from 1857 to 1867 including, Mashural Saroor, Gyan Deepak, Gwalior Gazette, Praja Hiteshi, Bharat Khandamrit, Tatev Bodhini, Gyan Pardayani Patrika, Satya Deepak, Virtant Viles, and Rattan Parkash, which enlarged the horizon of Hindi Press from Calcutta to Lahore. 56

The Kavi Vachan Sudha (1867) was edited by Bhartendu Harishchandra, who is known as 'Ram Mohan Roy of Hindi journalism'. A writer of repute, he placed the Hindi journalism on firm-  
Later, 57  
footing./he also started Harishchander Magazine and Chandrika.

The Hindi Pradeep (1877) was started as a monthly with Bal Krishan Bhat as its Editor. Bhat is known to be the 'father of Hindi political journalism'. It continued publication till 1910 when it was compelled to be closed down by the Government due to its frank and candid comments.

The year 1880 saw the emergence of maximum newspapers, numbering 10, followed by 1875 (8), 1877(7) and 1874(6). The years 1873 and 1887 had four Papers each seeing the light of the day. The number, however, pertains to only some significant and notable newspapers including those having their origin in Punjab though they have been discussed separately in this chapter.

The Hindusthan was the first Hindi newspaper, launched from abroad, London, as a tri-lingual in English, Hindi and Urdu and then from Kalakanker in 1885 by Raja Rampal Singh. Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was its Editor. It was a nationalist

newspaper and had all the trappings of a 'modern newspaper'.

No daily could be started afterwards till the outbreak of the First World War when certain weeklies as Calcutta Samachar, Abhyudhya, Sri Venkateshwar Samachar started publishing as dailies. Calcutta Samachar was renamed as Vishwamitra in 1918. It started its Bombay and New Delhi editions in 1941 and 1942 respectively.

Some Hindi newspapers which held the spotlight for having promoted the cause of Hindi journalism, Hinduism and Hindi language <sup>and</sup> literature after 1867 are stated to be: Kavi Vachan Sudha (1867); Darpan (1870), Parkash, Almoda Akhbar (1871); Hindi Deepati (1872); Jabalpur Samachar, Bharat Patrika, and Maryada Paripatti, Samachar (all 1873); Natak Parkash, Nagri Parkash, Bharat Bandhu, Bihar Bandhu, and Sadadarsh (all 1874); Satya Mritu, Harishchander Magazine, Harishchander Chandrika, Dharam Parkash, Dharam Patrika, Arya Bhushan and Balbodhini (all 1875); Hindi Pardeep, Nagri Patrika, and Dharam Patter (all 1877); Arya Millan and Bharat Millan (both 1878); Sarsudha Nidhi (1879); Vivid Vishay Vibhist, Jan Patrika, Uchit Vakta, Kahatri Patrika, Ved Parkash, Motichur, Hindu Parkash, Virtant Darpan, Paryogdut, and Rasik Patrika (all 1880); Anand Kadimbini (1881); Rajput Gasette, and Devnagri Parcharak (1882); Brahmin and Dharam Updesh and Hindusthan (1883); Bharat Jiwan (1884); Bharat Bharata, Shubchintak, Malwa Akhbar and Gwalior Gazette (all 1887); Sarvhitshi, and Hindu Bangbasi (1890); Parbhakar, Vabhav, and Gurakhi (all 1890); Sri Venkateshwar Samachar (1896); and Dharam Mritu (1897).

Of the about 200 newspapers, having their origin in the nineteenth century, all but Hindi Pradeep, Uchit Vakta, Bharat Jiwan, Bharat Mittar, Sar Sudhanidhi had short lives. Bharat Mittar (1878-1935) had the longest life of 57 years, followed by Hindi Pradeep (1877-1910)-33 years; Bharat Jiwan (1884-1913) - 29 years; Uchit Vakta (1880-1895) - 15 years; and Sar Sudhanidhi (1879-1890) - 11 years. The circulation of these newspapers, however, did not touch the thousand mark.

Saraswati (1900), which was adjudged the 'best produced journal' of the time for about two decades under the editorship of Mahabir Prasad Dwivedi, marked the beginning of the twentieth century Hindi journalism.<sup>59</sup>

Bharat Mittar prospered rapidly and came to be identified with Bal Mukand Gupta, who had had a distinguished career in journalism, having remained the Editor of Koh-i-Noor, an Urdu weekly, which was converted by him into a daily. Besides this, he became the full-fledged Editor of Hindusthan, earlier having assisted Madan Mohan Malviya.

Bharat Mittar very successfully resisted competition from Calcutta Samachar, with its Editors in Ambika Charan Bajpai and Lakshman Narayan Gardo.<sup>60</sup> The former started Swatantra in 1920 which continuously supported Civil Disobedience Movement and had to deposit heavy security in 1930.

The period of 1920 to 1947 has truly been referred to as the Gandhi era from the Hindi newspapers point of view. Gandhi started the Hindi versions of Navjivan, Harjan and Young India

in 1921, 1933 and 1938 under the names of Hindi Navjivan, Harijan Sewak and Tarun Bharat respectively. All these Papers were nationalist in spirit and bore the Gandhi stamp. A new type of journalism, the journalism of cyclostyled newspapers had also gone the pace during this era. Two such Papers, Bavandhar and Bol de Dhava dominated the field.

The other newspapers of the period 1900-1947 include: Garhwal Samachar (1901); Shatisagarh Mittar (1902); Garhwali (1905); Abhyudya, Hindi Kesri, Karamyogi, Harsingh, and Devnagar (all 1907); Hind, and Hindu Panch (both 1908); Parcharak (1911); Partap (1913); Patli Putter (1914); Gyan Shakti (1916); Vishwamitra (1917); Bhavisya (1918); Karamvir and Vijay (both 1919); Aj and Swatantra (both 1920); Paramvir (1921); Navin Rajasthan (1922); Madhuri, and Arjun (1923); Mahratta (1925); Sainik and Yuvuk (both 1928); Lokmanya, Lok Mat, Navshakti, and Rashtarvedi (all 1930); Vir Arjun, Navbharat and Hindustan (all 1934); Jyoti (1936); Sangarsh (1937); Adhikar, and Navjivan (both 1938); Praja Mandal Patrika, Jivan, Desh, and Praja Sewak (all 1940); Sarthi (1941); Arya Varta (1942); Alwar Patrika and Sansar (1943); Jai Hind, and Sanmarg (both 1946).

Bharat Mittar and Saraswati, in fact, had become the torch-bearers to set a new trend for the following generation of newspapers of the period.

#### The Punjab Factor

The Hindi journalism stepped into Punjab via Shimla with Sheikh Abdullah's Simla Akhbar in 1848. It was a bi-lingual

and was edited by the Shaikh himself for the Rajas of the Hills in Nagri script. The Simla Akhbar, alongwith Urdu's Sayyad-ul-Akhbar and Toohfat-ul-Hadisyug, was closed down in 1849 due to its 'clumsy' Nagri script.<sup>61</sup>

Gyan Pardayani Patrika was started by Navin Chander Rai from Lahore in 1866. It was a socialist Paper which alongwith Buddhi Parkash of Agra (1852) played a stellar role in fighting against the prevalent social evils.

The community Papers landed into Lahore during the years 1873 and 1874. Hindu Parkash (1873) preceded Hindu Bandhu (1874) and promoted the cause of Hinduism in Punjab to a great extent.

Then came the year 1875 of Sakal Sanbedhinin Patrika. Edited by Sardar Santokh Singh, the Patrika has been regarded as the first Hindi newspaper of Punjab by almost all the historians and so far by all the researchers. They perhaps did not care to look at the Punjab map of the period concerned, which contains Simla and Gurgaon in Punjab in the Ambala Division. Jalandhar and Patiala were the other two divisions.<sup>62</sup>

Hindu Bandhav and Mitter Vilas were simultaneously launched in 1877 from Lahore. Gurgaon came on the 'newspaper map' with two newspapers getting into circulation. These two papers were, Jain Parkash and Jat Sanchar.<sup>63</sup> Started in 1884 and 1889 respectively, these Papers like Hindu Parkash, Hindu Bandhu and Hindu Bandhav were started with the chief motive of furthering the community interests.

The first two decades of the twentieth century, however, proved virtually 'silent' as far as the game of journalistic activities during the period is concerned. The journals which started or restored during the period concentrated mostly on literary, religious or social aspects. They sometimes, however, extended their approach to subjects like education or agriculture.

The third decade was about to begin when Mahasha Khushal Chand took the initiative of starting the Hindi version of his Milap in Urdu. The Paper was named the Daily Hindi Milap and was started in September, 1929, from Lahore. Sudarshan was made the Chief Editor of the newspaper, which like many other contemporaries, was shifted to Jalandhar after partition. The Hindi Milap was made to run with financial assistance coming from the earnings of Urdu Milap, which now also had started its Delhi and Hyderabad editions. Its latest edition has started from London.

Prebhat was started from Lahore by Mahasha Krishan and Virender. The running success of the Paper enthused the Mahasha-Virender duo to start its Urdu version six years hence from the same venue. The Paper, besides promoting Hinduism played a significant role in the struggle for freedom. It came to be recognised as a nationalist Paper, with zeal to espouse the cause of Hinduism.

The other Punjab newspapers which had their origin in the present century include: Bharti (1920), Jat Pat Todhak

(1924), Satyavadi (1925), Arya (1928) and Vishwabandhu (1942).

### PUNJABI JOURNALISM

Though in India the Punjabi newspapers entered the field over half a century after the English newspapers, they snatched the initiative from the English newspapers in respect of their beginnings in Punjab. The English journalism started its journey in 1846 with the Lahore Chronicle, while Jagat Parkash Dars (a Gurmukhi version of Calcutta's Jam-i-Jahan-Nama) had already made its appearance in the very year of 1831 from Patiala.

The Press Commission in its report has stated that the Christian missionaries had started the first Punjabi newspaper from Ludhiana during the sixth decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>65</sup> Prof. Pritam Singh considers it to be Chauparitiya.<sup>66</sup> According to another consideration, the Ludhiana missionaries had started a bi-lingual (Persian and Punjabi) in 1839.<sup>67</sup> Some others opine The Punjabee (1865), a tri-lingual of Lahore in Persian, Punjabi and English to be the first Punjabi newspaper.<sup>68</sup> Another class of historians recommend the Ludhiana Akhbar of the fifth decade of nineteenth century to be the premier Punjabi newspaper.

Launched exactly a century after Hicky's Bengal Gazette in 1780, Gurmukhi Akhbar, started by Bhai Gurmukh Singh, a weekly published every Wednesday from Lahore, has been regarded as the first Punjabi newspaper<sup>69</sup> in real sense of the term. There has not been expressed any iota of doubt about its

originality and exactness in terms of a Punjabi journal, as has been done in case of its predecessors, the Jagat Parkash Dars, the Ludhiana Akhbar, the Chauritiya, or the Punjabee.

The Paper was started chiefly to provide a tribune for supporting, uplifting and furthering the cause of Singh Sabha Movement, which had picked up at that time but needed consolidation. The two - the Singh Sabha Movement and the Gurmukhi Akhbar - thus grew under each other's shadow and occasionally depended upon each other for their mutual existence.

Going back by 13 years, the year 1867 had seen Feraya Lal - Manahi Harinarayan duo placing the springboard to herald the era of Punjabi journalism by starting a fortnightly, Akhbar Shri Darbar Sahib. It was, however, not a purely Punjabi newspaper as though it was published in Gurmukhi script, its language was Hindi.<sup>70</sup> To add to it the chief motive of the Paper was to propagate Hinduism among the Sikhs. Though its name suggests otherwise, some historians regard it as an 'anti-Sikh' newspaper.

Two other newspapers, which more or less followed the pattern and objective of Akhbar Shri Darbar Sahib and were started during the eighth decade of the nineteenth century were Kavi Chandrodiya (1875) and Skaviya Sambodhini (1876).<sup>71</sup> These three newspapers resolutely opposed the stance and writings of Gurmukhi Akhbar and treated it as their main adversary and rival. Attacks and counter-attacks were galore between the Gurmukhi Akhbar and the Kavi Chandrodiya, Skaviya Sambodhini and Akhbar

Shri Darbar Sahib trio. All these newspapers did not bother much about the style and standard of writing and got closed very shortly.

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Though the Christian missionaries had established the use of Gurmukhi type in 1854, the Punjabi newspapers continued to be published on litho for a long time thereafter, because the patrons and controllers of Punjabi journalism feared that by doing so they will completely fall at the mercy of the outsiders. Secondly, the Gurmukhi type was also not available frequently and in desirable quantity.

Some historians treat the monthly Akal Parkash to be the first 'pure' Punjabi newspaper, started by Bhai Partap Singh Giani from Lahore in 1876. Its popularity grew instantaneously as it was publishing 1,200 copies within a few months of its start.

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Though to name, there were seven newspapers published in Punjabi by 1876, they neither give the look, pattern, style nor the language or objective which could be called 'promoting the cause of Punjabi journalism'.

Sized 20" x 30"/8, the Gurmukhi Akhbar went into the hands of Singh Sabha, Amritsar in 1883 with Bhai Kartar Singh Vahiriye taking over the editorship from Bhai Gurmukh Singh. The Paper met with its first end in 1888 but not before the Singh Sabha Movement had held its firm ground. It also found itself drawn against certain social evils, particularly the practice of idol worship. The Paper had financial support from the Maharaja of Nabha. The Paper got its second birth on April 13, 1893 with Giani Avtar Singh Vahiriye as its new

Editor.<sup>74</sup> It, however, found its new rivals in the weekly Khalsa Akhbar and the monthly Khalsa Sewak.<sup>75</sup> Gurmukhi Akhbar, nevertheless, continuously and successfully advanced the causes of the Singh Sabha and the Kuka Movements, the Sikh political movement in other words. It also put in its share in getting the Amritsar and Lahore Khalsa Divans established in 1883 and 1885 respectively. Moreover, it set the pace for the coming generation of Punjabi and Sikh newspapers.

The Khalsa Akhbar (1886) was started with Giani Jhanda Singh Faridkoti and Sardar Basant Singh as its Editors, followed by Giani Dit Singh, who infused new life into the drowning newspaper. Having entangled itself into a court case, the Paper met with its end in 1889. It got revived in 1892 with certain improvements in the type and its style of printing. The Paper, however, could not bear the loss of death of Giani Dit Singh and faced closure in 1905.<sup>76</sup>

Sized 20" x 26<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, the weekly Khalsa Samachar made its appearance on November 17, 1899, with improved printing and designing. It became the first newspaper to show systematic column divisions and proper positioning of the headlines and sub-headings. Secondly, it started printing from its own press from the very beginning thus rejecting all doubts of facing the trouble of 'paucity of printing presses', which its other contemporaries or predecessors had to tackle.

Editor Charan Singh of the Khalsa Samachar, in company with Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Bhai Gurmukh Singh, Sardar

Harbhajan Singh, Bhai Arjan Singh and son, Bhai Vir Singh, played a stellar role in the establishment of the Khalsa College, Amritsar. Khalsa Samachar, through its clean and objective writings, for which it is popular till this day, carried on its objective of teaching the Sikhs of their valuable historical past and religious values and ethics. It also 'internationalised' its columns by publishing global news. With the result of all this, its circulation went on to increase with the passage of time - from 500 in 1900 to 3234 in 1919. <sup>77</sup>

Besides other things, the Khalsa Samachar established the tradition of publishing special supplements, brought Punjabi Papers at par with other vernaculars, successfully tackled all onslaughts on Sikhism, and increased the Punjabi readership. To sum up, it did all that a newspaper could do for promoting a faith and bringing improvements in the society. <sup>78</sup>

The following newspapers were started during the period 1881 to 1899:

Vidayarak Punjab (1881 - monthly - Editor Bhai Gurmukh Singh); Risale-i-Guru Partap Suraj Udai (1882 - monthly - Editor Bedi Udai Singh, in Urdu and Punjabi); Punjab Darpan (1885 - weekly, Editor Lahora Singh); Khalsa Gazette (1885 - monthly, Editor Dayal Singh, restarted as weekly in 1894 and closed in 1900); Khalsa (1886 - weekly, English, Editor Lehna Singh Gyani); Khalsa Parkash (1886 - weekly - Editor Aya Singh); Sudharak (1886 - monthly, Editor Gurmukh Singh, closed in 1898);

Khalsa Akhbar (1866- weekly- Editor Gyani Jhanda Singh, restarted in 1892 with Editor in Gyani Dit Singh, 1905, Editor Sardar Maya Singh); Singh Sabha Gazette (1890 - weekly - Editor Lahora Singh, name changed to Naurattan in 1902 and started as monthly, closed in 1934); Khalsa Parkash (1891-weekly- Editor Boor Singh, closed in 1899); Lyall Khalsa Gazette (1891- weekly - Urdu and Punjabi, closed in 1894); Sudhar Patrika (1891-weekly Editors Guddu Mai and Sant Das, closed in 1910); Shri Gurnat Parkashak (1893 -10- Day-Editor Gyani Avtar Singh Vahiriyee - Gurmukhi and Urdu); Singh Sahaye (1893-weekly- merged with Punjab Gazette); Khalsa Dharam Parcharak (1894-weekly- Editor Lahora Singh); Nirguniara (1894-fortnightly, started by Khalsa Tract Society).

Shuddhi Patter Khalsa Dharam Parkashak (1896-monthly- Editors Bhai Sunder Singh, Bhai Attar Singh, Bhai Boor Singh, Bhai Mihan Singh and Ram Chand); Singh Sahaye Gazette, Sudharak Alankar, Sikh Handbill, Sudhar Saheli, Khalsa Naujawan Bahadur, and Khalsa Samachar (1899- weeklies and monthlies); Dokari (1902-monthly- Editor Pandit Ganda Singh, closed in 1906); Gurnat Parcharak (1902-monthly- Editor Lahora Singh, closed in 1922); Rangarhia Patrika (1902-monthly); Azad Khalsa (1903-monthly- Editor Sunder Singh, closed in 1904); Khalsa te Khalsa Advocate (1923, after merger of Khalsa and Khalsa Advocate, now being published as Khalsa Advocate in Punjabi); Istri Satsang, and Panth Mittar (1904-weeklies, first Sikh newspapers on women); Chittar Patter, and Masik Patter (1904- monthlies); Khalsa Dharam Deepak (1905-weekly/fortnightly, pro-Government

and anti-Chief Khalsa Diwan); Amritsar Patrika (1905- eight-day); Aror Hans Gazette (1905- eight-day-Editor Haksam Naryan Dass); Khalsa Young Man's Magazine (1905 - quarterly and monthly); Punjab Mail (1905- monthly); Sewak Singh Pattarkar (1905- monthly- Editor Mahan Singh); Punjab (1905-monthly, closed in 1910); Dukh Niwaran (1906-weekly- Editor Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, closed in 1920) restarted in 1936 and is still publishing); Civil and Military Akhbar, Mufid-i-Aam, Sacha Dhandora and Fauji Akhbar (1906-weeklies); Punjabi Kesari (1908-weekly); Nirmal Pattar (1907-weekly, started by Nirmalas, script Punjabi and Language Hindi); Granthi (1907-weekly); the Punjabi Bhain (1907-weekly, first Sikh Paper comprising 48 pages); Naurettan, earlier Singh Sabha Gazette and Punjab Darpan (1908-fortnightly- Editor Lahore Singh, closed in 1935); Istri Samachar (1908- monthly - Editor Rajinder Kaur); Bir (1908- monthly, fortnightly, weekly, daily, twice-a-day-Editor Charan Singh Shahid); Prem (1909-weekly-Editor Bhai Prem Singh); Patiala Gazette (1910-weekly-Editor Gahal Singh, first pro-Government weekly, started by Patiala rulers, Patiala Government Gazette for sometime, closed in 1944); Dit Singh Magazine (1910-monthly, in memory of Bhai Dit Singh, closed in 1912); Punjabi Reporter (1911-weekly, supported Sanatan Dharam ideology); Punjabi Surma (1911-monthly, also Sanatan Dharm supporter); Panch, Guru Nanak Darshan, Punjab Darpan, and Khalsa Parkash (1911-weeklies); Phulwari (1912-monthly); The Shahid (1914-daily/weekly- Editor C.S. Shahid); Panth Sewak (1914-weekly, restarted in 1920); Chakarvarti (1914-weekly-Editor Amir Singh); Jivan Sudhar (1914-monthly- Editor Vaid Budha Singh); Sukhdatta

(1914-monthly-Editor Vaid Atma Ram); Istri Sudhar Patrika (1914-monthly-Editor Ishar Kaur); Sukhiwan (1916-monthly-Editor Hakeem Labh Singh); Chakitsa Darpan (1916-monthly-Editor Roor Singh); Sach Khand (1916-monthly-Editor Vaid Navneet Hari).

Sant Sipahi and Sikh Sipahi (1917-monthly/weekly); Sutantar (1918-weekly, closed in 1930); Hag (1918-weekly-started by Punjab Publicity Committee, closed in 1921); Vigra (1918-weekly, closed in 1922); Akali (1920-daily); Chhankana (1920-monthly, first literary-cum-humorous Paper- Editor Ganesh Dass); Sansar (1921-daily); Bir Khalsa (1921-daily, cyclostyled and underground); Dharanveer, Sant Samachar, and Sant Udesh (1921-weeklies, Udasi Papers, anti-Akali Movement); Pardeesi Khalsa (1922-weekly, merged with Akali the same year and named Akali te Pardeesi); Kirpan Bahadur (1922-five-dayer/three-dayer/weekly, closed in 1930); Khalsa Training Gazette (1923-fortnightly); Desh Sewak (1923-weekly); Istri Jivan, Asad Bhai, Pritam (1923-monthlies); Kaumi Dard (1924-daily); Panch Khalsa Samachar and Kakkar Bahadur (1924-five-dayer/ten-dayer); Niroj Khalsa and The Sikh (1924-weekly); Ranjit (1925-daily, closed in 1926); Riasti Kehar, Sudharak Dal, Kaumi Sheer and Desh Bhagat (1925-weeklies).

Khalsa Parliament Gazette (1926-five dayer); Ranjit Dhandora, Daler Hind, Kaumi Sutantar, Bir Akali, Akali Samachar and Mauji (1926-weeklies); Punjabi, Istri Rattan, Fuleran, and Kirti (1926-monthlies); Majdoor Kisan, Desh Dardi, Panth Premi and Kaum Poojak (1927-weeklies); Brahmanan Sikh Samachar,

Khalsa Parchar Sewak, Kadhah Parshad, Komal, Mastana, Komal  
Kaliam and Kavi (1927-monthlies); Asli Kaumi Dardan (1927-  
daily); Dushat Daman (1928-daily); Sutantar (1928-fortnightly);  
Adi Dharam Doctor, and Fateh (1928-weeklies); Dastkar, and  
Parcharak (1929-weekly); Ranjit Nagra, Sanjhiwal, and Hansa  
(1929-monthlies); Akali to Pardesi, with name changed to Akali  
Patrika, name again changed to Akali (1930-daily); Purekha Sudhar,  
Nirbhai Akali, Sher Khalsa, and Punjab Mail (1930-dailies);  
Nirmal Pattar, (Kaumi Sewak and Himmat (1930-weeklies); Amrit,  
Kashmir Samachar, Moti, Punjab Koyal, Rajbansi Gazette and  
Sarang (1930-monthlies); Desh Darpan and Sahit Sarovar (1931-  
weeklies); Desh Darpan (1932-daily); Nawan Yug, Nirmal Samachar,  
and Mahatma (1932-weeklies); Balak, Guru Nanak Darshan, and  
Istri (1932-monthlies); Akashbani, and Kundan (1933-weeklies);  
Punjab Panch (1933-monthly/fortnightly/weekly); Udeshak and  
Preet Lari (1933-monthlies); Likhari (1934-quarterly/monthly);  
Khusdil, Bir Sarhadi, and Vihar Sudhar (1934-monthlies);  
Khalsa Sewak out of Sikh Sewak, which was out of Purekha Sudhar  
(1935-daily); Gursewak (1935-weekly); Parbhat, Arosta Parkash,  
Guru Kashi Pattar, Sikh Patrika and Social Sudhar (1935-monthlies);  
Punjab Parkash (1935-quarterly); Jagat Sudhar, Parkash,  
Dukhi Kisan, Punjab Sher, Sukhiwan and Guru Khalsa (1936-  
weeklies); Chittri Sansar, and Mauji Thakur (1936-monthlies);  
Dukhi Dunia and Sacha Sajjan (1937-weeklies); Punjab, Pahredar,  
Sada Vigas, Daler Khalsa, and Preet Sainik (1938-weeklies);  
Roohani Dhandora, Guru Nanak Sandesh, and Navin Duniya (1938-  
monthlies); Komal Sansar, Gyan Vigyan, Gursewak, and Pani Darya  
(1939-monthlies); Jug Paltau and Rangarhia Bir (1940-cyclostyled

weeklies); Suraj, Dastkar Pattar, Kansai, and Komal Kahani (1940-monthlies); Jang, Nabha Patrika and Nawan Samsar (1941-weeklies); Sari Duniya, and Jangi Samachar (1941-fortnightly); Prem Marg, Jeewan Preeti and Vichar (1941-monthlies); Bal Sandesh, and Punjabi Sahit (1942-monthlies); Jango-Asadi, and Balak (1943-monthlies); Nawan Chanan, and Patiala Samachar (1944-weeklies/fortnightly); Sant Sipahi (1945-monthly); Sadi Kahani (1946-monthly); Akali Yodha, Praja, and Mail Milap (1947-weekly); Ranjot (1947-weekly/daily); Fahuphati (1947-daily).

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The Bir, starting as a monthly in 1908 was converted into a fortnightly the next year. In 1911, it started having three issues a month and was made a daily in 1913. So much grew the popularity of the newspaper under the able stewardship of S.S. Charan Singh Shahid that it started having two issues a day. The end came in 1914 when it failed to deposit a surety for having involved itself in a controversy. It, however, resumed publication five years later. Its survival was again threatened due to another controversy during the very year of its re-emergence. The Paper ultimately succumbed to the financial constraints and ended publication.

The second decade of the twentieth century witnessed a change in the stance of Punjabi newspapers. Before this, while Papers like Punjabi Bhai, Istri Sudhar, Bhujhangan Patrika, Istri Samachar and Istri Satsang etc., fulfilled the cause of women welfare, some others such as Punjabi Surma, Nav Rattan, the Panth, the Tempress Magazine and Dukhniwaran etc., paved the

way for Sacha Dhandora to accept the cudgels to be the spokesman of Sikh social, religious and political issues.

Sacha Dhandora was launched from Lyallpur in 1908 with the efforts of Master Sunder Singh and Comrade Sohan Singh Josh. The Paper strongly condemned the Government's role in demolishing the Gurdwara Rikab Ganj wall and the Chief Khalsa Diwan, which had become a big tout of the Government in crushing the people's voice against the British tyranny. The Paper joined hands with the Ghadr in provoking the sentiments of Indians, particularly the Sikhs after the end of the First World War.

Ghadr appeared on November 1, 1913 as a result of untiring efforts of revolutionaries like Lala Hardyal, Pandit Kanshi Ram Barkatullah, Vasakha Singh, G.B. Lal, Bhai Puren Singh, Sardar Munsha Singh, Giani Bhagwan Singh, Pandit Ram Chander and Sardar Bhagat Singh. The Ghadr was the organ and chief spokesman of the Ghadr party, designed to throw the alien rulers out of India. It exploited all resources and avenues at its disposal to kindle awakening among the Indians about freedom. The Paper had circulation in lakhs and was published in many languages including Urdu, Hindi, Marathi and Punjabi. Its writings used to shake the nerves <sup>of the</sup> chained Indians. The innovation of printing the motive of the Paper alongwith the title paid rich dividends. Phrases relating to values of sacrifice and of free life were quoted from Guru Granth Sahib, Gita and Koran to invoke the religious sentiments of all communities. The news items were based on facts with data analysis which established its credibility, both in the minds of the rulers and the ruled.

A brainchild of Master Sunder Singh, The Akali (May, 1920) was the outcome of Jalianwala Bagh massacre, All-India Congress Committee meeting at Amritsar, Sikh League meeting at Amritsar, appeals by the Congress to Sikhs for joining the national movement and clandestine meetings of the Lyallpuri group of progressive Sikhs against the pro-Government attitude of the Chief Khalsa Diwan. In fact, Khalsa Akhbar, an Urdu weekly, was converted into daily Akali.

In a very short period, the Akali became a full-fledged spiritual leader of the Sikh community, a call from which could not be ignored. As a matter of fact, the Akali and the Gurdwara Reform Movement could not be visualised in separate perspectives. Akali's 'people' comprised Sunder Singh Lyallpuri, Partap Singh Giani, Mangal Singh, Hira Singh Dard, Giani Uttam Singh, Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Udham Singh Nagoke, Bawa Budh Singh, and Giani Gurmukh Singh Misafir. One after the other, about four dozen of its functionaries were arrested due to the inflammatory writings it used to carry. Its circulation soared to over 25,000 during the Gurdwara Movement, as its copies were used to be bought in 'black'.<sup>82</sup>

The popular image of the Paper attracted some Hindus and Muslims to learn Gurmukhi for reading the columns of the Akali. Many restrictions, coupled with opposition from the Government Papers like Kuka and Ranjit could not cow down the Akali functionaries. In 1922, it was merged with Master Tara Singh's Paper, Pardeesi Khalsa and started publishing as Akali te Pardeesi.

Pritam, Kirti, Mouji, Fateh, Preet Lari and Pani Darya were other Punjabi newspapers which cornered glory in different areas during two decades before independence.

#### CONCLUSION

The Indian Press by now has covered a journey of over 200 years, from a wanton to a free Press and from free to an Independent Press. Many a newspaper emerged, some of them even grew and developed handsomely but could not sustain the pressures and challenges and ultimately died pre-mature deaths. Only a few of them are alive today.

Punjab remained one of the storm centres of political activity during the British regime, embellished with communal feelings, giving rise to communal tensions and communal polemics. The Punjab Press could not escape the onslaught of communal politics and went on to progress on these lines. As a result of this, the Hindi Press got mainly reserved, with a few exceptions, for the Hindus, the Punjabi Press for the Sikhs and the Urdu Press for the Muslims.

The newspapers of the period also reflected public outrage and discontent against the British. It also rose to the occasion(s) to arouse spirits of nationalism, civicism and patriotism among the Indians. The growing criticism of the (mal) administration and urgency for reforms, demanded by the Punjab Press in the political arena is reflected in the volume and bitterness of inter-communal polemics. The vernacular Press has, by and large, been the single most agency to flare-up the

inter-communal tensions. The influence of the local Press was more extensive and more intensive for the common man.

Some other dimensions, such as the underground Press, the 'gutter Press' and the cyclostyled news-sheets also entered the field of journalism in Punjab, which irrespective of their small numbers had had a significant impact on the public opinion.

The Punjab Press became, on occasions, virulent, mischievous, inflammatory, aggressive and obscene to aggravate and precipitate communal problems. As the heat and temper of communal passions increased in volume, each community chose to arm itself with various media of mass communication, particularly with newspapers of different periodicities.

The Hindus used the journalistic tool more effectively than the Sikhs and the Muslims. The Sikhs, however, were performing much better at least than Muslims in respect of proportion to their population. It is thus clear that the surge in communalism in Punjab corresponded to the expanding journalistic activity.

The 'communal warfare' remained the chief attraction for the Punjab Press. Nevertheless, some of the provincial Papers and journals also served the society as a whole by way of guiding and protecting them against virtually all vicissitudes. They rose and fought unending battles against the prevailing social evils and religious misconceptions.

Some of the community newspapers promoted the cultural and socio-religious values without harming the

interests of the other. In other words, they moved on secular lines while furthering their own causes. The topical and the specialised journals on women and children also upheld and furthered their respective concerns. Some of the journals on medicine created awareness among the people about the uses and abuses of medicinal and natural cures.

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26. M.C. Rau, The Press, pp.119-120, 150, 155.
27. M.C. Rau, The Press in India, pp.73-75.
28. S. Natrajan, op.cit., pp.81-82, 84, 89.
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37. Hamendra Prasad Ghose, op.cit., pp.137, 139, 141-142.
38. M.C. Rau, The Press, op.cit., p.113.
39. The Paiss Akhbar, July 23, 1887.
40. Prem Narain, op.cit., p.288.
41. The Singh Sahaye was started as a weekly from Amritsar in 1897 and was merged with the Punjab Gazette in 1904. It was regarded as the first anti-Government newspaper in the real sense.
42. The Comrade, June 9, 1912.

43. Mahadevi Desai in Biography of Maulana Abul Kalam Asad, quoted by M.C. Rau, op.cit.,p.117.
44. Letter from Punjab Government to GOI, Home(Political), File No.3375, 1927,p.3.
45. Ramesh Kumar Jain, Hindi Pattarkarita ka Alochnatmik Itihas, Jaipur, pp.54,141-142.
46. Narinder Singh Kapur, op.cit., and M.C. Rau, The Press, p.119.
47. M.C. Rau, Ibid.,pp.119-122.
48. Muslim Outlook, August 19,1927.
49. Ramesh Kumar Jain, op.cit.,pp.103-106; also M.C. Rau, The Press,pp.22,107.
50. The literal meaning of Udant(News),Martand(Sun) is News Sun.
51. It was published every Tuesday of the month.
52. Radhakrishan Das in Hindi Bhasha ke Samayak Pattron ka Itihas (1945) and Bal Makand Gupta, Editor of Bharat Mittar (1905) consider Banaras Akhbar, launched by Raja Shivparsingh as a weekly in 1845, as the first Hindi weekly. Barjendernath Badhopadhaye, however, later confirmed that Udant Martand was the first Hindi weekly. Pandit Banarasi Das seconded Barjendernath's viewpoint. Moreover, Banaras Akhbar was not purely a Hindi newspaper. It was rather an Urdu-Hindi bi-lingual.
53. Ambika Prasad Vajpayee in Samachar Pattron ka Itihas,p.98.
54. M.C. Rau, The Press, p,113.
55. Ramesh Kumar Jain, Hindi Pattarkarita ka Alochnatmik Itihas, Jaipur, 1987, p.103.
56. Banaras Akhbar made the first attempt to use the Nagri script, instead of Persian. Soodhakar Akhbar, lithographed on Nagri was the second Hindi Paper published from Banaras.
57. Hindi newspapers in the sixties were largely devoted to religious or semi-religious causes. Virtanta Vilas, Gyan Deepak, and Kavi Vachan Sudha were the three newspapers which had started publishing in Hindi independently by 1867. M.C. Rau, op.cit.,p.113.
58. R.K. Jain, op.cit.,p.48.

59. Ibid., p.55.
60. M.C. Rau, op.cit.,pp.114-115; and R.K.Jain, op.cit., pp.46-47,50.
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64. Ibid.,pp.54 and 141. Also M.C. Rau, op.cit.,pp.116,118-119, 122.
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66. Sahit Samachar, March 1952, p.56.
67. M.C. Rau, op.cit.,p.58. Also The Tribune, December 29, 1975.
68. Press in Pakistan, S.M.A. Feroz, p.34.
69. Press Commission Report, pp.197-198; Also S. Natrajan, op.cit.,p.184; S.S. Ashok, Punjabi Pattarkar,p.18.
70. Press Commission Report, p.197.
71. Skaviya Sambodhini was a Hindi-Punjabi bi-lingual.
72. The Likhari, January-March,1935, pp.99-100.
73. N.S. Kapoor, op.cit.,p.61.
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76. Giani Dit Singh besides being a prolific writer and poet, had deep knowledge of Gurbani and other holy scriptures. The Dit Singh-Gurmukh Singh duo was used to be recognised as the true advocate of Sikhism.
77. Bhai Vir Singh. Abhinandan Granth, Harbans Singh(ed), p.42.
78. Suba Singh, op.cit.,pp.40-42, and Bhai Jodh Singh, Abhinandan Granth, Ganda Singh (ed.),p.138. Also Alochana, April 1958, pp.36-63; and S.S. Ashok, op.cit., p.36.
79. Shaheed,started in 1914 from Amritsar, has been regarded as the first Punjabi daily as unlike Bir, it,from the very beginning, was a daily. It was converted into a weekly when,unable to find a printer. Charan Singh Shahid had to take it to Lahore.

80. Suba Singh, op.cit., p.66.
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**CHAPTER III**

**PRINT MEDIA (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE REGIONAL  
MEDIA) AND THE SIKH POLITICS → AN INTERDEPENDENCE**

**FACTOR**

**CHAPTER III****PRINT MEDIA (SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE REGIONAL MEDIA)  
AND THE SIKH POLITICS - AN INTERDEPENDENCE FACTOR**

As ever, the Punjab Press, particularly the vernacular Press—which was dependent for its might, rather survival on the socio-political and religious areas of activity among the three major communities, namely Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs — played a stellar role in monitoring, moulding and shaping the public opinion and, thereby the Punjab politics during the pre-independence period of the 20th century. The Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi newspapers and journals were chiefly responsible to carry with them and to be carried along by the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh politics respectively. The Punjab Press has been seen serving as a 'convenient vehicle' for these communities to attack the Government and each other on one hand and propagate and consolidate their faith and theology on the other.

The performance of Sikhs in the area of journalism, as compared to other communities, was splendid vis-a-vis their population and literacy strength. It attained its full stature during the years of the Gurdwara Reform Movement which witnessed effervescent Sikh political activity. The passage of Sikh Gurdwara Legislation in 1925 had a 'negative impact' on the Sikh journalistic activity when the number of "Sikh dailies dropped from six to three and of tri-weeklies from three to zero in 1923 and 1929. However, unlike Muslims and like Hindus newspapers and magazines, the number of other Sikh periodicals

went on increasing with the course of time." <sup>1</sup> If Lahore and Amritsar acted as nuclei of Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu journalism, Multan, Rawalpindi, Ludhiana and Gurdaspur formed other centres of vernacular Press activity.

The Sikh identification issue climaxed with their realising the fact that it was only through production of literature and enlarging the vistas of knowledge that the community could survive the communal onslaught from the Hindu-Muslim ventures. The first step in the direction was taken with the Sikhs succeeding in getting the foundation stone of Khalsa College, Amritsar, laid by none other than Punjab's Lt Governor, Sir James Lyall on March 5, 1892. This was followed by the establishment of a number of Khalsa schools and Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalas at a number of places in the years to follow.

The Anjuman-i-Panjab took the initiative of translating useful English and other language books into Punjabi in 1865 so as to bring the language in the proximity of other international languages and expose the Sikh community to the outer world. The Singh Sabha Movement took up the onus of starting Punjabi newspapers, journals and of publishing books, tracts and encyclopaedias. This all provided a considerable impetus to the developing political consciousness among the Sikh faith.

The crusade of publishing newspapers gained strength gradually with Sikhs comprehending the relative importance of

comprising "thirtysix members, had been appointed by the Government which amounted to official involvement in the administration of the shrine." The radical Sikh Press was outrightly vocal in condemning the Government's action. It issued appeals to the Sikh community to rally in support for the SGPC at this critical juncture. The Akali declared, "O Khalsa! Awake and rub your eyes...Be prepared to become martyrs...the bureaucracy interfered with your religion and is always ready to crush you. You should always be ready to go gladly to jails and accept the sweet offer of bullets, because religion is in danger and it is proper for the Sikhs to protect their religion."<sup>4</sup>

The Sikh Press strongly criticised Government's direct interference in their religion as bands of Akalis started pouring in at Amritsar to participate in a meeting of the SGPC on November 11, 1921. Baba Kharak Singh and Sardar Jaswant Singh delivered provocative speeches as 'only the non-cooperators were allowed to speak'. A resolution requested the Sikh community to hold religious Divans to explain the facts about Chabian da Morcha (the Keys Affair).<sup>5</sup>

The SGPC also decided to 'observe hartal on the day of the arrival of Prince of Wales in India asking the Sikh soldiers not to attend any function in honour of the Prince.' Instructions were also issued from Akal Takht asking the Sikh soldiers and sepeys to renounce their jobs while the Sikh legislators were warned against retaining their seats.<sup>6</sup>

The Keys Affair was hailed as a great victory and as an unqualified triumph in the militant Sikh circles. The radical

Sikh Press while glorifying the triumph declared, "In the short time of two months, the Sikhs have broken the pride and humbled the Government, given to forcibly interfering with their religion. The bureaucracy, which held its head high uptill only yesterday, is today standing amid the shoes of the Khalsa with the bunch of keys in its hands. Brave, O heroes! You have vindicated your honour." This was contrary to the expectations of the Government which had hoped that its conciliatory attitude would reconcile the moderate Sikh opinion and reduce the appeal of extremist Sikhs. The affair provided a strong fillip to the prestige of the SGPC and the Akalis. It also added to the confidence of Sikh militants in their ability to agitate successfully against the Government.<sup>7</sup>

The religious grievances served as a springboard to bring the Sikhs into the stream of national movement. Paradesi Khalsa, an extremist Sikh Paper, wrote that "the Gurdwara Reform Movement and other movements are not safe without the Swaraj." The Akali noted that "there is no doubt that in these days Sikhs are engaged in reforming the Gurdwaras, still it cannot be denied that Swaraj is the only remedy of all troubles."

After the release of Sikh prisoners in January, 1922, the Sikh leaders invited the Sikhs to join other communities in securing Swaraj. Like the Congress and Central Khilafat Committee, the Central Sikh League started enrolling Sikh volunteers to struggle for acquiring Swaraj. Baba Kharak Singh, along with 26 other nationalist Sikhs, issued a notice on behalf of the League, calling upon 10,000 Sikh volunteers to participate

in the national struggle.<sup>8</sup>

The Akali, while condemning the proposed Gurdwara Bill, wrote: "It (Bill) is meant for the benefit of the Government and not for the benefit of the Sikhs." Sardar Bahadur Mahtab Singh, the acting President of the SGPC, intimated to the British authorities that "if the Bill was passed, ignoring the expressed wishes of the Panth, it would meet the fate of the Rowlatt Act. The Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council too refused to cooperate with the Government in passing this Bill until all Sikh prisoners were released, and ultimately the Bill was substantially changed."<sup>9</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan though "loyalist, having adopted a balanced, constrained and constitutional approach to politics, its leaders were quite sincere towards the interests of the Panth." Its delegates at the All-Sikh Parties Conference, Lahore (July 24, 1932) strongly opposed the forthcoming Communal Award.<sup>10</sup> The Party, no doubt, extended full cooperation to the British during the World War I like other political parties but unlike other parties, it "observed complete silence over the punishment meted out to the Ghadrites. It also went on to honour General Dyer despite atrocities committed by him during the Jalianwala Bagh massacre. It also preferred to keep quite over the much condemned Rowlatt Act."<sup>11</sup>

The Akali Dal passed a series of resolutions calling upon the SGPC to raise a typhoon of agitation till the Maharaja of Nabha was restored to the throne. The Sikh militants used the columns of the radical Sikh Press to raise and back-up the

issue. In August 1923, a general body meeting of the SGPC resolved that 'the Nabha affair was one with which it was entitled to deal'. It also passed a resolution stating: "It believed that the Government of India has deliberately taken advantage of the Patiala-Nabha dispute to wrest the administration of Nabha State from His Highness...that this decision of Government is vindictive, unjustified and absolutely uncalled for...the SGPC is convinced that this action taken by the Government is calculated to give a severe blow to the Panthic orthodoxy, organization, and well-being." The resolution authorised the Executive Committee to get the wrong done to Nabha and the Panth right through 'all peaceful and legitimate means'. Consequently, a campaign of protests against the Maharaja's abdication was initiated. The Sikh Press and a chain of religious Diwans enabled the militant Akalis to stir-up feelings against the Government. This campaign ultimately culminated into a big agitation.<sup>12</sup>

With the arrest of active members of the SGPC, their positions were hurriedly replaced by those who fell to the official repression and were of relatively little standing. Similar tactics were adopted by the Government to cope with the pro-Akali Press. The vulnerable Editors took refuge behind volunteers willing to court arrest. The Punjab Government in its report noted that "the men now in real charge of the proclaimed organizations are certain non-entities...it is difficult to ascertain who they are." The process of Jathas visiting Jaito continued unhindered while the official repression

further contributed to the Akali propaganda. The Akali described the campaign as "a war which is not between Akalis and the Government but between the God and the Satan." Though the election campaign to the Provincial Legislative Council temporarily diverted the public interest from Jaito da Morcha, it also, on the other hand, demonstrated effectively the extent of popular support enjoyed by the SGPC.

The Punjab Government adopted certain measures to discourage Akali recruitment in the police and the army. The Akali newspapers were 'repeatedly prosecuted for inflammatory writings, and when the elusive Editors could not be brought to task, the publishers and proprietors were charged with various offences. Public meetings of Akalis were closely watched and individuals singled out for prosecution. Pensions and other types of grants of persons sustentating the Akali campaigns were confiscated.'

The Government allowed Jathas to enter into Nabha State only after receiving a declaration to the effect that its members would not indulge in political activity. The Akalis, unwilling to file the necessary declaration continued to be arrested. Commenting on the campaign at Bhai Pheru, Hailey observed: "For myself, I consider this...a blessing in disguise, for it is clear that we cannot deal with the Akali problem until the mass of people are tired of their present leaders...Nothing will disgust them so much as futile proceedings of this nature. They cannot even pretend that they cause us any annoyance, for the whole matter causes no more trouble than a prize giving at

a girls school."<sup>15</sup>

The Sikhs opposed the Pakistan Resolution in its All-India Akali Conference (Attari, February 12) stating it to be 'anti-national, dangerous and disastrous to the best interests of the country'. Two more Sikh conferences held at Lahore thereafter, strongly upheld the resolution of the Attari<sup>16</sup> conference. Sardar Ishar Singh Majhail, in his presidential address at the Akali Jubilee Conference at Jandiala on November 25, said: "One thing is clear and that is that we will never<sup>17</sup> accept Pakistan and will fight to the finish."

The Shiromani Akali Dal condemned the arrest of the<sup>18</sup> Congress leaders, involved in the Quit India Movement. The Working Committee of the Akalis in a secret session (July 5, 1945), after taking a stock of the war situation, preferred to<sup>19</sup> help the British in the World War II.

The Sikhs rejected the recommendations of the Sapru Committee on account of the fact that "these recommendations do not subscribe to any solution of the Sikhs or the Punjab problem. They instead asked for abolition of statutory Muslim majority<sup>20</sup> in the Province."

The Constituent Assembly members- Sardar Ujjal Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh, asserted that we want that nothing affecting the Sikhs should be decided without our consent. To side with whom at the crucial junctures, remained a dilemma for the Sikhs. They had always to side with the Congress as the Muslim League had always been intolerant of the Sikhs. Another

aspect of the situation was that the British always favoured to win the Muslims, who had absolute majority in the trouble-torn Punjab. The Sikhs opined that in view of the cordial British-Muslim League relationships, the Congress will not find favour either with the Government or the Muslim League. The same was true for the Sikhs. Hence, the 'Congress-Sikh alliance remained there throughout, despite strong differences and betrayal of Sikhs at the hands of Congressmen on a number of occasions.'<sup>21</sup>

The Working Committee of the All-Sikh Parties Conference (March 16) constituted a sub-committee to consider the Cripps proposals and then prepare a draft of Sikh demands. The Akali, along with The Tribune, quoted that the All-Sikh Parties Conference (April 8) and Shiromani Akali Dal approved<sup>22</sup> of the Sikhs' negotiations with the Cripps Commission.

The Akali quoted the Khalsa Advocate having said that 'there is a faction amongst the Sikhs, which is using the Gurdwara Reform Movement to mislead the Sikhs and which is preventing an agreement because it does not want the agitation (regarding Jaito da Morcha) to end'. Even the Chief Khalsa Diwan was of the opinion that presently some Akalis were use-<sup>23</sup> lessly interested in elongating the Morcha of Jaito. The humiliation caused to Sardar Sampuran Singh despite his describing himself as a Congress soldier compelled the Akalis to 'join<sup>24</sup> the Civil Disobedience Movement as independents'. The Sikhs were again forced to support the Congress as they opined that it would get into power<sup>25</sup> and ultimately they would have to depend

upon it to fight against the Muslim League.

The Akali Dal manifesto emphasized on "attainment of full independence and cooperation with the like-minded parties; opposition to Communal Award; launching of struggle for the release of all political workers and detenus; work for the relief of rural indebtedness; land revenue on income-tax basis; opposing the formation of ministry by those parties which did not agree to amend the Communal Award; working for Indianisation of the army; securing freedom for Sikhs to carry Kirpan and opposing Muslim efforts to regain Shahid Ganj."<sup>27</sup>

The Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution allowing Akalis to join the Congress.<sup>28</sup> Many Congressite Sikhs were also elected office-bearers of the Akali Dal.<sup>29</sup> The Congress-minded Sikhs, though made up with their parent body, the Akali Dal, they continued to have a soft corner towards the Congress Party.<sup>30</sup> They even approved the C.R. Formula and disapproved the idea of the Azad Sikh State.<sup>31</sup>

The Central Sikh Association was among the fewer Sikh bodies that chose to meet the Simon Commission. It demanded larger Sikh representation in the Provincial and Central Legislatures on the basis of payments of land revenue and recruitment to the army.<sup>32</sup>

The Sikhs wanted constitutional privileges to safeguard their political and cultural existence and due share vis-a-vis provincial control. Sardar Mangal Singh, while chairing a session of the Khalsa Darbar at Moga (December, 28),

commented about the 1935 Act as: "The British Government has not considered the unanimous opinion of the whole politically-minded India. It, therefore, cannot be regarded as an agreed constitution but as a constitution which has been forced upon the unwilling and helpless people."<sup>33</sup>

The Sikh opinion was divided over the issue of joining army. The Master Tara Singh faction decided to help the British on the specific issue of recruitment to the army. The faction, led by Sardar Ishar Singh Majhail and Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke wanted to support the Congress attitude of not joining the army. The Chief Khalsa Diwan appealed the Sikhs to help the Government with men and money.<sup>34</sup>

A meeting held under the Chairmanship of Master Tara Singh on October 1, introduced a condition that the Shiremani Akali Dal would help the British in the war only if the Government assured of extended representation to the Sikhs in the army and services and also accommodated a Sikh on the Executive Council of the Viceroy.<sup>35</sup>

The Sikhs' position got weakened with the implementation of the Act of 1935 which had 'translated the statutory majority of Muslims in the Punjab into a functional reality'. The Khalsa National Party of Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia sided with the Unionists in the Punjab Legislature elections and the Akalis and the Congress jointly captured not more than 25 seats out of the total 164 seats. The Akalis, thus, in collaboration with the Congress decided to observe April 1, 1937 as a

protest day against the new constitution. A Hartal Committee was set up by the opposition to coordinate the activities in connection with the proposed Hartal. The Hartal was successfully observed all over the Province.

The Sikhs, after getting exemption to wear swords under Sections 13 and 15 of the Indian Arms Act, continued to press the Government for allowing them to wear big Kirpans. In a joint meeting, the Shiromani Akali Dal and the SGPC passed resolutions pleading the Government to remove restrictions on the big Kirpan, and on sporting of two small Kirpans. Seeing no response, the SGPC decided to launch a Morch from January 1936 under the joint stewardship of Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh, Sardar Teja Singh and Sardar Boota Singh.

The Akalis, most of them peasants, demanded rationalisation of the land revenue and to link it with the principle of income tax. They also remained in the forefront during the Kisan Movement.

The Sikh M.L.As in a meeting at Amritsar, expressed their deep concern over the Cabinet Mission's proposals, which had ignored the claims and grievances of the Sikhs. They observed that the weightage hitherto enjoyed by the Sikhs due to their historic, political and economic importance, instead of being increased for the Constituent Assembly, was wiped out. Master Tara Singh threatened that "we may set up a triangular Morcha against the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League which are going to be the three major parties in the interim Government."

The Sikhs, although, had been endeavouring to emphasise that the Sikh religion was separate from that of Hindus. With the start of Gurdwara Reform Movement, the notion of a separate religion was further endorsed. Master Tara Singh condemned the Hindu papers, Milap and Partap for describing Sikhs as Hindus. He underlined the fact that like Muslims, the Sikhs would not appreciate to be called Hindus.<sup>40</sup>

The abdication of the ruler of Nabha, one of the five Sikh rulers of the native States, attracted ample attention of the Sikh political leaders. The Sikh League immediately passed a resolution in protest and the radical Sikh Press was quick to interpret the enforced abdication of the Maharaja as a direct threat to the Sikh community. The Akali-te-Pardesi asked, "Will the bureaucracy succeed in weakening the Panth by putting an end to the Nabha State?" The SGPC also joined the active denunciation of the Government. In a communique issued on July 10, it warned, "the weakening of Nabha is the thin edge of the wedge of the designs of Government against an important section of the Sikh community."<sup>41</sup>

The Sikh Press took up the issue of the Maharaja and used it as a 'convenient stick to beat the Government with'. It did so partly because of the liberal attitude of the Maharaja towards the Editors, and partly because of the serious nature of the case. It was widely publicised that the Maharaja had been penalized just for his pro-Akali stance, and was described as another instance of gross interference by the Government in the Sikh affairs.<sup>42</sup>

The strategy of the Government was to let the Akali Jathas run out of steam. It simultaneously introduced a more insidious policy to undermine the SGPC's influence. The District officers, posted in the areas having substantial Sikh population, were instructed to work for the formation of anti-Akali associations by rallying those Sikhs as were loyal to the Government. Membership to these associations called Sewak or Sudhar (Reform) committees, was drawn largely from Sikh landlords and landed gentry, whose influence had been eclipsed by the growing influence of the SGPC. They also included a number of retired Sikh army men and civil pensioners. Thanks to Government's patronage, the Sudhar committees increased rapidly in number and strength. By the middle of August 1924, the Punjab Government reported that "such anti-Akali associations had been or were in the process of being formed in the districts of Karnal, Hoshiarpur, Ludhiana, Sialkot, Sheikhupura, Rawalpindi, Amritsar and Gujranwala."<sup>43</sup>

The Sudhar committees launched a campaign to clarify the religious issues behind the Sikh unrest and to separate them from the political ambitions of the Akalis. Through widely distributed posters and newspapers, they attacked the SGPC's tactics, while urging for the fulfilment of Sikh religious aspirations. Its objective, as the Punjab Government intimated to the Government of India, was "by these...we mean to create in time a body of opinion which will put pressure on the Akalis to adopt a more reasonable attitude but this is a process which will necessarily take time."<sup>44</sup>

Tara Singh group occasionally led to great confusion. The Party, nevertheless, survived such strifes to remain as the main plank for recording, propounding and expressing the aspirations and reactions of the Sikh community. Its position was further strengthened owing to the positive role played by it during the Gurdwara Movement and candid condemnation of the Simon Commission. In matters relating to constitutional developments, the Party sided with the nationalist and secular forces with keeping the interest of the Panth as foremost. <sup>49</sup>

Sardar Bahadur Mahtab Singh, Gyani Sher Singh and 18 other leaders agreed to undertake that they would work for the Gurdwara Act, and were released along with Bawa Harkishan Singh, who captained the group to accept the Government's above mentioned condition. On the other hand, Master Tara Singh, Gopal Singh Quami, Sohan Singh Josh and Sewa Singh Thikriwala refused to accept these conditions. The trial against them continued till September 27 when they were ultimately released. But this had already spelled dissensions among the Akali Dal leaders and as a consequence, there emerged the Central Akali <sup>50</sup> Dal.

The signs of reconciliation between Master Tara Singh and Gyani Sher Singh, which have emerged just after the death of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala, again diminished with Gyani Sher Singh charging the Master for converting the Khalsa Darbar into an instrument of his own party though the Darbar had been established on non-party lines. The Gyani's

outrage, in fact, was the result of his frustration and his intolerance of Master's popularity and mass appeal that he enjoyed. He also charged the Darbar as an obstruction in the Panthic unity.<sup>51</sup>

The Shiromani Akali Dal, in its January 16 meeting, under Sardar Udham Singh Nagoke, the Central Akali Dal and the Central Sikh League in separate meetings, and the All-Sikh Parties Conference on January 29 at Amritsar, finally resolved to boycott the Simon Commission.<sup>52</sup> The Congressman and the Akalis were prominent among the protestors at the Lahore Railway Station on the arrival of the Commission on March 10, 1928.<sup>53</sup> And Baba Kharak Singh was the dictator of the demonstration.

The Sikhs, through Sardar Bahadur Mahtab Singh, attempted to move a resolution at the All-Parties national convention at Calcutta condemning communalism in any form to be made the basis for any future constitution and urging to reform the Nehru Report on these lines. Following the rejection of this proposal, the Central Sikh League announced to withdraw its support to Nehru Report. The Sikhs now realised that the Hindus were being unjust to Sikhs just to please the Muslims.<sup>54</sup>

Mahatama Gandhi, Motilal Nehru and Madan Mohan Malviya refused to grant 30 per cent seats to Sikhs. At the most, they (the Sikhs) could be given seats in proportion to their numerical strength,<sup>55</sup> they commented. Mahatama Gandhi, before proceeding for the Second Round Table Conference, stated

that he was ready to accept the Muslim demands too but not  
 at the cost of Sikh demands.<sup>56</sup>

A Council of Action, created to cope with the exigency of establishing communal rule in Punjab, on July 29 resolved to raise a body of voluntary army called Akali Sahidi Fauj of one lakh Akalis.<sup>57</sup> Sir Sikandar, an aspirant for the Punjab Governorship, assured the Sikhs that he would fight against the Communal Award in case they support his case for the post he wished. The Council of Action criticised those Sikh leaders who agreed to the proposal of Sir Sikandar in its meeting of August 14, 1932.<sup>58</sup>

The Council of Action appreciated the acceptance of its proposal by the Akalis not to accept a seat on the Round Table Conference. The Sikhs also observed September 17, 1932, as anti-Communal Award Day, and passed strong resolutions asking the Government to withdraw the Award.<sup>59</sup> Since the Government of India Act, 1935 was based on some recommendations contained in the white paper on Round Table Conference and as the Communal Award was not delinked from it, the Sikhs would not greet the Act too. The introduction of provincial autonomy did not suit the Sikhs as it was of great advantage to the Muslim world, who enjoyed statutory majority in the Punjab,<sup>60</sup> viewed in terms of the white paper.

Keeping in view the "loyalist leadership of the SGPC and the contemporary situation, created by the Non-Cooperation Movement in the Country, the Government was probably reluctant to take any strong action against the Akali movement."

Therefore, it decided to play the 'politics of duality'. On the one hand, it expressed "overt sympathy for the Gurdwara reforms by announcing that a conference would be soon called to settle the disputes and to regulate the future control of the religious institutions of Sikhs. At the same time, the Government tried to check the activities of the Akalis by encouraging the Mahants to deal with them firmly."

The Conference, attended by about 60 Mahants, resolved not to acknowledge the authority of the SGPC and ultimately formed an organisation under the name of Udasi Mahamandal to advance their interests. Mahant Narain Das was elected President of the new organisation. It also launched a newspaper, Sant Sewak in Lahore to dilute the Akali propoganda. A volley of attacks on the conduct of Mahant Narain Das by the Sikh Press and a "vociferous campaign of appeals to the religious fervour of the devout had created an atmosphere of growing resentment towards the management of the Janam Asthan Gurdwara." The Mahant's denial to subscribe to the scheme of the reformers and his disdain for popular opinion further intensified the necessity for militant action. The forthcoming Sikh religious Diwan at Nankana Sahib was "viewed as an appropriate moment for such action, and for Narain Das rumours of an impending attack on the shrine persisted alarmingly."

The Sikh community had already declared that the surrender of the keys of the Toshakhana to Baba Kharek Singh, President of the SGPC, and immediate release of all Sikh detainees would alone satiate the Sikhs. Ultimately, the

Government in the absence of any other alternative, agreed to return the keys to the SGPC and the Sikh prisoners were released unconditionally.<sup>63</sup>

In spite of its repressive policy towards Akalis, the Government could not afford to ignore the religious nature of the Gurdwara Reform Movement. An official report mentions: "It is important to realise that though the outward manifestations of the Akali Movement are more political than religious, its inward inspiration is religious zeal." Therefore, the Government announced: "While, however, determined to suppress the political activities of this nature, the Government assures all abiding Sikhs that its sympathy and its desire to support the Sikh religion, are unaffected by the misdeeds of this lawless action."<sup>64</sup>

In order to pose its sincerity towards Sikh reforms of the religious places, the Government adopted measures in shape of instructing the judicial officers, through the Punjab High Court, to clear the pending cases relating to the dispute of Gurdwaras without any further delay.<sup>65</sup>

Mr C.M.G. Ogilvie, the officiating Administrator of Nabha, wrote to the Government that "there was a need of strong policy against the Akali agitation to maintain its prestige." Similarly, the anti-Akali Press opposed the mild policy of the Government pleading for a strong action against the agitating Akalis. Consequently, the Government of India permitted the Punjab Government to take necessary steps

following which the Punjab Government issued the following order: "The Government of Punjab in Council, by virtue of the powers conferred upon it by the Section 16 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1908, as amended by the Devolution Act of 1920, is pleased hereby to declare the said SGPC and the said Jathas to be unlawful associations." 66

The Punjab Government, on the other hand, was openly criticised for the Jaito firing. Moreover, inspite of all repressive measures, the Akali Movement could not be subdued. On the contrary, the despatch of daily Jathas and Shahidi Jathas continued with added vigour and enthusiasm among the Sikhs. Finally, Sir Edward Maclagan, anxious to solve the problem of the Sikhs, after his return from Punjab, decided to appoint a Committee under the chairmanship of Lt General Birdwood, Commander-in-Chief, Northern Command, to find out a lasting solution of the Akali problem. 67

The terrorist activities of the Muslims, after the introduction of the Act of 1935, increased increasingly. They occasionally attacked Hindu and Sikh shrines to forcibly take away their possessions. They even attacked the police parties which used to come to the rescue of the non-Muslims. They even started to influence the judicial proceedings exploiting the advantages of communal electorates to their end, ill-regarding the secular values. 68

Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh and Sardar Baldev Singh demanded from the Punjab Governor to fix a

boundary line identifying the proposed division of the river Chenab. They also demanded the clamping of Martial Law in Punjab and deploying of additional Sikh police to minimise disturbances and safeguard Sikh lives.<sup>69</sup>

M.A. Jinnah held that the 'partition of Punjab and Bengal was a sinister move actuated by spite and bitterness'. If these two regions were to be divided, he felt, the other Provinces would have to be cut-up in a similar way. He, alongwith the Sikh leaders felt that the migration of population on reciprocal basis was the only solution which could be amicably set.<sup>70</sup>

The Panthic Assembly Party, the Pratinidhi Board and the Shiromani Akali Dal passed a resolution on June 14 which stated that "the Punjab Boundary Commission should be given express directions to make recommendations for the transfer of the Hindu and the Sikh populations and property from the Western part of the Punjab to the Eastern part after the partition has been effected on equitable basis."<sup>71</sup>

The All-Sikh Parties Conference at Amritsar (June 9 and 10), which was attended by all Sikh parties except the Central Akali Dal, felt that the Cabinet Mission had relegated the position of Sikhs and now there was no way out left than to fight out the wrongs by making sacrifices, through bloodshed for which they would have to take a redoubtable pledge before the Akal Takht. The Conference resolution, earlier had opposed the 'compulsory grouping of Provinces' and liquidation

of position of Sikhs which had been acknowledged as the Sikh  
 Homeland by the Mission itself.<sup>72</sup>

The Maharaja of Patiala used to extend every type of aid to the one who attempted forge disunity among the Akalis. The Maharaja had paid a lakh of rupees upto 1935 to Gyani Sher Singh, who occasionally condemned Sikh leaders like, Master Tara Singh, Gopal Singh Quami, Sardar Sewa Singh, Sardar Jawahar Singh and Sardar Hari Singh Chakwalia on one pretext  
<sup>73</sup> or the other.

The indecisiveness among Sikhs whether to join whom had caused much harm to them. They felt sorry about sacrificing their religious values just to please the Congress and  
<sup>74</sup> taking to non-violence.

The Muslims' position was amply strengthened by the Act of 1935. They occasionally attacked the Sikh shrines, snatched away their belongings by use of force and also used  
<sup>75</sup> to massacre the Sikhs off and on.

The SGPC described the ban on supporting a big Kirpan by the Sikhs as an interference by the Government in their religious affairs. A deputation of Sikh leaders comprising Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Sardar Kartar Singh, Sardar Bishan Singh and Sardar Boota Singh, urged the Punjab Governor to remove restrictions on wearing of a big Kirpan. Their request was not, however, acceded to by the  
 Governor.<sup>76</sup>

It had become just necessary and obligatory for the Sikhs to side with the Congress in the wake of Cripps proposals. Siding with the Muslims before partition had not been fruitful for the Sikhs, though it had been equally useless for them having supported the Congress ideology for seeking their help in solving their problems. And the partition scheme envisaged perpetuation of slavery for the Sikhs as majority of their population and belongings rested in the areas demarcated to be given to Pakistan. The Sikhs thus rejected Cripps proposals. The Central Akali Dal strongly opposed the proposals as, in its view, it was destined to divide and disintegrate the country.<sup>77</sup>

The first issue of the Ghadr stated its party's objectives clearly as: "Today, there begins in foreign lands, in our country's language, a war against the British Raj. What is our name? Ghadr. What is our work? Ghadr. Where will Ghadr break out? in India. The time will soon come when rifles and blood will take the place of pen and ink." And just below the masthead was written: "Enemy of the British Government". The Ghadr party intensified the propaganda aimed at the Punjab. Thousands of copies of the Ghadr and many other revolutionary pamphlets, exhorting the people to overthrow the tyrannical Government, were distributed in the Punjab.<sup>78</sup>

Within a few months of its publication, its circulation 'raided' Indian settlers in Japan, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Philippines, Singapore, Trinidad, the Honduras and

South and East Africa.<sup>79</sup>

In spite of official vigilance, some Ghadr revolutionaries did slip into the Punjab, and others evaded residency restrictions imposed on them. The revolutionary emigrants travelled extensively through Sikh villages, attended religious fairs and public gatherings and exhorted the people to revolt. To their dismay, however, the violent methods they advocated stirred little response among Punjabi peasants, who regarded them as 'dangerous criminals', and the very men they had calculated to enlist in their cause quickly testified against them. Left largely to their own resources, they organized gangs and made plans to raid arsenals and treasuries.<sup>80</sup> But their design for a popular revolution rapidly degenerated into a campaign of terrorism and sporadic violence. However, swift Government action resulted into armed clashes with the revolutionaries, the arrest of crucial leaders and the interment of large number of Ghadrites.

By the summer of 1915, the Ghadr conspiracy was in a shambles. The interment of revolutionaries as they entered the country, lack of experience and bad leadership, the inability of revolutionaries to get arms and the infiltration of the revolutionary organisation by the police took their toll. Above all, the loyalty of influential Sikh leaders and the active cooperation of the bulk of the population with the authorities decided the issue in their disfavour. During the next two years, a few committed Ghadrites, who remained at large

turned their attention to informers and witnesses and dispersed their energy in isolated instances of revenge. Three successive attempts to smuggle arms to the revolutionaries with the German assistance proved abortive and in April, 1917, when the United States entered the War, the revolutionaries were deprived of their base and sanctuary.<sup>81</sup>

The Ghadr rebellion failed miserably, its ideology of political violence was to surface again in the Punjab a few years later. The war years were a period of great political change in India. Indian participation in the war, characterized as a fight to make the world safe for democracy and to assert the right of self-determination of nations raised nationalist aspirations in the country and intensified the demand for self-Government. From 1915, Annie Besant and Bal Gangadhar Tilak mobilized nationalist support through their home-rule leagues and between 1916 and 1917, conducted<sup>82</sup> the first nationwide agitation for home rule.

Though Sikh political activity had hitherto been marked by a non-participation in nationalist politics, Sikhs were not immune to changes in the larger political arena. Political activity generated by the imminent constitutional reforms aggravated tension between the Hindu community and the Tat Khalsa. In contributing to an escalation of communal competition, the impending reforms further provided an impetus to a movement apearnt within the Sikh community during the past two decades. The growing educated Sikh elite had provided the sharp edge to <sup>the</sup> Tat Khalsa demands over a variety of issues

since the turn of the century. The endemic unrest over the management of Sikh religious institutions and the agitation for Sikh control of the Khalsa College in Amritsar, the campaign against the ill-treatment of Sikh immigrants abroad, the bitter protests, generated by the Komagata Maru incident and the subsequent Budge Budge riots had witnessed the increasing participation of the Sikh elite and endowed them with greater self-assuredness in asserting the rights of their community. The Government of India Act of 1919 was formulated amidst a chorus of communal bickerings between Hindus and Sikhs in the Punjab, and in the process the Tat Khalsa elite was moved to militancy impressing for the fulfilment of the legitimate aspirations of their community. Moreover, recurring conflicts between the Sikhs and the Government, while imposing a strain on Anglo-Sikh relations, had also made the ineffectiveness of the Chief Khalsa Diwan's leadership apparent to educated Sikhs. The failure of the Chief Khalsa Diwan to secure Sikh demands for political representation under the 1919 Act brought about the establishment of a radical Sikh political organisation and paved the way for an alliance between the Sikh community and nationalist politicians.

83

The Sikhs were completely demoralised as they reverted to old evil practices. Even some staunch Sikhs also started adopting Hinduism and started giving a Hindu colour to the Sikh doctrines, beliefs and values as the 'five symbols became just an anomaly'.

84

The Chief Khalsa Diwan rejected the C.R. Formula and the Cabinet Delegation visit to decide the fate of Punjab. It sent a memorandum to the British Cabinet Mission opposing the creation of Pakistan, as it felt, there was no part of India which was completely inhabited by the Muslims. The creation of Pakistan would of necessity create the demand of bringing into existence another Pakistan (under a different name) within Pakistan. This would lead to chains of Pakistans -ad-absurdum. The party advocated joint electorates with proper safeguards for minorities.<sup>85</sup>

The C.R. Formula was schemed by the Congress with the active support and appreciation of nationalist Sikhs, such as Udharn Singh Nagoke, Surmukh Singh Jhabal, Amar Singh Jhabal and Gurmukh Singh Jhabal. The other Sikh organisations, except the Sikh Youth League, the Khalsa National Party and the Congress Sikh Party, saw to the C.R. Formula as a 'flagrant' violation of the Congress resolution of 1929'. They questioned Gandhiji's credentials in respect of the Formula when he had assured the Sikhs that his party would not be an associate to any communal settlement which does not satisfy the Sikhs.<sup>86</sup> The Jhabals, on the other hand, described Azad Punjab Scheme as 'divisive, violent, and a misguide for the Panth'.

The Akalis took these statements as a mere 'doctrinal sentimentality' of the nationalist Sikhs, and detrimental to the independent political identity of the Sikhs. The Formula caused Master Tara Singh to come out of his political exile, he was in after the Akali candidate's defeat

on the crucial Peshawar seat, which was considered as a verdict against the Akalis. An All-Sikh Parties Conference at Lahore (August 2, 1944) condemned the C.R. Formula and requested Gandhiji to leave the Sikhs at their own. It was also decided to observe August 3 as the protest day against the C.R. Formula. The Shiromani Akali Dal, in its meeting of August 3, 1944, described the Formula as a 'betrayal of Sikhs'. The Chief Khalsa Diwan, in its meeting on August 13 also condemned the Formula. Master Tara Singh, at an Akali Conference, held in Gujarat, proposed to form the central provincial Governments on the pattern of Switzerland in which no community may be able to dominate.

Urban politicians and organisations took up the cause of launching agitation against the Punjab Colonisation of Land Act. Lajpat Rai, a Punjabi Arya Samaj leader, and Ajit Singh, a revolutionary Jat leader from Lahore, charged the Government with treachery. 'A local Paper published Banke Dayal's song - 'Pagri Sambhal Jatta' (Oh Jati guard your turban) - which epitomized a campaign of emotional appeals to an enraged and fiercely proud peasantry. Ajit Singh and other militant politicians appealed for the militarism of the Khalsa. In a widely circulated pamphlet, he stated: "The English have treacherously robbed the Sikhs of their King and have thus reduced them to live the lives of slaves in their own land. The best part of their lives, of their property and honour has been confiscated by the English. The little that has been left to them will soon be taken away and then the English will look down on the natives as black dogs.

Oh! brave soldiers of the Khalsa, you are lost to all sense of national honour. Give up the British service and permit the Feringhees (foreigners) no more to disgrace you. If you are brave enough, expel the English from your land."<sup>88</sup>

Newspapers, prominent in the agitational campaign were sued for sedition; Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were deported to Burma. Despite severe repression, the agitation continued unabated. There were indications of disaffection spreading to the army and rumours of an imminent revolt. The Government was forced to yield. The Governor-General, Lord Minto, vetoed the Colonisation Bill and the water rate was reduced.

The changes introduced in the Khalsa College management also brought a strong reaction. There were threats of boycotts and bitter allegations of official attempts to dominate the college. A pamphlet entitled 'Ki Khalsa College Sikhian da Hai?' (Does the Khalsa College belongs to the Sikhs?) accused the Government of having "robbed the Sikhs of their College, just as they had, by gross breach of faith, previously swallowed up the Punjab" and reminded the Sikhs that "it was merely under the pretence of supervision that the British Government took possession of the Punjab. Ajit Singh published an appeal against the new management of the College and warned that the people must be ready to make sacrifices, and the Editor of the Punjab Akhbar sarcastically suggested that the College ought now to be called 'College of Flatterers'.<sup>89</sup>

The Tat Khalsa reformers strongly assailed the suggestion that 'Sikhism was a sect of Hinduism'. The conduct

of Baba Gurbaksh Singh Bedi in particular was severely attacked. The Khalsa Advocate stated that "the Baba was neither an authority on Sikhism nor an acknowledged leader of the Sikhs". The Rawalpindi Singh Sabha accused him of "perverting the Sikh scriptures and playing into the hands <sup>90</sup> of the anti-Sikh Hindu party."

The Rikabganj Gurdwara affair proved to be another cause of resentment for the Sikhs. The Government had demolished the outer wall of the Gurdwara just to build a road to the Secretariat. This step of the Government was strongly condemned by the Sikh Press, and a large number of meetings were held in protest at Lahore, Amritsar, Lyallpur, Sialkot, Rawalpindi and other places. Sardar Harchand Singh Lyallpur, took a strong exception to the Government through Khalsa Akhbar. He also raised the issue during the Sikh Education Conference at Jullundur. But the 'loyalist Sikhs of the Chief Khalsa Diwan did not allow Harchand Singh to speak at the Conference and forced him to leave the Pandal'. Meanwhile, viewing the strong protest among the Sikhs, the Chief Khalsa Diwan politely pleaded with the Government to restore the wall. The Government, however, took strong measures to subdue the Sikhs engaged in agitation for the restoration of the wall in the wake of outbreak of the World War. Harchand Singh was threatened with prosecution, if he continued his efforts to cause unrest. The security of his paper, The Khalsa Akhbar was forfeited. The Sikhs, however, did not relent till the Gurdwara wall was restored. As the Chief Khalsa Diwan had

failed in getting the wall rebuilt, its prestige in the Sikh community was greatly harmed. On the other hand, the Sikh papers like Sher-i-Punjab and Khalsa Akhbar strongly condemned the Government for firing on unarmed Sikh passengers of Komagata Maru.<sup>91</sup>

A progressive Sikh newspaper, the Khalsa Advocate expressed the sentiments of the majority of the Sikh intelligentsia clearly: "Whereas India is in the throes of a political crisis, there is a great hush prevailing in the Sikh world. What is the meaning of this great silence? Does it mean that the Sikhs have made no sacrifices worth the reward?...Does it mean, then, that the Sikhs are a negligible factor - a nation ignorant of politics and militant tactics? No. The Sikhs are a definite political entity. Nor are they less political. The Sikh nation is a politico-military nation par excellence, silence does not imply...non-existence. The Chief Khalsa Diwan has pursued a very wise policy so far viz., that of forbearance from taking part in political activity. But, Mr Montagu's decision has changed the situation materially. Such extraordinary circumstances must be met in an extraordinary manner. We must represent our needs. We must not lose our opportunity."<sup>92</sup>

"The Sikh politicians had recorded a thumping political victory. In suggesting separate electorates for the Sikh community, the authors of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report had given effective recognition to their independent political identity, and they had also given a promise of measures to

safeguard the Sikh interests. Sikh spokesmen were unanimous in applauding the reforms scheme." The Report was cited as a 'valuable document' and the Khalsa Advocate, expressing the Sikh point of view stated, "The reforms suggested are of a substantial and liberal nature. On perusal of the scheme, one can easily say that at any rate, as far as the provincial administration is concerned, the step is towards a substantial improvement." On the crucial issue of self-Government, the Khalsa Advocate stated, "We Sikhs are for the emancipation of the country from its dependent position. And so is the British Government, who has so clearly defined the ideal of British rule in India. But, we must resist the temptation to take too much all at once and get 'overdosed'. The approach to our goal should be gradual and substantial." Similar views were expressed by other Sikh Papers sympathetic to the Tat Khalsa movement. The Lyall Khalsa Gazette stated that "since the reforms scheme constituted a considerable advance towards self-Government, it should be thankfully accepted." The Khalsa Samachar, while expressing the gratitude of the Sikh community, continued that 'under no circumstances, should the Sikh join the extremist politicians in condemning the reforms scheme'. 93

The Tat Khalsa politicians were determined for substantial Sikh representation. Thus the Khalsa Advocate noted: "We are glad to note that the draughtsmen of the scheme have been prudent enough, unlike Lords Morley and Minto, to recognise the claim of the important and loyal Sikh community to a separate electorate...But...this recognition to be of

any value, must be very substantial in its practical handling. If the representation to be granted is nominal or small or falls short of what has been stated in the Sikh representation ...the effect of the recognition to the separate electorates would be gone or "infinitesimally reduced. The representation of the important Sikh community should be commensurate with its importance, loyalty, service and devotion to the Empire."

The Punjab Darpan (July 10, 1918) and the Loyal Gazette (July 15, 1918) also reiterated Sikh claims to substantial representation.<sup>94</sup> The loyalist Sikhs were not in favour of accepting any aid from the Congress in their struggle for identity. They were of the view that some members of SGPC, closely attached with the Congress activities, were knowingly keeping the agitation alive to meet their political objectives. The Khalsa Advocate, the official Paper of Chief Khalsa Diwan, noted: "There is a faction among the Sikhs which is using the Gurdwara Reform Movement to mislead the Sikhs and which is preventing an agreement because it does not want the agitation to end."<sup>95</sup>

Besides the Akali Dal, the Central Akali Dal leaders took the Khalsa Darbar for criticism at the behest of the Government, and aided by the Maharaja of Patiala. In the Executive Committee meeting of the Darbar (August 6, 1933), the element of disunity amongst Sikh leaders again came to the surface. The meeting, besides discarding Sardar Bahadur Mahtab Singh, resolved to merge the Darbar with the Central Sikh League to forge panthic unity.<sup>96</sup>

Criticising the Communal Award, the Sikh leaders in a statement (August 17) said that they had lost faith in the justice and wisdom of the British Government that did not care for the rightful representation of those who paid 40 per cent of the land revenue.<sup>97</sup>

While the Hindus and Sikhs supported the withdrawal of the Award in the Council of States, the Muslims expectedly were not for it. The Hindus and Sikh members walked out of the Punjab Legislature (November 7, 1932) after pointing out the following defects in the Award:

1. The Award divided Punjab into various groups and obstructed impartial Government;
2. It established permanent majority of a religious group and gave it more than what it asked for. It did not give any weightage to the Sikhs as it had given to minorities in the other Provinces, and it did not give the Hindus even their due (according to population);
3. It discriminated in the matter of weightage; and
4. In other provinces separate constituencies had been proposed to project minorities but in the Punjab, it was proposed to be done to project a majority.<sup>98</sup>

Reacting to the rejection of Sikh claims and sanction granted to the Communal Award, the Sikh leaders felt that the proposals in the white paper would not be able to establish an autonomous, impartial and just Government. Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sir Jogendra Singh held meetings with

Sir Fazi-i-Mussain to resolve the language problem, but all  
 99  
 proved of no advantage.

The Khalsa to Khalsa Advocate, along with the Akali  
 and the Fateh, launched a vigorous campaign to get the Sikhs  
 their socio-religious right of opening Jhatka meat shops.  
 Though some resourceful Sikhs were occasionally granted this  
 right, the facility was not extended to all the Sikhs. The  
 Sikhs thus felt humiliated and agitated over this discriminat-  
 ion against them even when the Muslims were allowed to freely  
 open the Halal meat shops wherever and whenever they liked.  
 Even the Khalsa National Party, a pro-Unionist Party  
 and a partner in the Provincial Government impressed upon the  
 Government to grant facility to open the Jhatka shops as  
 the Sikhs could not take any other meat except it. The issue,  
 however, hanged fire as the Unionist Government did not want  
 100  
 to please the Sikhs by annoying the Muslims.

The Government once again came down negatively on  
 Sikhs in the matter of Sikh religious holidays. The holidays  
 on the birth anniversaries of Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind  
 Singh and the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev were deliberately  
 omitted from the list of Punjab Government holidays.<sup>101</sup>

Reports of repression on the Sikh immigrants  
 continued to build up annoyance among the Tat Khalsa militants,  
 who fervent in their sense of communal identity and bristling  
 from reports of harsh treatment of their brethren, attempted  
 to arouse Sikh opinion through mass meetings and strongly  
 worded appeals for solidarity against white oppression. The

Government of India's inaction in safeguarding the interests of its subjects abroad provided a foe closer to home. New links were forged between disgruntled immigrants in North America and Sikh activists at home. Thus, the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan, based in California, offered to pay the security deposit demanded by the Government from the Khalsa Sewak for provocative writings, and the Secretary of the Diwan wrote: "As long as there is life in the nation, no one can stop the publication of your Paper. Let them demand security not once but a thousand times, by the grace of God the nation will pay it. This security has been taken not from the Paper but from the (Sikh) nation."<sup>102</sup>

The increasing political consciousness among the Sikhs intensified the need for the reform of Gurdwaras. Mr Fasi-i-Mussain stated in the Punjab Legislative Council that "the awakening of national consciousness is to<sup>a</sup> certain extent responsible for the spirit of restlessness and dissatisfaction with the management of shrines and Gurdwaras. For some Sikhs, Swaraj also meant emancipation of their religious institutions. The Sikh Press denounced vehemently the official control over the Gurdwaras."<sup>103</sup> Khalsa Sewak wrote: "To an ordinary mind, it is something inexplicable why a Christian Government should treat the management of this (Golden Temple) as a department of the Government."<sup>104</sup>

The Chief Khalsa Diwan also expressed sentiments of 'grave and serious apprehension' at the Southborough Committee's proposals.<sup>105</sup> Tat Khalsa's bitterness at the "lack of

recognition of what they regarded as their right was inevitably expressed in greater militancy in asserting their various demands. The educated Sikh elites took the lead in pressing with greater vehemence for Sikh control of the Khalsa College and the Golden Temple. In February 1919, the Khalsa Sewak, reaffirmed the Sikh demand for control over the management of the Golden Temple: "The shrine is no longer <sup>under</sup> the charge of the Khalsa, the offerings are not for the Panth, the management is not by the Sikhs...If the inhabitants of Palestine and the German colonies are considered fit for the principle of self-determination in the sphere of the Government of their lands, are the Sikhs not even fit to look after their own shrine?"<sup>106</sup>

By 1905, prominent reformist Sikh newspapers such as the Khalsa Advocate, the Khalsa Sanachar and the Khalsa Sewak had taken up the cause of Gurdwara mismanagement with vigour. Allegations of licentious living, misproportion of funds, debauchery, rape and sacrilege were made against the Mahants of several Gurdwaras. The Hinduization of their creed was yet another abuse attributed to unscrupulous Mahants and seen as another demonstration of their deprivation. Thus a correspondent denounced in the Khalsa Akhbar the presence of Hindu idols in the precincts of the Golden Temple, and another claimed that the Mahant of a Gurdwara at Tarn Taran had committed a similar sacrilege.<sup>107</sup>

Sikh newspapers and journals quite oftenly deplored the undue representation of the Muslim community in the civil administration and pleaded for the appointment of more Sikhs

on public offices. They demanded that Sikhs be authorised to wear Kirpans without the necessity of any licence and appealed for Sikh festivals as other religious festivals to be declared as public holidays in the Punjab. To the "dispassionate observer such demands might have appeared trivial in contrast with the greater issues of the day, but to educated Tat Khalsa, they were crucial for the recognition and preservation of a distinct Sikh identity in a hostile world."<sup>108</sup>

In 1919, the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation was initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. Though Punjab was one of the main centres of the activity, the Chief Khalsa Diwan chose to be loyal to the Government and exhorted Sikhs not to join the agitation. Its manifesto said: "It is the bounded duty of the sons of Satguru to abstain from any such demonstration and to keep themselves aloof from any movement against law and order. The Chief Khalsa Diwan would exhort all its brethren in the faith, the followers of Satguru Nanak Dev and Gura Gobind Singh, to abstain from such movement likely to disturb the peace of the country."<sup>109</sup>

The Sikh Press, nevertheless, strongly demonstrated its anti-Government stance. According to an official report: "As regards the Sikh newspapers, the year 1919 marked the opening of new chapter in their history, an era of strong language, exaggerated demands and even the advocacy of unconstitutional methods they showed a distinct tendency to take an aggressive attitude throughout the year." The Sikh newspapers

like Khalsa Akhbar, Sikh Sepoy and others came down heavily at the Rowlatt Act.<sup>110</sup>

The phase prior to the beginning of Second World War was again of great significance to the Sikhs. They were once again divided on the issue of cooperating with the Government or not in the War. The Master group in the Akali Dal and the moderates, along with the Chief Khalsa Diwan decided to help the Government. The Master was of the view that Sikh recruitment in the army would increase in their strength in services. The group also took it as loyalty in a period of ordeal as it had done during the First World War.

The Khalsa Akhbar, an organ of the Lahore Singh Sabha, and run by the radical group of Sikhs, who were opposed to the 'anti-Sikh customs' practised by the Amritsar Sabhaites (Khem Singh Bedi, Bikram Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala, Thakar Singh Sandhanwalia and Gyani Gyan Singh) described Khem Singh Bedi, who strongly supported the institution of 'Gurudom' as the 'guru of the satan'.<sup>111</sup>

Responding to the challenge thrown by Sir Jogendra Singh, Sir Majithia to shape <sup>of</sup> forming the Khalsa National Party, the Shiremani Akali Dal had to side with Congress despite its differences with that Party. To remove these differences, however, it constituted a Samjhota Board with Master Tara Singh, Ishar Singh Majhail, Mira Singh Dard and Gopal Singh Gausi as its members. The Board was able to persuade the Congress leaders to oppose the Communal Award.<sup>112</sup>

to  
 Reacting/the outright rejection of the Simon  
 Commission Report, Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State,  
 asked the Indians to propose a constitution that would be  
 acceptable to all parties. Accepting the challenge, they  
 113  
 constituted Mehru Committee.

The Kirti Kisan Party, the Indian counterpart of the  
 Ghadr organisation in America, was practically entirely confined  
 to the Punjab Sikhs. The Party's movement, the Kirti Kisan  
 Movement was mainly led by Kirtis (workers), who had no  
 immediate property in their names and they stood for a system  
 of Government in which they were to control the production  
 114  
 and distribution of material.

The Kirti Kisan Party started organising Kirti  
 Sabhas and Kisan Sabhas in the rural and urban areas respect-  
 ively to propagate their motive that the Sikh problem was not  
 to be solved by stressing on communalism but by concentrating  
 on the economic aspects. The Kirti, the Party publication  
 also aimed at spreading its aims and objectives to the masses.  
 Sohan Singh Josh, Hira Singh Dar, Bhag Singh Canadian, Karam  
 Singh Cheema and Santokh Singh were the main architects of  
 the Party. They had the support of Master Tara Singh, Darshan  
 115  
 Singh Pheruman and Udham Singh Nagoke.

The revolutionary activities of the Kirti Kisan  
 Party became a headache for the rulers. As a result, its  
 Party office was raided twice during February and March, 1929.  
 On the 20th day of March 1929, over 30 Kirti Kisan Party

leaders were arrested under Section 121A of the IPC on charges of sedition. The Government also passed the Trade Disputes Bill to make the strikes illegal and frighten the workers.

The Party boycotted the Simon Commission and dubbed it as the enemy of the people. It also criticised the Nehru Report for showing complacency on granting Commonwealth status instead of complete independence. Describing it as a capitalist document, the Party said that it aimed at transferring of power from the British imperialists to the Indian capitalists. The document was simple betrayal on the part of the Congress as it sanctioned sheltering of British trade and commerce in India. The Party took a causative note of the Round Table Conferences and the Gandhi-Irwin Pact which stood for only dominion status. The new Constitution based on the Act of 1935, was described as the hand-maid of princes, landlords, industrialists and a mouth-piece of imperialism and a deception under the guise of provincial autonomy.<sup>116</sup>

The Party observed the Indebtedness Relief Bill as deceptive and the product of two-mouthed policy of suppression and relief of the Government. The Government proposed to amend the criminal law. <sup>The</sup> Amendment Act was seen as the Black Act. The Lahore district Kisan Committee initiated a campaign of organising agitation against Government's atrocities on peasants and workers. Countless arrests were made on various occasions as the Kirtis themselves started courting arrests. By August 15, 1939, over 5000 peasants had been locked up.<sup>117</sup>

The Government ordered the Amritsar police to confiscate the July 11, 1939 issues of the Kirti Lehk and ordered the stopping of the Punjab Sher as these were devoted to promote the cause of peasants and the working class. The Congress remained indifferent to the Kirti Kisan Movement. However, the Kisans started getting support from their landlords, and some Akali leaders also threw in their weight against the movement though they posed themselves to be its supporters. They later supported the K.K.P's protest against the Agrarian Legislation of the Unionist Government.<sup>118</sup>

A radical Tat Khalsa leader suggested that the Sikhs should not inter-dine with Hindus since the latter did not observe Khalsa prohibitions on smoking as the Loyal Gazette wrote: "Certain Hindus offend the feelings of the Sikhs by parading figures of Sikh Gurus on the occasion of the Holi festival...Is it not surprising that the Hindus should bend to Sikh Gurus when they have 33 crore gods and goddesses of their own? The Tat Khalsa concern with the recognition of the Sikh communities' aspirations was reflected in their renewed preoccupation with the question of Gurdwara management and control."<sup>119</sup>

The Franchise Committee recommended 15.5 per cent seats for the Sikhs in the Punjab Legislative Council, which did not satisfy the Sikhs and they vehemently rejected the verdict. The Sikh Press strongly criticised the Government for not giving attention to the genuine interests of the Sikhs. The Sikhs now had come to realise that shying from the national

politics and over-dependence upon the Government had not paid them dividends. The Chief Khalsa Diwan was also assailed for its 'weak and timid policies'. The Loyal Gazette gave an expression to the Sikh sentiments: "We have failed in obtaining rights from <sup>the</sup> Government in accordance with the legitimate desires. If we had joined the Congress and rendered to the country half the service we have done to our Government, we should have been respected everywhere in India, as our Muslim brothers, and Government would have acknowledged our powerful importance of their own accord... Those leaders, who are incapable of guiding their community in politics, should retire and afford an opportunity to other gentlemen to come forward."<sup>120</sup>

The failure of the Southborough Committee to recommend representation in keeping with Sikhs' just and due share came as a nasty blow to Sikh political society. The Khalsa Advocate wrote: "The reforms are demanded on the grounds of India's share in the war, and on account of that, Sikhs surely deserve to receive the lion's share, and they felt that they had been cheated of the rewards of their loyalty and collaboration."<sup>121</sup> The Loyal Gazette expressed these feelings saying that "there can be no doubt that in the reformed councils our condition will be better than what it is at present. But our grievance is that justice has not been done to us... We appeal to the British Government and the nation to enable the loyal Sikh community to stand on its own legs and not to leave it to the mercy of other communities."

The Sikhs have always been and will ever remain loyal to the British nation. It is, now time for the latter to prove loyalty to the former."<sup>122</sup>

It also exposed the misappropriation of Gurdwara funds by the Manager of the Golden Temple, and as an instance of its "debased management elaborated on the familiar theme of the deferential treatment accorded to low-caste Sikhs regarding their admission to the Gurdwara." The Sikh Sepey, an organ of the Sikh recruiting committee of Ferozepur, wrote that "in confirming the appointment of an apostate manager, the district court had not acted in conformity with British policy of non-interference in the Sikh religious affairs."<sup>123</sup> Punjab Darpan stated that British courts had no jurisdiction in 'deciding who was a Sikh'.<sup>124</sup>

The Loyal Gazette and the Panth Sewak wrote severely against the Government's repression of the 'religious liberty of the Sikh community' and asked the Sikhs to remain ready to make sacrifices. Responding to an appeal by the SGPC, Akali Jathas started assembling at Amritsar and by November, thousands of Akalis were seen swarming the city. The SGPC arranged mammoth public meetings to protest against the seizure of keys of the Toshakhana. On SGPC's instructions, the Akalis picketed the Golden Temple and defying the Government's authority put their own locks to the Toshakhana. Soon the atmosphere in Amritsar became highly volatile and quite sensitive.<sup>125</sup>

The relaxation in shape of the Gurdwara Legislation and the settlement of Guru ka Bagh Morcha failed to solve the Sikh problem. The SGPC issued a communique saying that "it was not even ready to consider any Gurdwara Act unless the Akali prisoners were released. Many of the SGPC members and other Akalis staged protest marches through the Lahore and Amritsar streets and other towns inviting the Government to  
126  
arrest them."

In the second week of November 1920, the Punjab Government, perturbed by recent events and anxious that the Government indifference should not imply a surrender to the advocates of ultra-Sikhism, consulted with the Maharaja of Patiala and announced the appointment of a Provisional Advisory Committee of 36 members to propose rules regarding the management of the Golden Temple, and pending the formulation of definite proposals, to supervise its management. The Committee was composed entirely of Khalsa Sikhs, and was drawn from members of reputable Sikh landed and aristocratic families.  
127  
It also included Sunder Singh Rangarhia, the recently appointed Manager of the Golden Temple. In response, the Sikh militants immediately announced a public meeting of Sikhs to elect a committee to manage the Golden Temple. Invitations to attend the gathering were sent to various Singh Sabhas, Sikh schools, Sikh regiments in the army, and to other Sikh religious organisations. On November 16, 1920, a large gathering was held at the Golden Temple and a committee of 175-members was elected. The

gathering expressed its disapproval of the official Provisional Advisory Committee on the ground that it had been appointed without consultation with the Sikh community, but in an effort to avoid further controversy, the members of the Committee appointed by the Government were included in the new Committee. Further, moderate Chief Khalsa Diwan leaders were elected as leading office holders of the committee. Sunder Singh Majithia was elected President and Harbans Singh of Attari was appointed Vice-President. The election of this new management committee was based on the allocation of a definite number of seats to each district of the Punjab and to each Sikh Princely State. The Punjab Government noted with relief that the formation of the committee had proceeded along constitutional lines and did not interfere further in its proceedings.

Spurred by their success in gaining control of the Golden Temple, Sikh reformers rapidly moved towards greater militancy. Groups of reformers who called themselves Akalis were formed in various parts of the Province. The Akali Jathas, as the groups were known, had mushroom growth and did not contain any element of stability, noted an official intelligence report. They were independent units and adopted the name of the area to which they belonged. Most of their members adopted Akali symbols and carried large Kirpans and hatchets and pledged themselves to the service of the Sikh Panth. In December, 1920, militant members of the new Gurdwara committee, renamed the committee as the

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) and resolved to reform forcibly mismanaged Gurdwaras and eject corrupt Mahants.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan usually extended full cooperation to the Government on the question of First Round Table Conference despite the fact that Sir Sunder Singh Majithia expressed his disappointment with the slender representation granted to Sikhs for the Conference. The Shiromani Akali Dal reposed its faith in Mahatma Gandhi and pleaded with him to look after the Sikh interests at the Second Round Table Conference relating to one-third representation for the Sikhs.

The Shiromani Akali Dal took part in the All-Parties Conference (Lahore, April 14, 1930) ignoring the differences with the Congress on the question of including Sikh colour in the national flag. The differences, however, forced the Akali Dal to take its own separate course in respect of the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Maharaja of Patiala was opposed to the anti-British activities of the Akali Dal. He, therefore, did his best not to allow any rapprochement between different groups of Akalis. The Central Akali Dal which enjoyed the support of Maharaja of Patiala was a non-consistent body.

The Sikhs were chiefly in for boycotting the Simon Commission as they felt that the Government has mistimed it to capitalise on the prevailing tense communal situation in the Province. The Sikhs also thought it wise to consult the other communities on the subject. The Simon Commission

Report was outrightly rejected by the Sikhs as it instead of granting one-third representation to the Sikhs and undoing the communal electorate, conceded absolute majority to Muslims. While in the previous Punjab Legislative Council, Sikhs had 13 of the total 70 seats, they were given just 24 seats out of the total 134 seats. The irritant of permanent domination to Muslims was thus not removed.<sup>135</sup>

The Sikhs strongly supported the Congress move to boycott the Simon Commission and welcomed the constitution of Nehru Committee. They, in a very straightforward manner, opposed communal representation but in case it was to be continued, the Sikhs demanded 30 per cent seats in the Provincial Council. They refused to be subordinated to any communal majority. The Akalis decided to send a seven-member squad to Delhi to participate in the Congress Committee meeting for documenting the constitution.<sup>136</sup>

The Nehru Report had nothing in stock for the Sikhs - just pious platitudes. Master Tara Singh's protest cables to Motilal Nehru and Gandhi attracted nothing but a rebuff. To add to it, the Sikhs at the moment were badly disunited. Personalities like Sardar Mangal Singh, Hira Singh Dard, Caveeshar, Amar Singh Jhabal, Gurdit Singh, Master Kabul Singh, and Gyani Kartar Singh welcomed the Report.<sup>137</sup>

Master Tara Singh, Kharak Singh and Gyani Sher Singh objected to the Report and even thought of boycotting

the Congress. An All-Sikh Parties Conference at Amritsar upheld the decision of abolition of communal electorates or granting of equal privileges to the Sikhs as were extended to other communities under similar conditions in other Provinces. <sup>138</sup>

Sardar Kharak Singh demanded justifiable treatment from the Congress in case they wanted the support of Sikhs in their national movements. A resolution was drafted by the Congress leaders assuring them that no constitution would be accepted which did not satisfy them. The Sikhs, however, were not satisfied with the working of the resolution which mischievously stated: "No solution thereof in any future constitution would be acceptable to the Congress that did not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned." Further, this made the Congress leaders suspect in the eyes of Sikhs. The Congress leaders also did not give any assurance regarding inclusion of Sikh colour in the national flag. <sup>139</sup>

The Government choose only two Sikhs, Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh on a 70-member squad for the First Round Table Conference to know the Indian views to be put before the British Parliament for future considerations, as the Akali Party had boycotted it. <sup>140</sup>

A Sikh deputation comprising, Master Tara Singh, Sir Jogendra Singh, Sardar Sunder Singh Majithia, Sardar Ujjal Singh, Mangal Singh, Sampuran Singh, Masakha Singh, Sardar Bahadur Mahtab Singh, Giani Sher Singh and Sardul Singh Caveeshar forwarded a list of 17 Sikh demands to the Congress representative, Mahatma Gandhi, to the second Round

Table Conference for laying down before the committee. The major demands were: abolition of permanent communal majority in the legislature; 30 per cent Sikh share in Punjab Legislature; 1/3rd share in Punjab Cabinet and other services; status of Punjabi in Punjab administrative and educational institutions; Sikh representation in Central services; and weightage to Sikhs outside Punjab. <sup>141</sup> As an alternative to Sikh share in Legislature and the Cabinet and permanent communal majority, they demanded to adjust the Punjab boundaries in such a way that no community gets absolute majority in the reorganised Punjab. Even if this was not possible, the Sikhs asked for an other alternative that the Province should be governed by the Central Government. Before giving any commitment, Gandhiji took affirmation from the Sikhs that <sup>142</sup> they would cooperate him in the non-cooperation movement.

The 17 demands were noted as a watershed in Sikh politics. The Sikhs continued to emphasise upon Gandhiji not to overlook these demands. Of these 17 demands, the one relating to the readjustment of Punjab boundaries gained significance triggering off schemes like Asad Punjab, Sikh State and the Sikh Homeland.

Even Master Tara Singh himself showed eagerness to join the second Round Table Conference. He even threatened to launch Kirti Kisan Movement if he was not included in the team for the Round Table Conference. The Government, however, did not pay any attention to his demand. The Master even told Gandhiji that if he attended the Round Table Conference

without him, it would amount to treachery. The Government then vainly seemed to have agreed to send the third Sikh representative but not Master Tara Singh thinking of him as a controversial person. Partap Singh Kairon described Gandhi's intention to attend the Conference without an Akali representative by his side as 'a betrayal of Sikh League'.<sup>143</sup>

A prolonged debate ensued among different Akali leaders such as Master Tara Singh, Baba Kharak Singh, Giani Hira Singh Dard and Sardul Singh Caveeshar over the issue of participation by the Sikhs in the Civil Disobedience Movement. While the Master was inclined to participate, Baba Kharak Singh who was annoyed at the indifferent attitude of the Congress towards Sikhs in case of Nehru Report and inclusion of Sikh colour in the national flag, chose to stay away from it. The Nehru Report had already done much damage to the Sikh world. The Nationalist Sikh Party of Caveeshar too decided to cooperate with the Congress. Meanwhile, Mahatma Gandhi refuted the demand of the Shiromani Akali Dal to include five of their men in the first Satyagraha Jatha.<sup>144</sup>

The Sikhs found themselves to have chosen rightly their participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement as the Government had remained indifferent so far in the Sis Ganj affair.<sup>145</sup> The joining of hands by the Akalis with the Congress provided ample strength to the later. The Akalis, particularly Baba Kharak Singh was of the view that the Government may be asked to change their casual attitude towards the Sis Ganj affair.

The Central Sikh League and the Shiromani Akali Dal decided to boycott the coming general elections in response to a call given by the Congress. At an Akali Dal meeting at Lahore (August 31, 1930), it was decided to demand the loss, suffered by the Sikhs in the Sis Ganj incident. Another frustrating issue came up before the Government of India when the arrested Akali leaders started stating "Anandpur Sahib as their home and Guru Gobind Singh as their father".<sup>146</sup>

Shuddhi Samachar, published a series of articles entitled, "A review of Islamic Doctrines" attacking the founder of Islam in words such as liar, infidel, having a mind always blackened with ignorance since he was constantly under the influence of Satan. These remarks, in fact, seem to have erupted out of contemptuous statements of Swami Dayananda in his Satyarth Prakash, where he described the book on Islam as "full of empty verbiage, absurd, childish and worthless. It read like a 'fairy tale than an intelligent piece of work from an alleged religious master."<sup>147</sup>

The Milap wrote that "We feel deeply moved to hear the details of the Guru ka Bagh affair and express great sympathy with the Sikhs in their present sufferings. Many Muslim leaders also visited Guru ka Bagh. The Muslim members of Fazi-i-Hussain Party, however, did not show much sympathy with the Akalis in the Morcha.

The Nehru Report, to sum up, proved "an exercise in futility. The Muslims took scant notice of it and the

Sikhs rejected it. Even the Punjab Hindus also rejected it. It was generally feared that in the predominantly Muslim zone of the province, the non-Muslims might go practically <sup>148</sup>unrepresented."

The Aryan reprinted violently anti-Indian extracts from newspapers in Canada and sent copies to students by post at the Khalsa College and sympathetic Editors for distribution. In its issue of March-April, 1912, it quoted an extract from a Canadian newspaper which stated: "The smoke-coloured Hindu, exotic, unmixable, picturesque, a languid worker and a refuge for fleas, we will always have with us, but we don't want any more of him. We don't want any Hindu women. We don't want any Hindu children. It's nonsense to talk about Hindu assimilation. The Sikh may be of Aryan stock, we always thought he was of Jewish extraction. He may be near-white though he does not look it. British Columbia cannot allow <sup>149</sup>any more of the dark meat of the world come to this province."

The Sikhs were always at pains to stress their separate identity. They had earned the Hindu support during the Gurdwara Reforms Movement, who later on developed cold feet when separate intentions of the Sikhs became apparent. They (the Sikhs and the Hindus) had to live together as they had a common fear of Muslim dominance but primarily, it was an alliance of expediency and not a meeting of hearts. The majority Sikh attitude towards Congress was not consistent. They could not side with the Congress at the cost of their own political status. The Congress, on the other hand,

appreciated Sikhs in the national perspective in an effort to make their movement broad-based. Both Akalis and the Congress needed each other and their rapprochement was little more than an exercise in expediency.

Both the Hindus and the Sikhs were for granting them similar weightage for their communities which had been granted to Muslims where they were in minority. Earlier, having rejected the Sikh claims of separate community, the Congress, in order to reduce the Muslim majority in the P.L.C., the Hindus not only recognised Sikhs as a separate community but also supported their demand of adequate weightage in representation.

The Muslims had become all powerful. They even forgot to abide by any law or adopt legal methods for any of their activities, thanks to the new constitution reformed under the Act of 1935. On June 29, a group of Mohammadans attacked the Sikhs in Gurdwara Shahid Ganj. The following day, over 10,000 Muslims stormed the Gurdwara to take its forcible possession.

The Muslim Outlook had been one of the most ferocious journal, as far as offensive and defensive aspects were concerned in respect of Hindu-Muslim journalistic warfare. It was outrageously critical of the High Court's decision on the Rangila Rasul case and challenged the integrity of Justice Dalip Singh asking him to quit for the good of the Province. The Outlook further editorialised a piece that the two

judgements (Rangila Rasul case and Contempt case on Muslim Outlook) have staggered the Muslim world and created one of the most difficult and dangerous situation which has even been faced by the Government and by the people of this country. The Tribune, on the other hand, described as indefensible the Rangila Rasul agitation. <sup>154</sup>

The Muslim Outlook, the main protestor in the Rangila Rasul case, praised the Government for giving justice to the Muslims in the Risala-i-Vartaman case. It described it as having righted one wrong.

The Panj Darya, alongwith Akali Patrika, The Mauji, and the Akali, espoused the cause of Gurmukhi language in the Punjab as a symbol of their socio-religious identity. Refusal of the Unionist Government to accept this demand of the Sikhs, and the introduction of Urdu as a subject of elementary education in the Province further added to the frustration of the Sikhs. <sup>155</sup>

The staunch Punjabis held a Conference at Rawalpindi <sup>156</sup> on April 28 and 29 to press the Government to:

1. be fair towards Punjabi language;
2. give grants for its promotion,
3. prefer it to other languages in the Punjab Government offices;
4. introduce it as an elective subject in the boys colleges, as in the girls colleges; and
5. create Punjabi section in the college libraries.

The Government, however, just ignored Punjabi as a language of instruction in the Punjab Primary Education Bill, 1941.<sup>157</sup>

The Muslim League resolution spelled a great danger to the non-Muslim communities in Punjab and was a source of misery among the minorities, who were aware of their plight vis-a-vis the Pakistan Scheme. All British offers like the 'August Offer' (1944), the 'Cripps Offer' and the 'Cabinet Delegate Plan' suited the Muslims. The non-Muslim parties, on the other hand, were busy in movements like Quit India  
158  
and Civil Disobedience.

Gyani Kartar Singh suggested to create a sub-Province in Punjab containing areas between Ravi and Yamuna where non-Muslims dominated, to have a separate Assembly, separate Cabinet and autonomous Government with a common  
159  
Governor. No community should have absolute majority.

At an All-India Akali Conference at Bhawanigarh in 1943, Master Tara Singh, defending the Azad Punjab Scheme said that "by the creation of Azad Punjab, not only the Sikhs and the Hindus of Azad Punjab will get rid of the present Pakistan, but living in the portion of Punjab, which will be cut-off from the present Punjab, they will also be in a better position."<sup>160</sup>

On the other hand, Baba Kharak Singh, while presiding over the Akhand Hindustan Conference at Lahore on June 6, 1943, condemned the Azad Punjab Scheme of Master Tara Singh.

further said that Jinnah's and Master's schemes contain nothing different than each other as both aimed at vivisection of India and in that sense, 'Master Tara Singh was no better than Jinnah'. He assured the Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs that if they were united, 54 per cent Muslims could not do any harm to them. Sardar Sant Singh, in his article, "Asad Punjab Nahin Chahinda" (We do not need Asad Punjab), condemned the  
161  
Scheme.

The Shiromani Akali Dal allowed its members to continue their recruitment in the army and at the same time encouraged them to join movements like Civil Disobedience,  
162  
Quit India, Non-violence and Non-cooperation. Sardar Sampuran Singh, the opposition leader in the Punjab Legislature, openly stated that he did not believe in Non-violence, but had adopted it considering himself as a Congress soldier. 163  
Such was the Sikhs' loyalty to anybody whom they believed in.

Forced by the circumstances, the Sikhs were thus riding the horns of a dilemma. They were following a dual policy of cooperating with the Congress in the matter of Civil Disobedience and with the Government in the case of army  
164  
recruitment.

The Pakistan Scheme was condemned not only by the Hindus, the Christians, and the Sikh leaders alone but by some Muslim leaders too like Jalal-u-din Ambar and Prof Abdul Majid Khan at an All-Parties anti-Pakistan Conference at Lahore

in unequivocal terms. Even Sir Sikandar criticised it. All such endeavours, however, could not convince Jinnah to shelve the idea of creating two independent nations. But in Punjab, Sir Sikandar agreed that there would neither be Khalistan nor Pakistan but reign of the Punjabis only.<sup>165</sup>

The Punjabee reported that the Baba Saheb in his several memorable sermons, which he delivered in the principal Sikh temples in the city as well as in his presidential addresses, allegedly extracted from texts in Guru Granth Sahib, has said that "Sikhism was a vigorous offshoot of Hinduism and the Sikh scriptures embodied the cardinal principles of Hindu Dharam (religion)." Moreover, stated the Punjabee, one of the great internal dangers threatening the Hindu society in the Punjab is an attempt (at first insidious but now open) in progress to create aschism by the Tatta (Tat)Khalsa, that is, the few Sikhs who do not subscribe to the orthodox articles of faith and social ordinances of the Hindus. The rebuttal of the Tat Khalsa, emphasising on separatism from the Hindu community, was continued at the next Punjab Hindu Conference in 1911. In an attempt to conciliate the Sikh opinion, the Conference was held at Amritsar. In his address, the president emphasised the importance of the venue of the Conference and referred to the city as 'sacred to the memory of Great Sikh <sup>respected</sup> Gurus, who are/and venerated by the Hindu community, irrespective

of the circumstances whether they all fully accept or not their particular doctrines. Among the prominent figures who attended the Conference was Sardar Arur Singh, Manager of the Golden Temple.<sup>166</sup>

The Punjabee, alongwith the Punjab Patriot, the Arya Gasette, the Arya Samachar, the Vedic Magazine, as an organ of the Arya Samaj owned the responsibility of propagating the Shuddhi Movement, aimed at reconversion of Harijans and certain tribes in Punjab, who had turned Muslims and Sikhs attracted by various incentives offered by them. Occasionally, the Punjabee had to face rough weather due to its fundamentalistic stance generating objectionable writings.

The Paper noted the appointment of Mian Shah Din as a temporary judge of the Punjab Chief Court as mischievous. Contending in favour of an Arya Samajist, Lal Chand, it commented: "It has been a political appointment pure and simple. This was a wrong principle. Here indeed is communalism pure and simple." The Tribune, with its moderate stance, occasionally used to highlight the Sikh activities which demanded justice from the administration. The tussle between the Brahma Samaj (of which the founder of The Tribune, sardar Dyal Singh Majithia was a follower) and the Arya Samaj movements got acute with The Tribune gaining strength with the passage of time. Such tussles ended sometimes in murder of Editors, belonging to the three communities.<sup>167</sup>

The Punjabee, expressing Hindi views of Sikh claims 'scorned Sikh demands for a one-third share in all political representation'. Commenting on the Chief Khalsa Diwan's memorandum to the Government on the forthcoming constitutional reforms, it stated: "The most disappointing feature of this memorandum is its constant reiteration of communal claims. The movement is thoroughly mischievous. It can do no good...As a matter of fact, the Diwan only insists on communal representation, but asks that the community it represents should be granted a share in the representation, far in excess of its numerical proportion. We are told that nothing less than one-third of the seats in the Legislative Council and the appointments in the administration can satisfy the community....We have always regarded the Sikh community as part and parcel of the great Hindu community... (and) we are constrained to say that in basing the demand for the separate and excessive representation of the Sikhs on the grounds of their historical importance and their present services, the Diwan is betraying a strange ignorance of the essentials of representative Government under modern democratic conditions."

Narain Das had not only done to death defenceless devotees who had come simply to pay obeisance at Gurdwara Janam Asthan but the local authorities were also fully cognisant of the Mahant's designs and had in fact 'abetted him in his preparations'. The Sikh Press raised voice of

protest as The Sikh, for example, commented: "The butcherly Narain Das maintained a regular workshop for the manufacture of arms for use against the Sikhs...only the other day he received a full wagon of kerosene oil. And as is well known, his preparations and movements were not secret. But it is nothing short of a miracle, if not a mystery, that all this escaped the notice of the police, the Magistrate of the State, the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner. Those who know...that the Mahant and his proteges have very often been going to see the officials, cannot be led out to only one conclusion that all the preparations went on progressing under official connivance."<sup>169</sup>

The Arur Singh-Gurbaksh Singh Bedi testimony denying that "only Keshhari Sikhs could justifiably be considered Sikhs created a furor in the Tat Khalsa ranks. The audacity of Arur Singh, as a Government appointed Manager of the Golden Temple, in endorsing the Southborough Committee's proposal in particular provoked a violent reaction."

The two-fold policy of the Government further added to the discontent of the Sikhs. The repressive policy was strongly condemned.<sup>170</sup> A Sikh Paper wrote: "Who can emphatically say that the Akali Movement for reforms of the Gurdwaras can be suppressed. Every Jathedar who is arrested is instantly replaced by another and the process will go on as long as the 32 lakhs of Khalsas have not taken up their abode in jails."<sup>171</sup>

In August 1917, the Punjab Darpan reported with some consternation that "the Pujaris of the Golden Temple instructed the devotees to seek purification by bathing in the river Ganges according to Hindu custom." The paper deeply resented the fact that care of this premier Sikh shrine should not be in the hands of men, who held the views of Hindu Brahmins and warned that this state of affairs was weakening the Sikh community.<sup>172</sup>

Hissar-i-Islam came up with a cartoon depicting a Muslim holding a dagger and some Hindus in a shambles with their hand clasped in submission.<sup>173</sup>

Guru Ghantal came down heavily in reaction to a cartoon published in the Zamindar portraying some Hindus drinking the urine of a cow by lifting her tail.<sup>174</sup> It quoted Maulavi Al Fasal saying that "Prophet Mohammad's urine was so fragrant that whole of the room where it rested got purified and the fragrance continued to hang over for three generations who drank it."

Guru Ghantal went on to say that "if you are able to make a cartoon, make a cartoon of that man and his urine by drinking of which generation after generations are filled with fragrance."<sup>175</sup>

Commenting upon the Nankana Sahib massacre, the Zamindar took a strong exception to Muselman's participation

in the incident. It condemned the Muslims in very harsh words: "O! shameless Muslims, are you not yet ashamed of your act? You have (mis) used your weapons on those who were on their way to pay obeisance at Nankana Sahib. You are not worthy of being called Muslims. Rather, your action has made you worse than Kafirs."<sup>177</sup>

The Zamindar, alongwith Partap and Milap, the two staunch Arya Samajist Papers, supported the Sikhs in respect of their arrests in connection with the issue of management of the Sikh Gurdwaras. The Muslim League and the Arya Samaj passed resolutions showing sympathy with the Sikh struggle for Gurdwara reforms.<sup>178</sup>

The Sikhs so far having kept a cool temper despite provocation, have set a noble example by starting the Non-cooperation Movement independently. Our Sikh friends, the grave noble sufferers in the cause of truth, deserve all praise.<sup>179</sup>

Wrote Hindus and Muslims Papers that the "object of the Akali agitation is only nominally religious...as their aim is to extort concessions and strengthening position of the Sikhs among the other communities. The Muslim Press 'spaced' the growing adverse relations of the Sikhs with other communities. The Muslim members support in the P.L.C. in passing the Gurdwara legislation against the Sikh wishes further strained the relations between the two communities. A process of communal claims and counter-claims began which further strengthened the communal forces in Punjab."<sup>180</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The vernacular Press was at the top during the third decade of the twentieth century. The Hindu, Sikh and the Muslim publications remained engrossed in propagating their own ideas and viewpoints and attack others. While the Hindu and the Muslim journalistic writings unleashed a chain reaction of attacks and counter-attacks during this period, the Sikh journalists usually exercised a self-restraint, unless they were intensely provoked by their rivals to come out of their shells. In fact, the Sikh publications continued to reflect the identity crisis and its efforts to exist as separate socio-cultural entity during the period under study.

In addition to reflecting the mood and temper of the people, the Punjab Press highlighted the growing self-consciousness among the communities, efforts made by each community to propagate their own views at the expense of others, criticism of the Government for having played the role of divide and rule and strong internal cleavages within the communities.

In fact, the Sikhs, who had started the Gurdwara Movement to 'de-hinduise' their institutions, ended in confrontation with the Government. Hence, the Sikh literature usually tended to be anti-British and the main communal warfare remained the activity of the Hindus and the Muslim Press. This polemic reached a head with both these communities engaging themselves in strengthening their movements such as Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tanzim and Tabligh.

The period thus is replete with literature highlighting the deteriorating Hindu-Muslim relations and the Sikh

identity crisis. The Sikhs during this period sided with Hindus as Muslims came out harshly against all non-Muslim communities. The Sikh Papers like the Khalsa Advocate, Akali Te Pardesi joined hands with the Hindu Papers including Milap and Partap on the question of communal electorates and communal representation as it affected the cause of both the communities.

The Hindus and the Sikhs were united in their fight against the Muslims as besides the fact that they had no alternative under the prevailing circumstances, they were sitting pretty at the heart of economic life of villages. Muslims, numerically strong enough, started coercing the Hindus and the Sikhs to leave their ancestral homes in North-West Provinces where they had lived for generations together as essential and respectable members of the tribal system.

The Sikh and the Muslim Press, attacked 'Satyarth Prakash' as being replete with 'empty verbiage' and likened it to a 'fairy tale', work of a novice, 'dealing with the sundry'. The Arya Samaj was described as a political movement and not a religious one as it grew, matured and nourished itself by hatred towards the other religions.

The Sikh Papers found themselves fighting it out to establish their independent socio-cultural and religio-political identity for about 55 years before independence, and more so during the third decade of the twentieth century. These were the years during which the Akali Movement was at its brisk and effervescent best. The Sikhs could not find sincere and

resolute friends either among the Muslims or the Hindus — the two other major communities accounting for more than 80 per cent of the total population in Punjab. The Sikhs status was bedevilled by (1) a numerical majority of their arch-rivals, the Muslims, (2) essays of the Hindu and the Muslim fanatic movements to establish their respective communities as the only superior ones, (3) perpetual injustice perpetrated by the British on them, despite their being the 'most loyal to the Crown' community, (4) infighting amongst various Sikh religious and political organisations, (5) paucity of strong and indomitable leadership, (6) Hindu and Muslim leaders' indifference towards Sikhs, (7) a distinct yet a minority community as compared to Hindus (30.9 per cent) and Muslims (50.1 per cent), and (8) and a comparatively weak Press, at least quantitatively.

The Sikh Press remained short of time, money and the infrastructure, eventually the needful energy to participate in the 'wordy-duel' on the Hindu-Muslim pattern. The Muslim outrage against the Hindus was the main subject of the Muslim Press. About 300 books and tracts against the Arya Samaj were issued with the sole motive of negating the Hindu values and tenets. The Hindus, on the other hand, continued to issue inflammatory and scurrilous poems, cartoons and write-ups against the Muslim doctrines and principles. The Sikh journalism was notwithstanding sporadic, varied in its appeal, and often tainted by the idiosyncracies of the proprietors and Editors, though it continued to reflect the activities of the Sikh society.

The practice of appointing dummy editors was also in vogue so as to save the newspapers from the Government's wrath. The 'gutter Press' continued to supply mischievous and inflammatory write-ups to the despair and disgust of the Government. The law proscribing scurrilous articles became defunct and impotent in the face of intensive and expensive onslaught, engineered by the journals of the period.

A perusal of the ongoing text would show that Punjab's vernacular Press did not project itself as Punjab Press, rather it moved on communal lines based on language or castes. It rather precipitated the differences between the existing communities. Non-clarity of ideas had its impact on the stance adopted by different Papers of the period, as the proprietors or the Editors could not identify between patriotism, religion and politics. A definite line of action thus always remained illusive for these papers. It has also been found that more than 50 per cent of all language newspapers were either touts of the British regime or they remained aloof or indifferent to such sentiments as patriotism and nationalism.

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84. The Khalsa, October 25, 1899.
85. Ibid., August 13, and 20, 1944.
86. Ibid., August 13, 1944.
87. Ibid., September 17, 1944.
88. The Khalsa Advocate, August, 1907.
89. Ibid., July 1908.
90. Ibid., November 1910.
91. Ibid., May 17, 1914, also Khalsa Akhbar, May 19, 1915; Shera-i-Punjab, June 8, 1915.
92. The Khalsa Advocate, October 6, 1917.
93. Ibid., July 13, 1918. Also Loyal Gazette, July 14, 1918; Khalsa Samachar, July 18, 1918.
94. The Khalsa Advocate, July 13, 1918.
95. Ibid., March 30, 1924.
96. Ibid.
97. Ibid., August 20, 1932.
98. Ibid., November 12, 1932.
99. Ibid., May 20 and August 26, 1933.
100. Ibid., August 18, 1937.
101. Ibid., December 29, 1938.
102. Ibid., June 18, 1912.
103. Ibid., February 16, 1919.
104. Ibid., February 23, 1919.
105. Ibid.

106. The Khalsa Sewak, February 26, 1919.
107. Ibid., February 12, 1897, October 8, 1897.
108. Ibid., June 12, 1918.
109. Chief Khalsa Diwan Manifesto on Rowlett Act, February 12, 1919.
110. Khalsa Sewak, March 29, 1919.
111. Ibid., September 14, 1939.
112. The Kirti, November 1936 to January 8, 1937. The Paper was retitled as Kirti Lehr in 1937 after it was shifted to Meerut.
113. Ibid., July 17, 1928.
114. Ibid., March 1929 to 1936.
115. Ibid., June 14, 1936.
116. Ibid., June 22, 1937.
117. Ibid., August 16, 1939.
118. Ibid., October 30, 1939.
119. The Loyal Gazette, July 15, 1917.
120. Ibid., January 26, 1919.
121. Ibid., January 28, 1919.
122. Ibid., May 25, 1919.
123. Ibid., May 29, 1919.
124. Ibid., June 25, 1919.
125. Ibid., November 13, 1921, November 15, 1921.
126. Ibid., October 19 and October 21, 1923.
127. Ibid., November 27, 1923.
128. Ibid., November 17, 1920.
129. Ibid.
130. The Nauji, October 13, 1930.
131. Ibid., March 30, 1931.
132. Ibid., September 22, 1930.

133. Ibid., August 11, 1930.
134. Ibid., November 21, 1927.
135. Ibid., December 1, 1930.
136. Ibid., February 6, 1928.
137. Ibid., February 6, 1928.
138. Ibid., August 20, 1928.
139. Ibid., February 8, 1928.
140. Ibid., July 28
141. Ibid., September 22, 1930.
142. Ibid., October 13, 1930.
143. Ibid., March 16, 1930.
144. Ibid., March 17, 1930.
145. Ibid., July 28, 1940.
146. Ibid., August 4 and 11, September 2, 22, 29, 1930.
147. Milap, April, 7, 1942.
148. Ibid., September 19, 1922.
149. Ibid., August 9, 1928.
150. Ibid., August 28, 1912.
151. Ibid., November 12, 1937.
152. Ibid., December 19, 1938.
153. Ibid., August 14, 1917, Also Punjab Darpan, August 15, 1917.
154. Muslim Outlook, August 9, 1927.
155. Pani Darya, September 12, 1943.
156. Ibid., September 19, 1943.
157. Ibid., May 19, 1940.
158. Ibid., April 14, 1940.
159. Ibid., February 12, 1947.
160. Ibid., March 14, 1943.

161. Ibid., May 11, 1943.
162. Phulwari, January 28, 1941.
163. Ibid., December 12, 1940.
164. Ibid., January 17, 1941.
165. Ibid., December 4, 1940.
166. The Punjabee, November 22, 1910.
167. Ibid., August 28, 1908, September 14, 1908; and February 13, 1909.
168. Ibid., October 20, 1917.
169. The Sikh, February 27, 1921.
170. Ibid., July 4, 1920.
171. Ibid., March 29, 1922. Also Pardesi Khalsa, March 29, 1922.
172. Ibid., August 14, 1917.
173. Zamindar, July 5, 1935.
174. Ibid., October 10, 1927. Also FLCD, 1927, Vol. X, November 22, 1927, p. 1220.
175. Supplement to a note on Punjab Press, No. 31, ending August 2, 1924, File No. 787/1924, p. 47.
176. Zamindar, June 23, 1924.
177. Ibid., February 23, 1921.
178. Ibid., July 23, 1921. Also Milan, April 18, 1924.
179. Ibid., December 28, 1926.
180. Ibid., May 19, 1922.

**CHAPTER IV**

**THE TRIBUNE : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

CHAPTER IVTHE TRIBUNE : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The second half of the nineteenth century had newspapers which were either pro-Government, anti-Government or communal in character. The vernaculars were overwhelmingly parochial in nature. The Government had no alternative than to launch its own papers to counter the propaganda against it in the anti-Government journals of the period. Both the people and the Government were feeling fed-up due to the biased write-ups appearing in the contemporary newspapers. The need of a 'true and dispassionate newspaper' was thus being felt deeply.

At this juncture was launched The Tribune by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia from Lahore. The time when he started The Tribune in 1881, "to play the policeman, the judge, and the juror, was hardly propitious for this novel venture. The ideal of orientalism was then being presented to this province in a most attractive garb; and the Sardar, if he had so desired, might have endowed the Oriental College and earned for himself the esteem of the Government of the day and decorated his person with ribbons and badges and medals. But he set his face against Orientalism and curbed the rage of Orientalism by inaugurating a vigorous and successful agitation against the police of the day."

Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia before his demise on September 9, 1898, just 17 years after launching The Tribune, gave us a splendid "organ of public opinion and by that means created for persons so minded opportunities of cultivating a love of public life...Leaving aside the hundreds of acts of his, great and small...he confined himself to a consideration of three monumental endowments — the college, the free library and reading room, and the newspaper."

Writes Kipling that it was Sardar Majithia who stood out among those Orientalists, who "when troubled with religious truths, the Orientalists do not hesitate to become ascetics and to lavish their wealth on religious and semi-religious institutions" by choosing for his "benefactions objects quite novel and obviously unconventional." 1

The aim of the Paper has been described in its inaugural editorial as "fairly and temperately to advocate the cause of mute masses. In its columns, we shall seek to represent the public opinion of India, especially of Upper India, and what is more, we shall strive as much as lies in the compass of our humble abilities to create and educate such opinion...Our appearance in the field of journalism is to meet a crying want of this part of India, namely, an English journal for the representation of 'native opinion' which was being ruthlessly stifled by the alien ruler." 2

The Paper was the brainchild of Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia (1849-1898), the only son of Sardar Lehna Singh, a

close associate of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was known as the 'wisest, the purest and the most enlightened and the most honest of Sikh chiefs'. Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia belonged to an aristocratic family. His grandfather, one time Governor of Amritsar, was honoured with the title of 'Kasir-ul-Iktidar'. Such was the ancestry under the shadow of which Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia was nourished into a young man embedded with such qualities as tenacity, single-mindedness of purpose, intelligence and diligence. His keenness for enquiry, an instinctive love for books, developing in an atmosphere of exaltation added to his forbearance, exaltation and dignity of purpose. His uncanny vision and abundance of knowledge helped him draw closure to success in his mission of starting a newspaper.

When Dyal Singh came back to India from England in 1876, where he had gone to draw maximum benefit from the winds of liberation sweeping England, he spent considerable time in holding discussions with prominent people, especially leaders of liberal and progressive movements. After his return, he was completely a transformed personality with a broader outlook and wider knowledge, especially of religion and politics — the two polemical issues during those days as they are today.

Inspired by such incidents, thoughts and acquired knowledge, he thought of studying the emerging socio-economic and religio-political movements in Punjab. The Amritsar District Gazette has recorded that "Sardar Dyal Singh was appointed

Honorary Magistrate of Amritsar, but a few years after this, he resigned his post and proceeded to England. He had a good knowledge of English and enjoys a jagir of Rs. 4,900.<sup>4</sup> The Gazette further stated that "since his return from England he has lived entirely in Lahore where he is the proprietor of The Tribune newspaper and is very rarely seen in Amritsar or Majitha. The value of his jagir in Amritsar is Rs. 9,843, not including a jagir of Rs. 4,813 in the Tarn Taran Tehsil which is devoted to the keeping up of a dole of food at the cenotaph of his grandfather, Sardar Desa Singh."<sup>5</sup>

Sardar Dyal Singh also had had a thorough study of history of Sikhs. Lala Harkishan Lal, a former Trustee of The Tribune and a colleague of Dyal Singh, has mentioned that "Dyal Singh had a sizeable collection of books on various subjects. His study of history, especially of Sikhs, was deep and thorough. A fine conversationalist,<sup>he</sup> turned his house at Lahore into a popular centre of debate among intellectuals of all shades of opinion. He founded the Union Academy, later known as Dyal Singh School. He donated funds to various educational institutions in Punjab."<sup>6</sup> Professor Ruchi Ram Sahni noted in his memoirs: "It was surprising to see a rich nobleman holding forth eloquently, and in excellent English or Urdu, on the early schismatic tendencies in Islam and the forces that gave them birth. He was also well informed about Christianity. He studied Bhagvat Gita with the assistance of a Brahmin, hailing from Ferozepore."<sup>7</sup>

Sardar Dyal Singh also came in touch with Swami Vivekananda, Swami Dayananda, Dadabhai Naoroji, R.C. Dutt, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Surendra Nath Banerjee, P.C. Majumdar, S.N. Shastri and Sarda Ram with whom he had prolonged discussions on the politico-religious matters. Their ideologies had great impact on his attitude which ultimately transformed him into a steadfast champion of social reforms and of modern education. The principles of Brahma Samaj impressed him most and soon he became an active worker of the Samaj in Punjab. However, his association with the Brahma Samaj did not make him a fanatic as he continued to hold tenets of other religions in high esteem as well. His viewpoint was also impressed upon by the poet Laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a prominent educationist. The latter is in record having quoted: "Sardar Dyal Singh Bahadur Majithia is a very well-known and highly respected chief of fraternity of Sikh Sardars. A noble character, a loving nature, goodwill for all and respect for the people of all communities are his personal attainments. Muslims also consider him as their sincerest friend and a noble benefactor...He is the only person in Lahore, rather in the whole province of Punjab, of whom Punjabis and all Indians can feel justly proud."

Sardar Gurmukh Nihal Singh, in a tribute to Sardar Dyal Singh's courage, fortitude, nationalistic predilections and defiance of the British rulers, writes, "how can the Majithia Sardar be in the good graces of 'Lat Sahib' or his officers? He is not the man to dance attendance upon them

like others do. He can no more bend his knee or neck to the "Firanghi" than could his father."

The Indians during the last quarter of the nineteenth century were face to face with such conditions as unsavoury, oppressive and distasteful at the hands of British administration, which was continuously consuming the vast economic resources of India. Discontent among the masses towards the foreign rule was getting strengthened and precipitated with the passage of time. Such were the circumstances which invited Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia to accept the gauntlet of exposing the wrongful and defend the rightful through a newspaper in English, which was entitled The Tribune. The Paper was started as a weekly on February 2, 1881, priced at four annas a copy with a policy governed by such components as reason, logic, and promotion of nationalistic spirit. It soon became a major spokesman of the people, particularly of the elite class, and steadily burgeoned into a mighty organ of the Fourth Estate.

However, Punjab's educational backwardness stepped in as a major hindrance as far as communication in English, through print media, was concerned. It was thus felt that the Punjab mind needed a total overhauling. The slow rise of circulation of The Tribune had its obvious reason in the slow rise of literacy rate in Punjab. And the Press Act, designed to stifle the Indian newspapers stemmed out as the second threat to the existence of The Tribune.

The unstable and upsetting socio-economic and political conditions further aggravated the situation for The Tribune. The Paper thus primarily directed its efforts towards liberal education and enlightenment to engineer people's salvation. Another newspaper, The Bengalee, started in 1868 by G.C. Ghosh as a weekly journal, joined hands with The Tribune as a "fearless exponent of the national cause". Kesari in Marathi and Mahratia in English, started by Bal Gangadhar Tilak in 1881 formed a triangle, alongwith The Tribune, to uphold the cause of justice and nationalism. The Indian language Papers, such as Akhbar Shri Darbar Sahib, Sukavya Samodhini and Kavi Chandrodaya, which got off to a start during the last year of the eighth decade of the 19th century, left themselves to be more concerned to win the favour of the British. Similarly, the Civil and the Military Gazette, Lahore and The Pioneer of Allahabad, were inclined towards projecting the official viewpoint. It was during this period that a Paper was needed to highlight the native feelings and sentiments and provide a platform to vent the nationalistic feelings of the patriotic people. The Tribune came to the aid of this community of people as a dream come true for Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia, who had resolute supporters in Surendranath Banerjee and Mul Raj.

In an editorial, "About Ourselves", the Paper enunciated the reasons for publishing the Paper and the policy it intended to pursue in the following words:

"The projectors and conductors of The Tribune have no pet theories to maintain, nor any personal interest to serve

through the medium of this journal. They profess simply to act for the public weal, and they are conscious that the public weal is more advanced by charity and moderation than by rancour and hard words...As the mouthpiece of the people, The Tribune will be conducted on broad and catholic principles ...We shall not be identified with any particular race, class or creed, nor seek to give prominence to the views of any particular party. But the Paper, as the champion of the people, will not scruple to speak plainly against class interests, nor shrink from boldly assailing them whenever they should happen to clash with the welfare of the masses. In religious matters we shall maintain a strictly neutral position.

Towards the rulers of the country, our conduct will be marked by staunch loyalty...As the mouthpiece of the people, The Tribune will make known to our Government their wants and grievances and their hopes and aspirations. Similarly, it will seek faithfully to interpret the intentions of the Government to the people...so that cordial relations may be established between the governors and the governed."<sup>12</sup>

The editorial, which set the tone and temper of the Paper for the decades that followed, asked the readers to regard the Paper as their common property, and to foster it as such, by making use of its columns largely for the discussion of political, social and literary questions of the day.

The Tribune, as it continues to have till date, had a balanced approach, flexible enough notwithstanding, towards

the British rule. By flexibility here is meant that it moulded its attitude depending upon the changing policies of the British regime. It became harsher and hard-hitting when the Government assaulted either the freedom of the Press or the people of India. It showered praises whenever the Government attitude became conducive to the overall freedom of India and its countrymen.

It is because of its constructive approach that though "the production was poor and the issues of 1881 presented a monotonous look, the Paper's influence began to be felt widely. The Government circles also took notice of its editorial comments. The Paper seldom failed to "expose instances of official wrong doing, abuse of authority and racial high-handedness. But it never indulged in wild or intemperate criticism for sheer effect." Restraint in the presentation of news and views has throughout been its distinctive quality. On many occasions high authorities, including Lt. Governors used to advise public deputations, which waited on them, to represent public causes or grievances to get their point of view supported in the columns of The Tribune to facilitate the desired response from the 13 Government of India or His Majesty's Government in England." A senior British civilian serving in Punjab wrote to a friend that "Punjab was being ruled by two entities - the Governor and The Tribune, and Secretaries and District officers were 14 nowhere in the picture."

The balanced and 'constructively critical' approach of the Paper attracted many a European reader as well. The literate and the enlightened people occasionally described The Tribune as 'an organ which represented their feelings and aspirations'. The combined response exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its projectors. The first scathing attack by the Paper was unleashed on the wrong education policy of Lord Lytton and Dr. G.W. Leitner, which it felt to be 'discouraging as far as the question of imparting higher education to the Indians was concerned.' The Tribune, in its editorial, "our Government College - a thing of the past" supported the cause of those people, who had a genuine desire for learning.

The Paper throughout the British regime remained an 'outspoken spokesman' for providing liberal education through English medium. It had a proper logic behind it as it felt convinced that there was "dearth of textbooks in the vernacular languages; the few available textbooks were not properly translated and were worthless; and the people had indicated their preference for English." The Paper supporting the report of D.P.I., Punjab <sup>15</sup> wrote that "all hopes of regeneration of the country, of intellectual material and moral prosperity, and future glory and independence, depended entirely on the spread of English education."

Praising the significant role of The Tribune in promoting the cause of liberal education, Lala Lajpat Rai had said that "the English education imparted in schools and colleges, established by the British and the Christian

missionaries opened the gates of Western thoughts and literature to the mass of educated Indians. Some of the British teachers and professors consciously and unconsciously inspired their pupils with ideas of freedom as well as nationalism.<sup>16</sup> These comments from Lala Lajpat Rai were significant not only because these emanated from the pen of a prominent nationalist leader but also because of the fact that Lala Lajpat Rai was a strong critic of the British institutions in India which, he thought, were established to spell domination and strengthen their stronghold over the native Indians.

In fact, The Tribune felt convinced that the idea that "it is no longer worthwhile or useful not to speak or write in our own language which, in fact, exposes our hate for our mother-tongue but at the same time we cannot grow, blossom and prosper unless we imbibe good and great ideas of good and great men. And this is not possible unless we shed our tenacity of not exposing ourselves to the noble ideas coming from any side."<sup>17</sup> English being an international language, the enlargement of vision will not be possible if we did not cast off our narrow-mindedness of remaining clung to the 'vernacular ideology'. As is evident from the ongoing discussion, the Paper was not anti-regional language. It, on the other hand, valued high the ancient as well as the modern languages and literatures.

In the first year of its publication, The Tribune wrote 20 articles on education, strongly opposing those 'sham orientalist', who insisted on the adoption of India vernaculars to the exclusion of English. The Paper warned that "if the

Panjab University College succeeded in its attempts to orientalise education, its repercussions would not be confined to the limits of our five rivers... We do not believe in the theory that India is an assemblage of countries and that her people are an assemblage of nations. The vast continent from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, and from the Brahmaputra to the Indus, forms one great country, and Bengalis, Punjabis and Marhattas, the Rajputs of Mewar, the Nairs of Travancore and the Gurkhas of Nepal, the Hindus, the Sikhs and the Mohammedans, all constitute members of one great nation, bound together by affinities of language and similarities of manner and customs, and by a community of intellectual, social and political interests." <sup>18</sup> Further, the policy makers of The Tribune made it clear that the Paper's beat was not only Punjab but the whole of India.

The Paper was by all thoughts and objectives started with a missionary zeal to "cast a corrective influence by genuinely acting as a watchdog of fallacies and commissions and omissions of the Government. However, for reasons of economic viability some advertisements used to creep in from the very start. These were, however, always relegated to the last page, proving thereby their secondary importance. The quota of advertisements kept on increasing year after year, month after month. Besides, the private and commercial organisations, some <sup>19</sup> Government departments also used to buy space in The Tribune."

Earlier, having made fun of matrimonial advertisements in the Civil and Military Gazette, The Tribune caved in to the

pressure from its readers to publish the matrimonial material<sup>20</sup> in its columns when it became a bi-weekly in 1886. Interestingly, the Government Press notes were used to be published as advertisements. The Tribune on occasions rose sharply against its contemporary the Civil and the Military Gazette. Attacks and counterattacks by and on the Indian and Anglo-Indian newspapers were not very uncommon. The Tribune once referred the Gazette as its 'rabid contemporary' and a 'scurrilous English Paper' for its attacks on women and its anti-Indian and pro-Muslim bias. While The Tribune had remained a staunch supporter of the nationalistic standpoint of the Indian National Congress saying that it was the 'embodiment of the people's aspirations' and that it was 'entirely moderate in its demands and constitutional in its agitation', the Paper strongly criticised The Pioneer and the Civil and the Military Gazette for carrying malicious propaganda against the Congress.

The Tribune wrote many editorials supporting the "tradition of remarriage of Hindu widows. And on the other hand, it came out strongly against the evils of casteism among Hindus and extravagant marriages among Jats, who would not mind 'ruinous expenses on occasions of marriages which led the peasantry deeper and deeper into poverty and which, the Paper felt, was a very unhealthy trend and a virtual hindrance in the way of Indians fight against slavery at the hands of the British."<sup>21</sup>

Sardar Dyal Singh's objective to start a newspaper was to provide a common and open forum for all, irrespective

of the personal biases, prejudices and idiosyncracies of freedom fighters and other Indians together with the Trustees and staff of the Paper. To substantiate this point of view, the Majithia Sardar specifically barred the appointment of any Arya Samajist as a member of the committee of Trustees of the College he had founded alongwith The Tribune.<sup>22</sup> But no such bar was there in respect of The Tribune Trust. To add to it, the Paper had made<sup>23</sup> it a point to cover all the Arya Samaj meetings.

As an evidence to its stand, The Tribune championed the cause of gradual and steady reforms and came down heavily on extremist tendencies of some of the contemporary papers and the individuals propagating such tendencies. It was because the Paper felt that 'the nation was not well-prepared and well-equipped to launch mass struggle at that stage and without which it was not possible to thwart the foreigners.' And that was why the Paper backed the moderates who "had the proper historical sense and fully understood the limitations within which political work was possible in the country, the greatest limitation being the impenetrably thick and huge mass of immobile, unintelligent, almost lifeless humanity which cares not what form of Government it lives under, what miseries it endures,<sup>24</sup> what cruel indignities it is subjected to." This, however, did not mean that the Paper remained a silent spectator to all the punitive policies of the rulers. Underlining the fact that extremism was the direct upshot of the racial arrogance of the Europeans, the Paper demanded positive measures

instead of barren and negative policy of repression against the administrative blunders of the Government and its failure to introduce constitutional reforms.

The Punjabee, alongwith the Punjab Patriot, played a significant role in propagating the Shuddhi Movement.<sup>25</sup> Impelled by strong competition from The Punjabee and the Punjab Patriot, coupled with prevailing circumstances, The Tribune launched a crusade in favour of Punjabis. It strongly protested against the unjustifiable treatment being meted out to the Punjabis at the hands of the Government of India. The Paper, in a June issue of 1896 maintained that "in the race for progress in this country, Punjab is not given a fair chance, and that in a great many directions the Province is deliberately held back...despite the fact that Punjab has a stronger claim upon its (Government's) gratitude than any other Province in India."<sup>26</sup>

Supporting the Punjab cause, The Tribune further wrote that it was Punjab and Punjabis which stood by the British Government during its hours of difficulty and troublesome days of the mutiny and the Sikhs, in particular, extended their genuine help to resurrect and keep up their supremacy. The Paper very rightly asked "what they (the Sikhs) have been given in return." Supporting the cause of Sikhs as well-wishers of the British, the Paper said "the Sikhs are still among the finest fighting men in the Indian Army, and are always selected for services abroad, but they are in no way exempted from the general ban of suspicion and disqualification under which all fighting men in India have been placed."<sup>27</sup>

The impact of the Brahma Samaj movement held by the Bengali leaders cast a significant influence on the policy and functioning of The Tribune. Most of its senior staff members, including Editors and Assistant Editors, especially during its first 70 years, were Bengalis. As a result of this, the tone of the Paper used to be pro-Brahmo movement, though it did not give overall impression of such a kind. <sup>28</sup>

Two decades after earnestly campaigning for English as the most useful language of communication, the Paper diverted its energy in a way to extend equal support to the promotion of vernacular literature. Editorials started appearing in favour of adopting vernacular language as it continued to clarify its stand of not being 'anti-vernacularity'. An editorial condemning the neglect of vernacular literature stated: "there could be no doubt that the improvement and enrichment of vernacular literature was one of the most important objects that education in India could aim at. That great mass of the people cannot be reached except through their vernaculars, and no knowledge or enlightenment can influence the masses until it is made available to them in their own dialects." <sup>29</sup> The Paper threw a strong attack over the utility of existence of Panjab University <sup>30</sup> which <sup>it</sup> stated had "failed to promote any of these objects to an appreciable degree," and that "it is nothing short of a scandal to waste Rs. 40,000 a year on an institution, the utility of which is at best doubtful, while such admittedly useful objects as the improvement and extension of vernacular literature are allowed to languish for want of funds." <sup>31</sup>

The Paper also contributed towards improving the overall quality of education. It urged for appointment of qualified teachers in colleges and the Panjab University in a bid to improve the standard of postgraduate studies. It raised its voice against swelling the number of fellows on the University bodies who were 'not only incompetent and inefficient but were also disinterested in the affairs of the University'. It went on to expose wrongdoings and biased attitude of the Government in sacrificing the interests of poor students in the garb of educational reforms. In an editorial, the Paper said, "the Universities in this country are all examining bodies, and it cannot be denied that the teaching in the schools and colleges is, to a very large extent, influenced by the system of examinations which do not encourage originality or growth of thought."<sup>32</sup>

The Paper suggested the formation of a political association to arouse political spirit among Punjabis and for starting a constitutional agitation. It demarcated the following issues for such a constitutional agitation:<sup>33</sup>

- a) The inconvenience caused to the people as a result of Punjab being a non-Regulation Province;
- b) the denial to members of the Legislative Council of the right of interpellations and of discussing the budget;
- c) the need to establish a chief court instead of a chartered High Court; and
- d) the undesirability of appointing militarymen as Civil Judges and District Magistrates.

The Tribune took recourse to the dictatorial regime of Lord Curzon. As a result of certain articles appearing in the Paper, the people started developing antagonistic attitude towards the British Government. This change in the attitude of the people was duly reflected in the columns of the Paper which editorialised that : "Let our rulers realise that they are not Frenchmen, and, therefore, shun everything that might savour of foundness for theatrical effect. Let our rulers realise that they are not Germans and, therefore, shun everything that might savour of aspirations of a brand new empire based upon Bismarckianism. Let them realise that they are not Russians and, therefore, shun everything that might savour of incessant restlessness betokening inherrent loose-jointedness and absence of happy satisfied repose. England is England and it pains us to see that the present war has made many sons of England forget that." 34

At the start of the twentieth century, the issue of communal representation on the Punjab Assembly had become hot. Most of the organisations had opposed such a controversial move of the Government which would, in their sense, precipitate the communal tension in the Province. The Tribune too remained an 'uncompromising opponent' to such a move. It, in its opinion is bound to favour one community and harm the interests of others. The Paper condemned communal electorates, provided for in the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, as 'incompatible with democratic principles'. The Paper felt that the issue of communal representation was against the spirit of the principles which regarded India "as the National State and its people,

despite their diversity of religious views, had a common nationality." <sup>35</sup> The Tribune regarded the Minto-Morley Reforms Act, under which Legislative Councils were established, as a provision envisaging separate electorates for Hindus and Muslims. The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms Act of 1919 was termed by it as a 'step supporting the divide and rule policy of the British'. Proposing its argument in connection with the communal representation issue, The Tribune pointed out that the "communal representation would be worth having on two conditions: one, it must be clear that it is the only method by which proper representation of several interests can be secured, and secondly, that communal representation is not one of those evils that gather strength with year and tend to perpetuate themselves." <sup>36</sup> It vehemently deplored the partition of Bengal in 1905 and described it as a "measure designed to destroy the spirit of nationalism and promote communal tendencies."

The Paper took it as a privilege to expose and denounce the financial and trade policies which it said "sacrificed Indian national interests to placate British textile and other industrial manufacturers, and that it amounted to draining of Indian wealth and other resources." <sup>37</sup> In other words, the Paper strongly backed the Swadeshi Movement launched by Mahatama Gandhi.

With its balanced policy, evenly tough and relaxed towards the natives, the Indian National Congress and the Government, depending upon their activities and stances, the

Paper went on to mustering strength year after year. Its popularity soared and it became a 'Paper of the people', 'a Bible for educated homes in Punjab; and 'an addiction among its readers, which included many a British official'. It unequivocally denounced "both revolutionary crimes and the administration's repressive policy."<sup>38</sup> All such successes combined <sup>as</sup> the Paper became a daily from 1906.

The Tribune alongwith its contemporaries published from Punjab and some underground papers, played a significant role in arousing national consciousness. While The Tribune proved effective among the intelligentsia, signalling the social and national revival in Punjab, the vernacular dailies served as popular media of mass communication during the years just following the World War I. The Tribune particularly took a strong exception to the Rowlatt Bills which were chiefly meant to gag the freedom of the Press. It wrote that "it is as certain as anything can be in human affairs that they will not be thrust upon us even by an omniscient and all powerful bureaucracy."<sup>39</sup> It very strongly urged the Government to repeal the Rowlatt Bills on the one hand, while on the other hand, it asked the people to prepare themselves for an "organised protest throughout the length and breadth of the country and that fight unabatedly against the 'Black Act' with sobriety and non-violence."<sup>40</sup> The Paper further stated that "no civilised Government would adopt a policy of repression in the teeth <sup>of</sup> of opposition from the public. Of the two alternatives, one is that we should, like the dead, put the noose of this law

round our necks, bury in oblivion our fair name, as also our great men and sound the death-knell of the so-called liberty of India...And the other is that we should afford proof of our life by refusing to accept the law in question." <sup>41</sup> The Paper regarded the successful hartal on April 6 for which, alongwith others, it had also appealed as "a great day that will live in our history." <sup>42</sup>

The Tribune fell victim alongwith around one thousand other newspapers to the Government's apathy. The Paper was ordered to furnish a security of Rs. 2,000 and its Editor was imprisoned. However, it emerged out of the temporary tribulations and consequently succeeded in winning public opinion in its favour with regard to the two repressive acts based on the Rowlatt Report. This alarmed the Government when it noticed that the 'mild rebellion' was arising from the Province where <sup>43</sup> 'thousands of recruits came to the army from'.

The Tribune came out with an editorial, A Colossal Blunder, criticising the Rowlatt Report : "The action is a challenge which no self-respecting people can be slow to take up...it not only reopens but widens the gulf between the bureaucracy and the people, and is the starting point of a constitutional struggle infinitely larger, more intense and perhaps also more bitter than any known so far between authority and right, between irresponsible power and popular liberty." <sup>44</sup> The Paper, earlier having published inflammatory editorials - "Blazing indiscretion", "Vicious circle" and "Out-heroding Herod" was charged with sedition and its Editor, Kalinath Ray was

charged-sheeted which ultimately led to his imprisonment.

The Tribune changed its stance from foe to a friend with the taking over of Punjab Governship by Sir Edward Maclagan, who brought in some positive changes in the cruel policies of Sir Micheal O'Dwyer. The Paper occasionally appealed for general amnesty. The Paper, however, did not refrain from pointing out that the Government has not made a mention about Punjab in the 'historic pronouncement'<sup>45</sup>. It regarded the Reforms Bill (1919) as 'a real step towards self-Government in the Provinces' despite its many shortcomings and imperfections. It did not hesitate from criticising Mahatma Gandhi in disapproving his exposition of non-cooperation and in disagreeing with Lala Lajpat Rai regarding his suggestion of boycotting the Councils. The Paper also criticised Mahatma Gandhi on the question of Dominion Status as the nation's goal. An editorial in one of its January issues, entitled "Mahatma's two defeats", the Paper said, "We have no sympathy with those who think or say that Mahatma Gandhi should never be defeated, whether at a meeting of the A.I.C.C. or the Congress, because the nation cannot do without his leadership in the great struggle on which it is about to enter. Even the leadership of the Mahatma, invaluable as it is to the country at this stage, would be bought too dearly if the price paid for it was nothing less than the suspension by the Congress of its legitimate functions. It is a matter of common knowledge that the Mahatma himself has again and again warned not to take anything<sup>46</sup> on trust merely because it comes from him or from any other man."

It also came out strongly on Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while referring to his address to the Punjab Political Conference stating that "as long as the Congress was unable to secure the allegiance of the Muslim community, Congressmen could not hope to dislodge the Unionists who were mainly dependent on the Muslim communal vote."<sup>47</sup>

Subhas Chander Bose and Sir Jagdish Chander Bose appreciated the firm, tough and flexible stand of The Tribune depending on the occasion as "glorious record of public service." Subhas Chander Bose, while congratulating the Paper said that "its criticism is always free from malice and is of a friendly and constructive nature and is, <sup>48</sup> therefore, conducive to our public well-being and advancement." The Tribune was among top crusaders of Sardar Patel's Hindu Inter-caste Marriage Bill.

Unlike the popular style and format of dividing the page into seven columns, The Tribune followed the pattern adopted by the Civil and Military Gazette of five column division of the page. The stories in The Tribune, alongwith its contemporaries, centered round regional policies and its stance remained usually that of anti-British.

The Tribune was regarded as "Mr accurate" as far as the language aspect of the Paper was concerned. Teachers were used to advise their students to read The Tribune to improve their English. Though its circulation during 1920 was just around 7,000, its readership had crossed 50,000.<sup>49</sup> Reading of

The Tribune was also regarded as a status symbol as some people had developed a sort of emotional attachment for it. It had among its readers many an American Professor, teacher and industrialist.

The Paper supported the rapprochement move between the Congress and the British Government. The move, however, could not succeed because of some ditherings on the part of the latter. The Civil Disobedience Movement and the agitation against dyarchy had full backing of the Paper. It was first among the newspapers which advocated boycott of the Simon Commission. The Tribune, popular for its logical and reasonable approach, was widely recognised for its "sanest policy for the country and for the Punjab in particular." The Paper's role was considered to be that of serving the people as was that of The Hindu (Madras) and The Leader (Allahabad). Unafraid of inviting the displeasure of the British Government, the Paper published Bhagat Singh's historic statement made in connection with his throwing bomb in the Central Assembly Chamber on April 8, 1928. To further highlight the cruel and unjudicious resolve of the British Government to hang the three comrades refuting their desire to be shot dead as is done in case of war prisoners, The Tribune circulated some of the copies of the issues which carried the news of their 'hanging till death', stained with flood.

In fact, The Tribune was the sole newspaper in Punjab which always stood by the victims — they may be public,

leaders or even the Government. It stood for the cause of Harijans, who were fighting for increasing their wages to modest ones from Rs. 12 per month. In general, it pleaded the cause of poor and fought for all forms of discriminations based on caste, religion, race or sex. As an evidence to this, The Tribune backed the agitation against Punjab Money Lenders Registration Bill, Land Alienation (Amendment) Bill, the Restitution Bill and the Marketing Bill as these seemed to be of discriminatory nature or violated the fundamental principles of jurisprudence, or affected the proprietary rights of the non-agriculturalists. The Paper profusely condemned the Press Emergency Powers Act, 1931 and other such subordinating steps, by which the Government nominated Press advisors for censoring the news items. <sup>51</sup> The Government became more strict towards newspapers with the adoption of Quit India Resolution in August, 1942. Many a newspaper, including the National Herald, suspended publication not because of caving in to such repressive measures but because it was felt that it was better not to bring them out than to publish 'just the empty material'.

The Tribune adopted its usual stand of criticising the uncalled-for measures of the Government but continued publication. At one time, however, the Paper surrendered to exclude reports about progress of the National Movement, <sup>52</sup> complying with the official directives. The size and price of the Paper were temporary reduced due to acute shortage of newsprint. The format was restored after sometime with the

addition of some new features. Such changes owed much to its most versatile Editor, Mr Kali Nath Ray, who served the Paper for more than 27 years. He preferred being logical and reasonable than being dashing and flamboyant. He, however, came out sharply over the tragic incidents of 1919 in his editorials. As a result of such daring pieces in The Tribune and other Papers, Martial Law was promulgated in Amritsar and Lahore on April 14 and pre-censorship was ordered to stop newspapers from publishing reports and comments about disturbances in Punjab. The Tribune did not refrain from publishing glaring flaws in the evidence given by officials before the Hunter Committee and demanded strong action against the guilty persons after the lifting of censorship. Mr Kali Nath Ray was charged and convicted under Section 124-A of the Indian Penal Code and Rule 25 -Defence of India (Consolidated) Rules, 1915 in respect of certain articles appearing in The Tribune.<sup>53</sup>

The Tribune did a commendable job in making the people realise their duties and responsibilities towards their country, particularly during a period when the political leaders and other patriots were busy struggling to break the shackles of slavery and see the smiling face of freedom. This act of people awakening by the Paper later paid rich dividends as is revealed by a perusal of the background and history of The Tribune. The study shows that it has been rightly declared that "the history of the Paper's growth is by and large the history of the growth of nationalism in the country's northern region."<sup>54</sup>

The Paper provided the most conducive platform to those who were endeavouring to raise a voice of protest, displeasure, and disenchantment against the obnoxious, obstinate and stubborn attitude of the British Government towards the fundamental rights of the Indians. It never lost its determination to fight against the forces of suppression even in the face of a lot of many oddities and hurdles emerging from various quarters and fought it out vis-a-vis the political leadership unto the last. It never lost its patience, cool, restraint and dignity while reporting and editorialising the incidents and events. Its voice, however, became a bit harsher during the last phase of the freedom struggle. It remained indefatigable champion of the rights of the people throughout its life and was recognised as a "mouthpiece of nationalistic opinion in Punjab."

The Tribune, nevertheless, never came at the support of revolutionaries who indulged in terrorism. Its 'tenets' were virtually religious in this sense embellished with political overtones. It continued to plead, on one hand, the revolutionaries to maintain a credible restraint from indulging in activities of violence and, on the other hand, it kept on building a continuous pressure on the Government to redress the people's grievances and problems. It was the balanced approach of the Paper which saw it condemning the 'resurgence of revolutionary activities during the period of 1904-1907.'

It supported the Agrarian Agitation of 1907 in the South-West Punjab and the Ghadr and Babbar Akali Movements which just

followed the 1904-07 resurgence. The Tribune lauded the Ghadr and Babbar Akali movements describing them as "secular and nationalistic in character."<sup>57</sup>

Such performances notwithstanding brought immense credit to The Tribune and that was why the 'intelligentsia, in particular, looked up to this Paper for both information and guidance which they could not get elsewhere'. The imposition of Martial Law in 1919 came in for severe attack by the Paper. It most extravagantly exposed the atrocities on Indians by way of publishing the Hunter Committee's proceedings.<sup>58</sup>

As the Paper continued to change its stand from applause to critical and vice-versa, so did speak the Government for and against its viewpoints and policy and by punishing it occasionally. Mr. J.P. Thompson, then Chief Secretary, Punjab, once remarked that: "the Paper had been more responsible than any other single agency for arousing anti-British feelings and it was on this account that we stopped our advertisements to the Paper."<sup>59</sup>

The Paper most enthusiastically shared the responsibility of bringing about the nationalistic upsurge in 1920s. Then year 1930 saw The Tribune opposing the introduction of Communal Award which amounted to placating Muslims and degrading other communities in the process.

The Paper provided a forum to the All-India States People's Conference which mainly directed its efforts towards outdoing the self-endorsing rule of the luxurious and extravagant

princes. It, side by side, lauded Sardar Bhagat Singh's patriotic action of bombing the Central Assembly Chamber on April 28, 1929 which triggered off another phase of nationalistic upsurge in the early 1930s.<sup>60</sup>

A decade's period after 1937 passed off with patriotic forces sweating it out to overthrow the alien rulers off their homeland and The Tribune moved neck and neck and step by step as a true and resolute partner to these forces. It did its best to espouse and advocate the cause of communal amity and harmony during the last phase of the freedom struggle. The success, however, eluded its efforts in this direction mainly due to the essays of the Muslims, led by M.A. Jinnah, in the opposite direction, who remained steadfast in seeing the division of the country.<sup>61</sup>

The Paper nevertheless did not relent from its stand of siding with the secular forces and opposing the divisive elements. It carried on its efforts to preclude country's division and promote nationalistic ideals and country's unity through its writings till the efforts of the Muslims in the reverse directions met with success on August 14, 1947.

#### CONCLUSION

The Tribune, evidently, has been keeping its word to advocate the cause of mute masses and represent and educate public opinion on various socio-economic and politico-religious issues. It has been all the time directing its efforts towards

liberal education without identifying itself with any particular race, class or creed.

The Paper objectively carried out its objective of making the Government known its wants, people's needs, demands and aspirations and then faithfully interpret Government's intentions to the people. The Tribune played the role of a newspaper so wonderfully that it was usually mentioned by the Government officials that Punjab was being ruled by two entities — the Governor and The Tribune.

It always used to further the cause of steady and gradual reforms, condemn extremist tendencies and make the nationalists understand the limitations of their political exercises. It did not hesitate from criticising even top brass like Gandhi or Nehru if their statements or acts went against the welfare of the masses. All these exercises of The Tribune made it a 'Paper of the people' and a 'Bible for the educated homes' in Punjab.

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4. The Amritsar District Gazette, 1883-84.
5. Ibid., 1892-94.
6. Dyal Singh Majithia - an institution, by Lala Harkishan Lall, 1913.
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8. Syed Ahmed Khan, Safarnama-e-Punjab, 1884, pp.333-334.
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10. According to the census report, the proportion of educated persons was one in 26; literate Hindus and Sikhs were one in 15 and Muslims one in 69. In the total educated population only one person out of 10 was able to understand English. Most of the literates, on that, knew Urdu, Persian and Sanskrit but hardly any English.
11. The Press Act, enforced by the then Governor General, Lord Lytton, who believed in beheading the hydra at one sudden stroke, could not be exercised notwithstanding.
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13. Ibid.
14. The Punjab Administrative Reports, 1870-1900.
15. The then D.P.I. of Punjab had stated that 'an overall majority of the people have an overwhelming predilection for the English education and least for the vernacular education'.
16. Young India, April 14, 1916. Also mentioned in Autobiographical Writings, Lajpat Rai (Ed. V.C. Joshi), 1965.

17. The Tribune, April 17, 1922.
18. An editorial in The Tribune, March 19, 1891.
19. Ibid., June 18, 1918.
20. The Paper became a tri-weekly at the time of death of Dyal Singh Majithia.
21. A History of The Tribune - A Centenary Publication by the Tribune Trust, authored by Prakash Ananda, New Delhi, 1986.
22. Clause XXII of Dyal Singh Majithia's Will.
23. Despite all these efforts, the Arya Samajists would not please. And consequently in retaliation they launched their own paper The Arya Patrika. The things for them did not stop here. They went on to start another newspaper, a bi-weekly, "The Punjabee" as a challenge to The Tribune. These two papers which came to be regarded as advocates of radical independence, for a short while eclipsed the moderate attitude of The Tribune. However, it (The Tribune) did not change its policy of remaining moderate in the face of any such temporary challenges.
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26. The Tribune editorial "Why is Punjab being held back", dated June 3, 1896.
27. Ibid., June 7, 1896.
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**CHAPTER V**

**THE TRIBUNE AND THE SIKH POLITICS**

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A newspaper ought to be a clear mirror of the society's matrix in which it has originated, grown, developed, enjoyed privileges and sustained pressures to establish its identity or is, at least, it has attempted to do so. It must carry out its obligation to highlight and espouse the rightful, truthful and meaningful and come out against the distasteful, destructive and unsavoury situations, which the society happens to be face-to-face with.

The nineteenth century in India witnessed a phase of sufferings of the ruled by the alien ruler. The British administration and its spreading wings of imperialism were causing a great deal of distress and frustration among the Indians. This disgruntled class was being crushed unvoiced and unnoticed. A platform was, thus needed to come to the aid of these people, to give an exposure to their grievances and also expose the misdeeds and wrongdoings, being perpetrated by the rulers.

The Tribune appeared on the scene at this juncture not only to represent the oppressed class but also to extend 'written support' to those who were engaged in the national movement and were fighting it out to win freedom for the Indians. The prevalent socio-economic environment was surcharged with the 'communal-cum-national' interests of various communities which were to be furthered, nourished and sustained by such movements

as Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Shuddhi, Sangathan, Singh Sabha, Akali, Ghadar, Gurdwara Reform Movement, Praja Mandal, Tabligh and Tansim etc. The Tribune, like its contemporary vernaculars in some sense and unlike in some respects, carried along and fostered the genuine and whipped the unwanted and un-called-for.

The Tribune described the establishment of educational institutions and libraries by the Sikhs as a progressive trend. It said that "the catholic principles which it (Granth) inculcates are known but to a few and the clouds of prejudice and superstition have spread over the horizon of the Sikh religion. Now many Singh Sabhas have sprung up in different parts of Punjab and the leaders of the community have awakened to their present condition, and there are ample grounds now to hope that there would be a Sikh revival."<sup>1</sup>

These remarks generated much enthusiasm among the Sikh intelligentsia and encouraged them to continue the spree of spreading education among Sikhs. To attract the patronage of the Government, the Amritsar Singh Sabha resolved to 'cultivate loyalty to the Crown'. The Tribune recorded that "this resolve of the Amritsar Singh Sabha secured immediate response from the Government. With the result, another Singh Sabha was established at Lahore six years after the Amritsar Singh Sabha. Sir Robert Egerton, then Governor of Punjab, agreed to become its patron. Not only this, even the Viceroy, Lord Lansdown also agreed to extend full support to these institutions."<sup>2</sup>

The Government of India showed great sympathy with the Singh Sabha Movement. It once stated that "We appreciate the many admirable qualities of the Sikh nation, and it is a pleasure to us to know that while in days gone by, we recognised in them a gallant and a formidable foe, we are today able to give them a foremost place amongst the true and loyal subjects of Her Majesty, the Queen Empress."<sup>3</sup>

The Golden Temple management,<sup>4</sup> on the other hand continued to express its loyalty in terms as "our bodies are the exclusive possession of the British. Moreover, that we are solemnly and religiously bound to serve Her Majesty, that in discharging this duty we act according to the wishes of our Great Guru, the ever-living God and that whenever and wherever need be felt for us, we wish to be the foremost of all Her Majesty's subjects, to move and uphold the honour of the Crown, that we reckon ourselves as the favourite sons of our Empress-Mother, although living far distant from her Majesty's feet and we regard<sup>5</sup> the people of England as our kindred brethren."

The Tribune published many a piece to buttonhole the Sikh intelligentsia while it once stated that "contrary to Hindus and Muslims, who had their institutions to teach Sanskrit and Vedas and Koran, the Sikhs had no such institution for preaching Gurmukhi and tenets of Sikhism as were contained in Guru Granth Sahib." Following efforts by the Sikh theologians, with due support extended by the Paper by publishing such types of statements, the two Singh Sabhas resolved to refrain from mutual

acrimony. Consequently, their dream to start an educational institution came true on March 5, 1892, when Lt. Governor, Sir James Lyall, laid the foundation stone of Khalsa College at Amritsar.<sup>6</sup>

Following this, even the conservatives started thinking in terms of contributing to the cause by establishing Khalsa schools and Sikh Kanya Mahavidyalas. The Paper also encouraged the Sikhs to start their own newspapers, publish books, journals, magazines and tracts to provide a fillip to their literary and educational movement. And consequently, "Anjuman-i-Punjab", a literary organisation, took the task of translating significant English and other language books into Punjabi during 1865. Punjabi was introduced as a subject in Oriental College, Lahore, in 1877. The Lahore Singh Sabha held a Punjabi Pracharni Sabha in 1882 to popularise the use of Punjabi. The Singh Sabha Movement then took the initiative to start Punjabi newspapers and publish books.<sup>7</sup>

The Tribune quoted Mr Henry Gladstone, a nephew of the Prime Minister Gladstone, having said, "The Sikhs are scrupulously clean and I regard them as a very fine race of men" and Dr Lawson, a surgeon, having stated them to be "one hundred percent cleaner in their habits and freer from disease than European steerage passengers I had come in contact with."<sup>8</sup>

The Tribune referred to the city fathers of Punjab as persons, who did not know much more than to bid the English as

'jo hukam khudawand' (your Lordship's orders are acceptable). This was the reason why they did not show any interest in forming Punjab Legislative Council till 30 years after the coming into being of the Indian Council Act of 1861. Their keenness was also not forthcoming in relation to holding elections to municipal and district board administration.<sup>9</sup>

The Paper stated that the Muslim-Sikh relations got worsened during 1890s and during 1920s. The Sikh writers of various shades brought out pamphlets, cartoons and penned down poems depicting atrocities committed by Muslims on Sikhs in the past, with martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh respectively, receiving the spotlight. The Muslim propagandists, on the other hand, denounced Guru Nanak as a saint and held the Sikh Gurus in contempt. The Paper also carried reports of the Muslim proselytising activities leading to forced conversion of Sikhs to their faith.<sup>10</sup>

The Tribune, while expressing its own views about the Southborough Committee's proposals, which provided for the establishment of a representative Sikh political organization as a necessity for Sikh political life, quoted the Loyal Gazette having said that "if the Sikhs had had a political organization through which they had presented their claims to the Indian National Congress, like the Muslims, they too would have been accepted and respected by their fellow countrymen", and the Punjab Darpan having stated that "the Sikh community had not secured their rights due to their lack of participation in politics."<sup>11</sup>

One of the editorials of The Tribune stated that "for sometime past new life has been stirring in the Sikh community, and the feeling has been abroad that without a political organization of their own, their interests run the risk of being neglected altogether or at any rate not adequately safeguarded...Political self-immolation or a self-denying ordinance to abstain from taking part in politics over an extended period, cannot fail to serve as a handicap for the time being and produce a feeling of groping in the dark as it were, even when the awakening has come and there is a desire to gradually accommodate the eyes to the light before coming into the full blaze of the sun. Some such process is going on among the Sikhs."<sup>12</sup>

As a result of such views vehemently registered by various Sikh and some of the English journals, a meeting of the Sikh intelligentsia was convened at Lahore with the objective of founding a political organization to represent the community. The meeting, presided over by Sardar Gajjan Singh, a Sikh representative on the Punjab Legislative Council, was largely attended<sup>13</sup> by the Sikh elite from various corners of the Province. This added to the awareness getting increased among the Sikhs towards realisation of their identity as a separate political entity.

<sup>14</sup>  
In Punjab, protest against the two Bills, suggested by the Rowlatt Committee, was furious enough as was stated by The Tribune: "No civilised Government would adopt a policy of repression in the teeth of opposition from the public. There are now two ways open to us. One is that we should, like the dead, put the noose of this law round our necks, bury in oblivion for

ever our fair name, as also that of our great men, and sound the death-knell of the so called liberty of India. The other is that we should afford proof of our life by refusing to accept the law in question."<sup>15</sup> Vigorous campaign against the Bills was further heightened by economic distress as prices of foodgrains in the Punjab during the period had increased significantly and had outstripped rises in wages.<sup>16</sup>

The Gurdwaras have always been positioned high among the Sikhs till the annexation of Punjab in 1849 when the management of the Gurdwaras steadily slipped out of the hands of the Panth. The British had taken the possession of some of the prominent Gurdwaras, including the Golden Temple and Tarn Taran Sahib and frequently used them for political purposes.<sup>17</sup>

The second session of the Central Sikh League, presided over by Baba Kharak Singh, asked the Sikhs to participate in national politics for the 'very existence of their community'. It passed a resolution of non-cooperation on Congress lines with an additional clause that the Government was neglecting the rights of the Sikh community. The anti-Government feelings among the Sikhs grew so intense that when Sewaram Singh, a member of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, opposed the resolution of non-cooperation, the people sitting in the Pandal started shouting 'Sarkar-da-Mama' (Government's tout).<sup>18</sup>

The Central Sikh League at its inaugural session in December 1919, also passed the resolution stating that "this League representing the Sikh community expresses the strong

conviction that the management and control of the Sikh temples and endowments should no longer be withheld from the community itself, as imperatively called for in the best interests of these endowments and the Sikhs." <sup>19</sup>

Though the League demanded that the country should be "placed on a footing of equality with the self-governing members of the Empire, it welcomed the Government of India Act of 1919 as a substantial instalment of reform and assured the Government its hearty cooperation for its successful working." The League, though deferred comments on the conduct of the martial law administration in anticipation of the publication of the report of the official committee of inquiry and the report of the committee, appointed by the Indian National Congress, forcefully sounded the Government on specific demands of the Sikh community. It regretted the denial of substantial representation on the provincial and Indian Legislatures to which the Sikhs were justly entitled by reason of its political status, its military achievements, its services and sacrifices for the King Emperor. <sup>20</sup>

In May 1920, the Punjab Government reported: "A young sepoy of the Depot of the 34th Pioneers at Sialkot appeared on parade with a large kirpan, which he refused on religious grounds to give up. He was sentenced by court martial to one year imprisonment for insubordination. <sup>21</sup> By 1920, Akalis carrying large kirpans started appearing at public gatherings. Though they were not taken seriously by the Government, the novel appearance was indicative of the new spirit permeating the Khalsa.

For Sikh politicians, the final form of political representation accorded to them under the reforms came as a great blow. They were expecting justice in the formulation of details of political representation in the Punjab with increasing anxiety which never came their way. In May 1920, they had reiterated their demands for substantial political representation in the provincial legislature but the proceedings of the Reforms Advisory Committee of the Punjab Government in June 1920, further disappointed them. The Government had consulted only Gurbux Singh Bedi and Arur Singh, the Manager of the Golden Temple, as representatives of large Sikh religious opinion on the issue of definition of the term 'Sikh' to be employed for elections to the Legislative Councils.

The emergence of Khalsa nationalism provided additional fervour to the accusations of misconduct of Arur Singh holding out a generous treatment to General Dyer. His testimony before the Reforms Advisory Committee further caused urgency for reforms. In July 1920, the Punjab Government issued a communique announcing its intention to withdraw its association from the management of the Golden Temple. It stated that "it has been decided to defer the action until the Reforms scheme has been brought into operation. The elected representatives of Sikh constituencies will then be consulted as to any changes which may be contemplated."

The combined efforts of Sikh newspapers and The Tribune made the Punjab Government announce that Mahtab Singh, the Deputy President of the Punjab Legislative Council, has been asked to introduce a resolution recommending that "the local Government

appoint a committee of inquiry to consider the existing management of Sikh Gurdwaras and shrines and efforts being made to alter such managements and to report on the best method of settling disputes and of regulating future control of these institutions." <sup>24</sup> The Government also announced that in order to implement the forthcoming resolution at the earliest possible, a conference may be organised "to determine the precise questions in dispute with regard to management of the Sikh religious institutions, and where a compromise between contenders appeared possible to bring about an amicable settlement." <sup>25</sup>

The Tat Khalsa reformers, on the other hand, continued their efforts in connection with the seizure of Sikh shrines. <sup>26</sup> Failing to arrive at any positive conclusion, the conflict over the Gurdwara management led rapidly to 'a polarization of opinion'. Before further official initiative could be formulated, rising tension between the Akali reformers and the Sahajdhari Sikh Mahants exploded violently at Nankana Sahib. <sup>27</sup> A large number of Akalis, including some members of the S.G.P.C. got assembled inside the Janam Asthan shrine after having resolved to 'advance on the troops and be shot down'. The Government caved in and handed over the management of the shrine to a temporary committee of Akalis. It also withdrew troops and police contingents from the area. <sup>28</sup>

A tirade of such allegations against the Government connivance created an atmosphere 'full of suspicion against the Government'. To quell the agitated Sikhs, the Punjab Government

unequivocally expressed its concern at the Nankana Sahib tragedy and the Governor, Sir Edward Maclagan immediately promised a judicial inquiry. A committee to investigate the incident was set up and as a concession to Sikh opinion, Sardar Mahtab Singh was requested to make preliminary investigations. The pro-Akali Press and the S.G.P.C. spokesman challenged the credentials of the inquiry committee by pointing out that several local police and criminal investigation department officials, who were alleged to have connived with the Mahant, have been put on the committee. The Punjab Government reacted sharply to such 'unsubstantiated criticism' of members of the investigating body and so doing further compounded popular suspicions. A Government communique warned that "legal proceedings would be instituted against persons challenging the credentials of investigating officials without good cause or making unfounded allegations of partisan-<sup>29</sup>ship."

The Nankana Sahib massacre gave a chance to the nationalist politicians to exploit the prevalent anti-Government sentiments among the Sikhs. At a shahidi diwan, a special public meeting held to honour the Nankana Sahib martyrs, Gandhi chose to address the Sikh gathering in the following words: "you... naturally suspect that high officials contemplated with equanimity if they did not encourage, the preparations of a heinous deed...A moment's reflection must convince you that even if it is found that some Government officials were guilty of such complicity, the discovery takes you and India no further than where we stand today. You and practically the whole of India want to sweep the

whole of the Government out of existence unless the system under which it is being carried on is radically altered. It would be wrong to divert the attention of any section of the nation from the main or the only issue which is before the country." <sup>30</sup>

Religious passions generated by the Nankana Sahib massacre found expression in greater militancy among the Akali reformers and their success in gaining control of the Janam Asthan Gurdwara added confidence to their reinforced zeal for the Gurdwara reform. Meanwhile, a delegation of 12 Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council to Nankana Sahib noted that several charges registered by the police against the Sikhs were "baseless and that police action had instilled deep panic among the local population and, thus, the Sikh suspicion regarding Government's sincerity in conducting an impartial inquiry were confirmed." Encouraged by popular sympathy, the S.G.P.C. stepped up their efforts towards greater militancy. The committee demanded the privilege to manage all Sikh shrines and all property associated with them. It also declared that the Government must reject the claim to hereditary possession of any shrine by the Mahants and announced that it would resort to "passive resistance unless all Sikhs arrested in connection with the Gurdwara reforms were released and legislation for the satisfactory management of Sikh shrines adopted within four weeks." <sup>31</sup>

The publication of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill unleashed a spate of protests from various groups of the society. A memorandum was presented to the Governor of Punjab on behalf of

the Panchaiti Societies or akharas of Hardwar, which expressed apprehensions at the activities of a body of men unreasonably hostile and antagonistic to all mahants. They appealed to the Government to take measures to protect the interests of the Udasi and the Nirmala Mahants. It rejected allegations of corrupt conduct of mahants and cautioned that certain people were endeavouring to change the established order of things, sanctioned by religious tenets and accepted by a majority of disciples all over India. They stated that the proper procedure for reform of religious institutions could be to appeal to the akharas, or seeking redress through the civil law. The Hindu Sabhas of Lahore and Peshawar also urged that any Gurdwara Commission appointed for this purpose must give adequate representation to the Hindus who also revered Sikh Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. These Sabhas described the proposed Act as a "hasty and extraordinary measure...absolutely un-called-for and appears as a mere concession to the opinion of the Sikh community known as Akali Sikhs or Tat Khalsas."

The Tat Khalsa Sikhs, on the other hand, were equally critical in their opinion regarding the proposed legislation. Prof. Teja Singh, in a letter to the Editor of The Tribune, stated that any "intervention by the Government or any non-Sikh in the management or administration of Gurdwaras will be considered as an encroachment on the religious liberty of the Sikhs." He further stated that "any proposal to appoint a Board of Commissioners to conduct an inquiry into disputed Gurdwaras was unacceptable since it would, in fact, amount to only veiled

extension of the present defective law under which Gurdwaras are being attached and which treated the whole Sikh Panth, the rightful owners as a mere party against its servants, the Mahants. The effect of such legislation will be that instead of one Sarbrah (Manager), whom the Sikhs have with great difficulty ousted, there will be many sarbrhas, and instead of one Golden Temple, the Government will be controlling all Sikh temples." <sup>34</sup>

At a large public meeting attended by some 7000 Sikhs at Nankana Sahib, the S.G.P.C. announcing its reaction to the Gurdwara Bill asserted that "for the proposed legislation to be acceptable to the Sikh Panth, all members of the proposed Board of Commissioners must be Khalsa Sikhs, and two-thirds of these must be appointed by the S.G.P.C. Another condition was the release of all persons arrested in connection with the Gurdwara Reform Movement. The Tat Khalsa, the Singh Sabhas of Sialkot, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar city, the students and staff of the Khalsa College, Lyallpur and some Sikh public meetings at Ferozepur and Jhelum passed resolutions in support of S.G.P.C." <sup>35</sup>

Ultimately, the Bill was referred to a select committee of 13 members, including four members sympathetic to the Tat Khalsa and three belonging to the Sahajdhari Sikh community. With the representatives of Sahajdhari Sikhs in a minority and the Government anxious to adopt the Bill as rapidly as possible, the outcome of the select committee's deliberations was predictable. The select committee's report made only two major changes to the draft Bill. The composition of the Board of Commissioners to be appointed under the Bill was laid down as:

"(i) a non-Sikh to be appointed by the Local Government as President, (ii) a Sikh to be appointed by the local Government, and (iii) two Sikhs to be selected by the local Government from a panel of eight to be proposed by a majority of the Sikh members of the Legislative Council. It also suggested that the President of the Board should exercise a second, or casting vote in case of a deadlock between the Commissioners. Though the select committee steered clear of attempting any definition of the term "Sikh" to be applied, the composition of the Board of Commissioners to be appointed as laid out in its report was, in fact, a veiled concession to Tat Khalsa opinion."

The draft Gurdwara Bill, however, failed to satisfy either of the two parties in conflict. Four Sikh members of the Provincial Legislative Council — Kartar Singh, Mahtab Singh, Harnam Singh and Dasaundha Singh — appended a minute of dissent to the select committee's report in the following words: "The feelings of the Sikhs, which we ourselves fully share, are very keen, that all members of the Board should be of the Sikh faith elected or selected by the Sikh members of the Legislative Council. But we have agreed as a last resort to the constitution of the Board as given in the Bill as amended, in the hope that the Sikh members to be nominated by the Government will not be one whose views may be antagonistic to the spirit of religious reform among the Sikhs. We feel bound to express our opinion on this point because the success or failure of the proposed legislation depends entirely upon the constitution of the Board." The Sikhs were not prepared to accept the right of the Government to appoint

a Board of Commissioners in order to take a decision on the disputed Gurdwaras. They believed that all the Gurdwaras should be managed only by the Panth. Therefore, the S.G.P.C. declared that the Bill was not acceptable to the Sikhs. The moderates also did not accept it. The Akali, an extremist Sikh newspaper, wrote that "it would not accept a law like this."<sup>38</sup>

The two Hindu members of the select committee also disapproved the report. One of them, Raja Narendra Nath stated: "the Board of Commissioners has been formed in such a way as to give distinct advantage and a disproportionate representation to the advanced section of the Sikhs. The presence of one Hindu and non-Sikh member on the Board will be as ineffectual as the presence of this class of members on the select committee has been. Whilst two members of the advanced section have to be selected from a panel to be furnished by the elected members of the Legislative Council, the orthodox section is to be represented by one member only who is to be nominated by the Government."<sup>39</sup>

In an editorial on the select committee's proceedings, The Tribune summed up the controversy succinctly as: "The Sikh members begin in accepting the definition (of the term 'Gurdwara') and proceed to argue on the basis of this definition that they are entitled to complete and unreserved control of the Gurdwaras and shrines included in it, and that this Bill does not give them. But the other party, starting from the last point, namely the failure of the Bill to give complete control to the Sikhs, proceed to argue that the definition itself is not acceptable.

The very fact they say that the Government is not in a position to give the Sikhs complete control of all the Gurdwaras and shrines included in the definition and admit both the necessity of having a non-Sikh President with a casting vote and a Sikh member of the Board, who shall be a nominee of the Government, pure and simple, shows that the definition does not really define that the words, however, simple looking, do not convey the same meaning to all ears." <sup>40</sup>

The Government, thus, had no option than to defer the legislation. A resolution illustrating the Government's stand on the controversy over the Gurdwara reform, adopted by the Punjab Governor's Executive Council stressed the goodwill of the Government towards the Sikh community while stating that the "Government desire is to make clear the attitude towards the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee as their attitude has at times been misrepresented. The Committee states that it has been formed to look after the Panthic Gurdwaras within the Province and outside, and that it is entitled to make such changes as it thinks fit in the management of such shrines. But these claims have neither been acknowledged nor denied by the Government, as such claims do not in themselves affect the relation of Government to the people. If the Committee or its agents are able, without using any intimidation or violence, and without sending organized parties of persons, whose appearance at a shrine has the practical effect of intimidating the occupant, to persuade the existing incumbents to modify in a lawful manner the existing arrangements of Gurdwaras and shrines, the Government

has no desire, whatever, to interfere, and so far as such modifications may tend to secure real reform they have the sympathy and approval of the Government."<sup>41</sup>

Following the postponement of the Gurdwara Bill, the Government's numerous attempts to effect a compromise between the two parties proved futile and thus the Bill was postponed indefinitely. However, the Government in an effort to settle the Gurdwara disputes by legal means, issued instructions to all civil courts in the province to give priority to the cases involving disputes over Gurdwara's management. Finally, the Government stated, "if further legislation is thought necessary for securing these objects, it will be open to any Sikh member of the Legislative Council to put forward a private Bill, and if the provisions of such a Bill can be shown to be of a kind likely to meet with substantial approval of the Council, the Bill will receive the sympathetic attention of Government."<sup>42</sup> However, the Punjab Government's gestures of goodwill had little impact on the S.G.P.C. A meeting of the S.G.P.C. at Amritsar resolved in favour of militant action. The Committee ultimately resolved that "in view of the Government's failure to adopt a suitable legislation regarding the management of Sikh Gurdwaras, it would follow the policy of non-cooperation with the Government and resort to passive resistance in the pursuit of Gurdwara reform and boycott the British goods."<sup>43</sup>

The Sikhs were agitated because their religious grievances were not yet redressed. Many Gurdwaras were still under the control of the corrupt mahants. The restrictions on

the size of the Kirpan were also not removed. To express the religious discontent of the Sikh community, the S.G.P.C. issued the following statement: "The Committee (SGPC) had believed that at the release of key prisoners, the Government might remove the Sikh religious grievances, and therefore, the growing tension of feeling was deliberately checked. But we cannot indefinitely withhold the natural expression of discontent. Instructions would be shortly issued what action should be taken now."<sup>44</sup>

"The S.G.P.C. was making all efforts for the reform of Gurdwaras. There is no doubt that the leadership of this religious organisation was also in the hands of extremist Sikhs, like Baba Kharak Singh and others who were imbued with the spirit of genuine nationalism as in a small community, the politicians and social or religious reforms get mixed up...Moreover, it was under their leadership that the S.G.P.C. had resorted to the policy of non-cooperation to get their religious grievances redressed. But to maintain the distinct character of its religious movement, the S.G.P.C. again declared that it was a religious body and had nothing to do with politics...It had never accepted Swaraj as its creed. On the other hand, it was always anxious to secure a suitable Gurdwara legislation from the Government."<sup>45</sup>

The Punjab Government chose to relent in an effort to bring back the simple minded non-political majority of the Panth to reason. A campaign of conciliation towards popular Sikh opinion was initiated in view of the fact that "no Sikh body had declared its opposition to the management of the Golden Temple

being entrusted to the S.G.P.C. during the hearing of the official civil suit in the matter, the Government decided to withdraw from any connection with the management of the shrine... and to leave any further proceedings that may be thought necessary to the Sikh community itself. It was also announced that all Sikhs arrested in connection with the recent agitation would be released.<sup>46</sup>"

Regarding religious demands of the S.G.P.C., the Punjab Government issued a communique stating that the "Government desire(s) to explain in deciding, in January last, to leave the administration of the Golden Temple in the hands of the Committee, it was guided by the consideration that no opposition was made by any Sikh body to the adoption of this course and that accordingly the Committee might be looked on as representing a large section of Sikh religious opinion on the subject of Sikh Gurdwaras. In dealing with the question concerned with Sikh shrines, the Government is prepared to take a similar attitude so long as the Committee confines itself to religious matters and does not adopt undesirable political activities."<sup>47</sup>

The Government invited Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council for drafting a suitable Gurdwara legislation. It also consulted the S.G.P.C. to devise workable measures to control lawlessness by the Akalis brandishing Kirpans. The S.G.P.C. opposed any move to restrict the length of the Kirpan as it would amount to an infringement of the Sikh religious liberty. However, the Government reached a compromise with the S.G.P.C. by which the Government would prevent the misuse of

the Kirpan and won't issue any ordinance restricting its size. <sup>48</sup>

This effort initially met with success as the S.G.P.C. sided with the Government in evicting a group of Akalis, who had forceably occupied the Heran Gurdwara without prior instructions from the Committee. Further, it issued a communique stating that it viewed "with deep concern and condemnation that some Sikhs have insulted and boycotted some very respectable Sikhs for difference of views...that Jathas sometimes take possession of Gurdwaras without permission of this Committee...such incidents are signs of grave defects in our organization and prove the utter necessity of securing good discipline among workers. The work of reform will suffer a serious setback if the spirit of <sup>49</sup> indiscipline is not curbed at once."

The S.G.P.C. called upon the Sikhs in the army "to observe army regulations regarding the wearing of Kirpans and black turbans and also announced the formation of a sub-committee to enter into detailed negotiations with the Government on the proposed Gurdwara legislation. Accordingly, representatives of the S.G.P.C. and Punjab Government met and it was agreed that while negotiations regarding further Gurdwara legislation were being conducted, in order to produce the requisite atmosphere, nothing should be done by either party to prejudice the chances <sup>50</sup> of conciliation."

Such moves were soon followed by a propaganda battle between the S.G.P.C. and the Punjab Government with 'familiar allegations of official repression and interference in Sikh

religious matters and counter-allegations of Akali lawlessness.' With Government - S.G.P.C. talks failing, the former entered into consultation with Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council, as the Committee issued a warning that any Sikh, who will participate in the drafting or passing of the Bill under the prevailing circumstances, will be excommunicated from the Panth. The Sahajdhari Sikhs and the All India Udasi Mahamandal called on the Viceroy and expressed its deep concern over the drafting of the Gurdwara legislation without its participation. The Government strove to draft Gurdwara legislation acceptable to Sikh legislators, who themselves repeatedly shifted their stance.

The unabated arrests at Guru-ka-Bagh attracted the S.G.P.C. to launch a strong propaganda campaign to enlist public support against the Government propagating that by denying them their religious right of collecting fuel for the Guru-ka-Langar, the Government seems to bent upon undermining the Sikh faith. The propaganda produced instant results as the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar reported that the 'strength of Akalis at the shrine would rise to 6,000 within days'.

The attitude of other communities also grew sympathetic towards the Akalis. Shankaracharya of Sharadapeeth, an orthodox Hindu leader visited Amritsar and met the leaders of the S.G.P.C. The meeting was followed by a communique from the S.G.P.C. which said: "He (Shankaracharya) was deeply moved to hear the details of the Guru-ka-Bagh affair and expressed great sympathy with the Sikhs in their present sufferings...His presence markedly contributed to the harmony and affection which characterise the

relations between the two communities." <sup>53</sup> Many Muslim leaders, particularly the Khilafatists, and Congressmen, like Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Kifayat Ullah also visited Guru-ka-Bagh to express their sympathy with the Akalis.

The Government failed to contain the situation as the S.G.P.C. despatched a 50-member Akali Jatha to Guru-ka-Bagh, challenging the Government authority. The Akalis were intercepted by the police and were asked to disperse. On their refusal to do so, they were dispersed by force which provoked the S.G.P.C. to launch a campaign of 'non-violent civil disobedience'. The Akali volunteers took a sacred oath at the Akal Takht Sahib to remain non-violent and undeterred in their resolve to fulfil their religious duty. The process of daily march by the Akali Jathas to Guru-ka-Bagh and the use of force by the police to thwart their violence continued. But the non-violent demeanour of the Akalis, bearing hard beatings by the police rather added sting to the S.G.P.C.'s propaganda and helped in enlisting widespread support and sympathies. <sup>54</sup> A joint deputation of the Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council and of the Chief Khalsa Diwan visited the scene and passed resolutions condemning the official repression. Members of the All-India Congress Committee also visited the scene, and while issuing condemnation, recommended to appoint a committee of inquiry to probe into the police high-handedness. Even the pro-Government newspaper, the Civil and Military Gazette of Lahore was moved to comment: "One cannot help being impressed by the accounts of the way in which the Akalis have met the beatings that have been inflicted on them by

the police and feeling that they are brave men...when the irreducible minimum truth has been reached, it must be admitted that the beating which these Akali Jathas endured was one which required no small moral courage to face in cold blood." <sup>55</sup>

The continued attempts to march to Guru-ka-Bagh, defying the Government orders, gave it the form of a 'holy pilgrimage'. The religious sanctity and social prestige conferred upon members of these Jathas came to be regarded as 'an incentive to recruit members for the Jathas'. The fervent religious conviction which provided further strength to the campaign is best elucidated by an incident which received high publicity and credence. "A golden hawk was sighted in the vicinity of the shrine which was immediately hailed as a sign that the tenth Master (Guru Gobind Singh) had given his consent to the task". <sup>56</sup> C.F. Andrews described the scene as: "We saw two Sikhs — pointing to the sky, where a great bird was circling in its flight towards Amritsar...(they) eagerly...told me that every day, as soon as the beatings at Guru-ka-Bagh began, the golden hawk rose from the Guru's garden and took its flight to Amritsar to tell those who were serving at the Golden Temple what was taking place... There was a light in their eyes as they spoke, which betokened joy. The whole scene, the intense faith of my companion, the look of reverence in their faces...moved me very deeply. It was the first event which really put me in touch with the Akali reform movement in its spiritual aspects as perhaps nothing else could have done." <sup>57</sup>

The Punjab Government, which had previously underestimated the march of Akali Jathas now noted that they had started recording a fair proportion of ex-servicemen. To add to the worries of the Government, the S.G.P.C. announced to despatch a Jatha exclusively comprising Sikh army pensioners. The despatch of pensioners Jatha of some 100 army officers and Jawans was followed by a Jatha of Sikh graduates and another of students of the Khalsa college.

The Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1922 was published by the Punjab Government on September 15. The conflict at Guru-ka-Bagh, however, dramatically affected the dynamics of power within the Sikh community. While the Government stood determined to uphold the legal rights of Mahants and pujaris at Guru-ka-Bagh, the success of the S.G.P.C.'s campaign fortified it with unimpeachable authority. The local Government noted that the "success with which the S.G.P.C. was drawing support from varied sections of the community, and the substantial number of Sikhs who had rallied to its cause, lent credence to its claim to represent the majority of the Sikh community on the issue of Gurdwara management. Thus, shortly after the Bill was published, the Sikh members of the Legislative Council, who had been negotiating with the Government over the Bill in defiance of the S.G.P.C.'s instructions, refused to further extend their cooperation. The events of Guru-ka-Bagh, they claimed, had completely altered the circumstances in which the Bill would be acceptable to the Sikh community. Nor were the Sikh Legislators in favour of the Bill being drafted by the Chief Khalsa Diwan,

which, they insisted made unwarranted concessions to the Mahants and Pujaris. The Hindu and Sahajdhari Sikhs, for their part, alleged that the Bill, by providing disproportionate influence on to the Tat Khalsa, would trespass against their religious rights.<sup>59</sup>

On November 7, 1922, the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrine Bill of 1922 was introduced in the Punjab Legislative Council. The S.G.P.C. immediately reiterated its stand that "pending the release of all prisoners, arrested in the pursuit of Gurdwara reform, no legislation could be considered. Various Sahajdhari Sikh organisations also proclaimed their opposition to the Bill."<sup>60</sup> The Udasi Mahant Mahamandal, Punjab, passed a resolution stating that "this Sabha claims that the S.G.P.C. is not representative of the Sikhs as apart from the Akalis. None of the various sects of the Nanak Panth are represented by it, that this Sabha believes that the newly framed Gurdwara Bill is against the decision of this Committee. In the Legislative Council, the Sikh members refused to support the Bill. A motion to refer the Bill to a select committee was carried with official support,<sup>61</sup> but the Sikh members would not participate in its proceedings."

About the new Gurdwara legislation, The Tribune wrote: "We are not aware of any other case since the creation of the present Council, when a measure of the importance of the Gurdwara Bill was carried through in the teeth of opposition so overwhelming and so significant."<sup>62</sup>

The Punjab Government was in a dilemma over the issue of Sikh prisoners. While on one side, it was finding it

difficult to keep such a large number of them under detention, on the other side, releasing them unconditionally would have meant a virtual surrender. Then came a blessing for the Government in the guise of Hindu-Muslim riots at Amritsar. The Akalis cooperated with the Government in keeping the law and order situation under control. This gave the Government an opportunity to release the Akali leaders as a reward to their services. The Government, however, did not release leaders like Baba Kharak Singh, Jaswant Singh Jhabbal and Sardul Singh Caveeshar, and continued to harass them. The Gurdwara issue was not yet resolved, when the forced abdication of Maharaja of Nabha added to the list of their grievances.

The S.G.P.C. issued a communique on July 9, 1923 condemning the unjustly and forcible abdication of Maharaja of Nabha. Again on July 10, 1923, it issued another communique: "The general opinion among the Sikhs is that the Nabha-Patiala dispute has been used as a pretext by the authorities to get rid of a Sikh prince, well known for his liberal views and Panthic sympathies...The weakening of Nabha is the thin wedge against an important section of the Sikh community."

The executive committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal resolved to raise a 'typhoon of agitation till the Maharaja was restored'. Similarly, the Central Sikh League reminded the Government of Sikhs' determination to get the Maharaja reinstated. On the request of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Central Sikh League, the S.G.P.C. on September 29, 1923, passed the following

resolution: "The S.G.P.C. solemnly declares its determination to fulfill the sacred duty of adopting all peaceful and legitimate means to maintain the dignity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and to enjoy unfettered exercise of the religious right that has been challenged."<sup>65</sup>

The close relationship of the Congress and Akalis started worrying the British. To dilute this growing relationship, the Government released some Congress leaders, including Jawaharlal Nehru, who were arrested by the Nabha authorities at Jaito. In fact, the Government was of the opinion that the formation of the Satyagraha Committee at the Delhi session of the Congress was a proposal of the Akalis. The Sikh Papers like the Akali and Akali-to-Pardeai made continuous appeals to the Congress to 'help the Akalis by starting a civil disobedience movement simultaneously'. To the repressive policy of the Government, the S.G.P.C. reacted by passing a resolution to the effect that "the S.G.P.C. wants to reassure the Panth that by the grace of Guru, it is prepared to receive the blow and contemplates the threatened attack with equanimity."<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, the S.G.P.C. remained always keen to secure a conducive Gurdwara legislation. With this fact in view, the S.G.P.C. decided to "send its own representatives to the Punjab Legislative Council and in the Central Legislative Assembly. In the elections held in December 1923, the candidates of S.G.P.C. secured an overwhelming majority of votes which proved that the whole Sikh community was waiting for a suitable Gurdwara legislation under the leadership of the S.G.P.C."<sup>67</sup>

The Congress attitude was quite sympathetic towards the Akalis during the Morcha of Jaito. The Government's step declaring S.G.P.C. as an unlawful body, attracted condemnation from the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee and which assured all help to the Akalis. The Congress Working Committee also passed a resolution stating that "this conference declares that the attack made by the Government on the S.G.P.C. was the direct challenge to the right of free association of all Indians for non-violent activities, and being convinced that the blow is aimed at all movements of freedom, resolves to stand by the Sikhs, and calls upon Hindus, Muslims, Christians and all people of India to render all possible assistance to the Sikhs in their present struggle."<sup>68</sup>

In fact, the Congress was of the view that the Akali movement was a part of national struggle and thus, by supporting the Akalis, the Congress was serving its own cause. As Maulana Muhammad Ali, in his presidential address to the Coconada Session of the Congress admitted that "...a better opportunity for civil disobedience, at least on a provincial scale, never presented itself since the arrest of Mahatama."<sup>69</sup> And Dr Kitchlew, the Chairman of the Satyagraha Committee, remarked: "Now the Congress should associate itself with the movement and give practical help, for if Akalis failed on account of the lack of support from the whole country, the Congress would lose its prestige and progress towards Swaraj would be retarded for a long time to come."<sup>70</sup>

The interruption of the Akhand Panth at Jaito by the Government helped the S.G.P.C. to give a religious colour to the whole issue and, thus, effectively rally support against the Government. The general opinion at that time was that the Sikh agitation might have been difficult to sustain simply in the name of an abstract threat to the unity of the Panth. But the forcible interruption of the sacred ceremony was interpreted and capitalised as an insult to the Gurus and the Sikh religious faith. It further evoked a sense of outrage among a wide segment of the Sikh community when a resolution was passed by the Committee which stated: "The S.G.P.C. holds the Government of India responsible for the unbearable insult to Sikh scriptures and the action of challenging the religious liberty of the Sikhs to assemble in congregation and to go on pilgrimage to their Gurdwaras...(and) therefore...solemnly declares its determination to fulfill the sacred duty of adopting all peaceful and legitimate means to maintain the dignity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and to enjoy the unfettered exercise of the religious rights that have been challenged."

Akali Jathas were now permitted to enter the Nabha State without any inhibition, as the Government preferred to confront them at a place far removed from the nerve-centre of Akalis. Meanwhile, a concerted effort was made to curb Akali propaganda within the State. The Editors and Proprietors of newspapers, having soft corner for the Akali movement were charged with giving space to inflammatory writings. Akali meetings were oftenly raided and leaders and organisers rounded

up. Despite all this, the daily march of Jathas to Jaito continued and a steady supply of recruits to perpetuate the campaign remained a process. In October 1923, however, the Government decided in favour of curbing Akali activity as in a Press communique, the Punjab Government stated that "since the abdication of the Maharaja of Nabha, the Prabhandak Committee and the allied Akali Dal have openly encouraged bodies of Akalis to invade the Nabha State with the object of intimidating the Government, and to interfere with the maintenance of law and order. These associations are, in the opinion of the Government, a danger to the public peace. The managing agencies of these associations will now be prosecuted for sedition and conspiracy to overawe the Government. The S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal were declared unlawful associations, and thirty of the leading office-holders of the Committee were arrested and charged with conspiracy to wage war against the King."

The Sikh members of the Punjab Legislative Council felt the necessity of a tighter control over the Sikh legislators by the S.G.P.C. Thus, on the eve of elections to the Council in 1923, a general house meeting of the S.G.P.C. announced that "bearing in mind the desirability of securing satisfactory Gurdwara legislation and the changed conditions of affairs, the S.G.P.C. hereby resolves to run its own candidates for election to the Indian Legislative Assembly and the Punjab Legislative Council." It also announced the nomination of candidates to contest the provincial elections. Each candidate nominated by the S.G.P.C. was required to adhere to a declaration which stated:

"(a) I shall abide by the mandate of the S.G.P.C with regard to all matters placed before the Legislative Assembly or the Punjab Legislative Council concerning welfare of the Panth...and, if necessary, I shall resign my seat; (b) I shall not accept any post in or under the Government without the permission of the S.G.P.C.; (c), if, for any reason, at any time, I find myself unable to carry out the mandate of the S.G.P.C., I will resign my seat; (d) I shall conform to the condition of being an orthodox Amritdhari (Khalsa) and wear the Sikh symbols." <sup>72</sup>

Meanwhile, the Government had no alternative than to counter the S.G.P.C's campaign. On February 10, the Government announced that "all Jathas visiting Jaito were required to give an undertaking not to indulge in political activity, and further, the State authorities would limit the size of Jathas permitted to advance towards Jaito to fifty persons." On February 20, 1924, the anniversary of the Nankana massacre, a shahidi jatha was told about the new orders, in compliance with which 'only fifty of the Jathas could proceed to Jaito on giving the required undertaking. The Jatha ignored the order and continued its advance. It was met by a detachment of police who again asked it to retire. On its continued advance, the police opened fire, <sup>73</sup> killing fourteen Akalis and wounding 34 others." The incident added fuel to the fire with respect to Khalsa sentiments.

The Udasi Publicity Bureau, Lahore, voiced the Sahajdhari Sikh point of view regarding the Gurdwara Bill as: "Sikhism was never a religion but always a Panth...a cult...

embracing Hindu religion though laying particular stress on the devotional attachment towards Gurus. The Bill defines 'Sikh' to be a person who professes the Sikh religion. If it had contented itself with this laconic definition, it would have been all right. But it demands much more...it...prescribes a solemn declaration...The last words in the declaration...clearly compel a Hindu, even though otherwise qualified, to renounce his religion, simply because the bill aims at creating a separate community...The words that I have no other religion should...be deleted..The Central Board must be recruited from amongst all those who believe in Gurus even though they be...Sikhs, who have not adopted five symbols necessary for the volunteer corps, organized by the tenth Guru in defence of Hindu religion." <sup>74</sup>

A few of the Akali leaders also viewed the Bill <sup>75</sup> as the Government's strategy to limit their control on all Sikh shrines. While accepting the fundamental elements of the Bill, they expressed their reservations as: "The defect, which appears to be rather serious is the official attempt to weaken the control of the central body over their local committees. The power to modify the budgets, prepared by the local committees and the right to settle the scheme of administration of Gurdwaras should be given to the central body...the control of Akal Takht and Takht Kesgarh...should be vested in the central body, because they, in addition to being places of worship are seats of authority from which Bills are issued from time to time... binding upon every Sikh." <sup>76</sup>

The Akali Dal's control over the S.G.P.C. and its political appeal combined to make it a formidable force in Sikh politics. In religious terms, a separate Sikh identity was no longer in doubt. But despite the growing tendency of a Sikh consciousness and the drawing of communal boundaries between Sikhs and Hindus over several decades, there remained much in common between the Sikhs and large body of Punjabi Hindus. A common identification with the same caste groups, a shared spoken language and culture, and similar social and historical traditions bound the Sikhs and the Punjabi Hindus together. The Sikh communal separatism had been based essentially on religious differentiation. Even in religious matters, the Sikh and the Hindu religious thoughts and traditions had much in common as the Punjabi Hindus continued to pay homage at Sikh shrines in their thousands.

The declaration of places of worship as being either Sikh or Hindu religious institutions by the judicial tribunal, established under the provisions of 1925 Act, occasionally served as a cause of recrimination between the Khalsa Sikhs, the Sahajdhari Sikhs and the Hindus which was to last for several years. Many religious institutions were predominantly connected with either Sikh or Hindu history and tradition and widely regarded as such. However, with a number of other religious institutions, commonly worshipped by the Khalsa Sikhs, the Sahajdhari Sikhs and the Hindus made the issue far more complex. In such cases, the judicial tribunal's declaration of a place of worship as being essentially Sikh or Hindu inevitably brought

strong protests from the either side. Various Udasi organisations vehemently objected to shrines, historically under their charge being designated as Sikh shrines and placed under the authority of the S.G.P.C.<sup>77</sup>

Though in various nationalist forums, the Akalis had repeatedly asserted their support for joint electorates and condemned the reservation of seats as a communal evil, they strongly opposed the Nehru Report, since it did not foresee special minority representation for the Sikhs. The Central Sikh League, with the powerful Akali leader, Master Tara Singh as its General Secretary, adopted a resolution which declared the Nehru Report unacceptable to Sikhs.<sup>78</sup>

The introduction of dyarchy, ensuring statutory majority for the Muslims, the Hindu stance towards the Sikhs witnessed a sudden change. With a view to scalp the Muslim majority in the Provincial Council, the Hindu leaders preferred to recognise the Sikhs as a separate community and also went on to support their demand for a suitable weightage in representation for them.

Both the Hindu Mahasabha in Punjab and the Muslim League decided to cooperate with the Simon Commission while the extremist Sikhs like, Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Amar Singh Jhabbal, Baba Kharak Singh and Mangal Singh urged the Sikh community to boycott the Commission.<sup>79</sup> Many Akalis participated in the Congress demonstrations with the placard 'Simon go back, we have self-respect'. It was the Congress which was all the time assuring

the Sikhs that it would protect their interests. Thus, when the Congress opposed the Simon Commission and decided to frame the Swaraj constitution, in collaboration with other political parties, the Central Sikh League viewed it as advantageous to the Sikhs to participate in the deliberations of the Madras Session in 1927. Some Sikhs were of the view that their claim for separate representation could not be admitted in the Lucknow Pact primarily because they stayed away from it. In an effort not to repeat the mistake, the Central Sikh League and the Shiromani Akali Dal, decided to take part in the All Parties Conference, organised by the Congress on February 12, 1928.<sup>80</sup>

The Central Sikh League constituted a committee, comprising Baba Kharek Singh, Mehtab Singh, Master Tara Singh, Giani Sher Singh, Amar Singh and Mangal Singh to participate in the Conference. Prior to this, an All Sikh parties meeting unanimously decided that "they would oppose the communal representation as it was harmful to the interests of the country. But in case the communal representation was retained, the Sikhs must be given one-third share of representation in the Punjab Legislative Council."<sup>81</sup>

The Sikh representative on the Nehru Committee, Sardar Mangal Singh did not press for separate representation for Sikhs as was recommended for Muslim and non-Muslim minorities in other provinces. It was because of the fact that the Committee had accepted the Sikh demand for complete abolition of communal representation in Punjab. Mangal Singh was also under constant pressure from the Congress leaders like Motilal

Nehru and Dr Ansari to submit a unanimous report keeping in view the wider interests of the country. The Sikh Congress leaders like Sardul Singh Caveeshar, Amar Singh Jhabbal and others supported Mangal Singh's viewpoint.

Master Tara Singh, Gyani Sher Singh and other Akali leaders, however, viewed the recommendations of Nehru Report as harmful to the Sikh interests. They said that their demand for complete abolition of communal representation was not limited to Punjab only. The Congress, however, did not yield to this demand for the Sikhs and refused to amend the clause relating to Punjab.<sup>82</sup> They felt that by "accepting the universal adult suffrage, the Nehru Report would establish Muslim rule in Punjab because the Muslims had a numerical majority in the province."<sup>83</sup> They considered the Nehru Report as another Lucknow Pact in which the interests of the Sikhs had been sacrificed. Baba Kharak Singh analysed the Nehru Report as having conformed to 'Dominion Status instead of full independence'. As a consequence of this, the Central Sikh League resolved to reject the Nehru Report, ignoring pressures to the contrary by the Congressite Sikhs.

The Central Sikh League, nevertheless, chose to withhold the Sikh support to the Nehru Report and stated that "It has pained the Sikh community to find that the recommendations of the Nehru Report are all conceived in a spirit of communalism and the Sikhs apprehend that the Report tends to pave the way for another communal war....The Sikhs have again received a rude shock by having had to realise that those alone,

who talk the loudest and manoeuvre agitation the most, are listened to, however iniquitous their demands may be. The Nehru Report has divided the country into Hindu India and Muslim India."<sup>84</sup> The Report is "from all points of view entirely unacceptable. The sooner it is buried and forgotten the better it would be <sup>85</sup>  
for India and for the British Government."

Despite the best efforts, the Sikhs remained divided in their stand towards the Civil Disobedience Movement. Their participation in the Movement was 'limited as well as cautious'. The loyalist Sikhs erected bodies like Aman Sabha and Sikh Sudhar Committee to 'hamper the spread of Civil Disobedience Movement in the Sikh community'. The minority psychosis of Sikhs dominated the Sikh psyche and they were always compelled to think more of adequate representation than the bigger issues <sup>86</sup>  
 like the Civil Disobedience Movement.

After prolonged discussions, the Sikhs decided to participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement under their own flag. Master Tara Singh, while justifying Sikhs' participation in the Movement, stated that if the Congress wins and the Sikhs do not join them, they won't get any benefit and if the movement failed, the onus would lie again on Sikhs.

Sardar Ujjal Singh's acceptance of 24 per cent seats for his community, equivalent to the voting strength of the Sikhs was opposed by the Sikhs in Punjab. They insisted on securing one-third share in the Punjab Legislative Council. The Sikh leaders, including the moderates, led by Master Tara Singh

forwarded a charter of 17 demands before Gandhi in connection with the second Round Table Conference, most conspicuous of which was the 'redistribution of the boundaries of Punjab' and which read as: "The boundaries of Punjab may be so altered by transferring the predominantly Mohammedan areas to the Frontier Province as to produce a communal balance. In this reconstituted Punjab, there should be joint electorates with reservation of seats."<sup>87</sup>

The Congress again turned down the Sikh demand for 30 per cent representation and consented to concede only 13 per cent share which was in proportion to their population in the province. The only new concession granted was the "right to contest for the additional seats, which the Sikhs considered unrealistic in the context of the contemporary situation."<sup>88</sup> The Sikhs in general rejected the Congress proposal and reiterated their charter of 17 demands as the nationalist Sikhs like Sardul Singh Caveeshar agreed to the Congress formula. Moreover, they treated the 17 demands of the Sikhs as<sup>89</sup> 'reactionary and described them similar to 14 points of Jinnah'.

The Sikh Councillors were asked to resign from their seats in protest against the Communal Award. The Sikhs joined the Unity Conference, organised by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and Maulana Shaukat Ali at Allahabad on November 3, 1932 to 'find out an acceptable communal formula instead of Communal Award'. There was also a separate meeting of the Hindu and the Sikh leaders to formulate their common policy. The Sikhs, participating in the Conference, accepted the statutory

majority of Muslims in Punjab with joint electorate. In return, the Sikhs were promised safeguards like a seat in the Cabinet <sup>the</sup> of province. In the Central Legislature they would also get 4.5 per cent seats. In justification of this formula, Master Tara Singh said: "We do not claim that the present settlement is quite satisfactory from the Sikh or the national point of view; but we do claim that it is far better both for the Sikhs and the country, than the Communal Award of the British Government."<sup>90</sup>

As the main objective of the Sikhs was to get clear-out of the Communal Award menace and to safeguard the interests of their community, Sardar Joginder Singh, a leading member of the Chief Khalsa Diwan, proposed to form a Unity Board of all the Sikh political parties for the elections to be held under the new constitution. But the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Khalsa Darbar, refused to join the Board and decided to contest <sup>91</sup> the elections separately.

The Sikhs were once again left with no alternative than to side with the Congress. It was because of the fact that (i) <sup>the</sup> Akali policy matched with that of Congress and that was to strive for complete independence, (ii) it would help them contest elections to the Provincial Assembly against the Khalsa National party, and (iii) the Muslims enjoyed clear numerical domination. Also "with the announcement of the Communal Award and the realization by the Sikhs that the introduction of democratic autonomous Government in the provinces meant inevitably the rule of the majority, the Sikh

leaders began to look for allies who might strengthen the position of their community. As they had always been anti-British throughout, they did not expect much sympathy and assistance from the British Government and turned to the only great political organisation which might possibly help them - the Congress." <sup>92</sup>

The Khalsa National Party, however, reached an agreement with the Unionist Party, led by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan and joined it for forming ministry in Punjab. Sir Sunder Singh Majithia states that the Khalsa National Party chose to join the new ministry only after reaching "an honourable understanding with the Unionist Party for safeguarding the interests of the Sikh community under the new Government and that the destructive policy carried on by other groups during the past 10 to 12 years has yielded nothing but disruption and chaos in the community and their high sounding declaration had ended in nothing but smoke." <sup>93</sup> The Akali party, on the other hand, came out harshly against the decision of Sunder Singh Majithia and his party for joining hands with the Unionist Party as they felt that the Unionist Party's programme was destined to 'crush the growing power of the Akalis'.

The Government's antagonism regarding the Gurdwara Amendment Bill was described by Akalis as a Muslim interference in the Sikh religion. They professed that the Sikhs had been suffering under the so called non-communal ministry of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. They demanded a Commission, headed by the

Chief Justice of Punjab to inquire into the working of the Government of Punjab.<sup>94</sup> The Akalis underlined the fact that notwithstanding the Sikh support to the Government in the First World War, it had sacrificed the Sikh interests and put them under a permanent rule of the Muslims. They, thus demanded adequate protection for their community in any future constitutional development.<sup>95</sup>

The Muslim League resolution<sup>96</sup> for a separate Muslim State was viewed as threatening to the existence of Sikhs in Punjab. The Khalsa National Party resolved that "the Sikhs would never tolerate for a single day the rabid communal rule of any community in Punjab which was not only their homeland, but holy land". Baba Kharak Singh said that "the Sikhs would not allow the vivisection of India into such an absurd division". Master Tara Singh, President of Shiromani Akali Dal, declared that 'if the Muslims tried to establish their rule, they would have to cross an ocean of Sikh blood'.<sup>97</sup>

The Tribune carried reports on the claims and counter-claims over the controversy of Udasis. While the Khalsa Sikhs referred to Udasis 'not more than a family issue and not an evolution within the religion, the Udasis claimed themselves as a distinct community within Sikhism'.<sup>98</sup> They lived ascetic lives and worshipped commemorative relics instead of Guru Granth Sahib.

The Paper assailed the report by the Education Minister, Mr Fazli as a conscious essay to espouse the Muslim

cause at the expense of other communities, as it was aimed at expanding the areas of education keeping in mind the interests of a particular group of the society. The Government's policy of withdrawing facilities from one community and to extend these to the other was described as 'robbing peter to pay pane'.<sup>99</sup> It published a critique from Sardar Gurbaksh Singh, a Sikh member of the Punjab Legislative Council, which pointed out that the Government's education policy, drafted by a Muslim Education Minister was communal. As it was drawn with the pretext to promote the interests of a 'backward community', it dealt a blow to the institutions of the other communities.<sup>100</sup>

The Congress differed with Akalis on many accounts. The issue came on the surface when Gandhiji wrote to Master Tara Singh: "You have nothing in common with the Congress... You believe in the rule of the sword, the Congress does not!" Gandhiji accused Master Tara Singh of being communalist, to which the latter reacted as that it was wrong to suppose that the Congress stood for the whole of India and did not recognise any sectarian communities as they continued to negotiate with the Muslims. He also accused Gandhi of 'telling a very non-violent community that they were violent.' He further said that he had not seen any Congressite in the Punjab who believed in non-violence in the sense in which Gandhi believed in it. He was proud of being a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh who believed that 'all measures having failed the use of sword was justified'. Non-violence could be the principle of Gandhi and not of Congress. And if it was so, Gandhi was not a good Congressman.

The Master further told Gandhi that communalist or nationalist, he was still the same as he was in 1919 when he (Gandhi) had assured the Sikhs that no communal agreement would be acceptable to the Congress if it did not satisfy the Sikhs. But, Gandhi was not to be convinced. Consequently, Master Tara Singh resigned from the Congress on September 12, 1940. The Tribune even quoted Delhi's Rayast as having written that Gandhiji considered Guru Gobind Singh as 'a misguided leader'.<sup>101</sup>

The anti-Sikh policies and statements of the Congress came to arouse suspicion in the minds of the Akalis. They feared that the Congress, in order to acquire the support of the Muslims, "might agree to something detrimental to the Sikh interests. Therefore, they decided to strengthen their position by increasing their number in the army."<sup>102</sup>

The Baldev-Jinnah Pact (October 15) came as a counter-vailing factor against the growing Congress-Akali friendship in the Punjab politics and as a check on the increasing Congress impact in the Province.<sup>103</sup> The Tribune also quoted a Gurmukhi weekly, The Sikh as saying that "the Pact made the Muslims so self-important and arrogant that while addressing a meeting, Fazl-ul-Haq told the Sindhi Muslims that Mohammad Bin-Qasim conquered Sindh with only 18 men but now the Muslims were 90 million and they could certainly conquer the whole of the Hindustan."<sup>104</sup> Such statements were bound to cast fear among the minorities. Master Tara Singh urged the Punjabis to be ready to come together to give a befitting reply to the Jinnah-Sikandar-Haq trio.

On May 19, 1940, about 125 leading Sikhs met at Amritsar to consider the Khalistan scheme as a buffer-State between India and Pakistan. The meeting resolved to set-up Guru Raj Khalsa Darbar, stretching the Khalistan area to include the territory from Jamuna to Jamrud. A 21-member sub-committee, the Raj Khalsa Board was formed to launch a propaganda campaign for attaining Guru Khalsa Raj, that is, the Khalistan.<sup>105</sup>

Mr M.A. Jinnah told a Sikh deputation in Lahore that they might believe it or not, but Pakistan was to come. He asked the deputation to demand Khalistan instead of opposing the creation of Pakistan. The controversy over the separate autonomous Sikh State in the region in which Sikhs enjoyed overwhelming majority, with general character being distinctly Sikh, continued with the Akalis demanding it and the nationalists and Congressite Sikhs condemning it.<sup>106</sup> While the Akali leaders like Master Tara Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh started suspecting Congress to be an Hindu set-up to the core, the other group believed that the Congress opposition would, in the process,<sup>107</sup> strengthen the hands of British imperialism.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the Sikhs observed that the division of the Punjab was the only solution for the Sikhs to find for themselves earlier having been deceived badly by the Congress and the British. This decision of the Lahore Conference was endorsed by the S.G.P.C. at Amritsar on April 17. The Committee also demanded the appointment

of a Boundary Commission to look after the Sikh stakes in the Punjab.<sup>108</sup> Failing to reach a solution with the Muslim League, a joint conference of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board disagreed with the scheme of partitioning India into two sovereign States. They resented the inequitable and unjustifiable division of the Punjab which amounted to shatter the integrity and unity of the Sikh community.<sup>109</sup>

In a query of the Cabinet Mission, the Sikh leaders, including Master Tara Singh, Harnam Singh, Baldev Singh and Gyani Kartar Singh opposed the Pakistan proposition. However, if the Pakistan was inevitable, these leaders opined, then the Sikhs stood for an independent Sikh State with the privilege to federate either with India or Pakistan. Master Tara Singh further stated that Sikhs were not to be slave to anybody and urged the Mission to take a Sikh perspective of the Punjab problem. Baldev Singh went further by stating that a Jattasthan should be created, containing areas from Ravi to Meerut with Jullundur, Ambala, Meerut and Agra Divisions merged in it.<sup>110</sup>

The visiting Missions and Committees always ignored the Sikhs and usually held talks with the Congress and the Muslim League. Already in minority, the Sikhs remained further divided among themselves. The Congressite Sikhs and the moderates, for instance, always opposed independent judgement of the Sikhs. They subordinated their own judgement to the pronouncements of the Congress, unmindful of the stakes of their own community."<sup>111</sup>

**CONCLUSION**

The Tribune has habitually, naturally and unassumingly been defending, rather promoting the righteous and condemning and rejecting the unbecoming and unconscionable with all its vigour and might and without losing its balance and patience on that. It always rose above communal polemics and avowedly backed the spirits of nationalism, civicism and patriotism among the Indians.

The Paper probably has never had deviated from its sustained approach of rightly guiding its 'public', irrespective of their alignments, interests and ideologies. And the Sikhs have had been no exception.

It always had acted as a faithful advisor to the Sikh political leaders at a time when they were fighting a pitched battle against the Government and other communities in the fray in an effort to establish their separate communal identity. It always stood by them, suggesting them the right measures to be adopted to achieve their target, ill-caring for the predictable Government wrath. While on the one hand, it lauded the Sikhs in its columns as 'still among the finest fighting men in the Indian army', it exhorted them to think over 'what they have got in return of sincere services they had rendered to the British on numerous occasions'.

The Tribune oftenly used to advise the Sikhs to initiate steps to enlarge the frontiers of knowledge of the

community through various means like, opening of Khalsa Sikh schools, Colleges and Libraries, starting of their own newspapers and journals and by stopping largely spread infighting among them so as to provide the much needed support and strength to their movement.

The Tribune proved to be the only newspaper in English which provided the Sikhs with a much bigger platform for attaining a bigger reach to communicate their viewpoints and ideology in and outside Punjab. The Tribune thus played the guide, the mentor and advisor to the Sikhs on every account as the latter failed to evolve a concrete solution to their problems.

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REFERENCES

1. The Tribune, February 7, 1885.
2. Ibid., October 23, 1890.
3. Ibid., November 15, 1889.
4. The Manager of the Golden Temple used to be an official nominee. The Government thus used this platform effectively to control Sikh opinion.
5. Farewell Message by the management of the Golden Temple to the Viceroy, Lord Rippon. The Tribune, August 15, 1890.
6. The Tribune, March 6, 1892.
7. The newspapers started during this period included: Sukabi Sukhodi, Amritsar (1875), Akal Prakash, Amritsar (1876), Gurmukhi Akhbar, Lahore (1880), Khalsa Prakash, Lahore (1884), Sri Gurnat Prakash, Rawalpindi (1885), Punjab Darpan, Amritsar (1885), Khalsa Akhbar, Lahore (1886), Vidyarak, Lahore (1886), The Khalsa and the The Loyal Gazette (1887).  
Some significant books published included Encyclopaedia of Sikhism by Bhai Kahan Singh and Panth Prakash and Tawarikh-i-Guru Khalsa by Gyani Gyan Singh.
8. The Tribune, August 16, 1907.
9. Ibid., April 14, 1883.
10. Ibid., May 5, 1911.
11. Ibid., June 11, 1913.
12. Ibid., March 13, 1919.
13. Ibid., March 18 and March 29, 1919.
14. The two Bills were the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No.1 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No.2 of 1919.  
Sikh Separatism-The Politics of Faith, Rajiv A. Kapur, Allen & Unwin Publishers, 1986.
15. The Tribune, March 11, 1919.
16. Between 1912 and December 1917, with the exception of weavers, wages of every class labourer in the towns rose less than the 43 per cent increase in the prices of foodgrains. In the case of rural wages too, the wages of carpenters alone rose more than 43 per cent and then in only one out of twenty-eight districts.
17. The Manager of the Golden Temple, who was used to be appointed by the Government, always gave priority to the interests of the British Government. During the

Agrarian Agitation (1907), Arur Singh, the Manager of Golden Temple, had ordered to show their (Sikhs) unflinching loyalty to the Raj. Following this, after the outbreak of the First World War, a public meeting in the Golden Temple on August 10, 1914, unanimously resolved to hold Akhand Path in the Temple and pray for the victory of the British. In 1915, a commandment was issued from Akal Takht condemning the Komagata Maru Sikhs. Arur Singh had even presented 'Siropa' (robe of honour) to General Dyer in the Golden Temple after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy. The Tribune, August 16, 1914, and The Loyal Gazette, July 4, 1920.

18. The Tribune, March 18, 1919; December 31, 1919; and October 27, 1920.
19. Ibid., January 14, 1920.
20. Ibid., August 16, 1919.
21. Ibid., June 6, 1920.
22. Both Gurbux Singh Bedi and Arur Singh recommended that the Government refrain from placing any definite interpretation of the term, and as suggested by Southborough Committee, accept the declaration of any person that he was a Sikh in the compilation of electoral rolls.
23. The Tribune, February 16, 1919; March 10, 1919; December 12, 1919; December 15, 1919; December 17, 1918; December 18, 1919; December 23, 1919; December 26, 1919; January 23, 1920; July 22, 1920; and July 30, 1920.
24. The conference was to be attended by 40 representatives of the SGPC and a similar number of delegates of the Mahants and Pujaris, presided over by an official nominee. The conference however, never met.
25. The Mahants and Pujaris, for their part, announced a Conference of their own. Their Conference met and passed a resolution condemning the interference of Singh Sabha reformers in the management of the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras and petitioned the Government to remove the Singh Sabha control and restore peace.
26. The Tribune, February 10, 1921; February 20, 1921.
27. Ibid., March 1, 1921; March 12, 1921.
28. The Sikh concern over the constitution of the enquiry committee was justifiable as the Sikh Press voiced demands for the censure of the Commissioner of Lahore Division, Mr C.M. King, that arch villain, in popular

- belief, was promoted to Joint Chief Secretary to the Punjab Government and instructed to proceed immediately to his new appointment. For the sceptical, the scenario for a cover-up of official complicity was thus complete.
29. The Tribune, March 6, 1921.
30. Ibid., March 6, 1921.
31. An SGPC Press release, quoted by The Tribune, March 25, 1921.
32. These societies or Akharas represented ascetic order of Nirmala and Udasis which supervised and controlled Mahants belonging to their respective ascetic orders. These were registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.
33. The Tribune, March 25, 1921; April 6, 1921.
34. Ibid., March 26, 1921.
35. Ibid., April 7, 1921, April 17, 1921.
36. The Report of the Select Committee on Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act, 1921, stated by The Tribune, April 9, 1921 and April 12, 1921.
37. Ibid., April 10, 1921.
38. Ibid., April 13, 1921, April 17, 1921.  
Also The Akali, April 6, 1921.
39. The Tribune, April 10, 1921.
40. Ibid., May 7, 1921.
41. The Punjab Government Press Communique, cited by The Tribune, April 21, 1921.
42. Sikh Separatism - The Politics of Faith, Rajiv A. Kapur, 1986.
43. The decision was vigorously opposed by Harbans Singh Attari, Vice President of the SGPC, who argued that such political action by the Committee would detract from the religious cause of Gurdwara reform. Following the decision on passive resistance and non-cooperation, he resigned his office and membership of the Working Committee of the SGPC in protest. Jodh Singh, another prominent member was only induced to withdraw his resignation with some difficulty. Division within the SGPC over tactics, spilled into dissension among its supporters, and at least one Singh Sabha passed a resolution in support of Harbans Singh Attari. Based on

- the Fortnightly Report of May 15, 1921, G.O.I. Home (Pol), Deposit No.63 of June 1921; Weekly Report, DCI, May 20, 1921, GOI, Home (Pol.) Proceedings No.55 of June 1921, as mentioned in the issues of The Tribune of June 9, 1921 and June 11, 1921.
44. The Tribune, February 4, 1922; February 28, 1922.
45. Ibid., January 15, 1922, March 12, 1922; April 5, 1922.
46. Ibid., January 13, 1922.
47. The Punjab Government Press communique, March 10, 1922, GOI, Home (Pol.) Proceedings No.459/II of 1922.
48. Ibid., SGPC Press Communique, The Tribune, March 19, 1922.
49. SGPC Press communique, The Tribune, March 3, 1922, March 24, 1922.
50. The Tribune, April 4, 1922; Fortnightly Report, GOI Home (Pol.), Proceedings No.18, March 15, 1922.
51. The SGPC Press communique, The Tribune, April 19, 1922; May 31, 1922; The Punjab Government Press communique May 6, 1922, GOI, Home (Pol.), Proceedings No.861 of 1922; and GOI, Home (Pol.) proceedings No.179/II of 1922, The Tribune, July 28 and July 29, 1922.
52. A few weeks later, a number of Akalis acting under instructions from the SGPC cut down more trees on the land claimed by Mahant Sundar Das who complained to the police and the Akalis concerned were taken into custody. Fearing an escalation of the conflict, the Punjab Government sent a detachment of police to Guru-ka-Bagh to safeguard the Mahant's person and property. Prompt official action did not, however, deter the Akalis, and despite the presence of police repeated attempts were made to gather wood from the land neighbouring the Gurdwara. The police responded by making arrests for theft and criminal trespass. By August 24, 1922, some 110 Akalis had been arrested at Guru-ka-Bagh
53. The Tribune, September 19, 1922.
54. Sikh Separatism-The Politics of Faith, Rajiv A. Kapur, 1986.
55. The Tribune, citing extracts from reports in the Civil and Military Gazette dated September 21, 1922 in its issue of September 23, 1922.
56. The Tribune, September 26, 1922.
57. Ibid., September 19, 1922.

58. Meanwhile, the strength of Jathas sent to Guru-ka-Bagh was raised to 100 men per Jatha; two weeks later the strength of the daily Jathas was further raised to 120 men. As a result, the total number of Akalis arrested at Guru-ka-Bagh multiplied rapidly, and the Government frantically tried to limit the number of those arrested. District magistrates were instructed to discharge Akali offenders under the age of 18 or over the age of 60, but the released Akalis often simply joined the next Jatha that arrived at Guru-ka-Bagh. By the beginning of November 1922, some 4,000 Akalis had been arrested at the shrine.
59. The Tribune, March 3, 1922; March 9, 1922; March 18, 1922.
60. Ibid., March 24, 1922; April 19, 1922.
61. Ibid., May 31, 1922; July 28, 1922; September 8 and September 9, 1922; September 19, 1922; October 27, 1922; October 28, 1922; and October 28, 1922.
62. Ibid., November 21, 1922.
63. Ibid., May 2, 1923; September 20, 1922.
64. The S.G.P.C. communique of July 9, 1923;  
The Tribune, July 11, 1923 and July 23, 1923.
65. The S.G.P.C., communique of September 29, 1923;  
The Tribune, October 4, 1923.
66. The SGPC resolution of October 3, 1923 meeting.
67. The Tribune, October 2, 1923; January 4, 1924.
68. Resolution passed at the All India Congress Working Committee on October 16, 1923.
69. All India Congress Session at Coconada, December 31, 1923.
70. The SGPC communique, Ruchi Ram Sahni's Private papers, undated.
71. The Tribune, October 16, 1923.
72. The SGPC Press communique, The Tribune, October 3, 1923.
73. The Tribune, October 3, 1923; February 12, 1924; February 24, 1924.
74. Ibid., May 6, May 9, May 12, and May 27, 1925.

75. The Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill of 1925 was introduced by Tara Singh as a private bill in the Punjab Legislative Council on May 7, 1925 and referred to a Select Committee of 20 Legislators. The bill had been jointly drafted by the Government and the Sikh Legislators and, thus, the select committee's deliberations were for Tat Khalsa Sikhs only an arena to clarify the finer points. The membership of the select committee chosen placed the Sahajdhari Sikh representatives in a minority against the combined votes of the five Khalsa Sikh Legislators and the ten Government nominees, and ensured that they could not hinder its proceedings. Eventually, the bill was passed by the select committee, but Raja Narendra Nath and Gokul Chand Narang representing the Hindus and Sahajdhari Sikhs, appended minutes of dissent to its report. Predictably, their dissent focused on the definition of the term 'Sikh' employed. Thus, Gokul Chand Narang suggested that the last words in the required declaration of a person that 'he had no other religion' be deleted, since, as it is the declaration is likely to put an unnecessary strain on the conscience of many people, who are true Sikhs in every sense of the term. Both, Gokul Chand Narang and Raja Narendra Nath objected to the disqualification of Patits since the term was not defined in the bill. The Tribune, May 12, 1925; May 29, 1925.
76. The Tribune, April 28, 1925.
77. Certain Press releases by the Udasi and Hindu organizations published by The Tribune in the months of May and June, 1925.
78. The Tribune, May 12, 1925; October 26, 1928.
79. Ibid., June 6, 1928.
80. Ibid., February 17, 1928.
81. Ibid., January 3, 1928.
82. Ibid., January 1, 1929.
83. Ibid., October 30, 1928.
84. Ibid., December 26 and December 28, 1928.
85. Ibid., July 8, 1930.
86. Ibid., June 10, 1930; November 2, 1930; March 11, 1931.
87. Ibid., March 22, 1931.
88. Ibid., October 9, 1931.

89. The Tribune, October 11, 1931.
90. Ibid., December 29, 1932.
91. The Akalis would not like to join the Unity Board because it would mean allying with the moderates or the loyalists of Chief Khalsa Diwan against whom they had been fighting all these years and as it would alienate them from the Sikh masses, who then might prefer to support the Congressite Sikhs. To add to it the success of Akalis in the recent SGPC elections had ensured them of their victory in the Assembly elections.  
Sikh Separatism-Politics of Faith, Rajiv A. Kapur, 1986.
92. The Tribune, July 1, 1936.
93. Ibid., March 3, 1937.
94. Ibid., October 29, 1938; December 31, 1939.
95. Ibid., October 2, 1939.
96. Popularly known as the Pakistan Resolution of 1940.
97. The Tribune, April 11, April 14 and April 18, 1940; Akali te Pardesi as quoted by The Tribune, November 8, 1940.
98. The Tribune, July 19, 1927.
99. Ibid., March 5, 1925.
100. Ibid., March 15, 1925.
101. Ibid., September 14, 1940.
102. Ibid., October 19, 1937.
103. Ibid., November 14, 1937.
104. Ibid., November 12, 1939.
105. The Khalistan belt was to comprise, Sikh districts of Punjab, Sikh Princely States of Patiala, Nabha, Faridkot, Jind, Kalsia and non-Sikh Princely States of Malerkotla and Shimla.  
The Tribune, May 21 and May 29, 1940.
106. The Tribune, November 25, 1944; April 9, 1945.
107. Ibid., March 30 and April 12, 1946.
108. Ibid., April 18, 1947.

109. Ibid., June 13, 1947.
110. Ibid., April 6, 1946; April 17, 1946.
111. Ibid., May 1, 1966.

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**CHAPTER VI**

**CONCLUSION**

CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

The structure of Sikh politics is raised on the foundation of a faith, which emerged out of crises troubling the society of a phase during the fifteenth century to sprint past the hazards en route to an exclusive accomplishment. A study of the Sikh theological patterns ascertains the truth that the fundamental structure of the Sikh political values is an upshot of the secular and non-sectarian philosophy, upheld by the Sikh Gurus.

The evolutionary process of the Sikh politics has, through self-perception, identification and segregation, climaxed into a faith having characteristics of a distinct community. The aggravation of their socio-political catastrophe by the proselytising activities and other like tendencies of the Hindus and the Muslims in shape of Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tanzim and Tabligh movements made the Sikhs further redoubtable to dissociate themselves and establish their separate socio-cultural and religio-political identity.

The Sikh politics, the Sikh philosophy, the Sikh culture, the Sikh sociology and the Sikh religion have had been existing at the same time separately and unitedly like molecules of separate formulae in a chemical mixture, having specific properties, but then locked into each other, shaping a distinct formula (the Sikhism), having its own marked and

peculiar characteristics. Such a concept is based on the concept of 'miri' and 'piri' as propounded (earlier) and consolidated by Guru Hargobind and which appeared to the entire peoplehood as an innovative development of momentous importance, pregnant with great future possibilities.

The history of the Sikh politics is replete with incidents, fermenting crisis to the Sikh identity and the Sikh socio-political faith from within and from without simultaneously. Circumstances usually compounded the confusion that the Sikh political leadership has had been all, forcing it to rest on the horns of a dilemma for deciding to leave whom and to accompany whom at adverse and antagonistic junctures. They, on almost all occasions fell short of that everything which increases positivity.

As a matter of fact, the execution of Guru Arjan Dev, followed by the internment of Guru Hargobind cemented the base of Sikh political doctrines, visible in their protestive activities of 'defensively offensive' nature. And then the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur further strengthened the Sikh resistance against the Moghul atrocities and which, in fact, readied the path for final phase of the Sikh politics. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and the last Sikh Master, then declared to uphold the right in every place and destroy the wicked and the evil. His creation of Khalsa acted as a psychological booster aimed at revolutionalising the Sikh psyche and which ultimately helped frustrate the centrifugal

and centripetal designs operative in the society. It also invigorated the recessive dynamism of a vanquished people and set their souls free waiting for ascendancy.

The effect of this lofty beginning by Guru Gobind Singh was that the first independent Khalsa state was created within two years of his demise, and ultimately the Sikhs established their sovereign rule in the Punjab in the beginning of the sixties of the eighteenth century.

The about 50-year Sikh rule under Maharaja Ranjit Singh once again consolidated the Sikh conviction of their overall superiority over others. The new feeling of exaltation at the bestowing of the title of sardar now proved a psychological dope for the Sikhs, which they were never ready to relinquish as a mark of their identity in the years to follow.

With the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and annexation of Punjab by the British at the end of the nineteenth century, the Sikhism again started to follow a downhill journey. Social evils re-embraced their rich cultural heritage.

This invited some progressive Sikhs to launch a campaign of redemption of their brethren from these evils. And the result was the establishment of the first Singh Sabha at Amritsar in 1831 as a 'successor' to the Namdhari and Nirankari movements. The Lahore Singh Sabha was founded six years later with a similar charter. The Sikh response to these societies was so vigorous and forthcoming that by the

end of the nineteenth century, about 125 Singh Sabhas were operative in Punjab.

The Singh Sabha and the Shuddhi movements for once shared common concerns of revitalising their respective faiths against the increasing Christianary influence. Such strong were the bonds of affection between the Arya Samajists and the Singh Sabhaites that they jointly endeavoured to set up the Lahore Shuddhi Sabha. The expanding fanaticism among the Hindus, spearheaded by Swami Dayanand, however, hampered the further development of cordial relations between the two communities. The Muslims, with an overwhelming majority in Punjab, were sitting pretty and thus did not need anybody's help to draw favours from the alien rulers.

The similarity of purpose between the Amritsar and the Lahore Singh Sabhas, however, started developing trouble just a few years after their coming into being. The growing bitterness and acrimony between the two for once led to the parting of ways and the situation was to be capitalised by the anti-Sikh forces of the period. But the hatchet had to be buried, as both these factions now again started performing in terms of welfare of the Sikh society, and which was, in fact, in the interest of their own survival. As a first step, in the direction of unification, the two factions jointly stepped in to open Sikh schools, Colleges and Libraries, start newspapers, publish books, and tracts in an effort to educationalise the Sikh mind. This was followed by their

attempts at checking relapse of Sikhs into other camps and luring the non-Khalsa Sikhs to adopt Sikhism, which was of course a much-needed venture at increasing the Sikh population to substantiate their claims of one-third majority in the Punjab Legislative Assembly for which the Sikh political leaders have had been raising much clamour all through.

The progressive Sikhs were now found engrossed in restoring Sikhism to its pristine purity, reforming and bringing back the apostates into the Sikh fold and providing impetus to the Sikh educational programmes. Certain other organisations also sprouted up to propagate the Sikh values, such as, the Central Committee for the Management of Sikh Shrines, the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, the Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha, the Punjabi Parcharini Sabha, the Gurmat Granth Sudharak Committee, the Khalsa Tract Society, the Sikh Book Club, the Panch Khalsa Agency, the Khalsa Handbill Society, and the Khalsa Biradari etc.

Having achieved success on the educational front, the Sikhs now shifted their attention towards the reformation of Gurdwaras, which were the nuclei of Sikh activities and which were being widely exploited by the Government through its agents, the Mahants, and the managements which had, since the beginning of the eighteenth century, remained in the hands of the Udasi Sect, an ascetic group of Sehajdhari Sikhs.

The Mahants and the non-Khalsa managers of the Gurdwaras started involving themselves extensively into

misappropriation of religious funds, degradation of religious ethics and overall desecration of these places of Sikh worship. Degeneration of Sikh values was also now on the increase as the five Sikh symbols now became just an anomaly, idols found their way into the Golden Temple, Christians established their preaching centres in the precincts of Harmandir Sahib and rumours signalled the conversion of the Darbar Sahib into a Church. Such increasing non-Sikh practices at these holy places proved another shot in the arm of the Tat Khalsa Sikhs, who now started thinking in terms of purging the Gurdwaras of the Hindu traditions as a pre-requisite to the evolving spirit of Sikh solidarity. They, by 1920, had become strong enough to snatch possession of Sikh Gurdwaras from the Mahants but then had to bear the loss of many Sikh lives in the resulting Sikh-Government encounters.

The Mahants, in the meanwhile, had sped up the practice of 'hinduising' the Sikh creed after portraying themselves to be the sole proprietors of the Sikh Gurdwaras. They used to admit Sikhs as Hindus and the Sikh Scriptures as embodying the cardinal principle of Hinduism. The Sikhs again rose to the occasion to condemn the Mahants and the other non-Sikhs for the negative role they were playing to defame Sikhism. These circumstances 'delivered' the militant youth organisation, the Tat Khalsa, who came to believe that the Sikhs could not exist with Hindus as was desired by the latter. Consequently, they propounded certain norms of Sikh orthodoxy which admitted only that person to be a 'Sikh', who was a member of the Khalsa,

baptised through the administration of pahul. Their assertion was that the Sikhs who do not adore the Khalsa symbols, though they well rever the Sikh Gurus and worship at the Sikh shrines, were apostates or were the Hindus.

Tat Khalsa now also started rejecting the claims of moderate Singh Sabhaites to the effect that the Government control of the Gurdwaras was a political necessity. They began militarising themselves to face any eventuality in the process of redeeming and salvaging the prestige and honour of the Sikh religious institutions. This growing military preparedness and self-assuredness won it potential political leadership as, on the other hand, the 'soft' political leadership started losing credibility.

The orthodox concept of Sikh identity, in fact, constituted a turning point in the Sikh political history which was frequently and inconclusively debated till the final formulation of the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act in July, 1925. The earlier attempts in this direction had proved abortive due to the ultimate failures in correctly defining the terms 'Sikh', 'Sikh Gurdwaras' and the 'Sikh Shrines'. Previously, all 'self-styled Sikhs', like the Sehajdharis, the Nirmalas, etc. the Mahants, the Pujaris, the Udasis/used to project and authenticate themselves to be the pure and true Sikhs of Guru Nanak in an effort to establish their stronghold on the Sikh Gurdwaras with full patronage and abetment of the rulers.

Seen as a small chunk of a vast Hindu community, the Sikhs were rated as of little political importance. This generated among the Sikhs demand for their separation from the Hindus and recognition as an independent political entity. The truth that they accounted for only 13 per cent of the population in Punjab remained another cause for the Sikhs to feel worried about, as it threatened their identity as a distinct political society. That phase of the Hindu history, which stood witness to the assimilation of the Jains and the Buddhists by the Hindus into their faith and some more incidents and happenings made the Sikhs further conscious about the fact that they must have political representation way out of proportion to their numerical strength, as the Muslims had in other provinces where they were in minority. However, both the Hindus and the Muslims rejected such Sikh claims from various platforms and on numerous occasions, adding to the Sikh grievances.

The various Sikh political organisations, such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Shiromani Akali Dal, the Central Akali Dal, the Central Sikh League, the Khalsa National Party, the Congress Sikh Party, the Khalsa Darbar etc., survived their weaknesses, infightings, dissensions and differences of opinion on various issues to propagate the Sikh values and command following of Sikh leaderships, belonging to different stratas and groups in the society. Their role in representing and forwarding the Sikh point of view, in tones conducive to them notwithstanding, cannot be ignored and overlooked. Even as they fought inwardly or outwardly, they strengthened the base

of Sikhism to different extents on the face of pressures and constraints, unleashed upon them from and on various fronts. The Ghadr and the Akali Movements were all the time catalysing the Sikh movement in its totality, providing it the needful vigour, sting and dynamism.

The Lucknow Pact (1916) did not rate Sikhs at par with Muslims which made them jittery and apprehensive as a political entity. The Minto-Morley Reforms had earlier conceded separate electorates and extra weightage to the Muslims to upset the Sikh interests.

The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms (1918) recognised Sikhs as a separate and significant people, everywhere in minority, thus remaining unrepresented everytime, and recommended the same treatment for them as was allowed to the Muslims in Provinces, where they were in minority. The Muslim League-Congress alliance, which continued to frustrate the positive and progressive Sikh attempts, expressed dissatisfaction over the Report. And as a result of this, the favour shown to the Sikhs in the Montagu Report was withdrawn by the Southborough Committee (1919), constituted to review it, under pressure from the Hindu and the Muslim Legislatures. The Committee also recommended to accept the faithful statement of a person to the effect that he was a 'Sikh' for the purpose of exercising his franchise, and which was bound to weaken the Sikh political assertions.

The Congress for a while, in 1923, not only accepted the Sikhs as a separate community but also backed their claim of granting them adequate representation in the Legislative Assembly. In between, however, the Gurdwara Rikabganj agitation which culminated as the first major win for the Sikhs, followed by the ejection of Mahants of some Gurdwaras amply strengthened the base of the Khalsa nationalism.

The Government of India Act, 1920, and the Report of the Reforms Advisory Committee of the Punjab Government (1920) were recognised as major sources of anxiety to the Sikhs as now the Government started negotiating with those Sikhs, who had been dubbed as apostates, to resolve the Sikh issues.

The Khalsa Biradari's march towards the Golden Temple proved another success for the Sikhs as it resulted in their occupation of the Akal Takht. And then Gurdwara after Gurdwara came to be captured by the Sikhs by ejecting the Mahants and appointing committees of the local Khalsa Sikhs to manage the Gurdwaras. The Government at this juncture preferred to keep silent ignoring appeals from the Mahants to protect their interests.

The recurring S.G.P.C-Government conflicts after the Nankana Sahib massacre, Jaito da Morcha and the Guru ka Bagh Morcha sufficiently consolidated the position of the Sikhs as it helped in institutionalisation of the distinct Sikh identity. The Government, on the other hand, in an effort to dilute the potentiality and might of the Sikh Movements succeeded in winning

the support of some native princes and the Sikh landed gentry. The ultimate consequence of this whole episode was the formulation of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act in July, 1925, despite strong protests from many quarters. The Act granted many new concessions to the Sikhs and proved a turning point in the Sikh Movement in underlining the issue of the Sikh identity and of a distinct communal consciousness.

The Nehru Report (1928) came in for sharp criticism from among the Sikh ranks as the Committee caved in to pressures from the Muslims to shift its stand from assurances given to the Sikhs that nothing will be acceptable to the Congress which 'did not satisfy the Sikhs' to 'which did not satisfy each major community' in the Province.

The Akalis were of the conviction that anything less than one-third representation to the Sikhs, in view of the fact that they contributed 25 per cent of the land revenue, 40 per cent of land revenue and water rates combined, and their historical status, would fail to safeguard the Sikh political existence. And by the time they had come to realise that the Hindus would never accept them as a separate community. The Muslims were already being regarded as 'mistrustful' by the Sikhs. This generated a new concept of political extremism among the Sikhs.

The Round Table Conferences having ended inconclusively, the British now chose to support the system of separate electorates with seat reservations for the minorities,

envisaging 19 per cent seats to the Sikhs against their 14 per cent entitlement. But the Sikhs were adamant on having not less than one-third share.

The Cripps Mission (1942) also met with failure as the Sikhs opposed the Pakistan Resolution, suggested by it as an impending reality, because it amounted to splitting the Sikh population into two. The Sikhs opined that the Pakistan Scheme amounted to dismemberment of the full Province from India or partition of Punjab and which thus 'ensured' slavery for the Sikhs. If Punjab went to Pakistan, as conceived by the C.R. Offer, the Sikhs would be divided vertically into two territories, and which meant their subjugation in two states, they felt.

The Akali Dal then put forward a scheme of territorial adjustment suggesting the creation of Azad Punjab through demarcation of boundaries, keeping in view the elements of population, property, land revenue and historical importance of each community with a population pattern of 40, 40 and 20 in favour of Hindus, Muslims and the Sikhs, leaving scope for the Sikhs to make alliances with the either. As the Scheme was not taken seriously, the Sikhs ultimately asked for the creation of an independent Sikh State or Khalistan.

The Sikhs once again proposed the plan for a united India before the Cabinet Mission (1946) with a condition, nevertheless, that if Pakistan was to come, the Sikhs may be granted a separate State with the right to confederate either with India or with Pakistan. The Sikhs, however, did not get

anything desired by them and ultimately had to live with the Congress as a minority after India's partition in 1947. The main cause for this plight of the Sikhs was that they never demanded Azad Punjab, Khalistan or anything for that matter emphatically and forcefully. They would have saved much had they paid any heed to the suggestion of M.A. Jinnah, who had categorically stated that Pakistan was to come, and had advised the Sikh leaders to use their energy in getting the Azad Sikh State instead of wasting it in opposing the Pakistan Resolution.

Punjab continued to serve as a hectic and potential centre of political activity with such movements as Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tanzim, Tabligh, Akali, Ghadr, Singh Sabha etc., flourishing on its land. This engaged the Punjab Press to energise such an activity. The Punjab newspapers emerged, sustained and kept up the spree of rousing the spirits of nationalism, civicism and patriotism in the process of expressing public outrage and discontent against the Government, and consolidating their faith usually at the expense of other religions. The antagonistic stance of the newspapers towards the Government was understandable as the start to this 'movement' was given by those, who had grievances against the Government. The Government also saw in the Punjab Press an arch-rival, which oftenly used to generate rebuttal of its authority.

The registered Press was helped by the underground Press in monitoring the public opinion. Unlike vernacular

the English Press normally exercised self-restraint. But on occasions, it too started vying with the Indian language Press and indulged in unethical strifes which hampered the cause of unity among different communities. The vernacular Press, however, continued to foment and institutionalise the communal tensions, both extensively and intensively.

The Punjab Press always moved on communal lines. The secular and non-sectarian values always used to occupy the back seats. It, instead of diluting the communal tensions, precipitated them. Vagueness of ideas and non-clarity of thoughts dominated the show as definitiveness played the illusive. Despite all such negative tendencies, the Punjab Press grew qualitatively as well as quantitatively with the passage of time, giving rise to new trends and improving upon the older ones. While the English journalism grew and prospered mainly in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi, Lahore and Amritsar served as nerve centres for the vernacular Press.

The Government occasionally succeeded in 'buying' some of the reputed national and regional newspapers to combat its adversaries. The Vernacular Press Act, the Adam's regulations or the Gagging Act, introduced with motives to curb the Press, enabled the Government to some extent to control the anti-Government activities of the Punjab Press. But, almost all the newspapers re-entered the arena with added vigour and strength during their second births.

The newspapers were occasionally subjected to careful scrutiny during the pre-rebellion period. Though the

native Press viewed the affairs from an oriental than an English point of view, yet it kept a moderate tone, unlike the Persian and Urdu Papers. The tone of the Anglo-Indian newspapers was horrible as it gave the look of an antagonist to the despotic rule.

The period ranging from the start of the twentieth century to the end of the First World War saw the emergence of political journalism in Punjab due to the partition of Bengal, Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Komagate Maru and Budge Budge riots, Gurdwara Rikabganj agitation and the Press laws of 1908 and 1910. Then came the period of confiscations, fines and imprisonments of the Editors and the proprietors. Such restrictions, for the time being, checked the birth and growth of political journals.

The Sikh journalistic activity as the Sikh politics remained passive for the period ranging from 1913 to 1919. With the start of Ghadr and the Gurdwara Reform movements, this activity witnessed a sudden upsurge which continued to develop till the formulation of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act in 1925. The seven-year period from 1913 to 1919 and then from 1926 onwards till 1945, saw newspapers usually confining themselves only to some specialised activity.

As increased the Sikh political activity during the years of Gurdwara Reform Movement, the readership, circulation and cost of the Sikh newspapers also rose vis-a-vis other Indian language newspapers. The newspapers were also compartmentalised

as reading of Punjabi newspapers became a passion. Some prominent Hindus and Muslims also started learning Gurmukhi so as to go through the contents of Punjabi newspapers, especially those of political nature.

The Act of 1935 came to deepen the communal crises as different language newspapers now started giving different versions of the same incidents. One significant feature of the Punjab Press of the period was that while the dailies and weeklies delved by and large in politics, the monthlies and the fortnightlies circumscribed the topicality of their writings on religion and literature.

The existence of newspapers and the communal activity in Punjab had become indispensable with respect to each other. The Akali Movement had made the Sikhs realise that the extension of their religion-political march was not possible without the help of their own newspapers and journals. The success of the Singh Sabha Movement in enlarging the frontiers of knowledge of the Sikhs lied in the fact that like its Hindu and Muslim counterparts it, at a very opportune time, conceived of arming itself with newspapers. The other Sikh political forums, such as the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Central Sikh League, the Shiromani and the Central Akali Dals were also able to carry out their activities effectively only with the help of Sikh newspapers. On the other hand, the political organisations of the Sikhs also used to espouse the cause of development of the Sikh newspapers. The Sikh political activity and the Sikh print media in Punjab were thus dependable upon

each other for their survival and continuity.

Though the number of Sikh (Panjabi) newspapers was much less as compared to Hindu (Hindi) and the Muslim (Urdu) newspapers, their performance was splending vis-a-vis quantity. While the Hindi and the Urdu journalistic writings were oftenly based on communal warfare, the Sikh newspapers' major targets were the British wrongdoings, and the defence of the cause of separate Sikh identity.

Though the Sikh newspapers approached the polemic issue of the Sikh identity crisis with all sincerity, they, like the Sikh political leadership, also failed to achieve much success in winning true friends. The Sikh newspapers, to sum up, had come to underline the fact that the Sikh fortune kept on scintillating and dwindling due to their being a minority community, opposition to the Muslim numerical strength, the proselytising activities of the Shuddhi, Sangathan, Tanzim and Tabligh movements, perpetual injustice at the hands of the Government, infightings and dissensions among the Sikh political leadership, and a quantitatively weak Press.

The Tribune, started with the motive of playing the policeman, the judge, and the juror...to cultivate lane of public life...and to meet the crying demands of Punjab, rarely backed from its promise of upholding the cause of mute masses. It normally did not leave its track while reporting and editorialising on the prevalent societal issues. It called a wrong a wrong and a right a right, not caring the consequences. It

provided a common platform to all, instead of identifying with a particular race or community. Though its English contemporaries in Punjab as the Funjab Patriot, the Punjabee, and the Civil and the Military Gazette unitedly fought to undermine the prestige of The Tribune, they could not do much damage to it.

The Tribune also acted as a sort of connecting link between the people and the Government, objectively reporting the truth, however bitter. It had virtually ruled Punjab during the period under study. It set a qualitative tone, temper and new standards of journalism. The Tribune, was all for following the course of gradual reforms in a constitutional way. It, like a true friend, guided the Sikh politicians rightly after gauging and fathoming the depth and gravity of their might and that of the situation.

Maintaining cool temper and balance in the face of oddities has been fundamental to the policy of The Tribune. It maintained its cautionary stance even while encouraging such values as patriotism and nationalism and while contradicting charges levelled against it by the rival newspapers. It did not resort to 'extremism' even when it could have proved useful under the circumstances.

Unlike the Civil and the Military Gazette, the Arya Patrika, the Funjab Patriot and The Punjabee which, besides other things, advanced the causes of one community or the other, The Tribune was among those dispassionate leaders who made the

Sikhs conscious of the fact that there was no alternative to education and knowledge for a community aspiring for advancement, recognition and distinction. As a matter of fact, it supported the efforts of some Sikhs in opening libraries, schools and colleges and publishing newspapers, journals, tracts and books. It also encouraged them to establish institutions for preaching Gurmukhi and Sikh spiritual thought and methods.

The Tribune, time and again, criticised the forming of the Southborough Review Committee which relegated the Sikhs to a position where the Mantagu-Chelmsford Committee had upgraded them from. On the other hand, it expressed satisfaction at the Sikhs' participation in the national politics, as it had started restirring life in the Sikh community.

While The Tribune regretted the slipping of the management out of the hands of the Sikhs after 1850, it criticised the Government to take over and exploit control of these Gurdwaras by planting their own agents to injure the Sikh religious sentiments. It rose unequivocally against the system of communal electorates, as it amounted to discrimination against the Sikhs in Punjab, where they were, as elsewhere, in minority. In fact, it involved itself in religious matters simply to the extent of helping the entity being discriminated against.

The Tribune strongly protested against the unfair treatment meted out to the Punjabis, especially the Sikhs who, it stated, had stood firmly by the British during the troublous

days of the Mutiny and helped restore the supremacy of the rule. The Paper regarded Sikhs as still among the finest fighting races in the Indian Army, though they were still held in suspicion and disbelief.

The Tribune occasionally condemned the Government efforts directed at making a mockery of the Sikh belief and practices by inviting and abetting the alleged non-Sikhs for finding political solution to the Sikh problems. The Government was also held for criticism for committing atrocities on Sikh religious marches, described as holy pilgrimages, and peaceful diwans and sammelans. It usually suggested the Government to hand over the control of the Gurdwaras to the Sikhs, as they were their religious properties.

The Tribune appreciated the Gurdwara legislation as it was likely to end many Sikh grievances. It attached a great measure of significance to the legislation in view of new concessions, the Sikhs were granted through it. The Paper abstained from fundamentalism while reporting and editorialising facts in connection with the Nehru Report, the Lucknow Pact, the Minto-Morley Reforms, the Cabinet Mission, the Cripps Mission, the Round Table Conferences etc. It vehemently opposed the Pakistan Resolution which, in its view, amounted to unjustifiable and inequitable partitioning of Punjab and which was bound to shatter the integrity and solidarity of the Sikh community.

The Tribune summed up the Sikh political crisis in terms that while the visiting missions and committees had

ignored the Sikh interests, already in minority, they remained divided among themselves. The Sikhs, particularly the Congressite Sikhs and the moderates used to subordinate their own judgements to the Congress pronouncements, unmindful of the consequences.

The Tribune, in fact, was the only non-Sikh English newspaper of Punjab which internationalised the Sikh opinion and provided it a much wider perspective, was it enhanced the reach of the Sikh politicians to communicate their viewpoint and ideology outside Punjab. It played the role of a true advisor to the Sikh political leaders to shed differences and work in unison to strike their targets.

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The Zaminder

### Hindi

The Bharat Bandhu

The Bharat Jivan

The Bharat Mittar

The Harish Chander Patrika

The Hindi Pradeep

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**A P P E N D I C E S**

APPENDIX I

## THE HINDU SHUDDHI AND SANGATHAN MOVEMENTS

The Shuddhi and the Sangathan movements of the 1920's made Punjab the home of Hindu consolidation, and local leaders became the chief spokesmen for the Hindus of the entire sub-continent. A number of social and political factors helped to promote this consolidation: the stress on numerical strength laid by the Montagu Reforms and the growing fear among the Hindus that the Congress had betrayed them by following a pro-Muslim policy.

The Hindus saw that their disorganised community had served as a vast reservoir for converts to other communities. This "human drain" at a time when India was experimenting "the rule of the majority" highly disturbed the Hindus. A theme that dominated the Hindu literature in the 1920's was one of a "dying race waiting for its extinction". In an atmosphere reflecting such stress and strain, the Punjabi Hindu leaders launched the Shuddhi and the Sangathan movements.

Shuddhi Movement

The word Shuddhi has come to denote a double meaning: purification, or the acceptance of an individual or a group into the Hindu fold. In a general sense, Shuddhi means the cleansing of one's body from pollution caused by everyday acts through bathing and recitation of the sacred mantras (hymns), and in extreme cases through praischit (repentance).

Shuddhi is as old as Hinduism itself. However, towards the closing decades of the nineteenth century, the word Shuddhi came to mean conversion of an individual or a group of individuals through a well publicised ritualistic ceremony. Shuddhi as a proselytising movement really began with the advent of the Arya Samaj. The Samajist as well as the Hindu scholars, however, saw the process of Shuddhi in operation in the remote past: first, in the assimilation of foreign population like the Greeks, the Huns, the Sakas and the Kushans into the Hindu fold and secondly, in the reconversion of the Hindus that had been converted into Islam during the Islamic rule. However, both these movements of assimilation and reconversions had taken place so gradually or secretly that they had not drawn mass attention. Thus, the Shuddhi movement as a proselytising movement was an Arya Samaj innovation. Despite some initial success, the movement could not make much headway because of the opposition of the Sanatanist pandits as well as the Hindu code of ethics which did not permit inter-dining and inter-marriage with members of the other castes.

Although the Shuddhi movement did not make much headway in the Punjab, yet the damage done to the Hindu-Muslim relations in the Punjab was irreparable. It created the "Shuddhi-phobia" and "Shuddhi-consciousness" in the Muslim and the Hindu mind respectively which could never be erased.

#### Sangathan Movement

The Sangathan movement reflected the mood of the Hindus for self-preservation and consolidation rather than a

fixed set of doctrines or values, although the notion did develop an organisational structure of its own. The architects of this movement had conceived the notion of Sangathan with words and phrases such as: "cement", "modernism", "a cult of physical training and development," "a struggle for freedom against British yoke", and "a creed of self-defence and self-preservation." As it drew leaders from all walks of Hindu life, the Sangathan movement could not come to any unanimity as regards the real nature of its mission. Hindus could not distinguish between the Sangathan movement and Hindu-raj and were convinced that it was the function of the Sangathan movement to "Aryanize" the Aryavarta so that it could possess one culture and one civilisation. The Sangathan organisation in the Punjab got an extremely valuable support from the Hindu Sabha when the Hindu leaders championed the movement. Hindu Sabha had been founded in Punjab as a counterpart of the Muslim League in 1907. At that time, the Hindus had felt that the Congress had not only failed to promote their interests <sup>but</sup> had "tabooed" within its precinct anything that was Hindu. The Hindu Sabha movement had been dormant between 1911-1920, but began to pick up momentum again in the 1920's.

The Punjab was not only the home of Hindu Sabha movement but also formed the venue for the Hindu Mahasabha Conference in the 1920's and the following decades. In the eighth annual session of the Hindu Mahasabha, Lajpat Rai unfolded the thirteen-fold programme for the Sabha which among other things, included the organisation of the Hindu Sabhas

throughout the country, the building of Hindu prowess through the organisation of the physical training institutions and the reconversion of the Hindus who had been forcibly converted into Islam. Towards the close of 1925, the Hindu Sabha <sup>had</sup> made considerable progress in the Punjab.

With the approach of elections of 1926, the Sangathan movement was dragged into provincial and national politics because the Hindu Sabha decided to contest the elections of 1926 so as to protect the Hindu interests. The most significant feature of the outcome of this election was that with two exceptions, the candidates put forth by the Congress for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council were defeated. This defeat of the Congress, however, gave little comfort to the Muslims because they saw the possibility of political boycott as well as social boycott against them by the triumphant Hindu militants. The Shuddhi and the Sangathan movements were the two legs of Hindu consolidation movements in the 1920's to be joined by the third limb, the Hindu Sabha. Their aim was always the same — to preserve the "dying race" as well as to increase its numerical strength.

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(Extracts from 'Institutionalisation of Communal Tension' in P.R. Uprety's Religion and Politics in Punjab in the 1920's).

APPENDIX II

## THE MUSLIM TABLIGH AND TANZIM MOVEMENTS

The Muslims strongly felt that the Sangathan and the Shuddhi movements, aimed at increasing Hindu numerical strength, could eventually spell doom for the future of Islam in India. They reacted to this threat by establishing counter-organisations, such as the Tabligh and the Tanzim.

Tabligh

Tabligh refers to the conversion of a non-Muslim (Kafir) to Islam. The concept of Tabligh was not new to the Islamic India. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority of the Muslims in India were those Hindus who had been converted to Islam during the millennium of Muslim rule over India. However, in 1920's, the offensive thrust of Tabligh was not only neutralised by the militant Hindus but the Tabligh movement itself was definitely put on the defensive. Since democracy meant the rule of the majority, the Muslims felt that it was absolutely necessary to stop the loss of their members and if possible, try to augment their strength. In the Punjab, the Muslim religious organisations rose to meet this challenge. The Jamiat-ul-Ulema espoused the cause of Tabligh by establishing the All-India Anjuman Tabligh-ul-Islam in Delhi as early as 1923 to propagate Islam and to combine various schools of the Muslim sects in a joint action. The prominent sūfīs and Ulemas were the architects of this revitalized Tabligh movement.

Each Muslim organisation, nevertheless, did work independently to strengthen the Muslim community by adopting measures to check the Hindu proselytising activities. Many Muslims who had been converted were taken back to the fold. Various Muslim bodies arose to nullify the effects of Hindu Shuddhi activity all over the Punjab.

The immediate goal of the Tabligh Movement was stated to be to increase the strength of the Muslims to fifteen crores and the long term goal was to convert all Hindus to their faith. On January 22, 1927, the Muslims organised a mass meeting in Lahore which asked the Muslims to oppose Shuddhi with Tabligh. The Hindus also passed a similar resolution and both sides were set for further confrontation. Every sign seemed to indicate that the worst conflict was yet to come.

#### Tanzim Movement

The Tanzim Movement was an effort made by the Muslims partly to support swaraj (self-rule) but primarily to counteract the activities of the Hindu Sangathan. The Tanzim movement owes its origin to Dr Kitchlew, who after his release from jail in 1923, started the Jami-at-e-Tanzim for the purpose of achieving swaraj. He too called for the organisation of Muslims Volunteer Corps, benevolent organisations, and educational institutions imparting both western and indigenous training. To voice his ideals, he founded the Tanzim daily which was extremely critical of the Shuddhi and the Sangathan movements. While the Tanzim was the counterpart of the Sangathan movement, yet it was less aggressive than the latter. This was because

its founder, Dr Kitchlew, could not completely detach himself from the Congress as Swami Shradhanand and Ram Bhoj Dutta had done. He never lost faith in Hindu-Muslim unity, which according to him, could only be established by "adopting the doctrine of Prem (love)" taught by Mahatama Gandhi.

A speech by Dr Kitchlew at Mymensingh-Anjuman-Islamia on June 15, 1926, offers a glimpse of the objectives of Tanzim. These included the development of maktab schools, colleges and training institutions, the organisation of the mosques so that they could impart the correct type of spiritual, moral and educational instructions to the youths, and improve the physical health of the Muslims. The promotion of physical culture remained an important aspect of the Tanzim movement.

The year 1926 brought a further consolidation of the Tanzim movement. The leaders of the Khilafat movement, a champion of the Hindu-Muslim unity, in a special session of the Khilafat conference decided to join the Tanzim and the Tabligh movements.

The Tanzim and the Tabligh movements suffered more from the lack of leadership, than did their Hindu counterparts. These movements were led by the Hindu leaders of national repute who detached themselves completely from the Congress so as to devote themselves completely to the Hindu consolidation. The Muslim Congress leaders, as well as other political leaders could not do this either due to their lip service to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity or due to their sincere faith in the concept of brotherhood and love taught by Mahatama Gandhi.

Again, the Muslim League due to the split and due to its secular leanings could not throw its weight to Tanzim and the Tabligh as did the Hindu Mahasabha to the Shuddhi and Sangathan. The Muslims, however, sent their message loud and clear to the Hindus that they were not going to tolerate any more encroachments on their numerical strength. This message served its purpose.

The Tanzim and Tabligh movements were really defensive movements and it is difficult to evaluate the relative success of these movements. But the extent of damage done to the Hindu-Muslim relations by all these four movements taken together was tremendous.

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(Extracts from 'Institutionalisation of Communal Tensions' in P.R. Uprety's Religion and Politics in Punjab in the 1920's).

APPENDIX IIITHE TRIBUNE WILL

No one rendered greater service to the cause of liberal education and progressive thinking in North India in the closing decades of the last century than Dyal Singh Majithia. He established, through his will registered on June 15, 1895, three trusts — one each for establishing a library and a college, and the third for maintaining The Tribune Press and Newspaper which he had started in 1881. He bequeathed most of his vast property and other assets to the three trusts. The college and the library were named by the Trustees after the founder some years later. Probably the Sardar, who cared little for self-glorification, would not have approved of this gesture.

Events of the past 100 years have shown that the third venture, The Tribune, was the most important of all, even though, according to one report, the cash value of the assets (including the small printing press) which Dyal Singh earmarked for the newspaper was less than Rs 12,000. According to the will, the assets of the paper comprised "the property in the stock and goodwill of The Tribune". While the monetary worth of the legacy was unimpressive, the goodwill which the newspaper had built up in 17 years during the lifetime of the founder was priceless.

On the 28 concise paragraphs of the will the four concerning The Tribune are as follows:

XX: That my property in the stock and goodwill of The Tribune press and newspaper in Anarkali, Lahore, shall vest permanently in a Committee of Trustees consisting of the following members, viz.

1. Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose, M.A., B.L., Pleader, Chief Court, Lahore.
2. Mr Charles Golak Nath, B.A., LL.B., Barrister-at-Law, Lahore.
3. Mr Harkishan Lal, B.A., Barrister-at-<sup>Law,</sup>Lahore.

XXI. That it shall be the duty of the said Committee of Trustees to maintain the said press and newspaper in an efficient condition, keeping up the liberal policy of the said newspaper and devoting the surplus income of the said press and newspaper, after defraying all current expenses, in improving the said newspaper and placing it on a footing of permanency.

XXII. That in the even of any of the Trustee or Trustees of any of the aforesaid Committees of Trustees dying or resigning or declining or becoming incapable to act in the respective Trusts aforesaid, the remaining Trustees shall forthwith appoint new Trustee or Trustees to fill up the vacancy or vacancies so caused, bearing in mind, first, that the appointment made may be fully conducive to the attainment of the objects of the respective trusts and, secondly, that on the Colleges Committee of Trustees none may be appointed who are members of the "Arya Samaj" or persons interested in a rival institution or who hold views and opinions antagonistic to the Brahma faith.

XXIII. That the members of the aforesaid Committee of Trustees shall be answerable only for their own respective wilful defaults and not for those of other or others of them

and shall be protected for everything done by them in furtherance of the objects of the respective Trusts hereinbefore set forth and the aforesaid Committee of Trustees shall be competent to pay all costs incurred in, or in relation to, their respective Trusts out of the estates respectively vesting in them and to reimburse themselves for any costs they may have incurred in, or in relation thereto, out of the said estates.

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GLOSSARY

Abiana	:	Water rate
Akal Takht	:	The highest religious seat of the Sikh authority
Akali	:	Immortal
Akali Dal	:	The Army of immortal Sikhs
Akhand Path	:	The practice of non-stop recitation of the Guru Granth Sahib
Amritdhari	:	Khalsa Sikh, baptised through administration of pahul or Amrit
Azad	:	Independent
Bhakti	:	Worship or devotion
Charan pahul	:	Nector, sanctified by the touch of Guru's toe
Dharam	:	Religion
Diwan	:	The Sikh religious congregation
Granthi	:	The Sikh priest
Gurdwara	:	The Sikh place of worship
Gurmata	:	The community resolution, adopted in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib
Guru Granth Sahib	:	The Sikh holy scripture and the ever-living Guru
Halal	:	The practice of slaughtering animals the Muslim way
Hartal	:	Strike
Hukamnama	:	The directive from a Sikh Guru or the holy seats
Jagir	:	Land grant
Jathedar	:	Leader of the Sikh jatha, the band of devotees
Jattastan	:	The Land of the Jats
Jhatka	:	The practice of slaughtering the animals in the non-Muslim way

<b>Jholichuk</b>	: Tody or sycophant
<b>Kafir</b>	: Non-Muslim
<b>Kakkar</b>	: The five Khalsa symbols (Comb, bracelet, shorts, uncut hair, and the sword) possessing
<b>Kesdhari</b>	: The Sikh/uncut hair
<b>Khadim</b>	: Servant
<b>Khalsa</b>	: The baptised Sikh, initiated into the Sikh fraternity through the administration of pahul
<b>Khalsa Biradari</b>	: The fraternity of Khalsa Sikhs
<b>Kirpan</b>	: Sword
<b>Kirti</b>	: Worker
<b>Kisan/Kirsan</b>	: Peasant
<b>Koran</b>	: The holy scripture of the Muslims
<b>Langar</b>	: Free community kitchen
<b>Lathis</b>	: Sticks
<b>Mehant</b>	: Priest
<b>Mantras</b>	: Hymns
<b>Mela</b>	: Fare
<b>Morcha</b>	: Front
<b>Nishan Sahib</b>	: The Sikh religious flag
<b>Pagri</b>	: Turban
<b>Pandal</b>	: The tented enclosure for holding Sikh religious congregations
<b>Panth</b>	: The Sikh community as a whole
<b>Fraischit</b>	: Repentance
<b>Prem</b>	: Love
<b>Rehat palana</b>	: Observance of religious obligations by the Sikhs
<b>Riyasat</b>	: State

<b>Sabha</b>	:	<b>Society or organisation</b>
<b>Sahajdhari/ Sehajdhari</b>	:	<b>Other than Amritdhari Sikh</b>
<b>Sarbrah</b>	:	<b>The custodian of a Gurdwara</b>
<b>Siropa</b>	:	<b>The Sikh robe of honour</b>
<b>Satyagrah</b>	:	<b>Peaceful agitation</b>
<b>Shahidi Jatha</b>	:	<b>A group of Sikh martyrs</b>
<b>Swaraj</b>	:	<b>Self-rule or complete independence</b>
<b>Toshakhana</b>	:	<b>Treasury of the Golden Temple</b>

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